

Paradox

by Tony Higton

The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and Ministry in Israel and the Palestinian Territories Issue 38 January 2014

*The newsletter is available free on request to those who send their name and email
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A Paradox Letter with a difference

An excellent way to promote reconciliation in the Holy Land

Here is a recent newsletter from Rachel Netanel, an Israeli believer, which gives a glimpse of her exciting work as an evangelist among Jewish and Palestinian people in Israel and the West Bank. We are grateful to all who support her work and, after reading this wonderful letter, some of you may want to start supporting this vital ministry in Jerusalem. My wife Patricia and I worked alongside Rachel in Israel and can vouch for her. We believe that she is a key person whom the Lord has anointed to bring hundreds of Israelis and Palestinians to faith in Jesus, as part of his reconciling work.

Beit Netanel News

Dear friends,

I have as usual been so very busy with much activity. The renovations in my home have continued and there have always been a few Arabs living in the house as they come to work and stay here. And of course, as you know, they received the Gospel. Some of them heard it and received it and some not – just as the Lord spoke about the seed falling on good soil and some on not so good. Every evening we sat and ate together and studied. What is so amazing to me is how we love one another even though there is disagreement amongst them about what I believe. The ones with the doubts say that the Jews changed the Torah and that God gave the land to the Arabs and not to the Jews. It is a constant argument. I read to them from the book of Genesis where it is written that God gave the Arabs 12 nations around Israel but to the 12 tribes of Israel he divided up this one small land amongst all 12 families. We are continuing to stay in contact with them and go to their village to visit them and their families.

Earlier in November we had an ‘open house’ in my home. In Israel there is a special time set aside each year when a committee decides to ask certain houses of interest to open up their buildings for people to view. My house has been chosen again this year and this time I learned from last year's mistakes about how to do this more efficiently so that not one would miss an opportunity to hear the Gospel. This year we had 400 guests and I had assistance from Roni, a fellow evangelist, who came to help. So every 15 minutes we allowed about 20 – 40 people to enter the house. There was a table set up beside the door filled with bibles and other books. Roni stayed and distributed the books and spoke to them there. I took them through the gate and into the house and talked to them. Many people took my phone number so that they can come to have Kabbalat Shabbat (Friday evening meal) with me and learn about my faith. Almost everyone wanted to hear more and took a bible or book home with them.

At the end of the day, just as I had closed the door, a religious couple from Gush Etzion showed up. I told them that because they are the last people coming, they are not just visitors but they are our guests for supper. Yair is a professor who lectures at the Institute of Jewish Studies where he is the director. He teaches the Tenach and other Jewish studies. They asked me what this house is all about and I said, “I don’t think you want to know – we are Messianic Jews.” They became very curious and really wanted to understand the connection between Jews and Messianic Jews. After a time of discussion, to my surprise they agreed to have supper with us and eat the meal I had prepared. This is quite shocking, as many religious Jews will not eat my food as they think I am not ‘kosher’ enough for them. They really loved my husband Gilad and enjoyed their time so much that they have invited us to come to their home!

Later that evening Gilad and I prayed for all of the people who had heard my testimony that day. So many wanted to know the difference between religion and faith. Even one couple commented that they could see light in our eyes and there must be something special and they wanted to know how they could get this. I asked them to close their eyes and then I prayed with them in the name of Yeshua (Jesus) that He would open their eyes and see the Truth. They felt the love of the Lord and also want to come and visit us again. Please pray for all of these people that the Holy Spirit will touch each heart and help them to understand and draw them to Him.

The next Friday I was interviewed by a number of reporters from Russia, England and the United States. The Israeli Ministry of Tourism actually brought them to my house. They wanted to know about this place and what all of the issues are. I explained how when I first came here that I felt the peace of the Holy Spirit and that Yeshua gave me a vision for the ministry here. I was asked how is it that I believe in Yeshua. I explained, then I said that this whole place represents His life. ‘What is the difference between this place and other buildings?’ First of all, when you enter and close the doors, you enter into a whole new realm – like a protected covering of Yeshua. It is

only with the help of God that we can do what we do here. One of the reporters told me that he had been looking for the meaning of life for a long time. I told him that when he returns in April he is welcome to come and stay here for one week and hear about Yeshua. We sat around the table for a long time drinking Moroccan tea and talking while they viewed and photographed the house and the surrounding gardens.

A couple of weeks ago, we invited seventeen people to join us for Kabbalat Shabbat and instead forty people showed up. Praise God that I always make so much food! We had a blessed time in the Lord. Then last week we celebrated Chanukah with a Russian congregation in my home. We had a concert and invited non-believers to join us. One of the non-believers was the man (named Zion) who had come to fix my boiler. He brought with him 50 special Chanukah doughnuts and three more people. It was such a warm and wonderful evening.

Then last Friday, Zion came with food and a friend to our home and we sat up until midnight talking about Yeshua. I told him the difference between faith and religion and the passage that touched their hearts the most was the one where Yeshua said that it isn't important what goes into our mouths but what comes out of it that is important. For Jews who are taught all of their lives about all of the many laws of Kashrut dealing with what to eat, what not to eat, when and how and with what prayer ... this verse was a real revelation. Zion is a divorced man trying to raise his children on his own. He came to help Gilad with the work on the house and even made him couscous for tomorrow's meal. What a joyful time.

Please pray for all of these dear people (both Jew and Arab) who are so hungry to know the truth. That the Holy Spirit will help them to have a personal revelation about the Lord and that the enemy cannot steal it when persecution comes.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support.

May the Lord richly bless you out of Zion.

In His undying love,

Rachel

*"For out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."
Isaiah 2:3*

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