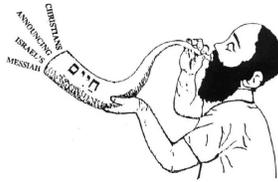


# CHAIM TIMES

The Newsletter of CHAIM, "CHristians Announcing Israel's Messiah"

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## Still To the Jew First?

Is the gospel still "to the Jew first" (Rom. 1:16) or was that merely a priority at the time? If the gospel is still "to the Jew first," what does that mean for us today? Before I answer those questions, let's consider what some of the great reformed commentator said about this.

**John Murray was one of the founding professors of Westminster Theological Seminary.** Cornelius Van Til famously depended upon the exegesis of that great Scotsman with his famous glass eye. Murray's commentary on Romans is one of the best. Here's what he had to say regarding Romans 1:16, "to the Jew first:"

"To the Jew first, and also to the Greek...It does not appear sufficient to regard this priority as that merely of time. In this text there is no suggestion to the effect that the priority is merely that of time. The implication appears to be rather that the power of God unto salvation through faith has primary relevance to the Jew, and the analogy of Scripture would indicate that this peculiar relevance to the Jew arises from the fact that the Jew had been chosen by God to be the recipient of the promise of the gospel and that to him were committed the oracles of God...the gospel is pre-eminently the gospel for the Jew.

**I suggest that we should see the Jewish people in unbelief in a similar way as we see children of believers, raised in the faith, yet living in unbelief and denial. They are estranged covenant children.**

While it is true that in respect of the privileges accruing from Christ's accomplishments there is now no longer Jew or Gentile and the Gentiles "are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel" (Eph. 3:6), yet it does not follow that Israel no longer fulfills any particular design in the realization of God's worldwide saving purpose...Israel are both "enemies" and "beloved" at the same time, enemies as regards the gospel, beloved as regards the election..."Beloved" thus means that God has not suspended or rescinded his relation to Israel as his chosen people in terms of the covenants made with their fathers.

Unfaithful as Israel have been and broken off for that reason, yet God still sustains his peculiar relation of love to them, a relation that will be demonstrated and vindicated in the restoration." (The Epistle to the Romans, John Murray, Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1984, Vol. I, p. 28 and Vol. II pp. xiv-xv and 76-101, passim.)

Murray did not understand the priority of Jewish evangelism as simply being that of time; he understood the priority as

being connected with the vindication of God. It is to be an ongoing concern of the church.

But isn't Israel in unbelief not really Israel says Paul? Aren't the children of Abraham by faith the true children? Isn't Jesus himself the one true heir of the promises? Yes, absolutely. Apart from the Messiah himself there is nothing to be had. So how should we really understand "to the Jew first" and the Jewish people today?

I suggest that we should see the Jewish people in unbelief in a similar way as we see children of believers, raised in the faith, yet living in unbelief and denial. They are estranged covenant children. Such children, who are enemies of the gospel, were raised in church with a relationship to the covenant and therefore must be a priority in terms of evangelism. So it is also with the Jewish people. They are the children of the patriarchs, and so Paul says of them that even though they are enemies of the gospel, they are still beloved, for the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable.

So on a practical level what does that mean? Does it mean Jewish evangelism should be supported before any other ministry? I wish that were the case! We have often struggled with less support financially than we need!

I would never make that claim, but

still, support for Jewish ministry should be at least *one* of the priorities for the church as a whole. Too often it has been neglected and all too often recently it has been considered by Reformed people to be of Dispensationalist provenance. Indeed Reformed churches in past generations were at the forefront of Jewish ministry. We have given the territory over to others too easily. If those with good solid theology abandon the mission field, it will become dominated by those with a less Biblical theology. This is where we find ourselves today and why we felt a call to start this ministry.

We rejoice in the gospel going out through those we may not agree with on all points, while at the same time we lament the poor theology we sometimes see being taught in the name of Jewish ministry. If Reformed people want to see good Biblical and Reformed theology in Jewish missions, they must be involved in Jewish missions. It is that simple.

Our hope and prayer is that God will raise up a new generation of men and women with Reformed convictions and a vision to take the gospel to the Jew first. —Fred Klett

# CHAIM MINISTRY UPDATES

## Rev. Fred Klett, Director

### In Memoriam



Early this summer one of the dearest people I knew went home to be with the Lord. I met Eugene Alcalay in 1988 when he had first come to Philadelphia to study at the Curtis Institute. He was sponsored by Leonard Bernstein. Eugene was from a Romanian Jewish background, and his parents lived in Israel. We became good friends, and he spent the holidays with my extended family. We would go up to his recitals when he was at Juilliard in New York working on his doctorate. After about ten years he came to faith in his Messiah. We were shocked to find out he passed away at the age of 51. I had the privilege of speaking at his funeral along with Pastor John McArthur. The memorial service was live broadcast over the internet and hundreds, no doubt, watched all over the world as he was a world-class concert pianist and teacher. Please pray for his dear wife, Ruth Elisabeth and their 3 year-old daughter Julie as they forge a future together without Eugene. Elisabeth is an inspiring woman of faith. The video of the memorial service, which is well worth watching, is available online at <https://vimeo.com/349787689/9f96da1de4>



We also recently lost another dear friend, Sevda, from Azerbaijan. We first knew of her through her husband, Urfan, who we met through street evangelism. He was the first Russian-speaking immigrant we met, from both a Jewish and Muslim background. He came to faith many years ago and has been one of our main members

at Rock of Israel PCA, and a very close friend. Sevda was from a Muslim background and become one of our closest friends. After a long battle with cancer, which lasted about 8 years beyond expectations, she went to be with the Lord. Many of you prayed for her. We baptized her just weeks before she left us. It was an honor to do her memorial service. Pray for her husband and daughters.

### Summer Street Campaign

Once again we hit the streets in Philadelphia to share the gospel. We gave out thousands of gospel tracts and had many good opportunities to share the Good News during the July Fourth festivities. Several weeks later we participated in a one-day outreach in cooperation with Chosen People Ministries. The team I was on traveled about 100 miles in my car to several different sites in the Philadelphia area. That day we had two Jewish women interested enough to give their contact information for follow up. **Rev. Rick Anderson** continues faithful street ministry and door-to-door work with Rev. Vitaly Kalinovsky.

### Hot Dogs in the Parking Lot Outreach

We noticed a number of local Russian-speaking immigrants walking in the parking lot where our congregational plant, Rock of Israel PCA, meets. We decided to have a kosher hot dog give-away and outdoor meal to connect with them. Several people ate with us including Muslims from Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan and a Buddhist "Kalmyk" from Russia named Boris. All received Bibles and other materials in Russian. Boris has been attending services! Pray for him to come to faith.



**Pray for Boris (left) seen here speaking with Rev. Vitaly Kalinovsky. Vitaly is still in need of much new support. If you do not already support our ministry, please prayerfully consider it. You can even support us online now! Make sure you designate the missionary account it should go to.**

### Matryoshka Russian Immigrant Festival

Once again (two days ago) we had a booth and book give-away at the annual Matryoshka Festival. This has been our practice for many years, and we were delighted to be welcomed back. We gave about 35 Russian Bibles! We will say more about how this went –pictures included– in the next newsletter!

### Jewish Holiday Info Online

The Jewish High Holy Days of Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur, and then Sukkot are coming up in October. I suggest you read up on them. They are a great opportunity to share the Good News because they point to Messiah's redemption. We have helpful bulletin inserts available for download to prepare you. Find them at: <https://chaim.org/downloads>

**We can also accept gifts of stock. Contact the CHAIM office for further info.**