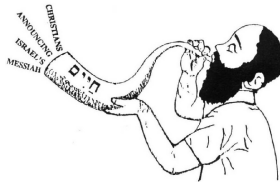


CHAIM TIMES

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

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Winter 2022
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Christians and Jews: A Shared Heritage

Christians by and large celebrate Christmas, and Jews generally celebrate Hanukkah. While Hanukkah is not the Jewish Christmas, it is hard to doubt that the magnitude of American Christmas celebrations has impacted Hanukkah—which had once been a minor Jewish holiday. There has been some cross-fertilization. Jews from the former Soviet Union typically put up a decorated tree and see it as merely a seasonal New Year's decoration. The communists tried to wash religion out of their culture, but certain things have a stubborn persistence.

Quite a few songs associated with the Christmas season were written by Jewish people! Of course *White Christmas* was written by Irving Berlin (Israel Beilin) –who also wrote *God Bless America*, *Easter Parade* and *Abie Sings an Irish Song!* Mel Torme, whose distinct voice earned him the appellation "The Velvet Fog," wrote *Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire*. Johnny Marks wrote *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*, *Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree*, *A Holly, Jolly Christmas*, and *Silver and Gold*. *It's The Most Wonderful Time of the Year* was written by two Jewish song writers, George Wyle and Eddie Pola. And there are several more!*

Felix Mendelssohn, a second generation Jewish Christian and grandson of the famous Jewish scholar Moses Mendelssohn, wrote the melody for *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*.

The most ironic facts are of course that the holiday Hanukkah is mentioned only in the New Testament (John 10:22) and, of course, Christmas celebrates the birth of a Jewish man. If the Jews had been wiped out instead of being lead to victory by the brave Maccabees, there would not have been an Israel for the Messiah to have been born into. Christians and Jews have a common heritage and both look to the Hebrew Bible as their foundation.

The question naturally arises as to which came first, Christianity or Judaism? Of course this depends significantly upon how you define terms. What do we mean by Judaism? Modern--day Judaism is very different from what was taught and practiced by Moses. The religion of ancient Israel

involved a priesthood and sacrifices and was tied to the land. After the Jewish exile from the land at the hands of the Romans, Judaism had to be revised. Before that there was the rise of the rabbis and scribes who taught a post-Babylonian exile Aramaic-speaking people their translation and interpretation of the Scriptures. So Judaism first became centered around rabbinic interpretation and then was reinvented for Jews in exile.

The New Covenant Messianic Faith understood Yeshua, Jesus, as the promised Messiah, as the one true heir of God's promises. Messiah came to bring the blessings of Abraham to the nations of the world (Galatians ch. 3). The institutions of the Temple, priesthood, and sacrifices came to their deeper realization in the atoning sacrifice of Messiah, his High Priesthood, and the Temple of the Holy Spirit, being made up of Messiah, the chief cornerstone, and his people (All of Hebrews, Ephesians 2:18-22, 1 Peter ch. 2).

The first Jewish Christians tried to remain within their Jewish community but were eventually excluded during the Second Jewish Revolt against Rome. Simon Bar Kochba was hailed as the Messiah by the great rabbi Akiva. That helped finalize the developing rift between Jews who followed Jesus and those who rejected him. Most Jewish Christians in exile joined their gentile convert brothers and sisters in the New Covenant communities throughout the Roman Empire. Gradually the church became populated by a non-Jewish majority. Sadly, it too often failed to remember its Jewish heritage and the good news being "to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16).

So let us celebrate the birth of the greatest Jew who ever lived and recognize our common heritage with the Jewish people. The patriarchs of the Hebrew Bible are the root and New Covenant believers, made up of both Jews and Gentiles, are the branches. (Romans 11:11-24). Joy to the world the Lord is truly come. Indeed, let earth, including the Jewish people, receive her King. —FK

*For more songs like these written by Jewish song writers see: kveller.com/11-iconic-christmas-songs-that-were-written-by-jews/

CHAIM MINISTRY UPDATES

From Director Fred Klett

2022 in Revue: Setbacks and Professions of Faith

In spite of setbacks and difficulties, we've had a very good year in many ways. Sometimes we plan things, but God has other plans. I got Covid and could not participate in an Independence Week outreach, but our senior Missionary Rick Anderson partnered with a team from various local churches, and a dozen people professed faith. An injury prevented me from going on a planned trip to Israel, but instead an opportunity opened up to move into a 55+ condominium. I've been meeting some of the many Jewish residents. (Pray we can sell our house soon!)

After ten years of discussion with an atheist who read an online pamphlet of mine called *The Absurdity of Atheism* (see chaim.org/atheism), my friend "A" finally has come to see how absurd atheists can be, and he now professes faith in Jesus. He came to see the post-modern ideology that comes out of atheism leads people to absurd conclusions and that it is Christians who have a basis for believing there is an actual reality we seek to understand rather than whatever any particular individual affirms as "his reality." Pray for "A" as he grows as a very new believer and as I continue to minister to him. I have also put him in touch with a PCA elder friend, Chuck, in his area and they also are in touch.

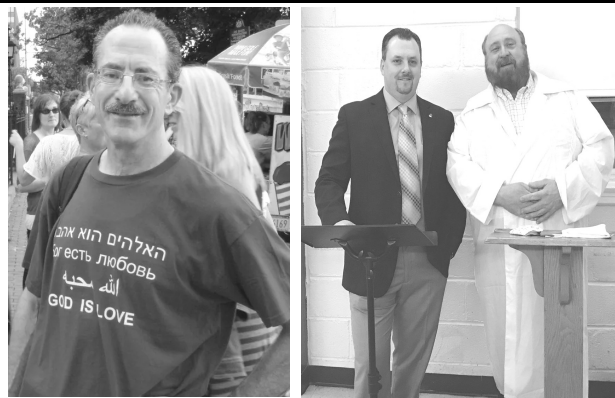
Three of the CHAIM ministry family are involved with teaching English to immigrants through joining a local program known as GROW. Vitaly Kalinovsky, Jean Klett, and Linda Anderson have all had great experiences and many opportunities to meet Russian-speaking and other immigrants and to share the Good News. Vitaly Kalinovsky reports he has an opportunity to proclaim the gospel clearly each week. Some of his students have begun to contact him for help with settling in as new immigrants. Vadim is a new Ukrainian immigrant. Vitaly gave Vadim a Russian Bible with a Jewish star on the cover and Vadim wondered about it. Vitaly explained Jesus is Jewish and the first Christians were Jews. Vadim had not read the Bible since the 1990s. Though Vadim is not Jewish, and also not yet a Christian, he has an admiration for Jewish people. Pray he comes to faith and reaches out to others in his community, many of whom are Jewish.

Rick Anderson has been faithful in street evangelism using our CHAIM street tracts. In coming weeks we plan on using a couple of our unique Christmas-oriented pamphlets that bring a gospel message to Jewish people and also others.

Our Rock of Israel PCA congregation continues to meet for worship. Pray for us to grow further. We have some good contacts who have been invited out, but so far they have not joined us. We are grateful to have survived Covid and that we have found a new home at Third Reformed PCA in Northeast Philadelphia, but we still have a long way to go.

We are encouraged about several who have expressed an interest in becoming official volunteer staff members. One, George, is in Maryland. I have had several phone conversations with George and he fits very well into our ministry in terms of both theology and philosophy. I recently sent him our volunteer staff application. Another couple, who are long term friends and supporters, would also like to get more involved. Pray for George and also Todd and Sandy.

Would you like a "Jesus Our Passover" program next spring? Now is the time to contact us to schedule a full Passover Seder or a presentation for your church.



Pictured left to right: Rick Anderson, Senior Missionary, Vitaly Kalinovsky, Russian Ministry Specialist, and Fred Klett, Executive Director. The CHAIM team thanks you for your prayers and support during the past year. We could not do this without you. May the Lord bless you richly in 2023!

BECOME A "CHAIM CHELPER!"

Do you have a heart for Jewish ministry and a desire to get more involved? We are looking for volunteer staff throughout the USA. Being an official volunteer means we will be there for you, and your expenses (travel, etc.) can be covered as funds are available.

No matter where you are, you can work with us on a volunteer basis by spearheading Jewish ministry in your local area and at your local church. CHAIM CAN PROVIDE TRAINING AND GUIDANCE! This could be as simple as starting a prayer group for Jewish ministry, hosting a Bible study or fellowship group, or scheduling a Jewish holiday program or training seminar at your local church. In the Philadelphia area, you can directly join in outreach.

If you believe God is calling you to get more involved, please contact us and we can discuss the possibilities and send you an application.