

Ten Years of Ministry ... Looking Back and Praying for the Future

As this opening newsletter article is being written, I (Amy Downey) am about to conclude my 10th year in Jewish evangelism. I consider the date that I boarded a plane to interview for a missionary position with Chosen People Ministries as the beginning date of my missionary beginnings. It has been an interesting ten years of ministry – some good, some bad, some heartbreaking, some thrilling!

And despite more than a few more gray hairs (see picture to the right!), I would not change the last ten years for anything in the world! **Well... there is one thing I would change.** And I will share that “wish change” with you at the conclusion of the article.

And in honor of my tenth year of missionary work, I celebrated the occasion by moving ... yet again! In the move, I found a journal begun ten years ago as I was preparing to board the plane for the interview in New York City. I read through some of the entries related to the move to NYC and then the move back to Texas and was stunned by not how I changed **but how God changed me.** For more details, go check out the ministry blog at <http://mysterysolvedwithmessiahjesus.wordpress.com/2009/09/11/reflections-on-ministry-on-9112009/>.



When I first traveled to New York City for the interview, I was confused as to what was to be the focus of the ministry. I naïvely assumed the work of evangelism was up to me. **How wrong I was in 1999!** The work of Jewish evangelism is solely up to God himself. If the work of salvation was up to me or any of you, “Isaac”, “Gene”, “Joan”, “Mary”, “Klaudia”, “Daniel”, “James” and countless other Jewish souls would now have their eternal passport to heaven already secured. The Jewish people are His people and God only wants us to be willing conduits for His Gospel message. However, many never share the Gospel with a Jewish person because they think it is their job to be a “Soul Winner”. Nope! Our task is to be **seed planters** and allow Jesus to reap the harvest of souls. He is a much better farmer than we will ever be!

The second way that God has changed me over the last ten years is to prune and shape me to be more fearless for the Gospel. Ten years ago I would never have had the courage to look at someone I cared deeply about and tell them there is no other way to heaven but through Messiah Jesus. Well ...

(article continues on page two)



Ten Years of Ministry ... (article continued from page one)

today I have discovered not only the courage to share this truth but have looked dear Jewish friends straight in the eye and told them this eternal truth. And you might be surprised to discover that I am still friends with them! The awkward reality of hell did not end our friendship. Actually the truth often made the friendship stronger because they knew the depths of my love for them ... deep enough to warn them of the reality of an eternity apart from Jesus.

Now for the one thing I would change ... "Isaac". I have written about him before for he was my dear friend and Holocaust survivor who died without Messiah Jesus. I begged and pleaded the last night I saw him alive to receive Jesus as Messiah. The horrors of the Holocaust and a number of other factors prevented him from making this decision for heaven and today my wonderful Isaac has spent another day in hell. I would change "Isaac" in a heartbeat; however, I cannot and that reality haunts me.

So that brings me to a journal entry I posted on the blog regarding my September 11 and missionary thoughts ten years after the final surrender. I can write nothing else about ten years of ministry because for once I think I truly wrote it all. Shalom!

(September 11, 2009) Today was another day of service for the Lord through the work of Jewish evangelism. I still struggle with spiritual exhaustion. How much more can I beg and plead for Christian churches to join the fight for the salvation of the Jewish people? What will we as the church of God say when we have to answer for our apathy at best and antipathy at worst? How will God respond to those who claim to serve Him but fail to share the Gospel with His Chosen Ones?

I must continue the work even when and if some of my own family and friends do not understand my obsessive passion of Jewish missions. There is nothing else I can do with my life. There is nothing else I want to do with my life.

Acts 20:24,



Amy Downey

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE . . .

What Is the Talmud? Why Should I Care?

Kabbalah Witnessing Tract Available...!

The Most Tragic Words Ever Stated or Written

What Is the Talmud? Why Should I Care?

As Tzedakah Ministries travels the country to share with churches and Christians about the urgency of Jewish evangelism, one of the issues that the ministry encounters is the fallacy that Jewish people know and understand the “Old Testament” (better known and Tanakh). Nothing could actually be further from the truth!

Many Jewish people have the writings from Genesis to Chronicles in the order of the ask their rabbi or surf the internet



very little in-depth knowledge of Malachi (or Genesis to 2 Tanakh). Most who have questions for answers. Those who are

suppose to know about Messianic prophecies and/or the writings of Moses often will depend upon what the **Talmud** says about the issue more than the actual words of the prophets.

So just exactly what is the Talmud and why is it important for Christian witnesses to the Jewish people to understand this “mysterious” volume of books? The Talmud in a nutshell is the codified writings of rabbis who provided commentary on the Words of God. These writings go back hundreds of years and are often held in the same esteem as the Tanakh itself. In fact, Chaim Potok wrote in his novel, *In the Beginning*, that a rabbinical student faced sneers and derision because he preferred to study the words of Moses rather than the words of Maimonides. Surprised? Many Christians are!

Therefore over the next few issues of *Tzedakah Times*, the newsletter will seek to help you be equipped to answer the “Talmudic” sages who were learned but blind to the truth of Jesus (Romans 10). Be on the lookout! And write in with questions if you have them!

Kabbalah Witnessing Tract Available...!

In light of last issue’s focus on Kabbalah, Tzedakah Ministries produced a witnessing tract (see front side example to your right) designed to help you to talk specifically with someone involved with Kabbalah (Jewish or Gentile). If you would like to receive copies of the tract for your church, your Sunday School class, or yourself, please

contact Tzedakah Ministries by email at info@tzedakahministries.org or by mail at Tzedakah Ministries, 1000 Butcher Road, Waxahachie, Texas 75165, and you will be sent as many copies of the tract as you believe is necessary. And as always, evangelistic materials provided by Tzedakah Ministries are given away.



The Most Tragic Words Ever Stated or Written

In my reading of *Jewish Stars in Texas: Rabbis and Their Work* by Hollace Ava Weiner, I came across a startling, heartbreaking, tragic, and telling statement (see below).

Weiner interviews the descendants of Heinrich Schwarz, one of the first leading rabbis to settle in Texas and who pastored a synagogue in Hempstead during the late 1800s, and discovers that the descendants of Heinrich scattered all across Texas and placed their roots in every part of Texas soil.

One of the areas that the descendants of Rabbi Heinrich settled in Texas was the Haskell/Stamford area – west of Abilene. Now no one really knows much about this area because aside from the Wal-Mart coming to Stamford, nothing much has happened in this area since Jeannie C. Riley lampooned her hometown of Anson with the country song “Harper Valley P.T.A.” And that song was written in the 1970s!

However, this area is critical to my life because my mother was born and raised in Hamlin (about 20 miles from Stamford), my father bought my mom’s engagement ring from his uncle’s jewelry store in Haskell, and most of my long- and not-so-long-gone family is now buried either in the Haskell or Hamlin cemeteries. In fact, when I told my mom about the page of Texas Jewish history, she remembers as a young girl going to Stamford and shopping in their department store.

Anyway ... In Weiner’s interview of the descendants of Rabbi Heinrich, his great-granddaughter remembers how the family was intertwined with every part of West Texas life – from the belles, to the football games, and everything else in-between. This tangle of threads included to the grandchildren of the rabbi even attending “evangelical revivals” when, I would assume, the circuit-riding tent preacher traveled through town. However, none of the rabbi’s long lineage of Jewish Texans ever converted to evangelical Christianity.

Why? The answer can be found for me in the most tragic words ever stated or written. This granddaughter states, **“NO ONE TRIED TO CONVERT US.”**

Wow! What an indictment of Christian witness. What a declaration of the Ichabod nature of so many “Christian churches”. Christians in Texas were happy to invite them to compete for the title of Homecoming Queen but never told them about the reality and hope of Messiah Jesus, our Sar Shalom (prince of peace).

And before one assumes that this is a page of Texas (or any other state) history past, let me ask you one question – Are there Jewish people living in your towns, on your block, and intertwined into your family tree who could also utter the words, **“NO ONE TRIED TO CONVERT US.”**

May God help us all if this is true. (This article can also be located on Tzedakah Ministries’ blog at <http://www.mysterysolvedwithmessiahjesus.wordpress.com>.)