MJAA Since 1927
Messianic Jewish Alliance of Australia

27 August 2024

From the President's Pen

by David Isaacson

Shalom! We welcome our new members and invite all existing members and friends, both locally and overseas, to participate in our various activities. Our weekly prayer meeting on Tuesdays from 5.15 - 6.00pm has been growing and we are happy to be able to unite in prayer across Australia with friends 'Zooming' in from New Zealand, Wales, Ghana, Thailand and Israel.

The Torah study by Dr Ashley Crane which starts the prayer meeting at 5.15pm has been a blessing to all in attendance. If you would like to participate in a more detailed study, please log in to the Tikvat Shalom congregation Havdalah service, which occurs every fortnight on Saturdays.

Dr Ashley Crane is a gifted teacher and scholar who delves deeply into the scriptures to bring understanding, life applications and prophetic insights from God's word, all delivered with his Aussie sense of humour and down-to-earth realism. Definitely no 'airy fairy' theories, just solid Biblical teaching that is relevant to our lives and the tumultuous times in which we live.

On the 323rd day of the war between Israel and Iran's many proxies including Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis, we continue to watch and pray as world military forces gather around Israel. This should not surprise us as both Tanakh and Brit Chadashah foretell of this event through the prophet Zechariah 12:3-4 and Messiah Yeshua himself in Luke 21:20-24. We are also assured by Yeshua in Luke 21:28 that "When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

Social media provides compelling alternative narratives and interpretations of happenings in the escalating global theatre of war, but we can rest assured that God is sovereign and in control, and we can put our trust in His unfailing love to be with us no matter the circumstances we face.

In the midst of these events, it may be tempting to try predict the exact time of the Lord's return. However, Yeshua said in Mark 13:32-36 that no one knows the day or hour, so while we can recognise a season of escalation of events, it is better for us to continue doing what the Lord has called us to do as we wait for Him while "fixing our eyes on Jesus" (Heb. 12:2).

In this issue you can read about the recent Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (22-25 July), Part 2 of a study in Romans by Terry Brooks, as well as a moving family story about Edith Schuller and her escape from Austria, written by one of our members, journalist Michelle Gunaseelan.

In Yeshua, David.

A Childhood Left Behind: Edith Schuller's Journey Across 3 Continents

By Michele Gunaseelan

About the author

Michele is a professional journalist and member of the MJAA. She compiled this article from the life stories handed down in her family by Edith Schuller, who told her life story to her husband Reverend Richard Littleton and her son John Littleton. John, who is Michele's uncle, then recounted the story to Michele.

Goodbye Papa

Edith Schuller endured a series of life-threatening events throughout her childhood. Edith was born into a Jewish family on August 7, 1929, while during her early years her parents Egon and Marianne divorced. To acquire the divorce her father signed official paperwork which stated that he no longer wanted anything to do with his daughter.

Marianne and her daughter Edith moved into her parents' home in West Central Vienna, Austria. Now a single mother, Marianne started her own retail business. Edith's grandfather, Friedrich Fleischer, was a WWI veteran who transported farm eggs and resold them in the city. His wife died before Austria became part of Nazi Germany.

Escaping Nazi-controlled Austria

After Austria was annexed by Germany on March 12, 1938, many Jews like Marianne and Edith attempted to escape Austria. Edith's grandfather, Friedrich, encouraged Marianne to leave with Edith but said he would stay in Austria as he claimed the Nazis would not worry about an old man.

Marianne's brother, Oskar Fleischer, was a lead violist in a band which was on tour in Singapore and he agreed to support them there. Desperate to obtain a visa to leave, Marianne stood in a long queue in the snow at the visa office every day at 5am but always returned empty handed until one day Marianne fell out of line in the snow and a Nazi guard hit her with his rifle. The force sent her sliding on the ice towards the front of the queue where another soldier picked her up and shoved her into line. Due to her progression in the queue, Marianne obtained their visas!

Before they left Austria, Marianne purchased and sewed jewellery into Edith's dress as she correctly assumed the Nazis wouldn't search her daughter. Thus, in a similar style as her ancestors who had escaped Egypt with silver and gold, Marianne left Austria with valuables to support them in Singapore.

They had to go via Venice, Italy before they took a tramp steamer which eventually arrived at Singapore. Thankfully Marianne and Edith got out of Austria when they did. According to the City of Vienna website there were about 206 000 Austrian Jews who lived in Austria in 1938 but by May of the following year 130 000 had left. The Jewish Virtual Library stated that 65 459 Austrian Jews were killed in concentration camps, and only 5 816 Austrian Jews survived. This was part of the death toll of over six million Jews killed by Nazi Germany in WWII.

A new country, culture, language, family and belief system

Singapore presented a different set of circumstances from Vienna for Marianne and Edith. As Marianne found work as a live-in housemaid, Edith was sent to a boarding school for Malay children. However, Edith escaped several times and somehow found Marianne at her new workplace. Then Marianne decided to foster Edith out with a Christian Anglo-Indian couple. Edith became a Christian during this time.

There exist a few discrepancies about what occurred next. Either Edith refused to leave the Christian family to go with Marianne until she bribed her with a new doll or Edith left the family to find her mother on the streets of Singapore. Edith told her mum never to abandon her again.

While both accounts were relayed by reliable sources told by Edith herself, unfortunately there is no further information available to eliminate the discrepancies. However, in either situation, thankfully both Marianne and Edith were reunited.

But Singapore was not the haven of safety that they expected. British authorities had organised for those they labelled as ‘aliens,’ foreigners and perceived ‘others’ who weren’t British, to be sent off to distant lands.

This was planned due to the predicted Japanese invasion of Singapore (which occurred less than two years later on February 15, 1942). The R.M.S. Queen Mary, now a troop ship, dry docked in Singapore on August 5, underwent modifications for the war and headed for Sydney about September 17.

Australia detained “alien” Jews who escaped Austria due to Nazi persecution

Despite fleeing for their lives, the fact that they had fled from Austria meant they were treated with suspicion, so Marianne and Edith were interned in Australia. Ironically, while they had fled Nazi persecution, one newspaper suggested their group were Nazis, stating ‘Nazi’s arrive for internment in a cheerful mood.’

Marianne and Edith ended up in Tatura internment camp, one of several internment camps in Victoria built for 'enemy aliens.' Local Jewish authorities organised for the children of detained Jewish parents to go to foster homes so they could receive an education. However, Marianne convinced the Commanding Officer that as Edith had become a Christian she should not have to go to a foster home. Instead, Edith became a charity boarder at Lowther Hall, a Church of England girls' school and went back to Tatura internment camp in the school holidays.

The internment camps relaxed their rules as it became more obvious why the Jewish foreigners were there and furthermore that they were not the enemy.

Even though Edith was told that she would not amount to anything at school, she became a qualified nurse. She met and married Reverend Richard Littleton and had three children, Malcolm, John, and Rhonda. Now a grandfather, Mr John Littleton recently retold his mother's story, provided the written records and the following family photos.

052440: 'Tatura, Vic. 1943-06-15. Internees of No. 1 Camp, Tatura Internment Group (German), line up for one of their regular route marches.'

Edith Schuller (Singapore): Photo: Australian War Memorial Public Domain Photos

Comment: This harrowing story of Marianne and Edith's escape from Europe under Nazi domination also highlights how Australia was a safe haven for Jewish people. Although much ignorance existed about the history and plight of Jewish people, Australia nevertheless represented a place where Jewish people could integrate, live peacefully and make meaningful contributions to society.

Since October 2023, this zone of safety for the Jewish community has been under threat in Australia and globally through the rise of extreme Islamism and antisemitism. **DI**

Report:
Dr Ashley Crane teaching seminar, 21 July

Dr Ashley Crane presented a free seminar on the “History of Antisemitism” in the suburb of Upper Coomera on the Gold Coast. We had a very interested group of members, pastors and local people in attendance. We look forward to ongoing conversations and opportunities to expand this ministry. Thanks to all who helped make the event a success.

Ashley has delivered this seminar, as well as one on the topic “Has the Church replaced Israel?” locally and internationally and will be continuing to do so on his regular ministry teaching circuit in November 2024 in WA.

Ashley is available locally and internationally for in-person and online Biblical teaching, theology, preaching, understanding the roles of the church and Israel, as well as church leadership training. If you’d like to be added to Ashley’s email list to find out more, you can request this at: **ashley.crane@gmail.com**

Report:
LCJE Conference, 22-25 July

The Lausanne Consultation is a global movement that mobilises collaboration between evangelical leaders. The Lausanne Consultation of Jewish Evangelism (LCJE) is part of this movement, focusing on uniting and encouraging ministries that are dedicated to reaching Jewish people with the gospel. The LCJE conference was held in Mt Tamborine, Qld and included several ministries and individuals that have an interest in Jewish evangelism.

Dan Sered, who served as an Israeli congregational leader and current international LCJE President, led five in-depth sessions that focused on Acts 15: sending Paul and Barnabas, with the theme of “Key Factors of Ministering in a Crisis.”

Each ministry had an opportunity to share about its work and we were pleased to be included with fellow ministries that have the same goal of uniting Messianic believers and sharing the gospel with Jewish people. It was particularly encouraging to hear Dan focus on the need for partnership and collaboration between ministries as we share the same goal in God’s Kingdom. We look forward to seeing how this LCJE goal becomes implemented in practice as different ministries work and collaborate together for the sake of the gospel.

I will include summaries of Dan’s outstanding teaching in future newsletters but in this introduction it is worth mentioning what Dan called “the holocaust effect”, which explains the syndrome of fear of sharing the gospel with Jewish people. The question was discussed about how to share the gospel with Jewish people in the current time of crisis. Dan emphasised that the secret to people coming to know Jesus is not more knowledge, but a heart that is ready to yield to Jesus the Messiah, and this is accomplished through prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

In building the Kingdom together, Dan highlighted these points:

- All ministry must start from a place of prayer - the secret weapon of evangelism
- One of the greatest gifts God has given us is one another
- Listen to how the Holy Spirit is speaking to you
- Pray for people - hear if God is calling you to work on a project with someone
- Have a heart to seek God first in order to know what to prioritise in time of crisis
- We need to know when we are fulfilling the specific calling of God in our lives

Testimony

I would like to share a testimony of a very interesting outcome from the LCJE conference. One of the keynote speakers was Ian Worby, who is the national chairman of Christian friends of Israel and C4I Oceania, as well as regional director of Vision Christian Media. These roles only represent a small fraction of the impact Ian has had in the global distribution of the gospel through technical expertise and setting up media networks.

I told Ian about my involvement with Friends of Madagascar Mission (madagascarmission.org), a volunteer organisation that does prison evangelism as well as humanitarian work in Madagascar. I asked Ian if he knew of radio broadcasters in Madagascar who could support evangelism for prisoners. He let me know about Megavoice, an Australian company that has developed a solar powered mp3 audio player, which is being used globally to share the Bible in 4500 languages and dialects.

I was able to take two of these amazing solar powered mp3 players loaded with the New Testament in Malagasy, English and French with me to Madagascar on my recent trip there from 9-19 August.

In Madagascar I introduced the mp3 players to a conference of 67 evangelists as well as to the principal of a blind school and the head of Prison Ministry Madagascar, which has outreaches in 34 of the 82 prisons in the island nation. The units were received with great excitement and their potential to reach thousands of villagers and prisoners, many of whom are illiterate, with the Bible and discipleship training was quickly understood. Plans are underway to raise funds to distribute scriptures in this way as a supplement to ongoing evangelism programs.

The reason I share this story here is that it demonstrates to me how great God is. Who would have thought that networking at a Messianic conference in the mountains of the Gold Coast would open a door for Bible distribution, evangelism and discipleship training in prisons and other communities in Madagascar?

Perhaps this is not surprising when we read that Yeshua Himself gave us the mandate to visit prisoners, feed the hungry, clothe the naked and give water to those in need (Matt. 25:31-46). Taking care of the needy is a key part of Messianic *halachah* or guidelines for living a life that is pleasing to God as we serve Yeshua in reaching “all the world” with the message of the gospel. I am grateful that this innovative method of distributing the Bible came through the LCJE conference. **DI.**

In the opening words of Romans 9 Sha'ul states he is speaking the truth. This fact is important as in general 'truth' is a rare commodity and open to interpretation in meaning. 1 John 1:6 tells us if believers claim to be walking with Yeshua and instead are walking in darkness, they are not living out the truth. Verse 7 talks about walking in the light and includes reference to Yeshua who purifies from all sin. Sha'ul can state he is now in the truth, as he has met with Yeshua who is Truth.

In the opening portions of chapter 9 we need to grasp hold of the fact Sha'ul has been deeply affected in regard to his own Jewish people. From a man who previously persecuted and had believers placed in prison, he has been touched very deeply. He is now so affected by the love of Yeshua for His people Israel that he experiences grief so great he had constant pain in his heart. In Jewish thought the heart is often considered central to emotional feelings.

Sha'ul mentions that the Ruach Ha Kodesh somehow worked in his conscience. I believe the opening verses in Romans 9 provide us with a glimpse of a deep love Yeshua has for His people Israel and as we will see further on in Romans 9-11, that deep love extends to people of the nations (I wonder if the depth of that love is greater than the mind can fully comprehend).

In 9:3 we see an amazing transformation experienced by Sha'ul in that he is prepared to be placed under Adonai's curse and separated from Messiah if it would help his own brothers, his own flesh and blood. In the English transliteration of Hebrew there is a word 'ach' which can mean brother, relative, kinsman, friend, fellow.

The status of the people of Israel at the time of writing Romans obviously caused Sha'ul great grief. Adonai Himself knew what lay ahead for Israel in terms of suffering right down to our day. Sha'ul is obviously aware that important though following Torah is, it must lead/point to Messiah. The people cannot attain righteousness through Torah alone, but through Yeshua the Messiah.

Right down to this time in history, there is a great need for the Ruach Ha Kodesh to touch the hearts of the people of Israel and to have their ears open that they might hear (Shema). Chapter 11 of Romans talks about Israel's eyes not being able to see and ears not able to hear so that salvation may come to the Goyim (Gentiles).

Adonai chose Israel as His children that they might live by His ways in a special relationship. Even though they failed in many ways, it does not mean the Word has failed. Adonai is true to His promises and will never forsake His people. His Word will achieve what it says.

The people of Israel are the only nation in the world to have been dispersed all around the nations and then brought back (in part at this stage) to their own promised land to be a nation again.

Galatians 3:26 tells us that in union with Messiah all believers are Adonai's children through trusting. Israel was chosen by Adonai for a purpose as His own special people and through them, came the Messiah. There are spiritual battles raging as the enemy attempts to thwart the plans of the Holy One. Yeshua the Messiah is to return and rule and reign in, and from, the Land promised through Avraham.

Israel is still being established back in the Land as foretold in Scripture. They are yet to be cleansed as a nation and will eventually see Yeshua and recognise Him as the True Messiah. Zechariah chapter 12 speaks of a future time when Israel will look on the One whom they pierced.

Chapter 9 verses 7-8 speaks of the seed of Avraham who was promised to be the father of many nations. Isaac was the promised son that Avraham and Sarah eventually received. Their faith was tested. It took many years for the promise to come about in their old age. Genesis chapters 17 and 21 show us Adonai would make a covenant with Isaac and an everlasting covenant for his descendants. The nation of Israel is descended from Isaac, not Ishmael. The children of Israel are the seed of the promise.

Romans 4:13 tells us the promise to Avraham and his seed about inheriting the world did not come though legalism. It was to come through righteousness that trust (faith) produces. It is through faith that the people of Israel will receive the promises. Those who try to attain life through following Torah only stumble if they fail to apply faith in Yeshua. Sha'ul's desire is for them to turn to Messiah Yeshua.

Adonai will never abandon His people Israel because of His promises and covenants outlined in Scripture. Romans 9:23 speaks of those who He has prepared in advance for glory. In His mercy Adonai chose the Jewish people to show forth His glory to the nations so they could also be brought to the saving knowledge of Messiah.

In 9:33 Sha'ul quotes from the book of Isaiah 28:16 which mentions the laying of a firm foundation stone in Tziyon. Psalm 118:22 says the rock the builders rejected has become the corner stone. Yeshua is the cornerstone who was rejected. Cornerstones have been used in buildings for thousands of years. The stone was the first to be squarely set in place as the alignment of a building relied on it. We see in Ephesians 2:19-22 that believers, Jew and Gentile, are a body of people built on the foundation of the emissaries and prophets as a spiritual dwelling place for Adonai. The cornerstone of the building is Yeshua. In union with Him, all things are held together.

(To be continued in the next newsletter).

“Jerusalem” Art work by Roni Mechanic.

Elisheva and Roni Mechanic are thought leaders in art in the Messianic movement. Their recent book is a significant contribution to defining Messianic art as a genre in its own right. It is an excellent reference for artists as well as a great gift idea. Order from Amazon: https://www.amazon.com.au/Messianic-Jewish-Art-New-Perspective/dp/B0BK7YCS7D

Comment: We live in a time when Jerusalem has become an enormous centre of global contention. The implied question in this conflict is “Who owns Jerusalem?” Almost a year ago I walked around the walls of the old city which has many memorials to the foreign nations that have occupied the city. Yet we know from scripture that the destiny of Jerusalem will not be in the hands of an alien power but the dwelling of the living God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. DI.

Isaiah 62: 1-4a

For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem’s sake I will not remain quiet,
till her vindication shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch.
2 The nations will see your vindication, and all kings your glory;
you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will bestow.
3 You will be a crown of splendour in the Lord’s hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God.
4 No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate.

Planned MJAA Conference 2024

We are planning the 2024 Messianic Jewish Alliance of Australia conference which will be held in Melbourne on Saturday 2 Nov.

The conference will include the launch of Australia's newest Messianic Congegation, Tikvat Shalom, based in Melbourne.

Please mark this date and plan to attend in person or online. We are planning:

- teaching
- fellowship
- prayer and intercession for Israel
- worship
- book launches
- Israeli dance
- Art and Israeli dance workshop electives.

Tikvat Shalom Messianic Fellowship Melbourne

TIKVAT SHALOM

Tikvat Shalom, the new Melbourne-based congregation, is continuing to grow. We meet fortnightly for a Havdalah service, as well as hosting larger events for Passover and other festivals. The service includes a light meal and fellowship, followed by worship, liturgy and Torah teaching. The service is streamed via Zoom, so please let us know if you'd like to log in for a time of fellowship. Email:

ashley.crane@gmail.com

MJAA Academy

We are making progress towards launching the MJAA Academy, which will be a web portal with online teaching and training on Messianic topics of interest. More information to follow as we get closer to launch.

Weekly Prayer Meetings Tuesdays @5.15pm (AEST)

Our weekly online prayer and fellowship meeting continues to thrive and we have been blessed to meet with people from across Australia, Thailand, New Zealand, UK, Israel and Ghana to pray and intercede for Israel and for the needs and growth of the MJAA in Australia.

We have expanded this time of fellowship and prayer to include a 15 minute Torah study from 5.15-5.30pm led by Dr Ashley Crane. We have been blessed by Ashley's practical applications of Torah teachings to our lives as Messianic believers in Yeshua. Please invite a friend, especially those who may be in areas far from a Messianic community.

Donate to the MJAA

Thank you to all of you who support the work of the MJAA. We are a volunteer organisation and rely on membership fees and donations to grow. Will you consider supporting the MJAA so we may expand our ministry? You can donate via our website at:

mjaa.org.au/payments

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