

'89  
WARDELL

THE JOYS AND SORROWS OF A MISSIONARY TO THE JEWS

by Ruth Wardell

Presented at the  
North American Lausanne  
Consultation on Jewish Evangelism  
April 4-5, 1989

## FOREWORD

The author of this paper, Ruth Wardell, missionary to the Jewish people for forty-two years, with the A B M J/Chosen People Ministries, was brought up in a minister's home in Ontario, Canada. God called Ruth to be a missionary when she was twelve years old. To help reach her goal Ruth attended the London Bible College, in London, Ontario. Several months after graduation, the Lord in a wonderful way gave her a call into Jewish Evangelism through Matthew 10:5-6 where it says:

"Go not into the way of the Gentiles,  
...but go rather to the lost sheep of  
the house of Israel."

Ruth spent the next twenty-seven years proclaiming the Gospel to children and youth in New York City. She then transferred to California where she shared Jesus with both children and adults for fifteen years. Since then she has enjoyed the freedom of retirement while continuing to work as a volunteer.

## CONTENTS

Introduction

One of my greatest sorrows

One of my greatest joys

Participating missionaries sorrows and joys

A fantastic joy

Personal joys and sorrows

Spiritual joys and sorrows

People-oriented joys and sorrows

Job-related joys and sorrows

Methodologies

Conclusion

## THE JOYS AND SORROWS OF A MISSIONARY TO THE JEWS

It is a privilege for me to share with you some of the JOYS and SORROWS of a missionary to the Jews. The first JOY I had was being called into Jewish work. I believe for a Gentile the highest calling that God could give is to take the gospel of the Jewish Messiah to God's chosen people. What a JOY!!! Then, I had the JOY of seeing the Bible through Jewish eyes, and learning their customs and traditions. What can compare to the joy of learning to eat bagels and cream cheese, and chicken soup? How can you express the pure delight of a Passover Seder, or the stimulating experiences of Sukkot? But above all, I had the real JOY of knowing and loving the Jewish people. This the Lord allowed me to do for forty-two years. I count each year as a real blessing from God Himself.

It will be very hard in the short time we have together to share the JOYS of many years of serving the Lord let alone adding a few SORROWS. However, this paper is presented not only with my views of JOYS and SORROWS, but also the JOYS and SORROWS of several missionaries from around the U S A and abroad who have participated with their ideas and insights.

## ONE OF MY GREATEST SORROWS

Please consider with me one of my greatest SORROWS. In 1946 as I began my work the war had not long been over - 6,000,000 Jewish people had been slaughtered in Europe, and now many refugees were coming to America. I was twenty-two years old from a very conservative background, and suddenly

I was faced with the tremendous problem of trying to communicate with these people who had come out of concentration camps. Their stories of terrible persecution, the gaunt expression and deep sadness etched into their faces showed something of the lives that they had been forced to live. At that time I was living in a small room in a rooming house, and down the hall from me lived a Jewish couple who had come from a camp in Germany. They had lost everything including their entire families. They had many scars all over their bodies where they had been burned with cigarettes, and skin had been torn off because they had to stand out in freezing weather for hours at a time. Many nights when I returned home their door was open, and they would share their experiences with me. Their stories, and the memories of the many others that I met, devastated me. I remember being literally bowed down with SORROWS to see the people that I had come to serve and share the love of God with, so completely destroyed.

I was unable to absorb all that I heard and saw. Their SORROWS became my sorrows - it was an unquenchable grief that is with me to this day.

#### ONE OF MY GREATEST JOYS

If that was one of my greatest SORROWS, one of my greatest JOYS has been the same as John when he said in 3 John 4:

"I have no greater JOY than to hear my children walk in truth."

John was about ninety years old when he penned those words, and although I am not quite 90 years old yet, I can

look back through many of years of service for the Lord and can say that my greatest JOY is in knowing that those I shared with over the years are still walking "in truth."

As I look at Arnold Fruchtenbaum here today, it gives me great JOY to know that he is still walking "in truth." I had the privilege of seeing Arnold accept the Lord in a little mission station in East New York many years ago. Not only is Arnold walking "in truth" but he is continuing to share truth to thousands around the world.

Besides Arnold, however, there are many others whom I have seen come to know the Lord. Many of these live in New York. Two years ago we held a reunion with a group of young people with whom I used to work. Over 50 participated and some unfortunately could not come, because they had moved out of the city, yet all of them were still walking "in truth."

My continuing JOY is knowing that even as I shared with them they are now reaching out to others and accomplishing the Lord's work. I feel privileged to receive such abundant JOY. For me it has been like casting a pebble in the midst of still waters and watching the ripples reaching further and further out into the water.

Many missionaries wrote to me concerning their JOYS and SORROWS. Some of their greatest sorrows are:

- "people are dying without salvation"
- "the death of my father, grandfather, and father-in-law, all of whom I cared for, and none who accepted Yeshua"
- "a doctor who studied the book of John faithfully stated he believed the book, but would like to go all the way b<sup>y</sup> he couldn't or wouldn't because he would lose his business, and family. The cost was too great for him."

- "the rejection of my sister and her family of my calling. The fact that in their eyes I have deserted my Jewish family."
- "to see people reject the Lord."
- "to see a young Jewish girl come to faith in Jesus, go forward with great joy and blessing and with an effective witness for a period of time - about a year. Then her mother died suddenly. Taking advantage of his daughter at this vulnerable time in her life, the father captured her, using anti-missionary tactics, he lured her into denouncing her faith. He had her "locked up" from any contact with Christianity. My heart aches for her."

Besides SORROWS, the missionaries also gave their views concerning their greatest JOYS:

- "the day I realized Jesus was my Lord and Savior"
- "introducing people to Jesus Christ and seeing them respond sometimes years later, but with a changed life."
- "leading the president of a synagogue to salvation"
- "to see my mother to whom I had witnessed to for over thirty years finally accepting that Jesus died for her so God might forgive her sins. She was 93 years old."

#### A FANTASTIC JOY

Having introduced this paper with some of the greatest JOYS and SORROWS I would like to tell you of a FANTASTIC JOY because of the many years that the Lord has given me to serve Him. If you will come back with me into the 40's, 50's and early 60's, you would find a different picture of Jewish missions than we have today. There seemed to be a drought. Not too many Jewish people were coming to know the Messiah. I can remember the late Dr. Fuchs (President of the Chosen People Ministries) saying that at one time he knew most of the Hebrew Christians in this country. During this time, as far as I know, the Chosen People Ministries had the only youth group in the country that met for weekly Bible study. It was called the Messianic Youth Fellowship.

Arnold helped to edit their paper which was published once a month. We used to speak in churches every other Sunday evening, and it was something new for Christians in churches to see 8 or 9 young Hebrew Christians giving their testimonies.

And then came the time of revival among the young people of the land. I remember when it was just beginning. I had a retreat with Joe Finklestein from Philadelphia. We had about 60 young people there - around 30 from each group. Many of these new believers in Philadelphia were just coming off the drug scene, and it was rather a strange mixture of people since the young people from the Chosen People Ministries had known the Lord for some time. I think I would be right in saying that this was one of the largest groups of young people that had met together in the U. S. A. for a long time.

Thank God - thousands have been added to these small numbers. What a JOY it is to see so many young people gathering together to serve the Lord and learn His truth. Think of:

- The Young Messianic Alliance Confernce with over 1,000 a year in attendance.

- The three Ingatherings of Jews for Jesus each year with nearly 1,000

- The two Simcha conferences of the Chosen People Ministries of nearly 500 people

- The many new congregations being established in the U S A and Canada.

-- The great group of new young Jewish missionaries in Jews for Jesus, Chosen People Ministries, Ariel Ministries and many other organizations.

All of the above were not around in the early part of my ministry. What a FANTASTIC JOY to have lived through these exciting years of growth from just a few to thousands. My heart shouts a great AMEN !!! and HALLELUJAH !!!

The beginning of the above JOY really started for me when I attended what was called "Explo 72" in Dallas, Texas. The occasion was sponsored by Campus Crusade for Christ. We had a booth at the conference, and we had made buttons for the Gentiles which said, "I am a Gentile for Jesus." and buttons for the Jewish people which said, "I am a Jew for Jesus." As we stood at the booth giving out pins to those who passed by, it was not long before we had distributed our 500 buttons to new young Jewish believers. I had been working in Jewish missions for over 20 years, and had seen many people come to know Jesus, but nothing like what we were seeing at this gathering. How many of the 85,000 young people who attended were Jewish I do not know, but to be a part of this conference, and see all these new Hebrew Christians was a very special, precious JOY to me.

#### PERSONAL JOYS

There are many personal joys that come to missionaries that work among the Jewish people. Some of my joys are:

- travelling to many parts of the world that you would ordinarily not see
- the warmth of meeting and making new friends
- being able to use your creativity in your work
- having lots of hugs and kisses
- sharing your home with fellow missionaries and friends from around the world.



- Getting to know and have fellowship with many of the heads of missions from years ago i.e. Dr. Joseph Hoffman Cohen, Moses Gitlin, Arthur Glass, Fred Kendal, Henry Einspruch, Victor Buksbazen

The missionary friends also communicated their personal JOYS that they had experienced The JOY of:

- "knowing that my sons have the ministry and the congregation as their model."
- "being enriched by learning Jewish tradition and culture."
- "finding a focus for my life"
- "meeting a Jewish believer who became my husband. A super Joy!!"
- "working together with my husband"

#### PERSONAL SORROWS

I do not think that there are any missionaries to the Jews who have not been struck with personal SORROWS. My

sorrows are:

- not having enough time to spend with the family
- not having enough time to communicate with unsaved relatives
- seeing many missionaries plagued with ill health - some even having to retire from the ministry.

The missionary friends shared the SORROWS of:

- "relatives who have no respect for my chosen profession"
- "being so involved in mission work that I missed a lot of life's activities with family and friends."
- "experiencing a lot of loneliness - some of it due to the fact that my life is very different than that of my peers. Not enough physical and emotional energy to invest in relationships."
- "alienation from my immediate family since they are Jewish"

#### SPIRITUAL JOYS

I believe perhaps the greatest JOY spiritually to me is knowing that I am doing the will of God. If I can know at the end of the day that the Lord was pleased with what had been done during the day, I am satisfied, and content.

Additional spiritual joys are:

- teaching the Word of God
- discovering new Biblical truths while preparing lessons
- having the Holy Spirit to lead, guide, and share in my life.
- answered prayer

Additional experiences of spiritual joy from other missionaries are:

- "seeing God's leading in contacting unsaved people"
- "the peace of knowing I am in the center of God's will for my life"
- "having extra motivation for deep Bible study"
- "His comfort, encouragement and strength through His Word"
- "I have grown much closer to the Lord. You are forced to keep growing in order to have the desire to share with others."

In summing up the personal and spiritual JOYS, I would like to quote from my friend and colleague Eleanor Bullock whom I worked with in New York for 27 years. She writes:

"The personal and spiritual joys combined brought the greatest fulfillment of personal worth. It was the realization of a goal set very early in life. The joy of giving the Gospel back to Jews, holds a dimension not to be compared. The very real fulfillment of God's promise of Ps. 122:6 and Gen. 12:3 brings a source of joy equal to none."

#### SPIRITUAL GROWTH FROM SORROWS

In Philippians 3:10 we read:

"That I may know Him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death."

Through suffering we can grow to know Jesus. In this aspect, suffering becomes a blessing. We are also blessed when men "revile and persecute us." Since all of us have had a lot of suffering and much persecution, we are blessed. The missionaries expressed their blessings:

- "helped me to know the Sovereignty of God as the ultimate force knowing that God is in control and aware of the trials"
- "served as a catalyst for keeping me dependent on Him"
- "I have grown closer to the Lord through my sorrows. Loneliness causes me to turn to Him and seek Him in prayer."
- "through my growth, I understand others who hurt and am able to minister more effectively."

A good illustration of a spiritual growth from sorrows was submitted by Madeline Goldberg (wife of Dr. Daniel Goldberg, who is the western regional director of Chosen People Ministries)'

"Soon after I developed a friendship with a certain Jewish lady, it was obvious that she was seeking answers. She asked the kind of questions that brought her to find the answer by receiving Jesus. How I rejoiced in her profession of faith.

But a few weeks later I discovered she would not make time in her scheduling to come to any Bible study or worship service, not even allowing time for me to teach her the Bible privately except for two lessons. Nevertheless she would often phone me asking for prayer for her needs, such as finances, health, etc. Even though she assured me she was trusting Messiah, why would she not love Him enough to desire to learn His word? This was a great sorrow to me.

After weeks of prayer for her, especially in the area of priorities, I realized God was saying, "In reality her spiritual growth is My work, not yours, commit her to my care." This truth God was teaching me became an enriching experience - to take my hands off the problem and trust God completely, even if He wanted to use another person or persons, I must leave that to God's discretion and when I did, He gave me great peace."

#### PEOPLE-ORIENTED JOYS

In this category, our joys are complete. The goals of seeing Jewish people come to know the Lord and grow in their faith brings a JOY beyond what we could ask or think. It is

a joy that explodes my whole being. I have already shared in this paper some of my joys seeing young people who have walked "in truth." I would like to share some of the JOYS of the missionaries:

- "the blessedness of counseling young-in-the-faith Jewish believers and seeing them established and growing"
- "there is no greater joy than seeing and sharing the tears of joy that fill the eyes of a new believer as he or she prays the first time to accept the Lord."
- "this joy is indescribable. Being instrumental in people's lives and seeing the Lord change them from:  
                                   Atheist to believing  
                                   Orthodox to personal faith in Christ  
                                   Hopeless to trusting  
                                   Discouraged to confident  
                                   Sinner to saint"
- "the greatest joy is seeing a Jewish person accept the Lord. It gives me great satisfaction in knowing that I am fulfilling the great commission of bringing the gospel to the lost. I have the joy of being able to trust God and grow in faith - even when it seems that nothing would come of our efforts. In particular it is a joy to<sup>see</sup> a husband and wife united spiritually."

#### PEOPLE-ORIENTED SORROWS

Because one of our greatest JOYS is seeing people grow in the Lord, one of the greatest SORROWS is seeing them go away from the Lord, into the ways of the world, often with a bitter spirit.

Being thwarted in our attempt to reach people who consider that we as Christians have nothing better to offer them, as they see the names of well-known and so-called Christians willfully sinning against God - this can lead to a tremendous sorrow when we are trying to witness to Jewish people.

The missionaries were very much perturbed in this area as they write of their sorrows:

- "definitely the people who left the Lord."
- "seeing people disregard counseling and warning and go into roles of life where the pull of the world was too great - the end, a carnal life with no testimony
- "there have been plenty of people who have gone away from the Lord. These have been the cause of much heartbreak on my part, and also soul searching."
- "I have had to pray much for the people who left the Lord. Each one becomes so personal to me."

#### JOB-RELATED JOYS

I have had the JOY of working together with several teams of missionaries - each of us doing our own work, but coming together on special projects such as camping, retreats, Passovers, etc. It was encouraging to pray and work, and see the Lord accomplish many things through these concerted efforts. In the Los Angeles area, there were seven of us who worked and prayed together for many years - this was a rich, and joyful time of ministry.

When I worked with the children and youth in New York, the Chosen People Ministries gave me freedom to use my own initiative and creativity in planning for weekly classes, retreats, camping programs etc. This gave me much joy as I could see so many things accomplished in what the Lord had given me to do.

Working within an organization gives a sense of "family" - especially for those of us who are single. The organization also provides a sense of security - gives you a feeling of belonging. The Chosen People Ministries is nearly 100 years old, and I often praise the Lord for the way He has provided the funds for the ongoing of the

ministry for so many years. Also, since the mission is old, it is encouraging to know how the Lord has kept it steadfast in holding true to the principles of the Word of God, and having a continuing desire to see Jewish people come to know the Lord.

Organizational encouragement over the years was a real incentive to carry on my ministry. One of the loveliest things the mission did for me was, after 25 years of service, to send my colleague Eleanor Bullock, and myself on a trip to Israel. Arnold was in Israel at the time, and he graciously took us around and showed us the land. We had a wonderful time, and it really lifted our spirits.

The following is a list of what the Lord did in the job-related joys of some of the other missionaries:

- "It is a joy when others trust you to do the work, and encourage you in what you are doing."
- "being part of an organization with solid roots gave a sense of confidence and security."
- "it was fun to work together with our colleagues in planning conferences, strategies, and enlarged outreaches"
- "prayer times were especially significant."
- "when people are working together there is real satisfaction in knowing we are doing what God wants."
- "A closely knit "family" relationship develops from working with other missionaries who have the same goals, and provides spiritual and emotional support."
- "having a net-work of friends around the world."

#### JOB-RELATED SORROWS

To me, this is the most difficult aspect of the paper to think through, and write about. How do we share our SORROWS? What do we say, and what do we leave out? I feel strongly that in the life of a missionary, the JOYS far outweigh the SORROWS, and the times we are in SORROWS are

oftentimes for us to learn a great deal about the grace of God which sustains us, and teaches us. SORROWS, even of the job-related kind, turn to JOYS as we see the Lord undertake for us. Through these, the Holy Spirit brings us into a deeper relationship with Jesus. I have been through the SORROWS of being hurt, depressed, bitter, and cynical. I am not happy for the times I have walked in SORROWS, or caused other people to have SORROWS, or made my own SORROWS. But, I thank the Lord He did heal the hurts, lifted the depressions, took away the bitternesses, and filled me with the JOY that He alone can give in the time of trouble.

SORROWS do exist, not just in Jewish missions, but also in missions all over the world. I will try to address the issues as I have come to know them through the interaction of many people in a variety of Jewish missions. Some of the job-related SORROWS are;

- sometimes a lack of communication with heads of missions and their missionaries
- stress from overwork, or not enough work
- lack of training - which was especially evident when I began my missionary endeavors. The policy was a sort of "sink" or "swim" concept. The problem was that many "sank."
- heavy work schedules that pre-empted personal needs
- missionaries who are often only interested in their people, their area, and their accomplishments, but remain uninterested in fellow-missionary endeavors.
- placing people in positions where they were not able to use their gifts, talents, or training.
- hurts in missionaries lives due to mismanagement, politics, and competition.
- lack of goals in missionaries lives, and lack of follow through and fulfillment of goals.
- sometimes the attitude of younger workers towards older workers
- people being hurt in one organization going on to hurt others in another organization
- changes in methodologies and philosophies of work which sometimes hampered productive ministry.
- lack of concern for retirees and their needs

Many of these SORROWS were echoed in the missionaries reports:

- "when there is competition or when others feel they have to only present a perfect image and they refuse to let down their guard and be real."
- "the pain and sorrow of not being able to get close to some of the younger missionaries"
- "sometimes there was stress, jealousy and strife - that was a sorrow"
- "lack of time to have personal fellowship with the missionaries"
- "not enough personal concern and interest in the work and life of the missionary. Seemingly too busy with administrative detail. We never really had enough money to live comfortably."
- "that<sup>w</sup>e were not trained well enough to handle many situations we were given to direct."
- "not having consistent-decision making"
- "sometimes you feel you are forgotten in the organizational structure. In our group there were so many changes of policy often we never knew where we stood."
- "When I have observed a Jewish mission organization displaying an attitude of disdain and condemnation toward other Jewish mission organizations, I have felt distressed. This non-Biblical attitude gives me sorrow of heart. We don't have to agree with the methodology of every other mission but so long as they adhere to sound Bible doctrine and faithfully make Messiah known to the Jewish people, we can pray for them and with them for God's blessing.

Another sorrow I have experienced is when administrators and/or persons in places of leadership have hired and placed workers in positions for which they were not sufficiently trained, experienced or mature. Although these workers may do the best they know, yet because of time spent in "trial and error" the work suffers from making mistakes rather than progresses as it should. The wisdom of more mature, experienced workers is ignored. This is a sad mistake.

Avi Snyder, director of Jews for Jesus in Los Angeles shares some thoughts with us:

"Very simply, I would have to say that the issue which causes me the greatest sorrow is the fact that I feel at times as though I'm fighting a two-front war. Let me explain. I expect (as do we all) opposition from both Jewish and non-Jewish believers. What hurts is the opposition we give ourselves, and it seems to come in two forms. First, there is the opposition from co-workers, whether in our own ministry or in other ministries.



How sad it is that we feel we must compete. How sad it is that we forget too easily the crucial fact that we are in the same work. Secondly, we encounter opposition from brothers and sisters in the Lord who do not understand why we must reach out to the Jewish people. Which one of us hasn't heard the statement, "Why do you have to make waves? Why can't you just leave well enough alone?"

It is this lack of understanding and mutual support which has caused me the greatest sorrow in my work as a missionary to the Jewish people. And I have to confess that I am as guilty as anyone else of failing to uphold, rejoice with, and cry for my brothers and sisters who are engaged in the same pursuit, whether it's through the auspices of the Jews for Jesus or any other ministry reaching out to our people. May God's spirit sufficiently convict us so we see our failure to uphold one another as the sin that it is."

#### METHODOLOGIES

There have been great changes in methodologies in the last 42 years. For instance, when I started with the Chosen People Ministries there wasn't a Jewish song in our song books. The closest we came to such a song was, "O Zion Haste," or "The God of Abraham Praise." The Yiddish songs we sang were translations of hymns that had been put into a song book by the late Henry Einspruch. Besides, the most attended meeting of the year was not Passover, or Rosh Hashana, but Christmas, where we sang "Silent Night" and "O Come All Ye Faithful." These programs were geared to share the prophecies of the birth of the Messiah. The children were dressed up like shepherds and angels as we shared the Messiah's birth together. As we gave out the message that the Messiah had come, the meetings were not only well attended, but also many Jewish people responded and accepted Jesus through this experience.

The main truths that the people heard when they came to classes were focused around Messianic prophecies, types of

Jesus in the Scriptures, and teachings concerning how Jesus fulfilled the holydays.

These methodologies seem a bit strange in this day and age, but we know that God uses different methods at different times to bring people to Himself.

So, over a lifetime I have seen the pendulum swing from the above view of sharing Jesus, to the new methodologies of today.

The older concepts were used of God for that particular time, but for today, they would leave something to be desired. Jewish people in that time did not feel the loss of identity the same as the children in following generations, who feel it is vital to maintain their Jewish heritage and traditions. Thus, I am JOYful that there has been a change in methods to incorporate these aspects.

The SORROW I have had is in seeing the confusion that has come in the over-all picture of Jewish Evangelism today. I believe that conferences like the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism, and the groups that have formed among the Messianic Congregations, will help to iron out the problems that have stemmed from these new methods.

### CONCLUSION

My prayer is that we will all be able to understand our JOYS and SORROWS more completely so that we can be better servants of the Lord, and His work will be accomplished through each one of us.

I deem it a privilege to have worked with Dr. Joseph Hoffman Cohen, the son of the founder of the Chosen People Ministries, and also with Dr. Daniel Fuchs, who just recently went on to be with the Lord. They were powerful men of God, and I thank God for their prayerful leadership.

I would also like to gratefully acknowledge those missionaries who took the time to participate in this paper with me.

#### Participating Missionaries -

Baruch, Betty - Victoria, Australia  
 Bond, Lyn R. - Jews for Jesus, Los Angeles CA  
 Bullock, Eleanor - Chosen People Ministries, Harrisburg, PA  
 Cham, Sarah - Christian Witness to Israel, Middlesex, Eng.  
 Goldberg, Madeline - Chosen People Ministries, Los Angeles  
 Golstein, Efraim - Jews for Jesus, San Francisco, CA  
 Ennis, Jo - Chosen People Ministries W. Vir.  
 Freeman, Edith and Bill - Chosen People Ministries CA  
 Kametsky, Ellen - Jews for Jesus, Los Angeles CA  
 Kohut, Milt - Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, Los Angeles  
 Miller, Robert & Althea - Chosen People Ministries, Ca  
 Rubin, Barry - Lederer Foundation, Baltimore, MD  
 Reeves, Ken - Chosen People Ministries, Sun Valley CA  
 Silverman, Howard - Shepherd of Israel Congregation CA  
 Synder, Avi - Jews for Jesus, Los Angeles CA  
 Stern, Sid - Chosen People Ministries, South Bay Area CA  
 Volman, Ben - Olive Tree Congregation, Toronto, Ont. Canada