



«For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost» (Luke 19:10)

MINISTRY UPDATE: JANUARY 2024

Dear Ministry Partners,

Warmest greetings to you all! Here are our most recent news and prayer requests.

Ashkelon Ministry – the “Day After”

These days Israeli politicians, among other things, wrestle with the question of the “day after the war” – how it is going to look like and what decisions should be made about it. In a similar way, we too are thinking about the “day after,” which in the case of our war relief efforts in Ashkelon, has already arrived. The war continues, but the rocket attacks on the city have become very rare, and Ashkelon is returning to a more or less normal life. What should we do next then?

Thanks to God and to your donations, during these three months we have been able to help a lot of people (about 800 families) and to build close relationships with them. On the one hand, we could finish the project now and say good-bye to everyone, but on the other hand, we value these connections and do not want to lose them. Besides, most of these people are immigrants, single mothers, the elderly and the disabled who live below the poverty line and, sadly, in the near future their financial situation is about to get worse, since because of the war we are expecting the prices and taxes to keep rising.

Therefore, we have decided that in 2024 we will be turning our short-term war relief initiative into an **ongoing humanitarian project**. This work is not cheap and requires a lot of effort, but it also has many advantages. For example, when you give someone a tract on the street, there is very little chance that you will ever meet this person again. And here we have a large group of people we can visit on a regular basis, bring them food and keep sharing the Gospel with them. And we do believe this work has a beautiful potential. In **Ofakim** – another nearby city where we have been doing food distributions – a weekly **Bible study group** has already been created. Please pray for all the people we are in touch with both in Ashkelon and Ofakim.

Two Brothers, Different Reactions

Moshe* and **Admil** are two brothers who come to eat to **Aviv Center**. Both were born to an Arab father, but their mothers were from different backgrounds. Moshe's mother was Jewish, while Admil's mother was Arab. Both brothers found themselves homeless and struggling to survive on the streets of Tel Aviv. They had no one to turn to and often went hungry. One evening after we had made all



the food preparations, – tells one of our employees, Shlomo, – we went out to share the Good News on the streets, and that was when we met Admil for the first time. With him was his brother Moshe*, a religious Jew, who kept trying to stop us from talking to Admil. Admil shared with me that he felt mentally ill. Inside his head there was a voice that kept telling him to commit suicide. I talked to him about Jesus and the power of His name. Moti, one of the volunteers who went out with us, joined the conversation talking about how Jesus is the only way to God. Admil listened carefully. Moshe*, on the other hand, who was raised with a strong Jewish identity,



was skeptical about any other religious beliefs and strongly objected to the idea of Jesus being the Messiah.

After we had left the place, Admil ran after us so excited and told us that he had had a revelation and felt like a blind man suddenly seeing. He said he understood that we were offering him the only good way that existed and added that he wanted to learn more about Jesus.” Please pray for the salvation of both brothers!

Two Graduations from the Rehab

We praise the Lord that one of our rehabilitants, **Alexei**, has just finished the program successfully, left the Rehab Center to live independently and even restored a good relationship with his wife. He keeps attending the Shabbat services of our congregation. Please pray that he keeps making good progress and grows spiritually.

Also pray for another rehabilitant, **Alexander**, who came to us four months ago. He has gotten better, has found a job and wants to rent an apartment and leave the rehab center. We worry about him, since after only four months in rehab, it will be a real challenge for Alexander to remain sober and strong. On the bright side, he says he wants to keep attending our church and rehab meetings, so we will be able to keep in touch with him.

Also please keep praying for **Wilhelm**, the manager of our rehab. He is its only teacher and worker and we see he needs a helper (or even helpers) very much.

Two Ladies Who Heard the Good News



Volunteers brought Christmas gifts to the Shelter

Some time ago we received a call from the social worker of **Rafia***, a lady who lived in our **Women’s Shelter** in 2022 and then moved out when she was ready to live independently. The social worker said that Rafia* needed a shelter again and that she asked for us specifically. We took her in and saw that, sadly, her condition (especially emotional and psychological) has worsened since we saw her last. We surrounded Rafia* with love and care and started helping her. Sadly, after a month and half, Rafia*, having thanked us for our help, decided to leave the Shelter again. She is an Arab Muslim lady, very reserved, and we worry for her future. Please keep praying for her. She heard the Gospel and we hope the Lord will keep working in her heart wherever she is.

In December we got another call from social services – this time it was about a new lady, **Edith***, who had been living on the streets of Beersheva for a week already. We took her into the Shelter, even though we had not been provided with much additional information about her. Several days later we realized Edith* had serious psychiatric issues and we would not be able to provide her with the professional help she needed, so we helped her move to another place that would answer her condition better. Still, we are glad we could get to know her and share the Gospel with her, and we ask you to pray for her salvation and healing.

*Thank you very much for all your prayers and care!
Every blessing to you all,
Dou and Olga Bikas*

