



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

MINISTRY UPDATE: APRIL 2024

Dear Ministry Partners,

This is a story about one of Aviv Center visitors - as told by Igal, a volunteer team leader and mentor at a rehab center in Netanya.

I met **Nicolas*** for the first time in Aviv Center about a year and a half ago. He came up to me and asked how much a meal would cost him. I said it was free, and that he could eat as much as he wanted. While he was eating, I sat next to him and asked how his day was going. Nicolas* said it was not so good, because he was a drug addict and had just found himself living in the street. I said that I was an addict too, but many years ago a well-known Person found me and delivered me from the life of crime and drugs. When Nicolas* heard the name “Jesus”, he immediately told me that he was Jewish, and that Jesus was only for Christians. So, I told him that Jesus Himself was Jewish and showed him His lineage in the Gospel of Matthew. Before Nicolas* left, I asked if I could pray for him, and he agreed.



Illustration photo from Aviv Center

Then I did not see him for a long time, until six months ago he suddenly showed up in Aviv Center. He was very happy to see me and said he had thought a lot about our conversation. I asked: “What do you think about Jesus now?” “He was a good person who helped people,” he replied. I asked him: “Where have you been all this time?” Nicolas* said that he used to work at a warehouse, slept there, and spent all his wages on drugs and alcohol, but then he got fired from his job and returned to the streets. I told him about our rehabilitation centers and the chance to get to know God and to receive His peace and true freedom from addiction. Nicolas* said he wasn't ready to go yet, but he would think about it.

He kept coming to Aviv Center to eat, and we would talk a lot about life and about God. Each time I would pray for him at the end of our conversation, and soon I noticed that he was slowly opening his heart towards the Lord.

Then about two months ago, Nicolas* called me and asked if he could come to a rehabilitation center and try to change his life. I went to pick him up from Tel Aviv. While he was in our rehab center in Netanya, we studied the Bible a lot and talked about God, sin, atonement, and why we needed Jesus in our lives. Nicolas* said he was divorced and had a teenaged girl. He is in his late thirties, a renovation contractor. During COVID-19, he lost his job and his team. He would sit at home smoking and drinking alcohol, until one day his wife told him she wanted a divorce and kicked him out of the house. In an instant, he lost everything and started abusing heavy drugs as a result. While Nicolas* was in the rehab, I saw how God's Word worked in his heart. He even started smiling again.

Then one day I held a Bible study in the rehab and we read how Jesus healed ten lepers. After the study, Nicolas* came up to me and said he felt just like those lepers - that Jesus touched him and cleansed his life of everything destructive. Then he asked to pray the sinner's prayer with me. We prayed and Nicolas* became our brother in Christ! Please pray for him.

Food distribution and a new home group

This photo shows preparations for food distribution in Ofakim. This city is situated further from Gaza than Ashkelon, but it is still very close. It suffered from rocket attacks during the war, and on the first day, Oct 7th, was invaded by Hamas terrorists who killed 47 people there. One day Eduard's team from Ashkelon, on their way home, went through Ofakim, distributed food packages to several families they knew in the city and shared the Gospel with them. A connection was established, and our team kept visiting and supporting these and other families in the city. After some time, praise the Lord, a small home group was born there: 10-12 people who gather twice a week for Bible studies. Please pray for these new brothers and sisters, for their leaders Gennady and Ivan, and for the Ofakim home group to grow!



Ministry vehicle and new church members

We are very grateful to all of you who sent donations for our ministry vehicle! We have gathered the sum that was needed and are making the purchase this month! Interestingly, after the accident, while Wilhelm and I were waiting in the office of the insurance company for a temporary substitute car, a guy who overheard our conversation and understood that we were believers came up to us and started asking questions. It turned out that Shalom* and his family were believers too, but could not find a church for a very long time. Wilhelm invited him to attend the services of our "Desert Flowers" congregation, and the family joined us the following Shabbat! The Lord is good!

Women's Shelter



Meal in the Shelter

We praise the Lord for **Betty*** who has been making great progress lately. She has become more stable physically and emotionally, attends Shabbat services and messianic youth meetings regularly and is also taking professional courses once a week in another city. Please keep praying for her. We also praise God for **Martha*** who has recently graduated from the Shelter successfully and moved to live independently in a social apartment. She is doing very well physically and spiritually and stays in touch.

Maya*, the lady who stayed in our Shelter for a year and a half, has moved out too, having received assistance from the social services for rent. She had serious debts from her past, but they have just been dropped miraculously, so she has got a real opportunity for a clean start. We would be very happy for her, but sadly, we see that Maya* still struggles with alcohol addiction and is not fully ready for independent life. She also has a serious health problem that requires brain surgery. Please keep praying for Maya*!

Thank you for your prayers and feel free to share your prayers requests too anytime!

Dov & Olga Bikas and Aviv Ministry Team

For more information about our ministry and for donations please visit our website: www.avivministry.com



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