



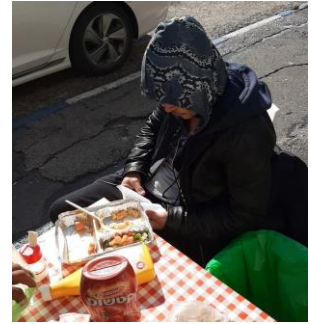
**AVIV MINISTRY – for Victims of Addictions and Sexual Abuse
THE NEGEV MINISTRY – Evangelization and Church Planting**

MINISTRY UPDATE: JUNE 2021

Tel Aviv Outreach

Dear Praying Friends,

Praise the Lord, the war with Hamas is over (for now) and life is back to normal! Also, these days **almost all Coronavirus restrictions are being lifted**, so very soon we should be able to let people inside Aviv Center – something we could not and really missed to do for over a year! We are happy that now we will have more opportunities for closer relationship and quieter conversations with our visitors. We also praise the Lord that in May **two of our visitors (L. and N.) decided to repent** and invite the Lord into their lives! Please pray for them.



Visitor of Aviv Center reading New Testament

Beersheva rehab center

We praise the Lord for our rehabilitants



Bible study in the rehab. Wilhelm first on the right, S. next to him, K. at the head of the table.

S. and K. who have just made a serious decision to follow the Lord! Remember we wrote to you about S. some time ago and asked to pray for his salvation? He was a homeless alcoholic when we took him from the streets in a terrible condition in the middle of last year. Since then he has made a beautiful progress, though not without setbacks, and last week he said he had a strong desire to repent and invite the Lord into his life! He was not able to explain this desire even to himself, since all his life he had been an atheist and a “rationalist”, as he put it, but he saw that during his stay in the rehab his character started changing for the better, and he realized it was not his but God’s doing. So we sat together and prayed a sinner’s prayer, and we ask you to keep praying for S. and for K. – for their growth and walk with the Lord.

Women’s Shelter

The work in the Women’s Shelter is very challenging, but rewarding! Some time ago we have been given a beautiful encouragement in a couple of situations.

One of our residents, L., had a visit from her social worker who was positively impressed by her wellbeing and the way she is taking care of her baby, so she even encouraged her: **“Stay here, this home does you good”** – exactly when L. had certain thoughts about leaving the Shelter. If everything goes well, in the near future the social services may decide to give L. back one of her older children, who is currently living in a foster home, instead of sending him to a boarding school. (Please pray that any decisions are made correctly and according to God’s will.)

Another encouraging event happened several weeks ago. A. who lives in our Shelter with a baby girl and a 12-year-old daughter, had an important hearing the purpose of which was to

determine whether the girls could keep living with the mother or should be taken away. When A. had escaped her abusive husband and lived in a government shelter for victims of domestic violence (before coming to us several months ago), her state of mind and behavior there was very problematic, so the social services started seriously thinking about taking the children away from the mother.

In April, however, when we brought A. to the hearing that had to determine the family's future, the social workers heard totally different, positive testimonies from independent professionals. The nurses from the family health center, where A.'s baby is monitored, said that the little one is clean and well-nourished and that the mother is always on time for all checkups and treatments. The oldest daughter's school testified that it was happy with the improvement in the girl's behavior and emotional state, even though there had been certain problems in the beginning. After hearing these testimonies, the social services came to the conclusion that our Shelter has got a positive influence on A., **the family is doing well and the children can stay with the mother.**



A.'s family: celebrating baby's birthday



Shabbat celebration in the Shelter

After the meeting the social workers also asked us more questions about our Shelter and its Christian program - and said they may be sending us more ladies in the future! We are grateful that this way we could share about our faith with Israeli authorities.

It was touching indeed to realize that independent people, strangers from the outside, saw positive changes in our residents. **It was a great encouragement** for our team. Even though it had not been a smooth and easy ride, we could see that the general atmosphere in the home, the attitude of our staff, Biblical lessons and educational material our Shelter provided did bring good fruit! And we consider that also God's miracle, since most women who suffer from the trauma

of abuse have got a very long and complicated journey to recovery, and some may not even be able to recover at all.

Also one of our residents, **N.**, left at the end of May to live independently after staying with us in the Shelter for half a year. She thanked us for our help and admitted she learnt a lot during those months. The Shelter's manager Tatyana will keep in touch with her. She invited N. to her home and to our **Shabbat services in the church** (which have just been renewed!) and N. was very positive about both invitations. Please keep praying for her as well as for all the other residents of the Shelter.

We also ask you to pray that the Lord would give us wisdom on how to find the right balance between discipline and kindness: we want to show our residents love and mercy, but at the same time we cannot do without discipline and correction, otherwise the ladies will not be able to get healed and restored.

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Please pray also for me personally – I have been very tired these days: probably as a result of a combination of factors: my age, stress of the days of running to the bomb shelter, work load in the ministry, etc. Olga is getting better slowly, but still has a long way before her, so please keep praying.

Thank you very much for your prayers and support, and may God bless you all! Yours in Him, *Dou and Olga Bikas*

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