



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

## **MINISTRY UPDATE – FALL / CHRISTMAS 2017**



These days, when the whole Christian world celebrates Christmas, let us ask ourselves this question: Why was Jesus born and why did He come to this world? We find the answer in the words spoken by the angel to Joseph: ***“You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins”*** (Mat 1:21). The angel tells Joseph how to name the baby and explains why God chose this specific name for His Son: ***“because he will save his people from their sins”***. For most of those who do not speak Hebrew this explanation says nothing, but if you look into the dictionary you will see that the direct meaning of the name ***“Yeshua”*** (Jesus) is ***“Savior”***.

And now imagine a lifeguard on the beach. Who will he be saving? Who will appeal to him for help? Only the one who is drowning and cannot save himself. The fact that God called His Son ***“Savior”*** and sent Him to save people from their sins tells us that sin is something we cannot save ourselves from. Sadly, most people do not understand that; they do not accept the Good News and try to overcome their shortcomings on their own, although Jesus Himself said that ***“everyone who sins is a slave to sin”*** and that only He can free us (John 8: 34, 36).



All people are going to the bottom, but for most of them the process is quite slow, so they do not even realize they are drowning. There are others, however, who are sinking very fast. These are people who suffer from severe addictions, such as alcohol and drugs. As a result, they are more aware of their need for the Savior than others.

And that's what makes our ministry of evangelism among drug addicts and the homeless in south Tel Aviv so effective. Over the year 2017, *every day about 40 street people* visited Aviv Center, and *each month 8 to 10 of them* decided to go to a Christian rehab.

One of these street addicts was Georgy, who went to the rehab of our partners in Ashkelon. There he repented and started getting to know God, but shortly afterwards he was arrested and imprisoned for his former crimes. The rehab's staff had been sad about this development until one day Georgy called and told what had happened to him. When he was brought to his prison cell, he saw there a man who was reading the Gospel. They started talking and Georgy learned that the man's name was Maxim and that he once was in Ashkelon rehab as well! Georgy and Maxim were happy to see each other. They understood that the Lord brought them together so that they could support one another spiritually. These days they are sharing the Good News in prison and can say with apostle Paul: ***"Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel"*** (Phil 1:12). Please pray for these brothers!



*Georgy at court*

### **Beersheva rehab center**

Please keep praying for our rehabilitation center in Beersheva. At present 7 people reside in it. The rehabilitation program includes regular visits to Tel Aviv (serving the homeless and sharing the Gospel in Aviv Center), cleaning the church's premises and preparing it for the Sabbath meeting, and weekly assistance to needy elderly people with shopping. During the Shabbat services the rehabilitants operate the mixing console and the slide projector; one of the most mature rehabilitants is a drummer, so he joined our worship team. Another mature resident of the rehab is studying in Israeli Bible College.



*Rehabilitants in the church*

Recently 3 rehabilitants have completed the program and left the rehab. We continue to keep in touch with them. One of them works and studies at the Technological College, the second one works too and has recently passed driver's license exams. The third one has received an apartment from social services and got married. All three continue to attend our church meetings. One of them also keeps going to Tel Aviv to serve the addicts and the homeless. Praise God!

***We thank God for all of you who have taken part in our ministry this year - physically, prayerfully and financially! We are grateful for your hearts filled with our Savior's compassion and love for the lost. May God bless you all abundantly this Christmas and in the New Year!***

Yours in Him, *Dou and Olga Bikas*

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