

From the Desk of Peg Byars
Project Return Aliyah Coordinator
Return Ministries

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Like many of you, no doubt, I am seeking the Lord to discern the times and what God may be calling me to do in this critical hour on His timeline. In doing this, I find myself looking back to acknowledge what He has done to bring me to this place and to equip me for the assignments He has given me here in Return Ministries where I have been tasked with the responsibility to lead our Project Return Aliyah Sponsorship Program.

When I see what is happening in Ukraine, memories of 2003 flood my heart. Return Ministries was birthed in June of 2003, but the Lord was preparing this retired banker to be part of a new Canadian Christian Zionist Aliyah ministry years before. But let me concentrate on 2003. In March of that year, the Lord led nine Canadian intercessors to spend that entire month in Israel at a time when Israel was on high alert against the sabre rattling of Saddam Hussein of Iraq. Tourists were absent and governments were warning their people to get out of Israel as threats were being made by Hussein to attack with chemical warfare. Everywhere we went we had our Bible in one hand and our gas masks in the other. But we were on a mission; to exalt the names of our great and mighty God all throughout Israel. Saddam Hussein and others of his kind are no more; but Israel stands strong because the Lion of the Tribe of Judah is faithful to watch over His land and His people. Hallelujah!

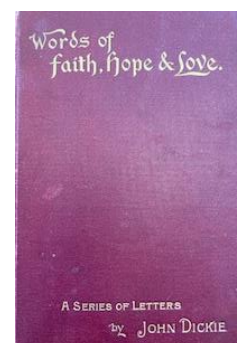


One of the words God gave me in preparation for His next assignment for me personally was: “You will know your place when you are in it.” Canadian friend Hilda Chen, an intercessor for Ebenezer Operation Exodus, lived in Jerusalem at this time and invited our Canadian prayer team to dinner one night. She showed us an Ebenezer Operation Exodus video of Jews from the former Soviet Union making Aliyah by ship from Odessa. Ukraine, and upon arriving in Haifa harbour, kissing the ground. In my spirit, I silently asked the Lord, “Is this



your call to me, to be a fisher in the former Soviet Union, Lord?” His answer baffled me until the next day! “Test the waters,” He said. Well, the next morning Hilda Chen contacted me and said the Lord told her to invite me to come on a guest sailing that October with Ebenezer. I immediately said yes because my Father said I was to - “Test the waters”!

Back in Canada, I awoke from a dream on June 26, 2003 in which a Finnish lady, with the gift of imparting languages from the Lord through Scripture, declared Ezekiel 3:3, 10 and 17 over me. But I was shocked that the book I had on my lap in the dream was not my Bible. Fully awake now, I grabbed my Bible and went for an early morning walk and talk with the Lord. “Father, why didn’t I have my Bible in this dream?” He responded, “Well, you have it now. What is the word you were given?” Verse 3 – Eat the word; verse 10 – Receive in your heart the word; and verse 17 entered my spirit like an arrow hitting the target, “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel . . .” In that moment I received God’s call, yet turned to the Lord and asked, “But why didn’t I have my Bible?” He asked, “What book did you have in this dream?” On my lap was a precious old book of anointed letters that were written by a Scottish man to his friend in Ireland and published in 1900. The Lord asked, “Peg, what is the name of the book?” I trembled as I declared the name of this precious book, “Words of Faith, Hope & Love.” And the Lord spoke, “This is your message to My people.”





In August 2003 I met Dean Bye, who had recently resigned from Christians For Israel after working mightily with ministries such as Exobus with the late Phil Hunter during the 1990's, to mobilize Christians to help fund the Aliyah of 10,000 Jews after the fall of communism in the former Soviet Union and other parts of Europe. God had now placed a call on his life to focus on North American Aliyah and he invited me to join forces with him to establish Return Ministries. Our first tour to Israel was that October 2003 and by a miracle of God's making, he was able to bring his wife Patti and all five Bye children with

him. These five precious children and their families are all still involved in some facet of Return Ministries. Glory to God.

At the end of that historic first Return Ministries tour, the first of many, I flew from Tel Aviv to Kiev and on to Odessa, Ukraine. There I met with the team from Ebenezer Operation Exodus at an old derelict building once used as a Communist Party meeting place, and over the next three days, we welcomed 118 Jewish immigrants (olim) some of whom had waited years to gain permission to make Aliyah. We settled them in their rooms, praying there would be water in their taps and toilets, and fed them as best we could given the limited amount of food available.



Then on Oct. 30, 2003, we journeyed to the Odessa harbour and boarded the Jasmine, a beautiful leisure ship of the Mayo Line. It was cold on the Black Sea but as we headed through the Dardanelles with Turkish cities on both sides and on into the Mediterranean Sea, past the island of Cyprus, it grew warmer, and the dear Jewish people began to strip off their winter garb. The pool was opened and the joy on the faces of the children as they played in the warm water is unforgettable. One of my assignments was to teach the children about God's call to them to return to the

land of Israel and to help them understand that now, they were fulfilling biblical prophecy. Lord, wherever these young ones are today in Israel, please bless them with the revelation of Your love and purpose in their lives.

At 5:30 AM on the third day, we saw the lights of Haifa harbour and these 118 precious Jewish men, women and children rushed to the deck as the wife of one of the Ebenezer leaders stood on the prow of the ship with a tin whistle and played the haunting notes of Hatikvah, The Hope, the national anthem of Israel. There was not a dry eye on the ship and as they descended from their old lives to ascend in Aliyah to Israel. Many fell to their knees to kiss the ground, their hearts bursting with joy to have made it home. I asked the Lord, "Am I in my right place, Father; where do You want me to serve You?" and He clearly spoke, "I am calling you the Aliyah of North America."

Two days later, still in Jerusalem, 2 Chronicles 16:32 took on new meaning as we were just beginning to establish Return Ministries. King Solomon is dedicating the temple to the Lord; but then he suddenly switches gears and says this: "Moreover, concerning a foreigner, who is not of Your people Israel, but has come from a far country for the sake of Your great name and Your mighty hand and Your outstretched arm, when they come and pray in this temple; then hear from heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You, as do Your people Israel, and that they may know that this temple which I have built is called by Your name."

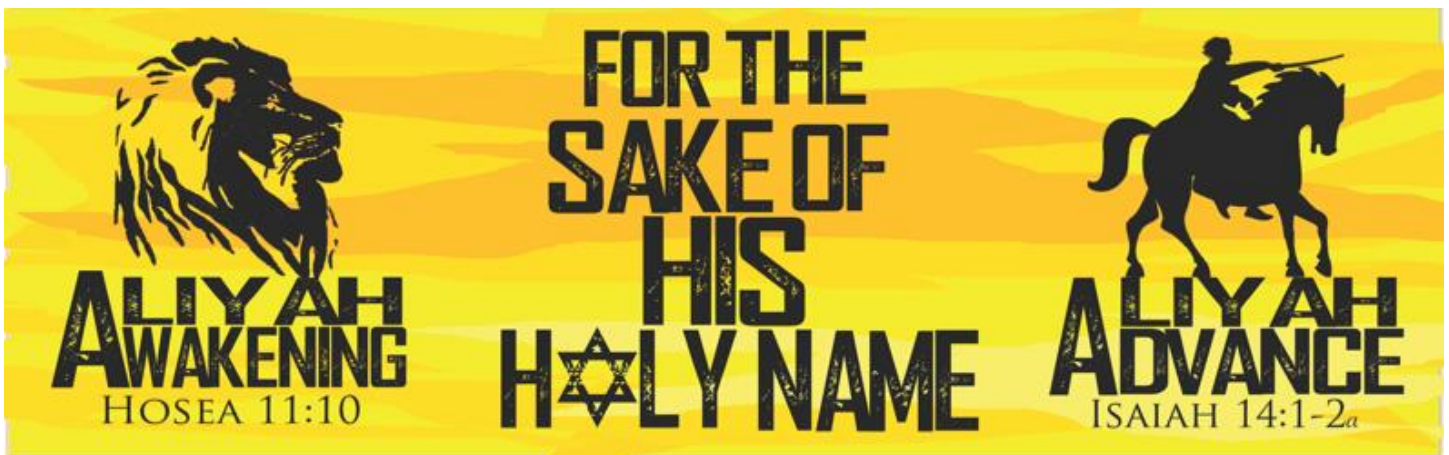
Dean was still in Israel so excitedly, I called him, shared this Scripture and immediately we both felt called to dedicate the work of Return Ministries to the Lord in the Old City of Jerusalem, as close to the second holy temple as possible. The next day we walked to the Kotel (area surrounding



the Western Wall) and entered the tunnels. At the spot thought to be closest to the where the Second Temple stood, we dedicated Return Ministries to the Lord and asked for His confirmation. How soon He gave it and in such a dramatic way was astounding! Leaving the tunnels, we came out into the broad expanse of the Kotel and there was the Lord's affirmation – hundreds of young Jewish boys and girls dressed in T-shirts with the Hebrew word תְּשׁוּבָה – RETURN!! Doesn't get much clearer than that!



And the rest is history! Now, 19 years and many God-ordained adventures later, we are pressing in to *SHEMA*, to hear and obey the Word of the Lord and to follow His leading. Looking back, I can honestly say that His guidance, direction and signposts have been there every inch of the way. God doesn't look for the folks who have it all together; rather, He seems to gravitate toward those with willing hearts who humble themselves and determine to be available to follow the Rabbi from Galilee into seemingly uncharted waters. Our Shepherd King stakes the very reputation of His name on leading us in paths of righteousness for His name's sake (Psalm 23:3).



Fast forward to the tumultuous present times we are in. The Lord's direction to Dean Bye in 2020 was to "Alter the Altar of Prayer for Aliyah." The Lord knew that increased global prayer would be needed and so went before us to birth this worldwide 24/7 global prayer gathering that presently has 56, three-hour watches each week, led by intercessors from all over the world. Focused on Aliyah, when events like this Ukrainian crisis develop, we are ready to go into high gear and focus our intercession on God's call and plan to get the hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian Jews home safely to Israel.

This is our current task. God prophesied events like this would take place as He faithfully sends out both fishers and hunters so we shouldn't be surprised - for His Word is true. God's hunters are those who will tenaciously go after even one Jewish life, to do whatever is necessary to get them safely home. Dean's

experience with the Russian Aliyah in the '90's and my exodus journey from Ukraine with 118 olim from the former Soviet Union, had sensitized us both to the plight of Jewish people in flight.

You may be asking, "What can I do to help?" Here are some biblical and practical ways that you, your prayer group and your congregations can participate in the outpouring of God's love for His people. He is faithful to fulfill all His promises to return and restore His people to their land and we are privileged to be called to partner with Him.

We discern that our first call is to PRAYER, so if you haven't already, please register to gain access to the [Altar of Prayer for Aliyah](#). During the past two years of lockdown, the Spirit of the Lord has touched nations and global on-line prayer has multiplied. I heard the Lord say, "In this lock down, I call you to look up!" Yes Lord, we seek Your face. Many are sensing that our God is calling forth One Hundred Million Intercessors for Israel. Sound impossible? Not with our God!! I want to be counted among this company, for the sake of God's Holy Name. How about you?



There is a great need for emergency and practical help for the Ukrainian and Russian exodus today and for the ongoing return of Jews from all nations as God shakes them free. Getting them home safely to Israel is the first challenge; getting them assimilated into Israel is perhaps even the greater challenge. Jesus is the head of His body and He calls us all to participate. Therefore, we ask you to pray for God's guidance as this ministry and other Aliyah focused organizations discern their part in this gigantic exodus and the waves of Aliyah still to come.

In Israel, our Aliyah Return Center in the Galilee is at the receiving end of those making Aliyah. Our team there, under the leadership of Chaim Malespin, needs your prayers and support to accommodate the influx of immigrants who have basically come with only the clothes on their backs. In addition to their practical needs, these dear people need our prayers to overcome the emotional trauma they have come through as they fled for their lives during this current war.

Return Ministries - <https://www.return.co.il/ways-to-give>

Aliyah Return Center - <https://aliyahreturncenter.com/en/helpukraineimmigrants>

This can and should be the body of Christ's finest hour as we take our place in history to care for God's Jewish people in their hour of need. They will receive our words of Faith, Hope and Love, for these is the words of the Father's heart to His children.

This is God's clear call to His 'other sheep' in the nations:

Isaiah 49:22 - Carry My children home!

Isaiah 40:1 - Comfort My people!

Isaiah 14:1-2 - Serve My people in the land and pray against the oppression of the enemy!



Amen.

Shalom and love to you all,
Peg

(Peg Byars and righthand assistant Cherissa Hould at the Western Wall, praying for the return and restoration of God's family to their inheritance in the land of Israel.)