

### Two Young Hebrew Students Walk into an Airport Chapel...

By Tom Johnston

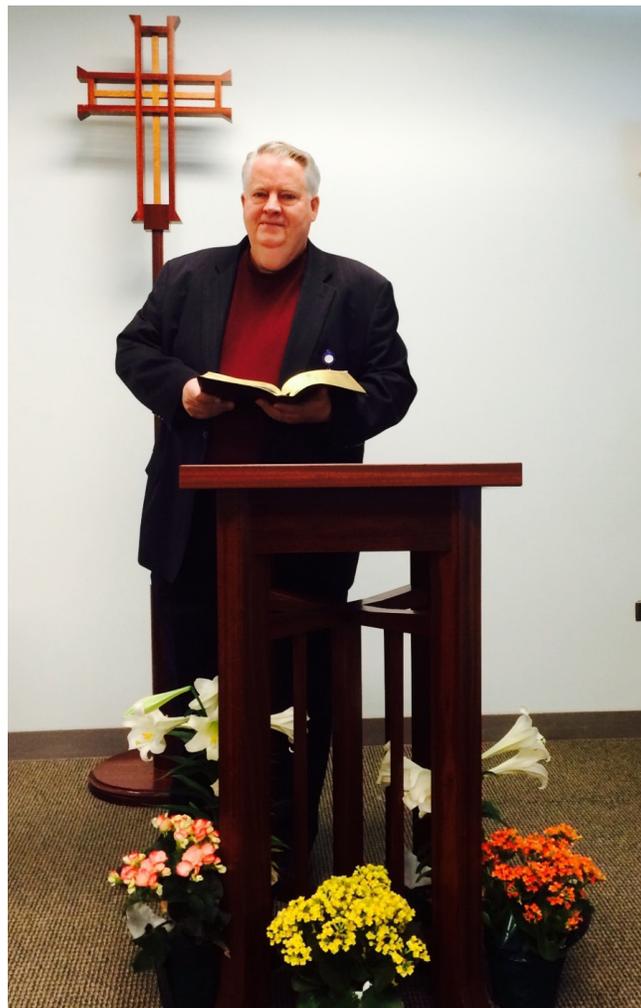
Two Jewish young men, ages 16 and 19, walked into the chapel recently—let's call them David and Jonathan. They are from a suburb north of Chicago, where they are enrolled in an Orthodox Jewish school. I greeted them warmly and told them that I was not only a friend of the Jews, but that in fact my wife, Mary, had a Jewish background. I peppered them with questions, and they were quite delighted to educate the older man in front of them.

We talked about the Shema from Deuteronomy 6:4 that Mary and I pray in Hebrew every day and night, like all good Jews! I asked them if they could help me with my Hebrew pronunciation and they were pleased to help. We talked about Zionism and the settlements in the West Bank, the four branches of Judaism and, as proper Orthodox Jews, they really didn't acknowledge two of the four branches as truly Jewish, since these branches were too liberal. I asked them why they weren't wearing their Yamikas / kippahs after they explained its Hebrew meaning of "fear" and "majesty." (Wow!)

Their reply was honest: They didn't know what kind of reception that they would receive in the chapel, but then they opened their backpacks, retrieved their Yamikas, and put them on. It was a wonderful moment. I asked them many questions and listened to their answers. Finally, I asked if they would read Isaiah 53, and told them that I believed Yeshua is the suffering servant in Isaiah 53. I explained that I also believed that Yeshua is the Passover lamb—that his death on the cross and his shed blood made it possible for God's judgment to pass over us. They were intrigued. Then, I received one of the highest compliments of my chaplaincy when one of them asked if I was at the chapel often. They were "breaking out of their bubble" and exploring a bit. Pray for David and Jonathan. What a providential conversation we had.

Then there was Peter, who walked into the chapel one quiet Saturday, a broken man. He poured out to me that he had thrown his life away partying with women, and was very likely about to lose his job. He had been caught on camera with a woman he had snuck into his office. For about an hour, we considered all of the possible scenarios. What if he lost the job? What would he do or like to do? We talked about his abilities, his dreams and goals and what he wanted out of life.

We shifted gears and began to talk about the message I've been sharing a lot at the chapel lately. We talked about loving God with all our hearts, with all our souls and all our strength, and our neighbors as ourselves (Deut. 6 and Mark 12). Peter listened as I explained that God had loved his chosen people with all of his heart, declaring this love: "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me" (Deut. 5:6-7). We went through the passion of Christ from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross and talked about how God in Christ showed us his love (Rom. 5:8) and indeed loved us with all of his heart, soul, mind and strength. Peter and I talked about his need for Christ at the center of his life. I explained that when we pray the Lord's Prayer, we are praying for God's kingdom to be established and his will be done both on earth and in our



hearts, too. His kingdom should rule over our life, should be on the throne of our hearts and God should be making the decisions about what happens—his will should be done.

I asked Peter if he wanted to love God with all of his heart and he replied yes. I explained that this couldn't happen unless he repented of his sin and asked Christ to be the King of kings in his heart. He seemed to get it. I asked him to pray in his own words and he did. He confessed his sin, asked for forgiveness and asked that Christ would be the king of his heart. He said he felt as though a burden had been lifted. Pray for Peter. He indeed has believed in his heart that Christ is Lord and risen from the dead (Romans 10: 9-10).

*Tom has several preaching opportunities—at Midway Chapel, the Pacific Garden Mission, the Zion Christian Church in Carpentersville and at the nursing home where his wife resides. Pray for Tom to preach with the power of the Holy Spirit.*

*Tom is one of College Church's evangelists. He is a chaplain with Skyword Ministries, the only sanctioned Protestant Christian ministry that ministers in O'Hare and Midway Airports in Chicago.*