



Eliezer - God is my Helper

On a recent trip to my hometown of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA, I was able to renew fellowship with a friend and brother in Jesus (Yeshua) named Eliezer Barros. Eliezer and his family moved to the USA from Brazil in 2000 and they soon became good friends of my family. He and his wife Esther are of Jewish/Marrano descent. The Marranos were Jewish people who lived in Spain and Portugal, and who were either forcibly 'converted' or expelled for being Jewish by the Catholic Church in the late 14th and early 15th centuries.



Because the Inquisition was strongest in Spain and Portugal, it is unsurprising that many who wished to practice Judaism secretly emigrated to the New World. In 1496, just before they were given the choice of conversion or expulsion, an estimated one third of the population of Portugal was Jewish. Although the exact figure is unknown, it is likely that an even higher percentage of emigrants to the New World were of Jewish descent.

Brazil was discovered by the Portuguese in 1500 and became its colony. Portuguese Marranos were among its earliest settlers.

The remote area of north-eastern Brazil, known as Rio Grande do Norte, was settled by the Portuguese, starting in the 1720s. This is the same time that the most intense Inquisitorial activity was occurring in the Brazilian northeast. This region was noted for its poor soil, dry climate and hostile Indian population. It seems likely that a major reason it was settled was that it was remote and difficult for the Inquisitorial authorities to reach. It also seems likely that an extremely high percentage of these early settlers were secret Jews.

Eliezer's grandfather, Angelo Periera de Barros, was born in 1863 in Santarem, Para, Brazil. Both of his parents came from Portugal. Angelo was an officer in Brazil's navy and travelled all over the world. When he left the navy, he became a rubber tree extractor and then a shipbuilder.

Angelo had a loose Catholic affiliation, but was dissatisfied with it and was searching further into spiritualism. On one occasion, he received news that his favourite aunt was dead. She lived far away, so news took time to travel. He loved this aunt and knew that she had been ill, but because of the distance, he couldn't go to her and say his farewells before she died. Spiritualism seemed to offer him a way of contacting her, so Angelo paid the spiritualists money to contact her dead spirit. Supposedly, she spoke to Angelo from beyond the grave and told him that she was OK, at peace and in heaven, etc. Angelo took comfort from this experience. However, two months later, his aunt showed up at his home in Santarem, FULLY ALIVE!

continued on page 2

Needless to say, Angelo was disillusioned with this form of spirituality. Notwithstanding, Angelo was searching for the Truth and it was at this time that Erik Nelson, a Swedish minister from the USA, had come to Brazil and was due to come and hold Gospel meetings in Santarem.

After the American Civil War (1861-1865), thousands of Americans left the Southern States, came to Brazil and settled in Santarem. As a result, this city was a hub for the Gospel. There was much opposition to the Gospel in Brazil by the Catholic Church, however. They coined a name for evangelists in Portuguese: 'black goat', which represents evil!

Angelo had a significant connection with the Freemasons in the area and was very influential, so the Catholic priests came to Angelo and told him that 'the evil' has just arrived (Erik Nelson and his message) and that they wanted him to stop these meetings from going ahead.

Angelo decided that he wanted to hear what the preacher had to say first, so he attended Erik Nelson's first gospel meeting and sat at the back. At the end of the meeting, Angelo recognised that this was what he had been searching for! That night, he accepted Jesus as his Messiah and committed his life to serving Him.

Angelo also suffered from a severe form of asthma. In those days, asthma was a very serious and even fatal disease, making it nearly impossible for Angelo to travel and spread the Gospel. Not only that, but there were no Bible colleges in his area. The closest one was miles away in Recife, in the state of Pernambuco and was founded and headed by a man named Solomon Ginsberg. Erik Nelson and Solomon Ginsberg, though living many miles from one another, worked together and were in touch with each other and both felt that it was right, after some time, to ordain Angelo, without him having to attend the Bible college! Angelo became one of only three people in Brazil to have been ordained in this way and he went on to found the church in Belem.

In 1916, Angelo's son, Eliezer Pereira de Barros, Sr. (father of my friend Eliezer), was born. In due time, he, too, accepted Jesus as Messiah and Lord and went on to



**Solomon
Ginsberg**

become a pastor. He attended the Bible college (Seminario Teologico Batista do Norte do Brazil) in Recife, Pernambuco that was founded by Solomon Ginsberg.

Now about Solomon Ginsberg: He was born near Suwalki, Poland in 1867, the son of a rabbi. After refusing to be married by 'shiddach' (match), he ran away from home

and eventually ended up penniless in London. He was invited by a Jewish believer in Yeshua to a meeting at the Mildmay Mission to the Jews (which later became part of the Messianic Testimony) in Whitechapel. The subject of the meeting was Isaiah 53. Because of an earlier experience and curiosity regarding this topic, Solomon decided to attend. This was a turning point for him and he realised from the message that the Isaiah passage could only be speaking of Jesus (Yeshua) as the Jewish Messiah. His heart, however, was torn as committing his life to the Messiah would mean being disowned by his family. Upon hearing the preaching of John Wilkinson (founder of the Mildmay Mission) soon afterwards, however, he was able to fully embrace Yeshua and follow Him.

Solomon left London for Brazil in 1890 and went on to become one of the pioneers of evangelism in Brazil. He is still considered one of the 'heroes' of the faith there, having faced many dangers and having laid the foundations of most of the Gospel work that exists today, along with Erik Nelson and a few others. In fact, my friend Eliezer told me that he grew up reading story books and 'comic' books about Solomon Ginsberg, because he was so famous! You can read his amazing testimony and autobiography in the book, 'A Wandering Jew in Brazil' (available online).

Today, Eliezer and his family are serving the Lord in Pittsburgh, PA. Eliezer's two daughters have recently sensed the call on their lives to full time evangelism. Many of Eliezer's siblings and relatives in Brazil are also full time pastors and workers. It was breathtaking for me to learn of such an enormous amount of fruit that has come through the early work of the Mildmay Mission, impacting much of Brazil – and beyond – to this day!

Jewish Climate

A large, front page headline in a recent edition of the Jewish Chronicle declared: **'Anti-Semitic incidents rise by 62% in London.'** (JC 5th Aug, 2016) Various reasons are cited as possible explanations for this but the fact remains that the article makes for unsettling reading, as the incidents are occurring in all levels of society. In the same edition of the JC, we find the articles, **'Shul (Synagogue) never gave me this peace'** and **'Why should I belong to a shul?'** The first one describing a woman's search within yoga in India and the other a woman teaching Buddhism in Kent.

The second article is simply about a twenty-something woman's disconnect with synagogue life and membership. The paradox, as always, is that anti-Semitism is on the rise, while Jewish people are drawing away from Judaism! These three such major articles are certainly a strong indication that now, as much as ever, 'the harvest is truly plenteous but the labourers are few; pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest.' Only New Life in Yeshua (Jesus) will bring the true peace that the world can't give. Ed.

Messianic Testimony Annual Welsh Meeting

'ISRAEL: Our Responsibility'

October 1, 2016

Time: 2:30 pm

Speaker: Tom Lori
Mission update: Colin Leyshon
Mission report: Simon Elman

Refreshments will be served • Bookstall

Venue: Bethany Baptist Church
Ford Road, Pwllgwaun, Pontypridd, Rhondda Cynon Taff CF37 1HX

Telephone enquiries: 07547 212299