

## One encounter leads to another, and another...

It all began with a visit to the hairdresser, along the road from our house in Jaffa. Being busy, the hairdresser asked me to wait. That was OK by me - in Israel we are used to waiting.



The salon was crowded, but I found a seat and smiled at the other waiting women as I sat down. One responded by asking what I was doing here. This was the signal for the others to satisfy their curiosity about an obvious foreigner. Like most Israelis we meet, they were very touched to hear that I'm one of many believers all over the world who love and pray for Israel. The woman next to me was Jewish, while the others, who called themselves Christians, were either Catholic or Greek Orthodox but it was clear that none was born again. (Jaffa has a mixed population of Arabs, both Muslim and Christian and also Jews, who all get along amicably together.)

Before long, Y, my middle-aged Jewish neighbor, and I were deep in conversation. Tearfully she confided that her husband had recently left her for another woman. Her husband's actions had broken her heart; she kept repeating: *"I hope God punishes him."* She was in such pain that my heart went out to her, so when she invited me home for coffee I willingly agreed. Y was a typical Jew, traditional rather than religious, believing in God's existence but lacking any true faith. To my joy she was very open to hearing the Gospel and appreciated my praying for her. She told me that one of her neighbors, who was a Russian believer, had told her a little about Yeshua and invited her to a Bible study a couple of years ago. At that time she had resisted, but now that she was facing a crisis in her life, her attitude had changed. I left in the knowledge that not only had we established a firm friendship, but also that God was watering the seed He had planted earlier and was preparing her to come into His kingdom.

A few days later, she met Jacob when she joined us for a Bible study about forgiveness. She was delighted to find that Jacob's parents, like hers, were Iranian. Then she came with us to our congregation on Shabbat. This experience affected her so deeply, that she went forward to pray with someone of the prayer team. Now she has joined a group of enquirers and new believers and we can be confident that *"He who began a good work... will carry it on to completion."* (Philippians 1:6)

After the service we had to get a taxi - buses don't run on Shabbat - and this also led to a fortuitous meeting. The Jewish driver, L. gladly accepted our offer of coffee when we reached home. He has now become a frequent visitor and has participated in our Bible studies. Through his personal circumstances at this time, the Lord has also prepared his heart. Although he has been unable to visit our congregation yet, we know this is only a matter of time.

There have been other spin-offs from my 'chance' encounter with Y. She has introduced several of her closest friends to us who have also been our guests for dinner. (In Israel, most meetings take place over food.) One evening she invited two of us to accompany her to the home of other friends - a Jewish couple in their 80's - who were overwhelmed to hear about Trumpet of Salvation's ministry in Israel. They found it hard to believe that there are Gentiles like us!

The Jews as well as the Arabs are so open and willing to hear - all it takes is our willingness not to be ashamed of the Gospel. Do unite your prayers with ours that the Lord will move the hearts of each one of these dear people and of so many others to believe what they have heard and to read Jacob's book. Significantly, Y. and L. have come under attack since responding to the Gospel.

All praise is due to our mighty God that a visit to the hairdresser should yield so many opportunities for friendship evangelism. C.