



***A JEWISH LEGACY OF  
DR. CHARLES F. STANLEY,  
FIRST BAPTIST ATLANTA  
AND IN TOUCH MINISTRIES  
By Steven Barry Kaplan***



In 1992, my New York co-workers challenged me to read ***“We all like sheep have gone astray. Each of us turned to his own way. So Adonai has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”-Isaiah 53:6 TLV*** For some reason it was left out of my Bar-Mitzvah book? I asked questions and cried out to God for the truth of Messiah! I believe Jesus is the promised Jewish Messiah, died for our sins and rose from the dead. God healed me of bitterness, anger, love of money and alcoholism and told me to move to Atlanta and work at The Coca-Cola Company. I asked my co-workers where to go to church, and they told me about a famous preacher on television, but they couldn't remember his name? I took a leap of faith and God showed me where I should live in Atlanta and walked into the church next door, First Baptist Atlanta. They asked if I was there for Dr. Stanley, and I asked, “Who's that?”

They sent me to the singles department where I was immediately accepted and befriended. When I informed them, I was Jewish and a new believer in Jesus, they were even more excited. After Sunday school, they took me to the service, and Dr. Stanley's teaching was incredible! They suggested I meet Paul Diamond, a Jewish believer on staff at FBA and who later became Dr. Stanley's assistant. I met with Paul, and he spent several hours walking me through the Bible and explaining basic things to me. During my baptism it was announced that it was the anniversary of my Bar-Mitzvah, and there was thunderous applause! Truly this church loves God and His chosen people! Years later, Paul endorsed my book, *The Green Velvet Missionary*, which highlights 25 years of miraculous personal and missionary activities largely due to the strong foundation I received at FBA!

It took a while before I actually got a job at The Coca-Cola Company. I worked various temporary jobs when I could get work. Between rent and college loans, it was hard to make ends meet. My new church family, furnished my apartment, paid my rent and even brought me food. The love and generosity of FBA was overwhelming!

My FBA Sunday school class had a home fellowship and asked me to bring a broccoli casserole. As I opened a soup can to make the casserole, my can opener broke, and I prayed for a new one. Minutes later there was a knock at the door. It was a UPS man with a box. I told him, “If there's a can opener in there, I will die!” I ripped open the box and it was an electric frying pan? I thought God, what an incredible testimony this would have been if it were a can opener? I was upset and shoved the box to the other side of the room and sulked. After 10 minutes I laughed and cleaned the box. As I cleaned, I found a package. I opened the package and found a can opener!

I asked God what He was teaching me and opened the Bible to: ***“The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone.”-Psalm 118:22 TLV*** 2,000 years ago the Jewish people were waiting for their Messiah. They thought Messiah would come as Mashiach ben David, the conquering hero Messiah to deliver them from the Romans. When Jesus came as Mashiach ben Joseph, the suffering servant Messiah (like a frying pan to burn off all their sin), **THEY REJECTED HIM BECAUSE HE WASN'T WHAT THEY WERE EXPECTING!** If they had humbled themselves, they would have received Jesus (like a can opener) who opens the knowledge of everything!

I usually sat in the same section at FBA as Lee Veal. We became friends, and he helped me start Jewish Outreach International in Dec 2007 and serves as chairman of our Jewish Outreach International board of directors. A Jewish believer in Jesus and missionary to the Jewish people at FBA, taught me how to distribute Gospel tracts, took me out evangelizing and on my first mission trip to Israel. He was trained by Jews for Jesus which was founded and led by Moishe Rosen. Years later, Moishe Rosen asked to serve on the JOI board of directors!

I joined the FBA choir which meant I was now part of the In Touch television program! What an incredible blessing to be part of a program that shares the Gospel all over the world! My Jewish grandmother in Brooklyn, New York watched In Touch every Sunday! My cousin's wife in Texas told me even though she was raised Catholic, she's born again and makes my Jewish cousin watch Dr. Stanley every Sunday! My Jewish friend, who worked at In Touch, told me Jewish people from South Florida constantly call in to order messages! A Jewish manicurist in Atlanta, told me she saw Dr. Stanley on TV, and he said, "You might be Jewish and not know how to believe in Jesus?" She went to FBA to meet Dr. Stanley, but didn't? Frustrated, she cried out to God. Soon afterwards, Dr. Stanley just happened to walk into her nail salon, for a manicure, and led her to the Lord!

The FBA choir went on two mission trips to Germany, but I didn't want to go! Nevertheless, I distributed a support letter, and met Carolyn Cunningham. Carolyn's great love for Israel and the Jewish people warmed my heart! She's been at FBA for 50 years and found out at a family reunion she's a descendant of Dr. Samuel Nunez, a Portuguese Jew who established one of the oldest American synagogues in Savannah, Georgia. Carolyn and her husband John are founding board members and still serve on our JOI board of directors.

While in Germany, I needed a hat. The only hat I could afford said, "I love Germany." I stood in that store for 30 minutes deciding? God said to me, "I've forgiven you; you need to forgive them." I wore it proudly! After the second trip, we gave a home concert. I was asked to share testimony. I walked up to the pulpit and drank the water that was there. Everyone laughed because it was Dr. Stanley's! Someone told me there was a Jewish person there who accepted the Lord, and Dr. Stanley said my testimony was one of the most powerful he heard in a while!

My friend told me he was in the church parking lot and two women were visiting from California and needed directions to the sanctuary. He said one was a Jewish believer. I asked if he received their contact information, but he didn't? I figured if God wanted me to meet her, I will. Years later I was invited to Rhonda Cromwick's house to share testimony while ministering in Las Vegas. It turns out Rhonda is the Jewish believer who visited FBA from California and now serves on staff with Jewish Outreach International in Las Vegas, Nevada!

Eddie and Lura Beckford serve on the staff of Jewish Outreach International in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. They were in Israel for over 20 years and distributed thousands of In Touch Messengers. Zev Sigulim is the Operations Manager for Mega Voice, the Israeli based company that produces In Touch Messengers. Zev attended the congregation Lura started, and Lura actually disciplined Zev! I too have known Zev and his family for almost 20 years, and I told that to the couple who just happened to be sitting next to me at Dr. Stanley's Legacy Celebration. The couple just happened to be the owners of Mega Voice, and they were most excited I know Zev and his family!

In 1998, God called me to Jewish Outreach and another church. I was not looking to leave FBA nor did I want to leave, but when God calls, we must obey! I will be forever grateful for the Biblical foundation I received from Dr. Stanley, First Baptist Atlanta and In Touch Ministries as well as ministry tools and people to be successful with Jewish Outreach International. God bless you all, and thank you so very much! Praise God so far millions of people worldwide have been challenged by evangelistic shirts while I personally distributed over 600,000 Gospel materials, People in about 100 countries have been equipped with about 40,000 of our evangelistic shirts, about 500 people (Jews and Gentiles) have prayed to receive Jesus and Jewish Outreach International continues...