





Christie Chadwick & Carrie Rhodes

Andrews University
Ph.D. Students
visit Israel for its 60th Anniversary

Christie Chadwick and Carrie Rhodes are students from Andrews University who went to study Modern Hebrew in Israel. We asked them to share their insights about this fascinating nation and their experience in Israel this past year.

Shabbat Shalom: How long were each of you there?

Christie Chadwick: I was there for seven months, from the end of June 2007 to the end of January 2008.

Carrie Rhodes: I was there for about fifteen months, from June 2007 to October 2008.

Shabbat Shalom: Why did you decide to go to Israel?

Rhodes: I wanted to learn Modern Hebrew and to take some other classes that were not being offered here at Andrews University, like Sumerian. Going to Israel gave me the chance to live in the land where so many of these things happened and to study at a University with some of the top scholars in the field.

Chadwick: I went to Israel because I wanted to learn Modern Hebrew, and I also wanted the opportunity to live abroad. As an archaeology

student, it was also a big chance to be surrounded by the reality of the land of the Bible and the current work being done there.

Shabbat Shalom: What did you learn about the reality of living in Israel and the conflict there that you can't learn in books or newspapers?

Rhodes: Living in the place of the conflict that is so publicized, one can see the realities that are not reported. Both sides have done things that do not justify their respective positions, and this is troubling.

Chadwick: I learned that the conflict is a lot more complicated than the media can portray, and when you are able to see it without the bias of the media telling you what to think of the wall and what to think of the terrorists, things are not so black and white. You see that there aren't really bad guys and good guys in a simple dichotomy, but that everyone, every moment makes a decision and can fall into one of these sides. It comes down to each individual person and their individual choices about how they will treat "The Other."

Shabbat Shalom: How was it for you as Seventh-day Adventist Christians living in a Jewish country?



Chadwick: You feel it. You know that you are a minority, that you are not one of them. And it's funny because you don't identify with the local Christians either. The Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox are the majority of Christians, and it is a very different culture of Christianity. There is also no visible difference between the Christians and the Muslims. In Jerusalem, where it is mostly Jewish, you feel the difference.

Rhodes: The Orthodox Jews are the primary presence in Jerusalem.

Chadwick: It was interesting to be completely out of your element. And since we are Seventh-day Adventists, we are a lot closer to the Jews in terms of eating habits and the Sabbath. Other foreigners had to get used to the idea that everything is closed on Sabbath; there are no busses, and you have to get ready for the Sabbath. It took a long time for it to sink in. It was easier for us, as Adventists, to adapt. And yet it was still really hard.

Rhodes: On Sabbath we would take the bus to the Damascus gate, and then walk to church. I had to bring books for teaching as well as piano music, so I had a backpack. It was interesting because I was dressed very modestly and in a more Jewish style, so at first glance, people passing me would think I was Jewish. But then they saw my backpack and immediately realized I wasn't. Walking through the city we would pass Christians and Muslims going to market or Jews going to synagogue, and then I felt the distinction.

Chadwick: There is a very distinct fashion difference between the Jews and the Arabs. Since the Jewish style is more Western, we identified with it a lot more and wore that style.

So we looked Jewish, but we were doing all the wrong things like taking a bus on Sabbath. The first time we rode the bus on Sabbath, everyone on the bus was staring at us like, "What's wrong with this picture?" We were dressed like Jews, carrying Christian Bibles, on the way to church on the Sabbath.

Rhodes: Also, among the other Christian students at the university, I had a couple of Christians outright mock me for being an Adventist. Then I felt even more alone.

Shabbat Shalom: *What was your experience with the Orthodox Jews?*

Chadwick: Because we are women, the Orthodox men wouldn't look at us, or speak to us, and if they had to, they would cross the street to avoid passing by us. They wanted as much distance as possible between us and them. But I never experienced any sort of harassment from them.

Shabbat Shalom: *What is your overall impression of Israel as a nation?*

Chadwick: They are a young nation, but they have figured our things very quickly. Everything is very solid and planned, and the way the army is structured and interacts with civilians is fairly smooth. They have created their own culture, which is remarkable since they previously all came from different nations. The kids there are maybe second or third generation. They have figured out a cultural identity that is a mixture of both the West and the East, which is amazing. The food, for example, is very Middle Eastern but with all these Western touches to it. Their dress is distinctively Israeli. The way that they live their lives is distinctive. They all go into the army after high school, and

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then once they are done they go on trips around the world. Once they come back, they travel in Israel. To have such a distinctive culture in such a young nation is remarkable. They all came with a common religious background, and yet it is not that commonality that sticks out the most in their culture.

Rhodes: I enjoyed the *ulpan* classes in which we read texts that dealt with issues in Israeli society, from immigration to art. It was then when one could get a taste of what it was to be modern Israeli. I was impressed with their gains in technology. On the religious side, it is amazing to see this nation survive

and thrive, when clearly their neighbors would prefer otherwise. It makes me think that God's mercies are still with the nation of Israel. As a Christian, I feel that God has given all peoples the opportunity to become His children, and yet, when I read the history of modern Israel and the battles it has won, I feel that there is something still there. I pray for them now in a way that I never did before.

This interview was conducted by J. Amanda McGuire

