Israeli Believers Form Law Firm

One was born in the United States, one in Moldova and the third in Israel. All are lawyers—believers who recently decided to form their own law firm in Israel—Cohen, Pex and Brosh.

How did this happen? Jamie Cowen, the attorney from the United States, reports that it’s one of those Divine coincidences that shape the direction of our lives. None of them knew each other previously but had heard of the others. According to Jamie, Joshua Pex, the Israeli, had referred a couple of cases to him, so he spoke with Joshua about possibly collaborating together.

Another case arose involving a real estate transaction. Neither Jamie nor Joshua felt fully comfortable handling it, but Joshua had heard of Alex Brosh, the one from Moldova, who is a real estate lawyer. They met and agreed to proceed together. After numerous meetings and a successful outcome on the real estate deal, they found their ideals and vision for life generally matched and thus formed a partnership. While the three are dedicated followers of Yeshua the Messiah, they do not want to limit their representation to believers only. Their goal is to be effective and fair to all clients, representing them to their fullest abilities.

Their stories and their expertise vary. Yet, they see this as a great asset since they can offer services to a wide range of needs. Jamie Cowen grew up in the Washington, DC area. He worked on Capitol Hill for almost 10 years as the chief counsel on a U.S. Senate subcommittee. Later, he, his wife and their three daughters moved to Virginia, where he served as the rabbi of a large Messianic Jewish congregation. However, he continued practicing law, assisting hundreds of mostly Russians. Gradually, his daughters began making aliya to Israel, and he and his wife Stacy followed them there a few years ago. Jamie’s primary expertise is immigration to the United States, but his many years in Congress also allow him to consult for those who do business with the federal government.

Alex Brosh grew up in Moldova, which in his early years was still part of the old Soviet Union. He was a serious athlete, ultimately becoming the Moldovan track and field champion in the 200 and 400 meter events. In his twenties, he decided to live in Israel. From that point his life dramatically changed. In 2002, he met the Lord in Israel. Then he met his future wife Anastacia, started having children and began law school. His interest in the subject dated from his days in Moldova. “When I relocated to Israel,” Alex emphasizes, “I realized how important it is to do something you love. I loved law and helping others.” He ultimately graduated from the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya, interned at a major law firm in Jerusalem and became a member of the Israeli Bar Association.

Later he was employed for a few years at another firm in Herzliya. While Alex practices in a number of business fields, his true interest is in real estate law. He points out that over 90% of the land in Israel is owned by the State and is not sold to private parties in the normal sense. Rather, real estate typically is leased for up to 49 years or longer with renewable extensions, an oblique reference to the year of the Jubilee.

Joshua Pex was born in Eilat, a port city and resort on the southern tip of Israel, bordering the Gulf of Aqaba. His parents came to faith while living in the Sinai Peninsula during the 1970s, and Joshua and his siblings were raised to believe in God. They eventually moved to Eilat where they opened a well-known youth hostel. The family and the fellowship were often subject to harassment and discrimination. On several occasions, members received legal advice to successfully combat the discrimination. This apparently caught Joshua’s attention. “Even at a young age, the ability of attorneys to make a change impressed me concerning the benefits of knowing the law. I understood firsthand how minorities in democratic countries can use the ‘rule of law’ to their advantage and stand up for their rights,” he reflects. He later graduated from Haifa University. Like Alex, he practices a wide range of Israeli law, specializing in human rights, the constitution, labor and international refugees.

Since many Americans do business with Israel and Israelis often need special visas to enter the United States, Jamie believes the
combination of a licensed American attorney in Israel working in conjunction with Israelis can offer a cafeteria worth of services to potential clients. For instance, most new immigrants to Israel begin their residency by renting an apartment. Of course, rental agreements are written in Hebrew, normally well beyond the capacity of a new arrival to understand. According to Alex, the law concerning landlords and tenants is quite complex, and legal assistance is beneficial. In one case he handled, a construction company bought an apartment building in which his client resided. The company sought to evict the client in order to raze the building. Alex successfully argued in court that his client was a “protected tenant” under law, a somewhat uncommon designation, and thus could not be evicted.

In addition, the Israeli government occasionally tries to prevent the immigration of Messianic Jews. Joshua has handled many such issues and suggests that any Jewish believer attempting to make aliyah to Israel should first receive legal counsel to avoid the many pitfalls along the way. Not only are there some issues that can bar a Messianic Jew from immigrating, there are numerous requirements a potential citizen must meet, especially with respect to proving Jewish heritage. “What’s required for the procedure are both religious verification of the applicant being Jewish, as well as civil papers proving the applicant’s identity,” Joshua explains. “Religious Jewish documents include a marriage ketubah of the parents, bar mitzvah certificate, proof of parents and grandparents being buried in a Jewish cemetery, membership in a synagogue and any other documentation. Also, the Ministry of Interior requires a letter from a rabbi or from another Jewish organization.”

While other Messianic lawyers exist in Israel, Cohen, Pex and Brosh Law Offices may be the first law firm comprised solely of believers. Jamie, Joshua and Alex are excited about this new development in their lives. Coming from such diverse backgrounds, they have joined together to help people with their needs.

The new law firm recently opened its main office in Petach Tikvah, one of modern Israel’s oldest cities, near Tel Aviv. They’re hoping to combine their various specialties into a wide-ranging law practice. Jamie Cowen’s assistance will be limited to American law. He’s joining the firm as a foreign lawyer.

This fact, in and of itself, is quite remarkable. Until this past year, an attorney who wanted to practice in Israel was required to take the Israeli bar exam in Hebrew. Jamie realized it would take years, if ever, to acquire sufficient Hebrew proficiency to pass such an exam. However, he was surprised to discover that the Knesset recently passed a law allowing foreign lawyers to join the Israeli bar, meaning that a licensed attorney from another country could legally practice the law of that country within Israel and potentially join with Israeli lawyers in a firm. Jamie continues, “I had no idea the Knesset was considering this change. When it was announced, I saw it as another miracle, further affirming our decision to move here.”