



THE OTHER OASIS MAGAZINE

By Martin Shoub



The editor is scrambling for stories; the graphic artist is submitting yet another design for consideration. The writer is backed up against the deadline and pleading with God for inspiration. Such is the busy world of the Oasis magazine; but no sooner is the staff beaming over the latest edition when a new deadline looms on the horizon and the whole scrambling process begins again – not for Eitan, Leora and Marty, but for Leon, Lena and Natasha.

Dear reader, I assume you are somewhat familiar with our Oasis magazine – after all, you are reading it right now, but did you know there is another Oasis magazine?

Shortly after the English Oasis magazine started up, Leon Mazin and the believers at our Haifa congregation, Shavei Tsion started the Russian Oasis magazine. The “other” Oasis magazine has the distinction of being the first Russian language Messianic magazine published in Israel. With over 12,000 copies and distribution in 7 countries (including of all

places, Australia), the magazine reaches a broad cross section of believers and covers a gamut of issues.

The English magazine limits itself to stories connected to the Tents of Mercy network and packs what it can every month into four printed pages. Published bi-monthly on a broadsheet format, the Russian Oasis magazine fills 12 pages with articles on current events in Israel, Torah portion commentaries, essays, editorials and photo shoots. You will even find the occasional Dan Juster or Don Finto article translated into Russian.

Leon Mazin provides the spiritual oversight for the magazine. Leon explained, “Oasis’ prime direction is to demonstrate the Jewish roots of our faith to the Russian speaking world. We present the news from a biblical, Messianic perspective.” Leon recalled that the magazine started out as a small informal bulletin for the local congregation. Interest from believers abroad and vision from within the Haifa congregation soon led to an expansion of both the format and the distribution. Spearheading that vision is the magazine’s editor, Lena Maizlina.

Lena is passionate about telling Israel’s story from a Messianic perspective and bemoans the lack of exposure afforded to Russian Messianic believers. Lena: “There are a growing number of Messianic believers in Israel, many with a talent for writing and media production but particularly among the Russian community, our voices are not being heard.” The voice Lena wants people to hear is growing louder. The Russian Oasis magazine continues to expand its reader base and has even recently started a Finnish version of the magazine. Lena dreams of the day when God expands their ministry to rival any secular network broadcasting and publishing in Israel. “We do not currently have the resources

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to fulfill this dream but nothing is impossible with Yeshua; I believe someday the dream will come true.”

Lena explained the guiding principles that govern the content of the Russian Oasis magazine:

✧ Introducing Russian speaking believers to the Jewish roots of their faith: “We want to share this great treasure; the riches of discovering that both the Old and New Covenants are Jewish scriptures.

✧ Informing readers about life in Israel. Believers who love Israel need to know what it is really like to live here. Lena and her staff seek to inform readers about the political, cultural and social realities of Israel: “We try and give them accurate, biblically focused information. We tell the truth even if it casts a negative light on aspects of Israeli society – at least this way, believers will know how to pray specifically for us.”

✧ Defending Israel from misinformation and anti-Israel bias. Lena understands how easy it is to be swayed by public opinion against Israel. Last summer she was in Russia during the Second Lebanon War: “I was mostly listening to Russian news coverage and began to wonder, ‘what is Israel doing?’ How can we bomb innocent civilians in Lebanon? When I returned to Israel, I heard the rest of the story. I was shocked by the lies disseminated by the Russian news agencies. We want to fight this information war because we love Israel and won’t let these attacks go unchallenged. Even though we are a drop in the mass-media ocean, we believe God is able to use us this way.”

Recently, God has revealed an even higher purpose for the magazine. Lena has a passion for the news but God has shown her that Oasis is to be first and foremost about the Good News! “There is a hunger among our people. We know that many believers use our magazine for evangelism in their own countries. The Shavei Tsion staff is discovering Oasis to be an excellent tool to reach out to Israelis.

Recently, I followed associate pastor, Misha Mazurovsky as he made his rounds through the narrow streets of the Hadar neighborhood of Haifa. Misha was delivering copies of the magazine to one of the stores frequented by the Russian community in the area. Misha explained that this is one of a dozen or so stores that have allowed Shavei Tsion to distribute the magazine on their shelves.

Misha had tried for years to distribute the magazine in Haifa shops but never received a favourable response. Last year the door suddenly opened. Misha distributes 2,500 copies of Oasis in Haifa stores every month. This is a marvel – a Messianic magazine distributed in secular shops in Israel’s third largest city! I am not aware of any other Messianic publication – in any language, that can make this claim. Lena explained that this is not a missionary activity, “We are an Israeli magazine giving people opportunity to read about events from an Israeli Messianic perspective.”

Sometimes the task seems overwhelming. Resources are tight and the publishing process means sorting through many varied challenges: “The Russian mindset is to think creatively first, and then think about the business challenges. God is helping us but we are still learning how to organize ourselves.” Lena is undaunted: “We realize we are not professionals but God chose us to serve Him in this way. We have obeyed and God has given us success all around the world. Once when I was praying, God gave me a vision. I saw God’s arms holding a huge copy of Oasis. We are encouraged because we know He is our Editor-in-Chief.”

Leon and Lena invite you to join them in prayer and partnership for this enterprise. Lena is hoping to be able to start publishing on a monthly basis but would need to expand her staff to do so. Leon invites you to contact him at leon_m@netvision.net.il to explore ways to develop this partnership ✧



Editor in Chief Leon Mazin



Misha setting out copies of Oasis in Hadar



Everybody is reading Oasis! (Editor Lena on left)

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Our Vision:

Tents of Mercy - to participate in today’s historic exodus by assisting Israel’s returning exiles.

No spectators in the Kingdom - to be a worshiping, sharing community based in homes, equipping each one for service.

Come back Yeshua - to welcome Yeshua home to Israel, by restoring the Jewish roots of New Covenant faith.



THE PATIENCE OF GOD PREVAILS

• By Moshe Morrison

to do with God and religion. Irena's grandfather fled to Siberia with his wife who died there, leaving him with two small daughters.

When he returned to the Ural region, he was arrested. However, many people came forward to testify on his behalf. He apparently was a kind and generous man who performed his religious services without cost. This was unusual enough to impress his jailors and he was released. He married again, had one more daughter and became a bookkeeper. His children were raised as atheists; there was no other means of survival. He died in 1935, at the age of 50, the last link with God for this family for many years.

Irena's parents were atheists and devout Communists. Her father was a significant man in the local party. God was never mentioned in their home. There were few, if any, Jews in the area where they lived so anti-Semitism was never an issue. When Irena was 10, they moved to a town near Odessa in Ukraine where it was permissible for Jews to live. The lot of the local Jewish population didn't seem any different than theirs, so again anti-Semitism was never a problem in their home.

At the age of 24, Irena married a Jewish man, Natan, who was 37. Both of them were conservatory graduates. He was a choirmaster and she taught voice and music history. Their son, Sasha was born in 1962.

Both Natan and Irena were atheists and loyal party members. Irena even led the Communist cell in the school where she worked. This was their life – total absorption in work and the Party. There was not a hint of God's presence in Irena's life for 35 years. But the patience of God kept waiting.

In 1973, Irena had the opportunity to go on an excursion to Salzburg, Austria, and in 1983, to Dresden, Germany. On both of these trips she attended art exhibits with religious themes. In Salzburg, paintings of the crucifixion began to raise questions in her mind. In Dresden, she was amazed at the peace she felt gazing at a painting of the nativity. Because she was a musician she also visited the church where Johan Sebastian Bach was buried. When she arrived, there was a service going on. She sat down and watched. She had never seen anything so beautiful in her life. However, when she returned home from both trips she dismissed these spiritual stirrings. But the patience of God still waited.

In the 1980's cracks were appearing in the Iron Curtain and occult and new age literature was filtering in. The Communist system is totally materialistic, but in spite of intense indoctrination, human beings are not. We cannot live without a spiritual dimension. Push God out of the picture and astrol-

ogy, palmistry and other occult forces will push their way forward. Nevertheless, God will always have the last word.

In autumn 1991, everything in the Soviet Union was falling apart and new freedoms were appearing. For several years Irena was part of a small group that sought to learn about the supernatural. They decided to visit a church because in their minds it was all the same.

By now Irena's involvement in occult things was having a negative impact on her. She was hearing voices, seeing visions and experiencing demonic attacks in her mind. Desperately seeking cleansing and deliverance and not knowing where else to turn she went to the local priest and asked him to baptize her. It was done in a private ceremony but the presence of God was there - Irena testified when she was immersed it felt like electricity going through her body.

A year later her 30 year-old son, Sasha came home and told her a similar story. He had received Yeshua; having heard the gospel at a Russian Baptist church. He was now working there as the music minister. Irena joined him, and started to experience a dimension of real fellowship that the Russian Orthodox Church could just not provide.

Irena's husband Natan was not opposed to the whole thing at all, but he struggled to open up after years of indoctrination. He had been an officer in the Soviet army and after the war worked for the KGB (he was eventually fired during an increase in anti-semitic feeling in the country). Today at the age of 83, he's much more open to the Gospel. Natan and Irena pray and read scriptures together at home.

In 1996, the doctors found a malignant lump in Irena's breast. They told her she must begin chemotherapy and have a mastectomy. Her son, Sasha had strong faith for her healing and declared she would not need the operation. Irena did not believe him and packed her things to go to the hospital. But the next morning when she got up she felt an irresistible force preventing her from going. Three weeks later she met with a panel of doctors, told them that she would not receive the operation, signed a release form absolving them of responsibility, then left and did not return. The next day the elders from the church came and prayed over her for 5 hours. But the tumor remained. She lost weight over the next two months. She felt bad both physically and spiritually because she did not see her healing. Seven months later, through an encouraging prophetic word she really started believing and the healing began in her body. For the next 9 years she had absolutely no problem.

Sasha had left the Baptist church and started a small Messianic Fellowship. In time he made connections with believers in Israel and with Tents of Mercy. In 1998, he and his wife and small son came to Natan and Irena and informed them

that they intended to move to Israel. Astonishingly, Natan and Irena replied, "We are coming too!" They quit their jobs, sold their apartment and arrived here in July, 1999.

In 2005, doctors here in Israel found more cancer cells in Irena's body. She needed to take some medicine orally but chose instead to trust God for continued healing. We have prayed for her and she continues to stand on the faithfulness of God. It is an ongoing battle but medical tests have shown the amount of cancer cells are slowly decreasing and she has almost fully returned to health. Her husband Natan has been greatly touched by what he is seeing in this gradual healing process. Irena says it is teaching her to daily rely on the Lord.



Irena

Sasha is leading a small fellowship in Tel Aviv where he lives with his wife and son. Irena is leading two groups here in the Kryot. She is one of our home group leaders, ministering greatly to some of our other elderly immigrants from the Former Soviet Union. She also meets regularly with a group of seniors who live in her apartment building and are not yet believers.

Irena says that all her life shows that God is mighty without limits and full of love without measure. She sees the godly service of her grandfather, which was cut short, restored and continuing in her and her son. Through the years of Communist indoctrination and spiritual isolation in the Soviet Union God patiently waited for this dear daughter to come to Him. Through her battle with cancer Irena has learned to patiently wait on God and trust in His healing power. In both cases the patience of God has prevailed. ✨

In 2 Peter 3:20, we are told that **"the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah."** Like the world in the days of Noah, life in the Soviet Union was void of God. Communism had pushed God out and locked the door behind Him, totally denying His existence and doing violence to anyone or anything that implied otherwise.

Irena was born in 1937, in the city of Sverdlosk in the Ural Mountains. Both of Irena's parents were Russian and her maternal grandfather had been a priest in the Russian Orthodox Church, as had several generations of his ancestors. This family heritage ended in 1917, when the victorious Communists brought with them an unrestrained hatred of anything that had