



When we arrived in Israel as brand new immigrants, our children were 22, 19, and 4 years old. Connie was pregnant with our “sabra” (native born) Israeli, who was born 23 years ago, in February 1993. The truth is we never expected to “found” any ministry. Our hope was to get the family sufficiently established to enable our children to join Israeli society and take part in the renewal/rebirth of Yeshua’s movement in the land.

To our surprise, 20 years ago we were given the privilege of launching Tents of Mercy as an indigenous, Hebrew-speaking, Messianic Jewish congregation emphasizing humanitarian aid. Then, the Lord expanded the work further by birthing another four congregations to create a modest network in northern Israel.

What about our children? All full adults now, their ages this spring will be 46, 42, 28, and 23. The younger ones are working and studying, integrating into Israeli society. The two eldest are involved (along with their spouses) in teaching, discipleship, pastoral, and humanitarian work. I could not have anticipated what satisfaction and joy it is to see the *next generation* embrace the call of God to be pioneers in this historic move of the Spirit. And not only have I watched my own children grow into this mature faith, but an entire *generation* has come of age while we spent two decades laying a foundation.

L’dor va’dor is a time honored phrase in Hebrew. Roughly translated it means “from generation to generation.” This is a concept woven through the whole fabric of the Hebrew Scriptures. Some 197 times the words “generation, generations, all your generations, etc.” appear in the Bible. God’s kingdom, His throne, name, salvation, crown, faithfulness, covenant, righteousness, and praise - are all said to *endure from generation to generation*.

A Man of Like Passions

This is seen vividly in Elisha *inheriting* the ministry of Elijah into the *next*



FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION

generation. Elijah rose during a backsliding era in Israel’s history. He defied idolatrous politicians in a clarion call to repent. He was the “breakthrough prophetic generation.” His ministry was raw, but effective in changing the “playing field.” He exhibited boldness, faith, and confrontation with the powers of darkness. (I can relate to that in some measure. In the early days we faced a fire bombing, lying posters distributed against our leaders, and an evening when the tires on every car in our lot were punctured while we worshiped.)

After great victory, Elijah ran in fear. He got locked inside depression. While licking his wounds in a cave of self-focus, God called him out. I can relate to this part too. More than I care to admit, there have been times of discouragement and introversion. Battlefields - including spiritual ones - can be traumatic.

God “pulled him out” of the cave, getting Elijah back on track with the assignment of anointing - *commissioning* - two kings and his *own* successor. Investing

in the *next generation* is a superb recipe for personal and kingdom “re-generation.” The senior prophet anointed Elisha as prophet in his place (1 Kings 19:16). The unwritten questions here are relevant for us.

Are we secure enough to give away our place to the next generation?

At same time, is the next generation humble enough to honor and learn from their forebears?

Both generations in this story had their challenges. Elijah needed to know that Elisha was seriously dedicated and willing to be trained. I hear him saying “Hey, kid, if you can’t take the heat, get out of the kitchen.” Elisha had to become a true servant, who “**poured water on the hands of Elijah**” (2 Kings 3:11).

Then, nearing the climax of the whole transition process, Elijah seemed to rebuff the younger man three times, telling him “You don’t need to come with me.” *Elisha persevered*, determined to receive a “double portion” of his mentor’s spirit (2 Kings 2:9).

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The dramatic result was that Elisha literally received the mantle of his spiritual father, going on to record almost precisely twice the miracles of Elijah. He extended and consolidated the breakthroughs of Elijah.

Fathers' and Children's Hearts

This generational shift came at a time of great spiritual need in Israel. Today, the need is no less intense; and we are also seeing a profound generational shift. Noticeably, many congregations both in Israel and abroad are going through this very transition, including ours. As with Elijah and Elisha, this is not an automatic or slick process. What pointers can we glean from these prophets?

First, *the transition was authored by God.* He sent Elijah to anoint Elisha as his successor (1 Kings 19:15-16).

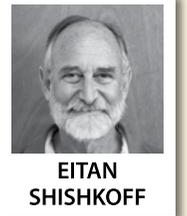
Second, *it involved a choice* by both the father/mentor and the son/protégé (1 Kings 19:19-21). They had to walk together in radical mutual commitment with the younger man faithfully serving the older prophet. (1 Kings 19:21).

Third, *Elisha refused to quit*, remaining steadfast in following Elijah until the shift occurred (2 Kings 2:2,4,6). A simple, yet riveting statement in 2 Kings 2:15 sums up this change. **“The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha.”**

In the final verse of the entire Hebrew Scriptures, God keys the coming of **“the great and awesome day of the Lord,”** to the *generations turning to one another in heart.*

“And He will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse” (Malachi 4:6).

On the one hand this is sobering. On the other hand it is deep and tender. Our priority could not be clearer. As those who quite possibly will see the “day of the Lord,” we are to give our very hearts to each other as generations. What encouragement and inspiration to know that this is just what’s happening! ✨



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TENTS OF MERCY CONGREGATION

20 Year Anniversary & Hanukkah Celebration



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OBSTACLES ON THE JOURNEY

When a baby is born we get so excited! Our hearts open wide. A glow of blessing rests visibly on the mother and the newborn.

Life is a gift from God, yet the destiny of each newborn is known only to his or her Creator. Where will his *journey* take him? What will she do in her lifetime? God has a purpose for all creatures, including – of course – each new human being. Each life has meaning and worth. No one is an accident, even those born with severe handicaps.

As they grow, parents endeavor to instill tools in their young ones, to equip and prepare them for all that life holds. Parents guide the child's path of discovery and stimulate his senses: sight, touch, hearing, smelling ... it is wonderful to see.

In the coming years, teachers, counselors, leaders and others will speak into the child's life. He will mature and find ways to overcome personal and environmental *obstacles*. All this eventually helps the now grown child find his place in society, stand on his own and fulfill his destiny. On the way he or she may well get married. The new couple will grow and learn from each other. Soon a baby will be born, starting the whole miraculous cycle over again.

Scoring Under Pressure

When a basketball player stands on the foul line to shoot a free throw, the opposing crowd makes noise trying to distract the player's attention and cause him to miss. Coaches prepare their players for this difficult situation by applying various pressures during practice sessions. *This is done for a good purpose - to get the player accustomed to focusing on the goal, and not allowing himself to be confused and affected by adversity.*

In the same manner, a teen or young adult is surrounded by a whole series of pressures and demands. That carefully coddled and educated baby grew up and is now exposed to a world full of things that are liable to confuse and distract him from the goal. Parents have the central all-important task of continuing to diligently rear and protect; to pass on skills that will stand strong against the storms and pressures of society. Indeed

bad company corrupts good morals, and we must always work toward having good company around our children. But our main role is to exemplify a life of integrity and faith, a foundation of trust in the Master Yeshua.

Our journey is defined by our responses to the difficulties we encounter. Challenges shape our character, change our thought patterns and give us the desire to improve. External crises can come from peers and society. Internal ones are me trying to deal with my identity. Who and what am I? Why am I here on this earth? For what purpose?

There is no such thing as a life without some kind of effort and struggle. These difficulties can drive the believer who is well trained in the Word of God, to trust in the Lord's overall plan and to stand fast, declaring victory. The Bible reveals to us the purpose of our time here on earth. We are journeying through this existence towards the eternal One who is our future.

Even mature believers have trials and challenges. These crises give us the opportunity to take a break from our busy routines, and internalize how we can move forward with improvement and change. Perhaps we have made mistakes, and the Lord wants us to alter the way we do certain things.

We must always be ready to be transformed, all the while dedicating our lives to Yeshua and putting aside our personal desires to serve His purposes. At the end of the day His will is going to be a whole lot better for me and everyone else, than mine!

Let us stand, focused and prepared to deal with any turmoil the enemy might send our way, since he goes around like a lion seeking to devour (1 Peter 5:8).

This temporal journey through the valley of sun and shadow is a great gift. Allow God to guide you and strengthen you, through the obstacles along the journey. ✨





1ST CENTURY PHENOMENON

Shavei Tzion is a Jewish Messianic congregation. For those who have never heard of such a thing, probably the most fitting way to describe it, would be to draw a parallel with the New Testament's description of the followers of the Messiah, namely an assembly of 1st century Jews who believed in Yeshua. Back then it was called an Ecclesia or the Hebrew equivalent – *Kahal* – a community of people united by the same belief.

Why not Christian?

Some may ask why we do not call ourselves Christians and prefer to be identified as Messianic Jews. What is the difference between the two? Well, if we look at the New Covenant, the first mention of *Christians* is in Acts. This is what the local Antiochians called the Gentile followers of Yeshua. The choice of this term is not surprising as the word itself takes its origin from *Christ* (or Messiah in Hebrew). Moreover, for the Gentiles of that time to believe in a Jewish Messiah and in the God of Israel, was revolutionary. It was a radical transformation, as they had to turn away from their pagan ways of life. On the other hand Jews who accepted their Messiah, didn't stop being Jews. Though their lives were transformed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, they were in fact still following the Law of Moses, namely believing in the **prophet like Moses who had been raised from among their brothers** (Deuteronomy 18:18). The first Jewish believers were actually called the *people of the Way*, for their Leader proclaimed that He was **"the way the truth and the life."**

Two thousand years later, we, the modern Messianic Jewish believers, are seeking the restoration of the faith of our forefathers, the Jews of the 1st century. We practice our faith by participating in all aspects of daily life in Israel - in our work places, in the army, at school. We seek to live our faith out by bringing the light and the goodness of God to all. In our congregation you will see traditional elements of Jewish fellowship and liturgy celebrating and honoring the Lord's feasts and His Sabbaths, which He established for Israel to observe forever. Therefore, our faith in the Messiah and the New Covenant is represented as a natural extension of the Hebrew Scriptures ("Old Testament") and our worship of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.



This is who we are, and the model of the First Century congregation is the one we aspire to live out here in Israel.

Returning to Zion

The name of our congregation, when translated from Hebrew, means those who Returned to Zion. It reflects the majority of our members whom God has returned to Zion from the exile abroad. There are those among us who came to faith in the God of Israel and His Messiah in the diaspora and were prompted to move to Israel.

However, we also have people in our fellowship who have found God and faith in His Messiah *here in Israel*, as it has been written: **"I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring**



you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws" (Ezekiel 36:24-27).

Reaching Out

One of our key aims as a congregation is to help those who are returning to Israel and to revive the desire of those who are still living abroad, in the Diaspora, to move to the Promised Land.

Besides meeting in fellowship throughout the week, worshipping and praising God, we also dedicate time and effort to help those who are in need. We study the Word in its original language and context, taking into consideration the traditions of those times. Essentially, by God's grace, we have become one large family that continues to grow, spiritually as well as physically.

After almost two thousand years, God is restoring faith in Yeshua among the Jewish people. Having accepted the call, we reach out to our people with the message of Messiah. ✡



LEON
MAZIN