



Oasis

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The Harvest

by Eitan Shishkoff

I remember harvesting when we were hippie farmers in New Mexico. A lot of work went into each crop before we could gather the fruits of our labors into storage for the winter. But there was nothing like the thrill of finally collecting ripe food from the earth.

Not haphazardly did God choose the image of harvest to speak of the end of the age. Repeatedly, especially in the Gospels, the Book of Revelation and the prophet Joel, harvest imagery represents our activity before Messiah's return. How shall we now apply this? Israel is restored as a nation. There is a remnant of Yeshua's Jewish followers living and worshiping in the land. What is our priority in the light of His coming?

HARVEST WORKERS: Our Sons & Daughters

The conclusion is not complicated. Yeshua says **"Lift up your eyes...the fields are already white unto harvest."** Though uttered some 20 centuries ago, the words are arresting. Even before Yeshua's time, Joel describes a time when we will be back in the land. In that context he speaks

of the Spirit being "poured out" upon all flesh, with an emphasis on "your sons and daughters" as prophetic messengers (Joel 2:28). Forgive me, if my interpretive grid seems simplistic, but I and my family returned to this land---as Joel predicted---and my sons and daughters are with me, following Yeshua as Messiah. Some are teens, some are in their 30's, but each one is receiving from God and being a witness that the Rabbi from Nazareth is our Redeemer.

One of my children is an 18 year old combat soldier in the Israeli Defense Force (IDF). He came home on leave with the following story. During a long night of guard duty he and another soldier got into a philosophical discussion about God, creation and the Messiah. They teased each other back and forth about evolution versus creation. But when my son spoke clearly of his faith in Yeshua, his companion asked "Tell me about this Yeshua again." In the end his friend said, half jokingly "Hey, I want to follow your Yeshua; make me a Messianic too."

Had we not arrived in Israel some 14 years ago, enabling Avi to grow up

here, knowing Hebrew as if it were his native language, the above conversation would never had happened. The generation of our children, those who've attended school in Israel and become part of the fabric of society, THEY are the harvest workers who will bring this nation to God in unprecedented numbers.

The HARVEST: Beginning in the Secret Place

Seeing the need for this generation to be equipped for the harvest, several of us joined together five years ago to form a national ministry to Messianic youth. Inspired by the expectation of a revival/harvest in Israel before Yeshua's return, we called it HaKatzir-The Harvest.

This past December we invited some 120 teenage men and women to the shores of the Sea of Galilee for a Chanukah camp organized by "The Harvest." The theme of the camp was "In the Secret Place" taken from Psalm 91. Its text became our focal point in messages, personal quiet times and small group discussion. Following the fear and disruption of last summer's war in Lebanon, we felt a need to emphasize the promises of God to those who come into His secret place and establish intimate trust. The language



Brother to Brother

Continued on Page 6

of the psalm is captivating. **"Because he has set his love upon me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known my name. (Psalm 91:12)**

On the second night of the camp a young IDF officer, who had recently completed his tour of duty, spoke to the kids. Stefan Silver's account of numerous near-death battle experiences gripped the entire assembly (See *Oasis* article, Dec.



Hear my Cry

06). For each young person the summer's memories were still vivid: air raid sirens, bomb shelters, the thud of rockets landing, death raining down from the sky, and sending our young men off to defend the country, praying often that they would return alive. Stefan also spoke of his reinvigorated faith while leading a company of men into battle, seeing men die before his very eyes. He told honestly of the decreasing importance of Yeshua in his life during Israeli high school years. But that changed in the dusty heat of exploding grenades, upended tanks and a vicious enemy. "God never left me. He pulled me back to Himself. I read Psalm 91 to my men before each battle. I saw every verse come true before my eyes. I knew people around the world were praying for us. I wept at that realization."

A HARVEST of Faith for the Future

He ended his sincere, straightforward testimony with a simple, provocative challenge. "God brought me to the place of no other option. Don't wait until you're in the middle of a war. An intimate relationship with God is the final issue of life." Then young people made their way to the front, to receive prayer from the group leaders of the camp. These are men and women Stefan's age, who have also grown up in Israel and now have a burden for the teens who are struggling through the same faith challenges they passed through not long ago. Youth after youth began to break, some weeping, others praying quietly, calling upon God to cleanse, renew and fill them.

At the end of the evening, as if all oppression/fear/compromise had been broken off of them, these kids rose up and began to shout: **"ALL ISRAEL WILL BE SAVED...KOL YISRAEL YIVASHA."** In unison every young



Daughters of Zion

man and woman, leaned forward pointing---their very posture declaring the future: **"ALL ISRAEL WILL BE SAVED...KOL YISRAEL YIVASHA."** Beloved, this is what we have been praying for, to raise up a generation of Israeli disciples who are dedicated to reaching this nation in its

own language and cultural vocabulary. Here are the harvest workers Yeshua commanded us to ask of Him in Matthew 9:38.



Two Leaders - Idan and Sasha

Toward the HARVEST - What NEXT?

The Harvest team (We are all from different congregations throughout Israel) expects to sponsor numerous events this year. We are planning for the next camp, a Passover experience in the Negev desert. I am personally motivated to bring together youth who feel a call to spiritual leadership, for days of equipping and prayer. Respected congregational leaders have already backed *HaKatzir* (The Harvest). We are committed to fostering every local youth group and the healthy congregational life of these "young lions."

So, I want to ask you to actively pray with us for the strengthening and deepening of this work among Israeli Messianic youth. We are in need of a team member who focuses on **logistics**. There is also the major facet of mentoring youth in worship. Music is a magnet for young people. It becomes a powerful vehicle to express their hearts. Part of our vision is **to equip them musically and spiritually** to create vibrant collective praise. Ongoing **intercession** is also an essential ingredient in breaking through to the greater harvest among Israeli youth, who currently haven't a clue about who Yeshua is. If you are drawn to participate with HaKatzir on any level, please contact me at ohalei@netvision.net.il ✨

Editor: Eitan Shishkoff
 Grafic Design: David Coddington
 P.O.Box 1018 Kiryat Yam, Israel 29109
 Tel. +972(4) 877-7921
 Fax: +972(4) 875-7792
 E-mail: ohalei@netvision.net.il
 Stateside: c/o Tikkun Ministries
 P.O.Box 2997 Gaithersburg, MD 20886-2997

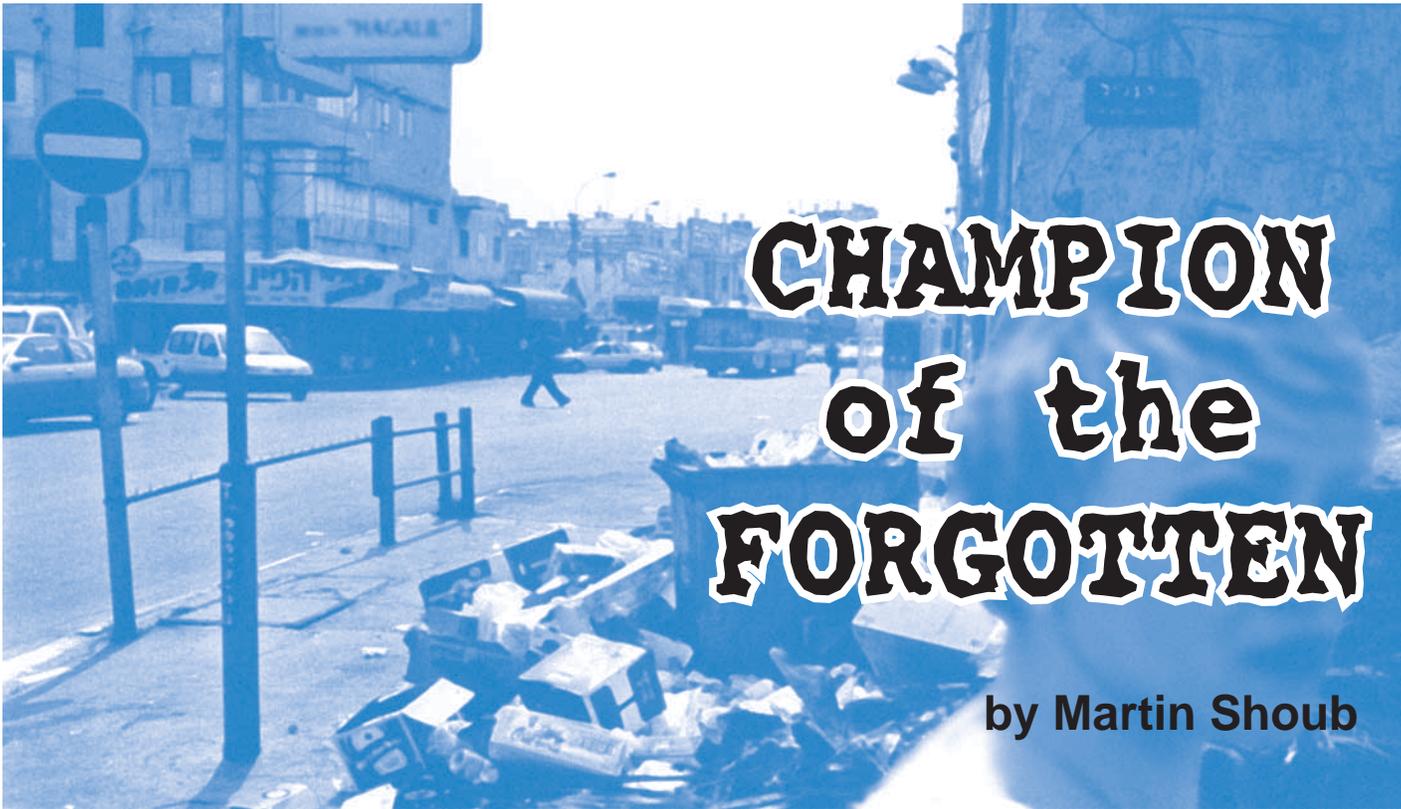


Our Vision:

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.



CHAMPION of the FORGOTTEN

by Martin Shoub

Valia was arrested in a Tel Aviv drug bust but the police wanted to see her off the streets more than they wanted her in prison. They knew who to call.

VALIA

Lydia, a member of the Tents of Mercy ministry team, was soon on her way to Tel Aviv from her home north of Haifa. A woman needed her help. Valia was like many young women caught in the prostitution trade, a new immigrant unable to find her way in the fast pace of Israeli society. Crisis



followed crisis until Valia found herself sold to a prostitution ring.

Lydia assured Valia, "I've come to help," but all Valia could do was cry. Lydia left Valia her card and told her she could call her anytime. The police released Valia but despair had so taken hold of her that she slit her wrist and tried to throw herself in front of a bus. The police again turned to Lydia for help. This time Valia opened her heart to Lydia and let herself be placed in a shelter run by believers in Haifa.

Day after day Lydia met with Valia to comfort her and to pray. Slowly, Valia trusted her new "spiritual mom" and further opened her heart. This time to the One who loved her with perfect love, Yeshua the Messiah.

GILAD

Gilad is a reservist medic called up to serve in last summer's conflict. During an intense firefight Gilad was seriously wounded. Despite his own

injuries he stayed at his post attending to 14 other wounded soldiers. In the fray of battle Gilad lost consciousness.

Under enormous pressure, the surviving troops evacuated the area, leaving Gilad on the field, presumably



Gilad, Lydia and Gilad's wife

dead. Hours later he awoke to find himself huddled next to several casualties – the lone survivor.

When a helicopter came back to retrieve the bodies they found Gilad alive and rushed him to emergency medical aid. Gilad underwent several operations and was discharged from the hospital one month later. Because Gilad is in the IDF reserves his

employer is required to continue providing his salary but an unfortunate mix-up left Gilad, his wife and two small children with mounting bills and no income to pay them. Gilad's stressful circumstances coupled with the shock of his recent trauma were too much to bear. He was re-admitted to the hospital unable to cope.

Lydia's compassion again launched her into action. Friendship translated into advocacy; through her contacts and loving determination Lydia persuaded a Knesset member to visit Gilad. The MK in turn pressured Gilad's employer to pay his back salary and Gilad received over three months wages' compensation. This Israeli hero deserved no less.

Who is this woman of mercy, this champion of the downtrodden? She is Lydia Nikitin, one of Tents of Mercy's outreach workers; a woman with a passion for justice and a heart for those in need.

ORPHANS

From the outset of her faith in Yeshua, Lydia sought to respond to God's love by working on behalf of others. Together with her husband they founded a children's center in her hometown near Vladivostok to bring practical help to needy children in their home town. After making aliyah to Israel in 1998, they continued to help needy children, fostering five others along with their own four children.

Lydia explains, "When I arrived in Israel I started to look around for what I could do. I had no language, no applicable profession (Lydia had been a Soviet army engineer), but I relied on God to help me." Four years ago, Lydia connected with the Israeli women's organization, Woman to Woman, a national program to help women caught in the snare of prostitution trafficking. The work was hard and discouraging but Lydia drew strength from Yeshua's words, **"I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to Me."** (Matt. 25:40)

Lydia's work with prostitutes eventually led her to develop her own

outreach program under the guidance and leadership of Tents of Mercy. Along with a group of Tents of Mercy volunteers she travels to the sites of solicitation, befriending and encouraging the women, letting them know that there is help and hope to live a different life.

Lydia's work has gained her respect on a national scale. On January 1st she was called to make a special presentation to the Knesset outlining the problems she has discovered in her work with women in prostitution. Her dream is to establish a rehabilitation center to assist women who want to be liberated from the shackles of prostitution.

But how did this friend of prostitutes get involved in ministering to wounded soldiers? Following the Second Lebanon War, Yishai Reinhardt, of Hands of Mercy-Israel (an organization dedicated to helping wounded soldiers and terror victims) approached Eitan Shishkoff to enlist our help in visiting wounded soldiers in Rambam hospital. Eitan chose Lydia and her team for this assignment because he knew they were equipped for the task. A smiling face and a word of prayer is medicine beyond a doctor's prescription. In the immediate aftermath of the war, Lydia and her team reached out to 40 soldiers recuperating from their wounds. They continue to do follow up work with wounded soldiers and civilians who live in Northern Israel.

COMPASSION BUILDS VISION

"Everything is possible to those who believe" is Lydia's motto. "I never thought that someone like me, without any special abilities could be used to help so many people." Lydia is not resting on her laurels. She reminded

me, "Yeshua calls us to take action, to impact individuals and society at large. We are called to defend the weak and down-trodden."

What motivates an ordinary woman to do such extraordinary feats? "I have had a lot of difficulties in my life. God has changed my life and is restoring me from everything I have suffered. When I see others oppressed I cannot be silent."

Lydia's dedication is a marker pointing us back to Yeshua's words to



Galina, a civilian victim of the war and Outreach workers

reach out to "The least of these." Dear reader, perhaps God is stirring you to reach out too. Lydia and Tents of Mercy invite you to join with her in her ministry to women in bondage and soldiers in need. Please pray for Lydia, her family and her team. They are challenging forces of darkness that have established strongholds in this land over the millennia. Pray for provision for Lydia's dream of a rehabilitation center for former prostitutes. As Lydia knows, all things are possible for those who believe.

If you would like to get in touch with Lydia you can e-mail her at: lydiathyatira@mail.ru ✨