

Oasis

REACH OUT

Ever since the inception of Tents of Mercy, humanitarian aid has been a very central part of our ministry mandate here in northern Israel. Over the last two decades with your help and God's grace, our "reach" has increased many times over. The local city welfare department works with us hand in hand in a close, trusting partnership. They are more than happy to refer 300 needy families to us every month for ongoing aid, mainly in the form of monthly food baskets. Over the years our humanitarian aid center has also been open daily throughout the week, making quality second hand clothing and household goods available to the community.

Approximately half of the needy recipients are brand new immigrants who recently just left the Jewish exile, returning from Ukraine, France, Cuba, Argentina, Paraguay and Hungary. Many of the Ukrainians fled the war zone in their homeland, with barely the clothes on their back. French Jews are fleeing increasing anti-Semitism in larger and larger numbers.



The fall and spring Biblical festival seasons provide the opportunity to reach out more broadly – to 700 needy households, including elderly widows and new immigrant families. This September members of our congregation, together with a team of volunteers from Tennessee, labored lovingly to pack blue bags with



food items, assembly line style. Then, just before Rosh Hashana, a city welfare official sat together with our Svetlana for hours on end confirming each "customer" as they received their special holiday food basket. We praise God for the privilege to offer this very practical gesture of God's blessing into the surrounding community. ✡



Svetlana with city employee registering aid recipients



TEA & SHABBAT IN TAIWAN



Tea Farm

We traversed Taiwan on a skyscraper-tall superhighway, threading through emerald mountains. Seeing intensive agriculture on the side of many carefully terraced hills, I asked our hosts “What are they growing there?” They replied, “Tea!”

Growing tea on these slopes requires vision and long-term investment. Such is the approach of the wise church leaders and ministry teams who became treasured friends during our eventful days with them. We saw the inspiring multiplication of a church network, which now numbers more than 10,000 in its central church in Taipei City, and another 20,000 in daughter churches throughout the nation. They told us, “We want a lasting relationship with you and your people, Eitan. An occasional speaking tour does not interest us. Nor do we want to be mere tourists in Israel.”

Everywhere we went our brothers and sisters were thrilled to have contact with Messianic Jews from Israel. The prophetic promises regarding Israel, the Church, and the Last Days were familiar to them, and we were received as living proof that God is keeping His word.

Two years ago I was blessed to see my book, “What About Us?” published in Taiwan’s traditional Chinese. One veteran pastor told me he had read the book three times. It had transformed his understanding of the relationship between Israel and Yeshua’s followers in the nations. That was humbling to hear, but when I joined his congregation in singing “Baruch haBa BaShem Adonai—Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord,” I began weeping for joy. Here I was on an island off Asia’s coast, at the “end” of the earth, calling on the Messiah to return and rule all nations. “OK,



Special hugs

Lord, it’s all true. Seeing this love and faith regarding Israel’s restoration and the Messiah’s coming - in such a far away place - it’s all GOT to be true.”

On the Sabbath Eve of our visit, I was asked to share on “Raising a Family according to Jewish Tradition.” The best way to learn is to experience. So our hosts supplied a table covered with a beautiful cloth, candles, grape juice, and even challah - the braided bread traditionally eaten during the blessings that invoke the peace of the Sabbath. I began chanting the blessings and leading the families through the celebration. There were at least 400 people there - grandparents, moms and dads and their children. We were family together. The atmosphere became homey - intimate, tender, and loving. Clearly the hard-working parents pour themselves out. They want the best for their children, and needed to experience the Sabbath rest in ceasing our own labors. The presence of three generations underscored our covenant inheritance from the God who calls Himself the God of a father (Abraham), a son (Isaac), and a grandson (Jacob).

The next night, at a huge youth meeting, I shared on “Going Beyond your Comfort Zone.” The response was amazing! Hundreds crowded the platform, eager to surrender their entire destiny to God. I couldn’t help thinking about our Israeli youth and the longing for such numbers to turn whole-heartedly to the Lord.

Again and again I was moved by the Taiwanese Christians’ devotion to Yeshua and their sacrificial service to those in need. We saw a storefront “barber shop” where people off the street receive a free haircut. We took part in a worship service that is held weekly for families of special needs children. These families are served during the week with material aid and assistance in the draining challenge of caring for their loved ones. I was asked to pronounce a blessing over them. As I explained the Aaronic Benediction from Numbers 6, my heart overflowed with affection for the young people - each with a different limitation, a different set of genetic challenges. I felt God’s love and personal care for each of them. After hearing the blessing sung in Hebrew, they began hugging me, squeezing me with a tangible, honest love. I was undone. Our Taiwanese friends showed me what true compassion is - a healthy reminder for a man from the Tents of Mercy. ✡

 By EITAN SHISHKOFF



Children’s Sabbath Eve service



Concrete & brick jungle in Brazil

DREAMS & DOORS IN BRAZIL

I always dreamed of going to Brazil. Most likely it started when I was a boy growing up in the Soviet Union, with cartoons, movies and books about the Amazon River and its uncharted jungles. I imagined myself wading through tropical rainforests, monkeys screeching all around while exotic birds flew overhead.

After moving to Israel, I had the opportunity to visit and teach in many countries: the United States and Germany, Japan and Kazakhstan, the Netherlands and Russia, Korea and Scandinavia. Though my English is not as fluent as I would like, I still get invited to share and I give it my best. I teach about Israel and the roots of our faith, hold seminars about "Tikkun Olam" (restoration of the world) and the prophetic biblical feasts. Occasionally I return to Israel with regrets, and at other times I am strongly inspired by my reception. People are the same everywhere, and every minister knows these two feelings. Sometimes one succeeds in conveying an idea, and sometimes it turns out that even the teacher doesn't understand fully what it was that he wanted to communicate. At least it is so in my case :)

Throughout these many journeys, the thought of Brazil remained in my mind and my heart. And then the dream came true. Somehow... mysteriously...through email correspondence we received an initial invitation. I say "we" because I am not alone. On our team we have a brother from Brazil, who serves as an administrator/cantor, and also prepares children for their "Bar and Bat Mitzvah." With my insistence and his Portuguese language skills we wrote to people in Brazil about the possibility of coming to teach, and in several places people responded. Perhaps it was hope combined with childish naiveté. But such a combination sometimes works out, and it is also called faith.



Received with open arms

The plan was to go to Sao Paulo, Mines, Compino and Rio de Janeiro in 13 days! Huge cities and vast distances to cover. There were six to seven meetings planned, with the hope that there would be some free time to sightsee. But it worked out differently.

After the first meeting with the theme "Mishkan David - the Tabernacle of David," we received various invitations. Instead of ordinary meetings, we were invited to gatherings of dozens of leaders and pastors. Some of those who attended were "trans-national leaders" or apostles, enthusiastically accepting the word from Zion. Our hands were nearly "torn off" from so many handshakes. We felt blinded by the camera flash. (But we did not allow ourselves to become proud because of it.) We saw God opening the door!



Heartfelt prayer

The Word was received with such desire, intensity and interest. I have not seen this even when I served in my native language (Russian). We met many wonderful people, including Paulo and Nadia - servants at the national level - who became our guides and most importantly, became our friends. They were truly angels of God!

Brazilians express emotions even more freely than Israelis. However, it was not just emotions. The Holy Spirit was moving, and as it is written in the Scriptures, we were with them "in weakness and in fear and much trembling" (I Corinthians 2:3).

Well, my dream came true, though I spent more time in meetings than in the jungle. I look forward to seeing the fruit of our visit. In the meantime it is a worthy cause to pray for Brazil. Brazilians face many challenges - but also have an open heart for God, sincerity in their eyes and energy to pray. And in their hearts there is plenty of room for Israel! These are "foreigners" of whom Isaiah speaks in chapters 56, 60 & 61. With their prayers and hands they are ready to build up and repair the walls of Zion! Together with us they are preparing the way for the homecoming of our Messiah! ✡



By LEON MAZIN

Star of David stained glass window from Moshe's childhood synagogue - given to him during the church renovation

REVISITING MY CHILDHOOD SYNAGOGUE

In August of 1979, I and my wife Katya, together with our two children, moved back to Baltimore from Long Island, New York. I was to take over the leadership of a small Baltimore Messianic congregation paying me fifty dollars a month for my services. Since this was obviously not enough to live on, within a couple of weeks I found a job repairing old houses throughout the city.

The neighborhoods in which I worked were formerly 98% Jewish. Now they were 98% Afro-American. Consequently, the numerous synagogues had become churches. Among them was a synagogue my family had attended when I was growing up and in which I had become a *bar mitzvah* nearly twenty years before. Now it was home to a Pentecostal church. One Sunday morning, I thought it might be an interesting adventure to attend services there. I walked into the entryway minutes before the service began, slipping into a seat in the back of the sanctuary. They were the very same oak pews I had sat on as a child with the fold down shelf to hold the traditional Jewish prayer book (*siddur*) and the little cubbyhole underneath to store one's prayer shawl (*tallit*).

The ark that held the Torah scrolls was gone, as was the "*ner tamid*" (everlasting light) that hung above it. Yet its holy presence still lingered on the bare wall in the faded but still visible Hebrew words, "Know before Whom you stand." Gone also was the large desk, in the center of the sanctuary, where the scrolls were read. Everything else seemed unchanged, except the Hammond organ and drums (sounding a bit like Booker T. and the MGs) and a thirty voice, white-robed choir singing gospel songs.

I sat reflecting about the past from a future that I never could possibly have imagined.

Two Messianic Movements

When I became a *bar mitzvah* in this Chabad synagogue, Rabbi Schneerson was already leading his Chasidic movement from its headquarters in Brooklyn. Then some began to think Schneerson was the Messiah (!). I reflected on how this was picking up momentum among his followers. I had also been gripped by a Messianic movement, but one that long predated the founding of

Chabad. According to Micah 5:2, my Messiah's "**goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.**" And the Messiah who had come into my life had only been in the grave for three days before he arose, unlike Schneerson whose followers have been waiting since 1994 for his resurrection.

Seasons

We are now in the season of the fall festivals. Rosh HaShana, Yom Kippur and Tabernacles. Rosh HaShana is called the head of the year, because it is the anniversary of the creation of the world. Like most birthdays it tends to bring a heightened awareness of the passage of time. Another year has passed, a new one begins bringing fresh reflection. The sound of the shofar grips our consciousness and calls us to prepare ourselves for what lies ahead. The Day of Atonement is a day of fasting and reflection.

I still follow the yearly cycle in Yeshua. Much is the same and much different. How amazing is the journey on which God leads us! And by the hand of God's Spirit, these precious foundations are woven into who I am. I still worship in a congregation with an ark and a Torah scroll.

During the fall festival season, someone would always come to my childhood synagogue and make a strong appeal for purchasing Israel Development Bonds. Now I contribute to the development of Israel, not by buying bonds, but by investing my life and the life of my family in this land. Here in Israel as well, we look back and remember all that the Lord has done. And we press on with confident expectation for the future because we know that Israel will yet hear the sound of the heavenly shofar. They will embrace the atonement of Yeshua. Then He, the rightful king of Israel, will come to take up His throne in Jerusalem, and the Tabernacle of God will be in the midst of His people. ✡



By MOSHE MORRISON



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