

EX-ORTHODOX CRISIS



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**I Couldn't Go On
Without an Answer**

Based in Israel | A Global Messianic Family Dedicated to the Restoration of Israel and the Church



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Vol.37 | Jan 21 | No. 1

Advancing the Kingdom of God

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Shalom Dear Friends,

It is an honor to partner together with you!

As we start this New Year, I'd like to review our ministry vision for 2021. Our basic values and vision have stayed consistent for over four decades. The vision is: *Advancing the Kingdom of God*. Almost ten years ago, I was interviewed on secular Israeli television and asked what our "dream" was, as Messianic Jews. I answered that it was the same as the longing of the ancient Hebrew prophets, to see the kingdom of Messiah here on earth, with peace and goodwill toward all men. (See Isaiah 2:2-4; Matthew 10:23, 24:14; Luke 17:21; Romans 14:17)

To serve such a huge vision, we have to work together. We call this team-work: "covenantal relationships." Covenant is a commitment to long-term relationship, through the biblical principles of loyalty and integrity. Despite the many challenges and ups-and-downs, over the decades we remain faithful in partnership and cooperation.

Our mission is to help foster a world-wide movement of revival and restoration, from Jerusalem, and Judea and Samaria, to the ends of the earth... and back again. This is an "updated" version of Yeshua's instructions to His disciples in Acts 1:8, **"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be witnesses of me from Jerusalem, and Judea and Samaria, and even to the ends of the earth."**

This is true and relevant for all followers of Yeshua at any time and any location. Yet, there is *something special today*, in that these words are coming back to their original historical context. Time and geography are merging together. Prophetic scriptures are being fulfilled as we move more into the End Times.

We take this verse quite literally – from Congregation Ahavat Yeshua in Jerusalem, and the Revive Israel training center in the Judean Hills, and congregations across Israel, to networking for unity in the "global ekklesia." By the grace of God, we have seen younger generation leaders take over all the ministries that were started by us as the "founding fathers." This year we are planting a new base of Revive Israel in downtown Jerusalem, to serve as the main arm, or headquarters for Tikkun Global.

The start of this year is a brief but intense window of transition. The virus epidemic led to a leap forward in united prayer worldwide. While governments have been going through shakings, the global ekklesia is receiving more revelation about its role as a "heavenly" government. The wave of peace treaties between Israel and the Arab nations is a sign that the visions of Isaiah and the other prophets are close at hand. A global alignment is taking place. This alignment from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth will release a new wave of spiritual synergy for both revival and restoration. Yes, times are difficult; and they will become even more difficult. Yet in the midst of all these tribulations, Yeshua's kingdom is advancing.

Everything done until now is a foundation for what is about to happen. We are going down a run-way, picking up speed, and about to take off. Let's join together in the new stage of the ancient vision.

With great appreciation,
Asher Intrater

On behalf of us all at Revive Israel - Tikkun Global



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Ex-Orthodox Crisis



By Tal Ruben

There is a phenomenon among Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel. A high percentage of them feel like they are dressed in a costume. They may still be living within the Orthodox community, but many do not believe in what they are doing or even in God. Many that look Orthodox do not define themselves as such. Some still believe in God but can no longer participate in Orthodox society.

These individuals are looking for a way out, a way to connect with the society at-large. Yet it is intimidating and scary to leave everything they know – the support structures in their all-encompassing society. How can they take this step without getting completely lost? Many of them do not even have the basic educational tools of the average Israeli citizen, since their learning has focused on rabbinical commentary and oral law. Many have never worked a regular job. How can they find employment? They are overwhelmed by the daunting challenges.

Some still love God but things they have seen in the religious world have burned them. If they actually leave, there is the trauma of going from having a framework to having no framework, and trying to find themselves. Some are shattered. Some become homeless. Some become atheists with no faith at all. Some go into New Age, and some come to faith in Yeshua.

For years the traditional religious and ultra-Orthodox Israelis have been on my heart. I feel this is the direction God is calling me to testify about Him. This is the main group in Israel to which He has drawn me. It is also part of who I am. My personal understanding as a Messianic Jew includes a positive approach to Jewish tradition and culture – though not subject to the rabbinate and to rabbinical religion.

We at Revive Israel have been sharing the good news in Israel for years, reaching out to society in general and also to the Orthodox and ex-Orthodox in various ways.

In our new program, centered around agriculture, we provide an opportunity for Israelis from all walks of life to directly experience God's creation – in this case through organic farming and permaculture. There is a wonderful action of God in the lives of people who come and work in the field with us. During part of the workday, we also provide a framework of *praise, prayer and Scripture-reading as well as taking time to respond to questions and needs of all kinds*. This is part of how we reach out to the ex-Orthodox. While working with us, one of them said he felt he had just had a cleansing shower for his soul.

We want to come to the aid of people who are struggling in the crisis and storms of life. We want to help them stand on the stable Rock and hear about Yeshua in a very clear way: by hearing the Scriptures, meeting believers, and encountering God in His creation.

So this is part of our vision of discipleship and evangelism through agriculture. Please join with us in prayer for all Israelis who are searching, secular and Orthodox alike, to find the One they are searching for.

We want to come to the aid of people who are struggling in the crisis and storms of life.



A Lesson-Filled Doughnut



By Hannah Tekle

Surprise! Here in Israel, we can't get doughnuts year-round. "Sufganiyot" (the Israeli equivalent for doughnuts) appear in bakeries in November, and stay around only through Hanukkah and the end of December.

As a multicultural family, it seems there is always some holiday we are working towards or recovering from. We recently celebrated Sigd, the Ethiopian-Jewish holiday of thanksgiving to God for bringing us home to Israel. Then, suddenly, doughnuts were everywhere—mainly the classic Israeli *red-jelly-filled*, sugar-frosted ones, but also versions with *chocolate, caramel and nougat fillings*, covered with decadent frostings.

So, what's the deal with all the *oil-fried treats* that only appear here for a few months out of the year? During Chanukah, fried foods are eaten to commemorate the *small bottle of oil* that the Maccabees found in the temple when they cleansed and rededicated it, which lasted a miraculous eight days until more oil could be brought to keep the everlasting light lit.

For being such a huge, powerful, sovereign Creator of the Universe, it sure seems that God cares an awful lot about the tiny, insignificant things - amounts of money, oil, talents, etc.

A small amount of oil proving to be a big deal appears in a few places in the scriptures. In I Kings 17, God directs Elijah the prophet to a widow from Zerahath, whose small amount of oil is multiplied. Matthew 25 tells the parable of the ten virgins: five had a small quantity of oil for their lamps, and five did not.

In one story, the oil represents **provision** and, in the other, **preparation**. True confession: I have always felt sorry for the five unprepared virgins, understanding their forgetfulness and feeling sad that they missed out and failed due to their haphazardness, a characteristic to which I can readily relate. Recently, we have studied the parable in our congregation and continued deeper in our women's group. Coming to a better understanding, I am encouraged that even as a *non-type-A personality*, I can prepare myself. The virgins who didn't have oil asked to borrow from their friends, but their friends told them to go get some for themselves. This small bit of oil is something we have to seek on our own. Psalm 81:10 says, "*I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt: open wide your mouth, and I will fill it.*" It's not a complicated process, merely an act of personal initiative to bring an empty jar and have it filled. When we bring our emptiness before Him, He is faithful to fill us.

Likewise, the jar of oil in the story of Hanukkah had a small amount that was enough, by God's grace. In a recent post-service congregational Zoom call, we heard a testimony and exhortation from a dear brother in the congregation. He and his wife are doing what small acts of service that they can, to encourage others. In doing so, they are able to rejoice despite frustrations and difficulties. He encouraged all of us to not despise the small things we can do or are prompted to do, because God uses the small things and miraculously multiplies them to provide enough.

The next time you indulge in a doughnut or any other oil-fried delight, think about those small jars of oil. Remember God's provision and faithfulness when we bring before Him our little, and even our emptiness for Him to fill.

Begin the Change



By Guy Cohen



I was born and raised in the city of Akko. As a young boy, due to a fever, I lost 80% of my hearing. Because of this, I was labeled by teachers and ridiculed by children. As I think back on that difficult time, I realize that if you want to change yourself or the opinion of others about you, *don't wait for someone else to inspire you*. Begin the change yourself.

Many times, people say things such as, “he/she is slow, incapable, or lazy.” You can agree with what others say about you – or not. If you have a confident attitude and do not accept their negativity, their opinion may change. No matter what, do not belittle yourself.

Sometimes we have to be like Abraham. When he obeyed God's call for him to leave his “comfort zone,” he was like a chick inside the egg, struggling and pushing until it breaks through the shell.

There are times when others see potential. They may expect more from us than we are ready to give. If we choose to move toward the goal, we can succeed and turn the tide in our own lives. Without struggle, we won't reach our potential.

The change begins as we ask, “What does God say about me?”

Does it line up with how you see yourself and what you say about yourself?

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen... By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible” (Hebrews 11:1-3).

Faith is like a tank or bulldozer moving us forward toward the goal. Only we, by believing the lies of the enemy and by thinking ungodly thoughts about ourselves, can become entangled in those lies. Through prayer and seeking God, *find a purpose in which to invest your life*.

We were created to make a change, and faith is meant to bring forth breakthroughs in our lives and those of others. There are many times in the Word and the history of Israel when those in leadership, while looking at the current situation, were the very ones who cast doubt - bringing the situation to a halt. In many cases, someone else rose up and stood in faith bringing the breakthrough. We must beware of those well-meaning people who talk about what *cannot* be done; AND we must ALSO be careful not to be our own worst enemy, *not to be used as a tool of the enemy* against ourselves. Instead, we should be encouraged in our faith and instructed in our walk by Yeshua's example in John 5:8-9, **“Rise, take up your bed and walk.”**

“Prepare the way, Take the stumbling block out of the way of My people” (Isaiah 57:14). Take action.

“... Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Yeshua, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls” (Hebrews 12:1-3).

Focus on what God has to say about you!

Looking Back & Looking Ahead



By Leon Mazin

Shalom,

Peace upon you from the Father of our Savior, Yeshua the Messiah. Thank you for your faithful partnership with Return to Zion Ministry! It is such a blessing to have you teaming up with us to do God's will in the land of Israel.

In 2019, we heard at least ten prophecies that spoke of how blessed and miraculous 2020 would be. Yet when the New Year arrived, it brought anxiety and stress to countless people around the globe, a depressing quarantine and unclear expectations of the future. We, too, have strongly felt the repercussions of the pandemic. Our congregation has almost totally transitioned to online meetings, losing precious face-to-face communication with many brothers and sisters.

However, this year has also brought the opportunity for many families to grow closer and spend more time together. We have also been given precious time to devote to prayer and intercession.

What are we to think of all this?

All in all, there were some mistakes as well as some successes; testing and sifting, separation and unification. **"We know that to those who love God...called according to His will, everything works together for good"** (Romans 8:28).

As the Hanukkah and Christmas season surround us, two thoughts persistently fill my heart:

Hanukkah - as a symbol for rededication of the altar, renewal of the value of faith as well as renewal of confidence.

Christmas - as a symbol for the power of God becoming flesh - as the Messiah in this world, and affirmation building up our faith in our heart. The book of Revelation reminds us: "Do not lose your first love."

I want to wish each of you renewal and affirmation in the Lord our God, and the ability to bring forth the best! Grace and help to you these days! We love you!

Friends, you are our valued partners in the ministry here in Israel! Please remember us in your prayers: the work with the poor and new immigrants, the school for the arts and the members of our congregation during these uncertain times.

May the Lord be with us all as we continue into 2021 – bringing love and light to our communities!

Yours faithfully,
Leon and Nina Mazin



Return to Zion Congregation

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A Plea from Our Father



By Eitan Shishkoff

As a ninth grade student in the beginning of the 1960s, I could see that the world was headed for atomic destruction. The Cold War, between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., threatened to blow up the globe. International tensions became common knowledge with the advent of daily television news coverage.

Tragically, our world is still filled with conflict, hatred, and war-born suffering. Not only have things not changed in the past 60 years, now they're worse. A short list of nations currently at war includes Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, Mexico, Turkey (vs. the Kurds), Somalia, Republic of the Congo, Burkina Faso, Mali, Iraq, Nigeria, South Sudan, and Ethiopia.

This list—which sanitizes the blood being spilled, families destroyed, and bitterness planted for future revenge—should bring tears to our eyes. Can we begin to imagine the sorrow of God's heart to watch, as His earthly children torture and devour one another?

Answers in Yeshua's Prayer

When I read Yeshua's impassioned prayer in John 17, I hear the Father's longing to bring His human family together. But surveying the globe—how in the world can that possibly happen?

The keys are “hiding in plain sight” within the verses of this phenomenal prayer. Yeshua is THE ultimate intercessor. **“He ever lives to make intercession...”** (Hebrews 7:25). So, what does the Messiah pray? What is “the Why” of His petition? And, how does He request the Father achieve this oneness of His followers?

The “Why” is stated in Ephesians 1:10 **“...that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Messiah.”** As any good father

desires, the Father of mankind longs to bring His children together in loving, cooperative relationship. This heart is what drove Yeshua to a Roman cross—to reconcile us once and for all to God and to each other (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). No wonder Psalm 133 compares “dwelling together in unity” with the blessing of everlasting life.

The Key - His glory in you

Fine. A noble and lofty goal, you say. But how in the world can we overcome our petty differences, much less foster a kingdom of peace? In His prayer, Yeshua focuses on a radical truth as the key to true oneness. **“And the glory which you gave me I have given them, that they may be one just as we are one.”** (John 17:22) Before dealing with international strife, our Lord is beginning with His followers—with us.

Sadly, we are aware of countless shameful and wasteful divisions among New Covenant believers—contention and disputation dishonoring to His name. The challenge is: Will I take the glory He's extending to me, and be healed of the bitter poison of thinking my group is the best and pointing the finger?

There is an available impartation of His radiant, glorious, resplendent nature. He came, to transmit that nature to my heart and to yours—to make us one. And, ultimately, to unite all of mankind, when **“the wolf and the lamb will feed together”** (Isaiah 65:25).

He then sends us into a divided world, armed with His glory. **“As you sent me into this world, I also have sent them into the world...that the world may know that you sent me”** (John 17:18, 23). Yeshua, the Prince of Peace, has appointed us as His ambassadors of true reconciliation and of the unity that flows from the heart of God.

Is God Leveraging COVID to Prepare the Congregations?



By Jonathan Moore

Has Coronavirus affected your spiritual community? I bet it has. Probably your spiritual community met weekly for a worship service with dozens of participants, if not hundreds or more. Then along came COVID-19 and things changed.

In Israel, there were drastic shutdowns during which we couldn't go more than 100 meters from our house, and we experienced our first Passover in which no one was permitted **"to go out of the door of his house until morning"** (Exodus 12:22). We learned how to meet on "Zoom." We learned how to keep it communal by using Zoom's breakout rooms for socializing even when we couldn't meet physically.

Eventually, restrictions eased so that we could gather outdoors in a park overlooking the Knesset and Israeli Supreme Court. In September, a second wave of infections shut everything down again. Begrudgingly, we went back to Zoom since only groups of 20 people or less were permitted to meet together face to face – even outside. We decided if 20 people could still gather, we would form three groups of 20 (adults) and meet outdoors in three different locations. This plan continued to be a blessing until the cold, rainy weather arrived.

Thankfully, not one congregant has contracted COVID-19! It hasn't been easy to walk the line of meeting in groups safely and continuing to live life as a light in the darkness, while not putting others at risk.

In an elders meeting in early November, we were praying and discussing how to continue during the winter. Asher received Acts 20:20 which says, **"I did not shrink back from proclaiming to you anything that was profitable, teaching you publicly as well as from house to house."**

We felt strongly to not become a "Zoom only" community, while obeying the law, which dictates that only ten people maximum can gather together inside. *We are now meeting in small house groups in several geographic areas in Jerusalem and just outside Jerusalem. The congregants gather in homes every other week, and then everyone meets digitally by Zoom on the alternate week. The Zoom meetings allow for the whole community to "gather" as one, including those who are abroad, those who are in self-quarantine because of high risk, and those who just live far enough apart that it is hard to attend a home meeting.*

It's amazing what God has done in the midst of COVID-19. We've gone from a community almost completely based on a large, weekly meeting in a building, to a community that can meet online, outdoors together, outdoors in smaller groups, or in homes in groups of just a few families each. All of this transformation happened in less than a year.

We long to meet together in larger settings, with the powerful worship in our hall with our sound system, etc. But we are also really enjoying the intimacy of just 10 of us in a home, worshipping "unamplified" together. **We are being knit tightly together, and we are now better prepared for end-times challenges and end-times revival than we were before the virus.**

What has God been birthing in your life and your communities? We'd love to hear from you.

Blessings in Yeshua's Love,

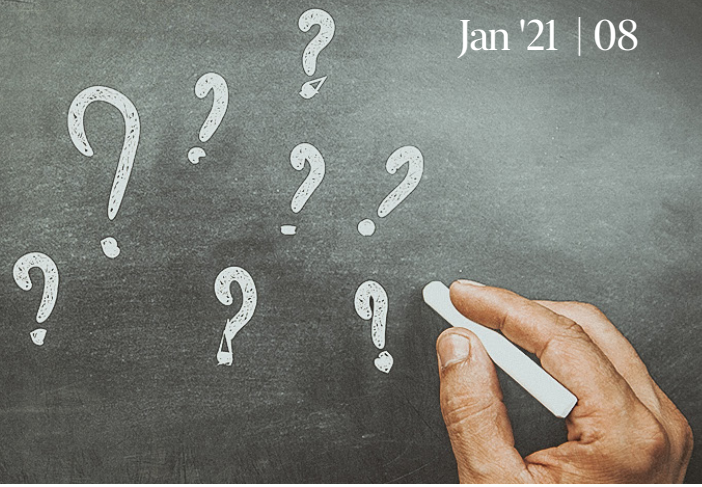
Jonathan, on behalf of the Elders of Congregation Ahavat Yeshua (The Love of Yeshua).

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I Couldn't Go On without an Answer



By Asher Intrater



I was born in the United States and grew up in a Jewish family. When I was young, I attended a conservative Jewish congregation and all my friends were Jewish. I happened to do very well in school, and was accepted to Harvard University. There, as I studied philosophy, psychology, and ancient literature, I began to be *perturbed by questions*:

What is the meaning of life?

Why am I here?

Life did not seem to make any sense to me – that you just live and at the end you die. Even though I seemed to be successful at a young age – that problem, that question, *bothered me so much that I could not go on without an answer*. I began to search and explore, all different kinds of philosophies and religions and literature, but I found no satisfactory answer. As a Jewish young man the one thing that I wasn't willing to investigate was of course Jesus.

After college I was traveling in Central America, and met some very nice young people. They were Spanish speaking and they began to tell me about Jesus. I thought, maybe I should just check it out. I got a copy of the New Testament Scriptures and began to read. Almost immediately I sensed that this was *more truthful* than anything I had read before – more than all the philosophy, literature and psychology. *I was fascinated, and fell in love with the person Jesus*.

After much prayer and thought, I came to the conclusion that there wasn't anything else in life worthy of dedicating myself to, other than Him. Then I began to be troubled by another question. Everyone that I read about in The New Testament – they were all Jewish! *I thought that you weren't supposed to believe in Jesus if you are Jewish*. But, all the people in the New Testament were still Jewish.

During that time there were other Jewish people around the world, who also spontaneously came to faith in Jesus. We began to find one another, and there was sort of a revolution, a historic reformation of faith – to begin to return to the Jewish roots of the faith, faith in Jesus. We began to recreate an environment where we could believe in Jesus, yet maintain our Jewish identity. That was the beginning of what we now call the modern day Messianic Jewish movement, both in the United States and in Israel. It has grown and grown and we are very excited to be part of it.

Betty and I, and our four children immigrated to Israel and went through the Aliyah process in 1991 and 1992. Previous to that we had been part of building Beth Messiah Congregation near Washington D.C., with our friend Daniel Juster; as well as helping build a network of congregations with others which we called Tikkun. We also started our own congregation in Maryland called El Shaddai.

After many years in Israel, helping others to build congregations and ministries and helping to build the infrastructure, we felt it was time to start specifically what God had called us to do. We decided to call our new team Revive Israel.

Today Revive Israel is active in various branches of ministry including local discipleship, evangelism, strategic global impartation; and undergirding Tikkun-related congregations both here in Israel and internationally.

***Thank you for partnering with us
as we all seek to establish
Yeshua's Kingdom upon the earth!***