

Hadadit-Israeli Fund for Helping the Needy

“...They gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship ...only that we should remember the poor, which very thing I was eager to do” (Galatians 2:9-10).

James, Peter and John, the pillars of the ancient messianic congregation in Jerusalem, knew that the work of God in building and strengthening the Body of Messiah, must be maintained with support given to the needy among the believers. In the same spirit, Menahem Benhayim, one of the founders of the “Messianic Jewish Alliance of Israel” in 1989, had previously set up a fund for helping the needy among Israeli messianic Jews.

In 1993 this fund was renamed “Hadadit-Israeli Fund for Helping the Needy”. Guidelines were drawn up to reactivate the fund. The aim of “Hadadit” has been to give financial assistance to messianic Jewish families and singles in need among the local messianic congregations.

The economic situation in Israel is difficult for many people. The gap in society between rich and poor is very high compared to other western countries and wages are very low in relation to the cost of living. For this reason many Israeli families live below the poverty line. Unfortunately, this is

also the case in the local congregations. Because of limited resources, the congregations find it difficult to adequately assist those members in need. In such cases “Hadadit” is ready to help. It is very important for us to work in co-operation with the local congregations. The guidelines of “Hadadit” require that assistance be conditioned upon a recommendation from the elder/pastor, and the congregation is obliged to contribute 20% of the amount approved by the board of “Hadadit”. A high priority is to supplement the income of those families and singles who make a real effort to maintain themselves but find themselves in a difficult situation. Below are three examples of families and singles that “Hadadit” has assisted recently.

1. Immigrant family from the former Soviet Union with 3 children who are attending a congregation in Upper Nazareth. The father lost his job because of illness and was recognized as 75% disabled. It was five months before they received any payment from the national insurance office, which caused them to be in debt.

2. Immigrant family from the former Soviet Union with 4 children, attending a congregation in Tel Aviv. They are

in financial difficulty with a five-years-old boy with Downs syndrome who needs special treatment and lots of care. In addition, the mother needs medical treatments.

3. A student in the “Israel College of Bible”. The cost of the studies is high and the student (who grew up in a Jewish religious family before commitment to the Lord) was unable to bear the cost of study by herself. She attends a messianic congregation in Jerusalem.

From the thank-you letters we receive from families and singles, we learn that the support they get encourages them to continue walking in the way of the Lord. They see this help as answers to prayer. We believe that “Hadadit” is a tool in the hands of God to strengthen the Body of Messiah in the Land.

We want to take this opportunity to give thanks from our hearts to all of you who have contributed to “Hadadit” and have supported us all these years, and for sharing with us in prayers for “Hadadit” and for the “Messianic Jewish Alliance of Israel”.

Boaz Fastman,
General Secretary, MJAI

Zot Habrit

This is the Covenant

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In memory of Ilan Zamir (Chairman of the Alliance 1994-1999)

The founding of the Messianic Jewish movement some 150 years ago was an early expression of the desire for a Messianic Jewish renewal. The Alliance was first founded in Israel during the British mandate, but it “folded” during the struggle for the establishment of the State of Israel. After independence was declared, an attempt was made to revive the Alliance, but it was unsuccessful due to the enormous differences among the various streams of believers, personal backgrounds, and their diverse approaches to the situation of Messianic Jews in Israel. In 1979, while serving as the Israeli Secretary of the International Alliance of Messianic Jews, I was asked to investigate the attitude of Messianic Jews in Israel to the idea of establishing an Israeli Messianic Jewish Alliance. I visited all the congregations, and for the most part found a positive attitude on the part of both Jews and Gentiles. I then contacted Ilan Zamir and another brother, who has since left Israel, and asked them to organize a committee of Messianic Jews that would be composed of representatives of the various streams for the purpose of preparing bylaws this would be the basis for reviving the Israeli Alliance following discussion with the wider community of Messianic Jews in Israel.

The committee worked for about a year, and Ilan contributed a great deal from his skills, keen mind, and his ability to work with a team. He was blessed with a patient and tolerant spirit toward others, and with great wisdom. More than once he encouraged me to let matters develop naturally, and not to run too far ahead of the community. It was no easy task to gather Messianic Jews together in order to realize the Alliance vision in Israel. Ilan was an encouragement and example for me and for all of us. The Messianic Jewish Alliance of Israel was founded by the broad consensus of a conference that was held in March, 1989. During the discussion on its re-establishment, there were only two votes for postponement.

Meanwhile, Ilan became ill and had to undergo a kidney transplant abroad. In spite of this, as soon as he returned to Israel and took up the position of president of the Israel College of the Bible, he continued his involvement in Alliance affairs, and afterward, during his last years, served as the Israel Alliance chairman. It was very difficult for us to separate from him when he finally succumbed to his illness. Ilan left us a sterling example of a Messianic Jew who served the broader Body of believers and the Messianic Jews within it, without personal conflicts, and with an open approach to all the brethren, Jew and Gentile, in a spirit of humility and dedication. May his memory be blessed.

Menahem Benhayim

“It is a Time of Trouble for Jacob, But he Shall be Saved Out of it” (Jeremiah 30:7)

Despite the troubles that beset our country as the year 2000 drew to a close, and as we make the transition to the new year 2001, we look back and reflect on the year gone by with gratitude and thanks to God, both personally and in regard to the Alliance. We thank God for His grace, His providence and His faithfulness, which have enabled us to remain faithful.

The Alliance had to undergo serious financial troubles throughout most of the year 2000. It was indeed “a time of trouble,” but thanks be to God, in whom we trust and have complete faith that He cares for us. We know that if we are truly at the center of His plan, serving Him according to His will, He will supply all our needs according to His riches in glory by Yeshua the Messiah. And indeed, at the end of the year we were led into a spacious place, opening new doors and hearts to support and contribute to the work of the Alliance.

At the same time, in spite of the financial difficulties throughout the past year, God has graciously enabled us to maintain the Alliance’s ongoing activities, beginning with the messianic music conference in February, continuing through the Shavuot (Pentecost) festival in June and the Jerusalem March in October during the Feast of Tabernacles. We were also able to revive the work of the Hadadit Fund for the assistance of needy believers in the land.

We also thank God for the members of the Alliance’s Executive Committee, who have faithfully, devotedly, and lovingly given of their time, experience and skill in the service of the Lord and the Body of the Messiah in Israel through the Alliance. We thank God for this field of service that He has given us, and we pray that He will help us remain faithful to it, and that at the same time He will expand our vision in all matters related to serving and strengthening the Body of Yeshua the Messiah here in Israel.

And now mid-summer 2001, as we update this article for the English translated edition of Zot Habrit, we are still in time of distress in many areas of life here in Israel. We experience horror and deep grieving caused by awful events (fx. The terror action in Jerusalem, where 5 people have been murdered, mostly children, and five members of one family), but we also see the mighty hand of God in preventing miraculously other attacks. We believe and pray that many hearts and eyes will turn, in this time of distress and confusion to the God of Israel and will find peace and everlasting joy when they will behold The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! We believe that this is a time when God is working in Israel both in judgment and in loving-kindness. “...Yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice, And will not let you go altogether unpunished” (Jer. 30:11). “At the same time, says the Lord, I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people... Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with loving-kindness I have drawn you” (Jer. 31:1,3).

May the Lord help us that we, the remnant according to the election of grace, the Body of Messiah in the Land, together with our brothers and sisters all over the world, those who are faithful and love and fear God, will take the place of intercession for the situation in Israel at a time like this. “For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for Israel from another place... Yet who knows whether you have come (been conveyed) to the Kingdom (of the Son of His love), for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14, Colos. 1:3).

“I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; They shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the Lord, do not keep silent, And give Him no rest till He establishes And till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth” (Isaiah 62:6,7).

Hanan Lukatz

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"Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity" (Ps. 133:1). Shavuot, also called Feast of Weeks, Feast of Harvest, Day of Firstfruits, or Pentecost, is one of the three holidays during which the people are to appear before the Lord (cf. Deut. 16:16). "And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place" (Acts 2:1).

Several years ago the "Messianic Jewish Alliance of Israel" decided to invite believers from all over the country to join together for an all day picnic on Shavuot. All the organization and the logistics were accomplished by the Alliance board. The goal was to provide a forum where Messianic Israeli believers could come together as families in a unique setting, and sing together, fellowship together, and enjoy a picnic lunch. The goal also was to hear about different activities in the Messianic community, and to hear music presentations from different congregations and groups. But above all, the goal was to worship our Lord YESHUA together.

The national Shavuot picnic quickly became a yearly tradition. In past years the picnic has been at the Rose garden next to the Knesset (Parliament building) in Jerusalem, and at Yad Hashmona, a moshav in the Judean hills. These past two years, we have celebrated Shavuot at "Har Haruach" near Abu Ghosh. On May 28, 2001, approximately 700,

mostly Hebrew speaking Messianic Israeli believers, gathered at "Har Haruach". It was a very hot day. The adults "melted" and the children ran and played together all day long, seemingly oblivious to the heat and the dust.

Every large gathering of Messianic believers in Israel is an historical event. The Lord is adding to the body and we have the opportunity to meet new and precious brothers and sisters each year.



Dance group from Be'er-Sheva presenting the offering of the firstfruits.

This year we had two ultra-orthodox men attend the picnic. We noticed that these two men, dressed in black hats, white shirts and black pants were clapping and singing along with us. When we approached them to ask how they had come to be at the picnic, we discovered that they did not speak Hebrew. They were two Romanian workers in Israel, believers from a Romanian congregation, who liked to dress like ultra-religious Jews as a means

of identifying with our people.

Only 30 short years ago, if we could bring ALL the believers from every corner of Israel to an event, only about 300 would gather. Our hearts should be full of praise for the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that a partial representation of believers and congregations brought about 700 Israeli believers together. We sang together to musby David and Lisa Loden and others.

Joel Goldberg led the fellowship. Meno Kalisher brought an excellent word about Shavuot. The children each made a wreath of flowers for their heads and paraded to the platform. We invited all the families with new babies born during the past year, and those expecting in the coming year to the platform, and the entire group prayed for them - a dedication to the Lord. We had several wonderful music presentations of contemporary Israeli Hebrew Messianic music by several Assemblygroups. We had

several dance groups presenting the offerings of the firstfruits. Fellowships were renewed and old friendships reborn and new friendships begun for eternity.

Over and above all, the name of the Lord YESHUA Hamashiach was exalted and uplifted and praised. And God Almighty received all the Glory.

Arthur Goldberg



Children parade to the platform with firstfruits



Worship team from Be'er-Sheva Congregation

Tal: The Third Journal of Jewish Disciples of Yeshua in the State of Israel

by Gershon Nerel

Moshe Emanuel Ben-Meir, scion of the Jerusalemite Lillienthal family (1905-1978), was the founder and editor of "Tal - a free bulletin of independent Messianic Jews in Israel". Over half a decade, from August 1962 to September 1967, 21 issues of the quarterly were published, almost uninterrupted. On the first page of each issue the title Tal (Dew) appeared in the center of a Star of David, with the words k'tal (as dew) and talam (their dew) inserted in the upper and lower parts of that same Star of David. The name Tal has its source in two verses from the Tanach: "I will be like the dew unto Israel," (Hosea 14:5) and "... the heavens will drop their dew" (Zechariah 8:12). It is also noted on the first page that the bulletin was printed in Jerusalem, but Ben-Meir himself continued to live, as he had during the British mandate, on Abas Street in Haifa. Ben-Meir's vision was described in the Editor's Note that appears at the beginning of the first issue. He says there: "Messianic Jews in the State of Israel are a flock without a shepherd. They are like a corpse attracting the vulture to nourish itself from its rotting flesh... Messianic Jews in Israel are a source of financial income for all sorts of 'community leaders', 'treasurers', 'pastors', 'preachers', and 'secretaries' who build themselves up from the sad situation of Messianic Jews... From far and near they come to us, their rucksacks filled with all kinds of drugs and cures to improve our situation. But these drugs and cures are nothing other than anesthetics to numb our senses, turning us into unresisting clay in their hands. And the result is that our situation continues to worsen, while they build on our ruins."

Immediately afterward, Ben-Meir continues: "This bulletin comes to draw a line of salvation and life that will put us in order and help us chase away the birds of prey and to become proof against their efforts to keep us in a state of continuous anesthesia. As Messianic Jews we have a special, important role as witnesses to the Lord Yeshua the Messiah among our brothers in this country, and we can fulfill this role only as Messianic Jews, having both Jewish and Messianic sentiment. They are trying to destroy or anesthetize this feeling. This bulletin is dedicated to call-out war against this attempt. This bulletin will attempt to set a table with all kinds of healthful, strengthening food, which will be carefully gathered from the storehouse of the Holy Scriptures. Food and dishes prepared by the delightful hands of the "yiddische mama" will awaken and stimulate us to the full and holy life that the Holy One, blessed be He, has destined for each and every one of us."

In Ben-Meir's opinion, the "birds of prey" in Israel were the representatives of official, distorted "Christianity" that had strayed from the path of pure, complete faith. In fact, even before Ben-Meir founded Tal, he consistently attacked missionary organizations from abroad, whose workers in Israel taught that

"the virgin Israel fell and has not risen, and Jews must be Christianized." That is, Ben-Meir denied the opinions and teachings of the "church" in all matters that did not reconcile with what is written in Holy Scripture regarding the Jews and their status in God's plan of salvation.

Among the various articles in Tal, we find two personal testimonies of particular interest. The first is by Daniel Zion, who had been the chief rabbi of Bulgarian Jewry. During World War II, Rabbi Zion had been very active in the capital city Sophia in obtaining protection for the Jews. In 1949, he immigrated to Israel and settled in the Bulgarian neighborhood of Jaffa, where he continued to function as rabbi of the Bulgarians. In his article "How I accepted the Lord Yeshua the Messiah," which was published in the second issue of Tal, Daniel Zion described the many times that Yeshua was revealed to him personally. In his testimony he relates: "At the beginning of



Rosh Hodesh Shvat 5710 (1950), the Holy Spirit came upon me like a burning flame, my voice was strangled, I could neither speak nor breathe, and I did not know what was happening to me. Then that internal voice called to me, 'Go and declare your faith in Yeshua the Messiah to the two secretaries of the Chief Rabbinate,'... I had no rest and no quiet until I rose the next morning and went to Tel Aviv, where I met the two secretaries and told them what had happened to me." In the wake of this, the affair became known throughout the country, Rabbi Zion was declared insane, and finally was removed from his position as a rabbi in Jaffa.

The second testimony was written by Lilly Wreschner, and was published in 1964 in the tenth issue of Tal. Lilly Wreschner (b. 1908) was born in Switzerland, where she dedicated herself to studying philosophy and psychology, and immigrated to Israel in 1938. She was active in spreading the gospel of Yeshua throughout the country for many years. She resided mainly in Haifa. In her article "I sought the truth," she wrote: "I labored in Eretz Yisrael in order to hasten the fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy, 'I will

sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean...' (36:25). These words were spoken to the House of Israel. I thank God and praise His holy name for giving me the entire truth, and revealing to me the Messiah of the God of Jacob, the King of the Jews, the glory of Israel, in the face of the man from Nazareth! He also poured His holy spirit into me as is written in the prophecy of Joel." Today Lilly plans to enter the Seniors' Home "Ebenezer" in Haifa.

An essential matter that concerned Ben-Meir was observance of the Torah by Jewish disciples of Yeshua, and he frequently expressed this in the pages of Tal. Thus, for example, in three issues (Nos. 2,3, and 20) articles were devoted to "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy!" In issue No. 14 of 1965, Ben-Meir posed the following question: "Is the prohibition of eating pork annulled?" And he answered himself as follows: "The Lord Yeshua did not eat pork. Simon Kepha and Paul did not eat pork. No member of the first Messianic community ate pork. Why should I deviate from this custom and eat pork? And what is wrong with the flesh of pure animals?... The Torah unites the people of Israel and is the guarantee of its eternal existence. It makes Jews the people of salvation... and it is the rituals of Christianity that distort the image of the Lord Yeshua and turn the Torah of the living God into a cauldron of death. He who would guard his soul will keep his distance from it and draw closer and closer to the Lord."

At the same time, Ben-Meir allowed to express the dangers in observing tradition. In an article entitled "The basis of our faith," by "A Jewish Believer" that was also published in the tenth issue of Tal (October 1964), it is stated that only the Holy Scriptures, the Tanach and the New Testament, should serve as the basis of faith for Jewish believers in Yeshua. On the subject of tradition, the author writes: "There is serious danger from tradition, even for those who are aware of its exclusive origins in the Tanach. Traditional opinions are liable to infiltrate our ways of thinking, and to replace the word of the Tanach in the formulation of principles of faith... Each of us is the victim of the kind of brain washing caused by the tradition of generations, families, or society, and we tend to attribute opinions and points of view to the Tanach, which are not there. There is a kind of tendency to attribute to the Tanach opinions that were formed in the heart of man, knowingly or unknowingly, even before this opinion is tested against what is written in the Tanach." Finally, he writes that "all of your opinions and halachic positions must pass the test of biblical truth." Recently, two articles from "Tal" were reprinted in the Hebrew version of "from Jerusalem to Jerusalem", the autobiography of Ben-Meir, published in Jerusalem in 2001.

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“Beit Asaph” Messianic Congregation

The congregation was established in Netanya in the late 1970's as a result of the consolidation of two Bible study/prayer groups led by the Lodens and the Hoaldriges. During 1980 the congregation began to express a clear identity, with consistent biblical teaching, celebration and interaction with the few recognised, established groups around the Land.

Netanya, today has a population of approximately 180,000 and is situated in the heart of the Sharon coastal plain. During the last major wave of Russian Aliya nearly 40,000 were settled in the city and now constitute 65% of the local congregation. The city and its surroundings are one of the most productive and rapidly growing areas of Israel, economically. This attracts more people into the area and affects the life and growth of the messianic community through effective outreach and also the arrival of new believers.

“Beit Asaph” consists of approximately one hundred and fifty committed believers and seekers, is predominantly Jewish and has a diverse makeup of; Russian, Anglo Saxon, South American and Ethiopian immigrants and Tsaberim (native born Israelis.) The main worship language is Hebrew with high quality translation provided in both Russian and English.

A system of language specific homegroups throughout the Sharon Valley provides welcome relief to congregants frustrated by the limitations of multi-lingual services. These groups each between eight and twenty participants often provide effective “evangelistic stations” where seekers can comfortably integrate into messianic life and belief before committing to the general Body.

Providing stable and faithful leadership for the congregation falls on the shoulders of two Elders; David Loden and Evan Thomas who share co-equal authority and responsibility for teaching the flock. Other responsibilities are shared according to their individual giftings. The development of ongoing leadership for the steadily expanding community in keeping with the vision to plant local messianic congregations

throughout the Sharon Valley is a major challenge. As a result, leadership training and biblical study is emphasised for the younger men and women. These young brothers and their wives are both the “backbone” and next stage development of the Israeli Messianic community. Practical application for them includes; the responsibility of leading home groups, children's and youth work, teaching and leadership in services and evangelism.



Blessing of the children during the Sabbath Service

The style of Shabbat services and expression has gone through transition over the years. So, too, has the need and confidence to develop a local identity that is characteristically Jewish and recognisably messianic. This identity is expressed via many of the basic elements of a synagogue service including; the weekly Torah portion, traditional blessings taken from the Amidah (standing prayer), prayer for Israel, the Kaddish, the Sh'ma (hear, O Israel) etc. Kabbalat Shabbat (reception of Sabbath) services are held once a month and the Biblical Feasts are all celebrated congregationally. “Rites of Passage” (weddings, Brits (circumcision) and Bar-Mitzvas (Confirmation)) are all celebrated with a strong emphasis on Jewish tradition. Inclusion of Davidic dance in the worship expression, provides a beautiful messianic element. The central, focus, however remains the redemptive message of Yeshua the Messiah. This is reflected in the regular emphasis on participation in the Lord's Table and immersion for every believer.

“Beit Asaph” has a longstanding vision for the severely disabled. For several

years the congregation has provided support and service to a number of disabled brothers and sisters who have accepted Yeshua as Redeemer and Lord. They all live in a local institution. Volunteers from the congregation help provide transport, friendship, teaching and coordination with care organisations to try to improve their living conditions.

With the blessing of growth and development has come the need to provide an improved facility. With God's guidance the elders found very suitable premises in the “southern gateway” of the Netanya. On February 1, 2000 a long-term lease was secured and the building designed and renovated to suit the growing needs, both as a worship and educational centre. With great joy and gratitude to the Lord a dedication service was held on May 20, inaugurating a “new season” for the messianic community of the central Sharon Valley.

The initial move into the new worship facility was with approximately one hundred committed members, including children. Today one hundred and sixty members regularly attend services and take part in a wide variety of congregational activities and programs. A humanitarian aid station is newly established in connection with the international messianic ministry, “Joseph Project.” This too will provide a means for “Beit Asaph” to effect the broader community.

Finally, it has always been an important emphasis for us to be firmly connected and involved with the broader community of faith in Messiah, both nationally and internationally. As a local congregation; presently the only one in Netanya, we have been deliberately proactive in national issues of evangelism, worship development, theological education, reconciliation and now, humanitarian aid. We count it a privilege to be an integral part of a movement of God in Israel and to help in any way to develop the Messianic community as a “light” to our nation and the peoples in it.

Evan Thomas

Jerusalem March 2000

On one of the intermediate days of Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles, October 17), the traditional Jerusalem March was held. While in previous years the group of Messianic Jews participated only in the colorful procession in the city center, this year we decided we would also participate in the popular procession that took place on the morning of the same day along an 8 km route, setting out from Ein Kerem, in a wadi, and climbing to the heights of Jerusalem, Sacker Park in the center of the city. The seven pioneering participants described the wonderful experience, the blessing it was, and told us about the opportunity to share the gospel with several people who approached them with questions about their faith. The morning procession was extremely important because it also provided the opportunity to participate in the colorful, traditional procession in the afternoon.



Messianic Jews Marching in the streets of Jerusalem

It was difficult! a real war, a spiritual war. Like last year, the day before the parade, when everything was already prepared, we received a telephone call from one of the main organizers of the Jerusalem March on behalf of the Jerusalem municipality. He made it very clear that we would not be able to participate in the main parade, and that, as he put it, he “would not turn Jaffa Road into a podium for missionaries.” In spite of this, we demanded to participate because we had already registered and had also purchased medallions and certificates for the marchers, but to no avail. When we said that we also intended to take part in the popular march in the morning, he was surprised and his tone of voice changed as he said, “If you march

in the morning you will also be able to march in the afternoon, but without your T-shirts and without posters.” Further attempts to convince him were to no avail, and given the lack of any alternative, we agreed. However, it did not end there, thanks be to God! Minutes before the colorful parade set out on its way, one of the organizers again appeared and demanded that our participation be prohibited. We argued again, and our main point was that we had also marched in the morning! For this reason, the

organizer approved our participation, and this time he had only one demand: that we don't carry posters. Fine! We didn't carry posters, but we did wear our Messianic Jewish T-shirts printed with “Yeshua is the Messiah”, and our hats with the message “He lives”... without violating the condition!

We were about 50 believers marching in full view of the thousands of observers along the route, which started below the train station, and continued along Jaffa Road, King George Street, and Bezalel Street, reaching the terminus at Sacker Park. Leading the procession was a troupe of dancers led by Miriam. We and the dancers

were accompanied by Messianic music all along the route, to the sound of voices of encouragement and applause from the onlookers, among whom we noticed more than a few kipot (Orthodox Jewish head covering). Unfortunately, we were also accompanied by other voices, much less pleasant: voices of the anti-missionary organization “Yad La'achim”. Just as they did last year, they attached themselves to us all along the route, photographing us with cameras and videos. They “encouraged” us with loud cries

of “boo” and “Missionaries - beware!” and also distributed anti-Messianic material to passersby, with the headline “Missionizing in Israel - Shocking”. We also received an escort of two police patrol officers and members of the GSS (General Security Service). In spite of all this, we marched in joyful high spirits, singing and praising the Lord, accompanied by dancing and the sound of the shofar (ram's horn). At Sacker Park we completed the event with prayer and thanksgiving, and then enjoyed light refreshments.

Due to the increasing opposition to our participation in the Jerusalem March, it is possible that next year we will not be able to participate in this manner. Please remember us in your prayers for wisdom and the power of the Lord for our participation next year. Thanks be to God for another opportunity that we were given by His grace to demonstrate our presence in the streets of Jerusalem and to lift up the name Yeshua among His people Israel.

Boaz Fastman

After the publication of a number of articles in "This Is the Covenant" about what is said in the Israeli press regarding Messianic Jews, it turns out that the secular press (in terms of news) is fairly indifferent to us, while the religious/ultra-Orthodox press is very concerned about us and sees us as a real danger to the Jewish nature of the people of Israel. The articles in the religious press regarding Messianic Jews are usually related to their close relationship with "Yad La'achim" (the anti-missionary organization), who are their almost exclusive source of news and information in this area. Examples:

Participation of a group of Messianic Jews in the traditional Jerusalem March during Sukkot was not a news item in the secular press; it was not even mentioned. In the ultra-Orthodox press, on the other hand, our participation was a problematic event that required publication, and they demanded that steps be taken against the "phenomenon." In these publications, it was said that senior officials had contacted the organizers of the March with the demand that the participation of Messianic Jews be prevented, claiming it would mean the "introduction of missionary messages." In this spirit, a very interesting item was published on November 3, 2000, in *Hamodia* (a Jerusalem daily) under the headline, "Municipality of Jerusalem will consider cancellation of missionary march," and stated further: "... a group of missionaries active in the Messianic Jewish cult have requested approval from the municipality for their participation in the parade on the intermediate days of Sukkot. The United Torah Judaism faction express determined opposition to issuance of a license to this group, for fear that the missionaries would exploit the parade to introduce missionary messages that are against the law. After the group, with the assistance of leftist lobbyists, put pressure on the municipality of Jerusalem, the city agreed to their participation, but the conditions of the license included an absolute prohibition of waving missionary posters, distributing material, or singing songs of that nature. During the march it became clear that the missionaries grossly violated the conditions of the license and waved posters upon which were messages that insulted Jewish sentiment... Acting Mayor, Rabbi Hayim Miller... announced that it is not possible to overlook the gross violation of an explicit agreement."

This false information, that the Messianic Jews created pressure with the help of leftist lobbyists and grossly violated some

of the conditions of the license, is apparently an attempt to cover up the lack of success of those officials who tried to prevent our participation in the march. It can be concluded from this article that next year an even greater effort will be made to keep us out of the march.

An item appeared on this subject on October 27, in the ultra-Orthodox newspaper *Yom Shishi* (a Jerusalem weekly) that reported a personal petition to Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert, demanding that the Messianic Jews not be permitted to participate in the march. The item was published under the headline "Protest against conspicuous participation by 'Messianics' in the Jerusalem March." The writer quoted Ehud Olmert's response to this demand: "I am sorry that, as you say, the group exploited the popular march to distribute propaganda, and the Jerusalem municipality will consider how to prevent such a situation in the coming years." The item ended on a sharp note: "... Nothing has changed, except for the fact that this time, perhaps because of last year's protests, this group was the only one that was accompanied by police..."

To another matter: In October 2000, a number of items were published about the "Ohalei Rahamim" (Tents of Mercy) congregation in the Kriyot (Haifa bay area), claiming that some of their members had attacked three 'Yad La'achim' activists, and that the police had refused to handle the complaint. This time, the incident was also published in the local secular press in the north of the country. The difference in the manner of publication is conspicuous. While the secular paper requested a response from "Ohalei Rahamim", the ultra-Orthodox press published the incident relying exclusively on the report of 'Yad La'achim' activists, and in an entirely tendentious manner. *Hamodia* (Jerusalem daily, Oct. 4, 2000), under the headline "Missionary group attacks three 'Yad La'achim' activists and the police refused to handle the complaint," writes in this manner (selected passages): "For quite some time, dangerous missionary activity by missionaries from a group of Messianic Jews has been taking place in a building on Lakish Street in Kiryat Yam... The meetings are organized by a missionary who immigrated from the USA, who operates an organization called 'Ohalei Rahamim', which is registered and recognized by the Ministry of the Interior... On Tuesday night, three 'Yad La'achim' activists came to Lakish Street, and distributed literature against the Messianic Jewish organization. After a short time, a group of people who

belonged to the Messianics came out to one of the 'Yad La'achim' activists and made threats against her if she would not leave the location. Afterwards, they approached Rabbi Moshe Weissman, a member of Pa'ilim in the north, attacked him, and attempted to rob him of his camera and a bag of personal effects. Then they attacked another activist. An officer and a policeman who arrived at the location were asked by the complainant, Rabbi Moshe Weissman, to handle the incident... The police officer refused to handle the complaint. According to the members of Pa'ilim, the police left the location - before the astonished eyes of residents - without taking action on the assault by the missionaries..."

Hed Ha-Kriyot (a Haifa Bay weekly) related to this incident on Oct. 13, 2000, under the headline "Confrontation between 'Yad La'achim' and 'Ohalei Rahamim' in Kiryat Yam." This time the reporter made the effort of requesting a response from "Ohalei Rahamim", and the resulting picture was entirely different. She wrote: "According to members of 'Ohalei Rahamim', two weeks ago on Tuesday, members of the organization [Yad La'achim] created an intentional provocation, arriving at their location with a video camera. They began to film people and frighten them. They even made direct threats against people and their property, with threats to persecute them. 'On this basis, we called the police, who arrested one of them and asked the others to vacate the area,' said a member of the association. According to members of the association, 'Yad La'achim' activists are always conspiring against them. Only a few months ago, the tires of 15 cars that were parked next to the building they operate were punctured. 'Since then, we place guards outside every time 'Yad La'achim' comes,' says one of the association's members."

From the article above and from other newspaper articles, the sense of frustration felt by "Yad La'achim" and their supporters about their inability to stop the development and activities of the community of Messianic Jews is conspicuous. They don't abandon their struggle, but we know that we are not alone! "Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you'll only find yourselves fighting against God!" (Rabban Gamliel - Acts 5:38-39)

Boaz Fastman

The "Ohalei Rahamim" (Tents of Mercy) Congregation

The "Ohalei Rahamim" congregation is the realization of a vision. About 10 years ago, the congregation's pastor, Eitan Shishkoff, received a vision from the Lord of a desert oasis, a place in which the weary could renew their strength, where the thirsty could drink of living waters and be saved. Jeremiah's prophecy, in which God says that when the time comes he will bring back the tents of Jacob and have compassion on his dwellings (Jeremiah 30:18), completes this vision. Thus was born our congregation, "Ohalei Rahamim." About five years ago we began to meet as a small home group in a house in the Kriyot in northern Israel. When the number of members grew, God helped us to rent a more spacious location that in the past had been an aluminum factory. After renovations, we began to meet there.

The primary goal of our congregation was to let the flock drink living waters from the Tanach (Old Testament) and the New Testament. In addition, we started a service of humanitarian aide to the needy. We did not broadcast our identity to the needy recipients, but tried to serve them with love and humility, because we wanted to do the will of the Lord for the poor of our city.

One of the central elements of the vision of our congregation is an emphasis on the Jewish roots of our faith, which is expressed in celebrating the feasts of the Tanach. Many people came for the first time to recognize the New Testament as being at heart a Jewish book. And most important of all, the truth that sets us free was revealed to them, the truth that the believer in Yeshua is not a traitor to his Judaism and his Jewish identity as

many have thought, but the opposite; the believer returns to his Jewish roots as a believer and as a person bearing the light of the Lord in this world. And he is no stranger, but someone who has put down roots and clung to Israel, someone who knows his God - the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob - the God of Israel. We discover that spiritual study has brought forth among our people an understanding of their identity as Jews who belong here, without needing to cut themselves off

insecurity, many things are happening around us striving for control of our thoughts and feelings, with the goal of pulling us along into the stormy stream of this world.

This period is not only difficult; it is also purifying. Because it is through fire that God is examining everything that has been done so far. This is a time of retrospection and of abandoning work that was done only out of good will, but not within the

perfect will of God. Now it is good to look at our Lord Yeshua who was guided not by His own opinions nor according to what he heard, but according to the voice of the Holy Spirit that he heard in His heart. There is no doubt that God is omnipotent, that in His omnipotence, he has chosen to act in this world through weak, earthen vessels, through people, who are completely prepared to submit to His will. As is stated in the letter to the Ephesians (chapter 2), as the Body of



Housewarming of the new structure after the fire (December, 1999)

from society or to close themselves up in immigrant ghettos. They found themselves to be an inseparable part of the people of Israel, upon whom is laid the enormous commission of the Lord - to be the salt of the earth. Being rooted in this truth has helped many people to be strengthened in building their lives in Israel and tasting the good things of the land in a practical way.

At the same time, we "enjoyed" strong opposition in the form of an arson attack on our congregation by a group of religious extremists. However, the Lord in His great goodness, turned the evil to good and gave us "a crown of beauty instead of ashes and the oil of gladness instead of mourning." We were blessed with a new, beautiful building to which He continues to attract the saved.

Today, in these stressful times of military, political, and spiritual

the Messiah, we must perform good acts, but as separate personalities, each one of us must examine His own actions. I see great need for the personal guidance of the Lord for every believer. It is very important to pray for the wisdom and patience of the Lord in order to know what is our place in the Body of the Messiah in accordance with the will of the Creator.

Once Yeshua spoke to Martha, and I think that today He is also speaking to us: "Martha, Martha. You are worried about many things, but only one thing is needed..." (Luke 10:41-42). Our portion is to sit at the feet of the teacher, listening to His voice, accepting His guidance. Only in this manner will we be able to be witnesses to His glory among our people, to see His redemption, and to bear eternal fruit.

Leon Mazin