



# Oasis

A Publication of Tents of Mercy Congregation (Ohalei Rachamim) - Volume 11, Issue 1



by Eitan Shishkoff

Can she really be 15 already? No, I'm not talking about my daughter (who is almost 18!!!) but about our congregation, Ohalei Rachamim, Tents of Mercy. On December 2, 1995 our community of believers was born in a warehouse in Kiryat Yam, Israel. At that time we totaled about 30 souls. The warehouse, a long narrow concrete enclosure, sandwiched between a meat packing plant and a small furniture factory. With the right timing there was stereophonic sound — a table saw whirring on one side and the refrigerator motors on the other. They were humble beginnings to be sure!

Our dream was to see the Book of Acts come alive again. In that original, first century Messianic Jewish community there was an emphasis on helping the poor and planting new congregations. After 15 years we can celebrate the amazing fulfillment of that dream. We are now five congregations spreading from the Haifa Bay to the Sea of Galilee, with some 500 people and our own warehouse filled with humanitarian aid for distribution. Thousands of needy immigrants and veteran Israelis have received help. What's more, by meeting basic physical needs in cooperation with local human services, we've seen a change in Yeshua's public image.

For this special birthday we threw a party. Tents of Mercy members were asked to bring food dishes native to their original countries, to enjoy the vast diversity in our backgrounds. Nineteen nations were represented! We feasted on plov (a Central Asia rice and lamb dish), angera (Ethiopian pancake-like bread with spicy meat sauce) and good old-fashioned American macaroni and cheese. Delightful music was provided by an orchestra comprised of young people from within the congregation, including a string section.

Fittingly, it was the third night of Chanukah, the feast commemorating the rededication of the temple. What a joy it was to rededicate our "temple" of living stones to the glory of Messiah Yeshua in Eretz Yisrael. I deeply believe that these years have been a prelude to something of much greater magnitude in the Spirit. We are filled with anticipation that the next fifteen years will carry us into an end-time harvest that will usher in the coming of the King. Thank you for being a part of our extended community. The purpose of this newsletter has always been to open our lives to you, so that God might weave our hearts together, bringing His Kingdom from heaven to earth. ☆



Sasha and son lighting the candles



Every party needs food



Youth orchestra



Sisters

# Fire on the Mountain

By Avi Tekle

**N**o country has faced so much adversity as Israel. When destruction and difficult circumstances rage all around, Israelis unite around the “eye of the storm” – and almost unanimously begin to act as one and call out to God for mercy. Israel blossoms in crisis.

We were two months into the official rainy season, and there was no rain in sight – dry, ironically temperate weather: perfect for picnics, hiking and drying clothes on the clothesline. It was the kind of weather that is the envy of summer-starved Europeans and Scandinavians, but we were thirsty for rain.

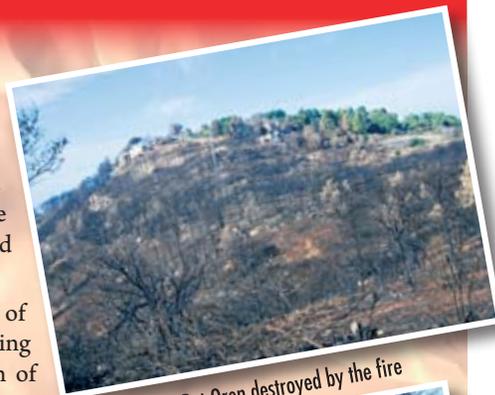
As each rainless week passed, the land grew thirstier; trees became parched for lack of water, and the crackling of the dry ground was almost audible. We waited for rain, knowing intuitively that crisis loomed. Then it erupted. A regular Thursday, just like the month of Thursdays before it, yet on this day, one small spark flew and the forest exploded in an angry rage of flames. As the fire spread, a billow of pinkish smoke rose above Elijah’s mountain range. This time, not God’s answer of fire, but a relentless epidemic of wind and fire that continued for over a week, ravaging the Carmel forest, destroying homes and spreading charcoal black over the landscape that was formerly painted with pine and olive green. Holding our breath, we watched the news and the horizon waiting for a miracle. It was Hanukkah; equated with the miracle of sustaining fire in face of depleting oil. On that first Hanukkah, Adonai miraculously made the fire burn, this time we needed the *fire* to cease.

When I made aliyah some 20 years ago, my new home in Israel was Bet Oren, a small kibbutz deep in the Carmel mountain range. Bet Oren sits perched on a hilltop, up a windy road lined with cliffs and sprawling pine forests. At first I was disappointed at being so far from Haifa’s city center, but I grew to love the timeless untamable beauty of the forest. It was on that same windy road that a bus of prison guards and fire fighters, on their way to offer assistance, were engulfed in flames. Forty-four precious lives were lost, leaving only three to tell the tale of disaster and heroism.

For some time, Tents of Mercy has made efforts to be prepared for emergencies. Joseph has been our example. He wisely stocked up in good times in order to have provisions on hand in times of trouble. When the fire broke out we began to assess areas where

we could help the fire victims, many who had lost their homes and belongings. We were very excited at the opportunity to give out from our stock to those in need. We made a couple of trips into the fire zone and brought basic goods to help with the initial recovery.

As we continue broadening our help, we are reminded of the times we are in. The prophets foretold that things would get worse before they get better. More difficult times are surely drawing near. This experience served us as an exercise to be prayerfully prepared! Humanitarian aid is a physical intercession between need and those in need. Our humanitarian aid front is a prophetic stand, vested with the authority of God-Almighty to intercede on behalf of our people in preparation for the future tribulations about to unfold on the prophetic timeline. May God give us wisdom and sustain us! ✡



Bet Oren destroyed by the fire



Memorial to the victims of the bus tragedy



Tents of Mercy van loaded with food for fire victims



A sign of hope - a blossom emerging out of the ashes

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**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.

# AN UNPARALLELED OPPORTUNITY

Daniel C. Juster, Director

I am writing to you about an unparalleled opportunity that has been presented to Congregation Shavei Tzion, led by Leon Mazin. Leon was the associate leader with Eitan Shishkoff at Tents of Mercy. He was sent out in 2001 and planted a vibrant, growing, and talented congregation in Haifa, the first Tents of Mercy daughter congregation. He is part of the network led by Eitan. Leon is a wholly dedicated and sacrificial servant of God. Shavei Tzion practices a high level Gospel witness, of hospitality and service, including food and clothing distribution, special ministry to holocaust survivors and more. They have also planted a congregation in Upper Nazareth.

Now Shavei Tzion has an opportunity to purchase the building in which they rent space for their congregation, classes, offices and guest housing. It is a great **downtown** building; like nothing any other Israeli Messianic Jewish congregation now owns. The quality of the facility, its multi-use potential, and its central location makes this a truly inspiring project. The price is very reasonable. I urge you to consider becoming part of this great project through prayer and giving.



Exterior of the building

## SHAVEI TZION BUILDING PROPOSAL

### SYNOPSIS:

Shavei Tzion is a Messianic Congregation situated in Haifa's downtown core. They offer a full range of ministries:

- Soup kitchen producing 1,700 meals per month for needy residents of downtown Haifa
- Ministry to 450 Holocaust survivors – holiday celebrations, recreational/educational tours within Israel, humanitarian aid and Torah instruction.
- Publication of bi-monthly, 12 page feature magazine, "Oasis"
- Outreach to artists through collaborative exhibitions and workshops
- Shavei Tzion planted a daughter congregation in Nazareth, Netzer HaGalil. Netzer HaGalil also operates a soup kitchen ministry producing an additional 1,500 meals a month. Shavei Tzion actively provides spiritual oversight and ministry Netzer HaGalil.
- Shavei Tzion is a founding member of the Haifa Theological Institute and will be hosting classes for instruction of future Messianic leaders and pastors in the Haifa region. ([www.hti.gutensite.co](http://www.hti.gutensite.co))

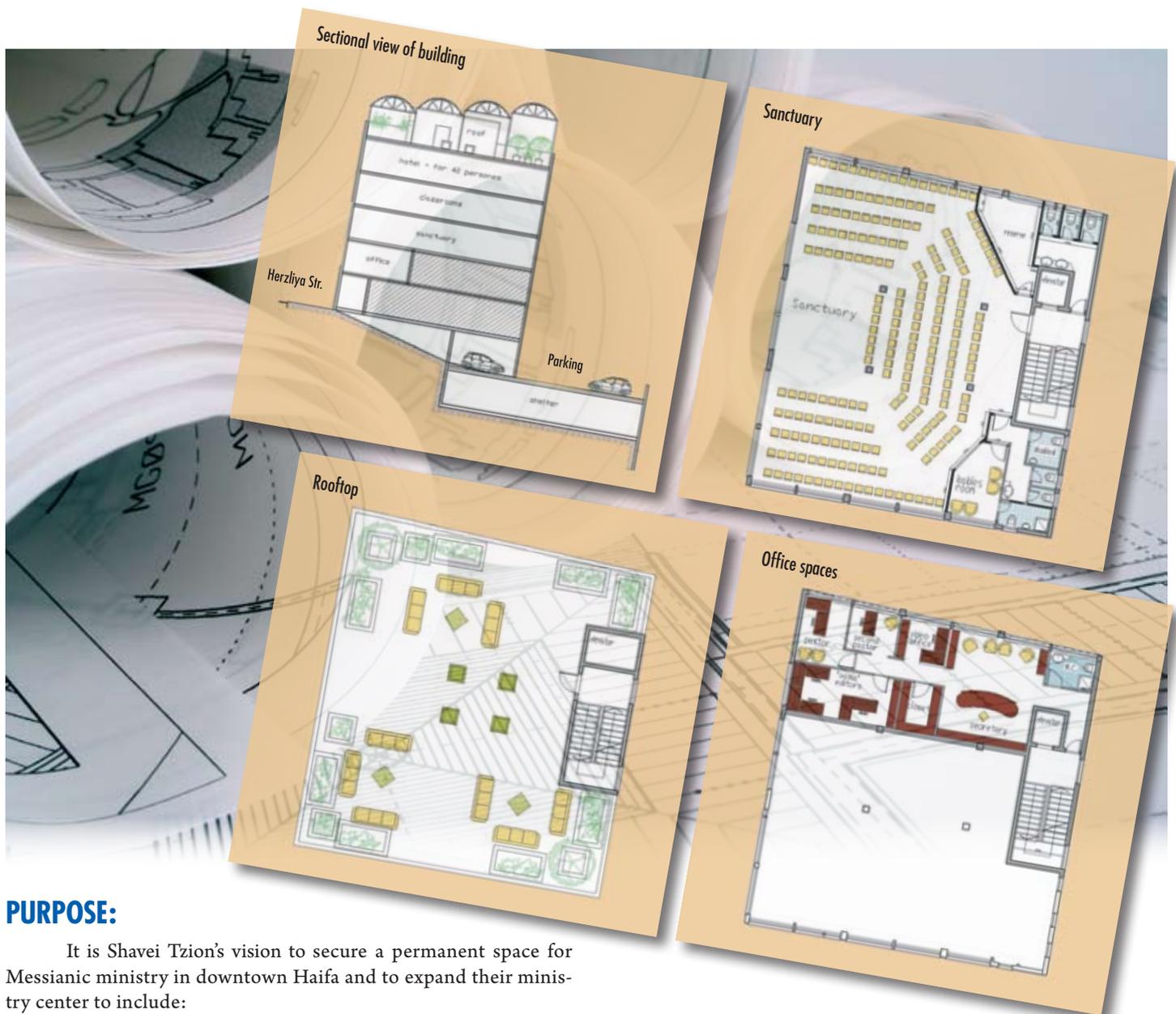
Shavei Tzion was established in December 2001 and is affiliated with Tents of Mercy. It is situated in Haifa's downtown core. Typically, Messianic congregations meet in homes or have rented facilities in industrial areas to avoid conflict with Orthodox anti-messianic organizations. Shavei Tzion has answered God's call to establish a work in a visible, high population density area. As a result, over a 5 year period Shavei Tzion had 4 rental agreements terminated. At the last moment, all the landlords bowed out of contracts because of pressure from anti-messianic groups. In September 2006 Shavei Tzion finally signed a long term lease on their current property.



Leon Mazin

### PROPOSAL:

Shavei Tzion is presented with a unique opportunity to purchase the building where they currently rent two floors. This is a five story, (10,000 ft<sup>2</sup>) commercial property located on Herzilya Avenue, downtown Haifa. The building has undergone an architect's inspection; construction is sound, there are no structural defects or problems. Remarkably, Shavei Tzion has special favor with the landlord of the building. In order to facilitate the purchase he has agreed to reduce the price by nearly 30% from \$1,000,000 US funds to \$700,000 US funds (including taxes). This is an exceptionally good price for a building of this quality at this location.



## PURPOSE:

It is Shavei Tzion's vision to secure a permanent space for Messianic ministry in downtown Haifa and to expand their ministry center to include:

- A shelter for homeless people living on the streets of downtown Haifa
- Expanded kitchen facilities to increase capacity of food distribution program
- An enlarged sanctuary utilizing an entire floor (expanded capacity is necessary to accommodate the growing number of congregation members)
- A new coffee house ministry where local residents can be exposed to the ministry and vision of Shavei Tzion
- Expanded educational capacity for their Shabbat school and the new Haifa Theological institute

**Benefits:** Shavei Tzion has a proven track record of caring for needy people and reaching out to the Jewish community through an indigenous Messianic presentation of the Gospel. Purchase of the building would have tremendous value:

**Stewardship:** The asking price is an exceptional bargain, \$700,000. Purchase would be a better allocation of funds than the current rental status.

**Ministry:** Expanding from two floors to five would not only consolidate ministries under one roof but would allow for needed expansion.

**Stability:** This is a crucial and unique issue facing Messianic congregations in Israel. A permanent building establishes a public face for Israeli Messianic ministry, removes the threat of eviction and sends the message that Messianic congregations are an integral part of the social landscape of the community. The landlord of the building is elderly and wants to sell. He is willing to reduce the price to help Shavei Tzion purchase the building but if they cannot do so someone else will. There is no guarantee that a new landlord will be favorably disposed towards Shavei Tzion.

Thank you for your consideration and prayers. ✡

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