

Jewish Believers and World Evangelization

Restoring Mission from Israel to the Nations

by Gavriel Gefen

In December 1999, thirteen Israeli congregational and ministry leaders gathered in the biblical port city of Yafo (Joppa, or Jaffa). They came together to discuss and pray about Israel's calling to the nations. Out of that meeting an Israeli mission agency was founded called *Keren HaShlichut*.

The following testimony is of a personal journey that led to the establishment of this ministry.

Hippies in Northern California

In the early 1970's, we were hippies in Northern California. My parents were part of a nationwide movement of American youth that turned on, tuned in, and dropped out. They rose up against Western government, capitalist corporate business, and the narrow-minded faith of their parents. Opposition to the war in Vietnam was the catalyst that brought together hundreds of thousands of young people in unity against the society, the communities, and even the very families they had grown up in.

Although most of these youth came from Christian homes, many were also from Jewish homes. In rejecting the cultural norms they had grown up with, these young hippies went beyond the boundaries in pursuit of truth. They longed to find purpose and meaning in the world. While searching, they often explored and experimented with many different faiths and philosophies.

Many hippies eventually embraced one of the two extremes of world religions. One extreme is a particularly American form of Zen Buddhism that teaches there is no God. The other extreme is a Hindu philosophy that regards all faiths as different means to the same end. Every religion is seen as a different path to the same truth, resulting in a basic belief that all gods are true. The end result of both extremes is the same, that *I am God*. If there is no God, then I am god of my own world. If all gods are true, then I can also be a god.

As a family, we lived on a hippie commune in the Santa Cruz Mountains above Palo Alto, California. The commune basically consisted of a bunch of hippies squatting on a huge abandoned ranch. Everyone built shacks and makeshift dwellings in the forest. In the summer, we often slept out on the

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hillsides under the open sky. The first winter, we lived in a tepee. The second winter, we lived in a geodesic dome covered with clear plastic. It was a clear bubble in the forest, without electricity or running water.

The idea behind this lifestyle was rejecting modern society and returning to the land. In fact, our commune was called *The Land*. It was an attempt by some to create a utopia, where love would flow freely, and everyone would live in peace and harmony with each other and with the earth.

In spite of this, or maybe because of this, life on the commune was difficult for children. There were not very many of us, and I was usually the oldest. All too often, new fathers would disappear shortly after their children were born. As mothers began to be concerned for the needs of their children, the attitude of those around was, "Whoa sister, don't put your trip on me. You're a real downer." To say the least, children were not a central concern of the community.

I had a hearing disability. People often had to look at me in the face and speak loudly in order for me to understand them. I preferred being alone, and often withdrew. Meditating by myself appealed to me, and I embraced Zen Buddhism.

In the spring of 1973, everything changed. Members of the commune suddenly began coming to faith in Jesus. In quick succession, Mom, Dad, and many of our closest hippie friends all came to faith. Things changed completely, almost overnight. Life became family centered and child oriented. We left the commune, and Mom and Dad got married.

Attending church, I began learning biblical stories of the Lord healing people. Well, I wanted to be healed of my hearing problem, so I asked to be prayed for. All the elders of the church came together to pray for me, and my hearing improved immediately. Over the following days, I gained complete hearing.

Life was wonderful. Through our newfound faith everything had been transformed, including my hearing. At the age of seven, I now fully committed myself to serving this God and His revealed Word.

For well over 100 years before this, there had been many attempts to create a movement of Jewish believers in Jesus. Yet, none of these efforts had ever resulted in much more than a number of isolated individual congregations. In the late 1960's and early 70's, so many young Jewish Americans came to faith that there was finally the critical mass needed to establish viable communities of Jewish followers of Jesus. Most new Jewish believers joined traditional churches. Over the years, many of us slowly returned to the biblical Jewish traditions of our heritage, and sought out fellowship with others doing the same. Out of this, the modern Messianic Jewish movement was born.

Farmers in Round Valley

A year and a half after coming to faith, we moved further north in northern California to Round Valley, a small mountain valley in Mendocino County. It was a very rural area sparsely populated by cattle ranchers and Native Americans from seven different tribes. It was here that we grew in our faith as a family and began to be involved in ministry. We joined a small country church where Dad eventually became an elder. There were two other Jewish families in the area who came to faith and joined us in the church.

Within a few years, we went from owning nothing but the clothes on our backs to having three successful businesses. We had a fifteen acre farm of organic apples that we juiced and sold in health food stores, an apiary of 300 beehives, and a homebuilding business. We called the farm *Apple Blossom Apiaries*.

Every spring we would move most of our beehives to southern Central Valley to pollinate almond orchards. It was a very long distance from where we lived, and driving back and forth to check on the hives was time-consuming. A private pilot in the area suggested that Dad learn to fly so he could fly down to check on his hives. He took lessons, got his license, and soon after bought a four-passenger plane (a Cessna 182).

The little church we were in was originally a mission church supported financially from the outside. While we were there, a few families in the congrega-

tion began to prosper, and the church became self-supporting.

Mom and Dad soon took an interest in world missions, and convinced the church board to begin supporting missionaries around the world. Mom was given the responsibility of coordinating this, and we soon began receiving promotional literature, newsletters, and books from numerous mission agencies. The missionaries we started supporting were with Wycliffe Bible Translators, JAARS (Jungle Aviation And Radio Service, associated with Wycliffe), and Mission Aviation Fellowship.

We hosted a number of these missionaries in our church to speak about their work. One of them was a Bible translator working in South America. After her visit, Dad flew her down to southern California to participate in a seminar at the US Center for World Mission in Pasadena. Dad was invited to sit in on the seminar and returned home a few days later with a legal notepad full of notes. He had a new understanding and excitement about world missions. In the following weeks, he took out his notepad many times to share the notes and stories with friends. Our many dinner guests heard all about it.

Dad's increasing interest in world missions reached the point where he finally decided that we either needed to expand our businesses and make more money so that we could support more missionaries, or we needed to sell everything and go ourselves. In the end, we sold our farm and moved to Longview, Texas where Mom and Dad began three years of training for ministry.

Training for Missions

In Texas, Dad studied aviation technology at LeTourneau College, a Christian technical school with a comprehensive aviation program. He received all of the main aviation ratings and became a flight instructor and a certified A&P airplane mechanic. Mom studied nursing at Kilgore College.

The plan was that we would be sent out to either the Amazon or central Africa. Dad would be a bush pilot, Mom a nurse, and we would fly in and out of remote tribal villages. However, there were two basic things that hap-

pened during their years of training that changed everything.

One of these things was our changing perspective on western missions. Many missionary pilots visited Dad's school. Often he would approach them to ask first hand about the work of a missionary pilot. He would ask, "So what's it like being out there flying into tribal villages and giving them the Gospel?" Inevitably, their responses were things like, "Well, I don't actually preach the Gospel. I'm a pilot. I just fly in the guy who preaches the Gospel." So Dad would respond, "Sure, but you live there, so you must have opportunities to share your faith on a daily basis." And they would say, "No, I'm a pilot, and when I'm not flying the plane I'm in the hangar working on it." And Dad would say, "Okay, but you live there among the people, so you must at least be a part of a local indigenous church. What's that like?" And they would respond, "No, we have our own church in the compound."

Added to this was the issue of how much money we would be expected to raise as monthly support in order to be sent out by a mission agency. Remember, we had previously been hippies, living off the land. So, Dad expected to live in a similar manner as the people he would go to. He figured that if he was going to a region of the world where people lived on only 20 or 30 dollars a month per family then he had no need of thousands of dollars a month. He already owned his own plane, he knew how to repair it, and he knew how much the fuel cost. He planned to live among the locals, and live like they did. Having a totally different lifestyle would only distance him from the people he was reaching out to. It appeared more and more that traditional western Christian missions all too often alienated the Gospel from the very people they were attempting to give it to.

The second thing that happened during those years of training was the development of a new understanding of Israel. We were all studying the Bible intensively. Dad was taking classes in theology, Bible, and ministry. I also was giving a lot of time to Bible reading. I used to come home from school every day and spend three hours

studying 25 chapters of the Bible. I had become convinced of a personal calling on my own life for ministry that would involve going to many nations, and believed that the best thing I could do to prepare for it was become thoroughly familiar with the Scriptures. As we all read, we increasingly saw the abundance of prophetic passages relating to Israel and the Jewish people which had not yet been fulfilled. Furthermore, it seemed to us that many of these things were beginning to take place. We came to realize that, as we were Jewish, these events must include us.



These two basic changes in our perspectives led to a complete change in our plans. Upon completing his training, Dad decided that we would not go overseas as missionaries, but that we would immigrate to Israel. He called an old friend of ours in California to tell him the news. He explained that we were going to Israel as immigrants, and that we had no idea what we would end up doing there. We were simply returning to our homeland.

This old friend was a bit upset by the news and said, "I can't accept this. You guys were so convinced that you had a calling to missions, and you spent the last three years training for it. I don't believe its right for you to walk away from that. I think you really have a calling." Dad gave him a spontaneous response and answered with something he had never even thought of, "If we're really called to missions, then we'll be sent out from Israel."

Immigrants to Israel

We immigrated to Israel in 1983. Upon arrival, the government placed us in an immigrant absorption center in Tiberias,

on the Sea of Galilee. Within a few days, we were assigned to a Hebrew language class consisting of an even mix of immigrants from all over the world. There was one family from the Soviet Union, one family from Hungary, a man from France, a woman from Romania, a man from Uruguay, a couple of young men from Ethiopia, and our family from the U.S. We all came from different countries and spoke different languages, none of us knowing the language of any of the other countries. We were all strangers in a new land, yet our own ancient homeland. We were all learning a new language, yet our own ancient tongue. We were strangers and yet family, coming from different cultures and yet having a common tradition.

Before immigrating, we had met a couple of believers living in Tiberias, and they welcomed us into the local Messianic Jewish community. Within days our arrival, a wave of persecution broke out. For a few weeks in a row, our meetings were violently attacked. In the end, our meeting hall was burned down and we began meeting each week in a local forest. Those years in the forest were a fruitful time for the congregation. It brought everyone closer together, strengthening us in faith and relationship.

As a young boy in California, I had already committed my life to full-time ministry. Then, as a teenager in Texas, I began recognizing a calling on my life that would involve going to many nations. Shortly after arriving in Israel as an immigrant, I noticed that missions from Israel to the nations didn't really exist. It appeared that if I were to stay in Israel having this calling to missions, there would be nobody to send me.

Many Messianic Jews had been traveling out in ministry from Israel to the nations for many years, but two basic dynamics were missing. First of all, few people were ever really sent. There was no sending process, and there was a lack of relational accountability. This meant that many of those going were not holding themselves accountable to leaders. It also meant that most congregational leaders in Israel did not hold themselves accountable as leaders to those who were going. In fact, even when congregational leaders them-

selves traveled, it usually had nothing to do with their congregations. They were often moonlighting on private trips. You would come to a congregational meeting on Shabbat (Saturday) and the leader would be gone. If you asked one of the other elders where the leader was, the response was often that they were not even sure.

The second missing dynamic was one of purpose. Those who were going were going not so much to be a blessing, but to seek blessing. Most of those who were going did so almost exclusively with the purpose of convincing the nations to bless us—to bless Israel, to bless the Jewish people, to bring the Jews back to Israel, to evangelize the Jews, and to give money to Israel, the Messianic Jews, etc. Our congregations were not being given a heart and vision for the nations.

In time, our family did indeed become involved in ministry in Israel. I moved to Jerusalem and worked with Jewish immigrants from Ethiopia, helping them come to Israel and become established here. There were a number of Messianic Jews among the Ethiopians, and I helped them establish six Amharic-speaking home congregations, one in each area of the country. Dad ministered for some years in Arab villages in the Galilee. He was also very involved in the main Tiberias congregation and often taught there on Shabbat.

Eventually I began going out to the nations from time to time on ministry trips. Mom and Dad started traveling too, but they went out for longer periods of time. They went to India, to China, and to Africa. A couple of times they went out paying their own expenses with money they had saved up from regular jobs. Finally, they served in Rwanda for one year where Dad was the country director of Food for the Hungry.

As some of us went to minister abroad, there was not much interest, support, or prayer coming from Israeli believers. I recall once, when Dad was on his way out on a trip, seeing a dear friend of his pat him on the back and say, “We’ll be praying for you, that God will give you a heart for your own people.”

Shortly after returning home from Rwanda, Dad received an invitation to the Great Lakes region to speak at a gathering of tribal believers in the

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mountains of eastern D.R. Congo (the former Zaire). He mentioned this invitation to a few other believers in Israel and they expressed an interest in hearing more about it. As he told a few more friends, there seemed to be more of an interest than he had encountered in the past.

A Seed is Planted

A few months later Dad indeed went out, together with another Israeli brother, and believers all over Israel were praying for them. The expenses of Dad’s trip were paid for by an elderly woman in their congregation who gave him her last money. He went out as an Israeli on his Israeli passport, sent by Israelis, without any connection to any church or organization outside of Israel. We spoke on the phone just before he left and he was very excited.

Dad and Boaz, the other Israeli, went first to Rwanda for a few days. They then crossed over into Bukavu, in South Kivu Province of D.R. Congo, where they met up with a group of senior pastors and ministry leaders from the region. They chartered a local twin-engine plane, and flew together into the mountains where the gathering was scheduled to take place. They flew to Minembwe, a small village high in the mountains with only a few round mud huts and a small dirt airstrip. There are no accessible roads, and one must either fly in or walk in.

We received a phone call that Dad’s plane had crashed. They told us it was in an isolated region without communications, and that they didn’t know the details. A follow-up call a few hours later confirmed they were sure everyone had died. Mom, my brother Isaac, and I flew down there immediately. We flew to Rwanda where we hired a U.N. plane to fly us to Bukavu. In Bukavu, we were met at the airport by the vice governor of the region and a local pilot with a small plane. Together they flew us into the mountains to Minembwe.

We were taken straight to the crash site. It was on the crest of a hill about

one mile from the airstrip. Everything was still right there on the ground, as it had come to rest at the time of the crash. Isaac took Mom away from the setting, and I began examining the remains of the passengers trying to identify Dad and Boaz.

After an hour or two of examining the site, a young man came over to me and said that the people were coming. The people who were originally supposed to be at the meeting where Dad was to speak were coming to the crash site. I walked over to get Mom and Isaac and we came back to wait for the people.

A few minutes later, we could hear singing in the distance. A few minutes after that, coming from one direction over the hill were thousands of men. A few minutes later, coming from the opposite direction, were thousands of women and children. They came and they surrounded us and the crash site. The bodies of many of their most senior pastors and ministry leaders were still right there on the ground in front of us. Yet, the people just worshipped. There were no instruments, no sound system, and no worship leader . . . just many thousands of people, singing song after song. Words cannot express . . .

As the people worshipped, my tears went from being tears of grief to being tears of joy. I began to recognize the progression of events in Dad’s life. Every ministry calling upon his life had been leading toward that moment—a call to ministry, to mission, to return to Israel, to be sent from Israel to the nations. The people and the place could not have been a more perfect fulfillment of the kind of place and kind of people he had always spoken of being called to—tropical, tribal, isolated, undeveloped. This was everything he had worked for, and the moment he arrived there he died together with these 18 pastors. He was gone and, yet, he had reached the summit. His life had become as a seed of the restoration of Israel’s calling to the nations.

A week later, we were back home in Israel. While unpacking my bag, I pulled out a newspaper I had picked up on the newsstand in Nairobi while changing planes. As I took a closer look, I noticed that the front page was all about the days of grief in England following the funeral of Princess Diana. The next page was covered with articles about the funeral of Mother Theresa. The third page had an article about the death of Mobutu Sese Seko, the recently deposed dictator of Zaire, where the crash had taken place. The next page had an article about Dad's crash. I put the paper down, and my first thought was, "September 1997 is a month of death." Then I realized, "No, September 1997 is a month of new life and something new will be born out of this."

In 1985, two years after arriving in Israel as an immigrant, I came to understand that there was a calling on my life to raise up a vision in Israel among the believers of our people's calling to the nations. I kept it in my heart and prayed

about it, but didn't tell anyone. In 1989, before marrying my wife Sofia, I shared it with her. Together, we carried a vision of this for many years, but never told anyone. We knew that we were not ready, and we knew the congregations in Israel were not ready. I figured it would not be until we were in our forties or fifties before we would be able to begin working on it.

In the months following Dad's death, Sofia and I knew that the time had come. I began going around Israel and speaking privately one-on-one with congregational and ministry leaders about what I believe Israel's calling to be. What I shared with them were some of the following thoughts.

Israel's Calling

In Genesis 12, the God of creation covenanted with Abraham and promised him that all the families of the earth would be blessed through his seed. God then reaffirmed and made this covenant again with Abraham's

son Isaac, and Isaac became the son of the covenant and the promise. He then reaffirmed and made this covenant yet again with Isaac's son Jacob. Jacob became Israel, and the children of Israel inherited this covenant with its promises.

In Exodus 19:6, the Lord told Moses that Israel is called to be a kingdom of priests. In Isaiah 2:3, we are told that teaching will go forth from Zion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. Later, in Isaiah 49:6, we are told that Israel is called to be a light to the nations. This passage is a messianic prophecy referring to the Messiah, and yet a few verses previous it seems to be addressing Israel as this individual. It could be interpreted that the Messiah Himself will be the light, and that Israel will shine that light to the nations. In Acts 13:46-47, when Paul and Barnabas announced that they were going to the Gentiles, they quoted this passage as evidence that they were called to the nations.

"What is the greatest crime in the desert?"

"Finding water and keeping silent."

- Arab proverb

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Israel has both prophetic and priestly callings. A prophet is called by God to speak on His behalf to the people. He stands between God and man as a representative of God, speaking God's Word to the people. A priest stands between God and man, and speaks the words of man to God. He stands before God as a representative of the people, speaking their confession to Him. Hebrews 3:1 states that Jesus is the High Priest of our confession. He speaks our confession to the Father. As both the Living Word and as our High Priest, he is the one mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5). He speaks God's Word to us, and our words to God.

When a priest stands before God in the office of his ministry, he does not do so for himself, but on behalf of those in whose place he stands. So, if Israel as a nation is called to be a kingdom of priests, then it is not for herself. Rather, she is to be a nation before God on behalf of the nations, interceding for mercy.

All of these callings—of being a blessing, a light, a kingdom of priests, and of taking the Word of the Lord to the nations—are inherited by any true believer, Jew or Gentile. Those in the nations inherit these callings as they are adopted and grafted into the commonwealth of Israel. Yet, the fact remains that each of these callings were originally entrusted to the physical seed of Israel.

Even the New Covenant calling of the Great Commission was originally given to the people of Israel. When Jesus commanded His disciples on the Mount of Olives to preach the Gospel to every creature and to make disciples of all nations, He was speaking to the Messianic Jews in Jerusalem. Of course, this calling is shared by any true believer, Jewish or not. Yet, this *too* was originally entrusted to the physical seed of Israel.

In Revelation 7:9–10, we see that one day there will be people from every nation, people, tongue, and tribe standing before the throne and worshipping. Every people group will indeed eventually receive the message of salvation. Over the last 2,000 years, this message has gone to the ends of the earth. Yet, there are still some

thousands of tribal groups and language groups that have never received the Word of the Lord. At the rate at which the Scriptures are being taught and preached in the nations today, these last peoples will likely be reached sometime in the next 30 years.

We live in a day when the Lord is restoring the nation of Israel. Over the last 100 years, the world has witnessed the miraculous beginnings of the physical restoration of Israel, as the Lord has begun restoring the people of Israel physically to the Land of Israel. More recently, over the last thirty-something years, we have witnessed the Lord beginning to restore the



people of Israel spiritually, to Himself. As God is restoring Israel to His covenants with her, she is also restored to her callings and responsibilities within those covenants.

I believe that part of the very purpose of the restoration of Israel at this time in history is that Israel might take part in completing the task that Israel was originally given. As the Gospel first went out from Israel to the first nations, so now will the Gospel go out from Israel to the last unreached peoples. As the last tribal and language groups are finally receiving the Good News, Messianic Jewish Israelis will be among those who reach them, as the completion of the Great Commission comes full circle.

The people of Israel were chosen by God as a people to serve and to worship Him. We were set apart from among the nations for the purpose of being a light to the nations, that they would be blessed through us.

In the same way, the Land of Israel was chosen as a place where the Lord would be served and worshipped. This Land was set apart in the earth as a place from which the light of God's Word would go forth, and from where the nations would find blessing.

Our people were chosen for a purpose and a function, to be servants of the Lord as His messengers to the nations. We were chosen as a nation to be an example before the other nations and become a model for them to follow. This choosing was neither earned, nor to the exclusion of the nations. It was not because we were somehow better, holier, or more righteous.

There are four primary directions on a compass—north, south, east, and west. The direction of north is of no greater intrinsic value than any other direction on the compass. The uniqueness of north is in its chosenness as the direction from which all other directions take their bearing. So it is with Israel. God's dealings with the nations take their bearing from His dealings with Israel.

So, why is the Lord bringing us back to Israel? Is it simply to gather us into one place to reveal Himself to us and end the story? Will the end result be that He pours out His blessings upon us, and we just lie at ease in Zion and grow fat on His blessing? No, He is bringing us home for the sake of the nations. Our God will bless us that we might bless others. Ultimately, He will reestablish this land and this people as channels of blessing. He will bless the nations through us.

Restoring Missions

As I went around the country and shared this vision, many ministry leaders rejected it flat out. Some rejected it in principle. Others accepted the basic vision, but felt that it was far too distant in the future for us to concern ourselves with doing anything about it. Only two leaders wholeheartedly embraced the vision, having already carried similar visions in their own hearts. Most leaders gave responses that included the following kinds of comments:

Brother, what are you talking about? The nations are supposed to be blessing us. The Lord is not sending the

Jewish people out from Israel. He is bringing us back here. Now is the time to return, not go out. We need to reach our own people with the Gospel. The needs in this country are so great both physically and spiritually, we can't afford to give to other countries. We are still a young fledgling movement of believers struggling with our own issues. We have too many problems here to be able to begin helping others with their problems. Yes, we are supposed to bless the nations. But, you see, they cannot be blessed unless they bless us. So, the way we bless them is by helping them to understand that they cannot be blessed unless they bless us.

My responses to these comments were that we cannot afford not to give. Part of the very process of coming to maturity is learning to give. If we are not faithful with little, we will not be faithful with much. Yes, the needs in this land are great, but the needs of most peoples in most countries are even greater. As great as our needs in Israel continue to be, there is still much that we have to share with others. Most importantly, the chosen-ness of our people is for this very purpose. The Bible is replete with references to these callings, and we must stop running from them.

I waited a few months, and then went around and approached many of these leaders again. I asked, "So, have you thought about it some more? Have you prayed about it? Have you taken a second look at any of the scriptures we read?" I waited some months, and then did it again. I then waited a few more months and did it yet again. Slowly, one by one, different leaders began responding positively and with new insight. As the number of people grew who were opening up to the idea, I soon recognized that although many of them were beginning to share their thoughts about this with me, they were not speaking to each other about it. Finally, I invited a number of leaders who were open to the vision to come together for a day of discussion and prayer on this matter of Israel's callings to the nations. I invited them to meet in the old city of Yafo (Joppa, or Jaffa) during the feast Hanukka in December, 1999.

Yafo is the city from which the prophet Jonah ran from his calling to the city

of Nineveh. As a Jewish prophet, he was called by God to take a message of repentance and redemption to a Gentile people. This, of course, was before Jesus lived on the earth and before the New Covenant was given. Yafo is also the city in which the emissary (apostle) Peter had the vision of the sheet coming down with unclean animals on it (Acts 10:9–16). Three times in his vision he was told to rise up, kill, and eat, yet it appears he never did. Through the vision and following events, Peter came to understand that God was calling him to the home of a Gentile, Cornelius, and that he should call no man unclean (Acts 10:28). As a Jew, Peter would not have been permitted even to drink a glass of water together with Cornelius. The issue was not so much what food Cornelius might happen to serve his guests but that, as a Gentile, Cornelius himself was perceived as being unclean. The testimony of Peter's vision and the events that followed led others in Jerusalem to glorify God saying, "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life." (Acts 11:18, NKJV).

These events give the old city of Yafo a historic link to Israel's calling to the nations. Yafo is believed to be the oldest continuously operating port in the world. As such, it has been a major point-of-departure for our people to the nations. It is interesting to note that even today the flight path for commercial airliners entering Israel is directly over Yafo.

We came together in Yafo that day as a group of thirteen Israeli congregational and ministry leaders to discuss and pray together about missions from Israel to the nations. We were from different cities and different congregations, having different expressions of ministry and different doctrinal views. But, as we sought the Lord together on this one matter, there was a strong sense of unity and agreement in the room as each person's comments only added to and strengthened what the last person had said. Five hours later, the time came to end the meeting and there were a few leaders who needed to leave for other appointments, but we knew that we were not finished. We were just getting started. The following days, I contacted five of the men who had been there and asked if they would

be willing to continue meeting with me on a regular basis. They all agreed, and the next time we met we founded *Keren HaShlichut*, an Israeli mission agency.

For the last three years in a row, emissaries associated with *Keren HaShlichut* have served in more than 20 countries each year. These were all short-term outreaches of only a matter of weeks. This last year, emissaries were sent out for slightly longer periods of time. Two women have just returned home from five months in Burkina Faso, West Africa. They were there ministering to homeless, Muslim street-children. A family with four children is presently serving for nine months in southeastern Turkey, where they are ministering the Word of the Lord to Kurdish Muslim refugees. In both cases, these are Jewish Israeli believers who were sent out to Muslim countries with the Gospel.

Keren HaShlichut is an Israeli association of Messianic Jewish emissaries taking the message of salvation to the Gentiles. Our aim is to see Israelis share in bringing the Word of the Lord to the very last tribal and language groups—that we might help to complete the task that was originally given to our people.

If our stumbling has brought salvation to the nations, how much more our fullness? If our casting Yeshua (Jesus) aside has been the reconciling of the world, what will our accepting Him be, but life from the dead? (Romans 11:11–12; 11:15, paraphrase) Indeed, the salvation of Israel will bring the fullness of God's redemption to the nations. **IJFM**

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