

How to Reach a Nation for Yeshua

If you were tasked with reaching an unreached nation as God's ambassador in Yeshua, how would you proceed?

My wife, Connie, and I became Israeli citizens and took up residence in this country over 20 years ago. A few years later, after getting a foundation in our new/old tongue of Hebrew, I faced that very question. I asked myself, "How can I best invest my life in order to draw our people to their Messiah?"

Since then, I've been privileged to establish humanitarian aid efforts and to assist in planting Hebrew-speaking Messianic congregations. These works are certainly relevant, and I'm grateful for them. But in all honesty, Israeli society as a whole has not yet been touched on a large scale by the pioneer ministries that have sprouted up in the past 25 to 30 years.

It was only when I got involved with teenagers—Messianic youth—that I saw a realistic possibility of influencing this chosen people, destined in Scripture to rediscover our Messiah King but blocked from knowing Him by history and spiritual blindness.

Back in the 1990s, I was invited to a youth event, sponsored by a dedicated ministry from abroad and conducted in English. I saw kids raising their hands high in surrender to the Lord. I saw the broad smiles on their faces and their tender tears of repentance. I knew that these young people needed this type of gathering in an Israeli, Hebrew-language format.

Naively, what I didn't yet realize was how long it would take to create such a ministry. Thus was born Katzir, the Hebrew word for "harvest." As a national service based on the volunteered time of young adult counselors and adult advisors,

hundreds and hundreds of teens have been inspired and equipped through the 14 years of Katzir camps.

The vision of Katzir is to equip the Messianic youth of Israel to be the workers and leaders in the final harvest, leading to Yeshua's return. Those who attended our initial equipping times years ago already have completed their compulsory military service and are entering professional careers, establishing young families and serving in local congregations.

They are the future of Israel. They are the key to transforming our society. They have grown up here in the land. They know the language, the culture, the institutions of Eretz Yisrael (the Land of Israel). I am convinced that the only way to truly impact this nation with the saving grace and power of Yeshua is through His young, dedicated Israeli disciples—integrated and developing relationships on the grassroots level.

This summer we will again spend a full week, night and day, with 90 teenagers and 30 volunteers, most of whom were once campers. Via small group interaction, biblical teaching, worship, prayer, outdoor activity, deep conversations and team-building experiences, we'll watch them change before our eyes. Here are three of their own responses from past gatherings:

"To be real is hard, but it's worth it. I passed through many things during this summer camp. Many prayed for me. It was really amazing. I don't want to continue the way I was, but really to be real. I shared something with you that was very private. It was really hard for me. For the next two days many people talked to me and told me things that were helpful and who identified with me. I never had a lot of believing friends. Believing friends are not to be taken for granted. I'm so glad to spend time with you—to speak freely without expecting to be put down. It's so important."

"I felt a lot of love from all of you. I really enjoyed it. I know that God did something deep in my life. Now, I can choose, and not be afraid. Before I was afraid. I began to sing yesterday. I feel that you are now my family. I hope we can be together again."

"Many of you feel alone where you are. As a counselor I am also facing challenges. I felt so bad that I couldn't give all of you the answers you were seeking. But God told me 'I want you to direct the kids to Me ... and I will give them the answers.' I yielded to God. I heard some stories about what some of you are going through. To hear that you are persevering – you brought me back to a better place. There is a LIE that you are alone and no one else is going through what you are. Keep on keeping on! I love you so much."

I hope that with this brief introduction, you can feel some of the awesome sense of reward, challenge and anticipation of our team. Please join us in equipping the youth who will soon become Yeshua's finest messengers in Israel.

Eitan Shiskoff *made aliyah in 1992 and established Tents of Mercy Congregation and Humanitarian Aid Center in 1995. He and his wife, Connie, have been married 44 years and have four children and nine grandchildren. He is the author of a new book What About Us? The End-Calling of Gentiles in Israel's Revival.*

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