

Messianic Jewish Church Looks to Future With Hope

In 2002, my family made the decision to make aliyah (immigration to Israel). One morning during a prayer walk, I had a strong sense that we were to plant ourselves wherever our longtime friend and mentor, Asher Intrater, was. At the time he was one of the elders in the first Spirit-filled, Hebrew-speaking only congregation in Israel—*Tiferet Yeshua* (The Glory of Yeshua).

Ari and Shira Sorko-Ram birthed the congregation in 1995 with the goal of reaching native-born Israelis. Despite the fact that I could hardly form a coherent sentence in Hebrew, Elana and I were attracted to the vision.

During that summer, we attended the Messianic Jewish Alliance conference in Pennsylvania. We knew that Ari and Shira were attending, and we were excited to connect with them. We sat with Ari in the dining room and within minutes, we knew we were making the right decision. He was so warm and friendly. When we moved to Israel, one of the first things Ari did was take Elana and me out to dinner to get to know us better. This is who Ari is.

Over the past 10 years, I have seen Ari laugh with people and cry with people. I watched him wash the feet of an Arab believer and stand with those who could not stand.

After a few years, we decided to help Asher plant a new congregation in the Jerusalem area. One night I felt the tolerable sciatic pain in my leg that I had been dealing with for a few months become intolerable. After a pain-filled, sleepless night I went to the emergency room. They admitted me and gave me some much-needed painkillers. Even though we were not in *Tiferet Yeshua* at the time, Ari was the first person to

visit me in the hospital. That meant so much to me!

After several years, the Lord led us back to Tiferet Yeshua. During these past few years I have enjoyed watching Ari up close, as he has shepherded the flock here in Tel Aviv. Mercy is not my strongest gift, but I have been able to study Ari and learn from him what it means to love people—to be there for them in their time of need.

As we enter into this new season where Ari has passed the baton at Tiferet Yeshua to Asher, with my assistance, to raise up a new generation of Israeli leaders, I feel better equipped for the task having been mentored by Ari's example.

In most cases when a leader turns over authority of his congregation to others, it is because he is moving on elsewhere. We are fortunate that Ari and Shira, now released to focus 100 percent of their energies on Maoz (leadership conferences for Israeli leaders, developing Hebrew media on Internet for outreach, translating books into Hebrew, financially investing in the Israeli Messianic community through and calling the nations to stand with Israel), will be staying in Tel Aviv and continuing to be a part of the Tiferet Yeshua family they birthed nearly 18 years ago.

Ron Cantor serves as one of the pastors and elders at Tiferet Yeshua Congregation in Tel Aviv. His recently released novel, *Identity Theft, on the Jewish roots of the New Testament*, continues to get strong reviews. In addition to blogging for *Maoz Israel*, you can read Ron's material on his website, . Ron also hosts a weekly podcast, *The Maoz Israel Report Podcast*, that can be downloaded on iTunes.