

Ebenezer Home

Haifa

Annual Report

for

2007



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Chairman of the Local Management Committee (LMC)

Gershon Nerel

From Survivors of the Shoah (Holocaust) to Survivors of the Soviet Union

*"Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming
at an hour you do not expect" (Matt 24:44)*

The Ebenezer Home was founded in 1976, about three decades after the establishment of the State of Israel. It was initially intended to provide a Home mainly for elderly Jewish believers in Yeshua who suffered during the Second World War and particularly for those who underwent the Shoah (holocaust). Most of the first residents were *olim* (new immigrants) from Eastern Europe - countries such as Romania, Bulgaria, Poland and Hungary. Only very few among them, or among their close relatives, could then afford to financially cover the monthly cost of living in the Home. Some of them could not even pay the entrance fee. The founding organisations that voluntarily took upon themselves the responsibility and the burden to raise the funds to guarantee the existence of the Home were fully aware of this reality. In fact, year after year, they have remained faithful in this mission, to this day.

During the 1990s and the beginning of the third millennium, the economy and the general standard of living in Israel has improved, also among Jewish believers in Yeshua. Consequently, it was hoped that the result of this

new situation would be that the "next generation" of elderly residents in the Home, together with their families, would be able to increase the local financial contribution to the running expenses. This did happen, but only to a limited extent. It was also hoped that the increase in the number of Messianic congregations in Israel and the improvement in their financial situation would also lead to a greater financial contributions on their part. This too, de facto, did happen, but it still didn't cover the costs. And so, until this day, more than 70% of the Home's annual budget is dependent upon financial support from brethren in the Lord overseas.



However, the reality today is that these devoted "veteran" organisations constantly signal and openly explain to us that their own income from their constituency is systematically decreasing. Some among them even say that nowadays it takes 10 younger contributors to replace one old-time donor to the Home. Furthermore, within the long standing donor countries – Norway, Denmark, Finland and Germany – some of the younger generation are raising the following question: "why should we contribute for developed and rich Israel?" This is a legitimate question, yet one should also remember that not all Israelis are rich, and especially among the elderly there are many that still cannot afford to pay all their expenses in the Home. This is true in particular when one remembers that many of the elderly today are a new generation of aging immigrants that hardly even speak Hebrew.

In May 2008 the State of Israel celebrates its 60th anniversary. New elderly immigrants are part and parcel of the country's population, but now many of them originate from the Former Soviet Union, places such as Russia, the Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus. Today eight residents in the Home speak Russian. One of the wall signs in the Home, for example, which shows the way to the bomb shelter, is written in Hebrew, Russian and English (see picture). Most of these "Russian" residents are widows whose relatives struggle with their own absorption problems in the country. Other close relatives, such as sons, daughters and grandchildren live outside of Israel. So, now there are new and real cases needing financial assistance - otherwise, these believers would simply find themselves in inhumane living conditions. Moreover, the Home is legally a private institution, and in order for us to maintain our spiritual independence, we cannot request government allowances.

With this reality, the Local Management Committee has to constantly face the dilemma of making decisions about admitting new residents into the Home who are in real material need, while knowing that no money, or only some of the money, will come from their family or congregation.

To this very day, our Saviour and Lord Yeshua has been more than faithful. Our prayers were answered in miraculous ways. When we look forward to the future, our prayer remains that the Lord will also lead and help in the years to come. To HIM be the glory and thanks for everything. ●



Left: Zhana (top right in picture) doing activities like handwork and cooking with the residents. Five of eight residents in the picture are from the Former Soviet Union.

Above: a sign in three languages: Hebrew, Russian and English.

Members of the various committees and meetings held in 2007

The International Board

Member	Deputy
Leiv Roald Thu (Chairman)	Torgeir Flateby
Ulrich Laepple	Hartmut Renz
Rolf Gunnar Heitmann	Berit Skjeie Meyers
Håvard Kleppe	Else-Brit Kleppe
Bodil F. Skjøtt	Hanne Mikkelsen
Roy Rissanen	Tarja Säynevirta
Hanan Lukatz	Arthur Goldberg
Gershon Nerel	Ruth Denlinger

According to the revised statutes (April 5th 1995, B2.3), members and deputies are appointed for a five year term and may be reappointed for two additional successive terms of five years each. Philip Sa'ad was an observer at the International Board as a representative of the Arab Christian sector in Israel. The recording secretary was Michael Nissim.

The Executive Committee

Member	Deputy
Leiv Roald Thu (Chairman)	Rolf Gunnar Heitmann
Gershon Nerel (Vice Chairman)	Roy Rissanen
Hanan Lukatz	Ulrich Laepple

The Executive Committee meetings were held on the 6th of May and the 2nd of December 2007. The recording secretary was Michael Nissim.

The Local Management Committee

Member	Deputy
Gershon Nerel	Daniel Yahav
Samuel Aweida	Irina Gorochov
Fida Ramadan	Naomi Ateeq
Ruth Denlinger	Beatrice Seiden
Berit Skjeie Meyers	Itai Meron

The Local Management Committee met six times throughout 2007 (17/01, 28/03, 06/05, 12/06, 19/09 and 21/11). The recording secretaries were Johnny Khoury and Michael Nissim.

EBENEZER HOME

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A view of the Haifa Bay

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Haifa, April 2008

Handwritten signature of Gershon Nerel in black ink.

Gershon Nerel
Chairman LMC

Handwritten signature of Johnny Khoury in black ink.

Johnny Khoury
Manager