

**News From**  
**Toward Jerusalem**  
**Council II**

**May 2002**



**Marty Waldman**, Executive General Secretary

**John Dawson**, Chairman

**Evan Thomas**, Chairman

**Meetings in Vienna**

On October 20, 2001, the TJC II executive committee convened in Vienna, Austria, the home of Johannes and Christy Fichtenbauer. By evening, they had been joined by more than fifty individuals and spouses who would be presented the TJC II vision with a view to becoming associate members. Most came from Europe or North America, but there were also representatives from Africa, Australia, and the Middle East. Along with Marty Waldman, Johannes welcomed the group and gave some of the history of his family and of the Jewish experience in Vienna.

Meetings of the entire group began the next morning in an auditorium dramatically decorated with a huge wooden menorah. Lilo Keller and Patti Ridings led worship for the general sessions.

Marty addressed the group and spoke of the journey from the time of his original vision of TJC II and the growing relationships and decisions that led up to Vienna. He also related his family connection as his parents had been in Vienna after WW II. Peter Hocken gave a brief history of replacement theology, the devastating results for the church, the need for true identification and repentance, and a caution against accusation of another group as people begin to uncover sin. Later in the day, Dan Juster shared on the Messianic Movement.

For two days, general sessions were alternately scheduled with breakout sessions of the sub-committees, to which participants had been assigned. The sub-committees, which are Theology, Israel, Spiritual, Diplomatic, and Development, will become ongoing working groups.

Highlights of the meetings included corporate prayer times as the group prayed over the executive committee and Ram Zango of Birkinia Faso led in reading Isaiah 49: 22-23 in multiple languages. Then in a dramatic and prophetic gesture, he knelt and licked the shoes of Marty Waldman. Many responded with weeping and repentance on behalf of nations.

In the Tuesday afternoon session, Cardinal Christoph Schonborn, Archbishop of Vienna, addressed the group on Jewish issues and reconciliation, followed by a blessing. Then the Jewish members of the executive committee prayed for the Cardinal and the Catholic members, Johannes and Peter.

Evan Thomas said, "How grateful we were to receive the exhortation of the Cardinal as he stood humbly before an enormous wooden menorah that formed a background to our speakers' podium. He shared briefly of the history of pain between the Christian and Jewish communities of Vienna and the work of reconciliation that has been accomplished through acts of forgiveness and restitution. And how precious too were the words of acceptance from our Syrian Orthodox associate from Damascus as he held my Israeli colleague and me and cried, 'Welcome to the neighborhood.' "

Relating the significance of the Vienna meetings, Peter Hocken said, "For me this meeting underlined the vital necessity for the Church's mission that all Christian streams and churches come together and that this reconciliation is ultimately only possible through the right honoring of the Jewish expression."

The "heroes" of the Vienna meetings were the intercessors who kept a constant vigil of worship, prayer and fasting on site. A small group of Americans joined Austrians and overcame language and cultural barriers to pray in unity.

A debt of appreciation is owed to members of Umkehr zum Herrn community who provided transportation, acted as tour guides, and hosted dinners, prayer meetings, and overnight guests in their homes. Their generous hospitality was an integral part of the wonderful experience in Vienna.

Following the meetings, the executive committee and family members traveled together to Poland to visit Auschwitz and Birkenau.

### **Comments on Visit to Auschwitz**

**Marty Waldman** – "This Holocaust memory represents our darkest hour. For many this was the hour when G-d turned His back on our people. As a result many of the survivors of the Holocaust can no longer see G-d nor long for His comforting presence."

**Marty Waldman** – "I don't know how many of my family perished at Auschwitz but one survived...my Aunt. Though my parents escaped the horrors of Auschwitz, they barely managed to stay alive during that time in Poland. Consequently, I have refused to travel into Poland until now. ... Our committee planned this journey of prayer a year in advance. As a son of survivors it gave me time to prepare my heart but it also gave me a year of struggle within that secret place of my

soul that included my personal family history. Could I bear it? By the grace of HaShem I would face this darkness with His help. “

**Evan Thomas** – “ Nothing could have prepared me for Auschwitz. Messianic Rabbi Waldman is the son of Polish Jewish Holocaust survivors of Auschwitz. Another member of our tiny group, Johannes Fichtenbauer, grew up in the home of Nazis, believing in Nazi ideals. These two men to a large degree represented the collective pain and shame we were feeling. In prayer we confessed that none of us wanted to be there. The first day was so terribly hard. “

**Dan Juster** – “ My wife Patty was unable to go on after several hours of the first day. The level of evil was simply too much. She said it was like trying to comprehend infinite evil.”

**Evan Thomas** - [Experience near the display of children’s clothing ] “ Amidst my own tears I became aware that I had been walking with a small group of German teenagers and several of the girls were weeping uncontrollably. They could not meet my eyes as I stood among them with a black yarmulke on my head. As I regarded one particularly inconsolable girl I felt the prompting of the Lord simply saying, ‘Comfort her!’ As I gently placed my hand on her shoulder there was a silent transaction between us all. And again I heard the ‘still small voice’ saying ‘You have all been victims here – both her people and yours.’ The pain of this victimization has become inseparable from our collective identities and has become generational. “

**Evan Thomas**-“There are many powerful testimonies of Messianic Jewish women that suffered and died at Auschwitz, including the Catholic nun, Edith Stein who fully identified with her people and was recently canonized by her Church.”

**Dan Juster**- “ By afternoon, Patty had recovered to visit Auschwitz II, Birkenau. The barrack sites stretch out as far as the eye can see. The destroyed gas chambers and crematoria were still visible and it was easy to reconstruct the full process by our imagination. However, strangely, I did not come away with despair, but more with the thought that only the chosenness of Israel could explain this. Only the united effort of the hosts of hell to thwart the plans of God could give adequate account. Only such a meaning is adequate to the memory of those who perished.”

**John Dawson** – “We met in the guard tower overlooking Auschwitz II Birkenau early the next day. We began to pray, and grieve before the Lord. We saw the indirect but discernible link between the repudiation of Jewish identity in the second century church: the extreme replacement theology that arose in parts of the church, the anti-Semitic decrees of the church councils and the later atrocities of the twentieth century pagan regimes.”

**Dan Juster**-“On this visit the next day, we spent the greater part of the time praying at the field of ashes where most of the ashes from the crematoria were deposited. So many prayers for resurrection life from the ashes and for the hope and future of the Jewish people. This was certainly a time of bonding in a mutual time of deep sorrow and hope.”

**Evan Thomas** –[Field of Ashes] “ We drew close to one another and recited the Kaddish, the ancient Jewish prayer of mourning and wept together at the enormity of the loss. As we continued, our prayers changed as we began to express gratitude for those that were spared and also that out of the very ashes, a nation was born. Finally, as we walked out along the central roadway of

Birkenau, mindful of a group of young Israeli mourners passing by, we recited the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm as a declaration of our security in God.”

**Marty Waldman** – “The Field of Ashes was holy ground to me. ...The rest of the committee left the field singing an unfamiliar song, 'Beauty for Ashes'. I could not leave but had to linger...as a family member lingers after a funeral. I needed to spend time with my family that I never knew... with my grandparents, my uncles and aunts, my cousins who perished in the Shoa...some of their ashes were mingled with the dirt beneath my feet. This was holy ground. One and a half million of my people were now only a memory in the lingering heart of a fellow sojourner in the Field of Ashes. The hope of the future now resides in our generation and the generations to come. Our hope is in the LORD and His Messiah...Yeshua. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, YOU [ my true shepherd ] are with me!”

**John Dawson** –“ I've dreaded this experience all year. Mainly because I anticipated the pain of the Jewish and German members. It was painful, but because we have walked through many trials together for nearly 6 years, our intimacy was enhanced rather than diminished and our time ended in great grace as the peace of the Holy Spirit descended upon us. We were filled with hope and energy on the bus while driving back through the Czech Republic back to Vienna.”

## Reminders

February 18-20, 2003 Europe Consultation for Associates  
May 12-13, 2003 North America Consultation for Associates

## Appreciation

On behalf of those invited to be associates, I want to say thank you for honoring us in this way. It is a privilege to commit to a great vision for the kingdom and to be in covenant relationship with men of such high character as those on the executive committee.

Linda Fulmer

## Letter from Spain

The following is an excerpt from a letter received December 2001 from Susana Rodriguez of Spain. She participated in the commissioning service in Malaga for the TJC II prayer journey in March 1998. Almost four years later, she states, “ Your team’s precious obedience made an impact in my heart of the glory of God. ...My heart was set on fire with a new zeal for God’s glory, especially when I could see the precious character of Jesus formed in you as you were making the word alive by sharing it! Especially I thank God for the fruits of the Spirit that are so abundant in your group, above all the true gentleness and wisdom from above that cause you to be an open letter of Romans 12:10.” [ “ Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.” NIV]

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