



THE THEOLOGICAL TASK OF TOWARD JERUSALEM COUNCIL II (TJCII)

As the Holy Spirit leads us into a deeper understanding of the TJCII vision concerning Israel and the nations, and the uniting of Jew and Gentile in the one body, there is necessarily a theological task. The task of all “new covenant” theology is TO KNOW GOD AS REVEALED IN MESSIAH YESHUA, that is to say, to understand the mystery of Yeshua in the light of the Holy Spirit. The specific task of TJCII is to serve the goal of bringing together the two constituent elements of the one body of Messiah, the Jewish and the Gentile.¹ TJCII is a “single focus” initiative: the theological task controlled by this single focus is to reflect theologically on all aspects of this initiative and to serve it with minds sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

The source of all our theology in TJCII has to be the revelation of God in the Scriptures that are the unique and authoritative Spirit-inspired witness to the irrevocable call of Israel and the promises given to Israel concerning the Messiah and his kingdom. They bear witness to a first and definitive fulfilment of these promises in and through the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Yeshua, the king of Israel and Saviour of the world. This fulfilment is communicated and transmitted through the outpouring

of the Holy Spirit, beginning on the Feast of Weeks (Shavuot) known to Gentiles as Pentecost, so as to form the body of the Messiah, made up of Jew and Gentile reconciled through the atoning death of Messiah. The promises in both Testaments to Israel and through Israel to the nations will be brought to their fullness through the visible coming of Yeshua in glory. Since it is only through the Holy Spirit that we can receive this revelation and begin to understand it, our theology has to be a “theology on our knees”, grounded in humble and repentant prayer.

We need to distinguish between the theological task within TJCII which directly serves the TJCII vision, and the theological work being done and needing to be done in the wider body of Messiah that can be a real help to the task of TJCII. We need to bear three major distinctions in mind:

- the distinction between the work that is necessary for the TJCII vision to move forward and the work that can be helpful to us (maybe this is a spectrum and not a clear disjunction); and
- the distinction between the work that is commissioned by TJCII

Continued on Page 2

- to be published under the auspices of TJCII and the work that is undertaken by people involved in TJCII and with the desire to benefit TJCII, but which is not for publication as a product of TJCII.
- The distinction between the work that needs to be done by Jewish scholars, particularly by Messianic Jews, and the work that needs to be done by Christian scholars. The task for the Jewish scholars is to develop an authentically Jewish understanding of the New Testament revelation concerning Yeshua and the kingdom. The task of the Christian scholars, in association with Jewish scholars, is to correct the imbalances and distortions brought about by a theology shaped by the exclusion of a Jewish understanding of Yeshua and of the gospel of the kingdom (see agenda point 3 below).

Those responsible for the theological work of TJCII are seeking to identify those topics on which work is necessary for the whole initiative to proceed on a sound foundation. However, there is also a need to discover and make known the significant scholarly work that is already available on topics relevant to TJCII. We hope that the TJCII witness to the restoration of a Jewish expression of the church will further promote and encourage the scholarly work that still needs to be done

in these relevant areas.

The theological agenda of TJCII is controlled by the foundational biblical distinction found in both Testaments between the chosen people of Israel and the nations (the Gentiles). This distinction grounds the twofold character of the church of Jesus Christ, expressed in the image of the “one new man” (Eph. 2: 15), and forms the basis of the TJCII vision for the reconciliation of Jew and Gentile in the one body of Messiah.

The theological agenda needs to include study and reflection on the following topics that are all in their different ways related to the distinction between Israel and the nations:

- to study and reflect upon the elements of covenantal continuity and the elements of radical newness and discontinuity between the covenants given to Israel before the coming of Messiah and the new covenant in the blood of Messiah;
- to reclaim for the whole body of Messiah a proper biblical understanding of the relationship between Israel and the nations, and all its implications for the unity of the one body;
- to uncover and undo the confusion introduced by replacement thinking, to examine how traditional Christian theological language has been shaped by

- the rejection of Israel and to expose and correct one-sided and partial teaching relating to the church and Israel – in particular the aberrations involved in Dual Covenant Theology, One Law Theology, and the Ephraimite movement; all of these aberrations are in different ways incompatible with the TJCII vision of the reconciliation of Jew and Gentile in one body;²
- to deepen theological thinking on the land of Israel and the role of Jerusalem in relation to the restoration of the “one new man” model of the church as well as their roles in the preparation for the coming of the Lord in glory and the fullness of his kingdom;
- to reflect theologically on repentance for the sins of the past, on “identificational repentance” and/or “representative confession”;
- to reflect theologically upon the relationship between the spread and consolidation of the Messianic Jewish congregational movement and the rise of Jewish expressions of faith in Yeshua within the churches of the nations;
- to eliminate misunderstandings that would impede the progress of the TJCII initiative

and to contribute to a reduction in the tensions inherent in the TJCII call to all expressions within the body of Messiah.

As we believe that in TJCII the Holy Spirit has lifted up in a particular way the model of the Council of “the apostles and elders” in Jerusalem, described in Acts chapter 15, it is appropriate that in the theological work of TJCII this Jerusalem Council serves as a model and guide for our reflection. In accordance with the principles formulated by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem, it is important to encourage the respective contributions of Jewish and Gentile scholars without impairment of the freedom required for all genuine scholarship.

While it is not the call of TJCII to resolve all the theological difficulties arising from many centuries of division and conflict, it is our expectation and our experience that as all return to the Jewish roots of our faith, the Lord will give us light that will lead us beyond our current impasses and oppositions and deeper into the “full riches of complete understanding ... to know the mystery of God, namely Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2: 2 – 3).

May 2009

Footnotes:

1 In this statement we use the term "body of Messiah" to describe the vision of TJCII for a renewed and reconciled church of Jesus Christ uniting Jew and Gentile in the one body. We use the term "churches" to describe all the existing churches, communions and/or denominations throughout the world. In these terms, the Messianic Jewish communities belong as an intrinsic element in the body of Messiah, but do not form part of "the churches".

The term 'church' as such, is the equivalent of *ekklesia* (greek; used both in the New Testament and in the Greek translation of Tanakh/OT), is originally a translation of the Hebrew *kahal/kehilah*. The *ekklesia*, the body of Messiah, is the gathering of the people of God – both from Israel and the nations - 'in the Messiah of Israel'.

2 "Dual Covenant Theology" refers to the widespread view among many involved in the Jewish – Christian dialogue that the first covenant was for the people of Israel and the new covenant is for the Gentiles, with the two covenants being presented as alternative ways to salvation for the two groups.

"One Law Theology" teaches that Gentiles have the same relationship as the Jews to the Mosaic Law and are to

apply it the same way.

The "Ephraimite movement" has its largest following in the United States, though it is also found in Europe and Israel. In its most problematic form, people become true Christians because they are descendants of the lost tribes of Israel. In a milder form, large contingents of true Christians are from the lost tribes. For them, Ephraim in prophecy is the body of true Christians that will become one with Judah, the Jews.

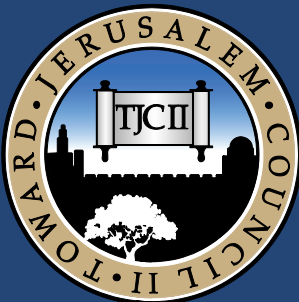
This document, to which several theological advisors have contributed, has been approved by the executive committee.

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The Aims of TJCII Include:



- Make known the restoration of the Jewish segments of the Body of Messiah
- Foster repentance for the historic suppression of the corporate Messianic Jewish witness of Yeshua (Jesus), the Messiah
- Further the calling and election of Israel and the Messianic Jewish Community through intercessory prayer, teachings and diplomacy
- Foster reconciliation and unity between Christians and Messianic Jews