



TJCII-North America

Our Vision for North America

A Vision of Unity between Jews and Gentiles in the Body of Messiah

Introduction

Toward Jerusalem Council II (TJCII) is first of all a vision. It is a vision of grace extended to the Church of this generation. It is a vision for the healing of the oldest wound in the Church. It is a vision for the unity of Jew and Gentile in the one body of believers in Jesus (Yeshua), the Messiah of Israel. It is a vision for the depth of unity among His followers for which Yeshua prayed. (John 17:18-23)

A Brief History

As the first century Jewish believers took the message of reconciliation to God through Yeshua to the Gentile world, it was necessary for them to understand how God intended the Gentiles to be absorbed into the Abrahamic Covenant apart from the Law of Moses (Torah). Because the original body of believers in Messiah Yeshua was a Jewish body, and because the Jewish people had been commanded by God to remain a people separated from the nations, this was a critical question. The decision of the first Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) demonstrated a wisdom that achieved unity between Jew and Gentile, while honoring the distinctive roles each group brought to the fulfillment of Scriptural promises.

God had indeed called out a people of faith to Himself, consisting of Jew and Gentile reconciled in one body through Messiah Yeshua. This is the mystery of the Gospel. (Ephesians 2:11-3:12)

After the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D., leading Rabbis sought to protect the Jewish people from assimilation by the construction of unified belief and practice. Those who could not adhere to their decisions were excluded from the community. This exclusion marginalized Jewish believers in Yeshua. However, all Jews, believers and non-believers in Yeshua, as well as Gentile believers, were considered a threat to the Roman Empire, and until the 3rd century, Jews and Christians often remained underground in practice. All of this changed when Constantine became the Roman Emperor and proclaimed Christianity as the religion of the Roman Empire.

From being totally Jewish in the first century, the body of Messiah became, by binding decisions (edicts), totally Gentile by the end of the fourth century. Early Gentile church councils forbade Jewish believers to practice their faith in Yeshua as Jews. They were required to abandon their Jewish identity and to renounce the heritage given by God in perpetuity to the Jewish people. On this point the Church and Synagogue were now in

agreement: One could not be Jewish and believe in Jesus.

But God has spoken in our day! He has resurrected the Messianic Jewish Community of the first century, in spite of the false perception of both church and synagogue. A Jewish expression of faith in Yeshua has reappeared to the body of Messiah, and it is here to stay! The mystery of the Gospel has been restored to us. Once again the elder brother in Messiah brings to the church the wisdom of her Jewish roots. The reconciliation of Jew and Gentile in the unified (not uniform) Body of Messiah will bring new life to the body, and will sanctify the Name of God.

Who Are the Messianic Jews?

The Messianic Jewish Community comprises Jews who have come to faith in Yeshua as Messiah (the anointed one) of Israel, the Word of God incarnate and Savior of the world. Messianic Jews hold this faith specifically as Jews by refusing assimilation into “Gentile” Christianity. Messianic Jews thus challenge the accepted Christian and Jewish view that when Jews come to faith in Yeshua, they cease to be Jews and become Christians instead. Messianic Jews are the “elder brother” in the body. The first believers expressed their faith as Jews; a faith in Yeshua that did not deny or compromise their continued position among God’s cov-

enant people. The Messianic Jewish Community promotes a faith in Yeshua that is expressed in Jewish terms, with worship and community life shaped by Hebrew Scriptures, and reflected in meaningful Jewish tradition.

Jewish life is traditionally diverse on a daily basis for Messianic Jews. Congregational life normally involves holding worship services on Shabbat and the celebration of the Biblical Feasts. The life and teachings of Yeshua take on a deeper meaning when understood in their Jewish context. Messianic Jews see the New Testament (Brit Hadasha) as bringing to fullness the promises of the Old Testament (Tanakh). The body of Messiah is blessed through this wisdom.

The rise of the Messianic Jewish Community demonstrates the irrevocable nature of the eternal covenant between God and Israel. The preservation of the Jewish people as a distinct, identifiable nation in diaspora (dispersion) for 2000 years, and the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, provide further affirmation of the irrevocable covenant as foretold by the prophets. (Ezekiel 36 and 37) Messianic Jews emphasize the prophetic link between the return of the people to the land, the gift of the Spirit and their return to God in rebirth and spiritual transformation. Thus the land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem are as significant for

Messianic Jews, as they are for the Jewish people as a whole.

ance of the Jewish segment of the body of Messiah, and the persecution of the Jewish people in the name of Jesus began.

Development of the TJCII Initiative

In the mid 1990's, the Lord imparted the vision of the TJCII initiative through Marty Waldman, leader of Baruch HaShem Messianic Congregation in Dallas, Texas. After conferring with trusted colleagues and gathering a group of leaders from both the Jewish and Christian communities, an executive council was formed, with equal representation of Jew and Gentile. Today, committees of leaders in eastern and western Europe, as well as North America are in place. They are committed to this vision for a second Jerusalem Council that will bless the right of Jewish believers to live out their faith as Jews. Many questions remain immersed in prayer, but the truth of the vision burns bright in the hearts of many believers worldwide. What is known for certain is that the "Elder Brother" has returned to embrace the "Younger Brother" to the glory of God.

TJCII was supported first by Evangelical Christians. However, its development has made clear how essential it is that there is participation by the ancient churches of East and West (Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic). The teaching that the Church replaced God's covenant people (Supersessionism or Replacement Theology) began with the ancient church councils. The edicts of these councils resulted in the disappear-

The Messianic Community Today

We believe that the resurrection of a Jewish New Covenant community demonstrates the irrevocable nature of the eternal covenant between God and Israel. The impetus for the international Community came almost entirely from the USA where there are more Messianic congregations, and where resources are greater. But the centrality of Israel and Jerusalem in Jewish faith confers a unique importance on the Messianic Jewish Community inside Israel, where it was initially called the "Messianic Movement". For Messianic Jews, Jerusalem is the focal point of their eschatological hope and of their vision for the restoration of both Israel and the Church and of world redemption.

Messianic congregations in Israel have more than tripled in number since the influx of immigrants from the former Soviet Union during the 1990's and now number more than 120 congregations (Kehiloth). The Messianic Jewish Community, like the traditional community, is remarkably diverse, reflecting the different countries of origin and different language groups.

The more than 300 Messianic Jewish congregations in the USA are associated with either the Messianic Jewish

Alliance of America (MJAA), the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations (UMJC), or the Association of Messianic Congregations (AMC). In addition, there are several unaffiliated Messianic Jewish congregations.

The Message to the Church

The schism between Jewish and Gentile believers that escalated in the first through third centuries was officially sealed by the Councils of Nicea in the fourth century. This split in the Body of Messiah may well have been the root for the further divisions in the Church throughout the centuries. For this reason, the Christian embrace of the Jewish expression of the Body of Messiah will release a major impulse for the restoration of unity among all the Christian bodies that have become divided through the ages.

The Church has the opportunity to enrich her understanding of the Scriptures given by God to the world and preserved through the Jewish people. We suggest that Christians become familiar with the Messianic community. There is a good deal of published materials available today,

authored by Messianic Jewish scholars. These scholars have written several outstanding commentaries on the Messiah, in particular and the Scriptures, in general, that deepen one's knowledge of God, and bring Jewish wisdom to the table. A list, of recommended materials, is available by email: northamerica@tjcii.org.

The Church has the opportunity to help the Messianic community to thrive in its development without the Christian conditions historically required. The Church also has the obligation to renounce all forms of replacement teaching which has fueled the persecution of Jews and promoted indifference toward the very people through whom she has been so richly blessed.

May the Body of Messiah, Jew and Gentile, enjoy the unity intended by Yeshua Himself as He gave His life for the sake of the redemption of the world and the sanctification of the Name of Almighty God.

TJCII North America invites your questions, your prayers and your support as we take this message of reconciliation to the churches of this continent—for such a time as this.

TJCII-North America exists to promote the vision of
Toward Jerusalem Council II (TJCII) in North America.

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For more information, please visit
TJCII website at: www.tjcii.org

The Vision of TJCII:

- **Uniting Jews and Gentiles for the Return of Yeshua: John 17**
- **Working toward the Second Jerusalem Council: Acts 15**
- **Encouraging Unity That Leads to Restoration" Romans 11**
- **Preparing for the Way for Yeshua's Return: Zechariah 8**