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JOURNEYING INTO MESSIANIC JUDAISM

By Revd. Tim Butlin (Anglican vicar, Loudwater, England)

The church is very messy on both sides of the Gentile Christian/Messianic Jewish divide, and how the Holy Spirit will resolve the situation remains unclear. In Ephesians 4, the Apostle Paul exhorts us to: Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace...(Ephesians 4: 2-3 NIV); until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 13 NIV).

I am part of the Gentile mess in a worldwide church that is far from united. Thirty years ago I arrived in Israel to live out a ministry calling among Jewish believers. An early experience was to hear mature brothers in Messiah profoundly disagree on doctrine and their whole approach to the New Testament. One had a lifetime of education and upbringing in Rabbinic Judaism and a personal experience of Yeshua/Jesus as Messiah while the other was steeped in 'sound' Gentile evangelical Christian theology, as was I. The shock of discovering that Messianic believers were not all destined to slide easily into my presupposed categories of good theological thinking was wholly unexpected.

Living in Jerusalem challenged my own tidy thinking. Watching robed clergy from ancient Christian traditions walk the Old City streets initially caused bewilderment. 'Why was it not obvious to them that their liturgies and theologies were being swept aside by waves of reformation and renewal over the centuries, from Martin Luther to the 1960's and 1970's Jesus Revolution?' puzzled me more than once. When I served on the United Christian Council in Israel's (UCCI) theological commission, I discovered that even among Protestants (the UCCI was a western protestant misnomer) our differences were more than merely cultural.

Little wonder, then, that my first experience of a TJCI consultation (Vienna 2004) left such a profound mark on me. Here were representatives of the entire Messianic Jewish/Gentile Christian spectrum (Orthodox, Roman Catholic, differing shades of Protestants and varying Messianic Jewish perspectives) actively doing the business of Ephesians 4; intensively making "every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" clearly not yet having reached "unity in the faith" but being humble that none of us have yet attained "to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ". Nevertheless we were looking past the varied costumes of our traditions from east and west and worshipping and praying together. Significant leaders from major movements were gathered together. There was respect and discussion. Most of all there was relationship-building and trust taking place, in which context it was and is possible for closely cherished starting positions to be scrutinized in a new light. And the presence of God was tangible.

On the night He was betrayed Yeshua prayed for unity, not only among His immediate disciples, but –pertinently – among all of us who believe through their testimony. Growing beyond the fragmented mess of our present relationships into maturity, therefore, is a matter of deep significance before the fulfillment of the ages comes and the Messiah returns. **TJCI**

Revd. Tim Butlin hopes to develop this theme further in a future issue.

LESSONS FROM SPAIN

A Model for Repentance Initiatives

By Peter Hocken,

a member of the TJCII Executive Committee living in Austria

In October 2010 a small group of intercessors spent 4 days in Seville and Huelva, Spain, to pray into the issues arising from the history of the Marranos, the Jews baptized into the Catholic faith under pressure or by force. On the first day, the group prayed for guidance as to how to approach this task. During our worship and prayer we received a clear plan for the three days we would spend in Seville. On the first day, we were to go into the city, not to pray, but to observe, to soak in and to learn. On the second day, we were to go to selected places in the city to thank the Lord for all the blessings and graces He had poured out on this city and its people throughout the centuries, including the blessings brought by the Jewish people. Only on the third day were we to enter into a confession of the sins in that history, especially the sins against the Jewish people. For this, we again sought guidance as to the significant places in the city where this prayer of confession and lament should take place.

This model is a protection against all forms of arrogance that can weaken and undermine repentance initiatives from within, . . .

The group in Seville quickly saw that the Lord had provided us with a model appropriate for all prayer journeys of repentance for the sins of the past. This model is a protection against all forms of arrogance that can weaken and undermine repentance initiatives from within, for example the arrogance that assumes we do not need to get a deep feel and respect for the place we are visiting. It is a sounder method theologically, because as the apostle Paul urges us “in everything, by prayer and petition,

with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” (Phil. 4:6). Starting with praise and thanksgiving protects us from the danger of placing the evil on the same level as the holy and the good. As Paul teaches “where sin increased, grace increased all the more.” (Rom. 5:20).

During another intercessory event in May 2011, not directly linked to TJCII, a prophetic word was received about “Proclaiming Life.” We are to proclaim life wherever we go. We are to proclaim life in place of death, a fruit of the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus. This proclamation of life enables the graces and blessings of the past to be taken up afresh and built upon. When I heard this word, I sensed that this word gives us a fourth step that completes the process of healing, for repentance is always “unto life” (see Acts 11: 18).



TJCII Seville group with the Archbishop of Seville in his office.

So we commend this four-step model for all repentance initiatives:

1. *Get a feel for the history, the character, the culture of the place, in all its dimensions.*
2. *Praise and thank the Lord for all His blessings, the gifts bestowed on this place and its people.*
3. *Confession of the sins committed there, and a grieving for them before the Lord.*
4. *Proclamation of Life in the places where sin had brought death.*

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LATEST NEWS FROM AFRICA

By Elizabeth Kamau, TJCII Coordinator for East Africa

In this further report on the TJCII Africa Diplomatic Journey made in March 2011 (see "Good News from Africa" by Benjamin Berger in Spring 2011 Communiqué), I add some thoughts on what this journey meant to us, as well as giving follow up news.



Intercessors in Accra, Ghana

To those who hosted us, the visit confirmed that what I had all along shared was true: there is spiritual truth we should know about the Messianic Jews. To many it was their first time to see the true face of a Messianic Jew and even to understand the reasons for the name Messianic and what makes them special among the Jews. It was so revealing to some of our African Intercessors. It was amazing to know that there are true Jews of the lineage of Jesus who love him the way we do! Many felt that their prayers about Israel have been answered and their desire to be a part of what God is doing in Israel grew in a new way.

In **Uganda**, the follow up meeting in July has been rescheduled for September 28th. In this meeting the TJCII Team will meet with about 35 Anglican bishops. Our expectations are that the bishops will agree to sign the Affirmation Statement to the Messianic Jewish Movement. It is our prayer that the Lord quickens the hearts of bishops to Messianic reconciliation. Plans are under way for the Jubilee Youth Conference in Uganda in September/ October 2012 and we expect a number of TJCII Youth to attend led by Eyal.

In **Kenya** the Anglican bishops' meeting on September 26th is still on. Besides this meeting plans are under way to hold meetings in different parts of Kenya and to meet as many church leaders as possible as the doors open. The expectations are the same as for Uganda. I am yet to get the dates for the next meeting in Accra, **Ghana**.

I believe that after these meetings in Kenya and Uganda many other African nations will be impacted and many doors will be wide open for TJCII in Africa. By September there might be fresh doors to **Tanzania, Rwanda** and **Burundi**, but this will be confirmed with time. We will continue to recruit intercessors for the TJCII work in Africa.

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**Brian Cox, Elizabeth Kamau,
Eyal Friedman, Benjamin Berger**



**Eyal Friedman and Benjamin
Berger with an African brother**



**Visitors with African Inter-
cessory Group**

Exciting News from the Now Generation

By Christine Braunsteiner – in Austria

At our last meeting in Hainburg (April 2011) our first consultation for the Now generation was initiated. The Now Generation is the name chosen by the young TJCII leaders group that has been meeting in Europe and in Israel since 2008.

Our consultation is going to take place from February 10 to 12, 2012 in a beautiful hotel close to Bratislava, Slovakia. We want to invite Christians from all over Europe between the ages of 20 and 40. Our target are those who have a heart for unity and want to get to know the TJCII vision. Please help us to invite as many brothers and sisters as possible!

This first consultation should be a platform to provide information and gather those who are stirred by the spirit to join TJCII. To give you a bit more insight into our plans, this is the thematic focus we have put together for the consultation:

**O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, ... How often I wanted to gather your children together, ...
for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say,
'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'** *(Matt. 23: 37 - 39)*

Do young Christians and Messianic Jews know how personally important, essential and enormous in spiritual weight this exclamation is? And how much it is connected to unity?

Our longing for the upcoming Now Generation Consultation is that many will grow in understanding of God's master plan and get involved with TJCII in the preparation of the Bride of Christ. Together we want to explore the following questions:

- What has Israel to do with the unity of the Church?
- What is the Holy Spirit doing in our days?
- How can we be part of the preparation of the wedding feast of the Lamb?

By the end of July 2011 our invitation flyer should be finished and be available in digital and print format. The TJCII office in Slovakia (Pavol Strezo and Majka Bôryová) will handle the organization. Please contact them if you want to support us: tjc2.slovakia@gmail.com. We are thankful for contacts all over Europe, and help with the distribution of the flyers.

We look forward to blowing the trumpet in order to start gathering the next generation of TJCII.

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May we send you the TJCII Communiqué electronically? In this way you could help us at TJCII be even better stewards. As the cost of postage escalates, we feel compelled to use email wherever possible. Please send us your email address at egs@tjcii.org and thank you for your generosity.

TOWARD JERUSALEM COUNCIL II



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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