

# Uniting Jews & Gentiles for Yeshua's Return



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## INTRODUCING: NEWEST WEBSITE, FACEBOOK AND TWITTER

BY DONNA BALLARD AND PAM BUCKROYD

For the last 9 months work has been done to complete and refine a new website ([www.tjcii.org](http://www.tjcii.org)) for TJCII. It has finally been accomplished; the latest version is now online. Even if you have been on our new site previously, **please look again** as we have updated it just within the last few weeks.

A young, media-savvy designer was intentionally chosen for the website. In appreciation of the TJCII initiative, his cost was modest, and he was willing to fit our job in and around his commercial accounts.

You are invited to look carefully as you scroll down on our home page and you will see behind the script, a man's hands – pressed against the Western Wall. The hand on the left is Orthodox, and the hand on the right is that of a businessman wearing an office shirt and watch – reflecting the commitment to TJCII that crosses all natural barriers.

At the bottom of the Home page there are links to websites for TJCII Europe, TJCII Poland, and TJCII Brazil. Just seeing these links warms our hearts because our goal in creating the website has been to tell the world about TJCII, and to facilitate communication amongst TJCII supporters.

This is where you come in! Communicate with us. At the top right side of the Home page, you will see symbols for Facebook, YouTube, and PayPal. Our Facebook page is in both English and Spanish (TJC Español). Very soon we will have Twitter which is primarily for discussion and debate. Even if you have never Tweeted before, jump in.

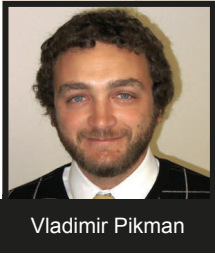
At the top of the web pages, you will see the REGIONS category. Along with the continents, we listed NOW Generation. These pages are changing regularly. It was strongly felt that our European region should have multiple pages because of the increasing number of TJCII activities across this large continent. Watch for this soon! Also, we will be adding an Archived page for our Newsletters, history, theological statements, and other important information.

We especially want to acknowledge the volunteers who participated in the creation of the website, as well as our many other initiatives. TJCII is truly supported by volunteers, from our International Leadership Council to the people writing and editing, taking photographs and posting on Facebook. Contributions to TJCII – which can be made online – are used to forward the aims of repentance and reconciliation with the least amount of overhead possible. We continue to solicit prayer support, personal involvement, contributions, and now participation in our social media venues.

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Donna Ballard, Director of Outreach and her volunteer assistant Pam Buckroyd (pictured here in Judea, Israel)



Vladimir Pikman

# THE MESSIANIC JEWISH MOVEMENT IN GERMANY

## By Vladimir Pikman

In the minds of the Jewish people and those with an understanding of history, Germany remains the country where the Holocaust was initiated, scrupulously planned and carried out, ending in the murder of 6 million Jews. Therefore, for many, it remains very strange to see how the Jewish community in Germany has revived over the past 20 years. Since 1989, about 300,000 people have come to Germany as “Jewish refugees and their family members” in large part from the countries of the former Soviet Union. Together with Jewish immigrants from other countries (including Israel), they have caused the Jewish population to grow ten times as large, from 30,000 to about 300,000. These very same “Russian Jews” have not only brought about the revival of the Jewish community in Germany, but have also brought back the issue of Jewish evangelistic outreach and the Messianic movement to this country. Thousands of Jewish people have become believers in Yeshua (with at least 5,000 integrated within various Messianic and Christian groups); and more than 40 Messianic congregations and groups have been established since 1995. This put Germany back on the map of significant countries in this regard.

The foundation of the modern Messianic movement in Germany was laid in 1994 by joint efforts of Chosen People Ministries, EDI, AmZi and Licht im Osten. In 1995 Beit Sar Shalom Ministry was founded to become a forerunner in planting of Messianic congregations. The same year could be considered as the starting point of the modern Messianic movement with the first congregation being established in Berlin.

The Messianic movement in Germany is very young and consists mostly of relatively new believers. It lacks trained and equipped leaders but it does possess a great deal of “neophyte” excitement about life with Yeshua. Most of the Messianic believers are new immigrants, therefore, the movement faces financial limitations. However, these limitations facilitate an exciting and energetic non-clergy volunteer involvement.

Since more than 70% of the Jews in Germany are the so-called “Russian Jews,” the majority of Messianic believers in Germany are from Russia. Sometimes it creates a ghetto-like situation. But it also gives chances to live in the unity of Messiah in spite of huge cultural differences. Attempts to bridge the gap is steadily growing within congregations, and by holding joint conferences for all the Messianic believers of the county to be able to fellowship. Remarkably, the Messianic movement in Germany enjoys a unity that may seem unbelievable in some other countries. Although there are several small groups and congregations that are keeping themselves isolated, the majority is very close-knit, even without creating any formal joint structure.

Sadly, because of the tragedy of the Holocaust, the mainstream churches (Catholic and Lutheran, and also many free churches) distance themselves from the Messianic Jews in order not to upset the traditional Jewish communities. The Messianic community in Germany grieves this situation.

At the present, there are signs of a new awakening among the Jews in Germany. This causes the Messianic movement to be optimistic about the days ahead.

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Vladimir Pikman is the Executive Director of Beit Sar Shalom Ministry in Germany and Rabbi of Beit Schomer Israel Congregation in Berlin.



Dan Juster

# The Messianic Jewish Movement in Israel

By Daniel Juster

*This is the 3rd article in a series on the Messianic Jewish Movement. The 1st on North America, and 2nd on Russian-speaking Messianic Jews appear in the 2013 Spring and Summer issues, respectively.*

A few years ago, Toward Jerusalem Council II put out a booklet entitled *The Messianic Jewish Movement*. While there could be some improvement, it was basically accurate at the time it was written. Some of it was based on the book by Kai Kjaer-Hansen called *Myths and Facts on Messianic Jews of Israel* (1998).

Generally, the bulk of the movement traces itself from after 1967. There were previous attempts at being something like a Messianic Jewish Movement in the British mandate period. This early history is well-documented in the writings of Gershon Nerel whose doctoral dissertation at Hebrew University dealt with the history of Messianic Jews in Israel and included that period.

Leaders such as Moshe Immanuel Ben-Meir and Hyman Jacobs sought to found a fellowship in the 1920s and 1930s that sadly was short lived (4 years), and also sought ways to draw Jewish followers of Yeshua into union. However, many missions to the Jews did not embrace the idea of a significant distinct Jewish identity expressed in congregations and institutions apart from the historical churches.

After independence in 1948 most of the Jewish believers in Yeshua left Israel and the handful that remained such as Moshe Ben-Meir, Abram Poljak, and Hayim Haimoff, maintained a stronger commitment to Jewish identity and organizational-congregational or corporate structures to foster Jewish identity in Yeshua. We see the beginnings during this time of promoting the term "Messianic Jew" as a self-identifying marker and avoiding the term Christian ("notzri" in Hebrew), which implied leaving the Jewish people, Jewish identity and Jewish destiny. These leaders argued for a Messianic Judaism rooted in the Land, in the pattern of life in the Torah with regard to the Sabbath and Feasts, circumcision for male babies, and more. It was a mostly non-rabbinic expression.

A Hebrew Catholic Movement also was fostered in the Land. There were different orientations proposed by such figures as Fr. Daniel Rufeisen and Fr. Elias Friedman (both Carmelites). However, Hebrew Catholics did identify as Christians, though hoping for a distinct Hebrew Catholic life and expression. There is a Hebrew translation of the Roman liturgy and a small identifiable group of Hebrew Catholics that continue to this day under the leadership of Fr. David Neuhaus, SJ.

*"Today it is estimated that the number of Messianic Jews is from ten to fifteen thousand . . . we can accurately name over 100 Messianic Jewish Congregations and house groups."*

After the '67 War, there was a stronger sense of Israeli identity among the handful of Jewish believers, perhaps numbering under 200. This began to grow from immigration, witness, and planting. The movement remained small but growing during the 1970s and 1980s, perhaps passing a thousand. Some came to faith in Yeshua during their post-Army trips where they met Christians who effectively shared their faith. With the coming of the Russian influx, the congregations swelled and the estimate by the end of the 1990s in Nerel and Hansen was over 5000. Today it is estimated that the number of Messianic Jews is from ten to fifteen thousand. I tend to think the more conservative number is more accurate, but there is no recent scientific survey for such a statistic. However, we can accurately name over 100 Messianic Jewish Congregations and house groups. The majority of such groups are Jewish in membership, with one such group being led by a Christian Arab who fosters Messianic Jewish life for the Jewish members. I am only counting here those groups that identify as Messianic Jewish congregations, not as Christian churches.

Most Messianic Jewish congregations are independent. According to Hansen's research, the majority have a doctrinal statement that is in line with the historic Creeds of the Church even though the language may be different. Most do not have formal membership, but consider membership according to the regular participation of their people. Water Immersion (Baptism) and Communion are significant in almost all the groups, but with variations concerning the interpretation of exactly what is received in the participation in the symbol.

The majority of Messianic Jews today are from Russian-speaking backgrounds though many of their children are now attaining adulthood and are speaking fluent Hebrew. This has and will change patterns in these congregations. The second largest group is native-born Israelis who are part of congregations where Hebrew is the predominant language. Then we note the English-speaking Jews that constitute a significant group influencing congregations to provide English translation to aid their full participation. So generally we find congregations practicing dual language from either Hebrew-Russian, Hebrew-English and sometimes all three. Finally there are about ten Ethiopian Messianic Jewish congregations, five in one network and the others more independent where Amharic and Hebrew are dominant.

*(continued on Page 4)*

## The Messianic Jewish Movement in Israel

By Daniel Juster

(continued from Page 3)

Dr. Dan Juster has been involved in the leadership of the Messianic Jewish movement since 1971. He presently serves as Director of Tikkun International, a network of congregations and ministries dedicated to the restoration of Israel and the Church.

The theology of the Messianic Jews of Israel tends to be an amalgam of Evangelical theology with Jewish or Torah rooted practices and patterns. There are interpretive differences from the Evangelical world, but the main thrust of theology is still Evangelical with many having a more significant role for Torah. The Messianic Jewish congregational world in Israel varies on the charismatic spectrum. My estimate is that about half are more charismatic and half tend to not emphasize the charismatic dimension. A few leaders have planted multiple congregations which remain in association.

While there are no strong organizational ties, Messianic Jews in the Land do have greater unity and more mutual support than at any other time in the past. In addition, there are looser points of affiliation that are significant such as the *Messianic Jewish Alliance of Israel*, which brings Jewish believers into significant joint celebrations and an internet dialogue network for leaders. Finally, there is a loose fellowship of leaders which does sometimes take positions on important doctrinal and moral issues (Kennes Artzee-Meeting of the Land). There is also an attempt to join leaders and congregations through a fellowship called *Olive Tree*.

Today, Messianic Jews are more integrated into the society. Most of the children in Messianic Jewish families attend the Israeli school system, serve in the Army and many go to Israeli universities.

The Messianic Jewish movement is growing slowly but steadily at this time. There is a group of young people who are on the sidelines of the congregations. They are not satisfied with present congregational models and look for alternatives. We are challenged to hear them, reach them, and find ways to inspire them to involvement while incorporating their legitimate concerns.

It is my hope that the Israel movement will develop in spiritual maturity, power, theology and organizational unity without any inordinate control. I think that the day will come when the Israel movement will be the head and not the tail of the worldwide Messianic Jewish movement.

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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](mailto:egs@tjcii.org) and thank you for your generosity.



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### The Aims of TJCII Include:

- Proclaim the restoration of Jewish believers in the Body of Messiah
- Foster repentance for the historic suppression of the 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
- Facilitate reconciliation and unity between Christians and Messianic Jews