

# **Foundations of European Messianic Jewish Theology: The Theological Significance and Challenges for Messianic Jews in Europe Today**

## **1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

The aim of this brief paper is to identify and establish a foundation for the future development of European Messianic Jewish Theology (EMJT). What are the political, philosophical, social, cultural and theological contexts in which we, as European Messianic Jews (EMJs)<sup>2</sup>, are to develop the much-needed theological reflection that undergirds our identity, faith and practice as Jewish believers in Yeshua? How are we to articulate and practice our beliefs in the context of the multi-faceted and rapidly changing European environments in which we live? In the light of the diverse political, social and theological transformations we witness in Europe today, how are we to position our theological reflection? As Europe witnesses gradual evolution, radical changes and the emergence and decline of its political, social, cultural and religious institutions, how can EMJs effectively fulfil our mission of witnessing to the universal saving power of the Messiah Yeshua to our people and all nations?

What are the key questions and issues we need to address and how should we approach this? This paper barely scratches the surface of some of these issues, and does not attempt to give any more than a brief brush-stroke sketch of some possible answers. After setting the context of EMJT, we will identify six (??!!) particular subject areas to which EMJs can make a contribution, noting the particular challenges facing us, and in light of our aim to formulate a joint statement as a result of this significant consultation, make some initial proposals to address these challenges.

## **2. The Contexts of EMJT**

### **a. General European Context**

It is beyond the purposes of this paper to discuss the major political, social and cultural changes in Europe in recent years, except where they impact directly on the process of EMJT. Europe has always been the arena in which ideas of progress, the rise and fall of the nation-state and the growth, transformation and decline of national identities have been played out in the midst of complex political, economic and social change.<sup>3</sup> Changing linguistic, cultural and political identities have reconstituted what was once a single Roman empire into a conglomerate of regions, states and nations, all competing for economic and political influence. This has never been more so than in the previous century.

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<sup>2</sup> For estimates of EMJS and EMJCs see Appendix 5

<sup>3</sup> Cristina Chimisso, "What is Identity?" in *Exploring European Identities*, ed. Cristina Chimisso (Milton Keynes: Open University, 2003), 5-66, 18.

David Herbert notes four major factors that have impacted the religious landscape of Europe in the second half of the twentieth century. These are:

- the decline and marginalisation of traditional churches (especially in northwest Europe);
- the impact of communism (which was often militantly opposed to religion) on eastern Europe;
- increased immigration bringing Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist and new kinds of Christian groups to western Europe, especially from former colonial territories;
- increasing awareness of and interest in new religions and traditions which have not historically been represented in Europe, as a result of globalisation of knowledge.<sup>4</sup>

For Messianic Judaism and its theological development, such factors influence our development significantly. Whilst the decline of the Western Church and the increasingly secular nature of European society makes our claim to be Jewish and believe in Jesus less acceptable or even understandable in many contexts, the increasing presence of self-defined ethnicities and greater freedom (in many but not all contexts) for New Religious Movements (NRMs<sup>5</sup>) provide welcome opportunities for EMJs to be recognised within the pluralistic mosaic of theological and cultural identities found in Europe today.

## **b. European Jewish Context**

According to the research of Sergio DellaPergola, the European Jewish population can be estimated at 1,455,900.<sup>6</sup> The numbers are increasingly concentrated in Western Europe and within the European Union. With the addition of Bulgaria and Romania, the estimated total of 1,118,000 Jewish people in 2010 comprises 77 percent of the continent's total. Former Soviet republics in Europe outside the EU comprise 297,100 Jews (20 percent). All other European countries combined comprise 40,800 Jews (3 percent).<sup>7</sup>

Debbie Weisman describes the situation of European Jews with a wry comment that typifies the mood of many:

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<sup>4</sup> David Herbert, "Religion and European Identities" in *Exploring European Identities*, ed. Cristina Chimisso (Milton Keynes: Open University, 2003), 183-229, 184.

<sup>5</sup> The term *New Religious Movement* is less value-laden and more amenable to examination by social anthropologists than previous terms such as 'cult' or 'sect'. See *The Cambridge Companion to New Religious Movements* (eds. Olav Hammer and Mikael Rothstein) (Cambridge: CUP, 2012), pp. 1-5.

<sup>6</sup> See Sergio DellaPergola, *World Jewish Population, 2010* (North American Jewish Data Bank Center for Judaic Studies and Contemporary Jewish Life, University of Connecticut, 2010) ([www.jewishdatabank.org](http://www.jewishdatabank.org)) p.46, summarized in Appendix 4.

<sup>7</sup> Sergio DellaPergola, *World Jewish Population, 2010* (North American Jewish Data Bank Center for Judaic Studies and Contemporary Jewish Life, University of Connecticut, 2010) ([www.jewishdatabank.org](http://www.jewishdatabank.org)) p.46.

A well-known Jewish joke exemplifies a Jewish telegram as: 'Start worrying; details to follow.' European Jews throughout the centuries have had real reasons for concern. Unfortunately, they still do today.<sup>8</sup> There have been intellectual and legal attacks on circumcision and Kosher slaughter of meat. Physical violence has left Jews wounded in Berlin, Malmo and, in the horrific incident in Toulouse, four dead. Some of the reasons for concern about the future of European Jewry are related to demographic trends such as an ageing population, a declining birth rate and a high rate of assimilation.<sup>9</sup>

More recently the UK Chief Rabbi, Lord Jonathan Sacks, has stated:

Jews in Europe have begun to ask, is there still a place for us here?<sup>10</sup>

In his introduction to the important study *Jewish Identities in the New Europe*, Jonathan Webber argues that:

As part of the attempt towards an assimilation into wider European society and a broad acceptance of its social ideals, Jews have increasingly been taking a critical look at the ideological basis of their identity and questioning the received idea. What has come about as a result has been a massive disintegration and rejection of the traditional consensus.<sup>11</sup>

Such an observation is not new to students of Judaism and Jewish identity.<sup>12</sup> For our purposes this recognition of the plurality of Jewish identities gives further traction to the construction of Messianic Jewish identities in Europe today. The development of coherent, authentic, contemporary and communally accepted theology amongst EMJs is the necessary ideological infrastructure around which such conscious development of Messianic Jewish identities must be based.<sup>13</sup> For Messianic Jewish identity to take its place within the pluralistic mosaic of Jewish

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<sup>8</sup> "France Sees 58% Increase in Anti-Semitic Incidents", *Jewish Daily Forward*, 20<sup>th</sup> February 2013, <http://bit.ly/Y9DFgR>

<sup>9</sup> Debbie Weisman, "Should we be fearful? Jewish-Christian Relations in Europe Today" in *Common Ground: The Magazine of The Council of Christians and Jews* (Winter 2012/13), p.3.

<sup>10</sup> Anna Sheinman, "Safe Haven in Britain" in *The Jewish Chronicle*, 22 February 2013, p. 1. This is hardly a Purim joke, although Sheinman does not look beyond France in defining Europe and does not include Britain as part of Europe.

<sup>11</sup> Jonathan Webber, "Introduction" in *Jewish Identities in the New Europe*, ed. Jonathan Webber, Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies/Littmann Library of Jewish Civilization, London, 1994, p.1.

<sup>12</sup> Richard Harvey, "What Shapes Jewish Identity?" in *Proceedings of the 6<sup>th</sup> International Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism* (eds. Kai Kjær-Hansen and Bodil Skjøtt), volume 2/6, 1999, pp.72-85.

<sup>13</sup> For the application of Byron Sherwin's criteria for the construction of Jewish theology, and my application of these criteria to the construction of Messianic Jewish theology, see Richard S. Harvey, *Mapping Messianic Jewish Theology* (Colorado Springs: Authentic Media, 2009), pp. 5-7.

identities, a clear articulation of our theological positions is needed, especially on those questions most relevant to our own particular contexts.

The same challenges facing Jewish existence in Europe today affect Messianic Jewish life, faith and practice. Our Diaspora existence, surviving polemics and persecution, enlightenment (*haskalah*) and emancipation, secularisation and increasing religious traditionalism, all cry out for serious theological engagement. Here in Germany, for example, the ordination of a woman rabbi at Bamberg in November 2011 led to the remark by Dieter Graumann of the Central Council of Jews, the umbrella organisation of the increasingly pluralistic Jewish community, placed progressive and orthodox Judaism on an equal footing:

Es soll jeder nach seiner Fassung fröhlich und jüdisch und glücklich sein können. (Everyone should be allowed to be cheerful and Jewish and happy in their own fashion.)<sup>14</sup>

### **c. European Jewish Theology**

Europe has until the last 200 years been at the forefront of Jewish thought, and the European tradition has continued to influence Jewish thought in the USA and Israel. It is beyond the purposes of this paper to survey contemporary European Jewish thought, but it is significant that Jewish thinkers from the UK such as Louis Jacobs and more recently Jonathan Sacks had developed Jewish philosophical and theological reflection that have integrated Orthodox and Conservative Jewish faith and practice alongside expressing Jewish identity in post-Holocaust Britain.

Jewish theologians who live through, perished in or survived the Holocaust in Europe such as such as Leo Baeck, Martin Buber, Emil Fackenheim, Joseph Soloveitchik, and before them Abraham Joshua Heschel, have all contributed to the flowering of Jewish reflection in troubled times. For EMJT to engage with such thinkers is no small task, especially since the postmodern turn in Jewish thought has co-incided with the post-liberal movement in Christian thought which has most successfully engaged with contemporary Judaism. The postmodern turn, exemplified by French Jewish thinkers Derrida and Levinas. Rosenzweig, most influential Jewish thinker in contemporary Jewish-Christian relations, and a guiding influence today.<sup>15</sup>

### **d. European Christian Context**

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<sup>14</sup> "Jewish pluralism awakens" in "Jüdische Theologie und Ausbildung in Deutschland", <http://www.goethe.de/wis/fut/uhs/en10006048.htm> (accessed February 2013). *Better translation?*

<sup>15</sup> A brief survey of contemporary European Jewish thinkers such as Jonathan Sacks, Louis Jacobs, Leo Baeck, Martin Buber, Gershon Scholem, Walter Benjamin, Abraham Joshua Heschel and Joseph Soloveitchik will be included in a later version of this paper.

Christianity in Europe has seen rapid growth, flowering, renewal and decline since the days of Lydia, the first European believer in Jesus (Acts 16). Today Christianity is still the largest European religion, with 76% of Europeans considering themselves Christian. Roman Catholics comprise 46% of this group, with Orthodox 35% and 18% Protestants, despite the fact that the Protestant Reformation was based in Europe.<sup>16</sup> The largest number of Christians are found in Russian (Orthodox), followed by German (Protestant) and Italy (Roman Catholic).

Whilst we at this consultation are predominantly influenced by Protestant Evangelicalism, and are meeting in Germany, the seedbed of the Reformation, it is worth observing from a Jewish and Messianic perspective that our people have had more experience of living in non-Protestant countries, and it is likely there are more Jewish believers in Jesus to be found in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches, than in Protestant congregations.

Callum Brown's thesis on the decline of Christianity in the UK can be replicated (with some appropriate regional variations) throughout Western Europe.<sup>17</sup> He challenges the view that that secularisation 'was the handmaiden of modernisation, pluralisation, urbanisation and Enlightenment rationality', preferring to identify other cultural and social changes that reduced the role of organised Christianity and Christian culture as what were once "core realities". This symptom for Brown is evidence of postmodernity which had "denied the reality of grand narratives and introduced a form of individual anarchy based on the supremacy of the individual".<sup>18</sup>

As an oral historian using a feminist analysis his views have been critically challenged by others studying the decline of Christianity in West, but his arguments challenge EMJT to focus on the post-supersessionist metanarrative we wish to propose, and discover a relevant social engagement with contemporary European cultures in which we situate ourselves. It may well be that as a relative newcomer on the scene, our Messianic Jewish identities may be uniquely placed to articulate in new ways the central truths we affirm of the Messianic claims of Yeshua and the ongoing election of Israel (the Jewish people) that are both pre- and postmodern, avoiding some of the weaknesses of modernism that precipitated the decline of Christianity in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

However, the European theology, particularly in the Protestant streams in Germany, Holland and the United Kingdom, and Roman Catholic and Orthodox streams elsewhere, have continued to thrive. EMJT cannot ignore the profound

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<sup>16</sup> Figures quickly gleaned from "Christianity in Europe", [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity\\_in\\_Europe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_in_Europe) (!) (accessed February 2013).

<sup>17</sup> Callum Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain* (London: Routledge; 2nd ed. 2009).

<sup>18</sup> Review of *Death of Christian Britain*, [http://www.amazon.co.uk/Death-Christian-Britain-Understanding-Secularisation/dp/0415471346/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1361522467&sr=8-1](http://www.amazon.co.uk/Death-Christian-Britain-Understanding-Secularisation/dp/0415471346/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1361522467&sr=8-1) (accessed February 22, 2013)

and enduring theological traditions of Europe, although often the intellectual formation of EMJs comes more from North American influences. Poised as we are midway between New York and Jerusalem, with our compass point ever attracted to these two magnetic poles of the Jewish world, our theological framework must be rigorous and bold enough to engage with the European, and perhaps especially German theological traditions, particularly in the light of responses to the Shoah.

In his survey of modern theology David Ford names the works of Barth, Bonhoeffer, Balthasar and Rahner as the 'classics' of 20<sup>th</sup> century theology, in addition to others who wrote in German. Pannenburg and Moltmann have chapters devoted to them, with the predominance of German and European theologians far outweighing voices from the USA or the 'two-thirds world'.<sup>19</sup>

Johannes Hoff poses the question:

What has become of German theology after the generation of the great German theologians of the 20th century, such as Karl Barth and Hans Urs von Balthasar, Karl Rahner, Jürgen Moltmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg? And why do we no longer hear about the trends among the younger generation of German theologians?<sup>20</sup>

For Hoff the influence of Kant continues to dominate the German theological scene:

His philosophy provides, as it were, the yardstick every philosophical or theological blueprint is to be measured by given that it proposes to cope with the problems Kant was not able to solve on his own. And it would be easy to demonstrate that this yardstick exerted formidable power even in the case of attempts to cut the Gordian knot of German Kantianism, as in the case of Karl Barth.<sup>21</sup>

This author would concur with such an analysis, noting the relevance of Barth's work not only as the generative thinker who has presented the most engaged attempt to move theological thinking beyond enlightenment paradigms, but also, for our purposes in the construction of EMJT, has provided some of the most profound, albeit still flawed by supersessionist elements, thinking on the relationship between Israel and the *ekklesia* in the light of our Christological election in Yeshua. Just as Mark Kinzer's project works closely with post-supersessionist thinking as exemplified by the works of R. Kendall Soulen, so

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<sup>19</sup> David F. Ford (ed.), *The Modern Theologians* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), pp. v-vii. Ford includes chapters on Torrance from Scotland and the Niebuhrs in the USA, but others individual theologians are covered in regional and thematic survey chapters. The omission of Pope Benedict XVI (Josef Ratzinger) will hopefully be corrected in future editions.

<sup>20</sup> Johannes Hoff, "German Theology in Contemporary Society", *Modern Believing*, Vol. 50:1 - Jan 2009, (<http://www.modernchurch.org.uk/publications/mb/jan2009/index.htm>) accessed February 2013.

<sup>21</sup> Hoff, "German theology", *ibid.*

EMJT has much to benefit by engagement with Barth's work on Israel and those of his successors, such as F W Marquardt.<sup>22</sup>

### e. Jewish-Christian Relations in Europe

Debbie Weisman goes on to identify three main challenges for the improvement of Jewish-Christian relations, which also challenge Messianic Jews in their theological reflection:

1. The persistence, and even revival, of traditionally negative attitudes.
2. The impact of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.
3. The impact of radical Islam and massive Muslim immigration.<sup>23</sup>

Weisman does not consider the theological issues at the heart of Jewish-Christian relations but focuses on the existential threats as she sees them to such relations. From the theological perspective a host of other questions need to be raised, not least the existence and problematic status of EMJs within the religious environment of Europe. Other theological issues on the agenda are the continuing need to address historical issues of anti-Judaism in Christian theology, theological responses to the Holocaust, the State of Israel, and the nature of Christ and Salvation, issues which we shall focus on below.

### f. Messianic Jewish Context

Previous theological consultations of Jewish believers in Jesus in Europe took place but have not been well documented. There are occasional reports of such conferences in "The Hebrew Christian", the quarterly magazine of the International Hebrew Christian Alliance, since the early 1920s.

The International Messianic Jewish Alliance (then the International Hebrew Christian Alliance) held a series of theological consultations in Europe, including major conferences before the WWII. Papers were given by biblical scholars and theologians Jacob Jocz, Rachmiel Frydland, Heinz Leinhard, Peter Schneider, Eric Lipson, Ronald Lewis, Marjorie Eberlé, and others. These continued into the 1970s and 1980s. The papers are held in the archives of the IMJA, and some were published as "Torah and other essays".<sup>24</sup> These meetings took place in the aftermath of the *Shoah*, and many of those participating were survivors. Their theological reflection was largely representative of the Hebrew

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<sup>22</sup> F. W. Marquardt, *Theological Audacities: Selected Essays* (ed. Andreas Pangritz and Paul S. Chung) (Oregon: Pickwick, 2010) makes Marquardt's work accessible to the English-speaking world. It is appropriate as this consultation takes place in his home town of Berlin to pay tribute to his work. See below. Mark S. Kinzer, *Post-missionary Messianic Judaism: Redefining Christian Engagement with the Jewish People*, (USA: Baker/Brazos, 2005).

<sup>23</sup> Debbie Weisman, "Should we be fearful?" p.3.

<sup>24</sup> "Torah and other essays": a Symposium in Honour of the 80th birthday of H.L. Ellison (Ramsgate, Kent: International Hebrew Christian Alliance, "Shalom", 1983).

Christian identity they espoused, as the formation of Messianic Congregations was rare. But many of the identity issues they wrestled with, and the theological topics they discussed, as the same as those facing us today. The papers are well worth careful study, but to date the majority have not been published.<sup>25</sup>

### 3. Issues, Challenges and Proposals

#### a. The Existence of Messianic Jews

At the turn of the millennium it was estimated that of the approximately 730 million population of Europe, 2.5 million were Jewish, a figure of less than one third of 1%.<sup>26</sup> If we estimate the percentage of Jewish believers in Jesus as 1% of the Jewish community (and I think this is an optimistic guess), then the 25,000 of us in Europe are not even a blip on the radar of most Europeans.<sup>27</sup> Yet we exist, despite the realities of the past and the challenges of the present, and our significance theologically should not be underestimated. According to Peter Hocken and Daniel Juster, the fastest growth in the Messianic movement today is found in some of the countries formerly part of the Soviet Union (Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus). The Messianic Jewish movement has been long established in England, France, Belgium and the Netherlands.<sup>28</sup>

If Messianic Jews are the ‘missing link’ between the Church and Israel, and eschatological foretaste of the promised restoration of Israel to her land, her Messiah and her God, then our presence in Diaspora, amongst the nations, and our role in summoning them to acknowledge the God of Israel and all the nations, is little short of a “Macedonian call” to come over here and help us, a call first given to Paul and his apostolic band, which led to the introduction of the faith of a few small Jewish disciples of Yeshua into the Greco-Roman world of Europe, and the beginnings of the spread of what was later known as “Christianity” throughout the known world .

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<sup>25</sup> I have what I think is a complete set, including the papers I gave in 1982, “Who is a Messianic Jew?” and 1984(?) on “Messianic Jewish Liturgy”. For the writings of Paul Re’emi on the Shoah, see Richard Harvey, “Holocaust Theology in the Light of Yeshua? Messianic Jewish Reception of *Eikah*” in *Great is Thy Faithfulness: Reading Lamentations as Sacred Scripture* ed. Robin A. Parry and Heath A. Thomas, Wipf and Stock, 2011, pp. ???

<sup>26</sup> Figures adapted from *Britannia Book of the Year*, 2001, p. 302, quoted in Christina Chimisso, “What is Identity?” in *EEL*, op. cit., p.50. See appendix ??? for other figures of religious communities.

<sup>27</sup> As far as I am aware there are no available statistics. The numbers in Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches are probably significantly higher than those in Protestant churches. How can we access information for these statistics?

<sup>28</sup> Daniel Juster and Peter Hocken, “The Messianic Jewish Movement: An Introduction” (Towards Jerusalem Council II, 2004).  
<http://www.tjci.org/userfiles/Image/messianic-jewish-movement-an-introduction-Eng.pdf>, p10 (accessed February 2013).



The fact that Messianic Jews exist in Europe today, despite 2,000 years of Christian anti-Judaism, a theological tradition that has largely espoused supersessionism, and the history of persecution of Jewish people in Europe culminating in the Shoah, is little short of miraculous. However, in theological terms, the meaning of word 'miracle' needs to be spelt out.

Winston Churchill wrote:

Some people like the Jews, and some do not. But no thoughtful man can deny the fact that they are, beyond any question, the most formidable and the most remarkable race which has appeared in the world.<sup>29</sup>

The philosopher Blaise Pascal was asked by King Louis XIV of France to give him proof of the supernatural. Pascal answered: "Why, the Jews, your Majesty – the Jews."<sup>30</sup>

For us as Messianic Jews to be both part of our people, and also part of the *ecclesia* is doubly significant and doubly mysterious. The philosopher and Roman Catholic thinker Walter Percy had special insight into this significance in a world of angst and uncertainty:

... But for the self that finds itself lost in the desert of theory and consumption, there is nothing to do but set out as a pilgrim in the desert in search of a sign. In this desert, that of theory and consumption, there remains only one sign, the Jews. By "the Jews" I mean not only Israel, the exclusive people of God, hut the worldwide ecclesia instituted by one of them, God-become-man, a Jew.<sup>31</sup>

So we exist, as EMJs, and our existence is an ongoing testimony to the true and greatest Jew, Yeshua, as the Messiah of Israel and Saviour of the world. Our witness to the Jewishness of Jesus, the early church, and the biblical writings confirms and strengthens the whole Church's testimony. Our continued existence as believers in Jesus within our people attests to God's ongoing election of Israel (the Jewish people) also.

There is thus a theological significance to:

- Our personal testimonies of *completion* (rather than 'conversion' with its too easily misunderstood overtones) alongside
- Our varying experiences of adaptation, including opposition and persecution because of our faith,
- The issues of adoption into new faith communities,

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<sup>29</sup> Winston Churchill, "Zionism versus Bolshevism: A Struggle for the Soul of the Jewish People" in *Illustrated Sunday Herald*, February 8, 1920, page 5, (<http://library.flawlesslogic.com/ish.htm>) accessed February 2013.

<sup>30</sup> The remark may be apocryphal and is similarly told of a Lutheran court chaplain speaking with Prussian Emperor Frederick II. Ralph Keen, *Exile and Restoration in Jewish Thought: An Essay In Interpretation* (Sheffield: Continuum Press, 2008) p.2.

<sup>31</sup> <http://jp2forum.blogspot.co.uk/2011/04/pascal-and-percy-on-jews-as-sign.html>

- Our integration of culture, customs and Jewish identity
- How we choose to express that as Messianic Jews.

The Helsinki Consultation has recently affirmed this role for Jewish believers in ecclesial communities:

There are many Jewish people in the body of Christ. We believe that this reality reflects God's intention that Israel and the Nations live as mutual blessings to one another. In fact, the Church in its essence is the communion of Jews and those from the Nations called to faith in Christ.

It goes on to articulate further the existential significance of Messianic Jews:

In light of this truth, we think that the life of Jews in the body of Christ has theological significance for that body as a whole. Their presence serves as a constant reminder to the body that its existence is rooted in the ongoing story of the people of Israel. This story resounds throughout the celebration of the liturgical life of the community. We believe that this story finds its center in Israel's Messiah. We believe that Jews within the body are a living bond between the Church and the people of Israel. Accordingly, we would like to explore concrete ways in which Jewish people may live out their distinctive calling in the body of Christ.<sup>32</sup>

Four challenges to EMJT arise from these observations:

- a. The challenge to be genuine and authentic. Peter von der Osten Sacken wrote quite sympathetically and optimistically about the role of Jewish believers in Jesus in his seminal book *Christian-Jewish Dialogue: Theological Foundations*.<sup>33</sup> However, in recent years, his encounter with Messianic Jews has led him to a revised and less optimistic assessment of our significance, based on his encounter with us.<sup>34</sup> Much of his concern was over the lack of authenticity of the Messianic movement.<sup>35</sup> In the 1940s and 1950s he knew Hebrew Christians such as Heinz Leuner who impressed him with the authentic 'feel' of their Jewishness and Jewish identity, linked to their own deep scholarship and integration with their people.<sup>36</sup> In recent years he had come to see this as largely lacking in the modern movement.

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<sup>32</sup> 2010 Statement, <http://helsinkiconsultation.squarespace.com/storage/Helsinki%20Statement%202010.pdf>

<sup>33</sup> Peter von der Osten-Sacken, *Christian-Jewish Dialogue: Theological Foundations* (Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1986, ET of *Grundzüge Einer Theologie Im Christlich-Judischen Gespräch*, Germany: Chr. Kaiser, 1982)

<sup>34</sup> Peter von der Osten-Sacken, "Ein Empfehlungsbrief Christi? Zur Debatte um Judenmission, Judenchristen und messianische Juden" in *Quaestiones Disputatae*: (eds. Karl Rahner and Heinrich-Schlier) (Freiburg: Herder, 2010) pp. 77-112.

<sup>35</sup> Conversation with author, 5<sup>th</sup> December 2012.

<sup>36</sup> Heinz D. Leuner, *When Compassion Was a Crime: Germany's Silent Heroes, 1933-45* (UK: Dufour, 1978). Leuner was a member of the IHCA for many years.

- b. The challenge to have wholistic and integrated identities. We are part of both Jewish and Christian communities but often on the margins of both. We have a multiplicity of non-homogeneous Jewish and Christian identities, expressing all the variations found within Judaism and Christianity.
- c. The challenge to develop a 'healthy theology of ethnicity' in the light of frequent attempts to spiritualise differentiated identity into uniformity in the church, and the alternative danger of an unhealthy ethnocentricity which prioritises Jewishness over Yeshua-ness and creates an unhealthy and divisive disjuncture between Israel and the nations within the body of the Messiah.
- d. In the light of these challenges we might formulate this proposal statement:

*We as Messianic Jews exist within our people Israel and the whole Church to proclaim the Good News that the Messiah has come for Israel and all nations, and are called to live out our election, calling and identity in ways that give glory to Him.*

## **b. Especial theological contributions of EMJT**

### **I. Trinitarian theology and the *Missio Dei***

Few other questions have so perplexed and challenged the Church so much as its understanding of its mission, and in particular its mission to Israel. Messianic Jewish Trinitarian theology also needs to contribute to this problematic area.

The mission of the people of God flows from and participates in God's mission, the *Missio Dei*. David Bosch writes "mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. God is a missionary God".<sup>37</sup> The Father sends the Son into the world, and it is through the work of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit that the people of God participate in God's mission.<sup>38</sup>

The 1966 Geneva Conference on Church and Society adopted a Trinitarian basis for its work– "we start with the basic assumption that the triune God is the Lord of his world and at work within it, and that the Church's task is to point to his acts, to respond to his demands, and to call mankind to this faith and obedience." Johannes Hoekendijk had previously set out some fundamental objections to what he saw as an overemphasis on the 'prevailing themes of the Christocentric basis and ecclesiocentric agency of mission'.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> David C. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (New York: Orbis Books, 1991), pp. 389–390.

<sup>38</sup> For the introduction of the concept see John G. Flett, *The Witness of God: The Trinity, Missio Dei, Karl Barth, and the Nature of Christian Community* (Eerdmans, 2010).

<sup>39</sup> Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Oxford:Blackwell, 2001), loc. 8943 Kindle edition.

This Trinitarian understanding of God’s mission should inform our understanding of the mission of Israel, as God’s servant, God’s people and God’s continuing covenant partner. Even more, in the light our discussion today, it should also inform our understanding of the mission, and indeed the role and calling of Messianic Jews, Jewish believers in Jesus, as being partners and participants in God’s mission to all humanity, to Israel and the nations, and to God’s creation.

I am not talking here of Judenmission – the mission of Christians to Jews – but rather the Mission of Israel, and how Messianic Jews are to live out their missionary calling, even in the footsteps of Jesus, to be a light to the nations and the glory of his people Israel.<sup>40</sup> If there is a Trinitarian shape to our understanding of the mission of Israel and the mission of the Church, Messianic Jews will surely be included in this agenda. They are beginning to structure their own understanding of this calling in new missiological paradigms.<sup>41</sup>

Mark Kinzer’s concept of bilateral ecclesiology thus has relevance as a missiological proposal and in Trinitarian discourse. The unity of Israel and the nations in the *ekklesia*, the body of Messiah, demonstrates the unity, complementarity and interdependence within the Godhead. This unity is expressed in practical ways in the life of the Church, the renewed and extended Israel that includes the nations grafted in, and does not exclude the Jewish people. Kinzer’s concept of “bilateral ecclesiology” has yet to be submitted to a sustained theological critique, but it gives a challenge to the Church’s own self-understanding in the light of Israel’s ongoing election, its engagement with the Jewish people today, the significance of Jewish believers in Yeshua, and Trinitarian thought.<sup>42</sup>

Jennifer Rosner describes and summarises Kinzer’s thought here.

*Certain aspects of Kinzer’s Christology bear a deep resemblance to the thought of both Barth and Rosenzweig. Kinzer’s Christology resonates with Barth’s Christology in that Israel’s No to Christ is couched within and ultimately overcome by Christ’s Yes to Israel, which sums up Israel’s vocation to usher in humanity’s intended telos. Christ’s sacrificial service to God guarantees both God’s definitive acceptance of Israel as well as the ultimate defeat of the forces that oppose God’s good creation. However, while Barth declares that the “Synagogue” is blind and its alleged obedience to God is bankrupt, Kinzer’s thought moves in a different direction. For Kinzer, rabbinic Judaism represents a truly faithful movement before*

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<sup>40</sup> Luke 2:32

A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. | 32 φως εις αποκαλυψιν εθνων και δοξαν λαου σου ισραηλ

<sup>41</sup> Richard Harvey, “What then? Towards a Messianic Jewish Missiology” in *Chosen to Follow: Jewish believers through History and Today*, eds. Knut H. Høyland and Jakob W. Nielsen (Jerusalem: Caspari Centre, 2012), 227-244.

<sup>42</sup> See the dissertation by Jennifer Rosner, “Healing the Schism: Barth, Rosenzweig and the New Jewish-Christian Encounter” (PhD. Diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2012), ch. 4.

*God whose rejection of the Christian gospel stems primarily from fidelity to its covenant with God. Furthermore, Judaism's ongoing existence serves as a corrective to Christianity's anti-Judaic and supersessionist tendencies.*

*Here Kinzer's thought mirrors Rosenzweig's, as Kinzer sees both the people of Israel and the ekklesia as holding complementary redemptive vocations that prevent one another from falling into error. Yet, unlike Rosenzweig, Kinzer unequivocally affirms Christ's relevance for the Jewish people. Whereas Rosenzweig merely gestures toward a Christology in light of Israel, Kinzer offers a robust and nuanced understanding of Christ that derives entirely from Israel's election and vocation. According to Kinzer, all Jews are called to embrace Jesus as their Messiah—and to embrace him as Jews.<sup>43</sup>*

1. Response to American fundamentalism, dispensationalism, right-wing conservatism

The contribution of EMJT is uniquely situated within European Jewish and Christian theological traditions to avoid the excesses and abuses driven by social-cultural factors that have influenced theology in North America.

2. Response to German Protestant Liberalism

Our presence in Europe also exposes us to the influence of Protestant Liberalism, which departs from the authority of scripture and calls for radical revisioning of Christian (and some Jewish) tradition.

3. Response to Catholic orthodoxy

Our situation in Europe with its predominance and history of Roman Catholic thought calls us to respond appropriately as EMJs. The Messianic Jewish-Roman Catholic Dialogue group that has been meeting in Rome, Vienna and Jerusalem has begun working on common areas of interest between MJ and RC theologians. Cardinal Schonborn of Vienna is a leading Roman Catholic thinker of Jewish descent who is involved in this initiative.

4. Post-supersessionist reading of scripture leads to reformulation of major areas of theology

In the light of the post-supersessionist turn in historical theology, EMJs are specially charged to contribute to the reformulation of other areas such as Biblical Studies, Ecclesiology, Missiology and Christology.

*Proposal: EMJT needs to develop informed theological responses to key theological traditions in Europe from a distinctive European theological perspective, and address key theological issues accordingly.*

### **c. Ecclesiology, Ethnicity and Election**

How do we articulate the ongoing election of our people Israel both within and outside the body of the Messiah?

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<sup>43</sup> Rosner, 287.

1. challenge to do post-supersessionist theology
2. challenge - strengthening unity, structure and organisations of MJCs
3. challenge - parachurch relationship with local congregations
4. challenge - developing a 'healthy theology of ethnicity' undergirding the Messianic movement<sup>44</sup>
5. *Proposal: EMJT needs to work in co-operation with other global networks such as the IMJA, UMJC and LCJE to articulate its understandings of ecclesiology, ethnicity and election.*

**d. Ethical and practical considerations**

1. Challenge: How do we live out Torah? The recent Helsinki statement on Torah looks at some areas of Torah and its application, stating:

As Jewish believers in Yeshua we are in the process of working out the meaning and concrete implications of this bond that we collectively experience. We find ourselves in a variety of different ecclesial and Jewish communal contexts, and we hold different understandings and definitions of Torah observance. Some of us consider the observance of mitzvot such as Shabbat, Jewish holidays, and the dietary laws as an essential component of fidelity to Torah. Yet we all understand that our attempt to live in radical discipleship to Yeshua (in conformity to teaching such as that found in the Sermon on the Mount) is the foundational principle of Torah observance. Furthermore, we all understand our faithfulness to Israel's Torah as a commitment to promote an awareness of the Jewish roots of the Church.<sup>45</sup>

What this means in practice and how it is to be worked out has yet to be explored by EMJT.

2. Challenge: Political issues of Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This has recently been discussed in detail at the Hashivenu conference 2013, with a paper of MJ ethics from Russ Resnick and responses from Jen Rosner and Yahnatan Lasko which are due to be published shortly, in addition to this writer's contribution.

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<sup>44</sup> Carys Mosely argues for something like this in "Nations and Nationalism in the Theology of Karl Barth" (Oxford: OUP, 2013) p.3: "Later Barth would preach that salvation comes from the Jews and would battle the German Christians' denial of the Old Testament and the Jewishness of Jesus Christ. More generally Barth's opposition to nationalism was that it was a religion, a form of unbelief in God because it made the nation the ultimate yet often secret source of what passed for theology and ethics. These twin commitments, taken together, help explain why after the Second World War Barth became supportive of secular Zionism, and developed a theological warrant for the foundation of the state of Israel, despite admitting that it partook of a type of nationalism. Barth also came to support Israel because he saw this as the necessary logical outcome of the theology of the Confessing Church which he had developed, admitting that the Confessing Church had not gone far enough in solidarity with the Jewish people as human beings worthy of human dignity and rights, and as a nation. Thus he developed an inclusive Christology with the potential to rival equivalents in the Hegelian tradition."

<sup>45</sup>Helsinki Consultation on Jewish Continuity in the Body of Messiah 2012: Berlin Statement on Torah (July 3, 2012)  
<http://helsinkiconsultation.squarespace.com/storage/Berlin%20Statement%20with%20Preface--%20Final.pdf>

3. Challenge: Responding to anti-Judaism in the church and increasing antisemitism in society
4. *Proposal: EMJT needs to be informed and engaged with the ethical, social and political issues of Europe, but developing a theoretical approach and practical application of Torah in every area of personal, congregation and communal life.*

**e. Evangelistic and missiological issues**

1. EMJT has to be able to say something positive about the Jewish 'no' to Yeshua in addition to affirming our own Jewish 'yes'.<sup>46</sup>
2. EMJT needs to be aware of the challenge of different evangelistic and missionary approaches to our people and carefully evaluate the different styles and strategies.
3. EMJT has to respond appropriately to challenge of the negative response of 99% of our people to the claims of Yeshua.
4. EMJT needs to see our own mission within the mission of the church and of Israel.<sup>47</sup>
5. *Proposal: There needs to be constructive and relevant engagement of EMJT with contemporary European Jewish cultures and identities. We need to highlight examples of good practice and provide a missiological reading of the coldening of Europe.*

**e. Eschatological future in EMjs in the Diaspora in the light of the restoration of Israel? What is the role of EMJS outside Israel?**

1. Systems of eschatology
2. Systems of social and political engagement
3. *Proposal: EMJT needs to explore its own eschatological thinking.*

**4. Conclusion**

If our presence in the Europe of today can speak to the Church and to Israel within the complex mix of European peoples and identities today of this powerful mandate as a remnant people to pioneer the calling of the nations to the 'obedience of faith' and of our people back to the Messiah, we shall, whilst being least of all the peoples, become truly a 'light to the nations'.

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<sup>46</sup> The phrase comes from W. F. Marquardt, *Theological Audacities Selected Essays* (eds. Andreas Pangritz and Paul S. Chung) (Princeton Theological Monographs, Pickwick, 2010), p3, "Enemies for our sake: The Jewish 'No' and Christian Theology".

<sup>47</sup> See Richard Harvey, "What then?" – Towards a Messianic Jewish Missiology" in *Chosen to Follow - Jewish Believers through History and Today* (eds. Knut H. Høyland and Jakob W. Nielsen) (Jerusalem: Caspari Centre, 2012).





Appendix 1 – Population of Europe<sup>48</sup>

Europe's total population			728,887,000
Christians			559,643,000
	Affiliated Christians		536,832,000
		RC	285,978,000
		Orthodox	158,105,000
		Protestant	77,529,000
		Anglicans	26,637,000
Nonreligious			106,841,000
Muslims			31,566,000
Atheists			22,922,000
Jews			2,527,000
Buddhists			1,547,000

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<sup>48</sup> European Identities, 2000????

## Appendix 2 European Messianic Jewish National Organisations

### 5. The United Kingdom

The Hebrew Christian Alliance of Great Britain, now the British Messianic Jewish Alliance (BMJA), was the first alliance in modern times to unite Jewish believers in Yeshua in fellowship and prayer. Its conferences, meetings and networking form a platform both for supporting Jewish believers in churches, and encouraging those in Messianic Jewish congregations. Its members advocate for Israel and *aliyah*, witness to the Messiah, challenge anti-Semitism, and call both Church and Israel to recognize the Messiah's commitment to his people.

The British Messianic Jewish Alliance (BMJA) lists 19 Messianic Jewish fellowships in the UK, associated through the British Messianic Jewish Alliance of Fellowships (BMJAF).<sup>49</sup> A smaller group, the Union of British Messianic Jewish Congregations (UBMJC) lists three member congregations.<sup>50</sup> The BMJA operates national and regional conferences, publishes CHAI<sup>51</sup>, its quarterly magazine, and has a youth organization (Yahad).<sup>52</sup>

### 6. France

The *Alliance Française de Juifs Messianiques* organises an annual conference, and unites Messianic Jewish groups in France and Belgium.<sup>53</sup> Out of a population of 580,000<sup>54</sup> it is estimated that there are 2,000-5,000 Jewish believers in Jesus, many in Roman Catholic churches. There are 3 Messianic Jewish congregations, in Paris, Brussels and Marseille, with a number of smaller fellowship groups.<sup>55</sup>

### 7. Germany

In the 1990s immigration from the former Soviet Union resulted in growth in the Jewish community from 30,000 to 300,000. The number of Jewish believers in Yeshua correspondingly grew from a few hundred in 1994 to at least 5,000 in 2007.<sup>56</sup> In 1994 no congregations existed but in 2010 there were more than 40 Messianic Jewish congregations and groups.<sup>57</sup> No single national Messianic Jewish organization exists to co-ordinate this growth. In the post-holocaust context of Germany, Messianic Leaders are involved in Jewish-Christian and Messianic Jewish-Christian relations, with institutes such as the *Instituts für*

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<sup>49</sup> "British Messianic Jewish Alliance of Fellowships". Online: <http://www.bmja.net/bmjaf.html>

<sup>50</sup> "Welcome to the Union of British Messianic Jewish Congregations". Online: <http://www.ubmjc.org/>.

<sup>51</sup> "Online CHAI", Online: <http://www.bmja.net/issue-index.html>

<sup>52</sup> "Yahad Facebook Page", online:

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/group.php?gid=2218713227&v=info>

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.yechoua.com/afjm.html>

<sup>54</sup> DellaPergola, *World Jewish Population*, 60.

<sup>55</sup> Information from Joshua Turnil, Dr. Evert van der Poll, and the Berger D'Israel website, <http://www.lebergerdisrael.org/index.php?page=pages/liens.php>

<sup>56</sup> Stephanie Fister, "The Present Messianic Jewish Movement in Germany" in *Mishkan* 58/2009, 6-20. See also Stephanie Fister, *Messianische Juden in Deutschland: Eine historische und religionssoziologische Untersuchung* (Germany: Lit Verlag, 2008).

<sup>57</sup> Vladimir Pikman, "Jewish Outreach: Some Flashlights from Germany", paper presented at the LCJE European Consultation, Krakov November 2010. LCJE Bulletin ?????? Online: <http://www.lcje.net/IndexofPapers2010.html>

*Israelogie* delivering programmes where Messianic Judaism and the place of Israel involve Christian and Messianic Jewish scholars.<sup>58</sup>

## 8. Former Soviet Union Countries

The Messianic Jewish movement in former Soviet Union countries grew rapidly in the 1990s with congregations established in major cities. Today there are Messianic Jewish congregations in Hungary, Kyrgistan, Ukraine, Romania, Russia and wherever migration has created communities of former Soviet Jews such as Australia, Canada, Germany and Israel. Whilst there are networks of congregations, Russian Messianic Jews prefer at present not to organise on a national level, but are likely to do so in the future.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Cf. the 2010 Conference "Wem gehört das „Land“? Christlich-theologische Überlegungen zur biblischen Landverheißung in Israel" [ET "Who owns the" land "? Christian theological reflection on the biblical promise of the land of Israel"] Online: <http://www.israelogie.de/>. The Institute also awards a Franz Delitsch Prize for works relevant to Messianic Judaism.

<sup>59</sup> Vladimir Pikman, *ibid.*

## Appendix 4 – European Jewish Populations<sup>60</sup>

Country	Total Population <sup>a</sup>	Core Jewish Population <sup>b</sup>	Jews per Total 1,000 Population	Accuracy Rating	Enlarged Jewish Population <sup>c</sup>
<b>EUROPE TOTAL</b>	<b>809,344,000</b>	<b>1,455,900</b>	<b>1.8</b>		
Austria	8,387,000	9,000	1.1	B 2001	15,000
Belgium	10,698,000	30,300	2.8	C 2002	40,000
Bulgaria	7,497,000	2,000	0.3	C 2001	
Czech Republic	10,411,000	3,900	0.4	C 2001	
Denmark	5,481,000	6,400	1.2	C 2001	
Estonia	1,339,000	1,800	1.3	B 2009	3,000
Finland	5,346,000	1,100	0.2	B 1999	
France <sup>f</sup>	62,670,000	483,500	7.7	B 2002	580,000
Germany	82,057,000	119,000	1.5	B 2009	250,000
Greece	11,183,000	4,500	0.4	B 1995	
Hungary	9,973,000	48,600	4.9	C 2001	100,000
Ireland	4,589,000	1,200	0.3	B 2001	
Italy	60,098,000	28,400	0.5	B 2009	35,000
Latvia	2,240,000	9,700	4.3	B 2009 X	19,000
Lithuania	3,255,000	2,800	0.9	B 2009 X	5,000
Luxembourg	492,000	600	1.2	B 2000	
Netherlands	16,653,000	30,000	1.8	B 1999	43,000 <sup>g</sup>
Poland	38,038,000	3,200	0.1	C 2001	
Portugal	10,732,000	500	0.0	C 1999	
Romania	21,190,000	9,700	0.5	B 2001	18,000
Slovakia	5,412,000	2,600	0.5	C 2001	
Slovenia	2,025,000	100	0.0	C 1996	
Spain	45,317,000	12,000	0.3	D 2006	15,000
Sweden	9,293,000	15,000	1.6	C 1999	25,000
United Kingdom <sup>h</sup>	62,129,000	292,000	4.7	B 2001	350,000
Other European Union <sup>i</sup>	1,290,000	100	0.1	D	
<b>Total European Union</b>	<b>497,795,000</b>	<b>1,118,000</b>	<b>2.2</b>		

a Source, with minor adjustments: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision. Volume I: Comprehensive Tables* (New York, 2009). Mid-year populations.

b Includes all persons who, when asked, identify themselves as Jews or who are identified as Jews by a respondent in the same household, and do not have another monotheistic religion. It also includes persons of Jewish parentage who claim no current religious or ethnic identity.

c Includes the sum of (a) the core Jewish population; (b) all other persons of Jewish parentage who are *not* Jewish currently (or at the date of reference or investigation); and (c) all respective non-Jewish household members (spouses, children, etc.).

d Includes core Jewish population plus non-Jewish members of the respective households. A similar figure of 6.7 million obtains for total persons of Jewish parentage, regardless of current identification. Further adding all the respective non-Jewish household members generates an aggregate of about 8 million. By the criteria of the *Law of Return*, the total number of eligible persons might approximate 10 to 12 million Americans.

e Including countries not listed separately.

f Including Monaco.

g Total persons with Jewish parentage.

<sup>60</sup> DellaPergola, *World Jewish Population 2010*, 60-61.

## Appendix 6 - Helsinki Consultation on Jewish Continuity in the Body of Messiah

### 2012 Berlin Statement on Torah (July 3, 2012)<sup>61</sup>

The third Helsinki Consultation on Jewish Continuity in the Body of Messiah met in Berlin, Germany June 29 – July 3, 2012. Building on statements formulated in the meetings of the previous two years, Jewish scholars from France, Germany, Israel, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, belonging to Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant and Messianic traditions, deepened their relationships and advanced in their discussion of crucial issues concerning Jewish life in the Body of Christ. The theme of this year's consultation was "Jewish Believers in Yeshua and the Torah."

Papers presented at the conference underlined the paradoxical richness and depth of Torah, and the way its fulfillment in Yeshua reinforces rather than undermines its enduring relevance. Following the conference, members of the consultation met together and developed the following common statement:

We, the members of the Helsinki Consultation, bear living witness to the recent emergence of Jewish believers in Yeshua (Jesus) who affirm their Jewish identity and acknowledge its theological significance. We are increasingly recognizing the intrinsic connection between this identity and Torah, the dynamic reality that has shaped the life of the Jewish people throughout its historical journey. We are also increasingly challenged to understand the continuing significance of the Torah encountered in the light of the gospel within the life of the Body of the Messiah.

The complex nature of Jewish existence reflects the multifaceted and paradoxical character of the Torah. Torah is both the historical revelation of God to Israel, and Israel's window to the eternity of God; once-for-all transmitted truth, and ever new process of discovery; the fashioner of human institutions, and the secret of the cosmic order; the absoluteness of the Divine Word, and the relativity of its human interpretation; the vulnerable letter of the written text, and its invulnerable spirit; defining mark of Israel's singular path and destiny, and wisdom for all nations of the earth.

From an early period, many Christians have not fully grasped the Torah's paradoxical unity. They have limited its relevance to what they deemed "moral precepts" whilst rejecting the so-called "civil" and "ceremonial" practices that are foundational to Jewish life. They have frequently viewed Torah through the dualistic lens of grace and law, contrasting faith and works, and thus overlooking the Torah's enduring value.

Recent scholarship has shed new light on the Jewish context of Yeshua and the early Yeshua-movement which challenges traditional Christian understanding of the Torah and brings renewed appreciation for its positive significance. Many now recognize that Yeshua, Sha'ul (Paul), and the other early Jewish followers of Yeshua were Torahobservant. This historical reality carries significant theological implications. We as Jewish believers in Yeshua acknowledge the special bond that unites us with Israel's Torah. This bond with Israel's Torah witnesses in the Church to the irrevocability of God's gifts and call to Israel (Rom 11:29). For Yeshua said, "Think not that I have come to destroy the Torah, or the prophets: I have not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Mt 5:17). We believe in the continuing validity of the Torah even as it is fulfilled in Christ.

Moreover, we see Christ as the incarnate Torah, the eternal wisdom of the Father in human flesh. He alone lived out the Torah in perfect form, and he calls his disciples to walk in his ways. As Jewish believers in Yeshua we are in the process of working out the meaning and concrete implications of this bond that we collectively experience. We find ourselves in a variety of different ecclesial and Jewish communal contexts, and we hold different understandings and definitions of Torah observance. Some of us consider the observance of mitzvot such as Shabbat, Jewish holidays, and the dietary laws as an essential component of fidelity to Torah. Yet we all

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<sup>61</sup> "Conference Statement 2013"

(<http://helsinkiconsultation.squarespace.com/storage/Berlin%20Statement%20with%20Preface--%20Final.pdf>, accessed February 2013).

understand that our attempt to live in radical discipleship to Yeshua (in conformity to teaching such as that found in the Sermon on the Mount) is the foundational principle of Torah observance. Furthermore, we all understand our faithfulness to Israel's Torah as a commitment to promote an awareness of the Jewish roots of the Church.

In the midst of our different approaches we have experienced through our deliberations and fellowship the dynamic and unifying power of Christ as Torah. Continuing to reflect on the Torah's role in our lives, we desire to grow together as Jews and as disciples of Yeshua. We hope these insights will resonate with other Jewish believers in Yeshua, and we invite them to join us on our journey.

Consultation Members:

Boris Balter (Russia)  
Jacques Doukhan (USA)  
Richard Harvey (Great Britain)  
Mark Kinzer (USA)  
Fr. Antoine Levy (Finland)  
Lisa Loden (Israel)  
Fr. David Neuhaus (Israel)  
Svetlana Panich (Russia)  
Vladimir Pikman (Germany)  
Jennifer Rosner (USA)  
Dominic Rubin (Russia)