

European Messianic Jewish Theological Symposium 2013

28 February 2013

Messianic Jews affirm their role in Europe

The second European Messianic Jewish Theological Symposium met in Berlin, 25-28 February, 2013.

Messianic Jews are Jewish people who accept Yeshua (Jesus) as the Messiah promised in the Hebrew Scriptures and revealed in the New Testament. As a Messianic movement within Judaism, they stand in continuity with their people. At the same time they are a Messianic Jewish part of the Christian community.

The symposium, a positive contribution to the growing theological maturity of the movement, meets to construct a distinctive Messianic Jewish theology that is both biblically based, and relevant to the cultural and historical context of post-Holocaust Europe.

The symposium participants are academic theologians who have completed or are engaged in postgraduate and doctoral studies. They come from the Germany, Holland, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Most but not all are Messianic Jews.

Vladimir Pikman, co-convenor (Germany) said "I was impressed by the high academic level and insights of our discussions. The Messianic movement is growing in Europe as is also our theological contribution."

Daniel Nessim, co-convenor (United Kingdom) said "'Silent no more' - European Messianic Jewish theological voices can now be heard! This much needed perspective brings to the Jewish and Christian worlds the meaning of faith in Yeshua (Jesus) as the Messiah of the Jewish people and Saviour of all nations"

Papers discussed the historical role of Messianic Jews in Europe, where an estimated 225,000 Jewish believers in Jesus flourished before the Shoah; the role Messianic Jews in the New Europe, facing the contemporary challenges of secularism, pluralism and anti-Semitism; The theological Significance and Challenges for Messianic Jews in Europe Today;

At the end of the conference a statement the following statement was issued:

Statement from the Second European Messianic Jewish Theological Symposium, Berlin, February 26-27, 2013

Our Challenge

A historic gap occurred in the 20th century between the rich theological heritage of Hebrew Christianity and the present state of European Messianic Jewish Theology. This was due to a number of factors: the tragedy of the Shoah, the liberal tendencies of the Church and the emigration of Jewish people and Jewish believers in Yeshua to Israel and the USA.

Facing secularization in European society, supersessionism (replacement theology) within the Church and a moratorium on Jewish mission in some state churches, the Messianic Jewish theological mind lacked a hospitable environment in which to develop and flourish.

Our Context

At this critical time of change within European society and Jewish experience several factors such as pluralism, globalisation, materialism, secularism and the influence of Eastern religions affect our cultural landscape. But now, with the worldwide growth of the Messianic Jewish Movement, the restoration of the State of Israel, and the influx of a new post-war generation of Jewish believers in Yeshua there are grounds for hope. Silent for too long, we now sense the urgency of developing a Messianic Jewish theology equipped to face the challenges of our present situation of Europe.

Previously the need for a distinctively European Messianic Jewish Theology was not recognized. Our small numbers, the relative newness of our movement and the absence, until recently, of our own theological tradition, led us to rely on the work of others. But there are now a growing number of Messianic Jews throughout Europe engaged in theological studies, and we encourage our fellow Jewish believers in Jesus to grow together with us in theological maturity.

Our Messianic community unites Jews and Gentiles in the body of the Messiah and provides new ways of belonging within both Church and Synagogue. Whilst being a minority, we are called to play a vital role in both communities. This will challenge the theological frameworks of both Christianity and Judaism. Both will be enriched by the new theological insights that we bring to traditional understandings of the Bible and the nature of God. Today, in this post-post-holocaust environment this significant theological voice needs to be both heard and acknowledged.

Our Contribution

The presence of Messianic Jews within our people brings the Jewish Jesus home. As we celebrate the fulfilment of his Messianic promises, our very existence declares God's ongoing purposes for the Jewish people and the Nations, proclaiming to our people the inauguration of the Kingdom of God. We recognise the historical and cultural reasons for the Jewish "no" to Jesus, but our "Yes" to "Yeshua" is a prophetic sign.

Our theology stresses the glory of God in His ongoing election of our Jewish people, our God-given identity as Jews, and an ecclesiology that integrates Israel and the nations within the Body of Messiah.

Our Role

Our role as European Messianic Jews is threefold. To our Jewish people we are called to be a light that shows the way to the Messiah and to care for the wellbeing of our people. Our faith, intercession, good deeds and life of righteousness, enabled by God, serve to avert the judgment of God.

Our role in society and before the watching world is similarly to live an exemplary and transformed life that leads others to Yeshua. This includes working for political and social justice, and participating in *Tikkun ha-Olam* (repairing the world).

Within the Church we are called to be a blessing, as a means of unity and reconciliation. We present Yeshua from a Jewish perspective, motivating all believers in him to burn with love for God and passion to make him known.

We are confident that God who supplies all our needs through Messiah Yeshua will enable us to fulfil this high calling and responsibility. As European Messianic Jews at this our second Symposium, we commit ourselves to this task, and call on our people and all those who believe in our Messiah to pray for this our ongoing service. We plan to meet next year to continue our working together, and aim to produce papers that will address the vital theological issues confronting our movement.

Members of the European Messianic Jewish Theological Consultation