

Zot Habrit

This is the Covenant

A Journal of the Messianic Jewish Alliance of Israel



Translated by Karen Mizrahi

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Changes in the Alliance

With the appearance of this second English edition of “**Zot HaBrit**” (This is the Covenant), we would like to update our friends and supporters in Israel and abroad on some changes that have occurred during the past year at the Alliance.

About half a year ago, Ilan Zamir announced his decision to resign from the position of President of the M.J.A.I.. Ilan's resignation, after serving for close to seven years, was based on personal and health reasons. In early April of this year, we mourned the passing of Ilan Zamir after a long and complicated illness. At this time, we wish to thank all of you who have sent letters of condolence in regards to Ilan's death. We join you in extending our love and prayers to Ilan's wife Shir-El and to their two young children, as well as to his other family members and friends.

Ilan Zamir was indeed an inspiration to us for his clear vision for the Alliance, its purpose in serving the local congregations in the Land and for his leadership of the Alliance despite the difficulties. On 28th December 1999, three days before Ilan's official resignation and before the end of the millennium, we organized a small surprise party for him in the Alliance's downtown Jerusalem office. Members of the Alliance's Executive Committee were in attendance as well as one of our co-founders with Ilan of the M.J.A.I. and its first secretary, Menahem Ben-Hayim. The party was very emotional and the Lord's grace was felt. It was a blessing and an encouragement to hear Ilan's parting words about the Alliance's future and the road that lies ahead of us. We thank the Lord for giving us the opportunity, before Ilan passed away, to honor him and express our appreciation for the many contributions that he made to M.J.A.I. during his tenure as President.

There have been other changes in the Alliance that we would like to mention:

- Asher Intrater, who was the Alliance's General Secretary for five years, resigned from his post in March 1999. Asher filled the role as General Secretary with diligence and much ability. Asher remains with the Alliance as a member of the Executive Committee where he continues to contribute his experience and knowledge.

- Boaz Fastman, a native born Israeli whose parents are also believers, was elected by the committee to replace Asher. Boaz served faithfully on the Alliance committee for many years as a board member, and was elected to this demanding and responsible job. He has been serving as the General Secretary of the M.J.A.I. since August 1999.

- Hanan Lukatz, a member of the Executive Committee for the past four years, was elected by the board in November 1999 to replace Ilan Zamir as Chairman of the Board effective 1.1.2000.

- Finally, in March of this year, the Alliance welcomed well-known Messianic composer, David Loden, to the Executive Committee. David is an elder at Beit Assaf congregation in Netanya, and brings with him much expertise and talent. We are happy to have David on the Alliance board where his gifts will certainly be appreciated and utilized.

We are grateful to the Lord for all those who have served him in the Alliance in the past, and we ask for God's blessing and support on those who are continuing to serve the Alliance. We see it as a

privilege to serve the Lord's Body here in the Land in every area where He leads us.

In conclusion, after many years of wandering, the M.J.A.I. has finally settled in a pleasant, well-organized, two-room office located in the center of Jerusalem (close to the Ben Yehuda pedestrian mall). God willing, we hope to stay there for a long period of time. If you happen to be in Jerusalem, you are cordially invited to stop by the office in order to refresh yourselves, and to get to know the Alliance better. We will be there to welcome you with a smile and a warm greeting.

On behalf of the Executive Committee I would like to take this opportunity to bless you and to thank you for your love, prayers, and support of the M.J.A.I.. We are confident that the work of the Israeli Alliance and your participation with us are very close to the Lord's heart.

* Details for contacting M.J.A.I. are noted on the back page.

Hanan Lukatz – Chairman of the Executive Committee



The Executive committee and Ilan Zamir at his Farewell meeting, 28 Dec '99.

Top left to right: Boaz Fastman, Menahem Ben-Hayim, Brele Balai, Asher Intrater, Gershon Nerel, Victor Blum, Arthur Goldberg.
Bottom left to right: Karen Mizrahi, Ilan Zamir, Hanan Lukatz.

“HaLapid “(The Torch): The Second Journal of Messianic Jews in the State of Israel

In the months of January and July of 1960 two of the first issues of *HaLapid – Biton HaKehila HaMeshihit HaIsraelit* (“The Torch – Journal of the Israeli Messianic Assembly”) were published in Jerusalem.

The initiators and journal staff members of the first edition were three men: “Rabbi Ze’ev Shlomo Kofsman, Rabbi Moshe Immanuel Ben-Meir and Rabbi I. Goldin”. Along side of them stood one woman, Rina Price. Out of all the above, only Rina, who has lately taken a renewed interest in Jewish people who are disciples of Yeshua, is still living and now belongs to the German group, *Beit El*, which was founded by Emma Berger in Zichron-Ya’akov. Two of the last issues of “HaLapid” were published in August 1961 and April 1962.

From the State of Israel’s viewpoint, “HaKehila HaMeshihit HaIsraelit” (The Israeli Messianic Assembly) during those years was nothing but an autonomous organization that was founded in 1957 under the name *Kehila Meshihit Israelit – Kehilat Yerushalayim* (“The Israeli Messianic Assembly – Jerusalem Assembly”) and that was formally recognized when it was publicized in the *Davar* newspaper about a year afterwards. Among the central founders of this organization that also continued to be active later on, were Ze’ev Shlomo Kofsman and his wife Yvette, Hava Kronhaus, Rina Price, and Rahel Greenberg. The main aspiration of Ze’ev Kofsman was that the Israeli Messianic Assembly would be a spiritual center for all Messianic Jews in Eretz Israel who were born here and those who were ingathered here from all parts of the world.

The name “HaLapid” (The Torch) was chosen based on two verses of God’s Word to the prophet Isaiah:

“For Zion’s sake I will not hold My peace, and for

Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a torch that burns” (Isaiah 62:1).

“Arise, shine; for your light has come!” (Isaiah 60:1)

Beneath the main headline of “HaLapid” a sub-headline was attached that read: “The Israeli Messianic Assembly symbolizes the resurrection of the ancient Messianic congregation in its original form.”

In the explanation given underneath the above sub-headline, it was written that the modern Messianic congregation in Israel is the direct and natural continuation of the first Israelite Messianic congregation that was also the most ancient congregation founded in Jerusalem by Jewish people in the first century. Further to this, the following comparison was made: Just as the Jewish people in Israel today are a direct and natural continuation of the ancient Jewish people who were residents of this country 2000 years ago, one can see that exactly as then, the Israeli Messianic Assembly of today is an inseparable part of the people. In other words, “Just as

the Jewish people have begun to re-build their national life on the ancient, desecrated ruins, so also can it be applied to the spiritual life; hence the Messianic Assembly has started to re-build its spiritual dwelling place in its renewed country”.

In connection with the return to Zion, Kofsman emphasized that just as the Jews “do not come home to this country as immigrants or squatters but to receive their fathers’ estate as an inheritance; likewise, we do not come to the Israeli Messianic Assembly as converts (proselytes), but rather as the redeemed who are returning to our spiritual inheritance.”



The Assembly, in Kofsman's opinion, was made in order to serve as a spiritual home for all the Messianic Jews so that they would not need to wander any more (in a spiritual sense) from place to place. Actually, the Assembly was supposed to be a framework and magnet for all the Jewish disciples of Yeshua in Eretz Israel and who were still scattered among the many kinds of historical churches. The main editor of the last two issues of "HaLapid" was Moshe Ben-Meir, who lived during those years in Haifa, and who listed the journal's address as No. 4, Gershon Agron Street, Jerusalem. Staff members of the journal's third issue were Ze'ev Shlomo Kofsman, Victor Smadja, and Rina Price from Jerusalem, and Professor Shlomo Birnbaum from Haifa. For the journal's fourth issue two new persons were elected to the editorial staff: Ya'akov Yaffe and Haim Fastman. Among the various articles that appeared in "HaLapid", it is interesting to note, besides other things, the following examples:

"Two letters to the Chief Rabbinate in Jerusalem"; "An Ongoing Series on the 'Names of Messiah the King'" and "Not a Converted Jew but a Saved Jew".

It is also interesting to pay attention to the announcement that appeared on the last page of the second issue:

"Welcome! On every Sabbath morning at 10:00, a public prayer meeting will take place (prayer and sermon) at the following locations: Y.M.C.A. building, room no. 110, in Jerusalem and No. 40, HaGefen Street, ground floor, in Haifa."

From this announcement, the meeting places of two of the smaller congregations in the year 1960 are deduced; one

under the leadership of Kofsman in Jerusalem and the other under the leadership of Ben-Meir in Haifa. About a year later, "Kofsman's Congregation" moved to No. 4 Gershon Agron Street, Jerusalem (today it is a Conservative Synagogue), and there the congregation's library was opened. In this library, that was open to the public only for a few hours three days a week, there were books in Hebrew, English and French, and a few other books in different languages. On the top of "HaLapid's" pages, an invitation was given to the readers to visit the library in order to get better acquainted with its books and also to check-out books for reading at home.

Throughout the three years that "HaLapid" was in existence, it was distributed free without charge. In the end, the publication of "HaLapid" was discontinued, and this was mainly because of differences in opinion among members of the journal's staff whose differing exegetical approaches eventually caused them to separate. The middle of the 1960's decade found each of the journal's editors in a different place and position - with some of them receiving help (be it theological or material) from supporters located outside of Israel. Only towards the year 1969 did some of them (among them the families of Ze'ev Kofsman, Victor Smadja, and Haim Fastman) manage to gather together again in Jerusalem. As for Moshe Ben-Meir, he continued to make his living as a postman in Haifa and also to give lectures on Messianic Jews outside the country, primarily in Scandinavia. In conjunction with this, Ben-Meir worked independently to publish another new Messianic magazine; but that is a different story entirely.

Gershon Nerel

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