

THE MESSIANIC JEW (AND HEBREW CHRISTIAN)

The Quarterly
Organ of the
International Messianic
Jewish (Hebrew Christian)
Alliance

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The Quarterly Organ of the International Messianic Jewish
(Hebrew Christian) Alliance

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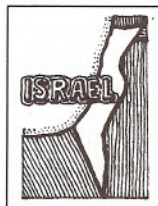
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THE MESSIANIC JEW (AND HEBREW CHRISTIAN) is the quarterly organ of the International Messianic Jewish (Hebrew Christian) Alliance, but except where otherwise stated the writers of the articles are alone responsible for the opinions expressed.

“HANDING OVER THE TORCH”

by Gershon Nerel, M.A.



ON APRIL 27, 1993, a special reception marked the “Changing of the Guard” of the Israel Secretary of the International Messianic Jewish (Hebrew Christian) Alliance. More than 200 guests gathered at the Messianic Moshav “Yad Hashmona” in the Judean Hills, near Jerusalem, for the occasion.

Following the words of his predecessor, Menahem Benhayim, the newly appointed Secretary of the I.M.J.(H.C.)A., Gershon Nerel, himself a resident of the Moshav, expressed his outlook and belief concerning the position he undertook. The present article is the English adaptation of the Hebrew discourse addressed to the guests.

Personal Feelings

I wish to welcome all of you who made a special effort to come and participate in this occasion. Somehow, because at once I have to face so many responsibilities with so high expectations, I feel again like a “Bar-Mitzvah” boy, reaching a special day in my life. However, although the duties ahead of me are heavy and not easy, I know that I have a Paraclete to guide me in every step.

Looking at the Past

In two more years, in September 1995, we shall celebrate the 70th anniversary of the International Messianic Jewish (Hebrew Christian) Alliance, established in London in 1925. This “pensionable



Gershon Nerel.

age” deserves much respect and serious consideration. If we compare the relative seniority of the Alliance as over against the mere “Middle-Age” (45 years) of the contemporary State of Israel, we do draw significant lessons from the very existence of an International Messianic Jewish Alliance.

Functioning as an organisation, which has become an established institution, I think that the Alliance represents very uniquely the renaissance of a Messianic Jewish movement worldwide. In fact, during all these decades the Alliance served as a tool to crystallise a strong group-consciousness of disciples of Yeshua, with a global significance.

The substantial existence of an organism like the International Alliance — for all these successive decades — does indeed manifest an

uninterrupted sequence of four generations acting as spokesmen for Messianic Judaism. This tendency seems to be a road with "one way ticket" only, i.e., in the direction of expansion and maturity.

The continuous international conferences of the Alliance, and especially the publication of its Quarterly, "The Hebrew Christian"/"The Messianic Jew", published without cessation both during periods of war and peace, deserve a special attention. They illustrate the strong desire to radiate openness and exposure concerning all various subjects relating to Messianic Jews. This attitude reflects much willingness to confront many problems and questions concerning definitions of self-identity, as well as outward expressions of such identity.

From a historical perspective, I may say that the International Alliance has had its particular contribution in the general sphere of refining the whole issue of spiritual identity among all believers in Yeshua, not merely the Jewish regiment of them. Any Gentile believer who wants to come closer to the Alliance and its activities — and again especially through the Quarterly — can easily find answers, from Jewish sources, to question regarding his own identity as a believer in the Messiah.

A good example for this "identity exegesis" may be observed in the recent adaptation of a new official title: "The Messianic Jewish Alliance", (although in parenthesis we still find Hebrew Christian). However, the change itself does imply a strong awareness and sensitivity to the significance of terminology and nomenclature.

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From the outset of its formation, during the period of British

Mandate over Eretz-Israel, the International Alliance of Messianic Jews sought to have its own presence and influence in the Land. These efforts and deeds vary in many aspects, but it would be sufficient enough to mention only the issue of setting up a unique colony of Jewish disciples of Yeshua, alongside all other Zionist colonies in the Land.

Looking to the Future

It is not a secret that the issue of transferring the Headquarters of the Alliance from London to Jerusalem was discussed more than once. But, unfortunately, this subject still remains a theoretical topic. I do hope that as soon as possible we shall reach the practical steps for the realization of this idea. Jerusalem is the natural location for such an Alliance.

In these days I am often asked by many people how do I perceive my functioning with this new position in the future. Potentially, the challenges are really manifold. However, I wish to mention mainly two spheres in which I would like to focus:

- (a) Building and operating a comprehensive "DATA-BANK", which would provide updated information concerning Messianic Jews. Such a data reservoir may provide answers for any person interested in this subject. I hope that it will be possible to have credible information with efficient accessibility to it. Through our office in Jerusalem quite a lot of information is already flowing and it could be channeled to every request. We could provide information on the following subjects: Personal and general data, history, theology, worldwide national organisations

etc. All this would definitely require computerisation of the office and constant use of professional equipment — requiring also much flexibility from ourselves as well.

- (b) To become a tool for expressing the concept of “Messianic Zionism”. It seems to me that there is an increasing demand, especially directed to our office in Jerusalem, to become a “Voice of Zion to the Diaspora”. There are already many requests to provide informative details concerning contextual teaching and biblical interpretation relating to the national revival of the people of Israel in the Land of Israel. Here we live at the heart of the process of the fulfilment of Ezekiel’s vision concerning the Dry Bones. From the four corners of the earth Messianic Jews, with Gentile

believers, constantly expect the spiritual revival of these bones. Many ears and eyes are daily directed towards Zion in this specific sphere. The ingathering of the exiles to this Land, including individuals and congregations of Messianic Jews, is already a reality we see every minute. The biblical Messianic Jewish Zionism is an enormous challenge for me.

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Menahem has already contributed toward paving the way in these directions. I thank him for what he has done and I pray that God will also help me to continue the good work. I know that in one body there are many members, and no member will be able to function correctly without the help of the other parts in the organism.

NEWS AND NOTES



Israel

OUR articles from the reception saying farewell to Menahem Benhayim and welcoming Gershon Nerel give some of the atmosphere of the occasion. It was held at Moshav Yad HaShmonah and was attended by people from all over Israel and many visitors from around the world who were in Israel for other purposes, but welcomed the opportunity. Also taking part were Victor Smadja, Ron Lewis and David and Lisa Loden led the praise. Gershon Nerel has also become Chairman of the local supervising

committee for the Ebenezer Home in Haifa. At the Open Day at the Home, Gershon gave another address, which we hope to publish.

Please note that we now have a new P.O. Box address in Jerusalem. We are in the process of buying the office which we have rented for the past few years. This does bite into our reserves, but is a long-term investment, and we hope that donors will see this as a worth while project to support in view of the importance it has been gaining by the way it is used.

Colombia

The Revd. David Sedaca recently visited Colombia and is helping the new Alliance there to formulate a constitution. It was a very intensive time, with large numbers of people hearing about Messianic Jews, and the future prospects are exciting.

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