

Zot Habrit

This is the Covenant

A Journal of the Messianic Jewish Alliance of Israel



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Activities of the Year 2001

The various activities of the Messianic Jewish Alliance of Israel in 2001 were intended to serve the Body of Messiah in Israel and contribute to its unity through a special expression of our Jewish identity in Yeshua the Messiah, the "Cornerstone". We began the year 2001 with a seminar entitled, "Our Jewish Identity in Messiah Yeshua", held in the framework of the Alliance's general meeting. The seminar was essentially a forum in which the different approaches to this issue by various Messianic Jews in Israel were presented. Volume 16 of "Zot HaBrit" (In Hebrew) was dedicated to covering this seminar. Whoever would like to get a copy of it may order it from the Alliance office.

On the holiday of Shavuot (Feast of Weeks) in May, 2001, the Alliance hosted our traditional "Shavuot Conference" held at "Har Haruach", near the town of Abu Gosh. Nearly 700 believers from all over the country gathered together to celebrate, to praise, to enjoy fellowship with one another and to take one more step forward in realizing the unity we have in Messiah

Yeshua. In recent years a number of "Shavuot Conference" traditions have taken root: Various congregations offer songs of praise as "spiritual first-fruits"; children weave wreaths of flowers; a short message from the Scriptures on the meaning of the holiday is given; the children decorate "first-fruits baskets" and bring them to the stage in a colorful procession; and babies born in the past year (first-fruits of the womb) are brought to the stage so that we can pray for them and thank God for them.

In October, 2001, on the holiday of Succot (The Feast of Tabernacles), the Alliance prepared once more for the annual

Jerusalem Parade. Participation of the Messianic Jews in this colorful event drew the expected resistance of Yad L'Achim (the long-time orthodox Jewish anti-mission and anti-messianic organization) as well as some of the powers that be in the Jerusalem Municipality. This year we wore new t-shirts sporting verses in Hebrew from the book of Isaiah, "And He bore the sin of many", and "Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace". This was the second year in

a row that we marched in both the "People's Parade" from Ein Kerem to Sacher Park (a distance of eight kilometers) as well as in the main processional downtown. Behind our dancers a huge banner reading "Messianic Jews" in Hebrew proclaimed the name of our group as we drew near to the main stage and to the mayor of Jerusalem, Ehud Ohlmert. We finished our march in the parade with a joyful sense of victory in the Lord.



The Dancers



The Costume



Banner "Messianic Jews"

In addition to all these activities, the Alliance manages "Hadadit", a fund for needy messianic Jews. We thank the Lord for the fact that we could help believers in local congregations who found themselves in financial straits. This aid was given only in conjunction with

recommendations from elders or pastors and on condition that the recipient's congregation would provide 20% of the donated amount.

Any Israeli believer who identifies with the goals and activities of the Alliance as presented in this article is

entitled to join as a member. We give thanks to the Lord for all these activities.

Boaz Fastman



"Firstfruits" march



Praise team from Beer Sheva assembly

“Teaching from Zion” : A Messianic Jewish Journal in English following the Yom Kippur

WAR

by Gershon Nerel

In April 1974, the first edition of the English quarterly “Teaching from Zion” was published in Jerusalem. The founder and editor was Moshe Emanuel Ben-Meir (1905–1978), who was often known by his acronym “Ma’abam” (מעב"ם). In the early 1970s he settled in Jerusalem, after living in Haifa since the times of the British Mandate for about four decades. Moshe’s wife, Ahuva, who currently attends the “Roeh Israel” congregation in Jerusalem, helped him publish the journal. Ahuva accompanied Moshe on his many journeys around the world (in Finland, Germany, Switzerland and the U.S.) during which he taught from the *Tanach* (Old Testament) and the New Testament. From the outset, “Teaching from Zion” was designed to maintain connections with those believers that Moshe and Ahuva met abroad.

Although “Teaching from Zion” was written in English and distributed overseas, its declared aim was to teach directly from the Hebrew text of Scripture. The editor stated that its purpose was “to teach the whole *Tanach* and New Testament - books given in the language of Zion by the God of Zion”, and especially “through Jews who live in Zion.” The motto of the journal was “For the Torah will go forth from Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Isaiah 2:3). Until his death on November 3, 1978, and his burial on the Mount of Olives, Ben-Meir edited nineteen issues of “Teaching from Zion”, of which most of the articles were written by him.

In the journal’s first issue, which comprised seven pages, “Ma’abam” expressed his belief that the world had already begun to experience End-Time events, especially since the founding of the State of Israel in 1948. He was fully convinced that the return of Yeshua would take place in 1988, precisely forty years later. Ben-Meir also reasoned that the re-unification of Jerusalem in the Six Days War in June 1967 was a clear sign of the end of the “Times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24); and that following the unification of the city a new spiritual era had begun in the life of the nation of Israel. He emphasized this also in the third issue of the magazine, which appeared in October 1974.

“Ma’abam” frequently wrote in his journal about current political issues. In the tenth issue, for example, which was printed in July 1976, he published an article entitled “A Palestinian State”, which included the following comments: “A partitioning of ‘Palestine’, a dividing of the Promised Land, is contrary to the plan and purpose of God. All who involve themselves in this division will have to face trial at the bar of God. Even the United States of America, which sides with Israel, is

so smitten with blindness that it fails to see through the satanic tactics of the Palestinian Liberation Organization”. In the same place Ben-Meir also stated: “Neutrality against Arab terrorism is impossible. The problem of Israel cannot be solved by compromises”.

In issue number 11, printed in October 1976, “Ma’abam” wrote the following about Yasser Arafat: “Arafat’s new tactics, which have proven more successful, are assuming the form of diplomatic infiltrations. Arafat was permitted to deliver his incendiary speech in the Assembly of the godless U.N.O. in New York, with his revolver dangling on his hip. Since then, the PLO has been given recognition by 105 States!” Furthermore, “Ma’abam” also criticized the upheaval and stone-throwing by the younger generation of Arab Israeli citizens, pointing to “Nazareth becoming the center of the nationalistic Arab uprising in the country”. In summary, Ben-Meir explained that when world public opinion will turn totally against Israel, Russia (‘Gog’ in his thinking) will come with its armies from the north to attack and destroy Israel; However, he stressed, “that will be the end of Moscow and not of Jerusalem.”

“Ma’abam” didn’t hide his Rightist political opinions. Thus, for example, in issue no. 14 of “Teaching from Zion”

(July 1977), he warmly welcomed the political victory of the Likud party, with Menachem Begin as Premier. “This is the doing of the God of Israel, and we are thankful”, “Ma’abam” wrote, and continued: “A new era has started which will bring healing and comfort to Israel in Israel. Judea and Samaria and other liberated territories are safe, and shall not be traded for a peace which is no peace.”

For two years after Moshe’s death, until October 1980, Ahuva continued to edit and publish the journal. All the 26 issues published up to that point were produced by the simple stencil method on plain folio-sized paper. The quality of the copies was so poor that sometimes it was impossible to read them.

In January 1981 the quarterly became the official journal of the Netivyah Congregation in Jerusalem, and Joseph Shulam became its chief editor. At this stage several interesting changes were introduced to the quarterly. Firstly, while the English name of the journal remained “Teaching from Zion”, its Hebrew name was shortened to “Torah Mitzion” (“Torah from Zion”). Secondly, the quality of the printing was much improved. Thirdly, the new format within perpendicular columns enabled easier folding of the journal for insertion into rectangular envelopes. And fourthly, from that point on, a new



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Congregation Keren Yeshuah (Horn of Salvation)

Congregation Keren Yeshuah was established on Tu b'Shvat (Arbor day) in 1990 as an Israeli Messianic-Jewish, Hebrew-speaking congregation; its goal, spreading the gospel of Yeshua the Messiah in the Tel Aviv area. We see Holy Scriptures as the sole basis through which we can know the truth and also to live according to it, by the power of the Spirit of God.

The congregation's name expresses both its character and its calling. It recalls the daily prayer (from the "Shmoneh Esrei" the 18 blessings) for the coming of the Messiah - the Branch of David - which ends with this blessing: "Blessed are you, Lord, Who raises up a horn of salvation." The name is taken also from the prophecy of Zechariah, the father of Yochanan the Baptist, which opens with a blessing heralding the imminent appearance of Yeshua the Messiah: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David His servant."

As a Messianic Jewish congregation we express our Jewish identity not only by flavoring our services with Jewish tradition, but more fundamentally by adopting an approach that emphasizes the program of God for our people, and the vital role of Messianic Jews in that program, for they are a "remnant according to choice" of the nation of Israel

in the current era. This approach is not just a means for helping spread the gospel. It is primarily a valid expression of our personal and corporate identity in Messiah Yeshua.

The members of the congregation reflect the many types of Israelis in Tel Aviv, although most come from the suburbs and nearby towns in the Dan region. The congregation has about 60 adult members plus a not insignificant number of children and young

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David His servant" (Luke 1:68-69).

people. Keren Yeshuah is made up of immigrants and native Israelis, who represent five continents and diverse cultures. The non-Jewish members are also Hebrew-speakers, and they take full part in the life of the congregation and the realization of its goals.

Besides Sabbath morning services, the congregation meets once a month on Friday evening and holds a "kabbalat Shabbat"; (welcoming the Sabbath) including a festive dinner. This framework enables us to strengthen our "familial" relationships in the congregation, and to enjoy the culinary talents of our congregants. The atmosphere at these meals is less formal and the program is flexible. There are testimonies, songs and other

improvisations. On weeks when we have "kabbalat Shabbat", we forgo the regular Shabbat service, and thus enjoy a day of resting with family, taking trips, or visiting other congregations.

The geographical distance between the congregation's members (from Modi'in to Rishon to Ra'anana) makes it very difficult to build community life in the congregation. This is the reason that we have raised up local home groups which meet once a week;

there is also one home group for Russian-speakers. Finding transportation for those members who don't own cars is another challenge that faces us as a result of the distance between us.

Over the years we have been privileged to see God bless Congregation Keren Yeshuah,

despite the ups and downs that we've seen along the way. Tens of people have come to faith, and many believers have been strengthened with us on their way to other congregations. We bless the Lord for his work in the midst of all the Messianic congregations in the Land, and we aim to strengthen the relationships and the unity between us. Our prayer is that we would all be built up in the knowledge of God and his grace, that He would perfect us as one body that would glorify him in holiness, in love, and in faith, for the sake of the salvation of our people.

Noam Hendren

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serial number system was used for the journal.

In recent years, "Teaching from Zion" has been printed on the average of once or twice a year, reflecting the views of the same congregation led by Joseph Shulam, now called "Roeh Yisrael". A central theme of the articles currently published in the journal focuses on the need to return to the roots of the primitive Kehila

(Assembly) of Jewish Yeshua-believers in Jerusalem. In other words, this congregation is attempting to follow the first-century Jewish believers in Yeshua, as they are understood 20 centuries later. Practically, this restorationist approach within "Teaching from Zion" is carried out through using mainstream Jewish interpretations and traditions of rabbinical Judaism.

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unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: "And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away, and they sin purged." This is a revelation of God's love and grace. God himself provides Isaiah's atonement, a covering for his sins, and purification. Isaiah saw the atonement. You could say that he saw Yeshua the Messiah and His glory, as written in John 12:41, "These things said Isaiah, when he saw his glory, and spoke of him.." Chapter 53 of the book of Isaiah expounds this further. As was stated, the vision that Isaiah saw was a revelation of the Lamb that was slain, of Yeshua the Messiah as the atonement of God. We see this more clearly in a similar vision in the Book of Revelation, where it says "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty... And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb that had been slain..." (Revelation 4:8; 5:6)

Holiness reveals God's purity, and his love and mercy. Holiness teaches us about the character and nature of God and his works, and the cross is its center. The highest expression of holiness is revealed in the cross of Messiah Yeshua, the Lamb of God who carried the sins of the world. This is what Isaiah saw and then he dedicated his life to proclaiming this revelation in the midst of his people. From the beginning Isaiah called the people to open their hearts to this grace of God: "Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

What then, is the connection between holiness, an attribute that reveals the character and nature of God, and congregational discipline? I believe that in the Body of Messiah we are meant to give a communal expression of Yeshua's life. This is the Body of Messiah. He is the Body's head, and the Body is the place where Yeshua reveals himself and lives his life. Therefore, congregational discipline is one of the tools which allows the congregation to develop and become like Messiah.

For this Paul yearned when he wrote to the Galatian congregation, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Messiah be formed in you (Galatians 4:19). Paul doesn't just pray for the congregation, but also instructs her, and when needed, corrects and reproves her with the goal of bringing her to the fullness of Messiah's life and holiness. For Paul, holiness and love are bound together: "...According as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Ephesians 1:4). In daily life, holiness expresses itself as pure love for God and for others, and its base and background is the cross of Messiah (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; Ephesians 4:17-24).

How can we apply these things today? "And he gave some, apostles, and some, prophets, and some, evangelists, and some, pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-13). God has built the congregation in such a way that we will develop together and become the Bride of the Lamb, "...that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27). It is the pastor's call to instruct, correct, reprove, pray, and demonstrate love and patience. The goal is unity with Messiah - the wedding of the Lamb!

Therefore, my brothers and pastors, a great responsibility has been placed in our hands. Let us serve the Bride of the Lamb in the fullness of love and in faithfulness to God and to the Bride, as Peter encouraged us to do: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a crown of glory that fades not away" (2 Peter 5:2-4).

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