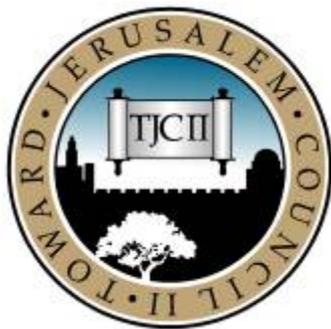


Toward Jerusalem Council II

The Vision and the Story



Peter Hocken

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Introduction: The Vision

Toward Jerusalem Council II (TJCII) is first of all a vision. It is a vision that bears the marks of the Holy Spirit. It is a vision for the Church according to the heart of the Father purchased by the blood of his Son. It is a vision for the healing of the oldest wound in the Church. The vision is for the unity of Jew and Gentile in the one Body of Jesus, the Messiah of Israel.¹

This is the vision for the Church taught by the apostle Paul in the letter to the Ephesians. “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ. For he is our peace: who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in His flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end” (Eph. 2: 13 – 16).

This vision did not exist at the beginning of the Church on the day of Pentecost. At that time, all the baptized were Jews. Only with the mission to the Gentiles, approved by Jerusalem Council One in Acts 15, did this vision become reality. But it did not last. From being totally Jewish, the Church became in effect totally Gentile, in the sense that Jewish converts were no longer allowed to believe in Jesus as Jews. They were required to abandon their Jewish identity and all Jewish practice. On this point the Church and the Synagogue were in agreement: you could not both be Jewish and believe in Jesus.

¹ In this booklet, the phrase “Body of Messiah” is often used where Christians would speak of the “Body of Christ”. The sole purpose of this usage is to restore the Jewish connotations of the New Testament Greek term *christos* that have been obscured by Gentile distancing from the Jewish roots.

The TJCII vision is for the restoration of this unity, where the Jew and the Gentile become one in the Body of Messiah without losing their identity, just as in marriage man and woman become one without ceasing to be man and woman. This vision is not just a pipe-dream. The reason is the Messianic Jewish movement, the reappearance in our day of a Jewish expression of faith in Jesus of Nazareth, whom the Messianic Jews know as Yeshua. Once again, there is a Jewish partner within the mystery of the Church, with whom the Gentiles can talk, pray, and listen to the Lord. There is a Jewish partner in Messiah, who confronts us Gentiles with our sin. There is a Jewish partner with whom we need to be reconciled within the one Body.

This booklet explains the origin of the TJCII vision, how it has developed in its initial years, and how it has responded to the struggles it has been through. TJCII is a vision before it is a program. The organization, the meetings, the practical initiatives only have meaning and purpose as they are directed toward the realization of this vision. “Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God” (Rom. 15: 7).

October 2002

Introduction to the Second Edition

The first edition of this booklet came out in 2002. Since then, it has become an important tool for the promotion of the vision of Toward Jerusalem Council II. The most intense discussion about this booklet took place in Jerusalem. It soon became clear that a revised edition was necessary – for several reasons. First, to correct possible misunderstandings concerning the meaning of Gentile recognition; secondly to correct some impressions given on page 29 of the original booklet, by adding a carefully-worded reference to the land of Israel and to the city of Jerusalem; thirdly, to restore the original focus of Marty Waldman’s vision on mutual reconciliation between Jewish and Gentile believers in Jesus, which had become obscured by the focus in the first edition on the Gentile acceptance of the Jewish expression of the Church.

The interaction between the TJCII Executive Committee and several Messianic Jewish brothers in Jerusalem has led, not just to the correction and improvement of this booklet, but also to the clarifying and furthering of the TJCII vision. This has been another sign of the guidance of the Holy Spirit upon this initiative and a clear deepening in the process of reconciliation among all those concerned.

December 2003

Section One

The Original Vision

In the summer of 1995, Marty Waldman, leader of Baruch HaShem Congregation in Dallas, Texas, was preparing a message to be given at the annual conference of the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations of which he was then president. As he prayed, the word of Acts 15 concerning the gathering of the (Jewish) apostles and elders in Jerusalem was opened up to him in a new way. As a Messianic Jew, Marty Waldman was convinced that the Messianic movement represents a resurrection of the Jewish church of the first generations after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The word the Lord put in Marty's heart concerned the Lord's desire for the full reconciliation of Jewish and Gentile believers in Yeshua (Jesus).

The heart of this vision is that one day there will be a second Council of Jerusalem. The second Council will be the inverse of the first Council described in Acts 15. At the first Council, all the leaders participating were Jewish (the apostles and the elders, verse 6). They decided on the terms of admission of Gentile converts to the Church. The leaders gathered in Jerusalem were led by the Holy Spirit to be very generous in imposing the minimum conditions on the Gentiles: "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things" (Acts 15: 28).

In Marty Waldman's vision, the second Council will be a gathering of both Jew and Gentile, fully accepting one another within the one Body of Jesus the Messiah. In such a gathering, the Gentile leaders would recognize the Jewish believers in Jesus (Yeshua), personally and corporately, as an integral part of the Church, and indeed as

those representing the elder brother who has the first place (Rom. 1: 16). Since at least the fourth century C. E. the Christian Church has not allowed the expression of a Jewish identity within the Body, excluding any expression of Jewish identity and prohibiting all forms of Jewish practice by Jewish believers in Jesus, the Son of God.

In this vision, the reconciliation of Jewish and Gentile believers would not be simply an acceptance of one another, but of the Gentiles recognizing and honoring the rightful place of the Jews. It would mean honor instead of contempt, humility in place of pride. The younger brother would honor the elder brother, the firstborn. The Gentiles would heed the warning of Paul: “If you do boast, remember that it is not you that support the root, but the root that supports you.” (Rom. 11: 18). Such a restoration of the Jewish believers to their rightful place would enable them to recover the God-given calling of the Jewish people to be a blessing to the nations.

During the last century, there has been a growing desire on the part of many Jewish believers in Jesus to restore a corporate Jewish expression of the Church. With the rise and spread of the Messianic Jewish movement since 1967, there have been an increasing number of Messianic Jewish congregations around the world (especially in the U. S. A., Israel, the Ukraine and in Russia).² However, many Messianic Jews feel that they live in a kind of “no man’s land” between the Jewish people on the one hand and the Christian Churches on the other, while believing that they are the bridge that unites the two. The observant Jews regard them as traitors, people who are really Christians but masquerading as Jews so as to entice more Jews away from their ancient faith. The Churches, to the extent that they are aware of the Messianic Jews, wonder why they can’t simply become “normal Christians” and easily see Jewish expressions as a reappearance of “Judaising” tendencies within the Church.

This reappearance of an explicitly Jewish expression of church demands a response from all the churches: a response to the question: “Who do you say that we are?” Marty Waldman’s vision presupposes that the Gentile response to this question would be as sensitive to the Holy Spirit as the Jewish answer to the Gentiles at Jerusalem Council I. At Jerusalem Council One, the Jewish apostles and elders had recognized the authenticity of the faith of the Gentile converts, but they did not require them to become Jews. At Jerusalem Council Two, the Gentile leaders would need to recognize the authenticity of the faith of the Jewish disciples of Yeshua and their assemblies, and then to reject all attempts to make them become Gentiles.

Confirmation and Support

Marty Waldman sought the advice and discernment of other Christian leaders. Among those he consulted was his old friend and colleague in the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations, Dr. Daniel C. Juster, then senior pastor of Beth Messiah Congregation in Rockville, Maryland. The vision of a second Council of Jerusalem resonated profoundly with Dan Juster. As one of the scholar-teachers of the Messianic movement, he was acutely aware of the need for the churches to recognize the “resurrected Church” of the Jewish believers in Jesus.

A year or two before Marty Waldman received his vision, Dan Juster had been at a gathering of leaders in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania on black/white reconciliation, addressed by John Dawson. Dawson, originally from New Zealand, and an international leader for many years in Youth With A Mission, had in the 1990’s concentrated his ministry on reconciliation, developing a body of teaching on how to reconcile groups in conflict, particularly ethnic conflicts. For this purpose, he had founded the International Reconciliation Coalition (IRC), based in Ventura, California as an instrument to facilitate

networking among those working in the field of reconciliation. After Dawson's message, Juster took him aside and said, "If you're ready, we're ready." "What do you mean?" asked Dawson. "It's the 50th Anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz," was his strange reply, adding "Do you know about the first split in church history? Wasn't it a division between Jew and Gentile in the late first Century?" From this meeting, John Dawson understood that his ministry of reconciliation had to be based on the foundational reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles in the one Body of Christ-Messiah, the first reconciliation achieved by the blood of the Cross of Jesus.

The Formation of a Steering Committee

Marty Waldman's early discussions made it clear that the forwarding of the vision required the gathering of a committed group of leaders. A vision of Jewish-Gentile reconciliation within the one Body of Messiah required that the committee be comprised equally of Messianic Jewish leaders and leaders from the Gentile Christian world. It was decided that there should be seven Jews and seven Gentiles. There would be two chairmen: one Jewish (Waldman), one Gentile (Dawson).

Since the goal of the Toward Jerusalem Council II vision is the mutual reconciliation of Jew and Gentile in the one Body, it was clear that this vision could not progress without the support of the Messianic Jewish movement around the world, both in Israel and in the diaspora. In the United States, there had been for some fifteen years division and tension within the Messianic movement between the two major Messianic organizations, the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America (MJAA) and the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations (UMJC). This division had been healed in 1994 with a public reconciliation of the leaders at the annual conferences of these two organizations. This act of reconciliation within the American Messianic movement made possible the Waldman vision. It also made clear the importance

of obtaining the backing of both bodies for the vision, and of having representatives from both on the Steering Committee. The initial Messianic Jewish membership of the Steering Committee from the United States was five: Marty Waldman, Dan Juster and David Rudolph (Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations) and David Chernoff and Bob Cohen (Messianic Jewish Alliance of America).

The Steering Committee also needed representation from Israel. Although the Messianic Jewish movement is numerically strongest in the United States, in many ways its heart is in Israel and Jerusalem. This is because of the place of “the land” and of “the city of the great king”³ in Jewish faith. Many Messianic Jews in fact see the rise of the Messianic Jewish movement as a spiritual fruit and consequence of the Israeli acquisition of Jerusalem as a result of the war of June 1967. It was decided then to invite as a member of the Steering Committee Ilan Zamir of Jerusalem, at that time president of the Messianic Jewish Alliance of Israel and president of King of Kings Bible College in the city.⁴ Ilan was seen as one of the most respected and widely accepted leaders within the Messianic movement in Israel. For a second Israeli member, Ilan Zamir recommended Evan Thomas, pastor of Beth Asaph Messianic Congregation in Netanya, Israel, who had made aliyah⁵ from New Zealand in 1983.

² See another booklet in this series on the Messianic Jewish movement, written by Dr. Daniel C. Juster.

³ This phrase is used by Jesus in Matt. 5: 35.

⁴ King of Kings Bible College has since been renamed Israel College of the Bible.

⁵ *Aliyah* is the Hebrew term used by Jews to describe the return of Jews to the land of Israel.

Section Two

The Initial Shaping of the Initiative

The first discussions about the vision of a second Council of Jerusalem assumed that the Gentile recognition of the Messianic Jews would come from those Marty Waldman knew as Gentile believers. He imagined that this would be a welcome of the Messianic movement by “born-again” Christians and their leaders. The initial thinking about the vision developed in an evangelical framework.

In many ways, this was a natural assumption. Almost all of the Christians who had been giving serious attention to the Old Testament prophecies concerning the people of Israel, the land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem were Evangelicals. These Evangelicals were convinced that ancient prophecies concerning Israel were being fulfilled in the 20th century. So it is not surprising that they were the Christians excited by the appearance of the Messianic Jews, seeing this “resurrection” as a fulfillment of biblical prophecy.⁶ It is true that some Evangelicals had problems with the Messianic Jews, mostly on theological grounds over issues concerning the Law of Moses and justification/salvation by faith. But the Gentile support for the Messianic movement had come virtually entirely from Evangelical Christians.

Thus, there has been evangelical support for the missionary and educational work of the Messianic Jews. A group of Messianic Jewish leaders in the United States had formed a charity to help found Messianic Jewish Bible Institutes in other parts of the world, first in Eastern Europe. One of the local churches strongly supporting this work, with both human and financial resources, was a congregation in the Dallas area, the Shady Grove church in Grand Prairie, Texas. Shady Grove had shown their deep commitment as Gentile believers

to the upbuilding of the Messianic Jewish movement. So two men from Shady Grove were invited to join the Steering Committee: Olen Griffing, the senior pastor, and Wayne Wilks, sent out from Shady Grove as director of the first Messianic Jewish Bible Institute in Odessa, Ukraine. Another American Evangelical leader invited was Don Finto, pastor emeritus of Belmont Church in Nashville, Tennessee, who had already demonstrated his love for the Messianic Jews and his commitment to their restoration.

The invitations out for the first meeting of the proposed Steering Committee had simply called the initiative “Jerusalem Council Two”. This title would soon be changed as a result of invitations to join the Steering Committee sent to two leaders from historic church traditions: Brian Cox, an Episcopal priest, pastor of Christ the King parish in Santa Barbara, California, and Peter Hocken, a Roman Catholic priest originally from England, but still at that time living in Gaithersburg, Maryland.⁷ Brian Cox was invited as a Christian leader with a worldwide experience in the ministry of reconciliation, presenting Christian principles to political leaders in situations of the greatest strife and tension. Peter Hocken was invited, because his book *The Glory and the Shame*, recently published, had recognized the importance of the Messianic Jewish movement and seen the importance of the Jewish Church for the restoration of Christian unity.

Both invitees from the historic churches could not in conscience join an initiative calling itself “Jerusalem Council II” and considering itself capable of convening a council of the whole Church of Jesus Christ. Indeed, they felt that these assumptions could undermine the whole vision, because to limit the Church to Evangelicals and charismatics represents another manifestation of replacement thinking (“we have replaced the older churches because of their unbelief”). It could thus unintentionally repeat the arrogance of Christians

throughout the centuries towards those they – but not the Lord – may have rejected. Since an element in the vision is that the historic decrees against a Jewish expression of the Church would be officially revoked and annulled, it is necessary that the Churches most directly responsible for those decrees should be present at the heart of the initiative.

It was agreed that the title for the initiative would be changed from “Jerusalem Council Two” to “Toward Jerusalem Council II”. This change represented significant adaptations to the outworking of the vision. The basic vision was unchanged, that of a second Council of Jerusalem witnessing the mutual reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles, with the undoing of the Gentile rejection of the Jewish church. But the practical task of the Steering Committee was significantly changed: instead of simply gathering as many evangelical and charismatic leaders in Jerusalem as soon as possible (the original hope was to hold this event in 1997), the task became a long-term work to win over all Christian churches and movements to this vision, creating the desire and the willingness in the churches for a second Council of Jerusalem. The Steering Committee would not itself convene the Council, but it would work for a representative gathering of Gentile Christian leaders in Jerusalem that would issue a call to all the churches for the Council.

This change in perspective made the task of the Steering Committee much more demanding, because it requires a going-out to those church leaders not yet aware of the Messianic Jews and not yet convinced of their significance for unity, for revival/renewal and for the coming of the Kingdom. It requires a direct confrontation with the historical obstacles to the restoration of the Jewish expression of the Body of Messiah. The widening and the deepening of perspective has revealed more clearly the spiritual battle involved in undoing the deepest evils in the history of the Church.

The Initial Work of the Steering Committee

Although there was no specific categorization of tasks in the early years of TJCII, there were in fact three main thrusts of its work between 1996 and 2000: the diplomatic, the promotional and the spiritual.

Diplomatic

At its second meeting at Grand Prairie, Texas in September 1996, the Committee appointed Brian Cox to lead the work of making known the Toward Jerusalem Council II initiative to the churches. In this task, designated as diplomatic, Brian Cox would be assisted by Peter Hocken.

In May 1997, a team of five members visited five European countries in order to visit church leaders and theologians.⁸ Among the meetings held during this trip were: those in Paris with two theologians from the Orthodox Church, another with the pastor at the Protestant Federation of France responsible for relations with Judaism and a third with the priest-secretary of the parallel commission of the Catholic Bishops of France; one in Prague, Czech republic with the secretary of the Czech Council of Churches; and those in Vienna, Austria with a group of Evangelical and Catholic renewal leaders, and separately with the Archbishop of Vienna.

Several lessons were learned from this trip. First, that the initial task with church leaders is to introduce them to the Messianic Jewish movement. There is no point in talking about TJCII until there is some awareness of the modern reappearance of a Jewish expression of the Church. Secondly, that the most effective way to present the Messianic Jewish movement is for the Messianic Jews themselves to give their own testimony. These testimonies customarily included details of their Jewish background and upbringing, how they

came to faith in Jesus (Yeshua) as the Messiah of Israel and the Savior of the world, together often with some details of their present ministry and service. We found that many of those we met were deeply touched by the Messianic testimonies, and had little difficulty recognizing their authenticity. While not all our interlocutors used the language of the prophetic, they often recognized that the Messianic Jews represent a work of God that cannot be fitted neatly into our existing categories.

We were also delighted by the openness of the two Orthodox theologians from the Institut Saint-Serge in Paris. From their close knowledge of the first Christian centuries and of the Fathers of the Church, they immediately sensed the historic importance of the reappearance of a Jewish expression of faith in Jesus the Christ. From this visit grew the conviction within the Committee of the importance of the participation by representatives of the Orthodox Church in the TJCII vision.

In September 1999, Dan Juster and Peter Hocken travelled to Oslo, Norway to present the TJCII initiative to a meeting of Norwegian church leaders, mostly from the Lutheran Church of Norway. Those attending were all involved in Israel-related ministries and teaching, so there was a warm response to the presentation. In fact, the Norwegian Mission to Israel, founded in the Lutheran Church, was one of the first historic church bodies to recognize the rightness of forming Hebrew-speaking congregations of a Jewish character in Israel. This experience was an important reminder of the significant contribution already coming from and to be expected from churches outside the English-speaking world.

Promotional

From the start of TJCII, the committee members had a strong desire to share their convictions with their friends and colleagues across

the world, as well as with other Christians who had already shown their love for the Jewish people and an openness to the Messianic movement. It was then decided to hold the second 1997 meeting of the committee in Europe, and to give two days to a meeting with leaders from Europe and Israel.

Some 40 gathered with the committee at Emmetten, Switzerland, in September 1997. The German-speakers constituted the biggest-language group among the Europeans. A memorable moment was when the Messianic Jews present (about 15 participants) announced that they wanted to pray for all the Germans, being conscious of the burden carried by the German Christians on account of the Holocaust. Many of the Germans, so accustomed to asking for Jewish forgiveness, wept when they experienced this initiative coming from the Jews. Immediately following, perhaps as its fruit, there was a mutual repentance and reconciliation between the Messianic Jews from the United States and those from Israel. This was not the healing of a clear-cut division, but a cleansing from prejudices and stereotypes with the Americans confessing their arrogance and the Israelis confessing their suspicion and lack of trust.

A promotional meeting essential to the work of TJCII occurred during the committee's visit to Israel in April 1999. Clearly, if the TJCII vision was to succeed, it was of vital importance that the Messianic community in Israel help to shape and forward the vision. It would be strange indeed if Christian leaders were to come to Jerusalem for meetings designed to forward the recognition of the Messianic Jews, if their leaders, particularly in Jerusalem, were not contributors and participants.

Thus, the leaders of Messianic congregations and ministries in Israel and their spouses were invited to a day meeting at Yad Hashmonah in April, 1999. The two Israeli members of the committee had warned

of the difficulty of gathering the Messianic leaders in the land, saying it was difficult to gather more than 30 or 35 to any one meeting. On the day of the meeting, we were delighted to welcome about 80 participants. Conscious of the hesitation many of the Israeli leaders feel toward well-intentioned outside initiatives seeking their support for ready-made plans, the committee decided that in the morning we should listen to the Israelis. All efforts to impose time-limits failed, so that the sharings continued until 4 p.m., leaving only an hour and a half for the TJCII input, and responses to questions. However, the many sharings were one of the great blessings of the day, with the Israeli leaders coming to know more about their colleagues (much of the growth has come since 1990 with the increased Russian immigration) and the committee getting a fuller picture of the Messianic movement in Israel.

Spiritual

From an early stage in the initiative, some members – particularly Bob Cohen and David Rudolph – were convinced that the committee had to address spiritually the major historical obstacles in the way of a Christian recognition of the Jewish church. Through a series of events, the committee was led to approve a series of prayer journeys to historic sites symbolized by four ancient gates: Granada, Spain; Rome, Italy; Nicaea (modern Izmit), Turkey; and Jerusalem.

A team of 40 including most of the Steering Committee visited Spain in March 1998, praying at sites in Grenada, Cordoba and Toledo. In the region of Grenada, we visited the place believed to be the site of the Council of Elvira that took place in the early 4th century. At this local synod of the Spanish church, there was a decree forbidding Christians to have their fields blessed by Jews. While this may seem to be a relatively minor prohibition, particularly in view of the atrocities that happened later, we saw a spiritual significance in this ban. The calling of the Jewish people is to bless. This includes the blessing of the nations. Forbidding the Jews to bless is a direct rejection of their calling.

The Spanish trip also enabled the Gentile participants to become more aware of the deep suffering of the Jewish people throughout the centuries. The city of Toledo has a particularly dark history in regard to the Jewish people: both from the repressive legislation of Church councils held there in the 7th century before the Muslim conquest, from the persecution and massacres of the 14th and 15th centuries, and the subsequent work of the Spanish Inquisition. The work of TJCII requires a growing sensitivity to Jewish history and suffering as part of the Gentile repentance and conversion to an honoring of the Jewish people and of the Jewish expression of the Church.

In September 1998, another team visited Rome and then Nicaea in Asia Minor. In Rome, there were reminders both of the past actions of the Catholic Church against the Jews (as at the 4th Council of the Lateran in the year 1215) and of the great transformation that has taken place in Catholic attitudes to the Jewish people since the Second Vatican Council. This change was evident at a meeting that committee members had with a senior Vatican official, at which the testimony of the Messianic brothers was heard with respect and sympathy. In Nicaea, the group addressed issues directly concerning the disappearance of the Jewish church: (i) the decision of the emperor Constantine at Nicaea in the year 325, accepted by the bishops, imposing a Gentile calculation of the date of Easter upon the whole church; (ii) the absence of any bishop from the survivors of the Jewish Church at the first Council of Nicaea in the year 325; (iii) the excommunication of Christians continuing to observe any Jewish practices, decreed at the second Council of Nicaea in the year 787.

In April 1999, the visit of the Steering Committee to Israel was combined with a prayer journey involving a team of intercessors. Besides the prayer in Jerusalem, this journey was marked by a visit to Yavneh, where the rabbis made the decision to exclude Jewish be-

lievers in Jesus from the synagogue. The Jewish members of the committee had felt strongly that the repentance concerning the Jewish church was not a one-way process, in which only the Gentiles had to confess the sins of the past. The Messianic Jews, who identify with their own people, had also their own confession to make.

Changes in Membership

One of the original Gentile members chosen for the Committee never in fact became truly involved, so from 1997 there was a Gentile vacancy. This was filled in March, 1998 (during the visit to Spain) by Johannes Fichtenbauer, a Catholic deacon from Vienna, Austria. Johannes was the founder of an ecumenical charismatic community in Vienna in the 1970's, the chairman of the group of evangelical and charismatic leaders known as Weg zur Versöhnung (Way to Reconciliation) and (since 1998) the personal delegate of the Archbishop of Vienna for relations with the free churches.

Because of his evident interest in TJCII during the May 1997 visit to Vienna, Johannes Fichtenbauer was invited to the promotional meeting in Switzerland the following September. The committee members were particularly struck by his testimony of deliverance from the Nazi ideology he had imbibed from his grandfather. Johannes was invited to Spain for March, 1998, where he became a member of the Steering Committee, with the full approval of his Archbishop, Cardinal Christoph Schönborn.

Among the trials afflicting some members of the committee was the illness of our Israeli brother, Ilan Zamir. Ilan's health deteriorated after the Israel meeting of April 1999, and declined seriously early in 2000. On April 5, 2000, Ilan Zamir went to be with his Messiah and Lord.

Another member, Olen Griffing, had despite his great interest been unable to attend several committee meetings due to a serious heart condition leading to major surgery. When he offered his resignation in October 2000, the committee decided to hold this seventh Gentile place free until a person could be found with leadership potential from the Orthodox Church who would be committed to the TJCII vision.

One of the Jewish members, David Chernoff, had not felt able to continue, and was replaced in 2002 by Jonathan Bernis, who has pioneered the Hear, O Israel festivals especially promoted in countries of the former Soviet Union.

⁶ Particularly Ezekiel 37: 1 – 14; Romans 11: 12, 15.

⁷ Fr Peter Hocken moved back to England in September 1996, subsequently serving as chaplain to the Bishop of Northampton from 1997 --2001. In January 2002, he moved to Vienna, Austria.

⁸ Marty Waldman, Dan Juster, David Rudolph, Brian Cox, Peter Hocken.

Section Three

A More Effective Structure for the Initiative

After the visit to Israel in April 1999, some weaknesses in the TJCII initiative were becoming more apparent. The weaknesses concerned not the vision in itself, but the practical organization required to forward the vision.

Since its first meeting in March 1996, the meetings of the Steering Committee had always been deeply blessed. There was an evident bonding between the men who often came from very different backgrounds. Important decisions were made. The development of diplomatic, promotional and spiritual (prayer journey) initiatives was a sign of the leading of the Holy Spirit.

However, there was a lack of momentum in the initiative between the meetings of the committee. The quality of the meetings should have led to more progress than actually occurred. In retrospect, it can be seen that the committee either had not grasped all the implications of the change of name to **Toward Jerusalem Council II** or had not given itself sufficient time to work out the practical implications of what was now a long-term vision.

With the widening of the vision to embrace all churches and denominations throughout the world, the task to which we had set ourselves was immense. Humanly speaking, it could seem an impossible dream. The Steering Committee was made up of twelve to fourteen leaders, most of whom had many other professional and ministerial responsibilities. The financial resources were limited. The original structure had been drawn up in relation to a short-term project culminating in Jerusalem at most within three years. For the vision to move forward, there had to be changes and developments in the

structure.

There were also some major setbacks. The greatest of these by far was the death of our Israeli brother, Ilan Zamir, in April 2000. Not only was Ilan the linchpin of the initiative in Israel, he was a leader respected in many lands who had given credibility to the initiative. Several of the Jewish members of the committee had also suffered major personal tragedies. It became clear that TJCII required an organized and systematic intercessory support and cover.

Another issue required clarification as a result of the death of Ilan Zamir. At the outset, the leadership in the committee was provided by the two chairmen, one Jewish (Marty Waldman) and one Gentile (John Dawson). After a time, it was felt that the structure ought to honor in some way the first place of the Jew. It had seemed that the solution was to give Ilan Zamir a particular place of honor as the Jewish brother with preeminent gifts, who was a native of Israel based in Jerusalem. With his death, this aspect of proposed restructuring was rendered impossible.

Executive General Secretary

The Steering Committee devoted an extensive time of prayer to the leadership issue. The solution at which we arrived addressed all the above concerns. The structural weaknesses would be remedied by the appointment of an Executive General Secretary, with authority to act between the committee meetings. The choice of Marty Waldman as Executive General Secretary would honor the first place of the Jew. This nomination would also honor Marty Waldman as the first recipient of the TJCII vision.

When Marty Waldman accepted his appointment as Executive General Secretary, he also made available the necessary services of the office of Baruch HaShem in Dallas to carry out the administrative work for TJCII.

Working Groups and Associate Members

The committee, henceforward to be known as the Executive Committee, realized that other leaders had to be brought into the initiative if it was to move forward in an effective way. It was not felt that the Executive Committee should be expanded. Rather, we needed to devise ways to bring other leaders into the initiative in ways that would be both meaningful and fruitful. This would have to be done in ways that were representative both of nations and of churches.

The proposal adopted at the end of the meeting in Dallas, Texas in October, 2000 was that the Executive Committee should establish a number of working groups, each to be chaired by a member of the Executive Committee. Selected leaders would be invited to become associate members of TJCII. The associate members would be asked to serve the initiative, particularly in their own nations, and could be allocated to particular working groups. The associate members would be invited to larger gatherings from time to time, particularly to continental or regional consultations. It was hoped in this way that leaders from different lands and church traditions would become seriously involved in TJCII, making distinctive contributions according to their talents and interests. Since 2002, a pattern is developing in which national groups are being formed in particular countries to forward the vision and the work of TJCII.

Five working groups were established, with one or two members of the executive as leaders. The responsibilities as of January 2004 are divided as follows:

Diplomatic, led by Brian Cox

Promotional, led by Dan Juster

Theological, led by Peter Hocken and Dan Juster

Spiritual, led by David Rudolph and Don Finto

Israel, led by Evan Thomas

In this way, the formation of the Diplomatic, Promotional and Spiritual working groups represented a formal structuring of the existing thrusts of the initiative. Two new areas were added: the Theological, as the work of TJCII needs to have a sound theological foundation; and Israel, because of the importance of Israeli support for the initiative and the need for a particular sensitivity to the Church in Israel.

It was recognized that the Spiritual working group would have two major responsibilities: (i) to encourage more prayer journeys as appropriate for the expression of repentance for sins against the Jewish expression of the church and (ii) to organise intercessory prayer support for every aspect of the work of TJCII. As a group of intercessors had been assembled in Dallas to pray throughout the October 2000 meetings of the executive, the leaders for that intercession, Dave and Raquel Pyles, were asked to take on responsibility for all intercessory support for the work of TJCII.

A Bulletin/Newsletter

Some efforts had been made before this time to develop a TJCII bulletin or newsletter to keep those whose interest had been awakened properly informed of the progress of the initiative. However, these had not been effective, perhaps due to the lack of a real center to the initiative. As it is imperative that regular information be sent out to all those who want to support and participate in TJCII and this task would place too big a burden on the Dallas staff, Linda Fulmer of Lindale, Texas, was appointed editor of an occasional TJCII newsletter. The first TJCII newsletter appeared in May 2002.

Section Four

A Direct Call to All Churches and Streams

To give a fuller picture of Toward Jerusalem Council II, it is important to add some reflections to the short history of the initiative already provided. These reflections will aim to indicate what is unique to TJCII, and why it has taken the shape described.

A Highly Focused Initiative

TJCII is a sharply focused initiative. It is wholly directed toward the reconciliation of Jew and Gentile in the one body. This requires the recognition by the churches of the Jewish expressions of the Church, and their proper honoring by Gentile believers, together with its acceptance by the Jewish leadership. TJCII has no other explicit goal.

This point is especially important when we consider how many issues – theological, historical and political – are raised by the Jewish people and by the establishment of the state of Israel. Many Christians – particularly evangelical Christians – have expressed their support and their love for the Jewish people. Many groups have formed to provide support for different Israel-related projects: helping Jews to emigrate to Israel, helping the state of Israel to develop its resources, missionary-evangelistic initiatives directed to the Jewish people, advocating particular views of Israel’s place in the “end-times”.

Support for TJCII does not involve or require support for any of these other Israel-related causes. In fact, it is essential for the “success” of TJCII that it concentrates on its sole purpose and as a group initiative does not allow itself to be drawn into other issues not clearly related to the mutual recognition of Jewish and Gentile be-

lievers, personally and corporately. However, it has become clear to us, especially through our discussions with Messianic Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, that a truly biblical understanding of the election of Israel and of God's "irrevocable" covenant with the chosen people involves an essential connection between the gift of the land of Israel and the calling of the people. Support for TJCII does not involve taking any particular political or theological position concerning the boundaries of the land or the policies of any Israeli government regarding the land. A proper Gentile acceptance of the Jewish believers does require a recognition that the promise of the land is an intrinsic part of the covenant that has not been revoked. As part of Israel's call to be a blessing to the nations, the gift of the land is to bring blessing to the neighboring peoples who also share in an Abrahamic inheritance. The reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles in Messiah will undoubtedly have profound eschatological implications, centering the Church increasingly upon Jerusalem, "the city of the great king", but the TJCII initiative does not require the adoption of any particular scenario for the last days.

Members of the TJCII Executive Committee do not all share the same understanding of church. But we all agree that according to Ephesians 2 and Romans 11, the Church is composed of both Jews and Gentiles, formed into one body through the blood of the cross. For the Gentiles, the key issue is the rightness and the necessity of the restoration of a Jewish expression of the church. It is not whether we agree with all the theology and the practice found among Messianic Jews. In fact, the Messianic Jewish movement is quite diverse, and includes many different forms of expression, and different theological explanations for their convictions.

The Formulation of a Gentile Response

At the outset of TJCII, a document had been formulated expressing the vision of Marty Waldman, which was approved by the Steering

Committee and then by the two main Messianic Jewish organisations in the United States. This document is printed in Appendix A.

After the initiative had developed, some members of the committee felt that this document needed to be updated. It was then realized more clearly than at the beginning that the initial formulation of the vision was a Messianic Jewish formulation, accepted by the Gentile members of the committee. It was realized that what TJCII needed was not a revision of the original document, but a Gentile response to the Messianic Jewish vision, together with a simple vision statement for TJCII as such. These documents were drawn up and agreed upon in October 2000 (they are printed as Appendix B and Appendix C). This response recognizes that the original document represented a “heart-cry for recognition and fellowship from our Messianic Jewish brethren” that required a Gentile response “to work for the realization of this vision of reconciliation in Christ”.

Why the Participation of All is Necessary

The TJCII vision as it developed from the first meeting of the committee is directed toward all nations, churches and movements that confess the name of Jesus. This breadth is essential to the vision.

First, the Pauline vision of the church as the union of Jew and Gentile in the one body is expressed in the letter to the Ephesians, which perhaps more than any other letter in the New Testament presents a catholic vision of “the many in the one”: the “plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him [Christ], things in heaven and things on earth” (Eph. 1: 10). It is the vision of Christ, under whose feet the Father has “put all things” and who has been made “the head over all things for the church” (Eph. 1: 22).

The sectarian tendency to reject all other expressions of faith in Jesus Christ as deviant or defective was itself a fruit of the replacement/

rejectionist thinking that had refused any Jewish expression in the early centuries. The acceptance of the rightness and the necessity of Jewish and Gentile expressions of faith within the one body excludes all sectarianism.

Secondly, the TJCII initiative has to reach all Christian churches and communities, because all Christian churches and communities have in varying degrees accepted an ecclesiology that excludes the Jews. The responsibility for the rejection of Jewish expressions of faith in Jesus varies from one church to another, but all had received an understanding of the church that required the complete assimilation of Jewish converts.

Thirdly, every Christian tradition carries a distinctive witness of the Holy Spirit that is needed for the fullness and the final completion of the one body of Christ. This witness of the Holy Spirit can only find its true place in the framework that acknowledges the first place of the elder brother.

The Responsibility of the Historic Churches

As the outline of the history of TJCII makes clear, the impulse for this initiative came from the Messianic Jews supported first by evangelical Christians. Up to this point, the evangelicals and the charismatics have made the biggest contribution. The intercessors praying for TJCII have been mostly evangelical-charismatic intercessors. It is from this background that the teaching and practice of identificational repentance has come. It is for these reasons that it was possible for those first involved to think of an initiative that did not include the historic churches.

However, the development of TJCII has made clear how essential it is for the initiative that there is a full participation by the historic churches of East and West. To start with, these are the churches

originally responsible for the teaching that the Church has replaced Israel, as a result of Israel's denial of the Lord Jesus. These are the churches responsible for the outlawing and the disappearance of the Jewish Church. They have therefore an indispensable role in expressing their repentance and grief for these sins against the Jewish people and specifically against the Jewish Church. Ultimately, this role cannot be properly played by anyone except the descendants in faith of those who were more immediately responsible. No other bodies can replace them in an official annulling of the original decisions.

Since TJCII began, Pope John Paul II has taken some remarkable initiatives in regard to a Catholic expression of sorrow for the sins of Catholics against the Jewish people through the ages. The Jewish people, who have a sharp awareness of who oppressed them through the centuries, immediately recognized the importance of the papal actions and statements. When the Pope visited Yad Vashem and prayed at the Western Wall in Jerusalem, the Jewish people knew that something historic was happening. The expression of a Christian repentance needs to be led by the Catholic and by the Orthodox Churches.

However, there are also positive reasons why the contribution of the historic churches is essential. They embody different elements of biblical tradition to the post-Reformation churches and communities. "This schism between Jew and Gentile was the original split in the Body of Messiah, and became the root for all further divisions in the Church throughout the centuries" (TJCII Original Declaration). For this reason, the Christian recognition of the Jewish expression of the Church will release a major impulse for unity among all the Christian bodies that have become divided through the ages.

The Importance of TJCII

The importance of TJCII is totally tied up with the importance of the Jewish expression of the Church, and with the importance of right relationship between Jews and Gentiles in the one Body of Messiah. But as indicated in the last paragraph, this reconciliation will be of huge and unimaginable consequence for the life and mission of the whole Church. In Romans 11, Paul makes prophetic statements about the extraordinary effects of Jewish reintegration: “Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion (*pleroma*) mean!” (Rom. 11: 12). These words clearly speak about the Jewish people accepting Yeshua (Jesus) as the Messiah, but imply the full recognition of this by the Gentiles.

While TJCII is then a highly-focused vision, it is one that has major implications for the Church and the Kingdom. So the initial Messianic formulation of the TJCII vision sensed its immense potential in the Lord’s purposes, and spoke excitedly though modestly of the possible consequences: “Toward Jerusalem Council II may result in a major thrust in evangelism. ... In like manner, God may mirror the first Jerusalem Council and open up the floodgates of evangelism into the Jewish community worldwide and to the nations. This proposition is so exciting because of what Paul recorded in Romans 11 – what will Israel’s acceptance be “but life from the dead” [Rom. 11: 15] – something far greater than riches for the Gentiles and the reconciliation of the world.”

A Work of the Holy Spirit

Just as the spread of the Gospel to the Gentiles was a work of the Holy Spirit, a point made very clear by the whole narrative in the Acts of the Apostles, so the resurrection of a Jewish expression of the one Body of Messiah can only be a work of the Holy Spirit. Both the restoration of this Jewish expression and its recognition by

the churches can only be begun and carried through by the creative power of the Spirit of God.

For this reason, the executive committee of TJCII has from the beginning recognized that for this initiative to advance there must be a trust in the leading of the Holy Spirit, and a confidence that the many obstacles can and will be overcome by the power of the Holy Spirit, whether in hidden ways or in more demonstrable outpourings of the Spirit. All, both Jews and Gentiles, are in equal need of the Spirit of God for divine life, for conviction of sin, for revelation and enlightenment, for guidance. This need will become ever more apparent as we approach the climax of this holy initiative. These convictions have led to an increasing recognition of the importance of intercessory support for TJCII and the development of TJCII intercessory groups in various nations.

Appendices

Appendix A

Toward Jerusalem Council II Original Declaration

Jerusalem Council II is a vision to repair and heal the breach between Jewish and Gentile believers in Yeshua dating from the first centuries of the Church, and to do so (primarily) through humility, prayer and repentance. In order to achieve this reconciliation, a gathering of cross-denominational representatives, both Gentile and Jewish, from around the world will convene in Jerusalem, the city of our King, to pray for and affirm the specific goals put forth in this document. Toward Jerusalem Council II is, first of all, a movement of prayer. Before convening in Jerusalem, smaller prayer journeys to prepare the way will have taken place.

WHO: Prayer representatives of the Gentile Christian Community and the Messianic Jewish Community. These representatives should be builder-leaders in various communities who practice a life of prayer.

WHAT: Jerusalem Council II is based on:

Acts 15	-	The Council
Acts 21:17-26	-	The Messianic Jewish View
Romans 11:29	-	The Irrevocable Call To Israel
Romans 11:11-24	-	Israel's Acceptance - Life From the Dead
II Corinthians 5:18-19	-	Reconciliation
Ephesians 2:11-16	-	One New Man

Toward Jerusalem Council II is a meeting of Gentile Christian and Messianic Jewish leaders to foster these goals to:

1. Recognize the schism between Jewish and Gentile brethren created by the early Church, especially culminating in the decrees of the Nicene Council II. Repair and heal this breach through humility, repentance, prayer and intercessory representation on the part of both Gentile Christians and Messianic Jews, including prayer for the recanting and rescinding of the anti-Messianic Jewish decrees which declared that Messianic Jewish communities had no right to exist. These decrees have hovered over the Body of Messiah for at least sixteen centuries.
2. Pray to be reconciled in heart and to call for all true believers to affirm the reality of our reconciliation as one new man. Recognize that true reconciliation is not the result of diluting one's identity, but is the miracle of breaking down the wall of partition through the Blood of the Messiah so that the two identifiable groups can become one new man (Ephesians 2).
3. Understand the Jewish roots of Christianity. The Bible is essentially a Jewish book written primarily by Jews, and the Jewish people were entrusted with the oracles of God with which the world is to be blessed. Jesus was Jewish, all of His first disciples and apostles were Jews, and the first congregation of believers were all Jewish. Jews and Gentiles alike who turn their hearts toward God are turning toward the LORD God of Israel, "Who was, and Who is, and Who is to come" — "the same yesterday, today, and forever".

Because our faith has its roots in the Jewish people, anti-Semitism is a most heinous sin to be repudiated by all Christian people.

4. Recognize the sacrificial, loving effort of true believers from among the Gentiles to share the Good News of the Messiah with the Jewish people. We, as Messianic Jews, are called on to repent of sinful attitudes and actions, of pride, arrogance, fear and isolation toward the rest of the Body of the Messiah. We must pray for the integrity, stability, restoration and evangelistic progress of the Church. We also are called to repudiate decisions taken since the days of the Apostles to direct the Jewish community away from faith in the Messiah Yeshua.

5. Encourage Gentile Christians as individual believers and as churches to recognize and to grieve over the Church's sins against Jewish believers in Jesus: (1) for all forms of "replacement" teaching that treated the first covenant as obsolete and discarded due to Jewish rejection of Jesus as Messiah, and that saw the (Gentile) Church as replacing Israel and inheriting Israel's promises in her place; thus not taking seriously the scriptural promise of Romans 11:29, that "The gifts and the call of God are irrevocable;" (2) for the rejection and suppression of any Jewish expression of faith in Yeshua, and for all requirements that Jews believing in Yeshua should repudiate their Jewish identity and all their Jewish practices; (3) for the seeds of Church division that were sown by the repudiation of the community of Jewish believers in Yeshua (Jesus) and its denial of the "one new man" of Ephesians 2.

6. Understand and appreciate the validity of the Messianic Jewish community.
 - A. That God is once again doing a great work among our Jewish brethren for the salvation and redemption of Israel.
 - B. That Jews who turn to the Messiah are free to and encouraged to remain distinctly Jewish in accord with the apostolic Jewish life pattern — including the circumcision of their sons as well as walking according to the pattern of Jewish life as is rightly applicable in the New Covenant.
 - C. Our Gentile brethren are called upon to affirm and pray for the doctrinal and moral integrity, stability and the evangelistic progress of the Messianic Jewish community. Gentile brethren are called to take up the imperative of intercession and support for the salvation of Israel.
7. Pray for and call for the Church to affirm a declaration(s) similar to that of Acts 15 whereby Jews who follow Jesus would be affirmed in their continued Jewish life and calling within the context of Scriptural norms.

WHEN: To Be Announced

WHERE: Jerusalem, Israel

WHY: Because God should be honored in the reconciling work of His Son through the reuniting of Jewish and Gentile followers of Yeshua. This schism between Jew

and Gentile was the original split in the Body of Messiah, and became the root for all further divisions in the Church throughout the centuries. The ultimate purpose in unifying the Body is to bring about the fulfillment of the promise of Romans 11:11-15, which speaks of reconciling the world to the glory of God.

HOW: By God's grace, the listed members of our executive and steering committee will coordinate the gathering of the leadership of both communities

PERSPECTIVE

We are encouraged by the efforts resulting from Jewish and Christian dialogue whereby Church leaders have called for Church repentance for all expression of anti-Semitism, for contempt for the Jewish people, for the cultivation of that contempt by preachers and theologians through many centuries, and for the spreading of all calumnious myths about the Jews that provoked persecution, violence, bloodshed and pogroms; which prepared the way for the ultimate horror of the Shoah. We affirm the calls for repentance that have gone forth with regard to the error of distorting the Scripture by not seeking its meaning in its original Hebraic context. Toward Jerusalem Council II deals with a different and related issue which is a significant root of these other great concerns. This root is the repudiation of the community of Jewish believers in Yeshua (Jesus).

Toward Jerusalem Council II may be tapping into the mystery of the ages declared by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians chapter 3. Through Yeshua, the Gentiles are fellow heirs (not exclusive heirs) and fellow partakers of the promise in Yeshua with the believing remnant of Israel. This revealed mystery, which is the manifold wisdom of God, is to be made known through the Church to the rulers and

authorities in the heavenlies in accordance with the eternal purpose which God carried out in Messiah Yeshua, our Lord.

Toward Jerusalem Council II may result in a major thrust in evangelism. Although the Apostle Paul had planted a number of believing congregations before his visit to Jerusalem in Acts 15, it was after the declaration of the original Jerusalem Council that God opened wide the floodgates of Gentile evangelism for Paul and his companions. Because of the Jerusalem Council decision, he was able to preach liberty in the Gospel, putting to rest the idea that Gentiles had to become proselytes to Judaism before attaining acceptance in the Body of Messiah. In like manner, God may mirror the first Jerusalem Council and open up the floodgates of evangelism into the Jewish community worldwide and to the nations.

This proposition is so exciting because of what Paul recorded in Romans 11 — what will Israel's acceptance be "*but life from the dead*" — something far greater than riches for the Gentiles and the reconciliation of the world.

Appendix B

Toward Jerusalem Council II The Gentile Response

As Gentile Christians, drawn from the Christian Churches and communities of the nations, we hear the heart-cry for recognition and fellowship from our Messianic Jewish brethren, as Jews who have come to faith in Jesus as Lord, Savior and the Messiah of Israel, and who seek to live this faith in communities whose worship, teaching and life-style are distinctively Jewish.

We receive and identify with the vision that one day there will be a Second Council of Jerusalem at which the leadership of the Church of the nations (*Ecclesia ex gentibus*) will recognize and enter into full fellowship with the resurrected Church of the Circumcision (*Ecclesia ex judaeis*), annulling all decrees and legislation against the Jewish expression of the Church.

We affirm afresh the New Testament vision of Ephesians 2, that the Church is formed as one new man by the reconciliation of Jew and Gentile in one body through the cross.

We recognize that for such a Council to take place, all the Gentile Churches and traditions must be led by the Holy Spirit into a process of prayer and purification, in which there would be a growing repentance for:

- ◆ All preaching and teaching that God has revoked the covenant with Israel thus denying the teaching of Romans 11:29.
- ◆ All enforced assimilation of Jewish believers into Gentile communities, culture and ways of thought.
- ◆ All forms of anti-Semitism.

We believe that this reconciliation of Jewish and Gentile believers in Christ will be a fulfillment of the prayer of Jesus in John 17:21 and that it will add a new dynamic for unity between the Gentile believers. We confidently hope that this work of reconciliation will unleash a great wave of evangelism and the restoration of justice among the divided peoples of the world.

We accept the invitation of our Jewish brothers to work for the realization of this vision of reconciliation in Christ, and we commit ourselves to spread this vision in all the Christian Churches and communities of the nations.

October 25, 2000
Dallas, Texas

Appendix C

Toward Jerusalem Council II Vision Statement

“Toward Jerusalem Council II” is an initiative of repentance and reconciliation between the Jewish and Gentile segments of the Church. The vision is that one day there will be a second council of Jerusalem that will be, in an important respect, the inverse of the First Council described in Acts 15. Whereas the First Council was made up of Jewish believers in Yeshua (Jesus), who decided not to impose on the Gentiles the requirements of the Jewish law, so the Second Council would be made up of Gentile church leaders, who would recognize and welcome the Jewish believers in Yeshua without requiring them to abandon their Jewish identity and practice.

The initiative is led by an Executive Committee of fourteen leaders, seven Jewish and seven Gentile, while both, the Jewish and Gentile members being broadly representative of the different international movements and churches, historic and modern that confess Yeshua (Jesus) as Lord and Savior. The committee members offer themselves as servants of this vision:

- ◆ To make known to church leaders and Christian scholars the restoration of the Jewish segments of the Church (the church of the circumcision).
- ◆ To foster repentance for the sins of Gentile Christians and the Christian Church against the Jewish people, especially for the suppression of the corporate Jewish witness to Yeshua, the Messiah.

- ◆ To foster intercession for all the churches of the nations to abandon all forms of replacement teaching concerning the calling and election of Israel and to recognize the place of the Jew in the Body of Messiah.

- ◆ To encourage the Messianic Jewish community in and out of Israel to enter into this vision of reconciliation and restoration and thereby fostering unity among the different streams and organizations within the Messianic Jewish Movement.

The Executive Committee will seek to do everything possible to forward a convocation of a second council of Jerusalem. This can only happen under the special leading of the Holy Spirit. Only the Holy Spirit can show us how a council recognized by all churches, denominations and movements can be possible.

Within this process toward a second council of Jerusalem there would be a gathering in Jerusalem as representative of churches/denominations and continents as possible for the purpose of issuing a call to the whole Christian world for the recognition of the church of the circumcision at a second council of Jerusalem.

We are doing this so that God may be honored in the reconciling work of His Son through the healing of the original schism in the Body of Christ, that between the Jewish and the Gentile components.

The ultimate purpose in unifying the Body and restoring the Jewish believers to their rightful place is the hastening of the coming of the Lord Yeshua in glory and the full accomplishment of His work of redemption in the Kingdom of God.

“For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?” (Rom. 11: 15)

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Notes