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# MESSIANIC JEW

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## AND HEBREW CHRISTIAN



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

# THE MESSIANIC JEW AND HEBREW CHRISTIAN

Vol. LXVIII

March, 1995 — May, 1995

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# Why "Biblical Zionism?"



by  
Gershon  
Nerel, M.A.

At our last IMJ(HC)A Executive-Committee meeting in Woudschoten, Holland, in October 1994, we discussed a most significant issue: our vision for the future. Every person among the delegates was asked to express a personal concept of our future "banner" — specifically as an International Alliance of Messianic Jews. When my turn came, I outlined my belief and hope that "Biblical Zionism" as a concept and way of living will become an integral part of our clear aims for the future.

Why take this issue at all as a strategic aim? Isn't it too political or too close to secular Zionism? Can this concept motivate others to join us and share this vision? Is "Biblical Zionism" a motto for an Alliance looking beyond the year 2000? My answer to these questions follows:

## A "Replacement Theology": The Diaspora Replacing Eretz-Israel

The prophecy of the "dry bones", metaphorically used by Ezekiel the Servant of the Lord, is a most relevant

message to our generation. Ezekiel's explanation is not hidden from us; the dead Jewish nation, symbolised by the dry bones, come to life in due time in the "valley" — Eretz Israel, the Land of Israel. In his words: "Thus says the Lord God to these bones, 'Behold, I will cause breath to enter you that you may come to life. And I will put sinews on you, make flesh grow back on you, cover you with skin, and put breath in you that you may come alive; and you will know that I am the Lord.'" (Ez. 37: 5-6).

Can we say, especially in these days, that we do **not know** what the Lord is doing with His people? Can we ignore and not realise the work of the Lord with the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in HIS Promised Land? Surely not!

We especially, Messianic Jews who live as citizens in Eretz-Israel, can testify to the great work of restoration and ingathering that God is accomplishing with His chosen people. Nevertheless, not very many among the *Olim* (immigrants) wanted to "make *Aliya*" and settle in this Land out of ideological motives.

But God controlled historical circumstances and brought the Jews back to this Land. Many had no choice. Many could not make a living elsewhere, and so they were obliged to come here: from Europe, before and after the two World Wars, from North Africa, from the former USSR, from Ethiopia. So then, it is not just a coincidence that only in the last century several million Jews have returned to their ancient Homeland. Furthermore, I anticipate the *Aliya* of American Jewry as well!

Yet **national** restoration by itself is not enough. We would all agree on the pressing need for the **spiritual revival** of the Jewish nation, as a corporate body and a sovereign people, which must take place in the Land of Israel, in the "valley of the dry bones". The prophet wrote:

"And I will put My Spirit within you, and you will come to life, and I will place you on your own land. Then you will know that I, the Lord, have spoken and done it, declares the Lord." (Ez. 37:14)

For us Messianic Jews, the key to such revival is found in Yeshua the Messiah, who came to die in Jerusalem and to bring eternal salvation from Zion. We Messianic Jews expect Yeshua to return soon to the same place on the Mount of Olives. The generation of those Jews already gathered in the Land, according to prophecy, could very well experience the fulfilment of Zechariah's prophecy:

"And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first born." (Zech. 12:10)

Zechariah speaks in this verse about a *National* Jewish body, brought back to Zion to accept Yeshua corporately as THE Saviour and Lord. Is all this going to happen only in the very distant future? Is it right for Messianic Jews to replace Zion with the Diaspora, and therefore to plan their future outside of Eretz-Israel? Unfortunately, too many Jewish disciples of Yeshua choose de-facto to adopt the *Golah*, the Jewish Dispersion in the place of Eretz-Israel. Too often, theological explanations serve as mere excuses for maintaining the higher standards of living available in the Diaspora.

To my understanding we, as a **body** of disciples of Yeshua, ought to grasp the Jewish *National-Spiritual* revival within the context of the present physical restoration of Israel in its Land — and especially in our present generation. It is the spiritual responsibility of leadership to see, discern and to know exactly what is happening around us.

No doubt, many individual Jews are saved these days outside of Eretz-Israel. In fact, most Messianic Jews



still live outside of the land of Israel. Should we, therefore, adopt this pattern as providing the right perspective and direction for the future? What exactly will our younger generation be taught about the salvation of our nation according to biblical prophecy?

### **Developing Identity**

After many centuries, Messianic Jews are beginning again to see a second, a third and even a fourth generation of believers. Further generations are expected to follow. We must ask: which characteristics will shape the self-identity of Messianic Jews and their children? We must admit that many Messianic Jews face a serious identity dilemma, especially when surrounded by a society where the majority of the believing population is non-Jewish.

The experience of the last five decades in Israel proves that Eretz-Israel provides the best conditions to avoid an identity crisis among Jewish disciples of Yeshua. Although still a small minority in relation to the mainstream of society, it is within Hebraic-Israeli surroundings that Messianic Jews and their children best maintain their Jewish identity.

By daily speaking the Hebrew language, by "officially" resting on the Shabbat and by keeping the biblical feasts as the national feast-

days of the State of Israel, they mature gradually as Jewish followers of Yeshua. Three and four generations of Messianic Jews, already reared in the State of Israel, can testify that it is specially true here in Israel: that we do not need to express our identity only by adhering to rabbinic traditions.

Only in the State of Israel do we have a unique opportunity to return to our real roots and develop a genuine Hebraic and Scriptural teaching. To use the Hebrew language in the Diaspora is often artificial, to use Hebrew in the State of Israel is natural. For example, the terms "Yeshua" and "Messianic" are naturally understood and accepted in a Hebrew-speaking society; furthermore, to express our identity we do not need to adopt East-European traditions.

### **A Central Vision for our Future**

A central vision for our future — AS A NATION — is nowhere else but in Eretz Israel. Leaders and teachers of Messianic Jewish congregations in the Diaspora should explain to their flocks the significance of the physical and spiritual restoration of our nation, according to biblical prophecy. We already live within the process of this historical renaissance. Still ahead of us are many prophecies to be fulfilled.

Let us not forget that many fellowships and congregations of Jewish disciples of Yeshua perished during the Nazi persecutions. Many Messianic Jews then preferred to talk only about the "Heavenly Zion", while dwelling

in an unstable earthly Diaspora. Will our post-Holocaust generation make the same mistake? Let us therefore not waste time when we come to define and present our vision.



The Executive Committee at Woudschoten, Holland, October 1994. Gershon Nerel is at the extreme right. The Executive Secretary missed the photo-call!

# I Remember



*When I remember all the friends,  
so linked together,  
I've seen around me fall,  
Like leaves in wintry weather;  
I feel like one, Who treads alone  
Some banquet-hall deserted!  
Whose lights are fled,  
Whose garlands dead,  
And all but he departed! Thos. Moore.*

*He being dead yet speaks.* Hebrews  
11:4

I remember **Morris Kaminsky**.  
I remember Morris Kaminsky, the  
man, the priest, the Jew, the example.

Morris Kaminsky, grew up in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, attended local schools and came to know Messiah Yeshua in this great "city of churches" where the Gospel was presented by great men and women of God: Henry Singer, The Kendals and Finestones, Rabbi Henry Bregman, Shabbetai Rohold, the Earl Bruneaus, Agnes Scott Kent, the Morris Zeidmans and Jacob Pankratz.

Newsboys returning from their routes had a more than usual discussion. Young Morris invited Arthur to come to the *Eliezer Club*

by  
Malvern  
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