

HELSINKI CONSULTATION STATEMENT ON
JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN TRADITION

As Jewish disciples of Yeshua we inherit and respect both Jewish and Christian traditions. Jewish tradition, rooted in the Torah and developed through the centuries, guides the life of our people Israel and remains a vital source of our identity. Christian tradition, rooted in Christ and unfolding over time, shapes the life of the body of Christ and is therefore an indispensable source for our shared faith and life in Messiah.

Tragically, Jewish denial of the legitimacy of Jewish belief in Yeshua as Messiah and Christian denial of the reality of his ongoing relationship with the Jewish people have been central in the development of these two traditions. We recognize the need to challenge these core denials.

Although the Messiahship of Yeshua is not recognized in Rabbinic tradition, we believe that the Spirit of Yeshua is at work within it. Conversely, Christian tradition, founded on Yeshua's teaching and redemptive work, has often propagated a distorted understanding of Christ by failing to acknowledge his Jewish identity and his ongoing relationship with the Jewish people and their tradition. As heirs of both traditions, our faith in Yeshua and our commitment to our people summon us to receive each tradition with filial deference and with the critical freedom of mature sons and daughters.

As Jews who believe in Yeshua, we represent a spectrum in our concrete expression of the Jewish and Christian traditions we have inherited. Each of us embodies in some way fidelity to the core practices of these traditions, such as Shabbat and the Lord's Supper. We experience an increasingly harmonious and natural integration of these two traditions as we search for an authentic way of being Jewish disciples of Yeshua. At the same time, the tensions that exist between Jewish and Christian traditions pulsate within us. As diverse as our practices might be (and diversity is a mark of both traditions), these practices express our shared commitment to honor the Lord Yeshua and identify as members of the Jewish people.

Therefore, we undertake to bear witness to and transmit a life of faithfulness to Torah and Messiah in which Jewish and Christian tradition are not opposed but rather mutually enriching. We believe this witness has significance for the entire people of God, both Israel and the Church. We aim to foster and embody a living community in which, even as both traditions are respected and upheld, the historical division between them is challenged and transcended.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

Boris Balter, Orthodox (Moscow), Researcher in Physics at the Russian Academy of Sciences

Jacques Doukhan, Seventh Day Adventist (USA), professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Exegesis, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Dr. Richard Harvey, Messianic (London), Associate Lecturer, All Nations Christian

College, author of “Mapping Messianic Jewish Theology”

Dr. Mark Kinzer, Messianic (Ann Arbor, USA), President-Emeritus of Messianic Jewish Theological Institute, author of “Postmissionary Messianic Judaism”

Fr. Antoine Levy, OP, Catholic (Helsinki), Professor at the School of Theology, University of Eastern Finland

Lisa Loden, Messianic (Israel), Head of Leadership Development at the Nazareth Evangelical Theological Seminary.

Fr. David Neuhaus, SJ, Catholic (Jerusalem), Patriarchal Vicar General for Hebrew speaking Catholics in Israel.

Svetlana Panich, Orthodox (Moscow) Literary critic and translator.

Rabbi Vladimir Pikman, Messianic (Berlin), Vice-President of the International Messianic Jewish Alliance, Executive Director of “Beit Sar Shalom” ministry.