



MESSIANIC JEWISH
THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE



Studium Catholicum

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HELSINKI CONSULTATION ON

JEWISH CONTINUITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST CONFERENCE IN

MOSCOW

The sixth Helsinki Consultation on Jewish Continuity in the Body of Messiah met June 25th -July 1st , 2015, hosted by the Library for Foreign Literature in Moscow. Jewish scholars from Finland, France, Germany, Israel, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States, belonging to Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant and Messianic traditions, met to deepen their fellowship in faith and reflect on the subject of this year’s consultation: “The Place of Jewish Believers in Yeshua in God’s Providential Design”.

Participants presented papers and gave workshops (available at the Helsinki Consultation website <http://helsinkiconsultation.squarespace.com/>) on the following themes:

- The Church and Judaism, the Jewish People and Jesus—Are Attitudes Changing?
- Jewish Followers of Yeshua: Coming out from the Underground and Becoming Visible.
- A Jewish Christian: a question, a problem, or a mystery?

- The Influence of our Personal Stories on What it Means to be Jewish for Ourselves and for Our Relationships with Our Brothers in Christ.
- Nostra Aetate 50 years on - achievements and challenges.
- What lessons on the place of Jewish Christians in God's design can be glimpsed from the life of Fr. Alexander Men?
- Jewish followers of Yeshua in the Russian Orthodox Church, the Russian Evangelical Church, and Russian Messianic Jewish communities.
- The importance of studying the Jewish spiritual and cultural heritage and the destiny of Jews for Christian self-knowledge and development.

The consultation recognized and responded to the unique cultural and theological circumstances of the Russian experience. It measured the rich liturgical and spiritual resources of the Orthodox Tradition. It witnessed the renewed sense of dignity that the life and teaching of Fr. Alexander Men gave to the Jewish disciples of Jesus. And yet at the same time, it came to an increased awareness of the difficulties that such disciples need to face in a number of congregations where growing nationalistic tendencies lead to an openly anti-Jewish reading of the Orthodox tradition.

The participants issued the following joint statement:

STATEMENT BEGINS

“The theological significance of the Jewish presence in the Body of the Messiah has been the object of a growing reflection over recent years. This must be seen in connection with the increasing visibility that this presence has taken in the Messianic movement and in various churches. This visibility has expressed itself in many forms. Two main forms of corporate expression have prevailed until now. The first is based on a reconnection with the legacy of

Jewish tradition outside the boundaries of the institutional churches. The second combines the rediscovery of the significance of Jewish identity with the striving to promote it from within the context of the institutional churches.

As the first form faces the challenge of forging a creative synthesis between faith in Yeshua (Jesus) and Jewish tradition, the second faces that of fighting against remnants of anti-Jewish discourse and behavior. Both share the experience of rejection by mainstream Jews while both maintain that their faith in Yeshua strengthens their Jewish identity and deepens their appreciation of the riches conveyed by Jewish tradition. We, members of the Helsinki Consultation, discern in both forms God's providence presiding over the destiny of the Body of the Messiah and leading it, through ways that are often puzzling for human minds, to its final goal, the unity of Israel and the Nations in Messiah Yeshua."

STATEMENT ENDS

The Consultation founders, Dr. Mark Kinzer, President Emeritus of Messianic Jewish Theological Institute (USA), and Fr. Antoine Levy, OP, Professor at the School of Theology, University of Eastern Finland, expressed thanks to the Library for Foreign Literature for hosting the conference.

Antoine Levy, the other co-founder, observed:

"Never before had a meeting of the Consultation given me such a sense that it was happening exactly where it should. I was amazed to see how easily we crossed the confessional and cultural borders that usually prevent the Russian public from taking in what foreigners have to say, as well as foreigners from grasping the situation and inner feelings of Russians. From

the very first day, we became one big, joyful and (of course) noisy family. May we not forget what we have experienced together in Moscow. May we be blessed to carry on our work in the same spirit!"

Mark Kinzer, Consultation co-founder, said:

"I was deeply moved to hear the stories of these Jewish disciples of Yeshua in Russia, who have endured so much for their faith in the Messiah and for their loyalty to the Jewish people. I was also deeply moved to see the legacy that remains from the extraordinary life and work of Fr. Alexander Men. May his memory be a blessing!"

Next year's consultation will be on the theme of the "Jewishness and Divine Nature of Jesus" and is planned for 26-28 June 2016 in London, UK.

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CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

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

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.



Antoine Levy and Mark Kinzer with conference host





