

**Collected Statements
of
The Helsinki Consultation
on Jewish Continuity
in the Body of the Messiah
(August 2018)**

2010 Helsinki Statement

We thank God for bringing us as Jews to the knowledge of Jesus the Messiah, and we express a debt of gratitude to those from the Nations who have transmitted the knowledge of Christ from generation to generation. While we seek to speak on behalf of those who share our Jewish identity and faith in Christ, we have no official mandate from our respective communities. In what follows we are expressing our own deeply held convictions.

At this unprecedented event, we have experienced the depth of our bond, and at the same time we have wrestled with the diversity of our ingrained theological and cultural constructs. In spite of church divisions, we have come together as Jews who believe in Jesus. We hope that sharing the fruit of our common efforts will benefit our brothers and sisters in Christ. We do not aim to issue a definitive declaration, but to initiate an ongoing process of discussion.

There are many Jewish people in the body of Christ. We believe that this reality reflects God's intention that Israel and the Nations live as mutual blessings to one another. In fact, the Church in its essence is the communion of Jews and those from the Nations called to faith in Christ.

In light of this truth, we think that the life of Jews in the body of Christ has theological significance for that body as a whole. Their presence serves as a constant reminder to the body that its existence is rooted in the ongoing story of the people of Israel. This story resounds throughout the celebration of the liturgical life of the community. We believe that this story finds its center in

Israel's Messiah. We believe that Jews within the body are a living bond between the Church and the people of Israel. Accordingly, we would like to explore concrete ways in which Jewish people may live out their distinctive calling in the body of Christ.

Finally, we wish to express to our Jewish brothers and sisters who do not share our faith in Jesus the Messiah that we consider ourselves to be part of the Jewish people and are committed to its welfare.

2011 Paris Statement on Am Israel

The theme of this year's consultation was "*Am Israel – our People*". As the many papers demonstrated, the identity of the Jewish People is complex, consisting of historical, familial, ethnic, cultural and spiritual components that are all essential and inseparable. The paradoxical nature of Jewish identity challenges us to avoid reductionist interpretation and to explore further the mystery of our people.

As Jewish believers in Jesus, we affirm our identity as part of both the people of Israel and of the Body of Christ. We recognise the pain this affirmation may cause to some of those of our people who do not believe in Yeshua. We are also aware of the misunderstanding that can occur in the Church when we state that we continue to be part of the Jewish people.

Nevertheless, we believe that we are a living witness to the mysterious and invisible bond which persists between the Church and Israel. Our dual membership brings us into a unique relationship with one another, and also entails weighty responsibilities and formidable

challenges. Our two communities have been separated but belong together. We bear witness to the tragedy of their division and herald the hope of their future reconciliation.

We are exploring how this unique relationship to one another as Jewish believers in Jesus might take visible form as a wider fellowship dedicated to the service of the Jewish people and the body of Messiah.

2012 Berlin Statement on Torah

We, the members of the Helsinki Consultation, bear living witness to the recent emergence of Jewish believers in Yeshua (Jesus) who affirm their Jewish identity and acknowledge its theological significance. We are increasingly recognizing the intrinsic connection between this identity and Torah, the dynamic reality that has shaped the life of the Jewish people throughout its historical journey. We are also increasingly challenged to understand the continuing significance of the Torah encountered in the light of the gospel within the life of the Body of the Messiah.

The complex nature of Jewish existence reflects the multifaceted and paradoxical character of the Torah. Torah is both the historical revelation of God to Israel, and Israel's window to the eternity of God; once-for-all transmitted truth, and ever new process of discovery; the fashioner of human institutions, and the secret of the cosmic order; the absoluteness of the Divine Word, and the relativity of its human interpretation; the vulnerable letter of the written text, and its invulnerable spirit; defining mark of Israel's singular path and destiny, and wisdom for all nations of the earth.

From an early period, many Christians have not fully grasped the Torah's paradoxical unity. They have limited its relevance to what they deemed "moral precepts" whilst rejecting the so-called "civil" and "ceremonial" practices that are foundational to Jewish life. They have frequently viewed Torah through the dualistic lens of grace and law, contrasting faith and works, and thus overlooking the Torah's enduring value.

Recent scholarship has shed new light on the Jewish context of Yeshua and the early Yeshua-movement which challenges traditional Christian understanding of the Torah and brings renewed appreciation for its positive significance. Many now recognize that Yeshua, Sha'ul (Paul), and the other early Jewish followers of Yeshua were Torah-observant. This historical reality carries significant theological implications.

We as Jewish believers in Yeshua acknowledge the special bond that unites us with Israel's Torah. This bond with Israel's Torah witnesses in the Church to the irrevocability of God's gifts and call to Israel (Rom 11:29). For Yeshua said, "Think not that I have come to destroy the Torah, or the prophets: I have not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Mt 5:17). We believe in the continuing validity of the Torah even as it is fulfilled in Christ. Moreover, we see Christ as the incarnate Torah, the eternal wisdom of the Father in human flesh. He alone lived out the Torah in perfect form, and he calls his disciples to walk in his ways.

As Jewish believers in Yeshua we are in the process of working out the meaning and concrete implications of this bond that we collectively experience. We find ourselves in a variety of different ecclesial and Jewish

communal contexts, and we hold different understandings and definitions of Torah observance. Some of us consider the observance of mitzvot such as Shabbat, Jewish holidays, and the dietary laws as an essential component of fidelity to Torah. Yet we all understand that our attempt to live in radical discipleship to Yeshua (in conformity to teaching such as that found in the Sermon on the Mount) is the foundational principle of Torah observance. Furthermore, we all understand our faithfulness to Israel's Torah as a commitment to promote an awareness of the Jewish roots of the Church.

In the midst of our different approaches we have experienced through our deliberations and fellowship the dynamic and unifying power of Christ as Torah. Continuing to reflect on the Torah's role in our lives, we desire to grow together as Jews and as disciples of Yeshua. We hope these insights will resonate with other Jewish believers in Yeshua, and we invite them to join us on our journey.

2014 Ede 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.

2015 Moscow Statement on Jewish Expression in the Body of Messiah

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.

2017 Krakow Statement on the Wounds of Memory

We have gathered in Krakow, Poland surrounded by witnesses to both a beautiful and tragic past. So too we have been reminded of King Casimir's welcome of the Jews, the rich achievements of Jewish culture, and its engagement with Polish society over many centuries, including the presence of Jews within the Church.

It is precisely in this ambivalent context of blessing and woundedness that we have sought to pursue our reflections on our place as Jewish believers in Yeshua in the living body of the Messiah. As Jews, we remember with our people the deep wounds received from the hands of Christians, sometimes with the assent of church authorities. We also remember that many Christians have been prey to persecutions across the ages, most acutely in the last century. We remember too that we Jews can be agents of violence and cause of suffering. Finally, we remember that we are part of the body of the Christ, who is the source and agent of all reconciliation. It is the paradox and mystery of our faith that healing and forgiveness come forth from the wounds of the Messiah on the cross.

Remembering has led us back to the wound that is the separation between the Church and the major part of the Jewish people. This has hindered the full realization of the body of Christ. As Jewish disciples of Jesus, we are profoundly affected by this separation. We are aware that our dual identity has sometimes proven a stumbling

block on the path to reconciliation and unity. The misguided zeal of some Jewish followers of Jesus has historically even furthered mutual rejection between members of the Church and the Jewish people. But we have also witnessed great figures among the Jewish followers of Jesus who have fought anti-Judaism, anti-Semitism, and their legacy, and who have worked tirelessly for reconciliation. They understood how healing the wounds of memory demands that the Church affirm the ongoing election of the Jewish people and the richness of its tradition. They believed also that the Church should welcome the expression of Jewish identity within her life.

Inspired by these great witnesses, we are convinced that a corporate Jewish expression is essential to the integrity of the entire body of the Messiah. The acceptance of this Jewish presence in its midst is itself an aspect of needed repentance from anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism, and a decision to break with its destructive legacy. This acceptance will also contribute to disclosing the authentic nature of the body of Christ, which is rooted in Israel's election and the Jewishness of its Messiah. We Jewish followers of Yeshua seek to be instruments of Christ's power for this healing of the wounds of memory and for reconciliation within his divided body.