

**The following statement was affirmed by the  
Delegates to the 23rd Annual UMJC Conference on July 31, 2002**

**Defining Messianic Judaism**

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**Basic Statement**

Messianic Judaism is a movement of Jewish congregations and congregation-like groupings committed to Yeshua the Messiah that embrace the covenantal responsibility of Jewish life and identity rooted in Torah, expressed in tradition, renewed and applied in the context of the New Covenant.

**Expanded Statement**

Jewish life is life in a concrete, historical community. Thus, Messianic Jewish groupings must be fully part of the Jewish people, sharing its history and its covenantal responsibility as a people chosen by G-d. At the same time, faith in Yeshua also has a crucial communal dimension. This faith unites Messianic Judaism and the Gentile Christian Church, which is the assembly of the faithful from the nations who are joined to Israel through the Messiah. Together Messianic Judaism and the Gentile Church constitute the one Body of Messiah, a community of Jews and Gentiles who in their ongoing distinction and mutual blessing anticipate the shalom of the world to come.

For a Messianic Jewish grouping (1) to fulfill the covenantal responsibility incumbent upon all Jews, (2) to bear witness to Yeshua within the people of Israel, and (3) to serve as an authentic and effective representative of the Jewish people within the body of Messiah, it must place a priority on integration with the wider Jewish world. Such integration must then be followed by a vital corporate relationship with the Gentile Christian Church.

The Messianic Jewish way of life involves an attempt to fulfill Israel's covenantal responsibility embodied in the Torah within a New Covenant context. Messianic Jewish halakhah is rooted in Scripture (Tanakh and the New Covenant writings), which is of unique sanctity and authority. However, it also draws upon Jewish tradition, especially those practices and concepts that have won near-universal acceptance by devout Jews through the centuries. Furthermore, like most other branches of Judaism, Messianic Judaism recognizes that halakhah must be dynamic as well as faithful, for it involves the application of the Torah to a wide variety of changing situations and circumstances.

Messianic Judaism embraces the fullness of New Covenant realities available through Yeshua, and seeks to express them in forms drawn from Jewish experience and accessible to Jewish people.