

THE INTERNATIONAL MESSIANIC JEWISH (HEBREW CHRISTIAN)
ALLIANCE

Minutes of the Nineteenth International Conference held
at Puerto Vallarta, Mexico from 21st - 23rd May, 1997

President Richard Harvey in the chair

Wednesday, 21st May, 1997

1. Conference convened at 9.15 a.m. The President conducted opening worship, a Scripture reading from Exodus ch. 3, the *Shema, Hineh Ma Tov* and prayer, then welcomed all present.
2. The President gave an explanation of procedure for the conduct of business.
3. The Secretary for Israel was congratulated on achieving his Doctorate Degree in Philosophy at the Hebrew University, his dissertation being on The Messianic Jewish Movement in recent history.
4. The delegates of the affiliated Alliances in Argentina, Canada, Colombia, France, Great Britain, Israel, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America and the Association of American Messianic Jewish Believers presented their credentials, and the status of others present as Observers and Visitors was clarified.
5. There were no delegates present from Australia, Brazil, Holland, Switzerland or Uruguay.
6. The Executive Secretary read the names of those who had passed to their rest since the last Conference, and members stood whilst a prayer of thanksgiving for their lives was offered.
7. The Executive Secretary gave notice that the Nominations Committee would consist of the Presidents (or their proxies) of all the national Alliances, and Richard Harvey, the outgoing President, would chair the Committee.
8. The Presidents of the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America and the Association of American Messianic Believers presented their reports. The Secretary for the Americas reported on the situation in Brazil, and explained that the President of the Alliance in Uruguay was ill, and his deputy unable to leave his employment. The work of all four Alliances was commended to God in prayer.
9. The Executive Secretary presented the Vision Statement prepared by the Office-Bearers at their Consultation:-

The International Messianic Jewish (Hebrew Christian) Alliance exists to:-

- (1) Unite and represent all Jewish believers in *Yeshua* throughout the world.
- (2) Nurture their spiritual growth and witness.
- (3) Encourage Gentile believers to appreciate the Jewish roots of their faith and stand together alongside Jewish believers.

Therefore we seek to:-

- (a) Unite Jewish believers with different backgrounds and emphases within the broad framework of our Constitution.
- (b) Encourage the involvement of sympathetic ministries and organisations concerned for the interests of Jewish believers in *Yeshua*.
- (c) Develop leadership in the Messianic movement by providing training opportunities and educational materials.
- (d) Promote the welfare of all Jewish believers, regardless of affiliation, by extending a ministry of spiritual and material support.
- (e) Provide a forum for the concerns of Jewish believers, encouraging solidarity with those whose rights are threatened, and reconciling those in conflict.
- (f) Be an example of excellence, integrity and organisational efficiency.
- (g) Emphasise the continuing biblical significance of the land of Israel and its people, recognising the strategic importance of the growing Messianic movement there, and encouraging those who wish to return to the Land of Promise.

After discussion Mr. Tom Lori proposed and Dr. Joe Rosenfarb seconded that the Statement be adopted subject to the following additions:-

- (4) Demonstrate our love for and unity with the Nation of Israel and the Jewish community world-wide.
- (e) After "Jewish believers" insert "and Messianic congregations".

The motion was passed unanimously.

10. It was further resolved that the Office-Bearers be instructed to produce an Action Plan as a development of the Vision Statement. The Conference called upon all national Alliances to submit their proposals and contributions to the Executive Secretary.
11. Reports from the Canadian and Argentine Alliances were received, and their work commended to God in prayer.
12. The Revd. David Sedaca, Secretary for the Americas presented his report in which he mentioned the problems caused in the South American Alliances by the growing number of "non-Jewish" Messianic Jewish congregations. Joel Chernoff and Rich Nichol were asked to work together on a paper addressing this issue which could be considered by the Theological Consultation.
13. The reports from the Colombian and Mexican Alliances were received with warm sympathy, and the Secretary for the Americas introduced Dr. Manuel Hernandez who had been instrumental in founding the Mexican Alliance.
14. The Executive Secretary described the current position *vis-à-vis* the I.M.J.(H.C.)A. Constitution and the United Kingdom Charity Commissioners, and after discussion the

following enabling resolution was proposed by Dr. Robert Kinser, seconded by Mr. Tom Lori, and passed unanimously:-

Conference authorises the Finance and General Purposes Committee on its behalf to dissolve the I.M.J.(H.C.)A. as a Charity in the United Kingdom, and to set up a new Charity with a Constitution which will meet the requirements of the British Charity Commissioners, the British held assets to be transferred to this new Charity, whose purpose will be to support and further the work of the I.M.J.(H.C.)A.

Explanation: Because of a change in British Charity law it is no longer possible to have nominated Trustees. The Governing Body (i.e. the Conference) are the Trustees and each member is responsible and liable. However, this is not practicable, since the British authorities could not always force accountability or liability on a foreign national. A suggested Constitution was sent some time ago to Alliance Presidents, but the Charity Commissioners have not approved this, since it seeks merely to change the set-up of the existing organisation. The new proposal makes it possible to keep charitable status in the United Kingdom, thus avoiding tax, and being able to receive the tax on covenanted donations. Outside the new United Kingdom body, the I.M.J.(H.C.)A. would continue to be ruled by its existing Constitution. This would make the United Kingdom body similar to the operation of I.M.J.A. in the U.S.A. and Canada. It would also facilitate any transfer of Headquarters to another country, and would cover continuing fund-raising in the United Kingdom. It requires the trust of the members of Conference and Executive, just as is so in the U.S.A. and Canada.

Subsidiary Motion: If after further negotiations with the Charity Commission it is unnecessary to go as far as dissolution, but is, after all, possible to amend the Constitution as regards work in the United Kingdom along the same lines as already outlined, Conference gives approval to the Finance and General Purposes Committee to act on its behalf accordingly.

15. A motion to delete the words "(HEBREW CHRISTIAN)" from the name of the Alliance was carried *nem con* with two abstentions.

Thursday, 22nd May

16. Following a presentation and discussion concerning the proposed move of Headquarters either to the U.S.A. or Israel it was agreed to suspend Standing Orders in order to facilitate a motion to be presented to Conference. When Standing Orders were re-imposed the following motion was proposed and adopted:-

Taking into account that at the present time and for the foreseeable future it is not feasible to relocate the Headquarters of the I.M.J.A. in Israel, these shall be moved to the U.S.A. This move to the U.S.A. does not invalidate the conditions of the resolution passed by the International Hebrew Christian Alliance in 1977 eventually to establish Headquarters in Israel. This decision is based, among other things, on the fact that there are already in place fully functioning offices totally equipped and staffed.

17. It was also agreed that the Executive Committee formulate a statement giving high status to the Israel Office.

18. The following motion regarding the Executive Secretary was unanimously adopted:-

Conference elects the Revd. David Sedaca to hold the Office of Executive Secretary when this post becomes vacant. Until then he will be the Executive Secretary Designate, and he shall work in tandem with the present Executive Secretary until the year A.D.2000 or before should the Revd. Ronald Lewis choose to relinquish the post sooner. With his appointment as Executive Secretary the present position of Secretary for the Americas will cease to function as it is absorbed into the Office of Executive Secretary. This election is based on his qualifications, present involvement, past experience, on-going relations with affiliated national Alliances, his leadership in the Messianic Jewish movement, and his excellent standing with evangelical churches.

19. Two motions proposed by the Office-Bearers' Consultation were considered clause by clause and adopted as follows:-

- (a) That the Executive Committee consist of the Presidents (or their proxies) of the national Alliances and the Office-Bearers, with an attendance of necessary non-voting participants and staff. Where an Office-Bearer is also national President, he or she may exercise a second vote. In principal the Executive Committee should meet every two-and-a-half years, and Conference every five years. The Office-Bearers' Consultation shall meet between meetings of the Executive Committee and Conference, and is empowered to handle urgent business. Matters brought by the Office-Bearers' Consultation requiring further decision shall be dealt with by correspondence via the appropriate Standing Committee. Similarly Development Committee decisions shall be dealt with by correspondence.
- (b) That an Ad Hoc Liaison Committee with congregationally-based organisations be formed to explore relationships and commitments, and seek ways of becoming a true umbrella for Messianic Jews.

20. The following amendment to Standing Order No. 1 was approved:-

The Executive Committee shall normally meet every two-and-a-half years at a date and place to be determined by the appropriate Standing Committee. During an accounting period in which the Executive Committee does not meet the accounts shall be presented to and approved by the appropriate Standing Committee. Additional meetings of the Executive Committee may be called at the discretion of the appropriate Standing Committee. An additional meeting must be called on the receipt by the Executive Secretary of a written request signed by more than half the number of members of the Committee; such meeting must be held not less than six weeks and not more than three months after the receipt of the request.

Friday, 23rd May

21. The Secretary for Israel presented his report. From this arose discussion concerning the proposed Penal Law Amendment 5757-1996 in the Israeli Knesset. A motion to send a friendly, but strongly-worded, letter to Morris Cerrullo urging that in future he does not initiate correspondence on a large scale in Israel without first consulting I.M.J.A., and that if no suitable response be received the letter be released publicly, was defeated.

The following motion was then passed:-

The I.M.J.A. expresses strong support for the Messianic Action Committee in its response to the new bill, and will work alongside our brethren in Israel, and for this reason makes a grant of five thousand pounds (£5,000.00).

It was further agreed to initiate a dialogue with Morris Cerrullo.

22. Mr. Hanan Lukats read the report of the Israeli Alliance in the form of a letter from the President, Mr. Ilan Zamir who was unable to attend Conference, and answered questions. The Israeli Alliance was commended to God in prayer.
23. The Nominations Committee presented their report, and it was resolved that Mr. Joel Chernoff be elected President until the next Ordinary Conference.
24. The following were elected to serve as Vice-Presidents until the next Ordinary Conference:-

Miss Myriam Levy, Messianic Rabbi Rich Nichol, Mrs. Fanny Roiter-Mendal
25. It was resolved that Dr. Joe Rosenfarb be elected Treasurer until the next Ordinary Conference.
26. Conference recorded its gratitude to Mrs. Irene Hide for the splendid way she took over the vacant position of Treasurer between Conferences, and brought the accounting up to date.
27. Reports of the work of the affiliated Alliances in South Africa, New Zealand, France and Great Britain were received from their representatives, and the Executive Secretary read reports from Holland and Switzerland who were not represented. The work of all these Alliances was commended to God in prayer. Mr. Tom Lori reported on groups of Messianic Jews with whom he was in touch in Germany.
28. The Executive Secretary was thanked for the excellent production of the Alliance magazine. The Spanish translation is greatly appreciated in the Spanish-speaking countries, and warm thanks was expressed to the translator.
29. Concern was expressed about the hurt caused to non-Jewish associate members of national Alliances. Assurance was given that this would be addressed.
30. The Executive Secretary expressed warm appreciation to Mr. Richard Harvey, the outgoing President. He, in turn, expressed appreciation of the three Secretaries and Irene Hide as Minute Secretary. Warm thanks was also expressed to Bernadette Vauquelin and Christy Hirmas for their simultaneous translation throughout the Conference, and to Gabriel and Aaron Cojab, the sound technicians, for their expert help. Mr. Ernest Lloyd expressed pleasure that Miss Justina Lofty was attending the Conference, and paid tribute to her long years of service to the Alliance in the past.
31. The Executive Secretary read the Conference Minutes and they were adopted.
32. The President gave the final address, and closed the Conference with prayer followed by the Aaronic Blessing.