



# Two Statements

By Kai Kjær-Hansen

In less than one month, we have seen two new statements with relevance for Jewish evangelism and Messianic Jews in Israel.

## **March 28 – A Statement from the World Evangelical Alliance**

On Friday, March 28, the *New York Times* carried a full-page ad about the gospel and the Jewish people, sponsored by the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA):

### *The Gospel and the Jewish People – An Evangelical Statement*

As evangelical Christians, we want to express our genuine friendship and love for the Jewish people. We sadly acknowledge that church history has been marred with anti-Semitic words and deeds; and that at times when the Jewish people were in great peril, the church did far less than it should have.

- We pledge our commitment to be loving friends and to stand against such injustice in our generation. At the same time, we want to be transparent in affirming that we believe the most loving and Scriptural expression of our friendship toward Jewish people, and to anyone we call friend, is to forthrightly share the love of God in the person of Jesus Christ.
- We believe that it is only through Jesus that all people can receive eternal life. If Jesus is not the Messiah of the Jewish people, He cannot be the Savior of the World (Acts 4:12).
- We recognize that it is good and right for those with specialized knowledge, history and skills to use these gifts to introduce individuals to the Messiah, and that includes those ministries specifically directed to the Jewish people (1 Corinthians 9:20–22).
- We deplore the use of deception or coercion in evangelism; however, we reject the notion that it is deceptive for followers of Jesus Christ who were born Jewish to continue to identify as Jews (Romans 11:1).

We want to make it clear that, as evangelical Christians, we do not wish to offend our Jewish friends by the above statements; but we are compelled by our faith and commitment to the Scriptures to stand by these principles. It is out of our profound respect for Jewish people that we seek to share the good news of Jesus Christ with them, and encourage others to do the same, for we believe that salvation is only found in Jesus, the Messiah of Israel and Savior of the World.

Jews for Jesus had this to say about the ad:

We applaud the WEA and those who signed the document for recognizing the need for the gospel to be lovingly brought to all people, including our Jewish people. And we are particularly encouraged to see our evangelical family acknowledge that those of us who are followers of Y'shua (Jesus) who were born Jewish have every right to continue to identify as Jews.

### **April 16 – A Statement from the Jerusalem Institute of Justice**

On Wednesday, April 16, Israel's Supreme Court issued a ruling of great importance for the Messianic Jewish community in Israel. The statement about the case, issued by the Jerusalem Institute of Justice, follows here.

#### *Important Legal Victory*

In a landmark decision today, the Supreme Court of Israel ratified a settlement between twelve Messianic Jewish believers and the State of Israel, which states that *being a Messianic Jew does not prevent one from receiving citizenship in Israel under the Law of Return or the Law of Citizenship*, if one is a descendent of Jews on one's father's side (and thus not Jewish according to halacha).

This Supreme Court decision brought an end to a legal battle that has carried on for two and a half years. The applicants were represented by Yuval Grayevsky and Calev Myers from the offices of Yehuda Raveh & Co., and their legal costs were subsidized by the Jerusalem Institute of Justice.

All twelve of the applicants were denied citizenship solely based on grounds that they belong to the Messianic Jewish community. Most of them received letters stating that they would not receive citizenship because they "*commit missionary activity.*" One of the applicants was told by a clerk at the Ministry of Interior that because she "*committed missionary activity,*" she is "*acting against the interests of the State of Israel and against the Jewish people.*" These allegations are not only untrue, but they also do not constitute legal grounds to deny one's right to immigrate to Israel.

This important victory paves the way for persons who have Jewish an-



cestry on their father's side to immigrate to Israel freely, whether or not they belong to the Messianic Jewish community. This is yet another battle won in our war to establish equality in Israel for the Messianic Jewish community just like every other legitimate stream of faith within the Jewish world.

Meno Kalisher from congregation Beit Geula in Jerusalem congratulates the twelve Messianic Jews who have now received their citizenship – and their lawyers – and says: "Any person with a minimal sense of logic would say: 'Did you need to go to court [to get] what you logically and rightfully deserve?'" Baruch Maoz of Grace and Truth Christian Assembly in Rishon Letzion states: "The recent Supreme Court ruling constitutes a breakthrough only in the sense that it forbids administrative action against Jewish Christians due to their faith ... The Court has required the State to act in accordance with its existing laws."