

# FACTS & MYTHS

## About the Messianic Congregations in Israel

Chareidi and Religious  
Representatives in the  
Knesset Demand  
Tightening of Mission Law

Particular material benefit. "In such cases, one must catch the missionary red-handed, while he is actually offering the benefit or the money. However this is highly unfeasible and impractical, because even though it is clear that this was his purpose and that he indeed acted against the law, it is impossible to prove this in a clear enough manner to make him culpable according to the law," Rabbi Gamliel combined the law's

protest or 'pogrom'

Police last week had to rescue a group of Messianic from their Beersheba compound, which had been angry observant Jews. Larry Derfner investigated in a series of religiously motivated

Survey conducted by  
Kai Kjær-Hansen  
Bodil F. Skjøtt

Protests Against the Severe Sentence  
for Setting Fire to  
Messianic Apartment

The harassment and persecution of the innocent chareidim, who are being held in prison until the end of the proceedings against the messianic congregations, with the



קק מתאימה לנושא

הוא ידוע ממועדים שם  
הוא אחרות שלא להסתייג  
הוא כמא לא יתקדם וזה  
הוא מסיבותיו של



# Facts and Myths

There are many myths about Messianic Jews in Israel. Some of these are perpetuated by Jewish anti-missionary organizations. Others are maintained by the various Christians working in Israel. Some are prevalent within the Messianic Jewish communities themselves!

This survey profiles more than 80 Messianic congregations and house groups in Israel today. This is the first time such an extensive survey has been conducted and it is designed to provide statistical evidence for the number of congregations, congregants, and breakdown of Jewish and non-Jewish members, among other figures.

It provides an overview of each congregation and its leaders, a brief description of the group's theology, leadership structure (including the role of women), membership, weekly services, and other regular activities. A brief analysis of the statistical results appears in the introductory chapters, which raise questions, subjects of interest and issues important for future reflection.

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Mishkan 30-31 / 1999

Published by the United Christian Council in Israel in cooperation  
with the Caspari Center for Biblical and Jewish Studies  
Jerusalem 1999

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## About the Messianic Congregations in Israel 1998-1999

A survey conducted by  
Kai Kjær-Hansen and Bodil F. Skjøtt

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**Facts & Myths About the Messianic Congregations in Israel**  
**A survey conducted by Kai Kjær-Hansen and Bodil F. Skjøtt**

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Cover design: Joel Goldberg, Goldgraph Design, Israel

Linguistic editor: David A. Smith

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Distribution by:

Caspari Center, P.O. Box 71099, Jerusalem 91000

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The survey has been sponsored by the Caspari Center of Biblical and Jewish  
Studies, Jerusalem

**Facts & Myths About the Messianic Congregations in Israel**

1. Jewish believers in Israel - profiles and statistics on Messianic Jewish congregations in Israel. 2. Messianic Judaism/Jewish Christianity. 3. Israeli Press and opposition to Messianic Jews. 4. Statement of faith/creeds in the Messianic Movement and their services. 5. Missions and churches in Israel. 6. Jewish evangelism. I. Kjær-Hansen, Kai and Skjøtt, Bodil F. authors.

Printed in Jerusalem, Israel, 1999

ISSN 0792-0474



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## Introduction

At a Mishkan editorial board meeting in 1997 it was decided to commemorate the State of Israel's 50-year jubilee in 1998 by devoting the ensuing three issues to focus on the history of the Messianic Movement in Israel 1948-1998.

The first two issues (published in Mishkan as issues 28/1998 and 29/1998) carried valuable and engaging articles by Menahem Benhayim, Baruch Maoz, Gershon Nerel and Lisa Loden - to mention some of the Messianic Israeli Jewish authors.

The third issue in this series (scheduled as issue 30) replaces issues 30/1999 and 31/1999 - due to the amount of the material.

The survey of Messianic congregations, presented in this double issue of Mishkan, has been conducted as follows:

After preparing the survey in the first part of 1998 three rounds of interviews were conducted in Israel in October and December 1998 and in January 1999. We worked independently on these interviews in Israel and in Denmark until May 1999. In Jerusalem during three weeks in May we made telephone interviews with the few congregations which we had not been able to talk to earlier and also with a few congregations whose existence we had not been aware of. We also prepared the manuscripts so that we could send them to the interviewees for approval - as we had promised. This method was used only with regard to the leaders of the Messianic congregations (Districts 1-7) and not with regard to the other groups (8-11) dealt with in the survey. In June/July 1999 we had four weeks to finalize the survey - with the assistance of David Smith, our linguistic editor, and others.

At the end of May 1999 our profiles were sent to the interviewees for approval. Most proposed corrections have been followed and included in the presented survey. Still, we have the full responsibility for the information in it. We also take full responsibility for the proposed corrections which we have not followed. The same applies to such errors and imprecision which may occur.

There are a few congregations which right from the beginning did not grant us an interview. We have written about those on the basis of information we have been able to gather from other sources. Of course the leaders of these congregations have not been given their profiles for approval. When we



mention names in connection with these congregations, we do so only when we know that these have already been mentioned in the Israeli press.

A few congregations have stressed that they wish to remain anonymous, and of course we have respected that request.

We have tried to be as open as possible in the hope that such openness clarify misconceptions about Jewish believers in Jesus.

We presume that the moderate figure for Jewish believers in Jesus, which the survey reveals, will disappoint some people who talk strongly about and rejoice in the openness for the gospel in Israel. In our opinion it is a sad thing if one's joy is founded on numerical myths. It is equally sad if one cannot rejoice in realistic figures - however small they might be.

It is our hope that the survey - in spite of all shortcomings - may offer a contribution to a realistic picture of the Messianic congregations in Israel here on the eve of the third millennium - and we thank all who have contributed information and assistance at the final stage before publication.

Jerusalem, 5 July 1999

*Kai Kjær-Hansen and Bodil F. Skjøtt*

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## 2. Collecting and presenting the material

This survey covers most of the Messianic congregations and independent house groups in Israel during 1998-1999. Its purpose is to give a realistic picture of as many of the congregations and groups in the country as possible. In most cases the information is provided by firsthand sources. If it was previously difficult to talk about *the* Messianic Movement it has certainly become no easier at the end of the 1990s.

The survey is built according to a questionnaire which was presented, face to face in most cases, otherwise by telephone, to responsible members of each congregation or house group. Where the leader was unavailable, for whatever reason, the information was obtained from another member. In some instances written sources have been obtained.

### The structure of the survey

The structure of the survey follows the questions asked in the questionnaire. It thus contains factual information, including the names of each group and their leaders; some few have requested to remain anonymous. A brief history of each congregation/group is then provided, documenting its “ups and downs” as well as splits which have occurred. The “Messianic” character of each group is addressed through an examination of how its members celebrate Jewish and Christian holidays. Similarly, whenever a statement of faith has been available it is referred to directly. The congregation/group’s attitude towards baptism and the way in which they perform it is then noted.

A section on leadership attempts to give an impression of each congregation/group’s structure, its leaders’ training and education, as well as the role of women in leadership. The number of Jewish believers in Jesus who are members in each group or belong to the core group is estimated as accurately as possible, together with the number of non-Jewish spouses and children in Jewish households. Reference is also made to the number of non-Jewish believers who have made a Messianic group their spiritual home.

An attempt has likewise been made to reflect changes over the recent years. The weekly service is described, including the number of attendants, other regular activities, and indicators of the group’s Jewish character. A brief section is included on cooperation between congregations and their leaders, and finally



the financial situation of each group has been reviewed. It has not been possible to give as clear a picture of these circumstances as we had wished.

Many other issues could have been researched. The survey does not pretend to cover all the relevant areas necessary in order to give an adequate picture of the present situation among the Messianic congregations. What we do claim, however, is that the survey covers a sufficient percentage of the overall number of congregations and house groups to obtain clear theological and demographical figures. The omission of certain groups – and we have heard of a couple whose existence could not be confirmed – will not significantly alter the picture. Until proven otherwise we believe that we have covered not only the most important but also the vast majority of the congregations and house groups which exist in Israel today.

In the introductory chapters we do not intend to comment statistically on all the issues dealt with. The material is made available for people to draw their own conclusions; we have merely addressed some specific issues, for their significance and/or for their interest, and provided some commentary which can hopefully form the basis for constructive reflection both within the Messianic Movement itself and by outsiders. Although international congregations, the Hebrew Catholics and other groups are included, as well as such groups as the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons, the Messianic Movement has at all times constituted the survey's primary focus.

The inclusion of the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons is solely due to the fact that they are part of the religious picture in Israel. While we do not intend to suggest that they are in any way related to the Messianic Movement at least Jehovah's Witnesses have more frequently than not received the same treatment as the Messianic congregations in Israel both in the press and "on the ground."

### Since the 1960s

In 1970 the Dane Per Østerbye published his book *The Church in Israel: A Report on the Work and Position of the Christian Churches in Israel, with Special Reference to the Protestant Churches and Communities*. The book gives a picture of the situation during the 1960s (up until 1968). Of the 43 short profiles at the end of the book on churches, congregations, and organizations only one deals with a local indigenous congregation, namely the Messianic Assembly of Israel (see 1-10). Although a few leaders of Jewish origin are referred to, these are almost without exception, mentioned in connection with congregations and works led by foreign churches or organizations.

Compared to Østerbye's account, it is clear that many developments have occurred over the last 30 years with respect to local, indigenous, independent congregations. The present survey covers 81 congregations and house groups, including a few which are still in close relation with a foreign organization (dealt with also by Østerbye). Some of the churches and organizations which

were part of the picture in the 1960s are still working in Israel, although their workers have a much less prominent leadership position in the congregations.

It is evident that today there are local, independent Messianic congregations whose leaders for the most part are either Jewish or have a Jewish spouse and therefore live in a Jewish household. It cannot be concluded from this, however, that the movement has become more homogenous, either with regard to theology or to style of worship. The possibility of founding a "national Israeli church" has not become more realistic than when it was mooted at the beginning of the 1950s. Around 1990 attempts were made to establish a broad theological basis for a Messianic Midrasha (Bible School). These also did not mature. Thus while this survey clearly shows an enormous increase in new congregations up through the 1990s it also shows that these have created an even greater diversity.

Messianic Jews have at times argued that foreign churches and organizations have been the reason for their lack of unity and prevented the formation of a Messianic "church." Thus, for example, the claim has been made that the foreign missionaries have merely promoted their own denomination, an accusation which is difficult to maintain at the end of the 1990s as the reason for the diversity within the movement. It has also been said that expatriate workers have not sufficiently identified with Jewish culture nor learned the language and that this has turned Jewish believers in Jesus away from their Jewish background.

Such an accusation does not carry the same weight in 1999, however, since expatriate workers now make up only a small minority of the leadership in the congregations. While identifying with Jewish culture and learning the language is still a problem its cause cannot be attributed to expatriate workers alone. This issue is today an *internal problem* in the Messianic Movement and is in no small degree due to immigration from the former USSR. The survey makes it clear that the growth of the movement has come from immigration more than from anything else, and this poses a challenge for the movement. Or in other words, the lack of uniformity within the Messianic congregations can be compared to the lack of consistency in the transliteration of Hebrew geographical and personal names, to which this survey also attests.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Transliterations: Anyone traveling in Israel and using a map soon realizes that its English spelling does not necessarily correspond to the spelling found on the road signs and that even two signs one after another are likely to give two (sometimes quite different) transliterations for the same name. We are aware that similar inconsistencies can be found in this survey. We have, however, deliberately chosen not to use a scholarly transliteration system, preferring instead to sacrifice correctness and consistency for familiarity with "standard" usages (at least in Israel) and thus avoiding odd spellings of names normally recognized under a different spelling.

*Hebrew personal names:* Here, we have endeavored to reflect the spelling used by the name's owner. This means that the same Hebrew name in English can be spelled in

### Between confidence and critique

This survey could not have been conducted without the openness and confidence extended to us by those from whom we sought information. Although we hope that we have honored and respected their confidence in the way we have presented the profiles, a certain scholarly "price" has been paid for doing so. Despite our best intentions, our commitment to people's sensitivities has thus led us at times to take a less "critical" approach than academia would normally require. While this may be viewed as a shortcoming, we are convinced that those who have shared the information with us should be able to recognize themselves in our description of their particular situation.

At times, the explanations and accounts given us concerning disagreements and splits has left us with the suspicion that we have not always been provided with all the relevant factual information. Such "concealment" may derive either from the desire to preserve one's own image or from consideration for the other party. While the latter is, humanly speaking, a very positive trait and indicates a desire not to hurt others involved, the resulting historical portrait must suffer from a certain inaccuracy regarding "what really happened." That the Messianic Movement in Israel has experienced splits cannot be concealed.

Only five of the congregational leaders whom we had interviewed did not (for various reasons) wish the profile of their congregation to be published after they had had the opportunity to see what we had written. It is with regret that we have had to accept their decision even if we have not deleted them completely from the survey. In four of these five profiles we have consequently omitted all information on the identity of the congregational leaders. In three of

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two different ways; for example Zvi and Tsvi. At times people themselves have changed the preferred spelling in English of their own name, such as Menachem/Menahem or Chaya/Haya.

*Geographical names:* These names generally follow the spelling adopted in *The Jerusalem Post*. However, it is not difficult to find inconsistencies in this particular newspaper, should one wish to look. The same is true for this survey.

*Congregational/group names:* Wherever possible we have given the Hebrew name, followed by the transliterated form and the official name in English under which the congregation is known. At times the *meaning* of the Hebrew name is given in English in parenthesis and quotation marks, together with a biblical reference where appropriate, indicating the source of the name.

The name we have given for a congregation may differ from its transliterated form. Likewise, no intention exists to infer that a congregation/group is "less Jewish" if the English is preferred over the Hebrew name; the reasons are purely practical. Thus very few people would recognize the "Flame of the Lord Congregation"; whether or not one knows the meaning of "Shalhevetyah," this is the name by which this congregation is customarily known. Similarly, Keren Yeshu'ah is not generally referred to as "The Horn of Salvation" but by its Hebrew name.

these four cases we have also omitted the name of the congregation and obscured the geographical location.

The fifth profile has, to our regret, been deleted following a specific request by its leader, to whom it was shown. Despite the fact that written sources which include the name of the congregation, its location, and a description of the weekly service and other activities are available in a Norwegian magazine written by a member of the congregation we are honoring the leader's request and have removed the profile. Similarly, although the number of the members of the congregation, which consists of "Jewish believers in Yeshua haMashiach who believe in keeping the law of God" is known approximately to us, we have respected the leader's conviction that "God has commanded that we not take a census of Israel." The congregation is therefore not included in the survey and with regret there is no further reference to the group or to its theology.

### Mapping out the Messianic congregations

The primary sources for the survey are the persons interviewed, but at times information from written sources has been added and incorporated into the profiles.

#### *Written sources*

We have not found it necessary to indicate when disagreement occurs between the information provided by the person interviewed and a written source. When extensive use of a written source has been made to describe either a person, a period or a group the source has been mentioned in the particular profile.

The following sources which are written in Israel are hard to come by and deserve special mention:

*Israel Update*, written by Baruch Maoz through the 1980s up until 1992 when it was discontinued due to what Maoz described as a lack of openness on the part of the leaders to share information (see p. 43). It contains brief, but valuable information about events and developments within the congregations written shortly after they occurred.

*UCCI News*, edited by different people, was a magazine started in 1970 and was published on a regular basis up until the early 1990s. It featured theological articles and information on the work of UCCI plus information from the member organizations under the heading "From the Vineyard."

*UCCI News Clippings* began in 1977 and continued until 1989 (during the last years under the name *Selections*). Altogether 178 issues were published. It was followed by *UCCI News Clips (New Serie)* with 19 issues up until 1992. The clippings were edited by Menachem Benhayim (see 1-10) and contains an extensive summaries of articles from the Israeli press, especially from the period 1977-1989. When the survey refers to sources from the Israeli press the UCCI

News Clippings is the main source, a very valuable source and not used as much as it could have been in the survey.

*The Caspari Center Media Review* began in 1995, and is less extensive than the UCCI News Clippings. Until 1999 it was edited by Cindy Osborn, since spring 1999 by Lisa Loden. In reference made to the Israeli press is also included material from this source.

Material from the Israeli press has not been evaluated either with regard to possible bias or inaccurate information.

Since 1997 and onwards Messianic Action Committee (MAC) has sent out continuously a *Freedom Report* with information concerning activities of Knesset-members to limit the right of freedom of expression (see p. 25-26).

*Hayahad*, the magazine of the Baptists is described in 8-01. Concerning other newsletter from Israel which have been used in the survey, see the Bibliography.

### *Districts*

We have followed the division of Israel into 6 districts used by the Central Bureau of Statistics (Yahav 1995) and placed each congregation according to its appropriate district. Congregations in Judea and Samaria are placed in what we have designated Area 7. This makes it possible to compare statistical information regarding the number of Jewish believers with the population number in the district, an analysis not done here. A congregation with the number 3-05 thus indicates that it belongs to district 3 (Haifa) where it appears as number 5.

International Protestant congregations where Jewish believers might worship are included in Group 8 and the number of Jewish believers is recorded in the statistical tables (Chapter 6). However, these figures are not included in the statistics on members in the Messianic congregations. A brief history of these congregations has been included when relevant for the history of the work of foreign churches and organizations in Israel and the development towards local, indigenous congregations.

### *81 congregations and house groups*

Included are 81 congregations and independent house groups.

Over the period in which the survey has been conducted certain changes have occurred in the congregations. Where these developments are known to us we have noted them at the end under a section called "Latest developments." One congregation has ceased to exist (3-06) and one (6-07) has merged with the new congregation in Ashkelon established by Grace and Truth (4-02) and still under its leadership. According to our criteria the new Ashkelon congregation should have had a separate number. The leader of the Yeruel congregation in Arad (6-09), Milton Maimon, passed away in May 1999 and the future of the

group is unknown to us. In spite of these changes we have therefore maintained the number 81.

The 81 groups can be divided into 69 congregations and 12 house groups. In some surveys, the term "house groups" is also used for "home groups" and since the present survey also talks about "home groups" an explanation is in order.

The designation *home group* refers to a cell-group under a congregation and members of home groups are therefore counted as members of their congregation or fellowship. It is not always clear whether this distinction has been made when numbers of congregations and house groups have previously been made; some members could therefore have been counted twice.

A *house group* refers, in our terms, to an *independent* group or a fellowship which does not define itself as a congregation/church. Often it perceives itself in the process of becoming a congregation.

A group which describes itself as a *fellowship* may either be a *house group* or a *home group* or a *congregation*.

A *congregation* may refer to itself as a *church* or an *assembly*, etc.

The *place* in which the services/meetings are held does not determine the group's self-designation. Many *congregations* come together in a "house" or an apartment. Similarly, a *home group* may meet on the premises of a church. Nor is it necessarily the number of persons which makes the difference. In the survey there are examples of *home groups* and *house groups* which are numerically larger than the smallest *congregation*. Some of the new 1990s "groups" do not seem to be motivated by thorough theological reflection when they go from being a house group to becoming a congregation. Often *house groups* develop into *congregations* when they grow and are able to find a leader. Some house groups perform baptism and communion, acts which in a traditional Christian setting belong only in a congregation.

Although *home groups* are often situated in the geographical vicinity of their congregation they are not always so proximate. A congregation in the Haifa area may thus have *home groups* in the Tel Aviv area. The survey shows that within the Messianic congregations there are more than 130 home groups (see p. 57).

While the pre-1990s congregations have clear – although often different – understandings of what constitutes a congregation, this is not true for some of the new congregation of the 1990s. Should the Messianic Movement be in need of issues for discussion the question of what constitutes a congregation is an obvious choice.

### Terminology and definitions

In order to be able to differentiate between Jewish and Christian holidays we have used Hebrew names for Jewish feasts, like Pesach, Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Chanuka and others. The Christian feasts are referred



to in the traditional manner: Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. The term "Old Testament" has been substituted by the Hebrew acronym *Tanakh*, in order to be sensitive and avoid suggesting that the Law, Prophets, and Writings have been made obsolete.

For the same reason both "Jesus" and "Yeshua" can be found, although we ourselves use the English form "Jesus."

A much more important issue is the use of the term "Messianic" and "Jewish" in this survey. A "Messianic" congregation is defined as a congregation which goal is to meet the spiritual needs of Jewish believers in Jesus but not at the expense of excluding non-Jewish people from their fellowship.

The word "Messianic" is - when referring to a person - used exclusively of believers in Jesus of Jewish origin. Non-Jewish believers who are members of a Messianic Jewish congregation are not called Messianic believers (see also p. 61). One of the survey's goals has been to clarify how "Messianic" the Messianic congregations are with regard to, for example, Jewish expressions and the incorporation of Jewish ways of thinking and theology. But regardless of how little there might be of such elements in the theology and style of worship of many congregations/groups, almost all the congregations define themselves as "Messianic" (see, however, 4-02).

The designation "Jew" and "Jewish," when used in connection with believers of Jewish origin, also demands clarification. These terms are not used strictly but rather reflect people's own self-understanding. Thus we have considered a person who has immigrated to Israel under the Law of Return and regards him/herself as Jewish to be Jewish - even though this person is not Jewish according to halakhah (Jewish law) (Sadan 1996).

More could be said on terminology within the Messianic Movement, including new Hebrew expressions for traditional Christian words and terms, a topic which we shall not deal with here. However, it cannot be denied that "terminology-clashes" between our way of communicating and that of those interviewed have arisen also. This is true for the way that many Messianic believers relate to Christian denominations and groups. In general it can be said that most would avoid defining themselves by using denominational labels.

The vast majority will not even use the word "Christian," certainly as a self-designation. This circumstance not only reflects the history of the Christian church but also demonstrates the fact that a Jew who believes in Jesus remains Jewish. The desire to maintain Jewish identity is consequently perceived to be in direct conflict with the use of Christian terminology and labeling. Whereas the word "congregation" is perceived as being neutral this is not always true for the word "church." The word "non-denominational" is neutral. The same is not true for the word "evangelical," although the theology, statement of faith, and style of worship of many congregations/groups are what is normally described

as “evangelical.” Very few have a confessional basis and openly admit a relationship to denominational ties within the traditional Protestant churches.

The label “charismatic” is also problematic for some because of its association with a western, Christian movement, although the style of worship in many congregations is obviously what is called charismatic in other circles. The Toronto Movement has caused division also in Israel and very few will subscribe to it without reservation, even though more groups are positive towards the charismatic movement in general. Other “charismatics” will define themselves as charismatics but “not like the Toronto Movement,” which they define as “wild charismatic.” On the other hand, *non-charismatics* will make sure that people understand that they believe in the continued work of the Holy Spirit. Add to this the fact that there are, for example, two congregations which are similar in that both make use of a Torah scroll in their services, but one describes itself as “charismatic,” the other as “non-charismatic,” and it becomes evident just how difficult it is to accurately express all differences terminologically. Things become even more complicated with the Russian Baptist- and Pentecostal-influenced congregations. These are sometimes described as “quiet” rather than “noisy” with regard to their style of worship, unless they have been exposed to the western charismatic movement; then other Russian Baptist and Pentecostals can describe them as “noisy” (see p. 51).

Israeli Messianic Jews have difficulties defining themselves not only in relation to Christian denominations but also to the so-called Messianic congregational movement in the USA. Terms used by some within the Messianic congregational movement in North America (see Wasserman 1997), such as *Rabbi* (for pastor or elder), are used by very few people in Israel, given the much greater religious nature of Israeli society, in which a Rabbi is indeed a qualified, yeshiva-trained person. Milton Maimon was an exception in this regard (see 6-09). Two other leaders who were part of the Messianic Movement in the USA before immigrating to Israel admit that such a title does not communicate in Israel (see 1-12; 3-11). Nobody within the Messianic Movement in Israel uses the word “synagogue” to describe their congregation, although a few groups define their style of worship as “synagogue-style” (e.g. 1-13).

Some people profiled have defined themselves as “Messianic, but *not* in the American sense.” This frequently refers to the use of prayer shawls, kippas, a Torah scroll, and a more extensive use of rabbinic traditions. Other congregations define the term “Messianic” as meaning “culturally relevant” in Jewish/Israeli society.

Only 3 leaders who prior to moving to Israel had identified with the Messianic Movement in the USA have continued their practice and maintained their vision after immigrating (1-12, 3-11 and 6-09). Two other congregations can be compared with regard to the continued relevance of “keeping the Law” for Jewish believers in Jesus: Roeh Yisrael (1-13) and the Ramat Gan Congregation (5-11) (in spite of the fact that the two are very different with

regard to their style of worship). A shared theology on the importance of the Torah therefore does not necessarily indicate a similar expression of worship.

This leaves us with problems, theological as well as terminological, in describing the range of Messianic congregations and in danger of doing them injustice. Describing Roeh Yisrael (1-13), led by Joseph Shulam, as being “Torah positive” will offend Shulam, who insists that the Torah is important today in the same way as it was central to the Early Church and we have to arrive at the Torah through the teaching of Jesus. To describe the group as “a messianic congregation of a New Testament type” would raise objections from others who claim that they too can be described as such, even though they are very different in theology and expression. Were we to say that local, independent congregations in Israel are adverse to any confessional basis, then Grace and Truth Christian Assembly (4-02) led by Baruch Maoz would protest. This congregation does not belong to any denomination but defines itself as Reformed Baptist. Congregations with a confessional Lutheran background and with close ties to an expatriate home board would claim that from this one cannot conclude that they do not desire to become local and independent!

These remarks explain why we find it difficult to apply clearly defined labels and why we often have been forced to be imprecise in our description.

To give an overview of the congregations we will sometimes divide them according to the decade in which they were founded, such as “the 1980s congregations, the 1990s or the pre-1990s congregations.” A list of when the present congregation was established can be found in Table 2 in Chapter 6.

The following chapter will explain the content of the questionnaire and give summary of our observations.

### **3. Summary of observations on Messianic congregations**

This chapter describes the questionnaire according to the different sections and summarizes some of the data of the profiles. When relevant or possible we will indicate general directions and point out the exceptions in an attempt to convey the picture of Messianic congregations illustrated by the information the leaders have shared.

#### **Factual information**

The first section in the questionnaire deals with factual issues such as location, name, category (congregation or house group) and meeting place.

##### **Location**

The list of congregations and house groups surveyed divides the groups into districts and the location of each group is then given accordingly (see p. 7-10).

##### **Names**

Fourteen groups have no official name. That a house group does not have an official name is not surprising but one would expect a congregation to have one. The 4 congregations that are listed as anonymous all have a biblical or biblically-inspired name.

It is not surprising that many have biblical names, often taken from the Tanakh. It indicates a desire to express that Messianic faith has biblical and Jewish roots.

Denominational names are rare, also for pre-1970 congregations. Only insiders will know that a name like "Achim" (5-09) shows that this is a "Brethren" assembly. Of the three congregations with Lutheran background only the one in Jaffa has maintained the word "Luteranit" in its Hebrew as well as its English name (5-08). The congregation in Haifa is now called "Beit Eliahu - Messianic Congregation" (3-01) and only very few people know that Shalhevetyah (1-15) in its official English name has the word "Christian." It is worth noticing that the only other congregation which in its official English name has the word "Christian" is Grace and Truth Christian Assembly (4-02).

The first of the congregations surveyed to use the adjective *Meshichi* in its name was "The Messianic Assembly of Israel" (1-10). When the congregation is referred to in English it is always mentioned as "Messianic," and not "Christian" Assembly. The name indicates as such an agenda and sends a message.

Congregations from the 1970s and 1980s use biblical and *not* denominational names or they use the name of their geographical location with or without the word "Messianic." It reveals the desire to detach and become independent of any ties to foreign denominations. The same tendency can be seen in congregations founded in the 1990s but there are notable exceptions. They can all be found in congregations established by people from the former USSR.

It is hard to imagine a congregation established in the 1980s using the name "Full Gospel Messianic Center" (3-05) even though it contains the word "Messianic." Names of foreign organizations are also used again in the 1990s, although in a less transparent way than before, partly because of the biblical inspiration, but the name "Word of Life Congregation" (3-13) reveals an inspiration from or perhaps even connection to the Swedish organization with the same name. "Rivers of Living Water" (2-15) is influenced by Rivers of Living Water International and the intention of the leaders is to form a Israeli branch.

The names confirm what the survey shows in other ways - that the formation of the congregations of the 1990s has brought about a situation that the congregations of the 1970-1980s thought was behind them.

### Legal status

Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 until 1980 the old Ottoman Law of Societies from 1909 was in use, under which most churches and institutions in Israel were registered. In July 1980 the *Amutot Law* was passed, known in English as the Friendly Societies Law. The *amutah* structure provides a legal framework for non-profit and charitable societies or associations - used by both Jewish and non-Jewish associations.

The name of the *amutah* is often different from the name of the congregation and the purpose of the *amutah* is usually wider than that of the congregation.

Some organizations are registered as a fund or a foreign organization. This is true for the Norwegian Church Mission to Israel (NCMI) and the Israel Trust of the Anglican Church (ITAC). The Anglican Church is the only Protestant church officially recognized by the Israeli authorities as a "religious community" (Colbi 1969:167-169).

In 1958 the Messianic Assembly, Jerusalem (1-10) received as the first Messianic congregation status as an Ottoman Society.

Some congregations have indicated that they have found it difficult to become registered as an *amutah* and that the process can take several years. When in the profiles it says "not yet an *amutah*" it means that the congregation

is in the actual process or plans to apply for amutah status. It is rare that a congregation does not want amutah status for *theological* reasons, however, one such case has been noted.

Of the 12 house groups only two are under the amutah of another organizations. Of the 69 congregations about half are registered as an amutah.

### Meeting place

It is not surprising that 11 of the 12 house groups meet in private homes; 1 Ethiopian group (1-07) meets in facilities belonging to a church/mission.

It is not surprising either that most of the pre-1990s congregations generally have better meeting facilities than those established only in the 1990s, although some of the older congregations still meet in private homes (2-04, 2-12, 6-05), and a few have a somewhat permanent meeting room in the private home. The remaining pre-1990 congregation meet in

- buildings owned by the congregation: 1-10, 1-13, 3-02, 4-03, 5-09.
- buildings rented by the congregation (not church facilities): 2-06; 2-14; 4-01;
- in church facilities (whether rented or not) 1-03; 1-15; 3-01, 4-02, 5-03, 5-06, 6-03, 5-07, 5-08.

The church facilities belong to CWI, FELM, ITAC C&MA and NCMI. In most cases this does not affect the congregations' status as independent of the foreign society/church. The rent is normally considerably lower than the marked price and in some cases the congregation does not pay rent but is responsible for the up-keep.

Of the congregations founded in the 1990s the majority meet in rented facilities. Often it is a private home or facilities where a congregation member - in most cases the leader - lives in one part and the other part is used by the congregation. Some 15 groups meet in church facilities.

A few of those in church facilities meet in buildings primarily used by Arabic-speaking congregations like 2-02 and 3-10.

Three congregations have new facilities (3-11, 4-03, 5-01). To the best of our knowledge congregations which own their facilities have either received them as a gift or bought them with means donated from abroad rather than collected locally.

None of the Russian groups own their facilities.

### History and key persons

Obviously the descriptions of the history of the congregations given in the profiles are very different, both with regard to character and to length. There is more to tell about an older congregation. When possible and relevant we have tried to refer to prominent persons who have influenced the specific



congregation. Often these are people who lived in the area even before the time of the State of Israel (see 1-10, 3-02, 5-09, 5-11; see also 1-13). We intended to indicate the background of these people; written sources have been used in order to achieve this goal.

A phenomenon which repeats itself in the history of the Messianic congregations is the many splits that have occurred. It is not the purpose here to say who is right or wrong. Some splits are due to disagreements between a foreign mission and local believers; others are caused either by theological contention or issues of leadership conflicts. As already mentioned the real reason for the split is not always expressed clearly in the profiles and the two parties will sometimes describe the same situation differently (see p. 14).

With regard to leaders we have tried to indicate either under *History* or *Leadership* whether they are Jewish or non-Jewish, when they came to faith, occupation and education, theological training and/or leadership experience.

The profiles do not reveal whether key persons are Jewish or non-Jewish nor is marriage status reflected (married/non-married/inter-marriage). In our first draft we tried to include this information but later decided to omit it. However, sufficient information has been collected to give approximate figures on this.

By focusing on key persons at the time of foundation and at present a number of persons who were key people in the congregation in the intervening time are not mentioned and unfortunately reference to their contribution is lacking.

Several of the 81 groups operate with a plural leadership although in most cases one person is the senior leader/elder. For the sake of statistics it is the information on that person which is included here. We are here looking for a *tendency* and do not pretend to have accurate information on all details.

The 81 groups have 78 different leaders (see 1-18 and 4-07). Of the 78 leaders some 55 are Jewish, which is about 70% of all the leaders. Two are Arabs (3-01 and 3-04).

(1) *Place of birth*: (Israeli born or outside Israel): Some 10 of the 55 Jewish leaders are born in Israel; some 6 came to Israel with their parents (under 10 years old) and some 6 came as teenagers.

(2) *Age*: The average age is under 50 and only some 5 leaders have turned 60.

(3) *Where the person came to faith (in Israel or abroad) and second generation believer*: Of the some 55 Jewish leaders about 35 came to faith outside Israel; about 15 came to faith in Israel and less than 5 are second generation Jewish Believers.

(4) *Marriage (status/intermarriage)*: Some 5 of all the leaders are not married. The intermarriage rate among the Jewish leaders is about 50%. However, more than 75% of all the leaders in the Messianic congregations live in a Jewish household (where at least one of the spouses is Jewish).

(5) *Education*: On an average leaders of the Messianic congregations have completed higher education (BA or the equivalent). The area in which they have trained vary greatly.

(6) *Theological training*: Only few of the Jewish leaders have a formal theological training of more than 3 years; some have a year or more of Bible School, but many have a long period of "on the job training".

For further comparisons see table in Chapter 6 on demographics.

## Harassment

For many congregations or their members, harassment and opposition seem to be part and parcel of what it means to be a Jewish believer in Jesus in Israel. The hostility which they face includes posters publicly exposing individuals or groups, unreliable or tendentious newspaper articles on congregations and members, threats of and actual loss of jobs, damage to property, death threats, interruption of meetings or attempts to prevent them from taking place, graffiti, arson, and so forth. However, the survey also shows that some congregations have experienced little or no harassment.

The fact that a congregation is the target of harassment demonstrates that it is known and its activities disliked by at least some people in the community. When harassment is absent, however, the opposite conclusion cannot be drawn; rather, this simply suggests that anti-missionary organizations are perhaps less active in that particular location.

The best known of these organizations is Yad L'Achim (literally: "A Hand to the Brethren"). According to Baruch Maoz, Yad L'Achim is: "An organization which enjoys substantial financial support from the Government and many municipality authorities and has an Anti-Missionary Department which utilises information culled from government files." (Maoz 1986:10).

The most severe cases of harassment are mentioned in the profiles on the following congregations: 1-10, 1-13, 2-14, 4-01, 4-02, 6-03, and 8-01.

The majority of the congregations have been the object of negative exposure in the press. Generally speaking, articles in the religious press are very tendentious. The Orthodox press makes no distinction between Messianic Jews and Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons but deals with all of them under the label of "cults." On the other hand, the secular press also presents objective articles on the movement and individual believers.

The survey may draw criticism for failing to ask any questions regarding "good relations to the surroundings." A Gallup from 1988 on Israeli public opinion on Jewish believers and their right to receive an immigrant's visa under the Law of Return shows that a majority would be in favor of granting Jews who believe in Jesus an immigrant visa (Stern 1989).

The so-called Anti-missionary Law of December 1977 has in fact never been implemented, despite the fact that the press tends to maintain the myth that Christian organizations and the Messianic Movement "buy souls" by offering

material gifts in exchange for conversion. In 1997 and 1998 two further proposals were presented to the Knesset. The first was initiated by Knesset members Moshe Gafni from United Torah Judaism and Nissim Zvili from Labour, the second by Shas member R. Pinchasi. Both proposals were submitted by individual members rather than a by a party. After the new elections to the Knesset in May 1999 the proposals need to be re-submitted.

Thus while some Christian circles outside of Israel perpetuate the myth that missionizing is prohibited in Israel, this is simply not true. It will only become so if and when a new law is passed. But this does not prevent anti-missionary organizations from being active and at times taking the law into their own hands.

In 1984 Victor Smadja (1-10) was quoted in an article in the national *Ha'Aretz* newspaper (16.03.84) as saying that the problems facing the congregations are seasonal: "There are times when they [the anti-missionaries] find it necessary to step up their activity, especially before elections in order to demonstrate their effectiveness." Events prior to the election on May 17, 1999 seems to underscore Smadja's words.

Considering the risks of harassment, some people might consider it surprising that so many of the congregations agreed to appear in this survey, the majority of them not only being willing to provide the name of the congregation but also those of its leaders. However, leaders of the pre-90 congregations are well aware that Yad L'Achim is already familiar with them, while some of the leaders of the newly-established Russian congregations are simply not intimidated. Perhaps those most sensitive to the opposition are the Amharic-speaking congregations.

The survey does not give any information regarding the effect harassment has had on individual members and their families, nor does it indicate how many have left the movement because of intimidation.

It should be mentioned that the Jehovah's Witnesses experience the same kind of harassment as do Messianic groups (see 11-01).

## Theological character

Under the heading *Theological character* the aim has been to find out how Jewish the Messianic Jewish congregations are and how or when Jewishness is expressed. Furthermore the aim has been to determine to what extent their theology differs from that of denominational churches.

### Theology

As said previously (p. 19-21) many leaders within the movement have difficulty describing the theological character of their congregation, mainly because they want to avoid terms which place them together with specific denominations

within the Christian church. In this section, however, we will have to use terms and categories in order to communicate clearly and draw some comparisons.

Our interpretation of the collected material is that the theology of Messianic Jewish congregations does not differ significantly from other groups within the Christian church. When it comes to expressions of worship some do not differ at all. A few differ very much because they have deliberately chosen the worship style of the synagogue. Others differ less because their aim is not necessarily to use a Jewish style of worship, but rather to make the worship culturally relevant to an Israeli/Jewish context. In these congregations Jewish elements are used to express the Jewish roots of faith in the Messiah and to stress that this faith is in essence Jewish.

But the incorporation of Jewish elements and the way in which this is done does not change the basic theology of the Messianic congregations which can best be compared to an evangelical theology. That a few congregations see a continued keeping of the Law as relevant and perhaps obligatory for Jewish believers in Jesus does not alter the over all picture.

### **Jewish and Christian holidays**

Almost all congregations celebrate the Jewish holidays in one form or another and understand the holidays to have their fulfillment in Jesus. In general, the pre-1990s congregations have a clear theological understanding of what this means which is expressed in the way the holidays are celebrated. The same is true for some of the newer congregations. Some of the Russian-speaking congregations have not yet dealt with this issue and here the Jewish holidays are primarily seen as yet another opportunity to come together.

Church holidays are not celebrated by the pre-1990s congregations except for the 3 that are Lutheran and, interestingly enough, the Ramat Gan Congregation (5-11). That individual members celebrate Christmas is not seen as an issue. The same trend can be seen in the 1990s congregations but with the exception of some of the Russian-speaking groups which find it natural to celebrate the church holidays. They have been used to and see no reason to discontinue their practice.

All congregations which celebrate the Jewish holidays do so "in the name of Jesus." The fact that the holidays are celebrated should be stressed. It clearly indicates that the congregations see themselves as *Jewish* congregations. We still uphold that this does not change their theology.

That the older congregations have become more Jewish over the years is clear. The celebration of the holidays is just one indication and the incorporation of other Jewish elements, mainly from the liturgy of the synagogue, is another example of how the movement has gotten a more Jewish flavor (more on this under *Description of the weekly service*, 39-41).

## **Jewishness and faith: The development within the Messianic congregations**

### *Pre-1970s congregations*

Apart from Ramat Gan Congregation (5-11), which basically has remained unchanged since its foundation all other pre-1990s congregations have changed with regard to Jewish expressions and have become more Jewish; this is true also for congregations of a Brethren tradition (1-10, 3-12, 5-09) and the 3 Lutheran congregations (1-15, 3-01, 5-08). Jewish identity has been strengthened but this has happened without a change in theology, Christology or soteriology away from the Christian church. That some leaders still are critical towards the Christian church and to the work of expatriates in Israel has in this respect very little to do with their fundamental theology.

A stronger Jewish flavor has not - either in theology or in practice - brought any of the pre-1970s congregations closer to the synagogue.

### *1970s congregations*

Congregations founded in the 1970s were influenced by the desire to be local, independent, Hebrew-speaking congregations. All are still independent and Hebrew-speaking but otherwise very different. Grace and Truth Christian Assembly (4-02) is a local, independent congregation with a confessional basis. Roeh Yisrael (1-13) is a local, independent congregation with a strong Jewish flavor both in its theology and practice. The remaining groups are local, independent with a Israeli/Jewish flavor.

In other words, only 1 of the 1970s congregations has remained unchanged in its leaning towards the synagogue without isolating itself from the rest of the movement on issues of Christology and soteriology.

### *1980s congregations*

Several of the congregations founded in the 1980s continued the line from the 1970s. They were local, independent and Hebrew-speaking with a Jewish flavor without moving towards the synagogue. But other congregations were established in which language and Jewishness were seen as secondary to reaching out to people in the neighborhood be they Jewish or non-Jewish using what ever means (for example 6-05, 7-01). The first Ethiopian congregation was also established in the 1980s without any special Jewish emphasis. In other words none of the 1980s congregations have moved closer towards the synagogue either in theology or practice.

### *1990s congregations*

Three congregations were established by leaders coming from North America, with ties to the Messianic Jewish movement there, and with an emphasis on some kind of a continued keeping of the Law for Jewish believers (1-12, 3-11, 6-09). In one of these the majority of the members are Russian (3-11), the others

not. All the other 54 of the 1990s congregations (whether they are Russian or not) do not resemble the synagogue in theology or practice.

In conclusion it can be said that most of the pre-1990 groups want to be culturally relevant and express an Israeli/Jewish identity. This is true also for some of the 1990s congregations apart from most of the Russian-speaking congregations founded in the 1990s which still need to deal with this issue. In its basic theology, Christology and soteriology the Messianic Movement is therefore best described as "Christian"/evangelical.

### **Symbols in meeting rooms**

We have only commented on use of symbols and decorations in meeting rooms in cases where this was appropriate. It is obvious that for groups meeting in private homes or in rented facilities for limited periods, the question is irrelevant.

Only two congregations, Roeh Yisrael and Ohalei Rachamim (1-13 and 3-11), have a Torah scroll, which is read from during the service. Hama'ayan (4-03) has a small Torah scroll as part of the decoration, deliberately chosen to signal the congregation's identity. Compared to traditional churches the decoration found in most Messianic congregations is simple. The most frequent items are banners or other wall hangings of Scripture quotations. Such Jewish symbols as shofar horns, menorahs, the Star of David, and occasionally the Israeli flag, can also be found. The cross is not used as a symbol. One exception is an olive wood cross, placed together with a menorah (Sar Shalom 1-14).

Congregations meeting in church buildings normally express that they do not find this problematic, apart from the fact that they would obviously prefer their own premises. In church buildings such as Christ Church (1-03 and 8-02), Beit Eliahu (3-01) and the Immanuel Lutheran Church (5-08), consciousness towards Jewish sensibilities is normally shown with regard to the symbols used. As noted, here too the cross is conspicuous by its absence. This is understandable considering the historic relations between the church and the Jewish people and the way the cross has been used negatively by the former.

In some congregations, particularly those established in the 1990s microphones, loudspeakers, musical instruments and a stage are frequently prominent. One could almost be tempted to call this "the altar" of today.

### **Statement of faith**

The survey indicates how many congregations have a statement of faith and how it is used. The question is raised how- or if- statements of faith within the Messianic Movement are significantly different from those in evangelical Christian congregations. Statements that are of interest are those written specifically for a Messianic congregation in Israel also when these stem from a denominational base.

It was to be expected that house groups do not have statements of faith, but that only 20 of the 69 congregations do is perhaps surprising.

*Where a statement does not exist.* Some answered that they found a statement of faith to be superfluous since they already have the Bible (for example 1-02, 2-01, 3-12). Ramat Gan Congregation expressed that a statement of faith was in danger of minimizing biblical faith (5-11). When the answer expressed in the profile is “not yet” it is an indication that the congregation wants to have one in the future (e.g. 2-15, 3-09, 3-13, 5-06, 5-10, 6-10). In a number of congregations the reason for not having a statement of faith is not the lack of a clear understanding of what Christian faith is (see congregations of a Brethren origin 1-10, 3-02, 5-09). Neither can the conclusion be drawn that congregations no longer hold to the theology which influenced them. Voice in the Wilderness (1-18, 6-08) for example, does not have a statement of faith especially suited to Israel but holds to the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith! Immanuel Lutheran Church does not seem to have one but in reality it does (see 5-08).

*Where a statements exist.* The existence of a statement does not necessarily mean that it plays any significant role in the daily life of the congregation or the present leader (e.g., 1-03, 2-14). The very detailed statement for Brit Olam (5-05), Tel Aviv, reflects perhaps the situation at the time of the writing of the statement and those who assisted, rather than the status quo.

Concerning the role of the statement in connection with baptism and membership see below on p. 37.

Twenty congregations have indicated that they have a statement of faith. Seven of these we have not received. Of these, 3 are basically identical to that of the Assemblies of God (3-04, 3-05, 3-10), 1 is identical with that of Dugit (5-01) which leaves 3 others (2-04, 2-10, 6-04). We have reasons to believe that the 4 last ones are “evangelical” (see below).

The remaining 13 statements are explained in the profiles. One is a personal statement of faith of Joseph Shulam (1-13), but has nevertheless been included because of Shulam’s prominent position in the Messianic Movement. We have divided the statements into three categories: 1. Confessional based or classical in theology, 2. evangelical and 3. Messianic Jewish. It should not be concluded from this that because one is called “evangelical” the two others are not evangelical in character. That one is called Messianic Jewish does not mean that the others do not include Jewish tradition; the New Testament is Jewish!

All statements are evangelical in their view of the Bible, Tanakh and NT as the authoritative word of God and their understanding that all people, Jews and non-Jews, have sinned and need salvation. With regard to soteriology there is also agreement: Salvation is by grace through faith in the atoning act of Jesus through his death and resurrection. Those who believe in Jesus will be saved; those who do not will be condemned.

Evangelical statements of faith assumes the oneness of God and use the word Trinity. Statements of faith written in Israel underscore the unity of God



and avoid the term trinity. This does not mean, however, that the relation between God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is not dealt with.

Only few statements talk about the role of Israel in the end times. Similarly only few mention the significance of the Law for Jewish believers in Jesus and do so in a way which makes it difficult to get a clear understanding of what it means in practical terms.

Below we shall look at the following questions.

1. Is it clearly said that Jesus is born of a virgin and that he is divine?
2. Is baptism mentioned explicitly?
3. Is Israel mentioned explicitly, the State of Israel?
4. Is there a specific eschatology?
5. What is said about a continued keeping of the Law for believers?

*Group 1* ( 4 of the 13 statements received)

*Lutheran* (1-15, 3-01). See, however also 5-08.

*Reformed Baptist* (4-02). See, however also 1-18 and 6-08.

*Non-denominational* with ties to a classical theology including the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed (5-05).

All of these are extensive including a constitution and explanation of the structure of the congregation. The first 3 clearly state their confessional position; the last is non-denominational. All express faith in the virgin birth of Jesus and his divinity; the importance of baptism is underlined (although with different theological emphasis). No specific mention is made of Israel apart from the important fact that it is the God of Israel who has revealed himself in Jesus. There is no reference to the State of Israel as an eschatological sign and no detailed explanation of Israel's role in the end times except for 5-05, where mention is made of the millennium when Christ and his saints shall reign. No mention of keeping of the Law for Jewish believers is made.

*Group 2* ( 6 of the 13 statements)

*Evangelical in content and often with a Jewish flavor*

*Beit Geulah* (1-01): Virgin birth and deity of Jesus; baptism; no specific reference to Israel or to the State of Israel nor to a specific keeping of the Law; pre-millennial.

*Christ Church* (1-03): Virgin birth; no specific reference to deity or baptism; the Christian Church has not replaced Israel; the return of Israel to the State of Israel is the national restoration promised by the prophets. No specific reference to keeping of the Law; no specific eschatology is indicated.

*Sar Shalom* (1-14): Virgin birth and deity of Jesus; no specific reference to Israel or the State of Israel nor to a specific keeping of the Law; rapture of the believers at Messiah's coming.

*Peniel* (2-14): Virgin birth and deity of Jesus; baptism; Israel is the chosen people; no specific reference to the State of Israel; imminent second coming of Jesus is expected; no specific reference to keeping of the Law.

*Beit Immanuel* (5-03): No specific reference to virgin birth or deity of Jesus; he is Messiah and the Son of God; no specific reference to baptism; emphasized that God loved Israel and the world; no specific reference to Israel or the State of Israel nor to a specific keeping of the Law; no specific eschatology is indicated.

*Hama'ayan* (4-03): Virgin birth and deity of Jesus; baptism; no specific reference to Israel or the State of Israel nor to a specific keeping of the Law; no specific eschatology is indicated.

#### *Group 3 (3 of the 13 statements)*

*Messianic Jewish leaning towards the synagogue.*

*Neveh Tzion* (1-12): No specific reference to virgin birth or deity of Jesus; he is the "Son of God, the Messiah, the Eternal One in Whom all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form ..."; no specific reference to baptism; belief in the continuity of God's covenant with the physical people of Israel; part of God's promises is the physical return of the people to the Promised Land; the Torah (along with the rest of the Scripture) is a description of the lifestyle of the redeemed community; pre-millennial.

*Roeh Yisrael* (1-13) (Joseph Shulam): Virgin birth and deity of Jesus; baptism; the Torah is important because it was important for the first believers and should not be interpreted through the Jewish tradition but through Jesus; Israel is the elect people of God and the advent of Christ has not changed the status of Israel with God; a clear promise in the Scriptures for the salvation of Israel, and such a salvation will happen through obedience to faith in Yeshua; anti pre-millennial.

*Ohalei Rachamim* (3-11): No reference to virgin birth; Jesus is the promised and "Divine Messiah"; no specific reference to baptism; Israel is chosen by God; the "day will come when Israel as a nation will accept the Messiah Yeshua..."; no reference to the State of Israel; fulfillment in Yeshua does not imply the abolition of the Mosaic legislation but does imply a reapplication of the principles of the Law for the New Covenant age. Messiah shall establish his worldwide rule from Jerusalem.

As can be seen the statements received vary. But the difference between them is not bigger than what can be found in statements within the Christian church.

The survey does not answer what impact the official statements of a congregation have on the individual member of that congregation. One thing is the content of the statement, another is its use. One needs to be careful and not draw too many conclusions from what is *not* said in the statements. That baptism is not mentioned does not mean of course that baptism is not practiced but the silence might say something about the importance attached to baptism.

Had the question of the role of Israel in the end times been asked specifically it is very likely that many more and rather diverse answers would be given than what can be derived from the statements of faith.

### **Baptism**

Baptism is performed by immersion and can take place in any body of (running) water. No theological significance is given to the place but preferred sites are the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee. Although bath tubs are the exception, even they can sometimes be used (1-14)! Some congregations prefer to use the facilities of a nearby church or of the Baptist Village. Others go to the Mediterranean Sea. A few congregations perceive baptism as a testimony to those who happen to be present and thus use public places, such as the beach (see 5-01 and 5-10).

The only exceptions to understanding baptism as believer's baptism are the 3 congregations with a Lutheran background (1-15, 3- 01, 5-08, and perhaps 7-02). These practice infant baptism of children from believing families or when at least one of the parents is a believer. These cases aside, some congregations will baptize children as young as 10 years old or even younger, who have come to faith and are of believing families. It is our impression that in such instances the children come from expatriate families. The majority of congregations will not baptize people below the age of 18 if they have no previous relation to the congregation. Although proselytizing is not illegal, many congregations take great care to avoid violating the strict laws concerning minors and do not wish to give any opportunity to be accused of stealing children away from their families or faith.

Formal instruction prior to baptism varies from congregation to congregation and from candidate to candidate. It is important to be able to verify that the person has indeed come to a living faith and understands what baptism is.

Concerning the relationship between baptism on the one hand and statements of faith and membership on the other, see p. 37.

The survey does not give any statistical figures regarding the number of baptisms performed in a particular year or decade. One anomaly clearly arises, however, when the figures given by the leaders for the numbers they have baptized are compared with the numerical growth of the congregations and the movement in general. Here, the interviews indicate a far higher figure for baptism than that represented by the increase in membership. There are several explanations for this. Sometimes, while members of some congregations/groups have moved to other parts of the country they have not become part of a congregation there; others were only in the country temporarily and have moved on. It also seems, however, that a considerable number of people have been in touch with a congregation and have since been lost, not only to the

particular congregation but to the movement. There are also people who get baptized more than once, even though not all will be as open as an anonymous member of the Immanuel Congregation (5-02) who told some Swedish students in 1986: "Yes, I have been baptized - twice!" (Berndtsson: 1986:74)

## Leadership

Under the heading *Leadership* questions concerning the organizational structure of the congregation have been asked. Does the congregation have a pastor/elder or an eldership, is there a council, how is leadership established, etc. ? Furthermore questions relating to the role of women have been raised.

### Election and appointment

Information on background, education and experience of the leadership is dealt with under *History and key person* p. 23-25.

In the 12 house groups leadership is normally in the hands of the key person. As expected, no formal leadership is established.

In younger congregations from the 1990s in which the leaders are new immigrants, the leadership at the initial stage rests with one person or a couple. In some cases the leader has felt a call to come to Israel to establish a congregation (e.g. 1-02). It is not always clear if a foreign organization is behind the work. Other congregations are established after splits. Often a new group forms around one or more persons who broke away and who then at the initial stage take the responsibility for the new group (e.g. 5-05). Again other congregations are formed because of a need in a particular area (e.g. 4-02) - or because of language needs (e.g. 2-10, 2-15). Finally, some congregations are formed through "planting" and new leader(s) are sent out or appointed by the leadership of the mother congregation.

The majority of the congregations try to define qualifications for leadership based on NT principles for leadership (e.g., Acts 6:1-6, 1 Tim 5:17-25, Tit 1:5-9) and a group of elders make up the leadership. Congregations in which women play a prominent role in the leadership have all been established in the 1990s and with just 2 exceptions (1-14, 5-07), are all Russian-speaking.

As congregations get older most form an eldership team assisted by deacons. Leaders of home groups and other activities are appointed. In Peniel (2-14) 40 different people share different responsibilities in the congregation. Some of the older congregations have only one leader or at least not the desired number of elders called for in their constitution. This is due to lack of qualified candidates rather than a lack of appreciation for a plural leadership (see for example 1-10, 3-01, 4-02). In 1998-1999 several congregations indicated that they have people in training for leadership.

The number of people who in 1999 in all of the 81 congregations and house groups functioned as leaders (pastors and elders) did not exceed 150.

Only 4 congregations have detailed rules for election of new leaders whether they be elders or deacons. These were all placed in group 1 in the (above) discussion on the statement of faith. They are 1-15, 3-01, 4-02, 5-05 (see p. 31).

This is not to say that *rules* for appointing a new leadership do not exist in other groups. In general it can be said the pastor or the pastor together with the elders appoint new elders and other persons in leadership positions after which they are presented to the congregation for its approval.

In congregations in which women cannot serve as the pastor or as elders for theological reasons they nevertheless play an important role in the life of the congregation. (e.g., 1-16, 4-03).

### **The role of women**

In the questionnaire the role of women is dealt with both under *Leadership* and under the description of the *Weekly service*. The first category seeks to determine what official leadership position women may hold, the second surveys their active role during the meeting. We shall deal with both issues here.

#### *Women and leadership*

The majority of the congregations profiled do not allow women to serve either as elders or pastors. They can be deaconesses. Although the survey does not define the office of "deacon," the impression conveyed from the statistics is that while in most cases deacons/deaconesses are recognized to hold an official position within the congregation their function is generally restricted to practical tasks. However, there are exceptions.

The survey shows that in 18 groups women can in principle serve as elders. This result is surprising. Two of these are house groups (1-09/8-03, 6-07). In other words, of the 59 congregations 16 are open to have women serve as elders, which in principle means that they can be pastors.

The following congregations are in theory open to having women serve as pastors but out of sensitivity to the movement as such they have not appointed any (1-11, 1-15, 6-04, 6-05). Three of them are not Russian-speaking.

The following 2 have women in the leadership: 5-07 in which a woman is the pastor and the husband the co-pastor, 1-14 where the husband is the senior pastor and the wife co-pastor. Both are non-Russian.

The following congregations have or are open to have women serving as elders, all are Russian-speaking: 1-02, 2-10, 2-15, 2-16, 3-05, 3-09, 3-10, 3-13, 3-14, 6-01. In other words about half of the Russian congregations established in the 1990s are open for having women take up the same leadership responsibility as men.

In two of the Russian-speaking congregations the wife serves as a co-pastor to her husband or as assistant to the pastor (3-05, 3-10). While some

congregations do not make a theological distinction between the role assigned to men and women (e.g., 2-15, 6-01), they do not necessarily have women serving in the eldership. The common denominator in all those congregations where women do serve as elders is the fact that they are all Russian-speaking and are all inspired by the charismatic movement.

In a few, mainly Hebrew-speaking congregations, married couples share the leadership responsibilities (e.g., 4-03, 5-01, 6-05) and one in particular mentions that "married couples are called to function as a team in all areas of life and ministry" (1-16).

Although some congregations state that women cannot serve as elders, women do appear in the heading *Key persons* in the profiles under *History* where the section relates to the foundation of the group. The history of additional congregations demonstrates that the contribution women have made is not adequately reflected in the official position they currently hold in the congregations.

The survey indicates that the introduction of women pastors or women in eldership does not derive from the influence of veteran, foreign organizations working in Israel but is a development from within the Messianic Movement, one which is closely related to immigration and the charismatic movement. The occurrence of women elders/pastors is also limited to post-1990 congregations. Leaders of foreign-led congregations might theologically be open to women serving as elders but have not implemented their view because they desire to be culturally sensitive (1-15).

#### *The role of women in the service and other activities*

The fact that women serve as deaconesses is an indicator of the active role they play in the life of many congregations. The congregations which do not accept women as elders will rarely permit women to teach in the congregation, limiting their teaching responsibilities to women's and children's groups. Other functions, such as leading worship, praying, reading, and bringing testimonies are, however, open to women in most congregations. Among the exceptions are 3-02 and 5-11.

At the same time, when asked, congregational leaders do not find it easy to clearly distinguish between sharing and bringing testimonies and "teaching." This problem is not confined to the Messianic Movement but is characteristic of the evangelical movement in general. (Of the congregations which have a statement of faith only one (4-02) deals specifically with the role of women - unfortunately precisely that paragraph was missing in the statement we received.)

## Membership

The number of members is dealt with in Chapter 5. It has been stressed that the lack of criteria for determining membership makes it difficult to be exact. Even though some groups will not talk about members but rather a core group, the survey uses the words members and membership for all groups.

### Membership, baptism and statement of faith

Under the heading *Membership* we have asked if a membership list exists and about the relationship between membership and baptism and (when appropriate) the role of the statement of faith in relation to membership.

The 12 house groups do not talk about an official membership which is not surprising considering the character of a house group.

Of the 69 congregations only 15 said they had a membership list. Of course all have a phone list for contacts. It means that in more than 50 congregations membership is not defined based on baptism or agreement to a statement of faith. One should not draw from this the conclusion that baptism is not important in these congregations, but some would say that baptism is not important for one's relationship to the congregation, rather it is something between the individual and God. Baptism does not make one a member of the congregation according to their view.

In the following congregations membership is connected to baptism *and* a statement of faith: the 3 Lutheran (1-15, 3-01, 3-10), the reformed 4-02 (and therefore also 1-17 and 6-08) and 4-03, 5-05 and partly 5-03. It can be noted that some congregations have a statement of faith in which the question of membership is not dealt with (2-14) or only "in principle" (1-03) or agreement to the statement of faith is a requirement only for taking part in the decision-making process (1-01).

Congregations in which membership depends on baptism are 1-17, 2-06, 2-14, 2-15, 2-16, 3-09, 3-12, 3-13, 5-07, 5-08, and 5-11 among others.

The survey makes it clear that being Jewish or non-Jewish has no impact on membership. The same requirements count for all whether they relate to baptism or agreement to a statement of faith. Being non-Jewish does not deprive one from membership. Neveh Zion (1-12) underscores that the members who have converted to Judaism did so before becoming members of the group. We have found only one congregation, Messianic Assembly, Jerusalem (1-10), which operates with a dual membership, full membership only to those with citizenship in Israel and associate membership to those with a long-term residency and others. The latter do not have voting rights and the reason is practical rather than theological in order to ensure the continuity of the congregation and not let policy decisions be made by people who are only short term in the country.



A few congregations have said that people who have no legal status in the country cannot be members. They can still attend all the meetings of the congregation.

The survey shows that Messianic congregations in Israel are made up of Jews and non-Jews with the same rights and the same responsibilities, at least in principle. How this is put into practice is not reflected in the survey.

Concerning the official figures of the survey for Jews and non-Jews in the Messianic congregations see tables in Chapter 6.

### Changes in membership

The paragraph *Changes in membership* is designed to detect the growth or decline of particular groups over the last few years. Here the specific history of each congregation/group has determined the time-frame. The obvious and expected factors for increase are immigration, evangelism and mergers. Numerical decrease is primarily the result of splits. However, splits have often resulted in the establishment of new groups, so the total number of believers is not necessarily affected. However, splits do leave people hurt and represent a cause for leaving the movement all together. A more healthy "decrease" takes place when a congregation decides to not split but rather to divide. Beit Immanuel is an example of a congregation that has dropped in numbers, the first time because of "church planting," the second time because of theological disagreement (5-03). It has since then experienced significant increase due to immigration: of the 70 members 25 are from Russia, 10 from Bulgaria, and 12 from Armenia. In other words, of the 70 members 47 are new immigrants

The majority of congregations have experienced an increase in membership in recent years and it is worth noting that in general it is the "youngest" congregations which have experienced the greatest increase.

The membership in some of the older congregations (e.g. 1-10, 1-13, 3-02, 6-03) has not noticeably changed in recent years. When change has occurred it has almost without exception been due to the addition of new immigrants to the group. The reason some older congregations have had an increase of new immigrants and others seem to have absorbed almost none can be explained in several ways. In some cases a group of new immigrants joined a congregation only to "break away" and establish their own due to differences either in language, theology or style of worship. In other congregations the number of new immigrants was so large as to lead to the group becoming identified with them. In a few cases this resulted in some of the "old" members leaving.

In this regard it should be noted that whereas some congregations have made the decision not to provide translation into English, this policy has not been applied to Russian. If a translation into Russian is lacking it is not due to a policy decision; the reason has rather been practical. In more than 20 of the congregations where Russian is not the main language, translation into Russian is provided.

The major source of growth within the Messianic Movement in the 1990s is due to the large increase in the number of new immigrants. This circumstance has not only resulted in an increase of new Russian-speaking congregations but also in Russian being a secondary language in otherwise Hebrew-speaking congregations.

The following list shows the increase of members in the 10 largest Hebrew-speaking congregations over the last few years, including the percentage of Russian immigrants. The Amharic-speaking congregations are not included.

1. 4-02 in 1993 some 40 members	Now: 200 members; some 170 Russians
2. 2-14 in 1982 some 50 members	Now: 180 members; very few Russians
3. 4-03 in 1989 some 15 members	Now: 90 members; some 25 Russians
4. 3-01 in 1992 some 60 members	Now 85 members; some 20 Russians
5. 3-11 in 1995 some 12 members	Now 85 members; some 70 Russians
6. 4-01 in 1993 some 35 members	Now 80 members; some 50 Russians
7. 1-03 in 1994 some 160 members	Now 70 members; very few Russians
8. 1-11 in 1989 some 30 members	Now 70 members; very few Russians
9. 3-02 in 1989 some 70 members	Now 70 members; some 15 Russians
10. 5-03 in 1995 some 12 members	Now 70 members; 25 Russians

See also demographic table in Chapter 6.

Perhaps the most encouraging and challenging observation is the number of new immigrants that have come to faith *in* Israel through friendship evangelism and other activities initiated by the new congregations. New people have been invited to the meetings and they do not seem to hold reservations towards accepting such an invitation with the result of them coming to faith and becoming a member of a congregation or house group.

The increase of new immigrants can at times overshadow the fact that *Israelis* do come to faith and that evangelism *can* bring results (1-17, 4-03, 5-10, 6-05). Coming face to face with the actual figures, however small they might seem, can also hopefully serve as a challenge to the whole movement, however.

## Description of the service

Under the heading *Description of the service* the survey seeks to give an impression of which Messianic congregations describe their service as *liturgical*, which ones use the term *free*, what elements from the liturgy of the synagogue are used (like the Shm'a and the weekly Torah portion) and which elements are more common in a church setting (like the Lord's Prayer).

### Liturgical or free

For Amharic-speaking congregations and their service, see under 5-06.

The survey shows that only 6 congregations use a liturgy or conduct their service in a way which can be described as liturgical. Three of these have Lutheran background; reading of Scriptures, both Tanakh and the NT, play a prominent role and elements like the Lord's Prayer and the Aaronic blessing, which can be described as Jewish elements, are included in each service. The liturgy is contextualized to a Jewish setting through the use of the Psalms and a Shm'a-like proclamation (see 1-15, 3-01, 5-08). It can be said that the Norwegians in Haifa and Jaffa and the Finns in Jerusalem have tried theologically to think through liturgical questions. Three other congregations use a liturgy or pre-set order for their service (1-12, 1-13, 4-01). Other groups will not use the word liturgical to describe their service but still have a prominent use of Jewish elements. These observations all show that the used of Jewish elements is very varied.

*Neveh Tzion* (1-12): Liturgical (Messianic Jewish) and many elements from the regular Sidur; parts of the weekly Torah portion is used; no use of the Lord's Prayer; no set reading of NT texts.

*Roeh Yisrael* (1-13): Liturgical, follows the outline of the synagogue service and includes the main elements of the Sidur; the weekly Torah reading from a Torah scroll and the portion from the Prophets are read; no use of music; no use of the Lord's Prayer; a NT text is read.

*Ohalei Rachamim* (3-11): Non-liturgical; the Sidur is not used, but blessings and prayers from the synagogue liturgy are used; Shm'a recited; Torah scroll; part of the weekly Torah portion is read; music; no use of the Lord's Prayer; no set reading of a NT text.

*Beit Asaf* (4-01): Liturgical, the order includes reading part of the Torah portion, responsive reading of either the Amida or a creed written for the congregation; Shm'a; the Havdalah service (if in the afternoon); Aaronic blessing, music; no set reading of a NT text.

*Ramat Gan Congregation* (5-11): Non-liturgical; no usage of elements from the Sidur; no reading of the weekly Torah portion; music; the Lord's prayer, Aaronic and the Apostolic blessing.

*Yeruel* (6-09): Non-liturgical; parts of the Sidur are used; Shm'a; part of the weekly Torah portions is read; music; no use of the Lord's Prayer; no set reading of a NT text.

This is enough to show the complexity and that no standard form can do justice to even a small group of congregations.

Most congregations describe their service as free. This does not prevent them from following a certain pattern as described in the profiles. In some congregations elements from the Sidur are used in connection with the Jewish holidays (see 1-03). In others reading from the weekly Torah portion and the reciting of the Shm'a are done regularly (see 1-10, 1-14, 4-03, 5-01, 5-04, 5-10, 5-

14); in some the Shm'a is used occasionally (see 2-14; 5-03). Of the Russian-speaking congregations only Beit Sar Shalom (5-04) has mentioned the use of the Shm'a in the service.

In the other congregations which are non-liturgical the service also follows a pattern, but the Jewish/Israeli context is reflected only very little in the order of the service.

The *Lord's Prayer* is hardly used in the service. Only the 3 Lutheran congregations mention regular use (1-02, 2-01, 6-01) and a few others indicate "sometimes" (5-04, 5-15, 6-01) and all of these are Russian-speaking. That the Lord's Prayer is used so rarely should be noted. It is Jewish in its form and origin and it could be expected that Messianic congregations in their search for Jewish expressions would have made wider use of it.

One might also have expected that more congregations would have followed a reading cycle of biblical texts considering that this is done in the synagogue. Perhaps the most surprising fact is that a reading from the NT is rare during the service. It is done almost only as part of the teaching. However it should not be forgotten that many congregations do have a weekly Bible study in which the NT is often studied. Congregations which read from the weekly Torah Portion do not read the whole portion, only part of it. This is true also for the two congregations which have a Torah scroll (1-13, 3-11). In some congregations the Torah reading is followed by a short explanation or sermon.

Most congregations maintain equal use of Tanakh and NT as the basis for the sermon. The character of the sermon varies. In some it is teaching rather than preaching. Some go through a book of the Bible or develop the teaching around a theme for a period of time. Others again will underline that a pattern is not followed and the choice depends on the "need of the congregation" or "the leading of the Spirit."

## Communion

The majority of the congregations celebrate communion once a month. Normally the first Saturday of the month is chosen. An almost equal number of groups share communion either every or every second week. Some congregations do not have a set time but the pastor will determine when the congregations "is ready." Two congregations share communion only once a year in connection with the celebration of Pesach (1-12, 6-09). Two groups connect communion to the 3 major Jewish holidays and Christmas and celebrate it on the Saturday before the holiday; they also have it when new members have been baptized (1-19, 5-11). At least two congregations share the Lord's Supper at a separate meeting before the weekly service (3-02, 5-09) in accordance with the Brethren tradition.

The vast majority of the groups do not follow a communion liturgy. The exception is the three congregations with a Lutheran background. Still communion is conducted similarly each time in most congregations. Often it

will include elements like a reading from 1 Corinthians 11 and/or from one of the gospels and a short sermon introducing and explaining what communion is.

The majority do not make baptism a requirement for taking part in communion but most will either indicate that it is preferred or point out that the Lord's supper is for believers only. Some will stress that those participating need to prepare themselves before taking part (1-17, 2-12).

In Roeh Yisrael (1-13) a fellowship meal after the Saturday meeting is introduced with "Kiddush in memory of Yeshua the Messiah." To outsiders this resembles communion, but is not understood so by the congregation. During the interview Grace and Truth congregation made a point of underlining that communion is a sacrament (4-02), a view that is held by the Lutheran congregations (1-15,3-01, 5-08) and also Brit Olam, Tel Aviv (5-05). Beit Asaf (4-01) stressed that the focus of the worship is the "incarnated presence of the Lord" and this is expressed in the communion.

It is difficult to talk in general terms of the understanding of communion within the Messianic congregations. There is no definition of what communion is that is shared by all groups and for a majority a clear theological understanding of what communion is does not seem to exist.

### Children's meetings

This heading concerns the activities for children in connection with the weekly service. To the extent that a congregation has programs for children and youth during the week this will be reflected in *Other weekly activities* (see below).

Only a few congregations lack some program for the children simultaneously with the weekly meeting or during part of it. In most cases the whole congregation is together for the first part of the service and children then go to their program when it is time for the sermon. In one congregation the "sabbath school" is held before the service and is not limited to children only. Children then take part in the whole service (4-02). The number of groups into which the children are divided depends both on the number of children, teachers and on the facilities available.

Although the results of the present survey do not allow us to gain a precise idea of the development of children's meetings over recent decades, our impression is that whereas the exception today is when there is no program for children, the opposite was true in the 60s and 70s. This situation not only reflects the importance now given to children for the future life of the congregation but also the fact that the Messianic Movement now includes second generation members.

### Other weekly activities

The activity most often mentioned here is weekly home group meetings. The number of home groups do not necessarily reflect the size of the congregations,

and younger congregations seem to have more home groups than pre-1990 congregations. The total number of home groups is about 130 (see p. 57).

The program of a home group meeting varies and will often depend on the particular group and its needs. This means that home groups within one congregation can have different emphases. The emphasis can be on teaching, prayer, intercession but also social needs.

Other regular activities in many congregations are women's meetings, youth meetings, and prayer meetings. Very few congregations have regular programs that involve evangelism.

A comparison of the number of weekly activities in the pre-1990 congregations with those found in the new congregations indicates that new congregations do not hold fewer weekly programs than older ones; the opposite is actually often the case (see e.g., 3-05, 3-10, 3-13, 3-14).

## Cooperation

The survey tries to give a picture of the cooperation on the local as well as the national level both between congregations and leaders.

### Cooperation in theory and practice

With almost no exception leaders express willingness to cooperate both locally and nationally. In general congregations with a Brethren background are less likely to encourage their members to participate in national events and one congregation, the Ramat Gan congregation, gives little or no priority to cooperation with other groups (5-11).

Some leaders admit that willingness to cooperation does not always translate into actual deeds. Reasons for this can be too heavy a work load (many leaders have a secular job) or that even though they are not against cooperation it is not given high priority. Some prefer cooperation on a local level with others with whom they share views and visions rather than involvement on a national level. Chairpersons for the different national organizations have not been contacted to find out what percentage of congregations participate there in reality.

On the situation in 1992 Baruch Maoz writes:

"A renewed insularism is spreading among the Hebrew-speaking congregations in Israel. Intercongregational cooperation has lessened considerably. After it rejected the draft Rules of procedure and Statement of Faith which it had labored to compose for 18 months, The Intercongregational Fellowship of Hebrew Speaking Congregations has met infrequently and spasmodically. Attendance has decreased..." (*Israel Update*, October 1992). Maoz mentions that there have been many challenges which require a cooperative effort: "... the need of the immigrants from Ethiopia and Russia and the evangelistic opportunities which these immigrants present., Inter-church

disciplinary matters, the need for an institute for non-partisan biblical and theological instruction, further evangelistic opportunities. In few of these has there been significant intercongregational cooperation."

Maoz also claims that "Congregations have not cooperated in ministering to immigrants who expressed a desire for Christian fellowship."

The survey does not reflect a change from the situation then nor does it confirm that Maoz's description is still relevant.

### **When cooperation does take place**

There *are* national committees and national conferences *are* held on a variety of topics and organized by different groups or institutions. Cooperation *does* take place.

A fellowship of leaders of Hebrew-speaking congregations (in Hebrew called Kenes Artzi) exists with a planning committee made up of seven leaders at the moment. National leadership meetings are held on an average 3 times a year. A national evangelism committee is structured under the national leadership committee but operates independently. The chairman for the last 13 years has been Evan Thomas (4-01) who also serves on and coordinates the meetings of the fellowship of national leadership. Furthermore, the national leadership committee serves as an advisory committee for MAC. The Israel coordinator for the Lausanne Consultation for Jewish Evangelism (LCJE) in 1999 was Arthur Goldberg. From time to time national LCJE conferences are held. Messianic believers participate in the yearly Jerusalem March and regional Shavuot conferences are held with a high number of participants.

MAC, established in 1997 in connection with the proposal to the Knesset of a new anti-missionary law, is led today by Paul Liberman (4-01).

Several of the congregations are actively involved in the work of Pro-Life (Be'ad Chaim) and its struggle against abortion. There is a national social fund. The local board of Ebenezer Home was in 1999 chaired by Gershon Nerel. In 1995, the general secretary of the Israeli Bible Society under United Bible Society was Doron Even Ari.

It was not possible to reach an agreement on a statement of faith as the basis for a Messianic Midrasha, a Bible School, in the beginning of the 1990s. However, students are being taught through the programs of Israel College of the Bible (previously called King of Kings College, see 8-03), through Netiviyah's Midrasha (see 1-13) and the Caspari Center's TELEM programs (see 8-11).

Only few Messianic leaders are involved in the work of the United Christian Council in Israel (UCCI). This is similar to 1985, when Shlomo Drori from Beit Eliahu (3-01) describes a like situation (*UCCI News* 1/1985:19-21). In 1999, the General Secretary of UCCI was Charles (Chuck) Kopp 8-05). In 1977, during the time of the struggle against the so-called anti-missionary law all groups benefited from the work of the UCCI.

The question of cooperation between local leaders and expatriate workers is not covered by the survey although it is still a pressing issue (see for example David Smith's article on this in *Mishkan* 29/1998). But based on the information given in the interviews we find it difficult to imagine that many of the leaders will agree with Joseph Shulam's statements (1-13) in *Mishkan* (29/1998:83): "The only resolution for the mistakes of the missionaries is that they go back home - speak on behalf of the local Messianic congregations and organizations and help finance the local bodies and give moral and spiritual support to those who are doing the Lord's work in Israel."

The survey rather questions the comments by Shulam in the same article. He says that "... Foreign missionaries have not been helpful in establishing local indigenous congregations. They have for the most part served to divide the Body of Messiah and splinter it, so they can continue to have rule. There are some exceptions to this accusation, but they are not many..."

These claims are not supported by the results of the present survey. They perpetuate a myth rather than take the actual facts of 1998-1999 into consideration. The survey shows that only a few congregations are led by "foreign missionaries," that foreign missionaries/missions have been helpful in establishing local indigenous congregations and that many of the splits that have marred the movement in the 1990s have nothing to do with the work of foreign missionaries but have arisen *within* the Messianic congregations themselves.

## Finances

Without openness myths will live on and be repeated also with regard to the Messianic Movement and finances. To our regret the survey does not make it possible to give a satisfactory picture of the financial situation.

### Relevant questions concerning finances

When we began the survey we had hoped to be able to answer the following questions concerning the financial situation in the congregations:

*Total expenses* in NIS or US dollars in the year 1997 or 1998.

*Total income* in NIS or US dollars in the year 1997 or 1998.

*Donations in Israel* divided into collections and individual gifts/tithes and gifts from tourists/visitors and other income.

*Donations from abroad* in NIS or US dollars.

We had as a goal to be able to say how many of the congregational leaders have a secular job, how many are paid by the congregation, how many have a job which in one way or another is related to a foreign organization and how much time some leaders spent on fundraising for their ministry or organization. Furthermore we had hoped to find out how many expatriate co-workers are involved in local independent congregations and paid by a foreign



organization. Finally, we had hoped to show how big a percentage of the income is used on social work in Israel and/or mission work elsewhere.

We soon had to realize that it would be impossible to meet this goal. Some congregations did give us very detailed financial statements but others refused to give figures for income and expenses and it soon became impossible to give even a vaguely accurate picture of the financial situation in all the congregations. When possible we have instead given figures according to percentage for income both in Israel and from abroad although this is less than satisfactory. We are in no doubt, however, that the Messianic movement only will gain from the result which a closer look at financial issues within the movement will bring.

Our presuppositions have been that the Messianic Movement has nothing to hide. Congregations registered as an *amutah* are obligated to produce an official financial report. All have a moral obligation to handle financial matters orderly. That some abstained from sharing details about the financial situation makes it more difficult to state clearly which congregations are independent when it come to finances. How much support from abroad can a local congregation receive and still be called a local *independent* congregation? Or does financial dependency differ from other kinds of dependence? A comparison of foreign support received by Messianic congregations and foreign support received by other Jewish organizations or institutions in Israel would be very interesting.

We do not find it negative that fundraising is done abroad. It is quite legitimate to collect money for an organization which in theory is unrelated to a congregation. But if the congregation in practice benefits from this or if no clear distinction is made between work done for the congregation and the work done for the organization it obscures the impression of the congregation's actual financial circumstances.

In some congregations a clear distinction between the private finances of the leader and congregational finances seems not to exist, a situation that we find could be dangerous. It can only confirm the myth that some leaders use the needs of the congregation for private fundraising. Whether or not that is the case the survey does not show. We also find it questionable that some leaders, who do not receive a salary from the congregation, nor from a foreign organization, nor from a secular job, but receive money from abroad (either from individuals or organizations) without submitting a financial report to the congregation or its leadership. Such a practice will only add - justly or unjustly - to the myth that one can get personal gain from involvement in the Messianic Movement.

Local and independent congregations who have their own meeting place have obtained these either as a gift or through considerable financial help from abroad. Congregations meeting in facilities belonging to a foreign organization often pay only a symbolic amount in rent.

Money collected in the congregation is used also for social purposes but what percentage that is it is impossible to determine.

Older congregations which maintain a relationship to a foreign organization seem to have a more transparent way of handling the finances of the congregation, both regarding income and expenses but also salaries for congregational workers.

## Concluding remarks

In this chapter we have attempted to trace certain developments and point out patterns within the groups surveyed. We shall abstain from drawing a decisive conclusion and do not dare give the final definition of what a "real" Messianic congregation is. But hopefully others can use the material presented in the profiles for constructive reflection as they try to determine the basis, conditions and the future of the Messianic Movement in Israel.

The diversity is great but not so much as to make it impossible to talk about *the* Messianic congregations or *the* Messianic Movement in Israel. There are common struggles and reflections which do take place but to which justice has not been done by the material represented. This is true for theological reflections on the question of Jewish identity, which leaders within the movement have raised and do struggle with.

In a paper Sigurd Chr. Støren stresses that the different congregations attempt to build bridges back to the first Jewish believers by underlining different aspects found in the Early Church (Støren 1997: 36-37). This happens in 3 different ways: 1. Through the use of liturgies of the Church which have connection to Judeo-Christians; 2. through free and spontaneous expressions which can be found in the Early Church; 3. through the tradition of the synagogue reflected also in the Early Church.

The question of Jewish identity plays no prominent role in the Russian-speaking congregations. But to assume that therefore it is not on their agenda at all would be wrong. Neither is faith in Jesus an expression of a rejection of Jewishness on their part. But what is true is that the theological reflection of this question has not yet taken place among most of the Russian congregations. Only the future can show what mutual inspiration will be shared among the older Hebrew-speaking congregations on the one hand and the newer Russian-speaking congregations on the other. Through their presence and their work they - together with other Jewish believers in Jesus - repeat what the Jew Paul has already said: "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile" (Rom 1:16).

It is likely that the survey will disappoint those Jewish as well as non-Jewish believers - in Israel and abroad - who with great enthusiasm have talked about

tremendous openness for the gospel among Jewish people in Israel. The survey cannot confirm this. There has been growth but not to the extent in which some have talked and written about it. Numerical growth is to be desired in a movement like the Messianic Movement in Israel but what should also be desired is a realistic picture, including realistic figures that can further a constructive assessment and aid in giving direction and setting goals.

What the survey does confirm is that the gospel is proclaimed, that congregations do exist and Jewish people are coming to faith. Considering the harassment and resistance which Jewish believers in Jesus encounter it can be said that the eagerness and willingness to share the gospel is greater in Israel than in many congregations in countries with a long Christian traditions.

## **Appendix 1: The Ethiopian Messianic Jewish Communities**

The history and the characteristics of the Ethiopian Messianic Movement in Israel are briefly dealt with in the description of the largest of the congregations in Israel, the Ethiopian Jewish Messianic Congregation in Jaffa (5-06). The beginning of the history of the Amharic-speaking Messianic congregations is closely related to Operation Moses (1984-1985) when many Jesus-believing Ethiopian Jews immigrated to Israel.

We surveyed 6 Ethiopian fellowships, one of which is a house group. Of the other five, one has ceased to exist since the survey was conducted (3-06). The congregation in Jaffa (5-07), the leader of which we did not interview, stated the following in a brochure from spring 1999: "We are composed of six Messianic Jewish fellowships through the land of Israel with our central coordinating office in Tel Aviv." According to our categorization we would rather term this one congregation with as many as 5 home groups. Statistically, we therefore speak in the survey about 6 Ethiopian "groups" and treat the congregation whose main center is in Jaffa as one.

The Amharic-speaking congregations tend to keep a low profile in Israeli society in order not to attract unwelcome attention which raises questions concerning its members' social and civil status. Generally speaking, they have good relations with the rest of the Messianic community; however, most of their members are not well integrated into that community. In the teaching provided by the congregations little if any emphasis is placed on the Jewish roots of their faith or on discovering culturally-relevant ways to express it.

Although the Amharic-speaking Messianic congregations have frequently been portrayed as being consensual and supportive of one another, a closer look at their history and development demonstrates that they face similar challenges

common to all congregations and fellowships - Messianic or not. While they might deal with disagreements differently as a result of their particular culture, they cannot avoid them altogether. Disputes have arisen in relation to leadership as well as over other issues, such as the importance of establishing a children's and youth work in the congregation and conducting services in Hebrew rather than in Amharic. The lack of attention given to the second generation in the congregations is viewed by some of the members as a very serious problem. Many of the children also find it difficult to understand Amharic and would benefit more from programs in Hebrew.

Congregational leaders have often maintained ties with the evangelical churches they were part of prior to their arrival in Israel and the question of integration into Hebrew-speaking congregations is viewed differently by the leaders. Whereas the leadership of the Haifa Ethiopian Congregation (3-07) would like to see his members find their permanent spiritual home in a Hebrew-speaking congregation, the leaders of the fellowship in Jaffa (5-06) have paid this question only little attention. Instead they have applied for – and received – membership in the Fellowship of Evangelical Churches in Ethiopia.

It is difficult to give a clear picture of the number of Ethiopian *Jewish* believers within the Ethiopian Messianic Movement. Our figures are conservative and built on information from members who are actively involved in the work of the Amharic-speaking fellowships. Our estimate of adult members of Jewish origin lies around 120, not including about 30 non-Jewish spouses. The number of children is 50. The figure of 400 given for *members* of the congregation in Jaffa in their brochure seems inflated. The latter also states: "We have national conferences three times annually with attendance normally reaching 500." Other participants in the conferences give figures considerably lower.

While a number of the Ethiopian Jews are now integrated into Hebrew-speaking Messianic congregations this figure still does not exceed 30 and is already included in the statistics.

No formal connection exists between the Amharic-speaking congregation and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in Israel.

## Appendix 2: The Russian-speaking congregations

The word "Russians" is used in the survey in a broad and neutral sense to include all those that have come from the former USSR. The large immigration from the former USSR has had a large influence on Israeli society in general - including the Messianic Movement. The appendix sums up observations made in the survey.

The impact began to be felt at the end of the 1980s and early 1990s with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent large waves of immigration of Soviet Jews to Israel. The arrival of Russian immigrants has meant not only an increase in members in already existing congregations but also an increased number of congregations. Of the 81 groups included in this survey some 57 were founded in the 1990s.

The fact that “only” some 20 of these congregations/groups were started by Russian and have Russian as their only or first language does not adequately reflect the situation. In other congregations established in the 1990s, over 90 percent of the members are Russians and the work began mainly as an outreach to Russians. This is true for 1-18, 2-10, 3-11, and 5-15 (see p. 39).

In some of the Russian congregations translation is provided, primarily into Hebrew. One should not draw from this fact the conclusion that just like there are many Russians in Hebrew-speaking congregations there are also many non-Russians in Russian-speaking congregations. This is the exception rather than the rule. Israelis rarely make a Russian congregation their “home,” but examples of the opposite are easy find, just as the Hebrew influence can be detected in Russian congregations where Hebrew songs are used together with Russian songs. What influence the influx of Russians will have in the future on the Messianic Movement in Israel is hard to determine. Until now very few leaders of Russian-speaking congregation have participated in national leadership events, although in several cases Russian members of Hebrew-speaking congregations are part of the leadership team and do participate in national leadership activities.

When asked about the percentage of new Russian members that were believers before moving to Israel and what percentage have come to faith in the country, most leaders reported half and half. However, most of the congregational leaders were already believers in Russia, although some only for a few years (2-15, 3-10, 3-14). Compared to the number of Israelis that have come to faith during the same period, the difference is significant. Part of the reason for this can be found in the special situation of immigrants. Life is still unsettled and open. Another cause, however, is to be found in the activities of both the congregations and the individual members who have actively practiced friendship evangelism and included non-believers in their fellowships.

### **Similarity and differences among the Russians**

The denominational background from which the majority of the Russians believers come is primarily Baptist or Pentecostal. Only a few of those who have become part of the Messianic Movement in Israel were associated with the Russian Orthodox Church. It is our impression that new immigrants with a Orthodox background have preferred a liturgical style of worship and can be found in higher numbers among the Hebrew Catholics - if they are to be found

at all within Jesus-believing community (see on 9-01). Some of those with a Baptist or Pentecostal background have been influenced by the charismatic movement before they came to Israel and this in turn has influenced their style of worship, although not necessarily their theology. The different Russian groups are sometimes described as “the *quiet* Russians” and “the *noisy* Russians”, where “quiet” is used to describe traditional Russian Baptist or Pentecostal groups, and “noisy” applied to those who use a more expressive, western-influenced charismatic style.

The questions of theology and identity that have shaped pre-1990 congregations have not (yet) significantly influenced the Russian congregations. It is true to say that for the pre-1990 congregations it has been important not only to be “Jewish” but also to be different from the gentile church. This has meant a greater appreciation of the Tanakh, Jewish traditions, and biblical feasts on the one hand, and on the other a lack of appreciation of the traditions of the gentile church and its holidays.

The need to set themselves apart from the church cannot be found among most of the Russians, many of whom find it natural to celebrate Christmas. Some will even have a Christmas tree. That only limited emphasis is given to Jewish holidays and Jewish traditions does not indicate a deliberate preference. Rather, both the presence of church holidays and the lack of Jewish traditions should be seen as an indication that little theological reflection has yet taken place. Church as well Jewish holidays are used as an occasion to come together and to include new people in the fellowship.

The Russians also demonstrate the lack of any need to develop and maintain formal ties with any foreign organizations, even when several of them perceive themselves as the Israeli extension of an international organization (2-08, 2-15, 3-12, 5-04).

Russians who were believers before immigration bring with them their traditions, theology, and style of worship. It is not difficult to imagine that this fact has caused friction and several examples can be presented (4-02, 6-02). Sometimes this has resulted in “old” members feeling intimidated by the presence of Russians who behaved differently and with whom communication was difficult. At other times the Russians have found it difficult to become part of the group both because of theology and worship-style and have left to form their own group.

It is to be expected that leadership structures are loose and formal statements of faith do not exist when the short histories of the congregations are considered, as well as (often) the number of years leaders have been believers. But if the Russians within the Messianic Movement are similar to the Russians in Israeli society in general one can expect that with time this will change and the Russian congregations will significantly contribute to the Messianic Movement more than just with regard to number.

Without the Jewish believers in Jesus who have come from the former USSR the numerical increase of the Messianic Movement in Israel would have been significantly smaller (see tables, Chapter 6).

## 4. Summary of observations on other groups

This survey focuses on Messianic congregations in Israel. However, other groups which for different reasons do not fall within this category are dealt with briefly. In the statistic analysis only figures from the category “International congregations” are included and only with regard to Jewish believers in Jesus and their families.

### Group 8: International Congregations

Eleven international congregations have been profiled in order to find out how many Jewish believers worship in them. The results indicate that in nine of these congregations less than 10 Jewish believers worship. In one congregation the number is about 20 (8-05), while in another the total number of adults is 47, plus 10 who are married to a Jewish spouse and form part of a Jewish household. Children of Jewish households can be found only in this one congregation, the King of Kings Assembly (8-03), where the total number of children of Jewish believers is 14.

King of Kings Assembly is also unique among the international congregations in other ways. The style of worship has a far more Jewish/Israeli flavor than that which is found in for example many of the Russian-speaking Messianic congregations. Since, however, it defines itself as an *international* congregation it has been placed under this category. While no plans exist for it to turn into a local congregation, one of its goals is to plant local congregations and support the Messianic Movement. As the survey shows, some local congregations have already been planted.

In 1999, King of Kings Assembly had a Hebrew-speaking fellowship in which the majority of members are part of the international congregation but also conduct an independent weekly meeting. We have included this group together with the Messianic congregations (1-09) even though, according to our definition, it falls under the scope of a *home* group. It is hoped that the group will develop into an independent congregation. Concerning figures, see 1-09 and 8-03. In the final statistics the members of this group are counted separately from the international congregation.

It may be asked why some Jewish believers worship in international congregations when so many Messianic congregations exist to choose from. In international congregations where the Jewish believers are few – or only one –



the causes are likely to derive from personal reasons, be it personal contacts or a preference for the style of worship. King of Kings is according to its leader, a large, stable, and well-functioning congregation and has been so for the last 16 years, and therefore makes an obvious choice for some people.

The total number of Jewish people in international congregations is 88, plus 13 non-Jewish spouses and 14 children.

### **Group 9: Hebrew Catholics**

As has already been mentioned, the primary focus of this survey lies on the Messianic congregations/groups in Israel. The basic theology of these groups mainly derives from a Protestant framework, even though some leaders within the Messianic Movement will only reluctantly acknowledge this. Nevertheless, it would be a grave mistake to ignore the Hebrew Catholics in this survey. That is, people of Jewish origin who are members of the Catholic Church. Their number, however, is not included in the statistic material. In dealing with the Hebrew Catholics we have made extensive use of two contributions on the Hebrew Catholic movement: an article by Lisa Loden and a lecture presented by Father Juan Moreno of the Pontifical Bible Institute, Jerusalem, given at the Caspari Center, Spring 1999. We regret the fact that we have been unable to give Hebrew Catholicism the attention it truly deserves.

Obvious similarities exist between the establishment of Hebrew Catholics and the Messianic Movement. Both groups seek to “reclaim” their Jewish identity and create a more Jewish style of worship than found in the historical churches. However, whereas the Hebrew Catholics desire to remain *within* the Catholic Church, the Messianic Movement characteristically seeks to be independent and to detach itself as far as possible from foreign organizations and denominations.

In some areas the Catholics have been ahead of the Messianic Movement. This is true regarding the creation of a Hebrew catechism (although people within the Messianic Movement would probably prefer another word than “Catechism”) as well as in respect of the composition of music dissociated from traditional church forms.

People within the Hebrew Catholic movement estimate their number at between 400-500 persons in the different congregations. This figure has been difficult to verify, as also an estimation of its division into members of orders (priests, monks and nuns) and lay people. It is evident that the number for active attendance is considerably lower than the number of membership in Hebrew Catholic congregations. In contrast, much greater correspondence between membership and attendance seems to exist in Messianic congregations.

It must be acknowledged, on the eve of the third millennium, that the majority of the Messianic Movement is not ready to embark on a closer cooperation with the Hebrew Catholics. Some even find it difficult to regard Hebrew Catholics as genuine believers. Although this issue goes beyond the

scope of this survey the question could be raised, considering the lack of conformity *within* the Messianic Movement, whether or not some Messianic believers are not *de facto* closer theologically to the Hebrew Catholics than to some individuals within their own movement.

In recent decades the Catholic Church has lost thousands of members who have immigrated to Israel when one of the spouses was Jewish. Several reasons account for the lack of absorption of these people within the local Catholic community. This, combined with the fact that many Hebrew Catholics are non-married priests, monks, or nuns and that the Hebrew Catholics do not actively evangelize, raises questions concerning the movement's future.

Juan Moreno makes an observation when dealing with the Hebrew Catholics, which is challenging for the Messianic Movement. He mentions that some Israeli Jews are attracted to the Catholic Church precisely because of elements which the Hebrew Catholics have tried to remove. Furthermore, there are Catholics of Jewish origin who desire to worship in the way they were accustomed before immigrating, which includes retaining a "foreign" language.

Without questioning the goal of leaders within the Messianic Movement to worship in Hebrew and observe Jewish traditions one can ask if this path shows sufficient consideration to new Jesus-believing immigrants and their background. If they are not met where they are they might assimilate into Israeli society but be lost to the Messianic fellowship. One might express it thus: While the Messianic Movement desires to remove itself from the traditions of the Christian Church and is eager to create an indigenous movement, situations could arise when one might be required to compromise one's vision in order to reach out with the gospel to as many as possible, including people with a positive relation to the traditions of the church, e.g. the celebration of Christmas.

The main area of cooperation between Hebrew Catholics and Messianic Jews so far has been related to the new translation into Hebrew of the New Testament; the closest relationship between the two groups seems to be found among charismatic Catholics and charismatic Messianic Jews.

### **Group 10: Other Groups**

Some of the five communities in group 10 might disagree with where and together with whom they are grouped. This categorization derives solely from practical reasons.

The Beit-El Community (Emma Berger Group) consists mainly of German-speaking people who have moved to Israel or people who are in Israel for a temporary period of time. The community is not evangelistic and very few Jews are affiliated with the community. Although the community received a lot of negative attention in the press in the late 1960s and early 1970s because of land purchases it has later developed good relations with its neighbors.

The Ir Ovot Community led by Simha Pearlmutter would seem to be in decline and has isolated itself from the Messianic Movement; it is described by a previous member as a cult.

Two of the Adventists communities, Church of God (Dugger) and the Davidic Seventh-Day Adventists, are very small and together possess less than a handful of Jewish members. We estimate that altogether the four mentioned communities have less than 20 adult members of Jewish origin.

The Seventh-Day Adventists, however, have grown in recent years. This is not due to evangelistic outreach, since the movement in Israel wishes to be sensitive to the situation in Israel and therefore abstains from any evangelistic activities. Rather the increase, from some 15 members of the community in the early 1970s to some 170 adults, plus 70 children in 1999, is primarily due to immigration from the former USSR and in this regard resembles the situation within the Messianic Movement.

### Group 11: Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons

We are aware that including the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons in this survey runs the risk of underscoring the myth perpetrated in the Orthodox press and by anti-missionary organizations, namely that they do not differ from the Messianic Movement and that they *all together* are "cults." Since, however, a theological gap exists between the Mormons and the Jehovah's Witnesses on the one hand, and between these two groups and the Messianic Movement on the other, we do not subscribe to this belief. Nevertheless, once again it cannot be denied that, in the eyes of Israeli observers, the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons alike form part of the "Christian" religious picture.

Two observations are appropriate:

1. *Jehovah's Witnesses* are equally if not more active than the Messianic Movement in presenting their message. They are the target of similar harassment and opposition. *If* it is true that the movement in 1999 has 1000 members as reported in the press – compared to 60 in the beginning of the 1960s – it has grown far more rapidly than the Messianic Movement. However, it has not been possible to verify this figure nor to estimate how many of the possible 1000 are of Jewish origin. We would not be surprised if the official figure was considerably lower than 1000.

2. The *Mormons* do not, by their own admission, actively promote their faith in Israel and have in fact given the Israeli authorities a promise not to "proselytize" in the country. In our opinion they have paid a high price to be allowed to establish their center on Mount Scopus by giving such a promise. Considering the importance Mormons give to bringing their message all over the world, this represents a significant compromise and can serve as a warning to the Messianic Movement, foreign organizations, and churches not to make agreements with the authorities which make evangelism illegal.

## 5. The quest for realistic figures of Jewish believers in Messianic congregations

One of the survey's primary goals is to arrive at a realistic figure concerning the number of congregations presently in Israel and the number of their individual members. It is obvious that also non-Jews are members of Messianic Jewish congregations. These are not called *Messianic* believers in this survey because this term can easily be misunderstood (cf. the remarks below on MAC's demographic profile); in our breakdown of members these are placed under "Non-Jewish." For Messianic Jews or Jewish believers in Jesus the term "Jewish," in a very broad sense, is employed (see below).

### Number, location and year of founding.

With 81 congregations and house groups included in the survey we dare to claim that should some groups have been omitted it will not change the overall picture in Messianic congregations in 1999. An approximate figure for home groups is given below. These home groups belong to the congregation within the respective districts but are not necessarily located within these districts.

The geographical division of the congregations and house groups is as follows

*District 1: Jerusalem.* In total, 19 groups:

15 congregations and 4 house groups. Some 20 home groups.

*District 2: Northern Israel.* In total, 16 groups:

13 congregations and 3 house groups. Some 30 home groups.

*District 3: Haifa.* In total, 14 groups:

13 congregations and 1 house group. Some 45 home groups.

*District 4: Central Israel.* In total, 6 groups:

5 congregation and 1 house group. Some 15 home groups.

*District 5: Tel Aviv.* In total, 15 groups:

15 congregations and 0 house groups. Some 20 home groups.

*District 6: Southern Israel.* In total, 9 groups:

7 congregations and 2 house groups. Some 10 home groups.

*Area 7: Judea and Samaria/West Bank.* In total, 2 groups:

1 congregation and 1 house group. 0 home groups.

The survey shows an enormous increase in number of congregations and house groups founded in the 1990s. The list below shows when still-existing congregations were founded. Some of these began as house groups prior to the time indicated here.

Before 1948: 2 (3-02, 5-09).

In the 1950s: 5 (1-10, 1-15, 3-01, 5-08, 5-11).

In the 1960s: None.

In the 1970s: 7 (1-05, 1-13, 2-04, 4-01, 4-02, 5-03, 6-03).

In the 1980s: 10 (1-03, 1-11, 2-01, 2-06, 2-12, 2-14, 4-03, 5-06, 6-05, 7-01).

In the 1990s: 57 (the remainder).

Of the 57 congregations and house groups founded in the 1990s some 25 are Russian-speaking or are led by people who have come from the former USSR. This observation does not give the full impression of the increase of Russian believers, since many have found their spiritual home in Hebrew-speaking congregations.

Of the 81 congregations and house groups there are 5 Amharic-speaking congregations and 1 house group.

At the end of this chapter under the sub-heading "From half a dozen to 6000-7000 Messianic *Jewish* believers in Israel?" information is given on what has been said concerning the number of Jewish believers in Jesus and the number of congregations in the recent decades.

### The need for realistic figures and a clear terminology

The need for a realistic figure for Jewish believers in Jesus is clear from the following.

When leaders of the Messianic Movement in Israel were asked about the number of Messianic Jewish believers in Israel many responded: "I don't know!" or "I have no idea." When pressed to give an answer we received 33 different answers. These last estimates are divided as follows (the figure in parentheses indicates how many have guessed so):

500 (1); under 1,000 (1)

less than 2,000 (1)

2,000 (4); 2,000-3,000 (3); 2,000-4,000 (1)

over 3,000 (1); 3,000 (1); 3,000-4,000 (3); 3,000-5,000 (1); 4,000-5,000 (1)

4,000-6,000 (1)

5,000 (1); 5,000-6,000 (2); 5,000-7,000 (5); 5,000-10,000(1)

6,000 (1); 6,000-7,000 (1); 6,000-10,000 (1)

7,000 (1)

50,000 (1).

In other words: the impression of the number of Jewish believers in Jesus varies considerably among the leaders of the movement. Considering that a similar statistical analysis has not been conducted up until now, this is perhaps not so very surprising. The large figures do not necessarily mean that one has consciously attempted to inflate the size of the movement. Some of those who said between 5,000 and 7,000 referred to information from the Messianic Action Committee (MAC). Let this be very clear: *We* are not saying that MAC claims that there are 5,000-7,000 *Jewish* believers in Jesus in Israel. MAC claims that there are 5,000-7,000 "Messianic believers" in Israel.

The need for a clearly defined terminology and the fact that terminology can be deceiving – is demonstrated by an example taken from the Messianic Action Committee (MAC). The MAC *Freedom Report* (No. 53, October 1998) includes a section called Demographic profile of Messianic believers in Israel, under which it reads:

"Numerical estimates of the number of Messianic believers in Israel range from 5,000-7,000 individuals. A mid-range figure of 6,000 would be the most agreed-upon. With such small numbers it might be more accurate in Israel to call us a phenomenon, rather than a movement. There are 53 congregations and approximately 70 independent home groups."

At first glance, one gains the impression that the numbers being quoted relate to Messianic *Jewish* believers in Israel. Carefully scrutiny reveals, however, that the term Messianic believers in Israel refers to Jews and gentiles ("born-again Christians of non-Jewish descent ..."). It is also not clear if the count includes Arabs (Evangelicals), a definite possibility. When Jewish believers in Jesus are specifically meant, these are referred to as "Messianic Jews" or "New Testament believers of Jewish lineage."

In other words: the figures stated in MAC's demographic profile of "Messianic believers" in Israel include non-Jewish believers, although people reading the profiles read them as if they talked specifically about *Jewish* believers. It must be noted, however, that statistical statements regarding the number of believers within the Messianic Movement in Israel expressly state that the congregations are composed of Jews and non-Jews.

The survey also endeavors to give a general idea of what persons (Jewish/non-Jewish) are regarded as members or part of the congregation's "core group" by dividing adult members into 4 categories (see below). The survey consequently intends to give a rather precise number of how many Jewish believers in Jesus are affiliated with a congregation or independent house group. The survey does *not* say anything about the number of *Jews* who believe in Jesus in Israel which is another question.

Similarly, the statistics are presented in a way as to assist in determining the percentage of Russian Jews in the Messianic Movement. This helps determine the numerical increase of local Israeli Jews within the latest decade.

### Specifications and uncertain factors

Some specifications and uncertain factors concerning the figures need to be mentioned.

The danger of giving unrealistically high figures is well known among all movements, especially when the numbers are mentioned for the purpose of securing financial aid. Thus many congregational newsletters run the risk of speaking enthusiastically about the growth and openness for the gospel in Israel. Merely examining the number of reported baptisms would reveal a significant disparity between the figures quoted and the growth rates "on the ground."

Generally speaking, congregational leaders very rarely underestimate figures in reporting on their own work at present or with respect to their own members, while the tendency to overestimate is very rare when they relate to the past. A good example of this phenomenon can be found in 1983 in *Hayahad*, the then English-language Baptist organ in Israel. Referring to a conference which gathered 135 "Hebrew believers" at the Baptist Village, the editor says, "It was not too many years ago when the number of Jewish Christians or Hebrew Believers could have literally been counted on two hands" (*Hayahad* 32/1983:1). However, this is an understatement with a vengeance; it creates in the reader the impression of enormous growth. The growth of the 80s is compared to "not too many years ago." It would have taken extremely large hands in the 60s or the 70s – and unnaturally many fingers – to count the Jewish believers in Jesus of the 60's or the 70s in Israel "on two hands" ... "literally!"

It may be said that when it comes to supplying statistics, the leaders of the Messianic congregations do not differ from leaders elsewhere. Nevertheless, we presume that the figures given by the leadership in this survey can be considered realistic with the following provisos in mind:

1. Compared to previous statistical estimates, this is the first time such figures are based on information conveyed by the leaders themselves. In some few cases we have provided our own evaluation, based on information made available to us by sources other than the leaders. Such cases are clearly noted and while our estimates might be erroneous the total figures will not change significantly.

2. We have gained the impression that leaders have in fact made their evaluations either on a membership list or congregational phone list. In a few Russian congregations the numbers of Jewish believers is surprisingly high compared to other Russian congregations whose non-Jewish percentage is 40-50. We have nevertheless accepted these leaders' figures.

### The four-fold division

To gain an overview of Jews and non-Jews in the congregation we have divided adult members into 4 categories:

1. Jewish
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.
3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship (Arabs/Palestinians included)
4. Non-Jews and without Israeli citizenship

Some astonishment – and criticism – has been expressed that we could divide the congregation into such “simplistic” categories. Some respondents have maintained that even such basic categorization creates an unbiblical and theologically-unsound division. The congregation made up of Jews and non-Jews/Gentiles is one. We fully agree with this viewpoint. The categorization has been created solely for statistical and missiological purposes – i.e., to ascertain how many Jewish believers in Jesus there are in Israeli Messianic congregations on the basis of information supplied by the local leadership.

The four-fold division has disturbed some leaders for other reasons. Some have claimed that they do not have sufficient personal knowledge of the “members” to make this division. Only a few have flatly refused to respond and one leader was of the opinion that it is wrong to count, referring us to King David’s census. In those cases in which we have been given an approximate figure, e.g., 15-20, for statistical purposes we have taken an average, 18. When the survey gives very precise figures, these are therefore in certain instances more precise than those given by the leadership.

*Concerning the number of adults and children:* The survey does not say how many of the children are Jewish. However, we set up here a category designated “Jewish/Israeli household,” by which is meant a family with at least one Jewish parent. This category enables us to ascertain how many persons – adults and children – live in what they themselves perceive to be a Jewish/Israeli household or “family.”

*Category 1* includes Jewish believers in Jesus. Our definition of who is considered a “Jew” is broader than that of the halakhah, which regards someone born of a Jewish mother to be Jewish. In this survey we also include those who have come to Israel under the Law of Return, whose stipulations only require that one grandparent is Jewish. The survey does not specify how many of those labeled Jewish believers in Jesus are Jews according to halakhah.

*Category 2* “Non-Jew but married to a Jew makes” makes it possible to determine the intermarriage rate among Jewish believers in Jesus in Israel. The survey does not specify the number of men and women in this category. Therefore we do not pronounce on the children’s identity as Jewish or non-Jewish according to halakhah.

*Category 3* includes gentiles who have obtained Israeli citizenship and Arab/Palestinians worshipping in the congregations. In this category is included also persons with permanent residency in Israel.

*Category 4* includes expatriates, some of whom may have lived in the country for a considerable period of time, e.g., staff in expatriate organizations,



missions, churches, etc. Students and others temporarily staying in the country, including guest workers, also fall into this group when they are members.

The *attendance number* is given as an average for the main weekly service and under normal circumstances. If a congregation is visited a few times a year by a busload of foreign tourists, these are not included. In some of the major congregations – particularly in the big cities and especially in Jerusalem – it is normal that tourists or people who are staying briefly in Israel attend services. These are included in the total of attendance.

Finally, the lack of systematic criteria for determining membership should be mentioned (see p. 37-38). The count would have been easier if membership in all Messianic congregations had been defined according, for example, to baptism. However, this is true only for some congregations. Some congregations do not talk about “membership” at all. Others speak in terms of a “core-group” in which regular attendance, faith, faithfulness, involvement, a common vision and so forth constitute the criteria for inclusion. In other words: If congregations which link membership to baptism – or even membership to agreement to a statement of faith – had used the same criteria as congregations operating with a core-group have, we would probably have to increase the total number of Jewish believers by a few hundred.

### **Appendix 3: From half a dozen to 6000-7000 Messianic *Jewish* believers in Israel?**

The following information is presented as an aid to gaining an impression of how the Messianic Movement in Israel has increased in numbers and more precisely, what its leaders have said up through the last decade concerning its size. In most cases we do not pass judgment on whether or not the quoted figures are exaggerated. One note should be made: It would appear that earlier statistical estimates – set out below – regarding the number either of Messianic Jewish believers in Israel or the number of Messianic Jewish congregations, would have been lower if they had followed the criteria set out in the present survey.

#### **Number of individuals: Point of departure in 1948**

In 1948, at the foundation of the State of Israel, the number of *Jewish* believers in Jesus in Israel was very few. While it is difficult to ascertain just how many they were, 80 people left the country in May under “Operation Mercy/Grace,” a rescue mission organized by the Jerusalem Anglican authorities to evacuate “all Hebrew Christians who preferred not to remain within the anticipated new Jewish State” (Nerel 1996; English summary: xi).

Gershon Nerel provides slightly different figures in a series of references for the numbers of Jewish believers in Jesus in Mandatory Palestine and the years

following. Thus in one source he suggests a number of "no more than one hundred persons" pre-1948, which drops to "less than half-a-dozen of these Messianic Jewish families" who remained immediately following the establishment of the State of Israel (Nerel 1993:77). In 1996, however, Nerel gives the latter number at "about half a dozen" - *individuals*, in contrast to the *families* previously mentioned (Nerel 1996a); these include five named leaders. In 1998, Nerel speaks of "about three dozen, who did remain in the Land" (Nerel 1998b:52).

Apart from these variations, it has been suggested that the numbers of individuals may well have been considerably higher than Nerel's estimates. Thus Kelvin Crombie seems to believe that rather more Jewish believers in Jesus remained in Israel (Crombie 1994:24-25). However, Magne Solheim, who served as minister in the Lutheran church in Haifa from 1950, states that there were "a few dozen" (Solheim: 1896:212).

The present survey bases itself on an estimate of some 100 *persons* (adults and children) at the time of the foundation of the State of Israel in May 1948. The question of the possible affiliation of these to congregations will not be dealt with here, as we are also not going to deal with how many Jews who came to Israel as *believers* were subsequently assimilated (*sic*) and lost all contact with other Jewish Believers in Jesus - or to put it bluntly, lost their faith. Our impression is that this may be a considerable number, larger than one we would like to believe. (Something similar can probably be said about the situation in the 1990's.) While the number of Jewish believers in Jesus seems to have been low at the time of the foundation of the State, the evidence presented below indicates that it rapidly increased.

### From 1948 to the end of the 60s

#### *Figures of Jewish believers in Jesus*

As early as December 1950 the number of Jewish believers in Jesus had increased considerably compared to May 1948. The growth was mainly due to the immigration of Hebrew Christians from Central and Eastern Europe (Østerbye 1970:169; Kvarme 1981:318-319; Nerel 1998b:53). The difficulty in gathering contemporary statistical evidence, however, may be demonstrated by the following examples.

1. The first general conference for Messianic Jews in the State of Israel, December 8-9, 1950 gathered ... well, how many? Moshe Immanuel Ben-Meir, a well-known Jewish believer (see 1-13), mentions 200 Jewish Jesus-believers. Ze'ev Kofsmann, one of the founders of the Messianic Assembly in Jerusalem in the 1950s (see 1-10), says that there were about 60 participants only, while the Israeli newspaper *Yediot Chadashot* (21 December 1950) states that there were 90 persons, among them 10 non-Jews (Østerbye 1970:169; Nerel 1998b:57-58).

We can be sure that these figures do not include children; children do not participate in conferences! It is also safe to assume that some of the participants'

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We can be sure that these figures do not include children; children do not participate in conferences! It is also safe to assume that some of the participants'

spouses did not attend either. It may also be assumed that not all Jewish believers in Jesus in Israel participated. In other words, if we presume that approximately 70 *adults* attended this conference, a fair estimate would be that in 1950 there were more than 100 *adults* and perhaps 70-100 *children*, consequently approximately 200 *persons*. If this conjecture is correct, it seems to show a considerable growth compared to May 1948. As already mentioned, the growth is primarily due to immigration, not to evangelism.

2. At the end of January 1954 Max Enker, then a representative of the International Hebrew Christian Alliance (IHCA), convened a meeting intended to organize the Hebrew Christians in Israel (cf. Østerbye 1970:169). *Der Zeuge*, IHCA's German-language publication, writes that the participants numbered 200 Jews (*Der Zeuge*, 12 June 1954:3) while *News Sheet* (XXIV, 1 April 1954:19) give the number as 140 (cf. Østerbye 1970:169). Gershon Nerel, with reference to Ben-Meir's notes, suggests that about 100 Jewish believers in Jesus attended (Nerel 1998b:59).

Again, children did not participate nor, presumably, did all the Jewish believers in Jesus in Israel. Nevertheless, the numbers have obviously increased compared to December 1950. A conservative guess is not quite 200 *adults* plus approximately 100 *children*. This may be a low estimate.

In 1960 a Jewish source, Chaim Vardi (affiliated with the Israeli Ministry of Religious Affairs), claimed the existence of "a tiny group of Hebrew Christians' ... some 300 strong, who try to create a Hebrew form of Christian worship and thus revert to the condition of the ancient Judaeo-Christian Community, which had been condemned and eliminated by the ancient Church Universal more than fifteen centuries ago" (*Judaica* 1960:228). It is not clear whether he speaks about Catholic and Protestant "Hebrew Christians," although it is likely that he is referring to the latter group. It is also not clear whether he includes children; in general his criteria for reaching his conclusions are unclear.

In speaking of the number of Messianic believers in 1963, the year when he and Haya immigrated to Israel, Menahem Benhayim says: "In 1963 we were about 100 Messianic Jews - perhaps 200 - in all Israel. Most were Holocaust survivors ..." (Benhayim 1993:51). Benhayim is probably talking about *adults*.

In 1989 Jim Sibley writes about the number of Jewish believers in 1965, although without quoting any source. He suggest that there were "... no more than 300 Jewish believers in 1965" (Sibley 1989:24). It is not clear whether this number includes children. For 1967 Gershon Nerel gives a number of "... roughly 500 around 1967" (Nerel 1996a:i). This figure probably includes children

### Figures in the 1970s

#### *Figures of Jewish believers in Jesus*

Baruch Maoz writes in 1976: "The total number of Hebrew Christians in Israel does not exceed the figure 1,000 and even that number seems to be somewhat

exaggerated" while he estimates that the number of indigenous local congregations "does not exceed the total of seven ..." (Maoz 1976:25). It is unclear whether or not these figures include children.

Ole Chr. Kvarme, then minister of the Lutheran church in Haifa, says the following of the situation in 1978: "Some say 400, others maybe 2,000." The authors further suggest that the total figure does not exceed 1000. These 1000 are divided between 700-800 Protestant and 200-300 Catholic Christian Jews. Both figures include *baptized* members and their children (Kjær-Hansen 1979: 27-28).

A hand-written note (dated 15 July 1977) relating to Kvarme's estimate lists 21 groups with a total of 610 *persons*. Retrospectively, a number of these figures may be questioned; the correct figure might as well be 500-600 *persons*, 150 of them possibly *children*, which would mean 350-450 *adults*.

### Figures in the 1980's

#### *Figures of Jewish believers in Jesus*

In a revised estimate for May 1980 Kvarme states the figure of Messianic believers in Israel to be between 1000-1100 (including 300 Catholics and 50 Russian Orthodox) (Kvarme 1981: 340). It is not said how many of these are *adults* and how many are *children*. Kvarme includes in this number "Jews who are baptized and have a living relationship to their church or assembly and their children."

In the course of the 1980s the number of Jewish believers in Jesus increases considerably - at least in the estimates bandied about. Thus Baruch Maoz suggests in 1986 that "there are some 3000 Jewish Christians who are not registered as such in any public registry" (Maoz 1986:3). Maoz fixes the most conservative figure at 2000-2500. Although it is not explicitly stated whether children are included they probably are.

This estimate is regarded as too high by some.

In 1986 Anne Dexter writes: "Estimates range from four-hundred to five-thousand. Some recent calculations that may well be more accurate than most settled on one-thousand-five-hundred. This figure will be quickly out of date ..." - the latter clause being a reference to the high number of baptisms (Dexter 1986:66).

In a survey whose existence is merely quoted by Sibley (1989:38 n. 4), Hanan Weisman fixes the number of Jewish believers at 1900.

Torleif Elgvin arrives at an even smaller figure of *Jewish* believers with a *permanent* affiliation to a Messianic congregation in 1988 (Tønnessen 1988:109-110). Elgvin states that it is usual to talk about 2000 or 3000 Messianic Jews. The core of the 29 congregations with which he is familiar consists of 1100 or 1200 people. If, he says, half of these are gentile Christians, then there are 600 Jewish believers with a *permanent* affiliation to a Messianic congregation, to which may be added 100 who attend Gentile Christian congregations. He nevertheless

considers that there are many without this permanent affiliation and speaks of 1500 to 2000, plus anonymous believers.

Joseph Shulam in an interview with Swedish students in 1986 indicated that the number of Messianic Jews in Israel hardly exceeds 1,000 (Berndtsson 1986:48), while M. Benhayim in the same survey says "between 1000 and 2000".

In 1989, Baruch Maoz and Avner Boskey touch on the question in an *LCJE Israel News Release* (No. 1, 30 May 1989; *Mishkan* 10/1989:91). While the contributors maintain a figure of 3000 this number is subjected to an important proviso: Of the approximately 3000 persons who belong to the some 30 congregations, churches, and house groups some 60 percent are both Jewish and Israeli. In other words, the number of *Jewish believers* is closer to 1800 than 3000.

At the international conference of the Lausanne Movement in Manila in July 1989, Avner Boskey states: "Christians outside of Israel are often thrilled to hear of the large numbers of secret believers' in Israel (one report speaks of 100,000!). Most insiders agree that their number is too small to be significant. We have no accurate statistics even concerning the number of Israelis attending regular Christian meetings in Israel. I estimate it around 1000, Baruch [Maoz] thinks 2000! There are of course many short-term expatriate gentile believers also" (Maoz 1989a:16). It is not explicitly stated whether children are included in the figure.

### Figures in the 1990s

#### *Figures of Jewish believers in Jesus*

In 1990 Avner Boskey elaborates on his figures in an interview with the *Messianic Times* (June 1990:1): "Between 700 and 1000 Jewish believers in Yeshua haMashiach meet weekly with another 1000 attending occasionally ... There are another 1000 to 2000 Hebrew speaking Gentiles."

Menahem Benhayim gives a similar figure in 1992: "We have grown in number. It is difficult to state how many Messianic Jews there are in the country, because most congregations are mixed. In some groups only half, or less, of the members are real Jews. At a careful guess, there are 1500 spread across some 30 to 33 congregations. But God never looks at numbers ..." (Hoekendijk 1992:100).

In 1995 Gary Denlinger writes: "Despite that great increase the total number of Messianic Jews probably still stands at fewer than 5000. No formal census has ever been taken, so estimates vary greatly" (Denlinger 1995: 92).

Bodil F. Skjøtt writes in 1994: "The Messianic Believers themselves claim 2000-3000 adherents (Skjøtt 1994:114). She is acquainted with the figure 5,000 for 1995, but mentions that many regard it as too optimistic. She estimates that children often make up more than 25 percent of this figure and says about the members of the approximately 40 congregations: "Most would feel more comfortable with a figure between 3000 and 4000" (Skjøtt 1995:35-38).

Joe Shulam writes in 1996: "There are in Israel, a few thousand Jews who believe that Jesus is the Messiah of whom the prophets spoke" (*Teaching from Zion* 7/1996:6).

Baruch Maoz estimates in 1998 that there are 5000-6000 (Jewish Christians, their spouses and children) plus "a small community of Jewish Catholics." (Maoz 1998:6).

In a 1998 article, Menahem Benhayim states: "Some 80 congregations and house fellowships are scattered throughout the land of Israel. Estimates vary between 3000 and 5000 believers in number, including gentiles who identify with the Messianic Jewish movement" (Benhayim 1998:29).

An estimate was produced by the Messianic Action Committee in 1998 in two issues of MAC's *Freedom Report*. The authors report in the same year first that: "The Messianic Community in Israel consists of only an estimated 6,000" (No. 51, August 1998) and second that: "Numerical estimates of the number of Messianic believers in Israel range from 5000 to 7000 individuals. A mid-range figure of 6000 would be the most agreed-upon" (No. 53, October 1998).

### Number of congregations and groups: 1950-1969

A number of fellowships and groups were led by Jewish believers in Jesus in the 1950s. In addition to these, expatriate Jewish missions also had services which could be attended. It would therefore not be surprising if further investigation demonstrated that at the end of the 1950s there were at least 20 churches, congregations and groups in Israel in which Jewish believers in Jesus were worshipping.

The number of these does not appear to considerably alter in the 1960s.

The following congregations have all reflect a certain degree of continuity from the 1950s and 1960s until the present, although most of them now possess a different status:

Haimoff/Bar-David: Ramat Gan Congregation, Tel Aviv (5-11) .....	1
Kofsman and Smadja: The Messianic Assembly, Jerusalem (1-10) .....	1
Ostrovsky: Jaffa Brethren Assembly (5-09), Jaffa .....	1

The three Lutheran congregations in Jerusalem (1-15), Haifa (3-01), and Jaffa (5-08) .....	3
CM&A: Beersheba Messianic Congregation (6-03) .....	1
Brethren: Bethesda Assembly, Haifa (3-02) .....	1
Baptists: Jerusalem (8-01), Petah Tikva (8-10) (and others?) .....	2

### Number of congregations and groups in the 1970s

The following lists the existence/presence of congregations and house groups as noted by various authors.

*Baruch Maoz* (Maoz 1976:25):

Seven indigenous local churches.....	7
Denominational and mission-based churches (number is not disclosed)...	?

*Kvarme* (Kjær-Hansen 1979:31-34):

Among the Protestant denominational churches:	
Anglicans (1), Lutherans (3) and Baptists (4) .....	7
Messianic Assemblies .....	4
Private and “semi-official” groups (approximately) .....	25
Total .....	36

**Number of congregations and groups in the 1980s**

*Kvarme* (Kvarme, Olé Chr.M. 1981:340):

Kvarme lists by name 34 congregations and groups .....	34
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*Torleif Elgvin* (Tønnessen 1988: 109):

“...We estimate that there are 29 mainly Hebrew-language Messianic congregations in Israel” .....	29
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*Baruch Maoz* (Maoz 1989b:10)

“Israel has some 30 Hebrew-speaking congregations and house group all over the country .....	30
--	----

**Number of congregations and groups in the 1990s**

*Avner Boskey* (Messianic Times June 1990:1):

“... 30 growing Messianic Jewish congregations are alive and well in Israel .....	30
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*Caspari Center List* (unpublished; September 1992):

Some 30 congregations and home groups are listed by name .....	30
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*Menahem Benhayim* (Hoekendijk 1992:100):

“...some 30 to 33 congregations .....	30-33
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*Bodil F. Skjøtt* (Skjøtt 1995:35):

“.... approximately 40 congregations ...” .....	40
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*Menahem Benhayim* (Benhayim 1998:29):

“... some 80 congregations and house fellowship are scattered throughout the land of Israel ...” .....	80
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*Messianic Action Committee (Freedom Report October 1998):*

"... There are 53 congregations and approximately 70 independent home groups." ..... 123

*Baruch Maoz (Maoz: 1998:6)*

"... slightly more than 50 Hebrew-speaking congregations of various descriptions and about 50 house groups. In addition there are 23 Russian-speaking Jewish congregations and seven Amharic-speaking congregations" ..... 130

*Baruch Maoz (Interview 14 December 1998):*

51 Hebrew-speaking congregations.....	51
53 Hebrew-speaking house groups .....	53
23 Russian-speaking congregations .....	23
7 Amharic-speaking congregations.....	7
<i>Total</i> .....	134

The statistical results of the survey are presented in the following chapter. The numbers of Jewish believers in Jesus are more moderate than those often quoted for the 1990s in reports on the Messianic Movement in Israel.

## 6. Demographics

In this chapter the results of the figures of the Messianic congregations are presented followed by two tables; one in which the congregations are listed according to their geographical location, the second in which they are listed according to their size. Furthermore the last table gives information also on language, year of foundation and more. For comparison on the leaders, see p. 24-25.

### Demographic observations on Messianic congregations and house groups<sup>1</sup>

<i>Members/core group</i>			<b>4957</b>
Adults		3560	72%
Children under 18 years		1397	28%
Adults in house groups:	171	5 % of total adult members	
Children in house groups:	70	2 % of total children	

<i>Characteristics of adults members/core group</i>			<b>3560</b>
1. Jewish		2178	61%
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew	649	18 %	
3. Non-Jewish with Israeli citizenship	212	6%	
of whom 21 are Arabs/Palestinians = 0,6%			
4. Non-Jews and without Israeli citizenship		521	15%

#### *Further observations*

Adult members living in a Jewish household: 2178 + 649 = 2827 (79% of total).

Non-Jewish adults outside a Jewish household: 212 + 521 = 733 (21% of total).

Members with Israeli citizenship: 2178 + 649 + 212 = 3039 (85% of total).

The number of Arabs/Palestinians is not surprisingly low when it is taken into account that there are a lot of Arabic-speaking evangelical fellowships.

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<sup>1</sup> Jewish members of the international congregations are not included in the demographic statistics apart from those who are members of King of King's Hebrew speaking Fellowship (1-09; see also 8-03). Even if the less than 50 additional adults present in the international congregations were added this would not change the tendency reflected in the statistics.

<b>Attendance (weekly)</b>		<b>4932</b>
Adults	3736	76%
Children under 18 years	1196	24%

*Further observations*

The number of members/core group and attendance are almost identical. Of course this does not mean that all members participate in each weekly service, since in the figure for attendance is also included non-members and visitors. Still it can be concluded that attendance rate of adult members is remarkably high.

With regard to children the picture is different. Of the total number of 1397 children the average attendance is only 1196 children.

**Intermarriage**

Intermarriage rate for 2178 Jewish believers is 30 %.

*Further observations*

We have estimated the percentage of intermarriage among Jewish believers in Israel. A certain inaccuracy should be assumed since it must be postulated that some (few) live in intermarriage with a spouse who is not member of the congregation.

English- and Russian-speaking congregations have the highest intermarriage percentage, 37,2 % and 37,1 % to be exact.

**Figures of people living in a Jewish/Israeli household**

Adults:  $2178 + 649$  (minus approx. 27 not married to a member) = 2800 adults. It must be assumed that a considerably high percentage of the children are from families where at least one of the parents is Jewish. Using the percentage of adults in Jewish households (79%) for children (total = 1397) then the number of children in Jewish household is 1197. With these presumptions the figures would be as follows:

Adults	2800	
Children	1197	
Total		<b>3997</b>

This means that 81% percentage of the total number of congregation members (adults and children = 4957) live in a Jewish household.

### The language groups: Jewish members, intermarriage, children and Russians

*Hebrew-speaking*: 60% Jewish; 25 % intermarriage; 32% children; 14 % Russian.

*Russian-speaking*: 71% Jewish\*; 37% intermarriage; 24% children; 97% Russians.

*English-speaking*: 44% Jewish; 37% intermarriage; 19% children; 16 Russians.

*Amharic-speaking*: 53% Jewish; 23% intermarriage; 22% children; 0% Russians.

\* The 71% is based on the figures given by the leaders of how many of the members are Jewish (category 1). Even if this number is occasionally estimated too high, which we believe it could be, it will not change the tendency.

### Figures of Russians

Adult members in Russian-speaking congregations (97% of 1026) 995

Estimated adults in non-Russian speaking congregation 500

Total adults of people from the former USSR 1495

This makes up 42% of the total number of members in all the congregations.

### Jewish believers born in Israel

The following calculation can give an indication of the number of Jewish believers in the Messianic congregations who are born in Israel :

Total number of Jewish believers (adults) 2178

Jewish believers not born in Israel:

*Russian* adults in Russian-speak. cong.: (almost none born in Israel) 725

*Russian* adults in Hebrew-speaking congregations (our estimate) 350

*Ethiopian* adults: (almost none born in Israel) 130

Total 1205

The result is 2178 minus (725 + 350 + 130) = 973. From this should be subtracted the number of those who are born outside Israel (excluding those from the former USSR). If we estimate this number at 325, which is about 33% of the total, then the number of Jewish believers in the Messianic congregations who are born in Israel is about 650.

## Abbreviations to demographic tables

A	Adult	IC	Israeli citizenship
Amh	Amharic-speaking	InterM	Intermarriage
C	Children	J	Jewish member
Cate	Category	L	Language
Ch	Church	MtoJ	Married to Jew
Con	Congregation	No	Acc. to Districts
Eng	English speaking	Non-IC	Non-Israeli citiz.
F-ship	Fellowship	Rus	Russian-speaking
G	Group	S	ranked acc. to size
Heb	Hebrew-speaking	T	Total
HG	House group	Y	Year of founding

**Table 1: Demographic make up of the congregations and house groups listed according to districts**

### District 1: Jerusalem

Congregation Name	Membership/core group							Attendance		
	T = A + C	1	2	3 (P)	4			T = A + C		
1-01 Beit Geulah	102 = 60 + 42	24	5	1 (1)	30			100 = 75 + 25		
1-02 Brit Olam	35 = 25 + 10	19	6	0	0			25 = 20 + 5		
1-03 Christ Church Con.	85 = 70 + 15	30	10	10	20			150 = 140 + 10		
1-04 Even Yisrael	65 = 50 + 15	40	5	0	5			85 = 65 + 20		
1-05 Home group in the Judea	18 = 8 + 10	8	0	0	0			10 = 4 + 6		
1-06 Jerusalem Ethiopian Con.	20 = 18 + 2	16	2	0	0			12 = 10 + 2		
1-07 Jerusalem Ethiopian HG	10 = 10 + 0	10	0	0	0			10 = 10 + 0		
1-08 Keshet Nitzachon	68 = 50 + 18	40	10	0	0			70 = 52 + 18		
1-09 King of Kings Fellowship	41 = 35 + 6	15	5	0	15			30 = 24 + 6		
1-10 Messianic Assembly	100 = 60 + 40	35	5	10 (1)	10			100 = 75 + 25		
1-11 Narkis Street Con.	140 = 70 + 70	30	10	0	30			175 = 105 + 70		
1-12 Neveh Tzion	27 = 21 + 6	17	0	0	4			30 = 24 + 6		
1-13 Roeh Yisrael	100 = 60 + 40	40	4	6 (1)	10			100 = 70 + 30		
1-14 Sar Shalom	17 = 16 + 1	8	2	3 (1)	3			12 = 12 = 0		
1-15 Shalheveyah	27 = 19 + 8	4	1	6	8			15 = 9 + 6		
1-16 Shemen Sasson	41 = 35 + 6	13	1	1	20			50 = 50 + 0		
1-17 Sukkat David	102 = 67 + 35	33	5	5	24			100 = 65 + 35		
1-18 Voice in the Wilderness	32 = 26 + 6	15	4	3	4			40 = 37 + 3		
1-19 Yad Hashmona HG	21 = 11 + 10	10	1	0	0			20 = 14 + 6		
<b>Total</b>	<b>1051 = 711 + 340</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>45 (4)</b>	<b>183</b>			<b>1134 = 861 + 273</b>		

**District 2: Northern Israel**

<b>Congregation</b>	<b>Membership/core group</b>						<b>Attendance</b>
<b>Name</b>	<b>T = A + C</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3 (P)</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>T = A + C</b>
2-01 Ahavah	31 = 25 + 6	22	3	0	0		35 = 29 + 6
2-02 Akko Congregation	50 = 40 + 10	25	15	0	0		40 = 30 + 10
2-03 Congregation in Galilee	47 = 37 + 10	27	7	1	2		47 = 37 + 10
2-04 Emek Yizre'el	35 = 23 + 12	15	3	4	1		25 = 15 + 10
2-05 F-ship in Northern Israel	40 = 30 + 10	20	10	0	0		35 = 25 + 10
2-06 Haderekh	60 = 40 + 20	30	7	3 (1)	0		50 = 35 + 15
2-07 House Group in Galilee	16 = 16 + 0	12	1	0	3		14 = 14 + 0
2-08 Living Stones Fellowship	20 = 16 + 4	10	6	0	0		18 = 14 + 4
2-09 Ma'alot House Group	4 = 4 + 0	2	2	0	0		4 = 4 + 0
2-10 Morning Star Fellowship	60 = 45 + 15	35	10	0	0		50 = 50 + 0
2-11 Nahariya House Group	10 = 8 + 2	7	0	0	1		10 = 8 + 2
2-12 Nahariya Mes. Fellowship	14 = 10 + 4	10	0	0	0		8 = 8 + 0
2-13 Nazareth Pentecostal G	14 = 12 + 2	7	5	0	0		14 = 12 + 2
2-14 Peniel Fellowship	280 = 180 + 100	80	15	45 (8)	40		235 = 165 + 70
2-15 Rivers of Living Water	17 = 10 + 7	7	3	0	0		40 = 25 + 15
2-16 Ruach Hachaim	56 = 35 + 21	31	4	0	0		75 = 55 + 20
<b>Total</b>	<b>754 = 531 + 223</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>53 (9)</b>	<b>47</b>		<b>700 = 526 + 174</b>

**District 3: Haifa**

<b>Congregation</b>	<b>Membership/core group</b>						<b>Attendance</b>
<b>Name</b>	<b>T = A + C</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3 (P)</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>T = A + C</b>
3-01 Beit Eliahu	105 = 85 + 20	50	5	20	1	10	110 = 90 + 20
3-02 Bethesda Assembly	90 = 70 + 20	30	25	10		5	100 = 80 + 20
3-03 Carmel Assembly	200 = 160 + 40	60	35	10		55	275 = 225 + 50
3-04 First Russian Baptist Ch.	13 = 11 + 2	7	4	0	0		10 = 8 + 2
3-05 Full Gospel Mes. Center	100 = 80 + 20	55	25	0	0		100 = 80 + 20
3-06 Hadera Ethiopian Con.	20 = 15 + 5	14	1	0	0		20 = 15 + 5
3-07 Haifa Ethiopian Con.	29 = 17 + 12	15	2	0	0		35 = 23 + 12
3-08 Hamikra	33 = 15 + 18	9	2	0	4		20 = 10 + 10
3-09 Melekh Hakavod	74 = 51 + 23	30	21	0	0		100 = 80 + 20
3-10 New Life Mes. Fellowship	135 = 95 + 40	85	0	6	4		110 = 85 + 25
3-11 Ohalei Rachamim	115 = 85 + 30	70	6	5	4		120 = 90 + 30
3-12 Russian Mes. Assembly	120 = 100 + 20	70	30	0	0		80 = 50 + 30
3-13 Word of Life Con.	28 = 25 + 3	14	10	0	1		35 = 28 + 7
3-14 Yisrael Chai	80 = 60 + 20	35	25	0	0		35 = 29 + 6
<b>Total</b>	<b>1142 = 869 + 273</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>1150 = 893 + 257</b>

**District 4: Central**

<b>Congregation</b>	<b>Membership/core group</b>						<b>Attendance</b>
<b>Name</b>	<b>T = A + C</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3 (P)</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>T = A + C</b>
4-01 Beit Asaf	100 = 80 + 20	60	16	0	4		100 = 80 + 20
4-02 Grace and Truth Chr. Con.	300 = 200 + 100	165	23	7 (3)	5		200 = 140 + 60
4-03 Hamaayan	140 = 90 + 50	60	7	18	5		140 = 105 + 35
4-04 Modi'in House Group	13 = 13 + 0	10	3	0	0		41 = 26 = 15
4-05 Rehovot Ethiopian Con.	45 = 25 + 20	24	1	0	0		45 = 25 + 20
4-07 Rishon Letzion Ru. F-ship	35 = 30 + 5	22	8	0	0		20 = 15 + 5
<b>Total</b>	<b>633 = 438 + 195</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>25 (3)</b>	<b>14</b>		<b>546 = 391 + 155</b>

**District 5: Tel Aviv**

Congregation	Membership/core group					Attendance
Name	T = A + C	1	2	3 (P)	4	T = A + C
5-01 Adonai Ro'i	70 = 55 + 15	23	5	0	27	55 = 40 + 15
5-02 Beit Elion	45 = 30 + 15	30	0	0	0	30 = 20 + 10
5-03 Beit Immanuel	105 = 70 + 35	45	24	0	1	100 = 65 + 35
5-04 Beit Sar Shalom	55 = 45 + 10	30	15	0	0	50 = 42 + 8
5-05 Brit Olam	63 = 50 + 13	35	5	5 (2)	5	80 = 70 + 10
5-06 Ethiopian Jew. Mes. Con.	65 = 55 + 10	35	20	0	0	200 = 180 + 20
5-07 Har Tzion	57 = 50 + 7	10	2	0	38	70 = 60 + 10
5-08 Immanuel Lutheran Ch.	20 = 18 + 2	10	2	0	6	37 = 35 + 2
5-09 Jaffa Brethren Assembly	60 = 40 + 20	30	5	3	2	50 = 35 + 15
5-10 Keren Yeshuah	65 = 45 + 20	37	5	1	2	60 = 45 + 15
5-11 Ramat Gan Congregation	65 = 40 + 25	32	1	2	5	70 = 45 + 25
5-12 Ramat Hasharon Con.	80 = 60 + 20	30	10	5	5	80 = 60 + 20
5-13 Tel Aviv Bulgarian F-ship	30 = 30 + 0	15	15	0	0	25 = 25 + 0
5-14 Tel Aviv Fellowship	13 = 10 + 3	10	0	0	0	12 = 9 + 3
5-15 Tikvat Yisrael	43 = 25 + 18	10	10	0	5	35 = 25 + 10
<b>Total</b>	<b>836 = 623 + 213</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>16 (P)</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>954 = 756 + 198</b>

**District 6: Southern**

Congregation	Membership/core group					Attendance
Name	T = A + C	1	2	3 (P)	4	T = A + C
6-01 Ashdod Congregation	65 = 50 + 15	25	22	0	3	50 = 37 + 13
6-02 Beersheba House Group	20 = 12 + 8	8	4	0	0	20 = 12 + 8
6-03 Beersheba Messianic Con.	90 = 60 + 30	20	28	8 (2)	4	100 = 70 + 30
6-04 Congregation in the South	41 = 33 + 8	25	5	0	3	40 = 32 + 8
6-05 Eilat Congregation	92 = 57 + 35	25	25	5	2	100 = 65 + 35
6-06 Fellowship in the South	42 = 35 + 7	20	15	0	0	50 = 43 + 7
6-07 Kol Chatan	22 = 18 + 4	14	2	0	2	15 = 8 + 7
6-08 Voice in the Wilderness	24 = 14 + 10	9	5	0	0	24 = 14 + 10
6-09 Yeruel	25 = 13 + 12	7	3	1	2	15 = 8 + 7
<b>Total</b>	<b>421 = 292 + 129</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>14 (2)</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>414 = 289 + 125</b>

**District 7: Judea and Samaria/ West Bank**

Congregation	Membership/core group					Attendance
Name	T = A + C	1	2	3 (P)	4	T = A + C
7-01 Ariel Fellowship	19 = 11 + 8	3	3	3	2	18 = 10 + 8
7-02 Bat Tzion	16 = 10 + 6	8	2	0	0	16 = 10 + 6
<b>Total</b>	<b>35 = 21 + 14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>34 = 20 + 14</b>

**Group 8: International Congregations**

Congregation	Membership/core group of Jews	
Name	T = A + C	1 2
8-01 Baptist Church	4 = 4 + 0	4 0
8-02 Christ Church	8 = 8 + 0	5 3
8-03 King of Kings Assembly	71 = 57 + 14	47 10
8-04 Mount Zion Fellowship	5 = 5 + 0	5 0
8-05 Narkis Str. English Con.	20 = 20 + 0	20 0
8-06 Redeemer Church	0 = 0 + 0	0 0
8-07 St. Andrew's Church	1 = 1 + 0	1 0
8-08 St. Paul's Church	0 = 0 + 0	0 0
8-09 The Scottish Church	0 = 0 + 0	0 0
8-10 Baptist Village	1 = 1 + 0	1 0
8-11 Immanuel Lutheran Ch.	5 = 5 + 0	5 0
<b>Total</b>	<b>115 = 101 + 14</b>	<b>88 13</b>

Table 2: Demographic make up of the congregations listed according to size

S	No	L	Y	Membership/core group				Adults	
				T	A	A % of T	C	C % of T	J J % of A
1	4-02	Heb	1976	300	200	66.7%	100	33.3%	165 82.5%
2	2-14	Heb	1982	280	180	64.3%	100	35.7%	80 44.4%
3	3-03	Eng	1991	200	160	80.0%	40	20.0%	60 37.5%
4	5-06	Amh	1998	150	130	86.7%	20	13.3%	35 26.9%
5	1-11	Heb	1989	140	70	50.0%	70	50.0%	30 42.9%
6	4-03	Heb	1989	140	90	64.3%	50	35.7%	60 66.7%
7	3-10	Rus	1990	135	95	70.4%	40	29.6%	85 89.5%
8	3-12	Rus	1992	120	100	83.3%	20	16.7%	70 70.0%
9	3-11	Heb	1995	115	85	73.9%	30	26.1%	70 82.4%
10	3-01	Heb	1950s	105	85	81.0%	20	19.0%	50 58.8%
11	5-03	Heb	1960s	105	70	66.7%	35	33.3%	45 64.3%
12	1-01	Heb	1991	102	60	58.8%	42	41.2%	24 40.0%
13	1-17	Heb	1993	102	67	65.7%	35	34.3%	33 49.3%
14	1-10	Heb	1950s	100	60	60.0%	40	40.0%	35 58.3%
15	1-13	Heb	1972	100	60	60.0%	40	40.0%	40 66.7%
16	3-05	Rus	1994	100	80	80.0%	20	20.0%	55 68.8%
17	4-01	Heb	1978	100	80	80.0%	20	20.0%	60 75.0%
18	6-05	Heb	1980	92	57	62.0%	35	38.0%	25 43.9%
19	3-02	Heb	1920	90	70	77.8%	20	22.2%	30 42.9%
20	6-03	Heb	1972	90	60	66.7%	30	33.3%	20 33.3%
21	1-03	Heb	1987	85	70	82.4%	15	17.6%	30 42.9%
22	3-14	Rus	1995	80	60	75.0%	20	25.0%	35 58.3%
23	5-12	Heb	1995s	80	60	75.0%	20	25.0%	30 50.0%
24	3-09	Rus	1998	74	51	68.9%	23	31.1%	30 58.8%
25	5-01	Heb	1996	70	55	78.6%	15	21.4%	23 41.8%
26	1-08	Heb	1995s	68	50	73.5%	18	26.5%	40 80.0%
27	1-04	Rus	1994	65	50	76.9%	15	23.1%	40 80.0%
28	5-10	Heb	1990	65	45	69.2%	20	30.8%	37 82.2%
29	5-11	Heb	1950s	65	40	61.5%	25	38.5%	32 80.0%
30	6-01	Rus	1998	65	50	76.9%	15	23.1%	25 50.0%
31	5-05	Heb	1993	63	50	79.4%	13	20.6%	35 70.0%
32	2-06	Heb	1989	60	40	66.7%	20	33.3%	30 75.0%
33	2-10	Rus	1990	60	45	75.0%	15	25.0%	35 77.8%
34	5-09	Heb	1930s	60	40	66.7%	20	33.3%	30 75.0%
35	5-07	Spa	1998	57	50	87.7%	7	12.3%	10 20.0%
36	2-16	Rus	1994	56	35	62.5%	21	37.5%	31 88.6%
37	5-04	Rus	1993	55	45	81.8%	10	18.2%	30 66.7%
38	2-02	Rus	1993	50	40	80.0%	10	20.0%	25 62.5%
39	2-03	Rus	1997	47	37	78.7%	10	21.3%	27 73.0%
40	4-05	Amh	1997	45	25	55.6%	20	44.4%	24 96.0%
41	5-02	Rus	1994	45	30	66.7%	15	33.3%	30 100.0%
42	5-15	Heb	1992	43	25	58.1%	18	41.9%	10 40.0%
43	6-06	Rus	1998	42	35	83.3%	7	16.7%	20 57.1%
44	1-09	Heb	1997	41	35	85.4%	6	14.6%	15 42.9%
45	1-16	Eng	1992	41	35	85.4%	6	14.6%	13 37.1%
46	6-04	Rus	1997	41	33	80.5%	8	19.5%	25 75.8%
47	2-05	Rus	1996	40	30	75.0%	10	25.0%	20 66.7%
48	1-02	Rus	1991	35	25	71.4%	10	28.6%	19 76.0%



No	Adults							Attendance		
	MtoJ	MtoJ % of A	InterM	IC	IC % of A	Non-IC	Non-IC % of A	T	A	C
4-02	23	11.5%	13.9%	7	3.5%	5	2.5%	200	140	60
2-14	15	8.3%	18.8%	45	25.0%	40	22.2%	235	165	70
3-03	35	21.9%	58.3%	10	6.3%	55	34.4%	275	225	50
5-06	20	15.4%	57.1%	5	3.8%	70	53.8%	200	180	20
1-11	10	14.3%	33.3%	0	0.0%	30	42.9%	175	105	70
4-03	7	7.8%	11.7%	18	20.0%	5	5.6%	140	105	35
3-10	0	0.0%	0.0%	6	6.3%	4	4.2%	110	85	25
3-12	30	30.0%	42.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	80	50	30
3-11	6	7.1%	8.6%	5	5.9%	4	4.7%	120	90	30
3-01	5	5.9%	10.0%	20	23.5%	10	11.8%	110	90	20
5-03	24	34.3%	53.3%	0	0.0%	1	1.4%	100	65	35
1-01	5	8.3%	20.8%	1	1.7%	30	50.0%	100	75	25
1-17	5	7.5%	15.2%	5	7.5%	24	35.8%	100	65	35
1-10	5	8.3%	14.3%	10	16.7%	10	16.7%	100	75	25
1-13	4	6.7%	10.0%	6	10.0%	10	16.7%	100	70	30
3-05	25	31.3%	45.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	100	80	20
4-01	16	20.0%	26.7%	0	0.0%	4	5.0%	100	80	20
6-05	25	43.9%	100.0%	5	8.8%	2	3.5%	100	65	35
3-02	25	35.7%	83.3%	10	14.3%	5	7.1%	100	80	20
6-03	28	46.7%	140.0%	8	13.3%	4	6.7%	100	70	30
1-03	10	14.3%	33.3%	10	14.3%	20	28.6%	150	140	10
3-14	25	41.7%	71.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	35	29	6
5-12	10	16.7%	33.3%	5	8.3%	15	25.0%	80	60	20
3-09	21	41.2%	70.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	100	80	20
5-01	5	9.1%	21.7%	0	0.0%	27	49.1%	55	40	15
1-08	10	20.0%	25.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	70	52	18
1-04	5	10.0%	12.5%	0	0.0%	5	10.0%	85	65	20
5-10	5	11.1%	13.5%	1	2.2%	2	4.4%	60	45	15
5-11	1	2.5%	3.1%	2	5.0%	5	12.5%	70	45	25
6-01	22	44.0%	88.0%	0	0.0%	3	6.0%	50	37	13
5-05	5	10.0%	14.3%	5	10.0%	5	10.0%	80	70	10
2-06	7	17.5%	23.3%	3	7.5%	0	0.0%	50	35	15
2-10	10	22.2%	28.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	50	50	0
5-09	5	12.5%	16.7%	3	7.5%	2	5.0%	50	35	15
5-07	2	4.0%	20.0%	0	0.0%	38	76.0%	70	60	10
2-16	4	11.4%	12.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	75	55	20
5-04	15	33.3%	50.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	50	42	8
2-02	15	37.5%	60.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	40	30	10
2-03	7	18.9%	25.9%	1	2.7%	2	5.4%	47	37	10
4-05	1	4.0%	4.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	45	25	20
5-02	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	30	20	10
5-15	10	40.0%	100.0%	0	0.0%	5	20.0%	35	25	10
6-06	15	42.9%	75.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	50	43	7
1-09	5	14.3%	33.3%	0	0.0%	15	42.9%	30	24	6
1-16	1	2.9%	7.7%	1	2.9%	20	57.1%	50	50	0
6-04	5	15.2%	20.0%	0	0.0%	3	9.1%	40	32	8
2-05	10	33.3%	50.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	35	25	10
1-02	6	24.0%	31.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	25	20	5

Table 2: Demographic make up of the congregations listed according to size  
(Cont.)

S	No	L	Y	Membership/core group					Adults	
				T	A	A % of T	C	C % of T	J	J % of A
49	2-04	Heb	1994	35	23	65.7%	12	34.3%	15	65.2%
50	4-06	Rus	1998	35	30	85.7%	5	14.3%	22	73.3%
51	3-08	Heb	1994	33	15	45.5%	18	54.5%	9	60.0%
52	1-18	Rus	1994	32	26	81.3%	6	18.8%	15	57.7%
53	2-01	Rus	1987	31	25	80.6%	6	19.4%	22	88.0%
54	5-13	Bul	1995	30	30	100.0%	0	0.0%	15	50.0%
55	3-07	Amh	1993	29	17	58.6%	12	41.4%	15	88.2%
56	3-13	Rus	1998	28	25	89.3%	3	10.7%	14	56.0%
57	1-12	Eng	1995	27	21	77.8%	6	22.2%	17	81.0%
58	1-15	Heb	1950s	27	19	70.4%	8	29.6%	4	21.1%
59	6-09	Heb	1998	25	13	52.0%	12	48.0%	7	53.8%
60	6-08	Rus	1995	24	14	58.3%	10	41.7%	9	64.3%
61	6-07	Heb	1998	22	18	81.8%	4	18.2%	14	77.8%
62	1-19	Heb	1996	21	11	52.4%	10	47.6%	10	90.9%
63	1-06	Amh	1990s	20	18	90.0%	2	10.0%	16	88.9%
64	2-08	Rus	1999	20	16	80.0%	4	20.0%	10	62.5%
65	3-06	Amh	1997	20	15	75.0%	5	25.0%	14	93.3%
66	5-08	Heb	1950s	20	18	90.0%	2	10.0%	10	55.6%
67	6-02	Rus	1998	20	12	60.0%	8	40.0%	8	66.7%
68	7-01	Eng	1989	19	11	57.9%	8	42.1%	3	27.3%
69	1-05	Heb	1970s	18	8	44.4%	10	55.6%	8	100.0%
70	1-14	Eng	1995	17	16	94.1%	1	5.9%	8	50.0%
71	2-15	Rus	1995	17	10	58.8%	7	41.2%	7	70.0%
72	2-07	Eng	1998	16	16	100.0%	0	0.0%	12	75.0%
73	7-02	Heb	1992	16	10	62.5%	6	37.5%	8	80.0%
74	2-12	Heb	1990	14	10	71.4%	4	28.6%	10	100.0%
75	2-13	Rus	1990s	14	12	85.7%	2	14.3%	7	58.3%
76	3-04	Rus	1990	13	11	84.6%	2	15.4%	7	63.6%
77	4-04	Heb	1998	13	13	100.0%	0	0.0%	10	76.9%
78	5-14	Heb	1991	13	10	76.9%	3	23.1%	10	100.0%
79	1-07	Amh	1998	10	10	100.0%	0	0.0%	10	100.0%
80	2-11	Heb	1990	10	8	80.0%	2	20.0%	7	87.5%
81	2-09	Rus	1990	4	4	100.0%	0	0.0%	2	50.0%

No	Adults							Attendance		
	MtoJ	MtoJ % of A	InterM	IC	IC % of A	Non-IC	Non-IC % of A	T	A	C
2-04	3	13.0%	20.0%	4	17.4%	1	4.3%	25	15	10
4-06	8	26.7%	36.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	20	15	5
3-08	2	13.3%	22.2%	0	0.0%	4	26.7%	20	10	10
1-18	4	15.4%	26.7%	3	11.5%	4	15.4%	40	37	3
2-01	3	12.0%	13.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	35	29	6
5-13	15	50.0%	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	25	25	0
3-07	2	11.8%	13.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	35	23	12
3-13	10	40.0%	71.4%	0	0.0%	1	4.0%	35	28	7
1-12	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	19.0%	30	24	6
1-15	1	5.3%	25.0%	6	31.6%	8	42.1%	15	9	6
6-09	3	23.1%	42.9%	1	7.7%	2	15.4%	15	8	7
6-08	5	35.7%	55.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	24	14	10
6-07	2	11.1%	14.3%	0	0.0%	2	11.1%	15	8	7
1-19	1	9.1%	10.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	20	14	6
1-06	2	11.1%	12.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	12	10	2
2-08	6	37.5%	60.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	18	14	4
3-06	1	6.7%	7.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	20	15	5
5-08	2	11.1%	20.0%	0	0.0%	6	33.3%	37	35	2
6-02	4	33.3%	50.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	20	12	8
7-01	3	27.3%	100.0%	3	27.3%	2	18.2%	18	10	8
1-05	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	10	4	6
1-14	2	12.5%	25.0%	3	18.8%	3	18.8%	12	12	0
2-15	3	30.0%	42.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	40	25	15
2-07	1	6.3%	8.3%	0	0.0%	3	18.8%	14	14	0
7-02	2	20.0%	25.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	16	10	6
2-12	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	8	8	0
2-13	5	41.7%	71.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	14	12	2
3-04	4	36.4%	57.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	10	8	2
4-04	3	23.1%	30.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	41	26	15
5-14	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	12	9	3
1-07	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	10	10	0
2-11	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	12.5%	10	8	2
2-09	2	50.0%	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	4	0

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## District 1: Jerusalem

1-01

### Beit Geulah

Southern Jerusalem

*Name:* בית גאולה; Beit Geulah ("House of Redemption"); Jerusalem Assembly.

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Amutah.

*Meeting place:* In rented facilities belonging to the Ecumenical Institute for Theological Research, Tantur; the weekly children's club is at Shalhevetyah (1-15).

#### History

*Founded* 4 May 1991. The work began as a Bible study group initiated by the leader in 1988 after he returned from a year at a Bible School in the USA. As the group became larger it naturally moved from house group to congregation. The leader is a second generation Messianic believer who grew up in the Messianic Assembly (1-10).

*Harassment:* The congregation as such has experienced little harassment, but the leader has because of advertisement campaigns and other evangelistic initiatives he has undertaken personally. He has received telephone threats and a hostile article was published as a reaction to an advertisement put in a Hebrew language, Friday paper.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Meno Kalischer, R.C., and J.Y.

*Key person(s) 1998:* Meno Kalischer, J.Y., and two other elders.

#### Theological character

Baptist, evangelical, and non-charismatic with a strong emphasis on evangelism. The Jewish holidays are seen as a shadow of what has come in the Messiah; the biblical content of the feasts is taught. The pastor has organized a Seder for members who do not have a home where Pesach is celebrated. The church holidays are not celebrated but mention is made of them at the appropriate time of the year.

A *statement of faith* exists. The 5-page document is divided into 12 paragraphs; the content and the language are evangelical in character. In the introductory paragraph called "Covenant" it reads: "... we agree to strive to spread the Gospel 'throughout all nations.'"

On the "one God" it reads: "... in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." On "the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal

Son of God" it reads: "... He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary as no other man was ever nor can be born of a woman." On the Holy Spirit: "... the Holy Spirit is a divine Person possessing all the attributes of personality and of deity." On the Church: "The local church is a congregation of baptized believers" with two offices – pastor (elder, bishop) and deacon – and with two ordinances: baptism and the Lord's table. The congregation identifies "with those believers who are known as Baptists." On eschatology it says that: "... (Jesus) will return to rapture His saints. After the tribulation He will set up the throne of David and establish His kingdom. The rapture coming is imminent and will be personal, pre-tribulational and pre-millennial."

*Baptism:* Candidates receive instruction before being baptized depending on the individual. Children can be baptized when they come to faith.

### Leadership

Beit Geulah is led by the pastor and 2 other elders. The congregation wants to appoint a third elder. Elders are appointed according to the New Testament principles for leadership and are brought before the congregation for its acceptance.

The professional background of the pastor is in field engineering. He worked for a computer company for several years until 1992. From 1987-88 he attended Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry's Bible School in New Jersey.

*Women* cannot serve as elders or pastors. They can be deaconesses and they can teach other women.

### Membership

In 1998 Beit Geulah had 60 members. This number does not include the 42 children registered in the children's club run by the congregation.

A *membership list* does not exist but members are those who consider the congregation their spiritual home regardless of how long they are in the country. In order to take part in the decisions of the congregation people have to agree to the statement of faith.

#### *Characteristics of adult members:*

1. Jewish ..... 24
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew ..... 5
3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship ..... 1  
(of whom 1 is an Arab/Palestinian)
4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship ..... 30

*Changes in membership since 1991:* About 20 of the present members are new immigrants from the former USSR, many of whom have come to faith in Israel. Many of the other members are also new believers who have joined the congregation through friendship evangelism. Among the members are also

foreign students and others in the country for a limited time. A few people have come from another congregation.

A number of foreign students in the country only for a short time attend regularly, but are not included in the number of members. A few people have left the congregation and moved to other places.

### **Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday morning at 10:00 am.

*Attendance:* Average number about 100. Of these 25 are children, about 40 are non-members but attend regularly; a few visitors/tourists attend.

*Description of the service:* The service is opened with a scripture reading, often from the Book of Psalms; then follows a time of worship before the sermon, which lasts about 60 minutes (including translation). The sermon is expository, often based on a continued teaching of a book of the Bible.

The *language used* is Hebrew with translation into English from the front; simultaneously translated into Russian.

*Communion:* Celebrated once a month; it is stressed that communion is for believers and those who have been baptized. The passage on the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11 is read and explained. Children can take part if they are baptized.

*Women* can take an active part in the service, but they cannot teach.

*Children's classes:* There are 2 children's classes during the time of the sermon.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* There is a weekly topical Bible study; a weekly children's club; women's meeting; prayer meeting; regular evangelistic outreach; and individual Bible study with those who have expressed a wish to learn more.

### **Cooperation**

The congregation is open to cooperation with others and invites a guest speaker 5-7 times a year. The pastor participates in national leadership events and from time to time the congregation has participated in national events. In spring 1999 the congregation participated in a national evangelistic campaign together with groups from other parts of the country.

### **Finances**

A financial report is given twice a year to the congregation to show how money received has been spent. Furthermore a financial statement is made at the end of each year. Donations in Israel comprise 75 percent of the income. The remainder comes from abroad. Money has been donated to the Fellowship of Christian Students in Israel (FCSI) and to a family in full time ministry in Haifa; the congregation has also supported a congregation in Slovakia. Congregations and individuals from abroad support the pastor and the money is channeled

through Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry.

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*Interview with Meno Kalischer, 15 October 1998.*

*Media: Jerusalem Post 23.03.92. Yom Hashishi 02.06.95.*

1-02

## Brit Olam

Southern Jerusalem

*Name:* עולם ברית; Kehilat Brit Olam ("Eternal Covenant Congregation" – Isaiah 55:3; Ezekiel 37:26).

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Not an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In a private home.

### History

*Founded* in 1991. In 1991 at the initiative of Vladimir Shekhter and others began what was then called the Russian Ministry in Jerusalem. Shekhter and his family moved to Israel in 1991 because of what he calls a response to a call from God. Until 1994 Vladimir Shekhter was the leader of the Russian-speaking group that met in the facilities of Baptist Church at Narkis Street (1-11). He left this group because of disagreement concerning the leadership and continued to lead what was called the Russian Ministry in Jerusalem. Since 1998 the group has met as a congregation under the name Brit Olam.

*Harassment:* There have been threats from anti-missionary organizations but the actual work of the congregation has never been interrupted nor have they encountered any difficulties from neighbors.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation and in 1998:* Vladimir Shekhter and family.

### Theological character

Central to the theology of the congregation is the belief in "the one new man" and the unity of all believers; the expression "the full gospel" is used to characterize the theology of the congregation which seeks to be "biblical rather than Jewish." ("Jewish" is understood in relation to rabbinical traditions.) The congregation desires to be open to the gifts of the Spirit. Of the church holidays, Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost are all celebrated. The Jewish holidays are seen as having their fulfillment in the Messiah and as being the roots out of which Messianic faith grows.

*A statement of faith* does not exist and a written statement different from the Bible is seen as being superfluous.

*Baptism:* The congregation has gone to the Jordan River for baptism. The instruction candidates receive differs from person to person.



**Leadership**

Brit Olam is led by the founder who is called the pastor. Two elders are appointed by the pastor. One of them is a woman. Prior to immigrating the pastor had a private business in Minsk where he and his wife were members of a Pentecostal church. The church subscribed to what Shekhter calls replacement theology, a theology he now considers unbiblical. The family spent a year at a Bible school in Finland before moving to Israel in 1991.

*Women* can serve as elders. The wife of the pastor is considered the co-pastor.

**Membership**

In 1998 the congregation had 25 members. This number does not include 10 children.

*A membership list* does not exist. The congregation is seen as a family with no formal membership, but there is a directory for contact.

*Characteristics of adult members:*

- 1. Jewish..... 19
- 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew..... 6

*Changes in membership since 1994:* When Shekhter formed his own group in 1994 he was joined by several members of the Russian-speaking group of the Narkis Street international congregation (8-05). Since then many people have attended the activities of the Russian Ministry in Jerusalem but moved on to find work in other parts of the country. The growth of the congregation has come primarily from friendship evangelism.

**Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

Weekly services are held on Sundays, Mondays, and Wednesdays. Non-members are invited mainly to the Wednesday meeting, which is also the weekday when the monthly Communion takes place.

*Attendance:* Average number about 25. Of these 5 are children; between 2-5 non-members attend.

*Description of the service:* It is non-liturgical and the main emphasis is on teaching. The teaching is topical and lasts between 30-60 minutes; both the Tanakh and NT are used. The Tanakh is seen as the roots or foundation of what is fulfilled in the NT. The Lord’s Prayer is used regularly.

The *language used* is Russian. If there is a need, translation is provided into Hebrew, English, and Georgian.

*Communion:* Celebrated once a month during the meeting on Wednesdays; no communion liturgy is used but reference is made to the passage on the Lord’s Supper in 1 Corinthians 11 or to John 6. Baptism is a requirement and participants are asked to prepare themselves before participating.

*Women* can have the same role as men in all the activities of the congregation.

*Children's classes:* At the moment no children's class is provided during the service.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* Women's meeting twice a week, mainly for prayer. Follow-up visits are made to people with whom contacts have been made.

### Cooperation

Guest speakers are invited 1-2 times a month, mainly to the Wednesday meetings. The pastor takes part in national leadership events and participation in national organized events is encouraged.

### Finances

The congregation receives donations from abroad, which cover its main expenses. The pastor works for the organization Bridges for Peace and receives his salary from them.

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*Interview with Vladimir Shekhter, 16 October 1998.*

## 1-03 Christ Church Congregation Old City, Jerusalem

*Name:* קהילת המשיח; Kehilat haMashiach ("Messiah's Congregation").

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Amutah.

*Meeting place:* In rented facilities, the church building belonging to the Israel Trust of the Anglican Church (ITAC).

### History

*Founded* Fall 1987. The pastor for the English-speaking congregation at Christ Church at that time, Alfred Sawyer, approached one of the present leaders, Benjamin Berger, and encouraged him to restore the Hebrew-speaking work on the compound. Benjamin Berger accepted the invitation and asked his brother, Reuven Berger, to join him in the leadership. A Hebrew-speaking prayer group had already been formed as part of the work of the English-speaking congregation and this group made up the core group of the new congregation. In 1989 about 25 persons attended the services but already in 1990 the attendance had increased to about 200.

The new congregation met in a historic place for Protestant missions in Jerusalem. Christ Church is the oldest Protestant church building in Jerusalem and was consecrated in 1849 after the London Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jewish People (today called the Church's Ministry among

Jewish People [CMJJ]) had begun its work in 1826. The first bishop to work in Jerusalem was Solomon Alexander, himself a Jewish believer (see also 8-02).

*Harassment:* The congregation has experienced only little harassment. The location of the congregation within a compound that clearly belongs to a mission provides some protection. However, the book shop located on the same compound and run by ITAC was the target of a demonstration in 1990; posters warning against the activities on the compound have been placed in the Old City, and the Orthodox press has brought accusation against the activities on the compound.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Alfred Sawyer, Benjamin and Rueven Berger.

*Key person(s) 1998:* Benjamin and Rueven Berger and Avi Brickner.

### Theological character

Non-denominational, independent and not under the umbrella of CMJ; it is a local congregation. The congregation is charismatic and open to the Toronto Movement; it sees itself as a local Israeli congregation although it is not limited to Israelis and Jews but is open for all people. There is an emphasis on the restoration of the Jewish people in the land but not on using rabbinic traditions in the service or applying them to the life of the congregation. The Jewish holidays are understood as having their fulfillment in Messiah and celebrated in this light.

None of the church holidays are celebrated but they are acknowledged and mention is made of them in the service at the appropriate time of the year. Most years the congregation has shared a congregational Seder meal at Pesach.

The congregation sees no problem in having its services in an actual church building, especially considering the history of the building and the purpose for which it was built. During the service a prayer shawl covers the altar on which stands a lighted menorah as a sign of the link to and identification with the rest of the Jewish people.

*A statement of faith* exists. However, in practice it is not used in the life of the congregation, due to the leaders' resistance to a "definition of faith." The "Statement of Basic Doctrinal Belief" is a 2½ page document with headings: 1. The Holy Scripture. 2. God: "... His oneness is unique, in that it is a composite unity unlike any other in His creation ... A. God the Father is King of the Universe ... He is spirit and not material or physical in the essence of His being ... B. The Son existed eternally with the Father ... He [the Son] came as a man in the person of Yeshua Messiah, born of virgin Miriam, of the lineage of Abraham and King David ... He possesses both divine and human natures. He manifested His divinity by forgiving sins ...". C. The Holy Spirit is a person, possessing all the attributes of deity ...". 3. Man: "Man [male and female] was created in God's image ... Man in his natural state, from birth is a fallen creature, needing salvation." 4. Salvation: "God's salvation for fallen man comes only through

Yeshua the Messiah ... Salvation has always been by faith. Works of law, keeping of good deeds done by men have never saved anyone ... Salvation is not only the receiving of new life from God through faith in Messiah's atoning work, but is a continuing process through life whereby God, through the Holy Spirit, transforms our character more and more into the character which is the likeness of Yeshua ...". 5. The Redeemed: "Those who receive God's salvation through Messiah become members of a community or body of redeemed people which is world-wide. This community is made up of both Jews and Gentiles who have equal spiritual standing before God and are considered one 'new man' in the Messiah." 6. Israel: "We believe that the election of Israel as a nation is irrevocable (Romans 11:1, 2, 28, 29) and is not superseded or replaced by any other group, including the present Church. We believe that the national restoration of Israel has already begun as promised by God in the Scriptures, and is being manifested in part by the modern reestablishment of the State of Israel. We believe that the national restoration will only be completed in the full restoration, when Israel as a nation shall fully recognize Yeshua, and shall be saved (Zechariah 12:10-13)." 7. Resurrection and Judgment.

*Baptism:* Candidates are baptized only after receiving basic instruction. Part of an ancient wine press located in the vicinity of Jerusalem has been used.

### **Leadership**

The congregation is led by a group of 3 elders. In 1998 there was no congregational council, which was dissolved after a disagreement over the vision of the congregation, but the eldership has appointed leaders for different activities in the congregation. These leaders are recognized by the congregation and are called co-laborers.

Neither Benjamin nor Reuven Berger have any formal theological training. The first is an architect, the other has a degree in art. They grew up in an Orthodox Jewish environment in the USA. Benjamin came to faith in the late 1960s while in Europe and through his testimony Reuven came to faith. Reuven immigrated to Israel in 1970 followed by his brother Benjamin in 1971.

In the mid-1970s they established a live-in house fellowship in Rosh Pina. In 1977 the apartment was broken into because of what was said to have been "missionary activities." Later they moved to Tiberias and were active in the formation of the Peniel Fellowship (2-14). In 1986 they moved to Jerusalem.

Avi Brickner immigrated to Israel from California in 1989. In the late 1970s he had worked for the organization Jews for Jesus and from 1979-1986 he pastored a charismatic church in the USA.

*Women* cannot serve as elders.

### **Membership**

In 1998 Christ Church Congregation had 70 members. This number does not include 15 children.

A membership list does not exist. Members must submit to the authority of the elders and be active in the congregation. In principle baptism is a requirement for membership.

*Characteristics of adults members:* Avi Brickner estimates that less than half of the members are Jewish. There are many internationals in the congregation. The following is our estimate:

1. Jewish .....	30
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....	10
3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship .....	10
4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship .....	20

*Changes in membership over the last 5 years:* In 1994 there were about 160 members, not including 85 children. Many left after this time because of disagreement over the Toronto Movement. Others, especially some families with smaller children, left because of the length of the service or for other reasons.

**Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday afternoon. The main service begins at 2:30 pm and ends around 5:30 pm. From 1:30-2:30 there is a prayer meeting, attended by 10-12 people.

*Attendance:* Average number 150. Of these 10 are children. There can be up to 100 visitors.

*Description of the service:* It is non-liturgical; the worship is charismatic in style and begins with 45-60 minutes of praise. The teaching is mostly topical and lasts 60 minutes. In connection with the Jewish holidays portions of the Sidur are sometimes read. The shofar might also be blown as a prophetic proclamation.

The *language used* is Hebrew with translation into English and Russian. On some occasions the sermon is in English with translation into Hebrew and Russian. Often there is translation into German.

*Communion:* Celebrated every second week. It is for believers only; children can take part on the parents' responsibility. No liturgy is used, but often reference is made to the passage on the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11.

*Women* can pray and give testimony; they cannot teach.

*Children's classes:* There are 2 children's classes.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* 4 home groups meet every second week. The emphasis differs from group to group. There is a prayer and praise service every Monday, attended mostly by visitors. Evangelistic outreach is organized by a Finnish missionary who works together with a Russian- and a Hebrew-speaking member of the congregation. There is a congregational retreat 2-3 times a year.

### Cooperation

The congregation and the leaders participate regularly in some of the national or regional meetings. Guest speakers are invited about 6 times a year. The congregation cooperates with other charismatic congregations.

### Finances

In 1997, tithes and offering from within Israel covered 50 percent of the congregation's expenses; 20 percent came from abroad; 20 percent were designated gifts of which 15 percent were for Ethiopians in Ethiopia.

None of the elders are paid by the congregation but two of them have for years had a "faith walk"; the other is a pensioner. The secretary receives a salary from the congregation.

### The premises

The church building was used by the following groups in 1998: The English-speaking international congregation (8-02), a Romanian congregation, and a Filipino congregation.

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*Interview with Avi Brickner, 20 October 1998.*

*Other sources:* Crombie 1991; *Israel Update* April 1989; November 1990; November 1991.

*Media:* Ha'Aretz 31.01.92. Erev Shabbat 09.03.90. Jerusalem Post 11.10.77; 17.10.77. Yom Hashishi 09.03.90.

1-04

## Even Yisrael

Central Jerusalem

*Name:* אבן ישראל; Kehilat Even Israel ("Rock of Israel Congregation" – Genesis 49:24).

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Amutah under the Baptist Convention in Israel.

*Premises:* Rented facilities belonging to the Baptist Convention in Israel (BCI).

### History

*Founded* in 1994. The congregation began in 1994 as a Russian-speaking prayer group within the English-speaking congregation that meets in the same premises at Narkis Street. Apart from the Saturday morning services they began to meet on Wednesdays for a separate Bible study in Russian. The group then consisted of about 20 people. In 1993, after returning from a year of Bible school in Finland, the present leader was asked by the elders at that time to take over the leadership of the group. As a consequence some left the congregation and

continued as an independent group (1-02). In 1997 the group had grown to a size where it was natural to form a Russian-speaking congregation rather than to continue as part of the international congregation.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Julia and Victor Blum.

*Key person(s) 1998:* Julia and Victor Blum together with 5 others.

**Theological character**

Non-denominational and open to the gifts of the Holy Spirit; the congregation believes that all the gifts of the Spirit are relevant and active today. There is an emphasis on the Jewishness of Jesus and the Jewish roots of faith in Jesus and a desire to rediscover and give expression to that in the life of the congregation.

The Jewish holidays are celebrated with an emphasis on the biblical content of the feasts; some traditional Jewish elements are used. The congregation wants to help new immigrants adjust to Israeli/Jewish society. None of the church holidays are celebrated but the message of Christmas is incorporated into the celebration of Chanuka.

A statement of faith does exist.

*Baptism:* Candidates receive instruction before baptism, the length of which varies from person to person. The preferred sites for baptism are the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River; other places have been used.

**Leadership**

The congregation is led by the pastor; no formal leadership has yet been formed, but 5 persons are in training for eldership and weekly leaders' meeting are held.

Victor Blum came to faith in 1991 and the same year immigrated with his family from Estonia to Israel. Before immigrating he was a university lecturer and had intended to continue his doctoral work at Hebrew University. When he first arrived he was also asked by the then new Estonian government to be the official representative of Estonia to Israel, a job he resigned from in 1994 after he returned from ½ year in Finland after attending a Pentecostal Bible school.

*Women* cannot serve as elders; they can be deaconesses and serve in other capacities in the congregation.

**Membership**

In 1999 the congregation had 50 members. This number does not include 15 children.

*A membership list* does not exist. Baptism is a requirement for membership.

*Characteristics of adult members:*

|                                                  |    |
|--------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Jewish .....                                  | 40 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew .....         | 5  |
| 3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship ..... | 0  |

#### 4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship .....5

*Changes in membership over the last 5 years:* In 1994 the group consisted of only 10 people. 25 of the present members have come to faith through the work of the congregation; 10 are new immigrants. About 15 previous members have moved to other parts of the country and 5 members have decided to join other Hebrew-speaking congregations. About 10 members have come from other congregations including also Hebrew-speaking congregations. The move to the Hebrew-speaking congregation is encouraged by the pastor.

#### **Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Friday evening from 6:30-9:00 pm; 6:30-7:00 is a prayer meeting and the regular service begins at 7:00 pm.

*Attendance:* Average number 85. Of these 20 are children; 30 are not members; 5 are visitors.

*Description of the service:* It is non-liturgical; prayers and songs are conducted in both Russian and Hebrew. A passage from the Tanakh is read, but it does not follow the weekly Torah portion. The sermon, which can be both topical and expository, is in Russian and translated into Hebrew, English and Finnish and German when needed. There is a desire to use more and more Hebrew in the service and eventually become a Hebrew-speaking congregation.

*Communion:* Celebrated once a month; baptism is required. No communion liturgy is used but the passage on the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11 is read with other NT texts and communion is preceded by a short sermon.

*Women* can pray and read scripture and bring testimonies during the service.

*Children's classes:* There are 3 children's class during the time of the sermon.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* A weekly Bible study is conducted for members of the congregation and other Russian-speaking believers in Jerusalem; on Tuesday there is a meeting for youth and on Wednesday for children; there is a monthly prayer and planning meeting for congregational workers; the worship team meets on Friday; the congregation encourages friendship-outreach.

#### **Cooperation**

The congregation is open to cooperation, especially with other Russian-speaking groups, and does not want to be isolated in an only Russian-speaking community. It desires to see more cooperation between all local congregations. Once a month a guest speaker from the local community is invited. The congregation participates in national organized events. The leader also participates in national leadership events and serves on the board of the Israel Messianic Jewish Alliance.



**Finances**

The congregation pays for the use of facilities. Other expenses include transportation. Members cover the majority of the expenses. The rest is covered by donations from abroad.

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*Interview with Victor Blum, 19 October 1998/June 1999.*

1-05

**House Group in Judea**

Judean Foothills

*Name:* No official name.  
*Category:* House group  
*Legal status:* Not an amutah.  
*Meeting place:* In private homes.

**History**

*Founded* in the late 1970s. The present core family has lived in the area for more than 25 years and been part of the house group since the late 1970s. Over the years others have moved to the area and joined the group for a period of time and then moved on. On several occasions the newcomers have initiated new activities and raised the profile of the group. The present leaders feel this has been harmful to the group and to those who were left behind to deal with the often negative reaction from the community. As a consequence the group continues to meet quietly for prayer and Bible study but does not seek to attract attention to itself.

Our estimate: in 1999 the house group had 8 members, not including 10 children.

*Characteristics of adult members (our estimate):*

1. Jewish .....	8
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*Interview by telephone, 13 May 1999.*

## 1-06      **Jerusalem Ethiopian Congregation**      Jerusalem

*Name:* No official name.

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Not an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In a private home.

### **History**

(For a general outline of the history, theology and style of worship of the Ethiopian community in Israel, see 5-06).

*Founded* in the early 1990s. The present leader and his wife came to the country in 1984 and were part of the fellowship in Netanya until 1991 when they decided to leave and form a separate congregation in Jerusalem.

The congregation is independent of the Ethiopian Jewish Messianic Fellowship in Jaffa (5-06).

### **Membership**

In 1999 Jerusalem Ethiopian Congregation had, according to our estimate, 18 members. There are 2 children in the group.

*Characteristics of adult members (our estimate):*

- |                                          |    |
|------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Jewish .....                          | 16 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew ..... | 2  |

*Attendance:* Average attendance is 12. The number includes 2 children.

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*Information* through members of the Ethiopian community in Israel, January/May 1999.

## 1-07      **Jerusalem Ethiopian House Group**      Jerusalem

*Name:* No official name.

*Category:* House group.

*Legal status:* Not an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In private homes.

### **History and membership**

(For a general outline of the history, theology and style of worship of the Ethiopian community in Israel, see 5-06).



*Characteristics of adult members (our estimate):*

1. Jewish..... 40
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew ..... 10

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*Interview has not been granted.*

## 1-09 King of Kings Fellowship

Central Jerusalem

*Name:* No official name.

*Category:* Home group of King of Kings Assembly.

*Legal status:* Part of the amutah of King of Kings.

*Meeting place:* In rented facilities.

### History

*Founded* in 1997. The Hebrew-speaking fellowship is a home group of the King of Kings Assembly (8-03). The large majority of the members of the fellowship continue to be involved in the regular activities of the Assembly. However, the status of the home group could change into a congregation in accordance with the goals of the King of Kings Assembly. The fellowship first met in the home of the leader but has since January 1999 met in the rented facilities.

*Harassment:* The home group has not experienced any significant harassment.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation and in 1999:* Wayne Hilsden together with two Jewish believers.

### Theological character

The theological character of the Hebrew-speaking fellowship reflects the theology of the King of Kings Assembly, which is Pentecostal and charismatic in its expression. The teaching is Messianic in the sense that it emphasizes a special concern for the Jewish people and their place in God's plan of salvation.

The Jewish holidays are celebrated in the home group and their content is reflected in the teaching at that time.

*A statement of faith* exists for the King of Kings Assembly of which the group is a part.

*Baptism:* The Hebrew-speaking fellowship has not baptized any (see 8-03).

### Leadership

The home group is led by the senior pastor of the Assembly together with two Jewish believers.

The senior pastor has a BA from the University of Toronto and an M.Div. from Wycliffe College, Toronto. He has served as a pastor for the English speaking King of Kings Assembly since 1983 and was one of the founders.

*Women* can, in theory, participate fully in all the activities in a congregation but the leadership wants to be culturally sensitive to the Messianic community in the land. A woman would therefore not be a pastor or an elder.

### Membership

In 1999 the home group had 35 members. This number does not include 6 children.

A *membership list* does not exist; except for 5 people all attend the King of Kings congregation.

#### *Characteristics of adult members:*

- |                                                     |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Jewish.....                                      | 15 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....             | 5  |
| 3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship.....     | 0  |
| 4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship ..... | 15 |

*Changes in membership since 1997:* There were 12 members in 1997. Except for 5 people, who have continued to attend other congregations, the remaining 18 have come from the King of Kings Assembly. Other members of the Assembly participated for a short time in the home group but decided for different reasons to attend only the English-speaking congregation (see 8-03).

### Weekly meeting

A weekly meeting is held on Tuesday evening.

*Attendance:* Average number is 30; of these 6 are children.

*Description of the service:* The meeting begins with a time of worship and sharing. Every second week this is followed by a sermon and discussion in small groups. The other weeks the group breaks into smaller groups for a inductive Bible study.

The *language used* is Hebrew with no translation provided, but the division into smaller groups is based on the level of Hebrew participants feel comfortable with.

*Communion:* The home group from time to time shares Communion together.

### Finances

The fellowship pays for the rent of facilities. A third of the expenses are paid by the group itself; the rest is subsidized by the King of Kings Assembly.

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*Interview with Wayne Hilsden, 20 January 1999.*

1-10

## Messianic Assembly

Central Jerusalem

*Name:* קהילת ירושלים - קהילה משיחית ישראלית; Kehilah Meshichit Yisraelit - Kehilat Yerushalayim; Israeli Messianic Assembly - Jerusalem Congregation.

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Amutah.

*Meeting place:* In premises owned by the congregation.

### History

(Interview has not been granted.)

*Founded* in the 1950s/*re-founded* in 1969. The history of the congregation is closely related to Ze'ev (Shlomo) Kofsman and the work he began shortly after he immigrated to Israel from France in 1948. This can be divided into two parts:

*From the 1950s to 1969:* Ze'ev Kofsman had a deep vision for developing an indigenous Israeli congregation and wished to bridge a gap of almost 2000 years of history and mentality by reviving the primitive Jewish church in Jerusalem. He wanted to create a congregation that did not belong to any society outside Israel and that was not governed by any foreign mission organization or church. He wanted to show that faith in Yeshua was not an import but originated in the Jewish religion and in the land of Israel.

Kofsman gathered other Jewish believers in Jesus for meetings on the Sabbath; the meetings were also attended by quite a few gentiles. The main language was Hebrew, but also Yiddish and French (the three languages mastered by Kofsman) were used and efforts were consistently made to maintain a Jewish cultural lifestyle. By using the name haKehilah haMeshichit haYisraelit ("The Messianic Assembly of Israel"), the group indicated that it did not only seek to be a local congregation in Jerusalem; rather the idea was that the Assembly should function as an umbrella organization for all Messianic Jewish congregations in Israel. This vision was never realized.

Kofsman had a Pentecostal background and throughout his life he maintained close contacts with French and American Assemblies of God. According to Baruch Maoz he received regular, "though unofficial" support from members of these Assemblies. In 1960, the congregation began publishing the magazine *Halapid*; 4 issues were published until it ceased to exist in 1962. The group of editors were in one of the issues Z. Kofsman, M. Ben-Meir, J. Goldin, and R. Preiss; the former three were listed with the title "HaRav" preceding the name. The creed of the congregation was stated in each issue; in an English translation it says:

"We believe in the oneness of God, in the Messiahship of Jesus, son of David, of whom Scriptures says:

– he was born in Bethlehem in the days of the second Temple

- was killed for our sins
  - on the third day rose from the dead
  - ascended into Heaven and sits at the right hand of the Power on high
  - whence he shall return to found the kingdom of heaven on earth
- We believe in the Holy Spirit
- in the Tanakh as the word of God
  - in the political and spiritual rebirth of Zion, according to God's promises.

The omission of any specific reference to the virgin birth of Jesus can be noticed. Baruch Maoz stated in 1989: "The Statement of Faith avoided all references to the deity of Christ and it is generally agreed that Ze'ev Kofsman denied Jesus' full deity and questioned the canonical status of Paul's writings." Gershon Nerel, however, is of a different opinion when he writes in 1998: "... within their inner circles they made it very clear that they literally believed in Scripture, Old and New Testament, in miracles, including the virgin birth of Yeshua, in Messiah's deity and in Israel's election and end-time role." Maoz's description of Kofsman's view in the 1960s does not represent those of the congregation in the 1980s (or today's), something Maoz also expresses clearly in the following words: "Its position on the deity of Jesus and the canonicity of Paul's writing has been fully orthodox."

In 1957 Kofsman applied to the Israeli authorities for a formal registration of the Assembly as an Ottoman Society, a legal status that had been in use from the time of the Turkish rule through the British Mandate and was taken over by the Israeli statutory system in 1948. (In 1980 instead of the "Ottoman Society" the Israeli authorities introduced the *amutah* structure that provides a legal framework for non-profit and charitable associations - used by both Jewish and non-Jewish associations.) The application was granted in 1958 by the Ministry of Interior Affairs. In this way the Assembly paved the way for other Messianic and Christian congregations and institutions to obtain legal status.

The congregation first met in the apartment belonging to the Kofsman family. In 1961 they moved to a large building belonging to the Assemblies of God on Agron Street opposite the Kings Hotel. In 1969 the building was sold and is today the address of the Center for Conservative Judaism in Israel. In 1969 the congregation was offered the use of the building on Prophets Street.

*From 1969 to 1999:* Since 1969 and until today the congregation has met at 56 Prophets Street. The building originally belonged to the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA). In 1971, the representative for C&MA in Israel, Warren Graham, was informed that C&MA had received a donation for the property and transferred it to the congregation as a gift, free of charge. However, the congregation has no denominational link to C&MA or to any other foreign body and is entirely autonomous.

The congregation was re-founded in 1969 under the name *haKehila haMeshichit haYisraelit* - *Kehilat Yerushalayim* ("Israeli Messianic Assembly - Jerusalem Congregation"). Among others Ya'akov Goren (J. Gurfinkel) joined

the congregation and was part of the new leadership. Since 1964 he had led the work of Hebrew Evangelization Society, which met in the Musrara quarter of Jerusalem. Victor Smadja, who in the mid-1960s was a teacher at the Finnish School, ran the Dolphin Press and, for a period after 1968, led Kol Tikvah, a radio program in Hebrew through Trans World Radio, Monaco, left the Shalhevetyah Congregation (1-15) and took with him members from that congregation into the new merger. Since Kofsman's death in 1976 and Goren's in the early 1980s Smadja has been the most influential leader of the Messianic Assembly. He has on several occasions given interviews to the Israeli press and the congregation has often been mentioned there.

During the 1980s the congregation developed into one of the largest Hebrew-speaking congregations in Israel with 100-150 attending its Saturday morning services, of whom 30-40 were Jewish members. Many visitors and short time workers also participated. People now in leadership in other congregations grew up in the congregation. There have been several splits from the congregation, some of the reasons for this being a disagreement, especially amongst the young members, over participation in evangelistic activities outside Israel. Another issue causing disagreement and people leaving the congregation has been the level of outreach activity from the congregation.

The conference center Beit Yedidia, located in Haifa, was for many years run by Keren Achva Meshichit, headed by Victor Smadja. In 1990 there was a disagreement between the Keren Achva Meshichit and Arbeitsgemeinschaft für das messianische Zeugnis an Israel (AmZI), the builder and owner of the conference center, over the right of possession of the property. The disagreement resulted in AmZI gaining control of the center and Keren Achva has since then used the facilities at Yad Hashmona for its conferences (see 1-19).

*Harassment:* Both the congregation and individual members have met with different kinds of opposition. Attempts have been made to arson the meeting place. The Smadja family have received telephone threats, their car has been torched, and in 1973 an improvised explosive was laid at their door. Their children have according to the Israeli Press needed police escort on the way to school according to the Israeli press.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Ze'ev Kofsman and others.

*Key person(s) at the time of re-founding:* Ze'ev Kofsman, Ya'akov Goren, Victor Smadja and others.

*Key person(s) in 1999:* Victor Smadja and one more family member.

### Theological character

The present leader had before immigrating to Israel contact to gentile Christians with a Brethren theology and the theology of the congregation is generally described as "Open Brethren" (see 3-02). In theory, the leadership is plural, in agreement with the theology of the Plymouth Brethren. The congregation is



non-charismatic but the style of worship is more open than that of the Brethren origin.

The Jewish holidays are celebrated in the congregation and Jewish traditions incorporated into the celebration. In 1998, special liturgies were being written for the celebration of the New Year and the Day of Atonement by one of the senior members and used in the congregation. Sukkot has also been celebrated with special traditional Jewish elements.

None of the church holidays are celebrated by the congregation. Some individual members celebrate Christmas.

*A statement of faith does not exist.*

*Baptism:* Candidates are interviewed by the elders as part of the preparation for baptism. At times the congregation has gone to the Jordan River, but it has also used a baptismal font in the nearby church building on Prophets Street owned by the C&MA.

### Leadership

The Messianic Assembly is governed by a plural leadership. In 1999 there were two elders of whom Victor Smadja is the senior and also the most influential. Elders used to be elected by voting members, but the congregation has determined that election is non-biblical and therefore elders are appointed by the leadership.

Victor Smadja was born in Tunis. At the end of the 1940s at the age of 16 he was sent by his traditionally-observant family to a youth camp whose leader was a believer. He took an interest in the gospel and his family then sent him to Israel with the hope that he would be cured of his "infection." For a short time he returned to Tunis to marry Suzy, also a Jewish believer in Jesus. As newly-weds they immigrated to Israel in 1955. In the 1960s Victor Smadja served as a teacher at the Finnish School (see 1-15). He resigned and left in 1969.

Smadja is the manager of Yanetz, a printing press, and the Israeli charity Keren Achva Meshichit, which is involved in literature distribution.

Menahem Benhayim served for many years as an elder in the congregation, a position he retired from in 1998. He and his wife Haya immigrated to Israel in 1963 and lived in Eilat for a number of years until they moved to Jerusalem in 1977. From 1976-1993 he served as the Israeli secretary of the International Messianic Jewish Alliance. Through his writing in particular he has made an important contribution to the wider Messianic movement in Israel.

Warren Graham is a full-time worker with the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA). He has not been an elder in the congregation but he and his wife Linda have made an important contribution both to the congregation and to the wider Messianic community through their work with the summer camps for children and youth and retreats throughout the year. He has not been sent to work in the congregation, rather the C&MA has released them to do so. Warren and Linda Graham moved to Beersheba in 1998.

## Membership

In 1999 the Messianic Assembly had, according to our estimate, 60 members. This number does not include 40 children. Officially there are two kinds of membership: (1) Full members need to have citizenship but can be both Jews and gentiles; (2) Associate members are those with long-term residency and others. These can take part in all the activities of the congregation, but they cannot vote. Baptism is a requirement for membership.

### *Characteristics of adult members (our estimate):*

1. Jewish.....	35
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....	5
3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship .....	10
(of whom 1 is Arab/Palestinian)	
4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship .....	10

*Changes in membership since 1990:* A number of members left the congregation in the mid-1990s. This was partly because of a disagreement over the involvement of the congregation in missionary work outside of Israel.

## Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities

A weekly meeting is held on Saturday morning between 10:15 am and 12:00 pm.

*Attendance:* Average attendance is 100, including 25 children.

*Description of the service:* Non-liturgical but the service follows a certain order. Married men among the members take turns leading the service and each one has some freedom to structure the service. The meeting begins with prayer and worship. Part of the weekly Torah portion is read followed by a parallel reading from the NT and a short meditation. Then follows a time of free prayer before the children are dismissed to their classes and before the sermon. Depending on the teacher the sermon is topical or expository. It is considered an important part of the weekly meeting and lasts up to 60 minutes.

The *language used* is Hebrew with translation into English for the sermon. Headsets are used.

*Communion* is celebrated at a congregational meal following the service once a month and every other Sunday evening. No liturgy is used. The passage on the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11 is read. People who are not believers are asked not to take part.

*Women* cannot serve as elders and are not asked to lead the service; they can pray and teach children's classes.

*Children's classes* are held during the time of the sermon.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* Several home groups meet for Bible study on Sunday evening. At the beginning of the 1990s members of the

congregation did regular outreach; in 1999 there was no congregational outreach.

### Cooperation

The Messianic Assembly has close ties with Bethesda Assembly in Haifa (3-02), the Jaffa Brethren Assembly (5-09), and the Beersheba Messianic Congregation (6-03). There are no structural ties but the groups will often adopt the same policy.

### Finances

None of the elders are paid by the congregation. The senior elder is the manager of Yanetz Printing Press.

### Premises

A Chinese congregation of mainly foreign workers uses the facilities for their weekly meeting.

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*Interview* has not been granted.

*Sources:* The main source for the historic information for the period up to 1969: Maoz 1989b:10-11; Nerel 1998b:61-65; Nerel 1998a; Østerbye 1970:196-97.

*Media:* Ha'Aretz 08.01.84; 16.03.84. Hamodi'a 28.12.83; 08.01.84. Davar 09.01.84. In Jerusalem (Jerusalem Post supplement) 17.06.88. Ma'ariv (Gush Dan Local Supplement) 04.02.83. She'arim 07.01.83. Yediot Acharonot 25.03.90; 23.05.90. Yom leYom 16.03.95.

## 1-11      **Narkis Street Congregation**      Central Jerusalem

*Name:* נרקיס ברחוב; haEdah beRechov Narkis ("The Congregation on Narkis Street").

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Amutah.

*Meeting place:* In facilities belonging to the Baptist Convention in Israel (BCI).

### History

*Founded* in January 1989. The English-speaking congregation at Narkis Street, under Robert Lindsey, had tried several times unsuccessfully to start a Hebrew service. After Lindsey's retirement at the end of 1986 another attempt was made. This time the core of people starting out was larger. For a while the two groups related to each other as one congregation with one pastor and two

meetings. However, the Hebrew congregation eventually became completely independent, and the pastor dedicated all his attention to it.

In 1998 the Hebrew-speaking congregation Brit Yerushalayim, founded in 1988 and led by Shmuel Suran, decided to merge with the Narkis Street congregation. In 1998 Shmuel Suran established a Messianic ministry called Chazon Yerushalayim Ministry Center located where the congregation Brit Yerushalayim used to be. In 1999 Asher Intrater joined this work.

*Harassment:* little or none.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Pat Hoaldrige, Chuck Kopp, Ray Pritz, and Arie Powlison.

*Key person(s) 1998:* Ofer and Chris Amitai, Peter Spaander, Salo Kapusta, and Ray Pritz.

### **Theological character**

Evangelical and non-denominational with an emphasis on Bible teaching. The meetings of the congregation are characterized by a charismatic flavor. There is no strong emphasis on Jewish traditions but a desire to retain an Israeli and culturally-relevant identity. Various Jewish holidays are celebrated but not consistently. None of the church holidays are celebrated.

*A statement of faith* does not exist.

*Baptism:* Baptism is preceded by formal instruction; it is normally performed outside, but there is no preferred place.

### **Leadership**

The congregation is led by a pastor together with five or six elders. Initially, elders were recognized (not elected) by members indicating that they were people to whom the members related with respect to pre-defined eldership responsibilities. There is also a service team, corresponding to deacons.

The present pastor was approached by the elders and asked to consider the position. He was not a member of the congregation at the time. Other elders have been added to the leadership by the decision of the pastor in consultation with the elders.

The pastor is an Israeli who came to faith in the USA. He lived in a Christian community in the USA for 14 years, and there he received ordination. He returned to Israel in 1994 and became pastor of the congregation in 1997. He serves also on various Messianic bodies, including Intercessors for Israel. Before his arrival the congregation did not contribute to the financial support of the pastor. The amount of support has been increased several times, with the goal to arrive at full support.

*Women* can serve as elders; they can be deaconesses, and in theory they can teach in the congregation, but this has not happened.

**Membership**

In 1999 the congregation had 70 members, not including 70 children.

A membership list does not exist and members are recognized through regular attendance.

*Characteristics of adult members:*

- 1. Jewish.....30
- 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew ..... 10
- 3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship ..... 0
- 4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship ..... 30

*Changes in membership since 1989:* In 1989 when the congregation started there were about 30 members. Some of the new members are new immigrants, mainly from the USA, others have moved from other congregations or from other parts of the country. Only a few are new believers.

**Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday afternoon at 5:00 pm.

*Attendance:* Average number is 175. Of these 70 are children; 35 are visitors.

*Description of the service:* The service begins with a time of worship and prayer after which the children leave for their classes. The sermon may be either expository or topical; Tanakh and NT texts are used equally; it lasts 30-60 minutes.

*The language used* is Hebrew with translation into English through headsets.

*Communion:* Celebrated once a month; no liturgy is used; baptism is not required but is encouraged and children can take part if the parents so decide.

*Women* can pray, read, and lead worship.

*Children's classes:* During the time of the sermon 7 children's classes are held.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* There are four home groups and a weekly women's prayer meeting. There is also a class for new believers. On Tuesday evening there is a youth meeting attended also by youth from other congregations in the city. Twice a year the congregation has a weekend retreat.

**Cooperation**

The congregation and its leaders are involved in national and regional programs for congregations and leaders. Guest speakers are invited 2-3 times a year.

**Finances**

The congregation receives no regular support from abroad. Two people are employed by the congregation: the pastor, just over half-time, and a one-quarter time bookkeeper. The congregation pays a monthly rent for the facilities.

The congregation has donated money to ministries in Israel and also regularly supports a family of Israeli believers serving in Kenya.

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*Interview with Ray Pritz, 17 May 1999.*

1-12

## Neveh Tzion

Northern Jerusalem

*Name:* קהילת נווה ציון; Kehilat Neveh Tzion ("Dwelling Place of Zion Congregation").

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Not an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In the home of the present leader.

### History

*Founded* in 1995. A couple of families, both with a background in the Messianic movement in the USA, felt a common need for a fellowship with a different emphasis than what they found in any of the already existing congregations.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation and in 1998:* Ariel Berkowitz.

### Theological character

Messianic with an emphasis on maintaining a traditional Jewish lifestyle. The Jewish holidays are all celebrated in accordance with rabbinic traditions; none of the church holidays are celebrated.

A *statement of faith* exists. The "Foundations of our Faith" is a one page document with 13 short articles, which all begin with "We believe" and so resembles Maimonides' 13 articles of faith. Most of the articles end with a scripture reference. The few Hebrew words used in the English text are all translated (Tanakh, Brit Hadasha, echad, Torah); biblical rather than Christian expressions are used. There is no reference to baptism/immersion.

The Bible (Tanakh and NT) "... is the only inspired, infallible, and authoritative Word of God." Concerning the "one God," reference is made to Deuteronomy 6:4, underscoring that the Hebrew word *echad* means a "composite unity." Concerning Yeshua: he "... is the Son of God, the Messiah, the Eternal One in Whom all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form and who is Word who became flesh ...". The "Spirit of God ... empowers all whom He regenerates." All have sinned and "... Yeshua's death and resurrection accomplished the atonement for all who would place their faith in Him." Salvation is by faith through the grace of God alone and "... the spiritual unity and equality of all believers in Messiah" is underlined.

Faith is expressed in the continuity of God's covenant with the physical people of Israel and the return of the people of Israel to their Promised Land is

part of the fulfillment of God's promises (cf. Jer. 31:35-36). All "non-Jewish people who trust in Yeshua are grafted into Israel." While "this does not make them Jewish, they are granted the privilege of following the Torah (God's Teachings). The Torah, understood as the first five books of the Bible, "... is a revelation of the righteousness of God and the description (along with the rest of the Scripture) of the lifestyle of the redeemed community."

On eschatology, "... a literal, physical return of Messiah to rule and reign upon the throne of David in Jerusalem" is expected and the pre-millennial view of his return is held. Finally, the belief in the resurrection of both the wicked and the righteous is expressed: Those "... who died without having believed in Yeshua will experience the eternal wrath of God."

*Baptism:* The congregation has not yet baptized anyone.

### Leadership

Neveh Tzion is led by the pastor. The title "Roeh" rather than "Rav" is used. The congregation is working towards establishing a group of elders.

The pastor has a M.Div. from a theological seminary in the USA. He has 15 years of pastoral experience from the USA before immigrating to Israel. He writes extensively on issues related to Messianic Judaism and Bible studies on weekly Torah readings and teaches at the Israel College of the Bible.

*Women* cannot serve as elders but they can be involved in teaching other women and children.

### Membership

In 1998 the congregation had 21 members. This number does not include 6 children.

A *membership list* does not exist but members are defined according to mutual acceptance and the sharing of a common vision for fellowship. People who do not share this vision are encouraged to find a different fellowship. Baptism is not a requirement for membership.

#### *Characteristics of adults members:*

1. Jewish.....	17
(of whom 2 converted to Judaism before joining the congregation)	
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....	0
3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship .....	0
4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship .....	4

*Changes in membership since 1995:* Change in membership has come through immigration. Recently two new families have joined the group. All new members are immigrants from the USA and were believers before coming to Israel.

### Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities

A weekly service is held on Saturday morning. Travel by car to get to the meeting is not an issue.

*Attendance:* Average number is 30; of these 6 are children. Members can bring visitors but otherwise tourists and visitors are not encouraged to come.

*Description of the service:* The service follows a Messianic Jewish liturgy including many of the elements from the regular Sidur (Amidah, Kaddish, Aleinu, Adon Olam). The sermon will often relate to the Torah reading for the Sabbath but it can also be a continued study of one of the books of the Bible; it lasts 30-40 minutes.

The *language used* is English with prayers and Scripture readings in both Hebrew and English.

*Communion:* Celebrated once a year in connection with the feast of Pesach. It is ministered to all attending. The Pesach Hagadah is used with the congregation's own additions including also readings of NT passages.

*Women* can read the Scriptures and pray aloud during the service; they can teach other women and children.

*Children's classes:* During the weekly service no children's class is provided, but in connection with the holidays there are special activities for the children.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* There is a weekly home group meeting with emphasis on Bible study and social fellowship. There is a women's group.

### Cooperation

The congregation is open to cooperation with other congregations and encourages participation in nationally-organized events. Guest speakers are invited 1-2 times a year.

### Finances

The congregation pays no rent nor salary to the pastor.

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*Interview with Ariel Berkowitz, October 1998.*

1-13

## Roeh Yisrael

Central Jerusalem

*Name:* קהילת רועה ישראל; Kehilat Ro'eh Yisrael ("Shepherd of Israel Congregation").

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Amutah.



*Meeting place:* In rented facilities belonging to Netivyah Bible Instruction Ministry.

### History

*Founded* in 1972/*re-founded* in 1993. The work began as a Bible study group in 1972 with 6 people who left various local churches. In the beginning they met in private homes and in 1974 moved to premises belonging to the Baptist Church, Narkis Street. At that time the group had grown to about 20 people. The group continued to meet there until the church building was burned and destroyed in 1982 by arsonists (see 8-01). In 1981 Joseph Shulam founded Netivyah Bible Instruction Ministry, a locally-registered amutah whose goals include the study and teaching of the New Testament and its Jewish background, acting as a bridge of understanding between the Jewish people and Christians, and the spiritual and material building up of Israeli Messianic believers in Jesus. A building on Narkis Street was purchased by Netivyah and the congregation continued to meet here under the name of Netivyah ("The Way of the Lord"). In 1993 the Netivyah Congregation changed its name to Roeh Yisrael. It was felt that the congregation had matured and should function as an autonomous entity, financially independent and distinct from the different projects and fellowships associated with the ministry of Netivyah.

Through the years Shulam has been the main person behind Netivyah/Roeh Yisrael. He was born in Bulgaria in 1946 and came to Israel when his parents immigrated in 1948. He grew up in an atheistic Jewish family and came to faith and was baptized when he was 16. An assignment on Christianity that he was required to write as part of school work caused him to read the New Testament which led him to faith. When his parents realized that he had been baptized they threw him out of the house. Through the help of an American family he went to the USA where he continued his education in Michigan Christian College (see below under leadership). After graduating from David Lipscomb College in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1969 he returned to Israel with the goal to preach the Good News to the people of Israel and restore a viable Jewish congregation of Messiah followers in Jerusalem. He was influenced and inspired by two main persons: Moshe Immanuel Ben-Meir (1904-1978) and Rabbi Daniel Zion (1883-1979).

1) Shortly after Shulam returned from the USA in 1969 he visited Moshe Ben-Meir, who at that time worked in the main post office in Haifa. He found a common vision with him to restore the first century church in Jerusalem. Ben-Meir, who was born and grew up in Jerusalem and had lived as an Orthodox Jew in Mea Shearim, continued to live an Orthodox Jewish lifestyle throughout his life. In 1925 he and two others tried to establish an independent Messianic congregation in Jerusalem called "Kehilat Ivrim Meshichim biYerushalayim." In 1927 he left to study at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago and returned to the Land in 1930. From the 1930s to the late 1950s he worked

for different missions, of whose work he became more and more critical. He maintained a good relationship with the Norwegian Carmel movement and its leader Per Faye Hansen, who opposed traditional Christian missions to Israel.

In the 1950s Ben-Meir was one of the central figures among the Messianic Jews who struggled to form a "Union of Messianic Jews in Israel," an attempt which never succeeded. He used his great linguistic talents to translate, rewrite, or write most of the hymns in "Shir Chadash," the songbook which until its 1976 revision was used in almost all Messianic congregations in Israel. In numerous articles he sharply criticized traditional Christian missionaries whom he saw as his "enemies" and accused them of sabotaging "all efforts of Messianic Jews to unite and to be effective in their witness and ministry." Similar views can often be found in the writings of Joseph Shulam. Ben-Meir wrote a teaching paper every quarter which was mailed to people in Israel and Europe. The paper was called "Teaching from Zion" and since its initial publication in 1981, Shulam has continued to publish it both as his personal newsletter and as Netivyah's publication. It now appears in journal form, with only a short introduction giving Shulam's personal news. In every issue it is acknowledged that "Teaching from Zion" was first published by Moshe Immanuel Ben-Meir and the present publishers continue to "adhere to the custom of traditional Judaism which forbid us from speaking or completely writing the proper name of G-d (sometimes translated as Jehovah in English) in order to ensure that it is not desecrated . . ."

In 1971 Joseph Shulam met with Ben-Meir again. The latter had moved to Jerusalem, married Ahuva, a Christian women from Finland, who prior to the marriage had converted to Judaism. Shulam and Ben-Meir worked together to establish a Messianic Jewish congregation in Jerusalem. With the financial support of friends from Finland of whom some (although Lutheran) were immersed by Shulam, Netivyah succeeded in purchasing their own building on Narkis Street in 1982.

2) Daniel Zion was chief Rabbi of Bulgaria and came to faith in Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God while in Bulgaria. In 1949 he immigrated to Israel. He was appointed as a judge in the Rabbinical court of Jerusalem, but when it became known that he believed in Jesus, the Rabbinical court stripped Rabbi Zion of his title. He continued to teach about Jesus. With the help of a Russian believer he obtained a building in Yefet Street in Jaffa where he officiated until October 1976. Every Saturday morning he held a synagogue service and in the afternoon he met with a group of his fellow worshippers to study the NT. After the study they would go back to the Synagogue to say the evening prayer. He wrote hundreds of songs and more than 20 books in Bulgarian. He lived a completely Orthodox Jewish lifestyle and did not connect himself with any of the Christian missions. When he died in 1979 his small house group joined with Netivyah.

Several house groups were formed in different parts of the country as part of the work of the congregation. In 1998 only one remained, located on a Moshav in lower Galilee near Nazareth. In the early 1990s the Messianic Midrasha (College) was formed. Although initially separate from Netivyah and intended to represent the wide Messianic body in Israel, many of the latter's board members, including Shulam, currently also serve on the board of the Midrasha.

*Harassment:* Both the congregation and individual members have experienced different kinds of harassment. The meeting place has been set on fire, posters have been put up with warnings against the congregation and individual members, who also have received death threats; they have had the tires of their cars slashed and other damage has been done to their vehicles. Several negative newspaper articles have been published. In March 1999 a Molotov cocktail was thrown at Joseph Shulam's apartment at 3:45 am. The bottle did not break. The assailants did not take into account that Shulam's apartment is on the second floor of an eight floor apartment house that has 28 apartments and that the damage could have spread to these as well.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Moshe Immanuel Ben-Meir, Joseph Vaktor, and Joseph Shulam.

*Key person(s) 1998:* Joseph Shulam and a leadership team.

### Theological character

The congregation desires to be like the first church in Jerusalem and see themselves as a continuation of what began among the Jewish people then. They are Messianic, non-denominational, and non-charismatic. The leader often uses harsh words against foreign organizations working in Israel and wishes that these would support the Messianic movement instead of their own work. The synagogue worship style is used as an expression of their identity as part of the Jewish people. They do not like to use the expression "Torah positive" about the congregation. The Torah is important because it was important for the early church and the congregation seeks to arrive at the Torah through the teaching of Jesus. They don't wish to interpret the Torah through the Jewish tradition, rather through Jesus. However, to the extent that the Jewish tradition is not in conflict with the teaching of Jesus and Paul the congregation encourages observance of this tradition and believes this is more legitimate than adopting a Protestant tradition from the western world.

All Jewish holidays are celebrated similarly to how the rest of the Jewish society celebrates them but with an emphasis on Yeshua as the center of the celebration. None of the church holidays are celebrated.

The worship room contains an Ark with a Torah scroll used during the worship service on Sabbath.

*A statement of faith* does not exist for the congregation. "The Holy Bible is our statement." However, in 1987 Joseph Shulam wrote a personal description of his faith following accusations expressed by some within the Messianic movement

that some of his views were unorthodox. A "court" of Messianic leaders agreed that the accusations were false. In the "Introduction" to "The personal description of my faith in Yeshua the Messiah" Shulam says: "We are plagued by denominational sectarianism imported by well-meaning Christian missionaries who have brought with them the divisions and religious rivalry from their home countries." The statement has five points.

A. The immutable principles of my faith: "There is One God ... Monotheism is an immutable Biblical dogma.... The Bible (Genesis to Revelation) is the inspired Word of God.... Yeshua is the Messiah, the Son of the Living God, and there is no other way to the Father except through the Son...."

B. The things about which I would feel a compulsion to take an intransigent stand: "The one God is the Creator, and Father of all men. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit is eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son ... Yeshua is the Son of God, eternally begotten of the FATHER ... He [Yeshua] was born by Mary who conceived Him from the Holy Spirit ... Yeshua was in God before the beginning of the world ... Yeshua in His divine nature was not created, and was from eternity a manifestation in the nature and character of the Father.... Yeshua is One with the LORD [LORD = the Tetragrammaton] and equal to Him in character, in mission, in nature, in purpose, in intention and in authority. This is so because of the nature of God as the Sender and Yeshua as the Sent one.' There is total equality between the LORD and Yeshua and at the same time there is also a hierarchy in that the LORD is called Father, and Yeshua is called Son ... Even in the flesh Yeshua retained that special relationship with the LORD which made him equal to God (Col. 2:9). However, that equality does not in any way change the Oneness of the LORD, and does not alter the Unity of God ... When all of the above is taken into account it ought to be evident that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit of God are all included in the Biblical concept of God ... I believe that a state of salvation can only be achieved through faithfulness to God and His grace. Man cannot alone or in community reach God's standards of righteousness ... There is a judgment in the End of Days, in which all men, the righteous and the evil, will be judged by the standard of the Word of God in the New Testament ... I believe that Israel is the elect people of God, and has been the elect people of God from the days of Abraham. The Torah was given to Israel alone and does not obligate the nations, although the nations have obligations which come from the general commandments of God for all man as they are elucidated in the New Covenant Scriptures ... The advent of the Messiah has not changed the status of Israel with God; although Israel went to exile they are still the people who is close to God's heart for the sake of the Fathers. There is a clear promise in the Scriptures for the salvation of Israel, and we believe that such a salvation will happen through obedience to faith in Yeshua ... The Kingdom of God is now in effect in the Body of the Messiah. We have a King, now, and the church is His Kingdom.... Yeshua is now ruling over

his Body and serving as its King. I see the doctrine of pre-millennialism as essentially non-biblical, and I feel that all that is said in this connection is in the realm of the speculative at best. Therefore, it is my opinion that we as Jewish believers ought to adopt the principles which Maimonides gave in Hilkhot Melachim 12: That we wait for the Messiah every day as if He is coming now, and stop speculating over things that were not revealed to us by God in clarity."

C. How does a person become a disciple of Yeshua the Messiah: "Faith in God and in Yeshua as the Messiah son of God is an explicit command and requirement of the New Testament ... Repentance is also a clear and mandatory step in the process of salvation.... Confession in public of the faith that a person has is also a part of the process of salvation, and cannot be eliminated for the sake of convenience ... Baptism in water is the final and ultimate step in the process of initiation into the Body of Yeshua ... it ought to be made clear that the New Testament requires baptism as an essential step of participation with the Messiah in the act of salvation. It is only in baptism that we enter into the Messiah ...".

D. The history of Christianity and the Jewish people: "The Jewish people have been persecuted and denied basic human rights throughout most of their exilic history ... Therefore it is my belief that the Christian Church has forfeited the right to preach to the Jewish people with an air of condemnation. The only right that Christendom has left in respect to the Jewish people is the showing of love and understanding, and the facilitation of Jews preaching to their own race ...".

E. Things which we as Messianic Jews who live in Israel ought to take to heart: "... the study of God's word in the traditional Jewish way and dedication ... I feel that our study ought to develop a Messianic halakhah, that is a practical New Covenant system of living among the Jewish community.... The home of the believer in the land of Israel ought to be such a home that any moderate Orthodox Jew would not feel intimidated to enter and partake of food ... If we give cause to the Jewish community to condemn us on the basis of not keeping the traditions and laws of Judaism then we cut ourselves off from the community which we so desperately wish to bring to Yeshua. That does not mean that we should place ourselves under the law, nor does it mean that we ought to cut ourselves from the grace of God. But it does mean that we ought to strive to be like the Early Church."

F. The question of the Charismatic Movement and Messianic Judaism: "... the Holy Spirit has the hypostatic characteristics of a person. He is described in the scriptures as the "comforter" and the "advocate" and has at times actions attributed to him which are identified as the acts of God. This is the reason why in Christian circles the Holy Spirit simply [is] called a person in the context of the Trinity ...".

*Baptism:* Candidates need to be ready for baptism which includes having come to repentance and confession. The place is not important as long as it is

running water. The congregation has gone to the Jordan River, to water holes in the desert, or to a ancient village near Jerusalem.

**Leadership**

Roeh Yisrael is led by the pastor with a leadership team. Together they are responsible for the spiritual matters of the congregation. Elders are elected as are deacons according to the requirements for leaders expressed in Paul’s letters to Timothy and Titus. There is also a committee which looks after the legal matters of the amutah; in practice this committee tends to function as deacons/deaconesses.

Joseph Shulam, the pastor, returned from the USA in 1964 after his education there. He continued his studies at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and has a BA from there in Biblical Archaeology and Bible. He studied NT at David Lipscomb College in Nashville, Tennessee, 1967-1969. Returning to Israel in 1969 he studied for 4 years at the Diaspora Yeshiva before he obtained his MA from the Hebrew University in Jewish Thought.

From 1991-1995 he served as the Israeli coordinator for the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism. He has appeared on Israeli TV on several occasions as a representative for the Messianic movement. He travels extensively abroad to teach and visit congregations with whom he has contacts.

*Women* cannot serve as pastors or elders. They can be deaconesses and teach other women and children.

**Membership**

In 1998 Roeh Yisrael had 60 members. This number does not include 40 children.

A *membership list* exists although it was primarily established for legal purposes concerning the establishment of the congregation as an amutah.

*Characteristics of adults members:*

- 1. Jewish..... 40
- 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew ..... 4
- 3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship ..... 6  
(of whom 1 is Arab/Palestinian)
- 4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship ..... 10

*Changes in membership over the last 5 years:* In 1993 the congregation had about 40 members. There has been an increase in members although a number of families have left the congregation among them also some in leadership positions. Some previous members have left the country. Among the new members are new immigrants, mainly non-Russian. Others have come to faith in the congregation.

### **Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held every Sunday afternoon at 5:30 pm. Every second Saturday there is a service in the morning beginning at 10:00 am.

*Attendance:* Average number is 100; of these are 30 children.

*Description of the service:* The Saturday service is liturgical and follows the outline of the synagogue service and includes the main elements of the Sidur. A parallel reading from the NT is included in the Scripture readings, where both the weekly Torah portion and the portion from the Prophets are read. Depending on the preacher the sermon is both topical and expository, although it generally follows the weekly Torah portion; it lasts about 30 minutes.

The meeting Sunday afternoon is in form of a Bible study, discussion; Communion is celebrated although not with a full meal.

The *language used* is Hebrew with translation into English.

*Communion:* The congregation partakes of the "breaking of bread" at the weekly Sunday service. The traditional Jewish blessings are recited over the bread and wine, each followed by a benediction, in the traditional format, which acknowledges the meaning attributed to the elements by Jesus and Paul (1 Corinthians 11). Saturday services conclude with "Kiddush in memory of Yeshua the Messiah" in which the above benedictions are also used, first over the wine and then over the bread, and the service is followed by a fellowship meal. Baptism is recommended for participation.

*Women* are not invited up for the reading from the Torah scroll; they can pray and take part in the discussion of the teaching on Sunday.

*Children's classes:* During the service 3 children classes are held.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* There is a women's meeting on Tuesday and individual members are involved in evangelistic outreach. Many of the congregation's members attend the classes given by the Messianic Midrasha.

### **Cooperation**

The congregation is open to cooperate with other groups. Guest speakers are invited 4-5 times a year and both leaders and members participate in nationally-organized events.

### **Finances**

Although tithing is seen as belonging to the time of the temple and therefore not mandated, members are encouraged to donate; this is done through a donation box in the meeting room.

The pastor receives 20 percent of his salary from the congregation; 80 percent comes from his position as director of Netivyah. The congregation also pays a secretary.

Money has been donated to the National Evangelistic Committee, Pro-life, Light to the Nations, and the Ebenezer Home, among others.

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*Interview with Joseph Shulam, 18 October 1998.*

*Sources:* Hoekendijk 1992:69-83; *Jerusalem Newsletter* December 1991; May 1993; August and December 1995; *Teaching from Zion* 8/1996:3; 12/1999:4.  
*Media:* *Ha'Aretz* 12.10.82. In *Jerusalem* 17.06.88; 14.10.88. *Jerusalem Post* 29.12.89. *Kol Ha'Ir* 12.10.82; 25.01.85. *Ma'ariv* 17.04.95. *Yediot Acharonot* 12.07.89; 02.11.89.  
*On Moshe Immanuel Ben-Meir (Maier):* Nerel 1998b; OEsterbye 1970:146-165; Shulam 1989:9.  
*On Rabbi Daniel Zion:* Maoz, 1989b:9; Shulam 1989:5 and 1991.

## 1-14      **Sar Shalom Congregation**      Central Jerusalem

*Name:* קהילת שר שלום; Kehilat Sar Shalom ("Ruler of Peace Congregation" – Isaiah 9:6).

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Amutah.

*Meeting place:* In a rented flat.

### History

*Founded* at the end of 1995. The congregation grew out of the work of Sar Shalom Ministries, a ministry that brought the founders in contact with people with social problems or who came from a difficult background. They saw a need for a fellowship different from that offered by other groups in the city.

*Harassment:* People from Yad L'Achim have attended the meetings and intimidated the participants.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation and in 1998:* Paul and Dragana Bianchini.

### Theological character

Pentecostal and conservative evangelical. The congregation seeks to identify with the Jewish Israeli context, with a clear focus on Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God. There is an emphasis on social and evangelistic outreach.

The Jewish holidays are celebrated on the eve of the holiday and are seen as providing an opportunity to underscore the biblical roots of faith in Jesus. Mention is made of the church holidays and Christmas is often celebrated in connection with Chanuka.

The meeting room is decorated with a banner, an Israeli flag, a shofar horn, a menorah and a small cross made of olive wood, a gift from a Palestinian believer.



A *statement of faith* exists. It is a one-page document with 13 short articles. It opens with "We believe" and all the articles end with a reference to the NT. It is evangelical and Pentecostal and emphasizes "the only means of being cleansed from sin is through repentance and faith in the precious blood of Messiah." Speaking in "unknown languages" is a manifestation of the "infilling with the Holy Spirit." The first statement says that "The Bible is the inspired and only infallible and authoritative Word of God." On God it says: "We believe there is one God, externally existent as God the Father, God the Son (the Devar Adonoi - the Word of the Lord), and God the Holy Spirit (Ruach ha Kodesh). On Jesus: "We believe in the deity of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, in his virgin birth ...".

*Baptism:* Prior to baptism candidates are given 4 instruction sessions. There are no preferred sites; the bathtub of the apartment has been used on occasion!

**Leadership**

Sar Shalom Congregation is led by Paul and Dragana Bianchini, who are both called pastors.

Paul Bianchini has a Ph.D in Theology from a Church of God seminary in the USA. The couple came to Israel in 1992. Prior to that Paul Bianchini pastored a congregation in New York while also working full time with the US government. Dragana Bianchini has a degree in Counseling.

*Women* can serve in all capacities in the congregation, including serving as pastor.

**Membership**

In 1999 Sar Shalom Congregation had 16 members. This number does not include 1 child.

A *membership list* exists. Baptism is a requirement for membership.

*Characteristics of adult members:*

1. Jewish.....	8
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....	2
3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship.....	3
(of whom 1 is Arab/Palestinian)	
4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship .....	3

*Changes in membership since 1995:* The congregation had 5 members in 1995. 7 have joined through evangelism, 4 have immigrated from the USA. Some people attended for a while but then left because they wanted a "more Jewish/Messianic fellowship" and the pastors encouraged members to find the congregation that met their needs rather than remain with them.

**Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday afternoon from 17:30-20:30 pm.

*Attendance:* Average number is 12. Of these none are children.

*Description of the service:* The service begins with the blowing of the shofar and the recitation of the Shm'a; then follows a time of praise and worship for about 60 minutes. Part of the weekly Torah portion is read, after which follows a time of prayer for special needs. The sermon is often based on the Torah portion combined with text from the NT. It lasts for 45 minutes. After the Aaronic blessing there is an altar call.

The *language used* is English with no translation.

*Communion:* Celebrated at least once a month; no communion liturgy is used but the passage on the Lord's Supper from 1 Corinthians 11 is read, together with other NT texts.

*Women* can lead all parts of the service.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* a weekly Bible study conducted in English, a Friday morning prayer meeting and weekly outreach activities together with Sar Shalom Ministries; the outreach is also conducted in Arab/Palestinian areas.

### Cooperation

Members are encouraged to participate in national events for local congregations. Guest speakers are used about 5 times a year.

### Finances

About 33% of the expenses are covered by the congregation, most of which go to pay for the rent of the facilities. The rest comes from donation from abroad. The pastor is not paid by the congregation.

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*Interview with Paul and Dragana Bianchini, 19 January 1999.*

1-15

## Shalhevetyah

Central Jerusalem

*Name:* שלהבתייה - הקהילה המשחיתת, haKehilah haMeshichit "Shalhevetyah"; Shalhevetyah Christian Congregation (Song of Songs 8:6).

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Part of the work of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM).

*Meeting place:* In facilities belonging to FELM.

### History

*Founded* in the late 1950s. The Finnish Missionary Society, now FELM, began its work in Israel in 1924, when A. Saarisalo, later professor of Oriental Languages

in Helsinki, worked among the Palestinian Jews in Jerusalem and Tiberias. In 1931 Aili Havas was sent out and she became the founder of the Finnish School in Jerusalem in 1945. The school taught in Hebrew. In 1963 the school moved from a hired building to its own school buildings, including a hostel for staff and pupils and a hall where services could be held. In 1967 a new law was passed prohibiting Jewish parents (and therefore also Jewish believers registered as Jews) from sending their children to a Christian boarding school. The law said that no child was allowed to be taught at a boarding school teaching a religion different from that of the child and its parents. The school could therefore no longer accept Jewish children, but continued to operate in Hebrew for Arab children until 1976. Among the local teachers in the 1960s was Victor Smadja (see 1-10).

In 1957 the Finnish pastor Risto Santala joined the mission and he began to hold services in Hebrew. The congregation grew out of a Hebrew Bible study which began already in the 1930s. Up until 1987 all pastors and the majority of the employees were Finnish workers except Avraham Eliezer, who for a period in the 1980s led the services of the congregation. In December 1987 Joseph Ben-Zvi was installed as a pastor. In February 1988 the congregation had 79 registered members. Ben-Zvi resigned in 1992 and began another congregation (7-02). The resignation was due mainly to a disagreement between the pastor and the mission board over the use of mission facilities.

*Harassment:* From time to time the sign at the entrance to the mission properties has been taken down, crosses have been painted on the wall, and stones have been thrown. The congregation as such has experienced only few difficulties. However, in 1963 – prior to the law prohibiting Jewish children being taught at a Christian boarding school – the school building was damaged, windows smashed, and the pastor was injured.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Aili Havas and later Risto Santala.

*Key person(s) 1998:* Juha-Pekka Rissanen and Aarne Tappaneinen.

### Theological character

Lutheran according to its constitution. The denominational background and foundation is clearly Protestant and Lutheran, but in maintaining this identity the congregation seeks to be sensitive to the Israeli/Jewish context.

All the Jewish holidays are recognized and reference is made to them in the service on the Sabbath of the week of the holiday. One evening during the week of Pesach there is a congregational Seder meal. A large sukkah is built every year and on the Sabbath of the week of Sukkot other congregations are invited to a joint service.

Of the church holidays Christmas is celebrated and both Easter and Pentecost are referred to in the teaching at the appropriate time of the year.

A constitution exists. It is a 9½ page document written both in Hebrew and English. There are 10 articles and a "Guidelines for the Ordained Ministry in the

Shalhevetyah Congregation." It reflects classical Lutheran expression and theology. In the heading "Commission" it reads: "The Congregation is an assembly of believers in Jerusalem and its vicinity, among whom the Gospel is taught purely and the Sacraments are administered rightly and where Christian life and ministry are realized. At the same time it is seen as a part of the Body of Christ in this country and worldwide, that is commissioned to proclaim the Gospel and His Kingdom to all creatures by word and service.

The task of the Congregation is to abide by this commission in its geographical context, and to maintain brotherly relations with congregations that have the same call. Its main language of communication and worship is Hebrew."

The paragraph on "Confessional Basis" expresses: "The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the final revelation of the One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and the true guide for faith, doctrine and life. The Congregation confesses its faith through the Ecumenical Creeds and the confessional books of the Lutheran Reformation as the true understanding and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures (i.e. the Apostolic and Nicene Creed, the Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism), which affirm that salvation is obtained only by grace through faith in Jesus Christ."

*Baptism:* Both infant baptism and believer's baptism are recognized, depending on the wish of the parents. Regulations for baptism are similar to those of Beit Eliahu (see 3-01). Baptism and Communion are sacraments "instituted by Jesus Christ Himself (Matt. 28:18-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)." The paragraph on baptism states: "We believe that baptism received as an infant or adult within a Christian congregation and conducted in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is a right and valid Christian baptism which opens incorporation into the Body of Christ and gives eternal salvation to everyone who receives this gift in faith." It can take place within the meeting room of the congregation, but the congregation has also gone to the Sea of Galilee. Adults receive instruction prior to baptism.

### Leadership

According to its constitution the congregation is required to hold a congregational meeting for all adult members at least once a year to discuss matters concerning the life of the congregation. At the congregational meeting the congregational council should be elected. The council should have five members, the pastor being an ex-officio member of the council "and one member being appointed by the FELM Missionary Committee, until the stage of independence of the Congregation is achieved." The purpose of the Council is to promote the spiritual life in the congregation, including "call and appoint workers to various tasks in the congregation." Since the split in 1992 there has not been a congregational council and the congregation has been led by the pastor. The pastor is appointed by FELM. In the "Guidelines" it is emphasized

that: “An organized independent congregation has the right to call an ordained pastor. Until the stage of an organized congregation is reached, the Missionary Committee of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission shall approve a candidate for ordination, after hearing the Congregation’s opinion.”

The present pastor has an MA in Theology from the University of Helsinki, Finland. He has pastoral experience from Finland (1986-89); he worked as assistant pastor in Immanuel Lutheran Church, Jaffa (5-08), from 1990-91 and as manager of the Ebenezer Home in Haifa from 1992 to 1995.

*Women:* According to the theological view of the mission board and the pastor, women can be ordained and serve as pastors. However, to be culturally sensitive they would not call a woman to be a pastor in Israel. Women can be deaconesses and serve on the congregation council.

**Membership**

In 1999 the congregation had 19 members. This number does not include 8 children.

A *membership list* exists and members have to be baptized and agree to the constitution (the conditions for membership are similar to those of Beit Eliahu, see 3-01).

*Characteristics of adult members:*

|                                                     |   |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Jewish.....                                      | 4 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....             | 1 |
| 3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship.....     | 6 |
| 4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship ..... | 8 |

*Changes in membership since 1992:* There were about 20 members in 1992. Eight left with the resigning pastor; 2 went to another congregation. One person has joined the congregation through evangelism.

**Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday morning from 10:00-11:30 am.

*Attendance:* Average number is 15. Of these 6 are children and 2-3 are non-members. Tourists and visitors attend regularly but are not included in the 15.

*Description of the service:* The service follows a liturgy from 1997 written specifically for the congregation and with 14 new Hebrew songs written and composed by Esther and Ya’akov Horesh. The main elements are similar to those of a Lutheran liturgy but contextualized to a Jewish environment. The elements are as follows: 1. Prelude. 2. Blessings (responsive reading of Psalm 92). 3. Confession of Sin (Psalm 51:1-9 read by the leader together with the congregation). 4. Forgiveness of Sin. 5. Thanksgiving (and song). 6. Scripture readings. 7. Prayer. 8. Gospel of the day. 9. Hymn. 10. Sermon. 11. Confession of

Faith (the Apostles' Creed, said together by leader and congregation). 12. Hymn and collection. 13. Prayer of the Church and the Lord's Prayer (followed by song or other music). 14. Communion (with prayer, song, thanksgiving, prophecy (Isaiah 53: 4-5), words of Institution pronounced over the bread and the wine); blessing of the bread and wine, song and, before coming to the Lord's table, the participants greet each other saying "chesed ve-shalom" ("grace and peace"). 15. Hymn. 16. The blessing (the Aaronic). 17. Hymn. 18. Announcements and postlude.

The Scripture readings follow the reading cycle of the Finnish Lutheran Church, including a Psalm, an OT reading, an Epistle reading and a gospel reading. The sermon lasts 20-25 minutes and takes its theme from one of the readings, more often than not the gospel reading.

*The language used* is Hebrew with translation into Finnish or English depending on visitors.

*Communion:* Celebrated every Sabbath, following a communion liturgy (see above). Baptism is a requirement and children who are baptized can take part together with parents.

*Women:* At the moment it does not happen often, but women are allowed to read and pray.

*Children's classes:* A children's class is held during the service.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* A weekly Bible study is held in the homes of congregation members; a weekly children's meeting; women's meeting; bi-weekly evangelistic outreach with distribution of Bibles and other literature in Hebrew and Russian.

## Cooperation

The congregation has a close relationship with the two other congregations of Lutheran background (3-01 and 5-08) and the congregations celebrate Sukkot together at the premises of the Shalhevetyah Congregation. Other local congregations are also invited. About once a month there is a guest speaker. Both the congregation and the leader participate in national events.

## Finances

The budget is part of the budget for the total work of FELM in Israel. FELM also works among Arabs/Palestinians. The main part of the expenses is covered by FELM, which also sends 3 persons for the work of the congregation.

The congregation donates money to the Fellowship of Christian Students in Israel, to Ebenezer Home, and to the Caspari Center.

## The premises

In 1998 the premises of the congregation were used also by the following groups: A Russian-speaking group led by Beit Sar Shalom (5-04), Beit Geulah youth group (1-01), one of the Ethiopian home groups (5-06), a Chinese

congregation, and a Korean group. FELM also runs a Hebrew-speaking kindergarten on the compound. The facilities have for many years been used for summer camps for children from the local Messianic congregations.

~~~~~  
*Interview with Juha-Pekka Rissanen, 13 October 1998/28 May 1999.*

*Other sources:* Baumann 1984:95-96; OEsterbye 1970:186; *UCCI News* 3/1977:7-12; 3/1984:31.

*Media:* *Jerusalem Report* 13.12.91.

1-16

## Shemen Sasson

Central Jerusalem

*Name:* קהילת שמן ששון; Kehilat Shemen Sasson ("Oil of Joy Congregation" – Isaiah 61:3).

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* No information.

*Meeting place:* In a church building in the center of Jerusalem.

### History

Founded in 1992.

### Theological character

Non-denominational and evangelical in doctrine with an expressive charismatic style of worship. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are practiced in the congregation but not seen as signs of salvation. Baptism in the Holy Spirit is defined as a separate event from salvation.

The congregation is both local and international, equally valuing and welcoming Jews, Arabs, Israelis, and internationals. A primary goal of the congregation is to train and mature disciples, with the goal of sending some of them forth to establish local congregations in other lands.

*A statement of faith* does not exist, but a 1 year course called "First principles" is taught as a discipleship class and is obligatory for anyone who wants to be active and assume any responsibility in the congregation.

*Baptism* is understood as an integral part of coming to faith. It is performed by immersion in the name of Jesus Christ. It can take place anywhere; candidates receive a short instruction of 1-2 lessons prior to baptism.

### Leadership

The congregation is led by a senior pastor. His wife partners with him in ministry, also being recognized as a pastor in the congregation. The

congregation believes in plurality of leadership, comprised of elders meeting New Testament qualification and functioning under the oversight of the senior pastor. Home leaders are in place but as yet no elders have been ordained.

*Women* are permitted to function in all forms of ministries including those mentioned in Ephesians 4:11. Eldership is restricted to men meeting the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3 with a recognition that married couples are called to function as a team in all areas of life and ministry.

### Membership

The leader prefers not to give numerical information regarding the composition of the congregation. In 1999 the congregation had, according to our estimates, 35 members. This number does not include 6 children.

*No formal membership list* is maintained, but commitment and faithfulness within a local congregation are strongly encouraged.

#### *Characteristics of adult members (our estimate):*

1. Jewish.....	13
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....	1
3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship.....	1
4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship .....	20

### Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities

A weekly service is held on Sunday evening.

*Attendance:* Average number, according to our estimate, is 50, including a few visitors.

*Description of the service:* The service is non-liturgical with a strong charismatic expression. Praise and worship are demonstrative and include music and dance. The sermon is topical drawing from both the Tanakh and NT texts.

The *language used* is normally English with translation into Hebrew.

*Communion* is celebrated about once a month; it is emphasized that it is for believers only. Like the rest of the service it does not follow a fixed pattern nor does it occur at the same time during the service each week. A Bible text is read prior to the Lord's Supper.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* Tuesday there is a discipleship class (First Principles); Thursday there are prayer and home meetings. The congregation has been involved in different evangelistic activities, including street evangelism.



### Cooperation

The leader of the congregation has participated in both local and national leadership events and participates in leadership of a monthly leaders' prayer meeting in Jerusalem.

### Finances

Members are encouraged to tithe and give offerings.

~~~~~

*Interview with the senior pastor, 20 January 1999.*

1-17

## Sukkat David

Central Jerusalem

*Name:* קהילת סוכת דוד; Kehilat Sukkat David ("The Tabernacle of David Congregation").

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Not an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In rented facilities at the Anglican International School, Jerusalem, belonging to the Israel Trust of the Anglican Church.

### History

*Founded* in 1993. In 1992 a Hebrew-speaking home group was started under the King of Kings English-speaking congregation (8-03), and in 1993 the leadership there encouraged the members of the home group to become an independent congregation, promising to give practical and spiritual support to the new congregation during the first year. At the time of foundation there were about 30 people in the group; some continued to maintain active involvement in the English-speaking congregation and eventually decided to continue there rather than be part of Sukkat David, thus reducing the number to about 15.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Zvi Randelman.

*Key person(s) 1998:* Zvi Randelman, two other elders and a deacon.

### Theological character

Non-denominational but in its theology the congregation is close to that of the King of Kings congregation. In its style it is open to a charismatic expression of the gifts of the Spirit. The congregation has a clear Jewish/Israeli identity but no desire to incorporate specific rabbinic/Jewish traditions into the life of the congregation. It is Messianic in the sense that the Jewish holidays are emphasized and taught. They are seen also as a way of identifying with Israeli society. None of the church holidays are celebrated.

*A statement of faith* does not exist.

*Baptism:* Candidates receive instruction prior to baptism depending on the individual, but the candidate must express repentance and faith. Baptism can take place any place there is running water.

### **Leadership**

Sukkat David is led by a group of elders, with the pastor being the senior elder. Leadership is seen as a gift with which to serve and recognized by the congregation. Deacons are appointed by the leadership and then commissioned by the congregation through prayer.

The pastor came to faith while in the USA but was not part of the Messianic movement there; he and his wife immigrated to Israel in 1974. He has an MA in Biological Chemistry from the Hebrew University. From 1980-81 he attended Elim Bible Institute in New York. He has a private company and presently he is also self-employed.

*Women* cannot serve as pastors or elders; they can serve as deaconesses.

### **Membership**

In 1998 the congregation had 67 members. This number does not include 35 children.

A *membership list* does not exist but there is a phone directory for contact. Those who are faithful to the congregation and see it as their spiritual home are considered members. Baptism is a requirement for membership.

#### *Characteristics of adult members:*

- |                                                     |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Jewish.....                                      | 33 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....             | 5  |
| 3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship .....    | 5  |
| 4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship ..... | 24 |

*Changes in membership since 1992:* In 1992 there were 30 members. A few new people have joined through evangelism. A significant number have come from other congregations. Some left their congregation because of doctrinal disagreements; others left theirs over disagreement regarding the Toronto Movement. Others are new immigrants.

About 15 of the original members returned to – or rather never really left – the King of Kings English-speaking congregation after the first year.

### **Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday afternoon at 5:00 pm. The service lasts 2 hours.

*Attendance:* Average number about 100. Of these 35 are children; a small number are non-members and visitors.

*Description of the service:* It is non-liturgical and begins with a time of praise,

testimonies, and prayer that lasts for 50 minutes. The sermon can be based on both the Tanakh and NT texts; it varies between topical and expository themes and normally lasts 40 minutes. Following the sermon there is usually an open time of testimonies and sharing.

*The language used* is Hebrew and no translation is provided.

*Communion:* Celebrated once a month. It is ministered to all believers who acknowledge Yeshua as savior. No communion liturgy is used but the passage on the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11 and a gospel text is often read or referred to. Baptism is not a requirement, but repentance is.

*Women* can be active in the service but they cannot teach.

*Children's classes:* During the service 4 children classes are held; there is also a nursery group.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* About 30 people are involved in home groups. There is a Monday evening prayer meeting. Members are encouraged to be involved in evangelism but the congregation does not have an organized outreach. Regular retreats are organized.

### Cooperation

The congregation has conducted programs together with the King of Kings congregation (8-03) and the Narkis Street Congregation (1-11). Guest speakers are invited about 4 times a year. The pastor has rarely participated in national events because of lack of time.

### Finances

Members are encouraged to tithe. Most of the expenses are covered by donations collected locally; the rest comes from abroad. The main expenses are rent of the facilities used during the weekly meeting and rent of an office in the center of Jerusalem. The pastor receives some support from the congregation.

~~~~~

*Interview with Zvi Randelman, 14 October 1998.*

## 1-18 Voice in the Wilderness Old City, Jerusalem

*Name:* קהילת קול במדבר; Kehilat Kol beMidbar; Voice in the Wilderness Congregation (Isaiah 40:3; Luke 3:4).

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Applying for amutah status.

*Premises:* Since May 1999, in St. Paul's Anglican Church.

## History

*Founded* in 1994. The work began in 1993 as an evangelistic outreach to Russian immigrants. Out of this grew a fellowship that has now been organized as a congregation. The fellowship also has a congregation in Kiryat Gat.

*Harassment:* In 1996 the home of the outreach work in Kiryat Gat was searched by the police; material was confiscated and members were taken to the police station for questioning. On several occasions when giving out literature in Sderot members of the Orthodox community have interfered. Posters warning against their work have been put up next to their notices.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Anthony Simon.

*Key person(s) 1998:* Anthony Simon, John Theodor, and a Russian believer.

## Theological character

Reformed in theology; non-charismatic, evangelical-Baptist, and culturally Jewish/Israeli. Both the Jewish and the Christian holidays are referred to in the teaching on the Sabbath of the week of the holiday; the Jewish holidays are celebrated and when possible the congregation will meet on the eve of the feasts. The emphasis of the work of the congregation is on teaching and discipleship, on evangelism and Bible distribution.

*A statement of faith* does not exist but the congregations holds to the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith.

*Baptism:* Before baptism, leaders will interview new candidates to make sure they understand what baptism is.

## Leadership

The congregation is led by the founding elders. Two other elders are in the process of being approved by the congregation.

The pastor became a believer in the Messiah while on a kibbutz in Israel in 1982. He graduated from a 3-year Bible College course in Wales and worked as an evangelist for 3 years in London with the reformed Bethesda Fellowship before immigrating to Israel. John Theodor has a degree in Business Management.

Deacons have been appointed to help with the hospitality of the congregation and make sure new people are welcomed.

*Women* cannot serve as elders but they can take an active part in the service in music, prayer and giving testimony.

## Membership

In 1999 the congregation had 26 members. This number does not include 6 children.

*A membership list* does not exist; baptism is a requirement for membership and membership is recognized according to regular attendance.

*Characteristics of adult members:*

1. Jewish..... 15
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew ..... 4
3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship ..... 3
4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship ..... 4

*Changes in membership since 1994:* There has been a slow increase. Many people have gone through the congregation and moved on to other parts of the country.

**Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday evening so people can use public transportation.

*Attendance:* Average number about 40. Of these 3 are children; non-members who attend regularly make up 10, and visitors about 5.

*Description of the service:* It is non-liturgical but the service follows a fixed pattern. There is a Scripture reading from both the Tanakh and NT. The sermon is more often than not based on a NT text and is often a continued expository teaching; it lasts about 40 minutes.

The *language used* is English with translation into Russian.

*Communion:* Celebrated once a month; people need to be baptized and attend regularly; the passage on the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11 and other Scripture passages are read.

*Women* are not invited up for the Scripture reading; they can pray during the service.

*Children's classes:* These vary from time to time according to the number attending.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* There is a weekly Bible study and a prayer meeting. Twice a week the leaders visit the group in Kiryat Gat to teach and to do evangelism. As a tool for evangelism the congregation organizes guided tours to Christian sites in the Old City. The movie Jesus of Nazareth has been shown every Friday evening over a period of 9 months. Classes for teaching English have been held. A service is held in Romanian every Saturday for mainly Romanian foreign workers.

**Cooperation**

The congregation cooperates with other congregations made up of mainly Russian speakers whom they feel theologically close to. They have participated in national events for congregations.

**Finances**

The members contribute towards the running expenses of the congregation. Money from abroad covers the major part of the expenses, which are rent,

transportation, and evangelistic literature for distribution. The three elders and a part-time worker are also paid through outside support. Part of that comes from Zion's Hope, Florida.

~~~~~

*Interview with John Theodor, 19 October 1998.*

## 1-19      **Yad Hashmona House Group**      Judean Hills

*Name:* No official name.

*Category:* House group.

*Legal status:* Not an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In a private home on the moshav.

### **History**

*Founded* in 1996. Moshav Yad Hashmona was founded in 1971 by Finnish Christians and named after eight Jews who were turned over by the Finnish authorities to the Nazis for extermination. From 1979 the moshav has welcomed Israeli believers in Jesus and among these are four children of Hayim Haimoff (Bar-David) together with their families.

These all used to be part of the Ramat Gan congregation, but in 1996 some of the members formed a house group with separate meetings in Yad Hashmona. The present house group consists of three families, two of which live on the moshav and one in Ramat Gan; the three families are from the Bar-David family.

In 1999 the moshav had about 28 members, not including 20 children. Some members of the moshav attend other congregations. 3 home groups of other congregations in Jerusalem meet in the moshav. The moshav has a guest house often used by Messianic groups for conferences and by Finnish Christian tourist groups and others.

### **Theological character**

The theological character of the house group is similar to that of the Ramat Gan Congregation (see 5-11). Also here the importance of passing on the teaching to the next generation is stressed together with daily devotions in the family.

The group meets Saturday noon from 12:00-1:30 pm.

### **Leadership**

There is no formal leadership.

### Membership

In 1999 the house group had 11 members. This number does not include 10 children.

#### *Characteristics of adult members:*

- |                                         |    |
|-----------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Jewish.....                          | 10 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew..... | 1  |

### Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities

A weekly service is held on Saturday noon from 12:00-1:30.

*Attendance:* Average number is 20; of these 6 are children.

*Description of the service:* The service begins with 15 minutes worship. The teaching lasts for 45 minutes.

*The language used is Hebrew.*

*Communion* is celebrated before the major Jewish feasts, Pesach, Shavuot, Yom Kippur, Sukkot and around the time of Christmas. No liturgy is used; the passage on the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11 might be read.

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*Information given by one of the members, 24 May 1999.*

*Media: Ha'Aretz 08.05.87. Sha'ar (Tel-Aviv) 03.09.82. Yediot Acharonot 01.12.89.*

## District 2: Northern Israel

2-01

**Ahavah**

Nazareth Illit

*Name:* אהבה יושבת; Kehilah Meshichit "Ahava" ("Love Congregation").

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Not yet an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In the house belonging to leader of the congregation.

### History

*Founded* in 1987. The congregation grew out of the house group which was started by René Stutz when he moved from the center of Nazareth to Nazareth Illit in 1987. The languages spoken by those attending the house group then were mainly German and English but with the immigration from the former USSR the focus of the work changed to include more and more of the Russian-speaking immigrants as the congregation experienced significant growth. Personal and theological disagreements between the pastor and another elder over how to absorb the many new members resulted in a split in 1997. The name Ahavah (love) was chosen after that to indicate a message that the pastor felt was needed to restore the fellowship in the congregation.

*Harassment:* The congregation and the pastor personally have experienced harassment in different ways. He has received death threats from anti-missionary organizations. Posters have been placed in the neighborhood with warnings against him, petrol bombs have been thrown at his car, and the tires have been slashed.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* R. Stutz and another person

*Key person(s) 1998:* R. Stutz and two Russian-speaking members.

### Theological character

The theology is "Baptist and Pentecostal"; the congregation is against the Toronto movement and the style of worship is non-charismatic. Emphasis is on the teaching of the Bible. The word "Messianic" in the name of the congregation is not to indicate that priority is given to Jewish traditions but rather to emphasize the centrality of faith in the Jewish Messiah.



The Jewish holidays are celebrated in the congregation on the eve of the feast, except for the Day of Atonement, which is not kept in any way. The congregation hosts a combined celebration of Chanukah and Christmas. The meeting room is simple with no display of any symbols.

*A statement of faith* does not exist; there used to be one but now the Bible is seen as making any statement superfluous.

*Baptism* can take place in the Sea of Galilee or the Jordan River. It is preceded by 3-4 lessons of instruction.

### Leadership

The congregation is led by the pastor together with two Russian-speaking elders appointed by the pastor. Both were believers before coming to Israel. The leader does not use the title pastor himself but is addressed thus by the members of the congregation.

Ren' Stutz has no formal pastoral training. In 1983 he immigrated to Israel from Switzerland where he had led a Christian Rehabilitation Center for 8 years. In Israel he has been self-employed.

*Women* cannot serve as teachers for the congregation. They can teach children and serve as deaconesses.

### Membership

In 1999 the congregation had 25 members; this number does not include 6 children.

*A membership list* does not exist; baptism is not a requirement for membership.

#### *Characteristics of adult members:*

1. Jewish..... 22
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew ..... 3

*Changes in membership since 1987:* There were 6 members when the house group began in 1987. In the early 1990s the group grew to about 40, the new members being mainly new believers. In 1995, 7 members were asked to leave the congregation because of disagreement over the style of worship. They were regarded as being "too noisy" (see 2-16). Before the split in 1997 the congregation had about 70 members, almost all of whom were from the former USSR.

### Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities

A weekly service is held on Saturday morning from 10:00-12:00 am.

*Attendance:* Average number about 35, including 6 children.

*Description of the service:* The service is non-liturgical and begins with a time of prayer and worship. The length and the style of the sermon depends on the

preacher on the particular day. The Lord's Prayer is used regularly.

The *language used* is English, Hebrew, or Russian; depending on which language the service is conducted in, there is translation into the others.

*Communion:* Celebrated once a month and is ministered only to those baptized. No liturgy is used, but the passage on the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11 is often read; those participating are asked to examine themselves before participating.

*Children's classes:* Every second Saturday there is a children's class in Russian. On the other Saturday the children join a children's club run by an American under the framework of the organization "Child Evangelism."

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* At the moment there are no other regular activities of the congregation. The pastor has initiated a distribution center for medicine. During the summer months he helps facilitate the work of OM (Operation Mobilization) in the area.

### Cooperation

The congregation is open to cooperation with others and often invites local guest speakers, among them Arab pastors.

### Finances

Ninety percent of the money for the work of the congregation comes from private donations from abroad. Many of the members are poor and not able to contribute financially to the work of the congregation.

~~~~~  
*Interview with Ren' Stutz, 21 January 1999.*

2-02

## Akko Congregation

Akko

*Name:* No official name.

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Not an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In premises belonging to the Arab Baptist Church in Akko.

### History

*Founded* in 1993. Already in 1991 Yuri Kalmikov began a work in Akko of which the present leader was part. Before Yuri Kalmikov left the country for Canada in 1993 the leader was encouraged to continue the work. Although hesitant because he was a new believer, he agreed and the present congregation was formed.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Yuri Kalmikov and L.H.

*Key person(s) 1999: L.H.*

### **Theological character**

Pentecostal. The majority of the members are immigrants from the former USSR and many of them were part of the Pentecostal church in Russia. The theology and style of worship is similar to what members were used to before they moved to Israel.

*A statement of faith does not exist.*

### **Leadership**

The congregation is led by the pastor and two other elders. The pastor came to faith in 1991 while still in Russia and was member of a Pentecostal church there. He immigrated to Israel in 1992 where he holds a secular job apart from his responsibilities for the congregation.

*Women cannot serve as elders.*

### **Membership**

In 1999 the congregation had 40 adult members, not including 10 children.

*A membership list does not exist.*

*Characteristics of adult members (our estimate):*

- |                                         |    |
|-----------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Jewish.....                          | 25 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew..... | 15 |

*Changes in membership since 1993:* The number of members has remained the same since 1993.

### **Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday morning, beginning at 10:00 am.

*Attendance:* Average number about 40; of these 10 are children.

*The language used* is Russian. No translation is provided.

*Communion:* Celebrated on the first Saturday of the month.

*Children's classes:* During the service a children class is held in Hebrew and Russian.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* On Wednesdays home groups meet in Kiryat Yam, Kiryat Chaim, and Carmiel.

### **Cooperation**

The congregation has a close relationship with Beit Elion in Jaffa (5-02).

**Finances**

The congregation pays a small rent for the use of facilities for the weekly meeting.

~~~~~

*Interview by telephone with L.H., 22 January/May 1999.*

2-03

**Congregation in Galilee**

Galilee

*Name:* Anonymous.

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* No information.

*Meeting place:* In rented facilities.

**History**

*Founded* in 1997. The leader had previously been part of another congregation in Galilee.

*Harassment:* No information.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation and in 1998:* The leader and three others.

**Theological character**

Non-denominational; the congregations wants to be a Messianic congregation and sensitive to Israeli culture; open to the gifts of the Spirit but opposed to the Toronto Movement. There is an emphasis on the relevance of all of Scripture.

The Jewish holidays are observed. Some members keep the Day of Atonement as a day of fasting in order to identify with the Jewish people. The church holidays are recognized.

*A statement of faith* is being prepared.

*Baptism:* Candidates receive 3-4 lessons of instruction prior to baptism. The preferred site for baptism has been the Sea of Galilee.

**Leadership**

The congregation is led by 4 persons.

**Membership**

In 1998 the congregation had 37 members. This number does not include 10 children.

*Membership:* The leader prefers not to give information on the composition of the congregation. The following division is our estimate.

*Characteristics of adult members:(our estimate)*

1. Jewish..... 27
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew..... 7
3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship ..... 1
4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship ..... 2

*Changes in membership since 1997:* In 1997 there were 25 members. New members have immigrated mainly from Russia and many were believers before they came to Israel.

**Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday morning between 10:00–12:00.

*Attendance:* Average number is 47, the same as the number of members. The number includes 10 children.

*Description of the service:* The service is opened with prayer and songs using both Russian and Hebrew songs. Then follows the teaching which last 30-40 minutes. The teaching can be both topical and expository and no preference is given to the Tanakh or NT. The service is closed with the Lord's Prayer in Russian.

The *language used* is usually Hebrew translated into Russian and English.

*Communion:* Celebrated once a month; there is no liturgy, but often the passage on the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11 is read. Baptism is a requirement.

*Children's classes:* 1 children's class is held.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* There are 3 weekly Bible study groups, two of which are Russian-Hebrew. A book of the Bible is taught.

**Finances**

The congregation's main expense is the monthly rent. Members contribute regularly through a donation box.

~~~~~

*Interview with one of the leaders, 11 December 1998.*

2-04

**Emek Yizre'el**

Afula

*Name:* עמק יזרעאל; Kehilat Emek Yizre'el ("The Jezreel Valley Congregation").

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Not an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In private homes.

## History

The fellowship which in January 1994 became a congregation had since the late 1970s been a house group under the name Kehilat Afula ("Afula Fellowship") led by another couple. At the beginning of the 1990s the group was joined by a number of Seventh Day Adventists. In light of this and other things the leadership decided it was time to come up with guidelines for a structure and a doctrinal statement for the group that could provide direction and give identity to the group. After a doctrinal statement was decided on in 1993 the group of Seventh Day Adventists and others left Kehilat haEmek ("The Valley Fellowship") as it was called at that time.

*Harassment:* The congregation has never experienced any difficulties from the local community or from any anti-missionary group. However, other groups have tried to establish themselves in Afula and met resistance.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Hilary Falk, Hanna and Herman Haustein. Also David Davis (3-03) and Stanley Roberts (2-12) provided both spiritual and practical support in the transition from house group to congregation.

*Key person(s) 1998:* Hanna and Herman Haustein and a Russian couple.

## Theological character

Evangelical with an emphasis on the importance of the deity of Yeshua, the Messiah. The congregation desires to be a local, Hebrew-speaking fellowship reflecting the fact that they are believers living in the land following the traditions of the land. There is no strong emphasis on being Messianic in the sense of observing Jewish traditions. None of the church holidays are celebrated and the Jewish feasts are seen in the light of the gospel as a shadow of what has been fulfilled in the Messiah.

*A statement of faith* exists from 1993 but has not been received.

## Leadership

The congregation is led by Herman Haustein who is the pastor. He is assisted by one Russian-speaking deacon who has been appointed by the congregation. The pastor has no formal theological education, but moved to Israel from South Africa in 1980 with what he describes as "a call from God to be a living testimony in the land." The family has Israeli citizenship and Herman Haustein is self-employed.

*Women* cannot serve as elders and at the moment no women are involved in leadership; in principal they can serve as deaconesses.

## Membership

In 1998 the congregation had 23 members, not including 12 children.

*A membership list* does not exist but those who want to consider themselves

part of the congregation have to attend regularly and show commitment to the Lord.

The leader prefers not to give detailed information on adult members.

*Characteristics of adult members (according to our estimates):*

1. Jewish..... 15
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....3
3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship .....4
4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship ..... 1

*Changes in membership since 1993:* When the group organized itself as a congregation there were 10 members. Since then 2 believing families have moved from other parts of the country and about 10 new members have immigrated to the country – all from the former USSR.

### Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities

A weekly service is held on Tuesday evening; plans are to move to Saturday.

*Attendance:* Average attendance is 25 including 10 children.

*Description of the service:* It is non-liturgical. The service lasts about 2 hours and the time is divided between worship (30 minutes), prayer (20 minutes), and teaching (45 minutes), followed by closing prayers. The teaching is expository. No preference is given to the Tanakh or NT.

The *language used* is Hebrew with translation into Russian provided simultaneously.

*Communion:* Celebrated once a month; no communion liturgy is used but the passage on the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11 is read. Children are not included.

*Children's classes* are not provided.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* On Saturday there is an intercessory prayer meeting. Friday is often used by the leaders to visit members of the congregation for encouragement and to disciple.

### Cooperation

The congregation does not cooperate with any other group in particular and the pastor has lately been less active in national or regional events. However, they do recognize the importance of meeting with others for mutual encouragement.

### Finances

The congregation does not have any regular expenses but offerings are given in private by members in order to be able to respond to needs within the group. The leader does not receive any salary from the congregation.

~~~~~

*Interview with Herman Haustein, 8 December 1998.*

2-05 **Fellowship in Northern Israel**      Northern Israel

*Name:* Anonymous.  
*Category:* Congregation.  
*Status:* Not an amutah.  
*Meeting place:* In private homes.

**History and description**

*Founded* in 1996. The fellowship began as a home group under the Peniel Fellowship in Tiberias (2-14) and became an independent congregation after being a home group for 2-3 years. Most of the members are living in the same geographical area and it was seen as a healthy development to let the home group become an independent congregation.  
The theology of the fellowship is similar to Peniel.  
The *language used* at the meetings is Hebrew with translation into Russian.

**Membership**

In 1999 the fellowship had 30 members. The number does not include 10 children.

*Characteristics of adult members:*

1. Jewish.....	20
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew .....	10

*Changes in membership since its founding in 1996:* A majority in the fellowship come from the former USSR. Some of them were already believers when they immigrated to Israel. Through evangelism the fellowship has increased from 20 in 1996 to 30 in 1999.

**Cooperation**

The congregation has maintained close ties with the Peniel Fellowship.  
~~~~~  
*Information* through Daniel Yahav (2-14).



2-06

## Haderekh

Carmiel

*Name:* קהילת הדרך; Kehilat haDerekh ("The Way Congregation" – John 14:6, Acts 9:2).

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Amutah.

*Meeting place:* In rented facilities, part of a private house; in the other part lives a family from the congregation.

### History

*Founded* Pesach of 1989. The group began as a home group under Bethesda Assembly in Haifa (3-02). In 1988 the present pastor, Joseph Ovadia, moved to Carmiel and the group became an independent congregation.

*Harassment:* The meetings have previously been interrupted by neighbors but at the moment the relationship is good. In 1991 a local newspaper carried a negative article about the congregation.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* One of the elders from the Bethesda Assembly together with Joseph Ovadia.

*Key person(s) 1998:* Joseph (Yossi) Ovadia.

### Theological character

It is an Israeli evangelical Messianic congregation, connected to daily life in Israel. They have had a congregational Seder meal. They fast on the Day of Atonement and end the day with a congregational meeting. The emphasis is on the study of the word of God and evangelism.

None of the church holidays are celebrated.

*A statement of faith* does not exist.

*Baptism:* Candidates are interviewed to make sure they understand what baptism is, but there is no prior formal instruction. Different places have been used for baptism.

### Leadership

At the moment the congregation is led by the pastor alone except for financial matters. A Russian believer comes once a month from Akko to help with the teaching.

The pastor studied at the Technion in Haifa and has since 1994 been employed by the government. He came to faith in 1983 and has been active in the youth ministry sponsored by the Messianic Assembly, Jerusalem (1-10) and Fellowship of Christian Students in Israel, of which he was chairman in the mid-1980s. Together with five other leaders from the area he is at the moment doing a Bible course.

*Women* cannot serve as pastors or elders but they can serve as deaconesses.

# **Membership**

In 1998 the congregation had 40 members. This number does not include 20 children.

A *membership list* does not exist but there is a directory for contact. In theory baptism is a requirement for membership.

## *Characteristics of adult members:*

|                                                     |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Jewish.....                                      | 30 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....             | 7  |
| 3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship .....    | 3  |
| (of whom 1 is an Arab)                              |    |
| 4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship ..... | 0  |

*Changes in membership over the last 5 years:* 3 of the present members have come to faith through the work of the congregation. The other new members are immigrants from different parts of the world. The following countries are represented in the group (some of the members have been in the country for quite some time): Albania, Hungary, Romania, England, Russia, Mexico, Brazil, USA, South Africa, and India.

In 1995 some members with Russian background left the congregation to join the Rivers of Living Water Congregation (2-15) in Carmiel. They preferred a different style of worship.

## **Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday afternoon from 4:30-6:30.

*Attendance:* Average number about 50. Of these about 15 are children; on an average 5 non-members attend as do 2-3 visitors.

*Description of the service:* It is non-liturgical but the pastor believes that the time of worship should be a time of order. The service opens with a Scripture reading followed by prayer and songs for 45 minutes. The teaching then lasts for 45 minutes; it can be topical or expository. No preference is given to the Tanakh or NT texts.

The *language used* is Hebrew with translation into Hungarian, English, Spanish, Russian, and sometimes Romanian.

*Communion:* Celebrated once a month; no communion liturgy is used but the passage on the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11 is read.

*Women* can lead worship and teach children's classes or other women. They cannot teach in the general service.

*Children's classes:* During the service 3 children's classes are held.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* There are 2 Bible study groups, one in English, one in Russian; a Friday morning prayer meeting; and a discipleship group that meets every other week.

**Cooperation**

The congregation works closely with the Peniel Fellowship (2-14). It also cooperates with an Arabic-speaking King’s Kids group from Shfaram. Once a month they have a guest speaker.

**Finances**

The congregation pays for about 50 percent of the expenses. The rest is covered by donations from abroad, mainly from Holland. They also receive support from Prayer for Israel (PFI).

~~~~~  
*Interview with Joseph Ovadia, 7 December 1998.*  
*Other sources: Epsilon (Haifa Technical Institute student newspaper) January 1986.*

2-07                                      **House Group in Galilee**                                      Northern Galilee

*Name:* No official name.  
*Category:* House group.  
*Status:* Not an amutah.  
*Meeting place:* In a private home.

**History and description**

*Founded in January 1998.* The group was started by a couple who came to Israel from South Africa in 1994 and at that time was active in the Peniel Fellowship (2-14). The family came to Israel because of what they “felt was God’s calling.” They have received support, both spiritually and financially, from a Baptist and a Pentecostal congregation in South Africa. The family left the country for a while in 1996 and returned in 1997 and moved to a city in Galilee. Before the founder left the country he had already tried to start a group there; other attempts had also been made previously.  
*Language used:* There are two separate meetings weekly, one conducted in Hebrew with Russian translation and one conducted only in English. Every second Friday the two groups come together for a Sabbath meal.

**Membership**

The meeting with Russian translation is attended by 6 people; the other by 10 people including the leaders. There are no children.

<i>Characteristics of adult members:</i>	
1. Jewish.....	12
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew .....	1

3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship ..... 0  
 4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship ..... 3

### Cooperation

The fellowship has had close ties with the Peniel Fellowship but as of January 1999 this situation has changed. The Russian-speaking part of the fellowship from time to time attends the Morning Star Fellowship (2-10) in Tiberias.

~~~~~

*Information by telephone with the leaders, 1 December/28 April 1999.*

2-08

## Living Stones Fellowship

Kiryat Shmona

*Name:* קהילת אבנים חיות; Kehilat Avanim Chaiot; Living Stones Fellowship.

*Category:* Congregation.

*Status:* Not an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In a private home.

### History and description

This fellowship of mainly new immigrants from the former USSR began as a house group in 1997. Before that the founding couple, who had come to faith through the work of Seva and Irene Friedman (2-15), would travel to Carmiel to participate in the meetings of Rivers of Living Water. In 1997 they felt called to start a house group in Kiryat Shmona. Over a period in 1998 the teaching was provided by an American working for a Christian organization in the land. In May 1999 the house group formally became a congregation with its own pastor, an immigrant from the Ukraine.

Like Rivers of Living Water, Israel, the congregation is also a branch of the international organization, Rivers of Living Water. The theology of the group is charismatic and similar to that of Rivers of Living Water (2-15).

The *weekly service* is on Saturday from 11:00-2:00 pm, beginning with a time of worship (30 minutes) followed by teaching and a time of prayer and worship. The Lord's Supper is shared depending on "how the Spirit leads." It takes place more than once a month.

The *language used* is Russian.

*Children's classes:* A children's class is held during the service.

*Other activities:* On Wednesdays the group meets for Bible study for about 90 minutes.

### Membership

In 1999 the fellowship had 16 members. This number does not include 4 children.

*Characteristics of adult members:*

|                                         |    |
|-----------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Jewish.....                          | 10 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew..... | 6  |

~~~~~  
*Information by telephone from Valeria Zaganenko and Seva Friedman, 28 April 1999.*

2-09

Ma'alot House Group

Ma'alot

*Name:* No official name.  
*Category:* House group.  
*Legal status:* Not an amutah.  
*Meeting place:* In private homes.

**History**  
*Founded* in 1990. The group began as a Bible study for believers in the area. They used to travel to Akko to meet with the group led by Yuri Kalmikov (2-02/3-05) but after some time Yochanan (John) Smith decided to start a group in Ma'alot, where the majority of the members live, in order to avoid traveling.  
Later on 5 families who had belonged a Russian Pentecostal church before moving to Israel separated from the group. This left the group with only two elderly Russians and the leader. Since then two more Russians have joined plus an Israeli couple from the Carmel Assembly (3-03). They have continued to attend the Carmel Assembly for worship service on the Sabbath.  
*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Yochanan Smith.  
*Key person(s) 1998:* Yochanan Smith.

**Leadership**  
The house group is led by Yochanan Smith. In 1971 he studied in Israel and met his future wife. They got married in the United States in 1973 and moved to Israel in 1974 and became part of the Peniel Fellowship in Tiberias (2-14). The leader comes from a Lutheran background; he considers the Peniel Fellowship his spiritual home and still attends the service there on the Sabbath and other family members are actively involved in the congregation.

**Membership**  
In 1999 the house group had 4 members that are not already members of another congregation. They are all from households where they are the only believer.

**Weekly meeting**

The focus of the group is to meet for Bible study and to provide an opportunity for prayer and worship. The group meets once a week on Sunday mornings in the home of the Israeli couple. The group has read through the New Testament continuously and are now reading through the Tanakh. The *language used* is Hebrew and Russian.

~~~~~

*Interview by telephone with Yochanan Smith, April 1999.*

2-10

**Morning Star Fellowship**

Tiberias

*Name:* קהילת כוכב השחר; Kehilat Kokhav haShachar; Morning Star Fellowship (Luke 1:78).

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Amutah.

*Meeting place:* In rented premises belonging to the Church of Scotland.

**History**

*Founded* in 1990. Before the congregation was established the leader and his wife were part of the Peniel Fellowship in Tiberias (2-14). However, in 1990 the leader received what he describes as a "call from the Lord" to start a new fellowship in Tiberias for Russian believers. Another person, who had helped with the translation into Russian in the Peniel Fellowship, joined them from the beginning.

*Harassment:* The congregation has not experienced any direct opposition. An article published in a local paper was informative rather than negative towards the congregation.

*Key persons at the time of foundation:* The present leader together with a Russian-speaking translator.

*Key persons 1998:* The present leader, who is the pastor, together with an elder.

**Theological character**

The congregation is open to the gifts of the Spirit and charismatic in its style of worship. The desire is to "continue in the footsteps of the first believers" and emphasis is given to teaching Jewish identity as expressed in the Scriptures, especially to the new immigrants. There is regular contact between the congregation and a group in France; the leaders from there are considered "apostles" for the congregation.

Celebrating the Jewish holidays is a way of giving expression to Jewish identity, but not all of them are celebrated systematically by the congregation

every year. When Chanuka is celebrated Jesus is the center of the feast. Many of the immigrants come from a tradition in which Christmas was celebrated and continue to observe the festival at home.

*A statement of faith* exists but members are not asked to subscribe or agree to it.

*Baptism:* Candidates receive 2-3 lessons prior to being baptized. Baptism takes place in the Sea of Galilee.

**Leadership**

The congregation is led by the founder and another elder appointed by the pastor and approved by the congregation.

The pastor, who is originally from Algeria and grew up in a traditional Sephardic Jewish community, immigrated to Israel from France in 1975. After a religious search through nearly all religions and cults he came to faith in 1985 after listening to the Voice of Hope radio program and requesting some of their material. For 3 years he attended a Bible study group led by a missionary couple. In 1989 the family moved from the kibbutz where he worked as a farmer and moved to Tiberias, where they now live. Since 1990 he has worked full time as the pastor of the congregation.

*Women* can serve as elders, but they can teach only under the authority of a man.

**Membership**

In 1998 the congregation had 45 adult members not including 15 children. The majority are Russians who have immigrated over the last 10 years.

*A membership list* exists. New members are included upon their request to become members. In theory members need to be baptized.

*Characteristics of adult members:*

|                                         |    |
|-----------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Jewish.....                          | 35 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew..... | 10 |

*Changes in membership since 1990:* The congregation grew quickly from 4 to 30 but there has been a lot of transition when people moved to find work. The congregation considers part of its work a seed-planting ministry. Immigration from Russia is the main source of new people. Up to half of those who have come as immigrants were believers when they came.

A few people have left the congregation; they came from a Russian Baptist background and did not agree with some of the teaching.

**Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday morning beginning at 11:00 am and lasting 2-3 hours.

*Attendance:* Average number is 50; in 1998 none of these were children. Each time between 5-10 people attend who are not yet members. Tourist groups are welcome but are asked to limit their number to less than 10 people at each service.

*Description of the service:* After the announcements there is a time of worship, then the teaching. The teaching is followed by an altar call followed by additional worship. The service ends with Communion and a time of testimony and worship. The teaching is topical and no preference is given to the Tanakh or NT texts.

The *language used* up front is Hebrew with translation into Russian, English, and French depending on the need. Earphones are used.

*Communion:* Every other Sabbath; it is introduced by a short teaching. Only those baptized can take part.

*Women* can lead worship, pray, and give testimony. They can also teach in the congregation under the authority of a man.

*Children's classes:* As of December 1998 there were no children's classes.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* 6 home groups in Tiberias, 3 of which are women's groups. There has been a home group in Hazer but it ceased meeting. There is a weekly youth meeting, a prayer meeting, and a weekly session using the material called "Cleansing Stream."

### Cooperation

The congregation is open to cooperation with other congregations but finds it hard to give priority to events organized on a national level. They have worked together with the Carmel Assembly (3-03). Together with others they have also been involved in helping new immigrants get settled.

### Finances

The congregation prefers not to have any details on finances published.

~~~~~

*Interview with the leader, 10 December 1998.*

*Other sources: Messianic Jew and Hebrew Christian 1/1989:5-7.*

2-11

## Nahariya House Group

Nahariya

*Name:* No official name.

*Category:* House group.

*Legal status:* Not an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In a private home.



History

*Founded* in 1990. The core members of the group are a family of 3 children and the grandmother. They are of Russian origin but the couple came to Israel as immigrants already when they were teenagers and the children were all born in the country. The couple came to faith in Nahariya in the mid-1980s; for a while they were part of the Nahariya Messianic Fellowship (2-12) and the leaders there were partly instrumental in leading them to faith. The theology of the group is Pentecostal; speaking in tongues is seen as expression of true faith and the group prefers not to be part of any fellowship that does not recognize this.

Membership

In 1999 the Nahariya house group had, according to our estimate, 8 members; this number does not include 2 children.

*Characteristics of adult members (our estimate):*

- 1. Jewish.....7
- 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....0
- 3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship .....0
- 4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship .....1

~~~~~

*Information* through a believer in Nahariya.

2-12

Nahariya Messianic Fellowship

Nahariya

*Name:* נהרייה המשיחית; הקהילה haKehilah haMeshichit Nahariya (Nahariya Messianic Fellowship).  
*Category:* Congregation.  
*Legal status:* Not an amutah.  
*Meeting place:* In private homes.

History

*Founded* in 1983 as a Hebrew-speaking group. In the early 1970s the leaders were part of a Bible study group in English led by a retired naval commander and his wife. Participating in the group were also two ladies, Elsie Churcher and Lily Wreshner. After a disagreement in the group over infant communion in 1976 the English-speaking group continued in 1977 with about 12 people. At its peak in 1983 there were about 30 people – mainly English-speaking expatriates living in the area. In 1983 a disagreement over the issue of salvation by deeds or by faith alone caused a split. Albert Nissim, the present leader, who strongly emphasized the latter, decided the group would meet only in Hebrew, which reduced the group to 5-6 adults.

*Harassment:* In 1974 posters were placed in the neighborhood and in 1984 newspaper articles were published with warnings against the leader and his wife. In 1975 Ruth Nissim was dismissed from her work in the local Kupat Cholim on grounds of being a missionary. Following protests from the staff she got her job back.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation and in 1998:* Albert Nissim and his wife Ruth.

### **Theological character**

Leans towards Reformed Theology (Westminster Confession of Faith) and is influenced by the Holiness Movement; none of the church holidays are celebrated.

No theological emphasis on Jewish tradition, however, the Jewish holidays are celebrated with an emphasis on their biblical content and Christological importance.

*A statement of faith* does not exist. The founding leader is influenced by Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones' teaching.

*Baptism:* Prior to baptism the candidate must have knowledge of salvific faith; if needed, instruction is provided. Baptism takes place by the Mediterranean or in the Jordan River.

### **Leadership**

The fellowship is led by the founder who considers himself an elder and his wife his closest assistant. At the moment there is no council of elders – although this is desired. The present elder has two years training at the Assemblies of God Bible College in Surrey, England.

*Women* cannot serve as elders; however, the present elder acknowledges, with appreciation the active role of his wife in the group.

### **Membership**

In 1998 about 10 people participated in the fellowship. This number does not include 4 children.

*A membership list* does not exist; the fellowship is open to anyone.

*Characteristics of adult members:*

1. Jewish..... 10

*Changes in membership over the last 5 years:* The majority of the members have come to faith within the last 5-6 years. Others have moved away from the area, so the number remains the same.

### **Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

Weekly meetings are held every Tuesday evening and every second Saturday morning. In style there is no significant difference between the two meetings although communion is normally celebrated on Saturday.

*Attendance:* Average number 8. The participants are between 22 and 66 years old.

*Description of the service:* Free and informal. The main emphasis is on prayer, Bible exposition, teaching, and doctrinal issues. The texts for the exposition are chosen by the elder and can be taken from both the Tanakh and the NT with no preference given to either one; for doctrinal issues there is an emphasis on teaching from the Pauline letters.

*The language used* is Hebrew.

*Communion:* Celebrated 3-4 times a year although it would be desirable to have it monthly. The elder decides when he finds it appropriate depending on the group's spiritual readiness. Communion is introduced by reading from the passage in 1 Corinthians 11 and one of the Gospel texts on the Last Supper. Communion is ministered by the elder to baptized persons only. Children may take communion only after baptism.

*Women* can lead women and children groups.

### **Cooperation**

Guest speakers are used but not often. The elder encourages the group to participate in nationally-organized events. The group consider the Bethesda Assembly, Haifa, (3-02) their closest spiritual family and consults them for advice when needed.

### **Finances**

Most of the expenses are covered by the elder and his wife. The majority of the members are unable to contribute. The elder, who now is on pension, worked in the import department of Haifa Chemicals until 1985. From 1985-1998 he was the manager of Quality Bookshop, Haifa, where he still works part-time.

~~~~~

*Interview with Albert Nissim, 7 October 1998.*

*Media: La'Ishah 26.10.83. Ma'ariv 21.02.79.*

## **2-13                      Nazareth Pentecostal Group                      Nazareth Illit**

*Name:* No official name.

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Not an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In rented premises.

### History

*Founded* in mid-1990s. The leader of the congregation immigrated to Israel from the former USSR in the early 1990s and moved to Nazareth Illit where he and his mother joined the congregation then led by R. Stutz (2-01). He had come to personal faith only a few years before coming to Israel through a Pentecostal Church in Russia to which his mother belonged. Together with other new immigrants he attended classes at the King of Kings Bible College in Haifa from 1992-1993.

The theology and the style of worship is similar to that of the Pentecostal church in Russia. All the members are new immigrants and the majority were believers before they came to Israel.

In 1999 the congregation had (according to our estimate) 12 members, not including 2 children.

*Characteristics of adult members (our estimate):*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Jewish.....                           | 7 |
| 2. Non Jewish but married to a Jew ..... | 5 |

~~~~~

*Information* through a believer in the area, May 1999.

2-14

## Peniel Fellowship

Tiberias

*Name:* פְּנִיֵּל הַפֶּלֶשׁ; Kehilat Peniel ("God's Face Congregation" – Genesis 32:31).

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Amutah.

*Meeting place:* In rented facilities belonging to the Galilee Experience.

### History

*Founded* in 1982. The congregation began as a house group in 1978. By the time the present congregation was officially founded 50 people – not counting children – were attending the group. In 1998 it was one of the largest congregations in the country.

This growth happened despite strong opposition from religious groups in Tiberias and from local authorities. In December 1983 the Hotel Nitzan in Tiberias was burned following demonstrations against the congregation and warnings to the owner of the hotel not to rent facilities to the congregation. This left the congregation homeless for a couple of years, during which it met outdoors in different places, including at times the facilities of an Arab congregation. From the mid-1980s until 1992 they met in the Poriya Youth

Hostel, just above Tiberias. Since then the congregation has met in the facilities owned by the Galilee Experience. The Galilee Experience runs a multi-media show for tourists which describes the 5000 year history of the Galilee. The Tiberias municipality first refused to grant a business license to Gal Group Industries Ltd., the owners of the Galilee Experience. Only following a ruling of the Israeli High Court in 1992 did the Tiberias municipality issue a license for the Galilee Experience to use the facilities and also to rent them out to the congregation.

The overlap of key persons in Galtronics with key persons in the Peniel Fellowship has led to several accusations against Galtronics for dismissing several employees because they were not believers nor wished to become so. The accusations were all dismissed and in 1991 Galtronics received the prestigious Kaplan Prize for productivity and efficiency.

*Harassment:* As indicated above, the congregation has suffered at the hands of the local authorities and violence from religious groups in Tiberias. This includes public demonstrations against the congregation, windows being smashed during the time of service, posters with warnings against the congregation, including the names and addresses of members, vandalism in the rented meeting place, and the slashing of tires of cars belonging to members.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Kenneth Crowell, Wendell Stern, and Daniel Yahav. Shaul Zuella and Reuven Berger were also instrumental.

*Key person(s) 1998:* Daniel Yahav and another elder.

### Theological character

Evangelical and not identifying with any specific denomination No strong emphasis is placed on being Messianic in the sense that adherence to the Law or the Jewish traditions are observed. Priority is given to the teaching of the Bible. The worship style is open to different charismatic expressions but the congregation as such is not charismatic. "To some people we are charismatic, for the charismatics we are not enough." All Jewish holidays are celebrated, at times on the eve of the holiday, at other times during the Sabbath service following the holiday; the emphasis is on the teaching of holidays rather than on applying rabbinic traditions to the celebration.

None of the church holidays are celebrated by the congregation but the message of Christmas is underlined in connection with the celebration of Chanuka. Individual members celebrate Christmas.

*A statement of faith* was written in 1993; however, in practice it is not used in the life of the congregation. The pastor does not disagree with the content but finds the form and the wording foreign. It is a 2½ page document with 17 paragraphs, all with a Scripture reference. In language and content the document is evangelical and reflects no emphasis on the Jewish or Israeli context. After the list of content follows the explanation introduced with: "We believe." The headlines are as follows:

1. Yeshua (Jesus) is Messiah of both Testaments: "We believe that Yeshua is the Jewish Messiah."
2. Israel is the chosen nation.
3. We are to be witnesses.
4. Inspiration of the Scriptures.
5. [One God]. We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit."
6. Deity and Humanity of Yeshua the Messiah: "We believe in the virgin birth of Yeshua our Lord, that He is true God and true man."
7. Blood Atonement.
8. Resurrection and Exaltation of Messiah.
9. Second coming of Messiah: "We believe in the personal and imminent coming of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah."
10. The Holy Spirit: "We believe in the personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit."
11. The Body of Messiah: "We believe that the true church is the invisible Body of Messiah, consisting of all who have been born again and baptized into this one body by the Holy Spirit."
12. Sin.
13. Salvation: "We believe that all who receive Yeshua the Messiah by a living faith are born again in the Holy Spirit ...".
14. Separation: "We believe ... that all saved persons are called into a life of separation from worldly and sinful practices."
15. Satan.
16. Heaven and Hell.
17. Baptism: "We believe in water baptism by immersion as a fulfillment of the Lord's commandment (Matthew 28,19)."

*Baptism:* Candidates receive 2-3 lessons of instruction prior to baptism. Baptism takes place in the Sea of Galilee or the Jordan River.

### **Leadership**

Peniel Fellowship is led by the pastor, Daniel Yahav, and another elder together with leaders or chairpersons of the different activities of the congregation. In 1998 about 40 people shared different responsibilities. Elders are appointed and brought to the congregation for their approval.

The pastor was an officer in the Israeli army before working for Galtronics, where he was the general manager between 1984-1992. He resigned from that position in order to become a full-time pastor. Prior to that he had served in the congregation alongside experienced elders, thus receiving his training. He came to faith in the mid-1970s when he was 15, through the work of the Ramat Gan Congregation (5-11).

*Women* cannot serve as elders. They can be active in other ways in the life of the congregation. Many of the chairpersons are women.

## Membership

In 1998 the Peniel Fellowship had 180 members. This number does not include about 100 children.

A *membership list* does not exist. Members are recognized by their regular participation in the activities of the congregation. Baptism is a requirement for membership.

### *Characteristics of adult members:*

- |                                                     |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Jewish.....                                      | 80 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....             | 15 |
| 3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship .....    | 45 |
| (8 of whom are Arabs/Palestinians)                  |    |
| 4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship ..... | 40 |

*Change in membership over the last 5 years:* There has been a steady increase in numbers but the character of the congregation has also changed. It has become more Israeli with more young Jewish families and fewer foreigners. Several new members have joined through evangelism; some have moved to the area from other parts of the country and some have immigrated, mainly from the former USSR.

In 1996 the congregation planted a new congregation in a city in northern Israel (2-05). About 20 adult members and 10 children – mainly Russians – moved over to the new congregation.

## Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities

A weekly service is held on Saturday morning which lasts 2-3 hours.

*Attendance:* Average number is 235, including about 70 children. Tourists often participate in the service.

*Description of the service:* It is non-liturgical; the first part of the service is used for worship (30 minutes) and prayer and announcements (30 minutes). Then follows the teaching (60 minutes), before the service is closed with a time of worship (30 minutes). From time to time the Shm'a is recited and the Aaronic blessing is recited at the close the service. The sermon is topical and Tanakh and NT texts are used equally.

The *language used* up front is Hebrew with simultaneous translation into Russian and English.

*Communion:* Celebrated once a month; no communion liturgy is used but reference is made to the passage on the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11. It is ministered to believers only.

*Women* can pray and teach children, but they cannot teach in the main service.

*Children's classes:* During the service 4 children's classes are held.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* 9 home groups meet weekly with an emphasis on teaching, prayer, and fellowship. There are weekly children's and youth meetings, a women's and men's meeting, and a prayer meeting for intercession. There are regular social activities like congregational picnics. The congregation also hosts a Seder at Pesach.

### Cooperation

The congregation cooperates with many of the other congregations in the Galilee and has given financial and spiritual support to some of the new congregations in the area. They also cooperate with some of the Arabic-speaking fellowships. Guest speakers are invited regularly.

The pastor serves on the Messianic Action Committee (MAC) and on the Kenes Artzi.

### Finances

The congregation is self supporting but does receive occasional gifts from abroad. The pastor receives his salary from the congregation. Money is donated to entities in Israel. On different occasions money has also been donated for work in Ethiopia and Russia.

~~~~~

*Interview with Daniel Yahav, 10 December 1998.*

*Other sources:* Israel Update November 1989; January 1990; November 1990; August 1991; November 1991.

*Media:* Ha'Aretz 26.12.83; 29.12.83; 17.04.91; 16.06.91; 24.07.91. Jerusalem Post 27.12.83. Ma'ariv 05.12.83; 06.12.83; 18.12.83. Yediot Acharonot 15.04.91. Yom Hashishi 07.09.91; 16.05.97.

2-15

## Rivers of Living Water

Carmiel

*Name:* קהילת נחלי מים חיים; Kehilat Nachalei Mayim Chaim ("Rivers of Living Water, Israel, Congregation").

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Amutah.

*Meeting place:* In a rented house where the pastor lives upstairs; the downstairs floor is used by the congregation.

### History

*Founded* in January 1995. The Friedmans immigrated to Israel in 1993 and came with the intention of starting a branch of Rivers of Living Water International in Israel, an organization they had been familiar with in Russia prior to coming to Israel. Before establishing their own congregation they attended haDerekh



(2-06) but left that congregation in 1995 in obedience to what they saw as “a call from God.

*Harassment:* Neighbors have interrupted their service as a way of protesting the activities of the congregation and the windows of the house were broken. However, as of December 1998 the relationship between the congregation and the neighborhood was good.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation and in 1998:* Seva and Irene Friedman.

**Theological character**

Expressively charismatic with an emphasis on the full use of all the gifts of the Spirit. The leaders set themselves apart from what they call the “wild” charismatics but stress that they have seen “God use the Toronto movement.” Salvation is for all through the Messiah of Israel. Both the Jewish holidays and the church holidays are seen as an opportunity for outreach in the community and fellowship in the congregation. The holidays are used to teach the biblical message related to the holidays.

*A statement of faith* does not yet exist.

*Baptism:* There is no formal instruction prior to baptism but the pastors meet with the candidate a couple of times before baptism takes place. The preferred site is the Jordan River.

**Leadership**

Rivers of Living Water is led by Seva and Irene Friedman. They are both called pastors. The leadership team is made up of them, the treasurer, and one more person.

Irene Friedman is trained as a high school teacher in English and history. Seva Friedman is an engineer. Since they came to Israel he has worked as a driver. Neither of them has any formal theological training nor did they have any leadership experience prior to coming to Israel.

*Women* can serve in all capacities in the congregation.

**Membership**

In 1998 the congregation had 10 members, not including 7 children.

*A membership list* does not exist. Those who are actively involved in the congregation are recognized as members. Baptism is a requirement for membership.

*Characteristics of adult members:*

1. Jewish.....	7
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....	3

*Changes in membership since 1994:* The congregation began with 4 people in

1995. During 1996-97 the group increased to more than 30 people. Some never made a commitment and dropped out. Others left because of disagreements. Almost all are Russian speaking and the majority have come to faith in Israel through the work of the congregation.

### **Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday morning from 10:00 am – 1:30 pm.

*Attendance:* Average number about 40; of these about 15 are children, about 15 are non-members.

*Description of the service:* It is non-liturgical and is opened with 30-40 minutes prayer and worship. The teaching then follows and after that there is a time of ministering to the needs of the people. There is no fixed way for how the service should be conducted; there is no fixed time for when the sermon is given nor for when the service ends.

*The language used* is Russian with translation into Hebrew almost every time. If there is a guest speaker the sermon can be in English.

*Communion* is shared every week. There is no liturgy nor are any scripture passages read regularly. It is ministered to believers, including children who have made a commitment of faith.

*The role of women:* No distinction is made between what men and women can do in the service.

*Children's classes:* During the service a children's class is held in Russian.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* There is a Bible study on Tuesday and worship practice on Friday together with a children's program followed by a prayer meeting.

### **Cooperation**

About once a month the congregation leaders meets with leaders of other Russian-speaking congregations in the area. They also have contact with Hebrew-speaking fellowships in the area. Guest speakers from other Russian-speaking fellowships are invited as well as speakers from outside the country. They are closely associated with Living Stones Fellowship in Kiryat Shmona (2-08)

### **Finances**

Tithing is encouraged among the members. The Friedmans are not employed by Rivers of Living Water, International, but receive spiritual support through the organization. Seva Friedman holds a secular job, which supports the family. They do receive gifts from abroad for the work of the congregation.

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*Interview with Seva and Irene Friedman, 11 December 1998.*

2-16

## Ruach Hachaim

Nazareth Illit

*Name:* קהילת רוח החיים; Kehilat Ruach haChaim ("The Spirit of Life Congregation" – Ezekiel 37).

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Amutah.

*Meeting place:* In rented facilities.

### History

*Founded* in 1994. Together with another family the present leader and his wife tried to establish a congregation in Haifa in 1993. Before that they were part of the congregation in Haifa led by the leader's father-in-law, Andrei Miller (3-10). In 1994 the two families moved to Nazareth Illit with the purpose of establishing a congregation there. The group met in private homes until 1997, when it moved to the present rented facilities.

*Harassment:* The congregation has experienced very little harassment. A local Hebrew-language paper has twice published articles about the congregation, the first negative and with a lot of misinformation. When the pastor complained to the editor another article, this time informative and objective, was published in the same newspaper.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Elvira and Sergei Bocharnikov and another couple.

*Key person(s) 1999:* Elvira and Sergei Bocharnikov.

### Theological character

Pentecostal, with a charismatic style of worship. The leader was part of a Pentecostal church in Russia. Before leaving Russia he was influenced by the charismatic movement and although he has not changed his theology he has "become more open to the expression of the work of the Spirit in the worship service."

The Jewish holidays are used as an opportunity to come together as a congregation. The holidays are seen as having their fulfillment in the Messiah and are not celebrated by using any traditional Jewish elements. The church holidays are celebrated similarly to the way in which in the leader was accustomed in Russia.

*A statement of faith* does not exist.

*Baptism:* Candidates do not receive any formal instruction prior to baptism. The preferred site for baptism is the Jordan River.

## Leadership

The congregation is led by the pastor, who is also one of the founders. Together with the pastor the 3 leaders of the home groups make up the leadership team. The home group leaders are appointed by the pastor.

The pastor grew up in a believing family and has leadership experience from when he was a member of a Pentecostal church in Siberia before immigrating to Israel. He attended classes at the King of Kings Bible College for two years from 1992-93. Apart from pastoring the congregation he also holds a secular job.

*Women* can serve as elders; in 1999 all the home group leaders were women.

## Membership

In 1999 the congregation had 35 members. This number does not include 21 children. The majority are Russian Jews who have immigrated over the last 10 years.

A *membership list* does not exist. To be considered a member a person should be baptized.

*Characteristics of adult members:*

- |                                         |    |
|-----------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Jewish.....                          | 31 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew..... | 4  |

*Changes in membership since 1994:* The congregation began with only 4 members. The pastor estimates that half of the new members were believers before immigrating to Israel. The other half has come to faith through the work of the congregation. Five people have left the congregation, all for different reasons none of which were theological.

## Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities

A weekly service is held on Saturday morning beginning at 10:15 am and lasting until 2:00-3:00 pm.

*Attendance:* Average number is 55, not including 20 children.

*Description of the service:* From 10:15-10:45 there is a prayer meeting and at 11:00 the regular service begins. It is opened with a time of praise and worship using both Hebrew and Russian songs. The sermon lasts about 60 minutes and is topical; no preference is given to the Tanakh or NT texts. After the sermon there is a time of prayer.

The *language used* is Russian except for some songs in Hebrew.

*Communion:* Celebrated once a month; no liturgy is used but often the passage on the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11 is referred to.

*Women* can take part in all activities of the service.

*Children's classes:* 2 children's classes are held during the service. The desire is to have more but the facilities will not permit it.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* 3 home groups meet at different times during the week. The time and the program depend on the home

group leader. On Tuesdays there is a Bible study for the whole congregation.

### **Cooperation**

The congregation has worked together with other Russian-speaking congregations in the area. The leader has participated in both national and local leadership events. About once a month a guest speaker from another local congregation is invited.

### **Finances**

Members are encouraged to tithe and the congregation does not receive any regular support from abroad. The congregation does not pay any salaries. The main expense is the monthly rent for the meeting place.

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*Interview with Elvira and Sergei Bocharnikov, 21 January 1999.*

## District 3: Haifa

3-01

### Beit Eliahu

Central Haifa

*Name:* áéú àèää, ÷äélä îùécéú; Beit Eliahu – Kehilah Meshichit; Beit Eliahu – Messianic Congregation.

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Amutah.

*Meeting place:* In church premises owned by the Norwegian Church Ministry to Israel (NCMI).

#### History

*Founded* in the early 1950s. The Norwegian pastor Magne Solheim, who together with his wife Cilgia served in Romania prior to and during the Second World War, was expelled from Romania in 1947. In 1949 Magne Solheim arrived in Israel, sent by NCMI, and from 1950 to 1976 he and his wife lived in Haifa. He preached in several of the already-existing congregations and the Anglican pastor Ronald Adeney encouraged him to gather Jewish believers of Romanian origin in the English church, St. Luke, in Haifa. They met every Saturday. The service was conducted in German and Romanian. From 1960 Solheim began to hold services in Hebrew every second Saturday prior to the regular services. In 1970 the new Beit Eliahu Church was dedicated and in 1976 the Ebenezer Home opened on the same compound.

Solheim's successor in 1976, Ole Chr M. Kvarme, a Norwegian, held his first services in German with translation to Romanian. He was persuaded by Solheim to change the language of the regular service, rather than having a Hebrew service prior to it. Even though the Romanian-speaking participants objected to this change it was implemented and those needing translation into Romanian or German were provided with earphones.

In the mid-1980s the Evangelism Explosion (EE) program was initiated in Israel through the Norwegian evangelist H. Kleppe. In 1992 the congregation became independent of NCMI; however NCMI remained its main financial supporter. Up until 1997 all the pastors and the majority of other employees have been Norwegian workers. In 1997 the congregation called its first local pastor, an Israeli-born Arab who grew up in the congregation.

*Harassment:* From time to time swastikas and other graffiti have been painted on the buildings.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Magne Solheim.

*Key person(s) 1998:* Samuel Awaida and Shlomo Drori.

### Theological character

Evangelical Lutheran by constitution; of the church holidays, Easter and Christmas are celebrated with participation from other local congregations in the area. No strong theological emphasis on Jewish tradition exists but the Jewish holidays are celebrated in a way that reflects Israeli culture. Up until the beginning of the 1990s the congregation was called the "Elias Church" (Knesiat Eliahu Hanavi) but since then the congregation has called itself "Beit Eliahu - Messianic Congregation" ... an indication of the move towards becoming a local congregation.

A *constitution* exists. It is a 5-page document with 10 articles reflecting classical Lutheran expression and theology. Under the heading "Commission" it reads: "The congregation is a community of believers in the Messiah Yeshua in Haifa and its vicinity, where the Gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the Gospel and Christian life and ministry is realized." The Constitution contains a short *statement of faith* ("Doctrine and Teaching") which reads: "The Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testament are the final revelation of the One God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit and the true guide for faith, doctrine and life. The congregation confesses its faith through the Ecumenical Church Creeds and the confessional books of the Lutheran reformation as the true understanding and interpretation of the Holy Scripture. The decisions made in the meetings of the Leadership team, congregation meetings, contrary to the Scripture or the doctrine of the congregation of this Constitution, have no validity."

*Baptism* (infant and adult baptism) should be exercised by the pastor or by one of the elders. The ceremony is performed by immersion in the church's baptistery or in any body of water. Persons "over the majority age" may be baptized: a) if they show interest in seeking Christian knowledge and fellowship [and] b) if they confess their faith in Jesus as Savior and Messiah and prove to have Christian knowledge." "Children ... below majority age may be baptized if one of the parents is a member of a Christian congregation and declares his/her wish to let the child be baptized and educated in the Christian faith and there is no objection on the part of the other parent." Adult baptism is preceded by formal instruction of some months depending on the individual. Baptism takes place in the baptistery of the church. Some have preferred the Jordan River or the Mediterranean.

### Leadership

The congregation's leadership team is, in line with the constitution, composed of a pastor and at least one elder and 4 deacons. This scheme was started in February 1992. Elders are elected by a congregational meeting that is held at least once a year; the elders serve for four years and can be reelected. The pastor is called by the congregation meeting after being presented and recommended by the leadership team.

Samuel Awaida, the present pastor, has 3 years of theological training at the seminary of the Lutheran Free Church, Norway, 1989-1992, following which he served as a pastor in Norway for 5 years. He is the first Israeli-born Arab to serve as pastor of a Messianic congregation in Israel.

*Women* can be on the leadership team but cannot serve as elders.

### Membership

In 1998 the congregation had 85 members. This number does not include 20 children. Some 15 of the about 30 residents of the Ebenezer Home are members of the congregation.

A *membership list* exists; according to the constitution a person needs to be baptized, have Christian knowledge, frequent the services of the congregation, submit to the discipline of the leadership, and share in the spiritual and financial burden of the congregation in order to be considered a member.

#### *Characteristics of adult members:*

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| 1. Jewish.....                                      | 50 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....             | 5  |
| 3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship .....    | 20 |
| (of whom one is an Arab)                            |    |
| 4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship ..... | 10 |

*Changes in membership since 1992:* In 1991-92 the congregation experienced a split when about 15 people broke away to join a more charismatic congregation in the area, the Carmel Assembly (3-03). New members have joined through evangelism; about 20 immigrants from the former USSR have come to the congregation and 2 from the USA. The group of expatriates has diminished significantly in recent years.

### Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities

A weekly service is held on Saturday morning from 11:00 am-1:30 pm. There is a prayer meeting at 10 am.

*Attendance:* Average number 110. Of these 20 are children; 5-40 are non-members; 5-10 are tourists/short term visitors.

*Description of the service:* A liturgy for the Sabbath service exists but not all elements are necessarily included in each service. The main elements are similar



to those of a Lutheran liturgy with confessions of sins, confession of faith (the Apostles' Creed), Scripture readings, and Communion (with the words of the institution of the Communion and also the Lord's Prayer), but the liturgy is contextualized to a Jewish context; parts of some Psalms are included and are sung by the congregation (with the introduction, Psalm 100:2-4; 139:23-24; with confession of sins, Psalm 139:23-24; with prayer, Psalm 42:1-2). The Scripture readings are introduced with the Shm'a-like proclamation: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, Father, Son and Holy Spirit." The reading cycle of the Norwegian Lutheran Church has been used (with texts from the Tanakh, Gospels, and Epistles). The text for the sermon can be taken from anywhere in the Bible, with preference given to the Gospels.

The *language used* up front is Hebrew with simultaneous translation into English, Russian, and Romanian.

*Communion:* Celebrated every second Saturday; communion liturgy is used. Baptism and faith are a requirement for communion; people who are not baptized may be refused. Children may take communion by the decision of their parents.

*Women:* It is unusual that they read the Scripture in the service; they do not take part in distribution of bread and wine during communion; they can teach children and other women and lead Bible study/home groups.

*Children's classes:* During the service 3 children's classes are held.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* An early morning prayer meeting every day except Saturday, when it is right before the service; every second week four groups meet in private homes for Bible study and every second week there is a congregational Bible study on the church's premises; a weekly Romanian Bible-study group; a weekly youth group.

*Evangelistic outreach:* Members of the congregation regularly distribute evangelistic literature in the neighborhood and the congregation is active in evangelistic campaigns organized in the area.

## Cooperation

The historic relationship between the two other congregations founded by Lutheran mission organizations is still expressed in annual visits (1-15 and 5-08). The pastor meets regularly with other congregational leaders from the Haifa area. Fellowship with other congregations – also Arabic-speaking – is expressed in mutual visits. Together with other Protestant groups the congregation is involved in a newly-established amutah for a cemetery in Haifa. Participation in nationally-organized events is encouraged.

## Finances

Income for the year 1997 was divided in the following way: Donations in Israel represented 33 percent. Donations from abroad made up 63 percent and were received from NCMI, Norway, Evangliumsdienst für Israel (EDI), Germany,

and the Swedish Israel Mission (SIM). The remaining 4 percent was bank interest.

The amutah pays for the pastor and a secretary. A deacon is paid directly by the Finnish Evangelical Mission (FELM). Rent of facilities does not reflect the actual marked price.

The congregation supports two children in Manila and money is donated to Ebenezer Home, Haifa.

### The premises

In 1998 the premises of the church were used also by the following groups: An Arab Baptist congregation for service every Sunday evening due to lack of space in their own building; a Russian house group associated with Beit Elion, Jaffa (5-02); an Ethiopian group also meet in the premises during the week (5-06). At the beginning of 1999 the Full Gospel Messianic Center also used the facilities for their service on Saturday (3-05).

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*Interview with Samuel Awaida, 9 October, 1998.*

*Other sources:* Baumann 1984:92-94; Solheim 1986; Oesterbye 1970:187-188; *Israel Update* November 1989; March 1992.

*Media:* *Hamodi'a* 30.08.84. *Kol Bo (Haifa)* 15.06.90. *Kol Haifa (Yediot Acharonot Supplement)* 24.01.97.

3-02

## Bethesda Assembly

Central Haifa

*Name:* בית חסדא, קהילה משיחית; Bethesda Messianic Assembly.

*Category:* Congregation.

*Status:* Amutah.

*Meeting place:* In a building belonging to the congregation.

### History

The history of the congregation dates back to the beginning of the late 1920s, which makes it one of the oldest congregations in the country. Over the years the congregation has kept its identity in many ways in practice as well as in theology.

During a visit to Palestine in 1926, J.W. Clapham from New Zealand had a vision to start a congregation in Haifa. He contacted A. Engelhardt, who shortly before had come to faith and together they rented an old mill, which they turned into the Gospel Hall Bethesda. During the time of the British Mandate some of the elders were British people serving in Palestine together with Engelhardt and J. Mattat, an Arab. Similar Brethren congregations were formed in Jerusalem and in Jaffa, the latter under the leadership of Solomon Ostrovsky

(5-09). In Nazareth, Kfar Yassif (near Akko) and in Lod Arab Brethren congregations were also formed.

One of the prominent figures in the Bethesda Assembly was Vladimir Marcinkowski. He was born in the Ukraine in 1884 and came to faith in 1904. In 1913 he dedicated his life to work among students and taught at a Russian University. After the revolution in 1917 he was imprisoned several times. In 1923 he was exiled to Prague in Czechoslovakia, and from there he traveled to speak in both universities and churches throughout Europe. In 1930 he came to Palestine and in 1932 married Nelly Schumacher, a deaconess whose family belonged to the Templars in Haifa. In 1948 they received Israeli citizenship. They made the Bethesda Assembly their spiritual home and, according to Nelly Marcinkowski-Schumacher, Vladimir Marcinkowski served as one of the elders until he died in 1971.

In the spring of 1976 the renovated hall was rededicated after the congregation had used other facilities for five years because of the poor conditions of the building and permission to renovate was delayed by the authorities. Through the years the congregation has served as a spiritual home for people from many nations who lived in the Haifa area. Consequently translation of the sermon into English has been provided.

In 1988 a member of the congregation was encouraged to move to Carmiel in order to provide leadership for a home group of the congregation there (2-06). In 1990 the Assembly was engaged in absorbing new immigrants, particularly from the former USSR. According to *Israel Update* (March 1992), the language in the services "continues to pose a problem. Sermons are in Hebrew, with translation provided from the pulpit, making services cumbersome and providing little incentive to learn Hebrew." From the beginning of the 1980s to the present time evangelistic activities have been undertaken together with teams from Operation Mobilization (OM). The book shop Quality Books is operated with support from the congregation.

*Key person(s) in 1999:* Brian (Baruch) Pokroy, John Zeidan, and Hanan Lukatz.

### Theological character

The Bethesda Assembly is influenced by the movement of the Plymouth Brethren. Members like Nelly and Vladimir Marcinkowski described themselves as "Open Brethren," a later division of the Plymouth Brethren in which some wanted to be less closed towards other congregations than Nelson Darby who had started the Plymouth Brethren in 1829 had originally been. The Plymouth Brethren emphasize personal belief in Jesus and the weekly celebration of the Communion. The expectation of the return of Jesus is prominent. In his writing Darby developed his eschatological thinking which became the spiritual basis of Dispensationalism.

Jewish feasts are noted and often become the subject of the sermon. The

congregation does not meet on the eve of the holiday. Christmas is not celebrated by the congregation.

*A statement of faith* does not exist. The Brethren do not have an official creed. The Bible provides direction for both life and creed.

*Baptism*: A person can be baptized when he or she expresses personal faith in Jesus. There is no formal preparation.

### Leadership

In accordance with Brethren theology in which the priesthood of all believers is stressed, no single person is recognized as the leader of the congregation; rather the 3 elders together make up the leadership team.

In 1999 there were 3 elders. Brian Pokroy is responsible for a small clinic run by the congregation in facilities next to the meeting hall and is responsible for the medical care of the residents of the Ebenezer Home. Hanan Lukatz is a native Israeli and works as an engineer. He came to faith in the 1980s while living in Denmark.

### Membership

In 1999 the congregation, according to our estimate, had 70 members. This number does not include 20 children.

*A membership list* does not exist. Members are recognized by active and long time participation in the congregation.

#### *Characteristics of adult members (our estimate):*

|                                                    |    |
|----------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Jewish.....                                     | 30 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....            | 25 |
| 3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship .....   | 10 |
| 4 Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship ..... | 5  |

*Changes in membership since 1982*: In 1982 one of the veteran believers in the Assembly, Yitzhak (Senya) Rasilov in an interview in *Kol Haifa* (a supplement of *Yediot Acharonot* said that "... the congregation numbered some 30, most of them Jewish believers" (12.02.90). In 1989 Baruch Maoz wrote: "Attendance is around 120, of whom some 40 are Jewish." In 1990 *Kol Haifa* (06.07.90) described a Bible study on a Wednesday evening with some 50 believers, "including many Russians." Since the beginning of the 1990s the growth has come mainly from new immigrants from the former USSR. A characteristic of the members of the congregation is their faithfulness towards their community.

### Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities

A weekly service is held on Saturday afternoon from 5:00-7:00 pm.

*Attendance*: Average number, according to our estimate, is 100. Of these 20 are children; 20 are visitors, many of whom attend regularly.

*Description of the service:* The service begins with Communion from 4:00-4:45; the regular worship service then begins at 5:00. The worship is opened with prayer and a time of singing followed by the sermon which more often than not is expository; it lasts about 60 minutes.

The *language used* is Hebrew with translation into English and Russian.

*Communion:* According to the tradition of the Plymouth Brethren Communion is shared every week.

*Women* cannot serve as elders.

*Children's classes:* During the service children's classes are provided.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* Bible study is not done in home groups but for the whole congregation on Wednesday in the facilities of the congregation.

### Cooperation

One of the congregation's members serves on the board of the National Evangelism Committee and members participate in the evangelistic outreach in the area. The elders participate in the meetings of the national fellowship of the leaders of the Israeli Messianic congregations (Kenes Artzi).

### Finances

No information. The elders all hold secular jobs and are not paid by the congregation.

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*Interview* has not been granted.

*Other sources:* *Israel Update* November 1988; November 1990; November 1991; March 1992; Marcinkowski 1978; *UCCI News* 3/1971:18.

*Media:* *Hatzofeh* 18.07.90. *Kol Haifa* 12.02.1982; 06.07. *Rechov Rosh* (Haifa) 30.09.1983.

3-03

## Carmel Assembly

Mount Carmel

*Name:* קהילת הכרמל; Kehilat haCarmel; Carmel Assembly.

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Amutah.

*Meeting place:* In premises belonging to the congregation.

### History

*Founded* in 1991. The congregation grew out of a Bible study group which first met in the home of the present senior pastor in 1990. Soon afterwards, the congregation moved to the present location, where the weekly Saturday service

was held in the facilities belonging to the Israel Trust of the Anglican Church (ITAC). The congregation quickly increased and outgrew the facilities and in 1994 received the rights to the piece of land where the new building (dedicated in 1998) was erected. In 1995 one of the leaders and ten families were sent out to plant a congregation mainly for new immigrants from the former USSR (see 3-11).

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* David Davis.

*Key person(s) 1998:* David Davis, Peter Tsukahira, and Reuven Ross.

### Theological character

Evangelical and charismatic. The vision of the congregation "is for the 'one new man' of Ephesians 2." There is a strong emphasis on praise, proclamation and prayer in declaring the victory of Yeshua over the powers of darkness. The congregation seeks to be relevant to Israeli society but not at the expense of giving expression to the unity between Jews and Arabs in the Messiah. The work of reconciliation is an important focus for the congregation.

None of the church holidays are celebrated, rather the congregation follows the Jewish calendar and celebrates the biblical Jewish holidays. The congregation describes itself as being "Messiah-centered" rather than "Torah-centered."

Around the altar of the new circular worship hall there are 12 stones symbolizing the 12 tribes of Israel; the 10 pillars represent the moral law, the covenant between God and his people. The skylight is the open heaven, God's grace. Together these symbols contain the elements of the cross and communicate the significance of what happened on the cross.

*A statement of faith* does not exist.

*Baptism:* Prior to baptism candidates receive instruction. The preferred site for baptism is the Mediterranean Sea.

### Leadership

The Carmel Assembly is led by the senior pastor together with two other pastors. There are also 4 deacons, two of whom are women.

The senior pastor and his wife lived in Jerusalem for a year in 1989. In 1990 they officially immigrated and moved to Haifa to begin a social service ministry to down and out people. He is ordained with World Challenge International Ministers Fellowship, founded by David Wilkerson.

One of the other pastors is also ordained with World Challenge and helped pastor a church in Japan for 6 years before immigrating to Israel in 1987 together with his wife, who is Jewish.

Another pastor was involved in the work of King of Kings Assembly, Jerusalem (8-03), before moving to Haifa.

*Women* serve as deaconesses. A pastor's wife oversees women ministries. The music ministry is also led by a woman.

## Membership

In 1999 the Carmel Assembly had approximately 160 members, not including 40 children.

A *membership list* does not exist. Baptism is not a requirement for membership.

### *Characteristics of adult members:*

1. Jewish..... 60
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew ..... 35
3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship ..... 10
4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship ..... 55

*Changes in membership since 1991:* At the time of foundation there were about 20 people, most of whom were members of the Bible study led by the founder. New members have joined through evangelism and immigration. Four families have come from other congregations in the area; some have moved from other parts of the country and joined the congregation.

Together with an elder in the congregation some were sent out from the congregation in order to form a new congregation (see 3-11).

## Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities

A weekly service is held on Saturdays.

*Attendance:* Average number 275; of these 50 are children and 100 visitors/tourists.

*Description of the service:* The service begins with 45-60 minutes of worship in Hebrew and English, with some Arabic and Russian, and sharing of the gifts of the Spirit. Most of the songs used are written by members of the congregation. Then follows the sermon (60 minutes); it is often based on texts from the Tanakh. After the sermon there is an altar call and altar ministry with prayer for those who request it.

The *language used* for the sermon is usually English with translation into Hebrew and Russian.

*Communion:* Celebrated twice a month in the congregation, but is also shared in home groups. Those participating are asked to examine themselves before taking part. It is stressed that communion is for believers only.

*Women* can pray, read, and lead worship.

*Children's classes:* Following the time of worship there are 6 children's classes. Once a month the youth also have a class after the worship time.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* There are 6 home groups, 3 conducted in English, the other in Hebrew/Russian or Hebrew/English. Discipleship groups meet once a week and there are two women's Bible studies, one in Hebrew and one in English. There are regular women's meetings, singles

meetings (6 times a year), men's meetings, and different conferences both international and national. The congregation hosts an annual three-day Passover conference. There is a 24 hour Watchman prayer ministry. There is also a feeding-of-the-needy program.

### Cooperation

The congregation cooperates extensively with other congregations and entities, both locally and nationally. David Davis has organized the prayer network for the Galilee area for leaders and pastors from both Hebrew and Arab congregations. The prayer focus is for revival in the area. Guest speakers from other local congregations are used but not often.

### Finances

The congregation teaches that tithing is also part of the new covenant. The pastors receive a stipend from the congregation, but are also supported from abroad. Since the congregation moved into its new facilities in 1998, 2 persons working as office staff have been paid by the congregation.

The congregation supports Pro-Life and the rehabilitation center, House of Victory. The congregation sends support to five workers in the nations.

~~~~~

*Interview by telephone with David Davis, 28 January 1999.*

*Other sources: Davis 1997; Shalom Magazine 1/1999:5.*

*Media: Yom leYom 27.10.95.*

## 3-04      **First Russian Baptist Church**      Central Haifa

*Name:* First Russian Baptist Church in Haifa.

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Not an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In the Baptist Center belonging to the Baptist Convention in Israel.

### History

*Founded* in 1990. The work began at the time when many immigrants arrived from the former USSR. The Arab Baptist church in Haifa is located in an area into which many of the new immigrants moved. Edward Souti, who used to be the pastor of the Arabic-speaking Baptist Church, began work among them together with Ivan Gatrach, one of the immigrants, who had pastored a Russian Baptist congregation before immigrating to Israel. In 1993 Ivan Gatrach moved to Canada and his son took over after him.

Shortly after that, in 1992, the group split into two, one segment led by J. G. (3-12) and one by Edward Souti. The split was due to personal rather than



theological disagreement. Both groups still meet in the Baptist Center, but at different times.

After the division the group led by Edward Souti consisted of 30 people. Even after many of them moved to other places in the area they continued to travel to Haifa for the service. In recent years the pastor has encouraged members to become part of a fellowship in the area in which they now live and the congregation no longer pays for transportation. This has meant that the number has gone from 30 in 1993 to 11 in 1999.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Edward Souti and Ivan Gatrach.

*Key person(s) 1999:* Edward Souti.

**Leadership**

The pastor, who is an Arab, was previously employed by the Baptist Convention in Israel as a local pastor for the Arabic-speaking Baptist congregation in Haifa. He is also involved in outreach to other language groups in the city, among them foreign workers from the Philippines.

**Membership**

In 1999 the Russian Baptist congregation had 11 members. This number does not include 2 children.

*Characteristics of adult members:*

- 1. Jewish.....7
- 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....4

**Weekly service**

The congregation meets on Sunday evening at 6:00 pm. The service, which lasts about 90 minutes, is conducted in Hebrew, which is the language most common to both the pastor and the members. Translation into Russian is provided and the translator is a Russian English teacher who was baptized in the congregation. The style of worship seeks to accommodate Russian Baptist liturgy. The theological profile of the congregation is also Baptist. Church holidays are celebrated.

**Finances**

The congregation pays a small rent for the use of the facilities. The pastor does not receive any pay from the congregation.

~~~~~

*Interview by telephone with Edward Souti, 14 January1999.*

*Media: Yediot Acharonot 22.02.82.*

3-05

## Full Gospel Messianic Center Central Haifa

*Name:* קהילת מיים חיים; Kehilat Mayim Chaim; Full Gospel Messianic Center.

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Amutah, under the Assemblies of God, Holy Land.

*Meeting place:* For the weekly service on the Sabbath, in premises belonging to the Norwegian Church Ministry to Israel (NCMI; see 3-01) for other activities during the week, in premises belonging to the Assemblies of God, Holy Land.

### History

*Founded* in April 1994. After having started and also led a congregation in Akko from 1991-1993 (2-02) Yuri Kalmikov left Israel for Canada in the summer of 1993 with the intention of settling down there. But in March 1994 he returned to Israel following what he saw as the Lord's calling. Encouraged by leaders from the Assemblies of God, Holy Land, he began a new congregation in Akko. It was important to him that the congregation be independent and not under any foreign organization.

In 1995 the congregation moved its meetings to Haifa. In February 1999 the congregation moved from the premises of the Assemblies of God, Holy Land, to larger facilities belonging to NCMI.

*Harassment:* The congregation has not experienced any difficulties but the pastor has once been questioned by the police and accused of giving out evangelistic literature to minors shortly after he arrived in Israel in 1990.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Yuri Kalmikov.

*Key person(s) 1998:* Yuri and Violetta Kalmikov and his wife.

### Theological character

Charismatic, with a desire to see all the gifts of the Spirit in use in the congregation, including healing and driving out evil spirits. The leader wants to be sensitive to the Israeli calendar and Jewish holidays but sees no need to teach and introduce Jewish traditions. Most of the members are not familiar with the Jewish holidays; Pesach is celebrated together with Easter. Christmas is celebrated and individual members continue the traditions they practiced in the former USSR, including putting up a Christmas tree.

*A statement of faith* exists. It is similar to that of the Assemblies of God, but with a few changes.

*Baptism* takes place when a person expresses faith in Jesus and is born again. The preferred place for baptism is the Jordan River or the Sea of Galilee.

### Leadership

The Full Gospel Messianic Center is led by the pastor together with his wife. A leadership group is made up of about 10 people chosen by the pastor and based on their active involvement in the congregation. The pastor came to faith

through a Russian Baptist church in 1973. His wife has been a believer since 1976. He has held many different jobs, such as truck driver, painter, photographer, and others and has all the time been very involved in evangelism and church planting. He is not Jewish but in 1988 he received permission to leave Russia for the USA as part of an agreement worked out between the two governments at that time. When he was ready to leave in 1990 the conditions had changed and his only possibility was to go to Israel. Here he has received citizenship.

Between 1990-93 he attended the Bible School of the Assemblies of God, Holy Land, in Haifa.

*Women* can serve in all capacities in the congregation. Violetta Kalmikov is the assistant pastor.

**Membership**

In 1999 the Full Gospel Messianic Center had 80 members. This number does not include 20 children.

A *membership list* does not exist at the moment but the leader intends to create one. To be recognized as a member a person would have to be baptized and be 16 or over.

*Characteristics of adult members:*

- 1. Jewish..... 55
- 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew..... 25

*Changes in membership over the last 5 years:* When the work began in 1994 there were 10 people. It is estimated that 60 percent of the new members have come to faith while in Israel. The others are mostly Russian immigrants who were believers before they came to Israel. Several people have come from the Russian Pentecostal congregation in Akko (2-02). In 1998, 8 people were asked to leave after they objected to the driving out of evil spirits.

**Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday evening from 5:00-9:00 pm.

*Attendance:* Average number about 100. Of these 20 are children.

*Description of the service:* The leaders meet for prayer before the service, which is then opened with a short devotion; then follows a time of prayer for the whole congregation. Then there is a time of singing led by the youth group, after which an offering is taken. The preaching and a time of testimonies takes about 60 minutes. From time to time the Lord’s Prayer is used at the end of the service.

The *language used* is Russian; translation into English is provided when needed.

*Communion:* Celebrated once a month; no special liturgy is used. Baptism is a

requirement and if children are baptized they can take part.

*The role of women:* No distinction is made between what men and women can do in the service.

*Children's classes:* During the service 2 children's classes are held.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* The pastor leads a Bible study group in Nahariya Monday, in Carmiel Tuesday, and in Haifa Wednesday. Home groups meet weekly in Carmiel, where there are two, Kiryat Motskin, Nahariya, and in Akko. Friday evening there is a youth meeting led by the assistant pastor.

### Cooperation

The congregation has worked together with mainly other Russian-speaking groups in the area.

### Finances

The money received through the weekly offerings covers about 50 percent of the expenses of the congregation. The other 50 percent are gifts received from abroad. The monthly rent for the facilities for the weekly meeting is only symbolic. The pastor has received a salary from the congregation since July 1998.

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*Interview with Yuri Kalmikov, January 1999.*

3-06

## Hadera Ethiopian Congregation

Hadera

*Name:* No official name.

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Not an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In a private home.

### History

(For the general outline of the history, theology and style of worship of the Ethiopian community in Israel, see 5-06).

*Founded* in 1997. The leader used to be part of Haifa Ethiopian Congregation but after some misunderstanding decided together with some of the members to meet on their own. The fellowship has sometimes been referred to as the Ethiopian Afula fellowship because some of the members came from there.

The congregation is independent of the Ethiopian Jewish Messianic Congregation in Jaffa (5-06).

**Membership**

In 1999 the Hadera Ethiopian Congregation had, according to our estimate, 15 members. This number does not include 5 children.

*Characteristics of adult members (our estimate):*

- 1. Jewish..... 14
- 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew..... 1

**Latest development**

As of May 1999 the congregation no longer exists.

~~~~~  
*Information* through members of the Ethiopian community in Israel, January 1999.

3-07

**Haifa Ethiopian Congregation**

Haifa

*Name:* Anonymous.  
*Category:* Congregation.  
*Legal status:* Not an amutah.  
*Meeting place:* In a rented flat.

**History**

*Founded* in 1993. At that time the congregation numbered about 8 adults and 9 children. The founding leader left Israel 1998 and returned to Ethiopia. The present leader has led the congregation since May 1998. The congregation meets every second week from Friday evening through Saturday. Friday evening the group shares a meal together followed by a time of prayer and worship. Saturday morning there is a service including worship, prayer and teaching. Since the present leader took over there has been no Communion. Following lunch there is a time of fellowship until the Sabbath is over and public transportation starts to operate. Some of the members live in Nazareth.

The goal of the congregation is to become superfluous and help the members move out from the Amharic-speaking congregation and integrate into already existing Hebrew-speaking fellowships. As of May 1999 it was estimated that even when the group comes together as an Amharic-speaking fellowship, 90% of the service is now conducted in Hebrew

The congregation is independent of the Ethiopian Jewish Messianic Congregation in Jaffa (5-06).

## Membership

In 1999 the Haifa Ethiopian Congregation had, according to our estimate, 17 members. This number does not include 12 children.

*Characteristics of adult members (our estimate):*

1. Jewish..... 15
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew ..... 2

*Change in membership since 1993:* In 1993 the congregation counted only a few members. Through friendship evangelism it grew to 40-50 members. The number went down when people who were part of the congregation but lived in Rehovot formed their own group. In 1999 a couple of new immigrants have joined the fellowship.

Attendance: On an average 35 people attend, including 12 children.

~~~~~

*Information through one of the members, 25 January / May 1999.*

3-08

## Hamikra

Hadera

*Name:* קהילת המקרא; Kehilat haMikra ("The Bible Fellowship").

*Category:* House group.

*Legal status:* Not an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In private homes.

## History

*Founded* in 1994. Mark Davis, employed by the Baptist Convention in Israel came to Israel in 1991 to work as a church planter. The family moved to Hadera to start a group that could be a tool for evangelism and discipleship and, when possible, could become a congregation. At the moment this is not seen as the primary goal for the house group.

*Harassment:* In 1996 the fellowship experienced demonstrations from Yad L'Achim at their meeting which caused some of the new members to stop coming to the fellowship.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation and in 1999:* Mark Davis.

## Theological character

Baptist, non-charismatic, with an emphasis on teaching Scripture ("haMikra" means "Scripture" in Hebrew) and being involved in evangelism and discipleship. The focus of the weekly meeting is to encourage and disciple one another. The fellowship understands itself as a group living in the land and therefore the fellowship has a Jewish flavor. Sabbath candles are lit at the beginning of the meeting on Friday evening and the Jewish holidays are

celebrated. None of the church holidays are celebrated in the congregation but some individual members do celebrate Christmas.

*A statement of faith* has not been written for the group.

*Baptism:* Two people have been baptized during the time the group has existed. The ceremonies took place in the Jordan River.

**Leadership**

The congregation does not have formal leadership. In practice Mark Davis is the leader; no title is used. Mark Davis has graduated from Criswell Baptist seminary.

*Women:* As of December 1998 the question of the role of women was not relevant for the fellowship. According to Mark Davis, women “can share, not teach” in a congregation and therefore cannot hold a leadership position.

**Membership**

In 1998 the congregation had 15 members, not including 18 children.

*Membership list:* There is no formal membership and the question of baptism as a requirement for belonging to the fellowship is therefore not relevant.

*Characteristics of adult members:*

|                                                     |   |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Jewish.....                                      | 9 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew .....            | 2 |
| 3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship .....    | 0 |
| 4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship ..... | 4 |

*Changes in membership since 1994:* When the group first got together there were 5 families. During the next 2 years they grew to 12 families. The majority of the new members were Russian immigrants. Three families left after being intimidated by the anti-missionary demonstrations in 1996. Three families left because of disagreement over the issue of charismatic/non-charismatic. They are now part of a Russian-speaking home group in Hadera belonging to the New Life Messianic Fellowship in Haifa (3-10).

**Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Friday evening at 5:00 pm.

*Attendance:* 20 persons, including the children.

*Description of the service:* The meeting begins with a time of prayer. Then follows the main part, which is the study of the Scriptures in an informal Bible study, with questions and discussion. The study is systematic teaching on a book from the Bible and is conducted in Hebrew; it lasts 60-90 minutes.

*Communion:* Celebrated a few times a year. Baptism is not a requirement but children do not take part.. No liturgy is used but the passage on the Lord’s Supper from 1 Corinthians 11 and a gospel passage is read.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* A men's prayer group was started in 1998. Mark Davis is involved in evangelistic outreach in several different ways; he has also organized groups from abroad which have helped do evangelistic outreach.

### Cooperation

From time to time they have gone as a group to visit other congregations on Saturdays and taken part in the worship service there.

### Finances

No regular offering is taken but money is collected in response to special needs or requests. Mark Davis is paid by the Baptist Convention in Israel.

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*Interview with Mark Davis, 8 December 1998/May 1999.*

3-09

## Melekh Hakavod

Northern Haifa

*Name:* מלך הכבוד; קהילת מלך הכבוד; Kehilat Melekh haKavod ("The King of Glory Congregation").

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Not yet an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In rented facilities.

### History

*Founded* in 1998. Daniel Matthias, the founder and pastor, was an elder in the Russian-speaking congregation in Haifa led by Andrei Miller until 1996 (3-10). When Andrei Miller, who is also Daniel Matthias' father-in-law, left the country for Germany, Daniel Matthias continued to lead a house group of about 20 people from the congregation. During this time he received repeated encouragement from different groups and individuals to establish a new congregation, which he did in 1998.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation and in 1999:* Daniel Matthias.

### Theological character

The congregation does not belong to any denomination but in theology and practice it is similar to the Assemblies of God. The congregation is charismatic in the sense that it is open to works of the Holy Spirit. The importance of the study and the preaching of the word of God is stressed and so is the mutual sharing of the love of God in the life of the congregation.

There is no emphasis on Jewish traditions. The Jewish holidays are seen as



having been fulfilled in Jesus. The church holidays are celebrated by individual members but not by the congregation. The pastor is open to this but it has not been done so far.

*A statement of faith* does not yet exist. It would be similar to that of the Assemblies of God, however.

*Baptism* can take place when a person has expressed his or her faith in the Messiah as Savior. There is no formal instruction and the preferred site is the Jordan River.

**Leadership**

The congregation is led by three elders of whom the pastor is one. The 4 home group leaders and the worship leader are part of the leadership team. They have been appointed by the congregation following prayer and recommendation from the elders.

Daniel Matthias grew up in Siberia in a family belonging to the Pentecostal Church. He attended the Baptist Bible College in Moscow from 1984-87. The Pentecostal Church did not have its own Bible College and the Baptists would allow a certain number of students from the Pentecostal Church to attend each year. His professional training in Russia was as an engineer. In 1989 he immigrated to Israel with his family and first worked for the electrical company Galtronics. Presently he works in a factory.

*Women:* The role of women is not clearly defined. The pastor is open to the idea that they can serve as pastors.

**Membership**

In 1999 Melekh Hakavod had 51 members. This number does not include 23 children.

*A membership list* exists and members have to be baptized.

*Characteristics of adult members (our estimate):*

- 1. Jewish.....30
- 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....21

*Changes in membership since 1998:* The congregation began with the 20 members of the house group. Of the 31 new members about 6 were believers before immigrating from the former USSR. The other 25 have come to faith through the work of the congregation.

**Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday morning from 11:00 am -2:00 pm.

*Attendance:* Average number about 100; of these 20 are children. About 35 of the attendees are new believers who are not yet members.

*Description of the service:* The service is non-liturgical. The initial time of

worship (45 minutes) is followed by the sermon that lasts up to 60 minutes. After the sermon follows an altar call and a time of prayer.

The *language used* is Russian with translation into Hebrew and other languages when needed.

*Communion* is celebrated on the first Saturday of the month. Members unable to attend that day because of illness or other reasons can ask to have communion ministered to them at home.

*Children's classes:* During the service a children's class is held. After the age of 12 children are encouraged to take part in the main service.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* 7 different home groups meet once a week for Bible study and worship from 7:00-10:00 pm.; the pastor meets once a week with the home group leaders.

### Cooperation

The congregation is open to cooperation with other congregations and to participation in national events. It has established close ties with other Russian-speaking congregations in the area. Guest speakers from local congregations are invited about 4 times a year.

### Finances

The main expense is the monthly rent; that and other expenses are covered through donations received from members. The pastor receives as a support 10 percent of the monthly donations. The congregation is looking for an organization from abroad to support their work financially.

~~~~~

*Interview with Daniel Matthias, 22 January 1999.*

## 3-10      **New Life Messianic Fellowship**      Central Haifa

*Name:* New Life Messianic Fellowship.

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Amutah, under the Assemblies of God, Holy Land.

*Meeting place:* In a church belonging to the Assemblies of God, Holy Land; used also by another Russian-speaking congregation and an Arabic-speaking congregation.

### History

*Founded* in 1990. The congregation was started by Andrei Miller, who immigrated from Russia in the late 1980s. It was one of the very first Russian-speaking congregations started in Israel at the time when many Jews

immigrated from the former USSR. It soon grew to more than 100 members. In the early 1990s there was a disagreement over doctrinal issues between Andrei Miller and the wider Messianic community in Israel. Pastor Miller applied some biblical prophecies to his own person. The matter was taken up also in the United Christian Council in Israel (UCCI) and Pastor Miller's view was labeled heretical. The disagreement caused a split in the congregation and pastor Miller later left the country in 1996 for Germany. The present Russian-speaking pastor was sent from USA in February 1996 to lead the congregation. At that time there were about 30 people in the congregation.

*Harassment:* The congregation has received threats; local Russian newspapers have carried articles about the congregation warning others against them and they have had their sign to the street taken down.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Andrei Miller and others related to the Assemblies of God.

*Key person(s) 1998:* Tonya and Victor Redko.

### Theological character

Charismatic and non-denominational but with ties to the Assemblies of God. The present leader comes from a Pentecostal Russian background and was influenced by the charismatic movement already in Russia before moving to the USA. There is no emphasis on either Jewish or Christian tradition. The message of the church holidays is stressed in the teaching at the appropriate time and individual members celebrate Christmas in their homes. The content of the Jewish holidays is also taught in the congregation, but there is no emphasis on the Jewish holiday traditions and no Jewish symbols are used. All forms of tradition are considered not only unnecessary but also a distraction. "Let everyone do what they want ... We emphasize the Holy Scriptures and Yeshua."

*A statement of faith* exists. It is basically identical to that of the Assemblies of God.

*Baptism* is not proceeded by any formal instruction. It is a requirement for membership. A preferred site for baptism has been the Jordan River.

### Leadership

The fellowship is led by a pastor who works closely with the leaders of the home groups. Together they form the leadership of the congregation.

The pastor and his wife moved from Byelorussia to the USA in 1989. He attended a Bible School in Jacksonville, Florida, for two years. Since February 1996 they have been in Israel.

*Women* can hold the same leadership positions in the congregation as men can.

## Membership

In 1998 the fellowship had 95 members. This number does not include 40 children.

A *membership list* exists; members are those who are active in the congregation, have agreed to the statement of faith, and are baptized.

### *Characteristics of adult members:*

- |                                                     |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Jewish.....                                      | 85 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....             | 0  |
| 3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship .....    | 6  |
| 4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship ..... | 4  |

*Changes in membership since February 1996:* There were 30 members in 1996. The growth has come through immigration and evangelism. The leader estimates that about 30 percent of the new members came to faith after arriving in Israel; the remainder were believers before and were part of congregations in the former USSR.

## Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities

A weekly service is held on Saturday morning.

*Attendance:* Average number about 110. Of these 25 are children; on an average about 10 non-members attend.

*Description of the service:* The time of worship is preceded by prayer in small groups. The worship lasts about 60 minutes and is followed by teaching, also about 60 minutes. The congregation shares a meal together before departing. The teaching is topical and the same theme can be dealt with over several times.

The *language* is Russian with translation into English when needed; they plan to provide full translation into Hebrew in the near future.

*Communion:* Celebrated once a month; no communion liturgy is used but 1 Corinthians 11 is often read; the emphasis is on fellowship and sharing a meal together. Baptism is not a requirement but it is stressed that Communion is for believers only. Parents can decide if their children can take part.

*Women* can take part in all the activities of the service.

*Children's classes:* There is a children's class during the service.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* There are 5 home groups; they plan to constitute the group in Hadera as a congregation in the near future. Twice a week there is a New Life Bible School with about 25 participating. A youth group meets on Friday. There is no organized evangelism but members always invite new people for the weekly service.

### Cooperation

The congregation cooperates with other Russian-speaking congregations in the area and participates in local and national congregational events. Approximately once a month there is a guest speaker, often from outside Israel.

### Finances

The main expenses for the congregation are transportation and hospitality. These expenses are covered by the congregation. A car is supplied by the Assemblies of God, Holy Land. The pastor is not paid by the congregation but receives his support from groups in the USA.

The congregation has collected money for ministries in Russia.

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*Interview with Tonya and Victor Redko, December 1998.*

*Media: Kol Bo Haifa 10.01.92. Kol Haifa 24.01.92. Yediot Acharonot 24.01.92.*

3-11

## Ohalei Rachamim

Kiryat Yam

*Name:* קהילת אוהלי רחמים; Kehilat Ohalei Rachamim; Tents of Mercy Congregation (Jeremiah 30:18).

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Amutah.

*Meeting place:* In own facilities (partly owned, partly rented).

### History

*Founded* in December 1995. In 1990, when still living in the USA, the founder and present leader had a vision of establishing an oasis for Jewish immigrants coming out of Russia and other countries. The oasis was to be for the refuge, encouragement, and spiritual discovery of the returning exiles. In 1992 he and his family immigrated to Israel. In 1995, after being part of the leadership team in the Carmel Assembly, Haifa (3-03), and sharing his vision and plans he was commissioned by that congregation to begin a work in Kiryat Yam, north of Haifa. Two Russian-speaking home groups with about 8 families from the Carmel Assembly became the foundation for the present congregation.

*Harassment:* The congregation has experienced threats from individuals; posters warning against the congregation have been placed in the neighborhood, the service has been interrupted several times, and windows of the premises broken. The night of 21 October 1997 the congregation premises were burned and the damage was estimated at \$50,000. A compromise was reached with the insurance agency, in which the congregation was reimbursed for half of the estimated damage. In 1998 the congregation moved to the present bigger premises.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Eitan Shishkoff.

*Key person(s) 1998:* Eitan Shishkoff, Leon Mazin, Moshe Morrison.

### **Theological character**

"Torah positive" and charismatic, with strong theological emphasis on the continued validity of the first covenant while still affirming that also for Jews there is only salvation through Yeshua the Messiah. The unity of Jews and gentiles in the body of Messiah is stressed; the importance of an identifiable Jewish life-style as a testimony to Jewish people is underlined. Members are encouraged to keep biblically kosher. All the Jewish holidays are celebrated, including the Day of Atonement, by incorporating some material from the synagogue liturgy. A central feature of the meeting hall is the Ark with a Torah scroll. Kippot and prayer shawls are used by some men during the service. None of the church holidays are celebrated.

A *statement of faith* exists. The "Doctrinal Statement" consists of 12 paragraphs, each introduced with the words: "We believe." It incorporates Hebrew terminology, such as "Tenach," "B'rith HaHadasha," and "Ruach haKodesh," and opens with a paragraph identifying God as "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the Creator of heaven and earth." Jesus is "Israel's promised Messiah and the Redeemer of the entire human race." Although his virgin birth is not explicitly mentioned, he is described as "the Divine Messiah," "the fullest revelation of God to man." Three paragraphs are devoted to the work of the Holy Spirit, which is defined in terms of being born again, creating "one new man," and "bringing forth righteousness in the life of all followers of the Messiah." Paragraphs 10 and 11 (9 and 10) address the relationship between the two covenants and Israel's role in the world.

Paragraph 10 (9) says: "Fulfillment of Yeshua does not imply the abolition of the Mosaic legislation (the Law) Matt 5:17, 18, but does imply a reapplication of the principles of the Law for the New Covenant age (Jer 31:31ff, Heb 8-9). This includes those aspects of the Law which are the roots of a unique Jewish national life and culture (Acts 15:21, Rom 11:29). The whole Bible is the Torah of God (the instruction of God) and no part can be ignored in guiding all believers and providing direction for Jewish life (2 Tim 3:16-17, Rom 11:29). The Bible in all its sections and as a whole teaches that salvation is by grace through faith which issues in works of faith obedience (Gen 15:6, Eph 2:8-10)."

In paragraph 11 (10) it says: "We believe that the nation of Israel is chosen to be a channel of blessing to all the nations on earth. The return of our people to their land in fulfillment of Biblical prophecy. The day will come when Israel as a nation will accept the Messiah Yeshua. Then shall the Word of God go forth from Zion. After Messiah Yeshua's return, He shall establish his world-wide rule from Jerusalem (Gen 12:1-3, Isa 11, Zech 12:10, 13:1)."

The statement concludes by expressing belief in the resurrection of the death.

*Baptism:* Prior to baptism candidates receive formal instructions.

**Leadership**

The congregation is led by the founder who is also the senior pastor. In the USA he would have been addressed as Rabbi but realizes that such a title does not work in Israel. He appointed two elders of which one is the assistant pastor; following the appointment the elders were confirmed by the congregation. These three make up the decision-making leadership; deacons responsible for the practical and humanitarian work are presented to the congregation for approval.

The senior pastor has a BA in Pastoral Theology from Messiah Bible Institute, Washington, DC; he worked as a pastor in the USA from 1983-1992, the last three years of which he spent working with Russian Jewish immigrants. He is one of the founders of Tikkun Ministries, USA, and still serves as one of the directors.

*Women cannot serve as elders.*

**Membership**

In 1998 the congregation had 85 members. This number does not include 30 children.

A *membership list* does not exist. Members are recognized by their participation in a cell group and in the activities of the congregation. According to the definition of membership one does not need to be baptized to be a member.

*Characteristics of adult members:*

- 1. Jewish.....70
- 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....6
- 3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship .....5
- 4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship .....4

*Changes in membership since 1995:* Thirty new members have joined through evangelism; 25 are immigrants from the former USSR. Some have joined after being members in other congregations. Only a few have left the congregation due to personal or theological disagreement.

**Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday, in winter at 5:00 pm, in summer at 6:00 pm – close to the beginning of the Havdalah service in the synagogue.

*Attendance:* Average number 120; of these 30 are children. Only a few visitors/tourists attend.

*Description of the service:* It is non-liturgical; the Sidur is not used but the Shm'a is recited. The Torah scroll is taken out from the Ark every other Saturday and only part of the text from the weekly Torah portion is then read

with the surrounding blessings and prayer from the synagogue liturgy. The text for the sermon can be taken from both the Tanakh and the NT with a slight preference for the Tanakh over the NT.

The *language used up front* is Hebrew with translation into Russian.

*Communion:* Celebrated once a month; no communion liturgy is used but the connection with Pesach is stressed and texts from the NT on the Lord's Supper are often read. It is ministered to all attending who wish to receive it. People are encouraged to participate only if baptized. Children are not encouraged to take communion..

*Women* are not invited up for the reading from the Torah scroll; they can pray during service, prophesy and take part in distribution of bread and wine during communion. They can lead Bible study groups. Many coordinate significant ministries within the congregation.

*Children's classes:* During the service 5 children's classes are held.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* 7 Russian-speaking weekly cell groups for adults and 1 youth groups. There has been an Amharic-speaking cell group. Thursday is a prayer and fast day with 6-8 attending the morning prayer meeting (at 6:30 am) and about 20-30 attending the evening prayer meeting (at 6:00 pm). A Pro-life counseling center is being opened in connection with the national Pro-life ministry. A textiles factory opened in spring 1999, called Tents of Mercy Textiles. The congregation has established a campus of the Israel College of the Bible.

*Social work:* The congregation also provides new immigrants with counseling on housing, employment, and other aspects of Israeli life. They have a food bank and receive clothing from abroad for their distribution center.

## Cooperation

The congregation is open to cooperation with other congregations and encourages participation in nationally-organized events. Guest speakers are used a few times a year.

## Finances

Members donate money to the work and many tithe. About 25 percent of the expenses are paid by the members. The remaining 75 percent comes from abroad; part of that is channeled through Tikkun Ministries, USA.

The congregation pays the senior pastor, the two elders, a full-time secretary and an administrative assistant. In addition four part-time employees are paid.

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*Interview with Eitan Shishkoff, 7 October 1998.*

*Other sources:* LCJE Bulletin 50/1997:4.

*Media:* Ha'Aretz 22.10.97. Jerusalem Post 24.10.97.



### 3-12      **Russian Messianic Assembly**      Central Haifa

*Name:* Russian Messianic Assembly.

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Not an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In facilities belonging to the Arab Baptist Church, Haifa.

#### **History**

*Founded* in 1992. When the big wave of immigrants from the former USSR arrived, the father of the present leader, together with a local Arab pastor, Edward Souti, began work among them (3-04). Many of the immigrants had connections with the Baptist church in Russia before they came and a special effort was made to reach out to this group. In 1992 they formed an independent group but continued to meet in the same place at a different time.

*Harassment:* The congregation has not experienced any difficulties, but the pastor, who is a medical doctor by profession, claims that he was denied a license to work as such in Israel when it became known that he was baptized.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* J.G. and Edward Souti.

*Key person(s) in 1998:* J.G.

#### **Theological character**

Baptist according to the tradition and theology of the Russian Baptist Church. This relates to the dress code especially of women (head covering) and to the celebration of the church holidays. The Jewish holidays are understood as being fulfilled in the Messiah.

*A statement of faith* does not exist and is not seen as necessary. "Everything is in the Bible."

*Baptism:* The preferred site for baptism has been the Jordan River.

#### **Leadership**

The Russian Baptist Assembly is led by the pastor. The leader is trained as a medical doctor. He was a believer already in Russia but had no pastoral experience before coming to Israel.

*Women* cannot serve as elders; they can be deaconesses.

#### **Membership**

The leader estimates the number of members in 1998 to 100, not including 20 children.

*Characteristics of adult members:* Baptism is a requirement for membership. According to the pastor members should not be divided into categories, because "all are children of God." However, he estimates the following breakdown of the members.

*Characteristics of adult members:*

1. Jewish.....70
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....30

**Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday morning and lasts for 3-4 hours.

*Attendance (our estimate):* Average number 80, including 30 children.

*Description of the service:* It is liturgical, following the order for worship used in the Russian Baptist Church. There is a time of prayer both before and after the teaching. Both Russian and Hebrew songs are used.

*The language used is* Russian with translation into Hebrew and English when needed.

*Communion:* Celebrated once a month.

*Children's classes* are not provided.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* There is a prayer and Bible study meeting once a week.

**Finances**

The congregation pays rent for the use of the facilities of the Arab Baptist Church. This money is collected in the congregation; no regular donations are received from abroad. The congregation would like to get its own meeting place.

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*Interview with the leader, December 1998/May 1999.*

**3-13 Word of Life Congregation**

Northern Haifa

*Name:* קהילת דבר החיים; Kehilat Davar haChaim ("Word of Life Congregation").

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Not yet an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In rented facilities.

**History**

Founded in 1998, by the present leader. He was familiar with many of the existing Russian-speaking congregations in the area and appreciated the work being done there. He still felt called, however, to begin an outreach in the neighborhood to young people among the immigrants from the former USSR.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation and in 1999:* Alexander (Sasha) Roytman.

**Theological character**

Charismatic, with no relationship to any denomination. There is a strong emphasis on evangelism through developing contacts with non-believers and inviting them to the activities of the congregation. The leader, who is a professional singer, sees Jewish music and Jewish traditions as a way of communicating the gospel in a Jewish context, especially when traveling in the former USSR and USA, but Jewish tradition is not an integral part of the life of the congregation.

The congregation has not yet developed any traditions for how holidays should be celebrated. The Jewish holidays are understood as being fulfilled in the Messiah. The congregation would be open to celebrate Christmas and other church holidays; however, they would not display a cross in their meeting place. They associate this with either the Catholic or the Orthodox church and want to avoid being identified with either.

*A statement of faith* does not exist yet, but they see a need formulate one.

*Baptism* can take place when a person has expressed his or her faith in the Messiah as Savior. There is no formal instruction and the preferred site is the Jordan River.

**Leadership**

Alexander Roytman is the pastor of the congregation. There is no other leadership yet and most of the members are new believers. The pastor has no previous leadership experience. He came to faith in 1988 through the testimony of his wife. In Russia they were part of a Pentecostal fellowship. From 1990-91 they spent a year in Sweden at the Word of Life Center of Ulf Ekman. From 1993-94 they were back in Sweden and in 1994 they immigrated to Israel. He is a well-known singer within the Russian-speaking Messianic community and often travels to Russia and to the USA. Presently he has a secular part time job that allows him to travel.

*Women* can serve in the congregation in the same capacities as men.

**Membership**

In 1999 the congregation had 25 members. This number does not include 3 children.

*A membership list* does not exist; baptism is a requirement for membership.

*Characteristics of adult members:*

1. Jewish.....	14
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....	10
3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship .....	0
4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship .....	1

*Changes in membership since 1998:* The congregation has grown through personal invitations to the activities of the congregation or to a home group. The majority are young singles.

### **Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday evening from 4:30-8:00 pm.

*Attendance:* Average number about 35; of these 7 are children.

*Description of the service:* A prayer meeting is held from 4:30-5:00 prior to the main service. Then there is time of worship (60 minutes) led by a worship team; there are no other regular elements in the service. The preaching is topical and relates to specific needs in the congregation.

The *language used* is Russian with translation into Hebrew provided when needed.

*Communion* is celebrated once a month. No communion liturgy is used.

*Women* can serve in the same roles during the service as men.

*Other activities during the week:* The pastor meets once a week with the leaders of the home groups; there is a weekly prayer meeting, a discipleship group, and home groups with Bible study. The worship team also meets once a week.

### **Cooperation**

The congregation stays in close contact with other Russian-speaking, charismatic congregations in the area.

### **Finances**

The main expense is the monthly rent. Members are encouraged to tithe. The congregation does not receive regular support from any foreign organization.

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*Interview with Alexander Roytman, 22 January 1999.*

3-14

## **Yisrael Chai**

Northern Haifa

*Name:* קהילת ישראל חי; Kehilat Yisrael Chai ("Israel Lives Congregation" - Ezekiel 37).

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Not an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In a rented house in the northern part of Haifa; a family from the congregation lives in one part of the house; the congregation uses the other part.

### History

*Founded* in December 1995. Before immigrating to Israel, the founder and leader of the congregation had a vision that he understood as God telling him that he was to initiate a ministry in Israel. The vision was confirmed to him by several people, among them Jonathan Bernis, director of the American-based Hear O Israel Ministries. A house group was started in 1995 under the leadership of the founder and out of this grew the congregation.

*Harassment:* The congregation has experienced no difficulties from its neighbors or from any anti-missionary organization.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* G.S., his wife and another family also from Russia.

*Key person(s) 1998:* G.S., his wife, and the leadership team.

### Theological character

The primary focus is on evangelism and sharing the gospel. The congregation has no affiliation with any denomination although some members were part of either a Baptist or Pentecostal church in Russia before immigrating to Israel. Other belonged to charismatic congregations. The leader would call himself charismatic but this is not necessarily true for others in the group ("this is not a dictatorship"). The significance of the cross is underlined in the teaching, as is Jesus' deity.

Both the Jewish holidays and Christmas are used as an occasion to come together as a congregation and as an opportunity to invite friends and neighbors to the congregation. Traditions on how to celebrate the Jewish holidays have not yet developed. Some members who celebrated Christmas before moving to Israel have continued to do so.

*A statement of faith* does not exist.

*Baptism:* Before baptism new believers are taught the importance of baptism in the home group to which they belong. The Jordan River is the preferred site for baptism.

### Leadership

The congregation is led by the pastor together with the home group leaders. No formal way of appointing or electing leaders has developed. The pastor has a professional background in child psychology and worked as such before immigrating to Israel from the former USSR in 1994. He has not had any formal pastoral training and his previous leadership experience is limited to leading a home group.

*Women* can serve in all capacities in the congregation.

### Membership

In 1998 the congregation had 60 members, not including 20 children.

*A membership list* does not exist and there is no formal way of recognizing

membership. Baptism is not a requirement for membership.

*Characteristics of adult members:*

1. Jewish.....35
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew..... 25

*Changes in membership since 1996:* Almost all the members are new immigrants from Russia. It is estimated that half of the members were believers before they came to the country; the other half have come to faith in Israel through the work of the congregation.

**Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday evening from 6:00-8:30 pm.

*Attendance:* Average number 35; of these 6 are children.

*Description of the service:* The first 30-40 minutes are used for prayers and worship. It is followed by teaching, which is topical and lasts about 60 minutes.

The *language used* is Russian and in 1998 there was no translation to Hebrew or any other language.

*Communion:* Celebrated only a few times a year, but the home groups are encouraged to have Communion when they meet. No special liturgy is used.

*Women* have the same responsibilities in the service and in the life of the congregation as men.

*Children's classes:* A children's class is held during the service.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* There are 11 home groups; most of them are in and around Haifa, in Kiryat Chaim, Kiryat Bialik, Kiryat Yam and the center of Haifa, but also in Akko, Carmiel and as far south as Petah Tikva. This explains the difference in number between members and attendance. Many members find it difficult to attend the weekly meeting regularly. The home groups are considered the main work of the congregation, both for growth and for evangelism. In 1998 a bible school is held twice a week, partly for leaders. One session was devoted to Bible study; another to teaching a topic like "justification" or "the meaning of the cross." There was also a class in New Testament Greek.

Under the structure of an amutah, different classes and activities are offered. One is a music school; one is for scouts; one is a Russian language school for children.

**Cooperation**

The congregation has a close relationship with several of the other Russian-speaking congregations in the area, and its members have participated in regional events organized for all congregations in the north.

**Finances**

Money for the work of the congregation is paid by the members. The pastor is not paid by the congregation

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*Interview* with G.S., his wife, and a member of the congregation, 11 December 1998.

## District 4: Central Israel

4-01

### Beit Asaf

Netanya

*Name:* בית אסף; Beit Asaf ("House of Asaf" – 1 Chronicles 16:5).

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Amutah.

*Meeting place:* In a private house rented by the congregation.

#### History

*Founded in 1978/re-founded in 1983.* The founding elder, David Loden, and his wife, Lisa Loden, had a vision to see a congregation established in the city. The two of them began meeting in 1976 and soon learned of another couple working with the Baptist Convention in Israel who had a Bible study in their home in Netanya. In 1978 the two families joined and soon after the congregation was formed; there were about 10 people in the group. In 1983 Evan Thomas joined the leadership and the new leadership team was officially approved by the congregation, an event that marked a new face in the history of the congregation.

*Harassment:* Individual members of the group have been the target of different kind of harassment. On several occasions David Loden has been accused of wanting to "draw people into Christianity by means of song and music." An article in the Jerusalem Post in 1996 mentions David Loden as a "priest" leading a "missionary center" in Netanya. Articles in the religious press in 1996 accused David Loden of having missionary purposes behind writing the opera "David and Bathsheba."

Members of the congregation working at social institutions in the city lost their jobs when it became known that they were part of a Messianic fellowship and the social ministry of the congregation involved in helping the handicapped has been accused of "preying on the weak and innocent."

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* David and Lisa Loden, Judy and Pat Hoalldridge.

*Key person(s) 1998:* David Loden, Evan Thomas, and Paul Liberman.



### Theological character

Evangelical and non-denominational. A decisive factor for the style of worship is that it be culturally relevant and express an Israeli, Jewish identity. Therefore Jewish worship elements are incorporated into the service. All the Jewish holidays are celebrated, including the Day of Atonement, which is observed as a time of intercession emphasizing solidarity with the Jewish people. The holidays are celebrated on the eve of the holiday at which time traditional Jewish elements are included in the celebration. The teaching the following Saturday will focus on the content of the holiday. The church holidays are not celebrated but their content is emphasized in the teaching at the appropriate time of the year.

*A statement of faith* does not exist but the congregation uses as its confession of faith a creed written by David Loden. It is recited during the worship service.

*Baptism*: Candidates are taught and prepared for baptism depending on the individual. There is no preferred site for baptism.

### Leadership

Beit Asaf is led by 3 co-equal elders who each serve according to their gifts. New elders are appointed by the eldership in consultation with the congregation and then approved by the congregation.

David Loden, the founding elder, immigrated from North America in 1974. He is a composer and teacher of music and has, together with his wife, Lisa, been one of the central figures in creating indigenous music for the Messianic movement in Israel. Many of the songs used by the Messianic movement were first presented at music conferences/workshops organized by the Lodens. In 1996 the opera "David and Bathsheba," written by David Loden, was performed for the first time. Through the message of the opera David Loden wanted to emphasize the need for soul searching within the Israeli society and break the iconic image of king David held by many religious Jews.

Evan Thomas, another elder in the congregation, immigrated from New Zealand in 1983. He has been in full time ministry in the congregation since 1983, before which time he held a secular job working in his profession as a food technologist. He has served on the board of Musalaha since its foundation in 1989. His major gift is that of pastoral care and management. He is chairman of the National Evangelism Committee.

Paul Liberman, another elder in the congregation, has served as the chairman of the Messianic Action Committee since 1998. He is a businessman by profession and immigrated from the USA in 1993.

*Women* cannot serve as elders. They can be deaconesses; they can teach outside the main congregational meetings.

## Membership

In 1998 Beit Asaf had 80 members, not including 20 children.

A *membership list* does not exist; members are recognized by regular attendance. Baptism is not a requirement for membership.

### *Characteristics of adult members:*

1. Jewish.....	60
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....	16
3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship .....	0
4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship .....	4

*Changes in membership since 1993:* In 1993 the congregation had about 35 members. The main group of new members are immigrants from either the former USSR or from the USA. The number of Russian-speaking members at the moment is about 50, half of whom have come to faith through the work of the congregation; 10 of the new members are immigrants from the USA.

A number of people left the congregation in 1993-94 because they felt that the arrival of the many Russian immigrants changed the dynamics of the congregation.

## Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities

A weekly service is held on Saturday morning in the winter time; in the summer time they meet in the afternoon. When the weather permits they meet outside on the premises. During the warm months the congregation meets on the third Friday of the month for a Kabbalat Shabbat service which takes the place of the normal Shabbat meeting.

*Attendance:* Average number about 100. Of these 20 are children, 5 visitors attend on an average.

*Description of the service:* The service follows a set order made up for the congregation: 1. Song. 2. Reading from the weekly Torah portion in Hebrew, English and Russian. 3. Worship (20 minutes). 4. Responsive reading of either the Amida or the creed written for the congregation. 5. Intercessory prayer for a) the nation of Israel; b) the world; c) new groups. 6. Communion. 7. The Shm'a said in Hebrew. 8. The sermon (30 minutes). 9. The havdalah service (if the service is in the afternoon). 10. Announcements. 11. Aaronic blessing.

The *language used* is Hebrew with translation into Russian and English.

*Communion:* the time of worship is focused on the "incarnated presence of the Lord" and Communion is celebrated every week. The passage on the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11 and other relevant NT texts are read; the traditional Jewish blessing over the bread and wine is said together with the lifting up of the elements.

*Women* cannot teach in the main congregational meetings; they can pray, lead worship and take part in the distribution of bread and wine.

*Children's classes:* There are 3 children's classes; the children leave for their classes after the time of worship.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* 6 home groups, 4 of them in Russian, 1 in Hebrew, and 1 in English. The emphasis in the groups varies depending on the need of the groups. Twice a year there is a special meeting for women; there are 3 yearly retreats, 1 for the whole congregation, 1 for the men, and 1 for women.

### Cooperation

The congregation and its leaders are involved in national programs for congregations and for leaders. On several occasions programs are conducted together with the group of Ethiopian believers in the city; the group is part of the Ethiopian Jewish Messianic Fellowship. On average there is a guest speaker once a month.

### Finances

The two elders who are in full-time ministry are not paid by the congregation. A part-time worker is paid by the congregation. The congregation has donated money to Musalaha, MAC, groups in Ethiopia, and different social needs.

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*Interview with Lisa Loden, 21 October 1998.*

*Other sources:* LCJE Bulletin 44/1996:7.

*Media:* Hamodi'a 07.04.1987. Jerusalem Post 29.04.96. Ma'ariv 17.11.87. Ultra Orthodox Camp 13.5.87. Yediot Acharonot 01.5.96. Yom Hashishi 11.10.96.

## 4-02      **Grace and Truth Christian Assembly**      Rishon Letzion

*Name:* קהילת חסד ואמת; Kehilat Chesed veEmet; Grace and Truth Christian Assembly (John 1:17).

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Amutah.

*Meeting place:* In premises belonging to Christian Witness to Israel (CWI).

### History

*Founded* in May 1976. Baruch Maoz, one of the founders and present pastor, saw a need to establish a congregation in the area based on the preaching and teaching of the Word of God. He began with his own family in 1974 in Rehovot. Christian Witness to Israel (CWI), for whom he worked as director of Hagefen Publishing House, were supportive of Maoz's idea to found a congregation. They suggested two conditions: 1) that the work of Hagefen would not be

adversely affected, and 2) that the church established would be independent of CWI. After some months he was joined by a few other believers and their families in the area who felt a similar need. Although they had very different ideas of what a congregation should be like, a constitution and a statement of faith were composed. After having started in private homes, they met in a small hall in Rehovot. In 1977 18 families chose the first four elders. In 1982 the congregation numbered about 70, including children. A theological disagreement caused a split in the congregation. One of the elders, David Tel-Zur, had come to the conclusion that Jesus-believing Jews are bound by the Torah and that gentiles should convert to Judaism, thereby becoming Jewish believers in Jesus. Furthermore he wanted complete freedom for charismatic expression. Maoz disagreed and for the sake of peace resigned, but the final outcome was that Tel-Zur left the congregation. The schism left the congregation with only about 12 members, a number later reduced to 7. Some of the members left with Tel-Zur; others scattered and did not immediately join another congregation.

In 1983 the congregation moved to another location in Rehovot. Orthodox groups managed to receive an injunction forbidding the congregation use of the new location for church purposes. For a while the congregation had to gather in the woods, in public parks, or in private homes. After a legal battle, the court awarded the congregation the right to meet and worship in the rented facilities. In November 1987 the congregation moved to the premises purchased by CWI in Rishon Letzion.

In 1990 the congregation numbered about 40, including children. It has since then increased due to immigration from the former USSR and evangelistic outreach, becoming one of the larger congregations in Israel. One congregation has sprung from Grace and Truth, namely Tikvat Yisrael in Holon (5-15). In spring 1999 steps were being taken to establish a congregation in Ashkelon.

*Harassment:* The congregation has met much antagonism and had several conflicts with the Orthodox community in the area. A large number of articles, especially in the religious press, have warned against the activities of the congregation. Between the time of the founding and up until the late 1980s Maoz was frequently the target for the attacks. These included posters warning against him, threatening telephone calls at night, and vandalism to the Maoz family's vehicle. There has also been vandalism to the facilities in Rehovot. When invitations were sent out in 1987 for the dedication of the meeting place for the congregation in Rishon Letzion, some pried into the mail and counterfeited another letter, supposedly from the congregation, informing the congregations of a change of date of the dedication. On the day of dedication the opponents covered the front door of the building and the parking lot with cow dung. However, in 1998 the relationship with the local community was good. The congregation has been involved in different social ministries providing material support for several of the local social institutions.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Baruch Maoz, Eli Ben Moshe, David (Dudu) Tel-Zur, Arthur Goldberg, and David Zeidan.

*Key person(s) 1998:* Baruch Maoz, David Zadok, Alex Faibishenko, Sasha Seriapov, and Ze'ev Bern, together with the elected body of eldership.

### Theological character

While not belonging to any denomination the congregation defines itself as Reformed Baptist. It is an evangelical Christian congregation dedicated to biblically oriented evangelism and to theological education. The culture of the worship is Jewish and all major Jewish holidays are celebrated in the congregation on the eve of the holiday. The Jewish calendar influences the teaching in the congregation but a distinction is made between "culture" and "worship." Listening to the Word of God is understood as a primary way of worship. The worship room is arranged with the pulpit in the middle around which the congregation sits, underlining the centrality of the Word. None of the church holidays are celebrated in the congregation. Some individual members celebrate Christmas in their homes.

A constitution with a *statement of faith* exists. It is a 19-page document which reflects classical Reformed theology. The title is "The Constitution and Affirmation of Faith of Grace and Truth Christian Assembly." In "A Word to the Reader" it is underscored that: "*The Constitution and Affirmation of Faith* are not meant to be a substitute for the Scriptures; they serve rather to express our united understanding of God's holy Word (1 Cor 1:10). As such they also bind us ..." However, it is stated that the principles presented in the document are "not the whole of Christian truth." Unequivocal agreement with all that is written in the constitution is not required: "... we neither expect nor demand that candidates for membership in our congregation must agree with us in every detail."

Then follows "A Summary of Duties of Membership." It is expected of each member that he has prepared his heart before meeting for worship, that he conducts his home according to Scriptures, that he contributes of his material ability regularly, and that members are alert to each other's needs. Four primary emphases in the congregation are described under the headings: 1. The fear and love for God. 2. The love of man. 3. Knowledge and love of the truth. 4. The priesthood of all believers.

The *Constitution and Affirmation of Faith* contains 14 clauses. 1. Name. 2. The Purpose Of Our Coming Together: "... shall be the glory of God ...". 3. Affirmation of Faith, divided into 11 articles: A. The Holy Scripture. B. God: "We believe that God is an eternal Spirit, without measure, unchanging in his essential being, wisdom, power, holiness, righteousness, goodness, and truth. There is only one God, who exists in three persons, each of whom is perfectly equal in the divine essence, glory and power." C. The Acts of God in History. D. Sin and its Consequences. E. God's Saving Grace: "God, in his eternal being and

out of the freedom of his person alone, has not left all men to perish in sin and suffering. He has chosen some among men to eternal life and made with them a covenant of grace in which he undertakes to save them from sin and suffering and to bring them into a new position of salvation by means of a Savior, in order to be glorified in them and to show the world through them his inexpressible glory ...". F. The Works of the Messiah. G. Man's Duties to God: "... the law is not a way of salvation but a way for saved men to live; it also helps, however, to bring sinners to the Messiah. The ceremonies, as given through Moses, were fulfilled in Christ ...". H. Salvation: "... All those whom the Father has chosen to belong to Christ will never perish because there is a complete identity between those whom he calls, saves, sanctifies and glorifies with the glory of his marvelous grace. They will all hear the gospel. God will work in all of them to their salvation, and no one will take them away from Christ..." I. The Means of Grace: "The Messiah works by his word, especially through the preaching of his word ... The Messiah has also commanded us to baptize in water, to partake of the Lord's supper, and to pray and to share in the congregational life. God uses all these things to sanctify, teach and comfort us in the way of God." J. The Church: "... the true church comprises all those whom God has chosen, who have been saved from their sins, and to whom God's Spirit has given new life by bringing them to faith in Christ ...". K. The Last Days: "God will literally fulfill all of his promises given to Israel. The earth will be filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea. Christ will return just as he departed. The dead will rise, and the living and the dead will be judged before God.... There will be a new heaven and a new earth, and God will be all in all."

Membership: A. What Membership Means. B. Application for Membership and Reception into Membership. C. Transferral of Membership: "A member who changes his place of residence shall be encouraged to join the church nearest to his new place of residence, which identifies with the convictions of Grace and Truth Christian Assembly. Should there be no such church near to him, in special cases a member shall be permitted to continue his membership with us, as determined by the Elders ...". 5. Manner of Life: A. Means of Grace. B. Family Life. C. Testimony. D. Financial Support. E. Freedom of Conscience. 6. Church Discipline: A. Edifying and Constructive Discipline. B. Corrective Discipline (1. Termination of Membership; 2. Temporary Suspension of Membership. 3. Excommunication. 4. Receipt of the Repentant). C. Appeals. 7. Officers of the Church: A. The Elders: "The Elders are those whose calling has come to them from the Lord through the church ... Every Elder shall be appointed by a separate vote and shall become an Elder only if he has been recognized by a  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority of the members in a special meeting of the church ... The Elders shall bring their recommendations to the church three weeks before the special meeting ... Candidates shall declare their unqualified agreement with the *Constitution and Affirmation of Faith*, especially the

Affirmation of Faith. Candidates who are not able to teach shall not be accepted, although all Elders shall not be required to teach ... All of the Elders shall conform to the Scriptural standards for Elders, especially those found in Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus ... The Elders shall be appointed to their office by the outgoing Elders and the church ...". B. Deacons: "... Deacons shall be appointed in the same way as Elders and in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, especially Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus ... Deacons shall be appointed to their office by Elders and the church." C. Severance of Ties with Church Workers. 8. Role of women [this paragraph was absent in the English version provided to us: eds.]. 9. Councils of the Church: A. The Council of Elders: "Every activity of the church shall be subject to the authority and leadership of this council ...". B. The Council of Deacons: "... This Council shall meet at least once every month ... The Deacons are especially responsible for mutual aid in the church ...". C. Special Councils. 10. Monies: "All expenses of this church shall be covered by contributions from believers only, especially from its members ...". 11. Association With Other Churches: "If deemed necessary or worthwhile, this church may agree to a loose organizational association with other churches on the condition that its independence and this *Constitution and Affirmation of Faith* are preserved at all times ...". 12. Ordinations: "...The Council of Ordination shall examine the credentials of the candidate ... Following the recommendation of the Council of Ordination, and the ratification of the person's call by a majority vote of the members present in a special business meeting of the church, the church shall appoint the candidate ...". 13. Annual and Special Business Meetings: "An Annual Meeting shall convene each year, where the Elders and Deacons shall report to the church their work ...". 14. The Covenant Of Membership concludes the constitution with these words: "We hereby make covenant with God and with one another in his presence ...".

The opening sentences in this 1 page Covenant are: "God Jehovah, the King of Israel, is our God, and we are his Church.... We devote ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ, to the work of his grace, and to his rule ... We will treat our brethren with love.... We will avoid ostentatious use of our abilities but will make them available to the church, submitting them to her leadership ... We will submit the authority of those over us in the church, in society and in government.... This we will do, by the help of God." This is read aloud in the congregation when a new member joins. Other members confirm it by saying "amen."

*Baptism* is based on a confession of faith. Those, who have been baptized differently but consider their baptism valid are not required to be baptized again. Before baptism two of the elders will talk to the candidate; he or she will go through five lessons. It is preferred that candidates be 16 years old or above. Sites used for baptism are the Baptist Village and a church in Jerusalem. However, a private beach at the Sea of Galilee has also been used.

### Leadership

In 1998 the congregation was led by 4 elders one of whom is the pastor, another the evangelist. There are 4 deacons and another 2 deacons in training.

Baruch Maoz, who is the pastor, immigrated from the USA to Israel in 1953 and came to faith in 1963 in Eilat while serving in the army. He graduated in 1969 from a 3-year college program in Biblical Studies at the World Wide Mission Training Institute in Glasgow, Scotland. He has been the director of Hagefen Publishing House and the work of Christian Witness to Israel (CWI) in Israel since 1976. In 1998 he handed over the management of Hagefen but remains the active director of CWI. This change allows him to devote more time to pastoral work in the congregation.

Between 1985-1991 he was the Israeli coordinator for the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE). He established and directs the National Social Aid Fund. He initiated and for many years led the Inter-congregational Fellowship of Hebrew-speaking Congregations. He was a founding editor of *Mishkan* and the first chairman for the Messianic Action Committee (MAC), a position he held between 1997-1998.

*Women* cannot serve as elders. They can be deaconesses and also serve as chairpersons of the different committees.

### Membership

In 1999 Grace and Truth had 200 members. This number does not include 100 children belonging to members.

A *membership list* exists and new members can be included after being in the congregation 3 months if they read the constitution and state they do not disagree on any point of it (see above). Members must be baptized and agree to live by the constitution.

#### *Characteristics of adult members:*

|                                                     |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Jewish.....                                      | 165 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....             | 23  |
| 3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship .....    | 7   |
| (of whom 3 are Arabs/Palestinians)                  |     |
| 4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship ..... | 5   |

*Changes in membership since 1993:* In 1993 there were about 40 adult members. Most of the new members are immigrants from the former USSR and have joined the congregation through personal invitation, tracts, and advertising. Half of those who have joined were believers before they came to the country. The others have come to faith through the work of the congregation. It is estimated that 85 percent of the present members are from the former USSR.

About 20 people have left the congregation over the last five years. With the



presence of the new Russian immigrants some felt that the character of the congregation changed. They left with letters of recommendation from the congregation to be able to join other congregations.

### **Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday morning from 11:30 am-1:30 pm.

*Attendance:* Average number 200. Of these about 60 are children and between 60-80 are non-members. Visitors are few and they are mainly students.

*Description of the service:* Sabbath school classes are held for all ages prior to the worship service. After a 15-minute break the main service begins and is opened with a time of prayer and singing. From time to time the children make a contribution. The sermon is generally systematic and expository, presented in the style of a dialogue followed by a time of discussion. It lasts about 60 minutes. A parallel service is held in Ashkelon at 6:00 pm on Saturday.

The *language used* is Hebrew with translation provided into English, Russian, and sign language. Russian and sign language translation is done from the front.

*Communion:* Celebrated once a month. Communion is understood as a sacrament and is introduced with a reading of a Bible passage and a short sermon. Baptism is a requirement for communion. Children do not take part. There is no communion liturgy.

*Women* can pray during the service. They do not take part in the distribution of bread and wine during communion; they can teach children.

*Children's classes* are held only before the worship service. There are 5 classes for children, 3 for adults.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* During the week there are 4 Bible study groups, one of which is held in Ashdod and another in Ashkelon; there is a weekly prayer meeting and regular evangelistic outreach. Two youth groups and one young adult group meet midweek. Once a month there is a women's meeting and there are regular meetings for deaf people. The congregation holds an annual retreat for all members.

*Social work:* The congregation raises support to buy equipment for special needs schools in the area. Overseas and local work parties for social projects are arranged. These activities are not seen as an opportunity for evangelism but as a response to the congregation's social obligations.

### **Cooperation**

The congregation, together with its leader, has been instrumental in forming several of the national committees and participates in national events for both congregations and leaders. Guest speakers are invited 4-6 times a year.

## Finances

As a local self-governing congregation the goal is to be financially independent of support from abroad. In 1998 running expenses were covered by donations from members. The congregation pays for the upkeep of the place, but does not pay rent. The congregation hopes to be able to pay for a pastor in the near future. Donations from abroad, mainly Patmos International, Finland, cover the salaries of the evangelist, the secretary, the social worker for the deaf people, 2 children/youth workers and ½ the salary of the pastor.

Twenty-five percent of the money collected by the congregation goes to work outside the congregation both in the country and overseas. Among organizations or institutions in the country that have received donations from the congregation are Ebenezer Home, the Israeli Fellowship of Christian Students (IFCS), Operation Mobilization (OM), and different orphan homes.

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*Interview with Baruch Maoz, 14 December 1998.*

*Other sources: Israel Update February and May 1991; Maoz 1996.*

*Media: Al Hamishmar 05.06.78; 19.12.84. Bamakom 29.03.91. Davar 04.12.84; 16.12.84. Ha'Aretz 20.04.78; 16.11.80; 18.11.80; 03.12.80; 22.05.81; 28.12.84; 23.01.85; 05.02.85. Hamodi'a 14.05.81; 12.12.84; 14.12.84; 17.12.84; 27.12.84; 11.01.85; 16.01.85; 27.12.85; 22.03.96. Hatzofeh 15.08.80. Jerusalem Post 27.12.85. Ma'ariv 27.12.84; 16.01.85.*

4-03

## Hama'ayan

Kfar Saba

*Name:* קהילת המעיין; Kehilat haMa'ayan ("The Well Congregation" – Isaiah 12:3).

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Amutah.

*Meeting place:* In property belonging to the congregation, bought in September 1996.

## History

*Founded* in April 1989. Prior to that the present leader, was an elder in the Beit Immanuel Congregation (5-03) in Jaffa and led a home group in Kfar Saba. In 1989 the membership in the Beit Immanuel congregation had increased to about 120 members and some felt it was time to split the group into two. The present leader was sent out from Beit Immanuel to start a new congregation, mainly for members already living in the Kfar Saba area and in order to do more effective outreach to the community. He and his wife were joined by three other families and together they made up the first leadership team of the new congregation. From 1991-1994 Avi Mizrahi (5-01) was a deacon in the congregation.

*Harassment:* The congregation has received threats from religious Orthodox

groups in the community and has been attacked through articles published in a local newspaper. It also took the congregation four years to be recognized as an amutah.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Tony and Orna Sperandeo together with three other couples.

*Key person(s) 1998:* Tony and Orna Sperandeo and Fred and Eva Schweig.

### Theological character

Evangelical, non-denominational, and charismatic but does not embrace the Toronto movement. It is a local Hebrew-speaking Messianic congregation and is not affiliated with any congregation or organization abroad. It seeks to fulfill the Great Commission and there is an emphasis on evangelism. The congregation endeavors to be culturally relevant to the Jewish society and will therefore incorporate Jewish traditions into its weekly service and other activities. The Jewish holidays are celebrated on the day of the feast. The holidays are seen as a way of identifying with society; Bar Mitzvas are also celebrated in the congregation. None of the church holidays are celebrated.

A *statement of faith* exists. The two-page document has 9 paragraphs all beginning with "I fully believe." In content it is evangelical and contextualized to a Jewish Israeli setting; in the English text words like Torah, Tanakh, and Kehilah are used. 1. On God, Yeshua and the Holy Spirit: "I fully believe in the Lord of Israel, the only true and living God who exists as our Father in Heaven, Yeshua the Messiah and the Holy Spirit." 2. On God: "... the God of love and salvation. He is the Creator ...". On Messiah Yeshua: "... our Lord, the only Son of His Father in Heaven, whom God sent as the Redeemer of Israel and the nations ... He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born to Miriam the virgin of the seed of David the King ...". 4. On God and Yeshua: "... Yeshua, our Lord, is the exact representation of the invisible God and the radiance of God's glory. In Him dwells all the fullness of the Deity ... Those who see Him see our Father in Heaven ...". On sin and salvation: "... all have sinned ... Messiah Yeshua, by His death on the cross, has fulfilled the Torah (Law). All mankind is made righteous before God through faith in the Messiah alone and not by good works of the Law...". On God as Spirit: "God is Spirit ... God the Holy Spirit ... dwells in the hearts of all believers ... The baptism of the Holy Spirit an experience in which a believer can receive the fullness of His power and presence ... The gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to each person as God wills.... Where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty." 7. On the Scriptures: "... the only written revelation of God, written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, free from errors and true for all times ...". On the Body of Messiah: "I believe in one Kehilah consisting of all true believers, Jews and Gentiles alike, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith and one Baptism." 9. On the Second Coming of the Messiah: "... the purpose of God to redeem His creation will be fulfilled at the Second Coming of the Messiah Yeshua to rule and reign over all and to raise all dead for judgment."

### Leadership

The congregation is led by two elders together with their wives. Tony Sperandeo is the senior elder. New elders are appointed and then presented to the congregation for its approval. Four deacons, responsible for practical tasks, are chosen by the congregation by secret ballot.

Tony Sperandeo is from France and worked at the Shelter in Amsterdam from 1978-1979 where he met his wife, who is an Israeli. He spent 1½ years at a Bible School in France before moving to Israel in 1980. He has held different secular jobs before becoming full time pastor. He has been in the leadership of Dugit, the Messianic Outreach Center in Tel Aviv (see 8-o1); like several others in the congregation he is active in the work of Pro-Life.

*Women* cannot serve as pastors or elders; they can be deaconesses and they can teach children's classes and lead Bible study groups.

### Membership

In 1998 the congregation had 90 members. This number does not include 50 children.

A *membership list* exists and new members have to agree to a list of 10 statements before being accepted as members. The statement says that a member has to be born again and believe in Jesus as the promised Messiah; a new member has to be convinced that God has called him to be a member in the congregation, have been baptized in water and be 18 years old or above. One has to have participated in the weekly meeting of the congregation for at least 3 months, agree to the statement of faith, be faithful to the activities of the congregation, be loyal to the leadership, tithe, and be faithful in serving the congregation.

It is possible to attend the congregation without being a member.

#### *Characteristics of adult members:*

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| 1. Jewish.....                                      | 60 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....             | 7  |
| 3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship .....    | 18 |
| 4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship ..... | 5  |

*Changes in membership since 1989:* The congregation numbered 15 people in 1989. Of the present members 35 have come to faith through the work of the congregation. Since 1996 26 immigrants from the former USSR have joined; of these about half were believers before immigrating from the former USSR; the others have come to faith in Israel.

A few people have left the congregation for personal and other reasons, among them Avi Mizrahi (5-01), who was part of the leadership committee from 1992-1994.

### **Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday morning at 11:00 am.

*Attendance:* Average number about 140; of these 35 are children; about 35 are non-members who attend the congregation regularly.

*Description of the service:* The service is non-liturgical, but elements from the Sidur are occasionally used, such as the Shm'a, and the weekly Torah portion. Both the Tanakh and NT are used with no preference to either one. The sermon lasts for about 45 minutes and can be both topical and expository depending on the preacher, who normally is one of the two elders.

The *language used* is Hebrew with translation into Russian and English.

*Communion* is celebrated once a month and ministered to all who are baptized. The passage on the Lord's Supper in 1. Corinthians 11 is often read together with a text from one of the gospels. A short introduction is given.

*Women* play an active role in the service; they are not asked to teach the congregation, but they can teach children.

*Children's classes:* During the service 5 children's classes are held.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* There are 3 home groups; 2 of these are conducted in Hebrew and one is for women, 1 is in Russian; there is a weekly discipleship group. Thursday there is a youth meeting and Friday a prayer meeting. The congregation does street evangelism and hands out literature. The congregation is involved in the work of Pro-Life and in running a crisis center, it has a food bank and a used-clothing distribution.

### **Cooperation**

The congregation is open to cooperation with other congregations. Since 1998 the youth work is done in cooperation with Brit Olam, Tel Aviv (5-05). Guest speakers are invited only 6 times a year as the leadership prefers to give potential leaders an opportunity to teach during the weekly service.

### **Finances**

A little more than 50 percent of the expenses are covered by donations received in Israel. The congregation receives some support from England, Germany, and Korea from individual people.

The pastor receives his salary from the congregation; two other people are employed half time. Ten percent of the income is used on humanitarian work outside Israel; ministries in Israel that have been supported are Pro-Life, and Ebenezer Home, among others.

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*Interview with Tony Sperandeo, 20 October 1998.*

*Other sources: Israel Update April 1989; November 1990; November 1991.*

*Media: Tzomet Hasharon 03.11.95.*

4-04

## Modi'in House Group

Modi'in

*Name:* No official name.

*Category:* House group.

*Status:* Not an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In private homes.

### History and description

*Founded* in 1998. During 1997 and 1998 several families of Jewish believers in Jesus and individuals had moved to Modi'in and decided to come together for regular weekly meetings of prayer and Bible study. The group meets every Tuesday and members take turn hosting the meeting. The *language used* is Hebrew. The teaching has been done partly by people from outside the group that have been invited, partly by members from the group.

Members take turns writing a monthly letter for the group. The letter includes a schedule of where the meetings are held, prayer items, and a short devotional piece. The group is made up of mainly young Israeli couples, many with children. Often group members celebrate the Jewish holidays together and come together for picnics and other social events.

The group is considering becoming a congregation and moving the weekly meeting to Saturday. They will then also include programs for the children. At the moment the group meets once a month on a Friday evening and includes the children in the meeting. The decision to become a congregation partly depends on finding a suitable place to meet.

### Membership

The Modi'in house group has 26 members, not including 15 children. About half of the members are also members of another congregation; some belong to HaMaayan (4-03), some to Keren Yeshuah (5-10) and some to Beit Immanuel (5-03).

*Characteristics of adults members:*

(only those that are not members of another congregation):

- |                                                     |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Jewish.....                                      | 10 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....             | 3  |
| 3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship .....    | 0  |
| 4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship ..... | 0  |

### Latest development

As of May 1999, 3 temporary elders have been elected for a 6 month period while the group moves from being a home group to becoming a congregation.

The weekly meeting has been moved to Saturday afternoon and now includes a children's meeting.

~~~~~

*Information by telephone with members of the group, 23 February/15 June 1999.*

4-05

Rehovot Ethiopian Congregation

Rehovot

*Name:* No official name.  
*Category:* Congregation.  
*Legal status:* Not an amutah.  
*Meeting place:* In a private home.

**History**  
(For the general outline of the history, theology and style of worship of the Ethiopian community in Israel, see 5-06).  
*Founded* at the end of 1997 when members of the Haifa Ethiopian Congregation (3-07), but living in Rehovot, decided to become an independent group. In 1999 the group considered merging with the Haifa Ethiopian Congregation again, but the leadership there felt it was unwise because the integration into Hebrew-speaking fellowship was further ahead in the Haifa group; it was thus decided to remain separate.  
The congregation is independent of the Ethiopian Jewish Messianic Congregation in Jaffa (5-06).

**Membership**  
In 1999 Rehovot Ethiopian Congregation had, according to our estimate, 25 members. This number does not include 20 children.

- Characteristics of adults members (our estimate):*
- |   |    |
|---|----|
| 1. Jewish.....                          | 24 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew..... | 1  |

*Attendance:* The number of attendance is similar to that of members and totals 45. Of these 20 are children.

~~~~~  
*Information through members of the Ethiopian community in Israel, January 1999.*

4-06

Rishon Letzion Russian Fellowship

Rishon  
Letzion

*Name:* No official name.  
*Category:* Congregation.  
*Legal status:* Not an amutah.  
*Meeting place:* In a private home.

**History**

*Founded* in 1998. For the history, theology and leadership of the congregation, see 5-14.

**Membership**

In 1999 the Russian Fellowship in Rishon Letzion had 30 members; this number does not include 5 children.

A *membership list* does not exist. Members are recognized according to regular attendance. Baptism is encouraged but not a requirement for membership.

|                                          |    |
|------------------------------------------|----|
| <i>Characteristics of adult members:</i> |    |
| 1. Jewish.....                           | 22 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....  | 8  |

**Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

Weekly services are held Thursday and Friday evening. The Friday meeting is the more formal of the two and includes Communion.

*Attendance:* Average number about 20; 5 of these are children.

*Description of service:* The service is conducted in Hebrew with translation into Russian. The order of the service is similar to that of 5-14.

~~~~~

*Interview* by telephone with Eli Levi, 25 May 1999.



## District 5: Tel Aviv

5-01

### Adonai Ro'i

Central Tel Aviv

*Name:* יהוה רעי קהילת; Kehilat Adonai Roi ("The Lord is My Shepherd Congregation" – Psalm 23:1)

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Amutah.

*Meeting place:* Since 1999 in large, rented facilities in the center of Tel Aviv.

#### History

*Founded* 25 July, 1996. The founder and leader has been in leadership positions in other Messianic congregations in the Tel Aviv area. At the time of foundation he was a member of the international congregation, King of Kings, in Jerusalem (8-03). He saw a need to form another Messianic congregation in the heart of Tel Aviv and felt called like Jonah to "go back to the city." In establishing the congregation he received practical and spiritual help from the leadership of King of Kings and was for the first year under their supervision.

*Harassment:* The pastor of Adonai Roi is also the executive manager of the ministry and the staff of Dugit, a Messianic Outreach Center with a bookshop and cafe in the center of Tel Aviv. The congregation is therefore frequently associated with Dugit and is the object of the same harassment. Posters and articles in local papers as well as telephone threats are examples of anti-missionary activities against the center and the congregation. Graffiti with swastika have also been painted on the walls of the building.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Avi Mizrachi together with his wife Chaya.

*Key person(s) 1998:* Avi and Chaya Mizrachi and three other couples.

#### Theological character

Charismatic and evangelical with an emphasis on reaching new people through evangelism. The congregation seeks to be a local Hebrew-speaking congregation with a Messianic and Israeli expression, following the Jewish calendar and using Jewish symbols but not applying any rabbinic traditions. The Jewish holidays are celebrated and also seen as a tool for evangelism. None of the church holidays are celebrated.

*A statement of faith exists; it is identical with the statement for Dugit (8-01).*

*Baptism* is ministered to those who come to faith and then ask for baptism. They are then given a lesson on what baptism is. It often takes place at a beach by the Mediterranean where it can also be a testimony for other people.

### **Leadership**

Adonai Roi is led by the founder; he serves as the pastor. Three other men are in training to become elders. The leadership group meets every second week for prayer and planning. Once a month the men are joined by their wives who then are part of the leadership.

Avi Mizrachi's family came from Bulgaria to Israel in 1948. Through the renowned Bulgarian Chief Rabbi Daniel Zion (1883-1979) and his ministry as a Jesus-believer in Israel, Avi Mizrachi's mother and later his sister came to faith. In 1984 after finishing his army service Avi Mizrachi traveled in the USA and came to faith while visiting his sister in Florida. From 1986-87 he attended Christ for the Nations Bible College in Dallas, Texas. He has pastoral experience from his work with Dugit, from being on the leadership team in Hama'ayan (4-03) for a time after 1992, and in Brit Olam Fellowship (5-05) for a period after 1995.

*Women* cannot serve as pastors or elders. They are encouraged to take up positions in the congregations under the supervision of the pastor.

### **Membership**

In 1998 Adonai Roi had 55 members. This number does not include 15 children.

*A membership list* does not exist. At the moment baptism is not a requirement for membership.

#### *Characteristics of adult members:*

1. Jewish.....	23
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....	5
3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship .....	0
4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship .....	27

*Changes in membership since 1996:* When the group began they were less than 10. New people have joined through evangelism. A few have come from other congregations in the area and others again were believers but not in a fellowship before joining Adonai Roi.

### **Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday evening from 5:00-7:30 pm.

*Attendance:* Average number is 55; of these 15 are children. From time to time a group of visitors attend but on an average no more than 5.

*Description of the service:* It is non-liturgical; the service is opened with the

singing of the Shm'a, after which 45 minutes are spent on prayer and worship; then follows a short teaching on the weekly Torah portion; after the offering is taken and before the sermon the children are dismissed. The sermon lasts for 40 minutes. It can be both expository and topical dealing with issues relevant for the life of the congregation at the moment.

*The language used* is Hebrew with translation into English.

*Communion:* Celebrated once a month, but plans are to have it more often; no communion liturgy is used but often the passage on the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11 is read. Communion is ministered to believers only but baptism is not a requirement.

*Women* are allowed to pray and bring testimony; they can also read the weekly Torah portion.

*Children's classes:* During the sermon there is a nursery, a children's class and a class for the youth.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* In December 1998 there were 4 home groups all with an emphasis on fellowship. One meets in Petah Tikva; in 2 others the language used is English. The pastor plans to join all the groups for a common course to give a new start to the home groups. After the course they will break into home groups again.

There is a weekly youth meeting; a women's group meets on Tuesdays; evangelistic outreach is done together with Dugit.

The congregation regularly meets once a month on Friday evening for a Kabbalat Shabbat service.

*Social work:* Part of the new facilities dedicated in December 1998 is used for a used clothes distribution center. It is run as an independent ministry.

## Cooperation

The congregation is open to cooperation with other congregations. Up through the 1990s the pastor has organized evangelistic outreach programs from Dugit in cooperation with members of Beit Immanuel (5-03), Brit Olam (5-05) haMa'ayan (4-03), the Ramat Hasharon Congregation (5-12) and international evangelistic teams, among them, Youth With a Mission (YWAM).

Once a month there is a guest speaker. The congregation and its leaders take part in national events, and Avi Mizrachi has served as Chairman of the National Evangelistic Committee.

## Finances

The pastor estimates that half of the expenses are covered through donations in Israel, mainly through the congregation. The other 50 percent comes from abroad, mainly the USA. The main expense is the monthly rent of the facilities the congregation moved into in December 1998.

The pastor is not paid by the congregation but raises his support from abroad. Ten percent of what is donated by the congregation is given to work in Israel; money has been given to the Ebenezer Home and to the Ethiopian

Messianic Jewish community.

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*Interview with Avi Mizrachi, 14 December 1998.*

*Other sources: Shalom from Israel: A newsletter from Avi & Chaya Mizrachi.*

*Media: Hamodi'a 10.03.92.*

5-02

## Beit Elion

Jaffa

*Name:* בית עליון; Beit Elion ("House of the Most High").

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Not an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In rented premises belonging to Norwegian Church Ministry to Israel (5-08).

### History

*Founded* in 1994. The founder and present leader came to faith in Russia in 1985 and while still living in Moscow he pastored a Russian Pentecostal congregation. When immigrating to Israel he felt called from God to continue ministry work in Israel and looked for ways to establish a congregation.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Leonid Odesky.

*Key person(s) 1998:* Leonid Odesky.

### Theological character

The leader's background is Russian Pentecostal but some of the members come from a Russian Baptist background; the difference is not seen as a problem. The Jewish holidays are considered as having their fulfillment in the Messiah, but they are celebrated as a way of being "a Jew to the Jews." The church holidays are celebrated and are seen as an important part of the life of the congregation. It is also a way of identifying with the church at large, of which they understand themselves to be a part. A Christmas tree is put up in the Lutheran congregation house where they worship and this is welcomed by some of the members who come from a tradition in which a tree was also part of the Christmas celebrations.

*A statement of faith* does not exist and the leader does not believe that faith can be expressed in a formula.

*Baptism:* Candidates receive basic instruction before baptism; Hebrews 6 is understood as an important expression of what baptism is. Baptism takes place either at the Mediterranean or in the Jordan River.

**Leadership**

Beit Elion is led by the founder and pastor. No leadership group has yet been established, but one person has been appointed to lead the children’s work; another to lead worship. In the near future they plan to ordain a deacon. The pastor has previous pastoral experience from his time in the former USSR although he has no formal theological education; his professional background is as a computer technician but since immigrating to Israel in 1994 he has worked as a guard.

*Women* cannot serve as elders, nor can they teach others. But they do take active part in the life of the congregation.

**Membership**

In January 1999, Beit Elion had 30 members. This number does not include 15 children.

A *membership list* does not exist. Members are recognized by their active participation in the life of the congregation. A person is considered a member from the age of 14.

*Characteristics of adult members:*

- 1. Jewish..... 30

According to the understanding of the pastor all of the 30 members are Jews and he does not wish to divide members into categories, not even for the sake of statistics.

*Changes in membership since 1994:* When the group began there were 4 people all together. About 15 of the new members were believers before coming to Israel. The rest have come to faith through the work of the congregation.

**Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Thursday evening from 7:00-10:00 pm.

*Attendance:* Average number about 30. Of these 10 are children.

*Description of the service:* The service begins with a time of prayer (45 minutes), followed by songs, including also Hebrew songs, and a short message to the children. The sermon, which usually is based on NT texts, is 60 minutes.

*The language used* is Russian.

*Communion* is celebrated once a month.

*Women* can take active part in the different parts of the service, but they cannot teach.

*Children’s classes:* During the service a children’s class is held.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* On Sundays there is a home group that meets for Bible study. About 20 people attend.

### Cooperation

The leader gave the following names of congregation they have worked with: Even Ysrael (1-04), the Akko Congregation (2-02), and Grace and Truth Christian Assembly (4-02).

### Finances

The congregation pays a small rent for the use of the facilities and for transportation. The pastor does not receive a salary from the congregation. The congregation is not supported by any organization from abroad.

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*Interview with Leonid Odesky together with an interpreter, 20 January 1999.*

5-03

## Beit Immanuel

Jaffa

*Name:* קהילת בית עמנואל; Kehilat Beit Immanuel; Immanuel House Congregation.

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Amutah.

*Meeting place:* In facilities belonging to the Israel Trust of the Anglican Church (ITAC).

### History

*Founded* in the late 1960s/beginning of the 1970s. The present Hebrew-speaking congregation grew out of the Anglican, English-speaking congregation, which in the 1960s held services in the Immanuel Lutheran Church (5-08) across the street from Beit Immanuel. Since 1927 Beit Immanuel was owned by ITAC.

Henry Knight arrived in Israel in 1967 and began work in Hebrew around 1970 as part of the Anglican ministry. The Book of Common Prayer, translated into Hebrew, was used, as were English hymns translated into Hebrew. Only a few people participated and most of them were Holocaust survivors. In 1977 two American Mennonites joined the work, Roy Kreider and Paul Swarr, both of whom had been in Israel since the 1950s. Roy Kreider came in 1953 and Paul Swarr in 1957. In the mid-1980s Bill Bjoraker came to assist in the work after Roy Kreider fell ill.

The congregation experienced growth in the late 1970s and in 1980 counted as many as 120 members, more than half of whom were locals and many were young people. The language went from English to Hebrew and the style of worship from Anglican to non-denominational and charismatic. The culture changed; meetings were held on Saturday rather than Sunday and the church holidays were no longer celebrated. Instead Jewish holidays were recognized.

Following some difficulties in the late 1980s Bill Bjoraker resigned as pastor.

In 1988, he turned the leadership over to the present pastor, David Lazarus. In 1989 Tony Sperandeo, who was part of the leadership, was sent out from the congregation to start a new group in Kfar Saba (4-03). Part of the leadership at that time were several up-coming persons in the Messianic movement in Israel, among them Ilan Zamir and Israel Harel.

The congregation experienced a growth in number again in the beginning of the 1990s and is said to have numbered around 60 in 1992.

*Harassment:* The compound and the whole neighborhood in which the congregation meets is perceived as a "church" neighborhood. It is part of the history of the area and the community is tolerant towards the Christian presence. However, the congregation was mentioned in a very sarcastic and negative newspaper article in 1991.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Henry Knight, Paul Swarr and Roy Kreider.

*Key person(s) 1998:* David Lazarus.

### Theological character

Evangelical, non-denominational and charismatic with an openness towards the current move of the Holy Spirit as expressed in Toronto and other places in the world. The congregation grew out of work initiated by Anglican missionaries but has become a local Messianic congregation with no official or theological links to the Anglican Church.

The congregation has moved towards a more Jewish expression and the major Jewish holidays are now celebrated by the congregation on the day of the feast. None of the church holidays are celebrated.

*A statement of faith* does exist. It is very brief and concentrates on Jesus' atoning work on the cross, "to bless Israel and the whole world." Jesus is also said to be responsible for pouring out "his Holy Spirit" on those who believe, thus enabling them to receive eternal life. The first paragraph stresses the authority of Scripture.

*Baptism* can take place when a person confesses faith in Jesus as Messiah. It is normally preceded by instruction but exceptions from this are made. No importance is attached to the place of the baptism. Often a place on the beach of Tel Aviv is used.

### Leadership

Beit Immanuel Congregation is led by the pastor who works closely with a group of young people considered to be in training for leadership. There has been no official appointment of leaders; rather, they have been chosen by the pastor based on their active involvement. The group was established in 1996.

David Lazarus has 3 years of formal theological training in the USA from 1985-1987, 2 years at Gordon College and 1 year at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena. He also attended the Eastern Mennonite Seminary for one semester.

*Women* cannot serve as pastors or elders. Presently, none of the people in leadership training are women.

### Membership

In 1998 the congregation had 70 members. This number does not include 35 children.

*A membership list exists.*

#### *Characteristics of adult members:*

1. Jewish.....	45
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....	24
3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship.....	0
4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship.....	1

*Changes in membership over the last 10 years:* At the end of the 1980s the congregation had 120 members. In 1989 about 70 members left and formed a new congregation in Kfar Saba under the leadership of Tony Sperandio who until then had been one of the elders in Beit Immanuel. Many of those who left were from the Kfar Saba area, but not all. In 1995 many people left the congregation because of its openness towards the Toronto Movement and only 12 members remained after the split.

Most of the new members are new immigrants; about 25 are from Russia, 10 from Bulgaria, 12 from Armenia, and 10 are Israelis.

### Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities

A weekly service is held on Friday evening which lasts 3-4 hours.

*Attendance:* Average number about 100; of these 35 are children. About 10 are non-members that attend regularly.

*Description of the service:* Since the service is held on Friday evening it begins with lighting the Sabbath candles. No other elements are used regularly; sometimes the Shm'a is recited. The service is expressively charismatic. The sermon can be both topical and expository, both Tanakh and NT texts are used.

*The language used* is Hebrew with translation into Russian.

*Communion* is not usually celebrated during the weekly service but more often in the framework of the home groups. Only baptized members are encouraged to participate.

*Women* can lead worship; during the service they can minister with prophetic gifts.

*Children's classes:* During the service 3 children's classes are held.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* There is a weekly prayer meeting on Sundays in which about 35 people attend; there are regular youth activities and the congregation is involved in evangelistic outreach. Several times a year congregational retreats and picnics are held.



### Cooperation

The congregation participates in national events together with other congregations; the pastor participates in both local and national leadership events. Guest speakers are invited about 6 times a year.

### Finances

About 80 percent of the expenses are covered by donations given as tithes and offerings in the congregation; 20 percent are donations from abroad. The pastor and an evangelist receive a salary from the congregation. The congregation has supported evangelistic work in the Ukraine and in Armenia.

### The premises

Part of the premises is used as a hostel run by ITAC; from 1982 to 1989 they housed a study center for the Messianic movement also run by ITAC. King of Kings College used the premises 1992-1998 both for classes and for boarding students.

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*Interview with David Lazarus, 23 October 1998.*

*Other sources: Israel Update February, April, and June 1990; January and July 1990; August, November 1991; March 1992. UCCI News 2/1979:20-21; 1/1980:29-32; 2/1984:22, 2/1985:32-33, 2/1987:12-15.*

*Media: Roshi (Tel Aviv) 11.04.91.*

5-04

## Beit Sar Shalom

Jaffa

*Name:* בית שר שלום; Beit Sar Shalom ("House of the Prince of Peace" – Isaiah 9:5).

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Amutah.

*Meeting place:* In rented premises belonging to the Norwegian Church Ministry to Israel (5-08).

### History

*Founded* in 1993. The group began as a Bible study group in Russian in the center of Tel Aviv on the premises of Dugit Gallery & Messianic Center. In 1993 they moved to the house of Ya'akov Damkani and organized as a congregation. Since 1994 the congregation has met in the congregation house of the Immanuel Church in Jaffa. The congregation has also rented an office in Kfar Saba.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Albert Israeli together with others.

*Key person(s) 1998:* Michael Zinn and two other Russian believers.

### **Theological character**

Baptist in doctrine and non-charismatic. Its primary goal is to reach the Jewish people with the gospel; there is an emphasis on being a Messianic, Jewish congregation. The holidays are celebrated on the Sabbath closest to the feast rather than on the eve of the holiday; they are understood as having been fulfilled in the Messiah. The congregation does not celebrate church holidays, but individual members do celebrate Christmas.

The *statement of faith* is identical with the statement for the American-based organization Chosen People Ministries, which supports the congregation.

*Baptism* takes place in the Jordan or in the baptistery of the Immanuel Church. Candidates are given two lessons of instruction prior to baptism.

### **Leadership**

Beit Sar Shalom is led by a pastor and two elders. All three are Russian immigrants. The congregation elects the leaders. The pastor, an engineer by profession, immigrated in 1989; he has attended the King of Kings Bible College in Jaffa. One elder, also an engineer by profession, immigrated in 1990 and came to faith in Israel in 1992. The other, a musician, immigrated in 1991; he had come to faith already while in Russia.

*Women* cannot serve as elders but they can be deaconesses.

### **Membership**

Beit Sar Shalom has 45 members, 15 of which meet separately in Jerusalem at the Shalhevetiyah Center (1-15). The number does not include 10 children.

*A membership list* exists. Members have to be baptized.

#### *Characteristics of adult members:*

- |                                         |    |
|-----------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Jewish.....                          | 30 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew..... | 15 |

*Changes in membership over the last 5 years:* In 1993 there were between 10-15 members. All the new members are Russian immigrants who have moved to Israel over the last 10 years. More than half of them have come to faith through the work of the congregation; the others came to the country as believers. Some members have moved to other parts of the country. A few have left the congregation because of theological or other reasons.

### **Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday evening from 7:30-9:30 pm.

*Attendance:* Average number is 50; of these 8 are children.

*Description of the service:* The service opens with music, then a time of worship (25 minutes), followed by preaching (45 minutes), and songs and prayer. The Shm'a is always recited and sometimes the Lord's Prayer is used.

The *language used* is Russian with songs in both Hebrew and Russian. No translation is provided regularly.

*Communion:* Celebrated once a month; no communion liturgy is used but the passage on the Lord's Supper from 1. Corinthians 11 is read. Baptism is a requirement. Children are not encouraged to take communion.

*Women* can pray during the service. They cannot preach and do not take part in the distribution of bread and wine.

*Children's classes:* During the service a children's class is held, conducted in Russian and Hebrew.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* On Tuesdays there is a Bible study for the whole congregation. One of the leaders conducts a home group in Bat Yam on Wednesdays and in Ariel on Thursdays. On Monday one or more of the leaders conducts a service with the group in Jerusalem. It is hoped that the group of 15 adults will eventually develop into a congregation.

On Friday there is an evangelistic outreach and two evangelistic tours are organized, one to Jerusalem, one in Old Jaffa. At the end of the tours people are invited to the congregation's meetings.

### Cooperation

The congregation is in close contact with other congregations in the area, both Russian and Hebrew-speaking. Guest speakers are used 8-10 times a year. Some are local pastors, others from abroad.

### Finances

Members are encouraged to tithe. The congregation pays a small amount for the rent of the meeting place. The pastor is employed by Chosen People Ministries, who also pay two elders a part-time salary.

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*Interview with L.B., 25 January 1999.*

5-05

## Brit Olam

Central Tel Aviv

*Name:* עולם ברית; קהילת ברית עולם; Kehilat Brit Olam ("Eternal Covenant Congregation" - Genesis 17:7).

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Amutah.

*Meeting place:* In rented facilities in a hotel.

## History

*Founded* in January 1993. A group broke away from Immanuel Congregation, Jaffa, because of disagreement over the vision of the congregation in the transition from a foreign mission-led congregation to a local self-governing congregation. In the eyes of the foreign mission, the Norwegian Church Ministry to Israel (NCMI), the transition was complicated by decisions made by locals and expatriates concerning selling and buying of property. At its inception the congregation had 15 members; it met in a park in Tel Aviv and was nicknamed the Park Church. In 1995 they started meeting at a hotel for their weekly meeting on Saturday. The congregation is looking for a permanent meeting place where they can host the weekly meeting and other activities.

*Harassment:* The congregation has moved its weekly meeting from a previous hotel due to pressure on the hotel manager.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Andy Ball, David Decker, and Haim Knoll.

*Key person(s) 1998:* Andy Ball, Luke Henrist, and Faith Russell.

## Theological character

Evangelical and non-denominational, open to charismatic elements in the service; there is an emphasis on evangelism. In the choice of name the congregation seeks to express the global aspect of the fellowship of believers in the Messiah by underlining that Brit Olam in Hebrew also means "world covenant." This is reflected in the constitution: "Brit Olam also reminds us of the universal scope of God's love to all the people of the world (Genesis 9:11-17; John 3:16)."

No strong theological emphasis on Jewish tradition exists; the content of the Jewish holidays is normally emphasized in the teaching but the holidays are not necessarily celebrated in the congregation. Of the church holidays Christmas is celebrated.

*Constitution and by-laws* exist in a detailed document of 17 pages. The document was made in 1993-1994 with the assistance Torleif Elgvin, the then director of Caspari Center. After the Preamble comes the constitution with 11 articles: 1. Name. 2. Purpose: "... to worship ...To provide spiritual and practical encouragement to all those of like-minded faith ... To obey the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20, Rom 1:16) ... To promote greater unity and strength within the whole body of the Messiah in Israel and on this earth...". 3. Prerogative: "... the congregation shall have the right to govern itself according to the standards of the Holy Scriptures ...". 4. The tenets of faith are divided into 12 paragraphs: 4.1. The Scripture Inspired. 4.2. The One True God: "... the one true God has revealed Himself as the eternally self-existent 'I AM' the Creator of heaven and earth and the redeemer of mankind. He has further revealed Himself as embodying the principles of relationship and association as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit ... Together with the Body of the Messiah

worldwide, we confess the words of The Nicene and Apostolic Creeds ...". 4.3. The Deity of the Lord Jesus the Messiah: "... the Lord Jesus is the unique, eternal Son of God. The Scriptures declare: A. He is the creator of Heaven and earth (John 1:1-18). B. His virgin birth...". 4.4. Man, His Fall. 4.5. The Salvation of Man. 4.6. Sanctification. 4.7. Baptism in water: "... Messianic immersion (baptism) is the end-time sign of incorporation into the people of God. Sinful man is, through the figure of baptism, united with the death and resurrection of the Messiah and in faith raised to new life." 4.8. Communion. 4.9. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit; 4.10. The Church and its Mission; 4.11. God's Judgements. 4.12. The blessed hope of the Church: "... the second coming of Christ includes the rapture of the saints, which is our blessed hope, followed by the visible return of Christ with his saints to reign on the earth for one thousand years ...".

5. Membership: "Membership in this assembly shall be eligible to all those who give evidence of their faith in the Lord Jesus our Messiah, a sincere desire to live according to his will and his glory; and the evidence of a consistent moral and Christian character and life. They must voluntarily subscribe to its tenets of faith and agree to be governed by its constitution and by-laws, and meet the membership requirements set forth in the by-laws." 6. Governments: Ministry team with elders/pastors and deacons and other officers with the following qualifications: "They shall be living a consistent Christian life. Meeting the qualifications as set forth in the by-laws of this fellowship." 7. Meetings. 8. Departments and Committees. 9. Finances. 10. Property. 11. Amendments. The "By-laws" make up 9 pages of the document.

*Baptism* is preceded by formal instruction of 1-2 months up to 6 months depending on the individual. The preferred site for baptism is the Jordan River.

## Leadership

According to its constitution the congregation is led by a ministry team of at least three members called deacons/deaconesses and elected by the congregation's members with the responsibility of overseeing all aspects of the congregational life, both spiritual and practical. The team chooses the elders, among them the pastor.

The present pastor, who has two years of Bible School training from Heritage University, Charlotte, USA, is employed by the foreign embassy and has been in Israel for 7 years.

Andy Ball is a second-generation Messianic believer of a Romanian family. His father, Isidor Ball, served as a deacon in the Immanuel Lutheran Church (5-08) and from 1969-1982 managed the Bible book shop in Tel Aviv, at that time run by NCMI. By profession Andy Ball is a goldsmith but since the mid-1980s he has worked as the manager of the Bible book shop now run by the Israeli Bible Society.

*Women* can be on the ministry team but cannot serve as elders.

## Membership

In 1998 Brit Olam had 50 members. This number does not include 13 children.

A *membership list* exists; regular (non-voting) members can obtain full membership after a year; new members are accepted by the ministry team; they need to be baptized and fully subscribe to the tenets of faith and be 18 years of age or older. A person does not have to be a Jew in order to be a member. All legal inhabitants of Israel (tourist/resident/citizen) can obtain membership.

### *Characteristics of adult members:*

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| 1. Jewish.....                                      | 35 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew .....            | 5  |
| 3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship .....    | 5  |
| (of these 2 are Arabs/Palestinian)                  |    |
| 4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship ..... | 5  |

*Changes in membership since 1993:* The congregation began with 15 people. About 10 new members have joined through evangelistic outreach by the congregation; another 10 have joined after moving from other parts of the country. A group of about 15 people left due to disagreement over leadership and later formed a new congregation (5-01).

## Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities

A weekly service is held on Saturday morning from 10:00 am-12:30 pm.

*Attendance:* Average number 80. Of these are 10 children, 10 non-members and 15-20 tourists/visitors.

*Description of the service:* It is non-liturgical; after a time of informal singing the actual worship begins with prayer and confession of sins. This is followed by either a time of reflection, prayer and singing or – when communion is shared – preparation for Communion. During the time of the sermon, which lasts for 45-60 minutes, the children go to their classes.

The *language used* is Hebrew with translation into English (or vice versa); when needed translation into other languages is provided.

*Communion:* Celebrated once a month on the first Saturday of the month; no communion liturgy is used. It is ministered to people who have accepted Yeshua as Lord and Savior. Children may take communion on the parents' decision.

*Women* can read the Scriptures and pray aloud during service; they cannot teach in the service but can lead Bible study groups.

*Children's classes:* During the service 2 children's classes are held.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* 1 weekly Bible study group for adults with emphasis on teaching and prayer; a weekly youth Bible study group, and a weekly prayer meeting.

### Cooperation

The congregation is open to cooperation with other congregations and entities; members are encouraged to participate in nationally-organized events. Guest speakers are invited to preach 1-2 times a month.

### Finances

The congregation pays 50 percent of the expenses themselves, 50 percent comes from donations from abroad. The congregation pays for a half-time secretary. None of the elders are financially supported by the congregation.

Money is donated to Ebenezer Home, Haifa, and the Fellowship of Christian Students in Israel.

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*Interview with Andy Ball, October 1998.*

5-06

## Ethiopian Jewish Messianic Congregation

Jaffa

*Name:* The Ethiopian Jewish Messianic Congregation in Israel.

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Amutah.

*Meeting place:* In rented facilities belonging to the Norwegian Church Mission to Israel (NCMI).

### History of the Amharic-speaking Ethiopian congregations in Israel

The following is based on information given by members of the Amharic-speaking Ethiopian congregations in Israel. It has not been presented to the leaders for their approval. There are a lot of similarities between the Amharic-speaking congregations in Israel with regard to their history, their theology and their style of worship and therefore this will be dealt with here under the Ethiopian Jewish Messianic Congregation (EJMC), which in 1999 was the largest of the Amharic-speaking congregations in the country. Figures and other details on the other congregations that are independent of the EJMC are dealt with under 1-06, 1-07, 3-06, 3-07, 4-05.

In connection with Operation Moses in 1984-1985 Jesus-believing Ethiopians came to the country under the Law of Return. Because of their common background and faith as well as a similar style of worship, and not least a common language, it was natural for them to come together as a fellowship. Already in 1984-1985 an Amharic-speaking group was formed in Jerusalem and in Netanya. From 1985 the fellowship in Netanya grew under the leadership of one of the members of the Ethiopian community. The group had a close

relationship to the Hebrew-speaking congregation in Netanya, Beit Asaf (4-01). The leader had been actively involved in bringing Ethiopian Jews to Israel and even though he himself was not Jewish he was given permission to come together with others who had also been instrumental in Operation Moses. Among those who arrived with Operation Solomon in 1991 there were also a number of Jesus believers.

In 1991 the group that started in Netanya began to hold meetings in Jaffa and also established themselves with an office there. The leader left the country around the same time, finding it too difficult to remain because of his status as a non-Jew. A new leader was chosen who remained in that position until 1996.

In 1995 the present leader of the Jaffa/Netanya group arrived in Israel and joined the congregation. He soon assumed a prominent position in the group. At this time the work of writing up a constitution for the congregation and constituting election procedures were undertaken. As a result of the initial election held in 1996 for the position of leader, the previous leader was chosen to continue the work. However, he expressed a wish to resign and as a result of that the present leader, who received second place in the election took over the responsibility of the congregation for a period of 2 years. These two years were meant as a trial period and it was decided to review the constitution again in 1998. At the end of that period several members expressed dissatisfaction with the leadership and the general situation in the congregation. After advice expressed by an Ethiopian evangelist living in the USA but visiting Israel at that time the group decided to ask the present leader to continue and only conduct new elections the elders. The decision resulted in several people leaving the congregation. Most of them have since found their way into a Hebrew-speaking congregation.

Prior to these, and independent of them, other Amharic-speaking congregations had been formed in other places in Israel. A number of the members of the group in Haifa were living in Nazareth and would meet there during the week joining the Haifa group for the weekly service. Among those living in Nazareth was also the leader of the group until 1998. The Rehovot (4-05) congregation was started in 1997 by people who initially were part of the Haifa group but decided to leave and form their own fellowship.

Among the challenges facing the Amharic-speaking fellowships are the questions of integration into the Israeli society and the transfer from Amharic to Hebrew. Related to these issue is that of the next generation of whom many prefer to speak Hebrew and some only understand little Amharic. The whole concept of children and youth work has not been developed within the Amharic-speaking fellowships and as a result of that the second generation is only little involved.

People involved in or close to the Amharic-speaking congregations will often quote very different figures for the number of both members and attendance in the congregations. In the German language magazine "Nachrichten aus Israel"



(NAI) from January 1997 the leader of the Amharic-speaking work in Jaffa sets the number of Ethiopian Jewish believers to 600. In a brochure printed in 1999 by the community the number is given at 400. Others prefer to be much more moderate and will set the total number of Jewish Amharic speaking believers at 150.

Amharic-speaking congregations tend to keep a low profile to avoid the attention of the surroundings and the authorities. An incident in March of 1999 serves as a good example of the reasons why this is so. A newspaper article mentions a meeting in Ashdod where the anti-missionary organization Lev L'Achim held a meeting attended by a number of mostly highly-respected Ethiopian religious leaders, as well as the deputy mayor and the chief rabbi of the city. The agenda of the meeting was to discuss the subject of missionary activities in the Ethiopian community in Israel. At the end of the meeting, according to the press, joint action was decided upon "to act against the pestilence of the activities of the mission ... and to maintain a strong connection between Lev L'Achim, the Ethiopian community and the members of the Shas party who are doing much on the subject of the mission."

### **Theological character**

The Ethiopian fellowships are all very similar to one another and to evangelical, Pentecostal fellowships in Ethiopia. The revival in Ethiopia which fostered many of the evangelical, Pentecostal fellowships there was to a large extent an indigenous revival and not linked to foreign denominational mission organizations.

There is only little influence of the Jewish, Israeli context in the congregations both when it comes to their theology and to their style of worship. The Jewish holidays are not celebrated although none of the church holidays are celebrated either.

### **Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

*Description of the service:* The style of worship found in all the Amharic-speaking fellowships in Israel resembles very closely the style found in evangelical Pentecostal congregation in Ethiopia. Even though several of the fellowship have been in existence in Israel for 10 year or more they have only been influenced by the Jewish/Israeli culture to a very little degree. Some resemblance to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church can be detected in the clapping of hands and the body movement. Both communal singing and songs performed by a choir take a prominent place in the service. The teaching will easily last 60 minutes.

The *language used* is Amharic with no translation. In the congregations where there is a desire to integrate Hebrew songs might be used. In the other group all is done in Amharic, including all songs used.

*Communion:* Very little importance is attached to Communion; it is not a

regular feature of the service and is shared only 3-4 times a year.

*Children's classes:* There is no special program or classes for children.

### Membership

In 1999 the Ethiopian Jewish Messianic Congregation had, according to our estimate, 55 members. This number does not include children nor does it include non-Jewish Amharic-speaking people who regularly attend the meetings.

*Characteristics of adult members (our estimate):*

- |                                         |    |
|-----------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Jewish.....                          | 35 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew..... | 20 |

### Latest developments

In a letter of 3 June 1999 the elders of the congregation informed friends and supporters of their decision to suspend the pastor for a 6 months period because of what they describe as spiritual and administrative mismanagement and misuse of his position.

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*Information* through members of the Ethiopian community in Israel, January/May 1999.

*Media:* Itton Yerushalayim 18.06.99

5-07

## Har Zion

Jaffa

*Name:* קהילת הר ציון; Kehilat Har Tzion ("Mount Zion Congregation").

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Not an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In rented facilities.

### History

In 1998 Dominique Bierman was asked by the previous pastor to help with the pastoral work of the international Spanish-speaking congregation in the Tel Aviv area. The congregation had gone through a leadership crisis that resulted, among other things, in the congregation being removed from the legal framework of the Baptist Convention in Israel. Prior to that the congregation was part of the amutah of the Baptist Convention in Israel. Since the middle of 1998 Dominique Bierman has had the pastoral responsibility of the congregation. In 1996 she and her husband, Baruch Bierman, founded the international congregation Kehilat Hakadosh in Jerusalem and led it until it closed in January 1999. Since 1994 they have also headed up an international praise and prayer "station" in Jerusalem working together with others,

including Tom Hess. Although they no longer have an office and an actual prayer “station” in Jerusalem, they are still involved in the international ministry.

*Key person(s) 1999:* Dominique and Baruch Bierman.

**Theological character**

The international prayer and prophetic praise ministry led by the Biermans is charismatic in its expression. It is Messianic in the sense that emphasis is given to the Jewish roots of faith in Jesus as Messiah. It is believed that the restoration of Israel will come about through the testimony of the nations. The unity among Jewish and gentile believers is underlined. The character of the work of the Biermans has changed since they have taken over the pastoral responsibilities of the Har Zion Congregation. Even though the theology is the same there is presently an emphasis on outreach to street people and a healing ministry.

*A statement of faith* does not yet exist.

*Baptism* often takes place at the beach. During their 5 years of ministry in Israel the Biermans have baptized about 300 people, most of whom have been visitors.

**Leadership**

Following the crisis in the Spanish-speaking congregation in 1998 no formal leadership has yet been formed. The pastor makes up the leadership. Dominique Bierman, who was born in Chile in 1959 and immigrated with her parents in 1970 when she was 11 years old, came to faith in 1989. She is a licensed tour guide and has worked as such for many years. After marrying Baruch in 1990 they both studied at Christ for the Nations Bible College in Dallas, Texas, from 1990-91. Until 1993 they traveled to different parts of the world to minister, then settled in Israel. They lead an international ministry from Israel to the Nations called Kad-Esh (“Vessel of Fire”) MAP Ministries International. MAP stands for Messianic, Apostolic, and Prophetic, and they are affiliated with the Full Gospel Fellowship of Churches and Ministers International.

*Women* can hold the same leadership position in the congregation as men. Dominique Bierman is ordained and is the pastor of the congregation; Baruch Bierman is the co-pastor.

**Membership**

In January 1999 there were 50 members and 7 children.

*A membership list* does not exist but members are considered to be those committed to the congregation. Baptism is required.

*Characteristics of adult members:*

- 1. Jewish..... 10

- 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew ..... 2
- 3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship ..... 0
- 4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship ..... 38

*Changes in membership since mid-1998:* There were 20 members in mid-1998. About 10 of the new members were believers before joining the congregation. The other 20 are all new believers and all the 10 Jewish members are among the new believers and all are Russian immigrants. The majority are young people, contacted mainly through street evangelism in an area of Jaffa frequented by the homeless and drug addicts.

### **Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday evening.

*Attendance:* Average number about 70.

*Description of the service:* The general meeting starts at 6:00 pm and lasts about 3-4 hours. It is preceded by a men's meeting from 5:00-6:00 pm. The service is non-liturgical and the time is divided between worship and praise, testimony, and a healing ministry - altogether 120 minutes - and teaching, which is topical and also lasts for 60 minutes.

The *language used* up front is Spanish with translation into Russian and Hebrew. Earphones are provided.

*Communion* is not ministered at a regular time but whenever it is perceived right and felt needed. The congregation conducts a Seder and celebrates Communion then.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* Sunday evening teaching on Jewish Roots; Tuesday evening intercessors' prayer meeting; Wednesday evening teaching on spiritual warfare; Friday evening Kabbalat Shabbat service once a month.

The congregation has rented an apartment to provide an alternative home for drug addicts who have come to faith and desire to be rehabilitated. The name of the place is Beit Yeshua ("The House of Jesus").

### **Cooperation**

The congregation has contacts with other charismatic congregations, both Spanish-, Hebrew-, and Russian-speaking.

### **Finances**

Donations are received from members of the congregation. International organizations such as the Christian Embassy have also contributed, especially for the social ministry among street people in the Jaffa area. The pastor receives

tithes from the congregation but also raises her support through the international ministry of Kad-Esh MAP led by her and her husband.

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*Interview with Dominiquae Bierman, 18 January 1999.*

5-08

## Immanuel Lutheran Church

Jaffa

*Name:* (לותרנית עמנואל); Knisiat Immanuel (Luteranit); Immanuel Lutheran Church.

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Part of the work of the Norwegian Church Ministry to Israel (NCMI).

*Meeting place:* Immanuel Church, legally owned by Lutheran World Federation (LWF) but managed by NCMI.

### History

*Founded* in the early 1950s. The work was begun by the Norwegian pastor, Magne Solheim, who came to Haifa in 1949 (see 3-01). He held weekly services and Bible studies and in 1952 sister Olga Olaussen came to Jaffa and began hosting meetings in her home every Sabbath. Both had worked for NCMI in Romania before and during the Second World War and the major part of the congregation was made up of Romanian immigrants. The two main languages used were German and Romanian. From the beginning of the 1970s the main language changed to Hebrew. The pastor at that time was Otto Hoevik, also sent by NCMI.

In 1956 the congregation received its first pastor, Andreas Fjeldstad, from Norway. The same year the Immanuel Church and the nearby congregation house were renovated and reopened. In accordance with an agreement made with the Israeli authorities in 1951, the original German church, dedicated in 1904, was handed over to the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). In 1955 LWF gave NCMI the rights and responsibility for the church and the congregation house. Up until the beginning of the 1970s the church was used jointly by the NCMI and the Anglicans, who had obtained the building opposite the church, now called Beit Immanuel (see 5-03). In 1977 the church was again renovated and received its beautiful glass mosaic windows with the Star of David and a menorah.

In 1956 there were about 50 adults in the Immanuel Lutheran Church congregation; during the 1980s the number increased to about 100, including children. In 1978 a congregational council was formed and attempts were made towards becoming indigenous. From 1979-1984 Joseph Ben-Zvi was employed as the assistant pastor with responsibility for work among students in the Tel Aviv area.

A major split occurred in the beginning of 1991 when NCMI workers were

called back because of what the home board regarded as misuse of the power of attorney and lack of trust. This interruption of the work halted the process of the congregation becoming independent of the foreign mission board and transferring the decision-making to a local body. This process has not yet been resumed; some of the members broke away to form Brit Olam (5-04).

Up until 1997 NCMI had the main responsibility for the work at the Immanuel Lutheran Church, but in 1997 a cooperation agreement was signed between NCMI, the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM) (see 1-15), and the Danish Israel Mission (DIM), under the name Joint Mission to Israel (JMI).

*Harassment:* The congregation and all of the mission work carried out on the premises have always been well accepted by the local community and the local authorities. Church work is seen as part of the local history and local culture and many groups, among them school classes, visit the place to hear about its history. Concerts are held regularly for the public in the church.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Magne Solheim and Olga Olaussen.

*Key person(s) 1998:* Magnus Riska.

### Theological character

Evangelical and Lutheran according to the agreement with the Joint Mission to Israel. The Jewish holidays are marked on the Sabbath of the week of the holiday. At Christmas a carol service is held, attended also by many Israelis. At Easter there is an international celebration in which the Hebrew-speaking congregation also participates.

*A statement of faith* does not exist. Work was begun in the mid-1980s to establish a constitution, including a statement of faith. It was never completed before the split in the early 1990s. In the confessional basis of JMI it reads: "The JMI acknowledges the Holy Bible as the revealed Word of God and the basic rule and standard of faith and practice. It confesses the Creed of the Apostles and it accepts the unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism as true expositions as the fundamental teaching of the Christian faith."

*Baptism* is according to Lutheran doctrine (see 3-01). The church building has a baptistery for immersion.

### Leadership

The Immanuel Lutheran Church is led by the pastor. At the moment there is no congregational council but the goal is to form one again.

The pastor has an MA in Theology from Helsinki University, Finland and is presently working on his Ph.D. thesis.

*Women* have served as deaconesses and led Bible studies.

## Membership

In 1998 the Immanuel Lutheran Church had 18 members. The number does not include 2 children.

A *membership list* does not exist. In theory baptism is a requirement for membership.

### *Characteristics of adult members:*

1. Jewish..... 10
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew..... 2
3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship ..... 0
4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship ..... 6

*Changes in membership since the split in 1991:* Only a few changes have taken place over this period. A few new people have joined.

## Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities

A weekly service is held on Saturday morning.

*Attendance:* Average number about 70 on Sabbaths when a Ghanaian joins the service. Otherwise it is 37.

*Description of the service:* The service follows a liturgy written for the congregation. It includes the Shm'a and follows the reading cycle used by the Norwegian Lutheran Church. It includes a Psalm, a reading from the Tanakh, an Epistle, and a Gospel reading. The Lord's Prayer is used regularly and so is the Apostolic Confession of Faith. The sermon is 30 minutes based on the Gospel reading of the day.

The *language used* is Hebrew with translation into English.

*Communion:* Celebrated every other Sabbath; a communion liturgy is followed and all baptized persons are invited. Children can participate on the parents' responsibility.

*Women* have not preached in the congregation, but they may pray, read, and take part in the distribution of bread and wine.

*Children's classes:* During the service a children's class is held.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* A weekly Bible study is held, conducted in English.

## Cooperation

The congregation has a special relationship with two other congregations of a Lutheran background in Jerusalem and Haifa (1-15 and 3-01) and regular visits are exchanged. Guest speakers are invited about 5 times a year. The pastor participates in the leadership meetings for the greater Tel Aviv area.

## Finances

The main part of the expenses are covered by NCMI. A weekly offering for the

work of the congregation is also received.

### The premises

The church and the congregation house was used by the following groups in 1998: an English-speaking international congregation (8-11), two Russian-speaking congregations (5-02 and 5-04), an Ethiopian (5-06), a Romanian, and a Ghanaian congregation.

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*Interview* with Magnus Riska, 6 December 1998 and Berit Meyers, 13 January 1999.

*Other sources:* Solheim 1986; *UCCI News* 1/1976:32-38.

5-09

## Jaffa Brethren Assembly

Jaffa

*Name:* Kehilat haAchim; The Brethren Assembly.

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Amutah.

*Meeting place:* In own building purchased in the early 1960s on Yefet Street, Yaffo,

### History

The history of the congregation is closely related to that of the life and work of Isaac Solomon Ostrovsky. Ostrovsky was born in the Ukraine in 1902. While on his way to Palestine in 1922 he was baptized by Leon Averbuch in Chisinau (= Kishinev), in Romania in 1922. After a short and disappointing stay at the Mount Carmel Bible School, Haifa, he went to London in 1924. There, at the recommendation of Leon Averbuch and at the expense of the Mildmay Mission to the Jews (MMJ), he attended the All Nations Bible College for 2 years. After that he worked in East London for MMJ until he in May 1927 he was sent to Chisinau or Kishinev, the town of the well known Jewish believer, Joseph Rabinowitz (Kjaer-Hansen 1995a) to be in charge of the work there while Averbuch was on furlough in America. Ostrovsky stayed in Chisinau almost one and a half years.

In the early 1930s Ostrovsky returned to Palestine and settled in Jaffa. He held meetings on Saturday in Hebrew and Russian for Jews and also meeting for local Arabs in the German Colony in a building belonging to the German Templars. In 1935 he founded a Messianic Jewish periodical called *Hatzofeh*. A decade before the establishment of the State of Israel Ostrovsky attempted to establish a Messianic Jewish colony or kibbutz near Herzliya, but the attempt failed due to lack of support from the believers. In the beginning of the 1960s the small congregation managed to purchase a building in Yefet Street, Jaffa,



where it has continued to meet.

At the end of the 1980s Ostrovsky and his wife emigrated from Israel to Toronto, Canada, where their children and grandchildren live.

According to *Israel Update* (August 1991) the congregation has experienced growth through immigration but “Local leadership has not yet emerged. The congregation is therefore lead by two young men from Canada.” In March 1992 *Israel Update* reported that the congregation “now numbers 40 regular congregants, including a number of new (immigrant) families.” *Israel Update* goes on to say “second generation Christians are beginning to take an active part in the life of the congregation. A number of Israeli families attend but do not yet profess faith in Christ.”

*Key person at the time of foundation:* Solomon Ostrovsky.

*Key persons 1999:* T.F.

**Theological character**

The theology of the congregation is similar to that of the Bethesda Assembly in that both of them are influenced by the Plymouth Brethren (see 3-02). Because of Ostrovsky’s strong influence, the Brethren Assembly has had less English influence than the Bethesda Assembly, but like the Bethesda Assembly the congregation emphasizes personal belief in Jesus and the weekly celebration of the Communion. The expectation of the return of Jesus is likewise prominent. Ostrovsky’s belief in the infallibility of Scripture and the belief in fulfillment of biblical prophecies concerning the end-time continue to be a part of the theology of the congregation.

A *statement of faith* does not exist. The Brethren do not have an official creed. The Bible provides direction for both life and teaching.

**Leadership**

In accordance with Brethren theology in which the priesthood of all believers are underlined, no single person is recognized as the leader of the congregation, rather the congregation is led by a team.

T.F. is an immigrant from England and teaches at an academic institution in Israel.

**Membership**

In 1999 the Jaffa Brethren Assembly had, according to our estimate, 40 members. The number does not include 20 children.

*Characteristics of adult members (our estimate):*

1. Jewish.....	30
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....	5
3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship.....	3
4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship.....	2

*Changes in membership since 1992:* According to *Israel Update* there were 40 members in 1992. According to our estimate the number of members has not changed significantly.

### **Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

Weekly service is held on Saturday.

*Attendance:* 50 (our estimate).

The *style of worship* is in accordance with the tradition of the Plymouth Brethren and resembles that of Bethesda Assembly (3-02).

*Communion:* According to the tradition of the Plymouth Brethren Communion is shared every week.

*Women* cannot serve as elders.

### **Cooperation**

On the congregational level the congregation has remained separatist and does not cooperate with congregations that do not hold to strictly Brethren doctrine.

### **Finances**

No information. The elders all hold secular jobs.

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*Interview* has not been granted.

*Other sources:* Nerel 1996b; *Trusting and Toiling* 1927:56, 75, 137; 1928:7, 32, 35, 46, 75, 123; *Israel Update* August 1991; March 1992.

5-10

## **Keren Yeschu'ah**

Tel Aviv

*Name:* קהילת קרן ישועה; Kehilat Keren Yeschu'ah ("Horn of Salvation Congregation" – Luke 1:69 and the Amidah Prayer).

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Amutah.

*Meeting place:* In rented facilities since 1992 (for 3 hours, only on Saturdays).

### **History**

*Founded* in January 1990. The founders of the congregation saw a need for an evangelistic, strictly Hebrew-speaking congregation in the Tel Aviv area, focused on local believers with a goal to reach out to Israelis in the area. Furthermore it was important to the congregation that the work be based on sound biblical teaching. The primary teaching elder had lived in the area from 1982-84 after immigrating from USA. From 1984-1989 the family lived in Beersheba and was active in the Beersheba Messianic Congregation (6-03).

*Harassment:* People connected with Yad L'Achim have attended the meetings and in at least one case, attempted to contact young believers and to dissuade them from the faith. Otherwise no harassment has been experienced.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Avner Boskey, Noam Hendren and Jim Sibley.

*Key person(s) 1998:* Noam Hendren and Arthur Goldberg.

### **Theological character**

The congregation defines its theological character according to the following 5 points:

- 1) The Scriptures are the sole and sufficient authority in all matters.
- 2) The congregation is to grow through evangelism.
- 3) It seeks to disciple new members and train future leadership from within the congregation.
- 4) It wants to multiply and plant new congregations.
- 5) It sees itself as called to be Jewish, Israeli and strictly Hebrew-speaking congregation and thus seeks to give a corporate testimony to Israeli society both in fulfillment of the biblical mandate to "enculturate" the Gospel (1 Cor 9:19-22) and as a natural expression of its membership's Messianic Jewish identity.

None of the church holidays are noted. All the Jewish holidays are celebrated (generally on the eve of the holiday to fit the rhythm of Israeli society) with an emphasis on their biblical content. The congregation sees itself as a family.

*A statement of faith* does not currently exist, nor is membership restricted to a particular expression of the Messianic faith.

*Baptism:* Prior to baptism candidates are given a lesson on "immersion in Yeshua's Name." Preferred place for baptism is a public place - either the Mediterranean or the Sea of Galilee - to let the act be also a public statement.

### **Leadership**

Keren Yeshu'ah is led by two elders one bearing the primary teaching and pastoral responsibility. There are two deacons, one of whom speaks Russian. Leaders are appointed after first being presented to the congregation for members' confirmation. The NT is seen as providing guidelines for leadership appointment and function.

The primary teaching elder holds a BA in Ancient Near East Civilizations UCLA and a Masters in Theology (Th.M.) from Dallas Theological Seminary, Texas. Part of his BA studies were conducted at the Hebrew University. The other elder is a graduate of Moody Bible Institute and studied archaeology at the Hebrew University. He has had leadership responsibilities in other congregations in the country for many years. He holds a secular job.

*Women* cannot serve as elders. They can be deaconesses; they can teach children or other women.

## Membership

In 1998 the congregation had 45 members, not including 20 children.

A *membership list* does not exist but there is phone list for contact. Members are recognized according to regular attendance. Baptism (immersion) is strongly encouraged as a fundamental biblical expression of faith in the Messiah but is not an absolute requirement for membership.

### *Characteristics of adult members:*

- |                                                     |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Jewish.....                                      | 37 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew .....            | 5  |
| 3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship .....    | 1  |
| 4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship ..... | 2  |

*Changes in membership since 1990:* In 1990, when the congregation started, there were 17 members and 12-15 of the present members have come to faith through the congregation. Seven have moved from other areas of the country and 12 have come from other congregations. In 1994 10 people left because of (1) disagreement over the makeup of the leadership (sabra vs immigrant) and (2) a desire for a more charismatic expression in the service

## Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities

A weekly service is held on Saturday morning at 11:00 am.

*Attendance:* Average number about 60. Of these 15 are children, 3 non-members, 3 visitors/tourists.

*Description of the service:* It is non-liturgical; the service opens with recitation of the Shm'a and part of the weekly Torah portion is read followed by a short reflection. The main teaching, about 40 minutes, is expository and often based on a NT text. The service is in Hebrew and no translation is provided

*Communion:* Celebrated once a month; no liturgy is used but it is introduced with a short teaching explaining what Communion means; the passage on the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11 might be read or from the Prophets. People not yet baptized are asked not to participate and parents are responsible for deciding whether their children may take part.

*Women* can pray, read, and lead worship. They cannot teach in the main service or mixed groups nor take part in distribution of bread and wine during communion.

*Children's classes:* During the time of the sermon 3 children's classes, a nursery, and a class for teenagers are held.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* 3 house groups, one of them in Russian. By the end of 1998 there were no youth group or women's meeting, but various youth activities,(including summer camps) have been organized by the congregation The leadership plans to initiate monthly gatherings beginning in

1999. The congregation is active in the work of the National Evangelistic Committee; there are two evangelistic Bible study groups and evangelistic literature is distributed.

### Cooperation

The congregation and its leaders are involved in national programs for congregations and for leaders. From time to time picnics and other social events are done with other congregations. Guest speakers are used 2-4 times a year.

### Finances

The congregation pays a weekly rent for facilities. Transportation and congregation supplies are also paid for by the congregation. At present, no member of the leadership receives a salary from the congregation.

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*Interview with Noam Hendren, 6 December 1998/June 1999.*

5-11

## Ramat Gan Congregation

Ramat Gan

*Name:* קהילת רמת גן; Kehilat Ramat Gan; Ramat Gan Congregation.

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Amutah since 1994.

*Meeting place:* In an apartment belonging to the Bar-David family, where Rachel, the wife of the late Hayim Haimoff (Bar-David), still lives.

### History

The history of the congregation is closely related to the life and work of Hayim Haimoff (Bar-David) who was born in 1904 came to Palestine in 1928 from Bulgaria. He attended the Bible School run by the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) at that time in Bethlehem. During the 1930s and 1940s he was employed by C&MA; among other things he was in charge of their library on 56 Prophets Street, Jerusalem – the premises which now belong to the Messianic Assembly, Jerusalem (1-10).

During a visit to Bulgaria in 1942 he married Rachel and the couple settled in Jerusalem in 1944. They refused to be evacuated in May 1948 in what was called Operation Grace or Mercy, prior to the establishment of the State of Israel. In 1957 the family moved from Haifa to Ramat Gan, where Haimoff started the congregation in 1957 – using Hebrew, English, Bulgarian, and other languages. From the early 1950s until his retirement in the mid-1980s, he was employed by the American Association for Jewish Evangelism.

Apart from members of his own family the congregation consisted mainly of

Bulgarian immigrants. Haimoff worked also among Bulgarian immigrants in other places in Israel. He died in 1991 at Moshav Yad Hashmona where he was taken care of by some of his children who live there. He is also buried there. According to the will of their father two of his sons, David and Moshe, took over the leadership of the congregation.

Part of the large Bar-David family (six sons and a daughter all active in the Messianic movement in Israel, together with their families) lived at the time of their father's death at Moshav Yad Hashmona but they continued to travel to Ramat Gan on Saturday for services. For a period the group met every first Saturday in Ramat Gan and every second in Yad Hashmona. Disagreement between the brothers David and Moshe, over the leadership of the congregation resulted in a split in 1996.

Moshe Bar-David continued as leader of the Ramat Gan Congregation, while David Bar-David, together with a few more families from Yad Hashmona, formed an independent group there (1-19). Up until spring 1998 the Ramat Gan Congregation continued to meet regularly at Yad Hashmona and members from the moshav still travel to Ramat Gan for the weekly service.

*Harassment:* Hayim Haimoff received death threats from anti-missionaries. The present leader, Moshe Bar-David, a high school biology teacher, had to change jobs in 1985 because complaints of missionary activity were made against him in the Youth Village in Ben Shemen. Since 1987 he has been a high school teacher in Ramat Gan. From the beginning he has made it clear that he is a believer but also that he clearly distinguishes between his job and his personal faith.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Hayim Haimoff (Bar-David); from the mid-1970s, assisted by his sons David and Moshe Bar-David.

*Key person(s) 1998:* Moshe Bar-David and Daniel Bar-David.

### Theological character

Evangelical, non-denominational, and non-charismatic with an emphasis on still being Jewish and therefore keeping the Torah, "but looking at it through the eyes of Jesus and with Him as the center for everything we do." The leader stresses the fruit of the spirit rather than the gifts of the spirit. "We are a quiet congregation and do not shout and dance when we meet. The way we live our lives should be a worship."

The Torah is understood as still valid for Jewish believers in Jesus, but rabbinical traditions are not observed. The members keep kosher and observe the Sabbath as a day of rest. However, travel to get to the congregation is permitted. The congregation exercises strong discipline, emphasizes teaching the next generation, and making sure children are not influenced negatively by society. In the Moshe Bar-David family there is no TV, but in most of the other families in the congregation there is.

The Jewish holidays are celebrated on the Sabbath of the week of the

holiday. Christmas is celebrated as the birthday of Jesus and the message of Easter is included in the Pesach celebration, also on the Sabbath of the week.

The meeting room is simple with just a couple of Bible verses. There is no Torah scroll nor are prayer shawls and kippas used during the service.

*A statement of faith* does not exist. Hayim Haimoff understood a creed as a theological expression that stands in danger of minimizing biblical faith.

*Baptism* takes place when a person is “ready” and normally not until around the age of 18. There is no formal instruction prior to baptism. Baptism often takes place at the near-by Baptist Village.

**Leadership**

Moshe Bar-David is the pastor of the Ramat Gan Congregation and considers himself the only leader since 1994; he has been involved in the leadership since the mid 1970s. In 1997 he appointed his younger brother, Daniel Bar-David, as his assistant leader. Non-Jews can take part in leadership if they identify with the congregation. They do not have to convert to Judaism but do have to live as a part of the Jewish nation. The pastor has no formal Bible training but grew up in a family where teaching the word of God was strongly emphasized.

*Women* cannot serve as pastors or elders and they can have no spiritual authority in the congregation. They can teach children’s classes.

**Membership**

In 1998 the Ramat Gan Congregation had 40 members. The number does not include 25 children belonging to members.

*A membership list* does not exist but members are counted as those who are baptized.

*Characteristics of adult members:*

1. Jewish.....	32
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....	1
3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship.....	2
4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship .....	5

*Changes in membership since 1994:* There were 80 members in 1994. Three families left in 1996 because of disagreement over leadership. Others have moved out of the area. Five new people have joined through evangelism and 4 people have come from another congregation.

**Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday evening at 7:00 pm.

*Attendance:* Average number about 70; of these 25 are children. It is rare that visitors/tourists attend.

*Description of the service:* The service is non-liturgical and lasts no longer than 90 minutes. Of these about 45 minutes are taken up by the sermon, which is expository. Usually the NT is used with preference to the teaching of Jesus. Elements from the Sidur are not used, nor is the weekly Torah portion read. Usually the song book, Hallel veZimrat Yah, which contains translations of mainly English hymns, is used; once in a while the newer Hebrew song book, often referred to as the "Tiberias song book," is also used. The service is often closed with the Lord's Prayer and both the Aaronic and the Apostolic blessings are used.

The *language used* is Hebrew with no translation.

*Communion* is celebrated four times a year: On the Sabbath of the week of Christmas and prior to the three Jewish Holidays of Pesach, Shavuot, and Yom Kippur. Furthermore Communion is celebrated when a new member receives baptism. Only those baptized can participate. Communion is preceded by an approximately 30 minutes teaching on the death of Jesus and the passage on the Lord's Supper in I Corinthians 11 is read.

*Women* do not play an active role in the service. They can teach children.

*Children's classes:* During the service 2 children classes are held. After the age of 8 the children take part in the main service.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* Every second week there is a prayer meeting, attended by about 30 people. During this meeting women can also pray aloud. Family devotion in the home is stressed.

### Cooperation

The congregation does not meet regularly with other congregations. The leader emphasizes, with reference to his father, the need for a congregation to be an organism rather than an organization.

### Finances

Money is needed mainly to maintain the place where they meet and for transportation. Now that the congregation no longer travels to Yad Hashmona, travel expenses have dropped. Financial support is not received from abroad and the leaders receive their income from their secular jobs. Members are not obligated to tithe but encouraged to donate according to their faith and ability. The congregation donates money to different projects in Israel but does so anonymously in accordance with "do not let the left hand know what the right hand does." Daniel Bar-David is in charge of finances.

~~~~~

*Interview with Moshe Bar-David, 13 December 1998.*



*Other sources:* Benhayim 1998; Nerel 1998a, 1998b, 1994; OEsterbye 1970:192.

*Media:* Chadashot (Tel Aviv) 11.03.1984. Erev Shabbat 03.04.1987. Erev Shabbat (B'nei Brak) 18.01.1985. Hamodi'a 16.03.84.

## 5-12 Ramat Hasharon Congregation Ramat Hasharon

*Name:* קהילת רמת השרון; Kehilat Ramat Hasharon; Ramat Hasharon Congregation.

*Category:* Congregation.

*Status:* Amutah [according to our sources].

*Meeting place:* In their own premises.

### History

(Interview has not been granted)

Founded in late 1990 by Ari (Richard) Sorko-Ram, who immigrated to Israel from the USA in 1976. In the 1980s Ari Sorko-Ram founded the Yama Congregation in Ramat Hasharon, where meetings were held in the family's house. In 1989 this group changed its name to Beit-El Congregation, overseen by elders David Dorris and David Friedman. The same year a disagreement between the elders and the founder resulted in a split in the congregation. A "court" made up of seven believers from different congregations ruled that the founder was guilty of intervening in the leadership of the congregation and disrupting the peace. Following the ruling the congregation moved to a rented house in Ramat Aviv. For awhile the premises of Grace and Truth Christian Assembly in Rishon Letzion (4-02) were used until the congregation disbanded in 1991 with the departure for North America of David Dorris.

After spending some time in the USA the Sorko-Rams returned to Israel in the beginning of the 1990s. For a while they worshipped with the Beit Immanuel (5-03). and contributed in different ways to evangelistic outreach together with other groups in the Tel Aviv area. They were instrumental in organizing leadership conferences for the wider Messianic movement and were the sponsors of a youth conference in 1996 held at a kibbutz outside Netanya. The youth conference was heavily criticized in the Israeli media, where the Sorko-Rams were accused of evangelizing minors. The sponsors maintain that no youth attended without the permission of parents.

In the late 1990s the Sorko-Rams again formed their own congregation located in Ramat Hasharon.

*Harassment:* No information concerning the present congregation. The founders have personally been harassed on several occasions in the Israeli press. In 1983 several newspapers mentioned the libel action of the Sorko-Rams against the head of the Ramat Hasharon council for calling them "Christian

missionaries." In 1987 Ari Sorko-Ram petitioned the Israeli High Court because of his removal from his IDF unit following charges from Yad L'Achim that he was involved in missionary activities. The petition was rejected in 1990.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation and in 1999: Ari and Shiri Sorko-Ram.*

### **Theological character**

Non-denominational and Pentecostal; the style of worship is expressively charismatic. There is an emphasis on evangelism; music, drama, and other artistic expressions are used both in the service and in outreach activities.

### **Membership**

In 1999 the congregation had, according to our estimate, 60 members. This number does not include 20 children. Many of the members are young people and young couples.

#### *Characteristics of adult members (our estimate):*

1. Jewish.....30
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....10
3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship .....5
4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship .....15

### **Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturdays.

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*Interview has not been granted.*

*Other sources: Mishkan 24/1996:74-76; Shalom from Israel May 1994; April 1995; May 1995; Israel Update February 1989; June 1989; November 1989; January 1990; November 1991.*

*Media: Hamodi'a 21.07.96; 17.05.87. Hatzofeh 19.07.96. Kol Hertzliya-Kfar Saba (Yediot Acharonot Supplement) 02.11.84. Shabbat Sharon 19.12.86. Yediot Acharonot 21.05.90; 09.04.96.*

5-13

## **Tel Aviv Bulgarian Fellowship**

Tel Aviv

*Name:* No official name.

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Not an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In a rented apartment.

**History**

*Founded* in 1995. For the history, theology and leadership of the congregation, see 5-14.

**Membership**

In 1999 the Bulgarian Fellowship in Tel Aviv had 30 members; there are no children.

A *membership list* does not exist. Members are recognized according to regular attendance. Baptism is encouraged but not a requirement membership.

*Characteristics of adult members:*

- 1. Jewish..... 15
- 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew..... 15

**Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday evening.

*Attendance:* Average number 25; there are no children.

*Description of the service:* The service is conducted in Bulgarian. The order of the service is similar to that of 5-14.

~~~~~

*Interview* by telephone with Eli Levi, 25 May 1999.

5-14

**Tel Aviv Fellowship**

Tel Aviv

*Name:* No official name.

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Not an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In a rented apartment.

**History**

*Founded* in 1991. The congregation grew out of a Bible study started by the present leader who began to meet with a few people for a regular Bible study in Hebrew in the facilities of the Messianic outreach center, Dugit (see 8-01). In 1991 the group began to meet as a congregation with regular weekly meetings and soon grew to 10-15 members. Around 1995 a group of Bulgarian immigrants joined the group (see 5-13) and the group grew to more than 40. The congregation moved from Dugit to its own rented apartment and in 1997 it was decided to split into two language groups, Bulgarian and Hebrew, and have separate weekly services. In 1998 the leader began meeting with a group of Russians in Rishon Letzion and a congregation was formed (see 4-06).

*Harassment:* The leader has experienced some personal harassment.

*Key persons at the time of foundation and in 1999: Eli Levi.*

### **Theological character**

The congregation is non-charismatic and emphasizes Jewish traditions and the freedom to continue a traditional Jewish lifestyle also as a believer in Jesus. The leaders see it as important to give expression to a Jewish identity. The congregation would have preferred a meeting place with a Torah scroll; however, the rented facilities do not make this possible.

All the Jewish holidays are celebrated with traditional Jewish customs; none of the church holidays are celebrated.

*A statement of faith does not exist.*

*Baptism:* Prior to baptism candidates receive instruction in a discipleship class. The preferred place for baptism is the Jordan River.

### **Leadership**

The Tel Aviv Fellowship is led by the founder; another member of the group assists in the leadership responsibility.

The leader was born in Israel to Bulgarian immigrants and came to faith in Israel in 1978 while taking part in a Bible study led by his uncle, Joseph Shulam (see 1-13). In 1978 he left for the USA for further studies. He has a degree in Bible and Psychology from Middle Tennessee State University and worked in computer sales in the States before he returned to Israel in 1990. He serves on the board of Netivyah Bible Instruction Ministry.

*Women* cannot serve as elders or in any position of authority in the congregation; they can serve as deaconesses.

### **Membership**

In 1999 the Tel Aviv Fellowship had 10 members. This number does not include 3 children.

A *membership list* does not exist. Members are recognized according to regular attendance. Baptism is encouraged but not a requirement for membership.

*Characteristics of adult members:*

1. Jewish..... 10

*Changes in membership since 1991:* In 1991 when the congregation started there were 10 members. The following years the number increased, partly due to the addition of Bulgarian immigrants. In 1995 these began holding separate weekly meetings, but both groups still meet for Bible study on Tuesday. The Bible study is conducted in Hebrew with translation into Bulgarian.

### Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities

A weekly service is held Sunday evening.

*Attendance:* Average number about 12; of these 3 are children.

*Description of the service:* It is non-liturgical; the service opens with prayer and a time of singing. This is followed by a time of sharing, both of encouragement and prayer requests. Before the teaching the Lord's Supper is shared. The teaching takes its theme from the weekly Torah portion.

*Communion:* Celebrated every week; no liturgy is used.

*Women* can pray, share testimonies, and also teach the Bible study.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* On Tuesday there is a Bible study where members of the Bulgarian congregation also take part.

### Finances

The congregation pays rent of the meeting place. Part of that is covered by donations in the congregation, part is paid through private gifts.

The leader is supported from abroad by non-denominational groups and individuals.

~~~~~

*Interview* by telephone with Eli Levi, 25 May 1999.

5-15

## Tikvat Yisrael

Holon

*Name:* קהילת תקוות ישראל; Kehilat Tikvat Yisrael ("Hope of Israel Congregation").

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Not an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In a private home where the congregation is responsible for part of the rent.

### History

*Founded* in 1992. After having been part of work of the Grace and Truth Christian Assembly (4-02) since 1985 the present pastor and founder decided in 1990 to start an independent group in neighboring Holon with the desire to plant a new congregation. The decision was supported by the leadership of Grace and Truth.

*Harassment:* The congregation has experienced very few difficulties. A local paper published an informative rather than negative article about the congregation.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Tom Jameson and another person from Grace and Truth Christian Assembly.

*Key person(s) 1998:* Tom Jameson together with two other people.

### Theological character

Reformed Baptist. Some of the members come from a charismatic background, but the style of worship in the congregation is non-charismatic. The Jewish holidays are usually celebrated on the day of the feast; the biblical content is taught and the celebration is seen as an opportunity to identify with Israeli/Jewish culture and society.

Of the church holidays Christmas and Easter are celebrated in the congregation.

*A statement of faith* does not yet exist.

*Baptism*: Candidates normally receive 6-7 lessons of instruction prior to baptism. Baptism has taken place at the Baptist Village and in the Immanuel Church but also in the Mediterranean Sea. The Jordan River has been avoided in order not to put emphasis on the place.

### Leadership

The congregation is led by the founder and pastor together with two other people elected by the congregation. The pastor worked as a missionary in Iran and in 1979 was sent to work among Iranian Jews in Israel. From 1982-85 he studied at Westminster Theological Seminary in California. He has a certificate to teach English and teaches at the British Council.

*Women* cannot serve as elders or pastors but they can be deaconesses.

### Membership

In 1998 the congregation had 25 members. This number does not include 18 children.

*A membership list* does not exist. In theory baptism is a requirement for membership.

#### *Characteristics of adult members:*

1. Jewish.....	10
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....	10
3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship.....	0
4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship .....	5

*Changes in membership since 1992*: When the group began in 1992 it consisted of 15 people, 6 of who were believers. 7 have joined through evangelism. The majority of the others are immigrants from the former USSR who were believers before arriving in Israel. One family has left in order to find work out of the area.

### Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities

A weekly service is held on Saturday afternoon from 4:30-7:00 pm.

*Attendance:* Average number about 35; of these 10 are children.

*Description of the service:* The meeting begins with a time of silence and then prayer. Songs follow this and scripture reading related to the theme of the day. Before the sermon the children are prayed for and leave for their class. The sermon can be both topical and expository and the last 45 minutes are followed by a time of questions and discussion. This is followed by a time of prayer and songs in both Hebrew and Russian and the service is closed with the Aaronic benediction. The Lord's prayer is used from time to time.

The *language used* is Hebrew with translation into Russian.

*Communion:* Celebrated once a month before the main meeting. It is introduced with a short sermon or meditation and is ministered to those baptized only.

*Women* can pray and read Scripture. They cannot distribute the bread and the wine nor can they teach.

*Children's classes:* During the service 2 children classes are taught in Hebrew.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* There is a weekly Bible study; Sunday is devoted to evangelistic outreach at the nearby beach area.

### Cooperation

The leadership meets regularly with the elders of the Grace and Truth Christian Assembly. It has also has worked with other mainly Russian-speaking congregations with a similar theological view, for example Beit Sar Shalom (5-04) and Voice in the Wilderness (1-18). A guest speaker is invited 2-3 times a year. The congregation participates in national events.

### Finances

The activities of the congregation are paid for by the members. The main expenses are the rent for the meeting facilities and another place used in connection with the evangelistic outreach. The pastor is supported through other means.

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*Interview with Tom Jameson, 14 December 1998.*

## District 6: Southern Israel

6-01

### Ashdod Congregation

Ashdod

*Name:* קהילת ברכה; Kehilat Berakha ("Blessing Congregation").

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Not yet an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In a rented 2-floor apartment; the pastor lives upstairs and the congregation uses the downstairs floor.

#### History

*Founded* in 1998. When the present pastor and his family moved to Ashdod in 1996 they joined the already existing house group established in the city and the congregation grew out of this house group. The group used to meet in the house of Asher and Rebecca Samson but when the group became mainly Russian-speaking they decided no longer to meet together there.

*Harassment:* The congregation has not experienced any opposition. However, Ashdod is a city where there previously has been a lot of anti-missionary activity. In January 1974, a Bible shop in the city was burned down.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Michael Kavalenko.

*Key person(s) 1999:* Oleg and Olga Hazin.

#### Theological character

Pentecostal and charismatic in its style of worship, but open to all. There is no emphasis on any Jewish traditions but a desire to develop a congregation that is Israeli and Jewish in its expression. This includes celebrating the Jewish holidays in the congregation, something that has not yet happened. Christmas is celebrated with an emphasis on the birth of the Messiah and without traditional Christmas elements that some members are familiar with from Russia. The congregation has organized a trip to the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem during Pesach.

*A statement of faith* does not yet exist.

*Baptism* has taken place by the Mediterranean. No formal instruction is given prior to baptism.

#### Leadership

The Ashdod Congregation is led by Oleg Hazin who is the pastor; he is assisted by his wife. There is no formal leadership established yet, but a group of about 5 people make up the leadership together with the pastor. One woman serves as a deacon. The pastor and his family immigrated in 1992 from the former USSR where they were part of a Baptist church. During a two-week Messianic



conference in Moscow in 1990 they were introduced to the charismatic movement. This influenced their view of the gifts of the Spirit and the style of worship they preferred. Neither the pastor nor his wife have any formal theological training; neither have they attended a Bible School. The couple were part of the Grace and Truth Christian Assembly (4-02) for a while when they first came to the country but they did not agree with the style of worship and left, moving to Ashdod later. The pastor holds a secular job.

*Women* can hold the same leadership position in the congregation as men.

**Membership**

In 1999 the Ashdod Congregation had 50 adult members, not including 15 children.

A *membership list* exists. Members do not need to be baptized. "Baptism is for the Lord, not for the congregation."

*Characteristics of adult members:*

- 1. Jewish..... 25
- 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew ..... 22
- 3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship ..... 0
- 4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship ..... 3

*Changes in membership since 1996:* 35 new members have joined, about half of whom are immigrants who were believers before coming; the other half are immigrants who have come to faith through the work of the congregation. About 5 people have left due to personal reasons.

**Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday mornings between 10:00-12:00 am.

*Attendance:* Average number about 50; of these 13 are children.

*Description of the service:* It is non-liturgical; the first 60 minutes is a time of prayer, worship and testimony, the next 60 minutes is preaching before closing with prayer. The Lord's Prayer is used occasionally.

The *language used* is Russian with songs in both Hebrew and Russian. Translation into Hebrew is provided when needed.

*Communion:* Celebrated once a month; it is conducted right before the sermon; no liturgy is used. Baptism is not a requirement.

*Women* can be active in all parts of the service.

*Children's classes:* During the service a children's class is held in Hebrew and Russian.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* On Monday there is a prayer meeting; Tuesday, Bible study, Wednesday, discipleship training. On Thursday the pastor and leaders visit people who have not come to the congregation lately.

### Cooperation

The congregation regularly invites speakers from other congregations. They have a close relationship with other charismatic congregations.

### Finances

Members are encouraged to give tithes but not all can afford to. Rent for the facilities are paid by an organization from abroad. The pastor does not receive a salary from the congregation.

~~~~~

*Interview with Oleg and Olga Hazin, 25 January 1999.*

*Other sources: Solheim 1986:224-225.*

6-02

## Beersheba House Group

Beersheba

*Name:* No official name.

*Category:* House group.

*Status:* Not an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In a private home.

### History and description

*Founded* in 1998. The group was started by a Russian immigrant who came to Israel in 1997. He became a believer while still in Russia and attended a Bible School in Moscow. The group consists of about 12 adults and 8 children (our estimate) all of whom have immigrated from the former USSR in 1997-98. They live in different parts of the northern Negev.

*The language used* is Russian.

The group has had contact with the Beersheba Messianic Congregation. Because of different theology and style of worship they did not feel at home there. The members who were believers already before coming to Israel are all from a charismatic background.

*Characteristics of adult members (our estimate):*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Jewish.....                          | 8 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew..... | 4 |

~~~~~

*Information* from a meeting with the leader, 11 December 1998.

## 6-03 Beersheba Messianic Congregation Beersheba

*Name:* באר-שבט, הקהילה המשיחית; haKehila haMeshichit Beersheba ("The Messianic Congregation in Beersheba").

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Not an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In buildings belonging to the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA).

### History

*Founded* in 1972. The congregation grew out of the work C&MA had initiated in Beersheba about 1910. The compound at the edge of the Old City was rented in 1911 and bought 2 years later by the C&MA. After the War of Independence the center was reopened in the 1950s. Services in English and Hebrew were held in the church building and a Bible Shop was opened. Later the shop was moved to the present site on Ramban Street. In 1976 the new Bible House was dedicated at the same location with a shop and a congregation hall. Olavi Syvanto who came to Israel from Finland in 1949, served as the manager of the Bible Shop from 1959-1992. In 1964 the C&MA workers, Warren and Linda Graham, moved to Beersheba and began work in Hebrew. In 1968 they moved to Jerusalem but continued to travel to Beersheba until a core group of 3 people took over in 1972 and formed the local independent congregation. The congregation met in the facilities belonging to the Bible Shop until the mid-1990s, when it moved back to the old compound where C&MA began its work.

*Harassment:* Until 1998 the congregation was not a target for harassment in the city, but the Bible Shop was; since the end of the 1980s it has had its windows smashed 4 times. In 1994 the shop was torched and its interior destroyed. The incident was reported to the police but no arrests were ever made. On Saturday 28 November 1998 the congregation was the target. Hundreds of Orthodox gathered outside the building before the weekly service – encouraged by the city's Chief Rabbi. They prevented the service and harassed and threatened members. The incident was reported in the Israeli press and was also mentioned on popular Israeli TV programs. A smaller demonstration took place on 30 January 1999 where demonstrators again threatened members of the congregation.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Thomas Adler, Larry Goldberg, and Olavi Syvanto.

*Key person(s) 1998:* Olavi Syvanto, Howard Bass, and one other.

### Theological character

Evangelical, non-denominational, and non-charismatic even though there are recent changes that have made the congregation more open to expressions of

the gifts of the Spirit. The Jewish holidays are celebrated and reflected in the teaching during that holiday season. No special Jewish traditions are used in the congregation but some years a Pesach Seder has been organized by the congregation. Succot as well as Chanuka are celebrated.

The congregation celebrates Christmas. Easter is celebrated with Passover and Pentecost together with Shavuot.

*A statement of faith* does not exist.

*Baptism:* People who express a desire to be baptized will be baptized after the elders have made sure they are believers and are ready for baptism. There is a baptismery in the building. The congregation is not in a rush to baptize new members.

### Leadership

The congregation is led by the group of elders, in 1998 there were 2 elders but 3 is the preferred number. Olavi Syvanto is considered the senior elder. It is the responsibility of the present eldership to appoint new leaders in cooperation with congregation members.

The senior elder has no formal theological training but has for many years worked with Bible distribution in Israel and has lived in Israel since 1947 when he came with his parents from Finland; they were involved there in Bible distribution. Howard Bass has a BA in Political Science and holds a secular job.

*Women* cannot serve as elders or pastors, but they can be deaconesses.

### Membership

In 1998 the congregation had 60 members, 40 of who are from a Russian background. The number does not include 30 children.

*A membership list* does not exist, members are recognized by regular attendance.

*Baptism:* In theory baptism is a requirement but in reality it is ministered to those present.

#### *Characteristics of adult members:*

|                                                     |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Jewish.....                                      | 20 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....             | 28 |
| 3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship .....    | 8  |
| (of whom 2 are Arabs/Palestinians)                  |    |
| 4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship ..... | 4  |

*Changes in membership over the last 5 years:* The congregation has doubled in number over the last 5 years, mainly due to immigration. Half of the new members who are immigrants have come to faith through the work of the congregation. Other new members are children of members that have been baptized and joined the congregation.

About 10 people left when the congregation disciplined a leading person due to moral issues; all were new Russian immigrants.

### **Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday morning in the winter; during the summer the congregation meets in the evening.

*Attendance:* Average number about 100. Of these about 30 are children; an average of 7 visitors/tourists attends.

*Description of the service:* The service is non-liturgical and is opened with a Scripture reading from either the Tanakh or NT. The sermon lasts about 45 minutes and can be both topical and expository depending on the teacher; no preference to either Tanakh or NT texts.

*The language used* is Hebrew with translation into Russian, Romanian, and English. Simultaneous translation is provided.

*Communion:* Celebrated twice a month during the Saturday meeting and in connection with the congregational meeting on Tuesday. No communion liturgy is used but the passage on the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11 is often read.

*Women* are not usually asked to read Scripture during the service, nor can they teach.

*Children's classes:* During the service 4 children's classes are held.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* There is a congregational meeting on Tuesdays; a weekly meeting for young adults; a monthly prayer meeting and a weekly women's prayer meeting. Evangelistic outreach is done through the work of the Bible Shop and by individual members.

### **Cooperation**

There has always been close cooperation with the Messianic Assembly in Jerusalem (1-10) because of personal contacts and through C&MA. Larry Goldberg teaches regularly in the congregation but is not considered a guest speaker. The leaders are involved in national and regional leadership events.

### **Finances**

The majority of expenses are covered through donations from abroad. Parts of the expenses include rent and upkeep for the congregational building.

None of the elders receive a salary from the congregation. The senior elder receives a salary through the Bible Shop.

Money has been donated to Ebenezer Home, Dugit (8-01), Yad Sarah, and Magen David Adom.

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*Interview with Olavi Syvanto and Howard Bass, 22 October 1998.*

*Other sources: LCJE Bulletin 2/1999:4-9; UCCI News 2/1976:28-32.*

*Media: Ha'Aretz 29.11.98. Jerusalem Post 30.11.98; 04.12.98.*

6-04

## Congregation in the South

Southern Israel

*Name:* Anonymous.

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Not an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In rented facilities in a private house.

### History

*Founded* in May 1997. The congregation grew out of a home group, which began in 1996 at the initiative of individual believers in the area. The decision to constitute as a congregation was made because of an increase in numbers.

*Key person(s) 1998:* Two persons.

### Theological character

Pentecostal with a charismatic style of worship and an emphasis on the manifestations of the work of the Holy Spirit. The leaders describe the congregation as Messianic without thereby implying an adherence to or use of Jewish, rabbinical traditions. The main feasts are celebrated with an emphasis on their biblical teaching. The congregation holds a Seder at Pesach and Christmas is celebrated together with Chanukah.

*Baptism:* New believers are encouraged to be baptized. The Jordan River is a preferred site and baptisms have been performed there together with other congregations.

### Leadership

The congregation is led by a pastor and an assistant pastor. The assistant pastor, appointed by the pastor, immigrated in 1997 from Russia, where he was also involved in pastoral work.

*Women* can serve as pastors, in theory, but in practice the present leadership would not appoint any.

### Membership

The congregation has 33 members. This number does not include 8 children. The majority are from the former USSR.

A *membership list* does not exist yet. Members are recognized by their commitment to the congregation. Baptism is encouraged but not required in order to be considered part of the congregation.

*Characteristics of adult members:*

1. Jewish.....	25
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....	5
3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship.....	0
4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship.....	3

·*Changes in membership since 1997:* 18 new people have joined. Of these 5 immigrated as believers, while 13 have come to faith through the work of the congregation. Two have left for personal reasons.

**Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday.

*Attendance:* Average number about 40. Of these 8 are children and 3-4 are non-members; only rarely do visitors/tourists attend.

*Description of the service:* It is non-liturgical. It always opens with the Shm’a, after which follows a time of worship, consisting of manifestations of the gifts of the spirit, testimonies, and songs in Hebrew and Russian, altogether lasting about 60 minutes. The preaching, a combination of topical and expository teaching, lasts 45 minutes including simultaneous translation. Both Tanakh and NT texts are used; occasionally part of the weekly Torah portion is read. The language is English with translation to Russian and Hebrew, or Russian translated into English and Hebrew. The goal is to move into Hebrew.

*Communion:* Celebrated once a month; no communion liturgy is used but the passage on the Lord’s Supper from 1. Corinthians 11 is quoted. Communion is ministered to believers only. Children can take communion with their parents’ permission.

*Children’s classes:* During the time of the sermon a children’s class is held in Russian.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* 3 different home groups, 1 for intercession, 1 in Russian, and 1 in Hebrew; the latter meets twice a week.

**Cooperation**

The congregation has not yet participated in any national events.

**Finances**

The main expense covered by the congregation is rent of premises. No salaries are paid.

~~~~~

*Interview with the two leaders, January 1999.*

6-05

## Eilat Congregation

Eilat

*Name:* הקהילה באילת; The Eilat Congregation.

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Not an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In the home of the senior elder.

### History

*Founded* in 1980. The history of the congregation is closely connected to the evangelistic work done by John and Judy Pex in Eilat and in the Negev. Both were traveling around the world as hippies in the beginning of the 1970s, John as a nominal Christian from the Netherlands and Judy as a Jew from the USA, where she grew up in a Jewish home.

John Pex came to faith during a stay in Eilat in 1973 and Judy while living on the beach at Nueiba in 1974. They met in Eilat at the home of an elderly couple who invited young people to study the Bible in their home. They returned to Nueiba and together with several other young believers, they began inviting people to their home-made tent and shared the gospel with them. In 1975 they went to the USA where they were married.

In the USA they opened their small apartment to people, most of whom were drop-outs and with whom they shared the gospel. In 1976 they returned to Eilat. As new immigrants they received an apartment in Eilat but spent a lot of time in a tent in Sinai sharing the gospel with travelers, hippies, soldiers on leave, and the Bedouins. In 1980 they settled more permanently in Eilat, mainly because of their children. Since 1983 they have run a youth hostel called The Shelter. They still put up a tent on the beach in Eilat during the Jewish holidays and do outreach from there. Various groups have come to Eilat to work assist in evangelistic campaigns. In 1990 and 1991 they worked together with a team from Jews for Jesus in an evangelistic campaign during the week of Sukkot.

The Shelter is a hostel for travelers and others needing a place to stay while in Eilat. Some stay for longer periods because they are working in the city and the hostel becomes like a home to them. Outreach is done on the beach inviting people to the Friday gospel evening and quite a few people have come to faith while staying at the hostel. One of them is an Israeli with a Russian background who for several years worked together with John Pex in Bible distribution and reaching out, especially to Russians.

*Harassment:* The Israeli press has on several occasions written articles about the work of John and Judy Pex and the Shelter. Some resistance has been expressed to their evangelistic activities; others are obviously intrigued and fascinated by the work being done. The hostel has been the focus of municipal and religious attention and efforts have been made to have the hostel closed. They have often been harassed by the municipal beach patrol while



evangelizing. During the campaign at Pesach in 1998 a formal complaint was lodged against them and a court date scheduled, but after a lawyer was hired the city backed off.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* John and Judy Pex together with two other couples.

*Key person(s) in 1999:* John and Judy Pex.

**Theological character**

Evangelical and non-denominational. The emphasis is on evangelism and discipleship. The congregation is the only Hebrew-speaking congregation in Eilat and the area around the city and desires to be a spiritual home for all believers in the area and therefore be open to different traditions. The style of worship is free but not typically charismatic.

The Jewish holidays are all celebrated in a way that reflects the Israeli/Jewish culture. None of the church holidays are celebrated by the congregation; some individual members do so in their home.

*A statement of faith* does not exist.

*Baptism:* Candidates are prepared for baptism by one of the elders but no formal instruction is given; baptism takes place at the beach.

**Leadership**

The congregation is led by John and 3 other elders. John Pex is the senior elder.

The senior elder has no formal theological training but has been involved in evangelism and discipleship since he himself came to faith in 1973.

One of the elders has formal training; the two others not and hold secular jobs.

*Women* are not asked to teach in the weekly meeting; in theory they can serve as elders but none of the present elders are women. They can lead Bible study and teach children's classes.

**Membership**

In 1999 the congregation had 57 members, not including 35 children.

A membership list does not exist; members are recognized by faithful attendance. Baptism is not a requirement for membership.

*Characteristics of adult members:*

|                                                     |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Jewish.....                                      | 25 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....             | 25 |
| 3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship .....    | 5  |
| 4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship ..... | 2  |

*Changes in membership since 1990:* The congregation has grown from about 35 in 1990 to 55 in 1999. Of the present members about 20 are Russian immigrants,

most of whom have come to faith in Israel. Among the new members are also Israeli families that have come to faith through the work of the congregation.

### **Weekly service/meeting and other activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday morning from 10:00 am - 11:30 am.

*Attendance:* Average attendance is 100, of whom 35 are children. About 10 of the participants are Romanian foreign workers. Visitors and tourists also participate but tourist groups are not encouraged to attend the weekly meeting.

*Description of the service:* The service begins with a time of worship (30 minutes), followed by the teaching, which can be both topical and expository; it last about 45 minutes. The service often includes an opportunity for people to share and bring testimonies. The meeting is concluded with prayer where participants split up into groups of 5-6 people to pray.

The *language used* is Hebrew with translation into Russian, English and lately also Romanian.

*Communion:* Celebrated once a month. No liturgy is used; different Scripture readings are used to introduce the Communion. Communion is for believers only.

*Women* are not asked to teach, but can pray and bring testimonies.

*Children's classes:* There are 4 children's classes.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* There are a weekly clubs for children, a women's Bible study, a Russian Bible study, a prayer meeting in English, and prayer meeting for young adults. The elders also meet for a weekly meeting.

At the Shelter John and Judy Pex have a Friday evening evangelistic meeting and a Sunday evening Bible study. This is not part of the work of the congregation but many of the same people participate.

### **Cooperation**

Members of other congregation have from time to time taken part in the evangelistic campaigns organized over the Jewish holidays, as have teams from abroad.

### **Finances**

The congregation has very little expenses. No salary is paid and no rent is paid. Donations given through the donation box cover the expenses. From time to time donations are received from individuals.

~~~~~

*Interview by telephone with Judy Pex, 23 May 1999.*

*Other sources:* *Israel Update* November 1990; May 1991; October 1992; Kjaer-Hansen 1991:29-31.

*Media:* *Erev Erev beEilat* 06.04.89. *Jerusalem Post* 26.11.86. *Kol Eilat* 18.02.87; 25.02.87.

6-06

## Fellowship in the South

Southern Israel

*Name:* No official name.

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Not an amutah

*Meeting place:* In a rented house.

### History

*Founded* in August 1998. The congregation developed out of the results of evangelistic outreach mainly to Russians in the southern part of Israel.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation and in 1998:* The leader/founder.

### Theological character

Members of the congregation come from different church backgrounds; some have been part of Baptist and Pentecostal churches in Russia; some come from a charismatic background; and a few from Russian Orthodox background. Others have come to faith in Israel and have been associated with another Messianic congregation in the area. The congregation is Messianic in the sense that the Jewish roots of the gospel are stressed. However, there is no emphasis on Jewish traditions nor on the Jewish holidays. According to the leader the congregation has yet to develop a way in which to celebrate the holidays. Individual members celebrate the church holidays. In the congregation the message of Chanukah and Christmas are combined.

*A statement of faith* does not exist.

*Baptism:* The importance of baptism is emphasized. The pastor has so far always asked another congregational leader to assist him.

### Leadership

The congregation is led by the founder together with two mature believers from the group. A prayer group meets once a week for planning and prayer.

The pastor immigrated with his parents to Israel from Russia in 1972. He came to faith in the mid-1980s.

*The role of women:* No policy concerning this issue has been made. The pastor practices what he has been introduced to in other congregations he has attended. There are women in the prayer and planning group.

### Membership

In 1998 the congregation had 35 members. The number does not include 7 children. Most of the members are older people.

*A membership list* does not exist and even though baptism is seen as

important it is not a requirement for membership.

*Characteristics of adult members:*

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| 1. Jewish.....                          | 20 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew..... | 15 |

The members have all become part of a house group fellowship within the last 5 years. About 50 percent are new believers; the others immigrated to Israel as believers.

**Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday and lasts 1½ hours.

*Attendance:* Average number about 50; of these 7 are children, about 10 are non-members.

*Description of the service:* The service is opened with a time of singing followed by the teaching which lasts 25 minutes; then there is a time of prayer before the service is closed. No preference is given to Tanakh or NT texts. The pastor finds the Russian translation difficult to understand and paraphrases rather than reads the Bible text referred to in the teaching.

The *language used* is Russian; no translation is provided.

*Communion:* Celebrated once a month; it is ministered to all present and no liturgy is used.

*Women* can pray and lead the worship but are not invited to teach.

*Children's classes:* During the service a children's class is held.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* There is a weekly youth meeting and a weekly prayer meeting. On Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays the pastor visits groups in other towns in the area for Bible study.

**Cooperation**

The congregation cooperates with other Russian-speaking groups in the South.

**Finances**

The congregation receives support from abroad.

~~~~~

*Interview with the founder, 22 October 1998.*

6-07

## Kol Chatan

Ashkelon

*Name:* קהילת קול חתן; Kehilat Kol Chatan ("Voice of the Bridegroom Congregation").

*Category:* House group.

*Legal status:* Not an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In a private house belonging to a member.

### History

*Founded* in 1998. The founders saw a need to bring believers together in a fellowship and thereby establish a framework to which new people could be invited. The present leader had from time to time attended a mainly Russian-speaking congregation in the area but felt the need for a different kind of fellowship. The group hopes through its activities to inspire other house or cell groups. Seeing the house group develop into a congregation is not the main goal.

*Harassment:* The group has not experienced any but there have been several incidents of harassment of believers over the last year in Ashkelon.

*Key person(s) 1998:* I.V. and two other couples.

### Theological character

The group is not affiliated with any denomination, but the present leader attended the King of Kings Bible College for 2 years; the emphasis is on reaching new people through friendship evangelism and strengthening believers through the same fellowship. The group is open to the gifts of the spirit. The group does not celebrate the Jewish holidays but in the teaching shared by the group there is an emphasis on the Jewish background of faith in Jesus. The fellowship is sensitive to members' possible Christian tradition and their wish to express that.

*A statement of faith* does not exist.

*Baptism* can be practiced by the group in the future. Most likely they would go to the Mediterranean beach.

### Leadership

The congregation is led by I.V. and a married couple. I.V. attended the King of Kings Bible College for two years (1995-1997). He is presently a university student studying for a BA in Counseling. He is also the director of a ministry called "More than Conquerors," a Messianic counseling ministry for ex-gay and sexually-abused people. The other family is a gentile family working temporarily in the country.

*Women* serve also as leaders; "All help is needed." I.V. does not believe a distinction would be made if the group were to become a congregation.

## Membership

In 1998 the congregation had 18 members, 5 of whom make up the core group; the number does not include 4 children.

A *membership list* does not exist but there is a directory for contact. Members are recognized by their participation in the activities of the fellowship. According to the definition of membership one does not have to be baptized to be a member.

### *Characteristics of adult members:*

- |                                                     |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Jewish.....                                      | 14 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....             | 2  |
| 3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship.....     | 0  |
| 4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship ..... | 2  |

*Changes in membership over the last year:* Contacts have been made with 4 new families in the area, 2 people have moved into the area and 4 of the new members are believers already living in the area but not attending a fellowship regularly.

## Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities

A weekly service is held on Friday evening from 5:30-8:00 pm.

*Attendance:* Average number is 15; of these 7 are children.

*Description of the service:* The meeting begins with Kabbalat Shabbat and a meal together. From time to time part of the weekly Torah portion together with blessings from the Sidur are used. One hour is divided equally between a time of praise and worship and the teaching. The meeting closes with prayer. Translation is provided depending on the need; English, Spanish, Romanian, and Hebrew have all been used. The goal is to make Hebrew the main language.

*Communion:* The group has not shared Communion together.

*Children's classes:* During the time of teaching a children's class is held.

*Other regular activities:* The group only meets for the weekly meeting and fellowship.

## Cooperation

The fellowship has not yet invited speakers from the outside, but is open to the idea.

## Finances

Expenses are shared by members and no money is collected except to cover the actual expenses.

**Latest developments**

As of May 1999 the group has ceased to exist and the members have joined the group in Ashkelon organized by Grace and Truth Christian Assembly (see 4-02).

~~~~~

*Interview with I.V., 17 January 1999.*

6-08

**Voice in the Wilderness**

Qiryat Gat

*Name:* קהילת קול במדבר; Kehilat Kol baMidbar; Voice in the Wilderness Congregation.

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Applying for amutah status (see 1-18).

*Meeting place:* In a private home.

**History**

The congregation is led by the same persons who are behind Voice in the Wilderness Fellowship in Jerusalem (see 1-18). It was founded in 1995 and is made up of people from Qiryat Gat and Sderot; the majority are immigrants from the former USSR.

Two weekly meetings are held plus an evangelistic outreach in the area.

*Membership:* In 1998, the congregation had 14 members; this number does not include 10 children.

*Characteristics of adult members:*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Jewish.....                          | 9 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew..... | 5 |

~~~~~

*Interview with John Theodor, 19 October 1998.*

6-09

**Yeruel**

Arad

*Name:* קהילת ירואל; Kehilat Yeruel ("God has Founded Congregation" - 2 Chronicles 20:16).

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Not yet an amutah.

*Meeting place:* In private homes.

## History

*Founded* in October 1998. The work of the congregation began as a response to a need expressed by some people for a Messianic fellowship in the Northern Negev with a more Jewish style of worship than found in the Messianic congregation in Beersheba (6-03).

*Harassment:* The congregation, and especially the pastor and his wife, are well known to the English-speaking community in Arad where they live and have not experienced any kind of harassment.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation and in 1999:* Milton and Laura Maimon.

## Theological character

The congregation seeks to follow in the footsteps of the first Jewish believers in Jerusalem proclaiming a Jewish Messiah to the Jewish people. This implies the use of Jewish traditions as long as they do not contradict the gospel. "God never released the Jewish people from the covenant and the regulations that He gave them."

The Jewish holidays are celebrated in accordance with the descriptions in the Tanakh and on the actual feast days. None of the church holidays are celebrated. If the congregation had facilities used for services only they would set up the room to resemble a synagogue.

*A statement of faith* does not exist yet but plans are to write on.

*Baptism:* There is no special instruction prior to baptism. Teaching on baptism is considered part of the regular teaching in the congregation.

## Leadership

The congregation is led by the founder who uses the title "rabbi" rather than "pastor" or "elder." He attended a Bible School in Pennsylvania in the USA, and has been affiliated with Ariel Ministries, Chosen People Ministries, and the Messianic Hebrew Christian Fellowship. From 1980-1996 he also pastored a Messianic congregation in the USA. He and his wife then immigrated to Israel. Prior to pastoral work he was employed in the US Air Force.

*Women* cannot serve as elders or pastors. They can teach other women.

## Membership

In January 1999 the congregation had 13 members, not including 12 children.

*A membership list* does not exist. Members are considered those who regard the congregation as their spiritual home and attend the service regularly. No distinction is made between Jews and non-Jews.

*Characteristics of adult members:*

- |                                                     |   |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Jewish.....                                      | 7 |
| 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....             | 3 |
| 3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship.....     | 1 |
| 4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship ..... | 2 |



*Changes in membership since the foundation:* The new members have either moved into the area or they were believers, but not part of a fellowship or congregation prior to joining.

### **Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday morning at 10:30 am - 12:30 pm. Travel by car in order to attend is not an issue.

*Attendance:* Average number about 15; of these 7 are children.

*Description of the service:* It is non-liturgical but does include parts of the Sidur. The Shm'a is recited and part of the weekly Torah portion is read followed by a parallel reading from the NT. Worship through songs is an important part of the service. The teaching lasts about 40 minutes and is often expository.

The language used is English.

*Communion:* Celebrated once a year in connection with Pesach; in case some of the members are unable to participate on that day an extra communion is held 30 days later. Baptism is not a requirement but faith is. Children can participate if they are believers.

*Women* do not teach but they can share testimonies.

*Children's classes:* At the moment there are none but children participate actively in the service.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* Monday evening there is Bible study. Friendship evangelism is practiced and encouraged.

### **Cooperation**

The congregation is very open to cooperation but has not yet expressed this in relationship to other groups in the area. The leader and his wife lived in Netanya from 1996-98 and were members of Beit Asaf (4-01), with whom they maintain close ties.

### **Finances**

At the moment the congregation does not have any regular expenses, but tithing is taught and the goal is for the congregation to be able to pay for a pastor.

### **Latest development**

The leader, pastor Milton Maimon, of blessed memory, passed away in May 1999.

~~~~~

*Interview with Milton and Laura Maimon, 18 January 1999.*

## District 7: Judea and Samaria/West Bank

7-01

### Ariel Fellowship

Ariel

*Name:* קהילת אריאל; Kehilat Ariel; Ariel Fellowship (or The Church of Samaria – the name used by people who attend from a Muslim background).

*Category:* House group.

*Legal status:* Amutah under the Baptist Convention in Israel.

*Meeting place:* In the home of the leader.

#### History

*Founded* in 1989. Prior to 1989 the Ortiz family had lived in several places in Israel but they felt called to move to a place where there was no congregation or formal fellowship of believers. They then chose to move to Ariel and began the fellowship. Some believers in Ariel decided not to join the fellowship as they preferred to be less visible in the community. Others have continued to commute to Jerusalem and Tel Aviv to attend a congregation there. There is also a Russian-speaking home group in Ariel belonging to Beit Sar Shalom, Jaffa (5-04). There is no formal cooperation between the different groups but a weekly children's meeting for all the children is arranged by a Russian couple; the women meet for prayer on Monday and Friday morning the men meet for prayer.

*Harassment:* Especially during their first two years in Ariel there were several incidents. The leader received threats from the local rabbi; there were demonstrations outside their home; attempts were made to have their children removed from the local school and local and national papers carried articles about their work.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* David and Leah Ortiz.

*Key person(s) 1998:* David and Leah Ortiz together with one more person.

#### Theological character

Pentecostal with a strong emphasis on evangelism, not only to Jews but also to Muslims in the area. The vision is to see Jews and Arabs come together in the fellowship of the Messiah as a manifestation of the gospel in the community. The group celebrates the Jewish holidays as a family. A celebration of the Church holidays is organized for the Arab believers.

A *statement of faith* has not been written for the group. David and Leah Ortiz subscribe to the statement of faith of the Brooklyn Tabernacle, a church associated with the Assemblies of God, USA.

*Baptism:* No formal instruction is given prior to baptism, but the meaning of baptism is explained and baptism is seen as a testimony to the outside world.

**Leadership**

The group is led by David and Leah Ortiz. Born in Puerto Rico and raised in New York City, David Ortiz immigrated to Israel with his wife in 1985. Until 1994 David was self-employed as a dental technician but has since then been in full-time ministry.

*Women* should not serve in leadership positions, but exceptions can be made when the situation requires it.

**Membership**

In 1998 the Ariel Fellowship had 11 members, not including 8 children.

A *membership list* does not exist and there is no formal membership.

*Characteristics of adults members:*

- 1. Jewish.....3
- 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....3
- 3. Non-Jewish but with Israeli citizenship.....3
- 4. Non-Jewish and without Israeli citizenship .....2

*Changes in membership since 1989:* Soon after the fellowship started there were 3 families; the 2 others have since moved from the area. Others have move to Ariel and joined; a couple have joined through evangelism. Outreach into the Muslim villages has resulted in several Muslims coming to faith. Since 1995 they have had contacts with an Arab congregation in Ramalla, a contact that has been important for the growth of the believers from a Muslim background.

**Weekly service/meeting and other regular activities**

A weekly service is held on Saturday evening from 6:30-9:30 pm.

*Attendance:* Average number is 18. Numbers would increase if there were a way for more Arab believers to come into Ariel to participate in the meeting. Occasionally people from Christian tourist groups staying at the Ariel Hotel participate.

*Description of the service:* It is a very informal gathering; the time is divided between prayer, worship, and sharing of testimonies. The teaching is topical and normally lasts for 20 minutes.

The *language used* is English, Hebrew and Arabic. Translation is provided into Russian when needed.

*Communion:* Celebrated once a month; no communion liturgy is used but

often the passage on the Communion in 1 Corinthians 11 is read. Baptism is not a requirement and all who want can participate.

*Women* can participate in all activities.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* There is a weekly women's meeting and a children's club. Both these activities are attended by people outside the Ariel Fellowship. The children's club is not organized by the fellowship but by another family in Ariel and here also children of the Russian-speaking home group participate. The Sunday evening prayer group meets in the local municipality building in agreement with the mayor. Evangelistic outreach is done in different ways, mainly by David Ortiz.

*Social work.* The group has been the channel for social outreach to Russian immigrants and to the Muslim villages in the area.

### Cooperation

The congregation cooperates together with the Assemblies of God Church in Ramalla and with people from the Baptist Convention in Israel working among the Arabic-speaking population.

### Finances

The house group has only a few expenses, and money is donated through the amutah for social work, mainly among Muslim families in the area. David Ortiz is not paid by the amutah.

~~~~~

*Interview with David Ortiz, 7 December 1998.*

*Other sources:* *Messianic Times* Spring 1995:13; *Vort Land* (Norwegian daily newspaper) 26.05.98.

*Media:* *Hamodi'a* 05.07.91. *Jerusalem Report* 22.01.98. *Kol Ha'Ir* 16.01.98.

7-02

## Bat Tzion

Vicinity of Jerusalem

*Name:* קהילת בת ציון; Kehilat Bat Tzion ("Daughter of Zion Congregation").

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Unknown.

*Meeting place:* In a private home.

### History

*Founded* in 1992. The founder and present pastor left the Shalhevetyah Congregation (1-15) in 1992 after having been the pastor there since 1986. His resignation was due mainly to a disagreement between the pastor and the mission board over the use of the mission's facilities. A little less than half the members of the Shalhevetyah Congregation made up the core group in the new congregation.

The pastor, who is Israeli born, was ordained in the Immanuel Lutheran Church, Tel Aviv (5-08), in 1979 and employed by the Norwegian Church Ministry to Israel (NCMI) following a year of theological studies in the USA. His primary responsibility was work among students. In 1984 he was elected the first chairman of the newly formed Fellowship of Christian Students in Israel. He resigned from NCMI in 1984.

The pastor does not hold a secular job and is supported from abroad, mainly from the Netherlands.

**Membership**

In 1999 Bat Tzion had, according to our estimate, 10 members. This number does not include 6 children.

*Characteristics of adult members (according to our estimate):*

- 1. Jewish..... 8
- 2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew..... 2

~~~~~

*Interview was not granted.*  
*Other sources: Solheim 1986:259.*

## Group 8: International Congregations

8-01

### Baptist Church

Central Jerusalem

An English-language service was re-instituted in 1996 on Sunday mornings at 10:45 am. The style of worship is traditional Baptist. The pastor of the congregation in 1999 is John Anthony, who is employed by the Baptist Convention in Israel (BCI). About half of the regular worshippers are people from an Asian background.

*Attendance:* Average attendance is 50 including 6 children. This number does not include groups of tourists who attend from time to time.

*Jewish people attending:* 4.

#### History

The Baptist work in the area began in 1911 under the name Baptist Convention in Palestine. The name has since been changed to the Baptist Convention in Israel (BCI). It was then, as it is today, supported by the Southern Baptist Convention in the USA and has included work among both Arabs and Jews. The first representatives were sent to Palestine in 1924. From the beginning of the 1990s BCI no longer employed or paid local workers in ministry. In 1999 there were 40 BCI persons working in Israel, about 40 of whom were directly or indirectly involved in Jewish ministry. One of these is the leader of a messianic congregation (see 3-08), while others are actively involved in Messianic congregations. Other previous workers have been instrumental in establishing local congregations, including Pat and Judy Hoaldrige and Jim Sibley.

Østerbye writes about the situation in the 1960s: "The Baptists seem to be the most active of the Protestants in Israel, and the missionaries usually have an excellent knowledge of Hebrew." A renewed commitment to Jewish evangelism was expressed by the Southern Baptism Convention in the USA in June 1996. Although the resolution did not contain anything new in relation to Jewish evangelism it was heavily criticized by American Jewry and in Israel. The magazine *Christians and Israel* stated: "The above-cited Baptist resolution is certainly not in the spirit of our time: the spirit of interfaith respect, cooperation and dialogue." The Israeli press was also very critical towards the resolution.

Concerning the work of BCI the following items deserve mention:

*The Baptist Church, Narkis Street, Jerusalem:* The Baptist Church in Jerusalem was built in 1933. The church was closed from 1941 to 1945 because of the war and then reopened for a period of six months by James Haygood. After Haygood's

death, Robert Lindsey came to assume responsibility. Robert Lindsey is unquestionably the most prominent among the BCI workers in the period covered in this survey. He came to Palestine in 1939 to study Hebrew and returned in 1945 with his family. Except for short breaks he served as pastor in Jerusalem and was involved in many tasks. For a period he served as Chairman of the United Christian Council in Israel; he was a researcher and Bible translator and had many contacts to Jewish people within the academic world, among others Professor David Flusser. Lindsey retired at the end of 1986 and died in the USA in 1995.

In 1962 the Jerusalem Baptist Congregation was reorganized and a 6-point "Articles of Faith" was presented. These reflect traditional evangelical theology without any reference to the Israeli/Jewish scene.

The Baptist Church in Jerusalem has on several occasions been the target of demonstrations and acts of vandalism. In 1974 a group of persons set fire to the office of the Baptist House. In 1977 the windows of the building were smashed by a hand grenade placed in a plastic pail. In 1982 the Church building was completely destroyed by fire. After finally having received building permission in 1988 the new facilities were dedicated in August 1996. In 1985 Teddy Kollek, the then mayor of Jerusalem, had tried to dissuade Lindsey from rebuilding the church and proposed two alternative sites. In 1999 the Bible shop was torched.

Messianic congregations have made extensive use of the facilities for their meetings. In 1999, besides the Baptist Congregation, Even Yisrael (1-04), Narkis Street (Hebrew-speaking) Congregation (1-11) and Narkis Street English-speaking Congregation (8-05) also made use of the facilities.

The *Baptist Village* near Petah Tikva was founded as a farming colony in 1954 with a boarding school for orphans (mainly Arabs). The school ceased to function in 1972 and is now used mainly for conferences and camps. Some Messianic congregations have, for an initial period, used the premises for their regular meetings and some congregations come here for baptism. International services have been held in English and in 1966 a chapel was built (see 8-10).

*Dugit* in the center of Tel Aviv was originally meant to be a book shop. However, in 1959 it was opened as an art gallery, and some of Israel's finest artists have exhibited their works here. During this period book sales were curtailed, except for Bibles. In 1979 the Baptist took a fresh look at the use of the facilities and desired a greater emphasis on ministry. The closure of Dugit Art Gallery in September 1981 was protested by Tel Aviv artists. Since then there have been occasional art exhibitions but the emphasis has been on book sales and special evangelistic programs held during the evenings for praise and worship. Around 1990 Dugit was made into a Messianic Outreach Center run by an independent board. In the 1990s under the manager Avi Mizrachi, the leader of Adonai Ro'i, several outreach programs held were the object of anti-missionary demonstrations (see 5-01).

The *Jerusalem House Study Center* was dedicated in November 1971. Property in the Mandelbaum area was purchased by the BCI in 1968 and made into a research center with the hope that the building would be a meeting place for Arab, Jewish, and international students. After having been used for different purposes in the meantime it was re-opened in 1999 as a student center.

The magazine *Hayahad* in Hebrew appeared for the first time in 1961. *Hayahad Digest* in English was published some months later, also in 1961. In 1966 the Arabic edition made its appearance. The *Hayahad* in Hebrew ceased publication in 1975, with the Arabic edition following suit shortly afterwards. The English publication included 32 issues, continuing until 1983.

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*Sources:* *Christians in Israel* 4/1996:1; *Hayahad* 28/1981:27;29; 29/1981:1-4;6-9; 31/1982:1-5; 32/1983:1; *Hayahad Digest* 11/1974:1; 25/1980:11-12; *LCJE Bulletin* 46/1996:2; Østerbye 1970:190-191; *UCCI News* 4/1971:23-24; 1/1972:16; 3/1979:22-24; 1/1982:32-34.

*Media:* *Al Hamishmar* 10.10.82. 11.10.82. *Ha'Aretz* 10.10.82. *Hamodi'a* 28.06.96. *In Jerusalem* 25.01.85. *Jerusalem Post* 11.10.77; 10.10.82 22.09.91. 28.06.96. *Kol Ha'Ir (Jerusalem)* 25.01.85. *Ma'ariv* 09.10.77; 08.10.82. *Yated Ne'eman* (English edition) 15.07.96; 06.09.96.

*On Robert Lindsey:* *Kol Ha'Ir (Jerusalem)* 09.01.87. *Ma'ariv* 15.10.82. *Tzomet Hasharon* 30.09.88. *Yediot Acharonot* 12.10.82.

8-02

## Christ Church

Old City Jerusalem

Two English-language services are held at Christ Church every Sunday, one in the morning at 9:30 am and one in the evening at 6:30 pm. The morning service is liturgical, following the Anglican Alternative Service Book; for the evening service no liturgy is followed. In 1999 the pastor was Ray Lockart.

*Attendance:* The number of people who attend regularly is about 100 for both services; of these 5 are children. This number does not include tourist groups who often attend the Sunday morning service. About 8 of those who attend are with Israeli citizenship; of these 5 are Jewish, 3 non-Jewish but married to a Jew; there are no children.

*Jewish people attending:* 5 and 3 non-Jewish but married to a Jew.

### History

The first Protestants to start work in Palestine were the Anglicans through the Jewish missionary society, the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst Jews, now renamed The Church's Ministry Among the Jewish People



(CMJ). In Israel CMJ operates under the name The Israel Trust of the Anglican Church (ITAC). The history of the work is described by Kelvin Crombie in his book *For the Love of Zion*. The Anglican Church also works among Arabs.

The real beginning of the Jewish work was made by the Dane John Nicolayson, who arrived in Palestine in 1826 and died in 1856. He was the main force behind the building of Christ Church, which after many difficulties was dedicated in 1849. The first bishop was M.S. Alexander, himself of Jewish origin. He served from 1841 until he died in 1846. By 1856 there were, according to Crombie, "Hebrew, English, German, Arabic and Spanish services in the church, plus, on alternate Saturday afternoons, an additional service in Hebrew." The Christ Church building reveals great sensitivity towards Jewish believers on the part of the builders, through appropriate symbols and no representation of human figures. Inscribed on the stainedglass windows are the Hebrew words for God, Immanuel, the Spirit of God, together with the Star of David and a picture portraying the heavenly Jerusalem. The olive-wood communion table from a later date and still to be found in the church, contains the Hebrew inscription "Immanuel" and "This do in remembrance of me," plus the Star of David and the Crown of David. On the wall are three large tablets of stone with the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Apostles' Creed inscribed in Hebrew.

Following the Six-day War in 1967 a new period began in the history of Christ Church, with services in English. In 1969 Roger Allison re-established a small Hebrew service on the compound. In January 1970 this small congregation moved to Christ Church where it met until mid-1976, when it again ceased. In 1987 Alfred Sawyer invited Benjamin and Rueven Berger to form an independent congregation (see 1-03). In 1999 the facilities were also used by a Romanian and a Filipino congregation. There is a guest house on the compound and biblical study tours are arranged under the name Shores. In connection with the compound there is a book shop and a coffee shop, which have also been the target of demonstrations.

In 1990, a demonstration was held in protest against the mission and the bookshop and in 1996 CMJ was accused in the Orthodox press of extending the guest house without license and the bookshop was charged with playing Hasidic music to attract unwary Jews.

*The Anglican School in Jerusalem:* From 1897 until the First World War the buildings on Prophets Street housed a hospital; later they were used as a military headquarters during the British Mandate. During the Second World War the hospital again offered its services for military use. After 1948, the Hadassah Medical Organization, no longer able to reach its own hospital on Mount Scopus, was invited to use the buildings and continued to do so until 1962. The last rooms to be returned by the Israeli authorities were released in 1979. From the beginnings of the 1950s part of the buildings were used for a school that had been established on the premises now known as Christ House

Hospice in the old city of Jerusalem. It had only few students. In the middle of the 1960s there were about 50 students, in 1983 enrollment was 357 students, and in 1998-1999 there were 320 students. The majority of the students are from international families working in the area. The school defines itself as a Christian school but receives also students from non-Christian families. A crisis arose in 1996-1998 between the local school board and CMJ, when CMJ decided to sell the property housing the school. The plans were never realized and as of 1999 CMJ has changed the decision. The crisis was reflected in the Israeli press.

*Stella Carmel* on the outskirts of the Druze village of Isafiya close to Haifa was purchased in 1969 by ITAC. The center takes tourists, but its ministry is primarily to local believers, Messianic Jews and Arab believers. A number of conferences are held on the premises. From 1992 the chapel of Stella Carmel was used by a newly-established congregation. In 1993 the congregation received from ITAC the right to a piece of land where it built its own congregational center dedicated in 1998. The center is independent of CMJ.

*Immanuel House, Jaffa:* The buildings were erected by Baron Ustinov, grandfather of the actor, Peter Ustinov, in 1884 and used by Park Hotel until 1927 when the property was purchased by ITAC. In 1948 it was taken over by the Israel Army but handed back to ITAC in 1953. For several years it was used as a boarding school hostel for students of Tabitha School (see 8-07). Anglican services, conducted in English in the neighboring Immanuel Church, were moved to Immanuel House in 1972. In the early 1970s a Hebrew-speaking congregation led by Henry Knight was formed. In 1977 Knight asked to be relieved as pastor in order to pursue studies at the Tel Aviv University. For the further development of the congregation, see 5-03.

*Immanuel House Study Centre* began in the early 1980s with Roy Kreider as director, followed by Tim Butlin. From the end of 1984 the center was led Walter Riggans, followed by Salim Munayer in 1986 until its close in 1989, in spite of the fact that the programs were well used. From 1992-1998 the King of Kings College (see 8-03) used the facilities for teaching and lodging.

The mission activities at the center have on several occasions been criticized in the Orthodox press.

In 1999, the buildings were used as a guest house and by the independent congregation, Beit Immanuel (5-03).

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*Sources:* Crombie 1991; Davis 1997:159-160; Dexter 1986:93-103, 170-175; Østerbye 1970:180-18; *Shalom Magazine* 1/1999, 5; Sibley 1989:34; *UCCI News* 3/1978:19-20; 1/1980:29-32; 3/1982:18-19; 1/1983:17-19; 1/1985:37.

*Media:* *Ha'Aretz* 31.01.92. *Erev Shabbat* 09.03.90. *Hamodi'a* 21.09.84; 28.11.96. *Hatzofeh* 06.12.96. *Itton Yerushalayim* 23.05.96; 31.05.97; 14.06.97. *Jerusalem Post* 21.01.92; 07.06.96. *Ma'ariv* 23.12.83. *Yom Hashishi* 09.03.90; 29.11.96.

8-03

## King of Kings Assembly

Central Jerusalem

*Name:* קהילת מלך המלכים; Kehilat Melekh haMelakhim, King of Kings Assembly.

*Category:* Congregation.

*Legal status:* Amutah.

*Meeting place:* In rented facilities belonging to the International YMCA.

### History

*Founded* in 1983 under the name "Jerusalem Christian Assembly" at the initiative of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC). This organization was encouraged by Israeli officials to start an international Pentecostal English-speaking congregation in Jerusalem. From the beginning the work of the congregation has been characterized by a strong burden to reach the Jewish people with the gospel and in 1988 it was decided to change the name of the congregation to more clearly reflect this emphasis. This coincided with the decision to open a Bible College under the name King of Kings College, the first director of which was Ray Gannon who was sent by the Assemblies of God, USA, to work under the auspices of the PAOC. The name of the Bible College was changed to The Israel College of the Bible in 1998 and with the blessing of the PAOC has become a locally-led institution.

*Harassment:* The congregation has not experienced any significant harassment although the Orthodox press has warned against it because of its evangelistic approach. The congregation has also been accused of proselytizing among immigrants from the former USSR in connection with its financial support to bring Jews to Israel.

*Key person(s) at the time of foundation:* Wayne Hilsden and Jim Cantelon.

*Key person(s) 1999:* Wayne Hilsden, Chuck Cohen, Channon Greer, Ian Jupp, and Chuck King.

### Theological character and weekly service

The theology of the King of Kings Assembly is Pentecostal and the style of worship is charismatic. The Assembly presents itself as "A congregation of Messianic believers in Jerusalem exalting Yeshua (Jesus), Israel's Messiah and Savior." It encourages wholeness in Messiah, fulfilling Romans 11:11: "salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel jealous." It views Jewish and non-Jewish believers as "one new man" and emphasizes small groups for building relationships. The Assembly wants to prepare people to present the gospel through word and deed and help them discover the Hebraic roots of the faith. In the service they exalt the Messiah with Hebraic-worship expressions. The

congregation has been asked to conduct the English-speaking Christmas service at the international YMCA, Jerusalem.

*A statement of faith* exists for the congregation and is identical with that of the PAOC.

*Baptism* takes place only after the leadership makes sure the candidate has come to faith and the significance of baptism is explained and understood. The preferred site is the Jordan River.

*A weekly service* is held in English on Sunday evening at 5:00 pm. It has a Jewish/Messianic flavor with songs in Hebrew and the reciting of the Shm'a in English; part of the weekly Torah portion is read and explained. The responsibility for doing this rotates between 25 persons. The sermon is often expository.

*Communion* is celebrated once a month.

*Attendance:* Average number is 400; of these 60 are children.

*Other regular activities in the congregation:* Daily noon prayer at the King of Kings office; weekly men's prayer meeting in the morning; weekly congregational prayer in the evening; there is a young adult discipleship group; 7 home groups ("Life groups") meet weekly.

### **King of Kings Assembly and Jewish believers in Jesus**

Part of the goal of the King of Kings Assembly is to help establish Hebrew-speaking fellowships. They did this in 1992 when they helped found Sukkat David (1-17), which began as a Hebrew-speaking home group under the Assembly. In 1996 the Assembly assisted in the foundation of Adonai Ro'i in Tel Aviv (5-01). In 1997 a Hebrew-speaking fellowship was founded as a home group of the King of Kings Assembly. The plan is to develop into an independent congregation, the reason for which is dealt with in a separate profile (see 1-09).

Within King of Kings Assembly there are Jewish people not included in the statistical information of the Hebrew-speaking fellowship, the reason for its inclusion here.

Reasons for people preferring the English-speaking congregation vary. Some have come to faith in an English-speaking environment and feel more at home here. Some attend to improve their English and others are not yet comfortable in Hebrew. Still others prefer a large congregation that has been stable and without any major crises in 16 years; they would "rather be healthy spiritually than speaking one's mother tongue."

*Jewish households attending the English-speaking King of Kings Assembly:* In June 1999 there were 57 adults and 14 children.

*A membership list* does not exist.

Characteristics of adults members:

1. Jewish.....	47
2. Non-Jewish but married to a Jew.....	10

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Interview with Wayne Hilsden, 20 January/June 1999.  
Media: *Mishpochah* (Jerusalem weekly) 19.10.95.

8-04

Mount Zion Fellowship

Jerusalem

Services are held in English at 10:30 am and 7:00 pm each Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. On days when there is no service there is a prayer meeting. The fellowship is a branch of Calvary Pentecostal Tabernacle, Virginia. In 1999 their services were advertised in the *Jerusalem Post* on Fridays.

*Attendance:* The number of people who regularly attend the weekly meetings is about 30. This does not include tourists.

*Jewish people attending:* According to our estimate very few, if any, of those who attend regularly are Jewish. However, for the sake of the statistical information the number has been set at 5 Jewish believers.

8-05

Narkis Street English Congregation

Central  
Jerusalem

An English-language service is held at the Baptist Church, Narkis Street, Jerusalem on Saturday morning from 10:30 am - 12:30 pm. It was started by Robert (Bob) Lindsey (see 8-01) in the early 1960s and in 1999 the congregation was led by Charles (Chuck) Kopp, who served at the Zion House until the Zion Book Shop on Prophets Street was closed in 1988. For several years Chuck Kopp has served as General Secretary of the United Christian Council in Israel (UCCI).

The service is attended by many expatriates but also local believers. Often tourist groups attend. The style of worship is free; from time to time reference is made to the weekly Torah reading and the worship will often include songs in Hebrew. The theology reflects a desire to embrace both the Jewish and Arab/Palestinian believers in the country; the leadership is open to the gifts of the Spirit. Guest preachers are often invited to teach in the congregation.

*Attendance:* The average attendance is 250.

*Jewish people attending:* The number of Jewish believers who attend regularly and consider the congregation their spiritual home is about 20; none of these are children.

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*Sources:* UCCI News 2/1981:25-26.

8-06

## Redeemer Church

Old City, Jerusalem

The Redeemer Church in the Muristan area close to the Holy Sepulcher was dedicated in 1898 in the presence of the German emperor William II. Since the mid-1800s the German Lutheran Church had been involved in school and hospital work in Jerusalem. In 1871, the Muristan chapel, named the Crusaders Chapel until the mid-1990s, when it was renovated and renamed St. John's Chapel. The church has mainly been involved in outreach to Arabs/Palestinians and in serving German-speaking people in the area.

In 1999 the following congregations use the facilities of the church: an Arab Lutheran congregation with about 200 members; a German Lutheran congregation with about 200 members led by Propst Ronnecker; an American Lutheran congregation; and a Danish congregation related to the work of the Danish Israel Mission (DIM) whose pastor, Jan Mortensen, arrived in the summer of 1999. The last two congregations are attended mainly by people who are in Israel for a short term only and by tourists, which makes it difficult to talk about membership.

The American Lutheran congregation can be characterized as an international congregation. Services are held Sunday morning at 9:00 am. In 1999 the pastors were Michael and Susan Thomas; they were sent by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA). The service is liturgical and follows, with some variations, the order of the Lutheran Book of Worship.

*Attendance:* Average attendance is 45 including 15 children. This number does not include tourist groups who often attend the services. None of the regular members are Jewish. However, a Jewish believer with membership in another congregation is employed part-time by the congregation.

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*Sources:* Colbi 1969:90-92.

8-07 **St. Andrew's Church**

Central Jerusalem

St Andrew's Church and Hospice in Jerusalem was consecrated in 1930. Up to 1964 it was administered by a special committee, the Scots' Memorial Church and Hospice. The work was, however, organized by the Jewish Mission Committee. The two committees were amalgamated in 1964 under the name The Committee on the Church and Israel. Services in English have mainly attracted foreign Protestants of various denominations.

In 1999 there were no evangelistic activities towards Jewish people from the church. However, that did not prevent unknown attackers in January 1999 from throwing rocks at the stained glass windows of the church and breaking several of them. No thorough investigation was conducted and the perpetrators were never found.

A service is held in English on Sunday morning at 10:00 am. It follows the liturgy of the Presbyterian Church. In 1999 the interim pastor was Maxwell Craig.

*Attendance:* The average attendance is 40 including tourists. The number of people who can be considered members is 30.

*Jewish people attending:* 1.

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*Sources:* Østerbye 1970:182-184; *UCCI News* 2/1978:27-35; 1/1981:36-37. (See also 8-08).

*Media:* *Jerusalem Post* 07.01.99.

8-08 **St. Paul's Church**

Central Jerusalem

St. Paul's Church, opposite Shalhevetyah (1-15), was built in 1873 as an Anglican place of worship in Jerusalem outside the ancient walls and was used mainly by an Arabic-speaking congregation. The church suffered extensive damage during the War of Independence in 1948 and was re-opened in 1953 after repairs and renovations. People living in West Jerusalem who prior to 1948 had worshipped in Christ Church could now use St. Paul's. Services in English were held until 1967, after which time Christ Church again became the main church for the work of CMJ (see 8-02). For a couple of years following the reopening in 1953 services were held in Hebrew.

Negotiations began in 1967 between the Israel Trust of the Anglican Church (ITAC) and the Bible Evangelistic Mission, a Pentecostal Jewish Mission with a home board in England, concerning the use of St. Paul's. The society had

worked in Palestine since from 1926 and had a well-situated Bible shop in the Musrara quarter, in addition to the meeting place in the missionary's house. The negotiations resulted in permission being granted to Bible Evangelistic Mission to do what they could with the building. After considerable repairs the church was rededicated in 1975 for the work being done by Lawrence V.D. Tiller. His work and regular services in Beit Hamevasser ("House of the Herald"), as the building was now called, also involved a few Jewish believers in Jesus. After Tiller's sudden death in 1979 Ray Eyre and, after him, Leslie Moxham and others continued the work. In 1983 a coffee shop was opened in the basement of the church. The shop was open every evening from 6:00-10:00 pm and received the attention of anti-missionaries. In 1984 the Sunday morning service was discontinued but the Saturday evening worship service (in English) continued. At the end of 1987 the church building twice suffered arson. According to the then leader, Leslie Moxham, it was the fifth case of arson in five years.

In 1999 St. Paul's Fellowship was no longer holding services in the facilities. Because of theological disagreement with the home board, the leader, Geoff Brice was asked not to continue.

As of May 1999 another congregation, Voice in the Wilderness (1-18), was using the facilities.

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*Sources:* Østerbye 1970:193-194; *UCCI News* 2/1975:34-35; 2/1981:28-30; 2/1983:22-23; 3/1984:25..

*Media:* Hamodi'a 21.09.84. *Kol Ha'Ir* 21.09.84; 11.12.87.

8-09

## The Scottish Church

Tiberias

The Church of Scotland began its work in Palestine in 1839, first in the Galilee and since 1863 in Jaffa, where the Tabitha School was opened. It still exists as an English-speaking school under the auspices of the Church of Scotland. The majority of the students come from local families. In 1978 there were approximately 300 students, in 1983 about 200, and in 1999 about 400. In 1885, David Watt Torrance was sent as a doctor and missionary to Tiberias. A hospital was opened in 1894.

In 1952 the hospital was made into the Sea of Galilee - Church of Scotland Center with a clinic (closed in 1965), a hospice and a bookshop. English services have been held on Sunday since 1951 with a few interruptions. Apart from the bookshop no evangelistic outreach was being conducted by the center in 1999.

In the mid-1970s services were held in English on Sundays and the congregation was made up of Arab, Jewish, and foreign believers. Furthermore the church was used for services in Hebrew led by Kenneth Crowell. In 1978 he



directed a Sabbath school in Hebrew for all ages on Saturday mornings and on Saturdays evenings a worship service was held in Hebrew. These activities were welcomed by the Scottish pastor at that time, William Tran, even though they were organized by a Baptist. Kenneth Crowell, working at the Gal Group Industries Ltd. in Tiberias, was one of the founders of Peniel Fellowship in 1982 (2-14).

In August 1995 arsonists broke into the church in the early hours in the morning and set fire to Bibles, the altar, and other items. The manager of the guest house said to the *Jerusalem Post*: "As far as I'm aware there has never been anything like this in the 100 years that the church has been here."

In 1999 services were held in English every Sunday evening at 6:00 pm according to the liturgy of the Scottish Church. The service is attended by members of the staff and guests from the Sea of Galilee Guest House belonging to the Scottish Church. From time to time tourists from the nearby hotels also participate. In 1999 the pastor was Rev. Fred Hibert.

According to our estimates no Jewish believers attend regularly.

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Sources: Colbi 1969:92-93; Østerbye 1970:182-184 *UCCI News* 2/1975:14; 2/1978:27-35; 3/1979:31; 1/1983:19-20 1/1984:36-38.

Media: *Jerusalem Post* 28.08.95.

## 8-10 Baptist Village Congregation

Petah Tikva

The Baptist Village Congregation was established in November 1958, in the "Playroom" (now "Fireside Room") of the George W. Truett Home, an orphanage which at that time was the main function of the Baptist Village. Bob Lindsey (8-01) was instrumental in establishing the congregation and served as its first pastor. Joseph Alkahe, later to serve as pastor for several years, was among those baptized during the first year of the congregation's life. Shabbat services were conducted in the "large classroom" (presently the reception room/office) with Lindsey preaching in Hebrew. The original intentions for the congregation were that it be an indigenous, Messianic Jewish congregation, worshipping in Hebrew, with a local pastor.

Charter members included Bob and Margaret Lindsey, Martha and Norman Lytle, Truett Home children who had been baptized, and mostly immigrant Messianic Jewish believers from eastern Europe including Ya'akov and Leah Goren (Poland), the Vlokh family (Poland), the Gutkind family (Poland), and Mr. Duvali (Czechoslovakia). The Anishko's and their adult children, who had fled from the Ukraine in the aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution and made their way to Palestine, purchasing land and settling in the area of the Yarkon

River, also attended. The senior Anishko provided 16 dunams for the Baptist Village, its first plot. Vehicles were sent from Baptist Village to Jaffa, Bat Yam, and Yavne to bring people to Shabbat services and return them home.

*Information from Norman Lytle, 23 June, 1999.*

8-11

## Immanuel Lutheran Church

Jaffa

The international English-speaking services at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Jaffa were started by the Norwegian pastor Otto Høvik in 1978. Services are held on Sunday mornings. The pastor responsible for the Hebrew-speaking congregation on Saturday has normally also had the responsibility for the international congregation. In 1999 this was Magnus Riska. The church is visited every year by a considerable number of school children as part of the school program. The concerts held in the church are well attended also by many Jews.

The English service is liturgical and follows, with some freedom, the order of the Lutheran Book of Worship.

*Attendance:* Average attendance is 30, including 5 children.

*Jewish people attending:* 5 adults and no children.

### History

Part of the history of the work of the Norwegian Church Ministry to Israel (NCMI) has been recorded under 3-01 and 5-08, including the other congregations which use the facilities.

The work of the NCMI has focused on the two congregations in Haifa and Jaffa. It has been the desire of the home board to make the congregations independent. In 1977 a Congregational Council was elected in Beit Eliahu which was seen as a step in the direction of making the congregation indigenous. In 1984 NCMI decided to transfer the authority and responsibility of administration to the two congregations, while Immanuel Church also received its own Congregational Council. However, in 1999, Immanuel Church does not have a Congregational Council, partly due to the setback caused by the split in 1991.

A prominent person in the work of the NCMI from 1950-1976 was Magne Solheim, who in a book published in Norwegian in 1986 describes his own work together with that of NCMI in Israel. Norwegian workers have been prominent in the work of the Israeli Bible Society and have contributed significantly to the translation of the New Testament into Hebrew.

In 1976, the *Ebenezer Home* was dedicated, an old people's home built on the same piece of land as Beit Eliahu in Haifa. In 1999 it had about 30 residents. The chairman of the local board of the Ebenezer Home is Gershon Nerel, from 1993

the Israel Secretary of the International Messianic Jewish (Hebrew Christian) Alliance (IMJ[HC]A).

The *Caspari Center* in Jerusalem began in 1982 with Ole Chr. Kvarme as its first director, followed by Torleif Elgvin in 1985 and in 1995 by the present director, Torkild Masvie. It is a center for Biblical and Jewish Studies with the primary goal of providing theological education for the Messianic movement. Its study program, TELEM offered 12 different courses in 1999. The journal *Mishkan*, dedicated to biblical and theological thinking on issues related to Jewish evangelism, has been published since 1994 by the United Christian Council (UCCI) in cooperation with Caspari Center.

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Sources: Baumann 1984:92-95; Østerbye 1970:185, 187-188; Solheim 1986; *UCCI News* 2/1970:8-9; 1/1977:26; 1/1978:32-38; 2/1984:22.

## Group 9

9-01

### Hebrew Catholics

Different locations

(The following information is mainly based on an article in *Mishkan* 29/1998 by Lisa Loden and a Caspari lecture given in May 1999 by Father Juan Moreno, Jerusalem.)

In 1999 there were four Hebrew-speaking congregations integrated in the work of Opus Sancti Jacobi, the Work of the Apostle St. James, founded in 1955 by the Latin Patriarchate for Catholics of Jewish origin living in Israel.

Parallel with but independent of the development of the Messianic Movement there arose after the foundation of the State of Israel among some groups within the Roman Catholic Church a wish to worship in Hebrew and to find a new expression of faith and worship more consistent with Jewish and Israeli culture. The primary motivation for this came from Jewish Catholics who immigrated to Israel in the 1950s and 1960s, which for some led to a deep renewal of their Jewish identity. These people felt it difficult to integrate into the local Palestinian Church which prayed in Arabic, and also did not want to integrate into the different foreign Catholic congregations which prayed in French, Italian or English. It is worth noting (without going into the Catholic mission in Palestine in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) that already in 1945 the learned Hebraist P. Jean M. Bauchet had published a Catholic Catechism in Hebrew, of more than 350 pages. The book was dedicated to the "204,504 Jews who in the 19th century had converted to Christianity," which indicates more eloquently than many words that the book was meant to be used for the purpose of Jewish evangelism. An analysis of this and other books in Hebrew by Catholic authors has been made by Pinchas E. Lapide.

In 1955 Opus Sancti Jacobi founded congregations in Jerusalem, Haifa, Jaffa and Beersheba. The Hebrew Liturgy which was used early on was not according to the Roman rite but to the rite of some oriental churches. This liturgy felt strange for those who were used to the Roman Liturgy and they were given permission from Rome to celebrate parts of the Mass in Hebrew. About the situation in 1999 Moreno states:

"At present the liturgy in use in the Catholic qehilot of the country follows closely the universal Roman liturgy, though a few interesting innovations can be detected. In fact the present Hebrew translations are rather free, and make use of the rich Jewish prayer language found in the Bible and rabbinical tradition. Yet there is a movement demanding a more adapted Liturgy, based

on the earliest liturgies of the Church, with a focus on the Hebrew roots of these liturgies, and simultaneously relevant to modern Israeli culture."

In 1979 the Association of Hebrew Catholics (AHC) was founded by Elias Friedman, a South African Jew and a holocaust survivor, who was a Carmelite monk of Stella Maris in Haifa. He passed away in June 1999. Friedman expressed his views in his book *Jewish Identity* (1974). The AHC has branches in Israel, Australia, New Zealand, and the USA. The AHC intends to end the alienation of Catholics of Jewish origin from their heritage by the formation of a Hebrew Catholic Community approved by the Holy See. They would like to have their own Jewish bishop who could present their interests. Requests along this line, however, have so far been denied on the grounds that the community is too small to justify having its own bishop.

The Hebrew Catholics feel a special call from God to a mission both with regard to the Catholic Church and with regard to Israel. The reasons for a specific Hebrew Catholic Church have been well summarized by Moreno:

"With regard to the Catholic Church they feel called to strive for a more positive view of the Jewish people, a better appreciation of the Jewish inheritance, the unity of both Covenants. An impulse exists to fight against all possible left-overs of the anti-Semitism of the past that may still be present in the Church. They want to contribute to the Catholicity of the Church that has been called to be present in all languages and cultures, so that the original communion between the Church from the Gentiles and the Church from the circumcision may be reestablished.

"With regard to Israel, they want to counteract general prejudices that a Jew cannot become a Christian and remain a Jew, or that the aim of Christianity is to extirpate the Jews by turning them into non-Jews, and then assimilating them into the body of Christians. They want to show in their own personal witness how Christian Jews can be loyal and patriotic citizens of the country. They want to show a Church that is concerned with the destiny of Israel, and can share her joys and sufferings."

Regarding the framework for worship, the Hebrew Catholics want changes which are more consistent with Jewish and Israeli culture. In Moreno's words:

"Worship places that architecturally speaking look more like synagogues than like baroque or Gothic churches. Absence of statues that are a source of scandal for Jewish piety. Simplicity in Liturgy, avoiding vestments, the use of incense, bodily gestures, organs, musical instruments. All these elements, no matter how beautiful or artistic, or even attractive, tend to give the Church a foreign or exotic character for the Israelis. They preferred to adopt a synagogal liturgy of the word, with prayers, reading and hymns. The Lord's Supper should try to stress the parallels with the Jewish Seder of Pesach, around a table that looks more like a table and less like an altar ...".

Already by the mid-1950s the Hebrew Catholics had begun to worship using original music set to verses from the Scriptures, setting aside traditional

Gregorian or polyphonic music in favor of more Israeli tunes. Lisa Loden, who with her husband David Loden (see 4-01)) has been instrumental in creating a Messianic Jewish expression for songs and hymns, agrees with Moreno that the Hebrew Catholics preceded the Messianic Movement in this respect by almost 20 years.

One marked difference between Messianic Jews and Hebrew Catholics is that the latter are not an evangelizing movement. In Moreno's words:

"They do not embark on any kind of active proselytizing, though they are ready to receive any Jews who freely choose to believe in Jesus, and to enter into a covenant relation with God in the Church. Before baptism there is normally an extensive period of teaching and a serious discernment of the validity of the motives that bring Jewish candidates to ask for baptism."

In 1993 Daniel Oswald Rufeisen (Brother Daniel) expressed this view in the following way: Be patient with yourselves and with "the Jews" and wait some generations (yes!) with the missionary activity. This is certainly not the time to evangelize either the Israeli-born Jew nor the newcomer. The newcomer often arrived here without any faith at all, deprived of Jewish tradition and neither integrated as a human being nor as a Jew. Let him first adapt to the new realities he found here and begin to feel at home. Let him find his new Israeli identity. I remember the ardent plea addressed to us several years ago by Professor Shlomo Avineri in the *Jerusalem Post*, 'Give us a moratorium till the year 2000! We are not able to take on board the missionary activities.'" (Rufeisen 1993:51).

The fact that Catholic Jews are not actively engaged in mission may explain why the Catholic Church does not experience the same kind of harassment as Messianic Jews. However, also Catholic church buildings have been the target of vandalism. Apart from covering issues on the relationship between the Vatican and the State of Israel, the Israeli press has often also published positive articles on monastic life and similar issues. Feature articles have also been brought on well-known persons like Father Marcel Dubois, who for many years was a professor and taught at the Hebrew University and in 1980 was appointed head of the Department of Philosophy at the university, the first Christian to serve in such a position. He received the Israel prize for 1996-97 for his special contribution to the society and the State of Israel. However, this did not prevent representatives from Shas in 1996 from bringing a court case against Father Marcel Dubois for transgression of the law prohibiting persuasion by gift for conversion. Other well-known persons of Jewish origin within the Catholic church who also on several occasions have been mentioned in the Israeli press include Lustiger, Cardinal of Paris, and Daniel Rufeisen (Brother Daniel). The canonization of Edith Stein, a Jewish born convert to Catholicism who died in Auschwitz, received a lot of attention and the act was met with protest from the World Jewish Congress which expressed concern that the canonization might

obscure her Jewish roots and minimize the fact that over 90 percent of her fellow victims were Jewish.

The Messianic Jewish Movement and the Catholic Church share one challenge concerning immigrants who are "Christians" but who, because of their Jewish ancestors, have been qualified to immigrate to Israel and often belong to mixed families. Moreno admits that many of these are very ignorant of their faith, are not committed to professing it, and are fearful of talking about it. They have difficulties feeling at home in the Hebrew Catholic Church. "The weak links that unite them with their Christian past are the icons, the candles, the incense, the Christmas tree, precisely the kind of things that have been put aside in the work of St. James."

Another challenge common to the Messianic Movement and Hebrew Catholics is that while they offer a fellowship where the flavor is Jewish and Israeli, there are Israelis who feel attracted precisely by the "church" elements which some of the Messianic congregations can offer - or at least do not prevent - or, in the case of the Catholic Church, exotic elements that are absent precisely from the work of St. James. Or in Moreno's words:

"What draws them (the growing number of Israeli Jews) to the Church is precisely the mysterious air of medieval monasteries, of contemplative life, the sound of the organ, the liturgical vestments, the incense, the art of icons ... What they want to find in the Church is not so much a second edition of the synagogue that they have rejected, but the Liturgy of the Old Temple, that helps them to transcend. What draws some Israeli Jews to the Catholic Church is precisely its catholicity, its universality."

## Members

According to Moreno the congregations in Jerusalem, Haifa, Jaffa and Beersheba flourished specially in the 1960s. He mentions that Alfred Delmée, pastor of the congregation in Jaffa, at some time "had a list of 2,000 members only in the area of Jaffa and Haifa. Summer camps and other activities for children of Catholic Jewish families could assemble then as many as 100 participants." As reasons why the congregations have dwindled in numbers and have aged considerably he suggests five causes:

1. Death: The average age of the communities is very advanced and every year they lose some of their members.
2. Emigration: A considerable number of members, especially young couples, have found it too difficult to stand the challenge of being Christians in Israeli society, especially the problems facing their children, and leave the country.
3. Assimilation: Others have assimilated into Israeli society, although practically none of them have undergone a reconversion to Judaism.

4. Lack of new members: The fact that the congregations do not engage in active proselytism means that very few new candidates have joined the Church during the last ten years.

5. Pluralism: A considerable number of Hebrew Catholics do not identify with the aims of St. James, with their special Liturgy, and spirituality, and have preferred to find their home in the foreign Catholic Church that worships in English, French or Italian.

Moreno finds it difficult to give exact figures of the number of Hebrew Catholics in Israel in 1999. If one includes those who regularly attend the four congregations *and* those who worship in other *foreign* congregations, i.e. non-Hebrew-speaking congregations "we might have as many as 500," he estimates. This figure does not allow for those who have dropped out completely but have not officially broken their ties with the Catholic Church. (These Catholics of Jewish origin are comparable to Messianic Jews who although baptized no longer have any regular connection with a congregation and who are therefore not included in the survey's statistics. That Catholics of Jewish origin who worship in *foreign* congregations appear here corresponds to the inclusion of Jewish believers in Jesus who worship in international congregations [see Group 8].) Moreno's estimate is confirmed by a member of the community who sets the total number of members at 400-500.

It has not been possible to find anyone who has dared divide these 400-500 into the categories of (1) priests, monks and nuns; and (2) laity, adults and children. It is also unclear how many of those members of the Hebrew Catholic community are non-Jewish. It is our impression that the number could be considerable. Instead we have tried to get an overview of number of people attending the Hebrew-speaking services in 1999.

### Attendance

In 1999 Hebrew Catholic services are held regularly in Beersheba, Jaffa, Jerusalem and Haifa. The information on attendance in these services is based on conversations with active members of the Hebrew Catholic community in the country. The figures for attendance on regular Sundays and feast days should be compared to the figures estimated for the total number of Hebrew Catholics in the country.

In Haifa the community has been without a priest since the death of Daniel Rufeisen in 1998, but receives help from time to time from a Greek-Catholic priest who travels from Tiberias to Haifa to preside over the service on Sunday, held at a community center in the city. Participants come not only from Haifa but also other places in the Galilee and number on regular Sundays between 20-40. Less than half of these are of Jewish origin. There are 4-5 children. On feast days the participants number between 60-80 adults, plus 15 children. Many of the participants are new immigrants and several of them come from a Russian Orthodox background.



In Jaffa there are two congregations. One of them belongs to Opus Sancti Jacobi and is the first and oldest of the congregations in the country. Today it numbers only about 10 members, 3 of whom are Jewish. Another congregation in Jaffa is led by a Polish priest, himself a Hebrew Catholic. Service is held in Polish, mainly for expatriates and foreign workers, but occasionally services are held in Hebrew to meet the needs of the families whose children speak mainly Hebrew.

The congregation in Beersheba meets in St. Abraham's Church every Sunday at 6:15 pm and on weekdays at 6:30 pm. According to our information the regular Sunday services are attended by about 20 people, none of whom are Jewish. On feast days attendance is about 80 including no or only few Jewish people.

In Jerusalem, services are held on weekdays and Sundays. Regular attendance on Sundays is between 40-50 and only a few of these are Jewish. On feast days attendance can be around 100. It is estimated that no more than 15 of these are Jewish.

From the above it can be concluded that the attendance of Jewish people in the Hebrew Catholic congregations does not seem to exceed 50, out of a total number of 350 attending. On regular Sundays the number of Hebrew Catholics does not exceed 30 out of a total number of 100 attending.

### **Cooperation and fellowship between Hebrew Catholics and Messianic Jews**

Up to 1999 there has been little cooperation between Messianic Jews and Hebrew Catholics. According to Lisa Loden, leaders of "Protestant" Messianic Jewish congregations do not want to include leaders of Hebrew Catholic congregations. She writes: "The discussions showed that Messianic Jews are not ready to accept as brothers in the faith those who choose to identify themselves as both Jews and Catholics." Her own opinion is that the "two communities could benefit from mutual recognition."

Common problems with the surroundings have on a few occasions resulted in cooperation and combined initiatives. After a wave of accusations in Israeli newspapers against Christians in Israel, nine Churches in Israel formulated a Joint Declaration 1963 in which the accusations were refuted. Behind the declaration were the Melchite Church, the Greek Orthodox Church, the Latin Church, the Anglican Church, the Baptist Convention in Israel, the Lutheran Church, the Church of the Nazarene, the British Pentecostal Church, and Church of Scotland. It should be noted that quite a few Messianic Jews were represented by the Protestant churches where they were members. In connection with the so-called "Anti-missionary Law" of 1977, the United Christian Council in Israel (UCCI) received help from David-Maria A. Jaeger, who served as chairman of the liaison office of the UCCI relating to matters resulting from the so-called Anti-missionary Law. A delegation from the UCCI visited the Vatican Secretariat for Christian Unity in 1978 during a tour of

Europe. Jaeger is Israeli-born (in 1955) and was baptized in 1973 at St. George's Cathedral, Jerusalem. After a continuing "pilgrimage" he was confirmed by the Bishop of the Roman Catholic Church in Israel in 1975.

Cooperation found prominent expression in connection with the translation of the New Testament into modern Hebrew, an undertaking which spanned from the years 1969 to 1976 and later continued with the annotated Hebrew New Testament, published by the United Bible Society (UBS). In line with UBS's policy, Bible translation is an ecumenical project, and therefore the translation committee consisted of Messianic Jews, expatriate workers of different denominations, and Catholics. In this context it may be noted that Yochanan Elichai and Yehoshua Blum had already published, in 1967, a new translation into modern Hebrew of John's Gospel, and in 1970 Matthew's Gospel, and that Elichai published Luke's Gospel in 1972, and together with Blum published the whole of the New Testament in modern Hebrew in 1974.

There are also examples of informal contacts between Messianic Jews and Hebrew Catholics on the personal level. In a letter of 17 March 1999, Messianic Jew Heinz Pollack says that there have been meetings and discussions between Catholic Jews and Messianic Jews in Israel since 1980. These meetings were initiated by Menahem Benhayim and others. Five groups were established in Jerusalem, where they held meetings in different homes. "I can testify that in these groups there were no less than 15 Catholic Jews among them," writes Pollack. The group, which he participated in, held regular meetings from December 1980 until February 1997. Heinz Pollack concludes his letter in the following way: "I wish I could finish by saying that this initiative continues in some form and that in this way had opened a door into the future."

In continuation of an international conference held by Catholic charismatics in Jerusalem in 1998, where leaders from the Messianic Movement were invited, there is now a monthly prayer meeting of charismatic Catholics and charismatic Messianic Jews, Lisa Loden writes.

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*Interview by telephone with members of the Hebrew Catholic community, 15 June 1999.*

*Other sources:* Lapidé 1984:101-02; Loden 1998; Moreno 1999; Pollack, private letter 17.03.99; Rufeisen 1993.

*On Marcel Dubois:* *Chadashot* 25.12.84. *Jerusalem Post* 30.05.80; 31.10.80. *Yom Hashishi* (Tel Aviv) 02.02.96. *Yom leYom* 04.01.96; 28.03.96.

*On Daniel Rufeisen:* *Jerusalem Post* 31.07.98. *Kol Haifa* 01.01.88. *Yediot Acharonot* 29.11.91; 31.07.98.

*On Edith Stein:* *Ha'Aretz* 23.05.97; 08.10.98. *Jerusalem Post* 09.10.98. *Ma'ariv* 13.10.98. *Politica* October 1987.

*On Lustiger:* *Ha'Aretz* 26.11.82; 27.05.83. *Ha'Universitah* (Journal of Tel Aviv University) Fall 1985. *Jerusalem Post* 02.02.81; 03.02.81; 06.02.81; 15.02.81

## Group 10: Other groups

### 10-01 Beth-El Community (Emma Berger)    Zichron Ya'akov

(The information up to the beginning of 1990 is mainly based on articles from the Israeli press.)

#### History and theology

The Beth-El Community, often called the Emma Berger sect or the German Christians by the Israeli Press, is located in Zichron Ya'akov, is located in Kibbutz Beth-El in Zichron Ya'akov south of Haifa. The group lives in self-imposed isolation and has no contact with the Messianic Movement. It was headed by its founder, Emma Berger, until her death in 1984. In an interview with *Ma'ariv* in 1981 Berger denied that she had founded a sect and claimed to follow only the Bible.

The group is characterized by expectations Jesus' return on the Mount of Olives and of the establishment of the millennium with Israel as its center. It sees its own work as a preparation for this. An article in *Jerusalem Post* Magazine in 1977 describes the group in the following way: "They believe that Jesus will come soon and that he will complete his work of redemption in Israel ... He will open the eyes of the Jews when he comes, and that will bring salvation to the world." Group discipline is strong and the members have practically no contact with other Christians, as they adhere to the idea of a "clean" congregation. In the same article from 1977 Emma Berger said to the *Jerusalem Post*: "The Messiah will come in our lifetime."

Having worked as a nurse for about 25 years in Germany and supported the German office of Youth Aliyah in the years around the 1960s, Berger visited Israel in the early 1960s at the suggestion of the latter, at which time she decided to set up a guest house. Berger's contacts in Youth Aliyah suggested several non-urban communities where it might be possible to find private land for sale. In 1963 Berger and her group settled in Zichron Ya'akov. Within six months they had bought two buildings which were converted to guest houses, and German tourists began arriving on regular visits. Until 1967 there was little opposition to the group. In 1967, when the group bought nine dunams of land concerned citizens attempted to block the purchase but the Supreme Court found the purchase legal and valid. Up through the 1970s the group bought

land in Zichron Ya'akov, in nearby Binyamina, Pardes Hanna, and Haifa, which met with fierce opposition and extensive press coverage. According to Knesset Member Gad Ya'acobi, the group had (in 1978) 14,000 square meters of buildings; 1500 dunams of agricultural land; building plots totaling 50 dunams; and 3000 square meters of industrial and business space. He adds they were about to purchase more. In a number of newspaper articles the group was accused of missionary activity. In 1982 the group, through its lawyer, Dr. R. Gottachalk, Haifa, rebutted rumors that "under-the-table payments" had been made in connection with the purchase of land and called such rumors slanderous: "The claim that Ms. Berger regularly purchases land is also not true. There were no purchases of land made either by Ms. Berger or by the amutah Beth-El -- Zichron Ya'acov for more than two years. Ms. Berger and/or the above-mentioned amutah society have not been nor are at present missionaries."

The group has experienced various forms of harassment. In the 1970s the newest building complex was set on fire; in 1981, 11 young yeshiva students, all under 16 and studying at various yeshivot in the area, were arrested on suspicion of causing serious damage to property belonging to the group, estimated by the police at tens of thousands of shekels.

In 1977 there were about 50 permanent members in the community in Zichron Ya'akov. In addition to that they had mainly German volunteers coming for short stays to help in the fields, in the group's factories, or in the guest house. Throughout the period Emma Berger denied that the group was engaged in missionary activities. In 1981 she claimed an international membership, including only an Israeli couple from Ashdod. Through the 1970s the group held services both in Zichron Ya'akov and in the Haifa area (Bat Galim) - by and large for the group's own members and for other German-speakers.

In 1990 the group offered the local council in Zichron Ya'akov land for the construction of housing for new immigrants. The anti-missionary organization Yad L'Achim charged that "this is but another attempt of this missionary sect to entrap Jewish families into its net by exploiting the housing stress of immigrants." In the end the local authorities were not in a position to accept the offer and nothing came of it.

Generally speaking the many charges of being a missionary sect have proved unfounded. Since the group stopped buying land there has been little press focus on it.

According to the leader of the community, Albert Fucht, in 1999 there were about 150 members in the community in Zichron Ya'akov. This includes volunteers who come to work at the factory run by the community in Zichron Ya'akov. The volunteers normally stay for 3-6 months and come mainly from Germany but also from other places. Services in German are held every

Saturday. According to our information very few persons of Jewish origin are affiliated with the group.

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*Media: Emtzah Hadera* 03.10.90. *Hamodi'a* 02.11.84. *Hatzofeh* 13.02.80; 13.09.90. *Jerusalem Post* 06.07.78; 08.05.81. *Jerusalem Post Magazine* 10.07.77. *Ma'ariv* 07.02.80; 11.02.80; 02.01.81. 04.01.81, 18.01.81; 23.10.84. *Yated Ne'eman* 13.09.90. *Yediot Acharonot* 21.02.80; 25.02.82. *Yom Hashishi* 19.10.90; 10.01.92.

## 10-02 Church of God (Dugger)

Jerusalem

(The information up to about 1970 is mainly based on data from Østerbye 1970 and Malachy 1978).

### History and theology

Already in the 1860s there were several splits within the Seventh-Day Adventists which led to the establishment of "The Church of God." The main reason for the split was disagreement over eschatological matters. Those who broke with the Seventh-Day Adventists thought that Jesus would return to establish the Kingdom of God on earth and not in heaven (see 10-05). In 1933 the Church of God (Seventh Day), Denver, Colorado, split and the Church of God of Seventh Day (Salem, West Virginia) was established. Prior to this it had been decided in 1931 that the General Conference of the church would transfer the center to Jerusalem "when conditions would permit." In accordance with this decision elder A.N. Dugger was sent to Jerusalem to look into the possibilities.

Dugger arrived in Jerusalem towards the end of 1931 and stayed during 1932-1933, establishing a group called "Church of God of the Seventh Day (A.N. Dugger, Jerusalem)." He lived in the Rehavia neighborhood, where he operated a small printing press, and he rented a place on the Mount of Olives where meetings were held every Saturday. Some of his assistants were of Jewish origin. During his stay it is maintained that some 150,000 tracts were printed in Hebrew and distributed all over Judea, Samaria and Galilee. Following Dugger's return to USA in 1933, differences arose between him and the church, which refused to move the headquarters to Jerusalem. Several splits and 20 years later, Dugger came to Jerusalem where he founded his church in 1953.

From his home in the Baka quarter in Jerusalem he resumed his activities, in particular the distribution of printed material issued from his private press. He also maintained a house of prayer near Abu Tor in Jerusalem. The missionary activity is seen as important, since the Jewish people are going to have a

glorious destiny in the Millennium after they have repented and acknowledged Jesus.

In February 1973 a person, or persons, poured kerosene on the building occupied by the Church of God in the Baka quarter. The fire did little damage. To *Hayad* Dugger said that he suspected that people from the Jewish Defence League (JDL) led by Rabbi Meir Kahane were behind the arson, since people from JDL had earlier intruded in the print shop in the building.

According to Yona Malachy about a dozen members joined Dugger in the 1950s in Jerusalem, including some "converted Jews." Malachy writes the following about the situation in the beginning of the 1970s: "Dugger's group includes, in addition to a number of converted Jews, several Adventist families who have settled as farmers in various rural areas of Israel."

#### Activities and members in 1999

Dugger died in 1975, but the work has been continued by his daughter and son-in-law who still live in Jerusalem in the Baka neighborhood where they have continued to publish *The Mount Zion Reporter*, a publication distributed mainly in the USA. It appears about 4 times a year. According to a relative a weekly meeting is held every Saturday morning and is attended by about 10 people. There is no relationship to any local Messianic congregation.

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*Information by telephone, 12 June 1999.*

*Other sources: Hayahad Digest 9/1973:2; Malachy 1978:40-48; Østerbye 1970:207-208.*

## 10-03 Davidic Seventh-Day Adventist

Bethany

The full name of this group is the First Temple of the House of David. While it used to meet on the Mount of Olives it now rents a house in the Arab village of Bethany. They number about 20 people and many of them are originally from Jamaica but have moved to here from the USA. Like the Seventh-Day Adventists they keep the Shabbat and observe the Jewish holidays, including the New Moon.

Services are held on Friday evening to "bring in the Sabbath" and on Saturday morning at 10:00 am. There is also a prayer meeting on Wednesday evening. All the services are in English.

According to information through one of the members one Jewish person attends the fellowship.

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*Information by telephone, 17 June 1999.*

10-04

## Ir Ovot (Simha Pearlmutter)

Arava

(The information below is mainly based on articles from the Israeli press.)

### History and theology

Simha Pearlmutter founder of the Negev moshav, Ir Ovot, in the Arava, his family and members of his group are not included in this survey. The group is isolated - or has isolated itself - and has apparently little, if any, contact with the Messianic movement in Israel. By one influential leader, Joseph Shulam (1-13), Pearlmutter is still seen as "a very colorful and interesting brother in the Messiah." A former member of the community, however, describes the group as a "cult."

Simha Pearlmutter was born in the mid-1930s, raised as an observant Jew, and eventually became head of an Orthodox synagogue in Miami, Florida, during the 1960s. He came to believe in Jesus as the Messiah and immigrated to Israel in 1966. He received a lot of public attention because of his two wives - a marriage relationship he explains as being in the style of the Patriarchies. In 1967, expecting that the Messiah would come from the Edom mountains he founded the moshav Ir Ovot in the Arava, close to what was then the Jordanian border. Relations with the Israeli Army have been good over the years. The Jewish Agency officials in the Agency's Settlement Department refused to recognize the moshav from the start. In 1973 the members of the moshav went to court and won the right to 30,000 cubic meters of water annually.

In an interview with the *Jerusalem Post* in December 1976 Pearlmutter stresses that he sees Yeshua only as a Jew: "My acceptance of him is taking him out of church and putting him into the synagogue." The reporter continues: "Pearlmutter says he differs from 'Jesus freaks,' 'Jews for Jesus' and other such groups in that he has never regarded himself as a Christian, does not pray to Jesus, and observes all the Jewish holidays and the mitzvot. Jesus never enters into the observance of his religion; rather, he is an abiding concept which adds a rosy glory to his Judaism: if the messiah has already come, then a Jew can happily work his land, raise his family, and wait with assurance for the Redemption."

About Pearlmutter's bigamy the reporter writes: "Pearlmutter justified his bigamy by arguing that when Rabbi Gershom imposed a ban on multiple marriages a thousand years ago, he did so for the sake of expediency in an era of Christian rule, and never intended to outlaw the Torah, in which multiple marriage was normal, everyday practice." That Pearlmutter lived with two wives has shocked many.

Having founded the settlement Pearlmutter decided about 1978, according to an article in *Ma'ariv*, that all members would become "penitents" (Ultra-orthodox Jews).

After the *Jerusalem Post* in 1980 had termed Ir Ovot a "Jewish Christian kibbutz," the group published a disclaimer to the effect that Ir Ovot is a Jewish kibbutz. The only Christians among them are foreign volunteers who live and work there on a temporary basis, as in many other kibbutzim in Israel. It is made clear that non-Jews cannot obtain membership in the kibbutz.

In 1982, according to *Ma'ariv*, about 80 people lived on the site. A crisis later the same year reduced the fellowship to about 25 people, when Pearlmutter's first wife, Judith, left him, taking with her four of their children. As a consequence many of the members of the settlement left as a group in October 1982, leaving about 25 in the settlement. According to the press the main reason why this group left was the feeling they were living in a dictatorship, and this was most keenly felt by the "converts" and the Jewish "penitents" (ba'alei tshuvah) in the wake of Pearlmutter's move to make them conform to Ultra-orthodox Judaism. According to Joseph Shulam, the wife who left Pearlmutter was "later the chief fighter against the Jews who believe in Yeshua as the Messiah," since she began working for an anti-missionary organization.

According to an article in *Davar* in 1983 the kibbutz members dress like residents of Mea She'arim and most of them are American "penitents," it is said. Yad L'Achim has obtained Pearlmutter's book *The Tents of Shem* which they consider to be filled with propaganda for Christianity and Jesus. As a result, a grave warning was issued by the Ultra-Orthodox judiciary: "In the wake of reliable testimonies ... we declare that this place [Ir Ovot] is a frightful menace to every Jew, that he [Simha Pearlmutter] is an extremely dangerous person who under the cover of an ultra-orthodox mantle seeks to persuade Jews to believe in that man [Jesus], Heaven forbid! We therefore warn each and every Israelite not to set foot in that place nor to be in the presence of this man."

Asked about the current number of people in the community in 1999 Simha Pearlmutter did not want to give any details. As a reason for that he gave the strained relationship between him and the rest of the Messianic community in the country, of which he does not consider himself a part. Their number, which according to our information is very small, is not included in this survey.

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Sources: *The Jerusalem Newsletter*, April 1994.

Media: *Davar* 08.06.83. *Ha'Aretz* 13.09.83; 15.04.85. *Jerusalem Post* 09.06.76; 17.06.76; 18.12.76; 19.10.80; 25.10.80. *Ma'ariv* 05.11.82.



10-05  
locations

## Seventh-Day Adventists

Different

(The information up to about 1970 is mainly based on data from Østerbye and Malachy).

### History and theology

William Miller (1782-1849) is considered the founder of the Seventh-Day Adventists. He was preoccupied with the question of the imminent return of Christ. After the calculations he had made for the return of Jesus, which was to take place in 1843 (later corrected to 1844) failed, he was discharged from a Baptist church of which he was the leader. At the Albany Conference in 1845, which he and his followers had convened, a resolution was adopted, part of which reads as follows: "Resolved, that we consider the doctrine of the restoration of the natural Jews, as a nation, either before or after the second advent of Christ, as heirs and inheritors of the land of Canaan, as subversive of the whole Gospel system, by raising up what Christ has broken down, namely the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile ...".

As to the Millennium, the predominant view among Seventh-Day Adventists became that Jesus would, after his Second Coming, reign over the Kingdom of Righteous for a thousand years in heaven, and not on earth. Other Adventists opposed this view and they broke away from the Seventh-Day Adventists and formed the Church of God (see 10-02). The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and the fact that all of Jerusalem came into Israeli hands in 1967 are not seen as eschatological signs. In the Bible they do not find any passages that predict the establishment of the Zionist State of Israel. However, internationally the Seventh-Day Adventists have always had close contact with Jewish circles, especially in the USA, concerning legal problems of Sabbath observance and religious liberty. They have also supported the Jews at international forums.

Intensive missionary activities have been launched among Jews in the USA. They have never abandoned the hope that the Jews would join their church, which is Jewish in that Saturday is their holiday and their dietary laws, e.g. abstention from pork, are derived from the Scriptures. The headquarters for the Seventh-Day Adventists in Israel is Advent House, Jerusalem.

According to Malachy, the center was established during the British Mandate. According to Østerbye, their activities were organized as a mission in 1950.

According to Malachy, there was in Jerusalem in the early 1970s one missionary who "heads a small group of ten to fifteen believers" with Advent House as their base.

**Activities and membership in 1999**

According the president of the work in Israel, pastor Richard Elofer, in 1999 there were about 800 members of the Seventh-Day Adventists in all of Israel. These are divided into 12 congregations all over the country, with 4 located in the Tel Aviv area. About 100 of the members are Jewish. This number does not include about 70 children of Jewish families. The recent increase in members of Jewish origin is mainly due to immigration from the former USSR. Three of the 12 congregations conduct their meetings in Russian. One of the two congregations that meet in Haifa conducts their meetings in Hebrew and there are plans to begin a Hebrew-speaking group also in Tel Aviv before the end of 1999.

In some of the Messianic congregations which have been surveyed there are people with an Adventist background who have found their spiritual home here, among them people from the former USSR. In Emek Yizre'el in Afula (2-04) there was a split between Adventists and other believers due to doctrinal issues.

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*Information by telephone, 12 June 1999.*

*Sources: Colbi 1969:142; Malachy 1978:19-40; Østerbye 1970:206-7.*

*Media: Hamodi'a 22.07.83.*

## Group 11

### 11-01                      **Jehovah's Witnesses**                      Different locations

(The information up to about 1970 is mainly based on data from Østerbye 1970 and Malachy 1978. After that information is based on articles from the Israeli press).

#### **History and theology**

Established by Charles T. Russell (1852-1916) in 1870 and with the present name Jehovah's Witnesses from 1931. They deny the Trinity and the divinity of Christ, are conscientious objectors, and wait for the great battle of Armageddon. They are very critical of any social organization, including the State of Israel.

Throughout his life founder Charles T. Russell retained excellent relations with the leaders of American Jewry, a fact which was at least partially due to his pro-zionist views and his assurance that the re-establishment of Israel in the land of Palestine was soon to be expected. The President to succeed him, Joseph Franklin Rutherford, also demonstrated up to about the late 1920s a sympathetic and even cordial attitude towards Jews and maintained that Zionism was the hope of the world, but he later changed - perhaps under the impression of his failed prophecies regarding the salvation of the Jewish people in 1925 - to a more negative stand on Jews and Zionism. Under the leadership of Nathan Homer Knorr from 1942, Jehovah's Witnesses have held the view that Israel is deprived of any eschatological role. Nothing in the modern return of the Jews to Palestine and the setting up of the State of Israel corresponds, according to their views, with biblical prophecies concerning the restoration of the people of Israel. After the proclamation of Israel in 1948 the new Jewish State was said to have committed the ultimate sin by joining the United Nations, which by Jehovah's Witnesses is seen as Satan's handiwork in his struggle against Jehovah. The State of Israel, with its democratic system and its army, seems to Jehovah Witness a state like any other state, far removed from the theocracy which they desire.

## History in Israel

According to Østerbye, the year of the foundation of the Jehovah's Witnesses' work in Israel was 1948. In the 1960s they had meeting halls at least in Tel Aviv and Haifa and perhaps also in other places in Israel.

In a statistical report of the activities in 1961 of the Witnesses worldwide, published in *The Watch Tower*, 10 January 1962, it is said that the number of Witnesses in Israel did not exceed 60. Based on information from the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Israel Østerbye gives the number of Jehovah's Witnesses in Tel Aviv in 1964 as 70 members, but adds: "Other people, well-informed about the Jehovah's Witnesses, give the number of members [in Israel] as 400."

## Harassment

The harassment which Jehovah's Witness are exposed to in Israel largely corresponds to what the Messianic Movement has experienced. In 1983 the Orthodox weekly *Yom Hashishi* Jehovah's Witnesses are called "The most dangerous of the missionary sects." Antimissionary organizations make no difference between Messianic Jews and Jehovah's Witnesses.

Jehovah's Witnesses have been often mentioned in the Hebrew Press for their missionary activities and distribution of material to mail boxes. Warnings against them have even involved a statement issued by the Department for Religious Education and Culture in the Petah Tikva area in 1995. They are accused of targeting new immigrants by presenting themselves under the cover of being Jewish.

There have been several incidents of violence against their buildings and properties, such as in March 1997 when a mob of more than 200 people ransacked the building belonging to Jehovah's Witnesses in Lod, destroying everything from the chairs to the sound system. According to witnesses, the perpetrators sang and danced around a bonfire of Bibles and literature from the hall.

During a demonstration outside their hall in Tel Aviv in May 1998 oil was poured down the stairs of building. Visitors to their Tel Aviv office have been harassed and they receive consistent threats from Orthodox anti-missionaries.

According to the Israeli press the Jehovah's Witnesses have 2 main centers, one in Haifa and one in Tel Aviv. Furthermore the press mentions meeting places in Bat Yam, Lod, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Beersheba, and Arad. It has not been possible to verify this.

In an interview with *Ha'Aretz* in March 1999 Eric Miller, a Jewish resident of New York and - according to the article - the Jehovah's Witnesses representative in Israel, says that they have decided the time has come to make themselves known by going from door to door, explaining their faith and leaving their material. They wish people to know that they too were persecuted by the Nazis and thousands of them were put to death in the concentration camps. According to Miller Israeli society is becoming more open to them although

oppression and violence. Miller claims that of the six million Jehovah's Witnesses in the world, 1000 live in Israel. It has not been possible to verify this number and neither has it been possible to find out how many of these are of Jewish origin.

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*Sources:* Malachy 1978:57-88. Østerbye 1970:213-214.

*Media:* Ha'Aretz 12.03.99. Hamodi'a 17.12.84; 18.01.91; 06.02.98. Jerusalem Post 26.05.95. Kol Ha'ir (Tel Aviv) 03.07.87. Milabes 26.05.95. Yediot Acharonot 02.12.83. Yediot Afula ve-haEmekim 17.03.95. Yom Hashishi 25.11.83. Yom leYom 13.04.95. Zman (Tel Aviv, Ma'ariv supplement) 13.03.98.

11-02

## Mormons

Different locations

(Information up to about 1981 is mainly based on a survey, *The Mormons in Israel*, which Menahem Benhayim drew up on behalf of UCCI, and on a feature article on the Mormons in Israel, *Sons of Joseph in the House of Judah*, in Ha'Aretz 18.09.81.)

### History and theology

The history of the Mormons (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints) in the region dates to the 1880s when Jacob Spori founded a Mormon community. Until the outbreak of World War I it was a part of the Mormon Syrian-Palestinian mission. Subsequently the area came under the jurisdiction of a Swiss Mormon administration with a mainly Lebanese and Armenian constituency. In 1972 a local Israeli branch was organized by Harold B. Lee, then presiding High Priest or Prophet over the international Mormon community.

On behalf of the Theological Commission of United Christian Council in Israel (UCCI) Menahem Benhayim drew up a report on the Mormons in Israel in 1981. In this report he bases his data on information from the then President of the Mormon Jerusalem community, Daniel Rona. Rona was born in Israel but raised in the USA under Mormon influence and returned to Israel in 1974.

Rona is quoted by Benhayim in 1981: "We don't have a large Israeli-Jewish community, but there are some 6000-7000 Jewish Mormon families worldwide among the almost five million Mormons." About Rona Benhayim says: "Rona is also the founder of an organisation catering to Jewish Mormons called 'B'nai Shalom, which also includes non-Jewish Mormons interested in Israel and Judaism."

Although Daniel Rona considered himself a Messianic Jew and claimed that Mormonism was originally very Jewish, the Mormons see themselves as distinct

from mainstream Christianity and have no connection with those who in this survey are called Messianic Jews. In Benhayim's words: "While they share with the Christians a belief in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, according to Rona the following are equally inspired and binding upon them:

The Book of Mormon

The Pearl of Great Price

The Doctrine and Covenants

plus whatever writings or ordinations are given by today's apostles and prophets which would be called Conference Reports ... every six months (in April and October) the presiding prophet, the councilors, the apostles, some 70 persons, teach the holy word of God as provided through living prophets."

In Israel the Mormons observe Jewish festivals, including the traditional Passover Seder minus rabbinic additions but including New Testament portions, Benhayim states.

Regarding the situation in 1981 Benhayim writes: "At present there are about 200 members in Israel, according to a local leader, with very few Israelis and even fewer Arab adherents." These 200 are divided into the following groups:

1. Jerusalem Residents: 45 members presided over by Daniel Rona. "This branch includes two Israeli-citizens families (the Rona and another) plus expatriate Mormons working in Israel as foreign experts in fields such as chemistry, electronics."
2. Jerusalem students: 100 - students in Israel under the direction of Brigham Young University in Utah, USA.
3. Herzliya: 35-40 members - presided over by a high-ranking military officer stationed in Israel. This branch includes two or three Jewish families, and an Israeli lawyer married to a Dutch Mormon.
4. Galilee: 12 - a newly-reactivated branch with one US Jewish family in Moshav Mishmar Hayarden and a Canadian gentile family (including the head physiotherapist at Safed Hospital).

Based on an interview with Rona and David Galbraith, President of the Israel Community - an interview which confirms Benhayim's statement of members - *Ha'Aretz* writes in September 1981 that the Mormons in Israel are well integrated into Israeli life, with some 140 in Jerusalem (including about 100 students from abroad), 40 in Tel Aviv, and 20 in Tiberias.

In this interview and in the information which Benhayim has gathered it is made clear that the Mormons conduct missionary work the world over, but in Israel absolutely not, as stated by Rona in *Ha'Aretz* in 1981. If someone should be convinced and desire to become a Mormon he will be accepted with love but without ceremony or sacrament when it comes to people in Israel, according to Galbraith. A tiny number of Mormons from Israel have gone outside Israel to do their Mormon service, but none have come into Israel for that purpose, Rona claimed in 1981. In 1980, a local periodical, "The Israel Light" was published,

but after three issues it was discontinued because "it might be interpreted as propaganda," Rona told Benhayim. At the beginning of the 1980s Orson Hyde Park at the Mount of Olives was dedicated with money raised among Mormons worldwide to finance it.

The study center on Mount Scopus in Jerusalem, an extension of Brigham Young University, was dedicated in 1988. Before that students had lived at Kibbutz Ramat Rachel. The building activities provoked considerable opposition, especially from Orthodox quarters, but the then mayor of Jerusalem, Teddy Kollek, supported it. In 1995, after his retirement as mayor, he writes openly about this in the Jerusalem Post. After the building license had been granted, "some of the ultra-religious cried that the Mormons were missionaries who would proselytize in Israel. They called for the immediate revocation of the building license. The support of the ministers evaporated and I was left alone to fight their battle. I had spoken to the Mormons long before and explained that we had lost six million Jews in our lifetime and couldn't allow proselytizing. They were totally understanding. The Mormons have now been in Jerusalem for eight years, and not a single case of proselytization has occurred. Everyone who comes over, be he a teacher, a student or a regular visitor, is told that if he distributes books or pamphlets or engages in any other form for proselytization he will be sent home immediately."

The Mormons have not, however, quite been able to avoid being accused of proselytizing. In 1995, four months before Teddy Kollek published the above the administration of the Jerusalem municipality held a discussion concerning the activities of the Mormons at the request of the vice-mayor, Rabbi Chaim Miller. The reason was that the booklet *Events and Trips* distributed by the Ministry of Tourism, contained also information on the Mormon Center, its telephone number and information on public transportation to the place, all which was against the agreement signed with the municipality. In a newspaper article from 1996 it was said that the Mormons have a new strategy for "getting into people's homes through new software containing most of the Dead Sea Scrolls as well as a Mormon commentary explaining them. Generally speaking the Mormons are treated favorably by the press. They are also noted for their pro-Israel stance, which has also been expressed in significant material contribution, and by their well-known musical culture. There are annually about 50 concerts at the center on the Mount of Olives.

In 1981 the Israeli press wrote that Dr. Jonathan Shunari of the Hebrew University was in the last stage of finishing his translation of the Book of Mormon into Hebrew. In 1999, Robert Hickmann, the President of the Israel community, could not verify that a Hebrew translation exists.

In 1999, according to Robert Hickmann, there were about 210 members in the country. This number includes children. The two main centers are in Jerusalem and in Tiberias where services are held Saturday morning. The services are conducted in English and translation is provided according to the

need, mainly into Spanish and Russian. There is no translation into Hebrew. The vast majority of the members are students and expatriates working in Israel for a limited time.

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*Information* through telephone conversation with Robert Hickmann, 13 June 1999.

*Media:* *Ha'Aretz* 24.10.80; 18.09.81. *Hatzofeh* 10.12.87. *Jerusalem Post* 27.11.81; 25.08.91. *Kol Bo Haifa* 31.03.95, 10.05.96. *Ma'ariv* 30.10.80.



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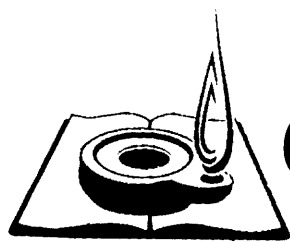
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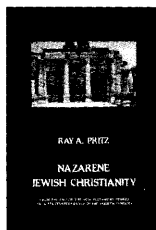
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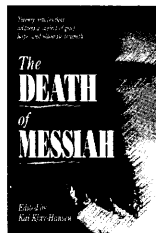
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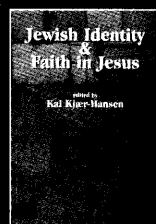
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