

OIM UPDATE

February 2017

As noted in last month's update, the change in direction of the government of the United States was a Godsend of magnanimous proportions! In many regards it could have been, according to a variety of righteous servants of the Most High, a direct result of God's children crying out for mercy, and then protection, for the inauguration of the new executive administration. Whatever it was, for those old enough to bear witness to the persistent political pendulum swings of the American culture, there is one undeniable conclusion: the population of this 240-year old democratic republic is substantially divided about how to proceed into the future. To observe the internecine battles played out daily on various media outlets can be extremely disconcerting. There almost appears to be a self-destructive nature at work to tear apart people with different worldviews. We must persist in our prayers!

From a Biblical viewpoint, one knows that without the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit impacting a person's thinking and understanding, diametrically opposed perspectives are expected. How, one might ask, is it possible for a person without faith under the domineering influence of the world, the flesh, and the Evil One (Ephesians 6:12; 1 John 2:16), going to comprehend spiritually appraised data in lieu of the onslaught of contradictory information? The Apostle Paul summarized the dilemma two millennia ago when writing to the Corinthians:

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*. But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM [Isaiah 40:13]? But we have the mind of Messiah" (1 Corinthians 2:12-16).

As I contemplated these realities, some words shared by Yeshua came to mind:

"If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand" (Mark 3:24-25; also Matthew 12:25; Luke 11:17).

Here in precise terms Yeshua stated that when a kingdom or a house is divided, it will not be able to stand. This universal truth applies to

countries that the Almighty has always used for His sovereign purposes. Hence, the United States of America, founded on Judeo-Christian principles—and currently the foremost protector of the State of Israel—cannot avoid the severe negative consequences of division indefinitely. This is especially true in light of geopolitical circumstances which have the potential to erupt with nominal warning. Once again, we urge the faithful to pray for those in authority, as was declared recently from the inaugural podium, when this Scripture was read without any hesitation:

“First of all, then, I urge that entreaties *and* prayers, petitions *and* thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, *and* one mediator also between God and men, *the* man Messiah Yeshua, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony *given* at the proper time” (1 Timothy 2:1-6).

With those Scriptures as a backdrop, rather than dwell on the depressing and surly aspects of division and vile detestation for others, instead I want to share a personal testimony which has taken place over the past year. This month’s lead article entitled, “**One New Man Testimony: United We Stand,**” describes how the Holy One of Israel is meeting the needs of people through willing vessels who are simply making themselves available to serve Him. Hopefully, everyone who reads this account will be as blessed, just as the author was, who simply followed the Spirit’s lead to help those in need.

Finally, our year has gotten off to a fast start and we are anticipating an acceleration of references to Israel as significant anniversaries occur later in the year! We know from past experience that as the Lord continues to bring His people together in harmony, the Enemy of our souls continues to prowl about as a lion seeking to devour any susceptible to his wiles. Hence, J.K. McKee continues to expand the Messianic Apologetics division of Outreach Israel in order to help people within the emerging Messianic community of faith refine their understanding. Please continue to support our efforts with your financial contributions. Without your offerings and gifts, it would be difficult to dedicate the time and energy to produce our many educational resources. Thank you in advance for your partnership with our endeavors!

With that in mind, may: “**The LORD bless you, and keep you; the LORD make His face shine on you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance on you, and give you peace**” (Numbers 6:24-26).

Shalom and blessings,

Mark Huey

ONE NEW MAN TESTIMONY

united we stand

by Mark Huey

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
for brothers to dwell together in unity!”

Psalm 133:1

Who would have thought that Psalm 133:1 would be quoted in the inaugural address by the newly elected President of the United States of America? In a prophetic sort of way, it is our prayer that his—and our—**desire for unity** between people of relatively common faith, will be a hallmark of the new administration and the citizens of our divided nation over the next four to eight years. However, as people of faith witness over and over again, the attainment of blessed unity, or even respectful coexistence, is under constant attack from nefarious spiritual forces that derive satisfaction from division, destruction, and the ultimate divider, death.

Lamentably, the acrimonious debate devolving to vile actions is never pleasant to observe. *In fact, the constant reminder of negative disinformation can be discouraging and downright depressing!* Hence, instead of writing and focusing on the ugly things people say and do to one another, I would like to, instead, share a positive personal testimony about how people from distinctly different Jewish and Christian backgrounds have come together to help others in desperate need. After all, everyone who fervently seeks to follow the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and walk in His ways, is exhorted to perform good works to and for their fellow human beings. Providentially, in a unique display of unity under the broad umbrella of the Holy Scriptures, there are Jewish Israelis, American Baptists, and Messianic Jews collaborating to minister to Syrian Christians fleeing from atrocious acts of carnage at this very hour. From my limited perspective as I watched the events unfold, it surely could have been God’s mercy answering the prayers of His people for those in significant need of medical attention.

In this particular case, although it continues to be a work in progress as of this writing, we find a prime modern-day example of a “one new man” collaboration of Jewish and non-Jewish people

working together to help those in physical need. The spiritual ramifications of the relationships established remains to be seen, as hearts are softened on all sides of the Judeo-Christian spectrum. After all, over the last several decades since the reconstitution of the State of Israel in the Promised Land, the Holy One has been patiently and methodically removing the enmity and breaking down many of the historical barriers that have been built between the Jewish people and non-Jewish followers of Israel's Messiah over the last two millennia. The Apostle Paul wrote some dynamic words to ancient Believers in the First Century, specifically on how Yeshua's work has torn down the barrier wall of enmity, and how Jewish Believers and non-Jewish Believers in Israel's Messiah were to be unified into a "one new man" or "one new humanity" in Him:

"For we are His workmanship, created in Messiah Yeshua for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we would walk in them. Therefore remember, that once you, the nations in the flesh—who are called 'Foreskin' by the ones called 'Circumcision,' *which is in the flesh, made by hands—remember* that you were at that time separate from Messiah, alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Messiah Yeshua you who were once far off, have been brought near in the blood of Messiah. **For He is our peace, who made both *groups* one, and broke down the middle wall of partition,** having abolished in His flesh the enmity, the *religious* Law of commandments in dogmas, **that He might create in Himself the two into one new humanity, so making peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, having killed the enmity by it"** (Ephesians 2:10-16, PME).

With this Scriptural reminder of not only how all Believers in Israel's Messiah are a part of the Commonwealth of Israel—but most especially how they are to experience great unity in His Body—the following is my testimony of what the Holy Spirit is doing to bring His people into unity to accomplish His purposes.

The resulting good works ministering to God's children in Syria began in an unusual way, with a chance encounter at the Baylor Hospital in Dallas, Texas. In late November 2015, I was attending to the needs of my father, who was receiving an MRI for his trigeminal neuralgia disorder at the hospital lab. My brother and I were in

the corridor speaking with the neurologist, when down the hall on an electric cart came a middle aged man who recognized and then greeted my brother. Apparently, these two SMU graduates had reserved season ticket seats next to each other at the basketball arena. Other than the time they sat together during games, they had no other real relationship. To be polite, my brother introduced me to Bruce, and I noticed he had a nametag on that indicated he worked for the Baylor Hospital system. So I asked him what he did, and he said that he helped raise money for the Baylor, Scott & White Health Group, and then also worked on distributing used medical equipment to needy people around the world, spending much of his time at his office in a warehouse just a block away.

As it happened, I had just seen a presentation about the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America's, or MJAA's, Joseph Project, a few weeks earlier. So, when Bruce mentioned medical equipment and giving it away, I simply asked him if they would consider giving some to needy people in Israel. Without hesitation, Bruce simply replied, "We give it to *any* needy people. All you have to do is pick it up and pay for the shipping overseas!" With that I said, "OK. When can I come by the warehouse and see what you have? Maybe some of this can minister to folks in Israel?" And from that providential point forward, a relationship was initiated that resulted in the shipment of a container of medical equipment and supplies in July 2016. In fact, I was able to solicit the medical expertise of one of our congregation members, an oncologist who had just recently retired from working at the Baylor Hospital. She was able to point out valuable medical equipment and supplies which would be appropriate to send, and was even going to be in Israel when the container was going to arrive. But the testimony does not end here...

The MJAA Joseph Project was already responsible for distributing over \$100 million in humanitarian aid to Israeli Jews, Arabs, and even Palestinians (widows, orphans, homeless, elderly, disabled, and Holocaust survivors) over the past two decades. They were delighted to receive the generous gift of medical equipment and supplies from the Christian Baptists and their Faith in Action Initiative (FAI), the non-profit organization of Baylor, Scott, & White Health Group. The FAI is the entity that runs the warehouse and prepared the pallets of supplies and equipment for shipment. So in a unique sort of way, there was a collaborative "one new man" effort

of Messianic Jews and Christians working together with the sole goal and desire to minister to people in Israel with this medical equipment and supplies. But there is more evidence of God's handiwork.

After the container landed at the dock in Israel, because there were some used electric powered incubators, monitors, and sophisticated baby warmers, the Israeli Health Ministry would not let it into use because of government regulations about restrictions on "used" electrical medical equipment. This "red tape" hang up precipitated a series of meetings with not only some of the Orthodox Jewish Israeli Health Ministry bureaucrats, but also the Israeli Minister of Health, who is also Orthodox. Thankfully, the Joseph Project director, who coordinated the shipment, and our retired oncologist friend, were able to attend the meetings with the Health Minister this September 2016 in Israel. Their conversations went extremely well. The result was the Israeli Health Ministry actually changing some governmental policies to allow used medical equipment to come into Israel, and actually be given to smaller towns, villages, and settlements where they do not necessarily have the monetary resources to purchase new equipment. That breakthrough was quite a blessing, because what is happening in Israel through the efforts of the Joseph Project is spiritually significant! Orthodox and secular Jews are witnessing the tangible actions of Messianic Jews literally giving all sorts clothes, shoes, furniture, appliances, diapers, baby formula, and other things to needy people—without expecting anything in return. The unconditional love of the Messianic Jewish community, to those in need, is softening the hearts of many Jews, who have historically been antagonistic toward Yeshua the Messiah, and very distrusting and suspicious of the Messianic Jewish community. Clearly, God has been using the Joseph Project for His eternal purposes beyond just physical relief!

However, even though at the time all the parties to the breakthrough were elated, there was still a problem getting the new regulations written and approved through the Israeli Health Ministry. (Does this sound familiar to those working through other governmental entities?) But God had another plan. Instead, while the container remained on the dock and the stowage fees began to mount daily, word got out through the community of Messianics and an Israeli lobbyist, with many contacts with the Knesset and Israeli

Defense Forces (IDF), that the container was being held up at the dock. Then somehow through a series of relationships, the person who started Israeli Flying Aid (IFA), a first responder to natural disasters, found out about the container of medical equipment. Through her contacts with the IDF, she was able to get the container released from the dock, and get the mounting stowage fees waived. She was then allowed to have the medical equipment and supplies sent clandestinely across the Israeli and Syrian border to help the Syrian “internally displaced people” (IDP) or refugees unable to leave the country. It is our understanding that many of these IDPs are Christian Syrians fleeing from the violence and carnage taking place in cities like Aleppo. Since the refugee camps established in Jordan are completely full and unwilling to take any more people, the Syrian IDPs are actually being collected down near the Golan Heights. How amazing is it that the IFA, performing some “good works” for their neighbors, have been instrumental in making all of this happen by the end of 2016? But if you can believe it, positive things continue to materialize.

In January 2017, after the people at the Joseph Project had developed this strong relationship with the secular Jewish Israelis and American Jews supporting the efforts of the Israeli Flying Aid missions, and the ongoing association with the Faith in Action Initiatives, a request for more aid was made to help those in Syria. Without any hesitation, the request for a container of medical equipment to be shipped in January was granted. In fact, during a long distance phone call showing the equipment available via Facetime technology, a request for a second container was suggested. Providentially on that very day, 87 pallets of shoes and orthopedic braces and boots had just arrived. Those at the FIAI warehouse were more than delighted to send a second container, because their own warehouse was too overloaded, with more medical equipment and supplies than it could handle. So not only did the MJAA Joseph Project send two containers which will make the trip to minister to the Christian Syrian IDPs, but a third container with 18 pallets of shoes will go directly to the Joseph Project warehouse in Israel this month. These will be distributed on a first come first served basis to needy Israelis of all backgrounds.

Quite frankly, I am marveling over how the Lord has orchestrat-

ed this rapid shipment of medical equipment and supplies to His needy people in Syria, and also in Israel. But what is also exciting to witness is how the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is knitting together the hearts of Israeli Jews, Messianic Jews, and Christians, in order to minister to Syrian Christians, as well as Israelis who are both Jewish and Arab. God does not discriminate when it comes to answering the prayers of His people, and ministering to those in need.

As I contemplated and wrote this testimony, a variety of Scriptures came to mind. One in particular is found in the Sermon on the Mount, when Yeshua contrasts the command to love neighbor with the common human fault of hating one's enemy:

“Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you. **You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR [Leviticus 19:18] and hate your enemy.’** But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous. **For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing *than* others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?** Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:42-48).

In addition, the Holy Scriptures are replete with commandments and examples of what is required to love God and your neighbor as yourself, as best summarized by the Messiah Yeshua, when questioned by a scribe as to what was the foremost commandment:

“One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, ‘What commandment is the foremost of all?’ Yeshua answered, ‘The foremost is, **‘HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH’ [Deuteronomy 6:4-5]. The second is this, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF’ [Leviticus 19:18].** There is no other commandment greater than these.’ The scribe said to Him, ‘Right, Teacher; You have truly stated that HE IS ONE, AND

THERE IS NO ONE ELSE BESIDES HIM [Deuteronomy 6:4]; AND TO LOVE HIM WITH ALL THE HEART AND WITH ALL THE UNDERSTANDING AND WITH ALL THE STRENGTH, AND TO LOVE ONE'S NEIGHBOR AS HIMSELF [Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18], is **much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices**" (Mark 12:28-33).

Notice at the end of this passage that evidence of loving God and neighbor is much more beneficial than "all burnt offerings and sacrifices." Is not ministering to the needs of neighbor—and perceived enemy—much more pleasing to our Creator than all the burnt offerings and sacrifices we can do? Now is that not something to think about as we move forward in 2017?! Perhaps we all should consider how we can live together in unity rather than in division. After all, we know how good and pleasant it can and will be if we can work toward that end!

So in this era of great division in our country, may our prayers be for those who persecute us—which quite frankly is a difficult thing to do. Nevertheless, we need to learn to love our neighbors and the immigrants which come to live among us, as was commanded of the Ancient Israelites in the Torah of Moses:

"When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 19:33-34).

The Lord God is testing all of us in this hour of rapid change, as the illegal immigrant population grows, not only in the United States, but in modern countries around the globe. And it is critical that we all understand that this axiom continues to ring true: "United we stand, divided we fall!"

I thank God that He is bringing together the **"one new man"** at His pleasure and according to His will. It is my prayer that this is one testimony which reflects His work among those who call upon the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and encourages one and all to continue to advance His Kingdom, until the Messianic restoration of all things...

MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS UPDATE

February 2017

Dear Friends:

2017 is going to be a very busy and active year for the expansion and growth of Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics. We have started this year with the release of the new commentary *2 Corinthians for the Practical Messianic*.

Later this Spring will see the first release of *Salvation on the Line: The Nature of Yeshua and His Divinity*, focusing on the Gospels and Acts. This will follow later in the year with the second release in this series, focusing on the General Epistles, Pauline Epistles, and the Later New Testament. This is a resource we have had an open file on since our early days in 2002-2003, and so we are very happy to see it finally come together!

An ongoing goal that we have had since the Summer, when our ministry websites were upgraded to a WordPress format, has been to see the Messianic Apologetics website really turn into a *massive online depository of information and teaching*. At the end of 2016, the first stage of this was completed, as all the information from the old website had been transferred over to the new website. This Spring, the second stage of this should be completed, with the finishing up of the Audio Archive series. If you have been steadily following the audio podcasts offered since the Summer, then you should have noticed that they have re-recorded previously offered studies going back to 2006. Some of this has been to obviously improve the audio quality, but also reflect the transition that took place in 2015 from TNN Online to Messianic Apologetics, as well as our ministry relocation from Central Florida to North Texas in 2012. This month, the Audio Archive study on 1&2 Thessalonians will be completed, with studies on Hebrews and the Pastoral Epistles remaining.

2017 will most certainly be a very active year with Messianic Apologetics employing electronic tools and social media! We make avid, daily use of Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, with regular podcasts available via YouTube, Podomatic, and iTunes. This month, we are anticipating the full release of the new Messianic Apologetics app. This app is already available for Android, and will also be available for iPhone. For those of you who do not like using Facebook or Twitter (or even e-mail), the app provides you a nice alternative to stay up to date with our ministry, as it provides push notifications for new updates.

Later in the year will begin our Social Media Encounters outreach, as we have been cataloguing a great number of the issues that Messianic people are talking about online. Expect us to be more pro-active and assertive in addressing the theological and spiritual issues, which matter to all of us in this movement.

Until next month... J.K. McKee

