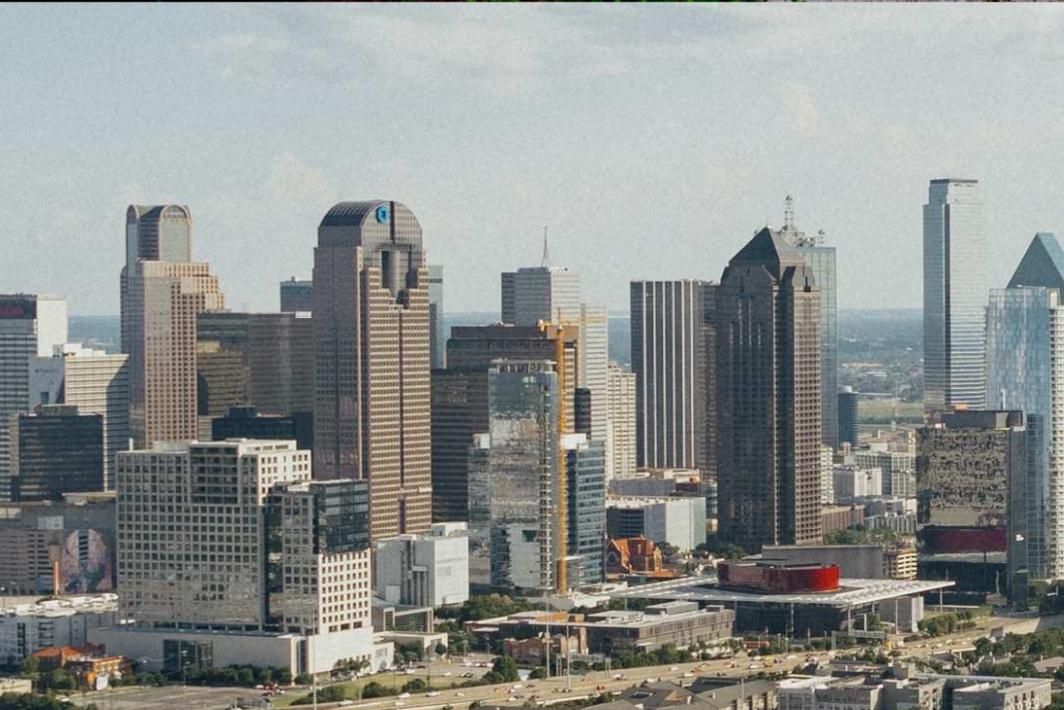




OUTREACH ISRAEL NEWS

monthly newsletter of Outreach Israel Ministries
and MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS



APRIL 2023
MY FAMILY'S
MESSIANIC EXPERIENCE
1995-2022 Part 1 of 3



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STATEMENT OF BELIEF

*Outreach Israel Ministries
and Messianic Apologetics*

There is One Almighty Creator God of the Universe, who has revealed Himself to us in the manifestations of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) came in fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies of the Scriptures and is fully God. It is mandatory for us to believe in a Divine Redeemer to be saved. Salvation is a free gift of God to all who receive Messiah Yeshua into their lives and confess of their sins. Those who reject Messiah will be consigned to eternal punishment.

The Holy Scriptures, Genesis-Revelation, are the inspired, infallible Word of God as revealed in the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts

All Believers in Israel's Messiah are to be regarded as a part of the Commonwealth of Israel. Jewish and non-Jewish Believers are to respect one another in mutual love as brothers and sisters, and are to work together for the salvation of the Jewish people and return of Israel's Messiah.

The Torah (Genesis-Deuteronomy) is the foundation of all Scripture, was followed by our Messiah Yeshua, and is to still be studied and heeded by Believers today.

Yeshua the Messiah is coming to gather the Believers after the Tribulation period.

OIM is an *agapē* ministry, freely and benevolently giving the vast majority of its teachings and resources, without charge, to those who desire to be spiritually nourished.

For a fuller Statement of Faith, consult the OIM website

Outreach Israel News is the monthly newsletter of Outreach Israel Ministries, a non-profit organization with an emphasis on reaching, teaching, and encouraging the Messianic community. Subscription to **Outreach Israel News** is without cost and supported only by donation.

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OLM UPDATE

April 2023

J.K. McKee

The following teaching has been excerpted and adapted from the 2022 updated edition of *Introduction to Things Messianic*

MY FAMILY'S MESSIANIC EXPERIENCE 1995-2022 Part 1 of 3

Where we are today in our relationship with the Lord, our comprehension of His Word, and our understanding of His plans for history—needs to be substantially different than when we first came to salvation and were initially growing in faith. When this resource, *Introduction to Things Messianic*, was initially released in 2005 as a spiral-combed volume, I had spent less than two years in full-time ministry, and had just started classes at Asbury Theological Seminary in Orlando, FL. When this resource was released into paperback in 2009, I had just graduated from seminary, and so I logically made some updates to the material, reflective of some of my new skills, and what I had learned in my studies. Now (2022), it has been over seventeen years since *Introduction to Things Messianic* was first released. Much has changed for me, both professionally and personally—and much has changed for the Messianic faith community which I am still definitely a part of.

Many of you have just reviewed a series of chapters [in: *Introduction to Things Messianic*] which discuss various aspects of Messianic theology and the Messianic lifestyle. It is very easy to recognize that a great deal has happened within the Messianic sphere of influence, when these materials were first written, and even later updated. How are we to best consider what has taken place within the Messianic movement over the past quarter century or so, in order to properly consider where we are moving, and what we think the Lord intends to do with us? As I have seriously thought and prayed about the best way to discuss **the Messianic condition**, and what some of you might encounter—as you might just be entering into things Messianic—it is best that I simply take you through some of the journey that I have been on.

What you are about to review is my personal experience, not just as

an individual, but also as a Messianic teacher and leader. Do I believe, as I am frequently asked, that the Messianic movement is something that every single non-Jewish Believer from an evangelical Protestant background needs to be a part of? Likely not. I believe that at this point in the development of the Messianic movement, its mission, and its future—that if you are a non-Jewish Believer you have to be specially called, summoned, and possibly even assigned by our Heavenly Father to be a part of this special, unique, but also challenging faith community. There is an idealism that many have when reconnecting to their faith heritage in the Scriptures of Israel, and in being genuinely blessed and enriched by the seventh-day Sabbath/*Shabbat*, the appointed times or *moedim*, a kosher style of diet, and the discipline of regular Torah study. Within several years, though, this idealism can quickly dissipate, as the realities of the Messianic movement being a still-maturing and developing move of God will set in.

Please allow me to do my best, in guiding you through our family's Messianic experience from 1995-2022. Revelation 12:11a states of the future end-time Believers, "they overcame...because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony" (NASU). With this noted, perhaps by reviewing my testimony of persevering in things Messianic—something which has not always been easy for us the past twenty-seven years—you will know more about the faith community you are either already a part of on some level, or the Lord is prompting you to considering joining in a significant way. **What you are about to read is, in no uncertain terms, my own experience and "take" on things Messianic.** The experiences, feelings, and thoughts of others you may read or encounter in today's Messianic community, might be a little different. However, this is probably the most practical and reasonable way that I can guide you through some of the blessings, hopes, but also anxieties and fears that many people, who enter into the Messianic community from an evangelical background, tend to go through.

1994-1995: Pre-Messianic Days

It is commonly stressed throughout today's Messianic Jewish community, that if you are a non-Jewish Believer, you need to be specially called by God into this movement. *This would mean that there were some unique series of circumstances, which are responsible for seeing you directed by the Lord into things Messianic.* When I look back on the events of my life, it

is easy to say that some out of the ordinary factors have played a role in my family not only leaving a more familiar and established evangelical Protestantism, but also entering full time Messianic ministry.

I was originally raised in the Greater Cincinnati area, in Northern Kentucky. My parents, Kimball and Margaret McKee, dramatically came to faith in Jesus in 1984, as a direct result of the family business being liquidated, consequent of the recession of 1983. They could have lost absolutely everything—and so they both dramatically turned to God as the only One who could see them through! Thankfully our family did not lose everything, but with my parents both becoming dynamically born again, they became very serious about their faith in Christ. My mother was the granddaughter of Methodist Bishop Marvin A. Franklin (1894-1972), and so my parents naturally became very active in the Kentucky Conference of the United Methodist Church, which in the 1980s was broadly conservative and evangelical.

Very quickly in 1986, Kim and Margaret McKee became active in a new church plant in Florence, KY, Christ United Methodist Church, and also became active in different Methodist ministry venues, notably including the Lay Witness Mission, the Walk to Emmaus, and Chrysalis, throughout both Kentucky and Ohio. In my elementary school years, I was raised around the church, church related activities, and I knew church and denomination business. My father was licensed as a lay minister, and taught the Single's Sunday School. He not only went on various Emmaus walks, but even led them, notably including the first men's Emmaus walk in Madras, India in January 1991. My mother too was used in United Methodist ministry, as a representative at the annual Kentucky Conference which often met at Asbury College, and leading Chrysalis and Emmaus walks. Kim and Margaret McKee modeled my sisters and me a partnership marriage, husband and wife mutually submitted to one another, which centered around their faith in the Lord.

My father's theological quests in the mid-to-late 1980s were affected by a great deal of the popular, quasi-dispensational presentations of the end-times, the pre-tribulation rapture, but also with a strong support for Israel. My father was exposed, like many evangelicals of the 1980s, to concepts like "Jesus in the Feasts," particularly through the teachings of the late Zola Levitt. During Holy Week each year, as anticipation was on the rise for Good Friday and Easter Sunday, my father gave our church a presentation on Maundy Thursday on Passover and the Last Supper. In 1992, my father was being called into full-time ministry, and had re-

ceived approval for the initial stages of becoming ordained in the Kentucky Conference of the United Methodist Church. In March 1992, however, he was diagnosed with malignant melanoma, and then died five months later on September 1.

Kim McKee's death on September 1, 1992, at the age of 41, totally altered the trajectory of my family: my mother, myself, and my two sisters Jane and Maggie. In May 1993 my mother made a point to attend my father's twentieth college reunion at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN. At this reunion, she was reacquainted with Mark Huey, who she had dated immediately prior to meeting my father, and who was concluding a difficult divorce. By the end of Summer 1993 after dating on the phone, Mark and Margaret were engaged. In May 1994, as the school year ended, I left my family home in Northern Kentucky to move to Dallas, TX. Mark and Margaret were married at Amelia Island, FL in June 1994, and we began the process of starting a new blended family, including my two stepsisters Danielle and Marielle, but most especially involving what expression of faith we were supposed to be involved with.

Mark Huey had come to faith in 1978, shortly after moving to Dallas, and not surprisingly had become involved in various dispensational Bible churches highly influenced by Dallas Theological Seminary. There was little chance that he was going to become Methodist, any more than my mother Margaret was going to become Bible church. So, after some trial and error during Summer 1994, Mark and Margaret Huey started attending charismatic churches influenced by the Toronto Blessing. Yet, while many were being influenced to go up to Canada—Mark actually had the prompting to sign the two of them up for a Zola Levitt tour to Israel in December 1994. During the tour to Israel, and not even married for a full six months, Mark and Margaret were supernaturally told by the Lord, in Israel, *to keep the feasts*.

1995-1996: Early Messianic Days

After returning from Israel in early 1995, the new blended family of Mark and Margaret tried getting involved in some independent, Spirit-filled churches in Dallas. There was a continual nagging though, in my parents, to get involved in the festivals of Israel. As Fall 1995 approached, they visited a number of Messianic fellowships and groups, eventually landing, as many people in the DFW Metroplex have, at Baruch HaShem. They have said it many times: my parents were encapsulated by the Messianic music in Hebrew, the Davidic dance, the weekly Torah portions,

and the fellowship of many Messianic Jewish Believers. They certainly had a few questions and a number of concerns regarding their acceptance as non-Jewish Believers, from a few of the Jewish Believers. But that did not stop Mark and Margaret Huey from taking the New Member's class and Hebrew class, and as such being exposed to an array of Messianic Jewish materials from figures such as David H. Stern or Dan Juster. My parents were there to learn and soak up what they could.

I had just started high school in Fall 1995, and even though I had an appreciation for the Old Testament "moral law" and supported Israel and the Jewish people as a good evangelical—I really saw no reason to get involved in attending Messianic Jewish services on Saturday morning. (My salvation testimony from Summer 1995 is covered in *Introduction to Things Messianic* Chapter 13, "The Assurance of Our Salvation.") So for Fall 1995, Mark and Margaret alone were widely attending *Shabbat*, but the whole family was attending church on Sunday. When Spring 1996 came, I was pulled into more of the *Shabbat* activities, especially the congregational *chavurahs* on Saturday night. Spring Break 1996, however, was a real turning point. While on a road trip my mother was reading an early edition of *Messiah Magazine* by First Fruits of Zion, and was convicted by the Holy Spirit that we needed to commit ourselves as a family more fully to the Messianic lifestyle. While our family was participating in *Shabbat* services, and appreciated the value of the Biblical feasts—we had yet to integrate anything involving the kosher dietary laws, except my mother being careful not to bring anything with pork or shellfish to the Messianic Jewish congregation. When we returned from our roadtrip, obviously unclean things like bacon, ham, and shrimp got tossed from the refrigerator and freezer. It was not particularly easy for me to make a change over to the Messianic lifestyle in Spring 1996, as we began to conclude ties with Sunday church, but I did it.

Late Spring 1996 saw our early Messianic days get a little more complicated. Do recognize how it had not even been a full two years since Mark and Margaret had been married, and I had only lived in Dallas for less than two years as well. My father Kim McKee had only been deceased for a little over three-and-a-half years. I had just finished my freshman year of high school, and all of us were trying to still sort through why we, as good conservative evangelicals, at least, were now being pulled into the Messianic Jewish movement. *There had to be some distinct reason for this.* As late Spring to early Summer 1996 came around, our family was introduced to some very compelling prophecy teachings,

which were predicting the Abomination of Desolation in March 1997, and the return of the Messiah by Rosh HaShanah of the Year 2000.

Our family was very, very new to the Messianic movement and experience. While I had been reared in Kentucky on the any moment pre-tribulation rapture, by Fall 1995 and into Spring 1996, I had already seen many flaws in the pre-tribulation rapture in my own personal Bible reading, and was heavily leaning toward some kind of post-tribulational scenario. So, when our family was exposed to the idea that the Tribulation period may have begun with the signing of the Middle East Peace Accord in September 1993, and the half-way point was March 1997—coupled with all of the drama of my father’s death in 1992, my mother’s remarriage in 1994, moving to Dallas, entering into a new life and high school, and being brought into the Messianic Jewish movement—this must have been all because the return of the Messiah was soon to take place. So I thought at the time. It certainly did get our family into the Bible like never before, reviewing end-time prophecies, and considering various geopolitical matters at a new level.

During Summer 1996, with a combination of being new to the Messianic Jewish movement and hearing some compelling teachings on the end-times, Mark and Margaret went to two major Messianic Jewish conferences. Our family was still getting acclimated to the Messianic movement and lifestyle, and they wanted to get more information about what was possibly happening in the world. In early July 1996 they attended the Messiah Conference in Grantham, PA, hosted by the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America (MJAA). In mid-July 1996, they attended the annual conference of the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations (UMJC), held that year in Sturbridge, MA. Coming back from both conferences, and getting a feel for much of the Messianic Jewish movement, my parents concluded in 1996 that the MJAA was especially marked for its emphasis on the gifts of the Holy Spirit and evangelism, while the UMJC focused its attention more on systematic theology. But the real questions that we had throughout the remainder of 1996 concerned the end-times, and the possibility of us being in the actual Tribulation period. Throughout Fall 1996, these created some difficulties for us at our local Messianic Jewish congregation in Dallas, as our family was certainly seen to be asking questions.

1997-1999: End-Time Speculation

At the beginning of 1997, and with the thought of possible end-time difficulties forthcoming, our family relocated out of North Dallas, to what was then the small town of McKinney, TX. My parents purchased a large ranch style house, with several acres of land, a barn, and an adjacent corn field. If any difficulties were going to manifest themselves, our family's thought was that we needed to be out of the big city. The compelling end-time predictions that we had heard were not materializing exactly as many had anticipated, but that did not stop my stepfather Mark Huey. Throughout Spring 1997, and then later in Fall 1997, he hosted a series of prophecy conferences under the label, "The Remnant Exchange." He also was co-host of a shortwave radio program called "The Remnant Report." Most important, perhaps, was that on August 15, 1997 I launched my website The Tribulation News Network, or TNN Online. This site, in its initial startup, was mainly put together to discuss the end-times, and posit questions about Bible prophecy.

Throughout 1997 my parents were exposed to many teachings and perspectives on the end-times. Some of these had some kind of Messianic or quasi-Messianic emphasis, but some of these also delved into other areas, as they investigated various secret societies such as the Freemasons, Illuminati, and issues such as the Nephilim and possible UFO connections. 1997 was quite a year!

Not quite knowing what was going to happen next, as tensions started to build toward the Year 2000, my stepfather Mark Huey got involved with a shortwave radio enterprise in the highlands of Central Honduras. Throughout the Fall and into the Spring, he made several trips to Honduras. The project he was involved with was going to build shortwave radio towers, broadcasting the gospel in both English and Spanish to the Northern and Southern Hemispheres, for the Last Days. It was also going to require our family to relocate. In April 1998, our home in McKinney, TX was sold, our belongings were packed into two twenty-foot containers, and they were sent to Roatán, in the Bay Islands of Honduras. My stepfather's plan was to relocate our family to the mainly English-speaking and more international Roatán, which had many retired Americans and Europeans, and he would commute to the mainland. Our family made the long drive through Mexico and Guatemala to Honduras in late April-early May 1998.

Yet, as we were getting acclimated on Roatán, it became clear that the shortwave radio operation was not going to work out. Throughout Sum-

mer 1998 and into Fall 1998, our containers remained on the dock, never opened. My parents looked into various endeavors to get involved with, but my stepfather would be unable to work as a real estate broker in a saturated market. Working with other ministries was not materializing, either. In October 1998, the answer to our wondering what we did in going to Honduras came: Hurricane Mitch. Once the storm had dissipated, my stepfather Mark Huey made a visit back to the United States, to touch base with family and friends.

The original reasons our family had relocated to Honduras, had not worked out. Yet Hurricane Mitch, which had wreaked havoc on Central America, was a logical reason for us to return to the United States. My stepfather Mark Huey received an offer in November 1998 to begin a consulting position with a Messianic prophecy ministry out of Norman, OK. *It was an opportunity to return to the U.S.* By December 1998, our family had ventured across the high seas to Tampa, FL, our containers were unloaded, and by January 1999 we were settling into a rental home in the college town of Norman. While to this day we wonder sometimes about the factors involved in going to Honduras, we do not wonder about how the Lord used this circumstance to set our family onto the path of full-time ministry.

Throughout the year of 1999, the ministry my stepfather consulted for was conjuring up various new theories about the return of the Messiah, in association with the Year 2000 and Y2k. I continued to keep up my website, Tribulation News Network, but the end-time speculations were not something I was as attuned to—and neither was our family. We were back in the United States! I was finishing up my high school via the Abe-ka correspondence program and was accepted into the University of Oklahoma. There were no more questions about whether or not I would go to college. While a wide number of the Messianic people we became acquainted with in Central Oklahoma, at the time, were end-time preppers—throughout 1999, our family was just thankful we were back in the United States, able to return to a wide degree of normalcy, and that the opportunities which we thought were completely over were still there. I would go to college, my sister Jane would finish high school two years later and also go to college, and my sister Maggie would be able to start elementary school. *But with everything, we knew the Lord was directing our steps!*

The May 2023 issue of Outreach Israel News, Part 2 of 3, will cover our family's Messianic years in Central Florida.