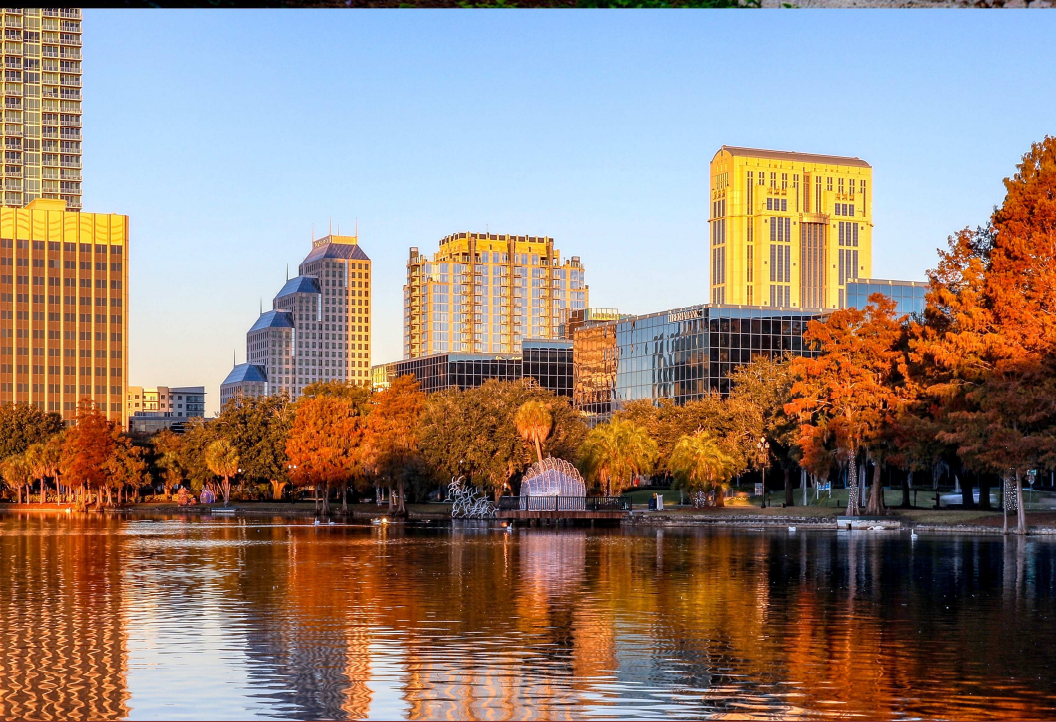


# OUTREACH ISRAEL NEWS

monthly newsletter of Outreach Israel Ministries  
and MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS



MAY 2023  
MY FAMILY'S  
MESSIANIC EXPERIENCE  
1995-2022 Part 2 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

May 2023

J.K. McKee

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

## 2000-2002: The University of Oklahoma

I started at the University of Oklahoma in Fall 1999, and I chose political science as my major and history as my minor. I continued to have my website, TNN Online, although it was clear enough that I was starting to address fewer matters involving prophecy and the end-times, and more matters involving theology and Messianic practice. As I became integrated into college life, I tried out a number of on campus ministries where my friends attended, including: the Baptist Student Union, Campus Crusade for Christ, and Chi-Alpha. My college studies and academic pursuits began to impact the level of my Bible studies and writing articles. By this time, though, I was not worried about the Year 2000 and Y2k. The Lord had shown our family through the Honduras experience that He was able to protect us through difficulty.

Simultaneously occurring to my going to college, the Messianic movement was entering into a new phase of development—whether it liked it or not. Waves of non-Jewish Believers had entered into Messianic congregations in the late 1990s, by this time outnumbering Jewish Believers in various places. Messianic Judaism, reflecting much of the Jewish community, has been pluralistic on many theological matters.<sup>1</sup> At the turn of the Millennium, one noticeable shift was a sector within Messianic Judaism which believed that the movement could one day be recognized as a formal branch of Judaism alongside the Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, etc. branches.<sup>2</sup> This was not embraced by the significant majority of Messianic Judaism—which saw the movement more as an organic move of the Holy Spirit—but it has affected a sizeable part of Messianic Jewish theological development. It was clear

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<sup>1</sup> This is particularly reflected at this time in the 2001 compilation Dan Cohn-Sherbok, ed., *Voices of Messianic Judaism* (Baltimore: Lederer Books, 2001).

<sup>2</sup> Some of this is covered in Dan Cohn-Sherbok, ed., *Messianic Judaism* (London and New York: Continuum, 2000).

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enough that Messianic Judaism was going to enter into a post-missionary phase, where it had to think beyond simply Jewish outreach and evangelism.<sup>3</sup>

With non-Jewish Believers entering into the Messianic community, in greater numbers, there were a number of responses on how to proceed forward. Some Messianic Jewish congregations (greatly) discouraged non-Jewish participation. Still, various Messianic Jewish congregations did embrace non-Jewish Believers, who were called into the Messianic movement, as fellow brothers and sisters, and together as representatives of the “one new humanity” (Ephesians 2:15, NRSV/CJSB). Still, though, a wide number of non-Jewish Believers, being led by the Lord to embrace their faith heritage in Israel’s Scriptures—in particular the appointed times or Biblical feasts—can say that they did not fully find themselves treated as equals of the Jewish Believers in Messianic Jewish settings (cf. Galatians 3:28). A number of these non-Jewish Believers, not fully feeling welcome in Messianic Judaism, either returned to their previous Church settings—or entered into a number of the new sub-movements that spun off of Messianic Judaism by the early 2000s.

Answers were being sought in the early 2000s for why so many non-Jewish Believers were being drawn into the Messianic movement. By far, the most provocative answer, which began being promoted en masse in the late 1990s, was seen via the emergence of the Two-House sub-movement. The Two-House sub-movement widely postulated that the reason why so many non-Jewish Believers swelled the Messianic community, was because they were members of the Ten Lost Tribes (Ephraim), and are being reunited with the Jewish people (Judah), in fulfillment of prophecies such as Ezekiel 37:15-28. 1998 saw the release of the book *Who Is Israel? And Why You Need to Know* by Batya Wootten,<sup>4</sup> including a full page advertisement in *The Messianic Times*. The International Messianic Jewish Alliance responded in 1999, with the issuance of “The Ephraimite Error” white paper,<sup>5</sup> which did not focus so much on resolving the questions of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms of Israel, in Biblical history and prophecy, as much as it did focus on some of the shoddy interpretations and bad behavior of various Two-House supporters, particularly Moshe Koniuchowsky, who had a major Sacred Name Only

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<sup>3</sup> Whether one agrees with his conclusions or not, this matter is raised in Mark S. Kinzer, *Post-Missionary Messianic Judaism: Redefining Christian Engagement with the Jewish People* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> Batya Ruth Wootten, *Who Is Israel? And Why You Need to Know* (St. Cloud, FL: Key of David, 1998), which has been re-written and re-released several times since.

Other Two-House publications of note from the time include Angus Wootten, *Restoring Israel’s Kingdom* (St. Cloud, FL: Key of David, 2000); Eddie Chumney, *Restoring the Two Houses of Israel* (Hagerstown, MD, Serenity Books, 1999).

<sup>5</sup> Kay Silberling (1999). *The Ephraimite Error: A Position Paper Submitted to the International Messianic Jewish Alliance*. Available online via <<http://umjc.org>>.

agenda.<sup>6</sup> Early Two-House conferences (1999-2002), while not uniformly Sacred Name Only, did see an affluent use of the Divine Name YHWH/YHVH (typically Yahweh or Yahveh).<sup>7</sup> Far from wanting to facilitate some degree of unity with individual Messianic Jewish Believers, at least, the Two-House sub-movement became riddled with a great deal of anti-Jewish and anti-Christian sentiment. Far from wanting to see a greater degree of unity between “both houses of Israel,” as they would say, the Two-House sub-movement widely did more to divide and condemn Jews and Christians and their so-called “paganism” and “traditions of men” — to say nothing of its widescale dismissal of responsible Biblical scholarship and exegesis.

A far less provocative answer to the non-Jewish question, but also controversial, was seen in the early 2000s with the emergence of the One Law or One Torah sub-movement, originally spearheaded by the popular ministry First Fruits of Zion (FFOZ), but especially via the theology and teachings of Tim Hegg of TorahResource. The original premise of One Law theology, was seen in their approach to a statement such as, “There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you” (Exodus 12:49, ESV). The implication was that God’s Torah is universal instruction to all of His people, regardless of whether or not a person was Jewish or non-Jewish. Non-Jewish Believers in the Messianic movement were to be likened unto the sojourners or *gerim* in Ancient Israel, with the frequent conclusion drawn that there were no differences or distinctions of any kind between native and sojourner.<sup>8</sup> A number of the early materials reflective of One Law, and published by FFOZ, included *Torah Rediscovered* (1996)<sup>9</sup> and *Take Hold* (1998)<sup>10</sup> by Ariel and D’vorah Berkowitz, and later *The Letter Writer: Paul’s Background and Torah Perspective* (2002)<sup>11</sup> by Hegg. Another influential book would be *The Mystery of the*

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<sup>6</sup> He notably offered a refutation of “The Ephraimite Error” in Moshe Koniuchowsky, *The Truth About All Israel: A Refutation of the I.M.J.A. Position Paper on the Two Houses of Israel* (Miami Beach: Your Arms to Israel, 2000).

<sup>7</sup> Not only that, but Two-House literature frequently was associated with various Sacred Name Only materials, including, but not limited to: C.J. Koster, *Come Out of Her, My People* (Northriding, South Africa: Institute for Scripture Research, 1998); *The Scriptures*, second edition (Northriding, South Africa: Institute for Scripture Research, 1998); Lew White, *Fossilized Customs: The Pagan Sources of Popular Customs* (Louisville, KY: Strawberry Islands, 2001).

<sup>8</sup> Deuteronomy 31:10-13 did specify how all in the community of Ancient Israel were to receive instruction from Moses’ Teaching, even if their adherence to it was not one-hundred percent identical.

<sup>9</sup> Ariel and D’vorah Berkowitz, *Torah Rediscovered* (Lakewood, CO: First Fruits of Zion, 1996).

<sup>10</sup> Ariel and D’vorah Berkowitz, *Take Hold* (Littleton, CO: First Fruits of Zion, 1999).

<sup>11</sup> Tim Hegg, *The Letter Writer: Paul’s Background and Torah Perspective* (Littleton, CO: First Fruits of Zion, 2002).

*Gospel: Jew and Gentile in the Eternal Purpose of God* (2003)<sup>12</sup> by D. Thomas Lancaster. To its credit, some of these materials and teachers, genuinely wanted to engage in Biblical scholarship, exegesis, and they certainly had a more positive than negative disposition toward the Synagogue and Church. Many non-Jewish Believers in the Messianic movement joined into First Fruits of Zion’s Torah Club program, and their materials were even seen in various parts of Messianic Judaism. Yet, various Messianic Jewish leaders were seen in the early 2000s to come out against a One Law theology.<sup>13</sup>

It would have been very difficult, if you were a non-Jewish Believer in the sphere of influence of things Messianic—not to have encountered teachings and teachers who did not identify as either “Two-House” or “One Law” in the early 2000s. Many of us were affected by a number of these ideas. While approached negatively by much of Messianic Judaism even today in 2022, neither Two-House nor One Law are identical.

In late Spring 2000, my family’s time in Norman, OK came to a conclusion, as my stepfather Mark Huey moved on to another consulting position, this time with a ministry in Kissimmee, FL. This would involve networking with many of the non-Jewish Believers and independent fellowships— influenced by various Two-House and/or One Law ideas—which did not find themselves too welcomed within Messianic Judaism.

I continued attending the University of Oklahoma, only spending the Summers of 2000, 2001, and 2002 in Central Florida. During this time, while working toward my bachelor’s degree, I kept up the TNN Online website, now composed of three sub-websites: Tribulation News Network, Theology News Network, and Two-House News Network. I admit, I took it upon myself to see that “all” of the controversial issues which I thought were unnecessarily dividing us, could be addressed out in the open and be taken care of. This was the time period that the main material for my two earliest books, *When Will the Messiah Return?* and *The New Testament Validates Torah* (formerly *The New Covenant Validates Torah*), was written. Today in 2022 I have come a long way in my theology and approach to the issues I encountered in 2002. I might have made some different choices if the Messianic environment of the early 2000s had not been so polarized. Still, it was far better for me to come to some incomplete or under-developed theological conclusions in my college days—than be drunk or promiscuous or addicted to drugs, as many in college frequently are.

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<sup>12</sup> D. Thomas Lancaster, *The Mystery of the Gospel: Jew and Gentile in the Eternal Purpose of God* (Littleton, CO: First Fruits of Zion, 2003).

<sup>13</sup> Daniel Juster and Russ Resnik (2005). *One Law Movements: A Challenge to the Messianic Jewish Community. Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations*. Available online via <<http://umjc.org>>.

## 2003-2004: Outreach Israel Ministries

Like the experience of many young people, I think if I could, there would be a number of things that I would go back in time and correct from my college experience. During my university years of 1999-2003, I did my best as a Messianic person to fellowship with various on campus Christian ministries. My roommate my junior year (2001-2002), was even the son of a pastor! I focused on issues of common faith in the Lord first, and was not hard and heavy about some of my Messianic convictions, typically only offering a Messianic perspective as one of “enrichment” or a “deeper understanding.” The fact that I had my own theology website, however, did occupy a great deal of my free time. I did not socialize with others, like I could have. Looking back on things, I had the experience in college that I needed to have, as I was working through a great number of issues. It was far better that I worked through some of these matters within the privacy of my dorm room, than out in a public ministry venue.

In September 2002, the ministry consulting position, which my stepfather Mark Huey had in Kissimmee, FL, came to a close. Over a number of months, my parents were seeking the direction of the Lord regarding what to do. It was becoming clear enough to them, especially with me finishing my undergraduate degree and some of the books that I had been producing, that we were being prepared as a family to start our own ministry. Outreach Israel Ministries was officially launched in November 2002, with an original focus on the people and the Land of Israel. While at this point, the pendulum had shifted away from Messianic Judaism toward more independent Messianic expressions, we definitely felt the need to be veered back toward building bridges, if possible, with open-minded and welcoming people in the Messianic Jewish community.

I graduated from the University of Oklahoma in May 2003, and relocated to Central Florida. Very soon, Outreach Israel Ministries and TNN Online would start producing an array of educational materials, as our family anticipated that the Messianic perspective was about to blow open. One of the things that I had, being a new university graduate, was a college degree. Far too many of the leaders and teachers who one will encounter across some parts of the Messianic spectrum, are not adequately trained. But more important than that, we wanted to be able to produce materials which could help people like us, from evangelical backgrounds, avoid some of the pitfalls and mistakes which we made. Some of the early publications we released in 2003 and 2004, included: *Torah In the Balance, Vol. I*, *Hebraic Roots: An Introductory Study* (now *Messianic Beginnings: An Introductory Study*), *The Dangers of Pre-Tribulationism*, *Messianic Winter Holiday Helper*, *Messianic Spring Holiday*

*Helper, Messianic Fall Holiday Helper, Messianic Sabbath Helper, and TorahScope, Vol I.* And yes, this would later be followed in early 2005 with *Introduction to Things Messianic*. Other potential projects had open files. Some of these projects reached various stages of completion, others did not materialize.

Mark Huey began 2004 with the intention of seeing Outreach Israel Ministries grow, which for him meant that we had to interact in person, with various speaking trips to different congregations and small groups. I had to learn how to balance some of the early research and writing of our new ministry, with our travel schedule. We went on a number of multi-week excursions, driving from Florida to the Midwest several times, flying out to Western Canada, flying out to the West Coast, hosting a tour to Israel, being invited for ten days to the United Kingdom, and driving in a Southwest-Southeastern tour. Our ministry certainly met and networked with many people. For me, it was an opportunity to see new parts of North America and the world. But most importantly, we got a hands on feel for some of the difficulties and controversies which were coming, seeing them in their infancy. These included not only some of the problems originating from Sacred Name Onlyism, Two-House and Israelite identity, but also the various so-called “restored Biblical calendar” systems, the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew and Matthew 23, and most especially those who would recognize Yeshua as Messiah but not as God. And yes, we would also encounter those who would place a lifestyle of Torah before their presumed faith in Yeshua.

The traveling throughout 2004 was not easy for either Mark Huey or myself, but we had to do it. While one would think that in interacting with new and idealistic Messianic people—that they would want to see the love of Yeshua and a desire to live like Him be the major motivating force for their actions, we encountered this far less often than we should have. We encountered far more people with a drive for the so-called “Truth” with a capital T, far too many non-Jewish people who placed some elusive identity as members of “scattered Ephraim” as more important than Messiah faith, and a majority who had major problems with some of the legitimate contributions of evangelical Christianity. It was not easy going from place to place, knowing that you were most probably going to see that each group had its own particular “issue” of dominance—which was hardly consistent with the original Messianic Jewish mission of Jewish evangelism, outreach, and support for the State of Israel. Our new family ministry tried many things in 2002-2004, our first two years, and we learned a great deal as well. We did make a few mistakes along the way. I honestly wondered at the end of 2004 if I had been truly called by the Lord into this, and I had no idea about the kinds of changes which I would be going through as 2005 began.



## 2005-2008: Asbury Theological Seminary

For the first decade or so, throughout our early Messianic experience, our family had certainly encountered our fair share of problematic and false teachings. We had also been subjected to various under-whelming levels of theological engagement. This was not limited to either parts of Messianic Judaism, or the more independent persuasions we were involved with in the early days of Outreach Israel Ministries. The one common thread throughout some of these challenges, was that very few leaders and teachers had any formal theological training, from either a Bible college or seminary. In fact, a number of people went out of their way to especially attack anyone who went to “cemetery.” Yet, these were some of the same people who had done no real study in Hebrew or Greek, their engagement almost entirely limited to Strong’s Concordance, and they certainly would not know how to engage with the proposals of contemporary Bible scholarship, accessing technical commentaries and studies. Traveling throughout 2004 was good in that it gave us an in-person idea about the sorts of matters we would have to confront (even if it were just bad attitudes). Our family was not going to stay in full-time ministry, unless one of us received some formal theological training—and with it a certain ability to not fall into the traps which we saw traveling the circuit.

There is no doubt in my mind why my family had to spend time in Central Florida: the satellite campus of Asbury Theological Seminary. In Summer 2004, I had submitted my application and was accepted to begin my master’s degree at Asbury, for Winter 2005. It was a good thing that Asbury had a campus in Orlando, because if I had moved to Wilmore, KY, given my family’s deep Methodist heritage, I may not be writing this, and I would have left things Messianic. Instead, I went to Asbury Orlando, a different place with no significant family memories.

I went to seminary with a specific goal: to learn the necessary skills to be able to be theologically engaged. We had encountered far too many people in our 9-year Messianic experience, to this point, who could not do this. Many, upon hearing that I was going to seminary, certainly did not respond well. “Why do you need to do that? Are you going to learn anything that you have not already learned?” And indeed, throughout my coursework toward my degree in Biblical Studies, I had numerous occasions, I believe, to separate from the Messianic movement and return to evangelicalism.

One of the things I quickly learned at Asbury, as I started classes for the Spring 2005 semester, is how much I had been influenced by fundamentalism for the previous 9-10 years of my spiritual life—a direct consequence of being a part of the Messianic movement. It did not matter whether it was Messianic

Judaism or interacting with those who identified as some other independent expression. One of my first Asbury professors identified as holding to extreme minimalism, the belief that almost everything in the Tanach (OT) up to the so-called “return” of the Jewish exiles from Babylon, was largely assembled as a myth, so that the Persian Empire would fund their relocation to the Holy Land, in order to build a better life. Hearing this would be the point where most Messianics I know, would leave. It is also an extreme example—but if you want to be in full-time ministry, you cannot limit yourself to only hearing the voices you want to listen to. More often than not, as I was first taking classes in 2005, I was being exposed to conservative opinions about the Tanach and its historicity, that even to this day in 2022, would not be too welcome in some sectors of the Messianic community.

I got along with the vast majority of my fellow students at Asbury, because I did not go to seminary with the intention of trying to “convert” my fellow students to some of my different Messianic beliefs. Many of my students at Asbury Orlando had to commute between two or three hours, from all over Florida and Georgia. In the different breaks between classes, they hardly ever wanted to discuss theology; most wanted to instead seek solace from their fellow students in ministry, over the various difficulties they were facing as pastors. So, by the grace of God, I never really got involved in any theological debates over Messianic minutiae.

The independent Messianic community, as it was perhaps best considered then, went through a number of significant controversies from 2005-2008, the same time as I was at Asbury. During Summer and into Fall 2005, Monte Judah of Lion and Lamb Ministries, issued a series of teachings dismissing the Epistle to the Hebrews as legitimate Holy Scripture.<sup>14</sup> One of his major claims against Hebrews was that various Tanach quotations (i.e., Jeremiah 31:31-34 in Hebrews 8:8-12) did not align with what was seen in the Hebrew. To be certain, anyone who would have possessed a minimum amount of formal Biblical training, would have been able to easily answer this: the author of Hebrews frequently does not quote from the Hebrew Tanach, but instead the Greek Septuagint (LXX) translation. This was the first major test for me at Asbury: Would I stay in a Messianic movement where these kinds of errors would be present? Would I stay in a Messianic movement that gave a high regard for Hebrew, but often demonstrated an ungodly prejudice toward Greek?

How did our ministry respond to the Hebrews fiasco of 2005? We used

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<sup>14</sup> Monte Judah. “The 7 Everlasting Covenants, Part 1 of 2” [Yavoh: He is coming!](#) Vol. 11 No. 9, September 2005; “The 7 Everlasting Covenants, Part 2 of 2” [Yavoh: He is coming!](#) Vol. 11 No. 10, October 2005; “The Paradigm of Hebrews” [Yavoh: He is coming!](#) Vol. 11 No. 11, November 2005.

this as an opportunity to assert ourselves as an up-and-coming educational ministry. I did a Bible study on Hebrews, as part of a new recorded Wednesday Night Bible Study (before podcasts). I would use the material, when completed, to produce a volume in our new *for the Practical Messianic* series. These would be technical studies, but not overly so, as we would also reflect upon the condition of the *emerging* Messianic movement, and ask difficult questions regarding what the Lord wanted us to *emerge* into. Throughout 2005-2016, our ministry released a wide selection of these commentaries including, in order: James, Hebrews, Philippians, Galatians, Apostolic Scriptures Survey, Tanach Survey, Ephesians, Colossians-Philemon, Acts 15, the Pastoral Epistles, 1&2 Thessalonians, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians.

A much bigger test for our family's long-term involvement in Messianic things, but most especially regarding what we were going to do with the whole Two-House issue, came in early Summer 2008. In late Spring 2008, avid Two-House proponent Moshe Koniuchowsky released his book *Sex and the Believer: Shocking Freedom of Sexuality in Torah*,<sup>15</sup> which unashamedly embraced and endorsed the practice of polygamy, men having multiple wives. At this time, our ministry had maintained an elusive approach to the specifics of the issue of Two-House. We acknowledged that there were unfulfilled prophecies like Ezekiel 37:15-28, that the restoration of Israel's Kingdom was bigger than just today's Jewish people, and speculated that some non-Jewish Believers might be members of the scattered Northern Kingdom—but ultimately known only to God. Polygamy in our minds—and certainly in the minds of many others—was not only an aberration introduced by the Fall, but King Solomon's polygamy was a direct cause of Ancient Israel's split into two kingdoms.

The Two-House sub-movement could have used the issue of polygamy as a means to recognize the errors and sins of Ancient Israel, not to be repeated. Instead, most leaders decided to remain quiet. Many, due to the patriarchal nature of many of its leaders, would instead be seen emphasizing that without the two wives and two concubines of Jacob, there would have been no Twelve Tribes. For our family, this triggered a significant difference in values between Two-House patriarchy, and the egalitarianism we believed instead needed to come forth among all Messianics. The failure for various Two-House leaders in 2008 to forthrightly condemn teachings endorsing polygamy, led me especially to start steadily pulling away from anything having to do with the label "Two-House," save the relevant prophecies which speak of the reunion of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms.

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<sup>15</sup> Moshe Koniuchowsky, *Sex and the Believer: Shocking Freedom of Sexuality in Torah* (Margate, FL: Your Arms to Israel Publishing, 2008).

## 2009-2012: The Transition

My time at Asbury Theological Seminary from 2005-2008 was much different, and much better, than my time at the University of Oklahoma from 1999-2003. I was definitely able to reconnect to my evangelical and Wesleyan heritage in a substantial way, and it really started to come through in my ministry. When I graduated, I received the Zondervan Biblical Languages Award—for Greek, no less! But when graduation was all over, there was a nagging question: What is our ministry going to do now? The fact was that our family was loosely associated with various independent Messianic people, not necessarily Two-House or strident One Law, but not necessarily Messianic Jewish, either. What was our future going to be? Continue to write books? In 2009, social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube were still relatively new. Smartphones were also just coming onto the market. And, anyone in the United States in 2008 was confronted with the words “Change” and “Hope,” because of the election of Barack Obama. If I had not attended seminary when I did, between 2005-2008, I may not have attended at all—because of the 2008 financial crisis.

Immediately after my graduation in Spring 2009, our family started asking questions about what was next. Within the next school year, my youngest sister Maggie would be graduating from high school. Were we going to spend the rest of our lives in Central Florida? One of our thoughts was to relocate northward up near Jacksonville, as we had extended family and my grandmother in the area. We began putting out prayers, as well as feelers. Yet during Summer 2009, my mother, Maggie, and I all went on a road trip, which began to change our trajectory completely. Initially, Maggie believed that just like her sister Jane (2001-2005), she would attend Vanderbilt University. Due to her high academics and athletics at high school, she was also very interested in the Naval ROTC program. Yet in 2009 Vanderbilt had become much more difficult to enter. My mother knew that Maggie needed to also visit the other “family school,” the University of Oklahoma. So, the three of us took a trip in mid-July 2009 to Norman, OK. I had not been back since my graduation, so I was very happy to reconnect. But I absolutely remember what happened, as all three of us walked into the Armory, where both the Army and Navy ROTC had their units. We were all hit with supernatural knowledge, just by that military machine shop smell, that Maggie was going to OU. She attended OU from 2010-2014, receiving both her bachelor’s and master’s degrees, and meeting her husband, Taylor Willetts.

In late Summer 2009 a huge theological development hit the Messianic world, as First Fruits of Zion made a shift in their theology away from One Law to Divine Invitation. This was basically the belief that while Jewish peo-

ple had a covenantal obligation or requirement to keep matters of Torah such as the Sabbath, appointed times, and dietary laws—non-Jewish Believers in Israel’s Messiah had no expectation to do these things, but could be regarded as invited by God to do them if they were so led.<sup>16</sup> Easily for the next several years, 2009-2011, people across the board were scrambling over what to do and how to respond to this. Tim Hegg of TorahResource, who did not join with FFOZ in this change, issued a strong rebuttal.<sup>17</sup> All of a sudden, FFOZ teachers could be seen attending what were considered to be mainstream Messianic Jewish events and conference. And if you were not Jewish, but in some kind of Messianic ministry, you were definitely being asked about where you stood regarding non-Jewish Believers and Torah. As we have done with so many polarizing issues, our ministry decided to take a third, alternative approach, rooted in the prophetic expectations of Micah 4:1-3 and Isaiah 2:2-4, and the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Ezekiel 36:25-27: Supernatural Compulsion. God writes God’s commandments on the hearts of God’s people at the pace of God’s Holy Spirit, dependent upon the willingness of a man or woman to grow and mature in faith. Salvation history has progressed toward the era of New Covenant. The 2009 change on the part of FFOZ, was partially responsible for the 2013 release of our ministry’s *Messianic Torah Helper*.

Throughout Fall 2009 and well into Summer 2010, I knew that my seminary training would have to be reflected in our ministry publications. So, I began a steady process of editing, updating, and expanding our resources. At the time, only a handful of our ministry books were in paperback, with the majority still only available in spiral bound comb. I knew that in the future, if we were going to see all of our books in paperback, they would have to be substantially updated. I had learned a great deal in seminary, which now needed to be integrated into our materials. I had no idea what the Lord was readying us for.

In 2005 my maternal grandmother, Mary Ruth Jeffries (now deceased-2019), had moved down from Annapolis, MD to a retirement center in Orange Park, FL, adjacent to my aunt and her family. We would visit Grandmother Jeffries every few weeks. She started out with a rather large apartment, and

<sup>16</sup> Much of this is covered in Boaz Michael and D. Thomas Lancaster. “‘One Law’ and the Messianic Gentile” *Messiah Journal* Issue 101, Summer 2009/5769; Aaron Eby, Toby Janicki, Daniel Lancaster, and Boaz Michael. (2009). *Divine Invitation: An Apostolic Call to Torah. First Fruits of Zion*. Available online via <<http://ffoz.org>>; Toby Janicki. “We are the God-Fearers” *Messiah Journal* Issue 103, Spring 2010/5770; “One Law for All” *Messiah Journal* Issue 105, Fall 2010/5771; Boaz Michael. “Messianic Judaism: Reconsidering the One Law, Two-House Trajectories” *Messiah Journal* Issue 111, Fall 2012/5773.

<sup>17</sup> Tim Hegg. (2009). *An Assessment of the “Divine Invitation” Teaching*. Torah Resource. Available online via <<http://torahresource.com>>.

then sized down to a one-bedroom apartment, and then later to memory care. In 2010, during her third move, which we went up to help, my mother and I both had the same experience: as we were leaving the complex to go have lunch, the Lord gave us the same word, "I would much rather move back to Dallas." We were counting on one day moving up to the Jacksonville area, but here we were both thinking about moving back to Texas. Not coincidental by any means, Mark Huey was in Dallas that weekend visiting with family and friends. He was absolutely elated when we told him! But the pull westward had already started in 2009, on the trip with my sister Maggie to the University of Oklahoma.

The process of moving back to Texas would not take place instantly. My sister Jane was presently without employment, and had moved from her job in Nashville to live with us in Kissimmee. The DFW Metroplex, however, has always had a dynamic economy. By late Fall 2010, my sister Jane had moved back to Dallas, and my stepfather Mark would share an apartment with her and travel back to Orlando for however long the transition period took, to relocate our entire family and ministry. I spent most of 2011 continuing to update our ministry publications, particularly with the knowledge that in relocating back to North Texas, we would be associating in some way with a large Messianic Jewish community. The TNN Online website contracted to Theology News Network. This was the time when the Lord showed me some important, alternative approaches to Bible passages such as Galatians 5:2-3 and 1 Corinthians 7:17-24, in anticipation of encountering many who were beginning to avidly espouse bilateral ecclesiology.<sup>18</sup> This was also the time when our ministry publication *Israel in Future Prophecy* was being prepared, which would offer a fair resolution to the Two-House controversy, thoroughly engaged with Jewish and Christian Bible scholarship and not Lost Tribes fairy tales.

Due to the real estate market in Central Florida, our family and ministry did not move back to North Texas until two-and-a-half years later in December 2012. It was a very long and arduous wait. But it was well worth it!

**The June 2023 issue of Outreach Israel News, Part 3 of 3, will cover our family's return to Dallas and McKinney, TX, and reintegration into the Messianic Jewish community.**

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<sup>18</sup> Bilateral ecclesiology is the premise that while all of God's people may be regarded as a part of the Commonwealth of Israel (Ephesians 2:11-13), such a Commonwealth of Israel is composed of two main, quasi-independent entities: the Jewish people/Messianic Jewish community and the Christian Church.