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Commitment

For each member of the team to excel, they must be committed to the team and to the vision. There will be disappointments and even heartaches along the way. People will always disappoint each other, but when we are committed to the goal we can get past the times people fail us. Israel must learn to hang in there with one another, knowing that there is no other place to go, so we better work it out. This is a by-product of maturity, but at the same time a decision to commit fosters maturity. If you look at any relationship you can find many reasons to separate. The Messianic movement is not immune to this condition. Separating is easy. Staying together takes effort and commitment.

We are often pulled apart due to an incomplete understanding or an incorrect perception. Through making a choice to hang in there we ultimately arrive at a better place. Scripture instructs us to go in private to the person with whom we have a conflict. It is during that process our commitment is tested. We have an opportunity to discuss our differences and gain added understanding. Plus, we have the chance to look at ourselves and say, "It's not that big of a deal after all; I'll just drop it and move on."

Going to a person in private with a matter of concern allows us to understand the situation more thoroughly and gain a greater perspective. To do this requires commitment. It is not an easy process, but one that bears much fruit when combined with a healthy dose of commitment. When we take the approach that we simply must work this out because there is no other place to go, we put in the effort to get things right. Without commitment the process simply does not work. Commitment is vital within Israel at this hour.

Moving Forward

May the God of Israel grant us the understanding that unity begins with each individual. There is no man or organization that can demand unity. The differences and challeng-

es we face today within the Messianic movement do not begin from, nor will they end with, organizations, but rather from individual people. We each are faced with the daily choice to hang in there or flee. None of us agree on everything. So, if we base our unity on uniformity, the result will be disastrous. But, if each of us would make the conscious decision to commit to our local community then we might stand a chance of unifying at the local level.

If we seek wisdom and maturity while placing a national perspective above our individual preferences, we might stand a chance of gaining true national unity. Within a nation there are many perspectives, yet the single nation remains. A common vision, compassion, accountability, maturity, and commitment must be valued and promoted if unity is to occur. Each of these is personal. They involve you and me at a very basic level. The nation is comprised of many individuals.

Unity for the sake of unity is not the issue. May we desire unity for the sake of our Messiah who said, "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one..." (John 17:22).

Messianic Israel has an opportunity to stabilize the entire Messianic movement. We are rebuilding His family. Families sometimes fight, but at the end of the day they hang in there. Blood is thicker than water, and we share a common bloodline. Let us use our blood connection to show the world a different way to walk. May we walk together and set the example for others to follow.

Yes, we can get along. The responsibility is yours and mine, not theirs. I implore you to take some steps today. Find a congregation you can be part of and be committed. Don't get so hung up in the doctrine that you lose sight of the common vision. The Father places us in congregations and puts Shepherds over us to help build our maturity. Staying committed to a local body of Believers, especially when you do not want to, builds character - one step at a time. Together, we can and will see the glory of Messiah and become one people, Israel.

**"if we base our unity on uniformity,
the result will be disastrous"**

Our Need

The Herald and the ministries of the Messianic Israel Alliance rely upon the generous contributions of our faithful family of friends. At this time we humbly ask that you consider supporting the vision of restored Israel through blessing this cutting-edge ministry with your tithes and offerings. We realize that many options exist when it comes to where you choose to send your contributions, but, if you have been blessed by the work of this ministry, we implore you to return the blessing with both your spiritual and financial support. All donations are both tax-deductible and greatly appreciated. May God bless each of you for your faithfulness.

The Herald

The Herald is published monthly by the Messianic Israel Alliance. Annual subscriptions are available by either visiting www.messianicisrael.com or sending a check or money order for \$20 (US) to the MIA, P.O. Box 3263, Lebanon, TN 37088. Add \$10 (US) for all subscriptions outside the U.S. The Herald welcomes submissions for publication.

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I AM ISRAEL AUGUST 8-11, 2008
Join with the people of Israel as we stand together to declare our unity.
Visit www.messianicisrael.com to find out more about the MIA's International Conference in St. Louis, MO.



ALLIANCE UPDATE

Brad Scott to speak at the MIA's conference

Popular Messianic teacher Brad Scott has been added to the list of speakers at this year's international conference, "I Am Israel." This exciting addition is sure to bless those in attendance this August in St. Louis. Brad is a gifted teacher with a strong emphasis on Biblical prophecy. Brad will be joining an impressive roster of teachers, including:

- Rabbi Richard Altom
- Chester Anderson
- Sandy Bloomfield
- Dr. Daniel Botkin
- Daniel & Sylvia Calderon
- Dr. John Conrad
- Boaz & Rina Dreyer
- Kelly Ferrari
- Ephraim & Rimona Frank
- Ed Harris
- Hale Harris
- Frank Houtz
- Toby Janicki
- Boaz Michael
- Laurie Cardoza-Moore
- Paul Nison
- Victor Schlatter
- Rabbi Mordecai Silver
- Rabbi Marvin Taylor
- Rebecca Park Totilo
- Angus & Batya Wootten

Our opportunity to act

This summer, big things are going to happen. In August, we will be hosting our international conference ("I Am Israel") in St. Louis. During that event, we will be forming the first Congress of B'nai Ephraim, which will place our movement on the path toward having the people of Ephraim legally recognized by the international community as a people. The significance of this act cannot be overstated.

That same weekend, we will be hosting our unprecedented March Through the Arch, an activist-style rally held at the "Gateway to the West," signifying the prophetic return of God's people "from the West." The March Through the Arch will also include a parade through the streets of downtown St. Louis. The purpose behind all of these actions is to announce to the world that Ephraim exists and showcase our support for the nation of Israel. We expect this event to generate significant and widespread media coverage, which will carry our message throughout the world.

In order for all of this to happen, we need you. We need your presence at our international conference this August. We are poised to shake the very foundations of international politics and religious institutions, but we cannot do it without you. Simply put, numbers speak. The effectiveness of our actions will be directly related to the number of people that choose to stand together. We can make

a real impact, taking tremendous steps toward the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy, but we cannot do it alone. We need to show the world, and our brothers in Israel, the strength of our people and our movement.



I understand that because of the tightening economy, many feel hindered from participating in this event. However, I also know that great achievements only come through sacrifice. As such, we implore you to fully consider the opportunities that lay before us. Israel, in every sense of its meaning, has reached its breaking point. We must join together and break through, or we will surely break down. It is with full sincerity and gravity that I urge you to make an investment in the Kingdom and join us in St. Louis this August.

To register for the conference, visit www.messianicisrael.com.

THE SHEPHERDS COUNCIL OF THE MIA

Unprecedented numbers within the Messianic movement are joining in an ever-increasing chorus that is crying for unity. It is as if His people desire a long cool drink from the fountain of unity. “Why can’t we all just get along?” is the question of the day. Today, there are various groups, ministries, and congregations, yet we all know we are called to be one body. The overwhelming desire for unity often leaves people frustrated at the lack of unity.

Digging deeper, it is possible to see that the ability to unite does not lie with the leadership of any one organization or ministry, but rather within each member of the body of Messiah. It is not the leadership that causes people to unite. Healthy leadership does not have the power to make people get along. The best any leader can do is to set the example and attempt to create an atmosphere in which unity is valued and encouraged.

At the end of the day, unity is the personal choice of each member of His body. Either we choose to stand and work out any perceived or real differences, or to flee. It is much easier to flee. I prefer to stand and get things right.

In my role within the Messianic Israel Alliance, I have the pleasure of speaking with individuals from around the world who are seeking a deeper walk with Messiah. They typically have been Believers for many years and are now seeing things in Scripture that they were previously blinded to.

As the Spirit of God removes their blinders, they begin to search out things on the Internet, looking for answers to their many questions. They do not know where else to turn. No one in their immediate circles sees these things and their long-term spiritual mentors view them warily. It does not take long for them to find that this movement of the Holy Spirit is disjointed and seemingly in disarray.

On the other hand, we have individuals who are among the fore-runners of this move of the Father. Many of these folks have weathered the storms of the past ten years. They have witnessed the division and strife that has occurred. At some point in their journey, they have decided to retreat back to their former church pew or hunker down with two or three families in the safe confines of their living room each Shabbat.

Then there is another group of folks who sit in the stands, criticizing the team who are giving their all on the field of play. Like terrorists, they throw in a scud missile once in a while just to stir things up. Rather than participate, they prefer to denigrate. Quick to tear apart, and slow to commit to anything larger than themselves, these individuals seem to hop from group to group, wreaking havoc along the way. Worse yet, some of these folks make their living tossing missiles while building their own kingdom.

So, the question before us is what will it take to have all Israel work together with common values, goals and a singular passion? Is it possible at this hour for His people, who are called by His Name, to function as a team rather than free agents? Well, I may be an eternal optimist, but I do believe it is possible. Furthermore, I believe it is imperative. What it will take is a change of attitude stemming from a change of heart. Below are a few concepts that I feel are greatly needed for Israel to truly be a team at this hour.

UNITY BEGINS WITH YOU

BY SCOTT DIFFENDERFER

Common Vision

My good friend, Daniel Botkin, accurately teaches that division is actually the condition of having two (di) visions. Therefore, the antithesis of that condition is a singular vision. There are many callings and many gifts within the Body of Messiah. However, our over-reaching objective should be the restoration of the Kingdom of Israel. Within that vision there is room for many ministries and individuals.

For instance, one individual’s passion/calling might be to physically care for the victims of terrorist attacks in Israel. This is certainly a noble cause. It takes time, commitment, finances, and plain old hard work. Another individual might be a “prayer warrior.” They might not understand my passion and may even find it wasteful to be dealing with such material matters. However, if instead of criticizing or dismissing, they would turn their prayer efforts towards supporting the other’s calling, we could have the nucleus of a powerful team.

On the other hand, the first person might become frustrated that all the other person does is pray. He would prefer they took some more tangible action. He might even say something like... “Didn’t James say that he would demonstrate his faith through his works?” What if his attitude changed and he became grateful for the prayer support? Perhaps he could come to appreciate the “prayer warrior” and maybe even learn a thing or two from them. Together, they could appreciate each other’s gifts and passions, realizing that they both have part in His Kingdom.

Our singular vision should allow us to see past our personal preferences. Together we can cover more bases and reach more people.

Together we stand a much better chance of seeing a complete picture and fulfilling our common purpose.

Compassion

Passion without compassion can have the effect of a steamroller heading downhill. The very zeal for truth that brought us into this movement may also annihilate this movement. We want to cling to the truth and seek the Father’s ways without compromise, yet we often forget, “Yahweh is gracious and full of compassion” (Psalm 111:4). I don’t believe that our movement is known for its compassion. We bludgeon one another on a regular basis. Personal attacks and doctrinal differences pull us apart - compassion is long since forgotten.

Often when Yeshua would perform a miracle, Scripture states He was, “moved with compassion.” Without His compassion none of us would be saved. But where is our compassion? Have we forgotten that “the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace” (James 3:17-18). Interestingly, in this passage the opposite of mercy is found to be envy and strife. Yeshua, the Living Torah, was a man of compassion; may we be the same.

Accountability

On any successful team there is accountability. Within Israel there is accountability. Accountability is one of the key factors that makes Israel function properly. Paul set about to set up elders in every city. Moses set up captains of tens, fifties, and hundreds. Yahweh put Adam as the head of Eve.

Today, in modern Israel, it is much easier to flee than to be accountable. When we do not like the way something happens within our congregation, we just jump to the next one. For the past fourteen years, I have led a Messianic congregation. Without ever deliberately trying to enlarge our congregation, it has grown from two families in 1994 to a community of more than 250 people today. During that time we have probably had over 1000 other people come through our community, only to find something or someone they did not like and move on. I have learned through those lessons good accountability for leaders and followers is vital.

Our movement is so young, when someone new shows up to our meetings we get so excited we forget to ask a few basic questions like, “Why did you leave the last group you were with?” or even, “Tell me about your salvation experience.” Instead, we embrace the new folks without reserve, and if they seem to possess some needed abilities, we thrust them into a leadership position. Our accountability gives way to chaos, because our desire to grow is greater than our desire to shepherd. Good shepherds must ask questions – after all Yeshua did.

Maturity

Indeed, this is a young movement. The mid 1990s saw the first significant growth. From the seeds that were planted by a few prior to that time, life was beginning to break forth during the mid 1990s. Countless ministries and congregations were born at that time and, ul-

timately, in 1999 the Messianic Israel Alliance emerged. That means that today we are not even teenagers. The good news is we are no longer infants who keep messing in our pants. Now, we are cleaned up and walking on our own, stumbling a bit, but moving forward.

Maturation is a process, not an event. It is not flashy. It is this slow, quiet growth that allows one’s roots to dig into the fertile soil, thereby bringing nutrition and support to the young sprout.

Some want to jump from one “new truth” to the next while their life remains in shambles. Scripture tells us to, “walk in the revealed things.” We are to leave the other matters to Yahweh, knowing that He will bring them to us when we are ready.

This strong desire for “new truth” seemingly propels those called to teach within the Messianic movement to, at times, stretch beyond sound doctrine. It is as if there is a contest going on to see which teacher can come up with the latest and greatest teaching so they can attract the largest crowd. Too often, these teachings leave His people confused and distracted. Rather than bring about stability, the result is anarchy. Maturation is thwarted and uprooting begins to occur.

Solid teaching is important, but the Bible says, “Know those who labor over you in the Word.” You are to know their character. Do they have a true heart for the restoration of all Israel, or to promote themselves? Are they team players or solo acts?

There is a reason why we read in Jeremiah 23:3-4, “And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. And I will set up Shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith Yahweh.” Yahweh will use Shepherds to regather and return Israel. Shepherds care about the maturity of their flock and know what diet the sheep need to take the next step. Shepherds have to clean up their own mistakes. They dwell with the sheep and the sheep know their voice. This is an intimate relationship that is developed over a period of time. It is the Shepherds who will help mature the sheep of Israel.

When we are mature, we are not easily shaken. We grow in wisdom and knowledge, not knowledge alone. The wisdom we gain is from our experience. Maturity allows us to see through the momentary traumas that come our way and stabilize our walk and relationships. What were once threats are now just minor issues as experience improves our depth perception.

It is interesting to note that maturity also fosters the ability to submit. Our appreciation for stable leadership increases. It is as if our grace quotient for leadership improves as we take a hard look at our own shortcomings. Our improved depth perception allows us to see past the momentary issue into the eternal good. Rather than having to agree with every point, we see the greater good of walking together and standing as one.

Order brings peace, without submission order is impossible. As we mature, we are not as concerned with our individual position, but rather gain a greater appreciation for the peace that comes from anointed and tested authority, even when we might disagree. Through maturity, submission takes on a positive, rather than negative tone.

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