

Open Rebuttal Letter to Ralph Messer

We, leaders in the Denver/Boulder Messianic Jewish community and friends of the MJ movement are outraged at the events that took place at New Birth Missionary Church. Although there have been a multitude of other protesting voices, we have a unique responsibility to express our severe disapproval since we live in the same community and are directly impacted by the ministry of Ralph Messer at Simchat Torah Beit Midrash.

We find the misuse of the Torah scroll to be an egregious offense. Regardless of the justification offered on YouTube, the vast consensus in Judaism, including the Messianic Jewish community, views the Torah as the sacred Word of G-d, to be handled with appropriate respect. The Torah is not an object to be manipulated according to one's whims or as a tool with which to stir the emotions of a crowd.

Our people died in order to save Torah scrolls. We saved Torah scrolls out of burning synagogues. The Torah represents a national treasure with which we identify passionately. This is particularly true of Torah scrolls associated with the Holocaust. For our community, the Holocaust defines our national trauma endured during those years of unbearable suffering.

The notion that a Torah scroll which came through Birkenau would be handled in a cavalier manner is a flagrant disregard of all Jewish sensitivities. The fact that it is readily available in a buyer's market does not cheapen its value. This scroll is precious to us.

This brings us to our next painful issue: Ralph Messer represents a very distasteful commitment to confound people's G-d given identities by propagating the Ephraimite error. It proclaims that non-Jewish followers of Yeshua are in fact physical descendants of the ten "lost" tribes. For us who are Jews, our G-d given identity is a precious heritage and a national calling. We love and value our brothers and sisters in Yeshua (Jesus) who are Gentiles and encourage them to celebrate their identity as sons and daughters of G-d who are not Jewish. They, like us, are "fearfully and wonderfully made," (Ps. 139:14).

We repudiate the Ephraimite teaching and the chaos generated by those who proclaim it. All major Messianic Jewish organizations have rejected it for what it is—a clear perversion of Scripture. Furthermore, it seeks to rob us of our national birthright by those who are unhappy with their own identity and who covet our Jewish identity.

We, in the Messianic Jewish community, have endured this burden for years and we say to those who propagate this false teaching, "Enough! Teach people to be comfortable in their own skins, to rejoice in who G-d made them and to steer clear of coveting others' identity !! "

Finally, we live under the authority of the Righteous Judge who demands accountability from us. We take the name 'Messianic Jewish' as a great honor, for which we have suffered and continue to suffer. We ask that Ralph Messer choose to abide by his identity as well. If he has been called to be a Christian pastor, let him wear that label with pride and lay down the pretense of being a Messianic Rabbi.

Rabbi Chaim Urbach, M.A.

Congregation Yeshuat Tsion (Greenwood Village)
Adj. Prof. at Denver Seminary

Rabbi Burt Yellin

Congregation Roeh Israel (Denver)

Pastor Michael Walker

Pastor Stewart Lieberman

Church in the City-Beth Abraham (Denver) CO

Pastor Gene Binder

Cornerstone Community Church (Boulder)

Hélène Dallaire, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Old Testament
Director of Messianic Judaism Programs
Denver Seminary

John and Arlene Stucki

Estes Park Chavurah