

Messianic Jewish Liturgical Practices

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Abstract

This thesis explores the current liturgical practices of mainstream Messianic Judaism in the United States using literary and ethnographic research. It examines the historical, biblical, and theological basis for the worship practices used. The origins of their worship practices are evaluated to ascertain whether they reflect charismatic Christian, Jewish denominational or biblical practice. A combination of literary research and qualitative research are used to define the movement; give a brief but comprehensive history of it; and, finally, explain and examine its worship practices. Leaders of the Messianic movement were interviewed for the qualitative research. The findings revealed that a distinction must be made between the early and current practice, which now primarily reflects an intentional combination of traditional Judaism, charismatic Christianity, and biblical roots.

Messianic Jewish Liturgical Practices

Introduction

“The Bible is a Jewish book, written by Jewish men, about a Jewish nation and a plan of redemption of the world, through a Jewish Messiah, Yeshua, the God-Man (Gen. 3:15; 4:1), who ingrafts (Ro. 11:17) non-Jewish believers to the Faith of Abraham (Gal 3:29).”¹ —this startling quote from David Beauregard accurately sums up the reasoning of many Jewish believers who choose to worship as Messianic Jews rather than Christians or Jews. What is Messianic Judaism? How is it different from mainline Christianity or mainline Judaism? Back in Acts 15, the church was asking how much traditional Judaism Gentile believers should be required to practice. With the rise of the current Messianic Jewish movement, the question has been inverted. Now, believing Jews are asked how much traditional Judaism they can practice while still acknowledging Jesus as Messiah. The animosity that has existed between the church and synagogue for the past seventeen hundred years has created a theology that one cannot be a Christian and practicing Jew simultaneously.² Yet today there is a thriving Messianic Jewish movement across the globe. Mainstream Messianic Jewish liturgical practices in the United States of America predominately reflect a focused effort to merge traditional Jewish liturgies and the Gospel into a Jewish expression of biblical worship.

¹ David Beauregard “Covenant Series” (lecture, Root of David Ministries, Lynchburg, 2012).

² Jeffrey Steven Wasserman, “Messianic Jewish Congregations: A Comparison and Critique of Contemporary North American and Israeli Expressions” (PhD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1997), 1, in ProQuest, <http://p2048-www.liberty.edu.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/docview/304368507?accountid=12085> (accessed August 26, 2014).

The hypothesis for this qualitative study was that in America, mainline Messianic Jewish worship practices predominately reflect the worship traditions of the mainline charismatic church. To discover whether or not this is true, first a thorough literature review was conducted. The literature review began with defining the Messianic Jewish movement and then moves into a brief but comprehensive examination of the history of the movement. The historic section begins with the founder of Messianic Judaism, Jesus, or Yeshua, and ends with the Jesus Movement in the 1970s and 1980s. The literature review continues by investigating what kind of liturgy is found in Messianic Jewish synagogues and the theology that undergirds it. After examining the related literature, the methods and challenges of the current study are described and the findings listed in table form. In the reflection that follows, the hypothesis and reality of the literature and research are addressed.

To facilitate a clear comprehension of discussions throughout this work, certain commonly utilized terms are defined here. There are two groups of terms. The first set of terms are well-known but may be used in a unique manner throughout this study. The second group is a natural part of Jewish life and worship, but may be unfamiliar to those outside this community. Therefore, brief definitions will be given of those terms that will be encountered most often throughout this thesis.

Although the following are well-known terms in the religious world, it is necessary to clarify how they are used throughout this study. The term *liturgy* and all its variants refer to an arrangement of a service, whether it is a charismatic, Pentecostal service or an ultra-Orthodox Jewish service. The term should also be considered synonymous with the terms *worship service* and *order of worship*. The terms *worship*

practice and *liturgical practice* refer specifically to the components that create the whole liturgy. For example, a liturgical practice during a Torah service is kissing the Torah scroll as it is in procession. In like manner, an Episcopalian kneels while reading the Prayers of the People as a worship practice. Also the term *musical worship* is used when discussing the portion of a service that uses music to enhance worship. The term *worship* is not synonymous with the term *music* throughout this piece. Instead *worship* is any life event or action that seeks to bring reverence and glory to God whether it takes place in a corporate worship service or in everyday life. By keeping these definitions forefront, their usage throughout the thesis will be more easily understood.

The second group of terms is an integral part of Jewish life and custom. The synagogue has a rich and ancient history beyond the scope of this work. In ancient history it was a local place of worship for the Jew who could not travel to the Temple on Shabbat. Since the Temple was destroyed, the liturgy of the synagogue was developed. This liturgy has helped the Jewish people retain their identity rather than disappear into the tapestry of their host cultures throughout almost two thousand years of the Diaspora.³ The synagogue's primary function is as a house of worship. The most regular service occurs weekly on the Shabbat or Sabbath and centers on the reading of the Torah. The Sabbath was the first feast celebrated in Scripture. In Genesis 2:2, God rests from His work and in Leviticus 23, He commands the seventh day to be a day of rest for the people and animals. Thus observant Jews celebrate the Sabbath from sundown Friday night until

³ *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 3rd ed. (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1972), s.v. "Synagogue."

sundown Saturday.⁴ The Torah, also known as the Law or Pentateuch, is the name for the first five books of the Bible and the basis for the majority of other Jewish religious writings. Although the term is often used interchangeably with the word *law*, the term *torah* actually means ‘to teach.’⁵ As ancient and modern rabbis studied the Torah, they strove to interpret its meaning and instructions for their time. They also taught the people how to apply the mandates of the Law⁶ to their lives. This created what is known as the Oral Law, tradition, or Oral traditions.⁷ The rabbinical writings are beyond the scope of this work, but fundamental to Judaism. The liturgy of Shabbat is within the Siddur, the Jewish prayer book, which is based on tradition with a biblical foundation.⁸ It is used to guide the worship participants through the Sabbath service and daily prayer.

In the context of a Torah service, many prayers are recited. Four of those are noted here. First, the Shema, also transliterated as *Sh'ma*, which comes from Deuteronomy 6:4-9, basically declares that God is One and He alone is God.⁹ Second, the Amidah, which means *standing*, is the oldest congregational prayer. Also known as the Shemoneh Esreh, it is said facing Jerusalem aloud but softly allowing each worshiper to

⁴ *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 3rd ed. (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1972), s.v. “Sabbath.”

⁵ *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 3rd ed. (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1972), s.v. “Torah.”

⁶ In this work, the terms *torah* and *law* will be used interchangeably as is the current norm.

⁷ Joshua Brumbach clearly and simply describes the importance and role of tradition in Messianic Jewish life in his article. Joshua Brumbach, “Helpful Points to Consider: The Role of Torah and Jewish Tradition in the Messianic Jewish Community” (a paper presented for the Borough Park Symposium, New York, New York, October 22-24, 2012), 4-5.

⁸ John Fischer, *Siddur for Messianic Jews*, 9th ed. (Palm Harbor, FL: Menorah Ministries, 2011), 180.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 186-188.

pray at their own pace.¹⁰ Third, the Kaddish, is a prayer of mourning, also called the *Mourner's Kaddish*, but also a prayer of praise and anticipation of Messiah's coming kingdom.¹¹ Finally, the Alenu, also transliterated *Aleinu*, basically expresses gratitude and praise to God for giving the covenant, the Torah, and making the Jews His covenant people.¹²

Jews observe both religious cycles and life cycle events. The religious cycles include the Sabbath and feasts. When God instructed the Israelites to observe Shabbat, He also commanded them to observe seven other feasts. Three of the feasts are pertinent to this study. Passover, Sukkot, and Shavuot are three of the feasts described in Leviticus 23. Passover commemorates God leading the children of Israel out of slavery in Egypt. It is celebrated during the Jewish calendar month of Nisan. Shavuot, also known as Pentecost, is the celebration of Moses receiving the Torah from the Lord. For Messianic Jews, it is also the remembrance of the coming of the Holy Spirit. Over the course of seven days in the fall, Sukkot, or the Feast of Tabernacles, commemorates the shelter God provided the Israelites as they wandered through the wilderness. The main Jewish life cycle events include circumcision, bar/bat mitzvah, wedding, and death and each of these events have their own set of liturgy and ritual. The first two are pertinent to this study. In obedience to God's command to Abraham, Jewish males are circumcised on the eighth day as a physical sign of the covenant God made with Abraham in Genesis 17:11-12. A bar mitzvah is the occasion when Jewish boys of thirteen plus one day attain

¹⁰ Ibid., 188.

¹¹ Ibid., 191.

¹² Ibid., 193.

religious and legal maturity and are required to fulfill all the commandments.¹³ This same day is celebrated in the life of a girl at twelve plus one day and is called a bat mitzvah.¹⁴ In Messianic Judaism, when a person comes to believe in Yeshua as the Messiah, they are immersed in water in obedience with biblical commands. Due to the connotations of the term *baptism*, Messianic Jews prefer the term *immersion*. These are only some of many religious and cultural terms that are encountered in Messianic Judaism.

Messianic Judaism in Context

The body of literature on Messianic Judaism is small when compared to the literature available regarding either Christianity or Judaism. Unlike Christianity or Judaism, Messianic Judaism does not have its own “continuous tradition” of “practicing Jews and believers.”¹⁵ As a result, it has shared traditions, history, and religious expression with both Judaism and Christianity.¹⁶ This examination of the literature includes an attempt to define Messianic Judaism; an overview of the history of the movement beginning with the New Testament and ending with the rebirth of the congregational movement in the 1970s; and concludes with a brief review of the liturgy and basic theology of the movement as it reflects Jewish and Christian liturgical tradition and theological development.

¹³ *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 3rd ed. (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1972), s.v. “Bar Mitzvah.”

¹⁴ *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 3rd ed. (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1972), s.v. “Bat Mitzvah.”

¹⁵ Devra Gilat Jaffe, “Straddling the Boundary: Messianic Judaism and the Construction of Culture” (master's thesis, Rice University, 2000), 1, in ProQuest, <http://p2048-www.liberty.edu.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/docview/230747687?accountid=12085> (accessed August 26, 2014).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 26-31.

Definition Difficulties

The movement of Messianic Judaism is hard to define for several reasons. First, it is a movement sometimes described as suspended between two movements, which have a long history of animosity. These movements are Christianity and Judaism. Since the phraseology of a definition could increase the odds of alienating one or both originating movements, the Messianic movement chooses its words carefully, but still seeks to clearly state who they are. Second, the New Testament's profile of a Jewish believer presents challenges for a clear definition.¹⁷ However, the movement must be defined. A Messianic Jew is a "person who was born Jewish or converted to Judaism, who is a genuine believer in Yeshua (Jesus), and who continues to acknowledge his or her Jewishness."¹⁸ Menahem Benhayim defined the movement as: "Messianic Judaism is an expression of Jewish faith built upon the essential truth that Jewish people who embrace the risen Messiah of Israel, Jesus, are obliged to partner with God in securing the ongoing existence and vitality of the Jewish people worldwide, while simultaneously upholding Jesus' message of love and redemption for the entire world."¹⁹

¹⁷ "What Is Messianic Judaism," International Messianic Jewish Alliance, October 9, 2013, accessed October 9, 2013, <http://imja.org/what-is-messianic-judaism/>, 1.

¹⁸ Simon Dein. "Becoming A Fulfilled Jew: An Ethnographic Study of a British Messianic Jewish Congregation." *Nova Religio* 12, no. 3 (02, 2009): <http://search.proquest.com/docview/222633319?accountid=12085>, 78.

¹⁹ Menahem Benhayim "Between Church and Synagogue: The Dilemma of Hebrew Christians and Messianic Jews," International Messianic Jewish Alliance, October 9, 2013, accessed October 9, 2013, <http://imja.org/between-church-and-synagogue/>, 2.

History of Messianic Judaism

Jesus. The case has been made that Messianic Judaism, began with Jesus' first converts in the New Testament.²⁰ While that time is often seen as the beginning of the Christian church, it should be remembered that Jesus was Himself Jewish as were all His first followers. It was not until the conversion of Cornelius and his family in Acts 10 that Gentiles began to enter the fold. Jesus was a practicing Jew for the entirety of His life on earth.²¹ A clear example appears in John 8 and Mark 14. These passages recount two different occasions when the religious leaders could find no flaw in Jesus concerning either the law or the traditions.²² The observance of Torah and Oral tradition is also reflected in His teachings. Passages in which Jesus challenges the interpretations of the law and the traditions are often understood to demonstrate that Jesus was abolishing the law. This would be an incorrect understanding of Jesus' teaching. Instead, Jesus condemned the hypocrisy of the religious leaders, not their teaching; stated that He came to "fulfill" or "to uphold," but not to do away with the Law; and also paralleled rabbinic material in His own teachings.²³ An example of how Jesus upheld the Law and traditions is the way in which He observed the last Passover meal.

²⁰ Ibid., 1-2.

²¹ John Fischer, "The Place of Rabbinic Tradition in a Messianic Jewish Lifestyle," in *The Enduring Paradox: Exploratory Essays in Messianic Judaism*, ed. Dr. John Fischer (Baltimore: Lederer/Messianic Jewish Pub., 200), 146.

²² Ibid., 146.

²³ Ibid., 146-51.

Jesus sent Peter and John ahead of Himself and the other disciples to make the proper Passover preparations.²⁴ Similar to every household in Jerusalem, they made preparations for the meal and the weeklong feast that followed. Among other things, they verified that all the leaven was removed from the house and upper room; purchased the wine, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs; brought the lamb to be sacrificed at the Temple; roasted it; and set the table.²⁵ Burge describes the scene that followed in this way: “During the meal, Christ, like other teachers and rabbis were doing all over Jerusalem, interpreted the ritual elements of the Passover meal as they ate.”²⁶ However, unlike the other rabbis, His interpretation of the unleavened bread and one of the cups of wine came to be known as the Last Supper, Communion, or the Eucharist. After blessing the bread, which represents life, with the traditional blessing, Jesus identified it with the “upcoming sacrifice” of His life.²⁷ Jesus also reinterpreted one of the cups of wine. It appears that even at that time, the meal may have been organized around four cups of red wine.²⁸ Scholars believe that it was the third cup which Jesus took and identified with “his sacrificial dedication.”²⁹ After Jesus gave thanks in the traditional way, He instructed

²⁴ Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Matthew” (PDF), from “Dr. Constable’s Expository (Bible Study) Notes” accessed on 4/21/2014 at <http://www.sonlight.com/constable/notes.htm>, PDF, 389

²⁵ Gary M. Burge, *Jesus and the Jewish Festivals (Ancient Context, Ancient Faith)*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2012), 102-108, 110.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 111.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 112.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 113.

them all to drink and identified the cup with His blood and a new covenant.³⁰ If Jesus had intended to abolish the Torah and Oral traditions, Passover was the optimum opportunity to demonstrate that. This is the first ordinance that Israel was commanded to keep. It was founded before the Law was given and reiterated multiple times within the Law (Exodus 12, Leviticus 23, Numbers 9, 28, 33, and Deuteronomy 16). Instead of saying that it was no longer necessary to keep Passover, Jesus brought new life and meaning to the Law and traditions of Passover while commanding believers to, “Do this in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19, 1 Cor. 11:24-25).

The apostles. After Jesus’ ascension into heaven, the first believers continued to practice Judaism though they had a new understanding of the purpose and fulfillment of the law and traditions. This is clearly described in the book of Acts, which begins with the believers praying during the feast of Shavuot. Some scholars believe that the first believers actually established a synagogue with Peter and James as its leaders.³¹ During those days, “Any group of Jews which comprised ten batlanim, men of leisure, could found a synagogue and there were numerous synagogues in Jerusalem representing nationalities, trades, and no doubt ‘Ways’³² as well.”³³ After Stephen was stoned, James the brother of John was beheaded, and Peter was imprisoned, there was a shift in practice:

³⁰ Lucien Deiss, *Springtime of the Liturgy: Liturgical Texts of the First Four Centuries*, Translated by Matthew J. O’Connell, (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1979), 23.

³¹ Wasserman, “Messianic Jewish Congregations,” 37-39.

³² The term ‘Ways’ refers to any number of groups that were presenting an answer to Israel’s problems at this time. Jerusalem was populated by a great variety of them, and they were tolerated unless they endangered the peace through their activities. Hugh J. Schonfield, *The History of Jewish Christianity from the First to the Twentieth Century* (Kent: Manna Books, 1995), 17.

³³ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

It now became evident to the apostles and elders that a more elaborate organization was necessary if the scattered communities of believers were to be kept together. The movement was in every way a Jewish one, and its leaders were closely identified with Jewish affairs. There was no split with the Synagogue, and it was only natural that the government of the communities should be conducted on current lines. This required the establishment of local Synagogues with their officials, president, deacons, precentor and teachers, three of whom form a tribunal for the Judgment of cases concerning money matters, thefts, losses, immorality, admission of proselytes, etc. This local council in turn would be responsible to the higher court in Jerusalem, to which graver charges and cases would be referred. The organization also provided for itinerant teachers sent out from the central authority, whose duty it was to exhort and expound the true doctrine, and also to collect dues for the maintenance of the organization. We gather that this system was adopted by the Nazarenes, the leadership of the visiting teachers being given to Peter, while James the brother of Jesus was elected Nasi, or president, of the supreme Council, both on account of his kinship to the Messiah and his noted piety.³⁴

This understanding of first century events has “become ‘dogma’ for the contemporary Messianic movement.”³⁵ The reason is as follows:

Three realities of this period have become cardinal and foundational principles in the contemporary Messianic movement:

1. The leadership was first in Peter and then later in James the brother of Jesus.
2. Messianic Jews continued to see themselves as Jews, not as another people or religion separate from the rest of the people of Israel.
3. The believers continued religious activities and worship at the Jerusalem Temple and local synagogues.³⁶

Beginning with the conversion of Cornelius’ family in Acts 10, the movement was soon filled with Gentile believers. In fact, at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, the apostles struggled with questions surrounding the issue of whether or not Gentile believers in Christ also needed to become proselytes. They had to decide if these new

³⁴ Ibid., 20.

³⁵ Wasserman, “Messianic Jewish Congregations,” 37-39.

³⁶ Ibid., 35.

believers needed to adopt all aspects of Judaism as evidence of real conversion or if that was unnecessary.

The middle centuries. By the second century, Christianity in the West had already actively sought to distance itself from its Jewish roots due, in part, to the violent unrest in Palestine.³⁷ One example of this distancing can be seen in the heated debates between patristic fathers as to when Easter should be celebrated.³⁸ In Asia, the church leadership came predominately from Jewish backgrounds. There was a group that came to be known as the *quartodecimans* who believed that Easter ought to be celebrated on the fourteenth of Nisan, regardless of the day of the week on which it fell. However, the leaders in Rome and Alexandria were mostly from non-Jewish backgrounds. They maintained that Easter should always be celebrated on a Sunday—resurrection day. For that reason, they believed it ought to be celebrated on the first Sunday after the fourteenth of Nisan.³⁹ The issue came to a head when Victor, the Pope in Rome at the time, tried to excommunicate all the believers in Asia over this issue.⁴⁰ Finally, at the Council of Nicaea, it was decided that Easter was to be celebrated on the first Sunday after the fourteenth of Nisan, and this continues to our current time.⁴¹ This is just one example of how the Church began to actively distance itself from its Jewish roots.

³⁷ Ibid., 42-46.

³⁸ Deiss, *Springtime of the Liturgy*, 98.

³⁹ Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik, eds., *The Early Centuries: Jewish Believers in Jesus* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), 516-517.

⁴⁰ Paul L. Maier, trans., *Eusebius: The Church History* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2007), 180.

⁴¹ Deiss, *Springtime of the Liturgy*, 98.

Later, Jewish believers were not allowed in the church if they continued to practice any form of Judaism. They were also ostracized from fellowship in both the Jewish and Christian communities if they did appear to practice both. Though Christianity had its roots in Judaism, it strived to completely disassociate itself in many ways.⁴² The feeling was mutual. Judaism exemplified this by adding “a curse on heretics (*minim*)”⁴³ to the *Shemoneh Esreh* (Eighteen Benedictions) in the synagogue liturgy. The last record of organized, Jewish Christianity comes from the seventh century.⁴⁴ Though pockets of it may have existed throughout the medieval era, both the synagogue and the church made it very difficult for anyone to profess Christ and practice Judaism simultaneously. In their eyes, a person had to be either a Jew or a Christian, but they could not be both.⁴⁵

The nineteenth century. Throughout the 19th and 20th century a shift was seen as Jews began to embrace Christianity without abandoning their Jewish practices. This took place partly because Christian missions formed to reach Jews Christianity’s theological framework shifted.⁴⁶ Shortly, after the “Hebrew Christian movement” started, the

⁴² Wasserman, “Messianic Jewish Congregations,” 47-54.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁴⁴ Carol A. Harris-Shapiro, “Syncretism or Struggle: The Case of Messianic Judaism” (PhD diss., Temple University, 1992), 26, in ProQuest, <http://p2048-www.liberty.edu.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/docview/304022444?accountid=12085> (accessed August 26, 2014).

⁴⁵ Benhayim “Between Church and Synagogue,” 1.

⁴⁶ Patricia A. Power. "Blurring the Boundaries: American Messianic Jews and Gentiles." *Nova Religio* 15, no. 1 (08, 2011). Accessed October 9, 2013. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/903966457?accountid=12085>, 74-75

congregational movement also began.⁴⁷ In 1813 in England, an association called Beni Abraham (Children of Abraham) became “the first body of believers who recognized both their Jewish ancestry, and their faith in Jesus as the Messiah of Israel.”⁴⁸

In 1882, Joseph ben Rabinowitz, a former rabbinic Jew, became the founder of the Hebrew Christian Synagogue in Hungary.⁴⁹ Not only was he the founder of a Messianic congregation, but he also left behind a theological foundation which “reconciled” his Judaism and Christianity into one faith.⁵⁰ He was among the first to lay the Messianic theological groundwork for the modern Messianic movement.⁵¹ Unfortunately, these early congregational attempts “disappeared by the turn of the century.”⁵²

The Jesus movement. What began as a small, rather timid movement in the 1800s turned into a revival during the Jesus Movement. Then, Messianic Judaism grew in momentum, boldness, and numbers reminiscent of the revival in Acts.⁵³ The 1960s are known as a time of cultural upheaval in American history, and the American Jewish

⁴⁷ Harris-Shapiro, “Syncretism or Struggle,” 30-31.

⁴⁸ David Sedaca. “The Rebirth of Messianic Judaism.” International Messianic Jewish Alliance. October 9, 2013. Accessed October 9, 2013. <http://imja.org/the-rebirth-of-messianic-judaism/>, 1-2

⁴⁹ Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Hebrew Christianity: Its Theology, History, and Philosophy* (Tustin: Ariel Ministries Press, 1992), 49.

⁵⁰ Kai Kjaer-hansen, *Joseph Rabinowitz and Teh Messianic Movement* (Grand Rapids: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), pg 58-74

⁵¹ Rabbi Stephen Galiley, from a interview/academic conversation on 3/12/13

⁵² Harris-Shapiro, “Syncretism or Struggle,” 32.

⁵³ Yaakov Ariel. "A different kind of dialogue? Messianic Judaism and Jewish-Christian relations." *Cross Currents* 62, no. 3 (September 1, 2012): 318-327. *ATLASerials, Religion Collection, EBSCOhost* (accessed October 9, 2013), 318-319.

community was not exempt from the turbulence.⁵⁴ Many American Jews who had become a part of the “emergent ‘Hippie’ counter-culture” joined “a new wave of Jewish converts eager to develop their own unique religious identity.”⁵⁵ Unlike the Hebrew Christians of the previous generation, these “young Jewish believers in Yeshua [Jesus] refused to join Christian churches, a move they regarded as assimilation among the Gentiles.”⁵⁶ Another important event in the formation of Messianic congregations was the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, which “encouraged new loyalties to Israel and Jewish peoplehood.”⁵⁷

Jews for Jesus was founded in 1973, as well as a youth branch of the Hebrew Christian Alliance of America (HCAA). By 1975, the HCAA would become the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America (MJAA), which “represented an evolution in the thought processes and religious and philosophical outlook toward a more fervent expression of Jewish identity.”⁵⁸ Messianic congregations also began forming all over the United States. These Jewish believers “established congregations on their own initiative, which were largely independent of the control of missionary societies or Christian

⁵⁴ Harris-Shapiro, “Syncretism or Struggle,” 34-35.

⁵⁵ Wasserman, “Messianic Jewish Congregations,” 78.

⁵⁶ Daniel Juster and Peter Hocken. “The Messianic Jewish Movement: an Introduction.” *Toward Jerusalem Council II* (2004): 15.
http://scholar.googleusercontent.com/scholar?q=cache:nYG8dgohPJ4J:scholar.google.com/+messianic+jewish+worship+music&hl=en&as_sdt=0,47 (Accessed October 26, 2013).

⁵⁷ Harris-Shapiro, “Syncretism or Struggle,” 36.

⁵⁸ David A. Rausch, *Messianic Judaism* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1982), 77.

denominations.”⁵⁹ This was the beginning of the congregational movement, which continues to grow in number domestically and internationally.⁶⁰

Liturgy and Theology

In the words of Dan Juster and Peter Hoken, “There is a great variety in the worship patterns of Messianic Jews.”⁶¹ On this point, basically all the literature agrees. There is no one form, or liturgy, to which all Messianic Jewish congregations adhere. On this topic, the literature ranges from simply describing the liturgy that is observed in certain Messianic fellowships to theological discussions regarding what should be done and why.

First, the literature that describes the actual practices of Messianic liturgy will be inspected, and, within that, the literature discussing ideal practice. Some of Messianic Judaism’s prominent writers have enumerated principles for how liturgy should be chosen for a Messianic Jewish synagogue and warnings about it as well.⁶² Second, the literature discussing the theological reasons for the chosen or repudiated liturgies will be examined. Finally, the ramifications these liturgical choices have had and the resulting controversies with Christians and Jews will be investigated. This admonition from Rausch should be kept in mind throughout this section, “it is essential to mention once

⁵⁹ Ariel. "A different kind of dialogue? Messianic Judaism and Jewish-Christian relations," 319.

⁶⁰ Harris-Shapiro, “Syncretism or Struggle,” 41.

⁶¹ Juster and Hoken, "The Messianic Jewish Movement," 38.

⁶² The ethnographic sources predominately focus on the worship practices of one or two congregations and not the movement as a whole. For this reason the ethnographic studies will by enlarge be avoided in this section since we are looking for those practices that are more universal. For this reason this section will give preference to the literature that gives a general overview of the entire movement and its worship expression.

again that Messianic Judaism is a vibrant, evolving, and constantly changing religious movement.”⁶³

Variety of liturgy. As noted earlier, there is a great variety within Messianic Judaism’s liturgy. In fact, all the literature agrees that there is vast diversity within Messianic Jewish worship. David Sedaca remarks that this diversity is reflective of the milieu in which the Messianic Jewish congregations took part.⁶⁴ Jeffrey Wasserman makes a similar observation when he says that “Messianic congregations, like the rest of Evangelicalism, are separated into charismatic and non-charismatic camps.”⁶⁵ Daniel Juster and Peter Hocken note that the charismatic influence is more prominent than non-charismatic and this is “most evident in the sphere of worship.”⁶⁶ Examples of charismatic influence they point to is in the use of expressive creativity—such as dance—during musical praise and worship; the use of anointing oil when praying for healing or the ordaining deacons and elders; and belief in prophetic utterances in the present time.⁶⁷ Although there are distinctions between charismatic and non-charismatic expression in the Messianic movement, the “lines of division are not as distinct as in Gentile churches.”⁶⁸

⁶³ Rausch, *Messianic Judaism*, 109.

⁶⁴ Sedaca, “The Rebirth of Messianic Judaism,” 3.

⁶⁵ Wasserman, “Messianic Jewish Congregations,” 94.

⁶⁶ Juster and Hocken, “The Messianic Jewish Movement,” 38.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 34, 37.

⁶⁸ Wasserman, “Messianic Jewish Congregations,” 96.

Elements of worship, such as dance, may reflect charismatic influence, but it also has “similarities with forms of Jewish revivalism.”⁶⁹ Some Messianic leaders, such as Rabbi Stephen Galiley, see Messianic Jewish worship expression as having “an impact upon charismatic and evangelical Christianity” as it begins to incorporate elements such as “Messianic Jewish music, Hebrew, Jewish folk dance, pageantry, use of shofars, among other elements.”⁷⁰ However, non-charismatic Messianic congregations are “generally non-demonstrative, perhaps like many Baptist or free evangelical worship, or perhaps even structured on the Siddur, the Jewish prayer book with some Messianic adjustments.”⁷¹ Since the majority of North American Messianic leaders identify themselves as charismatic,⁷² the discussion of general liturgical practices will probably reflect that.

Common liturgies. After a Jewish person comes to believe in Jesus as the Messiah and receives the forgiveness that He offers, they are often faced with a dilemma. That dilemma is, “Am I still Jewish?” and if so, “How Jewish is too Jewish?” Traditionally, both Judaism and Christianity have taught that one cannot be both Christian and Jewish simultaneously. Instead, they have been mutually exclusive for sixteen centuries.⁷³ Now, as Messianic Jews decided they did not have to choose between the two, the congregational leaders were confronted by similar questions. They wrestled

⁶⁹ Juster and Hocken, "The Messianic Jewish Movement," 34.

⁷⁰ Stephen D. Galiley. "The Millennial Divorce." diss., The King's University, 2013, 133.

⁷¹ Juster and Hocken, "The Messianic Jewish Movement," 34.

⁷² Wasserman, "Messianic Jewish Congregations," 95.

⁷³ "What Is Messianic Judaism," 3.

with the question, “What makes a congregation Messianic Jewish?” and “How Jewish is too Jewish?” David Rausch addressed the early conflict within the movement when he said:

The mainstream of the movement believed that any return to Jewish practices would put one *under* the Law. This was interpreted as something Christians should *never* do—even Jewish Christians. This mainstream group was not ashamed of its ‘Hebrew’ origin, but the direct practice of anything Jewish was seen as contrary to one’s being part of the ‘new’ covenant, the new people of God and the Body of Christ... a smaller second group within Hebrew Christianity asserted that the Jewish believer had a right to maintain his Jewish heritage and identity... At one end of the spectrum is Hebrew Christianity with a completely assimilated and church-acculturated Jewish convert to Christianity and on the other end of the spectrum is Messianic Judaism with the Jewish Christian maintaining traditional practice and either attending a Messianic congregation and/or a regular synagogue.⁷⁴

As the movement has matured, the questions still persist. However, the conflict between Hebrew Christians and Messianic Jews has abated due to Messianic Jews becoming the more prominent voice.⁷⁵

Once the decision to worship as a Messianic synagogue was made, each of the congregational leaders had to form Messianic liturgy. David Stern, one of the first Messianic theologians, warned:

A Messianic synagogue ought not to be merely a church service with a few Jewish words, clothes, and symbols. If the materials of Judaism are used, they should be used properly; or, if we change the normal ways of using these items, we should do so intentionally and not out of indifference or ignorance.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Rausch, *Messianic Judaism*, 87-88.

⁷⁵ Since most of the Hebrew Christians were within the Jewish mission outreach centers and were not establishing congregations, they have little to no liturgy to be examined. For the scope of this work, only the literature regarding the liturgies of the Messianic congregations that chose to maintain some Jewish practice will be discussed. However, the controversy between the two groups will be examined in a later section.

⁷⁶ David H. Stern, *Messianic Judaism: a Modern Movement with an Ancient Past* (Clarksville, MD: Messianic Jewish Publisher, 2007), 168.

Stern was only one among many Messianic Jews giving the same admonition. Namely, that attention be given to the proper use of the Jewish traditions in Messianic worship. Although there is variety, there emerged general worship practices observed by the majority of North American Messianic synagogues.⁷⁷

All Messianic Jews observe the Sabbath from sundown Friday to Saturday in accordance with Jewish tradition.⁷⁸ Most North American Messianic congregations gather Friday night, Saturday morning, or both to worship.⁷⁹ Juster and Hoken summarize general Messianic worship practices as follows:

The Sabbath service varies greatly. Some Messianic Jewish services, mostly in America, include the major elements of the liturgy of the traditional Jewish service, including introductory Psalms, the blessings before and after the *Sh'ma* (the great affirmation of Deuteronomy 6:4) and the *Sh'ma* itself including readings from Deuteronomy 6, 11, and Numbers 15). The Torah service with its blessings and readings are very common in America and in many Eastern European congregations, and are part of the life of a minority of Messianic Jewish congregations in Israel. In addition, the great prayer known as the *Amidah* whose basic content reaches back to the time of Yeshua is also quite common... Other classical hymns such as *Adon Olam* and *Aleinu* are also common.⁸⁰

Most continue to observe the feasts of Passover, Hanukkah, Purim, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Shavuot, and Sukkot either as a congregation, as a family, or both.⁸¹ These feasts are often observed according to tradition, but they are all “interpreted with Yeshua as the

⁷⁷ There is a distinct difference between Messianic worship in Israel and in the Diaspora; “North American Messianic Jews are typically the most liturgical, and those in Israel the least liturgical.” Juster and Hoken, “The Messianic Jewish Movement,” 38.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁷⁹ Stern, *Messianic Judaism*, 170.

⁸⁰ Juster and Hoken, “The Messianic Jewish Movement,” 39-40.

⁸¹ Dein. “Becoming A Fulfilled Jew,” 81.

center of fulfillment.”⁸² Decisions regarding “keeping *kashrut* (eating Kosher food) and wearing a *kippa* (skull cap) and *tallit* (prayer shawl), depends on individual choice.”⁸³

Wasserman briefly describes the music of the movement in saying that many Messianic congregations have a “more contemporary style of worship, employing music reflective of their sixties’ counterculture origin and incorporating elements of modern Israeli dance. Many of the songs used for congregational singing imitate the style and some of the substance of the modern Jewish synagogue.”⁸⁴ Some of the American Messianic songwriters and musicians include Stuart Dauermann, Marty Goetz, Paul Wilbur, Ted Pearce, and Joel Chernoff. These musicians have helped create the sound that is identified with Messianic Judaism. Little has been written about what has influenced the sound or lyric that is common to Messianic Jewish music. However, generally, their music uses minor keys and strong rhythms, “fast-paced and lively.”⁸⁵

Life of worship and witness. Most Messianic Jews continue to observe Jewish life cycle events in a traditional manner. They believe it is an act of worship and recognition of continuing affiliation with the broader Jewish community. Life cycle events include birth, death, coming of age and marriage. The boys are circumcised according to tradition and become a bar mitzvah, at the age of thirteen. Girls are dedicated as infants and become a bat mitzvah at twelve years of age.⁸⁶ The majority of

⁸² Juster and Hocken, "The Messianic Jewish Movement," 40.

⁸³ Dein. "Becoming A Fulfilled Jew," 81.

⁸⁴ Wasserman, "Messianic Jewish Congregations," 96.

⁸⁵ Harris-Shapiro, "Syncretism or Struggle," 314-315.

⁸⁶ Dein. "Becoming A Fulfilled Jew," 81.

Messianic Jewish marriages take place under a “canopy or *chupah* with a prayer shawl on top of it”⁸⁷ and include at least the traditional “blessing over the betrothal...the ring vows, and the seven blessings over the bride and the groom.”⁸⁸ When there is a death, Messianic Jews tend to adhere to Jewish traditions such as the “saying of the *Kaddish* prayer as part of the funeral”⁸⁹ and refraining from embalming the body. An important and somewhat unique life cycle event for Messianics is immersion in water, or baptism. Although traditional Judaism does incorporate immersion for religious reasons, Messianics participate in it when they come to faith in Jesus as the Messiah.⁹⁰

Theological principles and admonitions. Dr. John Fischer, David Stern, David Rausch, Dr. Daniel Juster, and Joshua Brumbach are only a few of the men who have written about the principles that should guide Messianics’ liturgical choices, as well as highlighting concerns regarding these decisions. Rausch believes some of the struggles with traditional liturgy lies in the “lack of foundation in Judaism for many Messianic Jews...Coupled with this problem is a lack of qualified leadership, educated in Jewish ritual, practice, and history.”⁹¹ Dr. Fischer, the author of *Siddur for Messianic Jews*, advocates the use of liturgy and traditions because they help to “fill out the details of the biblical holiday instructions.”⁹² He also said, “traditional liturgy...provides us with awesome and inspiring reflections of God as well as breathtaking opportunities and

⁸⁷ Juster and Hocken, "The Messianic Jewish Movement," 37.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 42-43.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁹¹ Rausch, *Messianic Judaism*, 110.

⁹² Fischer, “The Place of Rabbinic Tradition in a Messianic Jewish Lifestyle,” 157-158.

vehicles to worship him.”⁹³ Stern continues by pointing out that “Judaism is a liturgical religion. This is true not only of Judaism in its rabbinical forms, but of Judaism in the *Tanakh* as well...liturgy, properly used, does not keep the Holy Spirit from having his way in the worship service.”⁹⁴ He then describes the main liturgies in Judaism, as found in the *Siddur*, *Machzor*, and *Haggadah*. Dr. Fischer suggests principles for choosing Messianic liturgies. For example, he recommends a Messianic version of a liturgy “should be based on the Orthodox Jewish version.”⁹⁵ He also admonishes the title *rabbi* be reserved for those who have, “training commensurate with that which would enable him to qualify as a rabbi in a non-Messianic Jewish setting”⁹⁶

Recently, Rabbi Joshua Brumbach wrote an essay exhorting the Messianic community to consider the central role Torah and Jewish traditions should play in their lives.⁹⁷ He encourages Messianics to have and participate in traditional Torah services. Rabbi Brumbach says, “Torah is our ultimate symbol of faith, because if Yeshua is the Living Torah...than the Torah service is not only a sacred re-enactment of the events of Sinai, but also a dramatic re-enactment of the Gospel Message.”⁹⁸ He continues by making an engaging case for the traditions in the following statements:

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Stern, *Messianic Judaism*, 173.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 173-174.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 172.

⁹⁷ Joshua Brumbach, “Helpful Points to Consider: The Role of Torah and Jewish Tradition in the Messianic Jewish Community” (a paper presented for the Borough Park Symposium, New York, New York, October 22-24, 2012), 1.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 1.

If we think of the Torah as the Constitution, then the body of interpretative case law would be the *halachic* codes and responsa. Just as a body of courts were established to interpret and apply the Constitution, so too Jewish courts and *halachic* authorities were established to interpret and apply Torah. As such, just as the United States cannot operate in accordance with the Constitution without the interpretative guidance of the judiciary, so too we as a movement cannot operate in accordance with the Torah without the interpretive guidance of our tradition. Therefore, you cannot escape tradition. Such an attempt is impossible. Furthermore, there is not a single observance that can be defined as “Jewish” that is not “untainted” by tradition. Whether it is wearing a *Tallis*, blowing a *shofar*, praying liturgy, or saying a *bracha* over wine. Although some of these practices may have origins in the biblical text, or date back to biblical times, how they are observed is entirely tradition.⁹⁹

Tensions. Considering the history of Christianity and Judaism, it is no wonder that tensions and controversies not only surround the formation of a Messianic Jewish group, but also exist within the movement. Many scholars have written on these tensions and several of their discussions are highlighted here. Simon Dein describes some of the accusations against Messianics. First, he explained that Messianic Jewish terminology is deceptive according to the Jewish community. Second, he discussed how all major Jewish denominations have shown considerable opposition saying that Messianic Judaism is not a form of Judaism. Third, Dein showed that some Christian evangelicals and mainline Protestants “hold Messianic Jews to be too Jewish,” and the same Christian groups also find the evangelism of Jews for Jesus to be “engaging in subterfuge and dishonesty in representing the claims of their faith groups.”¹⁰⁰

Devra Jaffe discusses the struggle traditional Judaism has with Messianics in some detail in her thesis “Straddling the Boundary.” First, she points out that in addition

⁹⁹ Ibid., 4.

¹⁰⁰ Dein. “Becoming A Fulfilled Jew,” 82-83.

to considering Messianic Judaism to be a form of Christianity, Judaism has formed “active anti-cult and counter-missionary organizations that seeks to bring Jews back to their religion and their people.”¹⁰¹ In Israel, they do this by “reaffirming the exclusiveness of the Law of Return.”¹⁰² Second, she describes the Church’s reaction to the Messianic community. He says, “Christian authorities have not been so negative in their appraisal of Messianic Judaism” and “some have tried to view Messianic Judaism as just another case of Christianity being incorporated into local culture.”¹⁰³

Daniel Juster and Peter Hocken list the major points of friction within the movement as, “(1) the place and role of the Torah in the New Covenant era; (2) tensions between the movement in the land of Israel (Eretz Israel) and the movement in the Diaspora; and (3) tensions between the charismatic and the evangelical.”¹⁰⁴ They discuss each point of tension in relative detail. Menahem Benhayim in his work “Between Church and Synagogue” also describes the challenges that face the Messianic Judaism from within the movement, the Christian church, and the broader Jewish community.¹⁰⁵ He concludes his piece by saying that although an authoritative Jewish component within the Church will probably not rise again (the first time being in the formation of the faith), it is needed to balance biblical interpretation throughout Christendom.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ Jaffe, “Straddling the Boundary,” 62.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 64.

¹⁰⁴ Juster and Hocken, “The Messianic Jewish Movement,” 28.

¹⁰⁵ Benhayim “Between Church and Synagogue,” 1-10.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 6, 10.

A very common accusation from the Church, especially in the formative years, was the accusation of ‘Judaizing.’¹⁰⁷ David Stern and Jeffrey Wasserman deal with this issue in some detail. Wasserman defers to Stern’s explanation on the topic. Stern refutes the accusation in his book *Messianic Judaism* in the following manner:

Judaizing means requiring Gentiles to live or behave like Jews (see Galatians 2:11-15); the heresy is insisting they are not saved unless they do so. But encouraging Jews to live as Jews is not Judaizing—how could it be? Remember that Shau’ul did not teach Jews to stop circumcising their sons or to abandon the *Torah*...the Church’s opposition to a Messianic Jew’s observing the *Torah* seems to be based on fear either that he might leave his Messianic faith altogether and return to non-Messianic Judaism, or that he might set up an elite of Law-keepers withing he Body and thus “rebuild the middle wall of partition.” [Ephesians 2:11-16]¹⁰⁸

Current Study

Since the growth of Messianic Jewish congregations, several ethnographic studies have been conducted, of which four are noted here. Carol Harris-Shapiro’s work focused on a Messianic congregation in Philadelphia with great attention given to Messianic Jews’ formation of identity through theology, history, and ritual.¹⁰⁹ Jeffrey Wasserman did a comparative analysis of American and Israeli congregations to show Messianic Judaism’s historical development and “analyze their function in fellowship, discipleship, and evangelism.”¹¹⁰ Devra Jaffe also did an ethnographic study of two American Messianic Jewish congregations to analyze the construction of culture within the

¹⁰⁷ Wasserman, “Messianic Jewish Congregations,” 107.

¹⁰⁸ Stern, *Messianic Judaism*, 15, 144.

¹⁰⁹ Harris-Shapiro, “Syncretism or Struggle,” 21-22.

¹¹⁰ Wasserman, “Messianic Jewish Congregations,” 1.

movement.¹¹¹ More recently, Simon Dein did fieldwork in a British Messianic fellowship and focused on the role theology plays in the intellectual and emotional tensions experienced by Messianic Jews.¹¹² This study will build off these earlier works while examining the current worship practices of the mainline Messianic community. Special attention will be given to ascertaining from whence these practices came and the role mainline charismatic church, Jewish traditions and synagogue practices played in the formation of this unique worship expression. The historical basis, theological underpinnings, and the biblical foundation for these practices are also briefly examined. By interviewing leaders of the Messianic movement, who have been part of it for at least ten years, this study will seek to fulfill the above objectives.

Methodology

The current study was based on one-on-one interviews with Messianic Jewish congregational leaders, scholars, and musicians. The interviews began with Rabbi Stephen Galiley, the researcher's rabbi. At the conclusion of the interview, he mentioned several other rabbis whom he suggested be contacted for this research. He also strongly encouraged the researcher attend the annual Messiah's Conference in Grantham, Pennsylvania for the purpose of meeting rabbis outside his circle. As a result, three rabbis were met and subsequently interviewed after attending the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America (MJAA) conference. Another twenty leaders were contacted via telephone including those whose names were mentioned by Rabbi Galiley or others at the

¹¹¹ Jaffe, "Straddling the Boundary," 1-3.

¹¹² Dein. "Becoming A Fulfilled Jew," 83.

conference. All-in-all, seventeen of the twenty-nine Messianic leaders contacted were interviewed.

Participants. The following is a brief introduction to the seventeen interviewees in the order they were interviewed. Rabbi Stephen Galiley, the study's first participant, is a fifth generation Jewish believer in Jesus. He has been the rabbi of Beit Shalom in Utica, NY since 1995, though he has served as a rabbi since 1989. He earned a Master of Divinity with a concentration in Jewish studies from Fuller Theological Seminary in 1990 and his Doctor of Ministry degree from The King's Seminary in 2013. Before going into ministry, Rabbi Steve earned a degree in Audio Technology from Geneva College (B.A.) and worked in recording studios in Los Angeles in the mid-1980s. He has utilized this training to help Beit Shalom establish a recording studio and Sounds of Shalom, a pioneering Messianic Jewish internet radio station with an international audience.¹¹³

In Grantham, Pennsylvania, representatives of Jewish Jewels, a ministry founded by Rabbi Neil Lash, connected the rabbi with this research. Rabbi Lash was interviewed on site in Grantham. He founded Temple Aron HaKodesh in Fort Lauderdale, Florida in August of 1976. Rabbi Lash earned his Bachelor's degree in engineering, and his Master's and Doctorate in "educational technology or instructional technology."¹¹⁴ He is ordained through the International Association of Messianic Congregations and Synagogues (IAMCS).

Marty Goetz, professional musician, was contacted through his website. At Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, he graduated with a degree in English, but

¹¹³ Stephen D. Galiley, interviewed by author, June 28, 2014.

¹¹⁴ Neil Lash, interviewed by author, July 1, 2014.

began performing professionally at about nineteen. He and his wife connected with the Messianic Jewish movement around 1990 when they went the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America conference at Messiah College in Pennsylvania. Marty Goetz was raised conservative Jewish and came to faith in Yeshua during the Jesus Movement in California.¹¹⁵

Rabbi Jack Zimmerman was also raised in a conservative Jewish home in Brooklyn, New York. Today, he lives in Phoenix, Arizona where he has led congregation Tree of Life since 2000. In addition, he has been a staff evangelist for Jewish Voice Ministries International for the past ten years.¹¹⁶ Rabbi Zimmerman was interviewed as a result of contacting Jewish Voice Ministries to seeking an audience with Rabbi Jonathan Bernis, who was unavailable at that time.

While still in Grantham, Rabbi David Rosenberg agreed to participate in the study. A few weeks later, he and his wife, Helene, were interviewed after a service at Shuvah Yisrael Messianic Synagogue, which they founded in May of 1989. He was raised in a conservative synagogue while she grew up Italian Catholic. They both received salvation in Ashland, Oregon. Each of them holds the Masters of Divinity degree from Alliance Theological Seminary and are ordained through the International Alliance of Messianic Congregations and Synagogues (IAMCS).¹¹⁷

From Budapest, Hungary, Dr. John Fischer and his family survived the Holocaust and settled in Philadelphia. He was contacted after being recommended to the researcher

¹¹⁵ Marty Goetz, phone conversation with author, July 15, 2014.

¹¹⁶ Jack Zimmerman, phone conversation with author, July 22, 2014.

¹¹⁷ David Rosenberg, interviewed by author, July 26, 2014.

by other participants in the study. He grew up in a “Messianic family prior to the time that there were Messianic congregations.”¹¹⁸ Dr. Fischer founded congregation B’nai Maccabim in Chicago in 1975 and Congregation Ohr Chadash in Clearwater, Florida in 1982 where he continues to serve as rabbi. In his words, he “accumulated a handful of degrees and . . . ended up at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School doing masters work.”¹¹⁹ Through the years, he has held various positions of leadership within organizations in the Messianic Jewish movement including his current position as president of the International Messianic Jewish Alliance (IMJA).

Rabbi Aaron Bortz was met at the Messiah Conference and interviewed over the phone a few weeks later. Rabbi Bortz was raised in a reformed synagogue. He was also a member of a conservative synagogue’s cantorial choir in Cincinnati, Ohio. After receiving salvation in 1970, he worshiped in a Messianic congregation for twelve years and was very involved with the movement. However, when he moved to Louisville, Kentucky, he participated in a “church plant of the Evangelical Free Church.”¹²⁰ He stayed connected to Jewish work and in January 2013 became the rabbi intern of Adat Ha Tikvah in Louisville through the IAMCS.¹²¹

One of the oldest congregations in the Messianic movement is Ahavat Zion in Beverly Hills, which was founded in 1973 by Dr. Ray Gannon and Phillip Goble.¹²²

¹¹⁸ John Fischer, phone conversation with author, July 28, 2014.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Aaron Bortz, phone conversation with author, July 29, 2014.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² “Our History,” Ahavat Zion Messianic Synagogue, accessed October 22, 2014, <http://www.ahavatzion.org/history/>.

Rabbi Joshua Brumbach, the senior rabbi for three years, was recommended for the study and contacted via phone. He is a “third or fourth generation Jewish believer,” who was “ordained by the UMJC [Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations] and the Messianic Jewish Rabbinical Council (MJRC).”¹²³ Rabbi Brumbach earned a “MJS in Rabbinic Writings from MJTI, a BA in Ancient Near Eastern Civilizations and Biblical Studies from UCLA, and an AA in Anthropology from Mt. Hood Community College.”¹²⁴ He is also the current Vice-President of the Messianic Jewish Rabbinical Council (MJRC) and President of the Union of Messianic Believers (UMB).¹²⁵

The next participant was Lonnie Bradshaw, who grew up in a nonobservant home. After receiving salvation, he started attending the Orthodox synagogue. Two years ago he graduated with his M.Div. and is currently on a scholarship to King’s University in the doctoral program under Dr. Gannon.¹²⁶ His interview is not included in the findings section because it was determined during the interview that he did not meet the study’s criteria. However, he did have insightful things to share and his interview is in the appendix section.

Next, Dr. Jeffery Seif was contacted and agreed to participate. During the phone interview, he shared that he is from a German Jewish background, was raised traditional Jewish and attended Yeshiva.¹²⁷ After rededicating his life to the Lord in his early

¹²³ Joshua Brumbach, phone conversation with author, July 30, 2014

¹²⁴ “Leadership,” Ahavat Zion Messianic Synagogue, accessed September 9, 2014, <http://www.ahavatzion.org/leadership/>.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Lonnie Bradshaw, phone conversation with author, July 30, 2014.

twenties, Dr. Seif attended Moody Bible Institute, earned a masters and a doctorate from Southern Methodist University, and graduated from North Texas Regional Police Academy. He has served at several institutions as Messianic Jewish professor for twenty-five years. He currently oversees two Messianic congregations in North Dallas, and started congregation Sar Shalom in Plano, Texas about three years ago.¹²⁸

Rabbi Jim Appel, who was raised atheist, came to the Lord in 1977 through his non-Jewish wife. Sometime later, he joined Jonathan Bernis' congregation Shema Yisrael in Rochester, New York. Rabbi Appel has served as the senior rabbi there since 1997. He is ordained through the IAMCS Yeshiva. He also earned a bachelor's degree in optical engineering from the University of Rochester and a master's degree in physics from the University of Southern California.¹²⁹

Rabbi Irving Salzman serves as rabbi at Beth Messiah Congregation in Livingston, New Jersey. He was raised in a "pretty observant religious Jewish background," attended Yeshiva, and was a lay cantor before getting saved.¹³⁰ Rabbi Salzman graduated from Philadelphia Biblical University with a bachelor's degree in Biblical and Pastoral Studies. He has been involved in Messianic Jewish ministry in various ways for about seventeen years.¹³¹ He was recommended by his brother-in-law, Rabbi Galiley.

¹²⁷ Jeffery Seif, phone conversation with author, July 31, 2014.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Jim Appel, phone conversation with author, August 1, 2014.

¹³⁰ Irving Salzman, phone conversation with author, August 4, 2014.

¹³¹ Ibid.

The researcher was referred to Congregation Shema Yisrael in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. Rabbi Glenn Harris, who has served as associate rabbi since 1997, agreed to participate in the study. He shared that he was sent to Hebrew school by his grandfather, received salvation in 1981 at twenty-two, and served on staff with Jews for Jesus from 1986 to 1997. He also earned a Master of Divinity from Michigan Theological Seminary.¹³²

Having prior association with congregation Seed of Abraham in Albany, New York, the researcher decided to contact Rabbi Steve Feldman. He consented to participate. He shared that he was raised in a very secular, liberal Jewish home in Connecticut, was saved out of the hippie lifestyle during the hippie movement, and spent eighteen years as a Pentecostal pastor before reconnecting with Jewish roots in 1999 when he became the associate rabbi at Seed of Abraham. There he has served as the senior rabbi since 2008.¹³³

Dr. Ray Gannon, who is not Jewish, has been involved in Jewish ministry and the Messianic movement since its beginning in the 1970s. He was saved out of a neopagan background in 1962, attended Bethany College in Santa Cruz, California and in 1970 went to Los Angeles as evangelists to the Jewish people there. In 1973, with the consent of the Assemblies of God denomination, he and Peter Goble began one of the first Messianic congregations. He went on to found other congregations in San Francisco, Queens, and Long Island. He received graduate degrees from Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, California Graduate School of Theology, Princeton Theological

¹³² Glenn Harris, phone conversation with author, August 4, 2014.

¹³³ Steve Feldman, phone conversation with author, August 5, 2014.

Seminary, and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Dr. Gannon has held teaching positions at Central Bible College in Springfield, Missouri, Valley Forge Christian College outside Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and at Christ for the Nations' Long Island Campus. In 1989, he and his wife moved to Israel where he "pioneered the first real Bible college in Israel, which is now known as the Israel College of the Bible."¹³⁴ Today, he is the National Jewish Ministries Representative for the Assemblies of God. In addition, he serves as an associate pastor for his son-in-law's Messianic synagogue in Phoenix. He also helped create the Messianic Jewish studies program at The King's University.¹³⁵

Rabbi Frank Lowinger of congregation B'rith Hadoshah in Buffalo, New York was the sixteenth rabbi to contribute. He was raised in a conservative synagogue, was saved in 1974, and was self-employed in the business world for seventeen years. While on staff at New Covenant Tabernacle, the senior pastor had Rabbi Lowinger oversee the Friday night services beginning in 1982. Then in 1984, the senior pastor turned the entire Friday night service over to Rabbi Lowinger. When the congregation was founded, it was part of the Assembly of God church. He held a credential from Assemblies of God from 1984 till 2001 and is ordained through IAMCS. He earned a degree in accounting and marketing from Canisius College in Buffalo, New York and in Ministerial Studies from Berean College in Springfield, Missouri.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Ray Gannon, phone conversation with author, August 7, 2014.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Frank Lowinger, phone conversation with author, August 12, 2014.

Finally, Rabbi Nathan Joiner from Ruach Israel in Needham, Massachusetts was interviewed. He was raised atheist, graduated from New England Conservatory of Music for trumpet, became a yoga teacher, found truth along the Appalachian Trail in 2005, and now attends Messianic Jewish Theological Institute while serving on staff at Ruach Israel. He completed the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations (UMJC) internship program at Ruach Israel and was ordained in January 2012.¹³⁷ This is only a brief introduction to all those who so graciously consented to participate in the study.

Challenges

The anticipated challenge was there would a shortage of qualified individuals willing to participate in the study. However, once initial contact and follow-up was made, most of the individuals or congregations that were contacted were eager to assist with this research project. Soon the minimum number of interviews required was met. A slight problem developed when it was realized that several of the interviewees did not meet the full requirement of the study. The requirement was that they would have been in Messianic ministry for at least ten years. However, exception was given to some for a couple reasons. First, if they have spent over ten years in full-time ministry Messianic or otherwise. Second, if they have ministered with the movement since its inception though it was not in a rabbinical position. Only one interview will not be included in the findings reports because the individual's qualifications were too far outside the parameters of the study. However, it is included in the appendix section. The contribution of all was very much appreciated, though everything contributed could not be fully integrated due to the length of the study.

¹³⁷ Nathan Joiner, phone conversation with author, August 15, 2014.

A few unexpected challenges were faced during the interview process. The first challenge was due to an oversight on the part of the researcher. At the second interview it was discovered that provision had not been made for ascertaining what each interviewees' experience in ministry was. This was very important because the only criterion for the study was that it be individuals who had been in Messianic Jewish ministry for ten years or more. As a result, a very general question was added to the original thirteen, the response to which ranged anywhere from three to twenty minutes.

The second challenge concerned the terminology of the research. Although the original title still stands—Messianic Jewish Liturgical Practices—after only four interview attempts, it was discovered that the terminology needed to be altered in order for the research to proceed. When the leaders were first contacted, the title was mentioned when describing the purpose of the paper. However, anytime the phrase *liturgical practices* was used a wall seemed appear in the conversation. They were often not opposed to commit to an interview, but many would insist that they did not practice liturgy or were not qualified to speak on the subject. It became apparent the term *liturgy* seemed to evoke an image of a very traditional Jewish synagogue service. In Christian circles, this would be comparable to asking a Nondenominational Christian about their liturgy. Most will immediately state that they do not have liturgy or are not Catholic. In both cases, liturgy connotes an extremely structured and often ancient worship expression, instead of being understood as simply any “form of public worship.”¹³⁸ By

¹³⁸ *Dictionary.com Unabridged*, s.v. “Liturgy,” accessed September 26, 2014, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/liturgy>.

using the terms *worship practices* or *order of service*, the connotations of the term *liturgy* were avoided and those spoken with were more inclined to participate in the study.

The confusion of terminology did carry through into the questions. This created the third challenge. Certain questions had to be rearticulated during the course of the interview so the participants better understood what the researcher sought to learn. For example, one of the questions used the phrase “contemporary Jewish liturgical practices” but the word *contemporary* created an image of new practices. To clarify, the word *traditional* was exchanged for *contemporary*. Also the words *liturgy* and *liturgical practices* were substituted with the terms *order of service*, *worship service*, or *worship practice*. This assisted in clearing up the unexpected confusion.

Findings

The section that follows contains the questions that were put to each interviewee and their answer in a concise form. Each interview in its entirety can be found in the appendices. The information is presented in table form with the name of the interviewees on the left and their answers on the right. Before each table, there is a short introduction, which includes the question that the interviewees were responding to. Since the questions were open-ended and the interview was more conversational, there was often some variance in the phrasing of the questions or the placement of them. Yet the main idea was still present. The specific questions put to each interviewee can be found within their appendix. The organization of this section correlates to the organization of the literature review with the first section of this work. It begins with the definition of Messianic Judaism, moves to questions concerning the components and constituents used for creating this worship expression and why they were chosen, investigates the theology that

undergirds the liturgical choices that have been made, and briefly reveals differences or similarities observed between international and American Messianic Jewish liturgical expression.

The hypothesis of the study was that it would find that the worship practices used reflect a calculated combination of biblical roots, Jewish cultural heritage, and the influence of the charismatic church. Elements of this hypothesis were discovered to be correct, however there was little calculated about the movement at its inception. Based on the answers given, it was more a process of trial and error. Later, the filter for accepted or unaccepted liturgy became more calculated. This finding corroborates with some of the conclusions that the literature revealed regarding the formation of the movement and its worship expression.

Definition

Below is a table containing the definition of Messianic Judaism that each of the interviewees gave while answering the first question. (Please see appendices for each participant's complete response.) Notice that almost every one describes it as a Jewish expression of the worship of Jesus, Yeshua, as the Messiah.

Table 1

Definition of Messianic Judaism

Rabbi Stephen Galiley	"...this movement sprung out of the Hebrew Christian movement, but saw itself and its identity differently... Messianic Judaism tended to become people who wanted to form communities... this was not something where with Messianic Judaism the only people who could participate are Jewish necessarily, but if you participate in it, you will be embracing some level of Jewish identity, Jewish faith, Jewish practice in the midst of your worship of Jesus."
Rabbi Neil Lash	"Messianic Judaism is Jewish people who believe that Yeshua HaMeshiach or Jesus Christ is the Messiah and who choose to live a

	Jewish lifestyle with belief in Him as a central core to it.”
Marty Goetz	“It’s taking faith in God and in Jesus and contextualizing it in a way that reflects the heritage of the Jewish people, the Hebraic nature of the Scriptures and the focus on Israel because that is where it all began and where it all is going to end.”
Rabbi Jack Zimmerman	“I would define Messianic Judaism as a movement among both Jews and Gentiles to go back to the Jewish roots of Scripture and as well as to worship our Savior, our Messiah, and Redeemer within a Jewish cultural context, content, and environment.”
Rabbi David Rosenberg	“In our generation, I would say that it is a restoration movement to restore the Jewishness of the Gospel...” which was almost “...immediately connected to liturgy.”
Dr. John Fischer	<p>“What it looks like on the ground is basically... groups of people who are followers of Yeshua, or Jesus, who come from a Jewish background and want to maintain connections with that Jewish background in some way, shape, or form. It has come to include people who are interested in the Jewish framework and foundation of the Scriptures and of a faith in Yeshua.”</p> <p>Ideal or authentic Messianic Judaism ought to “sound like a synagogue. It would be involved in the traditional liturgy. Not that it would exclude Messianic additions, but it would incorporate the already Messianic traditions that are within traditional Judaism and supplement that with material related to Yeshua coming from the newer Testament.”</p>
Rabbi Aaron Bortz	“I will tell you that I am not totally sold on that term...my faith goes beyond Judaism... I mean obviously if the Lord is trying to, is putting together people of the ministry of the Church, you know putting the Jews together with people from all the walks of faith and molding them into one family, I wouldn’t necessarily say that’s Messianic Judaism. But my perspective and understanding of Christianity I guess would probably come under the term Messianic Judaism a little better.”
Rabbi Joshua Brumbach	“...Messianic Judaism is or should be a movement within Judaism, predominately by Jews and predominately for Jews and intermarriage.”
Dr. Jeffery Seif	“I’ll tell you what a Messianic Jew is and then Messianic Judaism. A Messianic Jew is someone who wrestles with the question, “What does it mean to participate in the Jesus story on the one hand while still participating in the Jewish story on the other?”... That said as a Messianic Jew, collectively Messianic Judaism is constituted by individuals who wrestle with the question, “What does it mean to participate in the Jesus story on the one hand and the Jewish story on the other?”... What makes them a Messianic Jew isn’t the way they answer the question. What makes them a Messianic Jew is the fact that they care to wrestle with that question.”
Rabbi Jim Appel	“It’s Jewish and non-Jewish people who believe that Yeshua is the Messiah and who worship the God of Israel in a Jewish way.”

Rabbi Irving Salzman	“You can define it in different ways... It is seeing in Jesus, in Yeshua, the fulfillment of all of the hope and promises of the Hebrew Scriptures... He [God] wants me to embrace my Messianic faith, but my faith in Jesus within the context of my physical Jewish lineage.”
Rabbi Glenn Harris	“...the modern day movement of Jewish people recognizing and acknowledging that Jesus is the promised Messiah and developing a form of worship that is more, uh, in concert with Jewish culture going back thousands of years.”
Rabbi Steve Feldman	“Messianic Judaism probably has as its roots the reality of the Jewish roots of the Gospel and ...to propagate that and certainly understand the focal point of all the prophecy of Jesus coming back to Israel. And it holds a very strong burden to preach the Gospel to the Jew first and then also to the Gentile. And to maintain the feasts of Leviticus 23...”
Dr. Ray Gannon	“...walking out of traditional Jewish religion under the authority of Yeshua and the council of the Holy Spirit.”
Rabbi Frank Lowinger	“It is a biblically based move of God upon the Jewish people to maintain their Jewish heritage and to continue on in the same line as our patriarchs, our prophets, the Messiah, and His first followers, who were Jewish one and all.”
Rabbi Nathan Joiner	“I would not define it as an integration between Judaism and Christianity...but instead, I would define Messianic Judaism as a Jewish movement which seeks to embrace Messiah Yeshua at its core... that exists and lives in solidarity with the Jewish people in a relationship of mutual blessing with the wider Christian church.”

Constituents to Creating a Worship Tradition

As Messianic Jews began forming congregations, they discovered that there were many facets to developing a worship expression especially when it was seen as illegitimate by its related traditions. However, they persevered and what has emerged is a unique worship expression. The group of questions that follow focus on the experiences, practices, and beliefs of each of these leaders in the area of liturgical expression. There are four basic questions that sought to uncover the what, where, how, and why of these leaders experience and understanding of the formation of the Messianic expression of worship.

Cultural markers. (Please see appendices for each participant’s complete response.) Each culture, subculture, mosque, synagogue, and church has distinctive elements or cultural markers that are unique to that group. They separate it from the others. It can be something as simple as raising hands in worship rather than kneeling or as intricate as putting on the tefillin, tallis, tzitzit, and kippa before entering into Morning Prayer. Each leader was asked a form of the following question: “What do you believe are important cultural markers in Messianic Jewish worship (hands raised or not raised in worship, kneeling, kissing Torah scroll, singing in English or Hebrew, etc.)?”

Table 2

Cultural Markers

Rabbi Stephen Galiley	“...there are a couple different streams... But you will have great variety between synagogues far more so than in more standardized church... Here are some of the big things that hold us together: worship on Shabbat, that’s a big deal. Another thing that holds us together is the biblical feast cycle.. certain pieces of ancient and traditional liturgy such as the Shema, the V’ahavta. You also have the Torah reading cycle... Messianic Jewish music tends to be minor modal music which has upbeat and happy rhythm.
Rabbi Neil Lash	“Going by our congregation... It’s a very active worship service, incorporating both what you would call contemporary Christian music, traditional Jewish music, original Messianic music, all forms of worship and praise are a part of our services and the great emphasis is pointing us as individuals worshipping in unity, worshipping the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Messiah Yeshua.”
Marty Goetz	“I would say the physical trappings of a Messianic synagogue, the dancing, the kind of egalitarian nature of everyone worshipping together in a congregational way, sometimes employing liturgy...”
Rabbi Jack Zimmerman	“So, our goal in Messianic Judaism is two-fold. It’s to say, ‘Listen, we want to in worshipping Yeshua within a Jewish culture, we want to let you know that you can retain that culture. We’re approaching a Jewish Savior in a Jewish way.’” “...an Aron Kodesh, or a large cabinet that has a scroll in it... It’s a Torah scroll... some Jewish symbols... men blow the ram’s horn, the shofars... I might speak Hebrew and translate it... we’ll go from a traditional Christian song to a Messianic Jewish song... a few, prayers of

	Hebrew liturgy... in Hebrew and in English... and take the Torah scroll and I will read from it or chant from it in Hebrew... Then following my message, after everyone is dismissed, we have something called “oneg.” It’s a time of food and fellowship...”
Rabbi David and Helene Rosenberg	“ <i>Niguns</i> are worship without words... you see it a lot when people are mourning, but it’s also true of joy... We’ve got Messianic dance, which is part of the worship, which incorporates Jewish dance, but a lot of it is choreographed by Messianic Jews... Yeshua is the marker.”
Dr. John Fischer	“...the foundational items in virtually any synagogue service. It should include <i>Shema</i> and <i>Amidah</i> . It should include <i>Alenu</i> . It should include <i>Kaddish</i> in one of its several forms if not more than one... one would expect, at least on a Saturday morning service, Torah reading and at least part of the Torah service and the blessings that are associated with that. If you’re doing a Friday night service, then you’d expect perhaps the lighting of the Shabbat candles.... it depends on which service you’re actually walking into.”
Rabbi Aaron Bortz	“...I would say a controversy that arises in a Messianic congregation is do we do what we do to make Jewish people feel comfortable? Or do we do what we do because this is what God’s wants us to do? ... At Adat HaTikvah, we have a full, a Torah service the first Saturday of every month... we do consider the Sabbath... was Friday and Saturday... we’ll have a Torah service and Siddur that we use. It’s a Messianic Siddur... we will have a <i>Kol Nidre</i> service and a Yom Kippur service. We’ll have a Rosh Hashanah service... And then Sukkot... we do have some liturgy. We will do the Shema... We’ll do the V’ahavta... we say it [V’ahavta] in Hebrew and then we do it in the English...”
Rabbi Joshua Brumbach	“...there’s flexibility I think even between a Messianic congregation versus a Messianic synagogue... Some sense of liturgy... A sense of Jewish space... that it feels Jewish to a Jewish person... there would be other kinds of Jewish practices so whether the observance of the holidays or life cycles...”
Dr. Jeffery Seif	“Well, there’s certain standard fair issues and the Torah is significant, some kind of Torah service... Then there are certain prayers too that are just identifiable cultural markers, and there’s certain art... I look at the adornment of yamakas and the tallis... Jewish cultural, religious paraphernalia that people might not wear during the week... meeting on a Saturday not a Sunday, having a Friday night service instead of a Sunday morning and Sunday night... with the lighting of candles with the challah, the working with the Sabbath bread, Saturday morning definitely a Torah service, some of the traditional prayers, and that would be it.”
Rabbi Jim Appel	“...we believe we have to retain our Jewish identity... doing a Torah service... probably a couple times a month or once a month. We incorporate the Jewish liturgical prayers in the service... our worship music usually is a mix of Hebrew and English... we encourage a lot of circle dancing. And of course, we keep the holidays... And we have bar

	and bat mitzvah programs for our children. We have circumcisions for ... our boys... We do immersion. We call it <i>t'vilah</i> , which is the Hebrew word for immersion... We keep biblically kosher.”
Rabbi Irving Salzman	“I think the use of Hebrew, the use of traditional Jewish liturgy that doesn't compromise or contradict our faith... I think that music ... and worship songs that would relate to the Jewish people as a whole and to the Messianic hope and the Messianic faith, again using things from Scriptures that all Jewish people can relate to ... such as the book of Psalms... the use of Jewish ceremony...like the traditional Jewish marriage ceremony. I think ...the celebration of Jewish feasts... would be a cultural marker...”
Rabbi Glenn Harris	“I'll be honest with you, I don't consider as important as the theological and doctrinal markers... sometimes I think we can be in danger of exalting culture over doctrine...”
Rabbi Steve Feldman	“...we don't get into a lot of the cultural stuff. Most of the cultural stuff is actually more Eastern European Jewish than it is biblical... most of our people are not Jewish. Maybe eight or ten percent are actually Jewish... when we keep the feasts we do some of the traditional things that are typically Jewish... we have minimal liturgy. What we do here is we open every service with the Shema... at the end of every service we do the Aaronic blessing... if we have a meeting like on Friday night, which is Erev Shabbat, we'll light the candles, do a prayer over the candles... we typically also use the Hebrew names of God...”
Dr. Ray Gannon	“I discovered a long time ago that if we lost our primary focus upon Jesus Himself and began to be infatuated with our own Jewish navels that the Holy Spirit backed away... that no matter what kind of cultural expression we used, it wasn't going to be useful unless we made Jesus front and center and foremost in all that we did... I would say that it needs to have a worship cultural expression that is recognizable to Jewish people.”
Rabbi Frank Lowinger	“...worship is a two-fold thing... Worship is the way we live... The fruit of an individual's worship comes with being doers of God's Word... we do a good amount of traditional Jewish liturgy... beginning with the Shema prayer...”
Rabbi Nathan Joiner	“I think that it's really that we engage the wider Jewish community and live ...lives that reflect...what the modern Jewish experience is... you have a service with a very recognizably Jewish to any conservative, reformed, even...orthodox person... Yeshua is not an add-on to our Jewish expression. But Yeshua is actually a through whom everything Jewish exists... we sing the Shema and the V'ahavta... the Alenu... We [Ruach Israel] think that there's a Jewish narrative that we need to maintain and a certain wholistic sensitive loving atmosphere that I think is really important that a Messianic Jewish synagogue maintain where we're free to let the Spirit move, but we're not judging each other whether or not we have our hands raised...”

Origin of liturgy. (Please see appendices for each participant’s complete response.) Within Messianic congregations, there are worship elements that would ordinarily be classified as Christian or Jewish practice. However, based on the interviews, Messianic congregational leader view them as Jewish or Christian based on their understanding of Messianic Judaism’s relationship to the continuity of these traditions. The next three questions sought to determine what the various leaders perceived the source of these origins to be and their relationship to Judaic, Christian, and biblical practice.

Judaic practices. Each interviewee was asked some variation of the following question: “What aspects of contemporary Jewish liturgical practices were integrated into Messianic Judaism? Please explain/give examples.” Their answers are in the table below. There was variety in answers, but the majority mentioned that the Shema, V’ahavta, Kaddish, and some form of a Torah service have been integrated into Messianic Judaism. Several of them also noted that it depends on the community the congregation is reaching out to.

Table 3

Judaic practices within Messianic Judaism

<p>Rabbi Stephen Galiley</p>	<p>“Depends on the community... If you are ministering to a Reformed community that is more loosely attached liturgically speaking, then you will probably do less. And if you are ministering to an Orthodox community that is very attached to these practices, then that’s a big deal. The life cycle things that go on are significant opportunities for Messianic Jewish believers to identify with their Jewish traditions. So some of these life cycle things include Bris, in terms of the birth of male babies, marriages, funerals, major portions of the life cycle of individuals in the community as the community celebrates it together.”</p>
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Rabbi Neil Lash	<p>“Our Friday night service begins with the acknowledgement of the covenant of Shabbat through the covenant meal, bread and wine, and the lighting of the Sabbath candles and launches immediately into prayer for Jerusalem and then the Shema and then our traditional worship service. The Saturday service does a similar thing in that we still have that covenant meal because Shabbat is the covenant, but we go directly from there into our worship service, which culminates and segways to the Torah service... The Torah is brought out every Saturday and one of the men of the congregation will present a five to seven minute drash, or teaching, from that week’s Torah portion... The Shema’s a part of that, the traditional blessing before the Torah, the blessing after the Torah, the Torah’s read, a small portion of the Torah segment is read in Hebrew...”</p>
Rabbi Jack Zimmerman	<p>“The Torah service we definitely wanted to integrate and we did that intentionally... if there is a Jewish person in there, when that Torah is rolled out on the bimah and they can see me chanting out of the Torah scroll with the correct Hebrew with the correct tropes and doing it the way that it is supposed to be done. Then, any and all question of authenticity melts away... The second part intentional liturgy that we’ve added is the Shema and the V’ahavta because we’re letting people know that God says to obey His commandments and adhere to His commandments... And one of the reasons that we have the Shema is because we want to intentionally state so it’s clear for everyone to understand, “No, we’re not worshiping three gods. Shema Yisrael Adonai Elohenu Adodai Echad. We are acknowledging that ‘God is one.’” But in that one God, we are also acknowledging that one God can have three manifestations or essences of Himself and still be one... Every once in a while we do include a Jewish liturgical prayer called the <i>Kaddish</i>, or the <i>Mourner’s Kaddish</i>; the prayer of mourning because of someone who may have lost a loved one in the last year.”</p>
Rabbi David and Helene Rosenberg	<p>“...we do a number of entrance Psalms, liturgies.... We alternate some of these cause you can’t fit them all in one service and be done in two hours... We do the Shema and V’ahavta.”¹³⁹</p>
Dr. John Fischer	<p>“Depending on which Messianic synagogue you go into there will be more or less because there is far more to either an Erev Shabbat or a Shabbat service, Friday night or Saturday morning... if you are doing a Friday night service you probably want to include <i>Lecha Dodi</i>, it’s the welcoming of the Shabbat. If you’re doing a Saturday morning service, then there’s some of the traditional morning blessings that occur near the beginning of the service... I would say that anything you have time for... that comes from the traditional synagogue service would certainly</p>

¹³⁹ Rabbi Rosenberg was confused by the use of the term “contemporary Jewish liturgy” when the term “traditional liturgy” should have been used. This terminology correction was made later. However, I observed a Torah processional, part of the parsha was chanted in Hebrew and read English, the Mourner’s Kaddish was prayed, along with other traditional liturgical prayers. I also participated in conversation about bar and bat mitzvah classes and ceremonies over the course of the day and a half that I spent with them.

	be appropriate.”
Rabbi Aaron Bortz	“...the Shema... the V’ahavta... we’ll do the Kaddish... we have a Torah, and we have an Aron Kodesh, and we have a markah mi, the everlasting light that is over that. Now that’s traditionally Jewish. And we bring the Torah out, and we read from the Torah... We’ll read from the half Torah... And then we also have a reading from the HaBrit Chadashah, the New Covenant.”
Rabbi Joshua Brumbach	“...how liturgical it is depends on the congregation; where it’s located; the kind of Jews, or just intermarried couples, or whoever they’re attracting to a congregation... it’s [Ahavat Zion] also always been a little more Jewish oriented in the sense of the make-up and the style of the service. So we actually, we have a cantor and we use the prayer book. It’s a liturgical service. And I’m not saying everybody has to be that way... it depends on the community... there should be the Shema. There should be the Barchu.... So it follows the basic framework and structure of the Jewish service.”
Dr. Jeffery Seif	“Well, it differs in part as determined by the assets of the individual congregations have... not all have a Torah scroll ... not all have someone that can actually cant the Hebrew... There’s the recitation of the Shema... There’s the Aaronic Benediction... The Torah service or the blessings before and after the reading of the Torah... the Haftorah portion will be... pretty much a standard fixture...there’s certain part of the Amidah... the various Jewish Holy days. There’ll be special foods and prayers and art that will adorn those respective holidays.”
Rabbi Jim Appel	“...keeping the holidays... bar mitzvahs... We do those...in traditional ways and circumcision we do that traditional ways... we take the prayers from the Siddur that are relevant and use them...”
Rabbi Irving Salzman	“I think that that is probably very congregation specific... We do practice circumcision, but for Jewish kids... we do it because it was part of the Abrahamic covenant in the Old Testament and the Abrahamic covenant is still ongoing... We do bar and bat mitzvahs... Some of the liturgical prayers... for example...the Shema... We still believe in the oneness of God. However, we believe that He is triune... we also do the V’ahavta.”
Rabbi Glenn Harris	“Well, I can’t speak for all of Messianic Judaism, but at congregation Shema Yisrael we do recite the Shema...and V’ahavta... Al chate is a confession of our sins corporately... the blessing before the reading of the Torah. When it’s Purim, blessing before the reading of the <i>megillah</i> ... there’s a lot that we do incorporate... We really try in our worship to join everything to the Scriptures that it’s founded on.”
Rabbi Steve Feldman	“...we have minimal liturgy... we open every service with the Shema... on Friday night, which is Erev Shabbat, we’ll light the candles, do a prayer over the candles... typically also use the Hebrew names of God...”
Dr. Ray Gannon	“Over the course of time, I discovered that some of the things that are part of traditional liturgy actually have a sort of a mystical connection, or

	<p>even a kabalistic connection associated with them. And so that immediately disqualifies them from my point of view. We didn't know that at the outset... but um, most of the things that you would find in a traditional Jewish service are things that were written and crafted over the centuries... the Shema, the Amidah... the Ashreinu... the Alenu—all kinds of different prayers that are part of the classical traditional sometimes indispensable liturgical parts of service we would want to include in our services... We didn't hesitate to have a Torah service... What was primary was that the Spirit of God was pleased with the worship and we would bring in whatever we needed to into the service, these public meetings to try to make them very conducive to genuine worship.”</p>
Rabbi Frank Lowinger	<p>“We don't do it all in a single service. We'll mix it up... the Amidah, the prayers before and after the reading, the Prophets, the Torah, the Writings, the New Covenant... We have a full Torah service once a month. And an abbreviated Torah service for the remainder of the month.”</p>
Rabbi Nathan Joiner	<p>“...our service would be much more liturgically oriented... starting with <i>Pezukie deZimrah</i>... It's a time when we would sing Psalms... we say the prayer <i>baruch she'amar</i>, which is what opens <i>Pezukie deZimrah</i>... we open our service with <i>ma tovu</i> and then we close <i>Pezukie deZimrah</i> with the traditional prayers, which would be called <i>yish'tabach</i> and the <i>hatzi kaddish</i> and things like that... then after <i>Pezukie deZimrah</i> is the Shema... then, after the Shema and the blessings around it... we move into the Amidah... we add in this beautiful melody where we sing in Hebrew Hebrews 1... We have a full Torah service um and after the Torah service we have a drash, like a message, a sermon. And then after that we move into concluding prayers, which would be like the Alenu, where we add in Philippians, the Mourner's Kaddish, Adon Olam.”</p>

Christian practices. (Please see appendices for each participant's complete response.) To learn what may be used from Christian practice, each was asked a variation of the following question: “What contemporary Christian liturgical practices were integrated into Messianic Judaism? Please explain/give examples.” In the table below, most of them mentioned that Messianic Jewish synagogues often incorporate music from the evangelical Christian world. They also utilize the Evangelical Church's model of

collecting tithes and offerings. They see both of these as Christian practices that are integrated into Messianic Jewish practice.

Table 4

Christian practices within Messianic Judaism

Rabbi Stephen Galiley	“...we are talking musically right now but this is true for other pieces of culture as well, okay? ... Jewish culture and Jewish art and Jewish music has always adapted and drawn from what’s going on around us... Some of the tonalities of the synagogal music can often end up finding its way into the mix with contemporary Jewish music... What you hear is what comes out.”
Rabbi Neil Lash	“We will have an altar call... That definitely reflects contemporary Christian tradition... I think that one of the contemporary Christian worship elements we have is collecting the tithe and the offering in the midst of the service. We do it with music. We do it by passing a velvet bag through the congregation. That would all be contemporary Christian. We do teach the tithe, which would be biblical Jewish, but not traditional Jewish.”
Rabbi Jack Zimmerman	“Tithes and offering is one. Anointing people with oil is another one... Obviously traditional congregations normally don’t play stuff that you would hear on K-Love. At least their worship teams won’t, and we do. So those I think would be the biggest things.”
Rabbi David and Helene Rosenberg	“The offering...the other big one is people always struggle with the Messiah’s Passover table or what they call ‘Communion.’... And we have some songs we do...”
Dr. John Fischer	“Again that depends on which congregation you’re talking to. Some have integrated far more than others. We have integrated very little if any... We will also include some of the more liturgical or... poetic sections of the Newer Testament... we by enlarge have relied more on songs that have actually been penned by Messianic authors. Or actually come from within the Jewish tradition... Judaism has always had a place for immersions. And what we have done is we’ve built off that tradition...”
Rabbi Aaron Bortz	“...we do communion once a month. Now, but is that really a Christian service? No. No, it was instituted by the Lord... mean liturgically in some respects we parallel a lot of contemporary worship... we don’t just use the Messianic Jewish authors and musicians.”
Rabbi Joshua Brumbach	“Every Messianic congregation is different... I think Messianic Jewish congregations and Messianic Judaism as a whole falls on a spectrum. So on one side of the spectrum, you can say, ‘Congregations that are more Jewishly influenced’ and then on the other side of the spectrum would be ‘Congregations that are more, kind of, influenced by contemporary Christianity.’ ... so it all depends...there are things...from contemporary

	Christian culture that we sort of sometimes intentionally incorporate but with... certain sensitivity...”
Dr. Jeffery Seif	“...Messianic Judaism is more game to differentiate than it is to assimilate. If you look at the story of Messianic Judaism, it used to be called Jewish Christianity... People still believe in Jesus, but it’s [Messianic Judaism] much more game to articulate a Jewish experience and so, you’re not going to find Christian holy days... you might find certain similarities, a call to prayer and conversion... Asking for a decision, a prayer for healing, you might find that. You find the New Testament read... the Jewish prayers will be punctuated at the end, “BaShem Yeshua HaMeshiach, in the name of Jesus the Messiah.” I mean there will be some kind of explicit attachment to the Jesus story... You might hear some of the songs...”
Rabbi Jim Appel	“...Christian songs sometimes... we do communion occasionally, but we emphasize the Jewishness of it... certain Bible teaching may be more extensive that you’ll find in most traditional synagogues... Teach out of the New Covenant ... we take up an offering... some of the other Christian holidays, we turn Jewish; like, for instance, we turn Easter into Resurrection Day and Frist Fruits.”
Rabbi Irving Salzman	“...I can’t claim to speak for all of Messianic Judaism. I can only claim to speak for our local expression of it... we pretty much have a mix of traditional Messianic music as well as contemporary Christian... we do have small groups in our congregation. Obviously, there’s nothing inherently Gentile or Jewish about small groups, but that’s something that the... traditional church world has incorporated as a way of having members interact and fellowship during the week...”
Rabbi Glenn Harris	“...we ... mix songs that are Messianic but also contemporary Christian... We don’t limit it to only Messianic style... but I would say, if you look at the layout of our service... we’re not quite in the same vein as most evangelical churches... there are prayers from historic Christianity that we do pray. But for example, we don’t call it the ‘Lord’s Prayer.’ We call it the ‘Disciple’s Prayer’ ... He’s talking to the disciples and we’ve adapted that... then for example, we do have a version of... the Apostles’ Creed, but again because we prefer to be faithful to Scripture more than tradition, we don’t say that Jesus descended to hell. The Scripture doesn’t say that... there are things that we’ve taken absolutely from mainstream Christianity and incorporated. I would say the biggest part of it is that the sermon is the centerpiece of our worship service...”
Rabbi Steve Feldman	“...traditional Jewish would never have an altar call. That’s more of the Christian, evangelical thing... we believe in healing... that probably more mirrors, you know, a more typical charismatic or Pentecostal kind of service than certainly a traditional Jewish or traditional Messianic service.”
Dr. Ray	“...the incorporation of choruses is certainly one... there was a freedom

Gannon	to raise one's hands and to worship God... we have times when we pray for the sick... There was open expression of the charismata, the gifts that are listed in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 that were orally expressed in services."
Rabbi Frank Lowinger	"...yes, we will draw from a lot of the good things that might be out there in the evangelical community. Ah, chorus[es] that are Messianic in character and by that I mean that there's a Hebraic flavor to it. That the content of the lyric or the Scripture text that is used in that song is something that is reflective of who we are... taking up of an offering during the service... the accent there would be traditional Jewish, uh, because when people came to the Temple, they didn't come empty handed."
Rabbi Nathan Joiner	"...to be honest, we've actually removed a lot of them...it's almost a greater respect for the Christian world and their practices... we do have a box in the back and we do give people the option to drop tithes and things like that into the box... we do follow like more of a church tithe model... we do allow people to give funds on Shabbat and we base that on the Rabbinical council... They endorse these standards where we don't spend money on Shabbat except for ministry purposes or charity... we do do a lot of healing prayer. And we have a healing prayer team and we break into small teams and pray for people after services and things like that. We feel like that's very Jewish although it's not done in most synagogue's I'll say that."

Contradictory or controversial practices. (Please see appendices for each participant's complete response.) As Messianic Jewish congregational leaders gained momentum in establishing houses of worship, they began to examine Christian and Jewish practices and traditions. Some of these they found incompatible with a Jewish expression of the Christian faith. To learn what some of those were, they were asked the following question: "What liturgical worship practices from either the Christian or Jewish worlds were avoided in the formation of Messianic Judaism and why do you think that was?"

Table 5

Liturgical traditions avoided by Messianic Jewish congregations.

Rabbi Stephen Galiley	<p>“In America, what has ended up happening is the Jewish community and Christian community have been defined almost in opposition to each other. And so people want to know if you’re Jewish or if you’re Christian... The Messianic Jewish world has looked at some of the cultural Christian markers and has determined that it would ...an identity problem in the culture that they live in for them to embrace certain parts of the Christian identity stuff...Christmas, Easter, Sunday worship—you just kind of go down the line of what’s going on in terms of what makes a Christian a Christian and you’ll find that in Messianic Judaism there is an attempt to avoid that. It’s not necessarily because it’s bad...Kabbalah, which is Jewish mysticism and magic, tends to be avoided because it is occultism...And also in terms of some of the rabbinic teaching and customs that were developed against Yeshua would also be things that different Messianic communities would have to weigh and would have to consider how they would relate to this.”</p>
Rabbi Neil Lash	<p>“For our Torah service, we have really shortened the amount of liturgical prayers to bring the focus very more definitely focused on the portion from Torah rather than a lot of prayers before and after. So we’ll have the traditional blessing before. So we have a very short liturgical portion to our services that probably last no more than fifteen minutes...we don’t have a cross, which would be in almost any Christian church... We call Him by His biblical titles and sometimes by His Hebrew titles rather than by the Greek translation.”</p>
Rabbi Jack Zimmerman	<p>“One of the Jewish liturgical practices was intentionally avoided is a Jewish prayer known as the <i>yigdal</i>...The <i>yigdal</i> is a prayer that is found in every traditional Jewish Siddur, every traditional Jewish prayer book...that prayer basically disqualifies the belief that God can be one in unity and it also disqualifies the belief that He did indeed come and manifest Himself in human form. So that’s why obviously we ignore the <i>yigdal</i> prayer because it’s contrary to biblical Judaism. It’s contrary to our belief in Yeshua...We...avoid reciting the Apostle’s Creed...”</p>
Rabbi David and Helene Rosenberg	<p>“Anything against women...also the Eighteenth Benediction, which was against the minim...We don’t do Passion plays... We also change everything to Messianic language... We also don’t have any crosses... We don’t use Christian symbols. We don’t celebrate Easter or Christmas in a communal way. People might do it privately with trees and stuff...It’s a conflict because it’s like, “Why wouldn’t we celebrate it?” But the fact is ... These are historically seen as expressions of converts who have betrayed Judaism and converted. This whole idea of conversion is a horrific split between the Jewish and Christian world which was a war between Jews converting to Christianity, Christians converting to</p>

	Judaism. And this was seen as a divide that has caused a lot of Christian anti-Semitism and a lot of Jewish hatred of Christians.”
Dr. John Fischer	“Here’s what was avoided at least intentionally or consciously, and that was the use of Christian imagery. Not necessarily liturgy, but imagery. For example, crosses. Did we avoid consciously any liturgy? Not necessarily. There were some groups that were doing the Lord’s Prayer and they would tend to do it in Hebrew. Anything else... Look this movement at its beginning was not a highly liturgical group. So you’re more likely to have Baptist or Charismatic influences in it than anything else and neither of those traditions tend to be very liturgical... So there wasn’t a whole lot of in that sense liturgy to avoid.”
Rabbi Aaron Bortz	“Well we don’t ‘lay on tefillin.’ ... I don’t really spend a whole lot of time studying the Talmud... We don’t have the women separated from the men.”
Rabbi Joshua Brumbach	“...our service was intentionally meant to be built as a synagogue and so it probably purposefully sort of avoided and at various points throughout its forty years its obviously morphed into the various kind of things but it’s sort of always been a little more intentional about avoiding sort of more a Christian approach to the worship than, sort of in favor of a more Jewish approach... we do not incorporate communion into our service ... but it doesn’t mean that we don’t do a type of communion... We have its own service that we do on a quarterly basis... it’s not that we don’t do it... I give it as an example of something that might be pretty common within most forms of Christianity...”
Dr. Jeffery Seif	“Crosses are gonna be out... You’re not gonna find... praying in Jesus name. You’ll hear Yeshua’s name... most of the... most Messianic Jews, Jewish people have come to faith. Came into the Jesus story by way of what we’ll call “low church traditions.” ... A lot of this came by way of the Assemblies of God, Baptist churches and Bible churches, which really aren’t loaded up with a lot of traditions.”
Rabbi Jim Appel	“I would try to avoid ones that are not biblical. For instance, the traditional prayer for lighting the Shabbat candles... It actually... says, “God, Who commanded us to light the Shabbat candles.” But that’s not true. There’s nothing in the Scriptures that commands us to light. So we just changed it... from the Christian world, we tend to avoid things that we know will turn off Jewish people... So our terminology... is very different from what you hear in church... a synagogue rather than a church. My title is ‘rabbi’ rather than ‘pastor.’”
Rabbi Irving Salzman	“...we won’t do Easter in our congregation... We would call it ‘Resurrection Day.’ ... At Christmas time, you will not find a Christmas tree in our congregation, which is not to say that we are anti-Christmas... what I would do for example at Christmas time is that I ... will give ... a birth of Messiah message in deference to the larger Christian world... there is a very traditional prayer in the Jewish liturgy, which is said on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement... it’s called <i>kol nidrei</i> ... we would

	not do that... we do not wear crosses even though the truth of the cross is something that we hold dear... I would not because I want to show my Jewish people that I'm not adopting... Gentile forms or expressions. I'm still continuing to identify through and through with my life and practice as a Jew."
Rabbi Glenn Harris	"...we don't pray the Alenu... I consider the Alenu to be a form of elitism... We don't have an Easter Sunday service... at Shema, we feel very strongly that Messianic Jews should not be putting down the Church or seeking to keep an arm's length from the Church... we want to not separate ourselves out or even see ourselves as separate from the larger body of Christ. We just happen to be the Jewish expression of it."
Rabbi Steve Feldman	"Well, I think a lot of the liturgy was avoided because to me it's religious ceremony and sometimes it's just not pertinent to what the Holy Spirit's doing. So our heart's really to get a sensitivity to the presence of God and what He's doing in the moment so... following liturgy and the parsha and the Torah portion and let that be the mainstay of it, sometimes there's a detour to just the spontaneous flow of what God wants to do. So we kind of avoided that type of stuff."
Dr. Ray Gannon	"Now there are things of course in liturgy, traditional liturgy that we have a problem with. Let me give you an example of what I mean. There's a prayer that is recited on Yom Kippur that's called the <i>yizkor</i> ... problem is when you pray for the soul of one who is already departed... And the <i>yizkor</i> prayer lends itself that way... we don't celebrate Mass if that's what you mean... we do ...regular the Lord's Supper... There are probably some distinct ways in which that is honored in the Messianic communities; whereas we would probably use real wine and we would use matzah as opposed to grape juice and wafers... we're much more careful about who we allow to take it. In my congregations, for example, we would not allow people to take the Lord's supper who had refused to be immersed in water, who had not been baptized because we felt as though water baptism or water immersion or the mikvah as we call it, is the first step of obedience."
Rabbi Frank Lowinger	"...in my upbringing, I always equated anything Christian as being Catholic. So we're not going to uh join in song singing "Ave Maria." We're not going to recite the Lord's Prayer. You know, we read it, but it's not a part of our liturgy per se... We're not going to [recite]...the Disciple's Creed or the Apostle's Creed, I should say... various denominational marks of Christendom, we don't incorporate that into our service... there are some prayers that we alter to meet up with the way we see things... And there are certain prayers that pronounce a curse on the <i>minim</i> or 'the heretics.' We're not going to recite those cause they're intended to be ear marked toward us. ... the <i>Shmoneh Esreh</i> ."
Rabbi Nathan Joiner	"...obviously we've avoided some things from the Orthodox world like splitting up men and women. We have a service that is, you know, denominationally oriented so we have uh everyone pretty much doing the

	<p>same thing at the same time, which if you go to a[n] Orthodox synagogue it is not like that... we do a lot more English recitation than you might see in... synagogue... we avoid certain tonalities in certain songs that would speak uh that would kind of move us out of Jewish space and into a Christian space so we would be particular on terms of certain chordal structure and things like that that would sound very much like a hymn or like some of the more contemporary evangelical songs... We don't do altar calls... I would be fine pressing people to make a faith commitment in the context of a message or something like that... We try to again stay within the framework of Jewish life so we don't like we don't do things that are not normative in the Jewish community unless there's a very good reason for it."</p>
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Biblical influence on practice. (Please see appendices for each participant's complete response.) Messianic Jews did not cease after examining Jewish and Christian traditions. In fact, some started by examining biblical Judaism and filtered all practices adopted from either Jewish or Christian tradition through New Testament theology and practice. The goal of asking "How did early Jewish cultural identity from Yeshua's era influence liturgical decisions in the rebirth of Messianic Judaism?" was to ascertain the role biblical practice holds in current practice. As can be seen by the variety of answers to this question, a clearer question should have been framed to learn this.

Table 6

Biblical influence on Messianic Jewish liturgy

<p>Rabbi Stephen Galiley</p>	<p>"...Yeshua did not abandon their [Jewish] culture, did not separate from their people, did not cease to become part of the world that they had become part of before they had embraced Yeshua. And so as a result this laid a groundwork, a plan or a prototype, if you will, for the point where we could end up looking around and saying 'We are going to do the same, that this is a Scripturally permissible thing to do.' ... I don't believe that Yeshua is against culture. I believe that He glories in culture and I believe there is aspects of culture that is God given, God breathed and that is effective. And so I believe that Messianic Judaism certainly has a seat at the table culturally with everything else. I believe also that God really wants to reach Jewish people who have come to the erroneous</p>
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	conclusion that the greatest rabbi Israel ever had doesn't like Jews.
Rabbi Neil Lash	"We begin our Torah service with Yeshua's answer to the lawyer who asked him which is the greatest commandment. We do that every single week, both Friday night and Saturday... That made our Torah service clearly Messianic Jewish rather than just Jewish and put the emphasis on His teaching."
Rabbi Jack Zimmerman	"...in some ways it did and in some ways it didn't. I mean, just because something is not found in the Bible, doesn't automatically mean it's anti-biblical... And, so some of the liturgical choices that we make, for example, I might start off a service by reciting a prayer... And that prayer... is not found in Scripture, but again, just because it's not in Scripture doesn't mean it's anti-biblical... when Yeshua was asked what was the greatest commandment in Matthew He responded by saying, "Hear, oh Israel, the Lord your God, the Lord is one." And then He went on with the V'ahavta, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind, etc.' So He was reaffirming Deuteronomy 6:4-9. And we feel that's important to have in our congregation because we want to show people, 'Look! It's all one book and yeah, the Shema and the V'ahavta come out from Jewish culture.'"
Rabbi David and Helene Rosenberg	"...well most Christians know that Yeshua quoted Scripture to <i>hasatan</i> what they don't understand is that He actually quotes the Torah portions to him, which is really unbelievable. So that would indicate a couple things: first of all, Yeshua was following the Torah cycle and then also <i>hasatan</i> also knew the Torah cycle. Cause he came back at Him with what was in the Torah portion."
Dr. John Fischer	"...my understanding is that the early followers of Yeshua, certainly the Jewish part of that following through the first century and in all likelihood through the first six centuries until the rise of Islam, I will argue that they maintained their Jewish lives, lifestyles and worship and remained in fact part of the overall Jewish community... So, I mean there was a viable, maybe not necessarily large, but there was a viable Messianic Jewish community that existed that remained part of a larger Jewish community. So of course their liturgy would have remained very Jewish. At least in the early stages of Christian liturgy there was some impact as well. You can see it demonstrated in some of the descriptions found in something called the Didache..."
Rabbi Aaron Bortz	"...when I was a brand new believer the fellow that was most important in my coming to the Lord... gave me a translation called the <i>Paraphrased Epistles</i> by J.B. Phillips. And I read in Romans... where Paul says the true Jew is one inwardly not outwardly... that meant everything to me cause when I went to the Conservative shul I thought, "Well, maybe I can find my true Jewishness in understanding all these <i>accu tramal</i> , all these things that surround being Jewish." The way you dress; the way, what you eat; how you eat; how you go to synagogue; tafillian; tallit; kippa. But no, that's not where God wants you to be a Jew

	<p>first. He wants you to be a Jew inside, and I believe He was speaking to me as a Jew... well the New Covenant influences me in the freedom that I have as the thing that came to me as a new believer when I read... I'm not a hyper-grace guy. I'm just telling you that we have the freedom to obey God! That's really big. A lot of people don't even know how to obey God... I look at liturgy, Jewish liturgy... and I think as we become more accustomed with certain liturgical things, we'll incorporate it a little more. But always, always the center is going to be the Lord."</p>
Rabbi Joshua Brumbach	<p>"...I think it's something that we obviously are connected to ... in effect it's what inspires most of us. This idea that... we're directly connected... to the early Jewish believers of the first couple centuries... However... I think that there are people who view Messianic Judaism as supposed to be just sort of like a recreation of biblical Judaism ...just the idea is actually quite problematic... we don't view ourselves as a return to the first century or whatever, we recognize not only is that impossible, but that would actually then ignore like two thousand years of Jewish history... we view ourselves as also taking seriously not just what Judaism was like in the first century, but ... the way Judaism has evolved to the present age."</p>
Dr. Jeffery Seif	<p>"Jewish believers in Jesus are all about a discovery. Jews we want to leap over two thousand years of church history and discover Jesus as a Jew among Jews in every which way... there's intense interest in exploring Jesus with Jewish eyes... In terms of the worship within that world, the Torah service, reclaiming that has factored in. uh, reclaiming Paul as a rabbi... if you look at the synagogue service and it was very primitive and very basic in the way that it was celebrated, that definitely gives a certain credence to the Messianic Jews that want to still retain a Torah service. As well as certain other traditions in the synagogue, pray facing Jerusalem, which is important."</p>
Rabbi Jim Appel	<p>"...well if we can find a biblical basis for something...that the Lord did in the New Covenant, like Passover, that's absolutely something that we incorporate. We actually do our Passover seder, um, much more like He would have done it than traditional Judaism does it today... So we incorporate things like the from biblical practices that we can see."</p>
Rabbi Irving Salzman	<p>"Well, I think that's an untapped. I think that's untapped for the most part, but I think there's a lot that can be used... I say untapped, but when you look at the New Testament believers ... the early Messianic epistles such as James, you see that these believers in Jesus continued to identify with their Jewish identity, with their Jewish practice, with their Jewish lifestyle. Same thing, by the way, Paul when he writes in Romans chapter eleven and he's arguing for the fact that God's promises to Israel are still in operation, but they, that God hasn't rejected His people, the proof is, he says, 'for I too am an Israelite.' So he doesn't say, 'For I used to.' ... So, none of that Messianic faith compromises or contradicts a Jewish identity, and so I think that a lot can be gleaned from the early believers,</p>

	the early followers of Yeshua.”
Rabbi Glenn Harris	“...I don’t know that I could give you particulars in answer to that question, but I can give you more philosophical or general principle... to best understand a teaching, it needs to be seen in context. To best understand a person, you need to understand them in context. And what has been so important in the rebirth of Jewish Christianity or Messianic Judaism is this idea that we are putting...the Gospel in its historical Jewish context... It helps us to avoid certain doctrinal and theological errors that have arisen as a result of trying to detach Christianity from its Jewish moorings... All we’re doing is we’re worshipping in a Jewish way the history is with us, Scripture is with us, and to the extent that a Messianic congregation is healthy and Bible centered there’s none of that setting up a wall of partition or division or anything like that.”
Rabbi Steve Feldman	“...when I look at especially Acts 15 where they say, ‘What do we do with these Gentiles that are now becoming part of this New Testament Judaism?’ It’s kind of interesting that over two thousand years it’s turned a hundred and eighty degrees. Initially, it was ‘what do we do with the Gentiles?’ now it’s ‘what do we do with Jews?’ But you know the decision in Acts 15 was not to put those statues and regulations and cultural directives—circumcision, kosher laws, those type of things—upon a New Testament Gentile. You know, since the original apostolic that was the wisdom of God so for me, not to emphasize those things was Scriptural to what God wanted for the New Covenant.”
Dr. Ray Gannon	“...you can’t help but read Matthew 23 and have to go back and reevaluate ah the attitude towards Jewish religious expression generally speaking where you find Jesus Himself speaking in the opening verses of Matthew 23 as looking with favor upon some of the teachings of the scribes and Pharisees... I mean He went on in the same chapter to issue stark prophetic warnings to the Pharisees... But He did it from the perspective of a broken hearted prophet. He was not looking to generate contempt towards them... Yeshua is endorsing the expectation of the community to expect religious leaders to provide counsel for its ongoing future and success. So He is on the one hand recognizing the contribution that they make and is endorsing of it while suggesting their hypocrisy is not what is to be emulated... the early church was likewise extremely comfortable within Jewish culture... in fact the Gospel made great headway within the Jewish community as the Gospel was offered in a Jewish cultural framework to Jewish people. So we understood if this was the pattern in Jesus’ own life and ministry, this was the apostolic pattern in ministry, there’s no reason why it couldn’t be the pattern in ministry of modern Messianic believers to fellow Jews.”
Rabbi Frank Lowinger	“...it was a genuine Jewish expression of worship that in Yeshua’s day there was already worship that was in place. So there was the continuity that always was from before the time of Yeshua right up to this present. So again we were following in that very same flow.”

Rabbi Nathan Joiner	“I don’t think ... that there’s necessarily a biblical Judaism and a Rabbinic Judaism... from my understanding of history, those categories are not real categories because ... Yeshua lived in a tradition. He observed Passover according to a tradition... obviously He came as the Son of God and as Divine, but in His humanity as coming as a Galilean Jew, probably a little bit less observant, but still engaging you know the different kinds of Judaism that existed in the first century... ‘how has Jewish tradition interpreted what the Bible says?’ Cause I think whenever you interpret a biblical commandment you create a new tradition. And then ‘what does Christian tradition have to say?’ We look at both of those things and when we take all those things into account, and then we’d also take into account ‘what does Yeshua have to say?’ and so one example is we pray for healing on Shabbat because that was Yeshua’s example, um although Rabbinic Judaism also prays for healing on Shabbat.”
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Response of leaders. (Please see appendices for each participant’s complete response.) After about two thousand years of mutually aggressive disassociation between Jews and Christians, Messianic Jews began banding together to form houses of worship that reflected their Jewish heritage and belief in Jesus as the Messiah who was to come. This movement was both denounced and praised at its explosion in the 1970s and 1980s. The question, “How did the leaders from Christianity and Judaism respond to Messianic Jews incorporating these liturgical practices,” to learn specifics about the reaction of Christian and Jewish leaders at that time. In their answers, some spoke to the national reaction, while others only described the local reaction. Some discussed the initial response of leaders while others focused on the current reaction.

Table 7

Response of Christian and Jewish leaders to Messianic Jewish movement

Rabbi Stephen Galiley	“With shrieking and wailing... some Christians are fairly supportive of Messianic Jews and see, it makes sense to them that this would exist if they have read Scripture and if they’ve studied. Other Christians believe that there was something inherently wrong and evil with Judaism where
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	<p>what God came to do was to set up a new culture called ‘Christianity’ to replace the old and defective culture called ‘Judaism.’ So the people who believe that tend not to be terribly supportive... On a certain level, if we believe somebody speaks a different language we will grudgingly allow them to do what they’ve got to do. But we don’t really understand a different culture versus a different language. So with what’s going on, we don’t understand culture and tradition as being part of what binds people together and also part of what can cause division and separation between people.”</p>
Rabbi Neil Lash	<p>“...we’ve always been supported. We are a member of a major Christian denomination. And they have accepted us as a fully independent congregation within their denomination. The Jewish community picketed us, said we were deceptive, that we were stealing souls, but the current reality is that I think that there’s more acceptance by the Jewish community even if it’s not by the rabbinic leadership in the community. We’ve become a known quantity. We’ve become the Jews for Jesus, so... we don’t even try to defend that anymore. That’s how they know us. And in the greatest sense, we are Jews for Jesus.”</p>
Rabbi Jack Zimmerman	<p>“You know it kind of went across the board... the traditional Jewish side one of the feelings or sentiments that I got is, ‘Oh, you are high jacking our liturgy for your purposes of pointing it to Jesus and that’s wrong.’ ... But on the other side, at one of our services, we actually had a conservative Jewish rabbi show up because we meet on Saturday mornings...At that time we had a <i>hazan</i>, a cantor, who basically had been in like Broadway and operatic productions, an incredible voice. And this cantor was chanting out of the Torah scroll, and you could see the rabbi’s mouth and his jaw drop to the floor because he was so amazed that this... and we got the authenticity... As far as the church and our liturgy...it’s across the board. There have been some leaders in the church who have basically said, ‘Look, what in the world are you doing that liturgy for? ... You’re taking stuff from the Old Testament. You’re going back under the law. And next thing you know these folks are in your congregation are gonna be so enamored with everything Jewish and then they’re gonna come into our church and they’re gonna tell our people that they need to be Jewish and convert and start wearing the yamakas and ...we don’t know what this nonsense is that you’re doing.’ And yet, at the same time we have had other pastors, and primarily they have been outreach missions pastors. They get it. And they said, ‘Wow, this is terrific, because what you’re doing is you are revering and glorifying Yeshua in a way that people can identify with Him within their own culture and their context.’ And they love it.”</p>
Rabbi David Rosenberg	<p>“I think most of the negative responses to that are due to their buying into the separation and due to the fact that many, many Christians believe that you cannot be Jewish and be a believer in Yeshua. That you are leaving Judaism as a religion and becoming a convert to Christianity.</p>

	Where, in truth, no Christian on the planet earth can become a Christian without accepting the tenets of Judaism... Really most of the conflict in any way that you define it has to do with the presuppositional idea by the person observing us that creates a conflict over it.”
Dr. John Fischer	“From the beginning... Neither side liked us... many of the leaders of Judaism felt that we were pseudo-Jews... more that we took on Jewish forms to mislead Jews into a Christian faith.... Christians, on the other hand, didn’t like much of what we were doing if they didn’t like it because if they thought most of them associated it with “going back under the law” which was the theological term, or “going back into Judaism,” or “Judaizing” all of which were supposed to have been done away with. For many felt that Judaism was supposed to have been done away with the coming of Yeshua. So that was the approach from those Christians who had significant difficulty with us from the outset.”
Rabbi Aaron Bortz	“Sometimes I hear people say that you’re ‘rebuilding the middle wall of the partition.’ ...I bristle with that. Just because I want to be Jewish... then they have the term ‘Judaizer,’ which is nowhere in the Bible. It’s not in Galatians, if you look. You could call them legalists, but I wouldn’t call them Judaizers. So, there were a lot of people and there are still people that believe that and don’t want to have anything to do with Messianic congregations... on the other hand, a lot of people are interested in my background...”
Rabbi Joshua Brumbach	“...obviously there are negative responses to Messianic Judaism from both the Christian side and the Jewish side. I think there’s more negativity on the Jewish side although that’s not always true. So it just varies. I think it depends on the local church community and the relationship that the local Messianic congregation has with the wider Jewish community and so on and so forth... on the Jewish... you have groups like Jews for Judaism and other sort of what we would call “anti-missionary” groups that are ...literally formed in a response and a reaction to Messianic Judaism... but then at the same time you have within the Jewish world ... a number of books and articles written recently of people who view Messianic Judaism quite positively and feel that Messianic Judaism should be included within the wider Jewish community ... obviously the same thing goes on the Christian side that there’s been... especially in recent years a very positive response towards Messianic Judaism especially within parts of the Evangelical and especially the charismatic forms of Christianity. But then there’s also been those who are quite skeptical or anti-. For example, John MacArthur is very anti-Messianic Judaism.”
Dr. Jeffery Seif	“Messianic Jews were kind of in a twilight zone... we want to be citizens of two commonwealths so we wind up sometimes getting kicked out of both... because for the Jews, we’re too Christian to be real Jews. And for the Christians, we’re too Jewish to be Christian... but on the whole... the Messianic Jewish movement is gaining a considerable amount of

	credibility in culture... There's a little more coming to terms with it. Jews can be very liberal people, very accepting so, more problem I think coming from the Christian world than the Jewish, but I think a lot of that's abating."
Rabbi Jim Appel	"My recollection is that early on before I became the rabbi, there was a lot of, there was you know, the accusation that we were "rebuilding the middle wall of partition" that we were a cult, but then by the time I got to be the rabbi in '96 it seemed like the local pastors were really open to what we were doing, very supportive of it... we had a lot of opposition and criticism from the Jewish community."
Rabbi Irving Salzman	"I think Christian leaders who understand our movement... I think that they would... be supportive... in the past, people would say, "Hey, why are you holding onto your Jewish identity? You're a Christian now." And they would almost take offense... They would almost be a little indignant. But I think the vast majority of people who understand the Messianic movement, understand that God is doing a work and raising up Jewish people and the remnant of Israel, understand that we need to continue to function as part of our people, and that we need to continue to be a witness to our people... And as far as the traditional Jewish community that doesn't believe in Jesus, I think that they would feel in a sense, they would feel violated. Well, sometimes they feel violated and robbed... A lot of Jewish people would question the fact that you could believe in Jesus and still be Jewish. They would almost say that theologically that's a dividing line between Judaism and Christianity."
Rabbi Glenn Harris	"...the Jewish community leadership basically wants us to make a choice. You're either a Jew or a Christian. You can't be both...unfortunately, there are those within mainline Christianity and by that I don't mean evangelical, I mean more like mainline denominations—Presbyterian Church USA, Methodist Church, Churches of Christ, um, some Baptist Churches—will argue the same way... and there are well placed Christian leaders who still, after many years, decry the whole Messianic Jewish movement; John MacArthur is one. "
Rabbi Steve Feldman	"... it depends who you ask of course... to the mainline Gentile church I think they see it as... being a nicety or a superfluous... because so many of them don't see a validity to the Old Testament at all...because of the whole thing of Replacement Theology... So I think they see the whole, the whole basis of Jewish roots and everything being totally unnecessary."
Dr. Ray Gannon	"...I started out as an Assemblies of God kid and I was recognized by the Assemblies of God as one devoting my life to salvation of the Jewish people... One of the first things they told me was, 'Okay, Gannon, you're gonna jump in Jewish ministry. That's fine, but no Jewish churches, absolutely no Jewish churches.' It wasn't until we had this significant number, I mean, a hundred people or so that could not blend in to churches that we had to come to grips with the cultural imperialism

	<p>idea. And we had to counter it and we did that by wanting to pioneer a Messianic synagogue... the Assemblies of God... endorsed the pilot project of a Messianic synagogue.... Initially, I can tell you that [Christian] Jewish ministries across the country, except for one, were really strongly opposed to us... almost anyone that you mention or know about would have been in opposition to us in those, in 1973, 1974. Ah because we were winning so many Jewish people to the Lord in contrast to them that they thought we had to be compromising the Gospel and we were heretics and we were Judaizers and they were accusing us of all kinds of things... The one ministry that did not condemn us was Jews for Jesus... However, I'd say though within the space of two years or three years almost all the groups that had been castigating us were themselves now pioneering Messianic synagogues."</p>
Rabbi Frank Lowinger	<p>"...Jewish community surely did not like us using the same prayers and symbols of Judaism in a worship of Jesus because in their eyes its incongruous. You can't be Jewish and believe in Jesus. So they look at it as being deceptive... because from the Jewish perspective Christianity is not Jewish... Anytime, you are doing different, something different than the mainstream it's always going to receive some push back. We are creatures of habit... we were doing something different. We were breaking new ground, and the Jewish community was not used to this kind of an approach. The Christian community also not used to this approach. Everybody had their categories, and you had to abide by those categories and those guidelines. And so here we were breaking new ground and naturally we're going to get some push back for it."</p>
Rabbi Nathan Joiner	<p>"...in our circles, we're starting to see an openness to uh at least our kind of Messianic Judaism in the wider Jewish world... we see ourselves as part of the wider Jewish world. So I think that in those circles they appreciate the things that we add. So like they appreciate that we add in the New Testament and they understand that because it's done with sensitivity and with respect... I think that the more we actually stand strong in our Jewish identity and what that looks like, the better we're able to relate to the Christian world because when it's sort of this mishmash of like kind of a quasi-Jewish expression of Christianity, it sends the wrong signal... we're able to connect with the higher church because of our value of tradition and things like that... we've got nothing but very positive feedback."</p>

Purpose of liturgical practices. Any worship expression has key components that differentiate it from other traditions of worship. In Messianic Judaism, three of those

components are their chosen liturgy, their musical expression, and the role of dance as an expression of worship.

Liturgy and maturation. (Please see appendices for each participant’s complete response.) The next question assumed that the goal of a Jewish believer is to grow and mature, not only in their identity in Messiah, but also in their identity as a Jew ethnically and culturally. It also assumed that religious practice plays a role in an individual and community’s maturation process. A form of the question, “How were the liturgical practices that were developed useful in the maturation of Messianic Jewish identity,” was asked each interviewee.

Table 8

The role of liturgy in the maturation of Messianic Judaism

Rabbi Stephen Galiley	“I think that what ended up happening is we didn’t think about it as we were doing it. We just did it. And so in terms of this, it could have been as simple as, you play a guitar, we need to sing some songs, we’ll give it a try. You went and you loved dancing at the bar mitzvah and you came back to your congregation and you had some music that had a similar beat to it and you had some folks who were going to get up and do dance at the same time. And you found out that the Spirit of God fell when you did it...then you find out that the Spirit of God can be in it. I think that’s how we did it. You academically study things after they happen, but when you are in the middle of it, you’re just kind of looking at it going, ‘Something has to happen here.’”
Rabbi Neil Lash	“Well, because we have a Torah service, our young people are encouraged to become bar or bat mitzvah. And the population of our congregation is reflective of the population of our community which has changed radically since 1976. We have many people from the islands, the Caribbean islands who are part of our congregation. And many of their children choose to become bar and bat mitzvah. And so it’s a part of being in the worship, the liturgical leads them to participating in that. And so when we have a congregational Passover seder we will have a rainbow of cultures and countries and skin colors and so I believe that the worship is the connecting point for all of that.”
Rabbi Jack Zimmerman	“...I think it does help spiritually mature people...it spiritually matures the folks in that we show them the second half, where it pointed to

	<p>Yeshua, who is the only one who can make them and all of us holy. So, I think that by them getting, as Paul Harvey used to say, “The rest of the story,” that some of the questions that they’ve had and some of the thoughts they’ve had as to why they do certain things. These questions are now answered and these thoughts resolved, and it helps them to grow closer in the Lord...both the Jews and the Christians, they start to see those things as Jesus’ Hebraic undertones. And then, from then on, anytime they read the Scriptures, they kind of read it with a greater eye toward looking for the Hebraic because they know that that’s what the prayers pointed to all along.”</p>
Dr. John Fischer	<p>“...yes, there was some real development that took place beginning in the early days but continuing because it had to. Cause there was so little that was done at the very outset... Yes, I think that is a sign of maturing. It’s a sign of coming to grips with what it means to be truly Jewish not just on the surface. Or to use the term we used before, to be authentically Jewish. I mean from the outset, we, um, advertised ourselves as a another branch of Judaism, but this particular branch in the beginning didn’t look all that Jewish. And if we’re going to be a branch of Judaism, we need to look like a branch of Judaism and I think that has been a positive development. That we’ve become more so.”</p>
Rabbi Aaron Bortz	<p>“Yes, I would say that it is... I mean there’s always been Jewish believers. If you look in Romans, Paul says there’s always going to be a remnant. There’s always been Jewish believers, but for the most part ...they were absorbed by the churches. So they really didn’t have a very strong witness to their community, the Jewish community. Now...these people know, “Oh, those Messianics.” ... they know we’re out there. And I think that the liturgy and the form of the worship further cemented that identity.”</p>
Rabbi Joshua Brumbach	<p>“...a lot of people had a much harder time being able to do that for whatever cultural and theological reasons. And so the only option for them was the Messianic synagogue and so that’s how our congregation was formed...why it’s important is for a few things...number one, is that it shapes the way that you think. Number two, is that you participate in Israel’s story in Jewish liturgy...The third reason is because it connects us to our people around the world...A fourth one, even though I don’t think it should be the number one reason why a congregation incorporates liturgy, but I do think it is an important reason is that it creates a safe place and familiar place for Jewish people who are seeking Yeshua.”</p>
Dr. Jeffery Seif	<p>“Well, I think it’s very important. People come up to me and they’ll say, ‘Jeffrey, how long have you been a converted Jew?’ And I like to say, ‘I’m not a converted Jew. I’m a converted sinner, and it’s not a sin to be a Jew.’ And, if you’re going to be Jewish, um, then being able to lay siege to the claim, ‘Wait a minute... I worship on a Saturday. I circumcise my sons. I bar mitzvah my sons. We have a Torah service.’ It</p>

	<p>doesn't matter to me whether some might see me as too much of a freak. At the end of the day, when I look at myself...I still think that I live and function as a Jew, like American Jews live. And if I didn't have... the Friday night service, the lighting of Sabbath candles... some of the Hebrew prayers and the Torah service and the circumcision, the bar mitzvah, the Jewish weddings and Jewish funerals, if I didn't retain all of that stuff something would be missing. The fact that I live within that performance world makes me feel more Jewish in ways that I wouldn't otherwise feel."</p>
Rabbi Jim Appel	<p>"Well, I think they are. I think we've developed a whole way of music at this point in time, Messianic music at this point in time with several well-known artists and all this new stuff coming out...I think there's a lot of identity coming out of the music, coming out of the dance, and keeping of the holidays... I know for me, I was not ... with my Jewish background as a child in traditional synagogues and things. And what I would strive to do as a rabbi is take those traditions and make them relevant, make them meaningful so they weren't just ritual ... but make them have a spiritual meaning, make them somehow bring revelation of the Lord and of all He's done."</p>
Rabbi Irving Salzman	<p>"I think they're very useful... you're question makes me think of my own kids because they're being raised in a Messianic congregation and setting... The town that we live in is fifty percent Jewish... So my kids when they go to school..., they're rubbing shoulders every day with a class that's almost half, fifty percent Jewish...so I think when we inculcate these Messianic values in our kids, the next generation, it makes them, it makes them feel that they do measure up. And they are verifiably Jewish."</p>
Rabbi Glenn Harris	<p>"I'm not sure they have...I'm convinced that maturity comes through knowing and taking to heart and studying, becoming proficient in the Word of God... Maturity is a function of the Word... See I think it's through the Word, obviously the power of the Spirit, but it's through the Word that we grow to maturity. So... I really don't think liturgy is something that contributes to spiritual maturity."</p>
Dr. Ray Gannon	<p>"I can tell you that in the earlier years of the Messianic movement... There was a much stronger emphasis in the Messianic movement...upon Jewish evangelism...the Messianic movement per se has diminished its evangelistic thrust into the Jewish world. Aand in direct proportion to its appetite for being embraced by the Jewish society or being reabsorbed into the Jewish world as believers but nevertheless thought of as equals, people have gone out of their way often to overdo their liturgical expression. To where it's not just liturgical expression that is honoring of the Lord and you know it's Jewish and it's healthful for Messianic Jews to feel the comfort of a regularized Jewish environment but sometimes the Messianic groups have gone beyond that and sought basically to out-Jew the Jewish community... The other end of the spectrum is those</p>

	kinds of ... Messianic groups that uh have liturgical pieces but they really don't know what in the world they're doing...and so any Jewish people walking in who have any kind of Jewish background walk in and realize the whole thing is cockamamie. And ah they want nothing to do with this...So ... there's very few congregations probably that have the liturgical balance we could hope for that lifts up Jesus, have a liturgical balance that is palatable and desirable for Jewish people."
Rabbi Frank Lowinger	"We're more and more comfortable in our own skin. Uh, we don't have to follow and emulate patterns that we see within the evangelical community. Most of us... are the product of evangelical Christianity... And so our first experience of faith in Yeshua was the things that we saw and emulated from the evangelical Christian world, charismatic and non-charismatic. So naturally when we became more of a congregational movement, we brought all of those dynamics with us. But as the years progressed we began to inculcate more and more of the liturgies of our people."
Rabbi Nathan Joiner	"I would say that an active engagement with liturgical expression of prayer is fundamental and essential for a maturing Messianic Judaism...I think that if we don't engage how Jewish liturgies in an intelligent and careful way. I don't think there's much success for the future of Messianic Judaism because I think that ... represents sort of ...an idea or a picture of what Messianic Judaism is. And uh if we throw out how Jews pray... we've thrown out a huge part of what it means to be Jewish.

Music. (Please see appendices for each participant's complete response.) A component of the revival of the Jesus Movement was the birth of not only Contemporary Christian music, but also Messianic Jewish music. A variation of this question was put to the leaders: "What musical influences were [did you] draw[n] upon to develop Messianic Jewish music?" Few of the pioneers of this musical genre were interviewed personally, but the general consensus of those spoken with was that there was a great variety of influences, but in general it had an Eastern European tonality and rhythm.

Table 9

The music of Messianic Judaism

Rabbi Stephen	"Messianic Jewish music in the late '60s/early '70s was profoundly impacted by the film "Fiddler on the Roof." And so what ended up
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Galiley	<p>happening was this was a European Jewish cultural expression that was very similar to “Beyond the Pale” and kind of like the point where the Orient and Europe and Russia all kind of came together. And the influences were drawn from all those areas... in terms of the very early Messianic Jewish music that was written a lot of this had a significant relationship to bar mitzvah music... I was starting in the late 1980s and as a result, we had already had the “Fiddler on the Roof” movie. We had already had Lamb... We had Israel’s Hope out of which came Paul Wilbur. Marty Goetz was starting in the mid-1980s, developed his music. So, I might have been part of the second wave that was coming along... There was Shlomo Carlebach, who was the hippy rabbi in San Francisco... Jews for Jesus had the Liberated Wailing Wall and Stuart Dauermann who led that, very accomplished musician and academic... so what you hear, you replicate in your own stuff..., in the Jewish world and in the Messianic Jewish world there’s a belief that God’s in everything and He is concerned with everything and that even the stuff that maybe mundane, even the stuff that doesn’t have a specific task/outcome to it is something that God’s involved with and God wants to be in and God is attentive to. And so by the time that you get to this point, you’ve got a bigger sandbox to play in. [Last two sentences refer to Messianic Jewish lyric variety in worship music]”</p>
Rabbi Neil Lash	<p>“We have people in our congregation who have written Messianic music that is sung all over the country, including my wife. We also have picked up music from Paul Wilbur, Joel Chernoff, Marty Goetz and so it’s both... Very earliest music was almost all written by my wife under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit since she knew nothing about writing music. All of the first songs were written down with alphabet letters. ‘A-B-C-C-D-E, what’s this sound? It’s not quite an ‘E’. Oh, this must be an E minor.” And then at one point our associate became a very gifted song writer, who had been a Jewish rock-and-roller, and he’s very prolific songwriter, Jeremy Storch. He wrote many, many songs, all biblically based and some are still sung, even here at the conferences.”</p>
Marty Goetz	<p>“I spent a lot of years in temple. And a lot of that music has a style that is liturgical. A lot of the music, the liturgy has kind of a minor key and almost, I say Eastern Europe because it came out of the kind of cantorial tradition from the years of Diaspora of the Jewish people. And so their music even in synagogue has that kind of influence of all those years of being dispersed through all the nations. A lot of what we deem to be Jewish music really has an Eastern Europe influence because that’s where a lot of the Jewish people spent most of their years...even Jews for Jesus music had that kind of oom-pa oom-pa oom-pa oom-pa oom-pa oom-pa kind of beat with the minor keys and the kind of Hebraic or Jewish sounding melodies, it had that Eastern European feel... And so, when I say it’s Jewish, it’s Jewish in the sense that it reflects my background as a Jewish person going to synagogue, going to temple,</p>

	<p>knowing the prayers, and being able to speak a little bit of Hebrew. Now if you went to Israel today and heard their music, it wouldn't sound like that because Israeli music ... no longer reflects that kind of Eastern European... the expression of my music is from the Scripture. It's Messianic in that sense. I mean, it's Jewish in that sense because the Scriptures are Jewish. So, it's not necessarily a stylistic thing. It's a stylistic thing sometimes, but sometimes it's more about the content."</p>
Rabbi Jack Zimmerman	<p>"...on the one hand, I don't know if I would be the best person to answer that. On the other hand, I can tell you that one of the influences would be that Jewish music itself has a distinct sound to it. Just like many types of music do... much of the music we play, or much of the songs that we play is music that has become traditional in the Messianic movement... Which comes from, I think, a beat structure that we're familiar with. I think ...staying within the minor keys. This is something that at the onset of it sounds very, very Jewish to a Jewish ear."</p>
Rabbi David and Helene Rosenberg	<p>"Well, Joel Chernoff... First of all, historically, Jews for Jesus began to produce albums that were liturgical and Jewish... and that came from Stuart Dauermann... then came Israel's Hope and almost everything else after those three, Jews for Jesus albums...Lamb, and Israel's Hope... Paul Wilbur probably has done more to mainline messianic music than any other living person... and then of course Marty Goetz... maybe those four actually drove almost every other artist that ever produced or successfully produced an album. But that's just my...I think that's an honest overview."</p>
Dr. John Fischer	<p>"...there was some influence from within Judaism, namely...the Israeli Chassidic song festivals. From within the movement itself, some of the early music came from Lamb and the Liberated Wailing Wall... I would think some of Shlomo Carlebach's music in the beginning was influential as well... Carlebach was an influence from within Judaism as was the Israeli Chassidic song festival."</p>
Rabbi Aaron Bortz	<p>"...in our congregation was Joel Chernoff. And Joel started writing music and we started doing a lot of his songs... we did a lot of his music... Marc Chopinsky... That was another guy."</p>
Rabbi Joshua Brumbach	<p>"...obviously there's been a number of influences on Messianic Jewish music as a whole... there's been both Christian contemporary influences on the Messianic movement as well as... the Catskills and that style of music and that kind of... Broadway... that had a big influence... Also like klezmer still the old school oompa oompa oompa kind of influence on Messianic music. So there's been both Jewish and Christian influences and wider cultural influences and I don't think that's necessarily, actually a bad thing. I think music is music and even Jewish liturgical music has always been influenced by the culture it happens to and the time in which it inhabits... you also have a very strong Israeli now influence on Messianic music...like the kind of more Middle Eastern beats. So you know and it will always change."</p>

Dr. Jeffery Seif	“...now I’m not good enough in music to speak to it. Minor chords, there’s a certain kind of folksy, lively rhythm. If you look at Jewish culture, it has its own music probably what influenced it, if you’re familiar with the movie ‘Fiddler on the Roof?’ ... it’s dated to be sure, but it reflects this Yiddish... There’s a kind of upbeat rhythmic meter to it and that kind of lives on in the music... I just enjoy the music. I don’t know what it takes to write it.”
Rabbi Jim Appel	“...our worship leaders have also drawn on Hassidic music quite a bit... we do quite a few songs that are taken right from the Hassidic. The more lively songs that they do. And even some from contemporary traditional Judaism that are adoptable. So we’re seeing Israeli, contemporary, and Hassidic influence in a lot of the songs that we’re doing... then of course we have the Messianic artists, the traditional American ones who have written some great songs like Marty Goetz and Paul Wilbur and Joel Chernoff and Ted Pearce.”
Rabbi Irving Salzman	“I think that a lot of it is drawn from traditional Jewish music. For example, the minor keys... the same beat. So there’s a real similarity between Messianic music and traditional Jewish music. But ... what differentiates, I think, is lyrically. The lyrics of our Messianic movement ... reflect a Messianic understanding of the Scriptures and the Messianic faith... I think that Jewish music itself has been a major influence...”
Rabbi Glenn Harris	“...to be honest most Messianic music is not as much Israeli as it is Eastern European. But those are the two main sources. A lot of the D minor, E minor, C music is actually Eastern European not so much Israeli or Davidic... But, for us though, at Shema, we do try to blend things. We do some traditional melodies... But we also are incorporating songs from the contemporary Christian world. What we are trying to do is choose songs that are substantive versus feel good songs. I’ve even been known once in a rare while to throw in a hymn... yeah, I’m not worried about turning off Jewish people who come... I’m not worried about that because I don’t turn anyone on and I don’t turn anyone off. That is the Holy Spirit’s job.”
Rabbi Steve Feldman	“...certainly stringed instruments are part of worship, ah the drums, the timbrel... I think ... the Old Testament Scripturally used instruments for worship.”
Dr. Ray Gannon	“I can um tell you that first of all when we were first starting the only Messianic music that was out there at all was music that had been produced by Stuart Dauermann... and the Liberated Wailing Wall of the Jews for Jesus... There was another group called Lamb... know it was kind of rockster. They would sing Hebrew music in a rock style and it wasn’t really Jewish music... But it was Hebrew... then there was a lot of singing of Scripture. Singing of Scripture was largely borrowed from more charismatic groups who were singing English Scripture. And then of course... a lot of the Israeli folk songs were obviously Hebrew but they were based upon quotations from the Bible so we would sing a lot

	of the traditional Israeli folk songs ... of course we would explain what the words meant but we would sing these Scriptures... later, other groups did come along like Israel's Hope which had Chopinsky and had Rene Bloc' and of course Paul Wilbur as the lead on guitar and singer.. a very important voice that came out of Israel... David and Lisa Loden are musicians and singers who composed ...hundreds of Messianic songs in Israel and they fostered a whole reservoir of singers and song producers in Israel... Marty Goetz... produced a lot of wonderful Messianic music..."
Rabbi Frank Lowinger	"...we will draw from a lot of the good things that might be out there in the evangelical community. Ah, chorus that are Messianic in character and by that I mean that there's a Hebraic flavor to it. That the content of the lyric or the Scripture text that is used in that song is something that is reflective of who we are... the first influence for me was a Canadian couple, Merv and Merla Watson... They were an early influence. Another early influence for me was the Liberated Wailing Wall, Jews for Jesus, and Lamb with Joel Chernoff and Rick Coghill."
Rabbi Nathan Joiner	"Stuart Dauermann would be the one to interview for this question cause he's like the 'father of Messianic Jewish music.' ...so I'm not sure. ...in the movement. I've seen sort of the Messianic Jewish movement music as it's sort of like an evolving process. A lot of it is very much basically contemporary evangelical worship music um with ...maybe some Hebrew words or things like that. And I'm not critiquing that necessarily, but that's obviously where the roots of ... most of it comes from... I think to be honest there is a need for new Messianic Jewish music ...doesn't have the same chord structures as what we see in the evangelical world. Again it's not a critique of those things. It's just that we need to distinguish ourselves from them in order to relate to them."

Dance. (Please see appendices for each participant's complete response.) By far and away, the most unanticipated responses came in answer to the question, "How did the development of Messianic Jewish dance serve as an identifier for Messianic Judaism, and what was/is its importance?" From the responses of the leaders, there appears to be a continuing discussion of the position that dance should hold in Messianic Jewish services.

Table 10

Place of dance in Messianic Judaism

Rabbi Stephen Galiley	<p>“There is a real sense in America of us being individualists. There is a real sense in terms of Yeshua and the Gospels and in His teachings and in the way His apostolic band carried His message forward of our being part of a community. And I really think that for Americans anytime there is something that takes us out of being an individual and turns us into a people who are a participating community that this is a powerful witness to the truth of God to us as a culture and that this is a lost truth for many of us... When you have a dance group that is in a coordinated fashion giving and receiving from each other and becoming a part of a body in an active and demonstrative fashion, this is again part of being a community. I’ve noticed that the Spirit of God just really seems to be all over people who sacrifice some aspect of their individualism to be part of a body... It’s also an expression of joyfulness, as well, and that’s a big deal.”</p>
Rabbi Neil Lash	<p>“Well, dance is always an important part of traditional Judaism ... there was a difference between traditional Israeli dance, which was horizontally oriented and down, and worship dance, which was vertically oriented. So we would be lifting hands as opposed to holding hands.... dance is important for the community because it is another form of worship and the way we dance is we dance in unity with a leader and a dance team that leads so that there are a bunch of steps that people learn but the leaders will for a particular song string those steps together ... In the same way that we are all following the song leader in singing the same songs, we are all following the dance leader. So there is a unity that occurs and that’s the difference between worshipping at home and worshipping in the congregation.”</p>
Marty Goetz	<p>“I think that something quite beautiful about it because I’ve noticed, now this is just a personal thing but you’re asking me the questions so I’ll answer them... it seems to me the dancing... brings everyone together... You have an eighty year old guy holding hands with an eight year old kid dancing in a circle. There’s something really refreshing about that, but biblically correct about that... like the prophet saying, “One day in the streets of Jerusalem, the young and the old will dance and sing together.” There’s something about that that I think is unique to the Messianic congregation and I think is a really good thing.”</p>
Rabbi Jack Zimmerman	<p>“There are many Messianic congregations that do have dance as a part of their praise and worship... as far as me and our congregation, the jury is still out with me on it, and I’ll tell you why... I love having dance in the Messianic setting as long as it’s done properly... as far as dance, yeah I would love it in our congregation. As long as, just like we have a worship team that rehearses so that they can present their gifting in</p>

	<p>excellence before the Lord. What I would want, is I would want a dance leader to say, ‘Okay, we’re gonna rehearse this so that everybody knows the steps so that we too can present excellence before the Lord.’... So, I love it when we take the time to rehearse and prepare so that all of us may present excellence before the Lord. I mean, look, before I give my message each and every Shabbat, I’ve prayed over it. I’ve taken the time to do the research. I’ve taken the time to go to the original Hebrew and investigate the exegesis and the hermeneutical principles of it. So that I can make sure that I am presenting this properly. And I don’t think that it’s too much to ask that everybody else in their ministry does the same thing.</p>
Rabbi David and Helene Rosenberg	<p>“Beth Yeshua ... may indeed be most famous for introducing Davidic dance... There’s so many people in that congregation choreographed most of the dances people do to the traditional Jewish or the Messianic... It is an amazing communal act that the Messianic conference happens that no matter where they come from, everyone knows how to dance to “Enter His Gates with Thanksgiving” or another song where everyone knows the steps. It’s like liturgy, something people recognize and understand. And it’s biblical. Psalm 150... And it... aids in the congregation worshipping... so this idea that we restore true worship and we restore joy and dance and all the modes of worship that should be there, not just mourning. It’s pretty much what the Orthodox were lacking till the Lubavitch came around and introduced joy to their services.”</p>
Dr. John Fischer	<p>“Let me start by saying, for whatever reason it always seems to have been around. It is some sort of a variation on... Jewish or Israeli folk dance ... I think that’s what it ultimately built on. It developed into all kinds of variants that look less and less like Israeli folk dance. Israeli and Jewish folk dance is not necessarily associated with worship. It’s simply associated with celebration ... I think Israeli folk dance is good, provided it is truly Israeli folk dance and not individual variations or whatever they think works with the music. But it needs to be kept to what it is intended to be and it wasn’t intended to be part of a worship service... The only time we dance related to services is at <i>Simchat Torah</i> when it’s traditional to dance with the Torah. We have a congregation that does a lot of dancing, but we do it during our socials not during our services. So, that’s my read on dance as well as trying to be at least a little bit descriptive as to how it developed in the movement.”</p>
Rabbi Aaron Bortz	<p>“...I think it really adds to worship... I don’t really completely understand. I just think I love the way they move and express themselves in praise to God. And I think it augments worship. It adds to the worship. And my wife will tell you the same thing, and she did not grow up in a dancing church.”</p>
Rabbi Joshua	<p>“We’re one of the, probably the minority of congregations that don’t</p>

Brumbach	incorporate dance into the service... A traditional Jewish service does not have a choreographed dancing in it... in more Hasidic forms of the synagogue, more like reformed and stuff you might get spontaneous dancing...., I have been a part of congregations that did incorporate dance. And this is actually the first Messianic congregation I've been a part of that does not... There are intentional ways to use dance in order to...supplement the worship of the congregation and actually it is part of the worship of the congregation and so you know I definitely think that there is room and a place for Messianic dancing...and... dance was a big part of the biblical text... I'm not anti-dance even though we don't really incorporate it within our own services... I think for some people it depends on the congregation. It's very meaningful to some people when that's a big part of the expression of their community.
Dr. Jeffery Seif	"You don't see that as much in synagogues. You know in traditional synagogues, women aren't even in the service, never mind dancing around drawing a certain kind of attention in the service... And the reason why that is cause God is jealous. God knows that, He knows Jewish boys. He knows that if there are Jewish women there the boys will be paying attention to the women not Him... So the whole idea of women participating in Jewish worship is new... but it is a nuance that's emergent within the Messianic Jewish community. I think that comes from, in part, within the charismatic world and a lot of Messianic Jewish energy is derived from the charismatic movement... It's born out in Israeli culture not synagogue culture, but in Israeli culture there's folk dance... And that's kind of evolved into Messianic Jewish worship experience... it's not important to many. It's important to those that do it...I don't know how to answer that because I've never done. I've never participated in that dance."
Rabbi Jim Appel	"Well, I think it's unique. I don't know of any, anywhere where you can do the circle dances during worship time. They're not in the traditional synagogue and certainly not in churches... I think it draws people... I found another interesting factor is that as I've visited other Messianic congregations... there are so many more women dancing than men. And I found a way to counter that and that's by me dancing. [laughter] So I love to dance, and our congregation has almost as many men and women dancing. And I really think it's because I set that example. Um, there was a period there when I didn't dance and it turned into being an all-women's ring."
Rabbi Irving Salzman	"I think it is very important because obviously...Jewish folk dance is important in the Jewish community. So it provides that continuity between our community and the traditional Jewish community but even more so... I think that Messianic dance would probably reflect the joy and the worship that we feel. In other words, we're not just spouting songs when we worship. But dance is almost like a spontaneous expression of the joy and worship that's in one's heart when you are

	singing a particular worship song. It's not just rote words on a page... by the way, I'm not a dancer."
Rabbi Glenn Harris	"...dance is a cultural experience that transcends Jewishness. Every people group has cultural dance aspects to it. ...I think it has significance in that, yes, we are identifying with our culture... I think as long as we keep the major things major and the minor things minor we're okay. So I'm not against it at all. I'm just not sure how important it is. And I say this as somebody who used to love going Israeli folk dancing."
Rabbi Steve Feldman	"We have amongst us a, we call it Davidic or Messianic dance. It's very typical to a Messianic congregation... dance is a very important part of what we do, which is very typical to Old Testament Judaism... We believe in Psalm 150 gives ...every manner and shape and form of... clapping your hands, shouting unto God, dancing before the Lord, all those postures of praise and worship is something we want to propagate."
Dr. Ray Gannon	"...I tell you I have never been much a fan of the Messianic dance concept except for after services... I think you hit the nail right on the head. It really has become a mark of the Messianic movement at this point and I would not discourage it whatsoever because it's one of the few distinctives of the Messianic movement in that sense. I mean I realize there's churches that also have dances by now as well, but uh I think as far as the Jewish world is concerned as being part of the normative Jewish worship expression that is pretty distinctly the Messianic contribution. I mean the other groups all dance but they don't dance for services, Messianics do."
Rabbi Frank Lowinger	"I can't really give you anything close to an expert opinion, but I will say this. When it comes to dance and music, I believe that we really borrowed from the rich tradition of the Hassidic Habad movement, who incorporated in the late 1700s and 1800s lively dance as a form of worship before God, which to me in 1948 you saw carried over with the rebirth of the state of Israel; the images of people, survivors of the Holocaust dancing a hora when Israel was declared statehood."
Rabbi Nathan Joiner	"To be honest, in our synagogue it's just the women. It's not a policy we have. It just sort of happened that way. Um, and um I think there's something special about dance because I think that dance is something I wouldn't want our movement to lose... There should be something in our services that are like that reflects like greater joy and reflects like a greater enthusiasm towards worship than you might see elsewhere... I think we should dance. I think we should be so excited that we get our bodies involved. Now that doesn't mean that we dance all the time. Um, it doesn't mean that we dance during the Amidah when you are supposed to have your feet together and not move. You know? But it's like you build it into the structure and I think it's important that we have structure."

Theology's Influence on Liturgy

After the interviewees discussed what is generally accepted and practiced liturgically, they were asked the following question to help determine the role of theology in filtering which practices were and are used, "How did the theological understandings of emerging Messianic Judaism influence the liturgy of the Messianic Jewish congregations?" There was great variety in the answer to this question. (Please see appendices for each participant's complete response.)

Table 11

The influence of theology upon the liturgy of Messianic Judaism

Rabbi Stephen Galiley	"Jewish people ... tend not to be more theological ... there's a tendency towards being somewhat practical... Now, there are Jewish theologians, there are Jewish rabbis, there are people who think in terms that we would call theological, but in much of the Jewish world if you do Shabbat, you have identified with the Jewish people... so by virtue of identifying with cultural markers that's more of how you're in and how you're out... Its more being involved in the community. It's more being involved in the cultural markers... But in terms of the rank and file of Jewish people, their understanding of what the tribe is a little different than the Christian understanding. The Christian understanding is that you have to think the right thing in order to be saved. The Jewish understanding tends more to be you have to be part of the community for salvation."
Rabbi Neil Lash	"I'm gonna have a hard time answering that question cause I'm not real big on theology. I'm just, you know, a guy who's following his Rabbi. That's our theology. We try to be led by the Holy Spirit. We are what the Christian community calls a "spirit filled" congregation. We function with an elder board and when the rabbi has some idea that some change would be appropriate he usually submits it to the elder board and we usually pray about it and then if it's the Lord, we go on."
Rabbi Jack Zimmerman	"I think you've got to be not only sensitive to the Jewish people who are coming, but you also have to be sensitive and cognizant of the neighborhood and the community in which your congregation is planted. Now for example, our congregation is somewhat light on Hebrew liturgy... Not because I'm not in favor of liturgy, but because the community where we are, which is Scottsdale, Phoenix, is a community where the average Jewish person doesn't even know

	<p>Hebrew. The average Jewish person does not have such an attachment to liturgy... At the same time... if there is a Messianic congregation that opens up in Williamsburg, Brooklyn or Crown Heights ... would be only natural and understandable for them to be heavier on the Jewish liturgy than we are because they are reaching an entirely different Jewish person than we are here in Phoenix, Arizona.”</p>
Rabbi David and Helene Rosenberg	<p>“There’s a lot of dispensational theology, which is actually replacement theology... because that’s where they came from. So we almost have had to overcome that as a movement to try to develop our own style...”</p>
Dr. John Fischer	<p>“The theology early on, as with some of the practices early on, came largely from Baptist and charismatic circles because those were the people that... the early believers in the Messianic movement ended up associating with or came to faith through. So some of that theology was the theology that shaped um practice ... I’m still thinking that by enlarge more people think like the movement at the beginning than think about what we’ve now just described as to where we’ve become more like.”</p>
Rabbi Aaron Bortz	<p>“I think that people are so consumed with, but the first thought might be to prove to the Jewish community that we are Jewish... I’m really not so concerned with that now. I’m interested in the Messianic experience... So I don’t know if I answered your question, but that’s my answer.”</p>
Rabbi Joshua Brumbach	<p>“I think what you’re seeing and what you’ve heard from various types of Messianic leaders and various congregations is that as the Messianic Jewish community has been wrestling with ‘What does it and should it mean as a Jewish movement and as a Messianic Jewish community? What does that mean and what should that look like and how should that shape our worship experience?’ and so obviously I think that our theologies are shaping in many ways by increase of liturgy and things like that because we’re recognizing that... as our thinking changes then our practice needs to change as well.”</p>
Dr. Jeffery Seif	<p>“It gives a certain kind of acceptability to carry on Jewish practices into the new Jesus economy... those first followers of Jesus lived and functioned as Jews. The congregations were synagogues. They kept Jewish dietary law. We haven’t discussed that. They kept kosher in large measure. They circumcised their children. They still lived and functioned as Jews. Realizing that, uh, gives Messianic Jews a little more umph, a little more gusto of ceasing these rights to live as Jews even while believing in Jesus.”</p>
Rabbi Jim Appel	<p>“I think in the first place the freedom to have a Jewish expression had to be established theologically because the church and their integration of replacement theology was actually, you know, at a point of saying, ‘Anything Jewish is evil...it should be avoided.’ ... the Bible doesn’t teach that at all and that ... came out of the animosity that developed between the early church and the Jewish community ... And so the theological basis of tearing all of that down is very important to give us</p>

	the freedom to incorporate Jewish tradition into how we worship.”
Rabbi Irving Salzman	“...in 1967 there was the Six Day War and Jerusalem fell back into Jewish hands for the first time in two thousand years. So ... I think that Israel occupies a prominent place in end time, biblical prophecy. So I think it’s all coming together. It’s almost like a circle. God is restarting to work with the Jewish people, right? Let’s say that’s the theological underpinning of it. And then you have the birth of the Messianic movement; people realizing, ‘Hey, God is calling us back. God’s calling our people back to faith and He’s starting to do things,’ as evidenced by the fact Jerusalem was now back in Jewish hands. So when you see the fulfillment of the Scriptures, that’s almost like a theological underpinning for everything that you do.
Rabbi Glenn Harris	“Yes, sound theology should drive everything we do...when we draw near, we need to draw near with reverence and understanding... Consequently, liturgy for its own sake is not the point...I think sometimes we think the older the form of things we’re doing, the more authentic. But no, antiquity doesn’t equal truth...Rather than just for traditions sake, think if every worship leader and every congregational leader would just give a little more intentionality to the matter of ‘why we do this.’ ...what is our goal? I think things would be better in general.
Rabbi Steve Feldman	“...to me to bring those things that God emphasize... His mercy, a place of repentance, and transformation. He always wanted a people who’d acknowledge when they didn’t please God, come to repentance and find mercy in the Lord to be restored... That personal, intimate relationship... was even in place during the entire Levitical, Sinai covenant ...I see that really brought the theological basis...And the covenant we’re in today is really more of a Abrahamic covenant than a Mosaic, Levitical, Sinai covenant... that’s why we’re considered Abraham’s seed so then Abraham’s righteousness was based on his relationship of faith and obedience... that’s the theological basis that I embrace.”
Dr. Ray Gannon	“Well, I came to the very early conviction that if someone did not have a sound handle on New Testament theology, he was destined to go into heresy...New Testament theology has to remain the filter through which all Jewish cultural expression, all Jewish religious practices are run...So that all of the good features of Jewish religion and Jewish religious practice and Jewish philosophy and Jewish literature, all of the good things associated with Jewish life come through the filter and we’re able to use them in their purified form.”
Rabbi Frank Lowinger	“I really don’t think it had much to do theologically other than the part that we identified theologically as being the natural people of Israel and identifying with things that were Jewish.”
Rabbi Nathan Joiner	“Oh, it’s tremendous. It’s huge... I think that’s why there’s such a variance in the Messianic Jewish movement...I don’t want to suggest

	<p>heresy and those sorts of things, but it's more like theological nuance... I think sometimes the Messianic Jewish movement had sort of like a ... replacement mentality where it's like... 'because we believe in Yeshua, we somehow supersede the entire Jewish world and we don't have anything we can learn from other Jews.' And so there's like a subtlety in that theology that then closes the door for interaction with the wider Jewish world in a way that is for relationships, 'the only reason we relate to the Jewish world is to ... evangelize'... as opposed to, 'we need to relate to the Jewish world because those are our brothers and sisters.' And I think that we need the latter if we're to even have a chance at bringing Yeshua home to the Jewish people.</p>
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International versus American

Two questions were asked in this section. The first inquiry, answered in Table 12, was, "Have you had significant Messianic Jewish experience internationally?" If the answer was yes, the second question was asked. Originally it was, "What similarities/differences have you noticed between the American Jewish experience and international Jewish experience and how that has affected the Messianic Jewish worship experience?" This question in its entirety was probably asked of only one interviewee. For the rest, the question was altered because the scope of the original question was too broad for the purposes of this study. Instead, a form of the following question was asked: "What similarities/differences have you noticed between the American Messianic Jewish worship experience and international Messianic Jewish worship?" The answers to this question are in Table 13. Many of the answers reflect the same conclusions as the literature in the area of the differences between the Israeli and American expression of Messianic Judaism. (Please see appendices for each participant's complete response.)

Table 12

The international experience of each research participant

Rabbi Stephen Galiley	“...I had an opportunity to visit Israel, and that was wonderful. I’ve also had the opportunity to go to Odessa, Ukraine and to be involved in a festival that Hear O Israel Ministries led by Jonathan Bernis had filled a soccer stadium of mostly Jewish people who wanted to know Yeshua.”
Rabbi Neil Lash	“, we did a marriage seminar in Israel and we take Mercy Mission Trips to Israel about every 18 months where we impact the people of Israel rather than tourists that are coming with us. We also host a weekly television program which is seen in many other parts of the world. Through our website, we had, through our latest one we had people tune in from over 80 different countries for some period of time. That would be our only international experience.”
Rabbi Jack Zimmerman	“It’s been ministering to Messianic Jews internationally and also to the church internationally as well that has wanted to learn about the Jewish roots of the faith.”
Rabbi David and Helene Rosenberg	“...just what I mentioned with Russia. Three times I went to the Soviet Union. I went to one conference in England.”
Dr. John Fischer	“I am the president of the International Messianic Jewish Alliance. So in conjunction with that I’ve done a little. Both my wife and I have taught. We had the opportunity to teach extensively around the world. Just to list the first few places that come to mind: Jerusalem, obviously, Berlin, Moscow. I’ve been to Cape Town, South Africa a couple times. One of the larger cities outside of Manila in the Philippines. I’ve been in the Ukraine on a couple occasions. So yeah, and we have had an opportunity to ministry fairly, fairly broadly.”
Rabbi Aaron Bortz	“Ah, not around the world.”
Rabbi Joshua Brumbach	“...the first week of January of ’01 to February of ’02, I lived in Budapest, Hungary. And I was there working with a whole network of congregations. At the time, the network was called Shalom Network International... so I was working with some of those congregations in Ukraine especially and in Hungary. I lived in Hungary and my primary focus was the Budapest congregation.”
Dr. Jeffery Seif	“I wouldn’t say internationally. Some have. Now I do travel internationally, and you know, will speak in conferences. I’ve been in Switzerland. I’ve been in Germany. I’ve been in Korea. I’ve been in Brazil. I’ve been in and out of Israel, you know, forty, fifty times. But, ah, some of our leaders are much more involved in an internationally scope... I’m not really a denominational leader, per se. I’m well respected in the movement, but I’m just an eccentric theologian.”
Rabbi Jim	“I would say in Canada, ah, in Israel. Um, when I visited Russia, which

Appel	was in the early nineties, there weren't any Messianic congregations yet. Uh, so that's about it. Canada and Israel—that's all I can claim."
Rabbi Irving Salzman	"I was just at one a couple of weeks ago in Berlin, but I couldn't stay for the whole service. They do a three hour service... it was interesting, you know, it was a congregation of German Jews and also of Russian Jews living in Germany. So I was able to attend that for a little bit. But I am by no means an expert on international expressions of Messianic Judaism. No. I haven't had the chance to see too many."
Rabbi Glenn Harris	"I'm sure along the way I visited one or two Messianic congregations in Europe because I traveled with the Liberated Wailing Wall, which is the Jews for Jesus music group that no longer exists. And we went to Europe a couple of times, South Africa, Germany. I can't remember off the top of my head so I'm just going to say, by enlarge, no, I really haven't had much opportunity to do things internationally."
Rabbi Steve Feldman	[No]
Dr. Ray Gannon	"...we moved to Israel under missions' appointment with the Assemblies of God. And uh we were there in and out ... cause my duties took me back and forth across the ocean, but we were in and out for much of fifteen years... while in Jerusalem ... we pioneered the first real Bible college in Israel, which is now known as the Israel College of the Bible... While there we were involved in ministering a lot with the Ethiopian Jews pouring into the nation from Ethiopia. As well as the Russian Jews, we had about a hundred thousand Russian Jews coming in every year all from the former Soviet Union."
Rabbi Frank Lowinger	"Sure, sure, um been to Israel nine times. I've been to Poland at least six times. I've toured and participated in services on four occasions in Ukraine. Uh, I've been to Hungary, Budapest twice. I've been able to, what am I leaving out? Oh, the Czech Republic. I was part of service in Czech Republic. Uh, Poland, Germany, so yes, I've had wonderful experiences like this, for which I am just thankful to God for opening up these opportunities for me."
Rabbi Nathan Joiner	"Not internationally, not really. No, just in the United States."

Table 13

Observed differences/similarities between the United States and international Messianic Judaism

Rabbi Stephen Galiley	"Every Jewish community has been impacted by various other cultures that they live in the midst of... We believe that there are different parts of the tribes just as Messianic Jews get along within our own little enclave with people who are very, very different than us and practice
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	<p>things that are very different than us and see the world very different than us so too what ends up happening is we believe that the Jewish community can benefit from having Messianic Jews in it because we're not simply involved for missionizing. We are also involved because we love the people whom we love. And we care for Jewish people. And we want to see God do what He wants to do."</p>
Rabbi Neil Lash	<p>"Yeah, there are a couple of different things and this is just my observation, they may or may not be true... Messianic rabbis in Israel will almost never wear a kippa because that imparts some information culturally and they usually use some other title than 'rabbi'. Even though they may use that here. Even though they may use the term 'rabbi' when they are here in the United States, in their congregations, it implies a certain thing that many of them do not have, but we have no experience with Messianic Judaism in Europe. Our only experience would be with some of the rabbis and congregational leaders in Israel that we know personally that we interact with."</p>
Rabbi Jack Zimmerman	<p>"One of the main differences is that when I go to Messianic congregations internationally I don't see so much of what I like to refer to as the 'Barbie and Ken Gentile and Jewish dress up.' I see it here in the United States, but I don't see it internationally. And we can learn a lot from those people internationally. Again I was just at the Mexican Messianic Alliance Conference, and at that conference you've got Jewish people coming. You've got Gentiles coming. And guess what! The Gentiles who are there don't feel the need to convert to Judaism to be Jews. Thank God! They do not feel the need to dress up like Jews. Thank God! ... yet that type of stuff unfortunately is all too common here in the United States... you don't get brownie points by converting from a Gentile to a Jew... The other dynamic though that I see, is that, and it's not just in Messianic congregations, it's in churches too. Here, stateside, we seem to have this overemphasis on end times Bible prophecy... I'm not saying that this stuff isn't good. It is. That's why it's in Scripture. But I think we focus too much on it. Whereas when you go internationally, that's not the focus... they're focus is, 'How do we get as many people into the kingdom as quickly, as best as possible? So that whenever it is that Yeshua decides to return He will be welcomed by an even bigger harvest of souls!'"</p>
Rabbi David and Helene Rosenberg	<p>"...in the early years when we were developing our approach to worship, which you saw this weekend, was we were close friends with Dr. Fleischer, Ruth Fleischer, and she was, at the time, her husband was a rabbi in London. He fell away. It was really tragic. She's such a courageous woman that she stayed and became the rabbi when it wasn't fashionable for any woman to lead a Messianic congregation... what I am excited about is she's planted congregations in Africa, in England, all throughout Europe, and they all follow this model of the Inner Court, Outer Court, Holy of Holies. She really adopted that, docking and</p>

	everything. I mean, they really, really adopted our model. She has spread it all over Europe and Africa. It's amazing what she's doing."
Dr. John Fischer	"...Americans expressions have tended to shape expressions elsewhere ... Both in Berlin and in Moscow, they have tended to move along more traditional lines perhaps faster than the American versions did. Now again, that's only two places so I can't necessarily generalize. At least, those two particular spots as of last year looked like they were moving in a more, a more liturgical, a more traditional direction... American messianic Judaism has been widely influential. I mean it led the way. It impacted Israel. It impacted the former Soviet Union. It impacted Europe. It was at least in the beginning always a step or two ahead of everywhere else. It is what impacted others, rather than the reverse."
Rabbi Aaron Bortz	"I've heard they [Israeli congregations] are considerably different. First of all, they can do everything in Hebrew. But they're not as, I don't think the Messianic Jewish congregations in Israel are as involved in liturgical observance as the American Messianic Jewish congregations. I'm pretty sure that's true. I mean they'll do some of it, but I don't think they're as actively involved in developing it and nurturing it along. But that's what I heard from other Messianic believers out of Israel."
Rabbi Joshua Brumbach	"I think it depends on which countries, but I think the American movement is much further along than any of the other countries...even though the movement really started in Great Britain ... shifted away to America. So the American congregations tend to be more liturgical... are better organized, the fact that we have a much larger movement... the majority of the Israeli Messianic Jewish congregations are very Christian. There's actually very little Jewish, other than the people are Jewish, in the services themselves. But there are many reasons for that also that the Messianic community is not as old in Israel as it is in America. And they're also wrestling with kind of different issues than we are here... But now slowly there are a number of Messianic Jews who are sort of recognizing that 'We need to wrestle with the exact same questions that the American Messianic Jewish community has been wrestling with.' ... in Israel... The majority of the congregations are charismatic... In Ukraine, you have a different kind of a thing. So it's not religiously Jewish but it's very culturally Jewish. So the music sounds very Jewish and everything, but the thinking and the actual practice of Judaism is very minuscule in many of those congregations."
Dr. Jeffery Seif	"Well, let me just contrast international with Israel. So, here Messianic leaders will call themselves rabbis. People don't call themselves rabbis in Israel. Here in the Messianic synagogues we'll wear yamakas and skull caps and tallis. They won't do it in Israel. Here they'll have a Torah service. Usually they won't do it in Israel, interestingly. In America, the Messianic Jews and in Europe too, individuals are much more predisposed to use the Jewish cultural markers—the yamaka, the tallis, the name 'rabbi,' etc. In Israel, that stuff doesn't mean anything

	<p>cause they don't need to, they don't need any cultural markers to say that they're Jewish. The fact that they live in Israel and put their kids in the army, they know they're Jewish... From their perspective, they have nothing to prove. So there's a marked difference between the Messianic Jewish experience from this side of the pond than in Israel. And, you know, I've been in Europe. The Messianic works there in the Soviet Union, in Germany, and the like, they're much more predisposed to employ the cultural markers. So those are some reflections."</p>
Rabbi Jim Appel	<p>"Well, in Canada, we're very similar. Very, very similar I think mostly because the particular congregations that I've visited there, they both belong to the IAMCS also and uh are very similar. In Israel, uh, it was quite different because they kind of see themselves more as churches in Israel. Interesting, because, actually I shouldn't say that. I shouldn't say that. The places I visited when I was in Israel were really churches of foreigners who were you know living in Israel so they were more like churches. They didn't have a lot of native Israelis in them."</p>
Rabbi Irving Salzman	<p>"I would say there were similarities and there were differences. I liked, there were certain things I liked about theirs. They were just, you know, I found it refreshing because there was such a wonderful marriage in this particular congregation in Berlin between Jewishness and faith. In other words, they were so unashamed in the way that they worshiped. You could almost feel, you could almost discern that they were proud to be Jews and proud to be believers. And there was no contradiction of that. They were just so confident of who they were in Jesus as Jews. And I can't point to what did that for people just there was something about it. But that's the way it made me feel."</p>
Dr. Ray Gannon	<p>"In a place like America... Jewish people are very focused on the Jewish identity question... This is not a biblical issue. This is an issue that developed in Europe among Jewish leadership with the rise of first, you know. I mean, they have the Enlightenment and then you have the Emancipation where Jews are permitted to come out of the ghettos where they have been cloistered for many long centuries where they couldn't change their identity if they wanted to. And now suddenly they're invited to come out and assimilate into Western civilization... But there's a certain price to pay for that assimilation and the issue is 'to what extent are we willing to put aside our Jewish distinctives and become like everybody else?' ... This is a problem for Jews in the Diaspora. This is not an issue for Jews living in Israel. Jews who live in Israel are not worried about Jewish identity... Israeli believers don't ... give a thought to Jewishness. They just want to worship the Lord... They want to have real encounter with God. They want to have real encounter with the Word of God. And they feel no obligation, most of them, feel no obligation to wear yamakas or to read from the Torah scroll or to do liturgical... And they don't carry a lot of the religious trappings that you may find among American Jewish believers or</p>

	among European Jewish believers or South American Jewish believers. They have no vested interest in donning the garb of ghetto Judaism. They want to be free liberated Israelis. And so this is why there is often a clash between Israeli believers and Messianic Jews especially those who migrate from the United States for example... And so this is the real dilemma and real diversity. If we were to take the average Messianic synagogue in the United States and transplant it per se to Israel, it would be held in contempt by Israeli believers.
Rabbi Frank Lowinger	“The major differences I saw was probably in Eastern Europe where as, for example when I would teach or speak, I’m used to standing, but in Ukraine, parts of Eastern Europe, it’s traditional for the teacher to be seated. So that took some getting used to, but other than that. I really didn’t find too much in the way of liturgy. There was a lot of good uplifting music and song with the cultural flavor that goes with the particular sounds that are known for Eastern Europe or the particular sounds of instrumentation of Poland or the Czech Republic and even Israel. There’s just this wonderful flavor of those countries and their style of music.”

Reflection

Both the qualitative research and the literature review revealed that the hypothesis of this study was correct regarding liturgy and the formation of Messianic Judaism but incorrect in its assumption about current practice. The hypothesis formulated by the researcher stated, “American mainline Messianic Jewish liturgy predominantly reflects the worship traditions of the mainline charismatic church.” This was true primarily when Messianic Judaism revived as a congregational movement in the 1970s and 1980s. According to the interviews, at that time, the majority of the congregations’ liturgical practices reflected the Christian tradition through which the congregational leader came to faith. However, as the movement matured, most of the congregations integrated more traditional Jewish liturgy and the Christian traditions were removed or altered. Based on the research, it can be concluded that today the majority of Messianic congregations in

the United States seek to identify with the wider Jewish community culturally and ethnically by worshiping Yeshua in a manner that is identifiably Jewish.

In one sense, the entirety of the research can be summed up in the statement, “it depends.” In another sense, there were some very similar liturgical concepts among the majority of those interviewed that corroborate the literature. Most of the inquiries probed into the root question of “What exactly is Messianic Judaism?” In order to answer this, the queries “What is Jewish?” and “What is Christian” also had to be answered. Based on the research, what is considered Jewish practice and what should be found in Messianic Judaism seems to depend on several key factors two of which are enumerated here.

First, it depends on the background of the congregational leader. As the interviewees responded to questions, phrases such as “this is Jewish” or “this is not Jewish” were used. Later, the background of the interviewees was taken into account as their descriptions of what is or is not Jewish was examined. After assessing the responses of the group, the conclusion of the researcher is that an individual’s belief of what is and is not Jewish is contingent, at least in part, upon what expression of Judaism that individual was raised in or exposed to. For example, an Episcopalian may associate Christian worship with high liturgical forms, and believe that the low liturgical expression of a nondenominational church is not a legitimate form of Christianity. Correspondingly, within Judaism there seems to be a similar difference between high and low synagogue traditions. This distinction seems to have carried over into Messianic Judaism as evidenced by the variety of answers given to questions regarding what is traditionally Jewish or Christian practice. Most of the leaders seemed to identify practices as Jewish or not based on their particular experience and background in Judaism.

However, some identified it from a more academic or historical point of view. In order to determine if there is a true correlation, further research should be conducted.

Second, the amount and kind of liturgy depends on the community within which the Messianic congregation is located. Several of the rabbis explicitly stated that a Messianic congregation must be sensitive to the kind of Jewish community they are seeking to reach. Rabbi Brumbach pointed out that Beverly Hills is a liturgically focused Jewish community so their Messianic congregation reflects that.¹⁴⁰ Conversely, Rabbi Zimmerman stated that most Jews in Phoenix are secular. Thus, his service is not as liturgically focused as a fellowship in Long Island or Beverly Hills should be, but the liturgy they do utilize is done intentionally and in a traditional manner.¹⁴¹ Several rabbis articulated their belief that each Messianic congregation should use liturgy intentionally and with sensitivity to the particular Jewish community within which it exists.

Beyond the contingencies, the majority of the rabbis interviewed agreed that there are elements of liturgy that must be present to make a congregation distinct and recognizable as Messianic Jewish. First, it must look Jewish by using Jewish symbols and imagery within the sanctuary.¹⁴² Jewish congregants don at least a tallis as is traditionally appropriate to a Shabbat service. Second, it must sound Jewish—certain prayers such as the Shema and V'ahavta are recited and music comes primarily from the Jewish world. Third, it must view Israel as eschatologically significant. Fourth, it must stay connected to the Jewish world by continuing to engage in life cycle events in a culturally

¹⁴⁰ Joshua Brumbach, phone conversation with author, July 30, 2014.

¹⁴¹ Jack Zimmerman, phone conversation with author, July 22, 2014.

¹⁴² These items are not necessarily listed in order of importance.

appropriate manner. Fifth, it needs to continue to celebrate the feasts. Finally, it must believe and teach Yeshua is the Messiah.

An unexpected area of disagreement was encountered concerning the place dance should hold in Messianic Judaism. It was expected that this question would prompt the most consistent answers. Instead, it was discovered that there is a divergence of conviction concerning its current and historic role within Judaism. On one end of spectrum, dance is seen as a demonstration of the restoration of joy because Messiah has come.¹⁴³ This joy was removed from the synagogue when the Temple was destroyed, although some, such as the Lubavitch communities, dance in their Shabbat services.¹⁴⁴ Other Messianics remain convicted that dance has no place in a Shabbat service, but should be used in celebration at other times, such as during fellowship after services.¹⁴⁵

Conclusion

Shortly after the inception of the Church, there was the question “How much Jewish practice should Gentile believers adopt?” Paul addressed the issue several times, and the Church in Jerusalem gave specific instructions to Gentile believers in Acts 15. However, over the course of history, the question disappeared as Christianity and Judaism grew to be mutually exclusive. It was not until the nineteenth century that the question again emerged but in an inverted manner. Now, the question was, “How much Judaism should Jewish believers in Jesus continue to practice?” Since the 1970s, the movement known as Messianic Judaism has been growing. At its beginning, these

¹⁴³ David Rosenberg, interviewed by author, July 26, 2014.

¹⁴⁴ Nathan Joiner, phone conversation with author, August 15, 2014.

¹⁴⁵ John Fischer, phone conversation with author, July 28, 2014.

congregations primarily reflected the worship practices of the Christian church. However, as the movement has matured, it has grown to reflect a more traditional Jewish worship expression. The result has been a movement that seeks to worship Jesus as Messiah in a manner that is culturally identifiable with Judaism. To do so, they have incorporated liturgy from the synagogue, charismatic movement, and Scripture, which has created a unique worship culture. This qualitative study has captured the smallest glimpse of the creation, evolution, and current practice of that culture, which will continue to alter and adjust its liturgy as long as it exists. This study has only ascertained in part how it began, why it began, and where it is going. For now, mainstream Messianic Jewish liturgical practices in the United States of America predominately reflect a focused effort to merge traditional Jewish liturgies and the Gospel into a Biblical expression of worship.

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Appendix A: Stephen Galiley

Interview with Rabbi Stephen Galiley on June 28, 2014

Elizabeth: This is a survey for Messianic Jewish Liturgical practices, um, I am interviewing Rabbi Steve, and, um, our first question is: 'If you would define 'Messianic Judaism?''

Steve: Messianic Judaism, as the term is currently used, is a movement, which is at the same time a very old movement and a very new movement. There has been a renaissance of Jewish people who believed in Jesus, in a sense, Paul says in Romans that there has always been a remnant of Jewish people who have believed in Jesus and historically this is accurate and this is correct. But what had happened was over the course of many centuries, uh, the Jewish remnant was an individual in one place or an individual in another place and it tended not to be community oriented. And, so, Messianic Judaism grew out of the Hebrew Christian movement, which was established around the time of the enlightenment, first in Europe and then over into the United States, whereby Hebrew Christians in their coming to believe in Jesus continued to embrace Jewish identity. But this tended to be individuals who would go and worship at an Episcopal church or a Presbyterian church or at some other Christian denomination and Christian movement. What ends up happening is in the mid-twentieth century and particularly after Jerusalem returns to Jewish hands in 1967. There is an influx of Jewish people who come to believe in Jesus, who not only want to have individual identification with the Jewish people as a Hebrew Christian, but want to end up having communal relationship with each other. And, so, this movement sprung out of the Hebrew Christian movement, but saw itself and its identity differently. And part of the different identity was the desire to set up congregations and synagogues and incorporate more Jewish practice.

Elizabeth: so, Hebrew Christian movement are acting Jewish people in Christian churches, established Christian churches?

Steve: tended to be individuals in Christian churches, okay, and Messianic Judaism tended to become people who wanted to form communities. Now the communities were open to those who were Jewish and were open to those who were not Jewish. And, so, this was not something where with Messianic Judaism the only people who could participate are Jewish necessarily, but if you participate in it, you will be embracing some level of Jewish identity, Jewish faith, Jewish practice in the midst of your worship of Jesus.

Elizabeth: Okay.

Steve: Is that helpful?

Elizabeth: Yes, yes. So then coming off of that, what do you believe are important cultural markers in Messianic Jewish worship? So, if I go to an Episcopal church, there is going to be a lot of kneeling and standing. There are certain prayers that we're going to pray from a prayer book. Um, so there are those defined liturgical practices of bowing, kneeling, and stuff. So when I say 'cultural markers', I'm talking about do you raise your hands in worship? Or nobody raises their hands in worship? Is there a lot of kneeling? I know in some synagogues you kiss the Torah scroll when it comes around. Is that common in Messianic Jewish synagogues? What do you think are some of the important ones?

Steve: Messianic Judaism is not unlike the tribes of Israel where you had people who were coming from somewhat different tribes who were all united under their worship of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And so in Messianic Judaism, in my experience, there have been flows of different types of people

and different types of practices. I'll go into a couple different ones okay? I'm hoping I won't get in a whole lot of trouble on this okay?

Liz, is ready but I don't know if those who read this will be ready. But there are a couple different streams, okay? Some people think that by having an exceedingly charismatic and spirit-filled service, what will end up happening is this will draw Jewish people to Yeshua, and so there are Messianic Jewish congregations that are very charismatic/Pentecostal. Other people believe that having the Word of truth proclaimed and having excellent teaching will draw Jewish people to Jesus. And so there tends to be a very heavy Baptist style preaching. Others believe that if we do traditional Jewish liturgy that is done in the synagogue but we do it really well and we say "Yeshua" that what will end up happening is this will draw Jewish people to Yeshua. Now none of these things are things that can't draw people to Yeshua, and on a certain level each of the people who believe different aspects of this have people that they really do draw to the Lord. But based on what you think is going to be an effective messiology strategy is going to be how you are going to anchor your service.

So for example, there are some messianic synagogues that are liturgically very heavy. And by liturgy I mean the traditional Jewish liturgy. And so they will go through and I interned at a Messianic Jewish synagogue that had over an hour of mostly Hebrew with some English translation of liturgy. Okay. Very serious.

Elizabeth: Now that was a Messianic Jewish synagogue?

Steve: Messianic Jewish synagogue. Now they had a three to four hour service. Okay, so they had praise and worship. They had a very strong liturgical component. They had a very long sermon as well. And so this does happen. What you are going to find, is you are going to find that where people come from in terms of the folks who have disciples the leaders of the movement are going to have an impact on how the leader leads their synagogue and their community. You are going to also find that who they continue to relate with has an impact on how they lead their synagogue and their community. And you're going to also find out that in Messianic Judaism the folks who are part charismatic synagogues embrace those who are doing baptistic synagogues and embrace those who are doing a traditional/liturgical synagogue. And so they all see themselves as being part of the same tribe and part of the same team. But you will have great variety between synagogues far more so than in more standardized church.

Elizabeth: okay. Well, that's kind of what I was going to ask so it sounds like it's not a denomination in the traditional sense of the word. Where its like, you know, you're Baptist and you all basically follow the same formula in your worship service. But even there it is very fluid as to what kind of Baptist you are will determine what kind of service you have, if it's more on the Pentecostal side or the Reformed side. So it kind of fluctuates there?

Steve: Yes. What holds Messianic Judaism together is the heart cry of wanting to see the Jewish people come to know Yeshua. And there is a recognition in many quarters that different communities are different and that a Messianic Jewish congregation in Brooklyn should look very different from a Messianic Jewish congregation in Kansas City, for example. That the level of observance, the level of Jewish comfort and culture that is in your community, should end up having an impact on the kind of service that you do and the kind of outreach that you do.

Elizabeth: so it's kind of knowing who your, who your, almost knowing your field? You know, not trying to plow a wheat field with the wrong kind of machine. Or something like that.

Steve: yes, I think that's fair. Is this helpful?

Elizabeth: Yes, when I'm not butchering metaphors. Are there any cultural markers that are pretty universal to Messianic Jewish congregations? Like certain things that you all do? Or a majority will do?

Steve: Here are some of the big things that hold us together: worship on Shabbat, that's a big deal. Another thing that holds us together is the biblical feast cycle.

Elizabeth: Shabbat is Saturday usually?

Steve: Shabbat is Friday night sundown to Saturday night sundown.

Elizabeth: Okay

Steve: So, the feasts in Leviticus chapter eleven. The biblical feasts have held the Jewish people together and help hold Messianic Judaism together. The vast majority of Messianic Jews have come from some sort of interaction with Christian Protestantism and so the theology tends to be similar to evangelical or charismatic Protestantism. In terms of their understanding of Scripture, their understanding of the Bible, their understanding of how the Bible relates the tools that they use for exegesis and study. They are going to kind of come out of that area although there's of course going to be significant cultural and theological influence from the Jewish people.

Elizabeth: Okay, that was my other question. You have many converting right from Judaism, so they are going to reflect their hermeneutics and exegesis more?

Steve: Well, what ends up happening is that there's pieces of this that are going to reflect the Jewish world and Jewish culture. But usually the leadership going through some level of training that will either be first, second, or third generation evangelical Protestantism of some variety.

Elizabeth: Okay, but, I mean, in the midst of that Messianic Judaism has been as a community for a generation or two at this point so is it formulating its own niche in between those two, the Jewish exegesis, hermeneutical, theology and the Protestant Christian. Is it forming its own united one?

Steve: That's starting to happen now. That's starting to happen now and what you have, is you have certain scholars who were part of the first generation to come to faith who have studied academically and they are starting to establish and teach. There is great excitement about this. But some of the people and this is not an exclusive list, but some of the significant scholars who have a hand in shaping Messianic Judaism include people like Dr. Michael Brown, who has the Fire School in the Carolinas. You have Dr. Jeffery Seif out of Texas who had been involved with Zola Levitt's Television show, is involved with Gateway, and also with King's University. You have Dr. Raymond Gannon who is arguably in a handful of people who may have been among the first people to start a Messianic Jewish synagogue in the twentieth century in Los Angeles. You have people like Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum who kind of comes from a more Hebrew Christian strain but is also very influential among Jewish believers in Jesus and maybe a bit more baptistic than some others.

Elizabeth: I was gonna say his name comes up a lot in Baptist theology books actually.

Steve: Yes, so, in terms of this, these are just a few people and if I was working hard on it and coming up with other people, there's Dr. Daniel Juster, who is involved with a movement called Tikkun. Okay and he is also well respected in the movement. And I'm sure that by just mentioning those names I have left off a

bunch of other names that I could get in real trouble for. But these are just some of the people who are either writing or who are teaching, who are pasturing, who are extending influence through the Messianic Jewish movement. There is an academic and Jewish people tend to be academic and messianic Jews tend to be academic. And we tend to really respect advanced learning. And so while most of what's going on on the ground is happening through individual congregations and communities, there is an academic base that is growing, okay? And with the growth of this academic base it meets the old Jewish saying "two Jews, three opinions." So whether we are actually standardizing or not is an entirely different issue, but we are certainly engaging. And Dr. Mitch Glaser actually has an annual symposium called the Borough Park Symposium that happens, I believe, in New York City every year, tends to be in the fall. And so the Borough Park Symposium is a gathering of academics and presentation of papers and opportunity to have an academic free for all amongst those from a lot of different traditions.

Elizabeth: That's cool. So, worship on Shabbat holds the community, more the global, it is a global community now?

Steve: Yes.

Elizabeth: Okay, the Leviticus 11 feasts, the theology that tends to be more charismatic, Christian Protestantism...

Steve: and there's also going to certain pieces of ancient and traditional liturgy such as the Shema, the V'ahavta. You also have the Torah reading cycle that's common in the synagogue and that maybe referred to implicitly or explicitly. Some synagogues the leadership preaches off of that on a weekly basis. And, so there's these sorts of pieces that we may choose to use, we may choose not to use, okay. But with the way that all of this is working its all understood as part of the cultural mix. Now the other thing that goes on with Messianic Jewish synagogues is we are, I think that we are a bridge movement between the rabbinic Jewish world and the Christian world and we kind of fit in the space between the two of them. And so culturally we will draw upon both streams but what ends up happening culturally is in terms of the types of music that we do, the type of culture that we present in terms of the food, it tends to be the sort of thing that if it relates in a Jewish world on a certain level, it's a good thing. Okay? So Messianic Jewish music in the late '60s/early '70s was profoundly impacted by the film "Fiddler on the Roof." And so what ended up happening was this was a European Jewish cultural expression that was very similar to "Beyond the Pale" and kind of like the point where the Orient and Europe and Russia all kind of came together. And the influences were drawn from all those areas.

Elizabeth: That's really interesting. It explains so much.

Steve: And so in terms of the very early Messianic Jewish music that was written a lot of this had a significant relationship to bar mitzvah music.

Elizabeth: Okay, now is that that same as Klezmer music? Or just not?

Steve: Klezmer music and bar mitzvah music are not...I would say that bar mitzvah music is a broader range and Klezmer is more narrow, but Klezmer is definitely part of what makes bar mitzvah music.

Elizabeth: Okay

Steve: so in terms of this what ended up happening with the growth of the community is to the extent that we could take Jewish cultural markers and take them and use them as our own, this ended up becoming a

really big deal. So one of the things that is characteristic of Messianic Jewish music tends to be minor modal music which has upbeat and happy rhythm. Okay, so danceable rhythm with minor modal tonalities. And in many other cultures minor modal music is used to represent sadness and sorrow.

Elizabeth: yeah, it's kind of an interesting mix.

Steve: but when you hear this you go, "Oh, that's kind of Jewish in certain fashions." But as a musician, that's how I would describe this.

Elizabeth: yeah, okay. I have a question off of something that you said earlier about how its between the rabbinic Jewish world and the Christian world. You said that the theology and stuff will tend to represent the charismatic Christian Protestantism. Now there are, I've never heard 'denomination' used in terms of the Jewish world, but there's Conservative, Reformed, Orthodox, what's the Jewish theology group, I guess, that's represented more?

Steve: Jewish people tend not to get really; they tend not to be more theological. They tend to be, there's a tendency towards being somewhat practical. Now, there are Jewish theologians, there are Jewish rabbis, there are people who think in terms that we would call theological, but in much of the Jewish world if you do Shabbat, you have identified with the Jewish people. If you do Passover, you've identified with the Jewish people. If you do Yom Kippur, you identify with the Jewish people. So by virtue of identifying with cultural markers that's more of how you're in and how you're out. And so if you're crazy uncle believes in Buddhism, nobody asks. But as long as he is doing the stuff that the rest of the community is doing, what he thinks when he's at home with the lamp on is just nobody else's business. Okay?

Elizabeth: Okay, so it's more tradition?

Steve: Its more being involved in the community. It's more being involved in the cultural markers. It's more being involved in how the world moves forward and identifying and participating as part of the community. Okay so are there theologies? Absolutely. If you read books where they get into what Jews believe and what Jews think and stuff like this, will there definitely be boundaries and barriers and fences and areas that are in and areas that are out? Absolutely. But in terms of the rank and file of Jewish people, their understanding of what the tribe is a little different than the Christian understanding. The Christian understanding is that you have to think the right thing in order to be saved. The Jewish understanding tends more to be you have to be part of the community for salvation. And in some respects the Jewish people and the Roman Catholics are far closer than one might otherwise think, because it's a communal participation.

Elizabeth: Rather than just an individual thing

Steve: Rather than individually thinking properly, which is kind of an evangelical Christian understanding of Scripture.

Elizabeth: Okay, it just reminded me of, you know, you read the Old Testament, as a more evangelical Christian, and you see the dad messed up and the whole family gets killed. You're like "Good grief! That's kind of harsh." But it's that community mindset and you see that in God describing things, you know, visiting upon the father to the third and fourth generation. Its like, "Oh, that's kind of a big deal."

Steve: Yes

Elizabeth: So you see that as very much alive where an evangelical Christian is going to say, "Oh, that's past and it's just you and God now."

Steve: The evangelical Christian will say, “The sandwich they had last Wednesday is past.”

Elizabeth: yes, alright so moving on, what aspects of contemporary Jewish and we’ve kind of gotten into this I think, liturgical practices are integrated into Messianic Judaism? Okay, so we talked about Leviticus eleven, but are there other, I guess, more traditions that have arisen in Jewish practice that have shifted over? Or is it still just kind of more the Scripture basis?

Steve: Depends on the community, doesn’t it? If you are ministering to a Reformed community that is more loosely attached liturgically speaking, then you will probably do less. And if you are ministering to an Orthodox community that is very attached to these practices, then that’s a big deal. The life cycle things that go on are significant opportunities for Messianic Jewish believers to identify with their Jewish traditions. So some of these life cycle things include Bris, in terms of the birth of male babies, marriages, funerals, major portions of the life cycle of individuals in the community as the community celebrates it together.

Elizabeth: Okay, then bar and bat mitzvahs? Those are in both communities?

Steve: Yes, absolutely.

Elizabeth: Then the flip side of that, what contemporary Christian liturgical practices are more commonly integrated. Now that’s kind of the same thing, it depends where your community is and all that?

Steve: Well, what’s ended up happening is Jewish music has always, and we are talking musically right now but this is true for other pieces of culture as well, okay? Jewish music has always drawn upon what is going on around them. So if you’re listening to Ladino music, that’s Mediterranean Jewish music; so Spanish Jewish music, Moroccan Jewish music, that sort of thing. You’ll find a lot of what music from Morocco and music from Spain sounds like that’s in the Jewish music. Okay? If you’re listening to the “Beyond the Pale” Jewish music and if you listen to the secular that came from the same time period, the same era, and the same region, you’ll find great similarities between Polish and Russian and Oriental music and the Jewish music of that era. Jewish culture and Jewish art and Jewish music has always adapted and drawn from what’s going on around us.

Elizabeth: That’s something that I noticed when I did research awhile back. I was trying to figure out what makes Jewish music Jewish music. And I was like, “Well, it just depends what part of the world you are in and what culture you are interacting with as a Jew and how much of their music is integrated and adapted. Because like you think about it and you have been scattered all over the world for about two thousand years. So the ones in Russia have a different music form and love than the Moroccans, like you said, and the Americans.

Steve: You have to remember that Bob Dylan, Neil Diamond, and Barbra Streisand are all Jewish musicians.

Elizabeth: I didn’t realize Bob Dylan was Jewish.

Steve: yeah, Robert Zimmerman was his birth name.

Elizabeth: Oh, okay so that’s kind of with the Christian aspect of using the music?

Steve: And the other thing that ends up happening with Jewish music is the niggun of Eastern Europe that were used in the Hasidic Jewish community is often an influence. Some of the tonalities of the synagogal music can often end up finding its way into the mix with contemporary Jewish music.

Elizabeth: And was that unique to Jewish communities there? Or even reflective of the cultures that they were in?

Steve: What you hear is what comes out. The communities that they were in the midst of would not have drawn necessarily on Jewish liturgical music unless they were hearing it regularly. But those who were hearing it regularly would draw on it. And one of the interesting contemporary examples of a Jewish musician who is drawing both contemporary music styles and synagogal music styles is **Matisyahu**. He is an interesting combination of how he has taken Jamaican reggae and Jewish **synagogal** music and made a musical form, which has been quite popular.

Elizabeth: I didn't realize it was Jamaican reggae. Cool. Thank you, this is good. What liturgical worship practices from either the Christian or Jewish world were avoided in the formation of Messianic Judaism and why do you think that was?

Steve: In America, what has ended up happening is the Jewish community and Christian community have been defined almost in opposition to each other. And so people want to know if you're Jewish or if you're Christian. And so as a result the Messianic Jewish community, and this is not necessarily simply a messiological issue but this is part of an identity issue and part of a choosing to identify with those whom you care for very deeply. The Messianic Jewish world has looked at some of the cultural Christian markers and has determined that it would be a messiological problem. And it would be an identity problem in the culture that they live in for them to embrace certain parts of the Christian identity stuff.

Elizabeth: Such as?

Steve: Christmas, Easter, Sunday worship, you just kind of go down the line of what's going on in terms of what makes a Christian a Christian and you'll find that in Messianic Judaism there is an attempt to avoid that. It's not necessarily because it's bad, okay? And some will argue that it's because it's bad, okay? I mean we've got all types in the movement. And if you go to the Messiah Conference, you'll meet some of those people. I'm giving you what I understand, and you'll get other people, okay? And you may end up coming back and saying, "Rabbi Steve, you said these people didn't exist." And well, maybe I didn't say that they didn't exist but maybe I didn't clue you into the full range of the wild animals out there. So in terms of this, there is always an eye towards the communities that we relate to that will end up having input at least on what we will accept and what we will determine will be not useful for our moving forward what we are called to.

Elizabeth: Are there any specific, common Jewish practices that you know were avoided? Or there's just less from that camp that was avoided?

Steve: Kabbalah, which is Jewish mysticism and magic, tends to be avoided because it is occultism. And there's a whole series of Jewish folk religion practices that were not necessarily what the rabbis taught but that, you know, ended up falling into the category I would say of superstition. And those tend to be avoided. And also in terms of some of the rabbinic teaching and customs that were developed against Yeshua would also be things that different Messianic communities would have to weigh and would have to consider how they would relate to this.

Elizabeth: Thank you. How did the leaders from Christianity and Judaism, those two camps, respond the Messianic Jews incorporating the liturgical practices or leaving them out? Basically, forming their own communities?

Steve: with shrieking and wailing.

Elizabeth: From both sides?

Steve: I mean in terms of this, there are lots of quotes that you can find over the past thirty to thirty-five years where rabbis have complained that the Messianic Jews or the Hebrew Christians or whatever they call us have stolen their symbols. Kind of like they have trademark on the symbols and nobody else is allowed to use it without their permission, okay? So when we talk about doing Christ in the Passover, which is common for Jews for Jesus, or Passover Sedars that incorporate Messiah, which is common to Messianic Jewish congregations, they will complain that we have stolen Passover. Now nobody bothers to read the Gospel and find out that Yeshua high jacked Passover around 30 of the Common Era, okay? It's been high jacked long, long ago whether we've been paying attention or not is another issue. But as a Messianic Jew who has been doing this for decades at this point in time I would have to say that every aspect of Torah, every aspect of the Jewish biblical feast cycle, points in one form or another to Yeshua. And if you believe that Yeshua is Messiah, you believe that this was all created to point towards Him when He came. If you don't believe that Yeshua's Messiah, but you believe that Yeshua came and lived as an observant Jewish man, you gotta say, "Well, this ended up molding Him in such a fashion so that He was congruent with the traditions that He grew up with." But however you come to this the truth of the matter is who Yeshua is and who Judaism is these rivers run alongside each other. And so for Messianic Judaism to take what Yeshua and the apostles did and what the first century church did, it's not very hard for us to reintegrate it so that it looks very much like what originally happened. And so some Christians are fairly supportive of Messianic Jews and see, it makes sense to them that this would exist if they have read Scripture and if they've studied. Other Christians believe that there was something inherently wrong and evil with Judaism where what God came to do was to set up a new culture called 'Christianity' to replace the old and defective culture called 'Judaism.' So the people who believe that tend not to be terribly supportive.

Elizabeth: and that tends to be more the replacement theology camp?

Steve: It is the replacement theology camp. In America, there are hundreds of millions of people who all speak the same language, who watch the same television, who enjoy the same media, even though they claim not to. And there is a variety of things that are going on in our culture, so it is very easy in America to be in a position where you think that everybody is like you. And so we have certain people who have churches who believe that everybody oughtta go to their church because they believe that everybody is essentially the same. And the bigger the church the more likely the pastor thinks that they are the only expression of the body of Messiah that is necessary. And so in terms of this, if you think that everybody is the same and everybody ought to be coming to your church, then you don't see a need for any of the rest of this. Okay? And it's only if you are sensitive to the cultural differences that happen with people that you get to a point that you realize that who Messiah is is so vast and so important and so wonderful that people should not be forced to abandon their culture in order to embrace Him.

Elizabeth: Have you ever had this? Where, I guess in bigger cities in America you'll see this more, but you'll have Spanish churches, you'll have African, like actually from Africa, black churches, and then

you'll have African American churches, and white churches but then somebody hears that you've got a Jewish church, synagogue and their like, "What do you need that for?"

Steve: Yes, all the time. Pretty standard. On a certain level, if we believe somebody speaks a different language we will grudgingly allow them to do what they've got to do. But we don't really understand a different culture versus a different language. So with what's going on, we don't understand culture and tradition as being part of what binds people together and also part of what can cause division and separation between people.

Elizabeth: How did early Jewish cultural identity from Yeshua's era influence liturgical decisions in the rebirth of Messianic Judaism?

Steve: We went back to the book and if it seemed to be what they were doing, we did it.

Elizabeth: Okay, so just reading and studying Scripture and seeing how did they worship and things like that?

Steve: How did they do it? Because some of the things that were being proposed were pretty radical for the Common Era. It was really evident in the reading of the New Covenant Scripture that the Jewish followers of Yeshua did not abandon their culture, did not separate from their people, did not cease to become part of the world that they had become part of before they had embraced Yeshua. And so as a result this laid a groundwork, a plan or a prototype, if you will, for the point where we could end up looking around and saying "We are going to do the same, that this is a Scripturally permissible thing to do." And messiologically, Hudson Taylor had gone to the far east and identified as being a Chinaman and dressed like a Chinaman and adopted Chinese culture and appearance and food in order to share the Gospel and was profoundly influential. And so the idea that there is something toxic or nuclear waste-like about Jewish culture to the point where you cannot embrace that and live in a Jewish culture in the same fashion as people were as they were reaching the rest of the world was a little late to the table, honestly.

Elizabeth: Yeah, just in studying cultures in global classes, it's like there is this mindset that you need to become a part of their culture as much as you can and don't try to make them Western Christians. But at the same time, you tell somebody you're Messianic Jewish and their like, "Why don't you just go to this church? Why do you need your own church?"

Steve: In terms of this, my understanding of what God is doing is I believe that people of every nation, tribe and tongue are going to recognize Yeshua as Messiah. And I believe that part of the richness and part of the tapestry of this is that there is going to be an Irish expression of people who love Jesus. There is going to be a West African expression of people who love Jesus. There is going to be an Afghani expression of people who love Jesus. There is going to be people from Nepal who love Jesus. There's going to be people from Argentina who love Jesus. There's going to be people from Japan and South Korea and Vietnam who love Jesus. And the tapestry and the richness of having people from all the nations of the world who have their languages, who have their customs, who have their traditions, and who have woven Yeshua into the center and the heart of this is all going to be the glory of what we are going to see and what we are going to understand at His second coming. And I don't believe that Yeshua is against culture. I believe that He glories in culture and I believe there is aspects of culture that is God given, God breathed and that is effective. And so I believe that Messianic Judaism certainly has a seat at the table culturally with everything else. I believe also that God really wants to reach Jewish people who have come to the erroneous conclusion that the greatest rabbi Israel ever had doesn't like Jews. I think that this can be fixed, and I'm working on it. In terms of this, this is what we have to do. And it's not that other people don't have

important things to do too cause they really do. But whatever field you find yourself in, whatever you feel called to, whatever God has made you for, you need to see that you are part of this extraordinary tapestry that is being woven together. And so we are supportive of what people are doing in a whole variety of cultures that we're not called to work in ourselves. But we also believe that it is poor form for anybody to look at a specific culture and go, "Eh, they don't need to hear about Yeshua."

Elizabeth: Yeah, which has been going on. Thank you. How were the liturgical practices that were developed within Messianic Judaism useful in the maturation of Messianic Jewish identity? So as rabbis started on that journey of becoming Messianic Jewish rabbis and deciding to make that break what were some?

Steve: I think that what ended up happening is we didn't think about it as we were doing it. We just did it. And so in terms of this, it could have been as simple as, you play a guitar, we need to sing some songs; we'll give it a try. You went and you loved dancing at the bar mitzvah and you came back to your congregation and you had some music that had a similar beat to it and you had some folks who were going to get up and do dance at the same time. And you found out that the Spirit of God fell when you did it. You had learned some broken Hebrew to make it through your thirteenth birthday and your bar mitzvah. And you pulled out a Torah scroll or you pulled out a Hebrew English Tanakh and you went, "I wonder if I can still do it?" there were certain things that just touched you and that was part of who you were in the past and part of who your family was and part of who your tribe was and you went, "This is significant. This is real." And then you find out that the Spirit of God can be in it. I think that's how we did it. You academically study things after they happen, but when you are in the middle of it, you're just kind of looking at it going, "Something has to happen here."

Elizabeth: Okay, so honing in on the music aspect, what musical influences, well you write music yourself?

Steve: Yes

Elizabeth: So we'll start with that. What did you draw upon in developing Messianic Jewish worship music that you do at your synagogue?

Steve: I was in a fortunate position because I was starting in the late 1980s and as a result, we had already had the "Fiddler on the Roof" movie. We had already had Lamb, which was a Messianic Jewish duo based out of Philadelphia and New York. We had Israel's Hope out of which came Paul Wilbur. Marty Goetz was starting in the mid-1980s, developed his music. So, I might have been part of the second wave that was coming along. So we had some significant people who had already thought. And there was Kol Simcha and there was a variety of other Jewish music groups that had developed in other geographies and they would get together and they would press 500 or 1000 copies of an LP and they would sell their wares and we would get it and we would figure their songs out. You know? We had a base to start from. There was Shlomo Carlebach, who was the hippie rabbi in San Francisco, very interesting guy. You should look him up if you aren't familiar with him. He actually in the 1960s had been a rabbi in San Francisco and there were all these hippies around and he started adapting the Jewish liturgy to attract hippies. His daughter has also been a musician and she is actually very accomplished as well. But that was kind of happening on the Jewish side as well. And Jews for Jesus had the Liberated Wailing Wall and Stuart Dauermann who led that, very accomplished musician and academic. Okay? And so there were a variety of different people who were making this kind of stuff. And so by the time I came along there was a richness on both the Jewish side and on the Christian side from which to draw from. And so what you hear, you replicate in your own stuff. And so I really enjoyed listening to klezmer, listening to Middle Eastern, like Yemenite music. Ofra

Haza is an example of a Jewish woman who came from a Yemenite background and actually took Yemenite music and disco and put it together.

Elizabeth: When did she record?

Steve: In the 1980s into the '90s, okay?

Elizabeth: I feel like I've heard some of her music. She was Israeli?

Steve: Israeli, yes. So you just listen to all of this stuff and you go, "Oh that's cool." And then you spend some time with it. And you work on it and you go, "How do we incorporate pieces of this?" and what ends up happening is you never really copy it well, but a piece of it ends up becoming a piece of you and it ends up becoming the sort of thing where they go, "Oh, that guy Galiley's music is like nothing else I've ever heard." It's because you're not good enough at copying other people's stuff, okay? But they have profoundly influenced you on a certain level. So it turns into your own thing.

Elizabeth: Okay, now, I don't know how much we can get into this, but one of the things that I've noticed about Jewish music is the unique lyric that it has. I mean it has an incredible variety of lyric, you know? You go in Christian circles and there's variety, but at the same time all the songs are basically the saying the same thing. They are praise, thanksgiving type of songs or they are "Lord, I need you" songs. There's not really a whole lot in between where in the Messianic Jewish world, I can't speak for the Jewish, but there's much more variety in what we sing about.

Steve: Absolutely.

Elizabeth: Where does that come from?

Steve: It comes from a bigger theology. It comes from a theology that believes that God is concerned about more than just simply salvation and heaven. Okay? And it comes from a sense in the Jewish world of being part of the community and being attached in other things. It's not that there aren't movements and peoples in the evangelical/Christian world who don't see this as well and I don't want this to come across as a slam, okay? But on a certain level, in the Jewish world and in the Messianic Jewish world there's a belief that God's in everything and He is concerned with everything and that even the stuff that maybe mundane, even the stuff that doesn't have a specific task/outcome to it is something that God's involved with and God wants to be in and God is attentive to. And so by the time that you get to this point, you've got a bigger sandbox to play in.

Elizabeth: Definitely. I just remember when we first started going to the synagogue being shocked by some of the songs. You know? There are certain things you just don't say to God, but if you do, you don't do it like in a worship service and everybody's singing it. That just doesn't happen.

Steve: Like the stuff in the Psalms? That stuff?

Elizabeth: yeah, exactly. You might say that to God in your closet, but surely you don't sing that. There's just certain things you don't talk about and you definitely don't sing about, but that's part of the core of music, you know? There's definitely a bigger place for the lamenting psalms or the psalms about God triumphing over His enemies.

Steve: The imprecatory psalms, yes.

Elizabeth: Yes, right, it's kind of like, "Whoa, that's kind of intense." And, the funny thing is that it's all Scripture so I can't really argue with you singing that, but at the same time, we wouldn't do this in some places.

Steve: In the last couple of weeks from this interview, there was a gentleman who had moved to Upstate New York from Utah and had been involved in an Independent Baptist church. And I had met him afterwards and asked him, "Gee, well, how did it go for ya? How'd you like it?" and he commented and said, "You guys sing about so much different stuff here." And he was a little bit reeling from it culturally, honestly. Because I don't think that he had permission in his world, and he was an older guy and it looked like he had probably been going to this flavor of churches for decades, okay? And he came to it and he didn't have a reason why you couldn't do it, but it just didn't seem right to him.

Elizabeth: yeah, and it's interesting that while it's okay to maybe talk about that stuff, even that's a little. But it's more acceptable to talk about it, why do you think it's so, "Don't sing about it?"

Steve: Singing goes right to the soul. I mean one of the ways that we lost the culture wars here in America was the people who had no use for God ended up high jacking the culture. And whether it was storytelling via media or movies, whether it was making music, these things just go past the gates and the barriers that we have. You have a commercial on TV and they tell you to buy Coke, you go, "I know it's caramelized, sugar water and that it'll destroy anything that's on the terminals of a battery." Okay? I know all this stuff about the thing. I know it's not good for me so I've got my barriers up. But you give me a jingle that makes it into my heart and I don't care what it does to battery acid, you know? It's like, all of a sudden it's gotten to the center of my emotion, the center of my being. Music does that.

Elizabeth: Mmm, that's good. So how did the development of Messianic Jewish dance serve as an identifier for Messianic Judaism and what was its importance? What is its importance in the liturgical practice?

Steve: There is a real sense in America of us being individualists. There is a real sense in terms of Yeshua and the Gospels and in His teachings and in the way His apostolic band carried His message forward of our being part of a community. And I really think that for Americans anytime there is something that takes us out of being an individual and turns us into a people who are a participating community that this is a powerful witness to the truth of God to us as a culture and that this is a lost truth for many of us. So when you have a worship team that is subsuming their own individual talents for the greater good, that's an expression of the body. When you have a dance group that is in a coordinated fashion giving and receiving from each other and becoming a part of a body in an active and demonstrative fashion, this is again part of being a community. I've noticed that the Spirit of God just really seems to be all over people who sacrifice some aspect of their individualism to be part of a body. And God's in it. And the Spirit of God moves through it. And so to the extent that we can find things that we can do corporately as a body, big deal, okay? And the Spirit of God really is attracted to this and we're changed by participating in it. Does that answer that?

Elizabeth: Yeah, definitely.

Steve: It's also an expression of joyfulness, as well, and that's a big deal.

Elizabeth: Okay, this question may have already been answered; I feel like in the discussion that has taken place. But you might have something to add. How did the theological understandings of emerging Messianic Judaism influence the liturgy of the Messianic Jewish congregations?

Steve: I almost feel like its going to a zoo and saying, “How are all these animals the same?” So in terms of this, the answer to your question is, “One way or another, they all process oxygen.” And the fish do it different than the mammals do it and the mammals do it different than the lizards and the, ya know? But it’s so varied and so different. And almost if I were to step into that question, I mean, I would be really interested in what other guys say to that question cause I think that if you get a dozen guys answering that question, you’ll have them all contradicting each other all over the place.

Elizabeth: Then, it will confirm what I already know.

Steve: But it’s a test question for whether they know what you know.

Elizabeth: Then, closing in on our last questions, have you had significant Messianic Jewish experience internationally?

Steve: Internationally, I had an opportunity to visit Israel, and that was wonderful. I’ve also had the opportunity to go to Odessa, Ukraine and to be involved in a festival that Hear O Israel Ministries led by Jonathan Bernis had filled a soccer stadium of mostly Jewish people who wanted to know Yeshua. Okay? So those are two significant international experiences that I’ve had and both of them have been profoundly touched by American Jewish Messianic Judaism. The Odessa thing was obviously put on by Americans, since I was there. And in Israel, the Messianic Jewish leaders in Israel joke about how God in His providence brought American Messianic Jewish leadership to Israel in order to pastor Russian Jews. Now, that’s not all that’s going on, but that’s a fair amount of what’s going on. Okay? And those who know Russians and those who know Americans know that it would have to be the infinite wisdom of God to put those combinations together.

Elizabeth: Okay, well, I’ll ask the final question because it sounds like you’re observant. What similarities/differences have you noticed between the American Jewish experience and the international Jewish experience? And how has this affected the Messianic Jewish worship experience?

Steve: Oh, you don’t want to know much do you?

Elizabeth: Not much

Steve: Every Jewish community has been impacted by various other cultures that they live in the midst of. There is an extraordinary book called *Cultures of the Jews* and it’s edited by David Biale, okay? I can get you his spelling. I actually have a copy of it down at the synagogue. But what ends up happening is, they take ancient Judaism, they take middle ages Judaism, and they take modern day Judaism and they have case studies by different people. It tends to be ten to thirty pages per chapter of them looking at Judaism in these different cultures. And I can really commend to you Biale’s research because what ended up happening is in previous generations the narrative that people had was that Judaism soldiered on and was never changed by anything that went on around them. H.H. S____, I believe had done a history of the Jews, which had operated under the Jews just went from place to place, they never changed, nothing ever happened, they were exactly identical wherever they went, ya know? We didn’t change our diet. We didn’t change our understanding of Torah. We didn’t end up talking to those other people. And then Biale is also a Jewish man working with Jewish scholars and the most current and contemporary look at this is, “No we have been significantly impacted and influenced by the cultures that we have lived in the midst of. And this isn’t necessarily a bad thing.” Okay? So, in terms of this, one of the questions in terms of the Jewish world is the Jewish world says about Messianic Judaism, “You are going to corrupt our Judaism and you are going to ruin things by doing what you do.” And our answer is, “Messianic Judaism is only one of many other

influences that are influencing the Jewish world.” We believe that we’re a positive influence and we believe that that Yeshua in the center of Judaism creates the strongest and the most extraordinary Judaism that can exist. And we believe that Messianic Judaism is a bulwark and a hope for preserving Jewish people as Jews because the other opportunity is for them to become secular humanists. And there really is no future for the Jewish people if they lose their children to secular humanism. Kippa wearing and secular humanism aren’t much of anything. And so in terms of this, there is influence, there is impact, there is change, there is a fight for the hearts of the next generations. And we really want to keep Jewish people to be Jewish. We believe that knowing Yeshua will deepen what they’ve been made for. We believe that Jewish people who know and love Yeshua love Jewish people who don’t know Yeshua. We believe that there are different parts of the tribes just as Messianic Jews get along within our own little enclave with people who are very, very different than us and practice things that are very different than us and see the world very different than us so too what ends up happening is we believe that the Jewish community can benefit from having Messianic Jews in it because we’re not simply involved for missionizing. We are also involved because we love the people whom we love. And we care for Jewish people. And we want to see God do what He wants to do. We want to see transformation. We want to see change. We want to see the Jewish people fully explore and fully work out the call and the destiny that God has on all of us. It’s a big deal. Is this answering the question, or is this going around it a little bit?

Elizabeth: It’s going around it a little bit, but that’s okay. You did answer it though in the first part, so that’s good. That was the last question, but I had kind of a follow-up question, but not really. So right now, we are somewhere between second and third generation of messianic Jewish leaders, you know there is a Bible translation, if you will...

Steve: There’s a couple of them.

Elizabeth: A couple of them at this point. And I’m in that position of I’m not Jewish but I identify myself as Messianic Jewish, which is a very interesting conversation to have with anybody. So, doing research and in all of this just kind of realizing I’m very much in between two worlds. What’s something that kind of drives you to continue pioneering between two worlds?

Steve: What’s ended up happening is somehow we have gotten in this idea that being Jewish is some really big deal. You have to remember that we are a people who are created out of slaves. The defining moment for the creation of the Jewish people was there were all of these slaves in Egypt. A disgraced prince of Egypt came out of the wilderness and brought an empire to its knees. And then he took all of these slaves out into the wilderness and the slaves who had been set free continued acting like slaves. This was not the most noble birth of a nation that has ever been written. This is the sort of thing where people don’t do Passover every year and say, “We were slaves unto Pharaoh in Egypt.” Okay? These are the sorts of things that we try and forget or like the Greeks say, “Well, there was a god who ended up having a thought and a piece of his brain plopped out and made us. So we come from the gods.” Okay? The other thing that ended up happening and Torah is very clear about this, is that not only the children of Israel left, but there was a mixed multitude that left with them. And so the mixed multitude that left with them were not Jewish. The mixed multitude who left with them were other slaves who said, “We’re with the God who can take out Pharaoh.” And so in terms of this, what ended up happening is we have always been a people who attract others to ourselves. And if you look at Torah, it’s very clear that if you have a foreigner with you, circumcise him. Okay? It’s very clear that if you have a foreigner with you, get them ready and do everything they can so they can participate in Passover. Take them to the feasts. Integrate them. If they’re God fearing people, marry their sons. Give their daughters to your sons. Make them part of the tribe. And so one of the challenges that Messianic Judaism has is are we really going to take those whom God has

added to us and make them part of our tribe? Are we going to really love these people? Are we going to really care for them? Are they going to end up becoming part of us? And are they going to be ours and are we going to be theirs? You know, there's a bit of a difficulty in terms of identity because we don't want to misrepresent ourselves to a culture and to a society that is really not sure about this Yeshua stuff yet, okay? So we want everybody to represent them as who they actually are, but in Messianic Judaism, I shouldn't say in Messianic Judaism, in Beit Shalom, if you are a part of our tribe, it doesn't matter if you were born Jewish or Gentile. You can be on our worship team. You can start ministries in our congregation. You can do whatever it is that God's called you to do. There is no barrier in any way, shape or form for you to do something with us where we're not going, "Oh, well, we've got to balance the number of Jews and the number of Gentiles. Or we've got to make sure we've got a super majority here. We've got to do this or that." It's nothing political, okay? God has created a single people in Messianic Judaism and particularly the Jewish people of your generation, I think you're gonna find that they're kind of looking for folks who can create a unity. And they're not looking for the barriers of their grandparents' generation. They're not looking to be standoffish or they're not afraid of the people around. They want to know, "How can we create a unity? How can we create a situation where we're all in it together? How can we create something that is what their parents' generation tried to do but failed in the '60s?" so this is a big deal and we're actually really well situated to answer that issue and answer that problem if we don't get all worried about what the concerns were of previous generations.

Elizabeth: Yeah, looking ahead instead.

Steve: As opposed to driving and looking in the rear view mirror. Is this helpful?

Elizabeth: Yes, thank you.

Appendix B: Neil Lash

Interview with Rabbi Neil Lash on July 1, 2014

Neil: I am Rabbi Neil Abraham Lash. I am the founder of Temple Aron HaKodesh in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. We began as a Messianic synagogue in August of 1976, and we continue to this day by the grace of God with no congregational splits. I am 78 years old. Along the way I have accumulated a Bachelor's degree in engineering, a Master's and Doctorate in educational technology or instructional technology.

Elizabeth: Thank you. To begin, Rabbi, how would you define Messianic Judaism?

Neil: Messianic Judaism is Jewish people who believe that Yeshua HaMeshiach or Jesus Christ is the Messiah and who choose to live a Jewish lifestyle with belief in Him as a central core to it. He's my rabbi. He's the One whose teachings I follow.

Elizabeth: So what do you believe are important cultural markers in Messianic Jewish worship? Raising hands in worship? Not raising hands in worship? Singing in English or Hebrew? What are some important...

Neil: In worship?

Elizabeth: Yes, specifically in worship.

Neil: Going by our congregation, worship is quite free. We have a staff member who is paid to lead dance as a form of worship. We have instructional classes for dance from 6 years old and up at all levels. It's a very active worship service, incorporating both what you would call contemporary Christian music, traditional Jewish music, original Messianic music, all forms of worship and praise are a part of our services and the great emphasis is pointing us as individuals worshiping in unity, worshiping the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Messiah Yeshua.

Elizabeth: Thank you, so kind of discovering the journey of how your services have developed and everything, what aspects of contemporary Jewish liturgical practices were integrated into your congregation's worship style?

Neil: When our congregation first began in 1976, we had a Friday night Shabbat service and a Sunday morning worship service. After just a few years, we gravitated to a Friday night and a Saturday morning service. Our Friday night service begins with the acknowledgement of the covenant of Shabbat through the covenant meal, bread and wine, and the lighting of the Sabbath candles and launches immediately into prayer for Jerusalem and then the Shema and then our traditional worship service. The Saturday service does a similar thing in that we still have that covenant meal because Shabbat is the covenant, but we go directly from there into our worship service, which culminates and segways to the Torah service. We have a Torah scroll. The Torah is brought out every Saturday and one of the men of the congregation will present a five to seven minute D____, or teaching, from that week's Torah portion. That's an opportunity for the men of the congregation to be before the congregation to learn to give a message, to be spiritual heads, to develop their own spiritual authority. The Shema's a part of that, the traditional blessing before the Torah, the blessing after the Torah, the Torah's read, a small portion of the Torah segment is read in Hebrew, and, at the conclusion of that, we typically will have the senior rabbi chant the Aaronic Benediction over the children and the younger children will be dismissed to classes. And they will have a message. Typically at the end of the message, there will be an opportunity for the people to respond to the

central point of the message, whatever it might be. We will have an altar call. The person who happens to be on staff heading up our dance is also the head of our prayer team. So we have a very well trained altar ministry team that will minister to the needs of the individual people. We generally have an oneg after our Friday night service. We generally have food available after our Saturday service.

Elizabeth: Now, I do want to ask, is an altar call part of contemporary Jewish liturgy or is that reflective more of Christian?

Neil: That definitely reflects contemporary Christian tradition.

Elizabeth: Okay, that's kind of the next question, what elements of your service were adopted from contemporary Christian liturgy?

Neil: Well, the emphasis of my rabbi Yeshua's teaching was that the people had to have an opportunity to respond. So, if we have a service and the people don't respond, you can call it contemporary Christian if you want, but it's originally Messianic Jewish.

Elizabeth: Yes, to be sure. So, moving into that though, what are some contemporary Christian liturgical practices? You mentioned that you use some contemporary Christian music, but for the most part it sounds like...

Neil: I think that one of the contemporary Christian worship elements we have is collecting the tithe and the offering in the midst of the service. We do it with music. We do it by passing a velvet bag through the congregation. That would all be contemporary Christian. We do teach the tithe, which would be biblical Jewish, but not traditional Jewish.

Elizabeth: Okay, thank you. Now, were there any liturgical practices from either Christian or the Jewish contemporary worlds that were purposefully avoided in the formation of your service and why was that?

Neil: For our Torah service, we have really shortened the amount of liturgical prayers to bring the focus very more definitely focused on the portion from Torah rather than a lot of prayers before and after. So we'll have the traditional blessing before. So we have a very short liturgical portion to our services that probably last no more than fifteen minutes. What was the other half of it?

Elizabeth: Christian liturgical practices that were avoided.

Neil: Well, we don't have a cross, which would be in almost any Christian church. And we hardly ever call Him Jesus Christ, we almost always call Him Yeshua HaMeshiach or the Messiah or the Lamb of God. We call Him by His biblical titles and sometimes by His Hebrew titles rather than by the Greek translation. Off hand, nothing else occurs to me.

Elizabeth: Okay, thank you. Now thinking back when you first started your congregation how did the leaders from the Christian community and the Jewish community respond to your forming a Messianic Jewish community?

Neil: The congregation was started by me as a result of direct confrontation with God during an early morning prayer meeting in a church where I had come to faith. I experienced God's grief over the lost sheep of the house of Israel. I said, "What do you want me to do about it?" He said, "I want you to start a Messianic synagogue." The church that I was in was extremely supportive of what I did. They actually helped us buy a building by putting their own church property on a mortgage. And, so, we've always been

supported. We are a member of a major Christian denomination. And they have accepted us as a fully independent congregation within their denomination. The Jewish community picketed us, said we were deceptive, that we were stealing souls, but the current reality is that I think that there's more acceptance by the Jewish community even if it's not by the rabbinic leadership in the community. We've become a known quantity. We've become the Jews for Jesus, so, you know, we don't even try to defend that anymore. That's how they know us. And in the greatest sense, we are Jews for Jesus.

Elizabeth: Wow, wonderful. And then specifically going back to the liturgically practices that you use because they are part of who you are as a Jew and believer in Yeshua, is some of that why the local, other Jews would say that you're false?

Neil: I need to go back and tell you one other thing that we do liturgically. We begin our Torah service with Yeshua's answer to the lawyer who asked him which is the greatest commandment. We do that every single week, both Friday night and Saturday. And it's, "The greatest commandment is, 'you shall love the Lord your God...' and the second is you shall love your neighbor as yourself." We've added that as a Messianic Jewish liturgical item in both of our services.

Elizabeth: Okay, so that's something that you added. I want to make sure that I get that right. Now, what you just said kind of segways into this next question I have how did early Jewish cultural identity from Yeshua's era influence liturgical decisions in the rebirth of your Messianic congregation? So you just said that you begin your service with the greatest commandment...

Neil: Well, yeah, that would be the answer to that.

Elizabeth: So, why did you decide to do that? What prompted that?

Neil: Oh, because that made it clearly Messianic. That made our Torah service clearly Messianic Jewish rather than just Jewish and put the emphasis on His teaching.

Elizabeth: Okay, how were the liturgical practices that have been developed and incorporated into your service how have they been useful in the maturing of Messianic Jewish identity over the years?

Neil: How have they?

Elizabeth: Your worship service, the liturgical practices that you've developed and incorporated, how has that been helpful in the formation of identity?

Neil: Well, because we have a torah service, our young people are encouraged to become bar or bat mitzvah. And the population of our congregation is reflective of the population of our community which has changed radically since 1976. We have many people from the islands, the Caribbean islands who are part of our congregation. And many of their children choose to become bar and bat mitzvah. And so it's a part of being in the worship, the liturgical leads them to participating in that. And so when we have a congregational Passover seder we will have a rainbow of cultures and countries and skin colors and so I believe that the worship is the connecting point for all of that.

Elizabeth: Okay, wonderful. You touched on earlier; you mentioned that you'll do traditional Jewish music, Christian contemporary and also original Messianic Jewish worship music, going to that original music: is that music coming out of your congregation? Or from the broader Messianic community?

Neil: Yes to both. We have people in our congregation who have written Messianic music that is sung all over the country, including my wife. We also have picked up music from Paul Wilbur, Joel Chernoff, Marty Goetz and so it's both.

Elizabeth: Now, what would you say were some of the musical influences that were drawn upon in the formation of your original music as far as style or common themes of the music?

Neil: Very earliest music was almost all written by my wife under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit since she knew nothing about writing music. All of the first songs were written down with alphabet letters. 'A-B-C-C-D-E, what's this sound? It's not quite an 'E'. Oh, this must be an E minor." And then at one point our associate became a very gifted song writer, who had been a Jewish rock-and-roller, and he's very prolific songwriter, Jeremy Storch. He wrote many, many songs, all biblically based and some are still sung, even here at the conferences.

Elizabeth: Oh, wow! I'll have to look him up. I'd love to see what his music is like. Now, this goes specifically to dance, you mentioned that you have a dance leader. How did the development of Messianic Jewish dance serve as an identifier for Messianic Judaism? What's its importance in the service and community?

Neil: Well, dance is always an important part of traditional Judaism. It became just a natural thing starting with Ha_____ and everybody jumping in to realize that dance was a part of what we wanted to do. It was in our DNA. And to realize that there was a difference between traditional Israeli dance which was horizontally oriented and down, and worship dance, which was vertically oriented. So we would be lifting hands as opposed to holding hands. And so we have, as I say, we have someone on staff who is in charge of that and she has done extensive teaching to the congregation both of dance and why we dance. And she is just starting to go out now to other congregations.

Elizabeth: [recorder died and I changed the battery] You were telling me why dance is important to the community.

Neil: Okay, dance is important for the community because it is another form of worship and the way we dance is we dance in unity with a leader and a dance team that leads so that there are a bunch of steps that people learn but the leaders will for a particular song string those steps together. So we are always following the leader in that. In the same way that we are all following the song leader in singing the same songs, we are all following the dance leader. So there is a unity that occurs and that's the difference between worshipping at home and worshipping in the congregation.

Elizabeth: Wonderful. How did the theological understandings of emerging Messianic Judaism influence the liturgy that you used? Or was it vice versa?

Neil: I'm gonna have a hard time answering that question cause I'm not real big on theology. I'm just, you know, a guy who's following his Rabbi. That's our theology. We try to be led by the Holy Spirit. We are what the Christian community calls a "spirit filled" congregation. WE function with an elder board and when the rabbi has some idea that some change would be appropriate he usually submits it to the elder board and we usually pray about it and then if it's the Lord, we go on.

Elizabeth: Okay, my second to last question, have you had significant Messianic Jewish experience internationally?

Neil: For me personally?

Elizabeth: yes

Neil: Let's see, we did a marriage seminar in Israel and we take Mercy Mission Trips to Israel about every 18 months where we impact the people of Israel rather than tourists that are coming with us. We also host a weekly television program which is seen in many other parts of the world. Through our website, we had, through our latest one we had people tune in from over 80 different countries for some period of time. That would be our only international experience.

Elizabeth: So, the last question kind of pertains to most of the rabbis that I am meeting are from a Western European Jewish heritage and background and their services reflect that in liturgy and such, have you noticed any similarities and differences between the American Messianic Jewish and the, maybe, the Israeli Messianic Jewish worship expression?

Neil: Yeah, there are a couple of different things and this is just my observation, they may or may not be true, so it's just through these eyes. Messianic rabbis in Israel will almost never wear a kippa because that imparts some information culturally and they usually use some other title than 'rabbi,' even though they may use that here. Even though they may use the term 'rabbi' when they are here in the United States, in their congregations, it implies a certain thing that many of them do not have, but we have no experience with Messianic Judaism in Europe. Our only experience would be with some of the rabbis and congregational leaders in Israel that we know personally that we interact with.

Elizabeth: Okay, wonderful. Thank you so much.

Appendix C: Marty Goetz

Interview with Marty Goetz on July 15, 2014

[We did not have a good phone connection so throughout this transcription ellipses are often used to indicate where words were lost due to poor connection.]

Elizabeth: Marty, to start this, could you just tell me a little bit about yourself. How long have you been a musician?

Marty: Well, hi, how are you?

Elizabeth: I'm good, sorry!

Marty: Well, I live here in Nashville, Tennessee. I have been a musician professionally since I was about nineteen years old. When I say professionally, what I mean is I got my first job playing piano for somebody. And the job that I got was playing piano for a fellow who wrote shows like... [call was lost and continued on next audio track]

Elizabeth: You were saying that the first...

Marty: I was saying that my first professional job playing piano was for a fellow named Don Brockett who wrote shows like stage shows, like a musical review. I don't know if you know what a musical review is?

Elizabeth: Yeah

Marty: Yeah, they were musical reviews that he hired a lot of college kids. I went to Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. And I was just an English major. So I wasn't majoring in music or anything, but I did know how to play the piano. So I auditioned for this fellow cause I had heard that he was auditioning to kids to play music for his shows... I went to Jackson Hall, Wyoming and I was the on-stage piano player for a couple musical reviews that were called, get ready, "Love Story Hollywood Style" and "Love Story Western Style". They had nothing to do with the movie "Love Story" that came out in those days, which you're too young to remember, but they were fun and I just loved doing it. I loved show biz, and I kind of got the show biz bug. And that's how I started playing professionally. And, you know, he didn't pay us much, but he paid us. Then when I returned back to Pittsburgh where I was in school, I teamed up with one of the fellas that had been in some of his shows. His name was Bert Lloyd. And he and I formed a little, actually what happened was Don Brockett wrote a show named, an off-Broadway musical, and it was called, "Sweet Feet." It was kind of a parody of the, it was a takeoff of '40s musicals, like '40s Hollywood musicals, but it was on stage. And he wrote this show, got some backing, and it went all the way to off-Broadway. So Bert was one of the cast members, I was as well playing piano and singing...in three days, so I had nothing to do cause we had planned our whole summer to be in New York City. So we formed a singing act called "Bert and Marty." I was the piano playing singer and he was ...singer. He had a great tenor voice. And we formed that act and the rest of my days...and years of college at Carnegie Mellon, I was supporting myself playing music with Bert. We did, like, Broadway show tunes and standard Tin Pan Alley type songs. Nothing spiritual just ...

Elizabeth: What those days was what? You're cutting in and out a little bit.

Marty: Yeah, you know like stuff you would see on the Ed Sullivan show. Do you remember who Ed Sullivan was?

Elizabeth: Yeah, my dad actually had us watch those old shows.

Marty: You can ask your dad about it. Anyway, that's how I got started in music, but up until then, I had been at like a typical...suburban kid taking piano lessons, you know. And I was a terrible student. I never practiced, but I learned how to play because my teacher taught me how to pick out songs on the piano all by myself so that's what I started to do. In my generation is when rock bands started, you know? And so, I played in rock bands in high school. Nothing really professional, so I was just basically did it as a hobby. I never thought I would do it the rest of my life. But I really liked it, and so, went from rock bands in high school to playing these variety shows in college and having my own singing act with this fellow Bert Lloyd. And we went up to an area of the country called the Catskill Mountains...which...

Elizabeth: Yes, I live a couple hours north of the Catskills.

Marty: Oh do you really?

Elizabeth: Yeah, up in Central New York.

Marty: Okay, well we lived at one of the hotels up there. Before you were born, you know, they had all these hotels up there that were very well known for being...they called it the Jewish Alps. Or the more technical term was the Borscht Belt and it was very famous for show business for Jewish people that would come up from New York City in the summer time to get away from the heat and...it was the place that all the performers would go and hone their performing skills before audiences that would stay up there for the whole summer. Very famous Jewish comics and singers and comedians and actors, you know, they all kind of got their start up there. It was pretty much on the downhill slope when Bert and I got there, but it still had shows. So Bert and I became an act up there. I mean, we were an act already in Pittsburgh, but we went up there. We moved to New York when I graduated college. And with an English degree you really can't do much, so I started singing with Bert up there. We won the Best New Act of 1974 up in the Catskill Mountains. We thought we were on our way to big stardom. And that's when the intersection of heaven and earth happened because Bert was a Methodist; just a good, Bible totin' Methodist from Altoona, Pennsylvania. But, somewhere along the line, he really felt he wanted a deeper relationship with God. So he went to a church in New York City called "The Rock Church." And it was a Pentecostal, kind of holy rollin', ya know. And it was the first time that I ever heard the term "born again." He became a "born again" Christian, which really disturbed me because I'm from a Jewish background. And I grew up conservative Jewish. Are you familiar with that?

Elizabeth: Yeah, a little bit.

Marty: It's between Orthodox and Reformed. It's like, my mother was raised Orthodox Jewish and my father was raised pretty Orthodox as well, but then they became Conservative, which is a little less strict. But it was still very observant of all the Jewish holidays and of all the Jewish customs and traditions. That's how I was bar mitzvah-ed, and I was confirmed. I went to regular high school, but I went to something called "Hebrew high school." So I had a pretty extensive Jewish upbringing, especially because my grandparents were Orthodox and they were from Poland. So it was very important to them that I had a good Jewish upbringing. So, when Bert became a born again Christian, it was horrifying to me. This was a long time ago, but there was a President called Jimmy Carter who said he was a born again Christian, and that term, "born again Christian" was becoming very, very, it had just kind of entered into the lexicon. I didn't know what it was, but it was frightening to me because Jewish people, you know, grow up knowing about all the persecution that happened to Jewish people in the Holocaust. You know, my grandparents had experienced anti-Semitism. So anything to do with that kind of, what I considered, radical religion was

horrifying. So eventually I broke up with my partner because I couldn't stand that he had become very, very committed to it. Everything was about Jesus and he stopped wanting to do stuff that I wanted to do. I don't have to go into that, but, you know, I was just a typical baby boomer kid from the '60s. I just wanted to do all the bad stuff. But he got real religious and started praying for me and preaching on the street corners and handing out tracks. It just got to too much. I broke up Bert and Marty, and I went my own way. I was still living in New York and I began to play piano at piano bars, restaurants, and things like that. Just playing any kind of songs, you know, like popular songs, Broadway songs, those kind of things... I don't know if you're familiar with the passage from Romans where Paul says, "I magnify my ministry that I might provoke to jealousy those who are my kinsmen." Have you ever read that verse?

Elizabeth: Yeah, I'm familiar with that.

Marty: In Romans... I just got very provoked by his faith, but more to anger than to jealousy. But I got provoked. I just couldn't get it out of my head. What was there about Jesus that just made people so... they couldn't see Him, they didn't know Him, they couldn't touch Him, but somehow they believed that He was their whole life? They committed their whole life to Him. I couldn't understand it. So I was real troubled by it. So all those years I was playing in those piano bars I was having a good old time seeking the things of this world... but in the meantime, I was thinking about this Jesus stuff all the time and it was bugging me. I finally bought myself a Bible and started to read it but I didn't really understand it. But the more I thought about it and once I had opened up the Bible and started pursuing it, I could sense that something was happening in me where I was becoming much more interested in Jesus, and who He was and what this was all about. And I started to get this sense that I was being drawn to, you know, drawn to find out about it. Eventually, I felt like I was supposed to move to California. I can't explain why, I just felt that. I just sensed, "It's time to go." So I packed up and moved to California... and Bert had a friend named 'Annie' who had moved out to Los Angeles before I did. She was a friend of his who went to that same church. And I knew that she was... but she was a friend. And because I needed someone to help me, she helped me kind of get started there in Los Angeles. One of the things she did, she took me... by this time, I had been reading the Bible. Little by little, I started reading it quite a bit. Once I got into the New Testament and started reading about Jesus more specifically and more directly I started to really like what I was hearing. I liked what I was reading. So I began to really... I started not believing my unbelief if that makes sense. I stopped believing my not believing cause I thought, "Well, why don't I believe? He was a good man and He was a good Jew. He was a better Jew than I was. He kept all the festivals and the traditions. He was a good Jew, and He was a good Jewish rabbi. He gave sight to the blind and made the deaf to hear and raised people from the dead." And I thought, "Well, gee, why don't we believe in Him?" And I didn't believe in Him, but I wondered why we didn't, if that makes sense. So when I moved to California, I had been reading the Bible pretty regularly, trying to figure out what it meant. On my way to California, I picked up a big, old family Bible that my parents had...

Elizabeth: Sorry, can you say that again? A family Bible that your parents had?

Marty: My parents had a big family Bible that was something they must have won like at a sweepstakes or something like that, like something you get in the mail. Cause it wasn't a Bible they were reading, it just happened to be in their house. But it was a big, big Bible... all the stuff inside like weddings... I took that to California along with me and started reading that. And not to, I don't want to offend you or anything but I also took with me some stuff that's now legal in Colorado. That shows you how old I am. I literally had it in a ... and a cigar box. I had it in my backpack and I went right on the plane with all that stuff. That's how long ago it was. They didn't have metal detectors; they didn't check your bag, nothing. I walked right onto the plane with all that stuff. And I was sort of ... Jesus as I was still doing that. It wasn't like I was having a

radical conversion. It was just I was investigating that. So when I got to California, I really wasn't interested in believing but my heart was becoming softened to God, Jesus. Because I could feel that I was, almost like somebody up there was watching out for me. I can't explain it. I landed an apartment in New York City that I wanted and it was kind of a long shot that I would get it. It was like a brand new apartment overlooking the Hudson River. It was just a lot of good things. You know some people come to the Lord when these horrible things happen, and they cry out to God. It wasn't that way. It was like good things were happening. And I was kind of looking up to heaven and going, "Thank you," because Bert and Annie had just opened my mind to the possibility of God. I just figured I'd hedge my bet. So when good things started happening, I'd look up to heaven and go, "Well, thank you, whoever you are." I remember looking up one day and just going, "If you're real, if Jesus is the Messiah..." So that's what was important for me to know, was He the Messiah? I didn't want to be a born again Christian or anything like that. I wasn't looking to change religions. I wasn't looking to be religious. I just wanted to know, is He the Messiah? Because if He is, then I need to know that because, after all, I was twenty-five years old, and I didn't believe in anything. So when I got to California, just a couple weeks after being there, my friend Annie took me to the Pacific...to the beach there in Los Angeles. And there was a preacher there named Hal Lindsey and he was very, very famous. I didn't know he was famous at the time, but he wrote a book called *The Late Great Planet Earth*. And he was preaching on the beach. The people in the Rock Church, where Bert went in New York City, they were real Pentecostal and real, kind of, old school Pentecostal; kind of a little bit odd to me. You know what I mean? They just [were] kind of city folks, people would be kind of dressed up [for services]. It was just kind of an odder environment for me, but when I went to California, there everybody was sitting on the beach in jeans and t-shirts and it was just cool. So I thought "Well, gee, maybe you can believe in Jesus and still be. Maybe you can just kind of hang around and like Jesus without having to believe in Him. Maybe you can just hang around with these cool people." So I thought maybe I'd make that work, but then it started to rain and, so, Annie said, "You know, if I take you back to where you're staying, I'm gonna miss my church service." And, so I was like, "Oh, well okay." I was not happy about it. I thought one service was enough. The interesting thing about the Hal Lindsey service was, he preached and I don't really remember what he preached about, but I remember that they took communion. And when they took communion, he asked the man named Gideon to get up. He said, "Gideon, would you come up and lead us in our communion?" And Gideon got up and he took the bread and he said these words. He said, "Baruch atah Adonai Elohaynu melek ha-olam ha-motzi lechem min ha-aretz," which is the Jewish prayer for bread. Then, he said, "Baruch atah Adonai Elohaynu melek ha-olam borei p'ri hagafen," which is the prayer for the wine. I was shocked cause, "Oh my goodness, there's Jews here." So, that was what really had me unsettled. I think that's why I was like, "Take me home. Take me home!" It was okay for Christians to believe in Jesus, you know, Gentiles, but for Jews. Even though Annie had some friends that were Jewish that did believe in Him, she had one friend that did believe, but I thought they were just a traitor, you know? That one person was just a traitor. Every Jewish person thinks they're the only person in the world that believes in Jesus when they come to believe in Jesus.

So I said, "Oye, oye get me home!" She said, "I can't because I'll be late." So she took me to this place called "The Vineyard", which was very different from the Rock Church. It not buttoned up and odd and Pentecostal. It was, I didn't know the term 'charismatic', but that's what it was. It was people raising their hands and they sang these beautiful little songs and they sang them beautifully. And it was just a really amazing place and just peaceful. And I could sense something there just different. And at the end of the service, I guess Bert's prayers and Annie's prayers and all the Rock Church's prayers and my reading and all my wrestlings and my anger and my jealousy and all of that and also the fact that because I was in a pharmaceutically influenced state, in those days I was kind of open to a lot of things, you know what I mean? So I was seeking and looking. In those days, those were the years when people were just kind of

really looking into all kinds of different things; eastern religions and all kinds of stuff. So, it was just a confluence of things and finally, when I was at the Vineyard with Annie, and there was a pastor named Ken Gulliksen was the pastor and he was this really sweet, blonde-haired, blue-eyed guy that I knew wasn't Jewish. He gave this lovely message, lovely Gospel invitation and when it was all over, Annie took me by the hand and I just reluctantly, kind of walked up to the front with her and said the prayer and got the Bible and had people pray for me and, you know, I always tell people at my concerts, "They prayed for me and they said 'Welcome to the family of God.' And I said, 'Oye! What am I going to tell my mother in Cleveland?'"

I realized when all of this was happening that I was being wooed. I was being drawn to the Lord. So I was in and one of the first things I did, I don't know if you remember a guy named Keith Greene?

Elizabeth: Yeah

Marty: He used to come to that Vineyard and play piano. It was just amazing to hear him, and I was a piano player. I was just amazed, you know? I never got as good as he was, but it was so impacting. He actually came one Sunday, and I went forward again. It was so impacting. I didn't know what to do. By that time, I was writing songs with a cousin of mine. I had moved out to California by myself, but he and I had been writing songs together. He went on to write the music for a show you probably are familiar with called *Reading Rainbow*. Do you know that show at all?

Elizabeth: yeah, I've heard of it.

Marty: Yeah, *Reading Rainbow*. It was on PBS. It was like an educational show about reading. And my cousin wrote the music for that, but at the time, we were writing music together. And when I went out to California, I was trying to sell our songs and stuff like that. But once I became a believer, I thought, "Well, gee, what do I do now? I'm not sure." Cause the songs I was singing, they weren't bad songs, but something had happened to me that I needed to express. So, the first thing I did, and this kind of gets into the area that you're asking about, the first thing I did was I opened the Bible. I sat down at the piano in Annie's apartment cause I was hanging out there. And I opened the Bible to the only passage that I really knew, which was Psalm 23. Everybody knows that because they say that at Jewish funerals. It's a very familiar passage. So I opened the Bible and I sat down and wrote a melody to it. I really liked it so once I did that I thought, "Wow, that's not bad." So that was the first thing I wrote, Psalm 23. So I started to write songs about the Lord, and I wasn't a trained, I didn't go to music school or anything like that. So everything I knew, I learned from my piano lessons and playing shows and playing in bars and playing in rock bands. So, you know, I wasn't a trained musician in the way that some people are. But I knew my way around the keyboard. I could read music. Not long after that a friend of mine heard that an artist named Debby Boone was looking for a backup band. And, you don't remember her probably.

Elizabeth: Nope

Marty: She had a song called, "You Light up My Life." It was a huge song and it was a number one hit for many, many weeks. Her father was a man named Pat Boone who wrote the words to a song called "Exodus," which is a song that talks about Israel. They call it the second national anthem of Israel. It's a song that speaks about the land of Israel, you know, essentially, "This land is mine. God gave this land to me." So know the family from when I was a kid. So, it was great to be with her cause I knew her family. My friend heard about her looking for a band cause this song that she had recorded was a huge, huge hit. And so, we auditioned for her and we got the job. And next thing I knew I was in places like, I played piano for her on the Tonight Show. Then I went to Atlantic City and she was opening for all these different

artists that you probably don't know but they were big artists at the time. Then we went to Los Vegas. So, here I was, I had just become a believer, and I was in Los Vegas and Atlantic City and playing with all these stars and it was a pretty exciting time. Too bad we didn't have digital phones then cause I don't have many pictures of it. But I did that for many, many years and in the meantime was writing my own music as well. The reason that I even brought that up was because Debby ended up singing one of my songs, Psalm 23. She sang it on her album called *With My Song*, and that was very exciting. Cause I had never had anything recorded before, so that was kind of cool for me because I had come out to California to be recorded. And low and behold I became a believer and got recorded. So that was cool.

Elizabeth: So when were you introduced to Messianic Judaism?

Marty: Okay, well that's a good question. So when I became a believer, I thought, "Gee, I've become a born again Christian, like the rest of those people." That was my feeling. I had become a born again Christian. So, it was odd for me because I was Jewish, but I had become a Christian like Bert, Annie and so I didn't really know about the Messianic movement, even though the Messianic movement existed. I knew there was something called 'Jews for Jesus' because I had seen their signs all over New York City. When I lived in New York City, I saw all these Jews for Jesus posters and things like that. So I knew about them, but I didn't really know about Messianic Judaism. As a matter of fact, when I used to go to the Vineyard, I would drive past this place and I would look inside and they would have tallises and yamakass and they were obviously in a worship service. I didn't know what they were but it turned out that they were a Messianic congregation. But I didn't have any sense of it so I never went to visit. Cause I didn't have a sense of, but I knew I was Jewish. I even wrote a song called "Jew Born Anew" which kind of became my theme song for me because I really had a strong sense of my Jewishness. Probably my first real connection with kind of Messianic would have been Jews for Jesus because they had something called an "Ingathering" that was kind of like a conference that they did. And they did it at Mount Hermon in California. And I went to that conference, Ingathering, just to because I was a Jewish believer and, "Hmm, let's check this out." So I went there and they had something called the Liberated Wailing Wall. And that was their musical group. One of the guys in that group was named Stuart Dauermann, he wrote a lot of their music. And they had this Jewish sounding worship music, which I thought was interesting. And that was my first exposure to it. I had never heard anything like that before. I wasn't familiar with the group Lamb or anything like that, like some other people were. My first exposure was the Jews for Jesus music and I think that when I wrote my song "Jew Born Anew" I kind of took that style, that kind of Eastern European, Jewish, kind of like _____ music they call it. The kind of music you'd hear in the villages of Eastern Europe, that our parents would have known—[The] kind of music that is commonly connected with Jewish people. Or identified with Jewish people, you know oom-pa oom-pa oom-pa, minor keys, and all that. And so that was my first exposure and then I heard through Jews for Jesus, I heard about Joel Chernoff and Lamb and all those other artists and became familiar with some of that music. And then after I was at the Vineyard, I went to Hollywood Presbyterian Church, which was real high church kind of music, choirs. So I wasn't really, really connected with my Jewish-ness that much until I went to, Hollywood Pres. had a little service that they did for more charismatic people, so to speak. And it was led by a guy named Bob Friedman and this guy had written a book called *What's a Nice Jewish Boy Like You Doing in a First Baptist Church?* And he took a liking to me and eventually, he had a show on TBN, on Trinity Broadcasting Network, called "Friedman and Friends" and he was the host. And it highlighted Jewish believers. So the whole show was highlighting the testimonies of Jewish believers. I was on it and my wife, Jennifer, before she was my wife, she was on it. And so she actually ended up being his production assistant. I was like the musical guest every week. So he would do little teaching and I would play the music. And then I did a couple of things on TBN, like "Jew Born Anew" and there was a ministry

in Phoenix that saw it and asked me to come out and play music for their TV Show called “Jewish Voice Broadcast”, which is now “Jewish Voice Ministries with Jonathan Bernis. So, what I’m trying to say is that all I was doing was making music on my own with Debby Boone and with writing my own songs and doing this “Friedman and Friends” show and playing some music at TBN and getting to go out to Phoenix to work for the Jewish Voice Broadcast people, so I was becoming known. To the extent I was known, people knew me as that Jewish guy who played piano. Because my music ... reflected that Jewish sense of place. I didn’t make it up myself. I was being influenced by that Jews for Jesus music and the Lamb with Joel Chernoff music; the music that was out there in the church that had a Messianic flavor. So I was trying to do some of that myself and when I started doing this TV show with Bob Friedman, I became identified with my Jewish background much more openly and fully. So that became my deal, kind of my identification. It was all happening all at the same time. And then Jennifer and I, we married in 1984 out in California. And as I said, she had been working on the Friedman and Friends show and we also went to a congregation in Los Angeles called Beth Ariel, which was kind of a Jewish Christian congregation. I was very, very aware and identified with my Jewish upbringing. When we finally got involved with the Messianic movement was like 1990. We went to the MJAA, the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America conference at Messiah College in Pennsylvania. Now, that’s been going on for many, many years. We knew other Messianic believers and we played in some of their congregations, but when we went to that conference is when we really got connected with the broader Messianic movement. So for many, many years I would play there and Paul Wilbur and Joel Chernoff and we were kind of like the regular performers and they still are. And I still am too. There’s a lot of new guys coming up, new gals and guys coming up. But we’ve been there for many, many years kind of like the standard folks. Anyway, I’m kind of babbling, but the point I’m making is that the music I was doing reflected my Jewish background, my Jewish thought, and the Jewish influence. But I wasn’t really officially a Messianic musician until I got involved with the Messianic movement more broadly, if that makes any sense.

Elizabeth: Yes, it does. And I think you answered this question, but I want to make sure that I have it down clearly, what exactly is it that makes your music Jewish? You mentioned that it reflects Eastern European Jewish music style...

Marty: Well, yes, because, for instance, I spent a lot of years in temple. And a lot of that music has a style that is liturgical. A lot of the music, the liturgy has kind of a minor key and almost, I say Eastern Europe because it came out of the kind of cantoral tradition from the years of Diaspora of the Jewish people. And so their music even in synagogue has that kind of influence of all those years of being dispersed through all the nations. A lot of what we deem to be Jewish music really has an Eastern Europe influence because that’s where a lot of the Jewish people spent most of their years, their Diaspora years were in those countries, you know what I’m saying. So even Jews for Jesus music had that kind of oom-pa oom-pa oom-pa oom-pa oom-pa oom-pa kind of beat with the minor keys and the kind of Hebraic or Jewish sounding melodies, it had that Eastern European feel. And so when I would sit down and try to write, when I would write a song, what I would try to do sometimes was pull in Hebrew like for some of my first songs, I would take a Hebrew phrase. I would take a phrase out of the Scriptures in Hebrew like I wrote a song from Psalm 34. I took the Hebrew, “Gadul Adonai _____...” and I put my own melody to it because it was in Hebrew, it had that feeling, you know, that almost comes out of the Jewish liturgy, if that makes sense. And so, when I say it’s Jewish, it’s Jewish in the sense that it reflects my background as a Jewish person going to synagogue, going to temple, knowing the prayers, and being able to speak a little bit of Hebrew. Now if you went to Israel today and heard their music, it wouldn’t sound like that because Israeli music is just...it no longer reflects that kind of Eastern European, that’s the music...the Diaspora. That’s the music of the Jewish wanderings. Now that there’s a homeland of Israel, the music’s different. It has a different feeling

than it would for someone like me, if that makes sense. But also the content of it because the Psalms is the hymnbook of the Jewish people. So most of my songs are based on the Psalms. It's not that the Psalms belong to the Jewish people exclusively. I'm not saying that. Anytime you sit down and put music to the Psalms, you're taking the hymnbook of the Jewish people and putting music to it. So because the Psalms, obviously, were written by the Jewish people, by David and other Psalmists, and that's why some people would call me a Psalmist more than a song writer because I'm not really a classic song writer where I would sit down and write a tune, write a song. I mostly sit down with the Scriptures and open them up and put music to them. So, the expression of my music is from the Scripture. It's Messianic in that sense. I mean, it's Jewish in that sense because the Scriptures are Jewish. So, it's not necessarily a stylistic thing. It's a stylistic thing sometimes, but sometimes it's more about the content.

Elizabeth: Okay, that was actually my next question, is how much the content influences the genre classification, if you will?

Marty: Yeah, also I would say this too, that the messianic music, or it gets called Messianic, the Messianic kind of music reflects an understanding and a concern about Israel and about the Jewish people. So, I have songs that that's the entire theme of the song. I wrote a song from Isaiah sixty-two called "For Zion's Sake" and it's basically the prayer of Isaiah saying, "For Zion's sake I will not keep silent. For Jerusalem's sake I will not hold my peace." That's the song. The Messianic musician always has an ear toward thinking about the Jewish people and about Israel and about the redemption of the world and the Hebraic as opposed to the church music, which generally does not occupy itself with that. A lot of church music is simply about the salvation message or about the goodness of God, and those are all great things. But often doesn't reflect a broader, kind of forward looking worldview that includes the restoration of Israel and the Jewish people, if that makes any sense?

Elizabeth: Yeah, that makes perfect sense.

Marty: You always have an ear and eye toward that as a Messianic musician. And to add to that too, a lot of people kind of deem something Messianic because of its style, but I've never really, that can be part of it, but I've never personally thought about it that way because my natural style of songs isn't necessarily always Hebraic style. It's often just regular sounding. I draw from my experience in show music and Broadway type music, but if you think about it, that music itself has Jewish underpinnings because the Broadway sound or the Tin Pan Alley sound, which is the sound of popular music back from the 30s or 40s. Most of that was written by and influenced by Jewish writers. They were immigrant kids who came over to America and created all this music; the popular music and Broadway music and show music. People like Gershwin, I'm not comparing myself. I'm not even for a second putting myself in the shoes or their category in terms of quality or skill. I'm simply saying that's the kind of music that I was...because I was raised in that environment. My parents listened to Broadway show music and things like that. There's a certain Jewish influence in all of that, which I draw from in my own personal expression because that's what I grew up with. So I kind of try to combine it all when I am writing.

By the way, do you know Don Marsh?

Elizabeth: Yes, I do.

Marty: Yeah, I did an album, speaking of Tin Pan Alley and speaking of standards and speaking of Broadway, I did an album called "Songs I Wish I'd Written" and it's an album of like full standard songs written mostly by Jewish writers and Don Marsh did the strings for it.

Elizabeth: Oh wow!

Marty: Yeah, so, he did a great job too. So I have a little Liberty connection in that regard.

Elizabeth: I have one more, quick question for you, if that's alright.

Marty: Yeah, yeah, yeah, I don't know that I'm answering any of your questions.

Elizabeth: No, you are. You're answering a lot of them before I get to ask them, which is great.

Marty: Okay.

Elizabeth: The only other one that I have is, now, I'm assuming that when you get do concerts and stuff you do them in Messianic Jewish congregations of all types and also Christian fellowships?

Marty: Yes

Elizabeth: Okay, so in just your observation of different fellowships and participation, what do you believe are important cultural markers in Messianic Jewish worship, referring to raising hands in worship or not raising hands? In some Christian liturgical churches there's a lot of kneeling, or in more charismatic circles there's dancing, raising hands. What are some things that you've observed to be really important, generally speaking, in most Messianic Jewish services?

Marty: Well, that's a good question. I think what distinguishes Messianic congregations at first glance might be what you've mentioned last, which was the dancing. I think that something quite beautiful about it because I've noticed, now this is just a personal thing but you're asking me the questions so I'll answer them. What I've noticed, and this is just my own, kind of observation, I've noticed a lot. Do you go to a church?

Elizabeth: I go to Beit Shalom in Utica, New York on Friday nights. And I go to an Episcopal church on Sunday morning.

Marty: Oh, you do! Okay, Beit Shalom, who leads that?

Elizabeth: Rabbi Stephen Galiley

Marty: Oh, I know Stephen Galiley. Yeah, we know each other...Are you Jewish, Ms. Elizabeth?

Elizabeth: I'm not Jewish.

Marty: If you don't mind my asking, how did you get involved?

Elizabeth: Oh, I don't mind at all. When I was thirteen, my family left the non-denominational church we had been attending. My dad has always been interested in the Jewish roots of our faith, always reading up on it. He had known Rabbi Steve years and years before when they first came to Utica. So when I was thirteen, it was a pretty rough situation. So our family started going to Beit Shalom on Friday nights, and that's when it became the anchor for me as we were church hopping on Sunday mornings. So I really grew up there, in that community. And when I went away to Liberty, I realized that I'm much more prone to identify myself as a Messianic Jew who's not Jewish, than an Episcopalian or non-denominational Christian. So, I thought, "Oh, that's interesting."

Marty: Right, well, good for you. Then, you understand why answering these questions is a little bit, you know, it's not easy to define some of these things. But going back to that question that you asked, I think what I've noticed in churches, I hate to sound like an old fogey, but churches "these days" that it seems to me what used to be congregational worship or worshipping together has become a lot of individuals worshipping at the same time. As opposed to...I didn't say that well. As opposed to corporate worship, it's a lot of individuals worshipping together, alongside of each other, but they're worshipping in their own world, so to speak. And I think what the Messianic congregation tries to do more is to reintroduce the corporate sense of worship, which is much more Hebraic kind of a sensibility. Because the Psalms always speak of that, like "Praise ye the Lord together," "Let the congregation praise the Lord." It's not like personal praise next to somebody else doing personal praise. Not that God's isn't a personal God and you're not worshipping Him personally, you are...So I think what happens in a Messianic congregation, just off the top of my head, it seems to me the dancing, one of the things that it does is it brings everyone together. You know? You have an eighty year old guy holding hands with an eight year old kid dancing in a circle. There's something really refreshing about that, but biblically correct about that. You know, like the prophet saying, "One day in the streets of Jerusalem, the young and the old will dance and sing together." There's something about that that I think is unique to the Messianic congregation and I think is a really good thing. That's one thing.

Also, the use of liturgy, which sometimes can be...doesn't engage people that much. Sometimes there can be so much of it that it can drown things out so to speak. Or, kind of bog things down, I might say. Be that as it may, done well and done right, liturgy can really be an enhancement to the congregational experience, I think. Now, you have liturgy in the Episcopal Church, but it's much more...it is what it is. But I think the Hebraic liturgy, the Hebrew liturgy, is unique and special because it goes all the way back to the roots of the faith. Not that the liturgy itself does, because a lot of that liturgy was developed again by the Diaspora Jews that put it all together. But still because it's Hebrew and it draws from the ancient texts and such, it takes you back to the root, to the real roots of the faith, whereas the Episcopal liturgy reflects much more, you probably have the word for it more than I do, but it reflects more theological truths developed by church fathers and such than it does actual going right back to the source. So I like that too because it constantly...like I've said to people before, "The kid that goes to have his bar mitzvah in 2014 is going to do something...he's going to be chanting prayers and doing rituals that reflect thousands of years of tradition and so there is a continuity to the Messianic expression that I think is actually deeper than the regular church expression. You know, that might just be my bias about it, but I think it does. I think it's rooted farther back in the roots of the faith. Also in terms of the expression of whether hands are raised or whether it's charismatic or not, I don't think that's as important as the content. Because everyone has a different...everyone expresses themselves differently. Of course, I came from the charismatic world, so kind of anything goes any place that I go, as long as it's in order of course. But I'm trying to think of anything else. Of course, physically a lot of congregations have the Torah, which is completely unique to a Messianic ministry, which you never see in church. That goes back thousands of years as well. So all I would say the physical trappings of a Messianic synagogue, the dancing, the kind of egalitarian nature of everyone worshipping together in a congregational way, sometimes employing liturgy, I think that tends to give it continuity and a rooting in ancient things that the church doesn't really have. And the church seems to be more given to, kind of like, the flavor of the day if that makes any sense. There's a lot of new music and stuff out that is really, really good, but it almost seems to be, "Well, it's really good now, but what about two months from now or two or three years from now?" That's what I'm to say, things go in and out of style in the church a lot.

Elizabeth: So it's almost faddish instead of...

Marty: Yeah, it's faddish exactly. I think what's neat about the...neat is not a very scholarly word, but I think that what is unique about the Messianic expression is it goes so far back and keeps a continuity that isn't as given to kind of like the latest thing. I don't think I said that very well, but you know, I'm trying to

Elizabeth: I follow you.

Marty: You follow me, okay. Now as far as what I bring when I go places, I pretty much just bring what I've written and what I express. I don't really...that's what's unique about what Jenny and I do; we don't really change it that much. We are totally comfortable in Messianic circle and we are totally comfortable in church circles. Even though I have my opinions and my thoughts about those things, I also recognize that I was brought to the Lord by church people. I wasn't brought to Yeshua by Messianic people. I was brought to Jesus by church people. And so my background in my early days of being a believer was in the church and so even though I've found a home in the Messianic world, for which I'm very grateful, I am completely at ease in the church world as well. Because I've recognized that it's through the mercy shown me through them that I'm even here. So I don't like to put myself in any kind of a box or constraint. I believe in the universal oneness of the Body. But I do think that the Messianic understanding of the Scriptures and of Israel and of the times we are in and of the continuity of the faith from beginning to end, I think is a more comprehensive worldview than what I've experienced in a lot of Christianity, which seems to focus much more on just salvation and church life and personal enrichment and personal enlightenment, you know what I mean? As opposed to a broader sweep of the historic nature of what we're all involved in.

Elizabeth: yeah, wow, thank you so much. You have given me much more time than I asked for and I really appreciate that.

Marty: Well, I hope I didn't babble too much.

Elizabeth: Oh, no, I really appreciate it. You answered, like I said, a lot of questions even before I asked them, which is great. There's one I skipped if it's okay? Do you have a little more time by chance? If not, it's okay.

Marty: Yeah

Elizabeth: Could you define Messianic Judaism for me?

Marty: Define it?

Elizabeth: Yeah, how would you define it?

Marty: How would I define it? I would define it by saying. I think it's...I would say Messianic Judaism is an attempt to express faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and love for His Son, Yeshua, Jesus, in a way that reflects the historic roots. Well, in a way that employs the Hebraic understanding of the Scriptures, which is a way of saying, "Seeing the Scriptures through Jewish eyes," so to speak. And to try to express faith in God and love for Yeshua in a way that expresses itself drawing from the Jewish experience and the Jewish history and heritage. So that it reclaims Jesus, or Yeshua, as the Jewish Messiah. That was a lot of words, but did that make any sense?

Elizabeth: Yes, it did.

Marty: It's taking faith in God and in Jesus and contextualizing it in a way that reflects the heritage of the Jewish people, the Hebraic nature of the Scriptures and the focus on Israel because that is where it all began

and where it all is going to end and expressing it in a way that reclaims the Jewish-ness of the Savior so that Jewish people know that Yeshua is their Messiah and that Gentiles know that their Savior is Jewish.

Elizabeth: Okay.

Marty: That's a lot of words, but somewhere in there you'll pull some out.

Elizabeth: No, that was great. Thank you. It was very comprehensive.

Marty: Yes, very, like I said everything that could be said.

Elizabeth: Alright, that's all the questions that I have.

Marty: And let me add one thing to that. It's Messianic Judaism because historically the church separated itself from its Jewish roots early on. I just need to do this addendum. Because the church through misunderstanding developed a theology whereby they replaced Israel as the people of God, at least in their understanding, and separated themselves from their Jewish roots, Hebraic roots, Christianity became a faith separate from Judaism almost at opposite ends of Judaism, but Messianic Judaism is an attempt to, once again use the word 'reclaim' the faith as a Jewish faith. Not anything against Christianity, but to kind of re-contextualize Christianity in its original form...

Elizabeth: which was Jewish?

Marty: which was Jewish. Yes, Amen. I feel a little silly because I've never. I should have written this down for myself before I babbled it out to you, but you'll make sense of it because you're smart and you're in school

Elizabeth: Oh, thanks, because I'm in school. They make you apply yourself, that's what. [laughter] Wow. Thank you so much.

Marty: Well, I hope you got something out of that Miss Elizabeth.

Elizabeth: Oh I did. Thank you. I really, really appreciate it.

Appendix D: Jack Zimmerman

Interview with Rabbi Jack Zimmerman on July 22, 2014

Elizabeth: To begin, could you tell me just a little bit about yourself? How you got into ministry and just a little bit of your story? That would be great.

Jack: You bet, Elizabeth, I was born into a conservative Jewish household in Brooklyn, New York, where my parents wanted me to live a traditional Jewish life, which consisted of going to Hebrew school, of having my bar mitzvah, and of at least, from Grandma's perspective, marrying a nice Jewish girl. And as I love to say whenever I share this story, you know I got two out of three right. When I was twenty-nine, I met and married this wonderful Christian girl from Northeast Philadelphia who really provoked me to enviousness of my Messiah as Romans 11:11 said that she as a Christian would because I was almost irritated to the point that where she knew more about my Bible than I did. Very early on in our marriage, she introduced to me some passages in the part of the Bible that the Jewish people read, the Old Testament obviously, that speak about the Messiah. And she said, "Now, I think that it's talking about one Messiah in particular, but Jack this is your Jewish Bible, I'll give you the verses and you tell me who you think it is." She was really good. So, she gave me what I did not know at the time are well known Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament—Psalm 22, Isaiah 7:14, 53, Micah 5:2, Zechariah 12:10, Proverbs 4, Psalm 2:7, the list goes on and on and on, including, but not limited to Daniel 9:25-27, which speaks of the time that the Messiah would have to arrive and at that point the year was 1988. All I had to do was connect the dots and realize that Yeshua was my Messiah and if in fact He wasn't, then we don't have a Messiah. So I gave my life to Yeshua in a little Southern Baptist Church in _____, Florida of all places, where I was living at the time. The pastor of the Southern Baptist Church actually said, "Jack, have you ever heard of a Messianic congregation?" and I said, "No." and I hadn't. and my wife and I went to check one out and we kind of noticed people doing some things that I said, "Oh my gosh, this woman is flailing around with her arms on the floor and foaming at the mouth. I've never seen that at any of my Jewish synagogues." So that wasn't exactly something that attracted me to the Messianic movement. But when we moved to New York a short time later, I got a call from a wonderful Messianic rabbi by the name of David Rosenberg, who to this day still has a congregation in Long Island, New York. Two of his sons are Messianic rabbis as well and we went to his congregation for a while. We moved out, my wife and I did, to central Pennsylvania. And in Central PA, there are really no Messianic congregations. So we spent our time on Sundays going to a Wesleyan church and sometimes on Saturdays we'd go to Philadelphia. And go to wonderful long established Messianic congregation by the name of Beth Yeshua headed up by David and Joel Chernoff. My wife at that time came down with chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, the doctor said if I wanted her to get better I seriously had to consider moving to a hot dry climate. And that is how, now sixteen years ago, we ended up in Arizona. And began attending a Church of the Nazarene where in the year 2000, the pastor said, "Look, Jack, I know that God has a calling on your life and if you want to have a Messianic congregation here nobody's using this building on Saturdays we might as well use it to glorify the Lord. Have at it." And so, Elizabeth, fifteen years later, here we are. I am the Messianic rabbi for the congregation Tree of Life in Phoenix. We meet each and every Saturday morning. And our average attendance is about 110-120 folks and the other hat that of course I wear and have been wearing for the past 10 years is the staff evangelist for Jewish Voice Ministries International. We are a ministry that basically is dedicated to proclaiming the Gospel to the Jew first and also to the nations, but also to equipping the church, providing them education about the Hebraic roots of Christianity and their responsibility to Israel and the Jewish people, and how to share Messiah with the Jewish people. And so all these years later, still not too many grey hairs and here we are.

Elizabeth: Wonderful. Thank you.

Jack: You bet.

Elizabeth: So, how would you define Messianic Judaism?

Jack: Well, I would define it, and you know each one of us have different definitions. I would define Messianic Judaism as a movement among both Jews and Gentiles to go back to the Jewish roots of Scripture and as well as to worship our Savior, our Messiah, and Redeemer within a Jewish cultural context, content, and environment.

Elizabeth: Wonderful. Okay. Now in your congregation and, I'm sure with Jewish Voice, you must travel all over and visit many different kinds of congregations. In your observation, what do you believe are important cultural markers in Messianic Jewish worship style?

Jack: You bet. Probably first and foremost, and there are two, the first thing that comes to mind is the need to obviously preserve Jewish culture within the environment of a Messianic congregation, but to do so while at the same time making sure that that which is preserved also points to Whom it is fulfilled by. And let me explain because that is almost a nebulous statement to make. I've always felt that every group of people, race, culture, creed, should always have the opportunity and the blessing to worship Yeshua within their own culture and context. This is why you have Spanish churches; you have Filipino churches, etc. Well, you know, Jewish people need that as well. We need to come to Yeshua and experience Him within our own culture and context if for no other reason than the fact that all of His Jewish roots over the last few thousand years have been stripped away from Him by a church that has largely been an adherent of Replacement Theology and has wanted to take everything Jewish out of the Bible. So, our goal in Messianic Judaism is two-fold. It's to say, "Listen, we want to in worshipping Yeshua within a Jewish culture, we want to let you know that you can retain that culture. We're approaching a Jewish Savior in a Jewish way. Yet at the same time, preserving culture and tradition just for the sake of preserving culture and tradition is not enough. You have to show within that culture and within the traditions and rituals that you engage in in a Messianic congregation how it all points to Yeshua, because if it doesn't, what's the point? And you're right, Elizabeth, I mean I travel the world, and speak at places large and small. In fact, just a couple weeks ago I was down at a wonderful congregation called Beth Hallel in Metairie, New Orleans, Louisiana. A few weeks before that, I was at another Messianic congregation in Chicago, Illinois. And what I like about both of them is they take Jewish tradition and ritual and say, "Listen, we don't have to let that go. But what we do have to do is show you how it always pointed to Yeshua." and that's what we do in our Messianic congregation, and I suspect that a lot of rabbis do, because again, if you're just doing tradition for the sake of tradition what's the point? The fact of the matter is that ninety percent, ninety percent—and a study was done on this—ninety percent of all Jewish people don't even go to their own local congregations or synagogues. And what do you have in those local congregations and synagogues? You got ritual. You got tradition. You've got liturgy. And all those things are good, but none of it points to Yeshua, so what's the point? And so when we want to engage in those things, we show folks how they always did, they do, and they always will point to Yeshua, if for no other reason than the fact that we don't want to replicate congregations that have a ninety percent failure rate.

Elizabeth: Right. So what are some things that somebody who just walking into a Messianic fellowship for the first time might notice immediately that sets it apart from a synagogue and from a Christian church?

Jack: Great question. Of course, it all depends upon who walks in. If the person who is walking in is a Christian, who is used to the church environment, wow. I mean this is going to be totally different than

anything they've ever seen. If the person walking in is Jewish from a traditional congregational environment, they are going to feel a sense of, "Wow, there's a lot of stuff in here that I can associate with, yet at the same time there's also a lot of stuff now that I'm being introduced to that was not part of my regular congregational environment that I never knew before." So let me get into detail about both. The Christian person walks in, number one they see what we call an Aron Kodesh, or a large cabinet that has a scroll in it, and in that scroll are the first five books of the Bible. It's a Torah scroll. They're going to be surprised. They're going to say, "Wow! We don't have this in my church." Chances are when they come in they might also see some Jewish symbols. They might see the symbol of the menorah. They might see the symbol of the Lion of the tribe of Judah. They might obviously see the symbol of the Star of David. These are not symbols traditionally seen in any Christian church. In our congregation also, we begin the service by having men blow the ram's horn, the shofars, at the four corners of our sanctuary, doesn't happen always in a traditional church. Then, I will go up and one of the first things that they may notice about me is that, "Wow, you know, our pastor doesn't wear a scarf and a little beanie on his head like this guy does." I'll open up in prayer and in opening up in prayer; I might speak Hebrew and translate it. That is not normally done in a traditional church. Our worship team will sing songs not normally sung in a traditional church. Some yes, some no, because we've got to understand that as a Messianic congregation, our main focus obviously is to reach Jewish people. But in our area, since the vast majority of Jewish people marry out of their faith, we have to be sensitive to the fact that we have to reach not only the Jewish person in the marriage, but also their Christian spouse. So our worship team may very well play some songs that you might hear on, you know, traditional Christian radio. But then we'll go from something like, "My Yeshua, my Savior, Lord there is none like You," we'll go from that to "He is my Defense. I shall not be moved." So, you know, we'll go from a traditional Christian song to a Messianic Jewish song so that we can incorporate the flavor of both. Following that we'll have what many churches do, which is our tithes and offerings. We'll also do something else that many churches do; we will have a time of congregational prayer, where we'll ask people if they desire to come forward to the altar and we'll anoint them with oil. Then we'll have a time where we pray for the nation of Israel, which some churches are starting to do, some not. Following that though, then we have our Hebrew liturgy, our liturgical service, which again, you're not going to find in churches. We will have several, just a few, prayers of Hebrew liturgy. We'll have the Shema and the V'ahavta, also known as Deuteronomy 6:4 and continuing in Deuteronomy 6:5-9 and we'll say those in Hebrew and in English. Following that, I will then call the kids, all the children to come up, and we call it "Torah Time with the Rabbi." What we'll do is we will take a verse out of the Torah portion that morning—a foreign concept to churches—we'll say, "Okay, this morning we're in Sh'mot." And we start off with Exodus 1:1 according to the traditional readings of the first five books, in accordance with the Jewish calendar. One of the kids will read a verse from that Torah portion, another one of the kids will read a parallel verse from the New Testament, or the B'rit Chadashah, to show how their all one book. Then, one of two things will happen, if we have our Torah service then, I'll have the kids open up the ark and take the Torah scroll and I will read from it or chant from it in Hebrew. We'll put the Torah scroll back. We'll then have the children up with me at the bimah, or at the pulpit. We will then have prayer shawls held over them and the Aaronic Benediction from Numbers 6:24-26 will be said over them. Then my message follows, which of course every church has. Then following my message, after everyone is dismissed, we have something called "oneg." It's a time of food and fellowship, and many churches have that same thing they just call it by a, they use different terminology. They call it the "agape love feast" or "potluck" as it were. And so that's how we would appear to a Christian person coming in—very, very different. For some of them, it might take some getting used to. A lot of times when Christians come in, they are like, "Wow, this maybe a difficult suit for me to put on." And I can understand because that suit was taken away from them for two thousand years to the point of where they never knew it was the right move to go by in the first place.

For the Jewish person who comes into the same service, it all depends. On the one hand, which is a very Jewish statement to make, the Jewish person coming in might very well say, “You know, there’s a lot of stuff in here that I remember seeing in my synagogue and yet, wow, now I’m seeing who this all points to in the first place.” And we do get a lot of Jewish people saying that. At the same time, and it happened about two weeks ago, we had Jewish people coming in. they were sitting in the service. They were there for the praise and worship and everything was great, but the minute, the minute the word “Jesus” was said, oh my gosh, they got up and walked out of there. We are not ashamed with the term “Jesus” because that’s His name in English. At the same time, we are reminded of what Paul said in the Scripture, he said, “Look, when I’m with the Romans, I act like a Roman. When I’m with the Jews, I act like a Jew. Not cause I’m trying to be civil, but because my goal is if that’s what I need to do to bring them to faith in Yeshua, that’s what I’m going to do.” And so when Jewish people come to our congregation, normally we’ll use the terminology “Yeshua,” which is His Hebrew name, so that they can understand Him from His original Jewish culture and context and see Him as the Jewish Savior that He always was, rather this blonde haired, blue eyed Norwegian, who has a British accent in every full-length feature film.

Elizabeth: Right. Right. Wow, thank you.

Jack: You bet.

Elizabeth: Now, these two questions, I think you might have already answered the next two, but I’ll ask just in case you think of something else. So what aspects of contemporary Jewish liturgical or worship practices did you intentionally integrate into your congregation’s worship?

Jack: That’s awesome. There are two things that come to mind. The Torah service we definitely wanted to integrate and we did that intentionally. Let me give you the reasons why. One of the things we find with traditional Jewish people is the minute that they hear that I’m a Messianic rabbi, one of the first questions that comes out of their mouth is, “Well, where did you go to school? Where did you go to Yeshiva?” It’s as if, you know, “What type of school or what type of facility would ordain you?” but I think one of the other reasons that they are asking that question is because they want to find out if we are authentic or not. Because let’s face it, unfortunately, there are some folks out there who have bestowed upon themselves the title of “Messianic rabbi” who have had no theological training, who cannot speak a lick of Hebrew, who basically say “Shabbat Shalom” and it’s Tuesday, you know. And we see a lot of it. And I think that one of the things that disturbs Jewish people is it drives them crazy when Gentiles who are so enamored with everything Jewish basically try to open up a storefront that says “Messianic” and come off as Jewish and it ends up being an insult. That’s one of the reasons that we have the Torah service, because during the Torah service, when that Torah is rolled out, if there is a Jewish person in there, when that Torah is rolled out on the bimah and they can see me chanting out of the Torah scroll with the correct Hebrew with the correct tropes and doing it the way that it is supposed to be done. Then, any and all question of authenticity melts away. They know that we’re serious and we’re not clowning around and we’re not messing around. That’s a very important message that I want to send. And so that’s one of the reasons that we have the Torah service, and we have it intentionally.

But the other reason that we have the Torah service and we have it intentionally is there is a point in the Torah service where the, again what congregations will do is they will raise the Torah into the air and say, “_____ Adonai, etc. This is the Torah which the Lord gave to Moses to give to the children of Israel.” And what we do is we say that, but we say, “Wait a minute, don’t you understand that Yeshua is Torah incarnate and as we’re lifting up this Torah, we’re not glorifying an icon. We’re being reminded of what Yeshua said, when he said, ‘and I, if I am lifted up,’ just like this Torah is lifted up, ‘I will draw all people

unto Myself.’ So again, Torah service is intentional also in this respect because I want to give the unsaved Jewish person coming in this, “AAHH” moment to say, “Oh, okay, I get it. Not only are they authentic, but they’re showing me what the significance of this symbol, this ritual of raising the Torah, really is. It’s not just something that we do, because this is what you do if you’re Jewish.” Everything points to Yeshua, and that’s the first thing.

The second part intentional liturgy that we’ve added is the Shema and the V’ahavta because we’re letting people know that God says to obey His commandments and adhere to His commandments. And also we want the message to the Jewish people who are coming, “Look, you know, you guys, one of the reasons that you have a problem with us is because you think we’re worshiping God, the Father, God, Jesus is God, Holy Spirit is God, okay we’re worshiping three gods. We’re meshuga! We’re out of our minds.” And one of the reasons that we have the Shema is because we want to intentionally state so it’s clear for everyone to understand, “No, we’re not worshiping three gods. Shema Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu Adodai Echad. We are acknowledging that ‘God is one.’” But in that one God, we are also acknowledging that one God can have three manifestations or essences of Himself and still be one. And, you know, to the Jewish person who has a problem with that, my question is, “Okay, if you have a hardboiled egg that has the shell, the white, and the yolk, it’s got three essences. It still remains one egg. You don’t have three eggs. How is it that we have no problem ascribing the power that an egg has the power to do that, but to suggest that God has the power to do the same thing, ‘Oh no, God can’t do that. He doesn’t have the same power as an egg does.’” Oh please! So, that’s why we are intentional to that particular liturgy in our service.

Elizabeth: Wow, thank you. So what contemporary Christian liturgical practices did you integrate? You mentioned tithes and offerings are something that a Christian might notice right away in your service.

Jack: You bet. Tithes and offering is one. Anointing people with oil is another one. Traditionally congregations and synagogues don’t do that. Let me see. Let me think of another one. Obviously traditional congregations normally don’t play stuff that you would hear on K-Love. At least their worship teams won’t, and we do. So those I think would be the biggest things.

Elizabeth: Okay, and then what liturgical practices from either the Jewish or the Christian world were intentionally avoided?

Jack: Sure. One of the Jewish liturgical practices was intentionally avoided is a Jewish prayer known as the *yigdal*, y-i-g-d-a-l. The *yigdal* is a prayer that is found in every traditional Jewish Siddur, every traditional Jewish prayer book. And, I mean, growing up before I knew Yeshua, man, I loved the *yigdal*, because it had great tune to it. The word ‘*yigdal*’ means ‘to magnify and exalt God acknowledging His majesty and acknowledging Him as the living God.’ The reason that we avoid the *yigdal* is that in the Hebrew, in the second and third verses it says, “*Echad v’ein yachid k’yichudo ne’lam v’gam ein sofl’achduto. Ein lo d’mut haguf v’eino guf lo na’aroch elav k’dushato.*” And in English, that means, “He is One - and there is no unity like His Oneness. Inscrutable and infinite is His Oneness. He has no semblance of a body nor is He corporeal; nor has His holiness any comparison.” So that’s why we don’t do that prayer, because that prayer basically disqualifies the belief that God can be one in unity and it also disqualifies the belief that He did indeed come and manifest Himself in human form. So that’s why obviously we ignore the *yigdal* prayer because it’s contrary to biblical Judaism. It’s contrary to our belief in Yeshua.

Let’s see. What was the other half of the question you asked about the liturgy that we avoid?

Elizabeth: Is there any Christian liturgy that you avoided?

Jack: You know, sure. There are certain Christians that for example will recite the Apostle's Creed. We, you know, avoid reciting the Apostle's Creed for a couple of reasons. One, of the reasons is that the Apostle's Creed, for example, uses the term 'Holy Ghost' and again this suggests something to the Jewish person that kind of distances them. Its like, "What do you mean? You guys believe in ghosts?" That's one thing, but in the Apostle's Creed it also says, "I believe in the holy catholic church, the communion of saints." We avoid that. We avoid that for a couple of reasons. Number one, we're not here to promote Catholicism. We are not here to promote, you know, praying the rosary, praying veneration of the Virgin Mary. And we're certainly not here to give any kind of credence to a Catholic church which no doubt may be perceived by these unsaved Jewish people as the enemies of Judaism and those who have ____ Jewish persecution for the last two thousand years. So I would say those are the two that we definitely avoid.

Now, one thing I forgot to mention. Every once in a while we do include a Jewish liturgical prayer called the *Kaddish*, or the *Mourner's Kaddish*; the prayer of mourning because of someone who may have lost a loved one in the last year. And I will recite that prayer over the congregation. I will sweep my hand across the congregation, and if anyone has lost a loved one over the past year, I'll just ask if they will raise their hands and we'll acknowledge that. We are not praying for the dead. That's not a Scriptural concept. But we are acknowledging their loss and thanking God for the celebration of life that they had and how we will always remember them and remember Him and His kindness to create them.

Elizabeth: Okay, I was actually going to ask because when you said 'yigdal', I know that term from the Kaddish.

Jack: Right

Elizabeth: so I wasn't sure if they were...it's just a term that's used in the Kaddish but it is its own prayer? Okay.

Jack: You bet

Elizabeth: Alright. Just to be clear. Then, as you got involved in Messianic Judaism how did you notice, or did you, how leaders from Christianity and leaders from Judaism responded to Messianic Jews using their liturgical practices?

Jack: You know it kind of went across the board. Let's talk about the traditional Jewish side first. I had the traditional Jewish side one of the feelings or sentiments that I got is, "Oh, you are high jacking our liturgy for your purposes of pointing it to Jesus and that's wrong." But on the other side, at one of our services, we actually had a conservative Jewish rabbi show up because we meet on Saturday mornings and his congregation meets on Friday nights, so he decided to come to one of our services and check us out. At that time we had a *hazan*, a cantor, who basically had been in like Broadway and operatic productions, an incredible voice. And this cantor was chanting out of the Torah scroll, and you could see the rabbi's mouth and his jaw drop to the floor because he was so amazed that this...you know here we are cowboys and Indians in Arizona, a Messianic congregation and we got the authenticity.

As far as the church and our liturgy, you know, it's across the board. There have been some leaders in the church who have basically said, "Look, what in the world are you doing that liturgy for? You know, here you are taking liturgy. You're taking stuff from the Old Testament. You're going back under the law. And next thing you know these folks are in your congregation are gonna be so enamored with everything Jewish and then they're gonna come into our church and they're gonna tell our people that they need to be Jewish and convert and start wearing the yamakas and you know, we don't know what this nonsense is that you're

doing.” And yet, at the same time we have had other pastors, and primarily they have been outreach missions pastors. They get it. And they said, “Wow, this is terrific, because what you’re doing is you are revering and glorifying Yeshua in a way that people can identify with Him within their own culture and their context and they love it.

Elizabeth: Awesome. So I just noticed the time, we are about half way through the questions. Are you okay for time? Or is this running long?

Jack: I am very okay for time. You take whatever you need. We want to be a blessing for you.

Elizabeth: Alright. Well, I truly appreciate it. So, how did, as you know, you read and study the Bible. How did that early Jewish cultural and practices and stuff from Yeshua’s era influence liturgical or worship decisions that you made in this rebirth of Messianic Judaism?

Jack: Well, you know, in some ways it did and in some ways it didn’t. I mean, just because something is not found in the Bible, doesn’t automatically mean it’s anti-biblical. And, so some of the liturgical choices that we make, for example, I might start off a service by reciting a prayer to thank God for bringing us through the night and giving us another day. _____ [said prayer in Hebrew] And that prayer, necessarily, is not found in Scripture, but again, just because it’s not in Scripture doesn’t mean it’s anti-biblical, particularly when we give all the credit and all the glory and all the honor to Yeshua for doing this for us. But there are a number of other things of course that are in the Scriptures, such as Deuteronomy 6:4, which when Yeshua was asked what was the greatest commandment in Matthew He responded by saying, “Hear, oh Israel, the Lord your God, the Lord is one.” And then He went on with the V’ahavta, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind, etc.” So He was reaffirming Deuteronomy 6:4-9. And we feel that’s important to have in our congregation because we want to show people, “Look! It’s all one book and yeah, the Shema and the V’ahavta come out from Jewish culture. But what these Jewish people and traditional congregations and synagogues may not realize is that, yeah, they are thinking that this blonde haired, blue-eyed Norwegian Jesus may have started Christianity, when in fact, here in Matthew, He said the same thing. Emphasizing His Jewishness, and emphasizing the importance of keeping the commandments.” So that’s a really strong reason why we have those as part of our liturgy and we always will.

Elizabeth: Gotcha. So how were the liturgical practices that were developed, kind of back when you first started your synagogue, how were they useful in the maturation of Messianic Jewish identity? I mean, it’s a relatively young movement, correct?

Jack: It is. I mean, it’s one of the youngest and at the same time, it’s one of the oldest. The first believers, obviously, in Yeshua were Messianic Jews. But, I think it does help spiritually mature people. Let me talk about both. It helps to spiritually mature Jewish people because they see that...it’s like they’re getting the second half of the story. They’ve always known, “Okay, well, we sing the Shema and the V’ahavta and we do the liturgy simply because we do what we do what we do. And rabbi said we do this, so we glorify God and we say these prayers.” But it spiritually matures the folks in that we show them the second half, where it pointed to Yeshua, who is the only one who can make them and all of us holy. So, I think that by them getting, as Paul Harvey used to say, “The rest of the story,” that some of the questions that they’ve had and some of the thoughts they’ve had as to why they do certain things. These questions are now answered and these thoughts resolved, and it helps them to grow closer in the Lord; the same thing for Christians who come in. When they hear us doing liturgy, you know, it would be very easy for them to assume, “Oh, hey they’re doing this liturgy because it’s a prayer and their Jewish and so they do it in Hebrew and hey, that’s

nice.” But when they see that na, na, na, na, na, na, no. We’re not doing this solely because it’s Jewish and, you know, “Hey, we’re all Jews so let’s do the Jewish thing, and, you know, sing the songs. Be careful about that Hebrew accent with the words that go ‘ch.’” You know, when they see that, “Okay, I get it. This is ... our very Jewish Yeshua, our very Jewish Jesus.” Then they know the rest of the story as well. And it helps them to spiritually mature because for both parties involved, both the Jews and the Christians, they start to see those things as Jesus’ Hebraic undertones. And then, from then on, anytime they read the Scriptures, they kind of read it with a greater eye toward looking for the Hebraic because they know that that’s what the prayers pointed to all along.

Elizabeth: Thank you. Wonderful.

Jack: You bet.

Elizabeth: Now, changing gears just a little bit here, are you a musician, just out of curiosity?

Jack: I’m not. I sing, but I don’t play any instruments.

Elizabeth: Okay, well, with the music that you do, or that you’re familiar with from the movement, what musical influences do you believe were drawn upon in the development of Messianic Jewish music?

Jack: Oh, wow. Oh, wow. This would be a great song for my buddy who I just spent the past weekend with, Paul Wilbur. Well, influences that were drawn upon in terms of Messianic worship?

Elizabeth: Yes

Jack: Wow, on the one hand, I don’t know if I would be the best person to answer that. On the other hand, I can tell you that one of the influences would be that Jewish music itself has a distinct sound to it. Just like many types of music do. Sometimes all you need to do is listen to the first couple of notes or the first stanza of music and you can say, “Wow, that’s jazz. That’s blues. That’s country and western. That’s rock ‘n roll.” Just by the instruments that are used. Just by the, let’s say the beats per second, etc. etc. etc. And I can tell you that, at least from the standpoint of our worship team that much of the music we play, or much of the songs that we play is music that has become traditional in the Messianic movement; such as ‘He is my Defense’ and “Adonai, every knee will bow, every tongue will cry,” you know, those types of music. Which comes from, I think, a beat structure that we’re familiar with. I think, you know, staying within the minor keys. This is something that at the onset of it sounds very, very Jewish to a Jewish ear. I don’t know if that makes any sense.

Elizabeth: Yeah, it does. That makes sense to me. I’ve been in a Messianic synagogue for a number of years myself, so yeah, that makes sense to me.

Jack: Okay.

Elizabeth: Okay, and then, what a lot of the folks that I have been talking to have told me is that a component of a worship service in many Messianic fellowships is the dance. And that’s kind of, usually an immediate... something an outsider would notice that there’s these dancers and stuff. So how do you think that the development of Messianic Jewish dance served as an identifier for Messianic Judaism and what is its importance to the movement?

Jack: Well, you know, you’re right. There are many Messianic congregations that do have dance as a part of their praise and worship. You know, as far as me and our congregation, the jury is still out with me on it,

and I'll tell you why. But you're right, normally churches and...don't have dance, certainly not Baptist churches. I mean, I love it. I love having dance in the Messianic setting as long as it's done properly. Here's what I mean. In our Messianic congregation, I would love to have dance as long as there is somebody leading a dance team who has worked with them, who has rehearsed with them, who has gone over the steps. Because the thing that I've never been able to figure out is this, everybody understands and everybody expects a worship team to have a time of rehearsal before the service so that everybody's on pitch, everybody knows the music, everybody knows the to start. You would expect that. It's the right thing to do, yet, if we expect that out of a worship team, then, what I can't figure out is how come, at the same time, there are then so many people who say, "Hey, you know, this music sounds great. I'm gonna go up and dance to it!" totally unrehearsed. I mean, why would you take something so beautiful such as music from a worship team that has taken the time and the opportunity to rehearse it so that they may present excellence before the Lord, and then augment it with a group of people who come up who are all kicking their feet in any which way or crazy directions. And just like you would expect people to be gifted to be on the worship team, you'd expect them to be gifted in dance, and you don't always have that. And that's something that has bothered me and continues to bother me for a long, long time. We want to present...worship team but at the same time we're saying, "Okay, let's augment that with a dance line that looks like Ringling Brothers, Barnum, and Bailey Circus." I don't understand that. It doesn't make sense to me. And so, as far as dance, yeah I would love it in our congregation. As long as, just like we have a worship team that rehearses so that they can present their gifting in excellence before the Lord. What I would want, is I would want a dance leader to say, "Okay, we're gonna rehearse this so that everybody knows the steps so that we too can present excellence before the Lord." I think it's the right thing to do. So I don't agree with Messianic congregations where everybody goes this way, or everybody goes that way. And the other problem with the dance is that sometimes what you've got is you've got one person is dancing over here. And then another person decides to feel what they feel is a move of the Spirit and they go dancing over there. And they go waving flags around and hit somebody in the head. Then you've got somebody in the back who is doing an entirely different dance step as if they were doing a foxtrot and it's all confusion. And I don't believe that it is glorifying to the Lord at all. Our God is a god...He is not the god of confusion. So, I love it when we take the time to rehearse and prepare so that all of us may present excellence before the Lord. I mean, look, before I give my message each and every Shabbat, I've prayed over it. I've taken the time to do the research. I've taken the time to go to the original Hebrew and investigate the exegesis and the hermeneutical principles of it. So that I can make sure that I am presenting this properly. And I don't think that it's too much to ask that everybody else in their ministry does the same thing.

Elizabeth: Excellent. That's a really great point. Thank you.

Jack: You bet.

Elizabeth: So how did the, and this is kind of broadening it out to more of the general movement, I guess, how did the theological understandings of emerging Messianic Judaism influence the liturgy of Messianic Jewish congregations? This might have been answered earlier though.

Jack: Um, I think it was, but let me add something to it.

Elizabeth: Sure

Jack: I think you've got to be not only sensitive to the Jewish people who are coming, but you also have to be sensitive and cognizant of the neighborhood and the community in which your congregation is planted.

Now for example, our congregation is somewhat light on Hebrew liturgy. We do the Shema. We do the V'ahavta. We'll chant the Aaronic Benediction over the kids, and we'll have a Torah service once a month, and every once in a while we'll have the Mourner's Kaddish. But that's as far as it goes, and that's about as far as it's going to get. Not because I'm not in favor of liturgy, but because the community where we are, which is Scottsdale, Phoenix, is a community where the average Jewish person doesn't even know Hebrew. The average Jewish person does not have such an attachment to liturgy. Yeah, they want to hear some of it, because it identifies with their heart because they're a Jewish person. And it presents in their heart a concept of home. But yet at the same time, this is the same type of Jewish person who basically, is the one to say, "You know, every Passover when we would have our Passover Sedar, man, you know, I love looking for the Afikomen and I love the various rituals. But, man! When our Sedar went on for four hours because dad read every single page of the synagogue and how many times are you gonna sing *Chad Gadya*?" It drove them crazy. So once again, we don't want to replicate that. At the same time, though, Elizabeth, if there is a Messianic congregation that opens up in Williamsburg, Brooklyn or Crown Heights or some areas of Beverly Hills or _____ in Upstate New York would be only natural and understandable for them to be heavier on the Jewish liturgy than we are because they are reaching an entirely different Jewish person than we are here in Phoenix, Arizona.

Elizabeth: Gotcha. So it's knowing the community that you're in?

Jack: You bet.

Elizabeth: Wonderful. We're almost done. Thank you so much. I think we mentioned this that you've traveled a lot over the world. Now is that ministering to Messianic Jews and Messianic Jewish congregations internationally? Or...

Jack: It's been ministering to Messianic Jews internationally and also to the church internationally as well that has wanted to learn about the Jewish roots of the faith. I mean, you'd be amazed. One thing that comes to mind, in 2009 I was invited by a church organization to come and speak in the Philippines. Prior to going there, I found out that in the northern part of the Philippines—wow—they've got a Messianic Jewish congregation.

Elizabeth: Oh my goodness!

Jack: I know, and I'm thinking, "Oh no. Come on, man, you've got to be kidding me. What is this going to be like?" So, I went to that northern part of the Philippines when I was there and I stayed overnight with the organizers. And they were saying, "Rabbi, tomorrow we'll go to our Messianic congregation." And I said, "Okay, I'm looking forward to it." And in the back of my mind I'm thinking, "Okay, if this is going to be the Philippine version of Jewish, this is not going to be authentic." And I walked in, and I was absolutely blown away, because, again, the guys are wearing the yamakas. They're wearing the prayer shawls. There's the Star of David. There's the ark with the Torah scroll. They're singing the songs by Paul Wilbur and Joel Chernoff and Ted Pearce and Jonathan Settel and doing Hebrew liturgy. And I said, "You know, I know that right now I'm in Baguio City in the Philippines but I know that if I close my eyes and could not see where I was and just listened. Then I would feel like I was in a Messianic congregation in Brooklyn, New York." There was no difference. It absolutely blew me away.

Elizabeth: Wow, that's crazy. And that's actually what my next question is about, what similarities or differences have you noticed between the American Messianic Jewish experience and the international Messianic Jewish experience?

Jack: Well, I've noticed too. One of the main differences is that when I go to Messianic congregations internationally I don't see so much of what I like to refer to as the "Barbie and Ken Gentile and Jewish dress up." I see it here in the United States, but I don't see it internationally. And we can learn a lot from those people internationally. Again I was just at the Mexican Messianic Alliance Conference, and at that conference you've got Jewish people coming. You've got Gentiles coming. And guess what! The Gentiles who are there don't feel the need to convert to Judaism to be Jews. Thank God! They do not feel the need to dress up like Jews. Thank God! They do not feel the need to change their name to, you know, if the gentleman's name is Jose Richardo, he does not—thank God—feel the need to change his name, Moshe ben Shia ben Yose ben Shlomo____. Thank God! And yet that type of stuff unfortunately is all too common here in the United States. Despite the fact that in Romans 4 Paul basically says, "Look, you guys are worshipping together, here's the deal. This one's Gentile. This one's Jewish. Neither one has to convert to be like the other because God's not looking at what label you wear. As long as you're believers in Yeshua, you're already equal covenant partners and equally children of Abraham." I mean, it's there in Romans 4. And yet, here in the United States, in so many Messianic congregations, primarily Gentile Christians pretend that doesn't even exist. So, they get so enamored with everything Jewish. I mean, I just got an email from somebody today saying, "I'm interested in attending a Messianic synagogue. I am a Gentile. How can I convert and become Jewish?" and the thought that always crosses my mind and I say to them, "Okay. What is the biblical principle that you are using to come to the conclusion that you need to convert?" Obviously, there is none, and I see that going on a lot all too often here in the U.S. I don't see it internationally. Internationally, I see people who are comfortable in their own skin. Know that as long as they are believers in Yeshua, God loves them whoever they are. And you don't get brownie points by converting from a Gentile to a Jew. That's number one.

The other dynamic though that I see, is that, and it's not just in Messianic congregations, it's in churches too. Here, stateside, we seem to have this overemphasis on end times Bible prophecy. Is it pre-trib, mid-trib, post-trib? What's the great white throne judgment? 666? Who're these witnesses? I mean, I'm not saying that this stuff isn't good. It is. That's why it's in Scripture. But I think we focus too much on it. Whereas when you go internationally, that's not the focus. People are not trying to figure out when He's showing up, they're focus is, "How do we get as many people into the kingdom as quickly, as best as possible? So that whenever it is that Yeshua decides to return He will be welcomed by an even bigger harvest of souls!" And so that I think is the greatest difference that I see between the two.

Elizabeth: Okay. Wow. Thank you so much. That's all of my questions.

Jack: Wow, well Elizabeth, thank you so much, number one for this wonderful project that you're doing for Liberty University. I can tell you they will be enhanced by what you're doing. I just know that. So I rejoice with you. And second, thank you so much for contacting us for this project. We're humbled and honored that you called upon us to play a role and participate in this with you.

Elizabeth: Oh, you're welcome. Thank you so much for all the time that you've given me. It's been more than forty-five minutes. I apologize.

Jack: Oh don't worry! You were never on a time clock to begin with, and I've gotten most of my work done for the day. So I'm so glad that we spent this time. Please tell Stephen and Devorah that I said hello. And I look forward to speaking with you again sometime, okay?

Elizabeth: Okay!

Appendix E: David Rosenberg

Interview with Rabbi David Rosenberg on July 26, 2014

[Also present for this interview was Rabbi Rosenberg's wife, Rebbetzin Helene Rosenberg and Shimon Galiley. Rebbetzin Helene was kind enough to also participate in the interview. This interview took place during lunch.]

David: I and my family all went to synagogue. First twelve years of my life, my parents sang in the choir, a Conservative synagogue. And pretty much, if I thought I had a happy childhood, it's because mostly of our relationship to the synagogue and the fact that my parents were. In my eyes they were famous because they were in the choir, and my mom, of course, was the lead prima soprano and she was a professional opera singer, so there was kind of an ambiance.

Helene: They didn't have instruments, but they had a choir.

David: Yeah, the choir was a real central part of the worship in the Conservative synagogue. So when my parents got divorced, that whole world came crashing down. As most of my therapy from that point on had to do with working out what my parents did. And part of our calling in terms of helping people with marriages comes all from that. The terror of divorce that we went through as kids, both my family and my wife's family. My wife and I met in high school; Italian Catholic, Conservative Jew. We both had problems. Our families had problems with each of us. And we ended up kind of saying, "We aren't gonna talk about God. We're just gonna run away together." And we did.

To me, zero to twelve was synagogue, twelve to twenty was conflict, and sixteen to twenty was part of the conflict because we were from different backgrounds, but it was also the best time of our lives because we met, we fell in love. That leads up to twenty where we both accepted the Lord in Ashland, Oregon. As soon as we turned back to the Lord, I don't know how immediate it was, but I realized that I had to do this for the rest of my life. I had to tell my people back in New York about Messiah. I became very involved in the study of the word. So immediately I felt a sense of call. So we went through our first five years as believers from twenty to twenty-five and then moved back to Philadelphia. Well, originally we were supposed to go to Long Island to work with Dr. Ray Gannon out in Suffolk County, Beth Emanuel. Well, he hadn't planted it yet. We came there cause he was starting an institute for training future leaders of Messianic synagogues. We drove from Oregon to New York. In the period of eight days it took us get across country—they had a house for us to live, a school to come to, all this other stuff that was supposed to be there when we got there—they were shutting everything down. We don't know what happened, but by the time we got there...

Helene: We had a three year old and a five week old baby.

David: We drove across country. We had our two first sons. Our first born kids were born in Ashland. Matthew was six weeks old when we went to our first Messiah conference. So after they closed everything down on Long Island, there was no place for us to stay.

Helene: and it was the ... gas rationing

David: the gas rationing, and we couldn't leave cause we had the wrong day for gas. They let us stay one night.

Helene: So we went to a park and cried. We asked the Lord what to do.

David: This is our historic retreat to Philadelphia. We went to Philadelphia.

Helene: cause Jan was there.

David: My brother Jan was in Philly. So we went to stay with him. We went to our first Messiah conference in 1979 in July. And we were there for six years the whole time intending to get back to New York and hook up with Ray Gannon. Meanwhile, he started a congregation but the school fell through. After six years, I went to work for a company that brought me to New York as a salesman. And we went to, the first three years at Beth Messiah in Livingston, New Jersey, where Larry Feldman had started the congregation. After that, in 1987, (that was '84 to '87) and then Ray Gannon asked me to come out cause he was missing a worship leader. Oh! No, no, no. We went out to visit and when I got there he said, "Can you lead worship? My worship leaders didn't show up today."

Helene: It was a set up.

David: Nobody had asked me in eight years. I used to be a worship leader in Oregon. But when I came back, it was eight years now, no one had ever asked me to do anything. Just wasn't interested. So I led worship that morning and then became the worship leader for the next year and a half. So...

Helene: We interned with Ray...

David: which was finally only ten years later than we planned. So I ended up right back there. We left in '79 and then we planted our synagogue in '89; ten years later than we thought. So, the congregation started in May of 1989. And this is an important part of the story because it frames how my view of liturgy became so important. We were about to have our first service...

Helene: ...with five couples...

David: And I was trying to just figure out. We were just meeting in somebody's house. It wasn't even a service. It was just a study, but I had to do my first sermon. And I was agonizing over my first sermon, "What am I gonna do?" I'm praying and I'm reading. I'm praying and I'm reading. My wife says to me a bunch of suggestions, and I don't know if you suggested it or...

Helene: I'll take credit for it.

David: ...whether I said, "You know what, I wonder what the Torah and Half Torah portion is today. Let me look it up." So I got a old _____. I opened it up, and it was my bar mitzvah passage. Amos 9, "For I will again rebuild the fallen tabernacle of David that is fallen down and I will raise up its ruins and restore it as days of old." I just started crying. We just named the synagogue Shuvah Yisrael, which, you know, "Return oh Israel to the Lord your God." That's my brother's Half Torah, which was Hosea 14. Now, Hosea 14 and Amos 9 are parallel passages. So I just went. It was like a positive trauma experience. I mean it was just, "We are gonna follow the Torah cycle from now on." First service, right? So from day one we didn't stop reading the Torah portion and the Half Torah.

Helene: And explaining it through.

David: Yeah, like today was a good example. Started in Jeremiah went into Matthew and showed that Yeshua was talking about the same thing, "Do not be afraid. I'll be with you. The end is coming, but it's not gonna be like you think." So that was a really pivotal moment because I realized that...

Helene: At this point we had three children.

David: Yeah, every time we had a baby we moved. What was really amazing for me was making this discovery about, you know; reading my Half Torah portion it reconnected me to something that was always a part of my life as a kid. I went, "Wow. This is real. This is God speaking." We started our synagogue on the anniversary of my bar mitzvah. And then we had our first bar mitzvah, it was with my son Matthew, and his bar mitzvah date was Amos chapter nine...so this became really embedded. And this is the interesting thing, we think of liturgy as the order of a service. Jewish history, or the Jewish calendar, is liturgical. Just like there's a missal in the Catholic Church. I think they have one in the Episcopal Church too, right?

Helene: Yes

Elizabeth: What is a missal?

David: Weekly readings

Elizabeth: Yes, that was something else, one of the other similarities.

David: Yeah, that all comes out of. They took that, borrowed that as an institutional ancient Jewish practice and it makes a lot of sense cause we didn't have a printing press till the sixteenth century. So, how did people hear the Word of God? Well, the ancient way was in the synagogue was they read it publically. And the only place to hear it was in the synagogue. Well, the church did the same thing because unless you were wealthy, and since it was mostly women, slaves, and Jews...

Helene: At some point we realized that when Yeshua came to Nazareth after His wilderness experience, it wasn't just a random passage. It was the reading of that day. And that's so exciting. The passage that he quoted to ha-Satan was part of the Torah portion...

David: ...of those particular weeks.

Helene: So, that's like, "Wow!" So, we know that was in place even when Yeshua was around.

David: Now how did we find that out? Well, because we decided to follow the Torah and Half Torah cycle, every year I had to preach a sermon on the Torah cycle and the Half Torah portion and I could not help but notice. It became a matter of a few years. It was so amazingly obvious to me. Then I did the research on it that Yeshua was immersed on Tish'a b'Av went into the wilderness for forty days, and then they had Tish'a b'Av, which meant the seven messages of Isaiah were between Tish'a b'Av and Rosh Hashanah and we start the reading of Deuteronomy. And here's Yeshua in the wilderness with the devil, who asks Him a question and He answers from Deuteronomy.

So, I actually did a fair amount over the years. I feel my major contribution is theological research on the Torah, Half Torah cycle, and it's just brutally stunning. Just to give you an example not only is it the seven messages of Isaiah line for line for the seven messages between Tish'a b'Av and Rosh Hashanah... [slight interruption due to falling food] but between Passover and Shavuot, I think you both are aware, that it's not just two holidays it's like four holidays. Cause there's the Passover, which is a day, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is seven days, then there's the Feast of Weeks, which is counting the days between the day after Passover and Shavuot, which is fifty day journey to Sinai called the "counting of the Omer." Then, there's Shavuot. So it's like four separate holidays overlapping each other. So Yeshua rises on the sixteenth of Nisan, which is day one of the counting of the Omer, which only happens in an

Orthodox synagogue where they count the Omer. But it blew my mind that there's a perfect symmetry. Yeshua rises of day one of the counting of the Omer. Day one is the day Yeshua rose from the dead. Day two is day two He rose from the dead. Day forty of the counting of the Omer is day forty of Yeshua being risen and ascending into heaven. He starts His ministry with forty days in the wilderness going after the adversary. He ends His life on earth, His last forty days on earth, in resurrection and ascension. That's like really, really liturgically stunning, you know? I mean it is off the chart liturgically stunning.

Helene: The whole idea is that Yeshua obviously thought that the calendar was important.

David: Since you read Leviticus, where God commanded the Jewish calendar as a—I call it the skeletal structure of the Jewish faith, it's the bones on which the flesh of Judaism hangs is the Jewish calendar. And since God gave it, is it any shock to us that He amplifies it with every single thing He says and does. So liturgy is not only the order of the service, it's not only the order of the readings of the year, but it is a transcendent liturgy that goes back to Creation, which is the pattern of the sevens for everything that follows; seven weeks, seven days, seven months. Even the Jewish year, we call it the new year, but the fact is, if it is Passover or Nisan is our beginning of months, which is in the rabbi's, in their tradition, they say it's Rosh Hashanah when the Creation. And they're wrong. They're just wrong. Passover, Nisan is your beginning of months that is Creation. Shavuot is the third month, which is the third day, which is the seed bearing plants, is the third day of Creation. Everything in the Creation story tells us the calendar as God gave it is actually the order of the Creation. And the seventh day equals the seventh month, which is Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot, right? So that's why that month is a month of holy days, because it's the seventh month. Then you have the seven year sabbaticals. Then you have the seventy times seventy. Everything progresses. Liturgically, maybe the perfect number for liturgy is seven, which is probably why when you have a bar mitzvah you call seven readers up to read and every Torah portion is divided into seven portions. You literally have a day of every single week of the entire year where you would read a particular Torah portion, which means in the fifty days between Tish'a b'Av and Rosh Hashanah and Pesach and Shavuot you literally have in those fifty days forty-nine Torah readings, cause it's seven times seven. It's so brutally precise and its precision is based in the Creation itself. Actually, liturgy practically emerges out of the Creation, hence the seasons—the sun, the moon, the stars—in a sense you could say the order of the universe is actually a liturgy. The sun—we derive the whole theory of time and relativity comes from the earth orbiting the sun, which means God created the sun, moon, and stars that was the moment God created time out of the timeless eternity. Then, He took that timeless eternity and He contained the quarantine of evil in it like a bottle. And time itself then becomes what God wants to fix everything in the bottle that is quarantined until the end of time when the bottle will be destroyed and there will be no more time. We'll be back to only eternity. So, when we use the term liturgy in worship, everything in the Bible that we understand as the written Word of God has a liturgical form including the order in which He created, the order of creation, the order of the supremacy of man over all creation giving man authority, the problem in heaven and the warfare in heaven, that God actually creates man in His image to fix this warfare in heaven that separates heaven and earth cause heaven and earth used to be one place, it will one day be one place again in Revelation 22. And God's going to restore that, and there will be no more evil and no need for sun, moon, or stars. It is a planned liturgy. It is a liturgical statement. So, enough with theology but it's so much more than just worship.

Elizabeth: So, how would you define Messianic Judaism?

David: I would define. How would I define Messianic Judaism? Well, there's a couple ways. In our generation, I would say that it is a restoration movement to restore the Jewishness of the Gospel, which we owe an amazing debt to Dr. David Stern for coining that phrase and writing a book of that title. So restoring

the Jewishness of the Gospel that passion was almost immediately connected to liturgy. That the way people celebrated Yeshua was so divorced from Jewish practice and Jewish life and Jewish holidays

Helene: I think what happens is that the Messianic movement most people design their Messianic service after what was going on with them when they accepted the Lord. So if they're Pentecostal, they have a Pentecostal expression. If they were Episcopal, they have an Episcopal. And I think that's pretty true all the way along. So we were born again in Christian Missionary Alliance and then we went to the Foursquare, which is Pentecostal. So we have a very mixed bag in that we believe in the gifts of the Spirit, but we don't have that going on in the service. We want Jewish people to be comfortable in the service so we feel the liturgy is very important part of that. So like last week when we had the bat mitzvah, we had eighty unsaved people, and I was watching the room and they all knew the Amidah. They all knew the Shema. They all knew the V'ahavta. And they couldn't say it wasn't Jewish. They could say, "I'm confused. I don't get this." But they couldn't say that it was not Jewish. So part of the whole expression of the Jewishness of the Gospel absolute _____. And we've seen congregations that have developed over the years that are extremely pentecostal in their practice and they do not appear to have any Jewishness, except for maybe some food or the Shema.

David: And here's what we liken it too, if you talk to first, second, third generation immigrants in the United States of any immigrant group—Vietnamese, Chinese, Korean—what they lose first—Italian, Yiddish—what does the second and third generation lose the most? They lose the language. So liturgy... [more food falling] What was I saying? Oh, so liturgy and the Hebrew language and all the accouterments that go with the culture of synagogue, it's a language. I'm gonna give you a really great example of this. We onetime had... yeah; this is really an amazing little story. It really personifies what I'm talking about. So, there was this young Jewish woman from Great _____ that came to our Bible study. So we invited her to come to shul and she says everybody in her family is completely Orthodox. She's the black sheep of the family. She says never in her family; they never went to shul ever. She doesn't know anything. So we invited her to come to shul. She comes to shul, and she sees the whole thing. This story gets back to me. When she sees her family that night, she says, "You're not going to believe what I did today." And they said, "What? What you went to shul?" And she goes, "I did." "No way! You went to synagogue, really?" and they are making fun of her, "Really? If you went to shul, what was the Torah portion?" She goes, "I think it was called *Nitzavim*." They go, "You really went to shul. You went to shul? You really went to shul!" So in other words, they asked her one question that had to do with liturgy because they didn't believe she went. She had one word answer. Now if we weren't a liturgical congregation, she couldn't have answered that [question]. Cause if you go to a congregation that doesn't tell you what the Torah portion was, she wouldn't have been able to answer the question. But because this is right up front: it's on the bulletin; it's on the overheads; it's in the m_____ we read from the portion; we read it in Hebrew; we talk about it; there's a sermon about it. It's impossible to miss it. So she gave the right answer. They didn't even bother to ask her what kind of synagogue it was because as far as they were concerned, she went to an Orthodox synagogue.

Helene: Which we aren't trying to be. So the story which I thought he was going to talk about was during the Holocaust. After the Holocaust was over, a lot of the children had been put in convents or monasteries and they wanted to come back for their children.

David: Well, that was the deal, "You hide our children until after the Holocaust is over. We'll come back and get them."

Helene: Right. So, they said after the war, “Well, we don’t know which ones are yours.” And the rabbi just stood in the door and said, “Shema Yisrael!”

David: at the top of his lungs

Helene: And the children answered back the rest of the Shema and he said, “Those are ours.”

David: All the children came running downstairs and he goes, “That’s them.”

Helene: “Those are ours.” So liturgy connects all the Jewish people throughout the whole world.

David: Isn’t that amazing? That’s a true story though I’m sure it’s been added to.

Helene: Mmm-hmm, but the liturgy is what connects people.

David: If you think about one of the points in my message today was the whole point of Jeremiah’s prophecy was “hear the voice of Adonai and do what He says.” So here is a rabbi that is now being told, “No, there’s no children here that are Jewish.” And when he does the Shema, they hear the voice and it is the liturgy that they respond to. It’s the language they know.

Helene: and so every Jewish person, no matter where they’ve been scattered will respond to the liturgy because they know the liturgy.

David: and it’s a visceral, nostalgic response no matter whether they had a good experience or a bad experience. It’s like...real. They can’t deny that it’s real.

Helene: and the sad thing. We see it as a really sad thing, the Messianic Jews; I mean certainly we don’t have to every liturgy. And we don’t do every liturgy. But when they miss it or take it out because they don’t think that it’s not spiritual then you’re not connected to the Jewish world, which is what we want. We want to be able to say, “We are true Judaism because we have the Messiah.” When you leave it out, you...

David: And we want to do it better. Where the synagogues failed us was they ended up doing entirely Hebrew service without any Jewish person ever—unless you were Israeli—ever knowing what they heard. I’m sure some people looked it up.

Helene: Well, I had that as a Catholic growing up. They did it in Latin. And we didn’t know what it said until ’64, I think it was when they changed that.

Elizabeth: So what do you think are important cultural markers in Messianic Jewish worship?

David: Cultural what?

Elizabeth: Cultural markers in a Messianic Jewish worship service?

Shimon: “Lai, lai, lai.”

Helene: Yeah, you gotta have those. Actually that’s not a bad thing because those are what are called *niguns*. *Niguns* are worship without words, and even though, we joke about that, “Lai lai lai” becomes a nighun in the...it’s almost like a tongue. So you see it a lot when people are mourning, but it’s also true of joy. Did you see Matt’s skit about Joel Chernoff?

David: Yeah, we showed them last night.

Helene: Okay, so that's really what Joel has developed is our niguns that might sound like, "Ba-na-nah-nah" it's kind of a nigan that is kind of funny because everybody in Messianic Judaism knows those, you know? So you're singing Joel Chernoff songs and the whole place goes, "Woo woo!" You know? That's what they are.

David: There's a nigan for someone. It's called Job's Nigan and it goes like this [melody and the syllable 'li di' for first run through, then...] Adonai na'tan Adonai lacha..."

Helene: It's very methodical. It helps people to mourn.

David: And it's quoting Job, "The Lord gives. The Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." And that's what that nigan is.

Helene: And that helps people to cry and that helps people to mourn. And that's a good thing.

David: We sang that and played that nigan for _____ funeral.

Helene: _____ has several of those that are really probably more than we understand and joyful ones too.

David: But, we probably have collected more niguns than most cultures because we've been thrown out of every country.

Helene: Right! We have niguns in every language.

David: We have niguns. Even sometimes, talk about cultural markers, *Fiddler on the Roof* is a cultural marker. You know? "Anatevka, Anatevka..."

Helene: So its music as well as, you know, that kind of rhythmic repeating of a phrase or a sound. It helps people to...

David: "If I Was a Rich Man," is by a man who had to work all day. [sang nigan part of song] Right that's a nigan? Right, so this is delirious joy nigan.

Helene: So the markers of Messianic Judaism I think come from wherever...it's kind of a mix breed what _____ has called the "hybrid." We have Protestant...

David: Catholic, Protestant, Jewish...

Helene: Mostly Protestant, Protestant expression alongside of Jewish. So if a person was brought up Conservative Jew and they are Pentecostal when they got saved, you're going to get a mixture of that. I mean it's just is the way...

David: Except, since Pentecostals don't believe in liturgy, you won't have liturgy in a Pentecostal church.

Helene: Well, they think they don't believe in liturgy. You know, like Marty Chernoff used to...he was a Baptist when he got saved so the beginnings of the congregational music was Baptist in orientation.

David: There's a lot of dispensational theology, which is actually replacement theology.

Helene: Right, because that's where they came from. So we almost have had to overcome that as a movement to try to develop our own style. We've got Messianic dance, which is part of the worship, which incorporates Jewish dance, but a lot of it is choreographed by Messianic Jews.

David: Part of the story of dance and worship altogether is that at the destruction of the Second Temple in 70AD. I don't know if you know this, you probably do. They outlawed music in the synagogue in 70AD. So, they were in mourning. Now that went for two hundred years, they protested, "Bring back the music and the joy." And the response was, talk about a response out of fear, "Oh, they're gonna way we're copying the churches." Cause two hundred years, now this had become the liturgy in the churches.

Helene: So they brought in the organ in the Reform movement.

David: But that wasn't till like the 1800s, right? So this went for hundreds of years without music. And so they maintained the mourning because they didn't want to be accused of copying the churches.

Helene: And that's part of everything that Jews do. The wedding—you break the glass because you're mourning the Temple. Everything goes back to that Temple. And of course in modern Judaism, everything goes back to the Holocaust. Everything is framed; their mindset is framed from the Holocaust.

David: In fact, even the religion itself, which I call it "post-Holocaust mentality," and that the unsaid or unwritten doctrine is, "If Messiah didn't come for the Holocaust, He's not coming."

Elizabeth: That's depressing.

David: But this is the response, "God tells us He'll rescue us. Well, where was He?" But we didn't hear Him or recognize Him when He came. If you're talking about a marker of Messianic Judaism, that's it. Yeshua is the marker. He is the land we rejected coming out...when we went to the land, we rejected the land. He is the Messiah we waited for, who we rejected. And the consequences of our disobedience, we misinterpreted as, "God has abandoned us because He doesn't exist," which is really right out of Jeremiah; what we just read this morning. Yeshua is the marker and the restoring of the Jewishness of the Gospel.

Helene: and the stumbling block

David: Yeah, but he is the marker that restores Judaism and restores Christianity because in the sense that the church history...how did they become anti-Semitic? How did they hate Jews? How did they have a deicide charge against Jews? "You killed Christ, we kill you." How did that...? Because it's a utter denial of the Gospel itself and the words of Yeshua when He said to Pilate, "For this purpose I came into the world, to lay my life down and I will pick it up again." I'm not kidding. I had a near argument with a pastor, very influential pastor in New York City, who insisted to me that in his dialogues with Jewish rabbis that he was trying to deflect the deicide charge by saying, "No, God killed Messiah." And I actually took him aside and said, "You're out of your mind." "Its right out of Isaiah 53," he tells me. I say, "You can't get that out of Isaiah 53. I don't care what language you read it in. It says, 'It pleased the Lord to bruise Him, to make His soul an offering for sin.' *'Pleased Him'*—He wasn't angry. He didn't take Him against His will. It pleased Him that Yeshua obediently understood His mission was to come into the world and die for the sins of the world. And it pleased the Father to see Him bruised only because for the joy that was set before Him." And he was insisting, "No, the wrath of God was placed on Yeshua." I said, "There wasn't wrath." I had this unbelievable argument with this guy. I mean it was a feudal argument, someone telling me this is what he is telling Jewish rabbis, "God killed Yeshua. The Jews didn't kill Yeshua." I said, "Nah, we did kill Him. It was our job to do it. The High Priest had to lay hands on Him as a sacrifice. It

would have been an un-kosher sacrifice if we didn't participate in it." And he just looked at me like I was crazy. And I said, "You want to undo the deicide charge and reintroduce it in their faces and at the same time, you don't want to understand the central theme of the Gospel. I mean what are you talking about?" He's a Baptist preacher. I mean, but how does it get so far? That's why Yeshua is the ultimate marker, but He's not just the ultimate marker by Himself. He is the marker both because He—Himself with His life, His teachings—there is no place He's not opening his mouth that isn't liturgical.

Elizabeth: so, what aspects of contemporary Jewish liturgy [interrupted by waiter] ... What aspects of contemporary Jewish liturgy were incorporated into Messianic Judaism or in your services? I think we saw some of that today.

David: Well, we do. There're a couple layers of it. Number one, we do a number of entrance Psalms, liturgies. *Ashrei yoshvei veitecha* is "happy are those who dwell in the house" so you have to come to the house to say that. You're coming into it. *Matovu* is...

Helene: Did you do it?

David: We didn't do that today. We alternate some of these cause you can't fit them all in one service and be done in two hours. *Ma Tov* is an entrance to the synagogue liturgy, "we come into your house and bow down and worship you. We gladly come into..."

Helene: Did you study anything about Psalms in your studies?

David: Yeah, there's a category in the Psalms called entrance Psalms.

Helene: Like, "Come let us go up..."

David: That's an actual Psalm. "Enter His gates with thanksgiving..." These are entrance Psalms.

Helene: That's all joyful. Anything that talks about going into the Temple, going up the mountain, all that has to ...

David: It's an actual theological category of one aspect of the Psalms. There's eschatological Psalms...

Helene: ...and there's lamenting...

David: apocalyptic Psalms. There's laments. There's *Tshuva* and repentance Psalms. There's Psalms of dealing with your enemies and those who come against you. Which you'll see, right, in a particular part of the service like the _____" which is "May our enemies flee." Right? So literally, and when do you do that? You do that as you are placing the Torah back into the ark. No, as you are taking the Torah in procession around the room you're basically processing the Torah and the words that go out before it are basically, "Cause our enemies to scatter." Which takes you right back...

Helene: So it's a warfare...

David: Yeah, it's a spiritual warfare motif and you take this right back to the Torah where the Levites in charge in the battle were to go out in the front. The worshipers and the guys blowing the trumpets were in front; went first. Sounds like suicide, but the fact is where they went with the Ark of the Covenant, it drove the enemies away. So, now this is true not only for the liturgies, but it's also true for every Messianic song that is taken from Scripture. You just take a song and say, "What kind of Biblical literature is this?" And

you'll find a category for it. So the song your dad [referring to Shimon, but Eliza Howarth wrote the song to which he was referring] wrote from Hosea is a liturgy right out of Hosea. And it expresses the idea of the unfaithful wife. Right? So contemporary liturgies are the ones that have been maintained in centuries upon centuries of liturgy. Some of them, for instance like the Shema we do, is only a hundred years old.

Helene: Maybe, it might be seventy-five.

David: And when I heard about it, it was fifty years old. So that tells you how long we've been around.

Helene: It's probably seventy-five.

David: It's probably ninety years old cause we've been doing this for forty years. Anyway, Moses didn't do the Shema that way.

Helene: Right, it was probably a very Middle Eastern or even Egyptian style.

David: Right, so liturgy is...I would say that... the question was about what are the contemporary...

Elizabeth: What aspects of contemporary Jewish liturgy do you incorporate?

David: We do the Shema and V'ahavta.

Helene: The tunes that we use. They are contemporary in the sense of ...

David: These are contemporary tunes from the last fifty to a hundred year old tunes that most Jewish people alive today would remember.

Helene: But certainly not the great-great grandpas

David: Well, it depends if they were Orthodox, Conservative, or Reformed because the liturgies that we do, which I used to think were Conservative cause I went to a conservative shul, I found out later on that my cantor used a lot of Reformed liturgy because he loved worship and there was more flamboyance and more freedom of expression. For instance, in an Orthodox synagogue, they are very rigorous about, "You shall not give extra meaning to any phrase in the liturgy by repeating it because someone musically decided to repeat it." That was a direct response against Reformed liturgies who repeated a phrase because it musically worked better. And so the Orthodox would say, "Well, you've given these two words, by repeating them twice, greater weight." So instead of saying, "*Ki mitzion tetze Torah. Ki mitzion tetze Torah*," the Orthodox say, "*Ki mitzion tetze Torah*" and then they continue. They would never go back and repeat the phrase because you are giving undo weight when the Torah gives it equal weight. Okay?

Helene: Also, contemporary things like this past year we incorporated walking in front of the Torah and pausing for each person during...

David: for Yom Kippur in front of the ark. We had an opposite procession. Instead of taking the Torah out, we left it in the ark, and we saw this on TV at the Central Synagogue. It's a Reformed synagogue in Manhattan. And we were really moved by the fact that they turned it around. They had it, for Yom Kippur, the whole congregation processing, they would each stop in front of the ark, look straight at the Torah. Just how you saw me look at the Torah...

Helene: ...or either give reverence or have a prayer request or something like that.

David: What was interesting was, theirs, in the service we saw, there was a rather brisk looking in it and moving on. When we did it, our people stood there and cried and moved and stayed along time and started weeping.

Helene: We were surprised. People were standing for long periods of time. That's a very contemporary...

David: Yeah, we saw that together and we said, "Oh, we gotta do that." My wife of course said, "We have to do that." And I said, "Oh I don't know about that."

Helene: It turned out to be really beautiful. Everybody really loved it. And then of course for his sermons we added... We did a sermon "Looking in the Mirror" so we did Michael Jackson song...

David: Well, we went to the Dollar Store and bought fifty mirrors. So we spent fifty dollars and they were handed out when they came in so without telling anybody...

Helene: "I'm looking at the man in the mirror..."

David: I had the words and everything, and you know what I realized. Check this out: first of all, Michael Jackson did not write that song, whoever wrote it I think it was a Jewish person. It is almost word for word a Yom Kippur song. What I mean by that is, it's about self-examination; it's about looking in the mirror; it's about seeing what's really inside; and some of the issues that that song touches on are all social issues. So it was totally in concert with Isaiah 58, "Is this the fast I have chosen for you?" And the song actually followed that idea; is self-examination, I want to go deeper...

Helene: "These are the things that I want you to do. I want you to take care of the orphans..." all of those things are listed in that song. And everybody knows the song.

David: Here it is Yom Kippur, right? And I waited till the close of the service to do this. I knew this would be a little too joyful cause it's Michael Jackson. But it was the closing service and this is how we closed it. Sun's going down, we're closing the service. And they're all swaying with their mirrors and singing, "I'm looking at the man in the mirror..."

Helene: So that's a contemporary thing we do, even though it's an old Michael Jackson song.

David: That's really a great example of taking something from the world that actually has its center in the issue of what you're supposed to be dealing with on Yom Kippur, which is looking at the man or woman in the mirror, examining yourself. Of course, this again, takes us right back to the liturgy that when Yeshua's coming out after he comes to Nazareth and he reads, "I've come to set the captives free, open the eyes of the blind, set at liberty those who are oppressed." He then does His Sermon on the Mount, which means this is *Nitzavim*, which is a few days before Rosh Hashanah and then ten days from Yom Kippur; so a few days plus ten. What are the themes of the Sermon on the Mount? All Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur themes; judging your neighbor, judging yourself, what you eat, what you drink, forgive and be forgiven—it's pretty profound—when you fast, don't fast as Pharisees. It's all in there. He's actually giving this Sermon on the Mount as a pre-Rosh Hashanah; between *Nitzavim*, which is the seventh Sabbath between _____ and Rosh Hashanah.

Helene: So He was being contemporary for His time.

David: So he was just stunningly living Torah. You know something, a million books have been written on the Sermon on the Mount, do you think anybody ever said, “This is pre-Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur”? That’s actually what it is...

Helene: Next question. She’s got a whole list and we’ve done two.

Elizabeth: Well, we got a little farther than that. What are some contemporary Christian liturgical practices that you’ve integrated?

David: The offering, no just kidding.

Elizabeth: Well, actually, no that’s what a couple other rabbis have said that too.

David: Well, it is. Yeah, I mean the offering is clearly again, the synagogue dumped the biblical approach to giving in the Torah.

Helene: And we’ve tried putting a box in the back and having people...

David: It doesn’t work.

Helene: So having it pass by their face. And we see it as it is a liturgical thing to do.

David: And the other big one is people always struggle with the Messiah’s Passover table or what they call ‘Communion.’ For a Jewish community, the conflict is that many in the Christian world would say, “You’re not a believer. Don’t partake.” Okay, but you would never in a synagogue ever tell someone not to partake of Kiddush. And so Yeshua clearly married the Kiddush blessing for the bread and the wine for a meal with His atonement. So what we do without an explanation do Kiddush so that for those who are not a believer are doing Kiddush, as opposed to believers understand that they are also...only an insider knows when I say, “We’re doing this in remembrance of Him.” You know the unbelieving Jewish person’s going, “Who? What?”

Helene: We used to do it every week for, I think, twenty-four years. Now, he just does it at the end and then we do it once a month.

David: We just recently changed it. Instead of passing it out, which I never liked, what we do is, I have them bring it to the front, I ask everyone to come down to the front and take it. So that we’re like forming a close... Yeah, those are clearly two major.

Helene: And we have some songs we do that are. What are some? Oceans we did last week and there’s different ones that we do that the church...

Elizabeth: What are some liturgical worship practices from either the Christian or Jewish world that were just pointedly avoided?

David: Say it again.

Helene: avoided

Elizabeth: Yeah, the liturgies that were avoided from either world?

Helene: Anything against women. That’s my influence.

David: Well... [interrupted by waiter] wait what was the question again?

Helene: And anything that speaks or says something against women like, "Thank God I'm not a woman."

David: Oh, also the Eighteenth Benediction, which was against the minim, which was a way that the early synagogues separated Jews from their midst. You know about that, right?

Elizabeth: Yeah, you're the first rabbi to mention it. I was wondering if it would ever come up. If any rabbi would ever mention that they don't say that. You're the first one.

David: We don't do Passion plays cause they are almost exclusively, there's almost no way for them to not provoke some anti-Semitic

Helene: We also change everything to Messianic language. So anything that says "Christ" we say "Messiah."

David: We also don't have any crosses in the building or on the building or on anything in the building. We don't use Christian symbols. We don't celebrate Easter or Christmas in a communal way. People might do it privately with trees and stuff, but for us. It's a conflict because it's like, "Why wouldn't we celebrate it?" But the fact is, it's such an abusive symbolism to Jewish people that for us to do that is to certainly advertise and say, "We're happy converts." These are historically seen as expressions of converts who have betrayed Judaism and converted. This whole idea of conversion is a horrific split between the Jewish and Christian world which was a war between Jews converting to Christianity, Christians converting to Judaism. And this was seen as a divide that has caused a lot of Christian anti-Semitism and a lot of Jewish hatred of Christians. In fact, I'll even give you a reference for that it's a Dr., oh; I can't remember his name now. The book is called *Jewish Self-Hatred and the Secret Language of the Jews* by a Jewish professor I think at Cornell. I can't remember who wrote that. If you look it up, you'll find it. In his book, he outlines that the history of Christian anti-Semitism and Jewish self-hatred are linked to the conflicts throughout the centuries of converts going both ways and creating this tension. And, of course, this all developed into, "You have to be one or the other. You can't be both." So this idea is one of the greatest abuses of truth that we have to confront is that there is a "holier than thou" attitude both in some of the Christian world and the Jewish world for sure. Anything that blends Jewish and Christian other than the absolutely polarized, nothing-in-common religions that they are is in an attempt to misuse Jewish symbolism or Christian symbolism to confuse people.

Elizabeth: So jumping off of that, what's been the response from Christian leaders and Jewish leaders to Messianic Judaism?

David: I think most of the negative responses to that are due to their buying into the separation and due to the fact that many, many Christians believe that you cannot be Jewish and be a believer in Yeshua. That you are leaving Judaism as a religion and becoming a convert to Christianity. Where, in truth, no Christian on the planet earth can become a Christian without accepting the tenets of Judaism. They cannot call themselves Christian. In fact, the word means, "follower of Christ," which is actually, "follower of the Jewish Messiah" but they don't want to refer to Him as their Messiah.

Helene: Yeah, Dan Juster always says that they have all these statues on their lawn and they're all statues of Jewish people.

David: Listen, this comes down to the fact that even when Paul or Peter are talking in the Scripture Christians will reference them as converts as converts to Christianity. So when they say, “we are being persecuted by Jews, by the Judeans” like when Paul says it. They’re saying, “Because Paul became a Christian, a convert, the Jews were coming against him.” The fact is to interpret what Peter or Paul are saying as Christians struggling with Jews who hate them is disgusting misuse of the text. These are Jews in conflict with Jews, as a family feud. This is an in-house discussion of whether He is the Messiah or not.

Helene: We’ve also had ex-Catholics come that are upset about kissing the Torah. They see it as a negative thing.

David: We’re worshiping the Torah. We kissed an inanimate object.

Helene: Right, they see Jewish customs as done away with.

David: Really most of the conflict in any way that you define it has to do with the presuppositional idea by the person observing us that creates a conflict over it. So the ex-Catholic, who now hates everything Catholic and the pope’s the anti-Christ, walks into our place, sees us kiss the Torah as it goes in procession, and they run out yelling, “Idolaters!” Or a Spanish woman comes in and is overwhelmed by the worship and she gets in the middle of the isle, which happens to be facing me in front of the bema, gets down on her knees and begins to bend up and down and it looks like she’s praying to me. And the Jewish person was scared to death, walked in the door, sat in the back, and ran out; never finding out who she was. So you get so much of all of this is based on the presuppositional ideas that people have and what they think we’re supposed to be. And then there is the defamation side where they go out and they start telling people, “Those Jews worship their Torah.” And they think, “Oh my gosh! That’s terrible.” So they spread this horrible slander where they don’t understand anything. So when a priest or a pastor takes their form of a tallit with crosses on it and they bend over, get down on their knees and they kiss it. There’s guys holding a staff with a cross in it and they kiss it. Like that doesn’t faze them one bit. Its selective process based upon their own personal experience.

Helene: So, tell me, Rabbi, why do you wear a kippa?

David: I just explained that to him [Shimon]. So I wear a kippa because the Orthodox pretend as if it is their private property. They see it as a uniquely exclusive Jewish ownership of the kippa.

Helene: And you’ll see Messianic Jews, some don’t wear kippa because they see it as Orthodox.

David: But as I shared with him before, and I don’t know why nobody wants to look at this, “Well, it’s a tradition. Wearing a kippa has nothing to do with the Bible.” I really strongly disagree. The reason I strongly disagree, and this is played out in every film that’s ever made about Yeshua. You do a study. Just watch a few minutes of any film about Yeshua, everybody has their head covered in the entire room and with Him coming in with the triumphal entry, every guy has his head covered except Yeshua. So why does every film writer think that every male Jew had their head covered but not Yeshua? And I guarantee you it’s just, “Well, He was a rebel. He wasn’t religious.” We call it ‘null curriculum’ in education. You teach people what you don’t tell them. So Yeshua is never wearing a head covering in any film ever...The book of Hebrews describes Yeshua as the *Cohen gadol*, who is connected to Melchizedek a priesthood without beginning and without end. In Leviticus no Cohen gadol can ever have his head uncovered coming into the synagogue. Well, since Yeshua actually is the synagogue. He is the Holy of Holies. He is the outer court. In essence for Him to have His head uncovered is almost a biblical impossibility. To not see Yeshua with His

head covered is almost a biblical impossibility. I guarantee if you talk to a thousand Messianic Jews they will all say, “Oh, well, it’s not biblical but it’s a tradition.” They will all say that.

Helene: Even our son Jake says that. He wears tzitzit but he doesn’t wear.

David: So what I’m saying is, at least to me, to overlook the instructions to the Levites and the Cohen gadol is really... why did they choose to overlook that and say the head covering is only a tradition? It is not just a tradition in my point of view. It is a responsibility that is extended to anyone who is in the priesthood, and of course the New Testament teaches us that priesthood of the believer. So in some ways, don’t misquote me on this one, that would mean men or women should all have their heads covered, from that point of view. This is a good example of how tortured some of these Jewish issues become in the synagogue, their own sense of ownership, in Orthodoxy. The fact is if you went to a Reformed, Conservative, or Orthodox service every man would have his head covered. In fact, today, many men and women will have their heads covered in Orthodox, Conservative, and Reformed because that issue of sexism is being changed drastically. And to me, I think that it’s embarrassing of course that Messianic Judaism is the last to see it. The biblical idea about male and female garments altogether whether tallit, or whether it’s tzitzits or whether its kippa, is that men and women shouldn’t wear the same clothes. That’s really a rather deep tenet of the Torah, is that we should be distinguished. Male and female should always maintain a clear distinction. So we’re not to dress the same. So a male head covering and a woman’s head covering should be very different. Men’s tzitzit and women’s tzitzit would be very different. One would be very feminine and one would be more masculine. The women might be more petite and less obvious, while the man’s, it would be out there and flamboyant to some degree. Because the idea is that ten Gentiles would grab the tzitzit of a man and say, “We want to go with you because we heard God is with you.” I don’t know how else to read that except that it’s something everybody has to be able to see for that to happen. And, here’s another great example of, I mean maybe the single most interesting issue about how people define things between Jewish and Christian world, but this has to do mostly with Orthodox. The Orthodox will not wear blue in their tzitzit. The Torah clearly tells you, the central tenet of tzitzit has to do with the thread of blue amidst the other thread, the fringes of your garment. Rashi came along in the thirteenth century and he said because they in the Talmud put down so many things that have nothing to do with the Bible that because they call it all Torah, they think that it is the Bible. And so there’s discussions in the Talmud about the particular mollusk that they want to get the blue from for their tzitzit. That mollusk became extinct. So Rashi says it’s an abomination to try to reproduce any other blue than the blue from this particular mollusk. But the fact is that this is what they say. Because of that, even though some people say they have discovered the *tekhelet* and they’ve discovered the mollusk, many of the Lubavitch movement refuse to do it because, again, in the Oral Torah it says, “The blue fringes will not return, the true mollusk will not be discovered until Messiah returns.” So despite every injunction the clearest statement in the Tanach is that you are to wear a thread of blue. It is to be exposed to so people see it, that ten men among the nations want to go with us because they heard that God is with us. And when was the last movie you saw where Yeshua wears tzitzits? Right?

The fact is if you just do a study on the images of Yeshua and the de-Judaizing of Yeshua Himself, you could write a series of commentaries just on this topic. He’s not wearing tzitzit. He’s not wearing tekhelet. He’s not wearing a kippa. He doesn’t wear a tallis. He floats. He glows. He’s handsome, rugged guy that any woman would want to go to bed with, you know? I mean it’s just crazy handsome guy with beautiful flowing hair. And the fact is the Scripture clearly tells us, “He will not be pretty.” Isaiah tells us that He’s not particularly handsome that anyone would say, “Oh, look at that guy. What a guy!” Just isn’t there. He probably looks like Frank Lowinger. Now, I think our Frank is actually a handsome guy.

What was this question again?

Elizabeth: Oh, this didn't have anything to do with the question actually. I'm not really sure how we got there.

David: You asked about the kippa. Oh, we were still on contemporary?

Elizabeth: No, we were actually on how leaders responded...

David: To?

Elizabeth: ...to Messianic Judaism.

David: Well, all of these issues grow out of the other questions. What I'm saying is these are image driven issues. Every Messianic Jew has to deal with these issues and very few actually are even conscious of them. They think, "Oh, well, we don't believe in that," or "We don't do that." But there's never been research or study to any of these issues which are the kippa, the tzitzit, the tallit, things that are embedded in commandment and Torah to Jewish people and how history has de-Judaized. So Messianic Judaism is all about, not a fallacious designing of religion where you 'roll your own,' but...is that the right word? 'Fallacious', you know, care free. We want to do it this way. Who cares? Roll our own. It has to be a careful...

Helene: They don't understand 'rolling your own.' They aren't from that era.

Elizabeth: I think you're talking about cigarettes.

Helene: What? Pot. Yeah, roll your own.

David: Yeah, 'roll your own religion' it's a saying. The point is, that I'm trying to make, is that these are issues that demand a profound research driven study of sociology, psychology, and anthropology about how Yeshua has been treated over the centuries. It is not just my opinion about what's Jewish, or so and so arguing about, "Oh, we don't do that anymore. We're believers." You know? This is a scholarship driven, sociologically studied human behavior interaction issues that to me are as important as any other theological approach that we take because Yeshua has been completely abused. I love Ron Cantor's title of his book, *Identity Theft*. It's a great title for a Messianic book about how Yeshua's identity has been stolen from us. And he's been turned into something that is not even recognizable as Jewish. I think nothing has done more damage than film to carry that out sociologically in the world, which is why—last statement on this—why *Ben-Hur* is the best movie ever made about the life of Yeshua, because it's the only film ever made about him that leaves him ambiguous in the story that it is purely a Jewish communal struggle. There is no such thing as a Christian or a convert to Christianity or a non-Jew in the story except the Romans. So, that story actually...of course when that film was made, Christians hated it; hated it, because it distorted the story. It actually is the only film that actually is Messianic in its approach; except he doesn't...at least they don't show you His face in the movie. It's so good that they don't because at least they leave that mystery in the story enough that you could...yeah, Victor Hugo did that. I don't know that the book does that, but the movie certainly does.

Elizabeth: So, how—you touched on this a little bit—how did early Jewish culture from Yeshua's era influence liturgical decisions today? You mentioned that the reading, the Torah portions are from that time period?

Helene: Well, people argue that they aren't but I think that we can pretty much show that in Luke 4...

David: ...Luke 3 and 4 and Acts 13...

Helene: Yeah, and that looks like...

David: In fact, even in the Jewish encyclopedia, Encyclopedia Judaica, cites an article about when was the Torah cycle...at the Babylonian Torah, Half Torah cycle which is a one year Torah cycle, where does it derive? And they say, "Well, archeologically speaking..." It's so great to see Jewish writer, Jewish encyclopedia saying this. They say, "The only real archeological evidence, uh, earliest known archeological evidence that the one year reading cycle that we have is the New Testament that in Luke 3 and 4 and Acts 13."

Helene: When He's handed that scroll and that's the portion.

David: Yeah, they read from the scroll of Isaiah. But I want to tell you something unbelievable that...you will find this unbelievable. You know the famous document written by Edersheim, Alfred Edersheim, wrote *The Temple*. He wrote some classic volumes about Jewish practice, ancient Jewish practice. It's classic literature for Messianic Jews. In his treatment of the Torah, Half-Torah cycle, he makes a statement. Well, Isaiah 60, where Yeshua says, 'I've come to set the captives free.' "The closest thing it could be related to it," he says, "is Yom Kippur because Isaiah 60 is like two chapters from Isaiah 58. So it could be related to Yom Kippur." But that actually means, him making that statement means he actually never ever cracked a book. Means he never looked at a *Chumash*. Means he never read the actual scriptures that reference the messages preached on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. He never looked at it. Cause had he looked at it...in other words, what he says about it can only come from not looking at it because Isaiah 60 is in the Torah cycle and it's the day he said it. Isaiah 61 one or two. And the week before is Isaiah 60 the whole chapter. The closest thing is Yom Kippur? It means he ...here considered to be one of the great Jewish scholars, Messianic Jewish scholars of history. I mean it's really upsetting. One of the great Messianic Jewish scholars in history didn't crack a *Chumash*. Didn't open it to see what the list of what you read between the seven messages of Isaiah and Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur!

Helene: So he's bogus!

David: No, he's not bogus, Hun. He's a great scholar and a lovely believer. What I'm saying is on this issue he did no research. I mean did not even look at the common *Chumash* which gives you the list of the readings. Didn't look at it. For him to say Isaiah 58 on Yom Kippur is the closest verse. He didn't look at ten weeks of the liturgy, which dances around Isaiah 60. It's crazy! I mean we read on ... right on into Sukkot, right on into Nitzavim, which is Isaiah 61:1-63:3.

Helene: Right, well most Christians know that Yeshua quoted Scripture to *hasatan* what they don't understand is that He actually quotes the Torah portions to him, which is really unbelievable. So that would indicate a couple things: first of all, Yeshua was following the Torah cycle and then also *hasatan* also knew the Torah cycle. Cause he came back at Him with what was in the Torah portion.

David: "If you're the Son of God, turn this stone into bread..."

Helene: And He said, "Uh, we don't take the..."

David: And he doesn't finish the sentence. Look it up, creep!

Elizabeth: Haha, changing gears just a little bit, a little more specific, what musical influences were drawn upon in the formation of Messianic Jewish worship?

David: Well, Joel Chernoff...Jews for Jesus clearly...

Helene: I mean the tune we do to the "Our Father" that...did Stuart Dauermann?

David: yeah, Stuart Dauermann wrote that. [begins singing in Hebrew]

Helene: It's on the first album of the Liberated Wailing Wall.

David: I believe that preceded any record of Joel Chernoff. Maybe not. It's close. Cause we came to the Lord in 1974. Yeah, I don't know if Joel had an album out before '74 but it was close. Almost around the same time.

Helene: Yeah, it was close.

David: I mean, let me put it to you this way. First of all, historically, Jews for Jesus began to produce albums that were liturgical and Jewish...

Helene: ...and that came from Stuart Dauermann...

David: ...and that's just the brilliance of Stuart Dauermann. I know there's like Mitch Glaser and people who sang on the Liberated Wailing Wall...

Helene: No, he sang. Stuart was the one that wrote.

David: Well, no, he wrote a lot of songs too. Mitch Glaser doesn't get as much credit, but Mitch Glaser wrote some of those songs on that album. So make sure you say that so Mitch knows you...

Helene: Stuart has a liturgical background.

David: Yeah, and Mitch came from Orthodox and Stuart came from Orthodox so ...and then of course there's Joel, which I'll tell you what Joel's contribution was. Joel...

Helene: Lai, lai, lai, lai

David: No, no, no, no his real contribution not the funny part. His real contribution is; he has an amazing anointing. He came along right at the early beginnings of the Jesus revivals in the West Coast. And he is not just one of the first Messianic musicians, but he's actually in pretty much the first group of contemporary Christian musicians. He was right in there with Second Chapter of Acts, Keith Greene, and Lamb. It's the same...it was actually birthed out of the exact same youth revival and out of that, he was the first crossover where Lamb music was being played on contemporary Christian stations. So Joel's music became almost a universal...in the Christian world and was played in the Christian markets. And Jews for Jesus was a strictly immediate thing within mostly the Christian marketplace. But Jews for Jesus catapulted into the most identifiable Jews who believed in Jesus. God, I believe, used Jews for Jesus to make it a household...this oxymoron "Jews for Jesus" to make that one of the most commonly understood single phrases in all of the world. It's gonna be recognized in every country of the world. So that and then along with that came music that they started producing albums. They also, whether they wanted it or not, they started producing Messianic rabbis. Stuart Dauermann is one of the first who left Jews for Jesus and became a Messianic rabbi and of course, Joel Chernoff who just became a monstrous hit. He had a couple

of really bit hits like the “Sacrifice Lamb” was the song that put him on the map of contemporary Christian artists. Right up there with “I Do Believe we are on the verge of destruction” with Keith Greene, Second Chapter of Acts, all the Maranatha Music, eh, groups. And the other...well of course then came Israel’s Hope and almost everything else after those three, Jews for Jesus albums, Joel; I mean Lamb, and Israel’s Hope. And then of course...right on the heels of that, Paul Wilbur probably has done more to mainline messianic music than any other living person because...and a lot of people were upset with him that he kind of left Messianic Judaism and became a worship leader at churches. The fact is, his connection to Hosanna has literally covered the world more than any other artist, maybe in Messianic Jewish history, and he comes full circle as a person that now represents us to the Christian world and introduces us to this enormous following that Hosanna records has. So, I would think of those three as the most influential.

Helene: Most Christians know about him.

David: He’s probably the single most well-known Messianic Jewish artist and then of course Marty Goetz. That’s more recent, but the fact is, he becomes probably the next person that is probably as well-known as maybe those four actually drove almost every other artist that ever produced or successfully produced an album. But that’s just my...I think that’s an honest overview.

Elizabeth: Mmm-hmm. So we talked about this a little bit earlier with Messianic dance, but how did the development of Messianic Jewish dance, you said it borrows stuff from the Orthodox or from the Jewish world but it’s got its own. How has that become an identifier of Messianic Judaism? What’s its importance?

David: Okay, I would say that more than any other group that Beth Yeshua in Philadelphia has probably more, along with Joel the whole music side of it, that Beth Yeshua is probably may indeed be most famous for introducing Davidic dance. They did an amazing job.

Helene: There’s so many people in that congregation choreographed most of the dances people do to the traditional Jewish or the Messianic

David: and they all started, we were there in the early days.

Helene: This was mostly people who were single.

David: Right, we were actually one of the only married couples with kids. We were twenty-five years old. We had two kids and a third one on the way.

Helene: So, mostly everybody was single back then and the single people brought a lot of energy and a lot of time they had to bring that kind of community where they would all get together and dance. It was not just a worship thing. It was social.

David: Well, the people who pioneered this at Beth Yeshua were all became highly involved in interfacing with Israeli dance groups and Israeli dance. So I think more than any other group that influenced people, Beth Yeshua took on the whole genre of Israeli, Davidic dance and incorporated it into Messianic Judaism which spread to everyone else. No doubt in my mind about that. The only thing is that in the beginning almost no men ever danced. And my brother Jan and I were two of the first guys that, you know, made people uncomfortable; guys dancing with girls.

Helene: Now, in our congregation we only have two guys that dance.

David: It's hard.

Shimon: And one of them looks ashamed.

Helene: And yeah, then you get the crazy people who dance.

David: But Davidic dance is actually prophetic; old men and young men together. You know, the whole, it's actually in the liturgy of the wedding.

Helene: I think it was part of the joy that Messianic Judaism brought back to the Jewish world. Of wanting to praise him, you know, "with the cymbals, praise with the dance" you know that whole thing. To bring back that Davidic worship that was lost in traditional Judaism.

David: Like in 1948, if you look at the films of Israel's independence you will see a whole town doing Davidic dance. It'd never be done in a synagogue. In the streets, they went wild with Davidic dance as soon as Israel was...if you watch these films, they break out into a dozen circles dancing around each other. It's amazing to see it in these films from 1948. But it would never be in the synagogue. So what Messianic Judaism did, I think what Beth Yeshua did was they brought it right into the heart of worship. I think they probably restored that, they're more responsible for that

Helene: and what we tried to do in our congregations was we... people pretty much get into their own little world but we made sure that the dances they were dancing were not only original dances that were okay but that they were also dancing the dances of our movement. So that when we are together in whatever capacity, we can dance the dances together.

David: It is an amazing communal act that the Messianic conference happens that no matter where they come from, everyone knows how to dance to "Enter His Gates with Thanksgiving" or another song where everyone knows the steps. It's like liturgy, something people recognize and understand. And it's biblical. Psalm 150

Helene: And it ushers people into, it aids in the congregation worshiping.

David: Yeah, so this idea that we restore true worship and we restore joy and dance and all the modes of worship that should be there, not just mourning. It's pretty much what the Orthodox were lacking till the Lubavitch came around and introduced joy to their services.

Elizabeth: So this is the last two questions together, have you had significant Messianic Jewish experience internationally? Ministering overseas?

David: Uh, just what I mentioned with Russia. Three times I went to the Soviet Union. I went to one conference in England. I'm particularly proud of the fact that in the early years when we were developing our approach to worship, which you saw this weekend, was we were close friends with Dr. Fleischer, Ruth Fleischer, and she was, at the time, her husband was a rabbi in London. He fell away. It was really tragic. She's such a courageous woman that she stayed and became the rabbi when it wasn't fashionable for any woman to lead a Messianic congregation.

Helene: Well, it still is not fashionable.

David: It still is not fashionable, but me and her dad and brother laid hands on her and ordained her in Florida at a conference. We had to do it in a hotel room cause no one else was for it. But what I am excited

about is she's planted congregations in Africa, in England, all throughout Europe, and they all follow this model of the Inner Court, Outer Court, Holy of Holies. She really adopted that, docking and everything. I mean, they really, really adopted our model. She has spread it all over Europe and Africa. It's amazing what she's doing...and Russia was just absolutely but the most exciting thing was what I shared about the Shema was in terms of it being in Moscow and St. Petersburg and going to Minsk, which I didn't share about is that I also, on that trip I found out where my family was from which nobody knew in my family. Because I smelled my grandmother's cooking in Minsk and I smelled her cookies in the synagogue. Someone was cooking my grandma's cookies and I knew what it was. "They're cooking my grandmother's cookies, cinnamon sugar cookies," I went. "That's not possible," they said, "What are you crazy? How can you know what they're cooking if they're eight thousand miles?" Olfactory lobes are...but I brought the cookie back and gave one to my Dad. My Dad since I know him could not tell us where my mother, grandmother, grandfather were from. He took one bite out of the cookie and says, "Mama was from _____ and Papa was from_____." In other words, the power of the taste of that cookies literally sent shock waves through his memory and he remembered...I didn't even ask him again. So, I found out the story of where my entire extended family except for my grandparents died in the Holocaust in the mass murders in C_____ and the concentration camps. But that moment I described today in my message about the Shema in St. Petersburg is one of the most thrilling moments of my life. That was something to introduce the Shema to people who hadn't heard the Shema or seen the Torah in seventy years, amazing.

Appendix F: John Fischer

Interview with Rabbi Dr. John Fischer on July 28, 2014

Elizabeth: To begin, can you, uh, just tell me a little about yourself? How you got into ministry and all of that?

John: Whoa! Okay

Elizabeth: I know it's a little open ended there.

John: Yeah, alright. I'll try to keep it to the basic framework. Um, I was born in Budapest, Hungary. My family obviously survived the Holocaust; came to this country when I was, oh, just around three. And I just now condensed about, uh, two and a half hours of material there into two and a half minutes there.

Elizabeth: Okay.

John: If you're interested in that part of the story, my parents wrote a book about their story. But, anyhow, grew up in Philadelphia. Um, then, um, alright. Effectively, I grew up in a Messianic family prior to the time that there were Messianic congregations. I accumulated a handful of degrees and in the process, ended up at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School doing masters work. I had a couple professors there who kind of really began to visit their own background on the Jewish nature and framework of the biblical texts. So they got me interested in that. It was about the same time. It was just after I graduated that we began hearing. Well, let me back it up a step. My wife and I got married after we graduated, she from Northwestern University; me from Trinity. And um, then thanks to the woman who actually pointed my parents to Yeshua back in Budapest, she was a Messianic Jew herself, she said that there was a group in Chicago that was looking for someone to coordinate campus ministry and it was a Jewish group. It turned out to be the oldest outreach to Jews in the States. Uh, so we went out, and liked what we saw. They seemed to like us. So we got involved in Jewish campus ministry, and it was just about that time they were beginning to hear about congregations forming. That time being, uh, we started literally January 1, 1973. What happened from there is I was involved with the, uh, what became within a year or two the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America. I functioned as the president of the Messianic Jewish Alliance of Chicago. So was involved in the Alliance changing its name from Hebrew Christian Alliance to Messianic Jewish Alliance and that was in conjunction with the beginnings of four or five Messianic congregations in L.A., in Philadelphia, in, uh, where else? What are some of the early ones? Well, anyway, those are the ones that come to mind; Cincinnati came just a little later. So we were challenged to start a Messianic synagogue in Chicago. So we did. We being my wife and I and the people we were working with. And, uh, that is congregation B'nai Maccabim which is still around to this day. And uh, that's how we all got started. Then a little later...

Elizabeth: What year was that that you started your congregation?

John: '75.

Elizabeth: Okay

John: And, then, um, let me see which comes first now. Um, yeah, alright. Then within the next couple years we _____ in starting an association of congregations and we were involved in the beginnings of that. And, I along with five of my colleagues were involved as the founders of the Union of Messianic Congregations. Um, was elected first vice president. That was in '79 when all that took place. '78 to '79; '79 was when it came into fruition. Alright, so, in '79, I was speaking at the Alliance conference in a

session on rabbinic _____ for Messianic lifestyle; and, uh, talked about the importance of the traditions and the liturgy. And, we ended up. We did a *shacharit* service the next day; traditional Morning Prayer service. I did not lead it, but somebody from the L.A. congregations did. And we ended up with probably sixty or sixty-five people, so indicated that there was an interest in things more liturgical, more traditional. Um, a couple years later, uh, '82 to be precise, we were asked to start a congregation here in Clearwater, Florida, which we did. But the year prior to that beginning in '81, I started work on both a Messianic edition of a Shabbat Siddur and then a Messianic edition of a Machzor, or holiday, Siddur. So the whole idea of the Siddur and the Machzor goes back to '80 and '81. We came down in [clears throat] pardon me. We came down to Florida in '82 and I think the first edition of the Siddur was probably ready by '83. So uh, and since then we have had, gosh, I don't know how many editions now of the Siddur. Um, have it now available in Russian and in Spanish as well. So, yeah that's the basic.

Elizabeth: How would I go about finding one?

John: Well, uh, we have them available here. If you go on our website menorahministries.com, we will have both the Siddur and the Machzor. As well if you're at all interested in Spanish or Russian editions. We'll have those available as well on that website.

Elizabeth: Okay

John: So, the whole liturgical thing, you know, we've been involved in for years and years. And in fact, prior to the actual starting of editing a Messianic Siddur, we were doing in...actually it's Chicago's suburbs is where we had the congregation in Highland Park. We were doing *shacharit*, or Morning Prayer services, a couple times a week back in the late '70s. So, our interest in, like I said, in liturgical, traditional things goes way back a long way. So I mean that's sort of a long story, but it's been a far longer story than the one that I told.

Elizabeth: Thank you. I can tell you left out a lot. So, how would you define Messianic Judaism?

John: Ideally or descriptively as to what it actually looks like on the ground?

Elizabeth: Um, could I get both definitions from you?

John: Okay, yep. What it looks like on the ground is basically an grouping, well...Messianic Judaism groups of people who are followers of Yeshua, or Jesus, who come from a Jewish background and want to maintain connections with that Jewish background in some way, shape, or form. It has come to include people who are interested in the Jewish framework and foundation of the Scriptures and of a faith in Yeshua. And so it is included a lot of non-Jews and it is included people who are in their style of life or in their worship are somewhat Jewish in some way, shape, or form. What I would see as a, uh, and a more and I'm going to use that term very carefully, I have no intention here of demeaning anybody, a more authentic variety, and I use the term 'authentic' because the person who invited us down here to Clearwater to start the Messianic synagogue here, that's what he was looking for, he used the term 'authentic'. And he'd been involved in both the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America and actually he was general secretary of the International Messianic Jewish Alliance...but anyhow, he wanted something that he considered authentic. In other words, doing not just Jewish like stuff, but doing authentically Jewish stuff. So if we were going to have a synagogue, we needed to sound like a synagogue. It would be involved in the traditional liturgy. Not that it would exclude Messianic additions, but it would incorporate the already Messianic traditions that are within traditional Judaism and supplement that with material related to Yeshua coming from the Newer Testament. So, he was looking for a, what he described, like I said, as authentic or what we might call a

somewhat more traditionally oriented expression of Judaism both with respect to the liturgy and its synagogue, as well as to the lifestyle that the people live. Hopefully that at least is a broad enough and yet detailed enough definition of where I see a sound Messianic Judaism would be.

Elizabeth: Yeah, oh, thank you. No, that's very good. Uh...

John: And if you've got questions, I'll be happy to clarify.

Elizabeth: Okay, [giggle], well I do have one cause initially you said that, um, you have an ideal definition and a on the ground. So I think the first one you gave me was an "on the ground." I just want to clarify...

John: Correct.

Elizabeth: ...that's what you're saying its "groups of people, Jewish and non-Jewish that are adopting some Jewish practices and worship Yeshua."

John: Correct

Elizabeth: And then the authentic would also be the ideal definition?

John: Yep, yep, exactly

Elizabeth: Okay, wonderful

John: Now, um, while I'm thinking of it, if you pick up a copy of our Messianic Siddur, in the back there's about twenty pages, maybe twenty-five pages of explanation and introduction to Jewish liturgy and tradition. Some things in there may be of help to you and for my overall framework and perspective there is another book that is available on the website or its available through Lederer called *The Enduring Paradox* and in it I do have a chapter called "The Rabbinic Traditions for a Messianic Jewish Lifestyle." That would flesh out some of what I would see as what we've called now ideal or authentic Messianic Judaism.

Elizabeth: Thank you. That's wonderful cause as I started getting into this study. Last fall is when I began researching everything. The reason I'm doing interview actually because I was having trouble finding what my school would accept as scholarly sources on this particular aspect of Messianic Judaism. Um, I'm learning now that there's probably enough out there I just didn't have the correct venues through which to search, I guess, at the times. So thank you! That definitely will help so I'll take a look at that.

John: And look, when you go to the website, a number of the articles my wife and I have written have appeared in journals. They're available as papers through the website, but I think on the website we also list where they appeared in journals so you could certainly cite those as well as the book I just mentioned to you. Now, another book that you should be aware of if you have not encountered it already is a book that goes back to the '80s. It's written by a religious historian of some note. And he was interested in Messianic Judaism. The book is called, and I hope I get the title in the right order the *History, Polity, and Theology of Messianic Judaism* or maybe it's the *History, Theology, and Polity of Messianic Judaism*, either way, the book is written by David Rausch. And I think some of the stuff that's in there will be directly relevant to your emphasis on liturgy or on worship. But it will also give you a really good history of the early days and how this movement came to be. And Rausch would certainly be a scholarly source.

Elizabeth: Okay, thank you so much I appreciate it. I will look that up.

John: And like I said, *Enduring Paradox* will be helpful as well. I'm trying to think of where else to send you that might be of help, but, um, if others pop into my mind I'll certainly drop a title on you.

Elizabeth: I appreciate it. Thank you. Sounds good to me. Now, going into, um, someone who walks into a Messianic Jewish worship service what do you think are important cultural markers of that service that they would notice that would set it apart from others?

John: Well, um, bottom line it should include the foundational items in virtually any synagogue service. It should include *Shema* and *Amidah*. It should include *Alenu*. It should include *Kaddish* in one of its several forms if not more than one. Um,

Elizabeth: What did you say before *Kaddish*? *Alenu*?

John: *Alenu*, yes.

Elizabeth: What is *Alenu*?

John: *Alenu* is a traditional closing...or one of the traditional closing portions of both daily and holiday services.

Elizabeth: Okay, is that like the Aaronic Benediction?

John: No, it's a liturgical piece other than the Aaronic Benediction. If you get a hold of the copy of the Messianic Siddur, there'll be a page or a page and a half on the *Alenu* and the *Alenu* text itself will be part of the service. Yeah, those are...I'm trying to think if there is something else...one would expect, at least on a Saturday morning service, Torah reading and at least part of the Torah service and the blessings that are associated with that. If you're doing a Friday night service, then you'd expect perhaps the lighting of the Shabbat candles. So, you know, it depends on which service you're actually walking into.

Elizabeth: Okay. Wonderful. Thank you. So, kind of getting into specifics, what aspects of contemporary Jewish liturgical practices were integrated into Messianic Judaism? The ones you just discussed, I know, *Shema*, *Amidah*, *Alenu*, and *Kaddish* those are all part of contemporary...

John: Traditional

Elizabeth: traditional liturgy?

John: Mmm-hmm and they're also part of contemporary Jewish liturgy. By contemporary I assume that you are talking about stuff that is purely modern in the sense that there is no...it's not part of the traditional package that has been with us down through the years.

Elizabeth: Actually, 'traditional' would have been a better word for me to use. So, yes, traditional.

John: Oh, well, if we're talking about traditional, then I've already given you the main parts.

Elizabeth: Okay

John: Depending on which Messianic synagogue you go into there will be more or less because there is far more to either an Erev Shabbat or a Shabbat service, Friday night or Saturday morning. Uh, that can and should be incorporated in a more thorough going Jewish service. Again, if you are doing a Friday night service you probably want to include *Lecha Dodi*, it's the welcoming of the Shabbat. If you're doing a

Saturday morning service, then there's some of the traditional morning blessings that occur near the beginning of the service. Um, it really depends on just how traditional you want the service to be. But theoretically, I would say that anything you have time for, there are time constraints, that comes from the traditional synagogue service would certainly be appropriate.

Elizabeth: Okay. Wonderful. And then what about contemporary Christian worship or liturgical practices? What kind of those were integrated into Messianic Judaism?

John: Again that depends on which congregation you're talking to. Some have integrated far more than others. We have integrated very little if any. What we have done by way of what you might call Christian that I would call first century Messianic Jewish, we have incorporated, for example, into our service a liturgical rendition of Hebrews 1:1-3. We will also include some of the more liturgical or, how should I put it, poetic sections of the Newer Testament. There are some clear prayers sections and some clear praise sections that you can find. Some that function as hymns, for example, Philippians 2:6-11, Colossians 1 beginning somewhere right around fifteen probably till about twenty-one, there's some in Ephesians. You've got some beautiful liturgical sections or stuff that could be used as liturgical sections in the book of Revelation particularly chapters five and seven. The hymns of response in Luke 1 are beautiful hymns; Zechariah's hymn, Miriam's hymn, even parts of Anna's and Simeon's responses in chapter two can be used as a, well they're structured liturgically and they could be included as liturgical sections coming from a Newer Testament perspective as well. Again I know that some people have incorporated more from within the Christian world both by way of what's considered... what they consider praise and worship, some of the songs that are out there. Um, we by enlarge have relied more on songs that have actually been penned by Messianic authors. Or actually come from within the Jewish tradition. And there's some delightful songs that have grown up from what used to be the Israeli Chassidic song festivals. I don't know that they're ongoing now but they used to run for many years and produced some beautiful songs that could be used in, either as part of liturgy, as alternate tunes, or as part of what's often called the praise and worship section where you just got some general congregational singing.

Elizabeth: Okay. Cool. So, um, do you, um, does your congregation do immersions?

John: Yes, we do.

Elizabeth: Would you consider that to be a part of Christian liturgy or part of ancient Jewish?

John: What we have done is to adapt what is available in Judaism. Judaism has always had a place for immersions. And what we have done is we've built off that tradition. We use the blessings that are associated with that and have just added to it a couple statements that are... one comes directly from the Newer Testament, one that's associated in general with Jewish liturgical practice. So we have in a sense created from within the Jewish sources plus Yeshua's statement as the end of the book of Matthew done in Hebrew into our process.

Elizabeth: Okay

John: Now, uh, trying to think. Trying to think of where we might have anything written down. I know that whole service is not written down but there is at least a basic page or so on the mikvah service in the festival Siddur or the Machzor that we've put together, which, again, you will find online.

Elizabeth: Okay. And do you do... I know at Beit Shalom we do immersions when we celebrate, um, Sukkot, I believe and that's the only time of year that we do it.

John: Oh, we'll try to connect it to a holiday. Frequently, we will do it, um, we have done it after *Tashlich*. We have a unique situation here. We have what we can advertise as the world's largest mikvah. We are literally across the street from Tampa Bay.

Elizabeth: Oh!

John: Yeah, so, when we do *tashlich* we go across and go in there. We have used that also for those who are not too squeamish. We've got some people who are—how should I put it?—who are adverse to bay water or ocean water. We'll do it in pools if they really don't want to do it there. But we will do most of our immersions in our _____. Now, just so you know how we do it because this may or may not be of interest in your study, we do it in the traditional Jewish way and by that I mean it is self immersion. The person actually goes out...after the blessings and after a brief statement as to what we're doing and why we're doing this and we do...I have a whole, what, thirty to forty minute class that our people go through before they go through the immersion. So they know what they're doing. But anyhow, and if that's part of your research I think we did have it transcribed a while back I could actually send you a transcribed copy of that.

Elizabeth: Unfortunately, for this, I don't need that. I know for myself I would be interested.

John: No, I understand. What we do is we have the blessing of the person who is involved in self immersion. And in self immersion you go under three times. And that's, in Jewish immersion or *tevillah*, that's the traditional way it's done—three times, self immersion. You do it three times to make sure you're completely covered by water.

Elizabeth: hmmm, wow, that's really interesting. Thank you. Now, what liturgical practices from either the Christian or Jewish worlds were avoided in the formation of Messianic Judaism?

John: Um, by that I mean, I assume you mean, when we first started forty years ago?

Elizabeth: Yes

John: Uh, there were some basic practices from Judaism, uh, the lighting of candles, the saying of the Shema, some parts of liturgy that I already spelled out for you earlier. The, uh, some form of immersion was part of the practice. I think from fairly on there was at least a blessing associated with it, but if you came to look at it, it would look very much like a Baptist immersion. Just from the looks of it. Um, complete with a person in the water actually dipping the person into the water that kind of thing. Now, if we're going back to the very beginning, so all of it is just developed some and it develops differently in the various forms of Messianic Judaism or various expressions of Messianic Judaism, which has become fairly broad by now.

Elizabeth: Okay, but those weren't things that were avoided from Judaism, right? Those are all things that were...

John: Well, the immersion was basically like I said, it looked very Christian like. Yeah, so, um, but, you know, because Jews did immersion it was not, uh, it at least seemed to be some sort of continuity. The style of praise and worship clearly came from, uh, some of your more independent forms of Christian worship and charismatic forms of Christian worship. So those things were incorporated at the beginning and much of it is; it still has some place and value.

Elizabeth: Okay

John: Obviously things such as the Passover holidays were done from Judaism. I don't know if I've answered your question completely, but those are the things that come to mind at this point.

Elizabeth: Mmm-hmm, so was there anything from the Christian world that you avoided adding to your service? And why might that have been?

John: Anything that we avoided adding to our service?

Elizabeth: Yeah, liturgical services.

John: Yeah, I know. I know what you're asking I'm just not sure if anybody really. Here's what was avoided at least intentionally or consciously, and that was the use of Christian imagery. Not necessarily liturgy, but imagery. For example, crosses. Did we avoid consciously any liturgy? Not necessarily. There were some groups that were doing the Lord's Prayer and they would tend to do it in Hebrew. Anything else... Look this movement at its beginning was not a highly liturgical group. So you're more likely to have Baptist or Charismatic influences in it than anything else and neither of those traditions tend to be very liturgical.

Elizabeth: Right

John: So there wasn't a whole lot of in that sense liturgy to avoid. That may not be particularly helpful in trying to describe...

Elizabeth: Oh, no, that's what I need to know. So how did the leaders...

John: Oh, and by the way, David's book may deal with some of that.

Elizabeth: Okay

John: So that may be another helpful source on that.

Elizabeth: Okay. Wonderful

John: Go ahead.

Elizabeth: Um, how did the leaders from Christianity and Judaism respond to the Messianic movement as it was forming and using some of their liturgy?

John: From the beginning you mean?

Elizabeth: yeah, from the beginning

John: Neither side liked us, probably the best way to put it.

Elizabeth: Okay

John: by enlarge, Judaism felt...many of the leaders of Judaism felt that we were pseudo-Jews or...what's a better way to put it? Play acting um more that we took on Jewish forms to mislead Jews into a Christian faith.

Elizabeth: Hmm

John: And there is a good term to describe it, but I am failing to come up with the best term to describe it.

Elizabeth: Like syncretism?

John: No, not syncretism something else. In the sense that that it was just we were trying to draw people in and lead them astray. Just put on a false front. After we hang up, I'll think of the best term... Christians, on the other hand, didn't like much of what we were doing if they didn't like it because if they thought most of them associated it with "going back under the law" which was the theological term, or "going back into Judaism," or "Judaizing" all of which were supposed to have been done away with. For many felt that Judaism was supposed to have been done away with the coming of Yeshua. So that was the approach from those Christians who had significant difficulty with us from the outset.

Elizabeth: Okay. Yeah, I've definitely heard that terminology before. Now, going even farther back how did early Jewish practices going back to Yeshua's era influence liturgical decisions in the rebirth of Messianic Judaism? You mentioned that there are New Testament passages that you use in your liturgy that wouldn't be from the traditional, are there other things like that you do?

John: Uh, my understanding and some of this will be developed in the chapter that I mentioned to you—"Rabbinic Traditions for Messianic Jewish Lifestyle"—my understanding is that the early followers of Yeshua, certainly the Jewish part of that following through the first century and in all likelihood through the first six centuries until the rise of Islam, I will argue that they maintained their Jewish lives, lifestyles and worship and remained in fact part of the overall Jewish community. Um, sometime around the rise of Islam, any viable Messianic community seems to have disappeared and it may have been due to the rise of Islam.

Elizabeth: Okay

John: But there are indications of an ongoing, thriving Messianic Jewish community many centuries after Yeshua. I mean, we've got Epiphanius writing about it in the late fourth early fifth centuries, Augustine writing about it in the early fifth century. You've got evidences for it up until the beginning of the seventh century in Capernaum. So, I mean there was a viable, maybe not necessarily large, but there was a viable Messianic Jewish community that existed that remained part of a larger Jewish community. So of course their liturgy would have remained very Jewish. At least in the early stages of Christian liturgy there was some impact as well. You can see it demonstrated in some of the descriptions found in something called the Didache. Are you familiar with the Didache?

Elizabeth: I have heard of it, yes.

John: Okay, it's probably an early second century Christian document. And if you read it, you'll find, and you're familiar with Judaism, you'll find a lot of it sounds very, very Jewish. Uh, blessings for bread, blessings for wine, grace at the meal or after the meal—I mean there's a bunch of stuff that's in there that indicates at least in the early second century there was a lot of crossover. If that's an area you want to pursue more fully, I'm gonna give you two more books.

Elizabeth: Okay

John: From two different sides of the coin, but same perspective. Both were edited by Oskar Skarsaune. One of them's called *Jewish Believers in Jesus*. The other's called, if I remember right, *In the Shadow of the Temple*.

Elizabeth: I am familiar with that one. My dad's been telling me that I need to read it for weeks.

John: Well, both those books will go into great detail as to what that first several centuries looked like and the crossover or overlap between the two.

Elizabeth: Okay, thank you so much. I'll definitely look into those. Um, now, we're rapidly approaching forty-five minutes. I have about four more questions though do you have time...

John: Go ahead

Elizabeth: Okay, alright. Thank you so much

John: If you're willing to hang in with me, I'll be happy to work with you.

Elizabeth: Oh, yes, this is wonderful I'm...thank you so much. So you've, throughout, I've noted that you ask "Are you talking about the early? Are you talking about right now?" So how were the liturgical practices that were developed and chosen at the beginning useful in the maturation of Messianic Jewish identity? Or was it kind of flip-flopped, where you didn't start with a lot of Jewish liturgy at the beginning and that's something that was seen as needed to be added to the movement for it to mature?

John: It's probably the latter. Uh, I think virtually everybody did the basics. Like I said, uh, if you're a Friday night service candle lighting, Shema at the minimum. If you're a Saturday morning service, then the Shema and some sort of reading from the Torah. How much more was done by some congregations? I'm not sure. Uh, I know the one we started in 1975, because we started from a more liturgical orientation anyhow. We right away did Shema, part of the Amidah, Kaddish. Did we do Alenu at the beginning?—that I'm not sure of. And then we just gradually added pieces as we went along the way. We added them far more rapidly than others did. Um, others basically did little more than the candles and Shema, or if it was Saturday obviously no candles. Some sort of Jewish music, mainly Messianic. And just services on Friday night or Saturday. So, yes, there was some real development that took place beginning in the early days but continuing because it had to. Cause there was so little that was done at the very outset.

Elizabeth: So, would you see the adding of those traditional, liturgical practices as a sign of the movement maturing into its own identity as a movement?

John: Yes, I think that is a sign of maturing. It's a sign of coming to grips with what it means to be truly Jewish not just on the surface. Or to use the term we used before, to be authentically Jewish. I mean from the outset, we, um, advertised ourselves as a another branch of Judaism, but this particular branch in the beginning didn't look all that Jewish. And if we're going to be a branch of Judaism, we need to look like a branch of Judaism and I think that has been a positive development. That we've become more so.

Elizabeth: Okay, wonderful. So changing gears just a little bit, we've talked a little bit about the music. What musical influences that you know of were drawn upon in the development of Messianic Jewish music?

John: Okay, um, there was some influence from within Judaism, namely, in what I called, mentioned before the Israeli Chassidic song festivals. From within the movement itself, some of the early music came from Lamb and the Liberated Wailing Wall. There were other groups that were beginning to form as well although I don't know if they necessarily wrote their own music they just built on the music that was out there. I would think some of Shlomo Carlebach's music in the beginning was influential as well.

Elizabeth: Shlomo Carlebach's?

John: Yes, c-a-r-l-e-b-a-c-h and it may have been more of his style rather than some of the actual music, but it was along those kind of lines.

Elizabeth: Alright. Now is he a Messianic musician?

John: No, he came from an Orthodox background.

Elizabeth: Oh, okay

John: In fact, he was a cantor. So Carlebach was an influence from within Judaism as was the Israeli Chassidic song festival.

Elizabeth: Okay. Wonderful. I hadn't heard of him before. Thank you. Um, now, one thing that many rabbis talk about is the dance and how that is a cultural marker in their services. How did the development of Messianic dance come to serve as an identifier for Messianic Judaism? What do you think its importance is?

John: Alright, that's a multilayered question.

Elizabeth: It is.

John: Let me start by saying, for whatever reason it always seems to have been around. It is some sort of a variation on, um, Jewish or Israeli folk dance. Um, I think that's what it ultimately built on it developed into all kinds of variants that look less and less like Israeli folk dance. Israeli and Jewish folk dance is not necessarily associated with worship. It's simply associated with celebration. Somehow, very early on in the movement, it was brought in as a worship element. And has remained there by enlarge till today. If you're asking me as an individual, I think Israeli folk dance is good, provided it is truly Israeli folk dance and not individual variations or whatever they think works with the music. But it needs to be kept to what it is intended to be and it wasn't intended to be part of a worship service. So if you were to come to our services, there is no dancing whether you call it Israeli dance or Davidic dance or whatever some of the descriptors are for this. The only time we dance related to services is at *Simchat Torah* when it's traditional to dance with the Torah. We have a congregation that does a lot of dancing, but we do it during our socials not during our services. So, that's my read on dance as well as trying to be at least a little bit descriptive as to how it developed in the movement. Like I said, my earliest recollections of the movement are that Jewish dance of some sort was always...somehow always was part of it.

Elizabeth: Okay. Wonderful. Thank you. Um, this is another loaded question, but how did the theological understandings of emerging Messianic Judaism influence the liturgy of Messianic Jewish congregations? I think we've touched on that a little bit, but...

John: Yeah, we have. The theology early on, as with some of the practices early on, came largely from Baptist and charismatic circles because those were the people that, uh, the early believers in the Messianic movement ended up associating with or came to faith through. So some of that theology was the theology that shaped um practice whether it was liturgical or non-...or personal practice. Uh, it was more, frequently it was more, "pick whatever you want that suits you comfortably. You don't have to do any of it. But anything you want to do, if it's helpful in bringing Jewish people to your congregation, your fellowship, then do it." There was in the beginning, or there was very little in the beginning of an emphasis that this is stuff that we really ought to do. Cause if we are Jews, we ought to look like Jews. We ought to sing like

Jews. We ought to live like Jews, practicing. That emphasis came later, but in the beginning it was more of a buffet line, pick and choose kind of thing. Sort of a “if it feels good, do it. If it’s Jewish, that’s cool.” There was no sense of, “I’m a Jew and if I’m gonna call myself Jew then I ought to at least live reasonably like a Jew.”

Elizabeth: Okay, and that’s kind of become, that’s how the movement has changed and matured to think more that way?

John: To think more that way. I’m still thinking that by enlarge more people think like the movement at the beginning than think about what we’ve now just described as to where we’ve become more like.

Elizabeth: So that goes back to what Messianic Judaism ideally looks like.

John: Exactly, exactly.

Elizabeth: Okay, um, thank you. Thank you. So switching gears again a little bit, um, have you had significant Messianic Jewish experience internationally? Have you ministered and traveled to congregations internationally?

John: Yes, um, as I mentioned in part of one of the answers, I am the president of the International Messianic Jewish Alliance. So in conjunction with that I’ve done a little. Both my wife and I have taught. We had the opportunity to teach extensively around the world. Just to list the first few places that come to mind: Jerusalem, obviously, Berlin, Moscow. I’ve been to Cape Town, South Africa a couple times, one of the larger cities outside of Manila in the Philippines. I’ve been in the Ukraine on a couple occasions. So yeah, and we have had an opportunity to ministry fairly, fairly broadly.

Elizabeth: Wonderful. So building off that question, um, what are some of the similarities or differences that you’ve noticed between the American Messianic Jewish liturgy and worship experience and International Messianic Jewish worship?

John: I would say, by enlarge, Americans expressions have tended to shape expressions elsewhere. Um, however, having said that, at least our experience, for example the two most recent ones we’ve had were...when was it?—a year ago, a little better than a year ago in Berlin and Moscow. Both in Berlin and in Moscow, they have tended to move along more traditional lines perhaps faster than the American versions did. Now again, that’s only two places so I can’t necessarily generalize. At least, those two particular spots as of last year looked like they were moving in a more, a more liturgical, a more traditional direction.

Elizabeth: Okay. So did they also begin looking more like American Messianic Jews and then...but just have as you described, made that change?

John: Well, it’s hard to know. American messianic Judaism has been widely influential. I mean it led the way. It impacted Israel. It impacted the former Soviet Union. It impacted Europe. It was at least in the beginning always a step or two ahead of everywhere else. It is what impacted others, rather than the reverse. But like I said at least in the Berlin and Moscow versions that we’ve been acquainted with over the last several years, they have become more liturgical, like I said, more quickly than we did here in the States.

Elizabeth: Okay. Wow. Thank you so much. That was the last question. And this has been very helpful and informative. I appreciate you setting aside time for this.

John: Sure thing. Glad to be of help.

Appendix G: Aaron Bortz

Interview with Rabbi Aaron Bortz on July 29, 2014

Elizabeth: So Rabbi Aaron, just to start could you just tell me a little bit of, ah, your history? How did you get into Messianic Jewish ministry? How long have you been in it?

Aaron: I grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio. Raised in, went to a Reformed synagogue. And probably the most liturgy that I was ever exposed to was one year I was a member of a cantoral choir at a Conservative shul in Cincinnati. They needed a tenor and I was Jewish and available so they came after me. Cause I did a lot of choral work. I became a believer in 1970, August of 1970. I came back to Cincinnati. I had already met Jewish people who were believers. I went to high school with Jeff A_____, David Chernoff, Joel Chernoff—these are guys who are all involved with leadership in the movement. And I met their dad when I was thirteen and he told me, he said, “Well, Jesus is the Jewish Messiah.” It was the first thing that I’d ever heard that made sense about Jesus because a lot of my friends sometimes in school would try to witness to me but I could put them off pretty quickly by saying, “The Old Covenant is for the Jewish people and the New Testament is for you guys.” And they wouldn’t have any comebacks because they weren’t taught that the New Testament was written by Jewish people. And, I mean, they knew it, but it didn’t really strike home. So, anyway, I obviously took a long time, it was nine years before I became a believer. There were a lot of things going on in my life but when I came back, I thought, “Well, I’m the only Jew in the world that believes this way,” even though I knew people who were Jewish who believed in the Messiah. And I bumped into Joel and David, these guys that I had known previously at campus, at University of Cin___ where I went back to school after I got out of the military. And they invited me over and I guess I tried to witness to them and they tried to witness to me then we both found out we were believers. So then I started attending there, they had a small; it was a Bible study and then it grew into a Messianic fellowship. It was called Beth Messiah. Marty Chernoff, who was one of the leaders in the Messianic movement, was the pastor. Cause at that time we said “pastor.” At that time, we said “Hebrew Christian.” Okay? It was the real impact of being messianic, which Marty was already thinking about. There were a lot of people thinking about it at the time, but Marty was thinking a lot about it. It was just starting to take a root. You know? Just really starting to get a foundation under its feet, of course, my first twelve years I was in a Messianic congregation as a believer. I fellowshiped with other believers at the university and people from different backgrounds; Christian church and Methodist church and Baptist. And they’d all call us “Hebrew Baptist” because we really have very much aligned with the Baptist doctrinal positions in many different respects but we were throwing a bit of a Jewish flavor into it. As a matter of fact in 1975, the first Messianic Jewish Alliance Conference that I went to, um, they changed the name to Messianic Jewish Alliance of America from Hebrew Christian Alliance of America, and I was, at that time I was the president of the Hebrew Christian Alliance chapter in Cincinnati. So that’s pretty much my background. From there I went to another congregation. We had two congregations in Cincinnati. And that’s a long story in itself which doesn’t need to be covered. The first pastor was Rachmiel Frydland and you could look him up. He was actually an Orthodox man, was schooled to be an Orthodox rabbi in Poland. Came to the Lord before the war and then came through the war. And there’s been a lot of books. He’s written a book, his autobiography and he was very prolific in writing literature for witnessing, tracts, etc.

Elizabeth: What was his name again?

Aaron: Rachmiel, R-a-c-h-m-i-e-l. Fryland, F-r-y-d-l-a-n-d. and you can Google him up.

Elizabeth: Thank you!

Aaron: Okay, and Rachmiel actually I really kind of was drawn to him because he had, he was very schooled in rabbinical, liturgical observance and everything. But he was a believer. And a lot of Jewish people were leaving all that behind when became believers because they usually got absorbed into the church and they couldn't bring the Hebrew and the different Jewish liturgies with them into the church. The church wasn't all that interested. Besides that, that wasn't their call to make Christians Jewish. I mean that issue was settled pretty quick in the book of Acts, if you know what I'm talking about.

Elizabeth: Yeah, yeah I do.

Aaron: Okay. Right. Alright, and then as things started to go forward, people started to express themselves in the more Messianic Jewish way and starting to incorporate a lot of the different Jewish liturgical and traditional things into the Messianic Jewish movement, but they had their own take on it, okay? Because a lot of them were not raised in an observant Jewish home; a lot of them were but a lot of them weren't. And it was interesting to see the different takes that people had as they tried to employ these things in their worship. And I actually was moved in 1982 by my business down to Louisville, Kentucky. And there was no Messianic congregation here. And I looked around to see if I could get something going. There had been a Hebrew Christian Alliance chapter here, but they kind of disbanded. The people were just that were here, the Jewish believers that were here were all caught up in the different denominational backgrounds, you know? The Pentecostals didn't get along with the Baptists, if you know what I mean? A lot of different things. So I just didn't feel led to start a Messianic congregation and I got involved in church plant of the Evangelical Free Church here. But I always kept my hand in Jewish work, and that was who I was. I did a lot of speaking. I did a lot of Sedar demonstrations, and teach classes at different churches of people that wanted to have a Jewish perspective on the New Testament, etc. And I was also on the board of the Messianic Literature Outreach, which was an organization Rachmiel founded that prints literature. Messianic Literature Outreach and you can look them up online: messianicliterature.org. But they're primarily involved with...the literature we publish is primarily tracts, Jewish people's testimonies of coming to the Lord. And there's quite a few of them, but there's other things too. Rachmiel wrote an awful lot of other stuff and there's a book we just did in Hebrew called *What the Rabbis Know about the Messiah* and that's gonna be for distribution in Israel. It's a very small organization. It's not a very big organization, but it's still there. Trying to get something done, if you know what I mean.

Then, in Louisville, there were some Jewish people here who actually came to the Free Church where I was at, and they wanted to get a fellowship going. Just like a once a month fellowship, you know, to kind of keep you with your roots. Cause I wanted my children to have some exposure. You know, we still did the Passover Sedars at home. We still had some observance here; Hanukah and the Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur. You know, I did that on my own at home. Tried to teach the girls their background, their Jewish background, as well as what was important, knowing the Lord. So the fellowship kind of took hold a little bit. Then they actually, they formed a congregation and quite frankly I was still, I was like the chairman of the elder board at Grace and I was very involved there. And I just didn't feel like that would be right to just walk away. Then when I finished my term there, they came to me and asked me if I would be a part time leader of the congregation. They didn't really have anybody. So I took on the job as a part time thing and was gonna find them a full time Messianic guy, a leader. But next thing I knew I wound up being it. And then I've retired from my job and now I'm fully involved in that work now.

Elizabeth: Wow. So when was that that you were the...?

Aaron: When I took the job full time? It started in January of 2013.

Elizabeth: Oh, okay.

Aaron: And then last year, I was accepted by the International Alliance of Messianic Congregations and Synagogues as a Messianic rabbi intern. It's affiliated with the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America. It's a very loose affiliation of about a hundred and fifty Messianic congregations around the United States and some outside of the United States.

Elizabeth: Okay, and that's the MJAA, right?

Aaron: Well, it's affiliated with the MJAA, but it's also but the actual organization that my congregation belongs to is the IAMCS and that is...If I go too fast, you just tell me to slow down cause you're the one writing, all I'm doing is talking. It's much easier from my side of the spectrum; the International Alliance of Messianic Congregations and Synagogues.

Elizabeth: Okay, so you said back before you moved to Louisville, you were involved in Messianic congregations. In leadership in Messianic congregations?

Aaron: Yes, in worship

Elizabeth: Oh! Awesome. So how would you define Messianic Judaism?

Aaron: Well, I'm not. I will tell you that I am not totally sold on that term. I'm Messianic Jewish, but to say that this is just another expression of Judaism. I think that the, my faith goes beyond Judaism, okay? I mean obviously if the Lord is trying to, is putting together people of the ministry of the Church, you know putting the Jews together with people from all the walks of faith and molding them into one family, I wouldn't necessarily say that's Messianic Judaism. But my perspective and understanding of Christianity I guess would probably come under the term Messianic Judaism a little better. Only because it's my, it would be my way of living out my faith in the Messiah Yeshua with Jewish influences, okay?

Elizabeth: Okay

Aaron: Which I really believe was the way it all started out. Okay? I mean, I can't tell you how many times I go into churches and, you know, have to explain to them that what Paul's talking about when he says "Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us." They miss that Paul, I believe, that when he was writing those epistles, he knew there would be Jewish people in the congregation who would explain to the people who didn't understand, but it's like. Here, I guess, what I'm fond of referring to is the fact that, and we just talked about it a minute ago, the first major doctrinal issue that the Church had, and 'church' is not, it's a *ecclesia* so it's not a Jewish term, but the first major doctrinal problem they had was...when Gentiles become followers of the Messiah, do they have to be Jewish? Do they have to be circumcised? Do they have to keep the laws of Moses? Do they have to keep the dietary laws? And you know how that issue was settled, I'm assuming that? Since you're going to a...

Elizabeth: Yes

Aaron: Okay. Now, move ahead anywhere from 1800 years to 2000 years and now I have people that when I tell them that I'm a Jewish believer in the Messiah, they look at me and they say, "Well, what kind of a Jew are you?" Okay, now do you think that anybody asked Paul that? They knew he was Jewish. They just said, "But you do have something different going on there." Yes, I do. I do believe the Messiah's come. And other people would say, "No, I don't believe the Messiah's come." Okay? So, I am not, I do not feel bound, I am not as aligned, for instance, with the Oral Law as the Orthodox Jews are. I do not think. I mean

Messianic Jews can look at the Oral Law and see what is good there, but there is a whole lot that isn't good. And Yeshua, when Yeshua said, "You by your laws have made the laws of God to no effect." Are you familiar with that passage?

Elizabeth: Yes

Aaron: Okay and I believe he was directly addressing the Oral Law. Okay? Because they had gotten to the point that they were holding the Oral Law in as high a reverence as the written Word of God, the Torah and the Prophets and the *Ketuvim* the Writings... basically, I hope that gave you some sort of an idea of what Messianic Judaism is?

Elizabeth: Yeah, yeah I think so.

Aaron: And I have a couple things I might send you and I'll get your address here.

Elizabeth: Oh! That would be wonderful.

Aaron: Okay what other questions do you have? I think I know where you're going, but go ahead.

Elizabeth: Alright, um, so what do you believe are important cultural markers in a Messianic Jewish worship service?

Aaron: Okay. I think the basic, the first, I wouldn't say a problem, but I would say a controversy that arises in a Messianic congregation is do we do what we do to make Jewish people feel comfortable? Or do we do what we do because this is what God's wants us to do? Do you understand what I'm saying?

Elizabeth: Yeah

Aaron: In other words, people can sometimes be so over-concerned with their witness that they miss the point. I don't know if I'm explaining that properly or not. Um, I do what I do. We do what we do because we want to do. Now, if it will help someone feel more comfortable and want to know more about the Lord, that's fine. But really worship services; I'm of the belief that worship services are not really an evangelistic effort. Worship services are a time when believers are, tank up on energy to go back into the world to be a light. Okay? So we have certain perspectives and what that would involve is a certain amount of liturgy. At *Adat HaTikvah*, we have a full, a Torah service the first Saturday of every month, and we do meet on, we do consider the Sabbath still obviously, which I think the Scripture does too, was Friday and Saturday. I don't, you know, and it's fine with me what the Church has done with Sunday. I don't have any problem with that. Paul taught you can worship one day to one man is one thing and another day to, you know, I'm more interested in whether they're worshipping God than what day they worship God. Okay?

Elizabeth: Yes

Aaron: But we as a Messianic congregation have chosen if we're going to have services, it's going to be Friday and Saturday. Okay? And we'll have a Torah service and Siddur that we use. It's a Messianic Siddur and that was written by Dr. John Fischer. Did I give you his name before?

Elizabeth: You know, somebody did. Maybe it was you that gave it to me. I actually got to interview him last night and he told me about the Siddur and I put my order in the mail yesterday. So I'm excited about taking a look at it.

Aaron: Oh, okay, good. There's such a thing as a Siddur and that takes you through your Sabbath services and other important Messianic Jewish things. If they're Jewish, but John has taken it to another step and made it Messianic, you follow?

Elizabeth: Yes

Aaron: And then there's also something called a *machzor*. I guess if you wanted to transliterate that that would be m-a-c-h-z-o-r. And John also does a *machzor*, and that is a specific set of liturgical observances for the high holidays, which would be, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot.

Elizabeth: Okay

Aaron: and that's called a *machzor*, and we use that as well when we have, we will have a *Kol Nidre* service and a Yom Kippur service. We'll have a Rosh Hashanah service, which is...the Jewish people call it the "head of the year." In Yeshua's day, it was called Yom Teruah, which is the "days of the trumpets." It's calling people to repentance. You know what I mean? Sounding horns. Getting their attention.

Elizabeth: Yes

Aaron: And then Sukkot is the feast of tabernacles, you might be familiar with that name.

Elizabeth: Mmm-hmm

Aaron: Okay and we celebrate those as well because there's nothing that says you're supposed to stop. Now, do I keep kosher? No. I might try to keep biblically kosher, but I haven't really been convicted of that yet. We have people in our congregation that don't eat any shellfish. They don't eat any pork. And they try to keep biblically kosher, and that's fine just as long as they don't condemn someone else for not doing it. Okay? And it's funny that you ask that, I was thinking about you wanted liturgical things, if you went to messianic congregations back in the '70s, you would of thought you just were in some sort of up-to-date prayer meeting because they did hymns and then they graduated from doing hymns, more timely hymns and songs about the Lord to stuff that was maybe written by some Jewish people and then also some other people, lots of guitars and things like that. If you were to come to our worship service now, there's a piano and a guitar and sometimes a cello, tambourines. But I don't, it's not necessarily a copy of the Pentecostal service, which years ago, that might have been what you would have thought you were looking at.

Elizabeth: Right, just a variance of a Pentecostal service?

Aaron: Well, possibly or even just a Baptist service, not necessarily, well contemporary worship. Let's put it that way...I mean, the Jewish services, even from the beginning, were always very upbeat. Lots of upbeat music, you know? But we would do some hymns once in a while cause there are some great old hymns.

Elizabeth: Right. Okay

Aaron: But you don't see that, I don't see that much now.

Elizabeth: Okay.

Aaron: Um, let me see. We do, the other services that we have during the week, we do have some liturgy. We will do the Shema, which is the watchword of the faith. We'll do the V'ahavta, which is, "And you

shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul.” It’s a Scripture, a particular Scripture. We’ll do that.

Elizabeth: Can you spell that “V’ahavta” for me?

Aaron: Yeah, let’s do this. Let’s call it v-apostrophe-a-h-a-v-t-a. I’m trying to remember. It’s out of Deuteronomy.

Elizabeth: Yeah, I’m familiar with it cause we say it in English every Friday at my...

Aaron: Right, we say it in Hebrew and then we do it in the English. And a lot of people stumble.

Elizabeth: I did it for the first time in Hebrew this past Saturday at Rabbi Rosenberg’s congregation. It was an experience. I was like, “Oh, I need to get familiar with this.”

Aaron: Oh! You know, it’s important to us, but you don’t have to do that stuff if you don’t want to. If you like it, I think that’s great. I mean, we have a number of people who aren’t Jewish but they feel called to the Jewish people. And they welcome and warm to the expressions, the Jewish expressions of how we worship and that’s fine. You know, it doesn’t make them any better a believer than anybody who doesn’t do those things. That’s what I teach, but on the other hand, it’s a very special calling. That’s how I view it. And when I see non-Jewish people that feel so strongly called and it’s very obvious that it’s a God calling, to me it is. I really, really am grateful to God for that, you know. I don’t want just all Jewish people there. I want to see more Jewish people in my congregation become believers, but I’ll welcome anybody who wants to know the Lord and serve God and know more about Him. That’s really what we’re all about. Okay? And all those Jewish guys that were running around, they were sharing with all the Gentiles. You know? They were very busy bringing them into the fold. They didn’t just say, “Hey, I...” You know, Yeshua said He’s called to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but then he told them, “But you’re going to the uttermost parts of the world.” And they didn’t embrace that instruction as quickly as they should have. You know? It took Stephen’s persecution and death to kind of get, to put the old boot into ‘em. I mean sometimes God has to hit us all over the head with a two by four.

Elizabeth: Oh, yes. Now, what are aspects of traditional Jewish liturgical practices that you’ve integrated into your service? Now, you’ve mentioned a couple of them, I think; the Shema, the V’ahavta...

Aaron: The V’ahavta, oh yeah, and we’ll do the Kaddish, which is very, actually, that is very similar to the Lord’s Prayer. If you’re familiar with the Kaddish, “yis’gadal v’yis’...” Well, at any rate. Once you get his Siddur, you’ll see what we do. Now, we’ll pick and choose from his Siddur what we want to do because sometimes we don’t want the services to be too long cause we’ll lose everybody. Cause the Torah service is kind of new for us. We just got our Torah this past year. They’re not cheap. And we have a Torah, and we have an Aron Kodesh, and we have a markah mi, the everlasting light that is over that. Now that’s traditionally Jewish. And we bring the Torah out, and we read from the Torah. But, you know, so that would be traditionally Jewish. We’ll read from the half Torah. We’ll read the, you were at the Messianic service on Saturday morning weren’t you?

Elizabeth: Um, yes.

Aaron: You were at the conference, okay.

Elizabeth: Oh, no, I wasn’t at the one at the conference, but I mean I go to one here. I go to Rabbi Stephen Galiley’s congregation here in Utica.

Aaron: Oh, okay, I'm not familiar with his congregation, but that doesn't mean anything because I don't know. I'm just. I'm still learning my way. You probably got an awful lot out of John Fischer yesterday, didn't you, regarding liturgy? He's a, John is very educated and really well-schooled. In all honesty, much more so than myself.

Elizabeth: Oh, that's fine. It's one of those things where I ask basically the same questions of everybody but it's really nice to see what it triggers, you know?

Aaron: Oh!

Elizabeth: Everybody thinks of something different when I ask it. Some people think the same things, some people think of different things. So I just kind of listen and take it all in, you know?

Aaron: I think you'll see a lot of consistency in the answers.

Elizabeth: Yeah, so far I have, which is great. No, thank you! You're helping a lot. You said you read from the Half Torah. I think you said its name in Hebrew, but can you, um...

Aaron: The Half Torah is when we read from the _____, the prophets. And then we also have a reading from the HaBrit Chadashah, the New Covenant.

Elizabeth: Oh, okay.

Aaron: Yeah, if you were to get a, if you've ever seen the Complete Jewish Bible, David Stern broke the *parashars* up and he identified these parashar and then at the end of the parashar, he'll show you what the, his suggested New Testament reading is, because that's all a matter of opinion. No one has actually sat down in unanimity everybody says, "Okay this is the New Testament we're going to read with the Prophets and the Torah portions." They're different. There's a place called Hebrew for Christians that if you went to they will show you every week they will have the suggested Torah readings for the week. That's a website you can go to. I think it was started by Zola Levitt, but he's been gone for a number of years. But it's called Hebrew for Christians, I believe .org or .com, I don't remember which one it is. And they do a great job. They do an absolute great job. And there's just a lot of resources available for you there.

Elizabeth: Okay. Thank you. I have heard of it, but I have never gotten on their site, so thank you for that.

Aaron: Yeah, you ought to take a look at their website, I think. I know you only have one paper to write, but, boy, a multitude of sources doesn't hurt. It's just picking through and finding out what you need.

Elizabeth: Exactly! Um, now what were some contemporary Christian worship practices that were integrated into your service?

Aaron: Well, you know, I mean, we do communion once a month. Now, but is that really a Christian service? No. No, it was instituted by the Lord. We call it the "Passover of the New Covenant." Other Messianic congregations call it different things. That's what I refer to it as the "Passover of the New Covenant." And, um, I mean liturgically in some respects we parallel a lot of contemporary worship because we do... [signal broke up]...and clapping and

Elizabeth: because of what?

Aaron: Because we do songs! Very rarely you go to a synagogue and they're all going to be singing there, ah, um, "Our God" or "Our God is an Awesome God" or "Step by Step" or, you know, I mean, we'll do things like that. I mean there're other guys that write music, we don't just use the Messianic Jewish authors and musicians. But really, quite frankly, there aren't many synagogues where you go to where you're going to sit down, you're going to have an opening prayer, you're going to have an announcements, you're going to have maybe three songs and then you're going to do some liturgy and then you might have a prayer for Israel, and then you'll do three more songs, and then you'll have a message from the rabbi, and then you'll have a closing blessing and then you'll have the Aaronic Benediction and a blessing for the bread and the wine because we have a little oneg afterwards, which is a light meal. Oneg Shabbat, are you familiar with that term?

Elizabeth: Yes!

Aaron: You should be. Good. In all honesty, if you really wanted to get technical, that's kind of a contemporary, there's Christian influence, there's from the Gentile church there.

Elizabeth: Okay.

Aaron: I mean that's... [family interruption] So do you understand what I'm saying?

Elizabeth: Yeah

Aaron: When I said what I did about the contemporariness of a service? I don't know what the synagogue you go to, but I doubt that we'll ever look a hundred percent like any synagogue you're gonna go into. You can't. I'm there to worship the Lord and we like some of the freedom we have in Him. I like a lot of the freedom.

Elizabeth: I have a question. Is the sermon, the time of teaching by the rabbi, is that a normal part of Jewish synagogue services?

Aaron: No, well, no. As a matter of fact, I was told. Now I told you, I was raised Reformed. But I was told that if you went to the European synagogues, the cantor, you know what a cantor is?

Elizabeth: Yes

Aaron: He ran the service. There was no sermon given. The rabbi taught classes, but he didn't give a sermon. The sermon idea really kind of came into being when they moved more into the Western world, and maybe moved away from traditional things. And so the rabbis were expected to give a sermon just like the preachers did. Now I might be wrong about that, but that's what I was told and I was not told that by a Messianic. I was told that by a rabbi years ago.

Elizabeth: Okay. So, um, forgive my ignorance, but being raised as a Reformed Jew...I'm a little more familiar with Conservative, um, and less with Orthodox, but definitely more than with Reformed so how...

Aaron: How are they different?

Elizabeth: Yes, thank you. How are they different?

Aaron: Well, okay, well first of all, by the way, let me also tell you that people would do a commentary, they call it a *drash*. That's what Yeshua did. Remember when he read. It says that He read from the

Scriptures, as was His custom, and He read from the Prophets and He said that the Messiah had come. He actually gave a little commentary after that and people will do that, it's called a *drash*.

Elizabeth: Okay

Aaron: That's a drash, d-r-a-s-h. There's a commentary there I'm sure your rabbi can explain that to you. And so it's not really supposed to be full blown sermon like your rabbi probably takes forty minutes or thirty -five minutes or whatever, an hour. You know, Yeshua was done in about five seconds. So, it's just a short commentary, a drash. We'll probably be moving to that, by the way, we'll, because right now I teach through the *parsha* every year, but I really want to start doing some more series out of the Prophets and out of the New Covenant. And so I'll probably have somebody read a portion of the Torah for that week and he'll give a little five minute commentary on that. But it also helps people learn how to, you know, learn how to sermonize. You want to train people. Okay, you asked me something else, and I gave you that answer there. What did you want?

Elizabeth: um, just a little understanding of Reformed Judaism.

Aaron: Oh, oh, the Reformed. Reformed Judaism was founded in Germany from my understanding it was in Germany and they moved away from the real liturgical...here let me put it to you this way, the Orthodox are very, very much involved with observance; Torah observance and study of the Talmud and the Mishna and the Gemara, all these different writings. Okay? And you have different graduations of the Orthodox, but even the less, well you have the _____, Hasidim, and you have all these different people that dress in the long black coats and the hats and the payot. You know what I'm talking about?

Elizabeth: Yes

Aaron: Okay. They're the real, real Orthodox, and I actually knew some kids like that when I grew up. The Conservatives that I knew and the Conservative synagogue I was in, I got the impression that they were more observant, but they did it because they wanted to. It was a joy, not a task. But most of the Conservatives that I knew, while they were maybe a little more liturgically savvy than I was, they really weren't that much more observant in their faith or their walk. The Reformed are like, you know, way far left. They're more liberal. When I was a kid growing up, they were extremely liberal. Um, we didn't really study the Bible. We studied Jewish writings. We studied history. We studied Hebrew, and the rabbi would give a little sermon, tell a story about David or something like that. We sang, and we had Sunday school we went to and then we went to Hebrew school once a week, but it was not anywhere near liturgically structured. Matter of fact, I'd say most Reformed Jews, which even a lot of the Conservative Jews I know, they seem more Reformed to me, they're called...you're familiar with the term "Easter Christians" aren't you?

Elizabeth: Yes

Aaron: You ever heard the term "Rosh Hashanah Jews?"

Elizabeth: Um, no I haven't heard that particular term, but I have heard of Jews that only go to the high holidays.

Aaron: Yeah, that's right. Well, they don't even go to Yom Kippur. They just go to Rosh Hashanah service because that's more of a celebration. They get to hear the trumpet sound and all that, but Yom Kippur is the fast day and all that other good stuff and I didn't do that as a kid. And my father was not observant at all.

My mother was the one that signed me up for Sunday school and made sure I went and got the training, not my dad, and he was raised Orthodox. But he kind of rebelled from all that, and now, and Isaac Mayer Wise was the, ah, synagogue I went to was founded by Isaac Mayer Wise, it was the oldest Reformed synagogue west of the Alleghenies. He came from Germany and started it. But the Reformed movement came through...and it was just kind of like, "Gosh, we don't really have to wear those clothes. Let's dress like everybody else around us." You know? "Do we have to speak in Yiddish? Cause I want to speak German too. I want to associate with people." You follow me?

Elizabeth: Yeah

Aaron: They were more acclimated to the culture. Now I will tell you this though, from what I can understand and what I've seen the Reformed thought they, think...since I long ago left have decided that they might have swung too far away from tradition and they've come back to let's say they'll wear tallit. They'll wear yamakas. I mean we didn't wear kippas, little yamakas. We didn't wear tallit at prayer services. We didn't do that. I didn't do that till I was in that synagogue choir in the Conservative shul. I showed up one night for choir practice before the high holidays and they said, "Oh, I'm so glad you got here we needed a tenth." You know a minyan. You know what a minyan is?

Elizabeth: [coughing] Oh my goodness

Aaron: Do you know what a minyan is?

Elizabeth: A minion?

Aaron: Okay, Jewish people believe that you don't have a congregation for an official worship service until you have ten people.

Elizabeth: Oh! Yes, yes, I do know that.

Aaron: Okay, very good. And it's just like there's Messianic minyan, which is "two or three are gathered in My name there am I in their midst." Okay, but the Jewish people, you gotta have ten men. I walked in and he says, "Oh, you're our tenth. Get in here."

And I said, "I've never participated in the minyan!"

"It doesn't make any difference. You're Jewish aren't you?"

"Yeah"

So, you know, that's all they needed. They needed ten Jewish men. So you know that's the first time I was ever exposed to anything like that.

Elizabeth: And that was at the Conservative shul?

Aaron: Pardon? Yeah, right, I also have a friend of mine who eventually became the rabbi back in Conservative shul, and he and I would double date. When we were in high school, we were in the same Jewish fraternity together, but during the summer time, you know, I couldn't pick him up on Saturday night until the sun went down. So that made for a late date, a late start for the date, because he was Orthodox, and I wasn't. He's not allowed to drive. So I'd say, "Oh, as soon as Terry sets a double date with our ____ I guess it's my turn." So that meant, you know, it was a late night date. But, ah, ____ eventually became the

rabbi at that one synagogue I told you about my nephews were bar mitzvahed there but they wouldn't let me read from the Torah because I wasn't Jewish anymore. Okay, I'm probably giving you a whole lot more than you wanted, but there you have it.

Elizabeth: No, that's good. It helped me cause I always get thrown off by the terminology because I think in the Christian world Reformed is more strict and so...

Aaron: Oh! It's exactly the opposite.

Elizabeth: Right, so I always get it confused and am like, "Wait. Is it the Conservative or the Reformed Jews that are more strict?"

Aaron: Okay. Now, if you have to think of it, there's three major, to my knowledge there's three basic break ups. There's the Orthodox, and there's several different break ups in there. Then you have the Conservatives. Then you have, what they call the Reformed Jews. And there's even a new group. I don't know how much they're out there anymore, but they were called Reconstructionists. And they didn't believe anything really. They just believed Judaism for the sake of Judaism. You understand what I mean? Traditions for the sake of the traditions.

Elizabeth: Yes

Aaron: It's not godly centered. But to be perfectly honest with you, I don't think Reformed Judaism is either. So, but that's neither here nor there. Okay, what else you got?

Elizabeth: Alright, so, what were some worship practices or liturgies from either the Christian or Jewish world that were avoided, um, in your...?

Aaron: Oh, that we'll avoid now?

Elizabeth: Yeah, that were avoided in the formation of your congregation?

Aaron: Well we don't "lay on tefillin." Are you familiar with that expression?

Elizabeth: What? No. Can you say that again?

Aaron: Well, there's tefillin t-e-f-i-l-l-i-n. I don't feel the need to...no, what these are, you might have seen pictures of them, Jewish men will wrap bands around their foreheads with a little box in it. And they'll have bands around their arm with a little box. Well, you remember, "They shall be for frontlets between thine eyes." You know that Scripture?

Elizabeth: Yes

Aaron: That's the law of God. Well, they took it literally, and they had these little boxes with a piece of that Scripture in it and they stick it right between their eyes in a little leather box. And then they have one on their arm as well. And then you say your prayers. Your morning, afternoon and evening prayers, that's more Orthodox. We don't do things like that. We study the Bible. I don't really spend a whole lot of time studying the Talmud. Um, and we don't separate. We don't have the women separated from the men. I mean that's, these things should be pretty obvious to you. I doubt that we're, I don't know how much different we are from the congregation you go to. Um, I guess there's freedom that I have in the Lord and that I express in that regard. Now, to say what do I borrow from the Christian, not much anymore other

than the form, not casualness. I would prefer to say the freedom of worship that we have. I think that the Protestant church in the last couple hundred years did a good job of developing that. But you still want the reverence. I want the reverence. God might be my best friend, but He is still God. He's not my buddy, if you know what I mean.

Elizabeth: Right. There's that line. There's finding that balance.

Aaron: Yeah, and there's a tension too. I think that's a good terminology for our walk. There's a tension because we don't really understand everything. We're looking through a glass darkly, but then, the best part is ... face to face. Okay, ask me a question. I'll give you at least four answers.

Elizabeth: [coughing] Sorry. No this is great. Thank you. I really appreciate it. Now, I am looking at my clock and we're well over thirty minutes, are you still okay for time? I've got a few more questions here.

Aaron: Sure.

Elizabeth: Alright. So how did, you know, thinking back to when you first got involved in Messianic Judaism, how did the leaders from Christian circles and Jewish circles respond to Messianic Jews?

Aaron: Sometimes I hear people say that you're "rebuilding the middle wall of the partition." Have you heard that expression?

Elizabeth: Yes, but can you expound on it just so I make sure I understand it correctly.

Aaron: Okay, well, the rebuilding the middle wall of the partition is saying. Okay, in the Temple, there was the court of the Gentiles and then there was, and the Jewish men would go in a different place to worship. Okay? And, so, there was a partition there. And we don't worship together. We're not really the same fellowship. I bristle with that. Just because I want to be Jewish, and a lot of people think, "Well, you're just trying to put yourself back under the law again." And then they have the term 'Judaizer,' which is nowhere in the Bible. It's not in Galatians, if you look. You could call them legalists, but I wouldn't call them Judaizers. So, there were a lot of people and there are still people that believe that and don't want to have anything to do with Messianic congregations. And they're not always Gentile either, sometimes they're Jewish. Probably the most scathing rebuff I ever received was from a Jewish believer from Israel that I met that came and spoke at our congregation. And he thought we were trying to go back to be something that we shouldn't be. I don't see anywhere in the New Covenant where Paul said he's not a Jew anymore or Peter or anybody. So in that regard, on the other hand, a lot of people are interested in my background, they're interested in the Sedar, you know, you do Sedar demonstrations every year, and I definitely, I definitely find that I take a different perspective on the Scriptures because of, and it's not just because I know the Old Testament because unfortunately, you know it wasn't me that said this, Michael Card. Do you know who Michael Card is?

Elizabeth: Yes.

Aaron: Yeah, Michael Card one time was saying, "A lot of Christians read the Bible like this..." and he went to open it up and he put his hand way down in the Bible and turned past the Old Covenant, turned past the Old Testament, just read the New Testament. He said, "Too many Christians read their Bible like this. They just read the last small part." And yet, really the last small part is there to explain everything that came before. Okay, that's what it's there for. So a lot of people are interested in that, but I don't know how seriously they take it. I really don't know. Our Messianic congregations are not there to be a side show.

Okay? I don't want it to be that and I'm not there to entertain people because we're gonna do something different. We're there worshipping God and we're trying to pick up the mantle of the first century church. You know a lot of, there's a whole group, I know it's called a non-denomination but they call themselves a "first century church," but they don't know the first thing about the Jewish roots, okay? Now, mind you, I do want to tell you that when I do Sedars, I tell people, "You don't need to know any of this to be a part of the community of God and to be a child of God. You don't need to know any of this." But to understand the Jewish background, to understand the depth of the promise is to understand the depth of the love of God, you follow me? To understand the humanity of Jesus is to understand just what great length He went to identify with you. Okay? So that's why I enjoy talking about those things, and now I've been able to make it more of my weekly experience.

Elizabeth: Mmm-hmm. Building off of what you just said about, you know going back to first century, it actually has something to do with the next question, how did looking at, you know, reading scripture and looking at as much as we can what early Christian Jewish—I don't know if that's the right term, but anyway—um, expression was from Yeshua's era. How did that influence worship, liturgical decisions that you made or that were made in the rebirth of Messianic Judaism?

Aaron: Okay the first thing, when I was a brand new believer the fellow that was most important in my coming to the Lord, did not give me a New Testament. That was not the first thing I read. He gave me a translation called the *Paraphrased Epistles* by J.B. Phillips. And I read in Romans, the thing that really grabbed me is where Paul says the true Jew is one inwardly not outwardly. And some people take that to mean that "Well, if you're born again, you're a real Jew." No, I don't think that's what he was saying. I think he was trying to tell, you see there was a lot of, um... what's the word I'm looking for... disagreements on when Gentiles became believers what they were supposed to do. So you have the book of Galatians to tell them, they don't need to go under the law, none of us can keep the law. But there were a lot of Jews running around saying, "No, you got to keep the law." And I think Paul was saying, "Look, you guys in Rome, you want to know who the real Jews are? The ones who are inside Jews in their hearts, from the heart out. And they know about the traditions, the importance of traditions and the liturgies and things like that. They really understand it and they know what's really important. And the most important thing, obviously, is to follow the Lord and to live for God." And so that meant everything to me cause when I went to the Conservative shul I thought, "Well, maybe I can find my true Jewish-ness in understanding all these *accu tramal*, all these things that surround being Jewish." The way you dress; the way, what you eat; how you eat; how you go to synagogue; tafillian; tallit; kippa. But no, that's not where God wants you to be a Jew first. He wants you to be a Jew inside, and I believe He was speaking to me as a Jew. So how that influences me, well the New Covenant influences me in the freedom that I have as the thing that came to me as a new believer when I read. When Yeshua says, "You shall know the truth and the truth will make you free," and I started thinking about the freedom and it scared the living daylights out of me cause I experienced it. If you ever stood on a cliff and looked at the vast expanse before you and it's a frightening thing because you can't take it in and that's the kind of freedom we have in Him. Okay? Now, I'm not a hyper-grace guy. I'm just telling you that we have the freedom to obey God! That's really big. A lot of people don't even know how to obey God. They don't even know the god they're supposed to obey. And you and I have the freedom to obey Him and follow Him and live the rich adventuresome life that He wants to give to us. Now, so, and I kind of take that attitude toward the liturgy. I look at liturgy, Jewish liturgy, cause we're growing as a congregation. You know, like I told you, we just started our first Torah service and I think as we become more accustomed with certain liturgical things, we'll incorporate it a little more. But always, always the center is going to be the Lord. It has to be. You know, we parade the Torah around the congregation and people will come up and the men will kiss their tzitzit on their and touch the

Torah with it. But we explain to people this is not worshiping the book or the scroll this is an expression of the love that you have that God provided us with a way out and a way to live, okay? And the liturgies that we'll do and the things that we'll accept and the things that we'll do have to pass that test. Is it putting the Lord first? Okay and there are something, there's a lot of things that Jewish people do, you know, it's just tradition and some of its superstition. There's a lot of Jewish superstitions out there, and even have you ever heard somebody say, "Mazel tov?"

Elizabeth: Yeah

Aaron: You know what that means in Hebrew?

Elizabeth: No

Aaron: Good stars!

Elizabeth: Good stars?

Aaron: Good stars. "Mazel" is star. You know where they picked that up? A lot of people believe, scholars believe they picked that expression up when they were in the Babylonian captivity. Most of the Jews stayed in Babylon and the Babylonians were well known for their Astrology. The stars are very important to the Babylonians.

Elizabeth: Huh

Aaron: There's even some elements of the Passover Sedar. I think the egg; some people believe that the egg was put in there from Babylon because the egg was the symbol of fertility to the Babylonians. Now there's other scholars believe the egg was put in there—are you familiar with the Passover Sedar? And they usually have a hardboiled egg on the plate?

Elizabeth: I am, but we, um, our congregation, our rabbi's sedar he never has a hardboiled egg on the plate.

Aaron: Okay, well some people believe that it was Messianic Jews that put that in there. I read that somewhere. And then there's something else that the people believe that Messianic Jews, that the Jewish people just kind of incorporated and they didn't know it but it was the Messianic Jews that did it. Because the Messianic Jews until the revolt of, the siege of Bar Kokhba, they were part and parcel of the Jewish community. Okay? They didn't just walk away. They stayed. They stayed and worshiped and whatever. Of course the Temple was destroyed in 70 AD. Okay, once again I'm giving you more than you want.

Elizabeth: No, no, this is good. Um, now going back, earlier you mentioned that in the, when you first started going to Messianic Jewish fellowships they didn't look too much different from a Protestant church or a Baptist church...

Aaron: ...their worship type stuff, yeah. Not like churchy at all and then other churches you go to it was, you know, three hymns, a poem, and a sermon. We did a lot of singing. Probably forty-five minutes of singing.

Elizabeth: Oh awesome!

Aaron: Upbeat songs—even back then, even back in the early '70s. Lots of singing. But you know that was part of the Jesus Movement, the Jesus people. If you're familiar with that at all, that was just part of it.

Elizabeth: So how did, you know I was talking to Dr. Fischer and he was saying the same thing that when the movement first started there wasn't a whole lot of liturgy, traditional Jewish liturgy and so how did adding the liturgical practices, the traditional Jewish, some of them, um, was that development useful in the maturation of the Messianic Jewish identity?

Aaron: Yes, I would say that it is. I mean it. I mean there's always been Jewish believers. If you look in Romans, Paul says there's always going to be a remnant. There's always been Jewish believers, but for the most part they just, they were absorbed by the churches. So they really didn't have a very strong witness to their community, the Jewish community. Now, you know, now these people know, "Oh, those Messianics." You know, they know we're out there. And I think that the liturgy and the form of the worship further cemented that identity.

Elizabeth: Okay, cause it's something that a Jewish people can identify with because they've grown up in shul or have interacted with it in some form?

Aaron: Right, although I would say a Jewish person that's really being pursued by God, I don't know how comfortable it's really going to make them because God is turning their hearts over. How old were you when you became a believer?

Elizabeth: I was young. I was raised in a Christian home.

Aaron: Oh, okay, well that's good. Yeah, but even among my friends that have that they got to a certain time in their teens when they really, really moved their commitment up to a different level. And I think God was chasing after you, and you know how He worked on your heart. Okay, alright, I've deviated again. What else have you got?

Elizabeth: We're good. Okay, so changing gears a little bit, um getting specific on music, you mentioned that you led choir for years. Now in the Messianic Jewish movement in particular what were some musical influences that were drawn upon to develop their sound? Do you know?

Aaron: I think the first song book I saw was a Word of Life song book by Jack Wyrzten. And they had a lot more contemporary songs then. And in our congregation was Joel Chernoff. And Joel started writing music and we started doing a lot of his songs. And then there's some other guys out there and I can't remember their names. Hold on a second.

Elizabeth: Okay

Aaron: Do you have Jews for Jesus? Stuart Dauermann?

Elizabeth: Yep

Aaron: He wrote a lot of different things. And there's another guy and I can't remember his name, but he's done an awful lot of stuff. And we did a lot of his music. What was his name? Oh gosh!

Elizabeth: Was it Marc Chopinsky?

Aaron: Marc Chopinsky! There you go!

Elizabeth: Okay, yep, we do his stuff too.

Aaron: That was another guy. And I really can't think of anybody else. I know that sometimes we'd sing songs from other people, but I can't remember who they were. Keith Green maybe, who, by the way, was Jewish. Did you know that?

Elizabeth: He was Jewish? No, I didn't know that. I knew he was part of the Jesus Movement.

Aaron: His wife Melody was raised in a Jewish home. Keith's parents were in some astro-physical thing so he wasn't raised in a Jewish home at all, but Keith Green was Jewish. And when I first heard his music, I thought, "There's something. That guy's Jewish." I could just tell by the way his, well he was very upbeat, but he's very serious. I love his music, but I also love Michael Card and I love Fernando Ortega a lot.

Elizabeth: Oh, yes.

Aaron: Are you familiar with Fernando?

Elizabeth: Yes

Aaron: And I love Chris Rice. But you know they got to say something. The music isn't everything. They got to say something.

Elizabeth: Yep

Aaron: And these guys are poets. Do you like Peterson? What's his first name?

Elizabeth: Andrew, yes.

Aaron: He's excellent too. But if I want to get in the worship spirit, I walk and I listen to Fernando.

Elizabeth: Yeah, he has an amazing voice and he does really beautiful lyrics, like you said.

Aaron: He does. Well, and he also takes old hymns and makes them more palatable to the contemporary ear. And some of those hymns, they got a lot of great theology in them. I mean he does the best "O Sacred Head Now Wounded" I ever heard.

Elizabeth: Yeah, now we haven't talked too much about this, but, um, in a lot of congregations one of the first things people will notice is dance. Is Messianic dance something that you do at your...?

Aaron: Yes, we do. And I'll tell you when I first became a believer I had friends of mine that were Assembly of God and I'd see certain things and I thought, "Those people are just trying to get a lot of attention for themselves." And I used to tell people. I said, "Okay." Well, my first response was, you know, "We're going to have Messianic dance." I said, "Okay, fine, but I want it in the back of the congregation because I don't want it to be people who are looking to get attention for themselves. I don't want that to cater to that." But now, I believe I want it in the front because I think it really adds to worship. And I don't dance, but I love watching them.

Elizabeth: So why do you think that it is so important?

Aaron: I don't really completely understand. I just think I love the way they move and express themselves in praise to God. And I think it augments worship. It adds to the worship. And my wife will tell you the same thing, and she did not grow up in a dancing church. She grew up in a Christian church, an instrumental, but they were, she really had to learn a lot of new stuff when she married me.

Elizabeth: Oh goodness. And then changing gears a little bit from the music and dance, going more toward theology—how did theological understandings of emerging Messianic Judaism, you know, back in the day when you first started, got involved with the fellowships, how did that influence the liturgy of the Messianic congregations?

Aaron: I know I think that people are so consumed with, but the first thought might be to prove to the Jewish community that we are Jewish. Because, I mean you can be a Buddhist and be a Jew. They're called Jewbus. You can be an atheist and be Jew. But you can't be a believer and be a Jew. I'm really not so concerned with that now. I'm interested in the Messianic experience. But I think, one of the first initial phases was, "Hey, we're Jewish. We are Jewish." You know, it was just, my brother, people that I went to school with, they'd drop in to see my brother and they wanted to know if I was still one of those Jews for Jesus. Well, because that's easier to say than Messianic Jew. Okay? "Jews for Jesus" means that you've gone off the deep end. You're no longer Jewish. You're a Christian. You know, for some reason or another there's this huge chasm between Christianity and Judaism, which really is not true. Okay? So I don't know if I answered your question, but that's my answer.

Elizabeth: That was great. Thank you. And have you had experience internationally with Messianic Judaism? Have you traveled and visited other congregations around the world?

Aaron: Ah, not around the world. Well, I've met people who are in Messianic congregations in Israel. But no I have not really actively gone around the world. I mean I meet with rabbis from seven or eight different congregations every other month and we have a conference call tomorrow. Then I am a member of the IMCS. I was also in the startup meetings for the UMJC with Jeff, he and I went to the initial meetings. So I know that there are other Messianic congregations out there. I think there's even another small organization of association of Messianic congregations. And I do know people at different works, you know, Chosen People Ministries and, uh, the Christian Jew Foundation; different organizations. And I will tell you that when I went to the Messianic Jewish Alliance conference last year, which was 2013, it was the first time I had been to one since 1975. And it is obviously, a tremendous growth has taken place. I believe, uh, Michael Brown, you might find this book interesting, the *Real Kosher Jesus*, are you familiar with that?

Elizabeth: Um, I haven't read it, but I have heard of it.

Aaron: Okay, he states and I've heard other people say this, there's somewhere between 200 and 250,000 Jewish believers in the world right now. So there's a lot of growth that has taken place. And God is calling the movement and wanting it to be more visible and permanent than they've been since the first century. Period.

Elizabeth: So, in bouncing off that question, what are some similarities or differences that you have heard of as you've interacted with Israeli Messianic Jews? What are some similarities or differences that you've heard that exist between the American expression?

Aaron: Uh, I've heard they are considerably different. First of all, they can do everything in Hebrew. But they're not as; I don't think the Messianic Jewish congregations in Israel are as involved in liturgical observance as the American Messianic Jewish congregations. I'm pretty sure that's true. I mean they'll do some of it, but I don't think they're as actively involved in developing it and nurturing it along. But that's what I heard from other Messianic believers out of Israel.

Elizabeth: Okay. Wow, well thank you so much. That's actually the last question that I have.

Appendix H: Joshua Brumbach

Interview with Rabbi Joshua Brumbach on July 30, 2014

Elizabeth: Rabbi Joshua just to begin would you mind telling me a little about yourself and how you got into ministry?

Joshua: Sure, so, I obviously am a Jewish believer in Yeshua and I come from a family that are also believers in Yeshua so I'm actually a, I think like a third or fourth generation Jewish believer and being involved in some way in ministry was something that I always wanted to do. And it really wasn't until I, I actually was working in law enforcement when I kind of really realized that, this, that wasn't exactly what I needed to full-time be doing. Instead of ministry just being something on the side, I really wanted to become a rabbi. And so that led me then to begin my rabbinical studies and everything which led me even around the world, you know, living and working in Europe. So I was licensed as a rabbi and then working full-time even as early as '07 and then in 2010 I got my full ordination and I've worked with different congregations as an associate leader or as a consulting position and then I've been the senior rabbi of Ahavat Zion in Beverly Hills for three years. But I've also worked with, like, the Messianic Jewish Theological Institute and the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations, so I actually have quite a background in various types of ministry. I mean that's kind of a nutshell. I'm not sure if there's something more specific you're interested in or looking for.

Elizabeth: Um, yeah, I'm curious. You said that you're a third or fourth generation Jewish believer. So you're the first person I've interviewed that has said that, that wasn't raised in some other form of Judaism. So were you raised Christian? For lack of a better term. Or, um, did your parents, were they Messianic Jews? How would you describe that?

Joshua: Right. So I mean thirty, forty years ago there were only. Well, like our synagogue was started in 1974 and it was one of only seven congregations in the entire country. So for most Jewish believers being raised Messianic wasn't necessarily an option. Especially the congregational movement was still just getting started. So we were raised definitely more, for lack of a better term, Christian. We went to. We were actively engaged in a church when I was young and my parents tried to do a few Jewish things on the side, but it really wasn't a lot. It wasn't a strong sense of Jewish identity. I was kind of one of the, of my siblings, I was the one who really wrestled with by the time I got into junior high and high school, "What does this look?" You know what I mean? That really asking the questions. Not so much questioning Yeshua, but, "If we're Jewish, why don't we live a Jewish life?" or whatever. My parents tried to sort of encourage me the best they could, but I don't think they knew what to do. So I started to get involved in the Jewish community, the _____ Jewish community where we lived. I grew up in a small town so there was only a 1_____ Jewish community when I was in high school and every month or so they would bring out a rabbi who would read services and stuff. And I started to get very involved in that. And it was probably, when I was probably a, I think a sophomore or junior in high school so this would have been around 1993 or 1994, I heard about Messianic Judaism and kind of started to get connected with the Messianic Jewish movement and then in 1997, I relocated to Los Angeles to begin my, formerly my Messianic Jewish, well my studies to become a rabbi through a Messianic Jewish context. So I originally started to get involved in the wider Jewish community before I even really got active in the Messianic Jewish community and so that's been really helpful and to this day I been a part of my continuing to be very involved in the wider Jewish community, not just the Messianic Jewish community, but I'm still very active in the Jewish community as a whole.

Elizabeth: Wonderful! So how would you define Messianic Judaism?

Joshua: I am a part of the segment of the Messianic community that believes that Messianic Judaism is or should be a movement within Judaism, predominately by Jews and predominately for Jews and intermarriage.

Elizabeth: So could you expound on that just a little bit. You're the first one to kind of phrase it that way. "A movement within Judaism" is that as opposed to a movement in-between Judaism and Christianity or a movement within Christianity?

Joshua: Right, so I mean I'm not sure how familiar you are with Messianic Judaism, if you were raised in a Messianic community...

Elizabeth: I was. I was raised in a Messianic community in Upstate New York.

Joshua: Oh! Okay, so then you're pretty familiar with a lot of the stuff they have. As you know, the Messianic Jewish community, er, let me back up and basically say what most people call Messianic is actually quite broad, right? When I use that term, just for the sake of transparency and so that we're on the same page. When I usually use the term 'Messianic Jewish,' I mean the mainstream Messianic Jewish movement. So that would include primarily the two major movements, not exclusive to but the major—the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America, the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations, as well as the affiliated congregations that make up the International Messianic Jewish Alliance. And there are other, you know, there's like the Association of Messianic Congregations and there's a few others that I would consider a part of that mainstream and in some ways you could even connect the mission side of things. Even though there might be differences of observance and theology and such. But I would include in the main stream, you know, for the sake of discussion, even, a little bit though I'm hesitant too, Jews for Jesus or Chosen People Ministries or whatever. The problem is that when most people hear the term 'Messianic' like that's what I mean by it. Is kind of the mainstream Messianic Jewish movement and then there are also obviously streams of thought even within the mainstream movement. But the problem is that to those on the outside the term 'Messianic' is also used by like the Hebrew roots, you know the Christian Hebrew roots movement by kind of One Law and Sacred Name groups and stuff like that. So people who are, like, clearly on the fringes and don't necessarily represent mainstream Messianic Judaism but, so the problem of "What does that mean? What is Messianic?" is people are definitely trying to sort of figure this out and define it. In fact, the only people that I know who have really come up with a formal declaration of what is Messianic Judaism is the UMJC, the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations, that several years ago actually came up with a definition of what is Messianic Judaism and actually uses that in their guiding documents. So it makes decisions based on what it defines as Messianic Judaism. And so I can only send you a link to that statement, but it's on the UMJC website.

Elizabeth: Okay, I'll have to look that up thank you.

Joshua: So what congregation did you grow up in?

Elizabeth: I grew up in Beit Shalom in Utica, New York, uh, Rabbi Stephen Galiley and his wife Deborah

Joshua: Oh yeah

Elizabeth: So you know the Galileys then?

Joshua: I do. I'm like acquainted with them. I would say.

Elizabeth: It's one of those small but spread out movements so everybody knows everybody is what I'm finding, which is awesome

Joshua: And Stephen's actually been to our congregation before.

Elizabeth: Oh okay! Probably when he was working on his...

Joshua: His doctorate, yeah.

Elizabeth: Okay, wonderful. So, what do you believe are important cultural markers in Messianic Jewish worship? Someone walking into a worship service what are some of those things they're going to notice right away that should be different?

Joshua: Well, I think for me a Messianic Jewish congregation, you know, and there's flexibility I think even between a Messianic congregation versus a Messianic synagogue. Even though they basically mean the same thing, but I think primarily it depends on what you mean and who is the person walking into the Messianic synagogue. If it's a Jew walking into a Messianic Jewish congregation, then I think it should be familiar in some way. Obviously I do believe as a Yeshua believing movement there are going to be aspects that might be different than what many Jews are used to and also it depends on the background of the Jewish person.

Elizabeth: What are in general some things that a Jew walking into a Messianic Jewish service might see that is familiar?

Joshua: Some sense of liturgy, you know, that is familiar. A sense of Jewish space and I mean Jewish space of not necessarily what's hanging on the walls and everything but that it feels Jewish to a Jewish person. So and that can mean something different for everybody, but, you know, I don't think it's so much it exactly it has to have this particular formula, but I do think there's some basics that if it's a Jewish worship service there should be some type of Jewish liturgy. There should be, you know, ideally other Jews there that the person would, you know, relate to. That there would be other kinds of Jewish practices so whether the observance of the holidays or life cycles or, you know, if they're Messianic Jews in the congregation that, you know, maybe during the service that somebody is wearing a tallit for example or a Torah service, just some kind of sense that this is Jewish space. And so for somebody who's not Jewish, who's maybe a Gentile walking into a Messianic congregation, there should be, you know, I think some sense of otherness, little bit. And slight unfamiliarity only because they're, the idea is they're walking into different cultural space. Not that that's bad or not that that should be offputting but it should give them a sense of like, "This doesn't, I'm not necessarily familiar with it." What you don't want, which is what Messianic Judaism has largely been, is for Jews to walk in and say, "This is crazy." You know?

Elizabeth: Right. Right. They should be identifying with it.

Joshua: Definitely we've kind of settled for a little more, what I would call "Jew-*ish*" its more -ish than even Jew, you know, on the Jew side [stated tongue in cheek with laughter resulting following]

Elizabeth: [coughing] So, what are some aspects of traditional Jewish liturgical practices that were integrated into Messianic Judaism? You mentioned a Torah service, um, are there any other specific things?

Joshua: Well, I mean again, how liturgical it is depends on the congregation; where it's located; the kind of Jews, or just intermarried couples, or whoever they're attracting to a congregation. You know, in an area that's not going to have a large Jewish community, obviously a congregation shouldn't pretend like it's out

to reach Orthodox Jews. You know what I mean? That's why I chuckle when you see in Montana somebody advertized themselves as a Orthodox Messianic congregation. Its like, "Yeah right, you and the no Jews in the congregation." It's like don't pretend you're something that you're not. But at the same time I think that if you're in an area, well, like for example, our congregation just celebrated its fortieth anniversary. We're the oldest Messianic synagogue on the West Coast and it was actually started as a Messianic synagogue, meaning it was started as a place for, where else are Jews going to go who became followers of Yeshua? And because it's in a community of 600,000 Jews and in the middle of a very Jewish community, it's also always been a little more Jewish oriented in the sense of the make-up and the style of the service. So we actually, we have a cantor and we use the prayer book. It's a liturgical service. And I'm not saying everybody has to be that way, I'm just saying, it depends on the community. So but I do think some sort of basics, you know, the basic elements of a Jewish service. So there should be the Shema. There should be the Barchu. There should be, you know, some basic familiarity of the congregation, or at least the leadership to, you know, the basics of Jewish worship. You know, that things are in the right order; that the Barchu is not at the end of the service and stuff like that. If you're gonna do it, at least follow the basic framework of where it should go in the service and so on and so forth.

Elizabeth: Now, you mentioned something I can't off the top of my head think what it is—the Barchu?

Joshua: Yeah, the Barchu is the call to worship in a Jewish service. It's a main staple in any Jewish service, or at least any morning or evening service.

Elizabeth: Okay. Wonderful. Um, so you mentioned that in, just kind of zoning in on specific things that your synagogue does, cause, as you said it really does depend on the congregation, for example, we don't have a cantor at our service, at our synagogue. So what are some other aspects that your congregation, aspects of traditional liturgy that your congregation uses due to location and such?

Joshua: Well, as I mentioned like our congregation is liturgical so we don't have, like, what some people would call like a contemporary worship part of the service. So it follows the basic framework and structure of the Jewish service. So we begin with a couple parts of the service called bar_____, the introductory prayer. And then it moves into the section of what's called the _____, the Psalms of Praise, which is, you know, ninety percent, you know just straight Scripture. And we're sometimes creative in the way that we approach these things. So our service even though it's more traditional, it's also at the same time very creative. So we will do, you know, it's very musical at the same time that it's liturgical. So then it follows the structure of then the Psalms of praise that then lead into the call to worship, the bar'khoo, and so there's accompanying blessings and the Shema and then the mi chamocho, the section "Who is like you, oh Lord among the gods?" And then the Amidah, which is like, the Amidah and the Torah service are the central parts, the, kind of, sort of climax of the Jewish service and so we do the Amidah and the Torah service. And then after the Torah service and the Torah's put away, that's when we do, I do a short sermon and then we do the concluding prayers. You know, the Alenu, and the mourners Kaddish. So it follows the main structure. It's a little bit more abbreviated than, um, like a Conservative synagogue or something but it follows the basic elements. And you know, again, how much and how little is gonna depend on the congregation, but I do think that every sort of Messianic Jewish congregation must be, the leadership needs to be familiar and intentional in the way that it constructs it's service. You know, so that it follows the patterns of Jewish prayer and also that that's taught and why it's important and why it matters and so on and so forth.

Elizabeth: Sure. So on the other side of that, what are some contemporary Christian worship or service practices that were integrated into Messianic Judaism? You mentioned that you give a sermon after the Torah service. That's not traditional in Jewish circles is it?

Joshua: Yeah, it is. Synagogues do sermons also.

Elizabeth: Oh, they do. Oh okay

Joshua: Yeah, um, because, I mean. Every Messianic congregation is different. Right? So I view Messianic Judaism as kind of a spectrum. So on one side, and again this isn't a value judgment it's just a ... statement. Right?

Elizabeth: Observation? Yeah, I gotcha.

Joshua: I think Messianic Jewish congregations and Messianic Judaism as a whole falls on a spectrum. So on one side of the spectrum, you can say, "Congregations that are more Jewishly influenced" and then on the other side of the spectrum would be "Congregations that are more, kind of, influenced by contemporary Christianity." And so depending on where a congregation falls on that spectrum will depend on how much influence is on that congregation. You know, so it all depends. Like in our congregation there are, you know I don't want to say that there's like no Christian influence on our congregation but at the same time even the way that we try to bring Yeshua into the service, and I try very hard to like, we're even experimenting with sort of New Testament inspired liturgy and stuff like that. So that is brought out. One example would be that it is our custom that following the Amidah, like the central prayer, often called the "standing prayer" during the service we either recite the Lord's Prayer or something similar. So other kind of New Testament inspired piece of liturgy afterwards and part of that is because, well, that gets into a lot of scholarship. So like a lot of scholars believe that the Lord's Prayer is actually sort of at the time of Yeshua there were certain prayers that rabbis, well, teachers would teach their disciples and a lot of scholars think that the Lord's Prayer is actually an abbreviation of the weekday Amidah. And so because of its connection to the Amidah, and also because in rabbinic literature there's a lot of discussions that after the Amidah was said that this was the time for personal supplication and also the times that particular students of a particular rabbi would recite the prayers that their rabbi taught them. So because of this, we say, "Obviously we should do the same thing." So following the Amidah, like, we should recite these words that are inspired by our own rabbi and teacher. And so we either recite versions or variations on the Lord's Prayer or the Beatitudes. So for example, there's a version of the Beatitudes that we do that was actually written by a Christian musician and it was originally off of a Christian album, but it is a piece that we view as kind of neutral, right? It's not a piece that you would specifically call Christian other than the fact that it's the words of Yeshua, but, you know, it doesn't necessarily reflect a purely Christian theology or however you want to put it. The version is literally just the lyrics of the text itself. So it's literally just the text, and so things like that we're comfortable bringing into the service because even if it's not strictly to the text, if it kind of, we don't just sort of haphazardly throw in, even though we're trying to incorporate Yeshua in many ways and bring it up more within our service, we're also very intentional in the way that we incorporate it. Recognizing that in the entire service, Jewish service wasn't just like haphazardly put together it actually is a narrative arch and the whole thing involves this idea of sacred drama. That we reenact and we participate in the telling of Israel's story and the participation of, you know the events to Israel's history as we go through the service. And so even when we insert certain things like the reason why we do particular Yeshua centered liturgy after the Amidah is because of the different reasons or when we bring other aspects into the liturgy it's meant to sort of correspond to the story that is being told already. Um, so anyway, so I think that in that ... sense there are things that from contemporary Christian culture

that we sort of sometimes intentionally incorporate but with a, also with a certain sensitivity, if that makes sense.

Elizabeth: Okay, yeah that does, and so an example was the song that you use...

Joshua: There's a song. I think it's actually called the "Beatitudes" and it was written by a woman named Michelle Bloom [not sure about spelling], who knows whether or not she's Jewish, but I forget the album or whatever that it's off of but it's a Christian album but because it's just strictly text, it's just the Scripture itself...yeah bringing into the service. I don't know if that's helpful and again I'm not saying that's the right way or the only way to do things. I realize there are also congregations that, um, very heavily incorporate different aspects of contemporary Christian culture and music and stuff like that into the service and it's just sort of, you know, there are different ways to do it.

Elizabeth: Right. Definitely, so on the flip side of this, what are some liturgical worship practices from either the Christian or Jewish world that were intentionally avoided in the formation of a Messianic Jewish service? Of yours, let's just talk about yours first and then...

Joshua: Uh, again, our service was intentionally meant to be built as a synagogue and so it probably purposefully sort of avoided and at various points throughout its forty years its obviously morphed into the various kind of things but it's sort of always been a little more intentional about avoiding sort of more a Christian approach to the worship than, sort of in favor of a more Jewish approach. So, I guess one thing, let me give you an example, is we do not incorporate communion into our service, which is a little surprising to people but it doesn't mean that we don't do a type of communion. We call it _____ Mashiach, the remembrance of Messiah. We have its own service that we do on a quarterly basis. We do that specifically for people and part of that is because...where we're located and the kind of congregation we have, we're one of only a handful of congregations that are predominately Jewish so our congregation is eighty percent Jewish. And we always, always have Jewish people here who are not believers and so because of a sense of sensitivity to the Jewish people who are not believers and who are not, it's not just like a fictitious idea in our case, we really always do have ... [phone cut out] sometimes uncomfortable, um, not to participate when we take the Lord's Supper of communion if they're not believers in Yeshua. So you know so in order to sort of avoid that and for sensitivity and stuff like that, we don't do it during the main service. We do it at another time.

Elizabeth: So it has its own service in and of itself?

Joshua: Right, so it has its own liturgy and stuff like that that we're just sort of toying around with, like how to bring it back into a little bit more of Jewish space.

Elizabeth: Okay

Joshua: So it's not that we don't do it. But it's just, I give it as an example of something that might be pretty common within most forms of Christianity, especially more traditional forms of Christianity that would be surprisingly absent within our service, um.

Elizabeth: Now, were there any liturgies from the Jewish world that were intentionally avoided?

Joshua: Mmm, not really, it's not that there might not be something that we didn't look at but we haven't really, hasn't really been an issue as far as liturgy goes.

Elizabeth: Okay, so what was the response from leaders in the, I guess this might be going back a few years, but maybe even till today, leaders from the Christian world and the Jewish world, what was their response to the formation of these Messianic Jewish synagogues and congregations?

Joshua: I mean obviously it's. I think initially. Well, I mean it's mixed, right? So, obviously there are negative responses to Messianic Judaism from both the Christian side and the Jewish side. I think there's more negativity on the Jewish side although that's not always true. So it just varies. I think it depends on the local church community and the relationship that the local Messianic congregation has with the wider Jewish community and so on and so forth. You know but there's been, obviously there are very anti-, for example on the Jewish side because that's the side I'm more comfortable talking about, you have groups like Jews for Judaism and other sort of what we would call "anti-missionary" groups that are clearly not just upset about Messianic Judaism, but are literally formed in a response and a reaction to Messianic Judaism. And then, but then at the same time you have within the Jewish world there have been a number of books and articles written recently of people who view Messianic Judaism quite positively and feel that Messianic Judaism should be included within the wider Jewish community. So you know and obviously the same thing goes on the Christian side that there's been, you know, especially in recent years a very positive response towards Messianic Judaism especially within parts of the Evangelical and especially the charismatic forms of Christianity. But then there's also been those who are quite skeptical or anti-. For example, John MacArthur is very anti-Messianic Judaism.

Elizabeth: Okay, I didn't realize that. So, it's very mixed. Um, now, how did, you know, in studying Scriptures and going back to the first century, if you will, how did that early Jewish cultural identity and understanding of Jewish practices from the first century, from Yeshua's era, how did that influence liturgical decisions in the rebirth of Messianic Judaism? Is that an issue or question you can speak to?

Joshua: Um, I think it's something that we obviously are connected to by this idea that in effect it's what inspires most of us this idea that, you know, we're directly connected to these, to the early Jewish believers of the first couple centuries in that we, you know, and I think in many ways, we need to sort of correct ideas, you know who the Messiah is and everything based on what the ideas that existed within the Jewish world then. However at the same time, I think that there are people who view Messianic Judaism as supposed to be just sort of like a recreation of biblical Judaism which is, just the idea is actually quite problematic. So I mean we don't view ourselves as trying to recreate first century Judaism and that's not, I mean, the Jews who were the followers of Yeshua, they were just living the way Judaism was then, right? And I think ... the thing that we're doing now. So we don't view ourselves as a return to the first century or whatever, we recognize not only is that impossible, but that would actually then ignore like two thousand years of Jewish history. And you can't just go back and recreate something that doesn't exist or necessarily should you because again, like we believe that God has been at work within the Jewish community, just like you do within the Church over the last two thousand years. Does it mean that we agree with every single last decision? Of course not, but it does mean that we view ourselves as part of or related to both of these historic communities in various ways. And so, we view ourselves as, you know, we view ourselves as also taking seriously not just what Judaism was like in the first century, but, you know, the way Judaism has evolved to the present age.

Elizabeth: Okay, thank you so much that's, um, yeah, that was a really, really helpful answer to that question. I appreciate it.

Joshua: Sure

Elizabeth: I am looking at the time though, and we are thirty-five minutes in and I have about four to five questions left. Is that okay?

Joshua: Yeah, that's fine with me. If that's fine with you, it's fine with me.

Elizabeth: Okay, I just wanted to make sure.

Joshua: I know that you've been also trying to get this done for a while and so I want to be, you know, not only ... you need to get this done but also since we're doing it, let's just do it.

Elizabeth: Yes, thank you. I do appreciate that. Um, yes, the deadlines are approaching quickly. Now, it sounds like you're congregation is unique from the others that I've spoken with. You said right from the beginning, it was called a synagogue and it was, the services were designed after synagogue practices, is that, did I catch that correctly?

Joshua: Yeah, right

Elizabeth: So, whereas other leaders that I've spoken with, most of them started with less liturgy and kind of added that later and so that's kind of where this question is coming from. So it may or may not apply to your congregation, but how do you think the liturgical practices that were developed and began being incorporated into, well not developed by Messianic Judaism but, you know, brought back in, incorporated, how is that useful in the maturation of the movement as a whole and especially the Messianic Jewish identity?

Joshua: So, you know that's actually a complex and it's actually a very good question. Let me answer the first part first and then we'll unpack that a little bit more. The first thing that I would say is like our congregation also is, even though it started off liturgical, it is more liturgical than when it first started. But we already started with a prayer book and stuff like that and part of it was because we were still part of, early enough when the idea that Messianic Jewish congregations should primarily exist for Jewish followers of Yeshua, like over time, as the movement changed, even though people kind of gave lip service to this idea that we exist to reach Jewish people with the message of Yeshua. That really wasn't practically what ended up happening. And so I think the shape of congregations that have been formed in the last twenty years or so have taken on that different approach. So they weren't really geared or designed to reach Jews. They were designed to reach Christians with the Jewish roots of the New Testament. So it's really much more Jewish, it's really more Jewish roots focused than it is than on being a Jewish community for Yeshua. If that makes sense? I hope that makes sense. So that idea because it was one of these very early communities shaped from the beginning the type of community that it would be, you know, in the focus and how it would do things and its style of worship and so on and so forth. Um, it was started during this whole, as much of the modern Messianic Jewish phenomenon was birthed out of is the Jesus Movement, you know, the early '70s, late '60s, early '70s when all of the sudden thousands of Jews are coming to faith in Yeshua and where did they go? Right? So our congregation was established in '73. I said it was '74, but it was actually '73 to meet this need. To meet this need of now all of the sudden, you know, in L.A. we have hundreds of Jews coming to believe in Yeshua, now where do they go? You know, some people, of course, were able to be easily absorbed into the wider Christian community, but a lot of people had a much harder time being able to do that for whatever cultural and theological reasons. And so the only option for them was the Messianic synagogue and so that's how our congregation was formed.

So why it's important is for a few things. Number one, it's important to incorporate Jewish liturgy and prayer into our service because, number one, it shapes our thinking. The reason why liturgy is important is

because when you recite things and you do things and you enact things, it causes it to become part of you, right? This is why we say “memorize Scripture.” By repetition and everything it becomes a part of you, and so by liturgy whether its Jewish liturgy or Christian liturgy, it frames a way of thought. So you actually think, you come to think in the way and the process of the prayers. That’s number one, is that it shapes the way that you think. Number two, is that you participate in Israel’s story in Jewish liturgy. As I mentioned earlier, Jewish liturgy is this idea of sacred drama, that we don’t just do things because it’s a tradition and we’ve always done it this way, it’s because we’re reenacting the events of, not only of Creation, but also of Israel’s story. So the liturgy traces Israel’s experience. So it starts off with this ... Creation. It takes us into the redemption from Egypt, through the Red Sea, to receiving the Torah through the Torah service. And then, hints, at the end of the service, hints of the Messianic age. So it tells Israel’s story and experience and gives us a hope for the future and the Messianic age in the story that we tell. So that’s number two, is you participate in Israel’s experience. The third reason is because it connects us to our people around the world. You know, when I get up in the morning and I put on tefillin and I put on my tallis, my prayer shawl, and I open up my Siddur, one of the things I think about is that while I’m doing this, there are Jews all over the world doing the exact same thing. And when I first moved to Hungary in two thousand, well, let’s see it would have been 2001, I think it was. Before I spoke Hungarian or anything, I went to a synagogue service there. I didn’t understand the sermon because it was in Hungarian and stuff. And I had a difficult time communicating, but you know what I could do? I could pray with my people. Like, I was able to participate in the service because I knew the liturgy. You know, at that time it was maybe a little more liturgy than I was a little bit familiar with, but at the same time, it was familiar. And that’s the thing, is that it not only connects us through the past of our people and the future of our people, it connects us to the present. So I can go to any synagogue anywhere in the world and I can pray along with them. They might do things a little bit differently that I might not be familiar with and I might not be able to understand things like the sermon or instructions that are given in the local language but, you know, by reciting things in Hebrew, you’re connected to the Jewish people everywhere. So I think those are like three major reasons why it’s beneficial to pray the liturgy. And I guess you could say a fourth one. A fourth one, even though I don’t think it should be the number one reason why a congregation incorporates liturgy, but I do think it is an important reason is that it creates a safe place and familiar place for Jewish people who are seeking Yeshua. Um, you know what I mean? I think that Jewish observance is important in and of itself and I think that we should really shy away from the idea that the only value Jewish observance has is for evangelistic purposes. But at the same time, because then it’s not real. You know, people see through that kind of a false veneer but when it is meaningful to you and everything then it’s meaningful to people who walk into that kind of a setting. So from that sense, I also think it’s important for Jewish people whether, you know, depending on, a lot of Jewish people are not even really observant, but still it’s somewhat familiar and recognizably Jewish. And I think that’s also important.

Elizabeth: Wonderful. Thank you. Wow. Thank you. Now changing gears a little bit, actually, a lot a bit, um, what were some musical influences that were drawn upon in the development of Messianic Jewish music? Now you mentioned that in your congregation you reflect more of the synagogue service. You don’t do contemporary Christian music. Do you do music from the Messianic Jewish movement or even stay away from that?

Joshua: Yeah, we do. So if we’re talking about the wider what you would call Messianic Jewish music obviously there’s been a number of influences on Messianic Jewish music as a whole. You know, if you’re talking about, I think we’re both familiar with Paul Wilbur, Joel Chernoff, you know, all the different types of Messianic music. You know, there’s been both Christian contemporary influences on the Messianic movement as well as like the kind of Catskills, uh, the kind of Catskills, I don’t even know what you want

to call it. That kind of culture on, you know when there used to be all the resorts and places up in the Catskills and that style of music and that kind of, you know, Broadway kind of. Anyway, so that had a big influence, believe it or not on Messianic Jewish music. Also like klezmer still the old school oompa oompa oompa kind of influence on Messianic music. So there's been both Jewish and Christian influences and wider cultural influences and I don't think that's necessarily, actually a bad thing. I think music is music and even Jewish liturgical music has always been influenced by the culture it happens to and the time in which it inhabits. So, you know, and that's true of also Christian music whether their hymns or whatever. Most people, you know, fundamentalists Christians are shocked to find out some of the melodies of some of their most sacred hymns are originally pub drinking songs, you know? And I think that there's also been for most people want to pretend like their religion is so untainted by other faith traditions but the reality is throughout history there's been great influence not only on the Jewish community towards the Church but even in more recent centuries on the Church towards Judaism. And so melodies and things like were very much influenced by Christian tradition. So anyway, so it's not a surprise that more contemporary forms of Messianic music have been influenced by all kinds of things especially, you know, kind of the more Catskills and klezmer and contemporary worship. But in many cases in the last, in more recent, well, I would say in the last decade, you also have a very strong Israeli now influence on Messianic music. So instead of the oompa oompa oompa, you have dant dant dant [with harmonic intervals] like the kind of more Middle Eastern beats. So you know and it will always change. Who knows what it will be fifty years from now, if the Messiah doesn't come.

Elizabeth: Of course. So, now one thing, you're congregation, well synagogue excuse me.

Joshua: I mean it's still a congregation either way.

Elizabeth: Do you have Messianic Jewish dance as a part of the service? Or no since that's not...

Joshua: We don't. We're one of the, probably the minority of congregations that don't incorporate dance into the service.

Elizabeth: Okay, and may I ask why that is?

Joshua: I think it's older than Messianic dance. The congregation, well maybe they probably in various ways, I don't know, tried to incorporate it but because sort of the kind of Messianic dance that most of us are familiar with in Messianic congregations is probably twenty or thirty years old, our congregation is forty years old. So and plus, you know because it's sort of influenced more of like the Jewish service. A traditional Jewish service does not have a choreographed dancing in it. You know, in more Hasidic forms of the synagogue, more like reformed and stuff you might get spontaneous dancing. Where people through an exciting song or something might get up and do the hora but it's not like as choreographed as it is in many Messianic congregations. So I mean, I used to be a part of a, I have been a part of congregations that did incorporate dance. And this is actually the first Messianic congregation I've been a part of that does not. So, you know, but then again our congregation is, as you mentioned already, kind of unusual. It is a little bit more, you know, probably one of the most traditional congregations and when I say "traditional" I don't mean Orthodox, I just mean what it's like in the wider Jewish community in the sense of. In the Messianic Jewish community, we tend to think of if we use a prayer book or whatever that that's Orthodox. But that's not the case in the wider Jewish community. Your most progressive congregation still uses a prayer book, you know what I mean? Whether it's Reformed, whether it's Jewish Renewal, whether it's Reconstructionist, it's not only Orthodox or Conservative synagogues that use a prayer book. So you know, so in that case, yes we're liturgical and we use the prayer book and everything, but that doesn't mean we're

like trying to be Orthodox. It just means, it sort of reflexes what is just sort of common in the wider Jewish community.

Elizabeth: Mmm-hmm, now, the dance has kind of served as an identifier for Messianic Jews in some ways. What do you think the importance of that is? Of Messianic Jewish dance as a part of services? Cause the majority of congregations do use it...

Joshua: Mmm-hmm, I mean obviously I think that there, definitely when it's done. There are intentional ways to use dance in order to, you know, to supplement the worship of the congregation and actually it is part of the worship of the congregation and so you know I definitely think that there is room and a place for Messianic dancing. You know, and historically, actually, biblically dance was a big part of the biblical text. Even in the worship celebrations of Israel and the Bible describes the, you know, some of the prophets would prepare themselves through dance to receive the word of HaShem and stuff like this. So, anyways, so it's definitely, I'm not anti-dance even though we don't really incorporate it within our own services. So I think for some people it depends on the congregation. It's very meaningful to some people when that's a big part of the expression of their community.

Elizabeth: [long pause] Are you still there?

Joshua: Yeah

Elizabeth: Oh, okay sorry! I thought I'd lost you.

Joshua: No, still here. I don't know really what else to add.

Elizabeth: No, no that's great. Thank you. Now, again this is a little bit switch of a gear, but um how did the theological understanding of Messianic Judaism as it was forming and stuff how did that influence the liturgical choices that were made in congregations?

Joshua: So obviously, what's interesting about the Messianic Jewish community and before the modern Messianic Jewish movement you had the Hebrew Christian movement of the early 1900s and the 1800s and the way that this sort of Jewish believing community formed was actually not out of Judaism but out of Christianity. So there's kind of been this evolving of the Messianic Jewish community out of Christianity to—we're actually doing something that is almost impossible, like I told you something earlier that almost seems contradictory right? That I believe Messianic Judaism at least should be if not is a form of Judaism so how do you take something that was birthed out of Christianity and make it Jewish? So, that's obviously a challenge, but I think what you're seeing and what you've heard from various types of Messianic leaders and various congregations is that as the Messianic Jewish community has been wrestling with "What does it and should it mean as a Jewish movement and as a Messianic Jewish community? What does that mean and what should that look like and how should that shape our worship experience?" and so obviously I think that our theologies are shaping in many ways by increase of liturgy and things like that because we're recognizing that, um, as our thinking changes then our practice needs to change as well.

Elizabeth: Okay, so kind of talking about that that maturation process of going from looking like a Christian, just a Christian movement with Jewish trappings to ...

Joshua: Right. I think a lot of ways that has been a challenge is that we've basically covered Christianity with a tallis in many ways and put a kippa on it and say like, "Look! Here's Messianic Judaism!" And it's like "Okay..." Its more -ish than anything else. So, you know, and again I want to be very careful that I

don't sounds like condescending or whatever, you know, I'm obviously committed to this movement and believe that even people that are at different stages or have different positions than I do, I want to be very careful about not sounding judgmental towards them, but I do think that as a whole slowly, slowly, slowly people are beginning to see that being Jewish is more than a cultural thing. Its more than just throwing in a little bit of Yiddish and some cultural practices that, "Hey listen if we believe that God did not sever the covenant between God and Israel that there are still covenantal responsibilities and things like that that Jews especially have as followers of Yeshua. Then what does that mean? And what does that look like?" When it, and I think that that's something that the movement as a whole is sort of, at least the mainstream of the Messianic Jewish movement you know, the part of the movement that contains Jews in it is wrestling with, like "What does this look like? And how should that shape who we are and how we practice our Yeshua faith as Jews?" And I think it's sort of a natural progression that it will begin to look and feel more Jewish.

Elizabeth: Gotcha. Wonderful. Alright, so moving in on the last question, it's kind of in two parts. Um, you've mentioned already that you were overseas with the Messianic Jewish movement for a while? Um, how long? Where, I guess? Could you expound on what that looked like for you?

Joshua: Yeah, so, the very beginning of 2001 to February of, so it was like the, literally the first week of January of '01 to February of '02, I lived in Budapest, Hungary. And I was there working with a whole network of congregations. At the time, the network was called Shalom Network International and, you know, if you're familiar with, I'm sure you know who Jonathan Bernis is. So before Jonathan Bernis was the head of Jewish Voice, he was leading a congregation in New York, you know, in...my brain just shut down...in Rochester I think right? It's called Hear O Israel, um, Shema Yisrael. Yeah I think it's in Rochester. Anyway, he felt this great burden as the Soviet Union was collapsing, or whatever you want to call it, coming to an end, and all these former Soviet Union or Soviet blocked countries were opening up that the message of Yeshua needed to be taken particularly to the Jewish communities of these places. So he started to do all of these festivals that he called the "Hear O Israel" festivals. And he ended up turning his congregation in New York over to David and Sandy Levine because he was so busy. And as a result of all these thousands and thousands of people coming to these festivals and thousands of people becoming believers in Yeshua that a whole network of congregations were started in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union and then later even in like South America then in Ethiopia. And then there were also the MJI, the Messianic Jewish Bible Institutes were also started out of these Hear O Israel festivals and stuff. So but then when David, not David, when Jonathan Bernis after the death of, I forget who started Jewish Voice, but then when Jonathan Bernis went to Jewish Voice things sort of then didn't really happen with the festivals and so each of those kind of ministries that were created as a part of the festivals became their own, kind of became distinct. So like the congregations became their own network of congregations. The MJI became its own thing, Messianic Jewish Bible Institutes and stuff like that. So the network of congregations that I was working with was called Shalom Network International. It was that whole network of congregations that were started through that whole work with Jonathan Bernis. And so I was working with some of those congregations in Ukraine especially and in Hungary. I lived in Hungary and my primary focus was the Budapest congregation. But I also did travel to Ukraine to, you know, work with the congregations there and be involved in leadership conferences and stuff like that.

Elizabeth: Oh, okay. Wonderful. So building off of that what were some similarities or differences that you've noticed between the American Messianic Jewish worship experience and the international one?

Joshua: So, I think it depends on which countries, but I think the American movement is much further along than any of the other countries. So, for example, even though the movement really started in Great

Britain, that's the oldest alliance. Well, it used to be the Hebrew Christian Alliance of Great Britain or the British... anyway; it's now called the... Alliance of British... anyway, the British Messianic Jewish Alliance. They're the oldest, but Europe and everything really... everything shifted away to America. So the American congregations tend to be more liturgical, even the ones that, just sort of generally speaking—tend to be more liturgical, tend to have a little bit more of a Jewish focus and stuff, are better organized, the fact that we have a much larger movement. So that's kind of what I would think. It's just much more; it's progressed much further so far in the maturation process. Like for example, people are shocked to find out, especially in Israel, that the majority of the Israeli Messianic Jewish congregations are very Christian. There's actually very little Jewish, other than the people are Jewish, in the services themselves. But there are many reasons for that also that the Messianic community is not as old in Israel as it is in America. And they're also wrestling with kind of different issues than we are here. The kind of secular [hard to understand here], religious divide in Israel is kind of a lot to do with that, but that's also changing too very slowly, um, where it wasn't true ten years ago. But now slowly there are a number of Messianic Jews who are sort of recognizing that "We need to wrestle with the exact same questions that the American Messianic Jewish community has been wrestling with."

Elizabeth: Hmmm, so in working with these congregations in Hungary and Ukraine and observing in Israel, would you say that their services tend to reflect more of the Christian world? You said that about the Israeli ones, but is that also true of Hungary and Ukraine?

Joshua: Yes, so like, in Israel they're very, very much influenced by contemporary Christian forms of worship and stuff like that, you know. The majority of the congregations are charismatic. They follow like a charismatic style of service. There is very little liturgy, if any. And so, even if though there are, you know, a couple exceptions to that, that's primarily the type of Messianic Jewish experience that's in Israel. So even some of the worship songs that have been written in Hebrew are very much influenced by, you know, contemporary Christian thinking and stuff like that. So, that's one example. In Hungary, no, I'm sorry not in Hungary. In Ukraine, you have a different kind of a thing. So it's not religiously Jewish but it's very culturally Jewish. So the music sounds very Jewish and everything, but the thinking and the actual practice of Judaism is very minuscule in many of those congregations. Um, you know, things have again slowly started to change in the last few years, but for example you would have never seen in any of these congregations, as Jewish as they felt culturally, you would have never heard the Shema, you would have never seen a Torah service, you wouldn't see the religion of Judaism, you would just feel like some Jewish cultural stuff. Some dancing and stuff like that cause it was more of a Jewish cultural influence rather than a, you know, a real wrestling with Judaism per se.

Elizabeth: Now, is that, some of that because of location with the Soviet Union and they weren't particularly...

Joshua: Yeah, I think part of that is because the Jewish community was not allowed to practice Judaism. I think there were so few people who were familiar with Judaism but also because the first waves of leaders going over there also weren't that familiar with Judaism. You know most Messianic leaders, you know, even if they were raised kind of culturally Jewish also were not that familiar with Judaism. It's really kind of been more recently that even Messianic Jewish leaders are becoming more familiar, you know, more educated themselves in Judaism and Jewish life and so on and so forth.

Elizabeth: Okay. Wow. Thank you so much. That was my last question. I really, really appreciate all the time that you've given me for this project and all the information. It's been great.

Appendix I: Lonnie Bradshaw

Interview with Lonnie Bradshaw on July 30, 2014

Elizabeth: So, we're on the recorder now. And just to begin, Lonnie, could you tell me a little bit about yourself? How did you get into ministry? And a little bit of your story.

Lonnie: Well, uh, mine is probably not your more typical, uh, road. I grew up in a nonobservant home. My grandmother was my main connection with our Jewishness, but I uh I did the typical teenage Jewish thing to rebel, but I didn't do it in the typical way. When I was fourteen, I left home and joined a rodeo circuit. And so I was about as far away from being a practicing Jewish individual as you can be I think. And I met and married my wife some years later. I have a tendency to do everything late in life so I met and married my wife when I was in college when I was in my thirties. And, uh, she was raised as a Christian so she spent some time trying to get me on board. And I went along without really expecting having any real change. And after a number of different things that happened in our life, we ended up in a small town in rural Minnesota on a farm...she got a job as a secretary to a pretty good pastor in a Methodist church. He was well educated. He was a very nice man. In both ways, he was just an excellent person. And she started growing in her faith at the same time I realized I was going nowhere. And at a certain point, I realized I was losing my wife to God. And, uh, I was desperate because this was the first real family, the first real experience of love I'd ever had and she and our small children. So I panicked and I didn't know what to do so I asked people for advice and I got a lot of advice that I realized later wasn't really helpful because they didn't know of what they spoke. But everyone said, you need to lean on the Lord, which really meant nothing to me because I didn't understand...turns out they didn't but based on people's advice I started praying, which I felt like I was talking to a brick wall. I started reading the Bible, which I didn't understand. It didn't mean anything to me. But I started sitting in the dark for an hour every morning before I went to work. Three o'clock in the morning, I'd sit in the dark and just wait. I didn't know what I was waiting for because no one really said, but I spent an hour waiting. Well, one morning I heard a voice and I was rather surprised to hear the voice say, "You've been waiting for Me." And I pretty much thought I'd lost it, but I was intrigued enough to continue. And so sometime later I heard Him say, "I've been waiting for you for a very long time." So I started a relationship, a conversation with an Individual that, you know, I knew who it was, but I had to ask. And I remembered my wife saying something about testing the spirits; you ask who it is. So I didn't know what I was doing, and so I basically said, "Who is this?" And had anything else been the response I probably would have quit right then, but what I heard is, "This is the God of your fathers. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

Elizabeth: Wow

Lonnie: So, I continued and found out very quickly that is not the mainstream Methodist belief...[laughter, coughing] but after several years of being a very odd duck in a very normal pond we were, as Paul Chappell puts it, "given the left foot of fellowship." [laughter] And one of the things that the Lord had me doing during this time was going back to the Orthodox synagogue and my wife was not very happy about that. But that's what I heard so that's what I did. So after a period of time I ended up in a Messianic congregation, which for me...rather odd...I did kind of went along with what I thought I was supposed to do and at some point I was told I was to become a rabbi. I thought, "Well, that's really odd." And so I said, "Well, this is kind of too critical for me to just say 'sure, yeah, okay.' I want to make sure." So I said, "I need some evidence. I need some proof here." And I had a doctor's appointment with a doctor that I had probably not spoken to...before. Walked in sat down, he said, "How are you doing?" I said, "I'm fine." He said, "Have you ever considered a career in ministry?"

Elizabeth: Wow

Lonnie: Really, really, so I got two more of those within a week, and I said “Okay.” I told my wife who said “That’s all well and good but He better pay for it because we have no money.” And I felt like ...so I said, “Well, if we’re supposed to do this that will happen. So I’ll just wait.” And I waited for eight years and the end result was I ended up getting retraining because I got injured at work and because of the way it was done, which was kind of illegal, they ended up paying for my reeducation. So I applied for the funding and they said, “Well, we don’t do ministry and we don’t do master’s degrees. But you can apply.” So I applied and was accepted for an M.Div. in Messianic studies.

Elizabeth: Oh, wow.

Lonnie: So, they paid for my entire education. They paid for my tuition and my books and my plane fare and my housing and meals and all that. And they paid me a living stipend while I was completing it and so it was very clear that’s what...you know? So the whole thing was just...interesting.

Elizabeth: Yeah, so how long have you been in ministry

Lonnie: What’s that?

Elizabeth: How long have you been in ministry?

Lonnie: Well, I graduated with the M.Div. two years ago and assumed...in a pulpit rabbi, which I hadn’t heard any different. I was an elder at a Messianic congregation and so I started sending applications and making contacts and got a lot of really nice responses, but most of them were “I’d love to have you don’t have a position...” And so I just kept working in industry and serving on the side and just figured if it was supposed to happen, it would happen. And in the meantime, I had had several of my instructors from different programs, uh, tell me they wanted me in their doctoral program, which I thought was odd, but, you know, it’s like “Okay.” And, uh, essentially, I got a full scholarship to King’s in the doctoral program under Dr. Gannon. And uh, so after, I think it was a couple of ...we were sitting talking and he was asking how the job search was going and I said well, you know, it was going but I wasn’t seeing a whole lot of response, but I was just waiting for where I was supposed to be. He said, “Well, I might have some congregations for you. I’ll give you some contact letter information later, but I think we need to go to lunch,” which was honestly unusual because the cohort went as a group, you know, to build unity. So he said, “We’re going to go to lunch and we’ll see you guys later.” So we sat down and he started talking about things and telling me things that I recognized immediately were rather critical and highly confidential and I had no idea why he was telling me all this. And at the end, he said, “I’d like to hire you as my associate.” And I said, “Okay.” So I said of course that I’d have to discuss it with my wife and pray about it but we would let him know. When we returned to class I had a message from the associate rabbi at the congregation we had...he said, “Call me right away.” I sent him a text. I said, “I can’t call you I’m in class, but I’ll call you as soon as I get home.” He said, “Call me immediately.” So I got back to the room and I called him and he said, “I’m leaving and I want to offer you as my replacement.”

Elizabeth: Oh, wow.

Lonnie: And I said, “Alright.” So then the next thing I got was an email from a congregation I’d been in conversation with and he said, “Well, we’d like you to come up...you and your wife up to discuss the position with our elders.” ...two days and three jobs. So we spent some time in prayer and fasting and felt like this was where I’m supposed to be so this is where I came. Uh ...now the thing that was probably

equally as odd is my wife, again, was raised in a Christian background, and uh she has always served in worship and sings. She's got a very, very fine solo voice. And she was told. She heard the Lord tell her while she was singing a solo in worship, "You will sing for Me." She said, "Well, what am I doing now?" ... People had approached her and another woman that she sang with about doing CDs and she thought maybe. So she waited awhile, and um, she... said, "I knew something was coming but I didn't know what." And I went with Dr. Gannon to do a course at the UMJC conference and there I was introduced to the fact that they had just started a new cantoral program... so I just mentioned it. I came home and my wife said, "That's it." [laughter] So you have to understand, she speaks no Hebrew or at least then did not. She felt like she was supposed to apply so she applied, spoke to the instructor in Israel, and the woman said, "Well, are you fluent in Hebrew?" She goes, "I don't speak any." "Oh," she said, "Well that's kind of a prerequisite to the course." And she said, "Well, that's fine. I understand." She goes, "We love your voice. We loved your ... everything was great and I think you're supposed to be here so I'll have to talk to the director." So they called the director and he said, "You're in." And she's been doing very well, but she's kind of a fish out of water type of thing. So our life has been rather interesting.

Elizabeth: Yeah, sounds like it. Wow that's so cool. So how would you define Messianic Judaism?

Lonnie: Well, and my... definition may be radically different than many people. People say to me, "Are you Christian?" And I'll say, "No, I'm a Messianic Jew." And that doesn't mean you can't be a Jewish Christian. I have many friends that are and they're fine people. Several of them are pastors. But to me there's a distinction. A Jewish Christian is somebody that converts to Christianity and leaves behind their culture and traditions. A Messianic Jew in my mind is a Jewish individual who continues in their culture and traditions and recognizes that Yeshua is the Messiah that was to come, but that doesn't change their background, their belief, their culture, it adds to it.

Elizabeth: Okay, now you're the first one to make that distinction between Jewish Christian and Messianic Jew. Could you say that definition of a Jewish Christian for me one more time?

Lonnie: To me that is somebody that is of Jewish ancestry, and when I say Jewish ancestry I go by the Orthodox, which is my background, definition of your mother was Jewish. Ah ...if your father was Jewish, some people would consider you Jewish, um, but if you have a great grandfather, that's really neither here nor there unless you're talking about Hitler, nobody considers that Jewish. Um, and so a Jewish Christian to me is somebody who is of Jewish ancestry, has a Jewish parent, who converted to Christianity and in so doing abandoned the traditions and cultures that go hand in hand with Judaism and the Jewish people and have assumed life as a Christian. And like I said, there's nothing wrong with that, but it's a different way of walking, different _____ [Hebrew]

Elizabeth: Gotcha, thank you. Um, so what do you believe are important cultural markers of Messianic Jewish worship service?

Lonnie: Well, I think, um, we need to recognize the most valid markers of being Jewish. If you say to somebody, "I'm Jewish," especially somebody that is Jewish and the first things they're going to say is, "Well, do you observe Shabbat? Do you keep kosher?" And those kinds of things, you know. I mean it may go as much as "Do you pray three times a day?" There are certain things which are connected with being Jewish more than Judaism. But a cultural marker, ah, so in my mind, Messianic worship, Messianic liturgy should reflect that. One of the things that uh we have found moving here to Phoenix we came from Minnesota where there was one Messianic congregation and probably two or three "Messianic congregations," which were actually Hebrew or Gentile congregations, which in my mind are different

things. And there was nothing to compare it to; I just knew it wasn't very Jewish...very nice people, very fine people. Then I got here and I expected with the large Jewish population that we would see a, perhaps a more traditional reflection than...other terminology of not a Messianic synagogue but was actually a Messianic church.

Elizabeth: Now, what's that differentiation that you're making between a Messianic church and a Messianic synagogue?

Lonnie: To me, a Messianic synagogue is a place of worship, a place of prayer and worship, where you have at least a goodly proportion of Jewish people. They will do at least a goodly proportion of traditional liturgical prayer and they will do it, uh, true to the way it was written, okay? To me, Messianic churches are places where you will bring people that particularly are looking for something Jewish because, and they're not Jewish themselves frequently, because they think it's neat. So you have a bunch of non-Jewish people that really don't know anything about the tradition or culture acting Jewish and the songs are generally either Christian songs or Christian songs with the words changed to make them Jewish sounding. And they do a lot of things that you see in Messianic congregations that you don't see in synagogues—the banners, what's referred to as Davidic dance, um, often the liturgy is incorrect. And I'm not saying that anything is wrong with that, but I'm saying that there in my mind needs to be options.

Elizabeth: That differentiation

Lonnie: Yeah, the vast majority of Jewish people that come to faith worship in a church. They're happy in a church...so I'm not sure why Messianic Judaism has to be...churches. There's a lot of churches out there, they're good churches, and Jewish people are welcomed in and they're happy. In our area, there are six main congregations. There are probably a dozen more that are little groups, uh, and they're all basically Messianic churches. Whereas, I've had people approach me with the possibility of starting a Messianic synagogue where we would do traditional liturgy. We would conduct service to align with Jewish tradition and culture. And so, like I said, it doesn't mean there's anything wrong with the others, but perhaps there's a need for this for people that don't feel comfortable in a church.

Elizabeth: Right. So, what are some aspects of traditional Jewish liturgical practices that were integrated into Messianic Judaism?

Lonnie: Well, it's very common to do traditional prayers although some of them are done in places that are not appropriate. It's very common to see Messianic congregations doing Erev Shabbat prayers on Shabbat day and vice versa. And it's very common to have them either modify very traditional prayers, which as a Jewish person is kind of offensive honestly. If you went into a church and the people there changed the wording of the Lord's Prayer because they didn't like it, how would it make you feel?

Elizabeth: Yeah, I wouldn't be very happy about that.

Lonnie: Yeah, and that's the kind of thing I'm talking about. There are people who make major changes in very basic prayers that, uh, that just don't feel right. One of the things that I've seen often in a number of congregations, and not just here, you know, uh is they'll post overhead a prayer in Hebrew and then transliteration and an English version and they're not saying the same thing. Often the Hebrew has missing verses, but they put it in English as if it was up there or vice versa. So if a Jewish person walked in they would be repulsed. You know? Things like, I've been to Messianic congregations and watched people take their Bibles or wear a tallit into the bathroom, which is absolutely...cause it had the Divine name in it. You are to treat it with reverence. And so...inappropriate. If you go into a synagogue, you'll notice outside

every bathroom there's a rack for hanging your tallit because the Divine name is written on it. So people don't understand the, uh, the representation of what they're copying and they're doing it incorrectly. It's not going to have the right effect if they think they're going to draw in Jewish people and show them the joy of a relationship with Yeshua. What it shows them is that these people are pretending, you know. There are some things that are done and some things that aren't done, but, for example, when you bring out a Torah scroll you treat it with reverence. You do not turn your back on it. You do not touch it with your hands for practical reasons because it damages the scroll, but you see it often in Messianic congregations. Or even worse, you'll see them go through the processional and do all the prayers and bring out the scroll and then they put it back without reading from it because they aren't capable of doing it. But that seems disrespectful—you know?—just things that if you grew up in Judaism are not necessarily quite proper, kosher would be the best way to put it. You know, and again there is a place for all things, but it would be helpful if people understood some of the culture they're imitating so that they don't do things that are inherently painful to watch...lack of understanding. I don't think anyone's doing it on purpose. No one's explained to them because, they just, you know, I don't know. It's a very common thing to see in a Messianic congregation not only an offering on Shabbat, light candles on Shabbat or even I've seen a number of congregations where the offering is literally held in the front and you each parade up through the aisle and give your offering. Well that seems rather false piety to me to start with, you know, but in the second place you're not to light a candle on Shabbat you're not to handle money or do commerce on Shabbat and so when you see those things if you're Jewish and you're not in relationship with Messiah that's kind of slamming ...you know? It's a step away from the old version of "if you want to prove you're not a Christian, you have to eat a ham sandwich in front of the congregation," which congregations have done. Yeah, to renounce Judaism say you'll never see your family again, you won't ever read the Torah or do any of your celebrations, and you have to eat a ham sandwich in front of everybody so we know you've really changed. But they don't ask Koreans to stop celebrating Korean holidays, you know. So, it seems ...to Judaism. And if you do anything Jewish whether you're in a church or a Messianic congregation very often you're told you're Judaizing, whether you're Jewish or not. I'm Jewish, I can't Judaize. You know? But there are some odd things out there. There's a lot of ...you know? I think it has great potential.

Elizabeth: Yeah, so talking about those Messianic fellowships that reflect the synagogue service more than a Christian church services, what are some key traditional liturgies that you would expect to see there?

Lonnie: Well, and you can see them in different forms, you know. It's not uncommon for Messianic congregations to do the Ma Tovv which is a prayer you do before you enter the sanctuary, although, at least in Orthodox Judaism we do it *before* we go in the sanctuary. Um, and they generally start with the _____ [Hebrew], which is the Psalms of praise from the Psalms. And some congregations do it just by reading Psalms in the beginning and there is nothing wrong with that, you know...is often done at that point and then the Barchu, the call to worship, is done in a traditional congregation followed by the Shema and the V'ahavta. And the Shema and V'ahavta are often done. Often the V'ahavta is one of those where they don't put the whole prayer up and or change it. You know and that's a foundational prayer of Judaism, that and the Shema or the Amidah. It's you know it's difficult to watch people just totally change it.

Elizabeth: Right, now what are some. You know on the other side we were talking about, um, more like Messianic Jewish churches, um what are some contemporary Christian liturgical practices that were kind of integrated into Messianic Judaism?

Lonnie: Well, it depends on the congregation. You know, I've been to Messianic congregations that were formed in that...do a lot of songs in Hebrew but...they're Christian praise and worship songs with Hebrew words added. And because of that it can often see that it's kind of an awkwardness even in simply going

from Jesus to Yeshua, you have an extra syllable. We've been trying to make words fit in a different language...there's an awful lot of good Messianic music out there and an awful lot of good traditional Jewish music that's out there that would probably be better suited for that. You know, and there's nothing wrong. If you're in a Messianic church and you want to do Christian music but don't try to make something it's not. You know, it's kind of like changing the prayer. If it was good to sing "How Great Thou Art," sing "How Great Thou Art." Don't try to make it Messianic...and I've been to some congregations that if you walked in and you walked out, you honestly wouldn't know unless somebody said or it was in their bulletins that it was Messianic because it looks like just any other church. It's all in English. It's all; you know Christian liturgy, Christian prayer, Christian songs. And there's nothing wrong with that, but I'm not sure why you would call it Messianic.

Elizabeth: Right. Why you'd make that distinction.

Lonnie: Especially when you find that ninety-five percent of the population is probably not Jewish. You know? I've been to a lot of Messianic congregations where I was the only Jew in the place.

Elizabeth: Wow, so what were some, what are some liturgical practices from either the Christian or Jewish world that were intentionally avoided in the formation of Messianic Jewish, Judaism rather?

Lonnie: Well, I'm not sure if it's true now, but there has been a kind of hesitation among ... to do the Amidah, which is one of the central prayers for Judaism. And I think part of that is because there is in the weekday Amidah one of the...it talks about heretics and people have gotten the idea that this was written strictly against Christians or strictly against new believers and to throw them out of the synagogue, which is not true. When it was first instituted, it was instituted against the Sadducees and then against the Samaritans and then against the Christians and then against the Gnostics, so it's been used a bunch of times against various groups. And one of the reasons, certainly not the only, was because it's hard to maintain order when everybody's arguing. [laughter] And of course, when you're having problems because you have a portion of people that believe radically different and people are being persecuted because of their presence whether it their fault or not you're gonna have a kick back. And the Christians kicked back as much as...the synagogues so. Um, but so because of that perception there has been a hesitation in many Messianic congregations to use the Amidah. Now, part of that might be that you're supposed to have a minyan to do the Amidah and, ah, are you familiar with minyans?

Elizabeth: Um, that's where you have to have ten Jewish men, right, in order to have a service?

Lonnie: Yes, and in modern day Judaism, I think even conservative have gotten to the place where it's just ten Jewish adults, male or female. But the concept is that you have a large enough group to do specific prayers and that of course comes from the story where Abraham interceded for Lot and said, "If there are but ten righteous..." so that's where the minyan came from.

Elizabeth: Oh, I didn't know that. Now this might sound like a silly question, but is 'minyan' spelled like it's the English word 'minion'? Like it's the sidekick of a villain 'minion'? Or is it different spelling?

Lonnie: Ah, it's typically spelled, and of course it's in Hebrew, so you're transliterating but the typical spelling is m-i-n-y-a-n

Elizabeth: M-i-n-y-a-n

Lonnie: Yes

Elizabeth: Okay, I wasn't sure if it was a transliterated word or not. That's why I asked. I don't want put the wrong word in my paper.

Lonnie: Mmm-hmm, and that's a pretty wide accepted spelling of it so.

Elizabeth: Okay, thanks, so you mentioned that. Oh, wait; was there anything that you thought of as far as practices from the Christian world that were also intentionally avoided? You mentioned the Amidah from the Jewish world, but any liturgy...

Lonnie: Well, ah, it depends on the congregation. You have some strange practices in trying to work these things out with, ah not so much the concept of baptism versus mikvah, but often in the context of trying to honor the Christian belief in communion and ah and so it manifests in some odd ways. I've been to some congregations where they will use nothing but kosher wine and matzah and they don't do a ceremony they just do the typical bracha over it. Uh, and I've been to congregations that actually use communion cups or the little trays with the ...you know so there's all kinds of varieties. But often times it seems kind of awkward and forced.

Elizabeth: Okay, and so just, um, so each congregation tries to figure out how best to do a communion service without...because it's not...I mean it's Jewish in that it came from the sedar but

Lonnie: Yeah, it depends a lot on the congregation too. I mean you have Christian churches that will do it every service. Some that will do it once a month and so on. And so then how does the Messianic congregation do that? I've been to some that do it every time. I've been to them that do it every week or every month or whatever. You know, and I've been to a lot of them frankly that have a process and they a time frame, but they forget a lot. So...haven't done this for three months, you know because it's not a standard process ... [coughing] it tends to slip through the cracks, you know? And then there's the group and I'm not going to say it's right or wrong. There are groups of people that believe this is when Yeshua said, "When you do this, do this in remembrance of Me," He was talking about at a sedar, so they only do that at their sedars. So you know you have the whole gamut there.

Elizabeth: Okay, wow. Thank you. I didn't realize it was such a gamut.

Lonnie: Yeah, you know, there's a lot of things that um the church has gotten from synagogue that people don't recognize um and so to say, "this is a church practice. This is a synagogue practice," often times are not exactly correct at all. But uh people don't acknowledge that, you know.

Elizabeth: Mmm, so how did and how do the leaders from Christianity and Judaism respond to Messianic Jews incorporating these liturgical practices into their services?

Lonnie: Okay, repeat that I didn't hear the first part.

Elizabeth: I'm sorry. I said how do the leaders from Christianity and Judaism respond to Messianic Jews incorporating these liturgical practices into their services?

Lonnie: Well, um, and it may be geographical or maybe just simply the neighborhood that you're in as to how a Christian church will respond. Um, and of course a lot of it depends on the nature of the Messianic congregation. There are Messianic congregation that are very charismatic in nature and there are some that absolutely not. You know. So if an 'absolutely not' is in an area that's full of charismatic Christians, you're gonna have problems and vice versa. You know, if you're in a place where it's a traditional Southern Baptist area, and you come in and you're a charismatic Messianic congregation, you're gonna have

problems, you know? So that has a lot to do with it...just the flavor or the culture of the other um you know. You're gonna find two groups as a general rule in the Christian church. You're gonna find those that are "We recognize the validity of Israel...we're not sure we understand it, but we think you probably are right, although we may not want you in our church doing this." And then you'll have those that are have grown up with the Replacement theology. They are like "you have no business doing this. Get out of here."

Elizabeth: Right, um, my, are you still there?

Lonnie: Mmm-hmm, yeah

Elizabeth: Okay, I'm sorry my phone battery is beeping at me. Can I put you on hold just a minute I'm gonna run and get my...[at this point the recorder was paused and the recharge chord retrieved. Once the phone was plugged in, the recorder was turned back on and the interview resumed.] How do you think early Jewish cultural identity from Yeshua's era, so as you're studying Scriptures and stuff, how does that influence liturgical decisions in Messianic Judaism today or in the rebirth of it?

Lonnie: Well, I think part of it is we recognize that much of traditional liturgy was just being formed in that time so there wasn't a hard and fast order of service like we have now. And even now, it's very...but when Messianic Judaism started in the late '60s, early '70s it really wasn't Messianic Judaism. It was the Jesus Movement with Jews. And so nobody really had a format. Now I understand that some of them were very liturgical and some of them were non-liturgical, but it sounds a lot like today there was less structure with it. You know, and I think many times they would start out and say, "Let's see how this works and if it doesn't work we'll change it." And things just kind of evolved for lack of a better word. I think there is at this point because of the differentiation between the two major associations the MJAA and the UMJC and then the fact that you have the Tikkun and other organizations. You're getting different groups. The UMJC there is a very observant group within them, which forms the Messianic Jewish Rabbinical Council that are very drawn to traditional liturgical practice so that if a Jewish person that wasn't Messianic walked in off the street, they would feel right at home. And I think there's a place for that and I don't think every congregation needs to be that way, but I think on the other hand they don't all have to be the other extreme which is churches wearing kippas. So you know

Elizabeth: So, some of the, many of the people that I've been speaking with rather have said, like you said, when the movement started in the '70s it was Jews getting saved through Christians, Christian churches, through that revival and everything. Um, and liturgy just started getting added to the fellowships. So how do you think, how were those liturgical practices and how do they continue to be as they were developed or added rather, how were they useful in the maturation of the Messianic Jewish identity?

Lonnie: Well, I think um they're useful if you're recognizing it as a Jewish movement. Um, there are those of us that believe that we're getting much closer to acceptance among the Jewish community, not on all fronts, but there are Jewish individuals and leaders that have said, "You know but we may not agree with them and they may be the black sheep of the family, but they're still Jewish." And I...think what with the struggle against assimilation and the disappearance of the Jewish family unit uh being a major concern in most Jewish communities at least up till now, uh, there may be a point where the Jewish community is going to say, "Well, you know, our choice is we just give up and die or we recognize them as Jews and we need the numbers so let's just take them." And so if in that case, they see you as conducting a more traditional Jewish service, if they see you doing things like honoring Shabbat, then their more inclined to see you as Jewish than they are if they see you going out and eating barbequed pork on Shabbat with a kippa on. You know?

Elizabeth: Yeah, so thank you. Now changing gears just a little bit, um, what musical influences were drawn upon in the development of Messianic Jewish music? You mentioned that there is a variety of it.

Lonnie: Well, and honestly because I wasn't involved with it at that point I'm not the best person to ask... I mean I've only. It's only been thirteen years since I've known the Lord so and you know it was sometime before I made it to the Messianic congregation so I'm late to the movement. I mean I can say what I've seen on early TVs and stuff. But I really don't know. I think there was tendency to try to make Jewish sounding music. For example, much Jewish music is in a minor key, you know, so that lends a distinctive sound to it. And copying things like klezmer music and other traditional Jewish music sounding things and incorporating uh either Hebrew words or occasionally Yiddish words into it um of course brings it in. but one of the things that is so variable again is the use of instruments. That even varies in traditional Judaism. You'll go to a lot of congregations where there is no instrumentation, you know? And then you'll go to a reformed congregations where they'll have a drums and guitars and you know so there's a lot of variety in traditional music that didn't used to exist. And along with the Christian movement to incorporate more relaxed musical styles, you know, playing guitars, playing drums, using things such as the clarinet or saxophone, which you know they're perfectly good instruments but you didn't see them in churches fifty years ago. And you'll see things like that and you'll see youth groups doing rap music and stuff. Now I've not seen that in Messianic Judaism but I'm sure it's there somewhere.

Elizabeth: Yeah, I can think of a group that does it.

Lonnie: Sure, sure

Elizabeth: Now, how um what do you think the importance is of Davidic or Messianic dance cause I know that's big in a lot of congregations? What do you think its place of importance is in the movement?

Lonnie: You know, to be honest with you, I'm not sure. I'm not sure it's Jewish. I've never ever seen a Jewish congregation of any sort do any dance. And so I'm not sure that that isn't something that the Jesus movement brought in and they just adapted.

Elizabeth: Okay

Lonnie: You know, I don't know. I haven't found any evidence of a history of that kind of dance, but I'd love to see it if there is one. You know, it may be one of those things that somebody tried it and caught on. It's kind of like the shofar. A lot of Messianic congregations blow the shofar every five minutes, but in traditional Judaism they're blown Rosh Hashanah and a few other occasions. Other than that you never blow them. You know so sometimes I see Messianic Judaism as taking something and deciding it's a good thing and going to excess. And often I think it's a "this makes us look more Jewish" when actually it makes you look less Jewish.

Elizabeth: Hmm, interesting. Now this question kind of goes with some of what we were discussing earlier, but how did the theological understanding of Messianic Judaism influence the liturgical decisions that the congregations made?

Lonnie: Hmm, you know, um I'm not sure but one of the things I see is there's kind of extremes on each end. There are some congregations that are very liturgical that. I mean I've been to congregations where had I not caught the terminology or not known in advance, I wouldn't have known it was a Messianic congregation because it was very traditional. And I've been to the opposite extreme, again, with Messianic congregations that you'd have thought you were in any Christian church. and you get on each side of that

you'll get people that think you need to be more Jewish and people that think you need to be less Jewish and more Yeshua and sometimes we're kind of missing the point in both of those. You know, the ... is getting rid of any Jewish liturgy or any Hebrew prayers so we have more Yeshua. But they're not necessarily bringing more Yeshua in they're just being less Jewish and then we have congregations that are so concerned with being more Jewish that they lose Yeshua. You know, and so you can see "We need more. We need less." But why? You have to understand what your point is and what you're trying to achieve before you do it just to do it.

Elizabeth: Okay, so what would you say the point is?

Lonnie: I'm sorry what?

Elizabeth: Where would you say like the balance is or the purpose or point is of the amount of liturgy and tradition and Yeshua?

Lonnie: Well, I think...depends on your culture and your congregation. You know, like I said there's a lot of congregations here and there are no liturgical or...there are congregations that think they're liturgical but when you go to them it kind of fades quickly when you realize they're really not. Um and there have been a number of people that have approached me about starting a very liturgical congregation and my danger is uh starting a liturgical congregation that...the Messianic flavor just so they're happy, well, there's no point in that. If it's not led by the Presence of the Almighty or the Spirit what's the point of doing it. Cause if you just want traditional liturgy, go to a synagogue if that's all you want. If you don't want Messianic, then go to a synagogue. I don't have a problem with Jewish people attending synagogue. I mean I know a lot of people that get upset if they find out their Jewish Messianic members go to a synagogue, but if you're Christian Messianic members go to a church they think nothing's wrong and that seems contradictory to me. You know, you going where you're familiar with the culture and perhaps you're seeing something you need that you're not finding but that doesn't mean that you change where you are just to fit your needs because it's not about us. It's about the body as a whole. It's about the whole congregation. If you have one person that feels you have to stand up and scream "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus," or your prayers aren't heard, if they're the only one in the congregation, they're probably in the wrong place. But you know, there's nothing wrong with them, but they're just not in the place they're supposed to be. You know and I've seen that I've heard that. I mean I was at a prayer meeting one time and it was only leaders of Messianic congregations and their wives and one of them said, "Yeah, we were all laying there going 'Jesus, Jesus, Jesus,' that's how we knew it was real." And I'm like, "Hmm." So if you said "Yeshua" it wasn't real. You have a problem... so you know, I think it's all a matter of what is your heart—the leadership, the people—and why are you doing what you're doing? It's not what you're doing it's why you're doing it. So if you've plastered the name of Yeshua all over the walls and you keep praising Yeshua, but you really don't mean it, what have you benefitted? You know, so I mean I was in a congregation where they kept saying, "We need more Yeshua, more Yeshua." And I mentioned the words 'Oral Law' in a message I gave and they almost stoned me. Its like are you serious? So it's part of our culture. We don't have to agree with it all, but you have to acknowledge its part of our culture.

Elizabeth: Sure, so Lonnie have you had significant Messianic Jewish experience internationally or have you visited congregations outside of the U.S.?

Lonnie: No, I have not.

Elizabeth: Okay, well, wow. Thank you so much I really appreciate what you've shared and the time that you've given me for this interview.

Appendix J: Jeffrey Seif

Interview with Dr. Jeffrey Seif on July 31, 2014

Elizabeth: So, Dr. Seif to begin, um, could you tell me a little bit about yourself? How you got into ministry? Just kind of in a nutshell.

Jeffrey: Sure. How long do you want me to speak?

Elizabeth: Well, we have thirty to forty-five minutes for the whole thing, so...

Jeffrey: Let me ... I'm from a German Jewish background; Jewish through both parents; raised traditional Jewish; went to a Yeshiva, religious Jewish school; fortuitously came to faith as a teenager; drifted away; rededicated my life to the Lord in the young twenties. Education: Moody Bible Institute; masters and a doctorate from Southern Methodist University; graduate North Texas Regional Police Academy. Have a career as a police officer; a marshal; twenty-five years a professor; and, you know, a Messianic Jewish rabbi. In addition to holding two professorships right now and some other posts I, you know, I kind of oversee two Messianic congregations in North Dallas. Married thirty years. Two wonderful boys and a daughter. And two dogs.

Elizabeth: Wow that was very impressive on abbreviating. [coughing]

Jeffrey: What? I didn't hear ya sorry.

Elizabeth: Oh, I said I'm very impressed with how you abbreviated.

Jeffrey: Well, people talk too much. You probably need some information for your paper so...

Elizabeth: Yeah, just a little bit. That's great. So how long have you been a congregational leader?

Jeffrey: Well, off and on, you know, I've planted regular traditional churches and a few years ago I started Sar Shalom, Prince of Peace in Hebrew, I started it, oh, maybe about three years ago, or so. I just figured, um, you know, I'm a Jewish studies professor and I decided I just wanted to finish up in life. I'm fifty-eight. I decided I wanted to give the last ten years to specifically just putting Messianic Jewish congregations on the map, among other things, my teaching posts. So I'm about three years into being a Messianic rabbi, but I've pastored beyond that in the regular just community churches and what have you.

Elizabeth: Mmm-hmm. Wonderful. So how would you define Messianic Judaism?

Jeffrey: Well, I'll tell you what a Messianic Jew is and then Messianic Judaism. A Messianic Jew is someone who wrestles with the question, "What does it mean to participate in the Jesus story on the one hand while still participating in the Jewish story on the other?" Those are judged by many to be mutually exclusive. But a Messianic Jew is a person who has, you know, feet in both worlds. And they wrestle with the question, "What does it mean to combine those two?" That said as a Messianic Jew, collectively Messianic Judaism is constituted by individuals who wrestle with the question, "What does it mean to participate in the Jesus story on the one hand and the Jewish story on the other?" Now people answer that question differently. What makes them a Messianic Jew isn't the way they answer the question. What makes them a Messianic Jew is the fact that they care to wrestle with that question. You can have someone who's raised Jewish that goes to First Baptist Church, "I used to be a Jew. I got saved. Now I'm a Baptist." And that's fine. That's not really a Messianic Jew because they're not game to wrestle with the question,

“How can I still participate in the Jewish story?” But for me a Messianic Jew is someone who wrestles with the question, “What does it mean to participate with the Jesus story on the one hand and the Jewish story on the other?”

Elizabeth: Okay. Wonderful. So what do you believe are important cultural markers in a Messianic Jewish worship service?

Jeffrey: Well, there’s certain standard fair issues and the Torah is significant, some kind of Torah service. In the Jewish world an expectation that prior place is given to Torah so some kind of. Then there are certain prayers too that are just identifiable cultural markers, and there’s certain art. You know, I look at the adornment of yamakas and the tallis. You know Jewish cultural, religious paraphernalia that people might not wear during the week. But they adorn that like are in part just to be able to identify a little with the Jewish story in that regard. So, there are certain prayers, um, Torah service, uh, meeting on a Saturday not a Sunday, having a Friday night service instead of a Sunday morning and Sunday night, a Friday night Sabbath service, but the Torah, with the lighting of candles with the challah, the working with the Sabbath bread, Saturday morning definitely a Torah service, some of the traditional prayers, and that would be it.

Elizabeth: Okay. So what aspects of traditional Jewish liturgical practices were integrated into Messianic Judaism?

Jeffrey: Well, it differs in part as determined by the assets of the individual congregations have. Um, not all have a Torah scroll. That might cost five or ten thousand dollars. Uh, not all have someone that can actually cant the Hebrew and these congregations, there maybe four or five hundred of them in North America, but sometimes they can be little better than home groups in size constituted by individuals that don’t have various skills in the Hebrew language. Uh, but and again forgive, to the question again, “what liturgical devices are employed?” Is that what you’re looking for?

Elizabeth: Yeah, what are some traditional Jewish practices that are seen in Messianic Jewish services? I think a lot of them go back to what you were just saying, right? Like the Torah service?

Jeffrey: Yes, there’s the Torah service. There’s the recitation of the Shema, which is a standard. There’s the Aaronic Benediction. Uh, you know, “May the Lord bless you and keep you, make His face to shine upon you.” That and the Shema will be staples the Torah service or the blessings before and after the reading of the Torah. Following the weekly Torah portion and the Haftarah portion will be, you know, pretty much a standard fixture, uh there’s certain prayers, um, that there’s certain part of the Amidah, the standing prayers will be recited in brief. And uh, with the holidays, you know Messianic congregations won’t be beholding to the Christian calendar as much with the various Jewish Holy days. There’ll be special foods and prayers and art that will adorn those respective holidays. You know, in as much as secular holidays, whether it’s Thanksgiving, it has its own day. It has its own story. it has its own food. You know, secular holidays do, ah, religious holidays do, your Christmas, your Easter, Jewish holidays have their own food and their own forms. Those will be employed at the Messianic Jewish congregations.

Elizabeth: Okay. Now on the flip side of that, what are some contemporary Christian liturgies that were integrated into Messianic Judaism?

Jeffrey: Um, you know, Messianic Judaism is more game to differentiate than it is to assimilate. If you look at the story of Messianic Judaism, it used to be called Jewish Christianity. Um, most Jewish believers in Jesus, by far and above, participate in Messianic Jewish experience. They just participate in at a Bible church, a Baptist church, a _____ center, Lutheran church, usually something conservative, Assemblies of

God, Pentecostal. They just kind of take on the trappings of that host culture, but Messianic Judaism is kind of differentiated, uh, not philosophically, not theologically. People still believe in Jesus, but it's much more game to articulate a Jewish experience and so, you're not going to find Christian holy days. You might not find, you might find certain similarities, a call to prayer and conversion. You might not even find that in all of them. Asking for a decision, a prayer for healing, you might find that. You find the New Testament read. People generally _____ about the New Testament and even the Jewish prayers will be punctuated at the end, "BaShem Yeshua HaMeshiach, in the name of Jesus the Messiah." I mean there will be some kind of explicit attachment to the Jesus story, but by far and above, it's more about wanting to put the Jesus story in Jewish dress than it is to carry a lot of the old baggage forward. Crosses are gonna be out. You're not going to find a cross in sacred space. You're not gonna find, you know, praying in Jesus name. You won't hear that. You'll hear Yeshua's name. You might hear some of the songs, but even then, you know, the movement's come up with its own music, and so, you're not gonna open up a hymnal. And so, you might get some contemporary Christian music however. But by far and above, it's going to be Jewish type music, uh, what have you.

Elizabeth: Gotcha, so what were some liturgies from either the Christian or Jewish world that were intentionally avoided in the formation of Messianic Judaism? You've already mentioned, you know, crosses wouldn't be used. Are there other things too?

Jeffrey: Yeah, well by far and above, most of the, um, most Messianic Jews, Jewish people have come to faith. Came into the Jesus story by way of what we'll call "low church traditions." As opposed to your high liturgical traditions, you're Catholic, your Episcopalian, your Lutheran, and the like. That's not really. A lot of this came by way of the Assemblies of God, Baptist churches and Bible churches, which really aren't loaded up with a lot of traditions.

Elizabeth: Right

Jeffrey: In terms of a worship service, it can just be, you know, three songs, an offering, an offertory, and then the preaching and then the invitation at the end. That might very well be a garden variety, Low Church tradition church service, save for the holiday___ your Christmas, your Easter, you know there's various ways that people do that. So, um, in terms of the question of what may be crossed over _____, uh, the basic template of worship music, a word, and an invitation, if we strip that down to the bare bones that crossed over into the new world. But premium on music, uh, in as much as the low church traditions musically will still place a premium on praise and worship music and Messianic Jewish music follows the same pattern; the same kind of template—your high energy praise and then more worshipful music. Um, calm it down a little bit and then to prepare people for the word. So that same structure carries over into the new economy.

Elizabeth: Okay, sure. Now what was kind of the response to this? How did leaders from Christianity and Judaism respond to Messianic Jews incorporating their liturgies?

Jeffrey: Well, the, uh, you know Messianic Jews were kind of in a twilight zone. You know, we want to be citizens of two commonwealths so we wind up sometimes getting kicked out of both, um, because for the Jews, we're too Christian to be real Jews and for the Christians, we're too Jewish to be Christian. You know, we do have problems, but on the whole, you know, a lot of the, I mean the Messianic Jewish movement is gaining a considerable amount of credibility in culture. Um, and part of that is because it is constituted by many now that have gone through the seminaries and, you know, and earned the right to a hearing. You know, someone might think that I'm a little kooky and they might be right, but I went to Moody Bible Institute and I have a masters and a doctorate from Southern Methodist University. I've

earned the right to talk about religious faith. And, uh, and you know all of our leaders, a lot of them, you know, terminal degrees—Dallas Seminary, Southwestern Baptist Seminary, from Princeton University, Harvard, just everywhere. So that gives you the kind of credibility where church people say, “Well, okay.” And we just finished translating our own translation of the Bible, which is now; it’s going to be released through a major Christian publisher. So we’re getting a little more credibility in the Christian world and even in the Jewish world people realize, “Well, look you know.” There’s a little more coming to terms with it. Jews can be very liberal people, very accepting so, more problem I think coming from the Christian world than the Jewish, but I think a lot of that’s abating.

Elizabeth: Okay. Wonderful. Thank you.

Jeffrey: Are you done?

Elizabeth: Oh, no, no, sorry. We’re about half way. We’re plugging along.

Jeffrey: Okay, well, I thought “Oh saying good-bye yet.” [Not totally sure if that’s what was said as there was laughter over top]

Elizabeth: [laughing] No, not yet. Um, how did early Jewish cultural identity from Yeshua’s era influence, um, liturgical decisions in the rebirth of Messianic Judaism?

Jeffrey: How did the...say that again please.

Elizabeth: How did early Jewish cultural identity from Yeshua’s era influence the liturgical decisions that were made in the rebirth of Messianic Judaism?

Jeffrey: Well, I think, um, it had more. I mean the impact of it. Jewish believers in Jesus are all about a discovery. Jews we want to leap over two thousand years of church history and discover Jesus as a Jew among Jews in every which way. And, uh, Paul, not just, I mean Paul himself was an orthodox Jewish rabbi that came to faith. So I mean, there’s intense interest in exploring Jesus with Jewish eyes. I’m a Jewish studies professor at two colleges. And I’ve written three or four books on the first century world. In terms of the worship within that world, the Torah service, reclaiming that has factored in. uh, reclaiming Paul as a rabbi, not Apostle Paul, Saint Paul, Reverend Paul, but Rabbi Paul, as a synagogue [signal cut out] observing that Paul frequents synagogues in the course of his travels. Not just for the purpose of converting Jews, but because it was his custom because he himself was a synagogue man. So if you look at the synagogue service and it was very primitive and very basic in the way that it was celebrated, that definitely gives a certain credence to the Messianic Jews that want to still retain a Torah service. As well as certain other traditions in the synagogue, pray facing Jerusalem, which is important. You know, if you have a low church tradition, you know, you just rent a church somewhere or rent a strip mall and you just have a church service—where you face isn’t as much of a factor. But Messianic Jews will face toward Jerusalem, which is an old synagogue practice as well.

Elizabeth: Okay, so how do you believe the liturgical practices that were developed in Messianic Judaism and are used were useful in the maturation of Messianic Jewish identity?

Jeffrey: Well, I think it’s very important. People come up to me and they’ll say, “Jeffrey, how long have you been a converted Jew?” And I like to say, “I’m not a converted Jew. I’m a converted sinner, and it’s not a sin to be a Jew.” And, if you’re going to be Jewish, um, then being able to lay siege to the claim, “Wait a minute, you know, I worship on a Saturday. I circumcise my sons. I bar mitzvah my sons. We have

a Torah service.” It doesn’t matter to me whether some might see me as too much of a freak. At the end of the day, when I look at myself, um, you know, I still think that I live and function as a Jew, like American Jews live. And if I didn’t have, you know, the Friday night service, the lighting of Sabbath candles, which I didn’t mention by the way. You know some of the Hebrew prayers and the Torah service and the circumcision, the bar mitzvah, the Jewish weddings and Jewish funerals, if I didn’t retain all of that stuff something would be missing. The fact that I live within that performance world makes me feel more Jewish in ways that I wouldn’t otherwise feel.

Elizabeth: Okay. Wonderful. So changing gears just a little bit you mentioned earlier, you were talking a little bit about the music, um, what musical influences that you know of were drawn upon in the development of Messianic Jewish worship music?

Jeffrey: Um, its, now I’m not good enough in music to speak to it. Minor chords, there’s a certain kind of folksy, lively rhythm. If you look at Jewish culture, it has its own music probably what influenced it, if you’re familiar with the movie *Fiddler on the Roof*?

Elizabeth: Yes

Jeffrey: Now, there’s, I mean, it’s dated to be sure, but it reflects this Yiddish. It’s a dead Jewish language from the Old World. There’s a kind of upbeat rhythmic meter to it and that kind of lives on in the music. But some of our songwriters could speak; some of our more able performers could do a better job of speaking more deliberately to the kind of influences upon them that contributed to their manufactured music. Me, I just enjoy the music. I don’t know what it takes to write it.

Elizabeth: Alright

Jeffrey: We’ll leave that to people like you to figure out.

Elizabeth: [laughter] That’s what I try to do. Um, so, this is also slightly different, um, track. Many synagogues that I know of have Davidic, or what’s called, Davidic or Messianic dance, um, how did the development of Messianic Jewish dance serve as an identifier for Messianic Judaism? And do you believe that it is?

Jeffrey: Well, it is. You don’t see that as much in synagogues. You know in traditional synagogues, women aren’t even in the service, never mind dancing around drawing a certain kind of attention in the service. And in religious Jewish synagogues or Orthodox, women were exempt from going to the synagogue, number one, and number two, if they went; they were behind a curtain somewhere, behind a partition. Are you aware of that?

Elizabeth: Yes

Jeffrey: And the reason why that is cause God is jealous. God knows that, He knows Jewish boys. He knows that if there are Jewish women there the boys will be paying attention to the women not Him.

Elizabeth: [laughter]

Jeffrey: So, very, very jealous. So the whole idea of women participating in Jewish worship is new. And even the folksy dance which, you know, shame on me that you mentioned it and not me. I didn’t even think of it in terms of standard Jewish liturgy because it isn’t traditionally, but it is a nuance that’s emergent within the Messianic Jewish community. I think that comes from, in part, within the charismatic world and

a lot of Messianic Jewish energy is derived from the charismatic movement. And, uh, even if you look at Pentecostalism, you know the first Pentecostal movement and how it's evolved. You can have a Baptist church and there are people that don't speak in tongues on the whole, but there's always those people in the church with their arms raise, much more expressive and much more experiential. If you look at those that kind of gave rise to more of an experiential approach to worship instead of three hymns and an offertory song, um, this was Pentecostalism and along with the movement of the arms there was flags, banners and dance. Um, and it was much more of holistic, experiential approach to what it meant to worship God. Like there's some guy, he wouldn't dance, but there's some guy, he plays the guitar and if he can play the guitar in a worship band in his church in a way, he's gonna love God more just cause he can get his hands on the instruments and do something. So, it can be a woman, she doesn't even sing that good but she participates in the choir. There are certain people; they just want to do something and, uh, so it's a way to involve women principally, though not exclusively. It's born out in Israeli culture not synagogue culture, but in Israeli culture there's folk dance. It comes from the kibbutz, young boys and girls dancing and the like. And that's kind of involved into Messianic Jewish worship experience.

Elizabeth: Okay, what do you think the importance of that, of dance is in Messianic Judaism?

Jeffrey: Say that again.

Elizabeth: Um, what do you think the importance of dance is in Messianic Judaism?

Jeffrey: Well, it's not important to many. It's important to those that do it. Uh, and I don't know how to answer that because I've never done. I've never participated in that dance. Not once in my life. Um, and so I just don't know how to speak to that, but for those that do, you know, I just think being able to move and do something, it just contributes to the worship experience.

Elizabeth: Okay. Great. Now this question probably builds off some of the things we've already discussed, but how did the theological understanding of emerging Messianic Judaism influence the liturgy chosen for the Messianic Jewish congregations?

Jeffrey: Well, it gave credence to the fact that. It gives a certain kind of acceptability to carry on Jewish practices into the new Jesus economy. The thinking was "You used to be Jewish. Now you've accepted Jesus. Now you're a Baptist. Now you're a Pentecostal," or whatever. But upon further inquiry when we consider how those first followers of Jesus still lived and functioned as Jews during Jesus earthly trek, but even beyond that with Paul. And my last book on early church history kind of followed the early Jesus movement all around the Mediterranean world up into the Levant, uh—Lebanon, Syria, Asia Minor, Turkey, over in Greece, Italy, Spain, and then North Africa Carthage, Cyrene, and Alexandria, Egypt. All around the Mediterranean world, ____ how those first followers of Jesus lived and functioned as Jews. The congregations were synagogues. They kept Jewish dietary law. We haven't discussed that. They kept kosher in large measure. They circumcised their children. They still lived and functioned as Jews. Realizing that, uh, gives Messianic Jews a little more umph, a little more gusto of ceasing these rights to live as Jews even while believing in Jesus.

Elizabeth: Mmm-hmm. Gotcha. So, Dr. Seif, have you had significant Messianic Jewish experience internationally?

Jeffrey: Um, I'm sorry. What's the question again?

Elizabeth: Oh, we're changing gears a little bit. Have you had significant Messianic Jewish experience internationally?

Jeffrey: I wouldn't say internationally. Some have. Now I do travel internationally, and you know, will speak in conferences. I've been in Switzerland. I've been in Germany. I've been in Korea. I've been in Brazil. I've been in and out of Israel, you know, forty, fifty times. But, ah, some of our leaders are much more involved in an internationally scope. I'm ____ actually cause I'm not really a denominational leader, per se. I'm well respected in the movement, but I'm just an eccentric theologian. Ah, but some have a little more international influence.

Elizabeth: Okay. Well, let me ask you this though, what similarities or differences have you noticed between the American Messianic Jewish worship experience and the international Messianic Jewish worship experience?

Jeffrey: Well, let me just contrast international with Israel. So, here Messianic leaders will call themselves rabbis. People don't call themselves rabbis in Israel. Here in the Messianic synagogues we'll wear yamakas and skull caps and tallis. They won't do it in Israel. Here they'll have a Torah service. Usually they won't do it in Israel, interestingly. In America, the Messianic Jews and in Europe too, individuals are much more predisposed to use the Jewish cultural markers—the yamaka, the tallis, the name 'rabbi,' etc. In Israel, that stuff doesn't mean anything cause they don't need to, they don't need any cultural markers to say that they're Jewish. The fact that they live in Israel and put their kids in the army, they know they're Jewish.

Elizabeth: Right.

Jeffrey: From their perspective, they have nothing to prove. So there's a marked difference between the Messianic Jewish experience from this side of the pond than in Israel. And, you know, I've been in Europe. The Messianic works there in the Soviet Union, in Germany, and the like, they're much more predisposed to employ the cultural markers. So those are some reflections.

Elizabeth: Okay. Great. Well, thank you so much! That was my last question.

Appendix K: Jim Appel

Interview with Rabbi Jim Appel on August 1, 2014

[For some reason, this recording was very difficult to understand thus the frequent use of ellipsis points.]

Elizabeth: Rabbi Jim, to start off, can you just tell me a little bit about your background? How you got into ministry and some of your journey?

Jim: Well, ah, how long a description do you want?

Elizabeth: [laughter] The short version

Jim: The short version, well, I came to the Lord in 1977 through my non-Jewish wife, ah, and the ... she had been. She had been, ah And I saw it have a very positive effect on her. Like, she began to study the Bible and participate in a church. So I started to read the Bible for myself and uh, read the New Testament for the first time and had a very dramatic encounter with the Lord...September. It was September of 1977. And then we were involved in churches in our area. There wasn't really a Messianic group in our area at that time. And I didn't really even understand the idea of the Messianic movement at that time. But after about seven years, uh, Jonathan Bernis came to Rochester as a very young man to plant a congregation here. And, uh, we found out about it and then, um, in late '85, or I guess early '85 my son was turning thirteen. So we decided as a witness to my Jewish family that we would have a bar mitzvah for him. And so we got involved with the congregation here and started attending and by late '85, early '86 the Lord spoke to us that we should be part of that congregation. So, we joined, and within a couple years, I think maybe '88, '87, I started serving our congregation, became an elder. And then in the early nineties, just after the Iron Curtain fell, Jonathan started traveling to the former Soviet Union where he discovered that people in the former Soviet Union, Jewish people, were very open. So at that point, we needed somebody to be here with the congregation. And so the Lord sent us David Levine. And he became our assistant rabbi to start with and then Jonathan moved to St. Petersburg, Russia. And David became the senior rabbi in, was that 1993? And then David started getting involved in the former Soviet Union. What would happen was Jonathan would do the evangelistic outreaches and then David would try to plant a congregation in the city that there had been a festival. So, I ended up filling in for David. And in 1995, David and I came to the conclusion that David couldn't do both jobs. So, in early of '96, I quit my job at Xerox and became the, uh, ... [phone cut out] and a year later, uh, I became senior rabbi.

Elizabeth: I'm sorry you said in '96...

Jim: What's that?

Elizabeth: I'm sorry the phone cut out. You said in '96 you became the associate rabbi?

Jim: Yeah, I quit my job and became the associate rabbi, uh, serving under David. And then in 1997, I became the senior rabbi.

Elizabeth: Okay

Jim: And during those first few years I took the IAMCS Yeshiva, which is through Messianic Jewish Alliance of America. It's their ordination process. So, I took a bunch of classes and, of course, was being mentored by David. And, uh, I received my ordination, I think, if I remember correctly in... and I've been serving here ever since.

Elizabeth: Wonderful. So Rabbi, how would you define Messianic Judaism?

Jim: Well, I could define it right off of our bulletin. It's Jewish and non-Jewish people who believe that Yeshua is the Messiah and who worship the God of Israel in a Jewish way.

Elizabeth: Wonderful. So what do you believe are important cultural markers in a Messianic Jewish worship service?

Jim: Well, uh, we believe we have to retain our Jewish identity. And so there are several ways that we do that. The most regular is by doing a Torah service. Now we don't do that every week. We do that probably a couple times a month or once a month. We incorporate the Jewish liturgical prayers in the service. Uh, our worship music usually is a mix of Hebrew and English.

Elizabeth: Okay

Jim: Uh, with the Hebrew transliterated and translated. And we encourage a lot of circle dancing. And of course, we keep the holidays. So we have special holiday celebrations for most of the holidays. And we have bar and bat mitzvah programs for our children. We have circumcisions for our young children, our boys. We do immersion. We call it *t'vilah*, which is the Hebrew word for immersion.

Elizabeth: Can you spell that for me?

Jim: I will spell it t-'v-i-l-a-h

Elizabeth: thank you.

Jim: It's also called *mikvah* in the Messianic movement, but that's really not grammatically correct. Because mikvah is actually the pool, but the actual immersion is *t'vilah*.

Elizabeth: Okay

Jim: And we emphasize the Jewishness of those things. For instance, immersion was around way before the time of the New Covenant. Um, I'm trying to think of what else we do. We keep biblically kosher. We integrate people into the congregation through an extensive, uh, class that I teach, a once a week class that we call Messianic Judaism class. We teach them about all the holidays and all the customs and, ah ... so that's another way that we keep Jewish tradition.

Elizabeth: So is that like a membership class?

Jim: It is a membership class, yes.

Elizabeth: Okay

Jim: At the moment, we're very focused on the situation in Israel, praying for, encouraging people to get involved in the Jewish community. Last week, a bunch of us attended a meeting at one of the non-Messianic synagogues focusing on the situation in Israel.

Elizabeth: Mmm, So what aspects of traditional Jewish liturgical practices were integrated into Messianic Judaism? You mentioned the traditional prayers, those are from traditional Jewish?

Jim: Right, and, like you know, keeping the holidays. That would be...but, ah, bar mitzvahs... We do those with, you know, in traditional ways and circumcision, we do that traditional ways.

Elizabeth: So you use the Siddur in your service? Or ...

Jim: Not usually, we ... all over to slides, ah, projects, a projector with an electronic, power point slide.

Elizabeth: Okay, yeah

Jim: So, we don't have a bunch of Siddurs ... everybody... We put the prayers up on the screen.

Elizabeth: Oh, okay. So it's from the Siddur?

Jim: Yeah, we take the prayers from the Siddur that are relevant and use them on the screens.

Elizabeth: Okay, now what are some contemporary Christian worship practices that were integrated into Messianic Judaism?

Jim: Well, we do a mix of songs ... you know...Christian songs sometimes. Pretty regularly, I would say in our choice of songs you know we might do six songs and one or two of them would be contemporary Christian songs.

Elizabeth: Okay

Jim: Uh, we do communion occasionally, but we emphasize the Jewishness of it. Um, other Christian things, certain Bible teaching may be more extensive that you'll find in most traditional synagogues...more like church in terms of significant Bible teaching...

Elizabeth: I'm sorry. You're cutting in and out on me. You said that, um, the Bible teaching you do is more extensive than would at most synagogues?

Jim: In a traditional synagogue, yeah

Elizabeth: In a traditional synagogue? Okay.

Jim: Teach out of the New Covenant, which would not be done in a traditional synagogue, but would be in church. Uh, we take up an offering, which most traditional synagogues don't do.

Elizabeth: Okay, now, thank you so much. But what are some liturgical practices that from either the Christian or Jewish world are, um, were avoided in the formation of your service? And why is that?

Jim: I would try to avoid ones that are not biblical. For instance, the traditional prayer for lighting the Shabbat candles, which I'm sure you must have heard. It actually...says, "God, Who commanded us to light the Shabbat candles." But that's not true. There's nothing in the Scriptures that commands us to light. So we just changed it to, uh, one that ... Jeremiah Greenburg...I think if I know it correctly it goes something like "Who has sanctified us by... Yeshua our Messiah commanded us to be a light to the world?"

Elizabeth: Yes, I have heard that prayer

Jim: Yeah, so we try not to adopt traditional Jewish customs that we ... be biblical.

Elizabeth: Okay, what about from the Christian world? Are there any...

Jim: Uh, well I think from the Christian world, we tend to avoid things that we know will turn off Jewish people.

Elizabeth: Okay

Jim: So our terminology in a lot of what we do, you know, is very different from what you hear in church. We use 'Yeshua' and 'Messiah' and call ourselves a synagogue rather than a church. My title is 'rabbi' rather than 'pastor.'

Elizabeth: Okay

Jim: So that flows into a lot of our songs in our worship. Most of our songs don't use the name Jesus or Christ. Uh, we would use Yeshua Messiah.

Elizabeth: Do you do the Christian holidays?

Jim: ...Um, in homes people do it. We don't discourage people from doing them because we know we have a lot of intermarried couples. And so we all...celebrate Christmas, but we don't discourage our people from doing it.

Elizabeth: Sure

Jim: And some of the other Christian holidays, we turn Jewish; like, for instance, we turn Easter into Resurrection Day and First Fruits. So at Passover time, what we do is we have a Passover seder and we do like a community seder in a ...house with hundreds of people. And then we encourage our people to do sedars in their homes. But then on the Sunday during the week of Passover, we understand that to be a Jewish holiday called 'First Fruits,' which is described in Leviticus chapter twenty-three. And we also understand it to be the day that Yeshua rose from the dead. So we have a special First Fruits, Resurrection service.

Elizabeth: Oh

Jim: Where we celebrate the Resurrection and we celebrate the First Fruits.

Elizabeth: Okay

Jim: And the connection is in 1 Corinthians 15 where Paul speaks about, um, Yeshua as being the first fruits of those resurrected from the dead. So we draw on that passage to talk about the Resurrection and how Jesus is the First Fruits meaning that the rest of us are going to be resurrected. So that's a holiday that we have. Like the way I like to say it is "we've taken all those Christian holidays and reconnected them to their Christian roots." We do a similar thing with Pentecost, Shavuot. We celebrate Shavuot on the same day that church usually celebrates Pentecost. We make a very. We do a big deal out of it. It's a big holiday for us. But we celebrate it as Shavuot and as the day the Holy Spirit was given. But also as the day the Torah was given cause that's the traditional Jewish understanding of it.

Elizabeth: Okay. So, how did the leaders from Christianity, or how do the leaders from Christianity and Judaism respond to you incorporating these practices into your service?

Jim: Well, I think that. my recollection is that early on before I became the rabbi, there was a lot of, there was you know, the accusation that we were "rebuilding the middle wall of partition" that we were a cult,

but then by the time I got to be the rabbi in '96 it seemed like the local pastors were really open to what we were doing, very supportive of it. In fact, I had an amazing experience in 2001. I had been participating in a local pastors group that met monthly and had, like, one chairman, you know...pretty big group. We had about fifty pastors showing up, mostly evangelical, not denominational, some denominational pastors but a lot of charismatic, evangelical pastors and others, independent Baptists, things like that. And amazingly in spring of 2001, they asked me to be president of this group.

Elizabeth: They asked you to do what?

Jim: Be the president of this group of pastors. So for four years I served as the president of the local pastors group. And it was just an amazing experience because I would go to New York City and ...functions representing the group and I'd be introduced as 'Rabbi Jim Appel representing the local evangelical pastors group' [laughter]. And everybody would double take when I was announced. So I found a lot of openness and I get a pretty consistent invitation to speak in churches about once a month. In fact, this Sunday, we're doing a joint service with a local church, actually three local churches that are meeting together with us. So I found, you know, many pastors to be very open. Of course, there are ones who are not, but I've found many to be, not only open, but look to me to educate them and help them understand their Jewish roots. So there have been, I'm trying to remember, at least four churches that have had me come do like twelve weeklong series. Not at their Sunday morning service, but like, Sunday night service or Wednesday night service or something, on, like, the Jewish holidays. And, uh, one pastor that, you know, was ... wanted me to come in and teach his congregation about replacement theology because he was concerned that some of the people in his congregation were getting into that and he's very against it. So my experience has been amazing about, you know, the openness and ah, the ...there have me come and usually if I go, sometimes they're open to having our worship team come, our dancers come, really opportunity to spread the knowledge of our existence and what we're all about within the Church.

Elizabeth: That's really neat. Now, what's the response from the Jewish leaders in your community been?

Jim: Oh, I guess the opposite. [laughter] Yeah, we had a lot of opposition and criticism from the Jewish community. Whenever we do something visible, you know, in public. It's not bad when we're, when we're not doing anything out there, but when we've done things in public, there's been a lot of push back. And you know it's been good. There's an old saying that says "any publicity is good publicity." So, ah, we had some push back. One of the most interesting things we had, is we had a. You know about the, what are called, the anti-missionary organizations?

Elizabeth: Yes, I've heard of them.

Jim: Okay, well, we had a person show up. He called our office and found out when my class was going on, the mid-week class on Messianic Judaism, which is our membership class. And because they didn't realize...where he was coming from, the person in the office invited him to come to class ... so he showed up to class and ...the class and participated and was very knowledgeable in his participation. Then at the end of class, I saw him going around and handing out his business card to people in the class. So I ... and turns out he was an anti-missionary. And had just moved into the area and was trying to make connections with the Jewish people in the class and offering to meet with them and study the Torah with them. So we checked our legal rights and learned that it was legal for us to tell him, "You can't come anymore." And, uh, we did that and that was the end of that, but that was pretty interesting.

Elizabeth: Yeah, that is.

Jim: So, the only positive experience I've had with the local rabbis was one of the local rabbis was doing a thesis on Jewish people who were exploring other ways of faith. So he was interviewing Jewish people who had become Hindus and Buddhists and so he actually interviewed me for his paper. And uh, wrote it up, and we have a cordial relationship. Not real friends, but that's the closest I've gotten to the rabbis in the community.

Elizabeth: Hmm, wow, thank you. So how did early Jewish cultural identity from Yeshua's era, you know, as you're reading the New Covenant, how does that influence liturgical decisions that are made? You mentioned that there are certain things that you do biblically versus traditionally, is that...

Jim: Mmm-hmm, well if we can find a biblical basis for something...that the Lord did in the New Covenant, like Passover, that's absolutely something that we incorporate. We actually do our Passover seder, um, much more like He would have done it than traditional Judaism does it today. So we have our own Haggadah and we do, basically, we do communion in the Passover seder when he does, you know, when we take the third cup and we eat the afikoman because that's how we understand He did it. So we incorporate things like the from biblical practices that we can see. I'm trying to think of others. Uh, on Shavuot or Pentecost, as I read the book of Acts, "After this the disciples were gathered together early in the morning on the day of Shavuot," my understanding of that is they were keeping a Jewish tradition to stay up all night on the eve of Shavuot and pray and worship and study the Scripture and that's why they were there so early in the morning. So we usually have an all-night prayer meeting that night, which is a New Testament that ...comes out of the New Testament. And then of course we relate a lot of the holidays, like for instance Yom Kippur. We relate a lot of what was done in biblical times, in Temple times on Yom Kippur, the sacrifices to Yeshua's sacrifice. That is very much a biblical way of keeping traditional Jewish holidays. So we keep them...but it's nothing like it's kept in traditional synagogues. We incorporate some of the liturgical prayers, but ... is about how Yeshua fulfilled it.

Elizabeth: Right. Okay. So one thing that I've been learning is that early on when a lot of the Messianic Jewish congregations and synagogues were founded, um, there was less liturgy than there might be today. Is that true of your fellowship?

Jim: Uh, I would say about the same. Yeah, I think it's about the same. I don't think we've gone very far either way on that. I don't think we did a Torah service when we first started because we didn't have a Torah. And then when we got one, I don't remember doing it very frequently either until I became the rabbi. And then I think we were having a discussion amongst our leaders here, talking how we can maintain a Jewish identity in our services and, ah, it just came to me that that's probably the most effective way ... maintain the Jewish identity is to have a Torah service.

Elizabeth: Yeah, so how do you think the liturgical practices that you use are useful in the maturation of a Messianic Jewish identity? Or are they?

Jim: Well, I think they are. I think we've developed a whole way of music at this point in time, Messianic music at this point in time with several well-known artists and all this new stuff coming out. I'm particularly impressed with the stuff that's coming out of Israel right now. I don't know if, have you ever gotten to the Messiah conference?

Elizabeth: Um, I was able to attend for the first time this year, but I was only able to be there for Monday and Tuesday.

Jim: Oh, well, this year they had, you know, like twenty young Israelis there, and they did a lot of the worship. A lot of the leading of worship was, you know, Israeli composed ... So, there's a whole, they're really different from American composed Hebrew songs, cause they're native Hebrew speakers so they...better at it. So you know, I think there's a lot of identity coming out of the music, coming out of the dance, and keeping of the holidays. In the class I do, I explain to people that they're really changing cultures by becoming part of the Messianic movement and that they need to see this as a slow process. That it doesn't happen just because you showed up. But you go through the year, you celebrate all the holidays, you attend weddings and funerals and bar mitzvahs. You begin to have a whole different culture that if you weren't raised Jewish. If you are raised Jewish, then that culture that you were raised with we attempt to make it weld into the New Covenant. We have to show how it is the roots of the New Covenant. So I know for me, I was not ... with my Jewish background as a child in traditional synagogues and things. And what I would strive to do as a rabbi is take those traditions and make them relevant, make them meaningful so they weren't just ritual ... but make them have a spiritual meaning, make them somehow bring revelation of the Lord and of all He's done.

Elizabeth: So, talking about the music, what are some musical influences that you know of that were drawn upon...

Jim: I couldn't understand you [cutting in and out]...say it again. I couldn't hear you.

Elizabeth: Oh, sorry. Yeah, I said what are the musical influences that are drawn upon in the development of Messianic Jewish music?

Jim: Oh that's an interesting question because I've seen, like we just talked about...Israelians. But our worship leaders have also drawn on Hassidic music quite a bit.

Elizabeth: On what music?

Jim: Hassidi? You know, Jewish Orthodox

Elizabeth: Oh! Yes, yes.

Jim: And so we do quite a few songs that are taken right from the Hassidic, the more lively songs that they do. And even some from contemporary traditional Judaism that are adoptable. So we're seeing Israeli, contemporary, and Hassidic influence in a lot of the songs that we're doing. And ... worship leaders just searching around. There's so much available on the internet now that you can find, you know, all kinds of music and adopt it if it's meaningful. So there's that and then of course we have the Messianic artists, the traditional American ones who have written some great songs like Marty Goetz and Paul Wilbur and Joel Chernoff and Ted Pearce. They're always coming up with good stuff.

Elizabeth: Mmm-hmm. Now you've mentioned dance a couple times. Um, how, what do you believe the importance of Messianic dance is?

Jim: Well, I think it's unique. I don't know of any, anywhere where you can do the circle dances during worship time. They're not in the traditional synagogue and certainly not in churches. And, uh, I think it draws people. I know many people who have become involved in the movement because they love to dance. So they see it and it's like...so I think it adds a lot of life. And, uh, I've done some study that the early church, which was a Messianic church, a Messianic Jewish church, uh, that they talked about a ring dance. We talk about them as circle dances, but there's mention in some of the ancient literature of the

church, the historical documents, of people doing ring dances. So I think it was really part of what went on in the early days in the Messianic movement.

Elizabeth: Wow, that's really interesting.

Jim: And I found another interesting factor is that as I've visited other Messianic congregations, uh, that there are so many more women dancing than men. And I found a way to counter that and that's by me dancing. [laughter] So I love to dance, and our congregation has almost as many men and women dancing. And I really think it's because I set that example. Um, there was a period there when I didn't dance and it turned into being an all-women's ring. So ...men have to step up.

Elizabeth: That's funny you say that because I've noticed in congregations where I've participated on the worship team, you know, if you observe how the pastor or the rabbi worships, just look around and you'll see that the men follow suit. It's very interesting to notice.

Jim: Yup. Right. Right

Elizabeth: Now how did the theological understandings of emerging Messianic Judaism influence the liturgical decisions of Messianic Jewish congregations?

Jim: Well, I think in the first place the freedom to have a Jewish expression had to be established theologically because the church and their integration of replacement theology was actually, you know, at a point of saying, "Anything Jewish is evil...it should be avoided." My own studies are that for hundreds of years if you tried to do anything that had Jewish tradition in the church, you were excommunicated. And you were accused of not really being saved...trying to earn your salvation by doing these good works. If you kept the Passover or you ... so I think the theological basis is very important that, um, that's all wrong. That the Bible doesn't teach that at all and that that came out of the animosity that developed between the early church and the Jewish community. And uh to where in the second and third centuries the church became very anti-Semitic and we have the writings of the early church fathers that were hateful toward Jews. And so the theological basis of tearing all of that down is very important to give us the freedom to incorporate Jewish tradition into how we worship.

Elizabeth: Hmm, okay wonderful. Uh, Rabbi I have one or two more questions. This has been wonderful. Thank you.

Jim: Actually, on that last one, if you're interested in that, I just watched a documentary movie that's just come out. They were promoting it at the Messiah Conference and I got a copy of it. It's called "Let the Lion Roar" and it's about an hour long documentary on how when the Protestant Reformation happened, uh, they didn't deal with the fact that the church had been hating Jews for like twelve hundred years and how that was ... a big thing that the Reformation missed. It reformed the church in certain ways, but it didn't reform its anti-Semitism. And that that was a huge issue. So the person who does this, Van Frank does this documentary. He goes back to the writings of Luther and Calvin and ...Jews after the Reformation and in the midst of the Reformation and shows why it was, it was really something that they missed so bad.

Elizabeth: Huh, I'll have to look that up. Thank you! Um, now Rabbi have you, have you travelled to Messianic Jewish congregations internationally?

Jim: Um, I would say in Canada, ah, in Israel. Um, when I visited Russia, which was in the early nineties, there weren't any Messianic congregations yet. Uh, so that's about it. Canada and Israel—that's all I can claim.

Elizabeth: So what are some similarities or differences that you noticed between the American Messianic Jewish worship experience and those in Canada and Israel?

Jim: Well, in Canada, we're very similar. Very, very similar I think mostly because the particular congregations that I've visited there, they both belong to the IAMCS also and uh are very similar. In Israel, uh, it was quite different because they kind of see themselves more as churches in Israel. Interesting, because, actually I shouldn't say that. I shouldn't say that. The places I visited when I was in Israel were really churches of foreigners who were you know living in Israel so they were more like churches. They didn't have a lot of native Israelis in them.

Elizabeth: Okay, so you said they were more like churches but they didn't have a high Israeli membership?

Jim: Yeah, that's right. So I really couldn't say.

Elizabeth: Okay, wow, well, thank you so much. That was the last of my questions.

Appendix L: Irving Salzman

Interview with Rabbi Irving Salzman on August 4, 2014

Elizabeth: So, Rabbi to begin can you just tell me a little bit about your background? How you got into ministry?

Irving: Okay, okay. Um, well, obviously, I became a believer first. I was saved in a pretty observant religious Jewish background and had that kind of an upbringing. I went to rabbinical school in my youth, something that we call Yeshivas, which is a, you know, a Jewish school where you learn from rabbinical texts and what not. And I was also, in my teen years and even into my early twenties, I was working at a synagogue, a traditional Jewish synagogue, working as the Torah reader every week. And also, I was sort of like a lay cantor. I would lead prayer services and so when I got saved, when I came to know Jesus as my Messiah, Yeshua, um, you know, it was out of that background. I was actually still working in the synagogue. And so, given that I had always been in ministry, even prior to being saved, if you can call that ministry. But even though I had always been in religious work, in ministry, even before I came to know the Lord, it was something that always came naturally to me so when I did become a believer and I realized that, you know, everything I had been doing up until that point was in the context of a Jewish community that didn't have the full truth, didn't know the full truth of the Messiah and the fulfillment of the prophecies and the Scriptures. And so my heart really ached over the condition of my people, that we didn't know the truth, that we didn't have all the promises and fulfillments. And so, I really had a burden. Here I was already working in the synagogue, but I really had a burden to share the Good News, the Gospel with my people. So that's really what was the impetus for me coming into ministry. And then I was pretty faithful in going to, you know, Bible studies and I befriended several people in Jewish ministry and they just you know brought me up in the faith. They mentored me. They saw me grow in my faith, and when I made known to them that I really desired to go into ministry, they, you know, they really encouraged me and they provided a scholarship to Bible college for me. And then I started working part time when I was going to school in Jewish ministry and when I graduated, I went fulltime into Jewish ministry.

Elizabeth: Wow. That's wonderful. So how long have you been a rabbi?

Irving: Um, in my current tenure, I was hired to be the rabbi of the congregation where I'm currently serving in 2000. So it's about fourteen years. But I had actually worked in congregations previously to that. But let's say, you know, fourteen plus years.

Elizabeth: Okay. That's wonderful. So how would you define Messianic Judaism?

Irving: I would say that, um, you know, you can define it in different ways. That's an excellent question. You know, sometimes I define it according to the audience that I'm speaking with. But I would say that if I were talking to a Jewish person. Let me put it this way, if I were talking to a Jewish person who didn't know the Lord, how I would define it is I would say that it is everything that the Jewish religion teaches. However, it is not only that, but it is the fulfillment. It is seeing in Jesus, in Yeshua, the fulfillment of all of the hope and promises of the Hebrew Scriptures. So we have the fullness of everything that God promised. That's how I would explain it to a Jewish person. If I were explaining it to a Christian, I would say, "Well, it's the same thing as Evangelical Christianity, born again Christianity. However, we have recognized that God has called us physically as Jews. You know, He doesn't expect me to become Gentile now that I'm a believer in Jesus. He wants me to embrace my Messianic faith, but my faith in Jesus within the context of my physical Jewish lineage." So that's what I would say to an Evangelical Christian. I would say that it's

everything that you are except I'm recognizing that I'm still Jewish and I will continue to identify as a Jew and with my people.

Elizabeth: Okay, so what do you believe are important cultural markers in Messianic Jewish worship services?

Irving: Wow, that's a great question. Um, I think that the use of Hebrew is certainly good because it _____ continuous with the Jewish community. I think that the worship selections are, you know, I think that it's good to have Messianic ones, you know, maybe taken from the book of Psalms. Jewish people can appreciate and identify with. So, I think the use of Hebrew, the use of traditional Jewish liturgy that doesn't compromise or contradict our faith. Um, again I think that music that would and worship songs that would relate to the Jewish people as a whole and to the Messianic hope and the Messianic faith, again using things from Scriptures that all Jewish people can relate to [coughing] such as the book of Psalms. So those definitely I think would more, uh, you know, that's what you would notice perhaps in a Messianic congregation as opposed to going to a church. You know, you mark ... New Testament ... of faith, but what would mark it as Messianic and what would mark it as let's say traditional Evangelical Christian. And I think those things the use of Hebrew, the use of the Jewish liturgy, the use of Jewish ceremony, you know, like the traditional Jewish marriage ceremony. I think the Jewish feasts, the celebration of Jewish feasts, you know, that would be a cultural marker and the other things that I mentioned earlier.

Elizabeth: Okay, so going off of that what aspects of traditional Jewish liturgical practices are integrated into Messianic Judaism?

Irving: Well, that's a great question too, but I think that that is probably very congregation specific because ... very different. [trouble with signal] Um, for us I can tell you and I don't know if you are, if I name some of the prayers, I'm not sure that you would recognize them per se. I'm not sure how extensive your background and knowledge of Jewish liturgy. But again, it would include all, like for example, the Sedar at Passover time. We do practice circumcision, but for Jewish kids. We don't believe that it's incumbent on everyone. And we don't do it to be saved, and we don't do it for sanctification. But we do it because it was part of the Abrahamic covenant in the Old Testament and the Abrahamic covenant is still ongoing. It's not like the Mosaic covenant. The Abrahamic covenant is eternal and unconditional. So in response to that the sign of the Abrahamic covenant in Genesis 17 was circumcision. So we continue to, you know, for Jewish babies born into Jewish families, males of course, we continue to practice circumcision. That would be another Jewish liturgical things that you would invite into the Messianic setting. We do bar and bat mitzvahs. Again not teaching that we are under the law because we feel that we're free to either keep it or not keep it. [coughing] Recognizing that it doesn't save us or sanctify us, but we still at the same time recognize our membership within the Jewish people as a whole. And, you know, the Jewish community does recognize that there is an age of, um, I won't say accountability, but uh, an age of, um, passing. You know, where you become recognized as a valuable, contributing member of the Jewish community, and for boys, that's thirteen; girl's that's twelve. So we continue to practice bar and bat mitzvahs that would be part of what we've liturgically incorporated into our Messianic setting. So those would be a few of the things. Some of the liturgical prayers too that we would continue to ascribe to, for example, it's called the Shema, but it's found in Deuteronomy 6:4, "Hear O Israel. The Lord our God, the Lord is one." So, and that's kind of like the center piece even within the traditional Jewish community, the non-Messianic Jewish community. And you will hear that chanted at our congregation as well.

Elizabeth: Okay

Irving: Now, we don't believe that our faith in the triune God contradicts, you know, Deuteronomy 6:4, the Shema. We still believe in the oneness of God. However, we believe that He is triune.

Elizabeth: So do you also do the V'ahavta?

Irving: Yep, we also do the V'ahavta. Yep.

Elizabeth: Okay. Wonderful. Now what contemporary Christian liturgical or worship practices were integrated into Messianic Judaism?

Irving: Mmm-hmm, and again I would just preface my remarks by saying that I can't claim to speak for all of Messianic Judaism. I can only claim to speak for our local expression of it at our congregation. But I would say that, you know, we do a lot of, uh, especially our current worship team, the current people that are doing it are young people and so they, you know, they listen to contemporary Christian worship music. So they have actually incorporated a lot of those songs into our worship. So we pretty much have a mix of traditional Messianic music as well as contemporary Christian.

Elizabeth: Okay

Irving: Yup, so we would consider that to be fair game for us as well. It's funny. I was at a church. I actually spoke at a church yesterday. I was invited to speak at a church, and, um, of course the worship was not Messianic at all, but it was still beautiful. Everything that they sang was just so theologically correct and very edifying for me, you know, to hear it and to sing along with it.

Elizabeth: That's cool. So is that the primary point of, um, music is pretty much the only thing that's used from the Christian world in your Messianic congregation?

Irving: Uh, I think so. But there are others, I'm trying to think of what else we might do. Like for example, we do have small groups in our congregation. Obviously, there's nothing inherently Gentile or Jewish about small groups, but that's something that the larger church world, you know, the traditional church world has incorporated as a way of having members interact and fellowship during the week. And it's a way to extend care to, you know, create care groups. So people who interact during the week pray together and, you know, come alongside one another. So, of course, that was something in the traditional non-Jewish world and that's something that we've also incorporated into our congregational setting. So that would be another thing. I don't know that you'd call that worship per se, but you know, that's. So we, yes, there's definitely a lot of great things in the traditional non-Jewish church and, ah, those are things that we really feel comfortable using. Not everything obviously, but...

Elizabeth: Right. I'm told pretty much across the board the Christian holidays are avoided. Is that true of your congregation also?

Irving: The Christian holidays are what? Can you say that again?

Elizabeth: Avoided, they're not...

Irving: You know what it's interesting. I would guess, I would make a guess that you've probably say that because you've spoken to other Messianic leaders. We're not so much. We don't so much avoid it. I wouldn't say we do them all, like, we won't do Easter in our congregation. We wouldn't call it 'Easter.' We would call it 'Resurrection Day.' You know because the name 'Easter' obviously has pagan origins. I don't know if you know that, but the name has pagan origins. But, and, you won't find. At Christmas time,

you will not find a Christmas tree in our congregation, which is not to say that we are anti-Christmas. But, you know, obviously, that's more of a Gentile expression of faith, not something that Jewish people are raised with. So what I would do for example at Christmas time is that I always, every year will give a Christmas message, you know, a birth of Messiah message in deference to the larger Christian world and the fact that we do have people in our congregation who do come from Gentile backgrounds, who for them Christmas was meaningful in their bringing up. So we don't. We'll always pay homage to it, at least a message, a sermon.

Elizabeth: Okay. Wonderful. Thank you. Now, what are some liturgical practices from either the Christian or the Jewish world that were, that are avoided, uh, in Messianic Judaism?

Irving: Mmm-hmm, well, that is good. You know, one thing that comes to mind off the bat, um, is that there is a very traditional prayer in the Jewish liturgy, which is said on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, and you may or may not know the name of that prayer, but it's called *kol nidrei*. Have you heard of that one?

Elizabeth: No, I haven't. Could you spell that for me?

Irving: In English, right? You want me to spell in English?

Elizabeth: Yes, please

Irving: Yeah, 'kol' would be k-o-l. 'Nidrei' would be n-i-d-r-e-i. Um, and it's actually, by the way, Aramaic. It means "all vows," okay?

Elizabeth: Okay

Irving: And it's something that they say on the eve of Yom Kippur, at the very start, the first evening. You know how the Jewish day is celebrated from evening to evening?

Elizabeth: [coughing] Uhuh

Irving: Um, so it is said at the evening, uh, at services at synagogues around the world. And basically what it is saying is that all vows which we have made we consider annulled. And there's a tradition that says that that prayer was initially penned during the, um, the Inquisition in Spain in the late 1400s, when Jews were expected either to go into exile and leave Spain or else they were forced to convert. And some of them actually underwent conversion, but it was like a façade. They continued to, they continued to hold onto their Jewish identity even secretly. Okay? So what they were saying, they came up with this kol nidrei prayers—what the tradition says, okay, as to the origin of this prayer—that they're asking God to make annul the vows that they took, namely the vow that they took to be a Christian. Okay? And they're asking God to annul that, "Don't count that against us because we continue to hold onto our Jewish identities." But they had to do it either for fear of death or fear of expulsion. Okay? So we would not do that. Of course Scripture says, "Let your 'yes' be 'yes' and your 'no' be 'no.'" You know? The feeling behind that prayer is it's better to get forgiveness than it is permission. You know? Nobody says it that way, that's just my own assessment of it. So that would be something that we would not do. Um, what else would I? I wouldn't do the Christmas trees, something that I would not do, but I would not do an Easter egg hunt. Um, we do not wear crosses even though the truth of the cross is something that we hold dear, but if Jewish people were to see a cross around my neck, they would automatically think, "Oh, he is a Christian." They wouldn't necessarily think that I was still Jewish. Okay? The big thing with Jewish people—unsaved Jewish people I'm talking about now—is that we have to show them that we can subscribe to faith in Jesus, we can believe in Jesus and we are still Jews. That's the big thing with Jewish people, okay? Because they are so, their identity is so important to them, anything that endangers that is threatening and so the big thing for us

in our witness to Jewish people is to show that “Yes, we believe in Jesus, but we are still Jews through and through.” So, that would be something that I would avoid. Again, not because I say there’s anything wrong with a cross and I know many Christians wear crosses, you know. But I would not because I want to show my Jewish people that I’m not adopting, you know, Gentile forms or expressions. I’m still continuing to identify through and through with my life and practice as a Jew.

Elizabeth: Okay

Irving: Oh, I would even wear, for example, a Jewish star. You know, which doesn’t contradict my faith in Jesus and shows that I’m identifying as Jewish.

Elizabeth: Okay, you said you would wear a Jewish star?

Irving: Yeah, I would wear a Jewish star.

Elizabeth: Okay. Wonderful. So how did the leaders from Christianity and Judaism, how have they responded to Messianic Jews incorporating these liturgical practices?

Irving: Uh, I think that. Well, obviously, there’s two aspects to the question... Christian leaders. I think Christian leaders who understand our movement, who understand and have a heart for the Messianic movement; I think that they would, you know, far and away would be supportive. You know, I think that people who have less understanding of it, for example, would probably question. Say, “Hey, what? You’re a Christian...” You know, this is not uncommon, especially in the past. I think it’s less so today. But in the past, people would say, “Hey, why are you holding onto your Jewish identity? You’re a Christian now.” And they would almost take offense, you know? They would almost be a little indignant. But I think the vast majority of people who understand the Messianic movement, understand that God is doing a work and raising up Jewish people and the remnant of Israel, understand that we need to continue to function as part of our people, and that we need to continue to be a witness to our people. So I think they’re supportive. And as far as the traditional Jewish community that doesn’t believe in Jesus, I think that they would feel in a sense, they would feel violated. Well, sometimes they feel violated and robbed. And they would say, “Why are you incorporating *our* practices into *your* services? You believe in Jesus. You don’t even believe like us.” And so they would think that we’re absconding. They would think that we’re, you know, using their stuff to sort of put a Jewish veneer on what we are. So they almost question. A lot of Jewish people would question the fact that you could believe in Jesus and still be Jewish. They would almost say that theologically that’s a dividing line between Judaism and Christianity. They would say, you know, “The moment you believe in Jesus, you can’t claim to be Jewish anymore.” Okay? So when they see us using Jewish symbols or Jewish liturgy or Jewish traditions in our congregational circles, sometimes they feel indignant because they’re saying, “Hey! You know what? You guys are Christians, but you’re just trying to put a veneer of Judaism on it.” So they almost think that we’re fraudulent; that we’re deceptive; deceptively trying to reach the Jewish people [phone cut out]

Elizabeth: Okay. Um, now how did early Jewish cultural identity from Yeshua’s era, how does that influence liturgical decisions that are made in this rebirth of Messianic Judaism?

Irving: Today?

Elizabeth: Yeah

Irving: Well, I think that's an untapped. I think that's untapped for the most part, but I think there's a lot that can be used. For example, you know, the book of James, ah, you know, it says, "What you come..." I think James chapter two when he and he uses the word a couple of times, "When you come together in your assembly." Okay? You know, in English translations, that's how it reads. Well, the word 'assembly' in the Greek is 'sunagoge,' which, you can already guess where that's going. What word comes from that? 'Synagogue' right? So literally, he says, "When you come together in your synagogues," okay? So and of course, in the early book, in the early chapters of Acts, when the story is still taking place in Jerusalem and Judea and in Israel, you see that the believers were in the Temple every day, they were going from house to house, they continued to celebrate the feasts, so I think. I say untapped, but when you look at the New Testament believers, the early believers especially, the early Messianic Jews and, you know, the early Messianic epistles such as James, you see that these believers in Jesus continued to identify with their Jewish identity, with their Jewish practice, with their Jewish lifestyle. Same thing, by the way, Paul when he writes in Romans chapter eleven and he's arguing for the fact that God's promises to Israel are still in operation, but they, that God hasn't rejected His people, the proof is, he says, "for I too am an Israelite." So he doesn't say, "For I used to." He doesn't say, "I was an Israelite." He doesn't say, "I used to be Jewish." He says, "I am." So, none of that Messianic faith compromises or contradicts a Jewish identity, and so I think that a lot can be gleaned from the early believers, the early followers of Yeshua.

Elizabeth: Okay. Wonderful. Um, so how do you, how have the liturgical practices that are used in Messianic congregations, how are they useful in the maturation of a Messianic Jewish identity?

Irving: Did you say "how are they useful in the maturation?"

Elizabeth: Uhuh

Irving: Of a Messianic Jewish identity?

Elizabeth: Yep

Irving: Um, I think they're very useful. And, uh, you're question makes me think of my own kids because they're being raised in a Messianic congregation and setting. And, um, you know something, we happen to live in a town that is very Jewish. The town that we live in is fifty percent Jewish—twenty-eight thousand residents in Livingston, New Jersey, fourteen thousand of which are Jewish. So my kids when they go to school, and they go to public school, they are in schools, they're rubbing shoulders every day with a class that's almost half, fifty percent Jewish, okay? And these other kids are not believers so they go to the traditional Jewish synagogues, okay? And so, you know, it could almost make you feel, you know, "Gee, do I measure up in their eyes?" And so I think when we inculcate these Messianic values in our kids, the next generation, it makes them; it makes them feel that they do measure up. And they are verifiably Jewish.

Elizabeth: Hmm, wonderful. So switching gears just a little bit, what are some musical influences that were drawn upon in the development of Messianic Jewish music?

Irving: Oh, I would definitely think that, I bet you Rabbi Stephen probably could answer this question better than I can. [laughter]

Elizabeth: [laughter] Yes, he had a good bit to say about that one.

Irving: Yeah, oh yeah, I'm sure he would be the better participant. I think that a lot of it is drawn from traditional Jewish music. For example, the minor keys, you know, the same beat. So there's a real similarity

between Messianic music and traditional Jewish music. But the lyrics. What differentiates, I think, is lyrically. The lyrics of our Messianic movement, which, you know, sort of picks the traditional Jewish beat and the traditional the minor keys and what not, but it uses lyrics that reflect a Messianic understanding of the Scriptures and the Messianic faith. And so for example, if you go into a Jewish synagogue, you're not going to hear a Messianic prophecy put to music. You're not going to hear it. Okay? But if you go to a Messianic congregation, you're going to hear something that talks about Yeshua, that talks about the Messiah, or that talks about some Messianic prophecy, or some prophecy of the end times. I think that Jewish music itself has been a major influence, to answer your question.

Elizabeth: Okay. Wonderful. Um, now what do you believe the importance is of Messianic Jewish dance and its development in Messianic congregations?

Irving: Uh, I think it is good. I think it is very important because obviously, just for the continuity of, again, because Jewish folk dance is important in the Jewish community. So it provides that continuity between our community and the traditional Jewish community but even more so, I think when you are. I think that Messianic dance can reflect the, um, I think that Messianic dance would probably reflect the joy and the worship that we feel. In other words, we're not just spouting songs when we worship. But dance is almost like a spontaneous expression of the joy and worship that's in one's heart when you are singing a particular worship song. It's not just rote words on a page. There's something that comes spontaneously and, you know, in the case of dance, it issues forth in dance.

Elizabeth: Okay. Wonderful.

Irving: And that, by the way, I'm not a dancer.

Elizabeth: Do you have dance at your synagogue?

Irving: Yes, we do. Yes, we do.

Elizabeth: Okay. Awesome. Now, how did the theological understandings of emerging Messianic Judaism influence the liturgy that the congregations chose to use?

Irving: What's the question? Can I hear that quick one more time?

Elizabeth: How did the theological understandings of emerging Messianic Judaism, I guess this goes back to when, kind of when it was first starting, um, influence the liturgy that the Messianic congregations chose to use?

Irving: Yeah, that's a good question. Um, when the Messianic movement was just starting, you mean, like in the, uh, twentieth century, you're talking about?

Elizabeth: Yeah,

Irving: Like the late '60s?

Elizabeth: Mmm-hmm

Irving: Well, I think that historically. And again I, you know, there's probably studies on this, you know, but there's probably a lot more ... on this. But if you think about, and of course it happened. You know, the Jesus Movement too was in the Gentile world, you know. It really started happening in the late '60s. Okay?

Now, the one event that happened, what world event, what happened in the late '60s? You know, 1948 Israel was reformed back in the land, but then in 1967 there was the Six Day War and Jerusalem fell back into Jewish hands for the first time in two thousand years. So and of course, I think that Israel occupies a prominent place in end time, biblical prophecy. So I think it's all coming together. It's almost like a circle. God is restarting to work with the Jewish people, right? Let's say that's the theological underpinning of it. And then you have the birth of the Messianic movement; people realizing, "Hey, God is calling us back. God's calling our people back to faith and He's starting to do things," as evidenced by the fact Jerusalem was now back in Jewish hands. So when you see the fulfillment of the Scriptures, that's almost like a theological underpinning for everything that you do. So I think that's when Messianic movement, you know, people started planting Messianic congregations and recognizing, "Hey, we've got to identify. We've got to be on the forefront. We've got to be sharing this message with our people and even with the world at large, with the Church." You know, calling the Church back to its, you know, original Jewish roots. Recognizing, God still does have a place for Israel. You know ... it at Liberty, but there's a big movement called "Replacement Theology"...right? Which actually believes that the Church has replaced Israel in God's program, okay? And I think that 1948, when Israel, when the state of Israel was formed back in the land and then 1967 when Jerusalem ...into Jewish hands, I think that started the change.

Elizabeth: Hmm, okay. Wonderful. So Rabbi have you had the opportunity to minister or visit Messianic congregations internationally?

Irving: You know, I was just at one a couple of weeks ago in Berlin, but I couldn't stay for the whole service. They do a three hour service.

Elizabeth: Oh my goodness

Irving: Yeah, I know, and the timing of it was bad. I was actually on a tour. So I had to get back to the tour. But it was interesting, you know, it was a congregation of German Jews and also of Russian Jews living in Germany. So I was able to attend that for a little bit. But I am by no means an expert on international expressions of Messianic Judaism. No. I haven't had the chance to see too many.

Elizabeth: Okay, well let me ask you this. In your observing even just a portion of that service, what are some similarities or differences that you noticed between their worship and the American Messianic Jewish worship?

Irving: That's a good question. Um, I would say both. I would say there were similarities and there were differences. I liked, there were certain things I liked about theirs. They were just, you know, I found it refreshing because there was such a wonderful marriage in this particular congregation in Berlin between Jewishness and faith. In other words, they were so unashamed in the way that they worshiped. You could almost feel, you could almost discern that they were proud to be Jews and proud to be believers. And there was no contradiction of that. They were just so confident of who they were in Jesus as Jews. And I can't point to what did that for people just there was something about it. But that's the way it made me feel.

Elizabeth: Wonderful. Wow. Thank you so much, Rabbi.

Irving: My pleasure

Elizabeth: That was actually my last question.

Irving: Oh, wow. Well, that was painless!

Appendix M: Glenn Harris

Interview with Rabbi Glenn Harris on August 4, 2014

Elizabeth: Well, Rabbi, to begin can you tell me a little bit about your background? How you got involved in Messianic Jewish ministry?

Glenn: Sure, um, well first, I came to the Lord when I was twenty-two years old. It was March of 1981. And, uh, well, I just did something dumb. Hang on a second here. Oh, I see what I did. I didn't do anything really dumb. I only did a minorly dumb thing. Hold on a second. [laughter] ... Okay, there we go. Anyway, I came to the Lord in 1981 at Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa cause I grew up in Southern California. And what happened was, uh, I was just going to churches, not mainline churches. I was going to evangelical churches or Assemblies of God churches or what have you for a couple years. and I was just working various jobs when I was twenty-two years old so I still didn't have the sense of what I was going to do with my life. What happened was I ended up working for a jewelry company as a sales rep, and I was doing that for about two years. And it was all good except that I had recently rededicated my life to the Lord, and I was just so excited to be talking to people about the Lord and then I started getting a little bit of trouble for it because my regional manager, he flies up to Seattle, at this point I'm living in Seattle, and he says, "Listen, Glenn, I hear you're talking about whatever this religious thing is with our clients and you just can't do that. I'm not telling you as your boss. I'm telling you as a friend. You just can't do that. You can't talk about politics or religion while you're working." And the following week I was on a sales trip out to Oregon and I'm thinking to myself, "What am I going to do? Cause I can't keep quiet about this!" It was just the best news ever. I can't keep quiet about it. So, um, I started praying and saying, "Lord, am I destined to go from job to job to job until I get fired for talking to people about Yeshua?" And, uh, so I'm praying and I'm out in the middle of nowhere. I'm up on the road to a place called The Dalles, Oregon, which may as well be called the _____. I mean it's in the middle of nowhere. And I'm driving along and I just started praying, "Lord, what am I supposed to do because I want to talk to people about Your Son. I don't want to keep getting fired or end up getting fired. What am I supposed to do?" And on the radio, right then, comes this advertisement for a Bible college and the guy says "Have you ever considered ... the ministry?" [laughter] And it dawned on me. Its like, "How come I never even thought about the idea that I could be a pastor? Or something like that?" So when I got back to town, it turns out. Um, I was living in Remond, Washington which is a Seattle suburb and I had some friends at church that went to the local Bible college. It was an Assemblies of God Bible college. So I said, "Hey, can I come sit in on some class? I just want to ... what the Lord has for me." Cause I had dropped out of college years earlier and, uh, so I sat in on some classes. The Lord really confirmed, "This is what I want you to be doing." So I ended up studying, getting ready to go into ministry. And here's where things got really strange, but ultimately in a good way. I was down studying at Northwest College... Assemblies of God, and, uh, I had just a year to go. And was enjoying it, was doing well in my classes, I had a lot of friends. And all of the sudden I took ill and it turns out I was diagnosed with testicular cancer. So I had to, uh, immediately withdraw from school. Um, my parents invited me to come back to Los Angeles and weather the storm back at home with them and so I did. Now things had been a little bit tense with my family when I came to the Lord at age twenty-two. At first they figured it was just a little passing phase and when they realized it wasn't, that's when things got a little tense. I mean, they weren't religious themselves. They weren't being hypocritical. They were just wondering if I was in a cult, do I even still consider myself a Jew, all of these questions. So anyway, I fly home to Los Angeles. My mom picks me up at the airport. We get back to the house. She says, "Just throw your things in your old room. And I'll fix up some lunch." So I throw my things in my old room, she's fixing lunch, we're talking. Then I got the yellow pages out cause I wasn't going to wait five minutes trying to find a place of worship. I had made that mistake once before of not making it a point to be

in fellowship. And, um, so I'm looking through the yellow pages. I'm looking at various churches, and then it dawns on my, "Wait a minute. I'm in L.A. There are Jews here. So maybe there's a Messianic congregation." I had never belonged to one, but in Seattle there was one or two of them I had been able to visit. And I thought, "Maybe, maybe there's a Messianic congregation around here." You ready for this? Now this is Los Angeles. This is a city that's so big it would take you easily three and a half to four hours to drive end to end in city traffic. And in this huge metropolitan area there was a Messianic synagogue ten minutes from their house.

Elizabeth: Wow

Glenn: Yeah, so what happened was I began going there. It's called Ahavat Zion. In fact, they were featured in the most recent Messianic Times. Back then Barry Budoff was the rabbi. And, so this congregation became my new home while I had to go through surgery, more surgery, chemotherapy. They watched me lose all my hair, lose a lot of weight... Then they watched me rebound and gain my strength and get my hair back and so for a good two years that was my spiritual home. And that was how I got reacquainted with my Jewish background, became familiar once again with the liturgy, um, and my parents were reassured that even though, yeah I believe in Jesus. I still very much identify as a Jew. So it was a really great witness for them. They would come to services once in a while. My mother thought the services were just beautiful. I think she was just afraid of my dad... I think she would have probably become a believer in a heartbeat except that she was... for my dad. Anyway, so that's how I really got connected with the Messianic movement was through going through the cancer, being back home in Los Angeles, and joining a Messianic congregation. And then, uh, in 1986, the end of 1986, I was invited to join the staff of Jews for Jesus. And so from November of 1986 to May of 1997, about ten and a half years, I was on staff with Jews for Jesus and then seventeen years ago, came out here to work with Loren and Martha Jacobs at congregation Shema Yisrael.

Elizabeth: Wow. And what year was that? You said seventeen years ago?

Glenn: Ah, May 1997 is when I started. So it's been fourteen years, uh, what am I saying? Seventeen years

Elizabeth: You're good. Wow so how would you define Messianic Judaism?

Glenn: How would I define Messianic Judaism? Um, the modern day movement of Jewish people recognizing and acknowledging that Jesus is the promised Messiah and developing a form of worship that is more, uh, in concert with Jewish culture going back thousands of years.

Elizabeth: Okay, so what do you believe are important cultural markers in Messianic Jewish worship?

Glenn: Uh, the cultural markers, I'll be honest with you, I don't consider as important as the theological and doctrinal markers. Um, you know, styles of music are good and I think its. Don't get me wrong. It's not that I don't think it's important, but sometimes I think we can be in danger of exalting culture over doctrine. And um, I'm always careful not to do that. There are, for example, Elizabeth, prayers that we will never, they're ancient prayers, they're very familiar prayers within Judaism. We will never, you'll never see me include them at Shema. For example...as beautiful a melody as it is, I won't, we don't pray the Alenu.

Elizabeth: Okay, why is that?

Glenn: I consider the Alenu to be a form of elitism. You know, while it's true that God did choose Israel from among all the nations of the world. In the New Covenant context, I don't think we're entitled to pray exclusionary prayers like that. And I consider the Alenu, however beautiful it is and however ancient it is, to be exclusionary. God says, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the peoples." And the Alenu just smacks a little bit too much of, "He didn't choose them. He chose us." You know, it's all about us. And I'm a little leery of that.

Elizabeth: Okay, what are some others that you would avoid?

Glenn: I'm sorry.

Elizabeth: What are some others that you would avoid?

Glenn: Um, I don't know. Well, I guess our philosophy is we don't do things just because it's always been done that way. Um, for example, here's another example, on Yom Kippur, we don't sing kol nidrei. And that may be sacrilegious to some Messianic Jews, but when you think about the context. Jewish conversions are not going on today of Jewish people. Um, so the context in which it came about doesn't exist, and just because it's a beautiful and a haunting melody doesn't mean you do it just because it's always been done. Um, and frankly when you think of the context of the kol nidrei, it was Jewish people basically renouncing their vows to follow Jesus which they had to do to save their lives or to save their livelihood, and I get that. But that context does not exist. And why would we want to pray a prayer or sing a song that's a renouncing of vows? So anyway, to me it's always biblical truth and sound teaching always come before culture, always.

Elizabeth: Okay, so what are some aspects of the traditional Jewish liturgy that have been integrated into Messianic Judaism?

Glenn: Well, I can't speak for all of Messianic Judaism, but at congregation Shema Yisrael we do recite the Shema. We ... more particularly, we don't just simply say the Shema and V'ahavta. We actually expand upon it. We don't feel that we're constrained to ...so for example, we will frequently have a reading that introduces the Shema. So we're affirming that yes, there is one God, but He is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. So, we're contextualizing things. And, uh, so yes, the Shema is very much a part of what we do. *Al chate* uh, confessing our sins is something that we usually do.

Elizabeth: Can you say that again?

Glenn: Sorry?

Elizabeth: What was that again?

Glenn: Al chate, um, "all sins" or "____ sins." Al chate is a confession of our sins corporately. And we typically will say the ____ before we have the Lord's Supper together because we want to come to Messiah's table with a clean heart and good conscience. Um, you know, the blessing before the reading of the Torah. When it's Purim, blessing before the reading of the *megillah*. Um, I mean there's a lot that we do incorporate and I can't speak for all of Messianic Judaism. You know, like I said I'm not a spokesperson for all of the movement, but at our congregation, we really value highly the contextualization of everything that we do based on Scripture. So for example, uh, when I was at the office earlier today, one of the reasons I was running late is because I decided to get ambitious and put the order of service together today instead of tomorrow. Um, for example, here's our lineup. I'm looking at our lineup of songs for this coming

Shabbat and it happens to be Shabbat Nachamu which is the “Sabbath of Consolation” after the Ninth of Av, cause the Ninth of Av is this week. And so I selected songs that have the theme of the future restoration of Israel and the wonderful things God is going to do for the Jewish people at the end of the age. So our first song up is “Trees of the Field,” very well-known song. And we don’t just...reading responsively as...Isaiah chapter 55:6-12. Then we sing the song based on that Scripture. The next song will be ____ “there will yet again be heard within the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem the sound of joy and gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride.” So before we sing that, we’re going to read and pray together Jeremiah 33. We really try in our worship to join everything to the Scriptures that it’s founded on.

Elizabeth: Okay. Wonderful. So Rabbi what aspects of contemporary Christian liturgy were integrated into your service, into your Messianic Jewish service?

Glenn: Um, let’s see...Christian liturgy. Um, not so much, um...that we ... incorporate anything, but we ... mix songs that are Messianic but also contemporary Christian. Um, “You Never Let Go” sang that last, uh, the week before. We do, you know, Aaron Shust songs and Third Day songs and things like that. We don’t limit it to only Messianic style. But, um, but I would say, if you look at the layout of our service, um, we’re not quite in the same vein as most evangelical churches. Most evangelical churches start out with, you know, a welcome and then there’s some songs, but you don’t usually have songs interspersed with prayers and readings of Scripture. It’s sort of like everything is compartmentalized. Now we’re singing. Okay, now we’re sitting. Now we’re listening. Okay, now we’re standing. We ... try to mix it all together and try a more integrative approach, which I think is more authentically Jewish anyway. By having Scripture preceding the music, preceding the songs, and to me it’s helpful for worship because that way everything is being reinforced. We just read Isaiah 55, hey, now we’re singing Isaiah 55. That’s how the Word of God gets its way deep into our hearts; is when we say it, we read it, and we sing it. So, that’s how we do things at Shema anyway.

Elizabeth: Okay so on the flip side of this, what worship practices from either the Christian or Jewish worlds were avoided in the formation of your service? You’ve mentioned a couple from the Jewish world, a couple of the prayers. Is there more to add?

Glenn: Yeah, for example, there are prayers from historic Christianity that we do pray. But for example, we don’t call it the ‘Lord’s Prayer.’ We call it the ‘Disciple’s Prayer’ because He said, “When you pray, pray like this.” So who’s He talking to? He’s talking to the disciples and we’ve adapted that. For example, and again this is a kind of integration, so we’ll say “Avinu malkeinu, our Father, our King, give us this day our daily bread. Avinu malkeinu, our Father, our King, lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.” So there are some prayers that are traditional Christian prayers that we’ve taken and adapted and kind of made it a little more Jewish along the way.

Elizabeth: Okay

Glenn: Yeah, in fact we’re praying a prayer this coming Shabbat “Avinu malkeinu, our Father, our King.” So um, and then for example, we do have a version of, uh, the Apostles’ Creed, but again because we prefer to be faithful to Scripture more than tradition we don’t say that Jesus descended to hell. The Scripture doesn’t say that. Um, there’s a difference between She’ol and hell. So we don’t say, so even though for centuries and centuries and centuries the Apostles’ Creed, “He descended into hell. The third day He rose again.” We don’t say “He descended into hell.” So you know, there are things that we’ve taken absolutely from mainstream Christianity and incorporated. I would say the biggest part of it is that the sermon is the

centerpiece of our worship service...you know, in a synagogue, typically, you know, you've got the parasha maybe it's a bar mitzvah boy doing it or maybe not. And then you have the *drasha*. And the *drasha* usually, you know, is more like a homily than a sermon. You know, if you go to a mainline synagogue the rabbi's message is probably going to be about between five and seven minutes. And it's not even necessarily a biblically based message. It may very well be a thematic message. It could be the Holocaust. It could be, um, Jewish identity. It could be intermarriage...but the way that we more resemble mainline evangelical Christianity is that the sermon really is the centerpiece. We give attention to the Word. And um, our sermons could be anywhere from thirty to forty-five minutes. And our people are very, uh, eager and patient and we eat it up. So, we're more like an evangelical church than a synagogue in the sense that we're very Word centered.

Elizabeth: Okay, wonderful and so were there any aside from changing some Christian practices, were there any that were definitely avoided? I know some rabbis say they avoid the Christian holidays or will change them a bit

Glenn: Yeah, well, let's put it this way. We don't have an Easter Sunday service. Uh, that's kind of a given. However, one of the things that we feel pretty strongly about is that we really take exception to groups that want to criticize the Church and accuse the Church of being pagan for celebrating Easter and Christmas and all that. You know, quite honestly, when you look at our own history as Jewish people. Look at our own calendar, the names of the month of the Jewish calendar are Babylonian deities. Tammuz was a Babylonian deity. Well, that doesn't mean that the Jewish people are pagan because we still have months that are named after Av and Tammuz and Elul. Um, they've long since been separated from their pagan origins. Mordecai and Esther, their names are from Marduk and Ishtar. Those were Babylonian deities, but, I mean there's lots of Mordecais and Esthers running around. So those names have been certainly redeemed and have no more connection with their pagan origins. In the same way, Christians celebrating Easter are not worship Ishtar. They're not practicing Babylonian paganism. But unfortunately there are a lot of Messianic groups and even some leaders that want to nitpick, well I don't want to say nitpick but they just take a certain delight in seizing every opportunity to criticize the Church for supposedly being pagan. Meanwhile, here we are calling the days of the week "Monday" after the moon, "Thursday" after Thor, "Saturday" after Saturn. You know, we're doing the same thing and it's not like we would ever think that we are being pagan. All I'm saying is I think there's a double standard there. So at Shema, we feel very strongly that Messianic Jews should not be putting down the Church or seeking to keep an arm's length from the Church. And in some cases, I think some Messianic leaders are trying to keep an arm's length from the Church because they're hoping to win points with the Jewish community by saying, "See, look. We're not with them." And I think that's really wrong. I think that's really, really wrong. Most of us, I think if you were to do a survey of how many Jewish believers in Jesus came to the Lord through the witness of a Gentile or a local church, something versus Jews for Jesus, Chosen People, a Messianic congregation. I think you will find, Elizabeth, that the vast majority of Jewish believers came to the Lord because of a Christian friend or a really good church nearby. And so, what are we gonna do? Now we're going to turn around and bad mouth the Church that essentially was used by God to birth us? So we feel pretty strongly about that. We're not looking to separate ourselves out. We consider ourselves very much part of the body of Christ. We might just say 'body of Messiah' but we're also comfortable with that...so, we want to not separate ourselves out or even see ourselves as separate from the larger body of Christ. We just happen to be the Jewish expression of it.

Elizabeth: Okay, wonderful. So now how did the leaders from Christianity and Judaism respond to, um, Shema Yisrael incorporating these different liturgical practices in your service?

Glenn: Well, I've been around long enough to tell you there's a pattern of this. And it's not so much Congregation Shema Yisrael. We're the local troublemakers... as criticism to say "Jews for Jesus and those Messianic Jews," they don't necessarily single us out. But the Jewish community leadership basically wants us to make a choice. You're either a Jew or a Christian. You can't be both. Well, that's. It's ludicrous to say something like that reveals a historical illiteracy that's breathtaking. Unfortunately, it's also very prominent. Jewish leaders say, "You're either a Jew or a Christian. You can't be both." And you know, you hear rabbis saying that as though they're historically illiterate and they don't realize that all of the first followers of Jesus were Jewish. It's a very Jewish thing. It's just not a very popular thing. But unfortunately, there are those within mainline Christianity and by that I don't mean evangelical, I mean more like mainline denominations—Presbyterian Church USA, Methodist Church, Churches of Christ, um, some Baptist Churches—will argue the same way, "Well, if you're a follower of Jesus, why are you still doing that Jewish stuff? Why do you celebrate Passover? It's already done. It's happened. Why do you feel like you got to celebrate Passover every year?" My response to that by the way is, "I don't feel like I have to, but I delight in it. And by the way, why do you keep taking Communion if it's all over and done? The writer of Hebrews said He died once for all time. Why do you keep celebrating Communion?" And they will say, "Well, to remember." I say, "Thank you. Now you answered your own question. That's why we do Passover."

So, um, there are on both sides of this people who are historically illiterate, biblically illiterate, yet in positions of religious authority who want to insist that you can't be both Jewish and Christian. And it's idiotic. It's Jewish through and through. You know, Gentiles who become believers in Jesus, I would argue, become more Jewish rather than me becoming less Jewish.

Elizabeth: Sure, from a historical standpoint, yes exactly. That's true. Um, so Rabbi, you touched on this earlier, but how did early Jewish cultural identity from Yeshua's era influence the liturgical decisions that were made in this rebirth of Messianic Judaism?

Glenn: Um, I'm sorry repeat that question one more time for me I want to kind of chew on it.

Elizabeth: Sure, how did early Jewish cultural identity from Yeshua's era influence liturgical decisions in the rebirth of Messianic Judaism?

Glenn: Wow, that's a doozy of a question. Um, I don't know that I could give you particulars in answer to that question, but I can give you more philosophical or general principle. Um, and that is to best understand a teaching, it needs to be seen in context. To best understand a person, you need to understand them in context. And what has been so important in the rebirth of Jewish Christianity or Messianic Judaism is this idea that we are putting, um, the Gospel in its historical Jewish context. Um, it helps so that we understand things better. It helps us to avoid certain doctrinal and theological errors that have arisen as a result of trying to detach Christianity from its Jewish moorings. Um, I think it was a historical mistake but it had theological and doctrinal repercussions which ended up leading to societal repercussions. I mean quite honestly, Hitler would have done what Hitler would have done anyway, but he was able to lean back on some of Martin Luther's teachings. Martin Luther, he didn't get all of his ideas in a vacuum. He looked at the church fathers, the early church fathers like Origen, um, C _____, had some horrible things to say about Jewish people. And it was all part of, really from the third and fourth century, this whole divorcing of Christianity from its Jewish roots let to a Christianity that was as un-Jewish as they could possibly make it. So really what you're looking at historically is Gentile leaders in the Christian church saying, "Look, you're either Jewish or Christian. Make up your mind." And the rabbis were only too happy to agree, "That's right. You're either Jewish or Christian. Make up your mind." And so everybody's saying, "You're

with us, or you're with them." And both institutions missing the point and missing the boat. So what we are attempting to do in part by teaching the New Testament in its Jewish context is to unpack it for people so that it does make sense. We're fighting two thousand years of tradition, tradition, tradition, on both sides, and, you know, that doesn't go away overnight. But it wouldn't go away at all if we didn't make an effort to teach Jesus in His Jewish context, to teach Paul in his Jewish context. So, I think if I had to sum it up in a word 'contextualization' is the key. It helps everybody to understand. Now what they do with that is a whole other thing. Some people even if they understand, they still don't approve of it. And there are well placed Christian leaders who still, after many years, decry the whole Messianic Jewish movement; John MacArthur is one. And you know through his associate Will Varner back in 1984 published a position paper denouncing Messianic congregations and accusing us of setting up the wall of partition all over again, and, of course, nothing could be further from the truth. All we're doing is we're worshipping in a Jewish way the history is with us, Scripture is with us, and to the extent that a Messianic congregation is healthy and Bible centered there's none of that setting up a wall of partition or division or anything like that. Unfortunately, Elizabeth, in the last fifteen years or so there have been some Messianic leaders and organizations and congregations that have become. Well, they've done the kinds of things that fueled the fire of John MacArthur's criticism. There's a congregation in Ann Arbor, forty-five minutes away from us. And Ann Arbor is where University of Michigan is. There're so many Jewish students there. There's so many Jewish people in Ann Arbor and yet this congregation, I wouldn't send anybody to. And it's not that old, "Oh, I would never send anybody to *that* synagogue." It's not that kind of. I wish I could. I wish that when we got calls from people that are in Saline or Ypsilanti or Ann Arbor, "Hey is there a Messianic congregation near me?" You know what I have to tell them? I have to tell them, "Well, there is but, um, I can't in good conscience recommend it because they exclude Gentiles." Literally, I mean I get calls, um...but I would say several times a year, at least three or five times a year, um, we will get calls from somebody saying, "Um, I'm wondering if I could come to your congregation. I'm not Jewish is that okay?" I would say to them, "Why would you think it wouldn't be okay? We would love to have you come and join us." "Well, it's just that I live out here in Ann Arbor and I called the rabbi of the congregation here and he didn't outright forbid me from coming but, boy, he sure made it clear he really would prefer I didn't come." That's terrible! Unfortunately, there is a significant segment of the Messianic movement right now that is shifting in that direction of wanting to, in an effort to be as "authentically Jewish" (make sure you put quotes on that because I'm saying it sarcastically). In order to be "authentically Jewish" they don't want to have too many Gentiles in their midst because then they will say, "Well, if Jewish people come and they see all these Gentiles, they're going to be turned off." I'm like, "C'mon, God says in Isaiah 56 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples' and Jesus in John chapter 10 said 'I lay down My life for the sheep, and I have sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also. And they shall become one flock with one Shepherd.'" And so, I don't know how in good conscience some of these Messianic leaders can contrive to artificially manufacture a larger Jewish demographic or to turn Gentiles away. I think it's terrible. I also that it violates the very heart of the New Covenant, you know, where we are called 'one new man.' So, uh, anyway, there are elements within Messianic Judaism today that unfortunately have legitimized some of the criticism from years back.

Elizabeth: Hmm, yeah, that is too bad cause I'm sitting here thinking, "Oh, I wouldn't have a place to worship if Rabbi Steve felt the same way," cause I'm not Jewish.

Glenn: Oh, yeah, yeah, I'm telling you. It's terrible. Some of the, there are some key leaders within Messianic Judaism who wanting to have a sense of authenticity, however they perceive it are keeping Gentiles away or are "converting" Gentiles (and again quotes around that) "converting" Gentiles into Messianic Jews. I'm thinking, "Do these guys not read their Bibles anymore?" "In whatever calling you

were called, remain,” Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7, “Were you already circumcised? Don’t try to be uncircumcised.” In other words, if you were Jewish you don’t need to try to suddenly live like a Gentile. “Were you uncircumcised? Don’t be circumcised.” Don’t try to become a Jew, and yet nowhere did Paul say “Now just make sure you set up your separate congregations so that Jews and Gentiles don’t mix.” So I’m really, really upset with some of the Messianic leaders today who are missing the whole point and in this effort to appease the Jewish community have just trampled on the Word of God. And really trampled on their own Gentile brothers and sisters.

Elizabeth: Rabbi, I was looking at the time. We’re about forty-five minutes in, and I have about five questions left. Are you okay if we go a little over?

Glenn: Yeah, I got some time. Sure.

Elizabeth: Okay, I just wanted to make sure. Um, so how have the liturgical practices that were developed in Messianic Judaism, how have they been useful in the maturation of the Messianic Jewish identity?

Glenn: I’m not sure they have. Um, see what is it that brings about maturity? Is it cultural stuff? Or is it the Word of God? I’m convinced that maturity comes through knowing and taking to heart and studying, becoming proficient in the Word of God. Um, look, I know Messianic Jews who know the liturgy inside and out, but are some of the most immature believers I have ever seen. I don’t really think maturity is a function of liturgy. Maturity is a function of the Word. Now in that regard, what we talked about earlier how we try as much as possible to incorporate Scripture into the context of our worship. This is why we don’t just do song, song, song, song, song just so people get in a worshipful mood. We have a song. We might have a second song. Then we have a Scripture reading to introduce the next one. We have a Scripture reading that’s the basis for the next one. See I think it’s through the Word, obviously the power of the Spirit, but it’s through the Word that we grow to maturity. So, don’t take this the wrong way, but I really don’t think liturgy is something that contributes to spiritual maturity.

Elizabeth: Okay, no, that’s wonderful. Thank you. Um, and kind of switching gears a little bit, um, what musical influences were drawn upon to develop Messianic Jewish music?

Glenn: Um, to be honest most Messianic music is not as much Israeli as it is Eastern European. But those are the two main sources. A lot of the D minor, E minor, C music is actually Eastern European not so much Israeli or Davidic. Um, so it is kind of funny because some people talk about ‘Davidic worship,’ um, no, that’s very Eastern European. David didn’t live in Eastern Europe. But, for us though, at Shema, we do try to blend things. We do some traditional melodies. Every so often we might sing ‘Ose Shalom,’ um, but, ah, “Covenant Song,” “I’ve sworn today that my…” But we also are incorporating songs from the contemporary Christian world. What we are trying to do is choose songs that are substantive versus feel good songs. I’ve even been known once in a rare while to throw in a hymn.

Elizabeth: Really? That’s awesome.

Glenn: Oh, yeah, I’m not worried about turning off Jewish people who come. If Jewish seekers come into our congregation, I’m not worried that they’re going to be turned off when they see Gentiles. I’m not going to be worried if they hear us singing…rather than ‘Yeshua.’ I’m not worried that they’re going to be turned off if they hear us singing a hymn. I’m not worried about that because I don’t turn anyone on and I don’t turn anyone off. That is the Holy Spirit’s job.

Elizabeth: Mmm, that’s good. Yes, indeed. Now do you have dance at your synagogue? Messianic dance?

Glenn: No, we don't but there are times when my wife and I think, "We should revisit this." Um, Rabbi Loren, the senior rabbi, is very much on the conservative side of things. And, uh, he's not really involved with dances and banners and, you know. I think he would probably call it 'hoopla' some of the hoopla. I tend to lean in his direction as well in terms of conservative, because I've seen things where people show up at some event just cause it's got some kind of a Jewish theme. And they've got the banners and they've got their shofar and they want to blow the shofar and suddenly it's become a circus. Um, and it becomes about them. So I tend to agree with Rabbi Loren that we want to keep things a little more in the realm of respectfulness and such, but at the same time, you know, that little boy in Christ in me says, "Can we also jump and shout once in a while?" So, my wife and I have talked about maybe we should find some way in which we could incorporate Messianic dance, but it is not as we talk right now, um, a normal part of our worship.

Elizabeth: Okay, what do you think the importance of dance is in Messianic Judaism?

Glenn: Uh, dance is a cultural experience that transcends Jewishness. Every people group has cultural dance aspects to it. There are Greek dances, Arabic dances, Yemenite, uh, what we typically call Davidic, folk dance is really more Eastern European folk dance, but you know, it's more cultural. I think it has significance in that, yes, we are identifying with our culture. Um, and I think as long as we keep the major things major and the minor things minor we're okay. So I'm not against it at all. I'm just not sure how important it is. And I say this as somebody who used to love going Israeli folk dancing. If we were doing it, I probably would be going now too. But we just, it's just a, I think, congregation by congregation. Every congregation has its own flavor and ours just is not especially the dancing flavor.

Elizabeth: Now, Rabbi, this goes back to something we were talking about way at the beginning. Um, but how did the theological understandings of emerging Messianic Judaism influence the liturgical decisions that were made for the congregations?

Glenn: Yes, sound theology should drive everything we do...because the purpose of liturgy is to help and aid in a...for drawing near to the living God. And when we draw near, we need to draw near with reverence and understanding. And so I think everything should serve the idea of reverencing God and preparing ourselves to draw near to Him. Consequently, liturgy for its own sake is not the point. A person could sit through a high liturgy and really draw near to the Lord. Somebody else would feel that it was dry and lifeless. Another person goes to a church where there is no liturgy and they think, "This is like culturally bereft. There's no culture here." But another person goes to that same service and they just feel so close to the Lord because they're not concerned about the antiquity of it all. But I think sometimes, and this I think, Elizabeth, is something to explore, worth exploring, how much is liturgy for liturgy's sake important versus how much, in other words, what's driving the desire for more liturgy? And I say this as someone who is in favor of liturgy. But what's driving it? Are we; is it purely a cultural expression? Or are we in love with antiquity? I think sometimes we think the older the form of things we're doing, the more authentic. But no, antiquity doesn't equal truth. Otherwise the Hindus have us all beat. So just because something has been done for hundreds, or even thousands of years doesn't make it necessarily something we want to do. I guess the bottom line, I would say Elizabeth, is we should do whatever it is we're doing when it comes to worship, when it comes to liturgy, when it comes to arranging the balance of music and Scripture and all those things. We need to be thinking about why are we doing this? Why have I chosen this song? Why would we read this? Why are we praying this prayer? Rather than just go through the motions because "Well, that's what we've done for five hundred years" or whatever. Rather than just for traditions sake, think if every worship leader and every congregational leader would just give a little more

intentionality to the matter of “why we do this.” Um, what is our goal? I think things would be better in general.

Elizabeth: Yeah, thank you. Um, now Rabbi, have you had the opportunity to visit or minister at Messianic congregations internationally?

Glenn: Um, let’s see. I’m sure along the way I visited one or two Messianic congregations in Europe because I traveled with the Liberated Wailing Wall, which is the Jews for Jesus music group that no longer exists. And we went to Europe a couple of times, South Africa, Germany. I can’t remember off the top of my head so I’m just going to say, by enlarge, no, I really haven’t had much opportunity to do things internationally.

Elizabeth: Okay. Well, wonderful. Well, that was actually my last question so thank you. Thank you so much for your time and what you’ve shared with me. This has been wonderful.

Glenn: Oh, my pleasure, Elizabeth. And God’s blessings

Appendix N: Steve Feldman

Interview with Rabbi Steve Feldman on August 5, 2014

[Due to the unreliability of the phone connection some words and phrases could not be clearly understood and are marked by ellipses points.]

Elizabeth: Um, Rabbi Steve, if you could, just to begin how did you get into ministry? What was your journey to that?

Steve: Uh, well back in the late '60s, very early '70s, I was a Jewish young man who was very involved in the hippie movement and all that that entails including the, you know, drugs and alcohol and rebellion. And, ah, it was probably 1972 I had met some people that I had known from high school that told me they had gotten saved and that Jesus was the Messiah. Of course, that was extremely foreign to me. Uh, but my life was really quite a disaster at the time and, uh, so I decided from what they were telling me I was intrigued and I really saw a lot of, the guy who was talking to me who had been a friend in high school...high school really seemed to be filled with a joy and a happiness that I mistook of course for another chemical. But, ah, when I really questioned him, his name was John and I said, "John, what have you got, man? I'm lookin to...happy..." He said, "Oh, I got born again. I got saved." You know, and started telling me about Jesus and He's my Messiah. Ah, so at the time and still with my wife, we got married right out of high school in 1970. So I went out and bought a King James Bible with the New Testament in it, and I started reading Matthew. I figured, "Hey, if this guy is really my Messiah, I've heard all my life that the Messiah was gonna come." But I also heard that Jesus Christ was not the Messiah. So I began to search the Scriptures, and, you know, with the aid of the Holy Spirit of course. I said, "Boy, if anybody's the Messiah, this Guy's the Messiah." So, you know, I don't know if it's a Jewish thing or what my own personality was, but I had really prayed and I said, "God, if this is real and the promise is real," and you know, I always believed that the Bible was God's word. I only know a little bit of Torah from my youth. Ah, but I said, "I'm going to surrender my life and believe You for the ... and I want to feel what my friend John felt." And so I made a thirty day covenant with God, literally said, "If You're real, then You'll show that Your real and that You're not...a philosophy or this isn't a bunch of junk like everything else...nothing really lost." So I really started reading the Scripture and believing God and I just got a tremendous hunger for the Scripture and by the end of thirty days I was feeling the joy of God. I had set aside all my drugs. God really delivered me and replaced that with His peace and His joy. And that was it. He had me.

Elizabeth: Wow, so were you raised in a traditional Jewish home? Or were

Steve: We were very secular, very liberal secular Jewish, you know, we celebrated Passover. Did not go to Temple. Did not go to synagogue. None of those things. But it was very clear to me that I was Jewish and we were the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and that the Creator the true God was the true God. So you know I knew that. I also in my heart knew God was holy, and I knew I wasn't neither did I at that time desire to be. So it was like, "You're real. I believe you. You stay over there and I'll stay over here and everything will be fine."

Elizabeth: Oh, wow, so how did you get involved in Messianic Judaism after getting saved?

Steve: Well, it's been an interesting journey because my wife and I actually got born again in a cult. Ah, that was very. That's still around today, but it was the whole time of the Jesus freak movement, the Jesus movement back in the early '70s and there was a ministry called the Way Ministry. And, uh, that's really

where that friend of mine and all my friends had become born again. And they really encouraged me to study the Scripture and to teach the Scripture. Well, I was finding some very definite conflict between what they were teaching and what the Bible seemed to say. Of course, they were telling me I'm a baby and I don't understand things. I said, "You know, it seems like Jesus needs to be God." And they didn't believe in that. They were really basically Gnostics. Ah, I said, "The Messiah needs to be God. He's the Savior." "Oh, no," so eventually after about a year of being with them we left. And actually at the time when I left, I was so disillusioned I backslid for almost, over four years and just went back to my ways. I got into hard drugs and that type of thing. And the Lord...really tried to get my attention. Well, eventually, after about four years, I was outside one day after getting a severe back injury on the job and rather than reading my normal *Playboy Penthouse*, I grabbed the Bible and started reading it again. I knew it had to be the Lord's mercy just compelling me to do so. And that day I just repented. I cried out to God for healing and forgiveness. And uh shortly after that the Lord supernaturally led me to an Assembly of God church. And that's really where we got focused. I spent eighteen years as a Pentecostal pastor, a Jewish Pentecostal pastor. Uh, but...running parallel to that the Messianic movement really go rebirth in the late '60s, early '70s. So they were kind of after me. You know, putting one plus one together, "You're Jewish. You're a Jewish believer. You should be part of this movement." And I saw some very bad excesses and things that I just felt were not Scriptural in that movement. And I really didn't feel that call at all. I really felt more of a Paul to the Gentiles than a Peter to the Jews. So we stayed within the Assemblies of God. I was ordained with them for twelve years, pastored Assembly of God churches, and I guess about eighteen years ago, my vision and everything. We were pastoring a church in Herkimer, actually, Herkimer Assembly of God, and ah, I just felt I was done. I had no more vision. I really prayed, sought the Lord said, "I need a vision. I can't shepherd these people or I can't lead them anywhere if I don't know where I'm going." And I'm not the kind of person to just do a maintenance type of thing. So I said, "Lord, You ...give me a vision for what's next, or I'll just wait on You. I'll resign and step out of this and see what happens." So I did. I resigned my pastorate and for about a year and a half went and did the only thing I was really trained to do besides ministering and that was sell cars, [laughter] which was sometimes a serious conflict of interests. But, I was selling vehicles for Carbone Honda actually up in the Utica area. And in that time, I was not in ministry just praying. Supernaturally, one day my wife had gotten a CD from Barry and Batya Segal. And I had not really heard them, you know, all those years we listened to the groups like Lamb and Wailing Wall and that type of thing cause we've always enjoyed the traditional Jewish Messianic worship. And, uh, so actually it was Sunday morning we were going to Mt. Zion church at the time and put the CD in and I was frozen, I couldn't move. I began to weep uncontrollably. And I didn't know if I was having a break down or if it was something the Holy Spirit was doing. So my beloved guided me over...and ... I was really just overwhelmed emotionally. I couldn't move. I just didn't know what was going on. And she really had a prophetic word for me, and she said, "Your heritage is calling you." And it just struck me in my heart. From that situation, God had really set up, you know, it would take me forty-five minutes to go through the nuances of how the Lord has moved. But my sister was at a revival meeting in Vermont, met somebody that went to Seed of Abraham. They started praying for me, the rabbi at Seed of Abraham called me, invited us to come. Of course, we were living in Mohawk, New York and this was in Albany and I was working for a car dealership. You know, Saturday you got to call in dead or you don't get Saturdays off [laughter]. So, but it was near the fall feasts so I went to my sales manager and I said, "You know, I'm a pastor but I'm also Jewish. I want to take these feasts off." So he, you know, not happily but he said, "You can take one of them off." So we came to the Seed of Abraham and started a relationship with the rabbi and it was more of a...consider ourself one new man congregation out of Ephesians chapter two. Ah, Jew and Gentile joined together, very, you know, middle of the road Messianic but not, you know, far full Messianic and yet charismatic but not, you know, Christian charismatic. It was more down the center. And that's how that developed and that probably was in 1998. So that's sixteen years ago. So we've been out

here and I've been, you know, the previous rabbi retired about seven years ago and I was his associate for nine years and then became the senior rabbi out here.

Elizabeth: Wow, so how would you define Messianic Judaism?

Steve: How would I define what?

Elizabeth: Messianic Judaism

Steve: Um, Messianic Judaism probably has as its roots the reality of the Jewish roots of the Gospel and you know, to propagate that and certainly understand the focal point of all the prophecy of Jesus coming back to Israel. And it holds a very strong burden to preach the Gospel to the Jew first and then also to the Gentile. And to maintain the feasts of Leviticus 23, uh, and seen not as Jewish feasts, but as actually, it says in Leviticus 23 God says "These are My feasts," and to celebrate them as prophetic feasts. All of them really point to Jesus, to Mashiach, and Who He is and what He does and the fulfillment of them to coin 1 Corinthians 15, uh, 5. It says, "Christ, (Mashiach) is our Passover." So that's pretty definitive. So I think that's the major distinction and to you know incorporate the Old Testament prophets as well as the Torah, the New Testament. One of the promises of the New Testament, Jeremiah 31 is that God would put His law into our hearts and into our minds. So you know, not all the statutes and ordinances, but certainly the commandments and just the pleasure of ... of course in the New Testament, He was the living Torah...come and make His abode in us. At least in my heart, that's the distinction. And, you know, again the Jewish roots, you know, my perspective and what I teach our Gentile participants and I've gone to several churches over the years just to share is that you know, you're either a Jewish Messianic or a Gentile Messianic. The covenant is Jewish. The promise was to Israel and Judah and Yeshua Himself in John 4 talking to the Samaritan woman made it very emphatic, He said, "Salvation is of the Jews." That's really the flow and if we belong to Messiah, then we're Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.

Elizabeth: Mmm-hmm, excellent. So what do you believe are important cultural markers in a Messianic Jewish worship service?

Steve: Well, we at the Seed, we don't get into a lot of the cultural stuff. Most of the cultural stuff is actually more Eastern European Jewish than it is biblical. Uh, and most of our people are not Jewish. Maybe eight or ten percent are actually Jewish. So we just hold to, you know, the Scripture more than the tradition. But we have amongst us some people that wear the tallit, wear the head covering, the kippa, uh. And you know, we keep the feasts and when we keep the feasts we do some of the traditional things that are typically Jewish as far as eating our apples and honey during Sukkot and things like that. Amongst us, we don't do a lot of that, uh, we have minimal liturgy. What we do here is we open every service with the Shema from Deuteronomy six, but our worship is very, uh, prophetic. We do all kinds of stuff, you know, from spontaneous prophetic things to, uh. You'll hear blues. You'll hear jazz. You'll hear old time Gospel. Like I said, we're very one new man. So we do run the gamut, and uh, to sandwich that, at the end of every service we do the Aaronic blessing. You know, that's sung and spoken from Numbers 6. So that's kind of the, for us, any liturgy that's it and if we have a meeting like on Friday night, which is Erev Shabbat, we'll light the candles, do a prayer over the candles. And you know, we typically also use the Hebrew names of God, you know, I usually use Yeshua for Jesus, Mashiach. So people get that flavor of, His Hebrew name more than His English transliterated, transliterated, transliterated name.

Elizabeth: Right, so is the Aaronic blessing, is that a traditional closing of a Jewish service?

Steve: Uh, I don't know I wasn't. You know, what's interesting for me is I was not raised in temple or synagogue. So I really kind of flowed in what was being done here. I know that most traditional Jewish synagogues do open their service with the Shema, uh, but I don't know if they close with the Aaronic blessing, but we always did. That's usually before we have an altar call. We have a guy that really does some wonderful. He's on our worship team and he also does the cantoral. He'll do the Aaronic blessing. He'll do it in Hebrew, you know, traditional cantoral way and then I'll speak it in English just to bless because God gave it to His people to establish His name.

Elizabeth: Wonderful, so on the flip side of that what are some contemporary Christian practices that have been integrated into your service? You mentioned an altar call is done. That's more traditional Christian than Jewish, correct?

Steve: Yeah, traditional Jewish would never have an altar call. That's more of the Christian, evangelical thing. Probably more Protestant, Charismatic, uh, you know. So we do that and always with that we're very charismatic/Pentecostal, uh, you know, we believe in healing. People that need healing body, soul, spirit. We see God do the miraculous amongst us so we always give an opportunity at the end of service. And our typical service probably runs two and a half to three hours. We love worshipping the Lord so we do so probably for an hour at least, certainly not typical, typical anything for the most part. Uh, we do have a section like before offering time, about a ten minute section that is where we do the Torah portion and they ... on the Hebrew calendar. So the Torah portion that we do is really what's going on in all traditional synagogues and Messianic synagogues so that kind of incorporates all that. But we don't just do the Torah reading. I have a gamut of people, probably twelve to fifteen different people, men and women, uh, who teach a section. I tell them, you know, read this section of the Torah and let the Holy Spirit make alive a point that you could bring and marry to a New Testament Scripture and New Testament truth because the Old Testament is all prophetic to the New Covenant that was the heart of God. The, uh, Revelation 19 says the "testimony of Jesus was the spirit of prophecy," so intertwine that. So that ten minute section is, uh, generally, a Torah portion and then the preaching of the Word and then the altar call. And that probably more mirrors, you know, a more typical charismatic or Pentecostal kind of service than certainly a traditional Jewish or traditional Messianic service.

Elizabeth: Okay, so what liturgical worship practices from either the Christian or Jewish world were avoided in the formation of your service and why was that?

Steve: Say that again please.

Elizabeth: Oh, sorry, I said what worship practices from either the Christian or Jewish world were avoided in the formation of your worship service and why is that?

Steve: Well, I think a lot of the liturgy was avoided because to me it's religious ceremony and sometimes it's just not pertinent to what the Holy Spirit's doing. So our heart's really to get a sensitivity to the presence of God and what He's doing in the moment so, you know, just following liturgy and the parsha and the Torah portion and let that be the mainstay of it, sometimes there's a detour to just the spontaneous flow of what God wants to do. So we kind of avoided that type of stuff. And emphasized what we believe the Scripture emphasizes and that, you know, what brings God pleasure is praise and worship so that's what we wanted to emphasize. And then of course, the Word; faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God so those are really our two focuses...praise and worship and teaching of the Word.

Elizabeth: Okay, so how did the leaders from Christianity and Judaism respond to you incorporating liturgical practices into your service such as you did use?

Steve: Well, you know, it depends who you ask of course. You know, to the people who come here. They love that marriage, that joining, or as Paul would have put it that ‘one new man’ aspect, Jew and Gentile being one. Ah, to the mainline Gentile church I think they see it as, you know, being a nicety or a superfluous, why would you even do that because so many of them don’t see a validity to the Old Testament at all. You know, we’re New Testament and uh because of the whole thing of Replacement Theology, if you know what that is about?

Elizabeth: Yeah.

Steve: You know, to cast out Israel and the prophecies I don’t know how they hear it, but they do that. So I think they see the whole, the whole basis of Jewish roots and everything being totally unnecessary. And of course, to traditional Jews, they think that it’s, you know, manipulation to convert Jews. You know, give them a little...soup and they’ll embrace Jesus as Messiah. So, they’re not too happy about it from that perspective.

Elizabeth: Mmm, sure. Thank you. Um, so Rabbi you touched on this a little bit when you said that, um, you try to go with biblical more than tradition. How did that early, Jewish cultural identity or practices from Yeshua’s era, you know that you see as you study Scripture, how does that influence liturgical decisions that you make?

Steve: Uh, well, you know, so much of the aspects of traditional Judaism are ... based on culture, uh, which is primarily more, like I said, Eastern European culture, Jewish culture than even biblical or Israeli culture. Cause until the forties there really was no Israel so that whole basis of culture had been gone and over the centuries rabbinical tradition had been built up. Even in the times of Jesus obviously the pharisaic, the rabbinical, the Sadducees, all those groups which were antagonistic to who He was. So you know that being set aside along with, you know, when you look at some 640 statues, ordinances, and judgments that almost are absurd. I mean, they have a reason, but they never propagated righteousness. So you know, we ... embrace those things. And you know, when I look at especially Acts 15 where they say, “What do we do with these Gentiles that are now becoming part of this New Testament Judaism?” It’s kind of interesting that over two thousand years it’s turned a hundred and eighty degrees. Initially, it was “what do we do with the Gentiles?” now it’s “what do we do with Jews?” But you know the decision in Acts 15 was not to put those statues and regulations and cultural directives—circumcision, kosher laws, those type of things—upon a New Testament Gentile. You know, since the original apostolic that was the wisdom of God so for me, not to emphasize those things was Scriptural to what God wanted for the New Covenant.

Elizabeth: Okay, Wonderful. Um, so Rabbi how do you believe worship or liturgical practices that are done in services, how do you think they’re useful in the maturation of a Messianic Jewish identity?

Steve: Ah, I think the, to incorporate, we do Messianic songs, not only are they filled with Hebrew, which people I believe need to hear and be sensitive to the Hebrew language. Most of them, of course are in Hebrew and English so everybody knows what they’re saying. Ah, but also that style. We have amongst us a, we call it Davidic or Messianic dance. It’s very typical to a Messianic congregation. So we teach that actually. We have a DVD that we did an instruction video that has gone out to whosoever will through our website. So that’s very important to us. And you know that Davidic dance is not only done to, you know, traditional Messianic music, but can be done to, you know, Gospel music as well, you know, Afro-American kind of Black Gospel. So dance is a very important part of what we do, which is very typical to Old Testament Judaism and traditional Judaism and Orthodox Judaism, of course, they’re devoid of, they

don't believe in Jesus as the Messiah. But many of the Orthodox still dance before the Lord as David instructed in the Psalms. So that we've definitely incorporate and base that in our worship.

Elizabeth: Why is that important? Why is dance important to worship?

Steve: Uh, just a celebration. God inhabits the praises of His people. It's a wonderful way to worship Him. We believe in Psalm 150 gives you such a, every manner and shape and form of, you know, clapping your hands, shouting unto God, dancing before the Lord, all those postures of praise and worship is something we want to propagate. God loves, you know... worship and praise. He's not interested in lip service. But real joy is intoxicating. And, you know, dance is a thing that belongs in the congregation and has been typical to the Jewish experience through the millenniums.

Elizabeth: Hmm, going off what you started to say something about the music, what were the musical influences that have been drawn upon to develop Messianic Jewish music?

Steve: Uh, well, I know what we have, uh, not so much stringed instruments but drums, piano, keyboard. Ah, so you know certainly stringed instruments are part of worship, ah the drums, the timbrel, basically a drum, you know, percussion instrument. And you know they didn't have keyboards and organs back then but very much when you take a harp and turn it sideways and put keys on it you get a piano so [laughter] a lot of those things were developed by David and Solomon and, you know, I think those are Scripturally, the Old Testament Scripturally used instruments for worship.

Elizabeth: Wonderful. Now, Rabbi, how did the theological understandings of emerging Messianic Judaism influence the liturgical decisions that were made for your congregation?

Steve: Say again?

Elizabeth: Yeah, did the theological understanding of emerging Messianic Judaism influence the liturgical decisions that were made for how the congregation would worship?

Steve: Uh, you know, the emphasis of the Scripture, you know, back to the Torah... and I call Deuteronomy the Acts of the Old Testament, clearly God wanted above all to be ...and He wanted a circumcision of the heart. And all the other things He put in place from the Sinai covenant was really to set perimeters for the children of Israel to be obedient so they be blessed in that kind of service of the true living God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. So to me to bring those things that God emphasize, you know, His mercy, a place of repentance, and transformation. He always wanted a people who'd acknowledge when they didn't please God, come to repentance and find mercy in the Lord to be restored. And of course the whole sacrificial system that was set up under the Levitical was set up to really be a support system and guidance but that was all happening in the Temple by the Levitical priesthood. So that the people who just cried out, you know, you see David in Psalm 32, Psalm 51 personally crying out for the mercy of God and receiving the mercy of God. That personal, intimate relationship, ah, was even in place during the entire Levitical, Sinai covenant so, ah, I see that really brought the theological basis. And the covenant we're in today is really more of a Abrahamic covenant than a Mosaic, Levitical, Sinai covenant. Uh, that's why we're considered Abraham's seed so then Abraham's righteousness was based on his relationship of faith and obedience. So you know, that's the theological basis that I embrace.

Elizabeth: Okay, wonderful. And Rabbi have you had the opportunity to minister at or observe Messianic Jewish services internationally?

Steve: Uh, I do once a year by obligation. I am credentialed by the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America under what's called the IAMCS, which is the International Association of Messianic Synagogues and Congregations. Uh, so we have a rabbis' conference once a year wisely held in early January generally down in Orlando, Florida. Where else would Jews want to go? [laughter]

Elizabeth: In January? Come now, of course

Steve: We should go to Miami if we did it really right, but Orlando is where we go and you know that's more typically Messianic as to the traditions, but I do not usually go only because I'm either not invited or I'm kind of wrapped up on Shabbat myself. So I don't usually go to other Messianic congregations, but generally I see more liturgy there and more structured kind of service than what we have here at the Seed, which for me personally is uncomfortable. I like the freedom, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth: Okay. That's great. Well, Rabbi, that was actually my last question. Thank you so much. This has been wonderful.

Appendix O: Ray Gannon

Interview with Dr. Ray Gannon on August 7, 2014

Elizabeth: I'm going to turn the recorder on. There we go. Um, could you just tell me a little bit of your background? How you got into Messianic Jewish ministry? How you came to know the Lord?

Ray: Alright, uh, 1962 I was visiting my grandparents in Tombstone, Arizona who had come to faith late in life and so my father had not had their religious exposure. So I came from an unsaved home. I attended services with them in southern Arizona, and I came to the Lord at that point. Went on in 196_, well, it was four months later actually that I felt called to Jewish ministry. I was living in northern California and started high school and in November of 1962 felt called to Jewish ministry. So, finished high school, went to Bible college in Santa Cruz, California, Bethany College. And after one year at school there, my wife and I married. She was, ah, she's a Greek national also with a missions call on her life. And uh and so when we graduated from school in 1970, we went to Los Angeles and jumped into the middle of 535,000 Jewish people. And began to do Jewish evangelism and other such things, but we really didn't know what we were doing. Uh, like I said, my wife is a Greek national. I came from basically American, Neopagan background. I had just come to faith as a teenager, and uh, so we. And there was no training for Jewish ministry available in those years. So we just had to do everything by trial and error. So by 1972, we had started a Jewish home Bible study in Beverly Hills and then begin to multiply Bible studies across ... Los Angeles, across the Los Angeles basin. And soon began to see Jewish people getting saved almost every week in almost every Bible study. So there was a great surge forward in the Messianic Jewish community. We really felt like we were on the brink of a Messianic Jewish people movement. And before we went too much down the pike, we realized that about half of our people were able to go into existing churches and make their cultural peace with the evangelical or Pentecostal worlds and the other half needed something that was more distinctly Jewish. Um, and so while we didn't have any particular aversion to people at all going into churches, I mean that was what we expected all along. Uh, at the same time recognized by the late 1972, the early part of 1973, recognized that it was going to require us to do what the apostle Paul had forbidden and that is to engage in culture imperialism if we were going to be able to force all these Jewish people into a Gentile lifestyle. So really we had to recognize in Galatians, Paul is not condemning Jewish things, he was condemning Jewish cultural imperialism, but any cultural imperialism where the sending group is imposing its own lifestyle upon a second group or the receiving culture. So it was improper for us to take our Assemblies of God or Baptist backgrounds and impose them upon Jewish people as a requirement for legitimate discipleship. But we could create Messianic synagogues that were Yeshua honoring, would lift up Jesus, the same way that any other body of Messiah, body of Christ would do but do it within the framework of Jewish culture. We came to the realization that Jesus is the Lord of every cultural group, of every language group, of every national group, and that He accepts worship and praise in a grand variety of ways. And it's not limited to the classical American expression of worship but could, would happily receive worship as it would be offered up in a Jewish mode. So we found (pardon me, my throat is still bothering me...)

Elizabeth: Oh it's okay.

Ray: [coughing] We found that, uh, that the Holy Spirit was neither quenched nor grieved by Jewish cultural expression. And that He was still able to woo the hearts of Jewish people and lead them closer to Himself even as they continued to wear yamakas and prayer shawls and they were able to recite the Hebrew liturgy along with everything else that made the customary...spiritual environment. There was nothing prohibitive as far as the Spirit of God was concerned about Jewish cultural expression. There was nothing that was distressing to the Holy Spirit. So as long as we had ah the blessing of God upon the

atmosphere and the people were responsive to the pure unadulterated Gospel, uh, and were coming to faith and were experiencing the born again experience, we felt the freedom to continue to proclaim the Gospel that way and soon had fashioned a congregation the end of 1973 that would in fact, um, be lifting up Yeshua—you know the name His mother called Him, Yeshua—and uh at the same time be free to worship the Lord in Jewish cultural expression. So we would honor the Shabbat, which is a classic feature of Jewish life. Parents would continue to circumcise their sons on the eighth day, which was, you know, just like a Jewish tribal marking in that sense. And uh, you know, people that wanted to keep kosher were free in Jesus to keep kosher. Those who did not want to keep kosher and wanted to eat ham, we didn't make a fuss about it. Whatever they wanted to do was entirely up to them and ... all the believers from across the board to come together with an egalitarian spirit and worship together the Lord in spirit and in truth. So we began that congregation in 1973. Led that congregation till 1976 when then that summer we brought in a Jewish pastor, Jewish rabbinic leader and uh moved up to the bay area. We started a new Jewish ministry in San Francisco. We were there until '79. '79 moved to New York and pioneered two Messianic congregations one on Long Island and one in Queens, New York. And um, [cough] (pardon me) oh, became involved in teaching during those years as well; teaching Jewish studies at Central Bible College in Springfield, Missouri, uh, teaching at Valley Forge Christian College Jewish Studies, uh, just outside Philadelphia and also teaching at Christ for the Nations their Long Island campus. And uh we um. I continued my education while I was at it. I don't know if this has anything to do with what you're looking for, maybe nothing. Tell me where I'm saying too much and we're going afield here.

Elizabeth: Um, you're actually completely fine right. So this is good if you're like to keep going on this track.

Ray: Okay, if I start to talk about things you're not interested in, just feel free to interrupt me.

Elizabeth: Okay, will do

Ray: I have no... [Elizabeth was coughing] whatever you need to know I'm happy to tell you.

Elizabeth: [laughter] okay

Ray: So, anyway, we went on. I did a couple of degrees in Los Angeles including a Ph.D in Hebrew Bible. Then we moved onto New York as I say and we were involved in teaching there while there...two degrees at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, one in Master of Arts in cross-cultural communications and then a Master of Divinity degree because I wanted to go to Princeton and study Church History so I did. I went onto Princeton Theological Seminary, did a ThM. And then later when we moved to Israel that was very useful because we pastored them, we pioneered this congregation along... and I led that congregation. We started it in 1980 uh led it until January of '89 when we moved to Israel. And we moved to Israel under mission's appointment with the Assemblies of God. And uh we were there in and out through, cause my duties took me back and forth across the ocean, but we were in and out for much of fifteen years. And we were based largely in Jerusalem and while in Jerusalem then we pioneered the first real Bible college in Israel, which is now known as the Israel College of the Bible. It's moved to Netanya, has a beautiful facility there in Netanya, north of Tel Aviv. And it's fully accredited that college with two masters' degrees now as well. So that was a great success. While there we were involved in ministering a lot with the Ethiopian Jews pouring into the nation from Ethiopia. As well as the Russian Jews, we had about a hundred thousand Russian Jews coming in every year all from the former Soviet Union. [coughing] And we managed to smoke out the believers in both these camps, Ethiopians and the Russians and were able then to launch ministries with them in Israel and a lot of success to day in Israel with Ethiopian Jewish

Messianics and Russian Israeli who also embrace Messianic faith in Jesus. And they're doing great. While there I also did, because I had. I kind of accidentally, if can say that accidentally I think it's kind of true, I sort of backed into—maybe that's a better way to put it—I backed into doing a Ph.D at the Hebrew University. It wasn't my intention to do that, but I kind of got roped into it. It's a long story, but succeeded finally to get a Ph.D in history from the Hebrew University. And then we came back, ah, we felt like we had accomplished in Israel what we needed to accomplish and then came back to the States cause the Bible school was doing great, Russian ministry was doing great, Ethiopian ministry was doing great, everything was in the hands of nationals. So there really wasn't any point for us to stay there. So we came back. I became the National Jewish Ministries Representative for the Assemblies of God. Then, um, in this post which I continue to hold, we were asked by Jack Hayford at Church on the Way and The King's University in Los Angeles, Jonathan Bernis who spearheads Jewish Voice Ministries International, and a number of other well-known names in the Messianic movement to kind of put together a Messianic Jewish studies program at The King's University. So we did that and we have a fully accredited bachelor's degree two different masters degrees and a doctor of ministry in Messianic Jewish leadership. The campus, now, the main campus has moved from Van Nuys, California to Dallas, Texas. And so the whole program is in transition at this point going from a quarter based program to a semester based program. And but it's um, it's got its growing pains but it's coming along nicely. So my duties include presently serving as an associate pastor for my son-in-law's Messianic synagogue here in Phoenix. My son-in-law Cosmo Panzetta, Jewish believer, married my daughter. They have five kids and lead the uh mother ship congregation here in Phoenix. So I'm involved with a lot of different things. So anyway, what can I do to tell you something that you really want to know?

Elizabeth: Yeah, so Dr. Gannon, how would you define Messianic Judaism?

Ray: Well, how would I define Messianic Judaism?

Elizabeth: Mmm-hmm

Ray: Well, I suppose there's any number of ways to define it. But the clearest way is the walking out of traditional Jewish religion under the authority of Yeshua and the council of the Holy Spirit.

Elizabeth: Wonderful, so what do you believe are important cultural markers in Messianic Jewish worship services?

Ray: Well, first of all, I discovered a long time ago as a Messianic pastor, I mean I was since...1973, from 1973 forward in Los Angeles. I discovered a long time ago that if we lost our primary focus upon Jesus Himself and began to be infatuated with our own Jewish navels that the Holy Spirit backed away. The anointing of the Holy Spirit just was, uh, became absent so it was clear that, you know, after all the Spirit of God is all about lifting up the name of Jesus. And if there's any compromise on that count, then the Holy Spirit just backs up and the anointing draws slack. So we realized right from the outset that no matter what kind of cultural expression we used, it wasn't going to be useful unless we made Jesus front and center and foremost in all that we did. [coughing] That's number one. Number two I would say that it needs to have a worship cultural expression that is recognizable to Jewish people. If it is too baptistic or if it's too wildly charismatic or something of this nature, then it's going to strike the Jewish world as alien, as foreign, as something that belongs to others and not for Jews. So while I do believe in real spiritual worship and I do believe it's quite legitimate to express oneself emotionally in services, at the same time I recognize that there has to, you know, people can't get carried away. There has to be a legitimate balance there and people need to express their hearts, their affections for God, and do so with a measure of sanity so that Jewish

people are able to recognize the genuine worship of God. That the God who spoke to Moses on Sinai is present with that group in worship and that this people are practicing something that is within the bounds of a traditional Jewish method of worship.

Elizabeth: Mmm, okay so what aspects of traditional Jewish liturgical practices were integrated into Messianic Judaism?

Ray: Well, I think over the course of time and actually you learn as you go. I mean in 1973 I was twenty-five years old and didn't know much that I would learn as years went by. So in the beginning I think I was less discriminate in the kinds of things that we would include in our liturgical services. Over the course of time, I discovered that some of the things that are part of traditional liturgy actually have a sort of a mystical connection, or even a kabalistic connection associated with them. And so that immediately disqualifies them from my point of view. We didn't know that at the outset. I think, you know we learned as we went. [coughing] You'll forgive me. I'm still a little bit choked up here [Dr. Gannon was recovering from pneumonia.]. But um, most of the things that you would find in a traditional Jewish service are things that were written and crafted over the centuries and included into the traditional Erev Shabbat, you know Friday night, or the Shacharit service, the Saturday morning service or the Minchah service, the afternoon service. These traditional things including the Shema, the Amidah, you know the prayer that is recited standing the same thing as the Eighteen Benedictions, the um the Ashreinu [I think that's what he said.], all these kinds of—the Alenu—all kinds of different prayers that are part of the classical traditional sometimes indispensable liturgical parts of service we would want to include in our services. So we didn't hesitate to do you know Friday night service and welcoming in the Sabbath. We didn't hesitate to have a Torah service at the same time we didn't hesitate to include in that same Messianic service choruses that you might hear in a home Bible study someplace or even in a church service. We might change a word or two, you know, just so that it didn't sound so strange to the Jewish ear, but we were, we felt at liberty to bring in all elements which would be supportive of genuine worship. We didn't feel any particular need to run away from worship songs just because Christians sang them. We wanted very much our people to be worship God in spirit and in truth and that was the preeminent factor for us because we knew that the Spirit of God would be responsive to genuine worship. The Jewish dimension for us is always a secondary dimension. It was important. It's very important, but it was always secondary. What was primary was that the Spirit of God was pleased with the worship and we would bring in whatever we needed to into the service, these public meetings to try to make them very conducive to genuine worship. And um and so we didn't back away at the same time from the utilization of classical Jewish liturgical pieces as long as we felt that they were based on truth and they were not in violation of things in the Scriptures. Now there are things of course in liturgy, traditional liturgy that we have a problem with. Let me give you an example of what I mean. There's a prayer that is recited on Yom Kippur that's called the *yizkor*, y-i-z-k-o-r, the yizkor. And basically it means "He will remember" and it's a prayer that is recited, not only in remembrance of the dead, which is not really such a problem I mean we go to Christian funerals and offer up praise to God for the one who's deceased, that's not a problem, but what's a problem is when you pray for the soul of one who is already departed. Or you assume that one is in some sort of a captive place and you're praying for their deliverance from this captivity. And the yizkor prayer lends itself that way. Now there's a different prayer, the Kaddish. The Kaddish prayer which is recited by usually the eldest son upon the death of his parents and every year on the anniversary of their death and certainly in the synagogue this is recited every week. This is the kind of prayer this is offered in thanksgiving for the one who is gone, "What a great blessing they were to us, praise be Your name oh Holy One," and so forth. You know that kind of a prayer. The yizkor was more of an intercessory kind of prayer, praying for them to be released and may they soon be permitted to enter into heaven and this we found a little bit too close to purgatory, you know, in its

emphasis. So we have never been comfortable obviously reciting a prayer of that nature. We have been faulted for it. Jewish people would sometimes come to our services on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. They would specifically come because they wanted to recite the yizkor prayer for their deceased parents and when we didn't even offer the yizkor prayer as part of our Yom Kippur services, they were irate with us. But that's really too bad we don't recite prayers that are not consistent with biblical revelation.

Elizabeth: Sure, so Dr. Gannon, on kind of the flip side of that what are some contemporary Christian liturgical practices or worship practices that were integrated into Messianic Judaism? You mentioned you use some choruses that are sung. Is there anything that was used?

Ray: Well, um, yeah the incorporation of choruses is certainly one. Of course most of our congregations are spirit-filled congregations so there was a freedom to raise one's hands and to worship God...you know this is something that is often done, especially in charismatic or Pentecostal churches, uh, less frequently in Baptist type churches but far often more in Baptist churches than Methodist too now these days. But that's one thing that we incorporated into the Messianic circles. Included in that as well, I would say that uh we have times when we pray for the sick. Where people will actually come forward during the services and we'll lay hands on them and pray for them and believe for their healing. We do believe, I mean in our circles at least the variety of circles that I run in. We do believe that there's healing in the atonement and that Yeshua died not only to forgive our sins but also to bring healing to bodies so we include that as part of our services. We also exercise, less and less so these days but especially looking back to the '70s and '80s more so then. There was open expression of the charismata, the gifts that are listed in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 that were orally expressed in services. And of course, that's not something you would ever see in synagogue because obviously these are the benefits of people who are part of the New Covenant, part of the New Testament. You know we've entered into this new kind of, new birth experience with God and the Spirit of God lives within us. This obviously would be the experience only of those who believe in Jesus. So there are plenty of churches that do that kind of thing. We also would do that as a body of Christ.

Elizabeth: Okay, wonderful. Thank you. Um, now what were some liturgical practices that were avoided from the Christian world in the formation of Messianic Judaism and why do you think that was?

Ray: Well, [laughter] certainly we don't celebrate Mass if that's what you mean. Or we do have of course regular the Lord's Supper or you know the Lord's Sedar, we call it. Often called in the high churches, you know, the Eucharist. Uh we celebrate the _____ [Hebrew phrase], the Lord's Meal or the Lord's Supper. There are probably some distinct ways in which that is honored in the Messianic communities; whereas we would probably use real wine and we would use matzah as opposed to grape juice and wafers you know. Uh and uh we're much more careful about who we allow to take it. In my congregations, for example, we would not allow people to take the Lord's Supper who had refused to be immersed in water, who had not been baptized because we felt as though water baptism or water immersion or the mikvah as we call it, is the first step of obedience. It's the first act of obedience. I mean by the time you say the second syllable of "Amen" to the sinner's prayer, you should have one foot in the water. I mean it's an automatic thing. And you know Jewish people have a strong aversion to water baptism because it was so often an imposition from the Christian world. Jews were often threaten "Either be baptized in water or we're going to cut your head off." So the resisters to water baptism became heroes of the faith and martyrs and those who saved their skin came to be looked upon as traitors. So Jews who were baptized in water are regarded largely in the Jewish world as traitors to all things Jewish. So there's an understandable, natural resistance to water baptism. So we had to do something that we thought was theologically sound and at the same time flex our muscle a bit and tell people that unless they follow the Lord in this first act of obedience to Yeshua, there was no reason for us to think that they were believers. You know that they were just

saying nice things and agreeable things, but until they were actively obedient, there was no reason for us to take them seriously and we were not going to extend to them the right hand of fellowship that is Communion. We were not going to be accepting them as equals unless we were convinced that they were committed believers and walking in obedience. So we withheld the communion from those who were refusing to be baptized and only gave it to those who had been baptized. But I'm happy to tell you, Elizabeth, I don't know of anybody that had to sit it out for more than one month. You know, once people understood the seriousness of water baptism and how it was such a strong biblical mandate that we would not overlook, uh, they came to terms with it. Of course, we had all kinds of study helps and all that sort of thing for them, but I can't think of one case where it took more than one month for people to come through and be immersed in water and then be on equal footing with us to take the Lord's Supper.

Elizabeth: Wow. That's really neat. So what kind of response did you get from the leaders of Christianity and Judaism um when you began forming congregations and incorporating their liturgies into your service?

Ray: Well, I can tell you. I mean, when I first started out in Jewish ministry, of course I started out as an Assemblies of God kid and I was recognized by the Assemblies of God as one devoting my life to salvation of the Jewish people. One of the first things they told me was, "Okay, Gannon, you're gonna jump in Jewish ministry. That's fine, but no Jewish churches, absolutely no Jewish churches." Well, this was just fine with me. I mean I couldn't imagine anything but that because we hadn't had any real success yet and I was just. I didn't want to pastor anyway. I wanted to just win Jewish people to the Lord and plant them in existing churches and be on my way. It wasn't until we had this significant number, I mean, a hundred people or so that could not blend in to churches that we had to come to grips with the cultural imperialism idea. And we had to counter it and we did that by wanting to pioneer a Messianic synagogue. I can tell you that um 1973 was our launching date because it was then that there was a meeting at the national headquarters in Springfield, Missouri. Phil Goble and I the two of us working together in Los Angeles uh presented to the session that there were things in our policies that weren't in the best interest of Jewish ministry. And they, you know the leaders of the Assemblies of God just jumped right up and said, "Ah, look as of right now there is no policy. You guys go out and do it. Whatever works we'll make policy." So the Assemblies of God...opening...1973 endorsed the pilot project of a Messianic synagogue. Now there were no Messianic synagogues at this time. This was a real, uh, innovation. We thought it was the first thing since the book of Acts. You know, really it was just unheard of from where we. It turns out that there were other things experimented with over the centuries, but I didn't know about those at the time. I thought we were really breaking out of the historical box something that hadn't been seen since the close of the New Covenant. And but they, some of guys...from day one and continued to support the idea. Initially, I can tell you that Jewish ministries across the country, except for one, were really strongly opposed to us. I mean I can almost; almost anyone that you mention or know about would have been in opposition to us in those, in 1973, 1974. Ah because we were winning so many Jewish people to the Lord in contrast to them that they thought we had to be compromising the Gospel and we were heretics and we were Judaizers and they were accusing us of all kinds of things. We were written up in a magazine called the *Christian Century*. We were blasted in *Christianity Today*. The magazines coming out of Jewish ministries were calling us heretics, identifying us as such and all that kind of thing. And but we weathered the storm and just continued to plow forward. The one ministry that did not condemn us was Jews for Jesus. They were the one ministry, and they're just as baptistic as you can imagine. Moishe Rosen, you know, the founder of Jews for Jesus was an ordained Baptist minister besides being Jewish and I would have thought, you would have thought that they would have been counter. But he recognized, "Look, it's just the Jewish body of Christ. What's the problem?" But they were the only ones who refused to castigate us. However, I'd say though within the space of two years or three years almost all the groups that had been castigating us were

themselves now pioneering Messianic synagogues. So there was resistance to what was new, what was different, what was an innovation, what was outside the box, but when people saw the fruit of it, then they came on board. So you know I can say that many of the denominations across the years followed the pattern of the Assemblies of God and also have endorsed Messianic synagogues including the Lutheran Church of America, or is the Lutheran St. Lewis Senate? It's one of those. One of the Presbyterian groups has come out in support of it. The Southern Baptists have their own Messianic synagogues. Ah, so there's any number of groups now that have come out; Foursquare has its own National Fellowship of Messianic Synagogues. So it's much broader now of course. You live long enough you can tell the story. [laughter]

Elizabeth: [laughter] Wow. That's wonderful. So you mentioned that when you first started forming the congregation you didn't think anything like that had been done since Acts, um, so how did reading Scripture and learning about the traditions from Yeshua's era influence liturgical decisions in the rebirth of Messianic Judaism?

Ray: Well, first of all, you can't help but read Matthew 23 and have to go back and reevaluate ah the attitude towards Jewish religious expression generally speaking where you find Jesus Himself speaking in the opening verses of Matthew 23 as looking with favor upon some of the teachings of the scribes and Pharisees. So I mean He went on in the same chapter to issue stark prophetic warnings to the Pharisees whom He loved, whom He was ready to go die for within a few days. He was issuing straight prophetic consternation that they were bringing upon themselves all kinds of calamity. They needed to repent and change their ways. But He did it from the perspective of a broken hearted prophet. He was not looking to generate contempt towards them. He probably did not anticipate Christian uh disdain for the Pharisees that would develop over the centuries that followed. He very much was uh fellow with the Pharisees in many, many respects, and condemns their hypocrisy, but endorses much of their teachings. In other words, He recognizes that they have something to contribute in terms of social engineering. They are in the process. I mean their world, if you go back and look at their first century world, was in a horrific state of confusion. The religious world, the political world, uh, culture was topsy-turvy. And the Temple was falling into disrepute in the Jewish community. Uh, and of course it was on its last legs anyways because it would be gone within a generation. Yeshua is endorsing the expectation of the community to expect religious leaders to provide counsel for its ongoing future and success. So He is on the one hand recognizing the contribution that they make and is endorsing of it while suggesting their hypocrisy is not what is to be emulated. So backing up from that we can say that and looking at His own life. Fact that He went to synagogue on Saturdays as was His custom; went up to the Temple on a regular basis; He went up to Jerusalem for the holidays. He did all these kinds of things. Ah He quotes extensively from the Hebrew Bible itself. He's very comfortable; He's very much at home in Jewish life and culture. And as you go through the Gospels and the book of Acts, you can see that the early church was likewise extremely comfortable within Jewish culture. They didn't feel any need to disassociate from it. They didn't feel any need to castigate it or dismiss it or to say, "Let's all become pork eating Greeks." This was not their disposition whatsoever. Ah and in fact the Gospel made great headway within the Jewish community as the Gospel was offered in a Jewish cultural framework to Jewish people. So we understood if this was the pattern in Jesus' own life and ministry, this was the apostolic pattern in ministry, there's no reason why it couldn't be the pattern in ministry of modern Messianic believers to fellow Jews. So we felt the perfect freedom to behave as Jesus behaved, to behave as the apostles behaved. In fact, the real aversion to all things Jewish which has characterized Christianity from the second century forward, was based upon extra biblical ideas. In other words a theological system was fashioned outside the bounds of Scripture. There's no biblical support to have a negative attitude toward Jews and Jewish things. That is entirely a cultural development that happened within second, third, and fourth century Christianity as it passed down through the ages where

there has been this antipathy, ah this repugnance towards all things Jewish. A suspicion of any kind of Jewish cultural expression, but again that stems from bad Christian theology. It doesn't stem from Scripture.

Elizabeth: Right

Ray: It might be interesting and worth noting that there's no place in the Bible where there's any mention of a new Israel or a true Israel as opposed to an old Israel or a false Israel. That's classical Christian teaching that found in our Sunday school materials, found in our Bible dictionaries, encyclopedias. We're taught that in our Bible schools. There's no foundation for that in the whole of Scripture. That's a Christian tradition.

Elizabeth: Wow, okay. Dr. Gannon I was just looking at the time. We're right at forty-five minutes. I do have a few more questions. Do you have time?

Ray: Sure

Elizabeth: Okay, wonderful. Um, just wanted to double check. This is great! Thank you so much. Um now you mentioned that when you first started you didn't use a whole lot of the Jewish traditions and that was kind of added as you went and learned more. So how, how have those liturgical practices that have been developed and added, how have they been useful in the maturation of Messianic Jewish identity? Or have they?

Ray: Well, um, you know the whole Messianic movement. I don't know how familiar you are, Elizabeth, with the history of the Messianic movement. Um, but I can tell you that in the earlier years of the Messianic movement. Now I mean by that the '70s and '80s. There was a much stronger emphasis in the Messianic movement, Messianic congregations upon Jewish evangelism, reaching out to the Jewish community. We are the key to the salvation of all Israel and so forth. There came a period. I mean there was another generation I suppose that rose up or maybe it was just the younger people getting old. There was another mindset that came into the movement. I would say from the late '80s and until recent years where the Messianic movement has been so preoccupied with Jewish identity with wanting to maintain its Jewish credentials within the Jewish community. Being looked upon with favor by the rabbinic establishment by wanting to be conceived of as real contributors to Jewish society and so there has been such a preoccupation with that side of things, they have often neglected evangelism, usually neglected evangelism. And...the Messianic movement per se has diminished its evangelistic thrust into the Jewish world. And in direct proportion to its appetite for being embraced by the Jewish society or being reabsorbed into the Jewish world as believers but nevertheless thought of as equals, people have gone out of their way often to overdo their liturgical expression. To where it's not just liturgical expression that is honoring of the Lord and, you know, it's Jewish and it's healthful for Messianic Jews to feel the comfort of a regularized Jewish environment, but sometimes the Messianic groups have gone beyond that and sought basically to out-Jew the Jewish community; to out-orthodox the Orthodox community. To try to demonstrate their Jewish credentials by out-doing themselves liturgically speaking where most Jews coming in off the streets you know even most Messianic Jews or secular Jews also religious Jews coming in off the street are blown away, I mean they just can't imagine this high Orthodox standard that is being offered in some of the Messianic congregations. So there's that side of it. There's that end of the spectrum which is uh probably far more widespread than we would care to generally acknowledge. And they have entered liturgical format so much so that ah they have lessened the centrality of Yeshua and the Holy Spirit has directly reacted to that. And so their services are usually very dead and dry and Jewish people coming into those services will

not necessarily all feel the presence of the Lord as they would in a regular congregation where Yeshua is exalted whether its Messianic or Christian, no matter what it is. Wherever Jesus is exalted, the Holy Spirit's gonna move. The other end of the spectrum is those kinds of groups, Messianic groups that uh have liturgical pieces but they really don't know what in the world they're doing. And uh they mispronounce the Hebrew and so any Jewish people walking in who have any kind of Jewish background walk in and realize the whole thing is cockamamie. And ah they want nothing to do with this. So they would much rather go to a Baptist church. They much rather go to a Methodist church or an Assemblies of God church where at least there is, you know, sort of a professional, ah, respectful religious environment. As opposed to something that calls itself Jewish but it's really uninformed or unprofessional. So um you know there's very few congregations probably that have the liturgical balance we could hope for that lifts up Jesus, have a liturgical balance that is palatable and desirable for Jewish people. Um and this is one of the reasons why we have King's University. This is one of the reasons why we've created these academic programs because so many people in the Messianic movement involved in leadership in the Messianic movement uh don't have an educational background. I mean they may be lawyers. They may be medical doctors or you know they may be have some other kind of profession and they've got a quick tongue. So they were put in leadership position. But if they don't have a good educational background in the Bible, if they don't know not only the Hebrew Bible if they haven't mastered the New Testament, if they don't know New Testament theology, they're doomed. And the congregation is basically doomed. They've got to be able to have a solid theological background. They've got to understand Jewish history. They have to know about Jewish Christian relations. They need in a nutshell a good education at King's University, if they're going be able to go out and do what needs to be done to get back the Jewish community.

Elizabeth: Mmm, wonderful. Thank you. Um the next couple questions change gears just a little bit, um, so um yeah. So what are some musical influences that were drawn upon to develop Messianic Jewish music?

Ray: Ah, what musical influences?

Elizabeth: Yes

Ray: You mean leading personalities? Or

Elizabeth: Um, kind of when you were first forming your communities, you know, what were the major influences in the kind of musical sound that was developed that has become Messianic Jewish?

Ray: Alright, well, I can um tell you that first of all when we were first starting the only Messianic music that was out there at all was music that had been produced by Stuart Dauermann, D-a-u-e-r-m-a-n-n. Stuart Dauermann and the Liberated Wailing Wall of the Jews for Jesus—they were a traveling music ministry at that point and they were putting out wonderful music that was being distributed broadly. It found a ready audience with Messianic Jews especially since there was hardly anything else. There was another group called Lamb which was coming out of Philadelphia at that point—Joel Chernoff and um...why can't I think of the guy's name?

Elizabeth: Paul Wilbur?

Ray: No, not Paul Wilbur—another guy that was singing with Joel Chernoff at the time way back in the mid, eh, early and mid '70s.

Elizabeth: Was it Marc Chopinsky?

Ray: No, not Marc Chopinsky. I know him too... all those guys, but Lamb had some music. You know it was kind of rock-ster. They would sing Hebrew music in a rock style and it wasn't really Jewish music, you know? But it was Hebrew. So uh it kind of, just because it was Hebrew it was sort of picked up by a lot of the Messianic groups and then there was a lot of singing of Scripture. Singing of Scripture was largely borrowed from more charismatic groups who were singing English Scripture. And then of course, many of the Israeli songs, a lot of the Israeli folk songs were obviously Hebrew but they were based upon quotations from the Bible so we would sing a lot of the traditional Israeli folk songs because they were Scripture of course we would explain what the words meant but we would sing these Scriptures. People were very, very responsive to these things. Now later, other groups did come along like Israel's Hope which had Chopinsky and had Rene Bloc' and of course Paul Wilbur as the lead on guitar and singer. Now they sang for a number of years and a lot of their music left an enduring imprint upon the movement. Uh and then of course, Paul Wilbur went solo and he went with Integrity Music and produced a lot of new and fresh Messianic music which continues to be sung all over the world but also in Messianic congregations. Uh, there's a very important voice that came out of Israel by the name of David Loden, L-o-d-e-n. David and Lisa Loden are musicians and singers who composed ...hundreds of Messianic songs in Israel and they fostered a whole reservoir of singers and song producers in Israel who put together song books and these kinds of things which then circulated the Messianic globe. And they became very useful songs in services around the Messianic world. Now of course you've got other voices that have come since, Marty Goetz. I'm sure you've heard the name Marty Goetz.

Elizabeth: Yes

Ray: Yeah, G-o-e-t-z. He's produced a lot of wonderful Messianic music and that has. And there are more recent people who have come along... Corry Bell and um Deborah—what's her name? Other names that are much more recent but their songs are making a great impact.

Elizabeth: Okay. Wonderful. Um, now I know there's, from the many people that I've spoken with there seems to be kind of mixed feelings about Davidic dance, Messianic dance and it's role, um, but it has kind of come to be an identifier in Messianic Jewish circles. What do you think um its importance is?

Ray: Well, [coughing] I tell you I have never been much a fan of the Messianic dance concept except for after services. I mean there's what's called the *oneg Shabbat* when service is over and people have fellowship and eat and dance and that sort of thing. I've never had any aversion to that kind of celebration per se. Uh, but in more recent years now, I mean... twenty years... for you probably that's before eternity started but for me it's just a couple decades ago, but uh over the last couple of decades the dance, which you know I think largely got its momentum out of Beth Yeshua in Philadelphia. Uh and it kind of picked and they were doing the dancing every year, the congregational dancing at their annual meeting at Messiah in Grantham, Pennsylvania. And I think people coming from all over kind of picked it up and carried it back and now, you can come to Phoenix where I am today and I can take you to maybe eight or ten different congregations probably most of them have Messianic dancing going on during the services. Including my son-in-law's congregation, they have regular dancing as part of the service. Now it's in the back and people are engaging the worship other ways, but then you've got your set of dancers back there worshipping in dance. I think you hit the nail right on the head it really has become a mark of the Messianic movement at this point and I would not discourage it whatsoever because it's one of the few distinctives of the Messianic movement in that sense. I mean I realize there's churches that also have dances by now as well, but uh I think as far as the Jewish world is concerned as being part of the normative Jewish worship expression that is pretty distinctly the Messianic contribution. I mean the other groups all dance, but they don't dance for services, Messianics do.

Elizabeth: Right, yeah. Okay. Wonderful. Now how did the theological understanding of emerging Messianic Judaism back when you were first forming your congregation, how did that influence the liturgy of the congregations?

Ray: Well, I came to the very early conviction that if someone did not have a sound handle on New Testament theology, he was destined to go into heresy. I mean there's so many attractive things about Jewish life and culture, so many great features associated with it. There's so many uh legitimate practices and things that can be done and things that can be made cases for that unless you had filter through which you could run all of these things you could easily go awry. So New Testament theology has to remain the filter through which all Jewish cultural expression, all Jewish religious practices are run and if they are; they have to be in one sense purified or cleansed of any dross that may be within them things that are offensive to the Holy Spirit or to Biblical... need to be sifted out. So that all of the good features of Jewish religion and Jewish religious practice and Jewish philosophy and Jewish literature, all of the good things associated with Jewish life come through the filter and we're able to use them in their purified form. It is absolutely necessary that one have. If one does not have, this is why again something like. I realize King's University is not the only program happening in the country today. There're several other programs that are starting, but it's this idea, you've got to have a solid theological understanding of the whole of Scripture and that includes the New Covenant. And if you don't, it's just too easy to get suckered into forming some kind of a cult.

Elizabeth: Yeah, wonderful. So closing in my last question, um you mentioned that you lived in Israel for many years, or several years, um what were some similarities or differences that you noticed between the American Messianic worship experience and the international Messianic worship experience?

Ray: Well, when you say internationally, you mean the Israeli worship as opposed to the Diaspora?

Elizabeth: Ye, yes

Ray: Okay, in the United States of America, of course this is part of the Diaspora when Jews were removed from the land so many centuries ago. In a place like America, um Jewish people are very focused on the Jewish identity question. Now the Jewish... now I'm answering your question, believe me although it may not sound like it. Uh, the Jewish identity issue is really a modern issue. When I say 'modern,' I mean it's not a biblical issue. You don't find the prophets or Jesus or Paul all worried about making sure Jews retain their Jewish identity. This is not a biblical issue. This is an issue that developed in Europe among Jewish leadership with the rise of first, you know. I mean, they have the Enlightenment and then you have the Emancipation where Jews are permitted to come out of the ghettos where they have been cloistered for many long centuries where they couldn't change their identity if they wanted to. And now suddenly they're invited to come out and assimilate into Western civilization and then there's. But there's a certain price to pay for that assimilation and the issue is "to what extent are we willing to put aside our Jewish distinctives and become like everybody else?" And in some cases they said, "Forget...being Jewish. We don't want to be Jewish anymore. We just want to come out and be like everybody else." And others were repulsed by that and so it's been a debate that's lasted, you know two hundred and fifty years ah as the whole Jewish identity question. Now this is a struggle. This is a debate. This is a problem for Jews in the Diaspora. This is not an issue for Jews living in Israel. Jews who live in Israel are not worried about Jewish identity, "Jewish identity? Everybody's Jewish. I mean this is a Jewish country. It's a Jewish nation. I can't help but be Jewish." And the Israeli culture, the Israeli mindset is uh "what do you mean I'm not Jewish? Of course I'm Jewish. I can do whatever I want to do however I want to do it and it doesn't change my Jewish identity. I'm Israeli." So what happens then is when the Gospel comes to Israelis and the Gospel has made

a big impact, I say a big impact. A lot bigger than it used to be and now there's about fifteen thousand Jewish believers in Israel today. It's still a small percentage but it's a lot more than it was twenty years ago. It was like two or three thousand twenty years ago. Now it's like fifteen thousand and growing, and you have many Messianic congregations there now that have more than three hundred members. So it's a growing phenomenon. However these Israeli believers don't give a, give a thought to Jewishness. They just want to worship the Lord. So they want to incorporate into their services songs that lift up Yeshua. They want to be able to worship God in spirit and in truth. They want to have real encounter with God. They want to have real encounter with the Word of God. And they feel no obligation, most of them, feel no obligation to wear yamakas or to read from the Torah scroll or to do liturgical. They all know Hebrew. They know Hebrew backwards and forwards. They're Israeli but they don't feel any obligation to do liturgical pieces anything of this nature because it's not part of what they need to be. Most of these were secularized Israelis in the first place. So they come to a place of faith and now they are, you know they are just Israelis who are born again, spirit-filled. And they don't carry a lot of the religious trappings that you may find among American Jewish believers or among European Jewish believers or South American Jewish believers. They have no vested interest in donning the garb of ghetto Judaism. They want to be free liberated Israelis. And so this is why there is often a clash between Israeli believers and Messianic Jews especially those who migrate from the United States for example and carry all of their, you know, their box of Jewish goodies with them. They take it with them and begin to unpack it in Israel and find it repudiated by the Messianic Jews in Israel and the American Jews have a real struggle with this; "I had to move to Israel so I can't be Jewish anymore?" you know? And so this is the real dilemma and real diversity. If we were to take the average Messianic synagogue in the United States and transplant it per se to Israel, it would be held in contempt by Israeli believers.

Elizabeth: That's really interesting.

Ray: Yeah, it's a very strange...it's a very strange reality, you know? It's the other side of the coin when you move to Israel.

Elizabeth: Right, cause you're already in that world where, like you were saying, in the Diaspora you're kind of making it.

Ray: Yeah, they don't feel any need to, I mean, they are as assimilated, eh, they're assimilated fully into Israeli society so they don't feel any need to make any adjustments beyond that which is called for by the Holy Spirit. They don't feel any need to make any cultural adjustments whatsoever.

Elizabeth: Yeah, wow. Well that was the last of my questions, Dr. Gannon. Thank you. Thank you so much

Ray: Well, I hope it's been helpful, Elizabeth.

Appendix P: Frank Lowinger

Interview with Rabbi Frank Lowinger on August 12, 2014

Elizabeth: ...tell me a little bit about how you got into ministry and what that journey's been like for you?

Frank: Uh, I came to believe sometime in the winter of 1974. I came into ministry because I saw a need, a need that nobody else was fulfilling. As a Jewish believer I saw a continuity, a correct inseparable continuity between uh Jewishness and Jesus. It was something that nobody else at all was ever expressing; not in a church certainly not in the synagogue. And early on I just felt that there was a need and it was the hope of my heart that one day there would be a congregation for Jewish people who believe in Jesus. Uh, this was before I ever knew, ever heard of there being a Messianic Jewish movement. And so in the early years of believing I sought out other Jewish believers and they too were seeking out other Jewish believers and we seemed to be on the very same page. It was our prayer that we would have a congregation of Jewish people believing in the Messiah, and it wasn't calling that I had felt. It was just something that I wanted. I was just like everybody else we would pray that God would raise up a leader and after years nothing came. My education was in accounting and business, uh, I was self-employed in a business for seventeen years before receiving the call to ministry. I received that call. There was something burning within me. I didn't understand it until a pastor friend invited me to come on staff of a church that I was a part of when it got started. And my reticence initially was "I'm not trained in this. I've got no understanding of doing anything pastorally. I can't do a wedding. I can't do marriage counseling. I'm inexperienced." I threw up every excuse imaginable. And he said to me, "You know, God has a call on you. He will equip you. I want you to come on staff." And so you know I was wrestling with that. I was also wrestling with another job offer that would have relocated me to Kansas City working for Interstate Brands Corporation. And it just came to me that no matter what I would choose if I'm not serving the Lord that I wouldn't have any kind of peace. So I turned down the interview in Kansas City and I came on staff at New Covenant Tabernacle here in the Buffalo area and summarily put my business up for sale. That was basically how I arrived at my calling.

Elizabeth: Hmm, so were you raised in a practicing Jewish home?

Frank: Well, uh, it was a practicing Jewish home. I preface it by saying 'well' simply because uh my father of blessed memory was a Holocaust survivor. My father lost everybody. His entire family perished at Auschwitz. As far as my father was concerned, God also died at Auschwitz. In his words to me more than once, "If there is a God and if we are the chosen people, then where is my family?" On the other hand, my mom of blessed memory, her family came to the United States right from the pogroms in Russia in a scene right out of *Fiddler on the Roof*. Uh, they lived in a little village of Sokolivka, which today is part of Ukraine. It used to be part of Russia, and now soon is probably going to be Russia all over again. They were forced out of Sokolivka and made their way to the United States. My mom's family, they were Orthodox, but my mother's orthodoxy went by the wayside when she married my father. But my father was very determined that my siblings and I continued in the synagogue, not just through bar and bat mitzvah but right through the age of eighteen and confirmation. And every time I would fight with my father, you know, "Why do you send us to the synagogue? Every week, twice a week, Hebrew school, Sunday school, services, but you never go to the synagogue?" And his answer to us was always the same, especially to me, "I want you to know who you are and who your people are." So I was basically secular, but my dad compelled us because to him being a Jew was important and identity was important. And I have found that this upbringing proved to be very valuable in the days that would come ahead when I would come to find the Messiah of Israel and to see that living one's life as a Jew is a good thing and it's just part of the vision that we carried into this congregation when we planted it.

Elizabeth: Hmm, so when did you get into Messianic Jewish ministry specifically? How did that come about?

Frank: It was always something that was a part of us. As soon as I came to believe, you know the Sabbath became important to me. And I along with other Jewish believers that we were seeking each other we would get together on the eve of every Sabbath to have a time of prayer, to have a meal together, and to share a devotional thought. We didn't have much, but we had each other. And we desired to keep to our Judaic practice. That's who we were. We saw and believed in a Jewish Messiah. And we did not want to assimilate into the wider Christian community because we were Jews. And initially we weren't really accepted by the wider Christian community. We were looked upon as being, you know, going against the law or we were re-erecting the middle wall of partition, we were under the law and all of these varying things that were said to us; that the worship on Sabbath and not on Sunday was also a violation of the teachings of Jesus. We were really a forbidden. I mean I would go to a church, it was an Italian Pentecostal church, and was reprimanded for keeping the Sabbath, I was reprimanded for my desire to keep to biblical dietary laws, observance of Passover. And I would ask the pastor why he's putting these rules on me when these things are all to be found in the Bible, but at the same time the church celebrates things that aren't in the Bible—Christmas, Easter. And so it was these double standards that I couldn't understand. So if I could summarize, you know, we weren't very well received by the Christian world and because we believed in Jesus we didn't . . . many friends in the Jewish community. So you know, so it was we were 'bageled' between two worlds and we were uh at the fence being shot at from both sides.

Elizabeth: Now was this while you were serving on staff at uh New Covenant Tabernacle?

Frank: No, no, no, this was prior. Yeah, this was prior. When I was on staff, you know, it was not easy because historically Christianity has defined herself in opposition to the Jewish people, and I met up with a lot of opposition. And I don't know where I would be if it were not for the confidence that the senior pastor had in me because every time I would teach of Jewish things, whether it was in a Sunday school class or the rare times when I would preach at a Sunday night service, I always had the backing of the pastor because you know I held with a firm conviction to the inerrancy of Scripture. And I saw things regarding the covenants God made with our fathers that to me the gifts and callings of God are irrevocable. But it is not the way that uh people growing up in the Christian faith are accustomed to hearing. For example, I look at, you know, the pinnacle, the very epicenter of all redemption to revolve around Israel and not the Church. And I don't say that in a demeaning way, but God never made a covenant with the Church. Every covenant that God made was with the people of Israel. And so I would get myself into hot water by making statements such as this, but I've found down through the years now and you know I've been in full-time ministry now for thirty-three years, that things are a lot different. And they're different for the better. Having all of these years I've established a lot of good relationships, a lot of good friends, in both the Christian and the Jewish communities. Uh people may not always see things eye to eye, but we're not calling each other names anymore. And there's a marvelous peace and I'm most thankful to God for that. People have their own convictions. I highly respect that. Every church in every town and village is directed by a vision, the vision of the founding pastor or the current pastor, and so the same thing with our humble little Messianic synagogue. We too are guided by a vision, and we remain true to that vision. It is not for everybody, but it is not intended to be for everybody.

Elizabeth: When did you found your synagogue?

Frank: When did we found it? Well, back when I was on staff at the church, it was an Assembly of God church, we would have a Friday night service and the Sunday service. So I would say we first started

having our services at some point in 1982. I'm thinking probably the summer of 1982. Then after a few years, I was on staff and I was basically overseeing the Friday night service. The senior pastor also had a part in it. But there came a time in '84 when he turned everything for Friday night over to me. And so I would say, we founded the congregation in you know in '82 and we were part of the Assembly of God church.

Elizabeth: Okay, so were you ordained through Assembly of God?

Frank: Yes, I was. I held an Assembly of God credential for seventeen years. I resigned that credential at the end of 2001.

Elizabeth: Okay, wow, so Rabbi how would you define Messianic Judaism?

Frank: How would I define it? It is a biblically based move of God upon the Jewish people to maintain their Jewish heritage and to continue on in the same line as our patriarchs, our prophets, the Messiah, and His first followers, who were Jewish, one and all. We see this as a continuation of the faith of our fathers. Recognizing that when Jerusalem was turned upside down, this was a movement of the Jewish people. That we do not read about the first Gentile converts to the Messianic Jewish faith until we get to the tenth chapter of the book of Acts, and prior to that all you read about is the move of the Spirit of God and thousands being added to the kingdom daily. These were Jewish men and women who continued to worship at the Temple, who became part of many different groups, who saw their numbers begin to swell during this marvelous time of Messianic Jewish fervor because there was the belief that the Messiah had come and He had brought the...[not sure what word was said]

Elizabeth: Hmm, wonderful. Thank you. So Rabbi what do you believe are important cultural markers in a Messianic Jewish worship service?

Frank: Important cultural makers. Now when we think about worship, generally people think "singing." But you know worship is a two-fold thing. Worship is far more than just raising one's voice in song or dancing as the musicians lead in a chorus. Worship is the way we live. Worship is the things that we do. We worship God with every good deed that we do, with each and every encouraging word that we give along the way, with a helping hand, with moneys that we give to charity. This too is the most major part of worship. If all we do is look at worship as raising our voices in song, then we're no different than anyone else. We're no different than people, for example, going to a rock concert. I mean one you know you're not singing to God, but you're still singing but there really isn't much to show. The fruit of an individual's worship comes with being doers of God's Word, being obedient to the things that He has said. So that's how I see worship. It's a doing. It's an active thing. But as far as singing, as far as that aspect of worship, you know, we desire music that is more culturally fitting to the people that we want to reach. When it comes to singing, I will tell you. Now the first church that I went to, and I mentioned it earlier, was an Italian Pentecostal church and then after was another Assemblies of God church and there was something about the old traditional hymns of the church that really moved my heart. I mean the depth, the beauty of the lyrics. So when we began the Messianic congregation I will admittedly tell you, it was difficult to not do those hymns, but if we wanted to reach the Jewish people, you know, these hymns were not going to be the way to do it. You know, as beautiful as they are, but we wanted something, we needed something that was more contemporary, something that was Yiddish kind if you will or you know to a Jewish liking. Because this was a reflection of who we were as Jews. You ah can't really do a hora to "The Old Rugged Cross" or any other old hymn at church [laughter], but we wanted something you know that would be vibrant, that would be upbeat, that would really express the joy that all of us were experiencing.

Elizabeth: Mmm, so Rabbi in addition to the music that will express a Jewish, or speak to a Jewish heart what other aspects of your service when a Jew walks in is gonna say to them that they are not just in a Jewish synagogue, but a Messianic Jewish synagogue?

Frank: Well, first of all we do a good amount of traditional Jewish liturgy, and you're not gonna hear any church service beginning with the Shema prayer and all of the other you know blessings that we would do. We have found the very special richness and quality in the time honored liturgies of our people, some of them as old as three thousand years old. Various hymns and songs carried down generationally that are known if not by heart, but the melodies fully recognized by Jewish people all over the world. And so this is the distinguishing factor that would separate us from other church groups. When I open our service for example, before we get into any liturgy, I always spend about five minutes welcoming people, explaining to people who we are and what we believe that we are Jewish and non-Jewish people who believe that Jesus, Yeshua, is the Messiah of our people. Then I'll say a few words regarding the New Covenant being made with the people of Israel and point out the wonderful flow that there is in New Covenant faith in Messiah. So everybody coming in they know at the very outset that's who we are. And so when we begin with our opening Hebraic prayer, people readily recognize these things.

Elizabeth: Okay, so what aspects of traditional Jewish liturgy were integrated into your service? You mentioned the Shema. Are there any other specific elements that you use?

Frank: Well, really, you know, we don't do them all in one service, but we utilize really most everything. We don't do it all in a single service. We'll mix it up. You know, the Amidah, the prayers before and after the reading, the Prophets, the Torah, the Writings, the New Covenant.

Elizabeth: So you have a Torah service.

Frank: Yes, we do. We have a full Torah service once a month. And an abbreviated Torah service for the remained of the month. By 'abbreviated,' we'll take out our scroll, but we will not unfold it to read from it.

Elizabeth: Okay, now when you do a full Torah service, forgive my ignorance, but you read from the Torah. Do you also read from the Haftarah and the Prophets? Or...

Frank: Yes, yes we do and a corresponding, parallel passage from the New Covenant.

Elizabeth: Oh, okay, so you read all four?

Frank: Well, sometimes, you know sometimes the Writings and the Prophets, they overlap. But traditionally there are prescribed readings for every week of the year. And so we keep with the Jewish calendar, only difference we add a corresponding reading from the New Covenant.

Elizabeth: Now is that on a calendar of readings that you have made or the one that, I think, it was Dr. Fischer was telling me that he helped create? Or some Messianic group?

Frank: Well, there have been a number of men that have established a reading cycle. Dr. Fischer certainly is one of those men. Dr. David Stern also developed another one. And in my instance I don't *follow* those, but I follow the traditional Jewish calendar and then I'll usually—either me or one of my elders—will select the passage from the New Covenant that we believe closely fits a theme or direction that we want to go with the earlier readings.

Elizabeth: Okay. Wonderful

Frank: Yeah, see there isn't anything hard fast. I'm thankful to Dr. Fischer and Dr. Stern and other have put together a calendar. It serves as a wonderful guideline, but we have the liberty to maybe select something from the New Covenant that maybe better makes the point that is the theme of the readings that we have chosen.

Elizabeth: Yeah, I was just curious cause he had mentioned that. Wonderful and you said the 'a-mee-**dah**' is that also pronounced the 'a-mi-**dah**'?

Frank: Yes, that's it.

Elizabeth: Okay, I just wanted to make sure I didn't write the wrong one.

Frank: Yeah, there are ...pronunciations.

Elizabeth: Okay, um, so then Rabbi Frank, now what contemporary Christian worship practices were integrated into your services?

Frank: We have a marvelous worship leader, who really you know scours everything really that's out there. And he centers, you know, I give him full liberty. He knows what I want. And so, yes, we will draw from a lot of the good things that might be out there in the evangelical community. Ah, chorus that are Messianic in character and by that I mean that there's a Hebraic flavor to it. That the content of the lyric or the Scripture text that is used in that song is something that is reflective of who we are. And then too you know a lot of our worship, I will tell you, is home grown. Our worship leader and his sister have written some of the most beautiful songs over the years. And for many years I've been telling them and pleading with them, "get it published," but they've not done it. So suffice it to say, a lot of our choruses are home grown.

Elizabeth: So your worship leader pulls some music from the evangelical Christian world, now when you say "Hebraic flavor" are you just talking about lyrical content or also uh musical elements?

Frank: Um, hmm, I would say mostly lyrical.

Elizabeth: Okay, sure. Awesome and Rabbi are there any other things that are taken from contemporary Christian worship? Some rabbis mentioned the taking up of an offering during the service isn't...

Frank: Yes, we do that, yes.

Elizabeth: And that's not traditional Jewish?

Frank: Right and the accent there would be traditional Jewish, uh, because when people came to the Temple, they didn't come empty handed.

Elizabeth: Right, they always come with a gift. Sure, now what liturgical practices from either the Christian or the Jewish worlds were avoided in the formation of your service?

Frank: Oh, well, it would be mostly you know a lot of things from the Christian world. We won't. Of course, I'm drawing from other things, but in my upbringing, I always equated anything Christian as being Catholic. So we're not going to uh join in song singing "Ave Maria." We're not going to recite the Lord's Prayer. You know, we read it, but it's not a part of our liturgy per se. you understand?

Elizabeth: Right, it's not done every week.

Frank: Yeah, it's just not something that we'll do uh liturgically. We're not going to recite [another word was used but I could not find its spelling. The meaning was the same.] the Disciple's Creed or the Apostle's Creed, I should say. You know, various denominational marks of Christendom, we don't incorporate that into our service.

Elizabeth: Okay and was there anything from the Jewish tradition that was avoided or is avoided?

Frank: Um, there are some prayers that we alter to meet up with the way we see things. Uh, but you know, we might alter a few. And there are certain prayers that pronounce a curse on the *minim* or 'the heretics.' We're not going to recite those cause they're intended to be ear marked toward us. So we don't follow those.

Elizabeth: That's the Eighteen Benedictions, right?

Frank: That's correct the *Shmoneh Esreh*.

Elizabeth: Okay, thank you. So you mentioned earlier that when you first started the leaders from the Jewish community and Christian community weren't very thrilled about what you were doing. Was that because they saw you using liturgies from the Jewish world in your practice? What was it that they didn't like about Messianic Judaism?

Frank: Well, they certainly you know, Jewish community surely did not like us using the same prayers and symbols of Judaism in a worship of Jesus because in their eyes its incongruous. You can't be Jewish and believe in Jesus. So they look at it as being deceptive. I understand where they're coming from because from the Jewish perspective Christianity is not Jewish. And when you try to meld the two it appears that this is just not congruous, that it's erroneous. So I understand where they're coming from. Whereas I explained earlier, we see perfect continuity within the writings of the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Covenant. We see perfect continuity with Jewish faith in Jesus because He's the Jewish Messiah. Uh, but I think it takes on another dimension besides just symbolisms and the use of symbolisms. You know, I forgot my thought and where I was gonna go with it. Oh my, but it's more than just the use of symbolisms. Uh, it'll come to me, Elizabeth, but it's not doing it now.

Elizabeth: Okay, that's alright. And then you said the Christian leaders were upset because they said you were building the middle wall of partition again? Can you remind me what Scripture...

Frank: Yeah, and you reminded me of where I was going. Anytime, you are doing different, something different than the mainstream it's always going to receive some push back. We are creatures of habit. So if somebody comes along with a new teaching, for example, people are naturally defensive about this. And I remember a superintendent of mine in the Assemblies of God, Reverend A___ Bartholomew, who encouraged me with these words, "If it's true, it isn't new, and if it's new, it isn't true." And he was right on. The thing is the things that are new to us are true and we see ourselves as walking in the footsteps of the first followers of Jesus. But this expression, you know, it was really sound. It was very insightful. But again we were doing something different. We were breaking new ground, and the Jewish community was not used to this kind of an approach. The Christian community also not used to this approach. Everybody had their categories, and you had to abide by those categories and those guidelines. And so here we were breaking new ground and naturally we're going to get some push back for it.

Elizabeth: Hmm, yeah, when the Christian leaders were saying you were building the middle wall of partition, they're referring to a Scripture aren't they?

Frank: Yes, they are.

Elizabeth: What is it? I can't remember.

Frank: They're referring to Ephesians two and I'm going to turn to that so rather than going from memory, I'll have it right before me.

Elizabeth: And, Rabbi, while you're turning there, I just looked at the time and we're almost forty-five minutes in and I do have a few more questions. Is that okay with you?

Frank: Sure, sure, yeah, that's fine.

Elizabeth: Okay

Frank: Yeah, I'm not seeing it. So look, why don't you ask your other two questions and what I will do, I will uh tap away at my computer and I will find that reference.

Elizabeth: Okay, thanks. Well my next question is more of a history question and how it impacted forming your synagogue. How did the early Jewish cultural identity from Yeshua's era influence liturgical decisions that you made in the rebirth of Messianic Judaism?

Frank: Wow, could you repeat that? That was a great question and I haven't fully digested it.

Elizabeth: Sure, how did early Jewish cultural identity from Yeshua's era influence liturgical decisions in the rebirth of Messianic Judaism?

Frank: Oh, well, it was a genuine Jewish expression of worship that in Yeshua's day there was already worship that was in place. So there was the continuity that always was from before the time of Yeshua right up to this present. So again we were following in that very same flow.

Elizabeth: Hmm, so were there things that when you looked at forming your service that you even looked. You looked at tradition, but you also said, "What did the disciples do? What did Yeshua do?" and made that your filter instead of just Jewish tradition and present Christianity?

Frank: Uh, I'll be honest with you; it's not really how we arrived at those. It was just a slow developmental process. When we started, our services were very evangelical Christian. Uh, and in many ways, we still are. Our worship and song service is upbeat, and we have a good time and there's dance. So I mean that's a part of evangelical Christianity that we retain along with the liturgies of our people. Not going to throw out the baby with the bathwater. I think evangelical Christianity has a lot of great things in the line of worship.

Elizabeth: Mmm-hmm, wonderful. So Rabbi how has the liturgical practices that were developed, and you mentioned that it's kind of, its changed from when you started to today, so as they were developing, how has that been useful in the maturation of a Messianic Jewish identity?

Frank: We're more and more comfortable in our own skin. Uh, we don't have to follow and emulate patterns that we see within the evangelical community. Most of us, mostly all of us are the product of evangelical Christianity. Almost all of us were witnessed to and came to faith through the faithfulness of evangelical Christians. And so our first experience of faith in Yeshua was the things that we saw and emulated from the evangelical Christian world, charismatic and non-charismatic. So naturally when we

became more of a congregational movement, we brought all of those dynamics with us. But as the years progressed we began to inculcate more and more of the liturgies of our people.

Elizabeth: Okay. Wonderful. Um, so changing gears a little bit and going back to the music. What musical influences were drawn upon or are drawn upon in the development of Messianic Jewish music?

Frank: I'm sorry can you say that again? Because I found that reference and I was reading the reference rather than listening to the question.

Elizabeth: [laughter] No problem. I said what musical influences were drawn upon to develop Messianic Jewish music?

Frank: Wow, well, for me in my opinion, uh, the first influence for me was a Canadian couple, Merv and Merla Watson.

Elizabeth: Merv and Merla Watson?

Frank: Merv and Merla Watson and they came up with really upbeat choruses, like "Awake O Israel," countless others. They were an early influence. Another early influence for me was the Liberated Wailing Wall, Jews for Jesus, and Lamb with Joel Chernoff and Rick Coghill.

Elizabeth: What was his name? Rick what?

Frank: Rick Coghill, C-o-g-h-i-l-l.

Elizabeth: Okay

Frank: Yeah, you know, Lamb music, the Watsons were just dynamic. And they were close to where I live in Buffalo. They were just on the other side of the border in St. Catherines, Ontario, only about a forty-five minute drive for me.

Elizabeth: You know, I've sung their music for years now and I've never heard of them before.

Frank: Yeah, do a web search. You will be amazed, but they were really pioneers in what is known today as Messianic Jewish music.

Elizabeth: Okay, wonderful. Well, thank you for mentioning them. You're the first one.

Frank: Really? Okay good.

Elizabeth: Yeah, that's great and you mentioned dance, that's what this question centers around. Um, how did the development of Messianic Jewish dance come to serve as an identifier for Messianic Judaism and what do you believe its importance is?

Frank: Oh, well, I can't really give you anything close to an expert opinion, but I will say this. When it comes to dance and music, I believe that we really borrowed from the rich tradition of the Hassidic Chabad movement, who incorporated in the late 1700s and 1800s lively dance as a form of worship before God, which to me in 1948 you saw carried over with the rebirth of the state of Israel; the images of people, survivors of the Holocaust dancing a hora when Israel was declared statehood. And dancing in the streets of Jerusalem when the '67 day war was completed and we had defended ourselves. I think you know it's a carryover on the tradition that was handed down to the Jewish world through the Lubavitcher movement.

Elizabeth: Now how do you say that? Babavitcher?

Frank: Lubavitch, Chabad Lubavitch

Elizabeth: Can you spell that for me?

Frank: Sure, uh, L-u-b-a-v-i-t-c-h, Lubavitch

Elizabeth: Okay and that was a movement in the 17 and 1800s?

Frank: Yeah, the mid-1700s, you know you can reference that. The founders name was Baal Shem Tov. That was his nickname. I'm not remembering his real name. I can reference that, but Baal Shem Tov means "master of the good name." I'll do a quick search. I'll come up with that name. It's not coming to me now. But the reference earlier is Ephesians 2:14.

Elizabeth: Oh, okay. 2:14? Thank you.

Frank: Yep

Elizabeth: So was that dance, is that what's referred to as the 'folk dance'? Is that the same or is this dance that you're talking about different?

Frank: Uh, again, you're talking to a man that couldn't tell you the difference.

Elizabeth: Okay, that's fine. But the Lubavitch is that used in synagogue worship or outside celebrations?

Frank: Only within the ultra-orthodox community.

Elizabeth: Oh, they actually use it in synagogue worship services? Wow

Frank: Well, yes, the early years when I came to believe, I would go to Chabad house. And it was there less than a mile from my home, and I would go there on Friday nights. And yes, it was very festive. And on the holidays we would take the Torah and parade it and dance you know late into the night out in the middle of Main Street near the university district.

Elizabeth: Wow

Frank: Okay, his name was Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer.

Elizabeth: Israel ben Eliezer?

Frank: Yeah, the 'master of the good name.'

Elizabeth: Thank you. Okay, um, and Rabbi Frank, how did the theological understandings of emerging Messianic Judaism influence the liturgy of your congregation?

Frank: I really don't think it had much to do theologically other than the part that we identified theologically as being the natural people of Israel and identifying with things that were Jewish.

Elizabeth: Okay, wonderful Rabbi have you had opportunity to travel internationally and observe or participate in Messianic Jewish services internationally?

Frank: Yes, I have on many occasions.

Elizabeth: Oh really? May I ask where?

Frank: Sure, sure, um been to Israel nine times. I've been to Poland at least six times. I've toured and participated in services on four occasions in Ukraine. Uh, I've been to Hungary, Budapest twice. I've been able to, what am I leaving out? Oh, the Czech Republic. I was part of service in Czech Republic. Uh, Poland, Germany, so yes, I've had wonderful experiences like this, for which I am just thankful to God for opening up these opportunities for me.

Elizabeth: Yeah, so what similarities or differences have you notices between American Messianic Jewish worship and the international Messianic Jewish worship?

Frank: Um, very little. The major differences I saw was probably in Eastern Europe where as, for example when I would teach or speak, I'm used to standing, but in Ukraine, parts of Eastern Europe, it's traditional for the teacher to be seated. So that took some getting used to, but other than that. I really didn't find too much in the way of liturgy. There was a lot of good uplifting music and song with the cultural flavor that goes with the particular sounds that are known for Eastern Europe or the particular sounds of instrumentation of Poland or the Czech Republic and even Israel. There's just this wonderful flavor of those countries and their style of music.

Elizabeth: Mmm-hmm, wonderful. Wow thank you so much, Rabbi. That was my last question

Frank: Oh, well, look I'm glad that we were finally were able to get this thing together. I think that we kicked the can down the road as far as we wanted it to, right?

Elizabeth: [laughter] Yes, this has been... [Recorder was turned off.]

Appendix Q: Nathan Joiner

Interview with Rabbi Nathan Joiner on August 15, 2014

[The recorder was a little late in starting, but this is where it starts.]

Nathan: So what was the question there? A little bit about...

Elizabeth: Just your background, how you got into ministry, how you came to know the Lord.

Nathan: Okay, cool um I'll give you the short version cause otherwise we'll be here for hours. Um, so I was actually raised in an atheist home. I would say just totally secular. My father's Jewish. My mother's not. And we were just totally secular, just apart from any kind of organized religion or anything like that. Long story short, I ended up going to a music conservatory at the New England Conservatory of Music for trumpet, and that was sort of like my thing. And through the music and through different experiences and things that I had there I started to feel the need, I guess, to start searching and to look for meaning in certain areas of my life. And um you know, I was involved in some unhealthy relationships and things like that that ended so there was like a need, if that makes sense? So I started looking and got really into yoga and Eastern spirituality and things like that. And I actually became a yoga teacher and went through a whole journey there for a few years. I was kind of very much intensely engaging sort of New Age spirituality, if you're aware of that?

Elizabeth: Yeah

Nathan: And um, I found enough spiritual types of things there that I kind of abandoned atheism, but it definitely was not God that I was engaging... sort of like a cosmic soup of you know spiritual things. A lot of which are probably demonic and things like that. So anyway, I engaged in that for a while, but it definitely broke the atheism. And so I was really looking and searching and for me anything that was other worldly was good. I didn't have a sense that there could be good spiritual and bad spiritual. And so I think that's kind of like a New Age thing. It's like everything is good if it's spiritual. So anyway, you know that world for me just got darker and darker and the—you know—in New Age, they sort of teach you that you find what you're looking for in the searching itself. You never actually find anything. And so, even though I was doing more and being more spiritual and doing hours and hours of yoga and meditation every day, it was like the pain and the things that I was going through just kept getting worse and worse. Um and it just got very dark. That basically led me to "there's something out there that I'm missing. I just need to search. I need to find it." And so I'm skipping a lot, but I decided to go on this pilgrimage to find truth along the Appalachian Trail. Have you heard of the Appalachian Trail?

Elizabeth: Yeah

Nathan: Okay, so yeah it's like the hiking trail that goes from Maine to Georgia. And so I decided on kind of like really a whim it was just, "I'm just gonna do this" to drop everything and to go hike from Maine to Georgia. And I have kind of a strange story. My story sort of belongs in the '70s like some of the people you've interviewed. But it wasn't. This was 2005.

Elizabeth: Wow

Nathan: Anyway, so I hitchhiked up to northern Maine. I live in Massachusetts. And um I didn't have any responsibilities or anything like that so I went up there and along the way a woman picked me up who was, while I was hitchhiking. And actually it was getting to be evening and so I actually stayed with her family

and it was kind of a nice thing. And in the car she said “What are you doing?” and I said, “I’m going on this pilgrimage to find truth.” She said, “Well, I did that when I was your age. You know, back in the ’70s, and did a hitchhiking search across the country, and we met Jesus.” And I was like, “Yeah, whatever. That’s the last thing I want to get connected to.” Here I was opposed to anything organizational, any kind of institutionalized religion or anything like that. And so anyway, she didn’t really say anything else. And I found out later that she had just, she had prayed for me. She said that she prayed for me every day after that. And so anyway, started the Appalachian Trail and it was sort of like one thing after the next. I had never really encountered anyone who actually believed in Jesus in a, you know, like in a relational way. Until at that time so it was like God started to just do things. So at the beginning of the Appalachian Trail there was another hiker who was this nineteen year old homeschool girl from Kentucky who was hiking the trail by herself because Jesus called her to do it. And we like started basically hiking together and arguing for maybe two weeks or so. And like I would win arguments, but it was clear that she was the one walking with God and I was the walking to find God. So I think what happened to me over that time was that hiking was a lot harder than I thought. It was a lot, you know there were bugs and mosquitoes. It was just challenging. And so like my brokenness on the inside came on the outside um. I just started to really realize that I needed God, which was big because I was coming from New Age so I wasn’t like I’m a. In New Age, in the end it says that you are god and you really just need to realize it. And so I was like realizing that. Anyway, I’ll jump ahead. After about a month or so on the trail and kind of realizing what I was searching for, and I started to read through a little bit of Matthew for the first time out of a Bible that she had given me. And I was really impressed with the Sermon on the Mount and felt like it contained all this sage wisdom, you know. Then, for me, it’s August 8th in 2005 and so I was in Northern Maine. I’m sorry. Not Northern Maine hiked from Northern Maine down to Northern New Hampshire in the White Mountains. Where do you live? Are you in the area? Or?

Elizabeth: I’m in Upstate New York, so Utica.

Nathan: Yeah, been there. Okay, so the White Mountains, and um so anyway, I was there and it’s kind of hard thing to describe, but I was just alone and sitting on this log with a beautiful sunset, and something inside me just released. I didn’t know like the sinners prayer or anything like that, but something just let go, and I just experienced Yeshua’s presence just came into that place ...and all those different areas. Sort of like a cellular experience. Just transformed who I was, like how I thought and it was very deep, very healing experience. Like true love, you know, and... I wasn’t alone in the woods anymore. Just my whole life changed in that moment and you know there were lots of things to learn. And of course, I’m still learning lots of things, but there was something at the center that changed. Now ... I was walking with Him, you know. I didn’t know about Messianic Judaism or Christianity or anything. I had never really been in a church except to play trumpet for Easter services for money, you know. I just had no idea, but it was like it was just me and Jesus we were just walking together. And I felt like He wanted me to keep walking and finish the trail. So it sort of became like my honeymoon time with Him. We would just walk together. I would start to see all kinds of little miracles and things. Like when I needed food, I would just pray and there would be food and places to stay, and there’s tons of stories I could share with you another time. But I’ll just get into how I connected to Messianic Judaism. I started to meet all kinds of other people like who were believers and had similar experiences to me from you know different Protestant groups you know and it was just like. I was starting to realize. I think God was showing me that I wasn’t. It wasn’t like I was the only one in the universe that had has this experience. [laughter] And it was kind of cool. But I didn’t really know how to self-identify. I wasn’t all that. Jewishness wasn’t really all that in my thinking cause I wasn’t really raised in that. It was like a part of my ancestry. It wasn’t like an identity so much. But then what happened was I was reading through the New Testament like crazy that this point and I’d begun to realize

that it was all about Jewish people and it just it was a Jewish book. And I just wanted to kind of see how that fit in so I rented this basement of a Catholic church staying there for a night. They have like a little hiker's hostel. And um, spent like the night arguing theology with the Catholic minister there. It's like, I didn't know theology, but so anyway what happened was ended up praying two prayers. One to meet "the one", it was like now that I've met God I'm ready to get married. That was my mentality and the other was to meet someone who was Jewish. And so just to see how it all fit together. I don't know exactly why but that day I was hitchhiking to get into town and things like that and that's when Raina, who I'm now married to, pulled over and picked me up while I was hitchhiking. So that's how we met. And so let's see. She was raised conservative Jewish, both sides of her family, you know, went to Camp Judaica her whole life so very much a part of her identity. And she was sort of seeking in like New Age kind of Judaism. Like finding meaning in eco-friendly farming and things like that. And it's sort of like a big renewal Jewish movement out there right now where it's like quasi observant and they do a lot of like Karl Marx types of things and they eat organic and they farm together and their into communal living and things like that. They also bring a lot of sort of New Age uh types of things and Eastern spirituality into the mix. So she was actually, when she met me, coming from the same yoga retreat where I had done my training...so we had a connection. So I was like, "Thanks, God. Finally I meet someone who is Jewish." And so we really connected and she was not Messianic at the time. She decided after about half an hour of driving together to like go hiking with me for a few days. Our story's very strange, like this shouldn't happen. But anyway, so she ended up going hiking with me for a few days and um you know, I was kind of on fire for Yeshua and was just really talking about Him, but not from like your southern evangelical perspective which she was very against. Um, she grew up in Tennessee and so in Tennessee it's sort of like you self-identify as a Jew by not believing in Jesus...that's sort of how you identify. She came from a family that you know would like make sure to sing the Hanukkah song at a Christmas pageant; things like that, very culturally Jewish and very proud of it. And so she was very turned off by any of the missional kinds of approaches to sharing who Jesus is just because it's so common and often comes along with tracks with like flames on them and stuff like that, you know? And so she was opposed to that and very reactionary to Jesus, but I was able to sort of share Him with her from a different perspective having never been in a church, having never, you know. It was really just "here's my experience and here's His teachings." So we engaged in conversation and she sort of like became my trail angel and would meet me every so often for hikes along the way. You know and that sort of thing. Eventually, she met me at the end of the trail in January, six months later, and uh a few months after that she decided to. She came to faith as well...by writing a letter to her parents who were flipping out about the whole thing. Yeah, so that gets us to. She writes this letter and uh her parents say, "We don't you to have anything to do with him. He's brainwashing you. We're crying all night. Its been a really painful" and all these things. So we decided to get engaged.

Elizabeth: Of course

Nathan: Yeah, we're not doing this right about here. Um, but what ended up happening was you know we. Let's see, we got engaged in Central America. We did this like little trip, trek around Central America. And we met some pastors from YWAM, Youth with a Mission, and they took us out to lunch. And they said, "Listen; there are people like you out there called Messianic Jews. We don't know them personally, but we've heard of them. So we're going to pray for you to find these people." So they prayed for us. So we came back to Boston, which is where our parents live and it was just before Rosh Hashanah. So we said, "Well, let's look up and find a Messianic Jewish synagogue and we found Ruach Israel, which is where we are now. And came for second day Rosh Hashanah services, and it was like home for us. So we, you know. We got connected. Her parents flipped out, you know "Messianic Judaism is (quote) 'right wing fundamentalists' evangelical Christian fundamentalism with Jewish trappings." That's what he said. And

so they flipped out, but we were like “No, really it’s Jewish.” Eventually we had them meet Rabbi Rich. I don’t know if you’ve met Rabbi Rich Nichol? He’s our senior rabbi here.

Elizabeth: No, I haven’t.

Nathan: Um, and with the intention of trying to find a rabbi to do our wedding. They were putting on the wedding and they met him and were amazed. They really liked him I guess...they let him do our wedding. So he flew down to Tennessee and we had this wedding with the entire conservative synagogue there. It was really beautiful. So that started our journey into Messianic Judaism. Over the next year or so I felt really called to recommit myself to my own Jewish heritage and to begin living a Jewish life in a covenantal way. And uh for Raina it was just always part of the deal and this was sort of like the perfect expression of community for her. And then we began to feel Yeshua’s hand really calling me into leadership. And so I ended up starting MJTI, the Messianic Jewish Theological Institute. And uh did the UMJC internship program here at the synagogue and six years later or so I guess, I was ordained in January 2012. And now we have three kids and one more coming. I think that’s pretty much it.

Elizabeth: Wow, so you said you were ordained in 2012? But, okay. Wow, that’s great. So how would you define Messianic Judaism?

Nathan: Okay, I don’t know if I went into too much detail there, but...

Elizabeth: No, that’s good. You were good.

Nathan: How would I define Messianic Judaism?

Elizabeth: yeah

Nathan: Hmm, okay let’s see. I would define Messianic Judaism. There are so many different ways to approach this depending upon the group. Um, let’s see. I would define Messianic Judaism as a. I’ll put it this way; I would not define it as an integration between Judaism and Christianity. Um, but instead, I would define Messianic Judaism as a Jewish movement which seeks to embrace Messiah Yeshua at its core and you know in that exists and lives in solidarity with the Jewish people in a relationship of mutual blessing with the wider Christian church.

Elizabeth: Wonderful. So Rabbi, what do you believe are important cultural markers in Messianic Jewish worship?

Nathan: Uh, cultural markers in Messianic Jewish worship itself?

Elizabeth: Sorry

Nathan: Cultural markers in Messianic Judaism in the worship?

Elizabeth: Yes, in like a worship service.

Nathan: Okay and you mean cultural not like in terms of. You mean like Messianic Jewish culture or Jewish culture that we should bring into Messianic Judaism?

Elizabeth: Um, no Messianic Jewish culture so be it, even if it does reflect the Jewish community like if I walk into your Messianic Jewish synagogue what’s going to stand out as part of the culture of worship there?

Nathan: I gotcha. Okay, I think two things. I think that it's really that we engage the wider Jewish community and live um live lives that reflect uh what the modern Jewish experience is. And so that's very nuanced and that could look like a lot of different things because the Jewish world is pretty diverse, but so I'm not by any means Orthodox, you know, we're definitely not in our synagogue. But I think that we need to stay within the norms of the Jewish world so I don't think we should depart from certain traditions and ways of doing things that the wider Jewish community sees as normative just because we, you know are Messianic and want to do things differently. So for example, if you walk into Ruach Israel, which I think our synagogue would be a good example of how I you know would like to see Messianic Jewish worship. You know, where you have a service with a very recognizably Jewish to any conservative, reformed, even...orthodox person although we do use music. We do, do certain things. You know, we're egalitarian for example. Um there would be. But you would feel at home and I think that that's really important. And not only in terms of reaching out to the Jewish community but maybe even more importantly in terms of solidarity with our Jewish community. And you know we need to be a part of the Jewish world for the greater calling of what the purpose of the Messianic Jewish movement is. So I think that's really important. And then secondly, Yeshua is not an add-on to our Jewish expression. But Yeshua is actually a through whom everything Jewish exists you know. Through whom...so we bring Him into our service in ways that, you know, it's not just like we add a prayer that says "Yeshua" in there. But we really bring Him into the heart of our service. We do that in a few tangible ways by um you know we add Hebrews 1 "In the past God spoke to our ancestors the prophets, etc. but now He's spoken to us by the Messiah, who is the Son." We bring that into the Shema section. So we after we sing the Shema and the V'ahavta, we actually have a melody where we'll bring that prayer into it, and it really fits the thematically. It fits thematically into the themes of the Shema. So and then we'll bring like Philippians 2, which speaks of Yeshua being Adonai Himself into the end of the Alenu, um which is already about kingship and bending knee and everything like that. So I guess what I'm saying is, we bring Yeshua into the service in a way that fits. So we're not just arbitrarily throwing things out there and doing things however we want to, but thinking deeply about the patterns, the rhythms of Jewish life, and the service is like going into the Temple and going out. And how can we bring Yeshua into that? Even bring New Covenant Scriptures into that in ways that are sensitive to those norms? And that fit the basic rhythms, it makes sense. It goes there. Um, and so. And then other things that I think are important in terms of like the Spirt, I really feel like. You know, we believe in the Holy Spirit, but we also don't want our synagogue to look like a Pentecostal church even though I love Pentecostal churches and love visiting them, you know. There's nothing wrong with that, but just in terms of the Holy Spirit moving in a Jewish way. Um what does that mean? You could talk for hours about that. We think that there's a Jewish narrative that we need to maintain and a certain wholistic sensitive loving atmosphere that I think is really important that a Messianic Jewish synagogue maintain where we're free to let the Spirit move, but we're not judging each other whether or not we have our hands raised or whether or not we. You know those sorts of things. We're also. Here's one other aspect that I think is important. We have to have a reverence and a respect for God and for tradition. Where that, where you know like the Torah...they really need to be elevated in our ...and in our practice. We're not just praying these prayers to receive something, but we're praying them because it's service, it's our service. It's our *avodah*, you know like to God. It's how the Jewish people come to praise together as a people. And so there's an element of reverence that I think. Just to be honest, some places tend to lose and I wouldn't want to do that. You know, so we're very careful about um symbolism and imagery and what does it mean and using it in ways that uh, using it in ways that wouldn't be appropriate. For example, that would be like shofar blowing and things like that. Traditionally would only be on Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur in the month of Elul. We don't bring that into our service because we want to hold that experience in a sacred place. If that makes sense, so those would be some little things.

Elizabeth: Okay, wonderful. So on that, what other aspects of traditional Jewish liturgy have you integrated into your Messianic Jewish service? You mentioned the Shema, the V'ahavta, the Alenu...

Nathan: Oh, um let's see. You, were you at the UMJC conference this year?

Elizabeth: Uh, the UMJC? No, I was at the MJAA for a day and a half.

Nathan: Oh, the MJAA, okay. Yeah, we actually led the service there this year so if you were there you would get a sense for it. And we had ah our Siddur was actually published through there, um. But we do a lot more. I know in some congregations like they only add in the Shema and it's sort of in a strange place. Um we, our service would be much more liturgically oriented, but the difference would be. To say that I think some people interpret that as, "Okay they're these staunchy orthodox Jews or whatever." It's like anything but the fact. I mean we had people coming up to us at the conference saying "You changed our stereotypes about how you can actually have a sensitive nuanced liturgical service that also bring the Ruach Hakodesh into the whole service." Um and I think that that's really important. I mean you can't get that across on the phone but it's really important to understand that there are ways to do this and ways that really uh are very reverent and very holy. And you know like for example, at the beginning of the Amidah as if we are standing like Ezekiel's angels in his vision before the throne of God. What does that really look like...? But then if we just casually take those prayers and just sort of step on them, you know, then what have we done with it? And so we try to bring all that in together. So I mean, for example, our service is based on the way that the Jewish service has developed over the past maybe eighteen, nineteen hundred years or so. Maybe even further back depending upon how you understand ancient history. But the you know so we go through like you know starting with *Pezukie deZimrah* and you know we have some times where people can dance and you know sometimes where there is music traditionally in other places they might call that worship time. What we do is instead of having worship time and then liturgy time, we consider all liturgy and worship, it's all worship. There's no distinction. So *Pezukie deZimrah*, it's verses of Psalms. It's a time when we would sing Psalms. So we actually have a time when we you know sing some songs together and allow ...we have our band and it's really fun.

Elizabeth: Rabbi, what's the name of that section? The zim?

Nathan: Oh, it's called *Pezukie deZimrah*

Elizabeth: Can you spell that for me?

Nathan: Sure, um, there's a couple different ways to spell it here. It's p-e-z-u-k-i-e-d-e-z-i-m-r-a-h and if you just googled it, you'll find it. There's a couple different ways to spell it using apostrophes and different things cause it's transliteration. So like the Jewish service kind of goes through a cycle where there's *Pezukie deZimrah*, which is praise and so we would actually engage songs that are praise oriented there. If we want to do a song that's not as praise oriented or has a different theme, we actually do it before we say the prayer *baruch she'amar*, which is what opens *Pezukie deZimrah*. So we actually do it before that. So we're staying within that thematic flow. [cough] Excuse me. So you know, so we have songs and things like that for that. You know, we open our service with *ma tovu* and then we close *Pezukie deZimrah* with the traditional prayers, which would be called *yish'tabach* and the *hatzi kaddish* and things like that. Uh, if these are new, these are all things you could find online or I could even send you like an overview of what that looks like.

Elizabeth: I was actually just going to ask you if you could cause a lot of the prayers you're saying are new to me.

Nathan: Right and that's okay... [side trip]. So I think a principle here is you can do a lot with what's already there inside of our tradition and that's what makes it so beautiful because there's so much wisdom there that we kind of just lose if we're just like, "Hey, I'm gonna do my own thing." So um, yeah, so we basically go through and then after Pezukie deZimrah is the Shema. And the Shema actually has a whole pile of blessings before and after the actual, you know, "Shema Yisrael." And so we go through that and we have some call and response English, some singing, some drumming, things like that, and then we have the Shema. Um, and then we sort of do like a some sort. We try to touch everybody. So we try to touch people...if you don't know any Hebrew and don't know any you know from anything, you can come and not even pay attention to the ... and still enter into prayer. That's really important to us, but then also if you come from you know a more observant background and what we do in our synagogue is not enough, and believe it or not we have a lot of people who feel that way, you can still enter in. And you can still...our praise even more than what we do, what we're doing. So we try to like make it a big umbrella for a lot of people to experience worship. I think entering into worship is the most important thing. So then, after the Shema and the blessings around it and there's. I won't go through all the different names because that'll take forever. But then we move into the Amidah. So the Amidah always comes after the Shema and like I said we add in this beautiful melody where we sing in Hebrew Hebrews 1. And then we have the Amidah. And then we do something that's a little innovative here in that what we take in the middle of the Amidah is a section called the *kedusha* and it's supposed to be like the holiest point of the service. So the Amidah is like, if you walk into the Temple, the Amidah is like being in the Holy of holies. So if you've seen Jews come up on their toes, you know, when we say "kadosh, kadosh, kadosh," the idea there is like reaching up into the ranks of the angels. And so what we're doing. What we do is we um sing a beautiful melody, a beautiful song for prayer that's in that section and then we have a time for spontaneous prayer where people in the congregation can pray in their own words prayers of thanksgiving and things. And so we, that's one of the ways we open it up to a little bit less structure and allow the Ruach to come in, and usually we have piano going on in the background and that can be really beautiful. And I think that if you're a conservative Jew and you come in, you're going to see that that's different from what they do, but it'll make sense because it's in the right place. It's like if you're gonna do that, that's the best place to do it. Usually people love it. It's really neat. So we that and finish off with the praying the remainder of the Amidah silently. So we do like the first three blessings out loud and then the remainder quietly on our own but together. Then we come back together. We have a full Torah service um and after the Torah service we have a drash, like a message, a sermon. And then after that we move into concluding prayers, which would be like the Alenu, where we add in Philippians, the Mourner's Kaddish, Adon Olam. I don't know if you know that prayer, "Adon 'olam, 'asher malakh." And then we have everyone come up and gather round close so we can...[Elizabeth coughed]and that sort of thing. So I don't know how much of that. I went over that kind of fast.

Elizabeth: Oh, you're good. Some of its familiar, some of its not. I wanted to ask you, though, about your drash; does that reflect? Okay I've heard conflicting accounts. I've been told that a drash in a synagogue is usually five to seven minutes, um, but most Messianic synagogues if they do it, if they call it a drash it reflects more of a Christian sermon. It's usually twenty minutes or more. Um, so does yours reflect the traditional Jewish drash of five to seven minutes or more like a pastor's sermon?

Nathan: Well, what I would do is I would challenge that assumption a little bit, just a stereotype a little bit. I think that in most conservative and reformed synagogues a drash is probably seven to ten minutes, five minutes. But a lot of it has to do. A lot of it has to do with people just aren't interested, you know. Um, I would say typically, traditionally like you know in different synagogues a drash could be lots longer.

Elizabeth: Okay, so in a like a Orthodox or ultra-Orthodox?

Nathan: Yeah, it could be longer. I mean it just depends upon the feel of the service. I mean traditionally a drash is more like on the parsha. So it's more like a. A drash would be more something that opening up the parsha itself. So at Ruach our drashes are more like, you know, we say about twenty minutes or so. We do have three rabbis here. So one of our rabbis who's more traditionally oriented um he tends to like to give shorter drashes, probably fifteen minutes or something. I tend to do a little bit longer. We're also not strict about the message being on the parsha. We try to stick with that, tie it in. you know, I'll do a message on you know "this is the material that we're going to be presenting at camp" for example. And get into that, those kinds of things. So I think when you get into like Christian Jewish divisions. It's interesting because like Jewish people used to pray with their hands in the air...so there's a lot more connections there. But um so what we don't do like at the UMJC conference for example they started to have like a five minute drash and then like a sermon and they were making that distinction. So they actually had two people do it. Like one person give like a short drash on the parsha and then someone else give a message. We don't do that. You know, we just have the drash. We call it a drash, or a message, or a sermon. Yeah, we don't really make a big distinction between it.

Elizabeth: And then you teach from, what was it again?

Nathan: I would say generally the parsha, which would be like the. Do you know what that is?

Elizabeth: No, I'm familiar with Torah and Haftorah, but

Nathan: Okay, sure. So the parsha (Ask anything cause I don't want to say any terms or anything like that that you wouldn't. I don't mind explaining.) The parsha would be like in a Torah there's a set system of readings in a Jewish community where each week, you know, the whole Jewish world around the globe is reading these chapters of Genesis. And then there's a corresponding Haftorah passage, which would be like the Prophets and the Writings. Of course, we don't read through the Haftorah, the whole Prophets and Writings, um. It's sort of reflections of various different things, but you read through the Torah in an entire year. So at our synagogue, we don't. At most synagogues they would actually read through the entire um parsha which is usually about four or five chapters. And they chant everything in Hebrew and there's not translation. What we do is, we usually read just one section or like four or five verses in Hebrew and then we would translate it into English and then do the Haftorah and then we also read from the _____, the New Covenant. So we read that in, we cant that in Hebrew and then in English as well. So we actually have three readings. So we don't do the whole reading because we don't have. It's really just a time factor.

Elizabeth: So 'parsha' refers to the Torah portion, Haftorah portion for that day?

Nathan: Yeah the parsha, exactly and we add in a cycle of readings from the New Testament. Now we follow. So there's an organization called the Messianic Jewish Rabbinical Council and so we kind of follow their standards of observance. You can check out their website. It's called ourrabbis.org. Oh, hang on just a second, my kids just showed up.

Nathan: Let me finish up this question here. Ourrabbis.org is a website and they have kind of like standards of observance and things like that. You might find interesting, but they also have, we also have a cycle of readings for the New Testament that we follow. And we follow that so I think every three years we actually read through the whole New Testament. And yeah, it's very. So we have particular readings that we do.

Elizabeth: Okay wonderful.

[Rabbi Nathan and I had to reschedule to later that day due to the unexpected length and unforeseen events.]

Elizabeth: Okay, can you hear me okay?

Nathan: Yep, I can hear you just fine.

Elizabeth: Alright wonderful. So to pick up can we um, my next question is what are some contemporary Christian worship practices that are integrated into your service?

Nathan: Interesting question. What are some contemporary Christian practices that are integrated into our service?

Elizabeth: Mmm-hmm, some people say taking up an offering or what's another one?

Nathan: Huh, well it's a very interesting question. So let's see. I guess people would say certain things like that. Um, to be honest, we've actually removed a lot of them...you know not again because of the negativity toward the Christian world. Quite the contrary actually, it's almost a greater respect for the Christian world and their practices. Um, we do, do a. We don't have an offering in the actual service, but we do have a box in the back and we do give people the option to drop tithes and things like that into the box. Um, the interesting thing is that we do follow like more of a church tithe model than what maybe most conservative synagogues would do, which would be a due system. However, it is interesting that the Jewish world is changing and some synagogues are starting to do tithe systems in the same way...um so I would say, you know we do have a tithe principle that we operate on. And we do allow people to give funds on Shabbat and we base that on the rabbinical council that I mentioned to you before. They endorse these standards where we don't spend money on Shabbat except for ministry purposes or charity...and the other ones. I can't really think of any other ones. I mean I think that the Jewish world has become so diverse that I'm not sure that. You know, I mean doing dance and things like that, but that's not really, yeah. I can't really think of anything else. Does that help?

Elizabeth: Yeah, no that's great. Um, now what are some worship practices or liturgies from either the Christian or Jewish world that were intentionally avoided in the formation of your synagogue and why is that?

Nathan: Some practices that were intentionally avoided? Well in the Jewish world, I would say we've avoided, you know, obviously we've avoided some things from the Orthodox world like splitting up men and women. We have a service that is, you know, denominationally oriented so we have uh everyone pretty much doing the same thing at the same time, which if you go to a Orthodox synagogue it is not like that. Um, you know...praise together even if you're at different places in the service. We um let's see. Think of Jewish first. I mean there are certain. We have. Everything is in English and Hebrew in terms of our Siddur and we do a lot more English recitation than you might see in, you know, an...[phone beeped] synagogue or something like that, but it's nothing less than a reformed synagogue would do. Um in terms of Christian practices, we used to have an offering where we actually came up and did an offering in the service, where people came up and did that. We've over the past three years have removed that because of the connotations specifically. Um, we avoid certain tonalities in certain songs that would speak uh that would kind of move us out of Jewish space and into a Christian space so we would be particular on terms of certain chordal structure and things like that that would sound very much like a hymn or like some of the more contemporary evangelical songs. Again not because we don't appreciate those, but...keep a Jewish *ekosh* [I think that's the word he used.], a Jewish space. So we don't do some of the mainline evangelical

songs that I think sometimes are done in some Messianic Jewish synagogues. And that would be there. You know, we don't um. We don't do altar calls. I'll say that. But we do. I would be fine pressing people to make a faith commitment in the context of a message or something like that. But we don't do "come up to pray at the altar" kinds of things. One thing we do, do is we do, do a lot of healing prayer. And we have a healing prayer team and we break into small teams and pray for people after services and things like that. We feel like that's very Jewish although it's not done in most synagogue's I'll say that. But we pray in Yeshua's name there. And we'll sometimes like bring people up to pray for healing during the Torah service or something like that. That...make us unique. That's sort of like the previous question. Um, so yeah those are a few things. We try to again stay within the framework of Jewish life so we don't like we don't do things that are not normative in the Jewish community unless there's a very good reason for it.

Elizabeth: Okay. Wonderful. So how um how did the leaders from Christianity and Judaism respond to you incorporating these liturgical practices in your service?

Nathan: Oh, good question. Well, um, in our circles, we're starting to see an openness to uh at least our kind of Messianic Judaism in the wider Jewish world. So for example, we have a scholar, Daniel Boyarin, who wrote the book called *The Jewish Gospel*. He's the orthodox Talmudic scholar of Berkeley, down in California. He's coming to do a lecture at our synagogue in October. Um, yeah, it's pretty neat. We've had you know, fully aware that we're a Messianic Jewish synagogue, we had the Moshav Band, which is an Orthodox band, um, rock band, do a concert here a few years ago. Um our synagogue founded a, the camp that I run Camp Or L'dor. We're hosted by an interdenominational Jewish camp where we interact with them and their rabbi comes and prays with us and they have *havdalah* services. It's actually pretty neat just last week we led havdalah services for they had five hundred youth there for their Jewish camp, interdenominational Jewish camp, and they had the Messianic Jewish group leading the service. You know, it was like really cool, and I think what allows that to happen is that we respect Jewish things. Um and we see ourselves as part of the wider Jewish world. So I think that in those circles they appreciate the things that we add. So like they appreciate that we add in the New Testament and they understand that because it's done with sensitivity and with respect. It's not sort of kooky or weird. Um and so I think we're getting a really a positive response on that end. And I think the more that we tailor it to Jewish space and what that means, what that looks like, the better response we get. And that's not hiding Yeshua's message. I think that actually enables us to lift up Yeshua's message even more because people will listen. On the Christian side of things, I think it's the same way. I think that the more we actually stand strong in our Jewish identity and what that looks like, the better we're able to relate to the Christian world because when it's sort of this mishmash of like kind of a quasi-Jewish expression of Christianity, it sends the wrong signal. And it says that Christians really if they were to do it right would become Jews. And we don't want to send that signal and so we want instead to be in relationship with the Church. You know, really respecting and appreciating the Church and all of her different colors and expressions and variations. That doesn't mean that we think everything is right or whatever, but we see a bigger picture there. And so we've had Catholics come and you know some pretty heavy hitters from Rome and different places come to our service and uh for certain things and really be very moved by the service. Um, and you know, we're able to connect with the higher church because of our value of tradition and things like that, but also...we have something where we do like a pastor's day, where we invite pastors to come in from the area and you know the distinctions, what makes our service so different they really appreciate. And we've got nothing but very positive feedback. And we had a Pentecostal pastor who said, "I don't understand everything because this isn't my home, but the Spirit is moving here and God is really doing something." Um and so it's like the more we can live in the identity that God has given us, the better we can actually relate to our Christian brothers and

sisters and the better they can appreciate us. So I think that creating those distinctions is actually healthy in the body.

Elizabeth: Wonderful, um so Rabbi how about from the biblical perspective? How did early Jewish cultural identity from Yeshua's era influence liturgical decisions that were made or are being made in your service?

Nathan: How did early, like early Messianic Jewish um traditions and things like that influence our service today?

Elizabeth: Mmm-hmm

Nathan: Well, it's a good question. I mean I don't think in terms of like that there's necessarily a biblical Judaism and a Rabbinic Judaism. I think there both, from my understanding of history, those categories are not real categories because you know Yeshua lived in a tradition. He observed Passover according to a tradition. He you know the synagogue was a tradition. It was not a biblical institution. Um, so like the idea of making those separations of biblical Judaism versus Rabbinic Judaism, they don't really exist. Um Rabbinic Judaism is in a category that you know developed that's separate from Pharisaical Judaism and separate from those things, but still has a lot of connections to Yeshua, Judaism of the first century. Um, and so you know, we see Yeshua as a Jewish. You know obviously He came as the Son of God and as Divine, but in His humanity as coming as a Galilean Jew, probably a little bit less observant, but still engaging you know the different kinds of Judaism that existed in the first century. There were dozens of different kinds of Judaism with different expressions and um He didn't really criticize any one type of Judaism. He just criticized hypocrisy within it. And I think that that's really important. You know, He said, "You tithe spices, but you don't honor justice, mercy, and faithfulness," and He says, "You should have done both," is how He ends it. So I think we try to do both. We see our service as you know first you know what... [phone battery beeped] and how has Jewish tradition interpreted what the Bible says? Cause I think whenever you interpret a biblical commandment you create a new tradition. And then what does Christian tradition have to say? We look at both of those things and when we take all those things into account, and then we'd also take into account "what does Yeshua have to say?" and so one example is we pray for healing on Shabbat because that was Yeshua's example, um although Rabbinic Judaism also prays for healing on Shabbat. But so we basically like wouldn't do something that would contradict one of Yeshua's... We also don't try to like get back to the first century. Sometimes you'll see groups that say like, "Oh, if it's like it was in the first century then it's better than what it is now." But I think that's not necessarily a legitimate argument because I mean you see Paul writing and critiquing the first century people of all kinds of different things. And so we really see ourselves as a twenty-first century synagogue and interacting in modern Judaism with a lot of history. And trying to still apply biblical principles, you know that would apply um but we're not like, we're not trying to represent a first century, early version of Messianic Judaism. Uh, we're trying to bring Yeshua home into contemporary Judaism of today.

Elizabeth: Okay, uh Rabbi I have a odd request. Can you bear with me one minute? My phone is dying so I have to run and get my charger.

[Recorder stopped at this point, the charger was retrieved and the interview continued.]

Elizabeth: ... Thank you for bearing with me.

Nathan: Oh it's fine. It's fine.

Elizabeth: Um, now how have the liturgical practices that were developed and used in your service and everything, how's that useful in the maturation of a Messianic Jewish identity?

Nathan: How is the liturgical development useful in maturing ...

Elizabeth: a Messianic Jewish identity

Nathan: In individual people or in the movement?

Elizabeth: Um, both

Nathan: Both okay. I would say that an active engagement with liturgical expression of prayer is fundamental and essential for a maturing Messianic Judaism. I would say that if we don't engage the prayers. You know. The saying, I can't remember who said it, I think it was a Christian, "Those who," you know "How you shall pray is what you will believe." You know? And I think that the Jewish prayer is very carefully crafted over centuries and centuries and there's so much depth to it. And I think what happens in our movement is that we kind of throw everything out because we feel like, you know, our experience when we grew up it was dry or it was not done very well or their wasn't any passion or people didn't know what it meant or whatever. So we just threw the whole thing out and created our own new traditions. But there's a lot more to it. And so I would say. Stuart Dauermann has a famous quote in our movement, "You can't depart from where you haven't been." And if you don't know and you aren't aware of all the things, how can you reject something categorically? Um, and so I would say that if we, engaging the liturgy is a fundamental way to engage the Jewish community and engage how Jews think, how Jews believe, and all those things. And it's very Messianic. All the liturgies are incredibly Messianic. I see Yeshua all over the Shema and all over the Amidah and you know like. The Amidah is likely an expanded version of the Lord's Prayer, you know? It's like. These prayers go so far back and so I think that it's essential. I think that if we don't engage how Jewish liturgies in an intelligent and careful way. I don't think there's much success for the future of Messianic Judaism because I think that you know that represents sort of like an idea or a picture of what Messianic Judaism is. And uh if we throw out how Jews pray, you know, we've thrown out a huge part of what it means to be Jewish. And so if without that we're sort of standing on our own and I'm not sure there's much purpose in the Messianic Jewish movement. So I mean I wouldn't want to place so much weight on different prayers. I think that. I'm intentionally saying "engaging Jewish prayer" rather than like "praying all Jewish prayer" because you can never pray all Jewish prayers. You know? Hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of them but um engaging and intelligently engaging. You know, knowing why we're doing what we're doing and who else is doing what we're doing and uh knowing what we're not doing. I think is really important and it reflects a sentiment for how we view our relationship with the wider Jewish community. So if we abandon those things and if we don't really engage them because we feel like we have Yeshua or we feel like whatever we feel like, I think we've lost the vision for what the Messianic Jewish movement is. Um, and so I think it's important. Now what level do we need to bring into our services? That's a whole other question. You know? Even in the Reformed Jewish world, for example, there's a lot of different expressions of corporate Jewish prayer. So I'm not suggesting that it all needs to look the same and that we can't. I do believe that liturgies are flexible and they're not fixed um but there's a difference between just categorically rejecting them because they're Rabbinic and they're whatever or they were crafted by people who didn't explicitly believe in Yeshua or than engaging them or interacting with them and developing it. I think we should engage Jewish liturgy and then add to it and put our touch onto it. A perfect example would be that camp which I was just telling you about, the rabbi there asked us to take our uh camp Siddur that we have and she wanted to take it so that she could develop her camp services after our service. And I think that that's where, that's what the Messianic Jewish movement should

be. We should be at the forefront of these types of things and the Jewish world should be looking to us for these things, and but the only reason why they're doing that is because our Siddur has more in it than theirs does. You know? She's amazed that our teens can actually do that. So again I don't want to come across as boastful, but um those are just some things that I think we're doing well and I think you know engaging the liturgies really have meaning. Uh, our first summer at camp five years ago, their rabbi came to our services not knowing what to expect. And was amazed that we actually had a Jewish service and that started our relationship. And but beyond the sort of like witnessing aspect of things, I think the Jewish service creates a Jewish soul, and you know, that's how it was designed. It was designed after the Temple and the Temple practices. And if that's not there, you know what else can we do? We pray. You know? Um and so I think it makes someone more fully Jewish. I hesitate to say that because you can't be made Jewish but you know what I mean.

Elizabeth: Part of the community? That's a link.

Nathan: Exactly, yeah

Elizabeth: Okay, wonderful. So changing gears a little bit, um, focusing on the music. Uh, what musical influences were drawn upon in the development of Messianic Jewish music?

Nathan: Um, what genres of music?

Elizabeth: Yeah, what are the musical influences that have created that genre of music?

Nathan: So in Messianic Judaism in general?

Elizabeth: Yeah like it has a very specific sound now I guess, you know?

Nathan: Yeah, it certainly does. To be honest, I'm not. Stuart Dauermann would be the one to interview for this question cause he's like the 'father of Messianic Jewish music.' Um but um, so I'm not sure. I've seen in my limited time in the movement. I've seen sort of the Messianic Jewish movement music as it's sort of like an evolving process. A lot of it is very much basically contemporary evangelical worship music um with sort of like a, maybe some Hebrew words or things like that. And I'm not critiquing that necessarily, but that's obviously where the roots of it, most of it comes from. Um, and I think that what we're starting to see now is a maybe little bit more branching out from that. I mean you have people like Roman and Alaina and some other people doing some, but I know that Yahnatan Lasko and his group are doing some incredible new music that's like very different you know? Sort of bringing a contemporary feel to it and um so I don't know. I think to be honest there is a need for new Messianic Jewish music that is sort of a different. That doesn't have the same chord structures as what we see in the evangelical world. Again it's not a critique of those things. It's just that we need to distinguish ourselves from them in order to relate to them. You know? Does that make sense? I don't want to come across as negative. I have so many evangelical friends and I speak at evangelical churches all the time and just love them like crazy and their music.

Elizabeth: Mmm-hmm, I'm curious though. What kind of music do you do at your synagogue? Or like whose music I guess?

Nathan: What kind do we do? Yeah, I don't this would be like a high point in our service necessarily. I think we're always searching for new things. Um you know, we do have a few of the sort of like traditional, what I call 'boom-chuck' you know Messianic Jewish songs that we do. We have some newer things that

we've gotten from the wider Jewish world on some Psalms that um. And we have a beautiful version of the *misha'barach*, the prayer for healing in a Torah service that you know. I don't remember where we've gotten it. Some group out there. So we just have people out there just exploring the Jewish world for music, um, where we see a huge need is for new Yeshua centered you know explicitly Yeshua centered music. Um that's Jewish, whatever that means. Jewish music is very, very, very broad so. Um, but um I think there's a huge need for that. And if we got some things, we would definitely incorporate that into our service.

Elizabeth: Okay, wonderful. Um, you mentioned that sometimes you do dance in your services, and I've gotten some mixed responses on this so I'm curious as to what you say. How did the development of Messianic Jewish dance, it's kind of become an identifier of Messianic Judaism, what do you think it's importance is?

Nathan: I mean we just kind of do Israeli dance you know. To be honest, in our synagogue it's just the women. It's not a policy we have. It just sort of happened that way. Um, and um I think there's something special about dance because I think that dance is something I wouldn't want our movement to lose. Now what I wouldn't mind us losing. Um well I think this is okay to say. I wouldn't mind us losing the dance costumes and the like the. There's something weird in our movement about the need to use, um, what are those scarves that like swirl around?

Elizabeth: Oh, yeah like the banner things?

Nathan: Yeah, and I think like "dance, just dance." There's no need to use those crazy things. Um, but I think like there is something to like we should be joyful. There should be something in our services that are like that reflects like greater joy and reflects like a greater enthusiasm towards worship than you might see elsewhere. That doesn't mean that other Jewish synagogues have prayer that is invalid or anything. I don't mean that. But just that we should be there. It should be like that. And to be honest if you go to like you know into the more orthodox world like they dance. Shabbat they dance like crazy. I mean they separate guys and girls dancing and stuff, but um so you know that may be a different kind of dancing. They don't do Israeli dancing in a traditional sense, but I think we should dance. I think we should be so excited that we get our bodies involved. Now that doesn't mean that we dance all the time. Um, it doesn't mean that we dance during the Amidah when you are supposed to have your feet together and not move. You know? But it's like you build it into the structure and I think it's important that we have structure. Even the most charismatic, Pentecostal church, you know, they have structure to their service, um and liturgies and things like that that they utilize. I think that it just has to be in the right place, but I do think it's important. You know, I think it's beautiful. Just minus some of the costumes.

Elizabeth: Okay, wonderful. Now how did the theological understandings of Messianic Judaism influence the liturgical decisions that were made?

Nathan: Oh, it's tremendous. It's huge. It's huge. I think that's why there's such a variance in the Messianic Jewish movement...services because there's such a wide degree of, I'll just say theological nuance. Because I don't think, I don't want to suggest heresy and those sorts of things, but it's more like theological nuance. How we understand our relationship to the wider Jewish community. And I think if we understand ourselves as separate and distinct from, like "We are not Rabbinic. We are not connected to the modern Jewish world. We are something entirely different." Or, "We are simply church," in a sense of Gentile expression, you know wider Gentile expression of faith...like we're a more Jewish oriented. It's different like Jewish roots is very different from Messianic Judaism in my mind. Um, and again I'm not casting value judgments. I think there's maybe a need for both, but Messianic Judaism really needs to be a mature

expression of Jewish ... faith in, but like I said in solidarity with the Jewish people, in a connection with the Jewish people where we see ourselves as one of the movements within the wider world. And you know where we have things to give to the Jewish world and they have things to receive from us. But if we come to that place where the Jewish people are an us and not a them, then we come from a place of humility where we can then learn from the beautiful things that come from our tradition. I think sometimes the Messianic Jewish movement had sort of like a replacement theology which says the "Church superseded Israel." Of course, they're not that, but still it has sort of a replacement mentality where it's like, you know, "because we believe in Yeshua, we somehow supersede the entire Jewish world and we don't have anything we can learn from other Jews." And so there's like a subtlety in that theology that then closes the door for interaction with the wider Jewish world in a way that is for relationships, "the only reason we relate to the Jewish world is to you know, to evangelize. Um as opposed to, "we need to relate to the Jewish world because those are our brothers and sisters." And I think that we need the latter if we're to even have a chance at bringing Yeshua home to the Jewish people.

Elizabeth: Yeah, wonderful. Now, Rabbi, changing gears again, but thank you this is really good. Have you had the opportunity to travel to Messianic Jewish synagogues internationally?

Nathan: Not internationally, not really. No, just in the United States.

Elizabeth: Okay, wonderful. Wow, thank you so much that was my last question. Um, but this has been really wonderful. I appreciate you taking almost two hours to do this with me.

Appendix R: Questionnaire
Messianic Jewish Liturgical Practices Questionnaire

Definitions

1. Please define Messianic Judaism
2. What do you believe are important cultural markers in Messianic Jewish worship (hands raised or not raised in worship, kneeling, kissing Torah scroll, singing in English or Hebrew, etc.)?

Roots of the practices/culture

3. What aspects of contemporary Jewish liturgical practices were integrated into Messianic Judaism? Please explain/give examples
4. What contemporary Christian liturgical practices were integrated into Messianic Judaism? Please explain/give examples
5. What liturgical worship practices from either the Christian or Jewish worlds were avoided in the formation of Messianic Judaism and why do you think that was?
6. How did the leaders from Christianity and Judaism respond to Messianic Jews incorporating these liturgical practices?
7. How did early Jewish cultural identity from Yeshua's era influence liturgical decisions in the rebirth of Messianic Judaism?
8. How were the liturgical practices that were developed useful in the maturation of Messianic Jewish identity?

Expounding of the Specifics of the practices:

9. What musical influences were [did you] draw[n] upon to develop Messianic Jewish music?
10. How did the development of Messianic Jewish dance serve as an identifier for Messianic Judaism and what was/is its importance?
11. How did the theological understandings of emerging Messianic Judaism influence the liturgy of the Messianic Jewish congregations?

Expounding on global nature of the practices:

12. Have you had significant Messianic Jewish experience internationally? (If yes, ask following question)
13. What similarities/differences have you noticed between the American Messianic Jewish worship experience and international Messianic Jewish worship?

Appendix S: Consent Form

Study of Messianic Jewish Liturgical Practices

Elizabeth Ames

Liberty University

Department of Worship and Music

You are invited to be in a research study of Messianic Jewish liturgical practices. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a leader in the Messianic Jewish movement. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Elizabeth Ames, a student in the Department of Music and Worship Studies at Liberty University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to examine mainline Messianic Jewish liturgical practices in order to discover from whence their worship practices originate. Some of the research questions that this study seeks to answer are as follows: Does the mainline Messianic Jewish liturgy reflect Christianity, Judaism, or neither? Is it a combination of the two, or are their liturgical practices unique?

Procedures:

If you agree to participate in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:
Be available to answer a series of questions (twelve to thirteen) in a one-time, live, thirty- to forty-five minute, audio-recorded interview either in-person, over the phone, or over Skype.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:

The study has minimal to little risks: the risks of the study are no more than you would encounter in everyday life and conversation.

The benefits to participation include:

Helping the generation that has been raised in the Messianic Jewish movement, as well as the one that has been raised beside it, in the Christian and Jewish culture, understand the original thought and intention behind the liturgical practices chosen.

If the next generation can hear from the first the reason why they felt it was important and even essential to be unique, it may help the next generation continue the work.

This research can also benefit others who are also researching this area in that it will bring to light some of the specifics of this unique religious movement.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be made public, in that each participant will be given credit for their contribution to the study. In any sort of report I might publish, I will include information that will

make it possible to identify a participant. Research records will be stored securely on a locked computer and only the researcher will have access to the records. The recordings will be transcribed, and the audio file will be destroyed.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

How to Withdraw

You can withdraw at any time from this study by contacting the principle investigator (Elizabeth Ames) or the faculty advisor (Dr. John D. Kinchen III) and informing them of your decision to withdraw. All the data and recordings will be deleted, erased, and removed from the final analysis.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Elizabeth Ames. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at (315) 939-2380 or eames@liberty.edu. The advisor for this study is Dr. John D. Kinchen III, and he can be contacted by email at jkinchen@liberty.edu or by phone at (434) 592-6563.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1837, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

I consent to have the interview documented via an audio-recording device.

I consent to have my name used in the thesis.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____

IRB Code Numbers: 1860.052914

IRB Expiration Date: May 29, 2015