

## **HISTORICAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

*This document contains references that date, beginning in 2006, when this needs assessment originated. The information in the report has been updated to current data where appropriate. The urgent need for a Messianic training academy has grown exponentially over the past thirteen years which is demonstrated by the findings of this report.*

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### **Historical Events Shaping the Society and Culture of Germany<sup>1</sup>**

There are a number of events in the history of Germany that have shaped the country's society and culture. Only the most prominent events will be discussed in this section, trying to describe their lasting effect on the country's socio-cultural state in general but especially on its religious scene. In preview, these events are the Reformation, the 30-Years War, the reign of Otto von Bismarck as chancellor of Prussia, the two World Wars, the post-war division of the country, the reunification and the impact of the Europeanization.<sup>2</sup>

*The Reformation.* The Reformation of the Roman Catholic Church which ultimately led to the creation of Protestantism originated in Germany, admittedly with some precursor in other parts of Europe. But it was Martin Luther, an Augustinian monk and professor of theology at Wittenberg, Thuringia (East Germany) who finally started the Reformation which was an

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<sup>1</sup> Greg Nees, *Germany: Unraveling an Enigma*, (Yarmouth: Intercultural Press, 2000), 8 states – and rightly so – that “Germans tend to always look to historical precedents in order to understand the present.” This is especially important in terms of German – Jewish relationships (see below).

<sup>2</sup>Some of the information used in this section is taken from a paper about a theological training program for lay people done in this course in 1999 (Michael J. Svigel, Markus Klausli, *Lay Institute Model For Western German Evangelical Churches*), supplemented by unofficial class notes about church history (Prof. Dr. Lutz E. von Padberg und Dr. Stephan Holthaus, *Kirchengeschichte I-IV*, Freie Theologische Akademie Gießen, 1999-2002). Other information is provided by the authors personal background and experience as a German citizen, underscored by several other (internet) sources as documented in footnotes.

event that altered not only German history but changed the history of Christendom and World history in general. The religious landscape in Germany after the Reformation was distinctively different than it had been before. Currently, there are two churches (the Protestant and the Roman Catholic), and generally speaking, every German citizen has the choice of choosing which he wanted to belong.<sup>3</sup> These two churches are officially-recognized as “Volkskirchen”, which may be especially recognized by the fact that they are governmentally supported through a certain part of the income tax that Germans (at least if they are a member of one of these churches) have to pay.

*The 30-Years War.* This war that took place between 1618 and 1648 is certainly one of the darkest chapters in European history. It was basically a series of conflicts between Roman Catholic and Protestant princes and ended with a polarization and fortification of regions as either Catholic or Protestant. In general, it may be said, that the southern (and parts of the western) regions tended to be Catholic, while the northern regions were mainly Protestant. The only denominations that were allowed after this time were the Catholic, the Lutheran and the Reformed Church.<sup>4</sup> Even today, these denominational divides still exist, with Bavaria for example being almost entirely Catholic, while the northern states like Schleswig-Holstein are mainly Lutheran.

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<sup>3</sup>The *Augsburger Religionsfriede* (the “religious peace treaty of Augsburg”), signed in 1555, allowed the sovereign princes to determine whether their territory should be Protestant or Catholic. But their subjects were allowed to migrate to other territories, where the religion of their choice was “state religion”. Although inconvenient for those who felt compelled to leave their territories, it is fair to say, that after 1555 there existed a basic religious freedom of choice between Catholic and Protestant convictions (cf. Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, Vol. 2: The Reformation to the Present (San Francisco: Harper, 1985), 134).

<sup>4</sup> Gonzalez, *Christianity*, 135-41.

*The reign of the Prussian chancellor Otto von Bismarck.* Under the reign of Otto von Bismarck an event took place which has been designated as *Kulturkampf* (“war of cultures”; 1871-1887). In this conflict, Bismarck, who was a Protestant, had basically two political goals: 1) He wanted to check Roman Catholic influence on German politics (Ultramontanism). His anti-Catholicism was manifested in the fact that he broke all diplomatic relations with the pope in Rome, expelled monastic orders and took away most of the financial support of the Catholic Church.<sup>5</sup> 2) He wanted to generally push back the church (protestant as well as catholic) and reduce their influence on everyday life. One result of his efforts was the establishment of civil marriage. Bismarck did not reach his first goal, as Catholicism was strengthened after the conflict. But what he achieved was a steadily increasing separation of Church and State, which may well be regarded as the beginning of a process of secularisation in Germany.<sup>6</sup>

*The Two World Wars.* The wars of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 have undoubtedly influenced World history and especially the history of Germany more than any other event in the last centuries. The nationalism and imperialism of the German “Kaiserreich” under Kaiser Wilhelm II led Germany into a war that soon involved countries all over the world. After the loss of the German army, the treaty of Versailles (1919) regulated the reparations Germany had to pay and the de-militarization at least of certain parts of Germany. This treaty also stated that Germany had the sole responsibility for the war. All this – especially the weight of the reparations – left Germany in a state of humiliation and hopelessness. This became the breeding ground for Hitler’s *National Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter Partei* (NSDAP; the “Nazis”) who

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 270.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Wolf-Dieter Hauschild, *Lehrbuch der Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte*, vol. 2 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1995), 812-818.

rose to power in 1933 and ultimately led Germany into the Second World War. “Their centralized ideology and message of social unity, while based on racial supremacist theories, provided social glue that seemed to help the country pull itself back together after the decisive clashes and violence of the previous twenty years.”<sup>7</sup> The crimes and atrocities committed by the Hitler regime with its dictatorial control of the people have left their marks in German society. Up to this day there is a discussion about the ongoing national guilt. Even the younger generations have difficulties in creating for themselves a distinct German identity. Any notion of nationalism is entirely suspect in most parts of society and you can rarely hear even younger Germans say that they are “proud to be German”.

The role of the churches during the Nazi reign was not at all glorious. The Catholic Church signed a concordat with the Third Reich as early as 1933, which should secure basic rights, but actually robbed the Church any opportunities to counter-influence society. The mainly liberal Protestants had “no theological tools with which to respond critically to the new challenge.”<sup>8</sup> The so-called *Deutschen Christen* tried to synthesize Christendom and national-socialistic worldview and were therefore exploited by Hitler in order to preach his gospel of German superiority to all people. However, there was an oppositional group of Protestants, who formed the *Bekennende Kirche* (“confessing Church”) and proclaimed in the 1934 *Barmer Theologische Erklärung*, that according to their theological convictions the mainline Protestant Church was heretic. The most prominent members of the confessing church were probably Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Karl Barth. Hitler fought heavily against the confessing church so that their influence remained small. Many of its members (such as Bonhoeffer) died in concentration

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<sup>7</sup> Nees, *Germany: Unraveling an Enigma*, 12.

<sup>8</sup> Gonzalez, 364-65

camps.<sup>9</sup> In summary, it is probably fair to say that the impotence of the Church to stand up against the Nazi regime further fostered its insignificance in the post-war secularisation process, which may thus be one reason amongst others for its marginal role in German society today.

*Post-war division and reunification.* After the second World War, Germany was divided into a western and an eastern part in 1949. The East was under the influence of the Soviets and thus became a communist state, while West-Germany was rebuilt under the leadership of the Allies (especially the United States). While West-Germany (Federal Republic of Germany) was politically strengthened and soon started to prosper economically, the eastern part (German Democratic Republic) faced an economic stagnation due to communist planned economy. When the Berlin Wall, which had long been the symbol for the separation between East and West Germany, came down in November 1989, Germany had to face the challenge of bringing together two totally contrasting societies when the country was finally reunited on October 3, 1990. While West-Germany had become a democratic and capitalistic country, East-Germany suffered from decades of dictatorship and communism. The rebuilding of economic structures in the Eastern part of the country, including infrastructure, political structures, democratic thinking, social structures etc. was, and remains a greater task than the political leadership in Germany had expected (see section about the current economic situation).<sup>10</sup> “Even as the eastern and western halves of the country come to share increasingly more in common,

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<sup>9</sup> For an overview about the role of the Church during the Nazi regime from 1933-1945 cf. Hauschild, *Lehrbuch der Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte*, 854-908.

<sup>10</sup> Nees, *Germany: Unraveling an Enigma*, 24: “Not only were the East Germans unfamiliar with how this legal and administrative system worked, the only people with any administrative and legal experience were the former communists, and no one wanted them backing power. This meant that large numbers of experts from former West Germany had to come east and help out, adding more insult to the East Germans’ already injured pride.”

German unification remains a work in progress.”<sup>11</sup> This is not only due to the enormous lack of economic resources in East-Germany, but also the result of two entirely different world-views (both politically and socially) that have emerged during the post-war decades. These paradigms of thinking have been challenged on both sides, since Germany was moving fast from a divided country in the political center of the cold war to a leading country in the shaping process of the European Union. This drastic change of the political and social environment has made it difficult for both Easterners and Westerners to develop a common identity. One of the most significant cultural gaps between people living in East-Germany and people living in West-Germany is manifest in their relationship to the Church (or religion in general). While we have already stated that the role of the church in German society is marginalized, it may be said that it is entirely insignificant or even non-existing in large parts of East-Germany. More than 40 years of governmentally organized atheism bears its fruit until today. That a lot of people in Eastern Germany lack a basic knowledge about Christian heritage, doctrines etc. goes without saying.

*Europeanization.* In the recent past, the greatest influence on German society at large was due to the ongoing development of the European Union. Germany is one of the leading countries in the process of a unified Europe. As even more and more eastern countries have joined the union, Germany finds itself in the middle of the new “European Country”. The installation of the Euro as the standard European currency together with open borders throughout Europe has helped to strengthen bi-lateral relationships and has simplified travelling between the countries. This has an impact on every enterprise, be it economically or even educationally oriented, as it has to take into account that it is no longer sufficient to focus on one

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.germany-info.org/relaunch/culture/history/unification.html>; “German Unification”; accessed April 11, 2005. Nees, *Germany: Unraveling an Enigma*, 23, comments the following: “The reunification was an untired experiment on a huge scale, and no one was sure how it would proceed. . . . German reunification can in fact be said to have experienced three chronological phases to date. The first phase, like a honeymoon, was marked by euphoria and joyous celebration of the new relationship, as just mentioned. Unfortunately, though, like many honeymoons, it was brief in duration, leading into a second phase marked by bitter disappointment. . . .

society or culture alone. We conclude that theological education must face the challenge of operating in a unified Europe with all its possibilities and weaknesses. A certain European or international perspective should therefore be obligatory.

### **The Current Religious Scene and the socio-political role of the church**

Building on what we have said so far about the role of the church in German society since the Reformation, this section will give a brief overview over the relationship between the State and the Church, the role of religion in everyday life and the current religious scene in Germany.

*The Relationship between State and Church.* Generally speaking, the *Grundgesetz* (the German Basic Laws, which has the importance of a Constitution) guarantees freedom of faith and freedom of religion and declares that no one may be discriminated due to their faith or religious opinions.<sup>12</sup> This is the basic framework, in which the Church is situated. As we have noted earlier, the Church has played an important role in German society up to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. From then on, several factors (from which we mentioned a few) have led to a steadily increasing marginalization of the Church in German society. Today, there is no state church in Germany and no control of the churches by the state. The churches and several other religious communities have the status of independent public-law corporations. The relationship between church and state is that of a partnership, regulated by concordats and agreements. Germans who are members of a church support it through their taxes, not directly as in the U.S. When taxpayers list their religious affiliation on their employment record a part of their income tax is collected by the tax authorities and given to the church to which the taxpayer belongs.”<sup>13</sup> But this privilege is limited only to the two officially recognized *Volkskirchen*, namely the *Evangelische*

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<sup>12</sup>Cf. <http://www.germany-info.org/relaunch/culture/life/religion.html>; “Religion”; accessed April 11, 2005.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

*Kirche in Deutschland* (EKD), a federation of several Lutheran and Reformed Churches and the Roman Catholic Church. Most of the other protestant or evangelical denominations are officially recognized as *Körperschaften des öffentlichen Rechts* (and have thus certain governmentally given rights), but do not receive any financial support by the state.

*The Role of Religion in Everyday Life.* According to 2017 statistics, about 23 million Germans still regard themselves as Catholic (about 27.9% of the population), while about 21.5 million are part of the official Protestant church (EKD; about 26% of the population).<sup>14</sup> But the numbers of actual churchgoers is not as high. Generally speaking, both the numbers of church members and of regularly church goers have dramatically declined in the recent decades. Most Germans would go, if ever, to Church twice a year: on Christmas and Easter.

Although the state-sponsored churches do not play a major role in most of the lives of its members, they are still a recognized part of society in general. Church officials still have a voice in social or ethical discussions, although their influence is somewhat limited. Most Germans would consider the Church as an institution of the past, while at the same time welcoming some of the church-related traditions. This may be seen in the existence of several Church holidays like *Himmelfahrt* (Ascension Day), Easter Monday, Pentecost Monday and others. Many Germans – although totally alienated from church life – would still have their children baptized, marry in a church ceremony or insist on a funeral held by a pastor or priest. But these expressions should be considered as mainly superficial and traditional rather than as a manifestation of inner faith.

*The current religious scene apart from the mainline churches.* Besides the two mainline denominations there are a number of protestant free churches, of whom many may be

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. [http://www.remid.de/remid\\_info\\_zahlen.htm](http://www.remid.de/remid_info_zahlen.htm); accessed May 3, 2019.



considered as evangelical. But it should be noted that at least the Methodist and parts of the Baptist Church have not resisted the influence of theological liberalism.

Most Evangelicals are connected with the *Evangelische Allianz*, “a joining together of Christ-believers from different (protestant) churches and Christian (mission) agencies, who see their mission in the working together of Christians in personal fellowship. The goal is a brotherly Jesus-fellowship, not an ecumenical church-union, it is not about organization, but about a living organism.”<sup>15</sup> Member churches of the *Evangelische Allianz* work together mostly in evangelism projects and prayer events.

The biggest non-Christian group in Germany are the Muslims, with 2017 estimates ranging from 4.4 to 4.7 million believers (mostly from Turkey). Muslims are also the fastest growing social group in Germany. In Berlin, the capital of Germany, entire neighborhoods are made up of Muslims, while even smaller, as well as the smallest cities, have their own mosque today. Apart from that, approximately 100.000 Hindus and 130.000 Buddhists (mostly Asian born, but also native Germans) live in Germany.<sup>16</sup> For the numbers of Jews see below.

### **Ethnic, Cultural, and Class Structure<sup>17</sup>**

Germany’s mono-cultural history reached its climax with the nationalistic policy of Nazi-Germany between 1933 and 1945. The basic axiom of this policy was the persecution and extermination of non-German (“*nicht-arische*”) elements of society. Hitler’s racial megalomania ended with the death of millions of Jews, Slavs, Sinti, Roma and other non-German races. But since World War II the pendulum swung in the other direction. Probably as a counter-reaction to

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<sup>15</sup> My own translation of parts of the mission statement of the *Evangelische Allianz*. Cf. [www.ead.de/info/werwirsind.htm](http://www.ead.de/info/werwirsind.htm); accessed April 12, 2005.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. [http://www.remid.de/remid\\_info\\_zahlen.htm](http://www.remid.de/remid_info_zahlen.htm); accessed May 3, 2019.

<sup>17</sup> For further details on this topic see especially the paragraph on “multi-culturalism” in Nees, *Germany: Unraveling an Enigma*, 154-57.

the racial discrimination during the Third Reich, Germany has become one of the distinguished immigration countries in Europe. This development began soon after the War, when thousands of Italians and other southern Europeans were hired in order to contribute to the fast-growing post-war economy. Today Germany has become a multi-cultural society with great ethnic variety especially in the bigger cities. Germany has become an open country for refugees from all over the world. The high number of immigrants has created certain social tensions, especially since the late 90s when the unemployment rate began to steadily increase.

In terms of the relationship between different ethnic groups it can be said that they basically form distinct subcultures with little or no motivation for real integration. Especially for the larger ethnic groups in the big cities, there seems to be no necessity to integrate into German society as the high number of fellow countrymen provides enough resources to establish a subculture with its own cultural institutions, shops, restaurants etc. For a lot of foreigners there is no necessity to even learn the German language as they only come in contact with people from their own country. For most of the original German population it may be said that they enjoy multi-culturalism in one sense (i.e., going to foreign restaurants or shops), but on a personal level there is still a lot of suspicion about people from other countries, especially Turks, Africans or Asians. This poor integration process may also be seen in Christian churches. You will find very few foreign believers in German evangelical churches. Foreigners usually form their own churches, so that you can find churches of every kind especially in the big cities (Persian Churches, English-speaking Churches etc.).

Unlike other countries like the United States, the differences between social classes are not too significant in Germany. The good social system (unemployment money from the government, health care for everybody etc.) makes sure that there are very few really poor people and that the gap between different social classes does not broaden exorbitantly.

Nevertheless, there are distinctions between social classes in German society, mainly based on education levels and careers. Apart from a small upper class made up of very rich people, there is an upper middle class made up of those with an academic degree and those who are high-qualified workers. A low middle class is formed by public-employees/white collar workers. Blue-collar workers may also be considered as lower middle class because they are not highly educated, although they often have a decent salary. Untrained workers, together with long-term unemployed people and most of the non-european foreigners shape the lowest social class. In general, it may be said that members of evangelical churches come mostly from a middle-class background, with a tendency in Pentecostal or charismatic churches to have more people from lower classes. Only a few extraordinary rich or poor people may be found in evangelical circles.

### **Economic Conditions<sup>18</sup>**

*A Typical German Work Week.* “The great majority of German employees work five days, 37.5 hours a week on average. Many firms and government agencies in Germany have adopted "flex-time" schedules for their employees. Under this system, employees can choose for themselves when they want to start and end their working day, as long as they are at work between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. and do not work more than ten hours per day. The original reason for introducing this system was to combat rush-hour traffic congestion, but among the more direct gains are an improvement in employee morale, greater productivity, significant decreases in absenteeism, greater flexibility for women who juggle the demands of work, home and children, and the increased sense of individual dignity that the employees get from having a greater say in

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<sup>18</sup> For a good overview of the German Social Market Economy cf. Nees, *Germany: Unraveling the Enigma*, 97-129.

organizing their own time.”<sup>19</sup> Besides this, “70 percent of all employees enjoy at least six weeks of paid vacation, and most of the others get between five and six weeks.”<sup>20</sup> All this gives a theological education program which will possibly include people who work besides their studies a greater flexibility than would be possible in other countries.

*Income and expenses.* According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Germany ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> in the world in 2017 for disposable income per capita. This includes generous benefits like a comprehensive state-sponsored health plan and excellent retirement benefits. On the other hand, income taxes are fairly high, ranging from between 14 to 45 percent.

*Unemployment.* Unemployment in Germany holds steady at a 39-year low of 3.2% as of March 2019.<sup>21</sup> The particular constituency of our program has enough potential for financially supporting a theological education program.<sup>22</sup>

### **The Role and Status of (Theological) Education**

Education has played an important role in German society, probably due to the influence of the enlightenment which was largely rooted in German-speaking Europe. Education is highly valued as it opens the door for climbing up the social ladder.<sup>23</sup> The German educational system may be described as follows: After four years of primary school, German children are

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<sup>19</sup>[http://www.germany-info.org/relaunch/info/facts/facts/questions\\_en/economicsystem/working3.html](http://www.germany-info.org/relaunch/info/facts/facts/questions_en/economicsystem/working3.html); accessed April 13, 2005.

<sup>20</sup> [http://www.germany-info.org/relaunch/info/facts/facts/questions\\_en/economicsystem/working4.html](http://www.germany-info.org/relaunch/info/facts/facts/questions_en/economicsystem/working4.html); accessed April 13, 2005.

<sup>21</sup> <https://tradingeconomics.com/germany/unemployment-rate>, accessed May 3, 2019.

<sup>22</sup> This confident statement is due to the encouraging experience of the *Beit Sar Shalom* missions agency over the past years.

<sup>23</sup> Nees, *Germany: Unraveling an Enigma*, 43: “The importance of education can hardly be overestimated. Occupational success and social standing go hand in hand with educational qualifications.”

forced to focus their education towards either academic/pre-university studies (on the *Gymnasium*, another 9 years) or more vocational/technical studies (on the *Realschule*, another 6 years or the *Hauptschule*, another 5 years). Every child has to go to school for at least 9 years. In order to study at a University, the German-student must complete 13 years of school with the *Abitur*-diploma. A formal accredited institution that wants to operate on University level and grant official (or equivalent) degrees has to require the *Abitur* diploma as a prerequisite. In a society that highly emphasizes a high standard in education, theological institutions have more and more tried to operate on the same academic level in order to provide credibility for their students in broader parts of the society. In order to secure a high educational standard in evangelical programs, the EEAA (European Evangelical Accrediting Association) was founded in 1977. It was renamed the European Council for Theological Education and the Messianic Jewish Theological Academy is a member. Their Manual of Accreditation provides a detailed list of objectives which the theological institutions must meet.<sup>24</sup> Our institution will operate on Master's level.

Although an official accreditation is necessary in order to gain credibility in the broader society, it has to be noted at this point that in some evangelical circles there are certain reservations against a theological education operating on University-level. This is due to the history of theological liberalism and biblical criticism which has been established in all theological faculties during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This critical approach is associated with theological education as such by some evangelicals. When creating an evangelical theological program, one needs to be aware of these tendencies in order to counteract them.

## **Psychosocial Factors**

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<sup>24</sup> This manual can be downloaded on the EEAA homepage, <http://www.eeaa.org>; accessed April 12, 2005.

*Two psychosocial factors* which impacts the environment of our theological education program have to be briefly mentioned. Both have relevance for the ministry context we are focussing. 1) Most non-evangelical Germans still look with suspicion on religious and independent Churches that are not state-sponsored. Free churches are often considered as sects (at least in mostly Catholic areas like Bavaria). Membership in recognized associations like the *Evangelische Allianz* will help avoid this stigma. 2) The second significant factor is that the Protestant State-church (EKD) refuses to undertake any evangelism among Jews whatsoever. An official document states, that “a Church that has failed to help Jews against the death threats during the Third Reich has certainly no right to undertake *Judenmission* (mission among Jews).”<sup>25</sup>

Accordingly, messianic Jews and their evangelistic activities are regarded with suspicion or even with a hostile attitude (see sections about Judaism and messianic Jews below).<sup>26</sup>

### **Jewish Socio-cultural Context**

Due to the specifics of our program, it is essential to also consider the Jewish socio-cultural context in Germany.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> My own translation of an official EKD-document on [http://www.ekd.de/EKD-Texte/c-j3/c-j3\\_3.html](http://www.ekd.de/EKD-Texte/c-j3/c-j3_3.html); accessed April 13, 2005.

<sup>26</sup> More details on German psychosocial factors (some of them not directly relevant to our project) may be found in the chapter “Wertewandel: Creation of a New German Identity” in Nees, *Germany: Unraveling an Enigma*, 151-170.

<sup>27</sup> As we will see below, the Jewish people in Germany build a distinct (although not separated) sub-cultural group. Because our program focused on the Jewish outreach and the messianic movement, we need to consider the distinctions of this group.

## **History that shaped the Jewish scene in Germany<sup>28</sup>**

Of all the countries in Europe, Germany is one of the richest in Jewish history and tradition. Even the Holocaust was unable to bring to an end the 1600 years of continuous Jewish habitation and cultural flourishing in Germany. German Jewry has been shaped for a millennia and a half in the tumultuous, ever-changing German political, social and economic landscape.

*Early History to 1095.* Evidence of Jews in the area, now known as Germany, dates back to the early 4th century. When the first Jews migrated to the "barbarian lands," Christianity had not yet arrived in Western Europe, and the Roman Empire was still the continent's dominant power. Little is known about the early German Jews, but by the 8th century, Jews were flourishing among the German tribes along the banks of the Rhine, living in harmony with their newly Christian neighbors and speaking the same languages with them.

At the time the Roman Catholic Church received power in this territory. It had codified much of its doctrine, including the attitude that the Jews were a rejected people, who must be separated decisively from the Christians. But, at first, it did not have big influence on the life of the Jews in Germany, because the people there liked them, due to the fact that they were providing different good for rulers and simple population of this region. The "Golden Age" that resulted for European Jews was interrupted occasionally by anti-Semitism, but, for the most part, Jews lived happily.

In the tenth century, European Jewry's most important intellectual movement began to thrive when Gershom founded a yeshiva in Mainz, Germany. This school attracted Jews from

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<sup>28</sup> The historical information is taken from a variety of sources, including "Germany," *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Geoffery Wigoder, *Jewish Art and Civilization*. Walker and Co. New York, 1972., Jay Bushinksy, "Germany's New Jews," (JTA ([www.jta.org](http://www.jta.org)), February 2, 2005), David Shyovitz, "Germany," <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/vjw/germany.html>

all over Europe, including the famous Rashi. Gershom became so renowned for his genius and prominence that he posthumously acquired the moniker "light of the exile." Study of the Talmud increased, and the German yeshivas in Mainz and Worms came to overshadow those in Persia,

*The Crusades and Middle Ages.* The Golden Age ended for the Jews of Western Europe on November 26, 1095 with the beginning of the First Crusade. One result of the Crusade, whether intended or otherwise, was that the era of cooperation between Christians and Jews immediately ceased. With Christendom unified in a single purpose, the Jews were now viewed as outsiders, and were rumored to be allied with the Muslims. Crusaders would routinely massacre whole Jewish communities on their way to the Holy Land. Communities in Worms, Mainz and Cologne were devastated; in Mainz, for example, 1,100 Jews were killed in one day in 1096, and the synagogue and other communities' buildings were razed. The attacks continued during the next seven crusades in the 12th and 13th centuries. Jewish life and communities in Germany were changed irrevocably as result of the crusades, 'new Church,' and governmental policies. No longer could Jews hold public office, or blithely interact with their Christian neighbors. Instead, the Jews of each city banded together in autonomous ghettos. No Jew could wander around the city without risking taunts and attacks, but few Jews had a reason or desire to leave the ghetto in the first place.

The collective isolation of the Jews also led to the rise of Yiddish, the language that consisted of a medieval dialect of German and elements of Hebrew.

In the thirteenth century, the Catholic Church instituted the Inquisition. Secular and religious rulers alike attacked "heretics" – a category that sometimes included Jews – with savagery, subjecting them to imprisonment, forced conversion and often death. At the same time, the Jews were accused of killing children for ritual purposes (blood libels), of host desecration, and, during the Black Plague in the fourteenth century, of poisoning wells. These accusations, and the violence that followed them (*Juddenschlacht*, or "Jews slaughter), led to the repeated



expulsion of the Jews of Germany from their towns. Jewish status became uncertain and, in essence, the Jews agreed to become the property of whichever ruler granted them a protective charter.

Nonetheless, the Jews never fully abandoned Germany. Even when a city-state expelled the Jewish population, there was another autonomous city that would extend them a charter, due to economic reasons. The Jews would thus settle in a new location. Eventually, the economic role they served would become unnecessary and, when this happened, violence against the Jews inevitably ensued, and expulsion followed. In this way, the Jews were constantly wandering through Europe, residing in each city only temporarily.

In general, the Jews migrated within Germany in the Middle Ages from the towns on the Rhine in the south to the east and the north. By the thirteenth century, communities were forming in Munich, Vienna and Berlin, which would become important Jewish cities in Germany in the modern era.

In the Reformation period, Jews continued to be oppressed both physically and economically—those who were not expelled shouldered a crippling tax burden. Additionally, Martin Luther, after failing to convert the Jews to Protestantism, savagely denounced them, which led to more religiously-inspired violence against them.

*German Jews in the Modern World.* The status of the Jews began to change in the seventeenth century, when absolutist (and later, enlightened absolutist) states became common. The rulers of these kingdoms viewed the interests of the state as supreme and began to realize that the Jews were a valuable commodity that was wasted when expelled. The rulers of Prussia, Hamburg, Brandenburg and Pomerania, to name just a few, therefore welcomed Jews into their territories; however, the invitation came with numerous strings attached. The life of the Jews was highly regulated to ensure that the state extracted as much value as possible from them. Laws were issued addressing employment, family life, residency and communal affairs.

The readmission of the Jews to many German states continued in the eighteenth century, when the charters extended to them granted them rights more and more similar to those of citizens. At the same time, however, the autonomy that had been a hallmark of Jewish communal life for centuries began to decline. As the Jews became more like citizens, their independent governance was withdrawn by the rulers. Jewish thinkers and authors began to criticize the insularity of the Jewish community and to emphasize secular and worldly pursuits in place of the traditional Jewish lifestyle and religion. As a result, many Jews left the ghetto to pursue education (if and when a school would admit Jews), brought their disputes to secular as opposed to religious courts and befriended non-Jews. It seriously eroded Jewish unity in Germany. In 1812, Prussia became the first German state to grant citizenship to its Jewish inhabitants.

The new status of the Jews, however, was not achieved without opposition. In 1819, the masses gave vent to their frustration at the Jews' rapid economic and political rise in the "Hep Hep" riots. Many peasants were less willing to let go of their conception of the Jews than the Jews were to let go of their conceptions of themselves.

The new open, cosmopolitan atmosphere had its impact on religion as well. Frustrated with traditional observance, which they viewed as overly restrictive and irrelevant to modern life, many Jews joined the Reform movement. The first Reform Temple was founded in Hamburg in 1817, and it marked a dramatic departure from the traditional prayer service. Soon, Reform Temples opened elsewhere too, and Berlin became the center of the movement. At the same time, Reform was opposed by the "Neo-orthodox" school, which emphasized strict traditionalism combined with worldly pursuits. Meanwhile, in Breslau the groundwork for the Conservative movement was laid.

The Jews of Germany were by now an overwhelmingly urban, professional class. Many of them took part in the German revolution of 1848, and in the resulting Frankfurt

parliament. The "Basic Laws of the German People" advanced by the parliament reinforced that Jews were citizens in full, regardless of their religious leanings. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, anti-Semitism became more visible, and even manifested itself in politics, but was dismissed by the urbane, and the assimilated Jews were considered as merely a passing social phenomenon. Anti-Semitism became more pronounced in the aftermath of World War I in Weimar Germany. For the most part, however, the prosperity and legal equality of the Jews continued unabated until the Holocaust.

Jewish social life in the inter-war period consisted of a struggle between Jewish nationalism and assimilation. While many Jews tried as hard as they could to assimilate, and to distinguish themselves from their "Eastern" counterparts— i.e., the Jews in Eastern Europe who were still largely observant and traditional— others advocated a return to Jewish autonomy, either within Europe or in the land of Israel. In terms of scholarship, German Jews enjoyed a "Jewish Renaissance" in the early twentieth century.

Some Jews immigrated in this period, mostly to America or Israel; many more did so after the rise of Nazism in 1933. The majority of Jews, however, remained in Germany, with catastrophic results.

*The Holocaust.* The Nazi takeover of 1933 was a stunning blow to German Jews. In 1935, the *Nürnberg Laws* were adopted; these laws officially defined Judaism in terms of race, and withdrew the citizenship of all Jews. On November 9, 1938, *Kristallnacht*, Jewish businesses and synagogues were razed, and Jews were hurt and killed in rioting.

The government persecution led to an increased solidarity among German Jewry. Communities banded together to promote immigration, and to provide many of the services that had been stripped away by the government. In March, 1941, Hitler officially ordered the implementation of the "Final Solution," which resulted in Jews being forced to wear a yellow star as identification, and being transferred en masse to ghettos and camps throughout Europe.

On May 19, 1943, Germany was declared *Judenrein* ("free of Jews"), though it is estimated that as many as 19,000 Jews remained in Germany underground.

*Rebuilding After the Holocaust.* Following the Holocaust, Jews settled in Germany once again. The Jewish population consisted of three types: (1) those who lived in Germany before the war and returned to their cities and homes; (2) displaced persons from elsewhere in Europe, who took refuge in Germany; and (3) those Germans who had never been discovered by the Nazis, and had remained in Germany throughout World War II. The total number barely reached five percent of the Jewish population before the war. This number decreased further as many German Jews immigrated to Israel in the 1950s. By the mid-1960s, communities were solidified in West Berlin, Munich, Frankfurt, Düsseldorf, Hamburg and Cologne. They consisted of about 20,000 Jews. Less than a thousand Jews lived in East Germany; those who did were concentrated in East Berlin. Other Jews, who were unaffiliated with the established communities, lived in Germany as well, but it is impossible to know precisely how many. For a long time, the communities were primarily elderly men and women, and opportunities for Jewish life were minimal: few communities conducted daily services, only two Jewish schools existed, and the two Jewish weekly newspapers had only modest circulations. Intermarriage became common. Because of reparations paid to Holocaust survivors and their descendants by the German government, however, the communities in Germany were among the richest in the world. The reunification of Germany, which repatriated Jews in East and West Germany, also went a long way to increasing Jewish opportunities and unity in the country.

Beginning in the late 1980s, the long-stagnant communities began to change. In 1990 the German government (both West and East Germany at that time) made a decision to invite the Jewish people from the USSR to come and to live in Germany which enabled them to enjoy a

very stable status as Jewish “refugees.”<sup>29</sup> Today, Germany remains the most popular country for Jewish immigration and the Jewish population in Germany is the fastest growing Jewish community in the world. As result, today, including non-affiliated Jews and descendants of mixed marriages, the number of Jews in Germany is estimated to exceed 225,000.

The influx of Soviet Jews revitalized community life, kosher food and restaurants and grass-roots organizations. While the German Jewish communities have traditionally observant members, the population has become increasingly liberal. Assimilation and intermarriage remain significant tendencies.

The supreme organization of the Jewish communities in Germany is “Central Council of Jews in Germany” that was formed in 1950.

### **Overview and description of important Jewish and messianic contextual factors**

The majority of the Jewish people in Germany are the Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union. Thus, regarding Jewish outreach and the messianic movement in Germany, we deal mostly with Russian Jews. Although the Russian Jews share similar Jewish background with the Germans, they are distinct from them due to their “Russian” background. Following, Jewish culture in Germany with particular emphasis on the Russian Jewish culture will be addressed.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> “Russische Juden in Nordrhein-Westfalen: Zum Stand ihrer beruflichen und sozialen Integration“, online: [www.lzz-nrw.de/docs/russ\\_jud.pdf](http://www.lzz-nrw.de/docs/russ_jud.pdf), accessed 7 April 2005.

<sup>30</sup> German culture that makes German Jews distinct from Russian Jews was already discussed before.

*Major characteristics of the Jewish people in Germany.* Coming to Germany the Russian Jews brought the Russian culture they have grown up with.<sup>31</sup> It takes many years for changes to take place and for the older people it is completely impossible to adapt to the German culture.<sup>32</sup> Most of the immigrants feel more comfortable in the Russian culture settings.<sup>33</sup> It is unavoidable that this leads to a sort of “ghetto-situation,” whereby the immigrants try to group with other immigrants rather than with the natives in the country. The new Jewish immigrants try to keep Russian language, to read Russian newspapers and books, watch Russian TV, go to the Russian theater and other events etc. Many of them are falling in love with the Russian culture even more than before they immigrated.

Besides Russian culture, many of the immigrants grew up in the time of the former Soviet Union and brought a solid “luggage” of that mentality to Germany.<sup>34</sup> It means not just that they want everybody to be equal, but that they were taught not to believe in God at all. Therefore, the majority of the Russian Jews are atheists in their worldview.<sup>35</sup> But the ideals they used to have in Soviet Union collapsed and the values they held to be dear, became foolish. Therefore, the people feel frustration and have a large gap in their souls that needs to be filled with something they can trust in. It makes them very open for the Gospel.

Jews in Germany usually have very strong Jewish identity which is very dear to them. Many are willing to join different Jewish communities to be a part of the Jewish life in the country and most feel a part of the world Jewry. They very much appreciate Israel and support it

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<sup>31</sup> Judith Kessler, “Zuwanderer aus den ehemaligen GUS-Staaten: Erwartungen und Realitäten in der jüdischen Gemeinde“, online: <http://www.juden-in-berlin.de/gemeinde/sozialarbeit-2.htm>, accessed 07 April 2005.

<sup>32</sup> “Russische Juden in Nordrhein-Westfalen“.

<sup>33</sup> Elena Burlina, “Vitamin "K" für Kultur“, online: <http://israel-live.de/berlin-judentum/kultur/russische-juden.htm>, accessed 07 April 2005.

<sup>34</sup> Kessler, “Zuwanderer aus den ehemaligen GUS-Staaten“.

<sup>35</sup> “Jeder dritte Jude geht zum Gottesdienst“, *Idea Spektrum*, December 2003, 12.

by different means. The Jews in Germany are very sensitive to any form of anti-Semitism and tend to see it almost in every unfriendly action toward them. The reason for that is found in the Jewish history of suffering the consequences of being Jewish. They also tend to believe that most of the people in the world hate Jews. As a result, some of the Russian Jews become very proud of their Jewishness and want everybody to see it. But the majority of them, in their desire to be accepted and following the old pattern learned from the history, tries to hide their Jewishness from being seen.

In spite of a strong Jewish identity, the Jewish people in Germany (especially Russian immigrants) do not have not much knowledge about Judaism and Jewish culture. As a result of Jewish assimilation in Europe during the twentieth century, most do not understand any Hebrew and lack knowledge about the content of their Scripture.<sup>36</sup> Many Russian Jews feel lost in the synagogue's service, as they don't understand the ritual and prayers.<sup>37</sup> However, they are interested in learning about the "Jewish" way of life.

Most of the Jewish people in Germany are humanists.<sup>38</sup> Most (especially Russian Jews) are trying to be good, nice and hospitable to others. The interests of others are very important and they consider it a value to make others feel good.<sup>39</sup> It is also true that they want their help to be appreciated. Also, it means that they expect the same attitude they value.

Most of the Jewish people in Germany have a very good education. Many of them hold Master's or even Doctoral degrees. Most are good in the professions they hold.<sup>40</sup> This

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<sup>36</sup> "Judenmission: Welche Gruppen sind besonders gefährdet?", online: <http://israel-live.de/judentum-org/judenmission/missionierte.htm>, accessed 07 April 2005.

<sup>37</sup> Witte, "Auf der Wacht", 5.

<sup>38</sup> "Jeder dritte Jude geht zum Gottesdienst", 12.

<sup>39</sup> "Russische Juden in Nordrhein-Westfalen".

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

results from a history where Jewish people had to work hard in order to survive in an unfriendly environment.

The Russian Jews are very open for fellowship. They do not mind spending much time in a conversation. They are very open in conversations and like to talk honestly. They like to have good friends and are always willing to spend time with them.

The new Russian Jewish immigrants generally are willing to learn about the German culture and have the desire to adjust to it. Because of significant cultural distinctions, this is not easy even for young people.<sup>41</sup> For the older generation it is very difficult and it becomes almost impossible (40% of the immigrants belong to this category<sup>42</sup>).

Feeling alien in the midst of their new country, the main desire of Russian Jewish immigrants is acceptance by Germans. They want to be a part of the society as they have been before.<sup>43</sup> But the language and cultural barriers are making the process very slow and difficult. There are not many Germans who are willing to invest time in building a relationship with “foreigners” which leaves many immigrants frustrated and depressed. It is obvious that, as a result of this cultural stress, many Russian Jews are suffering with nostalgia.<sup>44</sup>

The Russian Jewish immigrants can have ample financial welfare that is sufficient for all life expenses, including health care. But at the same time it is very difficult for many immigrants to find a job even after several years in the country.<sup>45</sup> And it is almost impossible to

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Kessler, “Zuwanderer aus den ehemaligen GUS-Staaten“.

<sup>43</sup> “Russische Juden in Nordrhein-Westfalen“.

<sup>44</sup> “Judenmission“.

<sup>45</sup> It is especially difficult due to the current the 12.5% unemployment rate in Germany.



find a job according to their respective profession.<sup>46</sup> Having a good education and being good professionals, Russian Jews feel very frustrated without jobs. Although welfare gives them financial security, it keeps them mostly very poor and outside the lifestyle many other people in the country enjoy.<sup>47</sup>

Geographically there is no specific area where the Jewish people are concentrated. They are spread out in each city and in whole Germany. Sometimes there is only one Jewish family in a small town.

Generally, Russian Jews tend to join Jewish cultural communities that give them a chance for fellowship and to raise their children as Jewish.<sup>48</sup> As result of the “Russian” majority, they change the existing communities and open new ones to satisfy their need to combine Russian, Soviet and Jewish cultures.<sup>49</sup>

Although most of the Jews do not attend a synagogue on a regular basis, they feel dependent on it, because they are of the belief that the synagogue represents the Jewish religion.<sup>50</sup> Also many believe that the synagogue and religious communities decide who are Jewish and therefore are the basis for them being in Germany.<sup>51</sup> Especially older Jewish people are dependent upon religious communities, because it is historically very important for them to be buried in a Jewish cemetery and the communities decide who is to be buried there.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> “Russische Juden in Nordrhein-Westfalen“.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Witte, “Auf der Wacht”, 5.

<sup>49</sup> Kessler, “Zuwanderer aus den ehemaligen GUS-Staaten“.

<sup>50</sup> “Jeder dritte Jude geht zum Gottesdienst”, 12.

<sup>51</sup> Susanne Spahn, “Die Mutter entscheidet“, online: <http://hagalil.de/hagalil/archiv/2001/08/kontingent.htm>, 07 April 2005.

<sup>52</sup> Witte, “Auf der Wacht”, 5.

Extended family and friends play a very important role in the Jewish life. Russian Jews try to communicate with their friends and relatives frequently, sometimes even several times a day. It is expected that good friends and close relatives will stay constantly in touch. They like to visit good friends and relatives and use any chance to get together.

*Attitude of the German people and anti-Semitism.* Officially Germans are very careful in maintaining friendly and respectful attitude to the Jewish people. But it is not possible to remove the anti-Semitism that was developed throughout the centuries. Throughout the post-war period, anti-Semitism has continued and neo-Nazi groups flourished throughout Germany. Recently, hate crimes and membership in neo-Nazi groups have skyrocketed, and even taken on some political forms in far-right political parties. These parties, however, have generally been unsuccessful in recruiting members from among the German populace, and several have been outlawed by the government. Hate crimes, although occurring more and more frequently, are very strictly punished by the German courts. Generally, anti-Semitism can be found even among people who even have never met a Jew personally.<sup>53</sup> German Jews are often blamed for being rich and oppressing Germans, while Russian Jews are blamed for plundering Germans by using social welfare. Politicians often use any statement against Jews or Israel by members of other parties to strengthen their position which results in considerable media coverage, even over minor issues. These scandals only strengthen anti-Semitic feelings in the society. Overall anti-Semitism tends to rise in Europe in general and in Germany in particular.<sup>54</sup>

*Germany and Israel.* Today, Germany is officially one of the most reliable allies of the State of Israel. Germany has become second only to the United States in its economic relations with Israel through imports and exports, as well as by providing assistance in the form

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<sup>53</sup> <http://www.worldpress.org/Europe/668.cfm>; "The Ugly German Shows His Face"; accessed April 24, 2005.

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,1183765,00.html>; "Berlin Conference Urges Action on Anti-Semitism", accessed April 24, 2005.

of grants and loans. Additionally, Germany has played a leading role in shaping the pro-Israel attitudes of many European countries. At the same time, the media coverage of the Israel-Palestine conflict which focuses its attention on the Palestinians as “victims” of “aggressive” Israelis, shifts public opinion toward an anti-Israeli attitude.<sup>55</sup>

*Messianic movement and Jewish evangelism.* Before the beginning of the Russian Jewish immigration about 28 years ago no one was thinking about Jewish outreach in Germany due to the insignificant number of the Jews in the country. The beginning of a new “era” was laid in 1994 by joint efforts of *Chosen People Ministries*, *EDI*, *AmZi* and *Licht im Osten*. In 1995 *Beit Sar Shalom* was founded, which today is the largest Jewish mission in Germany, ministering in 17 different cities with more than 40 ministers. Overall, there are about 30 messianic groups and congregations that were started in Germany since 1995 by different organizations and individuals.<sup>56</sup> The ministry is growing rapidly, especially among Russian Jews.<sup>57</sup> But, due to the geographical dispersion of the Jewish people in Germany, it is not possible to reach all of them without involvement of new ministers and German Christians.

The messianic movement in Germany is very young and mostly consists of new believers. It badly lacks trained and equipped leaders and pastors.<sup>58</sup> Most messianic believers are new immigrants, who receive social welfare. Therefore, the movement is comparatively poor and financially depends upon its ministry in Christian churches in the country.

The official Jewish community does not recognize the messianic movement and its congregations as being “Jewish.” The officially recognized Catholic and Lutheran churches do

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> The Information is taken from the archives of *Beit Sar Shalom*.

<sup>57</sup> Since 1995 more than 2000 Jewish people became believers. It makes the messianic community in Germany the fastest growing (percentage-wise) in the world.

<sup>58</sup> According to the information that we have from the messianic leaders in Germany, there are only 3 of them, who have an equivalent of a bachelors degree.

not want to have anything to do officially with messianic Jews. These factors, together with the young nature of the movement and the lack of leaders' theological education, complicate attempts of its legal recognition.

*Attitude of the Church.* The feeling of guilt that has been common for Germans after the Second World War (see the description above), made Christianity in Germany generally highly sensitive to the Jewish people. After the Holocaust the churches in Germany mostly tried to maintain good relationships with the Jewish community in the country. As a result, Jewish evangelism became “taboo” for many churches. Therefore, the messianic movement, with its passion to reach Jewish people with the Gospel, has been considered by many Christians as a “troublemaker.” The liberalism of Christianity supports this attitude towards Jewish outreach.

## **PROGRAM PLANNING ASSESSMENTS**

### **Needs Assessment**

*Why?* Based on the socio-cultural descriptions previously discussed, we face the following needs that motivate us to start the Messianic Jewish Theological Academy:

1. Due to the newness and beginning stage of the messianic movement in Germany, the leaders of the movement need training, mentoring and equipment for their ministry.

### **Jewish People**

2. The Jewish people (especially Russian Jews) in Germany are very open for the Gospel. The political and religious situation in Germany gives us an extraordinary opportunity for Jewish outreach. But this task is impossible to achieve by the comparatively small number of isolated enthusiasts. The believers need to be encouraged, motivated and trained for this ministry. Due to the strong theological and humanistic opposition from

Jewish communities and liberal Christians, we need people involved in Jewish outreach to be able to defend their faith and convictions.

3. We find many Jewish people being saved in Germany these days. Although it is a good reason to thank God, it is not the end of the ministry to them. The new believers need to be discipled. Because the messianic movement is still in the developing stage and the churches in Germany are not equipped for this task, we need new leaders, who will teach and disciple new Jewish believers.
4. Due to its newness, the Jewish outreach and messianic movement in Germany has the strong need for educational, evangelistic and theological materials, which correspond with its cultural specifics and language (German and Russian).
5. Due to the cultural specifics discussed previously, Jewish believers need distinct messianic congregations to live their faith in the community with other believers in an atmosphere that is comfortable for them. Messianic congregations are also very effective tools for reaching unbelieving Jews and for disciplining Jewish believers.
6. Because the Jewish community traditionally separates itself from Jewish-Christian believers and oppose any attempt of evangelism, we need to bridge this “gap” by practical identification with the Jews in Germany, showing a good testimony of biblical Jewish lifestyle.

#### The Church

7. We face separation between the messianic movement and the Christian church. It is based on the troubled past and cultural distinctions in the present. Following God’s will for the universal church, we need to maintain unity between these two groups. In this case both groups have to learn from each other and complement each other, which is also evidently needed.

8. In spite of having a rich Christian history and tradition, the church in Germany needs to know the Jewish roots of their faith in order to better understand of the Bible and the role of Israel, with the purpose of opposing every sign of Christian anti-Semitism.
9. Due to the dispersion of the Jewish people in Germany, we need more people to be involved in Jewish outreach. In order to fulfill their role toward the Jewish people, the Christians in Germany need to understand the necessity of Jewish evangelism and get involved in this outreach.
10. The messianic movement needs to learn from Christianity's 2000-year history in following Jesus, learning from both good and mistaken developments.

#### German Society

11. As we could see in its description, the society in Germany, being liberal and secular, needs a good and attractive testimony of a godly lifestyle and authentic faith.
12. In order to strengthen this testimony, the messianic movement needs recognition as a credible Jewish movement in Christianity and German society in general.
13. The high sensibility of German society toward to the Jewish people can be used to grab attention of the people for the Gospel presentation by using specific use of Jewish terminology. Although it is hardly possible for a non-Jewish believer, the Jewish believers can easily do that without being labeled as anti-Semitic. There is a need for this provocative style in evangelism.
14. As we saw previously, the dangerous teaching of anti-Semitism is on the rise in German society. This tendency definitely needs to be fought.
15. We believe that it is the biblical responsibility of believers to intercede on behalf of the Jewish people and Israel (e.g. Gen 12:3; Ps 122:6). The messianic movement is the most suitable for that, representing the faithful remnant of the Jewish nation at present.

Although in some Christian circles we can find intercession, this ministry needs to be more biblically grounded and should involve more people.

*Who? Personal Characteristics. Age/Sex.* Participants should be at least 19 years old because students will have completed their *Abitur* degree. As the program will generally be open to people of all ages, in principal it will allow for multi-generational interaction and learning. The program is open to both male and female students.

**Ethnolinguistic and racial diversity.** This program will make no distinction between Jew and gentile as long as they demonstrate deep love for Jewish people and have a passion for Jewish outreach. Therefore, this program will reflect racial as well as ethnolinguistic diversity as we expect students to come from different backgrounds.

**Life situation limitations.** Although prospective students will be native Russian and German speakers, the official language of the program will be German. As a result, students should have basic knowledge of the German language. Potential students will also be encouraged to have a working knowledge of the English language in order to communicate with guest professors and to read theological literature. The student body will be comprised of various socio-economic, family and personal backgrounds.

**Life experiences that influence learning.** The foundational life experience that will influence learning is the student's relationship with God and their call to ministry. The very nature of the program will tend to attract students from both gentile and messianic churches who have had these life experiences and are willing to make sacrifices for theological education.

*Who? Educational Background. Learning competencies.* By completing the *Abitur* or equivalent degree, students will have already attained a certain degree of cognitive ability. It will be assumed that all of the students bring to the program some level of knowledge of the

Bible and basic Christian doctrine. However, this will vary depending on individual education experience, age, etc.

**Familiarity and expectation of educational experience.** As the program will be modeled after the European university concept, students will enter the program with some level of familiarity and will therefore expect from the program what they would expect from a university education. Students will be expected to adjust to new modes and methods of learning that differ from the traditional modes and methods of a university education.

*Who? Religious background.* Both Jewish and gentile students will be expected to be mature believers with a messianic and evangelical orientation. To make the program more successful, it will be expected that student will be active members of existing churches or messianic congregations and actively serve in some type of ministry.

*Who? Relationship to overall educational experience.* Students will have a personal calling for Jewish ministry and are expected to come with a desire to learn, grow and minister. They are also expected to be highly motivated and eager to learn all that is needed for their future ministry and will need to understand that they are involved in a lifelong educational process. As teachers are normally highly valued in European contexts, students will also show respect and appreciation toward those who lead the program.

## **Mission Assessment**

*Why? (Prescriptive)*

The vision of Messianic Jewish Theological Academy is to see Jewish people being reached for Christ everywhere in Germany and to see the messianic movement being strengthened in order to be a great testimony of Jesus in the German society, thereby contributing to the overarching goal of the *missio dei*.



**Essential traits and competencies.** The traits and competencies of the leaders that we want to see after the graduation from Jewish Messianic Theological Academy are implied in the list of goals that we have for this theological education program (see below).<sup>59</sup>

**Mission statement.** The mission of Jewish Messianic Theological Academy is to prepare leaders for Jewish outreach and the messianic movement in Germany according to their gifts and calling.

**Program Goals.** Based on the needs and our vision, we want the leaders of the messianic movement after completing the program to impact three different areas in Germany: Jewish people, the church and society. The program will prepare<sup>60</sup> students according to their particular gifts and callings:<sup>61</sup>

Jewish people

1. To lead others in reaching the Jewish people with the Gospel and defend the messianic faith.
2. To lead, teach and disciple Jewish believers.
3. To contribute to the development of the Jewish messianic theological, evangelistic and educational materials.
4. To plant messianic congregations and groups.

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<sup>59</sup> For the sake of concise structure of our project, although we thoroughly discussed and described the traits and competencies, we have decided to understand it as an intermediate step and to incorporate it into the “goal” section.

<sup>60</sup> In our definition “preparation,” according to our “Manifesto,” means holistic change that combines cognitive, affective and skills areas.

<sup>61</sup> From the previous statement it is evident that the specific concentration of our program of theological education is on the Jewish ministry. Otherwise the spectrum of goals, coming out of our vision, is very broad. We understand that one particular student is able to cover only some of the goals listed below. Therefore, in order to reach these goals, we want to have students with different gifts and callings that correspond with our mission statement. We are going to work with each student individually in the area of elective classes, in order to make this student to be effective in reaching some of the goals according to his/her gifts and calling. Although we are committed to help each student to reach proficiency in a particular area of the Jewish messianic ministry (according to his/her gifts), we want all students to be holistically prepared for the ministry.

5. To lead the messianic movement to be a good testimony to the unbelieving Jewish community.

#### The Church

6. To promote unity between Jews and gentiles in the Body of Christ.
7. To fight Christian anti-Semitism and misunderstandings toward Jewish people.
8. To educate the church in the Jewish roots of Christianity.
9. To make the church involved in Jewish outreach.
10. To bridge the church and the messianic movement, making it possible for them to learn from each other and complement each other in life and ministry.

#### German Society

11. To contribute to transformation of the behavior, beliefs and values of German society.
12. To contribute to the messianic movement's recognition as a credible Jewish movement in Christianity and the German society.
13. To use the distinct Jewish specific of the messianic movement in a thought-provoking way to share the Gospel with Germans.
14. To fight anti-Semitism in the society.
15. To biblically intercede on behalf of the Jewish people and Israel.

#### **Program Objectives.<sup>62</sup>**

Upon completing the program, the student will...

1. ...advance in spiritual maturity and gifts' effectiveness.
2. ...understand God's plan of salvation for Jews and gentiles.
3. ...master methods and tools of Jewish outreach.

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<sup>62</sup> These program's objectives correspond to the programs goals with a ratio of 2:1.

4. ...understand God's plan for believers.
5. ...master methods and tools of leadership, teaching and discipleship.
6. ...be proficient in Bible exegesis and theological methods.
7. ...master research and writing skills.
8. ...understand God's plan for local messianic congregations.
9. ...be familiar with history and development of the messianic movement.
10. ...understand Jewish religion, history, life and worship.
11. ...understand and master serving to needs of unbelievers.
12. ...understand God's plan for the universal church.
13. ...know church history.
14. ...know history and biblical implications of anti-Semitism.
15. ...master methods and means for dealing with anti-Semitism.
16. ...understand New Testament Jewish backgrounds.
17. ...understand meaning and significance of biblical Jewish customs and feasts.
18. ...understand principles of intercultural communication.
19. ...master methods of support raising (practical, prayer and financial).
20. ...have basic knowledge of church movements and denominations with their distinct characteristics and history.
21. ...master overcoming negative biases between the gentile church and the messianic movement and mediating between the two.
22. ...have basic knowledge of German history and culture.
23. ...understand and be able to effectively respond to different worldviews with particular emphasis on the main ones in Germany.
24. ...have a recognized German theological degree.
25. ...master methods and skills of representing the messianic movement.

26. ...master creative thinking.
27. ...master methods and tools of outreach to non-Jewish Germans.
28. ...understand the roots and main assumptions of German anti-Semitism.
29. ...master methods of addressing German anti-Semitism.
30. ...understand God's plan for the Jewish people and the land of Israel.
31. ...master basic methods of intercession for the Jewish people and leading others in doing it.

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