

Date: February 28th 2014

Press Release from Ministries in Israel

Caspari Center for Jewish and Biblical Studies, Jerusalem
Ebenezer Senior Citizens Home, Haifa
Joint Mission in Israel (Immanuel Church), Tel Aviv/Jaffa
Makor HaTikvah Messianic Hebrew School, Jerusalem
Machaseh Association, Jerusalem

We, the above-listed organizations, who have been cooperating with the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM) for years and even decades, feel the need to bring to the attention of the public our official position concerning recent decisions made by FELM concerning their acceptance of registered partners of same-sex unions as being legitimate.

It came to our knowledge in 2013 that FELM, unilaterally and without consulting its partners in Israel, had at some point changed its employment policy to also include homosexual partners among its employees, and thus has abandoned the biblical principles which were commonly shared by us. We find those principles to be clearly stated in both the Old and the New Testament scriptures - that a sexual relationship is solely within the framework of the legal and public marital union of one man and one woman only.

Since the Word of God is our only authority concerning teaching and life, we are not permitted to stray from it.

As a result of our personal and organizational involvement and contact with the Israeli Messianic community, spanning the course of many years, we believe that our position reflects the accepted biblical understanding concerning this issue among believers in Israel. We have difficulties imagining a single local Messianic congregation or organization in Israel that would be prepared to work with FELM, given its current position on sexuality and marriage.

We regret that after decades of mutual cooperation we have found ourselves in a situation where this cooperation must be terminated.

Current FELM workers, who serve in the ministries in Israel, can continue their service (in Joint Mission in Israel and at Eben Ezer Home) until they end their employment contracts with FELM under the condition that they are fully loyal to the theological values and principles of the ministries, both while working in Israel and also when informing others about the work in Finland.

In this sad and painful moment, we want to thank FELM for the blessed cooperation we have had for the past many years, and even decades. We also want to acknowledge that FELM is in its full right to decide whatever FELM sees fit for its own organization. However, in light of those decisions, the best way we can respect FELM, without damaging either our integrity or the message of the Bible, is to go our separate ways.

We also want to declare that all five above mentioned ministries greatly value the fellowship and unity with the Body of Messiah in Finland and would be honored to continue the cooperation with Finnish believers, churches and organizations who share the biblical values and the desire to proclaim the gospel of Yeshua the Messiah and serve people in the land of Israel which we have enjoyed in the past.