Fribourg to award honorary doctorate to Mark S. Kinzer

Recognizing a Messianic Jewish theologian whose work opens new questions for the Church and Jewish-Christian relations

FRIBOURG, Switzerland — The Faculty of Theology at the University of Fribourg will confer an honorary doctorate on Dr Mark S. Kinzer on Monday, 16 November 2026, during the University's annual academic celebration *(Dies academicus)*, which begins at 10:00 at Forum Fribourg. Kinzer will deliver his public lecture at 16:15 at Auditoire A (MIS 03), University of Fribourg. Entitled "Weaving a Threefold Cord: Spirituality, Theology, and Historiography in Service to the Jewish People and the Church," the lecture will be followed by an evening service and reception. The event will be recorded for later distribution.

The Faculty says the award recognises Kinzer's scholarship on early Christian ecclesiology and his contribution to overcoming anti-Judaism. His work asks what the Church must learn from the continuing election and covenantal life of the Jewish people, and what place Jewish disciples of Yeshua (Jesus) have within the people of God.

The University of Fribourg, founded in 1889, is a world-renowned Swiss university and the country's only bilingual university, offering study in French and German. Its Faculty of Theology is a valued research institution within the international academic community. The setting gives this recognition significance beyond a personal tribute: it brings Messianic Jewish scholarship into a prominent European theological institution and a wider scholarly conversation.

Fribourg has also stated clearly what the distinction does not mean. It honors Kinzer's academic work; it does not confer institutional or ecclesial legitimacy on Messianic Judaism as a whole, nor does it make a judgment about who may be considered Jewish. The Faculty affirms the continuing election of Israel, rejects anti-Judaism and replacement theology, and says that dialogue with Messianic Jews must not replace or diminish Jewish-Christian dialogue with other Jewish communities.

That careful framing makes the award an occasion for further discussion. It invites Christian theologians and Messianic Jewish dialogue partners to consider how scholarship by Jewish followers of Yeshua can be engaged seriously while preserving the integrity of dialogue with non-Messianic Jewish communities. It also leaves open important questions about identity, ecclesial belonging and the visible place of Jewish disciples of Yeshua in a Church that rejects supersessionism.

> *"The Jewish-Christian dialogue cannot simply adopt Kinzer's positions wholesale; it must also reflect on them critically."* **Bernard Mallmann, Communio (translated from German)**

Kinzer is Rabbi Emeritus of Congregation Zera Avraham in Ann Arbor, Michigan; Senior Scholar and President Emeritus of the Messianic Jewish Theological Institute; founding moderator of Yachad BeYeshua; and a founding member of the Society for Post-Supersessionist Theology. His books include *Postmissionary Messianic Judaism* (2005), *Searching Her Own Mystery* (2015), and *Jerusalem Crucified, Jerusalem Risen* (2018).

Program for Monday 16 November (all times local to Fribourg)

- **10:00 — Dies academicus, Forum Fribourg, Route du Lac 12, 1763 Granges-Paccot.** Opening music and procession, welcome by Rector Katharina Fromm, addresses, a film and a roundtable precede academic honors, including Kinzer's honorary doctorate; the program then closes with Gaudeamus.
- **16:15 — Kinzer's public lecture, MIS 03, Auditoire A, Avenue de l'Europe 20, Fribourg.** "Weaving a Threefold Cord: Spirituality, Theology, and History in Service to the Jewish People and the Church."
- **18:15 — Eucharistic celebration, Cathedral of St Nicholas, Rue du Pont Suspendu 8, Fribourg.** Presided over by Mgr Felix Gmür, Bishop of Basel.
- **19:30 — Apéritif, Halle Mosaïque, University of Fribourg, Avenue de l'Europe 20.**

Registration for the Dies academicus was recommended by 2 November: University registration information

A wider conversation

The Fribourg recognition follows a growing academic discussion of Messianic Judaism and Christian theology. The 2025 volume *Jesus – the Messiah of Israel? Messianic Judaism and Christian Theology in Conversation*, edited by Jan-Heiner Tück, Mark S. Kinzer and Thomas Schumacher, publishes papers and responses from the 2022 international symposium at the University of Vienna. The gathering brought Catholic, Protestant and Messianic Jewish scholars into sustained conversation about the theological and ecclesiological questions raised by the movement.

Together, the Vienna symposium and the Fribourg doctorate mark a developing field of academic exchange. They do not settle contested questions of Jewish identity or ecclesial recognition. They do make it harder for Christian theology to treat Messianic Jewish scholarship as marginal, and they invite continued dialogue that is candid about disagreement as well as attentive to the enduring Jewish-Christian relationship.

Short version for reprint or online use

The Faculty of Theology at the University of Fribourg will confer an honorary doctorate on Messianic Jewish theologian Mark S. Kinzer on 16 November 2026, during the Dies academicus beginning at 10:00 at Forum Fribourg. Kinzer will give his public lecture at 16:15 at the University's Auditoire A. The award recognises his scholarship on early Christian ecclesiology and overcoming anti-Judaism. Fribourg has clarified that it honors Kinzer's academic work and does not settle questions of Jewish identity or endorse Messianic Judaism as a whole. The award brings new attention to Messianic Jewish scholarship and the future of Jewish-Christian dialogue.

Further reading

Jan-Heiner Tück, Mark S. Kinzer and Thomas Schumacher, eds., *Jesus – the Messiah of Israel? Messianic Judaism and Christian Theology in Conversation* (New York: Herder, 2025). A volume arising from the 2022 University of Vienna symposium.

Bernard Mallmann, "Mit messianischen Juden sprechen? Zum Streit um die Verleihung der Ehrendoktorwürde an Mark S. Kinzer," Communio, 8 October 2026. The quotation above is translated from the German.

Fribourg information and reprinting

University of Fribourg, Faculty of Theology, "Pourquoi nous honorons Mark S. Kinzer" (12 July 2026); and Dies academicus 2026 information and registration. Friendly organisations may reprint or adapt this release with attribution to Richard S. Harvey; please check links and contact details before publication.

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