Jewish Evangelism in a Postmodern Context

MISHKAN

▌ A FORUM ON THE GOSPEL AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE ▌ *Issue 66/ 2011*

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MISHKAN

A Forum on the Gospel and the Jewish People

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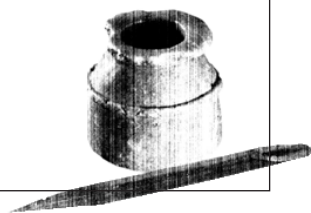
How unlikely a pedigree! Postmodernism began in architecture, moved to literature, then to philosophy, and is now a popular worldview, showing up in movies, music, and television. As believers, it is important for us to understand the times, to evaluate popular perspectives and worldviews, in order to engage them with what we believe to be biblical truth.

Postmodernism appears to be more a mood than a philosophy, although certainly philosophers have written at length about postmodernism. Yet it seems to have sprung from disillusionment, suspicion, and skepticism regarding modernism and rationalistic systems. It has yielded relativism in its understanding of truth as well as morality. It fits comfortably with pluralism and multiculturalism. It believes that one cannot know any objective thing with certainty (and it is certain of this!). Yet it is open to the spiritual and emphasizes personal relationships and community.

For those of us involved with the gospel and the Jewish people, we must understand postmodernism, for it is the language of many with whom we want to relate. This means that we must cultivate the ability to evaluate the pros and the cons, the helpful and the unhelpful aspects of postmodernism. This issue of *Mishkan* is designed to stimulate discussion and thought on this important topic.

The authors in this issue do not always agree with one another, but that is what happens in a forum, and that is what *Mishkan* strives to be. Certainly, we must acknowledge the problems with modernism and acknowledge that human systems are fallible and disappoint, yet we must also insist that God and His Word do not disappoint. He is the source of truth and morality that does not fail, and it is only through a personal and deeply satisfying relationship with Him through Jesus the Messiah that our lives find their

real purpose and order.

In this issue, Barry Creamer, my colleague at Criswell College, introduces the subject by sketching the roots of postmodernism and providing some evaluation of the worldview in general. Then Scott Nassau provides a look at postmodernism in the Jewish context of a Messianic community. Boaz Johnson, who has done extensive work in this area, suggests "a premodern model for postmodern dialogue and evangelism." It is our hope that you will find these articles stimulating and enlightening.

Rounding out this issue, we have an outstanding conclusion to Henri Blocher's two-part article on anti-Semitism, drawing us into theological reflection that leads us to a theology of Israel. We also have the first installment of a two-part article by Paul Wilkinson regarding "What the Church Left Behind," reminding us of the importance of Israel's restoration and Messiah's return. Finally, Knut Høyland brings us up-to-date on the news from Israel. May God give us discernment and direction as we emulate the men of Issachar, who "understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do" (1 Chr 12:32).

POSTMODERNISM AND JEWISH EVANGELISM

An Evangelical Perspective on Postmodernity

by **Barry Creamer**

Evangelicals are concerned not only with internal doctrinal debates and theological developments, but also with the ability to relate to the cultures in which they live. Therefore, postmodernity is important to evangelicals not simply as an object of academic commentary but as a practical worldview. Postmodernity has a purely academic and often esoteric side—usually rooted in hermeneutics—which will come up again below. Here, though, the cultural side of postmodernity takes center stage: its cultural origin, its sibling ideals and philosophies, its most significant and identifiable attributes, and finally both the helpful and harmful aspects of those attributes from an evangelical perspective.

Why the Enlightenment Fits Evangelicalism So Comfortably

The historical relationship between the Reformation and the Enlightenment (equivalent here to the "modern world" or modernity—roughly the seventeenth through mid-twentieth centuries) is no mere coincidence. It may have always been in the human nature and behavior of Christians to debate topics and challenge authority, but something about the early modern world (roughly the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries) made reformers' claims resonate with significant populations and structures in European society. While it would be absurd to attempt a comprehensive list and defense of which changing mental models created that resonance, two stand out, each with its own equally significant consequent perspective: 1) a newly developed confidence in human reason, with a consequent progressive view of man's ability to solve problems; and 2) the rise of individualism, with the consequent development of a psychologically defined self.

The significance of the shift from dependence on revelation to reliance on reason cannot be overstated. The journey from Aquinas' Aristotelian synthesis in the thirteenth century through William of Occam's nominalism to Descartes' consummate dependence on human reason is part and parcel

with the movement to translate Scripture into the language of the masses and with the renewed commitment to a priesthood of the believer; that is, a high regard for human nature's rationality and the power of that reason to guide any human being into truth make getting data and giving responsibility to every person a priority.

With that confidence comes also a melioristic and progressive view of society. If reason is dependable, then applying it in new ways to old problems should bring solutions and an improvement in the human condition. So formerly revelation-based disciplines ultimately become reason- and empirically-based sciences. Education and economics, for instance, all eventually become subjects of empirical inquiry and scientifically guided improvement. And those improvements are stoutly systematic and synthetic; for example, Dewey on education and Marx on economics. The point is simply that Western man's increasing confidence in his ability to solve his own problems leads inevitably to systematizing the solutions and to manipulating more and more resources in the process of applying those solutions.

Further, although a fair treatment of the difference between communitarian and individualistic society is not even remotely possible here, the rise of individualism may be the most culturally profound contribution of the Enlightenment to history. That a person's identity is found not in his community but in himself is no small matter. Even the most significant original reformers had not arrived at this transition, and so could not imagine the impotence of their still community-based religious establishments in a world becoming increasingly if not totally individualistic—hence, for example, today's German national Lutheranism.

But the full rise of the parochially-unbound and personally selected practice of religion ultimately depended on the transatlantic influence of pioneer America. There, protections for freedom of conscience and the shared space of competing denominations created a practically complete severance between belonging to a community and belonging to a faith. In short, faith became a matter of persuasion and acceptance, rather than a matter of birth and context.

Again, to be clear, it is not the point here that reason had never been so highly esteemed by some, nor that societies had not sought solutions to their problems, nor that individuals had never conscientiously stood against their community, nor that none had followed their own inclinations to find fulfillment in a faith not prescribed by their community. Rather, it is the point here that those components of a worldview had never shaped an entire culture until they converged in the modern world—in the European and finally transatlantic Enlightenment. And it is incontestable that the academic and cultural rise and success of evangelicalism is contingent upon that convergence.

Predictable Reactions to the Enlightenment

Every cultural mainstream has its counter-cultural currents. The Enlightenment is no exception. Romanticism, existentialism, and postmodernity are

the Enlightenment's most significant sub- or counter-cultural movements. Of course, the ways in which each of these movements or worldviews relates to modernity include everything along an axis from deliberate opposition to deliberate intensification, with plenty of unintentional and incidental options between those extremes. But, whether taken as natural outflows or oppositions, each is notably distinguishable from the world of modernity within which it resides.

Romanticism (from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) is the oldest response to the Enlightenment and, predictably, the most traditional. In its holism, there is an opposition to modernity's sub-dividing of the world into categories. In both that holism and its adoration of nature's significance and man's direct relationship with nature, there is an ethical and factual rejection of the belief that man can systematically comprehend and manage the world. That is, romanticism embraces the mystery of what is not known, and in most cases what cannot or should not be known. So there is no pretense that man's pains can be eliminated over time—that there awaits a utopia in this world. Rather, romantics accept and even pursue, for example, danger for its own sake. There are unknowable or unknown forces at work which bring about consequences, make things right, or make known what is wrong. Romantics recognize the value of family and community above the value of personal ambition and even personal success. The interest in heroic figures is decisively pre-modern. That is, where individuals are celebrated in romanticism it is because of their identification with a class or community. The rise of patriotism is romantic. Not surprisingly, considering its affinity for the aporetic and for organic structure, romanticism's best verbal presentations appear in narrative and poetry, not third-person essays.

Existentialism, only slightly later on the scene than romanticism, is a much more deliberately philosophical response to the Enlightenment's direction. Although there are huge differences between its origins in Kierkegaard and its twentieth century expression in Sartre, there are also unmistakable essentials (yes, that term is chosen ironically) which distinguish it from modernity. Probably most significant among these identifiers of existentialism is freedom. While the Enlightenment pushes humanity into one more category of the world awaiting full understanding and manipulation, existentialism opposes that push with a belief in the human being's radical freedom. Indeed, it is the exercise of that radical freedom which makes a human just that, a human. There are no predetermined categories—no essentials—a claim in direct opposition to modernity's categories and optimistic possibilities. That lack of essentials also relates to the nihilism that is almost inescapable in existentialism. For the existentialist, neither Newton's laws nor the ethics of society are real. While there is no space here to venture into the concepts and relationships of facticity, transcendence, and authenticity, existentialism's emphasis on authenticity plainly sets it apart from modernity's emphasis on accuracy and truth.

Postmodernity's Unique Place

Finally, in response to the dominant modernity of the day comes postmodernity. What gives postmodernity a place of distinction among these countercurrents is that it synthesizes and popularizes some of the most important elements of romanticism and existentialism. Some of that relationship is due to direct historical influence, some to their common opposition to the Enlightenment. Regardless, though, what becomes passé with romanticism and remains in ivory towers and Greenwich Village coffee shops with existentialism flows freely about Western society in postmodernity. Four postmodern features are important for the point here: mystery, community, narrative, and organic structure. Many other features stand out in specific contexts—the academy, the arts, or sociology, for example—but in terms of pervasive cultural impact, these terms are arguably most important.

In this case, mystery emerges immediately from the "humble hermeneutic" of postmodernity and fits comfortably with its subjective relativism. In one way or another, postmodern hermeneutics are shaped by what cannot be known about the text or author, or what can only be provided by the reader's creative interaction with the text. Given that basis, how could a postmodern hermeneutic avoid a subjectively relative interpretation of texts? Moreover, with no more objective textual claims, from exactly where is objectivity going to arrive? (The little jaunt from textual hermeneutics to inescapable subjective relativism also seems to be the point of the academic postmodern mantra that "all is text.") Perhaps the relationship between utter subjective relativism and mystery needs clearer pronunciation. While people can co-create meaning (avoiding at least the appearance of existentialism's nihilism), the subjective portion of that co-creation prevents it from being communicated with authority and, in practice, actually leaves it held even by the co-creative subject only ironically—in Richard Rorty's spirit, with the attitude that the subject might be wrong. Importantly, though, that irony (the mystery of the aporetic) in no way lessens the postmodern sense that there may be something true even if unknowable as such.

Community in postmodernity is straightforwardly reactionary to the individualism of modernity and to the isolation inevitable in the freedom and individualism of existentialism. Postmodernity can also appeal to pre-modernity in the call for a return to communitarian values, but that appeal is severely muffled by the fact that postmodern community is significant only insofar as it serves the psychological needs of the individual. So a postmodern may join a community only to abandon it in favor of another which may suit his needs more completely. Indeed, many postmoderns flit freely from one community to another without ever finding an identity there. This characteristic of

This characteristic of postmodernity (the pursuit of community with no ultimate commitment to it) is not its only inconsistency, and may be as rooted in the rejection of authority (since that authority could have no accessible, objective basis) as in the autonomic embrace of individualism.

postmodernity (the pursuit of community with no ultimate commitment to it) is not its only inconsistency, and may be as rooted in the rejection of authority (since that authority could have no accessible, objective basis) as in the autonomic embrace of individualism.

The desire for narrative includes a rejection of both metanarratives and propositional truth. Metanarratives are, in that perspective, synthetic constructs which skew and minimize the importance of personal narrative. A person's story should not be defined by the expectations imposed on it from above. Every story is unique and worth telling. And it is the story which is worth telling, not a list of doctrines or historical facts. That view, of course, challenges everything about modernity's truth—truth as what is accessible either rationally or empirically. For the postmodern, a person satisfies existentialism's demand for authenticity by living and perhaps telling his own story. Even if portions are inexplicable, they are part of what makes him what he is.

Finally, postmodernity has a persistent favor for organic rather than synthetic structures. The desire for events to be spontaneous, developments to be natural, and transitions to be unforced has come to shape many aspects of contemporary life. This organic component of postmodernity more than any other reveals its eclectic nature—that is, its distinctiveness from and dependence upon both modernity and its other antitheses. Visa's chaordic business model depends intensely on modern economics and technologies to allow for the natural development of equally cooperating and competing entities. Web news sites, blogs, and social networking services provide a reading experience which is hypertext-based and, therefore, mostly unstructured, by using a network backbone developed and maintained by purely modern scientific research and engineering.

Concord and Discord between Evangelicalism and Postmodernity

The only remaining consideration here is where and how postmodernity creates either inroads, roadblocks, or both for what ultimately must be the center of evangelical purpose, the Great Commission. Each of the four elements of postmodernity on which this essay has focused has its own influence on that relationship.

Mystery has an obvious benefit in light of the message of faith, but it has an equally obvious danger. Most interestingly, the benefit and danger are almost inseparable. If the pre-modern world is dominated by faith, modernity pursues knowledge to faith's exclusion. Subsequently, postmodernity's rejection of positivism (for example) in favor of mystery should lead right back to faith—and it does, as far as it goes. But unfortunately, the acceptance of faith as the willingness to embrace the mysterious or unknowable is hardly the faith of full commitment. It is instead the faith of irony—a faith which constantly, in fact by definition, doubts itself. In the postmodern case, faith is epistemological skepticism attached to a pragmatic commitment. (That is, it is "faith" because it cannot be known and because in that position of doubt there is still a willingness to commit, at

least in practical terms.) In short, that there could be mystery in opposition to pure metaphysical naturalism and sole dependence on human reason is a door to acknowledging supernaturalism (including the existence of God) and to taking the initial plunge of faith and commitment to Jesus. But the postmodern tendency can be not simply to acknowledge the possibility of mystery, but to assert, or at least embrace, its pervasiveness. But pervasive mystery is epistemologically equivalent to skepticism, although likely accompanied by a more socially acceptable demeanor. But Christianity seeks more than an agreeable demeanor; and mystery brings with it the risk of soul-detached profession and practice.

Community is probably the aspect of postmodernity most inviting to evangelical Christianity. Church as local congregation (or gathering, or community) is as fundamental to Christianity as *polis* is to Greek virtue. Baptism is "into" the church, the body of Christ, the community of faith. It is that community which grows into the full stature of Christ. It is indisputable that New Testament Christianity is found in the context of a pre-modern community; more specifically, a context where Jewish identity, religious practice, and eschatology are entirely based on belonging to a Jewish community. That reality should be, and often is, very appealing to the postmodern. The problem here is not in the doctrine of communitarianism, even though there is a substantial set of problems associated with it—most notably the stifling of free conscience and the absence of universal values. Instead, the problem here is in the inconsistency with which postmoderns often hold to the value of community, as mentioned above. The initial draw toward community cannot erase the reluctance of an individual to give up an identity distinct from that community. Another aspect of postmodernity, though, can help. The desire for authenticity (a value derived from existentialism, mentioned above) can lend itself to a genuine conversation about the disparity between pursuing community over individualism while running from its obligations. What is longed for but never or rarely found in postmodern life, and what is being threatened in modern life everywhere, is the community which is a real possibility to the believer who understands what it is to be part of a church—a community of faith.

Narrative brings an invitation to tell the story of God's people, the Messiah, and redemption. But the narrative of postmodernity is intensely personal, as mentioned above. Telling comparative stories in order to arrive inductively at a message is biblical; it is, as a matter of fact, exactly what the Bible does. To be direct, postmoderns value narrative, and the Scriptures are narrative. In this case, evangelicals can improve their communication with one adjustment (toward using more narrative) both by considering the audience and by considering the original form of the message. And despite the postmodern aversion to metanarrative mentioned above, every practicing evangelist (if not evangelical) knows that submission and conformity to the message only comes as a result of supernatural intervention anyway. But the job of communicating deliberately and effectively rests with the communicator, and so it is wise to turn toward narrative for the

reasons mentioned above. On the other hand, though, it is important that evangelicals remember the truths which are the point of biblical narrative, the kinds of truths listed by Paul in the opening verses of 1 Corinthians 15. Why? Because with the postmodern move toward narrative comes also a move away from clearly embracing propositional

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truth. Here evangelicals must simply remember that the two are not exclusive and do not need to be presented as such.

Organic structure poses a challenge for evangelicals. The truths of Christianity require vigilance, as every cautionary scripture about false teachers attests. But that vigilance requires authority and submission. One of two key evidences that teachers are not Christian is that they despise authority, as 2 Peter and Jude both declare. Organic structures grow naturally, from the bottom up, so to speak, and so find a natural home where authority is absent. A relatively inert example of this tendency (and, by the way, of postmodernity's growth) is when the participants in a Christian worship service are told that whether they sit or stand is up to them. Despite its individualistic sound, the effect is actually that there is an organic move in the congregation (or parts of the congregation) to remain seated, become silent, stand, raise hands, or whatever else the group in a section is doing. Again, the authenticity of self-motivated or group-motivated expression and growth is a point of connection between evangelicals and postmoderns. But the move away from the authority-submission relationship is simply untenable in terms of New Testament Christianity.

Two other ideas ought to be considered. First, there is much inconsistency in postmodernity. For example, the desire for community requires submission while the desire for organic structures rejects the same authority. But postmoderns can embrace such inconsistency as mystery. While evangelicals have a faith which is as consistent as any philosophical system and have spent the past century and a half refining that system of thought, the effort to convey that consistency is not going to be a point of connection with postmoderns. Presentations of rational apologetics and complex eschatologies to postmoderns thus fall on deaf ears. But, second, recognizing and using the vocabulary of postmoderns—for instance the vocabulary discussed throughout this essay—is not threatening to the doctrine of evangelicals and makes as much sense as learning the language of any people group being approached with the good news.

Evangelicals will do well to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of their own modern worldview as well as those of the postmodern worldview, which will never replace modernity, but will be standing within and against it as long as it endures.

POSTMODERNISM AND JEWISH EVANGELISM
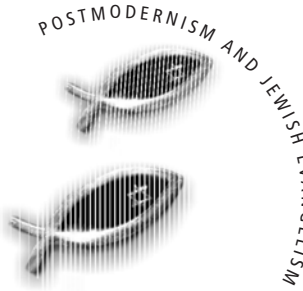
The Shaping of a Postmodern Messianic Community

Scott Nassau

Whether or not the Messianic community wants to acknowledge it, or is even aware of the cultural paradigm shift, the larger Jewish community is dramatically changing. Postmodernism is now the overarching lens through which the present culture views the world. The way in which Messianic Judaism interacted with the larger Jewish community in the previous generation will not continue to have the same impact in the present culture. The challenges the Messianic community faced in the last century will not be the same challenges it will face in the next century. Many are apprehensive of the challenges posed by the shift in the culture, but the characteristics of this culture may make this generation more receptive to the redemptive story of Yeshua than previous generations. Although postmodernity rejects traditional metanarratives, this generation is far more open to the spiritual aspects of the world than the previous generation. This paradigm shift to a postmodern culture significantly impacts theological dialogue, and Yeshua's narrative, in particular, presents unique ways in which the Messianic community can engage the culture with the hope of the King of Israel. The following paper will look at the climate of the postmodern Jewish community and how it may impact the shaping of the Messianic community in this generation.

Postmodernism and the Cultural Climate of the Jewish Community

Postmodern. The term can elicit either a strong reaction or a sense of ambivalence from those attempting to negotiate the shift in the cultural climate. Despite the uncertainty that surrounds postmodernism, it is impossible to overlook the cultural changes and the influence postmodernism has had upon the present culture. At its core, the term describes the "reaction against a naïve and earnest confidence in progress, and against confidence in objective or scientific truth."[1] Yet difficulty arises in an attempt to de-

1 Simon Blackburn, *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, 2nd ed. rev. (Oxford: Oxford University

fine the term, due to an application of the label to a number of disparate situations. Vincent Brook, who examines Jewish cultural engagement and interaction with postmodernism, describes the various applications of the term:

> Historically, it refers to a period in conflict with modernism's perceived attempts to fix meanings and locate truths; culturally, it is characterized by an ironic self-awareness and a penchant for pastiche; psychosocially, it suggests an ahistorical and hyperconsumerist consciousness; philosophically, it asserts the indeterminacy of meaning and the decenteredness of existence.[2]

Each of these applications, in some way or another, has helped shape the present Jewish community. Ultimately, in its more extreme expressions, postmodernism rejects the imposition of any universal truth and abandons all overarching metanarratives.[3]

The present postmodern culture may be best understood through the juxtaposition of postmodernity and modernity. Modernity arose in the wake of the Enlightenment (*Haskalah* in the Jewish world), in which society emphasized the importance of reason and science. Reason and science, in turn, relied heavily on both empirical evidence and the scientific method, consequently producing confidence in objective truth. The Enlightenment challenged traditional religious institutions and questioned long-held beliefs in God. While much can be said on this topic, it is important to note that modernity rejected traditional religious convictions; rational thought replaced faith in the supernatural.[4] Postmodernity, on the other hand, has certainly not fostered a return to traditional religious beliefs, but it has challenged the presuppositions of modernity. Modernity traditionally focuses upon materialism, the theory that material interactions explain all that exists, and on the assumption that everything can be known through science. Postmodernism is a reaction against this confidence; it is, by nature, skeptical of any assertion about absolute truth.[5] While there may be some continuity between the two philosophies, the shift from modernity

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Press, 2008), 283.

2 Vincent Brook, ed., *You Should See Yourself: Jewish Identity in Postmodern Culture* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University 2006), 6–7.

3 Jean-François Lyotard (*The Postmodern Condition*: *A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, Theory and History of Literature, vol. 10 [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1984], xxiv) presents postmodernism as "incredulity toward metanarratives." Lyotard's philosophy was heavily influenced by the concept of "language-games" proposed by Ludwig Wittgenstein, of Jewish descent, who describes the multiplicity of "language-games" and the means by which children learn their native language. See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations: The German Text, with a Revised English Translation*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 4.

4 Dorinda Outram, *The Enlightenment: New Approaches to European History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 31–46.

5 See Stephen Kepnes, Peter Ochs, and Robert Gibbs, eds., *Reasoning after Revelation: Dialogues in Postmodern Jewish Philosophy* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), 11.

to postmodernity is drastic and has significant implications for religious conversation.

The purpose of this article is not to simply analyze postmodern culture, but to look specifically at the characteristics of the postmodern Jewish community.[6] "What may be the most defining characteristic of postmodern American Jewish culture and identity is the increasing inability, yet persistent necessity, to define it."[7] Adding to this difficulty is the fact that many within the present Jewish community possess fractured and fragmented identities.[8] The Jewish people are now entering a unique period in history. Ethnicity, religion, and family no longer determine identity.[9] Yehudit Greenberg postulates that, in order for the Jewish community to survive in the postmodern world, the Jewish people can no longer passively view themselves as "the Chosen People" but must actively choose to affirm their Jewish identity.[10] "Jewish identity should evolve into a conscious willingness to belong to the Jewish people."[11]

The unaffiliated constitute a growing percentage of the Jewish community. Assimilation and intermarriage have left the postmodern generation ambivalent, with only a vague connection to Jewish life.[12] This generation is searching, looking for ways to connect to their Jewish heritage. Lisa Schiffman captures this search for identity and longing within the postmodern Jewish soul:

> I'm not alone. I'm part of a generation of fragmented Jews. We're in a kind of limbo. We're suspended between young adulthood and middle age, between Judaism and atheism, between a desire to believe in a religion and a personal history of skepticism. Call us a bunch of searchers. Call us post-Holocaust Jews. Call us Generation J. Wayfinders, each of us. You'll see us everywhere: Jews in search of a perfect clarity.[13]

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6 If interested in the characteristics and development of a postmodern Jewish philosophy, see Eugene B. Borowitz, *Renewing the Covenant: A Theology for the Postmodern Jew* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), and the evaluation of his work in *Reviewing the Covenant: Eugene B. Borowitz and the Postmodern Renewal of Jewish Theology*, ed. Peter Ochs (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000).

7 Brook, 6.

8 Ibid., 2.

9 Charles Selengut, "Introduction: The Dilemmas of Postmodern Judaism," in *Jewish Identity in the Postmodern Age: Scholarly and Personal Reflections*, ed. Charles Selengut (St. Paul, MN: Paragon House 1999), 1–2.

10 Yehudit Kornberg Greenberg, "The Choosing, not the Chosen People," in *Jewish Identity in the Postmodern Age: Scholarly and Personal Reflections*, ed. Charles Selengut (St. Paul, MN: Paragon House 1999), 15–19.

11 Ibid., 17.

12 See Alan M. Dershowitz, *The Vanishing American Jew: In Search for Jewish Identity for the Next Century* (New York: Touchstone, 1997).

13 Lisa Schiffman, *Generation J* (San Francisco: Harper, 1999), 11.

Messianic Engagement with the Larger Jewish Community

Can the Messianic community answer the longing deep within the post-modern Jewish soul? The move into a postmodern world has significant ramifications for creating meaningful dialogue within the larger Jewish community. Due to the ubiquitous shift from modernity to postmodernity, Messianic Judaism must rethink the way in which it communicates within the broader Jewish community. If postmodernism is the rejection of any universal truth and the abandonment of an overarching metanarrative, then appealing to the "Truth" or "proving" the reliability of the Messianic faith will not have much resonance within this culture. David Dockery describes how, even though the postmodern generation still longs for God, the questions they ask when searching for spiritual meaning differ from the questions asked by previous generations.[14] Modernity rebelled against the traditional religious institutions and embraced atheism, but postmodernity has advocated a spiritual pluralism. Therefore, if Messianic Judaism wants to effectively engage the postmodern community with the story of Yeshua, the God of Israel, then it must actively seek to answer the longing within the postmodern Jewish soul.

Unfortunately, the traditional approach employed by the Messianic community does not adequately answer these questions. Essentially, Messianic Judaism has attempted to respond to, as Mark Kinzer calls it, "the apparent Jewish no to Yeshua."[15] The Messianic community has faced the charge that worship of Yeshua as God is more objectionable than idolatry and that belief in the Incarnation is simply adopted from pagan religions.[16] Obviously, the Messianic community has felt the need to defend itself against claims of idolatry and syncretism. Therefore, in order to defend the faith and provide a reasonable response to the larger Jewish community, Messianic Judaism and Jewish missions have traditionally emphasized the use of apologetics when discussing the deity of Messiah.[17] Contrary to popular opinion, in a postmodern culture where experience determines reality,

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14 David S. Dockery, ed., *Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 9.

15 Mark S. Kinzer, *Post-Missionary Messianic Judaism: Redefining Christian Engagement with the Jewish People* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2005), 213. In this chapter, Kinzer presents Yeshua as the "representative and individual embodiment of the people of Israel," which provides a helpful discussion in regards to communicating the story of Yeshua, the Messiah of Israel, within the Jewish community.

16 For an example of these allegations see Aryeh Kaplan, *The Real Messiah? A Jewish Response to Missionaries* (New York: NCSY Orthodox Union, 1976), 17. Kaplan also argues that the "Jewish Messiah is truly human in origin. He is born of ordinary human parents, and is of flesh and blood like all mortals" (27). He then states, "Although the Messiah may achieve the upper limit of human perfection, he is still human. The kingdom of the Jewish Messiah is definitely 'of this world'" (29).

17 The term apologetics derives from the Greek word απολογια (*apologia*), which is a legal term referring to a speech of defense or the act of making a defense; see Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 2nd ed., ed. William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, and Frederick W. Danker (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), s.v. "απολογια."

apologetics rarely produces *empirical evidence that demands a verdict*. This does not mean that apologetics has outlived its usefulness; rather, it cannot ultimately demonstrate the meaning and significance this postmodern generation craves. For a postmodern community, engagement in religious debates does not produce a compelling argument: "too often, religion and religious arguments feel coercive—you have to think my way."[18]

> **Contrary to popular opinion, in a postmodern culture where experience determines reality, apologetics rarely produces *empirical evidence that demands a verdict*.**

Even if the Messianic community wins the intellectual argument and proves Yeshua is the Messiah of Israel, it will not create any resonance within the postmodern Jewish community unless it demonstrates the existential significance of Yeshua as the Messiah of Israel. In a postmodern world, where truth is relative, proving "truth" has very little impact in the spiritual realm. According to Stephen Kepnes, postmodern thinking "seeks no universal, all-encompassing system or story. It is content with particular stories; it celebrates the multiplicity of local stories of truth without trying to reduce them all to the one, the universal."[19] Therefore, reliance upon an apologetic that seeks to prove the intellectual integrity of faith will not produce a compelling claim in a postmodern context. This generation is not concerned with knowing "truth," but with discovering existential reality. An apologetic defense for Yeshua's reign over Israel is not sufficient; Messianic Judaism must demonstrate why Yeshua, the Jewish Messiah, produces a meaningful framework for Jewish life. While this may challenge many preconceptions prevalent within the Messianic community, it is not some radical new paradigm. Rather it is a call to return to the early Jewish *ecclesia*, to the way the body of Messiah operated prior to the expansion of Christendom during the reign of Constantine.[20] (To clarify, this paper is not advocating for a pluralistic approach or arguing for the deconstruction of truth.)

The Shaping of a Postmodern Messianic Community

Yesterday, while walking through the neighborhood with my son, I noticed a number of flyers advertising a beginner's *minyan*. The flyers intrigued me so I stopped for a moment to read one near the crosswalk. We live within

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18 Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson, "I Will Be Who I Will Be: A God of Dynamic Becoming," in *Jewish Theology in Our Time: A New Generation Explores the Foundations and Future of Jewish Belief*, ed. Rabbi Elliot J. Cosgrove (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing Woodstock, 2010), 3.

19 Stephen Kepnes in *Reasoning after Revelation*, 11.

20 The early Messianic community relied upon a more Hebraic worldview, but later generations introduced Greek dualist thought into the Yeshua community. For an excellent discussion on the formation of the Messianic community in a post-Christendom society, see the seminal work by Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st-Century Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003).

a predominately Jewish community, so it is common to find flyers plastered around our community advertising various events at local synagogues. Yet these particular invitations caught my attention, because they are attempting to engage that growing, and often overlooked, segment of the Jewish community: the unaffiliated. They do not appeal to the secular aspect of postmodern culture, but to the longing for the spiritual, the need to connect to the ancient Jewish community.

These leaflets challenge the Messianic community to deliberately consider how to shape a postmodern Messianic community. At the forefront of this conversation is the need to create an authentic and compelling Jewish community. Certainly, a yearning for belonging and community shapes and defines the postmodern generation. Postmodernity has rejected exclusivism and embraced inclusivism, making pluralism and diversity virtues in the present culture. These values have caused society to embrace and seek community. When society seeks community, it actually expresses a desire for the God of community.[21] In His very nature, God is self-sufficient and a perfect expression of love and community; therefore, God's nature demonstrates the balance between plurality and unity, providing an example for the pursuit of a postmodern society.

In a search for belonging, the Messianic community faces the tendency to reduce the discussion to external forms in an attempt to discover the appropriate level of liturgical expression. While the invitations for the beginner's *minyan* illustrate the longing within postmodern culture for an ancient faith, Messianic Judaism must not forsake the intangible aspect of community.[22] Ten years ago, Rabbi Sidney Schwarz set out to discover the essential elements in the creation of a vibrant Jewish community.[23] He presents various case studies from four different synagogues, representing the four major segments of American Judaism. He discovers that even though the four synagogues represent four very distinct Jewish movements, they all share a number of common elements and represent communities where Jewish people "feel at home."[24] Thus, Schwarz recognizes the need for belonging and the intangible nature of creating compelling Jewish communities. Yet simple community is not sufficient; the postmodern Jewish community craves a community with a shared spiritual conviction. Michael Frost and Alan Hirsh discuss an important model for an incarnational community when they differentiate between "bounded set" and "centered

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21 At the heart of the relationship in the Godhead is the *perichoresis*, which is the mutual indwelling of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. The *perichoresis* is the "real objective onto-relations in the eternal movement of Love in the Communion of the Holy Trinity as they have been disclosed to us in the incarnate economy of God's revealing and saving acts" of Yeshua, the Messiah, and His Spirit (F. Torrence Thomas, *The Christian Doctrine of God, One Being Three Persons* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996], 194).

22 In saying this, I do not want to invalidate the importance of incorporating ancient Jewish traditions into our spiritual lives. If we are going to create an authentic Jewish community, we cannot go out and develop new forms, which are completely foreign to the broader Jewish community.

23 Sidney Schwarz, *Finding a Spiritual Home: How a New Generation of Jews Can Transform the American Synagogue* (San Francisco: Josey-Bass, 2000).

24 Ibid., 268.

set" communities. "This means that rather than drawing a border to determine who belongs and who doesn't, a centered set is defined by its core values, and people are not seen as in or out, but as closer or further away from the center."[25] Akivah Cohen cites Hiebert's model of the "centered-set" when he shows how "we cannot compartmentalize the communication of a *belief* apart from connection with a *community*."[26]

The Significance of Yeshua's Redemptive Narrative

The rejection of any overarching metanarrative and the abandonment of universal truth have left postmodern society void of a sense of meaning and purpose. The postmodern Jewish community lacks a "coherent vision of why their lives are ultimately significant."[27] This longing for meaning and significance is where the redeeming narrative of Yeshua, the Messiah of Israel, can specifically resonate. Rather than feeling ashamed over its adoption of this narrative, Messianic Judaism can present Yeshua, the King of Israel, as the unique person who provides significance for postmodern Jewish life.

Incarnation: The Shekinah
The Incarnation provides humanity with the greatest picture of God; it allows God's people to come to know God through Yeshua.[28] "The Word became flesh and made *his dwelling* among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14, emphasis added).[29] The Incarnation became the most significant expression of the *Shekinah*, which is literally "the dwelling" or "presence" of God with Israel, "the divine manifestation in the community's life, or the sense of divine immanence within the world."[30] This occurred when the glory of God filled the tabernacle (Exod 40:34). The Targum describes the presence of God in the midst of Israel as the *Shekinah* dwelling among them (*Tg. Onq.* Exod 25:8). The Incarnation provides the culmination of how God came down to reveal Himself and to dwell among His people. The Incarnation allowed God to enter into community with His people. "No one has ever seen God, but God the One and *Only*, who is at the Father's side, has made him known" (John 1:18, emphasis added).

The Existential Importance of the Resurrection
Yet for a postmodern community, a presentation of the narrative of the Messiah as propositional truth does not create the existential vitality needed to produce significance for Jewish life. The message must be more

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25 Frost and Hirsch, 47.
26 Akivah Cohen, "Communicating the Deity of Yeshua to Postmodern Jews" (paper presented at Borough Park Symposium, April 2010), 8.
27 Ibid., 13.
28 Frost and Hirsch, 88.
29 All Scripture references are taken from the NIV (1984).
30 *Jewish Study Bible*, 2139.

substantial than presenting the community with a "get out of hell free" card. Instead, God's people need to discover the existential aspect of Yeshua's life that will infuse Jewish life with meaning. When Rabbi Sha'ul describes Yeshua as the "image of the invisible God," he gives Him the moniker "firstborn from among the dead" (Col 1:15, 18). Not only does the resurrection authenticate Jesus' deity, it also validates our hope in the future resurrection. In his great treatise on the resurrection, Sha'ul proclaims, "[Messiah] has indeed been raised from the dead, the *firstfruits* of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor 15:20, emphasis added). For Sha'ul, the resurrection represents the greatest demonstration of Yeshua's deity; it validates His divine nature. Through the resurrection, Yeshua conquered death and inaugurated His reign over all creation as the divine King of Israel, the preeminent Son of David (1 Cor 15:23–28).[31] When Thomas tangibly grasped the evidence of Yeshua's resurrection, he declared, "My Lord and My God" (John 20:28). The resurrection is not simply a historical reality, but provides the existential significance for Jewish life today.

But if the Messianic community presents the resurrection without its implications for contemporary life, the message lacks the necessary power. Sha'ul explains this significance when he says that we who have been buried with Him in His death shall also rise with Him in His resurrection to "new life" (Rom 6:3–9). The resurrection provides the power for a transformed life, the existential reality longed for in a postmodern world. Thus, the presentation of Yeshua's narrative must include the hope of resurrection into a new life, not simply the eschatological hope to get to heaven and avoid hell. To borrow from Kierkegaard, the Messianic community needs to employ "existence-communication," which means it is not attempting to convey knowledge but an inward authentic relationship with God.[32] The resurrection enables the indwelling of the Spirit, which means the *Shekinah* comes down and infuses the Messianic community with the transformed life (1 Cor 3:16–17). Transformed lives present the existential reality of Messiah's presence in His community, as letters from Messiah written by the Spirit of God (2 Cor 3:2–3). While some may misunderstand this argument, it is not attempting to diminish the importance

> **Thus, the presentation of Yeshua's narrative must include the hope of resurrection into a new life, not simply the eschatological hope to get to heaven and avoid hell.**

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31 Elsewhere Rabbi Sha'ul says that following Yeshua's death, the Father exalted Him so that every nation shall worship Him and acknowledge His reign over all the earth (Phil 2:9–11). In this passage, Sha'ul alludes to Isaiah 45, which affirms the uniqueness of the God of Israel as the only divine being (v. 23). Every day the Jewish community quotes Isaiah during the *Aleinu*, which acknowledges God's sovereignty over Israel and the hope that all nations will accept Him as the *Only God*. See *The Complete Artscroll Siddur: A New Translation and Anthologized Commentary*, ed. Rabbi Nosson Scherman (Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 1990), 158–59. Thus the resurrection validates Yeshua as the God of Israel, the King of all Creation.

32 Sylvia Walsh, *Kierkegaard: Thinking Christianly in an Existential Mode* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

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of propositional truth. Rather, in a postmodern world, a schism cannot exist between the message and the reality of the messenger's life if the Messianic community wants to have much resonance within the larger Jewish community. Like the man who was born blind, followers of Yeshua should be able to declare, "One thing I do know. I was blind

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but now I see!" (John 9:25). He did not need to present any theological treatise about Yeshua's narrative; he simply described the transformation he experienced through Yeshua.

If it is not yet entirely evident, this paper is not advocating one particular methodology as the means to reach the postmodern community. Quite the opposite, the present generation yearns for authenticity; attempting to shape a public persona in order to make the narrative of Yeshua more relevant to the larger Jewish community will only alienate the postmodern generation from Messianic Judaism. It is precisely the redemptive narrative of Yeshua that this generation craves. His story is not simply historically true, but existentially real. The Messianic community cannot overlook the transformational power of the resurrection, a power available only through the narrative of Yeshua (2 Cor 5:17). This power provides the existential reality to show that God is presently alive in His people. Sha'ul was not ashamed of His message, before both Jew and Gentile, because God's redemptive power is only available through Yeshua. He argues against using human wisdom as a way of convincing others that Yeshua is the Messiah because, through the indwelling of God's Spirit, God was powerfully at work through his life (1 Cor 1:17–2:5). Sha'ul's approach resonates in a postmodern world. He did not need to win the intellectual argument, although he could because he had access to the only real metanarrative; rather, the transforming power of the Spirit within his life was his message. He was not ashamed of Yeshua's redemptive narrative, because he knew God was vibrantly at work in his life.

Allow me to conclude with one last story. When Peter and John healed the man who was lame from birth as they entered the temple precinct, a large crowd gathered to hear about what had occurred (Acts 3). The Sanhedrin arrested Peter and John because they were annoyed by their declaration about the resurrection from the dead (4:1–2). Even though the Sanhedrin objected to their message, they could not dispute the evidence of the man healed beside them and recognized that the disciples had been with Yeshua (4:13). Our community may not accept our message, but the evidence of the *Shekinah* within our lives needs to provide existential evidence that Yeshua has transformed us and given us a narrative to share.

St. Thomas Knanaya Christians of India and the Jews of Malabar

– A Premodern Model for Postmodern Dialogue and Evangelism

POSTMODERNISM AND JEWISH EVANGELISM

by **Rajkumar Boaz Johnson**

My visits to India over the last several years have brought me into contact with hundreds of Israelis who seek to escape from the horrors and sadness of war into a new world. The sadness of war reminds them of modernity. The escape to India takes them into a postmodernity of sorts. They seek to escape the reality of war, and what it means to be an Israeli, to a world which they can form on their own. When I encountered them on the streets of New Delhi or Goa, they did not want to talk about the messianic prophecies in the book of Isaiah or Jeremiah. These were not the texts that shaped their identity. Those texts may have shaped the identity of the modern ultra-Orthodox and the Orthodox, but not theirs. Their identity was shaped by the hard realities of what it means to be a Jewish nation in the Middle East today. These young travelers do not want to be shaped by the modern State of Israel. That is a modern metanarrative. They are in search of a postmodern narrative that will enable them to escape the ravages of war and the metanarrative of modern Israel. The same is true of Jewish students I encounter on the campuses of Western universities. They are not shaped by the Torah. They are not even shaped by the modern varieties of Judaism—Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, or Reconstructionist. These remind them of modern determinism. They do not want to be shaped by the metanarratives of modern Judaism. Instead, they are in search of a postmodern Jewish identity. Both Israeli young people and Western, Jewish young people are seeking postmodern narratives which will define them. These narratives cannot be shaped by the modernistic interpretations of the Jewish texts by modern varieties of Judaism, they opine.

Jewish evangelism among a group of people who are seeking to escape all forms of traditionalism and modernity, it seems to me, is quite different from evangelism among a group of people who are bathed in the text of the Torah and the Prophets.

How may we reach out to the postmodern Jew from Tel Aviv or the West? These are Jewish people who are interacting with postmodern varieties of Eastern religions and people in very existential ways. In the process, they

are seeking to find their own identity. The question which we must ask ourselves is, *How may we communicate with this postmodern generation?* Modern theologies and methodologies, it seems clear, will not work.

It is the thesis of this article that part of the answer may be found in the history of the intersection between ancient Jewish communities and ancient Christian communities, when these communities were minorities within a majority community. In that case, the majority community formed the "modern" metanarrative. Yet these Jewish and Christian communities framed their own narratives which were counter to the majority community metanarrative. In the process they were able to communicate with each other, and so form messianic communities which encountered each other in deep and phenomenological ways. I suggest that the historical interaction between these communities can teach us some lessons regarding how two minority communities—evangelical Christian and Jewish—can interact with each other in our postmodern times. My sense is that we can learn something regarding Jewish evangelism from these ancient communities and apply it to our postmodern age.

I want to narrow the focus of my study to the interaction between two communities in a southern state of India called Kerala. In this state, there has been a historical presence of a Jewish community called the Cochin or Malabari Jews, and a Christian community called the St. Thomas Knanaya Christians. The interaction between the two communities was such that it reshaped the two communities: the Jews of this area were so taken up with the gospel of Jesus that they translated the New Testament into the kind of Hebrew they knew, and the Knanaya Christians reshaped their liturgy, rituals, and stories to bring them into keeping with the biblical narrative. In the process, both the Cochin Jews of this area and the Knanaya Christians became messianic communities—distinct in race, yet similar in their messianic identity. The appropriations of the Knanaya Christians from the Cochin Jewish community were based on their interpretation of whether a certain liturgy or practice was in line with their reading (*Qeryane*) of the Old Testament or not.

May I suggest that the substantial and intrinsic dialogue between the Knanaya Christians and the Cochin Jews is a very good model of dialogue between Christians and Jews in the modern era? In many senses, the "parting of the ways" model, which has been the pattern of much theological discussion in Jewish-Christian dialogue, has done more harm than good to theological discourse. In contrast to this, the St. Thomas Christian community and the Malabari Jewish community have shown that meaningful and deep essential dialogue can positively shape the two communities to become messianic communities. I must concede that this is perhaps because both were minority communities, and they had to lean on each other's shoulders.

This leads me to a larger corollary, which I hope will become the topic of a book length project. I would like to explore the Jewish-Christian relationship as minority communities in the context of their interaction with majority communities—whether these are Muslim, Buddhist, or even secular

communities. My hypothesis, based on my research in the Malabar area, is that biblical and theological scholarship does not need to stress the "parting of the ways" *a la* scholars like James Dunn and Lawrence Schiffman,[1] but rather the creative and dialogical re-imagination of the ways. This is what is seen in the dialogical encounter between the Malabari Knanaya Christians and Jews. It results in two distinct, yet similar, messianic communities. I suspect that this is what I will find in my projected research among Christian and Jewish communities, when they are both minority communities. It may already be shown that a creative interaction between Jewish and Christian communities has led into crisis points and emergence out of crisis points—the Reformation is a good example of this. It was the interaction of Christian thinkers with medieval Jewish rabbis like Rashi and Radak that led to the resurgence of interest in biblical exegesis. Of course, the young Luther's love relationship with the rabbis, and the old Luther's hate relationship with the rabbis, is well researched. My larger hypothesis is that much can be learned from Jewish-Christian encounters when both are minority groups in the midst of hostile majority cultures and civilizations. These provide good models of evangelism in our postmodern age.

My approach to this study is a phenomenological approach to the encounter between the St. Thomas Christian community and the Malabari Jewish community. I am seeking to follow in the tradition of the great phenomenologists of religion like Mircea Eliade, Ninian Smart, Gerardus van der Leew, etc. I examine the narrative dimension, the philosophical dimension, the textual dimension—the use of the text, the ritual dimension, the ethical dimension, the experiential dimension, and the social dimension of the St. Thomas Christians, how they understood their identity in creative encounters with the Malabari or Cochin Jewish community, and how this resulted in the emergence of new messianic communities.

The Malabari Jewish and Knanaya Christian Phenomenological Encounters with the Hebrew Bible[2]

1. The Malabari Jews influence the identity formation of the Knanaya Christians: The stories of the biblical patriarchs are actualized and become the messianic models for both communities.

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1 James J. D. Dunn, *The Parting of the Ways between Christianity and Judaism and Their Significance for the Character of Christianity* (London: SCM, 1991); Lawrence Schiffman, "At the Crossroads: Tanaaitic Perspectives on the Jewish-Christian Schism," in *Jewish and Christian Self-definition*, *vol. 2: Aspects of Judaism in the Graeco-Roman Period*, ed. E. P. Sanders (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 155–56.

2 I develop much of the following discussion on the basis of a significant amount of historical material. The most significant sources are as follows: 1) the earliest record of the St. Thomas tradition, *Acts of Judas Thomas*, written in Syriac in the Edessan circle, third century A.D. (Paul Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum Syriace* [Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1892], 3:1–175), English translation by A. J. F. Klijn (Hildesheim: Olms, 1968); 2) Clement of Alexandria, *Doctrine of the Apostles* (Syriac); 3) *Rabban Songs; Rabban Pattu* by Maliekiel Thomas Rabban (*ca.* A.D. 1200); *Margam kali Pattu* "Song of the Way." (E. R. Hambye, "Saint Thomas and India," *The Clergy Monthly* 16 [1952]); 4) Portuguese sources: Amador Correa, Francisco Dyonisio (1578); Manuel Gomes, 1517, encounters the Tomb of

There is a growing understanding among scholars that the encounter between the Cochin Jews and the St. Thomas Christians resulted in identical messianic stories of origins. The Cochin Jews are regarded by St. Thomas Christians as precursors to their Christianity. Both have traditions which link the biblical narrative to India, e.g., stories in both communities mention that as early as the tenth century B.C., King Solomon traded in spices, precious gems, etc. "Ophir," or the land of gold of the Hebrew text of 1 Kings 9:28, is the capital of the Indian kingdom of Aparanta which was on the west coast of India. It stretched all the way from Bombay to the state of Kerala. Jewish people lived in this stretch of land. Other traditions link *Tarshish* to the Indian city Tharisa in the present state of Kerala, near Quilon. First Kings 10:22 says, "For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks."[3] Other traditions among the Jews and St. Thomas Christians of Malabar suggest that the word for apes in Hebrew (*qoph*) is an early Dravidian loan word. Similarly, they suggest that the word for peacock (*tukkiyyim*) is also a Dravidian loan word.[4]

Another significant common tradition between the Malabari Jews and the St. Thomas Christians is the tradition of the copper plates. The Malabari Jews have in their possession copper plates which were given to them by Bhaskara Ravi Varma, whose title was Cheraman Perumal. According to Malabari Jewish traditions, these copper plates were given to Joseph Rabban, the leader of the immigrant Jewish community in the fourth century. The text of the inscription is in ancient Pre-Aryan, Dravidian language in the Vatteluttu script. It reads:

> Greetings! Prosperity! Gift was made by him who assumed the title "king of kings," his majesty the king, the glorious Bhaskara Ravivarman . . . we have given to Issuppu Irappan Anjuvanna, together with seventy-two proprietary rights.[5]

Stephen Neill, in his monumental *A History of Christianity in India*, notes very similar origin stories of the St. Thomas Christians. He writes,

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Thomas at Mylapur; 5) Gantz brothers, *The Land of the Perumals, or Cochin, Its Past and Present, 1863.* Mention is made of two kinds of people in the Malabar area: one, *Nasrani Mapillas*, or Jewish Christians, and two, *Yuda Mapillas*, Jewish. The term *mapilla* refers to Semitic people in the Dravidian language; and 6) W. J. Richards (*The Indian Christians of St. Thomas: Otherwise Called the Syrian Christians of Malabar: A Sketch of Their History and an Account of Their Present Condition as well as a Discussion of the Legend of St. Thomas* [London: Bemrose, 1908]) observes remnants of Saturday worship in some Nasrani communities. Documents of this kind suggest that the Nasrani, Malabar Jewish Christians, followed a lot of Jewish rituals and customs till the Portuguese conquest in the sixteenth century A.D.

3 All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version unless noted otherwise.

4 L. M. Zaleski, *The Apostle Thomas in India: History, Tradition and Legends* (Mangalore, 1912); Thomas Puthiakunnel, "The Jewish Colonies Paved the Way for St. Thomas," in *St. Thomas Christian Encyclopaedia*, ed. George Menachery (Trichur, 1973), 2:26–27.

5 Walter J. Fischel, "The Exploration of the Jewish Antiquities of Cochin on the Malabar Coast," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 87 no. 3 (1967): 231.

> In one of the copper plates, now in the possession of the Syrian [St. Thomas Christians] of Kerala, a king whose name is given as Vira-raghava Chakkravarti conveyed to one Iravi-Korttan otherwise known as Ceramanloka-pperum-jetti (the great merchant of the world ruled over by the Chera king), the title of Manigramam, together with a number of privileges.[6]

Common traditions of this kind, especially in matters related to their origin and identity, suggest a close relationship between the Malabari Jews and the St. Thomas Christians. First, both of the communities seek to represent that their identity formation is intrinsically linked to the biblical story of Jacob and Joseph. Both are communities settled in this "foreign land." Second, the theme of prosperity in a foreign land is underlined in this formative story. This is obviously a theme of prosperity which is seen in the settlement of Jacob and his sons in Egypt. Third, the number "seventy-two" is associated with both of the communities, just as in the Jacob and Joseph narratives (Gen 46:27; Exod 1:5). Fourth, it may be noted that the number "seventy" is a missiological term both in rabbinic thought and in Christian thought (Gen 10; Luke 10:1, 17). It connotes a number of completion and the seventy nations that represent the whole world. Therefore, in both Knanaya Christian and Malabari Jewish thought, it may well connote a missiological calling to reach out to the nations of the world. Both communities obviously seem to be portrayed as messianic communities with a task to reach out to the people among whom they dwell.

2. Malabari Jews influence sociological change: Knanaya Christians define their self-identity in terms of justice, as distinct from both Brahmin Hinduism and Christianity.

The identity of the St. Thomas Christians revolves around stories which portray them as the new Israel. The St. Thomas Christians divide themselves into two categories: the Northists and the Southists. In Malayalam, the language of the St. Thomas Christians, they are called the Tekkumbhagar and the Vadakumbhagar. According to the tradition of these two communities, a group of seventy families came into Malabar from the Middle East, led by Rabbi Joseph and a merchant known as Thomas of Cana (Knayi Thoma). In grounding their legends in Cana of Galilee, the St. Thomas Christians seek to ground their identity in the miracle of Cana. This, as we shall see later, becomes an essential part of their liturgy.

In their stories, they seek to appropriate the biblical narrative of the Hebrew patriarchs. For example, Thomas Keay retells a story in which Thomas of Cana had two wives, one from the Middle East and the other from an Indian Nayar family. The Southists, who are also known as the Knanaya, claim

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that they are the descendants of the woman of Cana who came along with Thomas of Cana. The Northists, therefore, claim to be of higher caste, while the Knanaya community claim to be of pure Jewish descent. This, in effect, identifies the Knanaya community with the lower caste *Shudra* society of India. The Northist, high caste, St. Thomas Christians call the wife of Thomas who produced the Southists a *dhobi*, i.e., a low caste woman. This is an attempt on the part of the Northists to portray themselves to be closer to the Hindu pure Brahmin caste. The Northists have, as a result of this, had a good relationship with high caste Hindu rulers, while the Knanaya Christians have been considered to be of lower caste.

These stories make it clear that the Southist Knanaya Christians seek to establish intrinsic ties with the Malabari Jews. It is interesting to note that these stories seem remarkably similar to the biblical narratives. Two examples of "two-son" narratives in the biblical text, in which the younger son is exalted, are those of Cain/Abel and Isaac/Ishmael. In the story of Cain and Abel, the older son is unjust to the younger son and kills him. God Himself posthumously lifts up the image of the younger son.[7] Similarly, Abraham has two sons, Ishmael and Isaac. In that narrative, Ishmael, the son of Hagar, scoffs at the younger son, Isaac.[8] In yet another patriarchal story, Jacob's ten older sons sell the younger son Joseph into slavery.[9] Jesus' story of the two sons follows this series of two-son Old Testament stories. The older son demeans the younger son, while the father himself lifts up the image of the younger son.[10] The St. Thomas Christians, it seems, quite clearly seek to actualize the stories of the Bible.

It further seems clear that the Knanaya community seeks to side with the lower castes of India and elevate their status. According to scholars of Indian history, the Aryans came into India *ca.* 1500 B.C. They took over the political, religious, and economic control of society. They formed the upper castes of India—the *Brahmans*, the priestly caste; the *Kshatriya*, or the ruler caste; and the *Vyashiyas*, or the business caste. These three form the upper caste structure of India to this day. These three castes have historically formed about 9 percent of the population of India. The low caste, the *Shudras*, have formed approximately 52 percent of the population of India. The rest of the population has been divided between the aboriginal tribes, the *Dalits*, and other religions. In their formation traditions, it seems clear that the St. Thomas Christians have sided with the low castes and the *Dalit* (outcaste) people groups. In actualizing the biblical narrative and making it their own, the Knanaya Christians elevate the status of the low castes and outcastes.

In actualizing the biblical narrative and making it their own, the Knanaya Christians elevate the status of the low castes and outcastes.

7 Genesis 4.
8 Genesis 21:9.
9 Genesis 37.
10 Luke 15.

A cursory look at the history and composition of the church in India makes it clear that it mirrors the sociological makeup of society in India. Indian society is 12 percent high caste; 52 percent low caste or *Shudra*; and 36 percent outcaste and tribal. Unfortunately, while 88 percent of the society is low caste, outcaste, or tribal, the leadership always comes from the higher castes. It is sadly true that this is also true of the Indian church. While 80 percent of the composition of the church is low caste, outcaste, and tribal, the leadership of the church has historically always come from the higher castes of society. The Knanaya Christians, as a result of their relationship with the Malabari Jews, reverse this injustice. They actualize the stories of the Bible and align themselves with the disgraced population.

3. Rituals of the Malabari Jews and the St. Thomas Christians actualize the messianic vision of the Hebrew Bible.

In their rituals, the Southists, or Knanaya Christians, seek to establish intrinsic encounters with the Malabari Jews.

• Rites of passage
Gouvea, a Portuguese traveler, described the Knanaya Christians of Malabar as people "who were allowed to wear the hair of their head tied with a golden flower." This seems to be quite similar to the Cochin Jews' custom of having long uncut sideburns. The Knanaya Christians appropriated this ceremony. In doing so they appropriated the Old Testament injunction of the Nazarite vow (Num 6:5–19). Among the Knanaya, this is a vow of messianic witness.

• Funeral rite
When a person dies, in the Knanaya Christian tradition, there is a mourning period of forty days. This was a Malabari Jewish practice, as well. It is, more significantly, based on the Old Testament practice that is seen, for example, in the burial ceremony of Jacob, the patriarch of Israel (Gen 50:3). The ceremony ends with performing the *kaiyyamuthu*, or the "kiss of hand" of the priest. This is reflective of the Knanaya Christian actualization of the Old Testament. The "kissing of the hand" of the priest links them back through several generations to the biblical patriarchs.

One of the most significant blessings of the children by parents and grandparents is a death-bed ceremony:

> God gave his blessing to Abraham,
> Abraham gave that blessing to Isaac,
> Isaac gave that blessing to my forefathers,
> My forefathers gave that blessing to my parents,
> And my parents gave that blessing to me.
> Now, dear son (daughter), I give that blessing to you.

Obviously, the Knanaya community and the Malabari Jewish community both see themselves as fulfilling the messianic vision of the Bible. This is an actualization of the patriarchal practice of the handing over of the messianic baton, as is seen in biblical narratives like Genesis 27—the blessing of Isaac and Esau.

• Wedding rite

Another ceremony worth noting is the wedding ceremony. There are many significant parallels between the Knanaya rites and the Malabari Jewish rites, which have messianic elements. Before the wedding ceremony, both the Knanaya bride and groom have to undergo a special rite of bathing. This is obviously derived from the Malabari Jewish *mikvah*. The lighting of a lamp precedes the wedding ceremony. The connotation here is quite clear—the wedding ceremony is an actualization of the messianic light.

In both of the ceremonies, the bride and the groom sit under a *chuppah*-like canopy. The bride is given a gold cross; the necklace is made of thread that is taken from the wedding prayer shawl called the *tali*. This is in contrast to other Indian ceremonies, where the father of the bride has to pay a large sum of money (dowry) to the bridegroom's family, practiced even among other St. Thomas Christian families. In the case of the Knanaya, the father of the bride is given a good amount of money, and the bridesmaids sing songs from the Song of Songs and other wedding texts of the Old Testament.

During the ceremony, the bride and groom are given a special drink made of coconut milk and certain plums. This is obviously an "Indianization" of the Jewish tradition of the cup of wine, the *Kiddush*, which sanctifies the wedding ceremony.[11]

The wedding ceremony in both communities is a re-enactment of the messianic wedding between God and the messianic community. The rituals reinforce various aspects of this vision.

• Passover and Maundy Thursday

On Maundy Thursday, the Southist, Knanaya Christians observe Passover—just like the Malabari Jews. They eat unleavened bread for seven days. The wine for the *Pesach* is a special drink. This drink is also made of coconut milk and certain plums. Throughout the Pascha, they sing songs from the Old Testament: the creation narrative, the Abrahamic narrative, the Exodus narrative, and ending with the story of the suffering of the Messiah.

Another tradition, which is common among the Knanaya Christians, is the practice of giving alms to the poor during the time of Pascha. On Good Friday, they drink a juice of bitter herbs. This is, perhaps, the connection which the Knanaya Christians see between the Passover use of bitter herbs and the Christian remembrance of the suffering of Christ on Good Friday.

11 Cf. John 2, where Jesus turns the water into wine so that this crucial ritual may be performed.

It is interesting to observe that while much of the rest of Christianity throughout the history of the church has minimized the ritual relationships between the Jewish Passover and Maundy Thursday, the Knanaya seek to reinforce these links in rich rituals. In doing so, their Malabari Jewish neighbors are able to see the essential relationship between Maundy Thursday/ Good Friday and the Jewish Passover.

- The Ecclesiology Concept of the Knanayas

The liturgical relationship between the Malabar church and the church of the East has been well attested by several scholars.[12] The Malabar church used the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, which probably originated in the early third century. However, the way in which this liturgy is used, especially in the Southist Knanaya church, has strong, local Dravidian and Jewish interpretation. The concept of the community of the local church and the concept of communion are contained in the concept called *palliyogam.* This is an interesting mix of the pre-Vedic, pre-Hindu Dravidian concept of the *manram*, and the Jewish concept of *adat*. Thomas Neendoor sees in this the Hindu concept of *sabha*, and the Buddhist concept of *sangha*. However, it seems to me that he misses the point. In Aryan Hinduism, the *sabha* consists of the community of Brahmans who are a part of the *sabha* or *samiti* of the Brahmins by virtue of their karma. In Buddhism the *sangha* is the community of the enlightened elite.

The Malabar church's concept of the *palliyogam* is strongly influenced by the Dravidian, pre-Hindu concept of *yogam.* The *yogam* was a community of families. The community *yogam* was generally held under a tree. The community was very egalitarian. Decisions were made keeping this sense of equality in mind. The people would spend a long time in singing songs while their cattle were grazing. There was a sense of serenity in this place, which served as a work place as well as a place for worship and communion. The leaders of the *yogam* formed a *manram*, a community of "wise leaders or elders" of the *yogam.* There is a form of mystical communion between the *yogam* at the local level and the *manram.*

The Malabar Jews similarly had a very strong sense of *adat,* or community. While there was a *rabban,* he was essentially equal to the rest of the people in the community. The Malabar synagogue was a place of "gathering" in the true sense of the word. It was a group of people who found unity around the Torah and around the *halakah*, the Malabari Jewish practices.

These two concepts—that is, the pre-Hindu, Dravidian concept of community and the Jewish concept of community—became the sources of the Knanaya concept of worship and community in the messianic community.

12 Placid J. Podipara, *The Hierarchy of the Syro-Malabar Church* (Alleppey: Prakasam Publications, 1976); Thomas Mannooramparampil, *The Anaphora and Post-Anaphora of the Syro-Malabar Church* (Kottayam: Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, 1989); Thomas Neendoor, *Communion: An Ecclesiological Analysis of the Concept of Communion of the Thomas Christians in the Light of the Idea of Self in Emmanuel Levinas* (Kottayam, Kerala: Pontifical Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, Paurastya Vidyapitham, 1998).

- The *Kadisha* Recited before the Holy *Qurbana*

In the early part of the nineteenth century, George Broadley Howard, an Anglican minister serving in South India, made extensive visits to the Malabar area. He collected the Malabar versions of the Anaphora of St. James, St. Peter, the Twelve Apostles, Mar Dionysius, Mar Xytus, and Mar Evannis, as well as the *Ordo Communis*.[13] He observed that the heart of the Southist, Knanaya worship was the constant repetition of the *Kadisha*. This, he observed—and rightly so—was "the Trisagium of the Jacobite Church, differing from that used by the Orthodox and the Nestorians."[14] He observed that the *Kadisha* reached a crescendo just before the *Qurbana*, the communion service. They sang,

> *Kadisha Aloha, Kadisha Heil-sana, Kadisha Lamai-o-sa*
> *Det-salev Hala-pein Meshiha Aloha Di-lan*
> (Holy is God, Holy is the Mighty One; Holy is the Immortal One;
> The One who was crucified for us. Messiah our God.)[15]

This creedal statement is very central to the communion and identity of the Knanaya. The first part is more a reflection of the *Kadosh* of the Malabari Jews, which was taken from Isaiah 6:3, "*Kadosh, kadosh, kadosh, YHWH Tseva'ot, melo chol-ha'aretz kevodo.*" This becomes the Trinitarian formula of the Knanaya Christians. Yet, the fullness of this Trinity is seen in "the One who was crucified for us, *Mashiach* our God." The Trinity forms the core of the unity of the Knanaya community, and this unity is seen in the communion with the One who was crucified.

This central creed of the St. Thomas Christians may be seen in the granite slab which is at St. Thomas Mount, the traditional burial site of St. Thomas. The writing on the slab is in Pahlavi (ancient Persian). It reads, "He that believes in the Messiah, and in the God on high, and in the Holy Spirit is in the grace of him who suffered the pain of the Cross." The communion of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, according to the Knanaya Christians, is seen most clearly on the cross. Obviously, this becomes the heart of the communion of the Knanaya church.

This is an important ritual that becomes the center of intrinsic interaction between the Malabari Jews and the Knanaya Christians. The Knanaya Christians simply actualize the text of the Old Testament and see a seamless flow of the narrative of the Old Testament into the narrative of the New Testament and the Gospels. The revelation of God in the Old Testament as *kadosh, kadosh, kadosh* is simply ascribed to the Messiah, the One who was crucified. This is the human face of God.

It is as if they completely overlook the Chalcedonian formula, and say, "Let us just stick with the biblical narrative and make it our own." There

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13 George Broadley Howard, *The Christians of St. Thomas and Their Liturgies* (Oxford: John Henry and James Parker, 1864).
14 Ibid., 158.
15 Ibid., 157.

seems to be profundity in this simplicity. It becomes the core of the gospel for the Malabari Jewish friends of the Knanaya Christians.

- Times and Method of Liturgical Prayer

W. J. Richards, another Anglican priest in British India, wrote an account of his travels among the Malabari Christians entitled *The Indian Christians of St. Thomas Otherwise Called the Christians of Malabar: A Sketch of Their History and an Account of Their Present Condition, as well as a Discussion of the Legend of St. Thomas*. Richards wrote down some crucial aspects of the Southist or Knanaya prayers. He noted a number of prayer practices that replicate the prayer practices of the Malabari Jews. The following are some of the examples:

1. We are commanded to pray standing, with faces towards the East, for at the last Messiah is manifested in the East.
2. All Christians, on rising from the sleep early in the morning, should at once wash the face and pray.
3. We are commanded to pray seven times, thus: At morn, because the Lord granted light; at nine, because He was delivered to judgment; at noon, because He was nailed to the cross; at three, because the earth quaked and the dead rose; at eve, for rest during the night; at nine, for protection from dreams and apparitions of unclean spirits; at midnight, for safety and deliverance from all perils. If all cannot pray seven times, they are bound to pray thrice, as sometimes did David and Daniel.[16]

It is significant that their model for prayers comes from the Old Testament, rather than from the Eastern church fathers. This obviously is another strong indication of the theological relationship between the Malabari Jews and the Knanaya Christians. One wonders if the Knanaya Christians were able to witness to the Malabari Jews during these times of deep prayer encounters with the Triune God.

4. Claudius Buchanan's *Christian Researches in Asia* and the Knanaya Jewish Manuscripts.

I would like to make a brief mention of another essential source, which suggests a strong relationship between the St. Thomas Christians and the Malabari Jews.

At the University Library of Cambridge, there is a set of manuscripts which were brought to Cambridge by Rev. Claudius Buchanan in 1806 from his travels in Malabar. (Oo 1:3, 4, 5, 16, 20, 23, 24, 30, 32, 34, 35, 37, 38, 42, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, and Add. 271). Buchanan wrote, "The Black Jews possessed formerly copies written on *Goat Skins*; and that . . . there was an old Record Chest, into which the decayed copies of their Scriptures had been

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16 Richards, 98.

thrown." Buchanan also got among these manuscripts a Hebrew copy of the New Testament. He writes, "The translator, a learned Rabbi, conceived the design of making an accurate version of the New Testament, for the express purpose of *confuting* it. His style is copious and elegant, like that of a master in the language, and his translation is in general faithful."[17]

It seems clear that these copies of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament give further evidence of a close relationship between the "Black Jews" of Cochin and the Southists, or Knanaya, of the St. Thomas Christian church. The Hebrew New Testament, in particular, is a very important example of the influence Knanaya Christians had upon the Malabari Jewish community. The fact that the Jewish leaders saw the need for the translation of the New Testament into the language of Jewish religion (i.e., Hebrew) speaks volumes to the messianic witness of the Knanaya Christian community to their Malabari Jewish friends.

> **The fact that the Jewish leaders saw the need for the translation of the New Testament into the language of Jewish religion . . . speaks volumes to the messianic witness of the Knanaya Christian community to their Malabari Jewish friends.**

5.   Knanaya Lectionary and the Jews of Malabar.

It may be remarked that there is a scarcity of Malabari manuscripts, since several of them were destroyed at the direction of the Roman Catholic Synod of Diamper (A.D. 1599). There is, however, a comprehensive dissertation, *The East Syrian Lectionary: An Historical-Liturgical Study*, written by Pauly Kannokadan at Pontificio Instituto Orientali, under the direction of Robert Taft and Pierre Yousif. He mainly examines the Chaldean edition OT (*Qery-ane)*; Epistle Lectionary (*Sliha*); and the Gospel Lectionary (*evangelion*). The work is mainly based on the manuscripts of the Upper Monastery System, the extant manuscripts of the Mosul system, the extant manuscripts of the Beth 'Abhe system, and the extant manuscripts of the Cathedral system. However, there is some reference to the St. Thomas Christian lectionary.[18]

In the Knanaya lectionary, the first period covers from Koodosh-Etho to Yeldo (incarnation). The second period covers from Yeldo to Kothine Perunal (marriage at Cana) or Pethrutha of the great lent. The third period covers from Kothine Perunal to Kymtha (resurrection).

It is crucial to observe that Kothine Perunal becomes the heart of the identity of the Knanaya community. It is the encounter of the people with the divine Messiah, who changes the water into wine, the ritual into the miraculous, the old covenant into the renewed covenant. Of course, it is from Cana that the community gets its identity.

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17 Claudius Buchanan, *Christian Researches in Asia: With Notes of the Translation of the Scriptures into the Oriental Languages* (London: Ward & Co. Paternoster Row, 1849), 119–21.

18 Pauly Kannokadan, *The East-Syrian Lectionary: An Historical-Liturgical Study* (Rome: Mar Thoma Yogam, 1991).

It becomes clear that the liturgical use of the Old Testament in the worship of the Knanaya community is an act of continuation of the canonical actualization into the life of the community. This may be called a "liturgical communion actualization and theologizing." The texts are recited before the Holy *Qurbana*. In reciting the Old Testament texts, the Knanaya community seeks to actualize the Old Testament narrative—to make it their own—and then to move into the *Qurbana*.

I suggest that this may be construed as a contrast to the great theological debates which the church encountered in the fourth century and following in other parts of the world. In the history of the church during this period of time, the church was seeking to come to terms with important concepts like Christology, the doctrine of God, the doctrine of the church, etc., in the light of Greek philosophical categories. In contrast to this, the St. Thomas Christians came up with a different method of doing theology. Perhaps we may call it a "liturgico-narrative-actualization" method. They simply saw their identity, the doctrine of God, the doctrine of Christ, the doctrine of the church, etc., seamlessly woven into the texture of the Old Testament and the biblical narrative.

The liturgical year was the same as that of the Malabari Jewish community, i.e., the beginning of the year was Rosh Hashanah and Simchat Torah. There is a clear indication that the St. Thomas Christians derived from the Malabari Jewish community an amazing actualization hermeneutic. Every aspect of the phenomenology of the St. Thomas Christian community sought to actualize their continuity with the Old Testament community and the New Testament community.

In their *Qeryane* (recitation) of the Hebrew Bible, they actualize crucial concerns of theology. It is not merely a propositional approach to the study of the theology of God, Christology, ecclesiology, etc. Rather, it is a living hermeneutic, which results in a living theology. The OT community, the NT community, the Malabari Jewish community, and the St. Thomas Christian community are intrinsically woven together. There is no disjuncture; there is no discontinuity. The biblical stories are actualized in the rituals, life, and liturgy of the community.

A good example is the *Qeryane* for Koodosh-Etho (The Time of Sanctification), the beginning of the church calendar, which, of course, coincides with the holiest days in the Malabari Jewish calendar. It begins with the theme of holiness, which is very central and essentially the theme of Yom Kippur. The Old Testament reflection of the community begins with recitation of the Exodus 33 text, which reminds people of the preparation of the community to receive the Torah. The tent was called "the tent of meeting."[19]

19 Exodus 33:7–11 (NRSV) reads, "Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far off from the camp; he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who sought the LORD would go out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp. Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people would rise and stand, each of them, at the entrance of their tents and watch Moses until he had gone into the tent. When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the

It should be noted that this text was one of the texts which was a part of the Eastern lectionary of the Jewish community, especially recited after the Ten Days of Awe, during the Sabbath of Sukkoth, or Tabernacles. The Knanaya community may well have interpreted this as preparation of the incarnation, the "tabernacling" of the Messiah.

It is almost as if the community is seeking to be actualized into the new Joshua, the community which is sanctifying itself to speak with God "face to face" like Moses. The Exodus 40 text similarly describes the "glory of God" filling the temple.

The community actualizes the presence of the "pillar of cloud" and the "pillar of fire," which are living symbols of the presence and the power of God. Their songs reflect the "pillar of cloud" and "pillar of fire" which led the Israelites in ancient times. Now, this presence of God resides in their midst, and they are prepared for a new year.

Soon after this text, they go into the recitation of the *Kadisha* text from Isaiah 6, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory."

> *Kadisha Aloha, Kadisha Heil-sana, Kadisha Lamai-o-sa*
> *Det-salev Hala-pein Meshiha Aloha Di-lan*
> (Holy is God, Holy is the Mighty One; Holy is the Immortal One;
> The One who was crucified for us. Messiah our God.)

The focus on this Knanaya *Qeryane* suggests that the identity of the community, quite clearly, is defined by the Exodus community. In the wilderness, they saw the glory of God. This glory and holiness defines the holiness of this new community—the St. Thomas Christian community.

Conclusion

Jewish evangelism and Jewish-Christian relations in the West have been developed in the context of a victorious Christian model. Christianity has been the dominant religion. Therefore, the philosophy of evangelism and evangelistic methods developed in the West have followed a top-down structure. This philosophy of evangelism is essentially modernistic. There is a modern Christian metanarrative which has shaped modern Jewish evangelism. In this paper, I have proposed that in this era, when global society has entered a postmodern phase, perhaps we can learn something from two premodern societies—the Knanaya Christians and the Malabari Jews.

We have observed that both societies developed as minorities in a majority Hindu metanarrative. Therefore, in some senses they were forced to engage with each other. This engagement resulted in some fascinating

> tent, and the LORD would speak with Moses. When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would rise and bow down, all of them, at the entrance of their tent. Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Then he would return to the camp; but his young assistant, Joshua son of Nun, would not leave the tent."

phenomenological narratives, which were countercultural to the metanarrative of the Hindu society. These narratives ran counter to the injustices against low castes, outcastes, and tribals, which were perpetrated by the Hindu religion and culture. We have seen that in the symbiotic relationship developed between the Malabari Jews and Knanaya Christians, they developed narratives of identity which were counter to the metanarrative of the majority Hindu community. Their stories of identity actualized the stories of the Hebrew patriarchs and slaves, and made those stories their own. In doing so they overcame the unjust stories of Hinduism, which resulted in the slavery of the low caste *Shudras*, the outcastes, and the aboriginal tribes of India.

I have often wondered if postmodern Jews and evangelical Christians may similarly come up with new narratives which would, together, fight against the injustices perpetrated by modern metanarratives. Some evangelicals during the Nazi era, like Dietrich Bonheoffer, did come up with countercultural narratives. Yet this was not a communal phenomenon of the kind seen in the relationship between the Malabari Jews and Knanaya Christians.

Phenomenological rituals which were followed by both the Malabari Jews and Knanaya Christians were also intentionally similar and messianic. The rituals of birth, death, communion, liturgy, and worship are all narratives of messianic communities, which enabled them to interact with each other in very essential and deep ways. Obviously, this enabled the Knanaya Christians to share the Messiah with their Jewish neighbors in ways that may be regarded as postmodern today. It was not in propositional thought; it was not through modernistic apologetics; it was through solid messianic rituals which defined them in similar ways.

I have often wondered what rituals and liturgies postmodern evangelical Christians might come up with that would enable them to communicate the Messiah to their postmodern Jewish neighbors. Perhaps these rituals and liturgies may need to be removed from modernistic notions, or notions which would connote the "parting of the ways." The model set by the Knanaya Christian community is to seek continuity with the narrative of the Bible, with the stories of the Bible. These stories will enable the postmodern evangelical Christian to come up with stories that will communicate the Messiah to the postmodern Jew, and together, there could be the formation of a messianic community.

Finally, let me add a word about Bible translation. It seems clear to me that modern translations of the Bible alienate postmodern Jews and Christians. Whenever one translates, one interprets. Evangelical Christians may need to accept that modern translations of the Bible interpret the ancient Jewish text of the Bible in modernistic ways. There may be a need to translate the Bible, just like the Malabari Jews and Knanaya Christians did, in ways which enable both postmodern Jews and Gentiles to see the message of the Bible in fresh language—a language which is in robust continuity with the text of the Bible, yet which is fresh to both postmodern Jews and Christians. The Malabari Jews and Knanaya Christians show us that

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this language must be in conformity and continuity with the message of the patriarchs, the prophets, and the Messiah Jesus.

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The "parting of the ways" model, which has been the pattern of much theological discussion in Jewish-Christian dialogue, has done more harm than good to theological discourse. In contrast to this, the Knanaya Christian community and the Malabari Jewish community have shown that deeply meaningful and significant dialogue can positively shape the two communities toward a quest for the biblical Messiah.

This brief analysis of the liturgy, rituals, and lectionary of the Knanaya Christian community shows that the thesis of a "parting of the ways" between Jews and Gentiles is overemphasized. The Knanaya Christians and the Malabari Jews are in dynamic continuity with each other. The Old Testament community and the New Testament community are in dynamic continuity with each other.

This is a profound way of doing theology in any age, especially in our present age. This is a profound dialogue between two minority communities in a majority Hindu community. Many times theology, dialogue, and evangelism find their best face in the face of persecution and opposition. My hope is that we would be able to emulate this model in our postmodern age.

Theological Reflections on Anti-Semitism

by **Henri Blocher**

As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs. (Rom 11:28)[1]

Anti-Semitism: the term, we are told, was coined by the German agitator Wilhelm Marr in 1879, for the cause he championed.[2] It has been widely used ever since for hostile attitudes and feelings, expressed in theory and practice, word and deed, toward those who are called "Jews." Obvious etymology leads one to question its adequacy: not all "Semites" are Jews (Jews are considered Semites, what does it mean exactly?[3]), and anti-Semitism today seems to be rampant in mostly Semite populations! "Anti-Judaism" will not do either. It suggests opposition to *rabbinical* religion, whether strictly theological disagreement or opposition incorporated into policies, with or without social constraints, since that religion bears the name "Judaism": many Jews, who have been the targets of anti-Semitism, do not adhere to that religion, nor to any of its often discordant versions. No one would use "anti-Hebraic," suggesting a linguistic criterion: a minority of Jews in the world speak Hebrew. "Anti-Jew racism" would correspond to the self-understanding of much anti-Semitism, but this branches off a delusive, pseudo-scientific concept of race which even the Nazis could not consistently apply.[4] "Anti-Zionism" is the guise under which much anti-

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1 All Scription quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the New International Version.
2 *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, s.v. "Anti-Semitism."
3 As Fadyev Lovsky (*Antisémitisme et mystère d'Israël* [Paris: Albin Michel, 1955], 278) points out, the distinction "Aryan/Semite" was a merely *linguistic* one at first; it acquired *racial* connotations in the nineteenth century, with Christian Lassen and the famous Max Müller in 1853 (though Müller in 1888 protested loud and clear against "the myth of the Aryan race"). (Unless otherwise indicated, I am responsible for the translation of quotations from material published in another language.)
4 They did *not* define Jewishness by religion but by race (and so sent to Auschwitz *Christian*, baptized Jews). They counted grandparents, with intermediate categories (*Mischlinge*, first degree with two Jewish grandparents, second degree with one), but the Jewishness of these grandparents was defined as adherence to the Judaic religion! Cf. Carol Iancu, *Les*

Semitism today manifests itself,[5] but Zionism as a particular political project does not coincide with Jewishness. To be sure, as Richard Harvey puts it, "Zionism has become the major expression of Jewish identity for a majority in Israel and the Diaspora who are disenchanted with religious faith but wish to express solidarity with the Jewish people."[6] This, however, does not embrace all Jews and may include some non-Jews (some Gentile Christian Zionists).

Embarrassment with the words already begins in the New Testament. The use of *Ioudaios* (Ἰουδαῖος) in the fourth Gospel has been much disputed. Can it be charged with anti-Semitism? Already in 1955, Fadyev Lovsky argued from the number of occurrences, the symbolic number 70, that the intention was by no means to disparage Jewishness.[7] Careful and tactful examination of the *data* has shown that the evangelist was writing as a Jew himself, that he was blaming, under the label the "Jews" (not only "Judeans" but including that nuance), neither all the "ethnic" Jews of the world nor adepts of Judaism, but the official *leaders* of the nation. He was preaching, or testifying, on Jesus' preaching in the manner of the prophets and Qumran texts, and with probable irony.[8] *That* Gospel pre-

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Mythes fondateurs de l'antisémitisme. De l'antiquité à nos jours, Bibliothèque historique Privat (Toulouse: Privat, 2003), 85.

5 Jacques Maritain denounced the fact in his book *De l'Eglise du Christ. La personne de l'Eglise et son personnel* ([Desclée de Brouwer, 1970], n.59), according to extracts published in *Le Monde* ([November 18, 1970]: 13): "Anti-Zionist propaganda at work today, and whose political origin is easily discerned, is actually a well organized anti-Semite propaganda." Jean-Paul Rempp (*Israël, peuple, foi et terre: Esquisse d'une synthèse* [Carols: Excelsis, 2010], 91f) quotes from Jacques Ellul and from Martin Luther King, Jr., to the same effect.

6 Richard S. Harvey, "Judaism," in *New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics*, ed. Gavin McGrath and W. C. Campbell-Jack (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2006).

7 Lovsky, 428 (with the strengthening argument that no pejorative word is used 7 or 70 times in the Gospel; *ekeinos* [that, that one] is used 70 times). He reaches the 70 number, however, by discounting the occurrence in 4:9b (not found in ℵ* and D); yet, since Lovsky wrote the book, papyri support for the reading has been added and makes an original omission unlikely. In a later book, *La Déchirure de l'absence. Essai sur les rapports entre l'Eglise du Christ et le peuple d'Israël* ([Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1971], 213), Lovsky counts 67 and adds 3 with the same meaning (not the word). The results of my own computing are as follows: there are 67 occurrences in a plural form, for men (the *Ioudaioi*); there are 3 occurrences of the word in the singular for an individual person (3:25; 4:9a; 18:35); the only other occurrence, feminine singular, qualifies the land (3:22), and, therefore, can be taken apart from the 70.

8 Craig S. Keener offers a fine survey and solution in the section he devotes to the topic in his *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* ([Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003], 1:214–28). He notes (1:226) that the names "Israel" and "Israelite" are used positively (1:31, 47–51; I had met the argument in the 1960s in J. Ramsey Michaels' article "Alleged Anti-Semitism in the Fourth Gospel," *Gordon Review* 11 [1968]: 12–24). With great acumen, he observes "that Jesus is called a Jew only by *non-Jews*" (4:9; 18:35), and accepts so to be, in contrast to His rejection by "His own" (1:11). "I am suggesting here," Keener adds, "that John employs the term 'Jews' *ironically*, as a response to his opponents' functional claims that the Johannine Christians are no longer Jewish" (1:218; cf. the conclusions 1:227). The "establishment" of Judaism casts out of synagogues those who believe in Jesus; their right to the title "Jews" is being denied. The Gospel in multiple ways shows that the leaders, rather, are those who forfeit their right, and cut themselves off from the true Israel (15:2a; cf. Rom 11:19ff); it ironically calls them "Jews." With the evidence he adduces about irony in ancient writers, and in the Fourth Gospel, Keener's proposal is not only illuminating, but quite convincing.

served the statement: "Salvation is from the Jews" (4:22)! But elsewhere also one meets complexity. Paul can use "Jews" for non-Christian ones (1 Cor 10:32, the seed of the "third *genos*" theme, which found its classical expression in the second century *Epistle to Diognetus*), and yet write: "A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly" (Rom 2:28). The people who bore the name of "Jews" in Smyrna and Philadelphia—undoubtedly, Jews in the ordinary sense, attending the synagogue services[9]—are branded as *liars*, as regards the very claim they were Jews (Rev 2:9; 3:9). Similarly, for "Israel" and "Israelite," the words may refer to those who reject the gospel of Jesus (Rom 9:31; 10:21; 11:7). Paul can say more precisely "the Israel according to the flesh" (1 Cor 10:18, literally; NIV weakens: "the people of Israel")—implying a contrast with what he calls in Galatians 6:16 "the Israel of God."[10] Paul claims an equal right to bear the name "Israelite" (and "Hebrew") as his adversaries boast they have (2 Cor 12:22; cf. Phil 3:5), and finally declares the complex duality: "not all who are descended from Israel are Israel" (Rom 9:6).

   If it is difficult to tell precisely who is a Jew,[11] anti-Semitism, understood as hostile behavior toward Jews, remains a phenomenon with fuzzy edges. Consequently, we shall not try to achieve strict exactness; we shall consider as "Jews" those who call themselves by that name and/or are thus called by many others. Though boundaries may be a matter of dispute, anti-Semitism appears enough of an identified object to be the object of theological reflection. We shall proceed in three main stages: since our reflection will be *Christian*, we shall meet the vexed question of Christianity's relationship with anti-Semitism head-on in our first section. We shall then dig for the motives, searching for the specific features of Jewishness which triggered negative actions and reactions. The third part will be devoted in compact form to import and meaning, in a bold, and yet timid, attempt to sketch a theology of Israel's privilege.

Christianity and Anti-Semitism

It is a firm conviction, both reasoned and passionate, of a great majority of "Jews" and of many non-Jews, that anti-Semitism has followed Christianity as its shadow for two millennia. The church has been responsible for an almost constant persecution; she has provided the fertile soil in which murderous myths germinated and thrived. She has advocated, and herself applied, measures that prefigure the ultimate anti-Semitic atrocity, the Shoah. "There have been times," Elie Wiesel could write, "when the cross

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 9 Keener, 1:225 n.484.
10 With most interpreters, we should understand the phrase for the church, *ekklèsia/qahal* (εκκλησια/קהל) of the Lord (Jesus), without making again circumcision into *something* dividing between Jewish and Gentile believers (v. 15). For a vigorous plea, from an original angle, see Greg K. Beale, "Peace and Mercy upon the Israel of God: The Old Testament Background of Galatians 6,16b," *Biblica* 80 (1999): 204–23.
11 The matter is notoriously difficult, and a bone of contention within Israel and within Judaism: cf. Richard Harvey, *Mapping Messianic Jewish Theology: A Constructive Approach* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009), 2 (with n.6), 16 (Rachael Kohn's "ethnicity").

symbolized, indeed incarnated, suffering and horror."[12] Jacques Maritain reported that "in Israel, not only has the Red Cross become the Red Star of David, but even the additive sign + in mathematics has been modified, also because it is evocative of the accursed sign."[13] Jules Isaac's historical work has persuaded his readers that the Christian "teaching of contempt" was a major (or the major) source of anti-Semitism. Rabbis and other thinkers sometimes draw the conclusion that Christianity is essentially anti-Semitic, and that evangelization, any attempt to lead Jews to faith in Jesus as their true Messiah, is akin to Hitler's *Endlösung*: evangelization, though it uses other means, aims at the total destruction of Jewish identity.[14]

Indeed, one gets a grim picture when reviewing large segments of official Christian history. To start with our own age, though no one should dispute the fact that Hitler was moved by an overtly *anti-Christian* ideology,[15] discussions concerning the alleged passivity, or even complacency, of church leaders are not altogether pointless. I am not called to play the role of the devil's advocate in Pius XII's canonization process—as his predecessor's Secretary of State, he, Eugenio Cardinal Pacelli, had a hand in the writing of the encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* (1938) and its affirmation of Christians being "spiritually Semites." He cannot be charged with anti-Semitism simply[16]—but the proof has been made of a strange leniency, bordering on complicity, for Shoah measures and actors among the hierarchy. On August 7, 1941, the Pétain government consulted the Holy See, through Léon Bérard, concerning the new laws against the Jews. Would the authorities of the church raise any objection? The answer came: *No*.[17] It is well-known

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12 In Ekkehard Schuster and Reinhold Boschert-Kimmig, *Hope against Hope: Johann Baptist Metz and Elie Wiesel Speak Out on the Holocaust*, trans. J. Matthew Ashley (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1999), 66.

13 Note 48, in the extracts from *De l'Eglise du Christ*, in *le Monde*, 13.

14 Ellen T. Charry's article "Judaism" (*Global Dictionary of Theology*, ed. William A. Dyrness and Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen [Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2008], 434a–42a) offers an accurate picture of the Jewish perspective and sharpens the antithesis with the Christian one. Her sympathy seems to lie with the "small but dedicated group of theologians and biblical scholars," like Rosemary Radford Ruether and Paul Van Buren, who offer a "[r]ereading" of Paul and Christology (438a), but they are not (apparently) representative of "Christianity." Charry does not hesitate to ascribe to the New Testament itself positions at which Jews, generally, take offense: "The New Testament already marks Jews as deicides" and it "set up the supersessionism that would dominate the Christian stance toward Jews and Judaism" (437b); Jesus alienated the leaders "by his flippant attitude toward tradition, Scripture and the Law" (439a); "it has been difficult for Christians to grant the 'Old Testament' (meaning 'surpassed') its own non-Christian identity" (439b). This is somewhat surprising in a Christian, evangelical dictionary (p. vii defines the framework as "evangelical and ecumenical").

15 Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel. Etude sur les relations entre chrétiens et Juifs dans l'Empire romain (135–425)*, new supp. ed. (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1964), 490; in moderate criticism of Jules Isaac.

16 Carol Iancu (46) mentions that Pius XII gave audience to Jules Isaac in 1949, and accepted to translate the *perfidis* of the *Pro Judaeis* Good Friday prayer (according to its true sense) "unbelieving." John XXIII dropped the word altogether in 1958.

17 Michel Remaud, *Israel, Servant of God*, trans. Margaret Ginzburg and Nicole François (London: T. & T. Clark, 2003), 55 n.11. Iancu (87) relates that the French ambassador to Romania informed his government that a "systematic extermination plan" was to be carried out, as soon as November 10, 1941. Pétain's "Vichy" government emphasized a Roman Catholic France.

that after the war Nazi criminals found refuge in monasteries and other Catholic institutions. Was the motive only compassion?

Since Vatican II, and especially since the Declaration *Nostra Aetate* (1965),[18] a spectacular reversal has taken place in the most "visible" institution,[19] but unexpected blemishes are mentioned that, even today, soil the Protestant record. Pierre Vidal-Naquet mentions that the stinking forgery *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* was republished in the United States by the *Christian Book Club*![20] During the previous centuries, pogroms were almost a matter of course in Eastern (Orthodox) Europe.[21] Do we imagine hordes of murderers, pulling down houses, setting them on fire, stealing all valuables, killing women and children, and shouting "Christ is risen"? The greater tolerance and freedom gained by Jews in the West was due to Enlightenment ideals and revolutionary reason: de-Christianization.

> **The greater tolerance and freedom gained by Jews in the West was due to Enlightenment ideals and revolutionary reason: de-Christianization.**

Previously, Martin Luther had written his 1543 pamphlet, *On Jews and Their Lies*, in which he recommends burning synagogues and expelling Jews if they do not convert. He gathered all possible calumnies, and believed, before Stalin, that Jewish doctors were poisoning their patients and were poisoning him, as well![22] The Nazis republished the text, and their *Kristallnacht* (November 9–10) fell on Luther's birthday (November 10). Luther—alas!—was in line with ordinary medieval anti-Semitism.

Since 1096, when the First Crusade was preached, how can one number the wholesale expulsions of Jews from "Christian" countries, brutal or refined humiliations (with, e.g., the oath, *more judaico*), the imposition of

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18 The Declaration uses *deplorat* as regards anti-Semitism; Maritain was disappointed it did not use *damnat*—according to Riquet, bishops from the Arab world were reluctant to adopt the stronger verb (Sylvie Bernay, "Le Père Michel Riquet. Du Philosémitisme d'action lors des années sombres au dialogue interreligieux," *Archives juives. Revue d'histoire des Juifs de France* 40/1 [1st semester, 2007]: 111).

19 "Repentance" has gone quite far. Joseph Ratzinger, then only Cardinal Ratzinger, wrote of the Shoah: "It cannot be denied that a certain insufficient resistance to this atrocity on the part of Christians can be explained by an inherited anti-Judaism present in the hearts of not a few Christians" ("New Vision of the Relationship between the Church and the Jews," *Origins* 30, no. 35 [February 15, 2001]: 565).

20 Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Réflexions sur le genocide*, Bibliothèques 10/18 (Paris: la Découverte, 1995), 327 n.12. In 1999, the name of the man who forged the document, in Paris, for the sake of the Okhrana, the tsar's secret police, was disclosed: Mathieu Golovinski (according to Iancu, 100).

21 As Marcel Simon (490) observes, against the idea that the influence of the Roman liturgy was the decisive factor.

22 David G. Singer, "Baptism or Expulsion: Martin Luther and the Jews of Germany," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 44/3 (Summer 2009): 401–08, 404 for the details. Singer, who belongs to Reform Judaism, offers a loyal and nuanced account of Luther's attitude. Luther "drew upon the anti-Jewish writings of Antonius Margarita, a Jew who converted first to Catholicism and then later embraced the Lutheran cause." In 1543, Luther wrote two other, less obnoxious, tracts: *David's Last Words* contends that the Trinity can be found in the Hebrew Scriptures, and *On the Ineffable Name (Vom Schem Hamaphoras)* criticizes the Kabbalah.

special marks on their clothes, and massacres, massacres? According to Carol Iancu, during the first six months of 1096, there were about 10,000 victims, nearly one-third of all the Jews of Northern France and Germany.[23]

Though the condition of Jews became worse with the Crusades (with thousands of Jews also slaughtered in Jerusalem), it had not been pleasant before. Several church fathers vituperate the Jews; for St. John Chrysostom, they are "the common plague and disease of the whole world."[24] The conversion of Constantine marked a tragic reversal for the Jews in the Roman Empire: Christians had been persecuted, and Jews had enjoyed a rather favorable status (except under Hadrian).[25] With a Christian emperor, this was no longer the case. We may recall St. Ambrose's glorious feat when he stood his ground before the Emperor and forced him to back down: the Emperor's decision, which Ambrose opposed, was to pay Jews an indemnity for their Callinicum synagogue that "Christians" had burned![26] Heroes can be moved by a nobler inspiration! How far should we go, tracing back hostility toward Jews in Christian history? Common judgment finds anti-Semitic accents in the *Epistle of* (*Pseudo*) *Barnabas*.[27] Are the roots already apparent even before, in the earlier, apostolic, period? We shall come to this question in a moment. At this stage, we must briefly assess the evidence we have just surveyed.

That anti-Semitism was present, massively present, in "Christian" tradition lies beyond controversy, but the most significant question is this: Is anti-Semitism *essentially* bound to Christianity, to *true* (biblical) Christianity? One reason to doubt a substantial kinship is the evidence of *pre-Christian* anti-Semitism, inclusive of the invention of the typical slanderous legends, such as of ritual murder[28] and massacres.[29] In Marcel Simon's estimate, it is a weakness of Isaac's historical work that he should unduly minimize this pre-Christian anti-Semitism, and he approves of Lovsky's more balanced account[30]; Christian anti-Semitism inherited the weapons paganism had fabricated.[31] In Scripture itself, not to speak of Pharaoh's policy, is not a whole book, written long before Christ, illustrative of such an attempt to destroy all Jews, as would be repeated so often through the centuries? Haman is already Hitler—and the Shoah he had planned boomeranged on him, as it did on the Nazi dictator. Islam tolerated Jews only with a lower *dhimmi* sta-

23 Iancu, 34.

24 John Chrysostom, *First Homily against the Jews*, 6, as quoted by Simon, 239 (*koinèn lumèn kai noson tès oikoumenès hapasès* [κοινὴν λύμην καὶ νόσον τῆς οἰκουμένης ʽαπάσης]).

25 Simon, especially 493–500.

26 Ibid., 266.

27 Lovsky, *Antisémitisme*, 147f.

28 Ibid., 63, the witness is a "Damocrite" as he writes the name. Iancu (22f) more recently names Democritus [os] (*ca*. 460–370), the great "atomic" philosopher, in a work entitled *Tactics*. He also regards as authentic the *Aegyptiaca* of Hecataeus, with slanderous material already.

29 Lovsky, *Antisémitisme*, 41–100, with many examples, not only from Egypt, but from the whole Mediterranean world.

30 Simon, 491.

31 Ibid., 246.

tus, and invented special clothing constraints already in the eighth century
A.D. (Omar Ben al-Aziz).[32] In Spain, Jews would flee from Muslim territories
to Christian ones.[33] One may add that post-Christian, in a way "neo-pagan,"
modernity was far from friendly toward Jews. At best, it could fight for ab-
stract human rights, but aversion transpired toward Jews as Jews. Voltaire
used extreme anti-Semitic language; Diderot and other revolutionaries fol-
lowed suit.[34] The Socialist thinker Pierre Proudhon wrote, "One must send
this race back to Asia or wipe it out."[35] Anti-Semitism does not look like an
exclusively Christian disease!

Anti-Semitism enrolled "Christians"—but were they *true* Christians? As
a believer whose spiritual, as well as physical, ancestors were persecuted
by the *same* church authorities who persecuted Jews (one of my ancestors
from the Cévennes was sentenced to the galleys), I am somewhat reluctant
to assume that the persecutors' Christianity was my Christianity. One way
to interpret the scheme of church history is to discern in the patristic era, as
well as in the Middle Ages, a gigantic compromise, an amalgamation of the
biblical message and teaching with a mass of pagan ideas and practices.
(One symptom of anti-Semitism, linked with erotic overtones, is the tension
between Jewish *generandi amor* and the high valuation of virginity[36]—
really an ascetic pagan infiltration into Christianity.) Lovsky rightly stresses
the part played by "half-Christians" in the genesis of Christian anti-Semi-
tism.[37] And some "fuller" Christians are on record: St. Bernard of Clairvaux
solemnly charged the Crusaders,

> March toward Zion, defend the tomb of Christ. But touch not ye the
> Jews; speak to them with mildness; For they are the flesh and bones of
> the Messiah; and if you molest them, you will run the risk of touching
> the very apple of the Lord's eye![38]

The Reformation only partially repudiated the "pagan" element. The trag-
ic lapse of which Luther was guilty—Luther old and sick, Luther bitterly
disappointed that the Jews did not receive his biblical message (he had
been branded as "a half-Jew" by Catholic polemicists)[39]—sadly illustrated

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32 Iancu, 50f (the famous Haroun al-Rashid in 807 again enforced the laws decreed by his
    predecessor).
33 Lovsky, *Antisémitisme*, 251; the whole chapter on Muslim anti-Semitism (well document-
    ed), 241–60.
34 Ibid., 263–73. Also Ernest Renan, 279ff.
35 Quoted by Iancu, 69 (he names other Socialists, and so does Lovsky, 274ff).
36 Simon, 250f.
37 Lovsky, *Antisémitisme*, 81.
38 From the classic biography of St. Bernard, by Ratisbonne, as quoted by Peter Stravinskas,
    "Anti-Semitism and the Christian Bible: Interpretation and Misinterpretation," *Origins*
    30, no. 33 (February 1, 2001): 531; the whole article (529–38) is a powerful protest against
    a certain blackening of the picture.
39 Singer, 402. Lovsky (*Antisémitisme*, 13) recalls that Blaise Pascal in the sixteenth letter
    of his *Provinciales* affirmed that the Calvinists brought us back to a Jewish condition (in
    my edition, *Lettres écrites à unProvincial par un de ses amis* [Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1933],
    281: "voilà ce qui nous fait abhorrer les calvinistes, comme nous réduisant à la condition
    des Juifs").

the truth he had preached: he who is *justus* by God's grace remains *semper peccator*. Nevertheless, his final anti-Semitism was not representative of the Reformation. The *Encyclopaedia Judaica* acknowledges:

> (T)he role played by the Old Testament in Calvinism led the Puritan sects to identify themselves with the Jews of the Bible and reflected favorably on their attitude toward contemporary Jewry. The French Calvinists were a special case: themselves persecuted until the French Revolution, their sympathies were traditionally pro-Jewish, an outlook retained to a considerable extent to the present day.[40]

Patrick Cabanel says, "The historian Myriam Yardeni rightly holds" a 1590 sermon by Theodore Beza "the most powerful rebuttal of Christian anti-Semitism."[41] As a child during World War II, precisely in a religious (ecclesial) environment indebted to Calvin and Beza, I was close to rescue actions that saved the lives of Jews—at the peril of the rescuers' lives. Vidal-Naquet himself was protected by French Protestants; he quotes from an evangelical hymn I still remember from those days![42] But the German Pietists also had a strong Philo-Judaic tradition.[43] This suggests that biblically-shaped Christianity does not necessarily breed anti-Semitism.[44]

Whatever magisterium churches may claim, heirs of Calvin and Beza do not believe the tradition to be infallible. The decisive consideration, if one speaks of *true* Christianity, is whether the New Testament sows seeds of anti-Semitism. The conviction that it does has been voiced, and rather stridently, e.g. by Rosemary Radford Ruether.[45] Alain Blancy deprecates, as the fatal move of Christian theology, that Jesus was believed to have pre-existed and was given divine honors. He does not deny, he implies, that it started in the New Testament.[46] Saying that Jesus is the Messiah already implies a condemnation of the Jews.[47]

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40 *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, s.v. "Anti-Semitism."
41 Patrick Cabanel, "Le Pasteur Jacques Martin de l'objection de conscience à la résistance spirituelle à l'antisémitisme," *Archives juives. Revue d'histoire des Juifs de France* 40/1 (1st semester, 2007): 86. Cf. Rempp, 22 and the appendix 119–22.
42 Vidal-Naquet, 203 ("*Le mal est là et Satan gronde . . .*"); Vidal-Naquet compares the action with what was done in Denmark (199f) and refers to an article he wrote on the topic (186 n.3).
43 Acknowledged by Lovsky, 215.
44 Forms which abandon the biblical line do not fall necessarily into anti-Semitism, but the connection has been observed, e.g. by Lovsky, *Antisémitisme*, 347. Stephen T. Davis ("Evangelical Christians and Holocaust Theology," *American Journal of Philosophy* 2/3 [1981]: 121–29) indicted liberal criticism of the Old Testament, according to John Jefferson Davis, "The Holocaust and the Problem of Theodicy: An Evangelical Perspective," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 29/1 (January 2005): 61. I remember reading once that rabbis had complained that "Higher Criticism" is really "Higher Anti-Semitism."
45 Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Seabury, 1974); incriminating especially the Gospel of John.
46 Alain Blancy, "La Théologie chrétienne d'après la *shoah*," *Foi et Vie* 99/1 (February 2000): 65–67. He also denounces the law/grace antithesis (66).
47 Remaud, 70.

Christian authors have offered detailed replies.[48] The argument that the (human) authors were all Jews does not settle the issue, for history knows of Jews who have been anti-Semitic,[49] but it does carry some weight. Two propositions seem to be established beyond any reasonable controversy. *First*, there is not a word of disparagement for the Jews' *racial* origin and characteristics.[50] Stephen's strictures in Acts 7:51 merely echo Old Testament language and are related to his fellow Jews' attitude toward Jesus and the Good News. Being born a Jew involves no stigma, no inferiority. On the contrary, it is something Paul could boast of (though, *for the sake of the exceeding superiority of the knowledge of Christ Jesus*, he had come to reckon it "loss" and "rubbish" [Phil 3:7–8]—he means that natural assets, if they tempt one into relying on oneself instead of relying on the pure grace of God, become liabilities; in themselves, they constitute advantages). Paul's allegory of the olive tree implies that the *natural* branches possess, and retain even as cut off branches, a superiority in this regard over the branches from the wild olive shoot (Rom 11:21ff). This is a stark contrast with modern racist anti-Semitism and also with the older one: the latter was not racist but did indulge in slanderous rumors and ugly caricature—and such cannot be traced to the New Testament. The older anti-Semitism granted full acceptance to the Jew who was baptized, but felt, then, that the Jew was cleansed of his Jewishness—nothing of the sort in the apostolic church!

Second, the New Testament sharply disagrees with the ruling interpretations of the Torah (and of the whole Tanakh) among their fellow Jews in the final period of the second temple—with those of Sadducaic and Pharisaic persuasions, according to the more explicit references in the Gospels and Acts.[51] Whatever the gamut of divergences, the central issue is obviously the truth of Jesus' person and work. Since he is not recognized as the Messiah, Lord, and Savior, the reading of the "Old Covenant" currently pursued in synagogues is *blind*, for the veil of misunderstanding remains on the "hearts" (minds) of devout Jews—"because only in Christ it is tak-

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48 Conveniently summarized by Stephen Motyer (briefly), "Anti-Semitism," in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 49b–51b; and J. A. Weatherly "Anti-Semitism," in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Joel B. Green and Scot McKnight (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1992), 13b–17b.

49 Lovsky, *Antisémitisme,* 14; his examples are Nicolas Donin, Pablo Christiani, and Pfefferkorn. He also cites adversaries of Judaism who were *not* anti-Semites: Herz Homberg and Simone Weil.

50 Simon (488) rightly distinguishes between Chrysostom's undeniable anti-Semitism and *racism*, which shows features foreign to the church father.

51 Strangely, the third "sect" in Josephus' precious description, that of the Essenes (with whom I would join the Qumran community, though debates still go on among experts on this point), is not mentioned in the New Testament. There are striking similarities with the early church, the claim to be "the Community of the New Covenant" to start with, and the starkest antagonism of spirits (radical legalism *vs.* freedom in Christ; separation, withdrawal *vs.* mission); this combination may explain why there is no overt reference in our Scriptures. I do not deny a large measure of agreement between Jesus and the Pharisees (cf. Matt 23:2–3), a popular theme nowadays, but the opposition is also very deep and should not be minimized.

en away" (2 Cor 3:14f). The conflict of conviction is so decisive that we should not be surprised if rabbinic Judaism—not to be confused with Old Testament religion, not even with second temple Judaism simply, but to be viewed as the twin[52] and rival interpretation of the Tanakh that established itself at the same time as did Christianity—denounced Christians as heretics (*minim*)[53] and "blessed" them to eternal perdition (the *Eighteen Benedictions*). It is no surprise (alas!), given the tendencies of human nature, if the one used the "weapons of the world" (2 Cor 10:4, literally "fleshly weapons") against the other (e.g., social pressure, legal discrimination, even physical violence): "Jews" first (that is, official representatives of rabbinic Judaism), as they held greater power, and then "Christians" (that is, official representatives of a Constantinian "Christendom").[54] Richard L. Rubenstein points to the memory of the old catastrophe, "70 C.E.," and its significance: for Christians, it provided the proof of Jesus' redemptive messianic identity and lordship (and so the Gospels did intimate), but for Jews. . . .[55]

Does the label "anti-Semitism" apply? The use of worldly or "fleshly" means to induce conversions and to fight false doctrine[56] is utterly opposed to the spirit and the letter of Jesus' message and apostolic teaching (though we should not ignore the depth and grandeur of Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor; this is a temptation for noble hearts, also). The modern term "anti-Semitism" to characterize acts of that sort throughout "Chris-

52 Tertullian, in his *Adversus Judaeos* 1, used the image of Rebecca's twins, Esau and Jacob: "*Procul dubio per edictum divinae elocutionis prior et major populus, id est Judaicus, serviat necesse est minori et minor populus, id est Christianus, superet majorem*" (quoted by Simon [102] from Migne's *Patrologia latina* 2, 636). It is worth noticing that the "greater" (*major*) people at this stage is still the Jewish people.

53 Simon (215–38) has offered a splendid piece of scholarship on the word and its use: "The Christian character of the *Minim* was thus attested in very many cases . . ." (233).

54 Craig A. Evans ("Christianity and Judaism: Partings of the Ways," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids [Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1997], 159b–70a) provides a remarkable synopsis, starting from New Testament times and depicting accurately the growing alienation (J. D. G. Dunn's two works under the title *Partings of the Ways* are in the background). I regret, however, that the defense of the traditional evangelical reading of the New Testament *data* concerning Christ's deity is *so timid*. Is it intended to win an easier academic reception? Evans speaks of the "divinization" or "deification" of Jesus (162–64); he only affirms "Jesus' own tendency to assume divine prerogatives in his words and deeds" (162a); only a close association when YHWH becomes the Lord *Jesus* in quotations from the Old Testament (163a); he does not go beyond the *possibility* of "God" used for Christ in Romans 9:5 (163ab); and he draws from the Johannine *egô eimi* passages that the intention was "to imply that in some sense Jesus was the manifestation of Israel's God" (164a). This is much too weak. I suspect that the reason conclusions are so far below the mark is *not* the need for caution, if one is to resist apologetic distortion and follow rigorous method (the conscious motive, I guess), but because of the dominant unbelief in the community of scholars—they will not accept, or even respect, a clear-cut orthodox reading and this deflects the reading of evangelical scholars themselves.

55 Richard L. Rubenstein, "Some Reflections on 'The Odd Couple': A Reply to Martin Marty," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 44/1 (Winter 2009): 139.

56 Simon (315–55, 432–39, *et passim*), agreeing with Lovsky, shows the role Jewish proselytism played *in Christendom*: it was so successful that Christian leaders were alarmed, from Chrysostom to Luther (cf. Singer, 403, about Luther's fears; n.2, he cites the famous Viennese rabbi Adolph Jellinek in the nineteenth century, who was the descendant of Czech Hussite peasants converted to Judaism).

tian" centuries may introduce unhelpful interferences (e.g. confusion with racism), but it is in such common use that we shall not reject it, and we say: Anti-Semitism, in that sense, is not found in the New Testament; it is not *truly* Christian.

But spiritual/theological polemics against rabbinic Judaism? Do they amount to anti-Semitism? Lovsky argues that we should distinguish anti-Semitism and *anti-Judaism*,[57] and Stephen Motyer emphasizes the point:

> Does theological argument against *Judaism* constitute hostility toward *Jews*? Some significant Jewish writers in this area (e.g. Cohn-Sherbok) do not distinguish between anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism, because they regard a theology that treats Jesus as the fulfilment of the Scriptures, and salvation as by faith in him (rather than through membership in Israel and obedience to Torah), as implicitly anti-Semitic. In fact, this is the predominant Jewish reaction to the NT, with Berkowitz [*sic*], for instance, describing the NT as "the most dangerous antisemitic tract in history," providing the theoretical basis for actual anti-Semitic hatred throughout time.[58]

He efficiently argues back. If, with Jacob Neusner, one uses "Judaist" for someone who practices Judaism as a religion,[59] we have every right to say: Attacking the beliefs and rites of Judaists implies no hatred of Jews. If a Jew who trusts in Yeshua for salvation is stigmatized with the label *meshumad* (משמד), "the issue that is at the heart of the objection can be answered satisfactorily only through a realization of the fundamental truth of the claims of Jesus and a recognition that it is perfectly compatible with Jewish identity to accept them, despite the prejudices and misperceptions of the past."[60]

This outlook I share, and yet . . . I, a Gentile Christian, a Jew-in-heart by the grace of adoption into God's people, confess a large dose of sympathy for the majority reaction among Jews. For Jewishness, Jewish identity, is a unique and complex phenomenon. Restricting Jewishness to participation in rabbinic religion (as Neusner argues[61]) and severing Jewishness from it fail to account for the complexity. Ellen T. Charry's comments sound realistic: "It is a way of life based on religious practice, a shared history and cultural tradition that holds the Jewish people together as a globally dispersed

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57 Lovsky, *Antisémitisme*, 14.

58 S. Motyer, 50a. I believe the name is spelled (Eliezer) Berkovits. In Harvey's memory, probably the name of Messianic Jewish believers Ariel and Devorah Berkowitz had left its imprint.

59 Jacob Neusner, "Being Israel: Religion and Ethnicity in Judaism," in *The Religion Factor: An Introduction to How Religion Matters*, ed. William Scott Green and Jacob Neusner (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 32.

60 Harvey, "Judaism," 378a.

61 Neusner, 37: "Israel becomes Israel through the Torah. It must follow that an ethnic religion is set aside in favor of one that invokes faith, covenant, obedience." (36: Deniers of the divine origin of the Torah and of resurrection are excluded, according to the Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 10.1.)

national identity that has been called peoplehood"; hence, "it is possible to be Jew and yet not to accept Jewish religious beliefs. One may identify with Jewish history and culture, and now the state of Israel, without participating in religious practices,"[62] and yet the religious reference cannot be erased. Ethnic identity, culture, and religion blend nearly everywhere in human history. Our "modern" disjunction is a fruit of Christian influence, but the Jewish blend is unique, because of the permanence in Diaspora conditions, through trials so disastrous, and because of the character of the religion, its universal scope, and its genealogical particularity.[63]

This uniqueness also comes to light when one inquires about the motives and factors of anti-Semitism, as we should now (more briefly) inquire.

Factors of Anti-Semitism

Human history has recorded genocides, whether total (the Etruscans' case) or partial, persecutions again and again, and the persistence of a distinct identity with ethnic and religious components combined (the Armenians' case). These expressions of universal sinfulness display the role of common xenophobia, religious fanaticism, and lust and greed in individuals, as well as the pursuit of social and political interests. All this has been evident enough in anti-Semitism. Yet, I cannot gainsay what the Eckardts wrote: "There are no parallels to it. There simply is no historical analogue to antisemitism [at least, I would say, no equivalent or close analogue]. . . . No prejudice can approach antisemitism for either geopolitical pervasiveness or temporal enduringness."[64] If so, *why*? Jean-Paul Sartre, in the wake of the Shoah, reviewed all the alleged characteristics of the Jews that could explain why they have been the target of constantly hostile attitudes and dismissed all of them.[65] A Jew is someone others make into a Jew—but

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62 Charry, 435a; she goes on: ". . . although religious Jews frown on this. Secular Judaism is not a self-contradiction because Judaism is both a religion and a cultural identity, largely focused on remaining a distinctive community with its own land and language."

63 This comment follows the common use of "Jew" to denote those who call themselves by that name and are connected, sometimes loosely connected (when assimilation has taken place), with the community shaped by rabbinical (Talmudic) traditions. However, one should heed Francis Bacon's warning about the *idola fori* (the "idols of the marketplace," involved in human exchanges), the subtle distortion and deception which the use of *words* may induce. The fact that people call themselves "Jews," while others don't, does not entail that they have the monopoly of Jewishness. A strong *historical* argument (not only theological) could be mounted to establish a paradoxical claim: belonging to the Christian church is another form of Jewishness. Gentiles becoming Christians are proselytes joining *a* Jewish community ("fellow-citizens of the saints")—not any less than the Khazars joining the Talmudic community; both communities remain "Jewish," whatever the number of proselytes; in that sense "Gentile church" is a misnomer. The place of the Old Testament is a concrete testimony of the Jewishness of the church. To defeat the argument, one has to grant the anti-Christian rabbis of the first centuries C.E. the *right* to define Jewishness through their interpretation of the Scriptures and through their rules for cult and life: this is arbitrary. But I shall not develop here this unusual suggestion.

64 A. Roy Eckardt with Alice L. Eckardt, *Long Night's Journey into Day: Life and Faith after the Holocaust* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1982), 50.

65 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Réflexions sur la question juive* (coll. Idées; Paris: Gallimard, 1954, paperback 1961).

why? Jean Améry goes even farther: "I am a Jew by the simple fact that people around me do not expressly define me as non-Jew. . . . As a non-non-Jew, I am a Jew, I must be one and I must will that it be so."[66] Again, why?

One possible explanation of recurring animosity could be that Jews have been able to secure places of power and privilege, and so attracted envy, jealousy, and feelings of resentment. What Haman's wife and advisers told him—"Since Mordecai, before whom your downfall has started, is of Jewish origin, you cannot stand against him" (Esth 6:13)—might express the frustration of many non-Jews, in many lands. The promise "The LORD will make you the head, not the tail" (Deut 28:13) has held good also in Diaspora conditions! The Rothschilds' riches fanned much socialistic anti-Semitism through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[67] Conversely, the high proportion of "Jews," after Karl Marx, among leading socialist and communist ideologists—up to 80 percent, in the estimate of experts[68]—was the most efficacious theme of anti-Semitic propaganda during the preparation and the perpetration of the Shoah. The coexistence of such symmetrical motives suggests that factors of this kind were more accidental than essential. For every Rothschild, there were a thousand poor Jews in an Eastern Europe *shtetl*. In the Middle Ages, they were identified with usury—because the church had confined them in that role[69]; but in Egypt, they were attacked as brutal soldiers representing Persian power.[70] Caricatures cancel each other out. And all ascription of racial, *genetic*, characters founders on the fact that successful proselytism, even if the whole population of the Khazar kingdom did not convert to Judaism, introduced so much foreign genetic material that the "pool" is as diverse as many a "melting-pot."

The most frequent complaint, even in ancient times, names the Jews' *amixia* (ἀμιξία), their isolationism, their "way of life contrary to humaneness and hospitality."[71] Their dietary laws that forbade table-fellowship, their refusal of intermarriages, their stubborn intolerance of other mores and rites persuaded their neighbors of their "misanthropy." "Haters of the

> "I am a Jew by the simple fact that people around me do not expressly define me as non-Jew. . . . As a non-non-Jew, I am a Jew, I must be one and I must will that it be so."

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66 Jean Améry, *Par-delà le crime et le châtiment. Essai pour surmonter l'insurmontable*, trans. Françoise Wuilmart (coll. Babel; Arles/Québec: Actes Sud/Leméac, 1995), 194.

67 Lovsky, *Antisémitisme*, 275f.

68 George Steiner, *Dans le château de Barbe-Bleue. Notes pour une redéfinition de la culture*, trans. Lucienne Lotringer (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), 56. I had no access to the English original of the book and must translate back my quotations (Steiner, who had his secondary education in Paris, certainly checked the French version of his work).

69 *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, s.v. "Anti-Semitism." Lending with interest was a danger to the soul, but since Jews were lost anyway, they were allowed to do it (and forbidden many other roles). With the development of "Christian" banking (Florentine bankers, the Lombards), Jewish lenders were less indispensable to kings—hence the expulsion of Jews from England in 1290 (102f).

70 Simon, 491f (referring to work of Jean Yoyotte).

71 Iancu, 22f.

human race"—this is the label and the charge.[72] The command to be sepa-rate was, of course, inculcated by the Torah, with the illustration of the Lord's design to deal with the Israelites separately when Moses brought the plagues on Egypt—when He spared the land of Goshen (Exod 8:22f; 9:4, 6f, 26; 10:23). It was painfully reinforced by Nehemiah's reform. It is in har-mony with God's character and the way He chooses to act: Creation is, first of all, a work of separation (Gen 1); God dislikes vague mixtures and reveals Himself through the *sword-like* Word (cf. Isa 45:19). The NIV rendering "in vain" for *tohu* (תהו) may lose the connotation of the word in Genesis 1:2 (i.e., formless void, the obscure emptiness that allures pagans in their or-acles; Alec Motyer adequately suggests "a maze of 'meaninglessness.'"[73]). The temptation of spiritual pride lies in wait, and Jesus pictures counterfeit sanctification in the Pharisee's—the *parush* (פרוש) "separate one's"—prayer of thanks: "I thank you [Thee] that I am not like other men" (Luke 18:11). But Jesus' disciples also enjoined a kind of separation (Matt 18:17; John 17:9, 14–18; 1 Cor 5:9–13; etc.). A refusal to mix is bound to arouse ill feel-ing, and it was verified in history for non-Christian Jews, Christian Jews, and non-Jewish Christians.

What is the meaning of separation, which is one aspect (at least) of sanc-tification? With penetrating spiritual insight (though he does not claim to be a believer), George Steiner emphasizes both the primacy of ethical con-cerns and the pure monotheism of the invisible, unthinkable Deity.[74] He has perceived the tie between them: Pantheistic religion (ultimately all idola-try) is unable to ground the radical and ultimate difference; it is bound to weaken and to obscure the disjunction between good and evil. "No historical or psycho-sociological model anyone has framed to this day, no psycho-pathological analysis of crowd behaviour or the mental aberrations of some leaders and of some killers separately considered, no diagnosis of deliberate hysteria, account for certain features of the problem."[75] Why an-ti-Semitism? Hitler's word is revealing: "Conscience is a Jewish invention."[76] And this disturbing innovation was combined with the most demanding monotheism of the invisible God, "a purer abstraction and harder to reach through the senses than the most arduous mathematics."[77] Whereas Chris-tian churches, "apart from a few exceptions, combined a monotheistic ide-al with polytheistic practices,"[78] the Jewish reminder of pure monotheism nourished the Western "bad conscience" and consciousness of "bad faith." "By killing the Jews, Western culture would eliminate those who had 'in-vented' God and had become, though imperfectly, though reluctantly, the heralds of his Unbearable Absence."[79]

72 I found it quoted several times by Lovsky, 59 (Philo mentions it), 180, 265, 371.
73 Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah* (Leicester: IVP, 1993), 365.
74 Steiner, especially 45–56.
75 Ibid., 46.
76 Ibid., 47. Cf. 53, a "maximum ethical commitment" (Steiner associates Jesus with the prophets); 57, "infectious character of morality."
77 Ibid., 48.
78 Ibid., 50.
79 Ibid., 52.

Emmanuel Levinas heightens hyperbolically the same themes: The ethical is first,[80] and God, the Infinite, is so transcendent that Levinas assumes the language of atheism (not in any vulgar sense!), and insistently so.[81] In a more accessible talk for the Jewish public, he spells out what it means "to love the Torah more than God."[82] This outcome sounds as a theological warning. Though breathtaking in brilliance and nimbleness, Levinas' discourse moves away from the Scriptures. One may perceive a continuity with the centrality of the law (not as a code but as requisition) and with speculation about the *'en sof* (אין סוף), but one has to measure the serious departure from the teaching of the Torah and the Prophets—if one is interested in what they mean to say, not in the multiplicity of clever inventions that take the letter as a pretext, a spring-board for indefinite creativity. Steiner's terms are more moderate, but they are still one-sided, and speaking of "abstraction" is unfortunate. The God of Abraham, Moses, David, and Isaiah is not the Exile of infinity. He is the God who is at home in *His* world, immanent as well as transcendent, and "living." Concretely present and active, He dwells, He "tabernacles"[83] in the midst of His people; He makes His ways and *Himself* known in clear and intelligible human words. There are secret things He keeps to Himself, "but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever" (Deut 29:29 [Hebrew 28]). The paradox is that negative theology, intending to defend divine transcendence against pagan continuity with the world, makes him still dependent upon the world through negation or antithesis; only *Trinitarian* monotheism is thoroughly and consistently monotheistic.

The unique energy to free deity from continuity with the world, a discontinuity reflected in Jewish *amixia*, flows from this distinct source: from the Word of God they received. "What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew . . . First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God" (Rom 3:1–2).[84] And since God *chose* this "family," Israel, to give His Word to humankind, the ultimate distinctive is divine *election*—the one characteristic Jean-Paul Sartre failed to consider! Here lies the uniqueness: "You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth" (Amos 3:2). "Have I chosen" is

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80 Emmanuel Levinas, *Totalité et Infini. Essai sur l'extériorité* (La Haye/Paris: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971/Biblio Essais-Kluwer Academic, 1990), 340.

81 Ibid., 52, 75, 151 (cf. 107). In *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence* ([La Haye/Paris: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974/Biblio Essais-Kluwer Academic, 1990], 184 n.1), Levinas can only tolerate a totally negative theology: "theology would only be possible as contesting the purely religious, confirming it only by its failure or struggle."

82 Frans Jozef van Beeck, *Loving the Torah More Than God? Toward a Catholic Appreciation of Judaism* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1989), 40, including the English translation of a talk by Levinas, which includes the phrase.

83 I intend to recall the "tabernacle," *'ohel mo'ed* and *mishkan* (אהל מועד and משכן), and the significant verbal form in John 1:14 *eskènôsen* (ἐσκήνωσεν). In that sense, I could underwrite Bruce Marshall's proposition (as quoted by Harvey [*Mapping*, 129], after Mark Kinzer): "The Christian doctrine of the incarnation is an intensification, not a repudiation, of traditional Jewish teaching about the dwelling of the divine presence in the midst of Israel"—though I suspect that the proposition is embedded in a far different theological structure.

84 In Romans 9:4, "the covenants, the receiving of the law [or legislation, *nomothesia* (νομοθεσία)], the temple worship and the promises" can come under the same head.

the right translation here of *yada'ti*, in accordance with one of the regular uses of the verb in the Bible. Though not all scholars reach such lucidity, C. E. B. Cranfield's comment on Romans 8:29 perfectly hits the mark: "The -εγνω is to be understood in the light of the use of *yàda'* in such passages as Gen 18.19; Jer 1.5; Amos 3.2, where it denotes that special taking knowledge of a person which is God's electing grace."[85] Israel uniquely chosen; Israel uniquely persecuted: the uniqueness of anti-Semitism seems to match the uniqueness of election.

> **Israel uniquely chosen; Israel uniquely persecuted: the uniqueness of anti-Semitism seems to match the uniqueness of election.**

Some writers, at least, have identified the neuralgic center. Among adversaries: "The Bible, the 'sophism' of grace and election, this is what Michelet did not forgive Israel."[86] Among friends and supporters: "The election of Israel arouses the nations' enmity"; "anti-Semitism is the shadow cast by the mystery of Israel in man's rebellious heart."[87] One can follow Karl Barth when he affirms that Israel's election confers a specific status or "holiness" to all who are by nature Jews (cf. Gal 2:15, *phusei* [φύσει]), and only to them, irrespective of their spiritual commitment:

> In a sense, all are there sanctified by nature (*von Natur*) through him, sanctified as the ancestors and relatives of the unique Holy One in Israel, as no non-Jew (*Heide*) is by nature, as not even the best among the Gentiles are, not even the Gentile Christians, not even the best among them, despite their belonging to the church, though now they also are sanctified by the Holy One of Israel and have become Israel. . . . [This is valid] "in every Jew without exception."[88]

One can, therefore, draw the conclusion: "'Jew-hatred is God-hatred': anti-semitism is a *theological* phenomenon, in that hatred of the chosen race is in the final analysis hatred directed against God himself."[89]

Theses for a Theology of Israel

We may use the elucidation of the uniqueness of Israel ("according to the flesh") and the spiritual root of ant-Semitism as the basis for a brief and tentative construction.

Israel's election is both firm, enduring, and limited in what it involves. Israel's uniqueness, as was just stressed, proceeds from God's gracious elec-

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85 C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975), 1:431. In the weaker, non-volitional sense, God knows *equally* well all human families and individuals; since the verb refers to something distinctive, it must have a stronger meaning in Amos 3:2 and Romans 8:29.

86 Lovsky, *Antisémitisme*, 282.

87 Ibid., 407 and 402.

88 Karl Barth, *Die kirchliche Dogmatik II/2. Die Lehre von Gott* (Zollikon Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1946²), 315f.

89 J. J. Davis, 69.

tion. It could be called a "family" privilege: not strictly genetic, since proselytes can be adopted into the family and are granted the rights of sons and daughters,[90] and yet genealogical, with promises to the "seed" of the patriarchs. This privilege is not abolished when individual Israelites fail to obey God's supreme Messenger, and even when the leaders, who represent the community as an organic whole (hence, the vocabulary of "rejection" [*apobolè* (ἀποβολή)] and partial "hardening" come to Israel) fail to do so: because of the root, the branches remain holy. Jews who still refuse to acknowledge Yeshua as the Messiah, the Lord, Incarnate Word, and Son, are *beloved* for the sake of the Fathers, because of election (Rom 11:28).

The privilege of "family" election does not comprise, however, the unconditional promise of blessing, salvation, fellowship with God, eternal life (none of these benefits are in the Romans 9:4–5 list). On the contrary, privilege entails increased responsibility and punishment more severe, as Amos 3:2 plainly states. The same Amos strikingly relativizes Israel's privilege with the Exodus in focus (9:7ff), comparing God's paradigmatic intervention with what He has done for the Philistines and Arameans. Under the image of the grain (9:9), Amos at the same time indicates that there will be a category for whom the promises will apply: the remnant. "A remnant shall return," Isaiah had proclaimed! There is *another election* which intersects the global "family election," the election of individuals, sometimes of one out of two twins (Rom 9:10ff), which is an election to personal sonship, salvation, and glory (v. 23). This election is conditional, in the sense that the condition of the "obedience of faith" will not be by-passed, but it is unconditional in that God, in sovereign grace, has decided to create faith, through the ministry of the Word and the Spirit, in all the elect, and He will! The 7,000 of Elijah's time represented this "remnant chosen by grace," God's "people whom He foreknew" in the volitional sense (Rom 11:2–5). The duality of elections, which obviously limits the import of the "family" election, produces the duality of Israel: "not all who are descended from Israel [Israel in common parlance, Israel 'according to the flesh'] are Israel" (Rom 9:6). The "holiness" of the branches which were cut off for unbelief, and which do not belong to the remnant, does not spare them divine condemnation: "As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies" (Rom 11:28). If the horror which anti-Semitism inspires led us to mute that element of the divine teaching, we would be yielding to manipulation.

The two elections are closely related (hence the use of the same name, "Israel"). The personal election to final salvation operates within the framework of the more external "family" election. This remains true, to some extent, when the new covenant is inaugurated, and the door is opened for all the nations. Gentile believers become "fellow-citizens" of the saints (Eph 2:19), grafted into the old olive tree (Rom 11:17ff). They receive the "circumcision done by Christ" (Col 2:11), and they correspond to proselytes

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90 This is often stressed; however, Simon (442) notes that according to Mishnah *Bikkurim* I,4, only Jews by birth, in the liturgy, say "*our* Fathers" whereas proselytes say "*your* Fathers."

under new conditions (Heb 12:22, *proselèluthate* [προσεληλύθατε]). The church is the Lord's *qahal* (קהל, congregation), formed by the remnant (after the sifting the prophets and John the Baptist had announced) and the new regime of proselytes. Conversely, the more external election is subservient, in God's plan, to the election of the "vessels of mercy" who will share in His glory. The "old disposition," which embodied and organized the privileges of the "family" election, had already been made nearly obsolete by Jeremiah's prophecy (Heb 8:13). Everything that happened was written for the benefit of Christians, in the age of fulfillment (1 Cor 10:11; Rom 15:4). The institutions that were given to Israel were the shadows that prefigured the reality (the "body"), which we find in Christ. The New Testament testifies abundantly to the preparatory significance of the "old covenant," itself bound with Israel's election.

Karl Barth concocted a powerful model of the relationship between the election of Israel and the election of the church. His genius shines through, but we must question the biblical adequacy of his proposal. On the basis of his dialectical[91] understanding of election, which combines reprobation and predestination, judgment and grace, as two *moments* of the same event (not directed at two distinct categories), he sees Israel, *disobedient* Israel, and the church as the two sides of the one community of Christ, with one election only in Christ. They appear remarkably symmetrical.[92] I suspect an inordinate love of order (aesthetic order indeed) to have produced symmetry where Scripture knows none. Jews cannot exult when they see which side of the symmetry Barth grants them: "Israel is the people of the Jews opposing their divine election"[93]; they are destined to be "the mirror of judgment"[94]; they are represented by Judas, and since Judas had to die, so with the right of Israel to exist.[95] But, at the same time, this disobedience is practically made harmless: "The result of Jewish unbelief (the model for all other unbelief!) is not to be sought outside, but only inside the results of the divine grace."[96] As it was for Judas (in Barth's interpretation), so for Israel: rejection is governed and surmounted by grace, in the end.[97] A critique of Barth's development lies beyond the scope of this paper, but I recommend David Gibson's splendid synthesis on this very topic.[98]

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91 I know he reacted negatively when this word was used (which had been his in the early stages), with the argument that, for him, the two terms are not evenly balanced: there is a movement from judgment to grace, not the reverse. Yet, in this life at least, the movement back and forth never ceases: when we say "grace" we must immediately recall the reality of judgment, without which grace is not grace; the Yes is only in Christ, not in ourselves. This I call dialectical.

92 E.g. Barth, 215.

93 Ibid., 219.

94 Ibid., 227.

95 Ibid., 562.

96 Ibid., 289.

97 Ibid., 562f.

98 David Gibson, "The Day of God's Mercy: Romans 9–11 in Barth's Doctrine of Election," in *Engaging with Barth: Contemporary Evangelical Critiques*, ed. David Gibson and Daniel Strange (Nottingham: Apollos [IVP], 2008), 136–67.

Barthian symmetry has encouraged views of Israel's election that assign parallel destinies and possibilities of blessing/salvation to Christianity and (rabbinic) Judaism.[99] The foregoing material shows roundly enough that full-blown versions belong to radically different perspectives. I may mention, however, a milder proposal. R. W. L. Moberly suggests a "multi-level reading" that will allow for both the Jewish and the Christian readings of the Hebrew Scriptures: "Just as a faith perspective can be both bracketed out and incorporated in relation to a nonfaith perspective, so can a Christian perspective be both bracketed out and included in relation to a Jewish perspective, and vice versa."[100] This depends on a "late modern" type of hermeneutics, which I would not endorse. The flexibility of our minds allows us to sympathize with the workings of other minds and, to some degree, "mimic" these, but the all-determinative perspective *cannot* be "bracketed out," and it *should not* be. In the last analysis, abandoning the faith perspective is *ungodly* (cf. Rom 14:23b).

The preparatory character of Israel's election implies a subordinate role, but it does not entail that there be no specific future for Israel "according to the flesh." Because "God's gifts and his call are irrevocable" (Rom 11:29), one may expect some magnificent compensation for the almost incredible sum of suffering that Jews have undergone through history. Evangelical exegetes diverge on conclusions one may draw from Romans 11. Without entering into their debate, I may register my conviction that the apostle rejoices in a symmetry of God's design—this time, a truly biblical symmetry—and lets us hope for a final turn to Yeshua among Jews that will match the refusal in the first century. The re-gathering in the land may be a move toward that end. The revelation of the wickedness and anti-Christian essence of anti-Semitism after the Shoah, with a large-scale "conversion" in this respect among Christians (whether nominal or not), has removed some obstacles in the way. The time may be near!

The persistence of a Jewish identity can be seen as a positive sign. That Jewishness did not disintegrate under persecution, through pogroms and Shoah, through comfortable assimilation and *haskalah* secularization, is so extraordinary that it suggests the stamp of election remains on this people—probably Dr. Zimmermann's meaning in his famous reply to King Friedrich of Prussia.[101] More precisely, St. Augustine's observation has been repeated by many after him (including Blaise Pascal): non-Christian Jews are the perfect witnesses when Christians use the argument of prophetic fulfillment—since Jews who do not see Yeshua in the prophetic Scriptures zealously guard the books, Christians cannot be suspected of tampering with the text when they show how the gospel events had been foretold.[102]

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99 It is one of the problems of Kinzer's views that he imbibed Barthian ideas that are not rooted in Scripture, together with so-called "postliberal" ways of proceeding; see Harvey, *Mapping*, 126f, 253.

100 R. W. L. Moberly, "Jewish-Christian Dialogue," in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 372.

101 Barth (230) also alludes to it.

102 *Civitas Dei*, XVIII, 46–47. Augustine notices the advantage of the dispersion of the Jews

Jews have been the "librarians" of the church. Without claiming to have found the *reason* why Jews, in numbers, have been "hardened," we may admire how God is able to draw benefits from evil itself, the evil of Jewish unbelief in Yeshua and the evil of anti-Semitism (this one, though aiming at the destruction of Jewish identity also comforted it, reactively).

. . . since Jews who do not see Yeshua in the prophetic Scriptures zealously guard the books, Christians cannot be suspected of tampering with the text when they show how the gospel events had been foretold. Jews have been the "librarians" of the church.

It is possible to credit the Jewish persistence with other positive effects, though Scripture seems to be rather silent on these.[103] The "librarians" have also been the teachers of Hebrew; without Nicolas of Lyra, no Martin Luther, and without Jewish teachers, no Nicolas! Christianity has been vulnerable to the pagan temptation, and Jewish monotheism has constituted a helpful reminder. Not to mention those Jews, armed with Jewish learning and culture, who have turned to Yeshua, through the centuries, and, being grafted back into the olive tree, have brought abundant blessings—"life from the dead"—to the church.

The inner meaning of Israel's election might be the representation of humankind. Elie Wiesel affirmed the identity: ". . . to me being a Jew and being a human being are one and the same."[104] If we consider the place of Israel in the total plan of God, we may own the thought. "Israel, for rabbinic Judaism," Jacob Neusner tells us, "forms the counterpart and opposite of Adam."[105] If Jesus was born a Jew, it was to become the Savior of the world, to be "made in human likeness" (Phil 2:7), becoming simply "flesh" (John 1:14). Jewish stock represented the human whole, with which He wanted to be identified. If "His own," who received Him not, were the Jews, they represented the world who did not recognize Him (John 1:10f). If the God of the Jews is the God of all Gentiles (Rom 3:29), do not the Jews represent all the others?

I suggest that Israel's election privilege and calling are to be the humankind of humankind, the quintessence of humanity. To be a Jew is to be human to the second power. Except for this special calling, practically everything we say of Jews may be said of all. All are created by God and are His children in that sense (cf. Deut 32:4, 6); all are wayward, stiff-necked, under condemnation; all are given a testimony to the truth of God; all are invited to receive forgiveness through Christ's blood (cf. 1 John 2:2); and all are to be drawn to the cross and receive the life-giving Spirit, for the King of Israel is the New Adam. This reveals the meaning, also, of the anti-Semitic effort at de-humanizing the Jews: the devil's lie and humankind's suicide.

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throughout the world.
103 Lovsky, *Antisémitisme*, 494f.
104 In Schuster and Boschert-Kimmig, 65.
105 Neusner, 39 (cf. 41: "The Torah forms the antidote to Adam's sin").

The glory of representing human-kind radiates when one affirms that Yeshua, the Jew, is the New Adam, the Redeemer of the whole world. When we add, with the apostle, that this Yeshua, who was born of the seed of Israel, *to kata sarka* (τὸ κατὰ σάρκα) as regards flesh-connections, this Yeshua our Lord and Savior is "God over all, forever praised" (Rom 9:5), then we discern first, that on the "fleshly" plane, Israel's privilege is the supreme privilege, the higher of which cannot be imagined; and second, that anti-Semitism is not only God-hatred but God-man hatred, the hatred of such a God as was able to unite Himself with the children of Adam and *help* Abraham's descendants (Heb 2:16).

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THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON ANTI-SEMITISM

THE MESSIANIC MOVEMENT

What the Church Left Behind

– Israel's Restoration and Christ's Return, Part 1

by **Paul Wilkinson**

In a sermon he preached in 1858 entitled "Scattered Israel to be Gathered," Anglican Bishop of Liverpool J. C. Ryle declared the following:

> Reader, however great the difficulties surrounding many parts of unfulfilled prophecy, two points appear to my own mind to stand out as plainly as if written by a sunbeam. One of these points is the second personal advent of our Lord Jesus Christ before the Millennium. The other of these points is the future literal gathering of the Jewish nation, and their restoration to their own land. I tell no man that these two truths are essential to salvation, and that he cannot be saved except he sees them with my eyes. But I tell any man that these truths appear to me distinctly set down in holy Scripture and that the denial of them is as astonishing and incomprehensible to my own mind as the denial of the divinity of Christ.[1]

Ryle (1816–1900) was one of the most authoritative and eminent churchmen of the nineteenth century. Sadly, since Ryle preached his sermon, bad shepherding and erroneous teaching in many parts of the church have greatly eclipsed these fundamental truths and, as a consequence, have muffled the midnight cry: "Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him" (Matt 25:6).[2] In this two-part series, we will walk briskly through the corridors of church history and consider how the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob sovereignly and progressively intervened in the political and religious affairs of men in order to ensure the fulfillment of His purposes for the Jewish people, the Gentile nations, and the church. As the Lord declared to His prophet Jeremiah, "I am watching over My word to perform it" (Jer 1:12).

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1 J. C. Ryle, *Are You Ready for the End of Time?* (Fearn: Christian Focus Publications, 2001), 112.

2 All Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible unless noted otherwise.

Britain, America, and the Jews

In September 1654, twenty-three Sephardic Jews sailed into New Amsterdam on the French vessel *Sainte Catherine*, establishing the first Jewish community in colonial America. That same year Menasseh ben Israel, chief rabbi of "old" Amsterdam, sent a petition to the Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell, appealing for the readmission of the Jews to Britain. (The Jews were exiled from Britain by King Edward I in 1290.) No two nations were to play so decisive a role in securing the future of the Jewish people and heralding the Lord's return as Britain and the United States, although in 1654 it was unclear which nation would stay the course the longest.

Eleven minutes after David Ben Gurion declared Israel's independence on May 14, 1948, U.S. President Harry S. Truman formally acknowledged the Jewish State. Eight hours later the British administration in charge of "Palestine" sailed out of Haifa, leaving the Jewish people with only the "sour conviction of betrayal by His Majesty's Government."[3] As the British Empire collapsed, the American Empire ascended.

England, Mighty England

In his address to the fourth Zionist Congress in London in 1900, Theodor Herzl, the founder of modern political Zionism, confidently declared: "England, mighty England, free England, with its world-embracing outlook will understand us and our aspirations."[4] Herzl's confidence had seemed well placed after British Prime Minister David Lloyd George's five-man war cabinet formulated initial proposals for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Of critical importance to the formulation and implementation of these plans was the assistance of the Zionist movement. Lloyd George later explained to the Jewish Historical Society why the British government had enlisted the support of Zionist leaders during World War I: "You have been hammered into very fine steel, and that is why you can never be broken. Hammered for centuries into the finest steel of any race in the world! And therefore we wanted your help."[5]

One of the aforementioned Zionist leaders was Chaim Weizmann, the professor of chemistry at Manchester University who effectively rescued Britain's war effort by discovering how to produce large quantities of acetone needed for explosives. (Weizmann later became the longest-serving president of the World Zionist Organization, and was appointed first president of the State of Israel in 1949.) As a 10-year-old boy growing up in his home *shtetl* of Motol in Russia, Weizmann had written a letter expressing his supreme confidence in England's future role: "Let us carry our banner to Zion," he wrote, "and return to the original matter upon whose knees

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3 A. J. Sherman, *Mandate Days: British Lives in Palestine 1918–1948* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), 12.

4 Douglas J. Culver, *Albion and Ariel: British Puritanism and the Birth of Political Zionism* (New York: Peter Lang, 1995), 6.

5 Philip Guedalla, *Napoleon and Palestine* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1925), 47.

we were reared. . . . All have decided that the Jew is doomed to death; but England nevertheless will have mercy on us."[6]

A Debt of Honor

On November 2, 1917, a letter was issued by the British Foreign Office addressed to Lord Walter Rothschild for the attention of the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland. The letter expressed the "sympathy" of the British government with "Jewish Zionist aspirations." Viewing with favor "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people," the government expressed its resolve "to facilitate the achievement of this object."[7] The issuing of the letter in the name of British Foreign Secretary Arthur J. Balfour seemed to promote this "convinced Zionist"[8] from East Lothian in Scotland to the position of "the new Cyrus restoring the Jews to their ancient land."[9]

Another member of Lloyd George's government, Field-Marshal Jan Christiaan Smuts (the future Prime Minister of South Africa), described the Balfour Declaration as "a debt of honour which must be discharged in full, at all costs, and in all circumstances."[10] On July 24, 1922, the League of Nations conferred upon the British government the Mandate for Palestine. As military correspondent and avowed Zionist Herbert Sidebotham wrote: "The whole world looked on, and the ghosts of three thousand years' history walked again to see how this great England would acquit herself on this magnificent stage. Never had the glory of England stood higher."[11]

> **. . . Field-Marshal Jan Christiaan Smuts . . . described the Balfour Declaration as "a debt of honour which must be discharged in full, at all costs, and in all circumstances."**

In 1925, Arthur Balfour was welcomed in Jerusalem by the Jewish people as "an honoured guest in their own National Home."[12] Accompanied by his close friend Chaim Weizmann, he addressed thousands who had assembled on Mount Scopus for the official opening of Hebrew University. Acknowledging the tremendous debt owed to the Jewish people by those who, like himself, had been "brought up on a translation into English of the Hebrew Scripture," Balfour concluded his address with the following prayer:

6 Quoted in Israel Sief, *The Memoirs of Israel Sief* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970), 73–74.

7 Known as "The Balfour Declaration."

8 *Speeches on Zionism*, ed. Israel Cohen (New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1971), 21.

9 Maurice Edelman, *Ben Gurion: A Political Biography* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964), 65.

10 Quoted in Eliyahu Tal, *You Don't Have to Be Jewish to Be a Zionist: A Review of 400 Years of Christian Zionism* (Jerusalem: International Forum for a United Jerusalem, 2000), 69–70.

11 Herbert Sidebotham, *Great Britain and Palestine* (London: MacMillan and Co. Limited, 1937), 146.

12 Blanche E. C. Dugdale, *Arthur James Balfour, First Earl of Balfour,* vol. 2 (London: Hutchinson & Co., Ltd., 1936), 367.

"Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who hast kept us in life, and hast preserved us, and enabled us to reach this moment."[13] Four years later, however, the future of the Jewish homeland hung in the balance as Palestinian Arabs began to riot. In a letter to *The Times* newspaper, dated December 19, 1929, Balfour, Lloyd George, and Smuts called upon the British government to appoint a commission of inquiry post-haste, a move they believed would act as "an advertisement to the world that Britain has not weakened in a task to which her honour is pledged."[14]

Abdication and Betrayal

In his presidential address to the Jewish Historical Society on October 20, 1936, renowned Jewish historian and co-editor of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* Cecil Roth spoke of how "new research workers will be forthcoming who will enable us to demonstrate to the world that, if by the renunciation of Zion we Jews would lose much of our inheritance, England, too, would lose no small part of hers."[15] His words would prove to be prophetic. No sooner had the Balfour Declaration been issued and the Palestine Mandate conferred than the British administration in Palestine had forsaken its commitment to the Jewish people in favor of a policy of Arab appeasement. On March 17, 1939, this policy of appeasement culminated in the issuing of the MacDonald White Paper, which spelled the end of Britain's support for the Zionist movement and the solemn pledge she had made to the Jewish people.

   Presided over by Malcolm MacDonald, British Colonial Secretary during Neville Chamberlain's premiership, this document, which set a five-year limit of 75,000 for Jewish immigration into Palestine, has been described as a "reprehensible"[16] and "vicious"[17] document which "closed the doors of Palestine to Jewish immigration just as Hitler was opening the door of Auschwitz."[18] The former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir described it as Britain's "betrayal"[19] of the Jewish people, while Colonel Richard Meinertzhagen, Chief Political Officer in Palestine under General Edmund Allenby, described this dramatic shift in British policy as "the complete abdication of Britain's moral influence in the world"[20] and one which "will cost us dear."[21]

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13 Jill Hamilton, *God, Guns and Israel: Britain, the First World War and the Jews in the Holy Land* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Limited, 2004), 216–17.
14 Quoted in Hamilton, 221.
15 Quoted in Culver, 23.
16 Ibid., 24.
17 Claude Duvernoy, *Controversy of Zion: A Biblical View of the History and Meaning of Zion* (Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 1987), 107.
18 David Brog, *Standing with Israel: Why Christians Support the Jewish State* (Lake Mary, FL: FrontLine, 2006), 120.
19 Golda Meir, *My Life* (London: Futura Publications Limited, 1978), 160.
20 John Lord, *Duty, Honour, Empire: The Life and Times of Colonel Richard Meinertzhagen* (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1971), 391.
21 Richard Meinertzhagen, *Middle East Diary 1917–1956* (London: The Cresset Press, 1959), 143, 225.

The glory of England, mighty England, lay in tatters. In his final address to the twenty-second Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, in 1946, an emotional Chaim Weizmann declared how "few documents in history have worse consequences for which to answer."[22]

A Remarkable Coincidence

Despite the abject failure of successive British governments to keep the Balfour promise, it yet remains one of the most remarkable *coincidences* of world history that the Zionist movement advanced under the leadership of Chaim Weizmann at the same time as the British government was being filled with Christian, or at least nominally Christian, sympathizers for a Jewish homeland. Of course, there are no coincidences when we understand the sovereignty of God. The emergence of such men on the political scene must be viewed against the greater backdrop of what the Sovereign Lord had been doing within the church throughout successive generations leading up to the Balfour Declaration. Although the precise nature of their Christian Zionist convictions may be difficult to ascertain, men like David Lloyd George, Arthur James Balfour, and Jan Christiaan Smuts were used by God not only at a critical juncture in world history, but also at a time when evangelical belief in the promised restoration of the Jews had reached its high point. To their names we should add those of Brigadier General Sir Wyndham Henry Deedes and Major-General Orde Charles Wingate.

In 1920, Wyndham Deedes was appointed chief secretary of the British administration in Palestine. Deedes not only had a special sympathy and appreciation for the Jewish people, but was driven by a desire "to do everything he could to hasten the Second Coming."[23] A year after the establishment of the modern State of Israel in 1948, he founded the Anglo-Israel Association, which seeks to promote a broader understanding of Israel in the UK. In 1936, the somewhat eccentric and controversial British officer Orde Wingate was dispatched to Palestine in order to quash Arab saboteurs of the British pipeline running from Mosul to Haifa. Known as "the Lawrence of Judaea"[24] by the young Jewish soldiers he trained, including Moshe Dayan, Wingate was highly esteemed by the early leaders of the modern Jewish State. In 1953, the Israeli village of Yemin Orde ("in the memory of Orde") was founded in his honor as a home for Holocaust orphans.

Wingate was the son of "devout members of the Plymouth Brethren,"[25] an evangelical movement established in Britain in the first half of the nineteenth century, which raised a banner for truth concerning Israel's restoration and Christ's return.

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22 Quoted in Abba Eban, *My People: The Story of the Jews* (New York: Behrman House, Inc., 1968), 433.
23 Hamilton, 155.
24 Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error: The Autobiography of Chaim Weizmann* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1949), 489–90.
25 Hamilton, 223.

The Lateness of the Hour

The chief architect of Plymouth Brethrenism was the Anglo-Irish clergyman and godson of Admiral Lord Nelson, John Nelson Darby (1800–82). In 1840, Darby noted in one of his many writings how the nations of the world were "occupied about Jerusalem (Zech.12:3), and know not what to do about it."[26] How pertinent Darby's words are today. In a series of lectures he delivered in Toronto, Canada, in 1863, Darby shifted his attention to the church. Drawing on the words of the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans, he brought the following indictment: "It is exactly through being wise in its own conceit that the professing church has fallen. It has looked on the Jews as entirely set aside, forgetting that 'the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.'"[27]

Following a horse-riding accident in 1827, Darby spent three long months convalescing at his sister's home in Dublin, where he devoted all of his time to studying the Scriptures. It was during this period that he finally owned Jesus as Lord and Savior, and began to understand more clearly the biblical distinction between Israel and the church. Although Darby ably expounded the Jewish roots of the Christian faith, sought to remedy the cancerous replacement theology which had spread through the church, and heralded the promised restoration of the Jewish people to their ancient homeland, his focus never wavered from proclaiming the gospel to the sinner and the second coming to the saint. As he declared in 1828, "Let the almighty doctrine of the cross be testified to all men, and let the eye of the believer be directed to the coming of the Lord."[28] Had Darby lived to witness the rebirth of the Jewish State in 1948, he would no doubt have discerned in Israel's national restoration the premier sign of Christ's imminent return. We will return to John Nelson Darby shortly.

Let us now continue our journey back through time and church history, and look at how the doctrine of Israel's restoration and Christ's return was first revived in the wake of the English Reformation, when the medieval yoke of the Roman Catholic Church was finally broken. We begin with the English Puritans who, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, re-stored the purity and simplicity of the Christian faith by re-establishing the authority of the Bible. These God-fearing men prepared the way for those who would later reclaim the doctrine of Israel's restoration from the eschatological dustbin of Reformed, amillennial theology, and who would, in the process, help to unveil the "blessed hope" of Christ's return (Titus 2:13).

26 John Nelson Darby, "The Hopes of the Church," in *The Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, vol. 2, ed. William Kelly (Kingston-on-Thames: Stow Hill Bible & Tract Depot, n.d.), 342.
27 Darby, "Lectures on the Second Coming," in *The Collected Writings*, vol. 11, 285.
28 Darby, "Considerations on the Nature and Unity of the Church of Christ," in *The Collected Writings*, vol. 1, 30.

The Puritans and the Bible

The theology of the English Puritans was rooted in the writings of men like William Tyndale (*ca.* 1494–1536). Tyndale was betrayed, kidnapped, and burned at the stake for defying the Pope and restoring the Word of God to the common people. John Wycliffe's translation of the Bible into English in 1382, along with the advent of the printing press in the mid-fifteenth century, paved the way for Tyndale's English translation of the New Testament in 1534. Tyndale's New Testament was the basis for all the major English translations which followed, including the popular Geneva Bible of 1560. This particular translation, which went through several editions, was the work of Protestant scholars who had fled Britain for Switzerland during the reign of "Bloody" Queen Mary (1553–58).

The Geneva Bible not only made the Scriptures more readily accessible to the people, with its easier-to-read style, numbered verses, and marginal notes, but also helped to transform the thinking of many Christians concerning Israel. In the 1560 edition, for example, the marginal note appended to Romans 11:26 explained that "Israel" meant "the *nation* of the Jews," and not the church of all ages as had been taught by the Roman Catholic Church *and* by the early Protestant reformers. The Geneva Bible was the translation favored by men like William Shakespeare, John Milton, John Bunyan, the Pilgrim fathers, and Oliver Cromwell. It was the most popular household translation of the Bible in England until it was denounced by King James I. It is important to note that the translators of the King James Version relied heavily on Tyndale and the Geneva Bible, without ever acknowledging their debt.

> **In the 1560 edition . . . the marginal note appended to Romans 11:26 explained that "Israel" meant "the *nation* of the Jews," and not the church of all ages as had been taught by the Roman Catholic Church *and* by the early Protestant reformers.**

England—An "Elect" Nation?

Although their achievements were many, the English Puritans generally *spiritualized* biblical prophecies relating to Israel's national restoration. Following the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588, many Englishmen believed that England, under Queen Elizabeth I, had replaced Israel as the elect people of God, and applied *Israel's* promises to their own nation. This was at a time when the Protestant church was still struggling to throw off the shackles of Augustine's amillennial theology, which dated back to the fourth century A.D. This theology, which spawned the belief that the church had replaced Israel and which denied that the Lord Jesus would come again to reign for a thousand years, underpins the official dogma of the Roman Catholic Church. Sadly it continues to inform many parts of the Protestant *and* evangelical church to this day.

Although the future *conversion* of the Jewish people was a consistent theme of many Puritan commentaries, and of sermons which were delivered before the English Parliament, it was left to men like Hugh Broughton, Robert Maton, Henry Archer, and Joseph Mede to raise a banner for belief in the future *restoration* of the Jewish people to their promised land. By far and away the most important advocate of this belief was Sir Henry Finch, who served as legal officer to King James I and as a Member of Parliament for Canterbury. In 1621, Finch published one of the most important, influential, and controversial works of the Puritan era. Entitled *The World's Great Restauration, Or, the Calling of the Jewes, and-with them-of all the nations and kingdomes of the earth, to the faith of Christ*, this book sent shockwaves through the political and religious establishment in Britain.

The World's Great Restoration

In his momentous work, Henry Finch included his own personal dedication to the Jewish people, assuring them that it was God's purpose "to bring thee home again, and to marry thee to himself by faith for evermore." He promised them that he would never fail to pray for their prosperity, and wrote the following: "Bowing my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of glory, that he would hasten that which he hath spoken concerning thee by the Prophets of old, and by the Apostles sent by his son."[29] Enraged by Finch's suggestion that all the nations of the world would one day be subject to a restored Jewish kingdom, King James I had Finch and his publisher arrested and imprisoned.

In 1648, Edward Nicholas published a pamphlet entitled *An Apology for the Honourable Nation of the Jews, and all the Sons of Israel*. Indicting the English for crimes committed against the Jewish people, whom he described as "the most honourable Nation of the world,"[30] Nicholas cited Jeremiah's prophecy that "all who devour you [Israel] will be devoured" (Jer 30:16). He warned that without national repentance, God would withdraw His favor from England. A year later, two Puritan exiles living in Amsterdam by the name of Joanna and Ebenezer Cartwright submitted their *Petition of the Jewes for the Repealing of the Act of Parliament for their banishment out of England*.[31] The Cartwrights urged Parliament to repeal the royal edict which had been issued by King Edward I in 1290, and called upon the English government to be "the first and the readiest to transport Israel's sons and daughters in their ships to the Land promised to their fore-

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29 Henry Finch, "To all the seed of Jacob, far and wide dispersed. Peace and Truth be multiplied unto you," in *The World's Great Restauration, Or, the Calling of the Jewes, and-with them-of all the nations and kingdomes of the earth, to the faith of Christ*, Henry Finch (London: William Gouge, 1621), preface.

30 Edward Nicholas, *An Apology for the Honourable Nation of the Jews, and All the Sons of Israel* (London: 1648), 4–5.

31 Johanna Cartwright, *Petition of the Jewes for the Repealing of the Act of Parliament for their banishment out of England* (London: Printed for George Roberts, 1649).

fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, for an everlasting Inheritance."[32] The political and spiritual tide was turning.

Cromwell and the Readmission of the Jews

On October 31, 1655, the chief rabbi of Amsterdam, Menasseh ben Israel, traveled to England to present his *Humble Address . . . in Behalf of the Jewish Nation* to the Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell. Ben Israel noted how many Christians shared his belief that Israel's restoration was "very near at hand."[33] Cromwell welcomed the petition, and on December 4, 1655, convened a conference of statesmen, lawyers, merchants, and theologians in Whitehall, London, to consider the question of readmitting the Jewish people to England. Although no consensus was ever reached at Whitehall, Cromwell *unofficially* repealed the expulsion edict of 1290. In his *Narrative of the Late Proceeds at Whitehall, Concerning the Jews* (1656), Henry Jesse expressed grave concerns that if the Jewish people were not readmitted at once, then "the Lord may show his displeasure to be great against England."[34] The Jewish people were finally, and *officially*, granted readmission following the restoration of the monarchy under Charles II in 1660.

A Marvelous Thing

The torch for Israel's restoration was taken up again in the eighteenth century by churchmen such as Joseph Perry, Samuel Collet, Joseph Eyre, and the bishop of Bristol and dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, Thomas Newton. In his *Dissertations on the Prophecies* (1754), Newton marveled at the uniqueness of the Jewish nation, which he likened to the burning bush that "hath been always burning, but is never consumed."[35] He believed that the fulfillment of prophecies relating to the return of the Jewish people to their ancient homeland was an unanswerable argument for the truth of the Bible. It was "a marvellous thing," he said, that

> after so many wars, battles, and sieges, after so many fires, famines, and pestilences, after so many rebellions, massacres, and persecutions, after so many years of captivity, slavery, and misery, they are not destroyed utterly, and though scattered among all people, yet subsist as a distinct people by themselves.

32 Barbara W. Tuchman, *Bible and Sword: How the British Came to Palestine* (London: Papermac, 1982), 121.

33 *Menasseh ben Israel's mission to Oliver Cromwell: being a reprint of the pamphlets published by Menasseh ben Israel to promote the re-admission of the Jews to England 1649–1656*, ed. Lucien Wolf (London: Macmillan & Co., Limited, 1901), 78–79.

34 Henry Jesse, *A Narrative of the Late Proceeds at Whitehall, Concerning the Jews* (London: 1656), 7.

35 Thomas Newton, *Dissertations on the Prophecies, which have remarkably been fulfilled, and at this time are fulfilling in the world* (London: n.d.), 92.

As Newton asked, "Where is any thing comparable to this to be found in all the histories, and in all the nations under the sun?"[36]

A New Awakening in the Church

The eighteenth-century evangelical revival, or "awakening," in Britain not only quickened the souls of many *sinners* in the land, but it also opened the hearts of many *saints* to the truth concerning Israel's restoration and the Lord's return. As men and women began to experience God's transforming power in their lives and to hunger for His Word, so the prophecies relating to the Jewish people came into sharper focus. Men like John and Charles Wesley were used mightily by God during this period to revive the nation and to awaken its slumbering church. Although their eschatology, or understanding of the end times, is not entirely certain, the hymns which were penned by the Wesley brothers suggest that they had more than just a passing interest in the Jewish people. The following extract is taken from *A Collection of Hymns* that was published by John Wesley in 1779. The hymn in question is beautifully re-enacted in the award-winning Christian documentary film *The Cyrus Call* (Hatikvah Film Trust, 2008):

> **As men and women began to experience God's transforming power in their lives and to hunger for His Word, so the prophecies relating to the Jewish people came into sharper focus.**

> We know it must be done,
> For God hath spoke the word:
> All Israel shall the Saviour own,
> To their first state restored:
> Rebuilt by his command,
> Jerusalem shall rise;
> Her temple on Moriah stand
> Again, and touch the skies.

Preaching to a congregation of Jews and Gentiles in Whitechapel, London, in 1796, one of the sons of the Evangelical Awakening, William Cooper, declared that the Jews had been preserved by God "for some very extraordinary event." He continued:

> Look at a Jew, and you see a miracle; his nation is stamped on his countenance; and it is an honourable nation. . . . Behold a Jew, and you see an expectant of the fulfilment of the Scriptures . . . a monu-

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36 Thomas Newton, "The Fulfilment of the Mosaical Prophecies Concerning the Jews as Unanswerable Argument for the Truth of the Bible," in *Elegant Extracts: or, Useful and Entertaining Passages in Prose, Selected for the Improvement of Young Persons*, 8th ed., Vicesimus Knox (London: 1803), 234.

ment of their veracity; for the time will come, I hope it is near, when all Israel shall be saved.[37]

In his *Remarks on the Signs of the Times* (1798), Edward King spoke in a similar vein. King argued that the religious world was "too backward to believe, and apprehend, what is really written" about Christ's return, having been "blinded by their constant habit of contending against the Jews."[38] In King's mind, belief in the second coming of the Lord Jesus and in the restoration of the Jewish people went hand in hand.

The Albury Park Conference

At a time when Europe was reeling from revolution in France and Napoleon Bonaparte was beginning to flex his imperial muscles, a remnant of true believers within the church believed that such events had been foretold in Scripture. As wars, rumors of wars, and revolutions transformed the political landscape, a number of evangelicals were convinced that the birth pangs which Jesus had spoken about in Matthew 24 had begun.

In his *Narrative of the Circumstances which Led to the Setting up of the Church of Christ at Albury* (1834), wealthy landowner, banker, and member of the British Parliament Henry Drummond (1786–1860) recalled how he had lamented the way "the majority of what was called the Religious World disbelieved that the Jews were to be restored to their own land, and that the Lord Jesus Christ was to return and reign in person on this earth." At that time, amillennialism and particularly postmillennialism held sway in the church. In 1826, Drummond took a decisive step. He invited to his home at Albury Park in Surrey, England, thirty of the most notable Christian scholars who were known to have "preserved their faith"[39] in Israel's national restoration and Christ's *pre*millennial return. The purpose of the Albury Park gathering was therefore to discuss "the great prophetic questions" of the day, questions which related to "the times of the Gentiles," "the present and future condition of the Jews," and "the future advent of the Lord."[40]

There can be no doubt that the men who assembled at Albury Park between the years 1826 and 1830 were raised up and used by God to help sound the midnight cry and point the church back to the Scriptures. There was, however, one major flaw in their end-times doctrine, which ultimately hampered their witness to the truth.

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37 William Cooper, *The Promised Seed: A Sermon, Preached to God's Ancient Israel, the Jews, at Sion-Chapel, Whitechapel, on Sunday Afternoon, August 28, 1796*, 3rd ed. (London: 1796), 14, 9, 34.

38 Edward King, *Remarks on the Signs of the Times* (London: 1798), 23–27.

39 Henry Drummond, *Narrative of the Circumstances which Led to the Setting up of the Church of Christ at Albury* (1834), 7.

40 Edward Irving, "Preliminary Discourse," in *The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty, by Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra, a Converted Jew, translated from the Spanish, with a Preliminary Discourse, by the Rev. Edward Irving, A.M*, vol. 1 (London: L. B. Seeley and Son, 1827), clxxxviii, clxxxix-cxc.

The 1260 "Days" of Prophecy

In Daniel and Revelation, we read about specific periods of time during which certain future events are prophesied to take place. These events, confined to the period known as the great tribulation, relate to the times of the Gentiles, the rise of the antichrist, the judgment and restoration of Israel, and the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus we read of "a time, times, and half a time" lasting three-and-a-half years (Dan 7:25; 12:7; Rev 12:14); of 1,260 days or 42 months (Rev 11:2; 12:6; 13:5); of 1,290 and 1,335 days (Dan 12:11–12); and of 2,300 "evenings and mornings" (Dan 8:14). The good news is that we do not need a degree in mathematics to understand the meaning of these prophecies. The bad news is that many Christians have either ignored these numbers, interpreted them symbolically, or dismissed the possibility that such apocalyptic events could take place within such a short space of time. Consequently, the prophetic "days" of Daniel and Revelation have often been transformed into calendar "years," causing many in the church to lose their prophetic bearings.

Despite their undoubted and invaluable contribution to the evangelical church during the nineteenth century, those who attended the Albury Park Conferences perpetuated this erroneous method of interpreting prophecy, which can be traced back to the Protestant Reformation. Regrettably, this led many of these true and devoted servants of God to calculate the date not only of Israel's restoration, but also of Christ's return, on the basis that the 1,260 prophetic "days" were to be understood as 1,260 historical "years." These years were typically said to have begun either during the reign of the Eastern Roman Emperor Justinian (A.D. 527–565) or during the reign of one of the early medieval popes. This approach came to be known as "historicism" and was dominant in the church until the second quarter of the nineteenth century.

Historicism's Great Disappointment

The same "historicist" or "year-day" approach to prophecy was followed by many believers and church leaders across the Atlantic in America. One of the most infamous cases was that of the New England farmer and Baptist preacher William Miller (1782–1849). In 1840, Miller announced that the second coming of Christ would take place between March 21, 1843, and March 21, 1844. When the Lord did not return, a revised date of October 22, 1844, was set, and Miller's followers, known as the "Millerites," duly gathered on a hill in white garments to meet the Lord. As the day closed, "the sun sank as it had on every other day since creation, and Christ had not come."[41] Despite what became known as "The Great Disappointment," Miller's doctrines were repackaged by a number of his followers, who broke away and formed the Seventh-day Adventists and later the Branch

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41 Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism 1800–1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 54.

Davidians (of Waco and David Ko-resh fame).

One man who helped remedy the growing disillusionment with biblical prophecy, which swept through the American churches as a result of Miller's actions, was John Nelson Darby. Darby's public rebuttal of "Millerism" during his seven preaching tours of the United States, from 1862 to 1877, enabled him to secure audiences with notable Christian leaders such as James H. Brookes, D. L. Moody, and Adoniram Judson Gordon—three of the founding fathers of what became known as dispensationalism.

In the next issue, we will consider John Nelson Darby's legacy in more detail, and highlight the impact he made on believers across America who wholeheartedly embraced and zealously proclaimed the truth that God had not finished with Israel, and that Jesus was coming soon.

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Yuval School of Arts

In September 2010, a new institution emerged within the Messianic movement in Israel. The Yuval School of Arts—sponsored by HaChotam publishing, the King of Kings community, and the Jerusalem Assembly / House of Redemption congregation—is the first of its kind in the country. The school offers instruction in music, art, and performing arts for Messianic children and youth. The vision behind the school is to help young believers to develop and make use of their God-given gifts, to His honor and for the benefit of the believing body in the country.

The school is led by Alex Atlas and has attracted many students, primarily from Jerusalem, but also from the greater Tel Aviv area. In January 2011, the school sent out an invitation to the first Yuval school concert, which was held at the Pavilion in Jerusalem. Over 250 people filled the concert hall as children and youth of all ages performed. The school, which is still working to expand its programs, will no doubt be an important tool in training young, talented believers for service in congregations around the country.

Cross Reference Bible

The Bible Society in Israel announced in January 2011 the publication of the first Hebrew Cross Reference Bible (Old and New Testaments). The Bible contains over 90,000 cross references, a Bible reading plan, a list of messianic prophecies in the Old Testament and their fulfillment in Christ, and a list of rabbinical references to messianic prophecies in the Old Testament. The Bible will be an important tool for believers in studying Scripture, as well as in evangelism.

Assault on Kay Wilson

On December 18, 2010, Kay Wilson, a Messianic Jew working as a tour guide for Shoresh Tours (part of CMJ's ministry in Israel), together with her friend, Kristine

NEWS FROM THE ISRAELI SCENE

by **Knut Høyland**

Luken, were brutally attacked by two Arab men as they were hiking in a forest west of Jerusalem. They were both stabbed repeatedly. Luken, an American citizen and CMJ employee in the UK, died from her injuries, while Wilson survived by pretending to be dead and then managed to get help from some passersby. She was admitted to the hospital with serious stab wounds, but is now recovering. The police have arrested two Palestinian men who have confessed to perpetrating the attack, and the incident has been classified as an act of terrorism. The whole country, and especially the Messianic community, was shocked by the attack. A memorial service for Luken was held at Christ Church in the Old City on December 23. In the media, much focus was given to the incident and to the fact that Wilson and Luken were part of the Messianic community. Several newspapers repeated a statement from CMJ in Israel, describing Luken as a person with "an infectious love for God and a great admiration and love for the Jewish people and the Holy Land."

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