MISHKAN

A Forum on the Gospel and the Jewish People | *Issue 57/ 2008*

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ISSUE 57 / 2008

General Editor: Kai Kjær-Hansen

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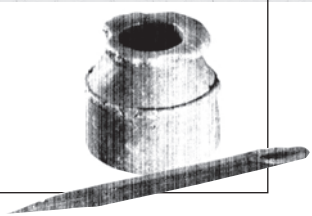
Mishkan is a forum for discussion, and articles included do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors, Pasche Institute of Jewish Studies, or Criswell College.

Mishkan is the Hebrew word for *tabernacle* or *dwelling place* (John 1:14).

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR



Mapping Messianic Jewish Theology

By **Kai Kjær-Hansen**

"Mapping Messianic Jewish Theology" is the title of Richard S. Harvey's Ph.D. dissertation. Harvey teaches theology at All Nations Christian College, Ware, UK; he is one of the associate editors of *Mishkan*; and for many years he has been involved in Jewish evangelism – not just its theory but also in practice.

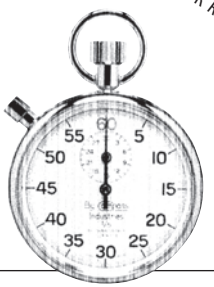
A person who can be seen in the streets handing out leaflets about Jesus or proclaiming the Jewish Messiah from Hyde Park Corner in London, a person who has gifts for theological reflection, must be worth listening to.

The provisional climax of this thinking is presented in his dissertation, "Mapping Messianic Jewish Theology," which is the theme of this issue of *Mishkan*, where we first let Harvey present his ideas and then let three other persons reflect on his work. Two of these, Daniel Nessim and Rich Robinson, are "insiders" as far as the Messianic movement is concerned; the third, Richard S. Briggs, sees himself as an "outsider." All three have allowed themselves to be challenged by Harvey's dissertation and make relevant critical comments on it.

Harvey maps out modern Messianic Jewish theology in eight categories or types. If it was not known already, it now becomes clear that what Harvey terms modern "Messianic Jewish theology" is *not* an unambiguous entity. Some may think that it is so ambiguous that a choice needs to be made, just as it is necessary in a Christian context to choose among different Christian "theologies."

After reading Harvey's dissertation it seems impossible to maintain that it is only Christians who have difficulty formulating their theology. So have Jesus-believing Jews. With regard to this, Messianic Jews and Gentile Christians now appear to be in the same boat.

A CURRENT ISSUE



Crystal Night and Prayer

By **Kai Kjær-Hansen**

This column was written in the days immediately after November 9–10, dates which probably mean little to most people. But these dates are significant in Jewish history and presumably also in German history. These dates should also be remembered by us who are involved in Jewish evangelism. Indeed, they should be commemorated in such a way that we are challenged to reflection and self-criticism.

Seventy years ago, in 1938, German Jews were violently attacked on November 9–10. Ninety-one Jews were murdered; approximately 25,000 Jews were sent to concentration camps; 267 synagogues were ruined or burnt down; Jewish burial grounds were desecrated; and more than 7,000 shops were destroyed. The streets were strewn with broken glass from the shop windows, which gave this horrible event the name "die Kristallnacht" – "Crystal Night" or "Night of Broken Glass."

This became the starting signal for the extermination of Jews in Nazi Germany and other countries – six million Jews, among them one and a half million children. The starting signal was fired in Germany – Europe's cultural center, a "Christian nation" then in the grip of Nazi ideology.

The seventy-year anniversary of Kristallnacht has been commemorated all over the world, including Germany, and also in Denmark, which is my observation post.

As a Dane, born in April 1945 in the last days of the war, I have no part or lot in Kristallnacht and what followed in its wake. But as a Christian involved in Jewish evangelism, I cannot brush this sickening thing aside and park it with the Christians of the past, many of whom – though not all – chose the part of the spectator.

In a sermon on November 13, 1938, Hans Fuglsang-Damgaard, bishop of Copenhagen, spoke sharply against what took place on Kristallnacht a few days before and expressed his solidarity with the Jewish Christians in Germany. Shortly thereafter, 149 of 190 pastors in the Danish Lutheran Church in Copenhagen signed a letter in which they gave expression to "their deep compassion with our Jewish countrymen on the occasion of the sufferings that in these days have befallen their compatriots elsewhere and which must fill all Christians with horror." In an interview, the

bishop called the churches to pray for the suffering Jews on the following Sunday. From the bishop's archive material, it appears he believed that the church of Christ should teach neither anti-Semitism nor the superiority of the Aryan race.

The Danish Israel Mission also turned against what had happened. Articles in its magazine reported on the hardships of the Jews. On the front page of the January 1939 issue, the following headline can be seen: "The blazing fires in which the Jewish synagogues burned on November 10, 1938, will be remembered longer than those who lit the fires can imagine." The Danish Israel Mission, along with other organizations, organized a collection of money for Jewish refugees.

This, however, does not mean that everything was rosy in Denmark in those days. The bishop of Copenhagen, the Danish Israel Mission, and others who fought for the Jews and against anti-Semitism were contradicted by Danes of a different opinion.

Martin Schwarz Lausten, professor of church history at the University of Copenhagen, recounts this story in the book *Jødesympati og jødehad i folkekirken* (Sympathy with Jews, Hatred of Jews in the Danish Lutheran Church). The book appeared in 2007, and is the sixth and last volume of a comprehensive study of the relationship between Christians and Jews in Denmark from the Middle Ages till 1948 – a work of almost 3,500 pages in Danish.

In the last volume, the Danish Israel Mission is often mentioned. There is much criticism but also praise. The way I read the book, the criticism exceeds the praise – because the Danish Israel Mission, in these difficult times, adheres to its belief that Jews need Jesus for salvation.

An example of this is when Schwarz Lausten calls attention to the mission's appeal for prayer for the Jewish people in the autumn of 1939. This appeal contains a detailed description of the unfortunate consequences of the racial hatred of the Jews, and it concludes by asking what the Christians of Denmark can do. The answer is that "we" through mercy and intercession can show "our Jewish brothers" that anti-Semitism is a plant that does not belong in Denmark's garden, and that "racial hatred in any form is irreconcilable with living Christianity."

Having mentioned this appeal, Schwarz Lausten continues: "This glowing appeal cannot but have caused joy among Danish Jews." But then he notes that on the said prayer day, the Christians in Denmark were to pray for the Jews that God in his grace would turn all the evil so it would become a blessing for the Jews, for the Jews must know that we "are ready to share with them the best which we have, namely Jesus Christ and his redemptive work on Calvary."

This reflects, as Schwarz Lausten says elsewhere in the book, "the anti-Jewish rhetoric and theology" of the Danish Israel Mission. In other words: Prayer in the name of Jesus for suffering Jews is acceptable. Prayer in the name of Jesus that they may come to faith in Jesus reflects "anti-Jewish rhetoric and theology."

This is a logical short circuit that I cannot accept, and personally I prefer

living with that accusation rather than omit praying – and working – for the salvation of Jewish people.

Having said that, I am not unaffected by Schwarz Lausten's many examples of unpleasant generalizations about Jews and their religious worship and about God's judgment on them and their lives, and examples of well-meant explanations of the purpose of God's judgment, etc. I wish, however, that – to an even larger extent – he had compared such statements with what was said by Jews at the same time about, for example, the Jewish people's suffering and God's judgment. Without such comparison, the presentation becomes lopsided. But this does not change the fact that there are statements in magazines and publications from the mission whose chairman I am today that I must dissociate myself from, statements I would not let pass my lips.

I suppose the same is true about what has been written in the magazines of other Jewish missions over the last two centuries – or how? It does not matter whether it has been written by Christians or Jesus-believing Jews.

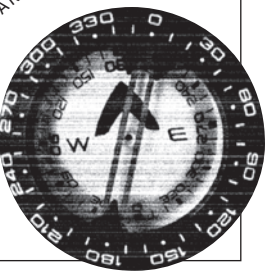
If this contention holds good, it is high time that we who are involved in Jewish evangelism scrutinize our own tradition critically – if we do not do so, it will be done by others who are unsympathetic to Jewish evangelism as such. If necessary, we ourselves must, in crystal clear terms, make it clear what we dissociate ourselves from in the way of generalizations, vocabulary, and tone, for example in the descriptions of Jews and Jewish worship in earlier mission literature. This should include a certain caution against determining in confident terms what is God's *purpose* with any event.

It must be possible to do that without abandoning our conviction that Jews need Jesus for salvation – as much as the rest of us.

I recently came across a challenging quotation by Henry Rasmussen, who had been sent by the Danish Israel Mission to work in Lwów (Lemberg in Eastern Poland) in 1938. He was in touch with some Jews who, in the 1930s, had been exiled from Germany. In the Danish Israel Mission's magazine (March 1940), Henry Rasmussen writes the following thought-provoking words:

> The biggest disaster in this world is not really that they [the Jews] do not know Christ but rather that they think they know him, and it is the Christians among whom they live who are to blame for that. They think they know the spirit and thoughts of Christ, for surely that must be what dictates the conduct of the Christians. They think they know the New Testament! Everywhere on the house wall are slogans against Jews: "Bij Zyda" (Slay the Jew), "Zyd twój wróg" (The Jew is your enemy), "Precz z Zydami" (Down with the Jews) and many other things which they believe are quotations from the New Testament! They believe that Jesus is the Jews' enemy no. 1, the anti-Semites' anti-Semite. How should they be able to believe otherwise?

May we who continue to pray and work for the salvation of Israel in the name of Jesus make it crystal clear that Jesus is the Jews' *friend* no. 1.



In Search of Messianic Jewish Theology

by **Richard Harvey**

Messianic Judaism is a Jewish form of Christianity and a Christian form of Judaism, a form of cultural, religious, and theological expression adopted in recent years by an increasing number of Jewish people worldwide who believe in Yeshua (Jesus) as the promised Messiah. Messianic Judaism finds its expression in Messianic congregations and synagogues, and in the individual lifestyle of Messianic Jews, who combine Jewish identity with belief in Jesus.

There are some 150,000 Jewish believers in Jesus worldwide, according to conservative estimates. More than 100,000 are in the USA, approximately 10,000 in Israel, the remainder being found throughout the approximately 14 million worldwide Jewish population. There are over 200 Messianic groups in the USA, and over 100 in Israel. Whilst they are not uniform in their beliefs and expression, the majority adhere to orthodox Christian beliefs on the uniqueness and deity of Christ, the Trinity, the authority of Scripture, etc., whilst expressing their beliefs in a Jewish cultural and religious context which affirms the continuing election of Israel (the Jewish people) and the ongoing purposes of God for his people.

There have always been Jewish believers in Jesus, from the time of the early church. These "followers of the way" or Nazarenes were known and accepted by the Church Fathers (Jerome, Justin Martyr, Epiphanius), but as Judaism and Christianity emerged as separate ways in the 4th century it became increasingly unacceptable to ecclesiastical and rabbinic authorities to allow the legitimacy of Jewish expressions of faith in Christ. Excluded from the synagogue for their belief in the Trinity and divinity of Christ, and anathematized by the church for continued practice of Jewish customs, they were known as Ebionites ("the poor ones") and suspected of legalism and an adoptionist Christology.

Small groups of Jewish Christians continued in the East, and Jewish converts to Christianity were afforded protection in the midst of an anti-Semitic European church by institutions such as the Domus Conversorum (House of Converts), which was maintained by royal patronage. But it was not until the modern missionary movement and an interest in mission to the Jewish people that a community of testimony of Jewish Christians reappeared.

In 1809, Joseph Samuel Christian Frey, son of a rabbi from Posen, Hungary, encouraged the formation of the London Society for the Promotion of Christianity Among the Jews, which became the Church's Ministry Among the Jewish People (CMJ). Encouraged by CMJ and other Jewish missions, the growing number of "Hebrew Christians," as they called themselves, formed their own Prayer Union (1866), British (1888) and International (1925) Alliances, and developed their own liturgies and Hebrew Christian churches in Europe, Palestine, and the USA. By the end of the 19th century, many Jewish people had become Christians, many for reasons of assimilation and emancipation from the ghettos into European society, with access to commerce, education, and secular society. Nevertheless, a recognizable number, such as Alfred Edersheim, Adolph Saphir, Augustus Neander, and Bishop Samuel Schereschewsky wished to retain aspects of their Jewish identity alongside faith in Christ, and were both a blessing to the church and a testimony to their people.

After the Second World War, the Holocaust, and the establishment of the State of Israel, Jewish believers in Jesus from a new generation were concerned to rediscover their ethnic roots and express their faith from a Jewish perspective. In the wake of the Jesus movement of the 1970s, "Jews for Jesus" moved from a slogan used on the streets of San Francisco to an organization of Jewish missionaries to their people. At the same time, the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America encouraged the establishment of Messianic congregations and synagogues. In Israel a new generation of native-born Israelis (*sabras*) were finding the Messiah and starting Hebrew-speaking congregations. At the beginning of the 21st century, an international network of Messianic groups exists, expressing denominational, theological, and cultural diversity, but united in belief in Yeshua.

Messianic Jews, to varying degrees, observe the Sabbath, keep kosher food laws, circumcise their sons, and celebrate the Jewish festivals, seeing Jesus and the church in Acts as their model and example. They celebrate Passover, showing how Yeshua came as the Passover Lamb, and practice baptism, linking to the Jewish *mikveh* (ritual bath). They worship with their own liturgies, based on the synagogue service, with readings from the Torah and New Testament. Pointing to Paul's teaching in Romans 9–11 and his practice on his missionary journeys, their hermeneutic of Scripture repudiates traditional Christian anti-Judaism ("the Jews killed Christ") and supersessionism (the church replaces Israel as the "new Israel"), arguing for forms of Torah observance that testify to the presence of a believing remnant in the midst of unbelieving Israel as a witness to the Messiah.

Messianic Jewish theology (MJT) has developed in the light of its Protestant evangelical background and its engagement with Jewish concerns. The doctrinal statements of Messianic Jewish organizations are uniformly orthodox, but are often expressed in Jewish rather than Hellenistic thought forms, and are more closely linked to Jewish concepts and readings of Scripture. Many Messianic Jews are influenced by the Charismatic movement, although an increasing number are opting for more formal

styles of worship using the resources of the Jewish prayer book and standard liturgical features such as the wearing of the prayer-shawl (*tallit*) and the use of Torah scrolls.

Most Messianic Jews are premillennial (but not necessarily dispensationalist) in their eschatology, seeing God's purposes for Israel being played out with various degrees of linkage to the present political events in the Middle East. Many advocate *aliyah* (immigration to Israel) for Messianic Jews, although the majority of Messianic Jews live in the diaspora. A growing number are concerned for reconciliation ministry with their Arab Christian neighbors.

MJT is a theology constructed in dialectic with Judaism and Christianity, refined in discussion between reflective practitioners engaged with Messianic Judaism, and developed into a new theological tradition based on the twin epistemic priorities of the continuing election of the Jewish people and the recognition of Jesus as the risen Messiah and incarnate Son of God.

Its key concerns are the nature and functions of the Messiah, the role of the Torah, and the place of Israel in the purposes of God. Its ongoing fashioning of Messianic Jewish identity, self-definition, and expression in lifecycle and liturgy are the visible manifestation and practical application of its theological activity. MJT is thus theoretical and theological reflection that arises from the faith and practice of Messianic Judaism. It is a theology of Jewish identity linked to belief in Jesus as Messiah.

It is a type of theology (both dogmatic and speculative) which is eclectic in its form and contents, covering relevant aspects of Jewish and Christian thought, theology, and praxis. It is arranged according to the key issues and topics that concern the contemporary Messianic movement. It is articulated in bilingual modes, speaking to both Jewish and Christian publics, combining the two modes of discourse of Jewish and Christian thought, but challenging, renewing and redefining them to form a coherent synthesis of meaning around the revelation of the messiahship of Jesus and the Jewishness of this belief.

Missiological Implications

The Messianic movement represents for missiologists a classic example of contextualization and ethno-theological formation. As the movement matures it provides an object lesson of the challenges and possibilities of mission in a gospel-resistant culture with 2,000 years of misperception of the Christian message. Some Messianic Jews would advocate Messianic congregations as the most effective missionary tool, but this is not born out by the evidence of the majority of Jewish believers in Jesus, who come to faith through the witness of their Christian friends in mainstream churches. The Homogenous Unit Principle (McGavran) does not precisely apply, as Jews are far from being a homogenous unit, yet the solidarity that Jewish believers in Jesus recognize does promote the need for an ethnic church which remains connected to the majority of the

Jewish people who do not yet believe in Jesus.

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Some would argue that all Jewish believers in Jesus should remain (or become) Torah-observant, or they will be lost to their people, but this view also has not been accepted by the majority of Messianic Jews, who are happy in their membership in the universal church. They see their freedom in the Messiah as allowing them to choose how much they identify with different forms of Judaism and Jewish identity. In terms of witness, Messianic Jews vary in their styles and strategy. A small number, often "secret believers," retain active membership in non-Messianic synagogues, but this option is not typical. Others are highly visible in high-profile witness on the streets in major cities, at stalls at New Age festivals in Israel, and meeting Israeli tourists on the hippie trail in India. Others prefer a less overt engagement within the Jewish community, through joining communal organizations and through day-to-day contact with friends and family. A growing number of Messianic Jews recognize their missionary calling to be a "light to the nations" and a blessing to the whole church, and seek ways to educate and challenge the church as to the riches of its heritage and the Jewish roots of its faith.

My own work in the field of MJT has been to carry out a "mapping exercise" to prepare the way for more detailed theological construction. The present issue of *Mishkan*, which introduces the results of my Ph.D. dissertation, encourages those in the field of Jewish evangelism with an interest in the emerging theologies of the Messianic movement to engage sympathetically, critically, and reflectively in the project. Messianic Judaism has a theological voice that needs to be heard by both the church and the Jewish people. It proclaims the messiahship of Yeshua and the Jewishness of faith in Jesus in ways that challenge the centuries-old assumption that the two are incompatible. If it can learn to speak with a clear voice, it will surely be heard.

A Typology of Messianic Jewish Theology

by **Richard Harvey**

This summary of conclusions demonstrates that Messianic Jewish theology (MJT) is an emerging theology. Byron Sherwin's categories of authenticity, coherence, contemporaneity, and communal acceptance that "characterise a valid Jewish theology" are applicable to it, and serve as guidelines for its development.[1] The *authenticity* of MJT is evident in that whilst it draws from both Jewish and Christian theological traditions, it is in the process of articulating its own position. It is beginning to speak with its own "inner voice." Its claim to authenticity will only be recognized as it responds effectively to the louder voices of the two larger theological traditions amongst which it clamors for a hearing. By finding and articulating its own authentic "theological voice," it will challenge the boundary lines that have traditionally separated Judaism from Christianity.

The *coherence* of MJT around the two epistemic priorities of the Messiahship of Jesus and the election of Israel (the Jewish people) has yet to be stated systematically and comprehensively. These two key affirmations, if held together in creative tension, provide fruitful ground for the elaboration of a coherent theology. The methodological issues to be addressed pose a considerable challenge to such a project. Questions of the nature of the sources, norms, methods, content, and results of such a systematic MJT await the production of a comprehensive work at a level that has thus far been beyond any one individual within the Messianic movement. This dissertation makes a small contribution to that endeavor, by summarizing and assessing existing work in progress.

The *contemporaneity* of MJT is also a concern. The writings of the formative period in the 1970s and 1980s are not as relevant in the new millennium, as they expressed the thinking of those pioneering the movement. The post-formative positions proposed by Mark Kinzer and the Hashivenu group have yet to gain general support. The issues that concern the contemporary Jewish community and its Messianic contingent are as pressing as ever. Jewish identity, the survival of the Jewish people, the question of Israel, and the coming of the Messiah are issues that MJT

1 Byron L. Sherwin, *Toward a Jewish Theology: Methods, Problems and Possibilities* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1991), 9.

must address appropriately, constructively, and persuasively in a contemporary context.

The *communal acceptance* of MJT is vital, as the growth and maturity of the Messianic movement is dependent on its acceptance of MJT in the light of changing needs and contexts. For MJT to be accepted by the Messianic community and the wider Jewish and Christian communities with which it interacts, it must provide answers that are satisfying, relevant, and applicable to future generations. With such concerns for authenticity, coherence, contemporaneity, and communal acceptance in view, the present state of MJT is now examined through a characterization of the various theological streams within the Messianic movement.

A Typology of Messianic Jewish Theologies

At present there is no consensus or unitary theology of Messianic Judaism. The purpose of this dissertation has been to map not only the theological concerns of MJT, but also how these are addressed by various practitioners. This section proposes a new typology to describe the plurality of MJT on the basis of the findings of this study. Previous typologies have observed different strands within the Messianic movement, and these are briefly discussed.

David Stern described a series of future options for Messianic Jews, based on "ideal types" of Messianic Judaism and Hebrew Christianity.[2] His options are "Ultimate Messianic Jew," "Ultimate Hebrew Christian," and a range of more limited possibilities within these two main categories: "Ultimately Jewish but Limited Messianic Possibilities," "Ultimate Hebrew Christianity of Today," "Present Limit of Hebrew Christianity," and "Present Limit of Messianic Judaism." He poses the question, "If you are a Messianic Jew, in which direction are you headed?" The discussion is unsatisfactory, limited as it was by the then-incipient nature of the Messianic movement and its lack of theological development at the time. Stern's grid constructs a dualistic and antithetical relationship between "Hebrew Christianity" and "Messianic Judaism." As one of the leaders of Messianic Judaism in the 1970s, he is at pains to distance Messianic Judaism from Hebrew Christianity, and his use of the metaphor of parent and child oversimplifies the questions and polarizes the alternatives, without articulating the nature of the theological questions involved.

Mark Kinzer distinguishes between "Missionary" and "Postmissionary" Messianic Judaism.[3] "Missionary Messianic Judaism" developed from Hebrew Christianity and the Jewish missions. It was formulated by individuals like Joseph Rabinowitz and organizations such as Jews for Jesus. It was then expressed in the 1970s and 1980s by the MJAA and the UMJC.

2 David Stern, *Messianic Jewish Manifesto* (Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1991), 234–38.

3 Mark S. Kinzer, *Postmissionary Messianic Judaism: Redefining Christian Engagement with the Jewish People* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2005).

Kinzer articulates five principles that Postmissionary Messianic Judaism affirms, and assesses to what degree they are held by others.[4] These are 1) Israel's irrevocable election and covenant; 2) the normative force of basic Jewish practice (Torah observance); 3) the validity of rabbinic tradition; 4) "a bilateral ecclesiology" that accepts the continuing position of the Jewish people as the people of God in partnership with the *ecclesia* of the nations; and 5) national solidarity with Israel. This enables Kinzer to distinguish between the new "Postmissionary" paradigm he proposes and other previous forms.

Both Stern and Kinzer use dualist conceptual schemes of Hebrew Christianity and Messianic Judaism (Stern), and more recently of "Missionary" and "Postmissionary" Messianic Judaism (Kinzer). Stern's aim is to argue for "Messianic Judaism" over against "Hebrew Christianity," and Kinzer favors "Postmissionary Messianic Judaism" against "Missionary Messianic Judaism." Both oversimplify the complexity of MJT for their own purposes, and without further detailing of the considerable theological variation found within MJT. Therefore a new typology is needed.

Eight Types of Messianic Jewish Theology

The present typology is more tentative and less dualist than those of Stern and Kinzer, tracing developing "streams" rather than clearly defined "schools" of theology within Messianic Judaism. The groupings are somewhat arbitrary and there are some overlaps, but leading voices are identified that speak representatively for each stream. The methods, criteria, and assumptions used are characterized, as are the structure and organization of their thought; their key concerns and emphases; the influences and the resources they draw from in Jewish and Christian theologies; the degree to which they are reflective and self-aware of the process of theologizing; the contexts and constituencies to which they are linked; and the possible future for their thought.

The views of each stream on the nature of God, the Messiah, the Torah in theory and in practice, and the future of Israel will be summarized where they have been addressed. The types of MJT range from those closest to the Protestant evangelicalism from which the Messianic movement has emerged, at one end of the spectrum, to those who locate their core identity within "Jewish social space" and Jewish religious and theological norms.

Type 1 – Jewish Christianity, Christocentric and Reformed (Maoz)

This type of MJT may be characterized as Christian proclamation, with limited cultural and linguistic translation into a Jewish frame of reference. Baruch Maoz identifies himself as an ethno-cultural "Jewish" Christian in dialogue with those in the Messianic movement who advocate a re-

4 Ibid., 293.

turn to a religious "Judaism."[5] Maoz works with the presuppositions of Reformed Protestantism and is highly critical of Rabbinic Judaism. His theology is shaped to correct what he sees as the error of Messianic Judaism: compromise on Christian essentials by acceptance of Rabbinic Judaism.

Maoz's doctrine of God reflects Christian orthodoxy with little engagement with Jewish theological concerns. His Christology is expressed in the creeds, and expounded as Reformed dogmatics. The law is fulfilled in Christ, with Jewish observance permitted only when in conformity with New Testament practice. The key theological concern is the elevation of Jesus as Messiah, the uniqueness of his saving work, and the challenge to Rabbinic Judaism that this poses. Judaism and Jewish identity cannot be allowed to diminish the authority of Christ as revealed in Scripture. The hermeneutical system is that of the Protestant Reformation and conservative evangelicalism.

Maoz has a strong political loyalty to the State of Israel, but justifies this on the grounds of national and cultural identity. He is critical of premillennialism and studiedly agnostic on eschatology. Maoz's thought, with its Christian Reformed theological emphasis, its non-charismatic and anti-rabbinic attitude, appeals to those with a focus on Scripture as interpreted through the Reformation tradition. Within the land of Israel, such views are popular with those disaffected with the more superficial elements of the Messianic movement and unimpressed with more engaged forms of Torah-observance. The challenge for Maoz's approach will be to develop an appropriate, coherent doctrine of Israel, and a theology of culture that does not artificially separate an ethno-cultural "Jewishness" from religious "Judaism." Maoz's arbitrary distinction between the two is problematic, and has not met with general acceptance.[6]

Type 2 – Dispensationalist Hebrew Christianity (Fruchtenbaum)

Arnold Fruchtenbaum is the leading theologian in this group, whose expression of Jewishness and Jewish identity are defined within the parameters of dispensationalism.[7] The shape of Fruchtenbaum's theology is determined by a systematic and programmatic application of dispensationalist teaching and method to existential questions of Jewish identity and faith in Jesus.

Fruchtenbaum's God is the God of Protestant evangelicalism, articulated in the mode of revised dispensationalism, with little room for speculative thought or contextualization.[8] There is no use for rabbinic or Jewish

5 Baruch Maoz, *Judaism Is Not Jewish: A Friendly Critique of the Messianic Movement* (Fearn: Mentor/Christian Focus Publications, 2003). Others include Stan Telchin, *Messianic Judaism Is Not Christianity: A Loving Call to Unity* (Grand Rapids: Baker/Chosen Books, 2004).

6 Richard Harvey, "Judaism Is Not Jewish [by Baruch Maoz]: A Review," *CWI Herald* (Summer 2003), http://www.banneroftruth.org/pages/articles/article_detail.php?490 [accessed October 6, 2007].

7 Others include Barry Leventhal, Louis Goldberg, and Louis Lapides.

8 For distinctions between classical, revised, and progressive dispensationalism see Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993, 2000).

tradition unless it confirms and illustrates biblical revelation as reflected through a dispensationalist hermeneutic. Orthodox Christology is viewed through a conservative evangelical lens. There are some attempts at translation into Jewish cultural contexts, but a literal rather than dynamic equivalence is sought. The Abrahamic covenant is fulfilled in the Messiah, and the Torah, seen as the dispensation of the Mosaic Law, has come to an end. Practice of those national and cultural Jewish elements that do not go against the New Testament is permitted, but the rabbinic re-interpretation of the Torah and its claims to authority are false.

Fruchtenbaum's concern is an effective rooting of gospel proclamation within a Jewish context, and with a strong eschatological agenda of dispensationalism, which looks forward with certainty to the imminent return of Christ, the rapture, tribulation, and millennial kingdom. This is the focus and center of his system.

With this clearly defined theological base, hermeneutical method, and eschatological scheme, Fruchtenbaum's articulate exposition appeals to those looking for a clear theological system. The combination of political support for Israel and a strong eschatological emphasis will continue to influence the Messianic movement. However, it also contains the weaknesses of dispensationalism: its hermeneutical methods; its 19th century amalgam of rationalism, romanticism, and historical consciousness; and the problem of Israel and the church as two peoples of God. These will not gain acceptance with the majority of Messianic Jews, and they will look for alternatives.

Type 3 – Israeli National and Restorationist (Nerel)

Gershon Nerel's theology is observable in his historical studies of Jewish believers in the early church, and in the 19th and early 20th centuries. His theological system is implicit rather than explicit in his narrative of the histories of Jewish believers in Yeshua (JBYs). He has yet to produce a systematic exposition of his theology. Nevertheless he is representative of many Israeli Messianic Jews, who express their proximity to Christianity in solid creedal affirmations, and practice a form of Messianic Judaism which is Hebrew-speaking, rooted in modern Israeli society and culture, but with little regard for rabbinic orthodoxy as a religious system. Culturally, ethnically, and nationally, like the majority of secular Israelis, they identify with Israel and its aspirations as a state, serving in the army, living in *kibbutzim* and *moshavim*, and putting their children through the Israeli school system.

The heart of Nerel's theology is the eschatological significance not just of the modern Zionist movement and the return to the land, but also the re-establishment of Jewish believers in Jesus in Israel to renew the original apostolic church of Peter and James. For Nerel this has significant implications for the shape and unity of the church, challenging it to repent of supersessionism and anti-Judaism. JBYs bear a special "eschatological spiritual authority." This challenges Israel to recognize the imminent return of her Messiah, and calls Jewish people world-wide to make *aliyah*

in preparation for the end times. In the light of anti-Semitism and supersessionism, Nerel's Messianic Judaism is a powerful prophetic call to Israel and the nations to see what God is doing today. His theological system is not concerned with *minutiae* of doctrinal formulas, but with a clear pragmatic involvement in a restorationist program. The fact that Messianic Judaism does not have twenty centuries of tradition to look to is a distinct advantage as it develops its theology.

> The very fact that *congregations of JBY lack a two-millennia tradition* [italics his] helps them to easily find the bridge between themselves and the first-century model of JBY as portrayed in the New Testament.[9]

> There exists a clear resemblance between the messianic movement of Jewish believers in Jesus and the modern Zionist movement. Basically, both movements highlight the idea of bridging a historical gap between modern times and biblical times. Namely, they consciously reject allegations that they maintain anachronistic approaches. On the contrary, contemporary Jewish Jesus-believers and mainstream Zionists raise the opposite argument that they still possess a natural right to bypass the last two millennia and directly relate to the pre-exilic period in Israel's history.[10]

Nerel's theological method and shape blends the independent evangelical stream of the previous generation of Messianic Jews who made *aliyah* in the 1950s with the establishment of the State of Israel and the Zionist movement, combining Jewish political action and Christian eschatology. His eschatology is premillennial, but he avoids the systematization of dispensationalism. His realized eschatology stresses the significance of the re-emergence of Messianic Jews in the land. This could become an important factor in the future, as the Messianic movement grows in Israel and takes on greater political and prophetic relevance.

Type 4 – New Testament Halacha, *Charismatic and Evangelical (Juster, Stern)*

The most popular type of MJT found within the Messianic movement is that of David Stern and Daniel Juster, who advocate "New Testament *halacha*" within a Jewish expression of faith that is evangelical and charismatic.[11] It is the dominant influence within the UMJC and integrates

9 Gershon Nerel, "Modern Assemblies of Jewish Yeshua-Believers between Church and Synagogue," in *How Jewish Is Christianity? Two Views on the Messianic Movement*, ed. Stanley N. Gundry and Louis Goldberg (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 106.

10 Gershon Nerel, "Primitive Jewish Christians in the Modern Thought of Messianic Jews," in *Le Judéo-Christianisme Dans Tous Ses États: Actes Du Colloque De Jérusalem 6–10 Juillet 1998*, ed. Simon C. Mimouni and F. Stanley Jones (Paris: Cerf, 2001), 399–425.

11 Other key practitioners are Burt Yellin, Barney Kasdan, and the majority of UMJC and MJAA leaders.

belief in Jesus as Messiah with Jewish tradition. It expresses Christian orthodoxy within a Jewish cultural and religious matrix, seeing a prophetic and restorative role for Messianic Judaism in the renewal of both Judaism and Christianity. Its theological system is an eclectic combination of evangelical innovation and traditional Jewish observance.

Belief in God and the Trinity follows Christian orthodoxy, but this is translated into Jewish forms of thought and expression. Nicene Christology is recontextualized and expressed in Jewish terms. The doctrine of the incarnation is expressed apologetically and in dynamically equivalent Jewish terms. The Torah is re-defined in the light of Yeshua, and the Oral Torah is critically evaluated in the light of the New Testament. The Messianic movement belongs to the movement of restoration of the whole church, and is part of Israel. Historic premillennialist eschatology brings urgent expectation of what God is doing in the land and among the people of Israel.

Salvation is only by faith in Yeshua. Yet Israel is still the people of God, and her future salvation is assured. Until this happens evangelistic witness is imperative, but must be done in ways that are culturally sensitive, showing how the Messianic movement is part of the Jewish community, not separate from it or outside it. Scripture is the supreme authority, but must be interpreted and applied contextually, following the "Fuller School of World Mission" approach developed by Glasser, Goble, and Hutchens. The Oral Torah can help understand and interpret New Testament *halacha*. The Torah to be observed is that of Yeshua and his followers, with some appropriate adjustments for today.

The future of this stream within the movement is bright, as it occupies the middle ground between Jewish and Christian spheres of influence. It has found popular expression in many Messianic congregations, especially in the USA, combining a vibrant charismatic expression of faith with a "Torah positive" attitude to Jewish tradition. However, its theological integrity and authenticity has yet to be made explicit, and the tension between tradition and innovation reconciled. The pioneering statements made by Juster and Stern in the formative period of the 1970s and 1980s have yet to be consolidated. It remains to be seen how the combination of charismatic evangelicalism and "New Covenant Torah observance" will be accepted by the next generation in Israel and the USA.

Type 5 – Traditional Judaism and the Messiah (Schiffman, Fischer, Berkowitz)

Several independent thinkers can be situated between Stern and Juster on one side and Kinzer and Hashivenu on the other. They cannot be easily aligned, as their thinking has not fully emerged, and it is difficult to locate their contribution precisely. Nevertheless, in the USA John Fischer and Michael Schiffman, and in Israel Ariel Berkowitz, David Freedman, and Arieh Powlinson bring perspectives which are both "Torah positive" and appreciative of rabbinic tradition without the full affirmation given them by Kinzer and the Hashivenu group. The systematization of their views is incomplete, and their theological reflection has yet to be ab-

stracted. They practice a halachic orthopraxy informed by faith in Jesus. It is possible that new streams of MJT may emerge more fully from this as yet disparate group. Whilst they remain close to Jewish orthodoxy, their doctrine of revelation does not see rabbinic tradition as the inspired, God-given means for the preservation of the Jewish people (as does Kinzer), but their observance of rabbinic *halacha* is stronger than that of Juster and Stern.

Powlinson brings a new spirituality to his thinking, and Freedman and Berkowitz bring a new orientation to the Torah, making it available, in principle if not in practice, to the nations. Fischer approaches Torah from his own orthodox Jewish background, but with the eyes of a New Testament follower of Yeshua. This group has maintained orthodox Christian beliefs, whilst interacting with Jewish traditional views and objections on the nature of God, the Messiah, and the Torah. Their eschatology is premillennial. Their observance of Torah follows orthodoxy, whilst allowing for re-statement where appropriate. Scripture is read in the light of rabbinic tradition, but is still supreme as authoritative revelation. The emerging shape of this theology is not clear, but could result in "Messianic Hasidism" with a possibly more orthodox Jewish expression.

Type 6 – "Postmissionary Messianic Judaism" (Kinzer, Nichol, Sadan[12]*)*
Mark Kinzer's "Postmissionary Messianic Judaism" presents the potential for a programmatic theological system. Combating supersessionist readings of Scripture to argue for the ongoing election of Israel and the legitimacy of a Torah-observant Messianic Judaism, Kinzer employs postliberal[13] and postcritical Jewish and Christian theological resources. His understanding of the revelation of God through the Scriptures and Jewish tradition acknowledges the significance of the Jewish and Christian faith communities through which such revelation is mediated. Ecclesiology and soteriology cohere around his bi-lateral understanding (reflecting Karl Barth) of the community of God made up of both "unbelieving" Israel and the church, with Jesus present in both, visible to the *ekklesia* but only partially recognized by Israel. This "mature Messianic Judaism" is summarized by the Hashivenu statement of purpose:

12 Kinzer is taken as the representative of this stream. For more on Nichol and Sadan see the chapters on Christology and eschatology in *Mapping Messianic Jewish Theology: A Constructive Approach* (forthcoming).

13 Postliberalism began as a reaction to theological liberalism. Karl Barth's reaction against Protestant liberal theology of the 19th and early 20th centuries was taken up by some of his followers in the USA to produce a new engagement with the Bible, church tradition, and contemporary culture. This sat in between the "liberal" and "conservative" labels. Key postliberal theologians include George Lindbeck, Hans Frei, and Stanley Hauerwas; the academic journals *First Things* and *Pro Ecclesia* are representative of postliberal thought. Postliberalism reacts against the relativism and rationalism of theological liberalism, with a more sympathetic reading of the Bible and church tradition, but with an openness to theological ecumenism, the existence and impact of other faiths, and engagement with contemporary culture. Cf. Richard Harvey, "Shaping the Aims and Aspirations of Jewish Believers (Review of Mark Kinzer's *Postmissionary Messianic Judaism*)," *Mishkan* 48 (2006): 18–21.

> Our goal is a mature Messianic Judaism. We seek an authentic expression of Jewish life maintaining substantial continuity with Jewish tradition. However, Messianic Judaism is energized by the belief that Yeshua of Nazareth is the promised Messiah, the fullness of Torah. Mature Messianic Judaism is not simply Judaism plus Yeshua, but is instead an integrated following of Yeshua through traditional Jewish forms and the modern day practice of Judaism in and through Yeshua.[14]

It is clear that Kinzer's influences and assumptions place him outside the mainstream of Protestant evangelicalism, especially the conservative variety often found within previous forms of Messianic Judaism. His view of the authority and inspiration of Scripture is tempered by respect for Jewish traditions of interpretation, and the influence of critical and postcritical biblical scholarship and postliberal theology.

Kinzer advocates solidarity with the Jewish community.[15] He encourages sympathetic identification with the religious and cultural concerns of Judaism, as found in the North American context. The primary location of identity is "within the Jewish community" in order that Messianic Jews will "have Jewish grandchildren." One purpose is to refute the accusation of assimilation that is leveled at Jewish believers in Jesus by the Jewish community.

"Postmissionary Messianic Judaism" arises as one way of negotiating the tension between proclamation of Jesus as Messiah and the preservation of Jewish belief, practice, and identity. Such concerns reflect the challenges facing the Messianic movement worldwide as it grows in theological, spiritual, communal, and personal maturity. Kinzer's response is a Messianic Judaism that echoes Conservative Judaism in its liturgy and practice, and integrates belief in Yeshua in the context of loyalties and identity to "Jewish space."

Kinzer sees Jesus as divine, but within a Judaism not inhospitable to the possibility of the divinity and incarnation of the Son of God. The historic Christian formulations of the Trinity are inadequate in Jewish contexts because they are steeped in Hellenism. New postcritical formulations are required that emerge from Jewish tradition and are recognized as possible understandings of the nature of God. The Scriptures of Judaism and Christianity are both inspired, and to be interpreted within a non-supersessionist appreciation of the canonical and communal contexts in which they arose.

Torah is observed in the light of Orthodox and Conservative *halacha*, with some modifications. Jewish believers thus integrate Messianic beliefs within traditional synagogal life, and witness to the Messiah through

14 "Toward a Mature Messianic Judaism," Hashivenu, http://www.hashivenu.org/core_values.htm [accessed March 17, 2006].

15 Others in this group include Stuart Dauermann, Paul Saal, Rich Nichol, Jason Sobel, and the New England Halachic Council.

the presence of a community within the Jewish community rather than through overt appeal to individuals from without.

Kinzer's approach is the most theologically creative proposal to have emerged within Messianic Judaism in recent years, but it remains to be seen how much communal acceptance it will receive. It builds on North American Conservative Judaism in its method and expression, and departs significantly from the evangelical foundations to which much of Messianic Judaism still adheres. Its theological articulation, whilst profound, may not find popular appeal.[16]

Type 7 – Rabbinic Halacha *in the Light of the New Testament (Shulam)*
Joseph Shulam expresses an Israeli form of Messianic Judaism using the resources of Orthodox Judaism. Shulam makes the call to "do Messianic Jewish *halacha*" and to cut the "umbilical cord" that connects Messianic Judaism to Christian denominations. He reads the Scriptures within the controlling hermeneutical framework of the Jewish tradition. His aim is to teach the church the Jewish roots of its faith by a series of commentaries on the Jewish sources of the New Testament writings.[17]

The project is incomplete, and it is not clear how such a theology will be formulated. Shulam's main concern is to clear away the preliminary barriers of twenty centuries of non-Jewish reading of the Scriptures. His call for Messianic *halacha* is in reaction to the "Gentilization" of Messianic Judaism. Whilst he advocates a return to *halacha*, it is not clear in what form this will emerge. However, his is a genuine and Israeli-based expression of a Jewish orthodoxy linked to orthodox Christian beliefs about Jesus. His perspective is one that should be recognized within the spectrum of MJT, and it is possible that others will follow in his emphases.[18]

Shulam disassociates himself from mainstream (and "Gentilized") Christianity, situating himself within Jewish social and religious space. He combines Messianic Judaism with mystical traditions in Judaism that lead to affirmations of his faith. Rabbinic and even mystical traditions are part of the revelatory process to be held in balance with Scripture. Shulam's theological system is based on a midrashic approach to Scripture, a reading of the New Testament influenced by David Flusser, and some expression of the Jewish mystical tradition (Kabbalah) factored in to his overall approach.

Type 8 – Messianic Rabbinic Orthodoxy (Brandt, Marcus)
Elazar Brandt advocates a form of Messianic Judaism that is close to rab-

16 Kinzer's *Postmissionary Messianic Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic/Brazos, 2005) has been the subject of major discussions and reviews in *Reactions to Postmissionary Messianic Judaism*, Mishkan 48 (2006), and *Kesher* 20 (Winter/Spring 2006).

17 Joseph Shulam, with Hilary Le Cornu, *A Commentary of the Jewish Roots of Romans* (Baltimore: Lederer Books, 1997).

18 Shulam's position is further complicated by repeated concerns that his Christology is not fully orthodox. Reference has been made to his written work, and not uncorroborated verbal remarks attributed to him.

binic orthodoxy, but is a minority position within the Messianic movement. He is convinced that Messianic Jews must

> make every effort to remain committed to the 4 pillars of Jewish existence that have always held us together – G-d,[19] land, people and Torah. History repeatedly shows that groups who have abandoned any of these commitments have quickly disappeared from the scene.[20]

His advocacy of Torah observance is very strong:

> I dare say that it is less dangerous to follow the wrong messiah than to follow the wrong Torah.[21]

The authority of Torah, which for him is interpreted through rabbinic tradition, influences his Christology:

> The rightful Messiah will come to Jerusalem where his throne will be established and where he will rule Israel and the nations with justice according to the Torah. There is no such thing as a Messiah who does not keep Torah and teach his people to do so. If Yeshua does not do and teach Torah, then he is not the Messiah – not for Israel, and not for anybody else.[22]

This leads him to oppose all forms of supersessionism:

> There is no such thing as a Messiah who is not the Messiah of Israel. A Messiah who rejects Israel and chooses another people group is not the Messiah promised in the Bible.[23]

Messianic Jews have no special status among their people as the "faithful remnant" of Romans 9–11, but rather take their stand within the faithful found within all Israel. They cannot claim special status as the "remnant" because of their belief in Yeshua, as this would disenfranchise others who do not believe in him.

> Jews who claim to follow Yeshua and to know and do his Torah more perfectly than other Jews, and on such a basis claim to be the "true Israel," or the "true remnant of Israel," or other such language, are

19 Brandt follows an orthodox Jewish custom of not writing the word "God" in full.
20 Elazar Brandt, e-mail message to author, February 26, 2007. This has been referred to at length to ensure accurate representation of Brandt's views, and because he has published few statements of his position on these questions.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.

> no less in the replacement camp than Christians who believe G-d has rejected Israel and chosen them instead.[24]

Brandt's soteriology includes all Israel:

> The "Israel" who today walks the streets of Jerusalem and the cities throughout the land, and the Jews who are identifiable outside of the land, are the Israel that G-d is going to see through to redemption. He staked his name on this by an oath. This includes Haredis and secular, Conservative and Reform as well as Zionist and uncommitted. "All Israel shall be saved," said Paul. If G-d does not keep this promise, then he is not G-d. He said so Himself.[25]

Brandt's hermeneutics call for a return to halachic orthodoxy. To Brandt this means abandoning a "spiritualizing and fantasizing" approach to the Bible, and returning to "literal interpretation and obedience." Jews who believe in Yeshua remain Jews. They are called to repent, not by being "sorry for personal sins," but by returning to the covenant and remaining "faithful to our G-d, land, people and Torah." As regards the witness of Messianic Jews to their people:

> Our best testimony to our own people will be if we can show that we are doing this because we met Yeshua. Instead, we have been doing our best to show that we have broken our covenant with the four pillars [God, land, people, and Torah] since we have met Yeshua. What reason is there today or in the past for our people to see us otherwise?[26]

This type is at the far end of the continuum, and expresses a tendency to move back into Judaism at the expense of Christian affirmations and distinctives. Uri Marcus puts forward a revised adoptionist Christology; Elazar Brandt is more comfortable within Jewish Orthodoxy and with ultra-orthodox Hasidim who come to believe in Jesus yet remain in their communities, practicing as "secret believers" invisible to outsiders, as part of an "insider movement."

Like Brandt, Marcus distances himself from "Hellenistic" and "Gentile" Christianity. Marcus subscribes to Orthodox Jewish views on the indivisibility and singularity of the divine nature which rules out the possibility of the Trinity. However, his dispensational premillennial eschatology and its charismatic expression relate closely to Christian Zionism, and his denial of the Trinity and incarnation has caused controversy in Christian Zionist and Messianic Jewish circles.

For Marcus, Jesus is the human Messiah, who did not claim deity and is

24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.

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not divine. Scripture is read in the context of rabbinic tradition, which informs and controls the results of such reading. Rabbinic *halacha* is accepted, and there is little overt proclamation. Whilst the theology of this stream has yet to be comprehensively or systematically articulated, it is an influential if heterodox group within the Messianic movement. Without clearer definition of the significance of Yeshua, it is likely that for some it will be a means back into Jewish orthodoxy, and that an increasing number of Messianic Jews will take up the label of "Orthodox" or "Just Jewish."

The Future of Messianic Jewish Theology

The above typology has been developed by surveying the main Messianic voices on the doctrines of God, the Messiah, Torah in theory, Torah in practice, and the future of Israel. The following section, on the practice of the Sabbath, is one of three examples of Torah in practice (the others being kashrut and Passover). Here the understandings of Torah are put into practice, and as indicated above, a variety of practices emerge. The aim of this section is not to be prescriptive, but to demonstrate the thought processes, the practical results, and the variety of views that make up contemporary Messianic Jewish theology.

Torah in Practice[1]

by **Richard Harvey**

Introduction

> One who studies Torah in order to teach, is given the means to study and to teach; and one who studies in order to practice, is given the means to study and to teach, to observe and to practice.[2]

'Torah' has little significance without practical application. This section of the thesis examines how the different understandings of Torah in theory find practical expression in Messianic Jewish life. Messianic Jews make significant theological statements through their lifestyle, liturgy and culture. Their outward, practical expression of Messianic Jewish identity gives coherence to their theology. The core affirmations of Messianic Judaism that Yeshua is the Messiah, and that it is appropriate for Jewish people to believe in and follow Him, are embedded in their practice. A rich and colourful diversity of practice has developed, reflecting the diversity of practice found within other branches of Judaism.[3]

Pauline Kollontai surveys the range of Jewish practice in the Messianic movement. Celebration of traditional Jewish lifestyle and life-cycle events plays a key role in the construction of Messianic Jewish identity.

> *Brit milah* (Covenant of circumcision) is observed within Messianic communities because it is commanded by God as symbolic of the

1 The following is an extract from Richard Harvey's Ph.D. dissertation; the author's spelling and formatting have not been changed to reflect *Mishkan*'s style.

2 Pirkei Avot 4:6 in Nosson Scherman (ed.), *The Complete Artscroll Siddur,* 2nd ed. (Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 1986), 567.

3 Daniel Juster, *Jewish Roots: A Foundation of Biblical Theology for Messianic Judaism* (Rockville: Davar, 1986), 191–226, 'Messianic Jewish Practice'. Juster treats Jewish identity; Sabbath; the festivals; fringes, *tephilin*, head-covering; biblical food and cleanliness laws; the importance of Messianic Jewish Congregations; life in a Messianic Congregation; and Rabbis, schooling and authority. Barney Kasdan's *God's Appointed Times* (Baltimore: Lederer, 1993) and *God's Appointed Customs* (Baltimore: Lederer, 1996) select the biblical and post-biblical Jewish festivals, and the lifecycle events of circumcision, redemption of the firstborn, *bar mitzvah* and *bat mitzvah*, marriage, death and mourning. *Mezuzah*, *kashrut*, *mikveh*, fringes, headcovering, and *tephilin* are discussed as part of Messianic Jewish lifestyle.

> covenant with the people of Israel. Circumcision of the flesh is placed alongside spiritual circumcision of the heart. *Bar mitzvah* is also observed, and weddings and funerals are mainly Jewish in form but have some "Christian" – that is, culturally Christian, rather than specifically religious – aspects.[4]

The Sabbath and Festivals are seen as 'a valid and important aspect of their belief and practice' yet Messianic Jews, like non-Orthodox Jews, 'avoid an overt legalistic approach to the Sabbath and festivals'.

> The key difference is that traditional Jewish blessings are accompanied by other blessings that refer to Jesus, and passages are read from the Torah and the New Testament, which they call the Torah of the Messiah. Other aspects of Jewish lifestyle practised in the Messianic Jewish community include observance of *kashrut*, the wearing of the *kippah*, *tallit*, the laying of *tefillin*, and having a *mezuzah* and other Jewish artefacts such as a *menorah* and *seder* plate in the home. Maintaining some, if not all, aspects of Jewish lifestyle is considered to deepen and enrich a Messianic Jew's faith and Jewish identity. Generally, whilst all key aspects of Jewish lifestyle and life-cycle events are recognized by the Messianic Jewish community, there is variation in observance and practice that is determined by the individual.[5]

Previous studies such as Kollontai's have observed Messianic Jewish practice from a phenomenological perspective, or as examples of how such practice illustrates beliefs.[6] Yet none have assessed the *diversity of practice* within the movement as indicative of its *differing theological emphases*. The present chapter does not attempt a comprehensive survey of every aspect of Messianic Jewish practice. It focuses on the three key topics of Sabbath, *kashrut* and Passover. These three observances serve as significant and representative indicators of the diversity of practice and the accompanying variety of theological understandings of Torah, tradition and culture. The selection of these three practices in particular is based on the importance of Sabbath and *kashrut* as boundary markers within Judaism, and of Passover as '*the* major Messianic feast'[7] because of its distinctively Christological emphasis.[8]

4 Pauline Kollontai, 'Messianic Jews and Jewish Identity,' *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 3 no. 2 (July 2004): 197. Kollontai is inaccurate in her interpretation here. Messianic Jews import Christian *theological* understandings into their practices, whilst generally eschewing 'culturally Christian, rather than specifically religious aspects'.

5 Ibid.

6 E.g. Feher, Harris-Shapiro, Cohn-Sherbok, op. cit.

7 Gershon Nerel, 'Torah and *Halakhah* Among Modern Assemblies of Jewish Yeshua-Believers: An Israeli Response to Arnold Fruchtenbaum' in *How Jewish Is Christianity? 2 Views of the Messianic Movement,* ed. Louis Goldberg (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 160.

8 Male Circumcision is universally observed within the Messianic movement, and there is general agreement on its practice and theological significance as a sign of entry into the Abrahamic covenant and a defining mark of Jewish descent which continues to be valid today. Cf. Daniel Juster, *Jewish Roots*, 191–193.

The majority of those involved in Messianic Judaism would define themselves in some sense as 'Torah observant' or 'Torah positive'. The present chapter follows the spectrum of Messianic Jewish thought from the most 'Torah negative' to the most 'Torah positive'. How do differing understandings and Jewish tradition work themselves out in practice, and how do Messianic Jews formulate their own *halacha* and *minhag* to accompany these understandings?

The Diversity of Messianic Jewish Practice

Natalia Yangarber-Hicks observes that

> Significant diversity characterises the extent to which Messianic Jewish congregations and individuals implement traditional Jewish practices into their life and lifestyle.[9]

Whilst Messianic Jews recognise the importance of Messianic Jewish practice, there is much debate within the movement on the subject.

> There is considerable divergence among Messianic Jews about which scriptural laws are binding.[10]

External observers of the movement have noted the degree of confusion on the topic.

> One series of sessions was designed for Messianic leaders to learn the appropriate ways to celebrate Jewish life-cycle events. The overriding concern of the Messianic spiritual leaders teaching the sessions was that Jewish events should be Jewish events, and not every event should be an occasion to preach the gospel. There was considerable disagreement among those present about how these events should be celebrated, so it seems that Jewish practice in the movement is still in a state of flux.[11]

Such confusion is not surprising when the Jewish community itself reflects many different understandings of the place of Torah and its practical outworking. Louis Jacobs summarises several attitudes found within the variety of contemporary Judaisms before arguing for his own preferences.

9 Natalia Yangarber-Hicks, 'Messianic believers: reflections on identity of a largely misunderstood group', *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 33, no. 2 (2005): 127.

10 Cohn-Sherbok, *Messianic Judaism,* 159.

11 Francine K. Samuelson, 'Messianic Judaism, Church, Denomination, Sect or Cult?' *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 37, no. 2 (2000): 183. Samuelson adds in a footnote: 'Though non-leaders were repeatedly asked to leave by the session chairs, this author did not leave. Apparently, their concern was that lay members of the U.M.J.C. not see how unresolved the movement still is over Jewish practice' (footnote 24, page 183).

> What, then, are our criteria to be? Granted that there is not too much difficulty in seeing that, for all the recognition of the human element, God really did command us to love our neighbour, how can we be sure that He also commanded us to observe the dietary laws or keep the traditional Sabbath? On the whole, in the modern world, there are five attitudes towards our problem. I propose to call these: (1) Fundamentalism, (2) Classical Reform, (3) The Attitude of the Historical School, (4) Folkways, (5) The Theological Attitude. We must examine each of these in turn and try to show why the fifth – the attitude we have sketched in this and in the previous chapter – is the most satisfactory.[12]

Surveys of Messianic Jewish Practice

Jeffrey Wasserman found considerable diversity when he examined the practice of over 200 Messianic Congregations in North America. Half of the congregations surveyed asserted that 'not only was observance of elements of the Mosaic Law permissible and recommended for Messianic Jews, but between 13 and 23 percent thought it mandatory'.[13]

> What portions of the Torah are to be observed? Once again there is no clear consensus. Like the Jewish community itself, with its Orthodox, Conservative and Reform interpretations or rabbinic Judaism, the Messianic community has varying attitudes with regard to the application of the Torah to daily life and congregational worship. There are those who keep a few select portions of the Law and others who not only strictly observe the Law according to the Orthodox rabbinic mandates, but believe that the Talmud (rabbinic commentary) is inspired and therefore binding on Messianic Jews.[14]

David Stern recognised a similar variety of practice as he estimated the practice of 300 Messianic Congregations in the USA, and some 90 in Israel. He recognises a considerable variety of practice:

> Data evidencing the Jewish aspects of the Messianic Jewish congregations are harder to come by. I would guess that 10 to 20 percent of them have Torah scrolls. A much larger percentage celebrate the major Jewish holidays in some fashion. A significant number of their members light *Shabbat* candles. Observance of *kashrut* (the dietary

12 Louis Jacobs, *A Jewish Theology* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1973), 215.

13 Jeffrey S. Wasserman, *Messianic Jewish Congregations: Who Sold this Business to the Gentiles?* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2000), 97. See also Jeffrey S. Wasserman, 'Messianic Jewish Congregations in North America,' *Mishkan* 27 (1997): 31. Bulend Senay found similar results in the UK amongst individual members of the two messianic associations, the BMJA and MJAGB; Bulend Senay, 'The Making of a Tradition: Jewish Christianity,' *Mishkan* 27 (1997): 39.

14 Jeffrey S. Wasserman, *Messianic Jewish Congregations,* 62.

laws) varies from not at all to the fairly careful separating of meat and milk (a rabbinic ordinance).[15]

Detailed information on the degree of practice found in the movement is not available. The variety of practices found are a result of different emphases on liturgy and the use of the *siddur*, different attitudes to worship styles (such as the influence of the charismatic movement), different theological emphases on the nature and place of Yeshua within worship, and linguistic and cultural issues (the place of Hebrew and the role of Diaspora Judaism in creating Jewish identity).

A plethora of organisations produce a multiplicity of resources. These include liturgies, guides to Jewish practice, and guides to Messianic Jewish life. Each grouping has its own liturgy committees, and many individuals have developed their own resources in the hope that these will be taken up and used by others.[16] Although it is not possible to quantify the range of observance of Messianic Jewish practice, its leading thinkers are clear in their advocacy of Messianic Jewish practice, and their understandings of Sabbath, *kashrut* and Passover are examined in the following sections.

The Sabbath

The Sabbath is foundational in Jewish life, and Messianic Jews meet for worship on the Sabbath. Bodil Skjøtt surveyed Sabbath worship and observance in Israel.[17] She found that whilst the majority of congregations met on the Sabbath, few members were 'sabbath observers', choosing not to travel, cook or do other forms of work prohibited by *halacha*. Senay found similar results in the UK, as did Wassermann in the USA. He found only 14 percent considered that keeping the Sabbath was 'mandatory' and 33 percent considered it 'recommended' for Jewish believers.[18]

Many families observe the lighting of the candles and the blessings before the meal on Friday night. Some congregations meet on Friday evenings, but the majority meet for a Sabbath morning service as their main weekly meeting. Some follow the orthodox practices of not driving to Synagogue, and doing no forbidden work, but the majority of Israeli and North American congregations are less strict. As Joseph Shulam notes:

15 David H. Stern, 'Summary Essay: The Future of Messianic Judaism' in *How Jewish Is Christianity? 2 Views of the Messianic Movement,* ed. Louis Goldberg (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 176.

16 The range of resources for Messianic Jewish practice is extensive. The survey of materials by Karl Pruter, *Jewish Christians in the United States: A Bibliography* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1987) has not been updated. There are directories of Messianic Jewish Resources published by the Messianic Alliances in the USA, UK and Israel. http://www.Messianicjewish.net lists several links (accessed June 12, 2007).

17 Bodil Skjøtt, 'Sabbath and Worship in Messianic Congregations in Israel – A Brief Survey,' *Mishkan* 22 (1995), 29–33. See also Kai Kjær-Hansen and Bodil Skjøtt, *Facts and Myths about the Messianic Congregations in Israel* (Jerusalem: UCCI, 1999), 27.

18 Bulent Senay, 'The Making of a Tradition – Jewish Christianity,' *Mishkan* 27 (1997): 36–42. Wasserman, *Messianic Jewish Congregations,* 96–97.

> The major problem which keeping the Sabbath raises for contemporary Jewish believers is not whether we should keep the Sabbath, but how to keep it.[19]

The reason for this difficulty, according to Shulam, is that both Judaism and Christianity have developed many 'strata of traditions' which over the 2000 years of exile have meant that the 'biblical way of looking at the Sabbath, and indeed the whole Torah, has been lost.'

Sabbath with Gusto, But Not According to the Rabbis

Baruch Maoz is critical of Messianic Jews who 'pick and choose' which aspects of Judaism they will observe.

> Few if any really avoid travel or the use of any form of electric power on the Sabbath.[20]

He knows of none who 'avoid tearing toilet paper on the Sabbath'[21] yet are happy to wear the *tallit* on Friday evening services in contrast to 'true Jewish tradition'.[22] He notes that 'something is wrong here'.

> If we empty Jewish tradition of its original meanings and pour into them distinctly Christian content, to which content none of our nation subscribes, we are hardly treating our tradition with respect. Indeed, to what extent can we say that we are really following Jewish tradition?[23]

Maoz is against the reinterpretation of Jewish observance to give the outward symbols a Christian content and meaning. Nevertheless he observes the Sabbath in his own way.

> I love being Jewish. My family greets the Sabbath each Friday night with a traditional Sabbath meal and we celebrate all the biblical and traditional feasts with gusto.[24]

The Sabbath is part of the Mosaic law which has eternal moral value, reflecting the nature of God himself.

19 Joseph Shulam, 'The Sabbath Day and How to Keep It,' *Mishkan* 22 (1995): 26. The issue is devoted to the Sabbath in Judaism, Christianity and Messianic Judaism.
20 Baruch Maoz, *Judaism is not Jewish: A Friendly Critique of the Messianic Movement* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2003), 241.
21 Ibid., 146.
22 The *tallit* is only worn in morning services.
23 Ibid., 147.
24 Ibid., 34–5.

> Sabbath was an eternal duty in which man [*sic*] was instructed to emulate his Creator, resting in the finished work of the Eternal One who loved him so freely. The day was blessed and sanctified to God from the sixth day of creation. The principle of one day in seven remains our joy and duty today, and so shall be for all eternity.[25]

But the 'civil and ritual aspects' of the Mosaic law 'are not essential to the law itself', and pass away, as 'shadow, not substance'.[26] This is why

> Ritual was never a crucial part of the Law. Priests could work on the Sabbath in the tabernacle and in the temple without being charged with doing what is unlawful. They trimmed the lights, cleared the ashes from the altar, carried wood to renew the fire and generally watched over their charges.[27]

Whilst the specific forms of Sabbath observance form 'part of our national culture', they have now been fulfilled and 'no longer have the religious value they had in the past'.[28] Maoz finds the lighting of Sabbath candles objectionable. It is an example of 'rabbinic practice, adhered to on the wrong grounds, not biblical custom'.[29] Maoz notes how Jesus kept the traditions of the Judaism of his day because

> He lived among a people that had not yet been enlightened by the gospel and at a time when the gospel was not yet fully made known. He also openly transgressed those traditions by healing on the Sabbath and defending the disciples' right to pluck grain, peel and eat it on the Sabbath – contrary to tradition – and to eat without the ritual washing of hands. He castigated the Pharisees for their customs because those customs transgressed the Word of God (Mark 7:6–13).[30]

Yet because rabbinic customs 'play a large role in the formation of that tradition which constitutes the national cultural consensus among Jewish people', the traditional 'festive meal on Sabbath eve, when the family meets together at the table' is acceptable.[31]

Preaching Law Whilst Practicing Grace

Arnold Fruchtenbaum also finds a discrepancy between 'law' and 'grace' in the teaching and observance of the Sabbath amongst Messianic Jews.

25 Ibid., 117.
26 Ibid., 125.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid., 127.
29 Ibid., 154.
30 Ibid., 161.
31 Ibid., 172.

> Another example has to do with the proper way of observing the Sabbath. Most Messianic Jews are under the misconception that the Sabbath was observed as a mandatory corporate day of worship. Actually, Moses commanded the Jews to stay home and observe the Sabbath as a day of rest rather than a day of corporate worship. Sabbath corporate worship was mandated for the priesthood in the tabernacle/temple compound but not for individual Jews elsewhere. So if a Messianic Jew gets into his car, starts the engine, and drives to his congregation on Friday night or Saturday morning, he is actually breaking the Sabbath in the way Moses prescribed it. Once again, he is preaching law while practicing grace. Grace permits one to stay home and rest on the Sabbath, it permits one to have corporate worship on the Sabbath, it permits one to have corporate worship on any other day of the week.[32]

Fruchtenbaum dismisses Daniel Juster's remark 'I am not particularly inspired by the Jewish identity of one who gives up the Sabbath' with:

> Juster certainly has the freedom to observe the Sabbath and observe it in the way he chooses, even if the specific way is not in Scripture (i.e. *challah,* wine, and candles). There is no biblical grounds for denying him this privilege. However, to deny the Jewish identity of another Jewish believer who chooses not to observe the Sabbath is out of order and contradicts New Testament teaching. Since from Abraham to Moses Jewish identity remained intact apart from observing the Sabbath, there is no grounds for making Sabbath observance the key element to determine Jewish identity or loyalties after Jesus.[33]

Similar concerns are voiced about the blessing said over the Sabbath candles. Messianic Jews using the traditional Orthodox Jewish service have often unknowingly developed statements and practices which are 'quite contrary to biblical truth'.

> This practice was never commanded in the Law of Moses, but is of rabbinic origin. However, it is not forbidden by the New Testament, it is biblically neutral. The Jewish believer is free to kindle the Sabbath lights, but he [*sic*] is also free not to. However, the prayer that goes with it states: 'Blessed art Thou O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us

32 Arnold Fruchtenbaum, 'Messianic Congregations May Exist Within the Body of Messiah, as Long as They Don't Function Contrary to the New Testament' in *How Jewish Is Christianity? 2 Views of the Messianic Movement,* ed. Louis Goldberg (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 124.

33 Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology* (Tustin: Ariel Ministries, 1992), 761.

> to kindle the Sabbath candles.' The truth is that no such command is found anywhere in Scripture.[34]

Because the prayer is not 'biblically neutral' and the Jewish believer would be 'wrong to recite this prayer', it leaves three options.

> First, he [*sic*] may choose to dispense with the prayer altogether. Second, he can reword the above prayer to bring it into conformity with biblical truth; the last phrase could read, 'permitted us to kindle the Sabbath candles.' Third, he may choose to make up his own prayer. Messianic Jews are free to participate in these things, but the guiding principle is that of conformity with their faith in Jesus the Messiah and the Scriptures.[35]

Fruchtenbaum is determined that Messianic Jews should have freedom to observe the Sabbath in any way they choose, provided they do not impose this on others, and do not themselves come under a bondage to legalism.

Biblical Sabbath Without Rabbinic Additions

For Gershon Nerel the Sabbath, along with the other Levitical feasts, has not been rescinded, and 'is therefore valid for JBY to observe'.[36] Nevertheless JBY should 'carefully discern between what *the* Rabbi [Jesus] says in the New Testament' and what 'the establishment rabbis say'.

> Only the guidelines of Yeshua should be considered by JBY for the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, since 'the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.' (Matthew 12:8).[37]

In Israel it is natural for JBYs to observe the Sabbath rather than Sunday, as it is the nation's day of rest. The principle should be that we follow Yeshua's practice and teaching, and be careful to apply this to the 'current rabbinical establishment with its restrictions concerning the *Shabbat* observance'.[38]

> For example, because 'the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath' (Mark 2:27), it is fully right for JBY to use a car and travel on the Sabbath to a Bible study or worship. Similarly, because 'it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath' (Matt. 12:12), it is right for JBY

34 Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology,* 761; 'Messianic Congregations,' 126–7.
35 Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology,* 761; 'Messianic Congregations,' 127; 'The Use of the Siddur by Messianic Jews,' *Mishkan* 25 (Jerusalem, UCCI, 1996), 44.
36 Nerel, 'Torah and *Halakhah,'* 158.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.

> to use fire and electricity for elementary activities. The same would apply for using money discreetly when circumstances require it.[39]

Nerel has little patience with 'imposed *Shabbat* traditions' such as the lighting of candles on Friday night or the *Havdalah* service, which have 'no biblical foundation whatever, although rabbinical traditions introduced "divine" prayers and blessings as though they were ordained by God'.[40]

> Contrary to the *Halakhah* blessings during the lighting of candles, God did not command any JBY to perform these acts. Needless to say, traditional East-European food, like *gefilte* (stuffed) fish, has nothing to do with the observance of the Sabbath.[41]

Whilst Nerel personally enjoys eating *gefilte* fish, he gives this as an illustration, to distinguish between *Yiddishkeit* and Judaism. A problem he sees in the USA Messianic movement is its failure to distinguish between a Jewish cultural veneer and biblical Judaism.

> In fact, personally I *do* like *gefilte* fish very much, but within the Gundry article I just gave this as an illustration, as I also could add, and perhaps should have done so, about peppery fish prepared for Shabbat by Jews from Northern Africa. My real point was/is that *Yiddishkeit*, characterized by this or that traditional food, is irrelevant for our Messianic Jewish and biblical identity. Indeed, I should again underline that *Yiddishkeit* is not Judaism. And in fact, *Yiddishkeit* is not just a matter of Jewish culture, but rather a combination of issues around Jewish *folklore* and myth.[42]

The priority of the Sabbath is not the enjoyment of leisure activities, but physical and spiritual renewal.

> The major issue of the seventh-day Sabbath is to rest from weekly obligations and to worship God. This holy day is to be used for the Lord and not for exhausting oneself through shopping, sports, or sightseeing at the expense of taking quality time for spiritual growth and edification.[43]

Freedom, Not a Requirement

Barney Kasdan describes the key features of Shabbat as observed by Messianic Jews.[44] He reminds his readers that

39 Ibid., 159.
40 Ibid., 159.
41 Ibid.
42 Gershon Nerel, e-mail message to author, October 10, 2006.
43 Nerel, 'Torah and *Halakhah,'* 159.
44 Barney Kasdan, *God's Appointed Customs* (Baltimore: Lederer Books, 1993), ch. 1, 1–24.

> Of utmost importance is the emphasis upon our freedom in the Messiah. These days, as with any other biblical custom, are not meant to lead us into legalistic bondage. Messiah Yeshua is our total sufficiency when it comes to our spiritual standing before God (Galatians 5:1).[45]

The two-fold theme of the Sabbath is to 'remember the creator and set the day aside to rest in him'.[46] The Sabbath preparation begins on the Friday afternoon, with the lighting of the Sabbath candles and the blessings over the wine and bread. Kasdan uses the traditional blessing,

> *asher kidshanu b'mitzvohtav v'tzi-vanu l'hadleek ner shel Shabbat,* 'who has sanctified us by your commandments and commanded us to light the Sabbath light'.[47]

This emphasises the rabbinic understanding that the lighting of the Sabbath candles is a commandment, rather than simply a tradition.

The bread is broken by hand, not sliced with a knife, to 'symbolise the day when all weapons of war will be done away with at the coming of the Messiah (Isaiah 2:4)' and the *challah* is eaten with salt as a reminder of the salting of the sacrifices in the days of the Temple. Blessings are said for the children and the *aishet khayeel* is recited in the wife's honour. 'Shabbat is meant to be a wonderful time of worship to the Lord God and a time of family sharing'.[48]

After the meal, with its accompanying *zemirot* and grace after the meal, most messianic synagogues have an *Erev Shabbat* service. The main service occurs on the Sabbath morning, as 'an important part of Shabbat observance is attending corporate worship services'.[49] The services that took place in Tabernacle and Temple in biblical times have continued in the synagogues of the Diaspora, providing the Jewish people with a time of rest, and allowing a 'corporate focus' on the God of Israel. Kasdan describes the elements of a typical service, following the basic structure laid down from the time of Ezra and Nehemiah (Nehemiah 8). The opening praise, hymns and psalms are followed by the public reading or chanting from the Torah and *Haftarah*, which are based on the annual or triennial lectionary cycle. The third major section of the service is the sermon on the passage for the week. The service concludes with the *Oneg Shabbat,* after which the congregation returns home for lunch and a leisurely afternoon of visiting friends or resting.

45 Kasdan, *God's Appointed Customs*, vii–viii.
46 Ibid., 2.
47 Ibid., 3. Others use more Messiah-centred or New Testament inspired blessings. E.g *Asher kidd'shanu b'Ruach Hakodesh v'natan lanu et-Yeshua Hamashiach l'hiyot or l'olam*, 'who has sanctified us by the Holy Spirit and given us Yeshua the Messiah to be the Light of the world'.
48 Kasdan, *God's Appointed Customs*, 5.
49 Ibid.

The Sabbath closes with *havdalah,* a service which the rabbis created to distinguish Shabbat from all other days, which consists of 'interesting symbolic elements',[50] the lighting of the *havdalah* candle, the passing round of the *b'sameem* (spice) box, and the extinguishing of the candle in the cup of wine. The singing of a 'significant song', *Eliyahu Ha-Navi* (Elijah the Prophet) closes the service. It is 'strongly messianic in content' and Kasdan notes that

> Having enjoyed the refreshing rest and worship of Shabbat, it is appropriate to consider the ultimate fulfilment of Shabbat, when Messiah will come with his kingdom of peace and rest.[51]

The place of the Sabbath in the New Testament and the teaching of Jesus is emphasised.

> Because of its centrality in Jewish tradition, we would naturally expect to find the observance of Shabbat mentioned throughout the New Testament.[52]

And this is the case, as 'the most detailed account in scripture of such a service is found in the Gospels', where Kasdan refers to the Nazareth sermon of Luke 4:16–21.

> Yeshua made it his habit to worship at the weekly Shabbat service. What else would he do? He was born a Jew and lived a life consistent with much of traditional Judaism of his day. Likewise, the first disciples continued in the traditional forms of synagogue worship.[53]

This does not mean that Yeshua 'agreed with every detail' or every rabbinic attitude to Sabbath observance, and he 'tried to correct imbalances in rabbinic perspective' by reminding that 'Shabbat was made for mankind, not mankind for Shabbat (Mark 2:27)'. The potential for legalism when the Sabbath is observed must be avoided.

> Sadly, too often the people forget to make Shabbat a delight, relegating it to a list of rules instead. Yeshua challenged the people of his day to remain biblically balanced, to enter into the true rest of God's spirit. The same appeal goes forth in this generation.[54]

From the book of Hebrews Kasdan gives a Christological understanding of the Sabbath. The Sabbath has been 'prophetically fulfilled' through the coming of the Messiah, and 'spiritual rest is the prophetic fulfilment

50 Ibid., 6.
51 Ibid., 7.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid., 8.
54 Ibid.

of the biblical observance of Shabbat'.[55] Kasdan adds his own premillennial understanding. The coming '1000 year Kingdom of Yeshua' will be a 'beautiful time of rest' and corporate worship of the King, and believers in Yeshua should long for its arrival. Until then the Messiah

> bids us to experience the truth of Shabbat in our daily walk . . . As we celebrate Shabbat, may spiritual rest in Yeshua constantly be our experience![56]

Kasdan provides a practical guide for the observance of the Shabbat, complete with handcrafts, recipes and songs.[57] Examples are given of Messianic modifications of the liturgy, such as the alternative blessing for the lighting of the candles that is used in many congregations. This avoids the sanctioning of rabbinic tradition, and emphasises Yeshua as light of the world.

> *Baruch atah Adonai Elohenu melek ha-olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav l'hayot or l'goyeem v'natan-lanu Yeshua m'sheekhaynu ha-or la-olam.*
>
> Blessed art thou, O Lord Our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us by thy commandments and commanded us to be a light unto the nations and has given us Yeshua, [our Messiah,] the light of the world.[58]

Apart from such occasional modifications, Kasdan urges Messianic Jews to adopt the rhythm and practice of the Sabbath, both congregationally and personally, as a way to celebrate the spiritual rest brought by the Messiah, and as a

> graphic reminder of the coming day when Messiah Yeshua will establish his true Shabbat light and the sweetness of his coming kingdom! May we, his followers, appreciate the foretaste of this truth as we observe this rich holy day, Shabbat.[59]

Celebration Without Legalism

For Daniel Juster, because the Sabbath is a special 'sign of the covenant' between Israel and God, failing to observe the Sabbath is to 'cast doubt on whether or not we uphold the continuing covenant of God with Israel'.[60] Daniel Juster affirms the foundational role the Sabbath plays.

55 Ibid., 9.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid., 12–23.
58 Ibid., 9–10.
59 Ibid., 11.
60 Daniel C. Juster, *Growing to Maturity: A Messianic Jewish Guide* (Denver CO: UMJC Press, 1996), 181.

> The Sabbath is a central pivot of Jewish life. As taught by Yeshua, 'the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath' (Matthew 12). It was never meant to be a day of legalistic conformity. However, Sabbath is a day of crucial significance to Jewish identity. The principle of *weekly rest, worship and renewal has universal significance*. In this sense the Sabbath principle is a *spiritual and humanitarian guide for all peoples*. Christians are free to incorporate this principle on Sunday or other days.[61]

Messianic Judaism looks to Yeshua, who proclaimed Himself 'Lord of the Sabbath' for the principles and details of Sabbath observance. As a memorial of creation and redemption, the day should be celebrated as an 'essential faith principle', but without the 'legalism' found in the practices of the New Testament Pharisees.

> Yeshua knew such legalism caused people to be concerned with restrictions, thereby missing the true meaning of the day: joy, refreshment, and renewal. As Lord of the Sabbath, Yeshua set the record straight.[62]

The first Jewish believers continued to observe the Sabbath, but the early church moved from Sabbath to Sunday.[63] Sunday-keeping was not introduced as an 'authoritative apostolic practice' but originated in communities of Gentile believers in Jesus.

As rules should not be 'imposed ad infinitum' Juster gives two basic principles for the Sabbath. Whilst there can be exceptions for emergencies and for those in certain professions, the day should be a 'day of freedom from work'. Secondly, it is valuable to 'mark the day off from other days' by a Friday evening meal, with the lighting of candles and prayer. Messianic Jews should mirror traditional Jewish observance of the Sabbath as a day for worship and the exposition of scripture, and make a time for fellowship with family and friends.

> It is a wonderful time for restful, quiet activities we might otherwise overlook. Reading biblical stories together, quiet games, sharing with friends, even just napping, can all be interwoven to make Sabbath a joy.[64]

Juster adopts 'traditional (rabbinic) practices that are in keeping with the Spirit of the New Covenant and the beauty and joy that is our inheritance' such as the *havdalah* service, but stresses that 'of primary importance' is that all Sabbath activity should be a 'true renewal of life in God'.

61 Juster, *Growing to Maturity*, 181; cf. *Jewish Roots*, 195.
62 Juster, *Growing to Maturity,* 182–3.
63 Ibid., 183. Juster uses the thesis of Samuele Bacchiochi, *From Saturday to Sunday* (Rome: The Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1977).
64 Juster, *Growing to Maturity,* 184.

> The rule of the New Testament is to engage in activity that is spiritually renewing or redemptive for ourselves or others. Sabbath should be a *real contrast* from other work days. Congregations with Sabbath schedules ought to be careful they do not tax their people with too much activity. To make Sabbath a delight, our celebration should be creatively expressed, not rote.[65]

Juster's approach combines flexibility with respect for tradition, but does not allow the imposition of legislation to affect the atmosphere and spirit of rest. His theology of the Sabbath is based on his understanding of Yeshua as 'Lord of the Sabbath', but he does not go into greater detail about the precise practice of the day, leaving it to the individual and their community. Whilst he does not consider the Sabbath mandatory, he regards it as an important part of Messianic Jewish identity.

> I am not particularly inspired by the Jewish identity of one who gives up the Sabbath.[66]

Following the Pharisaic Pattern

For John Fischer the Sabbath is still in force, as observed by Yeshua.

> To argue that the Sabbath has been abolished by the coming of Yeshua, as many do, contradicts not only Yeshua's own words in Matthew 5:17–20 . . . but also Paul's statement in Romans 3:31, that faith by no means nullifies the law.[67]

Fischer challenges the view that Yeshua's attitude to the Sabbath 'appears lax'.[68]

> The religious leaders had criticized Yeshua for his disciples' actions in picking grain on Shabbat [Mark 2:23–28; Matt. 12:1–8]. Yeshua's response is often presented as evidence that he disregarded the regulations for Shabbat observance. However, at this time in history, there was an ongoing discussion over the picking and eating of grain on Shabbat. Even the Talmud points out: 'Bundles which can be taken up with one hand may be handled on the Sabbath . . . and he may break it with his hand and eat thereof' (Shab.128a).

65 Ibid., 185.

66 Daniel Juster to Arnold Fruchtenbaum, letter dated September 29, 1984, quoted in Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology*: *The Missing Link in Systematic Theology* (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries Press, 1992), 762.

67 John Fischer, 'Messianic Congregations Should Exist and Should Be Very Jewish: A Response to Arnold Fruchtenbaum' in Louis Goldberg (ed.), *How Jewish Is Christianity: 2 Views on the Messianic Movement* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 136.

68 John Fischer, 'The Place of Rabbinic Tradition in a Messianic Jewish Lifestyle' in *The Enduring Paradox: Exploratory Essays in Messianic Judaism,* ed. John Fischer (Baltimore: Lederer, 2000), 149.

> This is exactly what the disciples were doing. Further, Yeshua's reasoning concerning his position on this issue follows the same patterns used by the Pharisees to demonstrate that the needs of life are paramount, even over the Sabbath regulations . . . Even Yeshua's concluding statement is found in the Talmud: 'Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath' (Mark 2:27; Yoma 85b). In neither case are the Sabbath regulations being set aside.[69]

Fischer also reviews Yeshua's healing on the Sabbath and concludes with a quotation from Shmuel Safrai: 'Jesus' Sabbath healings which angered the head of the synagogue were permitted by tannaitic law'.[70] Yeshua remained an 'observant, traditional Jew, both in his life and in his teachings'.[71] Fischer challenges Fruchtenbaum's assertion that corporate worship on the Sabbath was not part of the original biblical teaching.

> As for the critique that the Sabbath is a day of rest, not a day of corporate worship, it is both unjustified and anachronistic. Exodus 20:10, by noting that this day is a 'Sabbath to the LORD,' clearly implies the notion of response and therefore worship, an idea also suggested by Isaiah 58:13–14 ('if you call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD's holy day honourable, and if you honour it by not going your own way . . . '). Further, by the time of the second temple the Sabbath clearly was a day of corporate worship and one in which Yeshua (Matthew 9:35; Luke 4:16–30) and Paul (Acts 17:2) regularly participated.[72]

Details of observance are not given, but Fischer expects the example of Yeshua to be followed, as Sabbath-keeping is a fundamental principle, and not just a body of legislation. The Sabbath should be appreciated in the light of the 'covenant pattern of the [Ancient] Near East, which shows that all Torah material reflects God's grace'.[73] The principles of 'keep it holy', 'no labour', 'unto the Lord' and 'a delight' are the underlying themes.

> To keep something holy means to set it apart, separate it, *for* God and *from* other things. So Shabbat should be different from the other days, separated *from* the ordinary purposes of the week. It's to be set apart *for* God in order to build up and renew our life with God. Worship and instruction play an important role in this.[74]

69 Ibid., 149–150.
70 Ibid., 151, quoting S. Safrai, 'Religion in Everyday Life' in S. Safrai and M. Stern (eds.), *The Jewish People in the First Century,* vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976) (no page reference).
71 Ibid.
72 Ibid., 138. See above, section 2.2.
73 John Fischer, *Siddur for Messianic Jews* (Palm Harbor, FL: An Adventure in Faith, 1984), 202.
74 Ibid., 203.

For Fischer this means synagogal worship, the congregation meeting as a community, but with 'two important constructs' that undergird the significance of the Sabbath – rest and anticipation.[75]

> It is a day for not working, i.e. not interfering with or changing the natural order, not disturbing the harmony of creation. We don't work on this day because work is a symbol of conflict, disharmony and struggle (cf. 'cursed is the ground for your sake; in the sweat of your face will you eat of it'); it reminds us of man's [*sic*] fall (Gen. 3), not God's shalom. By not working we free ourselves from our weekly struggle with the world in order to make a living.[76]

The second construct, 'anticipation', is linked to the world to come, and the second coming of the Messiah.

> The time of harmony Shabbat looks forward to is the Olam Ha-Ba (the world to come), i.e., the time of the Messiah. This explains why we call the Messianic age the time of 'continuous Shabbat.' The Messianic strains of Havdalah heighten this sense of anticipation each week. So for us, Shabbat serves as a symbolic expectation of our Messiah's second coming, as well as an opportunity to experience *now* in a small way the rest and harmony that will exist *then*.[77]

Keeping the Sabbath Holy and Wholly

Mark Kinzer examines the practice of Yeshua and his disciples, challenging traditional readings that assume observance of Jewish practice is no longer valid, and in fact 'legalistic' for Messianic Jews.[78] Yeshua observed Sabbath, *kashrut* and the festivals, and for Kinzer such norms still apply today. They are God's provision and providential ordering for the survival of the Jewish people up to the present.

> Yeshua and his followers were born and raised within a Jewish world where such practices (i.e. circumcision, Sabbath and holiday observance, and dietary laws), commanded in the Torah, were presumed rather than disputed. Fierce disputes arose over *how* these commandments were to be interpreted and applied – but not over *whether* they were to be interpreted and applied. Nevertheless, according to conventional Christian readings of the New Testament, Yeshua and his followers ultimately rejected or transcended these basic Jewish practices. The purpose of this chapter is to examine this

75 Ibid., 205.
76 Ibid.
77 Ibid.
78 Mark Kinzer, *Postmissionary Messianic Judaism: Redefining Christian Engagement with the Jewish People,* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005), ch. 2, 'The New Testament and Jewish Practice,' 49–96.

> conventional assumption in order to determine if the evidence warrants it. We will find that it does not.[79]

The outworking of this approach to Shabbat is found in the Collected Halakhic Decisions of the MJRC (Messianic Jewish Rabbinical Council) of New England, in which Kinzer is a leading voice. The stipulations for Sabbath observance run to several pages, and follow closely Conservative Jewish practice.[80]

The principles behind the Sabbath are outlined from a quotation from Morris Joseph.

> The Sabbath is a sacred day and there are certain kinds of enjoyment which by their very nature are out of harmony with its inherent holiness. Participation in them on the Sabbath is like a sudden intrusion of a shrill street organ on a beautiful melody sung by a lovely voice. It is difficult, almost impossible, to lay down a definite rule on this point, to say 'This sort of amusement is allowable, that sort improper, on the Sabbath.' The matter must be left to the individual conscience, to each person's sense of what is seemly.[81]

The MJRC follows the traditional commencement of the Sabbath, beginning an hour before sunset and ending an hour afterwards.

> 3.1.1 Shabbat begins and ends according to the times determined and accepted by the wider Orthodox and Conservative Jewish world. This means that we are accepting the Rabbinic fence around the law, with an earlier time for starting and a later time for ending.[82]

Candle lighting is expected, and should be done before the beginning of the Sabbath. This is in contrast to most Messianic Jews, who do not follow this practice but light candles at services which often begin after the Sabbath.

> 3.2.1 If it is not possible to light candles before Shabbat begins, traditional halakhah would strictly prohibit lighting the candles at a later time. We respect this traditional halakhic decision, and the honor it shows to the objective temporal boundaries of Shabbat built into the natural order. At the same time, given the symbolic importance Shabbat candlelighting has assumed in modern Jewish family life, our own basic practice will not prohibit lighting Shabbat candles af-

79 Kinzer, *Postmissionary Messianic Judaism,* 50.

80 MJRC, 'Collected Halakhic Decisions (May 2006)' (draft pre-publication paper of the Messianic Jewish Rabbinical Council of New England, email attachment from Mark Kinzer, June 20, 2007), 3–7.

81 MJRC, 6, quoting Morris Joseph, *Judaism as Creed and Life* (New York: Bloch, 1920), 89–90.

82 MJRC, 'Collected Halakhic Decisions,' 3.

> ter Shabbat begins by transferring a fire from a candle lit before the beginning of Shabbat. In this case the original candle should not be extinguished on Shabbat, nor should the mitzvah berachah be recited.[83]

A traditional blessing should be used, but a Messianic one may be added if wished. This emphasis reflects a desire to follow orthodox/conservative tradition rather than use the opportunity for a Christocentric exegesis of the custom, as would be the case in the majority of Messianic groups that practice candle lighting on Friday evening.

> 3.2.3 The berachah recited at the lighting of the candles will be the traditional mitzvah berachah. If one wants to use an additional Messianic berachah, one may do so.[84]

The Sabbath meals should be accompanied by the traditional graces in Hebrew.

> 3.4.1 Friday night meal. The basic practice includes saying kiddush, hamotzi (over bread), and an abbreviated birkat hamazon (all prayers in Hebrew).[85]

The meals should take place with the traditional features such as 'handwashing, use of two loaves of bread, salting the bread, recitation of *aysheet hayil*, blessing of the children, singing of *zemirot,* full *birkat hamazon* and discussion of Torah'. The traditional *havdalah* service should also be observed at the end of the Sabbath.

Normal professions, trades, and daily occupations should cease, 'except in the following occupations: health care workers and care-givers, police, military, emergency personnel, and synagogue personnel who are involved in the synagogue activities of the day'.[86] One should not light a fire, although

> Halakhic authorities disagree about whether the use of electrical devices and the combustion involved in starting and running an automobile violate this commandment of the Torah. Our basic practice will follow the more lenient interpretation.[87]

According to Nehemiah 13, buying and selling should be avoided.

> 'Buying and selling' here includes both the selling of goods for profit and the selling of goods that are not sold for profit (e.g., religious

83 Ibid., 3–4.
84 Ibid., 4.
85 Ibid.
86 Ibid., 5.
87 Ibid.

> articles). Thus, we will not sell items (such as books or CD's) in our synagogues on Shabbat. 'Buying and selling' here includes payment for food or entertainment. Credit card purchases are 'buying.'[88]

However, offerings and *tzedakah* on Shabbat 'do not constitute buying and selling' and are permitted. 'Dining out or other recreational activity that involves spending money is inappropriate on Shabbat'.[89]

Travelling is permitted in some circumstances.

> In general, travelling on Shabbat conflicts with the spirit of the day. Nevertheless, limited travel may be appropriate to uphold certain values that are themselves associated with Shabbat. Thus, our basic practice does not prohibit travel on Shabbat to attend services at the synagogue, to visit the sick, and to sustain contact with the synagogue community and with one's family, though such travel should not occupy a substantial portion of the day. Normally one should avoid travelling on Shabbat for other purposes.[90]

Food should be prepared in advance, or kept on a slow cooker, where it may be kept warm or reheated. 'On Shabbat we do not manipulate and alter the world but receive and enjoy it. Cooking alters the composition of food'.[91]

The MJRC recognises the difficulty of some traditional requirements.

> Due to the demands of modern life, the traditional prohibition on writing and drawing places an excessive burden upon the Messianic Jewish community in our contemporary situation. Therefore, our basic practice will not include prohibitions of the sort of writing and drawing that enhances the community's ability to experience Shabbat and that does not violate the spirit of Shabbat. At the same time, we appreciate the reasons for these prohibitions and recognize their great value, and therefore commend them as part of our expanded practice.[92]

In order to maintain the 'spirit of Shabbat' it is best to avoid all activities that, although not strictly work, are not in keeping with the spirit of the day, and this includes avoiding Shabbat activities 'that involve the general public'.[93] Television is best avoided due to 'the socially fragmenting effect on families', especially commercial television. Letters should be left unopened and unread, email should not be read or composed, and the telephone should only be used in emergencies. Computers, videos and

88 Ibid.
89 Ibid.
90 Ibid., 5–6.
91 Ibid., 6.
92 Ibid.
93 Ibid.

mobile phones should be switched off.[94] Kinzer and the MJRC thus provide a guide to the Sabbath which would not be out of place in any observant community.

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Conclusion

For Maoz, Fruchtenbaum and Nerel, traditional observance of the Sabbath is problematic. Maoz does not accept a theological rationale for observance of Jewish 'religious' customs or attempt to give them new meaning in the light of Yeshua. There is no room for contextualisation, and no possibility of adapting rabbinic practices as vehicles for expression of faith in Jesus. Maoz's Protestant Reformed principles disallow the adoption of practices that are not clearly scriptural, and his construal of 'religious Judaism' is that it is antithetical to 'the Gospel'. Here he represents one pole of the Messianic movement, with others more willing to engage with 'religious' elements of Jewish culture.

Fruchtenbaum and Nerel also issue caveats. For Nerel, only the biblical forms of Judaism are permissible, and for Fruchtenbaum neither Mosaic (Pre-Yeshua) or Rabbinic (post-Yeshua) legislation can interfere with the believer's freedom in Christ, to observe the Sabbath as the Lord of the Sabbath intended.

For Kasdan, Fischer, Juster and Kinzer the Jewish tradition is to be accepted, either with adaptations, or with as few modifications as possible. Questions of the relationship between the law and grace, between freedom and observance, are not so threatening, as their hermeneutic reads scripture as affirming Yeshua's own Torah-observance, and they are willing to give rabbinic tradition a degree of legitimacy and normative influence, without seeing this in conflict with their allegiance to Yeshua. A similar breadth of opinion is to be observed in the discussion of the food laws.

94 Ibid., 7.

A Continuous Probing of Discontinuity:

A Grateful Outsider Reads "Mapping Messianic Jewish Theology"

by **Richard S. Briggs**

Over twenty years ago, my own easy-going and untroubled atheism – a very English kind of civil disinterest – was confronted by the claims of Jesus Christ. I had no desperate problems to deal with, no guilty past to lay to rest, and no sense of longing for something more profound, but nevertheless, within a few weeks of arriving at university as an undergraduate and encountering Christian believers who lived zealously and joyfully for their God, I signed up. And in profound discontinuity, my world was turned upside down. I plunged into long and mostly happy years of mission, church work, evangelism, theological study, and even church leadership. I drifted towards theological education. And thus it was that I eventually arrived at being a New Testament lecturer at a Christian college, raising my eyes from the narrow pages of doctoral intensity to survey a room full of young people eager to know what it was all about. At which point I began to realize, yet again, how little I understood what it was all about. I had my own frameworks and favorites: parables that I had found personally life-changing; verses which summarized key truths; and the book of Romans which, I had been taught, supported the great Reformation edifice of justification by faith. But somewhere between trying to offer an overview of Paul's letter to the Galatians to fresh-faced undergraduates in "Introduction to New Testament" and teaching an introductory class on Romans, it finally dawned on me that one of the great driving engines of the New Testament was the vexed question of how to understand God's new action in Jesus amongst the Gentiles in terms of the frameworks handed down from God's familiar action amongst the chosen people: the Jewish believers who had been center-stage from the very beginning. At which point, the New Testament came alive in my hands as a book of engaged and identity-shaping theology, a discovery which remains with me in my present context teaching the Old Testament to Christian ministers in training.

I recount this story by way of introduction to my own reading of Richard Harvey's "Mapping Messianic Jewish Theology" (MMJT),[1] in part to make

1 Richard S. Harvey, "Mapping Messianic Jewish Theology" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wales, 2007). Page references in the text are to this dissertation.

it as clear as I can that I come to his work from far afield. Where he writes as a participant-observer, I am an observer only, albeit an observer whose day job involves serious and persistent attention to the very same texts which make up the Tanakh. Where his own identity is deeply implicated in the issues and themes he explores, my own identity has been forged in a very different world: believer against atheist; Protestant against Catholic; evangelical against liberal – all these have been at various times identity-shaping issues for me (though less so now in some cases), but I have always been Gentile, and I teach the scriptural text mainly to Gentiles who will minister to Gentiles, for many of whom, indeed, there is no awareness of the Messianic Jewish movement (MJM) at all. My own awareness is indebted to Richard Harvey himself: it was my privilege to be his colleague as I first taught those New Testament classes, first stumbled through Romans, first found myself pausing over "what advantage has the Jew? . . . Much in every way" (Rom 3:1–2). I have learned much from him, even and perhaps especially in the midst of disagreement, and was always profoundly challenged to think better, more seriously, and more determinedly for the glory of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. So I am an outsider to this discussion, but an immensely grateful one, and I shall mark my outsider status here in small but significant ways such as maintaining the terminology of my own traditions: reference to "Jesus Christ," for example, when talking of Messiah Yeshua, or the labels "Old Testament" and "New Testament," which I retain in spite of long years debating this issue with Richard, for theological reasons to which I shall come towards the end.

As a mapping exercise, MMJT introduces me to a whole world of variant views around the central topics of how the MJM conceives of God, Torah, and Israel. I was surprised at first, though I should not have been, by the diversity of viewpoints. But of course, from my own various traditions (currently Anglican, though at other times free-church evangelical), diversity has always been a fact of theological life, and working now in a church which consciously sees itself as part of a church which is "one, holy, catholic and apostolic," I am aware of how the desire to incorporate as wide a body of believers as possible leads to a certain fuzziness over doctrinal distinctives and theological formulations. So in turn it seems to me inevitable that any gathered body of Messianic Jewish believers will exhibit diversity. The texts of the Torah, the former and latter Prophets, and the Writings are, after all, not a collection of texts which naturally lead one to think that there is only one way of putting matters with the God of Israel. Laws and narratives are repeated, and rarely, if ever, say the same thing twice.[2] Variant perspectives are enshrined in the canonical text, so that readers are promised that swords will become ploughshares while ploughshares will become swords, rendering complexity into any

2 I have offered an account of this phenomenon in my article "The Theological Function of Repetition in the Old Testament Canon," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 28.2 (2006): 95–112, suggesting the Deuteronomic rubric of double-testimony as a key.

attempt to discern the ways of God amidst subsequent events. There is little basis, within this canonical collection of inspired texts, to suppose that theological articulation in the centuries which followed should be univocal. One might also point out that, on the evidence of both Jewish and Christian traditions, it has not been so in practice either.

So my first observation is that it suggests perhaps an over-optimistic view of potential theological "progress" to make a statement such as, "at present there is no normative view of Torah" (p. 144), whether that be true of the MJM as a whole or even, as Harvey's subsequent survey makes clear, just within either the Torah-positive or Torah-negative streams of it. Such a way of putting the matter suggests that what is needed is "further work" in order to arrive at some kind of normative view. My observation from the wilds of Gentile post-Christendom is that such a thing will not happen this side of the eschaton. Over here the Lutheran tradition wrote off the Torah as an anti-type of the gospel, while the Calvinist tradition saw it as the root and foundation of Christian ethics, and both traditions brought forth glorious fruit in season (though not, of course, exclusively glorious), and they presumably cannot both be right – yet God somehow seems to pour out grace in both. It would be surprising to me if the MJM ever resolved this issue univocally. Indeed I find pretty much this point made by David Stern under the "Torah-positive" label (p. 152), but I don't think there are any logical reasons why it could not have been made in a Torah-negative framework as well. Moreover, as with Torah, so with many of the topics reviewed and mapped herein, until the very last page of the very last map, appropriately on eschatology, where Richard Harvey says more or less exactly this: "It remains to be seen whether Messianic thought will cohere around one main view, or continue to develop into separate streams reflecting, as one would expect from the variation and diversity within both Judaism and Christianity on the topic, a confusion of voices which will only be finally resolved at the return of the Messiah himself" (p. 258). I would place more emphasis on the "as one would expect" than on the "it remains to be seen." In practice it remains to be seen, but all the evidence points one way.

Perhaps this acceptance of diversity is to be understood as a MJM equivalent of what I would call catholic ecclesiology, as I hinted above. From my Anglican perspective, there is great merit in understanding the gathering of God's people to worship and learn together as disciples in as broad and inclusive a way as possible. Obviously, not all self-consciously evangelical ecclesiologies agree. A resurgent conservatism even within Anglicanism is currently campaigning loudly to return to something more like a "pure" church, and there have been non-conformist branches of the Protestant church for centuries whose avowed goal is to "return to the New Testament church" (a goal which has always struck me as odd in the light of, for example, Jesus' parable of the talents [Matt 25:14–30], but that is a point for another day). Such approaches often value doctrinal purity and correctness of theological confession, but whereas more theologically catholic church traditions value this too but manage to hold it

together with as inclusive as possible a vision of who should be welcomed into the fellowship of God's believers, non-conformist ecclesiologies often pursue a visible purity of the body. This is evidenced, for example, in having confessional standards as criteria for "membership," or in the *de facto* result of the pursuit of doctrinal purity: repeated splitting and new denominations. The history of the church over twenty centuries suggests that theological thinking is always both determinative of and determined in part by the ecclesiological structures in which it occurs. This give and take of what we might call theological idealism and pragmatism requires a constant interplay of allowing the structure to give voice to those who want to speak truthfully of God and God's creation at the same time as allowing the structure to be shaped by those who give such voice. This is one of those tensions which it is always easier to collapse one way or the other, as countless examples demonstrate, but when it works it offers the church as a "plausibility structure" for the Christian faith.[3] In the light of this, it is interesting to note that there is very little discussion of "structure" in MMJT. I don't know what the right word would be for a Messianic Jewish equivalent of "ecclesiology," and in this regard it is interesting that the organizing rubric of "God, Torah and Israel" (p. 36), when it arrives at discussion of Israel, turns out to be a chapter on eschatology and the land. I think what I am looking for is some middle term between Israel and the Messianic Jewish theologian, which relates to the theologian's socio-theological location. Harvey's discussion pursues, overall, the "sources, norms, methods, contents and results" of Messianic Jewish theology (MJT) (p. 2), but in spite of the close chronicling of specific views held by specific people, I end up wondering whether something has been missed by not attempting to articulate these sources, norms, methods, contents, and results in dialogue with their various social and structural locations. Conscious that I could simply be asking for a different work from the one presented, I want to ask how much of the "further work" which is advertised as desirable at many points throughout is in fact going to have to be the work of showing how particular conceptions and instances of Messianic Jewish congregations serve as plausibility structures for particular ways of construing MJT. There is evidence of this concern in the discussion of "Torah in practice," of Passover, for instance, as the "*locus classicus* for the practical outworking of MJT" (p. 213), and in the wise conclusion of this part of the survey, where Harvey writes, "The dynamics of demographic, generational and geographical changes in the constitution of the Messianic Jewish movement worldwide may influence the movement in the directions of either greater 'orthopraxy,' or less concern with observance, or continue the flexibility and diversity of practice that characterise it at present" (p. 221). This, it seems to me, is not only exactly right, but is also likely to be hugely significant for every other topic dis-

3 This notion is explored by, among others, Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (London: SPCK, 1989), e.g. chapter 18: "The Congregation as Hermeneutic for the Gospel."

cussed herein, and makes me question the claim made a few lines earlier that conformity of practice will only be possible subsequent to progress being made on "the theological debates on the nature and authority of Torah." I would rather suggest that different sorts of claims on that issue will count as progress depending on the demographic, generational, and geographical constitution of various streams of the MJM.

In this context, a word is appropriate about the evident close relationship between the MJM and conservative evangelicalism, and in particular its specifically American manifestations in various forms of dispensationalist belief or hermeneutics. If it is true, as Harvey says at various points, that much of the MJM grew out of the same milieu which produced works such as Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth*[4] and other end-times speculation, then the MJM has a real issue to face in terms of how it sees its own future(s) vis-à-vis the various trajectories currently being mapped out by such Christian movements. Summarizing his discussion of Baruch Maoz, Harvey writes, "If Messianic Judaism disassociates itself from Dispensationalism it would render less dogmatic some of the assertions of the movement, and would open it to a broader range of theological influences within Judaism and Christianity" (p. 257). To which this reader, situated a long way from such dispensational movements, might say: Yes, and a hundred times yes. The disastrous reduction of the books of Daniel and Revelation to end-time charts and maps is just one of the pieces of theological baggage which could be jettisoned in such a move. The patient inclusion in MMJT of diagrams explaining the differences between variant forms of premillennialism, amillennialism, and postmillennialism is a tribute to the author's even-handedness in being faithful to his source material, but it indicates significant problems in the ability of MJT to offer its own engagement with the relevant biblical texts (or indeed most mainstream Christian eschatological traditions and interpretations). Both Daniel and Revelation are profound analyses of the theological shaping of identity under pressure, both drawing upon vivid characterizations of the conflict between good and evil as experienced now and in heaven, and both are profoundly implicated in their originating contexts – the Maccabean crisis on the one hand and the dominance of the Roman imperial cult on the other. There is plenty of material here for MJT practitioners to ask questions about the nature of God and God's people, but none of it, frankly, has anything to do with the timing of the millennium.[5] There is even, to give one example, considerable pause for thought in the way that Daniel reads the Maccabean crisis in startlingly different terms from 1 Maccabees' account, which is deeply characterized by its zeal for Torah observance to the point of violent resistance (e.g. 1

4 Co-authored with C. C. Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), with many reprints and updates.

5 On the millennium in mainstream biblical studies, see the suitably brief treatment of Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, New Testament Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 106–08, as well Michael Gilbertson, *The Meaning of the Millennium*, Grove Biblical Series 5 (Cambridge: Grove Books, 1997).

Macc 2:15–28). The book of Daniel, instead, offers a resolutely theocentric perspective, even to the point of characterizing the Maccabean uprising as "a little help" (11:34). Are there implications here for understanding how to evaluate Torah observance in exile, and indeed what counts as faithfulness in any form in exile? A wide range of scholarship on Daniel suggests that the marginalized position of faith in the God of Israel in today's world can draw profoundly on this book for its self-understanding, and prevalent trends in the current study of Revelation point the same way.[6] Of course all these readings are contested, as I would be keen to admit, but for what it is worth I suggest that if MJT interacts with this kind of careful and critically respectful scholarship for its eschatological intuitions then it will find itself in a much better place.

This turn to the specifics of the biblical text brings me at last to the major point which anyone in my position is bound to want to engage in a discussion of MJT: the nature and the status of the Christian New Testament with respect to the "sources, norms, methods, content and results" of MJT, along with the hermeneutics appropriate to reading Jewish Scripture itself. As a Gentile coming to a reading of the two testament Bible, I find myself confronted with questions of the extent to which there is continuity and discontinuity between the two testaments, testaments which, in the theological structuring of the Christian Bible, are inter-related as "old" and "new." (In passing I note my continued bemusement at the bizarre argument, mainly put forward by young people I suppose, that "old" connotes "out of date" or "disrespectful" in some way – I always wonder what it says about some cultures that they think of "old" in this way rather than in terms of due respect and wisdom, and find it odd that some Christians have thought this was a sufficient argument to overturn the theological point at issue in this terminology, where the "Old Testament" is indeed very much one source of wisdom necessary to understand the New, and is thus to be treated with all – and very considerable – due respect.)

This matter of continuity and discontinuity between old and new is of course very much the subject-matter of both Romans and Galatians, and in a certain sense, perhaps all the New Testament writings. The context in both the main Pauline discussions makes it clear that the question of how to understand the on-going roles of Jew and Gentile are chief presenting questions. I tend to think that Galatians sees Paul arguing against Gentile conversion into Torah observance, an argument he pursues with an almost scornful zeal (wishing those who get circumcised would go all the way and "castrate themselves," 5:12), while Romans sees him looking

6 For Daniel see the unsurpassed commentary of Daniel Smith-Christopher in the *New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 7, ed. L. E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 17–194, as well as his *A Biblical Theology of Exile*, Overtures to Biblical Theology (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002). For an analysis of Daniel's differences from 1 Maccabees, see Wes Howard-Brook and Anthony Gwyther, *Unveiling Empire: Reading Revelation Then and Now* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), 46–53. The Revelation commentaries of Christopher Rowland (Epworth Press, 1993, and in *NIB* 12: 501–743 [1998]) are also strong on these themes.

the other way and wondering what becomes, then, of the Jewish people if his earlier argument is right. But the logic is the same in both cases, and it is an argument conducted in a very tight logical space: what God did in the past was good (and hence the Torah is good, and holy, and just [Rom 7:12]), but what God has done in Jesus is also good, indeed even better, except that this by no means implies that there was anything wrong with what was done before. The resulting tangle which is Romans 7 is answered with "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord," and the pursuant discussion of Romans 9–11 surely is intended to settle the matter, if only, as one of my own theological teachers put it so clearly, one had the faintest idea what it is Paul actually argues in Romans 9–11. But whatever it is, it ends, notoriously, with his only non-christological doxology (Rom 11:33–36), one which emphasizes the inscrutable mystery of God's glorious ways. Good and very good: the very good is better, but not in a way which renders the good any less good. Is Romans, I wonder, a putative MJT? It is, after all, a systematic treatment of the very subject which two thousand years later runs right through the concerns of MJT.

Surprisingly, to me, Romans is not much discussed in MMJT. Galatians gets a brief mention with Tzvi Sadan's reading of 3:24, where Paul describes the law as a disciplinarian (*paidagogos*; schoolmaster) who brought us to the Messiah, though Sadan's point is reported as being that the relationship of the believer to Torah is transformed and not terminated (p. 164), rather as Romans 10:4 presents Christ as the *telos* of the *nomos*, and thus the "purpose" or "final destination" of Torah, with either way of looking at it possible in the text. In fact, in general, the New Testament, the *Brit Chadashah*, is not particularly in view in this survey, and the question of hermeneutics does not often manage to escape the gravitational pull of some form of dispensationalist evangelicalism on the rare occasions it does surface. As an outsider, I confess to a sense of unease that the discussions so ably mapped by MMJT appear to proceed with so little dialogue with the New Testament.[7] Let me offer just one or two pointers to theological reasons which underlie my unease.

In my own teaching, I organize a course on "Biblical Theology" around the discussion of continuity and discontinuity between the testaments. I have been deeply influenced by Gerhard von Rad's presentation of the classical prophets:

> What engrossed the prophets' attention was God's new saving action, whose dawn they had discerned. The reason why they made any use at all of these old traditions in their preaching is that they ascribed to them something like a predictive character. They looked for a new David, a new Exodus, a new covenant, a new city of God:

7 Though here I am acutely aware of my "outsider" status, and am particularly conscious of not having read such works as Mark S. Kinzer, *Postmissionary Messianic Judaism: Redefining Christian Engagement with the Jewish People* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2005). My point is solely that the surveys of MMJT get by on such little dialogue.

> the old had thus become a type of the new and important as pointing forward to it.[8]

This sense in which scriptural categories are projected forward from their original appearances to help shape the discussion of later Scripture is picked up in the Christian New Testament too: creation is taken up in new creation, exodus in new exodus, covenant in new covenant, and all of these were announced long ago in Jewish Scripture (Isa 65, Jer 31, etc.). In this sense, the Christian New Testament simply progresses the hope of newness into a Christological shape, articulated around the person and work of Jesus Christ. Here is a model profoundly based in continuity. But as Chris Seitz has pointed out, there is a difference between von Rad's notion of tradition-history sustaining the canonical development of the Old Testament Scriptures and the separate claim being made that this is what the New Testament simply continues: the difference lies in the various points of rupture introduced into the trajectories of creation, exodus, covenant, and other categories.[9] As Seitz and others have suggested, the links between the testaments are best understood "typologically" or "figurally."[10] It is always well to remember the reaction of Jesus' disciples in coming across the empty tomb: bewilderment, despair, a genuine sense of not understanding how the story they thought they were following could come to this. Thus somehow the "fulfillment" of all Scripture which Jesus announced as taking place in himself (Luke 24:25–27) cannot simply have been read off the events, or indeed the texts which would go on to witness to the events. Here, then, is discontinuity: ways in which the New Testament suggests that God has now done something "new," although importantly, as the von Rad quote makes clear, it is not "newness" itself which is the significant theological category. The opening verses of Hebrews put the point most forcefully with respect to the category of revelation: "Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son" (Heb 1:1–2), and of course the rest of Hebrews treads no less lightly through a series of other category comparisons.

The key to holding all this together, it seems to me, is to recognize that the continuity is primarily discernible retrospectively, since there are many ways in principle that a narrative (or indeed a salvation-history) could be carried forward, and only one way in fact in which the New Testament does end up carrying it forward. Arguably theoretical notions of what counts as continuity count for little in the face of the onward

8 Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology: Vol. II, The Theology of Israel's Prophetic Traditions* (London: SCM Press; orig. 1960, ET 1965), 323.

9 See for example Christopher R. Seitz, *Prophecy and Hermeneutics: Toward a New Introduction to the Prophets*, Studies in Theological Interpretation (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 155–87.

10 See Stanley D. Walters, ed., *Go Figure! Figuration in Biblical Interpretation*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2008), including an introductory essay by Seitz.

particularistic march of history.[11] Continuity then has to be construed in and around (or "figured" into) the events and texts which continue to unfold. In short, the New Testament, in itself, is neither continuous with nor discontinuous with the Old, but degrees of continuity are discerned by people who come to see that the God of the story has not changed. These points of continuity are themselves handled differently by different New Testament authors: so (to over-simplify for a moment) Matthew tells us the story of Moses but tells it about Jesus, while John tells us the story of Genesis, but it is about Jesus, and Luke tells us the story of all the Law and the Prophets, but it is about . . . Jesus.

Increasingly it seems to me that the New Testament perhaps introduces very few new theological categories at all. Christology, or at least most articulations of it, might be an exception. But Christian ethics wrestles with its own versions of law and grace just as Israel always wrestled with Torah. The Holy Spirit is poured out at Pentecost (and surely plays a key role in facilitating the retrospective discernment of continuity), but was long since known in Israel and anticipated in prophecies quoted on the day of Pentecost. Atonement theology draws its categories from Leviticus and elsewhere in the Old Testament. None of it makes its intended sense without understanding it in continuity with the Old Testament.

To sum up: the New Testament could not have been anticipated as the *telos* of the Old, but in retrospect, continuity can be discerned between the two witnesses, and arguably the New Testament cannot be rightly understood without the Old. The familiar question, then, of whether in some sense it *replaces* the Old is badly put, or, we might say, replacement is the wrong metaphor for grasping the relationship between the two. But the Old is of course changed in some sense by its (new) relationship with the New.

The question which strikes me most forcefully, then, after reading MMJT, concerns the extent to which MJT already has to hand the conceptuality it needs for its task in the Scriptures of the New Testament. Undeniably these have been appropriated and interpreted in frameworks uncongenial (and sometimes downright hostile) to Jewish thought, and I found myself wondering whether part of the problem perceived here is to do with the *particular* Christian theological frameworks in play in the discussion rather than with the notion of Christian theological frameworks *per se*. I am not saying that the New Testament is the answer to the questions surveyed in MMJT, rather that it would be a profoundly constructive dialogue partner since it is, in its own time and place, deeply engaged with the project of working out the very questions which occupy MJT. If that dialogue could take place with people working with scriptural categories in a hermeneutically subtle and constructive way, then it seems to me

11 I note here, but cannot explore, the obvious point that there are (at least) two particular traditions which develop out of the Jewish Scriptures, but my focus is on the NT one.

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that one might have a very powerful engine both for reading the New Testament and for MJT.[12]

I am reminded of the extraordinary story in Acts 18 where Apollos, a Jew of Alexandria, comes to Ephesus and unleashes all his rhetorical glory on the gathered crowds. He was, says Luke, "an eloquent man, well-versed in the scriptures . . . and he taught accurately (*akribōs*) the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John" (Acts 18:24–25). These Scriptures are the Tanakh, and his baptism is not a Christian one. Intriguingly, "when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the Way of God to him more accurately (*akribesteron*)" (v. 26). Too often the discussion of Jewish and Christian theological categories supposes that for one to be right the other must be wrong, but perhaps one might suggest that one could be "accurate" and the other "more accurate." Unless, of course, God changed his mind sometime between the two testaments, and there is material discontinuity, but to this many New Testament readers will want to say, with Paul, "by no means!"

So I find myself wanting to read further than MMJT takes me, and agreeing with its concluding apologia that it is in fact a prolegomenon to a future development of a MJT. I want to know what a Messianic Jewish pneumatology looks like in the light of Joel 3 and Pentecost. I want to understand the categories of Messianic Jewish "ecclesiology." I want to see how far Messianic Jewish hermeneutics can learn to be indebted both to the rabbis and to all the other ways of reading texts which have flourished over God's many centuries. And most of all I want to see the New Testament read in a way which taps into its life-blood and brings it alive to those of us who have come late (though gratefully) to the story. This suggests that Richard Harvey has been more than successful in presenting his map-making exercise to an outsider like me, drawing me in to want to see further and better. Thank you – and may your map help lead us all into exceedingly fertile territory indeed.[13]

12 It is worth noting, again, how much contemporary biblical studies is profoundly engaged with questions driven by the Jewish particularity of everything the Bible says. Two striking examples are offered in the work of Jon Levenson, on the beloved son and on resurrection, which demonstrate, *inter alia*, how profoundly Christian categories are in their very nature profoundly and irreducibly Jewish. See Jon D. Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), and *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel: The Ultimate Victory of the God of Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

13 I am indebted to the helpful comments of Melody Briggs and Walter Moberly on an earlier version of this article.

First Reflections on "Mapping Messianic Jewish Theology"

A review article

by **Richard A. Robinson**

"What is truth?" Pontius Pilate famously asked Jesus, the one who claimed to be the truth. Had he asked, "What is Messianic Jewish theology?" he would have had a harder time of it. In a seminal dissertation, Richard Harvey offers the first comprehensive study of modern Messianic Jewish theology (MJT), surveying the theological thought of Messianic Jews who have been, to one degree or another, key players in the Messianic Jewish movement. The material is sorted by topic and then under that by the individual thinker, and addresses theological method, process, and content. At the conclusion the author gives us a typology of eight kinds of MJT and his own thoughts on how a MJT should develop.

It is clear by the end that the answer to Pilate's imaginary question would have been, "We don't quite know yet." For MJT is in flux, still developing, not yet sufficiently thought through, and without any one approach accepted across the board by Messianic Jews.

I have been asked to comment on a particular aspect of the dissertation rather than offer a full evaluation. So I would like to focus on an area that still needs further articulation, and that is: Exactly what do we mean by a Messianic Jewish theology? What is it, and why would we want to develop one? I wish to be clear that I consider this dissertation to be a major contribution in its originality and attempt to synthesize the Messianic Jewish playing field. It is strongest in bringing together the various strands of Messianic Jewish thought under one roof. It is less successful in handling the foundational areas that the author rightly states are critical for the development of a MJT.

At the outset, the author states that "Messianic Judaism is the religion of Jewish people who believe in Jesus (Yeshua) as the promised Messiah. It is a Jewish form of Christianity and a Christian form of Judaism" (p. 1). I question whether that is a helpful starting point. Already some of the thinkers treated in the book would disavow the term Messianic Judaism while affirming the adjectival Messianic Jewish. Some of them would question describing their faith as a (seemingly) distinct "religion," nor would they be accepting of the additional descriptions. The author then continues by describing the Messianic Jewish movement, with MJT as an articulation of the behavior and beliefs of that community. It seems, then,

that the approach is that of starting from *community*, with theology as the outworking of that community. That is certainly one way of going about the task; as the author points out, theology is contextual, and the context here is Jewish life "in conversation with" Christian theology (see p. 29). In this way, the dissertation describes what MJT *is*, rather than what it *should be* or *could be*. Or to put it differently, it describes what currently *is* as MJT. There is a tension in the dissertation between the theologically descriptive and the theologically normative: though the issue of truth often surfaces (the author is clear on what he considers to be orthodox and heterodox in some key areas), a descriptive approach tends to submerge truth issues beneath community concerns.

The author proceeds to speak of the need to define "Messianic Judaism" in order to "identify the boundaries of its theology" (p. 30). However, since a variety of meanings attaches to the term, depending on who is speaking, no particular definition is offered. Instead, the various thinkers surveyed are allowed their own voice on the question, which in turn will help shape their theologies.

The author clearly recognizes the need for a more self-conscious approach to MJT. A descriptive survey can only tell us what Messianic Jews are thinking *about* theology; it cannot say what a MJT ought to be, or why there ought to be one. This is not a fault of the author, who admirably meets his intention of "mapping" current MJT. But it does point us to a need to think further.

With that in mind, I would like to suggest a way forward. I have always preferred to identify the Messianic movement as simply the movement of Jews who believe in Jesus, without regard to congregational affiliation or even their self-awareness *as Jews*. This identification can only be meaningful if we move beyond the criterion of community into an objective word of revelation whereby *God* has called out the Jewish people, no matter how they view their own social location or sense of Jewishness. Therefore, even a Jewish believer in Jesus who attends a church, who has no or minimal Jewish self-awareness, can be considered part of the Messianic movement, because God has objectively made him or her to be Jewish. Of course, in saying, "God has called out the Jewish people," there is already an implication of peoplehood and community. But there is also an objective meaning to Jewishness which does not and cannot depend on what we do or where we move socially – for in the Hebrew Bible, Israel never ceases to be Israel despite her behavior, her presence or absence in the land, or even in living apart from the community (those spending time outside the camp in Leviticus; Jonah away from Israel en route to Nineveh). Israel-in-sin and Israelites-in-isolation never cease to be part of Israel.

There is a large discussion there. Nevertheless, the issue of the starting point – community or revelation – is critical. In developing a MJT we can at least see where the choice of a starting point leads us. If handled properly, both can be mutually fruitful.

There are further objective criteria. "MJT is not united in its belief on

[*sic*] the divine nature of Yeshua," writes the author (p. 267). Should such a theology be included under the rubric of MJT? Not only the starting point but also the boundaries of MJT need to be addressed. Once again, an objective word from God here would help. Interestingly, Don Carson, in his recent book *Christ and Culture Revisited*, faults Niehbuhr for including Gnosticism and liberalism under the rubric of "Christian"; remove those categories and one of Niebuhr's five typologies virtually collapses. Are we likewise extending the Messianic Jewish umbrella too wide? (Again, the suspicion is that the idea of community has improperly influenced the scope of what should be considered MJT.) To be sure, Messianic Jews have reasons for strongly emphasizing community and their "location" in both the Jewish and "Christian" worlds (though not all would state it that way). But we risk losing the objective word of God in this.

The author himself suggests a way forward based on Byron Sherwin's criteria for "a valid Jewish theology" (p. 268 ff). It is not clear, however, why Sherwin is offered as the model to follow. His four criteria are *authenticity* (having one's own voice); *coherence* (for MJT, cohering around the "two epistemic priorities of the Messiahship of Jesus and the [ongoing] election of Israel"); *contemporaneity* (speaking into the contemporary situation); and *communal acceptance* of such a theology by the larger Messianic Jewish community.

I question how helpful these four criteria really are. They could just as well describe formulating a political platform. They may possibly be *necessary* for a good theology, but they are not *sufficient*. Moreover, the ongoing election of Israel (part of the criterion of coherence in MJT) needs to be demonstrated *within* a theology, not as a *presupposition* to it, regardless of what one's stance is on the subject.

A MJT – or any theology – must articulate a goal before it discusses the method of achieving that goal. There must be a *justification* for doing theology. Furthermore, there must be a justification for doing *any particular* theology. It is not enough to say that we are Messianic Jews and therefore we must have a MJT. Nor is it sufficient to view a MJT as a way of defending one's existence to others, nor as a mere statement of belief, nor as a corrective to a history of anti-Semitism.

In its broadest conception, theology can be seen as an attempt to take the objective word of God and "translate" it into the world of our subjective existence, in order that we can better understand, relate to, and live for God as he has revealed himself, as well as to understand and relate to ourselves, to others, and to the world at large. It is a way of saying, "Here is God's word – now what?" The "now what" is the justification for theology in general.

The particular idea of a MJT is susceptible to several interpretations, a fact which can obfuscate the discussion. Do we mean the theology that addresses the concerns of a particular community, enabling that community to answer the "now what" question, or telling us how they have already attempted to answer it? In that meaning, MJT parallels the development of Asian, African, African-American, or Hispanic theologies. This

appears to be both the approach of current MJT thinkers and the line of approach taken in this dissertation.

But there is another meaning of a particular theology. We often speak of a theology of the environment, of economics, of racism, of environmentalism. Here what we mean is, what does Scripture have to say on a variety of topics that will enable us to live and act appropriately?

We may think of the first meaning as a "subjective" meaning, the theology emanating or emerging from a given community; while the second can be thought of as "objective," the theology that does not *emerge from* but *bears on* particular parts of life. The two can never be completely separated, but the first tends to lead to a *result* (describing what a given community thinks) – while the second may be a *cause* (prescribing how we should think and act in areas of life).

Thus we may be talking about a theology *done by* Messianic Jews – or we may be talking about a theology *of* Messianic Jews and *of* their unique concerns. The latter can be subsumed under the former. But one difference is that in the latter case, it is even possible for a non-Jew to write a "Messianic Jewish theology."

I prefer to start from an objective word from God and see how the "now what" plays out in relation to the concerns and questions that attach to Jewish followers of Jesus. Because I prefer to start there rather than from community, I do not feel that a MJT needs to *a priori* be shaped by "traditional Jewish categories" of God, Israel, and Torah, nor for that matter by traditional Christian approaches. Several directions are possible that give enlightenment on the issues; multiple approaches can in fact help shed more light than any one approach can. Certainly, we cannot take it as a presupposition that there is a Jewish way to organize theology, for Jewish attitudes and constructs of doctrinal theology have varied greatly. (For Jewish "systematic theology," see Menachem Kellner, *Dogma in Medieval Jewish Thought from Maimonides to Abravanel* [Oxford, 1986] as well as the standard theologies [organized along "Christian" lines] by Solomon Schechter and Kauffman Kohler; on the use of multiple approaches see Vern S. Poythress, *Symphonic Theology: The Validity of Multiple Perspectives in Theology* [Zondervan, 1987]).

Following the statement of goal, the question of method in theology is paramount. Method includes the question of which sources to use. And this use of sources also needs to be justified. It is not enough to say that Messianic Jews must utilize all the sources in Judaism – Talmud, midrash, and so on – simply because we have previously defined Messianic Judaism as a "Christian form of Judaism." We need to consider what we hope to accomplish by utilizing various sources. Particularly, we need to consider *what meta-narrative and authority structure* we are building when we utilize sources.

Is it significant that traditional Jewish theology rarely appeals to the Jewish apocrypha or the Dead Sea Scrolls, "Jewish" though they are? Does it mean something when Messianic Jewish thinkers cite the Talmud but not the Kabbalah? Or when they utilize both? What would

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a MJT look like that drew on the Scriptures and then from, say, *Heeb* magazine rather than the Talmud? The medium is pointedly the message: *the selection of what sources to draw from already hints at possible conclusions*. This is readily seen even when Scripture is the "only" source: differences among Christians on, say, free will vs. predestination, generally arise from emphasizing certain strands of Scripture over others, prejudicing the outcome. The same is true of drawing on extra-biblical materials for theological reflection; emphasizing certain sources will head us in certain directions. A man is known by the company he keeps, and by the books he reads.

So, MJT needs to ask itself about its goal by unpacking the need for a "now what?" As much as answering that question depends on a community of people asking it, MJT must also find an appropriate starting point in an objective word of God in order to speak a "should" word and not only an "is" word. It needs to give an account of why it draws on particular sources and of the shape utilizing those sources will give to its theology. In the final analysis, doing theology, like doing exegesis, involves a "hermeneutical spiral" or a "fusing of the horizons" (to use two metaphors widely employed) between Word and community, between us today and the writers of Scripture back then.

The present dissertation makes an admirable attempt to synthesize the state of things today. I hope the author will revise it into a more popular form. One suggestion would be to bring the eight-fold typology to the front, retaining the topic-by-topic chapters but grouping the individual thinkers according to typology rather than name-by-name. This would help the reader to more clearly think about the various theological strands.

And for anyone wanting to delve further into MJT, the 24-page bibliography gives an idea of the scope of thinking that is taking place, and is an invaluable part of the dissertation. The author is to be congratulated for accomplishing so much, and for helping to move the theological discussion forward. *Kol haKavod!*

The "Map" of "Mapping Messianic Jewish Theology"

by **Daniel Nessim**

It is greatly satisfying to one who has watched and participated in the modern Messianic movement to see that after a good forty years, there is today a "terrain" of Messianic Jewish theology (MJT) that is worthy of "mapping." The barren years following the loss of hundreds of thousands of Jewish believers in Yeshua during the Shoah are long past. Before the Shoah, MJT was clearly developing. Centered in Europe, it was informing the thought of Jewish believers around the world. It was never to come to fruition, however. Today, in place of the scholarship that the old world once steadily fed into the new, is a developing body of theology that increasingly demands to be recognized.

The need for "mapping" this theology is clear. MJT is not dominated by any one individual or even one particular school. It traverses the globe and is informed by the full breadth not only of Jewish theological thought, but also of Christian. Most streams of Judaism have their counterparts within the Messianic Jewish movement (MJM). Likewise, most Christian denominational and theological perspectives also find representation. Sometimes the Jewish and Christian perspectives appear in very unlikely and surprising combinations. It is no wonder, then, that MJT is quite diverse. Nevertheless, despite wide disparities, there are definable borders which demarcate MJT as a distinct body of thought. In other words, there are identifiable markers which determine whether a person's or body's theology is Messianic or not.

Richard Harvey's doctoral dissertation, "Mapping Messianic Jewish Theology" (MMJT)[1] addresses the need for a "map" of MJT. Under the supervision of Rabbi Professor Dan Cohn-Sherbok, a Reform rabbi who is also an authority on Messianic Judaism, Harvey has become a theological cartographer. In a bit over 300 pages, he surveys the terrain, having as his aim "to understand the nature of MJT, identifying its sources, norms, methods, content and results" (p. 2). The use of Harvey's "mapping" terminology comes from constructive theology which uses the organizing metaphor of "theological geography" (p. 34).

1 Richard Harvey, "Mapping Messianic Jewish Theology" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wales, 2008).

Borders

In order to map Messianic theology, Harvey has had the necessary task of determining its borders. This is the task of the first chapter of MMJT, titled "Approaching Messianic Jewish Theology." It is the purpose of this review to focus on that chapter and to comment on it.

This first chapter of Harvey's dissertation "maps" the boundaries of the terrain from which MJT has risen. For those who have been keeping up with published surveys of the MJM, as well as readers of *Mishkan* to some degree, much will be familiar. However, Harvey has managed to bring together a wider variety of studies than anyone else to date and much will certainly be new to the reader. Harvey surveys Messianic, Jewish, and Christian theologians, sociologists, and historians. Whether evaluating Maoz or Kinzer, Sobel or Ariel, the full breadth of available scholarship is covered.

In this regard, gaping voids in current research are revealed. This reflects one of the difficulties that MMJT faces. The body of previous research is yet limited. There are very few scholarly studies that have been done in Israel, either in Hebrew or English, on the MJM.[2] Previous studies of the MJM are therefore almost entirely limited to the English speaking world. This means that Harvey's survey of the MJM is unavoidably limited. Since the theological map definitely does include – and give an appropriately significant place to – Messianic theology coming from Israel, this is a real lack which cannot be easily ignored.

The limits of the map being drawn are not only geographical, but chronological. The MJM is young. While it has its roots in the late 19th century, its contemporary connection to those roots is tenuous, having been almost completely severed in the Shoah. Since there has been very little to survey, very few surveys exist past the last two decades. The earliest significant study is Sobel's landmark work of 1974,[3] which while antagonistic to Hebrew Christianity, was in its day "the only book-length sociological analysis of Hebrew Christianity."[4]

This brings up a third limitation, that of the availability of secondary sources. Harvey specifically notes this (p. 36). It is this very limitation that MMJT helps to solve. Future theological work in the MJM should be helped by this dissertation's existence and the wide terrain that it covers.

Terrain

Working with these limitations, MMJT's first chapter comes up with a cohesive description of the terrain within the boundaries of Messianic

2 The notable exception is Kai Kjær-Hansen and Bodil Skjøtt, *Facts and Myths about the Messianic Congregations in Israel 1998–1999*, Mishkan 30/31 (Jerusalem: UCCI/Caspari Center, 1999).

3 B. Z. Sobel, *Hebrew Christianity: The Thirteenth Tribe* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1974).

4 Ibid., front flyleaf of dustcover.

Judaism. A clear picture, a collage, of Messianic Judaism emerges, and its commonalities become evident. In this first chapter, Harvey does not identify many leading participants and practitioners. That is a task to be taken up later, when he actually maps the theology of the MJM. In this chapter it is the MJM itself that is being mapped, and for the purposes of his study, Harvey defines Messianic Judaism using an inclusive definition (p. 32).

Here, Messianic Judaism is viewed from the vantage point of various anthropological studies, sociological studies, and historico-theological studies. It is viewed through studies by participants in Messianic Judaism, whether writing as observers, advocates, or actual practitioners. Each study is shown to have a particular contribution to make to the description of Messianic Judaism, from which MJT springs. Thus Messianic Judaism is viewed from various vantage points, some at ground level, up close, others from high altitude, taking in grand vistas. These various studies of Messianic Jewish congregations and the movement as a whole occupy the bulk of MMJT's first chapter. They are categorized in three main divisions.

Firstly, anthropological studies, following the methodology and ethos of anthropological research, describe the movement in terms of its development, history, identity, and place in the religious world. These studies do not evaluate the belief system or theology of Messianic Jews. Especially in recent times, they have been viewed positively by Jewish believers in Yeshua, for whom being the subject of published analysis has contributed a degree of legitimacy.

The second category of studies dealt with is that of social-psychological analyses. The main subject of this category is the social-psychological study by Eliot Cohen on Jews for Jesus (p. 40).[5] Interestingly, as a Jewish Buddhist (JUBU) his approach is non-committal in terms of the theology of Messianic Judaism (p. 14).

A third category, that of historico-theological approaches, hits closest to home. It has the most overlap with the mapping of MJT that is the topic of the dissertation. Here Harvey presents studies that evaluate not only the social and historical aspects of Messianic Judaism, but also its theology. In this category are many who engage with the MJM and its theology either from the outside or from within, as practitioners. Studies by those who have significantly different visions of what Messianic Judaism is or should become are described along with an assessment of their significance. It's worth noting that in this category many of the "[e]ngaged Messianic Jewish Practitioners" (p. 23) turn out to be the very same people engaged in the development of MJT. What emerges is a picture of a reflective, self-analytical, yet forward thinking body of scholarship. It is by no means a dispassionate body of scholars. As such, this body of scholarship is especially affected by its own scholars' convictions, beliefs, and

5 Harvey refers to Eliot Marc Cohen, *Brother or Other: Jews for Jesus* (Ph.D. diss., Manchester Metropolitan University, 2004).

situations. Nevertheless, in this MMJT is most instructive, as it informs the reader of the *loci* from which come the different theological opinions to be described later in Harvey's dissertation.

Approach

It must have been an entertaining task to compare the theological perspectives and beliefs of Fruchtenbaum and Juster, and others with divergent approaches, within the same dissertation. In undertaking such a task, one's own presuppositions are certainly relevant. Harvey declares his own approach in treating his subject matter, categorizing it according to the "traditional subject divisions found in Jewish theology, of 'God, Torah, and Israel'" (p. 36). This significantly demonstrates that MJT is being treated within the framework of a Jewish mindset. This is a *Jewish* review of MJT, specifically a *Messianic Jewish* review. As such, it marks a milestone on the landscape that it itself describes. Hitherto has the Lord helped us (1 Sam 7:12).

Harvey's approach is also definably British. Like the Jewish world, the MJM is overwhelmingly influenced by two centers of Jewish population and influence: North America and Israel. In England, standing at a vantage point between these two Messianic poles, both are equally distant and equally accessible. Both are fairly represented and given their due weight. A second British characteristic is the proclivity to be inclusive, to moderate between opposing views. This has resulted in the widest possible range of contributors being included in the landscape of MMJT. Thus Maoz, whom one might assume would not describe himself as a Messianic Jewish theologian, is included. Harvey footnotes his correspondence with Maoz, who is tellingly willing to identify himself as such (p. 46, n. 201).

Thirdly, Harvey's approach is open-ended. It is not a conclusive study on a fossilized or monolithic theology. Rather, as this chapter shows through its survey of surveys, the movement is in a phase of development. At one point it may have been reasonable to propose that MJT was largely a Jewish variation of North American fundamentalism, as Rausch concluded in 1982 (p. 15). If Rausch's conclusions were still correct today, then the whole exercise that Harvey has embarked upon would be questionable. The terrain mapped would not be so much that of Messianic Judaism, but that of the brand of Christianity within which Messianic Judaism most often finds its home. MMJT has bravely forged into the fray, and fortunately for Harvey, it has been evident to his examiners that he is right, that there is a definable MJT worth writing on!

Where We Go from Here

Two major trends are today bearing fruit in the MJM. They are relevant to the mapping of MJT. The first trend is in Israel. In the 1980s, Messianic pastors faced agonizing choices and dilemmas regarding the use of Hebrew in their congregations. Happily, they were courageous, and as they in-

creasingly used Hebrew as their primary language, their congregations became increasingly representative of the Israeli population.[6] Today, Israeli congregations continue to be increasingly indigenous in composition, with expatriates less often in the lead. This is a key factor in their increasing relevance to the Israeli public, and a key factor in the increasing number of Israelis coming to realize that Yeshua is their Messiah and Savior. From this growing body, theologically astute leaders are bound to emerge and make their mark not only in Israel, but for the MJM as a whole.

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The second major trend is the increasing theological maturity of leaders in the diaspora. Theological debates that abound now between Messianic Jews are a sign not of weakness but of independent thinking and strength. Events such as the Borough Park Symposium of 2007 demonstrate that the movement can entertain a healthy and vigorous dialogue in a far more academic fashion than would have been possible two decades ago. Extrapolating forward, it is reasonable to expect MJT to converse at an ever more sophisticated level both with itself and with Jewish and Christian theology in the future.

Harvey's dissertation marks another milestone in the development of Messianic thought. It is of great encouragement to me that such milestones are passing with ever greater frequency within the nascent Messianic movement. There is no doubt in my mind that this work will provide an excellent "snapshot in time" for future historians, theologians, and sociologists in reference to the movement it pictures.

Like a flower, MJT is the fruit of the Messianic Jewish movement, now beginning to unfurl its petals. While Sobel might have skeptically witnessed the unfurling of its first leaves, Harvey has captured the opening of MJT's first buds. His work will therefore be of enduring interest to sociologists, historians, and not least, theologians.

6 Kjær-Hansen, 76–79; a chart shows approximately half of Israeli congregations speaking Hebrew in 1999. This trend continues.

A Time to Rejoice and a Time to Weep:

Reflections on the Current State of "Jewish Work"

by **Stuart Dauermann**

Apparently the Holy One of Israel decreed that I should spend my adult life interpreting Jesus to the Jewish people. From the very beginning of my encounter with Yeshua, I have been surrounded by lay Gentiles, missionaries, and Messianic Jews involved with this cause. And from the vantage point of more than four decades of such experience, I view contemporary trends and events in what used to be called "Jewish work" with a mixture of rejoicing and dismay.

A Time to Rejoice

I rejoice over a burgeoning renewal movement from within Messianic Judaism committed to what I term the New Messianic Jewish Agenda (NMJA). The elements of this agenda are attested throughout Scripture, but are summarized nicely in Ezekiel 37:21–28. There are seven elements:

1. God will gather Israel from all the nations: "Behold, I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from all sides, and bring them to their own land" (Ezek 37:21).
2. God will unify the Jewish people as one nation in the land: "And I will make them one nation in the land, upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; and they shall be no longer two nations, and no longer divided into two kingdoms" (Ezek 37:22).
3. God will spiritually renew the people of Israel: "They shall not defile themselves any more with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions; but I will save them from all the backslidings in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them; and they will be my people, and I will be their God" (Ezek 37:23).
4. God will gather all Israel around our Davidic King (whom we know to be Messiah Yeshua): "My servant David will be king over them; and they will all have one shepherd" (Ezek 37:24a).
5. God will cause all Israel to faithfully obey his law: "They will follow my ordinances and be careful to observe my statutes" (Ezek 37:24b).

6. God will bring all Israel to a full and relational experience of the divine presence: "I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will bless them and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My dwelling place will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be my people" (Ezek 37:26–27).
7. God will demonstrate to the nations once and for all that Israel is his people and that he is their God: "Then the nations will know that I the LORD sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary is in the midst of them for evermore" (Ezek 37:28).

I found it fascinating to discover recently that no less an authority than N. T. Wright identified most if not all of the items of this agenda as outlining the Jewish worldview of Jesus' day, something which he calls "a story in search of an ending." However, Wright considers the entire story and its features to have been collapsed into Christ and transmuted in the process.[1] Missiologist Chris Wright concurs:

> Both Jesus himself and his immediate interpreters tell us that in the events of his arrival, life, death, resurrection and exaltation, God had acted decisively for the redemption and restoration of his people Israel in fulfillment of the whole range of Old Testament prophecy that he would do so. To this they were called urgently to respond there and then as a present reality, not as some still future hope.[2]

To adherents of the NMJA, it seems that in this case, two Wrights make a wrong. These fine scholars seem too focused on what has already been accomplished in Christ, while failing to give due weight to the "not yet" still to be fulfilled.[3] Messianic Jewish adherents to the NMJA await and serve these goals through the Messiah who is the living guarantee that they will be accomplished.

Each of the items on the NMJA suggests clusters of commitments and actions. Widely attested in Scripture, they suggest new initiatives and alliances, and form a matrix for a vigorously renewed Messianic Judaism – not unrelated to what has gone before, but surely going beyond the commitments most people in "Jewish work" have heretofore advocated and followed.

Because such commitments are eschatological as well as new, they have a God-given dynamism. I rejoice to see a growing body of Messianic and non-Messianic Jews embracing them in whole or in part in the United

1 N. T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 32–35.

2 Chris Wright, "A Christian Approach to Old Testament Prophecy Concerning Israel," in *Jerusalem Past and Present in the Purposes of God*, ed. P. W. L. Walker (Cambridge: Tyndale House, 1992), 14–15.

3 Scripture testifies that Messianic salvation is not simply immediate, but involves stages, or a process. See, for example, Isa 42:4 and Acts 3:19–26.

States, in Europe, in Israel, and elsewhere in the world. And because this is a move of the Spirit, it is sure to prevail, despite whatever resistance and vilification it might encounter along the way. One must always remember the wise words of Gamaliel, "So my advice is, leave these men alone. If they are teaching and doing these things merely on their own, it will soon be overthrown. But if it is of God, you will not be able to stop them. You may even find yourselves fighting against God" (Acts 5:38–39). I believe this *is* of God, and in that, I certainly rejoice.

I rejoice as well over meeting some of the next generation of young leaders, capable people with a mind of their own and a passion for God. Meeting such leaders from the United States, Israel, Europe, Africa, and Asia convinces me that Messianic Judaism will not die with my generation. God is raising up a new generation of scholars whose expertise will undergird the maturation of our movement in the years to come, people like Richard Harvey in England, Mark Kinzer, David Rudolph, Carl Kinbar, Jonathan Kaplan, Seth Klayman, and Jen Rosner in the States, and Akiva Cohen and Tsvi Sadan in Israel, among many others. God is also raising up administrators like Andrew Sparks, and dynamic young leaders like Jason Sobel and Joshua Brumbach of the David Harold Stern Center for Messianic Jewish Learning and Life, Mark Seide, Nathan and Raina Joiner, and David Nichol, giants in the earth. The movement is in good hands, God's hands. In this too I rejoice.

Paul Pierson, of Fuller Seminary's School of Intercultural Studies, teaches principles underlying the renewal and expansion of God's people.[4] One of these principles states that "renewal and expansion of the people of God are linked." I rejoice over the renewal of the Messianic Jewish community in Israel, joined to growth in numbers. A recent report states:

> Although nobody knows for sure how many Messianic Jews live in Israel, it's believed there are about 120 congregations now and 10,000–15,000 Jewish believers in Jesus. That may not sound like many given Israel's nearly six million Jews, but it's a far cry from 10 years ago when there were only about 3,500 Jewish believers and 80 congregations.[5]

Who among us would not rejoice? The Holy Spirit is at work and does as he chooses among the children of men.

Pierson reminds us as well that "renewal and expansion are often accompanied by theological breakthroughs." I believe the new commitment to Torah living as a matter of covenant obedience among Messianic Jews to be one of those breakthroughs, not because such obedience will attract more Jews to our ranks (this is not some sort of bait), but because

4 Paul E. Pierson, "Historical Development of the Christian Movement" (lecture notes), Fuller Theological Seminary School of Intercultural Studies.

5 Wendy Griffith, "Israel's Messianic Jews: Some Call it a Miracle," CBN, http://www.cbn.com/CBNnews/407139.aspx [accessed September 1, 2008].

it is a prophetic sign of the times. Ezekiel spoke of the Jewish people returning to God's statutes and ordinances in the latter days, in conjunction with being gathered around the Son of David.[6] This seems to me of even greater import than the 1970s discovery that you can be a Jew and be for Jesus. We are now rediscovering that it is right to be a Messianic Jew for Torah living. This is a theological breakthrough and another cause for rejoicing.

And if Pierson is right that "renewal and expansion are contagious in contexts where information is easily distributed," then I rejoice at how the internet and other modern media are being put to effective use by many of us, whether the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations, Chosen People Ministries, and Jews for Jesus with their videos, DVDs, and well-tended internet presences, or the growing internet and media presence of Messianic Jewish Theological Institute, and among young people, the Yachad Network.

Pierson also reminds us that "renewal and expansion are often seen to have begun on the periphery of the ecclesiastical structures of the day." This being so, all of us should rejoice at the development of new groups like Hashivenu and Messianic Jewish Theological Institute, groups as controversial in our day as were the American Board of Missions to the Jews (the former name of Chosen People Ministries) and Jews for Jesus when each first appeared. Even the idea of Messianic Jewish congregations, now widely accepted, was reviled when first suggested. While some view with alarm the controversies surrounding new groups on the periphery, those with missiological eyes and a sense of history would counsel us to think again. Remember Gamaliel, and with me, rejoice.

Pierson reports that "renewal and expansion are often seen to have been accompanied by new leadership patterns." The birth of Messianic Jewish Theological Institute under the leadership of Mark Kinzer, and the associated Rabbinical Ordination Institute (RO'I) under the leadership of Rich Nichol, reflect a well-incubated new move toward having a clergy for the Messianic movement appropriate to the Jewish context, well-educated congregational rabbis rather than mission employees in charge of meetings, in effect Protestant ministers. This new leadership pattern creates new lines of accountability and a new familial ethos which can only help foster new possibilities and expressions for the Messianic Jewish movement.

Of course, not all is rosy among those involved in "Jewish work." There are reasons for concern. To some of these I turn now.

A Time to Weep

For me, chief among the reasons for weeping is the acrimony and politi-

6 For end-time Jewish return to God's statutes and ordinances, see Deut 30:6; Jer 31:33; 32:39; Ezek 11:20a; 36:27; 37:24b, 26. For end-time gathering of the Jewish people around the Son of David, see Jer 23:5; 30:8–9; Hos 3:4; Luke 1:32.

cal maneuvering all too typical among us. None of us involved for any length of time in "Jewish work" can claim ignorance of political intrigues and evil speech (*lashon hara*) among us. Nor can we claim these behaviors to be exceptional. Rather, they have long been the norm. To me, this is far and away the greatest source for alarm in our movement, expressed in two varieties of intolerance.

First there is an intolerance of one another's success. Certainly a certain kind of competitiveness can be healthy and productive. But I am speaking rather of those threatened by or resentful of the success of other individuals and organizations. I am speaking of the kind of politics that is preoccupied with accumulating and protecting power and influence, and denying that power and influence to others, the politics of back room deals and strategies designed to defame and disempower others. This is widespread in our circles, a scandal which I do not expect to see eradicated before Yeshua returns. Meanwhile, "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles" because of us (Rom 2:24).

The second variety of intolerance is an intolerance of viewpoints different from our own. People are often denounced as "dangerous," "theologically faulty," "troubled," or "heretical" simply because they are expressing opinions and views different from the party line of the vilifying party. Surely not all diversity is good, but certainly some is, and is necessary to the spiritual strength of our ideological gene pool as well. But some would rather close the windows and bar the doors against new perspectives or viewpoints, denouncing the different as dangerous and suspect. Too many believe in the verbal plenary inspiration of their own theologies and opinions, and are ever ready to cast stones at those they distrust or oppose. That those we denounce are our brothers and sisters in Messiah seems not to matter very much at all. But it seems to me that it must be significant that those who are denounced are often "the competition," or the people on the periphery through whom God may just be bringing the renewal that all of us need. This too is a scandal, and a source of concern and sorrow not merely to me, but also, I would guess, to many of you and to the Holy One of Israel.

Related to the above is the sin of *lashon hara*, unethical speech. We have grown too comfortable with a low level of theological rhetoric, devoid of appropriate humility and simple decency. Do some of us imagine that those please God best who are quickest and most adept at denouncing others? Have we forgotten that we serve one who "will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets, who will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick" (Isa 42:2–3)? How many of us are quick to speak and quick to anger, and count as trophies the broken reeds and quenched wicks lying at our feet?

No one involved in any significant degree with "Jewish work" can deny outright that these indictments are valid. May God have mercy on us, renewing our days as of old, that we might repent of our acrimony, jealousy, intolerance, and *lashon hara*. Rather than waiting for this to hap-

pen, it would be best for all of us to ask, "Lord, is it I?" and to take steps to rectify the wrongs in which we or our organizations have been implicated.

If we cannot expect movement-wide repentance and change in these areas, there yet remains something we each can do: we can strive to "not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing" (1 Pet 3:9). We cannot prevent others from throwing mud, but we need not throw it back at them.

May at least some of us take this road less traveled, walking with Yeshua on the way.

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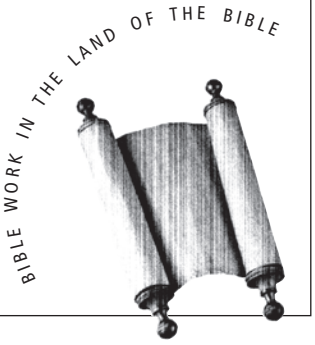
First "Organized" Bible-work in 19th Century Jerusalem



Part VIII: Bible-men in Jerusalem from the summer of 1824 to the spring of 1827

by **Kai Kjær-Hansen**

At the turn of the year 1823–1824, a Bible Society Room had been set up in Jerusalem. The American missionary Pliny Fisk, though based in Beirut, had been appointed its leader. In the first months of 1824, he and other Bible-men had met with a great deal of opposition in Jerusalem, and a few of them had even been arrested due to their distribution of Bibles. They had, nonetheless, managed to distribute quite a few Scriptures and Scripture portions to both Christians and Jews in Jerusalem.

This article will address the period from the summer of 1824 to the spring of 1827. It will be shown that very little was done in the way of Bible distribution in this almost three-year period.

But first, a few words about the bans and bulls issued against the missionaries in the first half of 1824.

During the almost three months the prosperous Lewis Way, a member of the leadership of London Jews Society (LJS), spent in Lebanon in the summer of 1823, he had rented a building in Antoura, in the mountains of Lebanon. The building had been abandoned by the Jesuits, and the purpose of the lease was to set up a "college" for Protestant missionaries.[1]

The Vatican is informed about this, and reacts against the lease in letters dated January 31, 1824, sent to the highest ecclesiastical authorities in the Roman Catholic and Maronite churches in Lebanon.[2] The Protestant Bible-men allegedly work "under the mask of an affected zeal," but "are public criers of error and corruption." And it is made clear that they should not be allowed to have "an asylum on Mount Lebanon, from whence they may diffuse their poison with impunity. . . ."[3] After this the lease is given up.

But as early as 1823, the Maronite Church in Lebanon had prepared an "Anathema" against the Protestant missionaries' activities. This

1 Cf. *Mishkan* 55 (2008): 60.
2 These letters are available in English translation in *Jewish Expositor* (1825): 101–02, and *Missionary Herald* (1825): 108–09.
3 *Jewish Expositor* (1825): 101.

"Anathema" is read out in the Maronite Church on January 6, 1824.[4] The charge is not just that the Old Testament Apocrypha has been left out of some of the editions distributed by the Bible-men; it is a problem altogether that the Scriptures are read, even if the Bible editions agree with "the vulgate of Rome." As it is said:

> . . . and we enjoin, in the name of God, that henceforth none shall either keep in possession any of the above-named books, or shall sell, buy, or give them away to others; and moreover, shall not read them on any consideration, even though they be correct copies, according to the vulgate of Rome.

People are furthermore forbidden to have "communication with them in spiritual matters" – they are "heretics." The missionaries' books are to be burnt or handed over to the ecclesiastical authorities. If a church man does not do it, "he shall be, *ipso facto,* prohibited the exercise of his degree or calling; and if he be of the laity, he shall be put under excommunication, reserving his absolution to ourselves."[5]

This "Anathema" impeded the Bible-men's work in Lebanon, but there are still numerous examples of Scriptures being distributed there.

The situation seems to get worse in mid-June 1824, when a *firman* is issued by the Grand Signor, i.e. the Sultan of Constantinople, prohibiting the distribution of Christian Scriptures.[6] This *firman* decrees that if Christian Scriptures enter the Sultan's empire, they are to be returned to Europe. No Muslim may own them, and the buying and selling of them is prohibited. If such Scriptures are found in the possession of Muslims, they will be confiscated and burnt.[7]

It is understandable that the Bible-men felt that this *firman* threatened their project. But things did not go quite as badly as the *firman* intended. The Muslim authorities did not enforce it strictly; on the other hand it was occasionally used by representatives of the Catholic Church in their struggle against Protestant missionaries' distribution of Bibles.

In the April 1825 issue of the *Missionary Herald*, the editor writes:

> The prevailing belief of the missionaries is, that it will not long operate as a material hindrance to their operations. At Aleppo, although the people who had received copies of the Scriptures were threatened with hanging, if they refused to give them up, it was not ascertained that a single copy was given up, or that a single individual

4 Translated into English in ibid., 102–04; cf. the translation in *Missionary Herald* (1827): 297–99, which is followed on pp. 299–301 by the missionaries' response to the charges, under the date of January 1, 1825.

5 *Jewish Expositor* (1825): 103.

6 This *firman* is dated "in the middle of the honoured Shoual, 1239," which according to the Christian calendar is mid-June 1824; cf. Peter Kawerau, *Amerika und die Orientalischen Kirchen* (Berlin: Walter de Gryter & Co., 1958), 505.

7 *Jewish Expositor* (1825): 107.

> suffered injury on that account. In the Custom-House, indeed, a few cases were sequestered and sent to Europe, and at Jaffa a sample of the books was committed to the flames. One of the missionaries compares this decree of the Sultan against the Bible to the bursting of thunder in the air, which excites attention, but does no harm.[8]

That the Bible-men's situation did not turn out as badly as intended by the Sultan's *firman* is confirmed by William Bucknor Lewis in a letter dated October 1, 1824, to LJS in London. Here Lewis reflects on the situation in this way:

> The present prohibitory, if left to take its course, like many other proclamations issued by the Grand Signor, would soon, perhaps, be forgotten; but it is much to be feared, that the same unfair means which could obtain a royal decree prohibiting the introduction of Bible-books into these countries, may be able also at some future day to procure from the Porte another firman, prohibiting the residence and travelling of Bible-men in the Ottoman empire. Here the matter most surely is to be regarded in a very serious point of view.

In the same letter, Lewis gives expression to the hope that "the British influence will obtain for us the same privileges at least, which are enjoyed by the subjects of other foreign nations."[9] It should be noted that the Protestant Bible-men, even after the issue of this *firman*, are able to continue their work.

In April 1825, the situation relating to the Sultan's *firman* is summed up in this way in the Missionary Herald:

> Last of all came a Firman from the Grand Seignore at Constantinople, forbidding the sale of Bibles, &c. in his dominions. The missionaries are quite sure, that this was obtained wholly through Catholic influence. At first, it alarmed them very much. They were fearful that it would put a stop, for some time, to the distribution of the Scriptures. But, since they have seen how the local authorities seem to understand it, and especially since they have remarked with what apathy the Turks regard it, their hopes have revived, and they have strong expectations of soon proceeding in their work as usual.[10]

Exactly when the Sultan's *firman* reached Syria – and was enforced – is

8 *Missionary Herald* (1825): 109. In the middle of October 1826, Consul John Barker, Aleppo, told the missionaries that some of the cases of Scriptures which two years before had been detained in the custom house at Aleppo remained there, and it is added: "But as a change is about taking place in the government, he hopes to succeed in obtaining their release." Cf. *Missionary Herald* (1827): 302.

9 *Jewish Expositor* (1825): 100.

10 *Missionary Herald* (1825): 92.

hard to say.[11] But we know that in the summer of 1824, Benjamin Barker distributes Bibles in Syria – unimpeded. On his journey as a Bible-man, he also travels to Jerusalem.

Barker in Jerusalem, Summer 1824

Benjamin Barker, salaried agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS) in Smyrna[12] – and brother to British consul John Barker in Aleppo – visited Jerusalem in 1824.[13] Going from Aleppo to Jerusalem, Barker writes in a letter sent from Beirut, dated June 24, 1824, that he has established a Bible depot there and that, from Beirut, he has sent "Holy Scriptures" to various towns, among them Jerusalem.[14]

Barker's visit to Jerusalem took place during the period of time from the beginning of August (earliest date for arrival) to the middle of September (latest date for departure) 1824.[15] From extracts from Barker's trip from Aleppo to Jerusalem, the following may be noted:[16]

In Jerusalem Barker naturally finds lodgings in the Greek convent Mar Michael, which houses the Bible Society Room,[17] and he is well received there: "every day, during my stay at Jerusalem, the proxy of the Greek Patriarch sent me fresh bread, and inquired after my health. In short, I could not be more kindly received than I was by these Greek prelates."

Barker has come to Jerusalem expecting to distribute Scriptures. But the Armenian Patriarch "made the same observation as the Greek proxy, that my good intentions would meet with no encouragement at this season of the year, for other Englishmen had supplied the Armenians residing here; but that if I came in the winter I should find the opportunity to dispose of a great many to the Armenian pilgrims." Barker promises that "no books should be wanting in the winter" and says straight out: "I had no occasion to sell any books."

Even more important is perhaps what Barker's published extracts

11 It must have been before October 1, 1824, when Lewis mentions it in a letter to LJS. Cf. *Jewish Expositor* (1825): 84.

12 Barker left Smyrna on January 30, 1824; during his stay in Syria his base was in Aleppo, which he left on December 5, 1824; cf. BFBS *Twenty-First Report* (1825): 64; and *Twenty-Second Report* (1826): 103.

13 The visit is briefly described by Kelvin Crombie in *Mishkan* 41 (2004): 8–9, without indication of when it took place.

14 BFBS *Twenty-First Report* (1825): 66–67.

15 This dating is based on the following: On his journey to Jerusalem he meets Fisk and King in Damascus, but no date is mentioned; cf. BFBS *Twenty-Second Report* (1826): 109. From King's journal it emerges that Barker came to Damascus on July 8 and is still there on July 12; cf. *Missionary Herald* (1825): 344. Before getting to Jerusalem he reports about a good deal of activity in the regions south of Damascus. And after his visit to Jerusalem he writes in a letter dated Aleppo, November 24, 1824: "A week after my arrival at Aleppo, it pleased God to afflict me with a dangerous fever, of which I was ill upwards of two months. I am now, by the Almighty's goodness, gradually recovering, although still weak, and really unfit to write"; BFBS *Twenty-First Report* (1825): 67.

16 Published in BFBS *Twenty-Second Report* (1826): 108–12; the quotations below are from pp. 111–12.

17 See *Mishkan* 55 (2008): 57–60.

disclose about the distribution of Scriptures in the periods when the Protestant Bible-men are *not* in Jerusalem. He mentions that when the missionaries "quit Jerusalem, after Easter, they leave with the Superior of the convent [of Mar Michael] a certain number to dispose of during their absence." About the situation in Rama Arimathea west of Jerusalem, he notes: "Besides the Sacred Scriptures distributed by the English, the Greek convent of Jerusalem has sent 200 Psalters, for the use of the children at Rama and its vicinity."

On his conversation with the Armenian Archbishop, Barker writes: "I told him that my principal view was to obtain his consent to distribute the Sacred Scriptures amongst his nation, and that no books should be wanting in the winter [1824–1825], for I intended to see that this was the case." Barker gets more than the Armenian Archbishop's "consent" to this. "He kindly answered," Barker continues, "that not only I had his full consent, but that he himself would co-operate and dispose of the books to the pilgrims, as he did once before when he bought many copies from an Englishman."

Barker claims that "the Christians of Jerusalem were amply supplied with the Sacred Scriptures by the Missionaries, and others who have visited this city." This should be taken with a grain of salt – it can hardly include the Catholics.[18]

In other words, even when the Protestant Bible-men are not in Jerusalem, distribution of Bibles sometimes takes place. They are channeled through the Greeks and the Armenians, on whose cooperation the Bible-men can continue to count. The Christians of Jerusalem have been amply supplied with Scriptures. And from Zion, Scriptures are spread throughout the world by Christian pilgrims. But distribution of Scriptures in Jerusalem, to the Jews of Jerusalem, is *not* undertaken by the Christians of Jerusalem. And the Protestant missionaries coming from abroad do *not* really succeed in spreading Bibles among the Jews of Jerusalem.

We must assume that Barker, on his departure, left some Bible portions in a depot, for there was no shortage of Bibles in the depot when the next Bible-men arrived about six months later.

Fisk, King, Lewis, and Dalton, Spring 1825

The Americans Pliny Fisk and Jonas King, and also William Bucknor Lewis, LJS's envoy, arrive together in Jerusalem on March 29, 1825. They have all been here before. At Mar Michael they are received "with open arms." On April 2, King writes: "Our hearts were gladdened by the unexpected arrival of Dr. Dalton from Beyroot [*sic*]." Dalton came to sound out the situation with a view to settling down in Jerusalem as a doctor.[19] As such

18 I am in doubt as to what, precisely, Barker means by "others who had visited this city."

19 *Missionary Herald* (1827): 35. George E. Dalton arrived with his wife, Jane, and their newborn son in Beirut on January 6, 1825, as an envoy for LJS; see *Jewish Expositor* (1825): 309.

he could expect to be granted a residence permit in Jerusalem. But there is not much cause for rejoicing for these four missionaries. There is no shortage of Bibles for sale and distribution in Jerusalem this Easter. There is, however, a shortage of pilgrims, and an abundance of political unrest. Lewis comments:

> Thousand of devoted pilgrims were formerly in the habit of going up to Jerusalem to attend the ceremonies, but, owing to the Greek war, the number at present is greatly diminished. Great opportunities were then consequently afforded for the distributions of the Scriptures of truth, and channels were opened, by means of which living waters might flow into distant lands. But, alas! this year nothing could be done in the Holy City in the way of circulating copies of the Word of God, as on former occasions. I need not say how much this was calculated to distress those who had it in their power, but could not give away a single copy, except privately, and with the greatest caution. This was the effect of our fears, and the fears of the people, and of our weakness in opposition to the Goliaths of the Terra Sancta convent. We were well persuaded that these monks had too much to do in the issuing of the prohibitory Firman against the Scriptures, not to be particularly on the alert to make use of it in Jerusalem, as the mischievous instrument of attack whenever the opportunity permitted."[20]

Besides this, there was political unrest when Mustafa, Pasha of Damascus – and a couple of thousand soldiers – "pitched his tent without the city, near the gate of Jaffa" on April 1, to collect tribute from the inhabitants of Jerusalem.[21] This was done in a brutal way, and enormous sums of money were exacted from the Christian convents, the Jews, and others. In Dalton's words, under April 8: "Every day, nay, almost every hour, brings us intelligence of crime – Christians, Jews, and even Turks, seized and put in chains, and large sums demanded of them."[22]

Two matters are particularly important for the story of the Bible-men in Jerusalem and their relations with Christians and Jews there.

First, the relations with the Greeks: King writes, on April 4: "Last night, the Pasha took the Superior of the convent of Mar Elias, (a Greek,) and gave him five hundred blows on his feet, in order to make him confess, that he had concealed in his convent the treasures of the people of Bethlehem, who have all fled to Hebron." From April 6, Dr. Dalton takes care of the Superior and treats him.[23] Later in the year, when Dalton is back in Jerusalem, he resumes contact with him (see below). Such an act

20 *Jewish Expositor* (1825): 427. "Terra Sancta" was the headquarters of the Roman Catholics in Jerusalem.

21 The Pasha of Damascus possessed supremacy over Jerusalem on behalf of the Sultan.

22 *Jewish Expositor* (1826): 137.

23 *Missionary Herald* (1827): 35–36; cf. *Jewish Expositor* (1826): 136.

of kindness consolidates the good relations between the Greeks and the Protestant Bible-men.

Second, the relations with the Ashkenazi Jews: Rabbi Menahem Mendel and some other Jews are taken, in chains, to the camp of the Pasha outside Jerusalem. Lewis intervenes through the Spanish Consul in Aleppo, Signor Durogello, who is celebrating Easter in Jerusalem, and these Jews are set free. Subsequently, Rabbi Mendel and other Jews come to thank them for their help.[24]

Dr. Dalton does what is expected of a doctor – regardless of where he is and why he is there. Actually he is not in Jerusalem in order to begin his work as a doctor, but to make some practical arrangements so that he and his family can move there. He visits, and is visited by, a number of Jews who consult him as a doctor. Both the LJS missionaries and the Americans keep up the contact with Jewish leaders, for example Rabbi Mendel, which earlier missionaries had established. Dalton mentions that he once had a conversation with a Jew to whom a New Testament was given.[25]

These matters, however, cannot conceal the fact that Jews in Jerusalem are not open to the gospel. They are open to Protestant missionaries who, through their contacts abroad, help improve their social situation in Jerusalem. Dalton agrees with Lewis when he recommends that the LJS committee in London work to bring a British consul to Jerusalem.[26]

After the Pasha and his troops have left Jerusalem in the middle of April 1825, troubles escalate. King writes, on April 22: "The country about Jerusalem is in a very tumultuous state." A rebellion breaks out in the wake of the Pasha's visit and the increased taxes he has imposed on the population. And on April 27: "Heard of several men being killed at Bethlehem. Robberies and murders in the vicinity of Jerusalem, are now frequent."[27]

It goes without saying that these circumstances have a negative impact on the Protestant missionaries and their work. In Lewis' words: "Truly we have had a very miserable time of it during the six weeks we spent at Jerusalem. . . . As to our party, we kept ourselves prisoners in the convent nearly three weeks."[28] And Dalton similarly: "From the time we entered Jerusalem until we left it, there has been nothing but trouble, oppression, and confusion: Jews, Christians, and even Turks, have had their share, and were almost daily the bearers of some doleful tidings to our ears."[29]

Under such circumstances it is understandable that the Bible-men are very concerned about getting away from Jerusalem, which is not easy.

24 *Missionary Herald* (1827): 36; *Jewish Expositor* (1826): 138.
25 *Jewish Expositor* (1826): 133–40.
26 Ibid., 76. Not until 1839 was this hope realized with Vice-Consul W. T. Young's arrival in Jerusalem; see, e.g. Kelvin Crombie, *For the Love of Zion* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991), 25–27.
27 *Missionary Herald* (1827): 37.
28 *Jewish Expositor* (1825): 428.
29 *Jewish Expositor* (1826): 183.

They have all ordered mules for Saturday, May 7, but these are brought to them so late in the day that they cannot leave before Monday, May 9. For God-fearing Bible-men do not travel on the "Sabbath," i.e. Sunday, even if they find themselves in a dangerous situation. On Sunday, May 8, Fisk preaches for the first time in Jerusalem in Greek. "Eighteen Greeks were present, of whom *ten* were *priests.* This was one of the most interesting Sabbaths which we have had at Jerusalem," King writes.[30]

Although there were a few encouraging incidents for the Bible-men, this does not change the fact that hardly any Scriptures were distributed during this Easter visit to Jerusalem in 1825 – neither to Christian pilgrims nor to Jews.

Last Visit to Jerusalem for Fisk, King, and Lewis

For Lewis, King, and Fisk, this was to be the last visit to Jerusalem. Lewis takes leave of the other missionaries in Beirut at the end of June 1825, and goes back to England.[31] LJS wanted him to return to Palestine, but he resists this.

King has honored his three-year contract with his American Board.[32] On September 26, 1825, he says goodbye to his colleagues in Beirut – "less than a month before the death of Mr. Fisk" – and leaves for the USA.[33]

Fisk is ready to return to Jerusalem and work on the distribution of Bibles from the Bible Society Room. But he suffers the same fate as his friend Levi Parson, who died in Alexandria on February 10, 1822, before he turned 30.[34] Fisk dies in Beirut on October 23, 1825 – not yet 33 years old.[35] After this, the Bible depot in Jerusalem is without a leader.

Only Dalton, whose job is to be a doctor and not really a Bible distributor, returns to Jerusalem – where he is buried soon after, as we shall now see.

Dalton and Nicolayson, the Turn of the Year 1825–1826

George E. Dalton's second visit to Jerusalem begins on December 24, 1825 (as to his first visit, see above). Like other Protestant missionaries before him, he takes lodgings at the Mar Michael convent, where he received a "warm reception" from his Greek "friends," among them Papas Ysa (Isa), the learned Greek Orthodox priest who, in various ways, had helped Protestant Bible-men. Together they commemorate Pliny Fisk, who had

30 The previous Sunday, May 1, Fisk had preached in Italian to 18–20 persons, "among whom were six Greek priests, one Jew, and one Catholic"; *Missionary Herald* (1827): 37–38. It would be a mistake to conclude from the relatively massive attendance of Greek priests at the services that these priests were about to convert to Protestantism.

31 *Jewish Expositor* (1825): 426.

32 Cf. *Mishkan* 54 (2007): 64.

33 *Missionary Herald* (1827): 345.

34 *See Mishkan* 48 (2006): 73–85; and 52 (2007): 11–16.

35 About his disease and death, see *Mishkan* 52 (2007): 19–23.

died two months earlier in Beirut.[36] Dalton writes: "My recollections of him were much revived, as I occupied the vacant place in his rooms, and looked on all where the year before I had enjoyed sweet communion with him. I burst into tears, and was joined by those with me; we felt a common loss."[37]

The purpose of Dalton's second visit to Jerusalem is to make arrangements for his and his family's transfer from Lebanon to Jerusalem. He negotiates with the Greeks, presents his *firman* to the governor, and makes contact with several Jews – including Rabbi Menahem Mendel, who asks, among other things, "if I came empowered by the Consul to protect them."[38] "I answered," Dalton writes, "that this was impossible, but that I should feel happy in serving the Jews in any way I could."

Dalton receives instruction in modern Greek and Arabic from Papas Ysa, and in return he teaches Papas Ysa Italian. He also arranges for a Sephardic Jew to give him lessons in Hebrew. He meets the Superior of Mar Elias, "whose foot I healed last year," and accepts an invitation from him to visit the Mar Elias convent between Jerusalem and Bethlehem.[39]

Dalton's journal ends on January 3, 1826, the very day the new and young missionary John Nicolayson comes to Jerusalem, sent by the London Jews Society. The idea is that he should assist Dalton and work as a missionary with particular reference to the Ashkenazi Jews in Jerusalem. On January 4, they travel together to visit Bethlehem after having received refreshments at the Mar Elias convent.

But on January 5, Dalton, after a visit to Solomon's pools, is seized with fever – "perhaps in consequence of having drunk more than he ought of the springs we found on the road," Nicolayson writes.[40] Dalton dies in Jerusalem on January 25, 1826, and the following day he is buried in the Greeks' churchyard on Mount Zion.[41]

Nicolayson has to take care of a number of practical matters in connection with Dalton's death, but he also has time to make contact with some Jews, among others Rabbi Mendel, with whom he rather unsuccessfully tries to start a conversation on the subject of the Messiahship of Jesus. Nonetheless, Mendel invites him to call again.[42]

On February 11, Nicolayson is ready to leave Jerusalem, but due to bad weather he does not leave until February 17, 1826.[43] Where can he go? As he cannot expect to get a residence permit in Jerusalem, he only has one option, namely to settle in Beirut together with the American missionaries, which he does.

As things developed, not many Bibles were handed out by Dalton and

36 Ibid.
37 *Jewish Expositor* (1827): 70.
38 A matter which Rabbi Mendel and William Bucknor Lewis had discussed; see *Mishkan* 55 (2007): 62.
39 *Jewish Expositor* (1827): 72.
40 Ibid., 141.
41 As to Dalton's disease and death, see *Mishkan* 52 (2006): 24–28.
42 *Jewish Expositor* (1827): 145.
43 Ibid., 146.

Nicolayson during this visit. And there is no real optimism on the question of what was achieved and whether the Jews of Jerusalem are open to the gospel. In Dalton's words on his deathbed, quoted by Nicolayson:

> I asked him whether he had any particulars to mention respecting the mission in this country, or the cause in general? To which he replied, "Tell the Committee that the friends of the cause in England have too high an opinion of what has been done here, for as to the establishing of a mission in Jerusalem, or any other places in the country, nothing has been done as yet."[44]

Gobat, Kugler, Müller, and Nicolayson, Spring 1827

In the spring of 1827, John Nicolayson accompanies three missionaries attached to the Church Missionary Society (CMS) to Jerusalem. This is his second visit to Jerusalem (about the first, see above).[45] They arrive on March 31, 1827.[46]

On February 18, 1827, the three missionaries Samuel Gobat, Christian Kugler, and Theodor Müller had come to Beirut from Egypt, where they had studied languages with a view to their future work as missionaries. They wanted to continue their language studies in Jerusalem for some time; Gobat and Kugler intended to study Amharic in preparation for their future work in Abyssinia, and Müller Arabic for his work in Egypt. So they do not come to Jerusalem as Bible-men proper. The Armenian Dionysius Carabet (see below) accompanied them on the journey to Jerusalem and served as interpreter.

They take lodgings at the Greek Convent St. Michael – in the rented rooms made available to them by the Protestant missionaries. The relationship between the Greeks and Nicolayson is still cordial.

For Gobat and Kugler, the stay in Jerusalem lasted less than three months; on June 23, they leave Jerusalem and go back to Cairo.[47] During their stay they make the acquaintance of the 25 Abyssinians who live in the convent at Jerusalem, and they recommend Bethlehem as a possible mission station for CMS.[48] For them, missionary activities are secondary to language studies. Gobat writes, however, that he and Kugler tried to preach to "Jews and nominal Christians" – but without success, and

44 Ibid., 143.

45 A planned visit to Jerusalem with Rev. Donald MacPherson, "a Missionary in the Wesleyan connexion, stationed at Alexandria," who was then on a visit to Palestine, did not take place due to information about unrest in Jerusalem at the time. Cf. *Jewish Expositor* (1828): 234, 273.

46 This according to Nicolayson in his handwritten journal; in the published version in the *Jewish Expositor* (1829): 151, it is, erroneously, given as March 26; March 31 is stated by Gobat, cf. Samuel Gobat, *Samuel Gobat – Evangelischer Bischof in Jerusalem. Sein Leben und Wirken* (Basel: Verlag von C.S. Spittler, 1884), 105. The American sources have April 1; cf. *Missionary Herald* (1828): 285.

47 Cf. Gobat, 112.

48 There is a description of their visit in *Missionary Herald* (1828): 285–87.

no one dared receive a Bible from them "for fear of the rabbis and the priests."[49]

So far the Armenians in Jerusalem had been favorably disposed to the Protestant Bible-men's distribution of Scriptures, but now a certain tension arose due to the presence of the above-mentioned Dionysius Carabet among the Bible-men.[50] Carabet was in Jerusalem for 18 days, and then returned to Beirut.[51] He had been Archbishop of the Armenian Church in Jerusalem for a number of years, but had left the church, married, and was now working for the American missionaries in Beirut. When he had left the church, it had refused to pay the relatively large amount of money belonging to him, and during his visit his former church gave him the cold shoulder. The 800 Armenian pilgrims were forbidden to have anything whatsoever to do with him.[52] Without going into detail about this matter, it is evident that there were tensions between the Protestant Bible-men and the local churches when individuals from the latter joined the Protestant mission. All were in agreement about the importance of Bibles being distributed, but not about the competition for souls.[53]

Nicolayson does not seem to have been in contact with any *esteemed* Jerusalem Jews during his barely three-week stay. And he has no Hebrew Scriptures in his luggage. When a young German Jew wants to buy Hebrew Bibles, he writes: "But my hope of finding some here was disappointed, and therefore I was not able to supply him with any." The Bible Society Room thus appears to have been without *Hebrew* Scriptures at this time. Yet one day he converses with "several Jews," and another day with an aged German Jew: "He had read the Gospel, but it should seem with but little attention."[54]

An important result of Nicolayson's second stay in Jerusalem is of a personal nature: through talks with the missionaries, he becomes convinced that for the time being Jerusalem is not the place he should settle.

> Considering all that we had been able to learn of the internal state of this city, and its various classes of inhabitants, we jointly came to the conclusion, that it was better for me not to attempt a residence here alone at present.[55]

49 Gobat, 111. From 1846 to his death in 1879, Gobat was Protestant Bishop in Jerusalem.

50 "The name of the *archbishop* is *Dionysius.* He is familiarly called *Garabet or Carabet,* an Armenian word signifying *forerunner*, which was given him, at his own request, by Mr. Goodell in the hope that he might prove – as he seems likely to do – the *forerunner of great good to his nation*." Cf. *Missionary Herald* (1827): 343.

51 Ibid., 105, 342.

52 Ibid.

53 Similar tensions arose in 1829 between the Greeks and Joseph Wolff, which will be shown in the next article in this series.

54 *Jewish Expositor* (1829): 151–52.

55 Ibid., 152.

Nicolayson and Müller leave Jerusalem on April 20, 1827.[56] Müller realizes that his Arabic studies need not be done in Jerusalem. So Nicolayson's second visit to Jerusalem includes no distribution of Scriptures to Jews to speak of.

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Concluding Remarks

In the almost three-year period covered by this article, very little is done by the Protestant Bible-men in the way of distributing Scriptures in Jerusalem. Some attempts are made, but they are largely in vain. Neither Pliny Fisk's death, King's and Lewis' departure from the region, nor the various bans and bulls are the main reasons for this poor result; the single most important factor is the turbulent political situation. Very few Scriptures are handed out to Jews in this period. It may be said that the record of this three-year period of Bible distribution in Jerusalem, historically speaking, is a history of what did *not* succeed.

In 1829, Joseph Wolff comes to Jerusalem on his third visit, which we shall cover in the next article in this series.

56 Ibid.

By **Knut Høyland**

Who Is a Jew?

The question of who is Jewish has been an issue of contention in the Jewish community for centuries, and especially since the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. In the Messianic community there has been an ongoing struggle for the acknowledgement of believers' Jewish identity in spite of their belief in Jesus as the Messiah. This debate has an important historical and theological component, but in Israel today it also has clear practical implications, especially in relation to the right of Messianic Jews to make *aliya*, i.e. to attain Israeli citizenship under the Law of Return. This was also highlighted in the April 16, 2008, ruling of the Israeli Supreme Court stating that "being a Messianic Jew does not prevent one from receiving citizenship in Israel . . . if one is a descendant of Jews on one's father's side."[1]

This is not the only case in which the Supreme Court has had to tackle the difficult issue of defining who is a Jew. Recently, a lot of attention has been given to the case of a young woman, originally of Danish Christian background, who sixteen years ago married a Jewish man. Because there is no civil marriage in Israel, she converted to Judaism in order to marry him. They lived a Jewish life in Israel, raising their children as Jews. Fifteen years later, her husband filed for divorce in the religious court. The court examined the case and questioned the couple about their Jewish observance. When their answers were not satisfactory, the court ruled that there was no need for a divorce as they had never been married. They had never been married because she had never been Jewish, and neither were her children. This case, which has put into question the validity of thousands of marriages and conversions, has brought to light the power struggle that exists within Jewish society as to who defines who is Jewish and who is not. It has shown that this struggle is not one of theological definition, but of differing political views on the state of Israel and Zionism.

One the one hand, the *haredi* leaders who control the religious courts – and are therefore responsible for all conversions, marriages, and divorces – want to restrict the definition of Jews to those born to a Jewish mother and those who, in MK Moshe Gafni's words, "are willing to abide by Jewish law and accept the hundreds of *mitzvot,* or commandments, that govern an observant Jew's daily life."[2] On the other hand are the Zionists, often religious Zionists, who are worried about demographic developments that suggest the Jewish population between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea will be a minority if an active program isn't developed to bring more Jews to the land. One group would disqualify many who regard themselves as Jewish, including Messianic Jews, while the other would welcome

1 Kai Kjær-Hansen, "Two Statements," Mishkan 55 (2008): 5.

2 *Jerusalem Post,* Yom Kippur Supplement, October 8, 2008.

anyone who is willing to commit to being a part of the Jewish people and fulfill the Zionist aspirations of a continued Jewish majority in Israel.

This struggle has been characterized as a "cultural war." Whether a winner will emerge is hard to say. For the Messianic community it is, however, clear that there may be support found among secular and Zionist Jews who are concerned about demographic developments in the country and who to a large degree have already been alienated by the *haredi* groups that want a monopoly on the right to define who is Jewish. Even former prime minister Ariel Sharon stated, "If I had to convert [to Judaism], I would not pass."[3] This support may yet prove important in the continuing process of the Messianic community regaining its rightful place within the Jewish community and Israeli society.

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3 Ibid.

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