

MISHIKAN

A THEOLOGICAL FORUM ON JEWISH EVANGELISM

CONTENTS

SETTING THE SCENE — JOHN 3:1-16

David Harley 1

LETTER TO THE CHURCHES

Statement Issued by the LCJE Third International
Consultation 1986 6

LCJE PRESS RELEASE 9

TO THE JEW FIRST

Responses to DNI's Statement about Christian
Ministry to the Jewish People 12

THE NEW TESTAMENT AND ANTI-SEMITISM

Allan M. Harman 34

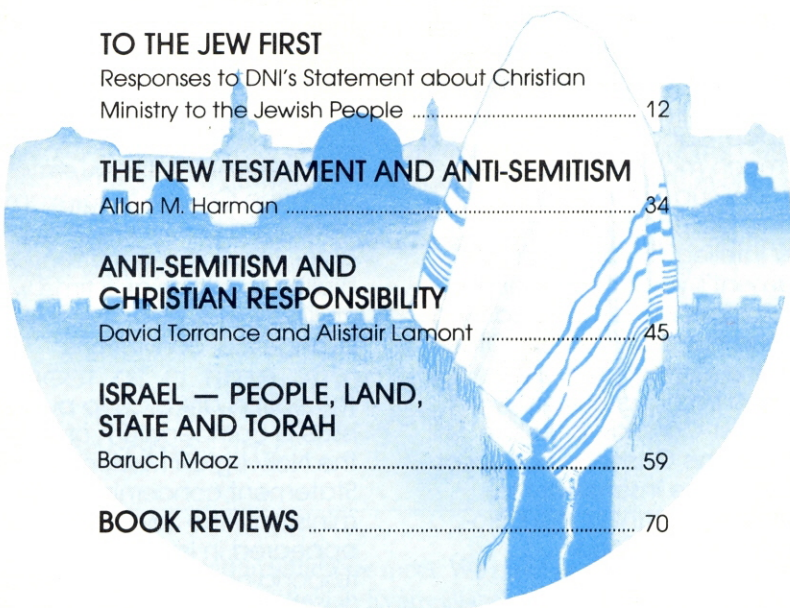
ANTI-SEMITISM AND CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY

David Torrance and Alistair Lamont 45

ISRAEL — PEOPLE, LAND, STATE AND TORAH

Baruch Maoz 59

BOOK REVIEWS 70



MISHKAN

A Forum on the Gospel and the Jewish People

"I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL"

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Editorial

I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

The Apostle Paul penned the above phrase nearly two thousand years ago, but its truth still resounds with amazing relevance toward the close of the twentieth century. No matter whether they faced rejection from their countrymen or from the Gentiles, Paul and the apostles resolutely insisted that there is only *one* name given under heaven by which all men might be saved. This some Gospel message continues to cut people to the quick nearly two millennia later.

In our decade, opposition to the Gospel is much more devious and certainly more subtle: an outright denial of the Gospel is today substituted by intellectual doubt of the New Testament's veracity; a rejection of Messiah's message is replaced by a search for the historical Yeshua. Others argue that the Gospel's absolutism is medieval and primitive, definitely out of line with post-Christian pluralism. Still others accuse the Gospel preacher of gross and obscene insensitivity to human suffering in light of the Holocaust and the Atomic age.

The fifth issue of MISHKAN reaffirms our faith in the Gospel as God's saving message to the Jew first and also to the Gentile; it reaffirms that God has visited His people in the divine Person of Messiah Yeshua as prophesied in *the* Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms. The editors of MISHKAN are not ashamed to proclaim that Yeshua is the Messiah of Israel. We continue to stress the Great Commission as our central calling and primary purpose.

David Harley starts off this issue with his address "Setting the Scene"; he reminds us of the context within which we stand, and of the pressures which are immediately brought to bear against the one who would preach the crucified Messiah to Israel. *Caveat Iector!* Following close on his heels comes the Letter to the Churches from the '1986 Easneye Conference of the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism. This timely statement calls upon the Church to re-examine the need for a bold Messianic witness to Israel, to refocus our attention on biblical priorities at a time when chilling winds blow upon our evangelical convictions.

The editors are glad to publish in this issue a compendium of responses to the Norwegian Mission to Israel's Statement concerning Christian ministry to the Jewish people which appeared in issue four. Not all of those responding agree that the Gospel is "to the Jew *first*", but nearly all would agree that our message is definitely for Jewish people. The debate is lively and gives much pause for thought. We hope that it will help you, our readers, to appraise the tenor of Jewish evangelism today.

Anti-semitism has been nicknamed "the scourge of Christianity". We who share Messiah's good news with Israel are well acquainted with the extent of grief caused to our people by anti-semitism, and the barriers created by Christian participation in such sinful misdeeds. Some participants in Christian-Jewish dialogue have concluded that both Christianity and its source documents (the New Testament) are hopelessly, endemically and radically Anti-semitic. A sober attempt to investigate these charges from a biblical and historical perspective is presented here by Messrs. Harmon, Torrance and Lamont. May their words serve as a prophetic challenge to us all as we reappraise our attitudes and actions vis-à-vis God's covenant people.

A paper by MISHKAN co-editor Baruch Maoz brings this issue to its conclusion. What are the connections between Israel the people and Israel the land, between the Jewish nation and the modern State of Israel? This article is not the last word on the subject. It is nevertheless a penetrating inquiry into the vast amount of biblical material on the subject. It serves as a worthy challenge for the exegetes among us to develop a biblically-based theology of the relationship between the Jewish people and their homeland.

As we find ourselves in the midst of summer, awaiting the fall harvest, let us not forget to lift up our eyes and to look around. The fields around us are ripening and are now ready for reaping. Let us continue to harvest together unashamed of the Gospel and set for its defense both here in Jerusalem and to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Avner Boskey

Setting the Scene — John 3:1-16

David Harley

International Co-ordinator — LCJE consultation, and Principal of All Nations Christian College, Easneye.

This opening address was originally presented at the Third International Consultation of the LAUSANNE CONSULTATION ON JEWISH EVANGELISM held in EASNEYE, ENGLAND during AUGUST, 1986.

I don't want to tax your patience but just for a few moments let's reflect on this key passage in John 3. I know many of you are weary from your travels but I think in so many ways this appropriately sets the scene for why we are gathered together for these eight days — why after a great deal of preparation and a great deal of expense have met together. I don't suggest that we have met together because we are a particular kind of club with a particular hobby that is of interest to us. We are met together because we fervently believe the truth that is contained in John 3: it is actually true that except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. It is actually true that he who believes in Jesus has eternal life. And yet you know as well as I that we live in a time when the very idea that these things are true — that Jesus is for the Jews, that the Gospel is relevant to the Jewish people — is challenged. It had been said to me time after time both by members of my family and from others: “Why are you trying to take the Gospel to the Jewish people?” What a hard question — it's a question I wish I could avoid, a question from which I would like to run a mile away from. Because I would rather not answer it — it would be easier not to. But you see, I cannot be consistent with the Scriptures and *not* share the Gospel with the Jewish people.

Another issue is the context within which we meet. We meet at a time when, perhaps more than ever before, the very words “Jewish Evangelism” have almost become dirty. The whole idea of Jewish evangelism is challenged not only by the Jewish community (that we might expect) but also increasingly challenged from within the Christian community. We are only too well aware of challenge from within the Jewish community: for example, In Israel we have the case of a municipality refusing to grant a license for Christian worship. Here in Britain we have repeated calls by the Jewish community to the Christian churches asking them to renounce every form and every attempt at proselytism, evangelism and witness to Jews. Clifford Longley writes: “The Jewish community, particularly the Orthodox, is angry at the allegedly high pressure and sometimes devious methods

employed by evangelical Protestant groups. They would like nothing less than the repudiation of all Christian attempts to convert Jews” (*The Times* Jan 6th 1986). And that's it! Longley goes on to say in his article that if one holds to one's Christian beliefs, one does believe in the continued relevance of the Gospel for Jewish people.

The *Sunday Telegraph* Jan. 19th 1986 writes: “Leaders of Britain's 400,000 Jews are deeply concerned about the growth of this aggressive ‘New Evangelism’. They allege the harassment of the sick and elderly and ‘unprecedented’ pressure on Jewish students.” It saddens me that often these accusations are acknowledged by the Church and are left unanswered, and so an impression is built up that Christians use devious methods in their witness.

In the States there appears to be a constant stream of articles in the Jewish and secular press criticizing those who witness and sometimes even attacking the Christian faith itself. At the April meeting of the North American chapter of LCJE in Chicago this year Sue Perlman presented a whole collection of articles from the Jewish and secular press containing accusations and criticism of methods, motivation and personal integrity of those involved in witness to the Jewish people. Again we find a strong appeal to the Christian Church to have nothing to do with Jewish evangelism, to assume that this activity belongs simply to the extremists. The normal, rational, balanced Christian wouldn't at all be involved in Jewish evangelism. Perhaps, though, we can understand much of that. We are aware of the things that Jewish people have suffered in the past at the hands of Christians. We are aware of the pain that is often brought to a Jewish family when one of their members accepts faith in Christ; so we can understand something of the reaction that comes from the Jewish community.

What I think should surprise us and grieve us is the extent of the challenge to Jewish evangelism within the Christian Church, not only from radical scholars, but also from some conservative evangelical scholars. Now the most radical view states that Jewish evangelism is indefensible in the light of the Holocaust, that one cannot ignore the Holocaust when one writes one's theology; one cannot teach theology as if the Holocaust had never occurred. Was it not Christian theology (so the argument goes) which sowed the seed that ultimately bore fruit in Hitler's “final solution?” Therefore Christian theology must change; Christian triumphalism must be challenged and traditional orthodox views about the person and work of Christ must be reexamined. The entire christological issue is reopened, write Roy and Alice Eckhart in their book *A Long Journey into Day*. One's whole understanding of God must be reconsidered, and God Himself must be brought to trial. The Eckharts and other radical theologians make far-reaching statements: Jesus is not seen as the pre-existent Son of God; indeed, the idea that Christ was God reconciling the world to Himself is seen as idolatrous; the Resurrection did not take place but Jesus “sleeps with the other Jewish dead.” He was not the Messiah but a Jew who hoped for the coming of the kingdom of God and who died in that hope.

In the last resort this debate must focus around the person of Jesus: if He was a prophet, and not only a prophet, then the Eckharts and others suggest a helpful way to a postHolocaust theology. But if Jesus was God incarnate, then that surely is the pivotal event of history. The way we present the Gospel may change in light of the Holocaust; the truth cannot change. It's not the cross that must be reexamined in the light of the Holocaust, but the Holocaust which must be understood in the light of the cross.

A less radical objection to Jewish evangelism argues that evangelism is actually unnecessary because the Jewish people have their own covenant through Mt. Sinai while we Christians have our own covenant through Calvary.

The Jewish people have access to the former through Sinai they enjoy and establish a relationship with God, approaching Him in prayer and Ending atonement for their sins through sacrifice (at least historically). They still enjoy these privileges and status. Now here comes the insidious part of the argument, wherein we are being sold a half-truth: the Jews (so runs the argument in James Parke's book *Judaism and Christianity*) have not been rejected as a people; the very idea is absolutely Impossible in Paul's thinking — the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable, and the Jews are beloved for the Sake of their forefathers. They are a people who still enjoy a covenantal relationship with God. For the time being, it is true, they are deprived of the opportunity to offer sacrifices in the Temple, but the time may come when even that maybe available to them. The argument continues that God's faithfulness to His covenant people can be seen in their national survival and in their return to the land once promised to their fathers.

There is much in the above position that we would agree with and to which we would say "Amen". But the weakness of such a position surely is that it fails to observe that, for Paul, the evidence that God has not abandoned His people is to be seen in the *remnant* saved by grace (as stated in Rom. 11) — Jewish believers in the Messiah. Further, whatever may be the nature of the covenant between God and Israel, can it bring with it salvation and be consistent with the rest of the teaching of the N.T.? How can we say that and look at Romans 9-11 in the context of the whole book of Romans? Doesn't Paul say so clearly that salvation both for the Jew and for the Gentile lies not in Sinai but in Calvary? This is after all, the main thrust of Romans 10! All have sinned (Jew and Gentile) but there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

asneyI would like to spend a moment now on some evangelical objections to Jewish evangelism which have had a radical effect on witness to the Jewish people in the last 5 to 10 years. Some evangelicals, of course, would hold a form of the two-covenant theology which we will be looking at during this conference. For others the removal of blindness from Israel will be an act of God's sovereign grace which we should not anticipate with our frenzied evangelistic activity. For some, the moment of the lifting of blindness from Israel will be when Jesus returns "and they look upon Him whom they have pierced." Some would emphasize that now is the time to comfort Israel. Amen to that: let us do all we can to support Israel! But surely the supreme comfort for Israel is to be found in their Messiah, in the One who said, "Come unto Me all who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest." I say this in love (I don't wish to offend any), but I feel that this is an important issue. I think that there can be a real danger of the land assuming a greater importance than the Lord — as if possession of the land is actually of greater importance than being possessed by the Lord or coming to know the Lord.

Indeed, I have been in one meeting where I was saddened because I felt there was a worship of the land of Israel that was almost akin to idolatry. I don't wish for one minute to underestimate the importance of the land in the history of salvation, nor do I wish to undermine in any way the support that Christians should give to Israel, but we must avoid the danger of worshipping what has been created rather than the One who created it. We need to focus our eyes increasingly on the Lord and perhaps a little away from what time it is on God's clock of history (much as we would like to know). Let us live always as if now is the time and today is the day of the Lord Jesus' Second Coming — always to live with that anticipation! We need to challenge one another afresh with the unchanging commission to take the Gospel to every creature and to the Jew first. This is precisely the emphasis that Jesus gave in Acts 1 during that conversation He had with the disciples. When they asked that all-time Millennial question "Lord, are You going at this time to restore the Kingdom"? and Jesus replied "It is not for you to know the times or the days the Father has set," He, as I understand it, deflects their attention from speculation *about the future* to their responsibility *in the present*. I read a statement yesterday in an article which said that a responsible eschatology would always result in fervent evangelism. One sad trend in the last 5 to 10 years is an increasing deflection of evangelical effort, prayer and giving away from evangelism toward other activities which, however valuable and very fine, cannot claim the same dominical authority and priority as is found in the Great Commission.

So we meet, then, at a time when from a whole variety of quarters the very concept of taking the Gospel to the Jewish people is being challenged, and at such a time it's good to remind ourselves of the simple truths of John 3. A Jewish religious leader comes to Jesus by night, not because he was afraid, but because it was the only time when he could get a quiet chat with Jesus. He was a teacher, a member of the ruling council, a Pharisee —

sincere, devoted, respected. He came not, as I understand it, to challenge antagonistically, criticize or to trick Jesus; he came because he was impressed, because he was attracted, because he was drawn (to use Albert Einstein's phrase) by the luminous figure of the Nazarene. He recognized the authority with which Jesus spoke, the power and the grace of the things that He did (a little side-lesson for us involved in Jewish evangelism is that the message was authenticated in the life of the One who spoke). But he was attracted by this Man and came to learn from Him. And as I look at Nicodemus, for me he epitomizes everything that is good in the Jewish religious life and tradition.

And to this man Jesus said "I tell you the truth: unless a man is born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." I see Jesus looking at Nicodemus and saying, "Nicodemus, neither your sincerity, (which is so genuine), nor your good works (which are many, nor your religious observance (which is carried out meticulously), nor your learning nor your birth can earn you a place in the kingdom of God." Jesus went on to speak immediately of Himself and His own death as the means whereby anyone could obtain eternal life. Did not Nicodemus stand precisely where you and I have stood, whether we are Gentiles or Jews — where we can bring nothing to God; where we come naked before Him and simply cling to His cross, depending on His grace for our forgiveness and for our rebirth, for our place In His kingdom? And do we not meet for these eight days precisely because we believe this —that except a man be born again (be he Jew or be he Gentile, be he a devout member of the Lubavitch Chassidim or an Anglican or a Lutheran or a Baptist — whatever!), nothing of his religious tradition or religious upbringing can avail him at all in terms of salvation? "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." And I think that, when we actually look at why we are here, *that* is why we are here! We haven't got all the answers; we haven't got the right methodology we probably haven't even got the right structure for LCJE! All of us make mistakes, but we are here because on our hearts is written this truth. For the Jewish people, like us Gentiles, need to be born again. And this new birth is by the Spirit of God. This is a salutary reminder to us, with all our discussions, papers, workshops and seminars: unless it is the Spirit of God who works, we shall achieve nothing. So may these verses be constantly in our minds during this time together may that same gracious Holy Spirit guide all that we do; and may the result of our time together be that more Jewish men and women will be born anew by the gracious and sovereign Spirit of God!

LETTER TO THE CHURCHES

STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE LCJE THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATION 1986.

WE, THE MEMBERS OF THE LAUSANNE CONSULTATION ON JEWISH EVANGELISM, conclude our third world-wide conference with this letter to the churches. Recently there has been widespread media criticism of evangelisation among Jewish people, and church bodies have also expressed opposition to such ministries. In this situation, we desire to share with you our convictions and concerns relating to the Jewish people.

God's Irrevocable Call

God's call to the Jewish people is irrevocable. We rejoice that God chose Israel to reveal His mercy and grace to all the world. God's choice of His people is still in force. The New Testament stresses that they are beloved for the sake of the fathers, and that to them belong "the adoption as sons, the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the worship and the promises... the patriarchs..., the human ancestry of Christ" (Romans 9:4-5, 11:29). In His love for the world, God has faithfully and graciously watched over His people through the centuries. The salvation of "all Israel" is also included in God's purposes for the world and will bring rich blessing to the nations (Romans 11:12,26).

During the turbulent years in which Yeshua lived, there emerged among the covenant people those who loved Him and willingly confessed Him as Lord and Messiah. Since those first decades, God's reconciled community has always included both Jewish and non-Jewish believers. We are grateful that this is indeed the case in the 1980s! We see this as a sign of God's continuing work of redemption.

We grieve over the discrimination and suffering which have been inflicted upon the Jewish people in the name of Jesus the Messiah. These deeds constituted a denial of God's love for His people and a misrepresentation of the person and work of Jesus. We denounce all forms of anti-semitism as contrary to the gospel and to the content of the New Testament. We must protest, however, when past history is used to silence the church in her witness to the Jewish people. To withhold the gospel from the Jewish people would be an act of gross discrimination. We believe that it is time to renew our obligation to share with the Jewish people, both in word and deed, the good news of reconciliation in Jesus the Messiah.

Our generation has witnessed the rebirth of Jewish sovereignty in the land of Israel. We view this as an act of God's mercy and faithfulness. God's covenant with the people of Israel embraces His promises concerning the land, just as His covenant with mankind

embraces all creation. We realize that Israel's salvation is not to be thought of primarily in territorial or political terms, and that there are differences in our understandings of the theological significance of the State of Israel. But we delight in the life of the Jewish people as a nation in their ancestral homeland. We are also grateful for the presence of a vital community of Jewish believers in Yeshua in Israel, and call upon the official authorities to acknowledge their rightful place within the Jewish people. At the same time, we are concerned about unbiblical attitudes to minorities in Israeli society; the Hebrew Scriptures make it clear that minorities are to be treated with respect and dignity. We echo this for the sake of these people themselves and for Israel's sake, who is called to be a light to the nations.

We also bring to the church's attention the plight of Soviet Jewry and of Jewish minorities in other countries where their freedom is limited. We express our concern for their spiritual and physical well-being, and urge the church to join us in praying and acting responsibly to secure their freedom.

“To The Jew First”

We believe that the Jewish people and Jesus the Messiah are fundamentally bound to one another in God's purposes of salvation for the world. God's call to Israel to be a light to the nations was, is and will be fulfilled through Jesus the Messiah (2 Corinthians 1:20, Romans 11:15).

Today, therefore, we call upon the Body of Christ to restore vigorous evangelistic outreach to the Jewish people to the same, natural and central place as it had in the ministry of the Early Church. The words of Paul are still in force: “The gospel... is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes: to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile” (Romans 1:16).

It is frequently asserted that the church has no evangelistic obligation to the Jewish people, and that there are two covenants: the Jewish people are accepted by God through the Sinai Covenant and non-Jews through the New Covenant in Jesus the Messiah. To the contrary, it was before the highest council of the Jewish people that the early Jewish apostles claimed. “There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). We uphold the apostolic witness that salvation comes through Jesus Christ alone: there is only one covenant of salvation. If the gospel is not the power of salvation for the Jewish people, to whom it was first addressed, how can it be Good News to people from other nations? Biblically, the gospel proclamation to the Jewish people is the foundation stone upon which Christian mission to all nations is built. We therefore urge the church to uphold the legitimacy of Christian witness to the Jewish community and to be obedient to God in the fulfillment of this witness. Likewise, we call upon Jewish Christians to fulfil their evangelistic responsibility to be a light to the Gentiles.

Within the context of Christian witness, dialogue with the Jewish people is valuable and

essential. Dialogue can help to promote mutual understanding and respect and to break down stereotypes. But it is more. Dialogue can enhance our understanding of the church and Israel because the church in its roots and in its hope is intimately linked to the Jewish people. For that reason we regret that Jewish Christians have often been excluded from the current Jewish-Christian dialogue, and we call upon the churches to insist that Jewish Christians be invited to contribute to that dialogue. However, dialogue must not replace our concern to witness positively to Yeshua as the Messiah, nor detract from our call to the Jewish people to embrace Him as Saviour.

Enriched by Diversity

We are greatly encouraged to share the news about considerable growth in the number of Jewish believers in Jesus, both in Israel and elsewhere in the world. These Jewish believers are variously known as Hebrew Christians, Jewish Christians, Christian Jews or Messianic Jews, depending on personal preference or the culture in which they live. Some of them have joined established denominations or congregations, whereas others have been incorporated in Messianic Jewish congregations. This latter category of congregations emphasizes the Jewishness of the gospel and its application to contemporary Jewish life.

Today Christian communities in various parts of the world are developing their cultural distinctives. Jewish believers are also developing Jewish expressions of their faith in Jesus and of their life with Him. This includes the use of music and the arts and creative patterns of worship and celebration. As Jewish believers share their biblical heritage with the church, they have enriched many congregations.

We therefore call upon the churches to affirm the Jewish identity of the Jewish believers in their midst and to provide an environment in which new believers can develop that Jewish identity on a sound, biblical basis.

We affirm the unity of Jews and non-Jews in Jesus Christ. This unity is fundamental to the gospel: Jesus has brought reconciliation between God and man, and has broken down the barriers between Jew and non-Jew (Ephesians 2:14).

How shall they hear?

It is urgent that each individual Christian makes every effort to share the Good News of Jesus the Messiah with all people. As we look and long for Christ's return and for a new heaven and a new earth, we remember that the gospel must first be brought to the fullness of the nations and to the Jewish people for their salvation. We therefore call upon all who are in Christ to be faithful, obedient, expectant and prayerful in the proclamation of the gospel to Jew and non-Jew alike. (Romans 10:12-15).

**LCJE Press Release
(Third International Consultation
August, 1986. Easneye, England)**

CONSULTATION AFFIRMS EVANGELISM “TO THE JEW FIRST”

EASNEYE, England — A conference for those involved in Christian witness to the Jewish people issued a statement today (see attached) urging “the church to uphold the legitimacy of Christian witness to the Jewish community”.

The statement, in the form of an open letter to the churches, also expressed grief over the “discrimination and suffering which have been inflicted on the Jewish people in the name of Jesus Christ”.

However, the letter added that past history cannot be used “to silence the church in her witness to the Jewish people”, but called for continuing evangelistic outreach.

The conference was the largest international gathering of its kind since a similar meeting in Warsaw, Poland in 1927. Nearly 160 participants from 17 nations met from August 18 to 27, 1986 at the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE).

One of the purposes of the meeting was to “raise the voice of concern” for reaching Jewish people with the gospel, according to conference organisers. “We are not meeting far the sake of meeting, but to call the Jewish people to their Messiah, Jesus Christ”, said the Rev. David Harley, international co-ordinator of the consultation and Principal of All Nations Christian College, a missionary training institution.

Harley said that Christians cannot talk about evangelising the Jews without addressing the issue of Christian theology and the Holocaust. But he added, “it is not the Cross that should be re-examined in the light of the Holocaust, but the Holocaust in the light of the Cross”.

Harley told the delegates that “one cannot be consistent with Scripture and neglect the evangelisation of the Jewish people”.

The delegates not only emphasised the need for Jewish evangelism, but also maintained that it must be a priority.

In the opening address, Mitch Glaser, director of recruitment and training for Jews for Jesus, cited a phrase used by the Apostle Paul in the Book of Romans —“to the Jew first”— claiming that, “the same Spirit who inspired the Great Commission Matthew 28 inspired the Jewish priority emphasised in Romans. Jewish evangelism has become the Great Omission of the Church”.

Harley traced the history of the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism back to the Consultation on World Evangelisation in Pattaya, Thailand in 1980, sponsored by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation. This year’s consultation has attracted more than three times the number of delegates who attended the conference in Newmarket, England in 1983. The LCJE publishes a quarterly Bulletin on issues and methods in Jewish evangelism.

Delegates, who minister largely among the Jewish people, also emphasised the importance of reaching the rest of the world. “To the Jew first, yes . but then to all nations and people, including Arabs and Moslems”, said noted author and lecturer in missionary studies, Martin Goldsmith.

Conference participants included missionaries among the Jewish people, directors of Jewish evangelism agencies, denominational executives, members of the boards of directors, scholars, and pastors of Jewish-Christian congregations. Over half the participants were themselves Jewish Christians.

Participants attended workshops and seminars on various subjects, including missionary ethics, handling hostility, evangelistic literature and answering the anti-missionary.

Case studies in Jewish evangelism were presented, and national and regional reports were received on the status of Jewish Christian concerns in various parts of the world, including Argentina, France, Eastern Europe, Israel and New Zealand.

There was substantial representation from the Jewish Christian community of Israel. In an evening address, the Rev. Baruch Maoz of Rehovot, Israel, made an impassioned plea calling his nation to “reconsider the claim of Jesus to be the Messiah”.

In a move that may surprise some evangelical Protestant Christians, the consultation came out in support of dialogue with the Jewish people, albeit within carefully defined parameters. Dialogue is “valuable and essential”, according to the letter to the churches, but delegates expressed “regret that Jewish Christians have often been excluded from current Jewish-Christian dialogue...”

They called on churches to insist that Jewish Christians be invited to enter into the dialogue, but maintained that such participation is not a substitute for active Christian witness to the Jewish community.

“Increasingly we find Jewish partners in the dialogue demanding that Christians formally renounce any desire or intention to see Jewish people accept Jesus as Messiah”, said the

Rev. Walter Riggans, a lecturer in Hebrew and Semitic Studies at All Nations Christian College. Riggans, a former pastor and teacher in Israel, added, “the Church must bear witness to Jewish people and our message must be unashamedly Christocentric in content”.

The consultation expressed solidarity with “the plight of Soviet Jewry and of Jewish minorities in other countries where their freedom is limited”. They urged the Church to pray and act responsibly to secure their freedom.

One of the regional reports brought before the conference concerned the plight of the Falashas, a tribe of Jewish Ethiopians, who number 25,000. Of these 12,000 have migrated to Israel via the Sudan because of the famine which has struck Ethiopia. Many are in “absorption centers” in Israel and initial contact shows that “sizeable numbers” are Christians, though accurate figures are unavailable.

A report from the United States on the Y’shua (Hebrew for Jesus –*sic.*) Campaign was an example of making something positive out a negative. The campaign was launched by Jews for Jesus, after they saw the name of Jesus Christ desecrated on the outside wall of their San Francisco-based office.

“We took that desecration and turned it around to glorify God”, said Susan Penman. Every Christmas since 1982 they have placed full-page advertisements in major newspapers and magazines around the U.S.A., including such publications as *The New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Time* and *Newsweek*. In 1982, the ads reached a readership of some 13 million. By 1986, that figure topped 50 million. Since the campaign began, Jews for Jesus has handled nearly 15,000 inquiries from Jews and some 17,000 from unbelieving non-Jews.

The closing address was delivered by Bishop Jack Dam of Sydney, Australia. He said that he was ‘impressed by the tremendous scholarship represented here which provides a solid theological basis for the consultation’. He applauded the “wide-ranging decisions to network which will lead to an interchange of ideas, materials and programmes for Jewish evangelism”.

RESPONSES !

The following are solicited responses to the Norwegian Mission to Israel (DNI) Statement about Christian Ministry to the Jewish People, which statement was originally published in MISHKAN issue 4.

Walter Barker

Post general director of CMJ and presently minister-at-large for same. England.

We live in a time when many questions of a critical nature are being asked of those representing the older missionary boards, and it is therefore good to state one's case. The Norwegian Mission to Israel is to be congratulated for producing such a full statement of its own theological stance.

The title of the statement was taken from Romans 1:16 and is interpreted as giving Jews precedence over Gentiles as divinely intended objects of evangelism. Most commentators would understand this text as an historical description rather than as a directive for missionary priorities. We cannot hope to convince those who look with doubt upon the missionary cause by placing more on texts than the passage can legitimately bear.

The biblical statement regarding mission to the Jews is boldly stated. The usual biblical passages are produced as evidence i.e. Matthew 10:6; Romans 1:16; Luke 24:47 and others. We are, however, living almost 2000 years later, in a post-Christendom and post-Holocaust situation. There are those who would claim that this ought to alter the Church's stance on Jewish evangelism. Indeed, though the theological section of this statement says many good things, it does not deal with the present resistance to Jewish missions spearheaded by liberal theologians, a resistance which has proven so successful. Though Paul is now frequently quoted, it is Paul Van Buren and not the Apostle from Tarsus!

In his book *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People* (page 196) Prof. E. P. Sanders writes, "Paul teaches that the only way to enter the body of those who will be saved is by faith in Christ. Generations have come and gone and Paul's expectations have not been fulfilled. His

references to the fullness of the Gentiles and all Israel depend on his expectation that the Redeemer would come soon. Thus they cannot be used in any simple way to determine what Paul would have thought of the future generations of either Gentiles or Jews”. This example surely is a “relevant theological issue” to which mission societies ought to respond.

The statement seems to regard Messianic Judaism with some ambivalence, for a mere five lines are devoted to the subject. How can Jewish Christians maintain and develop their Jewish identities unless they meet together as Jews and worship accordingly? This can hardly be done within a Gentile congregation!

In spite of these weaknesses, the DNI statement is a good document, well worth being studied by other society boards and workers.

Menachem Benhayim

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The Statement is sensitive, well-balanced and fairly comprehensive. It can serve as a good basis for presenting the Jewish cause to the Church at large. With some modifications it could also serve to inform Jewish inquirers. Certain clarifications are, however, needed in order to make a good statement even better.

The fundamental need is for a practical, contextual sense of the term “salvation” as it relates to both believer and non-believer. All readers agree that the New Testament presents salvation as centered in Jesus Christ. How to understand the implications of this “act of salvation” is not yet a matter of consensus, even within the Evangelical movement.

The statement errs by laying too large an emphasis on individual salvation, neglecting the *national* aspects of the Gospel. This is one important area in which the statement could be improved.

A second area of neglect has to do with a communication gap between Gospel preachers and potential Jewish hearers. While there are doctrines and concepts in traditional Judaism relating to the afterlife, these are not a major focus in the thought of Orthodox or secular Jews. Contemporary evangelism is, therefore, often in the position of answering questions few Jews have asked. Widespread Jewish indifference to questions relating to personal immortality should not of itself rule out the preaching of a biblical message

concerning eternity an emphasis on eternity, when detached from the totality of the biblical message, can give the impression of being irrelevant, egocentric or antisocial, tending to detach individual Jews from their natural community and thus contributing to the disintegration of Jewish peoplehood.

For the committed Jew, redemption is inseparable from belonging to the people of Israel even if, for the present, it includes sharing in the anguish of the apostle Paul as “one born out of time”.

Larry Brandt

Minister-at-Large, Jews for Jesus, San Francisco.

The Norwegian Mission to Israel has given us a timely and irenic statement which is both biblically sound and culturally well-balanced. The authors address biblical, theological and historical issues that are all too frequently misunderstood by Jews and non-Jews alike, thus causing mutual suspicion and disagreement over the nature of the task to which God has called us – to proclaim the good news of salvation through Jesus to all people.

I have chosen to comment on a few of the topics covered in this magnificent statement. These include 1) the identity of “Israel”, 2) the “hellenizing” of the Church, and 3) Israel (and the Church) and the Law.

1. Identity of “Israel”

The authors of the statement rightly assert that when we say “Israel” in the context of missions, we mean the Jewish people of all times and places. We do not mean the state or the land of Israel, the Church as “the New Israel”, nor any other abstract theological entity.

But who are the Jewish people today? The words “Israel” and the Jew often conjure an idealistic image of a devout people, thoroughly versed in the Scriptures, pious, charitable, talented, wise and faithful to God. We imagine old men huddled over tomes which we have neither the skill nor the desire to understand.

Jewish Christians, who should know better, tend to perpetuate this myth by failing to deny it. We ought to paint a more accurate picture: Grandfather is retired, and living in Miami, or in a nursing home, all but forgotten by his children and grandchildren. His father was Orthodox, but when they left the old country, the traditional way of life slowly dissolved. Father is in the living room reading the financial page of the newspaper. He went to Hebrew school and had a bar-mitzvah. But he has never read the Bible, and he can’t quite remember the last time he was in synagogue. He’s a doctor, a lawyer or a merchant, or perhaps he works in a factory. Mother probably works, too. Either mom or dad may not even be Jewish, a situation which often leaves both spouse and children with nagging questions about who they are and where they belong.

The Gospel is for this “Israel”, too. Modern missions to Israel must recognise that most of the “Israel” whom we address has been cut loose from whatever traditional and spiritual moorings she may have once had. Most Jews today are asking what it means to be Jewish,

and are offering themselves widely divergent answers. In bringing the Gospel to Israel, we must realize that we are addressing a people who is searching for identity and for meaning, who may not be as acutely aware of the traditional beliefs and customs which we tend to associate with the Jewish people. Are these not also to be accounted for as “biblical Israel”?

2. The “hellenizing” of the Church

Uncertain about our own identity, we Jewish people – Jewish Christians included – are liable to be irrationally fearful of compromising our identity by belonging to a so-called “Gentile” Church. We may not know what it means to be a Jew, but we’re convinced that belonging to a church has nothing to contribute to such an identity. In consequence, we find it convenient to accuse the Church of being “un-Jewish”, hellenized.

This misconception is eloquently set aside by the statement. First of all, a biblical definition of the Church encompasses both Jews and non-Jews who belong together to Jesus. Second, in the course of its history, the Church has maintained a biblical (Old Testament as well as New!) view of God to the point of insisting upon elements that a Greek mind would tend to reject, such as the concept that a divine person could truly suffer and die.

Ironically, many Jews have adopted a “hellenized” theology. The view of the absolute unity of God generally accepted today by the Jewish people was first expounded by Maimonides in the 12th century. Maimonides had as his purpose a harmonization between the Bible’s teaching about God and Aristotle’s Greek philosophy! Actually, much of the classical Jewish theology of biblical and mishnaic times is espoused by the Church to this very day, while modern Judaism tends to dismiss it as “primitive” and “unsophisticated”.

The Church, which has consisted mostly of non-Jews for 1900 years, has been able to understand the message of the Bible in terms of the various cultures in which the Gospel has taken root. I, for one, am thankful to God for this. The message of the Gospel is for all people. Jews, who are so quick to demand that the non-Jewish Church understand them, must also make an effort to understand non-Jews. God does not require them to become Jews, and He does not allow us to separate ourselves from our non-Jewish brethren in

Messiah. A great many of us have been led to faith in Jesus by Christians who are not Jewish. We must not bite the hands that reached out to us to bring us into the Kingdom.

3. Israel (and the Church) and the Law

What of Jewish identity, tradition and culture? The Gospel declares, “The Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). Are Torah and Gospel opposed to one another? Were there neither grace nor truth in the Old Testament? Did Not Jesus give commandments?

The question of the Law has vexed Jewish and non-Jewish believers from the beginning and the statement gives an even and sensitive exposition of this subject. Nevertheless, a few additional points could be made.

First of all, as long as we talk about “Law”, we have not fully understood the nature of the Mosaic Covenant. The Hebrew word “Torah” does not mean “Law”; it means “Instruction”. It derives from a word that means “to shoot at a target”. One of the Hebrew words for “sin” means “to miss a target”. The Torah was not meant to be some kind of cosmic game, in which we had to keep all the rules in order to win. Such legalism would have been categorically rejected by Moses, as well as by the best of the Jewish rabbis. Torah, properly understood, is God’s instruction to those who are already His people. It is an instrument of sanctification rather than of salvation.

But what was the Torah’s good? Paul replies to that question in Romans 10:4: “Christ is the end (the goal, not the cessation) of the Torah for righteousness to everyone who believes”. The Torah was given in order to bring us to Christ. What happens to the Torah when Christ comes?

Certain Rabbis in the Talmud and the Midrashim would agree that, when Messiah comes, changes are to be introduced in the Torah. Some claim that things once forbidden will be permitted, and vice-versa. Others say that the letters of the Torah will be rearranged so as to reveal the names of God and of new instructions. I would suggest that the New Testament views the Torah in a similar way. The Torah is not cancelled nor has its validity expired; it has been modified by Messiah Himself.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus presents Himself as One who brings a new Torah. By His well-known formula, “You have heard it said to the men of old... but I say to you...”, Jesus took a position of authority with respect to the Torah. “He taught with authority, and not like the scribes” (Matt. 7:29). He was not canceling the precepts but showing us that they must be written on our hearts and obeyed in the spirit, not just in letter. Paul later insists that non-Jewish Galatians should “fulfill the Law of Christ (the Torah of Messiah)” (Gal. 6:2).

How does this “Torah of the Messiah” differ from the Torah of Moses? Consider, for example, the laws of purity. Moses declares that a leper, dead bodies or the like render anyone who touches them unclean. But when Jesus touches a leper or a human corpse He does not become unclean. Rather, He cleanses and heals all that He touches (Matt 8:1-3; 9:25). Jewish tradition declared foreigners to be unclean but the New Covenant tells us that “What God has cleansed, (we are) no longer (to) consider unholy” (Acts 10:15). If God can cleanse people, how much more can He cleanse food? Do we thus set Torah aside? The Torah of Moses, perhaps, but not that of Messiah.

Did Jesus free us from the Law? Many believers erroneously think He did. But Paul wrote that “the law of the spirit of life in Messiah has set you free from the *law of sin and of death*”

(Romans 8:2), Ezekiel wrote (18:4) “the soul that sins shall die”. It is from that judgement that Jesus freed us. “Christ redeemed us the curse the law...” (Gal. 3:13), from the death which was the sure result of our sins. But “do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law” (Rom. 3:31).

Like the Torah of Moses, the Torah of Jesus has testimonies, statutes, ordinances, decrees, commandments and traditions – all explained in detail in the New Testament. One of the pictures drawn of Jesus in the Gospels is that of a rabbi. Jewish rabbis of Jesus’ time had disciples whom they trained by instruction and by example. The rabbi thus became a personification of his teaching. They learned by listening to him and by observing how he lived the life of Torah. Jesus became the incarnation of the Torah in a way which was not open to any rabbi: He was the Word which became flesh. If we Jewish believers in Jesus are to develop our identity as Jews, then we must let Jesus be our rabbi. His Torah (and that of His disciples) must serve as our standard of Jewishness.

Conclusion:

The Norwegian Mission to Israelis to be commended for a thorough and well-reasoned statement. It reflects the Mission’s commitment to God, to His Word, and to Jews and non-Jews alike. The statement lays a sound foundation firmly rooted in Scripture. It is culturally sensitive to Jewish and non-Jewish people alike without patronizing either one. It reflects the Mission’s desire to promote unity and cooperation between missions and churches, and between Jews and non-Jews.

It is my sincere hope and prayer that the commitments which this statement represents will encourage greater, more widespread and more effective missionary work among the Jewish people in the land of Israel, as well as in the Diaspora.

Allan R. Brockway

The Rev. Allan R. Brockway, who is Secretary of the World Council of Churches Consultation on the Church and the Jewish People (CCJP), offers these reflections with the understanding that they do not necessarily represent formally taken positions of either the World Council of Churches or of the CCJP.

“To the Jew First” is a welcome statement of the position of those Christians and churches who are convinced that the Church has an evangelistic mission to Jews and the Jewish

people. It is, however, a position I do not hold — in fact, I find most of the objections to such a mission listed in the statement's introduction to be biblically and theologically valid — and in fairness I must state this at the outset

A basic difficulty I have with the statement lies in its failure to take seriously the immense amount of biblical, historical, and theological scholarship that has transpired during the last fifty or so years. I have in mind the work of such people as Moore, van Buren, Parks, Stendahl, Gager, Gaston, Pawlikowski, Osten-Sacken, and E. P. Sanders who have demonstrated convincingly, *inter alia*, that the picture of first-century Judaism found in the New Testament is inaccurate, that Paul's relationship to his people is complex, and that the messianic consciousness of Jesus cannot be taken for granted.

The statement is founded on two fundamental assertions: salvation is only to be found in Jesus the Messiah and it would, therefore, be discrimination against Jews to withhold the Gospel from them. Each of these has been seriously questioned by faithful Christians.

It is debatable whether Jesus actually thought of himself as the Messiah, though it is certain that he was so considered by his followers and by the Church. The title "Messiah" for Jesus, particularly in the form, "Israel's Messiah," is simply inaccurate. We in the Church would do well to acknowledge that "Christ" has come to have a radically different meaning from "Messiah." It is one thing to say that salvation comes through Jesus *Christ* and quite another to say that it comes through *Messiah* Jesus, for "Messiah" contains a complex of meanings — ranging from one anointed to be the leader of the people, such as an Israelite king, to the one who will usher in the messianic age, complete with justice, harmony, and peace for the entire world — which do not, and never did, accurately describe Jesus and the effect of his ministry. It is past time for the Church actively to repent of its usurpation of the title, honoring instead Jews' understanding of their own word. In "Christ" Christians have the precise title for the message of salvation, a title that is filled with theological significance far beyond what "Messiah" signifies. Further, for us Christians to try to tell Jews who *their* Messiah is, is a presumption that belies our denials that the Church has taken the place of Israel in the economy of God. Let us preach the Christ, and leave the Messiah to Jews.

"To the Jew First" states categorically that "God will never desert or divorce Israel and replace her with the Church". But that categorical and theologically correct statement is immediately followed by qualifications that deny it, defining Israel in terms that limit the people God chose to those who believe in Jesus: "First, part of Israel has always believed in Jesus." Presumably, it is this *part* of Israel that God will not desert. What about the vast majority, the Jewish people itself? Arid then, "Secondly, God has not abandoned the branches that have been cut off. He has the power to graft them in again. This means that God leads and preserves these, His own people, in a special way. They have not lost their unique place in God's plan of salvation." Apparently, since "Israel has a 'natural' right to salvation due to God's promises," God's faithfulness to Israel amounts to His desire that Jews be grafted back in on Christian terms.

The-theology of these qualifications is a direct denial of the assertion that God has not rejected Israel in favor of the Church. It assumes that the “true” remnant of Israel has accepted Jesus as Messiah and that it is through this remnant that continuity with the original people of Israel is maintained. Thus the Church becomes the “new Israel” (despite the statement’s denial) by virtue of those Jews who have accepted Jesus as their Messiah, and rabbinic Judaism (that is to say the contemporary Jewish people) is left out and therefore is a legitimate target for Christian evangelization. “Israel” is thus radically redefined, a redefinition that contravenes the most fundamental premise of interreligious dialogue – that partners must be allowed to define themselves in their own terms. This theology appears, to me at least, to be an extremely serious distortion of what must have been Paul’s meaning when he used the image of the wild olive branches.

The statement denies that “an unconditional acceptance of rabbinic tradition (can) be considered.” Indeed, rabbinic Judaism appears to be a principal target, indeed opponent, of the messianic mission. Whereas Jews who accept Messiah Jesus are called to remain Jews and to be accepted as such, the statement seems to insist that they must reject *rabbinic* Judaism in favor of a type of second-temple Judaism that does not exist today. But certainly they cannot remain within rabbinic Judaism (the only kind of Judaism that now exists, though in various contemporary forms). Jews (and Christians) today are not in the same situation as were those of Jesus and Paul’s time. Too much water has passed beneath the historical bridge for them to become first-century Jews, as though rabbinic Judaism did not now exist as normative.

The authors of the statement deny that “mission to the Jews, if successful, would mean the end of the Jewish people.” But the document as a whole seems to suggest just that, as, for instance, in the sentence from Ephesians that is quoted with approval: “Christ is to ‘reconcile us both (Jews and Gentiles) to God in one body *through the cross*, thereby bringing the hostility to an end” (emphasis added). The clear implication is that the “reconciliation” can take place only when Jews become Christian, which *today* means that they stop being Jews.

While originally the Christian movement was largely composed of Jews who remained faithful to Torah, it can be argued that the spread of Christianity through the Gentile world and the final separation of the Church from the Jewish people was due precisely to Gentile Christians telling Jewish Christians they need no longer be obedient to Torah. In the end it became clear that no Jew could become a Christian and remain a legitimate part of the Jewish people. No longer a Jewish sect, Christianity became a distinct and separate religion from Judaism. Thus, in terms of the statement’s own historical analysis, it is today all but impossible to comprehend how Jews could remain Jews while accepting “Jesus’ atoning death (as) their substitution for the temple offerings” instead of the solution adopted by rabbinic Judaism. Of course, it is quite

possible and even desirable for Messianic Jews to identify with the Jewish people as people, but I would submit that the attempt to combine the religion *Judaism* with the religion *Christianity* can only produce a syncretism that is neither Judaism nor Christianity.

The statement is, of course, correct when it reminds us that the New Testament and subsequent Christian theology understood that “keeping the Law (was) unnecessary for salvation.” In fact, so far as salvation is concerned, Christ and Torah are opposing concepts. As E. P. Sanders has demonstrated, for Paul the Law was not sufficient for salvation, which was the only thing it lacked; there was nothing wrong with the Law, it just did not do what Christ did. The statement notes that, for rabbinic Judaism, “to live by the Law was less a means of atonement and salvation than a matter of loyalty to Israel and the God of Israel.” That was true not only for rabbinic Judaism (after 70 CE) but also for Judaism during the time of Jesus and Paul.

The Christian understanding of “salvation” was no less alien to Jews of the first century than it is to Jews today. “To the Jew First” focuses on belief in Jesus as the Messiah, specifically as the Messiah of Israel. It would seem that the purpose of Christian ministry to the Jewish people is to convince Jews that Jesus is the Messiah because only by adherence to that belief will they attain to salvation – but otherwise what “salvation” is for them is left without definition.

An important question before us today (and a question that has been with the Church from the beginning) concerns what we actually mean when we speak of “salvation.” Once we have become clear about that, we can speak about the ways it is to be obtained (that is, the means of salvation). Although a single brief statement of purpose cannot be expected to contain a complete theology, it would have been helpful if “To the Jew First” had been more specific about what the salvation is which its authors actually offer. What does “Messiah Jesus” offer that “all people need”? Specifically, what does the salvation available only through Messiah Jesus have to offer Jews?

The statement is correct to use “Gentile” to mean “non-Jew” and to reject the pejorative significance the word has accumulated in some Israeli and other Middle Eastern Christian circles. Christianity is a Gentile religion, but it is a Gentile religion that offers obedience to the God of *Israel*. In that respect it is different from all other Gentile religions. But that Christianity should offer its special way of obedience to the God of Israel to *Israel* as the only way is so preposterous as to be beyond theological justification.

“To the Jew First” commendably renounces anti-semitism. Everybody renounces anti-semitism, though usually for general human ethical reasons, not theological reasons. In this day and age, prejudice of all kinds and its related action (anti-semitism included) is decried by modern societies. But this statement, unfortunately, does not go beyond that; it does not provide a *theological* reason for opposition to antisemitism. Instead, it offers a

rationale for opposition to (rabbinical) Judaism that leaves open the theoretical possibility of antisemitism: if the Gospel is the only way to salvation, then Jews must be convinced of that. But what if they are not convinced? We Christians still love them for the sake of the promises, a position that was held by the early Church fathers and maintained by their descendents through the centuries. But who wants to be loved for the sake of ones fathers? Everyone wants, and needs, to be respected for themselves. Today's Jews — today's Jewish people — demand, and have every right to demand, more than that, far more than that. They have the right — and we Christians owe it to ourselves — to be fully respected for what they can tell us about the God of those same fathers. After all, we have dared to worship the God whom we have come to know and love through the Jewish people. How can we have the audacity to declare that those same Jewish people can only worship their own God if they do it in our way?

But the statement is not about worship of God; it is about salvation and the conviction that there is no salvation apart from belief in Messiah Jesus. But the two cannot be kept separate. “To the Jew First” observes that “confession of the deity of Jesus is also found with the earliest Christian Jews, both within and subsequent to the New Testament.” That is true. But the deity of Jesus in the Christian confession does not negate the deity of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob worshipped by Jews through obedience to Torah. It is *this* God who saves. It is *this* God whom Christians know through Jesus Christ. And it is *this* God whom Jews know through covenant and serve by obedience to Torah. I am convinced that the Christian attempt to cause Jews to believe that Jesus is their Messiah is tantamount to a declaration that deified Messiah Jesus is a different God from that worshipped by Jews.

Christians are called to testify to what God through Jesus Christ has done for them, and to suggest thereby that the same is a possibility for others. But, far from being first, Jews should be the last people to whom Christians should direct their evangelistic mission. We should never lose sight of the genuine possibility that Jews may know at least as much about the God first revealed to them as we do, and be as closely related to Him as we are.

Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum

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The Norwegian Mission to Israel is to be commended for its courage in issuing such a paper at this time, when the concept of evangelizing Jewish people is under heavy attack from

both Jewish and liberal church circles. Many of those who consider themselves members of the evangelical camp have expressed a growing ambivalence on this issue. Some have gone so far as to discourage evangelism altogether. Others have developed a new theology (the “two covenant” theory) which has as its goal a denial of the importance of Jewish evangelism. Such movements make a statement of this nature very necessary. The Norwegian Mission to Israel has met the need without compromise.

I appreciate the forthright nature of the statement that salvation comes only through faith in Jesus the Messiah *and* that the Gospel must be preached to the Jews. The paper’s focus on preaching “to the Jews first” is both significant and admirable; this is not a popular view among evangelicals, who, though supportive of preaching the Gospel to Jewish people, nonetheless de-emphasize the New Testament priority of proclaiming the Gospel to the Jew. The Norwegian Mission has displayed great courage by stating that, “the good news that Jesus died for us and victoriously rose again from the dead is to be preached to the Jews, and to them first ...”, and again “thus the *one* Church has this *one* mandate: to preach the gospel of Israel’s Messiah and the Saviour of men to *all* peoples – first to the Jewish people, and then to the Gentiles.”

The article’s clear appraisal of the relationship of Israel’s national salvation to Messiah’s Second Coming is also commendable. The Mission rightly asserts that Israel’s salvation must result from the exercise of faith rather than from the Second Coming.

I was pleasantly surprised by the paper’s attitude to the Church within Israel. The notion that the Church has assumed possession of promises once reserved for Israel is openly rejected. Israel’s return to the land is seen as part of the divine plan, because “Israel’s land and people are bound together...” A balanced picture is also presented with regard to Arab believers, while maintaining a decidedly conciliatory tone.

Another laudable aspect of the Statement is its clear position concerning the role of the Law – another presently controversial issue. The statement affirms that salvation cannot be found through the Law or by keeping the Law. Many Jewish believers today believe that keeping the Law is mandatory, although they do not extend this notion to Gentile believers. The statement clearly and rightfully rejects this viewpoint: in accordance with Scripture, a Jewish believer is free from the Law. Believers are free to keep it or not to keep

it. Similarly, the statement concerning rabbinic Judaism is worthy of the attention of every Jewish believer, for many of them attempt to maintain their Jewish identity through rabbinic Judaism, while failing to evaluate their practices in light of New Testament truth. “An unconditional acceptance of rabbinic tradition cannot be considered”. My hope is that the Norwegian Mission’s Statement will find wide circulation in all segments of evangelicalism, Jewish believers included.

Todd Hicks

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The statement “To the Jew First” addresses relevant theological and historical issues in coming to terms with its own mission to the Jewish people. The history of the Church’s attitude toward Jews is certainly not without taint. The statement applies some important biblical correctives to some painfully familiar historical attitudes of the Church. There is a legitimate reproof to be made to non-Jewish believers who have made a theological scapegoat of the Jews in order to build a peculiar oxymoron in the doctrine of arrogance in grace (“Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.”).

I fear, however, that while seeking to dismantle bricks from one side of the “dividing wall of hostility,” the statement courts the danger of placing those same bricks as firmly on the other side. While rightfully arguing from Scripture that Gentile Christians have no ground for spiritual pride, it is implied that Jewish Christians have such a ground — as if the only means to relieve one group from the burden of pride is to burden the other with it.

The statement carries this out with the familiar method of spot quotation from Scripture. The most flagrant of these is the selective borrowing from Paul’s Romans 11 metaphor of the “natural” and “wild” branches. The statement reads “... Israel has a ‘natural’ right to salvation due to God’s promises.” This hardly does justice to Romans 11 or any other Scripture that deals with the doctrine of salvation.

There are spiritual realities in the promises made to Israel that Scripture proclaims and affirms. The statement “To the Jews First” focuses on these — sometimes at the expense of “balancing” Scriptures — and argues persuasively for their continued relevance. I wouldn’t begrudge a wide range of interpretation on such Scriptures, including that of the statement, although a little more openness would be refreshing. Indeed, in that the

statement was written by Gentiles, they are to be commended for better arguing the other's "good".

As history demonstrates, failure to fully appropriate the Gospel of grace has often led Gentile Christians to ugly pride, evil accusations, discrimination and injustice toward Jew that has in turn been harnessed by the world as justification to an even greater vicious purpose. As the psalmist experienced (Psalm 123:4), "pride" in self and "contempt" for others go hand in hand. The statement "To the Jew First" commendably addresses an condemns this attitude on the part of Gentile Christians, but is silent as to the complicity Zionist Christians, Jew or Gentile, in the same attitude: specifically, to justify the expulsion of Palestinians from their own homes so as to become either exiles in other lands c refugees and second-class citizens in their own land. The same monstrous cycle of pride and contempt is at work and the world is only too glad to harness for its vicious ends, the most vicious of which — again as with the Jews — is a hardening of hearts against the very Gospel that reconciles man to God and to his neighbour.

My difficulty with the statement "To the Jew First" is not so much one of detail but of focus. Theologically, the cross is asserted but there seems to be a distorted emphasis: "Israel in a 'natural' right to salvation..."; "...there is a great difference between the mission to Israel and the mission to the Gentiles"; "Israel can rightfully claim privileges an prerogatives given to them in God's promises. Hence, before all others, Israel must receive the Gospel message";... to the Jew first..." "...Israel's precedence..." etc. These statements and others have Scriptural support (indeed, some are quotations from Scripture) but are, on the whole, over-stated in a way not found in Scripture and n brought into the perspective of their larger context. They become the focus of the statement and everything else is seen in their light.

A just mission to the Jews demands dealing less equivocally with the Palestinian larger Arab community than simply recognizing their hard luck. The message of the cross is the only message in the world that can bring reconciliation. In God's sovereignty the present hour of history has brought together the destinies of Palestinian and Jew. Only through the unequivocal Gospel of "Christ crucified" can this event mean "...peace to (those) who were far off and peace to those who were near.

DAN JUSTER

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DNI has presented us with an excellent and balanced statement. The following are a number of detailed comments:

The Introduction addresses all the key reasons why the legitimacy of Jewish missions is questioned today. This is most helpful.

Salvation through Jesus (I.1.b.) This could be improved by adding Rom. 11:29 to the reference from Rom. 11:4 and by including a reference to the corporate dimension of salvation alongside that of the individual.

Ministering (I.2.d. and f) This deals in a very encouraging manner with the need for and legitimacy of Jewish Christian congregations. Church planting should indeed be the goal of missionary work – but a reference to Messianic congregations is called for, as well as that to “congregations of Jewish Christians”.

The Bible refers to Israel's conversion and salvation *as a people* as a "mystery" for Christians today: it is a fact once hidden but now made known. Scripture teaches that Israel will turn to Jesus before His Second Coming. It is most probable that a Jewish “people movement” will prove to be one of the factors leading up to a national turning of the people to Messiah.

The Church and Israel (II.1.) We do well not to overstate Israel's relative importance. Unless we perceive the depth of Jewish lostness and alienation from their own olive tree, we are in danger of losing our own corresponding fervor and urgency as we consider their need of the Gospel. Israel is lost because it has rejected the apostolic witness to Messiah. It is also lost because it has entertained false hopes of a national salvation through secular Zionism or rabbinic legalism.

Israel and the Law (II.2.d.) It was not the Law which isolated Jews from Gentiles but rather rabbinic extensions of the Law. No Mosaic commandments required such a separation. Moreover, the Law is still valid “for instruction and training in righteousness” as well as for developing a modern day Messianic Jewish life style.

“Hellenizing” the Church (113.). The general tenor of this section is correct we ought to acknowledge that the Nicene Creed is equally hellenistic and therefore liable to Jewish

misunderstanding. What is needed is a similar statement, equally assertive of the same truths, but couched in more Jewish terms.

Historical Mistakes and Historical Models (III.b). The origin of the commandment against eating of blood does not find its apologetic in the desire to ensure table fellowship between Jews and Gentiles; rather, it is a command dating from Genesis Chapter 9 and still binding upon Christians today.

One general comment: a use of terms such as “Messiah”, “Messianic” and “Yeshua” alongside “Christ”, “Christian” and “Jesus” may well add to the acceptability of the statement in wider circles.

Yehezkel Landau

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I have been asked by the editors of MISHKAN to write a response to the policy statement of the Norwegian Mission to Israel (DNI), entitled “To the Jew First”. I hesitated for a long time before consenting. My initial reaction was to dismiss the whole matter as not worthy of comment. But as I weighed the issues more reflectively, I concluded that there was too much at stake to simply let the invitation go by. And when I learned that no other Jew had accepted the offer, I felt it was essential that the editors, sponsors, and readers of MISHKAN hear from a faithful Jew why most Jews, here in Israel and elsewhere, consider an undertaking like MISHKAN to be the equivalent of a declaration of war against the Jewish people.

Christian “evangelism” towards Jews is nothing new. It has a long and tragic history, which has left scars on our collective body and traumatic memories in our souls. This legacy of forced conversions, and of violence against those who would not submit, is the primary obstacle in the way of “normalized” relations between Jews and Christians. We are, thank God, way beyond the age of disputations and apologetics. The power of the Church has waned, and there is now a reborn Jewish state in Zion. No self-respecting Jew will today engage in theological debate with Christians who avow, as the DNI does, to woo him away from the Covenant of Israel and baptize him into the Body of Christ. My intent here is not to argue the truth or merits of Judaism compared to Christianity. Rather, I feel it my obligation

to insist, in the name of my people, that you leave us alone to define for ourselves, in our homeland, what our own tradition means to us.

One of the positive signs of this post-Holocaust era is the growing number of Christian theologians who repudiate the “teaching of contempt” which characterized Christianity for centuries. In the shadow of Auschwitz, the debate over the proper interpretation of scripture and tradition is now an internal Christian one. Within this debate, the Norwegian Mission, together with the editors of MISHKAN have made their position clear. They reject this new spirit in the churches and reaffirm the classical understanding of the “claims of the Gospel upon Israel.” Any moral claims which the Gospel, or human history and conscience, may have upon *them* as Christians are evidently brushed aside in an unabashed reiteration of Christian exclusionism.

Since it is “obvious” to the DNI that “salvation is found only through Jesus,” it follows that “mission to Israel has been considered an obvious duty for the Christian congregation.” The direct historical ramifications of this absolutist claim are, apparently, less obvious to the Norwegian Mission. The DNI would argue that it was those malicious pseudo-Christians who, time and again, betrayed the true meaning of the Gospel in persecuting Jews. Its statement condemns “ecclesiastical and popular anti-semitism” and inveighs against “a triumphal arrogance on the part of the Church”. But no connection is made between these “wrong, harmful and dangerous” attributes and the ardent attempt by that same Church to convert Jews. “The Church’s historical guilt is plain to see,” the statement acknowledges, but the DNI declares that the Church must continue “to preach the gospel to the Jewish people and to incorporate those Jews who accept Christ as their Savior into the body of Christ through baptism.” With this goal, the DNI operates in the state of Israel and supports financially such activities as MISHKAN. Before explaining why this effort is seen by Jews as belligerent, no less than a military assault, I want to address what I consider to be the basic fallacy in the DNI's analysis.

The DNI thinks it was the Church’s arrogance or triumphalistic behavior that caused the Jews to reject Christianity “as being un-Jewish or even anti-Jewish.” The Church’s failure with respect to the Jewish people is viewed by the DNI as a matter of poor public relations, of a cruel image that betrayed the substance – for the Christian kerygma, in its own terms, must be powerfully persuasive if not contaminated by coercion. The theological incompatibility between Christianity and Biblical-Rabbinic Judaism is not even entertained by the DNI as a possible reason for the Jewish “No thank you!” In fact, the authors of “To

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the Jew First” go to great lengths to deny this incompatibility. For the Norwegian evangelists, it is perfectly reasonable and desirable for Jews to “practice” Jewish rituals and use the Hebrew language while entering the Christian fold through baptism. Since a Jewish-Christian movement existed in the first century C.E., why not today? So, together with the almost 2,000-year history of Christian anti-Judaism, the even longer tradition of Rabbinic Judaism is brushed aside as irrelevant to the issue of what constitutes an authentic, fulfilled Jewish identity. It is axiomatic to the vast majority of Jews, even with a minimal grounding in Bible or Talmud, that a “Christian Jew” or a “Hebrew Christian” is a contradiction in terms, a cover for apostasy. Most of the DNI statement aims at negating this contradiction. The definitions and criteria presented are, naturally, Christian ones –so the theological fallacy (denying the incompatibility of the two faiths) is compounded by the psychological presumption that Jews can be led to see, understand, and believe as Christians do.

Now to the crux of the matter inherent in the DNI document, quite explicitly, is a threat to the integrity, the autonomy, and the security of the people of Israel. This threat is posed by the fallacies I just described, which are not merely errors in theology or psychology. By trying to redefine Jewish spirituality according to Christian criteria, and then importing this pseudo-Jewishness into Israel, the Norwegian Mission has declared itself an enemy of the Jewish people. If you think this reaction unduly harsh, consider this parallel: the PLO’s famous, or infamous, National Covenant also defines Jewish identity in a self-serving way (i.e., serving the Palestinian claim to all of Palestine). Article 20 of that manifesto states: “Claims of historical or religious ties of Jews with Palestine are incompatible with the facts of history and the true conception of what constitutes statehood. Judaism, being a religion, is not an independent nationality . . . These assertions are patently false, and it is this distortion of the truth which underlies the PLO’s war against the state and the people of Israel. The general Palestinian tendency to respect Judaism as a faith-tradition, while denigrating Zionism as a secular, colonialist movement with no religious foundation, has led the PLO to conceptually split the two dimensions of Jewish identity, faith and covenanted peoplehood. This is akin to divorcing the soul from the body. At the heart of Zionism is the integral connection between the land of Israel and the soul of the Jewish people. This connection reflects the fact that Judaism has always been a concretizing, this-worldly discipline of faith, an orthopraxy that requires real, tangible human bodies, Torah scrolls, candles, bread and wine, leather phylacteries, garments with fringes, *mezuzot* on our doorposts, and a land under our collective feet –a land to plow and to leave fallow every seven years, a land to sanctify by righteous living, a land which is the natural habitat of the Jewish people within the Divine ecology of this world. This “true conception of (Jewish) statehood” the PLO cannot see, or refuses to see. So we are at war with the PLO until it revises its own exclusionist view of Jews and Judaism.

Now, I am a religious educator involved in the Israeli peace movement. In that capacity, and as a religious Zionist, I make it my business to reach out to Palestinians and to share with them the classical Jewish understanding of who we are, why we have survived all attempts to assimilate or annihilate us, and why we have come home to Zion in this century. This is a difficult educational task, and I have no illusions about its prospects for success, especially given the tragic history of the Palestinians which has shaped their own collective consciousness. But I believe it is a religious obligation to try to “make of one’s enemy a friend” (see chp. 23 of *Avot de Rabbi Natan*, the midrashic commentary on the Mishnaic tractate *Pirkei Avot*).

In the same spirit, I appeal to the MISHKAN readership to try to appreciate why most Jews the world over will see in your “Jewish evangelism” a threat to Jewish identity and survival as serious as the threat from those who take up arms against us. In many ways, the threat which you pose is even more dangerous, since it is not a military one that mobilizes an instinctive defensive response. Our Arab enemies have tried to invade our *physical* terrain in order to “de-Zionize” it. You celebrate the Jewish homecoming to the Holy Land, but you come here with no less aggressive intentions. Christian missionaries, or evangelists, operating in the state of Israel today are trying to invade the intimate *spiritual* terrain on which a Jew meets God. It is on this sacred ground that you wish to plant your Christian flag, even if it features a Star of David as a sign of our “chosenness” as God’s people. Our peoplehood, and our Zionist expression of it, you would affirm. But the spirituality that has always gone together with this physical vessel you still reject, because we have rejected the Messiahship of Jesus. So you split our soul from our body, just as the PLO does – and that is why you are not welcome here. Despite all the claims in the DNI statement about coming “with a new love and a new feeling of kinship with the Jewish people,” this professed love and kinship will be rejected – because they are conditional, hence hypocritical. I suggest you direct all that Christian “love” elsewhere, in Christian countries where your hosts will not accuse you of abusing their hospitality. Lest I be misunderstood, let me declare unequivocally that I am a fervent advocate of pluralism and complete freedom of worship. The state of Israel is trying to live up to its self-assumed task of protecting the religious freedom of its non-Jewish minority communities. I applaud this commitment.

I have nothing against Christians, of all denominations, living and worshipping among us. Moreover, I am tolerant enough to accept Christians “witnessing” to the truth of the Gospel, even in public. This I recognize as an integral part of the Christian calling, or the “Great Commission,” as the DNI terms it. But the DNI and MISHKAN do not content themselves with this agenda. They seek to redefine Jewishness for us, and this constitutes an attack on pluralism as well as on Judaism. The DNI declares its objective to be the establishment in Israel of “congregations which predominantly consist of Christian Jews. It is only natural that such believers have Hebrew as their main language, and that they

integrate into their worship, services and holidays those elements of the Jewish traditions (*sic*) which they find appropriate.”

It so happens that what is “natural” to the DNI is *unnatural* to the average Jew, who knows that baptism and Jewish faithfulness are antithetical; who knows that Hebrew is not just another language; who knows that the “worship, services and holidays” of the Jewish people are not quaint folk customs or purely ritual behaviors that can be transferred over to a Christian setting as though they were gastronomic or esthetic preferences. These Jewish practices, from the liturgical use of Hebrew to the *kiddush* benediction chanted over the wine at a *Shabbat* or festival meal, are integral, inviolable expressions of the covenantal bond between the one God of all Creation and the people of Israel. If you rip these elements out of their sacred, revealed context, you are committing two grave sins. First of all, you are committing a transgression that is tantamount to “spiritual plagiarism.” Even worse, you are propagating a colossal fraud on the potential “customers” who may be shopping for some religious meaning and may be tempted to buy this hybrid product called “Christian Judaism”. In Jewish terms, it is theological *sha’atnez*, a “garment” woven of irreconcilable materials (like wool and linen, cf. Leviticus 19:19, Deuteronomy 22:11).

No one can prevent an individual, or a whole congregation, from defining him/themselves as “Christian Jews”. But they, and you, must recognize that the overwhelming majority of Jews, rooted in our tradition, will reject this definition (witness the famous Brother Daniel case here some years ago).^{*} We live in the twentieth century, not the first (To the PLO, I would say: we are living in 1987, not 1947, so let’s face reality as it is.) “Confession of the deity of Jesus” or of his saving power to atone for sin and overcome death – this is, normative Jewish terms, apostasy plain and simple. The Church’s Christ – within a trinitarian theology, soteriology, and eschatology – is *not* identical with the Jewish political-historical Messiah. Baptism into a Christian fellowship means leaving the covenanted community of Abraham, even though one’s mother is still Jewish and one’s foreskin is still gone. Only in this technical, halakhic sense does this Christian “believer” remain a Jew – to be welcomed back if she/he repents and returns.

These various confessional and behavioral commitments are too precious to either faith community to be syncretistically blended together under the heading of “Hebrew Christianity”.

Affirming also entails renouncing – such is the reality in either direction. One can’t have it both ways, unless one creates a new religion altogether, or another limb growing on the

Editorial Note: Brother Daniel is a Polish Jew (active during W.W.II in the anti-Nazi resistance) whose efforts led to the rescue of approximately 150 Jews in the Mir area. He later took shelter from the Gestapo in a Carmelite Monastery and came to embrace that faith. After 1948 he came to Israel and sought residency under the Law of Return, as a Jew. The Supreme Court rejected his application, though admitting that Brother Daniel is still a Jew according to Rabbinic law. On this issue, therefore, the Law of Return chose to depart from Rabbinic law. Brother Daniel was subsequently granted permanent residence in Israel and resides at the Carmelite Monastery in Haifa.

Body of Christ that may look anatomically Jewish (being circumcised in infancy) but, in terms of Jewish spirituality, is an offensive misappropriation of the *yarmulke*, or the *tali* (prayer shawl), or the tefilin (phylacteries) which adorn that body (as suggested by the figure on the cover of MISHKAN).

History and tradition engender loyalties to an understanding of God and to a community that shares that understanding. In the Jewish or the Christian context, the test of one's loyalty may lie in whether one observes *Yom Kippur* or Easter as the Day of Atonement. It boggles the mind, and the confessing heart, to imaging embracing both; for these are two distinct paradigms of atonement, which cannot be combined. One has to choose, and no theological reconstruction will succeed in squaring the circle.

This choice is for each individual to make. Whatever "Great Commission" you feel you have received, you have no business or right mixing in to tip the scales one way or the other. MISHKAN, supported by the DNI, is a particularly noxious attempt to intervene in this private, existential process because the journal appears with a Jerusalem address and under the aegis of the United Christian Council *in Israel*. Only one generation after the Holocaust, you have the audacity to come here and shamelessly intrude into our internal wrestling over the meaning of Jewish identity, continuity, and destiny. In the same issue of MISHKAN which featured the Norwegian Mission statement, Jan Rantrud, the Immanuel Lutheran Church pastor in Jaffa, prizes the DNI document for "breaking new ground in the Lutheran context." Why? Because "a distinct Jewish identity" is acknowledged and encouraged — unlike classical Christian doctrine — but the distinctiveness is defined by Christian claims and expectations. Rantrud writes: "A definition of Jewish identity is as uncertain as is the whole question 'who is a Jew' perhaps only Hebrew Christianity in Israel will develop a true Israeli Jewish identity. Rabbinic Judaism cannot" This is presumptuous and perverse — a Christian deciding that he, and not the Jewish sages, is the arbiter of "true" Jewishness, and that only his tiny minority of Hebrew Christians are Jewish "believers". I wonder how Pastor Rantrud would feel if I derogated the Church Fathers and Martin Luther in a similar way, or if I proclaimed that only a radical reformulation of Christian tradition could attract the masses of estranged, nominal Christians back to church. I strongly suggest that, instead of working to establish congregations of "Christian Jews" in Israel, the DNI and the MISHKAN staff direct their educational energies to wooing back all those disenchanting Christians who do not belong to any congregation or fellowship. In other words, "to the *Christian* first" But this requires a greater measure of prophetic self-criticism than the MISHKAN fellowship seems prepared to engage in. Perhaps some helpful guidance can be provided by Bishop Krister Stendahl, no less Lutheran or Scandinavian than the DNI members. (Bishop Stendahl, now back in Stockholm, happens to be the teacher with whom I studied New Testament at Harvard Divinity School, and we remain good friends.) In his book *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles* (pp. 32-33), he offers this understanding of the Christian witness called for today.

A prophetic corrective to too much certainty and a sign of the need for repentance take precedence over any joyful assurance that God's coming in final judgment will be vindication. Such a prophetic corrective runs through the Bible and now seems particularly appropriate in our time of injustice and in our situation when we often need to be prodded by a prophetic voice out of complacency."

Having tried to explain why Jews will feel offended and threatened by the DNI policy, and by MISHKAN as one of its vehicles, I will end this appeal on another note, no less serious but, hopefully, more positive. You are attacking not just Judaism and pluralism; you are also undermining all the blessed work in the field of Jewish-Christian relations since the Second World War. Christians who have taken the Holocaust and the rebirth of Israel as a nation-state to heart, as goads to theological rethinking and repentance, have dedicated themselves, alongside hopeful Jews, to the sacred task of forging a new relationship between our faith communities. You are jeopardizing the continued success of this endeavor, and you have no right to do so. I call on you, also in the name of those Christian allies (if they will permit me), to desist from your "Jewish evangelism" and to join our multilateral explorations of faith. The discoveries are exciting, sometimes painful, always challenging. They demand disciplined silence and the ability to listen without judging, to accept the other's integrity even when one disagrees with the theology. If you can accept this invitation, then by all means stay here and take part. If you cannot, because such a pluralistic stance conflicts with your Christian identity and calling, then take that calling back to Norway, or wherever, and let us live in peace. We will be joined and supported by genuine friends, whose love is demonstrated in the kind of witness that entails sacrifice, not vindication.

James Prash

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The title of the statement, "To the Jew First" is a scriptural phrase that is subject to various understandings. DNI's use of the term should be more concisely defined. For instance, there are those who maintain that Jewish evangelism should be given a priority in the Church's mission strategy. Others maintain that it simply means that the Gospel is "to the Jew first" in historical terms. My own view is that the Gospel remains "for the Jew first" because of the covenantal relationship. In terms of evangelistic strategy, Jesus' command still stands. We are to carry the gospel from Jerusalem to Judea, to Samaria and only then

to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). The prophecies of Isaiah (2:3) and Micah (4:2) have been fulfilled in the apostolic Church, so that Rom. 1:16 is not a divine command for the body of Messiah, forcing them to give priority to preaching the Gospel to the Jewish people. The time will come when God will again turn back to Israel, but the Gospel is always “to the Jew first” from the aspect of covenant

Secondly, the Norwegian Mission to Israel is portrayed in the statement as a para-church organization, not a church or a denomination. However unintentional, this misrepresents the reality. DNI is an outreach of the Lutheran Church. I personally favor DNI-type structures because I see them to be more scriptural, but one is not the other. The Norwegian Mission to Israel is at least very close to being a church and the prologue ought to convey this reality.

Thirdly, it seems to me that a document of this type should attempt to deal with Jewish as well as Christian arguments against Jewish evangelism. The statement answers Christian objections from the N.T. Standard Jewish objections ought to have been addressed from the Tenach as well. In section II—“The Church and Israel”, for instance, one might add a few sentences dealing with O.T. proselytism and its scriptural basis (Gen. 17:23; Gen. 34:15; Ex. 12:48; Ruth 1:16), indicating the connection between the N.T. missionary mandate and the divine plan of universal redemption (Isa. 11:10; Isa. 42:1, 6; Isa. 56:6-8; Isa. 63:16; Isa. 65:1,13-15; Mic. 4:2). The teaching of Romans 11 should also be briefly illustrated from the O.T.

Fourth, in II.1. the document draws a correct distinction between biblical and rabbinic Judaism. It then goes on to present Christianity and rabbinic Judaism as sister religions, daughters of pre-70 A.D. Judaism. Theologically and historically the issue is far too complicated to be stated in such concise terms: the N.T. makes it clear that Christianity in its initial apostolic form was true Judaism fulfilled in Yeshua, and as such is very much the daughter of the Torah. However, there are many reasons why it should not be considered the sister of Rabbinic Judaism. Furthermore, the statement centers on the schism between biblical and non-biblical Judaism, yet fails to make a similar contrast between biblical and non-biblical Christianity.

Fifth, the statement adopts the classical Protestant view of Nicea. Yet in the section of 11.3. the document fails to take into account Jewish resistance to the concept of a suffering God-Man – a superlatively critical factor in the Jewish rejection of Yeshua as Messiah. This was not only a problem for Greeks; originally it was very much a Jewish motivation for resistance to the Gospel. In that sense Nicea represented a tendency to “de-apostolise” the Church by relegating its Jewish components to as obscure a corner as the times would allow.

The New Testament and Anti-Semitism

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To speak of anti-semitism and the New Testament is strictly an anachronism, because the term “anti-semitism” only arose in the latter part of the nineteenth century. However, the general idea conveyed by the term was certainly present in the ancient world and was in evidence prior to New Testament times. Anti-semitic literature first appeared in Alexandria, and arose there and in other Greek cities because of resentment against a section of the community which refused to share in general social interests and amusements’. Basically the term can be understood to indicate hostile statements or actions of Gentiles towards Jews or Judaism.

A distinction has to be made concerning the difference in the basis of anti-semitism in the ancient world and the modern world since around 1880. While the modern usage of the term denotes hostility which is based on *race*, opposition to Jews up to around 1880 was based on *religion*. Hence in applying a modern term to the New Testament and its world we have to take care lest we unconsciously import ideas which had no part in ancient hostility to Jews or Judaism.

It is easy to see why the New Testament has been brought into current discussions of anti-semitism. Hostility to the Jews has often been shown by those who claim to be Christians and who at times quoted the New Testament to support this attitude. In particular, the cry of the people to Pilate, “Let his blood be on us and our children” (Matthew 27:25), has been appealed to as the reason underlying God’s rejection of the Jews and as the explanation of their sufferings throughout the centuries- The attitude did not spring from exegetical considerations. On the contrary, biblical justification has been sought for a viewpoint which has been adopted on the basis of other considerations. The issue of the New Testament statements which have a relevance for the discussion of anti-semitism having been raised, it must be faced. Important theological considerations rest on the outcome, as well as practical considerations in regard to Jewish evangelism. Before proceeding to a discussion of the New Testament and anti-semitism, our approach

has to be clarified in relation to what is meant by the New Testament. So many of the discussions, Jewish and Christian, which relate to this topic assume that the New Testament is simply the work of the early church. Hence, there can be many varied theologies represented in it, and it is often claimed in reference to this particular topic that the triumphalist theology of the Synoptic Gospels and Acts was used to justify the view that God had rejected the Jews². The outcome is that the teaching of the New Testament had to be recognised on the one hand, yet avoided on the other hand. The result has been that a hermeneutic had to be devised, *“by means of which anti-Judaism of this kind can be acknowledged exegetically while negated theologically”*³

To do justice to the topic, we have to approach the New Testament and recognise the claims it makes concerning its own character. It claims to be a revelation from God, and part of an organic revelation which has as its antecedent the Old Testament Scriptures. What it contains, though penned by human writers, is the inscripturated Word of God. It is to divine revelation that we turn when we approach the New Testament and ask, “What bearing does its teaching have on the subject of anti-semitism?”

1. The Alleged Negative Evidence Relating to the Jews

Any exposition of the New Testament teaching has to take account of the historical setting into which God’s revelation came. Revelation never came to men in a vacuum but in precise historical circumstances. So it was when the New Testament revelation was given. Revelation and history are inextricably connected, and in the New Testament we have both a record of selected events along with commentary on the significance of the events recorded. In this way the New Testament writers were fulfilling the same function as the writers of the historical books of the Old Testament.

The New Testament concentrates in the Gospels on the birth, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus. It purports to set out faithfully and in order the things concerning Jesus (cf. Luke 1:14). In addition, there is the sermonic material recorded in Acts which recounts and reflects on the Gospel events, especially concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus. The New Testament epistles contain further theological reflection as the writers, in fulfillment of the promises of Jesus (John 14:26; 16:12-15), both remembered His teaching and were able to expound it more fully. There is a unity of presentation in the New Testament in regard to the setting out and exposition of Christian teaching.

The teaching of Jesus must be central to any discussion in relation to our approach to the Jews. His ministry was exercised in prophetic style, and blended warnings of impending doom with the tenderest of appeals to turn to the living God. It was specifically a ministry to the Jewish people, for He asserted that His own ministry was to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 15:24). Likewise, the ministry of the apostolic band was

restricted to the Jews prior to Jesus' death and resurrection (Matthew 10:5f.⁴)

There are several features of Jesus' ministry which require comment. Firstly, there was clearly no break with the past in His message. The continuity is everywhere evident, including the Sermon on the Mount. The stress there is not on abolition of the law but on its fulfillment and abiding relevance. The constant challenge is to be obedient to its requirements.

Secondly, Jesus often made a distinction between His hearers. This distinction was not in terms of Jew versus non-Jew, but rather in terms of believer versus non-believer. That difference would set a man against those of his own family as he took up his cross to follow Jesus (Matthew 10:34-39). Nowhere is this emphasis brought out more fully than in the Gospel of John with the repeated mention of "believing". Jesus declared that a believer has eternal life and has crossed over from death to life (John 5:24). On the last great day of the Feast of Tabernacles, He appealed to the thirsty to believe in Him (John 7:37), while at the Feast of Hanukkah the angry crowd was challenged at least to believe Jesus' miracles and so learn that the Father was in Him (John 10:38).

Thirdly, another aspect of Jesus' teaching was strong denunciation of His fellow Jews, not because they were Jews but because they were not believing sons of Abraham. Those who held fast to His teaching and showed the reality of that by their obedience were truly Abrahamic children (John 8:31-41). In particular, it was the leaders of the people who were singled out for adverse comment. The disciples were warned of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matthew 16:5-12), while in Jesus' recital of woes in Matthew 23, each one is directed towards the teachers of the law and Pharisees. They had many outward acts to show, but inwardly they lacked that spiritual change which would bring them to deviate from the sinful ways of their fathers. Likewise such places as Korazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum, which had seen so many of His miracles and yet did not repent, stood condemned (Matthew 11:20-24).

Coupled with such teachings of Jesus there are also His warnings that because of unbelief the kingdom was to be given to those who will produce the fruits of the kingdom. On this note Jesus concludes the parable of the tenants. The earlier part of the parable tells of the succession of messengers who were ill-treated as they came to collect the fruit of the vineyard. This recalls other passages in Jesus' teaching in reference to the persistence with which Israel had rejected and even killed God's prophets (cf. Luke 6:23; 11:47-51; 13:33f.). The Old Testament itself records the judgement of the Chronicler (in reference to the case of the murder of Zechariah son of Jehoiada) that the Lord sent prophets to the people to bring them back to Him, and though they testified against them they would not listen" (2 Chronicles 24:19, and see also the stronger words in 2 Chronicles 36:15f. in reference to God's anger culminating in the fall of Jerusalem). It is noteworthy that Jesus explicitly refers to the death of Zechariah in Luke I 1:50f. The climax of the parable was that Jesus was the son who, sent last of all, was taken, thrown out of the vineyard and killed. The warning then follows that the vineyard will be rented to other tenants and the kingdom of heaven taken from them (Matthew 21:43).

That theme is continued in the following parable in Matthew, the parable of the Wedding Banquet (Matthew 22:1-14). Those invited did not deserve to sit at the banquet and messengers went and brought others in. Yet the distinction is still made in the parable of the right qualifications for partaking of the feast (vv. 11-14). Earlier in His ministry, Jesus had had occasion to speak of the exclusion of some of the Jews from the great eschatological banquet, and instead Gentiles from east and west would be ingathered to sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 8:10-12).

Such teaching of Jesus does not imply exclusion of Jews from His kingdom. Rather the Gospels tell of many who did believe including leaders of the people (John 12~42). Zacchaeus is described as a recipient of salvation and a son of Abraham (Luke 19:9), while the good seed in the parable of the sower represents the sons of the kingdom (Matthew 13:38). Jesus taught that Jew and Gentile would be united in one fold with Himself as the one shepherd (John 10:16). Anticipations are seen of the inclusion of the Gentiles in incidents such as those concerning the believing centurion (Matthew 8:5-13) or the Syro-Phoenician woman (Matthew 21:28), both of whose faith is commended by Jesus. There is also the assurance of Jesus that when He was lifted up on the cross, He would draw all kinds of men to Himself (John 12:32).

Thirdly, Jesus' teaching has to be set against a framework of Old Testament teaching. He came as the great prophet and in His public ministry He re-echoed both the covenant curses and the woes of the prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah and Amos. Passages such as Leviticus 26:14-39 and Deuteronomy 28:15-68 set out the dreadful warnings concerning apostasy from the Lord. If Israel would not listen and obey, then God would avenge the breaking of the covenant (Leviticus 26:25). It is striking that when Isaiah comes in chapter 5 to express a series of woes against Israel and Judah, he does so with language which seems to be based on Deuteronomy (cf. particularly Isaiah 5:26ff. with Deuteronomy 28:49ff). Moreover, it is probable that in the parable of the tenants, especially in its opening, Jesus was consciously echoing the language of Isaiah 5:11. John the Baptist and Jesus both continued in this prophetic line and the call of the forerunner for repentance was taken up and amplified in Jesus' ministry. "Repent and believe the good news" was us cry (Mark 1:15).

Any accusation of anti-semitism against Jesus' teaching because of His accusations against the religious leaders of His day and because of His call for repentance would apply equally to many Old Testament passages. The prime mission of Jesus was to His own people, and in prophetic fashion He proclaimed God's truth to them. Such preaching with a view to repentance should not be construed in any sense as anti-semitic.⁵

Turning now to the question of the crucifixion of Jesus, note has to be taken first of all of Jesus' own prophetic comments on His death. While Jesus early in His ministry spoke of His death (John 2:20-22), it was not until later that He began to describe It in fuller detail. The turning point came with Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi that Jesus was the Messiah (Mark 8:29). Immediately afterwards Jesus foretold His rejection by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law (Mark 8:31). As Jesus and His disciples approach Jerusalem He again speaks of His impending rejection by the religious leaders. He now adds that they will hand Him over to the Gentiles who will mock Him, spit on Him, flog Him and kill Him (Mark 10:33f. and parallels in Matthew 20:17-19 and Luke 18:32).

The presentation of Jesus' death in the Gospels (both the Synoptics and John) is uniform. They depict a plot among the chief priests and elders of the Jews to have Jesus arrested and killed (Matthew 26:3f.; Mark 11:18; Luke 22:1f.; John 18:3, 12-14). The Synoptics state that the reason why the taking of Jesus had to be done in a less than open way was because the leaders feared the people (Matthew 26:5; Mark 11:18; Luke 22:1, 5), many of whom believed in Jesus, a fact which John in his account endorses (John 12:42f.). After recounting the trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrin, they tell of Him being handed over to Pilate (using the same Greek word, *paradidomi*, which is used of Judas' action in relation to Jesus). After His trial before Pilate He is finally handed over (the same Greek word again) to be crucified.

The crucial passage for the present discussion is clearly Matthew 27:24-26. Pilate washes his hands, proclaiming Jesus' innocence in the words, "I am not guilty of this man's blood. You will see (that)", or, "You see (to his death)". Then the crowd responds, saying, "Let his blood be on us and on our children!" (v. 25).

Several facts about this claim must be noted. It was the cry of a crowd which had been persuaded to ask for Barabbas instead of Jesus (Matthew 27:20; Mark 15:11). Clearly they were not true representatives of the whole people, nor were they delegated in any way to assume such a role. While Matthew calls them "all the people" (v. 25),⁶ the context makes it clear that they are the "crowd" previously mentioned in v. 20. While they could accept personal responsibility for their own actions, they could not make a claim for succeeding generations. It is not clear that they were in fact accepting responsibility for any others than themselves and their immediate families. Moreover, the narratives uniformly show that immediate responsibility had to rest on Jew and Gentile, for it was the Jewish leaders together with Pilate, Herod and the Gentiles who conspired against the anointed of the Lord (see Acts 4:27). Neither here in Matthew's account nor anywhere else in the New Testament is there the suggestion that guilt was to rest in perpetuity upon the Jewish people because of their part in the death of Jesus. Such a suggestion has been a reading back into the New Testament of an idea which has no biblical foundation.

The Book of Acts confirms this picture in the account of the early sermons (and in one case the prayer) of the Christian believers. The sermons were addressed to Jewish audiences, and three facts are clear from the accounts. Firstly, the death of Jesus was in fulfillment of God's purposes and accomplished His plans (Acts 2:23; 3:18; 13:27, 32). Secondly, responsibility is clearly placed on all the people involved in Jesus' death. They disowned Jesus before Pilate and killed the holy and just One. Stephen took up the same theme which had occurred in Jesus' teaching concerning the persecution of the prophets, and he accused his hearers of handing over and murdering the righteous One (Acts 7:52f.). In Peter's speech in Acts 3, along with accusations of responsibility for Jesus' death, he also tells his brethren that he knew that they and their leaders had acted in ignorance (3:17). This too may well be an echo of Jesus' prayer on the Cross, "Father, forgive them, for they

do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34). Lack of true spiritual knowledge and faith in Jesus led them to actions in keeping with their spiritual condition. Thirdly, the responsibility attributed for Jesus’ death has to be viewed in conjunction with the appeal to audiences to repent and find forgiveness through Jesus (Acts 2:38; 3:19-23; 4:11f.; 13:38f.). There is no suggestion at all of permanent estrangement from God because of their action in regard to Jesus. On the contrary, the promise of forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit was to them, their children and to all who were far off, “for all whom the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2:39).

The evidence from Jesus’ teaching on anti-semitism is non-existent. In true prophetic style, He rebuked because of unbelief and lack of obedience, but also encouraged with words of hope and promised blessing. The apostles clearly carried on this balanced presentation of the facts relating to Jesus’ death. They did not spare their listeners the truths concerning those recent happenings, but linked Jew and Gentile together in the crucifixion of the Prince of Life.

2. A Positive Approach to the Jews

While some reference has been made in the preceding section to positive indications of hope for the Jewish people, fuller consideration must be given to them. In opposition to any claim of anti-semitism in the New Testament, several aspects need comment. First of all, we are confronted with a book all of whose writers come from within Judaism. Of several of these writers, we know a considerable amount about their Jewish pedigree, and of none is this more so than the apostle Paul. From Luke we have biographical notes concerning Paul and speeches by him which provide further information. In his own letters, Paul supplements this with notes of his heritage in Judaism (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:21f. and Philippians 3:3-6). In his first recorded sermon he addressed his audience in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch in these terms: “Brothers, children of Abraham and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent” (Acts 13:26). In his last recorded speech in Acts, when appearing before the Sanhedrin, he still claimed at that time to be a Pharisee (Acts 23:16, ‘I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee’).

It is impossible to read and understand the New Testament correctly without a true appreciation of the Jewish and Old Testament background which undergirds it throughout. There were clearly tensions present in the early Church over the terms of admission of Gentiles into the Christian Church, but Peter expressed the basic position when at Cornelius’ house at Caesarea he said:

I now realise how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. This is the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all (Acts 10:34-36).

Secondly, the ministry of Jesus and the continuation of it by the apostles demonstrates the concern for the Jewish people. Jesus directed His own and His disciples' ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, even though He spoke of the opposition which would arise against both Himself and His disciples. After His resurrection and the expansion of the scope of that ministry to the Gentile world, the priority remained for the disciples to be witnesses first of all in Jerusalem, then in all of Judaea and Samaria, and finally to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). Paul's expression concerning the Gospel being the power of God unto salvation to the Jew first and then to the Greek (Romans 1:16) was exemplified in his own ministry. At Pisidian Antioch he spoke to his brethren, "children of the stock of Abraham", to whom "this salvation is sent" (Acts 13:26; cf. also v. 46, "It is necessary to speak the word of God first to you", which was in accord with Peter's words to the Jews in the Temple, "To you first God, having raised His son, sent Him to bless you, by turning each of you from your wicked ways" (Acts 3:26).

Moreover, the apostles exhibited the same longings for the Jewish people as Jesus Himself had shown and expressed in His ministry. He appealed to the weary and burdened to find rest in Himself (Matthew 11:28). Even as the Saviour had repeatedly desired to gather the children of Jerusalem to Himself, so also the apostles showed the same concern. Paul could have wished himself accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of his own brethren (Romans 9:3).

Thirdly, far from considering the Jewish nation perpetually condemned because of His death, Jesus held out hope for forgiveness and ultimate blessing. His words on the cross are particularly important: "*Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing*" (Luke 23:34). In the light of Jesus' predictions about His death and His knowledge that it was His own people and the chief priests who handed Him over (John 18:35), these words certainly have a wider reference than just to the Roman soldiers who were actually carrying out the crucifixion. The reason Jesus appends to His prayer "for they do not know what they are doing" is also important because the implication is present that they had not committed the sin against the Holy Spirit.⁷ The assurance is present that forgiveness was yet possible for even those directly involved in His death, which assurance Peter was later to enunciate in his promise of sins being blotted out (Acts 3:17).

The other major passage of hope in Jesus' teaching is found in Matthew 23:38f. (with the parallel in Luke 13:35), following the lament of Jesus to which reference has already been made. Jesus said, "Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see Me again until you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord'." The reference to "house" must certainly mean the Temple, as it is commonly called "house" in the Old Testament (as in 2 Samuel 7:5, 13; Psalm 27:4 house/temple; Psalm 65:4 your house/your holy temple). The spiritual desolation of the Temple had already occurred and the physical destruction was soon to follow under the Romans. However, Jesus points to a future day when the people as a whole will use the words some had already addressed to

Him in His entry into Jerusalem, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord” (Matthew 21:9). As Bengel pointed out long ago,

Our Lord, however, does not add again, although the people had shouted those words on the occasion recorded in Matthew 21:9. For neither had all joined in this acclamation to Him, nor had they who did so understood what they were saying, as Israel shall understand hereafter: and soon after they, as it were, retracted their acclamation. The first utterance of these words was less complete, the second will be worthy of the name.

The words direct attention to a future day when the Jewish people will utter these words in confident trust in the Messiah.

Fourthly, to follow on from the preceding point, we find the fullest New Testament discussion on the future of the Jews contained in Romans 9-11. While this is the *locus classicus* on the subject, yet it has to be taken in conjunction with the rest of the New Testament teaching. The general teaching of the New Testament is that there is one way for Jew and Gentile to be incorporated into the kingdom of God, and that is by personal faith in Jesus. Physical derivation from Abraham is only of significance when the spiritual characteristics of the patriarch are evident in the hearts and lives of his descendants. This teaching was not original to the New Testament for in the covenant renewal just prior to entry into Canaan, Israel was reminded that the relationship with God was a spiritual one (Deuteronomy 10:16, “Circumcise your hearts”, and cf. the expression used in Jeremiah 9:25f., “circumcised only in the flesh”). Clearly even in the Old Testament something more was necessary beyond mere outward observance of covenant requirements. A true Jew, as Paul expressed it (Romans 2:28f.), is one who possesses inward circumcision of the heart by the Spirit. What matters now is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision but a new creation (Galatians 6:15).

However, the Gospel does not obliterate all distinctions. While there is spiritual unity in Christ (Galatians 3:28), that unity does not override sexual differences, nor does it abolish ethnic distinctions. It is that latter distinction to which special attention is given in Romans 9-11. While some branches of the olive tree have been cut off because of unbelief (Romans 11:19f.), Gentile branches have been grafted in, so that both have the same root. That is why Paul elsewhere can refer to the Israelites of old as being the forefathers of Gentile Christians in Corinth (I Corinthians 10:1).

The argument of Paul in Romans 9-11 rises to a climax in 11:25ff. After tracing in the earlier part of the discussion the blessings of Israel through God’s sovereign choice, he speaks of the unbelief of many in Israel according to God’s word through Moses and other prophets. But the prospect is presented of a future engrafting of Israel. If wild olive branches were grafted in, “how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted in to their own olive tree?” (11:24).

The apostle sets out more fully the relationship between this engrafting and the Gentile world, for in announcing a future conversion of Israel he also intimates the blessing that

will ensue for Gentiles. Verses 12 and 15 are crucial to his argument a parallel is drawn between the Jews' unbelief and the riches of the Gentiles on the one hand, and their fullness and riches of the Gentiles on the other. The relationship between the two parallels is conditioned by the expression "how much greater" (v. 12). This implies an even closer connection between the conversion of Israel and the riches of the Gentiles than between their rejection and the original blessing which ensued to the Gentile world. The greater blessing is called "life from the dead" in v. 15. In the New Testament this expression speaks of spiritual awakening (Luke 15:24; Romans 6:13; Revelation 3:1), and here may well denote the rejuvenation of the Church which will result in a greater awakening and ingathering.

The final assertion of Paul in this section is that when these events have transpired, "all Israel will be saved" (v. 26). The point is introduced by the use of the expression "*mystery*" in v. 25, which points to the unveiling of something hidden up to the present. This mystery relates to "all Israel". Here Israel cannot be interpreted as "the church" or "the elect", for among other contraindications it was no mystery that the elect would be saved. "*All Israel*" must refer to ethnic Israel, as the expression is used in the Old Testament to denote the collective identity of the Jewish people (cf. I Samuel 25:1; 1 Kings 12:1; II Chronicles 12:1), though the "*all*" need not be pressed to mean every individual in Israel. At times "*all*" is used to denote the community as such and not every specific member of it (cf. Genesis 6:12). Just as "*fullness of the Gentiles*" does not signify every individual Gentile, so "*all Israel*" appears to indicate not every individual Jew but the ethnic community in its entry into God's salvation.

A final comment is necessary on this passage. It comes in a letter addressed to a church composed of Jewish and Gentile elements. Not only does Romans 9-11 contain encouragement relating to the Jewish people but also warnings addressed to Gentiles (Romans 11:13ff.). They were warned not to be "arrogant, but be afraid. For if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you either" (v. 20f.). Neither ethnic background nor pride in current achievements can take the place of continuation in the kindness of the Lord (v. 22).

From a Christian standpoint there is considerable encouragement in the New Testament in reference to the Jewish people. They are integral to God's purposes, as He has not rejected them (Romans 11:2). There is no idea present of perpetual retribution on the Jews because of Jesus' death. The present offer of the Gospel is to Jews and to Gentiles, with the prospect of even greater blessing for both in the future.

3. Implications for Jewish Evangelism

The preceding argument carries with it certain practical implications for Jewish evangelism and some suggestions are noted in this regard. Centuries of anti-semitism have left a legacy of bitterness, especially because of persecution emanating from Christian sources. We

cannot accept retrospective guilt for what happened in the past. We can only look with sorrow on what Christians have said and done to the Jewish people, and seek to create new relationships, paving the way for the presentation to them of the claims of the Messiah. Especially by our actions we have to show we do not share in any anti-semitic attitudes. Our aim has to be to alleviate the offence which has been caused by anti-semitism, which so often exceeds the offence caused by the Cross itself.

Our primary task has to begin with the Christian community. The urgent need is for an educative process to set out the basic biblical principles which must govern our general approach to the Jewish community and specifically to direct our evangelistic endeavours.

All our churches, but especially those in areas where they are in direct contact with Jews, have to learn how to alleviate the problems which have so often marred Jewish-Christian relationships: A new climate of spiritual concern for the Jewish people has to be generated and churches directed towards putting forth efforts in the task of Jewish evangelism. Passivity should neither mark our general relationships with Jewish people nor our evangelistic attitudes, but churches have to be taught how to conduct their relationships with sensitivity.

The approach to the Jewish community has also to be a long-term one. There can be no short-term solution to solving problems created by centuries of anti-semitism. That is an additional and major difficulty to be faced in bringing the Gospel to the Jews. In particular the effort has to be made to propagate the positive message of the New Testament, and that we affirm that there is no perpetual guilt upon the Jewish people because of the crucifixion. All who continue in unbelief share the same attitude to Jesus as those who actively participated in His death. They crucify to themselves afresh the Son of God and put Him to open disgrace (Hebrews 6:6).

Uniformity in evangelistic approach has created its own problems but nowhere more acutely than in the area of Jewish evangelism. The biblical teaching relating to the Jewish people has to be consciously brought to the fore in presenting the Gospel to the Jewish people. For a Jew, adherence to the Messiah does not bring a repudiation of the Old Testament, nor does conversion involve repudiation of being a Jew. Missionary activity towards Jews in itself may be regarded as anti-semitic by Jews, but we cannot exclude them from the proclamation of a Gospel which is intended for all, and one specifically which we are commanded to take to the Jew first.

To Jew and Gentile we have to present a common message, recognizing that God by His Spirit is able to bring both into His kingdom just as He did in the days of the apostolic Church. Our prayer has to be

*Let Zion's time of favour come;
O bring the tribes of Israel home;
And let our wondering eyes behold
Gentiles and Jews in Jesus' fold.*

The New Testament and Anti-Semitism

NOTES

1. For good discussions on anti-semitism in the pre-Christian world, see L R Bevan, "Hellenistic Judaism", in *The Legacy of Israel*, ed. E. R. Bevan and C. Singer, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1927, pp. 30ff., and J. C. Meagher. "As the Twig was bent Anti-semitism in Graeco-Roman and Earliest Christian times" in *Anti-Semitism and the Foundations of Christianity*, ed. A. T. Davies, Fortress Press, pp. 1-26.
2. For an expression of this viewpoint, see D. R. A. Hare in *Anti-Semitism and the Foundations of Christianity op. cit.*, pp. 27ff.
3. *Ibid.*, p.27.
4. For some comment on these aspects of Jesus' ministry, with relevant bibliography, see my article "Missions in the Thought of Jesus", *Evangelical Quarterly*, XLI, 1969, pp. 13 1-142.
5. Cf. the comments of Menahem Benhayim "*It is quite true that the New Testament contains some harsh words directed against individual Jews. or groups of Jews like the Pharisees and Sadducees; and even against the mainstream of Jewry. This trend cannot, however, be compared to the irrational fantasies of the anti-semitic mind. It is rather an expression of the dynamic proclamation or truth*", *Jews and Gentiles and the New Testament*, Yanetz Ltd., Jerusalem, 1985, p. 35.
6. Luke's use of *laos* (Luke 23:13) instead of *ochlos* as in Matthew and Mark does not seem significant, for the context makes it plain that not all the people supported the actions leading to Jesus' death.
7. For comment along this line see E. W. Hengstenberg, "The Jews and the Christian Church" in his *Commentary on Ecclesiastes with Other Treatises*, T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1860, p. 441f.
8. J. A. Bengel, *Gnomon of the New Testament*, T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1873, I, p. 415.

Anti-Semitism and Christian Responsibility

By David Torrance and Alistair Lamont

Both the authors were members of a Church of Scotland working group on anti-semitism, and some of their thinking is reflected in a report by the Board of World Mission and Unity to the General Assembly of 1985. David Torrance has also edited The Witness of the Jews to God (Handsel Press, 1982). The article reprinted below was originally published by The Handsel Press Ltd., 33 Montgomery Street, Edinburgh, and is reprinted with kind permission of the Handsel Press Ltd.

Introduction: Church and Israel

If we truly care about the relationships between Christians and Jews, between the Christians and Jews, between the church and Israel, then we are obliged to begin by facing up to how we got where we are today. For Christians that may well be an uncomfortable process, but that discomfort is the very least we owe to our Jewish brothers and sisters.

The very phrase “Church *and* Israel” pinpoints the issue, for immediately it gives us the picture of two mutually exclusive entities seen side by side – whether we think of them simply as existing in parallel or as standing in contrast over against each other. Yet we know that in its origins the Church was *not* alongside Israel or over against Israel. The Church began wholly within Israel. It derives from Israel.

The New Testament gives us a picture of considerable controversy surrounding the person of Jesus. But that controversy was a family one, within the House of Israel, between Jew and Jew.

Jesus was born a Jew, living the Jewish way, observing the commandments, the feasts, the ordered prayer-life, the study of Jewish Scripture. Israel was the context of His whole life. When He lifted His eyes beyond the borders of Israel and commanded His disciples to take the good news into all the world, it was to Jewish followers He was speaking. He clearly envisaged Israel as the prime agency of God’s Mission to the world.

It was only in later generations that Christians began to see the Church as *over against* the Jews. The great division between Church and Israel is the original and most tragic schism which has come to divide the people of God.

Christians cannot regard the Jews as simply another people or race or nation. We cannot look on Judaism as just another religion. Whatever the Jews themselves may think of us, from the Christian point of view our faith is irrevocably bound up with them.

There is a unique relationship between the Christian Church and the Jewish people, both historical and theological. Historically, Christianity emerged out of Judaism.

To Jewish writers we owe the Holy Scriptures (almost all of the New Testament as well as the Old Testament). To them we owe all we know of the revelation of the one and only God. Above all the person of Jesus Himself we owe to the Jewish people of whom He was born, It was from Jewish apostles and Jewish missionaries that the Gentiles first received the faith in which we stand. When we approach the Jews we are approaching the people who, under God, gave us everything we value most.

But that debt is not merely historical; it is also theological. St. Paul wrestles with this issue particularly in Romans, chapters 9 to 11. It is quite clear in chapter 11, verses 17 to 24 that Gentile Christians are seen not as a new growth, separate from Israel but as a branch grafted on to the original root. In other words, our Christian calling in no way replaces or displaces the Children of Abraham. Their election by God has not been abrogated or ended. On the contrary, the branch grafted onto the ancient tree still depends upon God's blessing upon the original root. Paul teaches that the Church and the Jewish people together form one people of God – tragically split from one another for the present time, but with the hope that in the purposes of God they will ultimately flourish as one for the redemption of the world.

Historical Perspective

While this is Paul's theory of the relationship, the subsequent *history* of Christian attitudes to the Jews is in stark and terrible contrast.

In the beginning, even after Pentecost, it is clear that the original disciples continued to live as faithful Jews. At that time Judaism already contained a variety of groups as different as Pharisees, Sadducees, and the community of the Essenes — all contending among themselves as to what was the true path of Judaism. The controversy between the

followers of Jesus and the Pharisees was at first an internal controversy within Judaism, in some ways comparable to the sometimes bitter controversy in 19th century Scotland between different forms of Presbyterianism. The great dividing point began with the influx of non-Jewish converts in places like Antioch. In the book of Acts we read how the Church had to call a General Council in Jerusalem to decide the question of whether a Gentile had to become a Jew in order to be a Christian. It is significant that even up to this stage the Church had not yet made up its mind on the matter. It was not yet “Church *and* Israel”, because “Church” was till then still *within* the House of Israel.

The Council of Jerusalem came to the decision that by being “in Christ” the convert was thereby received into the Israel of God without further ritual requirements – and in that decision we rejoice. But what happened in later generations was that the Church became first predominantly, then overwhelmingly and finally almost exclusively Gentile. The Gentile Church then, in effect, turned the question which had concerned the Council of Jerusalem onto its head, to ask, “Can a Jew become a Christian and still remain a Jew?” The answer that the later Church has largely given to that question has usually been in the negative – and yet the very question would have been incomprehensible to the first disciples.

The deepening division between Church and Israel was aggravated by a number of factors. First, the most fertile ground for conversion to Christianity was among those Gentiles who were attending synagogues throughout the Jewish dispersion and who were therefore potential converts to Judaism. It was only human nature that the synagogue authorities found this form of “sheep stealing” provocative.

Then, more significant, there continued to be some *within* the Church who, despite the Council of Jerusalem, continued to argue for Gentile converts to Christianity to be required also to become Jewish proselytes by circumcision. These people *within* the Church came to be called “Judaisers”. The ongoing bitter controversy is reflected in several of the letters of the New Testament. The foundations of Christian anti-semitism were laid when some Church leaders transferred the theological arguments aimed at the Judaising party within the Church into a poisonous antagonism against Judaism itself – and finally against the Jewish people as such.

About the time when the Church, now predominantly Gentile, was growing rapidly in numbers, chiefly among the slave population of the Roman Empire, and was thereby attracting the antagonism and suspicion of the Roman authorities, the Jews in the Holy Land launched a heroic but unsuccessful war of independence which was eventually crushed by Rome. Jerusalem was destroyed. The Temple was destroyed and the whole system of worship and priesthood associated with it was ended. The Jewish State was ended, apparently without any prospect of being restored, and the bulk of the Jewish people were driven into exile where they have remained until the events of our own lifetime.

Relations between Christians and Jews were thereby further embittered – for the Jewish-Christian minority within the Holy Land had not joined in the revolt. The Church even seemed to take satisfaction in the destruction of what it now saw as a rival religion. The Jews were simply being punished for not having given up their Judaism to become Christians.

Ever since then, the Church has very largely insisted on seeing the exile and suffering of the Jewish people as no more than their just deserts. Much *more* than that, the Church down succeeding centuries has become the prime agent in *inflicting* oppression, humiliation and

persecution upon the Jews. It has also incited its members to anti-Jewish attitudes and actions, claiming that in so doing it is the agent of God's anger and hatred against who are no longer to be considered the people of God but rather the enemies of God.

These facts may be startling and unpalatable to many Christians who are unaware of the record of Christian anti-semitism, but it is time to face them. The history of what the Church has said and done to the Jewish people, *in the name of Jesus*, is one of the darkest stains on the Church's record. It would be almost impossible to over-estimate Christian guilt in this respect.

Why Such Anti-Semitism?

The Christian Church believes that the One God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, came to earth to be united with His own people (this most representative people), took flesh and blood and was present in the Man Jesus. Jesus was and is forever, a Jew. A Christian is not simply one who accepts the teaching of Jesus: not simply someone in whom the risen Jesus condescends to live by His Spirit: to be so related to Jesus is to be related to a Jew, to the most representative of all Jews, and is in some way to become Jewish, and to be related by grace and by adoption to Jesus' brothers and sisters after the flesh. The Jewish people and the Christian Church belong, different they are, to the one family of God. So — how could Christians turn against the Jews?

Some first thoughts: evil is irrational and anti-semitism being evil is altogether irrational. It cannot be understood or explained simply on the human plane. We can only discern its nature, understand what it is, see its dimensions and grasp its significance for us all as our eyes are opened and our minds enlightened by God. Without God's word and without faith, anti-semitism remains all too frequently hidden to us like a hidden cancer in the body, and because of its hiddenness, is able to flourish and exercise its evil influence over us all, growing ever more powerful until it breaks out with fearful onslaughts against God's elect people. The people who engage in anti-semitism (and but for the restraining grace of God, that can be all of us at times) are not necessarily aware of the real reasons for their irritation and anger towards the Jewish people.

Second, anti-semitism affects us all, Jews and Gentiles, without exception, for it is the expression of our natural, sinful rebellion against God and His election of Israel as the representative of the peoples of the world. The natural man does not want God and His election to salvation. He resists it and rebels against it. His rebellion takes the form of anti-semitism, which is the attempt to get rid of that means whereby God elects to salvation. In drawing us into fellowship with God, the Holy Spirit causes us to put off the old life and to share in the new life of Christ. Yet, alas, the old life continues to exercise its evil influence over us. As Paul says, "I do not do the good I want to do; instead I do the evil I don't want to do" (Romans 7 verse 19). We are each a "walking civil war". None of us can escape the influence of our old life upon us, and our old life in its rebellion against God is irritated and angry with the Jews as God's people.

Third, whereas anti-semitism affects both Gentiles and Jews, it takes a different form amongst Gentiles and Jews. Among Gentiles it takes the form of anger against Jews and all things Jewish and has resulted in the immensely tragic persecution of Jews throughout the course of history, even (and especially!) by the Christian Church. Among Jews, anti-semitism generally takes the form of assimilation, that is to say, it is the attempt by Jews to identify with a particular Gentile nation or people, to the extent that they wish to deny their Jewishness. They wish to deny that the Jews are God's covenant people and that they belong to that covenant people. It is one of the very sad facts in history, that Jews have sometimes suffered most, as in Soviet Russia, at the hands of fellow Jews. Anti-semitism can affect us all, Jews and Gentiles alike.

We cannot explain it by pointing to the faults of the Jews, for other peoples and nations have their faults and the faults of the Jews are not more than those of other people and frequently are less. Moreover, when we are angered by the faults, real or imaginary, of other people, history has shown that we frequently forgive and forget their faults, but those of the Jews which are no worse, or are even less, we continue to dwell on and exaggerate. We neither forgive nor forget. This would indicate that anti-semitism does not really have its explanation in any faults of the Jews but is something which goes deep within us all. Again, whereas there have been many acts of brutal savagery in history and also acts of genocide, yet anti-semitism is in a different category to any of these acts of savagery; anti-semitism has not just occurred at one time in history. It has occurred all through the three and a half thousand years of Jewish history. They have experienced an antagonism and hatred by other people not experienced by any other nation, Again, anti-semitism is not limited to one nation nor to one place in this world. It has been and is experienced by every nation in whose midst Jews have lived or continue to live. Anti-semitism touches us all and exerts its influence on us all, and there is no rational or moral argument which can overcome it.

The Bible testifies in many places that Israel is a people whom God has set apart for Himself among all the other nations of the world. They are a people whom God has chosen

to be His people so that in and through them He might redeem the world. History testifies to their “apartness” throughout the whole of their history and to their continuing apartness today. Again, in choosing them to be apart, God chose them to be a “representative people” for all the peoples of the world, so that they might, as God’s servant, represent all the other peoples and nations before God; and in order that, through God’s peculiar identification with Israel, through His presence in their midst and through all that He has said and done to them, they might represent God to the world. The very fact that, in terms of God’s calling, they are representing us to God and God to us, means that when we encounter them we are encountering something deep, something real and beyond us. We are encountering God. Natural man, although not understanding the nature of this encounter, nonetheless is aware that he is encountering something which affects his inner being. He feels threatened and withdraws in irritation and anger. And his irritation and anger is in fact against God and God’s election of Israel and God’s way of dealing with him. However, we need God’s word and the enlightenment of faith to understand this. Anti-semitism is a rejection of God and His electing grace.

How Anti-Semitism Grew

The Jews are very well aware of the record of Christian anti-semitism. And yet seldom will you hear a Jew lay the charges to a Christian’s face. Perhaps they have endured enough and learned enough to know that guilt only strikes home to the heart when a man *is* prepared to accuse himself. Let Christians then look at the record for themselves. Let us look at the language used by Church leaders from very early times. In the second century (within a hundred years of Jesus Himself) one of the revered fathers of the Christian Church, Justin Martyr, wrote of the pious hope that — “the country of the Jews be reduced to a desert and their towns consumed by flames, and that no Jew be ever able to go to Jerusalem”. The campaign of hatred was fuelled by often repeated accusations that the Jews *as an entire race* must forever bear collective guilt for the crucifixion of Jesus. Verses from the New Testament like “His blood be on us and on our children” (Matthew 27 verse 25) were seized on to justify the charge of “Christ Killer” upon every Jew. St Augustine taught that the truly representative Jew is Judas Iscariot. The golden tongued Chrysostom, famous for the crowds he drew to hear his preaching, made a special target of the Jews and of Judaism. He declared them as a race to be the enemies of God. “God hates them — and I hate them too!” His words still smoke like acid on the pages of history, but the Church canonised him as a saint.

Right down from the early Christian fathers through the Middle Ages all kinds of accusations have been made and believed which could only have had currency in an atmosphere of ignorance and bigotry fostered by Christian paranoia about the Jews.

Jews were accused, quite seriously, of reenacting the crucifixion with children stolen from Christian parents. Jews were said to use Christian blood in celebrating the Passover. Jews were held responsible for disease and the outbreak of epidemics. They were believed to have poisoned the wells of Christians. Looked at today, such lies seem pathetic and even

laughable but the consequences for the beleaguered Jewish minorities were real and grim. Most Jewish scholars trace the real ordeal of anti-semitism to the conversion of the Roman Emperor Constantine to Christianity. From that time the Christian Church became the official religion of the Empire and the by then fixed antipathy of Christianity to Judaism escalated into official persecution in the name of religion.

New Testament –New Israel?

The Church by now took the line (which some Christians still insist on) that the Christian Gentiles had quite *replaced* the Jews as the people of God. The Church was the new Israel. The old Israel was finished. Their special place in the gracious purposes of God was no more. The Jews were now a cast-off scapegoat race with an obsolete religion. Judaism was a dead faith, arid, fruitless, unspiritual — an affront to the true religion and to God.

The very fact that the Jews were still around, that their religion did *not* die with the destruction of the Temple, that they continued to produce great scholars and spiritual leaders, and that their faith continued to sustain them even in the face of all persecution — this in itself was a provocation, a challenge, an insult to the claims and dignities of the state religion and those who proclaimed it

One of the most atrocious aspects of all this was the way in which the New Testament itself was used, or rather abused, to justify anti-semitic attitudes. In studying the subject, it was shocking to discover that many Jewish scholars who have studied the New Testament have declared that in parts it is anti-semitic. How, we asked, could a book written by Jews about Jesus and largely for Jews possibly be anti-semitic? But having looked at some of the things that actually were done by Christians to Jews and the use made by the Church of the New Testament to justify it, we then went back to the Scriptures. Reading them now as if our Jewish friends were sitting with us listening to the words we began to realize how chilling certain passages could sound to Jewish ears.

For example, in John Chapter 8 verses 39-44 in a conversation between Jesus and some opponents, Jesus is reported to have said of them “You are of your father, the Devil”. This is one Jew arguing with other Jews and, in the heat of argument, using the language of the hyperbole. Nevertheless it is the kind of remark which anti-semitic Christians have seized on to justify their defamation of the whole Jewish race as agents of the devil.

A modern Christian Bishop, himself a Jew, Hugh Montefiore, Anglican Bishop of Birmingham, has remarked on the poison with which Christian anti-semitism has retroactively tainted even the words of Jesus Himself — so that we cannot hear them without being conscious of what Christians have read into them over the years.

The whole Gospel of John is full of potential barbs simply because John chooses to refer to the opponents of Jesus as “the Jews”. By this phrase John could only have meant those particular Jews with whom Jesus was in controversy. John’s phrase “the Jews” referred to what we might call in our modern society “the establishment” or “the hierarchy”. Similarly, we may talk about “the Americans”, meaning the White House or the CIA, or “the Russians” when we are referring to the Kremlin.

St John, who was himself a Jew, understood what he meant by “the Jews” but for us there is a need to explain very clearly what he did *not* mean. Otherwise we can allow the impression to get across of a wholesale condemnation of the entire Jewish nation and race.

What the Church has *made* of the New Testament in its relations with the Jews has, it seems to us, poisoned the very wells of God which were meant for the refreshment of His people. In this sense it is the Church, it is the Christians who have made it almost impossible for Jews to see Jesus, hidden from them as He is by the cruel mask of Christian anti-semitism.

In his earlier period Martin Luther began by advising the Church to be nicer to the Jews. Show them a kind face. With kindness presumably, they will see the error of their ways and become Christian. But when it didn’t work out that way Luther, for all his greatness in other respects, became a Jew-baiter. In his later writing, he referred to the Jews as “a damned, rejected race. Their synagogues should be set on fire, likewise their homes in order that God may see that we are Christians and have not tolerated their lying, cursing or blaspheming”.

The influence of such words cannot be overestimated in preparing the way for terrible suffering inflicted on Jewish people. Violent words breed violent deeds. Words of hatred may bear the fruits of murder, and sometimes do.

Jews living in Western Europe under the intolerance of both German Catholics and Protestants and those in Eastern Europe under the Russian Orthodox have had good reason to associate the Christian Church with intolerance and persecution.

Scotland Also

We in Scotland may be tempted to congratulate ourselves that we have escaped the stain of anti-semitism. It might of course be pointed out that we have lacked opportunity; for the Jewish community in Scotland is so small that many Scots outside the cities have little or no contact with Jewish people. Nevertheless we are perhaps not so free of guilt as we like to think.

Even within the Kirk there is a fair amount of “dismissive anti-semitism”. That is, we tend (without deliberate malice) to dismiss the Jews to the dustbin of history. In Sunday School we were taught to think of the Jews as people who lived long ago. We picture them in

clothes of the biblical period as though history for them stopped at that point. They had a religion which was very good as far as it went — which was just as far as preparing the way for the arrival of Christianity. Any Jews still around are a kind of relic — an interesting bit of ancient history that has somehow survived beyond its time. That attitude may not be malicious but it is still pretty devastating. How much is said today in Sunday Schools or in theological colleges about the Jews or Judaism as a lively people and faith, contemporary with ourselves? How ready are we to face up to the lively and perhaps awkward theological issues which are thereby raised for us?

In how many pulpits do we still hear unthinking insensitive remarks about Judaism in negative terms — as a dead sea, a barren field, a withered root? How often do we still hear the New Testament expounded to the detriment and disparagement of the Judaism of Jesus' day? How glibly we pass over the fact that it was the religion which Jesus practiced and on which He nourished His spirit. We seem to think that by putting down Judaism we somehow enhance the Christian faith in comparison.

A few years ago the Scottish Churches Council put out a Holy Week leaflet with a comment that the Jewish way of life had become “sterile, inhibiting, deadly”. At one time one might have skipped through the sentence without a blink. But today as we read, we have at our elbow and our conscience the Jewish friends with whom we have been in dialogue. These are men and women who are truly gracious, deep-thinking, reverent, pious, who know what it means to do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God. Their spiritual life is *not* sterile their ways are *not* deadly. There are areas of belief on which we openly and profoundly disagree — particularly regarding the person of Jesus. Yet whether they know it or not they have helped us to see Jesus and to think about the Scriptures in ways we never did before.

The Holocaust

But if anything has opened Christian eyes to the ultimate evil of anti-semitism, it is the tragedy of the Holocaust. For the Jews it posed a terrible problem of suffering and grief. But for *us* it poses a searching moral question to our Western European Christian conscience. How could such a thing have happened in our Continent which has been under the conscience and tutelage of the Christian Church for over a thousand years? Sadly the answer must be that the Christian Church has more than a little to answer for in preparing the way for the Holocaust.

Of course it was carried out by Nazis whose creed was fundamentally opposed to the Gospel. But it was Christian-inspired prejudice against the Jews that made many people so utterly vulnerable to the propaganda of Hitler. According to Jacob Jocz, author of *Jesus and the Jews after Auschwitz* both Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches in Germany emerged from the War with a crushing sense of guilt. In October, 1945, the Lutheran Church of Germany made a public confession of guilt for its failure to act more

courageously in defense of the persecuted Jews. There were, of course, honorable and heroic exceptions but they were pitifully few.

The Church in Poland and the Ukraine and elsewhere equally stood by unprotesting at the prosecution to its final limit of an anti-semitism fostered by the Church itself for hundreds of years. Even among the Allies the Churches emerged with a nagging conscience regarding the fate of European Jews. Protests were made, pious noises were emitted, resolutions and deliverances passed – but what was *done* was pitifully little and tragically late. The role of the British Foreign Office in spurning pleas for help to bomb the railways leading to the biggest death camps, and even during the Holocaust continuing actively to block the flight of Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe lest their arrival in Palestine should embarrass us with our Arab allies – these have been well documented. In a country which until recently regarded itself as Christian there is little cause for comfort, and much for embarrassment and shame on the part of Christians.

When Christians look at the Cross of Jesus we believe we see in it the stark consequences of our human sin. Now the Holocaust has made Western men and women face up to the horrific consequences of anti-semitism in Christian Europe. *This* is where the attitudes and prejudices cultivated by Christendom have ultimately led. Until Christians are willing to face up to that seriously and seek from God the grace of repentance there can be no real meeting between Christians and Jews. Perhaps the Saviour who from His own Cross could pray “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do” will somehow give *us* grace to pray from the heart, “Father forgive us – for now at last we know what we have done to You and to Your people”.

Repentance and Responsibility

There is much to think about, much to pray about and a lot of humble listening for Christians to do. Any suggestion that we speak down to the Jewish people from a greater moral and spiritual height is *worse* than impertinence. That would be equivalent of the lion lecturing the lamb on the virtues of vegetarianism!

Only by genuine dialogue, listening and seeking to understand without condescension or prejudice how they walk with God, can we obey the commandment not to bear false witness against our neighbor.

Christians are committed by Jesus Himself to witness to Him. But the nature of our witness is crucial. When by the grace of God the Church is itself being true to Christ by the way she lives, prays and worships, when we truly walk in humility with God and with others whom we have wronged; when the Church has really repented of the wicked distortions by which we have masked the face of Jesus from His own people – then Christ Himself can be His own witness. But the truth is not served by arrogance. There must be no spiritual pride; no seeking to take the power of conversion into our own hands in imposing upon others what

they do not want. There must be no resentment because of disagreement; no riding roughshod over another's faith or non-faith.

There must be such faith in God that we can trust Him to lead each of us through the faithful, humble witness of the other into an even fuller understanding of His truth in His way.

Pray God, therefore, that Jew and Christian, each in faithfulness to our calling under God, may at last come to that unity of love and unity in the truth that flows from the unity of the One God whom we both worship. For Christians, that prayer is made in the name of Him to whom we look in faith as the hope of Israel and of the World.

The Causes of Anti-Semitism

1. Man's primary, basic sin, portrayed in the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, is the desire to be like God, to be equal with God, to be lord of creation and master of his own destiny. His sin is the refusal to acknowledge that God alone is God, the creator of the universe and Lord of life and being. The very presence of the Jewish people recalls us to their own history, to the way in which God in His purpose for the world's redemption has set them apart, to the way in which God has made Himself known to them, and through them to the world, as the living and true God. Their presence reminds us that we are not God, that we are creatures and that there is a living Lord and God who holds us, together with the whole world, and our destiny, in His hands. Against this, natural sinful man rebels. He wants to get rid of God and be master of his own destiny, but he cannot. So he wants to be rid of this visible reminder of God in the form of the Jewish people, in the vain and foolish hope that if he is rid of them, he will be master of his own fate (cf. Nazi, Soviet and Islamic speeches and writings). Again, nations and governments often act as if God were very distant and not concerned with how they behave. The Jews, however, by their presence, by their sacred traditions and by the things that have happened to them in their long history (and in our generation by the fact of their return to the Promised Land) remind the nations that God is the God of history, that we encounter Him in the drama of everyday affairs, and as nations must give account to Him. Against this, however, the nations rebel. They do not wish to encounter God and give account to Him. They close their eyes to what God is doing in history and vent all their frustration and anger against the Covenant People who are God's servant for the saving of the nations.

2. In so far as the Jews represent us before God, so in them as in a mirror which magnifies, we see ourselves as we really are before God. They are not better or worse than ourselves; only in them we see who and what we all are before God. We see how good we are. In the Jewish people, as in a mirror, we see the best and the noblest in the human race. We see faith at its highest level. Also we see how bad we are, and it is the sight of how that angers us. In Israel's resistance and opposition to God's grace, as denounced by the

Jewish prophets themselves, we see everyman's resistance and opposition to God's grace. In their ancient desire to elect their own king, in place of the only true King, in their desire then and now, to control their own safety and security, to be masters of their own fate, to take to themselves the glory that belongs only to God, we see the attitude of all the governments and nations of the world, we see fundamentally natural man before God and His grace. We see ourselves, and we do not like what we see! It belongs to the peculiar mystery of God's election of Israel that everything about man and who he is and what he is, is portrayed clearly as in a mirror. This is the mystery of God's election of them to be a representative people.

The Jew is the man from whom the cloak has been torn off The Jew stands before us as that which radically we all are. In the Jew there is revealed the primary revolt, the unbelief, the disobedience in which we all are engaged. In this sense the Jew is the most human of all men. And that is why he is not pleasing to us. That is why we want him away that is why we are so critical of the Jew. That is why we make them out to be worse than they really are... that is why we ascribe to the Jews every possible crime... Our annoyance is not really with the Jew himself: It is with the Jew because and to the extent that the Jew is a mirror in which we immediately recognise ourselves, in which all the nations recognise themselves as they are before the Judgement Seat of God. That is why we can never forgive the Jew. That is why we think we have to heap hatred and contempt upon the stranger. And obviously it is because the Jews are this mirror that they are there. The Divine Providence has arranged it. (See Barth, Church Dogmatics 3.3, pp. 221 ff.).

Of course, the very presence of the Jews in themselves is not enough to reveal that to us and to the people of the world. We need the word of God to enlighten our minds. Even so, confronted as they are with the presence of the Jews in their midst, the nations of the world are deeply aware that something unpleasant and deeply annoying is being said to them, something which they do not wish to hear and so they lash out in anger against the Jews and in so doing they declare the reality of their confrontation with God and manifest their real anger and rebellion against God.

3. The actual existence of the Jews living in our midst confronts us with a dramatic reminder that all of us live from day to day only by the grace of God. In His grace, God has given us life and we continue to live from day to day only through His continuing grace. We have no other real support or security. As Israel can only exist and continues to exist as a people apart only through the grace of God, so all people and all of us can only live from day to day by the grace of God. By our anger with the Jews we indicate that we do not like the fact. We like our imagined earthly securities. We continue to search for them and spend our lives in seeking to acquire them. We do not like to be reminded that our only security in life from one day to the next is through God's grace. Israel, in number one of the fewest people on earth, persecuted through long centuries and through the years of her exile, driven constantly from one country to another, demonstrates that we all have no continuing city except by the grace of God. Israel demonstrates that as the Jews in Dispersion seek to return to Jerusalem as their eternal city, so we must seek that Eternal City whose builder and maker is God. Natural sinful man who wants to abandon God, to become himself a God, is infuriated and angered by the reminder. He does not like it He cannot stand it and seeks ever and ever again to get rid of the Jew and prove his own security, which he believes that the Jews threaten, and seeks to find that security for example in the Third Reich, which he plans to last for a thousand years, or in Capitalism, or in Marxism or in Islam. But by the providence of God, the Jews, whom the world has

endeavored to obliterate, continue to exist and to remind us of God's grace and mercy, through which alone all of us exist and have our being and life.

4. The immense contribution of Judaism and of the Jewish people in almost every area of life, demonstrates to the world that without God and His grace we can do nothing. It has been demonstrated by such people as Professors A. D. Ritchie, T. F. Torrance and also by Einstein and by other Jews that modern science did not and could not have developed without the contribution of Judaism. The immense contribution of Judaism to our modern world is in part a fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham, "I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing... and through you I will bless all the nations" (Genesis 12 verses 2,3). The world in its sinful alienation from God seeks to take to itself all the glory, and claims that in its own strength and wisdom it can accomplish all things; it bitterly resents the fact that modern science and technology is dependent on the contribution of Judaism, bitterly resents the reminder that without God's grace we can do nothing. Of course Jews, being representative of us all, can take to themselves the glory of all that has been achieved and behave in a superior way. This, alas, brings persecution. But it does not deny the fact that their peculiar and immense contribution is of God. It is God's doing and a reminder that without God we can do nothing. The contribution of individual Jewish people has been immense. Almost every major scientific advance this century has been made either by a Jew or has been dependent on a Jewish contribution. They have also contributed immensely in the fields of education, psychology, sociology, economics, politics, music and entertainment. Three men — Jews — have perhaps exercised the greatest influence on everyday life in the twentieth century, namely Freud, Einstein (whose relativity theory revolutionized the entire scientific approach to the universe), and Karl Marx. To these could be added a host of others such as Niels Bohr, who laid the foundation of modern atomic science; Levi-Civita, who paved the way for Einstein; Heinrich Herz, who pioneered in research on electro-magnetic waves; James Franck and Gustave Hertz, who helped to develop the quantum theory; and in nuclear physics J. Robert Oppenheimer, Edward Teller and Uta Meitner. We should also add perhaps Ferdinand Chon, father of bacteriology, Waldemar Haffkine, pioneer of inoculation against cholera and bubonic plague; August von Wasserman who determined the syphilis test; the cancer researcher Otto Warburg; Ernst Boris Chain, co-discoverer of penicillin; Selman Waxman, discoverer of streptomycin and Jonas Salk and Albert Sabin, discoverers of anti-polio serums and a host of others.

According to the 1985 edition of *The Jewish Handbook*, from 1907 to 1984, 88 Nobel Prizes were awarded to Jews (although Jews number less than 1/2% of the world population). 25 Nobel Prizes were awarded for physics (today about a quarter of the world's top physicists are Jews), 13 for chemistry, 31 for medicine, 9 for literature, 5 for economics and 5 for peace.

In Britain, where many Jews are of comparatively recent origin and where they number less than 1% of the population, it is interesting to note the following, that of Jews there were in 1985:

14 Privy Councillors

46 Peers (10 hereditary and 36 life Peers)

28 Members of Parliament

52 Fellows of the Royal Society (plus 6 Foreign Members including Prof. Ephraim Katzir, a former President of Israel)

23 Fellows of the British Academy (plus 2 corresponding fellows)

9 Baronets

79 Knights

3 Dames

The world owes an immense debt to the Jews. History shows that a country wherein there is a sizeable population of Jews, provided that the many restrictions imposed against them are lifted or even partially lifted, can made immense strides forward in almost every realm of science, technology and culture. Jews have had fearful restrictions imposed upon them, they have been persecuted, driven penniless from one country to another and yet in an extraordinary short space of time, provided there is freedom for them, they will again and again far outstrip their Gentile contemporaries in every area of commerce and the professional sciences. The world in its sin resents this bitterly. It does not wish to recognise it. In its jealousy, it will invent all sorts of spurious reasons why this should not be so, and will accuse the Jews falsely, because it does not wish to acknowledge that the accomplishments of the Jews are intimately related to the Hand of God and His electing grace (cf. Nazi writings claiming the superiority of the Aryan race, and also recent Soviet writings). Judaism and the Jewish people loudly proclaim for all who have eyes to see and ears to hear that without God's grace we can do nothing.

NOTES

David Torrance has written the sections "Why Such Anti-Semitism?" and "The Causes of Anti-Semitism." The text was edited by the Reverend Jock Stein.

Editor's Note A review of the series *On Church and Israel* (from which the above article is taken) is to be found on pp. 70-72 of this issue of MISHKAN.

Israel People, Land, State and Torah

By Baruch Maoz

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This paper was originally presented at the Third International Consultation of the LAUSANNE CONSULTATION ON JEWISH EVANGELISM held in EASNEYE, ENGLAND during August, 1986.

This paper will explore the nature of the relationships ordained by God between the people of Israel, the land once given that people and the question of a national political life for the people in the land. We shall also briefly look into Israel's covenantal duties (that is to say, the nation's) toward Torah.

a. Introduction

The history of the people of Israel may legitimately be described as that of a constant journey, but it is not a journey void of goal; Israelis portrayed in the Bible as constantly journeying either toward the land or from it, but always in relation to it.

God's first act in relation to Israel is to call the people's founding father away from his previous dwelling, "to a land which I will show you" (Gen. 12:1). In other words, biblical history – which to a very large extent is synonymous with the history of the people of Israel – is "landed history," firmly grounded (in the fullest sense of the term) in a specific location. Much of what took place in the land could have taken place nowhere else, and took place because of the people of Israel.

The very beginning of human history teaches us to expect as much. Man was not only created, given a ruler's mandate, gifted with a marriage relationship and enthroned over all the earth: the peak of God's blessing to man is a specific location, geographically defined by rivers and a garden. It is there that man communes with God and acts out his calling to subdue the earth, replenish and rule over it. There he communes with God. When (following his sin) man is cast out, his exile from the garden is equal to his being exiled from God.

b. The People, Ifs God and the Land

Similar guidelines apply to Israel. Their land was not earned any more than Adam had earned the Garden of Eden) But once placed in the land through the mercies of God,² the people's enjoyment of the land was contingent upon their faithful obedience to God who had graciously placed them there.³ Upon sinning, they lost the right to enjoy the land and were consequently exiled. Exile from the land is equal to being exiled from God.⁴ It is a kind of disembodied national existence which tears at the very roots of normal existence, threatening to extinguish it if not remedied by a return.

Moreover, Israel as a people cannot truly fulfill its duties to God apart from the land – note not "land" in general, nor even any land in particular, but only one certain and

specific land repeatedly designated in Scripture by way of borders,⁵ topography,⁶ climate,⁷ and history. Israel's worship of God is contingent upon a certain order of seasons,⁸ animals,⁹ fruit and grain which are locally available, or modes of dress¹⁰ and buildings¹¹ suitable to some areas but not to others and so on. Most particularly, it is a place "where the Lord your God shall choose to put His name."¹² Consequently, Israel could not serve its God as well in Tibet, West Europe or North America as it could in that specific plot of land wedged between the Anti-Lebanon and the River of Egypt, between the Great Sea and the Arabian Desert.

The amount of biblical material on this subject is astounding to a measure equaled only by the paucity of theological inquiry into the subject. Land is a central theme of biblical faith.

Small wonder, then, that the land has been given so many loving names by the people who were called to dwell in it. Here are only a few examples: "my place and my land" (Gen. 30:25), "the land of (our) fathers" (Gen. 31:3, etc.), "native land" (Gen.31:13), "home" (Lev. 19:28), "beloved" (Isa. 62:4), "the glorious land" (Dan. 11:16), even simply "the land" (Num. 14:3), since for Israel there is none other.

c. The Land and God's Presence

The land of Israel is not merely a piece of turf; it is God's blessing,³ God's presence,⁴ evidence of an ongoing relationship between God and the people of Israel." The land is the covenant made concrete.⁶ The land, as far as Israel is concerned, is God's "holy habitation".⁷ This is particularly indicated by the Temple, serving as what W. D. Davies has aptly (though somewhat quaintly) described as "the quintessence of the land" (see I Kings 8:17-19,33). This is so fundamental that for Israel to be "carried away into exile from its own land" is equal to its being "removed" from God's sight (IIKings 17:18-19, etc.). The Lord reigns from Zion (Psa. 2:6; 68:35, etc), the scene of His presence and saving power (Psa. 14:7; 46:4-5; 63:2). Nothing is so heart-rending to the psalmist as to be away "at the peaks of Hermon", instead of being able to "appear before God" (Psa. 42). Elsewhere he cries out on behalf of all his people, "How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land" (Psa. 126).

The land is not only where God dwells; it is where He is constantly active in blessing: God's eyes are constantly upon the land," governing its seasons by bringing or withholding its rains," protecting it from enemies,²⁰ directing the growth of its produce²¹ and either preserving it from or exposing it to locusts, frost and mildew.²² Do enemies invade the land, rob its inhabitants of its fruit and burn the rest? – God has done this.²³ Has the invading enemy been defeated? This, too, is God's handiwork.²⁴ Is a plague stalking the land, or wild beasts? These are the Lord's doings.²⁵ Everything that ever happens in the land is God's work: giants are defeated,²⁶ well-fortified cities collapse,²⁷ rivers overflow and cause

chariots to drown in the ensuing mud²⁸ — even the sun and the moon stand still when God so orders it.²⁹ The land is nothing less than God’s amazing presence.

At this point we must clarify an important issue which, when misconceived, has led many down a twisted path and concluded in erroneous convictions. Contrary to what the rabbis would have us understand, the basic covenant which lies at the root of Israel’s national existence is not the covenant instituted at Sinai; it is the covenant which God made with Abraham. Other biblical covenants flow from and are subservient to the purposes of this basic, fundamental covenant. The covenant with Abraham is the covenant which lies at the foundation of Israel’s national being. It was because God remembered *this* covenant that He led Israel out of Egypt. Israel’s deliverance from Egypt had the accomplishment of the Abrahamic promise as its goal (Ex. 6:6-8, cf. 3:6-8). The Mosaic covenant, on the other hand, is secondary to that made with Abraham.³¹ Israel’s continued enjoyment of the land is contingent upon their keeping of the Mosaic covenant³² only because as from one designated moment of history³³ to another³⁴ — it serves to fulfil the purposes of the Abrahamic covenant

The People and the Land

It is an interesting phenomenon of the English language that, with regard to all people but the people of Israel, we may easily distinguish between a land and its people by linguistic means. We say “Greece” and “Greeks,” “China” and “Chinese,” “Nigeria” and “Nigerians”

— but “Israel” denotes both people and land. It therefore should come as no surprise to us to discover that the Bible lays a similar identification at the foundations of our thinking on the subject.

The land is no passive observer, a mere sphere in which Israel as a people operate; it is spoken of as altogether at one with the people, so much so that it becomes liable for the people’s actions.³⁵ Sabbath is a duty required of the land as well as of the people (Lev.25:2). It is also a privilege granted to the land (Lev. 25:4-5). Israel’s sin brings punishment to the land (Lev. 26:33; Deut. 24:4,22-28), for God will be “angry with the land” because of the people’s sin. Conversely, when the people are true to God, He will bless them and the land (Deut. 30:9). Israel’s destiny is that of the land (Psa. 122:1-2,6; 147:2). The prophets speak of land and people as one: blessing upon the people is blessing to the land.³⁶ The people sinning is equal to the land committing sin.³⁷ Mourning,³⁸ sorrow,³⁹ pain⁴⁰ and joy⁴¹ often are shared by land and people alike, so that it is sometimes impossible to determine if the terms employed refer to the people or to the land. In fact, they often speak of both. When God addresses Jerusalem, speaking tenderly to her,⁴² or when He refers to a glorified New Jerusalem,⁴³ can we confidently say whether the reference is to people in terms of land or to the land as somehow identified with the people? When God pours out His Spirit upon the people, the very land radiates with His glory (Ezek. 43:2) and joyfully celebrates His goodness to the people (Hosea 2:18-25).

The land is the sphere in which the people experience blessing, a means for their enjoyment of God: it was to be constantly celebrated by annual observance of the feasts related to its seasons, and its fruits are continually offered to God in sacrifice. It must be disposed with (Lev. 25:23-24), tilled (Lev. 25:2-5), and its fruits enjoyed (Lev. 25:6-7) in accordance with God's commands. Its "edges" are to be left for the needy (Lev. 23:22), for the people are forbidden to exhaust its resources for private gain. The climax of blessing in the land is "I will be your God" (Lev. 25:28). The land is the epitome of God's promises, an important part of the whole without which the remainder is incomplete. Nowhere in Scriptures are the people of Israel considered blessed outside of the land. Nowhere is blessing promised to the people apart from blessing to the land (Deut. 28:65-68; Psa. 69:35-6; 16; 85:1-2, 12; Isa. 20:24, etc.).

Small wonder that the people of Israel have come to love the land so vehemently

if I forget you, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget her skill! May my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you, if I do not exalt Jerusalem above my chief joy!... O daughter of Babylon, you devastated one, how blessed will be the one who repays... who seizes and dashes your little ones against the rock!" (Psa. 137).

e. Political Independence in the Land

A biblical term used to express one aspect of the divinely-intended relationship between the people and the land is the term "possess."⁴⁴ The people of Israel were not only meant to dwell in the land — as did Abraham — but "to possess" it.⁴⁵ As early as at Jacob's bedside we come across the concept of political independence in relation to the land." However seminal the form in which the concept here appears, Jacob nevertheless assures Judah of a scepter — the symbol of government and kingly power possession denotes control of the land,⁴⁷ its resources,⁴⁸ highways,⁴⁹ agricultural produce⁵⁰ and the freedoms of its inhabitants.⁵¹ Loss of such control was always conceived of as divine punishment (Lev. 26) due to the people's unfaithfulness to the covenant (Deut. 28-29. Cf. Deut. 5:31-32; 11:8, 22-25, etc.).

Consequently, the returnees in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah realized that renewal of a physical presence in the land is but one step toward the ultimate goal. They must labour for the renewal of national, economic, political, social and religious life in the land to which they have returned.³² Such aspirations are faithful representations of earlier prophetic utterances, of which Ezekiel's following statement is but one example: "They will know that I am the Lord when I break the bars of their yoke and rescue them from the hands of them who enslaved them. They will no longer be plundered by the nations; they will dwell safely" (Ezek. 34:27-29).

Of course, the right to enjoy such a national blessing is conditional, as we have already indicated. Possession as well as physical presence are not, so far as the divine purposes are concerned, ends in themselves; they serve greater purposes. For this reason, the people are to exercise great care as to how they conduct their political independence and what they do to secure it. All such deeds must be acts of faith (Isa. 7:9; IIKi. 19, etc.) and expressions of covenant loyalty (Lev. 25:18-19; 26:3-6,9-10; Josh. 1:7; IIKi. 17). The people must not mingle with the other nations so as to lose their distinct moral and religious identity (Deut. 6:12-19; Josh. 23:9-16; Jer. 7; Ezek. 8, etc.).

f. The Land and Salvation

We have said that the people's right to enjoy the land is contingent upon their covenant loyalty. But no one ever earns the right to God's goodness, any more than man's sinfulness can ever undo the faithfulness of God. While God declares that He will punish the people of Israel's unfaithfulness with terrible stringency, "yet ... I will not reject them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking my covenant with them, for I am the Lord their God ... I will remember them" (Lev. 26:44-45). Those who are not consumed by the just deserts of their sin will discover that their salvation issues out of God's unchangingly merciful nature. Even when we do not believe, He continues to be faithful because He cannot deny himself. God's self-consistency is man's salvation and only hope.

The people will be restored to the land if they repent (Deut. 30:1-10); otherwise they will be brought back to the land, and will there repent (Jer. 50:20; Ezek. 36:4-21; 39:27-29). Even then people and land are inseparable. The land sins (Deut. 24:4), is defiled by the people's sin (Lev. 28:25; Num. 35:34; Jer. 2:7; 16:18) and is later redeemed and blessed (Isa. 62:4). Psalms, Ezra, Nehemiah, and earlier books such as Leviticus, Deuteronomy and Judges all speak of the land and the people as one. Nation, city, land and political entity all have a shared destiny, so that one cannot be redeemed without the others. At times they may be distinguishable, but they are never separable except as spirits may be separated from bodies – an excruciating abnormality which constantly cries out for remedy.

Consequently, Israel can be redeemed nowhere else but in Israel. "There" (says Israel the people concerning Israel the land) is "Zion, the city of our appointed feasts... the Majestic One, the Lord shall be for us" (cf. Isa. 33:20-24). Indeed, salvation itself is conceived of in

terms of a joyful return to the land (Isa. 35:10; Amos 9:15; Zech. 10:9-10), and comfort is addressed indistinguishably to people, city and land (Isa. 40:1,9-10; 50:3, 11, 16; Jer. 4:14; 8:5; 22:29, etc.). Jerusalem is the people which has sinned (Jer. 6:6) and which stands in need of forgiveness (Jer. 5:1). Spiritual restoration and a return to the land are linked (Jer. 23:74; 24:6-7; 30:1-9; Ezek. 34:13-27; 36:16-38; 37:21-27; Micah 4:1, etc.), so that the people are never considered blessed, forgiven or redeemed except in the land promised to their fathers: “You will know that I am the Lord when I bring you into the land of Israel” (Ezek. 20:33-44). “On that day they will say to Jerusalem, ‘Do not fear, ... the Lord your God is with you ... He will rejoice over you with singing’” (Zeph. 3:16-17).

g. The New Testament

The New Testament neither contradicts nor corrects what we have deduced from the Old Testament data. On the contrary, OT expectations are heightened in the NT by the sheer fact that their fulfillment is described as having begun. After all, the New Testament claims to be a fulfillment of OT promise, the reliable description of a climax of hope being realized and clarified by the coming of Messiah. Jesus is not a cancellation of OT hope but its unequivocal affirmation.⁵³

That is not to say that OT expectations are now fully realized or that whatever has not yet been fulfilled is now replaced by a different hope. Israel is yet to experience salvation (Rom. 9-11) – an assurance which necessarily connotes essential continuity with OT promise. Nor is there any NT modification of what we have learned from the OT regarding Israel, except by way of clarification. Consequently, we must necessarily conclude our reading of the NT with the same conceptions as we did with the Old. There is a real continuity between Old and New Testaments, as well as a kind of discontinuity.

It is true that redemption from sin is not to be conceived of in terms which are primarily material. On this point the NT is as clear as the Old, though much more emphatic. But salvation is not to be thought of as exclusively spiritual and moral – as if Israel’s living in the land had no spiritual and moral implications! The Gospel message is replete with appreciation for the material. The NT makes it quite clear that the material is the arena in which ultimate salvation is to take place (Rom. 8:18-25), thus reconfirming OT expectation. Even our bodies are to be redeemed (Rom. 8:23; 1 Cor. 15).

Of course, salvation is not exclusively nor primarily a matter of material realities (Heb. 4:8), nor are the OT promises exhausted by exclusively material accomplishments as against heavenly ones (Heb. 11:16). The contradiction found between “heavenly” and “earthly” lies not in terms of geography but in terms of the priority of things: Godward or otherwise, holy or sinful. The new heaven and new earth are said to “descend”. There are spiritual bodies and natural ones (1 Cor. 15:36-44) and the NT doctrine of resurrection implies a spiritual kind of material existence rather than a non-material state of being.

To summarize our argument up to this point:

Israel as a people and the land of Israel are inseparable in so far as the divine purposes are concerned. God promised the land to the people in His covenant with Abraham. In the unfolding of this promise. God has made the land a focal point for all His promised blessings: the people are blessed, walk in God's ways and enjoy His presence only in the land.

That land is not just any land, but one specific land repeatedly designated in Scripture by borders, the cities it contains, its climate, topography, former inhabitants and such like. The Gospel is the fulfillment of OT promise and, consequently, not a replacement. God's gifts and His calling are without repentance. However wider the gifts and graces of the Gospel may now be, however wider their dispersion, the NT may in no rightful sense be construed as replacing the covenant made with Abraham. Hence, Israel as a people (and therefore Israel as a people in its divinely-promised land), remains a focal point of NT expectation. God has not forsaken His people; He has consigned them over to unbelief that He might have mercy upon all.

h. The Torah

Such conclusions immediately present us with a problem: it is obvious from many of the texts quoted that Israel's relation to the land is not only the product of the Abrahamic covenant, but also of the Mosaic (n.b. Lev. 26; Deut. 28-29). Are we then to conclude that Israel's divinely-purposed continued existence also implies an equally divinely-intended duty toward the covenant made at Sinai? This is an issue which sharply divides many Jewish-Christians and which has never been satisfactorily resolved by our Gentile brethren. Antinomianism, legalism, Judaizing and libertinism have plagued the Church from the moment of its inception, and are hardly liable to be decisively resolved in the course of this paper! It is high time that a biblical doctrine of the Law, thoroughly and carefully conceived, be formulated. Until it is, perhaps I may be allowed the liberty of the following brief remarks.

As already intimated, the people's relation to the land has a two-fold contingency: it is contingent upon the Abraham covenant as its primary ground⁵⁵ it is contingent upon the

people's faithful adherence to the Mosaic covenant as a secondary ground,⁵⁶ subservient to and serving the purposes of the former covenant.⁵⁷

The Abrahamic covenant continues in the face of transgressions against the Mosaic,⁵⁸ even while the people are being punished because of their sins.⁵⁹ Jesus fulfills the Abrahamic covenant. He is the deliverer⁶⁰ destined to turn "ungodliness away from Jacob" in accordance with the (Abrahamic) covenant.⁶¹

Consequently, Israel is not displaced by the Church. Rather, the Church enters into the enjoyment of Israel's blessings as a strange branch "grafted in contrary to nature", but never in place of the natural branches, who shall be "grafted in again."⁶² That is not to say that Israel's redemption bears no relation to the Torah (however we may choose to define that term) or to Torah in general. Israel's redemption is the fulfilling of Torah — a renewing of covenant, A NEW COVENANT.⁶³ Here too, as in other areas, the Torah is fulfilled by Christ, who was "given as a covenant for the people."⁶⁴ Israel is still bound — in Christ and by Christ — to God in covenant, but the covenant in view is no longer that "which God made with our fathers when He took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt". The promised Seed has come!⁶⁵ We now have another priesthood, empowered by an endless life and after a different order than that of Aaron; a change in the priesthood of necessity implies a change in the Law.⁶⁶ We are no longer subject to the *pedagogos* — nor are we free to live as if we were still so subject, "for the Son of the bondwoman shall not inherit with the Son of the freewoman".⁶⁷

Allow me to spell out the implications of the last few paragraphs in three short statements. They are submitted for your reflective consideration and appraisal:

1. Jews in Christ are no longer bound by the Mosaic Covenant.
2. Israel is still bound to God in covenant, that is to say, in the Abrahamic covenant.
3. Jesus brings to Israel a new covenant. He does not do so by canceling the Mosaic covenant but by fulfilling it. Hence, no lasting comfort is available to Israel outside of Christ and no greater comfort is possible than the comforts of the Gospel. We **must** preach Christ! We **must** call Israel to repentance! Our people's destiny depends on this to a terrifying extent.

It yet remains for us to explain the relation between people, land, state and Torah as set forth in our title:

The observant reader will have noticed that the references to a new covenant in end note 63 all make reference to the land as well as to the covenant. Further such examples could be quoted. It is as true of God's earthly promises as it is of the heavenly, that "God's gifts and calling are not revocable." God's purposes for Israel include the land.

These references also make mention of Israel's obedience. Israel's right to enjoy God's

goodness is contingent upon Israel's obedience. That, in a nutshell, is the message of the prophets. Herein lies the crucial importance of Israel being meaningfully confronted with the Gospel, for obedience to God is impossible without submission to Christ. The Mosaic Torah has its fulfillment in Him, and the New Torah is established in His blood. To reject Christ is to disobey God in the most radical manner. In other words, Israel's right to continued enjoyment of the land is to a great extent contingent upon its relation to Jesus. May God give us the courage to call Israel to Christ.

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings, who publishes peace, who brings good tidings of well-being who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!" Listen! Your watchmen raise their voices. Together they sing for joy, for eye to eye they gaze at the return of the Lord to Zion. Break forth joyously! Sing together, you wasted ruins of Jerusalem! For the Lord has comforted His people; He has redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord has bared His holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

One last word: I have deliberately not dealt with many important issues related to Torah. Among these are the questions as to whether or not Jewish Christians are free to adhere to the requirements of Torah, and what should be the Jewish Christian's relationship to rabbinic tradition. This is not an oversight. The topic assigned to me for this Consultation — as I understand it — did not include a reference to those important issues, addressed elsewhere in HaGefen's Jewish Christian Occasional papers and in other articles written by more competent individuals.

NOTES

1. Gen. 12:1; 57 etc.; Jer. 31:20-40; 32:30-44.
2. EL 3:74:6:64; Deut. 6:10-11; 7:1, 7-10.
3. Lev. 26:14W, Deut. 6:12ff Deut. 27-28.
4. Psa. 42:11 Ki. 13:23; 17:18-20; 24:20; Jer. 32:31.
5. Gen. 15:18; EL 23:31; Deut. 11:24; Josh. 1:4.
6. Deut. 1:7; 6:7; Judg. 1:9, 15; t Sam. 14:4-5, etc.
7. Deut. 11:10-11; Judg. 6:40; Isa. 18:4; 55:10; Jer. 18:17; Hag. 2:17.
8. Lev. 23:9-10, 39-40; 26:4; Josh. 1:15; Job. 5:26; Psa. 1:3.
9. Lev. 11.
10. Isa. 22:21 (תנורתוכ); II Sam. 13:8 (ליעמ); II Ki. 1:8 (טנבא); Deut. 25:9 (לענ).
11. Ezek. 41:8 (דסומ); Zech. 9:15 (חיוז); Lev. 14:37 (ריק); Psa. 118:22 (הנמיפ נבא); Josh. 2:6 (גג).
12. Deut. 12:11; cf. I IG. 11:36; Neh. 1:9, etc.

13. Gen. 1:22; 26:3; Num. 24:1, 5-7.
14. See end note 4.
15. Deut. 7:12-13; II Ki. 21:14; Jer. 23:49; Lam. 5:16-22.
16. Gen. 17:7-8; EL 6:8; Neh. 9:8; Jer. 31:31, 38-40; 32:37-41.
17. Ex. 3:6-8, 16-17, etc.
18. Gal.3:15-18.
19. Deut. 29:22-25; Jer. 11:1-8.
20. That is to say, from the departure from Egypt (Ex. 20:2, see also Lev. 11:45; 22:33, etc).
21. Until the Seed should come (Gal. 3:19; Jer. 31:31-32; Heb. 8:8-12; 9:1-15; 10:15-18).
22. Psa. 28:2; Joel 3:17.
23. Deut. 11:12; I Ki. 9:3.
24. Lev. 26:4; 11G. 17:14; Psa. 68:9; Amos 4:7; Zech. 10:1.
25. II Ki. 7:6-7; 19:5-8, 35-37; Isa. 7:3-7, 16-17.
26. Lev.25:19; Deut. 16:10, 15; Mal. 3:9-10.
27. Deut. 28:22, 38; I 1(1. 8:37; Psa. 78:46-47; Joel 1:4; Amos 4:9.
28. Judg. 3:7-8, 12-14; 4:1-2, etc.; Isa. 7:18-25; Jer. 17:3-4.
29. Judg. 3:9, 15; 4:3ff; Isa. 46:14
30. II Sam. 24:15; Psa. 106:29; Lev. 26:22; Deut. 32:24; Ezek. 34:28.
31. Deut. 3:3; Josh. 17:15; I Sam. 15:46, 50; II Sam. 21:15-22.
32. Josh. 6.
33. Judg. 5:12-13; 5:4-5.
34. Josh. 10:12-14.
35. Isa. 7:22; Jer. 44:22; Mal. 4:16.
36. Psa. 85:1-2, 12; 102:13f; Jer. 50:34; Joel 3:17-21.
37. Lev. 19:29; Deut. 24:4; I Sam. 3:8.
38. Hosea 4:3; Jer. 23:10; Zech. 12:12.
39. Isa. 3:26; 64:11.
40. Micah 1:9; Amos 8:8.
41. Joel 2:21; Amos 9:13-15.
42. Isa. 40.1; cf. whole chapter.
43. Isa. 65:18; Joel 3:17; Micah 4:2; Czech. 1:17; Mal. 3:4; Isa. 62:1-2; Rev. 21:2.
44. Translating the Hebrew terms *vi'* (Lev. 20:24; Deut. 19:2, 14; Josh. 19:47; Jud. 11:21, etc.) and הוֹחָא (Gen. 17:8; Lev. 14:34; Num. 32:9; Deut. 32:49; Josh. 21:12) which denote "to take by cutting off or cutting away" (ירש) and "to take by laying hold" (הוֹחָא) (see Biblical Dictionary by J. Steinberg, Jezreel Publishing House, Tel Aviv 1977).
45. Gen. 22:17; 23:4 cf. Acts 7:5; Heb. 11:8-9.
46. Gen. 49:8, 10.
47. 11G. 21:15; 115G. 17:24; Isa. 14:21.
48. Lev. 26:20; Deut. 28:11-12, 28; I Sam. 13:19-21; Ezr. 9:36-37.
49. Lev. 26:22; Judg. 5:6.
50. Lev. 26:16; Deut. 28:4-5; Judg. 6:3-6.
51. Deut. 28:48-52; Judg. 3:14; I Sam. 7:6-7; Jer. 30:8.
52. Ezr. 7:10; 9; Neh. 1:3; 2:17; 5:1-12; 7:1-5; 8; 9:36-37; 11; Hag. 2:4-5, 20-23.
53. Matt. 5:17; 19:28; II Cor. 1:20.
54. Lk. 20:36; 24:38-44; Jn. 11:24; 20:24-27; Acts 24:15; Rom. 8:18-24; Phil. 3:21; Rev. 21, 22.
55. Ex. 3:6,8; Num. 32:11; Deut. 30:20; Neh. 9:7-8.
56. Lev. 26:14ff; Deut. 29:21-24; 115G. 18:11-12; Jer. 34:12ff.
57. E.g. Jer. 11:3-5.

58. Lev. 26:27-28, 40-46; 111(1. 13:22; Isa. 54:10; 59:21; Micah 7:18-20; Ram. 11:28-29; Gal. 3:17-18.
59. Hosea 3:14-4:1; 11:1-9; Rom. 11:1, 2, 26.
60. Ram 11:26.
61. See also Matt. 1:2 1; Lk. 1:54-55, 68-73.
62. Rom. 11:23-29.
63. Isa. 42:6f; 49:4ff; 55:1-3; 61:1-8; Jer. 31:31-39, etc.
64. Isa. 42:9; 49:8; Lk. 22:20.
65. Gal. 3:1-19.
66. Heb. 7:12.
67. Gal. 4:1-30.

Review of the series:

On Church and Israel

(Series C: Four booklets published by the Handsel Press)

Booklet I: Anti—Semitism and Christian Responsibility

by David Torrance and Alastair Lamont.

Booklet II: Israel, Covenant and Land *by James B. Walker.*

Booklet III: World Hope in the Middle East *by Howard Taylor.*

Booklet IV: The Mission of Christians and Jews *by David Torrance.*

By Jan Rantrud

District Pastor

Immanuel Lutheran Church

Yaffo

While recognizing the immense difficulty of covering the historical and theological implications of Church-Israel relationships in a total of 257 booklet pages, it is nevertheless the present reviewer's opinion that this series makes a valuable contribution to the ongoing debate on these crucial subjects. This has been done by recognizing the fact that there is hardly a more important question which the Church faces than its relationship to the Jewish people past, present and future; secondly, by consistently addressing these questions in a biblical, sympathetic and non-sectarian way, and thirdly, by blending elements such as history, dogmatics and eschatology into one balanced whole. Too much general missionary literature relegates the Jewish people to a numerically small and hence insignificant object of the Church's worldwide missionary effort. Far too much eschatological literature (whether sober or sensational) tends to reduce the significance of the Jewish people's and the State of Israel's existence to a mere "Sign of the Times", if it does not disregard them altogether as irrelevant.

Because these issues are of tremendous importance for contemporary Protestant Christendom as a whole, the consistent and doctrinally sound presentation found in these booklets is a doubly-welcome contribution.

Torrance and Lamont open this series by stating a basic and self-evident fact: the history and fate of the Church are irrevocably bound together with the history and fate of the Jewish people, to the extent that neither of them can ever be viewed apart from the other. The Church is neither an entity alongside of

Israel nor over against Israel; the schism between them is a schism *within* the people of God! This perspective, outlined with reference to Romans 9-11, is fundamental to the Church's self-understanding. It has been tragically eroded by popular and unbiblical doctrines of the Church as an entity replacing Israel as the people of God, or of Christianity and Judaism as being two separate and parallel ways to salvation.

Torrance and Lamont clearly present Christian anti-semitism throughout the ages as a sin for which there can be no excuse or forgiveness apart from painful recognition of universal Christian guilt. The often arrogant and always ignorant excuse that "our church never did such a thing" is effectively dealt with here. Christian and non-Christian anti-semitism are significantly described as the archetype of man's rebellion against God (p. 11)! A partial corrective should be added here: though anti-semitism may well remain the ugliest blot on the Church's conscience, this is not due to a flaw in its fundamentals any more than Israel's repeated sins and apostasies in O.T. times can be ascribed to a faulty Torah!

James B. Walker presents sound biblical teaching on the subject *Israel-Covenant and Land*. His essential thought is summarized in the sentence on page eight "Israel's coming to faith in the land (initiated by Israel's return to the land) is fully integrated with the covenant which lies at the heart of creation".

Howard Taylor deals with theological and political aspects of the Arab-Jewish question, combining both sound doctrine and sympathetic understanding for both sides. Without compromising the indisputable Jewish right of inheritance and stewardship/ownership of the promised land, he reminds us that the Arabs are inheritors of God's covenant with Ishmael (p. 5). His presentation is not wholly without flaws, however: some unfortunate concepts are communicated by such sentences: "How they (the Jews) have survived as a distinct people, having lost their homeland for millennia and being persecuted wherever they went, is *beyond explanation*" and "The history of any other people can be understood by political, historical, cultural and social analyses. *But not the descendants of Abraham*. They are God's imprints in world history" (p. 4, brackets and italics mine). The point of objection here is that one simply has no right to relegate God's acts in human or natural history to inexplicable causes. Nothing is proved by unexplained phenomena. God's dealings with His covenant people are a demonstration of His electing grace incarnated in human history (and therefore potentially explainable); His dealings are certainly not veiled in impenetrable mystery!

This reviewer cannot resist the temptation to comment on the use of Matt. 24:34 as a proof-text that the Jewish people will not disappear from the earth (p. 5). This is an example of very poor exegesis indeed! The fact that Israel's survival is God-willed is better proven by passages such as Jer. 31:35-37; 33:19-26, etc.

One must comment on the author's inexactitude in saying that the Jews rejected their Messiah (p. 6): though the unbelieving majority did so, the sacred remnant by which the whole people is ultimately sanctified did not (to which Romans 11 so emphatically bears witness).

In dealing with the Arabs and the Palestinian refugee problem, Taylor regrettably appears to promote the tragic oversimplification that Palestinian refugees could be effortlessly integrated in the various Arab countries (p. 13). Nevertheless, such weaknesses do not detract from the validity of Taylor's essential presentation, and many of his thoughts are worthy of further development. His statements on Mary,

Israel and Christ (p. 22) are bold indeed coming from a Protestant, and they open exciting perspectives. The same can be said for his rebuttal of Cohn Chapman's *Whose Promised Land* (p. 23), wherein Taylor presents Jesus' death and resurrection as a sign and prophetic affirmation of Israel's scattering and restoration. Here is a subject for genuine Jewish-Christian dialogue. Christian scholars and students in this land ought to look forward with anticipation to further clarification and development of Taylor's understanding of the vicarious suffering of the people of God mentioned on p. 24.

David W. Torrance's final contribution (*The Mission of Christians and Jews*) again underlines the inseparability of the Church and the Jewish people. By pointing out the Incarnation's implication (that God forever became not only man but also a Jewish man) he shows that in such a manner does the mission of Israel reach its zenith and fulfillment (though not its replacement or abolition — p. 2). The Church and the whole creation to-be-redeemed is established on a Jewish foundation. Hence, the universal mission of the Church (to the Jewish people first and then to the Gentiles) cannot be separated from the mission of Israel to the world, nor can one be defined apart from the other.

St Augustine's "No Salvation Outside the Church" is not untrue but neither is it exhaustive; that occurs only when his *Extra Ecclesiam* is augmented by a *Sine Judaeis*.

This little series of booklets is not only recommended reading but also an important contribution to learning and studies within the body of Christ. It deserves a wide circulation and it is recommended for the rare honour of being translated into Hebrew.

A Response to

Whose Promised Land

By Cohn Chapman (Lion Publishing, 263 pp.)

By Baruch Maoz

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In his famous book, Colin Chapman has provided his readers with one of the most sedate, most reasoned and most coherent cases for the PLO that has recently been published. His book is an attempt to explain what the question, WHOSE PROMISED LAND? is all about. It does so methodically and plainly but from the viewpoint of a distinctly hidden agenda which the author takes great care not to disclose.

Needless to say, it is impossible for anyone to be wholly objective on any subject. This is doubly true of such a volatile, widely discussed issue as the Middle East conflict and its extensive practical implications. The present reviewer levels no charge, therefore, when he says that Mr. Chapman has ably presented the PLO position: the manner in which he chooses to present the facts, his careful choice of quotes – even the maps at the beginning of the book – all indicate an obvious and legitimate bias. One could only wish that a statement describing the author's position would have been made at the opening of the book in order to nullify the possibility of one viewing this book as mere propaganda.

Mr. Chapman is described on the flyleaf as “working...in different countries in the Middle East”; these “different countries” are actually Arab countries where the author labored long and sacrificially. The author has an altogether understandable commitment to the interests of those among whom he has worked. But this understandable predisposition for one of the two sides enjoined in the Middle East conflict is never clearly acknowledged by the author. Though no duplicity was intended, the author's presentation is nonetheless misleading.

Facts and Figures

Mr. Chapman's book is composed of four main parts. Part One (*Facts and Figures*, 11 pp.) seeks to provide the reader with a brief review of the history of the land from Abraham to 1982 A.D. Much is made in the book of the fact that only 5% of the population in the land in 1880 was Jewish. There is no indication, however, of the condition into which the land had been allowed to degenerate by its largely Arab population, nor of the extremely small number of Arabs in the land at that time.

The reader is not told that once dense forests had been destroyed, large and formerly fertile regions had become malaria-ridden swamps, terraced mountain slopes had become barren, and vital topsoil had been washed away. Sands had crept over extensive tracts of the historically luxuriant Sharon and Hefer coastal plains. Indeed, it was no coincidence that Arabs and Seljuk Turks provided absentee rule over Palestine from Damascus, Baghdad and Constantinople the land was considered a no-man's land, never as belonging to an

indigenous nation that evidenced an affection for it. Apart from those created by the people of Israel, Palestine developed no language of its own, no indigenous religion, and no independent political expression. No nation apart from the Jews ever looked upon Palestine as its national homeland.

In his description of later events, Mr. Chapman describes dissimilar incidents as if they were all alike. For example, when discussing the Jewish attack on Dir Yassin — condemned in public and in private by all recognised Jewish military and political authorities in Israel — he presents the facts in terms identical with those used to describe the atrocity perpetrated by Arabs against the Hadassah medical convoy of April 12, 1948, an act which not only was uncondemned but actually lauded by many Arab leaders! No one would (and certainly never should) contend that wrongdoing was found only on one side of the conflict, but to ignore differences of attitudes between the sides is less than unfair — it is misleading.

Selective presentation of facts continues throughout this section of the book. For example, slight mention is made of the fact that opposition from the Arab states was what actually prevented the establishment of a Palestinian homeland. All of the Arab states rejected the UN's proposed compromise and it was they who later attacked the new Jewish state in order to destroy it. Jordan, which later annexed most of the territory designated by the UN for the Arab Palestinian state, held the local Arab population under stringent military rule for almost two decades. None of these facts are acknowledged by Mr. Chapman. On the other hand, he brings a strange charge of blame against Israel in that, by it having occupied areas which had not been designated for the Jewish state according to the UN peace plan (due, of course, to the result of hostilities forced on it in 1948 and drawn to a close by the cease fire of 1949), Israel itself is the agent at fault for the lack of an Arab Palestinian state.

Neither is any indication given in Mr. Chapman's book of the shameful cynicism with which the Arab nations treated the Palestinian refugees for well over 20 years. Israel accepted and settled a very great number of Jewish refugees who, having been robbed of most of their possessions, fled the Arab countries. Arab governments chose to isolate their refugee brethren in special camps, refusing them citizenship or any likelihood of rehabilitation, and even denying them basic rights, such as reasonable sanitation and health services.

Mr. Chapman's references to the military situation are similarly tendentious. He states that, in 1956, Israel found an "opportunity to attack Egypt" (p. 22). In relation to 1967, he states that "clashes had reached serious proportions" between the two nations. No indication is given that these clashes were primarily in the nature of armed Arab attacks on civilian settlements or that Israeli counter-attacks were largely directed against Arab military installations. Nor is it noted that Egypt had reneged on its commitments to keep the Red Sea straits open to all international shipping, including Israeli shipping. The writer indicates that Israel withdrew from Lebanon in 1978 "as a result of strong pressure from the United Nations" (p. 23), completely ignoring the fact that Israel had repeatedly declared that it had no intention of staying in Lebanon in the first place. No mention is made of Israel's repeated offers of territorial compromise for peace, an offer consistently rejected by a united Arab front which openly declared as its purpose the final destruction of the State of Israel.

History

Section Two (*Call the Next Witness*, 70 pp.) deals with specific issues, such as anti-semitism, Zionism, the role of Britain in the conflict, and Jewish and Arab views relating to the conflict. This is the weakest section of the book. It purports to bring an anthology of quotations from different sources, thus insinuating an objectivity which is no more present than in the preceding section. The sources quoted are all cut from the same cloth, notwithstanding the author's declared desire for objectivity; they all serve the cause which the writer has chosen to espouse. They are highly selective and are presented in such a way as to eliminate the possibility of true discussion, or of any serious evaluation of the materials presented. For every such quote brought by Mr. Chapman, at least ten could have been chosen which would prove the opposite of whatever view Mr. Chapman might wish to support.

The facts are well-known: Ben Gurion, Sharett, Dayan and many other Israeli leaders repeatedly proposed compromises which would have allowed Jews and Arabs to live together in the contested land. Each and every one of these proposals was rejected by the Arab side. The PLO has repeatedly called for Israel to be dismantled and a "secular democratic" state to be established on its ruins. Leaving aside the poor reputation the PLO managed to create for itself regarding the democratic process, where does such a state exist in the Middle East? And why should the Jews not be allowed a state of their own?

Of course, the State of Israel is not a perfect state, and its government and citizens are also imperfect. Not all of the policies Israel has pursued have been totally right, nor have all the means it has employed been legitimate. Israel has sinned as much as any other people. It is the duty of all those who love Israel ever to remember the moral implications of Israel's national calling and to draw that people's attention to any such infractions. The modern Christian fascination with prophecy is often little more than a Christian version of fortune-telling with attention being focused primarily on the predictive elements to the neglect of any other. Of course, prediction is an integral part of prophecy — God, the Lord of all, declares His purposes and intentions before the ears of man. But this is not prophecy's major element, nor does prediction fulfill the primary purpose of prophecy. Prophecy's main objective is moral: it is a call for men and nations to repent in the light of God's impending judgement, to trust in God and to be encouraged in the light of God's promised faithfulness, to beware because of His declared determination to work His will in the world. Where Israel has sinned, it deserves rebuke; where it fails to repent, it is liable to punishment. We must not permit fascination with a people — any people — to distract from our loyalty to God. But let the nation that is without sin cast the first stone!

Most regrettably, there is no discussion in Mr. Chapman's book concerning the possible limits of the right to self-determination of one or another of the parties involved. Let us not forget that the northern states of the American Republic waged a war against the South because the latter insisted upon a form of self-determination which the North considered unacceptable. Similar examples are plentiful: Spain and the Basques, France and the Corsicans, Italy and the Sicilians. In many cases the right to self-determination belonging to one group is legitimately restricted by other rights which override it, or by a greater and more crucial cause. Is it not time that Arab Palestinian rights to self-determination be discussed, not in the abstract but in relation to the rights of Jews to national and political self-expression? We ask again: do Jews have no right to political self-determination?

The references on page 60 to Jewish political lobbying in the USA are naive, to say the least. A portrayal of such lobbying as a necessarily negative reality is culpable. Is *any* political issue ever decided without lobbying? Is not lobbying in one form or another part of the very mechanism of political democracy? Have the Arabs ever refused to use economic and political clout when it was available to them? What is democracy if not the consequence of political lobbying and the result of such give and take?

On page 65 Mr. Chapman brings a quote from Glubb Pasha which is nothing less than irresponsible. He says, "In December 1947, two British officers and a Jewish official in the mandatory government were discussing the newly published UN partition plan over an evening drink. One of the British officers asked the Jewish official whether the Jewish state would not have a great deal of trouble in view of the fact that there would be as many Arabs in it as Jews. 'Oh no!' replied the Jewish officer. 'A few calculated massacres will soon get rid of them.' This was five months before the Arab invasion." Fools and knaves are unfortunately to be found on both sides of the Arab-Israeli conflict, but the facts are very different from those intimated by Mr. Glubb's words. Arabs, not Jews, were those who embarked on a policy of "calculated massacres." Any investigation of the facts will prove this conclusively. Mr. Chapman has to make extensive and repeated recourse to the shameful Dir Yassin event because there are precious few others available for him to quote.

The PLO

The PLO is described as a relatively mild national organization struggling for its people's freedom (p. 24 ff). No indication is given of the amount of control exercised by supporting Arab states over the PLO, of the extortionist methods used by that organization in order to enforce its claims to a share of the incomes and lives of Arab Palestinians around the world, nor of the extensive and well-documented PLO support given to the IRA, the Red Brigades, the Japanese Red Army, the Bader-Meinhoff group and similar terrorist organizations all over the world. Neither is any information given concerning the extent to which the PLO serves the interests either of the Soviet government or of irrational, irresponsible governments such as Gaddafi's Libya or Khomeini's Iran. Not a word is presented describing the nature of PLO attacks on Israeli civilian villages, schools, school buses or aircraft, nor on innocent overseas tourists, airports and private homes. We hear not a whisper of the destruction the PLO has brought to stricken Lebanon.

Chapman treats the PLO's offer of a "multi-national democratic state" in the Middle East as sincere and realistic, completely ignoring the following facts, some of which we have already intimated:

1. There is no true democracy anywhere in the Arab world. Israel is the only democratic state in the Middle East.
2. A "multi-national state" is simply a round-about way to call for the destruction of Israel as a legitimate instrument of Jewish survival and national self-expression.
3. Jews in Arab lands have, on the whole, suffered terribly. They have paid an awful price in terms of life, property and human dignity. There is no reason to believe that the PLO will treat Jews in a "multinational state" any better.
4. Repeated Israeli offers of a solution by way of mutual territorial concessions have been repeatedly rejected by PLO spokesmen, who have stated that territorial compromise is only to be considered as a step toward the

ultimate goal: the total destruction of Israel.

The Land

Section Three (*The Land Before and After Jesus Christ*, 54 pp.) is in many ways the most interesting section of the book because it seeks to deal with the Middle East conflict theologically. Mr. Chapman is concerned with establishing the principles whereby biblical statements concerning the land may be properly understood. His argument is built on two major premises:

1. The Jewish people as a whole can no longer be considered in any sense the “Israel of God.”
2. The Old Testament promises are now to “take on a new meaning” (p. 125) which replaces the previous one. The “spiritual” meaning (p. 144) is now the correct one. In a sense, Jesus now replaces Israel (pp. 129, 138). In another sense the Church is now Israel (p. 144).

These are by no means new concepts. There seems to be no foundation in Scripture for the view that “new meaning” is really anymore than “new light on an old subject” It by no means implies the replacement of one meaning by another, and the onus of proof rests on those who would contend otherwise. God does not say one thing and mean another! The New Testament makes a wider application of the same principles enunciated in the Old Testament texts, but it never does so at the expense of the original meaning. The “spiritual” meaning is dependent upon the “natural” because it flows from it. The New Testament speaks in terms of “even as, so also” rather than “instead of, now this.” Hence, the Church does not replace Israel but is, in certain senses, joined to her — and the engrafted Gentile branches of the Church are clearly warned not to boast against the natural branches (Romans 11:11-32)! “Even as” means “even as is naturally true,” or “even as the natural shall be.” Spiritual fulfillment does not replace the natural but hangs upon it, flows from it and completes it. This is the meaning of the term “fulfill” when used by the New Testament in relation to the Old Testament. In other words, “even as” God vowed to bless Israel, “so also” will He bless the Church.

Spiritual fulfillment is a fruit which grows on the tree of natural promise. For example, the writer of Hebrews 4:1-3 does not ignore the fact that Israel actually possessed a literal land. On the contrary, his argument hangs entirely by that fact. As we learn from biblical history, in spite of having obtained the land, Israel did not obtain final rest by the hand of Joshua. From this we may deduce, as did the author of Hebrews, that the promise of a physical land did not, could not, and was never intended to exhaust the meaning of God’s promise. This is not a case of spiritual reality replacing the physical; here is spiritual meaning issuing out of physical as conveyed by the promise. Thus, C. H. Dodd’s statement — “the resurrection of Christ is the resurrection of Israel of which the prophets spoke” which Chapman quotes approvingly on p. 129 (cf. p.138) — is only true in the sense that Jesus’ resurrection was a prerequisite for Israel’s spiritual resurrection and a crucial step in that direction. In no sense does Jesus’ resurrection replace that of Israel. In this sense Jesus did not come instead of Israel; He came for Israel.

God

The view of God implied in Mr. Chapman’s treatment of the biblical text (and stated explicitly on p. 137) raises grave difficulties. To picture God as having rejected the people of Israel due to their sin seems inconsistent with the express intent of passages such as Jer.

31:34-36. Such a view conveys the picture of a God inconsistent with Himself, unable to take all factors into consideration before He chose Israel — indeed, this is a God who may very well forsake us all because we are in no sense better than Israel. However, it bears restating that grace, and not human merit, is the grounds of all salvation, whether national or personal.

This basic truth lies at the foundation of any biblically-oriented view of God and of His relations with man. Any view which leads us to conceive of God as inconsistent, unreliable or unfaithful should surely be suspect in the eyes of those who claim the Bible to be their authority. We are not surprised by Israel's shortcomings; of course Israel sinned! To expect otherwise is to run counter to biblical testimony. But such an awareness must not be allowed to stand alone; to it we must add another principle — God is faithful! To think otherwise is to deny that He is God. God's faithfulness is not to be thought of in abstract terms. Rather, His faithfulness must be recognized as bearing directly upon His relationship to man and therefore to the nation of Israel, to the house of David, to the Church and to each of us as individuals before Him.

God declares that His eyes are upon sinful kingdoms to destroy them from the face of the earth, but that He would not deal in a similar way with Israel (Amos 9:8-12). He further declares that heaven and earth will pass away before He forsakes Israel; it is His avowed intention to bring Israel back to the land and to show them mercy (Jer. 33:23-26), this in spite of all their sin (Jer. 31:35-37).

He declared concerning the seed of David that should one of his reigning sons behave wrongly, he would be punished by the God who, at the same time, would not remove His covenanted faithfulness from him (II Sam. 7:14-16).

Of man we read that those given by the Father to the Son can never be taken out of His hand. They will undoubtedly rise on the last day because nothing can separate them from the covenant faithfulness of God nor obstruct His eternal plans for them (John 10:28, 6:39; Rom. 8:28-39).

There is no such explicit statement concerning the Church. God's faithfulness to the Church is inferred from all we know of God and of His dealings in other circumstances. At the same time, Paul warns those grafted into the olive tree not to boast against the natural branches. Some have indeed fallen — been cut off — but not with a view to the destruction of all the natural branches. Moreover, unless the engrafted branches prove to be more faithful than were the natural ones, they too will be cut off (Rom. 11:11-24)! In view of the sad history of the last 2000 years, let alone the Church's failings today, it is hardly likely that anyone would wish to claim that the Church has proven itself more worthy of God's goodness than Israel. Consequently, if God can legitimately be thought of as having forsaken Israel and replacing it with another body (the Church), then God will equally forsake not only the house of David, but also men who fail to live up to their Christian profession. Indeed, He will also forsake the Church as a whole! Woe be to those whose fate is so insecure and whose God is so fickle.

Reinterpretation?

There is no New Testament evidence for the view that Israel has been replaced by the Church. The extensive use made in the New Testament of Old Testament language when speaking of the Church should be surprising to no one. Neither must such use (in Chapman's words, "deliberate echoes," p. 135) be taken as conclusive proof for reinterpretation, as if Israel's promises were now to be "reinterpreted" as relating to the Church. Such usage is in no sense part of

hermeneutical process whereby “new meaning” is supposedly given to Old Testament texts. This is merely borrowing phrases from one context in order to serve another, and is a common feature of human language.

When dealing with the issue of Israel and the Church, it is incorrect to state “there are two possible interpretations” (p. 139), when three or more might be possible. When Jesus replied as He did to His disciples’ question in Acts 1:7 concerning the Kingdom, His intention might in no way have been to correct their concepts regarding the Kingdom (as coming to Israel), but to concentrate on another issue entirely, more vital to His immediate purpose. His reply can in no way be construed to imply a denial of a future Kingdom.

Mr. Chapman’s discussion of the land both in relation to the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants and also in the Prophets is excellent (p. 140 if). He correctly emphasizes an aspect of this subject frequently ignored by Israel’s more avid supporters, stressing the Old Testament conditions related to Israel’s enjoyment of the land. Israel must obey God or face losing its right to enjoy the land. On the other hand, Mr. Chapman ignores the complete absence of conditions in the Abrahamic Covenant. He also ignores the fact that the Abrahamic covenant is one to which another covenant (“given some 430 years later” cf. Gal. 3:16-20) can neither add to nor from which it may subtract. This is the understanding which probably lies at the foundation of later prophetic pronouncements indicating a future gracious return by the people of Israel to their land, a return to be followed by national repentance.

It is also a mistake to attribute the centrality of Jerusalem in Jewish thought to a date during or following the Babylonian exile, as does Mr. Chapman on p. 115. David and Solomon both testify to the vital role which was attributed to the city in their own day.

Nor can we accept without question our writer’s contention which identifies “the appearing of the Son of Man” with His “coming to the Father” (pp. 151-152). Are we to understand that Mr. Chapman does not expect a future appearing of the Son of Man at the end of the present era? This could not be the case, as other statements by the author clearly indicate. Nevertheless, the inconsistency of his position in this matter augurs poorly for his other arguments.

The discussion of John’s Revelation is thoughtful and very scrupulous although inevitably and regrettably brief. We would be very interested in reading a more extensive work by Mr. Chapman on this fascinating book. Obviously, a short discussion cannot prove the correctness of Mr. Chapman’s view — it barely does justice to the depth of his own thinking on the subject. He has, however, succeeded in giving his readers a highly coherent presentation of his views on a difficult subject — an achievement none should treat lightly!

Mr. Chapman makes apt comments on the unhelpful influence of various classic millennial concepts and the restrictions which they impose upon serious discussion of the Middle East conflict. Such statements are worthy of the attention of all Christians who wish to formulate a thoughtful position on the problematic Middle East conflict. This reviewer strongly supports Mr. Chapman’s plea for moral, social, historical and political issues all be accorded their full weight by adherents of both sides and, most certainly, by all Christians. It is, however, precisely on these grounds that Mr. Chapman and the PLO are unable to present a truly convincing argument, and that the burden of facts tends to lean toward the aspirations of Zionism.

On the other hand, not a few of Mr. Chapman’s eschatological denials, however mildly put, seem to be the

product of extrabiblical exposition. This is no less culpable than the practice of those whose views Mr. Chapman seeks to challenge. What is needed is a balanced Christian view which takes all relevant factors into account.

Morality

Section Four (*Is There Any Word From the Lord*, 67 pp.) is an attempt to evaluate Middle East realities in the light of biblical morality. This reviewer shares the author's view that the Church in the Middle East has failed dismally in this respect, and he gladly joins with him in calling upon God's people everywhere to make more strenuous efforts in order to correct themselves in this regard. But we are likewise convinced that Mr. Chapman shares in the Church's above-mentioned failure by his one-sided evaluation of facts.

For example, Mr. Chapman rightly shows that Israel's press is not beyond reproach, nor is it unfettered by restrictions (many of which are dictated by the circumstances of the State's threatened existence). Nevertheless, no press in the Middle East is freer, nor has any ever been freer in a country laboring under a state of war. Disinterested persons are invited to compare Israeli press releases with those from any Arab state of their choosing. The facts are self-evident with nearly no exceptions, Israeli press releases are much closer to the facts.

It is disconcerting to note how studiously Mr. Chapman avoids criticizing – or even mentioning – PLO atrocities or those perpetuated by Egyptian and Syrian emissaries. Quotes from Jews such as those brought on p. 165 (and more troubling ones) could even more easily have been brought from the mouths of Arab spokesmen. What is more – where circumstances have allowed them to do so, the Arabs have generally lived up to their threats. Conversely, Israel has prosecuted and punished any of its citizens who have responded immorally to Arab threats. Can our author point to one solitary case in which Arab nations have arrested and charged their own citizens because of terrorist activity directed against Israel? Evil deeds have sometimes been perpetrated by men on both sides; if we are to be true to our calling as Christians, we ought to be willing to criticize both sides whenever the occasion demands it.

The Solution

The Epilogue (8 pp.) attempts to propose a solution. His proposal amounts to the dismantling of the State of Israel. So completely has Mr. Chapman been impressed by the plight of the Palestinian Arabs that he completely ignores the implications of his proffered solution: the destruction of the Jews' only means of national self-expression, of their national physical existence and of their national cultural continuity. Palestinian Arabs have never had a state nor have they ever aspired to one until goaded by Zionist success and the jealousy of neighboring Arab nations. Neither has their existence – physical, cultural or religious – in any way been threatened by the lack of an independent state; not so the Jew. That is why it is incorrect to attribute the rise of Zionism to anti-semitism. The yearning for national, political, cultural and religious sovereignty in the land promised them by God has characterized the Jewish people ever since they came into being: Abraham makes his first appearance on the stage of human history by force of a divine promise giving him a land. His children – those to whom the promise is conveyed by divine fact – are similarly pictured as yearning for the land which, at that stage, was not yet in their possession. The making of the people into a nation involved a reiteration of the promise and the people's consequent wandering on their way to

the land God promised them. The greatest punishment with which God threatened His people throughout their history was to remove them from the land, and the greatest promise is connected with their being brought back into it.

The only resolution possible to the Middle East conflict is one of compromise, with greater concessions given to the side which is in the greatest danger. Perfect justice will not now nor ever will be achieved until God establishes His own rule on earth. This seems to be the only conclusion acceptable to those motivated by biblical considerations and whose moral standards are determined by divine revelation. In Israel there is a large and vocal body of people who are willing to make such compromises; a similar body has not yet achieved visibility among Arab Palestinians.

In summary, a much better case could be put forward on behalf of Zionism than the one presented by Mr. Chapman on behalf of the PLO. Conversely, it is difficult to imagine a better presentation of the PLO position than the one Chapman has made for them in his book. The weaknesses of Chapman's arguments devolve mainly from the inherent weakness of the case defended. Mr. Chapman has written a book on the Middle East crisis which all informed persons will want to read. I suggest they also read a book representing the other side of the coin and then dare to judge for themselves.

Anti-semitism has been nicknamed “the scourge of Christianity”. We who share Messiah’s good news with Israel are well acquainted with the extent of grief caused to our people by anti-semitism, and the burners created by Christian participation in such sinful misdeeds. Some participants in Christian-Jewish dialogue have concluded that both Christianity and its source documents (the New Testament) are hopelessly, endemically and radically Anti-semitic. A sober attempt to investigate these charges from a biblical and historical perspective is presented here by Messrs. Harmon, Torrance and Lamont. May their words serve as a prophetic challenge to us all as we reappraise our attitudes and actions vis-à-vis God’s covenant people.

A paper by MISHKAN co-editor Baruch Maoz brings this issue to its conclusion. What are the connections between Israel the people and Israel the land, between the Jewish nation and the modern State of Israel? This article is not the last word on the subject. It is nevertheless a penetrating inquiry into the vast amount of biblical material on the subject. It serves as a worthy challenge for the exegetes among us to develop a biblically-based theology of the relationship between the Jewish people and their homeland.

As we find ourselves in the midst of Summer, awaiting the Fall harvest, let us not forget to lift up our eyes and to look around. The fields around us are ripening and are now ready for reaping. Let us continue to harvest together unashamed of the Gospel and set for its defense both here in Jerusalem and to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Avner Boskey