

# MISHIKAN

A THEOLOGICAL FORUM ON JEWISH EVANGELISM

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# MISHKAN

**A Forum on the Gospel and the Jewish People**

**"TRENDS IN JEWISH EVANGELISM"**

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## **Editorial {Inside cover}**

### **TO THE JEW FIRST**

In his epistle to the Romans, Paul begins by boldly stating his theme: “I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God unto salvation for all who believe--to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” These words have echoed through the corridors of time, losing nothing of their power and simplicity in nearly 2,000 years.

Yet the church of the twentieth century is infinitely more content with the first part of Paul’s declaration, than with the ethnic priority given at the end of that verse. Those involved in Jewish evangelism have tended either to be bombastic about the text, haranguing their audiences with guilt over a lack of support for Jewish missions, or they have quietly ignored the text, unsure as to whether the exegetical evidence supports an historical description or a paradigm for ministry, Do the irrevocable gifts and calling of Romans 11 apply also to this verse? Should our evangelistic praxis of ministry be shaped in any way by Romans 1: 16b?

Little serious discussion of this issue has occurred up to this point. MISHKAN would like to open up a forum on this issue. Reidar Hvalvik presents an exegesis of Romans 1:16b and an analysis of the verse in light of the entire epistle to the Romans. Robert Hicks expands the debate with evidence from Paul’s practice and preaching in Acts, and with some philosophical considerations and pragmatic ramifications for missiology. Readers’ responses are invited and would be appreciated. Previous issues of MISHKAN have presented statements from both the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations and the Fellowship of Messianic Congregations. In our continuing attempt to serve as a forum on the subject of Jewish evangelism, the editors have solicited a differing perspective on this issue from a respected voice, that of Dr. Maurice Bowler. His opinion warrants thoughtful and considered reflection.

Mitch Glaser, another respected voice among American Jewish evangelicals, draws our attention to two positive and two negative trends affecting evangelical attitudes to Israel and to Jewish evangelism. The pitfalls of “comfort theology” and insincere dialogue are clearly articulated, as are the potentially encouraging developments within the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism and in the Messianic congregational movement.

{93} The heart of this issue is dedicated to a survey of Jewish evangelism the world over, and to a presentation of modern trends by responsible parties engaged in this field. From Patagonia and Paris, Los Angeles and London, Johannesburg and Jerusalem come reports on evangelism among the Jewish people. A broad spectrum of perspectives has been solicited; we hope that this collection of information will aid our readers in praying more accurately for Messiah’s ancient people.

A poll analyzing Israeli Jewish attitudes toward Messianic Jewish immigration to Israel is published for the first time in this issue of MISHKAN. The poll reveals that the Israeli man in the street is far less opposed to Messianic Jewish immigration to Israel than some Israeli political lobbies might have us believe. Two news releases from Israel bring this issue to a close. With hope in the Rock of Israel, on behalf of the MISHKAN editors,

*Avner Boskey*

# {1} “To the Jew First and also to the Greek”: The meaning of Romans 1:16b

Reidar Hvalvik

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## Romans 1:16 and its significance

There is a widespread agreement that Romans 1:16 (-17) states the theme of Paul’s letter to the Romans.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, these verses have great importance to the interpretation of the letter as a whole ( and vice-versa). As to the central element in the theme of Romans, most commentators lay stress on the expression “God’s righteousness.”<sup>2</sup> In recent years, however, some scholars have drawn attention to another phrase in Romans 1:16. To quote E. P. Sanders: “Thus while I do not disagree with the general view that the theme of Romans is announced in 1:16, I would put the emphasis more on the second part of the verse (“to all who have faith, the Jew first and also the Greek”) than to the phrase ‘the righteousness of God.’<sup>3</sup> Similar views are also held by Walter Schmithals<sup>4</sup> and Peter Richardson<sup>5</sup> who both stress that *equal access for Jew and Gentile* is the most important point in Romans 1:16. I think there are good reasons for such a position, and there can be no doubt that throughout the letter Paul again and again stresses the equality between Jew and Gentile (cf. 3:9; 3:29;10:12).

This interpretation points to the significance of Romans 1:16b, but at the same time it creates difficulties as to the meaning of the phrase “*to the Jew first*.” “What is the meaning of these words? A look at the commentaries discloses a great variety as to the treatment and interpretation of the phrase. Some commentators simply ignore them, as does F.F. Bruce in his short commentary on Romans.<sup>6</sup> Hans Lietzmann comments on them, maintaining that the word “first” is nothing more than “a worthless concession to ‘God’s elected people.’”<sup>7</sup> Anders Nygren<sup>8</sup> admits that the word “first” indicates a salvation historical priority which, according to Nygren, has been abolished in Christ. The word “first” no longer has any importance.

On the other hand, there are scholars who hold that Paul here gives the Jews “precedence” (E. Käsemann<sup>9</sup>) or speak about “a certain undeniable priority of the Jew” (C. E. B. Cranfield<sup>10</sup>). In this article we shall look further at these questions:

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. W.G. Kummel, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Rev. ed.; London: SCM,1975) 306; B. S. Childs, *The New Testament as Canon: An Introduction* (London: SCM, 1984) 255.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the following superscription in connection with Romans: “The Righteousness of God as Theme” in B. S. Childs, [see n. 1]255.

<sup>3</sup> E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983) 30.

<sup>4</sup> W. Schmithals, *Der Römerbrief als historisches Problem* (Gütersloh 1975) 12f.

<sup>5</sup> P. Richardson, *Israel in the Apostolic Church* (SNTS. MS 10; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969) 136: “Over Romans as a whole stands Paul’s imaginative phrase: ‘to everyone who believes...’”

<sup>6</sup> See F. F. Bruce, *The Letter of Paul to the Romans* (TNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985) 74.

<sup>7</sup> H. Lietzmann, *An die Römer* (HNT 8; Tübingen, 1933) 30. So also W. Schmithals, [see n.4] 12.

<sup>8</sup> A. Nygren, *Commentary on Romans* (London 1952) 73.

<sup>9</sup> E. Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 23.

{2} Does Paul speak of a priority of the Jews? If he does, what sort of priority has he in mind?

Much depends, of course, on the word “first” (in Greek *proton*), which is missing in some manuscripts. But there is no reason to doubt that it belonged to the original texts.<sup>11</sup> Let us have a look at the phrase in detail: “to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (*Ioudaio te proton kai Helleni*).

### “Jew and Greek”

The expression “Jew and/or Greek” or “Jews and/or Greeks” occurs many times in the Pauline letters (Rom. 1:16; 2:9,10; 3:9; 10:32; 1 Cor. 1:24; 12:13; Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11). Elsewhere in the New Testament, it is used solely by Luke in the Book of Acts (14:1; 18:4; 19:10,17; 20:21) concerning Paul’s missionary activity: He preached the gospel both to Jews and Greeks/ Gentiles.

The Greek word *Hellen* may have the narrow sense “a Greek” especially if it occurs next to “barbarian” (Rom. 1:14; Col. 3:11), but usually it means “Gentile” in general. In these cases *Hellen* is used as singular of “the nations,” (*ta ethne*)<sup>12</sup> in the meaning “the Gentiles” (Hebrew: *goyim*) - in opposition to Israel. In other words, the expression “Jews and Greeks” is a designation of all mankind as seen through Jewish eyes.

In all cases where the expression “Jew (s) and Greek (s)” occurs in the Pauline letters (with the exception of Col. 3:11), the word “Jew (s)” comes first. This does not imply some sort of rank;<sup>13</sup> it expresses the Jewish point of view, as is evident from some of the occurrences, especially in Romans 10:12, where Paul’s concern is that “there is no difference between Jew and Gentile” (cf. 2:9-10; Gal. 3:28).

It would be natural to presume that Romans 1:16 also expresses Paul’s concern to place Jews and Gentiles on an equal footing, because of two factors. First, the emphasis on “everyone” or “all” (*panti*): the gospel is “the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.” Secondly, “Jew” and “Greek” are not connected by a simple *kai* (“and”), but by the Greek expression “te... *kai*. “ This mode of expression “provides a closer connection than a simple *kai*.”<sup>14</sup> While *kai* (as in 1 Cor. 10:32) points to the difference between Jews and Greeks, the *te kai* implies that “the distinction is set aside.”<sup>15</sup>

With this background, it is especially remarkable to note that the expression “to the Jew and also to the Greek” in Romans 1:16 (and 2:9f) is supplemented by “first” (*proton*) before “Jew.” This provides us with a formulation which, on the one hand, emphasizes

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<sup>10</sup> C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, Vol. I (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975) 91.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. C. E. B. Cranfield, (see n. 10] 90f.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. H. Schlier, *Der Römerbrief* (HTKNT VI; Freiburg: Herder, 1977) 43.

<sup>13</sup> Contra W. Bauer/ W. F. Arndt/ F. W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957) 251.

<sup>14</sup> So F. Blass/ A. Debrunner/ R. W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961) § 444(2).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

that Jews and Greeks are on equal footing; on the other, that Jews seem to have some sort of priority. What, then, is the meaning of *proton*?

### {3} The Meaning of “First”

According to Bauer’s lexicon, the adverb *proton* may have three meanings: 1) first in time, 2) first of sequence in enumerations (not always clearly distinguished from meaning 1), \* and; 3) first of degree (“in the first place,” “above all,” “especially”).<sup>16</sup> Which of these meanings is meant in Romans 1:16?

Two texts seem to be of interest when seeking semantic analogies to the phrase in Romans 1:16. The first is Acts 26:20, where the phrase *te proton kai* occurs: Paul preached first to the people in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and Judea and to the Gentiles. Here, the meaning of *proton* is obviously temporal. Another text is 2 Cor.8:5, where Paul speaks of the Macedonian Christians when he says: “... First they gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God (*proton ... kai*).” Here we have a Pauline usage of *proton* where the comparative meaning (“above all,” “first and foremost”) is in view.<sup>17</sup>

As to the meaning of *proton* in Romans 1:16, the temporal meaning is the one maintained by many commentators. This was the opinion of many Church Fathers<sup>18</sup> and it is presently maintained by many modern scholars.<sup>19</sup> Paul is understood as expressing “that the Gospel of salvation is offered to the Jews first.”<sup>20</sup> Or, to use C. K. Barrett’s paraphrase of the verse, “The Gospel means salvation to everyone who has faith, but it was delivered to the Jews first, and then to the Gentiles too.”<sup>21</sup> That the gospel first was preached to Jews, is, of course, an indisputable historical fact. But this historical priority was more than coincidence. It seems clear that both Jesus and the early church believed that the Jewish people had a priority due to its election. This is evident from Jesus’ word to the non-Jewish woman (a *Hellenis*) in Mark 7:27: “First (*proton*) let the children eat. . .”<sup>22</sup> Accordingly, His own ministry was more or less restricted to Israel (cf. Matt. 15:24; 10:5f).

That the gospel first was preached to the Jews is also evident from the record in the first chapters of Acts. In Acts 3:25f. it is given a theological explanation. Peter says to the Jews in Jerusalem: “When God raised up His servant, He sent him first to you . . .” The reasons for the priority are expressed in the preceding: “You are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, ‘Through your

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<sup>16</sup> W. Bauer/ W. F. Arndt/F. W. Gingrich, [see n. 13] 733f.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. A. Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1915) 236: “*Proton* here ... means ‘first in importance’”. - Other NT examples of *proton* with such a meaning include Matt 6:33 and 1Tim 2:1.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. K. H. Schelkle, *Paulus, Lehrer der Vater. Die altkirchliche Auslegung von Römer 1-11* (Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1959<sup>2</sup>) 38f.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. e.g. J. B. Lightfoot, *Notes on Epistles of St. Paul* (London 1895) 250: “... it must refer to priority of time.” Cf. also H. Langkammer in H. Balz/G. Schneider (Hg.), *Exegetisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* B. III (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer GmbH, 1983) col. 454: “Im Sinn einer zeitlichen Priorität erscheint p. Röm 1,16.”

<sup>20</sup> W. Michaelis, art. “*protos* ktl.,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol VI (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968) 869.

<sup>21</sup> C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (London: A. & C. Black, 1957) 29.

<sup>22</sup> On this text, see J. Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* (London: SCM, 1959) 260ff.

offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.”<sup>23</sup> The priority thus is based on Old Testament promises; nevertheless it is merely a temporal priority.

According to Acts, Paul also maintained that the Jews had a priority to hear the gospel. Wherever he went, he first visited the synagogue and preached to the Jews (cf. Acts 13:14; 14:1; 17:10; 18:4-6; 19:8f).<sup>23</sup> This seems to be more than a mere missionary strategy. According to Acts 13:46, Paul says to the Jews that it “was necessary (*anankaion*) that the word of God should be spoken first to you.”<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately, we are not told the reason for this necessity. But, and this is the important point, Paul seems to have a special reason in mind: the priority of the {4} Jews is no mere historical coincidence; it is a necessity. In context this probably means that priority is according to God’s plan of salvation.

So far, we have looked at many texts which could support a temporal understanding of *proton*. The question remains, however, whether temporal priority is Paul’s concern in Romans 1:16. I doubt it. The statement in Romans 1:16 does not deal with the historical development of the Christian mission. It is a general statement concerning the power of the gospel.<sup>25</sup> This fact alone points to a meaning other than the temporal, an assumption further supported by the use of the expression “the Jew first and also the Greek” in Romans 2:9f.

## Romans 2:9f

In Romans 2:7f., Paul speaks of God’s judgment: God will judge all men according to their works. Everyone who does evil will be faced with “trouble and distress;” everyone who does good shall have “glory, honour and peace.” In both cases, Paul adds, “the Jew first and also the Greek.” The point in these statements can be seen in verse 11: “For God does not show favoritism.” The point being made is that Jews and Gentiles are on equal footing. Therefore, it is surprising to find Paul using the word “first” in this context.

What does the expression “the Jew first” here mean? A temporal priority is a possibility. Such a solution is supported by the fact that some Old Testament texts speak of a temporal aspect in God’s judgment. Jeremiah 25:29 says that God will begin His judgment in the city (Jerusalem). Ezekiel 9:6f. states that God’s messengers began their slaughter in the Temple (cf. 1 Pet. 4:17), and then went throughout the city. The most interesting text is, however, found in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: “... for the Lord first judges Israel for the wrong she has committed and then He shall do the same for all the nations” (Test. Ben. 10:8f). Here we find the idea of chronological stages in judgment.

It is, however, improbable that in Romans 2:9f., Paul has in mind a kind of temporal priority. The context indicates otherwise. As Dieter Zeller rightly points out, Paul is not concerned with “the course, but with the standard of judgment.”<sup>26</sup> This is further clarified in verse 12, which is introduced by the word “for” (Greek: *gar*)<sup>27</sup> serving to indicate the reason why God

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<sup>23</sup> Luke may have stereotyped this procedure, but I can see no reason to doubt that Paul usually acted in this way.

<sup>24</sup> This saying probably reflects genuine Pauline theology. The same idea seems to be at the bottom of Paul’s statement in Rom 11:11.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. D. Zeller, *Juden und Heiden in der Mission des Paulus. Studien zum Römerbrief* (2. ed; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1972) 142. Cf. also the quotation from O. Moe below (with n. 31).

<sup>26</sup> D. Zeller, [see n. 25] 150.

<sup>27</sup> The word is, however, omitted in most translations.

does not show partiality: “(For) all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law.” The similarity and the difference between Jews and Gentiles is clearly stated: unlike the Gentiles, the Jews have the law (cf. 2:14. 17f), so they will be judged by the law. As Otto Michel says in his commentary on Romans: “*Der Jude ist durch sein Gesetz in erster Linie (proton wie 1,16) unter den Masstab Gottes gestellt*” (“By his law the Jew is first of all [*proton* like 1,16] placed under God’s standard”).<sup>28</sup>

### {5} More than temporal priority

So far we may conclude: in the light of 2:9f., the word *proton* in 1:16 seems to refer to something more than temporal priority. To quote Anton Vogtle: “A mere chronological understanding of ‘first’ in 1:16 - in the meaning of the prius of the missionary salvation offer - is not sufficient.”<sup>29</sup> We are therefore, left with the comparative meaning “above all,” “in the first place.”<sup>30</sup>

From the use of *proton* in 2:9f. we may also learn that Paul connected the priority of the Jews (in judgment) with their position as God’s elect people: they have the law (a point Paul stresses in Rom. 9:4 as well). By analogy, we may presume that Paul maintains a priority of the Jews in connection with salvation, and that he does so on the basis of *promises*, another aspect of the privileges of the Jews (cf. 9:4). This is in full accordance with Romans 3:2, where Paul is speaking positively of the advantage which the Jews enjoy: it is based first and foremost on the fact that the Jews “have been entrusted with the very words of God.”

Against this background it seems fitting to quote the late Norwegian scholar, Professor Olaf Moe, who said that Paul is speaking of a “salvation historical prerogative” for the Jews. Or, to quote him more extensively, “*Proton* does not only refer to the historical fact that the gospel first was preached to the Jews. The sentence is a general and fundamental statement. The apostle must mean that the historical ‘first’ is based on a principal ‘first,’ a salvation historical prerogative; God has, through His promises, given the elect people a precedence to the gospel that speaks of the fulfillment in Christ.”<sup>31</sup>

Without a doubt, Paul’s intention in Romans 1:16 is described in the above quotation. It is necessary to stress that Paul is speaking of a precedence to *the gospel*. Nothing more and nothing less than the gospel is the power for salvation *to the Jew first*.<sup>32</sup> Such was Paul’s conviction.

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<sup>28</sup> O. Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer* (KEK 4; Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978) 116 (my emphasis).

<sup>29</sup> A Vögtle in L. de Lorenzi (Hg.), *Die Israelfrage nach Röm 9-11* (Monographische Reihe von ‘Benedictina’, Biblisch-okümenische Abteilung 3; Rome: Abtei von St Paul vor den Mauern, 1977) 167: “2,9f scheint mir zu bestätigen, dass ein bloss chronologisches Verständnis des ‘zuerst’ von 1,16 - im Sinne eines prius des missionarischen Heilsangebot - nicht ausreicht.” - A similar conclusion is also found in H. Schlier, [see n. 12143. See also L. Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) 68.

<sup>30</sup> So also Bauer/ Arndt/ Gingrich [see n. 13] . Cf. D. Zeller, [see n. 251142: “Das *proton* hat demnach eine *Rangenance*.”

<sup>31</sup> O. Moe in his (Norwegian) commentary on Romans, *Apostelen Paulus’s brev til Romerne* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1948) 64f; my translation.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Dieter Zeller’s expression in *Der Brief an die Römer* (RNT; Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1985) 43: Israel is, through God’s promises - “vor allen anderen Völkern in besonderer Weise der



The hard facts of reality did not sustain such an idea in any way. The majority of the Jewish people rejected the gospel. Only a “remnant” of Israel came to faith in Jesus. This constituted a real problem for Paul, who was sincerely concerned for his kinsmen by race: “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved” (10:1; cf. 9:1-3). The salvation of the Jews was not a secondary matter in Paul’s mind and he finds it necessary to deal with the question at length in Romans 9-11.

### **Romans 1:16 in the light of chapters 9-11**

Romans 9-11 is of great importance for the present subject, for as Nils A. Dahl says: this section “belongs to the development of the theme of the letter stated in 1:16.” More precisely, “Paul discusses the relation between Jews and Gentiles in Romans 14, but only in chapters 9-11 does he make clear what he means by ‘to the Jew first.’”<sup>33</sup>

{6} What, then, does Paul mean by this expression? Even a superficial reading through chapters 9-11 indicates that Paul does not hold to a temporal priority regarding the salvation of the Jews. On the contrary, the “full number of the Gentiles” will be saved prior to the salvation of the great majority of the Jews (cf. 11, 25f.). Our earlier interpretation of “first” is hereby confirmed. But what is the practical meaning of the phrase?

In the last verses in chapter 11 we find that Paul, speaking of Israel, refers to “election,” “the patriarchs” and “God’s gift and call.” On this account, it seems justified to say: “‘To the Jew first’ for Paul means a recognition of the abiding election of Israel.”<sup>34</sup> This election means that God has chosen the people of Israel “out of all peoples on the face of the earth, to be His people, His treasured possession” (Deut. 7:6). No other people has such a position; no other people is chosen as a people. Undoubtedly, this is the key to the prerogative of the Jews: Israel is - as a people - elected by God, and has a promise of salvation for the people as a *whole*.<sup>35</sup> This finds expression in Romans 11:26: “And so all *Israel* shall be saved.”<sup>36</sup>

To sum up: Israel has a prerogative which is based on God’s gracious election, an election which holds good because “the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable” (11:29). This prerogative means a promise of salvation for the Jewish people as a whole. But this prerogative does in no way abolish the gospel. On the contrary: what really matters for Paul in Romans 1:16 is that “God’s power for salvation” is found in the gospel and that it embraces “everyone who believes.” It is in this connection that Paul uses the expression “to the Jew first.” Consequently, the prerogative of Israel implies a *priority as to the gospel*.

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rettenden Macht des Evangelium zugeordnet.” Cf. also W. G. Kümmel, “Die Probleme von Römer 9-11 in der gegenwärtigen Forschungslage,” L. de Lorenzi, [see n. 29] 13-33; 28.

<sup>33</sup> N. A. Dahl, “The Future of Israel,” *Studies in Paul* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1977) 137-158; 139.

<sup>34</sup> W. S. Campbell, “The Freedom and Faithfulness of God in Relation to Israel,” *JSNT* 13 (1981) 27-45; 36.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. the formulation of N. Walter, “Zur Interpretation von Römer 9-11,” *ZThK* 81 (1984) 172-195; 181: “Hier liegt der einzige Vorzug, den nach der Sicht des Paulus Israel eschatologisch vor allen übrigen Nationen haben (wieder haben!) wird; ihm - und keinem anderen Volk - ist *als* Volk die Erwählung Gottes zuteil geworden und darum auch, kraft der unwandelbaren Treue Gottes, bleibend zugesichert.”

<sup>36</sup> On this text, see my article “A ‘Sonderweg’ for Israel? A critical examination of a current interpretation of Rom 11:25-27,” forthcoming in *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* (1990).

# {9} Romans 1:16 and the Priority of Jewish Evangelism.

Robert M. Hicks

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Almost all commentators agree that the apostolic model of evangelism followed the practice “to the Jew first.” However, the real question is whether this practice was out of mere pragmatism (going to the Jewish people because the latter already had the common ground of the Scriptures), or because of some other biblical or theological principle. It will be argued that the priority of Jewish evangelism was *not* on pragmatic grounds, but was founded upon a proper understanding of certain biblical and theological truths. These truths were revealed in the life and teaching of the Messiah and were illustrated and taught as doctrine in the writings of the Apostle Paul. Inasmuch as this doctrine was authoritative for all churches (1 Cor. 4:17), Paul’s practice of Jewish evangelism in church planting should be equally binding upon the church planter today as was in the first century. The argument will touch upon three areas: the biblical passages which relate to the argument; those theological concepts which relate to the role of Jewish evangelism; and several practical considerations for doing Jewish evangelism.

## I. THE BIBLICAL ARGUMENT

### A. Practice and Precept of the Messiah

Jesus was both sent (John 1:11) and went to the Jews first (Matt. 4:23-25; 9:35). Being the Messianic King, He went to those to whom the Kingdom had been promised.

Jesus sent His disciples to the Jews first (Matt. 10:5-6; 15:24; particularly notice the use of *proton* in Mark 7:27). It was only later in Matthew’s development, after the rejection by Israel of her King, that Jesus expands the commission to include the Gentiles (*ethne--Matt. 21:43; 28:19*).

### B. Practice of the Apostles

Peter began his ministry in Jerusalem by preaching his Pentecost sermon to Jews (Acts 2:5). In the exercise of this ministry, he emphasized the preeminence of the Jewish mission by underscoring the special nature of the gospel message to the Jewish people (Acts 3:26, notice again the use of *proton*). God expanded Peter’s {10} ministry by opening up the Gentile regions only after there had been a rejection of the gospel on the part of some Jews (cf. Acts 4:1,5,17,28; 7:54; 8:1 with 10:1,28,36). All the scattered believers in Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch proclaimed the word not only to the Jews *first*, but also to Jews *alone!* (Acts 11:19)

Paul began and carried out his ministry under the guiding principle “to the Jew first” (Acts 9:20; 13:5,14; 14:1; 17:1-18; 18:1-16; 19:8; 28:17). Special notice should be given to Acts 13:46 where again the word *proton* is used to argue the priority of Jewish evangelism. It is only *after* his message has been rejected by the majority of the Jewish community that Paul moves to the Gentiles (Acts 13:50-51). But in so doing, as he enters

a new community, he goes right back to the Jewish synagogue to evangelize the Jews (Acts 14:1). His established pattern and principle are the same: the priority of Jewish evangelism.

### **C. Precepts of the Apostle Paul**

*Acts 13:44-46*:: Although there is much debate as to why Paul went to the Jew first, in this passage Luke records in Paul's own reasoning for the priority of the Jewish mission. Here Paul explains that the gospel must first (*anagkaion proton*) be preached to the Jews, not on the basis of pragmatism but due to a definitive theological /biblical reason. The priority of Jewish evangelism has a partial by-product in this case--the confirming of those Jews who are not part of the Israeli remnant in their rejection of the Messiah. Note nevertheless the positive side of the coin in Acts 13:43, where many of the Jews (the remnant community) and God-fearing proselytes believed the message.

*Romans 1:16* : Paul some twenty years after the gospel had been on Gentile soil, writes this letter to the Roman Christians. It is apparent from both 1:16 and chapters 8-11 that the priority of Jewish evangelism was still in effect for Gentile Christians living in a Gentile world! Even though Paul teaches the essential equality of the Jew and Gentile in the Body of Christ, he still maintains both the separate priority and preeminence of Jewish evangelism, as well as Jewish eschatological blessing and accountability. The implication seems obvious: even for a Gentile living in the Gentile world, there are still theological and biblical reasons for the priority of Jewish evangelism. (On whether or not *proton* means "first in time" as Hodge, Calvin, and Barnhouse hold, or "first in priority," see commentaries by Murray, p. 28; Käsemann, p. 23; Mills, pp. 37-38, and Cranfield, p. 91. Of special interest are the sections by Murray and Cranfield. Murray says, "Since Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles and since the church at Rome was preponderantly Gentile it is the more significant that he should have intimated so expressly the priority of the Jew ... It does not appear sufficient to regard this priority as that merely of time." Cranfield states, "the word *proton* indicates that within the framework of this basic equality there is a certain undeniable priority of the Jew." Even the controversial Catholic theological, Hans Kung, accepts the priority of the Jew in his book *The Church*. He suggests, "they (the Jewish people) {11} were and remain those to whom God addressed himself *first*" (p. 191). It can then responsibly be argued that the phrase "to the Jew first" is as applicable today as it was in Paul's time.)

*Romans 9:11* : From this section several points are clear:

- 1) God has not abrogated His covenant with the Jewish people (*Romans 11:1,29*).
- 2) The Jewish remnant will continue to believe in Messiah Jesus throughout the Church Age (*Romans 11:5*).
- 3) The Gentiles, by accepting the Jewish promises, have a potential ministry of provoking Jewish people to jealousy (*Romans 10:19; 11:11,14*) and of illustrating God's mercy to them (*Romans 11:30-31*). (*N.B.*: The use of *parazelloo* in *Romans 11:30-31* with reference to the LXX use in *Deut. 32:31*.)

When compared with the phrase "filled with jealousy" (*Romans 13:45; 5:17*) and "becoming jealous" (*Romans 17:5*), it is apparent that Paul's practice of "to the Jew first" involved the biblical principle of provoking the Jewish people to jealousy. This gospel presentation would call out the elect remnant in Israel to believe in the promised Messiah, as well as confirm in unbelief those Jewish people who rejected Jesus' message and ministry. After these responses from the Jewish community, Paul would then move on locally to the Gentile community to begin

evangelism there. (See F.F. Bruce, *Paul, Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, p. 169.) Paul, then, had a biblical motive based upon Deut. 32:31 for declaring the gospel to the Jew first. This involved provoking the Jewish nation to jealousy, drawing the remnant into a relationship with the God of Israel through Messiah Jesus, and confirming the prophesied rejection of part of national Israel. In the mind of Paul this precept was to be valid until the Jewish nation was to be grafted back into the place of God's blessing (Romans 11:25).

## II. THE THEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

### A. To Provoke the Jewish People to Jealousy (Romans 11:11,14).

As discussed above, the priority of Jewish evangelism is today a theological issue and not only a practical one. The early church had only two kinds of missions: Jewish and Gentile. Today we promote home and foreign missions, totally missing the thrust of New Testament evangelism. If the role of the Church is to provoke the Jewish people to jealousy *until* the fullness of the Gentiles comes in, then it is only logical for church planting to have this same priority *until* the fullness of the Gentiles comes in.

### B. To Call The Remnant of Israel to Faith in Her Messiah (Romans 10:9-21)

God has told us in His Word that, among scattered and disobedient Israel, a remnant of Jews will always believe; yet very few churches or Gentile missions have any {12} kind of outreach toward the Jewish people. How else can Jewish people be saved except by the preaching of the gospel (Romans 10:14-15)? Yet the Jewish people worldwide remain largely in a separate category of "nonreachable!" But God has decreed a response for the remnant of Israel; a spiritual blessing is waiting for those who take God at His word.

### C. To Bring About the National Restoration of Israel (Romans 11:25-27; Matt. 23:37-39; Zech. 12:10).

No matter where the Gentile is, and no matter what kind of ministry he has, he sees a glorious opportunity before him--that of being involved in the process (and perhaps even in the consummation of that process) whereby Israel as a nation responds to the gospel message. Though many believe this promise, unfortunately, we don't allow it to invade our practice of church planting. As a result, we make no overt attempts to win the Jewish community, or to give the Jewish people the opportunity to say "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." Yet the above passages are clear--the Messiah will not come until the Jewish nation says, "BLESSED ART THOU" directly to Jesus their Messiah. If the Gentiles desire their Lord to return, then Jewish evangelism must be a priority in all Gentile ministries, including the ministry of congregational planting. F.F. Bruce concludes: "The ingathering of the Gentiles would thus lead, in the unfolding of the divine purpose, to the salvation of Israel, and Paul learned to 'magnify his ministry' because of this more remote sequel over and above its immediate effect in producing among other nations 'the obedience of faith'" (Paul, p. 168).

## III. THE PRACTICAL ARGUMENT

### A. The Extent of Jewish Dispersion

Jewish people are located all over the globe, in all large cities and even in most small towns. *The Jewish World Almanac* is a must for church planters who want to know where and to what extent this "unreached" and "hidden" Jewish people is located. This writer was involved in planting a new congregation on the smallest of the Hawaiian islands (population 6,000), and

found the editor of the local newspaper to be Jewish. The Jewish people are everywhere; in order to reach them with the Gospel, the Church must take the Gospel to them everywhere.

### **B. The Concentration of Jewish People**

Paul concentrated his efforts on the major metropolitan areas of the Roman world. Similarly, in America and abroad, as the major cities are targeted for church planting ministries, large concentrations of Jewish people will be found resident there. As church growth experts have revealed, the gospel moves very quickly along ethnic lines. A conscious decision to evangelize the Jewish communities of the world could lend an added boost to a new church planting ministry. For behind every Jewish person who believes stands a whole network of other Jewish friends, relatives and associates.

### **{13} C. The Commitment of Jewish Believers**

One of the most basic ingredients for a successful church planting ministry is a group of committed followers of Messiah. Historically and contemporarily, Jews have paid the price of family exclusion, or even expulsion. Because of the fact that Jewish believers often “count the cost” of following Messiah more than do many Gentile believers, their commitment level is usually correspondingly higher.

### **D. The Openness of the Secular Jew**

Today only a very few Jews are committed to Orthodox rabbinic Judaism. With the advent of both Conservative and Reform Judaism there has been a secularizing of the modern Jew. Along with this trend has come a more open attitude toward Christians, and to the person of Christ. There are great opportunities for discussion, study, and even friendship with thinking Jewish people. In light of these new attitudes, it is the conviction and experience of this writer that the Jewish people are one of the most open as well as one of the most unreached peoples in the world. For those believers who hold to the Great Commission of Messiah, it is our joy and calling to bring the Gospel to Israel. But for those who look askance at Jesus’ command, Mills summarizes, “the sad part of it is this, that many sincere Christians who do not believe that the Gospel is to the Jew first, do not believe that the Gospel is for the Jew at all!” (*A Hebrew Christian Looks at Romans*, p. 37)

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## {14} Messianic Assemblies and the Bible

Maurice. G. Bowler

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### What's in a Name?

Upon being asked to write an article on the topic before us, I began to think about the meaning of the term “Messianic assembly.” “Messianic” comes from “Messiah;” and, as the Thirteen Principles of the Jewish Faith affirm the coming of the Messiah, one could say that all Jews are supposed to be “Messianic.” I have heard the term used by a well-known rabbi to describe rabbinic Jews. We are told by linguistic experts that “the meaning is in the use,” and the term “Messianic” is normally used to describe Jewish believers in Jesus. As *Christos* is the Greek translation of “Messiah,” the terms “Messianic” and “Christian” are virtually synonymous.

The term “assembly” is the English translation of the Greek term *ekklesia*. It is also the term used for “the congregation of Israel” in the Greek Old Testament. But the term *ekklesia* is usually translated as church (from *kuriakos* - “belonging to the Lord”). So, from a purely verbal standpoint, a Messianic assembly is a Christian Church, and any Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist or Jew (upon examining its beliefs and practices) would agree. What is the objection to using this traditional title for a group of believers in Jesus? In the land of Israel one objection could be that the associations of these terms are foreign to the Jewish ethos and, because of tragic historical associations, are offensive and counter-productive. But the Chasidim in Israel wear old-fashioned European clothes and glory in these exotic features. They are rather like the Chinese Christian who called himself a “Conservative Evangelical American Lutheran of the Missouri Synod” and, by so doing, managed to avoid calling himself Chinese or Christian!

### The Indigenous Messianic Assembly

In contrast to this “expatriate” attitude to religious identity, and in respect to the accusations to the contrary which are hurled against them, Israeli Hebrew Christians need to affirm, as part of their witness, their full membership of the Jewish people. Not every rabbinic critic seems to be aware of the ruling in TB Sanhedrin 44a which says that, according to halacha, qualified Jews remain Jews, even if they have been initiated into another religion. In the case of the Hebrew {15} Christian, continuity is maintained. Paul affirms that continuity in Acts 22:2, even when opponents describe Hebrew Christianity as a sect (Acts 24:14). Certainly the rabbis can make up rules of association from their own fellowships, and, on these grounds, the Hebrew Christians have been excluded from the rabbinic fold.

In the days of the Second Temple, the Pharisees ruled that believers in Jesus should be put out of the synagogue (John 12:42). Within a decade of the fall of the Temple and the consequent triumph of the Pharisees, the quaintly named *Birkat Haminim* (AD 80 according to Dr J.

Parkes) effectively excluded Hebrew Christians from the rabbinic mainstream. But separation from the rabbinic fold is not equal to being separated from Israel. It is certainly wrong for a Jew to “separate himself from the community” (Pirkei Avot). It is unrealistic to refuse to recognize an exclusion which has already been effected by the recognized leaders of the rabbinic community. No one can exclude a Jew from his people Israel; even the Talmud recognizes the indelibility of Jewishness. But membership in the rabbinic community is in the hands of the leaders of that community and no amount of cosmetic adjustment to titles and customs will win acceptance for Hebrew Christians. Only apostasy from Christ would achieve this.

In seeking to affirm their credentials as Jews and as Israelis, Hebrew Christians in Israel are wise to refrain from using foreign or misleading terminology to describe themselves. They also act wisely if they bring the traditions of contemporary Christianity to the bar of Scripture before deciding what is of the essence of New Testament churchmanship and what are mere accidents of European and American cultural settings. In doing this, they may need to be tolerant toward denominational and expatriate fellowships and toward the indigenous Arab Christian churches which do not share Jewish continuity with an ethnic Jewish past.

### **The “Messianic Assembly” in Exile**

What of the vast majority of Jewish believers in Christ, who live outside the land of Israel, mostly in the USA? If it is true that the majority of American Jews are Conservative or Reform, as the majority of English Jews could be called “neo-Orthodox” or Progressive, it follows that most Jews who do become believers in Jesus would probably come from non-traditional backgrounds. Unlike their 19th century counterparts, they have not brought with them to faith in Christ many rabbis and scholars trained in Judaics, although an encouraging number take up study of their Jewish heritage after their conversion.

According to Jewish mission experts in the USA, most Jewish believers find their spiritual home in a regular Christian church or fellowship, as is the case in Europe. But what of the considerable minority, numbering several thousands, which meets in Messianic assemblies of various types, assembling in large numbers {16} at the annual “Messiah” conferences? Is there a scriptural blueprint among Jewish believers in Christ to which one can refer for guidance in contemporary assembly building ?

Philosophers say that we cannot step in the stream twice. The New Testament, in its account of a flowing, dynamic, first century situation, illustrates this. During Christ’s earthly ministry, the disciples were told to obey the then-existing rabbinic authorities who “sat in Moses’ seat” (Matt. 23:3). After Pentecost, the apostles continued to worship in the Temple (Acts 3:1). Neither of these options is available today. The Temple has been destroyed and the rabbis of today do not represent first century Judaism.

What about the early rabbinic model as a guide for modern Messianic assemblies? Apart from the fact that later first century rabbinic Judaism developed an anti-Christian position, the loss of the Temple and the Sanhedrin and the continued development of rabbinic teaching in the Mishnah, Gemara, Midrash and Kabbala have placed this option out of reach. The further assimilation of the role of rabbi to that of Protestant ministers (in Reform circles, even to the extent of pronouncing the Levitical blessing) has made such a course a roundabout way of imitating the Gentile.

## Conclusion

Notwithstanding the above, much of it more cautionary than critical, the fact that large numbers of Jews in our day have taken a stand for Christ is a wonderfully encouraging phenomenon. Their faith in Christ as God and Saviour means that they are answerable to Him above all others and the expression of their service and worship of the Lord is a matter between them and their Lord. An argument could be made in defense of separate assemblies for Jewish believers on the “homogeneous unit principle” but for the fact that present day Messianic assemblies are, like the New Testament church in Rome (Rom. 2:17, 11:13), not usually homogeneous but often include as much as 40 per cent Gentiles.

How would one go about making a Messianic assembly authentically Jewish? Apart from the simple and relatively superficial factors of dress and architecture, are there strategic areas in which Jewish identity can be affirmed? In the matter of music, there would be little left of modern “Jewish” music if the Russian and Arab elements were removed. As to language, which language would be used to shout a fire warning in an American or British Messianic assembly? Hebrew, Yiddish, or English?

Can we look for a flowering of Messianic Rabbinism to give a scholarly “stiffening” to the Messianic assemblies? How many Messianic scholars are equipped to filter out Muslim Unitarianism from the Thirteen Principles, Aristotelian philosophy {17} from the *Moreh Nevuchim*, and Gnostic mythology from the Kabbala and Chasidic mysticism? Can Messianic leaders handle halacha better than modern rabbis, whom Rabbi Ignaz Maybaum has accused of the “Islamization of Judaism” in their treating of Torah as law, instead of seeing it as instruction, as it truly is?

As mentioned earlier, it is encouraging to note that some Messianic scholars are addressing themselves to these issues, but there might be some who tend to take the modern rabbinic model at its face value, without recognizing the derivative nature of much modern Judaism. They could end up like the watchmaker who set his display clock by the factory hooter, only to find that the factory timekeeper set his watch by the shop display clock!

A much safer guide than the rabbinic model is the Hebrew Bible, which sets out what God had in mind when He “formed” Israel for Himself, and the New Testament book of Acts, which shows Christian assemblies being set up by apostles and being led by local leaders in the way best suited for local situations and conditions. If these authorities were followed, the Jewish believers in exile would find they have more in common with their Gentile brothers and sisters than generally assumed. After all, it was the Jewish Messiah who broke down the middle wall of partition, and made us all one in Himself!



## {18} POSSIBILITIES AND PERILS: A LOOK AT JEWISH MISSIONS

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Four trends in Jewish missions sadden and gladden Hebrew Christians. The number of Jews who believe in Jesus has grown considerably in the past 20 years. The origin of this growth can, in large part, be traced to the Jesus Movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Most people know about the thousands of “counter-culture” youth with Protestant backgrounds who embraced Christ during this time. However, few realize that a large number of Jews also accepted the Lord. It was from these beginnings that the modern movement in Jewish missions was spawned. Most importantly, perhaps, is the fact that this movement brought the sparkle of indigeneity back to the enterprise of Jewish missions.

Today, this movement is in its teens, advancing, sometimes stumbling, toward maturity. Four trends are having a significant impact in the field of Jewish missions in the 1980s.

The first trend, one that is seemingly positive and yet has dangerous implications for Jewish missions, is the proliferation of “friendship groups.” These are evangelical Christians who have banded together for the purpose of supporting Jewish causes. The largest of these groups is Christian Embassy, headquartered in Israel, with “consulates” around the world. Smaller groups such as Bless Israel (England), Comfort My People (Canada), and TAV Ministries (California) have recently been formed.

The friendship groups are theologically committed to the modern state of Israel as the fulfillment of biblical prophecy. They believe it is the Christian’s duty, according to Genesis 12:3, to “bless” Israel via financial and political support. Christian Embassy’s statement of goals reflects this view, expressing concern for the Jewish people and the reborn state of Israel; encouraging Christians to pray for Jerusalem and the land of Israel; serving as a center for Christians worldwide; {19} stimulating Christians to influence their countries on behalf of the Jewish people; assisting projects in Israel, for the well-being of all who live there; and seeking to be a reconciling influence between Arabs and Jews.

Every fall, Christian Embassy and other friendship groups gather in Jerusalem for a celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. Keynote speakers have included Teddy Kollect, Mayor of Jerusalem, and Menachem Begin, former Prime Minister of Israel.

Noticeably absent are representatives of the Jewish Christian community. I was told of a Jewish Christian who was wearing a T-shirt that said “Jesus made me kosher.” The man was asked to remove the shirt or leave the celebration because the leaders were afraid of offending non-Christian Israelis in attendance.

This incident is indicative of how friendship groups feel about direct contact evangelism. Their idea of evangelism is to bless Israel through political, financial, and prayer support.

Through this support, it is hoped Israelis will see the love of Christians for the Jewish people and perhaps ask question about Christianity. Christian witness is just a byproduct of the friendship groups. Many Christians confuse the friendship groups with Jewish missions and feel that the approach is merely one of many ways to evangelize the Jews. As a result, these groups tend to divert the energy and resources of sincere Christians away from authentic evangelism. The friendship group movement is dangerous because it focuses the attention of the church on something other than the Great Commission. Evangelism is the most loving act an evangelical Christian can do for a Jewish person, even if the message is not positively received.

### **The danger of dialogue**

The second trend in the field of Jewish missions today is the increase in Jewish/evangelical dialogue. In 1975, the first such dialogue was held in New York City, co-sponsored by the Institute of Holy Land Studies and the Interreligious Affairs Department of the American Jewish Committee (IAD/AJC). A volume of essays, titled “Evangelicals and Jews in Conversation,” resulted from the conference.

A second national conference was held at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Ill., in 1980, co-sponsored by Christianity Today magazine and IAD/AJC. A volume titled “Evangelicals and Jews in an Age of Pluralism” resulted and was published in 1984. That same year another conference was held at Gordon-Conwell Divinity School in South Hamilton, Mass. Although it is always good to promote understanding between people, the movement of evangelical and Jewish dialogue potentially can be harmful. In an article titled “Dialogue, Evangelism, and the Jewish Community,” Moishe Rosen said, “Dialogue is often a thinly-veiled attack on evangelism and those who practice it. As Jewish {20} community leaders enter into such dialogue, they never miss the opportunity to deal a blow at the enterprise of Jewish evangelism.”

Jewish community- leaders stand to gain much by entering such dialogue. For example, they are able to tell their constituency that they are bettering community relations and upgrading respect for the Jewish religion. But their hidden agenda is to hinder evangelism among the Jewish people.

Rabbi A. James Rudin, Director of IAC/AJC, wrote: “The major problem [with Jewish/evangelical relations] centers on these themes: missions, witness, conversion, and proselytization.” He urged the evangelical community to end its support of Hebrew Christian groups, saying that such activity compromised the authenticity of inter-faith dialogue. “There is such a thing as authentic Judaism and authentic Christianity, but the Hebrew Christian groups are neither,” he said.

Morris Inch, in his article “Jews and Evangelicals, a Breach Born in Heaven,” comments: “I conclude with an appeal to dialogue. By nature, dialogue suggests the willingness to hear and be heard. It also suggests that we go beyond speaking at Jews to speaking with them. Rightly understood, dialogue does not compromise the integrity of those who participate or the communities they represent. The opportunity today for Jewish/evangelical dialogue is unprecedented. With these thoughts in mind, therefore, let us proceed with care, but proceed nonetheless.”

In response to Dr. Inch, we should indeed proceed with care in pursuing Jewish/ Christian dialogue, for there truly is danger. We usually allow ourselves to be influenced by our

friends. Evangelicals wearing “rose-colored glasses” hope that by winning the friendship of Jewish community leaders, an opportunity will open for witness. But the Jewish leaders have more to gain than evangelicals, because they will use that friendship to denounce Jewish evangelism.

### **A boost from Lausanne**

The third trend in Jewish missions and a positive one - is the support they have received from the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE) that had its origin in the Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization Consultation held in Thailand in 1980. In many ways LCJE is a resurrection of the old Committee for the Christian Approach to the Jews sponsored by the International Missionary Council some 50 years ago. The consultation in Thailand produced a paper titled, “Christian Witness to the Jewish People.” Twenty church and Jewish mission leaders committed themselves to continuation of the consultation on Jewish evangelism, and with the encouragement of Leighton Ford and other leaders of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, the LCJE was formed as an on-going task force.

{21} The five-fold purpose of the task force is:

1. To gather and catalogue information appropriate for Jewish evangelism and to furnish such material in an occasional publication.
2. To provide a platform on which Jewish missions can meet to coordinate strategies.
3. To monitor and report trends in the Jewish community.
4. To stimulate theological and missiological research related to Jewish evangelism.
5. To arrange for consultations that will be useful for those engaged in Jewish evangelism.

In September, 1983, LCJE met in England for its second consultation. Fifty-two delegates were represented, as well as 17 Jewish missions, seven theological institutes, and a number of Messianic congregations. More than half of the participants were Jewish believers. During that consultation, committees were formed for different continents, and the leaders of these groups were encouraged to develop local conferences. So far, in the United States, there have been three conferences.

Last August, a third international meeting took place on the grounds of All Nations Christian College in Easeneye, England. This significant gathering involved 160 participants from 17 nations. Again more than half of the participants were Jewish Christians. The conference can be summed up in the challenging comment of David Harley, international coordinator, who said: “One cannot be consistent with the Scriptures and neglect the evangelization of the Jewish people.”

In the past, the church has expressed only a fringe concern for the evangelization of Jews. Likewise, Jewish mission agencies have limited their concern to evangelism of Jewish people, and have not taken their place in the mainstream of the evangelical church.

LCJE is a giant leap forward. Now, Jewish believers and missionaries to the Jews have a voice within the international missionary community. This credibility is vital to the progress of Jewish missions.

### **Messianic congregations proliferate**

The fourth trend in Jewish missions today is the establishment of indigenous Jewish Christian churches, or Messianic congregations. The forming of Messianic congregations is ancient; its

history begins in the second chapter of Acts. Jewish congregations existed world-wide to some extent during the 19th century. But the movement declined after World War I, and Hebrew Christian churches became rare.

The trend in missions during the past 25 years toward establishing homogeneous churches (Hispanic, Black, Korean, etc.), combined with the resurgence of Jewish identity, has resulted in a significant movement of Jewish Christians toward **{22}** forming Messianic congregations. In a recent survey of Jewish Christians, 10 percent indicated they attended Messianic congregations.

Currently, there are more than 50 functioning Messianic congregations in the United States. Many are small, with less than 30 members, and have no full-time pastor. But a few, such as Beth Yeshua (House of Jesus) in Philadelphia, Beth Messiah (House of the Messiah) in Washington, D.C., and Kehilat Y'shua (Congregation of Jesus) in New York City, draw close to 200 people at their main services.

Most Messianic congregations are independent, although some are members of major denominations. The Assemblies of God have six Messianic congregations. The Presbyterians have two. These congregations are usually at least 50 percent Jewish and meet on Friday nights or Saturday mornings, although some worship on Sunday as well.

### **New strength for Hebrew Christian churches**

In July, 1979, a Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations (UMJC) was formed. UMJC considers itself an umbrella organization embracing and strengthening most of the Messianic congregations in the United States and Canada. The objectives of UMJC are:

1. To provide whatever aid possible in the initiation, establishment and growth of Messianic Jewish congregations worldwide.
2. To be a voice for Messianic Jewish congregations and Messianic Judaism worldwide.
3. To provide a forum for the discussion of issues relevant to Messianic Judaism and Messianic Jewish congregations.
4. To aid in the causes of Jewish people worldwide, especially in Israel.
5. To support the training of Messianic leaders.

Perhaps of greater interest is UMJC's statement of standards, which clearly asserts the UMJC's desire to be counted among mainstream evangelicals:

1. The Bible is the absolute authority in all matters of teaching and practice.
2. Salvation is by grace through faith in Yeshua's atonement and resurrection. He is Messiah and Lord.
3. As Jewish followers of Yeshua, we are called to maintain our Jewish heritage and remain a part of our people, Israel, and the universal body of believers. This is part of our identity and a witness to the faithfulness of God.
4. As believers in the Scriptures, we subscribe to the divinity of Yeshua.

A new organization of Messianic congregations called the Fellowship of Messianic Congregations was formed last summer. The group is similar to the UMJC.

### **{23} Jewish evangelism at the crossroads**

In conclusion, the work of Jewish evangelism is more vulnerable than ever before. In the past, there was some confusion as to how to evangelize Jews. But now evangelicals are listening to the question, "Should Jews be evangelized?" Unfortunately, a dynamic response to this critical question has not come forth from the evangelical power structures.

Many highly qualified Jewish Christians are committed to Jewish evangelism. However, few resources are available for facilities, equipment, and programs, because most evangelicals remain uncommitted to Jewish evangelism.

Many evangelical leaders continue to be reluctant to endorse missionary work to the Jews for fear of being accused of proselytizing. Thus, it is not surprising that the amount of money spent on Jewish evangelism by the Church in North America in 1984 was less than eight-tenths of one percent of the total amount spent on evangelism efforts worldwide.

The possibilities for expanding evangelistic efforts among the Jews are greater today than ever before. The key that unlocks the door is courage. Will evangelical Christians have the courage to proclaim the gospel among the Jewish people? Will evangelical Christians have the courage to support Jewish believers who desire to express their faith in a Jewish way? Will evangelical Christians have the courage to endure the subtle coercions by some Jews and nominal Christians to soften the message of Christ?

The fields of world Jewry are "white unto harvest." Evangelical Christians must courageously seize the opportunity while it is still day.

# {24} TRENDS IN JEWISH EVANGELISM IN ISRAEL

James R. Sibley

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To paraphrase Luke, “Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have transpired among us.... Therefore, having carefully investigated these things, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you.” Although the number of Jews in Israel who believe in Jesus (Yeshua, in Hebrew) is minute, there have been encouraging changes in this community of believers in the past decade. Books written about Christian ministries and congregations in Israel twenty years ago scarcely mention the existence of Messianic Jews.<sup>1</sup> Today, no responsible reporter of the religious scene can ignore the phenomenon of Jews who are embracing Jesus as Messiah and Redeemer.<sup>2</sup>

There has been little consistency in the reported numbers of Messianic Jews in Israel. The only common denominator in most of these estimates is that they are highly inflated. This may be due to several factors, but primarily it is because they are offered by “overly optimistic Christians and overly pessimistic Jews.”<sup>3</sup> First, it should be noted that no formal or complete census has been taken. Secondly, there are many distinctions which can be made which will affect the final figure. Some believers are citizens, others are not; some worship in Hebrew, others in English, Arabic, or a variety of other languages; and some are Jewish, others are Gentile. It is also difficult to estimate the number of “secret believers,” that is, believers who have not chosen to identify with a congregation. Their numbers are probably very small and are most probably shrinking. In short, it would be more accurate to say that there are somewhere between 1,000 to 2,000 Israeli Messianic Jews who worship in Hebrew congregations with any degree of regularity.<sup>4</sup> This compares with a figure of no more than 300 Jewish believers in 1965. Nevertheless, that figure is

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this paper, “Messianic Jews” refers to all Jews who have entered a saving relationship with God through faith in Jesus, the Messiah of Israel. A number of them would prefer to be known as Jewish Christians. For older treatments of the Church in Israel, cf. Colbi, Saul. *Christianity In The Holy Land: Past and Present*. Tel Aviv: Am Hassefer, 1969; and Osterbye, Per. *The Church In Israel*. Lund, Sweden: Gleerup, 1970.

<sup>2</sup> cf. e.g., Pippert, Wesley G. *Land of Promise, Land of Strife: Israel at Forty*. Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1988; and Willmington, H.L. and Ray Pritz. *Israel at Forty*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 1987.

<sup>3</sup> Willmington and Pritz, pg. 19

<sup>4</sup> Hannan Weisman conducted an informal survey in November, 1988. His total for the number of Jewish believers is 1900, but questions regarding his methodology, definitions and interpretation of data cannot be answered at the time of writing, due to Mr. Weismari’s travel abroad.

growing and Messianic Jews are beginning to have an impact on public opinion which is disproportionately large in respect to their numbers.

Several reasons have been given for this continuing growth in the number of Messianic Jews. Some point to sociological factors in Israeli society. There appears to be a rise of religious interest which is evidenced on the one hand by the growth in numbers of students in the *yeshivot* (day schools with curricula that include {25} rabbinic Judaism and Jewish culture), and on the other by the growth of cults. Secular society has created a spiritual vacuum and Messianic Jews are capitalizing on the opportunity. The danger is that faith in Jesus may be perceived as merely one of several options offered by fringe cult groups. Others point to the influence of outside Christian groups such as those which will be discussed below, as well as to denominational representatives. Finally, there are those who point to a new generation of less inhibited Messianic Jews as the explanation for the increasing numbers. Willmington and Pritz, in *Israel at Forty*, observe that “these believers are average, well-adjusted Israelis, not those on the fringe of society.”<sup>5</sup> The answer may lie in all of these directions or, perhaps, beyond all of them, for certainly all would agree that such growth is primarily a work of the sovereign Lord.

The Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20 can be organized around three exhortations: proclaim the gospel, plant new believers in congregations, and provide them with the training which they need to become effective disciples. Perhaps, in describing Messianic Jews in Israel, we would do well to look first at evangelism, then at the congregations, and finally at the training which is being offered. The relationship of the State of Israel to Messianic Jews and the difficulty of maintaining unity with Palestinian brothers and sisters during the intifada will also be addressed briefly.

## I. EVANGELISM

Willmington and Pritz say, “In the past five or six years there has been an upswing in the number of Israelis receiving Jesus.”<sup>6</sup> While this is certainly true, the most evident change has been in the growing interest and involvement of the believers themselves in evangelistic activities. Ten years ago, most believers were intimidated. Although very few had actually lost their jobs or had suffered other forms of harassment or persecution, this generated a great deal of fear. Consequently, there were very few who were willing to pass out tracts on the street. There was even a reticence to be open with one’s neighbors about one’s faith.

A real turning point for some came as they realized that the persecution which they so feared - and sought to avoid - might be inevitable. While most were “in the closet,” others seemed to be inviting trouble by testifying openly. Even if a few were bold and aggressive, others tried to be as uncontroversial as possible. It did not matter. Intimidating opposition appeared to confront all believers, irrespective of their conduct or lifestyle. This resulted in a resignation to, and acceptance of, whatever future consequences might attend their open profession of Jesus as Messiah and Lord.

Once their fear had been “turned inside out,” some Israeli believers discovered within themselves a desire to be trained, organized, and directed. In order to meet these needs, believers began to form

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<sup>5</sup> Willmington and Pritz, pg. 21

<sup>6</sup> Willmington and Pritz, pg. 21

local organizations, but they also availed themselves of the assistance which outside organizations offered.

## **{26}A. Foreign organizations**

In addition to the denominations and ministries which have operated in the country for many years, other organizations which still shun publicity for a variety of reasons, and individuals who have held conferences, distributed literature, and brought groups of short term volunteers for evangelistic activities, four movements from outside of Israel merit special consideration.

### **1. Operation Mobilization**

Operation Mobilization has pioneered literature evangelism in Israel. They first began work here in 1964. Using mostly short-term volunteers (one or two year shifts), they have distributed thousands of pieces of literature and sold tens of thousands of books, going from door to door. They also passed out tracts before it became “fashionable.” Their work has been largely pre-evangelism, or seed-sowing, but they have seen results. Some have come to faith in a relatively short time, and others, who have expressed interest, have been directed to a congregation or to a Messianic correspondence course.

### **2. Jews For Jesus**

Due to their bold and aggressive evangelistic methods used in the United States since the mid-70’s, Jews for Jesus is perhaps one of the better known missions to the Jewish people. They, along with sister organizations, have succeeded in raising the consciousness of the Jewish people that Jews , as well as Gentiles, believe in Jesus. This has indirectly affected the public consciousness in Israel. A recent contribution on their part, however, has been the practical training which they have offered to selected young Israeli believers over the past three or four years. Reflecting Nehemiah’s Diaspora concern for conditions in Israel, JFJ’s “Operation Nehemiah” has made it possible for several young Israeli believers to be involved in their New York City campaign each summer. Though some of JFJ’s methods have not been transferable, these young people have returned to Israel with a greater desire to stand publicly for the Lord.

### **3. Lausanne Consultation for Jewish Evangelism**

Under the sponsorship of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, an international congress was held in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1974. As a part of the program, several Jewish participants from Israel, North America, and Europe participated in a workshop on evangelism. Several years later, in 1980, the Consultation On World Evangelism (COWE) was convened in Pattaya, Thailand as a follow-up to the Lausanne Congress. COWE focused on developing evangelistic strategy for reaching specific groups of people in pursuit of the ultimate goal of world evangelism. As in Lausanne, one of the workgroups concentrated on “Reaching the Jewish People.” This experience was so positive that they decided to form an ongoing task force which became known as the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE). They articulated their five-fold purpose which was, and continues to be:

**{27}** a) to gather and catalogue information useful in Jewish evangelism and to furnish such material in an occasional publication; b) to provide a platform on which Jewish missions can meet to coordinate strategies; c) to monitor and report trends in the Jewish community; d) to stimulate



theological and missiological research related to Jewish evangelism; and e) to organize consultations that will be useful to those engaged or interested in Jewish evangelism.<sup>7</sup>

LCJE has since held two international conferences, both in England: one in September, 1983 in Newmarket and the other in August, 1986 in Easneye. Its greatest achievement has been in providing a forum in which relationships have been established, cooperation has been fostered between expatriate organizations, local congregations, and individual believers, information has been shared; and plans have been coordinated.

#### **4. Evangelism Explosion III, Int'l.**

Evangelism Explosion (EE) is a congregationally based evangelism training program. It is unique in that some of the training involves actual evangelistic encounters. It has been so warmly received that is now found in more than 80 countries. EE was first introduced to Israel through a weeklong seminar which was held in 1985, and was followed by a 16 week course. By 1987, it had been translated into Hebrew and adapted to Israeli culture. Since then, seminars have been held in 1987 and 1988, and several congregations have conducted one or more courses. Other congregations have plans to begin implementation of this training program in the near future. Although Israel is more resistant to the gospel than many other countries, EE is proving to be an effective tool. The effectiveness should increase as the leadership gains more experience and as the program continues to be fine tuned.

These are only a few of the organizations which have furthered the cause of the Messiah in Israel. In addition, the labors of other Jewish mission organizations, institutions, and personnel could also be cited. In all of these undertakings, however, there has generally been an absence of narrow sectarianism, harmful competition, or paternalistic attitudes.

#### **B. Local Organizations**

In harmony with these organizations from abroad, Messianic Jews began to form their own local structures. For example, the Israel chapter of LCJE was begun in 1984. In addition to regular meetings for their membership, they have sponsored two conferences for the wider Messianic Jewish community in Israel. The first was a "Seminar on the Writing, Design and Use of Evangelistic Tracts" which was held in September, 1984. The second was a national conference on evangelism which convened in September, 1988. LCJE-Israel has also assisted local congregations in coordinating the participation of a team of Israeli believers in an evangelistic campaign in England. Some more recent actions are the appointment of spokesmen who will respond to the media, the issuance of notices to the press, the formulation {28} of a statement on Christian Zionism, and an investigation of charges that postal workers have tampered with believers' mail.

The National Conference of Congregational Leadership was organized in November, 1981, and has subsequently proven its worth. It is estimated that as many as two-thirds of all of the leadership of the Messianic Hebrew congregations are actively involved in the Conference. More than any other single body of people, it has raised the profile of cooperation between congregations and has, therefore, vastly improved the image of the congregations and their leadership in the eyes of local Messianic believers. Prior to this new level of cooperation, congregational leadership was tempted to espouse theological anomalies or extremes. This tendency has been checked, not so much by

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<sup>7</sup> Perlman, Susan and C.David Harley, "To The Jew First" in *World Evangelization* 13:43 (June, 1986), pg. 3.

compromising, but by honestly listening to and learning from one another. The dialogue has shifted the discussion from personalities to issues. This intercongregational pastor's conference, in response to the increased interest in evangelism, began the Evangelism Committee in 1984. This was done in order to minimize the possibility that an overzealous individual or group might conduct an evangelistic activity in an irresponsible way which would cause problems for all Israeli believers. Specifically, their purposes were:

a) to coordinate intercongregational evangelistic efforts (and follow-up); b) to provide a framework in which those involved in public evangelistic efforts would have both accountability and moral and spiritual support; c) to help in the identification and development of gifted evangelists; and d) to encourage congregations to support evangelistic efforts with prayer, finances, and personnel.

While LCJE-Israel has provided a forum for evangelistic thought and strategy, the Evangelism Committee has been a facilitator. The Evangelism Committee has won a great deal of respect among the various congregations for the sensitive and sagacious manner in which it has guided and supervised evangelism within the country. Up to this point in time, they have placed their emphasis on pre-evangelism through the street campaigns.

In May, 1989, initial steps were taken toward the formation of the Messianic Jewish Alliance of Israel. Previous attempts to organize a local chapter had faltered; and at present, interest is mixed. It was formed to deal with a wider range of issues than most other organizations. A few examples are: 1) the development of guidelines for the observance of the holidays by Messianic Jews, 2) the response of Messianic Jews to government interpretations of the Law of Return, and 3) the relationship between Israeli believers and their non-Messianic countrymen. Generally stated, their aim is "to encourage fellowship and cooperation among Messianic Jews and their supporters in order to deepen the sense of a common destiny of Messianic Jews among our people and in the wider communion of believers in Jesus."<sup>8</sup>

To whatever extent these various organizations have been responsible, the fact remains that a major change has come about with regard to evangelism in Israel.

{29} Until 1986, many local believers and veteran missionaries assumed that street evangelism was simply out of the question in Israel. As late as October, 1985, a "Hebrew believer" was quoted in *Moody Monthly* as saying, "You can't use the same methods... In the States you can hand out tracts, but not here."<sup>9</sup>

News of the Tel Aviv Campaign of August, 1986 was received with a great deal of interest by the Israeli Messianic community. Some local believers were shocked at the news of what had happened, while others were greatly encouraged. It had been decided not to focus on tract distribution, but on the collection of names and addresses of interested Israelis. These would be contacted following the campaign and would be given more material about Jesus and the New Testament. The total number of participants in the six day campaign was only 22, but it resulted in hundreds of conversations regarding Jesus and the New Testament.

T-shirts had been prepared which proclaimed the wearers as Messianic Jews, and each participant was given a tract bag of literature for distribution. Although the primary instrument of outreach was

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<sup>8</sup> As translated by Menahem Benhayim from the draft constitution

<sup>9</sup> Donohue, Sharon. "Let My People Live" in *Moody Monthly*, October, 1985. Pg. 28.

a questionnaire, other media included street preaching, drama, and music. In spite of the fact that literature distribution was not the strategic focus, three hundred and fifty pieces of literature were distributed. Furthermore, there was not a single incident of violence.

The next campaign was held in February, 1988 in Haifa. This campaign was smaller, and marked the first time that posters had been used. Posters, which quoted Acts 5:38-39, said, ““If this plan or action should be of men, it will be overthrown; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; or else you may even be found fighting against God’--Rabbi Gamaliel MESSIANIC JEWS.” These were placed on municipal sign boards all around the city, just prior to the campaign. A logo with a menorah was used on the T-shirts, tracts, and posters. It had been developed by Christian Witness to Israel and is now used extensively by Israeli Messianic Jews.

The next three Tel Aviv campaigns coincided with holidays. The Passover Campaign of 1988 involved 38 participants, with 29 of them on the streets. This time, the focus was on tract distribution, and 45,600 broadsides were distributed. There was one incident of violent confrontation, but serious injury was avoided. Additionally, names and addresses were recorded for follow-up. The Purim Campaign of 1989 also concentrated on tract distribution and, in the brief three days of this effort, 31,500 broadsides were handed out. The Pentecost campaign was held in June 1989, involving 42 participants. Emphasis was placed on sharing the gospel through street conversations and over 400 people received an in-depth presentation of the Good News; 19,500 broadsides were also handed out.

Although tracts, Scripture portions, and Messianic booklets are distributed in person, door-to-door, and through the mail, the majority are distributed in the campaigns. A wide variety of subjects are dealt with in the literature which include full-sized books, booklets and more comprehensive tracts, an Israeli {30} version of “The Four Spiritual Laws,” and the catchy, informal broadsides. These broadsides are written and produced locally, many of them by those who were trained at the tract-writing seminar of 1984.

Though these “high profile” campaigns have resulted in few new believers, they have attempted to communicate a three-fold message:

a) the Jewish Messiah has come; b) Jews can, and do, believe in Him; and c) a Jewish believer is accessible for more information.

In addition to the evangelistic campaigns on the streets of the major cities, Messianic Jews have also begun to use the major newspapers to carry the message of Messiah to the people of Israel. Although there had been precedents, a new day began in 1988 with two advertisements which were placed by Ya’akov Damkani. Following those of Damkani, Meno Kalisher placed full page ads in the Hebrew press in January and in April, 1989. These advertisements have varied in content, style, and approach, and have been carried by all but two of Israel’s major Hebrew newspapers. These two are still closed to any Messianic advertisement. Although the response has varied with each advertisement, some Israelis have become believers through this medium. Under the aegis of L.C.J.E.-Israel, a conference on the media was held in September, 1988. This is an area which will require more attention, but some progress already been made.

Although some have come to faith through the street campaigns and the media advertisements, these means are to be considered and evaluated as pre-evangelism, rather than as evangelism. The most significant results of these efforts will probably not be known for many years.

By and large, direct, personal evangelism is related to the local congregations. Some congregations have a regular program of home visitation; others are using Evangelism Explosion, while yet others are presenting the gospel in less structured, more informal ways. The important thing is that Israelis are entering into a personal relationship with the God of their fathers through Jesus the Messiah, as the good news is presented in their living rooms. Though not as public, this is the real work of evangelism.

Not only are the Messianic Jews of Israel interested in evangelism at home, but also in the world. In fact, the Lord Himself told some of the first Messianic Jews, "You shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8b, NASB). This perspective is maintained by a quarterly supplement of international Christian news ("Window On the Christian World") which is distributed with *Me'Et Le'Et* (cf. infra.).

In June, 1988, a team of three Israeli believers was sent by their local congregations to work in partnership with Jewish believers in England (Christian Witness to Israel) in a street campaign. This was arranged through the initiative and the {31} contacts of LCJE-Israel. The results of this cooperation were encouraging, and the future of this type of arrangement looks promising.

With such small numbers of Messianic Jews in Israel, it might seem strange to send teams overseas. However, there are significant numbers of Israelis who have emigrated to major European and American cities, and reports indicate a greater receptivity to the gospel among these emigrants than among the general Israeli population. It is also healthy to maintain a world vision in order to counter the Israeli tendency to introversion.

## II. CONGREGATIONS

The best estimates indicate that, at the present, there are approximately thirty congregations and house groups. Many of these meet in private homes. They are scattered from Upper Galilee to the southernmost tip of the Negev. For the past four or five years, they have increased in number at the rate of more than one new congregation per year and, at present, there are at least two new works anticipated by the end of 1989.

Very few descriptions can be offered of these congregations which will not be challenged by exceptions. Nevertheless, in general, they believe in the autonomy of the local congregation, a plurality of elders (with one handling most of the preaching responsibility), the priesthood of the believer, and believer's baptism by immersion (almost exclusively adults).

Though some congregations meet on Friday evening, others on Sunday evening, and at least one on Wednesday evening, most meet on Saturday. This arises not so much out of exegetical or theological reasons, as out of the six-day Israeli work schedule (in which Sunday is a day of labor and school for Israelis). Israel is moving toward a five-day workweek in which the weekend will consist of Friday and Saturday. This should free up more time for believers and give congregational leadership a little more freedom in scheduling activities.

With regard to the style of worship, there is definitely a trend toward contextualization. Immigrants are learning Hebrew, and congregations are moving away from a dependence on simultaneous translation into English, French, etc. There is a preference for the use of indigenous Hebrew music over the Hebrew translations of American, British and German hymns. Initially, most of the locally produced choruses were Scripture songs which used passages from the Psalms or other passages from the Hebrew Scriptures. Today there are more songs which are based on New Testament passages.

Most of the Hebrew songs which are sung in the congregations were introduced at annual music conferences held between 1981 and 1986. This music is reflecting more biblical content and a more “Jewish” sound. To date, five books of choruses have appeared, with more on the horizon.

{32} Several years ago, very few congregations provided an adequate Messianic education for their children. What literature there was, had been translated from material which had originally been written in English. Hebrew literature ‘is now being produced which is directed specifically to the Israeli Jewish context. It is being used regularly by approximately twelve congregations-this includes most of the larger congregations in the country. The goal is to produce age-graded materials which follow a three-year cycle. As more serious attention is given to Messianic children’s’ education, there will be an expanded need for teacher training.

Local congregations tend to eschew denominational labels, seeing them as hindrances to contextualization (among other reasons). Nevertheless, there is a solid consensus on the essential tenets of the faith. Although in the past one or two had hedged, the deity of our Lord is not openly denied. The atonement of Jesus is accepted as the basis for our salvation, received with repentance and faith in Him alone. The heretical “Dual Covenant” theology has had very little influence on Messianic Jews, though it has had considerable impact on non believing Israelis. On the surface at least, there appears to be an evangelical consensus.

This consensus on essential doctrines, however, belies a tremendous diversity of thought and expression. Since the Charismatic movement swept through the Israeli community of faith in the early ‘70’s; many congregations have been extensively affected. There are, however, several congregations which have not been significantly influenced by the “Renewal.” There have also been a few congregations which have been oriented more toward Torah observance. While these distinctives are still valid, it should be noted that there is a growing awareness, in all quarters, of the need for more serious study of the Scripture. There seems to be more concern for theological training and a hunger for more substantive doctrinal and expository teaching and preaching.

### **III. DISCIPLESHIP**

Obviously, discipleship is primarily the responsibility of the local congregation and the individual believer. Nevertheless, through camps, conferences, Messianic literature, and theological education, the process of discipleship is greatly enhanced. Messianic Jews in Israel are fortunate to have each, though they vary in the level of their development and helpfulness.

The Baptist Village serves both Jews and Arabs as it intentionally promotes the unity of Abraham’s greater Son. The Village is now used for congregational retreats and conferences, intercongregational seminars and conferences, family conferences for Messianic Jews, and conferences which coincide with some of the major Jewish holidays. The most significant of these is the Passover Conference which draws hundreds of believers from all parts of the country. This conference was once organized by an ad hoc committee, but is now the responsibility of the National Conference of Congregational Leadership.

{33} The Israel Trust of the Anglican Church has operated the Stella Carmel Conference Center near Haifa since 1961. It serves both Arab and Jewish believers, and also places a priority on reconciliation. It may best be described as a retreat center with an emphasis on encouragement, renewal and intercession. Many of the congregations and families of Messianic Jews throughout the

country have been strengthened by the ministry of the staff and the conferences which have been hosted by Stella Carmel.

A local board of directors (Keren Achvah Meshichit) has owned and operated Beit Yedidiah Conference Center in Haifa since the early '70s. Although the relationship is unofficial, this center is related primarily to a few congregations, such as Messianic Assembly in Jerusalem. It seeks to serve the needs of all congregations, but actually ministers to a more restricted circle. Nevertheless, through their conferences, they have contributed to the discipleship and growth of believers and congregations.

From 1966-1972, the Baptist Village sponsored a Hebrew camp to which both Messianic and non-Messianic Israelis sent their children. Since 1971, the Messianic Assembly in Jerusalem has sponsored a camp program for the children of Messianic believers. It began with approximately 25 children, half of whom spoke English. This camp now serves 160 children and teenagers during a Hebrew-only summer program. The Messianic Assembly also has special events for high schoolers during some of the major holidays. In addition to this, the congregations on the coastal plain (Ashqelon, Tel Aviv, Netanya, etc.) are formulating plans for a camp program which is set to begin in 1990.

Messianic literature is also an important tool in the discipleship and spiritual growth of Israeli believers. In 1973, a three-volume concordance to the Hebrew New Testament was published, under the auspices of the United Christian Council of Israel. In the first quarter of 1990, the Bible Society plans to release an annotated edition of the Modern Hebrew New Testament. It will contain cross-references, color maps, tables of weights and measures, a glossary, an index, a wide range of introductory and explanatory articles, and footnotes which, in addition to the usual clarifications, will alert the reader to parallels in rabbinic literature as well as in other Jewish sources. Most of these articles and notes are locally written and edited.

Although several groups have published books and materials in Hebrew, the largest two are Yanetz, in Jerusalem, and HaGefen, in the Tel Aviv area. Yanetz has published over one hundred titles which cover many categories of Messianic literature, particularly devotional literature and biographies. HaGefen, on the other hand, has published over thirty books. Although HaGefen has published some devotional literature, it has concentrated on books which deal with doctrine, Bible exposition, and practical areas of application. HaGefen publishes more locally-written material which is {34} written specifically for an Israeli readership. Both HaGefen and Yanetz publish evangelistic materials.

Trends in this area are difficult to identify, but there has definitely been an improvement in the quality of both the writing and the production of Messianic literature over the years. More books are being written in Israel, and for Israelis. *Ha'Ish HaHu* ("That Man")<sup>10</sup>, a book which presents the life of Jesus in the context of the land and people of Israel, is a good example.

Messianic magazines have also been sources of information, edification, and encouragement. *B'Shuv* ("With the Return"), a journal of news and relevant devotional articles is published twice annually, under the editorship of Menahem Benhayim. *Me'Et Le'Et* ("From Time to

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<sup>10</sup> Hendren, Noam. *Halsh HaHu*. Tel Aviv: Dugith, 1987.

*Time*”) is a quarterly which is published by HaGefen and edited by a four-member editorial board. It consists of news and articles of informed devotional content dealing with history, doctrine and apologetics. HaGefen also publishes *Re’a Ne’eman* (“Faithful Friend”), a quarterly devoted to young people between the ages of 9 and 13. Also produced by an editorial board, *Re’a Ne’eman* seeks to develop a total world view, with articles covering a wide range of subjects such as geography, science, Jewish lore and Bible stories.

*MISHKAN: A Theological Forum on Jewish Evangelism*, which you hold in your hands, began as a project of the United Christian Council of Israel. Although it serves an international readership, it is not without influence and honor in its own country. It is read by believer and non-believer alike, and provides a forum for the exchange of ideas which are relevant to Jewish evangelism, Hebrew Christian/Messianic- Jewish identity and Jewish/Christian relations.

Though some of the young Israeli believers are studying in Christian schools abroad, there are some options within Israel. Beit Immanuel Study Center began in 1981 and, although in the first several years had enrolled very few, in the last three years has had about three hundred students who have enrolled for seminars and short term offerings. Just over 40% of that number was indigenous. In addition, more than one hundred fifty students have completed at least one of the fourteen semester-length courses (90% of those were local believers). By offering courses in the evenings, the Study Center has been able to serve local believers who must also work. The Study Center has recently closed, but there are plans to open a new study center soon, with an organizational structure placing administration and control of the program in the hands of local Messianic Jews.

Caspari Center is the Israeli branch of the Norway Israel Mission (D.N.I.). It is named for Theodore Caspari, a Norwegian Messianic Jew who wrote a definitive Arabic grammar in the last century. Caspari sponsors *Telem*, a lay version of theological education by extension. *Telem* offers two certificate programs and a diploma program. They have averaged approximately twenty students per year since they began in 1984 and are continuing to produce original classroom materials {35} in Hebrew. Together with the Beit Immanuel Study Center, they have helped to meet a very pressing need. Of course, much more needs to be done.

#### **IV. MESSIANIC JEWS AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL**

Though Jewish believers have always found themselves in the minority not since the first century have they lived in the context of a Jewish, unbelieving State. Several legal studies have been made which relate to the Messianic Jews in Israel. Eric Pillischer, an Israeli believer and lawyer, made a study of “Religious Freedom in Israel” for the United Christian Council of Israel; an Israeli lawyer retained by a Jerusalem congregation made a study of prohibitions and possibilities in evangelism in Jerusalem; and legal counsel representing the Evangelism Committee has investigated the legality of tract distribution in the Tel Aviv area.

Basically, the legal concerns of Messianic Jews in Israel lie in three areas: gaining citizenship under the Law of Return; countering harassment or defamation; and establishing the freedoms of expression and assembly, in order to witness and congregate as Messianic Jews. In relation to this last mentioned area of concern, clarification is needed regarding the so-called “Anti-mission Law.”

Wesley Pippert says, “In Israel, the law prohibits activity by Christian missionaries.”<sup>11</sup> This reflects a common misunderstanding. In the first place, the Ministry of Interior, in consultation with the Ministry of Religious Affairs, grants visas to scores of missionaries and denominational representatives annually. This is in perfect harmony with Israel’s commitment to freedom of religion. In the second place, there is little distinction between a missionary and any other believer. However much believers may oppose Moshe Porush, leader of a group of anti-missionary activists in Jerusalem, he was absolutely correct when he said, “Whoever declares that he is a good Christian but is not a missionary either is lying or isn’t a good Christian. Whoever is familiar with theology knows that in their eyes mission is an obligation.”<sup>12</sup> One could only wish that every believer shared his “Orthodoxy”! Israel permits the activities of Messianic Jew and missionary alike.

What the law proscribes is the offer or acceptance of a material inducement (i.e., a bribe) to change religions. Again, it has been said, “Thus even giving out a tract, being a thing of value, is against the law.”<sup>13</sup> The question, however, is not whether a thing has value, but if that value is sufficient to constitute “material inducement.” At this point, Israelis are not becoming believers in order that they might become recipients of a tract!

This law reveals a total lack of understanding concerning what it means to place one’s trust in the Messiah of Israel. That trust is faith in Jesus alone for eternal salvation, and must be completely unaffected by material considerations. Furthermore, it is not until an individual is capable of making this decision that {36} he can be considered a believer. Finally, Messianic Jews have not converted from being Jews to non-Jews, but are Jews, once alienated from the God of their fathers, who now have a personal relationship with Him through Jesus the Messiah. Needless to say, no charge has ever been brought to court under this law.

Messianic Jews in Israel do not have great difficulty with the laws of the State, but with the abuse of authority often exercised by clerks and bureaucrats, and with the indifference of officials to the plight of believers. Another cause of concern is the fact that a portion of the financial support for Yad L’Achim, a society of anti-mission activists, comes from the government itself. Nevertheless, most believers are patriotic citizens who abide by the laws of the land.

## **V. MESSIANIC JEWS, ARABS AND THE *INTIFADA***

To begin with, it is essential that a distinction be made between Israeli Arabs and West Bank or Gaza Arabs. Though most Israeli Arabs consider themselves Palestinians, the pressures and dynamics are different.

There are solid relationships and excellent fellowship between Messianic Jews and Israeli Arabs. In spite of the language and cultural differences, congregations of Arab and Jewish believers occasionally worship together or exchange pulpits. It should also be noted that Arab believers have joined with Messianic Jews in every major evangelistic campaign.

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<sup>11</sup> Pippert, pg. 205

<sup>12</sup> Moshe Porush, newspaper interview in January, 1984, quoted on pg. 32 of Willmington /Pritz

<sup>13</sup> Pippert, pg. 205



With regard to West Bank or Gaza Arab believers, the *intifada* (uprising) has definitely brought about a change of relationship with Messianic Jews. Prior to the *intifada*, fellowship retreats were held in which Messianic Jews and West Bank Arab believers got to know and understand each other. They spent time in each other's home, and their families were brought together.

In spite of a very sensitive and caring statement which was issued by Grace and Truth Congregation in Rehovot and some fellowship which continued initially, these activities largely ceased with the *intifada*. Two major reasons may be suggested for this: the West Bank and Gaza believers face a very serious threat from radical extremists if they are perceived as being too friendly with Israelis. Many who were thought to be collaborators with Israel have been brutally murdered. The second reason is a theological difference which politics have thrust to the fore: whereas most Messianic Jews believe that God's covenant with Abraham was unconditional, that therefore the people of Israel still have a valid biblical claim to the Land, and that there is yet a distinct role for the Jewish people in the economy of God, their brothers and sisters on the West Bank and in Gaza would tend to disagree. Prior to the *intifada*, it was possible to overlook these differences, but that is no longer the case. Outside influences have prevented believers from expressing their oneness, what with the tension and strife which are bound up in the *intifada*.

{37} An Israeli believer, serving not only as an elder in his congregation but also in Israel's reserves, told of a recent tour of duty in Gaza. While there, he was gratified to be able to be of some help to several Arab believers. Nevertheless, it would have been naive to claim that politics did not matter, as he stood with a gun and a uniform that symbolized all that they had grown to hate. As conditions seem to be deteriorating politically, we can only pray that the Prince of Peace will invade the hearts and lives of Jew and Arab alike.

To the Western mind, religion and politics are separate categories. This is not so in the Middle East, where the political implications of religious belief are more immediately apparent. The premise that one's beliefs determine one's political actions is taken for granted, but it is no less true with regard to the trends which we have observed among Messianic Jews in Israel. Proverbs 23:7 says, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

There is a constant need for balance. The trend toward greater cooperation has helped to provide balance both in theological development and in evangelism. This will continue to be a priority concern. The trend toward the indigenization of present ministries and institutions must be balanced by the needs for trained leadership. The trend toward contextualization should be balanced, not only by gospel distinctives, but also compounded with a world vision and with compassion and justice for the "stranger within thy gates" (Deuteronomy 24:14).

The mere identification of trends, however, is inadequate. Through prayerful and careful Bible study, we must identify God's will for future development. Neither our theology nor our practice should be allowed to develop "accidentally." We have been called to work together in thoughtful and intentional ministry.

This article has been an attempt to paint a picture of the conditions and the degree of development of Messianic Jews in Israel. This has necessarily involved a survey of the events of the past ten or fifteen years. Within the confines of an article of this nature, it has not been possible to paint with a very fine brush. The fact that readily available information is often inadequate and sometimes inaccurate is a

frustration to be anticipated. Nevertheless, the production of a fairly comprehensive study of Messianic Jews in Israel covering the 1970's and 1980's is a work which needs to be done. It should richly reward the patient and skilled hand, for though these times are perilous, they are indeed exciting.

## {38} TRENDS IN JEWISH EVANGELISM IN SOUTH AFRICA

*Rodney Mechanic*

Rodney Mechanic is a Messianic Jew born in Johannesburg. He presently lives in Cape Town, and with his wife is involved in Jewish ministry with Messianic Testimony.

Under the Dutch East India Company, prior to 1795, no practicing Jew was allowed to reside in the Cape Colony. This changed when the British took over the rule of the Cape in that year. By 1846 there were a number of Jewish people living in Southern Africa. During the last century a small number of Jewish people are recorded as having become baptised members of both the Dutch Reformed and Anglican churches. It appears that they were genuine believers.

{39} The 20th century saw a great influx of European settlers to the gold fields. Among these new immigrants were many Jewish people who came to the Reef, with Johannesburg as its centre. Today 56% of the Jewish population are in Johannesburg and about 22% in Cape Town, which is the oldest Jewish community in South Africa. The remaining 12% are scattered throughout the country, with sizable communities in Durban, Port Elizabeth, East London and Bloemfontein. The total of South African Jewry is approximately 120,000, including a number of Israeli-born Jews.

### **Outreach among the Jewish People**

The Dutch Reformed Church is the only denomination consistently involved in ministry among the Jewish people since the early part of the 20th century. Their workers on the Reef and in Cape Town continue to exercise a meaningful role in sharing the gospel with the Jews.

About 1948 the British Jews Society (now known as Christian Witness to Israel) established a work in South Africa under the name of the South Africa Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Among the Jews (SAJS), with headquarters in Cape Town. At the height of their activity, they had workers in most of the Jewish population centres. Rev. Jack Mundel, himself from a Jewish/Scottish background, was a most dynamic leader and the Society's annual general meetings in Cape Town drew crowds of up to 1500 people, including numbers of Jewish people.

The Prayer Union for Israel and The Messianic Testimony have both maintained a faithful witness in Johannesburg for many years. In addition, a number of smaller organizations and individuals have been involved in sharing their faith among the Jews. Among these is the Good News Society, based in Johannesburg, which produces outstanding free gospel booklets, including the "Rabbis' edition" - testimonies of twelve rabbis who came to faith in Yeshua.

In January 1984 the Church's Ministry Among the Jews was established in Cape Town under the name "The Messiah's People Outreach." This was an Anglican Society with headquarters in London. There was considerable success in sharing the gospel with Jewish people and about 10 Jewish people came to faith in Yeshua as Lord. Activities included open-air witnessing, particularly along the Sea Point beachfront, which is a high-density Jewish area.

Such activity did not go unnoticed by the Orthodox Jewish leadership. Rabbi Selwyn Franklin has spearheaded the opposition of the Marais Road Synagogue in Sea Point, the largest Jewish congregation in the Southern Hemisphere. Franklin is trained in deprogramming Jewish people involved in cults. He declared to the Jewish press that he was declaring war on the "Missionaries" in what he termed 'a Maccabean battle for survival'. His efforts have had some success in turning back a number of Jewish believers to Orthodox Judaism.

{40} Rabbi Franklin has also influenced senior Anglican clergy, including Nobel Peace Prize winner Archbishop Tutu to end "the Messiah's People Outreach." This is a very crucial time in the history of South Africa, a country undergoing great stress both at home and internationally as a result of the failure of the apartheid racial policies espoused by the Nationalist Party. The Jewish people are very insecure, and some are willing to consider the gospel message as they search for security.

The question facing us in this part of the world is whether or not we will be able to take advantage of the present spiritual climate to reach South Africa's Jewish community. We need a two-fold strategy to make an impact. First, the church needs to be mobilized to pray for the salvation of the Jewish people. Evangelistic training programmes at Bible schools need to help tomorrow's leaders become aware of the need to reach out to the Jewish people. Believers need to be taught the Jewish roots of their faith, so there will be greater sensitivity to Jewish culture and belief.

Second, we need to be actively involved in reaching Jewish people through evangelism, discipleship and the creation of Messianic fellowships and congregations. Each of these aspects forms an important stage in the establishment of Jewish people within the Body of Messiah in South Africa. Much of the traditional evangelistic endeavour has been strong on outreach, but has not dealt with questions of Jewish identity and of the assimilation process--often these have been the end result of our failure to face the issues involved. Consequently, there are very few second and third generation Messianic Jewish believers in the Diaspora. The resultant potential for a strong Messianic witness has largely been lost.

I believe this is a time of unprecedented opportunity to reach our Jewish people in South Africa, so that they too may be included in the fulfillment of the Great Commission-- 'Jerusalem,... Judea and Samaria, and even unto the remotest part of the earth ' (Acts 1:8).

# TRENDS IN JEWISH EVANGELISM IN FRANCE, SWITZERLAND AND BELGIUM

*Rev. Jacques Guggenheim*

*Rev. Jacques Guggenheim is editor of *Le Berger d'Israel*, and ministers out of the Greater Paris area under the auspices of Chosen People Ministries and the Messianic Testimony.*

In 1936 Doctor Joseph Hoffman Cohn, then president of the American Board of Missions to the Jews (now Chosen People Ministries), asked Rev. Henri Vincent to {41} begin a work in Paris. Vincent sought to help Jewish refugees who were fleeing the Nazi regime. During the Occupation in France, he dedicated himself to these people, hiding them from arrest.

The first French edition *Le Berger d'Israel* ("The Shepherd of Israel") a monthly paper for Messianic Jews, appeared in 1936. For several years, it was published in French and Yiddish. In its 52 years of existence, several million copies of the paper have been distributed throughout the French-speaking world. About 100,000 copies are presently distributed annually.

The Messianic Testimony of London has had a work in France since 1950. It now supports a team of seven workers who work mainly in Paris and Marseille. In 1959 Rev. Jacques Guggenheim joined the Messianic Testimony, which has been associated with Chosen People Ministries (formerly American Board of Missions to the Jews) since 1978. Since 1978 Guggenheim has served as editor of the paper *Le Berger d'Israel*. Prior to that time, Guggenheim had an evangelistic outreach to the Jewish population of Alsace from 1964 to 1978. The "Messianic Testimony To Israel" (MTI) has a ministry in Paris, Belgium and Switzerland; the Pentecostal Churches of Scandinavia support this work. They have established a Messianic Jewish assembly in Paris, and publish a quarterly paper as well as various and tapes and tracts. Other groups are mainly known through their periodicals.

Of the 700,000 Jewish people living in France, 320,000 live in Paris and its suburbs and nearly 220,000 live in the South (Marseille, Nice, Carpentras). Approximately 400,000 of the Jewish population are Sephardim, Jews of Mediterranean or North African background. Jewish believers number about 500-600 in France.

Jewish missions in the last 10 years have suffered at the hands of a small minority who insisted that all Messianic Jews must leave the evangelical assemblies and churches. Most Messianic Jews in Europe are part of the various Protestant and evangelical churches. Some are even part of the Roman Catholic Church. Several have assimilated voluntarily, or perhaps by friendly persuasion, forgetting their Jewish roots and identity. Others have attached supreme importance to their Jewish origins, often violating a balanced New Testament perspective. During the past years, three Messianic assemblies have been planted in France. One has since closed and a second maintains no ongoing contact with the larger body of Christ. The third, in Paris, consists of some 60 Jewish believers.

There remains a need for Messianic Bible-study groups. Some of these Bible studies may eventually become Messianic assemblies; nevertheless, the basic need today is for men and women rooted in faith

and in sound doctrine. Four Messianic Bible studies of the *Berger d'Israel* meet in Paris, Marseille, Aix-en-Provence and Lyon. Others are presently in the planning stages. Christians of Jewish background participate in these groups and wish to explore both the Jewish and Christian {42} roots of their faith. Their goal is to be an active part of the body of Christ, as well as to relate meaningfully to their Jewish friends and family.

## TRENDS IN JEWISH EVANGELISM IN BRITAIN

*Steven and Elizabeth Myers*

*Elizabeth Myers is editor of the Bulletin of the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism, and is currently working towards her Ph.D. at Fuller Theological Seminary, specializing in Jewish-Christian studies. Steven Myers, a businessman and former rabbinical student, serves on the Council and General Committee of CMJ, and is also engaged in missiological studies at Fuller.*

LONDON BLITZ BY MISSIONARIES! MISSIONARY FIGHT IS ON! 'INVASION' BY MISSIONARIES! JEWS FOR JESUS THREAT ON THE RISE! LUBAVITCH FIGHTS BACK! Headlines such as these, which have appeared at various times over the past few years in the Jewish Chronicle, London's premier Jewish newspaper, well illustrate the renewed vigor with which agencies and individuals are undertaking Jewish evangelism in Britain. The number of Jewish Christians in Britain is estimated to have doubled since 1980, to a total of slightly more than 5,000 (in a Jewish community of 330,000). The two major Jewish missions, CMJ [The Church's Ministry among the Jews] and CWI [Christian Witness to Israel], are both recruiting Jewish believers, mostly recent college graduates, to strengthen their London work. The CCJ [Council of Christians and Jews] 'deplores' their activity. The British public tends to consider all evangelistic activity somewhat distasteful, secretly sympathizing with rabbis who cry 'foul!' Witness the editor of The Times: "After 20 centuries, enough is surely enough. And what has Christendom to show for those 20 centuries which could remotely justify the presumption that the state of professed Christianity is a superior one? Disraeli said that Christianity was completed Judaism. That is what it may have aspired to be, but if only it had achieved more of its aspirations. The record of organized Christendom entitles no Christian to presume that his Church is any more complete in its spirituality than the rabbinical approach theoretically left behind, in the wrong, 20 centuries ago" (The Times, 2 April 1983).

Notwithstanding the reference to Benjamin Disraeli, the editor of The Times evidently assumed, as the rabbis would wish him to, that those who were perpetrating their dastardly efforts in attempting to 'convert' the Jews were themselves Gentile believers, the natural inheritors of Christendom's mistakes and disasters. He was wrong. As has increasingly been the case in other parts of the world, those who can boast most 'success' in raising the profile of Jewish evangelism in Britain are in fact Jewish believers in Jesus. Disdained by the rabbis, disowned by the Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) and disliked by some Anglican bishops, they have nonetheless found an open ear among many in the British Jewish community. Disaffected by the endless internal squabbles of their communal leaders, the empty materialism of their elders, and the rigid legalism that often passes for spirituality, members of the Jewish community who have grown up in the post-war generation have listened with astonished, growing respect to their friends and relatives who have found their Jewishness enriched and fulfilled through faith in Jesus the Messiah.

It is this intrigued openness that has led the self-styled spokesmen of the Jewish community to engage in the vitriolic condemnation of the 'missionaries' that has characterized official Jewish response. The Jewish Chronicle, reporting a public meeting held by members of Jews For Jesus held in an Anglican church, stated: "The Jewish community, however, is alarmed at the fact that the church authorities appeared to be at least complacent, if not acquiescent, at what was blatantly an attempt to foment anti-

Jewish feeling” (24 August 1984). The following year, the same newspaper announced the setting up of a CCJ working party “... which Jewish leaders hope will call for clear church condemnation of ‘underhanded’ tactics used by fringe evangelical groups to lure Jews to become Christians” (15 November 1985). The growing paranoia of these leaders (whose names are never disclosed!) is underlined by the Jewish Chronicle’s recently adopted policy of labeling Jewish missions as cults: a paragraph quoting the CCJ’s outgoing director as deploring the “... increasing activity of Christian missionary groups” was printed under the headline DANGER FROM CULTS (12 June 1987).

Again and again, the overworked allegation is made that Messianic Jews are the symptom of a new, more insidious, ‘final solution.’ The Crusades, the Inquisition, the Holocaust, the missionaries - all are rolled into one. Murdo MacLeod spoke for many when he wrote, in a letter to the Jewish Chronicle: “As a Christian, I deplore the attribution of guilt to succeeding generations of Jews for any culpability that may have belonged to the generation of Christ’s time, but I also plead for cessation of this unseemly clamor for the present-day Church to go ‘in sackcloth and ashes’ for the sins of a previous age” (13 May 1983). Yet the clamor is still heard: “We have not survived the death camps of Europe in order willingly to surrender our Jewish identity” (editorial on ‘conversionist propaganda,’ Jewish Chronicle, 10 May 1985). The CCJ agrees: “Claims are still made that the Church is the true Israel, so devaluing the religious significance of living Judaism, and conversionist activity implies a ‘spiritual final solution’” (letter to The Times from CCJ’s executive director, 6 April 1985).

In the years immediately following the Second World War, various British Jewish missions trod very carefully in reconstructing their shattered work. The Jewish {44} community of Britain, having survived the Holocaust, suffered an element of collective guilt for having been spared so completely. A compelling sense of identification with the victims emerged for this very reason. The missions reacted with tact and diplomacy. Names like ‘Church Missions to Jews’ were quietly dropped. Gentile missionaries to the Jewish people adopted a lower profile. Only with the advent of a sizeable number of credible *Jewish* believers, did the tide begin to turn for the cause of Jewish evangelism in Britain. During the present decade Jewish believers have become prominent in the efforts of groups such as CWI and CMJ, causing these institutions to re-examine their goals and strategies. Jewish Christians engaged in street evangelism can no longer be faced with the complaint: “You’ve no right to try to convert us to your way of thinking after all you’ve done to us!”

In recent years, the individual Londoner has increasingly encountered Jewish Christians in the underground station, in the high street, in the park. Jews For Jesus led the way with their 1983 ‘Messiah has come’ campaign, staged in cooperation with CMJ, CWI and The Messianic Testimony to Israel. Smaller campaigns have taken place at regular intervals since that date, timed to coincide with either Jewish holidays or the summer holidays! Most recently, CWI conducted a 1988 summer program designed to reach Jews, Israeli tourists and others with the gospel. (*Ed. note:* a team of evangelists from Israel participated in this outreach.)

Evangelical Christians in Britain have enthusiastically supported the new confidence in evangelism shown by their Jewish brothers and sisters in Christ. The arrival of a Jews For Jesus booth at major Christian events, organized by London representative Anne Teymourian, has been warmly welcomed. Following a successful first appearance at Spring Harvest (Britain’s biggest annual Christian holiday week, attracting 60,000 this year), Susan Perlman is now writing a guest column for 21st Century Christian Magazine, Britain’s largest circulation Christian monthly. Miss Perlman



will be returning to Spring Harvest for the coming season, and the Jewish presence on the platform will be further strengthened by Steven and Elizabeth Myers, who have been engaged as speakers.

The profile of Jewish believers among evangelical Christians has been further raised by the regular radio and television appearances of Michele Guinness, best-selling author of *Child of the Covenant*. Indeed, books by and about Jewish Christians and about Jewish evangelism are much in vogue. A British edition of Moishe Rosen's *Y'shua - the Jewish Way to Say Jesus* has been successfully launched by CWI. A new book about Jewish evangelism, authored jointly by David Harley, Martin Goldsmith and Walter Riggans, is slated for publication shortly. Jewish missions are also slowly dragging themselves into the video age: CWI is offering to its supporters a new video entitled *My People* along with the old favorite *Still Not Ashamed* (produced by Jews for Jesus). CMJ has recently released a video titled *The Shepherd of Israel*.

{45} Not all British Christian leaders are pleased with these developments. The recent Lambeth Conference (the gathering of Anglican bishops from around the world) was presented with a proposal denigrating missionary overtures by Anglicans to Jewish people, suggesting that the Jewish people find their salvation through being "... faithful to the Torah which God has given them" (Church Times, 29 July 1988). The appropriate stance of Anglicans toward Jews, it was claimed, should be one of 'sincere dialogue' rather than 'Christian triumphalism'. The Bishop of Oxford was quoted as saying that all forms of proselytizing, aggressive or manipulative [the only two choices?], must be firmly rejected. The Lambeth fathers chose to redraft the proposal, omitting all reference to the undesirability of Jewish evangelism, before accepting it, but not before the media had extensively discussed the subject.

The outlook for Jewish evangelism in Britain is encouraging. The growing presence of Jewish Christians in churches is making itself felt. Various official handbooks of the Jewish community bemoan the fact that Britain's Jewish population has decreased by 25 per cent over the past 30 years, from 450,000 to 330,000. The Church Times wryly commented that 'defection to Christianity' might not have been a significant contributory factor to the numerical decline of British Jewry, but it is certain that the statisticians consider Messianic Jews to have deserted the fold. As is true in other countries, Jewish believers disagree. They proclaim their identification with their Jewish heritage in no uncertain terms and are determined to continue to do so.

The following information on CWI's summer outreach programme has been compiled from a report by team leader Paul Morris to supplement the previous article on Jewish Evangelism in Great Britain.

Aiming "to reach Israelis and other Jews with the gospel in the centre and suburbs of London," an outreach team of seven (bolstered by 15 volunteers who contributed from one to four days each) distributed tracts, visited in homes and held an open air meeting during an evangelistic campaign July 16-29, 1988.

*During the first week we began with the team devotions and then went into central London for a morning and afternoon session of tracting. We returned to Kensit (Memorial College, where the group stayed) for our evening meal, and then went back to the various 'night-spots' in the West End for a further session of witness. The second week we began with team*

*devotions and then went door-to-door in the suburbs. Our main meal was at lunchtime. Later in the afternoon we went to the suburban underground stations giving tracts to shoppers and homecoming commuters. In the evenings we either went door-to-door or went tracting in the busier suburban streets.*

{46} In areas with a large Jewish population, the team distributed the book Y'shua, the booklet "God has Promised," or the tract, "Facing Eternity." Gentiles were offered the tract "Evolution - a Myth?" A number of books in Hebrew were available for Israelis. The team received a series of Israelis' addresses and visited each of those with an Israeli believer.

Some CWI workers who served on the campaign are executing the follow-up; they are often enlisting the help of local churches in the follow-up of Gentiles.

# Trends in Jewish Evangelism in Germany

*Alfred Burchartz*

Alfred Burchartz is former General Secretary of Evangeliumsdienst for Israel, and resides in Nürtingen, West Germany.

## **The Situation in Germany**

During the four decades following the collapse of Nazi tyranny, the subject of the Holocaust has remained central to discussions concerning the relationship between Jews and Christians. The after-shocks concerning what had been done to Jews in a supposedly “Christian” country have had ramifications of vital importance.

Of primary importance has been a wish to achieve a new and better relationship with the Jewish people. It was hoped that, by getting to know both the Jewish people and their faith, prejudices would be broken down and age-old misunderstandings concerning them would be cleared up; the resulting by-products would be both the confrontation and abolition of anti-semitism in the hearts of the German people. From these presuppositions emerged what is called the modern “dialogue” between Christians and Jews.

Next came an uncertainty concerning certain Christian doctrines. It was recognized that certain traditional teachings of the Church contained some elements which may have aided or even encouraged anti-semitic tendencies already present in the so-called “Christian” nations. This recognition led both to an examination of the Church’s theological teaching concerning the Jewish people and a demand for new theologizing concerning them.

Undoubtedly, the whole issue of dialogue became an important area of study for Christians and this tendency was supported to a large extent by outstanding representatives of Reform Judaism.

{47} A new sensitivity arose to Jewish elements of faith found in the New Testament, and a new realization of Christianity’s dependence on the ancient Jewish faith for its self-understanding also arose. As well, the need was seen for feedback to Christians from the perspective of Judaism. The other side of the spectrum, however, was not held to be true, for the Christian faith was understood to have no relevance for Jews in their own faith-deliberations. The understanding was that Christians and Jews should accept and understand each other as partners before the one and only God, and that the Christian partner should feel thankful that Jews, after the Holocaust, would be interested in this type of partnership.

As a result, the teaching of two parallel ways of salvation leading to the same destination found greater acceptance: the Christian way included Jesus, the Jew of Nazareth, while the Jewish way continued without Him. In the considered opinion of many representatives of Christian-Jewish dialogue, the above perspective does, and should, hinder any form of evangelization or mission among the Jews, regardless of form or motive. Jewish evangelism today is interpreted by this group as an outcome of anti-semitic tendencies in the history of the Christian Church. The proponents of

such attitudes could not accept the eternal election of Israel as God's people, and therefore could not consider the Jewish people as an equal partner for dialogue, but only as an object of missionizing. This hypothesis is supposedly proven by the Jewish mission societies' proselytizing activities.

These are also the supposed reasons why the Jewish contingent, with very few exceptions, refuses to participate in dialogue with representatives of Jewish mission societies.

The uncertainty of many Christians was increased by doubt and questions brought into the dialogue as a result of input from the Jewish contingent, doubts revolving around and building upon liberal Protestant theological research concerning the person of Jesus and the origins of the New Testament.

First of all, these questions concern the "historical Jesus": is Jesus of Nazareth really the same figure as the one presented in the New Testament? Perhaps, instead, Reform Jews are right in understanding Jesus to be a morally excelling and faithful Jew, one of Israel's most outstanding teachers (e.g. the opinion of Shalom Ben-Chorin in "Jesus our Brother"). This line of questioning urges a re-examination of fundamental Christian testimony concerning the person of Jesus Christ, more than a re-examination of Christological thinking from the perspective of historical theology. Shalom Ben-Chorin is of the opinion that the faith which Jesus held (as a Jew) could unite Jews and Christians, but that faith in Jesus must separate them. Pinchas Lapide has formulated it even more succinctly: "After the death of Jesus, the evangelical imagination got fired up!" He claims that the Christian faith is founded on a basic misunderstanding concerning the person of Jesus, and has led to a host of other misunderstandings (e.g. concerning the Jewish people).

{48} This debate has enlarged to challenge churches and theologians with another question: are not the roots of anti-semitism already to be found in the New Testament? Are not the origins of all Jew-hatred based on, influenced by and even demanded by the New Testament and gospel preaching? One example of the above concerns John 14:6. This "supposed" saying of Jesus, it is posited, reeks of arrogance and haughty superiority toward the Jews, and this had to lead eventually to the murderous teaching about the rejection of Israel.

It becomes clear why there is a sharp dispute in present-day Christianity regarding the integrity with which Christian dogma can be represented and taught, not only to the Jews, but also to Christians in the churches. For example, can the second article of the Apostolic Creed ("I believe in Jesus Christ") claim universal validity for all Christians, or are such declarations only empty formulations which cannot even be re-interpreted or filled with new meaning? Can such an article have any value or use when people are baptized, confirmed, given communion and helped at the hour of death? It is natural to understand the suspicion among orthodox Christians that this state of affairs might lead to such a recasting of the faith and program of the Church that the result would be an abandoning of the faith itself, at least that faith founded on the apostles and the prophets with Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone.

The existing uncertainty in some circles of Christianity regarding the foundations of its own faith is also exacerbated by the deafening silence of many of the Church's most eloquent spokesmen. This reticence in leadership has led to the development of new and more evangelical structures and ministries by those who are not favourably impressed by the deepening spiritual emptiness in the churches. On the other hand, the influence of the Free Churches, as well as of other denominational

streams and sects, is increasing. Many of these groups connect their eschatological hopes of redemption with the State of Israel (in what this author feels is a most unbiblical manner).

### **Tasks and Perspectives**

In Germany there are at present two church-linked organizations, which in the true sense of the word can be called “Missions to the Jews.” These are Evangelisch-lutherischer Zentralverein für Zeugnis und Dienst unter Juden und Christen (Evangelical Lutheran Central Agency for Witness and Service to Jews and Christians) with local branches, and the Evangeliumsdienst für Israel. (E.D.I. - Evangelical Mission to Israel). Both organizations have roots in the pietistic tradition and have a different identity from the one usually ascribed to them by their modern opponents. The approach of Jewish missions to the Jewish people and to Judaism has always been seen by these organizations as service to Jesus motivated by the love of God in Jesus to His people Israel. A natural development, therefore, was their desire for a better understanding of Judaism among Christians, as well as a greater appreciation of the New Testament, (a book which, in their {49} opinion, presented its Jewish message to Jewish people in Jewish faith-terms). According to this viewpoint, love for Israel as expressed in Romans 9-11 cannot be understood or explained without the presuppositional context of Romans 1:16.

For the Jewish missionary societies, the person of Jesus and His atoning sacrifice on Calvary for the Jewish people still remained the centre of their theology of Israel. Chronologically speaking, Jewish mission societies in Germany were first missions directed to a specific people, and only in the modern period were they suspected of being aligned with anti-semitism and “Christian” manifestations of such. Not much attention has been paid in Christian circles to the fact that in 1939 these societies were forbidden to operate by the Nazis and that their property was subsequently confiscated. Leo Baeck, one of the great rabbis of German Judaism, wrote prior to the Nazi period (in his book “The Character of Judaism”): “There exists, nevertheless, a serious and honest Jewish mission in devout Protestantism, motivated both by honest religious endeavour and also by a sincere love for Israel, which has often proved itself worthy in the face of its opponents.”

There is no doubt that even German societies which evangelize among Jewish people, cannot consider themselves free of the collective German guilt toward the Jewish people. Together with the rest of the Christian churches they continue in an attitude of repentance. And with that attitude they must ask themselves how they can witness to the Jewish people today. The final answers to such questions have perhaps not yet been found, but this much can be said:

A. The Christian witness to Israel in Germany is, as before, first and foremost a mission directed to a specific people. Some of its main tasks include introducing Judaism to Christians and winning respect and love for the Jewish people--all this based on the teachings of the New Testament. In this way it is hoped, anti-semitism will be restrained, while an unqualified, uncritical or jingoistic political support for Israel may be somewhat tempered.

B. In so doing, Jewish missions first and foremost serve the Church by reminding it of and witnessing to it concerning the fundamental truths and teachings of the evangelical Christian faith. It remains a truism that, if the gospel does not apply to the Jews, and if a Christian witness to them is no longer necessary, then that same gospel has no relevance to the Gentiles either.

Considering this viewpoint in light of the Holocaust, this much can be said: the Holocaust did not only result in the murder of six million Jews, due both to German guilt and to the silence of the churches; it also resulted in the destruction of the German Church's faithfulness to Jesus Christ. For the Church which belongs to the Messiah of Israel (that is, the Church of Jesus Christ) is by its calling, faith and character, first and foremost a witness to the Jewish people (Rom. 1:16, Rom. 10:1). When the Church is not faithful to that people and to its witness to that people, she gives up the heart of her identity and her reason for existing.

{50} C. In spite of the rejection of dialogue on the part of many Jews and non-evangelical Christians, a consistent commitment to evangelical witness on the part of Jewish mission societies has still made it possible to get into conversation with Jewish people. Experience shows that secularization is also increasing among Jews, and that ignorance of Judaism prevails. Therefore, according to our own experience, we consider it a legitimate task to help Jewish people rediscover their own Jewish faith, to understand it and to act upon it. After all, Jesus Christ was a Jew and lived according to the Jewish faith. As long as his own Judaism is strange to him, a Jew will never understand the consequence of the first coming of Jesus and of His atoning sacrifice for Israel.

D. We know that no man can convert anyone to Jesus Christ; that work is the unique ministry of the Spirit of God. Therefore, we oppose putting people under pressures which would lead them to forced decisions. On the other hand, conversations with Jews should not be allowed to become a monologue, in which only one party speaks or is allowed to speak.

E. As well as our own areas of ministry within Germany, our societies cooperate with other societies abroad, and thus we are committed to a world-wide ministry among the Jewish people on all continents. This fits in with an existing Christian evangelical ecumenism that brings a common Christian witness to the Jewish people, wherein confessional differences are not to be given priority.

This opens up a wide range of activity for the future, one which must not remain isolated by the exclusivity of our own theological bodies.

F. The State of Israel, whatever her borders, cannot and must not be considered a mission field for any German mission societies. It remains, however, one of their most important tasks to support indigenous Hebrew Christian congregations in their witness to their own people, in ways that are deemed suitable by them. All this can be done as long as they have no problems identifying with us and with the larger body of Messiah.

In conclusion it must be said: the much-desired renewal of the relationship between Christian and Jew in Germany cannot take place at the expense of our faith in Messiah Jesus. His church is committed to confess Him and bear His witness to all the world and this obligation cannot be dismissed, however compelling the reasons might seem. To give the impression that our commission is something which we might conceivably abandon in our dialogue with Jews today, would have very grave ramifications which would later need to be painfully corrected. Such a step would not renew our relationship with Jewish people, but impede it even further, and create tendencies in the churches as a whole which would lead to a very different type of reformation. As long as the church

is to remain faithful to its calling as the Church of Jesus Christ, then the proclamation must remain the same. “For there is salvation in no other name . . . .” (Acts 4:12).

# {51} TRENDS IN JEWISH EVANGELISM IN SCANDINAVIA : THE LONG TWILIGHT OF THE NORTHERN MISSION TO THE JEWS

*Heikki Nurminen*

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*“She simply writes the ‘ENTRANCE ALLOWED’, and God will forgive the poorness of her style*

*And angels are whispering to each other  
saying: How great is the depth,  
if these two simple words  
cause tears from the eyes of the Most High!”*  
(from the Hebrew poet Natan Alterman’s ‘The Swedish Language,’ 1942)

## **Not Everybody Is Silent**

Whatever Alterman was referring to in his poem, alongside the depths of evil that were about to swallow European Jewry, and the depth of sacrificial love that gave refuge to the persecuted, there was also a watery depth to be crossed, a concrete geographical obstacle to be bridged which separated the Danish shores from the coast of Sweden. On 30 September 1943, the eve of the Jewish New Year, the Jews of German-occupied Denmark were to be deported to Germany. During that stormy autumn night the Danish people carried out a rescue operation that has few parallels in history. More than 6.000 Jews were transported to Sweden by small Danish fishing boats. No wonder that the State of Israel has built a commemorative monument based on a model of one of these boats in Jerusalem, her capital city.

It is often asked, “why were Christians silent during the Nazi terror?” This question has created an impression that Christian voices were never raised, but this was not the case in Scandinavia. On 29 September 1943, Danish bishops wrote a letter which was signed by Bishop H. Fuglsang Damgaard of Copenhagen and sent to the German authorities in the country. The letter was read from all the pulpits of Danish churches on 3 October 1943. The text is worthy to be studied for generations. Norway had been occupied in April 1940. In November of the same {52} year a group of leading university and churchmen wrote an opposition letter to Mr. Quisling, the infamous collaborator. The first signatory was a theologian and revivalist preacher, Professor Ole Hallesby.

Finland found itself in a special position. It had lost Carelia in the East to the Russians during the Winter War of 1939-40 and had made a hopeless effort to win it back with the help of Germany. Finland and Germany were even allies for a certain period. In Autumn 1942 Germany demanded that all Jews living in Finland, including refugees from Central European countries, be surrendered. Field Marshal Mannerheim and the Cabinet refused in no uncertain terms, but eight Jews had already been loaded onto a “death ship” and transported to Germany. In memory of the eight, Finnish Christians



have established a moshav settlement called Yad HaShmona (“Memorial to the Eight”) in the Judean hills. During the war, the Friends of Israel Society and the Finnish Missionary Society, together with a special rescue committee, helped the Jewish refugees to escape to Sweden.

### **Missions Prepared The Soil**

Much of the readiness to help the Jewish people can be explained in terms of traditional Scandinavian humanism. The role of the Social Democratic parties in the rescue operations was central, at least in Sweden and Finland. But a full explanation is not possible without taking into consideration the century-long influence of Jewish missions on Scandinavian public opinion. Israel Mission was established in Norway in 1844, in Sweden in 1875, and in Denmark in 1885. In Finland in 1863 the Jewish Mission became in part of the general mission organization, the Finnish Missionary Society (today the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission). An interdenominational Jewish mission, the Friends of Israel was founded in 1908. These two worked in close cooperation for decades.

It is important to remember that, during the last century and in the first part of the present one, the Israel missions were practically the only organizations working for the promotion of interest, respect and love towards the Jewish people among the churches and the general public. Their ceaseless efforts produced study and scholarship of Talmudic literature and other Jewish sources, in many cases in cooperation with academic circles in their respective countries. At the same time, the deputation work carried out by the missions penetrated the local congregations, the grass roots of the nations. Prayer groups and missions circles covered all of Scandinavia. Ceaseless prayer for Israel’s salvation and for its wellbeing rose from many in these countries in the course of the decades immediately preceding the Holocaust, serving as a foundation for bravery when horror occurred.

Jewish mission is often described as being interested exclusively in the soul. The history of Scandinavian Israel missions, as well as the history of their sister organizations elsewhere, indicate that such an interest was likewise directed at the social-political wellbeing of the Jewish people. Several dedicated their lives to fight for the human rights and equal civil status of Jewish minorities and many good efforts were made for their social wellbeing. Rev. Hans Ucko of the Church of {53} Sweden Mission describes the positive impact of Jewish missions while sharply criticizing the triumphalism lurking in the minds of some Jewish missionaries:

*What started out as the “Svenska Israelsmissionen” in 1875 is as of 1976 a part of the Church of Sweden Mission. It is to be noted that the concern of the “Svenska Israelsmission” vis-à-vis the Jewish people has always remained the corner-stone of its work and still is. I think it is necessary to point out that the different mission societies for mission to the Jews actually were those groups in the Christian church who stood up for the Jewish people in the days when the churches sometimes indulged in an all out antisemitism. These mission societies had witnessed the plight of the Jewish people in Eastern Europe and were appalled. Their efforts to rescue the Jews from the pogroms were through the proclamation of the Gospel and through the invitation to baptism. There were surely other and obscure reasons for their zealotry to evangelize the Jews: a conviction that the way of Israel was doomed unless Israel repented and accepted baptism; a conviction that the covenant at Sinai no longer “post Christum” was a salvific way, but that the way of the Church was the only one henceforth; a conviction that the plight of the Jews was an immediate result of their having crucified the Lord and that the only remedy was to embrace the Christian faith. There were surely many unconscious anti-Jewish*

*feelings lurking in their attempt to reach out to the Jews. Overriding however was an equally unconscious and unreflected "love" for the Jews being the brothers and sisters of Jesus according to the flesh.*

### **The Golden Age of Jewish Mission**

The Jewish population in Scandinavian countries has always been rather small (today's figures: Denmark-8,000; Norway-1,000; Sweden-16,000; Finland-1,000). Scandinavian Jewry has therefore not been the focal point of most missionary activities in those countries, although there has always been an attempt to bring the Gospel to the Jews there as well. Therefore we must speak in terms of Jewish missions from, rather than in, Scandinavia. The main inspiration for Jewish mission came from two sources: a number of English and German Jewish believers have had a decisive impact on Scandinavian Christians, among them: Johan Christian Moritz, Paulus Wolff, Naftali Rudnitsky and Carl Paul Caspari. Wolff and Rudnitsky paid several visits to Scandinavia in order to bring the Gospel to their kinsmen and to lay the burden of Jewish missions on the hearts of local Christians. Carl Paul Caspari, of German origin, lived out his career in Norway, leaving a lasting influence in that country and its neighbours. He also established a link between Scandinavian missions and their German sister organization, the *Zentralverein*, which link has continued to this day. Another Jewish Christian figure that inspired Christians in the North was David Baron, one of whose most faithful workers came from Finland. Thanks to the influence of those outstanding Jewish believers, Northern missions have maintained their interest in the cause of Hebrew Christians and have always had a notable number of Jewish believers among their workers.

{54} Jewish missions from Scandinavia was at its height during the first half of the century. The protocols of the Budapest-Warsaw mission conference of 1927 describe a large part of this work. Scandinavians and Jewish believers were working in Poland, Ukraine, Rumania, Hungary, Austria, North Africa and the Holy Land itself. The work included congregations of Jewish believers, schools, diaconal service, hospital work and institutions of study. During the Holocaust, many Jewish believers shared the fate of their kinsmen and several Scandinavian missionaries risked their lives trying to save Jews from the hands of the Nazis. Swedish missionaries working in German-occupied Austria and Norwegians working in Romania (which had first been occupied by the Germans and then by the Russians) contributed the noblest part to this tale. Many Jews were led to safe havens thanks to these brave men and women.

Concern for the wellbeing of victims of the Holocaust did not cease at the end of the war. Jewish missions took part in family reunion programs and helped people attempt to re-establish settled lives. Norwegian missionaries moved to the newly-born state of Israel and established works in Haifa and Tel Aviv, where immigrants from Romania and other East European countries formed the nucleus of congregations. Summer retreats and camps for refugees were held in Denmark as late as the 70's. Until the mid-eighties the Danish mission had an active ministry in Southern France, a continuation of their earlier work in North Africa.

### **The Era Of Twilight**

The period following World War II and the World Council of Churches' meeting in Amsterdam 1948 was a testing time for Jewish missions. Scandinavian missions tried to keep up to date with

theological developments in the field of Jewish Christian relations. The four missions" have cooperated in a committee that gathered regularly since the 60's, in which representatives of the German sister organization also took part. The Committee arranged summer conferences and theological forums in Scandinavia and kept the challenge of the Jewish missions alive among Scandinavian churches. They have also been active in the Study Department of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), arranging several extensive conferences on Jewish Christian relations from 1964 to 1983. They were instrumental in 1976 in establishing the Evangelical Lutheran Commission for Church and the Jewish people (LEKKJ) under the auspices of the LWF. On the basis of preparatory work by the LEKKJ, the anti-semitic statements of Luther's works were officially denounced in the General Assembly of the LWF in Budapest, 1984. The same assembly included Christian mission to the Jews as one of the topics for debate. It is not self-evident that Jewish missions will always enjoy the backing of the Lutheran Church which, in Scandinavia, is the dominant one. During the last decades, a number of synods in Europe have officially denounced missions to the Jews, due to influence from liberal theology. Recently Jewish missions have had to confront counter-winds from Christian Zionism, Israel-romanticists and some Millenarian groups which are either opposed to or uninterested in Jewish evangelism. These influences have been felt especially in {55} Free Church and pietistic circles in Norway and Finland. In this sense the sun has set in their midst. The North is living in the era of twilight. Scandinavian churches have been strongly affected by revival movements within the churches. A commitment to mission and an interest in Israel is deeply rooted among their members. Church leadership increasingly conceives of mission as the main function of the church--indeed, its very essence. Many in faculties and theological seminaries are making constructive contributions to the missiological theology and practice.

Yet, a need might rise for new kinds of cooperative constellations between those who remain faithful to the Church's original call to mission. The Lausanne movement has been one such important encouragement in Scandinavia, as elsewhere, and Scandinavian missions have been active in the movement. Pentecostals and Free Churches in Scandinavia have a strong interest in Israel and therefore in Jewish missions. Certainly this is true in Finland, where the Pentecostals have supported Bible work in Israel for decades and where they have a top quality publishing house that releases important books in this field. Bible schools and theological institutes are investing effort to achieve higher standards of studies, offering alternatives to liberal theological faculties. These institutes are often faithful supporters of Jewish missions. A number of new Lutheran missions were established in the 60's and 70's. One example of such is the Finnish Lutheran Mission, founded in 1967, and working among Jews in England and Italy. In Norway, the Lutheran Free Church supports the work of the Norwegian Church Ministry to Israel.

The work of the Scandinavian Jewish missions still holds to its original principles: the Gospel is for everybody. Everybody has the right to hear it in his own language and to join the body of Christ. Starting from these premises, church planting has been the first priority. The Norwegian Church Ministry is working to build Hebrew Messianic congregations in Haifa and in Tel Aviv-Jaffa. Evangelism, church planting and diaconal work are considered central. The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission has adopted an identical approach in Jerusalem. The above two missions are cooperating in the framework of the Ebenezer Old People's Home in Haifa and in the Caspari Centre in Jerusalem. The latter is an attempt to provide Israeli believers with opportunity to study the Bible and the basics of Christianity in their own language. Norwegians have recently started a new cooperative effort with a mission in New York, and the Finns are

starting a new work in France and West Germany. Danish pastors, who were mainly sent to provide pastoral care for the youth working in kibbutzim, have made a very solid contribution to Hebrew congregational work and to the activities of the Caspari Center. The Danish organisation 'Ordet og Israel' has been active in diaconal work in Israel without either concealing their belief in the Gospel or being embarrassed by its claims.

In the 70's the Church of Sweden Mission still had a work in Marseille among the North African Jews, but since then has ceased its outreach. During the 80's it chose {56} to concentrate on theological research, especially in the Theological Institute in Jerusalem which had begun 30 years previous. The Institute offers courses in Semitics, Judaica and Jewish Christian relations. Its students come from Scandinavia and from sister churches in Africa and Asia. This institute fulfills a very important function, equipping African and Asian Christians to relate to Judaism and to the position of Israel in a positive manner.

In their home countries, and according to their traditional and varied approaches, Jewish missions are active in Israel solidarity organizations. The Israel Friendship Committee consists of 16 organizations in Finland, of whom some are missionary organisations. The Friends of Israel in the Norwegian Parliament and Friends of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Norway are examples of activities in which many mission friends take part. Solidarity with Israel and with the Jewish people is now facing new and difficult challenges, challenges which also face the missions. There are many ways to support and help Israel, yet the best we possess is the Gospel of Christ. To communicate the Gospel today, and in today's terms, to the people of Israel is the biggest of all possible challenges.

Some alterations of the names have taken place recently, and these mission are at present called: The Danish Israel Mission; The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission; The Norwegian Church Ministry to Israel; Church of Sweden Mission; Department for Jewish-Christian Relations.

# TRENDS IN JEWISH EVANGELISM IN SOUTH AMERICA

*Rev. Peter J. Clarke*

*The Rev. Peter J. Clarke is Director of The Church's Ministry among the Jews (CMJ) work in South America. He has resided in Buenos Aires since 1965.*

Evangelism does not take place in a vacuum, and the task of sharing the gospel with Jewish people in Latin America is affected by factors which may not be easily understood by people elsewhere, particularly those in the English speaking world.

Although most people in South America think of themselves as Roman Catholics, the level of practical allegiance is very low, between 5 and 10%. A large proportion of Roman Catholic bishops, particularly in Argentina, are conservative {57} to a degree rarely found in Europe or North America. Among Protestants, the Pentecostals form an overwhelming majority. Congregations numbering in the thousands, meeting in former cinemas or garages, are common. This has long been the case in Brazil and Chile, but it is only in the last five years that Pentecostals have become dominant in Argentina. Likewise, the Jewish communities of Latin America have their own particular characteristics, which affect evangelism.

Readers of MISHKAN will not need to be reminded that Jews have often suffered at the hands of Christians. The problem however is particularly acute in Latin America. Very few Jews came here of their own free will. The vast majority of Jewish immigrants to Argentina came because of persecution and found themselves a somewhat mistrusted minority in their new home. By coming to Argentina, the Jews not only escaped the priests, but the rabbis. For non-observant Jews, living among non-observant Roman Catholics in a relationship of vague mutual distrust was better than living in Russia, Poland, or Nazi-dominated Europe. The Jews of Latin America have developed many community organizations, but with some exceptions noted below they have not developed lively synagogues. There has also been little among the churches to attract them to Christianity.

## **Principal Jewish Communities**

The largest Jewish community in South America is that of Argentina. The high level of assimilation and the large number of "mixed marriages" make it difficult to give meaningful statistics, but most authorities accept a figure of 350 to 400 thousand for the total Jewish population, around 250-320 thousand of these living in Buenos Aires. Brazil has large Jewish communities in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, the total population being about 150,000. Smaller Jewish communities are to be found throughout the sub-continent numbering a few thousand.

## **Jewish Religious Life**

The Jews of Latin America are the least religiously observant. However, over the last 25 years the Conservative movement has grown considerably. The Latin American Rabbinical Seminary in Buenos

Aires has trained rabbis who are now working all over the sub-continent, often in synagogues which formerly considered themselves Orthodox. In the last few years, the Habad Lubavitch movement has also grown considerably. Traditional Orthodox synagogues have great difficulty maintaining themselves, although Orthodox rabbis are usually considered “official” spokesmen of the community.

### **Jewish Evangelism: Past Imperfect and Present Imperative!**

Three kinds of agencies are involved in Jewish evangelism: missions, messianic groups, and Gentile-dominated churches which have a particular ministry to Jews. Ten years ago there were many problems, but the past six years have seen great developments. All agencies are seeing advances which were only dreamed of a few years ago.

{58} The following British and North American missions are supporting, or have in the past supported, workers in Latin America: Chosen People Ministries/A..B.M.J., C.M.J., C.W.I. (Barbican Mission), Christian Jew Foundation, Friends for Israel, L.B.J.M., Midwest Messianic Testimony, and (although not theoretically a mission) the Hebrew Christian Alliance of America. There are also independent workers. Mission workers are involved in a variety of activities. Most are involved in home visitation, and in teaching in churches. A few teach in seminaries. Some are involved in tract distribution and other kinds of open-air work. A few have opportunities for evangelistic dialogue with rabbis.

The Messianic groups in Buenos Aires are as follows:

1. *The Hebrew Christian Church.* This group was founded in 1936. It is now independent but in the past it was a missionary outreach of the Hebrew Christian Alliance of (North) America. It meets in a Methodist church and is organized on Brethren lines. At present it has about 15 members, the majority of whom are second or third generation believers. In the past, one of its regular activities was open-air preaching.

2. *The Messianic Bible Centre.* This is another established group which grew out of the Hebrew Christian Church. It also is organized on the Brethren pattern, but has its own building with Jewish symbols, etc. It has about 25 members almost all of whom are Jewish, a good number of them first generation believers

3. *The American Board of Missions to Jews (Chosen People Ministries).* Over the past three years, the work of the A.B.M.J. has become much more of a Messianic congregation than a “mission.” About 70 people attend the main Saturday meetings, about half of whom are Gentiles. Many of those who attend, both Jews and Gentiles, are members of other churches. The pastor is a Baptist minister. The building has Jewish symbols, and some songs are sung in Hebrew. The general style of the worship could be described as “charismatic Baptist.”

There are groups called the “Friends of the A.B.M.J.” in other cities of Argentina, and in other Latin American countries.

4. *“Atzeret Yehudim Meshichi'im”* (the “Messianic Jewish Assembly”). This is directed by a Jewish believer and his son. They have had up to 50 people at their meetings, although the average would be 35-40. The majority are Jewish believers, many of whom are first generation. They observe some Jewish customs such as lighting Sabbath candles. Some songs are sung in Hebrew. The overall impact of the meetings is clearly Jewish. Their major need at present is for a permanent meeting place

on “neutral ground,” i.e. not on church premises. At the moment, many of the members attend a Pentecostal church.

5. “*Bet Shalom Hamashiach*.” This is the newest group, begun in late 1987. It meets in a private home in an area where many Orthodox Jews live. About 25 people attend, almost all of them Jewish believers of different ages and {59} backgrounds. The worship is Pentecostal in character, with a particular emphasis on “liberation” or exorcism.

Altogether there are 12 evangelical entities (missions, individuals, or groups) at work. The (Roman Catholic) Sisters of Zion are also doing an excellent work of teaching, and breaking down prejudice, while a syncretistic group attracts mixed-marriage couples.

Various churches have a particular interest in the Jews. One Anglican church which six years ago had no Jewish believers in the congregation, now has five, and there is increase in concern for Jewish evangelism. This is true of a growing number of churches, particularly among Baptists and Pentecostals. It is encouraging to find Jewish believers within a church who meet together to deepen their own faith, and reach out to unbelieving Jews; they are not separating themselves from the existing congregation, but maintaining a distinct identity within it.

Various agencies are also represented in Brazil. In Sao Paulo, Bet Sar Shalom and the I.B.J.M. are at work. The Brazilian Messianic Mission has a Bible school, and the Antioch Mission (another national organization) supports workers in Israel. There are also churches with a particular ministry to Jews. In Porto Alegre a new work is being started.

In Asuncion, Paraguay, at least one Pentecostal church includes a group of Jewish believers who meet together for prayer. There are Hebrew Christian Alliances in Argentina and Uruguay and one is presently being developed in Brazil. The Uruguayan Alliance holds monthly meetings. Over the last few years, meetings of the Argentine Alliance have been marked by larger numbers and by a renewed spirit of fellowship, mutual respect, and evangelistic concern. The committee meetings of the I.H.C.A. were held in Buenos Aires in October 1988.

The past five years have seen great advances. The development of Messianic groups is notable. Christians, including many Roman Catholics, are becoming more conscious of their Jewish roots. The one great fear is of an increase of antisemitism. Popular distrust of “the Jew,” although decreasing, still exists and undercover violent anti-semitic groups seem to be awaiting their moment. It is imperative that the opportunities of the present should be taken.

# {60} TRENDS IN JEWISH EVANGELISM IN NORTH AMERICA: A PROFILE OF JEWISH MISSIONS

*Dr. Daniel Fuchs*

*The late Dr. Daniel Fuchs was Chairman of the Board of Directors of Chosen People Ministries (formerly American Board of Missions to the Jews) from 1979 to 1988. Prior to 1979 he served as Executive Director and President of the same organization.*

The first recorded contact between Christians and Jews in Colonial America was a result of the Portuguese Inquisition. In September 1654, 23 Sephardic Jews arrived in New Amsterdam. They confidently expected to be well-received. After all, they had helped the Dutch defend Brazil against the Portuguese. They were terribly disappointed. Peter Stuyvesant, the Dutch Director General protested strongly to the Dutch West India Company against the settlement of a “deceitful race” who professed “an abominable religion at the feet of Mammon.” Fortunately, Puritanism was making the Old Testament an open book and Stuyvesant was overruled. However, the Jews were not permitted to build a synagogue until after the British took over New Amsterdam in 1664.

The rise of Puritanism had an enormous effect. Insofar as missions to the Jews are concerned, it divides the Middle Ages from our times. “Instead of maintaining, as the old Church did, that the Jewish people is utterly rejected by God, it was now recognized that Israel had still a great future.” (Jakob Jocz, *The Jewish People and Jesus Christ: The Relationship between Church and Synagogue*, Grand Rapids 1979.)

The *Encyclopedia Judaica* expresses it: no Christian community in history identified more with the Israelites of the Bible than did the first generations of settlers of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, who believed their own lives to be a literal reenactment of the biblical drama of the chosen people. They were the children of Israel; the American continent was the promised land; the kings of England were the pharaohs of Egypt; the Indians were the natives of Canaan or, alternately, the Ten Lost Tribes; the pact of Plymouth Rock was God’s holy covenant; and the ordinances by which they lived were His divine law. Since they viewed themselves as the persecuted victims of the sinful Christian establishment of the Old World, the Puritans also had a natural sympathy for the Jews of their own time, at least in the abstract. The Puritan leader Cotton Mather repeatedly referred to the Jews in his prayer for their conversion as God’s “Beloved People;” and the lasting influence of this attitude no doubt accounts in large measure for the {61} striking philo-Semitism that prevailed in American life and letters long after Puritanism as such had ceased to be a vital force. (*EJ*, vol. 15, pp. 1568-69). Increase Mather was also intensely interested in the conversion of the Jews. He had much influence on Judah Monis who had been a rabbi both in Jamaica and New York. Mortis appeared in the Boston area in 1720, and on March 27, 1722 was publicly baptized in the College Hall at Cambridge. At that time the Reverend Benjamin Colman delivered “A Discourse ...Before the Baptism of R. Judah Mortis, to which were added Three Discourses, Written by Mr. Monis himself. The Truth, The Whole Truth, Nothing But The Truth. One of which was delivered by him at his Baptism” (Boston, 1722). Monis’ essays are an apology and defense of his new faith, and his defense



of the doctrine of the Trinity drew support from “the Old Testament, and with the Authority of the Cabalistical Rabbis, Ancient and Modern.” (*EJ*, vol. 12, p. 257)

The cause of Jewish missions in America had an auspicious beginning. It was initiated by both of the founders of Yale University (Cotton Mather) and a president of Harvard (Increase Mather). Its first fruit was a rabbi whose testimony is still honoured by both Jewish and Christian communities. The number of Jews in the U.S.A. by the time of the Revolution has been estimated at perhaps 2,000, with no more than 2,500 in 1790. Shirley Moses Berne was a Jewish Christian, a student at Union Theological Seminary in New York. Her recent death is a loss to the cause of Jewish Christianity. She submitted to her professor of systematic theology a thesis entitled “Missionary Theology and the Jewish People.” She wrote: “The 19th or Great Century of Christian Missions to the Jews in the U.S; the story of the American Jews interwoven with the growth of religious freedom in America, of Judaism as it developed in this context, of the dominant Christian Church and how it interpreted its mission, and of the resultant trends toward marriage, assimilation and conversion. Sociologically and psychologically, Allen Gutman summarized it in his study of conversions to Christianity as portrayed in American fiction, ‘Come they did, only to discover that acceptance in the new world undid them as persecution in the old had not. Many became Christians. Many more became converts to the American Way, to the religion of Americanism.’ Or, as Maurice Kretzer expressed it, ‘The easier it is to be a Jew, the easier it is to cease being one.’” (p. 10)

The great problem of Jewish missions in the U.S.A. from the 19th century onward (including our present generation), is that when Jews accept the Lord, they think that they cease being Jewish.

The 19th century witnessed an extraordinary development in missions to the Jews. The first charter for a mission to the Jews was granted by New York State in 1820 to the American Society for Ameliorating the Condition of the Jews. This mission was led by Joseph Samuel C. Frey who initially came to the United States in 1816, after the London Jews Society had been organised as an Anglican Mission. The Protestant Episcopal Church also began a work in 1842.

{62} In 1845, the Baptist Society for the Evangelization of the Jews was formed. Frey edited their paper. Their most outstanding worker was G. R. Lederer who, together with John Neander, led a Hebrew Christian Seder in New York at which Samuel I. J. Schereschewsky accepted the Lord. Schereschewsky is one of the giants of Jewish Christianity. Many other missions to the Jews were started, led in many cases by Jewish Christian ministers and missionaries. The roll call includes such men (and in a number cases their wives also served as missionaries) as Angel, Alman, Amsden, Bernheim, Berger, Bernstein, Cohn, Dushaw, Finkelstein, Frey, Herschell, Jaeger, Landsman, Lederer, Marcusohn, Meyer, Neander, Newman, Neuhaus, Rosevally, Ruben, Steinthal, Schapiro, Steinhardt, Strauss and Wallfish. The lives of these men display a remarkable similarity: all experienced a striking encounter with Christ in their personal lives--sometimes through reading the New Testament, sometimes through personal acquaintance with Christians. Despite rejection, abuse and persecution from their fellow Jews (in many cases from their own families), they sought to bring the Gospel to their people.

Some of these men received the support of their denominations, as was the case with Neander, Steinthal and Strauss who labored under the auspices of the Foreign Board of the Presbyterian Church. Nevertheless, for the most part these men worked alone, with perhaps the help of a few individual Christians. There were also Jewish Christians who went abroad as missionaries, as was

the case with Samuel Schereschewsky, Bishop of Shanghai, and Isador Lowenthal, missionary to Afghanistan (Berne, *ibid*, p. 12).

Not all of the missionaries were Jewish. Heading the “Righteous Gentiles” of the era was W. E. Blackstone, founder of the Chicago Hebrew Mission (now the American Messianic Fellowship) and author of the book, *Jesus is Coming*. Because he was a missionary to the Jews, his part in the founding of modern Zionism has been played down by Jewish sources.

When Herzl was planning to visit the Czar of Russia to ask him for a homeland for the Jews, Blackstone personally persuaded President Benjamin Harrison to intercede on behalf of the Jews. He sent marked copies of the Old Testament Scriptures to Herzl, underscoring God’s promise of the Land to Israel. These letters are now kept with Herzl’s personal papers in the Herzl Museum, Jerusalem.

In 1902 A. E. Thompson published a book entitled *A Century of Jewish Missions*. He observed that, during the years of massive Jewish immigration, the main line denominations (Baptist, Presbyterian, Reformed, Evangelical Lutheran, Lutheran, Methodist, including the New York City Mission Society) all supported Jewish missions.

Eighty missionaries were active, and an annual income of \$54,950 was spent on outreach. Thompson details missionary methods both in Europe and America:

*{63} The equipment of a large station is quite elaborate. The staff usually consists of one or more missionaries, either Gentile or Jews, who must understand Hebrew and the languages spoken by the Jewish community; assistants who spend much time in house to house visitation; colporteurs; Bible women who work among the Jewesses; teachers for the schools; and physicians, dispensers and nurses. The departments of work embrace preaching in the chapel or mission halls; street preaching; house to house visitation; distribution of literature by colporteurs and in the Book Depot; itineration to the surrounding places; educational work including Day Boarding and Sunday Schools, sewing classes and Mother’s meetings. (Thompson, op. cit., p.81.)*

Between 1900 and 1924, Jewish immigration to the USA averaged above 90,000 a year. Another 350,000 arrived before immigration quotas were imposed in 1924. Eighty percent of those who came from Eastern Europe had an Orthodox background, but were largely unaffiliated with any synagogue. There was a flight from Judaism to ethical culture, Theosophy, spiritualism, Socialism, agnosticism, Christian Science, Jewish Science. It seemed as if Judaism itself was dying.

In 1930, John Stuart Conning estimated that there were 20,000 Jewish Christians connected with various Christian churches. But, like their brethren according to the flesh, Hebrew Christians were likewise losing their cultural identity. In response, in 1934 the Jewish missions’ arm of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. helped to organize the first Hebrew Christian Church in Chicago, which was led by David Bronstein, Sr.

The years prior to World War II were days of crisis. Anti-semitism was evidenced by both sides to the conflict. The fundamentalistic bias of W. B. Riley and Gerald Winrod is well known but Liberals were also guilty. “The Christian Century” rejected evidence that the Nazis were slaughtering European Jews and they charged American Jews with “hyphenated citizenship” and “pro-Zionism” (new anti- Semitic

code words) because the latter tried to arouse America to action. Rabbi Stephen Wise personally delivered concrete evidence of what was going on to Dr. Morrison, editor of "The Christian Century." It was dismissed as "Jewish propaganda and fabrication."

Between the two extremes of a rabid feudalism (the pun is intended) and an apostasizing liberalism, a faithful remnant in the U.S.A. opened their hearts and their homes to the needs of persecuted Jewish people. This was especially true of the Mennonites and the Brethren in Christ (A.B.M.J. engaged in this ministry with both denominations, and over 30 families were rescued as a result). Other missions did likewise. During this period several smaller independent missions were established.

Following World War II, when the whole world saw the evidence of Auschwitz (especially following the establishment of the State of Israel), ecumenism became {64} prevalent. Jewish missions then became a non-state among many mainline denominations who brought their Jewish mission work to a close.

Christians expressed their brotherhood with the Jews by forsaking The Great Commission. This attitude reached a climax at the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Evanston in 1954. The theme of the conference was "Christ, the Hope of the World." A proposal was made to include a special reference concerning an evangelical witness to the Jews. Charles P. Taft, a lay delegate of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the U.S., objected strongly. Insisting that his views had no political implications, he said the reference would make for bad inter-faith relations. The special reference to the Jews was deleted by a vote of 195 to 150. (Will Herberg, "Protestant, Catholic and Jew" in *American Sociology*, p.245) In other words, the theme became "Christ the Hope of the World - except the Jews."

Will Herberg observed that the Evanston vote against Jewish evangelism was motivated by the anti-Jewish stance of the Coptic and Orthodox churches in the Middle East and Africa: "In Europe, an omission of such reference to the Jews would very likely have been regarded as an outcropping of anti-Semitic prejudices, reminiscent of the Nazi exclusion of the Jews from the scope of the church; in the United States, to include such references was felt by even earnest Christians to be somehow insulting to the Jews and an impairment of interfaith relations." (op. cit., p. 245)

We should not understand the anti-evangelization policy adopted by the World Council of Churches as that of individual and main-line churches; many churches and main-line denominations (Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Episcopal and others) strongly support Jewish missions.

A notable supporter among the larger denominations is the Southern Baptist Convention. In April 1972, W. B. Mitchell of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention wrote that there were "15,000 to 20,000 Hebrew Christians in Southern Baptist churches." (Berne, *Ibid*, p.15)

Many smaller evangelical denominations actively support missions to the Jews. Some, such as the Christian and Missionary Alliance, Conservative Baptist, Grace Brethren, and Assembly of God, maintain their own missions to the Jews; others generously support various independent Jewish missions.

Other denominations have changed their focus. The Christian Reformed Church, for instance, once had missions to the Jews in Chicago and in Paterson, N.J., but has now abandoned institutional Jewish evangelism, preferring to encourage local churches to participate in parish evangelism. This method has been successful in many areas.

{65} During the 1950's and 60's, many of the Jewish missions began quiet ministries on college campuses. It was a fruitful labour, but because participants or new converts joined local churches, there remain no accurate numbers of Jewish students who were converted. But many did. At that time, Jewish leaders largely ignored or scorned us. There were some polemics in the Jewish press and a few scholarly rebuttals, but most of the Jewish people considered Jewish missions to be either non-existent or ineffective. About 1970, Lyle Murphy of Kansas City asked a rabbi and friend of his to address the Fellowship of Christian Testimonies to the Jews which met at Nyack College, giving him opportunity to express the attitude of the Jewish community to Jewish missions. The rabbi told his hearers that the Jewish people enjoyed our antics, for we were so ineffective!

Meanwhile something was happening in campuses in all over the United States. There was turbulence everywhere. Young men graduated to Vietnam. There, social and religious upheaval was so startling that a new phrase, the "generation gap," was coined to describe it. Young people on campus were alienated. Drinking and hard drugs became the norm. Missionaries to the Jews, local pastors and several student evangelistic organizations such as Campus Crusade, were surprised witnesses to the sullen emergence of a revolution. At that time there were to be found young students who were known as "Jesus People," or even "Jesus Freaks." They looked awfully sinful; they even wore beards and long hair. In many areas they lived in communes. I visited one on the Berkeley Campus with Moishe Rosen and found the members living a very strictly disciplined life. They all loved the Lord, studied the Scriptures, and tried to live their lives according to the Bible. It has been estimated that 20 to 40 percent of the Jesus People were Jewish. Suddenly, the modern Jewish Christian movement had become visible, vocal and effective. On June 12, 1972 TIME magazine described the Jewish Christians:

*Whether pamphleteering on the West Coast or professing their beliefs at a Reform temple in suburban New Jersey, the young Jewish Christians are increasingly conspicuous. Their number, while modest compared with the Jesus movement as a whole, is unprecedented among U.S. Jews. U.C.L.A. campus Rabbi Sholomo Cunin estimates that young Jews are converting to Christianity at the rate of 6000 or 7000 a year. California Jewish Christian evangelist, Abe Schneider, says he has noted more converts in the past nine months than in the previous 23 years combined. Though Jewish Christians come from all ages and backgrounds, they are predominantly young spiritual refugees from secularized Jewish homes, liberal synagogues, the drug culture or radical politics. Their most controversial claim is that they are still Jews even though they now accept Jesus as the Messiah promised by the biblical prophets. Many reject the label "convert" and sometimes even "Christian," preferring to call themselves "Messianic" or "completed Jews." (pp. 66,67).*

Shortly after this the rabbi called me up. His nephew had accepted the Lord and was studying at Nyack College! The rabbis no longer ignored us. They organized a {66} "Committee on the Cults and Missionaries." They attended our meetings, read everything we published, and held

seminars on “How to Answer the Missionaries:” The cause of Jewish missions in the U.S.A. today is dynamic and strong. More Jews are being won to the Lord Jesus Christ than at any time since Apostolic days. It is very difficult to present accurate statistics, but by updating, comparing, and correcting several lists there are at least 48 agencies employing 325 workers in 25 locations in the U.S.A., all of whom are involved in Jewish evangelism.

Today we are seeing a subtle change in the modern emphasis on Jewish missions: the old missions functioned as centers to which people were invited. This is certainly a biblical method; it was and still is effective. But the new emphasis seems to be on missions approaching the Jews. That, too, is biblical and it seems to me that one of the reasons more Jews are being won is because more and more we are on the highways and in the campuses.

Another reason for the growing rate of conversions has to do with the quality of the rising generation of Jewish missionaries. I mentioned earlier the list of Jewish missionary leaders of the nineteenth century. Heroes they were, and as you read their biographies you will notice that most of them were trained either in Rabbinics or linguistics or in both disciplines.

Today, we do not have many Talmudic scholars, but many missions have on their staffs graduates of theological seminaries, workers who have training in music, philosophy, communications, etc. There have been nation-wide television programs including a Broadway theatrical production. Musical teams from missions to the Jews travel across the country and are enthusiastically received. There are more local churches today preaching the Gospel to all men everywhere, Jews included.

The cause of Jewish missions in the United States has been blessed by God. One of the most visible blessings has been emergence of Jewish Christian congregations. Last year Karl Pruter published a 192 page book, *Jewish Christians in the United States*. The Jewish community no longer ignores us. Everything we have written and done has been listed. He says that in the U.S. today, there are over 100 congregations which preach the gospel of Jesus Christ while preserving their Jewish cultural heritage. Although the growth rate has decreased since the 1960s, there is no indication that the number of Jewish converts per year is declining. Yet Jews have “Americanized” just like other immigrants; the old neighbourhoods have broken up and the younger generations have lost their languages and cultures. But several centuries of discrimination against Jews have resulted in separate Jewish and Gentile cultural patterns. Subsequently many Jews do not feel at home, and in some cases do not feel welcome, in many Gentile congregations....

At present, there are about 20,000 to 30,000 Jewish Christians, half of which are in distinctive Jewish congregations. (Pruter, op. cit., pp. 178-179). Mr. Pruter, contrary to custom, has sought to be both accurate and fair.

{67} When I started with A.B.M.J. in 1937, I thought I knew every Jewish Christian in the United States and Canada, for we were so few. What a difference exists today! Wherever I go there are Jewish Christians! We have witnessed an act of the Holy Spirit. We have only begun to see what God will do for Israel.

*As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, for God's gifts and His call are irrevocable. Just as you (who were at one time disobedient to God) have now received mercy as*

*a result of their disobedience, so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that He may have mercy on them all. Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments, and His paths beyond tracing out!*  
(Romans 11:28-33)

## **Harold A. Sevenser**

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Jewish evangelism in North America has changed dramatically in the last few years. The change became most noticeable after Israel's Six Day War in June 1967. Prior to 1967 Jewish evangelists in the United States operated programmes fashioned according to their counterparts in Europe and England. Mission stations were established; missionaries maintained evangelistic programmes, often working out of a center. These programmes may have included a medical dispensary, language classes, sewing classes and children's classes. There were regular worship services, Bible studies, etc. Often the missionary stations were store-front buildings located in Jewish neighborhoods. In some cases, these centers became actual congregations of Jewish Christians, with the exception that they were not autonomous. Rather, they were supported by and subject to the mission board or organizations which sponsored the programme.

Mission societies also depended heavily on tract ministries geared toward theological and doctrinal issues relating to the Jewish people. Many of these were scholarly works which only a few in the Jewish community could read or appreciate. While other missionary organizations sought to identify cross-culturally with the people they were evangelizing, Jewish missions seemed to have stagnated, seeking to reach only the ghetto Jew or immigrants. While these programmes were effective during the early part of the nineteenth century, they became less effective after World War II and the establishment of the State of Israel. It took a number of years for Jewish missions to realize that a change had taken place, especially in the aftermath of the Six Day War in June, 1967, the continuing conflict in Vietnam, and the breakdown both of Jewish traditions and social and family structures in the United States.

The establishment of the State of Israel brought a prophetic hope to the Christian world and an awakening to the need to reach the Jewish people with the gospel. It also brought many to expect a prophetic future for the Jewish people. The State of Israel gave the Jewish people an external instrument of identity, a new rationale, a new hope. It also shifted traditional values within the Jewish community: it created a new kind of Jewish identity. All one had to do was to immigrate to Israel and thus become an Israeli.

It also created a new kind of Diaspora identity for those who did not intend to immigrate to Israel, but who would support Israel through gifts, etc. While the Israelis sought to establish themselves as a nation, fighting for their very survival, Diaspora Jewry was fighting another battle for existence. It was struggling against acceptance as a part of a multi-ethnic society in America. Laws against racial prejudice were passed by Congress. Minorities were being accepted into the mainstream of American life. Inter-marriage no longer carried the stigma it had once borne. Jewish young people could break away from the ghettos and establish themselves as successful Americans, enjoying suburbia with all of its benefits and freedoms.

This new-found freedom brought with it the problems of identity. Israel's triumph in June, 1967 served to define more precisely the problem of American Jewry. Israeli Jewry was finding its identity, but Diaspora Jewry in America, along with its Gentile counterpart, was busy with the Vietnam War, rebellion against authority, and so on--still trying to find themselves in the vast

melting pot which seemingly eliminated the individual. Thus, during the latter part of the 1960's and the early part of the 1970's, Jewish young people were not affected by traditional Jewish mission programmes. They were not involved with synagogues, temples and religious worship. They wanted nothing at all to do with institutionalized religion. They were seeking other solutions to life.

In this social, political and religious vacuum, new methods and programmes were developed to reach Jewish people with the gospel. The strategy developed out of a recognition that old methods and programmes were not effective for this new generation of Jewish people. Two major approaches were developed: they were the "Jews For Jesus" phenomenon, and the Messianic congregation or synagogue movement. The third, or non-direct evangelistic approach, is the Christian Zionist Movement. Karl Pruter in his book, *Jewish Christians in the United States, a Bibliography* (Garland Publishing, Inc., New York & London 1987), in writing of the Jews for Jesus movement, states, "The new group was different from any other mission to the Jews in many respects. First, it sought out not conservative scholars but those who were estranged both from Judaism and from society. Second, just as Martin Rosen rediscovered his Jewishness and he chose to be known as Moishe {69} Rosen, the group reclaimed much of its Jewish culture, observing traditions such as the Pesach Seder which are not incompatible with the Christian faith. They also sang the Kiddush, the initial blessing over meals, and wrote their own Haggadah, the historical narrative of how the Jews escaped the Pharaoh" (p. 135). In departing from traditional Jewish mission programmes, Moishe Rosen sought, through cross cultural identification, to reach Jewish young people in rebellion against institutionalized religion, young people looking for an identity which their counterparts in Israel had already found.

The second approach is that of the Messianic Jewish movement. This movement calls for the establishment of Messianic congregations and synagogues. Karl Pruter writes,

*The movement, which emerged in the early 1970's, grew out of the old argument within the Hebrew Christian community over the role of missionary organizations and the 'gentilization' process usually undergone by new converts from Judaism to Christianity. Most early leaders who spearheaded Jewish missions, denounced any attempts to build a distinctly Jewish Christianity. There were, however, always minority voices. During the 1970's, within the larger context of the Jews For Jesus movement, and the articulation of Jewish converts as 'completed Jews,' a new burst of Messianic Judaism appeared. Observers saw its first manifestation in the Young Hebrew Christian Alliance of America, an affiliate of the Hebrew Christian Alliance of America. Outsiders began to take the movement seriously after the younger members captured the Hebrew Christian Alliance and changed its name to Messianic Jewish Alliance of America. The International Hebrew Christian Alliance also became a part of the movement and soon, as Messianic congregations were formed around the United States, a Union of Messianic Congregations was added as a third major structure. (Pruter, op. cit., p. 150)*

The establishment of Messianic congregations brought a new sense of direction to the Jewish Christian movement. For the first time, Jewish people professing faith in Jesus could express their Jewishness in terms of their culture and tradition without becoming "Gentilized."

Most of the major Jewish mission societies in the United States and North America are now establishing Messianic congregations as a part of their missionary programme to the Jewish



people. These congregations differ from the old centres in that they are completely autonomous. Jewish people are allowed to express their faith within the confines of those Jewish traditions and customs which are not contradictory to Scripture. As a result of these new approaches, hundreds and thousands of Jewish people have come to faith in Jesus. Congregations have been established in most of the major cities throughout the United States and Canada. A Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations (U.M.J.C.) has been formed, as well as the Fellowship of Messianic Congregations (F.M.C.). These organizations serve as means to give direction and assistance to existing congregations. The success of this approach seems to be due to the fact that it has identified problem areas within {70} the Jewish community and designed programmes to communicate the gospel within the context of Jewish culture and needs. Such approaches demonstrate that our mission programmes and methodology cannot remain static; we must seek to contextualize the gospel message.

The third approach, that of the Christian Zionist Movement, continues to grow as a phenomenon in North America. It is basically a philo-Israel movement and it is seen as a means of expressing love and concern for the Jewish people. Its emphasis is not on direct evangelism, but on demonstrating love. The best expression of this movement is seen in the establishment of the Christian Embassy in Jerusalem. While Christian Zionism is at odds with established Jewish missions over the issue of Jewish evangelism, Christian Zionism, because of its philo-Israel feelings, has helped to create a new environment for Jewish missions and evangelism, one conducive for raising support and for awakening in Christians their need to evangelize the Jew. Perhaps the success of these three movements can best be illustrated in the reaction within the Jewish community. The community has accused various Jewish mission organizations of deceit and of fraud. They have gone so far as to take various organizations to court in an attempt to bring an end to evangelistic programmes. They have tried to label the Messianic movement as a cult, thus seeking to discredit its leaders and founders. To further counteract the inroads already achieved, the Jewish community has established its own task force on cults, set up its own antimissionary groups, and is seeking to raise funds to combat what it calls “the threat of the Jewish missionary.”

Thus, the success of these programmes can be measured by the numbers of Jewish people coming to faith in Jesus, by the establishment of new congregations and, externally, by the concern expressed in the Jewish community over the numbers of Jewish people professing faith in Jesus.

What problems do these approaches create? There are several. Care must be taken not to create a polarization between the Messianic Jewish movement and the Christian community. There is a danger that Messianic congregations and synagogues will lay such an emphasis on being Jewish that they will no longer identify with the larger body of Christ. There is always the inherent danger that culture and tradition will replace a living, vital faith, and that the Church at large will see in these congregations an attempt to rebuild the “middle wall of partition.” I suspect that, as the Lord tarries, and as more congregations are established, these dangers will be minimized and that Messianic congregations will serve to revitalize the Church’s awareness of its commission to reach the Jewish people with the Gospel.

## {71} Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum

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Evangelistic methods employed in North America throughout the 1970's and 80's are still being used. Some older missions tend to prefer low-key approaches in the context of small group Bible studies, often attended by a high percentage of Gentiles. Some newer organizations have embraced more aggressive approaches in the streets and in Jewish neighbourhoods.

Two processes can be observed but neither trend can be described as radical.

A. Jewish opposition to all and any forms of Jewish evangelism is growing, becoming more organized and attaining higher levels of scholarly standards. Organizations now exist whose sole purpose is to counteract missionary activity among the Jewish people. It is interesting to note that some of the methods used simply parrot methods used by Jewish missions in spreading the gospel and in fund raising. As well, Jewish groups who have repeatedly accused Jewish missions of using unethical practices are often guilty themselves of unethical conduct in their efforts to convince Jewish believers to give up the faith and return to Judaism. Their portrayals of what Messianic Jews believe and how they live often borders on the imaginary and appears, at times, to be deliberate distortion. It is difficult to accept that they really believe all that they are saying.

On the scholarly side, they have produced literature intended to deal exegetically with messianic prophecies by offering an alternative exegesis. For the most part, these books are not likely to convince an honest seeker, but those looking for reasons not to believe will find in them justification for their unbelief. There is a degree of dishonesty in many such books, for the writers often presume a lack of knowledge of Hebrew or rabbinics on the part of their readers. Better informed students will not find these books convincing.

B. A more recent trend is the rise of Messianic congregations other than those affiliated with the Union of Messianic Congregations (UMJC). Many Jewish believers have been uncomfortable with the tendency of UMJC congregations to be overly rabbinic in their outlook and practice, with the adoption of Pentecostal /charismatic theology and with UMJC's approach to worship. Jewish congregations planted by Chosen People Ministries, Ariel Ministries, Jews For Jesus, and other independently organized Messianic congregations, have followed a less rabbinic/charismatic (but no less enthusiastic) style of worship. Some of these congregations are affiliated with the Fellowship of Messianic Congregations (FMC). Of course, Messianic Jewish congregations of all kinds do evangelize, and Jewish people are coming to the Messiah through these congregations. Some would {72} claim that the congregational approach is the best approach, but this has not yet proven to be the case. Most new Jewish believers are still coming to the Messiah by other means. The congregations are probably of greatest value in providing a community for Jewish believers, rather than being on the cutting edge of Jewish evangelism at the present time.

Another trend I might mention among various groups engaged in Jewish evangelism is the greater acceptance of each other and of our different approaches. A good example of this is the LCJE, which is composed of a variety of affiliated groups actively participating in the North American meetings. There is a greater degree of cooperation than heretofore, though some Jewish ministries are still cautious about full participation.

Were I to suggest one needful thing today, I would say it is time to have a scholarly response to the new anti-missionary and anti-Messianic literature being produced by those organizations whose sole purpose is to counteract Jewish evangelism. The American Messianic Fellowship is in the process of preparing a popular booklet, aimed at helping new believers confronted by anti-missionary material. This could prove to be a very useful tool, but many more contributions are needed.

## Moishe Rosen

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In order to understand present trends on Jewish evangelism in the U.S., one must look back momentarily to the establishment of Jewish missions in the United States. The 19th century witnessed an extraordinary development of missions to the Jews, with the first charter for a mission to the Jews granted by the State of New York in 1820. Though at the beginning of the 19th century there wasn't a single established Jewish mission in the United States, when the century closed there were 29 such societies. At the same time, Britain claimed 28 Jewish mission societies supporting 481 missionaries on 120 stations throughout the world.

World War I witnessed a severe blow to the Jewish missionary forces of Europe. Though a reconstruction was encouraged and strengthened by the three conferences of Budapest (1928), Warsaw (1929), and Atlantic City (1931), the center of world Jewish missions would soon move to the United States. In 1930, John Stuart Conning of the National Board of Missions of the Presbyterian Church estimated that there were 20,000 Jewish Christians connected with various churches throughout the U.S. But Jews who came to faith in Jesus tended to lose their cultural identity, regarding themselves as "Christians of Jewish background." With a mind to arresting this trend, Conning proposed that a number of Hebrew Christian churches be initiated by local presbyteries. The first was established in 1934 and {73} eventually, by the time of World War II, there were 16 of these mission stations operative in most of the large Jewish centers of the U.S. The Presbyterian church, however, continued to be wracked by theological controversies.

In the mid-1950's an Australian Baptist preacher called Lawrence Duff-Forbes visited the U.S. to attend a Hebrew Christian Alliance convention. Since Duff Forbes was only an associate member in the Hebrew Christian Alliance, it is possible that he himself was not Jewish. Nevertheless, it was Duff-Forbes took it upon himself to create a new kind of Judaism. He attended a teacher's course of the University of Judaism at Los Angeles and declared himself a "rabbi in the Jewish Messianic movement."

Early in 1957 two graduates of Dallas Theological Seminary came alongside to help him (one of them is Albert Stoltey, from whom much of this information was gleaned). They conducted regular Friday night services in a Jewish burial chapel, and a handful of Jews and Gentiles attended. Duff-Forbes conducted a rabbinical liturgy that, as someone said, would have been appropriate were he to have been the chief rabbi of England officiating at a synagogue of 5,000 Jews! Edward Daniel Brodsky served with Duff-Forbes for awhile and was also ordained as a rabbi in this fledgling Jewish Messianic movement. He returned to Canada after a short time and then later moved to Philadelphia. Through his work with the Hebrew Christian Alliance (later to be called "the Messianic Jewish Alliance,") he brought the term "Messianic Judaism" into vogue.

But the difference was more than a name: these young people were searching for a Messianic Jewish lifestyle, something that could be as Jewish as what they had seen as unbelievers growing up in their own homes. Their zeal, though refreshing, sometimes had a hard face on it,

particularly when they began making distinctions between themselves and other less zealous Jewish believers. Almost immediately, a reaction set in among some of the older Jewish believers. "The Fellowship of Christian Testimonies to the Jews;" originally an umbrella organization of all Jewish believers who agreed on the Apostle's Creed, gradually changed direction in the early 70's, becoming more separatistic. It was quick to condemn Messianic Judaism. Tempers flared, divisions took place. People barely acquainted with the Lord were forced to choose sides, which they did, largely on the basis of the spiritual leaders influencing them.

At the same time, during the three and a half year period between mid-1968 and 1971, there was a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the U.S. The world press called it the "Jesus Revolution." It was young and noisy, bold, bright and brash. But to Jewish people, it meant something completely different than what it might have meant to their Gentile neighbors. Gentiles said that the young people were simply getting religious. But to the Jewish community, young people turning to Christ raised a spectre of assimilation and hinted of persecution. Nevertheless, the Jewish community was slow to react to the Jesus revolution.

{74} Between 1969 and 1973, approximately 14,000 Jewish people of all ages turned to Christ, and most were young. This number was only ascertained in the year 1976 (three years after the initial swell) and one must not forget that some attrition in the movement had undoubtedly occurred; thus it would not be wrong to assume that the original figure had been greater than 14,000. It should of course be noted that the attrition rate among the Jewish participants in the Jesus revolution was no greater than the Gentile attrition rate.

In 1971, one small part of this movement of young Jewish believers began to call itself "Jews for Jesus." This term would at times be applied to the whole movement of Messianic Jews in a generic sense, but became the official name of the Jews for Jesus organization/Hineni Ministries, founded in late 1973.

Prior to 1972 there had been only 63 outreach ministries to the Jews in the U.S. and Canada; but by 1980 that number had now grown more than 400. This did not necessarily represent an increase in the proportionate amount of work; it did represent an increased in those requesting support by the Church for doing that work! Messianic congregations began to be planted, and many of them developed two organizations: one presented itself as a completely indigenous, independent, self-supporting congregation; the other one would be an outreach ministry or evangelistic agency which would solicit support from the church (which support in turn would be used to support the personnel involved in that outreach).

The revival in the Jewish community began to slack by 1973. Since that time a continuing number of Jews continued to come to Messiah but conservatively speaking, that number averages out to about 600 to 1100 per year! Some spiritual leaders were dissatisfied with that kind of substantial progress and were eventually persuaded that many times that number of Jewish people were coming to the Lord. Wildly exaggerated figures, in excess of 100,000, were commonly reported in the press and usually amplified by the anti-missionary agencies who were using scare tactics to get their funding. Instead of planning evangelistic programs for future outreach, many Jewish missions busied themselves with self-congratulatory accolades.

In the 70's some new methods of outreach were used for the first time: the American Board of Missions to the Jews (now Chosen People Ministries) was the first agency to take out full-page advertisements in newspapers with a well planned advertising campaign entitled, "Why are all of these Jews smiling?" Concentrated, short-term missionary programs were begun by the American Messianic Fellowship with their Summer Intern Program (S.I.P.). This was followed by the Jews for Jesus Summer Street Witnessing Campaign and the ABMJ's STEP program.

The first record of Messianic music (*Lamb*) was produced in the U.S. in 1972 by Joel Chernoff and Rick Coghill. Shortly thereafter it was followed by a recording from the Liberated Wailing Wall. Since that time it's been estimated that 35 {75} Messianic music albums have been produced in the U.S. alone. As far as literature is concerned, some older publications passed from the scene (like the Yiddish/English monthly evangelistic newspaper, *Shepherd of Israel*, or *The Dawn*). Probably 100 books have been written, either as testimonies or histories, pertaining to the movement in the decade between 1970 and 1980. But fewer than 20 significant books have been brought out in the 1980's.

At the present time in the U.S., what we see happening might be described as follows:

1. It's time for a house-cleaning. Many of the organizations that were founded in the 1970's as congregations or as outreach ministries have become defunct or inoperative; others are not able to continue. In all probability, 1990 will find fewer operative congregations and fewer operative Messianic ministries than 1980.

2. Another phenomenon is organized resistance. In 1970-71, the Jewish Defense League reacted strongly against the Jewish component of the Jesus revolution: many of the pioneers of the movement were beaten; there were acts of extreme vandalism; threats were raised. Out of the Jewish Defense League grew an organization called "Jews for Judaism" or "Jews for Jews." These groups immediately applied to the organized Jewish communities for Jewish Federation funds. Other more sinister forces seized several of the Jewish believers in an attempt to forcibly deprogram them--these deprogramming efforts by-and-large never worked.

Some damage was done to the movement by the anti-missionary forces. Weaker brothers in the movement, who were anxious to seek some sort of accommodation with the Jewish community, tried to find favor in anti-missionary eyes by becoming more Jewish. For some that was spiritually fatal, because they could not distinguish between biblical teachings and certain unscriptural elements in the Rabbinic teachings. The counter-missionary forces clamored and complained so much that the ordinary civil courtesies normally extended in a pluralistic society were frequently withheld from Messianic groups. Nevertheless, the opposition itself drew attention to the Messianic movement and to the missionary cause. Perhaps, had they learned to ignore us in the beginning, we would have received less attention. But by focusing the media's attention on the movement, their tactics backfired, and the report of the action became more noticeable than the action itself.

Another significant change occurred which has not been as noticeable. In the 1960's, during a time of American prosperity, the esteem of the gospel ministry to the Jews had sunk low among many Christians, and so had the lot of the missionary to the Jews: he generally had a living allowance or salary that was half the amount paid to a public school teacher. Nevertheless, in the last two decades, missionary work among the Jews has demanded a better trained and better

educated individual. In the past two decades, whereas ordinary salaries in the {76} U.S. have gone up four-fold in commerce and three-fold in industry, the remuneration of missionaries to the Jews has increased to the point that most are paid on the same level as a minister in a medium-sized church.

As we face the 1990's, the last decade of this millennium, we are confronted by a number of questions.

1. How can we stop the internecine squabbles among the different Jewish mission agencies and congregational bodies, which discredit us and cause grief to our Lord?
2. How can we communicate our message to the Jewish people, many who have not only become gospel resistant but whose leaders have also developed the apparatus to greatly influence the public spheres of communication in their attempt to silence our message?
3. How can we face the Jewish community with a particularistic message, stressing unique salvation in Christ, when even in the evangelical churches universalism is growing?
4. How can those of us in North America who want to engage in evangelism in the greater Diaspora and in Israel, do so effectively and sensitively?

Today, there is cause for guarded optimism: the mission movement is better trained and better equipped than ever before; the scores of Messianic congregations that have risen up are becoming a strong witness in their communities.

I myself see the resurgence of Orthodoxy in the Jewish community and an attempt by the Orthodox to take over all Jewish institutions as a trend with a positive by-product. This Orthodoxy is intolerant and intransigent, going against the common American spirit of free inquiry. Every time a missionary is shouted down on a street corner, I'm convinced that several Jewish people take stock of that fact. Since Orthodoxy by nature will not compromise, and the other branches of Judaism will, eventually all other Jewish institutions will probably move in the direction of Orthodoxy. Then, rather than close their minds in order to fit into a religious ghetto of thought, most American Jews will bolt; through the preaching of the law, I believe, many will crave grace.

# {77} TRENDS IN JEWISH EVANGELISM IN NEW ZEALAND

*Brian S. Wells*

Brian S. Wells (B.A., M.A.) is Christian Witness to Israel representative in New Zealand.

New Zealand has been described as “a Pacific Asian and European nation... By its geographical points of reference it is certainly a Pacific country. Its climatic and weather are oceanic, subject to sudden change. No point of it is no more than 110 km from the sea. And its coastline totals some 11,200 km.” (Michael King, *New Zealand: Its Land and its People*. A.H. and A.W. Reed: Wellington, 1979). New Zealand is made up of two main islands with a number of smaller ones scattered close by. The total area of 269,057 sq km. In the South Pacific, the light of the new day is beginning to shine, just at the moment when many in other regions of the world are settling down for the night.

The very first emigrant ships brought Jewish people to the region. Although New Zealand is a new country, its population has grown to approximately 3.3 million. The number of Jewish people living in New Zealand is estimated at 4,000 (The Jewish Year Book, 1987), although it has often been contended by Jews that 5,000 to 6,000 would be a more accurate total. Most live in Auckland and Wellington provinces.

Brian Wells, a missionary, teacher and anthropologist, with his wife Vicky, have evangelised the Jewish people in New Zealand since 1968 under the auspices of CWI, the only Christian organization in New Zealand engaged in Jewish evangelism. He works in the North Island of New Zealand, where more than two thirds of the country’s total population lives, and in the city of Auckland (the largest city in the world in area mass), where the greatest number of the Jewish people lives.

“Numerically the community is losing vast numbers of its young people through inter-marriage ...the state of religion is in great flux, with many turning away from the focus of the synagogue. Jewish education is hardly effective, the Jewish family has lost much of its impact, and social activities are very limited. Young people, attracted by Gentile peer group activities, and disenchanted by current trends in the community, find Auckland a bleak prospect for continued Jewish life.” (Russell M. Jaffe, “Social Conflicts and Changes in the Auckland Jewish Community.” Unpublished theses, Auckland University, 1976.)

{78} A thesis dealing with the subject of intermarriage between Jews and Gentiles in Auckland was submitted in 1983 to the department of Anthropology, the University of Auckland. The findings of this thesis support the statement quoted above. This atmosphere among the Jews opens a “wide door of witness.”

Christian Witness to Israel (founded 1842) consolidated its work in New Zealand from 1968 onwards. Outreach is largely carried out from a private home where guests are able to stay, and meetings are conducted regularly. Christian support has been encouraged through continuing deputation, stressing especially the need for prayer. Beginning with one prayer group in



Christchurch, and one in Auckland, prayer groups now number in the 30s and are continuing to grow.

The next major step toward the Christian community was an effort to encourage interest in this work. The group *Haderach* (“the way”) began to meet regularly in order to promote understanding of Jewish culture, feasts and Jewish life in general. Guest groups of young people visited local churches. This led to small but regular gatherings which heard reports, studied and ultimately became more involved in the work.

*Haderach* also contributed to making the work more widely known, helping to attain our main goal of getting to know Jewish people, thus making our witness even more accessible. *SHALOM CAMP* is now a regular annual event at the end of each year school holiday period. Young people come and hear the Gospel, and some turn to Christ. As the work has developed, a *PESACH CAMP* was held during the Easter holiday recess; this has brought encouragement to Christians and to Jews alike.

The most recent form of outreach is *HATIKVAH* (“the hope”) - an evening school of Jewish studies. The New Zealand Bible College encouraged us by deciding to grant three semester units to any of their students taking the course. Personal visitation, a further vital aspect of the work, has led to new friendships and new opportunities for witness. *Hatikvah Books*, a small bookshop in the centre of Auckland, has provided an opportunity for wider reading about Judaism, as well as books on evangelism.

## {79} The Dahaf Report on Israel Public Opinion Concerning Messianic Jewish Aliyah

*The following is a report entitled “Public Opinion Concerning the Right of People in Various Categories to Receive an Immigrant’s Visa According to the Law of Return: Findings of a Survey of Public Opinion” by the Dahaf Research Institute, Tel Aviv. Square - bracketed comments ( ) are by David H. Stern (Ph. D. Economics, Princetown University) This article has been translated by A. Tavor.*

[This research was commissioned by a group of Israeli Messianic Jews . whose object was to find out in what measure there is public support for allowing Messianic Jews to make *aliyah* (immigrate to Israel) as Jews under the Law of Return. We had noticed that the accepted “conventional wisdom” assumed the Israeli “man in the street” to be opposed to Messianic Jewish *aliyah*. It occurred to us that so long as no one inquired of the real “man in the street,” he could be depicted as having whatever opinion one wanted him to have; but once that a research institute one considered above reproach in regard to either scientific methodological competence or religious/ideological bias conducts a proper survey of public opinion, such previous assumptions might be found unwarranted. We are pleased that the results of the survey overwhelmingly refute the conventional wisdom. It is evident that the majority of the Israeli Jewish public, whether religious, traditional or secular, welcomes Messianic Jewish *aliyah* under the Law of Return.]

### A. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of the research was to examine public opinion concerning the right of people from the following categories to receive an immigrant’s visa according to the Law of Return.

The interviewees were asked about 10 “categories” or “prototypes,” in the following order:

1. A person born to a Jewish mother, who does not believe in the existence of God.
2. A person born to a Jewish mother, who belongs to Hare Krishna, Scientology or a similar cult [Hebrew *kat*].
3. A person born to a Jewish mother, who believes that Yeshua is the Messiah.
4. A person born to a Jewish mother, who does not believe that the Torah is inspired by God [literally “is the words of the living God”].
5. A person born to a Jewish mother, who believes that both the Torah and the New Testament are inspired by God.
- {80} 6. A person born to a Jewish mother, who was baptized in the framework of a Christian church.
7. A person born to a Jewish mother, who was baptized in the framework of a Messianic Jewish congregation.
8. A person born to a Jewish mother, who believes that Yeshua is the Messiah, considers and feels himself to be Jewish, and was baptized within the framework of a Messianic Jewish congregation.

9. A person born to a Jewish mother, who believes that Yeshua is the Messiah, considers and feels himself to be both Jewish and Christian, and was baptized within the framework of a Christian church.

10. A person born to a Jewish mother, who is faithful to the State of Israel, pays his taxes to the State, serves in the army, celebrates the Jewish holidays, keeps commandments from Israel's tradition, feels that he is a Jew, and believes that Yeshua is the Messiah, but was not baptized into Christianity.

[a. From the point of view of those who commissioned the research, questions 1, 2 and 4 are "control questions" relating to groups other than the one in which we are especially interested.]

[b. The words "as a Jew" was explicitly included only in this question, although all the questions imply them. I must admit that this question was badly worded, because the phrase "but was not baptized into Christianity;" could be interpreted by the interviewee to mean either (1) "was indeed baptized (as the New Testament requires) but was not thereby transferred out of the Jewish community or Judaism, into the religion known as Christianity," or (2) "was not baptized at all." This ambiguity makes the question unclear and may cloud the conclusions to be drawn from it.]

The above questions were investigated both in an overall sample of Israel's population, and also separately according to socio-demographic characteristics.

## **B. RESEARCH PROCEDURE**

### **1. The Interview and the Sample of Interviewees**

The relevant questions were included in the on-going interview programme of Dahaf Research Institute conducted between January 17 and January 24, 1988.

[The Dahaf Research Institute is to Israel more or less as the Gallup Poll is the to the United States. Dahaf maintains a sample of the Israeli public chosen according to socio-demographic criteria. Once a month Dahaf interviews this sample. Anyone who pays the requisite fee can have his questions presented to the interviewees and learn the results of the poll. The Institute's director of research is Mina Tzemach, Ph. D. (Psychology, Yale University).]

In this framework 1,189 persons were interviewed. These people are a representative sample of the adult Jewish population in the country, excluding members of kibbutzim. (The maximum error of a sample this size in relation to the {81} population as a whole is 2.5/5.) The interviews were conducted face-to-face in the homes of the interviewees.

[What this means is that there is a 95% probability that the percentage figures based on the 1,189 person sample, the figures shown in this report, are not more than 2.5 percentage points away from the true percentage figures for the Israeli Jewish population of 3,630,000.]

### **2. Data Analysis**

The data analysis was performed, as mentioned above, for both the sample as a whole, and separately, according to socio-demographic characteristics. The sociodemographic characteristics investigated were:

Religious self-identification

Sex

Age

Geographical origin  
Education  
Income level

It is possible to investigate interrelationships between socio-demographic characteristics and opinions in two different ways:

- a. Examination of the opinions of each socio-demographic class. For example, one can compare the different socio-demographic classes in regard to the percentage of interviewees, indicating that a person born to a Jewish mother and baptized in the framework of a Christian church has a right to receive an immigrant's visa according to the Law of Return.
- b. Examination of the socio-demographic profile of those presenting certain answers - for example, checking the differential responses of persons of various ages to the question as to whether a person born to a Jewish mother and baptized in the framework of a Christian church has a right to receive an immigrant's visa according to the Law of Return.

The decision as to which viewpoint to use is determined according to what seems relevant to the situation.

In view of the aims of this research, we have used the first viewpoint. The results are presented as follows:

For every opinion (response) we checked the percent of those who hold it from each of the socio-demographic classes and compared it to the corresponding percentage in the general sample. If in a certain class the percentage of those who hold a certain position was significantly different from that in the general sample, then in the corresponding table the name of the class is presented along with the significantly different response shown by this class.

**{82}** If the percentage of those holding a particular opinion in a socio-demographic class was not significantly different from that of the general sample, the name of the class is not mentioned in the table at all. Thus these tables mention only those socio-demographic classes whose responses differ significantly from that of the sample as a whole.

The question now is: how seriously must these socio-demographic variables be taken? Is a particular class negligible or is it important? The answer to this question is determined by two criteria:

- a. A Priori: The readers of the research and the people who will apply its results may determine for various reasons that one class is important and another not so.
- b. Empirical: The relative weight of a particular class in the general population may make it important or not so.

## C. FINDINGS

### 1. Data For The General Sample.

In order to check public opinion concerning the right of people from different categories to receive an immigrant's visa under the Law of Return, the following information was presented to the interviewees:

"The Law of Return determines that every Jew may immigrate to the Land of Israel. The Law defines 'Jew' as 'anyone born of a Jewish mother or converted to Judaism, who does not belong to another religion and who did not voluntarily change his religion.' This definition allows for different interpretations."

Then the interviewees were asked about each of the discussed categories the following question:

"In your opinion, does the person described as follows have the right to receive an immigrant's visa under the Law of Return?"

Table 1 presents the findings. First, however, it should be noted that when polling of public opinion is done in Israel, there is usually under-representation of persons who self-identify themselves as "religious" (dati) [as distinct from "traditional" (masorati) and "secular" (chiloni)]. For this reason the raw data obtained in the sample have been weighted so as to obtain figures representing the correct proportion of religious, traditional and secular in the general population. The data have been weighted in order to reflect the presumption that in the Israel public there are approximately 20% who define themselves as "religious," 33% who define themselves as "traditional," and 47% who define themselves as "secular." [This weighting corrects for the fact that the sample contained only 12% "religious." It has been suggested that the reason for this under-representation is that many religious Jews do not wish to be interviewed in public opinion polls.]

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Interviewees' Reactions in the General Sample Concerning the Right of People in Various Categories to Receive an Immigrant's Visa under the Law of Return

(Note: The data are presented not in the order in which the questions were asked the interviewees, but in order of the percentage voting in favor of the right to receive an immigrant's visa under the Law of Return. The numbers at the left of the table show the order in which the questions were asked.)

**Table 1**

QUESTIONS, AND ORDER IN WHICH THE QUESTIONS WERE PRESENTED TO INTERVIEWEES	HAS RIGHT	DOES NOT HAVE RIGHT	NO RESPONSE	TOTAL
1. A person born to a Jewish mother, who does not believe in the existence of God.	83	13	4	100
10. A person born to a Jewish mother, who is faithful to the State of Israel, pays his taxes to the State, serves in the army, celebrates the Jewish holidays, keeps commandments from Israel's tradition, feels that he is a Jew, and believes that Yeshua is the Messiah, but was not baptized into Christianity.	78	17	5	100
4. A person born to a Jewish mother, who does not believe that the <i>Torah</i> was inspired by God.	73	22	5	100
5. A person born to a Jewish mother, who believes that both the <i>Torah</i> and the New Testament are inspired by God.	68	27	5	100
7. A person born to a Jewish mother, who was baptized in the framework of a Messianic Jewish congregation.	63	32	5	100
8. A person born to a Jewish mother, who believes that Yeshua is the Messiah, considers and feels himself a Jew, and was baptized in the framework of a Messianic Jewish congregation.	61	34	5	100
<b>{84}</b>				
3. A person born to a Jewish mother, who believes that Yeshua is the Messiah.	61	35	4	100
2. A person born to a Jewish mother, who is a member of Hare Krishna, Scientology or a	61	35	4	100

similar cult.

9. A person born to a Jewish mother, who believes that Yeshua is the Messiah, considers and feels himself both a Jew and a Christian, and was baptized in the framework of a Christian church.	54	41	5	100
6. A person born to a Jewish mother, who was baptized in the framework of a Christian church.	49	46	5	100

From Table 1 can be deduced the following:

a. An absolute majority of the public (more than 50%) favors granting an immigrant’s visa under the Law of Return to all the abovementioned categories, except for the case of someone “born to a Jewish mother and baptized in the framework of a Christian church.” [Even in this case, an absolute majority of those expressing an opinion favored granting the visa, 49% to 46%.]

b. The category of people [of those defined in the survey] which the highest percentage of interviewees (83%) believes has the right to an immigrant’s visa under the Law of Return is “persons born to a Jewish mother, who do not believe in the existence of God.” [Actually, we were amazed that there were as many as 13% opposed to granting an immigrant’s visa to Jewish atheists and agnostics. However, the 83% figure serves as a benchmark against which the other categories can be measured.]

c. The category of people [of those defined in the survey] which the lowest percentage of the interviewees (49%) believes has the right to an immigrant’s visa under the Law of Return is “persons born to a Jewish mother, who were baptized in the framework of a Christian church.” [See my remark in paragraph “a.” above.]

d. 78% of those interviewed have the opinion that “a person born to a Jewish mother, who is faithful to the State of Israel, pays his taxes to the State, serves in the army, celebrates the Jewish holidays, keeps the commandments of Israel’s tradition, feels that he is a Jew, and believes that Yeshua is the Messiah, but was not baptized into Christianity” has the right to receive an immigrant’s visa as a Jew under the Law of Return. [See my remarks on question 10 at the beginning of this report.]

{85} e. From the order of the categories as presented in Table 1 it is obvious that there exist groups of categories which have different “support rates” on the part of the interviewees.

The two groups which received the highest support rates may be identified as Jews who do not believe in God at all, and persons born to a Jewish mother, who keep the Jewish tradition, celebrate the Jewish feasts and believe that Yeshua is the Messiah.

The two categories with the lowest support rates are those who have been baptized; and of these, the persons baptized in a Christian church framework have the lowest support rates of all. [I do

not agree. Persons baptized in a Messianic Jewish congregational framework have relatively high support rates and really belong with the categories listed in the next paragraph.]

Between these two groups, as far as support rates are concerned, are those belonging to cults and those who believe in Yeshua as the Messiah.

It is interesting to note that a very high support rate (78%) was given to the person [born of a Jewish mother] who believes that Jesus is the Messiah but was not baptized into Christianity, and who behaves and feels like a Jew and acts the part of a good Israeli (“a person born to a Jewish mother, who is faithful to the State of Israel, pays his taxes to the state, serves in the army, celebrates the Jewish holidays, keeps commandments from Israel’s tradition, feels that he is a Jew, and believes the Yeshua is the Messiah, but was not baptized into Christianity”).

The gap between the 78% support rate for the above-mentioned prototype and the 61% support rate for the prototype described briefly as “a person born to a Jewish mother, who believes that Yeshua is the Messiah” could be due to either of the following reasons:

- 1) The other characteristics of the person--”faithful to the State of Israel, pays his taxes to the state, serves in the army,” etc., *outweighed* the fact that he believes in the Messiahship of Yeshua.
- 2) The many other facts mentioned in the question *obscured* the element of his faith in Yeshua.

It is likely that both factors contributed to this gap.

[What I notice in these data is that when a member of the public is asked whether he would favor allowing on aliyah a person born to a Jewish mother but who believes in Yeshua, he seems to want reassurance that the person is not a traitor to his people but remains Jewish, as evidence by Jewish lifestyle, self-identification with the Jewish people and loyalty to the Jewish state. This conclusion emerges from several results of the survey:

**{86}**

- a. The very high (78%) support rate given to the believer in Yeshua who pays his taxes, serves in the army, celebrates Jewish festivals, etc. etc. It seems that each point adds more reassurance.
- b. A comparison between questions 7 and 9. If all that is known about a person is that he had a Jewish mother and was baptized in a Christian church, only 49% support his right to immigrate. But if it is also known that he considers himself still a Jew (even though he also considers himself a Christian, and the description explicitly states that he believes Yeshua is the Messiah), then the rate rises to 54%.
- c. A comparison of questions 6 and 7. Here the focus is on the context of baptism. If the baptism is in a Christian church framework the support rate is 49%, but if it is in a Messianic Jewish congregational framework the support rate rises to 63%. The differential of 14 percentage points is very large, and surely some of it is due to interviewees being reassured by the term “Messianic Jewish” that the person continues to identify himself as a Jew.



A second observation is that the support level for a person who believes that both the *Torah* and the New Testament are divinely inspired Scripture is the second highest of the support levels recorded for Messiah Jews (68%). This may mean that when interviewees are told a person believes the New Testament is inspired by God, they do not necessarily infer that he believes in Yeshua and normally would have been baptized.]

## 2. Effect of Religious Self -Identification

The interviewees in the survey identified themselves as religious (*dati*), traditional (*masorati*) or secular (*chiloni*). Table 2 presents the findings for these three categories.

**Table 2**

Percentage of Religious, Traditional and Secular Interviewees Supporting the Right of People in Various Categories Having the Right to An Immigrant's Visa Under the Law of Return

QUESTIONS, AND ORDER IN WHICH THE QUESTIONS WERE PRESENTED TO INTERVIEWEES	RELIGIOUS	TRADITIONAL	SECULAR
<u>Number in sample (total 1189*)</u>	<u>143</u>	<u>447</u>	<u>563</u>
1. A person born to a Jewish mother, who 89 does not believe in the existence of God.	78	79	89
{87}			
10. A person born to a Jewish mother, who is faithful to the State of Israel, pays his taxes to the State, serves in the army, celebrates the Jewish holidays, keeps commandments from Israel's tradition, feels that he is a Jew, and believes that Yeshua is the Messiah, but was not baptized into Christianity.	77	75	82
4. A person born to a Jewish mother, who does not believe that the <i>Torah</i> was inspired by God.	71	68	78
5. A person born to a Jewish mother, who believes that both the <i>Torah</i> and the New Testament are inspired by God.	57	67	74

7. A person born to a Jewish mother, who was baptized in the framework of a Messianic Jewish congregation.	55	59	69
8. A person born to a Jewish mother, who believes that Yeshua is the Messiah, considers and feels himself a Jew, and was baptized in the framework of a Messianic Jewish congregation.	50	57	69
3. A person born to a Jewish mother, who believes that Yeshua is the Messiah.	50	54	69
2. A person born to a Jewish mother, who is a member of Hare Krishna, Scientology or a similar cult.	57	54	68
9. A person born to a Jewish mother, who believes that Yeshua is the Messiah, considers and feels himself both a Jew and a Christian, and was baptized in the framework of a Christian church.	26	48	63
6. A person born to a Jewish mother, who was baptized in the framework of a Christian church.	27	43	57

\*[36 interviewees did not place themselves in any religious category.]

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From Table 2 can be deduced the following:

a. The main issue over which religious and other differ is their viewpoint concerning a person's right to an immigrant's visa under the Law of Return is baptism in the framework of a Christian church. In regard to all the other factors one finds little difference between religious and secular. [I cannot agree. On questions 3, 5, 7 and 8, all of which describe Messianic Jews, the support rate of the religious is 14 to 19 percentage points lower than that of the secular. Only on question 10 is the religious support rate of 77% close to the 82% rate of the secular. However, as indicated in my comment on question 10, conclusions drawn from it must be treated with caution because of its ambiguity.]

b. Approximately one-quarter of all those who define themselves as “religious” are willing to grant the right to an immigrant’s visa under the Law of Return even to Jews baptized in the framework of a Christian church. [To me it is even more remarkable that 50-57% of the religious Jews interviewed would grant the right to immigrate under the Law of Return to Jews who believe Yeshua is the Messiah and/or have been baptized in a Messianic Jews congregational framework (see questions 3, 5, 7 and 8)].

### 3. Effects of Other Socio-Demographic Characteristics

The examination of the socio-demographic characteristics of the interviewees according to whom people of the different categories should or not receive immigrant’s rights presented a similar picture concerning all categories except the age groups [of the interviewees].

Following we shall present the interactions with socio-demographic characteristics for four categories representing different support rates of the interviewees in the sample for receiving immigrant’s visa under the Law of Return. Tables 3-6 represent interrelations with the socio-demographic characteristics.

**Table 3**  
Classes Differing from the Overall Sample  
Category: Does Not Believe in Existence of God (Question 1)

Has Right (Overall Sample 83%)		Does Not Have Right (Overall Sample 13%)	
Ages 22-25	91	Ages 18-21	18
		Ages 26-30	17
Israel-born, Western origin	89	Israel-born, Oriental origin	18
Born in Europe or America	89		
<b>{89}</b>			
High-school graduates	88	Partial high-school education	22
University education	92		
Medium income	89	Low income	23
Medium-to-high income	88	Medium-to-low income	17
High income	88		

**Table 4**

Classes Differing from the Overall Sample  
 Category: Loyal Messianic Jew Not Baptized Into Christianity (Question 10)

Has Right (Whole Sample 78%)		Does Not Have Right (Whole Sample 17%)	
Ages 18-21	85	Ages 22-25	21
Ages 31-40	84	Ages 61+	21
		Israel-born, Israeli parents	22
Israeli-born, Western origin	90	Israel-born, Oriental origin	22
High-school graduates	82	Elementary school education	25
University education	86		
Medium income	83	Low income	27
Medium-to-high income	86	Medium-to-low income	26
High income	92		

**Table 5**

Classes Differing from the Overall Sample Category: Member of Cult (Question 2)

Has Right (Whole Sample 61%)		Does Not Have Right (Whole Sample 35%)	
Ages 22-25	68	Ages 61+	41
Israeli-born, Israeli parents	72		
Israeli-born, Western origin	73	Israel-born, Oriental origin	46
Born in Europe or America	66	Born in Asia or Africa	41
High-school graduates	66	Elementary school education	47
University education	75	Partial high-school education	40
<b>{90}</b>			
Medium income	67	Low income	51
Medium-to-high income	72	Medium-to-low income	45
High income	72		

**Table 6**

Classes Differing from the Overall Sample  
Category: Baptized in The Framework Of A Christian Church (Question 7)

Has Right (Whole Sample 49%)		Does Not Have Right (Whole Sample 46%)	
		Ages 51-60	31
Israeli-born, Israeli parents	78		
Israel-born, Western origin	79	Israel-born, Oriental origin	32
		Born in Asia or Africa	32
High-school graduates	73	Elementary school education	33
University education	79	Partial high-school education	30
Medium income	73	Low income	39
Medium-to-high income	83	Medium-to-low income	32
High income	75		

## {91} NEWS RELEASES

*From time to time, MISHKAN will be pleased to reproduce news releases from responsible bodies worldwide on items of concern to those interested in Jewish evangelism. Our readers are invited to submit such news releases for publication.*

*The Editors.*

LCJE Israel News Release No. 1, May 30, 1989

The Lausanne Consultation for World Evangelisation was founded at the initiative of the well-known American evangelist, Dr. Billy Graham. It incorporates hundreds of thousands of individuals and thousands of congregations, churches and organizations all over the world. One branch of this movement is the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE). The Israeli chapter of the LCJE has been active since 1984, led by a secretariat composed of Avner Boskey, Hovard Kleppe, Baruch Maoz (Chairman) and Joseph Shulam. The Chairman also serves as the chapter's spokesman, aided by Avner Boskey.

In Israel there are some 30 congregations, churches and house groups of Jewish Christians scattered around the country. Approximately 3000 persons belong to these bodies, of whom some 60% are both Jewish and Israeli. Most of these participate in the semi-annual National Inter-congregational Conferences. No umbrella organization represents all of the above congregations.

LCJE does not represent these congregations: it incorporates those individuals, congregations and organizations in Israel which have as their purpose the presentation of their faith before the Israeli public and, consequently, the insistence upon freedom of religion, opinion and religious expression. Among LCJE members there are representatives from most of the Jewish-Christian/Messianic Jewish congregations in the country, and from a large cross-section of evangelical Christian organizations.

From time to time, LCJE's spokesmen will issue news releases. LCJE is also available to any members of the press requesting further information. Such information may be obtained from the LCJE spokesman at: P.O. Box 75, Rishon Letsion, 75100, Tel. (FAX) 972-03-966-1898.

Reporters who desire to receive our releases by FAX are invited to inform us of their numbers.

On behalf of LCJE Israel,

Baruch Maoz and Avner Boskey, spokesmen

{92} LCJE Israel News Release No. 2, May 30, 1989

On May 19 an advertisement was carried in the national press announcing a public lecture to be held at the Laromme Hotel, Jerusalem. The lecture was to address the question, "What has-Jesus to do with Jewishness?" As a result of verbal and written threats from Rabbi Bornstein, Head of the Jerusalem Religious Authority's Kashrut Department, the hotels' manager, Mr. Dan Klayman, was forced to request a breaking of contract and to cover all expenses involved in this decision. When Orthodox religious persons learnt that Kol Yisrael, the Israel Broadcasting authority, was planning to broadcast a segment on the subject in the daily news program "BaChatsi HaYom," they exerted pressure which brought about the cancellation of the broadcast.

We firmly protest this repeated effort to obstruct freedom of opinion and expression in Israel. What kind of response could be expected in Israel if an Orthodox Jewish community was forbidden to organize a public lecture in New York, London or Paris? We protest against this abuse of legally-accorded authority and the use of economic threats used to enforce religious coercion.

We are amazed once again by the willingness of the Israeli public to submit to blackmail, coercion and a cynical misuse of authority on the part of interested parties who do damage to Israel's image both within the country and abroad.

Such events cannot go unchallenged. On behalf of LCJE Israel,  
Baruch Maoz and Avner Boskey, spokesmen