

MISHKAN

A THEOLOGICAL FORUM ON JEWISH EVANGELISM

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MISHKAN

A Forum on the Gospel and the Jewish People

"CHRISTIAN ZIONISM"

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EDITORIAL

{Inside cover}

The present issue of MISHKAN was most difficult to prepare. Christian Zionism as a whole and the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem in particular are subjects which concern all Christians who are related to Israel. Thousands have visited Israel under the auspices of the Embassy. Tens, perhaps hundreds, of thousands have been called upon to support Israel in the name of Christian Zionism. Missions around the world who are engaged in evangelistic work among the Jews have felt the impact of the Embassy's aggressive advertising, while interest and support has been diverted from Gospel witness to political and social support. Christian Zionism has become synonymous in the minds of many with true Christian regard for Israel - and in the minds of others it has wedded the Gospel to a philo-semitism that is willing to sacrifice the legitimate claims of one people on the altar of another's.

We are convinced that there are other options which are worthy of consideration. We could not, therefore, ignore the subject and remain a forum in which burning issues related to Jewish-Christian relations are intelligently discussed.

Our writers were encouraged to be as careful with the facts, as generous in their evaluations and as candid in their writing as they possibly could. But we did not want them to beat around the bush. As our readers can see, they obliged.

We regret that repeated efforts to obtain either an article or an official response from the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem were not successful.

John Ross provides us with an historical and theological assessment of the very notion of Christian Zionism. He spells out its implications in no uncertain terms, climaxing in a review of the work of the Christian Embassy in Jerusalem. David Friedman insists upon the necessity of such an embassy, briefly detailing the grounds for such a need. Baruch Maoz raises some of the important criticisms of the Embassy. The Israel chapter of LCJE published a statement on Christian Zionism which is too {91} pertinent to our subject to be ignored. It is also likely to carry some weight by virtue of the fact that it is a voice from within the country. The responses we bring are as varied as the views themselves, and are meant to help our readers in the formulation of their own opinions. MISHKAN has endeavored to obtain also a Christian Arab response, and we hope to publish this in our next issue, which will also include a review of Naim Ateek's *Justice, and only Justice. A Palestinian Theology of Liberation*.

David Pileggi's description of one of many early Jewish Christian attempts to settle the land is instructive, shedding some light to a little-known and seldom acknowledged chapter in the history of modern Israel. Arthur Glasser's article on ecumenism first appeared in *Theology*, March 1988, and encourages us to think of ecumenism in relation to Jewish evangelism.

Joanna Loves Jesus describes an article we think every would-be evangelist to the Jewish people should read. All too often evangelists are accused of being insensitive to the emotional implications which their efforts have on affected families. At times such accusations are true, and the article we here review can serve as an excellent antidote to such a shortcoming.

We earnestly pray that the open discussion of things that matter and upon which sincere men differ will broaden our fellowship by allowing us to learn from each other and thus come another step closer to the image of our Savior. We further pray that the present discussion will further the true interests in the Kingdom of God among his chosen people, Israel.

Ole Chr. Kvarme

{1} The Christian Embassy In Jerusalem

Baruch Maoz

Baruch Maoz is Field Director for Christian Witness to Israel and Pastor of Grace and Truth Christian Assembly. He has authored a number of books in Hebrew and a series of occasional papers on themes relating to Jewish evangelism.

Jewish Christians who love Christ and love Israel are finding it extremely difficult to know how to relate to the Christian Embassy in Jerusalem. The Embassy is the sincere, devoted and sacrificial result of the love which many Christians have for our nation, and since Jews have never suffered from an overdose of Christian affection, every expression of practical friendship or support should be welcome.

If that were all that needed to be said, the present issue of MISHKAN would be unnecessary. Nor would there be grounds for the difficulty which many are encountering in relation to the Embassy.

None of those who know the staff of the Christian Embassy could ever doubt the warmth with which they embrace evangelical convictions. Nor can any cast doubt on the effectiveness with which they support many worthy projects in Israel. There are no known grounds to criticize their management of funds, nor reason to believe that ulterior motives lie behind their tremendous energy which they invest in tasks.

Nevertheless, there are some grounds for concern and criticism.

MISHKAN editors entertained the hope that the Embassy would take advantage of this forum in order to give its own point of view. We assured them we would not impose restrictions (beyond the number of pages they could use) and that we would accord them the further privilege of response to each of the articles produced in this issue. Our repeated overtures were rejected.

In a personal interview which I had with Jan Vilhelm van der Hoeven, I mentioned the difficulty MISHKAN encountered finding anyone to present the Embassy's view. Jan Vilhelm responded by calling upon me to "defend {2} the Embassy." I regret to say that, on a number of accounts, I find that an impossible task.

What follows is an argument among friends who disagree. While respecting each other's opinion and acknowledging their respective personal integrity, both sides hold to views which are not compatible. I am delighted with the thought that MISHKAN once again address an issue of import, and that it does so via a forum. We might not all agree, but we must all afford each other a fair and open hearing. Only by such mutual edification can we ever hope to come closer to the perfection of truth, to the which we shall only arrive *together*. That is why I so much regret the Embassy's persistent refusal to enter into dialogue with those who voice concern over the path they have taken. I can only hope this issue of MISHKAN will lead to dialogue in the future.

As stated, none who know the Embassy's staff could ever entertain a legitimate doubt as to the warmth and sincerity with which they maintain evangelical convictions. But how consistently are these convictions held? As is widely acknowledged, "evangelical convictions" include the belief that Jesus is Israel's promised Messiah, and that faith in Him is necessary for salvation. This inevitably means the gospel of Jesus Christ must be preached to all men - Israel included. Those of us who know the Embassy, know full well there is no disagreement between us and them on this point. It is possible that some non-Christian Jewish friends are also aware of this fact. But the Embassy has repeatedly and consistently laboured to keep it a well-guarded secret.

One finds it difficult not to wonder why. It would be natural for a body as convinced of the truth of the gospel as the Embassy undoubtedly is, and which had such a solid basis of support among evangelicals as the Embassy claims to enjoy, not to need to hedge its convictions by public ambivalence. There are, it would appear, only three possible explanations: Either we have misjudged the sincerity with which Embassy staff believe the gospel (a merely theoretical possibility); the Embassy does not really have as wide and as solid a support in the evangelical world as they wish some to believe and therefore must pander to the denials of non-evangelicals; or, hidden in the recesses of their hearts, the Embassy staff have a niggling suspicion that they are merely being used by Israel and that, were they to stand up for what they believe, they would be rejected. It is for the Embassy to inform us which of the options is correct.

It is readily acknowledged that not all evangelical bodies must be involved in evangelism. Indeed, some such bodies definitely should not. Their callings are different, and should be conducted accordingly. There would be no difficulty if the Embassy issued a statement to the effect that, while it {3} believed in the necessity of evangelism per se, it did not itself engage in such activity. But the Embassy's repeated hedging on this issue gives credence to the growing conviction of some that the Embassy believes political and economic support in the name of Christ are all that is needed, and that evangelism is, at best, peripheral.

Such an opinion is further strengthened by the oft-repeated reports (never publically denied by the Embassy) that participants in Embassy-related events in Israel are discouraged by Embassy staff from commending their faith to Jewish friends.

I can well understand the Embassy's hesitation to pronounce on this point: They fear Israeli Government's response once they openly declared the truth of their convictions. But the lack of such a declaration does little to gain respect and, consequently, little to commend the sincerity of our religious commitment.

Further, there is some ground for concern that economic and political support for Israel have, in the minds of the Embassy and many of its supporters, replaced a consistently evangelical concern for Israel. The Bible describes this concern as including the whole man, not exclusively his material and political interests.

Israel is certainly in need of the kind of aid Christians can give it. But, more than anything else, Israel needs Christ, its promised Saviour and covenanted Messiah.

The Embassy lays much stress on "End-Times doctrine" and on the End-Times concerns which motivate many of its endeavours. It most frequently attaches itself to one brand of eschatological expectation frequently to be found among evangelical Christians. It is important to note that the practical conclusions at which they arrive are not the only ones which may be logically deduced by that particular school of eschatology. Indeed, many who hold to similar views are at times embarrassed by statements and claims made by the Embassy on the strength of shared and cherished convictions.

The Embassy actually serves its cause poorly by insisting upon the necessity of their brand of Christian goodwill toward Israel, and upon the eschatological assumptions which, they insist, underlay them. Those who subscribe to other eschatological opinions, or who wish to include in their political concerns a consideration of Arab Palestinian claims, are unilaterally excluded by the Embassy's determined position.

{4} This leads us to our next point, namely the Embassy's almost total identification of consistent Christianity with right-wing Israeli politics or with Zionism itself. Allow me to explain: I am an adamant Zionist, committed to the support of Zionism and convinced of the basic morality of its position. I am further convinced that the land of Israel was promised to

the people of Israel and that we have every right - moral, political, and legal - to have a state of our own in this land. I am prepared to defend that state with my life.

But the Christian Faith is not equal to Zionism and those who oppose my Zionist convictions are not necessarily poorer Christians than those who support it. It is distressing to see how an originally secular political platform (albeit, not without its religious origins) has come to be identified in the minds of some with the very basics of the gospel. Zionism stands or falls on the merits by which all and any political views must be tried. An Arab Palestinian who opposes a Jewish State, or who wishes to create a Palestinian entity alongside Israel, is not one whit lesser a Christian because of his aspirations. I may disagree with him (and I do), but he and I shall have to discuss our differences on more than eschatological grounds. Nor can eschatology be allowed to replace moral considerations. Morality and the fear of God are major issues in eschatology!

Further, the Embassy has been consistently unwilling to take public issue with anything Israel has done. This is particularly unfortunate because the Embassy has such extensive access to Israeli ears that, had it exercised the prerogative of a friend and criticized where criticism was due, Israel might have been spared some mistakes. A distinctly Christian moral input could only benefit those who are exposed to it, so long as it is offered in a humble, gentle and believing manner. While Zionism is (I am confident) a valid Christian option, it is not without its mistakes.

Uncritical support has done little to earn the respect of the Jewish people. It has further exposed the fledging Jewish Christian church in Israel to harassment, insufficiently undeterred by those in the country responsible for preserving democratic freedoms, because the Embassy and those whom it represents have not been willing to add substance to their discreet but ineffectual protests. Such protests are not taken seriously, as anyone who is conversant with the facts can tell, because Israeli officials are convinced they are mere words. The Embassy has yet to disprove the old dictum that barking dogs don't bite.

True. The Embassy has come out on one or two occasions in the course of its activity with public statements in defense of Jewish Christians. But these statements have been few and far between - far enough to be ignored and forgotten. Financial aid has been purportedly given by the Embassy to {5} Jewish Christians fringe elements while widely-respected congregations continue to meet and to function with few resources and, in some cases, under constant official harassment. There is further room for concern over the fact that no public record has ever been made of the uses of the sizeable amounts of money the Embassy receives.

Some Jewish Christians have been invited to address the Embassy's Feast of Tabernacles Plenary. This is a most welcome trend, however uncharacteristic of the Embassy's usual chosen path. Hopefully, there will be more such. To date, the Embassy is in no significant way related to the local congregations in Israel and is barely involved in their welfare.

I believe the Christian Embassy in Jerusalem exemplifies the loss of evangelical confidence which is dogging the feet of the Church in many places all over the world. It represents a laudible attempt to make up for the generations of shame, when Jews were the object of Christian scorn and cruelty, but it errs to going too far in the opposite direction. As such and contrary to its fondest wishes, it is rendering Israel an ultimate disservice. I thank the Embassy's staff for their love. I thank them for their concern for my people. I covet the warmth of their fervour. I thank them, too, for being willing to read these lines. For them, for Israel and for myself, I covet the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

{6} A Statement on Christian Zionism

By the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism – Israel Branch

We, the Israel chapter of LCJE, representing various evangelical and evangelistic bodies, local congregations and individuals in Israel, present the following statement:

1. We affirm our belief that, as part of the fulfillment of God's promises in the Bible, the Jewish people have a right to the land of Israel. We further affirm the legitimacy of a Jewish national political entity in the land within safe and secure borders.
2. Jesus is Israel's promised Messiah, sent for the salvation of Israel and of the nations. It was with regard to the salvation of Israel that Paul asked, "How can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?" and concerning whom Peter declared that "Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."
3. We therefore conclude that the Gospel of Jesus Christ must be preached to Israel and that there is no room for neglect of this duty.
4. We rejoice in every expression of love toward Israel, be it in evangelistic, social, economic or political terms; but we hereby register our concern over the tendency to equate love for Israel with a political platform: The Gospel does not necessarily imply any one position on Zionism.
5. We recognise with shame the terrible blot on relations between Jews and Christians created by the culpable deeds of many who claimed the title Christian. We freely concur with those today who call for humility and sensitivity in Jewish Christian relations. We commend those Christians who are reaching out to Israel by humanitarian labours of love and concern. However, history cannot excuse the church from its duty to preach the Gospel to Israel, nor can Israel be comforted truly apart from her Messiah. No good deeds can atone for the past, nor may we replace the finished, atoning work of Messiah with expressions of our love.
6. From all over the world we hear reports of Jews turning to Jesus. An indigenous body of Jewish believers in Jesus the Messiah is emerging in Israel. We are astounded that, at this exciting moment in Israel's history, any should doubt the necessity of proclaiming the Gospel to Israel. The {7} church should recognise its duty to publicly identify with and support the growing body of Israeli Jewish believers in Jesus, especially at this time of challenge and opportunity.

We therefore call upon the Church throughout the world not to abandon its central calling to preach Christ. Political support for Israel must not come in place of preaching the gospel to all nations, to the Jew first and also to the gentile.

On behalf of the LCJE Israel membership,

Baruch Maoz

National Coordinator

January, 1989.

{8} Beyond Zionism: Evangelical Responsibility to Israel

John S. Ross

John S. Ross is a minister of the Free Church of Scotland and deputy director of Christian Witness to Israel.

I. AN OUTLINE OF EVANGELICAL PRO-ZIONISM

A. Reformation and Puritan Roots

Modern evangelical concern for the Jewish people has its roots in the European Reformation and especially the 17th century Puritan movements. Crucial to this developing concern for the homeless and stateless Jews was the study of the Bible in its original languages and its translation into the common tongue. As its stories and teachings permeated the life of the Protestant nations, more and more people became aware of the Jews and their history, their homeland and its geography, and above all, the prophecies that pointed forward to a restoration of Israel. The fresh light of Scripture enabled gentiles to see Jews in a new way. The old stereotypes and caricatures drawn by Rome were challenged by the new authority: The Bible had de-throned the Pope and cast into question everything he stood for. These new Bible-believing Christians did not see themselves as the avengers of Christ's blood but as those whose very Bible, Saviour and faith had come to them as a direct result of God's covenants with Abraham and his descendants.

Michael J. Pragai sees the great turning point to be the publication (in 1611) of the Authorized Version of the Bible: "... the 'adoption' of the Bible was complete. The family and tribal history of one nation became the 'national epic' of the other."¹ It could be argued that concern for the Jewish people and their future was stimulated by the earlier production of the Geneva Bible. In 1560, four years before the death of the great reformer John Calvin, the Geneva Bible taught the future spiritual restoration of the Jews through its marginal notes. For example, its comment on Romans 11:26 states that Paul "sheweth that the time shall come that the whole nation of the Jews, though not every one particularly, shall be joined to the church of Christ."

{9} Increasingly the opinion was formed that God had not abandoned the Jews or replaced them by gentile believers in Christ. Jews were 'beloved for the fathers' sake' and their time of gospel blessing was yet to come. Most significant among the earlier Puritans was Thomas Brightman (1562-1607), who believed that the restoration of the Jews need not be placed at the end of the age. Though a certain fulness of the gentiles would precede the national conversion of Israel, Brightman did not exclude the possibility of further worldwide conversions of gentiles. As Murray puts it, "The Jews' calling, he believed, would be part of a new and brighter era of history, and not the end."² Brightman is important also for another reason: his resolute belief in a Jewish return to Palestine. In answer to the rhetorical question, "Shall they return to Jerusalem again?," he responds, "There is nothing more certain: the prophets do everywhere confirm it and beat upon it."³

The Jews, were seen as a people of destiny, with a future and a hope, their destiny inextricably connected with the ultimate blessing of the gentile nations and of the Church.

¹ Michael J. Pragai, *Faith and fulfillment*. Christians and the Return to the Promised Land, Valentine, Mitchell, London 1985, p. 9.

² Iain Murray, *The Puritan Hope*, Banner of the Truth Trust, London 1971, p.46.

³ Pragai, op. cit. p.12.

Through the dark days of the English Civil Wars, the subject of the restoration of the Jews was frequently raised within Parliament and throughout the nation. Puritans such as Richard Sibbes and Thomas Goodwin sounded a new note of joyful anticipation. Says Murray, “This note of joy is significant. If a widespread conversion of the Jews was to occur in the earth then the horizons of history were not, as Luther feared, wholly dark.”⁴ In a sermon preached before the House of Commons in 1649, John Owen spoke of “the bringing home of his ancient people to be one fold with the fulness of the Gentiles.”⁵

These theological convictions led many Christians to pray earnestly for the Jews’ blessing. Owen’s sermon, quoted above, saw the “bringing home of his ancient people” as the answer to the “millions of prayers put up at the throne of grace, for this very glory, in all generations.” Murray reminds us, “days of prayer and humiliation were kept in Scotland, one particular object being ‘That the promised conversion of his ancient people of the Jews may be hastened.’”⁶ In 1643 the Westminster Assembly produced its famous Confession of Faith and Larger and Shorter Catechisms. These unsurpassed theological formulations of Reformed teaching carried in their heart deep concern for the Jews. The Larger Catechism’s teaching on the Lord’s Prayer understood the coming of Christ’s kingdom to include the restoration of the Jews. The Directory For Public Worship instructs that the public prayer offered in churches each Sunday should include intercession “for the conversion of the Jews.”

Nowhere in the 17th century does this spirit of prayer come to higher expression than in the poem of George Herbert (1593–1633). Herbert’s poem shows both a deep awareness of the sad history of the Jews, the Christian debt to them and the consequent longing for their salvation and restoration:

{10} Poor nation, whose sweet sap and juice
Our scions have purloined and left you dry;
Whose streams we get by the Apostle’s sluice,
And use in baptism, while ye pine and die;
Who by not keeping once became a debtor,
And now by keeping loose the letter.
O that my prayers! - mine, alas!-
O that some angel might a trumpet sound,
At which the Church, falling upon her face,
Should cry so loud until the trump were drowned,
And by that cry of her dear Lord obtain
That your sweet sap might come again!

If theological reflection gave rise to prayer, it also gave rise to action. A contemporary of Thomas Brightman was Sir Henry Finch (1558 - 1623), Member of Parliament, a distinguished jurist and an eminent Hebraist. His book *The World’s Great Restoration - Or Calling of the Jews*, was published in 1621. Pragai describes it as “a veritable classic of early Christian pro-

⁴ Murray, *op. cit.* p.14.

⁵ *The Works of John Owen*, The Banner of Truth Trust, vol. 8, reprint London 1965, p.266.

⁶ Murray, *op. cit.* p.100.

Zionism.”⁷ The Elizabethan and 17th century Puritans created an atmosphere in England that could only be described as Judeophile. Many believed in the promised restoration of the Jews, prayed for it, and were disposed to work for it too. Such was the climate in which Oliver Cromwell became Lord Protector of England in 1653. As a Puritan, Cromwell viewed the Jews with great sympathy. He strongly supported Jewish requests to live in England and, though frustrated by the prejudice of the Council of State, encouraged their eventual resettlement there.

B. Evangelical Affirmation

The Protestant Reformation in its English and Genevan expressions gave rise to the conviction that God had not abandoned the Jews. The 18th and 19th century revival of evangelicalism added momentum to the belief that the Jews would one day return to their homeland.

Increasing European animosity toward Jews gave rise to Zionist aspirations and fired the sympathetic imagination of many in Christian lands. Lord Byron, expressed it well as he linked the words of Jesus with the contemporary plight of the Jews:

The wild dove hath her nest
the fox his cave,
Mankind their country –
Israel but the grave⁸.

{11} Christian pro-Zionism found a distinguished advocate in the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, Ashley Cooper. Lord Shaftesbury’s view has been described by Carl Amerding as “a kind of Romantic Christian Zionism very different from the Zionism of our own day and yet not entirely at one either with the millenarian movements of contemporary North America.”⁹ Shaftesbury’s concerns were based on his understanding of the Bible, which had been his guiding light in many endeavours to alter the moral and social landscape of Victorian England. Amerding remarks: “What made him a Zionist half a century before the publication of Herzl’s *Der Judenstaat* (1896) was his intense conviction that the Jews were destined by God to return to their own land as part of the fulfilment of biblical prophecy.”¹⁰

One of the most significant Christian Zionists of the period was William Hechler (1845-1931), chaplain to the British Embassy at Vienna. Hechler established a strong friendship with Theodore Herzl. Hechler helped the Zionist cause and influenced Herzl’s thinking so much that he has been described as the Prophet of Zionism and Herzl as the Prince. Hechler’s biblical motivation is revealed in the title of his most important work, *The Restoration of the Jews to Palestine According to the Prophets*. But Hechler never confused Jewish return to *Eretz Israel* with their spiritual restoration. He saw beyond Zionism - “the stirrings of the bones in Ezekiel’s valley” - to the time when there would be “the glorious outpourings of spiritual life predicted in Ezekiel 36.”¹¹

Such evangelical convictions had considerable influence on British governments. Lord Palmerston instructed the British Consul in Jerusalem to “exert friendly protection on behalf of all Jews generally, whether British subjects or not.” In 1849 the British Consulate was entrusted by the British Government with the care of all Russian Jews in

⁷ Pragai. *Op. cit.* p.14.

⁸ Lord Byron (1788-1824), *Hebrew Melodies*.

⁹ Carl Edwin Amerding, “The Meaning of Israel in Evangelical Thought,” in *Evangelicals and Jews in Conversation*, (ed, Tanenbaum, Wilson and Rudin), Baker, Grand Rapids 1978, p.134.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Pragai, *op. cit.* p.60.

Palestine. Hechler also exercised influence over the German Kaiser who, on a visit to Palestine in 1898, received a delegation of Jews living in the land. The exertions of 19th century pro-Zionist Christians to influence policy makers came to fruit with the Balfour Declaration of 1917.

The Jewish homeland did not eclipse, let alone replace, the idea that the fullest restoration of the Jewish people, would involve their acceptance of Jesus as Messiah. In direct response to the evangelical perception of the Jews as God's special people, missionary societies were founded in Britain and Europe. There was no tension between the Zionist viewpoint and support of missionary activity among the Jews: Lord Shaftesbury, the foremost pro-Zionist, was president of the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews.

{12} C. Twentieth century evangelical reaction

The 20th century saw the outworking of the Zionist dream. The increasing immigration to Palestine after the first world war was given an added momentum following the Nazi Holocaust.

William Hechler had hoped that "the religious element ... (would) become the inspiring force."¹² However post-Holocaust Zionism often strikes a defiantly humanistic tone with its insistent question: "As Israel perished in the camps, where was God?" Guided by secular thought rather than by a deliberate attempt to fulfil prophecy, modern Zionism attempts to secure the safety of the Jewish people.

The Holocaust continues to be a living force in the lives of Jewish men and women. As David Wolf Silverman observes, "How deeply or widely Jews were affected is not yet completely understood or comprehended today. It is a defensible assumption, however, that the echoes, reverberations, and repercussions of the Holocaust are constitutive of the background and are operative in almost everything that happens in Jewish life."¹³

The birth of the state of Israel out of the ashes of the Holocaust has deeply perplexed modern evangelical Christians. On the one hand there are those who believe that the state exists in fulfilment of biblical prophecy. On the other, few if any know how to respond to a people who have suffered so terribly and who attribute their suffering in some way to Christianity. The result has been to make evangelical Christian response to Israel at times unbalanced. Three widely differing views are represented by 'replacement' theology, millenarianism and Christian Zionism.

Replacement theology

Some evangelicals have developed the idea that God is through with the Jews. Though this view is usually associated with some forms of A-millennialism, the Post-millennialist Loraine Boettner is an unexpected advocate of such a notion: "With the coming of the Messiah, God's purpose with Israel as a nation was accomplished and their mission as a separate people was at an end."¹⁴ William Hendriksen teaches that the Church is the new Israel. "... in this world wide 'Israel' God's promises would be fulfilled. ... Old Testament prophecies are fulfilled in the Spirit-filled church."¹⁵

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ David Wolf Silverman, "The Holocaust and the Reality of Evil," in *Evangelicals and Jews in Age of Pluralism*, (ed. Tanenbaum, Wilson and Rudin), Baker, Grand Rapids 1984, p.268.

¹⁴ Loraine Boettner, *The Millennium*, Presbyterian and Reformed, Grand Rapids 1957, p.322.

¹⁵ William Hendriksen, *Israel in Prophecy*, Baker Grand Rapids 1968, pp 56-57.

It follows that, for such thinkers, the return to *Eretz Israel* is of no prophetic significance and therefore unrelated to any future restoration of Israel. Louis De Caro says, “Far to many in Christendom ... indiscriminately relate Zionist statecraft and Zionist political determination to Old Testament prophecy and conclude that the state of {13} Israel - ipso facto - is a fulfillment of prophecy. Thus, in their thinking, the state of Israel is assumed to exist by divine decree. The assumption ... is, in the author’s view, *ipse dixit* - something not borne out in Scripture, neither is it related to Israel’s ancient prophetic tradition.”¹⁶ This view evidences an overwhelming tendency to allegorize the prophetic expectations and make the Church the inheritor of all the promises originally given to ethnic Israel.

Millenarianism

Millenarianism, is the belief that Christ will reign on earth for 1000 years over a perfect world order, with its centre in Jerusalem. The primary basis for this view is a literal interpretation of biblical prophecy in the light of Revelation 20:1-10. The most familiar form of this idea is that advocated by Dispensationalists. Though there are many important elements in the various schemes of Dispensationalism, the one that concerns us most is that of “the kingdom.” It is suggested that, because the majority of the Jews rejected Jesus’ Messianic claims, He postponed setting up His kingdom until His return. In the interim period - the present dispensation of grace - He gathers together His church. Thus this view stresses a discontinuity between Church and Israel.

Dispensationalists are characterized by a great love for the Jewish people and a strong belief in the people’s central role in the future establishment and administration of the kingdom of God on earth. In line with the above is the conviction that the Temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem and non-redemptive offerings of thanksgiving will once more be offered. Many believe that the building of this Third Temple is soon to begin.

While the majority of Dispensationalists hold to the need to evangelize Jews in this age, most do not entertain great hopes of evangelistic success. The national conversion of Israel, it is said, will not take place as a result of Christian witness but of actually seeing Jesus coming or witnessing some other miraculous manifestation of God’s power.

The expectation of only meager success for Christian witness does not inhibit most dispensationalists from evangelistic activity. However, a distorted form of millenarianism can be a strong disincentive to evangelism, by leading advocates to wait for the future redemption of Israel, and meanwhile, prepare the way of the Lord through social and political support of the state of Israel.

Non-evangelizing Christian Zionism

Some Christians believe that Christian witness to Jews is inappropriate. They express their Christian concern for Israel through institutions such as {14} Nes Ammim (a Christian kibbutz), the Christian Embassy, and Christian Action for Israel. These groups have renounced the idea of direct, often even of indirect, evangelism. The fourth of Nes Ammim’s Principles declares: “Nes Ammim’s goal is to renounce both practically and in principle any pretension to engage in missionary proselytism (that is, efforts to make Jews members of the Church).”¹⁷

The South African based Christian Action for Israel sets out its aims as follows:

#1 “Derived from our faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray for Israel, give to Israel and similarly educate fellow Christians so that Israel may occupy the land given to her by Divine

¹⁶ Louis De Caro, *Israel Today: Fulfillment of Prophecy?*, Presbyterian and Reformed, Grand Rapids 1976, p.xiii.

¹⁷ Cited by Johannes Verkyl, *Contemporary Missiology*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids 1978,p.141.

right - dwelling in prosperity and peace in accordance with biblical promises which promises have never been abrogated.

#2 “We promote tourism, trade, investment and afforestation. We also link arms with the Jews against anti-Semitism.

#3 “We stand for a peaceful secure Jerusalem united under Jewish control and believe that every committed Christian is responsible before God to carry out the above aims.”¹⁸

As Codrington observes, the Doctrinal Statement of Christian Action for Israel, while similar in its first seven clauses to that of many evangelical organizations, fails to relate its gospel affirmations to the spiritual state of Jewish people. “While there are clear statements concerning the work of Jesus in salvation and the need for all men to repent, nowhere ... is there any reference to the Messiahship of Jesus.”¹⁹

II. CHRISTIAN ZIONISM TODAY: THE INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN EMBASSY - JERUSALEM

So significant is the work of the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem (ICEJ), that, in the minds of many, it epitomizes Christian Zionism. It is therefore necessary for us to consider the establishment, theology and practice of ICEJ with a view to better understanding its strengths and weaknesses.

A. Its Origins.

The promulgation in May, 1980 of the Jerusalem Law had as its objective making a united Jerusalem the capital of Israel, the seat of its President, Legislature, Executive and Supreme Court.

{15} Begin’s Government had hoped the implementation of the Jerusalem Law would encourage foreign countries to install their Ambassadors in Jerusalem and counter the negative effects of the post Yom Kippur War oil embargo imposed by the Arab League. From 1947, the vast majority of embassies had been located in Tel Aviv under the provisions of the original United Nations Partition Plan. Thirteen embassies (the Dutch and twelve Latin American) were located in Jerusalem. Under threat of Arab sanctions, most had closed down.

At this time, “a small company of Christians living in Jerusalem and seeking a way to comfort Israel, felt the Lord’s leading that during the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles they should hold a Christian celebration of this national Jewish Feast, not in imitation but in supportive fellowship.”²⁰ An ICEJ report continues... “This, it seemed, was not enough, for in the midst of the celebration a further inspiration resulted in the opening of a Christian Embassy.”²¹ Thus the Christian Embassy was established.

B. Its Representative Role

The Embassy came into being as the direct result of what was believed to be divine inspiration. The claim to such guidance, through prophetic ‘words’ and revelations has featured prominently in the Embassy’s subsequent history. The point, however, has to

¹⁸ Reginald Codrington, *An Appraisal of Modern Jewish Evangelism*, University of the Western Cape 1983, p.81.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *International Christian Embassy Jerusalem*, ICEJ p.4.

²¹ *Ibid.*

be made that there are many evangelical Christians who cannot accept the Embassy as being fully representative of their views.

In its publications, the ICEJ claims to have “given Christians worldwide, from many Church backgrounds, a channel through which they can express their love for Israel.”²² Glancing through the pages of the ICEJ’s Second International Christian Zionist Congress banquet programme, listing sponsors, patrons, donors and supporters of the event, one looks in vain for the name of any mainstream evangelical denomination or fellowship of churches. More significant is the lack of support from the Hebrew speaking congregations within Israel. But to have credibility as an “embassy” the ICEJ would need to have been inaugurated by a clearly defined and previously existing Christian community to represent its interests, a community to whom it is accountable and from whom it derives its mandate. This is not the case. The ICEJ is a self-perpetuating and self-regulating body, independent of any ecclesiastical jurisdiction. It is a voluntary society representing the views of its own limited circle of supporters.

Most disturbing is the way in which ICEJ seems to distance itself from the growing Hebrew speaking congregations of Jewish believers. This small but significantly growing number of congregations has not enjoyed an easy time in the recent past: Official government backing is given to anti-evangelistic {16} organizations such as Yad L’Achim. The Ministry of the Interior attempts to stop Jewish believers emigrating to the country and taking up Israeli citizenship, and has also denied visas to expatriates hoping to undertake jobs in cooperation with Jewish Christians. Local municipalities have refused licenses to Hebrew speaking congregations. Despite such harassment, the number of Hebrew speaking congregations has risen from a mere handful 20 years ago to about 30 today and the number continues to grow. Yet the ICEJ has significantly failed to publicly and vigorously represent the interests of these indigenous Christian congregations literally on its own doorstep. Such protests as the embassy has made against the harassment of Israeli believers has been described as “discreet and ineffectual.”

The ICEJ has no right to claim to be speaking for evangelical Christianity. Far less can it claim to be God’s authorized voice in Israel, “a means ... through which, in a visible way, God can say to His people (the State of Israel) ‘I have come to comfort you’”²³ Its views are its own, no more and no less.

C. Evangelical Theology

In his article “Our Responsibility Towards Righteousness and Peace” Jan Willem van der Hoeven, ICEJ Spokesman, identifies himself with the evangelical position. Those who know ICEJ staff ungrudgingly testify to both their evangelicalism and the fervour with which they hold such views.

The evident reluctance of the ICEJ to represent a full and balanced evangelicalism to the Jewish nation is perplexing. In the summer of 1988, while making a video film about Israel, the author invited Jan Willem van der Hoeven to place on record the Embassy’s viewpoint on the subject of Jewish evangelism. In private conversation one was left in no doubt that he and I stood on common ground regarding the need of all men, Jew and gentile alike, to trust in Jesus Christ for salvation. But Van der Hoeven constantly stressed that this was not the time to preach the gospel to Jews. He emphasized the need for providing a socio/political support for Israel, marginalizing and therefore neutralizing evangelism. The appropriate Christian

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

contribution as Van der Hoeven understood it, did not focus on Israel's spiritual needs but on building good relations with the state of Israel.

The ICEJ further contradicts its evangelical claims by forbidding Christians involved in its events from any kind of evangelistic activity. Participants in the annual Christian Celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles organized by the Embassy, are instructed in the printed programmes when visiting {17} Jewish homes: "Please do not leave tracts or attempt to proselytise. This can cause great offence." Undoubtedly, there is need for sensitivity and tact in evangelism, but it is our opinion the Embassy would be better employed in encouraging sensitivity than in discouraging what is every Christian's Godgiven responsibility.

D. Reinterpreted Dispensationalism.

The International Christian Embassy's claim to be evangelical despite its inhibitions regarding evangelism can partly be understood in terms of its reinterpretation of dispensationalist teaching, particularly the idea that few Jews will come to faith in Messiah during the present age of grace. Though some individuals may accept Jesus during this dispensation, the nation will collectively turn to Christ at the second advent. In other words, Israel will not be fully converted by the preaching of the gospel but by the appearance of Christ in glory. The fulfilment of the Lord's Prayer petition, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" is to be seen in the future: In "God's marvellous intervention in the affairs of His people Israel, Jerusalem would become the centre of his rule and kingdom on earth and be his heavenly answer to the centuries of prayer."²⁴

A greater sensitivity to Jewish objections than to the biblical mandate had led the ICEJ to abandon evangelism altogether. When challenged by a *Jerusalem Post* reporter on whether the ICEJ might not be a covert mission society, Van der Hoeven said, "Not so. The Zionist Christians are different. Our objectives are not as you describe them. We don't believe in conversion, we don't want to make the Jews into Christians." He admits that the "Jewish religion must modify itself in the course of time - but on one point only, the identity of the Messiah." He adds, they "must make the modification as a collective entity. Suborning individuals to secede would serve no purpose."²⁵

The effect of this policy is clearly illustrated by a non-Messianic Jew who, after attending the First International Christian Zionist Congress at Basel in August 1985, affirmed, "From this Congress, I am going out stronger in my belief and my Judaism because what I see is the fulfilment of the prophecies of the prophets of Israel."²⁶

Van der Hoeven describes our present Christian responsibility as follows: "Those therefore interested and concerned to see God's redemptive purposes established upon this earth have a dear directive given to them by God in His word - to seek the good of his people and their city in these latter days."²⁷ He continues, "That's why prayer and effort for the peace of Israel and this city of Jerusalem is so important, because in her peace the whole world will receive peace"²⁸ Van der Hoeven exhorts Christians to "pray for {18} the peace of Jerusalem" and "comfort Israel," interpreting the concepts of peace and comfort in a thoroughly materialistic sense, with no regard for the spiritual.

A further effect of reinterpreted dispensationalism is the claim by the Embassy to have re-introduced 'Davidic worship'. Foreshadowing what they conceive to be the Messianic

²⁴ Jan Willem van der Hoeven, *Our Responsibility, Christian Zionism and its Biblical Basis*, ICEJ, p.26.

²⁵ *Jerusalem Post*.

²⁶ *International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, First Christian Zionist Congress*, ICEJ 1985, p.16.

²⁷ Van der Hoeven, *Our Responsibility....* P.27.

²⁸ *Ibid*.

celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, “Davidic worship expressed in music, dance and song has become a hallmark of the evening celebrations,” and are said to be “outstanding characteristics and a source of blessing to the participating pilgrims.”²⁹ The Praise Procession from the Mount of Olives to the Old City of Jerusalem expresses “preparation and welcome for the soon-returning of the King of kings and Messiah of Israel to His city, Jerusalem. It is in recognition of these facts that Christians are invited each year to prepare the way of the Lord with songs and prayers ...”³⁰

E. Socio-economic ministry

ICEJ expresses its Christianity through direct support for the state of Israel and its citizens. Its caring, creative involvement through its Social Assistance Programme is impressive. Assuring its supporters that 100 per cent of any gift made through the SAP is passed on to Jewish and Arab organizations in need, help is extended to the elderly, handicapped, deprived children, soldiers and others. As well as disbursing monies, Christian visitors are encouraged to “bring a blessing in your luggage,” reminding us, “You are allowed \$125 worth of gifts duty free. The greatest needs are: Clothing (all ages) in good, clean condition; Shoes; Household linens; Toiletries; School supplies; Educational toys.” The admirable aims of this programme are: “To comfort and encourage Jewish people” and “To help towards reconciliation between Jews and Arabs.”

One area in which the SAP seems deficient is in its policy toward Israeli Jewish Christians. Many of these people are in the lower income bracket and are therefore legitimate candidates for social assistance, either as grants or loans. Some small grants have been offered but they are insignificant compared to what is offered to Jewish and Arab organizations. Surely, impoverished Jewish Christian people should have a special claim on the compassion of the Christian Embassy.

We must also express concern at the underlying theological justification for this programme. The terminology used to describe such concern is that of “blessing” or “comforting” Israel. The first term, “bless”, originates from Genesis 12:3, where it can mean the conferring of prosperity and happiness. The second term, “comfort”, is derived from Isaiah 40. This passage is ill-understood if its command is seen only in terms of social, political or {19} economic concern. The express command of Isaiah 40: 1-2 is to “speak comfortably to Jerusalem and proclaim to her...” The nature of the proclamation is to instruct Israel as to how her sins have been atoned for and how God’s justice was fully satisfied. A materialistic interpretation of this significant passage tends to obscure the ultimate comfort for Jew and gentile alike, the ministry of the Messiah as the servant of the Lord.

“Comforting” and “blessing” only in a materialistic way is inadequate. No matter how sincere, such help is superficial if divorced from clear Christian witness. We may apply the Messiah’s teaching: What shall it profit the Jewish people if they gain the whole land, political stability, military security and economic viability, but lose their own soul?

Responding to the non-evangelizing ‘Principles of Nes Ammim,’ in words equally applicable to the International Christian Embassy, Johannes Verkyl comments, “I must register my disagreement, for it strikes me that it calls Christians to do something which is principally impossible and never allowable. No Christian community may ever vow to give up its missionary activity. Nor do I think that such a promise was necessary in view of the fact that

²⁹ *First Christian Zionist Congress*, ICEJ, “Highlights and Events,” p.11.

³⁰ *Op. Cit.* p.13

the state of Israel guarantees freedom of religion in its constitution.”³¹ Verkyl adds, “I hope that this promise ... can ultimately be withdrawn. As for the rest of the work ... contributing to the Israeli economy and building bridges of understanding between Jews and Christians, I have nothing but the deepest admiration and respect.”³²

III. BEYOND ZIONISM: AN EVANGELICAL AGENDA

A. Sensitivity to Israel’s History

Christians must not ignore centuries of Jewish suffering at the hands of those who claimed to be Christians. Coercive and manipulative attempts to force a superficial change of religious affiliation has understandably created a climate of skepticism and hostility towards the Church. Today we are forced not only to acknowledge these realities but challenged to formulate a theological and historical analysis that will guide our response toward Israel in the post-Holocaust world.

ICEJ has come to the conclusion that the Christian Church must manifest repentance before Jewish eyes, because the Holocaust is a crime in which the Church must share a burden of guilt. But does this mean the Church has lost the right to evangelize Jewish people? Some suggest it has, advocating a moratorium on missions until the Church regains credibility through “comforting Israel.” Others suggest the evangel must be abandoned. Such a response is but an echo of an oft repeated but essentially erroneous idea that originates in Jewish criticism of missions, namely, that missions are an act of hostility directed against the Jews.

{20} This idea finds representative expression in the words of Blu Greenburg:

I see mission through the unique and historically discontinuous event of the Holocaust ... The question here is not one of silence of the established church, nor acknowledgement of Christian acts of mercy and loving-kindness. It is neither complicity or bystanders nor incredible, individual Christian selflessness and sacrifice. ... The issue here is much more simple. From the standpoint of evangelical theory on mission to the Jews, the Holocaust offers an opportunity for reality testing. Would those who preach conversion for all Jews really want a world Judenrein, a world free of Jews? ...After the Holocaust, can any well-meaning Christian look into my eyes and make that claim, the call for a kind of ‘spiritual final solution’.”³³

If gentiles who witness to Jews need to be sensitive to the historical factors that have shaped the Jewish people and the state of Israel, there is an equal, if not greater, sensitivity incumbent upon Jewish believers. The claim to be Jewish and a believer in Jesus is seen as at least highly contentious by the Jewish community. Emotive allegations of apostasy, with all that conjures up, are frequently and vehemently directed at Jewish Christians. In the past the Hebrew Christian was expected to assimilate into a predominantly gentile Church, to keep his head down and deny his Jewishness. This was attributable both to the assimilationist spirit of the pre-Holocaust world and the expectations of the Church. The naivety that views Jewishness as something incompatible with Christian belief has not been altogether banished but is being challenged. Convincing the Jewish community that belief in the Christian gospel

³¹ Verkyl, *Op. cit.* p.13.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Blu Greenburg, “Mission, Witness and Proselytism,” in *Evangelicals and Jews in an age of Pluralism*, p.230.

is not a denial of authentic Jewishness is of the very essence of the challenge facing Jewish believers today, particularly in Israel.

B. Caring support for Israel

One of the obvious ways to demonstrate that a large segment of the gentile church has lost sight of its Hebrew roots and origins, is in the very nature of the debate on the relationship between a diaconal ministry and the task of proclamation. The strongly life-affirming nature of the Torah tradition is poles apart from the influence of Greek philosophy that would draw an absolute distinction between the secular and sacred, the material and spiritual. In the definitive ministry of the Apostle Paul, who lived and died as a Hebrew of the Hebrews, we see zealous evangelism coupled with an appeal to the gentile churches for material aid for the suffering church in Jerusalem. There is nothing incongruous in the juxtaposition of these responsibilities; there is no tension to be resolved. Together they reflect God's total care for people in all aspects of their humanity.

{21} It is therefore ironic to see modern Christian Zionism (which professes to be so sensitive to the Hebrew background of Christianity) losing touch with this tradition but as well as the roots of its own tradition in the Protestant Reformation. It was a crucial part of the Reformers contribution to break through the false dialectic. For Paul (and for historic Protestantism) it was not a case of "preach or offer material support" but, according to ability, supply both. It is a travesty to reduce Christian concern for Israel merely to the level of buying Jaffa oranges or Carmel avocados, planting trees and encouraging tourism. But it is equally a travesty to profess concern for the Jewish people of Israel and limit that concern to spiritual issues.

While the call to both social action and gospel preaching is addressed to the Church as a whole, it does not follow that individuals and organizations must be equally involved in both. Some will work through social action, others by proclamation, but neither is permitted to denounce the legitimacy of the other.

The issues are deeper than a biblical duty to "do good unto all men" and the integrity of a biblically holistic ministry. We are talking here of support for the state of Israel, its right to exist in peace as a sovereign nation with secure boundaries and equal rights for all its citizens. The return of a considerable number of Jewish people to the Promised Land cannot, I believe, be set aside as insignificant. Whatever happens to them is significant. At least we need open-mindedness to the possibility that we are witnessing the fulfilment of the biblical promises. Such was the position of J. H. Bavinck: "The return of countless Jews to the present day land of Israel contains many elements which remind us of the ancient prophecies," He added, "The proper attitude for us is to wait, with reverence and humility, to see what God is going to do in this perplexing moment of world history." And while we are waiting? "... Missions to Israel and particularly in the land of Israel have a great importance."³⁴

In the modern state of Israel is a clear sign that God's purposes with Israel have not been come to an end. To disregard the probability that the promised restoration of Jews to the land of Israel is now being fulfilled seems to fly in the face of the clear meaning of Scripture and the expectations of generations of godly and scholarly Christians. Further, it raises doubt that God is Lord of history. We cannot accept any idea that separates between ordinary history and "spiritual" history, that grace operates in the realm of "heilsgeschichte," detached from what is taking place in the Middle East today. In a 1980 interview for *Christianity Today*, Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, expressed his considered opinion that the reunification of Jerusalem

³⁴ J.H. Barvinck, *Introduction to the Science of Missions*, Presbyterian and Reformed, Grand Rapids 1960, pp.73-74.

in 1967 brought to an end the “times of the gentiles,” thus bringing nearer the spiritual restoration of Israel and the eventual return of Christ.

{22} However the prophets always linked return to the land with repentance. Christians may debate which comes first but the important thing is to understand that return to the land without also a return to the Lord is not the biblical expectation. Israel’s continued existence in *Eretz Israel* is conditional upon her repentance. When that repentance is forthcoming then we will be able to affirm the fulfilment of prophetic expectations.

This means that Christian support of the state of Israel must also be conditional - affirming righteousness in Israeli life and criticizing, as only friends can, unrighteousness, injustice and unbelief. Christians cannot make the naive assumption that God is “on the side of Israel” while operating a double standard that fails to measure Israel’s behaviour by the same canons of morality and behaviour applied to other nations. If anything, the standards to which Israel is bound are higher because of the status she enjoys by reason of election. “With regard to all other nations, their right appears to be unconditional. With regard to the Jewish people, it is conditional, depending upon the moral standards which they maintain,” so wrote Louis Rabinowitz in his article “Conditional Right to the Land.”³⁵

C. Praying for Israel

It is appropriate for the Christian to show compassionate but discerning support for Israel. It is also obligatory to pray for Israel. The command is clear, “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem” (Ps. 122:6). The great biblical example is the Apostle Paul. “My heart’s desire and prayer for Israel is that they might be saved.” (Rom. 10.1). The depth of Paul’s commitment to the Jewish people, is set out in Romans 9:1-3. His sincerity and integrity are beyond dispute: he, like Moses of old, is prepared to forego God’s favour that his people may enjoy it. It is in prayer that Paul’s anguished longing for their salvation finds its primary expression.

There are many things that Christians can do for Israel but none is more important or more conducive to their welfare than prayer. Verbal Christian witness is often frustrated by the resolute determination of Jewish people to continue in their historically conditioned prejudice against Jesus and His message. No matter how articulate our witness or sacrificial our service, it is easily misrepresented or dismissed as insignificant unless the power of God’s grace makes it effective. Our dependence upon Him is absolute and it is in prayer that this dependence is expressed.

Prayer is not to be seen in isolation from other activities such as caring and witness. A number of organizations are committed to prayer for Israel. Some have set themselves apart in embarrassed detachment from evangelistic activity. Informed, compassionate, earnest prayer is essential but it is not {23} enough. The Apostle Paul backed up his ministry of prayer with a programme of evangelism, for he recognized it is preaching, not prayer alone that is the power of God unto salvation ... to the Jew first (Rom. 1:16). His concern found expression first in earnest prayer but prayer itself gave rise to optimistic verbal witness to the gospel.

D. Verbal Witness to Israel

The legitimacy of such activity cannot be denied, both from the standpoint of the biblical nature of the Church and the civil and religious freedoms of democratic societies. A most unexpected statement about the necessity of verbal proclamation of the Christian message to the Jewish people was recently made by Canon Jim Richardson, representing the Council of Christians and Jews (a British forum for interfaith dialogue). Richardson stated on a radio

³⁵ *Jerusalem Post*, April 28, 1977.

programme, „... The raison d’être of the Christian Church is to go out and make disciples.... If we are not involved in proselytisation ... we might as well shut up shop. ... Jesus is the Messiah and we have to proclaim that.”³⁶ Anglican Archbishop Robert Runcie made the same point when responding to Jewish criticism of his patronage of the Anglican Church Ministry among the Jews. He said, “The call to make disciples is clear in the New Testament record.”³⁷

Many Jewish leaders recognize the Church’s evangelistic ministry is absolutely integral to its authenticity and view with suspicion evangelicals who claim to have renounced evangelism. The late Rabbi Rabinowitz of Manchester commended a local Anglican rector because “he does not intend to jump on the bandwagon now being ridden by leading Christians who disclaim that missionising Jews is an integral part of their religion.” He added, “I admire him for it, and I am not convinced by the wagon riders.”³⁸

Appropriate Christian witness to Jews may be channelled through a number of avenues. Evangelicals, suspicious of bland interfaith encounters, need to be reminded of the legitimacy of encounter with Jewish people in dialogue. As the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism Easneye statement (1986) reminds us, dialogue can clear misunderstanding, break down stereotypes and give to both Christians and Jews a clearer understanding of our common biblical heritage.³⁹ Such dialogue need not be devoid of a challenge. As Rabbi Bernard Bamberger has said, “I see no reason why Christians should not try to convince us of their viewpoint, if they do so decently and courteously.”⁴⁰ This outlook is shared by writer and lecturer Rabbi Dan Cohen Sherbok, who when asked about Christian witnessing replied, “I’m not outraged myself. They have the right to present their views and I’m willing to hear what they have to say.”⁴¹

{24} Dialogue must not, however, be seen as an alternative to direct evangelism, controversial though that it may be at times. The Church cannot renounce such activity and be true to herself. Undoubtedly it is high time for Christians involved in Jewish evangelism to understand it is not enough for the Church to affirm its right to evangelize; it must also address itself to the wisdom of its tactics.

In his recent statement on Jewish evangelism, the Archbishop of Canterbury disapproved of covert and deceitful methods of presenting the Christian message to Jews. We enthusiastically endorse this view. Christians must distance themselves from anything that is underhanded, manipulative or carries any offence beyond the integral offence of the gospel itself.

The object of evangelism is not to win the argument but to win the person, not to brow-beat but to reasonably and sensitively persuade Jewish people that the fulfilment of their covenant heritage is in Christ and His gospel. To achieve this goal Christian witness must be winsome and attractive. As Paul reiterates, “I make much of my ministry in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them” (Rom. 11:14). Frankly, I would like to see in modern gentile evangelicalism much more that would inculcate a spirit of envy, provoking in the Jewish mind the thought that the gentiles are enjoying the fruit of

³⁶ *London Broadcasting Corporation*, January 28, 1989.

³⁷ Cited by *Church Times*, January 6, 1989, p.20.

³⁸ *Jewish Telegraph*, Manchester 1986.

³⁹ *LCJE Statement*, Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism, Third International Consultation, 19-27 August 1985, England.

⁴⁰ Rabbi Bernard Bamberger.

⁴¹ Rabbi Dan Cohen Sherbok, *BBC Radio Kent*, January 29, 1989.

Israel's covenants. This would create a desire among Jews to obtain that what the gentile church has.

The words of Bishop Stephen Neill ought to be imprinted clearly in our minds, "The mission to Israel has to be carried out with the utmost prudence and delicacy."⁴² Christian witness to the Jewish people has sometimes been marked by crass insensitivity and blundering carelessness. Missions and evangelism must be carried out with a genuine love for Jewish people. "If we really love the people of Israel as we ought, we shall never be without a means of reaching them."⁴³

In answer to the allegation that missionary witness is itself anti-Semitic, evangelicals see the preaching of Jesus the Messiah and salvation through faith in His name as something regained by their renunciation and condemnation of anti-Semitism. "There is one thing," says George A. F. Knight, "and only one thing that we must communicate to all men, and that is Christ. To refrain from doing so ... is a form of religious anti-Semitism which is as basically evil as the philosophy of the Nazis."⁴⁴

E. Fellowship with Jewish believers

In our concern to embrace legitimate biblical Zionism our sincerity faces its true litmus test in relation to Jewish Christians. Like their Saviour, they are often "despised and rejected of men" and in many respects are the Lord's suffering servants in Israel today. They are harassed by officially backed {25} anti-missionary organizations such as Yad L'Achim. Those wishing to settle in Israel under the right of return are frequently blocked by the immigration authorities. Local municipalities have refused licences to Hebrew-speaking congregations. Taunted by Orthodox Jews as apostates, dismissed as freaks by the secular Jew they are often cold shouldered by Christian Zionists whose support is too often directed at an unbelieving majority rather than at the present-day believing remnant.

Walter Riggans has rightly drawn our attention to the fact that the greatest sign of God's covenant faithfulness is not seen in the sign of the preservation of Israel as a people, great though that is, but rather in the existence of "the Jewish believers in Jesus within the whole Jewish people; in short the 'righteous remnant.'"⁴⁵ These people constitute, in the fullest sense, the seed of Abraham. "A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code." (Rom. 2:28,29).

If any people have a right to Zionist aspirations, then it must be those known as Jewish believers, Messianic Jews or Hebrew Christians. These people are both physical and spiritual descendants of Abraham and there can be no dispute as to the legitimacy of their claim to inherit the promises of the covenant.

If there is indeed a legitimate Christian Zionism, its focus of support must be those it now largely shuns - the Jewish Christians/Messianic Jews. It must, through witness, church planting and the nurture of Jewish believers in Jesus, demonstrate the reality of what God is doing. "His purpose was to create in Himself one new man of the two, (Jew and gentile) thus making peace ..." This is the wonder of the New Covenant relationship between God and His people. Recognizing that God desires and decrees that Israel as a whole will one day enter into this covenant and inherit its promises, it becomes the goal of the true Christian Zionist to

⁴² Stephen Neill, *I believe in The Great Commission*.

⁴³ Verkyl. *Op. cit.* p.142.

⁴⁴ George A.F. Knight, quoted by Vernon c. Grounds in *Evangelicals and Jews in age of Pluralism*.

⁴⁵ Walter Riggans, *Israel and Zionism*, Handsel Press, Edinburgh 1989.

pray and work for Israel's national repentance and faith in Messiah Jesus. At the same time, it must offer support and comfort to "the Israel of God," the righteous remnant of Messianic believers.

{28} Why A Christian Embassy

David Friedman

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As a Jew, I conceive of a number of good reasons for the existence of an international Christian embassy in Israel. A Christian embassy is capable of serving the Jewish people as well as the nations of the world.

With regard to the people and the land of Israel, an important service may be rendered. Repeated acts of genocide have been perpetuated against our people throughout history by “Christians” who claimed to be acting in the name of Jesus, with the frequent concurrence of major Christian bodies. As a result of the Holocaust, many of our people have been convinced it is right not to believe in God, not to trust Christians and not to accord Jesus any attention, certainly not as a Jew. Which of us, after visiting the Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem, has not wondered: “Where were the Christians, the believers or the Church, in the course of the events which constituted the Holocaust?”

Today, many Jews repeat that question in the course of the struggle to continue our national and political existence. Jews long for signs of love and support from Christians and the Church.

An embassy could exert itself in spreading the message of reconciliation - time is always ripe for such a message. It can serve to help our people recognize there actually are Christians who love us as a people, and who wish to support us in our struggle for continued national existence. This would be a positive step toward freeing us from the pain and hatred of the past.

Israel needs to hear a message of comfort and reconciliation. Who can better convey such but gentiles who love God? God has commanded the gentiles, “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people (Isa. 4:1). A Christian embassy, because of its motivation (the love of God), is in the right strategic position to fulfill that command.

{29} Secondly, a Christian embassy is capable of making very important statements to the Christian public, as well as teach that public what the Scriptures have to say about Israel as a people and a state, and what are God’s purposes with regard to Israel in the latter days. The present affords an excellent opportunity to teach these subjects to the Christian world. Once again, the Christian Embassy in Jerusalem is in an excellent position to offer this service to those who are willing to accept it.

Representatives of the embassy in the churches of their respective countries can teach against anti-Semitism, utilizing messages such as that found in Jeremiah 31: 1-14. They are also well equipped to teach the Church concerning the need of intercession for Israel (See Ps. 122: 6-9). As one who annually teaches on these themes overseas, I am well aware of the need, especially when met on the part of non-Jews who belong to the Church and who can return to their countries and churches in order to teach (as is written in Jer. 31 & 10). Thus, a Christian embassy can be the instigator of a movement for teaching about Israel in Christian countries.

I have personal doubts as to the effectiveness of a Christian embassy as a political force so long as it is not recognized as a true diplomatic mission. Still - as a Jew and as an Israeli - I am always delighted to meet people who believe in Jesus, who understand God’s heart and His plans for our people, and consequently wish to be in Israel testifying that God is still true

to His people, and there is still a need to support Israel. May there be many more such, (Matt. 25: 37-40)!

In summary, being Jewish, I cannot tell Christians what they should do. But, as a Jew, I can advise them as to which areas of their relations with my people require more attention and that the most relevant message is twofold: 1) The message of reconciliation between Jews and gentiles and of God's love to Israel, and 2) the need for support and prayer for the State of Israel is of the highest value to God and to the Jewish people. If a Christian embassy can serve those purposes, I would be delighted.

There is a pressing need today for non-Jewish believers in Jesus, who truly know God, to speak in His name, comfort our people and teach their own nations. An embassy in Jerusalem, poised to achieve those goals is in an excellent position to do so.

{30} The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem. A Response.

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I would agree with David Friedman that there truly is a need both to inform the Christian public of the past role of the church in persecuting the Jews, and to present Israel's case today. However, I question whether the Christian Embassy is the forum by which this can best be accomplished. Friedman mentions the need for an embassy that "could exert itself in spreading the message of reconciliation." Can a true message of reconciliation be presented without the gospel and Jewish need to believe it? The New Testament does not separate reconciliation from the gospel. Second Corinthians 5:18-20, the central passage dealing with reconciliation, clearly ties reconciliation to the gospel. God reconciled all things "to Himself yet through Christ" (v. 18). It is true that he has given us "the ministry of reconciliation" (v. 18), but that ministry is the message "that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself" (v. 19). We believers today "are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ," but our message is "be ye reconciled to God" (v. 20), and the means of reconciliation is by believing on the Messiah.

As well, the key passage on reconciliation between Jews and gentiles, (Eph. 2:11-16), states clearly that this reconciliation took place as a result of Messiah's death. That reconciliation becomes a practical reality only between those Jews and gentiles who have become believers in Messiah. Any message of reconciliation that does not include a presentation of the gospel is not a *biblical* message of reconciliation.

Friedman also cites Isaiah 40:1, where Isaiah's readers are commanded: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people ... " This is the Christian Embassy's *sine qua non*. However, the passage must not be removed from its context, which specifies the means by which "my people" are to be comforted: according to verse 9, comforting is achieved by proclaiming the good news to Zion and to Jerusalem. A message of comfort to Israel that does not include a declaration {31} that "her iniquity is pardoned" (Isa. 40:2) by means of faith in Messiah's work, is no comfort at all.

Friedman further states: "Representatives of the Embassy in the churches of their respective countries can teach against anti-Semitism, utilizing messages such as that found in Jeremiah. 31:1-14." To this we can all heartily agree.

However, the Christian Embassy cannot be faithful to its professed evangelical commitment without also proclaiming to Israel the message found in that same chapter of Jeremiah, the message of the New Covenant (vss. 31-34).

In his summary, Friedman states that he would be "delighted" if the Christian Embassy would fulfill the two purposes of the "dual message" which he cites as: "1) The message of reconciliation between Jews and gentiles and of God's love to Israel, and 2) (that) of support and prayer for the State (which) is of the highest value to God and to the Jewish people." I would argue that the good news of the Messiah is of even higher value to God. Until the Christian Embassy is willing to obey this message without compromise, they are neither comforting Israel nor providing a true message of reconciliation.

I fully agree with Baruch Maoz's article when he states that "the Embassy has repeatedly and consistently labored to keep their belief in the necessity of evangelizing the Jews a well-

guarded secret.” I would also support his statement that there would be “no difficulty if the Embassy issued a statement to the effect that, while it believed in the necessity of evangelism per se, it did not itself engage in such activity.”

The unwillingness of the Embassy to evangelize should be made very clear, for few of its supporters in the United States are aware of that fact. I travel throughout the country, speaking in many churches. Periodically, supporters of the Christian Embassy inform me of their support for the Embassy. I make it a point to question them on what basis they provide such support and invariably the answer is that they support the Embassy because of its fine work of evangelism in Israel. The Christian Embassy has not made its non-evangelistic position clear to a good number of their American supporters; I doubt its position is more clearly represented elsewhere in the world.

True, the leadership of the Christian Embassy might explain that they fear Israeli governmental response once they openly declare the truth of their convictions, but that is a price they must be willing to pay for the truth of the gospel. They may very well be expelled from the country.

{32} However, they could easily raise Christian support for Israel from outside the country.

By far the most severe indictment of the Christian Embassy is that “the Embassy is in no significant way related to the local congregations in Israel and is barely involved in their welfare.” Such behavior is neither comforting nor reconciling. John Ross’s article is very good in describing the Christian Embassy and its activities. However, I was disappointed in what he had to say about Dispensationalism and Dispensationalists. As one who affirms that theology, and one who travels among many who do not, I have become accustomed to hearing and reading what Dispensationalists supposedly believe or do not believe, and about motivation behind those positions. They are rarely accurate. If Ross better understood Dispensationalism and gave a more honest evaluation of it, he would have found he is closer to the Dispensationalist than he thinks.

Under “Reinterpreted Dispensationalism” Ross tries to demonstrate that many of the problems with the Christian Embassy are a result of their Dispensationalism. Many Dispensationalists would be surprised to hear that the Christian Embassy reflects Dispensationalism. Most of the representatives I have heard espouse a post-tribulational theology while Van der Hoeven espouses what might be called “past-tribulationism” in that he has stated that he believes that the Tribulation prophecies have already been fulfilled with the Holocaust.

Let me conclude by interacting with those elements in Ross’ article which I found especially helpful. First, Ross has been very helpful in pointing out that the Christian public which the Christian Embassy actually represents is extremely small, mainly limited to Charismatic individuals and groups. It does not have a broad base of support from the general evangelical community. As with the article by Maoz, the greatest indictment against the Christian Embassy is that it lacks the support from the Hebrew-speaking congregations within Israel, whether Charismatic or not. Even more telling is the way in which ICEJ seems to distance itself from the growing Hebrew speaking congregations of Jewish believers. This fact needs to be clearly presented to the greater Christian public who might be tempted to support the Christian Embassy because of misconceptions about where it really stands. Ross has been very helpful in his article in pointing out that the Christian Embassy does not have broad base support from the Israeli congregations, nor does it have any right to claim it is speaking for evangelical Christianity as such.

Secondly, Ross has also been helpful in pointing out that, while the Christian Embassy claims to be within the evangelical orbit, in practice it has been anything but evangelistic. Is it possible to claim to be evangelical {33} without being evangelistic? Not every evangelical organization

must necessarily engage in evangelism. But, the Christian Embassy actually seems to be engaged in preventing evangelistic work being done under their auspices by staff members or those who participate in their annual Tabernacle celebrations. This, too, must be made very clear to the wider Christian public so that those who choose to support the Christian Embassy do so out of a clear knowledge of what the Embassy stands for.

Third, Ross' article is also helpful in clarifying what consists of blessing and comforting Israel as over against what the Embassy is doing. As I stated earlier, blessing or comforting Israel without the proclamation of the gospel is neither a blessing nor a comfort. Ross has put the point forward in a more forthright manner by pointing out that blessing and comforting cannot be limited to material aid. As he states, such material help "is essentially inadequate, for no matter how sincere, such help is superficial if divorced from a clear Christian witness and, ultimately, irrelevant." This is clearly a statement that the Christian Embassy should take to heart.

Fourth, Ross clarifies the difference between being sensitive to Israel's history as over against giving up evangelism of the Jew. His refutation of the modern concept that the Church has lost its right to evangelize the Jewish people is correct and to the point. Sensitivity to Jewish history cannot and must not include the concept of non-evangelism.

Fifth, the two most important segments of Ross' article concern the sections on "Praying for Israel" and "A Verbal Witness to Israel." Indeed, the two concepts must go hand-in-hand. One would be hypocritical to pray for the salvation of Israel while refusing to take advantage of every opportunity to share the gospel with the Jewish people. Praying for Israel will call upon the divine side of evangelism. But the human side is just as vital, and the human side must be the verbal presentation of the gospel because "faith cometh by hearing."

{34} The International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem – Christians for Whom or What?

Tuvya Zaretsky

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Christians in North America have an occasionally confused impression concerning the ministry of the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem (ICEJ). It is important to understand what representatives of the ICEJ have been saying that has created a discordant picture.

The ICEJ is primarily an image organization. Diplomatic emissaries understand well the role of image building and public relations. It is all a part of the intricate dance in international relations.

The ICEJ was created out of a desire by some Christians who wanted to stand by Israel. From its inception in September, 1980, the Embassy has depicted itself as a friend of the Jewish people and a particular ally of the Jewish state. Opportunity to realize that friendship came at a poignant moment in Israel's history, when various nations moved their embassies from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv. The ICEJ arose out of a concern that nations were abandoning Israel.

The International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem must be commended for the love that it obviously seeks to display for the Jewish people and for the State of Israel. While such love for the Jewish people is to be lauded, at least two questions have to be asked.

Is it not possible that the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem has developed a program and policies that are too closely tied to one particular view of biblical prophecy and by so doing restricted its ability to represent a broad spectrum of Christian people?

The other question is whether the ICEJ has linked itself too tightly with one particular political party in Israel. It must be noted that the Embassy declared its existence at a time when Menachem Begin was the Prime Minister of Israel and was leading the nation well to the right-of-center.

{35} Emissaries for whom?

The ICEJ speaks of shelter, comfort, and affection for Jewish people. In an undated pamphlet, produced by the U.S. branch of the ICEJ in Tampa, Florida, its purpose was described as to "represent the concern of millions of Christians who love and honor the Jewish people and who wish to obey the word of God concerning them." Which Christians are being represented?

While the purpose is honorable, a pretentious element is attached to this kind of statement. An embassy is an official mission abroad, representing the diplomatic affairs of a state. Here lies the origin of one of the contrasts between the way the ICEJ perceives itself and the way it is perceived among many Christians.

An embassy cannot be the product of self-constituted authority. There is no doubt that ICEJ leaders have portrayed themselves as ambassadors for the Messiah, King Jesus, unto the Land of Israel. There is a disparity between the true mission of Jesus Christ and what the ICEJ represents. The ICEJ calls to "comfort, bless, pray for, love and

show mercy” to Israel. Nowhere is there a call for an evangelical witness and for discipleship.

In February, 1984, Johann Luckhoff (the ICEJ Director) was quoted in a World Zionist organization bulletin as saying, “Christians accuse us of not carrying out the Christian mission of witnessing the Gospel, but that is not our task.” (*Israel Scene*, February 1984, Volume 5, #6 “There are Christians who are different”.) As an avowed “non-proselytizing organization,” (St. Petersburg *Times*, 6/8/85, p. 4) the Embassy presents a passive policy with regard to Christian witness. Is the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem a Mission without a ministry? In fairness, it should be acknowledged that Christian representatives of the ICEJ do believe in salvation through Jesus Christ. However, their published statements focus upon “Christian love” for Jews, rather than upon Christ’s love. Thus, while the ICEJ seeks to lovingly serve the Jewish people, its service is actually no service because the message of the risen Christ has been relegated to the realm of religious opinion, rather than regarded as Christian responsibility.

Ambivalence and Ambiguity.

The credibility of an image organization is built upon a clearly stated platform and actions that support it. The ICEJ seems to be saying something other than what people are hearing, and little has been done to correct the disparity. Christians are allowed to presume that a distinctly Christian witness is being accomplished, while the gospel is consistently brushed aside: from the ICEJ’s Statement of Purpose, we learn that the Embassy {36} wishes to represent Christians “who wish to obey the Word of God concerning (the Jewish people).” But the Embassy does not engage in the kind of witness the gospel clearly demands. The Embassy desires to express toward the Jewish people an affection that is devoid of confrontation. Still, Jewish leaders have a proper understanding of what Christian believers are all about. They recognize that every Christian is under mandate to give faithful testimony to Jesus Christ. When the ICEJ disavows that purpose, it causes skepticism and diminishes respect.

Pnina Peli writing for the *Jerusalem Post* (9/28/85, “Doubting the Blessings of Christian Zionism”), pointed out that “Hebrew Christian literature ... is commonly sold and displayed at the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem.” She went on to point out that “the Jewish people have preserved their spiritual identity at high cost and have not come to carelessly compromise it in exchange for what passes as love and good will.” In other words, she expects the ICEJ to present a Christian witness and looks upon anything less coming from that quarter to be a counterfeit of love and good will.

What is needed?

We do need Christian embassies. Congregations and individual “emissaries” are needed to represent Christ as King and coming Saviour. Indeed, the greatest expression of Christian love would be to seek to present Yeshua as Messiah while respecting the dignity and integrity of the Jewish people. Anything less is unloving.

We further need less public relations and more personal redemption. If people are to be transformed into the image of Messiah, we need a P.R. (personal redemption) of a very different nature.

There is no doubt that those who have worked on the ICEJ project are competent people. While there has been some question regarding accountability, one cannot help but appreciate the enthusiasm and ability to mobilize. What results for the Lord's ministry might have been obtained if those appreciable energies and enthusiasm had been turned toward evangelism?

{37} Ecumenism: Signs of Hope?

Arthur F. Glasser

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Down through the history of the Christian Church there have always been those who believed that Jesus Christ was the Messiah of the Jewish people, the Savior of the world, and the eternal son of God. They have felt that by his death, burial and resurrection he provided not only deliverance from the consequences of one's sins but also acceptance with and access to God. As a result, they regarded the New Testament pattern of mission obedience to be normative for all subsequent generations, including their own. They must go everywhere beseeching men and women, whether Jews or Gentiles, to be reconciled to God through the atoning work of Jesus Christ.

These Christians also believed that faithfulness to Scripture demanded that this mission include both dialogical encounter and authoritative witness. The former promoted mutual understanding and respect, the latter involved bringing into the discussion the revelation of God concerning the significance of his Son's redemptive work: "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, [this is] what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Cor. 2:9).

We are called upon to follow their example. Both dialogue and revelation must be kept in balance. Interreligious dialogue by itself can terribly distort, even falsify the whole dimension of the human predicament - the alienation of people from God. Authoritative witness by itself can be dismissed as nothing less than unwarranted parochialism and cultural arrogance. What is tragic in our day, however, is that in too many churches the emphasis is increasingly on dialogue and not on gospel proclamation.

This overemphasis on dialogue is accompanied by what can only be described as religious syncretism. It has produced such a tolerance of religious pluralism that church leaders today are often embarrassed that within their churches there still exist mission structures whose leaders stress the urgency of all people being converted to Jesus Christ. In this connection, the late professor of systematic theology at Wycliffe College, {38} Toronto, Dr. Jakob Jocz, said, "The extent of syncretistic pressure is best gauged by the Church's attitude to Jewish missions. At present the barometer stands at zero... In fact, it is held in some quarters that the conversion of Jews is in bad taste" (1966).

The Jewish Debate

Actually, there are many arguments being advanced today against any form of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with the Jewish people. On the cultural level, it is argued that for a Jew to receive baptism is tantamount to the decision to cross over into the Gentile world. Baptism inevitably provokes disorientation from one's Jewish culture. On the historical level, centuries of "Christian" anti-Semitism have rendered the Church morally bankrupt and totally unworthy to proclaim Jesus to the Jewish people. On the covenantal level, the increasingly popular view is that all Jews through the Abrahamic covenant already have direct relationship with God and require no new covenant to make them more secure.

On the Christological level, Jesus could not possibly be the Messiah of the Jews because the new era he inaugurated has utterly failed to approximate the Messianic Age predicted in the Old Testament. On the missiological level, there is no specific mandate in the New Testament whereby Jesus' Jewish disciples were told to make disciples of Jews; instead they were to bear witness to "all the nations" (i.e., the Gentiles). On the political level, anti-Zionists such as the PLO and other Arab groups regard all Christian missions to the Jews as so uncritically supportive of the State of Israel that they lack even the semblance of ethical integrity. Finally, many millennialists teach that on soteriological and eschatological levels the Bible indicates that Israel will be converted by God directly and independently of the Church at the last day.

Some of these arguments are advanced and developed in Jewish publications. Others are widely publicized in church periodicals and through interchurch agencies. In February 1986 the Norwegian Church Ministry to Israel, a voluntary society established in 1861 within the Lutheran Church of Norway, published an extensive statement, "To the Jew First" (MISHKAN 1/1986, pp. 51-63). At the outset it briefly mentioned this wide range of arguments against missions to the Jews. The NCMI then sought to describe the theological basis for its work and defined its aims. By using this sequence in its presentation these Lutherans were affirming what everyone knows to be true. The scandal of the cross is invariably an offense to religious people, whether they be Jews or Gentiles.

Saul of Tarsus boasted of his diligence "in the Jew's religion" (Gal. 1:13) before he found out to his surprise that only Christ and not his Judaism could reconcile him to God. Later, as the Apostle Paul, he proclaimed to the {39} religious Athenians that only Christ could deliver them from the final judgment (Acts 17:30,31). Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Catholics and Protestants - indeed, all religious people - need what only Christ can provide. His atoning work is an offense to all those who regard their religious activity as somehow sufficient to commend them to God's approbation and acceptance. But religious activity provides neither forgiveness nor righteousness. Did not Jesus tell an exemplary Jewish leader named Nicodemus that apart from his being spiritually reborn, there was no possibility of his ever seeing, much less entering, the Kingdom of God (John 3:3,5)?

The Rev. Allan R. Brockway, secretary of the World Council of Churches' Consultation on the Church and the Jewish People (CCJP), recently wrote a most critical evaluation of this Lutheran statement (MISHKAN 2/1986, pp. 17-21). He revealed his hand by largely accepting as valid most of the objections to Jewish evangelism summarized above, and then gave his own presuppositions: "That the picture of first-century Judaism found in the New Testament is inaccurate, that Paul's relationship to his people is complex, and that the Messianic consciousness of Jesus cannot be taken for granted" (p. 18). Inevitably, he challenged the Norwegian Lutherans, point by point. His hostility to anything approximating any form of Christian witness to the Jews is hardly what one would expect from the leader of the CCJP. And what about those member churches of the WCC that are involved in Jewish evangelism? How must they feel? One thinks of the United Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its Messianic Jewish Center in Philadelphia. Just how did the WCC bureaucracy - supposedly a servant of its member churches - come to the place where it now feels the leader of its CCJP unit should vigorously challenge those who do not identify with his personal bias? Of course, Allan Brockway is free to believe what he wants to believe, but is the CCJP to be shaped according to his personal preference? It is very salutary and eye-opening to review ecumenical literature in recent decades. At the First Assembly of the WCC (Amsterdam, 1948), much attention was given to the Jewish people. In the final report, the preface to the section on "The Approach to Adherents of Other Faiths" contains the words: "If we hold that Christ died for all men, and that His Gospel is to be preached to all nations, the proclamation

of the Gospel to Israel stands out as an absolute obligation from which the church must not try to escape.” However, at the Second Assembly of the WCC (Evanston, 1954), by a vote of 195 to 150, it was decided to delete all reference to the Jews or to the State of Israel from the report, even though “Evangelism” and “Christian Hope” were among its main sections. Efforts were made to mollify such a large dissenting vote by devoting the April 1955 issue of *The Ecumenical Review* to six articles on the Jews and Israel (pp. 221-255).

{40} The Third Assembly of the WCC (New Delhi, 1961) evaded the whole subject except for a pronouncement on anti-Semitism. At that time the International Missionary Council(1921-1961) was absorbed into the WCC. Its former Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews was replaced by what came to be known as the Consultation on the Church and the Jewish People. Whereas previously the thrust of “Christian Approach” was evangelistic, this new committee was not identified with the WCC’s Commission on World Mission and Evangelism. The new buzz words were “understanding,” “reconciliation” and “cooperation.”

Attention should also be focused on a study group convened in 1969 involving scholars from the U.S. National Council of Churches’ Faith and Order Commission and the Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. After four years it produced “A Statement to Our Fellow Christians.” This statement deliberately omits any reference to Christian witness to the Jewish people. Gerald H. Anderson (in *MIR*, July 1974, 11/3) relates how in discussion with one of its members he was told that “In the light of history, Christians have nothing to say to the Jews except, ‘God, forgive us!’”

One could extend this brief essay by referring to the influence of both Catholic scholars (Gregory Baum, Paul Knitter, John Pawlikowski) and Protestant scholars (Franklin Kittell, Rosemary Reuther, Paul van Buren). They have all contributed in one way or another to the popularization of the end of Christian witness to the Jews.

However, the ongoing fascination of Jews with Jesus Christ and the increase in the numbers of those willing to confess themselves as “Jews for Jesus” means that one should not predict the final outcome. Perhaps we shall all be surprised...

Positive signs

But is this all that should be said? Are we just to “wait and see”? Hardly! There are some positive signs that a new day is dawning. A few years ago evangelicals were greatly encouraged when the Central Committee of the WCC (1982) approved the document, “Mission and Evangelism - An Ecumenical Affirmation.” This was drafted by Emilio Castro, at that time in charge of the WCC’s Commission on World Mission and Evangelism. One of its major emphases is that “Christians owe the message of God’s salvation in Jesus Christ to every person and to every people” (par. 41).

The second sign was the appointment of Emilio Castro as general secretary of the WCC in 1985. Evangelicals rejoiced! Here was one with whom many had enjoyed real fellowship - a Christian whose faith embraced as inseparable and interdependent the vertical and horizontal components of Scripture. For exposition of this position we would quote what are virtually {41} the closing lines of the autobiography of Castro’s hero - Willem A. Visser’t Hooft, the first general secretary of the WCC:

It must become clear that church members who deny in fact their responsibility for the needy in any part of the world are just as much guilty of heresy as those who deny this or that article of the faith ... And church members who deny that God has reconciled

men to himself in Christ are just as much guilty of heresy as those who refuse to be in the struggle for justice and freedom for all men and who do nothing to help their brethren in need (Memoirs, 1973, p. 3b3).

In the brief period since Castro has been guiding the WCC, he has again and again demonstrated his readiness to stand with equal firmness for these two convictions. Furthermore, he feels that both convictions should be simultaneously affirmed. The good news of the Kingdom - to be proclaimed (by word) and demonstrated (by deed) - is what the Christian mission is all about.

The WCC's Commission on World Mission and Evangelism convened a consultation on evangelism in Stuttgart, West Germany in 1987, and significantly clarified the earlier affirmation. Its participants included almost a score of evangelicals not related to the WCC. They also sought to generate input into the theological preparation of the next WCC World Mission Conference, in 1989.

But the most recent sign provides exciting evidence of Castro's desire "to encourage all attempts to bring together Christians for the sake of the mission and renewal of the church." In the January 1988 issue of *The Ecumenical Review* Castro included an excellent essay by Donald H. Dayton. Its cryptic title: "Yet Another Layer of the Onion." This title is amplified as follows: "Or Opening the Ecumenical Door to Let the Riffraff In" (pp. 87-110). In a masterful fashion Dayton shows how inadequately represented the WCC actually is of the worldwide Christian movement. Its ecclesiastical "mainstream" represents barely half of all Protestantism. And Castro commends this lengthy article to ER readers! He wants them to catch the measure of "the historiographical and theological significance of the Holiness, Pentecostal and Keswick movements and the churches which trace their origin to them." He endorses Dayton's view that they represent a layer of Christian truth and commitment without which the ecumenical movement remains incomplete. Then he adds: "It is an issue that needs to be faced, not least because of the historical commitment of these movements to what today are recognized as ecumenical concerns" (p.3). And we might conclude: This vast segment of the worldwide church includes in its mission concern the desire to bear witness to Jesus Christ to the Jewish people.

{42} The Experiment at Artouf

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On March 13, 1881, the Czar of Russia, Alexander II, was assassinated by revolutionaries as he rode through the streets of St. Petersburg. His death and the violent anti-Jewish pogroms that followed mark the beginning of the Zionist movement.

The emergence of Jewish nationalism in the early 1880s had a significant impact on the Church. A large body of western evangelicals saw the persecutions and Jewish immigration into Palestine as a fulfilment of prophecy. The rise of Zionism also stimulated an increased interest in Jewish missions.¹

Anticipation of the Jewish return to Palestine produced one of the strangest episodes in the history of Jewish missions - the establishment of Artouf, a colony for Jewish refugees in Turkish-ruled Palestine. Set up by Anglican missionaries from Jerusalem in 1883, the settlement was a unique effort to build a mixed community of Jews and Christians in the Judean Hills. The founders of the colony hoped that Artouf would aid in the restoration of the Jewish people to the land of Israel and expose Eastern European refugees to Hebrew-Christianity. Although Artouf collapsed shortly after its establishment, it was part of a larger effort at the time to assist destitute Jews arriving from Russia and Romania. It is against these events that the work at Artouf should be judged.

The story of Artouf is intertwined with the beginnings of the first aliyah. That exodus from Russia, and to a lesser extent from Romania, began soon after the murder of Alexander II. The popular Russian press accused the Jews of being responsible for the assassination, a baseless charge since only one Jew was involved with the conspiracy and only at a secondary level. Such press reports fueled rumours in the Pale of Settlement that the government wanted the Jews punished for the Czar's murder.²

{43} The sources of these rumours have never been fully determined, but historians generally suspect the Sacred Band of Warriors, a reactionary group of high-level officials who came together to prevent Russia from falling into what they feared would be revolutionary anarchy.³ The Sacred Band was determined to defeat the "enemies of public order," and it seems likely this group exploited peasant dissatisfaction, redirecting it away from the corrupt and autocratic regime and toward the Jews. It was not difficult for these officials to exploit the deep seated anti-Semitism that was widespread in all levels of Russian society.

The first pogrom took place in the Ukrainian city of Elizavetgrad (now Kirovograd) in 1881. During Easter a mob attacked the city's Jewish quarter, burning and looting their shops, houses

¹ Jakob Jocz, *The Jewish People and Jesus Christ*, London, 1949, p. 227. Jocz, a wellknown Jewish Christian theologian, argues that the rise in Zionism made the church aware of the national coherence of Jewish life, and with an earlier rise in European nationalism the church began to insist that Jewish converts remain loyal to their nation despite their faith in Christ. Jocz traces the origins of this idea to French professor, A.F. Petavel (1791-1870) in his 1834 book *Discours Prononce dans L'Assemble Generale des Missions*.

² S.M. Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland, Vol. II*, Philadelphia, 1918, p. 247. The Pale of Settlement was a strip of territory that ran from the Baltic to the Black Sea where Russia's 4.5 million Jews were confined until 1917.

³ David Vital, *The Origins of Zionism*, Oxford, 1975, pp. 54-56 and Dubnow, p. 248.

and synagogues. Several Jews were killed and an untold numbers of Jewish women were raped. Government soldiers did little to restore order until the mob had its fill of pillage.

Government passivity and the desire for easy loot encouraged further attacks on the Jews. Many peasants were convinced that the new Czar, Alexander III, also wanted the Jews punished.⁴ After Elizavetgrad, Jews were attacked in hundreds of villages and towns all across Southern Russia, nor were they safe in large cities such as Kiev and Odessa.

By the end of 1881, the pogroms had claimed the lives of 40 Jews. While the casualty figures were low by modern standards, Zionist historians point out that the material damage was immense. A contemporary source estimates that 100,000 Jews were made homeless and impoverished by the pogroms.⁵ The Russian landscape soon was crowded with Jewish refugees fleeing the mobs and searching for food and shelter.

The pogroms, which some Jews called the Southern Storms (from Isa. 21:1), continued into the middle of 1884,⁶ and destroyed the illusions of most Jews that they would eventually be given equal rights in Russia. Hopes for assimilation into gentile society by most Jewish intellectuals also died with the pogroms, and emigration became the only escape from endless state repression and hatred. This option was encouraged by the Russian government when Interior Minister Count Ignatyev reminded the Jews that the Western Frontier was open for their departure.⁷ Official encouragement was unnecessary, and in 1881-82 the Jews fled into neighbouring Austria and Hungary where they pleaded to be evacuated to America. This was the beginning of the great Jewish exodus from Russia to the west. From 1881-1914 more than 1.5 million Jews left, mainly for the United States. By comparison, only 70,000 emigrated to Palestine.⁸

{44} But not everyone believed that America held the answer to the problems of East European Jewry. A small minority rediscovered the ancient dream of returning to Zion and believed that resettlement of the Land would result in a resolution of the Jewish problem. Emigration societies sprang up independently across the Pale to encourage Jewish emigration to the land of their forefathers. These groups eventually organized themselves into a loosely knit movement under the name *Hibbat Zion* - Love of Zion.

The best known of these groups, but by no means the most effective, was *Bilu* (an acronym from Isaiah 2:5 - ("O House of Jacob come and let us go"). which was founded by 25 students from Kharkov University. The students toured Jewish communities throughout Russia in 1882, preaching the necessity to leave for Palestine immediately. *Bilu* attracted only 525 members who intended to emigrate to Palestine to establish "an exemplary colony on a communal basis, heralding a healthy national revival."⁹ Despite their enthusiasm, only 59 *Bilu* members ever made their way to Palestine, where a handful of the movement founded the colony of Gadera at the end of 1884. The vast majority of immigrants in the first *aliyah* came with less ambitious goals, hoping to prove that Jews could be farmers and that the Land could once again become fruitful.¹⁰

The first Jewish refugees fleeing the pogroms began to arrive in Palestine in fall, 1881. In mid-October of that year the Anglican newspaper *The Record* reported that some 800

⁴ Dubnow, p. 251.

⁵ Vital, p. 58.

⁶ A second set of pogroms occurred from 1903-1906 and a third set took place from 1917-1921. This final wave was the most savage taking the lives of 60,000 Jews in the Ukraine.

⁷ Dubnow, p.285.

⁸ For the origins of the Jewish exodus to America see Zoza Szajkowski "How the Mass Migration to America Began," *Jewish Social Studies*, October 1942.

⁹ Shulamit Laskov, "The Biluim: Reality and Legend," in *Zionism*, Spring 1981, pp. 19-20

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 20.

refugees had recently trickled into Jerusalem. Warning that more refugees were expected, the evangelical weekly said the new arrivals were an embarrassing addition to the already overcrowded Jewish Quarter.¹¹

By spring, 1882 the trickle turned into a flood. Intending to become farmers, most new immigrants who arrived in Jaffa were poor.¹² Many would-be colonists came with the expectation that they would receive help from a colonization committee in Jaffa, but while such a committee did exist it was in no position to turn refugees into farmers. With no money and no immediate prospects for becoming tillers of the soil, the newcomers became an immediate burden on Palestine's impoverished Jewish community. At the time, most of the country's 25,000 Jews lived in squalid conditions and survived only by donations (*halukka*) from the diaspora.¹³ The Jewish population had been expanding rapidly since the 1860s which strained the limited funds available. Incoming Jews expected a share of the charity, which naturally caused resentment among the veteran population.¹⁴

By the summer, 1882, *The Jewish Chronicle* reported that "the streets of Jaffa and Jerusalem are full of immigrants seeking a helping hand in vain."¹⁵ The paper had to admit that it was English missionaries in both cities that prevented many Jews from perishing from sheer want.¹⁶ The {45} unidentified missionaries were agents of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews, the largest and most influential Jewish missionary society of the 19th century. Established in 1809, it was popularly known as the London Jews Society (LJS). The mission first made an appearance in Palestine in 1820, and its presence grew to include schools, workshops and a hospital. In 1882, Palestine was the biggest of the society's numerous foreign stations outside Britain, yet by the time of the Russian pogroms the mission had fallen into a state of inactivity. The massive influx of Russian refugees shook the Anglican missionaries out of their lethargy and presented them with opportunities unprecedented in the history of the mission.¹⁷ At the time, the LJS was quite possibly the best organized institution in the country to assist the Russians.

Not every Russian or Romanian refugee that came to Palestine that summer crowded into Jerusalem to accept missionary charity. In 1882 brave groups of pioneers started settlements at Rosh Pina, Rishon LeZion and Samirin (later Zichron Ya'acov). The new colonies were established by men and women with no agricultural experience and few financial resources, and they soon had to be rescued by the French banker Baron Edmund Rothschild. But in the cities there was no one to save the refugees from hunger and misery. "It is a pitiful sight," reported *The Record's* Jerusalem correspondent, "to behold so many able, intelligent and respectable-looking young men (medical practitioners, druggists, clerks, mechanics etc.) going about without any means of substance or hopes of employment."¹⁸

But before the LJS could organize any substantial assistance for the refugees, help came from the Hebrew-Christian Congregation that met at Christ Church just inside Jerusalem's Jaffa Gate. Members of the congregation collected money for the refugees and gave them food and

¹¹ Reported in *The Jewish Chronicle* (hereafter JC) October 21, 1881, p. 12.

¹² H. Friedlander, "The Jewish Refugees from Russia in Jaffa and Jerusalem," *Prophetic News and Israel's Watchmen*, April, 1883, p. 116.

¹³ Simon Schama, *Two Rothschilds and the Land of Israel*, London, 1978, p. 57. Schama estimates that 15-20,000 Jews, over half of the Jewish population of Palestine, lived off *halukka* by 1890.

¹⁴ JC, August 26 1881, p. 7. 15. JC, July 21, 1882, p. 5. 16. *Ibid.*

¹⁵ JC, July 21, 1882, p. 5.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ W.T. Gidney, *The History of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews, 1809-1908*, London 1908, p. 450.

¹⁸ *The Record*, August 18, 1882, p. 556.

clothing.¹⁹ But the immediate problem for the newcomers was accommodation. In Jaffa the missionaries borrowed tents from the hotelier Baron Ustinov (grandfather of actor Peter Ustinov) and pitched them on the grounds of the LJS mission. Conrad Shick, the noted Jerusalem architect and employee of the LJS, opened his house and took in several refugee families.²⁰ Other newcomers were also housed in the LJS sanatorium located on the Street of the Prophets in Jerusalem.

The relief work was initiated and directed by the German-born Hebrew-Christian missionary, Herman Friedlander, who was known for his “enthusiastic temperament.”²¹ He converted to Christianity at age 20 and entered the service of the LJS, working first in England and later in Tunisia. He came to Jerusalem in 1873 and was ordained an Anglican priest by Bishop Gobat. In Jerusalem Friedlander acquired a reputation for being something of a diligent missionary.²² His relief efforts had the full support from the head of the LJS mission in Palestine, A. Hastings Kelk.²³

{46} Friedlander created employment for the refugees at the society’s sanatorium where they earned a small daily wage and did no work on the Jewish and Christian sabbaths. Some refugees were given tools to enable them to ply their trades. The sick were treated at the LJS hospital in Jerusalem, and a number of immigrants who were too weak to endure the backward conditions of the country were sent back to Russia by the Society. Other refugees were given places for their children in an LJS school as day students. “The treatment of these poor Jews is kind in the extreme and the missionaries have saved many Jewish lives,” acknowledged *The Jewish Chronicle*.²⁴ It was an unusual admission from a paper that rarely had anything positive to say about the London Jews Society.

The refugees were not simply interested in receiving missionary handouts, and they pressed Friedlander to set up a colony where they could become farmers.²⁵ The refugees apparently suggested that the settlement be run by Hebrew-Christians. The idea strongly appealed to Friedlander who saw it as an opportunity to help the refugees become self-supporting and bring them under the influence of the gospel. The plan also appealed to Friedlander’s firm belief in the coming restoration of Israel.²⁶ As early as the summer of 1882, Friedlander and Kelk began advocating the establishment of a farm for Eastern European refugees, but the proposal was shelved for more than a year due to the lack of money.²⁷ The immigrants attached to the mission waited anxiously for the day when their settlement would be ready. Friedlander repeatedly promised that there would be complete freedom of religion on the planned settlement.²⁸

¹⁹ One member, Moses Shapira (1830-1885), the Jerusalem antiquities dealer who later became somewhat infamous for his attempt to sell questionable manuscripts to the British Museum, was one of those who contributed to the refugees. *Tidings from Zion*, (hereafter TFZ) July 1882, p. 14.

²⁰ H. Friedlander, p.119.

²¹ JC, July 20, 1883, p. 6.

²² Shaul Saphir, *The Contribution of the Anglican Missionary Societies Toward the Development of Jerusalem at the End of the Ottoman Period*, M.A. Dissertation, Hebrew University [in Hebrew], p. 73. Friedlander left Jerusalem in 1886 under cloudy circumstances.

²³ A. Hastings Kelk (1836-1909), a Cambridge graduate, took charge of the Palestine mission in 1878. He retired in 1901 and subsequently, worked for the LJS in London and Leeds.

²⁴ JC, September, 181882, p.13. 25 TFZ, August 1882, p.82.

²⁵ TFZ, August1882, p.82.

²⁶ Friedlander, p. 115.

²⁷ JC, September 18, 1882, p. 13, and Kelvin Crombie, *The Jewish Church*, publication forthcoming, MS p.346.

²⁸ TFZ, June 1883 pp.185-86; *The Record*, July 27,1883, p.748, and July 13, 1883, p.701.

According to the Jews of Palestine, the refugees were “driven into the arms of the missionaries” by hunger.²⁹ Jerusalem’s Sephardi and Ashkenazi chief rabbis asked Jewish communities in Europe to “rescue” their co-religionists and return them to Russia. It was commonly believed that the refugees being aided by the LJS were forced to attend church services, but Friedlander and Kelk always rejected such charges in the strongest possible terms.³⁰ Likewise, the missionaries consistently denied rumours made in the Jewish press that they bought children from poor refugees and beat their lazy workers.³¹

More seriously, the Jewish press in both England and Palestine accused the missionaries of enticing desperate Jews to become Christians through the use of material incentives.³² Friedlander insisted that the Anglicans aided the refugees unconditionally and only “because they were genuinely poor Jews; we respected their distress too much to mix up religious concerns with the help they received.”³³ But he acknowledged that as soon as the refugees could “breathe” they began to discuss the value of Christianity.³⁴ Soon afterwards, LJS agents reported that hundreds of Russians who knew {47} nothing of the gospel except that it was the religion of their enemies, now flocked into the missionary meetings.³⁵ Between 50 and 100 refugees attended the daily Hebrew service, while another 100 newcomers came to a weekly Hebrew service held outside the city. After the services the missionaries and the refugees discussed the differences between Judaism and Christianity. Kelk and Friedlander claimed that many refugees “acknowledged Jesus as their saviour,” but judging by the records of Christ Church few of the “believers” in this period came forward for baptism.

From the beginning the rabbis did all they could either through intimidation or persuasion to sever ties between the Church of England and the Russians.³⁶ Initially, these efforts were unsuccessful as the religious authorities had little or no money to support the refugees. Later they issued a *cherem* or ban forbidding Jews from having contact with missionaries. The *cherem* was the cause of a riot between the refugees and residents in the Jewish Quarter in July, 1883. The trouble developed when a refugee who worked for the LJS had a child who died. The grieving newcomer applied to have the child buried in a Jewish cemetery but the Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi, Samuel Salant, refused. The refugees marched on the Chief Rabbi’s house in an attempt to force him to accept the child’s body for burial. When the Jews saw the group of some 30 Russians armed with sticks heading for Salant’s residence, a riot quickly broke out and pandemonium reigned in the Jewish Quarter until Turkish police and troops restored order.³⁷ An officer at the Hurva Synagogue was struck by a stone and died after the disturbance. A Russian refugee was charged with the death, but he was later released for lack of evidence.³⁸

Some Jewish help for the poor refugees came in 1883, when a group of Jerusalem intellectuals founded a charity known as *Ezrat Niddahim* (Aid to the Dispersed). Its activities were designed to stop Jews from relying on the LJS and other Christian institutions

²⁹ *JC*, September 15, 1882, p. 5.

³⁰ See for example *The Record*, October 20, 1882, p. 786, and *TFZ*, June 1883, p. 192. ³¹ See Friedlander’s letter in the *Jewish Chronicle*, July 13, 1883, pp 4-5. Also *TFZ*, June, 1883, pp. 186-87.

³¹ See Friedlander’s letter in the *Jewish Chronicle*, July 13, 1883, pp. 4-5. Also *TFZ*, June 1883, pp. 186-187.

³² See for example, *JC*, July 27, 1883, pp. 8-9. ³³ *TFZ*, July, 1882, p.8.

³³ *TFZ*, July, 1882, p.8.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ A. Hastings Kelk, H. Friedlander, *Jerusalem Refugee Fund*, Jerusalem, 1883, p.4. ³⁶ *The Record*, October 27, 1882

³⁶ *The Record*, October 27, 1882.

³⁷ The riot is described in detail in the *JC*, August 24, 1883, p.7.

³⁸ *TFZ*, February, 1884, pp. 113-4.

for help.³⁹ Eliezer Ben Yehuda, the reviver of modern Hebrew, was an active member of this society.

The LJS's work with the refugees peaked in October, 1883 with the establishment of an agricultural settlement, although it did not end altogether. After they had been working with the Russians for a year, Kelk and Friedlander calculated they had given assistance to 2,000 refugees in one form or another.⁴⁰ Acting like a modern Zionist absorption agency, the two missionaries further stated that the LJS helped 400 impoverished Jews remain in the Holy Land⁴¹ while criticizing the rabbis for sending so many refugees back to the land of their oppression.

A special Refugee Aid Fund was established in England and administered by the LJS in London, and a monthly publication, *Tidings From Zion*, kept the evangelical public up to date on the Society's work among the Jews of {48} Palestine.⁴² To prevent further deficits, the missionaries were prohibited from providing relief aid from the Society's general fund. Instead, assistance to feed, clothe and train the refugees would have to come from money raised through the Jerusalem Refugee's Fund. The governing committee of the LJS was also not prepared to let Friedlander carry out his cherished colonization plan as an employee of the Anglican mission.⁴³ It was not that the LJS was unsympathetic to Jewish settlement in Palestine, but the ever-cautious committee was no doubt hesitant to be directly involved in the costly business of colonization.⁴⁴

With LJS's support and encouragement, Friedlander formed the Jewish Refugees Aid Society (JRAS). Unlike the London Jews Society, the JRAS was not an Anglican organization; rather it was an evangelical society that sought broad Christian support. The honorary president of the new society was a well-known Scottish aristocrat, the Earl of Aberdeen.⁴⁵ Vice presidents of the society included the notable Scottish minister Andrew Alexander Bonar, and the father of Palestinian natural studies Henry Baker Tristram. The London committee also included Captain Conder, the famed surveyor and explorer of the Holy Land. Critics charged that the newly formed JRAS was indirectly controlled by LJS.⁴⁶ There was some truth to this charge since three of those serving on the committee of the JRAS were members of the governing body of the London Jews Society. In Palestine, however, the local committee was fully dominated by missionaries working for the LJS.⁴⁷

Taking advantage of the great public interest in Bible prophecy and the Jews in general, JRAS quickly raised over £3,000. This was a significant sum at the time, although Friedlander initially was hoping to collect £7,000 before dispatching his Russian refugees onto the land.⁴⁸

One of Friedlander's earliest supporters was the Rev. William Henry Hechler (1845-1931), who later became a devoted friend and backer of Theodor Herzl and his program of political

³⁹ JC, April 10, 1885, p. 10.

⁴⁰ *The Rock*, June 22, 1883, p. 44.

⁴¹ Kelk and Friedlander, p. 2.

⁴² *Tidings From Zion* began in July 1882 and ceased publication in July 1885.

⁴³ Crombie, p. 351.

⁴⁴ According to Gidney, the Society's finances ran heavily in deficit during the 1880s. See Gidney, p. 398.

⁴⁵ John Campbell Gordon (1847-1934) the seventh Earl of Aberdeen, a statesman, social reformer, member of the Church of Scotland and close associate of Lord Shaftesbury.

⁴⁶ "Missions to the Jews," *Westminster Review* January-April, 1886, London, p. 170.

⁴⁷ The Palestine Committee members of the JRAS are listed in the First Annual Report of JRAS. The American consul Rev. Selah Merrill and his British counterpart Noel Temple Moore were also members of the colonization committee.

⁴⁸ For a list of projected expenses see *The Record*, August 3, 1883, p. 777.

Zionism. Hechler was an active promoter of the Jewish return to Palestine in the early 1880s, and was one of the founding members of Syrian Colonization Fund headed by Lord Shaftesbury and Elizabeth Ann Finn.⁴⁹ The Syrian Colonization Fund attempted to settle a group of Russian refugees in Northern Syria where they had been given land. Due to Ottoman opposition, the Russians were moved to Cyprus where the entire scheme finally collapsed in 1884. For Hechler, the advantage of the JRAS was that the Jews were being resettled in the land of their forefathers and not Syria.⁵⁰ He also expressed himself in favour of Friedlander's efforts to bring the refugees under "scriptural instruction."

{49} The Syrian Colonization Fund, for its part, had no direct missionary aims but was intended to show what Elizabeth Ann Finn called Christian charity to a people who had suffered at the hands of Christians.⁵¹ For a time, the JRAS and the Syrian Colonization Fund competed with the Artouf colony for funds on the pages of the British Evangelical press. Hechler gave JRAS the sizable sum of £100 at its inception. Another notable donor at the time was the preacher and philanthropist George Mueller. Within a year the JRAS collected over £4,000. Meetings to promote the scheme were held throughout England and contributions came in from Europe, the United States and South Africa.⁵² The JRAS initially received such widespread support because the contributors saw the Hebrew-Christian colony as part of Israel's national restoration.⁵³

With cash in hand, the JRAS bought a 1,250-acre estate at the Arab hamlet of Artouf (Har Tuv in Hebrew) north of what is now Bet Shemesh. According to Friedlander, only a dozen impoverished Arab families lived at the site.⁵⁴ The missionaries took possession of the property immediately after Succot, 1883. It was dedicated to God's service with hymns and prayers in English, German and Hebrew. Forty-six Russian and Romanian families took up the challenge and moved onto Artouf where they found conditions primitive - no houses had been built and the settlers were forced to live in a large wooden barn. In the centre of the leaky building were three communal kitchens, one of which was kosher.⁵⁵ The floor of the barn was not boarded because of the expense, and conditions could only be described as filthy. For the first winter the new colonists did not have adequate clothing and bedding, and Friedlander admitted that "one needed a stout heart to be happy in such conditions."⁵⁶ The Refugees Aid Society lacked the money to provide the settlers with proper housing, and more importantly they were denied government permission to build permanent accommodations.

Money was also lacking to buy ploughs and needed agricultural tools. Until they could become self-supporting, the colonists were given a small weekly allowance which barely covered food expenses for the families. At the same time, a fee was deducted to pay the colony's doctor. The business affairs of Artouf were supervised by a Hebrew-Christian administrator. It seems that relations between him and settlers were generally poor.

Although discouraged by the situation at Artouf, Friedlander emphasized the advance of the gospel at the colony. He classified a third of the settlers, 140 residents, as "genuine inquirers into the truth of Christianity."⁵⁷ A missionary from Jerusalem, usually a Hebrew-Christian,

⁴⁹ Shaftesbury was president of the LJS from 1848-85, but he had only minimal involvement with the JRAS. Finn was the widow of James Finn, British Council in Jerusalem from 1845-62.

⁵⁰ *The Christian*, November 30, 1882 p. 15.

⁵¹ *The Record*, June 29, 1883, p. 653.

⁵² *First Annual Report of Jewish Refugees Aid Society*, London, 1884, p. 2.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *TFZ*, January 1884, p. 101.

⁵⁵ *JC*, May 29, 1885 p. 11.

⁵⁶ *TFZ*, January 1884, *ibid.*

⁵⁷ *TFZ*, November 1883 p. 78.

travelled to the colony every weekend to hold church services. The missionary was welcomed by colonists if only as an end to their isolation. Eventually, a permanent LJS missionary-school teacher was installed on {50} the settlement, an act which *The Jewish Chronicle* saw as making a mockery out of Friedlander's frequent declarations that there would be "perfect religious liberty" at Artouf.⁵⁸

Friedlander reported that the gospel could be preached at Artouf in a way that was impossible in any other part of the country,⁵⁹ but he was not merely interested in conversions. When a baptised Jew was elected by the community to an internal management committee, Friedlander was certain of a change in the Jewish residents of Artouf. "Unconsciously, the settlers were learning that a Jew who believes in Jesus still remains a Jew," observed Friedlander.⁶⁰ He further claimed that the experience of Artouf was creating a new kind of Jew: a Jewish settler at Artouf "need not cease being a religious Jew observing all the ceremonies prescribed by Jewish tradition, but he does cease to be slavishly dependent on the guidance of the rabbis or cowardly fearful of Jewish public opinion."⁶¹ In all, eight Jewish adults and 11 children from Artouf were baptized.⁶²

Conditions for the colonists steadily declined as the settlement approached its first birthday. The JRAS could not afford to dig a well, and water had to be carted in from a nearby brook. In August, 1884, there were still insufficient funds to supply each family with enough tools and work animals to move the colonists toward self-sufficiency.⁶³ The discouraging situation was described by Friedlander as an "apparent state of servitude."⁶⁴ Meat was rarely seen on the tables of Artouf, and the farmers suffered in the summer heat because they had only winter clothes to wear.

Christians from the United States and Britain attempted to relieve the poverty at Artouf through practical means. Clothes, books and quinine were sent to the settlement, but money did not arrive in sufficient amounts to keep the colony from collapse. By the spring harvest in 1885, the maize and wheat crops were too small to provide an adequate income for the settlers.

In July, 1885, the colonists at Artouf were told they would no longer receive their weekly stipends. "The blow to these poor settlers was very severe, but they received it, on the whole, like men," recalled Friedlander.⁶⁵ With the growing financial crisis, many settlers took the proceeds from the harvest and returned to Jerusalem while others left the country. Friedlander bitterly blamed the Christian public for its failure to support Artouf.⁶⁶ Kelk, for his part, was willing to admit that the missionaries made mistakes and pleaded in the last issue of *Tidings from Zion* for more money to finally make the settlement viable.

The JRAS managed to support a small number of families at Artouf into the middle 1890s. Permission finally was received to build permanent housing on the site. Living conditions improved considerably for the handful of Jews {51} that clung to the land. The colony was still managed by a Hebrew-Christian, and much of the field labour was done by Arab

⁵⁸ JC, November 14, 1884, p. 11.

⁵⁹ Gidney, p. 454.

⁶⁰ *TFZ*, January, 1884 p. 195. Franz Delitzsch, the respected German Hebraist and translator of the New Testament into Hebrew also thought that Artouf was an important instrument in resolving the conflict between a profession of Christianity and retaining a Jewish identity. *TFZ*, February, 1884, P. 126.

⁶¹ *TFZ*, December, 1883, p. 94.

⁶² See Register of Baptisms, Christ Church, Jerusalem, pp. 60-77.

⁶³ *TFZ*, August, 1884, p. 10.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁶⁵ *TFZ*, July, 1885, p.188.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

peasants. In 1893, the JRAS attempted to renew Christian interest in Artouf, but with only limited success.⁶⁷ Until it was sold, Artouf also served as something of a weekend retreat for LJS employees.

A group of Bulgarian Jews bought Artouf in 1895.⁶⁸ The money earned from the sale was handed over to the London Jews Society. Putting its best face on the failure, the JRAS attempted to argue that their settlement stimulated other Jewish colonization efforts. “When wealthy Jews;” we are told, “saw the keen interest taken by Christians in the great inflow of Jewish immigrants, they were provoked to jealousy and emulation, and now following Christian initiative, many Jewish colonies backed by large Jewish capital, are steadily at work.”⁶⁹ But as the Syrian historian A. L. Tibawi points out, virtually no historian accepts this claim.⁷⁰

Jewish settlement was well underway before Artouf, and it needed no stimulation from the Jewish Refugees Aid Society. However, the LJS itself seems to have been responsible for advancing Jewish settlement in another less-publicized way. When Baron Edmund Rothschild saw the interest of British evangelicals in promoting the Jewish return to Palestine, he suspected a missionary plot. Rothschild thought that once the Jews were in Palestine the English missionaries (i.e. LJS) would easily lure them into conversion.⁷¹ This “crackpot notion,” as Schama describes it, was one of the reasons Rothschild took the new Jewish colonies under his wing.⁷²

Friedlander’s experiment seems to have been doomed from the start. The LJS had little real commitment to settling Jews on the land, and those who most wanted to see the project succeed, Kelk and Friedlander, did not have the resources or expertise to carry it through. Colonization, as even Edmund Rothschild discovered, was a costly proposition. It is undeniable that Friedlander was naive in what he expected to achieve from Artouf, but in some ways his naivety was similar to that of the Jewish settlers who made up much of the first aliyah. While Artouf did not produce all the expected religious results, it was a sincere attempt by local missionaries to aid desperate and starving refugees who longed to be farmers in the land of Israel.

The costly setback at Artouf did not stop the LJS from carrying out a major program of expansion in the 1890s. A new school was built in 1892, and five years later a large horseshoe-shaped hospital was completed at the cost of £17,000. Soon after its opening, the hospital was attracting hundreds of patients each week.⁷³ Regarding the LJS’s activities in Jerusalem during this period, an American diplomat observed that the city was clearly “over-missionized.”⁷⁴

{52} In 1899, many years after Friedlander left Jerusalem, A. Hastings Kelk urged the readers of *The Record* to support a fledgling colony in Jericho.⁷⁵ The Hebrew-Christian-run settlement was in some ways similar to Artouf. Membership was open to any Jew who agreed to place

⁶⁷ *The Record*, January 20, 1893, p. 52.

⁶⁸ For the history of Artouf after its sale, see Yossi Ben Artzi, “Har Tuv - A Forgotten Colony in the Judean Hills,” *Horizons: Studies in Geography*, 1978 [in Hebrew], pp. 126-139.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ A.L. Tibawi, *British Interest in Syria and Palestine*, Oxford, 1961, p. 207.

⁷¹ Schama, p. 76.

⁷² Crombie, pp. 346-48.

⁷³ Shaul Sapor, “The Anglican Missionary Societies in Jerusalem: Activities and Impact,” in *The Land that Became Israel*, Ed. Ruth Kark, New Haven, 1989, p. 111. Ironically, the architect of the hospital, A. Beresford Pite, was also President of the JRAS from 1889-95.

⁷⁴ Edwin Sherman Wallace, *Jerusalem the Holy*, New York, 1895, p. 325.

⁷⁵ *The Record*, February 10, 1899, p. 155.

himself under Christian instruction; however if, after a year, the prospective farmer did not accept the gospel, “he had no choice but to leave the colony.” Still hoping to realize the original vision of Artouf, Kelk advanced money to the struggling community and appealed to British Christians to do likewise. But nothing would come of the Jericho colony or other subsequent attempts by Hebrew-Christians to establish agricultural settlements in the Land of Israel.

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⁷⁶ Special thanks must be extended to the Rev. Alfred Sawyer and Kelvin Crombie, The Vicar and church historian respectively of Christ Church, Jerusalem, for their practical help in researching the Artouf story. An additional note of gratitude must be extended to Derek White and Alison Marchant. This article is dedicated to the memory of Flo Dobbie.

{56} Joanna loves Jesus: A Review and a response

By Baruch Maoz

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Religious discussion, evangelistic and otherwise, is all too often conducted in the form of a debate on theological differences or in the heart of angry aggression, with little regard to the implications in human terms of our “success” or our failure. Sensitive dialogue, in which two or more divergent and strongly-held convictions are contrasted, seldom occurs. Triumphalism threatens the delicate fabric of our human relations, transforming evangelism into a form of religious and psychological imperialism that is unworthy of any form of honest piety.

MISHKAN dearly wishes to serve as a forum in which honest discussion is undertaken. However wrong we may believe another to be, he has a right to be heard - and we have a duty to hear him. The purposes of the gospel are never faithfully served when men and women shout their religious slogans at each other and refuse to lend a listening ear to the responses. In that sense, evangelism must be dialogue. We simply must cultivate a growing sensitivity to the hurt and hopes of those whom we wish to evangelize. This is all the more pressing when the issue under discussion is Jewish evangelism - the church’s occasionally arrogant and triumphalist approaches have done little to commend the gospel to the Jewish people.

Joanna Loves Jesus is an article originally published by *Commentary* (August 1987). Its author, Jacob Lampart, is a Jew who draws us into the story of a Jewish family painfully effected by one of its members believing in Jesus. As such, Lampart is a spokesman for many such Jewish families, and his message deserves to be heard by those who wish to preach the gospel to the Jews. Rabbi Emmanuel Preshko heads a congregation of 300 families. Joanna, his daughter, “has been through transcendental meditation, Rajneesh, bio-energetics, macrobiotics, zen and who knows what else, but Jesus is the last straw,” the article states. Following a failed relationship and a motor accident, Joanna had responded to the confident {57} warmth of a Christian nurse who “prayed so hard to move heaven and earth to heal poor Joanna Preshko that tears began to roll down her cheeks. Joanna, who had never seen anyone, certainly not a stranger cry for her, felt as if she were basking in a different kind of light, and a sweet glow passed from Mrs. Williams (the nurse) to Joanna.”

Within a short time, Mrs. Williams had “made rapid progress,” plying Joanna with a Bible, tracts, booklets and the such like. Rabbi Preshko is distraught beyond words. What could have caused this strange turn in his daughter’s life. “Could she have fallen in love with a Jesus freak who twisted her mind around?”

Sleepless nights follow. Rabbi Preshko cannot understand the horror of his daughter’s new attitude to life. No sorrow could be compared with this “delirium.” Joanna is very precious to him:

The rabbi gets out of bed and goes into Joanna’s room where he paces the floor and runs his fingers over the spines of her sprawling book collection - hundreds, it seems like thousands, of them. She was always a loner, a very private child who was hard to control and

excessively temperamental. In his eyes, however, his daughter is beautiful, painfully so. Unlike the other Preshkos, she has long lean limbs, and deep haunted eyes like the most expensive black olives - Jesus's sister, he thinks sacrilegiously. He's been spending long hours in her room lately, sitting at her desk, touching the sheets of her bed, looking for an answer to the question of how to get her back, and going back over his life to see where he'd failed: were there things he'd said that she'd misinterpreted, and things he didn't say that he should have said? Would it be different if he'd stayed on at the Seminary instead of opting for the easier road of Reform? Had he made a mistake in the first place leaving the world of the academy for the more dangerous world of the rabbinate? There are no guarantees in life, but if he hadn't dressed his own historical yearnings in a religious mantle, isn't it likely that his daughter, who's obviously committing the ultimate act of rebellion against a rabbi-father, wouldn't be flirting with the other side now? As for himself, once the news gets out, he doubts if his career can survive the slings and the stares. In effect, he'll become a lame-duck rabbi.

To make matters worse, there seems to be no escape from the problem. Whenever he turns on his car radio, all he seems to get are stations selling Jesus. There's no end to it. Wherever he drives there are bumper stickers crying, "Repent;" and "I'm Going to Heaven, Are You?" and "He Died for Your Sins." It makes no sense to him. How could anybody die for the sins of anybody else? What does it mean? A person commits a sin, and that sin is redeemed somehow by the death of a man, nailed to a {58} cross two thousand years before? It simply makes no logical sense to Rabbi Preshko to base a religion on this peculiar myth of crosses, sin, redemption.

Rabbi Preshko is torn between a burning love for his daughter and revulsion at the cause she has chosen. He cannot understand it in any other terms than rejection: "She is not my daughter. In case you haven't heard, Jesus is her father!"

When Joanna finally totters home, stiff and aching he asks, "How are you?" "Praise the lord (sic)," beams Joanna.

Rabbi Preshko turns white and looks at his wife. "What did she say?"

"I said 'Praise the lord, (sic) the king, the one and only,'" Joanna repeats.

"I have to sit down," says her father. "Is this how you're supposed to refer to him?"

"Jesus, Daddy, Jesus, say his name, the name of the lord, the saviour, the only-begotten son who was born to save us from sin."

"Is this possible?" The rabbi grabs for his daughter's shoulder but she pulls away.

Mrs Preshko's face turns green with anger. "Manny, you promised."

The rabbi ignores his wife and looks at Joanna without flinching. "Have you forgotten that you're Jewish?"

"No, Daddy, I haven't forgotten, but for the first time being Jewish means something to me. I'm one of the elect, Jesus's own."

"I can't listen to this. You're torturing me." "I'm sorry, Daddy, it's just something I've spent a lot of time thinking about lately." Joanna closes her eyes, "It says in the New Testament..."

"New! Did you read the Old too?" "Parts of it, please don't shout."

"In Hebrew?" The rabbi's voice rises, a defense attorney for the Hebrew God.

"You know my Hebrew isn't good enough, but I'm planning to start studying Hebrew again."

“Joanna, I may not be a very smart rabbi, but I do know that if you haven’t read the Bible in Hebrew then you haven’t read the Bible of the Jews, what you read was the Bible of the Christians.”

“I don’t care whose Bible I read. Jesus is the one. It all makes perfect sense.”

“Do you know what you’re doing to us? To me?”

{59} Mrs Preshko feels the conversation is heading down a one-way street in the wrong direction. “Does anybody want some coffee? Honey, where do you keep the coffee? We brought some marmalade and fresh rolls...” The rabbi turns on her. “Can’t you wait with all that?”

“It’s all right. You talk and I’ll perk. We’ll just sit right there and have a nice cup of coffee, unless someone prefers tea. Last call for tea.” “Mom, did you hear what I said?”

“Yes, honey, I heard every word.”

“About Jesus, I mean, the greatest Jew who ever lived.”

“Yes honey, if you say so, whatever you say, as long as you don’t do anything crazy like you did with the car. Do you promise?”

“Mother, you’re not listening to me, I’m talking about the greatest Jew who ever lived.”

“Are you happy, Joanna?” Mrs Preshko asks. “You look happy. Manny, she looks happy, doesn’t she?”

Joanna tries very much to explain. But all she says adds up to emotional exhilaration at the sound of Jesus’ name. “It’s like falling in love with someone new.”

A storm threatens to break loose. Mrs. Preshko drags her husband into the bathroom.

She drags her husband into the bathroom and in a soft whisper, nearly crying, says, “I know only one thing. I want my daughter.”

The rabbi puts his arms around his wife. “I understand, I really do. But if she’s tied up with Jesus, she’s not yours.”

“Manny, she’s ours. She’ll always be ours. This is just one more of her phases, and if we make a big stink, she may really start taking herself seriously. Let’s just forget about it.”

Joanna sticks her head through the door with a final message: “I think you should know that I’m planning a long trip soon to the Holy Land.” Mrs. Preshko’s eyes light up. “Did you hear that, Manny? Joanna wants to visit Israel. Isn’t that wonderful?”

“Not exactly Israel, Mother, but the Holy Land. Bethlehem, the Mount of Olives, Nazareth. I want to spend Christmas on the Via Dolorosa. Not in Eilat, and I’m certainly not stepping into Tel Aviv.”

“Joanna, do you know exactly what you’re talking about?” Rabbi Preshko asks.

“Yes, Daddy, I know exactly what I’m talking about. Christmas, December 25th, in the Holy Land. I think it would be a wonderful way to meet Jesus in the flesh, so to speak, on the very earth where he once walked.”

“I’m leaving. I can’t take this any more.”

{60} Rabbi Preshko finds himself pursued by thoughts of Jesus. He reads anything he can get on Jesus, Jewish Christians and related subjects. He watches gospel broadcasts and repeatedly questions his faith, his sanity, the very grounds of his existence. Could the gospel

be true? Was he right to choose Reform Judaism rather than stricter Orthodoxy? He is worried. Watching a Christian worshipper on TV burst into tears, “he wonders why in all his years as a rabbi he’s never seen a worshipper cry?” And then he is startled: “If a rabbi can see something positive in the gospel according to Channel 11, then what about Jews in the rest of the country?”

At this moment he understands two things: he loves Joanna more than anyone else in the world, and no matter what she does, he will never withdraw his love from her. He also realizes that some day he will have to walk into a church and read from the Christian Bible, not as a scholar but as an ordinary person seeing with his own eyes what it’s all about.

Rabbi Preshko couldn’t have picked a more appropriate time for his travail. It seems that only yesterday was Columbus Day, and - after a lonely, brooding Thanksgiving - here it is already the second week in December. Joanna has gone off on her four-week tour of the holy sites, and from the moment he hears of her departure the rabbi can no longer sit still in his office. Even as she’s tracing Jesus’ footsteps in the Holy Land, he begins to trace her footsteps in Manhattan, and discovers a town in the throes of feverish preparation. Wherever he turns, he collides with Christmas, blinded by the colors, bitten by the wind, wet from the slush, knocked against by packages, importuned by the Salvation Army, assailed at every corner by the the incessant ringing of bells.

What is Christmas? he wonders. Is it a religious festival or a national holiday? What can it mean to the Jews of America when the most festive day of the most festive season of the year - a time of gifts and good cheer, and reconciliation throughout the land - excludes them from its embrace? He knows that most members of his congregation have Christmas trees in their homes, but who can blame them for wanting to be a part of the world they live in, day after day, night after night? Do most of America’s Jews, despite the theoretical separation of church and state, really live in some sense like Marranos in their business suits and leisure suits, swinging their golf clubs and flashing their credit cards in this great free land? Do they take part in the seasonal cheer and good will because they enjoy it or because they’re afraid or unable to live separately from the rest?

{61} Rabbi Preshko is aware that he’s writing his sermon for next week, and that it will be a good sermon, and one which might even move a few people to burn their Christmas trees before New Year’s. But he doubts if he’ll ever deliver it.

The next Sunday, the portion of the Torah is *Vayishlach*, with its famous tale of Jacob’s all-night wrestling match with a stranger, perhaps an angel, who before releasing Jacob wounds him in the thigh. Ostensibly the story has nothing to do with December or Christmas, but as Rabbi Preshko stands in front of his congregation and begins to discuss the significance of Jacob’s wound, he finds himself talking about latter-day Jacobs, and before he knows it the subject has switched to Marranos in Spain, Christianity in Portugal, the Inquisition.

The shift doesn’t surprise his listeners, they’ve heard him introduced often as a “Ph.D in history, from a very prestigious university.” But soon his calm lecturer’s voice begins trembling and grows jittery and scratched, like a violin string being twisted. In this new voice he begins to speak of Christmas trees and Santa Claus, launching into an attack on the Marrano Jews of America. There’s a stunned silence in the audience, a sense of shock. Rabbi Preshko doesn’t sound like a Ph.D any longer. He sounds like some sort of preacher, one of those terrible rural preachers who act as if they know all the answers.

“We are guilty, you and I, all of us. It’s a sham, this religion, how we practice it. And if you think I’m not talking about personal experience, you’re wrong. I haven’t been able to talk about this to

anyone, but my own daughter, Joanna - many of you know her, NYU Film Institute - has become a born-again Christian.”

Rabbi Preshko is in tears. “I’m sorry for putting you through my own personal sorrow from this pulpit, but history has come home. There’s a price to pay. A good Sabbath to you.”

At the end of the service, Rabbi Preshko does not follow his usual custom of joining the temple president at the rear of the synagogue to greet the worshippers. Instead he slips out the back way, and without consulting his wife, hands in his resignation. He’s not sure what he’ll do with his life, but supposes he’ll be able to land a job teaching history somewhere. It’s only three mouths to feed now.

But the congregation won’t accept Rabbi Preshko’s resignation, and instead the board votes a lifetime contract for him. In the end, Rabbi Preshko accepts. His sermons are events. He becomes a more distant man, but at the same time the congregants feel that his suffering is good {62} for them. Although they’ve never realized it before, they really do want a rabbi who can also preach and carry his audience toward a rip-roaring climax. Every year on the Sabbath before December 25th, Rabbi Preshko dedicates his sermon to Joanna, praying that one day she will return to the fold, to Jewish history, and he will look up from his notes to see her black olive eyes staring at him from the audience, her heart open, willing to believe that he loves her very much.

The agony, the utterly emotional process, are so eloquently described by Lampart that any additional words are unnecessary. The weakness of Joanna’s faith is painted as being as weak as her father’s: neither address the real issues. They are swept up in works of religious emotion for and against, and the agony is as real as is the ecstasy.

Was Rabbi Preshko right in assuming that Mrs. Williams took advantage of Joanna’s physical and emotional vulnerability? Are Christian proponents of the gospel *never* guilty of such abuse? As we evangelize do we have sufficient regard for the human beings which will inevitably be affected by what we do?

True religious dialogue will entail pain - by all involved. *Joanna Loves Jesus* describes just such a pain, and by so doing makes an important contribution towards making us sensitive to the pains that come upon non-believing families and friends of Jewish Christians. There is a price to pay.

{63} Hebrew Christianity: Its Theology, History, and Philosophy

Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum
Ariel Ministries, 1983.

Reviewed by Dr. Raymond Gannon

Dr. Raymond Gannon is a graduate of the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary (M.A, M.Div.), the California Graduate School of Theology (Ph.D.), and Princeton Theological Seminary (Th.M.). He is presently co-pastor of the King of Kings Assembly (Jerusalem) and Principal of the King of Kings College.

Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum's original text entitled, *Hebrew Christianity: Its Theology, History, and Philosophy*, was first published in 1974 but revised for its fifth printing in 1983. It is the 1983 revised edition that was primarily used for this review.

Dr. Fruchtenbaum is a Hebrew Christian with many years of Jewish ministry with different organizations. He was educated at Dallas Theological Seminary and New York University. In more recent years Fruchtenbaum has served as founding President of Ariel Ministries, headquartered in southern California.

Fruchtenbaum's chapter titles are: Jewishness and Hebrew Christianity: A Matter of Definitions; The Biblical Basis for the Hebrew Christian Distinctive; The History of Hebrew Christianity; Messianism; Hebrew Christianity and the Jews; The Law of Moses; Hebrew Christianity and the Local Church; Missions; Hebrew Christianity and Judaism; The State of Israel; and Legalism. He adds an appendix of a Hebrew Christian Wedding Service.

Fruchtenbaum writes to a general audience. Probably his wide range of topics could have been handled better and issues more carefully explained if a more specific readership were in focus. His general range of content (in the space of 132 pages) is far too broad to be effective and his approach too dogmatic to avoid offending most.

{64} The author offers definitions for Jewishness, gentile, Christian, and Hebrew Christian. According to Fruchtenbaum, one is a Jew if his "father is Jewish;" based on biblical precedent. A "Gentile is anyone who is not a Jew." Fruchtenbaum makes two further statements which are inaccurate in terms of religious history: "Gentile converts to Judaism are never given the title of Jews," and "a Gentile cannot do anything to become a non-Gentile." (p.10)

After stating, "Christians are Jews and Gentiles who believe in the Messiahship of Christ" (p.12), the author devotes his second chapter to making a case for "the Hebrew Christian Distinctive." He devotes 17 of his 132 pages to distinguish "spiritual Gentiles" from "spiritual Jews" in order to combat a "problem" I have never encountered: i.e. the label "spiritual Jew" indicates "some kind of national or racial transformation of the Gentile to a Jew." (p.18) His arguments establish that society includes people who perform different social functions. But his insistence upon spiritual non-identification, i.e., "spiritual Jews" in distinction to "spiritual Gentiles;" is not supportable from scripture. This laboured argument only confuses the reader.

Justification for a Hebrew Christian profile in the Body of Christ could be more easily handled by simply pointing out the valuable insights and perspectives Jewish believers can add to the Church's collective understanding of scripture and life in the Messiah. This, of course, is contingent upon the Jewish believer having received a quality Jewish cultural and

religious educational background. Certainly *anyone* (not only a Jewish believer) fellowshiping cross-culturally is soon able to identify extra-biblical social mores in the practices and teachings of a second cultural group. Fruchtenbaum's lack of such qualifiers seems to suggest he also is not entirely free of cultural chauvinism.

Fruchtenbaum recognizes the unity between all believers in Christ, but chooses a strange metaphor to distinguish between believers. He states the "wild olive branches" are of a different 'blood type' than the "natural branches." But this seems misleading since both the natural and wild olive branches are sustained by the same life-flow, the spirit of Christ.

Fruchtenbaum is careful to counter the replacement heresy, (that the Church has replaced Israel in God's economy). But he goes too far by insisting that non-Jewish believers are not a part of the Israel of God.

His third chapter provides a very simple historical review of Hebrew Christianity from the Book of Acts to developments in the 19th and 20th centuries. The next three chapters on Messianism, the Abrahamic covenant, and the Law, are the predictable analyses of one fully committed to western dispensational and systematic theology.

{65} The same assumptions characterize chapter seven: "Hebrew Christianity and the Local Church." Fruchtenbaum expresses very well some of the tensions Hebrew Christians encounter in the local gentile-Christian church. These include: a foreign gentile culture, periodic episodes of anti-Semitism, insensitivity to Hebrew Christian needs, occasional instant stardom, and the imposition of gentile cultural taboos expressed in Christian legalism (elaborated extensively in the final chapter on "Legalism").

But Fruchtenbaum goes on to confuse two very different issues: (1) the biblical propriety of a Messianic Congregation and (2) ethnic bigotry. He declares the Hebrew Christian church to be unbiblical and therefore an unacceptable alternative to the Gentile-enculturated local congregations. His categorical statement insists that a Hebrew Christian church (or Messianic congregation) will inevitably be errant in its attitude and conduct toward gentile fellow-believers who may be excluded since they are not Jewish.

Experience over the past two decades has demonstrated (with one or two possible exceptions) that gentile believers choosing to identify with Messianic Congregations are welcomed as fully contributing members of the local spiritual family. Messianic Congregations reject the idea that believing Jews and gentiles are spiritually different. Rather, believers are obliged to listen to the promptings of the same Holy Spirit who has made of two, "one new man."

Varying cultural groups will express their faith in patterns unique to their culture. Certainly each ethnic group likewise suffers from a cultural shortsightedness that must be perpetually corrected by the Holy Spirit and the Scripture. But it is not correct to think all believers can be or should be culturally "at home" with all other believers on a daily basis due to the spiritual unity all believers enjoy in Christ. God did not make people that way.

I could have raised a family with any believing woman of God. But practically, I had to seriously regard compatibility. I can appreciate all God's women and esteem my relationship to them in Christ. But for practical matters I selected the one with whom I could be most happy. I think this is wisdom, not bigotry. In submission to the Bible and in harmony with the Holy Spirit, people can select their own preferred mates and their own congregational cultural norms.

While recognized cultures and religious styles of expression may be markedly different between ethnic groups (and between variant Christian denominations consisting of people

even of the same ethnic group), there is no spiritual difference between believing Jews and believing gentiles in {66} Christ. Spiritual unity both transcends culture and is independent of cultural conformity. The author admits “the two are one in unity but not in uniformity,” (p.34) but he is not prepared to take that truth to its logical conclusion.

Is Fruchtenbaum saying a Hebrew Christian Church or Messianic Congregation with a Jewish-enculturated local Body of Christ is unbiblical as it may culturally alienate certain Christians, but that a gentile-enculturated local body is biblical even though it culturally (and usually) alienates Jewish believers? There is an obvious inconsistency exhibited here.

While advocating Hebrew Christian participation in Jewish festivals recognizing their fulfillment in Christ, he suggests these be done in a para-church Fellowship format rather than as a church in order to avoid exclusivism but still satisfy Jewish cultural needs. This is double-talk and reminiscent of halachic equivocation.

Why is it so difficult to recognize that every local church is an expression of the Messiah Yeshua to its own particular sphere of social influence? To be effective, every local body must relate culturally to the society it hopes to see redeemed. This is not a Jewish-gentile issue. This is a fact of missiological and spiritual life.

On the whole Fruchtenbaum’s philosophy in *Hebrew Christianity; Its Theology, History, and Philosophy* reflects the thinking of a 1974 dispensationalist and not one who is well acquainted with the contemporary Messianic world. For this reason one paragraph on “The Jewish Oriented Local Church” is simply added to the revised 1983 edition in which he envisions the possibility of a Jewish encultured congregation receiving non-Jews on equal biblical footing.

In his chapter on “Hebrew Christianity and Judaism,” Fruchtenbaum offers several valuable insights. His recognition that Rabbinic Judaism and Christianity are two offspring of biblical Judaism in contrast to the perception of Christianity as child of Rabbinism, is an important observation frequently overlooked. Likewise the author’s conviction that Jewish festivals can perform a cultural function while being reinterpreted in light of the Christ is astute and critically important to the spread of the gospel in the Jewish community.

Also significant is Fruchtenbaum’s rejection of born-again Christians converting to Judaism on any grounds. He offers valid reasons why Christian conversions should be rejected: The convert would thereby be “submitting {67} himself to a non-biblical religion” (rabbinism) and that I Corinthians 7:18-20 “clearly forbids a Gentile Christian to convert to Judaism.”

But he misses the underlying reason why the scriptures denounce such conversions. Such outward religious conversion would obscure the reality that the gentile believer *has already been* spiritually joined to the Israel of God by the accomplishment of Christ. But such an admission would require the author to rethink his earlier dogmatic statements on this count.

Near the end of the book, the author makes a strong biblical case for preaching the gospel “to the Jew first.” Later he demonstrates Hebrew Christian loyalty to the state of Israel and insists the Messianic hope for Jewish believers is bound up with the return of the Jewish Messiah, Yeshua. What concerned me most with the book was the dogmatic manner in which most statements were made. Perhaps this is due to the author’s training. Perhaps it is just the author’s personal style. But my impression was that nothing was open for discussion. Truth had been reached and there was nothing else to do or say but follow the blueprint herein provided. Since 1974 we have learned that many answers still need to be found to Hebrew Christian dilemmas. We need to

encounter many new and previously unimagined problems before we can take much stock in our answers.

It seems to me the first few chapters of this book would alienate, generally confuse, or even anger its readership. Undoubtedly portions of this dated material served specific purposes in years past. But the needs of contemporary readers can be better met by more recent writings. It certainly would not be fair to judge the value of Fruchtenbaum's contribution to the Hebrew Christian cause on the basis of such a dated work. I look forward to studying more carefully some of his newer works which will surely be more reflective of continuing professional and academic development since 1974.

{68} Jewish New Testament. A translation of the New Testament that expresses its Jewishness.

David H. Stern

Jewish New Testament Publications, Jerusalem/ Clarksville 1989. 391 pp. \$14.95.

Reviewed by Kai Kjaer-Hansen

Dr. Kai Kjaer-Hansen, has his Ph.D. from Lund University on "Studies in the Name of Jesus" (1982). He is editor of the LCJEBulletin and is involved in the new translation of the Bible to Danish. He has authored a monograph on Joseph Rabinowitz.

A new translation of the New Testament in English is now available. It is the fruit of the labours of Dr. David H. Stern, a Messianic Jew living in Jerusalem, who is also an editorial advisor to this periodical. The translation is titled *Jewish New Testament* (JNT). In the first sentences of the introduction, the translator states the reasons for his work: "Why is this New Testament different from all other New Testaments? Because the Jewish New Testament expresses its original and essential Jewishness. Nearly all other English translations of the New Testament - and there are literally hundreds - present its message in a Gentile-Christian linguistic, cultural and theological framework."

Stern is clearly not critical of this fact. "For although the Gospel is Jewish in origin, it is not only for Jews but also for Gentiles. The New Testament itself makes this very clear, so it is appropriate that its message be communicated to non-Jews in ways that impose on them a minimum of alien cultural baggage."

The JNT's purpose is to make "it normal to think of the New Testament as Jewish." The JNT "challenges Jews to understand that Yeshua is a friend to every Jewish heart and the New Testament, a Jewish book filled with truths to be accepted and acted upon. At the same time, while reaffirming the equality of Gentiles and Jews in the Messianic Community, it challenges Christians to acknowledge the Jewishness of their faith and their oneness with the Jewish people." The translation is further described as "freshly rendered from the original Greek into enjoyable modern English."

{69} Stern states three ways of bringing out the Jewishness of the New Testament:

1. *Cosmetically*: Names are expressed in their Hebrew forms, eg. Yeshua (Jesus), Yochanan (John). Traditional "church language" is expressed by "neutral terminology that encourages the reader to think, "immersion (baptism), emissary (apostle), execution-stake (cross) and Messianic community (church).

2. *Culturally and Religiously*: *Tzitzit* is used instead of the fringe (edge) of a robe (Mt. 9:20), *Motza 'ei-Shabbat* instead of "the first day of the week" (Acts 20:7).

3. *Theologically*: In Romans 10:4 "the word *telos* does not mean that the Messiah terminates the law, but that he is 'the goal of which the *Torah* aims.'"

Stern also includes "Jewish English" expressions "defined as Hebrew and Yiddish expressions which English-speaking Jews incorporate into everyday speech."

He does not describe his translation as a "literal" translation or a "paraphrase" but as a "dynamically equivalent" translation. "At certain points especially related to the issue of Jewishness it becomes militantly so." For example, he translates two Greek words, upo

nomon (under the law), with thirteen English words: “in subjection to the system which results from perverting the *Torah* into legalism.”

Concerning whether or not the translator should “inject his opinions” into his translation, Stern answers, “The *Jewish New Testament* cautiously answers in the affirmative, on the ground that it inevitably happens anyhow ... Even when a Greek expression seems vague, capable of more than one interpretation, the translator should not transfer the ambiguity into English but should decide on *one* of the possible interpretations and render that one well.”

All non-English words are explained at the bottom of every right-hand page. In the text, non-English words are written in italics, while quotations from OT are written in boldface. A glossary and a reverse glossary are found at the end of the book.

Translation and the receiver group

Anyone involved in translation knows how difficult it is to satisfy everybody. Trying to satisfy everybody will satisfy nobody. Translators know how much work is involved in making a translation like JNT, even as a team and how much more when a single person has undertaken the job himself.

{70} David H. Stern has undertaken it and for this he should be congratulated. It is extremely important to emphasize the Jewish roots of the Christian faith - for both Jews and Christians of gentile origin.

There are weaknesses in the JNT as there are in all other translations. The perfect is for the world to come. God has made use of incomplete translations - a comfort for any translator who is criticized for his work. This translation will no doubt be used to stimulate interest in the Jewishness of the New Testament and to show the way for some Jews to their Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth.

It seems, however, that the receiver group has not been satisfactorily defined. If the translation were presented as an experiment with a view to evangelism among Jews who do not understand Hebrew well and who think that the New Testament is a gentile book, I have no major objection. If the translation were introduced as a means to provide gentile Christians with a first hand impression of the fact that the Greek New Testament vocabulary can and must be understood within the framework of an Old Testament and Jewish reference, I would be less critical of the work.

But that is not the way the translation is described. The translation seems to promise more than it can deliver. I fear that both Jewish and Christian theologians will regard it as a curiosity. That would be unfortunate because it deserves more appreciation. If curiosity leads people to faith in Jesus, what matters the opinion of theologians? I agree. But when a translation demands to be evaluated theologically, these demands need to be taken seriously.

In the following paragraphs I will not render the translation full justice because I will not stress its many positive aspects. I will point out certain weaknesses.

Selection

Stern has used about 400 words and phrases of Hebrew, Aramaic, Yiddish or other origins. The majority of these are Hebrew. Other words are denarius, diaspora and

talent. Some terms should not have been included: “They had plotted to have him ambushed and killed *en route* “ (Acts 25:3).

If the translation’s primary goal is to express the original and essential Jewishness of the New Testament, it seems unnecessary to use Yiddish words. Stern excuses the use of expressions from “Jewish English,” “but since ‘Jewish English’ in its manifold variety is widely used, an appeal is made for tolerance of those elements included in the *Jewish New Testament* .” I {71} don’t find it hard to tolerate such expressions, if the translation was directed at people who talk in such a manner, but then I would have preferred much more of such words to have been used. The JNT all together contains 10 such terms (bubbemeises, davvening, Goyishe, kvetching, macher, mentsh, nu, nudnik, shmooze, tsuris). These words have the effect of slang. I have no objections to translations rendering the New Testament in slang in order to comply to people, who only understand or who prefer slang, so long as it is not implied that this is how Jesus talked.

Most of the 400 words are Hebrew and Aramaic. If we are to exclude names of persons and places, less than 100 Hebrew and Aramaic words remain. If terms such as scribe, pharisee, saducee and publican are excluded, names of Jewish holidays, and Hebrew and Aramaic words that are found in the Greek New Testament then only about 70 Hebrew and Aramaic words remain. I refuse to believe that NT’s “original and essential Jewishness” can be expressed in so few words!

Of course, names of persons, places, Jewish groups and holidays in their original Hebrew form give the impression that Jesus and his disciples were Jews, and that Jesus worked mainly in Jewish localities. For English speaking Jews, who are familiar with Hebrew name forms, these renderings are quite acceptable. But could it also be imagined that some American Jews who would want to read the JNT, would have problems understanding these name forms, because they are more used to traditional English names?

More important, however, is the question of the principles by which Stern chose the Hebrew and Aramaic terms he employs or omits. To a great extent it seems that a vague understanding of the receiver group has determined the choices made. This is a dismally poor method of indicating the NT’s original Jewishness.

A few examples: “Go and make people from all nations into *talmidim* , immersing them into the reality of the Father, the Son and the *Ruach Ha-Kodesh* “ (Matt. 28:19). Why not translate “Father” and “Son” as “Abba” and “Ben?” Another example is “Grace, mercy and *shalom* will be with us from God...” (2 John 3).

Occasionally a few words are rendered differently and other concepts just as familiar are rendered in the traditional way: “Why is it that your *talmidim* break the Tradition of the Elders? They don’t do *n’tilat yadayim* before they eat!” Why not use *masoret*, for the Hebrew expression for “Tradition of the Elders?” (Matt. 15:2) “I tell you that until heaven and earth pass away not so much as a yud or a stroke will pass from the *Torah* “ (Matt. 5:18). Is there no word for “a stroke” in Hebrew?

{72} The Lord’s Prayer, on the other hand, is rendered in a “pure” English translation: “Our Father in heaven! May your Name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven... Amen.” If the translator had followed the line he follows in other places, he could have found Hebrew expressions for “Our Father,” “heaven,” “Name,” “holy,” and “kingdom.” The selective use of Hebrew and Aramaic expressions raises the question, “Why use these terms, and are not others equally important?” Hebrew expressions considered to be theologically more relevant are transliterated from Hebrew or Aramaic. Others remain in simple English.

Omission of Hebrew Words and phrases

In his introduction Stern says, “It is all very well to adapt a Jewish book for easier appreciation by non-Jews, but not at the cost of suppressing its inherent Jewishness.” With this in mind, it is strange to notice that there are examples in the JNT of a Jewishness that has been subdued. A few examples: In the original text of Matt. 5:22, the Aramaic term *raqa is* found, an epithet used frequently in rabbinic literature. Stern renders it ‘You-good-for-nothing!’ There is nothing wrong with this rendering except that it subdues the Jewishness of the Greek text.

More serious is the rendering of the word *amen*. After a prayer or a statement *amen is* used (Matt. 6:13; Rom. 11:36). Still, in the Synoptics and in the Gospel of John a double *amen, amen is* found - with no parallel in other first century Jewish sources - but is rendered in the JNT with the very ordinary “Yes, indeed!” (Matt. 5:26). The Hebrew flavour found in the Greek has disappeared. Nor does the translation differentiate between the single *amen* and the characteristic double *amen, amen* in the Gospel of John. It must further be asked whether any modern translation should aim at a rendering, which in some way or another creates an effect unlike the one found in the Greek New Testament. The use of *amen is* extraordinary! It must have seemed strange to the first readers. Stern’s explanation in the Glossary does not sound very convincing: “Most translators take Yeshua’s *Amen* as referring forward to what he was about to say: ‘Truly, I say to you,...’ But there is no other instance of *Amen* pointing forward in early Jewish literature, and the context does not require it. Yeshua uses *Amen* to refer back, either seriously or ironically, to what he or someone else has said, or to what has just happened....”

I don’t think Stern has said the last word in this matter. The pre-positioned *amen* contains the Christology of the New Testament in a nutshell. Whether one agrees with me or not it is surprising to find that a translation of the New Testament which is meant to emphasize its Jewishness, passes lightly over such a characteristic Jewish expression {73} found in the Greek. May only those words and expressions already found in the Jewish tradition, rightly be described as “Jewish?” Is it not possible to think that Jesus - because he is the unique Jew and the Son of God - can express himself in a way that cannot be found in Jewish tradition, but which is no less Jewish?

Which is more important: Jewishness or the modern reader’s frame of reference?

The modern translator must constantly choose his emphasis: should he emphasize the antiquity of the book, in which case he is in danger of producing a translation that is not readily understood? Or should he be more conscious of his readers, in which case he is in danger of suppressing elements belonging to the original milieu? All translators face this dilemma. The JNT has not resolved this tension in such a way as to emphasize the Jewishness of the New Testament. It should be noted that “Jewishness” in New Testament times and rabbinical material is often expressed by phrases which are not Semitic in their origin. The following are examples of such:

Indications of time: “...it was about four o’clock in the afternoon” (John 1:29) instead of “by the tenth hour” and: “... it was about noon” (John 19:14) in connection with the crucifixion of Jesus. The fourth watch of the night in Mark 6:48 is rendered in the JNT as: “around four o’clock in the morning.” Whether there were three or four

night watches - a topic for discussion among the rabbis - the JNT translation eliminates a historical detail.

Linear Measurements: “Beit-Anyah [Bethany] was about two miles from Yerusalayim” (John 11:18). “The talmidim ... weren’t far from shore, only about a hundred yards” (John 21:8). The angel measured the new Jerusalem as “at 1500 miles ... its wall at 216 feet by human standards of measurement” (Rev. 21:16-17). There is nothing faulty with miles, yards and feet, but the introduction emphasized strongly the importance of restoring the original cultural environment. We must also ask whether the 12.000 stadia (=1500 miles) and the 144 cubits (=216 feet) could have a theological meaning in the Apocalypse.

Cubic measurements: The six stone water-jars at the wedding in Cana each had a “capacity of 20-30 gallons” (John 2:6). Many other examples could be mentioned. These suffice to demonstrate that the JNT at times suppresses the original Jewish milieu for the sake of its readers. That is good “dynamic equivalent” translation, but it is not very Jewish.

Some New Testament phrases “make no sense”

In his introduction Stern writes: “Sha’ul, whose letters were composed in Greek, clearly drew on his native Jewish and Hebraic thought-forms when {74} he wrote. In fact, as shown earlier, some phrases in the New Testament manuscripts make no sense unless one reaches through the Greek to the underlying Hebrew expressions.”

The first part of this claim is correct. But it is not complete. Paul (and John) also used Greek thought-forms, which they filled with biblical content. When Paul communicated the gospel to Greeks, Jews or gentile, he wrote in clear Greek - not in “Jewish Greek!” I am not arguing against Stern’s experiment in the JNT, but am merely observing that the (Jewish) apostles found it possible to communicate the gospel in a language other than Hebrew. When Paul calls himself Paul and not Sha’ul, as it is rendered consistently in JNT, I don’t think he or his readers considered his practice less than Jewish. There were many venerable rabbis whose names could be traced to gentile deities.

For the sake of simplicity, I shall now refer to the three letters of John in order to indicate how the JNT translates a group of manuscripts. Is it really more “Jewish” than other translations? The answer is negative.

III John.

There are four foreign words in this short message:

v. 7: “for the sake of *Ha-Shem* they went out without accepting anything from the *Goyim* .” The expression *Ha-Shem* serves in the JNT to refer to God. In the Greek text it can just as well be understood as referring to Jesus. In John the two might well be joined. This is an example of how translations can narrow meanings by avoiding the ambiguities which are built into the Greek text.

Goyim: To a modern reader this may have a derogative meaning, not necessarily found in the text. It does not here refer to gentile Christians. *Macher* (v.9): A Yiddish word that is both unnecessary and alienating. *Shalom* to you (v. 15): See below.

II John. *Yeshua* and three times *shalom*.

v. 3: “Grace, mercy and *shalom* ...” Only one of the three terms used is Hebrew.

v. 10-11: “Don’t even say ‘*Shalom!*’ to him; for the person who says, ‘*Shalom!*’ to him shares in his evil deeds.” I, too, love *Shalom* , the word as well as the reality. But the idea can easily be expressed in other languages. Stern’s use of the term here tends to obscure the fact that the prohibition is not against private hospitality but hospitality given by the church.

I John. Besides *Yeshua* and *Kayin* , only the following words:

2:1: “If anyone does sin, we have Yeshua the Messiah, the *Tzaddik* who pleads our cause with the Father.” The term *Tzaddik* may lead one to think {75} of a chassidic rebbe. The same Greek word used to describe God is rendered “righteous,” (2:29; 3:7).

2:2: “He is the *kapparah* for our sins ...” (also in 4:10). This is precise rendering - provided you understand the word.

2:20: “You have received the Messiah’s anointing from *HaKodesh...*” But why then is Jesus only called “Deliverer” in 4:14 instead of *Moshia* ?

3:4: “Everyone who keeps sinning is violating *Torah* - indeed, sin is violation of *Torah* (*anomia* in Greek). By using *Torah* the rendering becomes too precise, again interpreting rather than preserving the ambivalence of the original text.

In other places the JNT uses expressions like *acharit-hayamim* and *olam haba* , but in I John English phrases are maintained: “Last hour” and “Day of Judgment.”

Some phrases could actually sound more Semitic in English. For example, in I John 1:6 JNT says, “... not living out the truth,” literally: “we do not do the truth.” The JNT renders the meaning well, but the Jewishness of the original has disappeared. Furthermore, according to John, that truth is not only something to be said, but also to be done.

Finally, whether it is part of Jewishness or not, I wonder, but the JNT consistently avoids translating the Greek word for “give birth to,” paraphrasing it by “that he is the Father of everyone” (I John 2:29) and not “that he is born by him (God),” (I John 3:9; 4:7; 5:1,4). Concerning the Son (in 5:18), “We know that everyone who has God as his Father (literally: everyone born by God) does not go on sinning; on the contrary, the Son born of God protects him, and the Evil One does not touch him.” I appreciate the fact that “to be born of” is used concerning Jesus. There indeed is a theological difference between the birth of the Son of God and the spiritual birth of the believers, but the theological and grammatical connections found in the Greek text should not be eliminated in a translation.

The JNT translation of John’s letters is outstanding, but they are not particularly Jewish. In other words: To restore the Jewishness of the New Testament is easier said than done.

It is a bold claim to say that some phrases in the Greek New Testament make no sense unless reached through the Greek to underlying Hebrew expressions. I admit, of course, the need for studies involving Hebrew words and phrases underlying the Greek text. I look forward to a thorough discussion of this question in the commentary that Stern, in the introduction to the JNT, promises will come. The main question is: Are we not assuming the existence of an hypothetical Hebrew source for the Gospels, attributing to such a text the characteristics of inspiration? The Gospels as we have {76} them did not fall from heaven. But our rejoicing over “discoveries” in the Hebrew background carry with them the danger that we do not realize the implications some of our “discoveries” may have on our view of Scripture. Stern refers to Matt. 6:23: “Yeshua says in the Sermon on the Mount, literally, ‘If your eye be evil, your whole body will be dark.’ What is an evil eye?

Someone not knowing the Jewish background might suppose Yeshua was talking about casting spells. However, in Hebrew, having an *'ayin ra'ah*, an 'evil eye', means being stingy; while having an *'ayin tovah*, a 'good eye', means being generous. Yeshua is simply urging generosity against stinginess."

I would have preferred a "most likely" instead of a "simply," other explanations are also possible. But from the point of view of translation it is strange to read Matt. 6:22-23: "'The eye is a lamp of the body.' So if you have a 'good eye' [That is, if you are generous] your whole body will be full of light; But if you have an 'evil eye' [if you are stingy] your whole body will be full of darkness."

The use of brackets to indicate the translator's explanations is very unfortunate. These are best given elsewhere because brackets are also used by Stern for other purposes in the translation. The reader is likely to forget the difference and confuse the two kinds, thus obscuring the difference between the text and Stern's explanations.

Militantly or not militantly

As mentioned, Stern says of his translation that "... at certain points especially related to issues of Jewishness it becomes militantly so, " i.e. "dynamically." Paul's Greek phrase *erga nomou* is not rendered as "works of the law;" but as "legalistic observance of Torah commands." *Upo nomou* is not rendered "under the law;" but with thirteen words: "in subjection to the system which results from perverting the Torah into legalism."

First it must be noted, that Paul used only two words, which apparently he found to be sufficient. Secondly, if two words are presumed to be theologically important, and are also difficult to understand, is it right for a modern translation to make them more "understandable;" thus running the danger of narrowing a very complex theological issue. Thirdly, are there no other texts which require a similar paraphrase?

I am inclined to think that a precise word-to-word translation is preferable in cases that are theologically very loaded. Any more specific translation is liable to be challenged. Preachers and archeological professors may {77} allow themselves to do what translators ought not. This is certainly the case when it comes to translating the Bible.

There are places in the JNT that hardly can be described as militant, but nevertheless are questionable. I have in mind the difficult question of rendering expressions of possession. In Romans 3:21-26 one notices the following:

V. 22: "... and it is righteousness that comes from God, through the faithfulness of Yeshua the Messiah.

V. 25: "... God put Yeshua forward as the *kapparah* for sin through his faithfulness in respect to his bloody sacrificial death."

V. 26: "... and is also the one who makes people righteous on the ground of Yeshua's faithfulness."

I am not saying JNT's rendering is false. It is *through* the faithfulness of Jesus that we can be declared righteous. This is good theology. But the question is if the traditional understanding (that the text here refers to the righteousness that can be obtained "*through faith* in Jesus") isn't more correct.

It would be beyond the framework of review to look more deeply into the translation. In general it can be said that Stern, in many and important ways, has provided us with a brilliant translation,

as dynamic translations go. There are places, like Romans 9:5, where a comma would have been preferred to a period (“... and from them [the Jews], ... came the Messiah, who is over all. Praised be *Adonai* for ever!”) Examples show that rendering of the Greek *Kyrios* is a complex and difficult problem. It is my opinion that Rom. 9:5 praises Jesus as *Kyrios* (cf. JNT’s rendering of Phil. 2:11: “... Yeshua the Messiah is *Adonai* ...”).

The translator only says in his introduction that “Immersion [baptism] is a Jewish practice.” I don’t quite know what to do with such a brief statement, as it raises more questions than it answers. Do Hebrew Christians not have anything more to say about baptism than that it is “a Jewish practice?” Hebrew Christians should further inquire, in speaking of baptism, what word best suits the Greek term, *baptizo*.

This takes us to the JNT’s use of “execution-stake” instead of “cross.” Jehovah’s Witnesses would rejoice over this rendering, but they do not understand atonement. I am, of course, aware of the feelings among Jewish people towards the cross because of offenses perpetrated by the church toward the Jewish people. But I do not think this despicable word with the despicable content can be avoided. When Jews write about others who were crucified during the period of the second temple, they use the term crucified. In the new Hebrew translation of the New Testament (United Bible Society, {78} Jerusalem) the common Hebrew word for cross is used. It is artificial to use such an uncommon expression when Hebrew Christians in Israel have no such compunctions. This is equally true of other important terms.

Conclusion

In 1901 The British and Foreign Bible Society sent out a new edition of the New Testament in Yiddish. Joseph Rabinowitz in Kischinev was one of the translators. The translation was appreciated by many, because it was not as “pure” as the translation published in 1899 done by Marcus S. Bergmann. The translation from 1901 used the kind of Yiddish that was best understood in many Jewish circles in Russia.

Among other criteria, a translation ought to be judged according to its ability to satisfy the needs of its intended readership, assuming that it faithfully renders the original biblical message. The Jewish New Testament not only renders the New Testament message “in an acceptable way,” but does it well. The fact that individual places may be criticized is true of all other translations.

The intended readership should have been more narrowly defined and the project introduced with more reservation than has been done. If the translator had done so, the JNT could have had more effect than is now likely to be the case.

Translations are best made by a team, in spite of the compromises such teamwork entails. I look forward to the day, when English speaking Hebrew Christians will, as a team, produce a translation that will satisfy their needs.

David H. Stern has made the first move. For this he deserves our thanks.

{79} Messianic Jewish Manifesto

David H. Stern

Jewish New Testament Publications, Jerusalem 1988; 281 pp.

Reviewed by Arvid Vikum.

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How does one respond to a manifesto? Probably either by acting according to it, or by writing a counter-manifesto. Reviewing it seems somehow strange. But David Stern has written a thought-provoking book with an intense drive and a strong vision for the Jewish Church. At the same time he reveals how unsettled is the theology of the Messianic Jewish movement. Writing the book in such a situation is demanding, and thus deserves careful review.

Appendix for Gentile Christians.

At the end of the book (pp. 239 - 264) is an appendix which offers the quintessence of the whole book: a call to recognize the need to restore the Jewishness of the gospel. The gentile church is here called to “share some of the responsibility for [this] restoring” (p. 239). Being a gentile, I started reading here.

According to Stern, without this Jewishness, the Church fails to proclaim the whole counsel of God and is in danger of communicating another gospel. Therefore she “cannot fulfil the Great Commission properly,” and the Jews will be prevented from being “the right kind of ‘light to the nations.’” This is “an extremely serious problem which has not received from the Christians the attention it deserves” (p. 240).

Stern states that Christianity, as presented by Paul to the gentiles was a “transcultural Judaism,” not compelling anyone to adopt Jewish culture or abandon their own. Afterwards, however, the Church acted conversely by demanding from Jewish believers in Yeshua the Messiah a (gentile) cultural Christianity. They were required to abandon Jewish culture in order to be accepted as believers.

{80} In order to overcome the consequent alienation between Jews and the gospel, Stern claims that contextualized evangelism on the part of the Church, or even of Hebrew Christians, is insufficient. While taking a strong position in defence of Jewish evangelism, Stern insists that it is not enough to contextualize a “gentilized” gospel. What is needed is a re-contextualization - a restoration of the original Jewishness of the gospel.

Answers and questions.

The desire and vision to restore the full Jewishness of faith and life in the Messiah is welcome. But what does Stern mean by such a call? All my questions were not answered by reading (the rest) of the book. Some became more pressing, while new ones turned up.

Outline of Content

Chapter I (pp 3-10) presents the calling of The Messianic Jews as Stern understands it. They are to be God's instrument in healing the worst schism in history - the one between the Church and the Jewish people. They are to lead both the Jewish people and the Church to a fulfilment of their tasks in a manner neither has so far executed. The solution is to be at the same time 100 percent Jewish and 100 percent Messianic /Christian. It involves a rejection of the "either-or" demanded by the Church and the Jewish people for the last 2000 years. Messianic Jews are thus consciously seen as God's focal point in history and eschatology, cfr. p. 41.

Stern does not claim originality. He writes with a view to stimulate action and make a systematic contribution to the discussion. He insists that his ideas are "conformed to the Word of God" so that he can present "not only ideology and program, but also theology."

Chapter II (pp 11-34) states that Messianic Jews "have a full-blown identity crisis" which demands such a manifesto in order "to express the inner truth of who we are.[and] create the visible reality that will validate our rhetoric" (p. 27). The tension-filled identification of a Messianic Jew with both the Church (persecutor in the past) and the Jewish people (victim in the past) expresses the unique situation of a Jewish believer. The reconciling power of faith in Jesus the Messiah is clearly described against this background.

Chapter III (pp 35-84) gives a very brief survey of the history of the Church and of the Jewish people from the author's point of view. Since the Jewish gospel was preached for gentiles without demanding that they adopt Jewish culture, it would be a "double error to expect Messianic Jews not to act Jewish" when they believe in the Jewish Gospel.

{81} Chapter IV (pp 85-124) is titled "Theology" and points out main topics for a "consumer-oriented" (sic!) "Messianic Jewish systematic theology". Systematic theology is defined as "presentation of biblical truth in an organized fashion, by subject matter, in a manner that will be understood by its intended audience." (p. 85). In a later chapter theology is "the organized arrangement of biblical truth for a particular people, culture and time." (p. 200).

Stern is conscious that he is hinting at the solutions rather than providing them. The methodological guiding star is "to use the Jewish theological agenda when doing Messianic Jewish theology". This "may suggest" interacting with Jewish tradition from Talmud onwards; and "may imply" using "the thought framework of Jewish theology, for which the main topics are God, Israel and Torah, rather than the Christian agenda of theology, anthropology, soteriology and eschatology." (pp. 90-91). The idea is to start with Torah and arrive at New Testament conclusions, instead of starting with New Testament content and then proving it from the Tanakh. This is applied to God's covenants (with Israel and with mankind) through Noah, Abraham, Moses, David and Yeshua (pp. 99-102). Stern says all covenants, including the Mosaic, are still in force. Yet, "the Torah has to be adjusted to take account of Yeshua's role as *cohen gadol* (High Priest)". Stern explains, "The Mosaic Covenant is here to be observed and not broken from our side, since it has never been broken from God's side."(p102).

Statements like these make it necessary to discern how Stern understands the Torah, to which he has devoted the longest chapter of the book (pp. 125-187). He starts by claiming that the question of the Torah is a *terra incognita* (unknown territory) in Christian theology, and that this is its greatest deficiency. Christian theology has misunderstood Paul. It has erroneously been led into believing that Paul taught the Law is no longer in force. The first grave result of this deficiency is that Christians do not properly understand their own faith. The second is the barrier created which obstructs efforts to communicate the Gospel to the Jewish people. The conclusion is evident: "The most urgent task of theology today is [to] get right its view of the Law." (p125).

The conclusion is: “Our rallying cry must be: Torah! Torah! Torah! - understood in the Spirit of the Messiah” (p. 187).

The chapter claims that Christian theology has misunderstood the greek terms *nomos* (“Law”), *upō nomon* (“under the Law”), *erga nomou* (“works of the Law”) in the New Testament. The Law, the Torah, has not come to an end (*telos*) or been abolished as taught by the Church, it has come to its aim (*telos*). The main point which has not been understood until now is that {82} the whole gospel, the New Covenant, has been given as Torah (p.132 ff, based on Hebrews 8:6).

What then is the Torah? Who decides what is Halakha? The different branches of Judaism have their own answers to this question. Stern claims confidently that, for the Messianic branch of Judaism, Torah is the teaching of Yeshua the Messiah, meaning the New Testament. The authorized interpreter (halakhic authority) are Messiah’s apostles (pp. 149, 158 using Matthew 18:18-20) and the believing community today, who has His Holy Spirit (p. 154). Stern imagines that on this basis, Messianic Judaism will be “creating a NT case law much like the Talmud, the Codes and Responsa of Judaism.” (p158). He gives a number of examples (cases), and sketches interpretations and ideas as to how this can be accomplished.

Stern stresses that the written word of God must have priority over traditions of men (p. 160). Messianic Judaism “can never ignore the evangelistic imperative”(p186) or allow Jewishness to take the place of the Messiah.

Chapter VI (pp189-196) deals with holiness, “the most important element in a Messianic Jewish vision.”

The book concludes with a large scale sketch of a program for the Messianic movement, (chapter VII, pp. 197-238). This includes a Messianic counterpart to practically everything found in (American) Christianity or Judaism - from study-books to big institutions. These “programmatics” are seen as “a theological discipline of setting forth a program for all or part of the Body of the Messiah.” (p. 200).

Finally the whole book is summed up in a two-dimensional graph, where the vertical axis measures (degrees of) “Christian/ Messianic,” and the horizontal axis measures degrees of “Jewishness”. The aim is to “be 100 percent Jewish and 100 percent Christian/ Messianic,” otherwise described as “Ultimate Messianic Judaism”. A short note at the end of the chapter mentions that “the dimension of the living God” is the third one, impossible to describe in the graph.

The book ends with a glossary of Hebrew words and indices of references to the Bible and other early literature.

Legitimate, fresh and valuable.

There are many valuable elements in Stern’s book: a vigorous drive to convey a holistic Messianic view of theology, faith and life, references for further study, sharp observations, logical analyses of concepts and attitudes, a {83} willingness for radical re-formulation of well-known subjects and challenges to rethink traditional approaches.

I consider the main vision of the book to be unquestionable, as are the joy and sympathy of its pursuit. A main problem with the implementation of Stern’s program, ‘however, is this: The more I try to take it seriously, the greater are my doubts regarding its theological soundness. I hope the following paragraphs will explain.

Vague self-presentation and claim of authority.

Stern explains he did not call the manifesto "*The Messianic Jewish Manifesto*" since he does not want to claim official or magisterial authority for private claims (p. 8). But he says that whoever acts in accordance with the program will thereby spark "the salvation of the Jews ... [and] ... will be rewarded by an eternal crown of glory" (p. 10). On page 211 he tells us that God gave him a direct order to wait with the publication of the Manifesto in order to give priority to the New Testament translation.

Should the Manifesto be received as a prophetic word? Why then this modesty in title? Perhaps it should best be titled "God's Messianic Jewish Manifesto?" Or is it really meant to represent the private opinion of one believer? But the title is not "A Jewish Messianic Manifesto," either. Why not? The self-presentation seems to stand in a peculiar contrast to the author's wish to have everything manifest - "clear, plain and obvious," with no obscurities (p. 7 ff.).

Ideology as a theological discipline?

Stern defines ideology as "a coordinated body of ideas about human life and culture, coupled with integrated assertions, theories and aims constituting a social, political and spiritual vision" (p. 201). A fundamental characteristic of the book is that ideology and theology are seen as closely integrated, without defining clearly which serves as the context for the other (p. 7ff., pp. 200-202). This is a striking attitude in a book which otherwise represents a clearly evangelical position. Was not a main point of the reformation to sift out the "transcultural Gospel" from the Roman intermingling of ideological and theological elements? Can a restoration of the "trans-culturality" of the Jewish Messianic Gospel be so closely linked to an ideological concept? This is too imprecise to be convincing. A dubious definition of theology seems to be at the root of this ambiguity.

What is "theology"?

A main point for Stern's program is that Messianic Judaism/Christian faith in the New Testament was originally a "transcultural Judaism," able to express itself in any culture.

{84} But Stern defines "theology" as "consumer oriented"; "arrangement of biblical truth for a particular people, culture and time." Earlier in this debate (MISHKAN 1985² p. 19) he stated something similar: "Our theology, then should be developed together with our ideology and program, not by itself. Scripture is Truth, but theology is not Truth; rather, it is a tool which relates Truth to real situations, needs, purposes, plans and actions."

The question must be asked: Can such a pragmatic and particularistic definition of theology function as a basis for a restoration of a transcultural and universal faith? When the aim is to re-contextualize a theological content (roughly, New Testament faith and life in the Messiah), is it clear enough - or even possible - to include in the definition a direct link to context? Will not the context thus become too dominating and decisive a factor? It seems that such a "high" program will need deeper theological roots than indicated in this book. Some topics to illustrate the point:

Torah or the Messiah's kerygma?

What was the setting of early Messianic Judaism? Yeshua and the disciples conceived of the Torah as the given theological framework for the people of Israel. They preached, taught and lived out the message of the coming Kingdom of God into the context of Torah.

This new activity, reflecting what God revealed and did through the Messiah, created a *new Messianic setting* : the Gospel, the message of the Messiah who brings the promised Spirit and Kingdom. The energy of the Early Messianic movement was mainly directed into preaching and defending this message, producing its best in confessions and theology.

The Rabbinic movement did not receive the Messiah, His message or Spirit, and therefore poured all its energy into the implementation of the Torah, developing its halakhic part as a *non-Messianic setting* of theology. When Torah is made the all-important catch-word and setting for Messianic Judaism, how will the content be influenced? Is it satisfactorily clear to urge Torah and Halakhah as medium for the Messianic message? Will not the new wine need a new wineskin of its own? It seems to me that these issues need deeper consideration.

1. Pneumatology is absent from Stern's thesis as a theological topic. But according to both the Tanakh and the New Testament, the Spirit is the *main goal* of the new covenant, *constituting* its fellowship (eg. Rom. 8, Acts 2 and Gal. 3). Must not this major historical event be reflected in the basic **{85}** structure of Messianic Judaism - even today ? Has its relative absence in non-Messianic Judaism pushed it out of Stern's Messianic Jewish program, too ? 2. Is this absence the reason a discussion of ecclesiology is also missing? Ecclesiology was understood by the early church as an application of Pneumatology.

God's promises in the Tanach are divided by Stern into individual promises of salvation and promises to the nation Israel (p. 56). This categorization is inconsistent with Scripture. The Tanach promises a new fellowship of the Spirit - the People of the New Covenant. The New Testament describes this new fellowship of confessors in the Spirit of Messiah (e.g. Jer 31 and 1 Cor 12:3). Promises of salvation and their implementation are collective; they include both the remnant of Israel and all gentile believers, and therefore demand an ecclesiology.

3 Eternal Torah or eternal Messiah as supreme authority? Stern states his view "that the Torah is eternal and the New Testament has not abrogated it. But in its totality the Torah has to be understood and interpreted in the light of what ... the New Covenant Scriptures have said about it." (p. 139ff.). Has the Torah been abrogated? "The Mosaic Covenant ... has never been broken from God's side." It has only been "transformed ... adjusted... amended,... specific rules [sic!] are set aside " in order to include Yeshua's ministry (p. 102).

I must ask: Is this an intelligible, helpful way to address the question? If one holds that the Torah is eternal, must one not simply say that "God has broken the Torah" since He appointed Yeshua *Cohen Gadol* (high priest) although He came from the wrong tribe (Hebrews 7,13f)? He also allowed (caused) the Temple to be 'abrogated' for 2000 years.

Maybe the inner tensions in language and claims are a signal that form and content do not quite fit together ? Hasn't the consumer context (Rabbinic tradition with its theory of an eternal Torah from Sinai) overly affected the content of the message?

The New Testament (e.g. Gal.3-4) states that the role of the Torah was to be a *historical* means of God in his dealing with Israel. Yeshua did not come to be an interpreter of the Torah - not even the final one. He is more than the Torah, Lord of the Sabbath; more than the Temple, a greater high priest after a pre-Torah order (Melkizedek's); Lord of king David etc. Thus the only *eternal* authority is a person - the Messiah, Son of God - not an eternal Torah.

{86} Identity in two dimensions - or incarnation?

Should the conclusion be that Messianic Judaism must question more radically what is Jewish, that it should do so on the basis of the Tanakh, and it should then apply both the form and the content of the biblical answer?

The two-dimensional graph on page 234 puts “Messianic/ Christian” and “Jewish” on the same level or plain. That is hardly adequate. The *starting-point* of the New Covenant is the meeting-place between the Godly and the human - Son of God becoming a son of men, uniting the Jewish and human with the heavenly and Godly - *100 percent Jewish and 100 percent Godly!* Only from this third dimension, beyond the percentage of *Jewish* and *Messianic* can the true identity of Messianic Judaism be anchored.

This starting-point of the New Covenant became the firm point of orientation for the followers of Yeshua the Messiah in the first centuries. The question was: Where is God to be found, where is he dwelling? The first believers saw the line of God’s dwelling-places from the Tabernacle through the Temple leading to the body of Messiah, Son of God (John 1 and 2). From there to His *ekklesia* as the Temple of his Holy Spirit. At the turning point was the Holy Communion, connecting altar and believer, Incarnate and confessor; heaven and earth; God and man (1 Cor 10, 14-22).

From this point of orientation one could immediately say: “All things are lawful... (1 Cor 10:23a). From there they could concentrate on the God-given freedom of the *conscience*. Free enough to bind itself for “Jew, Gentile and God’s church,” drawing power from the imitation of the Messiah (1 Cor 10:28-11:1). *In him* identity was to be found!

Cleansed Temple - Cleansed Conscience.

Stern quotes Acts 25:8 and 28:17 indicating that Paul lived as a “lifelong observant Jew” not acting against the law, the temple or the customs of the fathers. “If this kind of life was good enough for Shau’1, it is good enough for Jewish believers today. No ham sandwiches, please, for Messianic Jews who keep kosher.” (p. 247ff.).

But Paul’s lifelong observance was firmly rooted in this identity of a free conscience in the Messiah. The anthropological “counterpart” of pneumatology is human conscience. This all-important issue is also not discussed in Sterns *Manifesto*.

The first Messianic Jews knew that Yeshua had cleansed the Temple and not the Synagogue. He cleansed the place of sacrificial atonement and not the house of prayer or piety. His first disciples courageously described the {87} *ekklesia* as the third Temple, this while the second Temple was yet standing!

I miss this line ‘from the tabernacle to the *identity of the Messianic conscience* in Sterns thought-provoking manifesto. Together with the above-mentioned missing theological considerations it forces me to ask: Is the theological perspective clear enough for such an ambitious program?

Even the issue of Yom Kippur and the question of the third temple are not dealt with specifically in *Manifesto*. Can a really convincing discussion of the Torah-question take place without examining these central issues in depth?

Take, read and test!

It is difficult to judge a book that tries to cover so much ground. Perhaps I have taken the text too seriously. There are dozens of questions between the main lines I have tried to point out above.

Implications of the present-day Jewish Messianic search for identity become very clear when one reads through the chapters of this book. Anyone who wants to be acquainted with some of the radical questions Messianic Jews are struggling with today will be helped by reading *Manifesto*.

At one point I am 100 percent in accord with the author. Though he completely ignores the history of Christian theology in the curriculum of his Messianic study program, he rightly states "history is the key to understanding." Without a living interaction with history, one will surely repeat mistakes of the past. Stern would do well to enter into a careful dialogue with the tradition of theological reflection from the Early Church onwards. There is a lot to learn for every generation - Christian or Jewish/ Messianic.

{88} Israel and Zionism

Walter Riggans.

Israel Reassessed

Samuel Hosain.

Handsel Press, Edinburgh, 1989.

Reviewed by Alfred Sawyer

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The Handsel Press of Edinburgh has published two new booklets on the subject of the modern State of Israel, representing widely divergent opinions on the issue.

The first booklet, *Israel and Zionism*, is written by the Rev. Walter Riggans, a Church of Scotland minister who has worked for eight years in Israel. Riggans ministered first with the Church of Scotland Centre in Tiberias, and later with the Israel Trust of the Anglican Church (ITAC) in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

A generally sympathetic view of Zionism in this booklet, both within from the perspective of Jewish secular and religious thought, and from a Christian context. Riggans gives a very helpful summary of the etymology of the term “Zion” both as a geographical place and a theological concept in Jewish thought. As well, he contrasts the significance of Zion and Sinai, and comes down clearly on the side of Sinai’s greater importance: “Finally, Rev. 14:1 gives an apocalyptic vision of the end times when Jesus, the Lamb of God, will come to redeem and judge. Zion is reduced again to its rightful place as a symbol, not a security in itself.”

The development of political Zionism is traced, beginning with Rabbi Judah Alkalai in the 18th and 19th centuries down to Herzl and *Der Judenstaat*. There he takes his leave from the evolution of political Zionism (omitting some of the important developments such as the Revisionist Movement or Gush Emunim) and turns to religious reactions to the Zionist phenomenon. Perhaps the biggest omission in Riggans’ overview of the various religious movements’ attitudes towards Zionism is in the area of messianic expectation on the part of some religious Zionists. He concludes this section of the booklet with a summary of what he calls the “Biblical Zionist” {89} position, a position which Riggans makes little attempt to hide that he advocates.

The section on Christian Zionism summarizes the views held by those who believe (in one form or another) that God has brought the Jewish people back to their ancestral homeland. He gives a fairly comprehensive historical summary of “Christian Zionism”, beginning with the Puritans. He is weak, however, in emphasizing the very significant and widespread support for “Christian Zionism” or “Restorationism” given by leading British evangelicals in the 19th century. Indeed, it could be argued that without the spadework of such notables as Wilberforce, Simeon and Shaftsbury, Britain would never have issued the Balfour Declaration, which document led eventually to the establishment of the Jewish State. Men like Lewis Way, who argued the Restorationist position before the crowned heads of Europe (including the Russian Czar), do not receive so much as a mention. It is fairly disconcerting to see the Restorationist Movement of the 19th century dismissed with a sentence or two that lumps them together with such unlikely bedfellows as the Christadelphians and Mormons.

The anti-Zionist position among Christians is given its due. It is especially helpful to be reminded that there are conservative evangelical Protestants who do not view the State of Israel as a fulfillment of prophecy.

Riggans concludes the booklet with a strong statement of his own “Biblical Zionist” position. Riggans is careful to avoid the pitfalls of prophetic fanaticism, and argues for a Zionism free of dogmatic polemics, centered firmly on the Person of Jesus of Nazareth.

Israel Reassessed by Samuel Hosain, a Christian Arab, is a no-holds-barred attack on the idea that the modern State of Israel has any prophetic significance whatsoever. Hosain makes no attempt at even giving the appearance of impartiality. Using a style of rhetoric that brooks no challenge, Hosain sets out to demolish (with considerable aplomb) every argument of the beastly Zionists, especially the dreaded and ubiquitous species called the “American Fundamentalist.” According to Hosain, these nasty people (whom he labels with the epithet of “premillennial dispensationalists”) are responsible for all kinds of misunderstandings and misconceptions when it comes to the Western Christian’s view of the Arab world.

Both Arab Muslims and Arab Christians have had a bad press in the West because of the “greatly influential” fundamentalist Christians from the U.S.A. Hosain also heaps disdain upon two recent books, *The Haj*, by Leon Uris, and *From Time Immemorial* by Jan Peters. The former, he says, is racist in its view of Arabs, and the latter falsifies history. He then goes on {90} to argue that the Arabs have been around in the region for a long, long time (a fact which even the most ardent Zionist would be hard pressed to dispute) and have a biblical and historical legitimacy which is derived from their ancient Abrahamic origins.

Hosain’s simplistic and blinkered view of history is the weakest point of the booklet. It gets better when he moves on to theological grounds. The section dealing with covenant is cogent. Unfortunately, Hosain quickly begins to slide down the slippery slope of incredulity when discussing covenantal conditionality, for he fails to apply the same litmus test of obedience to the Church as he does to Israel! Has he really read Romans 11:19-24? More importantly, does he understand Romans 11:32?

Like Riggans, Hosain correctly concludes that the true hope of Israel “...lies neither in her power politics, nor in her statecraft, nor in her war machine. It lies in the redemptive love of God, through Jesus Christ, and in righteousness and justice.”

Would that the booklet ended there. Hosain ruins a perfectly good conclusion by pulling out the old argument that any sympathetic view of the Jewish State by Christians makes ministry among Arabs impossible. He equates modern Israel to Ahab in the story of Naboth’s vineyard, and makes no allowance for even the most moderate expression of Christian sympathy toward Jewish national aspirations.

Hosain’s booklet leaves one with a feeling of weariness, having heard yet another categorical pronouncement on the Arab-Israeli conflict.