

MISHIKAN

A THEOLOGICAL FORUM ON JEWISH EVANGELISM

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MISHKAN

A Forum on the Gospel and the Jewish People

“HISTORY OF MISSIONARY ACTIVITY IN ISRAEL”

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Editorial

{Inside Cover}

Our journal is an attempt to lay a biblically oriented basis for dialogue on the relations between the gospel and the Jewish people. Such a dialogue should be both historically aware and theologically astute. It must be conducted within the restraints imposed by ethical considerations; a far cry from much that has characterized Jewish-Christian relations through the centuries.

Dialogue implies that there are at least two sides to the question being discussed, and that each side is represented by individuals who sincerely hold to the truth of their opinion. Sometimes dialogue leads the respective sides to discover a greater or larger measure of truth in the other view. Sometimes it results in the conversion of one side to the other's viewpoint. However concluded, it must be conducted in the context of mutual respect for divergent opinions. Error too has rights, and man as God's image-bearer is ever to be respected.

Dialogue does not have to lead to agreement in opinion, but it cannot be held without agreeing to accord each other mutual respect. Nor can it be undertaken unless each side has the confidence of its own convictions.

Such confidence can be made up of various elements, one of which is the ability to look back and identify one's individual collective ideological history. History is decidedly NOT bunk, whatever some may say. Shared values and experiences are part and parcel of what makes up valid human reality, religious or secular. Anyone who has had to travel on his own in a foreign land will fully understand my point: However lost you may be, it is better to be lost together with someone who can share your experiences and help guide you through the uncertainties surrounding you. Joys and thrills are enhanced when shared with others. Lovers simply cannot help but speak of their loved ones. That is why history is important, as William H. McNeill argues so poignantly in his *Myth History and other Essays* (Chicago, 1986).

{80} Jewish Christians have often been denied the right to a history, as have Jewish missions. They are described -as a contemporary historical aberration that will soon pass away. This is an inaccuracy, to say the least. MISHKAN therefore returns in this issue to the history of Jewish Christian relations and of Jewish Christians by according our readers with a description of some of its lesser-known chapters. More such will follow in the course of time.

The editors are encouraged by the growing Israeli interest in the historical roots of Jewish Christianity. We are aware of at least three research projects being conducted on the topic in Israeli universities. We would be delighted to hear from our readers details of other such projects undertaken here or abroad. Readers are encouraged to inform us or to send in their findings with a view to possible publication. We are convinced that the present trend will lead to more mature theological reflection and to a more conducive, more fascinating, dialogue. Jewish Christians have existed since the church was founded. The first Christians were Jews. In spite of their many failings - as well as those of their coreligionists - Jewish disciples of Jesus followed the Lord through the maze of Roman, Byzantine, Catholic and Protestant meanderings. They began to emerge at the turn of the last century as a direct result of pluralism and the spirit of inquiry. According to the most conservative figure, tens of thousands of them were to be found at the turn of the century

worshipping God as Christians, while insisting upon their Jewish identity. Many, rejected by both church and synagogue, perished in the concentration camps.

The time has come to record this history. MISHKAN is seeking to make some small contribution of its own to that worthy end.

Baruch Maoz

{1} Michael Solomon Alexander and The Controversial Jerusalem Bishopric

Kelvin Crombie

Kelvin Crombie was born in Australia and came to Israel in 1979. He is presently serving as manager of the Christ Church guest house and as historical guide to the church.

Few bishops in the modern period have been as controversial as the Jewish Bishop Michael Solomon Alexander, and few Bishoprics as controversial as his See, Jerusalem.

Since the consecration of Bishop Alexander was 150 years ago, this is a worthy time to reflect not so much on the man, M.S. Alexander, but more upon the motives and vision behind the establishment of the controversial Jerusalem Bishopric. Reflection is important when we view the present state of the Anglican Church in Israel and the Middle East. Today the Assistant Bishop of the Diocese of Jerusalem sits on the Executive Committee of the PLO, in contradiction to the strong Jewish restorationist emphasis of the original Bishopric.

Alexander's Early Life

Michael Solomon Alexander's early life is adequately detailed by Muriel Corey in her invaluable book "From Rabbi to Bishop." I refer you to this work in order to gain more detailed information about Alexander until his elevation to the Episcopacy.

Alexander was born in 1799 in Schonlanke in the Grand Duchy of Posen in East Prussia. His father was an English-born rabbi, who died in 1817. Upon his death, the position of rabbi passed to his eldest son, Michael's brother. It appears that from this point the life of Michael Solomon became embroiled in controversy. He became progressively dissatisfied with the oracles of Rabbinic Judaism (the Talmud) and began raising questions over its authority. This questioning led to his departure from the family home and his 1819 arrival in England.

He applied to the Chief Rabbi of London for a job and was appointed to be a {2} private tutor to a Jewish family in Colchester. There he became acquainted with William Marsh, a stalwart of the London Jews Society (LJS). This acquaintance was followed by an introduction to the New Testament, and also to the aims of the above mentioned missionary society. As if to drag himself away from this new influence, Alexander then moved to Norwich where he was rabbi, and then later he moved again, to Plymouth, where he officiated as the *Schochet* and Prayer-reader.

While at Plymouth, Alexander met his wife to be, Deborah Levi. Alexander met others who, like his future wife, had an impact upon his life. One of them was Benjamin Golding, the curate of Stonehouse Church to whom Alexander gave Hebrew lessons. Influenced by Golding's beliefs, Alexander would secretly go down to Stonehouse Church and listen to the evening service.

Alexander shared about his interest in Yeshua to Deborah, and once the family became aware of the situation, pressure mounted for the engagement to be broken. Yet despite this opposition, Alexander and Deborah married according to Jewish rites.

But marriage did not quieten Alexander's interest in Yeshua. Although family pressure was again exerted, it was to no avail, and Alexander was baptised June 22, 1825 at St. Andrews

Church, Plymouth. Some five months later, after a difficult period during which her twin babies died, Deborah too was baptized.

The Alexanders then entered upon a new life in Dublin, where Alexander took up the post of teacher of Hebrew and secretary of the Ireland Jews Society. He was ordained as deacon in the Anglican Church in 1826, then interviewed by the LJS for a missionary position in Germany. Prior to taking up this post, he was ordained a priest.

Following his ordination Alexander accompanied W. Ayerst to Germany. There they studied German, Greek and Hebrew together and performed services in German and English in Danzig. On one of their missionary journeys Alexander visited his family in Schonlanke, a visit which upset the local Jewish community. For a short time the Alexanders also worked in Warsaw alongside LJS stalwart Alexander McCaul.

The Alexanders were recalled to London in 1830, where Alexander worked at the LJS's large centre known as 'Palestine Place.' During this period his scholastic abilities were recognized and a special position opened for him at the King's College, where he was Professor of Hebrew and Rabbinic literature. Over the next few years, Alexander laboured alongside McCaul and a Rev. Reichardt, writing a revised Hebrew New Testament and Hebrew Prayer book. During the same period he also traveled throughout Britain speaking on behalf of the LJS.

{3} Ferment in the Middle East

As Alexander was labouring in Britain, political events were occurring in the Middle East which would greatly affect his future. The French Revolution and subsequent events had triggered a revival of interest within the English Church of the coming of the Latter Days and the restoration of Israel.¹

When Napoleon invaded the Middle East in 1798-99, this interest increased, especially following the British victory at Acre in 1799. Britain could ill-afford a rival European power entrenched between her and India. British Christians began to sense that their nation was being marked out to be a modern-day Cyrus.

Anxiety again arose in 1831-32 when the Egyptian Pasha Mehmet Ali conquered the pashaliks of Acre and Damascus and set his eyes upon Constantinople. Yet Egypt, aware of British interest in the region, made every effort to assuage British anxiety, and even opened the way for British interests to be established in Eretz Israel. In 1833 the first permanent British/ Protestant institution was set up in Jerusalem-when the LJS's John Nicolayson settled there. Aware of the probability of a political change, the LJS saw the necessity for consolidation-property, official recognition, and a church. But according to existing laws, all of these requirements were impossible, for Protestantism was not officially recognized by the Turks as a millet-community. The assistance of the British Government was sought and received, mostly through the help of Anthony Ashley (Lord Shaftesbury) a L.J.S. supporter. Following L.J.S. requests, and for political considerations, the British established the first consulate in Jerusalem in 1838, which was responsible for protecting Protestants and Jews. Professor Verete wrote of the appointment of Consul Young:

Many members of the Society, McCaul and Shaftesbury appear certainly to be among them, tended to see the hand of Providence in everything conducive to their goal. And

¹ Verete M., "The Restoration of the Jews in English Protestant thought, 1790-1840," *Middle East Studies*, 1972.

*what could seem more providential than the appointment of a devout Protestant as Consul in the Holy Land at the very time when they were to establish the Protestant Church at Mt. Zion.*²

McCaul, Shaftesbury and prominent LJS members viewed the LJS presence in Jerusalem and the Consulate as vehicles for the full restoration of Israel. This interest became widespread, especially within the Evangelical party of the Anglican Church, following a profound pro-restoration article by Shaftesbury in the "Quarterly Review" in 1838 in which he highlighted a British role in such a restoration. In the same year Shaftesbury also wrote: "Could we not erect a Protestant Bishopric at Jerusalem?"³

{4} As interest in Eretz Israel increased, the LJS sent out more missionaries in 1838, the same year that Nicolayson succeeded in obtaining property for building a church.

The following year Egypt again moved against the Turks. This time she was supported by France. Britain, fearing the worst, came to Turkey's assistance, signing a treaty with her in July 1840, as did Austria, Russia and Prussia. The signatories called for Egypt's withdrawal. Egypt refused, war erupted, and by November 1840 Egyptian forces had been forced out of Eretz Israel, due mostly to British arms.

The events of 1840 convinced Shaftesbury and the LJS that the time was right for a modern Cyrus decree. On August 11, after conferring with his relative (Shaftesbury), Foreign Secretary Palmerston despatched an official memo to the British Ambassador at Constantinople to be relayed to the Sultan:

*There exists at present among the Jews dispersed over Europe a strong notion that the time is approaching when their nation is to return to Palestine ... it would be of manifest importance to the Sultan to encourage the Jews to return to, and settle in Palestine.*⁴

Shaftesbury, Palmerston and the LJS were 77 years too early. The Jews were not ready, the Turks were not in agreement and the other signatories of the treaty opposed the scheme. Following the war Eretz Israel was returned to the Turks.

The Protestant Bishopric

While Shaftesbury, Alexander and the LJS supporters were caught up in the euphoria of restorationism, excitement of another kind was influencing the King of Prussia, Frederick William IV. He had a vision that a regenerated Prussian church would become a "starting point of a world-wide union" whereby evangelical Christians would be united. He believed this vision would be linked to Jerusalem.

Following the war of 1840, the King approached Turkey in order to gain concessions in lieu of Prussia's siding with Turkey. The Sultan was unimpressed. However, the King was aware of the existence of the small LJS presence in Jerusalem and soon realized his only hope would be to attach himself to this presence.⁵

² Verete M., "Why a British Consulate Was Established in Jerusalem" in *English Historical Review*, LXXXV, London 1971, p. 343.

³ Hodder, E., *The Life and Works of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury*, London 1886, p.125.

⁴ F.O. 78/390 No. 134, quoted in A. Hyamson, *The British Consulate in Jerusalem in Relation to the Jews, 1838-1914*. London 1939, pp. 33-34.

⁵ Hechler W.H., *The Jerusalem Bishopric*, London 1883, part 1, p. 27.

The King then sent his envoy Chevalier de Bunsen to London in June 1841 to inquire if the English Church and government were willing to join in an ecclesiastical /political treaty with Prussia and establish an evangelical Protestant Bishopric in Jerusalem. The King set forth his proposal in a long and profound declaration concluding:

{5} *The Episcopate to be instituted at Jerusalem would associate itself with the institutions and erections on Mount Zion, and include all Protestant Christians in the Holy Land within its pale, so far as they should be disposed to take part in it.*⁶

Bunsen found well-prepared ground and, following discussions with Shaftesbury, Palmerston, Archbishop Howley and Queen Victoria, by mid-July all the decision makers had been addressed and found to be in agreement. But the sympathetic government of Melbourne and Palmerston was about to resign, and a quick decision was required before the next, less sympathetic government took office.

Expected opposition within the government was matched by opposition within the Church to the scheme. An influential group within Anglicanism, the Oxford movement, sometimes known as the high church party, disagreed. This movement had gained momentum in the 1830's and was dedicated to the restoration of more Roman Catholic practices and beliefs into the Anglican Church, which at that point was more evangelical. Close contact with the Protestant Churches of Europe was also opposed. Such opposition emanated because:

*It was strongly felt that the episcopal system of the Church of England, was incompatible with the non-episcopal system of the Prussian Church. Other objectors ... argued that the proposed bishopric was an infringement of the jurisdiction of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem and bishops of the other Eastern churches. Needless to say the reaction of Rome was hostile: the Roman Catholic Church resented the intrusion of a Anglican bishop in Palestine. To the Russian influence over the Orthodox would be added English influence over the Protestants.*⁷

The whole project was surrounded by opposition. Meanwhile the proposal was agreed to in principle and the details worked out by Bunsen, Shaftesbury and the Bishop of London. They desired to lay the *foundation* in Jerusalem of a Hebrew National Church, with its own language and customs, modelled as much as possible upon those of the reformed *Anglican* Church. Once the scheme was agreed to, the decision makers turned to the LJS to fill the position of first Protestant bishop. Alexander McCaul was offered the post but refused, stating that a Hebrew Christian should fill the position. The LJS turned to McCaul's friend and their trusted worker, Michael Solomon Alexander. Concerning his appointment, Leon Stein wrote:

*The choice was significant. So also was the comment of the Prussian envoy de Bunsen on the successful conclusion of his negotiations with Palmerston: 'So the beginning is made, please God, for the restoration of Israel.' The restoration of the Jews to Palestine under the auspices of the Protestant Powers, to be followed by their conversion to Christianity, would indeed be a triumph for the Protestant Churches.*⁸

{6} Alexander's selection embodied both the evangelical Anglican and Jewish characteristics of the Bishopric. The official instructions of the proposed Bishopric actually stated that the

⁶ Hechler, W.H. *ibid.* p. 16.

⁷ Tibawi, A.L. *British Interests in Palestine, 1800-1901*, Oxford 1961, p. 47.

⁸ Stein, L. *The Balfour Declaration*, London 1961, p. 8.

Bishops needed the following qualifications: 1) Jewish descent; 2) Learning; 3) Membership of the Ministry of the Church of England.⁹ Greaves also wrote that:

*...by a clause which was apparently kept secret at first, it was agreed that until the 'restoration' of a Christian Jewish Church, but not afterwards, the Archbishop of Canterbury should be the Metropolitan of the new See.*¹⁰

The final arrangement called for an Anglican bishop to be nominated alternatively by the British and Prussian crowns. But authority needed to be attained from the Crown and Parliament. In a short space of time the Bill (sometimes known as the 'Jerusalem Bishopric Bill') was passed through both Houses of Parliament and received the Royal Assent.

Despite strong pressure, Howley finally consecrated Alexander on November 11 1841 at Lambeth Palace. McCaul preached a controversial message concerning Jewish restorationism. Hodder wrote:

*The first official act of the Jewish church was performed on the 18th of November, when the new Bishop preached a sermon and gave 'the first episcopal benediction that had fallen from Hebrew lips for seventeen hundred years.'*¹¹

The LJS wrote:

*...the consecration of a Jewish Christian to be a shepherd unto Israel is an event unheard of since the day that Jerusalem was delivered to be trodden down by the Gentiles, and forms an era in the history both of the Jewish nation and the Christian Church ... What the friends of Israel longed and prayed and laboured for was not simply the conversion of a few individuals, but the resuscitation of the Jewish people and the resurrection of the Jewish Church.*¹²

The restorationist expectations were being placed upon Alexander's broad shoulders.

In order to allay some of the expected opposition, Alexander received ecclesiastical instructions to submit to the Greek Orthodox Bishop in Jerusalem, stating that his purpose was only to evangelize the Jews. The British and Prussian governments also released official statements, which aroused further opposition, especially in Constantinople. The British Embassy had actually been informed not to mention the matter to the Porte. And as Greaves wrote:

*Difficulties were sure to arise from reactionary elements at the Porte, from the mutual jealousies of rival Christian dignitaries and from the vigilant suspicions of the Powers.*¹³

{7} The Catholic powers of France and Austria opposed the scheme, as did the Orthodox power, Russia. The Ottomans looked on the venture with suspicion. How could the Protestants send out a Bishop to an almost non-existent community-and a Jewish Bishop at that? Surely, they surmised, there was a subtle connection with Palmerston's restorationist proposal of 1840. Also disturbing were Prussia's statements about their intention to establish colonies.

⁹ FO 406 (5460) June 1887, "Memorandum of the Jerusalem Bishopric," p. 9.

¹⁰ Greaves, R.W. "The Jerusalem Bishopric," in *English Historical Review*, July 1949, pp.. 342-343.

¹¹ Hodder, E., *ibid.* p. 202.

¹² Jewish Missionary Intelligence, JMI, 1841, p. 390-391.

¹³ Greaves, R.W., *ibid.* p. 349.

Fewer ecclesiastical schemes of the time aroused as much attention, excitement and opposition. And in the middle of it all-perhaps a naive and innocent pawn-was the Jewish Protestant Bishop and his faithful family.

Alexander's Life in Jerusalem

The British Government generously provided transportation for Alexander and his entourage to the shores of Eretz Israel. Accompanying him and his family were his chaplain-Williams (of high church persuasion); a LJS missionary Ewald (a Hebrew Christian); and the new head of L.J.S. medical work, Macgowan. For a more detailed description of Alexander's arrival and early days, see Corey.

The party was escorted into Jerusalem on January 21 1842, by Nicolayson and Consul-General Rose (from Beirut). The next weeks were taken up with securing a worthy residence and settling in. It was not an easy task. Shortly after arrival the Alexanders lost their newborn baby.

Fewer events in the modern period upset the status quo of Jerusalem as did Alexander's arrival. Yehoshuah Ben Arieah wrote that Alexander's appointment:

*... sparked the interest of the Roman Catholics of Central Europe who demanded a counter balance to Western Protestant and Greek Orthodox activity. On 14th January 1842 the decision was made to appoint a Roman Catholic Bishop.*¹⁴

In 1845 the Greek Orthodox Church also appointed a Patriarchate to reside in Jerusalem. Until then the Patriarchs of these powerful churches resided in Rome and Constantinople respectively.

The subsequent increase in the activities of the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches, goaded on by the new Protestant presence, was matched by the increase in the activities of the European nations of France, Prussia, Sardinia, Austria and Russia, mostly in order to counter the influence of the newly established British Consulate. The race for the control and ultimately the conquest of Jerusalem was on. Alexander in all probability was unaware of the fuller implications of these movements as well as those of his own appointment.

{8} Alexander's priority was to see the Jewish Church in Jerusalem restored under the covering of the Anglican Church. Therefore, over the next four years he was instrumental in establishing new institutions or encouraging the development of those already established. A service was conducted in the temporary chapel every morning at 7:00 a.m. in Hebrew, and every evening in English. On Sundays, services were held in English and German. In time, Arabic and Spanish services were added so as to benefit the multi-lingual Jewish community and the variety of Protestant visitors.

In February 1842, the first ordination was held. Soon afterwards he welcomed a family of Hebrew Christians, the Meshullams, to Jerusalem. The first confirmation class was held on October 9, in which eight of the nine candidates were 'Hebrew of the Hebrews.' The same year he conducted a Messianic wedding between Peter Bergheim, a medical missionary, and Dorothy Rosenthal, a member of the Rosenthal family which

¹⁴ Ben Arieah, Y. *Jerusalem in the Nineteenth Century*, Jerusalem 1984, vol. 1, p. 231.

Nicolayson had baptized in 1839. Before the year ended he ordained a man named Tarkover as deacon, causing Nicolayson to comment:

*...by today's solemnities, the nucleus of a Hebrew Christian Church in this city is now complete in all its offices, as well as functions. There is now here a Bishop, a priest (Ewald), and a deacon also, all "Hebrew of Hebrews," a fact in the history of Jerusalem which had not been realized since its final destruction by Adrian (Hadrian ed.) in the second century; and which thus completes also the chain of restored connexion between the first Hebrew church here ... and its present, distant, yet genuine off-shoot. May it grow into a great tree of life, under whose branches the dispersed of Israel shall find shelter, and whose fruits shall be the healing of the nations!*¹⁵

As the spiritual temple was being built, the physical was hindered, resulting in one of Alexander's many confrontations.

Under instructions from the new Government, Consul Young distanced himself from too active an involvement in the operations of the Mission and Bishopric. The Government was aware of the political and ecclesiastical sensitivities associated with the Protestant presence in Jerusalem and reactions to it in Europe and Constantinople. Construction of the Protestant church had begun in 1841 by Nicolayson and Johns (the architect) without official permission. On January 28 1842, Alexander laid the first foundation stone above ground. Work continued until mid-January 1843 when "... through the interference of the Turkish authorities, it was stopped."¹⁶ Consul Young wrote to Ambassador Canning at Constantinople that the "present check (the stoppage of the building of a Christian Church in Jerusalem) is a consequence of the affair of October last, when the mission protected some Russian Jews."¹⁷

{9} Three Russian rabbis had come under the instructions of Pieritz, a LJS missionary, and openly confessed faith in Yeshua in October 1842. The Jewish community then forced their wives to separate from them. As an angry mob was aroused by Rabbi Isaiah Bordaki, the three rabbis sought shelter with the Ewalds. Rabbi Bordaki then addressed Young about the situation. Bordaki was the Russian consular agent in Jerusalem, who viewed the affair politically, as did Young, that Russian nationals were escaping 'justice' and sheltering under British protection. Young summoned Alexander to return the three rabbis to Russian protection.¹⁸

Alexander refused, prompting Young to state: "I feared that the full consequences of the case were not apprehended by the Bishop."¹⁹ Alexander stated he was led to understand by all the parties in Britain that he could receive full cooperation in his efforts to bring the gospel to the Jewish population. This indicates Alexander's ignorance of some of the deeper issues in Middle Eastern political life and the Capitulatory system. The situation was so dangerous that a messenger was set to leave for Beirut, Constantinople and St. Petersburg if the matter remained unresolved.

Ultimately Alexander relented and the rabbis returned, temporarily, to the fold of rabbinic Judaism. But the issue, highlighting on one hand Alexander's ignorance of some important matters, also revealed his character. He would not give up easily in such confrontations and

¹⁵ JMI, 1842, p.17.

¹⁶ Johns, J.W., *The Anglican Cathedral Church of St. James Jerusalem*, London 1844, p.14.

¹⁷ F.O. 78/540 (No. 3) in A. Hyamson, Vol. 1, p. 60.

¹⁸ Crombie, K. "Of Rabbis and Bishops," in *Shalom*, March 1991, p. 7-9.

¹⁹ F.O. 78/50, No. 7; A. Hyamson pp. 47-48.

was willing to stand with and support members of his flock to the fullest. But such intense struggles, occurring often, would ultimately have a detrimental effect upon his health.

This issue exposed, for all to see, the operations of the ‘illegal’ Protestant mission. It was illegal, for Turkish law forbade the building of new churches and foreigners were forbidden to bring attention to themselves.

The nucleus of a Hebrew Christian Church is now complete in all its offices, all ‘Hebrew of Hebrews,’ which thus completes the chain of restored connexion between the first Hebrew church here and its present, distant, yet genuine off-shoot.

When construction of the church was stopped, Alexander again stuck by his principles. On January 20 1843 he and Nicolayson set off for Beirut in a ‘row boat’ to consult with Consul Rose and to protest against Young’s unsympathetic attitude. Rose however stated that the Turks were within their rights to halt construction. Alexander was not satisfied. He threatened to take the issue to Constantinople and even to England if need be. Rose persuaded him to return to Jerusalem and allow the diplomats to handle the matter. The presence of the controversial Bishop in Constantinople would probably have created even more problems. Nicolayson went to Constantinople and conducted affairs in a quieter **{10}** fashion. Henceforth the issue of permission for the church building was taken up by the British and Prussian Ambassadors.

Over the next two and a half years Alexander’s energies were diverted to the local Messianic community, and to the evangelism of other Jewish communities in Eretz Israel. These initiatives caused Alexander to confront more often the antagonism of the local Jewish community to the mission.

First in importance of those initiatives was the medical work. Under Macgowan it grew, and in December 1844 the L.J.S. opened the first modern hospital in Jerusalem. Jewish opposition was tough, and resulted in the issuing of the severest *cherems* (excommunications) known in Jerusalem for some time. In 1843 Alexander opened a school or house of industry-the first of its kind in Jerusalem, in order to provide work for the new Jewish believers. In the same year he opened a Hebrew College where missionary-minded Jewish believers could be trained. Several of the first students later went and opened a LJS mission in Cairo. The following year, 1844, Alexander opened the very effective Book Shop, which “caused quite a stir among the Jews in the Holy City, and for several days the place was filled from morning to night.”²⁰

Alexander’s initiatives stirred up the Jewish community considerably. Various methods of countering the missionary influence were introduced. Moses Montefiore was at the forefront of this counter-action, sending a Jewish doctor to Jerusalem, and having the radically anti-Christian book, *Chizzuk Emunah* (“Faith Strengthened”), printed and distributed. Correspondence from the rabbis to their colleagues in Europe seemed now to take on a new dimension.

The Restorationist Star Fades Out

That there was a strong spiritual reaction to the LJS activities there is no doubt. And Alexander, being the titular head of the mission, was the main target for the opposition. These pressures, allied with Alexander’s uncompromising personality, could only result in constant conflict and even “burn-out.” Indeed from the time of his nomination

²⁰ JMI, 1844, p. 233.

Alexander had been the subject of opposition-and not always of his own making. Much of it was because of what he stood for.

After some four years of constant pressure, Alexander and his wife left Jerusalem in November 1845 for a lengthy break. He never returned to his adopted city alive. Just prior to reaching Cairo, he died on November 22. When a post mortem was held in Cairo shortly thereafter,

it was found that the immediate cause of death was the rupture of one of the largest blood vessels near the heart. But the whole of the lungs, liver and heart were found in an exceedingly diseased state, and had been so for a long {11} time. The accelerating cause, doubtless, was great and continuing anxiety-such as the Bishopric of Jerusalem and its cares best account for."²¹

Many were shocked at his untimely death. Shaftesbury and the Evangelical-restorationist camp were in a state of confusion-the full restoration had not occurred as it was supposed to under Alexander's wings. But the deepest to be hurt were his own physical and spiritual family in Jerusalem. His wife later received a letter of condolence from 31 Jewish believers in Jerusalem, which concluded:

*He was a burning and a shining light; and when he was raised to the highest dignity in the Church, he conferred the most conspicuous honour to our whole nation, but especially on the little band of Jewish believers. With him, captive Judah's brightest earthly star has set, and the top stone has been taken away from the rising Hebrew Church.*²²

The top stone of the rising Anglican Hebrew Church may have been taken away. But, as prophetic as the LJS initiatives were, as important as Alexander's appointment had been, the timing for the complete restoration of the Hebrew Church to Jerusalem had not arrived. In this respect Alexander was a man before his time, although in laying the foundation stone of the Hebrew Church in Jerusalem he was a man of his time. For upon that foundation, laid as it was upon the previous apostolic foundation of the earlier "Jewish Church" in Jerusalem, a spiritual building would later be built. Due to Alexander's efforts, as well as those of others, this evangelical witness, Christ Church, stands inside the Old City . Today the true expression of that Evangelical /restorationist dream lies just inside Jaffa Gate where Jew and gentile worship together, in Hebrew on the Sabbath day, and on Sunday in English. Michael Solomon Alexander played an important part in this present day reality.

MISHKAN is pleased to publish this article on Bishop Michael Soloomn Alexander on the 150th anniversary of his consecration as bishop in Jerusalem.

²¹ Corey, M. *From Rabbi to Bishop*, London n.d., p. 104 & 105.

²² Corey, M. *ibid*, p. 110.

{13} James and Elizabeth Finn: Missionary Activity in Jerusalem 1848-1863

Sybil M. Jack

Professor Sybil M. Jack is the Dean of Arts at the University of Sidney, Australia.

When the Finns arrived, Protestant missionary endeavour in Palestine had been going on for 25 years. The principal British societies in Jerusalem were the London society for promoting Christianity among the Jews, and the Church Missionary Society. Both were concerned with conversion worldwide.¹ In Jerusalem, the London Jews Society had separate funding of 40,000 pounds left exclusively for work in Jerusalem. John Nicolayson, who had been in Jerusalem for 20 years, headed this work with Henry Crawford as assistant. Existing mission activities included the Industrial School where Jewish converts could work for a salary, and the hospital, run by a Dr. MacGowan, and a church, Christ Church, on Mount Zion. Turkish permission had been granted on the understanding that it was to be a consular chapel. Until the Turks relaxed their rules, this meant that the consul had to live nearby. Thus, the society provided Finn with a house for the first 10 years of his consulate which clearly added to the perception of him as a missionary. The bishop had no church of his own. He was on the local committee of the London Jews Society, but its local representatives were not his direct servants and could follow their own paths. The bishop, however, had more direct control of the activities of the Church Missionary Society, whose mission to native Christians was headed by Charles Sandreczki. Douglas Veitch ran a Hebrew seminary, in which proselytes were instructed in theology and languages and indigent Jews found work and were instructed in useful handicrafts.² The relationship between this House of Industry and the London Jews Society's Industrial School is unclear, but Gobat's house of Industry was, he claimed, funded by a Mrs. Allix.³

The Arrival of the Finns

James and Elizabeth Finn arrived in April 1846. Both held the eschatological belief that Christ's second coming would occur only when the biblical Israel had been repopulated with Christianized Jews, labouring in agriculture as well as industry. Elizabeth's father, Alexander McCaul, was {14} one of its leading exponents. Finn had been a committee member of the London Jews Society, and was known as the author of a learned tome on Judaism.⁴ Despite his gift for languages, his appointment as British consul had not been made without reservations on the government's part. The reluctant appointment had been accompanied by the classic cry of *pointe de zele* and he was conscious of being on probation.⁵

¹ Robert Michael Smith, "The London Jews' Society and Patterns of Jewish Conversion in England 1801-1859" *Jewish Social Studies A quarterly journal devoted to contemporary and historical aspects of Jewish life*, XLIII, 1981, p. 275ff.

² *Samuel Gobat, bishop of Jerusalem his Life and Work a biographical sketch drawn chiefly from his own journals* with preface by Rt. Hon the E. of Shaftesbury, New York 1885, p. 226.

³ See his reports on the Jerusalem Diocesan Funds no. 2-8.

⁴ Finn, James, *Sephardim: or the History of Jews in Spain and Portugal*, London 1841.

⁵ Yad Ben Zvi Institute Finn Archives Diaries. Vol. 11. These present a little difficulty as their format at some points suggests that the earlier parts may have been re-written later. Finn's occasional remarks about the great

James and Elizabeth Finn held the eschatological belief that Christ's second coming would occur only when the biblical Israel had been repopulated with Christianized Jews labouring in agriculture as well as industry.

Finn's consular work was far more widespread than any activity he may have had with missions. The almost daily involvement in Jewish matters which it required, and his known enthusiastic commitment to Protestant renewal, made it easy for his enemies to disparage, as motivated by missionary zeal, any action of his which they disliked. Finn, throughout his time as consul, strove unsuccessfully to avoid giving any grounds for complaint that he was abusing his consular authority for personal or missionary purposes.

In the delicate negotiations over the British assuming the protection of Russian Jews, Finn was accused by Basili of a too great zeal for proselytism.⁶ Finn heatedly responded:

*No such efforts have been made by me in either a public or private capacity. In private life I have hitherto abstained from making such attempts although were I not a Consul, it would be impossible for a Christian Gentleman residing here to be so silent as I have been on so important a subject-and yet I know of no reason why I should not if I pleased at any time and in any society express my preference of the religion that I profess above all others-yet even for this I have never sought occasion...*⁷

On this occasion, the cynical Palmerston supported him, writing to Moore that the complaint was "a pretence."⁸ At other times, with a less sympathetic audience, it was impossible to refute because there were people anxious to misinterpret the slightest act, if it were to their advantage.

A Solomon would have been required to solve the interrelated problems which Finn faced. Satisfying all parties was impossible and Finn's own sympathies-which he took for natural justice-supported by what appeared to be his instructions from his government, led to a series of clashes with the established rabbis. The arrival in increasing numbers of the Ashkenazi Jews, unacceptable to the established Sephardic community who sought British assistance, complicated the problems. Adding further confusion was the increasingly vocal and influential, but hardly united body {15} of British Jewry, for whom Sir Moses Montefiore was the best-known spokesman, pressuring the British government to require the consul to assist their co-religionists in ways which were not always within his powers, or which were against the local rabbis' wishes. The Jerusalem rabbis were opposed to the establishment of schools to teach languages and science, particularly for girls, which was one of Montefiore's purposes alongside the promotion of Jewish agriculture.⁹ Finn helped Montefiore although while there was an immediate compatibility of interests between Montefiore's objectives and those Finn espoused, they were ultimately quite incompatible.

To avoid accusations of impropriety, if for no other reason, therefore, it was Elizabeth who took the lead in missionary undertakings. Finn recorded that, "Elizabeth spoke, as on

later significance of certain events would otherwise imply a prescience he is unlikely to have possessed. It is therefore impossible to rule out other editorial work. I am most grateful to the Yad Ben Zvi Institute for permission to cite them. In this article, specific material which is not attributed to another source is taken from these diaries.

⁶ Hyamson, op. cit., p.123.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 126-7.

⁸ Ibid., no 80.

⁹ Finn Diaries, Vol. 19, 3 Aug 1854; *Diaries of Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore* London ed by Dr. L. Loewe 2 vols, 1890 ii, p. 47.

occasions I prefer she should, leaving me as an official person to watch in comparative silence.”

The Finns and Missionary Work

The Finns held the commonly accepted opinion about missionary work that it could be no more than enabling since only God could move the heart and mind. The missionaries' job was to be on hand to help when God had so moved. The Finns also believed, however, which was slightly less common, that help and assistance should not depend on conversion and were anxious to see the Jews, unconverted as well as converted, helped to help themselves. The cynical and amoral Edmund Hornby, long the judge at Constantinople, in his slightly scandalous autobiography, saw Elizabeth as “a lady of very considerable energy and ability and of a very masterful temper...” He summarized her objectives as “to raise the moral tone of Judaism as a preparatory step to the conversion of the ‘chosen people’ to Christianity.”¹⁰ It was an attitude which brought them into difficulties with the bishop and others. Elizabeth presented the opposing viewpoints, in a simplified and doubtless unfair way, in a conversation in her novel *Third Year in Jerusalem*.¹¹

They believed that help and assistance should not depend on conversion and were anxious to see the Jews, unconverted as well as converted, helped to help themselves.

It was only some years after their arrival in Jerusalem that Elizabeth Finn embarked upon what was indeed to prove too great a venture for the available resources. From the start, she had been moved to give practical help. When the Jews were in distress for want of food in 1847-48, she gave the poor women needlework or knitting to do. The numbers seeking employment were too great for her, but she thought, “This was the beginning of the industrial work.”¹² The arrival of a Miss Cooper, the daughter of a physician with some independent means, in the early summer of 1848 {16} provided a solution, for she decided to devote her resources to employing poor Jewish women in needlework. The start of this school, which was known as Miss Cooper's Institute for Jewesses, also made clear the inevitability of conflict with the rabbis, who saw working for gentiles as the first step to conversion. Excommunicated, the women initially left, but the threat of starvation brought them back..

To raise money for the work, she and Elizabeth started a bazaar in 1849, selling the work and local artifacts. Assisted by a Miss Creasy, she successfully taught 150 Jewish women fine needlework in a house inside the Old City for some 10 years. Various people were employed to assist in the work,¹³ which was also supported by sales at the bazaar and in London.¹⁴ On her death in 1859, however, although she left her property in trust to the London Society to carry on the work, Elizabeth Finn ceased to write of the project.¹⁵

¹⁰ Sir Edmund Hornby, *Autobiography*, London 1929, p. 131.

¹¹ Mrs. Finn, *Third Year in Jerusalem: a Tale Illustrating Customs and Incidents of Modern Jerusalem or a Sequel to "Home in the Holy Land"*, London 1969, p. 231.

¹² *Reminiscences of Mrs. Finn*, Member of the Royal Asiatic Society,, London and Edinburgh, nd (Preface is 15 Oct 1929) p. 74.

¹³ Arnold Blumberg, *A view from Jerusalem, 1849-1858: the consular diary of James and Elizabeth Ann Finn* Ruthford, New York 1980; hereafter Blumberg Consular Diary. Here it is assumed that this was part of the house of industry which was run by the LJS, but Graham's testimony makes it clear that it was independent before Miss Cooper's death.

¹⁴ Various advertisements in the *Record* 1850-7: Finn Diaries, 23 July 1852.

¹⁵ *Reminiscences of Mrs. Finn*, p. 75.

“My great object and desire being to see the land of Israel cultivated by Christian Israelites preparatory to the time when the land will be all restored to their nation.”

Elizabeth’s own venture in this direction came in January 1854, when she proposed a Sarah society, whose purpose was to visit indigent Jewish women in their homes, assess what help they needed and provide what they could. The meetings seem to have been held every three months and to have been supported by travellers’ gifts. The other undertakings were financed by charitable works and the sale of olive wood and other curios. The society had to be shut down since there was no one to take it over when Elizabeth left.¹⁶

In 1848, however, they were on good terms with Nicolayson and Crawford and had no defined intentions of developing separate projects. They were evidently content with the work that was proceeding. The evidence that Finn had individuals he had personally converted, who received favoured treatment, is slim.¹⁷ Diness, the central figure in the Jewish riots in 1849, has been identified as one such, but the claim seems to have been made only by those with intention to embarrass him. Elizabeth had certainly taken one Jewess under her wing and promoted a marriage to a converted rabbi¹⁸-but their story hardly fits the accusation.

The Finns were merely generally supportive of the missionary work going on. In February 1850, when Elizabeth escorted HRH princess Mariana around the city, she took her on a tour of Protestant undertakings-the Hospital, the School, Miss Cooper’s Institute and to the “converts”‘ house of industry.

The steps were already in train, however, for the development which was to have most effect on the Finns’ future and lead them into more active work {17} -the purchase of the estate called Talibeyeh just outside the walls of Jerusalem in the name of their interpreter and guide, Tanoos, on 17 June 1850. The purchase, and Finn’s immediate hopes for it, show a confusion of reasonable personal pleasure in ownership and a more selfless aspiration for its future. On 18 December 1850, Finn made the offer of a plot of land to a convert, Simon Peter Kornblau, and noted that he was ready to make other offers: “My great object and desire being to see the land of Israel cultivated by Christian Israelites preparatory to the time when the land will be all restored to their nation.” The two ambitions were not compatible, and the financial problems precipitated by Finn’s overextension in land purchases¹⁹ meant that the estate was soon more or less continuously back on the market although the Finns never succeeded in selling it.²⁰

The estate at least provided a possible source of employment to offer clamouring Jewish labourers. Finn continued for a time to see it as the place from which Jewish agricultural settlement would start. On 24 March he noted that part of the land was for a Mr. Bergheim and Max Ungar (two of the few Jewish protestants), “so that we shall soon have a flourishing colony of agricultural Hebrew converts.” To cover the costs, the Jews were trained to cut stone on the estate, but although it was used to build the Finn home

¹⁶ *Reminiscences of Mrs. Finn*, pp. 116-7.

¹⁷ Arnold Blumberg, *Zion before Zionism 1838-1880*, New York 1985

¹⁸ She is the model for Rachel in Elizabeth Anne Finn, *Home in the Holy Land: A Tale Illustrating Customs and Incidents in Modern Jerusalem*, London 1866 and *A Third Year in Jerusalem*, London 1866. Rachel's story is more or less directly rendered although the sad real-life ending is committed.

¹⁹ The later investigation into his finances and his claims for ill treatment by the Foreign Office in money matters make it clear that the problems had started earlier and the purchases are only the last straw - exacerbated by his continued unfounded optimism that the Foreign Office would provide him with a house.

²⁰ He also acquired the Sadarah estate on 26 Aug 1850 which he was also unable to resell. Finn Diaries , vol. 14 , 26 Aug 1850; vol. 15 , 30 Sep 1852; vol.26.

and the walls that surrounded the property, Finn's hopes that it could be sold by contract to other builders were disappointed.

Finn continued to support the London Jews society.²¹ They in turn, appear to have supported the idea of the formal venture to promote Jewish agriculture, a need which he and Elizabeth were now seriously planning to meet.

The Industrial Plantation

On 15 December 1851, the Finns prepared an address to the bishop, requesting him to patronize the foundation of the Jerusalem Missionary Society. Macgowan immediately disapproved of it and, although the bishop asked for time to consider, he finally refused to support it. Bishop Gobat (Bishop 1846-79, nominated by the Prussian church after the death of Solomon Alexander) had never been a whole-hearted believer in converting the Jews.²² He believed that "the time for immigration into this country is not yet come."²³ From the start he would not baptize those Jews who refused to learn a trade and, in his later years, he expressed himself forcibly: "Either he [the Jew] is insincere from the beginning or, if he commences by being honest and in earnest, he will soon be spoilt by the flattery of the friends of Israel in England."²⁴ He was accused of "shamefully sacrificing the mission to the Jews." He rarely baptised Jews himself or was present at their baptism except when some symbolic action was involved.²⁵ He was more interested in converting members of other religions, especially Christians and Druse.²⁶ In the end, his notorious quarrel with the Finns over {18} Simeon Rosenthal, which was a major newspaper topic for over a year in 1857-8, undermined much of the financial support for both parties.

In 1852 however, Elizabeth Finn, with the support of Nicolayson and Crawford, went on to act independently and started a separate institution. Committed to the view that conversion was not a sensible primary objective, but a gift of God which may come from association with good Christians who had right social and moral habits, she proposed an Industrial Plantation for the employment of Jews in order to teach them habits of honest industry. This was called the Jerusalem Missionary Society.

On 29 June 1852 Finn records, "We rode early with the Crawford family to... inspect [a site] with the idea of possible formation of an Industrial farm for Jews." Obtaining a lease took time, but finally an unwalled, desolate and weed-covered farm, a mile from the northwest gates of Jerusalem, in the area called Kerem Avraham, or Abraham's Vineyard, was obtained.

Meanwhile, somewhere between 50 and 80 Jews were provided with work on Talibeyeh under the convert Simon Rosenthal, and another 66 were recommended to Meshullam, working under the direction of another trusted convert, Bloom. The workers were unconverted Jews and, although doubtless it was hoped that the converts influence

²¹ Hyamson, op. cit. no 126.

²² Robert Michael Smith, "The London Jews Society: Patterns of Jewish conversion in England 1801-59," *Jewish Social Studies* XLIII 1981, pp. 275ff. Mel Scult, "English Missions to the Jews - conversion in an age of Emancipation" *Jewish Social Studies* XXXV 1973, p. 34ff.

²³ *Samuel Gobat, bishop of Jerusalem his Life and Work* a biographical sketch drawn chiefly from his own journals with preface by Rt Hon the E. of Shaftesbury New York 1885, p. 308, hereafter *Samuel Gobat*.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 289.

²⁵ Christ Church, Jerusalem Archives.

²⁶ *Samuel Gobat*, pp. 238-9.

them, the Finns denied overt attempts at proselytization. The unconverted Jews were allowed to break off from their work for Jewish congregational prayer; and fast days, as well as Sabbath and holidays were observed.²⁷ By 23 August the work was halted for want of funds and this was to be the pattern with the Plantation. Money raised in England came in, and there was employment until it ran out again.

The leading Ashkenazi rabbi proclaimed that it was unlawful to accept work from Christians.

A separate committee to manage the raising of funds for the plantation was therefore created, although the link to the local London Jews Society evidently remained strong. By 1854 the plantation had an overseer, a Mr. Hanauer who, with his wife, was settled on the property. The Jews continued to work under the direction of Bloom. They had to be fed at the consulate every morning before they left for work, because they were so weak. A major water shortage in Jerusalem led the Finns to turn the workers to the task of excavating cisterns in the rock at Abraham's Vineyard.²⁸

The Jewish community's fear of proselytising remained. The leading Ashkenazi rabbi, normally more sympathetic to the Finns than the Sephardi, also proclaimed that it was unlawful to accept work from Christians.²⁹

Throughout 1855 and 1856 the Plantation continued to do well; a new house was built for the Hanauers and more people employed.³⁰ Nicolayson's {19} death, however, marked the downturn and the final break with the society. By 1857 Elizabeth had finally raised the funds needed to purchase Abraham's Vineyard. The 25-year lease had cost 215 pounds and another 100 pounds to convert it into freehold. Money, however, was evidently inadequate for its management for when, on 22 January 1858, Finn walked with Elizabeth to the plantation, he thought it "a melancholy spectacle to what it has been in former days-no persons there but old Mordecai, Elias and Yussuf the Persian." Trees, however, were still being planted. By 1860 the Finns seem to have lost their London support. Mrs. Hanauer died on Christmas Day, and the final blow was the discovery that Bloom had been misappropriating resources and cutting down the trees Nicolayson had planted.³¹

Elizabeth Finn and Arias

Meanwhile, Elizabeth, in her role as manager of the Plantation had become involved in the complicated business of John Meshullam at Artas, the episode in which Blumberg has based his criticisms of the Finns as unscrupulous land grabbers. John Meshullam was a British subject and Jewish convert who, after opening a hotel in Jerusalem, had moved to the cultivating of about 70 acres of land in the valley of Artas (on the road between Bethlehem and Hebron) jointly with its owners who received a fixed rental and share of the proceeds. Meshullam had achieved this by playing on the protection he would have because he was a British subject.³²

Finn was at first, and rightly, sceptical of Meshullam's capacity to carry this off, but some saw it as the first breakthrough "providentially connected with that series of changes which

²⁷ Finn, *Stirring Times*, ii:73-4.

²⁸ *Reminiscences of Mrs. Finn*, p. 109.

²⁹ *Reminiscences of Mrs. Finn*, p. 123.

³⁰ Finn Diaries vol. 19, 15 Dec 1855; vol. 20, 1 Sept 1856; *Reminiscences of Mrs. Finn*, p. 135; Finn, *Stirring Times 1* pp. 120-21.

³¹ Finn Diaries vol. 25; vol. 26, 25 May, re. deportation for Bloom - suggest to Pasha he should be sent to Constantinople - threat to Eliz life.

³² *Reminiscences of Mrs. Finn*, pp. 90-1.

we do know must take place ere the history of the Lord's... ancient people shall attain the consummation which his eternal counsels have decreed."³³ Despite the fact that Finn was involved in virtually weekly incidents in which Meshullam called on British protection, he allowed himself to be persuaded that Meshullam must succeed and began blaming the Greeks for fomenting trouble and threatening the English at Artas. There was also constant trouble with the Bedouin over water rights.³⁴ Finn was also persuaded to send Jews to work for Meshullam.³⁵

Despite this support Meshullam was losing money. Apparently he came to some agreement in November 1849 with an American brother and sister calling themselves Adams, who had come to prepare the way for a missionary sect, apparently Sabbatarians, called the Children of Israel.³⁶ When they returned in March 1852, she had brought an enormous tent and quantities of tools and seeds obtained, according to the Finn's version, by opening a shop in Boston in Meshullam's name to collect money. By June 1852 Meshullam was complaining about the Americans to Finn. The quarrel thereafter degenerated into a slandering match in which both sides {20} maintained their own purity of behaviour by misinterpreting anything they could.

Finn, in the meantime, was attempting to salvage the eschatological dream of Jewish agriculture by setting up a management committee, on which he hoped the distinguished American, Barclay, would serve. Barclay, however, was eventually disillusioned with Finn after a catastrophic venture into land purchase through Finn's interpreter, Tannoos. Finn, however, got support from one family, the Dwights who had been driven out by the other Americans and subsequently offered them a job.

It might have been wise for the Finns to have left Meshullam to his own plans, in which MacGowan had a part. But by 29 December 1852 Elizabeth had a plan of her own. As a result, after the hearing of the case in early 1853 in which the Americans sought to blame Finn for the whole trouble, and after various meetings to "consider what can be done by subscription-that is through a society in England-to reestablish Meshullam at Artas," an arrangement was made which eventually brought some of the land in the valley into the Jewish Industrial Plantation scheme.³⁷

This, however, did not follow until nearly two years later, after Meshullam had run into further difficulties.³⁸ The immediate effect was for Meshullam to get help in renewing his leases, which were coming to an end, and for larger numbers of Jews, who were being paid by the Industrial Plantation account, to be sent to work at Artas. Ever dissatisfied,

³³ Palestine Exploration Fund (JER)/5 Minutes of the transactions of the Jerusalem Literary Society, Vol. 1, pp. 339-41. Mrs. Hovenden's paper.

³⁴ For the detailed history see Arnold Blumberg, - *Consular diary; Reminiscences of Mrs. Finn*, p. 91; Finn Diaries vol. 15, 10 Feb 1852; vol. 15, 9 Mar 1852.

³⁵ Finn, *Stirring Times*, i:120-21.

³⁶ Finn Diaries vol. 12, 27 Nov 1849; Blumberg, - *Consular diary* gives an unfavourable account of Finn's part but it must be modified in the light of the material in the Diaries. There is also reference to this in Arnold Blumberg, *Zion before Zionism, 1838-1880*, New York 1985.

³⁷ Much of the case that Smith sent to the American Foreign office, (as summarised in Blumberg, *Consular Diar*) is susceptible to a different interpretation if Meshullam is viewed as wholly self-serving and the ordinary arrangements for mail deliver considered.

³⁸ Blumberg suggests "the meeting to solicit help for Meshullam might have been merely the excuse needed for Mrs. Finn's aggressive seizure of the Artas property, following a series of legal condemnations in her own husband's consular court." Meshullam's evidence, however, is suspect, especially in 1862 when unless Finn's help was replaced, as it was not, by the equally vigorous support of the incoming consul, his own future was dim.

Meshullam had thoughts of leaving Artas and taking land at El Aroob near Cuferin as soon as the leases were settled.

Meshullam's problems and the accusations of the Americans were finally audited by Lord Napier, who was sent from Constantinople expressly for the purpose. The Finns were not found guilty on any gross impropriety, so by 27 June 1855, the management of the Artas farm became legally Elizabeth's. Meshullam had lost control, but not possession. It was not, however, until a year later, 19 April 1856, that a contract was signed between Elizabeth, on behalf of the Jewish Plantation, and Meshullam, on behalf of himself and the family, spelling out the relationship.

The Finns were also under pressure from the London Jews Society to abandon the Plantation. In 1857 the London lay secretary Layard suggested that this would no doubt be "most agreeable to the government." So changed was the climate in London, that he also suggested it was impossible to have a church of Hebrew Christians.

By January 1858 therefore, new plans for funding were necessary, and the subject of "allowing shareholders in general to the estate in Artas" was discussed. This was probably the scheme recounted by Hornby of "selling" small plots inside the Artas gardens (which Hornby dismisses as three or four acres) to those whose religious enthusiasm made possession of a few {21} yards of Holy Land invaluable. Conscientious as ever, she had careful books "with cabbalistic signs" showing where each small plot was. Disaster, however, continued. Elijah and James were criticising the management of Artas, and German religious enthusiasts, called *Gottesvolk*, were discussing terms for, cooperation with Meshullam. Only Elizabeth's skills in raising public subscription for the plantation at Artas kept them afloat. New estates, the Bakoosh and others, were added and on October 23 1860 Elizabeth and Meshullam cast lots for upper and lower halves of the new lands in the valley. Likely benefactors kept up their spirits. The discoveries which "identified" Artas as Emmaus also helped.³⁹

After Finn's loss of the consulate in 1863, however, it is clear that the plantation was effectively doomed. The sale of the property, which had become essential, enabled Elizabeth to buy it back, but since it was done in the consular court, Finn was criticized. Meshullam attempted to dictate terms for keeping the Plantation afloat, in which he demanded to be put back in with his son Elijah, but his debts to Elizabeth and others made this unthinkable. On 14 January 1863, when they visited Artas, there were young Jews thinking of cultivating the valley under the Jewish agricultural association.

So changed was the climate in London, that he also suggested it was impossible to have a church of Hebrew Christians.

On 7 February 1863 Elizabeth, refusing to give in, got the peasantry of Artas to sign over to her the documents of the vineyards. The matter was not, however, in Hornby's hands. Although on 3 July 1863 he told her of the favourable terms in which he was addressing her in a letter about the Jewish Plantation work, it was hard to see who would carry on. Aron Saphir was evidently left in charge of the farm, but on 26 March 1864 they had to send a document allowing him to leave it on account of the danger to his life, the mischief perpetrated on the property and the want of redress from the consul.

After they got back to England, Elizabeth went to assist at a committee meeting of the Industrial Plantation for Jerusalem chaired by Lord Shaftesbury, but she could only report that they were all puzzled to know what to do with the Plantation (Artas was not mentioned),

³⁹ *Reminiscences of Mrs. Finn*, p. 233.

and that she advised them to let it “lie in God’s hands for a couple of years.” Although they were scheduled to meet again after Easter, the Committee in fact soon broke up. The land, however, remained in Elizabeth’s name and the trust formally continued to exist for many years.

{22} Christian Israelites’ Plans

Finn gave moral support to other people’s projects. On the 28 October 1854 a meeting at the bishop’s library, convened by R.H. Herschell, consulted on means of implementing a “Palestine Agricultural settlement” scheme. Nothing immediately eventuated, probably because of the bishop’s opposition. On 23 April 1856 Finn was discussing with Bergheim and Calman a proposal from R. Herschell for cultivation of the land of Israel by Christian Israelites. By 26 November 1856 a committee had decided to consult only Hebrew Christians and to commence at Jaffa - to Elizabeth’s dismay. Still, it went ahead with some of the Jerusalem converts like Bloch involved. Finn’s help was acknowledged after his loss of the Jerusalem post. At a meeting of the Christian Israelites in Jerusalem at his house, on 14 December 1862, after he had made a speech on the subject of Jewish agriculture in the Holy Land, fears were expressed that most would be too timid to engage in it after he had gone.

{25} A Real Son of Zion: Ben Zion Friedman and the Jewish Mission at Safed

Kelvin Crombie

Since the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, Safed has attracted many pious Jews, many of whom were adherents of Cabbalist Judaism which claims the “Zohar” as its source and inspiration.

There were some interruptions, especially the devastating earthquake of 1837 and the period of the First World War, when thousands of Safed Jews left, died or were deported. Apart from these, the Safed Jewish community has lived a virtually unmolested life. Unmolested, that is, despite the fact that under Islamic law they were classified as ‘dhimmis’ or second class citizens and were subject to all the disadvantages which this status placed upon them. Economically, too, the Safed Jews were in an untenable position, being the poorest of the town’s communities, and relying for their survival upon the ‘haluka’ (distribution of alms) sent by European Jews.

The “Mission” to the Jews made a significant contribution to the development of this city from the mid-1880’s onwards. For about 30 years the welfare of this Jewish mission revolved around one man, a Hebrew Christian and former rabbi named Ben Zion (“Son of Zion”) Friedman. The Jewish “Mission” primarily in question was CMJ (Church’s Ministry among the Jews), or as it was popularly known last century, the LJS (London Jews Society).

The LJS made its initial efforts to establish a mission in Palestine in 1822, but all efforts failed until 1833. During these intervening years a number of LJS missionaries visited Safed, and John Nicolayson actually lived there for several months in 1826. Nicolayson was exposed to the religious extremism of the Jewish community, and related such information to the Society’s main office in London. Gidney, a later LJS historian, wrote of the Safed Jews: “Some of them told a former missionary of the Society that, if he succeeded in making a convert, he must dig a grave for him, as he would never be able to keep him alive there.”¹

Following the consolidation of the LJS’s presence in Jerusalem, with the arrival of Michael Solomon Alexander, a former rabbi, as first Protestant bishop in 1842, the LJS looked to expand its operations. In 1843 it decided to establish a mission in Safed. Two Hebrew Christians, P.H. Shernchuss and A.J. Behrens, both graduates of the LJS Hebrew Missionary College in London, arrived in Safed in June 1843 accompanied by the experienced {26} Nicolayson. A mission house was procured and a daily Hebrew service was begun along the lines of the daily Hebrew services in Jerusalem. The following year another Hebrew Christian, a Dr. Kiel, was sent there in order to establish a medical work among the Jewish population.

Stiff opposition followed, and severe *cherems* (excommunications or curses) were issued by the leading rabbis against anyone having contact with the missionaries. During the next few years a number of LJS missionaries laboured in order to establish a solid base in Safed, but all efforts failed. From about 1852, no permanent workers remained there, but the LJS retained its properties and in forthcoming years made yearly visits to the city.

¹ Gidney, Rev., *History of the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews*, London 1908, p. 248.

Also in 1852, a baby boy was born to a rabbi in Russia. The boy's name was Ben Zion Friedman. Later Rabbi Friedman came with his young son to Safed in order for the boy to study and become a renowned rabbi.

During one of the yearly LJS visits to Safed, young Friedman, now a rabbi, like many other young Jewish men, engaged in religious debate with the missionaries. He was quietly impressed with their message. Friedman visited Jerusalem, in about 1876, in order to visit the Western Wall and re-establish contact with the missionaries.

His friends in Safed soon found this out and used every effort to bring him back again. In order to escape the terrible persecution which they raised against him, he was disguised and in the dead of night sent to Jaffa, where he embarked on a steamer and eventually found himself in London.²

In London, Friedman became actively involved with the LJS operations. He was baptized by a pastor named Stern in December 1878 at the Episcopal Jews Chapel, which formed part of the huge complex owned and operated by the LJS known as "Palestine Place." Under Stern's direction, Friedman began some missionary work, especially among the young men who entered the LJS "Wanderers' Home." He began studying at the LJS Hebrew Missionary College in November 1880.

Meanwhile international events were preparing conditions for Friedman's return to Palestine. Persecutions against the Jewish people in Russia erupted in 1881, forcing thousands of Jews to flee from Czarist control. Several thousand braved the odds and came to Palestine. The LJS in Jaffa, and especially at Jerusalem, were inundated with these new Russian arrivals. This situation forced them to expand their work. To accommodate this extra work, two Hebrew Christians, Leo Oczeret and Friedman, were sent back 'home' from the missionary training college.

Friedman returned to Jerusalem on 14 November 1882 and was immediately plunged into the mass of work associated with the Russian Jews. Initially, little assistance was offered to these refugees by the local Jewish {27} population or the European Jewish philanthropic societies and families, including the Rothschilds. In contradiction, the LJS offered social, spiritual and material assistance. Up to 70 Russian Jews attended the daily, 7:00 a.m. Hebrew service in Christ Church. About the same number were daily employed on some LJS property outside the city walls, clearing and preparing it for cultivation. Later, this property (the Sanitarium) was used for the new and large LJS hospital for the Jews. Many of the sick Russians were treated in the existing LJS hospital within the Old City.

European Jewish awareness of the assistance offered to their brethren by the Mission provoked a response. Edmond Rothschild changed from his previously resistant attitude, to one of open assistance. He actually wrote that it was his fear of a British missionary plot which strongly contributed to his reversal of opinion.³

Friedman quickly found himself engaged in multifarious activities. He assisted with the daily Hebrew service in Christ Church and the weekly Saturday service on the Sanitarium property. When an evening class began on this same property, Friedman was involved. For many years, three monthly visits had been made to Hebron, where medical assistance was offered-and a gospel tract, if desired. Friedman participated in such visits. Weekly visits were also made to the LJS-affiliated colony, Artouf⁴ and Friedman often participated in these

² JMI, 1916, p. 48.

³ Rothschild to Hirsch, 6 April 1883, in Yavniely, S., *Sefer Ha-Zionist*, Tel Aviv 1944, p. 81; and Laskov, S., *The Biluim* (Hebrew), Jerusalem 1979, p. 30.

⁴ Pileggi, David: "The Experiment at Artouf", *Mishkan*, no. 12, 1990

visits, too. Friedman was also actively involved with the evangelism at the LJS Hospital. In April 1885 he took charge of the daily Hebrew service, while assisting with the English and German services on Sunday. On 28 December 1884 he and Oczeret were ordained deacons by a Bishop Hannington in Jerusalem. One month later he married Margarete Isabella James in Christ Church.

Oczeret, meanwhile, had been dispatched to Safed in June 1884 in order to reestablish a permanent LJS mission there. Oczeret was soon afterwards assisted by the appointment of N. Shadan, a doctor and local Christian Arab, who was commissioned to set up a medical work in Safed. The initial work revolved around the Mission house, which served as medical centre and church. Two services were held on Sunday, English/German and Arabic, while Hebrew services were held at least four days during the week. Shadan treated many people at the dispensary, and Oczeret shared the gospel to them while they waited for treatment.

But as so often had happened at Safed, disaster struck. Oczeret, a man in his mid-30's, fell desperately sick and was relieved of his duties. LJS turned to Friedman to replace Oczeret temporarily. Although advised of the dangers of accepting such a dangerous position, Friedman took up the challenge and returned to his adopted city on 26 June 1885.

Although not greeted with open arms by the Jewish community, Friedman still was able to write that he felt the community was less aggressive towards missionaries than he remembered. That they weren't too {28} concerned is shown by the attendance of some 78 Jewish people to the dispensary on June 28th. Medical assistance was received, Friedman addressed them in German and then offered up prayer on their behalf in Hebrew.

Friedman remained in Safed for several weeks, and was then recalled to Jerusalem, while L.P. Weinberg, a Hebrew Christian from the Jaffa station, replaced him in Safed.

Back in Jerusalem, Friedman was given more responsibilities. He took over the daily Hebrew service, the teaching at the Enquirers Home and the House of Industry. It was evident that his stint at Safed had prepared him for future leadership work.

Friedman's future station in life was determined on 31 July 1886, when Oczeret died while receiving treatment in Vienna. Weinberg remained at his post in Safed, but it became clear that he was required back in Jaffa in order to cope with the mass of work involved with the new Jewish colonies in that area. The LJS realized that Friedman was needed back in Safed. To prepare him for his task, Friedman was ordained priest by Bishop WPF Blyth at Christ Church on Trinity Sunday, while the latter was en-route to England from Burma.⁵ Soon afterwards, the call to return to Safed was received, and Friedman and his faithful wife returned to the city on the hill on 10 August 1887-this time permanently.

Consolidation at Last

The LJS work at Safed was modelled upon the work at Jerusalem. Street evangelism was difficult, so emphasis was given to the medical work, inviting visitors to the Mission house, schools and other educational work, and to missionary journeys to villages and colonies and wherever Jewish people lived. From the outset, Friedman's leadership of these activities was strong and effectual.

Friedman was greatly encouraged in his work when in 1889 Rachel Bevas, a 17-year-old Jew, confessed faith in Jesus and was baptized. Bevas, educated at the LJS Jerusalem Girls

⁵ Blyth was appointed in 1887 to be the fourth Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem following the dissolution of the Anglo/German Protestant Bishopric in 1886.

School, and who for some time resided at Artouf, later became involved in the LJS Safed Girls School.

Safed lacked modern medical services. As in Jerusalem, the LJS was among the pioneers in this field, which further provoked the Jewish community to establish their own such facilities. In 1889 Alexander Iliewitz, an experienced Hebrew Christian doctor, arrived from the LJS Jerusalem Hospital. Iliewitz was obliged to retire in 1893, and was temporarily replaced by E.W. Gurney Masterman, amateur archaeologist and doctor from the LJS Jerusalem Hospital. Masterman had a busy period at Safed, and informed the LJS London Committee that there was a wonderful opportunity there for medical expansion, even for the building of a small {29} hospital. Masterman also mentioned the respect which the Safed Jews held for Friedman.

His report convinced the LJS Committee and in April 1894 a doctor, W.H. Anderson, arrived in Safed in order to expand the medical work. Anderson's dispensary was daily filled with Jewish patients, causing him also to request the construction of a hospital. The London Committee agreed and money was collected. A small, temporary hospital was opened on 21 February 1896 while a suitable site was purchased for the permanent hospital near the Jewish quarter. A Jewish organization was afterwards set up in order to scrutinize the LJS medical activities named the "Holy Watch." Anderson wrote in 1898:

*Spies were sent to the Society's little temporary Hospital, to study our methods of work and to take note of our arrangements, and on a recent Sabbath morning, a printed "Cherem," a copy of that recently published in Jerusalem, was read in the synagogues and posted on the doors of the same.*⁶

At the same time that the *Cherem* was being posted, the Chief Rabbi's nephew lay seriously ill, and was attended by Anderson.

An out-patients department was completed on the purchased property in 1900. By 1904 the new hospital was completed-a fine large new building with beds for 40 patients. Nathan Schur wrote in his book, *History of Safed*, that both treatment and medicines were free, and that, "At the beginning, the Jews never had an answer to this institution."⁷

Like a repetition of the battle between the Jewish community and the US in Jerusalem during the 1840's concerning medical work, the Safed Jews now also began to expand their medical work.

Initial opposition to the new hospital subsided somewhat when a wellknown rabbi was later cured there. But, like a repetition of the battle between the Jewish community and the LJS in Jerusalem during the 1840's concerning medical work, the Safed Jews now also began to expand their medical work. As in Jerusalem, it was the Rothschild family who established the first Jewish hospital in Safed to combat that of the LJS. This hospital, which opened in 1912, was immediately opposite the LJS hospital.⁸

The LJS hospital was used by both Jews and Arabs, from Safed, nearby villages and the new Jewish agricultural colonies.

As at Jerusalem, high priority was given to the establishment of schools for Jewish children. A small Girls School was opened in September 1887, with Mrs. Friedman and a Mrs. Maas

⁶ LJS Report, 1898, p. 78.

⁷ Schur, N., *History of Safed* (Hebrew), Israel 1983, p. 223.

⁸ Eliav, M., *The Formation of the New Yishuv, 1880-1914* (Hebrew), Jerusalem 1978 p. 428; Bar-El, Y & Levi N., "The Beginning of Modern Medicine in Galilean Cities" (Hebrew), in *Cathedra*, December 1989 no. 54, p.102; Schur, N., *ibid*, p. 223.

as teachers. Friedman reported shortly afterwards that, as a result of repeated *cherems* against the {30} school, most of the children were forced to leave. These *cherems* were pronounced in the synagogue and notices were posted in Hebrew and Yiddish.

The French-based Alliance Israelite set up a rival Jewish girls school in 1891, offering free meals to the children and gifts to the parents, thereby drawing away some of the girls. Yet there were still enough students in the LJS school to prompt the LJS to send out another English teacher, Miss James, (the sister of Mrs. Friedman), in 1891. Her arrival freed Mrs. Friedman to devote more time to assisting the Jewish mothers of the girls in the school. Also about 1890, Friedman succeeded in bringing his only sister, Giselle, to Safed where he led her to a saving knowledge of Jesus. Giselle then went to England where she was baptized in 1891. She then returned to Safed to teach in the LJS school.⁹

At Mrs. Friedman's Dorcas meetings, the mothers of the pupils were taught how to sew, make their own baby clothes, etc. The materials for this work were supplied by the LJS. Tea and food were offered to these ladies before they began work, as many were very poor.

These educational activities upset the Jewish leadership in Safed. Newspaper reports were filed against the LJS schools, especially in 1893, and on 29 December 1893 the Hebrew "Habazeleth" paper wrote concerning the Safed Jewish community:

*And to those parents whose children attend the schools of Enticers, appeals should be made again and again to depart from the evil way in which there is spiritual death, and they should be separated from the congregation of Israel.*¹⁰

An extension of the educational work began in 1906 with the opening of a school for Jewish boys. Attendance at the boys school was never large as there were many Talmudic schools for Jewish boys. Yet by 1910 some 20 boys daily attended the school when the *cherem* was not in force. Into the 20th century Jewish opposition to missionary activities increased due to the added strength of Zionist opposition. The mission schools came very much under attack.

*At one time the Zionist teachers of the land formed a league against the Mission, and spread a rumour that all the children had been poisoned. This was followed by a great meeting in the synagogue and for the moment the numbers fell from 207 to 60. A German Jewish Society opened a school next to the CMJ school, but the children still came, and the numbers rose again. When Rev. and Mrs. F. L. Denman visited Safed in 1913, the report was spread that they were all to be baptised and to present crosses and flowers to Mr. Denman. Teachers' houses were stoned and many children left. Unfortunately no teacher could be found for the boys school and it was closed.*¹¹

{31} Friedman opened a small library in 1890 attached to his house, and this activity was closely associated with a Book Shop. The Jewish community reacted to these activities by opening their own Hebrew library in 1891 to keep curious young Jews away from the Mission. The Book Shop grew and, by the early 1890's, two Hebrew Christians, the Marashes, were in charge. Mrs. Marash, who was supported by the British and Foreign Bible Society, also assisted in the school by teaching Hebrew, while Mr. Marash aided Friedman on his missionary journeys.

A display window was added to the Book Shop in 1899, displaying Hebrew passages showing Messianic texts. The Book Shop also supplied Hebrew papers and writing

⁹ Ben Zion had never seen Giselle until she arrived in Palestine. As a young girl she had witnessed the pogroms in Russia. She died in 1956 at the age of 80.

¹⁰ טרויפֿע 1894, פפ. 97-98.

¹¹ Adeney, Rev. J., *History of CMJ, 1908-1958*, CMJ HQ St Albans, p. 22.

materials, and Jewish people could have their letters written for them in a number of languages.

One of Friedman's most interesting ventures was the periodic missionary journeys he made, accompanied by a medical missionary and Marash. Every year, and occasionally more frequently, lengthy journeys were made to towns and villages with Jewish residents, such as Sidon, Acre, Tiberias, Tyre, El Bukaian, Shef 'Omar, Meiron and the Zionist colonies of Metulla, Petach Tikva, Samarin and Jauni.

One of his first such ventures occurred in 1887, when he accepted an invitation to visit the Rothschild colony Jaulan (Golan). Laurence Oliphant, a prominent English supporter of the Zionist fore-runner, the Chovevei Zion, had sent money to Oczeret for distribution to this colony. It fell to Friedman to deliver this money, prompting the colony to invite him to visit them. On this occasion relations between Friedman and the colonists were cordial, but on many later occasions Friedman encountered stiff opposition, especially from the colony managers.

Friedman became familiar with the colonizing ventures of the Chovevei Zion and of Baron Rothschild. Rothschild in particular resented the presence of the missionaries, as the LJS wrote in 1894:

...it has been repeatedly stated in the Hebrew papers that when the Baron (Rothschild) first visited the colonies in Galilee, he expressed the hope that the provision made for the education and employment of the Jewish poor would have the effect of driving away the Missionaries from the Holy Land.¹²

On the yearly visit to Haifa a room was hired in a hotel near the Jewish centre and medical assistance and religious debate offered. On such visits Friedman often visited Mrs. Oliphant, widow of Laurence.

On one occasion in 1896 he and Anderson visited the remote village of El Bukaia (Pekiin). On this visit, Friedman and Anderson were refused entry into the synagogue and the house where medical visits had previously been held. They were told that their assistance was no longer required. Friedman had a different and more encouraging story to relate of their {32} visit to Pekiin in 1894, when he actually preached in the synagogue there. He wrote:

These opportunities of preaching Christ to the Jews in their own synagogues are. now in the East fast becoming things of the past. El Bukaia and Shef 'Omar are the only places in the Holy Land where the followers of Jesus of Nazareth enjoy the same privilege as the Chachamim of expounding the Scriptures in the synagogues-the only remaining links connecting our own time with that of the Apostolic age."¹³

Until the beginning of the First World War, Friedman and his colleagues continued these adventurous journeys, and an interesting relationship developed between him and the Jewish colonists. As the Zionists strengthened their grip upon the land, opposition to the LJS initiatives increased. Yet there is no doubt that Friedman and Anderson had gained the respect of the local inhabitants.

When Rothschild delegated the running of his colonies to the PICA (Palestine Colonisation Association) in 1901, several hundred labourers from these colonies were

¹² LJS Report 1894, p. 95.

¹³ JMI 1895, p.122.

dismissed. Some of these labourers asked Friedman if they could be accepted into one of the LJS institutions.¹⁴

“One enquirer who comes to me has just had his wife and child taken away from him because he comes to the Mission; unless he gives up coming, they will remain away.”

Friedman on occasion wrote of the difficulties to be endured by enquiring Jews, because intense harassment would become their lot once their interest was discovered. At Jerusalem the LJS had many institutions to assist enquiring and believing Jews, but at Safed there were none. Rachel Bevas found work as a teacher in the Girls School, but few other opportunities existed. Another teacher, Miss Cotton, who assisted Friedman with the enquirers, wrote: “One enquirer who comes to me has just had his wife and child taken away from him because he comes to the Mission; unless he gives up coming, they will remain away.”¹⁵

Friedman also related how three inquirers were exposed by the Jewish community. One was beaten and thereafter stopped coming, the second was locked in his room and forced to promise never again to attend the “Mission,” while the third was kidnapped and sent to a Jewish colony.

One danger all enquirers faced was the threat of losing their *haluka* assistance. For this reason many genuine enquirers left Safed, moving to Jerusalem, London or further afield. The LJS Report of 1897 stated that five inquirers from Safed were to be found in London.

{33} There were few Jewish baptisms in Safed. A 55-year old man named Reuven was baptised in 1898 and subsequently underwent persecution. To add to his woes, his wife went insane and his son left him. The few that did become open believers and remained, became closely attached to either of the two missions in Safed - the Scots and the LJS. One notable Jewish believer attached to the Scottish mission was Leon (later Sir Leon) Levinson, first president of the International Hebrew Christian Alliance.

The LJS community revolved around the Mission house and Hospital complexes. Most of the spiritual activities were held in the Mission house, where the Central Hotel is presently located. But in 1911, the LJS began the construction of a Church on the side of the Castle Hill which overlooks Safed. Construction difficulties, allied with opposition from the nearby Jewish quarter slowed down the building process to such an extent that the “Immanuel Church” was still incomplete on the eve of the First World War. The LJS never used the Church. Following the War the nearly completed building had several uses, and at the time of writing it is, ironically, being used as a school by the Shas religious party. But the Municipality is endeavouring to repossess the building and turn it into a Museum of the Galilee.

The First World War and Dislocation

The First World War drastically affected the life of Safed as it did the entire population of Palestine. Political events within the Turkish Empire in the years preceding 1914 had already prepared the populace for future hardships.

Following the Young Turks revolt of 1908, Jewish men throughout the Empire were eligible for conscription into the Turkish Army. Friedman on several occasions recorded the effect of this act upon the Jews of Safed, once stating that 70 young Jewish men had left the city and

¹⁴ LJS Report 1901, p.102.

¹⁵ LJS Report, 1897, p. 92.

country. A number of these men had attended the LJS night school. In fact, many young Jewish men attended his classes to learn English in order to emigrate to English-speaking countries. The New Testament was a standard teaching tool at these classes.

With the onset of war in 1914 more young men left. Many more were forced to leave following Turkey's decision to fight against the Allies. Those Jews holding foreign passports, especially Russian, were given the choice of leaving (often forcibly) or adopting Turkish nationality. Although a naturalized British subject, Friedman chose to remain in Safed and adopt Turkish nationality, as he was too sick to travel. Besides, he found it difficult to leave his adopted city and his people.

For the Jewish men who remained in Palestine the future was bleak, as many were pressed into labour gangs as slave labourers. This trend increased following the aborted Turkish/German attack on the Suez Canal {34} in February, 1915, following which the Turks feared an uprising of all unloyal subjects within its realm.

An allied naval blockade cut the country off from the outside world. The crops were disastrous, and whatever small amount was produced was hauled off to service the Turkish, Austrian, and German troops. Palestine was the most raped and devastated land within the Turkish Empire.

Life for the Friedman family was intolerable as they had the additional disadvantage of being former British subjects. At a time when the Turks hung locals on the slightest suspicion of espionage, this link was indeed disadvantageous. Miss James later wrote, "...it was dangerous for anyone to express an opinion or to be seen visiting us, the only English people left in Safed."¹⁶

As elsewhere in Palestine, the Turks commandeered all British buildings. The school building was commandeered by the Turkish Government, as were other Mission properties. The beautiful Hospital building was taken over by the army, which billeted soldiers in the upper story and stabled horses in the lower.

For Friedman, both the physical and mental pain became unbearable. For almost 30 years he had been the flag-bearer of Protestant missionary work in Safed. For more than 30 years he had been a resident of this city and a lover of the people, especially those of his own nation. Now, before his very eyes, the Turkish army and authorities were destroying much that he held precious in life. Weakened by the prevalent diseases rampaging Safed, Friedman passed away on New Year's Day, 1916. He was laid to rest under an olive tree in his garden adjoining the Mission-house. The funeral service was conducted by James Cohen from the United Free Church of Scotland mission in Tiberias.¹⁷ Friedman was one of hundreds who died of disease and deprivation during this period.

Written sources for this period are rather scarce, but Miss James was able to keep a brief account of the events in Safed. This, in fact, was a dangerous undertaking, as she wrote in November 1917:

*"The Government is prosecuting its search for spies with increased vigour. We have been secretly warned to destroy or hide all letters and papers, especially those written in English."*¹⁸

Life for the two sisters deteriorated as the Allied forces advanced into the country. Towards the end of 1917 they were interned by the Turks and were not released until October 1918,

¹⁶ JMI, 1916, p. 66

¹⁷ JMI, 1916, p. 49.

¹⁸ JMI, 1920, p. 70.

following the Allied liberation of Safed. When conditions permitted, Mrs. Friedman and Miss James left Safed in order to recuperate. The British forces meanwhile took possession of the LJS properties. Only in December 1919 were they returned to the LJS who now, under the leadership of P. Nyland, had the difficult task of re-establishing their work in Safed. Anderson returned, and was later {35} assisted by C.H. Corbett, also a physician. Their task was complicated by the arrival of many Arab Christian refugees from Lebanon. The Hospital sheltered many of the refugees.

Meanwhile, Arabic and English services began in the Mission Hall in conjunction with the Scottish mission. The church building was still incomplete. English classes with Hebrew explanations also began.

But Safed in 1920 was a totally different place than the Safed of 1914. Now only 4,000 Jewish people remained there, compared to some 13,000 prior to the war. The LJS also had to contend with a drastically different Europe and Middle East, coupled with a large decrease in finances and a large outlay for reconstruction of its battered properties. And to add salt to the wounds, they became involved in a complicated legal battle concerning property in Safed.

All of these matters caused the Society to offer their properties to the Scottish Mission in 1921. The Scots agreed to pay 15,000 pounds, thereby consolidating their position in the Galilee and allowing the LJS to consolidate its position in Judea.

Conclusion

Much of the pioneering period of the Jewish mission in Safed revolved around that one central personality-Ben Zion Friedman. One cannot separate the two. When informed of Friedman's death, Dr. Anderson remarked:

*Eternity alone will reveal the full extent of his work of faith and labour of love in the Gospel. I look upon Mr. Friedman as one of the greatest Hebrew Christian missionaries. His work was essentially quiet and unobtrusive; it was nonetheless real and far reaching.*¹⁹

Present day Safed resident Shmuel Pearl remembers stories from his childhood about the missionary Friedman keeping himself locked indoors when he first came back to Safed.²⁰ But even if this story were true and Friedman did remain indoors initially, the very fact that he dared to return to Safed as a Hebrew Christian reveals the depth of character and determination of the man. The consolidation of the Safed Jewish Mission was due mostly to his vision and perseverance. Other missionaries to the Jewish people would have been found wanting in such a situation. His efforts have probably not been granted the appreciation they have deserved. Indeed, Anderson's words following Friedman's death may now be more relevant: "I believe that many a now-unknown convert will rise up to call him blessed in that Great Day, now, possibly, not so far distant."²¹

¹⁹ JMI, 1916, p. 49.

²⁰ Conversation held with Pearl in Safed on 30 October 1990. Pearl is the father of the present mayor of Safed and the son of Zev Pearl and was a good friend of Dr. Torrance, the well-known Scottish doctor who established the Scottish mission in Tiberias.

²¹ JMI, 1916, p. 49.

{37} Harcourt Samuel: Hebrew Christian Leader

T. H. Bendor-Samuel

T.H. Bendor-Samuel held pastorates in the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches from 1927 to 1955. From 1955 to 1973 he was Director of the Mildmay Mission to the Jews and presently he serves as the Consultant Director of Messianic Testimony.

Harcourt Samuel is the eldest surviving son of Elijah Bendor Samuel. Elijah was born in Kovna, Lithuania and came to England in 1886. The elder Samuel settled in Birmingham where, through a friendship with a believer in his workplace, he came to faith in the Messiah. The Saviour meant very much to him, and he passed on to his children a sincere desire, above all else, to do God's will. Harcourt was born in 1903 at the Central Hall, Philpot Street, Whitechapel where his parents worked in the Mildmay Mission to the Jews. The family moved from Whitechapel to East Ham and then to Ilford where Harcourt attended the County High School. The five children had the privilege of growing up in a home where the Bible was read and prayer was offered every day and where their Jewish descent was valued.

On leaving school, Harcourt joined the throng of commuters who went up each day from the London suburbs to work in the city, then the hub of trade and empire. He served on the staff of the Head Office of the Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance Company in Cornhill, just across the street from the Bank of England. Here, he acquired a knowledge of the business world that was to be of great use to him when he found his true vocation in so largely directing the affairs of the International Hebrew Christian Alliance. Commenting on Paul's tribute to David that he "served his own generation by the will of God," Harcourt has written that this has meant three activities for him: ministering in the Christian Church which is Christ's chosen instrument to make salvation known; entering public life and serving the Lord there; and working especially among his own people - Israel.

There was in the South Park district of Ilford an independent Chapel run on Brethren lines. Here the family found Christian fellowship and opportunity for service. Among the activities at South Park Chapel was an evangelistic activity in the villages of Essex run by the young people. Harcourt, then in his teens, participated in this outreach. Seeing the need for witness in a hamlet named Lambourne End, he commenced Sunday evening services for which he took responsibility in one of the cottages. The {38} enterprise was blessed of God. Harcourt found it possible to purchase a disused Army hut and this became the home of a small independent chapel which continued for many years.

In 1922 a group of independent evangelical churches came together to form an association which became known as the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches. The witness of Lambourne was linked with this. Harcourt was asked to serve on the F.I.E.C. Council, and after some years became Recording Secretary. He has maintained an influential part in the direction of these churches, being now the member of Council with the longest service. He is a Baptist by conviction but has always sought to foster fellowship with all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and thanks God for all he has learned in the fellowship of the three churches he has served as minister.

Since 1866 there had existed in England an association known as the British Hebrew Christian Alliance and Prayer Union. There was a similar Alliance in the United States. In 1925 the two alliances joined to arrange an international conference of Hebrew Christians. This was held in Islington, London. Elijah Bendor Samuel was the secretary of the British Alliance. In making the arrangements he asked his son, Harcourt, to help him. Thus began the

long years of service Harcourt has given the I.H.C.A. The Jewish believers gathered at Islington passed this resolution:

We Hebrew Christians from different parts of the world, standing for the Evangelical Faith, now met in Conference, reaffirm our living Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Messiah and our oneness in Him; and do hereby declare that we now form ourselves into an International Hebrew Christian Alliance.

At a conference of the Alliance held in Hamburg in 1928, Harcourt became Recording Secretary and in 1931 he was appointed General Secretary. He was now able to give all his time to the work of the Alliance and its promotion. This took him to many churches in Great Britain and the Alliance became well known and appreciated.

In 1929 Harcourt married Ruth Harvey. Their first home was in Seven Kings, Essex. They had two daughters, Irene and Hope. Irene has served in the I.H.C.A. office for many years. While the Samuels lived in Seven Kings, Ruth's cousin, Justina Lofty, became Harcourt's secretary and made her home with them. Her service for the Alliance lasted until her retirement.

Within two years of its founding the Alliance had 12 national alliances affiliated with it. In 1934 he accepted a call to the pastorate of Ramsgate Baptist Church, serving both as Minister of the church and Secretary of the Alliance. The death of Sir Leon Levison, president of the Alliance, brought him also the editorship of the quarterly magazine, "The Hebrew {39} Christian." In memory of Levison, the Alliance purchased Memorial House in South West London which provided office and hostel accommodations for many years.

The growing menace of the Nazis now brought the Alliance increased responsibility, for there were many Hebrew Christian refugees from central Europe. Considerable funds needed to be raised for their accommodation and support. Some government grants helped. All this brought him the constant tasks of administering affairs and finance. Few men could have carried as heavy a load as he did in those years.

War conditions also brought him civic duties. In addition to the constant bombing raids to which the whole country was subjected. Ramsgate lay within cannonshot of occupied France. The town seemed to empty almost overnight. Sixty percent of the population left. Harcourt remained in his church, now greatly reduced in numbers, but Ruth and the children wisely found refuge in less dangerous surroundings. Justina took up work in the town.

We Hebrew Christians reaffirm our living Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Messiah and do hereby declare that we now form ourselves into an International Hebrew Christian Alliance.
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Pastoral work had brought him into contact with the local hospital and schools. Men capable of administering these and other civic affairs were needed, so the local authorities co-opted him to the town Council. He remained a member for more than 23 years. At first, his special responsibility was the Housing Committee. This brought him into contact with many needy families. Earlier, he had been the Free Church representative on the Education Committee, becoming its Chairman, with opportunities for close contact with some of the 50 schools that were under its administration. The constitution of the local hospital provided for ministers of the churches to be ex-officio members of its General Committee. In 1940 he became its Chairman. The Committee was expanded to cover a group of nine hospitals in the southeast of England. He found

these important duties to be of absorbing interest and they were certainly of lasting value to many.

Harcourt's services to the town were much appreciated. In 1944 he was elected Mayor of Ramsgate. He was reelected in 1955 and also in 1957, filling that office three times. His civic tasks continued to extend beyond the town itself. He was now Chairman of the Isle of Thanet Hospital Management Committee and a Governor of Westminster Hospital, London. He also served as Chairman of the Thanet Divisional Executive for Education, as a member of the Kent Education Committee, and as Chairman of the Governors of two local schools. These services were recognized in {40} January 1960 when the Queen conferred the Order of the British Empire on him.

Harcourt Samuel's work as Executive Secretary of the I.H.C.A. involved him in frequent visits to Israel, many European countries, the United States and Canada, South America and South Africa. The task of the Alliance, caring for the world communities of Jewish believers in the Messiah, brought encouragement to many and earned him many friends.

In 1949 he relinquished the pastorate he had held for 15 years at Ramsgate Baptist Church. He is by nature a preacher and so it was no surprise when in 1951 he continued this ministry by becoming honorary pastor of a smaller cause, the Birchington Baptist Church, a few miles along the coast. When in 1978 he retired from the pastorate there, he left the church in a far stronger state than it had been when he had come to it 27 years earlier.

The chief aim of Bendor-Samuel's life has remained the need for Jewish believers in the Lord Jesus to witness to the men and women of their race.

In 1933 Harcourt became a life trustee of a charity known as Abraham's Vineyard. This had an interesting history. As far back as 1851 a Mrs. Finn, the wife of a former H. M. Consul in Palestine, had purchased a piece of land just outside the city of Jerusalem and placed it in trust for the benefit of poor Jews who could be employed there. The members of this trust had passed the land on to the Alliance who now formed the trust into a limited company. The charity's funds are not large but the company has been useful through the years that have followed. Harcourt is the only survivor of the original life trustees. He has also taken a great interest in a parallel charity - the Ebenezer Home for elderly Hebrew Christians. From its inception until very recently he was a member of the Ebenezer Board.

The I.H.C.A. office had been located in Memorial House since the 1930's. In 1970 it was transferred to Ramsgate. Harcourt has continued to make quite frequent journeys from Ramsgate to London and other places and, though advancing in years, he has stood the constant strain remarkably well.

The chief aim of his life has remained the need for Jewish believers in the Lord Jesus to witness to the men and women of their race. It was of special interest to him to be invited to join the Council of the Mildmay Mission to the Jews in 1947 and, on the death of Charles Fisher, to become its chairman. He continued to hold this office when the Mildmay Mission united with the Hebrew Christian Testimony in 1973 to form the Messianic Testimony.

He says of his life's work,

{41} *It has been a very great privilege to have been at the centre of the Alliance's work during such historic events in the life of our people as the Nazi holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel. In both, the Alliance has been able to help Hebrew Christians and their witness. Another privilege has been meeting fellow Hebrew Christians in different parts of the world, some of whom have real eminence as scholars and preachers; some of whom have filled humbler places, but lived in them to the glory of God.*

Now, at 86, Harcourt is still widely effective and still seeks to live and work to the glory of God. Frederick Levison, in his recent biography of his father, Sir Leon Levison, says of Harcourt:

A second generation Hebrew Christian, he sat loose to most of the feasts, fasts and traditions of Israel. At the same time joining with those groups of Hebrew Christians who find inspiration in them. His mildness of manner and ready friendliness conceal both a spiritual depth and business acumen which, along with the willingness to carry a heavy work-load, have made him a prime asset to the Alliance.

May the writer be permitted to add, he is greatly loved and none could wish for a better brother!

{42} A Missionary Journey to Palestine with Bonar and McCheyne in 1839

Allan M. Harman

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An amazing missionary journey was undertaken by a group of Scottish clergymen in 1839. The fullest account of the visit is by Andrew Bonar and Robert Murray McCheyne, and entitled *A Narrative of a Visit to the Holy Land*.¹ It was a journey which was to have considerable impact on Jewish missions, first of all on the Continent of Europe and then afterwards in Palestine itself. They undertook an arduous trip, travelling across southern Europe, then by ship to Alexandria, and finally by camel from Egypt to Palestine. Though the four visitors separated at Beirut, they all travelled through Europe and back to Scotland.

The book itself is a tribute to the meticulous care which Bonar and McCheyne took to document their journey. The text is a detailed account of all their travels, practically on a daily basis. It is accompanied by maps and many sketches, presumably by McCheyne, as it is known that he was gifted with his pen as an artist. However, much of the writing may actually be the work of Bonar.² The *Narrative* contains many statistics concerning the Jewish people, and gives a picture of the state of missionary activity in all the areas through which they passed. They made enquiries about other places and recorded the information they were given. Throughout, they drew attention to biblical passages which had a bearing on the matter in hand. Over a thousand passages, most of them from the Old Testament, are utilized in this way, and with quite a few there is reference to the Hebrew text. The youthfulness of Bonar and McCheyne can easily be overlooked by a modern reader, but they were only 29 and 28 years of age respectively when they set out for Palestine. However, their biblical and theological knowledge, their linguistic abilities, their spirituality, and their maturity of judgement were exceptional for men of that age.

The Scottish Mission to Palestine 1839

A concern for the Jewish people was present in Scotland right from the time of the Reformation. Though neither Luther nor Calvin expected a future conversion of Israel, yet in post-Reformation theology there was a strong {43} concern for the Jewish people.³ In the marginal notes of the Geneva Bible of 1560, the following comment occurs on Romans 11:15 and 26: "He 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." Many of the Puritans held to this position, and the Westminster *Directory of Public Worship* said that prayer was to be made "for the conversion of the Jews". The same viewpoint was set forth in Scottish

¹ The references which are given in this article to this volume are taken from the 1847 printing, and they are placed in parentheses in the text.

² N.L. Walker, *Chapters from the History of the Free Church of Scotland*, new edition, Edinburgh 1895) p. 168, called Bonar "the historiographer of the mission" and refers to it as "his narrative".

³ For an excellent survey of post-Reformation thinking on the conversion of the Jews see I.H. Murray, *The Puritan Hope*, Banner of Truth Trust 1971, especially pp. 39-55 and 115ff.

commentaries such as Dickson's on the Psalms and Ferguson's on the Epistles, and in sermons by such men as Thomas Boston of Ettrick.

This desire for the conversion of the Jews was maintained in Scotland by evangelical ministers down into the 19th century. However, the concern for Israel seems to have been heightened by the arrival in Scotland of quite a number of Jewish people in the early 19th century. Missionary vision in general had been stimulated in Scotland in the half-century before the visit and as the theme of revival was coming to the fore, so also as an accompaniment, came a desire to reach out to the Jews with the gospel. From its inception in 1810 the *Christian Instructor* (under the editorship of Andrew Thomson) carried articles on the Jewish people and activities about endeavours to bring the gospel to them. This included reports of the meetings of the London Society for the Propagation of Christianity amongst the Jews and its Scottish auxiliaries.⁴

By the mid-1830's there was a deep concern on the part of many Scottish Christians for missionary work to the Jews. The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland appointed a Committee on the Conversion of the Jews to the Faith of Christ in 1837. The following year various overtures came to the General Assembly on the question of Jewish missions, and it responded by appointing a committee "to collect information respecting the Jews: their numbers, condition and character, what means have hitherto been employed by the Christian Church for their spiritual good and with what success, whether there are any openings for a mission to their nation and where these are most promising:" During the winter of 1838-39 a series of sermons was preached in Glasgow by ministers of the Church on the conversion of the Jews.⁵ One of these sermons was by John Duncan, who would become a missionary in Hungary, and eventually a professor in the Free Church of Scotland after the Disruption of 1843.⁶

The committee appointed by the General Assembly decided to fulfil its remit by sending out a commission of enquiry to Palestine and also to Eastern and Central Europe. Two senior ministers were selected, Alexander Keith, minister of St. Cyrus in Kincardineshire, and Alexander Black, Professor of Theology in Marischal College, Aberdeen. Robert Wodrow of Glasgow, who had cherished the idea for many years and who had proposed the visit, was also chosen to go, but he had later to withdraw from the visit. Robert Candlish made the suggestion that Robert Murray McCheyne and his close friend Andrew Bonar should make up the party.

{44} McCheyne was at the time in Edinburgh. His congregation was St. Peter's, Dundee, but because of his prevailing ill-health he was with his family in Edinburgh. When the news became known, Bonar wrote him saying: "His cure for you is *the fragrance of Lebanon* and the balmy air of Thy *land, O Immanuel,*" (cf. Cant. 4:11 and Is. 8:8). As for himself Bonar could not at first see how he could leave his congregation at Collace. In the same letter to McCheyne, Bonar explained that the deputation did not need his linguistic skill for they had a brilliant linguist named Black, and he felt that the three others could attain all the objects of

⁴ The article by Don Chambers, "Prelude to the last things: the Church of Scotland's mission to the Jews", *Scottish Church History Society Records XIX, 1* (1975), pp. 43-58, has much useful information yet lacks the theological and spiritual orientation needed for a true assessment. For comment on aspects of the background to the missionary movement, see G. White, "Highly Preposterous: Origins of Scottish Missions", *Scottish Church History Society Records XIX 2*, 1976, pp. 111-124.

⁵ *The conversion of the Jews*, 1839

⁶ This sermon is reprinted in J.S. Sinclair, ed., *Rich Gleanings after the Vintage from "Rabbi" Duncan*, London 1925, pp. 330-357. [Note: The Disruption was a controversy in Scotland over the autonomy of the Church, and led to the formation of the Free Church of Scotland in 1843. Ed.]

the visit.⁷ His concern for his congregation was great, but at length satisfactory arrangements were made and he agreed to go. This was a happy arrangement for two close friends to travel together, and in the end they had to fulfil a major part of the visit. The two older men were forced to abandon the visit at Beirut. Black's health was a problem, and the climate, together with the rough travelling, sapped his strength. He felt he could not carry through the projected visit to Galilee, and therefore the decision was made that he and Keith would return to Britain via Constantinople and the Danube. Black had to stay some months in Vienna, while Keith was seriously ill at Budapest. Ill-health so delayed their return, that it was not until well after McCheyne and Bonar had arrived back that they finally were able to return home.

The one object of their journey was, "To see the real condition and character of God's ancient people, and to observe whatever might contribute to interest others in their cause"

The journey was an arduous one. Repeatedly they faced dangers, and, on several occasions, there was the prospect that they would lose their lives. As Bonar and McCheyne were leaving Sidon to head for Galilee, a Greek Christian came and told them that a traveller had been killed by Arabs the day before. However, they committed themselves to God and pressed on. A day or two later, they were wakened by a soldier and two Jews who told them, in broken French, that a Jew had been shot the day before, two hours further on towards Safed. In addition they had to cope with accidents such as when Black fell from his camel on the way from Egypt to Palestine. This accident contributed towards Black's inability to fulfil the original plan, though in the providence of God it led to blessing because of the time Keith spent in Pesth. That city became the site of Jewish mission work from Scotland in 1841. One of the touring party rightly said: "Dr Black's fall from the camel was the first step towards Pesth."⁸ The plague was raging both in Egypt and in Palestine at that period, and they had to undergo periods of quarantine. McCheyne took very ill while in Beirut for a second visit, and then was left behind at Smyrna while Bonar and their travelling companion Calman went on to Constantinople. One Sabbath in Poland, Bonar, McCheyne, and Calman separated for a time of private devotions.

{45} McCheyne went about a mile and a half towards some hills, not realising that this was a area of frequent robberies and murders. Two men approached and tried to drag him into the nearby woods. He struggled violently for fifteen minutes and then completely exhausted he collapsed on the ground. The men talked to themselves for a while and then suddenly ran off. The comment on the incident was: "We felt that the hand of God, that had delivered us out of so many dangers during our previous wanderings, had been eminently stretched out again" (p.461).

An Investigative Journey

In the preface to their volume Bonar and McCheyne wrote that they only had one object in view in their journey: "To see the real condition and character of God's ancient people, and to observe whatever might contribute to interest others in their cause" (p.v). Wherever they went they made detailed enquiries concerning the Jewish people in the locality, and they commented on such matters as economic circumstances, educational opportunities, devotion to Jewish belief and openness to Christian teaching. At the end of a discussion relating to a particular place, there was usually a summary of their findings. Thus they surveyed the

⁷ Quoted in A. Smellie, *Robert Murray McCheyne*, London 1913, pp. 96-97.

⁸ Andrew A. Bonar, *Memoir and Remains of Robert Murray McCheyne*, p. 99.

situation in France and Italy, and they pointed out that in France the Jews were not gathered in large communities, but spread throughout the population. Hence, an itinerant missionary would be of more value there. However, in Italy the situation was different, and they recommended that, as the Jews were so numerous and the government not so interfering, a missionary be placed there who could minister to the Protestants and also reach out with the gospel to the Jews.

The major statement concerned the condition of the Jews in Palestine. The committee of the Church of Scotland which sent them out had provided them with a list of questions which they wished answered. The answers (given on pp.163-173) are a detailed response to a variety of questions. They reckoned that the total Jewish population of Palestine was 12,000, with approximately 7000 of these living in Jerusalem. The Jews in Palestine were supported by collections taken among Jewish people in other countries, with the Amsterdam community providing the largest sums. The Palestinian Jews came largely from Poland, with a strong representation from Russia. Most of them were the “elite of the devotional and strictly religious Jews of other countries.” The book provides an account of the history of missionary work in Palestine among the Jews from the arrival of a Swiss clergyman, Tschudi, in 1820 to the time of their visit. Details regarding cost of living and housing were also provided.

Similarly, Bonar and McCheyne gave detailed reports on all the places they visited in Asia Minor and Europe on their way home. For example, there was a detailed report on their visit of 17-20 September 1839 to Jassy in Hungary. This report was significant, for the first missionary to the Jews {46} sent out soon after by the Church of Scotland, in 1841, went to Jassy. They visited 12 of the synagogues there, though they noted that there were 200 synagogues in the town, more than 30 of which were large. Their arrival coincided with the beginning of the Day of Atonement, and they described how the greater part of Leviticus 16 was incorporated in the prayers, and how a Hebrew poem was read, but because it was such difficult Hebrew, the worshippers scarcely understood one word. They estimated that out of a total population of 50,000 about 20,000 were Jews.

Wherever they went they tried to make contact with the British Consul, carrying with them letters to her Majesty’s consuls, as well as letters to friends and merchants in the various countries they visited. In Jerusalem they found that the professed Christians (Greeks, Armenians and Roman Catholics) were more bitter enemies of the Jews than the Muslims. If a Jew was in danger he would flee to the house of a Turk rather than look to a Christian for help. Instead of showing love to Israel these Christians displayed great hatred, and even prevented Jews from passing the door of the church of the Holy Sepulchre. They then had this to say:

On this account, the kindness of Protestants appears to them very striking; and convinces them that here is a real difference in the religion we profess. And they are becoming strongly attached to British Christians. The fact that a British Consul should be sent to the Holy Land, with special instructions to interest himself in behalf of the Jews, and having for his district the very region formerly allotted to the twelve tribes of Israel! And how much more wonderful still, that our first Consul in Jerusalem should be one actuated by a deep and enlightened attachment to the cause of God’s ancient people! (p.149)

In regard to scenery, they compared the bleak and wild hills through which the river Rhone runs with the hills of Glencoe in Scotland. Other places did not impress them, including Mount Carmel. When they first saw it, they needed some persuasion that it was really Carmel. Because it lacked any imposing appearance, one of the party exclaimed: “Is this Carmel? Lachnagar is finer than this!” (p. 229).

At the same time as they were in Jerusalem, Sir Moses Montefiore, Sheriff of London and leader of English-speaking Jews at the time, was on a visit. He received them kindly and gave them cake and wine. He told them of his visit to other places including Safed and Tiberias, and they talked over “the state of the land, the miseries of the Jews, and the fulfilment of prophecy.” Later, Sir Moses was again to show kindness to them when they met up, in quarantine, at Carmel. The plague had not reached further north than Carmel, and all travellers had to wait there for 14 days and to wash their clothes in the sea for seven days. Sir Moses sent them a watermelon and two bottles of the wine of Lebanon. Bonar and McCheyne commented that if this was a fair sample of Lebanon wine then it had lost its excellence since the days of Hosea (Hos. 14.7) for it was not pleasant!

{47} A Missionary Journey

What was proposed as a journey of investigation turned out to be a remarkable missionary journey. Bonar and McCheyne recorded how the four members of the deputation engaged in telling the message of the gospel wherever they went. Naturally this was done more fully in the case of the authors themselves, especially as so much of their visit was without Keith and Black.

The four members of the deputation all had backgrounds which fitted them for their missionary work. Black was a Professor of Theology, while Keith had been an ardent student of the prophecies of the Old Testament for many years and had written on the subject. Bonar and McCheyne had developed a love for the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures during student days in Edinburgh. They had been part of an exegetical society which met every Saturday morning at 6:30. McCheyne himself attributed to this society much of the knowledge of Jewish literature and geography of Palestine which came in so useful during his trip.⁹ Along with Bonar he had a thorough grasp of things relating to the Jews which he was able to use during the visit.

As soon as McCheyne set out for London, his Jewish missionary work started. On board the ship, he found a young Jew who did not want his Jewish identity known. McCheyne spoke with him several times, and before parting read Psalm 1 with him in Hebrew. Once the deputation crossed the Channel to France, the missionary activity started in earnest. At Boulogne they began to ask about Jewish people, and that first evening on the Continent they had a visit from a well-educated Jew who spoke excellent English. They explained that their love for the Jewish people had impelled them to take on this deputation,” and Keith, with great fervour, pictured the outcast state of Israel, and how plainly it seemed to be on account of some sin lying at their door, urging him to consider what the sin could be” (p. 4). The Jew, in reply, spoke of God’s general love and mercy, but the visitors showed him the way of pardon and acceptance with God. He was much affected and wished that there were more of the Church of Scotland’s missionaries. Immediately, he explained that he meant this only in one sense, as he did not wish to see them succeed in their desire to convert his brethren! Their activities on this first day abroad set the pattern for the rest of their time abroad. No opportunity was lost to speak of the Saviour or to turn attention to God’s Word. When they visited the home of a sick rabbi in Galilee, they spoke in Hebrew and German “and before leaving had some conversation regarding the pardon of sin” (p.281).

The members of the deputation distributed Bibles and tracts wherever they went. At Dijon, they met a young boy and gave him a book. He went away and got his father, and they were delighted that father and son were Jews! The father looked at their Hebrew Bible and read

⁹ *Memoir*, p. 40.

some verses aloud. They gave him a book and a French New Testament, which he accepted with joy.

{48} Another man approached them and asked for a Hebrew tract, for they must have been distributing them too.

Their literature got them into trouble on several occasions. They had heard that Leghorn, in northern Italy, was a free port and thought that it might be free to receive the gospel. Hence, when eight men carried their luggage to the hotel where they were staying, they gave them tracts. An hour or so later, an officer appeared and asked them if they were the men who were distributing books, and then he proceeded to seal and carry off their box with books and tracts and their box with Hebrew books. They were sent to Florence for a report from the censor. When they were getting ready to sail to Malta, they were called before the police and given the finding on their books. The censor had condemned the books and they were told to leave Tuscany without delay. Afterwards they learned that a sentence of perpetual banishment had been passed on them. They noted that the Jews were interested in what had happened to them, and it showed that Popery was equally the enemy of Protestantism and of Israel. When returning, they travelled through Austria and their literature was confiscated. They had to undergo an examination from the police because of their interest in Jewish matters-synagogues, Hebrew language, and *tefillin* (phylacteries). At Brody they were sent for by the chief of the police. It was claimed that they were Jews travelling under a false passport. The police had been informed by letter that Bonar and McCheyne had gone into the synagogue at Jaaglinsky and joined in the Jewish prayers, even saying the Shema. They were also asked why they had bought *tefillin*. This is how they recorded their reply:

We were somewhat perplexed as well as amused by this attempt to shew that we were Jews and not Christians, and were now made aware of the system of jealous espionage maintained in this kingdom of Popish darkness. We answered that we were Protestant pastors from Scotland, and that all ministers in our country are instructed in Hebrew; that we had read in the synagogue only to shew the Jews that we knew their language; and that we had bought the Tephillin as curiosities (p.457).

The variety of languages which the ministers used is amazing. In the stagecoach travelling from Dijon to Lyons they met a Roman Catholic priest. With him they held a conversation, especially on the subject of peace with God, and the conversation was sometimes in French, sometimes in Latin. In Leghorn, they had a long conversation with an Eastern rabbi on religious topics including the nature of the Messiah. They all took part in the conversation, but Black was the main speaker as he was very fluent in Italian. They used Italian when trying to present the Gospel on ships en route to Alexandria, while travelling from Egypt to Palestine, and in Palestine itself. German was used in Palestine and frequently on their travels in Europe. Latin came in useful on various occasions, while Hebrew was frequently used. They were able to read Hebrew inscriptions in the {49} synagogues, to understand much of Hebrew liturgy, and even to make limited conversation in it. On the last stage of their sea journey to Alexandria they talked with four Jews from the Dardenelles. They explained Hebrew abbreviations to them and then surprised them by saying, *Gam anachnu omrim amen* "We too use the word *Amen*" (p. 43). It would seem that their knowledge of Hebrew had been academic up to this time, but they were ready to attempt to use it in debate over the Hebrew Scriptures, or with children as Andrew Bonar did in Tyre (p. 263). At times they made mistakes with the Hebrew (as on the last occasion) and also with the spelling of post-biblical expressions.¹⁰ In the town of Safed in the north, a young man met McCheyne in the

¹⁰ For examples see S.G. Reif, "A Mission to the Holy Land - 1839", *Glasgow University Oriental Society Transactions Vol XXIV* (1971-72), p. 6. This article is an interesting Jewish commentary on the mission.

street, and seeing that he had a staff in his hand, he asked for it as a present. He said in Hebrew, "Give me this staff, and if the Arabs come, I will smite them with it." The comment was added: "It was strange to hear this youth speaking the language of his fathers on their own mountains" (p. 282). There are examples in the *Narrative* of their use of Yiddish and Rumanian, while they even engaged in some elementary comparative philology using Arabic and Hebrew (e.g., cf. pp.54, 77, 79).

"Rather send one good missionary than fifty others. It was pleasant to come after Wolff. All the Jews in the place knew what he wanted with them-viz. that without Christ there is no remission of sin"

Several times in their narrative, Bonar and McCheyne dealt with the question of the qualifications needed for being a missionary to the Jews. They had discussed this with those working in Jerusalem on their visit, and the feeling was that Hebrew was the most necessary language for ministering to the Jews in Palestine. All of them spoke it, but there was also a variety of other languages in use - Arabic, Spanish, German, Italian, Judeo-Spanish, and Judeo-Polish. Seemingly some Italian was understood by almost all the Jews, regardless of background. In addition to this impressive array of languages which a missionary would need, they added: "A knowledge of Chaldee [Aramaic] and Syriac would be very useful!" (p. 194). The missionaries also would need to have a good knowledge of Hebrew literature and especially of the Talmud. In discussing the qualifications with a man named Pieritz (who was once the Jewish rabbi in Yarmouth in England) he mentioned the name of Wolff, who had been a missionary in Palestine, and said: "Rather send one good missionary than fifty others. I have come after many missionaries, and have wished that they had never been there. It was pleasant to come after Wolff. All the Jews in the place knew what he wanted with them-viz. that without Christ there is no remission of sin" (p. 248). That last comment was significant, for Bonar and McCheyne constantly came back to that basic issue in their discussions with both Jews and Gentiles.

{50} In Palestine they found the Jews more oppressed and in greater poverty than in other countries. The expectation of the coming of the Messiah was real though, and Bonar and McCheyne saw this as an opportunity for missionary work: "The missionary has thus firm ground to stand upon, and, with the Hebrew Bible in his hand, may expound to them, with intelligence and power, all that is written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Jesus"(p. 321). They concluded that the Holy Land presented the most attractive and most important area for missionary work among the Jews. At the time of their visit an effective work was maintained in Jerusalem by the London Society for the Propagation of Christianity Amongst the Jews. Hence they suggested that the northern part of the land, the ancient Galilee, with over half of the Palestinian Jewish population, "still presents an open and uncultivated field" (p. 322). It was to be almost 50 years before Scottish missionaries were in fact sent to Galilee.

The Results of the Mission

The deputation provided a major stimulus to the cause of Jewish missions in Scotland. At the meeting of the General Assembly in May, 1840, a report was received from the Committee for Promoting Christianity among the Jews, and two of the deputation spoke to the Assembly about their visit to Palestine. The committee was authorized

to take steps for preparing and sending missionaries to the stations most promising; and the General Assembly recommend that collections be made throughout the Church for this object, in the same way as for the other Schemes of the Church; and renew their

*recommendation to ministers to remember the cause of God's ancient people in the services of the sanctuary.*¹¹

This meant that funds would be collected for Jewish missions along with Foreign Missions, Church Extension, Education, and Colonial Churches. The following year, the Assembly agreed to send an address to the Jewish people which was drawn up by Robert Wodrow, the man who had first proposed the mission of enquiry to Palestine. While clearly the evangelical party in the Church of Scotland was the driving force behind the cause of the Jewish mission, yet the so-called moderate party was prepared to give assistance and even to agree to waive the normal requirements in regard to the ordination of William Allan and William Wingate.¹²

The first Jewish missionary sent out by the Church of Scotland was Daniel Edward, who in 1841 was sent to work in Jassy in Moldavia.¹³ A few months later he was followed by John Duncan, with two helpers, William Allan of Glasgow and Robert Smith of Aberdeen, to Pesth. Alfred Edersheim and Adolph Saphir were soon to become two very significant converts of the Hungarian mission, and afterwards they became prominent in British evangelical life. The infant mission was changed by events in Scotland, for {51} with the Disruption of the Church of Scotland in 1843 all four missionaries joined the Free Church. The first report dealt with by the Free Church Assembly in 1843 was Jewish Missions, and work among the Jews was an integral part of Free Church missions thereafter.¹⁴

Bonar and McCheyne in particular were busy in promoting the cause of Jewish missions and telling of their visit to Palestine. In this connection McCheyne went across to Ireland in July, 1840 and spoke in both Belfast and Dublin. A result of this visit was that the first missionaries to the Jews from the Presbyterian Church of Ireland were sent out in the following year.

The establishment of a Scottish mission in Palestine did not take place until 1885. John Wilson of Bombay came through Palestine when returning from India, and he reported that there was no suitable place for a mission station.¹⁵ It was only when Hood Wilson visited there in 1883 that a new interest developed and stations, involving medical work as well as educational and evangelistic, were opened in Tiberias and Safed.

It is hard to estimate the indirect effect of the mission of enquiry. Clearly, the report to the General Assembly in 1840, the *Narrative* (of which 23,000 copies were in print by 1847), and the sections in Bonar's *Memoirs and Remains of Robert Murray McCheyne* dealing with the visit to Palestine and with Jewish missions in general, further stimulated interest. The outcome was a deep commitment to Jewish missions so that evangelical Christians in Scotland to this day are known for their concern to bring the news of the Messiah to Jewish people.

¹¹ *Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 1638-1842*, p. 1101.

¹² For personal details of the early Jewish missionaries of the Church of Scotland see Hew Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, new edition, Edinburgh 1928, vol. VII, pp. 712-717. A discussion of the evangelical/moderate support for the Jewish cause is found in Chambers, *op. cit.*, pp. 55ff.

¹³ Jassy is the present city of Iasi in Romania.

¹⁴ For a summary of later Free Church activities in regard to Jewish work, see N.L. Walker, "The Conversion of Israel", in *Chapters from the History of the Free Church of Scotland*, pp. 168-180.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 171.

{53} Rabbi Daniel Zion: Chief Rabbi of Bulgarian Jews During World War II

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In 1918 a message went from Sofia to Thessalonika to send Rabbis. The head of the Yeshiva in Thessalonika sent his young son, Daniel, to serve the community in Sofia. Rabbi Daniel Zion served the community and was elected to be the chief Rabbi of Bulgaria. Zion's major accomplishment was his activity during the war years.

With the beginning of World War II began also the problems for the Jews. On 23 January 1941, the *Law for the Protection of the Nation* was published in the official paper. This law was simply a Bulgarian adaptation of the Nuremberg laws. Its purpose was to separate the Jewish community from the rest of the Bulgarian people and to limit freedom for Jews. March 1 1941, the Bulgarian government announced they were joining the Axis Powers. On the same day German Nazi forces entered Bulgaria and an edict was published that every male Jew between 20 and 40 years old must report to "Work Brigades."

In 1943 the government of Bulgaria made a decision under German pressure to send the Jews out of Bulgaria. May 23 Rabbi Daniel Zion gathered all the Jews in the central synagogue of Sofia, the second largest synagogue in Europe. Every Jew in the city came to the synagogue to pray for the evil decision to be reversed. Zion said publicly to all the community, "It is better for us to die here than in Poland." When the Jews came out of the synagogue the police attacked the multitude with truncheons and arrested about 250 men. The people continued to march toward the Holy Synod and demanded to see the Metropolitan Stephen, who was respected by the Jewish community because of his friendly attitude toward them. The Metropolitan Stephen promised the Jewish community he would meet with the King and the ministers and attempt to influence them to change their attitude and stop the persecution of the Jews. However, on 25 May 1943, the expulsion of the Jews from Sofia began. The Commission for Jewish affairs took from Sofia 10,153 Jews into the provincial cities and 3500 men into labor camps. In Sofia **{54}** only 2300 Jews remained. The Bulgarian Orthodox Church was one of the major stumbling blocks in the way of the Bulgarian Government sending the Jews to Auschwitz. The church continued to intercede with the King and the cabinet for the Jews. The church was amicable to the Jews because of the special relationship the Metropolitan Stephen and Zion shared.

Zion had been invited in the early 1930's to visit Dunnov, a teacher of a mystic type of Christianity. Dunnov mixed mysticism, Christianity, vegetarianism and yoga exercises. Zion was impressed with the lifestyle of Dunnov, and started to implement some teachings of this mystic. There were three things which Zion appropriated from Dunnov: vegetarianism, starting the day with prayer looking at the sunrise and daily physical exercise. Dunnov did speak of Jesus as the Messiah and Saviour. He also spoke of the simple lifestyle of the early disciples of Jesus. These subjects were eye openers for Zion. He started to think in an unorthodox manner, or at least about unusual subjects for a Rabbi to think about. But according to Zion,

the major change came into his life when, as he was praying while looking at the sunrise, Yeshua appeared to him in a vision.

the major change came into his life when, as he was praying while looking at the sunrise, Yeshua appeared to him in a vision. He did not know what this vision meant, so he asked some of the other Rabbis what he should do about it. The third time the same vision appeared, Zion turned toward the figure and spoke to him. The figure was scintillating right out from the sun. Zion was impressed that it spoke back to him identifying himself as Yeshua. It is no small thing for a Rabbi to receive a vision of Yeshua the Messiah, but Zion was well-versed with the teaching, "Receive the truth by whomever it might come." He understood there is something very special in this person who appeared to him. The totally bizarre nature of this vision forced the Rabbi to investigate and try to understand what God was positioning before him. Zion knew that he had to find a source of information that would help him deal with this vision and discern its meaning. At this point Zion went to the patriarchate of the Greek Orthodox Church in Sofia and befriended the Archimandrite Stephen with whom he had a close friendship and a frank exchange of ideas on a variety of spiritual subjects including Jesus and the early church. The Patriarch, who was well-versed in the delicate relationship between Jews and Christians, encouraged the Rabbi to forget about Christianity and concentrate on Yeshua Himself.

Zion never converted to "Christianity"; he started to believe in Yeshua and remained faithful to a Torah-keeping lifestyle. A song that Rabbi Daniel wrote about his faith can probably best express his attitude toward Yeshua the Messiah:

{55} *No not I, No not I, only you are Yeshua in me!*

Only you bring me before the God of my fathers,

Only you can heal me from every evil illness,

No not I, No not I, only you are Yeshua in me!

Only you teach me to love all creation,

Only you teach me to love even the enemy,

No not I, No not I, only you are Yeshua in me!

For this reason I will stay in your love,

For ever will I be within your will,

No not I, No not I, only you are Yeshua in me!

Zion started to collect a very select small group of Jewish people to study the New Testament each Saturday afternoon in his house. Among these Jews were some of the leading members of the Jewish community in Sofia.

Zion's faith in Yeshua the Messiah became known in the Jewish community of Bulgaria. However his position was so honoured and his services so highly esteemed that none of the Jewish functionaries in Sofia could openly criticize the Rabbi. And, because he remained well within the framework of the Jewish community in Bulgaria and did not stop living as an Orthodox Jew in all the rigour of the strictest observance of the Torah, there was little that his opponents could point to as heresy. In the background, however, the leadership of the Jewish community started to isolate him slowly.

When Nazi Germany occupied Bulgaria without shooting one shot, Zion, as the spiritual leader of the Jewish community, became the object of persecution and ridicule. He was publicly flogged in

front of the Great Synagogue of Sofia. During these times, Zion walked upright before the fascists and his only reaction was to call upon God. My mother and sister were present in at least two of these occasions and they retold this story many times. The memories years later from this experience made them feel proud to be Jews. When there was talk of shipping the Jews to Germany, Zion and his secretary, A. A. Anski, wrote a letter to the King of Bulgaria. In this letter Rabbi Daniel begged the King in the name of Yeshua not to allow the Jews to be taken out of Bulgaria. He wrote that in a vision Yeshua had told him to warn the King from delivering the Jews to the Nazis. After a long ordeal of waiting many hours at the door of the King's palace in Sofia, the Rabbi and his secretary were able to deliver this letter to the King's secretary. On the next day the King was going to Germany for a meeting with the Nazi Government and Hitler himself. King Boris of Bulgaria stood his ground and did not submit to the Nazi pressure to deliver the Jews of Bulgaria to the death camps of Poland and Germany. The next Sabbath Zion preached:

Salvation ... Yesterday, I have been informed that the Metropolitte Stephen has agreed to see me immediately and discuss his conversation with the King of Bulgaria. When I went to see the Metropolitte {56} Stephen, he told me, 'Tell your people that the King has promised that the Bulgarian Jews will not leave the borders of Bulgaria' ... I explained to the Metropolitte that thousands of Jews are waiting for me in the Synagogue to hear this good news. When I returned to the Synagogue there was full silence in the large crowd that was gathered waiting to hear the results of my meeting with Stephen. As I walked in, my announcement was, 'Yes my brothers, God has heard our prayers' ...

On 9 September 1944, the fascist Government of Bulgaria fell and the Communists took over the patronage of Russia. Zion remained the leader and chief Rabbi of Bulgaria until 1949, when he, with most of the Bulgarian Jewish community, immigrated to Israel.

In Israel, Zion was immediately accepted as the Rabbi of the Bulgarian Jews. When in 1954 Rabbi Samuel Toledano became the Chief Rabbi of Israel, he invited Zion to be a judge in the Rabbinical court of Jerusalem. When the rumours circulated that Zion believed in Yeshua, Toledano invited Zion to his office and asked him personally about these rumours. Zion explained to Toledano his position. He explained that he accepts Yeshua as the Messiah and he does not accept Christianity as the true expression of the teaching and person of Yeshua the Messiah. Toledano responded he could tolerate this position as long as Zion will keep it to himself. When Zion said that he did not think that such a message can be kept a secret, Toledano was forced to take Zion to the Rabbinic court, and allow the other Rabbis to decide what should be done.

<p>Yeshua conquered me. I stand here alone in my faith, the whole world is against me. I give up all earthly honour for the sake of the Messiah, my mate.</p>

In the court, evidence of Zion's faith in Yeshua the Messiah was presented in the form of four books that Zion had written in Bulgarian about Yeshua. The right to speak was given to Zion:

I am poor and feeble, persecuted and vulnerable, Yeshua conquered me, and with the New Man he honoured me, He delivered me from the poverty-stricken self; with his great love, he cherished me. Every day the canny Devil aspires to grab my faith, I hold on to my Encourager, and chase the Devil away. I stand here alone in my faith, the whole world is against me. I give up all earthly honour for the sake of the Messiah, my mate.

The Rabbinical Court striped Zion from his Rabbinical title, but the Bulgarian Jews continued to honour him as their Rabbi. A Russian Jew who was one of the early Zionist settlers in Rishon LeZion and had become a "believer," had given Zion a building on Yeffet Street in the heart of Jaffa for a synagogue where Rabbi Daniel officiated until October 6, 1973. In this {57} synagogue Zion did not often speak of Yeshua openly, but many times he

brought stories and parables from the New Testament. However, each Sabbath after Synagogue, Zion would bring home a group of his fellow worshippers and they would study about Yeshua and the New Testament all the Sabbath afternoon until they would go back to the Synagogue to say the evening prayers.

Many missions, missionaries and Christian societies visited Zion in his Jaffa home. They wrote many articles about him, and at rare occasions would even offer him large amounts of money for the use of his name in their ministries. In every case Zion rejected their offers. He did not want to destroy his witness with the people of Israel for a handful of dollars. If any one would give him some free-will offering without strings attached, the Rabbi would accept it and pass it on to charitable organizations of the blind, or to orphans and widows. He, himself, lived in abject poverty. There was nothing in his own house that was of value and he would never lock his home.

Zion wrote hundreds of songs about Yeshua the Messiah, Sabbath, and the good life. He also wrote books on the subject of vegetarianism, health food and natural living. His major contribution to Messianic Judaism is his personal example. He lived a complete Jewish lifestyle, and was completely devoted to Messiah Yeshua. He compromised faith neither for money from Christian missions, nor pressures of the chief rabbinate. Yeshua was his Saviour and friend until the last days of his life. Zion lived up to the poem that he wrote with the acrostic of his name, Daniel Zion the Servant of God.

The (Davar) Word of God is my path,

The (Ner) Lamp of God is my guide,

The (Irat) Fear of God is the beginning of Wisdom,

The (Ahavat) Love of God is my Life,

The (Laasot) Doing the will of God is my aspiration,

(Zedek) Righteousness and Justice are my goals,

His (Isurim) Suffering is my atonement,

He will (Yagen) protect you in all your ways,

The (Nezah) Eternal one of Israel is my comfort.

In 1979 Rabbi Daniel Zion died at age 96. The Bulgarian Jewish community of Israel gave him full military, and state honors. His bier stood in the centre of Jaffa with a military guard, and at noon was carried all the way to the Holon cemetery by foot. He was buried as the Chief Rabbi of Bulgarian Jews who saved them from the Nazi holocaust.

{58} The Messianic Jewish Alliance of America 1901-1939

Robert I. Winer

Robert I. Winer, M.D. was commissioned by the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America to write the history of the Alliance. His book was published in 1990.¹

Introduction

The Messianic Jewish Alliance of America (MJAA), formed in 1915, is the largest national organization of its kind in the world, representing the interests of an estimated 100,000 Jews in the United States who have come to faith in Yeshua as the Messiah. The MJAA is part of the International Hebrew Christian Alliance, formed in 1925, and now encompassing 13 member nations. The Alliance is an umbrella organization for Messianic Jews. Governed through a democratic process, MJAA officers are elected volunteers dedicated to perpetuating its ideals and accomplishing its program to unite Messianic Jews in a nationwide cooperative fellowship community. Though not a mission, it believes in and encourages evangelism. The Alliance was, and is, not an attempt to form a denomination, yet it encourages all Jewish believers to unite for a corporate testimony within its framework of government.

The men who formed the Alliance saw that the majority of Jewish believers had lost their ethnic, social, and cultural identity as Jews. Excluded from Jewish communal life, they lacked any Messianic expression to take its place. By the second generation, their testimony as Jews had all but vanished. Their children had no Jewish religious or ethnic upbringing.

The MJAA stood alone for many years, encouraging Jewish believers to consider the possibility of retaining their Jewishness. Today, they have many more options for Jewish expression than were available to those who lived before us. However, the need remains for an organization to represent Messianic Jews. Unfortunately, Messianic Jews still have little impact in influencing events on a national or international level. One of the many goals of the MJAA in the next decade is to let the world know that Messianic Jews exist, that they have a distinct viewpoint and that they are not just a “passing fancy” destined to fade away.

The origin of the MJAA is a multifaceted story which can be told from several different perspectives. Mine is that of a Messianic Jew, rather than {59} a Hebrew Christian. Although our beliefs are the same, a Messianic Jew prefers to use the name “Yeshua” rather than “Jesus” and generally maintains a more ethnically Jewish-based lifestyle. I came to believe in Yeshua as Messiah in 1975, the year that the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America changed its name from the Hebrew Christian Alliance of America. These facts among others have no doubt influenced the direction and content of this history. I ask for understanding and tolerance of my perspective from all Messianic Jews, regardless of their persuasion.

¹ This article is composed of excerpts taken from the author's book, *The Calling - The History of the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America, 1915-1990*, Messianic Jewish Alliance of America, Wynnewood, PA. 1990 written to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Alliance in 1990. The thoughts expressed here reflect his own research. The opinions reflect the entire spectrum of thought within the Alliance.

In the Beginning

In Boston, Massachusetts, on 22 May 1901 a group of Jewish believers in the Messiah, Yeshua, convened at the request of Mark Levy at a meeting described as The Boston Conference of the Messianic Council. Mark Levy was an English Jew, born during the second half of the 19th century. As a young believer in Messiah Yeshua, he agonized over the fact that Jewish believers were ostracized from their families. Levy was a passionate man, a poet. He saw from the Scriptures that a great injustice had been done to Jewish believers—they had become gentiles. He was a visionary, a man before his time. His view that a Jew should and can remain Jewish after his acceptance of Yeshua was not accepted by the majority of his contemporaries. Levy was a man who worked hard. He promoted his idea to form an alliance of Jewish believers in the United States.

The Messianic Council resolved to call a national conference which would in turn organize a Hebrew Christian Alliance of America. A planning committee was formed. Arthur Kuldell was the chairman and Louis Meyer was the corresponding secretary. The Conference was held at Mountain Lake Park, Maryland on 28-30 July 1903, and Arthur Kuldell was elected President.

Despite the initial enthusiasm for an Alliance, no action was taken to further the creation of the Hebrew Christian Alliance of America (HCAA) until 1913.

Arthur Kuldell reminisces about these events in his 1921 letter to the Alliance:

For many years the writer has been longing for a union of Hebrew Christians in this land, thinking that through a corporate testimony to the power of the Gospel upon Jewish hearts, great good could be accomplished among Jews and Gentiles. He prayed and waited and corresponded with others until Louis Meyer, who is gone to glory, and others who are still with us, caught the vision.

At a conference in Boston we were drawn to each other very closely in the Lord, and decided to call a conference at Mountain Lake Park for the purpose of forming an Alliance of Hebrew Christians. Even though the writer was the chairman of the movement, the vast amount of work {60} that had to be done preparatory to this conference was upon the willing and able shoulders of our departed brother as Secretary.

...The conference at Mountain Lake Park at the beginning of this century was a success, but we were not yet ripe for an Alliance.

The ideal of the writer was a Hebrew Christian Union or Alliance with Hebrew Christian businessmen, professors and pastors at the forefront, and missionaries in the background. The reason was because of the prejudice with which the Jewish heart was filled against the missionary...

The Hebrew Christian pastors and professors and businessmen did not rally around the writer, and Pastor Louis Meyer soon learned, to his sorrow, that the time for an Alliance, with the material at hand, was premature and he resigned. Thus the matter was held in abeyance until about seven years ago.²

Kuldell was a Lutheran, somewhat proper and not very charismatic. His ideas of what the Alliance should be did not gain support and he lost heart. In November 1913 Maurice Ruben of Pittsburgh invited several Jewish believers to come to Pittsburgh for the 15th anniversary

² Kuldell, Arthur: "Letter to the Editor," *The Hebrew Christian Alliance of America Quarterly*, vol. 6:1, 1922, pp.38-40.

of the New Covenant Mission which he headed. Ruben had been at the Mountain Lake Park Conference in 1903. A European-born, prominent businessman, he became a believer in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. His family had him committed for six months to an insane asylum because of his belief. Using legal means to secure his release, his testimony for Yeshua became known throughout the region. With the same intensity that he used in business, Ruben sought to live his life in devotion to God. He was a strong, likeable man who could get things done. With the anniversary of his work fresh in mind, something clicked. What Levy longed for and what Kuldell had hoped, but lost heart for, now had the energies of Maurice Ruben.

Levy's view that a Jew should and can remain Jewish after his acceptance of Yeshua was not accepted by the majority of his contemporaries.

The group invited to Pittsburgh decided to pursue the formation of the HCAA.³ Arthur Kuldell was asked to send a circular, under his name, calling Jewish believers to form the HCAA.

The Pittsburgh meeting was attended by Sabbati Rohold, a Jew born in Palestine. He was an imposing man, born of a long line of Rabbis, trained in one of the strictest sects of Orthodox Jewry. A writer, scholar, Hebraist and Talmudist, he was respected by both Jew and gentile. Rohold was a leader, a kind of senior statesman to whom people listened. He was also the kind of man that people could rally around. Once he saw the need for an alliance, it {61} became to him like a beloved child. Rohold was the glue that enabled divergent men to come together.

Kuldell's circular created great interest and a conference was planned for 1915. Kuldell was appointed to act as Corresponding Secretary and Mark Levy as Recording Secretary. In order to take care of the details for the conference, Kuldell was to move to New York City prior to the meeting in order to oversee its arrangements, but he gave notice in the early part of 1915 that he was unable to come. The job fell to Levy who was tireless in his task.

The First General Conference of the Alliance

The first conference took place 6-9 April 1915 at the Assembly Hall of the United Charities Building in New York City. The Constitution was ratified during the first business meeting on Wednesday, 7 April. On the afternoon of that day, elections and establishment of committees took place. Sabbati Rohold was elected President.⁴

The founding of the Alliance stirred much excitement. For many it was a dream come true. Others chose to wait and see before joining.

Once formed, the hard work of defining an agenda became the most important task ahead. All agreed that the Alliance ought to be more than a fellowship. Many felt that the key to a lasting organization was for the Alliance to play an integral role in promoting evangelism. The new organization should bring new ideas and promote methods other than those usually employed in the work of Jewish missions. A resolution was passed to establish a Hebrew Christian Center where new Jewish believers could temporarily live and work, apart from a denominational structure, after their profession of faith⁵. A Chair of Hebrew Studies was

³ Report of the First general conference of the Hebrew Christian Alliance of America, 1915, p.7.

⁴ See the Appendix of *The Calling* for a complete list of officers and committee members from these early meetings.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.29.

proposed to be founded at the Kennedy College in Connecticut.⁶ Neither of these projects took place.

The Alliance eventually established a Chair of Jewish Studies at Moody Bible Institute in 1923, which was first filled by Solomon Birnbaum. A special section in the *Quarterly* chronicled the first class of students at what was called "The Jewish Mission Course."⁷ Classes consisted of Biblical studies, Hebrew, Yiddish, and Rabbinic literature, with weekly assignments in various local Jewish missions. The Alliance continued to sponsor the Chair of Jewish Studies well into the 1930's. After that time, Moody continued the position, still filled by candidates recommended by the Alliance. These have included Max Reich, Nathan Stone and Louis Goldberg, who continues in this position today.

1916-1939

Sabbati Rohold was re-elected President at the 1916 conference. He would remain President until 1921, when he immigrated to Israel. In 1916 the {62} HCAA appointed a Missionary Committee which, in 1917, called Emmanuel Greenbaum to serve as worker-evangelist. This position was maintained by the Alliance for the next 40 years. Greenbaum travelled in the United States, speaking in churches, promoting the program of the Alliance and encouraging Jewish believers to join.

The Literature Committee formed a permanent Board of Editors which, in 1917, began to publish *The Hebrew Christian Alliance Quarterly*, with a Yiddish supplement in each issue. The *Quarterly's* purpose was to promote the understanding that Jews who believed in Yeshua do not cease to be Jews, that they continue to be concerned for their people and the issues facing them.

The Hebrew Christian Alliance of America

The formation of the HCAA was not without disputes.⁸ These came from within the camp of Jewish believers and from the Church at large. A unique thing was happening: Jewish believers were asserting their right to be Jews. This was in direct conflict with the viewpoint of the majority of American Christians, who held that the Scriptural promises to Israel were now in the possession of the Church. This issue had far-reaching implications, as the concept of a literal Israel and Jewish identity after accepting Messiah, posed questions concerning the Church's role in the present age.

It was generally held that the maintenance of a Jewish distinctive within the body of Christ implied a resurrection of the "middle wall of partition" between Jew and Gentile. Foes of the Alliance insisted that the old ways of Judaism must be replaced by one body, with one church.

In 1920 Sabbati Rohold, President of the Alliance, responded to these attacks in the *Quarterly*:

Our own beloved Hebrew Christian Alliance is not immune from attack. ... In the midst of blessing, encouragement, commendation and expressions of good will from many ...

⁶ Ibid., p.37.

⁷ "Our First Jewish Missions Class at the Moody Bible Institute," *The Hebrew Christian Alliance Quarterly*, vol. 7:4 & 5, 1924, pp.135-140.

⁸ See excerpted criticism from the New York Jewish Evangelization Society in *The Calling*, pp. 14-17.

there comes also a note of discord. Perhaps it is a voice of warning to us to be kept humble. ... Our hearts are truly sad to find that through friendly criticism the seed of doubt and mistrust is sown, and the question comes, "Shall we be silent?" Too much attention must not be given, but we must at the same time be loyal and faithful, and zealously guard the honor of our Lord. ... We are warned that, "Jewish believers should not separate themselves from their fellow Christians." The trouble is not the separation tendency on the part of the Hebrew Christian. It is this very aloofness and want of companionship which the Hebrew Christian suffers. He who, for Messiah's sake, has lost all, finds himself stranded and deserted, often treated as an inferior and very seldom taken into family circles, or treated as one of their own. ... It is these unshepherded Hebrew Christians that have touched the bowels of our compassion. It is because {63} of their bitter cry and claimant needs that the HCAA has come into existence. ... Leading Christian men in the world have written to us and encouraged us, and look upon the HCAA as a God-movement. ... The statement that twenty Hebrew Christian Alliances have failed, hardly needs contradiction. Not one of them has failed. They all came into existence by the bidding of the spirit of God. They have served nobly in their day and generation. Their influence for good is still operating and the spirit that prompted them is constraining us. To stigmatize these as failures, one has indeed to be very bold. Some of its leaders were of the noblest men of God, chosen vessels, whom God has honored and used to lead literally thousands to Messiah, and though dead, yet live for the glory of God. For we find that the Hebrew Christian Alliance of Great Britain, founded in London, 23 May 2866, and which is still in existence, has amongst its founders and leaders such giants, saints, and men of world-wide renown, whose very names shine like stars in the crown of Messiah. ... To accuse these men of acting contrary to Scripture in organizing an Alliance, and labeling them as failures, is too grotesque. It is altogether sad.

The real issue is not walls of partition, discords, and all the other things we have mentioned. The real issue is, "Can we trust the Lord for the Hebrew Christian as well as for the gentile Christian?"

. . . If we want to prove the visible success of Hebrew Christian leaders as compared to Gentile leaders, we could prove it. One only has to read the histories of the great Jewish missionary societies and he will see the array of noble Hebrew Christians who have labored in different parts of the world with such wonderful success. ... The real issue is not walls of partition, discords, and all the other things we have mentioned. The real issue is, "Can we trust the Lord for the Hebrew Christian as well as for the Gentile Christian?" If he is to be trusted for one, he must be trusted for all.⁹

Messianic Judaism?

In the early years of the Alliance there was a clear sentiment amongst its leaders against any move to incorporate Jewish traditions into a Hebrew Christian life-style. Mark Levy, in his paper, "Jewish Ordinances in the Light of Hebrew Christianity" supported the idea that Jewish believers were free to observe the national rites and ceremonies of Israel after they had accepted Yeshua as Messiah.¹⁰ He also proposed that Jewish

⁹ Rohold, Sabbati: "Another Voice," *The Hebrew Christian Alliance Quarterly*, vol. 4:2, 1920, pp. 39-40.

¹⁰ Levy, Mark: "Jewish Ordinance in the Light of Hebrew Christianity," *The Hebrew Christian Alliance Quarterly*, vol. 1:3 & 4, 1917, pp. 138-143.

believers have a duty to make known to Jews outside of the Messiah that we do not seek to gentilize them or to make them members of the gentile branch of the Church.

{64} Today this does not sound radical, but in 1917 it was not a mainstream Hebrew Christian viewpoint. Jewish believers had for the most part assimilated into the church. Levy proposed a resolution which asserted that “our Jewish brethren are left free to admit their children into the covenant of Abraham and observe other God-given rites and ceremonies of Israel, if they so desire” after they accept Messiah. The resolution was almost unanimously defeated. I am pleased to say that in 1989 Levy’s original resolution was accepted at the MJAA’s Biennial Conference as a tribute to his life’s work and vision.

Beside Mark Levy, the only other advocate of a Messianic lifestyle in this early period was John Zacker. Zacker was a Russian Jew, who became a believer in London, where he had travelled to make his fortune. He came to the United States in 1910, while in his mid-20’s, and became involved with the Alliance in 1918. He quickly rose to the positions of Associate Editor of the *Quarterly* and Chairman of the Relations Committee (later to become the International Relations Committee in 1990), which he founded. The Relations Committee responded to issues of interest to the Jewish and Messianic communities. Zacker was regarded with respect for his literary skills. His ideas were similar to Levy’s, but he had the ability to write them out in a more acceptable manner. He supported the Alliance strenuously and was one of its chief defenders in print. Zacker was vehement in his assertion of the rights of Messianic Jews. His letters to the American Zionist Congress, concerning involvement of Jewish Believers in helping the cause of Zionism, is stirring.¹¹

The bulk of Gentile Christians unconsciously unite with Jews in defining and accepting our conversion as complete Gentilization.

The words of his message, “Untrodden Paths,” delivered at the Seventh National Conference of the HCAA in 1921, are strikingly prophetic. Zacker asserted that Jewish believers were, “placed in . . . a harness which demanded [their] complete Gentilization. . . Churches have not borne a Messianic testimony but have presented a Gentile Jesus of Israel.” As for the individual Jewish believer, “the bulk of Gentile Christians unconsciously unite with Jews in defining and accepting our conversion as complete Gentilization . . . [One cannot] deny that Hebrew Christian Gentilization is due primarily to Jewish ostracism and excommunication.”¹²

Zacker advocated a step-by-step plan for Messianic Judaism. He saw at the core, the formation and solidification of the Alliance, followed by expansion of its publications. He expected the liaison with Moody Bible Institute to spawn a Messianic Jewish College. He called for an immediate “suppression of pessimism regarding Hebrew Christian congregationalism and [for the] establishment of Messianic Synagogues.” He predicted that {65} “[more Jews would come to know Messiah] through three Hebrew Christian congregations than all the Jewish Missions of the American continent combined.” He contended that the contemporary belief of his day, namely that the “religious assimilation of the Hebrew Christian [was the] result of personal choice,” was a “ubiquitous myth:” Only through a strong Alliance could the framework for “Hebrew Christian environment, sentiment, organization and general propaganda” be realized. These, “however must and can only begin with Hebrew Christian Messianic Synagogues.”

Although a visionary, Zacker was a realist. He understood that, despite the formation of Messianic Synagogues, recognition of Messianic Jews by the Jewish community was not

¹¹ See appropriate appendix, *The Calling*.

¹² Zacker, John: "Untrodden Paths," *The Hebrew Christian Alliance Quarterly*, vol. 5:4, 1921, pp. 135-144.

assured. But he was convinced that the Jewish community would eventually have to accept Messianic Jews, as Jews, when they reached sufficient numerical proportions. He said, when there exists “in every large city of the United States a Messianic Synagogue, ... Jews will look up and take notice.” Recognizing that Jewish ostracism would not cease with the establishment of Messianic Synagogues, he encourages Messianic Jews to accept that they will have to live in “the dark corner of the [Messianic] ghetto rather than ... the [Jewish] world at large.” He advocated the formation of “our own Zionist organization, a few clubs [and] lodges.”

Fighting Anti-Semitism

The Alliance was active in using the written word to propagate its views, preeminently through the writings of Max Reich. Reich was a German Jew who became a believer in England during the latter part of the 19th century. He was not a large man and not at all handsome, but possessed a saint-like personality. He was a pacifist, a Quaker by choice, but a strongly evangelical believer. He was articulate, a poet, and a Hebraic and Talmudic scholar. He wrote with power, knowing how to stir a man’s heart. When Reich wrote concerning Jewish causes, he expressed a confidence that Messianic Jews should be heed. He was also realistic, knowing that Jewish believers would probably not be accepted in his day. Reich was an encouragement to all. He insisted that Jewish believers press on for the benefit of the next generation.

In the 1920’s there was a wide campaign of anti-Jewish propaganda. It was alleged that a secret Jewish agency was seeking to gain control of USA economics. Reich, editor of the *Quarterly*, said in 1921:

*The so-called “Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion,” was one of the basest forgeries ever fathered on the Jewish people. Jewish believers will stand by their slandered nation at this time. We know the people of the Jews are innocent of any plotting against governments and of planning world domination. Jews in every country honor their flag. ... None love America more than her Jewish citizens. ... Jewish believers {66} utterly detest the spirit that has made prominent men take up unproven accusations against their brethren, lending themselves to be tools in the hand of unscrupulous Jew-haters, who remain anonymous, bent on stirring up racial strife and religious bigotry.*¹³

Later, the Executive Committee circulated a statement similar in content to the above. It appeared in newspapers around the country.

As the Alliance continued to grow, its purpose and expression naturally evolved. Priority was given to efforts to combat false views circulating in the church about the Jewish people. The Alliance sponsored seminars combating Christian anti-Semitism and explaining Hebrew Christianity. The Alliance protested the treatment of Jews in Nazi Germany as early as 1933 and began a refugee relocation program.¹⁴

The Hebrew Christian Church

For a short time in the 1930’s, there was a growing awareness among Jewish believers that something new was needed. The future appeared grim. A temporary enthusiasm for

¹³ Reich, Max: "The Forged Protocols," *The Hebrew Christian Alliance Quarterly*, vol. 5:1,1921, p. 5.

¹⁴ See *The Calling* pp. 31-33, 35-37.

indigenous Hebrew Christian Churches arose. Its major impetus came from the International Alliance which sought to encourage the formation of separate Jewish congregations in countries where Jewish believers were not allowed to be part of the church. The International Alliance composed a constitution and statement of faith for the Hebrew Christian Church, but its efforts to foster the formation of congregations on an international scale ceased shortly after the death in 1936 of its President, Sir Leon Levison.

I believe that these congregations failed to have an impact because of a lack of vision for what would later become Messianic Judaism. In the 1930's, interest in congregations was based on a need caused by anti-Semitism. It was not until the formation of the State of Israel that Jewish believers fully grasped the prophetic significance of their movement and could articulate its principles. Discussions were at the time carried out by men who had not actually experienced life in a Messianic or Hebrew Christian Congregation. Their ideas were, therefore, somewhat hypothetical. The successful rise of Messianic congregations in the 1970's would prove the need for the fusion of theology, Messianic Judaism, and an experientially-based pragmatism.

South America

In 1931 it came to the attention of the Alliance that there was no organized evangelistic effort among the Jewish people in Argentina. As a result, Dr. Greenbaum, President of the Alliance, called upon the Alliance to commence a work in Argentina. In February, 1933, Arthur Glass was offered the position by the Executive Committee. The Glass family set sail for Buenos Aires on November 10, 1934. This was the first organized evangelistic effort among the Jewish people in Argentina by a Jewish believer.

{67} Initially the work involved much travel in order to meet Jewish believers who were urged to meet together for fellowship. Glass spoke in churches throughout Argentina and Uruguay. As the numbers of Jewish believers grew, so did the desire to remain together for worship rather than join a church. Glass wrote to the Alliance concerning this in April, 1935:

We felt it not advisable to accept any chapel offered to us by any of the churches for the following reasons:

- 1. The psychology of the Jew.*
- 2. It does not assure privacy.*
- 3. They are not in desirable locations.*
- 4. It is inadvisable to accept any denominational building, seeing that our work is non-denominational.*

*It is best to have a place of our own; and we have been surveying the Jewish neighborhood. ... We need literature and that right away: Yiddish Bibles, Gospels and selected Yiddish tracts.*¹⁵

The First Hebrew Christian Church of Buenos Aires was formed in 1935. In October 1943 Glass and his family resigned from the work in South America and returned to the United States. From that time until the Alliance left off working in South America, others were

¹⁵ Glass, Arthur: "Report from South America," *The Hebrew Christian Alliance Quarterly*, vol. 20:1, 1935, pp. 18-20.

hired. None were as successful as Glass, who continued to be involved on a consultative basis.

In 1960 the work of the Alliance in South America was expanded to include Victor Sedaca as a representative in Montevideo, Uruguay. Sedaca was made a part-time Secretary for South America representing the International Hebrew Christian Alliance. Through his activity, an Alliance of Argentina was formed in 1960.

Beginning in the middle 1960's, there was a waning interest in the work from the Alliance leadership. In November 1975, through Glass' involvement, Midwest Messianic Center assumed the work in South America.

{69} “Behold, I Am Doing A New Thing”

Message from the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism, Zeist, The Netherlands, August 9, 1991

As God once spoke to Israel, we hear his voice again today: “Behold, I am doing a new thing” (Isa. 43:19).

At the fourth international conference of the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism, 150 people from five continents-including many Jewish believers in Jesus-gathered in Zeist, The Netherlands, August 5-9, 1991. In response to God’s word to us, we offer the following message to the Jewish people, the churches and all those concerned with Jewish evangelism.

“Behold I am doing a new thing...”

To the Jewish people:

We lament the resurgence of hatred against the Jewish people, against the state of Israel and we abhor every action or attitude which threatens Jewish survival.

We rejoice in God’s continuing care of his covenant people. We rejoice that many have found freedom from oppression in Eastern Europe and Ethiopia, and that many have returned to the land of their fathers. We hope and pray for an end to oppression and for peace for all in the Middle East.

We implore you in this time of renewed messianic fervour to recognise that the era of redemption has begun with Yeshua of Nazareth. He is indeed the promised divine Messiah of Israel, as well as the light to the nations, revealing God’s presence and saving power to all who receive him.

“Behold I am doing a new thing...”

To the Churches:

We lament the teaching that the church has replaced the Jewish people in the purposes of God and we lament the widespread reluctance to share the Gospel with the Jewish people. Silence has often replaced shouts of joy that Jesus came as the Jewish Messiah, the Saviour of the world and the only way of salvation.

{70} We rejoice that the response of Jewish people to the Gospel is none the less gaining momentum in our time and that messianic Jews are making a creative contribution to the life, worship and witness of the worldwide Church. We also rejoice that significant numbers of Christians are again upholding “the New Testament pattern of taking the Gospel to the Jew first...” (Manila Manifesto, LCWE 1989).

We implore the churches to stand with us against powers that promote anti-Semitism and to affirm the urgency of Jewish evangelism. We Jewish and Gentile believers in Jesus need to strengthen our resolve to work together, and together we call upon the whole church to take the whole Gospel to Jewish people everywhere.

“Behold I am doing a new thing...”

{71} Christian and Jew: Leon Levison 1881-1936

Frederick Levison, The Pentland Press: Edinburgh, 1989

Reviewed by Menahem Benhayim

Menahem Benhayim is Secretary for the International Hebrew Christian Alliance in Israel, living in Jerusalem.

“The title of this book will be anathema to many Jews who hold that ‘Christian and Jew’ is an impossible combination;” Fred Levison notes in this biography of his father. It will also no doubt raise hackles among the new generation of Jewish Messianics who would prefer to consign the “impossible combination” to oblivion (or, at best, to a study of the ancient Judaeo-Christian movement which would not generate the emotion of modern terms such as Jewish Christian or Hebrew Christian).

As important as semantics can be in crystalizing belief and ideology, and in providing a rallying point, we must not forget the elastic nature of language. The terms “Messianic” and “Messianic Jew” are applied in the Israeli media to a variety of species totally unrelated to Yeshua-Jesus. “Messianic” may be on its way to becoming as burdensome and uncommunicative as “Christian” has become in so many contexts, especially in the Middle East.

From Palestinian to Scotsman

Judah Leib Levison (later anglicized to Leon Levison) was a Galilean Jew raised in Safed, the child of a distinguished Orthodox rabbi. He married a well-born Scottish woman eight years after having come to faith in Christ through the Scottish mission in 19th century Ottoman Palestine.

Growing up in Edinburgh in the Britain of George V, author Fred Levison remembers with amusement the discovery as a child that he had an uncle Moses in faraway Palestine. “We were thoroughly assimilated and had never thought of ourselves as anything but Scots,” he writes. “And that, many a patriotic Jew would say, is the trouble.”

Today, many Evangelical Christians and Messianic Jews affirm the importance of a continued active Jewish family identity for Jewish believers in Jesus. Leon’s family life and upbringing in Judaism seem to have been both well-rounded and attractive. There is therefore room to wonder what value {72} exists in the record of a man steeped in Jewish lore and life who refused, according to the testimony of his son, to “impose” Jewish traditions or customs on his own family.

Leon Levison had become a well-established British national, but he was not about to become an assimilated “former Jew,” now thoroughly Christianized. That was a path which many of his generation had pursued, whether out of purely secular motives or out of religious conviction.

After his conversion his strong Jewish roots continued to make an impact on his Christian life. This, no doubt, was reinforced by the rise of modern Zionism and the prophetic hopes so strongly associated with it in British circles, as well as by his personal ties to *Eretz Yisrael*. The author notes the continuing friendly ties between the Christian Levisons and their Israeli and diaspora kinfolk.

Leon's involvement in Jewish mission work also helped shape him into something more than a classic assimilated Jewish convert, indifferent to his former co-religionists and kinsmen according to the flesh.

Leon's younger brother Nahum was a rabbinical student in Jerusalem when Leon's conversion rocked the family. Nahum was told his brother was dead. When a local Hebrew Christian revealed the truth to him, he began his own investigation which eventually led him to Scotland, the Christian faith and the ministry. Leon and Nahum were both devoted to their family and a reconciliation was finally effected.

Leon Levison became one of the great leaders of the burgeoning movement of early 20th century Hebrew Christianity. He was one of the founders and first president of the International Hebrew Christian Alliance in 1925. He envisioned and worked for the creation of a Hebrew Christian colony in mandatory Palestine, and sought to recreate a Hebrew Christian Church.

Levison was awarded a knighthood in 1919, officially for his masterly relief campaigns on behalf of suffering Russian Jewry during World War One. Unofficial factors are believed to include his personal links with the pro-British "NILI" underground in Ottoman Palestine (which spied behind Turkish lines during the war), as well as his strong political connections with the British Liberal Party (including such notables as Lloyd George, one of the architects of the Balfour Declaration).

Levison was a missionary, a minister of the United Free (Presbyterian) Church of Scotland, a writer on religious, political and social topics of current interest and a successful fund-raiser for Hebrew Christian, Jewish and other philanthropic causes (such as Armenian relief during the Armenian genocide of World War One). He also cultivated important and friendly links with leaders in Great Britain and elsewhere. There were also contacts with the beleaguered Samaritan Community in Nablus who appealed to Levison for help, which he apparently provided.

{73} Hebrew Christian Colony Planned

The rise of militant Arab nationalism and the later emergence of National Socialism in Germany (bringing with it an intensified anti-Semitism in East Europe) thrust Levison once again into the role of campaigner for oppressed Jewry. The undisputed leader of the Hebrew Christian movement and its most respected spokesman, Levison was thoroughly involved in rescue operations and appeals. He always sought more than temporary or symptomatic relief, pursuing the larger goals in order to find answers to the source of the problem.

A Hebrew Christian colony in Palestine was planned even before Hitler's rise to power. This Colony was in part a response to the massacre of Jews by Arab peasants who had been stirred up by the infamous Grand Mufti of Jerusalem. The establishment of the Third Reich led to a flow of Jewish and Jewish Christian refugees into Palestine and a Hebrew Christian Colony seemed even more urgent. For a while the idea of a colony in Poland was also broached; but, aside from the opening of a Girl's Hostel and Children's Home in Lodz in 1935 (subsequently destroyed in the Holocaust), no Polish colony was ever established.

The Palestine colony was "brought to the point of birth but did not come forth" (Isa. 66:9): a contract was signed and a deposit left with the Mayor of Gaza for the purchase of 2000 dunams (500 acres) of land in 1933. The following year Levison met a Hebrew

Christian family (the Nathan Berlijns) in Holland who was being trained by the Salvation Army to assume leadership in the Palestine colony.

It was never to be-internal disputes, the death of Levison, and objective factors involving both the mandatory power and Arab landowners, doomed the project. It is unlikely that a Hebrew Christian colony would have survived the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1948, or that such a colony would have fared well within the bounds of the new state of Israel in the post-Holocaust atmosphere.

A Hebrew Christian Church Envisioned

Considering Sir Leon's very successful integration into the Evangelical mainstream Protestant Christian church, his active support for the concept of a Hebrew Christian Church may seem surprising. According to his son, Levison did not harbour Restorationist views about "the mystique of a Promised Land" to which the Jewish people must return. In his view, the Old Testament promises had been superseded by the New Testament, which contained no promise of a return to the Land or to a Jewish kingdom. Yet he saw Palestine as the authentic Jewish homeland and he shared in the dream of return. Like many other Hebrew Christians of his day, he {74} identified with the Zionist movement on national, rather than on theological, grounds.

Similarly, his call for a Hebrew Christian church was less of a "restorationist" nature than a recognition of the practical difficulties facing Hebrew Christians in an unfamiliar, sometimes unfriendly, gentile Christian framework. As an active missionary to the Jews, he recognized the incentive a congenial Hebrew-Christian community would be to serious inquirers alienated or intimidated by gentile churches, some of which espoused anti-Jewish sentiments.

Perhaps he also had in mind some of the Portuguese "Maranos" to which he had ministered. These were descendants of Spanish Jews who had converted to Roman Catholicism to escape expulsion in the 15th century, but who secretly retained Jewish practices. In the 20th century many had abandoned the pretence of being crypto-Jews and openly returned to Judaism; others retained a Christian faith, albeit outside the Catholic Church. Levison reported in 1933 that some of them joined the Portuguese Hebrew Christian Alliance.

Levison felt no commitment to Jewish tradition or even to Old Testament practices (such as Kashrut, Sabbath and festival observance), as do many Messianic Jews today, "but to devise a Church reflective of Jewish culture and tradition was Leon's and the Alliance's aim," his son concludes. In the end, despite many efforts (including drafts of liturgy, outlines for creeds and constitutions, commissions to pursue the matter - involving the International Hebrew Christian Alliance, Scottish churches and interdenominational bodies), the program was laid to rest in 1937, one year after Levison's death. It seems to have been overwhelmed by the (then) impending tragedy in Jewish and world history.

Levison died at the age of 55 of heart failure in the midst of the strain of appealing for the needs of Hebrew-Christian refugees and those trapped in Nazi Germany. "This prolonged agony in Germany is breaking my heart," a relief appeal in the religious press declared in his name. His death was reported as far off as the New York Times, with tributes arriving from around the world.

“A Filial Biography”

Fred Levison admits in his introduction, “A filial biography is peculiarly difficult” if there is a wish for some measure of objectivity in dealing with the subject. The 50 years since the death of his father may be expected to have provided sufficient temporal leverage to deal with a beloved father without making it “a sentimental act of pious adulation.” Fred Levison has also drawn on various public documents, including those of the Edinburgh Jewish Medical Mission, the International Hebrew Christian Alliance, both {75} Jewish and Christian members of his family living in Israel and the Diaspora, church reports, and his own personal memories.

The result is a well-rounded portrait of a man very much of his time. In the positive sense, the book reflects Sir Leon’s awareness of the critical changes both Western and Jewish society were undergoing. He did not retreat from that encounter; even before his conversion, he was demonstrating this awareness as he preferred learning a trade (first tailoring, then agriculture) to following his father into the rabbinate.

As a Hebrew-Christian missionary, he avoided a ghetto mentality and cultivated a variety of interests which could have led him into a parliamentary career. His son reports that both the Liberals and Labour offered him nominations on their parliamentary lists. He refused.

A Thorough Integration

Some will question Sir Leon’s integration into British Christian life. Though the author compares his father’s assimilation to that of the biblical Ruth who “assimilated” into Judah, it would seem that this is a particularly inappropriate analogy for a Hebrew-Christian missionary to the Jews. Hebrew Christians by-and-large today seek to counter the accusation that mission is a threat to Jewish national survival. But Levison imbibed the prevailing theology which denigrated Judaism. In a popular book on the life of St. Paul that he wrote in 1918, he emphasized that Christianity as the universal religion meant the abolition of Judaism. “The Old Testament was to him,” his son comments, “merely a preliminary revelation, a kind of religious primer which no longer suited the advanced stage of the Christian life.”

If this is a representative excerpt, it is an all-too-familiar reflection of the back-door Marcionism which flooded the Church in its days of triumph. At the same time, it ignores Paul’s Jewish particularism, his Jewish apologetics reported several times in the Book of Acts (13:14-41; 22:1-21; 23:1-6; 24:10-21; 26:1-23; 28:17-20), as well as the well-known pericope in Romans 9-11. There is a certain irony in Sir Leon’s criticism of Jewish particularism, in the light of his ties to Scottish churches (for which national, theological and cultural elements were so deeply intertwined).

Still, during an exploratory return to Galilee to effect reconciliation with his family, he favoured the use of the Haggada and Jewish forms of worship for a Hebrew-Christian church. Of course the incident must be seen in the context of his day, for even passive attendance at the synagogue was seen by some zealous Evangelical overseers as “apostacy” from Christian faith.

In 1930, during a truly triumphant return to Galilee, Levison wrote of his surprise at the welcome he received. “They (Jews in the Holy Land) sent {76} deputations to me and even gave receptions in my honour” while acknowledging him “as the leader of Hebrew Christianity throughout the world.” In speaking to an elderly rabbi in Safed who called on

him, he denied that Hebrew Christians were “converted” but were (in the words of that now familiar, euphemism) “completed Jews.”

An Assessment of Value

In his closing assessment of his father’s life and work, the author seeks to answer the question of whether or not Sir Leon’s dreams of a Hebrew-Christian colony and a renewed Hebrew-Christian church have any permanent value. Of course, even 50 years is too short a span to evaluate such dreams. Can we evaluate the permanent value of the modern return to Jewish national sovereignty, except by faith? Although Israel became a nation-state again in 1948, it is still in crisis and has not yet fulfilled the hopes of the ancient and modern dreamers of Zion.

For those of us who live closer to his time, the life and work of Leon Levison remain significant. It is certainly not detached from the historical and theological process which led to the modern rekindling of “the candlestick of witness within the Jewish people,” to borrow a phrase adopted by the International Hebrew Christian Alliance. The movement he served for almost 40 years has represented at least a partial reingrafting of a small Jewish remnant into the Messianic olive tree. Despite the tremendous changes in both Jewish and Christian life since Leon Levison completed his ministry, the basic issues facing Jewish believers in the New Testament continue to challenge, puzzle and engage us all.

Author Levison included a chapter on “The After Years,” relating to Lady Levison, brother Nahum and the I.H.C.A. Also included are two appendices for proposed articles of faith for a Hebrew Christian Church and a Haggada for a Christian Seder.

It is recommended that, in any future edition of an otherwise attractively printed book, the many Hebraic expressions be proofread by someone familiar with the original language - there are numerous poor and even erroneous transliterations. In a work of this kind, an index would be a particularly helpful tool for readers and research.

This very readable and well-documented book is a welcome addition to the modern story of the Hebrew-Christian/Messianic Jewish movement in all its diversity.

{77} God's New Covenant: A New Testament Translation

Heinz W. Cassirer

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1989

Reviewed by Allan M. Harman

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Since 1880 there has been almost one new translation of the New Testament into English every year. Many of these translations have been done by individuals, a lesser number by committees. It is notable that those done by individuals have not, on the whole, stood the test of time, and rarely does one find them quoted. Thus Moffat, Weymouth, Knox and Barclay were important achievements by individual translators, but the translations which have continued in use and are frequently cited tend to be those like the RSV, NASB, NIV, and NKJV, all of which are committee products.

We ask the question, "Why does the work of individual translators not stand the test of time?" Part of the answer is that the task of translating the New Testament is a massive one, and the total range of skills needed are possibly never possessed by one person. Two major skills are required. First, there has to be an immense knowledge of New Testament Greek and related literature, including classical Greek. This would of course include the LXX, which exerted a profound influence upon the New Testament writers, because for many of them it was their Bible. Second, there has to be an understanding of the meaning of the New Testament - that is to say, problems of translation are first of all problems of interpretation. Before we can translate anything from one language to another we have to decide what the passage means. In the case of the New Testament we can put it in this way: Exegesis of the text must come first, and on the basis of that exegesis, a translation can be offered.

Let us use these two principles to begin an assessment of Cassirer's translation. There can be no doubt that Cassirer has clearly demonstrated his high competence in Greek. He was not a classicist, but a philosopher first of all in his native Germany and then from 1933 in the U. K., teaching at the Universities of Oxford and Glasgow. For someone whose first language was not English, it is an amazing achievement to create a translation of this magnitude with graceful English prose. Only rarely are {78} there expressions which may betray Cassirer's Continental background. Cassirer's spiritual pilgrimage also lies behind his translation. During the course of his work as a philosopher, he finally came to sense the impossibility of being satisfied with philosophical thought, and he turned instead to the New Testament. It is hard to accept the statement at the beginning of the Introduction that he had not read a word of the Bible before he was 49 years old. As a philosopher he would surely have come across biblical phrases in his study, though the reference may be to a conscious opening of the pages of a Bible. He turned to Paul's epistles and was deeply affected by them. He worked both on translating them and also categorizing their themes under 40 headings. These headings are given as an appendix to the translation (pp. 493-494). He worked on these categories

in 1957-58 but it was not until 1972-73 that he committed his entire translation of the New Testament to paper. During that period Ronald Weizman acted as his amanuensis and, after Cassirer's death, he supervised the publication of this volume.

Clearly there was a deep spiritual understanding of the text on Cassirer's part. One has only to read through the translation to empathize with the way in which he renders the Greek into English. At times he adds words which have no equivalent in Greek, but that is what all translations of the New Testament are forced to do. Sometimes this reflects the exegetical position he adopts in regard to a particular passage. Take for example his rendering of the second part of 2 Timothy 1:12b: "I am persuaded that he has the power to keep guard over that which I have put in his charge until the coming of that Day." The Greek can be rendered literally: "I am persuaded that he is able to guard my deposit until that day." The exegetical problem involves identifying the deposit to which Paul refers. Is it his soul which was committed to God, or is it the gospel which had been committed to him by God? The word for "deposit" only occurs three times in the New Testament, and all of these are in the epistles to Timothy (I Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:12, 14). Clearly in the two other contexts the "deposit" has to be the gospel, not Paul's soul, and in 2 Timothy 1:12 it makes better sense to translate it that way. What Paul was convinced about was the fact that the gospel was not going to be affected by his impending death. Rather, God would ensure that the gospel which had been entrusted to Paul would be maintained and preserved. Here Cassirer has followed AV's tradition of interpretation; his paraphrastic translation reflects his exegetical decision. The claim is made in the introduction that,

a response which is alert to every emotional nuance of the text lies at the heart of this translation. ... He trusted that imaginative scholars who so wished would be able to find firm foundation implied within the context itself for any challenging and unexpected choices of word or phrase.

{79} I found that often he attempted to fill out the meaning of the Greek or use unusual words or phrases in a way which may jolt the reader but not always satisfy. Take for example the opening sentence of the Lord's Prayer, "Father of ours, you who have your dwelling in heaven". The expression "Father of ours" is not good idiomatic English. It may have been chosen because it has a somewhat Germanic ring to it, or simply to try and avoid the common "our Father". But nothing is gained by the change; rather, there is a feeling that the Lord's Prayer is being distanced from us as Cassirer avoids the simple commencement with which we are familiar.

The same sort of comment could be made regarding various other changes. What improvement is made by calling the unclean spirits in the Gospels "tarnished spirits?" Or why would one so often expand the translation so that it becomes close to a paraphrase? Examples are passages such as Mark 4:14 where "lest they should turn and it should be forgiven them" becomes "to make certain that they should not turn to God and have their deeds forgiven them," or Mark 2:27 where "therefore" becomes "and the conclusion to be drawn from this is."

Nowhere, to my knowledge, did Cassirer claim that his translation was a Jewish one. However the cover claims that because Cassirer was of Hebrew descent himself, his translation is especially attentive to Jewish sensibilities present, often most subtly, in the New Testament texts.

The opinions of various scholars are quoted regarding his translation; three of these (E.E. Ellis, T.F. Torrance, and Marvin R. Wilson) refer to his Jewish background. Ellis says that "As a Jewish translator of the New Testament, he often brings out subtle meanings

that escape the Gentile scholar.” According to Torrance, “We need Jewish eyes to help us read and understand the Gospels and Epistles in a faithful way - and that is precisely what Heinz Cassirer does for us.

It is unfortunate that the emphasis has been placed in this way on Cassirer’s Jewish background. For much of his life he was a non-practising Jew, and I am unaware that he delved deeply into that background after he became a Christian believer. The features which commend the translation are due to his Christian understanding and his ability as a translator of *koine* Greek, not from knowledge gained from a thorough Jewish upbringing and training.

Few translations by individuals last, and while I enjoyed reading this one, I think that it is unlikely to make a permanent impression. He has provided some translations which may well be an improvement, but overall his work does not surpass existing translations. It remains an expression of Cassirer’s devotion to the New Testament, and of his desire to express for himself its meaning in English.