

MISHKAN

A FORUM ON THE GOSPEL AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE



Jerusalem

MISHKAN

A Forum on the Gospel and the Jewish People

"CONTRIBUTORS TO THE MESSIANIC MOVEMENT"

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Roots and Records

Editorial

In this issue of *Mishkan* we read about eight individuals who are very different, but share a common involvement in Jewish evangelism during the 19th and 20th centuries. The articles are different in style and length, but each sheds light on a person who has contributed to the history of Jewish missions. The biographies are not exhaustive, but contain sufficient detail to inspire those of us now involved in the same ministry. Perhaps one or more of the articles could serve as a foundation for further research. In a later issue of *Mishkan* we hope to focus on others who also have made a contribution to Jewish evangelism.

Thorough study of mission history helps us understand our own identity. We are part of a movement which has a history. We are not the first ones to contemplate difficult issues regarding the relationship between Jews and Christians and Jesus-believing Jews, although at times we act and talk *as if* we were. In so doing we only prove our lack of appreciation and understanding of history. We demonstrate our unwillingness to debate and struggle with other points of view, many of which we reject before due deliberation occurs. German and English mission magazines and reports from mission conferences from the late 19th and the early 20th century are all good examples of great theological resource material which has not been given the attention it deserves.

Historical studies done by insiders run the danger of touching up history. This alone makes an outsider's views valuable and needed. Although the motives behind any retouching of the history of an organization or a person might be good, we do not do ourselves a favor by omitting negative or exaggerating positive elements. Personally, I have never found much benefit in reading the history of saints, but I have been encouraged by an honest history of men and women who, under the difficult circumstances that make up real life, have remained faithful to their calling.

W.T. Gidney offers a principle for a good writing of mission history in his preface to *The History of the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews* (London 1908: ix-x). Gidney writes:

The reader of this History must not expect to learn of large numbers of converts gathered in at one time, but rather of one here and another there. Whatever the results are, they are narrated with profound thankfulness to Almighty God, for what He has graciously permitted His servants to achieve by the power of the Holy Spirit, and, it is believed, they will prove a source of encouragement to those who are, or may be, engaged in this work. The failure and mistakes of those who have gone before – due to the weakness of mortal nature, and to circumstances over which they had no control, or were not wise enough to turn to good account – have not been concealed or minimized. To have done this would have destroyed the value of the History as a guide for the years to come.

Gidney hopes to be “of encouragement to those who are, or may be, engaged” in Jewish mission. However, this encouragement is not based on success stories or covering up mistakes, but on the conviction that God wants the gospel presented to the Jews—regardless of our success. The fact that God uses flawed people in his service makes room—even for us!

Even an author who has secondary motives for writing mission history can still offer inspiration and encouragement. An example of this is A. Bernstein who in his introduction to *Some Jewish Witness for Christ* (London 1909: 5-6) writes:

The aim of this work is to shew that God had at all times in the history of the Christian Church a considerable number of believing Israelites who, after their conversion to Christianity, rendered good service to their fellowmen and to the Church of Christ at large.

Louis Meyer also had multiple motives when he wrote his 21 brief biographical sketches under the title: *Eminent Hebrew Christians of the Nineteenth Century* (Edited with an Introduction by David A. Rausch, New York and Toronto, The Edwin Mellen Press, 1983). The conclusion of Meyer’s preface exhorts:

May this volume stimulate those who are already zealous in the evangelization of the Jews. May it shame those who uphold that labor spent in preaching the Gospel to the Jews is lost labor, that it is impossible to bring a Jew to Christ, or that Hebrew Christians come only from the lowest class of Jews. (p. xxxiv)

Against such a background one can understand why the author talks about *eminent* persons in Jewish missions—or about *Famous Hebrew Christians*, as J. Gartenhaus does in his anthology (Grand Rapids, 1979). There are persons who have made history and set the agenda in a special way. We should, of course, occupy ourselves with them. However, I miss the description of *ordinary* Jesus-believing Jews, their everyday life, their relationships to their surroundings or a description of life in an ordinary congregation—i.e. realistic descriptions lacking glossy colors and touch up. A history which occupies itself with only the *eminent* will remain an amputated history.

Regardless of our view of eschatology, our present involvement in Jewish evangelism is important. This raises the question of how much we invest in preserving the history of our own work—with its failures and successes. Let me give a 19th century example. One of the reasons that we know—or can know—much about both famous and non-famous mission workers’ lives and deeds is that they were requested to write reports and journals about their work. This is what the Committee for the London Jews Society required of its employees:

They [the Committee] would wish you to keep a daily account of your proceedings. In these Journals you will record, not only the events and transactions in which you are engaged, but the feelings of your minds, and your reflections upon the various objects, around you, and in the great work upon which you are occupied, its difficulties, and the means of its

advancement. These Journals are to be considered as the property of the Society, and are to be sent home as opportunities occur. Besides these Journals, the Committee wish you to keep up a regular correspondence with them, in which you will give extracts from your Journals as will be interesting to the friends of the Society, before you may be enabled to transmit the Journals themselves. (General Instructions by the Committee of the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst The Jews to their Missionaries. London: 1824, p. 19)

Mission magazines would often publish lengthy excerpts from the missionaries' journals. If the issues were sensitive some editing was done. Had these journals not been published we would today suffer a lack of resources. It is ironic that the committees requesting these regular reports (so that they could make the best decisions regarding the work) seem to have had no policy on how to preserve these journals for the future. Clearly some valuable material has been lost. Leaders themselves might even have destroyed some of the material. When an organization moves its headquarters to a new location there is always a danger that valuable historical files will be lost.

This prompts the question of what we must do to preserve the records of our work for the future. In a report from the Billy Graham Center Archives it says:

Many evangelical agencies/organizations/leaders do not recognize the need for preserving an account of their ministry. The immediate demands of the day take precedence over preservation of their records. As a result, the entire Christian body suffers from this loss. (www.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/EAC/eac6.html)

In *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* (vol. 38, no. 2, April 2002, p. 168-175) Robert Shuster, director of the Billy Graham Center Archives, offers some guidelines. Under the title "It's Your History. Guidelines for Establishing Your Mission Archives" Schuster writes:

Consider the Benefits. To be the steward of a mission's history is to care for and protect material that records the work of God acted out in the lives of men and women. Now is the time to decide how best to retain the documents that identify your group as unique and provide you with the means to continue to respond to God's call faithfully and productively. A mission archives will:

- *Serve as a resource for current work*
- *Remind individuals of the lessons from the past*
- *Supplement fund-raising projects and publications with illustrations, photographs and relevant documents*
- *Facilitate training new missionaries*
- *Enrich anniversary celebrations*
- *Enhance visual and audio appeal to web sites and exhibits*
- *Provide answers to legal queries*

Although small mission organizations might not be able to fully live up to this standard, the people at Billy Graham Center Archives should be thanked

for reminding us to preserve our own records. Even a modest beginning is better than none at all.

If we don't know our history we stand in danger of becoming rootless and without our records future generations will be rootless. If we know only the retouched version of history we easily lose hope. It becomes impossible to identify with those who went ahead of us. An honest history can serve as an encouragement to continue the blessed work of sharing the gospel with the Jewish people.

Kai Kjær-Hansen

Samuel Schor, the Man and His Time

Yoelit Migron*

My interest in Samuel Schor arose from a misconception. I came upon his name in a Hebrew pamphlet, listed as one of the members of the Council of the Jewish Colonial Bank, the Zionist bank founded in London in 1899.¹ It was one of 19 names, most of them belonging to well known Zionists. In the short biography appended to the third edition of his book "The Everlasting Nation and Their Coming King," he is also described as "the only Hebrew Christian who had the privilege of being present at the first Zionist Conference in 1897."² On reading these two facts, it struck me as intriguing and even sensational that a Hebrew Christian, and a missionary to the Jews, should be appointed to such a central Zionist position. I tried to confirm this notion, but unfortunately, it turned out to be incorrect. The member of the Council mentioned in the list was, in fact, a different person: one Samuel Schurr, a doctor of Chemistry from Stanislaw, Galicia.³ Unpointed written Hebrew does not distinguish between "Schurr" and "Schor."

However, the real Samuel Schor (1859-1933) was nevertheless a very interesting man. He was Zionist, a lover of the Jewish nation and of the Holy Land, and he was also a great organizer and an eloquent speaker. He was born to a Hebrew Christian family of the Anglican community in Jerusalem, but spent most of his adult life in England. He was a clergyman, a missionary to the Jews, and an author. In terms of his beliefs, he was a fundamentalist, and fundamentalism was at the core of his entire worldview. He believed in prophecy, and in the restoration of Israel in their homeland, and therefore he supported Zionism. Out of love for the Holy Land, he also prepared and exhibited the Palestine Exhibitions for about 25 years. He believed that Israel is

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¹ B. Stopniker, *Hamachshir Lehityashvut* (Tel Aviv, 1931), 13.

² K. Burnett, "Short Biography" in: S. Schor, *The Everlasting Nation and their Coming King*, 3rd impression (Heathfield, Sussex, 1871), 12.

³ "Announcement of the Opening of the Original Scription List for Shares in the Jewish Colonial Trust, London 1899", The Central Zionist Archives. This document is shown in a photograph in "Jewish Colonial Trust", *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 10 (Jerusalem, 1971), 43.

the chosen nation beloved of God, and that Hebrew Christians have a special mission to Christianity.

Biography

Samuel Schor was born in Jerusalem on 17 August 1859,⁴ and was baptized in Christ Church, Jerusalem, on 11 September 1859.⁵ He was the second son of Nathan Israel Schor and Rachel, who was Nathan's second wife. Both his parents were refugees of sorts in the Jerusalem Community. Nathan was a tailor from Austria, probably from Galicia. He was baptized in Cairo on 23 March 1850 by Christian Lazarus Lauria and Johann Rudolph Theophilus Lieder in the chapel of the CMS (Church Missionary Society).⁶ His first wife died in September 1851, and he was left with four small children. At that point he left Cairo, and went to the LJS (The London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews) station in Jerusalem, to find a workplace for himself, and some arrangement for his children.⁷ Rachel was baptized in the LJS station in Jerusalem on 2 April 1847.⁸ According to the missionary F.C. Ewald, she was abandoned at the age of 17 by her husband at the LJS station at Jerusalem. The couple, who came from Constantinople, visited Ewald sometime in 1846. Rachel told Ewald that they had meant to get baptized, but her husband had suddenly changed his mind, divorced her, and left Jerusalem.⁹ After her baptism, she married Judah Lyons on 28 July 1847,¹⁰ and after Judah's death she married Israel Nathan Schor on 27 March 1853.¹¹

Samuel Schor was educated in the Boys' School of the LJS in Jerusalem, first as a day student,¹² and later, in the end of 1871 as a boarder.¹³ The Hebrew Christians in Jerusalem preferred to keep their children in the boarding schools.

⁴ Samuel Schor's application for naturalization, date 5.8.1890, HO 144 321/B8758, Public Record Office.

⁵ Register of Baptisms in the Parish Christ Church, Jerusalem, p. 27.

⁶ C.L. Lauria, "Cairo, Letter from the Rev. C. L. Lauria, Baptism of a Jewish family", *JJ* (Jewish Intelligence) (July 1851), 282-283.

⁷ Letters of C.L. Lauria to J. Nicolayson, dates 1.10.1851 and 30.1.1852, A letter of P.I. Hershon to J.C. Reichart, date 6.4.1852, Envelope 2A, The LJS Archive in the Heritage Center, Christ Church, Jerusalem.

⁸ Register of Baptisms in the Parish Christ Church, Jerusalem, p. 7.

⁹ F.C. Ewald, "Jerusalem, Journal of the Rev. F. C. Ewald, Candidades for Baptism", *JJ* (Jan. 1847), 20. Ewald does not explicitly mention her name, but dates and circumstances suggest that he is referring to Rachel.

¹⁰ Register Book of Banns of Marriages, 2. 6

¹¹ Register Book of Banns of Marriages, 4.

¹² S. Schor, *Palestine and the Bible: Illustrating the Manners and Customs of the People in Bible Lands* (London, 1931), 21-22.

¹³ Report date 28.11.1871, The Local Committee Minute Book 1867-1885, The LJS Archive in the Heritage Center, Christ Church, Jerusalem.

At age of 16 he left the Boys' School and trained in carpentry for a year and a half in the House of Industry of the LJS in Jerusalem,¹⁴ then he left to St. Chrischona Institution near Basel, where he studied bookbinding for two years.¹⁵ On 9 January 1880 he was admitted to the Hebrew Missionary College of the LJS in London.¹⁶ The course of his education actually followed that of his elder brother, John. Both studied in the Boys' School at Jerusalem, in St Chrichona, and then in the Hebrew Missionary College in London. Some other boys of the Hebrew Christian community also followed a similar course, studying either in St. Chrischona, or in the Hebrew Missionary College, or in both.

While in college, on 2 June 1882, Schor was offered mission work in Galilee but declined. In February 1883 he started to work as a missionary in the LJS, first in London, later in Birmingham and then in Jerusalem. On 5 April 1884, he married Miss Remdall, but not before the Mission Committee sanctioned their marriage.¹⁷ He arrived in Jerusalem on 12 November 1886, but after ten months he went back to England on account of the illness of his wife and child. In England he was again attached to the Metropolitan Mission.¹⁸ While in Jerusalem Schor, James Edward Hanauer and Ben-Zion Friedman were recommended for ordination to the General Committee in London by A. Hastings Kelk, the head of Jerusalem mission station. The Committee sanctioned the ordination of Hanauer and Friedman, but refused to approve Schor's ordination.¹⁹ He was ordained deacon in 1889,²⁰ and in 1890 he was ordained minister.²¹ During all this time Samuel Schor served as a missionary of the LJS in London.²² In 1891 he got a curacy in Felixtow, and left his work with the LJS. However, he did not sever his connection with the mission. He was involved with the mission's supporters, and visited its auxiliary societies.²³

¹⁴ Book of Appointments and Applications for Missionary Employment, 1884; Report date 7.9.1875, The Local Committee Minute Book 1867-1885, The LJS Archive in the Heritage Center, Christ Church, Jerusalem.

¹⁵ Book of Appointments and Applications for Missionary Employment, 1884; Report dates 13.2.1877 and 13.3.1877, The Local Committee Minute Book 1867-1885, The LJS Archive in the Heritage Center, Christ Church, Jerusalem.

¹⁶ Book of Appointments and Applications for Missionary Employment, 1884.

¹⁷ Registration of Missionaries I, Dep. CMJ. d. 19, 17.

¹⁸ Registration of Missionaries I, Dep. CMJ. d. 19, 17.

¹⁹ Report no. 502, date 22.4.1887, Resolutions of the Parent Committee 1887-1890, The LJS Archive in the Heritage Center, Christ Church, Jerusalem.

²⁰ "News of the Month", *Jl* (April 1889), 61.

²¹ "News of the Month", *Jl* (July 1890), 109.

²² S. Schor, "Gleaning Mission from the Field", *Jl* (April 1890), 60-61.

²³ *Jl* (Nov. 1891), 162; *Jl* (Dec. 1891), 190.

Schor held his first Palestine Exhibition in 1891 in Felixtowe,²⁴ and this was the beginning of his long-time activity with the Palestine Exhibitions in the service of the LJS. In 1893 he renewed his work with the LJS, this time as the association secretary of their northwestern district.²⁵ Schor's main charge in that office was to collect money for the LJS activities. Toward that purpose he endeavored to enlarge the circle of LJS supporters. He attended the meetings of the auxiliary Societies in his district, and spoke there. He also represented the LJS at the Keswick Convention in 1894, where he found many opportunities to present the mission activities to the attendants.²⁶ Schor was known as a magnetic speaker, and he was invited to preach before Jews in special events like the services conducted on Passover feast in the Church of Whitechapel.²⁷ On 30 September 1904 he was appointed Head of the Mission in Liverpool, and on 1 January 1906 he was appointed the General Secretary and Manager of Palestine Exhibitions. In March of the same year he gave up charge of the Liverpool Mission,²⁸ and was finally able to dedicate all his time to the development, preparation and display of the exhibitions.²⁹ Schor organized the exhibitions for some 23 years, until on 31 May 1914, when he resigned his post with the Palestine Exhibitions to become a Vicar of the Christ Church at Blackpool.³⁰ He held that post until 1923. From 1923 till 1925 he was in charge of the Barbican Mission to the Jews.³¹ He opened up work in Poland, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, establishing many mission stations. He also purchased two Gospel vans for extensive colportage work throughout East Europe.³² His

²⁴ "A Palestine Exhibition", *Jl* (Oct. 1891), 155; "The Palestine Exhibition", *Jl* (Nov. 1891), 175; H.S., "In Memoriam - Rev. Samuel Schor", *The Hebrew Christian*, 4 (Jan. 1934), 162; R. M. Stevens, "The Late Rev. Samuel Schor", *The Hebrew Christian Alliance Quarterly*, 4 (Jan. 1934), 26. I thank Dr. Gershon Nerel for the reprints of the two last references that he generously gave me.

²⁵ "By the Way", *JMI* (Jewish Missionary Intelligence) (July 1893), 97; H.S., "In Memoriam", 162; R. M. Stevens, 26.

²⁶ "News of the Month", *JMI* (Oct. 1894), 158.

²⁷ G.N. Hanks, "One Hundred and Third Anniversary", *JMI* (June 1911), 93.

²⁸ *Missionaries* No. 3, Dep. CMJ, c. 77, p. 212, The Bodleian Library, Oxford University.

²⁹ "By the Way, Palestine Exhibitions", *JMI* (Jan. 1907), 2.

³⁰ *Missionaries* No. 3, Dep. CMJ, c. 77, p. 212, The Bodleian Library, Oxford University

³¹ The Barbican Mission to the Jews was founded in 1879 by Rev. Paul. I. Warschawski. In 1889 Prediger Christlieb. T. Lipschytz became the manager, and under him the work prospered. It was a small institute, and it employed Hebrew Christian exclusively. About the earlier history of Barbican Mission see: A.E. Thompson, *A Century of Jewish Missions*, Chicago, New York and Toronto [1902], 110-111; A. Bernstein, *Some Jewish Witnesses for Christ* (Jerusalem, 1999; [London 1909]), 340-341.

³² K. Burnett, "Brief Biography" in: S. Schor, *The Everlasting Nation and their Coming King* (Heathfield, Sussex, 1971), 11-12.

successful work in the Barbican Mission came to end when he had a stroke 3 September 1925.³³

Samuel Schor also took part in the public Hebrew Christian life. He was a president of The Hebrew Christian Alliance and Prayer Union of Great Britain, and as such he shouldered much of the work of organizing the International Hebrew Christian Conference in 1925.³⁴ At that conference the International Hebrew Christian Alliance (IHCA) was founded, and Samuel Schor was elected as one of its Vice-Presidents.³⁵ Frederich Levison, the son of Leon Levison, the first president of the IHCA, assumes that Schor would have been elected first president if he had not fallen ill.³⁶ Samuel Schor died 9 November 1933 in his home in Longfield, Kent.³⁷

Organizer of the Palestine Exhibitions and Holy Land Enthusiast

Samuel Schor started giving lectures about Palestine in 1883, a few years after the remarkable inscription in the Hezekiah Tunnel was discovered.³⁸ He was one of several members of the Jerusalem Hebrew Christian community who gave lectures and wrote about the Holy Land, a topic which roused much interest in the western public. Peter Finkelstein, for example, lectured in England in 1886,³⁹ and his sister Lidya did the same.⁴⁰ Mendel John Dinnes, who had been a photographer in Jerusalem, lectured in the USA in the early 1870s, accompanying his lectures with slides projected from a magic lantern.⁴¹ James Edward Hanauer published numerous articles about Palestine in the "Jewish Intelligence," and the "Jewish Missionary Intelligence" the LJS monthlies. In 1891 Samuel Schor published his book "Interesting Facts about Jerusalem," which included illustrations of the city, of its inhabitants, and of the LJS premises there. It described life in Jerusalem, and spoke of the marvelous future awaiting the city.⁴²

³³ F. Levison, *Christian and Jew: The Life of Leon Levison 1881-1936* (Edinburgh, 1989), 164.

³⁴ H.S., "In Memoriam", 162-163.

³⁵ *Report of the First International Hebrew Christian Conference, Held at Islington, London, 5th to 12th September 1925, "Office Bearers 1926"*, London and Edinburgh [1926]. I thank Dr. Gershon Nerel and Mr. Victor Smadja for the reprints of this reference that they generously gave me.

³⁶ F. Levison, *Christian and Jew: The Life of Leon Levison 1881-1936* (Edinburgh, 1989), 164.

³⁷ K. Burnett, 11-12.

³⁸ H.S., "In Memoriam", 162; R.M. Stevens, 26.

³⁹ "News of the Month", *Jl* (Jan. 1887), 7. 9

⁴⁰ Johannes F. A. de le Roi, *Geschichte der evangelischen Mission seit Entstehung des neueren Judentums*, II, Leipzig 1899, 199.

⁴¹ D. Wahrmann, C. Gavin and N. Rosovsky, *Capturing the Holy Land: M. J. Diness and the Beginning of Photography in Jerusalem* (Cambridge, Mass., 1993), 39-41.

⁴² "Literary Notice", *Jl* (March 1891), 47.

In 1891 Samuel Schor displayed his first "Palestine Exhibition," the first of a long series of exhibitions, which he prepared over a period of almost 25 years. These exhibitions were his life's work. They were displayed all over England, and were even taken to Canada in 1912.⁴³ Schor's largest exhibition was held in 1907, in the Royal Agricultural Hall in London. More than 3000 volunteers took part in the preparations and in the displays. The exhibition illustrated many facets of the Holy Land.⁴⁴ There were various models, e.g. the Church of the Holy Sepulcher,⁴⁵ Christ Church of Jerusalem and the buildings around it,⁴⁶ Solomon's First Temple,⁴⁷ and Herod's Second Temple.⁴⁸ In the entrance of the exhibition stood a gigantic raised map of the whole country, based on a map made by the Palestine Exploration Fund.⁴⁹ Species of the flora and the fauna of Palestine were exhibited.⁵⁰ Realistic scenes of Palestine life were performed by volunteers wearing oriental garments. They illustrated life in a Jerusalem home and in the market place, where various articles and curiosities were on sale. The scenes also showed peasant and Bedouin life in Palestine, as well as Jewish religious ceremonies.⁵¹ Musicians played oriental music on original oriental instruments.⁵² Daily lectures and limelight lectures were given on various topics, such as life in Palestine and in other countries in the Middle East, the Mission's work in Jerusalem, Christ in the Holy Land, Jews and Zionism. Even a cinematograph about Jerusalem was shown, photographed in Jerusalem especially for the LJS.⁵³ Samuel Schor planned and managed the whole exhibition. He was also involved in the technical work. Having been trained as a carpenter and bookbinder, he was very skillful. He himself made the model of

⁴³ "Palestine in Canada", *JMI* (Sept. 1912), 130.

⁴⁴ A detailed description of this exhibition is given in the article: "Palestine in London", *JMI* (Aug. 1907), 118-125, and in the catalogue of this exhibition: *Palestine in London: Official Guide, Royal Agricultural Hall, Islington. June 11 to July 2, 1907*, [n. p.], 1907.

⁴⁵ "Palestine in London", *JMI* (Aug. 1907), 124.

⁴⁶ "Palestine in London", *JMI* (Aug. 1907), 124.

⁴⁷ "Palestine in London", *JMI* (Aug. 1907), 125.

⁴⁸ *Palestine in London: Official Guide, Royal Agricultural Hall, Islington. June 11 to July 2, 1907*, [n. p.], 1907, 65-68.

⁴⁹ *Palestine in London: Official Guide, Royal Agriculture Hall, Islington. June 11 to July 2 1907*, [n. p.] 1907, 42.

⁵⁰ "Palestine in London", *JMI* (Aug. 1907), 124.

⁵¹ Photographs of parts of those scenes are illustrated in the article: "Palestine in London", *JMI* (Aug. 1907), 118-125, and in the exhibition catalogue: *Palestine in London: Official Guide, Royal Agriculture Hall, Islington. June 11 to July 2 1907*, [n. p.] [1907].

⁵² "Palestine in London", *JMI* (Aug. 1907), 124.

⁵³ "Palestine in London", *JMI* (Aug. 1907), 123.

Herod's Second Temple,⁵⁴ and he with W. Armstrong, the Secretary of the Palestine Exploration Fund, supervised the preparation of the raised map.⁵⁵

Other Palestine Exhibitions were smaller than the one of 1907, but they had similar features. The first exhibition in Felixtowe displayed models of the Tabernacle, of Solomon's and Herod's Temples, and an ancient tomb with a rolling door-stone. It also displayed a sarcophagus from Palestine, and an Assyrian brick, brought from an Iraqi archeological site by John Moses Eppstein, a Hebrew Christian missionary from Baghdad. There were also scenes of a water seller with goatskins full of water, a butter-maker at work, and a mother carrying her child on her back. Oriental food like ma'amul, kamardin, mulban and baklawa were sold in a life-sized model of a Jerusalem market, providing a taste of the local atmosphere.⁵⁶

The Palestine Exhibitions attracted the public, and were a great success. The LJS valued them as a way of arousing interest in mission to the Jews,⁵⁷ and as a source of income.⁵⁸ The exhibitions were very profitable. The 1907 exhibition alone yielded a profit of 12,000 pounds.⁵⁹ The money was used for building the LJS hospitals in Jerusalem and Safed, and after these works were finished, the profits were deposited in the General Fund of that mission.⁶⁰ Samuel Schor regarded his exhibitions as a means of helping western people understand the Holy Scriptures. He argued that without real knowledge of the East, many verses in the Scriptures were unintelligible to the reader.⁶¹ He believed that life in the East had not changed for centuries, and therefore the life and the world-view of the modern peasants and Bedouins reflected those of the Patriarchs, of the children of Israel and of the people in the time of Jesus.⁶²

Schor was generally fascinated with the East. In addition to his involvement with the Palestine Exhibitions, he published a collection of oriental songs with their musical score, and with the Arabic or Hebrew lyrics transcribed in Latin

⁵⁴ *Palestine in London: Official Guide, Royal Agriculture Hall, Islington. June 11 to July 2 1907*, [n. p.] [1907], 67.

⁵⁵ *Palestine in London: Official Guide, Royal Agriculture Hall, Islington. June 11 to July 2 1907*, [n. p.], 1907, 42.

⁵⁶ "The Palestine Exhibition", *Jl* (Nov. 1891), 175.

⁵⁷ "By the Way", *JMI* (Jan. 1893), 2.

⁵⁸ "By the Way", *JMI* (May 1893), 65.

⁵⁹ W.T. Gidney, *The History of the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews, From 1809 to 1908*, London 1908, 581.

⁶⁰ W.T. Gidney, 501.

⁶¹ S. Schor, "Palestine Light on Scripture Difficulties, I. The Hole in the Door", *JMI* (April. 1911), 58-59.

⁶² S. Schor, *Palestine and the Bible: Illustrating the Manners and Customs of the People in Bible Lands*, London 1831, 7. This notion was common amongst European residents in the East in Schor's time. See for instance Philip Baldensperger's book: P.J. Baldensperger, *The Immoveable East: Studies of the People and Custom of Palestine* (London, 1913).

characters.⁶³ He was proud of having been born in Jerusalem, and felt that this gave him a place among “the Salt of the Earth.” This pride is apparent in his speech at the opening ceremony of the 1907 Palestine Exhibition, which began with the words: “I welcome you all to my home in Palestine.”⁶⁴ He also mentioned his birthplace in the title page of his book *Palestine and the Bible*, which carries the caption: “By Samuel Schor who was born in Jerusalem.”⁶⁵ He made four trips to Palestine, in 1901,⁶⁶ 1904,⁶⁷ 1909,⁶⁸ and again in 1912,⁶⁹ accompanied by fellow travelers whom he invited to see the country.⁷⁰

Schor, The Hebrew Christian and Lover of the Jewish Nation

As mentioned above, Schor was proud to be a native of the Holy Land, like “St. Paul my own countryman.”⁷¹ This pride had two facets, the Christian facet and the national Jewish facet. He was proud to be a descendant of the original Christians, people like St. Paul. He was also proud to belong to the Jewish people, the “peculiar nation” (i.e. the chosen people), who gave the world the Bible and Jesus Christ.⁷² He also appreciated the modern Jewish people. After attending the Second Zionist Congress, he wrote that it had been the most impressive event that he had ever attended, and that he had felt proud to belong to the Jewish race.⁷³ He was impressed with the Jewish delegates for their considerable talent. He was also impressed with the treatment of women, who enjoyed equal opportunity to speak and to vote. He wrote: “Thus the oldest race leaps with bound into the much coveted and most advanced of all the world’s ideals, where to women is accorded the same rights and privileges as to man.”⁷⁴

Schor also played an important role among the Hebrew Christians in Britain, his activity being both missionary and social in nature. He was the manager of the Barbican Mission,⁷⁵ founded in 1879 by Paul I. Warschawski, a Hebrew

⁶³ *Nine Oriental Songs*, Arranged and collected by the Rev. Samuel Schor, London 1929.

⁶⁴ “Palestine in London”, *JMI* (Aug. 1907), 118.

⁶⁵ S. Schor, *Palestine and the Bible*.

⁶⁶ “Recent Intelligence”, *JMI* (April 1901), 64; “Recent Intelligence”, *JMI* (June 1901), 95.

⁶⁷ “Recent Intelligence”, *JMI* (Feb. 1904), 31.

⁶⁸ “Palestine Pilgrims's re-union”, *JMI* (July 1910), 108.

⁶⁹ *JMI* (Jan. 1912), 12; “Evening Meeting”, *JMI* (July 1912), 107.

⁷⁰ “Recent Intelligence”, *JMI* (Feb. 1901), 31; “Recent Intelligence”, *JMI* (Feb. 1904), 31; *JMI* (Jan. 1912), 12.

⁷¹ “Palestine in London”, *JMI* (Aug. 1907), 118.

⁷² S. Schor, *Palestine and the Bible*, 101.

⁷³ S. Schor “What I saw at the Zionist Congress in Basle”, *JMI* (Nov. 1899), 174-175.

⁷⁴ S. Schor, “What I saw at the Zionist Congress in Basle”, *JMI* (Nov. 1899), 175.

⁷⁵ H.S., “In Memoriam”, 162; R. M. Stevens, 27; K. Burnett, “Brief Biography”, 11-12.

Christian, all its workers being Hebrew Christians.⁷⁶ Under Schor's management this mission flourished.⁷⁷

From the social point of view, Schor was one of the leaders of the Hebrew Christian community. In the beginning of the 20th century, he served as a president of the Hebrew Christian Alliance and Prayer Union of Great Britain,⁷⁸ which was founded in the end of 1901. Its members were Hebrew Christians from all Christian denominations.⁷⁹ It was a union between the British Hebrew Christian Alliance, founded by Carl Swartz in 1866, and the Hebrew Christian Prayer Union, founded by J.B. Barraclough (not a Jew) and Henry Aaron Stern in 1882.⁸⁰ Samuel Schor was considered one of the prominent presidents of this alliance,⁸¹ and he earned a reputation for outstanding ability, energy, tact and eloquence as a speaker.⁸² When the International Hebrew Christian Alliance (IHCA) was founded in 1925, Schor was appointed as one of its Vice-Presidents, representing the British Alliance.⁸³ But in this office he was not able to do much, since the sudden failure of his health in the end of 1925 compelled him to abandon all his public activities in the Hebrew Christian movements, as well as in the Barbican Mission.⁸⁴

Samuel Schor's Theology

The question of the Hebrew Christian identity within Christianity was hotly debated in Schor's time. Many questions were raised, e.g: should missionaries approach the Jews at all? Should converted Jews be allowed to keep the law of Moses as their national heritage? Is it desirable to establish a separate national Hebrew Christian church? And if so, what character should such this church have? The scope of this paper is too short for a full discussion of these subjects. Suffice it to say that some people thought that it is unscriptural to build a wall between Jews and gentiles within the Church, and that the converts should be assimilated into the general church.⁸⁵ Some even declared that the idea of a

⁷⁶ A.E. Thompson, 110-111.

⁷⁷ K. Burnett, "Short Biography" , 11-12.

⁷⁸ H.S., "In Memoriam", 162-163.

⁷⁹ *JMI* (Oct. 1901), 155.

⁸⁰ "The Formation of a Hebrew-Church: Is It Desirable?", *JMI* (May 1902), 68.

⁸¹ H.J Schonfield, *The History of Jewish Christianity From the First to the Twentieth Century*, London 1936, 223.

⁸² F. Levison, *Christian and Jew: The Life of Leon Levison 1881-1936*, Edinburgh 1989, 164.

⁸³ *Report of the First International Hebrew Christian Conference, Held at Islington, London, 5th to 12th September 1925, "Office Bearers 1926"* (London and Edinburgh [1926]), iv).

⁸⁴ H.S., "In Memoriam", 162.

⁸⁵ "The Formation of a Hebrew-Church: Is It Desirable?", *JMI* (May 1902), 68.

Hebrew Christian church was heresy,⁸⁶ which was the doctrine of the Ebionites.⁸⁷ Such debates also took place within the Hebrew Christian circles. For years, both the British Hebrew Christians Alliance and the American Hebrew Christians Alliance disapproved of Hebrew Christians observing the national rites and ceremonies of Israel while accepting Christ as the Messiah,⁸⁸ and certainly did not approve of a separate Hebrew Christian church. In 1931, however, the International Hebrew Christians Alliance changed its attitude, and resolved to approve the notion of a Hebrew Christian church.⁸⁹

In this context, Schor believed that the Hebrew Christians had a special role to play within Christianity. He argued that the westerners had spoiled Christianity, and since the Scriptures are Jewish books, and since Christianity is an eastern religion of Jewish origin, the Christian Jews have the task of restoring Christianity to its original splendor. In Schor's own words:⁹⁰

The Bible is an oriental Book, and Christianity is "complete Judaism" (Lord Beaconsfield). For centuries this Eastern Creed and Book have been domiciled among western nations who have absorbed the faith, but have also in the process obscured the eastern figure by covering it in a western garb, not altogether to the benefit of the creed or its western adherents.

... When the Jews are converted, they will drop many of the Western accretions, and add not a few points which had been allowed to drop out in the process of time.

Samuel Schor was not alone in this approach, nor was this approach a new one. Hugh Schonfield held similar views, and wrote that he himself, as well as understanding gentiles, looked to the Jewish Christians to proclaim a purer Christianity, uninfluenced by the doctrinal controversies which tore the Church.⁹¹ Many decades earlier, in 1852, Charles Kingsley had also written that the Jews have a special call in perfecting the faith and practice of the Church. He argued that gentiles can only gentelize the Church, and that only the Jews can see all heaven and earth in the eyes of Abraham, David and St. Paul.⁹²

Schor's ideas about the present character of Christianity, and the role of the Hebrew Christians in restoring it, must be considered in light of the tension

⁸⁶ Newman's letter, 12.12.1841 in: John Henry Cardinal Newman, *Apologia pro vita sua* (New York, The Modern Library, 1950), 159; G. Williams, *The Holy City: Historical, Topographical and Antiquarian Notices of Jerusalem*, II, (London, 1849), 591.

⁸⁷ H.J. Schonfield, 230. On the Ebionite sect see: "Ebionites" and "Ebionites, Gospel according to the" in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*³, 532 and references within; "Ebionites, *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, II, 8-9, and references within.

⁸⁸ D.A. Raush, *Messianic Judaism: Its History, Theology, and Polity* (New York and Toronto, 1982), 39-40, 35-38 respectively.

⁸⁹ H.J. Schonfield, 243.

⁹⁰ S. Schor, *The Everlasting Nation and their Coming King*, p 127 (London and Edinburgh [1933]), 41-42.

⁹¹ H.J. Schonfield, 229-230.

⁹² "The Formation of a Hebrew-Christian Church: Is It Desirable?", *JMI* (May 1892), 68.

between the proponents and opponents of the Jewish heritage in Christianity. Hebrew Christians like David Baron, Charles Andrew Schönberger and Joseph Rabinowitz emphasized this Jewish aspect. According to Baron, Jesus Christ is the divine King of the Jews, the sum and substance of the Jewish Old Testament, the fulfillment of the Jewish Law and the Jewish prophets, the embodiment of all the promises of the Jewish covenant.⁹³ Baron added that he and Schönberger always emphasized in their mission to the Jews that they believe in Christ as the Son of Man and Son of God, not in spite, but because they are Jews.⁹⁴ Joseph Rabinowitz coined the phrase “our brother Jesus,”⁹⁵ implying that Jesus may belong more to the Jews than to the gentiles. On the other hand, there were gentiles in the 19th century who opposed the Jewish heritage in Christianity. Charles Dickens, for instance, morally objected to the “God of Israel” and the doctrine of avenging wrath. He attributed the misery and hypocrisy of the Christian world to forcing the Old Testament into unnatural alliance with the New Testament.⁹⁶ Professor Goldwin Smith stated that the Old Testament gives a bad impression of God’s character and his attitude toward humans. He offered to disassociate Christianity from the Jewish Scriptures, arguing that Christianity has much stonger connections to the teachings of Plato, than to the teachings of the Talmud.⁹⁷ Adolph Saphir indignantly reported that “a learned professor” (probably the same Goldwin Smith [Y.M.]) said that the substitution of the shedding of blood for the remission of sins is a Jewish notion, which must be carefully distinguished from the eternal and divine element in the teaching of the Apostles.⁹⁸ Nineteen century Europe claimed Christianity for herself, arguing that Christianity has a European nature, and Jesus’ teaching was more Arian than it was Semitic.⁹⁹ The notion of the “otherness” of the Eastern world prevailed then in Europe. Many Europeans looked down on the Eastern culture, but Schor, on the other hand, believed that Jews would restore the genuine eastern features of Christianity. Other Europeans were afraid of the Moslem Menace, which they thought was threatening to conquer the entire world.¹⁰⁰ Kennaway believed that the Jews, as easterners, would know how to present Christianity to Orientals unencumbered

⁹³ Schonfield cited Baron. see: H.J. Schonfield, 213-214.

⁹⁴ Anon., *David Baron and the Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel*, London [n.d.], p. 20.

⁹⁵ K. Kjær-Hansen, *Joseph Rabinowitz and the Messianic Movement* (Grand Rapids, 1995), 118.

⁹⁶ O. Chadwick, *The Victorian Church, Pt. I 1829-1859* (London, 1971), 528.

⁹⁷ “Is Anti-Semitic Agitation on the Wane?” *JMI* (Dec. 1881), 204.

⁹⁸ A. Saphir, ‘The Restoration of the Jews - A Comprehensive Bible Study of Israel’s Past, Present, and Future.,. D. Baron (ed.), *Christ and Israel: Lectures and Addresses on the Jews*, Jerusalem 2001, 143.

⁹⁹ L. Zeckhausen, “The Outlook”, *JMI* (Sept. 1911), 141.

¹⁰⁰ J. Kennaway, “World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh”, *JMI* (Sept. 1910), 129.

by Western ideas.¹⁰¹ Both Schor and Kennaway saw the Jews as mediators between the two cultures.

In the debate about the necessity of evangelizing the Jews, the English evangelical millennialists advocated the bringing of the Gospel to all, and first to the Jew. Their literal reading of the Scriptures led them to believe that the Jewish people are God's chosen people, and that they will play a central role in Jesus' second coming.¹⁰² Samuel Schor was a premillennialist dispensationalist.¹⁰³ He said that, according to the prophets, the evangelization of the whole world depends on the evangelization of Jews.¹⁰⁴ He believed that God had planned the history of the Jews in advance, and the prophets had foretold it in minute detail.¹⁰⁵ And, just as the prophecy has foretold the events which had already occurred, and it was possible to verify, it also foretold the future. Schor believed that the prophets had predicted the restoration of the Jews to Zion, and he described the restoration according to Dispensationalism. He said that the Scriptures speak about three periods of restoration. The first is the restoration from Egypt, out of which came Moses the great lawgiver, most of the prophets, and a means of teaching the nations the way of righteousness. The second restoration is the restoration from Babylon, out of which came Jesus Christ and the Apostles.¹⁰⁶ The third is the restoration that occurs in our time.¹⁰⁷ When the Jews are converted, they will purify Christianity, and promugulate it in the world.¹⁰⁸

Schor believed, moreover, that Jesus' second coming was imminent, since the four signs of time foretold in the prophecy had been realized: much evil in the world, Christendom in a state of apostasy, fervent expectation and action in missionary service, and Israel restored to Palestine.¹⁰⁹ Schor thus believed that

¹⁰¹ J. Kennaway, 129.

¹⁰² About the millennialism in England in those years see: Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism 1800-1930* (Chicago and London, 1970); W. H. Oliver, *Prophets and Millennialists: The Use of Biblical Prophecy in England from the 1790s to the 1840s* (Auckland and Oxford, 1978).

¹⁰³ About Dispensationalism see: Arnold D. Ehlert, *A Bibliographic History of Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids, 1965); Ernest Sandeen, *Root of Fundamentalism, British and American Millenarianism 1800-1930* (Grand Rapid, 1978); Yaacov Ariel, *Evangelizing the Chosen People: Missions to the Jews in America 1880-2000* (Chapel Hill and London, 2000), 10.

¹⁰⁴ "Afternoon Meeting", *JMI* (July. 1912), 106.

¹⁰⁵ Samuel Schor, *The Everlasting Nation and Their Coming King* (London and Edinburgh [1933]), 16-27.

¹⁰⁶ Samuel Schor, *The Everlasting Nation*, 36.

¹⁰⁷ Samuel Schor, *The Everlasting Nation*, 36. Schor is referring to the 1930's, the time when his book was published.

¹⁰⁸ Samuel Schor, *The Everlasting*, 42.

¹⁰⁹ Samuel Schor, *The Everlasting Nation*, 83.

the Apocalypse was about to come, in which natural disasters would strike, the world would be ablaze with revolutions, and armies would attack each other with satanic force. The true believers, however, would not be hurt. They would be carried away from the earth to meet Christ.¹¹⁰ Thereafter Christ will descend with all his saints, and the New Kingdom will be established. In this kingdom, there will be no evil or even temptation to do evil, Satan will be imprisoned, and peace, righteousness and knowledge of God will prevail throughout the world.¹¹¹ As for predestination, Schor opposed this notion. He insisted that he did not believe that only the elect would be saved. From this point of view, Schor was an Arminian. He believed that all converted souls who repented, would be pardoned, and share the bliss of the rapture.¹¹²

Samuel Schor, who believed in every written word in the Scripture, was a bitter opponent to the science of biblical criticism, which he regarded as destructive criticism. He was shocked by the notions that Moses did not write the Pentateuch, that Deuteronomy is a pious fiction invented by priests in the days of Josiah, that the book of Daniel is a myth, and many statements in it are unhistorical, that the miracles of the Old Testament are pure fiction, and that Jesus was just an ignorant Jew.¹¹³ Schor argued that modernism had destroyed faith, and reduced Christianity to an empty shell.¹¹⁴

Samuel Schor and Zionism

As a devout millennialist, Schor saw all current political events in the light of the prophecy in the Scriptures. The restoration of the Jews to Palestine, the British conquest of the country, and the mandate that Britain received to govern it, all appeared to him as the signs of the time, of which the prophets had spoken.¹¹⁵ Schor argued that, according to the Scriptures, the restoration of the Jews to their country would come before their conversion.¹¹⁶ Thus, Zionism was also seen by him as a sign of the time, an important step toward the salvation of the world.

Schor was not alone in his sympathetic attitude toward Zionism. For Mark John Levy, who struggled for years to preserve the national Jewish identity of the Hebrew Christians, the essence of Jewish nationality was the regaining of

¹¹⁰ Samuel Schor, *The Everlasting Nation*, 85-86; S. Schor, "The Teaching of Our Lord on His Second Coming", *The Hebrew Christian*, 5 (Oct. 1932), 125. I thank Dr. Gershon Nerel for the reprints of the second reference here, that he generously gave me.

¹¹¹ Samuel Schor, *The Everlasting Nation*, 105-109.

¹¹² Samuel Schor, *The Everlasting Nation*, 90-91.

¹¹³ Samuel Schor, *The Everlasting Nation*, 68-70.

¹¹⁴ Samuel Schor, *The Everlasting Nation*, 70.

¹¹⁵ Samuel Schor, *The Everlasting Nation*, 77.

¹¹⁶ Samuel Schor, *The Everlasting Nation*, 38.

Palestine, and the establishment there of a national Jewish independence.¹¹⁷ The Hebrew Christian Alliance and Prayer Union of Great Britain was also supportive of Zionism. In the founding conference of this organization in 1901, its members resolved to express their sympathy toward Zionism to Herzl and to other Zionist leaders.¹¹⁸ There were missionary groups in Britain, Germany, Holland and America who supported Herzl's campaign for a Jewish state, since they saw the restoration of the Jews to Palestine and their subsequent mass conversion as essential steps in the progress of humankind toward salvation.¹¹⁹ The LJS was also generally sympathetic toward the Zionist movement, and frequently published reports about it in the *Jewish Missionary Intelligence*.¹²⁰ Sir John Kennaway, the president of LJS, supported the Zionist movement, and admired its vitality and abilities. He expressed his sympathy in his speeches in the 1899 annual meeting of that society,¹²¹ and in the 1899 Congress of the Church of England.¹²²

As mentioned above, Samuel Schor attended the second Zionist Congress in 1898 in Basle. He was impressed with the quality of the Zionist leadership in continental Europe, and expressed derision towards the English Jewry, which did not join in.^{123, 124} Schor said that the Zionist friends welcomed him kindly, even though they knew that he belonged to their race but not to their faith.¹²⁵ He seems to have taken their kindness as a sign that Hebrew Christians may be welcome to take part in the Zionist movement.

Schor also attended the fourth Zionist Congress held in London in 1900. He had no doubt that the Zionists would succeed in building a home for the Jewish

¹¹⁷ J.M., "Rundschau über Mission und Judentum, The Christian Jews' Patriotic Alliance", *Saat Auf Hoffnung*, 29 (1892), 137-138.

¹¹⁸ *JMI* (Oct. 1901), 155.

¹¹⁹ C.M. Clark, *The Politics of conversion: Missionary Protestantism and the Jews in Prussia 1728-1941* (Oxford, 1905), 250.

¹²⁰ See for instance the articles: "By the Way", *JMI* (Oct. 1897), 146; "By the Way", *JMI* (Dec 1897), 177; "Palestine for the Jews. - The Zionist Conference. I", *JMI* (Oct. 1897), 154-155; "Palestine for the Jews. - The Zionist Conference. II", *JMI* (Nov. 1897), 164-167; "News of the Month", *JMI* (Aug. 1900),¹²⁵; "The Third Zionist Conference Report", *JMI* (Oct. 1899), 149; *JMI* (Oct. 1905), 151.

¹²¹ J. Kennaway, "The Ninety-first Anniversary", *JMI* (June 1899), 83.

¹²² W.T. Gidney, 521.

¹²³ S. Schor, "What I saw at the Zionist Congress in Basle," *JMI* (Nov. 1899), 174-175.

¹²⁴ Most of the leaders of the English Jewry opposed the Zionist movement. See: B. Jaffe, "The British Press and Zionism in Herzl's Time," *JHSE*, 24 (1974), 94; S.A. Cohen, "The Reception of Political Zionism in England: Patterns of Alignment among the Clergy and Rabbinate, 1895-1904", *Jewish Journal of Sociology*, 16, 2 (1974), 171-185; S.A. Cohen, *English Zionists and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1895-1920* (New Jersey, 1982), 47-50, 57-61.

¹²⁵ S. Schor, "What I saw at the Zionist Congress in Basle," *JMI* (Nov. 1899), 174-175.

people in Palestine. Prophecy foretold this, and he trusted God to fulfill prophecy.¹²⁶ He could not understand why the Zionist leaders did not realize God's plan to act and overrule, and why, instead of trusting God, they planned to ask the Turkish Sultan for permission to settle a few persecuted Jews in Palestine as his faithful subjects.¹²⁷ Nobody then wanted to be a Turkish subject. European residents in the Ottoman Empire endeavored to be protected by European consulates.

Schor was delighted with the development of the Jewish settlement in Palestine. He regarded it as the fulfillment of the Parable of the Fig tree: "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; when her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth its leaves, ye know that summer is nigh; even so also, when ye see all these things, know ye, that he is nigh, even at the door." (Luke 21: 29-31).¹²⁸

Samuel Schor also raised the "Arab Problem." As student of the Bible, he claimed that the Arabs of Palestine were not descended from the Canaanite race, since the latter is never mentioned in the Bible after the Babylonian Captivity, and hence had ceased to exist. The Arabs, he said, are rather the descendants of the Edomites, Children of Esau, which the prophet Ezekiel had called the eternal enemies of Israel (Ezek 35:5). Schor claimed that the Arabs had preserved this hostility toward the Jews, and that they had attacked them thrice in recent times, massacring men, woman and children.¹²⁹ He claimed that God promised the land exclusively to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their descendants, and not to Ishmael, Isaacs' older brother, or to Esau, the older brother of Jacob.¹³⁰ However, he said that the Jews would not be able to conquer the Palestinian Arabs and their numerous allies unless they return to Jesus.¹³¹ Schor concluded: "Of this there can be no doubt. It is fully described in what follows (see Ezek xxxvi. 8, etc.). God Himself will intervene. The Edomites will be crushed, the whole land shall pass into Jewish hands."¹³²

¹²⁶ S. Schor "The Fourth Zionist Congress," *JMI* (Oct. 1900), 152-157.

¹²⁷ S. Schor, *Palestine and the Bible: Illustrating the Manners and Customs of the People in Bible Lands*, London 1831, 128.

¹²⁸ Samuel Schor, *The Everlasting Nation*, 75, 77-80.

¹²⁹ S. Schor, *Palestine and the Bible*, 120-121. It seems that Schor was referring to the 1929 riots in Palestine, since the book was published in 1931.

¹³⁰ S. Schor, "Growing Opposition to the Restoration to Palestine," 16-17.

¹³¹ S. Schor, "Growing Opposition to the Restoration to Palestine," 17-18.

¹³² S. Schor, *Palestine and the Bible*, 121.

Appendix I: A List of Samuel Schor's Books

1. S.H. Wilkinson and S. Schor, *The Future of Jerusalem. Its Successive Phase with Regard to Present Events*, London 1917.
2. S. Schor, *The Everlasting Nation and their Coming King*, London and Edinburgh [1933].
 - 2.1. S. Schor, *The Everlasting Nation and Their Coming King*, 3rd impression, Heathfield Sussex 1971 (This edition contains some information about S. Schor and a photograph of him. In addition, the editor changed some of the original text.)
3. S. Schor, *Palestine and the Bible. Illustrating the manners and customs of the people in the Bible lands*, 19th edition, Book Society, London 1931.
4. S. Schor, *Palestine for the Jews; or the Awakening of the Jewish Nation*, 2nd edition, London 1907.
5. *Palestine in London. Official Guide*, June 11 to July 2 1907, 2nd edition, pp. 145, 1907.
6. S. Schor, *Ten Oriental Songs*. Arranged and Collected by the Rev. S. Schor (melodies only), 1920.
7. *The Apocalypse. A Simple Exposition*, London, the Barbican Mission to the Jews, [n. d.]
8. *Nine Oriental Songs*, Arranged and collected by the Rev. Samuel Schor, London 1929. Tunes with transliterated Arabic and Hebrew words. At head title: Palestine exhibition, Baftoo Hindee, Bedouin love songs, wedding chant, a slave song, a Nazareth part song, Arab mill song, El Ivneh, Ya Ribon, Galilean school song.
9. Samuel Schor, *Interesting Facts about Jerusalem*, London Society, [n.d.]
10. S. Schor, Dreyfus and Zionism (no bibliographical details. From "Catalogue of Works Published by the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews". Ninety-fourth Annual Report (1902), no pagination.)
11. *Narrative of the Proceedings of the Great Council of Jews to Examine the Scriptures Concerning Christ*, October 1650 (no bibliographical details. From "Catalogue of Works Published by the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews", Ninety-fourth Annual Report (1902), no pagination).

Paul Phillip Levertoff: Pioneering Hebrew-Christian Scholar and Leader

Jorge Quiñónez*

*My father danced a Hassidic dance the day before he died.
His daughters they were far away, his wife was by his side...
He danced for Jesus his Messiah who rose up from the dead
And left the tomb for the upper room
and was known in the breaking of bread...
Except you become as a little child my kingdom you shall not see.
So he danced in his joy as he did when a boy and often he danced for me...¹³³*

Introduction

Paul Phillip Levertoff is best known to the modern world as the Jewish believer in Jesus (JBJ) who helped translate the Zohar into English for Soncino Press, a leading publisher of Judaica.¹³⁴ Less well known about Levertoff, as we will see, is the fact that he was a major pioneer in the Hebrew Christian movement of his time. The noted historian on JBJs, Jakób Jocz, includes Levertoff in his short list of distinguished late 19th and early 20th century JBJ,

Of the many other missionaries of the house of Israel, the names of Salkinson, Cassel, Lucky, the two Lichtensteins, Schönberger, Joseph Immanuel Landsmann, and Dr. P. P. Levertoff... They can all be characterized by devotion to the missionary cause, simplicity of faith, and great Talmudic learning.¹³⁵

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¹³³ Olga [Tatjana] Levertoff, "The Ballad of My Father" in Denise Levertov, *The Sorrow Dance* (New York: New Directions, 1966), 93-94.

¹³⁴ See Harry Sperling, Maurice Simon, and Paul Phillip Levertoff (translators), *Zohar*. Vol. 3 (London: Soncino Press, 1933); Maurice Simon and Paul Phillip Levertoff (translators), *Zohar*. Vol. 4. (London: Soncino Press, 1933).

¹³⁵ Jakób Jocz, *The Jewish People and Jesus Christ* (London: S. P. C. K., 1949), 255.

In the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, several on Jocz's list are given their own entries and Levertoff is one of these few.¹³⁶ Levertoff comes rather late on the scene, too late to be included in the principal biographies or studies on JBJ.¹³⁷ He is conspicuously absent in one modern biographical anthology of JBJ.¹³⁸ This article endeavors to provide a brief assessment of Levertoff's life and work, focusing on the interesting highlights and accomplishments in his life.

Early Life

Paul Phillip Levertoff was born in Orsha, Belarus, to Saul and Batya Levertoff.¹³⁹ When this happened is not entirely clear: one source¹⁴⁰ states 12 October 1875, while another¹⁴¹ states 14 October 1878. His birth name was probably not "Paul Phillip." In a letter in Hebrew from Paul's father, Saul Levertoff, to Paul Levertoff himself, Saul Levertoff employs Paul's Hebrew/Yiddish name, "Feivel"¹⁴² This was almost certainly his original Jewish name since "Paul Phillip" is a Christian name.

His family came from a Sephardic background whose religious persuasion was Hassidic.¹⁴³ According to more than one source,¹⁴⁴ he was a descendent of

¹³⁶ *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Macmillan, Vol. 11, 1972), 71; Cf. Leonard Prager, *Yiddish Culture in Britain* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1990), 405.

¹³⁷ Aaron Bernstein, *Jewish Witnesses for Christ* (London: O.J.C.I., 1909) [reprinted 1999 by Keren Ahvah Meshihit, Israel]; Johannes Friedrich Alexander de le Roi, *Die evangelische Christenheit und die Juden*, Volumes 1, 2, and 3 (Berlin: H. Reuther, 1891).

¹³⁸ See Jacob Gartenhaus. *Famous Hebrew Christians*. TN: I.B.J.M. (1998); The most likely explanation why Levertoff is not included in this book is that Gartenhaus himself states (p. 12) that he is heavily dependent on late 19th century secondary sources (cf. note 6).

¹³⁹ Karina Lehnardt. "LEVERTOFF, Paul Phillip." <<http://www.bautz.de/bbkl/1/Levertoff.shtml>> June 1998.

¹⁴⁰ According to an e-mail copy (dated 7 March 2002) of an unpublished record on Levertoff, courtesy of Charles Hundley from "The Church's Ministry among the Jewish People" (or CMJ, formerly known as the London Jews Society or the LJS) with its headquarters based in England. According to this information, Levertoff's birth date is "12 Oct 1875 at Janowitsch, near Vitwpsk, Russia". This becomes more interesting: he applied for work with the LJS in late 1896 (according to the unpublished CMJ record). If he was born in 1875, he would have been 21 years old at the time of application, otherwise if he was born in 1878 he would only have been 18 years old—rather young to be employed by the LJS!

¹⁴¹ Karina Lehnardt, "LEVERTOFF, Paul Phillip."

¹⁴² Denise Levertov Papers, M0601, Box 15, Folder 17. Thanks to Tsvi Sadan for pointing this out.

¹⁴³ Olga Tatjana Levertoff, "Paul Levertoff and the Jewish-Christian Problem" in Lev Gillet (ed.), *Judaism and Christianity/Essays presented to the Rev. Paul P. Levertoff, D.D.* (London: J.B. Shears & Sons, 1939), 93.

¹⁴⁴ Rabbi Schneur Zalman was "...his [grandfather's] mother's uncle..." ([no author]. "Thirty Years Work" from *The Church and the Jews*, No. 180, Autumn (1954), 4, located in

Rabbi Schneur Zalman. He received a traditional education in the *cheder* (a Hebrew primary school). In one instance, Denise Levertov, his younger daughter,¹⁴⁵ describes her father's first childhood encounter with the New Testament and Jesus:

One day when he was eight or nine my father was walking home ...As he trudged homeward my father's eye was caught by a scrap of printed paper lying in the gray, trampled snow. Though he was a playful, disobedient boy like any other, he was also – like his playmates – a little Talmud scholar, respectful of words; and he saw at a glance, too, that this paper was not printed in Russian but in Hebrew. So he picked it up and began to read. Could it be a fragment of Torah? Never before had he read such a story: about a boy like himself who – it said – was found in the Temple expounding the scriptures to the old, reverent, important rabbis! [Luke 2:46-47]

My father took the scrap – it was obviously a page from a book – home to his father. The effect was startling. ...his father became angry – not with him, exactly, but rather with the text he had brought to show him. He tore it into pieces and thrust them into the stove. My father was vehemently told to avoid such writings, utterly, if ever he should again encounter them; but just what they were, and how to tell them from holy writ, was not explained. My father was awed to see written words destroyed – Hebrew words. It was not if it had been a mere scrap of Russian newspaper.

*Secretly, he wished he had not given up the mysterious fragment. Who was the wise boy in the story?*¹⁴⁶

An interest had awakened in the young Levertoff. By his teenage years, he was attending the Volozhin Yeshiva.¹⁴⁷ This Lithuanian Jewish seminary was

the Denise Levertov Papers, M0601, Box 34, Folder 36); Cf., Linda Welshimer Wagner, *Denise Levertov* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1967), 24.

¹⁴⁵ Paul Levertoff had two daughters: Olga Tatjana Levertoff and Denise Levertov. Denise changed the spelling of her surname to 'Levertov' because her sister was already getting published with the surname 'Levertoff' so readers could distinguish between them. Denise became a very famous poet in America who later became Catholic but still considered herself Jewish. She died in late 1997.

¹⁴⁶ Denise Levertov, *Tessarae/Memorie & Suppositions* (New York: New Directions Books, 1995), 4-5. Another source mentions the scrap of paper to be from the book of John, cf. "...one day [Levertoff] found about the street of the little Russian town some leaves torn from a book that had been printed in Hebrew, he was amazed to read something that seemed to him Hassidic; but so strange, for it related in detail an account of the Messiah who had been crucified. It was parts of the Gospel according to St. John." ("Thirty Years Work", 4)

¹⁴⁷ Located at the time in what is currently modern Belarus. This Yeshiva was founded in 1802 by Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin (1749-1821), a disciple of the Vilna Gaon. Much of the Jewish population of Volozhin perished in the Holocaust. Today, the Yeshiva survives transplanted in Israel. Denise Levertov misspells it "Valójine", Jewel Spears Brooker (ed.), *Conversations with Denise Levertov* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1998), 90.)

one of the most prominent in its day. Here Levertov received an exemplary rabbinic education,¹⁴⁸ knowledge that he would demonstrate in his later years. He was on his way to becoming a rabbi. Denise Levertov called her father “a precocious graduate...”¹⁴⁹ of this institute, which meant he graduated early. Afterwards Saul Levertov, Paul Levertov’s father, had to send him out of the country to the Prussian city of Königsberg (modern day Kaliningrad) to obtain a university education because Jews were not permitted to study in Russian universities.

Paul Phillip Levertov’s fascination with Jesus continued through his adolescent years. It was near the end of the 19th century, at the University of Königsberg where Levertov reached a very important conclusion about Jesus that would affect him the rest of his life for it was here

*...in the Gentile, utterly secular atmosphere of the Prussian city, this book [i.e., the Gospels] of the Christians seemed more his than theirs. He read it in German, then in Hebrew... And as he read he experienced a profound and shaking new conviction. This Jesus of Nazareth...had indeed been the Messiah.*¹⁵⁰

The year this occurred was 1895¹⁵¹ when Levertov was only 17 or 18 years old. Predictably his “family was appalled”¹⁵² after he told them of his new belief. At this point, he seems to have had a major argument with his father – most likely over his new belief – that led him to abruptly leave home.¹⁵³ Without financial support from his parents, he had to go it alone. He was baptized in 11 August 1895 in Königsberg.¹⁵⁴ For the next several years he “... supported himself by tutoring and undertaking translations to and from the various languages he knew.”¹⁵⁵ Seeking employment as a missionary on 11

and “Volójine” which appears to be the French spelling (Levertov, *Tessarae/Memorie & Suppositions*, 6).

¹⁴⁸ Denise Levertov, *Tessarae/Memorie & Suppositions*, 6.

¹⁴⁹ Denise Levertov, *Tessarae/Memorie & Suppositions*, 6.

¹⁵⁰ Denise Levertov, *Tessarae/Memorie & Suppositions*, 7; cf., Jewel Spears Brooker (ed.), *Conversations with Denise Levertov* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1998), 90.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Karina Lehnardt, “LEVERTOFF, Paul Phillip.”; *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, “Levertov, Paul Phillip”; “Thirty Years Work”, 4.

¹⁵² Denise Levertov, *Tessarae/Memorie & Suppositions*, 7.

¹⁵³ Reportedly later in his life, Levertov, regretted having fled his parents because they did not agree with his new belief that Jesus ~~was~~ ^{was} the Messiah for he “...often felt that if he had been wiser he would have gained his father, for he realised how near the Kingdom he was.” (“Thirty Years Work”, 4).

¹⁵⁴ E-mail from Charles Hundley of CMJ (dated 7 March 2002) of an unpublished record on Levertov.

¹⁵⁵ Denise Levertov, *Tessarae/Memorie & Suppositions*, 8.

December 1896,¹⁵⁶ he applied for a position with the London Jews Society (LJS).¹⁵⁷ He was accepted and soon worked full time in his new vocation.

Missionary Translator and Writer

For reasons unknown, Levertoff changed Jewish missions organizations in 1901, having joined the staff of the Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel (HCTI), founded by two other JBJ, David Baron and Charles Andrew Schönberger in 1893. A thorough search of the CMJ archives in Oxford might shed light on the question of what Levertoff did in the LJS.

Levertoff first appeared in the HCTI's periodical, *The Scattered Nation* in 1901¹⁵⁸ and continued to appear frequently in its pages through 1909 in his reports and articles. He was one of the HCTI's most active missionaries, traveling throughout Europe and the Mediterranean under their employ. He usually traveled together with David Baron, who was 23 years older than Levertoff. They visited Hungary and Bosnia in 1905¹⁵⁹ and Egypt and Palestine in 1908.¹⁶⁰

No less than seven original works and translations in Hebrew by Levertoff were published in London between 1902 and 1909 by several London area publishers and the HCTI publishing house's Hebrew name, *Edut leYisrael*.¹⁶¹ His Hebrew writings did not go unnoticed within Jewish missionary circles: Arthur Lukyn Williams said "Good work has been done in recent years in the presentation of the life of our Lord to the Jews by ... Levertoff. In this connection may be mentioned ... Levertoff's *St. Paul. His Life, Works, and Travels*,

¹⁵⁶ E-mail from Charles Hundley of CMJ (dated 7 March 2002) of an unpublished record on Levertoff.

¹⁵⁷ Short for "The London Society for promoting Christianity amongst the Jews".

¹⁵⁸ Paul Levertoff, "Experiences at Our New Centre" in *The Scattered Nation* 26 (April 1901), 253-255.

¹⁵⁹ David Baron & Paul Levertoff, "Down the Danube to Hungary and Bosnia" in *The Scattered Nation* 42 (April 1905), 317.

¹⁶⁰ David Baron & Paul Levertoff, "A Mission Tour of Egypt and Palestine" in *The Scattered Nation* 55 (July 1908), 135-150.

¹⁶¹ The titles of the publication were as follows: *Yisra'el, emunato ute'udato* [Israel's Religion and Destiny] (London: Edut leYisrael, 1902); *Ben ha-Adam, Chayey Yeshua ha-Mashiach upealav* [The Son of Man. A Survey of the Life and Deeds of Jesus Christ] (London, 1904); *ha-Amek She'ala* (London, 1905) [partial Hebrew translation of Franz Delitzsch's *Ernste Fragen an die Gebildeten Jüdischer Religion*]; *Polus ha-Shaliach, o, Sha'ul ish Tarsus: hayav, po'otav u-nesi'otav* [St. Paul. His Life, Works, and Travels] (London: Y. Neroditski, 1905); *Viduyei Augustinus ha-Kadosh* [The Confessions of St. Augustine]. (London: Luzac, 1906); *Tomas Karlel: hashkefotav vede'otav, reshimot bikortiyot* [Thomas Carlyle. A Lecture] (London: Luzac, 1907); *Hu veAni* [He and I] (London: Edut leYisrael, 1909).

1907 (in modern Hebrew) ..."¹⁶² For nearly a decade, he served the HCTI as their principal Hebrew translator and writer.

Also noteworthy about Levertoff's Hebrew writings was the fact that *Viduyei Augustinus ha-Kadosh* ("The Confessions of St. Augustine") was the first translation into Hebrew of a major work by a Latin Church Father. Levertoff's book on Jesus in Hebrew, *Ben ha-Adam*, ("The Son of Man") predated Joseph Klausner's own book on Jesus, *Yeshu ha-Notsri*,¹⁶³ by over 17 years, which itself is generally considered the first book written on Jesus and Christianity's early beginnings by a Jewish scholar in Modern Hebrew. Regarding Levertoff's *Ben ha-Adam*, Klausner said,

*The plain purpose of the writer (in spite of what he says to the contrary in his Preface [to Ben ha-Adam], p. xxi) is to win adherents to Christianity from among Russian Jews who read Hebrew; and such a book is not to be relied upon for objective and single-minded scholarship. The author skillfully refrains from imposing upon us most of the unacceptable miracles; he follows (as he tells us in his preface) P.W. Schmidt's excellent "Die Geschichte Jesu erzählt...["] save that he conceals a few miracles and some missionary teaching in an account of natural facts (obviously not always explained as they should be) and a presentation of the ethical teachings of Jesus. . . . And this has been the only work about Jesus in modern Hebrew literature!*¹⁶⁴

Among Levertoff's publications from 1902 and 1909, *Hu veAni*¹⁶⁵ ("He and I") is worth discussing because of its seemingly autobiographical veneer. It is the story of a young yeshiva student, a JBJ, who is going to be punished for his belief. Another character in the story is an old friend of his who knew him before he came to his new belief in Jesus through the efforts of a wandering missionary. The main character escapes his punishment through chance and the two characters desire to discuss belief in Jesus; however, the main character, the JBJ, has to leave the town the next morning. The story ends before this occurs. It is apparent that Levertoff integrates some of his own early personal history into this story. He is like the main character, who leaves his town because of his belief in Jesus, which came about through his encounter with missionary literature.

¹⁶² Hermann L. Strack, *Jahrbuch der evangelischen Judenmission/Yearbook of the Evangelical Missions among the Jews*, Vol. 2 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichssche Buchhandlung, 1913), 13.

¹⁶³ Joseph Klausner, *Yeshu ha-Notsri: zemano, hayav ve-torato*. Jerusalem: Shtibel [1922], 3; (In English:) Joseph Klausner. *Jesus Of Nazareth* (New York: MacMillan, 1925), 11.

¹⁶⁴ Joseph Klausner, *Jesus Of Nazareth*, 124. 26

¹⁶⁵ In my comments, I refer to Levertoff's own English translation of *Hu veAni*, "Two of Them"; Cf. Paul P. Levertoff. "Two of Them" in Henry Einspruch (ed.). *When Jews face Christ* [First Edition] (Baltimore, MD: The Mediator, 1932), 144-156. Note Levertoff's translation is not published in the second edition of Einspruch's *When Jews face Christ* (Brooklyn: American Board of Missions to the Jews, 1939).

In 1910, Baron announced in *The Scattered Nation* that “Mr. Paul Levertoff [had] accept[ed] an invitation from the United Free Church of Scotland Jewish Committee to take the position of Evangelist in Constantinople [and] is no longer a member of our missionary board.” In Constantinople (modern day Istanbul) in 1910, Levertoff met the lady who would later become his wife, Beatrice Spooner-Jones.¹⁶⁶ She was Welsh not Jewish. They returned to England to get married. In 1911, with the LJS he attended an important Jewish missions conference in Stockholm, Sweden.¹⁶⁷ That same year, Levertoff moved with his family to Warsaw.¹⁶⁸ He would soon (again) change employers and begin a new career in academia.

Germany: Teacher and Scholar

Levertoff’s life solely as a professional missionary would soon come to an end since he would have a new job in a new city. He was appointed to the position of teacher of Hebrew and Rabbinics with the Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum (IJD), a postgraduate institute for Jewish missions founded by Franz Delitzsch in Leipzig, Germany. Otto von Harling, the IJD’s director, publicized that Levertoff was relocating from Warsaw to Leipzig on 1 April 1912,¹⁶⁹ to take over the teaching position at the IJD, which had been left vacant by the death of Jechiel Zebi Herschensohn-Lichtenstein¹⁷⁰ (hereafter Lichtenstein). He was a JBJ *maskil*¹⁷¹ of Romanian Hassidic background who had

¹⁶⁶ Denise Levertov, *New & Selected Essays* (New York: New Directions Books, 1992), 259.

¹⁶⁷ Hermann L. Strack, *Jahrbuch der evangelischen Judenmission/Yearbook of the Evangelical Missions among the Jews*, Vol. 2 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichssche Buchhandlung, 1913), 7.

¹⁶⁸ Denise Levertov, *Light Up The Cave* (New York: New Directions Books, 1981), 241.

¹⁶⁹ Otto von Harling, “An die Gesellschaften für Judenmission und die Freunde des Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum!” in *Saat auf Hoffnung* 49 (1912), 92.

¹⁷⁰ Herschensohn-Lichtenstein (1831-1912) translated about half of the *Tanach* into Yiddish. He was also a prolific Hebrew writer who among his many writings wrote what is probably the only commentary on the whole New Testament in Hebrew (recently republished in Israel). He was more commonly known to Christian readers by the name of “J. Lichtenstein” and is not to be confused with the Hungarian Orthodox Rabbi, Isaac (Ignatz) Lichtenstein, another JBJ. His story is a worthy topic for further investigation since so little biographical information available about him is published in English; See Jorge Quiñónez. “An Introductory Bio-bibliography to Jechiel Zebi Herschensohn-Lichtenstein (1831-1912)” in *Kesher* 15 (Summer 2002), 78-89.

¹⁷¹ The *maskilim* (singular *maskil*) were participants of the *Haskalah*, the “enlightenment”, a Jewish movement originating in 18th century Germany aimed at modernizing Jewish life and thought or the integration of Jews into the larger society. Notable features within the movement was *maskilim* cooperation with liberal-minded Christian thinkers and that much of the *maskilim* literature was disseminated in Hebrew; Cf. Shmuel Feiner & David Sorkin, *New Perspectives on the Haskalah* (Oregon: Littman, 2001).

held the position from 1885 until his death on 12 February 1912. A year later, Levertoff and a colleague posthumously published Lichtenstein's revised Matthew commentary in Hebrew.¹⁷² The IJD's class schedules from 1912 to 1917 (published in its journal *Saat auf Hoffnung*) have Levertoff teaching a variety of courses: Yiddish language, the New Testament in Hebrew based on Lichtenstein's commentary, Midrash, Isaac Troki's polemical work *Hizzuk Emunah*, various books of the *Tanach* based on traditional Rabbinic commentaries, and a variety of other similar subjects in Jewish studies, Rabbinics and the New Testament.

Levertoff seemed to flourish in his new job for the next few years despite having to endure unusual adversity for several years. During World War I (1914-1916), he was under house arrest as a prisoner of war because he was a Russian citizen. This did not in any way stop him academically; he was quite prolific. In addition to Hebrew, he now wrote extensively in German which included a number of articles for *Saat auf Hoffnung*. According to his older daughter,

The War [WW I] deprived him of his post, but kept him in Germany until the Armistice, as a prisoner who, it is interesting to note, was, in spite of many hardships, commissioned by the University [of Leipzig] to write three books:

1. *The edition and German translation, with commentary, of the Pesikta Rabbati, a collection of ancient Synagogue homilies never before translated into any language.*
2. *German translation of the whole of the Palestinian Talmud [Talmud Yerushalmi], with commentary.*
3. *"Die religiöse Denkweise der Chassidim" – the first systematic treatise on intellectual Jewish mysticism.*

*The first and third of these works were produced, though, for lack of funds, only the third was published. The Talmud... never reached the public...[because of] the advent of a new "race-cultured" system in Germany... render[ed] its publication impossible.*¹⁷³

Die religiöse Denkweise der Chassidim did indeed see the light of day.¹⁷⁴ Levertoff eventually made an English adaptation of it that he later published as *Love and the Messianic Age*.¹⁷⁵ Both of these works were pioneering from the context of a comparative religion perspective. They were Levertoff's attempts in exploring similarities between Hassidic and New Testament theology. This study would later become very important theme in later writings because of his

¹⁷² Jechiel Zebi Lichtenstein, *Beur lesifrei berit hachadashah /Kerech [aleph]: Matai*. Paul Levertoff & Heinrich Laible (eds.) (Leipzig, 1913); It was republished in Yehiel Tsvi Lichtenstein. *Sugiyot nibharot besefer haberit hachadashah [A Commentary on Selected Portions From the New Testament]* (Jerusalem: Keren Ahvah Meshihit, 2002), 13-63.

¹⁷³ Olga Tatjana Levertoff, "Paul Levertoff and the Jewish-Christian Problem", 99.

¹⁷⁴ Paul Levertoff, *Die religiöse Denkweise der Chassidim* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1918).

¹⁷⁵ Paul Levertoff, *Love and the messianic age in hitherto untranslated Hasidic writings with special reference to the Fourth Gospel* (London, Episcopal Hebrew Christian Church, 1923).

desire to create a theology that would be acceptable and used in a community of JBJ. The original text and German translation of *Pesikta Rabbati* is extant in manuscript form¹⁷⁶ in the Stanford University Libraries. It is unfortunate that Levertoff never even had the opportunity to begin his translation and commentary of the Palestinian Talmud into German.

His time with IJD lasted until 1918 when he left Germany for England. World War One had left him and his family impoverished.¹⁷⁷

England: The Issue of a Hebrew-Christian Church

Levertoff and his family returned to his wife's native Wales, where, between 1919 through 1922, he held the position of librarian at St. Deiniol's Library, Hawarden (Flintshire County). During this time, he was also ordained by the Archbishop of Wales into the Church of England.¹⁷⁸ In 1923, he became Director of the East London Fund for the Jews and took over Holy Trinity, a church in Shoreditch while making his residence in Ilford. While in this position, he published the quarterly *The Church and the Jews*. As spiritual leader of Holy Trinity, he realized his goal of having a "Hebrew Christian Church" where JBJ could worship by making it familiar to them which "...would make a much stronger appeal than Missionary Societies organized by Gentiles."¹⁷⁹ He followed in the tradition of Joseph Rabinowitz¹⁸⁰ and Hayyim Yediyah Pollak,¹⁸¹ to establish an independent community and congregation of JBJ. Levertoff appealed to "... those Jews who are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ and of their Jewish origin ... to unite as a community ... and institute Jewish Christian services of worship which would present our Faith in terms of the rich background of devotional and mystical Jewish traditions."¹⁸²

¹⁷⁶ Denise Levertov Papers, M0601, Box 33, Folders 1 and 2.

¹⁷⁷ Olga Tatjana Levertoff, "Paul Levertoff and the Jewish-Christian Problem", 100.

¹⁷⁸ Olga Tatjana Levertoff, "Paul Levertoff and the Jewish-Christian Problem", 100.

¹⁷⁹ Paul Levertoff, "Editorial" in *The Church and the Jews*, No. 79 (London, April 1929), 7 [located in the Denise Levertov Papers, M0601, Box 34, Folder 25].

¹⁸⁰ Kai Kjær-Hansen, *Joseph Rabinowitz and the Messianic Movement* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans/Handsel, 1995).

¹⁸¹ Also known as Christian Theophilus Lucky (1864-1916); Cf. Henry Einspruch, "A Lamed-Vovnik" in Henry and Marie Einspruch (eds.) *Would I? Would You?* (Baltimore: Lederer Foundation, 1970), 74-78; Cf. Theodor Zoeckler, "Christian Theophilus Lucky" in *Saat auf Hoffnung* 60, (Leipzig, 1917), 2-8.

¹⁸² Paul Levertoff, *The Possibility of a Hebrew-Christian Church* (London: Conferences of Missionary Societies in Great Britain and Ireland, no date), 4; according to Gershon Nerel this same title appeared as an article in *The Hebrew Christian Alliance Quarterly*, vol. 7 (1924).

To that end in 1925, Levertoff published his Hebrew liturgy *Meal of the Holy King*¹⁸³ that was his own attempt to establish a liturgy for a Hebrew Christian church. In the late 19th century, the LJS and Rabinowitz,¹⁸⁴ had their own Hebrew liturgies for JBJ. Additionally, Levertoff's contemporary Leon Averbuch, a Romanian JBJ leader, employed several different Hebrew and Yiddish hymnbooks.¹⁸⁵ Levertoff, now an Anglican priest, certainly had the option of employing the LJS's Hebrew translation of the Anglican Church's Book of Common Prayer (BCP), which the LJS had used in Christ Church under Michael Solomon Alexander in Jerusalem, a JBJ and Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem, in the mid-19th century.¹⁸⁶ However, rather than employ the standard Anglican liturgy in Hebrew he went to the trouble to write his own Hebrew liturgy that he entitled *Meal of the Holy King*.

Levertoff read from a Torah scroll with tallit and kippah as part of the Hebrew services at Holy Trinity. While it was not a new thing to have a Hebrew liturgy for JBJ in England since the LJS had used the Hebrew BCP at times in their own chapel, this was one step closer to a native Jewish Christian liturgy. The liturgy was original, Jewish in authorship, faithful to the sources and not just a plain Hebrew translation of a Christian liturgical text. Comparisons to Rabinowitz's own Hebrew liturgy *Tefilah*, while interesting, are beyond the scope of this paper.

Within the International Hebrew Christian Alliance (IHCA), Levertoff was highly respected, but he was not entirely associated with the Alliance itself. At a missionary conference held in Edinburgh in 1931, Frederick Levison, son of Sir Leon Levison, said of Levertoff:

... the outstanding contribution came from Dr Paul Levertoff... It was on literature for the Jews, a subject on the Alliance's agenda, and Leon applauded [Levertoff's] plea for the Hebrew tongue, so sacred to the Jew, and for a Hebrew New Testament and commentary. Dr Levertoff

¹⁸³ *Seder kiddush disudhata demalka kadisha /The Order of Service of the Meal of the Holy King*, Shoreditch (London: Mowbray, 1925).

¹⁸⁴ Kai Kjær-Hansen, "Two Nineteenth Century Hebrew 'Siddurim'" in *Mishkan 25* (1996), 50-59; Cf., Jorge Quiñónez (ed.), *TEFILAH/Joseph Rabinowitz's/Prayerbook from 1892 /A Transcribed Edition* (2000), unpublished mss.

¹⁸⁵ *The Hebrew Christian*, International Hebrew Christian Alliance, Vol. LXII, No. 1, (March-May 1989), 11.

¹⁸⁶ Even at the beginning of the twentieth century, LJS missionary, Aaron Bernstein, stated that "...our Hebrew Prayer Book has now become almost an obsolete book, as it is only used in Jerusalem and for missionary purposes." from Aaron Bernstein. "A Formation of a Hebrew-Christian Church: Is It Desirable?" in *Jewish Missionary Intelligence* (May 1902), 68.

became ... a key member of the subsequent Commission on a Hebrew Christian Church, without wholly identifying himself with the Alliance.¹⁸⁷

Levertoff himself mentions his involvement with the IHCA's Hebrew Christian Church Commission in 1932 in his publication, *The Church and the Jews*.¹⁸⁸ In the same space, he presents his own draft for the "The Ten Principles of the Faith of the Hebrew Christian Church" much of which was later incorporated into the final version as "The Proposed Articles of Faith for the Hebrew Christian Church."¹⁸⁹ Nerel points out that the death of Levison in 1935 drastically changed the IHCA's attitude towards a Hebrew Christian Church,

... the IHCA ... seriously considered establishing a Hebrew Christian Church ... The main motivator for this was Sir Leon Levison, born in Safed and first President of the IHCA... However, after Levison's death in 1935, the IHCA drastically withdrew from its official policy to form a global Hebrew Christian church under its wings.¹⁹⁰

The IHCA's change in policy signaled the end for further official discussion for a Hebrew Christian Church within the IHCA proper. However, for three decades with little or no aid from the IHCA, Levertoff led his congregation while keeping a low profile.

During 1920s and 1930s, he transferred his scholarly prowess for ancient Jewish texts from the German into the English language. In 1933, along with Harry Sperling and Maurice Simon, he helped translate the Zohar into English for the first time for Soncino Press (see note 2). Such involved work on the Zohar by a JBJ had not been done in several centuries.¹⁹¹ Levertoff also translated the Sifre on Numbers,¹⁹² a halakhic midrashic text, into English for

¹⁸⁷ Frederick Levison, *Christian and Jew/The Life of Leon Levison 1881-1936* (Edinburgh: The Pentland Press Ltd., 1989), 209-210.

¹⁸⁸ Paul Levertoff, "Editorial" in *The Church and the Jews*, No. 91 (London, April 1932), 6-7 [located in the Denise Levertov Papers, M0601, Box 34, Folder 27].

¹⁸⁹ Robert I. Winer, *The Calling/The History of the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America*. PA: MJAA (1990), 122-23; See also Gershon Nerel, "Creeds among Jewish Believers in Yeshua between World Wars" in *Mishkan* 34 (2001), 65-69.

¹⁹⁰ Gershon Nerel, "Attempts to Establish a 'Messianic Jewish Church' in Eretz-Israel" in *Mishkan* 28 (1998), 40.

¹⁹¹ I am referring to the very lengthy *Messianic* commentary on the Zohar by the JBJ Johann Kemper (died 1714); Cf. Elliot R. Wolfson. "Messianism in the Christian Kabbalah of Johann Kemper," in *Millenarianism and Messianism in the Early Modern European Culture: Jewish Messianism in the Early Modern World*, edited by Matthew D. Goldish and Richard H. Popkin (the Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), 139-187. For a good biographical account of Kemper, see the chapter entitled "'Rabbi' Johan Kemper in Uppsala" in Hans Joachim Schoeps. *Philosemitismus im Barock* (Germany: J.C.B. (Paul Siebeck) Tübingen, 1952), 92-133.

¹⁹² Paul P. Levertoff, *Midrash Sifre on Numbers/Selections from Early Rabbinic Scriptural Interpretations* (London: S. P. C. K. ,1926).

the first time.¹⁹³ While he only translated about a fifth of the text, it served as the only available translation for the next 60 years until Jacob Neusner had a translation of his own published.¹⁹⁴

During his tenure as the priest at Holy Trinity, in addition to leading a small community of JBJ, Levertoff assisted everyone from Hans Herzl¹⁹⁵, also a JBJ and son of Theodore Herzl, to providing succor to JBJ refugees from Austria and Nazi Germany.¹⁹⁶ A very interesting aspect about Levertoff's life in England, which I will only briefly touch upon was Levertoff's relations with the Jewish intelligentsia of the time, many fleeing Nazi oppression or on their way to America or British Mandatory Palestine, who made London their home for a time. For example, Levertoff corresponded with the *maskil* Joseph Brenner¹⁹⁷ and had many discussions with the Yiddish writer Sholem Asch.¹⁹⁸ Levertoff surely kept current with the Hebrew press of his time as J. Klausner observed:

*In [Levertoff's] introduction [to Ben ha-Adam] he indulges in argument against "Ahad ha-Am," Dr. Neumark, S. J. Horowitz, Dr. Bernfeld and the present writer [Klausner], because of their articles in Ha-Shiloach on the "Nature of Judaism" they did not perceive the advantages of Christianity.*¹⁹⁹

A Lost Work

One intriguing work by Levertoff that unfortunately no longer appears to be extant is *Christ and the Shekinah*, which Lev Gillet, a friend of Levertoff, first mentioned in 1939:

*This question of the Shekinah and its relationship with Christology is, as we know it, in the center of Dr. Levertoff's theological concerns. This is why the work Christ and the Shekinah that for a long time he prepared on the topic will be "the book of his life."*²⁰⁰

¹⁹³ H.L. Strack and G. Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (Scotland: T&T Clark, 1991), 292.

¹⁹⁴ According to Strack and Stemberger, 292: Jacob Neusner, *Sifré to Numbers: An American Translation and Explanations*, 2 vols (Atlanta, 1986).

¹⁹⁵ This is a very tragic story. Hans Herzl became a JBJ in 1924 and committed suicide in 1930; Cf. Einspruch, *When Jews face Christ*, 12-13; Cf. Hans Herzl, Letter to Mr. Levertoff, July 29, 1926 (Denise Levertov Papers, M0601, Box 11, Folder 8).

¹⁹⁶ Olga Tatjana Levertoff, "Paul Levertoff and the Jewish-Christian Problem", 109.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Leonard Prager, *Yiddish Culture in Britain*, 405; Cf. Yitzchak Bakon, "Rumors" in *From Within the Band* (Tel Aviv: Papyrus Publishing, 1982) [Hebrew].

¹⁹⁸ Paul Levertoff, "Editorial Notes" in *The Church and the Jews*, No. 175, London (July 1953), 4-5.

¹⁹⁹ Joseph Klausner, *Jesus Of Nazareth*, 124.

²⁰⁰ Lev Gillet, "Questions Concernant la Chekinah" in Lev Gillet (ed.), *Judaism and Christianity/Essays presented to the Rev. Paul P. Levertoff*, 33; This quote is translated from the French.

Several years later, in 1942, he alludes to it again: “Levertoff has also written a great work still unpublished on *Christ and the Shekinah*.”²⁰¹ Levertoff as early as the 1920s when he wrote *Love and the Messianic Age* was trying to integrate Christian and Jewish theologies as Gillet explains “...[Levertoff] understood the importance of an intellectual appeal and the necessity of expressing the theological concepts of Christianity in Jewish terms (according to him, along the lines of the Shekinah teaching and of Hasidic mysticism).”²⁰² Gillet first refers to *Christ and the Shekinah* in 1939 and later in 1942. It was obviously a late writing (most likely begun in the late 1930s) and by the tone of Gillet’s comments very serious to Levertoff. *Christ and the Shekinah* is only mentioned here because of the potential importance it could have in answering the question which is still unanswered: How successful was Levertoff in creating a theology of Jewish-Christianity melding Hassidic theology with the New Testament? This question is especially important to modern JBJ who struggle with practically the same question of how to establish a feasible theology for JBJs that is compatible with the New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism.²⁰³

Conclusion

Not the average missionary apostate as the Jewish press might have depicted at various times, Levertoff continued to write in Hebrew and English in his final two decades. His Hebrew Christian church service did not seem to thrive after his death on 31 July 1954. He followed in the footsteps of Michael Solomon Alexander in establishing a Hebrew Christian Church connected to the Anglican Church. In hindsight, unlike other JBJ *maskilim* such as Herschensohn-Lichtenstein, Isaac Salkinson,²⁰⁴ or Hayyim Yedidiah Pollak, today Levertoff is more remembered and this because of his major scholarly achievements. For example, the English edition of the Zohar he helped translate is still widely used today. His Hebrew Torah service at Holy Trinity portended at things to come half a century later in the USA with the formation of the modern Messianic Jewish congregational movement. Additionally, he is still published in Israel today: his book *Ben ha-Adam*²⁰⁵ and translation *ha-Amek She'ala*²⁰⁶ have been reprinted. As probably the last of the JBJ *maskilim* in the early 20th

²⁰¹ Lev Gillet, *Communion in the Messiah* (Lutterworth Press, 1942), 84 n. 1.

²⁰² Lev Gillet, *Communion in the Messiah*, 203.

²⁰³ I tried with great effort to locate *Christ and the Shekinah* to no avail.

²⁰⁴ Hanna Scolnicov, “The Hebrew Who Turned Christian: The First Translator of Shakespeare into the Holy Tongue” in *Shakespeare Survey, Vol. 54: Shakespeare and Religions*, Peter Holland (ed.), November (2001), 182-190.

²⁰⁵ Jerusalem: Dolphin (1968).

²⁰⁶ Jerusalem: Keren Ahvah Meshihit (1999).

century,²⁰⁷ Levertoff lived in the twilight of the *Haskalah* and died 31 July 1954, at the dawn of the modern Jewish state. He is today perhaps more relevant to us than he was 75 years ago when he seemed nothing more than a fringe theological curiosity. He was both a congregational leader and capable Jewish scholar; he engaged and interacted with Jewish thinkers, and helped the Hebrew-Christian movement push in directions which reflected the modes of thought of traditional Judaism. Suggested topics for future investigation are the relationship his Hebrew writings have had in the history of Modern Hebrew literature and his polemic relation with the Jewish intellectuals of his time.

²⁰⁷ Cf., "... missionaries tried to reach the maskil through Hebrew as late as the third decade of the [twentieth century]" (Leonard Prager. *Yiddish Culture in Britain*, 391).

Passing over the Plot? The Life and Work of Hugh Schonfield (1901-1988)

Richard Harvey*

Hugh Schonfield, “an independent Jewish historian of the Nazarene Faith,”²⁰⁸ was the *enfant terrible* of the Hebrew Christian movement of the 20th century. A pioneering researcher in the history of Jewish Christianity and founding member of the International Hebrew Christian Alliance (IHCA),²⁰⁹ his gifts as scholar, writer and visionary thinker made a significant contribution to Hebrew Christian thought and identity. As evidence of his heterodox views emerged he was excluded from IHCA membership, and his talents were employed elsewhere, in the cause of his own particular brand of biblical scholarship and the search for world peace. In a series of reconstructions of the life of Jesus and the early church he proposed sensationalist versions of events which found little acceptance in academic circles but were widely canvassed in the popular press. His innovative editions and translations of Jewish and Christian works such as the *Tol'dot Yeshu*,²¹⁰ while putting for the first time important materials before the general public, were marred by the imposition of his own agenda. His *History of Jewish Christianity (HJC)*²¹¹ remains a significant work chronicling the forerunners and foundations of the modern Messianic movement. Much can be gained from a study of Schonfield's life and work, especially as these impinge on the task of developing coherent Messianic Jewish theology for today.

Early Years (1901-1937)

Hugh Joseph Schonfield was born to Jewish parents on 17 May 1901. His family was well-known in the London Jewish community and his father, Major William Schonfield, was a founding member of General Allenby's Jewish

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²⁰⁸ *Saints against Caesar (SAC)* (London: Macdonald, 1948), vii.

²⁰⁹ The IHCA was renamed the International Messianic Jewish Alliance (IMJA) in 1992.

²¹⁰ *According to the Hebrews, a new translation of the Jewish Life of Jesus (the Toldoth Yeshu)* (London: Duckworth, 1937).

²¹¹ London: Duckworth, 1936; Manna Books, 1995.

brigade and himself an amateur historian.²¹² Hugh's love for his early family traditions remained with him throughout his life. As a young boy Schonfield puzzled his parents with his "solemn questions and strange dreams,"²¹³ premonitions of the future and experiences which he later described as "psychic phenomena and extra-sensory perception."²¹⁴ At the age of six he "frankly and unreservedly gave himself to God" and began to be aware of God's guidance and preparation "for a task that would one day be revealed." As part of his preparation he read widely, and took a keen interest in world affairs.

From 1914 to 1917 he attended St Paul's School²¹⁵ where at the age of 16 he read the New Testament, because he was aware that Christians held Jesus to be the Messiah. He came in due course to the same conclusion, and when he told his parents, this brought "a time of great suffering, mercifully ended in a few years."²¹⁶ He attended some courses at King's College, London, and in 1926 went to Glasgow University to study Semitic and Oriental Languages.²¹⁷ There he managed to startle an "eminent Scottish Professor of New Testament" with his "youthful arguments and familiarity with the ancient Christian authorities,"²¹⁸ and promised to write a biography of Jesus.²¹⁹ While in Scotland

²¹² cf. Frederick Levison's *Christian and Jew: The Life of Sir Leon Levison* (Edinburgh: Pentland Press, 1989), 279. William Schonfield/Schofield published a translation of a German work on the treatment of the Jews under Richard the Lionheart. (*Die Juden und die Kreuzfahrer in England unter Richard Löwenherz*, Francolm, Isaak Ascher, 1933) as "Jews of the Lionheart" and gave a paper at the Jewish Historical Society of England on *The Josephs of Cornwall* (20th December, 1938).

²¹³ *The Politics of God (POG)* (London: Hutchinson, 1970), xiii. The admissions Schonfield made in 1970 raise important questions about the genuineness of his original involvement in the IHCA. He realised the *POG* account might lead him to be regarded as "a crank, crackpot or a charlatan" but he felt it necessary to inform his readers of the true nature of his inspiration and sense of personal calling to his destined mission, the formation of a "servant nation" (1970:xi).

²¹⁴ *ibid.*

²¹⁵ Other famous men of letters produced by St Paul's include G.K. Chesterton and Isaiah Berlin.

²¹⁶ *POG* (1970:xiv).

²¹⁷ This is stated by Frederick Levison (1989:279) but the archives at Glasgow University show only that he was present for the 1926/1927 session and attended classes in Logic and English, giving no evidence of graduation or a degree award. On his record it states that he opted to take Hebrew but he was not listed on class lists for this session (email from Rachel Hosker, Glasgow University Archive Services, 21/8/2002). This lack of information may reflect the concern of the times not to record detailed information about Jewish students, and the question of the precise nature of Schonfield's academic qualifications, including the doctorate that is referred to in later publications, awaits further research.

²¹⁸ *The Passover Plot (PP)* (London: Hutchinson, 1965), 9.

²¹⁹ *Jesus: A Biography* (London: Banner Books, 1939).

he became the protégé of Sir Leon Levison, the first President of the IHCA, whose influence, whilst living, succeeded in keeping him within the fold of orthodoxy.²²⁰ He is described as “small, dark and olive skinned, his youthful appearance and unlined features belied his enormous erudition.”²²¹ He married Hélène Cohen, a childhood friend and confidant.²²² They had three daughters, one of whom is still alive, and several grandchildren.

While in Scotland Schonfield assisted Sir Leon, his brother Nahum Levison and others in the formation of the IHCA. He attended the first International Conference in 1925, and presented papers at successive conferences.²²³ As literary editor of the quarterly magazine, he published many book reviews, poems and articles both under his own name and anonymously.²²⁴

Already his more unorthodox views appeared in books published at this time,²²⁵ and in “The Search,”²²⁶ a short-lived magazine which Schonfield co-

²²⁰ Frederick Levison, pp. 279-283. “Leon... would have been aghast at his expulsion and would, Hugh believed, have succeeded in keeping him in, on the grounds that he accepted the Messiahship of Jesus, though not his Godhead.” (1989:280). This is Schonfield’s view as reported by Fred Levinson, and may not be an accurate representation of the position of Sir Leon.

²²¹ See the photograph of Hugh in Levinson (1989:282). When I met him in 1987 he had a more portly demeanour and balding grey hair, but the glint in his eye and the smiling countenance were still the same. At that meeting Schonfield spoke warmly and affectionately of his Alliance friends, and asked for greetings and best wishes to be passed on to them.

²²² Hélène was Honorary Secretary of the Women’s auxiliary of the IHCA. Her own faith is evident from the closing remarks of the Women’s auxiliary annual report for 1934: “Finally, I should like to emphasise that this work is indeed of the Lord, and to ask the Conference to recognise that we are serving those who will become the future mothers of the next generations of Hebrew Christians... We are anxious to follow in the footsteps of those pious Hebrew Christian women of whom the New Testament speaks, and who rendered such great service to the Church of the Apostles.” (*THC* vol. 7 no. 3 (October 1934) pp. 146-149).

²²³ “The Need for Hebrew Christian Literature” (1928); “Our Relations with Jewry, Official and Unofficial” (1931).

²²⁴ Schonfield also wrote under the pseudonyms “Hubert Fielding” and “Hegesippus”, the Jewish Christian whose works are referred to by Eusebius (cf. *Hist. Eccl.* 2.33.4-18; 4.22.1-4) but are otherwise non-extant. His style is detectable in several unsigned articles.

²²⁵ *The Lost “Book of the Nativity of John: A Study in Messianic Folklore and Christian Origins With a New Solution to the Virgin-Birth Problem”* (LBNJ) (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1929); *Jesus: A Biography* (1939) clearly indicate his difficulties with orthodoxy.

²²⁶ *The Search, A Quarterly Review* (Volume 1, Number 1: January, 1931) eds. E.J. Langford Garstin and Hugh J.Schonfield. Only four issues were published between January and October 1931 (Volume 1, Numbers 1-4). The relationship between the editors and Leonard Woolf was not smooth and the Hogarth Press published only the first two issues. “The Search aims at presenting its readers, in form as readily assimilable as

edited with E.J. Langford Garstin and was published by Leonard Woolf's "Hogarth Press." Garstin was also a member of "Alpha and Omega," a circle of occultists interested in hermetic magic and associated with Alastair Crowley. While the magazine was described generally as "devoted to the discovery of Truth in Religion, Science, Philosophy, Literature and Art,"²²⁷ it was particularly interested in esoteric religious knowledge.

Alliance Membership 1925-37

Schonfield was a member of the Executive Committee of the IHCA from 1925 to 1937. He saw the significance of the Alliance (a world-wide association of Jewish believers in Jesus united as members of National Alliances affiliated to the International) as an important instrument for a renewed expression of Jewish Christianity. The existence of the IHCA had significance for Jew and gentile alike, with political and eschatological implications that would herald a new world order. In the quarterly magazine he serialized what was to become the *History of Jewish Christianity (HJC)*. Here he traced the history of Jewish Christianity with a strong interest on the present and future of the movement. His writing harnesses history with visionary thinking in grand rhetorical style.

The *HJC* surveys and summarizes the history of Jewish Christianity since the days of the early church, adding Schonfield's own glosses on subjects that were of particular interest to him. Thus the Nazarenes "believed that Jesus was the natural son of Joseph and Mary" whereas the gentile Christians "were ignorant of the meaning of the term "son of God" in its Messianic sense, but were familiar with its use in their mythologies to signify one begotten of a god in a supernatural sense."²²⁸ In *HJC* Schonfield explored Toland's understanding of the divergence and conflict between Pauline and Petrine Christianities²²⁹ and would later write "there were two Christianities, one inside the other. The inside one was Jewish relating to the Messiahship of Jesus, while the outside one was largely Gentile reflecting the major doctrines of the Church."²³⁰

As a study the *HJC* established for the first time the continuity of Hebrew Christianity throughout history, giving legitimacy to the claims of the modern Hebrew Christian and Messianic movements. Despite Schonfield's own *penchant* for particular views (his sections on the Gospel of the Nazarenes and Ebionism should be read with special caution),²³¹ the book is an eye-opener to

possible, with the researches and conclusions of modern scholarship in the domains of Religion, Philosophy, Science, Literature and Art." (front cover, Issue 1).

²²⁷ Notice in *THC* (vol. 4, April 1931, p.45), cf. Advertisement in *THC* (vol. 4, October 1931, no. 3, 174).

²²⁸ *HJC* 1936:55.

²²⁹ *HJC* 1936:205-208.

²³⁰ *POG* 1970:xiv.

²³¹ *HJC* 86-96; 226-236.

the possibilities and varieties of Jewish Christianity, and a *tour de force* of historic research.

In HJC Schonfield anticipated the need for a revision of views on Early Christianity, and showed the direction his own work was taking:

"The evidences have been accumulating, and partly due to the unpalatable researches of Dr. Robert Eisler, which tend to show that Jewish Christianity was a much more fundamental thing, politically, socially and spiritually than ecclesiastical historians have been disposed to admit. One day the whole story of Christian beginnings will have to be rewritten, and any day may bring to light again part of the vanished record. Even that very Gospel which the Nazarenes cherished may ere long be restored." (HJC 1936:16, 1995:15)

He indicated not only the reliance he would later put on Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphal works (including the Dead Sea Scrolls in the 1950's), but also his own inclinations to speculate freely on the nature of the mission and Messiahship of Jesus.

In HJC Schonfield expressed the hope that the "great Gentile Churches would return to the simpler faith and Christology of the early Jewish Christians." This would result in a "Zionism of faith" and was already in process of happening, with accompanying manifestations and evidence of eschatological fulfillment:

The attempts of the several denominations to model their government and order on what they believe to be the lines laid down in the primitive Church, the renewal of foreign missionary activity, phenomenal manifestations like the revival of prophecy and speaking with tongues, second Adventism, the intensified quest for the historical Jesus, the acceptance of their Messiah by thousands of Jews, all these and many more are signs to the discerning that the wheel has turned full circle, and that the message of salvation that went forth from Zion is returning to Zion again, parallel with the dispersion and restoration of the Jewish people. If it is permissible to coin a new word, this trend may best be described as the Rejudaisance [emphasis mine] of Christianity. ²³²

His conclusion pointed the way forward to a renewed Jewish Christianity.

The change in the condition of Jewish Christianity which has taken place within the last century, and particularly within the last decade, is little short of miraculous. One by one the positions lost in the age-old triumph of the Gentile Church have been regained. A revived Jewish Christian independent religious communion is within measurable distance of achievement. The wheel has turned full circle. ²³³

He went on with a series of rhetorical questions to express his own enthusiasm and zeal for the movement expressed by the formation of the International Alliance and the formation of Hebrew-Christian churches:

To what purpose is all of this? Is it that Jewish³⁹ Christianity with its accumulated experiences of human passions and Divine love has a potent message to give to a world crying aloud for

²³² (1936:17; 1995:15).

²³³ HJC 1936:245.

*light and truth? Is it that these patient followers of the King Messiah have a leading part to play in the restoration of peace and international brotherhood to a world sown with dissension and distrust? Is there after all something in the Mosaic vision of "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" playing a mediatorial part between the nations and their God? Those who seek an answer to these questions must go to the Fountain-head and to the word of his revelation.*²³⁴

The Hebrew-Christian Church Commission

Schonfield believed that Jewish Christianity should be both visionary and practical, and was involved in a project beloved of Sir Leon Levison—the establishment of a Hebrew Christian Church. Schonfield was co-opted onto the Commission for this purpose that met from 1931 to 1934²³⁵ and was chaired by Elijah Bendor-Samuel.²³⁶ Whilst Schonfield challenged the remit of the Committee, arguing that the worldwide survey of Hebrew Christians was too demanding a task to be undertaken adequately²³⁷ and could not be undertaken without partiality and bias,²³⁸ he was fully involved in the formulation of the Constitution and Articles of Faith.

Schonfield and Paul Levertoff, another member of the Commission, put forward for discussion their own draft Confessions of Faith, in addition to one provided by the Chairman. After consideration of the three proposals, Schonfield's was rejected as being "unsuitable for a Creed" although it was thought "admirable as a tract."²³⁹ The "tract" is of interest for its echoing of

²³⁴ *ibid.*

²³⁵ Minutes of Meetings of the IHCA Commission are available from the Friends of the IMJA Office, Ramsgate, Kent (unpublished). The aims of the Commission were:

"1. To make a survey of the numbers of Hebrew Christians in the World, their locations and if possible their Denominational connections.

2. To report on the desirability and practicability of the suggested Hebrew Christian Religious Body.

3. To draw up a Constitution for the said suggested Hebrew Christian Religious Body.

4. To indicate the Doctrines of the said suggested Hebrew Christian Religious Body.

5. To determine the relation of the said Body to the Universal Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

6. To determine its relationship to the Jewish people." (Report of First Meeting, p. 2)

²³⁶ The father of Harcourt Samuel, who acted as Secretary to the Committee. Sir Leon Levinson attended *ex officio* as President of the IHCA, and gave the opening statement which set the tone for the meetings. Already some tension is apparent in the interjections of Schonfield and the way they were handled by Nahum Levinson, Sir Leon's brother, despite the diplomatic tone of the Minutes.

²³⁷ Remarks on pp. 3,5,6.

²³⁸ Remarks, 10, 11.

²³⁹ Minutes, 11.

synagogue liturgy – “Thou, O Lord, hast performed the truth to Jacob and the mercy to Abraham, which thou didst swear unto our fathers from the days of old.”

His contribution also reflects an orthodox Christology, with Jesus as “God’s son,” the “one mediator between God and man” and the incarnation expressed by “God was manifest in the flesh and we beheld His glory – the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”²⁴⁰ However, it was left to the committee to discuss Levertoff’s proposal and the original draft in detail and these became the basis for what was later published as the Articles of Faith in the Alliance Quarterly.²⁴¹

The Commission produced its report, including the Articles of Belief, a Constitution and a Service for the Ordination of Ministers, and these were the major items of discussion at the Fourth International Conference in 1934. By then Schonfield had had second thoughts on the process. He spoke of his chief concern for such a Church, as to how far it was “going to influence the Jewish people towards Christ.”²⁴² He is reported as saying:

*He was not concerned how it affected other denominations. He thought the name “Church” an unhappy one, for the whole conception of Church was entirely contrary to the Jewish spirit. The only type of building and worship which a Jew would understand would be that of a Jewish-Christian Synagogue. Jews would never find themselves at home in a Hebrew Christian Church as visualized in the Commission’s findings.*²⁴³

Exclusion from the IHCA

The process of Schonfield’s removal from the IHCA is significant not only for the effect it had on his later activities, but also as a moment of truth for the development of the Alliance and the future of Hebrew Christian/Messianic Jewish thought. The circumstances were reported in the Quarterly magazine’s report of the Fifth International Executive, and the Legislative Conference that preceded it.²⁴⁴

The Alliance was unfortunate at this session in having to lose the valued services of Mr and Mrs Hugh Schonfield. Prior to the Conference it had been suggested to the Business Committee that Mr Schonfield had expressed himself unable to accept the wording of Article 9

²⁴⁰ Minutes, 17.

²⁴¹ Adopted January 1st 1932 Minutes (pp23-4) and published in the Alliance Quarterly, 1932 vol. 2, 170.

²⁴² IHJA Quarterly, vol.7 no.3, 115 (October 1934).

²⁴³ Ibid. 115.

²⁴⁴ Additional information is found in the Minutes of the IMJA, which are quoted with permission.

*of the Bye-Laws which govern the Alliance, the article which defines the doctrinal position of the Alliance in relation to the Deity of Christ.*²⁴⁵

The Business Committee carefully considered a statement of belief prepared by Schonfield, but found the statement “inadequate” and insisted on a “yes” or “no” answer to the question “Do you believe in the Deity of Jesus Christ, as set forth in Article no. 9 of the Bye-Laws?” The meeting adjourned and Schonfield was asked privately for his answer.²⁴⁶ Schonfield was “unable to answer the question,” and his dismissal from membership was voted on, and confirmed.

Schonfield then appealed against the decision, and a special Judicial Committee was convened composed of the Presidents of National Alliances. The decision of the Judicial Committee was to be final²⁴⁷. The following day Dr. Arnold Frank reported positively on the Judicial Committee’s findings, stating, “the committee were of opinion that Mr. Schonfield’s views were not really in conflict with Article 9 of the Bye-Laws.”²⁴⁸

The matter would have rested there, but for the next item of business of the Conference—the election of Officers of the International. Nahum Levison, Harcourt Samuel and others declined to allow their names to go forward for election (as proposed by the Nominations Committee) because of their dissatisfaction with the Judicial Committee’s report, despite their previous decision that this would be “the final word on the matter.” Nahum Levison “complained that the Committee had not fully understood the position and wondered if possibly there were not others who did not believe in the full Deity of Jesus.”²⁴⁹

Jacob Peltz and Nahum Levison then proposed a motion asking each Alliance member to affirm their faith in terms which included the Article of Faith under discussion. All were asked to affirm their agreement with Article 9 of the Constitution, which read:

Persons eligible for membership must be Hebrew Christians who a) have made public confession of their faith; b) have accepted Jesus as their personal Saviour; c) believe in the

²⁴⁵ THC vol. 10, April 1937-January 1938, pp. 104-108. See too Gershon Nerel “Creeds Among Jewish Believers in Yeshua,” in *Mishkan* (Issue 34/2001), 69 and Levison 1989:279-283.

²⁴⁶ Minute no. 6.

²⁴⁷ THC 1937:104. The Minutes which formed the basis for the report in THC add “and three others to be nominated by Mr Schonfield” could attend (Minute 6, Tuesday 6th July). It is likely that Zeidman attended as a supporter of Schonfield. I am very grateful to the FIMJA Office staff for assistance in tracing the relevant Committee minutes.

²⁴⁸ Minute 5, Wednesday 7th July, 1937. This was later expanded in THC as “This Committee felt that though Mr. Schonfield was unwilling to use a phrase which he regarded as unscriptural, his beliefs were not really in conflict with the doctrinal position of the Alliance.”

²⁴⁹ *ibid.* Minute 6.

Atonement and vicarious suffering which He has wrought on the Cross at Calvary; d) believe in His Deity and Resurrection; e) declare their adherence to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the supreme rule of faith and life.

In this public forum "Mr. and Mrs. Schonfield alone abstained, and it was, therefore, declared that their membership had terminated."²⁵⁰

Some months later, in what may have been pique at rejection, or a desire to clarify the Alliance's position further, Schonfield himself sought to "suggest to the Committee" that there were others in the Alliance who had the same difficulties as himself, and that they too should be expelled. The matter was dealt with in the December meeting of the Business committee²⁵¹ where the Secretary read a letter from Schonfield stating that "certain Associate members"²⁵² had expressed their disagreement with the Doctrinal Basis and suggested that notice should be given "that all such cannot remain in membership." The Committee wisely decided that "no action be taken", and no further loss of members occurred.

The loss of membership was a heavy blow to bear, and affected Schonfield significantly, setting him more firmly on the path of reluctant outcast and maverick. According to Frederick Levison, had Sir Leon Levison still been alive, he "would have been aghast" at the expulsion, and "would have succeeded in keeping him in, on the grounds that he accepted the Messiahship of Jesus, though not his Godhead."²⁵³ Nevertheless, the nature and theological integrity of the IHCA would have been seriously affected.

A later letter from Schonfield to Rev. M. Zeidman, who alone dissented from the procedure that took place, expresses Hugh's sense of sorrow at his exclusion:

I have had to school myself to bearing rebuke and misrepresentation, and it has been a joy to maintain undimmed my love for and confidence in my Hebrew Christian brethren. Like Joseph of old my exile has been under God a means for good and I have been free to devote myself to Christian work which perhaps otherwise I could not have undertaken. God bless you all. Your friend and brother in Christ...²⁵⁴

Different explanations have been given for Schonfield's position. Fred Levison believed that Schonfield's lack of academic training in theology (he was a New Testament scholar primarily) may have led to an over-reaction against the courses he attended at the Bible Training Institute (BTI) in Glasgow, an "ultra-conservative college."

²⁵⁰ THC1937:104.

²⁵¹ IHCA Business Committee Meeting Minutes for 2nd December 1937 held in London (copy available from IHCA office, Ramsgate).

²⁵² Associate members are those supportive of the IHCA who are not themselves Jewish.

²⁵³ Levison 1989:280.

²⁵⁴ *ibid.*

According to David Rausch²⁵⁵ Schonfield was a “casualty in the clash” between the philosophy of “Hebrew Christianity” and “Messianic Judaism,” as the revival of the Hebrew Christian movement and the revival of Jewish Christian consciousness set the two tendencies in opposition as a “veritable battle-line.”²⁵⁶ But this analysis, though maintaining the notion of an imagined dichotomy between Hebrew Christianity and Messianic Judaism that was part of the polemics of Messianic Judaism in the 1980’s, does not easily apply in Schonfield’s case. His unorthodox views had already surfaced within the Hebrew Christian Alliance, and there is no evidence that these were about congregational issues, but rather theological ones.

The Commonwealth of World Citizens (1937-1965)

After leaving the IHCA Schonfield went on to found the Commonwealth of World Citizens (CWC) the following year, a parallel but variant group that aimed to incorporate every nation into a global polity.²⁵⁷ It emerged as Schonfield sought to combat practically the dark forces overshadowing Europe between the wars. In 1938 he put forward his vision for a “servant-nation,” an independent, self-governing international community which would deliver the world from the serious problems facing it. The people of this community would serve humankind and mediate and act as a model global community.²⁵⁸ The group was originally known (with clear messianic overtones) as the “Society for the Constitution of a Holy Nation” and later as the “Servant-Nation” movement. It was named the CWC in 1950, and was inaugurated through a Constituent Assembly in 1956, with Schonfield as Acting President and Ambassador-General. A quarterly journal, “The Mondcitivan” was published in Esperanto as the language of neutrality that would unite each national community. For his work with the CWC he was nominated in 1959 for the Nobel Peace Prize.²⁵⁹

Schonfield had numerous other interests, and many aspects of the Middle East’s past and present interested him. He put forward his own proposals for modern Hebrew Typography.²⁶⁰ In 1940 he wrote a book about Italian foreign

²⁵⁵ *Messianic Judaism* (New York: Mellen Press, 1982), 40-43.

²⁵⁶ Rausch 1982:42.

²⁵⁷ Information on the CWC is available from the Dorothy Martin Archive at Bradford University, UK. I am grateful for the assistance of Allison Cullingford, the Special Collections Librarian, for the above information. Schonfield’s papers are held in the Archives of Boston University Library.

²⁵⁸ Email from Alison Cullingford, August 8th 2002.

²⁵⁹ Obituary in *The Times*, Tuesday 26th January 1988.

²⁶⁰ *The New Hebrew Typography* (London: Dennis Archer, 1932). Whilst it had the support of Rabbi Moses Gaster, who was generally interested in Schonfield’s work and

policy in the region; he was an authority on the Victorian explorer, Richard Burton, and wrote a biography of him. Later in life, he published a history of the Suez Canal on the 100th anniversary of its opening. He worked for several years in publishing at Michael Joseph and wrote, edited and published more than 40 books.

During the war he worked for a time with the Near East Department of the Ministry of Information. After the war he continued as an author and broadcaster, turning out a stream of works, many in the popular style. In the 1950s, he wrote a series of newspaper articles interpreting the recently discovered Dead Sea Scrolls to a lay public, and these too were later published in book form.²⁶¹ His translations of the New Testament were widely circulated.²⁶²

Schonfield's Jesus

The main theme of Schonfield's thought could be summarized as "the message of Messianism for modern man."²⁶³ He understood Jesus to be the Messiah, not in the deified form he saw of later gentile Christianity, but in accordance with his particular understanding of contemporary Jewish messianic expectation that looked for a worthy successor to the royal line of David. According to Schonfield Jesus was uniquely able to fulfil the role of suffering servant, and his followers were to take on his messianic consciousness and mission after him. His program was a utopian vision of world peace brought about through a "new religio-political society within and in defiance of the established order."²⁶⁴ However, the exposition of this program was filtered through a haze of pantheistic, occult, Gnostic and secular influences.

Schonfield's view of the Virgin Birth is dealt with in "The Lost Book of the Nativity of John." He defends the birth narratives from the charge that they were influenced by Hellenistic thought, demonstrating their congruity with other Jewish Midrashic speculation on the Messiah.²⁶⁵ However, Schonfield's approach to the Gospel accounts shows a de-mythologizing tendency that

collaborated with him to some extent, the proposals were never taken up, and the book remains a historical rarity and curiosity.

²⁶¹ *Secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (1956) and *The Bible Was Right* (1959), a French translation of which was published as *Réalités du Nouveau* (1962).

²⁶² *The Original New Testament* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985) was a revision of *The Authentic New Testament* (London: Dobson, 1956). A useful review of the translation is given by Robert Bratcher in *The Bible Translator* (vol. 38 no. 3 July 1987), 339-341.

²⁶³ POG 1970:x.

²⁶⁴ SAC 1948:xiv.

²⁶⁵ LBNJ 1929: 55-68. Gnostic, Essene and Mandaean influences are acknowledged, however.

leaves little room for doubt about his acceptance of the IMJA basis of faith on the Virgin birth and the Authority of Scripture:

*Concerning Jesus, we may say that, if the stories setting forth His birth according to current Messianic conceptions served as a stepping-stone by which His contemporaries were enabled to reach the Man Himself and grasp His mission, they fulfilled their purpose well enough. Today they are a stumbling block rather than a stepping-stone to the faith of many, and could conveniently be deleted, and placed among the Apocrypha.*²⁶⁶

In terms of his ministry, Jesus understood himself to be the Messiah, but to Schonfield his Messianic consciousness was an awkward combination of lofty idealism and deceptive cunning. This resulted in a Machiavellian attempt to engineer the circumstances of his death and presumed resurrection. In his most controversial book, *The Passover Plot*²⁶⁷, Schonfield argues that Jesus, with his knowledge of the Scriptures and other Messianic literature, succeeded in “producing a kind of blueprint of the Messiah’s mission with the prophetic requirements organised to show a progressive programme of events.”²⁶⁸ He then proceeded to fulfil the requirements by acting out an engineered set of circumstances with the help of Lazarus and Joseph of Arimathea, with the other disciples ignorant of his plot. He wished to feign death on the cross by being drugged, revive in the tomb, and demonstrate to his disciples that he was the Messiah. This plan, according to Schonfield, misfired when Jesus was pierced by the spear and did actually die from his suffering.²⁶⁹

Jesus’ death was accidental, but “surely for the best, since there would be no future for a Messiah who returned temporarily to this troubled world possibly crippled in mind and body.”²⁷⁰ His mission had nevertheless succeeded, and

²⁶⁶ LBNJ 1929: 68

²⁶⁷ London: Hutchinson, 1965. More than two million copies were sold and it is supposed to have prompted John Lennon's famous remark that the Beatles were more popular than Jesus Christ. According to correspondence with Dan Juster the content of his book *The Passover Plot* was revealed in a vision and the footnotes to give evidence for it came later. He did not for years reveal this for he knew that the materialistic western mind would otherwise discredit the book. (email from Dan Juster, July 17th 2002)

²⁶⁸ PP 1965:46

²⁶⁹ In the light of the controversy that ensued there was no shortage of critical reviews and refutations of Schonfield’s hypothesis. The character of Christ, the nature of prophecy and fulfilment, and the fact of the Resurrection were debated widely, and Schonfield enjoyed being in the thick of the controversy. Cf. C. Wilson *The Passover Plot Exposed* (San Diego: Master Books, 1977) for detailed discussion.

²⁷⁰ PP 1965:180. Levison (1989:280) quotes Schonfield as writing “His corpse was hastily buried in a new grave, whose whereabouts, like that of Moses, was never subsequently revealed” as early as 1939 (*Jesus: a Biography*). This sentence does not appear in the same form in the 1948 reprint. Schonfield reviews the tradition of the *Toldot Yeshu*, that the gardener of the tomb area, to save his vegetables, removed the body and re-buried it beneath an irrigation ditch. (JT 1946:58; PP 1965:171, 180; AH 1937:52), and concludes "As

his resurrection, in a metaphorical sense, was ongoing. "Wherever mankind strives to bring in the rule of justice, righteousness and peace, there the deathless presence of Jesus the Messiah is with them."²⁷¹

Jesus' divinity was therefore a later gentile invention owing more to Platonic philosophy than Jewish teaching, and meaningful only to non-Jews: "Where we find Jesus making statements which no Jewish Messiah could make, and where Jesus is presented in terms suggestive of deity, we can recognise these passages as contributions to what could readily be entertained by non-Jews."²⁷²

For Schonfield, the idea of the Trinity was inconceivable:

*I am a Jew, and one, moreover, entitled to be termed a Nazarene, since Jesus is for me the Messiah. But I am not a Christian, if that name is to be applied only to those who have subscribed to the dogmas of the Church in their full orthodox form. I confess the Unity of God, not a Unity in Trinity.*²⁷³

Conclusion

Schonfield's pioneering scholarship bequeathed to Hebrew Christianity and the Messianic movement vital resources on which to base a rationale. However, his own inclinations led him to develop his understanding of Jesus and his aims in ways that could never be acceptable in the light of New Testament understanding of the Resurrection of Jesus, and the doctrine of the Trinity. The challenge to Messianic Judaism to articulate an authentic Jewish expression of a Trinitarian faith remains today, and Schonfield's approach stands as an example of the issues that must be faced, and a warning of dangers to be avoided. Schonfield appreciated the existence of Jewish Christianity as a significant movement on the world stage, and sought after exclusion from the IHCA to replicate some of its aspects. The CWC combined spiritual renewal, interaction between world faiths, and moral re-armament, but it did not have more than minority support from those who came under Schonfield's personal influence, and remains a historical curiosity. His exclusion from the IHCA resulted in a tragic loss of his talents, but was a necessary one were the Alliance to remain credally orthodox. Schonfield's Messianism, with its pantheist, adoptionist and esoteric elements, stands as a salutary warning to the Messianic movement today to "rightly handle the word of truth."²⁷⁴

with Moses, so with the prophet like Moses, NO MAN KNOWETH OF HIS SEPULCHRE UNTO THIS DAY." (1948:264).

²⁷¹ PP 1965:181.

²⁷² For *Christ's Sake* (London: Macdonald, 1975), 21. See too the discussion of Schonfield's views in D.A. Hagner's *The Jewish Reclamation of Jesus* (USA: Zondervan, 1984) pp. 247-8, 262-3.

²⁷³ *The Jew of Tarsus: An Unorthodox Portrait of Paul* (London: Macdonald, 1946), vii-viii.

²⁷⁴ 2 Tim. 2:15.

Hillel Pokrzywa: Wandering Jew— Witnessing Jew

Julie Anderson*

Wandering Jew, Witnessing Jew by Frédéric Baudin presents an autobiographical account of the life of Hillel Pokrzywa, who, for several years, acted as vice president of The French Alliance of Messianic Jews. Part one of the autobiography traces Hillel's life, punctuated by relationships and traveling experiences, from the Polish town of Lodz to Sidi-Bel-Abbes in Algeria—a journey which leads him to acknowledge Jesus as Messiah. The second part of the book is concerned with his travels and experiences as an evangelist, presenting the New Covenant to his fellow Jews, while conserving and treasuring his Jewish identity.

From Lodz to Sidi-Bel-Abbes: The Curious Road to Damascus

Hillel was born in 1904 into a Jewish family in the Polish town of Lodz. His extended family lived between the city of Lodz, dominated by the textile industry and home to a large proportion of Jews, and the provincial town of Kazimierz-Wielki in the province of Kielce. Family life played an essential role in Hillel's community, dictating marriages and family ties and causing relatives to live in close proximity. During this time, Poland was home to three categories of Jews: those who strictly abided by traditional religious law, those who had abandoned Jewish orthodox practices in favour of socialist ideologies and Marxist materialism, and those Jews who wished to integrate into the bourgeois society.

In 1908, the birth of Hillel's youngest sister, Rachel-Lea, immediately preceded the death of his father, a coachman from Lodz. As a result, Hillel

The following article is a summary of Frédéric Boudin's biography in French on Hillel Pokrzywa: *Wandering Jew ... Witnessing Jew!* Published by Editions I.L.B., Valence, France, 1992. Frédéric Baudin is an author and lecturer.

The Book's Purpose is to (1) trace the life and ministry of Hillel Pokrzywa (1904-2001), (2) present the beliefs and struggles of Messianic Jews in an age where they are largely misunderstood and (3) bridge the gap between Jewish identity/culture and belief in Jesus as Messiah.

Julie Anderson, who would like to make a full translation of the book if a publisher can be found, has written the summary.

moved in with his uncle Joseph and aunt Kaila in Balut, the Jewish community of Lodz. Even though living conditions were cramped and accommodation modest, he never recalled feeling socially underprivileged. He contemplates, with joy and pain and in most vivid detail, his memories of life in Balut: children playing, the small shops and businesses lining the streets, the hustle and bustle of Jews in black caps. Hillel presents a world rooted in cultural traditions. This sheltered community with its own language, culture, commercial network and education system, represented a secure refuge for Hillel which enabled him to identify more deeply with his Jewish background.

However, this separate sub-culture only served to reinforce the divisions between Jews and non-Jews as Hillel recounts the reality of underlying anti-Semitic bitterness and hatred: riots, false accusations and the recent massacres at Kiev. As a child Hillel recalls a young Polish boy spitting on his "sacred" (Shabbat) bread and his fear and guilt over Christian accusations that he was responsible for "killing Christ." His fear intensified as anti-Semitism reached frightening proportions in Poland dominated by Russia.

In 1914, immediately before the events of the First World War, Hillel's mother remarried and brought Rachel-Lea with her to her husband's home in the Jewish community of Dialoszyce. Meanwhile, Hillel remained in Kielce with his aunt and uncle. His journeys began at the age of 10 when he traveled unaccompanied to visit his mother during the summer holiday. In spite of his intention to return to Kielce to complete his studies and provide company for his aunt and uncle, the circumstances surrounding the outbreak of war delayed his departure from his mother's house. Hillel was prevented from continuing his studies for two years, during which time he recalls the violence of the Russian soldiers who literally confiscated their houses, forcing them to seek refuge elsewhere. This stands in stark contrast to his memory of the German officers who befriended members of the community, even protecting them against potential enemies. Yet it is somewhat ironic that within 30 years, German soldiers would be responsible for the annihilation of the entire Jewish population.

In 1916, Hillel and his sister, Rachel-Lea were uprooted once again and moved to the home of their Grandfather Zelik at Kazimierz-Wielki. At the age of 13, Hillel's Jewish faith was confirmed as he participated in the *Bar Mitzva* ceremony, publicly confessing his sins and taking responsibility for his actions before God. He also recalls his conversations with his Zionist friend who informed Hillel of young men and women emigrating from Poland in the hope of establishing a new society in Palestine. The seeds of travel and adventure were planted in Hillel's heart the ⁴⁹moment his friend's family moved to America.

By 1918, in addition to the consequences of the war, the Polish Republic was re-established under the leadership of Pilsudski. After the towns of Lodz and

Kielce were liberated, Hillel returned to Lodz where he continued his education, and was cared for by his aunt Kaila. Discouraged by the fact that his academic progress had been stunted for four years, he decided to become an apprentice tailor. Not only was he shocked by the extent to which his childhood environment had been transformed architecturally, but he was deeply disturbed by the indifference of Jewish workers to religious practices and values. However, influenced by the political ideologies of his workmates and the teaching of "reformed" thought that he had encountered in Jaroczynski School, he eventually conformed to the liberalism which he had formerly scorned. At the age of 19, on gaining his qualifications as a tailor, he agreed to open a workshop with his friend. At this time, Hillel fell in love with Reisele, the sister of his associate. However, due to her mother's disapproval of the relationship, Hillel decided to discuss his intention of imminent marriage with a rabbi who in turn rectified the family tension by granting his supreme approval of the relationship.

In an attempt to avoid military service, Hillel decided to flee from Poland with a companion without informing anyone. His intention, however, was to inform Reisele as soon as he was settled and for her to join him in due course. After leaving a note on his father's gravestone, where his family would gather the next day to commemorate the anniversary of his death, he paid 15 dollars to be smuggled across the German border in a hay cart. Their driver left the stowaways in a wooded area from where they began their cautious and apprehensive walk towards the nearest town of Bresla. Here, they spent the night with a Jewish cobbler, whose address they had been given in Lodz, before traveling in a fourth class carriage by train to Berlin the following morning.

On arrival in Berlin, the two companions separated, never to meet again. Hillel traveled on by underground to his aunt's house where he spent the night. His adventures were set to continue as he was awakened by police officers invading the house in search of his uncle who, to Hillel's surprise, was a renowned thief - suspected of having orchestrated a burglary in the vicinity! Hillel, caught without identification, was arrested, brought before a German tribunal and sentenced to two weeks in prison, on condition that he left Germany on his release. After serving his time, he returned to his aunt's house to collect the jacket in which he had hidden his money. Not only did he discover that the house was empty, but also that his money has been stolen from the concealed pocket! For one week, he wandered aimlessly around the streets of Berlin until he remembered that he had noted the address of one of his neighbors from Lodz who had married a Jewish girl from Berlin and had settled there as a tailor. He contacted ⁵⁰him immediately and was instantly hired as a tailor to work in his business. Hillel, however, did not remain long enough to receive his first paycheck. On catching a glimpse of a policeman, whom he

recognized from prison, passing by the workshop window, he panicked and rushed to the station where he caught the next train to Liege.

He arrived in Liege after successfully avoiding confrontation with customs authorities at the Belgian border, and decided to travel to Brussels to meet with his aunts in Anvers. He spent nearly one year working as a tailor in the suburbs of this industrial town before resuming his travels. For a second time, he left without informing anyone and proceeded to Quievrain where he journeyed by train across the French border to Valenciennes, arriving in Paris at the end of a cold November in 1925. He systematically made his way to the "Pletzel," a predominantly Jewish community, where he believed he could settle permanently. Hillel's hopes were harshly disillusioned when the contact address he had been given in Anvers proved to be incorrect. After spending one night in a hotel, which somewhat exceeded his budget, he decided to sleep rough, in the Parisian metro. He then spent his days strolling along the streets of Paris, searching for individuals bearing a vague resemblance to the photograph of his contact, Leiser Sztulman. Events appeared to turn in his favor as he eventually stumbled upon Leiser who invited him to his hotel room, accompanied him to a restaurant and offered to cover his financial needs until he obtained suitable employment.

Within a short time, Hillel succeeded in finding a well-paid post in a tailor's workshop. With his newfound friends and colleagues, he enjoyed dining and frequenting the most popular dance venues in Paris. However, freedom in his dream city was short-lived. On one occasion, as he returned from a dance, he was approached by a police officer and asked for identification. After spending one night in the police station, he was accompanied to the Foreign Affairs Office where he was advised to leave the country within eight days. Happy and settled in Paris, Hillel had no intention of leaving; instead, he moved to a different hotel and returned to his original post. In fear of being traced once more by the police, he resolved to lodge with a Jewish family in the area. In 1926 Hillel was eventually caught up in the wide-scale arrest of illegal Jews and it is at this point that he was forced to choose between expulsion to Poland and signing up as a member of the French Legion.

His desire to become a fully-fledged French citizen and subsequent decision to join the French Legion, led him on a series of further adventures. From Marseille, he was sent to the high plain of Sidi-Bel-Abbes, the nucleus of the Foreign Legion in Algeria. For many years, Hillel designed and made army uniforms, while at the same time enjoying the company of his friends and lapping up the pleasant atmosphere of Sidi-Bel-Abbes. In a neighboring workshop, Hillel established a friendship with Iorga, a Romanian orphan, adopted by a Jewish family, who was able to relate to Hillel's cultural and linguistic background. Iorga unexpectedly deserted his job and disappeared only to meet Hillel 26 years later under rather different circumstances.

Five years after his enrolment to the Foreign Legion, Hillel obtained French nationality. However his intention to return to France and marry Reisele was thwarted by Reisele's family. Upon learning of Hillel's involvement with the Legion in North Africa, they formally opposed their daughter's departure. Hillel painfully accepted that he would never see his first love again. His suffering was soon to be alleviated as he began to frequent a bakery where he met and fell in love with Adeline, a young Spanish waitress. He was captivated by her smile and the simplicity of her heart. Although Hillel barely believed in God at this stage, he strongly valued and maintained his Jewish identity. Therefore, when Clemence, a Jewish dressmaker in the Legion, simultaneously expressed her desire to marry Hillel, he was torn between love and reason. At first, he chose to fulfill his obligations as a Jew, attempting to avoid Adeline by pretending to be in mourning for a deceased uncle. However, unable to suppress his growing feelings for her, he eventually approached her parents, who accepted his request for their daughter's hand in marriage.

Shortly after the wedding, Adeline's mother joined a Protestant, evangelical church. Hillel recalls how she was bubbling with joy, love and enthusiasm for her faith and consequently invited an English pastor to pronounce a blessing on her daughter's relationship with Hillel. In the meantime, Adeline held strongly to her Catholic beliefs, praying fervently to saints and wooden statues, much to Hillel's disapproval. One day, Adeline's mother invited Rene Bloch, a pastor and Messianic Jew, to their home. Considering him a traitor, Hillel refused to identify any common ground with him, remaining adamant that one cannot profess to be a Christian while advocating Jewish heritage. When Hillel questioned Rene Bloch on the purpose and frequency of his visits, he revealed his desire for Hillel to understand that Jesus is the Messiah of both Jews and non-Jews. Furthermore, he explained that Christ's teachings on true discipleship producing good fruit proved how the so-called Christians, who committed criminal acts against the Jews, were not genuine disciples of this Messiah. In order to appease Bloch's incessant "preaching," Hillel insincerely confessed that Jesus was the Messiah. To Hillel's great surprise and amusement, Rene Bloch prayed for him, equipped him with a New Testament in Yiddish, accompanied him to Protestant church services and paid for him to attend an Evangelical Assembly meeting in Switzerland.

Hillel's original opinion of the "ignorant" Christians of his childhood began to dissolve as he encountered real believers with a great admiration for Jewish people, an in-depth knowledge of the scriptures, a deep joy and a genuine love for people, demonstrated in their kindness and willingness to pray for one other. Hillel recognized that the consistency of their behavior, even in the midst of trial and difficulty, could not have been achieved by human means. This realization, combined with his recent discovery of Jesus in the New Testament, led him to make a personal commitment to his Messiah. Shortly afterwards,

Adeline shared this experience and similarly was renewed by her faith in Jesus Christ.

In the meantime, Hillel was concerned about the reaction of his parents to his newfound faith and decided to convey the news in writing. However, with the outbreak of war, he did not receive a reply. Only later, to his immense grief, was he to learn of the extermination of his entire family in a Nazi concentration camp. Hillel returned to Sidi-Bel-Abbes, from where he was sent to Saida for military training. Here, he gained permission to hold church services in a vacant Protestant church. During the 1940 Armistice, Hillel was demobilized and immediately found employment in a tailor's workshop. However, two years later, he was sent to Kasserine in Tunisia where the battle against the Germans intensified. After the capitulation of the German army in May 1943, Hillel was employed in mine clearing operations. The dangerous nature of his work only strengthened his appreciation of the reality of God's peace, presence and promises in all circumstances.

Travels of a Witnessing Jew: Jews and the New Covenant

After the Second World War, Hillel's attempts to establish himself as a tailor in Sidi-Bel-Abbes and Morocco were thwarted by economic instability. As a result, he was forced to leave his family in Algeria in search of employment in Casablanca. The first stages of his new life as a follower of Jesus the Messiah were not without trials. Despite the friendliness and generosity of his fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, Hillel suffered in silence over his inability to express his underlying Jewish identity. His loneliness was enhanced by feelings that he was the only one to have challenged centuries of Jewish tradition. However he soon met a kindred spirit, Leibj Feldman, a leather craftsman, Polish Messianic Jew and former legionnaire, who shared Hillel's sensitivity to his cultural background.

Following the First World War, Leibj's grandfather, a profoundly religious man, had returned to his family in Warsaw. From a young age, Leibj studied Jewish writings with his grandfather until his father opposed the studies as "indoctrination." Consequently, Leibj began to attend dances and social events with his brothers. However he was not satisfied by such activities and plunged into the study of philosophical writings which led him further into despair. He chose to travel to Dantzic, where he stayed in a hostel owned by evangelical Christians, some of whom were Jews. Here he attended conferences, Bible studies, engaged in discussion and began to read the New Testament in Yiddish. However in spite of his comfortable situation in Belgium, Leibj remained in a state of depression which drove him to consider death as the only escape. He opted for a noble death, rather than commit suicide, and joined the French Legion which sent him to Sid-Bel-Abbes. Disgusted by the immorality of the legionnaires, he decided to escape, only to be arrested and imprisoned. His

time in prison allowed him to read and meditate on God's Word. The judge passed a lenient verdict and, as a disciplinary measure, Leibj was sent to construct roads for the army in the mountains. It was during this time that he developed an awareness of the reality of his weakness, that the Almighty God became man, offering a sacrifice sufficient to overcome all human weakness. Leibj's life was radically transformed and his depression was healed as he recognized Jesus as a fulfillment of God's promises in the Old Testament and accepted Him as his Messiah and Savior. When Hillel was reunited with Leibj, more than 15 years later, it was hard for him to imagine that this enthusiastic, humorous man, happily married with 3 children, had once been in spiritual turmoil.

Disillusioned by his work in Casablanca, Hillel returned to Siddi-Bel-Abbes where he established a successful home business. During this time, Leibj persuaded him to engage in a joint ministry, bringing the New Testament in Hebrew to their fellow Jews. Hillel eventually agreed, trusting in God to provide his needs, and moved with his family to Leibj's home in the town of Meknes. The lifestyle of the Jewish people in Morocco, and the friendly atmosphere and community spirit, reminded Hillel of his childhood experiences at Lodz. The public reaction to their ministry, however, was somewhat mixed, ranging from lively, intimate discussions, gratitude and genuine interest, to scornful remarks, suspicion, refusal and anger. At the beginning of the 1950's, Hillel and Leibj decided to buy a camping car in which they traveled around North Africa, transporting New Testaments and distributing them at town and community events. In the midst of the political unrest and suffering in Africa at that time, they continued to visit villages and towns, presenting the gospel of Jesus the Messiah to the Jewish people and trusting in God's unfailing love and protection.

On their arrival in Tunisia, they encountered a young Jew, Victor Smadja. Victor had come to faith in Jesus through a youth camp, organized by an American in Tunisia. After graduating from Emmaus Bible College in Switzerland and studying Hebrew in Israel, Victor had returned to Tunisia to marry Suzy. He finally settled in Israel with his young wife, where they became involved in a Messianic Assembly in Jerusalem. Here, both Jews and non-Jews gathered to worship the Living God of Israel, Jesus the Messiah.

From Tunisia, they proceeded to Algeria. Hillel recalls one particular instance when a shopkeeper reluctantly accepted Hillel's offer of a Bible, throwing it indifferently into a corner. Little did he realize that it would later be discovered by a young man, Paul Ghennassia, who, intrigued by the witness of Christians in his town and their prayers⁵⁴ for his sick wife, searched the Bible for evidence that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. After coming to faith in the Messiah, he acted as pastor in a large Pentecostal church in St Raphael and eventually established the "T'moignage Messianique au Peuple d'Israel" in

1964. Shortly afterwards, he planted a Messianic Assembly in Paris where Jews and non-Jews continue to gather to worship Christ.

In order to establish more frequent contact with her Spanish friends, Adeline moved to Tangier with the family, providing a more stable base from which Hillel could embark on his journeys. Hillel decided to return to Paris with Leibj. They continued distributing Hebrew/French New Testaments in Alsace and Lorraine, Strasbourg, Brussels and Switzerland. However, the times of discouragements and struggles were counterbalanced by precious glimmers of encouragement.

On his return to Tangier, Hillel was overjoyed to be reunited with his dear Adeline and soon became involved in her ministry to the young girls of the town. He soon discovered that two girls in the group were daughters of Iorga, his tailor partner who had escaped from the Legion in Sidi-Bel-Abbes! One day, upon entering a tailor's shop which carried the Jewish surname, Goldstein, he was amazed to recognize Iorga. After deserting the French Legion, Iorga had fled to Spain where he had joined the Spanish army. During the Civil War in 1936, his Jewish friend, Goldstein, had been killed beside him. Iorga was forced to leave Goldstein on the front line, hurriedly removing the personal and identification papers from his friend's pockets. On liberation from the Spanish army, Iorga moved to Tangier in Morocco. It was then that he decided to adopt the identity of his friend, integrate into the Jewish community and establish a dressmaker's shop. Even his Jewish wife and children were not aware of his true identity.

One of Hillel's favorite journeys was his excursion to Spanish-speaking Morocco where he distributed bilingual Spanish/Hebrew New Testaments. However, this work was also not free of difficulty. In the town of Tetouan, the Bibles were burnt on the streets and Hillel was once again arrested and detained in a police station for one night. The trials culminated in a tragic road accident on the mountain tracks of Northern Morocco when a drunken lorry driver overtook Hillel's car, pushing it off the road, killing Mayer Barkey, knocking his wife and Adeline unconscious, and leaving Hillel with a permanent leg injury. Nevertheless, Hillel adamantly continued the mission work to which he was called. In May 1957, he accompanied Leibj on a journey to Spain. Here, the greatest obstacle to their mission work was the polarization of Christians and Jews, which had resulted from a dark history of conflict and bitterness. For a Spanish Jew to accept a New Testament required great effort, given the fact that their ancestors had sacrificed their lives for the Jewish faith. Hillel and Leibj decided to concentrate their efforts on evangelical Christians in Barcelona, attempting to break down⁵⁵ the misunderstandings between Christians and Jews by preaching on the history of the Jewish exile from Egypt in the Old Testament. During one of their meetings, a young Christian introduced Hillel and Leibj to Rodrigo, an old man, descendant of a Jewish

family, converted to Catholicism during the Inquisition. After discussion and prayer with Hillel, Rodrigo came to recognize Jesus as the Jewish Messiah. Realizing that faith in Jesus Christ unites both Jews and Christians, he no longer experienced the shame of being a Jew among Christians or a Christian among Jews. Instead, he lived with the assurance that it was possible to be one or the other without giving up his Jewish identity and faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Hillel returned to Tangier in 1960 and remained there until 1963. He undertook his last missionary journey in Africa in 1963 when his realization that the Jewish population was being increasingly threatened and in steep decline, led him to return to France. On arrival in Marseille, he envisaged using a refuge center which had no director as a shelter for expatriates from North Africa. This centre had formerly been established by the deceased Rene Bloch. Hillel, realizing that he did not possess the administrative capacity to manage the center, decided to bring the issue to the committee director in Alsace. Here, he stayed with a young couple – Jacques Guggenheim and his wife, Reine.

Like Hillel, Jacques had been born into a Jewish family. However his discovery of the gospel began at a young age when he stayed with a Christian family in Switzerland. Although he maintained that “Christians had stolen the Jewish heritage,” he was nevertheless touched by their love for the Bible, the warmth of their welcome, their profound joy, the Biblical teaching he received and the words inscribed in a Bible given to him: “By your birth you are son of Abraham and by faith in Jesus you are even more ... Christians are only sons of Abraham by adoption.” However, he soon lost his enthusiasm for the Bible when he returned to his home. Instead, he entered into the world of fine art and painting where he simultaneously dabbled in the occult and philosophy. He eventually fell ill in Italy and was hospitalized. On being discharged from hospital, Jacques returned to Nancy, in France, where he noticed a signpost attached to a public building on which the words, “Jesus is the way, the truth and the life” were written. Intrigued by the message, he entered to listen to the sermon. After much contemplation of the Old and New Testaments, Jacques came to realize that other scribes and prophets of the people of Israel had also believed in Jesus the Messiah. It was at this point that he came to faith in Jesus as his personal Savior. He went on to study theology and to preach in churches, leading Christians to an awareness of the Jewish roots of Christianity, the uncomfortable situation of Jews in the church and the necessity of being attentive to Jewish needs after so many years of persecution. In 1975, he became director of the Messianic charity and paper, “Le Berger d’Israel,” until he was recently replaced by a French Messianic Jew, Guy Athia.

When Adeline died painfully of cancer in 1965, Hillel experienced profound solitude and emotional pain. However, he continued to travel, distribute New Testaments and help families in need. In 1972 he married his second wife,

Mireille, in Nice. Mireille shared his vision for mission and accompanied him on his travels. Their missionary work eventually led them to Denmark, home to the numerous refugees expelled from Poland. Here they assisted a Christian organization founded by a Messianic Jew, Nathaniel Hirsch, by bringing practical aid to the refugees.

Hillel embarked on three further journeys which touched him profoundly. The first was Israel, the country of his ancestors. As he traveled through Tel Aviv, Tiberias, Haifa, and Jerusalem, he was greatly encouraged and his sense of isolation considerably lessened as he encountered Jews who shared his faith in the Messiah born in Bethlehem 2000 years earlier. In addition, he traveled to the USA where he was uplifted by the fellowship enjoyed with fellow Messianic Jews in Messiah College, Philadelphia, and by the general growth of Messianic Jewish organizations throughout America. Finally, he returned to Poland where anti-Semitism continued to simmer. After visiting Warsaw and Krakow, he traveled to Lodz where he reminisced about his childhood, Reisele and his departure. However, in spite of his melancholic reflections, he was encouraged and comforted by his faith in Jesus, in the God of Israel who promised to wipe away all tears one day, and in his divine, eternal love which time can never extinguish.

Haim (Haimoff) Bar-David: Apostolic Authority among Jewish Yeshua-Believers

Gershon Nerel*

Among the pioneers of the modern revival of a Messianic presence within Israel linked to Yeshua, the Bar-David family are unique. While not a few preceded them in the difficult witness and walk of Yeshua within reviving national Israel, none had succeeded in striking deep enough roots in the land to transmit their commitment to future generations who would remain in the land faithful to the parental vision.²⁷⁵

Haim Joseph Haimoff was born in the small town of Doupnitza, not far from Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria, 10 May 1905. He was the oldest son of six children, two younger brothers and three sisters. His parents, Joseph and Tamar, of Sephardic origin, were not observant Jews but kept Jewish traditions. His father, a wealthy tobacco merchant, was a free thinker who served as the president of the Jewish Community for nearly 15 years. Long before school age, Haim happily joined his father in *Selichot* – early morning prayers offered in the synagogue a month prior the Feast of Trumpets, so called New Year.²⁷⁶

When Haimoff was 13 his father sent him to an American College, conducted by the Congregational Church, in the nearby town of Samokov. There for the first time young Haimoff came in contact with the New Testament. “It impressed me very much,” he wrote in one version of his brief autobiographies.²⁷⁷ But because the curriculum of the school was very

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²⁷⁵ Menahem Benhayim, “In Memoriam – Haim (Haimoff) Bar-David,” in *The Hebrew Christian*, vol. 64 (1991), 6.

²⁷⁶ Haim Joseph Haimoff, *My Biography: Since Birth to Faith in Zürich 1923, Plus*, Manuscript in the Private Archive of Gershon Nerel, (= PAGN) n.d., (1969?), 1.

²⁷⁷ H.J. Haimoff, *My Biography*, 1.

extensive, it proved impossible for Haimoff to study the Bible systematically and profoundly. At home they spoke Ladino,²⁷⁸ and in school he studied Bulgarian, French, English, Russian and German. Although he very much liked classical literature and philosophy, both ancient and modern, he complained that something was still lacking. "My soul was hungry for something that I did not know where to find. My world was the world of thought, and I continued reading and seeking."²⁷⁹

After graduating the American College at the age of 17, he continued his studies in the University of Zürich, Switzerland, in the Faculty of Law with its special branch of Social Economics. During two academic years (1923/4 and 1924/5) he took classes in economic theory and practice,²⁸⁰ and focused on legal aspects of business management. These studies actually enabled him to skip military service in Bulgaria.²⁸¹ However, it was in Zürich that Haimoff decided to leave the academic world and to dedicate his entire life to the service of Yeshua. After he carefully read the Sermon on the Mount he realized that here he had found the treasure in the field. Decades later he wrote in his testimony:

*What I found in this wonderful Sermon and in the New Testament I could not find in the whole of classical literature and in all the philosophical systems. I knelt and prayed to the God of my fathers. I was filled with the Holy Ghost who convinced me beyond any doubt that Christ was the Savior and in the New Testament was the truth. I had no more any interest in continuing my studies in the university. I wanted to know Christ deeper and deeper and serve Him by proclaiming His Gospel to my people. After four semesters, God helped me in stopping my studies. Only one year more I could get my doctorate in Political Economy. But I was not anxious for that since I did not intend to make any use of it.*²⁸²

At home in the beginning his father did not make any objections to his faith in Yeshua. At the time Haimoff was his father's attorney and chief treasurer. They had in their tobacco workshop about 250 daily workers, mostly women, besides technical staff and clerks. Yet when the father saw that for his son the spiritual matters were indeed serious and deep, he told Haimoff that he could

²⁷⁸ *Ladino* is a Spanish Jewish dialect, also known as 'Judeo-Spanish' or 'Spaniolish', a form of *Castilian* with an admixture of Hebrew elements. Ladino spread after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492. Like Yiddish, it is written in Hebrew characters.

²⁷⁹ H.J. Haimoff, *My Biography*, 1.

²⁸⁰ *Testatbuch für Herrn stud. jur. Haim Haimoff aus Sofia*, (Certificate of Accomplished Studies), Universität Zürich, from 12 November. 1923 to 27 April 1925. Matrikelnummer 29776. This document includes the signatures of the university professors, PAGN.

²⁸¹ *Zeugnis z. H. der Königl. Militärbehörden in Bulgarien*, Universität Zürich, Testifying that Haimoff enrolled to the university on 16 October 1923. The document was signed on 9 July 1925, PAGN.

²⁸² H.J. Haimoff, *My Biography*, 2. He repeated that story verbally in private and assembly meetings.

believe whatever he wished, but there was no need to go to church or speak to everybody about Yeshua. This Haimoff could not accept. So by the end of May, 1928 he left family and home and traveled to the land of Israel, which he believed was the only divinely appointed place for Jews to live.

Student, Laborer and Missionary in Mandatory Palestine

Haimoff went to Jerusalem. There he contacted the American Church of the "Christian and Missionary Alliance" (C&MA) located on 55 Prophets Street. He was told that they had a special department for work among the Jews, carried out about 400 meters down the road, on 56 Prophets Street. Haimoff met Leigh Irish, the missionary in charge, who told him that the C&MA had a Bible School in Bethlehem. Its official name was "The Bible Training Institute of the C&MA – Men's Department" (BTI). This was what Haimoff was looking for.²⁸³ He registered and paid the fees for the whole year.²⁸⁴ His parents came several times from Europe to take him back, but he declined. He stayed till he graduated in 1932.

After he finished his studies at the BTI, Haimoff worked in Mandatory Palestine as a daily laborer in agriculture and as teacher. He worked in the *Pardesim* (orange groves) of the Sharon plains, often in the citrus fields around Magdiel, near Netanya, as well as in banana plantations, and gave private lessons. He was ready to do everything to support himself and remain in the land. Occasionally Haimoff went for short visits to Bulgaria to convince his family to settle in the land of Israel, but because of the difficulty liquidating their real estate, this did not materialize. Eventually Haimoff returned to the land by himself.²⁸⁵ In 1937 he wrote a bilingual pamphlet, in English and Hebrew, under the name H. Ben-Joseph. It was entitled "Does God Have a Son – What Says the Old Testament."²⁸⁶ In this booklet Haimoff confessed that as a teenager in gymnasium he was greatly impressed by the New Testament, but

²⁸³ M.A. Butterfield, "Jewish Department", in *Palestine and Arabian Mission of the Christian and Missionary Alliance - Annual Report for 1928*, Jerusalem 1929, 37.

²⁸⁴ The principal of the school when Haimoff enrolled in 28 Nov 1928, was Charles H. Shaw. The total school fees for 1928-29 were twenty Palestine Pounds and 375 mils. Receipt no. 37. PAGN.

²⁸⁵ H.J. Haimoff, "From Bulgaria to Jerusalem", in *Salvation* (Organ of the American Association for Jewish Evangelism, Winona Lake, Indiana), vol. 9, January 1955, pp. 9-10. It should be noted that the date of birth mentioned in this article (27 April 1905) is mistaken. The correct date (10 May 1905) appears on the gravestone which is at Yad-Hashmona.

²⁸⁶ H. Ben Joseph, *Haomnam Yesh Ben Le'Elohim – Ma Omer Tanach Odot Zot?*, Living Waters Printing Press, P.O. Box 621, Jerusalem 1937 (10 pages in English and 6 pages in Hebrew). The publisher, C.A. Gabriel, was an enthusiastic pro-Jewish Arab Christian, who between 1928-1935 was in charge of the C&MA Jewish work.

there was one thing only that did not allow him to fully accept Christ: "He called Himself the Son of God; and if the Son, then God Himself. At once I remembered the first commandment of God 'Thou shall have no other gods before me', and I trembled before the thought of taking such a step without fully understanding it."²⁸⁷ Later on, he described how he became acquainted with the Old Testament and understood the unique plurality of the Godhead through the word *Elohim*. He particularly referred to the Sonship of Yeshua as related to the verse "The Lord has said to Me, You are My Son, today I have begotten You" (Ps 2:6-7). His conclusion was that the Word of God does not have only one passage about God having a Son, but a richness of texts revealing this truth. Haimoff never doubted the issue of the full divinity of Yeshua, still a stumbling-block for so many Jews, even for certain Messianic Jews. Throughout his lifetime, and frequently in his teaching, Haimoff quoted the verse "For it pleased the Father that in Him (Yeshua) all the fullness should dwell" (Col 1:19).

During the Second World War Haimoff again visited his family in Bulgaria. In Sofia in 1942 he married a second-generation Hebrew Christian girl named Rachel (Raschely or Schelly). They managed to escape the Nazis in January 1944 and came to Palestine/Eretz-Israel via Turkey and Lebanon. In Jerusalem Haimoff approached the *House of Seekers After the Truth (Beit Dorshe Emet)* located on 56 Prophets Street, where the C&MA had conducted its work among the Jews. The American Mission desperately needed a local helper, so they immediately employed Haimoff and his wife as local workers in their Jewish department.²⁸⁸ The Americans reported as follows: "Without overstatement we can say that the return of this brother after these years of Nazi persecutions was one of the minor miracles of Modern Missions – and perfectly timed."²⁸⁹

The compound of the *House of Seekers After the Truth*, well known for its simple *Tin Tabernacle*,²⁹⁰ was the residence of Haimoff and his family (1944-1947), as well as his working place. In the reading room he talked with visitors about his faith in Yeshua and also served as the librarian of the small

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 3-4

²⁸⁸ The C&MA 'Second Quarterly Executive Committee', Feb. 23, 1944, in *Executive Committee Minutes Book*, Jerusalem C&MA Office, (Jan. 1927-Apr. 1944), 580; 586.

²⁸⁹ "A New Program for Palestine", in W.F. Smalley, ed., *Alliance Missions in Palestine, Arab Lands and Israel (1890-1970)*, N.Y. 1971, mimeographed, 384.

²⁹⁰ Currently this property belongs to the "Israeli Messianic Assembly" in Jerusalem. See, for example, Gershon Nerel, "The 'House of Seekers After Truth' in Jerusalem: From an American Mission to the 'Messianic Assembly of Israel'", *The Thirteenth World Congress of Jewish Studies*, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, August 2001 (edited article forthcoming).

theological library there.²⁹¹ As the Alliance evangelist to the Jews, he also spoke in regular meetings that were held each Saturday afternoon or evening.²⁹²

Following the United Nations "Partition Resolution" of the land in November 1947, the security and political situation in Palestine deteriorated rapidly. Violence was worse than the pattern of the Arab riots of 1936-39. Jews and Arabs were attacking each other and the situation was precarious. Thus, for example, when on his way from the *Katamon* residential area to the American Church, Haimoff was attacked by an infuriated Arab with a revolver, who shot at him four times from a distance of three feet.²⁹³ The first two shots missed him; the third shot hit his head just above his eye causing profuse bleeding but not a dangerous wound. The fourth shot pierced his shoulders, grazed his skin and the bullet lodged in the pad of his coat. He grabbed the hands of the man, knocked him down in the struggle and then from every direction shots rang out toward him, yet miraculously he was not hit. Later on he was taken by an ambulance and his wound was treated. He was then settled with his entire family in the basement of the American Church.²⁹⁴

The Watershed of 1948

The British wanted to pull out as quickly as possible, and their withdrawal from Palestine was fixed for 1 May 1948. The government started to prepare the evacuation of their people. All the C&MA expatriate missionaries also left the country, except for Mrs. Bernice Gibson. In those days she wrote:

*The position of the Hebrew Christians is becoming more difficult every day. Now they are forced to leave the Arab quarters and come to the Jewish quarters, where they are more exposed to the persecuting elements of Jewry. With the evacuation of those who have employed them and the increased pressure of the Jewish organizations, their position is fast becoming humanly impossible.*²⁹⁵

²⁹¹ See, for example, Gershon Nerel, "'House of Seekers After Truth' in Jerusalem: A Forerunner of the 'Israeli Messianic Jewish Assembly'", with photograph of the "Tin Tabernacle", in *Kivun*, vol. 25, fall 2001, 14 (in Hebrew).

²⁹² Carolyn F. Irish with Elizabeth Irish-Wright, *Sharing Good Tidings in Zion*, Columbus, Georgia 1995, 82-84; 116.

²⁹³ A brief report was published in the daily *Davar* on December 30th, 1947 (no. 6828), p. A (Hebrew).

²⁹⁴ Detailed report from Rev. Ralph Fried, Chairman, C&MA Church, Jerusalem, December 31st, 1947, to Rev. A. C. Snead, Area Director, p. 4, in C&MA 'A.B. Simpson Historical Archives', Colorado Springs, Colorado, USA.

²⁹⁵ B.C. Gibson, "In Troubled Jerusalem", in *The Alliance Weekly*, vol. 83, # 10, March 6, 1948, 152. Bernice Gibson (1892-1980) served with the C&MA in the land of Israel in the years 1931-1957. She was the editor of the first Messianic hymnal in Hebrew to contain both words and music.

Alongside the preparations for the evacuation of the British forces, the authorities, together with the Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem, and the International Hebrew Christian Alliance, launched a quasi-military action to evacuate all Hebrew Christians from the land. The fear was not merely that the small group of Jewish believers in Yeshua (JBY) be trapped between Jews and Arabs, but particularly that the JBY would be harassed and persecuted in the anticipated Jewish State.

“Operation Mercy,” or “Operation Grace” as it was also called, was the name given by the British to evacuate the Palestinian Hebrew Christians through the Haifa seaport to England. On 7 May 1948, a group of about 40 JBY were escorted by police armored cars to *Kalandiah* aerodrome, north of Jerusalem, from where they were flown to Haifa and boarded the same day the S.S. “Georgic,” which sailed for Liverpool on 8 May.²⁹⁶ There were about 80 Hebrew Christians, most of them from Jerusalem, Jaffa and Haifa.²⁹⁷ Haim Haimoff and his family, as well as about a dozen other JBY in the land were also offered to evacuate via the “Georgic.” Haimoff rejected the option of retreat, and took his decision as a step of faith in God who promised to fulfill his prophecies of restoration and redemption to Israel. Thus, alongside a few other JBY, like the Ostrovsky family in Jaffa²⁹⁸ and the Ben-Meirs in Haifa,²⁹⁹ the Haimoffs remained in the land during Israel’s War for Statehood. In fact Haimoff volunteered for the *Mishmar Ha’am* (People’s Guard), and took part in the civilian activities “defending the capital of Israel in the War of Independence, and esteemed for that.”³⁰⁰

The departure/evacuation of most Hebrew Christians was a significant watershed in the history of JBY in the land. Hebrew Christian communities and fellowships of the Mandatory period simply ceased to exist. “Operation Grace” caused rupture and discontinuity of grouping structures among JBY. It took decades for new congregations to develop. Yet the trauma of “Operation Grace”

²⁹⁶ Rev. Hugh Jones (Christ Church, Jerusalem) to Rev. C.H. Gill, (London, Church Missions to Jews), [=CMJ], 10th May, 1948, in *Bodleian Library*, Oxford, Department of Western Manuscripts, CMJ Miscellaneous Papers 581, (7pp).

²⁹⁷ “Meet Georgic Liverpool with Cash”, Copy of cable dated 3rd May, 1948, from Canon C. Witton- Davis, to Rev. R. C. Macanna, London (CMJ), in *St. Antony’s College*, Oxford, Middle East Center, Private Papers, Box J&EM, LXXII/5.

²⁹⁸ Cf. Menahem Benhayim, “Two Who were Twice Redeemed”, in *The Hebrew Christian*, vol. 48, # 3, Autumn 1975, 113.

²⁹⁹ Cf. Gershon Nerel, *Messianic Jews in Eretz-Israel (1917-1967): Trends and Changes in Shaping Self-Identity*, Ph.D. Dissertation, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1996, 114-123 (Hebrew).

³⁰⁰ An official certificate which solemnly testifies to this was given to H. Haimoff in 1964, on the occasion of the State of Israel celebrating its 16th year of independence (no. 00034). This is in the family residence living room, in 28 Arlozoroff St., Ramat-Gan.

in fact also had positive consequences. It enabled, step-by-step, formulation of new ways of thinking, new frameworks of traditions and self-determination of JBY—independent of the historic churches and of the missionary organizations in Israel. Thus, around the leadership of those few who did remain in the land in 1948, reinforced by new believers who moved into Israel through the massive waves of *aliyah*, gradually a new local generation developed. The Hebrew language became the common basis for the newly born Israeli assemblies of JBY. The remaining experienced leadership of the Mandatory times actually aimed towards organizational freedom from the established churches. They used the fresh linguistic tools of Hebrew to freely define their own theology, liturgy and identity.

Independent Evangelist in the State of Israel

During the year and a half after the Jewish State was born in 15 May 1948, Haimoff continued his missionary work at the Jewish department of the *House of Seekers After Truth*, not far from the American Gospel Church in Jerusalem. Moreover, in the fall of 1949 the C&MA conferred upon him the “Ordination to the Ministry of Jesus Christ.”³⁰¹ Thus occasionally he was also called “Pastor Haim Joseph Haimoff.”³⁰² Yet by the end of 1949, after collaborating for nearly six years, Haimoff informed his superior in Jerusalem, Leigh Irish, that as of 1 January 1950, he would stop working for the C&MA.³⁰³ He felt that his hands were tied by the mission with regard to establishing a new Israeli non-denominational congregation. Bernice Gibson felt the same way. She became a freelance worker, and Mr. Irish complained, “her work does not build up the Alliance because she is not definite in advising converts to come to the Alliance services.”³⁰⁴

In 1950 Haimoff became the missionary of the “American Board of Missions to the Jews” (ABMJ), and was made responsible for managing their Jerusalem branch. This veteran missionary organization had its world headquarters in New York City, with Joseph Hoffman Cohn as General Secretary, and it was

³⁰¹ Rev. Leigh F. Irish, C&MA Jerusalem Board Representative, to Mr. Haim Haimoff, Jerusalem, Sept. 12, 1949. Copy of letter at C&MA Archives, Colorado Springs, Colorado. See also Rev. Leigh F. Irish to Rev. Milton Lindberg, 3916 Rosevelt Rd., Chicago, Ill., Jerusalem Nov. 4, 1949. Copy at C&MA archives, CO.

³⁰² See, for example, A.C. Snead, “In Israel and Palestine”, in *The Alliance Weekly*, vol. 84, # 40, Oct. 1, 1949, 634.

³⁰³ Cablegram of Rev. L. F. Irish to Rev. A. C. Snead, Jerusalem 26 Dec 1949, and letter of the same dated Dec. 27, 1949. In the C&MA Archives in Colorado Springs, CO.

³⁰⁴ W. M. Smalley, *Alliance Missions in Palestine*, *op. cit.*, 503.

officially registered in Israel as a foreign corporation.³⁰⁵ The constitution of the corporation was composed in Hebrew and contained seven clauses, openly stating that its purpose was to “introduce the Word of God (Old and New Testaments) among the Jews in Israel.”³⁰⁶ However, only three years later, Haimoff left the *ABMJ* and joined a relatively new mission led by Dr. A.B.Machlin who was the director of the conservative “American Association for Jewish Evangelism” (AAJE), based in Chicago. De facto the *AAJE* split from the *ABMJ*, which was its parent organization. Machlin was also the first editor of *Salvation*, a monthly magazine which carried the motto “Salvation is of the Jews,” published since 1946.³⁰⁷

From the outset, Haimoff had made it very clear to both leadership and readership of the *AAJE* that he had every intentions of working freely with no theological or other dictates. The content of his ultimate position about that was published in *Salvation*, as follows:

*The cooperation which I referred to in my letter to you has to do with the freedom to attend meetings in different churches or missions and to preach or witness there if invited to do so; and the perfect freedom to use New Testaments, tracts or other Christian literature which I might find helpful to the spiritual enlightenment of the people I visit. These things ought to be done by my own free will as I am led by the Holy Spirit.*³⁰⁸

Haimoff showed much enthusiasm in his missionary work, both at his home, where many came to visit him, and by traveling throughout the land.³⁰⁹ Quite naturally his home’s large family living room, either in Jerusalem,³¹⁰ in Haifa (1955-1957) or in Ramat-Gan (1958 until today),³¹¹ was turned into a Gospel Hall. Every Shabbat afternoon, or evening, when the meetings were packed also in the corridor, they could hold up to 80 people, including the family members. On Monday afternoons he arranged a Bible class for children, also in his home. Wednesday was his day for traveling around the country.

³⁰⁵ The address of the Israeli Branch, P.O. Box 419, Jerusalem, appeared on the formal letterhead of the organization. In PAGN.

³⁰⁶ The seven clauses dealt with the name of the corporation, its aims, membership, management, sources of income, meetings and amendments. *Constitution of the “American Board of Missions to the Jews” in Israel*, (in Hebrew). In PAGN.

³⁰⁷ Yaakov Ariel, *Evangelizing the Chosen People (Missions to the Jews in America, 1880-2000)*, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill & London 2000, 114-118; 148.

³⁰⁸ H.J. Haimoff, “Jerusalem, Israel”, in *Salvation*, vol. 7, # 5, May 1953, 13.

³⁰⁹ See also “Jewish Evangelism” in *The Wesleyan Methodist*, vol. 112, June 29, 1955, p. (411) 11.

³¹⁰ Haimoff’s residential flat between the years 1950-1954 was at 11 Arlozoroff Street, Rehavia, Jerusalem.

³¹¹ Haim’s widow, Schelly, is still living in the same flat in Ramat-Gan, on 28 Arlozoroff Street. By coincidence the street name in Ramat-Gan was the same as in Jerusalem.

Thus, for example, he regularly visited Lod (Lydda), Ramle, Jaffa and Ibne, where he taught the Bible in Bulgarian. Schelly, his wife, was proving to be a special help in all the meetings, not only in providing solo music, but also in teaching people how to sing spiritual hymns.³¹²

For two years (1957-1958) Haimoff was elected President of the Hebrew Christian Alliance of Israel.³¹³ In those times the Alliance had a "Hebrew Christian Center" in Haifa with a small library,³¹⁴ which was under the auspices of the umbrella organization, The International Hebrew Christian Alliance (IHCA), headquartered in London. Haimoff usually addressed those who gathered there with the saying: "We must be an organism, not an organization." He emphasized the need to focus primarily on the spiritual life of the believers, and at least twice, for example, he strongly rebuked those who introduced into the Alliance attitudes of "divisions, separatism, hatred and gossip."³¹⁵ Then, during 1960-1961 Haimoff became a member of the United Christian Council in Israel (UCCI), representing the AAJE as delegate among about 20 other representatives of different churches, missionary societies and Christian institutions.³¹⁶ He also functioned as a member of the UCCI Executive Committee. There he cooperated with Arab Christians,³¹⁷ and until 1966 attended the annual UCCI conferences.³¹⁸ However, when he realized that the UCCI leaders tended to politicize their activities by involving nationalist Palestinian claims, he decided to leave this group.

Gradually Haimoff became so disappointed with being active within broad organizations and discussing their regulations and constitutions that he withdrew totally from work with corporations and decided to concentrate only on his own congregation, around the nucleus of the members of his large family of six boys and one girl. Haimoff gradually limited his pastoral activities to the greater Tel-Aviv area, avoiding any commitments among JBY on the national level. Consequently, many believers in the land often criticized him as being a separatist and even a "sectarian," because he boldly refused to attend any committee work or join conferences around the country. Yet eventually certain

³¹² H.J. Haimoff, "Jerusalem, Israel", in *Salvation*, vol. 7, #6, June 1953, 10-11. A photograph of the "Bible Class at Ramle" was printed in *Salvation*, vol. 7, #8, August 1953, 3.

³¹³ H.J. Haimoff, "Our Witness in Israel", ms., n.d., (1965?). In PAGN.

³¹⁴ About this "Judenchristliches Zentrum in Haifa" see H.D. Leuner, "Kurze Nachrichten" in *Der Zeuge*, no. 20, Nov. 1958, 31.

³¹⁵ H.J. Haimoff, notes "H.C. Alliance - Haifa", ms., dated January 4, 1958, and June 14, 1958. In PAGN.

³¹⁶ H.J. Haimoff, "Beginning at Jerusalem", in *Salvation*, vol. 15, # 2, February 1961, 5.

³¹⁷ H.J. Haimoff, *ibid*, vol. 16, #1, January 1962, 6-7.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 20, #3, March 1966, 7.

believers also apologized for their criticism. Thus, for example, Rachmiel Frydland, who represented the IHCA in Israel (1961-1965), and then returned to America,³¹⁹ wrote many years later in one of his reports, as follows:

I admitted to Mr. Haimoff, that when I was in Israel as secretary for IHCA, I did not know how to appreciate him and his family as they kept so much to themselves and did not mix with other believers. I asked him sincerely to pardon and forgive me. This he did readily.³²⁰

Focus on the Family and Work with Children

Haimoff and Rachel Haimoff reared their seven children during the “Tzema Years,” times of drastic austerity rations in Israel. People bought basic food with individual coupons and the black market flourished. A polio epidemic broke out and paralyzed many babies and even caused deaths. In her memoirs Rachel explained: “I felt then as if the angel of death was passing over our heads. I recall gathering the children for prayer, and asking the Lord to protect them from this microbe. Praise God, our prayers were answered and they all grew up healthy.”³²¹ Daily the family devoted time to prayer and teaching from Scripture. Usually Haimoff explained Bible passages to the children in the evenings before bedtime and asked them, according to their age, to pray openly. Rachel taught them new songs which they also sang at the Shabbat worship of the congregation meeting in their home. Now those children are transmitting the same habit to more than 40 grandchildren as well as to their great-grandchildren. They also used to pray and give thanks in the name of Yeshua before every meal they had together.

The Haimoffs insisted that their children should attend public school with a Jewish curriculum in the Hebrew language. They refused to send the children to a separate Christian school, which actually did operate in Jaffa, not too far from Ramat-Gan. As a matter of principle, the parents wanted their children to be raised as Jews and therefore integrated into Israeli society, though difficulties were not absent. For example, sometimes their children were mocked by other children and nicknamed “gentiles” or “Christians.” On such occasions the parents prayed with the children and encouraged them to trust the Lord for help and guidance. The home education to fear God and remember him

³¹⁹ See Menahem Benhayim, “The Messianic Movement in Israel – A Personal Perspective (1963-1998)”, in *Mishkan*, vol. 28 (1998), 4-6. The same, with photograph, also in *Kivun*, vol. 10 (1998) 3 (Hebrew).

³²⁰ Rachmiel Frydland, “Israel Minorities: Messianic Jews”, in *The American Messianic Jewish Quarterly*, vol. 64, #1, Winter 1979, 24-25.

³²¹ Gershon Nerel, “Rachel Bar-David: Mother of a Modern Israeli Messianic Jewish ‘Tribe’”, in *The Messianic Jew and Hebrew Christian*, vol. 67, #3 (1994), 68.

everywhere was deeply rooted in the children and gave them a profound consciousness of sin.

In the 1960s Haimoff was active in the formation of a group of young believers in Yeshua in the Tel-Aviv-Jaffa district. The nucleus of this young fellowship came from the children of a few large Hebrew Christian families who believed in the Messiah when they were still in Europe, among them the Herscu and Ball families from Romania, and the Jakobovitsch family from Germany. There were also youngsters of mixed marriages, where only one of the parents was a believer. On Friday evenings Haimoff used to collect with his large car the teenagers to and from the meeting place—usually Beit Immanuel in Jaffa. In the regular fortnightly gatherings they played different games like ping-pong, chess etc., after which they sang hymns and studied the Bible or saw some interesting film.³²² Haimoff frequently taught from Scripture. The group has attracted a few other friends whose parents were not believers. Sometimes the group also met at Haimoff's residence in Ramat-Gan, and the guests brought along guitars and a mandoline, while his boys brought the bass violin and accordion. Along with the piano they had an improvised orchestra.³²³ Similar activities were organized for younger children, those between eight and 13.³²⁴ In the 1970s and the 1980s the young Haimoffs participated in organizing youth camps and contributed as instructors and counselors.³²⁵

The Haimoff parents never developed an identity crisis as Jewish believers in Yeshua, and neither did their children ever doubt their Jewish identity.³²⁶ The children understood that except for their belief in Yeshua and the New Testament, they were no different from their Jewish neighbors. Basically, they kept the Shabbat and the Jewish festivals according to the biblical calendar. In 1973, prior to the Yom-Kippur War, the entire family abandoned the name Haimoff and adopted the Hebraic name Bar-David, as *Davidoff* was part of the ancestral family appellation. From now on the name Haimoff totally

³²² H.J. Haimoff, "Beginning at Jerusalem", in *Salvation*, vol. 19, #8, Sept. 1965, 10.

³²³ H.J. Haimoff, *ibid*, vol. 19, #6, June 1965, 9.

³²⁴ H.J. Haimoff, *ibid*, vol. 20, #1, Jan. 1966, 8. Cf. "Report of Campmeeting at Jerusalem", in *Mount Zion Reporter*, no. 8, Nov. 1965, 5.

³²⁵ H.J. Haimoff, in *Salvation*, vol. 31, #9, Oct. 1977, 10-11.

³²⁶ All seven children of the Haimoffs served in the Israeli Army (IDF), including their daughter. Actually during two wars, the Six-Day-War and the Yom-Kippur War, three of them were serving in the military forces as paratroopers at the same time in the front lines. Every year they went to military reserve duty, and now the grandchildren serve in various units of the Israeli Defence Forces, also as combat officers. In the army, as well as in other walks of society, the Haimoffs openly continue to witness about their personal faith in Yeshua. Haim, as their patriarch, set the model for that. Like their father, the children spoke to their comrades about the prophetic significance of living in Israel, particularly during war times. See Menahem Benhayim, "Hebrew Christians in Modern Israel: Are they Strangers in the Land of Promise?", in *Eternity*, May 1974, 26.

disappeared from the private family records, even from Haim's gravestone; yet it continually appeared beside his photograph published in *Salvation* until April 1986.

Shaping an Indigenous Assembly

For Haimoff it was of utmost importance to establish a local congregation of JBY which would develop independently of non-biblical traditions found within both Church and Synagogue. On the one hand he wholeheartedly welcomed non-Jews who wished to attend his home assembly, but on the other he insisted that the teaching and spiritual direction of the congregation had to be Jewish-minded. Thus, for example, he observed the biblical/Jewish calendar with its seventh-day *Shabbat* and not Sunday. Still he emphasized that the *Shabbat* needed to be kept as Yeshua taught, and not as the rabbis demanded. He also kept the Torah festivals by pointing to their messianic significance according to the New Testament.

Axiomatically, Haimoff taught that the Old and New Testaments are one book, being *the Jewish Scripture*. The New Testament, he underlined, was given by God as a continuation of God's revelation, so the Old and New Testaments form the complete Bible, "a pure Jewish faith and not as some would have us think 'a goyish' (gentile) one. We remain Jews and believe in Yeshua."³²⁷ Interestingly, this statement about the "Jewish Bible, Old and New Testaments" still remains valid as a sharp contrast to the conception of the historical churches that Holy Scriptures are the "Christian Bible."³²⁸ Actually Haim's biblical exegesis was based on the principle that the Old Testament stands as the basis for the New Testament, and that the New Testament provides the key to understanding the Old.

In fact Haimoff by himself conducted the lion's share of the teaching in the congregation. Only rarely did he allow guest-speakers to teach at the Shabbat services, and even then the carefully examined the background of the teacher. As he aged and his boys matured and were baptized—mainly since mid 1970s and on—he directed his own sons to become the teachers in the congregation. They followed in his footsteps and de facto adopted his advice to search and teach Scripture with the aid of the Holy Spirit—without using traditional commentaries. Thus, step by step two of his sons, David and Moshe, replaced their father respectively, each one teaching on alternate Shabbats. In fact during the last decade of Haimoff's life, most of the teaching was done by the two, while Haimoff sat near the speaker and provided, when he thought fit, his

³²⁷ H.J. Haimoff, "Jerusalem, Israel", in *Salvation*, vol. 7, #8, August 1953, 3.

³²⁸ See recently the Vatican document "The Jewish People and their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible", issued by the Pontifical Biblical Commission, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2002.

“polishing remarks,” which included additional points as well as his corrections.

Haimoff strongly rejected the idea that young Israeli believers should acquire theological education in Christian schools abroad. This he expressed constantly in his sermons as well as in private talks. Therefore he objected to sending his own sons to a Bible School overseas, although he was offered to do so gratis. Actually Haimoff was suspicious of the multiform non-biblical indoctrination of the historical churches, especially as many of them were captives of their own denominational heritage and anti-Jewish traditions. Haimoff’s conviction was that a genuine theology needed to grow within the body of believers in the fatherland of the Messianic faith. Often he used to say: “To study the Scriptures in Hebrew, interpreting it through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, focusing on the words of Yeshua and *practicing* that daily – this is the heart of the organism.”³²⁹

Haim’s vision was to establish the infrastructure for an authentic Israeli congregation of JBY, following the paradigm of the early disciples of Yeshua, the simple (not simplistic, as he emphasized) fishermen in Galilee and Judea 2000 years ago. This was his model—the early apostles who did not attend theological seminaries yet entirely relied upon the words of the Messiah and the Spirit, and as faithful servants commenced a powerful new movement.

“We are not talking about leaders but about becoming disciples of Yeshua” he used to emphasize. Therefore over and over he returned to the basic teachings of Yeshua, mainly in the Sermon on the Mount, the parables in the gospels and the issue of being born again.³³⁰ In other words, the congregation itself became de facto the “theological school” for its next generations, without seeking an institutional church ordination or Yeshiva ordination.

Although music, both vocal and instrumental, was a major characteristic of the Haimoff congregation and witness,³³¹ Haimoff rather focused on the teaching and preaching of the Word of God, and strictly limited “musical praise.” He set the structure of the regular Shabbat service within one hour only, with the Bible study in the center. The worship order was as follows: starting with three hymns, and then prayer by one person, in rotation, praying in front of the fellowship, concluding the prayer by all gathered saying the Lord’s Prayer. The focus of the service was 40 minutes of expository teaching, and finally one last hymn and then the benediction. The benediction, for which all stood up, consisted of a combination of both the Aaronic Blessing (Num 6:24-26) and the Apostle’s Blessing (2 Cor 13:13).

³²⁹ See also, for example, H.J. Haimoff, “Beginning at Jerusalem”, in *Salvation*, vol. 31, # 11 Dec. 1977, 9-10.

³³⁰ As also appearing in notes of Haim’s various sermons, mss. form. In PAGN.

³³¹ See, for example, in *Salvation*, vol. 31, # 3, March 1977, 9.

Concerning the Lord's Supper, Haimoff laid the principle of practicing it as a special event in the congregation.³³² Namely, Communion was not a weekly nor monthly event, but rather practiced alongside the major feasts—*Pessach* (Passover), *Shavuot* (Pentecost), Yom Kippur, and Christmas. Actually Haimoff found no justification to observe the feast of Hanukkah, which is based on the Apocrypha, yet he dedicated the regular *Shabbat* service, before or after the 24-25 December, to highlight the incarnation of the Son of God. Even though Christmas is not scriptural, Haimoff used the opportunity to remind the congregation of the fulfillment of the messianic prophecies concerning Immanuel and to express solidarity with the universal body of believers. Occasionally, the Communion of breaking of the *Matzot* (unleavened bread) was also served in the assembly right after the baptism ceremony of a new believer.³³³

While Haimoff focused on the indigenous assembly of believers, he also spoke about the need to maintain small congregations. He did not support the notion of establishing huge mega churches which hold hundreds or thousands of members. Rather he stressed the importance of family sized congregations, locally based and not more than several dozen, in the capacity of an average meeting place. As an example of that, he offered the model of Yeshua himself who gathered only a very small group around himself.

The Written and the Oral Torah

Theologically, Haimoff was a Dispensationalist. He clearly set forth the difference between the old dispensation of the Law of Moses and the new dispensation of grace through Messiah Yeshua. At the same time, however, Haimoff frequently quoted the words of Yeshua, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Torah or the prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill" (Matt 5:17). Haimoff taught that the Pentateuch is still valid for the modern JBY yet with the guidelines and corrections of Yeshua and in his spirit.³³⁴ Consequently Haimoff was not legalistic about the Torah, because the observance of any of the Torah commandments cannot provide forgiveness of sins, salvation and eternal life. Thus, for example, Haimoff naturally advocated the practice of circumcision for Jewish babies, because it was God's plan for the eternal descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Gen 17:10-13). However, this he understood only as a national commandment given to the Hebrews, without

³³² Cf. Per Østerbye, *The Church in Israel*, Studia Missionalia Upsaliensia XV, Glerup 1970, 192. See also 157 n.

³³³ H.J. Haimoff, "Beginning at Jerusalem", in *Salvation*, vol. 27, #2, February 1973, p. 9. Cf. *Ibid.*, vol. 38, #3, March 1984, 7.

³³⁴ H.J. Haimoff, "The Hebrew Christian and the Law of Moses", draft of a sermon, ms., n.d. (1970?), in PAGN.

any credit whatever for salvation, and without requiring it from gentile believers (Acts 15:1-20).

Parallel to that, Haimoff ignored the *Torah she'bealpeh* (Oral Torah), the Torah according to rabbinical traditions and restrictions. In Messiah's economy, he neither deemed relevant the Talmud nor the *Halakha* (practice) of orthodox Judaism. He asks,

*Is there a common interpretation of the Old Testament in the Talmud? For one rabbi says one thing and another something different, and a third expresses yet another opinion, ending up with quite contradictory statements. Isn't that an indication that the Talmud is not an inspired book?*³³⁵

Thus Haimoff taught that while JBY are keeping the *Shabbat*, God did not command lighting *Shabbat* candles or saying blessings upon such candles.³³⁶ Similarly, Haimoff questioned the traditions of the historical churches, including the replacement of *Shabbat* with Sunday, Easter eggs, Christmas trees and Santa Claus. Thus, for example, at an annual conference of the UCCI where the theme of "Revelation and Tradition" was raised, Haimoff addressed the participants saying, "There is great danger of placing on an equal footing the revealed Word of God and tradition, as some churches do, thus making of no effect the commandments of our Lord."³³⁷

Yet, on the other hand, Haimoff did not totally ignore the rabbinic establishment. In a sense even today, the rabbis are still sitting "in Moses' seat" (Matt 23:2), he explained. Consequently JBY may receive some technical services, from their institutions. Such services include, for example, the performance of matrimony ceremonies. In fact five of Haim's children were married at the Tel-Aviv Chief Rabbinat offices, with a formal *Ketubah* (marriage) certificate.³³⁸ Another example would be the operation of authorized *Mohalim*, circumcisers, to perform their work at the *Brit-Mila* (circumcision) ceremonies. Likewise, Haimoff found no reason to object to the use of *Hevrah Kaddisha*, the services of the authorized Jewish Burial Society, and bury the dead in the formal Jewish cemeteries. Obviously, these services may be used when the rabbinical institutions do not turn down such requests of JBY.

We should draw special attention to the significance that Haimoff/Bar-David stressed regarding Christmas. While fully aware that there is no biblical commandment regarding this event, he still used the Christmas season to highlight the climax of human history, the first coming of the Messiah, Son of

³³⁵ H.J. Haimoff, "Beginning at Jerusalem", in *Salvation*, vol. 30, #5, May 1976, 3.

³³⁶ See also, for example, Gershon Nerel, "Observing the Torah according to Yeshua", in *Chai*, Organ of the British Messianic Jewish Alliance, vol. 212 (2001) 4-5.

³³⁷ H.J. Haimoff, "Beginning at Jerusalem", in *Salvation*, vol. 19, #2, Feb. 1965, 9.

³³⁸ About the special occasion of two Haimoff brothers married to two sisters see also Roger Allison, "Congratulations", in *UCCI News*, vol.1, #3, Fall 1970, 20.

God.³³⁹ Haimoff never sanctified Christmas day, and in fact insisted that on this day his children should go normally to kindergarten and school. However, he often spoke about not allowing the feast of *Hannukah* to eclipse the significance of Messiah's birth that brought great salvation into this world. At the same time, however, Haimoff also used to compare two major festivals – Christmas and Passover. His conclusion was that in a sense Passover was “more important” than Christmas, because it was at the cross that Yeshua accomplished his redemptive plan. To support this view, Haimoff mentioned that Yeshua himself gave the commandment to commemorate his death, not his birth.³⁴⁰

Apostolic and Spiritual Authority

Haim Bar-David was not ashamed of calling himself a “fundamentalist believer,” as he literally believed in the absolute truth of the Old and New Testaments, without questioning the inspiration of the Bible and its infallibility.³⁴¹ The guidance of both Scripture and Spirit were his solid foundation and therefore he had no doubt that he possessed no less spiritual authority than Yeshua's first Jewish apostles in the first century.³⁴² At the same time, however, Haimoff explained that it was necessary to prioritize the use of Scripture because not all of the biblical books share the same significance. Hence he taught that the New Testament, and particularly the words of Yeshua, must hold the ultimate and supreme authority regarding the Kingdom of God. This scriptural prioritization, he clarified, was also necessary because life on earth is short and the believers need to focus on the essential parts of the Bible.

Having experienced the Jewish national restoration in *Eretz-Israel*, the land of Israel, Haimoff was fully convinced that he was led by a personal calling of Yeshua to carry out a special responsibility to witness about the Kingdom of God. He strongly held the belief that he and JBY of his own generation shared a much wider theological spectrum than the one that belonged to the first apostles who had lived 20 centuries ago. In his interpretation of Scripture Haimoff demonstrated his deep conviction that he retained a genuine spiritual authorization to contextualize the Bible according the new reality of prophecy being fulfilled during the 20th century. He fully believed that God was behind

³³⁹ See, for example, H.J. Haimoff, “Beginning at Jerusalem”, in *Salvation*, vol. 13, #2, Feb. 1959,7; vol. 16, #3, March 1962, 6; vol. 18, #2, Feb. 1964, 8.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 38, #4, April 1984, 9.

³⁴¹ H.J. Haimoff, *Ibid.*, vol. 39, #9, Oct. 1985, 7.

³⁴² H.J. Haimoff, *Ibid.*, vol. 8, #1, January 1954, 12; cf. *ibid.*, vol. 11, #11, Nov. 1957, 8. See also Gershon Nerel, “Primitive Jewish Christians in the Modern Thought of Messianic Jews”, in S.C. Mimouni & F.S. Jones, eds., in *Le judéo-christianisme dans tous ses états*, Paris 2001, 399-425.

Israel's election and physical restoration in the land. Hence he also believed that God had raised a spiritual leadership among JBY that held full apostolic authority to guide the "Remnant," the first-fruits of the tiny Jewish minority that believed in Yeshua—being "life from the dead" (Rom 11:15).³⁴³

This fresh spiritual and prophetic authority to shepherd modern JBY, Haimoff reasoned, did not require the approval or the legitimization of the historic churches. It came directly from God. Therefore he frequently spoke about the vocation and divine authority of biblical prophets and servants of God like Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah and John the Baptist. Thus, for example, he repudiated the strong arguments of the Roman Catholic Church concerning the existence of *Apostolic Succession* (and authority) only within its own ranks.³⁴⁴ This was completely irrelevant in his theological thinking. Needless to say he also dismissed similar claims "to absorb JBY under evangelical-denominational wings," coming from the Protestant churches.³⁴⁵ In other words, Haimoff/Bar-David understood that Israel's territorial restoration (particularly since 1948) was divinely restored to JBY as was theological hegemony—without the need to get approval of the institutional Church or Synagogue. Essentially this notion was also related to the interpretation of the verse "the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (Luke 21:24), namely that apostolic authority among JBY originates from the biblical canon and is empowered by the Holy Spirit. Actually the same belief was held also by other contemporary JBY like Moshe Ben-Meir and Zeev Kofsmann who lived in other parts of the land during almost the same period.³⁴⁶

Biblical Zionism, according to Haimoff, was leading towards the spiritual revival of the Jews through Yeshua (Zach 12:10; Rev 1:7). Hence he had no doubt that he already had been living in the End-Times, with the imminent return of Yeshua. Jerusalem being Israel's capital city was a clear sign for Haimoff that soon Yeshua would come exactly there and "will fill it with the 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel harping with their harps songs of praise and adoration."³⁴⁷ So when he was earnestly looking for the Millennial reign of

³⁴³ Haim systematically expressed these views along his many sermons and Bible classes.

³⁴⁴ See, for example, *Catéchisme de l'Église Catholique*, Paris 1992, clauses 77; 815; 1209; 1576. Cf. James G. McCarthy, *The Gospel According to Rome*, Eugene, Oregon 1995, 263-339.

³⁴⁵ Based upon personal talks with Haim and David Bar-David. See also recently, for example, Gershon Nerel, "Hebrew Christian Associations in Ottoman Jerusalem: Jewish Yeshua-Believers Facing Church and Synagogue", in *Revue des Études juives*, 161 (3-4), 2002, 483-509.

³⁴⁶ Cf. Gershon Nerel, *Dissertation*, 188-195.

³⁴⁷ H.J. Haimoff, "Beginning at Jerusalem", in *Salvation*, vol. 20, #3, March 1966, 7.

Messiah he also saw the imminent great events connected with the people of Israel – already happening within his own times.

Death and Legacy

Well beyond his four score, Haim Haimoff died on 6 February 1991, and was buried at Yad-Hashmona, a small Messianic Moshav (village) in the Judean Hills west of Jerusalem, where four of his children and their families have settled since 1979.³⁴⁸ While on his sickbed, Haimoff spent his last days at Yad-Hashmona during the Iraqi missiles strikes on Ramat Gan, near the family home. At his graveside, inaugurating the Moshav cemetery, his whole family and a host of friends and believers from around Israel gathered. A month later the following words in Hebrew were inscribed on the gravestone: “I have finished the race, I have kept the faith and from now there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness,” taken from 2 Timothy 4:7.

Until Haimoff died, all members of the large family gathered in Ramat Gan for the worship service on Shabbat evening. Later, between the years 1992-1995, the congregation met in two locations alternately: one Shabbat in Ramat-Gan and the other in the Moshav. Every second week the congregation hired a bus that transported the people from Ramat Gan to the Moshav and back, while those who resided in the Moshav traveled by their local cars. However, in the next year, exactly half a decade after Haimoff passed away, the Ramat Gan congregation split into two groups following theological disagreements between the brothers Moshe and David. In fact it was the issue of leadership that caused the disintegration within the congregation.

One Shabbat in January 1996 Moshe unexpectedly announced in the congregation that David would have to stop teaching every second week, as he used to do for more than two decades with the blessing of his father. The reason Moshe gave was hermeneutical issues. Since then there have been two separate assemblies, one that meets with Moshe in Ramat Gan and the other that meets with David at Yad Hashmona.³⁴⁹ The assembly in Ramat Gan had incorporated into an *Amuta* status (non-profit society), whereas the *Kehila* in the Moshav has not acquired a formal legal position. Now basically both groups consider themselves to be the followers of the family patriarch, and remained non-charismatic in their doctrine and style of worship.

At the same time, some of the Bar-David grandchildren have established their own families, and with their spouses have joined other congregations. Thus, for example, two couples became members of *Kehilat Shemen Sasson*, in

³⁴⁸ Gershon Nerel, “Haim J. Bar-David (Haimoff): In Memoriam”, in *Zot Habrit*, Organ of the Israeli Messianic Jewish Alliance, vol. 2 (1991), 33-34 (Hebrew).

³⁴⁹ Kai Kjaer-Hansen & Bodil F. Skjott, eds., *Facts and Myths about the Messianic Congregations in Israel*, Mishkan 30-31, UCCI & Caspari, Jerusalem 1999, 242-246; 131.

Jerusalem, that has an expressive charismatic style of worship.³⁵⁰ Currently all members of the Bar-David “tribe” including the younger generations, continue to walk in faith in Yeshua. They openly and boldly witness about their belief around the country, while many of their activities take place at Yad Hashmona.³⁵¹ Both groups insist on focusing their witness ministry in the state of Israel, with no aims of establishing work in other countries, because according to prophecy this is the place for the nation’s future.

Summary

Haim Haimoff Bar-David lived and labored during a most formative period in the land of Israel.³⁵² Conceptually as well as practically he succeeded in bridging a gap of 2000 years, linking the contemporary Jewish believers in Yeshua directly to the first *Kehila* of the apostles in Jerusalem. For him this was neither a utopia nor an anachronism. Therefore he did not feel defensive or apologetic with regard to his faith. Along with that, he did not hesitate to deal authoritatively with operative questions that bothered the newly-born congregations in the state of Israel. Interestingly, although for over four decades he worked closely with an American mission, he never visited America. After a short visit in Holland in the 1950s, he never again left Israel. His focus was totally in the land, as he also believed that the *Golah*, the Jewish Diaspora had to cease following eschatological prophecies.

While certain aspects of Haimoff’s theological thinking developed and changed throughout his lifetime, he never compromised his fundamentalism – sticking to the absolutes of Scripture. Thus, for example, he gradually abandoned the use of the rabbinical *Haggadah* during the Passover *Seder* meal, and focused on the biblical text which pointed to the Lord’s Supper.³⁵³ He also disregarded the festival of Purim because of its “un-messianic” nature and therefore deemed it unnecessary. As Haimoff had a low opinion of “some misleading ways” of both Church and Synagogue, he also questioned, for example, the denominational Easter traditions of the churches. He did not put faith automatically in the long list of creeds and dogmas that the historic

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 124-126.

³⁵¹ See Menahem Benhayim, “Chocolate for Ave Maria – Reminiscences 1963 to 1998”, in *Kivun*, vol. 11 (1998), 3 (Hebrew).

³⁵² For a more comprehensive and comparative perspective about some key-figure Israeli JBY see recently Gershon Nerel, “Pioneers with a Magazine: Israeli Jewish Yeshua-Believers and their ‘Journalism’”, in *Kesher*, A Journal of Messianic Judaism (USA), vol. 14, Winter 2002, 3-39.

³⁵³ H.J. Haimoff, in *Salvation*, vol. 31, #7, July-August 1977, 6; and seven years later, *ibid.*, vol. 38, #9, Oct. 1984, 10.

churches presented. In fact tradition was not sacrosanct in his eyes and historical habits not obligatory for shaping his identity as a believer in Yeshua.

Actually Haimoff found great advantage in the *lack* of a uniform tradition among JBY. The significance of lack of tradition during the past two millennia de facto enabled JBY, he reasoned, to freely think and shape their own theology and identity—as unattached believers in the land where their faith was born. This unapologetic approach better equipped him to evaluate and comprehend the reality surrounding him.

The *Peilim*, the anti-missionary orthodox activists in Israel, were fully aware of Haimoff's "missionary work," but never stopped his labor. Occasionally they harassed him and his family, even threw stones at his house and disturbed him by telephone calls, but not beyond that.³⁵⁴ At the same time, however, his independent theological approach resulted in the antagonism of some Jewish and gentile believers in Yeshua, so that sometimes it looked as if he were completely alone and isolated from the mainstream movement. Yet many Israeli believers still respected the originality of his teaching, as well as his faithfulness and stability in stirring times. Especially in times of despair and crisis he kindly offered advice and support. For many he remained a solid source for spiritual orientation. Although as a matter of principle Haimoff refused to write books, today his children follow his vision of a restored Israel and the centrality of Yeshua. They continue to contribute to the ongoing development of JBY within the land with the pioneering legacy of their father, frequently encouraged by his motto, "Satan is Mighty but God is Almighty."

³⁵⁴ See, for example, Yaakov Ariel, "Evangelists in a Strange Land: American Missionaries in Israel (1948-1967)," in Peter Y. Medding, ed., *Coping with Life and Death, Jewish Families in the Twentieth Century, Studies in Contemporary Jewry, an Annual XIV*, N.Y. & Oxford 1998, 195-213.

The Life and Work of Heinz David Leuner (1906-1977)

Ulrich Laepple*

It must be a curious feeling for a congregation to be addressed by one who was born in Germany and is not a German, lived for some time in Czechoslovakia without being a Czech, is an ordained minister of the Church of Scotland but not a Scot, and, though holding a British passport, is not an Englishman. Here is the Jew par excellence, citizen of many countries, and yet cosmopolitan, restless and stateless until he has found peace in his Messiah, and through Him a better country.³⁵⁵

Who was this gifted man, living from 1906 to 1977, this convinced Hebrew Christian in the literal sense, critic of the Church to which he belonged by free choice, highly appreciated partner of the Jews, brilliant lecturer, skilled journalist, faithful pastor to those who escaped from the furnace of affliction, real liberal in the sense of being liberated from any human guardianship, a true servant of the International Hebrew Christian Alliance for over 30 years?

Childhood and Training in Breslau (1906-1925)

Heinz David Leuner, born in 1906, grew up in Breslau³⁵⁶ in a “fairly upper class home that did not live at the edge of Jewishness, but was rather conservative and even had an inclination to orthodoxy as long as my grandmother was alive.”³⁵⁷ For a young man like Leuner it was an existential task to preserve

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The author dedicates this article to his friend Revd. Ronald Lewis, long time secretary of the International Messianic and British Jewish Alliance.

³⁵⁵ “Letter from Europe” in “The Hebrew Christian” 29 (1956/57), 119, ed. by The International Hebrew Christian Alliance (further referred to as “HC”).

³⁵⁶ Breslau in the second half of the 19th century became a stronghold of German Jewry. The atmosphere was mainly orthodox due to the Rabbinical High School there.

³⁵⁷ The following biographical notes are taken mainly from his printed lecture “Flucht nach vorn” aus: Heinz David Leuner, Zwischen Israel und den Völkern. Vorträge eines Judenchristen, Berlin 1978 (Veröffentlichungen aus dem Institut Kirche und Judentum, Heft 6),10-20; Ibid., 10.

Jewish identity on the one hand, and, on the other, to enter into dialogue with his non-Jewish environment. At that time the atmosphere in society consisted of a conservative mixture of Christianity and German Nationalism under Emperor William II. As a Diaspora Jew, Leuner had done thorough studies in the Holy Scriptures and the Talmud as well as receiving a solid education at the well-known Elisabeth Gymnasium in Breslau. He learned the ancient languages of Hebrew, Greek and Latin, but no English nor any other modern language.

Leuner's professional aim was to become a Rabbi and he prepared for it even during his school years.³⁵⁸ But he later went through a major crisis, cut his rabbinic studies and went to the university to study classical philology. It would be, however, far from true to presume that by this change he wanted to somehow get rid of his Jewishness. In his biographical survey of 1975, he wrote about his feelings about being a Jew with appreciation and gratefulness:

I already said that I grew up in a conservative Jewish home ... in which being a Jew was taken seriously. This meant, among other things, that one also took seriously that the present was always determined by the future. When the Jews – and I still consider myself one – speak about the Messiah this has nothing to do with remembrance. For all that fixes man in his present state of now is contradictory to the meaning of the Messiah. All Jewish thinking, including the secular, is messianic. Only parenthetically, I want to mention Karl Marx, Ferdinand Lassalle and Moses Hess. Even in these men we find something of the Jewish messianism, a constant protest against the status quo ... The Messiah will come from ahead. Therefore we should remain watchful, we shall be waiting – but not inactive. I think of the Jewish proverb: and while you go to meet Him, he comes to meet you.³⁵⁹

Here we get to the cultural and spiritual roots of Leuner, with his alertness to contemporary events—especially reactionary developments—his sensitivity toward social grievances and abuses—a sort of impatience to go forward and get clear results, and, not least, the non-conformism which was so typical of him.

I still remember how I made a mockery of certain missionaries or of certain missionary tracts put into the letterbox or handed out by somebody on the street. I always asked myself: how can people be so stupid and write such silly things? No sensible Jew can read such a thing without bursting into laughter.³⁶⁰

³⁵⁸ He got additional teaching from the Jewish professors Jacob Guttman and Dr. Hermann Vogelstein.

³⁵⁹ Flucht, 15 (this and the following quotations of German texts are translated by the author).

³⁶⁰ Ibid. 16, see also 19. He also remembers the “horrible ignorance” about Jewish history from the year 70 to the present, a vacuum that did not only exist with his classmates but (later) also with his fellow theological students.

Journalist on an International Platform (1925-1933)

After his training Leuner became a journalist. His field was cultural politics. A splendid career stood before him. His job allowed him to travel, above all to the capitals of Eastern Europe like Prague, Vienna and Budapest.³⁶¹ This was in the years of the Weimar Republic, which brought catastrophe upon so many peoples and upon the Leuner family as well.³⁶²

An interview in 1931 with Thomas Masaryk, a leading professor in the field of literature and later president of Czechoslovakia, was a most important event in Leuner's life. He repeatedly mentions it in his writings. Masaryk's "simple faith" as a Christian made a lasting impression on Leuner and was among the factors that caused him to choose Prague as a refuge only two years later.

A different and portentous event occurred during a lawsuit in Leipzig, which Leuner observed for his magazine. Edmund Heines, who was a leader of the SA, had been accused of murder but got only a mild sentence. Leuner wrote a critical commentary in his magazine. After a while he got a post-card from Heines saying, "I will show you, you damned rogue."³⁶³

Right after Hitler's seizure of power in January 1933—Leuner was 27 years old—the SA smashed the bureau of his magazine and then his flat to bits. For some time he remained hidden in Breslau until his declared enemy, Heines, became the president of the police there (March 1933). The inevitable flight led him to Prague together with his pregnant wife.³⁶⁴

Escaping The Anti-Semitic Terror (1933-1940)

Leuner reflected intensively on what it meant to be a refugee. He saw two types of refugees. The one delivers himself totally to what was yesterday, to the loss and to despair. The other type, to which Leuner and his wife felt attracted, sees and expects a future life. For them the flight meant a process of birth, an existence "in between," however with great privations. The heaviest blow was the expatriation from Germany and the condition of having no nationality.

Integration into the new society became difficult because of the language barrier. For this reason he was no longer able to continue his journalistic work. After some casual jobs he eventually received permission to study at the German University of Prague. Gradually he became more familiar with the language and culture of the country, and finally acquired Czech citizenship.³⁶⁵

³⁶¹ Ibid. 10.

³⁶² "All my family perished in Auschwitz, parents, parents-in-law, brothers, sisters, sisters-in-law and brother-in-law." Ibid. 14

³⁶³ Ibid. 11

³⁶⁴ A warrant for Leuner was issued. Ibid. 11

³⁶⁵ "Many years we lived out of suit-cases ... and had to fight unceasingly a battle against self-pity, egoism and home-sickness. But an even heavier battle that has not ceased until

The Step into Christian Faith

During this difficult time in Prague, he and his wife gradually took steps towards Christianity. It took them three years. The impulse came from a very existential question: "'Is there a God if such things can happen? If there is such misery what kind of God is this?' These questions led us into a second stage – reading the Bible." They read the Old Testament and the New Testament, and discovered that "God had not withdrawn from us, but that we had been blind in our own guilt and our own failure."

There was a Church that greatly impacted Leuner and his wife—the Moravian Brethren.³⁶⁶ They had close contact with the Scottish Church which had founded a congregation for foreign English speakers in Prague. This church was to be the place where Leuner found a life-long theological and spiritual home and his vocation as well.

How can it be possible for a Jew to become a Christian? Leuner's remarkable way to Christ offers a hint: "The first thing that surprised us in the service of this church was the great emphasis on the Old Testament, the Hebrew Bible³⁶⁷... Out of 52 Sundays of the year 26 sermons minimum had been on the Old Testament, the Hebrew Bible. This was a new world to my wife and me."³⁶⁸

It was in 1937 that Leuner and his wife were baptised.³⁶⁹ As the Scottish Church obviously saw in him a gifted Christian who could become a good pastor, they promised to let him study theology. At that time Leuner also joined the "Hebrew Christian Alliance."³⁷⁰ With this step he showed his conviction that a Jewish believer in Jesus would not lose but deepen his Jewishness. And

today is the fight against the three most evil diseases: hatred, prejudice and generalisation. This was not easy." During the six years as a refugee in Czechoslovakia his family had eight different addresses, among them attics. Their daughter attended eight different schools but "without suffering any damage." Ibid.

³⁶⁶ In his biographical survey Leuner says: "In a talk some years ago David Flusser from Jerusalem made the interesting remark that he had got strong impulses from the Moravian Brethren. (He grew up in Moravia.) Still today he is convinced that the Moravian Brethren stand next to the early Church." Ibid. 16.

³⁶⁷ Leuner was critical of the term "Old Testament": "... such a thing does not really exist: you have the Hebrew Bible, and then you have a renewed testament, a renewed covenant." Ibid.

³⁶⁸ Ibid.17.

³⁶⁹ Ibid.13, Leuner describes his personal process towards faith in Jesus Christ with the Hebrew notion of tikkun, which means – in both the cosmic (the Flood) and individual dimensions—the (transforming) restoration of vessels after they had broken apart. Ibid.17

³⁷⁰ Ibid.,7.

with his new identity as a Christian and a Jew he desperately needed this special fellowship.³⁷¹

Studies For The Ministry In The Scottish Church

In March 1939 the family had to flee again after Germany occupied Czechoslovakia.³⁷² This time their refuge was Scotland. Again they were “hostile” foreigners—and stateless. Five difficult months of internment followed.³⁷³

Leuner must have considered it a great opportunity and a holy duty to finally begin his theological studies after being released from the camp.³⁷⁴ In the course of his studies he often got into disputes with his teachers and fellow students because of the distance he observed between traditional occidental theology and the Jewish roots of the Biblical message.³⁷⁵ He certainly was no easy interlocutor.

³⁷¹ The stream of refugees that thronged towards Prague had increased in 1938 after the German occupation of Austria and later of the Sudetendeutsche Gebiete. With the help of Leuner a “Christian Committee for Refugees” was built up in Prague. “This experience of really ecumenical cooperation has been unique in my life. Catholics, Protestants, Moravian Brethren – all were working together. In this work with emigrants and refugees I could learn a great deal which I could use so much in later years.” Ibid. 13.

³⁷² “In Spring 1939 they were again in danger, through the German annexation of that unhappy land. Happily we were able to bring them to this country, though only just in time, and by aeroplane.” H. Samuel, *ibid.* 17,7.

³⁷³ “I remember that homeliness, so characteristic a feature of Jewishness, and the pangs of nostalgia after I had lost my home, until I found a new home in the community and fellowship of my brethren in Christ.” *Flucht*, 13.

As Leuner was a pacifist he refused the offer to be released from the internment camp on the condition of doing military service. But finally he was released because he could prove five years of active opposition to Hitler. *Ibid.*

³⁷⁴ Leuner studied for five years, first at the Bible Institute and later at Trinity College and the University of Glasgow. During the last two years he also did practical work in Jewish Missions under the auspices of the Scottish Church.

³⁷⁵ “My Hebrew eyes kept leading me into conflicts with my professors. I felt an aversion over against too much dogmatism, and this was a source of many problems and quarrels.” One good example of his unorthodox dogmatic stand: “When you ask me: ‘Do you believe in Jesus?’ I have to answer ‘No!’” When you ask me: ‘Do you believe Jesus?’ I say ‘Yes!’ I do believe that he brought forgiveness of sins also for me. And I believe in his message which is an authentic Jewish message...” Leuner got very good grades in his theological examinations and a number of extra awards, among them the Dowanhill Prize for Elocution – despite (or perhaps because of) his sometimes exceptional theological opinions. See *HC* 19, 24 and *Flucht*, 17.

Messenger of the Hebrew Christian-Alliance in Great Britain (1946-1950)

It is with pleasure that we announce that Mr. Heinz D. Leuner has completed his studies ...He has been appointed to the dual position of Secretary for Great Britain of our International Hebrew Christian Alliance, and Secretary of the affiliated British Hebrew Christian Alliance. In addition to his work among Hebrew Christians throughout this country, Mr. Leuner will be responsible for deputation work. ³⁷⁶

It is true that Leuner became an ordained minister of the Scottish Church, but he did not enter her service. Instead he began his service in the British Hebrew Christian Alliance as their secretary. There he had a threefold task. The first was to contact the denominations and churches of Britain in all regions, to make them acquainted with the work of the Alliance and to ask the congregations to support the work among Hebrew Christians. Secondly, he was to remind the church of its Jewish roots. In all this Leuner proved to be a man who stood above denominations and their doctrinal separations. He always sought frontier-crossing brotherhood such as he himself had experienced in Prague.

The third task was to give pastoral care to Hebrew Christians. He often travelled under hard circumstances to remote corners of Great Britain in order to look after his sisters and brethren in their small congregations or groups. ³⁷⁷

Twelve months after the beginning of his work, Leuner gave a report at the *International Hebrew Christian Alliance's* (IHCA) Ramsgate Conference (1947). In a precise analysis he makes the following fundamental statements:

... I found the state of affairs far from satisfactory. There was, and still is, a considerable and fairly widespread general antagonism towards ... Jewish work. Events in Palestine and the general increase of anti-Semitism in Great Britain are contributory causes." ³⁷⁸

Then he determined that the aims and work of the International Hebrew Christian Alliance should be clarified, "that it is not a missionary society though it is setting up a candlestick of witness to the Jews and Gentiles." He considered the aim to be "our work among refugees, the training of missionaries, doctors and nurses, our relief activities on the Continent and all the other branches of our work, which are nothing to be ashamed of." ³⁷⁹

³⁷⁶ Harcourt Samuel, Executive Secretary of the International Hebrew Christian Alliance, in his presentation of Heinz David Leuner for the readers in HC 19 (1946/47), 24, (September, 1946).

³⁷⁷ We get lively impressions of Leuner's experiences in his "Notes from my Diary," which is also the headline of a more than a dozen reports in the "Hebrew Christian."

³⁷⁸ Ibid. 70f.

³⁷⁹ Ibid. We will see that Leuner often gives reports on conferences in order to give the strategy of the Alliance a clearer profile, state traditional principles, and push the organization to cope with the real needs as he saw them.

The Struggle for the Reconstruction of Europe (1950 – 1961)

Leuner always had an international horizon of thinking, and therefore became the secretary of the International Hebrew Christian Alliance for Europe in 1950. He saw his commission as follows:

*The same urgent need for a spiritual ministry will prevail everywhere – the same hunger and thirst for comfort and consolation. As before, I shall visit them, especially those who are shy and too weak to come to meetings and services, and I shall try to stir up the conscience of churches and Christian organisations that have not yet awakened to their responsibility towards the victims of what might never have happened had not those churches and organisations grievously neglected their duty towards Israel.*³⁸⁰

The Misery of European Refugees

The first challenge he refers to in this statement is pastoral care for the Hebrew Christian refugees. He called it "the dearest to my heart."³⁸¹ He was quite aware from his own experience of what it means to be a "displaced person" and to feel lost, to be driven to despair, and he also knew what practical questions were to be pondered and solved. In "A letter from Europe" we read:

*There are aspects of my work for which I did not bargain when I started, and now I find that they demand a larger proportion of my time than I actually have at my disposal. Ever so many of our brethren I have met on my journeys are turning to me for advice and guidance in long letters which require careful and sympathetic replies. I should fall down on my job if I confined my ministry to praying with our brethren on the occasion of my visit without continuing to stand by them whenever they feel the urge to approach me.*³⁸²

In this and many other reports during the following 10 or more years, Leuner repeatedly reminds the reader of the misery of the refugees and thus made known the need for intercession, pastoral care and practical help.³⁸³

The deepest problem of the Hebrew Christians he met was, however, the question of the hardship they had endured during the Nazi-time and later: "Why all this suffering?" Leuner gives a glance into the depth of this question:

Those sore and painful memories can only be sublimated in the light of a personal experience of the living Christ; they cannot and must not be suppressed, for they would only return in the disguise of hatred and feelings of revenge. The suffering of the innocent ones cannot be

³⁸⁰ Ibid. 23, 103.

³⁸¹ Ibid. 30.

³⁸² Ibid. 24 (1951/52), 22.

³⁸³ "... too many of the brethren are looking upon us as relief organization, and it is only gradually dawning upon them that underlying all our charitable work there is the idea of a witnessing community whose members constitute what is called in Biblical language 'the faithful remnant of Israel.'" Ibid., 24, 24.

*explained away by cheap phrases; it must be faced in the stark reality of the cross. What a task for your representative! What a challenge to pray without ceasing!"*³⁸⁴

The fight against anti-Semitism was central and existential for Leuner. Almost to the last breath he speaks and writes against it with abhorrence, especially when this poison arose in Germany. This country had always been in the center of his critical observation; at the same time Germany was his main destination while he was traveling. In a report in the "Hebrew Christian" in 1950 he sees Germany like this:

*The consequences of wholesale destruction are twofold: there is the material havoc expressed in acres of ruins, empty shells of houses and mountains of rubble; and there is the mental and spiritual disintegration (of the Germans) manifest in an almost pathological endeavour to explain the catastrophe by pointing out that all nations are at least as guilty as the Germans. They are so sorry for themselves, so filled with self-pity*³⁸⁵

And he feels very sorry to state that, on the whole, German churches do not seem to have learned the lesson of the last decade:

*There is little prayer for Israel, and many pastors have not even thought it necessary to go to the Hebrew Christians (who belonged to their congregations in the past, and were put out when the churches were cleared of the racially polluted) in order to prove the new spirit that was supposed to have entered into the churches with the passing of Hitlerism. Nor has the Church – again with few exceptions – raised her voice as conscience of the nation to speed up the matter of restitution, which is looked upon as an act of grace and mercy, whereas it ought to be a matter of elementary justice to make good the damage and loss to those who had suffered on account of their race.*³⁸⁶

The Church as the First Address in the Fight against Anti-Semitism

Leuner's pastoral ministry to Hebrew Christians in Europe had been gradually bolstered by national alliances and became his primary task. But the framework of the whole was the renewal of relations between the Church and Israel. In this so far unsound relation he saw the roots of the evil of anti-Semitism. Therefore one had to start with Christian anti-Semitism, which existed long before the racial, and was a main cause for the latter.

Leuner criticized quite sharply:

³⁸⁴ Ibid. 31, 31.

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 22.64.

³⁸⁶ Ibid. 22, 65. But Leuner sees also the other side when referring to the stream of Jewish and Hebrew Christian refugees coming from the eastern part of Germany. "Christian organisations, the churches and missions in Berlin perform miracles of true love in action, working day and night with a tired and numerically inadequate staff... The overwhelming majority of refugees have no clothes to change, not a second pair of shoes or socks or stockings." Ibid., 26, 55.

*... the comfortable position held in so many Christian quarters that the Church cannot do any more about the Jewish plight than to preach the Gospel to the children of Israel ... It is not only the Jews who know that a good deal of their persecution came from so-called baptized, church-going, and even apparently regenerate Christians. He never loses sight of the practical point: How can the Church mitigate the Jewish plight? Not merely by helping the victims but by removing the causes that may well be found within its own ranks.*³⁸⁷

The Idea of Corporate Witness by Hebrew Christians

During Leuner's first years as European Secretary of the Alliance he, together with others, succeeded in establishing national alliances in about 10 European countries. As their primary aim they hoped to build up a family of Hebrew Christians so that these might find in their country a supportive network of brothers and sisters of the same origin, with similar experiences in the past and similar problems in the present.³⁸⁸

It has been questioned whether the term "Hebrew-Christian" was theologically appropriate and if the Hebrew Christian Alliances were at all desirable alongside churches and congregations. Leuner always argued strongly for a positive understanding that the Hebrew Christian "may remain a Christian with a difference, in that he considers himself a member of God's covenant people and believes that only after his conversion to the Christ Messiah has he become a real Jew, an Israelite indeed."³⁸⁹

A very important service for the German-speaking countries was the magazine *Der Zeuge* founded 1950 and edited by the IHCA, with Leuner as the redactor. It was thought to be "the voice of the Hebrew Christian, the mouthpiece of what we have to say both to current events and on questions of Biblical and theological interpretation."³⁹⁰

The Hebrew-Christian's contribution to the renewal of a {or "a renewal of the..."} pagan-Christian dominated Church was threefold, according to Leuner:

that he (the Hebrew Christian) may endeavour to carry out that task by some new approach to the study of the Word of God, something he may bring with him from the knowledge of the Old Testament. The question before him is not only how to explain Jesus to the Jew but how

³⁸⁷ Ibid. 23 (1950/51), S. 22.

³⁸⁸ *...there is among our Jewish and Hebrew Christian brethren and the genuine Christian a greater sense of cohesion, of belonging together, than could have been observed at any previous period of history, and it is the outcome of a common experience of suffering and persecution.* Ibid.30, 91 (1958).

³⁸⁹ Leuner defended his conviction publicly over against arguments of the Lutheran World Federation, see his essay: "Ist die Bezeichnung Judenchrist theologisch richtig?" in: H. D. Leuner, *Zwischen Israel und den Völkern*, Berlin 1978 S.68-74.

³⁹⁰ Ibid., 39, S. 92. "Der Zeuge" was published by the International Hebrew Christian Alliance with Rev. H.D. Leuner as editor (from 1950 to 1989, at times bi-annual).

to explain the Jew to the Church ...in facing organized Christianity as distinct from Jesus Christ.³⁹¹

With this more exegetical and hermeneutical aspect goes a second one which refers to Israel: "(The Hebrew Christian) will frequently make no secret of his Zionism, without holding a brief for everything done by the government of Israel."³⁹²

The third aspect regards dialogue:

As a result he may retain, or succeed in building up, relations with Jewish people such as would be considered impossible or unheard of in the Anglo-Saxon world. The number of contacts between Hebrew-Christians and Jews on the European continent is truly amazing.

³⁹³

It is evident that from about 1961 Leuner's reports on refugees gradually disappeared. More and more we read about conferences, seminars and basic theological questions. This signifies that Leuner had to—and wanted to—give his work a new profile.

In his remarkable "Report on Work in Europe," submitted to the IHCA High Wycombe Conference in 1967, he explained this change in a passionate and even provocative manner:

Not deliberate choice but necessity forced us to shift from pulpit and congregational meeting to evangelical academies, seminaries, diocesan conferences and high schools, where we can reach the future generation. Our work has had to be transferred to a more theological and educational level than could have been envisaged at the start. The classroom and the college of teachers may, in the providence of God, be the place of the battle for the soul of man, for it is there that we can come to grips with the outsider and communicate the gospel...Contributing articles and essays has become more effective than I would have expected ten years ago, and I can thank God for having equipped me in that field." ³⁹⁴

Concentrating on Academic Work in Germany

While Leuner's academic work had for some years been known only in scholarly circles and special church groups, the breakthrough to open publicity occurred with the first evangelical "Kirchentag" in 1961. This biannual German Church Congress brings masses of mainly lay protestant and evangelical Christians together. In Berlin, under the motto "I am with you," 80,000 people

³⁹¹ Ibid.

³⁹² Ibid. 92.

³⁹³ Ibid. "Dialogue ... is the way which reveals the continental Hebrew Christians' love for their brethren after the flesh." Ibid. 37,102.

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 39,94f. "There is cowardice towards, or incapacity of, adapting ourselves to the change we are faced with on every side. For it is not rapidly changing circumstances but change that confronts us, and it is completely beside the point whether or not we like it." Ibid. 39,93.

from all over Germany and 1000 from abroad attended this 10th "Kirchentag."³⁹⁵ For the first time in the history of the congress, a committee of Jews and Christians had been appointed as the steering panel of one of the seven groups into which the masses were divided.³⁹⁶

Heinz David Leuner and outstanding theologians from the German Churches, as well as well-known Rabbi Raphael Geis and Schalom Ben Chorin³⁹⁷ from the Jewish community, were members of the steering group. Leuner was one of the main lecturers to a large audience, and was involved in many discussions.³⁹⁸

After 1961 Leuner intensified his educational work in many respects. All kinds of institutions and networks utilized his experience and skills. The dearth of information in Germany concerning the history and religion of the Jews as well as the State of Israel was a great challenge to him, and he was prepared to capitalize upon this still fragile openness to break the "conspiracy of silence" which existed at that time.

He began a pedagogical rally through high schools, first in Wuppertal and then several times in Berlin. In innumerable lectures and discussions³⁹⁹ he won

³⁹⁵ Leuner gave an enthusiastic report in *The Hebrew Christian*: The press pointed out that what had happened here was a new phenomenon in the 1900 year history of the Christian Church. Insisting that "Jews and Christians are indissolubly united," the statement appealed to all Germans, and especially to parents, teachers and people with political responsibilities, to admit their own failure to the younger generation and to point out the causes of anti-Semitism ... Those present could not help feeling that it was the Lord's doing and marvellous in their eyes. *Ibid.*, 34,102.

³⁹⁶ "This particular group proved the greatest attraction and was throughout the three days of the Congress attended by 6000 to 8000 people ... The audience, predominantly young and interspersed with many colored brethren, listened with rapt attention to the lectures dealing with the religious history of Jews and Christians, and with the nature of religious anti-Semitism, and enthusiastically participated in the discussions which went on for hours and brought to light much of the prejudice and ignorance so manifestly evident in Jewish Christian relationship ..." *Ibid.* 34,102

³⁹⁷ Whereas Schalom Ben Chorin had some problems with a Hebrew-Christian in this group (according to a remark made by Prof. H.J. Kraus to the author), it was the opposite with Rabbi Geis. The wonderful friendship between Leuner and Geis is documented in "Leiden an der Unerlöstheit der Welt", Robert Raphael Geis, 1906-1972 (Briefe, Reden Aufsätze), 1979.

³⁹⁸ All documented in "Der ungekündigte Bund," Stuttgart 1962, hrg. von D. Goldschmidt und Hans-Joachim Kraus. Leuner made his contributions also two years later in the following 'Kirchentag' in Dortmund in 1963.

³⁹⁹ A list of 27 school visits and even four prison visits between April 1965 and May 1968 in Berlin is found in the Informationsblatt Nr 22, ed. by the "Institut Kirche und Judentum" (1969), S.3. In the archives I found itineraries which show a vast field of diverse requests he responded to in all parts of Europe, especially in Germany - and at the same time these notes give the impression of a breathless way of life.

the trust of pupils and teachers, as they saw in him a candid, confident and authentic partner.⁴⁰⁰

An important network for Leuner was the "Institut Kirche und Judentum" in Berlin. This institute not only gave him contacts to schools and other institutions, but also to many congregations and to the clergy of Berlin. He also did academic work in the Institute itself.⁴⁰¹ The Institute's director's friendship with Leuner was so deep that, after the latter's death in 1977, he published a collection of Leuner's essays and articles, given or written in the 1960s and 1970s – an impressive spectrum of Leuner's thought and how he lived out his vocation in terms of theology and academic work.⁴⁰²

Dialogue with the Synagogue

As a Hebrew Christian Leuner understood himself to be a bridge to the Jew of the Synagogue. In the 1960s Leuner occasionally made reference to "dialogue." At the beginning there was no theoretical conception behind it but only experience.⁴⁰³ But when the mostly British and American readers of the "Hebrew Christian" read about "dialogue" they obviously must have turned to Leuner and asked him to explain this new concept.

In his answer in "The Hebrew Christian" he renders a systematic, deliberate and skilled account of that sort of encounter. His principles are of utmost importance for every Christian witness to the Jews now or in future.

⁴⁰⁰ He addressed them with subjects like "What can we Christians learn from the Jews?" and "What do Jews think about Jesus Christ today?" Ibid., Nr. 11,3; Leuner even elaborated and published pedagogical material on Jewish history for German teachers: Heinz-David Leuner: Ein Gang durch die jüdische Geschichte von 70 bis 1948 (hrsg. v. Amt für Evangelischen Religionsunterricht, Berlin, 1975).

⁴⁰¹ Its information letter reported regularly about his work.

⁴⁰² H.D. Leuner, Zwischen Israel und den Völkern. Vorträge eines Judenchristen, Veröffentlichungen aus dem Institut Kirche und Judentum, Band 6, Berlin 1978, published by Prof. Peter von den Osten-Sacken. Leuner's focus on theological and educational work was fruitful in a number of other publications: "When compassion was a crime. Germany's silent heroes, 1933-1945," London, 1966; Religiöses Denken im Judentum des 20. Jahrhunderts, Wuppertal, 1969, and others.

⁴⁰³ See Leuner's touching report on a five day gathering held by the "German Evangelical Committee for Service to Israel" in 1958: "... an honest attempt to face each other in all humility, each party prepared to surrender its privileges so that it might learn from the other ... The chairman was right when he expressed the general feeling that the participants had become a family, taking each other seriously ... We experienced a deep sense of being fellow pilgrims on the road of life, a new understanding of the sacred duty to love one's neighbor; and none of the Jewish participants made the Hebrew Christians feel that they were looked upon as traitors or apostates ... There was no hiding of the differences of opinion and interpretation..." HC 31, 66 (1957/58).

(1) At the beginning Leuner makes clear that the concept of dialogue is a European phenomenon and “cannot be taken as a guiding principle for other parts of the world.”⁴⁰⁴ Europe had, to begin with, a minute minority of Jews living in a nominally Christian world.⁴⁰⁵ (2) Then, there was “an appalling ignorance of Judaism that has led in the past to a persecution of the Jews on an unparalleled scale.”⁴⁰⁶ (3) “It was in Europe that missionary societies ...were frequently either unable or unwilling to foster in their converts the conviction of remaining part and parcel of their people Israel.”⁴⁰⁷ (4) There is the great failure and burden of insufficiency of Christian civilization as witnessed under Hitler, where people pose the question:

*Are we in our actions and attitudes credible examples of our faith? Dare we speak as those who know it all? Or ought we not at least for the time being, to remain silent in shame, remembering what has happened, putting our own house in order, and leaving our deeds to transmit the message?*⁴⁰⁸

There are also reasons coming from realistic observations:

(5) It is the “common defense against atheism and blatant materialism”⁴⁰⁹ as well as the need for creating community, “because the partnership between God and man so clearly revealed in both the old and new covenants demands partnership between man and his fellow man.”⁴¹⁰

Leuner’s theological conviction was (6) “that the voice of God can be heard even today from the synagogue, or, to put it more bluntly, that Jews have something to say to the Church. The Church and Israel have enough in common to provide plenty of ground for a dialogue that is anchored in what is existential.”⁴¹¹ The person convinced by dialogue “acknowledges the continuity of the divine covenant with Israel and can see but one people of God – Israel, into which the Church has been taken up so that the Church is not to be looked upon as the heir of but the joint-heir with Israel, for God remains faithful even towards the unfaithful.”⁴¹²

And finally there is the ethical condition for a real dialogue, (7) the willingness “to recognize the other in his otherness, for only one who seeks to understand can himself hope to be understood, and without that understanding there is no bridge to the innermost concerns of the other.” This is especially true

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 39,94 (1966/67).

⁴⁰⁵ “In Germany we find 30,000 Jews among a population of 70,000,000”. Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.37, 104 (1964/65)

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.37, 30 (1964/65)

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.37, 103 (1964/65)

⁴¹¹ Ibid. 30; Leuner denies that the Church, vis-a-vis the Synagogue, “has to confront a false faith with the true faith, for both have the same God....” Ibid. 103

⁴¹² Ibid.31

“as dialogue begins with confession of sin before it goes on to a confession of faith.”⁴¹³

In practical terms Leuner describes dialogue as a type of (8) encounter which is neither a monologue nor a sermon:

*One seeks to meet the other face to face, and listens to him. In other words, to question the other about his faith always means readiness to be exposed to the questions the other might ask. There is but one refuge in dialogue, refuge in God, in whose sight both partners, Christian and Jew alike, stand as sinners, and out of whose boundless, unmerited mercy each lives.*⁴¹⁴

Leuner is firm (9) that dialogue must not keep one from expressing one’s own faith in the Messiah:

*Dialogue invariably means, for the Christian, confession of Jesus as the Christ who is the Redeemer of all...If we were to suppress our confession of Christ dialogue would degenerate into idle talk. ... But the uniqueness of Jesus is more important than the claim to absolute superiority. The Church can only be the humble servant of the Lord.*⁴¹⁵

It is important to state, too, that Leuner listens carefully to objections to dialogue from concerned evangelical brethren, and he does not hesitate to refer to the dangers of the sort of encounter they are suspicious of.⁴¹⁶ But for himself in respect to the Jews he does not see any other possibility than dialogue and rejects easy judgments:

*Those who have embarked upon the Christian-Jewish encounter through dialogue can see the reason for their undertaking much more clearly than the farther milestones on their road, but we have no right to doubt the sincerity of their prayer that their efforts may redound to the glory of God, and that the erstwhile unity of Christ and His people Israel may be restored.*⁴¹⁷

It remains to add that the rise and development of Christian-Jewish relations through dialogue is by no means a German phenomenon, “although none would deny that the systematic annihilation of 6,000,000 Jews under the eyes of a people evangelized for over 1000 years very strongly influenced the search for new ways for Christian-Jewish encounter.”⁴¹⁸

⁴¹³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 105. Leuner’s writings give no evidence for an understanding that the Church has a general commission to evangelize the Jews. According to a friend of Leuner, Hary Herz-Hablützel, Leuner considered evangelization of the Jews a commission of Hebrew Christians in the different context of Israel. (Zurich, talk on August 12th, 2002)

⁴¹⁶ see also *ibid.*, 31, 28f (1958/59).

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid. 32.

Leuner's Attitude toward the State of Israel

The political and spiritual development in the Near East was always of existential importance for Leuner.⁴¹⁹ Israel was his people, and as an authentic Hebrew Christian he identified with it.⁴²⁰ Holy Scripture served as the basis for his view of the problems of the newborn state.⁴²¹ And there he read the fundamental statement: "God had not cast away His people!"

Leuner was always a Zionist, as Jewry meant to him the unity of people, land and religion.⁴²² As a Biblical theologian he was quite clear that the people and land would remain God's property and were bound by the condition of a vocation.⁴²³ These principles were not theoretical statements but became practical. Right after the State of Israel gained independence he recognized the responsibility of the Alliance to send relief parcels to Israel.⁴²⁴ For Leuner this was far more important than "mechanical interpretation of prophecies yet unfulfilled" which he always had warned against as well as "against the opinion that the State of Israel in its present form was already the dream of the Messianic kingdom come true."⁴²⁵

On the basis of such solidarity he felt quite free to criticize, and at times did so sharply. He always pleaded for a realistic approach and factual reports on the situation in the Holy Land. He could call Zionism an "offspring of the combination of nationalism and neo-romanticism, which characterized the

⁴¹⁹ Leuner's most passionate contribution to the question of the State of Israel is the lecture he gave at an ecumenical study conference in Bossey in 1950 on "The Church and Zionism," *Ibid.* 22, (1949/50), 33-37.

⁴²⁰ "The misery, distress and homelessness of Israel are part and parcel of my own experience. And they are important as they form a large part of the background to the problem without which it cannot be properly understood." *Ibid.* 33f.

⁴²¹ "What matters to us is to discover not who is right, but what is the will of God." *Ibid.*, 34

⁴²² "...combating that ignorance about Israel which frequently provides the basis of anti-Jewish feelings within the churches and Christian communities." *Ibid.*, (1952/53), 23. See also Leuner's article "The Promise of the Land," *ibid.*, 46 (1973), 83ff, which is an exegetical investigation through the Old and New Testaments on the subject of the land.

⁴²³ "...on trust, to carry out her mission and function of spreading the divine message among the nations of the world. And God left them in no doubt about it when He said: 'The land is Mine, ye are strangers and sojourners therein.'" *Ibid.* 34

⁴²⁴ "Practical love for the land of their fathers has proved the common ground on which the Christ-believing Jew can meet with his yet unbelieving brother, and in this atmosphere encounters and dialogues have occurred, the value of which will be gauged in eternity." *Ibid.* (1957/58), 133.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.* 25 (1952/53), 23.

nineteenth century..."⁴²⁶ After the Six Day War he could speak (also by quoting Israeli Jews) of a "betrayal of the Hebrew ethical heritage."⁴²⁷

Facing this and many other problems in the land (among which he included both materialism and orthodox Judaism),⁴²⁸ one may quote his words in a lecture on "The Church and Zionism" delivered in 1950: "I believe that a new heart must be given to my people ... and that a new citizenship of which our New Testament speaks embodies a new home and a new nationality."⁴²⁹

Looking back to Leuner's Life and Work

In the year he underwent a major operation (1972) he formulated a text in which he described the vocation of a Hebrew Christian leader on a fastidious scale:

The Hebrew Christian leader must become visible and audible in public; he must seek to influence almost everything that occupies or puzzles the contemporary mind. With the new interest in the message of the Old Testament – especially its bearing on social justice, corporate salvation and the evaluation of the corollary of the term Shalom – he is in demand at theological consultations, in expository publications and as a member of panels at discussions connected with rallies and assemblies.

He has to assume

the heavy burden of interpreting the spirit of Judaism to the Church, a task securely embodied in the original constitution of our Alliance... With a newly awakened interest in the Jews and a no less noticeable antagonism against the State of Israel, this part of our ministry is growing and requires constant and painstaking attention to current affairs and their discussion in both secular and Christian media."⁴³⁰

This is what Heinz David Leuner was and did. Only an extremely gifted person could fulfill this commission—but at the cost of increasingly severe health problems. In 1972, after a serious operation, he had to retire, but was re-appointed on a part-time basis⁴³¹ as there was no one to replace him. But he did not make a lasting recovery, and died in September 1977.

⁴²⁶ "War and hatred reached a dreadful climax; half a million refugees were driven from their homes; the King David Hotel was blown sky high; two sergeants of the British Army were lynched ... I nearly said, 'Look what you have done to my people, you Gentiles! How you have failed, you churches! Look how my people have copied you...'" Ibid.22, 36.

⁴²⁷ Ibid. 43 (1970), 35. Leuner hints at "the high degree of self-criticism in the Jewish camp in the course of peace." Ibid.

⁴²⁸ On a journey to Israel just before the Six Day War he saw with his own eyes how things were. (See letter to Majer-Leonhard of May 3, 1967, archive of the Oberkirchenrat, Stuttgart.)

⁴²⁹ Ibid. 22, 37.

⁴³⁰ Ibid. 9 (1972).

⁴³¹ Ibid.,48 (1975),164.

Perhaps the finest and most touching words said about Heinz David Leuner (and he himself must have considered them the best compliment for a Hebrew Christian) are the words of Rabbi Robert Raphael Geis in a letter to him:

Over the years I have come across Christians who once belonged to the Jewish people. But there has been always something in their attitude that disturbed me. The only one whose Christianity I believe and whom at the same time I feel near to me as a brother... is you. And it makes me very happy that you are giving me what the 'only'- Christian can hardly give me.⁴³²

⁴³² Leiden an der Unerlöstheit der Welt, *ibid.*, 370

Preaching Was His Life – Richard Wurmbrand (1909-2001)

Marian Eigeles*

Romania, spring 1946. The Communists were heading for total power. Control over religious life was a part of their goal. That is why Father Constantin Burducea, Minister of Religious Affairs in the Communist-controlled government, convened a Congress of Religions to be held in the hall of the Parliament. The congress, whose proceedings were broadcast, was meant to show support for the policy of the government. Orthodox priests, Baptist and Adventist pastors, Pentecostal preachers, rabbis and mullahs succeeded each other to the rostrum and gave praise to the new regime.

Eventually the floor was seized by a man who started with these words: "We have heard many praises and adulations. However, we shall not forget that Heaven is longing for the lost Sheep of Israel."

Suddenly, the rabbis rose in anger, lifted their canes and started shouting: "Stop him, stop him, stop him!" The priests answered with the cries: "Let him finish, let him finish!" The majority started shouting: "The pastor! The pastor!"

The broadcast ended abruptly...

Who was the man who dared to interfere with the agenda of the new masters of the country? His name was Richard Wurmbrand. He was born to a Jewish family in Romania in the year 1909. According to what he used to tell us, his early years were characterized by dire poverty. That may be one of the reasons that he joined the illegal Communist Party. His revolutionary enthusiasm and oratorical talent led his leaders to send him to the High School of the Comintern in Moscow, where Bucharin, Zinoviev and others were his teachers.

As the Stalinists gained control over the party, however, there was less room for revolutionaries. The party of Stalin needed obedient executors. In

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This article is based on oral information from a number of people given to the author during his years in Romania and Israel, among them Magne Solheim.

order to get rid of him they let him fall into the hands of the Romanian Secret Police. The treachery of his supposed comrades destroyed his faith in communism. He suddenly realized what the Communists were like and what their cause was about. As he was indicted for his illegal activities, he could not but abjure his ideology and disassociate himself from his former comrades, whom he denounced as evil people.

After he had served his sentence, he tried a new career in business, but was left with a deep sense of emptiness and a broken body.

Since he was suffering from tuberculosis, he went with his wife, Sabina, to Vulcan, a place in the mountains of Transylvania, where he stayed at a sanatorium. In Vulcan there was an old German carpenter who for many years had prayed to meet a Jew whom he could lead to Christ. Wurmbrand was the answer to his prayers. The old man, with a big worn German Bible in his hands, met Wurmbrand and asked him to read it. Wurmbrand reluctantly borrowed it, read it ... and believed it. His entire life turned upside down. This happened when he was 27. Subsequently, he was baptized.

Not long afterward Sabina (Bintia) his wife joined him. Thus she became his partner in the new career he embarked on: preaching Christ. He started working with the Anglican Mission and eventually with the Norwegian Mission to Israel. He became a close collaborator of pastor Magne Solheim⁴³³, who came to Romania in 1938.

Wurmbrand was ordained a pastor, although he never received any formal theological education. However, all his life he studied on his own. He was a voracious reader. According to Solheim, Wurmbrand used to pick up a pile of books from his library and spend the night reading them. The next Sunday, one could tell from his sermon which books he had read. Throughout his life Wurmbrand remained more a preacher and thinker than a systematic theologian or biblical exegete.

Wurmbrand had the gift of making friends with people from all Christian denominations. Thus he had friends among the prelates of the Romanian Orthodox Church, lay-leaders of the Army of the Lord (an evangelical revival movement within the Orthodox Church) and Baptist and Pentecostal pastors. He was welcome in the pulpits of all these churches.

During 1938-1940 the situation of the Jews in Romania gradually worsened. In those years Wurmbrand was engaged in an intense work of evangelization among the Jews of the country. He held meetings in Bessarabia, which subsequently became a part of the Soviet Union, in that part of Transylvania which Hitler gave to Hungary, and in Bucharest. He used to warn his fellow-Jews that a hard time was ahead.

⁴³³ Norwegian missionary pastor working in Romania in 1938-48, and thereafter in Haifa until 1975.

The crisis came on 6 September 1940, as General Ion Antonescu seized power. Even though the situation of the Jews in Romania never became as tragic as in those countries which were under direct German control, they were pushed to the periphery of society, and they were periodically afflicted with pogroms and deportations which claimed 380,000 lives. The government daily issued new regulations calculated to make their existence miserable. Forced labor and confiscation of holdings were part of their lives. The rulers of the country, who claimed to be Christians, also banned mission to the Jews, because the Jews were thought to have forfeited their share in the gospel of Christ.

Nevertheless those were days of growth for the church, among the Jews as well as among Romanians. Stories are told about Legionaries (members of the Iron Guard, a virulent anti-Jewish movement which was in power until January 1941) who, after listening to Wurmbrand's preaching, threw away their green shirts (the uniform of the movement) and became Evangelical Christians and devoted friends of Israel and of Wurmbrand.

During the first years after liberation from the Nazis the evangelical churches enjoyed a freedom they never had before. After May 1945 Solheim resumed his contact with Norway, which had been cut off during the war. Subsequently he moved from Galati (Galatz) to Bucharest. The collaboration between Solheim and Wurmbrand became closer. Beside the work among the Jews, they engaged in spreading Russian tracts and portions of Scripture among the Soviet soldiers who were stationed in the country, and in distributing the relief sent by the World Council of Churches to the different congregations of Romania. Wurmbrand also gave lectures to Romanian priests. For the congregation they led, it was a period of growth. Although most people called it "The Jewish Church," it had many gentile members. The Jews used to bring gentiles to the church and the gentiles brought Jews. Jews and Romanians alike were attracted to the preaching of the Jewish pastor, who was believed by many to be the St. Paul of Romania. The story told by Mihail Ciopraga, a Romanian member of the church who later moved to Israel with his Jewish wife, and died in the Ebenezer Retirement Home in Haifa, is deeply touching. For years he searched for truth and eventually decided to be circumcised in order to join the synagogue of a renowned rabbi in Bucharest. Someone brought him to Wurmbrand. After a discussion he had the feeling that there was a third person in the room. It was Jesus! He could not but surrender to the claims of Christ.

Richard Wurmbrand was also an indefatigable publicist. He wrote under the pseudonyms Radu Valentin and Ruben Moses, and the number of his publications was legion. Moreover, he edited the Hebrew-Christian magazine "Prietenul" (The Friend). He was, however,⁹⁷ an irritant to the rabbis and the Communists.

Representatives of the Communist Party contacted him and offered him a high position and pardon for all his past "mistakes," provided he rejoin them.

Wurmbrand's answer was an emphatic "No." Then they threatened to let him rot behind bars. That threat was fulfilled one Sunday morning in February 1948, when the newly founded secret police snatched him away. He was on his way to the church, where he was expected to perform a wedding.

In August of the same year his wife was arrested, and after a stay in several prisons she was sent to a labor-camp at the Danube-Black Sea Canal. Their son Mihai, then about nine years old, was cared for by Alice Panaidor (Aunt Alice), a devoted friend of the family. In autumn of that year the communist authorities ordered the Solheims to leave the country.

Nevertheless, the community survived. Pastor Solheim came to an arrangement in which the Hungarian bishop of Cluj would take over the congregation and register it as a part of the Hungarian Lutheran Church. The leaders of the newly (re)founded community were Iancu Moscovici (who died in June this year in Hamburg, where he had worked for many years as a pastor) and Felix Jacobsohn, two Jewish pastors who had been trained during the ministry of Solheim and Wurmbrand. Both earned a degree in theology.

I was twenty when in autumn 1954 I started visiting the church. I was in the habit of entering any open church I came across to ask God for help. The help came through Mihai Wurmbrand, whom I met in the congregation. Even though he was five years my junior he made a good partner for religious discussions. Left without father and mother, being denied any education, he learned from a Christian friend of the family how to tune pianos. Thus, he became a breadwinner. He was mature for his age, and he was reading and thinking a lot. He helped me to take the final step of surrendering my life to God. On 2 January 1955 I received the sacrament of baptism through Pastor Felix, who became my confessor.

In the church I met people who told me very interesting stories about Wurmbrand. Thanks to them I can write these lines. I also met the mother of Mihai, Sabina, who had been released not long after the death of Stalin (1953). She was a living lesson in humility.

The years 1954-1956 could have been called the years of great expectations. As Khrushchev came to power in Moscow, he tried a new approach to domestic and international politics. It was the period of the so-called detente, a period of rapprochement between East and West. During that period the gates of the prisons in Eastern Europe opened and many people came to "freedom."

That is how Wurmbrand came out in the spring of 1956.

I remember the first sermon he gave after his release. He could hardly sit, so he delivered his message leaning. "I want you to know," he said, "that I came from joy to joy, from my beloved ones to my beloved ones. In spite of everything, I have experienced the joy of God's presence..."

He could not talk in public about his life in prison, but in the course of many private conversations we learned of his brush with death in the prison hospital,

where he had spent two years. However, in the antechamber of death he met the angels of God and experienced the very presence of the crucified and risen Lord.

These were euphoric days. The church room and the courtyard were crammed with people who came to see him and listen to his sermons. Visitors constantly filled his little flat, and he talked unceasingly about different aspects of the spiritual life. The audience was awestruck.

I remember asking him whether asceticism could help us improve our spiritual life. He did not answer me at once. The answer came in a letter, in which he put it this way:

It is like a poor girl marrying a rich prince. She is poor; she has nothing, while the prince has everything. However, when they get married, all his wealth belongs also to her. The same holds true of us: I am a sinner; Jesus is righteous. However in his fellowship, all his purity, all his righteousness are mine. You have to believe it. Fire makes the charcoal white. So, the fire of Christ's love makes us white.

The letter was written, if I remember correctly, at the Pavlov Institute, to which he was admitted for treatment of his insomnia. It was quite common for former inmates of the communist prisons to be treated at "Pavlov." Even there he kept preaching. I remember once, when I visited him, he was sitting on the lawn with friends from outside and fellow-patients around him. He was talking about how to become a center of spiritual energy.

In those days of relative freedom he was appointed by the German Bishop Müller of Sibiu (Hermanstadt) to the post of bishopric's missionary, with the license to preach in the German churches of Transylvania. Previously he had taken a graduation exam at the Faculty of Theology in Sibiu. In fact he gave a lecture in Apologetics before a large audience of students, teachers and clergy. The subject was "Do we have proof of Jesus' resurrection?"

To be sure, he used to "visit" us and hold evangelistic campaigns which contributed to the growth of our congregation. However, not everyone was happy with these arrangements. His old friends wanted him back in the leadership of the community, and to have things the way they were before his imprisonment. That is why a foolish and horrible struggle for power broke out. The community became divided between those who supported Pastors Jancu Moscovici and Felix Jacobsohn, and the friends of "Brother Richard." Bonds of friendship attached me to all these groups. I had a very hard time as each group advanced its claims and asked me to take its position. I was a convinced Lutheran, and that is why I chose to support Felix, who was my confessor and whose pastoral care was inestimable to me, and Jancu Moscovici (Dutu), who made an excellent youth leader. However, Mihai was one of my best friends, and the confrontations with Wurmbrand gave me the feeling that fighting him was tantamount to fighting Christ. On the other hand, I could not accept some of the doctrines he was preaching and some of his courses of action.

To make things worse, the communist authorities withdrew his license to preach some months after the Soviet repression of the Hungarian uprising. He could not work as a pastor anymore. The time of relative freedom was over.

The conflict in our church was unremitting and my attempts to keep myself aloof from it were of no avail. I ended up wandering together with Wurmbrand and his friends from community to community. The fear of the authorities made the pastors of these churches bar him from the pulpit, but there were other ways to give him the floor. In these communities, they had Sunday School for adults, where the pastor could ask "Brother Richard" a question, and the answer came in the form of a lecture or a sermon.

Celebration parties gave him another opportunity to preach. Since in Romania people celebrate both their birthday and the day of the saint who is one's namesake, there were plenty of such opportunities. Spiritual warfare was one of the most important topics of these parties. He never lost the opportunity to tell us that we, the Christian Jews, were even more exposed to the attacks of our invisible enemy than our gentile sisters and brethren. The Evil one knows that the Jews who believe in Jesus are the harbinger of his end. That is why he has done his best to destroy our community and scatter us. When Jesus returns the mystery of the failures and defeats we have experienced in our lives will be revealed.

Richard Wurmbrand was living proof that the waters of baptism do not wash away one's Jewish identity. He was a man with a Jewish sense of humor and Jewish mindset, a man who cared for his people. However, he was also an ardent internationalist who opposed any form of chauvinism. He said:

Being Jewish means being human. In the Jewish people we find all the types of the human race – both good or bad. If you look for the typical king, you will find him in David. If you look for the pure type you find it in the Virgin Mary. If you look for the typical traitor you will find him in Judas ... All these were Jews.

Once as we sat in his room and he was lying in his bed, he lifted up his Bible and said:

Look, here is our exit-permit to Israel. Here is our passport to the Land of Israel. Here are the promises of God, that He will gather us from all the nations and bring us to the Promised Land. However don't expect an easy life there. You will face persecution. You will not only sit and eat bread and butter. The times of tribulation are ahead.

He named the Great Tribulation, the Antichrist, the battle of Armageddon.

Another time he said: "What Israel really needs is not preachers. No, it needs prophets, people who have the courage to come to the Parliament and say: 'Yeshua hu ha Mashiah—Jesus is the Messiah.'" He kept telling us that someday Israel will have to stand alone against all the nations of the world.

In November 1958 my mother and I received the long-awaited permit to immigrate to Israel. Our last weeks on Romanian soil were a real nightmare.

The permit could be withdrawn anytime at the whim of the authorities. Every day we had to go through the red tape involved in securing the necessary papers for the travel certificate. Every day we had to put up with the taunts of the officials who had to deliver these papers, and sometimes we had to bribe them.

Another part of the nightmare was the horror stories Wurmbrand told me every night. I sat in his room and learned the message he wanted me to give to Pastor Solheim and to Saiovici (Shaiovitch), the Secretary of the Hebrew Christian Alliance in Israel. It was about the general situation of the Church in Romania. I had to memorize the names of the martyrs who needed the help of the Church in the West, and the names of the traitors who were working for the Securitate. Last but not least he wanted Solheim and Saiovici to help him out of Romania, since he knew that his re-arrest was imminent. The night of our departure, before we took a taxi to the railway station, he gave us Holy Communion in the home of one of our friends.

After arriving in Israel I immediately met with Saiovici and Solheim. However, they were involved in a conflict which reminded me of the congregation I left in Romania. I do not know what they did about the message I brought them from Wurmbrand.

In January 1959 the news of Wurmbrand's re-arrest reached us. I remember reading a letter from Mihai, who quoted his father as saying that in his life bad things never happen, only sad ones. In the aftermath of his father's re-imprisonment, Mihai was expelled from the Faculty of Theology in Sibiu. Later he received the same treatment after being admitted to a medical school, and again when he tried to study at an engineering college. As the son of a political prisoner he was barred from any education.

However, during 1963-1964 the Romanian government embarked on a new policy aimed at turning one of the most servile satellites in the Eastern Block into an independent and yet totalitarian state. To reach this goal, they needed the good will and the money of the West. That is why they started emptying the prisons of their political inmates. Thus, Wurmbrand was released in June 1964.

Thanks to the relentless efforts of Anutza Moise (1914-1994), a faithful friend of the family, and the help of the Norwegian Mission to Israel, the International Hebrew Christian Alliance, and one of Richard Wurmbrand's brothers, the sum necessary to ransom him and his family was raised. That is how, after many obstacles, the Wurmbands came to the West in December 1965.

They were happy and thankful to be free at last; nevertheless they were disappointed at the people's lack of concern for the fate of the Church behind the Iron Curtain. They could not understand how some Christians could show support for regimes which aimed at the eradication of Christianity. That is why he took issue with Swiss theologian Karl Barth and German pastor Martin Niemöller, who took an admirable stance on Nazism but became conciliatory

toward the Communists. He felt that his new call was to make Christians in the Western world aware of the threat the Soviet Block posed to the freedom of mankind, and of the plight of the Church behind the Iron Curtain. Thus he became instrumental in the founding of the organization "Voice of the Martyrs" around the world. He made the voice of the Martyr Church heard in the West, and taught the Christians in the Free World how to help their suffering sisters and brethren.

Of course there were people, especially among the theologians, who criticized him for "being political." As a matter of fact, he merely exposed a political system, which not unlike that of Nazi Germany was a forerunner of Antichrist. Now that the Iron Curtain is a thing of the past, all agree that Wurmbrand was right.

He lived to see the Soviet Block fall apart, and I think that he experienced some of the finest hours of his life when he returned to Romania to preach the gospel of Christ to the officers of the Securitate who were behind bars. Conceivably he met in the audience some of those who had tortured him.

The Wurmbrands eventually chose to make their home in the USA. Their message has been given a better reception there than anywhere else. However, most of these years he and his wife have spent traveling around the world with their message. Writing has also been an essential part of their ministry.

As mentioned above, in Romania Richard Wurmbrand was a productive writer. I remember him being busy writing articles, essays and even poems that never had a chance of being published under the Communist regime. He was also working on a book about Jesus, which I suppose he had to leave unfinished. When he came to the West he was no less prolific—only now he could actually have his books published.

Among them I consider *Christ on the Jewish Road*, *In God's Underground*, *Tortured for Christ*, *Sermon in Solitary Confinement*, and *If Prison Walls Could Speak* to be the most important.

Only illness could stop the Wurmbrands' preaching, traveling and writing. Together they were engaged in a great ministry until first Bintia and then Richard passed away.

The Evangelistic Methods of Robert Lisle Lindsey – A Personal Tribute

Halvor Ronning*

Followers of the God of Israel have been very creative over the centuries in reaching out to their neighbors with the good news of his existence and his love. But this is a strictly biblical characteristic. Never in the annals of non-biblical religion in antiquity does the notion occur that love is the attitude of a divine being toward people. Neither can a text be found which records the reverse—that love is an emotion to be expressed by people in return toward such a loving divinity. Love of God, whether his love to us or our love in response to him, is a uniquely biblical teaching. It is not a human invention; it is the profoundest proof of *revelation*.

In fact some of God's followers, like Jonah, were rather reluctant to see such love extended to others. Jonah argued with God, even complained to God, against the love of God toward the cruel Ninevites, and did not want to follow God's instructions to warn them of impending danger and how to escape it. But others, like Isaiah, are even eloquent in expressing God's love for all his creation.

This sense of the responsibility of being God's people and the sense of obligation to be a light to the nations has been inherited by Christians from our biblical Hebrew and Jewish forefathers. Robert Lindsey was among the foremost in leading us to be thankful for this tremendous inheritance! Accordingly he spoke respectfully about his work in Israel as evangelizing, not "missionizing." He felt that we are to awaken the people to the calling of God on their lives, to point out their heritage which we have joined to enjoy, and to challenge them to wake up to the fulfillment of the promises of God in their Messiah as recorded in their Scriptures.

The Theological Basis of Lindsey's Preaching

The two key words of his entire ministry are "God's Kingdom"—the rule of the love of God in our individual and collective hearts and lives. The extension of his rule involves, first of all, the deepening of God's rule in our own life—till every aspect of our lives are cleaned up and devoted to him. But such individual deepening will automatically reflect the love of God to others, and therefore involve outreach to others, just as the Jewish people were to exemplify God's rule, and so spread the light of his Torah—his instructions for "real living" to others. "Choose life and not death" was the basic instruction they were given; i.e., follow God, the author and giver of life, follow his ways and instructions and *live*.

Jesus, as Immanuel, "with us—God" finally lived out the Torah to perfection, and gave one new commandment - "to love one another as I have loved you." The love of the God of Israel for His people was there all the time - as can be clearly seen in Jesus' Bible, the Old Testament, but never so clearly nor so deeply expressed as in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. In him the Father ruled totally. "I do nothing, but what the Father tells me to do." This obedience released such a Holy Spirit energy that the whole world is benefiting from it. The rest is detail.

Lindsey was a pastor and a scholar, but first of all a pastor, a shepherd. He cared about people. The Lindsey home was open, and many a lonely person, including many university students, enjoyed meals with the Lindseys. Sometimes it was just a soup alone with Lindsey in the kitchen, a soup that he threw together if Margaret, his wife, was not around.

Lindsey loved music. He was a trumpeter and a piano player. He regularly led the singing himself and often accompanied with his trumpet. He wrote songs—often with a black southern beat that belied his Oklahoman origins. Especially loved was a congregational favorite at the Narkis Street Baptist House in Jerusalem which began: "Go tell John what you see and hear." The song goes on to describe the rule of God on this earth as "the blind see and the lame are walking."

He once said that the best evangelizing he ever did was when he worked as a piano tuner in Tiberias. This work brought him into homes in a relaxed atmosphere where unthreatening personal conversations were easy vehicles of sharing stories and life values, and the story of the gospel.

The Personality of Jesus

He often said, "If you want to be a 'missionary' in Israel, be a *ben adam*." A *ben adam* is someone who makes soup for you in his kitchen, who listens to you and hears what you are saying and relates to it. He is not someone who pushes himself on you. He cares about what you are thinking and feeling, and starts

there, not with any personal agenda of getting some ideas off his back. If you have medicine for a wounded fox, or lion for that matter, which has been wounded by people who look like you (i.e., if you want to offer comfort and healing for Jews who have been wounded for nearly two millennia by people who were Christians or at least appeared to be Christians), you don't go running after them waving the medicine in your hand.

In contrast, Ben-Adam, which is "son of man" in Hebrew, and "Mensch" in Yiddish, is a very different concept. In its modern meaning in both languages, it is somewhat equivalent in English to being "human," "humane," "real," "genuine," not a fake, but a genuinely caring human being, a real friend, one who sticks around through thick and thin.

I called Bob on the phone one morning maybe 30 years ago, and he said, "The strangest thing happened to me last night in Bethlehem. The Arab Baptist pastor of East Jerusalem asked me to come with him to pray for a lady in Bethlehem who was suffering severe disturbances and could not hold down any job because of it. As we sat praying for her, she suddenly got down off her chair and started writhing around on the floor and screaming. I got scared, but it didn't seem to bother the Arab pastor at all. He just kept praying, and so did I. Then I started speaking to her in a loud voice that was not English or Hebrew or Arabic or any language I knew. She got up off the floor and sat calmly on her chair again. I really don't know what to make of all this." What had happened was that, without Lindsey desiring or even asking, the Holy Spirit had given him the gift of tongues to help this lady.

This openness expressed itself in Oklahoma as a readiness to play his trumpet on the street corner and testify. In Israel he led a little congregation of some 25 people into a revival that multiplied the size of the congregation many times over. The little chapel had a wall broken out to expand it. Then it was burned down, evidently by zealots who sensed that some kind of change had taken place at the Narkis Street Baptist House. For years after the fire the congregation met in a tent in the parking lot, which over the years was converted into a sizeable tin shack hall until eventually a new facility was built. Four congregations now meet in this new building—the original congregation still meets in the English language, plus three spin-offs—a Hebrew-speaking congregation, a Russian-speaking congregation and second English-speaking congregation.

Here was a Southern Baptist pastor who began to hold weekly healing and deliverance meetings where people sensed the presence and power of God. They wanted to be a part of this movement of the Spirit. He spoke in tongues occasionally, but he spoke quietly. He never wore it on his sleeve.

In a custom continued from Lindsey's time, today's congregation recites the *Shema*, "Hear O Israel," and reads from the Parasha, the weekly Torah reading—as in the synagogues in Jesus' day and today—and occasionally sings

in Arabic as well as in Hebrew. Thus Narkis Street Congregation is known for its openness. This is definitely a part of the heritage of Lindsey, who at one stage in his life was the manager of the Petach Tikva area Baptist Village School for Arab orphans and also a retreat center.

It is profound that the new sanctuary built after the fire has been deliberately modeled to look like a tent, a temporary sort of dwelling that can be moved. The idea is that the congregation will be open to the moving of God's Spirit, open to youth and new ideas—not new ideas about God, but new ideas about how to express His love and His power, specifically now amidst such tremendous fear and hostility from Islam. Many are the testimonies of God's moving among Jewish and Arab people alike.

Biblical Scholarship in the Academic Jungle

Although the congregation was English-speaking, there were a number of Hebrew speakers as well and Lindsey started a small weekly Bible study in Hebrew in the late 1960's. He desired to create a new translation of the New Testament into Modern Hebrew for use in that Bible study. In the late 19th century, the great German Hebraist, Franz Delitsch, had created an excellent translation into Hebrew that was a mixture of Biblical Hebrew and the later Mishnaic Hebrew was spoken in the land of Israel in the days of Jesus. This was the translation used by the majority of the Hebrew-speaking Christian congregations in the State of Israel, but it was difficult for people whose mother tongue was not Hebrew and who did not know the old Biblical Hebrew style. Forty years ago this was about half of the people of the State of Israel who were born abroad and immigrated as adults to the state. These immigrants did not know Hebrew well yet, nor did the foreign students.

So Lindsey, with his pastor's heart, wanted to create a more easily understandable Hebrew translation. He started with the shortest of the gospels, Mark, which almost all teachers at that time still considered to be the first of the four gospels. The short of a long and fascinating story is that now there exists in Jerusalem an officially incorporated Jerusalem School of Synoptic Gospel Research, which is a school of New Testament Gospel interpretation.

The Jerusalem School is a school of thought that has developed out of the research work of Lindsey, but, curiously, it was against what Lindsey had been taught. He had been taught the importance of Greek and the priority of Mark. It was his translation work of putting the gospels into Hebrew that forced him reluctantly to recognize that his teachers were wrong in emphasizing the Greek language and the Greek philosophical world to the extent they had been doing. He found Biblical Hebrew words and phrases behind the Greek words of the gospels. He realized that the only proper place to go to understand them was to the Hebrew Bible, and not primarily to Greek. He was also forced to realize that this had consequences for the relationship of the synoptic gospels.

It turned out that Luke is the gospel whose Greek has the more linguistically Hebrew features – which is all the more fascinating when one discovers that in the second half of Acts, where Luke writes in the first person of his own experiences while traveling with Paul, there is no Hebrew influence at all! It just goes to show how respectful Luke was of the eyewitness sources he mentions at the beginning of his narrative.

Yet God in his providence ordained that the Gospel was to be spread in the Greek language which is more thorough and exact than Hebrew as a language. It was the international language of those days, like English is today. But the thought world from which the concepts are all originating – concepts like sin, salvation, confession, repentance, Messiah, Son of God, and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit – are born of God’s revelations to his people as recorded in the Hebrew Bible. The pagan world did not have, nor could they even imagine, such a world of love of God for his people and their love in return for Him. Hebrew itself was a pagan language which began to be different only as God revealed new concepts which did not exist in other languages through the medium of his Hebrew-speaking people. The primary concept was the love of God expressed in the Kingdom of his loving faithfulness to his people.

The profound blessing of this level of Hebrew scholarship, known in the 19th century and lost till revived by Lindsey and others like him, is that it is faith-building, not faith-destroying. All who have studied with Lindsey can testify that their love for Jesus and desire to be near him and like him has been strengthened by the kind of research Lindsey did. He did not pull apart the gospel traditions into little pieces and create doubt about whether Jesus ever said what is recorded – ala the infamous “Jesus Seminar” in California. Rather he brought his students back into the world of Jesus’ Bible, the Old Testament, to see where an idea came from, how Jesus used it, what he meant and how he fulfilled it.

For example, Christians have agreed to use “Son of Man” to refer to Jesus’ humanity, but there is no more divine title for a human in the whole Hebrew Bible than the “Son of Man, who sits at the right hand of the Ancient of Days” and comes on the clouds at the end of time – in Daniel and in Enoch. This was the title that Jesus used of himself far more than any other. Jesus knew who he was and claimed it. Many accepted his claims, but even more rejected them. It will not do for our liberals to claim that he was just a nice man who was dressed with divinity by the “second generation, former pagan, Greek-speaking followers” doing the best they could to explain who Jesus was ... as is being taught in too many seminaries in the West. David Flusser of the Hebrew University, with whom Lindsey worked closely together, used to say, “Listening to the Christian liberals could make you think that Matthew, Mark and Luke were great religious geniuses, and Jesus was nothing!”

Lindsey was an evangelist in the academic jungle of prowling lions eager to devour the gospel truths about Jesus. A whole score of students at the Hebrew University bless God for Lindsey and the biblically reliable methods of research learned from him.⁴³⁴

Of his various ways of reaching out to neighbors with the claims of Jesus, this last approach may be of the most long-lasting significance. That is, his ministry in the academic jungle. God honoring scholarship is desperately lacking in all too many western seminaries.

In this jungle, I thank God all the more for the personal example of love for Jesus, the Messiah and Savior, which I sensed in my mentor, Dr. Robert Lindsey. His openness to the direction of the Holy Spirit in his life—in accordance with the Scriptures, is one that I could wish for every reader of this article. It could unite us in the battle for God honoring, faith building, and historically solid Biblical interpretation. It could help us restore and sustain the faith of seminary students who are now so often ravaged by skeptics and cynics among their professors. Such professors typically abuse historical criticism to shred texts and diminish Jesus to a teacher of ethics, a nice man, rather than letting the light of the Gospel of the God of Israel, the World Savior Jesus, shine the more brightly. His very name in Hebrew, Yeshua—Jesus, proclaims that he is “savior.”

In Israel there are organizations which emphasize more the approach of aggressive witness and other organizations which emphasize the approach of listening and answering. It can be quite legitimate for an organization to choose a certain emphasis, but to make a rigid formula of one approach or the other would be to quench the Holy Spirit. Lindsey is for me an example of one who sought not to quench the Holy Spirit, but to allow the Spirit full sway. What an incredibly rich and varied ministry with a variety of approaches to sharing the gospel. May we learn from him, who learned from Jesus, his Messiah and Lord, the King who ruled his life.

Appendix

Milestones in the Life of Robert Lisle Lindsey

Aug. 16, 1917: Born in Norman, Oklahoma, to J. L. and Elsie Lisle Lindsey.

1944: The Lindseys appointed as missionaries by the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

⁴³⁴ Among those who studied with Lindsey are David Bivin, founder of Jerusalem School of Synoptic Gospel Research, Dr. Brad Young, head of the Bible Department at Oral Roberts University, Dr. Steve Notley, head of Manhattan educational Services, Dr. Weston Fields, director of the Dead Sea Scrolls Foundation, Dr. Randall Buth, head of the Biblical Hebrew Ulpan, Dwight Pryor, director of the Center for Judaic-Christian Studies and the author himself.

May 22, 1945: Th.M., Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey.

Oct. 16, 1945: Sails from New York for Palestine, with Margaret, his wife.

Mar. 1949: Negotiates, on behalf of the Baptist Convention in Israel, the purchase of a 15-acre tract of land near Petah Tikvah. The Christian kibbutz Lindsey hopes to found never materializes, but the farm, known to Israelis as the Baptist Village, will serve as an orphanage and boarding school, camp and retreat center.

1951: Completes, with the help of two Israeli translators working from English and French, a preliminary translation of the New Testament into Hebrew.

May 20, 1954: Ph.D., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

1955: Negotiates, on behalf of the Baptist Convention in Israel, the purchase of property in the heart of Tel Aviv's theater and cafe district for an art gallery and bookshop. The bookshop, which is named Dugith ("small fishing boat" in Hebrew), will open on Oct. 1, 1959.

End of Aug. 1962: Moves to Jerusalem, where, until his retirement in 1987, serves as senior pastor of the Narkis Street Baptist Church.

Oct. 19, 1969: First edition of *A Hebrew Translation of the Gospel of Mark* is published. Lindsey and Prof. Flusser hold a joint press conference at Baptist House.

May 16, 1987: Retires as senior pastor of the Narkis Street Baptist Church.

May 18, 1987: Leaves Israel. Resides in Moore, Oklahoma.

1990: *The Jesus Sources* is published.

1990: *Jesus: Rabbi & Lord* is published.

May 31, 1995: Dies in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Age 77.

June 7, 1995: Memorial service, Narkis Street Baptist Church, Jerusalem. The 18 speakers include Teddy Kollek, former mayor of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem School members Prof. David Flusser, Prof. Brad Young and David Bivin.

The Writings of Robert L. Lindsey

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Books and Booklets⁴³⁵

1. *Israel in Christendom: The Problem of Jewish Identity*. Jerusalem: no publisher, no date (between 1954 and 1959). 369 pp.
2. *A Hebrew Translation of the Gospel of Mark*. Jerusalem: Dugith Publishers, 1969 (1st ed.); 1973 (2nd ed.). xxvi + 162 pp. (Preface to the 2nd ed., pp. v-xxvi. Foreword by David Flusser, pp. 1-8. Introduction, pp. 9-84. Greek text and Hebrew trans., pp. 85–159.)
3. *A New Approach to the Synoptic Gospels*. Jerusalem: Dugith Publishers, 1971. 23 pp.
4. *The Gospels*. Jerusalem: Dugith Publishers, 1972. 18 pp.
5. *From Luke to Mark to Matthew: Notes on the Sources of Mark's "Pick-ups" and the Use by All the Synoptists of a Central Noncanonical Source*. Jerusalem: Dugith Publishers, 1982. 55 pp.
6. *An Introduction to the Theology of the Jewish Christian Relationship*. Jerusalem: Dugith Publishers, 1984. 15 pp. (An address delivered at the first Consultation of the United Christian Council in Israel, Apr. 1969.)
7. *The Lindsey Lectures: Understanding the Gospels*. Jerusalem: New Testament Research Center, 1985. 117 pp. (Edited by James L. Burnham, these were a series of lectures delivered to fellow representatives of the Baptist Convention in Israel, winter 1982/83. After further editing, they became *The Jesus Sources* [see no. 11 below].)
8. *A Comparative Greek Concordance of the Synoptic Gospels*. Editor. 3 vols. Jerusalem: Dugith Publishers, 1985, 1988, 1989. Vol. 1: xvi + 451 pp. (Preface by Elmar Camillo dos Santos, p. iii. Introduction by Lindsey, pp. v–xiv.) Vol. 2: 327 pp. Vol. 3: 300 pp. (Elmar Camillo dos Santos compiled and collated Vols. 1 and 2. James Leonard Burnham assisted with the editing of Vol. 2, and compiled and collated Vol. 3.)
9. *The Expansion of His Kingdom: New Insights Into Isaiah 9:6-7*. Tulsa, OK: HaKeshar, 1989. 20 pp.
10. *Jesus Rabbi & Lord: The Hebrew Story of Jesus Behind Our Gospels*. Oak Creek, WI: Cornerstone Publishing, 1990. 227 pp.
11. *The Jesus Sources: Understanding the Gospels*. Tulsa, OK: HaKeshar, 1990. 111 pp.
12. *The Apostles' Question*. Tulsa, OK: HaKeshar, 1998. 29 pp.
13. *The Expansion of His Kingdom*. Tulsa, OK: HaKeshar, 1998. 31 pp.
14. *Jesus, Lord of Capernaum*. Tulsa, OK: HaKeshar, 1998. 35 pp.

⁴³⁵ For information on articles written by Lindsey, see *Jerusalem Perspective*.

Annotated Bibliographies of Jewish Believers in Jesus⁴³⁶

1. Teruya, Yoshihiko. "Bernard J. Bettelheim and Okinawa: A Study of the First Protestant Missionary to the Island Kingdom, 1846-1854." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Colorado, 1969.

Bernard Bettelheim was a Jewish believer and a missionary to the nations rather than to his own people. This is a thesis, and its style is typically dry. If you can slog through the endless details about Ryukyuan/Chinese/British relations in mid-19th century, there is no denying that Bettelheim cuts a fascinating figure. As the authorities literally drove people away from him, he devised ways of continuing to preach, including showing up uninvited inside private homes! This is not by any means a full biography, though there are glimpses of his early life, of how he used the difficulties faced by Jewish believers as a point of contact with his hearers, of how he thought the Ryukyuan were descended from the Ten Lost Tribes, and of his personality which seems to have been one of an undiplomatic, non-stop talker who spoke with his hands—and was undeniably stubborn and creative!

2. Ebenezer, Matthew. "American Presbyterians and Islam in India 1855-1923: A Critical Evaluation of the Contributions of Isidor Loewenthal (1826-1864) & Elwood Morris Wherry (1843-1927)." Ph.D. dissertation, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1998.

Isidor Loewenthal was another Jewish Christian whose call was to the Afghans of India. This thesis is split between material on Loewenthal and that on Wherry, known for his often strident Muslim apologetics. We learn something of Loewenthal's biography, and especially of his time on the mission field (cut short by his accidental death). He is characterized as creative, intellectual, and ahead of his time in many of his attitudes. The section on Wherry also has value for Jewish evangelism, for what is said about the methods of Muslim apologetics can apply in many respects to apologetics for Jews; and relevant, as Christians have given more thought to Muslim evangelism since 9/11. And given the stated intention of by some of the terrorists to destroy Jews, how ironic that God used a Jewish Christian to reach Afghans! May He again use a Jewish believer to bring the message of peace to unlikely places?

3. Carlyle, Gavin. "*Mighty in the Scriptures*": A Memoir of Adolph Saphir, D.D. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, n.d. [1893]. Hb, viii, 448 pp.

This book is comprehensive, responsible, and interesting. Adolph Saphir was an author whose works are in desperate need of rediscovery. The fact that

⁴³⁶ The annotations are written by Richard Robinson (1-2) and by Jim R. Sibley (3-10).

Keren Ahvah Meshihit in Jerusalem is currently republishing them makes Saphir's biography all the more relevant. His works sparkle with fresh insights and spiritual warmth. Saphir was baptized along with his father, mother and sisters in Budapest in June of 1843—in the midst of the "Budapest Revival." The account of the Mission of Inquiry from the Church of Scotland is a fascinating story that needs to be retold for each generation. The story of the prayer of the Archduchess, Maria Dorothea, is an inspiring illustration of prevailing prayer. Though the book does not include any indices, the table of contents is very full and descriptive. The book includes a sampling from his correspondence, "pithy sayings and short extracts" from his sermons, three complete sermon manuscripts, and three appendices.

4. Corey, Muriel W. *From Rabbi to Bishop: The Biography of the Right Reverend Michael Solomon Alexander, Bishop in Jerusalem*. London: The Olive Press, n.d. [1956]. Pb, 112 pp.

Corey's biography of Michael Solomon Alexander is not only accessible, but of tremendous interest from any number of perspectives. First, as the title suggests, the story of a young rabbi who comes to faith in Messiah Yeshua and then eventually becomes the first Anglican bishop in Jerusalem is a fascinating tale in and of itself. For the student of the history and politics of the mid-nineteenth century Middle East, Alexander's appointment involved the greatest world powers of the day that were vying for the trade routes to India. For one interested in the history of Anglican missions to the Jews, or in the history of Christ Church in Jerusalem, Corey's book is a good starting point. Finally, Alexander's rabbinic training and background counters the canard that only Jews who are ignorant of Judaism are drawn to faith in Messiah. It should also be noted that Alexander gave significant attention to Hebrew liturgy and to the contextualization of Anglican Christianity to Jewish culture. It is a shame that some of this work was not included in the book.

5. Frey, Joseph Samuel C. F. *Narrative of the Rev. Joseph Samuel C. F. Frey*. New York: Printed for the author by D. Fanshaw, 1833. Hb, 172 pp.

Frey has been called the "Father of Modern Jewish Missions," and certainly made a significant contribution to the proclamation of the gospel to his people. In this, the tenth edition of his autobiography (The original title was, *The Converted Jew; or Memoirs of the Life of Joseph Samuel C. F. Frey*, etc.), Frey tells his own story in his own words. Few endured more active opposition than Frey and this work reflects and anticipates this opposition. His character and integrity were often assailed by his ¹¹²opponents, but were ratified by all who knew him. His *Narrative* incorporates personal correspondence, biblical and theological observations and an appendix "containing answers to a variety of questions relative to the Jews and the Ten Tribes." The third edition carried an

appended "Address to Christians of all Denominations, in behalf of the Descendants of Abraham." The importance of Frey's life and the scarcity of his autobiography make this an excellent candidate for republication.

6. Hopkins, Hugh Evan. *Sublime Vagabond: The Life of Joseph Wolff, Missionary Extraordinary*. West Chilmington, Sussex: Chanctonbury Press, Ltd., 1984. Pb, xiv, 370 pp., bibliographies and index, no documentation.

Joseph Wolff ranks as one of the most colorful, yet significant, pioneers in modern Jewish missions. Hopkins portrays Wolff as the first to proclaim the gospel in Jerusalem in modern times (p.119)—the result of which was the salvation of a young rabbi. Wolff traveled throughout the Middle East, Iran, central Asia, and India. Everywhere he went, he followed the pattern of Paul in preaching the gospel "to the Jew first and also to the Greek." Among the Muslim he was known as the "English dervish," who was "drunk with the love of God" (pp. 145-157). Wolff sent extensive reports of his travels to his supporters in England [Cf., e.g., his *Mission to Bokhara*, edited and abridged with an introduction by Guy Wint (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969)]. One result of his reports were the activities of the Bible societies and mission agencies that followed in his wake. The contributions of this Jewish believer are largely unknown to Messianic Jews and missionaries to the Jewish people, not to mention those who have been sent to the Muslim world.

7. *David Baron and the Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel*. London: The Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel, n.d. [1947?]. Hb, x, 161 pp., index, but no documentation.

David Baron was known chiefly as a writer. He wrote some 38 books and many pamphlets and booklets. Most noteworthy are: *The Servant of Jehovah* (on Isaiah 53), *The Shepherd of Israel* (on Psalm 80), *The Visions and Prophecies of Zechariah*, and *Rays of Messiah's Glory, Christ in the Old Testament*. In 1893, Baron, together with Charles Schonberger, founded "The Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel." This was a non-denominational mission work by Messianic Jews. As a "faith mission," funding was often sparse. Nevertheless, all of the affairs of the mission were under the direction of a board, and every effort was made to handle funds with utmost integrity. On one occasion, Baron remarked that there were two miracles with respect to the funding of the mission: one was that the needed funds came in; the other was that the board released these needed funds (cf. p. 89)! This book is enriched with numerous photographs and with six of Baron's sermons.

8. Bernstein, A. *Some Jewish Witnesses For Christ*. London: Operative Jewish Converts' Institution, 1909, documentation, but no index 535 pp.

Of his work, Bernstein says, "The aim of this work is to shew that God had at all times in the history of the Christian Church, a considerable number of believing Israelites who, after their conversion to Christianity, rendered good service to their fellowmen and to the Church of Christ at large" (p.6). He groups brief biographical articles under the following headings: "Apostolic Period" (5 pp), "Sub-Apostolic or Patristic Period " (3 pp), "The Period of the Talmud " (7 pp), "Jewish Converts in the Eastern Church " (3 pp), "Jewish Converts in the Western Church" (42 pp), and "Converts in the Protestant Churches" (463 pp). He has drawn his information from the Talmud, the *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, Ridley Herschell, de le Roi, Moses Margolouth, W.T. Gidney, and others. Long out of print, Bernstein's valuable work is now available in two separate formats: Keren Ahvah Meshihit has released a convenient paperback edition, and Good Books (in Springfield, Illinois) offers a hardback edition with two pages printed on a single side of each 8 1/2 " x 11" sheet, and bound on the left.

9. Gartenhaus, Jacob. *Famous Hebrew Christians*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979. Pb., 206 pp.

The lives of thirty-three individuals are treated in this handy paperback. Comparing Gartenhaus to Meyer (below), they have fourteen subjects in common and nineteen in Gartenhaus are not treated in Meyer. Of these nineteen, only two are not also found in Bernstein (although many of his article are very brief). Gartenhaus unfortunately mistakes Isaac Lichtenstein for Iechiel Lichtenstein, but otherwise his information is fairly reliable. In fact, this book is probably the best introduction to the lives of well-known Jewish believers of the past.

10. Meyer, Louis. *Eminent Hebrew Christians of the Nineteenth Century* (edited with an introduction by David A. Rausch). New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1983. Hb., xxxviii, 145 pp.

Meyer covers the lives of twenty-one Jewish believers in this relatively expensive book. His articles are generally slightly longer than those in Gartenhaus. As mentioned above, Meyer and Gartenhaus share fourteen subjects, and seven are found here that are not treated by Gartenhaus. Of these seven, two are not listed in Bernstein. In Meyer's book, Theodore J. Meyer is the same as Jonas Theodor Meyer in Bernstein's. Nevertheless, Meyer's book is certainly significant for the student of great Jewish believers of the past.

Book Review

The Jewish Bishop and the Chinese Bible: S.I.J. Schereschewsky (1831-1906). Studies in Christian Mission, vol. 22, Irene Eber. Leiden: Brill, 1999.

Richard Robinson

This, the first full-length scholarly treatment of Bishop Schereschewsky (hereafter "S."), is about as complete an account as you will find of this Jewish pioneer missionary's life and work—and at about \$106.00 US, about as expensive an account, too.

The author, Irene Eber, herself Jewish and not a believer in Jesus, is a specialist in Asian Studies at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Accordingly, the book is very strong on the Chinese elements, though a good 30 pages are devoted to a bio of the pre-China S., with much of those details reconstructed from accounts by S.'s children as well as from an earlier biography, *Apostle to China* (1937) by James A. Muller. Eber acknowledges S.'s Jewishness and devotes a good number of pages to the Jewish setting of his age, his time at rabbinical school, and so on, written objectively.

The eight main sections are: "Introduction: The Setting," with a look at both the Jewish Haskalah and the relationship between China and missionaries; "The Early Years from Lithuania to America, 1831-1859," detailing S.'s European upbringing and transition to the United States; "Shanghai, 1859-1862;" "Peking, 1862-1874," during which period S. was married; "Years of Achievement, 1878-1906," which contains accounts of S.'s illness and his well-known work of translating the Old Testament into northern Mandarin Chinese; "The Chinese Old Testament and Notes," a narrowly-focused chapter about translation techniques and specific problems relating to translating terms such as "God," "Soul," etc.; "The 'Term Question,'" concerning debates over the proper translation for "God"; and "A Summing Up: The Man and the Text."

Readers who want to concentrate more on learning about S. as a person rather than on the details of Chinese translation could profitably read the Introduction and first and last chapters, while skimming chapters 2-4 and omitting 5-6 altogether. Glossy photos of excellent quality and a full bibliography, index, and maps round out the publication.

As is clear from the above, the book has a dual focus on S. the person and on his translation work. Eber's first interest is the text, which provides the springboard into talking about S. himself: "It is due to the unique nature of his translation that Schereschewsky the translator and his background assume special importance." (p. xiv). S.'s background is explicated in terms of Eastern European Jewry, then German Hebrew-Christianity, next Christian America, and lastly 19th-century China: the four cultural currents that went into S.'s

personal formation and vision of life. Thus Eber does not marginalize the movement of Jews to Jesus.

The reader will discover sympathy with S.'s Jewish background not necessarily expected from a Jewish author:

Trained in biblical Hebrew and grammar since early childhood, he brought to the task of translation an unrivalled knowledge of and insight into the text. Because this training included the study of rabbinic commentaries and midrashic literature (a body of expository materials of the scriptures), his approach to translating as well as the resources he used differed greatly from those of other missionary translators, who had no background in Jewish exegesis. These differences were reflected both in the strategies he used to translate the Old Testament and how he interpreted the text in his appended notes. Thus Schereschewsky's translation can be regarded as the only Chinese Old Testament to reflect not only the traditional Jewish text but to also include elements of the Jewish exegetical tradition (p. xv).

In her introductory chapter on "The Setting," Eber makes a few remarks of special interest to missionaries to the Jews. The London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews reported, in the first half of the 19th century, eager reception of Bibles distributed by missionaries. Eber's evaluation is "that the desire for Bible reflected, not a religious quest, but rather the Haskalah spirit to know more about their own and the outside world." She comments at some length on the interaction between missionary work among the Jews and the Haskalah.

Chapter One, the biography of S.'s first 28 years, by itself is the most complete biography in print (the reviewer has not had the opportunity to see the 1937 Muller book referred to above). We learn of S.'s being made an orphan early on; of the fact that he was Ashkenazi on his father's side and Sephardic on his mother's; of his life first in Taurage in Lithuania and then in rabbinical school in Zhitomir. Eber gives plenty of background information to flesh out and give perspective to the bare facts. While many testimonies of European Jewish believers may mention in passing that they "studied at rabbinical school," Eber explains the nature of rabbinical schools, how they related to larger society, to conscription in the army, and to the Enlightenment, what the curriculum was like, and the fear that the newer rabbinic schools actually were considered by some to be "stepping stones to conversion." Eber is of the opinion that a London Society Bible made its way into S.'s school, being probably his first encounter with the New Testament. Incidentally, Eber notes that the missionaries to the Jews "maintained that the popular assumption, that Israel ceased to be God's chosen people by not recognizing Jesus, was completely mistaken ... According to this view, far from losing their Jewish identity, the converts' Jewish identity is reaffirmed, and their role in God's plan given a special, universal meaning." It is refreshing to hear this statement of what Jewish Christians believe reiterated in this context.

Eber likewise spends much time on the American background and details S.'s early time in America. The exact timing and circumstance of his coming to Christ remains unclear, as many formative influences both in Breslau and in America are described—though Eber cites Muller's book as giving 2 April 1855, during a Passover seder, as the decisive moment. The author then makes an interesting remark: "With baptism Schereschewsky turned his back once and for all, not on Judaism itself, as we shall see, but on the world-wide Jewish community." Many 19th-century Jewish Christians would have said that they had left Judaism, but not the Jewish people. Eber further develops S.'s bio by enlarging on his seminary experiences in America. In short, if you want a readable, colorful biography of at least the first 28 years of S.'s life, you will want to read this chapter if nothing else.

Space does not permit me to detail Eber's chapters on the Chinese phases of S.'s life, with two exceptions. One, how S. brought his Jewish background to bear on his work of translation; and two, how he persevered in spite of becoming an invalid.

As to his Jewish background, this bore upon his judgment that a prayer book in literary, rather than spoken Chinese, was needed.

... he stated that, although "...Hebrew is regarded as a dead language...it cannot be considered such, as far as Polish and Oriental Jews are concerned, being constantly used by them for religious and literary purposes." Thus if Jewish non-Hebrew speaking congregations can use a Hebrew prayer book, non-literary Chinese speakers can do so even more easily. Invoking the Jewish case to prove the Chinese indicates how thoroughly comfortable Schereschewsky was with his Jewish past (p. 241).

S. also drew on his knowledge of medieval Jewish commentary. The expression "he will be cut off from his people" in Genesis 17:14 is translated into Chinese as "he will be renounced, he will not be permitted among the people." On the other hand, a similar phrase in Exodus 12:19 is rendered more explicitly as "destroyed among the congregation." Eber notes,

In translating Genesis, Schereschewsky evidently resorted to the medieval commentator Rashi, who explains the verb as meaning separation: the violator of the commandment shall go elsewhere. Whatever the reason, he apparently did not consult a commentary while translating this passage from Exodus (p. 171).

In his appended notes to his translation, S. "most frequently resorted to Rashi for his comments, especially in Genesis, and at times to Ibn Ezra, as well as to midrashic literature." (p. 189). Several pages of illustrative examples follow.

The second salient detail to be mentioned is that in the course of his ministry, S. succumbed to paralysis—caused, according to one judgment, by malaria, and to another, by sunstroke in extreme heat—and became an invalid for life. A 13-year interlude ensued in Europe and America, during which time S. adjusted to his loss of capacities. As Eber describes it, S. experienced a

gradual return to a mental equilibrium which, although shaky at times, allowed him to eventually resume intellectual and scholarly work. One factor was, of course, his Christian faith, the beliefs and values to which he had committed himself thirty years earlier. The other was the more intangible tenacity, the life-affirming will despite adversity of his Jewish background and its tradition.

So Eber affirms both his Christian faith and his Jewishness.

In the concluding “Summing Up,” Eber reflects that there was a “remarkable integration of the Jew and Christian” in S.’s life. “Aside from Schereschewky’s brief attempt at a name change (or was it a registrar’s mistake?) at the Western Theological Seminary, he never denied his Jewish antecedents. Nor was he allowed to forget them.” From a non-Christian author, the following evaluation is most positive:

But even if a Jew cannot reconcile Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Messiah, with Judaism – something Schereschewsky clearly knew – he nonetheless succeeded in integrating his Jewish past with his Christian present. Both parts of his life, one so different from the other, became necessary ingredients of who he was.

Is there a lesson in this for us today, when questions of Jewish identity surface in the “messianic movement” and among missions to the Jews? The bigger question is, “In terms of *halakha*, the apostate is a sinner, but he is a Jewish sinner ... Schereschewsky was surely aware that by converting he did not cease to be a Jew.... Schereschewsky’s Jewish past, far from a hindrance, was an asset on the path he had chosen.” (pp. 243-44)

Such is the life of one who “as translator of Hebrew Scripture ... had no equal at the time, then nor since” (p. 239) and who even now is commemorated in the Episcopal church calendar every 14 October. “*Zecher tzaddik livracha*” – “the name of the just is blessed” (Prov 10:7).