

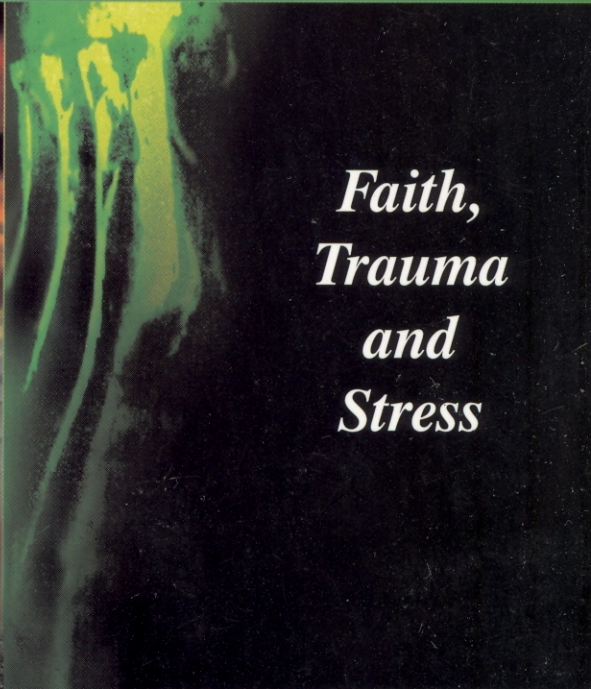
*When  
Life  
Hurts*

# MISHKAN

A FORUM ON THE GOSPEL AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE

Issue 40 / 2004

JERUSALEM



*Faith,  
Trauma  
and  
Stress*

# MISHKAN

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

ISSUE 40 / 2004

**General Editor: Kai Kjær-Hansen**

**Caspari Center for Biblical and Jewish Studies · Jerusalem**

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**Mishkan** is a semi-annual journal dedicated to biblical and theological thinking on issues related to Jewish Evangelism, Hebrew-Christian/Messianic-Jewish identity, and Jewish-Christian relations.

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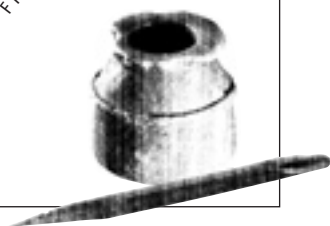
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**Mishkan** is a forum for discussion, and articles included do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors.

# When Pain is Part of Life

By Kai Kjær-Hansen

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR



Life is not always easy. Neither is the life we live in faith trusting in the crucified and risen Messiah, Jesus.

Even when body language and facial expressions communicate suffering, many believers find it difficult to honestly say that they hurt. I'm not referring to physical pain, but pain no less genuine and debilitating. Believers have fears. Believers suffer from anxieties. The darkness of depression threatens to close out all light and life. Some suffer emotional trauma as a result of a physical disease like cancer. Others can't cope with the loss of a loved one.

Why is it so difficult for many of us to admit that there are times when life hurts – particularly the life we live as believers in Jesus? Is it because we fail to live up to a man-made image of what it means to be a good believer? Is it because in our congregations we have created a picture of a believer which no one – in real life – can live up to? Do we fail to admit that life hurts out of fear that if we do no one will trust us nor take us seriously? Are we afraid that they see us as someone in need of being delivered – from evil or even evil spirits?

As long as we remain silent about such issues our own faith is crippled and we cripple other believers who have nowhere to go and no one to talk to.

In this issue of *Mishkan* we will address the issue of the pains of life. We are glad to inform readers about different new initiatives taken within the Messianic community in Israel to break the silence and speak out.

In order to help – our hurting community ...

A CURRENT ISSUE



# They Crucified Him

By Kai Kjær-Hansen

"The Passion of the Christ is as anti-Semitic as the New Testament and Johann Sebastian Bach. We have to acknowledge that and cannot ignore it." This is a statement put forth by a well-known Christian debater in Denmark during the controversy over Mel Gibson's film about the last 12 hours of Jesus' life. So the question of whether the New Testament is anti-Semitic – or contains anti-Semitic or anti-Judaistic elements – is not just a topic between Jews and Christians; it is also a topic between Christians and Christians.

It is no wonder that some Jews fear that the movie may add fuel to the fire of anti-Semitism when we consider how New Testament texts through the ages have been misused for anti-Semitic purposes. That some Christians call the New Testament anti-Semitic could be a way to atone for the misdeeds that the church has committed against the Jewish people in the name of the New Testament. The statement, however, shows that parts of the Christian church are in crisis.

Personally, I could easily have done without nine tenths of the violent scenes in the film. And I would have liked to see those scenes replaced with (even more) flashbacks to the life of Jesus, so there would be a clear connection to the things in his life which led up to his death. But as a Christian I cannot do without Jews in the context of the Passion of the Christ. For me as a Christian it is of the utmost importance that it is Israel's God who acts with and through Jesus for the good of Israel – and consequently for the good of all other people.

So who crucified Jesus? When Mark writes "they crucified him" (Mark 15:25), the subject is the Romans. No doubt about that. But what share did Jews have in the death of Jesus? For a Christian to raise this question is to expose himself to criticism due to the sins of the church against the Jewish people through history.

According to the gospels there is no doubt that some of the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem wanted to silence Jesus. After the arrest and interrogation of Jesus he is beaten with fists and sticks. Nor is there any doubt that representatives of the Jewish council handed him over to the Romans, and that it was the Romans who had him flogged before his crucifixion. The inscription on the cross – composed by the Romans – makes



it clear that Jesus is hanging on the cross as a political rebel, as “the king of the Jews.”

It is possible to look at the events that lead up to the crucifixion in a variety of ways. Some believe that the Gospel writers tried to exonerate the Romans from guilt and instead place the main responsibility for the death of Jesus on the Jews. Why? Because, (the argument goes) it would have been easier to preach the gospel in a Roman world if Jesus’ death sentence had not been passed by Pilate, the Roman governor. Therefore, it is said, the Romans’ guilt is toned down in the gospels. And as a consequence, Jesus the Jew is “cleared” or “whitewashed,” while the Gospel writers are to blame.

If this was the Gospel writers’ intention, they certainly bungled the job! Pilate is not portrayed as a competent examining judge. He is corrupt and spineless, goes against his own conviction and thinks more about his own political career than about upholding justice. Is that the way Romans would like to see a Roman governor portrayed?

Pilate has Jesus flogged. The New Testament does not go into detail about it. At that time people were well aware of the brutality of such a flogging, the torso being slashed and bleeding. In the scene where Jesus is crowned with thorns – in the gospel as well as in the movie – we see sadistic Roman soldiers who take pleasure in tormenting an already broken human being. In some Roman sources there are examples of flogging before crucifixion that were so brutal that the condemned died – and yet the body was hung up on the cross – as a deterrent! Does that put the Romans in a favorable light?

It is also remarkable that some Roman emperors who sentenced people to death by crucifixion do not mention this in their biographies. Everyone knew that crucifixion was a thoroughly cruel manner of death. However, the Roman elite preferred not to mention or write about it, for it did not fit into the general picture of the Roman empire as a humane society.

Some early Roman sources mention that Christ “was executed by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilate in the reign of Tiberius” without mentioning that Jews were involved (Tacitus in *Annals* 15:44). There are Jewish sources that say: “On the Eve of Passover they hanged Yeshu ...” (*b Sanhedrin 43a* – a baraita, i.e. a tannaitic text in an amoraic context) – without mentioning that Romans were involved. Most scholars agree that such Jewish sources do not give reliable information about the historical Jesus and his death. But one thing can be deduced from this: None of these Jewish sources attempt to deny that Jewish leaders were involved in the death of Jesus. The reason given for his execution is that “he practised sorcery and enticed and led Israel astray.” Is it anti-Semitic to observe that in the Jewish tradition there is an acknowledgement that the leaders in Israel acted correctly against one whom they believed was trying to lead the people of Israel astray?

Continued on page 79.



# Can a Believer Suffer Psychological Disorders?

By Erez Soref

What is the believer's relationship to psychological disorders and emotional difficulties? What do we mean by the term "psychological disorder," and what constitutes one? What is the relationship between the body, spirit, and emotions? Further, is there such a thing as a psychological disorder, or does the believer struggle only in the spiritual and/or physical realms? In this introductory article I shall attempt to provide a perspective on these and related questions.

## Why Ask the Question? Social Commentary and Reality

Why do believers find themselves struggling with these questions at the present time? In the past 40–50 years a leading force in society and academia has been the field of the behavioral sciences, particularly psychology (Cushman, 2000; Smith, 1997). It is important to note that the behavioral sciences in general and the discipline of psychology in particular cover a broad array of fields of study and practice, and are *not* strictly limited to the *clinical* aspect. Clinical psychology is the applied branch of the academic discipline of psychology. It seeks to apply the knowledge accumulated based on research and theory regarding personality (what constitutes a person), psychopathology (psychological problems and disorders), and psychotherapy (how to assist persons suffering from psychological disorders). This clinical aspect has taken an ever increasing portion of the field of psychology. One result of the dramatic proliferation of clinical psychology and psychotherapy in the so-called western civilization is a "psychologization" of that society (Cushman, 2000). "Psychologized" thinking and figures of speech have been integrated into our ways of expression.

The body of Messiah, of course, has been exposed to these influences, and that has generated a lively discussion as to how believers should relate to that phenomenon. This discussion has produced a variety of viewpoints that can be placed on a continuum. On the one end of the continuum, one can find the view which endorses a total rejection of what current clinical psychology and psychotherapy have to offer, and is usually called "Biblical counseling" (i.e. Adams, 1970, 1973, 1979; Bobgan and Bobgan, 1987, Ganz, 1993; Vitz, 1994; Powlison, 1995). These authors



have emphasized the terms “sufficiency of Scripture” and “sufficiency of Christ,” as well as the incompatibility of Scripture with philosophies that underlie theories and models of current psychology. For an excellent review of the different authors and views of Biblical counseling, please see Smith (1996). On the other end of the continuum, one can find the “integration approach,” characterized by adhering to the Biblical standard, while attempting to study current psychological science and practice, and adapting that which is in accordance to the Biblical standard (i.e. Carter and Narramore, 1979; Jones and Butman, 1991; Collins, 1993). Alongside this continuum, at times intertwined within it, is the movement that seeks to explore ancient sources within larger Christendom, that apply to emotional and pastoral care (i.e. Lawler, 1950; Clebsch and Jaekle, 1964; Jones, 1995). Some heated debates have been taking place along that continuum in the past few decades, and still do today. While that debate is intensifying within evangelical circles, it is illuminating to find what literature written from an orthodox Jewish perspective says about the matter. In his interesting book, *Christianity and Psychiatry, The Theology Behind the Psychology*, Ruttenberg (1994) seeks to demonstrate that all of psychology is in fact based on and even clandestinely promoting Christian values and theology.

While the body of Messiah in Israel has not actively engaged in this discussion, the present reality of many needs in the area of counseling warrants that these questions become increasingly relevant in Israel as well.

### **The Relationship between Body, Soul, and Spirit – a Brief Introduction**

The word ‘psychology’ is derived from the Greek word *psyche*, similar to the Hebrew word *nephesh*, usually translated “soul” in English. Psychology is then an attempt to understand the soul aspect of humanity. That is no small claim, and it rightly prompts us as believers to explore and develop an understanding of a Biblical view of psychology. To do that, one must be informed as to what constitutes a *person* from a Biblical perspective. For the purposes of our discussion, we might ask the question, what “part” of the human being may be the subject for psychological and emotional difficulties? Is it the body, the soul, the spirit, the heart? Further, what are the relations between body, soul, and spirit?

Most Christian theology through the centuries has been characterized by Aristotelian inductive thinking, moving from specific observations to broader generalizations. That is, in order to understand a phenomenon, one would take it apart into as small units of observation as possible, and would build an understanding from there (also known as “bottom-up” approaches). This method is different from the Hebraic thinking characterizing the Hebrew Scripture, which is more associative, or deductive, working from the more general to the more specific. In this way of thinking, understanding a phenomenon is best achieved when it is investigated as a whole (top-down approach).



This opening is warranted when talking about a Biblical-theological view of persons. Through the centuries, a discussion aimed at understanding persons as consisting of certain specifically distinguishable “parts” has concentrated on differentiating the “Trichotomy view” from the “Dichotomy view,” both after the tradition of the inductive method. The Trichotomy view denotes that the human person consists of body, soul, and spirit. Proponents of the Trichotomic view have been numerous, and include early church fathers such as Irenaeus and Apollonarius, to 19th century theologians such as Franz Delitzsch, and church leaders such as Watchman Nee (Hoekema, 1986). Some of the problems with this view include its violation of the unity of man – its presupposition of an irreconcilable antithesis between body and spirit, which has no scriptural support. Also, the distinction between spirit and soul characterizing the Trichotomic view has limited support in Scripture (where often used interchangeably, i.e. Matt 10:20; 1 Cor 7:34). The other view, the Dichotomic view, denotes that man consists of body and soul. This view has been more commonly held in comparison with the Trichotomic view, and is held by theologians such as Louis Berkhoff (1941). However, problems associated with this view mainly include objections to the Platonic background of it, with its emphasis on the “goodness of the soul,” versus the “badness of the body.”

So what is an alternative, perhaps more Biblically-holistic view of persons? Hoekema (1986) proposes the term “Unitary Being.” He adds: “[man] has a physical side and a mental or spiritual side, but we must not separate these two” (p. 216). This view, then, sees man in his totality, as a whole, and not as a composite of different “parts” (that is, using deductive thinking). In other words, we are a complex being, with inter-related “parts” – embodied souls, or “besouled” bodies. Therefore, when we talk about psychological or emotional disorders, we cannot “locate” them to one specific part, but we need to view it as a *composite phenomenon*. While this discussion is true for all persons, there is however a difference between the believer and the non-believer. Since all humans are born with a sin nature (Gen 3; 5:1-4), we are by nature separated from God, and can suffer sicknesses. The difference is that the believer’s spirit is regenerated and united with God, while the unbeliever’s spirit is not regenerated. Still, both are unitary beings as discussed earlier. [For a fuller discussion of this important issue, please look for Hoekema’s excellent book, *Created in God’s image* (1986).]

## **What are Psychological Disorders? The Composite Outlook**

In the secular professional/scientific literature there are two main classification systems describing psychological, psychiatric, and mental disorders. The American system is called DSM-IV-TR (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders – 4th Edition, Text Revision), and the world health organization classification system is called ICD-10 (International

Classification of Disease, 10th Edition). The two systems are fairly similar. In these classification systems, psychological disorders are described as particular behavioral, emotional, and physical phenomena. For example, a person suffering from clinical depression would be characterized by *behavior* of withdrawal and isolation, by *emotions* of sadness, sense of inadequacy and hopelessness, and *physically* – by an over-production of the neurotransmitter serotonin in the brain. As one may notice, the spiritual aspect is widely ignored in this scientific literature, and we shall return to that later. But for now, let us ask again, can a believer suffer a psychological disorder according to these parameters? Few would argue that this is *never* possible – most would accept that believers *can* under certain circumstances find themselves, for example, fitting the description of clinical depression given above. However, there could be a serious debate as to *why* does the believer experience these phenomenon.

No doubt, a *specific sin* in a believer's life can influence us as unitary beings and cause emotional turmoil, physical imbalance, and behavioral irregularity (thus, the source for the psychological disorder is *spiritual*). Biblical examples for that can be found in many of King David's psalms (i.e. Ps 6; 52). Certainly, numerous *physical* sources can affect the unitary being in all realms and cause a psychological disorder (i.e. glands over- or under-production, concussion, cerebral palsy, etc., all causing psychological and behavioral problems). Thus, our physical as well as spiritual side can cause a psychological disorder. But can an *emotional* event be the cause of a psychological disorder? By emotional causes for a psychological disorder I mean such things as thoughts, memories, past emotional injuries, immaturity in handling emotions, and problems in interpersonal relationship (Carlson, 1994).

Let us begin by mentioning the biblical accounts of men of God – like Moses, Elijah, Job, and Jeremiah. These men, though in communion with God, found themselves in difficult emotional states, depression, even to the point of being suicidal (Num 11; 1 Kgs 19; Job 3; Jer 20). The Bible is full of examples of God's turning "bad" experiences to good in the believer's life – "you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good" (Gen 50:20). But as in Joseph's life, before healing takes place there is a period of a "desert" experience and suffering. Further, historical and personal accounts of noted Christian leaders that have been greatly used by God detail their struggles with emotional difficulties. In his thought-provoking book *Why Do Christians Shoot Their Wounded?* Carlson (1994) provides a brief review of the accounts of Martin Luther, Charles Spurgeon, and J.B. Phillips. These men suffered and struggled with emotional difficulties for many years of ministry, yet walked with God.

I would like to further demonstrate how a secular psychological conceptualization can assist in describing human behavior in a way that can

**Historical and personal accounts of noted Christian leaders that have been greatly used by God detail their struggles with emotional difficulties**



fit even believers. This brief example is taken from the field of stress research (study of the psychological aspects of human stress). This approach, described by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), is concerned with the psychological sequel of a person that has been exposed to a stressful situation. Based on their research, they theorize that the severity of the psychological distress following a stressful event would be influenced by antecedent personal variables, such as demographic characteristics and personal resources and values. Those influence the person's appraisal of a given encounter as harmful, threatening, or challenging. There are other processes, which mediate the person-environment encounter, including cognitive appraisal and coping, as well as the short-term outcomes of the encounter (i.e. the emotions experienced). How applicable is such an example for a believer?

To examine that question we might look at a tragic reality in Israel in recent years – terror attacks on civilians. Within this terrible reality, many are exposed to stressful situations in experiencing and seeing terror attacks, or knowing persons who have been killed or hurt by terror attacks. People who have been in these situations often describe distress responses categorized as anxiety and post-trauma disorders (Somer,

Soref, Sever, and Ruvio, in review). These disorders are comprised of an *emotional* component that includes a strong sense of fear, intrusive thoughts and dreams about the stressful event; a *behavioral* component that includes attempts to

**As Job's experience teaches us,  
events difficult to understand can  
happen to God's people too**

avoid stimuli that resemble the stressful situation (i.e. avoiding driving near to, standing by, or looking at buses); and a *physical* component that includes headaches, dizziness, chest pain, and difficulty breathing. Can a believer who is walking righteously before God suffer from these psychological disorders after being exposed to such stressful events? Given the fact that the above description has been a reality for some believers, few would argue that a believer is out of reach of these experiences. As Job's experience teaches us, events difficult to understand can happen to God's people too. This painful truth from our terror-marred region confirms that even believers can suffer psychological disorders as a result of *emotional* events, as well as spiritual and physical events. Returning to the secular conceptualization of the stress theory described earlier, we can say that God is the believer's main resource and asset in every way including the psychological aspect. The fact that a believer suffers a psychological disorder does not impact God's sovereignty, Christ's sufficiency, or necessarily point to a specific sin of the believer. As unitary, created beings we can suffer emotional pain to the same degree of suffering as physical or spiritual pain.

I would like to sum things up with a few points:

1. As unitary beings, believers can suffer a physical ailment, and similarly a psychological/emotional one. In a study comparing the psychologi-

cal well-being and disorders of Messianic Jews versus non-Messianic Jews in Israel (both groups with similar demographic characteristics) on a number of psychological factors (i.e. depression, anxiety, self-esteem, etc), no differences were observed (Soref, 1999). For our purposes we can interpret that finding as a statistically-equal vulnerability regarding psychological well-being and disorders for believers and non-believers.

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Erez Soref received his doctoral degree in Psychology from Wheaton College in 2002. He is a registered psychologist in the Israeli ministry of health, and also serves as the Academic Dean of Israel College of the Bible.

Carlson (1994), summarizes this point well:

... in my psychiatric practice, I have generally not found that individuals with emotional problems were sinning or being naïve Christians. I have a few patients whose problems are truly spiritual – that is they are deliberately choosing a path contrary to God’s word ... But most of my patients are sincerely trying to follow God’s will. I have many patients who are ministers, missionaries, Bible study leaders, elders, and deacons. Yet they have emotional problems. They find it encouraging to know they are not alone. (p. 38.)

2. I think the real question we need to ask is not *whether* true believers can suffer a psychological disorder. Rather, we should ask ourselves *how* we as believers treat our emotionally wounded brothers and sisters. Is our attitude characterized by love and compassion (even the truth needs to be said in love! Eph 4:15)? Or do we find the subject so threatening we pass quick judgment (i.e. if a believer suffers emotionally it means there is a sin in his life)?
3. All that being said, this does not stand in contrast to the spiritual reality of the believer, but is part of it. In other words, *spiritual* and *pastoral* care include caring for the emotional and psychological needs of the flock as well. As believers, our method of healing is not limited to the scientific or professional techniques, but includes primarily our spiritual resources. However, it can be useful for shepherds of souls to tap into the body of knowledge that has accumulated in scientific and professional literature, and attempt to learn from it that which is in accord with the biblical standard. It can be very beneficial for pastors to receive training in basic counseling skills, be educated in identifying common psychological and emotional difficulties, and become familiar with the mental health system in their regions.



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# Stress and Support among Messianic Pastors in Israel

– *A Phenomenological Study*

By Katherine Snyder

## The Purpose of this Study

The sources of potential stress upon Messianic leaders are many. Messianic congregations in Israel are embedded in a historical context that includes centuries of persecution, the Holocaust and numerous wars. In addition, they are rooted in communities that are polarized across religious/secular lines, left/right political factions, differences between native born Israelis versus new immigrants, and the different cultures represented by immigrant groups.

Although there are studies of families in war, there are few studies on the Messianic Jewish population in Israel in the research literature, and none devoted specifically to the pastors in this chronically stressed society. This study aims to examine the individual experiences of these leaders through in-depth interviews in order to identify essential themes of their representative experience as Messianic leaders and provide an exhaustive, composite description of these shared phenomena.

The phenomenological approach is a type of qualitative research that aims at promoting an understanding of the meaning that these leaders themselves import to their experience of “stress” and “support.” In addition, this study endeavors to expand the understanding of stress in relation to pastors in chronic stress circumstances, especially those involving threat of war and terrorist attack.

## Theoretical Orientation – Stress and Coping

In preparing for this study I examined the research literature across several domains, including stress and coping theory, clergy and stress, stress and war in Israel, stress and social support, and the impact of the Holocaust on Jewish identity. According to the research literature there is no one agreed upon definition of stress, but the research does point towards a concept of stress that underscores the relationship and interaction between the person and environment. This means taking into consideration the unique qualities of the person and the nature of the situation. For the purpose of this study I embrace the concept that stress appraisal is “Any



event in which the person feels his adaptive resources are to be taxed and exceeded" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1980). Our perception of control or helplessness, the perceived relevancy of an event to our well-being, the commitment level of facing the difficulty, personal belief system (including faith in God), personal factors, personality, experiences, event properties (e.g., novelty, duration and predictability) all contribute to our perception of what is stressful. Since terrorism is a part of life for the average Israeli, there must be a constant state of awareness owing to the possibility of potential danger. Therefore, "What may be 'normative' within the parameters of Israeli experience may be considered catastrophic in other sociological contexts." (Ben David & Good, 1998).

### Analysis of Data

In addressing autobiographical issues and interests in this study, it is important to keep in mind that this research does not depend on the neutrality or disinterest of the researcher. For example, my bias as a Jewish person towards believing in the need for a Jewish homeland after the Holocaust cannot be separated from my approach to this study, nor can I suspend my belief that Jesus (*Yeshua*) is the Messiah. And yet, at the same time, as "the interpreter" of the data, I have attempted this exploration with a determination to be open to the personal experiences of the participants.

### Subjects

The specific criteria for being an interview candidate began with being recognized as a Messianic leader in Israel. I have used the term "leader" here instead of "pastor" because it is common usage in Messianic congregations to exchange the terms "leader" or "pastor" to describe the role under investigation. All the participants serve or have served in a prominent/influential position in a congregation in Israel for five years or more. The ethnic backgrounds range from being native-born Israelis (*Sabras*) to immigrants who are relatively recent (six years) to established immigrants (10 years). In the immigrant group the command of the Hebrew language ranged from fluent to beginner level. The age level ranged from mid-30s to over 65, however most participants were in the 40 to 50 year old age bracket. While 16 participants were interviewed, one tape did not record and one participant was excluded as his ministry was concentrated outside the country much of the year. Therefore, 14 interviews were transcribed. The geographical range represented by the participants range from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and Reshon L'Zion (in central Israel) to Tiberias and Netanyah (in the north).

### Obtaining data

Each participant agreed to a lengthy taped interview of approximately one hour and was assured of complete confidentiality. I informed the sub-



jects that I would share the results of their interview with them (Individual Textual Description) and that the participant could chose to withdraw at any time. The interview itself was constructed to approach various facets of their experience regarding stress and support. This was first addressed on a daily level of stress and support, in family, ministry and community, and continued to how the on-going conflict with the Palestinian people affected them and their ministries. The interviews were conducted in the summer of 2000, before the second *intifada* (civil uprising) of the Palestinians. Therefore the level of stress reflected in these interviews does not take into consideration the escalation of terrorism and recent deterioration of basic domestic security. The final question was intended to elicit their perception of the Holocaust in terms of its present impact on Israel as this was seen to be the historical framework for Israeli society.

Each subject was asked the following questions:

- 1) What are the major stressors you face in daily living (in your role as leader, in your family life, in the community in which you live)?
- 2) What do you perceive are the greatest barriers to getting your basic needs met (socially, emotionally, spiritually)?
- 3) What are your experiences in regards to emotional/spiritual support? From your peers, colleagues, family, a mentor, your own pastor, your congregation, the community in general?
- 4) How does the conflict with the Palestinians impact you personally? The mood in the congregation? Your community? The country?
- 5) What have been your cross-cultural experiences? Personally? In terms of leadership dynamics? Between sub-groups in the congregation (i.e., between native-born Israelis (*Sabras*) and Russian immigrants)?

These questions were developed to evoke a comprehensive description of the stress and support these leaders encountered in their private and ministerial lives as well as their lives as neighbors and citizens.

## Composite textual descriptions

### *Typology one*

Messianic pastors live in a generally stressful atmosphere, as do most Israelis. This means being involved in a world that is "highly pressured and demanding." Much daily stress is related to time pressure. There is the tiring six-day workweek. Ordinary tasks like going to the bank take an extraordinary amount of time. There is also lack of leisure time. Consequently, for some, there is a sense that life is experienced as "going too fast," and therefore there is not enough transitional space to make decisions. The roads are crowded and the drivers impatient and anxious. In a big city this means living with constant noise and movement. In addition the threat of political violence is always close to the surface. The Arab and Jewish neighborhoods are intertwined and there are few buffers when fighting breaks out. Like all Israelis the Messianic pastor is concerned over

the decline in national security. They are concerned, as are most Israelis about their families being victimized by terror attacks. Also there is the on-going vicarious stress of seeing traumatic terror attacks on national television. The society is polarized not only between Arab and Jews from without, but also between secular and religious, liberal and conservative from within. There are also numerous language and culture groups in the society, represented by new immigrants. This is all reflected isomorphically in the life of the congregational leaders who cope with the several cultural groups existing within each congregation.

While a few of the pastors interviewed were born in Israel, most are immigrants. Some face the stress of not having fluent command of the language which isolates them into a "social ghetto" and not having the support of an immediate family. As an immigrant and a believer there is a sense of being a "fourth culture person." This means that they are part of a culture born of the combination of the culture of their country of origin, their Israeli citizenship and being a Messianic believer. There is a strong commitment to the nation of Israel and to the Israeli people.

#### *Stress as a Jewish Believer in Israel*

Along with the stress that all Israelis face, there is the additional stress of being a Jewish believer in Jesus. This translates as a general sense of non-acceptance from the general population. For most believers there is the stress of having to overcome fear and rejection related to possible persecution. Metaphorically speaking, this anticipated persecution is like 'living with a low electrical hum' in the background. At times when one's identity as a believer is discovered, this 'hum' can explode and persecution can erupt in the form of personal attacks on property and family members. This has been compounded by proposed anti-missionary legislation that would impose imprisonment or fine on anyone attempting to evangelize or keeping evangelistic literature in the home. In addition, believers face the stress of not having a political advocate either on the "Left" or "Right" in the political arena.

Internally this translates into an inner stress of being an object of hatred by those they love, namely, their own people. For the believer there is the additional stress of trying to integrate biblical principles such as "turning the other cheek" with having to survive in an aggressive society that demands a certain amount of assertion.

#### *Stress as a Messianic leader*

For messianic leaders in particular, there are particular stressors that go beyond being just a Jewish believer in Israel. Most participants expressed a conflict between the time they had with their families and ministry demands. For the Messianic congregational leader there is often no rest on Shabbat because that is when meetings are held. Some participants indicated that their wives, while being supportive, lacked support themselves. In some cases, they were their wife's only intimate friend.

Most have the stress of assuming multiple roles in their ministry which



range from teaching, counseling, training new leadership, mediating conflicts, overseeing building projects to working with several cultural groups and three main language groups (Russian, Hebrew, English). For some this means the stress of finding translators. Some see themselves as the bridge between these cultural groups. Many view “love of the Lord” as the glue that holds these diverse groups together. Since many of the congregation members are immigrants, they often are in financial distress. Even if the Messianic leader himself is financially solvent, he faces the stress of pastoring congregation members who sometimes work 12-hour workdays and are in constant economic need.

An additional stress is often a lack of trained workers exacerbated by some congregants – Israeli born believers (*Sabras*) – pressuring to be placed in ministry positions for which they are not qualified. These responsibilities and pressures are often undertaken without the benefit of a pastor or mentor figure on whom to lean or turn to for evaluation. There is often a lack of having someone who functions in their life as a pastor. The Messianic pastors are called to father without being fathered themselves. This leads to a sense of discouragement at times.

### **The Messianic pastors are called to father without being fathered themselves**

There is also the stress if one takes an “unpopular stance” not just externally from society in general for being a Messianic believer, but from within the Messianic community.

From without the stressor is being seen as a traitor by the general population. Some leaders have represented the Messianic believers on national television and have had to face the consequence of possible physical violence to family members. Some have had the stress of being involved in a political advocacy group that was formed to combat anti-missionary legislation. From within the Messianic community, there is pressure if one takes an “unpopular stance” which might involve conflict theologically with other leaders or a controversial ministry direction. This causes the strain of being marginalized (perceived as outside the mainstream) both by society in general and other members in the Messianic community.

For many participants there was a lack of intimacy and support from a group of peers and friends. With some participants there is a perceived lack of affirmation and unity within the general national leadership. The time pressure, lack of evaluation from a mentor and infrequency of recreational times with peers that are not ministry-centered produces the sense of “driving on a road with no shoulders.” There is not much leeway for error and an absence of needed affirmation.

### *Support*

All co-researchers had strong marriages with supportive partners that participated in the ministry alongside them. Those born in Israel had the support of more extended family. On a community level they were often known as Messianic Jews and respected as good neighbors, but this was more in the form of the absence of persecution rather than genuine

support. Within the congregation most are generally supported by appreciative members. A prayer group supported some pastors, and with most there were other leaders to call upon in crisis. Some participants had other pastors overseas they could turn to for support in crisis.

The greatest support, however, was their internal strengths. Some had the ability to prioritize and set boundaries on their time. Some expressly carved out time to be with the family. These interior qualities include the ability to withstand considerable external pressure. This means having the courage to take an unpopular stand and face the repercussions, both from the society for being a Jew who believes in Jesus, and from other believers who might not agree with an aspect of their ministry. This reveals the ability to stand alone when necessary. This calls for a certain degree of integrity in order to maintain equilibrium under adversity. For some participants this meant considering giving up their lives for their beliefs. They show the capacity to face extreme situations, such as providing a containing atmosphere during terror attacks. Most expressed a sense of inner satisfaction with the work in which they were involved and thrived under pressure.

Most participants could easily move between diverse cultures and were open to cross-cultural experiences. All were encouraged by the increase of Jewish believers in their congregations. All were motivated by the vision to train younger people for ministry and in some this is fortified by the ability, to let go and let others share leadership. For some co-researchers, this vision for training new leaders and disciples especially energized and empowered them. Most saw leadership as a shared responsibility with other elders, forsaking the earlier “pyramid” model of pastoring with only one person at the top. Along with this conjoint style of leadership, for some went the attribute of vulnerability as part of their model of leadership. Many pastors expressed the ability to make compromises in structural changes in the life of the congregation due to the influx of new immigrants such as extra services and translations. This denotes a certain amount of flexibility necessary to persevere with their work.

All leaders shared a love for their country. All considered themselves a part of the Israeli people. Their level of involvement in the general society had to do more with the level of fluency in the language, rather than level of commitment to the people. Most could reach out for support when needed, even if it meant contacting friends overseas.

These internal qualities are fed by a deep faith in God, which gives them strength to remain in difficult situations with a sense of purpose, even, as some expressed, to the point of relinquishing their lives. All indicated a strong devotional life, evidenced by time spent in prayer, study of scripture, worship and waiting on God for guidance. These disciplines enabled them to draw on spiritual resources in tangible and practical

**They show the capacity to face extreme situations, such as providing a containing atmosphere during terror attacks.**



ways in all the multi-level challenges that they face. Their faith helped them to frame negative events in a positive way without withdrawing from the very real difficulties involved. Their faith helped in some ways to transcend the polarized political situation as they sought God's higher purpose for the region.

### *Impact of the Holocaust*

Israel is set in the collective historical framework of the Holocaust. All saw the Holocaust as a deep unhealed wound in the heart of the Jewish people, "like a gun shot to the chest" or even more potent, "like an atom bomb" in the midst of the nation. The Holocaust can be seen as a "crossroad" with one road leading to statehood and the other leading to questioning God's sovereignty. The Holocaust is not perceived in ordinary time as an event that can be relegated to the past. It is an on-going event that continuously influences every aspect of life.

Most participants agree that Christian collaboration with the Nazis caused an anti-Christian feeling, which makes it difficult to approach Israelis with a gospel perspective. Most co-researchers felt that since many first generation survivors from the death camps formed the society, there was little illusion, from the beginning of the state, about the ultimate goodwill of the non-Jewish world. This produces in the citizenry a bottom line inner message that "We are alone." This sense of isolation translates to the outer world as messages of "We are strong," "Don't question it for a minute," and "Never again." Along with this is a deep underlying sense in the Jewish soul of being profoundly misunderstood. On an everyday level it has created a tendency towards panic. This also means in the Jewish mind there is a stark division between "us" and "them." Most participants felt that the Holocaust is an inherent part of the Jewish and national identity.

The theological questions that surface among participants included wondering whether God would allow the Holocaust just to create a state? And was the Holocaust a sign of Divine judgment against the Jewish people? The Holocaust was also perceived as a mystery as far as God's permissiveness to allow it to happen that goes beyond the modern state of Israel. The Jewish nation was compared to the scapegoat sent into the wilderness, but still intimately connected with the Messiah.

## **Regional Differences**

### *Typology two*

Along with the stressors and support mentioned above, Messianic pastors in Tiberius discussed the threat of persecution from ultra-religious groups that is more imminent. The congregations function on the level of a "quasi-underground church." The membership lists are kept secret. There is an awareness of danger in this region from persecution and while all congregations face the potential of persecution, in this area it was noted more than in any other.

## Those involved in Para-Congregational Ministries

### *Typology three*

Three of the participants were in eldership positions at one time and are now functioning in para-congregational ministries such as counseling, writing and evangelism. They share the stress of pioneering new ministries. Two are facing these endeavors under the additional burden of financial stress. (See table next page.)

## Conclusion

### *On Being a Messianic Jew in Israel*

This study of Messianic leaders in Israel pointed to the fact that Messianic Jews have a unique position: they stand as a potential conduit of reconciliation between the church and the Jewish community, while being part of both. This tension is most dramatically illustrated by being framed as “traitors” to their own people while sacrificing much to live in Israel, especially by those who were immigrants. Along with “daily hassles” one of the main tensions reflected in this group of Messianic leaders concerning their beliefs centered around coping with possible persecution by the ultra-religious and through possible anti-missionary legislation.

This community is not only marginalized from without, but tends to be polarized from within, sometimes causing a lack of unity. Quick, Nelson, & Orman (2001) in their discussion of stress explore the isomorphic link between characteristics in the person or small group and the containing environment. Isomorphic theory posits that characteristics of a system on one level may be reflected on every level. Therefore, the lack of unity and polarization over an unpopular stance theologically (e.g. charismatic versus non-charismatic, etc.) may be a reflection of the conflictual society in which these congregations are embedded.

## Theoretical Implications

### *Stress, Appraisal and Coping*

This study showed that the participants, along with the rest of the nation, had a certain degree of inoculation (Milgram, 1993) towards living with chronic disaster. They met the Israeli societal expectation that asks of its citizens to perceive the threat of war and attack as part of everyday life (McCubbin, 1979). They accept as normative a certain amount of struggle and violence as the price for existence. This is partly due to the fact that, sadly, there is little novelty in facing terror attacks on civilians. These leaders live within a population that faces the possibility of trauma with a high level of predictability. Milgram (1993) suggests that a certain amount of indoctrination, which he defines as values and worldview that enable one to live in high stress circumstances, is essential. This would not be the term I would use regarding these pastors. However, for most, there is a tacit implication that their patriotism is founded on a worldview



Table 1: *Categories of Stress*

<b>Categories of stress in Israel described in interviews</b>	
<b>Categories</b>	<b>Themes</b>
General stress	<p>Living in dangerous area.</p> <p>Decline in national security.</p> <p>Living among troubled population.</p> <p>Crowded roads, unpredictable drivers.</p> <p>Simple tasks take long time.</p> <p>Six-day work week.</p> <p>Difficult overall economic situation.</p> <p>Dealing with population of thousands of new immigrants.</p>
Stress as a Jewish Believer in Israel	<p>Non-acceptance by general population of beliefs and viewed as traitor.</p> <p>Being an object of hatred by those you love (Israeli people).</p> <p>Ever present, low-level possibility of persecution.</p> <p>Having to overcome fear of rejection and persecution.</p> <p>Anticipation of anti-missionary legislation imposing fine or jail for evangelistic activities.</p> <p>As a moral person seeing decline of morality on societal level.</p> <p>Inner conflict over integrating biblical principle of turning the other cheek with surviving in an aggressive society.</p>
Stress of being a Messianic pastor in Israel	<p>Conflict between time for ministry versus family</p> <p>Sabbath is a working day.</p> <p>Lack of trained workers.</p> <p>Lack of on-going evaluation from mentor or pastor</p> <p>Lack of desired level of intimacy with peers.</p>
Stress of being a Messianic pastor specific to Israel	<p>Pressure from Sabras (indigenous population) who feel entitled to ministry roles for which they are unprepared.</p> <p>Publicly representing a group that has taken an unpopular stance in society.</p> <p>Facing pressure from local believers for taking an unpopular stance theologically or in ministry.</p> <p>Face possibility of jail or fine if proposed anti-missionary legislation is passed.</p> <p>Possibility of laying down life for beliefs.</p> <p>Face possibility of exposing family to persecution for taking public stand.</p> <p>Bridge gap between various language and culture groups.</p> <p>Work with new immigrants from several cultures.</p> <p>Serving congregation that is in constantly volatile political situation (possibility of war and terrorism).</p>



based on the belief that God has a plan for modern-day Israel, and sharing the gospel is an outworking of that plan. These beliefs allow them to maintain stability in extremely stressful circumstances.

The cognitive control found among these subjects is most closely associated with what Gardner (1962) labels flexible and constricted control. This was demonstrated in that they could live with a great deal of ambiguity as to the political situation, how new immigrants in their congregations would adjust and survive economically and also with respect to larger questions such as the theological implications of the Holocaust. They also demonstrated leveling as a cognitive style in that they were able to minimize the great cultural gaps between the groups in their congregations. As one pastor said, referring to all the nationalities under the one roof of his fellowship, "Love is the glue that holds us together." Messianic leaders have a high level of commitment to the task of building and leading a congregation. Wrubel, Benner & Lazarus (1981) stated commitment could be a powerful resource for coping and strength in meeting stress. This was evidenced by the participants of this study. Their commitment level to their perceived mission, their dedication to their role in leadership, and their personal faith in God allowed for stressors to be experienced as challenges, rather than threats. It also allowed harsh circumstances to be infused with a sense of meaning and purpose.

Many expressed concern over deteriorating morals and the escalation of violence in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, but did not remain in constant engagement with the tension surrounding these issues. Instead they experienced both the grief and wound of living with terror attacks and also a distancing or detachment in the acceptance that this is a part of life in Israel. This is what Lazarus (1982) calls "middle knowledge," which he defines as living in a delicate balance between facing harsh reality and maintaining hope.

### *The Holocaust*

The majority agreed with Bauer (1989) that the Holocaust is an "unhealed psychic wound" in the nation. These pastors are able to live in the wake of the Holocaust and maintain their faith without having "all the answers." This ability to live with a certain amount of ambiguity is an internal source of strength when facing trauma of this magnitude. None of the pastors interviewed attempted to wrap up the theological implications or questions as to why God would allow such a cataclysmic event to happen to the Jewish people with an easy answer. They admitted to their own questions, which embraced those discussed in reference to the discussion on Jewish theology referenced above.

The literature on the Holocaust suggest the style in which four specific types of families (Rich, 1982) adapt to trauma (victim, fighter, numb and

**Their patriotism is founded on a worldview based on the belief that God has a plan for modern-day Israel, and sharing the gospel is an outworking of that plan**



"those who made it"). These leaders point to a fifth category, which might be labeled a "spiritually empowered" mode of meeting trauma. The components of this spiritual empowerment include: belief that their vocation is God-ordained, underlying faith in a loving God, trust in the efficacy of prayer, faith in the truth of scripture, and an eschatological belief that God has an end time plan for the Jewish people and the nation of Israel in particular. All of these convictions taken together give them a transcendent view of the chaotic and tragic political situation in which they live. This transcendent view is visibly demonstrated in that they are able to remain optimistic, reach out in reconciliation with Arab-Christian believers, continue to share the gospel with Israelis despite the very real possibility of rejection, and have a hope for the future of the country despite all the turmoil. This is consistent with the literature on coping and beliefs (Lazarus and Folkman, 1980), which posits that strong belief in God can help people to see purpose and meaning in detrimental experiences.

### *Clergy and Stress*

The most constant stressors mentioned in this group were consistent with the categories of stressors that affect many leaders in ministry. These included too many demands on their time, over-extension in terms of commitments, and inadequate resources with regard to an intimate circle of friends and supportive peers, outside of their immediate family. The implications of over-extension, the pressure of too many commitments and multiple roles may be due to the lack of trained laity to provide a network of support for the congregation through volunteers.

Although there was stress associated with ministry and possible harassment or persecution, burnout was not mentioned or evidenced in these interviews. This seems to be in keeping with evidence in the study conducted by Pines (1994), which pointed to the fact that people do not experience burnout even under extremely stressful circumstances, if they impart great existential meaning to what they do. In the case of these subjects "existential" includes the spiritual foundations of their personhood. Although secondary or vicarious stress was not overly reported in this group, it was implied by such behavior as having to stop reading the newspapers because doing so made the participant "feel too bad."

### *Social support*

According to the literature social support includes comforting, assisting/defending another in terms of advocacy, emotional support, all of which is executed through a social support network. Most lacked a pastor or a close group of friends that were readily accessible to support them. They met for ministry purposes and for special events like evangelistic outreach, but there was not enough contact for companionship, encouragement, and recreational times together. The opportunity to obtain emotional support, mutual encouragement from other leaders, and feedback or evaluation in a secure, non-threatening environment seems

lacking outside of their own immediate families. What seems to be missing among these pastors was the intimacy and community that develops when people are allowed to expose their hurts and receive healing, instead of criticism, from one another. This does not imply that this is totally lacking in this community, but mutual support of the kind mentioned above seemed to be minimal from the self-reports of those interviewed.

## Recommendations

### *Support groups*

Most of the connections Messianic pastors had with each other were made through cooperative ministry; however, this is not always a relaxed environment for cultivating relationship. One of the primary recommendations in regard to the data collected in these interviews points to small support groups for these leaders to receive the encouragement, prayer, and peer evaluation needed for effective ministry. This might be in the form of "covenant" or "accountability" groups that promote honesty and healing and are strongly based in confidentiality. Another recommendation for the promotion of group support is for these leaders to spend times of recreation together, not just activities that are aimed at vocation. This might also provide a venue for reducing the intolerance or marginalization of each other.

### *Training the Laity*

As indicated above there is an implied need for more support to alleviate stress and create a "shoulder for the road" on which these leaders travel. An important recommendation would be utilizing and training the laity such as in developing a lay counseling program that would provide a safety net of care for the members of the congregation. Research has shown that paraprofessionals can be as effective as professionals in the area of lay counseling (Durlak, 1979; Berman & Norton, 1985; Hattie, Sharpley & Rogers, 1984). For those already involved with counseling there might be in-service seminars in continuing education. Overall this allows for the pastor to function in his own gifts and effectively opens the way for the fulfillment of 1 Peter 2:9 which speaks of the "priesthood of all believers."

### *The role of women*

Although there are women deaconesses in some congregations, the role of women is essentially very limited. Bons-Storm (1996) writes, "Nobody reads the Bible with a completely open mind. Even theologians who declare they let the texts speak for themselves, show their bias in giving more attention to some texts than others" (p. 127). Therefore, it is recommended that the role of women and the tremendous resource available for lay ministry be re-examined. Congregational leaders in Israel generally quote the text in 1 Timothy 2:12, "I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent". Other texts regard-



ing women such as the injunction to cover the head in prayer and setting aside a fund for widows are generally ignored. Galatians 3:28 seems to imply and support equal participation of men and women in the life and ministry of the Church. Furthermore, women missionaries, preachers and pastors have been a valuable source of ministry throughout the history of the church. Perhaps texts used as injunctions against using women in leadership need to be revisited in order to expand the availability of workers and to promote the gifts of each member.

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#### *Suggestions for further research*

Suggestions for further research include the investigation of the effect of terror attacks and war on clergy, studies on the support and stress of pastors' wives, the effect of immigration on congregational life, and investigation into what traits enable these leaders to manage without experiencing burnout in such harsh conditions.

This study has attempted to explore the growth and uniqueness of this ancient and young movement in Israel, and its unfolding in the wake of the Holocaust. The narrative style intrinsic to phenomenological research is intended to give a personal glimpse into the lives of these leaders, the tremendous demands with which they cope, and their resiliency which is rooted in a deep spirituality.

Reflections on the lives of these Messianic leaders and the development of their congregations in Israel reveal an ongoing journey which parallels that of the State of Israel. Both are involved in a process, not just concerned with survival and struggle, but dedicated to overcoming immense obstacles and thriving in the midst of opposition.

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THEME: FAITH, TRAUMA AND STRESS



# Pastors and Mental Health in Israel

– *An Exploratory Needs Assessment*

By Erez Soref and Larry Goldberg

This is an *exploratory* study, attempting to assess counseling and mental health needs among Messianic congregations in Israel, and potential for cooperation between pastors and professional counselors in counseling and mental health issues. For that purpose, we have surveyed 22 Israeli pastors and pastors' wives. We have collected information regarding demographics (including data concerning training for ministry and counseling), reported psychological needs among congregational members, number of counseling sessions conducted per week, and perceived need and availability for professional counselors/mental health professionals. The results indicate a lack of training in counseling skills and mental health issues for most pastors, coupled with a willingness to receive more training, as well as professional help in counseling and mental health issues. As mentioned earlier, this is a preliminary study examining a new area; further investigation is needed. Limitations and implications of this study are discussed.

The ministry of soul care has been a central aspect of the work of pastors throughout Christian history (Clebsch and Jaekle, 1964). Contemporary psychology has been concerned with addressing issues of emotional and psychological needs, embedded in the care of souls. Soul care had been a unique and distinct domain and mission of the Body of Messiah's healing ministry for centuries, and psychology's rise has posed a challenge to this tradition (Kemp, 1947). Some (McRay, Mcminn, Wrightsman, Burnett, and Ho, 2001; Benner, 1998) claim that "the tension and competition created by this apparent overlap contributed to the inappropriate and theologically incorrect separation of the spiritual and the psychological aspects of persons" (McRay et. al., 2001 p. 99). This has led to tension and animosity by both parties, and also to an artificial compartmentalization of responsibilities. That is, the body of Messiah deals only with the spiritual aspect, while psychologists and mental health professionals deal with the emotional/psychological aspect. This leaves souls with less than optimal care.

In the past few years there has been a resurgence of interest in religious

beliefs and values in scientific and professional literature (Benes, Walsh, McMinn, Dominguez, and Aikins, 2002; McRay et. al., 2001). Additionally, the interest among Christians in the psychological aspect of soul care has been rekindled from many perspectives (i.e. Adams, 1970; Powlison, 1995; Carter and Narramore, 1979; Jones and Butman, 1991). But will the two meet and cooperate? There are examples of both training pastors in mental health issues, and training psychologists to work with congregations and Christian organizations (McMinn, Meek, Canning, and Pozzi, 2001). For such collaboration to happen and improve pastoral soul care, the first question would be, what are the mental health needs perceived by pastors, and how well do pastors feel that they are equipped to fulfill them?

The purpose of this exploratory study is to provide preliminary answers to those questions in relation to the Messianic Body in Israel. More specifically, this study should reveal pastors' level of training in counseling and mental health, pastors' perception of the psychological needs of their congregations, and pastors' attitudes regarding possible cooperation with professional counselors.

## Method

In two instances of gatherings of Hebrew-speaking Israeli pastors and their wives (within a six-month time frame), they were requested to fill out questionnaires regarding counseling issues. A total of 22 pastors and pastors' wives filled out the questionnaires. A three-part questionnaire was designed to meet the needs of this study:

### *Demographic Information*

The first part contains demographic information including age, gender, family status, position in congregation, and level of education. Additionally, this section asked about type of training for ministry one has, and training in counseling and mental health.

### *Psychological Needs Information*

The second part contains information regarding the type and frequency of psychological problems found among the congregational members (scored on a five-point Likert scale). Additionally, respondents were asked about the number of counseling sessions conducted per week.

### *Need and Availability of Mental Health Professionals*

In the third part seven brief vignettes describing different types of situations that may involve a need for a professional counselor were described. The specific vignettes were chosen following a consultation of three psychologists regarding pertinent issues based on their professional and clinical experience.

For each vignette, participants were requested to rate on a five-point Likert scale: (1) How useful the assistance of a professional counselor



could be in such a situation; and (2) How available such a counselor is should they desire such assistance. The vignettes included the following situations: (1) Phone consultation for the pastor when an issue arises while he conducts pre-marital counseling. (2) A congregational seminar after a traumatic event. (3) Consultation regarding a suicidal teenager. (4) Assistance regarding assessment of needs and team-building skills for the congregational staff. (5) Using a professional counselor to train congregational members as lay counselors. (6) Referring a demanding person or couple to a professional counselor. (7) Willingness to attend a mental health training seminar taught by a professional counselor.

## Results

### *Demographic Information*

Eighteen of the participants were men, four women, all married. The average age was 44.3 (SD=10.9). Most of the participants were pastors or elders and had college education.

In terms of training for ministry, about a third of the participants indicated having a formal degree for ministry, about a third had taken courses for ministry, and about a third had no formal training. Regarding training in counseling and mental health, most indicated having very little such training. Table 1 presents the details regarding the demographic characteristics of the participants, and their level of training for ministry and in counseling.

### *Psychological Needs Information*

Table 2 presents the details regarding perceived psychological needs, and number of counseling sessions conducted by pastors per week. The most pressing needs designated by participants in this study are (in descending order): marital problems, child education, stress related problems, and depression. In lower frequencies were reported trauma related problems, alcohol and drug abuse, child abuse, suicide attempts and addictions. Respondents indicated conducting approximately four counseling sessions per week.

### *Need and Availability of Mental Health Professionals*

Participants reported the following situations as useful in utilizing the services of a professional counselor (in descending order): attending a seminar on mental health and counseling issues; consultation regarding a suicidal teenager; training of lay counselors; referring a demanding person or couple to a professional counselor; teaching a congregational seminar after a traumatic event; phone consultation regarding a pre-marital counseling issue; and lastly, using a professional counselor in assessing needs and in team-building for congregational staff. In terms of availability, scores were lower in general. Participants noted that a professional counselor is available for the following areas (in descending order): training lay counselors; referring people to a counselor; phone



Table 1: *Personal Demographic Information of the Participants in the Study (N = 22)*

Characteristic	Frequency (n)	Percentage
<b>Age (years)</b>		
under 35	7	32
36–45	4	18
46–55	8	36
55+	3	14
<b>Gender</b>		
Males	18	82
Females	4	18
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	22	100
<b>Education</b>		
College +	14	64
High School	8	36
<b>Position in Congregation (N = 20)</b>		
Pastors	11	50
Elders	5	25
Children's Teacher	5	25
<b>Training for Ministry</b>		
Courses	8	36
Bible College	6	27
B.A.	7	32
M.A.	1	5
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>Training in Counseling and MH</b>		
Number of courses	2.04	3.05
Number of seminars	1.04	1.4
Number of books read about the subject	4.8	8.2
Number of articles read about the subject	7.25	12.4

Mean = average – SD = Standard Deviation

consultation in a pre-marital issue; attending a mental health seminar; assessing and training congregational staff; consulting concerning a suicidal adolescent; and finally in providing a seminar after a traumatic event. The details are presented in Table 3.

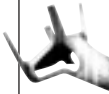


Table 2: *Perceived Psychological Needs by Participants in the Study (N=22)*

Characteristic	Mean	SD
Marital problems	3.7	1.2
Child education	3.7	1.0
Stress	2.9	1.0
Depression	2.8	0.8
Trauma	2.4	0.9
Alcohol and drug abuse	2.0	1.4
Child abuse	2.0	0.8
Suicidal attempts	1.7	0.8
Addictions	1.7	0.5
Number of counseling sessions per week	3.9	2.6

## Discussion and Implications

Most pastors (64%) had either college education or obtained formal education related to their ministry, but only very little training in counseling and/or mental health issues. Pastors had an average of two courses in mental health with a relatively large Standard Deviation and spread (large variability). Importantly, about 25 percent had *no* training in counseling at all. The average number of seminars pastors had attended in counseling and mental health was one. There was a large range for estimated number of books and articles read in mental health and counseling issues, with an average of about five books and seven articles per person. Still, about 10 percent had read nothing at all on these subjects. Overall then, it seems that most pastors had but a limited *exposure* to the subjects of counseling and mental health, and even less *training* in these subjects. However, the average pastor sees about four persons a week for counseling (again, with a large SD = 2.6). This apparent gap implies a need for additional training for pastors in basic counseling skills and mental health issues. But what are the most pressing counseling issues and in what areas should the training concentrate?

The subjects that were reported as significant can be divided into two groups: higher needs (reported average > 2.5 on the 1 to 5 Likert scale), and lower needs (reported average < 2.5). The higher needs are marital problems and child education issues, and to somewhat of a lesser degree also stress and depression. It seems that in planning training seminars or programs in pastoral counseling skills and mental health needs, an emphasis should be placed on issues of marriage and family. These include pre-marital counseling, marital counseling, and child therapy – all that,

Table 3: *Perceived Need for and Availability of a Professional counselor By Participants (N= 22)*

<b>Case of Using a Professional Counselor</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Attending a seminar on mental health issues	4.40	0.68
Training congregational members as lay counselors	4.10	0.91
Consultation regarding a suicidal teenager	4.10	0.47
Referring people to a professional counselor for counseling	3.85	1.04
A congregational seminar after a traumatic event	3.80	1.10
Phone consultation for pre-marital counseling	3.68	1.25
Assessment of needs and team-building skills for the congregational staff	3.42	1.20
<b>Availability of a Professional Counselor</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Training congregational members as lay counselors	3.40	1.32
Referring people to a professional counselor for counseling	3.40	1.20
Phone consultation for pre-marital counseling	3.35	1.45
Attending a seminar on mental health issues	3.23	1.14
Assessment of needs and team-building skills for the congregational staff	2.81	1.37
Consultation regarding a suicidal teenager	2.80	1.60
A congregational seminar after a traumatic event	2.17	1.33

not *instead* of a biblical model, but as part of it. The lower needs areas were in issues usually considered more serious. They were trauma, alcohol and drug abuse, child abuse, suicidal attempts, and addictions. On the one hand it seems that this is good news for the body of Messiah in Israel that these issues are in relative low prevalence. However, one can hypothesize that if pastors have little training in this subject, they could find it difficult to recognize these more serious conditions. Nonetheless, when these more serious conditions occur, they tend to be acute. As such, it still seems appropriate and needed to provide basic training regarding these issues (alongside stress management and depression), at least in a level of "do and do not." Also, many of the more serious conditions (suicidal at-



tempt, child abuse, addictions and chemical dependencies) may also warrant further intervention by the medical, legal, and mental health public system. An introduction to these systems is also an appropriate topic for training and education for pastors.

Regarding perceived needs versus availability of a professional counselor, a gap is evidenced between the two. The total average of need for a counselor is 3.9, and for availability 3.0. That is, the need is greater than the available service. In a previous needs assessment survey among Israeli pastors, counseling training was indicated as the number one area of need (Boyd, 2001). Our data confirms this stance.

The attitudes of participants concerning usage of a professional counselor are all in the high range (4.40 – 3.42 with relatively small SD's). Pastors seem to be willing to utilize the services of professional counselors. These attitudes may be grouped into three clusters, according to score level. In the highest scored cluster (4.4 – 4.1), pastors reported high willingness to cooperate with a professional counselor in attending a seminar about counseling or mental health issues, training lay counselors in their congregation, and conducting an emergency consultation regarding a suicidal teenager. Two of three have to do with training. There seems to be a positive attitude regarding training in counseling. The third is regarding an emergency. When an emergency occurs, especially in the instance of possible loss of life and/or need to involve public agencies (i.e. emergency room, social services, etc.), there is a high willingness to receive assistance from a professional counselor.

In the middle scored cluster (3.85 – 3.68), are issues such as referring needy people to a professional counselor, having a congregational seminar after a traumatic event, and conducting a phone consultation in regard to a pre-marital counseling issue. Pastors' willingness to refer congregants to a professional counselor, to invite one to their congregation to assist with pastoral care and to consult regarding a counseling issue, all point to a very positive potential for cooperation.

**Overall, there seems to be a high willingness for cooperation between pastors and professional counselors/mental health professionals**

The last cluster is comprised by one factor only (mean=3.42), that has to do with utilizing a counselor to assist in needs assessment and skill-building among congregational staff. This may be scored lower (though still relatively high) because it may not be perceived as an issue that a counselor specializes in. Overall, there seems to be a high willingness for cooperation between pastors and professional counselors/mental health professionals in both receiving training and direct assistance.

In terms of the availability of professional counselors, we can group the responses into two clusters. First, a large cluster of high-scored items (6 items, 3.4 – 2.8), which include training lay counselors, referring to a professional counselor, phone consultation in the course of pre-marital counseling, attending a counseling/mental health seminar, needs assessment and team-building skills for congregational staff, and emergency

consultation regarding a suicidal teenager. For those subjects participants indicated a relatively high availability. That is encouraging, in light of the needs reported earlier. Interestingly, the one item not scored high, was regarding availability of a counselor to conduct a congregational seminar after a traumatic event. There are believers trained in trauma and emergency mental health in Israel. Perhaps the lack of communication in the body of Messiah may be the reason for this low score, in addition to the overall low number of professional counselors/mental health professionals. This seems to emphasize the need for better communication between the needs in pastoral care and the available resources of professionals in these fields.

This study has provided preliminary and previously unknown information regarding counseling and mental health issues in the Messianic community in Israel. We have seen that training in counseling and mental health related subjects among pastors is seriously lacking, although some did have various degrees of formal training for ministry. We have also seen many needs described in the areas of marriage and family counseling, and to a lesser degree in some psychological disorders. Pastors have expressed an overall impressive willingness to cooperate with professional counselors and mental health professionals. They have also expressed a sense of lower availability of professional counselors in response to the need. The immediate implications that seem to flow from this are the need for: (1) More training in counseling skills and mental health issues for pastors and leaders in Israel; (2) Better communication between the existing resources in counseling and mental health and the pastors/leaders, who function as gate-keepers.

This is an exploratory study. It rests on a relatively small database (though a relatively large sample considering the size of the entire population under investigation). The details provided in this study can serve as an introduction – they point to needs and directions, but further research is necessary.

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### Author info:

Larry Goldberg has been working in Israeli industries for more than 30 years in Human Resources. He has an M.A. in clinical psychology, and serves with Everlasting Arms as a counselor.

Erez Soref: See page 11.



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## Introduction

On the following pages *Mishkan* publishes a report from *the Karen Fund, Inc. – Keren LeKaren*, an organization established in 2002 for alleviating mental and emotional suffering in Israel, and a brief introduction to *Everlasting Arms*, another newly established counseling ministry in Israel. Both organizations aim to provide individual and family counseling to people within the Messianic and wider Christian community. Additionally, *Mishkan* announces a course offered at Israeli College of the Bible on Messianic counseling.

The fact that such organizations are established at this point and such a course is offered indicates a recognized need within the Messianic community; it also attests to the willingness to face and deal with issues of hurt and suffering by providing professional counseling. *Mishkan* editors affirm this ministry and look forward to its expansion and development.

# Keren LeKaren — The Karen Fund Inc.<sup>1</sup>

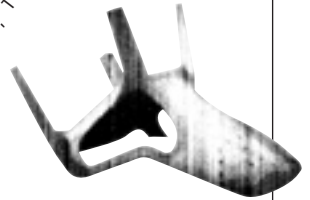
By **Mirja Ronning**

“The Lord has chosen me to encourage the poor, to help the brokenhearted, to decree the release of captives ... to console all who mourn...to strengthen those who mourn in Zion.” Isaiah 61:1-3

The Karen Fund was established in memory of Karen Ronning who was born, grew up in a Christian home and died in Jerusalem at age 28. To quote a friend, “She was an incredibly compassionate person, kind to every one, absolutely fun-loving, and tenacious in her convictions.” She had an unusual ability to listen, to feel and to show compassion for others. Growing up amidst the diversity of Jerusalem with Jews, Arabs and expatriates, she developed a capacity to relate to people of different backgrounds, to respect them and to become a true friend to many. This ability was put to good use as social worker in these communities, especially among the periphery of society, such as new immigrants, the old, the sick, the poor and the homeless.

1 A play on words on “Keren leKaren” in Hebrew, which means both a “ray of light” and a “fund.” It is an organization for alleviating mental and emotional suffering in Israel.

THEME: FAITH, TRAUMA AND STRESS



Karen herself suffered since adolescence from occasional cyclical periods of clinical depression. She suffered immensely from the rift between her joy of life and these pits of depression. This made her sensitive to the mental, emotional and spiritual suffering round about her. Karen felt closer to God than to anyone else; she trusted that even if others did not understand her, "God will always understand."

The Karen Fund is devoted to people like her in the suffering communities of this land. As a friend said at her funeral, we, like Karen, should do what she did – "jump into a hurting heart." We, her parents, established the Karen Fund to help people like her among the believers in the land.

The Karen Fund Goals are:

1. To *build trust* in biblically-based psychological counseling among the local believing communities, especially among the leaders. This is to be achieved by sponsoring lecture series, given by speakers who represent the highest level both professionally and spiritually.
2. To *develop a lending library* with psychologically and spiritually trustworthy books on the many facets of problems facing believers: depression, stress, anxiety, marital problems, identity problems, etc.
3. To *form a team* of highly trained and officially recognized *professionals* in the spheres of psychiatric nursing, psychology, clinical psychology and psychiatry. These team members will provide biblically based psychological *counseling and testing*. The team members can provide counseling in several languages.
4. To *acquire a facility* to house the center where the actual diagnostic (intake) and counseling activities take place.
5. To *acquire the funds* needed to:
  - a. provide support for professional personnel.
  - b. pay expenses of the counseling center.
  - c. obtain spiritually trustworthy books for an up-to-date lending library.

The Karen Fund, Inc. was established in 2002 as a non-profit organization in the USA (with its own bank account there and with an associated account in Israel). It was introduced to the public, mostly from the Jerusalem area, on March 1, 2002 at a formal occasion at Moshav Yad HaShevona. Isaiah 61:1-3 was read in three languages to symbolize the fact that the Karen Fund hopes to serve English, Hebrew and Arabic language communities in the land.

### Lecture Series

In March 2002, the Karen Fund sponsored its first conference, a lecture series on "Depression and the Christian Believer." The series was held at Christ Church, Jerusalem. The speaker was Dr. Pablo Polischuk of Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. Polischuk is a professor of clinical psychology and has an active private counseling practice. He offers a unique combi-



nation of the highest level of professionalism and a solid Christian outlook. He has also made himself available in various other countries including his homeland Argentina and the Ukraine, homeland of his parents.

In 2003, the Karen Fund sponsored two lecture series. One series was on "Stress, Anxiety and the Christian Believer." Once again the conference was held at Christ Church and the speaker was again Polischuk. Another lecture series on "Healing Life's Hurts the Biblical Way," was conducted by Clint and Bonnie Conner, counselors and authors from Ohio, USA, and their friends, Dwight and Karen Pryor. The lectures were followed by a three-day workshop on "Healing Prayer." This workshop was designed to introduce the approach of healing prayer to potential counselors.

### **Present Activities**

**A team:** In the Fall of 2003 we formed a team which includes a psychologist, a clinical psychologist, and a psychiatrist, all of whom are officially recognized professionals in Israel. The team also includes the coordinator, a psychiatric nurse, Christiane Furmann and Miriam Ronning, cofounder and director of the Karen Fund. We meet once a month for planning the Karen Fund activities, for discussion of cases, and for prayer and fellowship. This has been a most encouraging experience for all involved.

**An apartment:** A facility for counseling has been made available to provide a place for counseling sessions in a quiet and secluded setting in Jerusalem. The plan is to install on these new premises a small lending library of books on relevant topics such as depression, anxiety, stress, marital problems, etc.

**Lectures:** Two lecture series are to be held in 2004, one on "Suffering and the Believer – seen from biblical and psychological perspectives," on the 25th and 26th of March. In September we are hoping for a two week seminar whose subject is yet to be announced. The lecturer will be Dr. Pablo Polischuk.

**Coordinator:** A new phase in the work of the Karen Fund was initiated when Christiane Furmann came to volunteer her services in Fall, 2003. Christiane Furmann is an intercessor with a long history of service in Europe and other areas. She is now hard at work pursuing the goals of the Karen Fund in her new position as coordinator of its activities. She is expanding of the work of the Karen Fund among the Arab Christians in Galilee, by traveling to Shfaram to the House of Light twice a month. She reports that the House of Light, Christian Arab Social Aid in Israel, works with people from different backgrounds including non-Arabs. For 20 years they have brought loving care to problematic teenagers, women in difficulty, and prisoners and their families. The need in this sector is great, and few professional Christian counselors are available .

**"Karen's Song" CD:** A song composed by Jennifer Burton for Karen as she sat by Karen's hospital bedside is now the name of a new CD. It has been produced by Elisheva and Yuval Shomron, who decided to volunteer



their time “in order to carry on the legacy which Karen left – to reach out to the downtrodden with the comfort of the Lord’s friendship and love.” Elisheva describes the CD as “a unique blend of sounds and expressions in that it includes tones from old familiar hymns together with meditative instrumental music and songs in Hebrew and in English which enable one to receive comfort.” Many friends, both singers and musicians, volunteered to create an inspiring message of comfort and hope – which this land so desperately needs.

**Author info:**

Mirja Ronning has a B.A. in psychology and has done M.A. studies in clinical psychology at the Hebrew University with internship at the Hadassah Hospital, Jerusalem.

**Resources**

Karen Fund is a non-profit organization depending totally on contributions and on volunteer workers. Some funding during the conferences was obtained by free will offerings and by selling cards, art work and CDs.

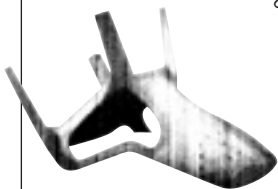
**Final Words**

More than 20 years ago Larry Goldberg and I talked and dreamed about the need of providing biblically-based Christian counseling for believers in the land. It is with great joy and gratitude to the Lord that, as this *Mishkan* issue attests, we see a number of efforts to minister to these needs of the various communities of the land. May we all together, through these different organizations, be the healing hands of our Lord to those who need to be helped and comforted. Our hope and prayer is to be a “ray of light” (Keren Or) for all those who need it in this suffering land.

For further information see [www.KarenFund.org](http://www.KarenFund.org)



THEME: FAITH, TRAUMA AND STRESS



# Everlasting Arms — Messianic Counseling

By **Erez Soref**

Everlasting Arms is an Israeli national, non-denominational, non-for-profit organization with the specific vision of providing a variety of counseling services to the Messianic and Christian community in Israel. The scope of the ministry is not only to provide direct counseling services, but has a strong emphasis on supporting and training pastors and lay people alike, via courses, conferences, discipleship and literature.

The name Everlasting Arms is taken from Moses' Blessing in Deuteronomy 33:27: "The eternal God is your refuge, and his *everlasting arms* are under you." We found this name to be inspiring, as a Messianic ministry that wishes to be a part of God's everlasting arms on earth, in Israel.

The body of Messiah in Israel has some unique characteristics. Like the country itself, the body of Messiah in Israel is characterized by great diversity. It is largely comprised of immigrants from all over the world, carrying different cultural heritages, languages, and different Messianic and Christian traditions. Issues of identity as Jewish believers/Messianic Jews, compounded by a growing rejection from the general population within a very stressful part of the world cause great spiritual, emotional, and physical stress for many believers in Israel. The small number of trained ministers usually concentrates on teaching and evangelism, and many Christian leaders report feeling overwhelmed and unprepared to appropriately respond when emotional/relational problems occur. The specific training of Everlasting Arms' counselors Larry Goldberg and Dr. Erez Soref includes both theology and counseling, and has been undertaken specifically to address this gap.

Because of the demographic characteristics of the church in Israel (as explained earlier), the need for counseling is great. Closely connected to the need and the nature of the Messianic and Christian community, is the fact that most believers in Israel are below average in terms of economic status. Thus, the vast majority of the believers in Israel cannot afford counseling services. Through Everlasting Arms, we provide these services in a subsidized manner, through a non-for profit organization.

Leaders and lay people alike seek Messianic counseling services. Noted Messianic leaders in Israel have been instrumental in encouraging Goldberg and Soref to pursue this line of training. Many leaders have ap-

proached Everlasting Arms with requests to provide counseling services, courses, and seminars.

## Mission Statement of Everlasting Arms

The ministry serves within the context of the body of Messiah in Israel. This body is comprised of all true followers of Messiah – Jewish, Arab, or of other national origin.

### *Specific Goals of the Ministry:*

1. To provide clinical counseling and assessment services in the following areas:
  - i. Individual
  - ii. Couples
  - iii. Family
  - iv. Pre-marital counseling
2. Being a resource for Congregational leaders:
  - i. To provide training for congregational leaders in the area of counseling via conferences and courses.
  - ii. To be a source for crisis consultation in areas related to mental health (for example, a suicide attempt, suicide bombing victims from a congregation).
3. Family conferences in a variety of subjects related to the Messianic family.
4. Coordination of conferences and meetings for believers in the health professions.
5. Creating Messianic counseling literature for the Messianic and Christian community in Israel, via translating, editing, and writing.
6. Conducting research related to counseling among the Messianic and Christian community in Israel, for the purposes of monitoring our ministry, and the enhancement of knowledge regarding the Messianic and Christian community in Israel.
7. Minister in our region. Though the ministry in the above-mentioned domains is intended primarily to the body of Messiah in Israel, it is our hope that with time, as the need arises, we might be able to assist in a similar manner to believers in neighboring countries (as short-term endeavors).

## Core Values of Everlasting Arms as a Messianic Counseling Ministry

A few points detailing our way of thinking regarding the foundations and practice of Messianic counseling:

- Wise counsel has been one of the ministries of the body of Messiah since its inception (Jas 1:5, Rom 15:1-6). The people of God always have been and still are seeking sound, biblical counsel in all areas of living.
- The ultimate purpose of the process of Messianic counseling is to assist a person, a couple or a family to confront the old man (our sinful na-



- ture) and help release the new nature given us in Messiah.
- Our counseling philosophy is based on and measured by the one absolute standard – the Bible, God’s inerrant word. While we are informed by the scientific and developmental aspects of the academic discipline of psychology, we examine it by God’s Word. That is in line with our training, which included Bible and theology, as well as clinical psychology.

**Author info:**

Erez Soref received his doctoral degree in Psychology from Wheaton College in 2002. He is a registered psychologist in the Israeli ministry of health, and also serves as the Academic Dean of Israel College of the Bible.

*How we see Messianic Counseling as a ministry to the body of Messiah:*

- All the clinical services to congregations are at their best when the counseling process is accompanied by spiritual guidance and coordination with the patients’ local congregational leader(s).
- We are convinced that while Messianic counseling can be an important resource for support and growth for believers that need it, it cannot replace the support and encouragement of the local congregation, nor the spiritual accountability a person must have with members of the local congregation.
- Therefore, we will do everything in our power to encourage and incorporate cooperation and coordination with patients’ congregational leaders, without compromising professional confidentiality.

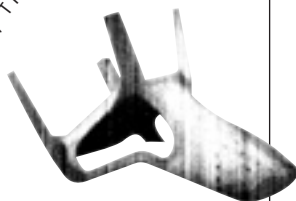
Since its inception in January 2003, Everlasting Arms has been active in providing this variety of counseling services in Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv, Haifa, Netanya, and Be’er-sheva.

If you are interested in learning more about Everlasting Arms, and support this ministry, please contact us at [erezsis@netvision.net.il](mailto:erezsis@netvision.net.il) or [larry@galtronics.co.il](mailto:larry@galtronics.co.il) .

# Life in the Shadow of Death: Tools for Coping

By Lynne Halamish

THEME: FAITH, TRAUMA AND STRESS



## Introduction

Grief and loss are constants and inseparable elements of life. Every individual grieves losses in his own way. Humanity as a whole and Israelis in particular are all grieving the loss of security. On the more personal level, people grieve the loss of friends or family members. When dealing with grief, there are elements that are common to all types of grief. It is these common elements that this paper will discuss.

In the Israeli context, which is the focus of this paper, the heightened incidence of terrorist attacks during the past three years has caused increased fear, anxiety and sense of vulnerability to injury, terrorist attacks, war and death. We are unable to change the reality in which we live, but we do have the power to change how we respond to the events that constitute our reality

Robert Jay Lifton, while a visiting Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, stated in an interview with Bill Moyers for Public Broadcasting System in the United States:

... we are vulnerable, and ... to think that we can destroy all vulnerability is an illusion ... we all have a double life. On the one hand we know that we can be annihilated and everybody around us by terrorism ... yet in another part of our mind we simply go through our routine. And we do what we do in life, and we try to do it as well as we can ... And to live a life that's free of these events but doesn't deny them.

This paper will give practical tools to help in dealing with fear, loss, and heightened sense of vulnerability.

One of these tools, is to provide information on what constitutes a normal, expected reaction under loss related circumstances, including duration and intensity. Another tool is practical advice on how to reduce conscious levels of fear.

## Anxiety, Fear, and Anger

One of the primary causes of fear and anxiety in today's modern world is the influence of mass media. Media is built on sales and sales are built on viewing time. Since there is much competition for viewing time, reporting of news, whether in newspapers, on television or radio, is generally sensationalized in order to attract the maximum number of viewers. The images of devastation and death, visual or verbal are more and more explicit. Whether the images are of automobile accidents, war, terrorist attacks or natural disasters, they are seemingly endlessly repeated in the mass media. This contradicts nature. In life, one experiences or witnesses an event one time only. Repeated viewing of images of terrorism, disaster and death repeatedly traumatize even those who have no connection to the actual event. The impact on those who are directly involved with the event is often heightened. I have had clients who were "informed" of the death of a loved one via television by viewing recognizable features or possessions of their loved ones on the television screen prior to receiving official notification of the death. This is shocking and inhumane. Images have power to attract, but this attraction is like the attraction of a moth to the flame.

One practical suggestion for reducing fear and anxiety is to lower the impact of the news by reducing the sensory input of repeated exposure. For example, do not watch television four times daily, but rather listen to the news on radio once a day. Understand that knowledge is *not* control. Immersing yourself in a constant flow of news information will not help you deal with the danger. Two days a week without exposure to media reportage of news events would significantly reduce anxiety. I am not suggesting that you cut yourself off from the world. Bad news travels rapidly and if you have a need to know what is happening, you will be informed regardless of whether or not you are glued to the television. The same principle holds true for news via newspapers. A good exercise is to ask yourself how you feel when you have seen the news in a graphic or visual representation. Have you ever had a good reaction?

A positive way to deal with the overabundance of "bad news" is to spend time in nature. Look at the cycle of life and the beauty of creation instead of focusing on endless repetitions of frightening, ugly images.

**When anger is released appropriately it is a good, cleansing emotion**

Anger is a natural reaction to the times in which we live. Although anger has "bad press" it is a good, strong emotion. Anger in itself is not the problem; how anger is dealt with is. Suppressed anger frequently becomes depression and frustration.

Anger needs to be released in appropriate, positive ways. When anger is released appropriately it is a good, cleansing emotion.

There are many ways to release anger. Each person should explore the way that best suits him. The most common and easiest method is through rigorous physical exercise – the kind that leaves you breathless and sweat-



ing. I, for example, have a punching bag in my yard and gloves to go with it. Running, tennis, swimming, basketball, football are also good ways to release anger. Repeating the word “no” while engaging in these activities is an aid to releasing anger.

There are individuals for whom these types of activities are not suited. Art is another way to get the anger out, particularly finger painting or throwing wet clay at a wall. Sometimes writing letters can be beneficial. Letters can be written to the deceased or to the government, hospitals, or God. Some people find it possible to express anger through more expressive, quiet artistic endeavors. In this area, invention is invited.

### **What Responses are Normal?**

The initial response to death or terror is usually one of shock – the feeling of receiving a physical blow, a kick in the face or a punch in the stomach. Depending on how close the tragedy is to you personally, the intensity of this feeling will vary. The same initial reaction is experienced by persons when they receive bad news. Some people actually fall when they receive bad news. Different people feel the blow in different parts of their body, stomach, chest cavity, face, knees, etc. This emotional/psychological “knee jerk” response is quite similar to the response you would have if someone were to come and actually physically hit you. You would defend and protect the body part that received the blow.

In the same manner, the emotional/psychological self is defended by armoring itself against any further damage, by shutting down. In this context it is helpful to be aware that when giving bad news, only one or two sentences of information are absorbed before the receiver shuts down. From that point on, absorption of new material is at approximately zero level. Any additional information given will most likely not be absorbed.

The initial sensation, that the receiver of bad news experiences is a type of numbness, accompanied by disbelief, confusion, and bewilderment. In cases of fear for personal safety, fear of leaving the house (agoraphobia), hyper vigilance, sweaty palms, rapid heartbeat, mild paranoia (interpreting shadows in a sinister manner), or suspecting passersby of transporting explosives are all normal reactions.

Another phenomenon is a tendency to wait for and expect a “ripple effect.” We expect another incident to follow. This is especially true after two events. The numbers three, four and seven seem to hold special significance. We wait for the ripple, for other deaths to occur, before we feel temporarily safe again.

It is also normal to feel disorganized, particularly if it is the loss of a significant other; a person who in addition to being significant emotionally, also fulfills certain roles in our lives. If a mother in a traditional role is killed, it may be that the caring of daily household needs is beyond the scope of the bereaved. This period of confusion continues until a replacement figure is found or until one learns to fulfill the role. If a child or more than one member of the family is killed, parents often feel they



have no reason to wake up in the morning, no one to cook or care for. This is particularly true if the one who has died is an only child, the youngest or a disabled child who has required particularly intensive care.

It is a normal reaction to look for the deceased person. Our eyes wander to the vacant place at the table. If a soldier has died, we may find ourselves looking for him at the trapiada among the other soldiers as we drive by. We may even see him! Hallucinations of the deceased are experienced by 34 percent of the grieving population and are therefore classified as a normal reaction to loss. Yearning, despair, crying, sighing, breathing and sleep difficulties, appetite changes, and dreams of the loved one are all normal reactions in grief and become our daily bread.

One of the most disturbing daily effects of grief is a lack of concentration. We read the newspaper headlines four times and don't recall what was read. We find our car keys in the refrigerator or may walk into a room and forget why we entered it. In the case of this kind of confusion it is impossible to escape the grief by reading books or working. These, however, are all normal responses to loss.

Another common but very distressing symptom of grief is guilt and self reproach. At the moment when one hears of the death of a loved one, all

**At the moment when one hears of the death of a loved one, all the mistakes in the relationship come to mind**

the mistakes in the relationship come to mind. These mistakes fit into two broad categories, the things we did do that we shouldn't have, and the things we didn't do and should have done – sins of commission and sins of omission. All relationships are flawed; mistakes are made but

these mistakes have nothing to do with the death itself. Because guilt appears at the time of recognition of death, the tendency is to appropriate responsibility for the death. The thinking patterns can be: "It's because of me that he died." What did you do that caused him to die? "I should have been a better wife/husband." While it may be true that you should have been a better wife/husband, that fact had nothing whatsoever to do with the cause of death. The person died because a terrorist bombed the bus stop or because a speeding driver hit his car. It is important to allow regret and even guilt where appropriate, while simultaneously being clear as to the actual causes of death. Guilt can be worked through after the death of a loved one.

A reason guilt is so common and prominent is that our subliminal reasoning says that if we didn't cause the death then we are also impotent to have prevented it and by extension, to protect the loved ones that remain. We have no control. Whether lack of control or guilt is the easier option initially, guilt is not a positive or productive way to deal with grief in the long term.

One prominent type of guilt associated with death is called survivor guilt. Examples of this range from holocaust survivors, survivors of fatal car crashes, survivors of terror incidents to soldiers who have switched positions with each other prior to one of them being killed. This guilt is

caused by confusion between two emotions that occur simultaneously upon realization that the death has occurred. The emotions are horror that the death has occurred and relief that you are still alive. When these occur simultaneously, we find confusion of interpretation. There is a feeling of relief and even joy when we saw that someone else (not ourselves) was killed followed by extreme guilt for feeling that way. A lack of recognition that there is a legitimate reason for feeling joy after surviving a brush with death complicates this response.

Although the list of normal responses to death is long and may sound like a shopping list, it is important to understand that all of the above mentioned responses are normal in the initial period following death by violence.

### **Does Faith or Religion Help?**

One speaker at a conference on terror in November 2003 presented interesting data on research on the coping mechanisms of victims of terror. He indicated that religious belief may help but he noted a difference between "inner" and "outer" religious beliefs in their efficacy as tools to cope with grief. In my work, I have observed the same phenomena but I prefer to describe it in a different way. The distinction I make is between "religion" and "faith." Religion is a cultural, behavioral expression. Religion is exclusive and includes only those within the culture who follow specific rules. Faith, by contrast, has to do with a personal commitment/belief by an individual in a source outside himself. The source of faith can be something quite banal, like faith that the chair is strong enough to hold me and I will therefore sit in it. Or the faith can be based on something more profound .

In my work and in my personal life, I have seen that the strength of personal faith can be discovered only when it is tested; learning to ride a bicycle without training wheels or jumping out of an airplane with a parachute are two examples. The second trial is inevitably easier than the first because it requires less faith and is supported by more "proof" ergo experience.

People of significant faith in God, frequently respond to death of a loved one by violence, with anger and even rage against God. A feeling of abandonment, even betrayal, is not uncommon. The strength of the root of faith, (which is usually a function of time plus investment in study, prayer, etc.) is a determining factor as to whether the faith will hold through the fire of grief.

When it comes to religion, as opposed to faith, the response of the "religious" person is to either move more deeply into the religion or to become distanced in the event of the death of a loved one. The individual is looking for answers that are difficult to find in an external observance of "outer religion." Conversely, many non-religious individuals embrace religion after the death of a loved one, finding no adequate answers in any other sphere.

Sudden death may tend to intensify grief and increase the tendency to



fixate on one stage of mourning. (Hinton 1980) People all grieve in different ways but both family and culture influence public and private grief. That is to say, the actual intensity of grief cannot necessarily be observed externally. For example, the force of some types of Sephardic cultural grief expression (tearing out of hair, scratching of the face and falling on the ground) seem very intense, but they are also a cultural imperative, and therefore don't necessarily reflect the true intensity of the grief.

## Meaning

For most people, survivors and mourners alike, it is important to find meaning in the death and life of the one who has died. For many, it is also important to know the reason for the death. This is often a difficult task. Some look to God or politics or guilt for answers. Others seek meaning in memorializing the victim, either by glorifying the memory through selective remembrance or through erecting monuments like parks, buildings or statues dedicated to the deceased. Some people dedicate books or conferences in the name of the deceased.

The lives of those who remain can also become an answer to the question of meaning. People express this quest for the meaning of the death of a loved one by themselves, either choosing to retreat from previous connections or reconnecting with their lives in significant new ways. Still others answer this quest for meaning by battling against the cause of the death of a loved one, joining the ranks of those who fight cancer or war. An example of this would be someone who takes initiative to improve the quality of traffic conditions, thereby enabling him to say, "Because of my daughter's death at this corner, we are erecting a stoplight so that no one else will die at this corner." Living without meaning in our lives and in our deaths is very difficult.

## Sudden, Violent Death

When death is sudden or violent there are issues that make the grief more difficult. One of the big problems with this kind of death is that there is no opportunity to say goodbye or many of the other things we would have wanted to say. Reactions to sudden, violent deaths tend to be more severe, exaggerated and complicated. Disbelief and murderous impulses are among the most difficult reactions to understand. Frequently, the intensity, duration and frequency of anger and rage are totally out of character for those who experience them. To fantasize "acting out" or seeking revenge is *normal*. Elaborate plans may be devised; images of seeing the murderer suffer more than one's own loved one are *normal reactions* for bereaved survivors.

Often the survivors are ashamed to tell anyone of their retaliatory thoughts. Lifton (1979)<sup>1</sup> explained that anger has to do with an internal

1 Robert Jay Lifton, *The Broken Connection: On Death and the Continuity of Life*, 1979.

struggle to assert one's own vitality by attacking the other rather than the self in an attempt to prevent a sense of inner deadness. Survivors are often frightened by their own murderous impulses and sense of rage. It is common to feel that one is "going crazy" or "losing one's mind."

The survivor needs to be reassured that he is not losing his mind. Retaliatory thinking is typical. It is in venting and verbalizing murderous impulses that anger begins to lose some of its power.

Anger can be displaced so that it targets family members, friends, co-workers, strangers or even those who try to assist the bereaved. The threshold of irritation and self-control is typically low in survivors or bereaved family members. When dealing with this kind of bereavement, it is important to listen with acknowledgement, understanding and nonjudgmental acceptance. There are significant levels of cognitive dissonance in cases of death by violence and in particular by death caused by terror. The belief is that if we are good people and do not harm others, life and God will be fair to us. When this does not happen, a lonely search for understanding ensues. Previously held belief systems are called into question and there can be a loss of trust in God or in the world as it had been known prior to the death of a loved one.

The survivor is empowered by knowledge of what is normal and to be expected in the grieving process and by gaining knowledge and information about the circumstances of the death. The sense of powerlessness and frustration are real, painful and very common. Fear and a pervasive sense of apprehension and vulnerability are not irrational. Death involves a profound loss of security.<sup>2</sup>

## Landmines

One significant tool for dealing with grief is to be aware of the "landmines." When we enter grief or go through trauma, we enter a minefield. Mines are by definition an overflowing of emotion, either expressed or not, that is unexpected both in terms of timing and location. Occasions for encountering these landmines could be the first anniversary of the person's birthday, holidays or weekends without the loved one, the scent of the loved one's cologne, a place that they loved, a song that reminds you of him/her, mail addressed to the deceased, a graduation or special event at which the deceased was meant to be present, etc.

An example of an unexpected landmine is the teenager who lost his mother in the bombing of a mall in Netanya and decided to go out with

**There can be a loss of trust in God or in the world as it had been known prior to the death of a loved one**

2 Lula M. Redmond, RN, MS – Chapter 5 "Sudden Violent Death", in Kenneth J. Doka (Ed.): *Living With Grief After Sudden Loss*, Hospice Foundation of America, 1996, p.53–72.



his friends for the first time after the loss. He got in the car and heard the news reporting another bombing of a shopping area. He asked his friends to stop the car, got out and walked home with tears streaming down his face.

The length of these minefields is approximately one year. By the end of the first year after a death, most of the mines will have surfaced and you will be aware of their locations. This, however, does not signify the end of grief.

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### **Getting Past the Grief or Is it ever over?**

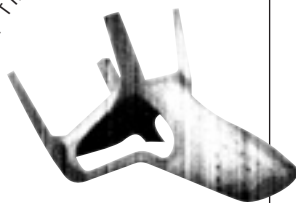
The most difficult aspect of grief is that it is long-lasting. In a society of mega information conveyed in seconds via the internet and meals in minutes via fast food, long term grief is out of fashion. Long, tedious grief for a significant other lasting one to two years seems an anachronism in 2004. For the death of a child the period is even longer with five to six years being the minimum. If grief lasts longer than that this, therapy of some sort may be required.

There are times when grief is held on to for the reason that letting go of it seems like a betrayal of the memory of the one who has died. Grief itself is a healing process and as such is positive. It heals painful psychological wounds.

Grief has a beginning, middle, and can have an end. Some of this process is dependent on the individual mourner. The end of grief does not imply that you will no longer miss your loved one. What it does mean is reconnecting and reinvesting in life and in other people. The end of grief comes when there is a reconnection with joy. This enables significant connection with other family members, friends, and yourself – your own spiritual, intellectual and physical needs. There is a point at which one can choose to return to joy and leave grief behind. It is, however, a choice. In conclusion, the words of Jonathan Swift serve as a blessing, "May you live every day of your life!"

# Selected Annotated Bibliography on Counseling

THEME: FAITH, TRAUMA AND STRESS



By **Erez Soref**

Adams, J. (1970). *Competent to Counsel*. P&R Publishing Co.: Phillipsburg, N.J.

At its time, this book has been indeed ground-breaking. Dr. Adams challenged Christians to think about counseling supported by the Bible, in contrast to modern psychotherapy (aspects of which are provocatively criticized in the book). In this book, Adams introduced the term "sufficiency of Scriptures," and "Nouthetic counseling" – from the Greek, sometimes translated "admonish, correct or instruct." He provides a scriptural passages index to be used in counseling.

Adams, J. (1973). *The Christian Counselor's Manual*. P&R Publishing Co.: Phillipsburg, N.J.

A sequel of "Competent to Counsel," in this book Adams continues to develop Nouthetic biblical counseling, and addresses many specific questions for the Christian counselor, such as "Who is qualified to be a counselor? How can counselees change? How does the Holy Spirit work? What often lies behind depression? How do we deal with anger? What is schizophrenia?" and more. A useful and detailed resource.

Bobgan, M. and D. (1987). *Psychoheresy: The Psychological Seduction of Christianity*. Santa Barbara, California: EastGate.

This book presents a strong opposition to psychological theories and practice, and claims to "expose the fallacies and failure of psychological counseling theories and therapies, and reveals the anti-Christian biases." It further attacks the integration movement as an "unholy union."

Carlson, D.L. (1994). *Why Do Christians Shoot Their Wounded? Helping (Not Hurting) Those with Serious Emotional Difficulties*. IVP.

Carlson presents the position, based on both the Bible and science, that it is no sin to hurt. He reviews evidence that many prominent Christians suffer emotionally *not* as the result of sin or bad choices. Written in a compelling and compassionate manner.

Carter, J.D., & Narramore, B. (1979). *The Integration of Psychology and Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Academie Books, A division of Zondervan Publishing House.

This book asks the question how does one's faith influences his profession, especially in the mental health field? Further, how the body of knowledge accumulated in the field of psychology can assist the body of Messiah? They introduce the term "Unity of Truth," that is, truth found in science, is God's truth, even if written by non-believers. All these aspects are discussed.

Clebsch, W. and Jaekle, C. (1964). *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective*. NY: Jason Aronson

A compendium of historical Christian articles concerning pastoral care.

Collins, G.R. (1993). *The Biblical Basis of Christian Counseling for People Helpers: Relating the Basic Teachings of Scripture to People's Problems*. NavPress, 1993.

Presents the idea that any Christian wishing to help others can function as people helper (lay counselor). The book reviews the biblical basis for counseling, and provides Scriptures related to counseling.

Cushman, P. (1995). *Constructing the self, constructing America: A cultural history of psychotherapy*. New York: Addison-Wesley.

Cushman, a secular Jewish psychologist, reviews developments of American culture as it had led to the place psychotherapy occupies in current American culture. Using a social constructionist lens he presents a strong argument intent on demonstrating the various ways in which economic, political and cultural concerns gave shape to the contemporary practice of psychology in the US.



Ganz, R. (1993). *Psychobabble: The Failure of Modern Psychology – and the Biblical Alternative*. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1993).

Dr. Ganz, A Jewish believer with background of psychoanalytic training, presents his own record and additional arguments to support the stance for Biblical Counseling and against integration.

Hoekema, A. (1986). *Created in God's Image*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing.

A detailed presentation of theological anthropology – the doctrine of man in Scriptures. Dr. Hoekema deals with many aspects of the person, and concentrates on the Image of God in humanity. An excellent resource on the subject.

Jones, A. (1995). *Soul Making: The Desert Way of Spirituality*. San Francisco: Harper.

A thoughtful book, drawing on Scripture, psychological theories, and writings of Christian saints and desert fathers. Discusses spirituality, relationship with God, and with one another in light of these sources.

Jones, S., and Butman, R. (1991). *Modern psychotherapies: A Comprehensive Christian Appraisal*. IVP: Downers Grove.

This book provides a thorough review and description of the major theories of psychotherapy. Following the description of each theory is a detailed review from a Biblical viewpoint. The authors try to stay objective, not showing favorites among the various schools of thought. A thought-provoking book, recommended for every student and teacher of counseling and psychology.

Lawler, T.C. (1950). *St. Gregory the Great: Pastoral Care (Ancient Christian Writers, No 11)*. Paulist Press.

A classic book by one of the best-known popes, St. Gregory the great. This book is an instruction manual as to how the clergy should behave, and how they should counsel and treat those who are in sin and/or who come to him for guidance. Provides ample insight and background for Christian thinking about counseling.



Powlison, D. (1995). Idols of the Heart and 'Vanity Fair,'. *The Journal of Biblical Counseling*, 13:2.

Powlison is arguing for the richness and sufficiency of the Bible against a non-biblical philosophy of life. He attempts to demonstrate the consistency of the biblical view point of persons, versus the contradicting views of the non-biblical philosophies, and their usage by integrationalists.

Ruttenberg, M. (1994). *Christianity and Psychiatry, the Theology Behind the Psychology*. Broadcast University: Office of Defense. [Hebrew only]

Ruttenberg details his philosophy regarding the influence of religion on culture in general, and specifically, the influence of Christianity on Psychiatry and psychology. A worthy reading, provides an interesting perspective to the different arguments among Evangelical Christians.

Smith, W. (1996). Authors and Arguments in Biblical Counseling: A Review and Analysis. *The Journal of Biblical Counseling*, 15:1.

A detailed review of the different authors and arguments in biblical counseling in the past few decades. Each author's stance is presented and analyzed. Though not written from a critical perspective, it is a useful resource for a quick reference to the different authors of biblical counseling.

Soref, E. (1999). *Religion and Psychological Well-Being – Messianic Jews and Other Religious Groups in Israel*. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Wheaton College: IL.

Examination of 2000 the Messianic-Jewish community in Israel compares to non-messianic Jews on a variety of psychological measures. No statistically significant differences were observed on any psychological measure.

Vitz, C.P. (1994). *Psychology As Religion: The Cult of Self-Worship 2nd Edition*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing.

Vitz writes both to refute secular theories' claims and to awake the church. First, he provides a response to secular humanism in the psychologized form of self, what he terms "self-ism." He wants to expose the bankruptcy of secular humanism's claims to be a sufficient philosophical foundation for all of life. Secondly, he wants to rouse the church to provide the answers that it already has.

# Bishop Jean-Baptiste Gurion and two Modern Yeshua-Movements

By **Gershon NereI**

Sunday, November 9, 2003, an exceptional ceremony took place at the Church of "Notre Dame – Ark of the Covenant," annexed to the Monastery of the Sisters of St. Joseph, located above the Arab village of Abu-Ghosh, near Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> Traditionally, this is the biblical site of both *Kiryat Yearim* and *Emmaus*, on the Judean Hills. The solemn liturgy, including a choir and a variety of clerical robes, was performed for the episcopal ordination of Jean-Baptiste (*Yohanan Hamatbil*) Gurion, OSB, as the Assistant (Auxiliary) Bishop to Michel Sabbah, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> About 800 people crowded inside and outside the large church, among them also the elderly mother of the new bishop.

The major officiators were Monsignor Michel Sabbah,<sup>3</sup> Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, personal representative of Pope John Paul II and Archbishop Pietro Sambi, the Apostolic Nuncio in Israel. Also about half a dozen other bishops, from different denominations, participated in the ceremony of laying hands on the newly consecrated episcopal leader.<sup>4</sup> During the ceremony a papal letter (*bulla*), dated August 14, 2003, was read. This letter, signed by the Pope, was read in French and in Hebrew in the presence of all those who gathered there.<sup>5</sup>

According to the pontifical letter, the Pope personally appoints beside the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem an auxiliary bishop with the special task

1 "Upcoming Events," In *Christian Jerusalem*, Friday, Nov. 7, 2003, p. 7; "Hebrew-Israeli Catholics get New Bishop," in *Bulletin Associated Christian Press*, Jerusalem, no. 431 (Nov.-Dec. 2003): 2. See also at <http://www.cicts.org>

2 See, for example, "Rev. Father Jean-Baptiste Gourion, Auxiliary Bishop to Mgr. Michel Sabbah," in *Jerusalem* (Diocesan Bulletin of the Latin Patriarchate), vol. 9, nos. 3-4 (June-Aug. 2003): 130-132. "Olivetian Monk Named Bishop," at <http://www.osb.org/new/0303new.html> and Alain René Arbez, "Un évêque pour la communauté hébraïque d'Israël," at <http://www.upjf.org> (<http://www.upjf/documents/showthread.php?threadid=4972> This was removed from the website. Copy in NereI Archive.)

3 Michel Sabbah, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem since 1988, is the first Palestinian to be named patriarch. The Arab-Christian theology of Michel Sabbah is openly expressed in his book *Paix sur Jérusalem – Propos d'un évêque palestinien*, written by Yves Teyssier d'Orfeuille, Desclée de Brouwer, 2002.

4 On the personal letter of invitation to the event in three languages (French, Hebrew and Arabic), all clergy were requested to come with white alb and stole.

5 I thank Rev. Pierbattista Pizzaballa, OFM, for providing the written text.

of the "pastoral care of the Catholic faithful of Hebrew expression" who live in Israel. Additionally, the Pope confers on Jean-Baptiste Gurion the titular byname of "Bishop of Lod (Lydda)," which is located southeast of Tel-Aviv-Jaffa, and during the fourth century AD became a Christian center.

The new bishop is of Jewish descent, born in Algeria in 1934, baptized at the age of 24 and entered the French Abbey of Bec as a Benedictine monk. In 1976 he moved to Israel, serving as Abbot of the *Olivetian Benedictines* at the Crusader "Church of the Resurrection" at Abu-Ghosh. Since 1990 Gurion has headed the "Society of St. James" (*Hevrat Ya'akov Hakadosh*) for the pastoral care of the Hebrew Catholics in Israel. This society was established in 1956, and its communities (today about 400 local citizens and residents) are concentrated in the cities of Jerusalem, Jaffa, Haifa and Be'er-Sheva.<sup>6</sup>

Since the times of the late Oswald Rufeisen, "Brother Daniel," (a Zionist Jew who was a Carmelite monk in Haifa, died in July 1998), there exist friendly personal relations between Messianic Jews and Hebrew Catholics in Israel.<sup>7</sup> Without hiding the clear theological differences between them, the basic common ground for these two Hebraic minorities is around the belief in Yeshua and in the New Testament. A particular common interest between Messianic Jews and Hebrew Catholics focuses around the fast and influential spread of Islam with its "*Jihad*" ideology against all the "infidels" – the Jews and the Western Christians.<sup>8</sup>

Gurion's ordination is understood as both historic and controversial. Roman Catholics who emphasize the historic side, point to the formal restoration of the ancient See of *Ya'akov* (James), the Brother of the Lord, who according to the New Testament (Acts 15:13) presided over the first *Kehila* of Jewish Yeshua-believers in Jerusalem. Jesuit historian Francesco Rossi de Gasperis of the Pontifical Biblical Institute of Jerusalem comments on the current situation as follows:

The opposition to creating within Israel a Church 'for Israel' finds its deepest reason in the denial of the very existence of the State of Israel. But such a Church is the original figure of the Christian identity; it is the Church of the Apostle Peter, a community made of Jews faithful to the Torah and also believers in Jesus, the Son of God. Gourion's nomination as a bishop 'ad judaeos' signifies an historic turning point.<sup>9</sup>

6 Some sources mention only 200 members, see "Dom Jean-Baptiste Gourion," in *La Terre Sainte*, vol. 69, no. 569, (Jan.-Fév. 2004): 38. See also, for example, David Neuhaus, SJ, "Kehilla, Church and the Jewish People," *Mishkan*, 36(2002): 78–86.

7 Cf. Nechama Tec, *In the Lion's Den: The Life of Oswald Rufeisen*, Oxford U.P., Oxford 1990.

8 See, for example, Shlomit Raz, "Islam, Christianity and Judaism – Islam for Infidels (A Guide for the Perplexed)," An Open Letter, dated 2 Apr. 2003; Victor Mordecai, "The Islamic Threat Looms as America Sleeps," in *Israel Today*, no. 59 (Dec. 2003): 22.

9 See Sandro Magister, "Arab Patriarch Sabbah has an Auxiliary – But He Speaks Hebrew," at [http://213.92.16.98/ESW\\_articolo/0,2393,41875,00.html](http://213.92.16.98/ESW_articolo/0,2393,41875,00.html)

Francesco Rossi de Gasperis is fully aware of the challenge that the new Israeli Hebrew/Jewish bishop poses not merely for Palestinian Christianity, but to the entire universal Church. Such Catholics think that Gurion, the new "Hebrew/Jewish Bishop" in Israel, now bridges over a long gap that goes back to the second century AD, when the line of the Jerusalem bishops "of the circumcision" was replaced by the bishops "of uncircumcision." Thus, for example, Eusebius Pamphilus, the Father of "Church History" wrote in the fourth century that up to the year 135 AD, at the Bar-Kochba's revolt, there had been a series of 15 Jewish bishops in Jerusalem from apostolic times. Then the Jewish apostolic line ended.

Catholics see in Gurion's episcopate the modern revival of the 'Jewish Church' in Israel, yet within full Catholic garb, i.e., incorporated in a Catholic structure of episcopal succession. Namely, under the Catholic authorization of the *Magisterium* for the doctrinal teaching and the performance of the Latin liturgy, although it is translated into the Hebrew language, especially in that church. All these developments are under complete submission to the bishop of Rome.

However, we should also note that in the papal nomination of Jean Baptiste-Gurion, the word "Jew" or "Jewish" is systematically avoided, and not without a reason. All Catholic official documents intentionally avoid the term "Jew," while they speak either of a Hebrew speaking bishop, or a Hebraic community. Thus, the employment of the Hebrew language is naturally more convenient. This terminological distinction between "Hebrew speaking" and "Jewish" actually reflects a substantial complexity within this community – and within the entire Catholic church. Nowadays, the local Hebrew-speaking community is composed of many non-Jews who live and labor in Israel, among them spouses and relatives of Jews who immigrated to Israel from Eastern Europe and former USSR, or foreign workers from Catholic countries, like the Philippines.

Yet still the new bishop himself very much highlights his Jewish background and his Jewish identity. Gurion, in fact, talks about the *ripe time* to revive the Jewish branch within the universal church, and particularly in the land of Israel. Thus, for example, on the front page of a special booklet issued for Gurion's episcopal ordination, one can see the two ladies from the famous mosaic at the church of *Santa Sabina* in Rome representing the "Church of the Circumcision" and the "Church of the Gentiles." On the new booklet front page, the mosaic of the "Jewish Church" is placed on the higher level, as being the originator of the Gentile church. And in the same booklet, on the back cover page, Gurion also published his new episcopal emblem. This badge of office has several Jewish symbols, as follows: the *Magen David*, the Star of David, the Lion of Judah and Jerusalem, and the inscription "you shall be comforted in Jerusalem" (Isa 66: 13). In the booklet's front and back cover pages, a

**Gurion talks about the *ripe time* to revive the Jewish branch within the universal church, and particularly in the land of Israel**

large olive tree is depicted.<sup>10</sup> The olive tree with the many branches symbolizes not only the Olivetan Benedictines, but also the nation of Israel, into whom the Gentiles were ingrafted (Rom 11: 16–21). In the same line, Gurion's episcopal Staff is made of an olive tree, taken from Bethlehem. Indeed, although the word *Jew* was "formally absent" at this event, yet the Jewish presence is still strongly attached to Gurion's personal position and to the community that he represents.

For those who point to the controversial side of Gurion's nomination, especially Palestinian Christians, the very creation of a special ecclesiastical jurisdiction for the Hebrew Catholics in Israel is viewed as a hard blow for the pro-Palestinian Patriarch in Jerusalem. Some have even claimed that the ordination of a Jewish bishop is completely political, in order to strengthen the Vatican's ties with Israel, and which will divide the Christians in the land even more. Thus, Zack Saliba, for example, a Palestinian Christian, writes:

This is the biggest joke that I have seen. It is so because once again the Christian Church succumbs to the dictates of the Zionist entity. We all know that Israel wants a foothold in the Catholic Church in the Holy Land. They do not like what Patriarch Michael Sabbah stands for and his influence in the Church ... Please tell me how many churches does the new Bishop have under his control? And how many people attend church of the so-called Hebrew Catholics? ... I am sorry that even within the Church we are allowed to be manipulated by these outsiders.<sup>11</sup>

Patriarch Michel Sabbah never concealed his view that he has always been against the idea of having a particular bishop *ad judaeos*. Then, there are also others, who view the new titular "bishopric" as merely designated for the non-Arab Christians in the land, without any particular Jewish characteristics, except for the Hebrew language, which de facto is even common among Israeli and other Arabs. The current *al-Aqsa Intifada* (2000–2004) has invigorated the tensions between Arab Palestinian Catholics and Israeli Jewish Catholics. It has brought to the forefront the dissonance in the church between the pro-Zionist Jewish Catholic minority and the Palestinian majority.<sup>12</sup> In fact, the two modern movements in the Land – Messianic Jews (in the State of Israel), & Palestinian Christians (in the

10 Ordination épiscopale de Monseigneur Jean-Baptiste Gourion, Evêque auxiliaire de Jérusalem, Notre Dame de l'Arche d'Alliance, 9 novembre 2003. The 32-page booklet, in French and Hebrew, includes prayers and invocations to more than 30 Saints.

11 <http://hcef.org/hcef/index.cfm/mod/news/ID/17/SubMod/Comments/NewsID/1025.cfm> (This was removed from the website. Copy in Nerel Archive).

12 See recently: Drew Christiansen, "A Campaign to Divide the Church in the Holy Land," in America, The National Catholic Weekly, vol. 188, no. 17, May 19, 2003.

13 See, for example, "Steps to Support the Mother Church," at <http://hcef.org/hcef/index.cfm/ID/118.cfm> and Gershon Nerel, "Primitive Jewish Christians in the Modern Thought of Messianic Jews," in: S.C. Mimouni & F.S. Jones, eds., *Le judéo-christianisme dans tous ses états*, (Paris, Cerf, 2001), 399–425.

Palestinian Authority) attempt simultaneously to represent the authentic "Mother Church" of the first century.<sup>13</sup>

Another dimension also deserves special attention. The very fact that the papal letter declares that Gurion bears the titular name of "Bishop of Lod" more than signals that nobody should even assume that there is now a new bishop of – or in – Jerusalem. The pontifical *Curia* in Rome is very careful not to re-create a potentially rival Jewish See in Jerusalem, particularly when the Hebrew Christians are involved, and associatively the early Jewish *Kehila* is always in the background. The Catholic Church is still much aware of the symbolism and authority of a revived Hebraic church, specifically if and when such a predominantly Jewish church becomes too independent.

Therefore, the solution which was introduced by the Vatican actually refers to another delicate historic issue: to revive Roman Catholic presence in Lod (Lydda). The story, in brief, relates to an old dispute, when in the 1870s the Latin Catholics lost their "Crusader rights" in the church of St. George in Lod to the Greek-Orthodox church. Instead of those Catholic rights in Lod, the Ottoman rulers of the land gave the ownership of the Crusader church in Abu-Ghosh to Catholic France. Although in the 19th century the Catholics received the Resurrection Church as a compensation in Abu-Ghosh, now they, in a way, regained their special position also in Lod.<sup>14</sup>

Bishop Gurion did not say much during the ordination ceremony. Besides thanking all who greeted him, he had just a brief sentence to say in Hebrew: "*Sof sof anahnu babait!*" meaning that "At last we are again at home!" By that he expressed his appreciation of the return to the Jewish roots of the faith. However, it is still a fact that Gurion himself retains his personal status in the land under the French Diplomatic Corps, without choosing to become an Israeli citizen. In fact, his monastery and church in Abu-Ghosh are a French ex-territory, under French flag. Following the ordination ceremony, about half of all those who were present in the church were also invited for a festive lunch at Moshav Yad Hashmona, in a distance of only three kilometers from the church.

All in all, Gurion's nomination does reflect the recognition of the Holy See in the need, and the significance, of a distinct Bishop for the Israelis. At the same time, however, it also looks that the appointment of a Catholic Jewish Bishop in Israel comes as a counterpoise to the dynamic emergence, and constant development, of the Messianic Jewish movement, mostly linked to the Protestant world. In other words, this Catholic move comes, de facto, to balance the "Protestant congregations" of Jewish

**The pontifical *Curia* in Rome is very careful not to re-create a potentially rival Jewish See in Jerusalem, particularly when the Hebrew Christians are involved**

14 See Joel Ben-Dov, Abu-Ghosh, Yad Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, Jerusalem 2003, p. 54 (in Hebrew).

believers in Yeshua, both in Israel and in the Diaspora. Moreover, thus actually the Vatican also meets the needs of the Association of Hebrew Catholics (AHC) established by the late Elias Friedman, OCD, (1916–1999) which for a long time has requested “the formation of a Hebrew Catholic Community *juridically* (sic) approved by the Holy See.”<sup>15</sup>

The same evening of Gurion’s ordination, Channel 2 of the Israeli TV reported the event with pictures taken at the ceremony. This followed some large cover-stories in the Israeli newspapers.<sup>16</sup> However, not all ‘fact’ which are published are also accurate, even when they come from the Bishop himself. Thus, for example, in an interview that appeared in *Israel Today* in January 2004, Gurion is quoted as follows: “Yes, I am the first Jewish bishop in *Eretz Israel* [the Land of Israel] in nearly 2,000 years!”<sup>17</sup> Yet historically this is not true. The first Jewish Bishop in modern Jerusalem after almost two thousand years was the Anglican missionary Michael Solomon Alexander. The story began with the solemn consecration of M. S. Alexander by the Archbishop of Canterbury at the Lambeth Palace in London, on Sunday, November 7, 1841. The establishment of a Protestant Bishopric in Jerusalem was a Lutheran-Anglican joint project, initiated by the King of Prussia, Frederick William IV and Queen Victoria. Although the new Jerusalem Bishopric was “Made in Germany,”<sup>18</sup> its concept was basically fueled by the millenarian hopes that prevailed in the English-speaking world. It was particularly in Great Britain that eschatological expectations were strongly correlated with a literal Jewish territorial and spiritual renaissance, and Yeshua’s return.<sup>19</sup>

The appearance of a Jewish Bishop in 19th century Jerusalem, a “Bishop of the Circumcision on mount Zion,” immediately stirred the imagination and support of Anglican millenarians. The concept of a restored authentic Jewish Church was not just a dream, but now became a realistic and visible fact. Therefore, although Alexander was the official Episcopal representative of the Church of England in Jerusalem, clerically garbed, he was also regarded as a unique representative of the original Jewish Church. A contemporary book enthusiastically described the bishop

conveyed to the land of his fathers and to the city where David reigned, where the Son of God suffered for the redemption of man-

15 See, for example, *The Hebrew Catholic*, no. 77, Summer-Fall 2002, p. 2.

16 See, for example, Ariyeh Dayan, “The New Appointment of the Pope: A Bishop for the New Immigrants,” in *Haaretz*, Tuesday, 14 Oct. 2003, B4 (in Hebrew); Vered Kellner, “Abba Gourion,” in *Maariv*, Sofshavua, 17 Oct. 2003, pp. 50–54.

17 Aviel Schneider, “New Bishop in Jerusalem is Jewish,” in *Israel Today*, no. 60 (Jan. 2004): 20–21.

18 Alex Devine, “Abyssinia and the Holy Places – The Chevalier Bunsen and the Jerusalem Bishopric,” in: *The Palestine Weekly*, Jerusalem, October 8th, 1926, pp. 347–349.

19 See, for example, Iain H. Murray, *The Puritan Hope: A Study in Revival and the Interpretation of Prophecy*, London 1971, esp. pp. 44–55; 142. Cf. Yaakov Ariel, “The Rise of Christian Eschatology in the Wake of the French Revolution,” in: Richard I. Cohen, ed., *The French Revolution and Its Impact*, Jerusalem 1991, pp. 319–338 (in Hebrew).



kind; and where the Apostle St. James, the first {Jewish} Christian bishop, presided over the first Christian Church – the Church of the Circumcision.”<sup>20</sup>

Unlike the situation today within official Catholicism, many Anglican friends of Israel in the mid-19th century expected that the newly established Jerusalem Bishopric would soon become the most important and influential diocese in the world, and earnestly prayed for the full success of Alexander in this “Mother of all churches.” Furthermore, the supporters of the appointment of an Israelite bishop to succeed the Jewish See of St. James regarded the circumstances as a significant victory over the “domineering spirit” of the Church of Rome “which requires all to bow down to the idol of her pretended supremacy.” Obviously, at the very first stages of shaping the concept of a modern Jewish bishopric in Zion, those Anglican millennialists strongly wished to revive the See of St. James. For them it became a living testimony that Jerusalem, not Rome, is the *mother of us all*. Namely, “that the western Papacy is neither fitted nor destined to be the great center of unity to a distracted Church, or the channel of salvation to a ruined world.”<sup>21</sup>

Ironically, however, since 1976 all three inheritors of Bishop M.S. Alexander’s See are pro-Palestinian Arabs. Riah Abu El-Assal, the current Palestinian bishop of the Anglican diocese, was enthroned in Jerusalem on August 15, 1998. Yet unlike Alexander, Abu El-Assal strongly opposes the Zionist movement as well as Christian Zionism, mostly on theological grounds.<sup>22</sup>

To summarize, such a historic comparison is most striking. Although today the Hebrew Catholics and the Messianic Jews are still tiny marginal communities, they continue to attract much interest in the general public. It is not their numbers that matter, but rather their symbolic significance for both Jewry and Christendom.

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20 J.B. Cartwright, *The Church of St. James: the Primitive Hebrew Christian Church of Jerusalem*, London 1842, pp. vii-viii.

21 J.B. Cartwright, *The Church of St. James*, p. xii. See Gershon Nerel, “Hebrew Christian Associations in Ottoman Jerusalem: Jewish Yeshua- Believers Facing Church and Synagogue,” *Revue des études juives*, 161 (2002): 431–457.

22 See, for example, Riah Abu El-Assal, *Caught in Between (The Extraordinary Story of an Arab Palestinian Christian Israeli)*, SPCK, London 1999; Idem, “A Christmas Message from Bethlehem,” 19 December 2000, at [www.archbishops.org/peace.htm](http://www.archbishops.org/peace.htm)



# Judah Monis: "First" American Jewish Believer<sup>1</sup>

By **Jim R. Sibley**

Who was the first Jewish believer in North America? It all depends on what one means by the word, "first." In truth, only the Lord knows. Hugh Schonfield says, "When Christopher Columbus set out on his voyage that led to the discovery of the New World, there were ... Jewish Christians among the members of his own crew."<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, he offers no documentation.

Arthur Hertzberg reports of a later period, when:

A family of Jewish extraction had come ... to North American shores, to join the Pilgrims. Moses Simonson landed in Plymouth Harbor in 1621, two years after the Mayflower; he and his family were reputed to be "from the Jewish settlement in Amsterdam."<sup>3</sup>

In the late 1690's Cotton Mather (in Cambridge, Massachusetts) was writing a manual on Jewish evangelism.<sup>4</sup> It consisted of a set of scriptural texts from the Hebrew Scriptures, designed to establish the truth of the gospel and of Christian teaching. Whether or not Mather's book had anything to do with it, Lee Friedman writes of "the Jew, Simon, who in [September 17] 1702 was baptized in Charlestown, Massachusetts, and assumed the name of Barns to disappear in the surrounding community."<sup>5</sup> In this, he must have succeeded, for nothing more is known of him.

There was, however, a direct connection between Mather's book and the salvation of another Jewish man named Simon, who came to faith in *Yeshua* in South Carolina. It is of some interest that two Simons and

1 This is an abridgment of an article by the same title in *Faith & Mission*, Vol. 20, No. 2, Spring 2003.

2 H. Schonfield, *The History of Jewish Christianity* (London: Duckworth, 1936), 96.

3 A. Hertzberg, "The New England Puritans and the Jews" in *Hebrew and the Bible in America, the First Two Centuries* (ed. Shalom Goldman; Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1993), 106.

4 C. Mather, *The Faith of the Fathers* (Boston, 1699).

5 L. Friedman, "Joshua Montefiore of St. Albans, Vermont" in *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, vol. 40 (December 1950), 119.

a family of Simonsons are the first known Jewish believers in the New World.

Judah Monis may not have been the first Jewish believer in North America, but he was the first about whom much is known. Nevertheless, his name is largely unknown both to those involved in ministry to the Jewish people and to the Messianic Jewish community. Though much has been written about Monis, almost every assertion about his life is a matter of some dispute. In many cases, this is due to a scarcity of information; in others, it may reflect hostility against Jewish believers in Yeshua.

### Family Origin and Birth

Judah Monis was born on February 4, 1683. This is based on information from his epitaph, and there is no reason to challenge it. However, while the date of his birth may be clear, the place of his birth has been rather obscure. Many claim a birthplace in northern Africa.

One source of the confusion and difficulty in establishing his family's origin is the rarity of his name. Not only is Monis not a common Jewish name; it has even been suggested that Monis might be an anagram for ... Simon!<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, George Foot Moore has made a compelling case that "Monis was descended from a Portuguese Marano family which had emigrated from the [Iberian] Peninsula in the sixteenth century." Regarding his birthplace, Moore concludes, "Everything that is discoverable about Judah Monis points to Italy." To be even more specific, the most likely suggestion, based on the appearance of the family name in contemporary cemetery records, is that he was born in Venice.

### Monis' Life Prior to 1720

On February 28, 1715, Judah Monis was admitted as a freeman in the mayor's court of New York City at thirty-two years of age.<sup>7</sup> It is not known when he left his home in Italy, but we are told that he studied in the rabbinic academies of Leghorn and Amsterdam.<sup>8</sup> Louis Meyer says, "His education was the strict training of the pious Jew, in the ceremonial law and in the traditions of the fathers, so that he soon became 'truly read and learned in the Jewish Cabbala and Rabbins, a Master and Critic in the Hebrew."<sup>9</sup> An article in the *New England Courant*<sup>10</sup> on the occasion of Monis' baptism, says that he was a *mashkil venabon* and that he had served as a rabbi of synagogues in Jamaica and New York prior to his arrival in Boston. Likewise, Monis' epitaph identifies him as a rabbi. Some would view his claim to the title of rabbi as a deception or a fraud. Rabbi

6 Moore, 4-5.

7 Moore, 6.

8 *The New-England Courant*, No. 35, March 26–April 2, 1722.

9 Meyer, "The First Jewish Christian," 3.

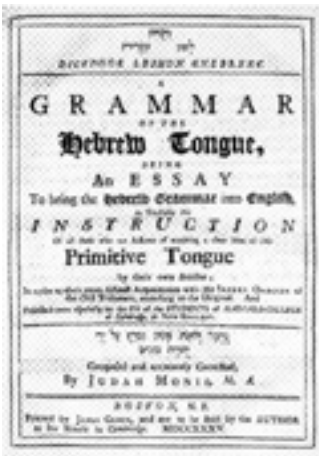
10 *The New-England Courant*, No. 35.



Jacob R. Marcus writes, "Although he received a good Jewish education, it is doubtful that he was a rabbi ..."<sup>11</sup>

Marcus' skepticism is unwarranted. Moore says, "The title, *maskil*, conferred on rabbinical students, was used chiefly in Italy ... to indicate a stage of proficiency inferior to the rabbinical title, *hakam*."<sup>12</sup> Borenstein writes in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* that Spanish and Portuguese concepts of religious leadership and ordination differed from those of Ashkenazi Jews. Sephardim had been reluctant to ordain rabbis. She says that early sixteenth century Sephardim "claimed that no one could ordain once the Sanhedrin no longer existed."<sup>13</sup> Later, a community leader would have been called a "teacher of the Torah" (*marbitz torah*) or a *hakham*, and would not have had ordination. He would have functioned, nonetheless, as an authoritative spiritual leader in his community. The title *hakham* was apparently used of a well-known rabbi, but a young rabbi would have been known as a *maskil*.<sup>14</sup> Although a few modern Jewish scholars, such as Jacob Marcus, question Monis' status, no question was registered among his contemporaries. It seems odd that no question about his status arose until two hundred and fifty years after his baptism!

Although nothing is known of his tenure in Jamaica, he arrived in New York in 1715 and stayed for about three years. In New York, Monis apparently was the proprietor of a store, taught Hebrew, and served the Jewish community as a rabbi, *hazzan*, and *schochet*.<sup>15</sup> During this time, he was doubtless also learning English.



Judah Monis had originally written his grammar in 1720, though it was not published until 1735, when Hebrew type was brought from England and the necessary funds were raised for its publication.

- 11 J. Marcus, *The Colonial American Jew, 1492–1776* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970), 1096.
- 12 Moore, 5.
- 13 L. Borenstein, "The Jewish Religious Leadership in the Muslim East," *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 13:1449.
- 14 Borenstein, 1451.
- 15 E. Smith, "Strangers and Sojourners: The Jews of Colonial Boston" in *The Jews of Boston* (eds. J. Sarna and E. Smith; Boston: Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston, 1995), 31.

By the time Monis moved to the Boston area, most probably in 1718, there were "only a handful of Jews"<sup>16</sup> who had settled in Boston. Monis had apparently been working on a Hebrew grammar and corresponding with Christian clergymen regarding the study of Hebrew. Louis Meyer writes:

In Monis' breast was a strong desire after a higher education, and as soon as he had mastered the English language sufficiently, he devoted his spare time to studies in the renowned Harvard College. In spite of his thirty-five years and of innumerable difficulties in the path of the poor foreigner, Monis succeeded well and received the degree of A.M. at Harvard in 1720.<sup>17</sup>

Monis wrote a letter on June 29, 1720, to the corporation of Harvard. He wrote that he had completed writing a Hebrew grammar and sought their approval. During his period of study at Harvard, Monis evidently became acquainted with both Increase and Cotton Mather, as well as with other ministers in the area. He was probably familiar with Cotton Mather's apology for Christian faith, which had been written especially for the Jewish people.

### Monis' Conversion

From 1720 to 1722, Monis operated a small store and taught Hebrew in an unofficial capacity at Harvard. This period of time was doubtless a time of spiritual struggle for Monis. His relationships with Christian leaders were growing, as was the prospect of placing his trust in Yeshua as his Messiah and Redeemer.

A sudden change came over the Jewish Rabbi, for the Holy Spirit illumined the writings of the prophets from which he was teaching so diligently; the truth was made known to him, and he saw the prophecies fulfilled in Yeshua. It was a short, but sharp struggle; then he decided to follow his Saviour outside the camp!<sup>18</sup>

Meyer's characterization of Monis' faith coming suddenly may not be entirely accurate, for Increase Mather wrote, a little over one month after Monis' baptism:

There is no cause to fear that Mr. Monis will Renounce his Christianity, since he did embrace it Voluntarily and Gradually, and with much Consideration, and from Scriptures in the Old-Testament. GOD Grant that he (who is the first Jew that ever I knew Converted

16 J. Sarna, "The Jews of Boston in Historical Perspective" in *The Jews of Boston*, 3.

17 Meyer, "The First Christian Jew," 3.

18 Meyer, "The First Christian Jew," 3.



in New-England) may prove a Blessing unto many, and especially to some of his own Nation: Which is the Prayer and hearty Desire of, Increase Mather.<sup>19</sup>

On March 27, 1722, in Cambridge, an illustrious congregation assembled to witness Monis' baptism. Cotton Mather's father, Increase Mather, was to have preached the sermon, but he had become ill, so the invitation was extended to Benjamin Colman.<sup>20</sup> Colman's sermon was based on John 5: 46 ("If you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me"), and it was entitled, "Moses, a Witness to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."<sup>21</sup> At the conclusion of Colman's sermon, Monis was baptized. He then immediately ascended the platform and delivered a lecture in which he addressed his "Brethren According to the Flesh." He began:

Dear and Beloved Brethren, I Do expect the News of my Embracing the Christian Religion that came to your Ears Some time ago, has been Somewhat Surprizing to you all; and I am afraid you did not think it to be the best you ever have heard; If So, I am very Sorry for it, and hope in the God of Love and Mercy, that He will keep me in my belief, with that Love towards you in particular, and to all Mankind in general, and more especially to those that belong to the household of Faith, as his holy Word has directed me: and have mercy upon you, and in due time take the Vail from before the eyes of your Understanding, that So you may See the veracity of his Christ.<sup>22</sup>

More recent Jewish authors contest the sincerity of Monis' conversion. Their skepticism, if not scorn, is based on three lines of evidence: 1) his marriage, 2) his Sabbath observance, and 3) his teaching position at Harvard. On January 18, 1724, he married Abigail Marrett of Cambridge.<sup>23</sup> Since this was two years following his conversion, the likelihood that romance played a role is slim indeed. He was a faithful husband until her death, thirty-seven years later, and he was faithful to his profession of faith until his own death forty years later.

Monis continued to observe the Sabbath until death. George Kohut argues that "his observance of the Jewish Sabbath is proof enough of his adherence to the ancestral creed, and that, like the Marranos..., he remained loyal to Israel at heart, whilst apparently devoted to Christianity."<sup>24</sup>

19 I. Mather, "The Preface to the Reader", iv, in Colman, *A Discourse Had in the College-Hall At Cambridge, March 27. 1722. Before the Baptism of R. Judah Monis* (Boston, 1722).

20 Friedman, "Judah Monis," 3.

21 Colman, 1.

22 J. Monis, "The Truth, Being a DISCOURSE Which the Author Delivered at his BAPTISM," in Colman, 1.

23 J. Kent, *Northborough History* (Newton, MA: Garden City Press, 1921), 287.

24 G. Kohut, "Judah Monis, M.A., the First Instructor [of Hebrew?] at Harvard University (1683-1764)" in *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, 14:4 (1898), 218..

Monis not only observed the Sabbath, however, but was an active participant in church services on Sunday. Monis apparently saw no irreconcilable difference between his Jewishness and his faith in Israel's Messiah.

By far, the most prominent ground for skepticism regarding the sincerity of Monis' conversion is the fact that faith in Christ was a prerequisite for teaching at Harvard College. Typical is the remark of Solomon Grayzel, who says that Monis "became a convert to Christianity presumably in order to obtain this position."<sup>25</sup> Yet for the thirty-eight years that he was a member of the faculty, he was paid a meager, and at times, inadequate salary. He taught an unpopular subject, yet maintained his profession of faith until his death in retirement. Arthur Hertzberg concludes:

Monis seems to have been sincere in his conversion, even though Cotton Mather's father, Increase, was guardedly dubious in the introduction that he wrote to the printed version of Monis's *Three Discourses*. Increase Mather's doubts were disproved by Monis's later life.<sup>26</sup>

Indeed, even Grayzel acknowledges that the sole object of Harvard at that time was "training for Christian ministry."<sup>27</sup> Were he not to have been sincere, what possible motive could he have had for aspiring to teach at Harvard?

In summary, whatever doubts may have existed at the time of his baptism were completely removed by his lifetime of faithfulness. Shortly after his baptism, he had said, "My embracing Christianity was because I was fully persuaded that it is the only religion wherein I thought I could be saved, and not because I had self ends."<sup>28</sup>

## Monis at Harvard

Clifford Shipton maintains that Monis' master's degree was awarded, not in 1720 as most believe, but in 1723.<sup>29</sup> He argues his position on the following bases: First, Monis's name was placed "at the foot of the Class of 1720, the members of which took the MA in 1723." Second, "his name does not appear in the catalogue of 1721." Third, Monis's M.A. degree "is not mentioned in the newspaper notices or on the title pages of his books printed in 1722." Additional evidence for this position may be found in the fact that his degree is listed on publications after 1723.

In response, it should be noted that Monis' name is indisputably listed with the class of 1720. No one, to my knowledge, contends that Monis received a bachelor's degree from Harvard in 1720. Had he been granted

25 S. Grayzel, *A History of the Jews* (New York: Meridian, 1968), 480

26 A. Hertzberg. *The Jews in America*, 42.

27 Grayzel, 481.

28 Monis, in his "Dedication" to "The Truth," ii.

29 Shipton, 642. The following quotations are taken from Shipton, 642, f.n. 12.



his M.A. in 1720, it would be natural for his name to have been listed with the class of 1720, yet following the names of those who were graduated with undergraduate degrees. That his degree is not otherwise publicized until 1723 seems to be an argument from silence.

One suspects more behind this discussion than dispassionate historical scholarship, however. Some, with an animus against Yeshua-believing Jews, have been tempted to push the granting of his degree forward to 1723 in order to make it *follow* his baptism, and thus – since at that time (according these polemicists), he ceased to be a Jew – he would not have been the first Jew to obtain an academic degree in North America, or the first Jew to obtain an academic degree from Harvard, or the first Jew on the faculty at Harvard.

In the author's opinion, historical revision in this case seems both unwarranted and tendentious. While Shipton's arguments do not appear to be compelling, those who see no contradiction between Jewishness and faith in Yeshua may certainly approach the question of the year in which his degree was granted with greater objectivity.

Monis was first a tutor of Hebrew for two years at Harvard (while the college was without a professor of Hebrew on the faculty), and then taught on the faculty for thirty-eight years. He began well. Even though Hebrew was not a popular subject, his teaching was apparently very effective. His lengthy tenure at Harvard would certainly support such a claim, and there is direct testimony to that effect, as well. The records of the Harvard Corporation for April 1723 report that the overseers were "greatly satisfied wth his assiduity and faithfulness in his instruction, ye surprising effects of them having been laid before the corporation."<sup>30</sup> One of Monis' students was Henry Commings, who later ministered in the town of Billerica. Of Commings (and Monis), it was said, "he was considered a fine Hebrew scholar, having been taught while in college by a Jew who took unmeasured pains with a small class to perfect them in the language he loved, and took great pride in their success."<sup>31</sup>

Other accounts of his effectiveness have not been as positive. There are reports that his students were constantly mocking and intimidating their instructor.

How can the seemingly contradictory evidence be reconciled? Thomas Siegel, a historian of Harvard College, argues that major changes in the philosophy and practice of education in general were taking place during Monis' tenure. He contends that the frustration of some of the students and the abuse they heaped upon Monis were more properly the result of his methods. The new approach would have been more popular with the students, but it also would have been more secular.<sup>32</sup>

30 Corporation Records, April, 1723, as cited in Friedman, "Judah Monis," 8-9.

31 *History of the Town of Billerica*, as cited by Kent, 286.

32 T. Siegel, "Professor Stephen Sewall and the Transformation of Hebrew at Harvard," in *Hebrew and the Bible in America*, 228-233.



## Monis' Latter Years

Monis retired from Harvard following the death of his wife on October 21, 1760. Since he was childless and did not have any other relatives in Boston, the seventy-seven-year-old Jewish Christian moved to Northborough, just west of Boston, to take up residence with his wife's sister and her husband, the Rev. John Martyn. Martyn had been Monis' former student, and was no doubt, gratified that Monis was treated with respect and honor. Kent writes, "At the time of his coming to Northborough Mr. Monis was a venerable man, full of years and honor."<sup>33</sup> As an expression of their respect, he was given a prominent seat in the church.

Monis' retirement, however, was short-lived. He died on April 25, 1764, and was buried in the churchyard of the First Parish Church. One historian says that while Monis was on his deathbed, a clergyman told him, "Now, Good Father, you will go to Abraham's bosom." She recounts that he replied, "No, he was but a Jew, I will go to Christ, for he is my only hope."<sup>34</sup> Monis' epitaph reads as follows:<sup>35</sup>

### RESURGAM

Here lies buried the Remains of RABBI

IUDAH MONIS, M.A. late HEBREW

Instructor at HARVARD College in

Cambridge in which Office He continued 40

Years. He was by Birth and Religion a jew but

embrac-d the Christian Faith & was publicly

baptiz-d at Cambridge AD 1722 and

departed this Life April 25, 1764, Aged

81 years 2 months and 21 days

A native branch of Jacob see!

Which, once from off its olive brok,

Regrafted, from the living tree

Rom. XI. 17-24.

Of the reviving sap partook

From teeming Zion's fertile womb,

Isai. LXVI. 8.

As dew drops in early morn,

Psal. CX. 3.

Or rising bodies from the tomb,

Iohn V. 28, 29

At once be Isr'els nation born!

Isai. LXVI. 8.

"*Resurgam*," meaning, "I shall rise again," is carved above a representation of a skull and crossed bones. Below this affirmation of faith, there follow a nine-line biographical summary and an eight-line poem, with Scripture references to the right. The poem may likewise be divided into

33 Kent, 287-288.

34 As cited by Friedman, "Judah Monis," 20.

35 The author inspected the tombstone on December 14, 2000. Professor Gradwohl, of Iowa State University, accurately transcribed the inscription in an unpublished paper, presented at the American Culture Association, San Diego, California, March 31-April 3, 1999.



two stanzas – the first, a spiritual autobiography, and the last a prayer for Israel's rebirth.

This striking epitaph bears mute testimony to the hope and faith of a Jew in his Messiah. What is particularly noteworthy in this final legacy of America's "first" Jewish believer in Yeshua is that he held as tightly to his Jewishness as to his faith in Yeshua.

Monis twice cited Isaiah 66:8; but for his detractors he could have referred to Isaiah 66:5: "Hear the word of the LORD, you who tremble at His word: 'Your brothers who hate you ... exclude you for My name's sake, ... but they will be put to shame.'" Yet, there is every reason to believe that the hopes and prayers for his brethren that he expressed at his baptism continued to the end of his life:

[I] hope in the God of Love and Mercy, that He will keep me in my belief, with that Love towards you in particular, and to all Mankind in general, and more especially to those that belong to the household of Faith, as his holy Word has directed me: and have mercy upon you, and in due time take the Vail from before the eyes of your Understanding, that So you may See the veracity of his Christ.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> J. Monis, "The Truth," 1.

## How Jewish Is Christianity? 2 Views On The Messianic Movement

If you are a practitioner in Jewish ministry, then *How Jewish Is Christianity?: 2 Views On The Messianic Movement* is a book worth wrestling with. It is also a book worth recommending to others who would be helped by knowing what the various positions are on the establishment and existence of the burgeoning Messianic movement. A book like this would have saved me a few years of asking questions and looking for answers had I had a copy of it after I was first exposed to the Messianic community and its various camps.

Although the title of the book indicates that there are only two views presented on the Messianic movement, the book actually demonstrates that there are several proverbial branches on the olive tree. These branches take their shape through the candid perspectives of some of the most regarded detractors and defenders of the Messianic movement, including John Fischer, Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, Gershon Nerel, David H. Stern, William Varner, and the esteemed Dr. Louis Goldberg who edited and contributed to this project shortly before his death.

A few of the most notable highlights in this book include Goldberg's introductory



comments on the rise, disappearance, and resurgence of Messianic congregations. This is the most concise and thorough summary on this subject I think you will find anywhere. Another highlight are the margins, because if you're anything like me you'll be jotting down your own reactions to the various perspectives presented throughout the book. You will also be challenged by the closing essay on the future of Messianic Judaism by David Stern, who reminds us that the primary purpose of the Messianic movement is to bring people into an abiding relationship with God, his Son, and the Holy Spirit.

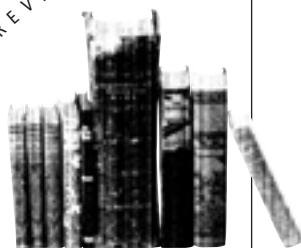
If you're hoping to read this book to find a slam-dunk defense of your position on the Messianic movement, you will probably be disappointed. However, if you want a book that will encourage you to honestly wrestle with the strengths and weaknesses of the movement, and its future existence, then you will be the better for reading it.

*Justin M. Kron*

### How Jewish is Christianity? 2 Views on the Messianic Movement

GUNDRY & GOLDBERG (EDS.)  
208 PAGES  
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BOOK REVIEWS



## The Jewish-Christian Schism Revisited

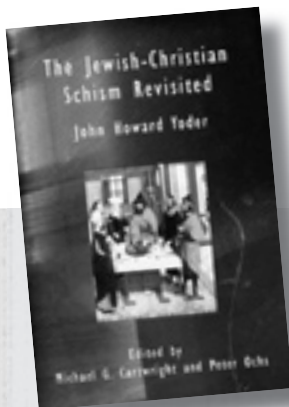
*The Jewish-Christian Schism Revisited* is a publication of essays by John Howard Yoder compiled after his death. Yoder, a Mennonite, was most recently professor in the Department of Theology at University of Notre Dame in Indiana, USA.

This book was edited by Michael Cartwright, Dean of Ecumenical and Interfaith Programs at the University of Indianapolis, Indiana, and Peter Ochs, Bronfman Professor of Modern Judaic Studies at the University of Virginia. Peter Ochs is also co-editor of the "Radical Tradition Series." Ochs has joined with Cartwright to represent the interests of the Radical Tradition series in Yoder's works and to offer a Jewish perspective in addition to a Christian response to Yoder's writings. This book focuses on the relationship between Judaism and Christianity. In 10 essays Yoder deals with overlapping issues as well as differences between Judaism and Christianity. He notes that Jews and Christians both wrestle with the failings of Western civilization. Being from the radical reformation tradition, Yoder is very critical of Christian failures and Constantinian forms of Christianity.

Ochs offers a Jewish commentary on Yoder's 10 essays which embody his vision of Judaism. Ochs' commentary represents an approach to Judaism that parallels Yoder's efforts to renew and reform Christianity after the impact of modernity. Though Ochs is sympathetic and appreciative of Yoder's work, he also cites troubling aspects of Yoder's reading of Judaism. Ochs' response models Jewish-Christian dialogue at its best.

Yoder's concerns embrace witness, peacemaking, reconciliation and inter-religious dialogue. He was involved in witness and peacemaking efforts throughout his life, including involvements in Mennonite witness and peacemaking activities with Christian and Jews in Israel/Palestine. He believed it was a mistake to regard inter-faith dialogue and missionary endeavors as separate activities. For Yoder, mission and dialogue were not alternatives; each was important to the other. Being aware of the historical issues that have distorted fruitful conversation, he asserted that the people one converses with need to see Jesus.

Yoder insisted that the split between Christianity and Judaism »did not have to be« because through the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus came a new kind of politic – a social embodiment of the gospel – in which former Jews and former gentiles could be reconciled. His writings recommended a view of Jewish-Christian relations that attempts to avoid patterns



### The Jewish-Christian Schism Revisited

JOHN HOWARD YODER, MICHAEL G. CARTWRIGHT AND PETER OCHS, EDS.  
VIII + 290 PAGES  
SCM PRESS

of supersessionism. For him, dialogue between Christians and Jews can take place within the context of the good news where a new social existence is possible as each embraces a new reality. Dialogue should remove obstacles that have resulted from Christians bearing witness to Jews in coercive ways or not bearing witness to Jews at all.

This book deserves careful reading. Cartwright and Ochs have done excellent work in making Yoder's writings available to scholars of mission, ecumenics, and inter-faith relations.

*Dr. Calvin E. Shenk*

### **A Commentary on the Jewish Roots of Acts**

This commentary's weighty double tomes, come on the heels of a previous commentary release by Shulam and Le Cornu on Romans, wherein Shulam is listed as the primary author and Le Cornu as the secondary author.

As with the former commentary, the emphasis once again is on the "Jewish Roots" of the biblical book being commented upon. Shulam's long time experience as a congregational leader in Jerusalem and his acquaintance with the Jewish sources and Le Cornu's proficiency with the same, give the authors a firmer footing than most Christian commentators who try and use "Jewish sources" to substantiate a legitimate Jewish background to a given New Testament book.

Before proceeding to the content, a word or two about the layout of the commentary is appropriate. The layout is somewhat daunting and not the most inviting. There are not thematic chapter headings, but only a numbered chapter heading that corresponds with the given chapter from the book of Acts. After listing a verse in English, the commentary proper proceeds

to give one a very detailed exposition of the given passage interspersed by a wealth of Hebrew and Greek words and source quotes, generous cross-references and references from canonical and non-canonical sources.

The commentary presupposes a working knowledge of Hebrew and Greek and some basic familiarity with the Jewish sources, and so its target audience seems to have been geared more for the specialist than the lay reader, although the latter could certainly glean much from the commentary.

The vantage point of the commentary – as explained by Shulam – is that the New Testament is a Jewish document and "can only be properly understood in [its] original Jewish cultural and religious milieu (xxvii)." The New Testament, Shulam explains, reflects a "Torah-worldview."

The purpose of the commentary, like its predecessor, is "to demonstrate the Jewishness of the book of Acts by demonstrating its first-century Jewish literary, historical, cultural and theological context (xxvii)."

In keeping with this stated purpose, it does not surprise, that Shulam sees the intended audience to be, not gentiles, but rather "the Jewish community in Jerusalem (xxix)." Although this may seem to many as an overstatement driven from Shulam's zeal to emphasize the "Jewishness" of Acts, his points are not without merit. Among them he mentions, 1) Paul's struggles with the Sanhedrin, Agrippa, and Festus over his faithfulness to the Law and the prophets would indeed be more comprehensible to Jews than Gentiles; 2) Paul's defense speeches are directed towards Jewish authorities and prove his faithfulness to Torah and the Prophets; 3) Luke's emphasis of Paul's zeal to maintain a Torah-observant lifestyle, seems to point in the direction of his address to a Jewish audience.

Shulam sees the purpose of Acts as explaining the "relationship between the



Jewish and gentile segments of the early community, and to reconcile Paul's ministry with Peter's (p.xxx)." The correspondence between Paul and Peter and the importance of Acts 15, coming near the half way mark of the book, are seen as indications that Acts was written to demonstrate the validity and equality of Peter and Paul's ministries, to locate the place of ministry to the gentiles in its proper perspective with respect to the Jerusalem community, to show the scriptural validity of ministry to the gentiles, and to communicate that the gentile mission does not vitiate the Jewishness of the apostolic mission to the Jews (p.xxxi).

Students of Scripture in general and those seeking a respectful scholastic dialogue between Jewish and Christian biblical scholars need to be thankful to Shulam and Le Cornu for this labor of love that they have accomplished in providing the student of Acts this wealth of relevant source material. A careful reading of the commentary is, of course, the only way to determine whether or not the commentary proper is able to support Shulam's claims at the commentary's outset. The scholastic community would do well to avail themselves of Le Cornu and Shulam's commentary when exegeting Acts to complement the various contributions of most other

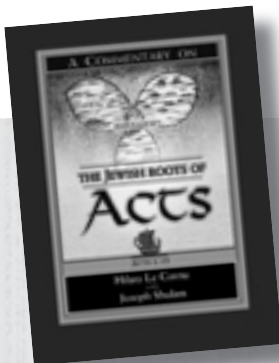
commentaries that will not delve into the Jewish sources with the same depth and familiarity as Shulam and Le Cornu have done.

Their commentary should not, however, be viewed as only for the academic guild of biblical scholars. All students of the Bible in general and pastors in particular, would do well to add this commentary to their collection.

Lastly, the uniqueness of this commentary should be seen by the fact that Shulam himself is a Messianic Jew. Perhaps such a commentary is only possible by someone like Shulam and his long time disciple, Le Cornu. That is to say, there is much truth in the old adage, "our starting point determines our destination." It may just be that a Messianic Jew who has lived the majority of his years in Jerusalem – and traveled from there extensively throughout the world to strengthen the gentile church and teach her about the Jewish roots of her faith – is in many ways uniquely qualified to penetrate something of the heart of the faith that spread from Jerusalem to the seat of imperial power in Rome.

This uniqueness, combined with Le Cornu's fastidious scholarship, makes this commentary a must buy for every student of the Bible that has a sincere desire to get to the "Jewish roots" of the Acts of the Apostles.

*Akiva Cohen*



### **A Commentary on the Jewish Roots of Acts**

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## The Passion

The week before Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ" was released in the United States, every Israeli newspaper carried articles on the film and its possible implications for Jewish-Christian relations, the state of Israel and a potential revival of anti-Semitism. The Jerusalem Post carried articles on the film and surrounding controversy as the cover story for its weekend supplement at the end of February.

Under the banner "Jesus and the Jews [-] Debating the 'Passion,'" the Post carried articles by Michael Novak, holder of the Jewett Chair in Philosophy and Religion at The American Enterprise Institution, and Robert S. Wistrich, director of Hebrew University's Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Anti-Semitism.

Novak sidesteps the issue of possible Jewish culpability for the crucifixion, instead maintaining, "... it is clear that God's will governs the last 12 hours of Christ's suffering and death, and that He is called, not by his own will, but by his father's, to die for my sins. I am not sure how the filmmaker achieved this effect ..."

Wistrich considers anti-Semitism the only real issue, maintaining that Gibson's "literalist approach to the Gospel story" conveys anti-Semitism inherent in the New Testament. Wistrich writes that "the Gospels themselves contain an anti-Jewish venom," which he finds ironic since "not only Jesus, but all the first Christians, were Jews and that Christianity was originally Judeo-Christianity."

While in the U.S. for a few weeks, Eilat congregational leader Herbbby Geer found time to see the movie. Geer agrees that the film is consistent with New Testament accounts, but adds that the film also showed Jews who spoke out against the crucifixion. Geer focuses on the fact that the movie will be coming to Israel (which the Cinematique staff also believes, but has not yet con-

NEWS FROM THE ISRAELI SCENE



Reported by **David Smith**

firmed) and will provoke many questions about Jesus' life, work and sacrifice.

"I don't think it's going to affect Jewish Christian relations – it can open the door for dialogue. There are more people talking about Jesus than ever before and that's why we need to be out there with New Testaments when it does come to Israel. Israelis need to get the rest of the story," Geer concluded.

## Save a Child's Heart

The story of Bayan, an Iraqi baby whose transport to Israel for medical treatment was arranged by *Shevet Achim* Coordinator Jonathan Miles, received much attention in Israeli as well as international media (CNN, Los Angeles Times, Chicago Tribune). Miles, a Christian believer who has secured transport and medical service for more than 200 children from the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and Jordan, works closely with an Israeli charity called "Save a Child's Heart" which has provided similar medical service to more than 1000 children. Bayan, a Kurdish baby with a congenital heart disease, survived the operation but quickly developed complications resulting in her death in December. The Jerusalem Post called the endeavor a possible "harbinger of future informal contacts between Israel and the fledgling democratic Iraq" while Israeli cardiologist Akiva Tamir succinctly

expressed the event as “a little drop of saneness.”

### Memorial Service for Abigail Litle

More than 100 people attended the one-year memorial service for Abigail Litle, a Christian believer and teenage terror victim, which was held in Haifa March 5. Busloads of her classmates arrived while three students participated in the service. One of her classmates read a Hebrew translation of Chris Rice’s “The Power of a Moment.” Phil Litle, Abigail’s father, said “It was encouraging that both believers and non-believers attended [because] it’s always a comfort to know people are hearing truth as a result of her testimony. It was a chance for us to reflect ... the meaning of her faith.”

### Building Permit

After years of applications and legal appeals, Grace and Truth Christian Assembly received Israel’s Supreme Court’s authorization for its building permit January 29. The congregation had received its first permit as early as 2000, but a series of legal challenges by anti-missionary organization Yad L’Achim sought to impede progress. According to Pastor Baruch Maoz, “Finally a decision was rendered – in favour of the congregation. This is a landmark decision. All legal obstacles to constructing our building have been removed – there is no higher court of appeal.”

### Visa Problems

Churches and institutions of the United Christian Council in Israel “are experiencing unnecessary visa problems that are seriously jeopardizing our work and presence in the Land,” according to Charles Kopp, chairman of the body. “The renewal of clergy visas has been especially problem-

atic during the last two years, as tenures have been limited to just a few months rather than the usual one to two years,” he insists. Meetings with Israeli political officials and American embassy personnel have not proven effective, Kopp maintains, adding that presently a number of people are serving in Israel without visas and “if they are picked up on the street, they can be taken to the airport (for deportation) or detained.”

### New name to Kehilat HaMashiach

On January 10 the name of the Messianic congregation “Kehilat HaMashiach,” which meets at Christ Church at Jaffa Gate, was changed to “Kehilat HaSeh al Har Tzion” (Congregation of the Lamb upon Mount Zion), as inspired by Revelation 14:1. According to Kelvin Crombie, archivist at Christ Church, the name *Apostolic Anglican Church of Jerusalem* was given in 1841 to the church then being built. During the tenure of Bishop (and former rabbi) Michael Solomon Alexander construction was interrupted. The small congregation of Jewish and gentile believers likely used a nearby room named the *Chapel of St. James*, identifying the congregation with the leader of the first-century Jerusalem church. In 1847, in consultation with Bishop Gobat, the leadership of the London Jew’s Society changed the name of the Middle East’s first protestant church to *Christ Church*.

*If you would like to contribute items to this column, please send them to israelnewsishkan@hotmail.com for consideration.*





Continued from page 5.

At this moment it may be relevant to mention a few comments by Paul Winter – known for his book *On the Trial of Jesus*.<sup>1</sup> In connection with a 1967 German TV program about the trial of Jesus, he was asked to elaborate on the question of guilt in connection with the death of Jesus. He began by saying that whether one looks on Jesus as the son of God, the savior of mankind, or just as a great human being and a wise rabbi, the sympathy is on Jesus' side, not on the side of his enemies. But as a historian one does not do Jesus' adversaries justice in this way. It is true that Pilate was a cruel man, but it was his duty to prevent rebellion. The Jewish rulers may very well have held a grudge against Jesus, but then again it was their duty to maintain peace in the country so that the Romans would not have an excuse to deprive the Jews of their last bit of autonomy. Paul Winter continues:

Looking back from a centuries-removed perspective, it is easy to fault those who were involved in the verdict. But it is better to refrain than to look for the culprits. Roman as well as Jewish officials had a hand in the trial of Jesus. Whose guilt is heavier and whose is lighter cannot be weighed on any scales. But when we read the gospel accounts, we also have to admit that besides the Romans and Jews there was a third guilty party: Jesus' own followers, among whom one betrayed him, another disowned him and all the rest left him to his fate. Actually I am surprised that you, a Christian, ask me, a Jew: "Who was guilty?" The question you should ask – not me but yourself – is: "Who is without guilt?"<sup>2</sup>

Paul Winter's question is – theologically speaking – well put. And we could add one more party in the trial of Jesus, the most important one, namely the God of Israel, who wanted the death of Jesus.

Among the many reviews of Gibson's film by Jews, I have particularly noticed what American radio host Dennis Prager has said ([http://www.beliefnet.com/story/135/story\\_13565.html](http://www.beliefnet.com/story/135/story_13565.html)). Under the heading "Mel Gibson's Two Movies" he observes that "Jews and Christians are watching two entirely different films. For two hours, Christians watch their Savior tortured and killed. For the same two hours, Jews watch Jews arrange the killing and torture of the Christians' Savior." After an almost 2000-year long history of Jews being attacked as "Christ-killers," one should not declare them paranoid when some fear possible anti-Semitic use of the film.

I agree. As a Christian I am challenged to (continue to) remind myself and the Christian church of the church's anti-Semitism and sin against the Jewish people.

<sup>1</sup> Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1961.

<sup>2</sup> Werner Koch, *Zum Prozess Jesu* (Köln: Verlag DER LÖWE, 1967, pp. 49-50).



But Prager has more to say. He also addresses Jews and says that

most American Christians watching the film do not see 'the Jews' as the villains in the passion story historically, let alone today ... most American Christians – Catholic and Protestant – believe that a sinning humanity killed Jesus, not 'the Jews' ... To the Christians, God made it happen, not the Jews or the Romans.

Prager also says: "many Jewish groups and media people now attacking 'The Passion' have a history of irresponsibly labeling conservative Christians anti-Semitic."

These are very good words from a Jew about a very sensitive but important question, which should provoke soul-searching for Christians and Jews alike.

The next step on the road is to get both Jews and Christians to understand that there is no Christian Savior unless Jesus was and is the Messiah of the Jews.

The passion story is based on human sin. Without exception we are *all* participants. God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us *all* (Rom 8:32).