

LCJE Bulletin

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Networking Jewish Evangelism



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on Jewish Evangelism



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From the Coordinator

The major news from the ICC meeting in March was the official decision to hold the Tenth International Conference of the LCJE in 2015 in Jerusalem! More on that to come in future issues.

This is Kai Kjær-Hansen's last issue as editor of the Bulletin. I am sure I speak for everyone in LCJE when I express our very deep appreciation and gratitude to Kai, Bodil F. Skjøtt, Birger Petterson, Cindy Osborne, Chris Skjøtt and all the others who have been involved in the editing, layout, web placement, and so many other necessary tasks undertaken over the years in order to put together and distribute our network's very high quality publication. My goal is to continue the very high standards that have been set.

"Jewish Evangelism in the Shadow of the Holocaust" was the theme of the LCJE North America annual conference held in March in San Diego, California, under the able guidance of area coordinator Gary Hedrick, his wonderful staff, Kathi Graham, and numerous others. The conference included many fine papers and presentations that examined various aspects of the Holocaust and Jewish evangelism, including many moving stories of Jewish believers during that terrible time, some of whose testimonies have remained largely unknown.

In many ways, that conference theme mirrors much of Jewish evangelism during the latter half of the 20th century and the beginning of this one – the need to respond to the Holocaust and also, in many cases, to engage the widespread Jewish secularism that has sometimes resulted.

As I noted at the San Diego conference, one notable example of this attitude is self-proclaimed Jewish atheist and 1979 Nobel laureate in physics Steven Weinberg, who once wrote: "Remembrance of the Holocaust leaves me unsympathetic to attempt to justify the ways of God to man. . . . If there is a God that has special plans for humans, then he has taken very great pains to hide his concern for us."

Weinberg's challenge tears at our hearts. We cry out with the prophet Isaiah, who wrote, "Truly you are a God who hides himself, O God of Israel, Savior" (45:15). Yes, he does hide himself, but he has also revealed himself as Savior, and that has made all the difference.

That is both our message and our hope.

For the salvation of Israel.

Jim Melnick

Papers from the conference in San Diego
are available at www.lcje.net

Isaiah 6

By David Zadok, LCJE Coordinator for Israel

Isaiah was one of the most important prophets in the Old Testament, and many of his writings are quoted in the New Testament. He prophesized during the reigns of six kings, and based on tradition was sawed in two by the order of Manasseh, one of the most evil kings of Israel.

The first king, Uzziah, was one of the better kings of both the northern and southern kingdoms. During his 52 years of reign, Uzziah advanced Judah politically, economically, and, more importantly, spiritually. Under his rule the borders of Israel were expanded, trade treaties were signed, and above all he promoted the spirituality of the people. His long and successful reign brought much stability to the people of Israel and their neighbors.

As history has taught us, prosperity often drives us away from God. This has occurred in Europe as well as North America and other parts of the world. Much earlier, it happened to Judah during the last years of the reign of King Uzziah. Trade with neighboring countries brought with it foreign gods and idol worship, and they became self-reliant.

Isaiah saw the Lord

In the year that this great king died, Isaiah saw the Lord. The death of Uzziah brought instability and insecurity to the people. Changes



David Zadok

that we so much dread surfaced, and no one could guess where they would lead. But the Lord was seated on his throne. His sovereignty and majesty are such that nothing moves him from his throne. He continued to be seated on his throne, in spite of the turmoil. He did not have to call his advisors; he did not need to tour the land. Even when king Uzziah died, and troubles were on the horizon, God continued to sit on his throne. He is unmovable and unshakeable. No other throne is like his, and no one can compete or challenge him. While in each of our lives troubles, hardships, difficulties, and pain come – and they do come – we can trust the Lord who is seated upon his throne. He is the solid rock of stability. God in his sovereignty and great wisdom called Isaiah to his office at a critical point in history. While

kings die, people move, and governments rise and fall, the Lord remains unmoved on his throne. What an encouraging truth this is!

The Lord sits on his throne

During the feast of Purim the tension with Gaza escalated once again. Within a week, more than two hundred missiles were fired on the southern cities of Israel. Over 250,000 children were forced to stay home for an unpleasant extension of the Purim holiday. At the same time, more news from the killing fields of Syria came out, and to this reality is added the nuclear threat from Iran. All of these situations caused great unease, to say the least. However, this passage from Isaiah is a great reminder that while the world around us might seem to be falling apart, the Lord sits on his throne and accomplishes his perfect, good, and acceptable will.

May we know and experience the security we have in Christ, who is sitting upon his throne ruling triumphantly over the whole universe. May we look upon him, and not upon the circumstances that surround us. May we keep our eyes fixed on the founder and perfecter of our faith, the one that Isaiah saw seated on the throne high and lifted up.

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“Christ at the Checkpoint” – An LCJE Member’s Reflections

By Richard Harvey, Senior Researcher with Jews for Jesus

Before

I was invited to present a paper on a “Messianic Jewish Approach to Reconciliation” at the Christ at the Checkpoint (CATC) conference in Bethlehem in March 2012.¹ My concern for peace and reconciliation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has arisen from long-term involvement in Jewish evangelism, and interest in the development of Messianic Jewish theology. I have participated in similar meetings and discussions with Palestinian Christians and their supporters over the years. My aims have been first to meet, listen to, learn from, and pray with those with different views, and second, to explore the political and theological issues from a peace-making perspective with brothers and sisters in Messiah.

The aims of those hosting the conference, and my reasons for participating, were the subject of healthy debate and critical scrutiny. From friends within LCJE circles comments varied from “No, please don’t go, you are betraying our people and the cause of Jewish evangelism” to “we appreciate your bold decision.” The majority of personal correspondents and not a few bloggers were strongly opposed to the conference and my attendance at it.² Leaders of Messianic organisations in the USA and congregational leaders in Israel issued statements condemning the “anti-Israel and, indeed, unbiblical nature of the Christ at the Checkpoint conference.”³ However, others were supportive, helping me to ponder the possible consequences and pray through my decision to attend.



Richard Harvey

During

Like the other Messianic participants and attendees, I was warmly welcomed, respectfully heard, and sensitively treated. The participants varied widely in theological and political views, but the majority were supportive of the conference aims and agenda.⁴ Most were evangelicals, but there were others from different Christian traditions and secular backgrounds. Many were activists and advocates for Palestinian causes.

The conference was well-organised, and the quality of presentations was generally very high. The daily program was a full timetable of talks, panel discussions, music, and media on a wide variety of theological, political, social, and personal issues from international and Palestinian perspectives.⁵ Additional activities and seminars were put on to co-ordinate with the main program. The food was excellent. Coffee times were good opportunities to meet some of the international leaders present, including Lausanne Move-

ment leaders Chris Wright and Doug Birdsall, and Palestinian theologians Yohanna Katanacho and Munther Isaac.

Abstract

My presentation was a shortened version of a longer paper. The abstract reads:

“Messianic Jews can play a significant part as peacemakers in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A theology and praxis of reconciliation is needed to address its political, social psychological and theological dimensions. Previous studies of Messianic Jewish approaches to the conflict are noted, and the method of Critical Political Discourse analysis is proposed to strategically engage Messianic Jewish theological discourse with the discourses of other conflict partners in a number of overlapping conflicts. Recent discussions of Palestinian and Israeli strategic proposals for conflict resolution provide a context in which a survey of Messianic Jewish understandings of the present conflict, proposals to end it, and the contribution Messianic Jews can make are analysed and evaluated. Concluding proposals for the development of a Messianic Jewish theology of reconciliation include the need for hope and the development of intra-group discourse that can engage strategically with other conflict partners.”⁶

The paper was well received, and I hope makes a positive contribution in this area. I will be most happy to discuss it further with LCJE Bulletin readers.

After

The conference organisers



issued a statement at the end of the conference, which was commended to participants, but was only agreed on and endorsed by the organisers themselves. Some of us who attended also released a statement:

Brief Response to “Christ at the Checkpoint” from Messianic participants

As Messianic Jews and supporters of Israel who attended the “Christ at the Checkpoint” conference we were warmly welcomed. We participated in a personal capacity, clearly stating we did not claim to represent any other individuals, groups or organisations.

We gave presentations on God’s continuing purposes for the Jewish people and the land of Israel, assured by His covenant promises to our forefathers; the need for reconciliation to develop a deeper fellowship and partnership in the Gospel with our Arab brothers and sisters; and the building of a Messianic Jewish theology and practice of reconciliation and peace-making.

The aims of the conference organisers were clearly stated on their website, which were to

- Empower and encourage the Palestinian church.
- Expose the realities of the

injustices in the Palestinian Territories and create awareness of the obstacles to reconciliation and peace.

- Create a platform for serious engagement with Christian Zionism and an open forum for ongoing dialogue between all positions within the Evangelical theological spectrum.
- Motivate participants to become advocates for the reconciliation work of the church in Palestine/Israel and its ramifications for the Middle East and the world.

Also on the agenda was promotion of non-violent resistance to the administration of Gaza and the West Bank, and the development of Palestinian Evangelical Christian theologies.

However, at no point was it assumed that we were in agreement with these aims, but rather it was expected that we had different views which needed to be heard. We were free to challenge in informal discussion and platform dialogue the differing theological and political understandings of the place of Israel in Scripture, the purposes of God, and present political realities. We reflected the concerns of the Messianic community as expressed in recent statements from the UMJC/IMJA/MJAA and Israeli Messianic groups, high-

lighting areas of both agreement and disagreement on the ongoing election of Israel (the Jewish people) and the promises of the Land.

We did not feel compromised in any way, but were able to freely express our own points of view, and were treated with respect. The conference organisers have issued a manifesto affirming their aims and positions, which was commended to the conference participants at the end of the conference. Some of us were shown this statement during the editorial process, out of respect and appreciation for our involvement, and out of acknowledgment of the bridges that were built during the conference. While a few of us offered advice on the composition of these documents, we do not in fact endorse all the points that were finally presented. Nor were we asked by the organizers to endorse them.

The impact of the conference has yet to be assessed. But those of us who took part were particularly impressed with the genuine attempts to meet with Messianic Jews and Christian supporters of Israel, and begin a dialogue. Our hopes and prayers are for continuing attempts at peaceful engagement with one another in fellowship, prayer and discussion, and

for true reconciliation to be achieved through the atoning love of the Yeshua, the Messiah of Israel and Prince of Peace.

We hope and pray that our willingness to accept the invitation to participate in the conference has opened a door for us to strengthen genuine relationships with our Arab brothers and sisters. We trust that in the context of such relationships we will be able to address in greater depth the serious issues that concern the messianic body, both of a theological nature and existential threats and attacks against the nation of Israel.

Ephesians 4:1–4. I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling.

Romans 12:18–20. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." This brief response sum-



"Christ at the Checkpoint" at Bethlehem Bible College

marises our positive engagement with the conference and its organisers. More detailed personal responses are available from the individuals named below.

Richard Harvey
Wayne Hilsden
Dan Juster
David Loden
Lisa Loden
Evan Thomas

Now

After such a controversial event, what now? Believing that reconciliation is at the heart of the gospel, my hope is for discussions to continue, especially between Messianic Jews and Palestinian Christians, on how we can model and put into practice true reconciliation. I came away moved by the depths of anger and pain of the Palestinian Christians, and impressed by the warmth

of their love for the Lord, and for me as a Jewish believer in Jesus. I have been reminded of my own need for increasing personal, spiritual, and theological maturity, especially in allowing different political and theological perspectives to be held together in tension, to love my enemies, and be willing to talk to them. I look for "peace-building infrastructures" to be developed, particularly amongst Messianic Jews and those concerned for Jewish evangelism. I hope that networks like the LCJE and wider Lausanne Movement will encourage unity and reconciliation between Jewish and Palestinian believers, so that the reconciling love of Yeshua can be made known to Israel and all nations.

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Danish Jewish Journal Informs about Messianic Jews

By Kai Kjær-Hansen, Chairman of the Danish Israel Mission

Jødisk Orientering (a journal for the members of the Jewish community in Denmark) launched, in December 2011, a series of articles "that intend to inform about various forms of Jewish faith and identity in Denmark and abroad." Interestingly, the first article was about Messianic Jews. In the January issue the article was followed up by an interview with Sofie Kuperman, a Messianic Jew who lives in Denmark. Both articles are by the Danish Jew Lene Fischermann.



Kai Kjær-Hansen

"Messianic Jews choose Jesus"

The first article has the "positive" heading "Messianic Jews choose Jesus." But the introduction to the article as well as the demography info box cite this "fact": "Today there are about 1 million Messianic Jews all over the world." I must admit that my skepticism was alerted: Is this simply yet another article with a gross exaggeration of the number of Messianic Jews intended as a deterrent to other Jews – an exaggeration which Jewish anti-missionaries have sometimes employed?

But I was mistaken about the article as such! It is not that I do not believe the number of Messianic Jews to be exaggerated. But this is, after all, not a Jewish invention. Christians and Messianic Jews can also inflate the numbers (see below). All in all, the article is fair. The intention seems good.

In the article, Lene Fischermann writes that she first met Sofia Kuperman at a talk

rable situations.

It is done in a fair-minded way. It is not really surprising that the chief rabbi does not think that "Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God or God incarnate." Worship of Jesus is "in Jewish thinking an offence against God, who is one."

To Lexner that means that "Messianic Jews and Jews do not have a common identity." And yet the Jewish principle is maintained that even the Jew who has sinned – for example by being baptized – is still a Jew. If a Jew has converted to Christianity and has been baptized, "and then realizes that he or she would like to be a member of the Mosaic community, I expect that person to go to a *mikvah* in order to have the water of baptism symbolically annulled," Lexner says.

Lexner continues: "It is hard for me to understand that such an essential choice, the choice of Jesus, can be reconciled with Judaism today. But I also think that it is the individual's own choice and people should be allowed to do as they like, just as we recognize people who want to convert to Judaism. Everybody has a free choice."

Plain speech from a chief rabbi about his faith and his opinion of Messianic Jews – whether or not you agree with him.

Jerusalem in Sofie Kuperman's heart

The January 2012 issue of *Jødisk Orientering* has a two-page interview with Sofie Kuperman under the heading "Jerusalem in my heart."

Kuperman gave in a church hall north of Copenhagen. "How was it possible," Fischermann writes, "that I, myself a Jew and the child of Holocaust survivors, had never heard about this woman?" She tries to give a brief and objective description of Messianic Jews, their origin and rituals. Of course there are details that are debatable and reveal that this has been written by an outsider. But that is not so very different from the rest of us when we, as outsiders – and Christians – write briefly about Jews and their faith.

Chief Rabbi Bent Lexner's comments

In her first article, Fischermann included comments by Chief Rabbi Bent Lexner on the subject of Messianic Jews, so the readers are not given complete freedom to form their own picture of them. Of course not. I do not want to criticize that, for what else is a chief rabbi for? He is supposed to guide. That is what we Christians also do in compa-

1 <http://www.christatthecheckpoint.com>.

2 See the joint statements from Messianic leaders at <http://www.umjc.net/home-mainmenu-1/news-mainmenu-40/1-latest/750-joint-statement-on-qchrist-at-the-checkpointq> and <http://roshpinaproject.com>.

3 <http://www.umjc.net/home-mainmenu-1/news-mainmenu-40/1-latest/750-joint-statement-on-qchrist-at-the-checkpointq>.

4 <http://www.christatthecheckpoint.com/index.php/about-us/conference-goals>.

5 All the presentations are available for viewing at <http://www.christatthecheckpoint.com>. The papers will be put online. The program is available at <http://www.christatthecheckpoint.com/index.php/schedule/daily-schedule>.

6 The full paper, PowerPoint presentation, and conference presentation can be found at <http://www.lulu.com/content/paperback-book/towards-a-messianic-jewish-theology-of-reconciliation/12822994>; <http://dl.dropbox.com/u/28495742/CATC%20100312a.pptx>; and <https://vimeo.com/38967441>

Seldom, if ever, have I seen anything like it in a Jewish magazine. The article sums up Sofie Kuperman's life and story as she herself told it in the book *Sofies historie – en dansk jødes bekendelse* (*Sofie's Story – the Confession of a Danish Jew*). Kuperman is given an opportunity to tell her story, and she tells about her life and her faith in the Jew Jesus – without being interrupted by Fischermann.

The interview is in the nature of a testimony and ends in the following way: "In Poland the Catholics threw stones at me, they spat on me and they called me a Christ-killer. Here in Denmark, after I became a Messianic Jew, I have got many hostile looks, and many will not talk to me. I cannot demand that either Poles or Danish Jews relate to my Messianic identity, but I would like them to respect it," Sofie concludes.

I cannot help saying "*Kol HaKavod*." A presentation like this in a Jewish magazine deserves credit and respect. Chief Rabbi Lexner presented the premises in the first article, and in the following article a Messianic Jew is allowed to speak and witness about her faith in Yeshua HaMashiach. For, in the words of Chief Rabbi Lexner, "Everybody has a free choice."

But when it comes to the number of Messianic Jews in the world today, as mentioned in *Jødisk Orientering*, I must object. You need to be careful with figures whether you are Jew, Messianic Jew, or Christian.

One million Messianic Jews in the world today?

Figures can be used for many



Sofie Kuperman's book Sofies historie – en dansk jødes bekendelse (Sofie's Story – the Confession of a Danish Jew)

things. Jewish anti-missionaries sometimes state exaggerated figures for Messianic Jews in order to draw attention to the danger of Christian missionaries. In *Jødisk Orientering* it is stated as a fact: "Today there are about one million Messianic Jews all over the world." Where did the author of the article get this large number?

One million – too good to be true

According to scholarly Jewish sources, there are 13–14 million Jews in the world today. Other Jewish sources have a larger number, but it depends on how you define who is a Jew. If the abovementioned allegation of the number of Messianic Jews is true, it means that every fourteenth Jew in the world today is a Messianic Jew. This is too good to be true!

And maybe it is even too good to be true if you say that there are a quarter of a million Messianic Jews. I do not know.

As far as I know, there are no reliable studies about it.

If you Google "one million Messianic Jews," it is not difficult to find websites that mention this figure, even websites which are sympathetic to Messianic Jews or belong to a Messianic organization.

I will give two examples: "Messianic Jews are estimated to number 1 million worldwide, with more than 200,000 in the United States" (<http://christianity.about.com/od/messianicjewishmovement/a/What-Is-Messianic-Judaism.htm>).

"How many Jewish believers in Yeshua are there? Estimates vary, approximately one quarter of a million in the US, with 1 million worldwide" (<http://www.man-na.com/questions.htm>).

These figures do not necessarily become true because they come from Messianic Jews. Far smaller figures are also mentioned. It is important to be level-headed and assess this information critically and not be guided by one's yearning for success. It must be based on data.

The number of Jesus-believing Jews in Israel

Even about a small area like the State of Israel, opinions can be quite divided. This became clear at LCJE's Ninth International Conference at High Leigh, UK, in August 2011. Three speakers, all from Israel and all leaders in the Messianic movement, commented on the number of Messianic Jews.

The first said: between 15,000 and 20,000. The second said: about 15,000 Messianic Jews in Israel and about 300,000 worldwide. The third said: most people in the Mes-

sianic movement put the number of Jesus-believing Jews in Israel at about 10,000, but a more conservative estimate would be 5,000. None referred to statistical data, only to "estimates." The danger is that the more times such "estimates" are mentioned, the more likely they are to become "data" in the collective consciousness, which is exactly what they are not.

So I cannot criticize Lene Fischermann for writing in her article that there are about 15,000 Messianic Jews in Israel. Many Messianic Jews say the same. Personally, I have my doubts.

Facts and myths

In 1999 Bodil F. Skjøtt and I published the survey *Facts & Myths About the Messianic Congregations in Israel*. It was

then generally assumed that there were between 5,000 and 7,000 Messianic Jews in Israel. Our survey concluded that there were about 5,000 in the Messianic movement in Israel at that time, which was a disappointing result for many.

Of the approximately 5,000 individuals, about 2,500 were adult Jews. The remaining 2,500 were evenly distributed among Jewish children under 18 and non-Jews who were a part of the Messianic movement. Being a member of a Messianic congregation does not turn a non-Jewish person into a Messianic Jew, although it is possible to be a legitimate member of a Messianic congregation and be included, numerically, in the Messianic movement – something that is not always considered when we talk about figures. It is

also a well-known fact that in a number of Messianic congregations in the USA, a large proportion of the members – in some cases the majority – are non-Jews.

The temptation to exaggerate is a danger for all who evangelize. I ask for figures based on surveys. It is, however, not a problem for me to say that the number of Messianic Jews in Israel, and presumably also the world, has grown in the last decade, which is a cause for joy. But the allegation that there are one million Messianic Jews in the world today – that I do not buy.

Show me where they are!

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Forty-seven Years and Counting, to the Jew First: Vesta Joy Rehkugler, Grace Bible Mission Society, Kansas City

By Lyle P. Murphy, D.D., Grace Bible Mission, Kansas City

The late summer sun was warm on our backs as I chatted with Josie Rehkugler. It was Labor Day, 1964. Josie and his wife, Esther, were at our mission home, the Messianic Witness of Kansas City. Josie looked at me with a level gaze and said, "Is this mission on the level?" "I hope so," I replied. If that sounds less than certain of our calling, I had arrived as the new general director of the mission just two weeks before. Vesta had just signified her willingness to join the mission as a worker among Jewish women of metropolitan Kansas City.



Vesta J. Rehkugler, Calvary Bible College graduation, 1964

It was a reunion for of us. We had worked in the Jewish community as volunteers beginning in 1961, while we were in college. Vesta had won the 1964 missions prize as the top student in the missions department of Calvary Bible College. She had a missionary vision and was praying about serving Christ in the regions beyond.

When Vesta was a little girl

A family friend, Bro. Paul Strickler, was convinced that Vesta – then a little girl – should one day take the mes-

sage of salvation to the Jews. That was his prayer for all of her formative years. Now she was joining a mission to the Jews, organized in April 1943. A war-weary world had just come to the mind-numbing news that Nazi Germany was systematically murdering the Jews of Europe in an assembly line fashion. Local men of God in Kansas City began to pray about a new outreach to the relatively small Jewish community in the gateway to the West. The renowned physician, evangelist, and pastor Dr. Walter L. Wilson contacted Dr. George Christian Weiss, president of the Gospel Missionary Union (now Avant Ministries), urging him to join in an effort to reach local Jews. Weiss readily agreed. He had worked for some years in Morocco, at the time a safe place for Jews in an Islamic country. Several other local men of God joined in the new undertaking.

Vesta grew up in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in a home of former Mennonite parents. They were Mennonite in heart and culture, but they had left Menno Simon's body over the doctrine of eternal security. It was a home life with an accent on the word of God and few frills. At Christmas, gifts were limited to necessities like coats and shoes for Vesta and her three siblings. Josie worked in a ball-bearing plant, a job that kept him out of the army. He taught a well-attended Bible class and was on a local gospel radio station. Vesta was saved as a small child.



From left: Vesta together with Roberta Vasholz - a messianic believer

Kansas City and Vesta's work

Kansas City has a small Jewish community of about 20,000. There is little future for Jewish young people, and as a result they go off to prestigious colleges and universities, rarely to return home except for visits. Fifteen to twenty rabbis, serving mostly Reform and Conservative bodies, major on Talmudic Judaism. Hearty support for Israel, including major financial contributions, are the highlights of Jewish social life. At the time of the break-up of the Soviet Union, Kansas City-area Jews gave huge sums of money to effect the rescue of their co-religionists. A good many came to Kansas City to settle, but only a very small number have identified with their Jewish benefactors.

Vesta teaches a Bible study on Monday evenings in a federally-subsidized high rise apartment where most of the Russian Jews live. Her class has been meeting for 25 years and attracts Jewish women, 1 or 2 Messianic Jews, and interested Gentile believers. No Russian Jews attend. She also has a Bible study on Wednesday mornings for Gentile Christian women.

No sign of slowing down

The Grace Bible Mission Society requires that missionary candidates raise their own support through the gifts of the Lord's people. Vesta has outlived some of her supporters, but the Lord continues to supply her needs, often in dramatic and miraculous ways. Her home church in her native Pennsylvania has supported her since 1964. A cancer survivor, Vesta shows no sign of slowing down. She keeps the roads hot driving to appointments with lost Jews, meeting appointments, and carrying on her responsibilities with the all-volunteer Wycliffe Associates, which gives her an opportunity to keep pace with world evangelism, a burden of hers from the very beginning.

Vesta begins her 48th year of service on Labor Day 2012. We would hazard the guess she is one of the longest-serving missionaries to the Jews in the world. Eternity alone may verify that conclusion.

Lyle P. Murphy
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From left: Terje Bjørkås, The Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Norway; Rolf G. Heitmann, Norwegian Church Ministry to Israel (NCMI); Bodil F. Skjøtt, Danish Israel Mission (DIM); Martin Rösch, Arbeitsgemeinschaft für das messianische Zeugnis an Israel (AMZI); Alex Jacob, Church's Ministry among Jewish people (CMJ, UK); Daniel Nes-sim, Chosen People Ministries (CPM, UK); Amin Bachor, Evangeliumsdiens-t für Israel (EDI); Juhani Koivisto, Finnish Lutheran Mission (FLO); Vladimir Pikman, Beit Sar Shalom, Germany

Notes from a European LCJE-CEO Meeting

By Bodil F. Skjøtt, General Secretary, Danish Israel Mission

The same day as spring arrived in Berlin, 9 of a possible 15-17 CEOs of European Jewish missions also found their way to the city and to the Beit Sar Shalom Center for the first meeting of its kind – at least within the LCJE network. Previously some of the Lutheran ministries had met once a year for what was called Geschäftsführer Konferenz.

In his role as unofficial chairperson of the meeting, Rolf Heitmann had sent out a letter of invitation with a suggested agenda made up of four Cs and one I.

- *Communication:* Sharing information on ministries, projects, plans, and initiatives taken.
- *Consultation:* Listen to each other, learn from each other, and strategize together.
- *Coordination:* Discuss how we may supplement each other instead of wasting resources on overlap.
- *Cooperation:* Identify areas and projects where it is pos-

sible to join resources and work together.

- *Intercession:* Prayer for each other, for our ministries, and for the issues brought up at the meeting.

Communication

As this was the first meeting of European CEOs, and for some of the participants also the first time to meet each other, more time was spent on communication and simply getting to know each other's personal history as well as the history of the organizations represented. These organizations are very different in age, focus, and ways of working. Some go back more than 100, even 200, years; others only 10 or 20 years. Jewish mission is for some only one area within the organization, and for others it is the only one. Some work mainly in Europe, and for others Israel is the focus of ministry. Some work mainly in evangelism; others see themselves as a support ministry for Messianic believ-

ers and congregations; and still others focus on theological teaching and training.

Consultation

Despite these differences it became clear when we got to the second C, consultation, that we all face similar challenges in our ministries and therefore could benefit not only from listening and learning from each other but also from strategizing together. At this our first meeting we got to listen and learn, and also to locate some of the areas where we all would benefit if we found ways to implement the final two Cs, coordination and cooperation.

Several of us support the same ministries and congregations, but only to some extent do we coordinate our involvement or even know what others are doing and supporting. It was therefore decided – as a start – to share a list of the ministries and organizations each one is involved with as a means of coordinating our efforts.

Another common challenge located during the consultation was how to teach churches in Europe about the necessity and relevance of Jewish mission, not only for the sake of our ministries but also for the sake of the churches themselves. An even greater challenge, but related to this, is to ensure that the role of Israel in God's plan of salvation forms part of the curriculum of theological schools in Africa and Asia, where the church is growing.

Others issues brought up by several people were involving the next generation in our work, secularization and how to persevere in society today, the political and religious climate in the Middle East, anti-

Semitism, and how the State of Israel is perceived in Europe and among our supporters.

Areas for more or new cooperation Eastern Europe and especially France were mentioned, as well as the possibility for a common strategy for Manchester among ministries working in Britain.

Where to go from here?

Before the meeting was closed with a time of intercession, it was discussed where we could and should go from here. It was suggested that the issues brought up at this meeting be topics to be dealt with at the European LCJE conference scheduled for 2014. It was also agreed that the meeting had been helpful and an

encouragement for us all. We were reminded of the bigger picture that all our small ministries are part of, and we became aware of others we could turn to for further cooperation.

It was decided not to schedule a meeting in 2013 but to try to meet as European CEOs during the international meeting already scheduled for May 2013. The next European CEO meeting should therefore be in 2014.

On behalf of the group,

*Bodil F. Skjøtt
general@israel.dk*

Jewish Evangelism Network

By Amy Downey, Director of Tzedakah Ministries, Waxahachie, Texas

Imagine if you will three separate scenes of Jewish evangelistic opportunities:

Scene 1

The "heroine" of the story finds herself in the Oklahoma City airport just two days after a tornado leveled Joplin, Missouri, and delayed plane travel across the country. A very grumpy and tired Amy Downey is kvetching over the delay to her busy life. She is wondering around the terminal looking for a television so that she might watch Prime Minister Netanyahu's speech before a Joint Session of Congress.

She finds a television that is airing the speech, but it is in – of all places for her Baptist sensibilities – a bar. She decides to cross the Rubicon when she notices an



Amy Karen Downey

older man also watching the television screen and something within her spirit tells her that he is Jewish. She helps to translate the speech over the din of sports television that is prevalent on the rest of the TVs, and afterwards begins a conversation with "Barry." (Names have been changed to

protect their privacy.)

Barry is from Chicago, and he as well has been delayed from leaving Oklahoma City due to the storms in Missouri. The two discuss politics and Israel and religion over the course of a few minutes. Amy uses every opportunity possible, including the Messianic seal necklace she is wearing, to turn the conversation to the Jewish Messiah, Jesus. A few small inroads for the gospel are allowed and both have to leave their conversation too soon.

Returning to her gate, Amy searches the internet for Barry and Chicago and discovers a great deal of information about her new airport acquaintance. She also discovers that God wanted her delayed in Oklahoma City so that she could at least plant a seed for

Jesus in the heart and soul of Barry. Her only question: Who will come along and continue the Jesus conversation with him?

Scene 2

Amy Downey finds herself boarding a plane for her first transatlantic flight to go to High Leigh and the 9th international LCJE conference. She prays as she does before every flight that God will put the person he wants for the purpose he wants in the seat next to her. Shortly after the prayer is uttered, "Johann" from Norway sits down beside her.

Johann is leaving Texas to return to Norway so that he can finish his Ph.D. at the University of Oslo, as he had tired of being a Texas A&M Aggie, especially since he was not exactly sure what an Aggie actually was. Shortly after takeoff, Johann notices the Messianic seal necklace and asks if Amy is Jewish. Her reply: "No, but my Jesus is." Hence they begin a conversation about faith and belief, one that begins in earnest after Johann confesses to being Jewish.

Throughout the eight-hour flight, and between small naps, the two continue the conversation about Jesus, Judaism, faith, etc. About halfway through the flight, Johann tells her that his mother is the only female rabbi in the entire country of Norway, and that his grandfather is a Holocaust survivor. These tidbits of information only increase the opportunity for "Jesus talk," and entirely too soon the flight begins its descent for Heathrow.

As the plane lands and taxis

toward the terminal, Johann tells Amy that she is unlike any Christian he has ever met and thanks her for the conversation. They have kept in contact through Facebook, and Amy has even shared Jesus with his mother via email. But the question still remains: Who will come along and continue the Jesus conversation with Johann and his mother?

Scene 3

A young woman from Alabama contacts Tzedakah Ministries about sending evangelistic materials to her friend, "Moshe," in Israel. Tzedakah Ministries secures contact information from the young woman as well as for Moshe. Tzedakah Ministries also checks the story out to ensure that this is not an anti-missionary ploy.

Tzedakah Ministries contacts a missionary friend in Israel with the information, and can only pray that this individual will follow up with Moshe about the gospel. Because if the friend does not, then one is left with only one eternal question: Who will come along and continue the Jesus conversation with Moshe?

A burden began

A burden that began with the encounter with Barry in Oklahoma City and that increased with Johann over the Atlantic Ocean reached a crescendo with Moshe's need for Jesus. For we all have these encounters, whether they are in airports or restaurants or hotel lobbies. We meet Jewish people from around the world who need Jesus, and we are only given a few moments to plant as many seeds as possible for the gospel. We

are then left with a hope and prayer that God will bring along someone who will continue the gospel witness until such a time comes that God "gains the increase."

However, what if there was a way to be proactive in continuing the conversation with our new contacts? What if there was a chance that we did not have to leave follow-up to chance? What if there was a resource out there that we could utilize to place our new friend in touch with a missionary, a church, a Messianic congregation that would make it their passion to not let this contact drift away?

A network is needed

The International Jewish Evangelism Network Database could be the answer to this gospel dilemma. The network database website (www.jewishevangelismnetwork.net) is still under construction; however, the process of securing contact information of individuals and organizations that will join in this work has already begun. Tzedakah Ministries used this database as the centerpiece of its March newsletter. Individuals and churches have already begun to send in their information to info@tzedakahministries.org.

For while there are logistical questions to resolve, there is no question that a network is needed to continue the gospel proclamation in the 21st century. The members of LCJE can be a part of this network database and continue to live out the truths of two of its aims: to share information and resources and to strategize on a global level so that more Jewish people will hear and consider the Good News of

Jesus.

In many ways, this is simply an introductory article and vision casting for the International Jewish Evangelism Network Database. However, for the network to reach its true fulfillment, more ministries, more individuals, and more congregations/churches

need to join this vision. If you are interested in linking together in this vision, please contact Amy Downey at info@tzedakahministries.org.

The website is secured. The "web guys" are considering the best avenue and approach to build the database. Additional details hopefully will

be available in future issues of the LCJE Bulletin. All that is missing is you. God bless. Shalom!

*Amy Downey
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Note from the International Coordinator

On March 4, 2012, the ICC voted to respond favorably to Amy's request; however, this database in support of an International Jewish Evangelism Network will be developed on a voluntary basis by LCJE members who are interested, and preserved under Amy's proprietorship or through those members collaborating together on this project, not the ICC itself.

Jim Melnick



LCJE North America held its annual conference in San Diego, March 5-7, 2012. The theme was "Jewish Evangelism in the Shadow of the Holocaust." Following are excerpts of some papers. References to sources have been removed; the full text and other papers are posted at www.lcje.net

Excerpt

Redemption for the Wounds of the Holocaust for Survivors and Their Children

By Rabbi Chaim Urbach, Congregation Yeshuat Tsion, Denver, Colorado, USA

Abstract

My father, who passed away in 2009, was caught up in the horrific vortex of the Holocaust. I grew up with the Holocaust deeply embedded in my psyche. Why write a paper on the impact of the Holocaust on the second generation,

knowing that it would be a gut-wrenching experience, inducing me to dive deeply into national, family, and personal pain?

The need to address this topic is infinitely greater than airing my personal story. There are many Mes-

sianic Jews living in Israel, the United States, Canada, and elsewhere who are children of survivors. Yet, the Messianic Jewish movement has been silent to a large degree on the struggles involved in the lives of the second and third generations of survivors.

There is no need for the wounds experienced by the children of those who suffered through the tragedy of the Holocaust to remain unhealed. Redemption is available. The Messiah is waiting to be granted entrance into those dark and broken places to bring healing and restoration. The Holocaust is a potent

and horrific model for other human catastrophes which cross ethnic boundaries. In the United States there are thousands of soldiers and their families who have suffered and experience Post Traumatic Stress Disorder because of various wars, most recently the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is my hope that this

message of hope and redemption will ripple outward from those of us who are second generation Holocaust survivors to others, both Jews and Gentiles, who need to experience Yeshua's redemption.

*Chaim Urbach
chaimurbach@yeshuattsion.org*

Excerpt

Heroes of the Holocaust: Poland, the Warsaw Ghetto and Yeshua

By Mitch Glaser, President, Chosen People Ministries

The impact of the Holocaust on Jewish evangelism

The Holocaust was the most significant challenge to the survival of the Jewish people since the Babylonian captivity. A number of other threats reshaped the Jewish community, including the Crusades, expulsions, pogroms, and the ongoing conflicts related to the establishment of the modern state of Israel. Yet the reduction of Jewish population and destruction of Jewish life engendered by the Holocaust is incomparable to any other modern trauma brought upon the Jewish people.

The impact of this tragedy on the general Jewish population was massive, as was its impact on the community of Jewish followers of Jesus, who had enjoyed a thriving community in the various countries affected by the Holocaust. The numbers of Jewish believers living in Europe prior to the Holocaust numbered in the

hundreds of thousands, and most were either killed or moved to other parts of the globe. This created a twenty year plus decline in the Messianic movement. The ensuing shift of Jewish life and culture from Europe to North America was just one further example of the impact the Holocaust had on Messianic Jewish life, and has shaped a new and distinctive community identity.

We still live in the shadow of the Holocaust and the current Messianic and Jewish mission movements cannot be understood without developing a deeper understanding of what transpired amongst our spiritual forefathers before, during, and after the Holocaust. For many years we have heard passionate and sincere advocates of the modern Messianic movement, which we can date as initiating in the late 1960s, heralding our movement as the long awaited beginning of the "end times" and that there are now more Messianic Jews

than there were at any other time in history – including the first century.

I do not wish to debate numbers (though I suspect there may have been more Jewish believers in Jesus in the years immediately preceding the Holocaust than today), but rather to emphasize the dramatic importance of what God accomplished through the Jewish believers who endured, and in rare cases, survived the Holocaust.

The achievements and witness of Jewish believers during the Holocaust and especially in the Warsaw Ghetto are essentially unknown to most present day Jewish believers. We stand on the shoulders of these heroes of the Holocaust – the Jewish believers of the Warsaw Ghetto – and their story, as much or as little as we know, must be told.

*Mitch Glaser
mitchglaser@aol.com*

Excerpt

Bonhoeffer and the Jews

By Theresa Newell, Chairman CMJ USA

Lutheran theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer stands out among German church leaders during the twelve years of the Third Reich. He was one of a small number of churchmen to actively resist the racist policies and actions of the Nazi regime. He called for an uncompromising stand on the Word of God by the church of Germany in the time of its greatest evil. As a result, Bonhoeffer paid the ultimate price: on April 9, 1945, he was hanged at Flossenbürg Concentration Camp, weeks before World War II ended and the camp was liberated by Allied forces.

Bonhoeffer's commitment to the Jews

The question has been asked: How committed to the Jewish people was Bonhoeffer? Was he concerned only for Jewish believers and the Jewish clergy of his Lutheran Church? The following facts demonstrate Bonhoeffer's courage and commitment to the Jews regardless of their belief.

- Two days after Hitler became Chancellor of Germany, on February 1, 1933, twenty-six year old Bonhoeffer gave a national radio speech distinguishing between a leader ("Führer") and a misleader ("Verführer") who becomes an idol for the people. Mid-way through his speech, the broadcast was cut off.
- In March of that year, before Hitler's newly formed Reichstag could pass its Aryan Paragraph, Bonhoeffer published

his paper "The Church and the Jewish Question," which stated that "the church has an unconditional obligation to the victims of any ordering of society, even if they do not belong to the Christian community."

• A few weeks later, Bonhoeffer violated the High Treason Law by sending descriptions of Berlin procedures against leftists and Jews to Rabbi Stephen S. Wise in New York, who conveyed the message to President Roosevelt with whom he had ties.

• In September 1933, Bonhoeffer attend the World Conference of Churches meeting in Sofia, Bulgaria, where he successfully sponsored a resolution stating that "we especially deplore the fact that the state measures against the Jews in Germany have had such an effect on public opinion that in some circles the Jewish race is considered a race of inferior status."

• In 1935 Bonhoeffer became head of an underground seminary for the Confessing Church. He told his students, "Only he who cries out for the Jews can sing Gregorian chants." The Gestapo closed the seminary in 1937 and wrote that Bonhoeffer "represented the world's enemy, Juda, as the 'eternal nation,' the true 'noble people,' the 'people of God.'"

• In 1940 (after returning from New York where he could have had safe haven), he wrote that the Lutheran Church had "not raised her voice on behalf of the victims . . . and is guilty of the deaths

of the weakest and most defenseless brothers of Jesus Christ."

• Bonhoeffer joined the staff of the military intelligence apparatus, the Abwehr, and became a double agent, using his overseas contacts to stand against Hitler's rule.

• In October 1941, Bonhoeffer petitioned his army friends to attempt to interdict the government orders that all Jews must leave Berlin. Having failed in this attempt, he wrote a report documenting the Third Reich's deportation policy.

• In 1942, he met secretly with the Bishop of Chichester, George Bell, to discuss the opposition movement in Germany that was pledged to repeal the anti-Jewish Nuremberg laws.

• He helped rescue a group of Jews from deportation for the "final solution" – known as Operation 7 – by disguising the group as special agents of the Abwehr on assignment in Switzerland. Bonhoeffer obtained a letter of permission from the president of the Federation of Swiss Churches to make this escape possible.

It was Bonhoeffer's connection to the conspirators of a failed assassination attempt against Hitler on July 20, 1944, which led to his imprisonment and death.

Bonhoeffer – a hero for me
Dietrich Bonhoeffer has become a hero for me as I have read again his life of integrity and faith in a time of unimagi-

nable horror. Born into a family well situated in German society, offered many doors of escape during his country's and church's darkest hour, he not only stood firm in the face of the enemy but used every possible tool – teaching, preaching, travelling abroad – to find allies for the righteous cause.

Above all, he determined to hear no voice but God's through Scripture. He escaped the allure of the ferocious nationalism of his day and party loyalty to church leaders, instead taking the fearful prospect of standing against a murderous dictator, Hitler, even in the face of the death and destruction he saw all around him.

Bonhoeffer presents a challenge to our day. Will Yeshua



Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews (INRI) looks at the sign: "Here Jews are unwanted". – From the "Christian" Europe in the 1940s.

find faith when he returns to the earth in our generation? Will I stand with the Jews, saved or unsaved, in this day of rising anti-Semitism? Will I declare that my Jew-

ish brethren in the faith and Gentile believers are fully one in Christ?

Theresa Newell
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Excerpt

Media Report

By Susan Perlman, Communication Director, Jews for Jesus, San Francisco

Christ at the Checkpoint

An article on the Palestine News Network website announced that Bethlehem Bible College will be hosting its second "Christ at the Checkpoint" conference on March 5–9, 2012. The article said the goal of the conference is "to provide an opportunity for evangelical Christians who take the Bible seriously to prayerfully seek a proper awareness of issues of peace, justice and reconciliation."

Munther Isaac, the conference director, said he expected more than 600 participants. He raised the question, "If Christ were to pass through the checkpoint today,



Susan Perlman

what message would he send to the world? This is what we aim to send the whole world through the conference."

In response to the announcement of the "Christ at

the Checkpoint" conference, the UMJC and MJAA issued a joint statement, which included leaders of the International Messianic Jewish Alliance and the International Association of Messianic Congregation and Synagogues.

The introduction to the joint statement noted that the first conference, in 2010, "drew much criticism for its biased treatment of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and promotion for this year's event raises the same concerns." The statement itself listed the following concerns:

- "You frame the entire story of Israeli-Palestinian conflict

in terms of Israel's alleged oppression and abuses."

- "Both the structure of your conference, with its one-sided focus on the Israeli 'occupation,' and the anti-Israel record of some of its key representatives, work against peace and reconciliation."
- "Your conference objectives discredit Zionism alone of any political movement."
- "There is no mention of the violence perpetrated against Jews by Palestinians, including Hamas, which regularly attacks Israeli civilians."

The statement urged the organizers to "disassociate from all anti-Semitic and anti-Jewish expressions during your upcoming conference" and to "remember the terrible history of Christian supersessionism, which led to invalidating the Jewish people and their unique covenant with God."

On February 21, 2012, Christ at the Checkpoint published on its website a response to the joint statement by the UMJC and MJAA. It was entitled "A Response to Representatives of the International Messianic Jewish Community." The authors wrote,

"We were quite disappointed to read your statement, and we encourage you in the future to contact us directly (Matthew 18:15-20) in order to resolve differences rather than send a public letter to appeal for dialogue through the internet. Had you done that, you would have discovered that many of the accusations against us and against the conference were untrue, and you would have given us the opportunity to address



From "Christ at the Checkpoint" at Bethlehem Bible College

your concerns." They went on to say, "We truly and deeply care for our relationship with the Messianic believers. We are excited that a small delegation of Messianic believers will be involved in the conference.... We have made sure that the Messianic voice will be represented in our discussions on reconciliation and peacemaking, through our brothers Evan Thomas and Richard Harvey. In addition, Wayne Hilsden, who is part of the Messianic community, will share about his biblical understanding regarding the place of Israel in God's plan. Wayne has the support of most of the Messianic leaders in Jerusalem regarding his participation." They also said, "Your statement has undermined all these reconciliation efforts, given the wrong impression concerning our relationship with the Messianic body, and done harm to the unity of the body of Christ in the Holy Land. They concluded with this: "We invite you, brothers and sisters, to be our honored guests at the conference, not because we want to win you over to our perspectives nor for you to win us over to your perspectives, but in order that

together, we may discover ways to keep the unity of the Body and to demonstrate to Evangelicals and Christians worldwide that our bond in Christ is far stronger than our differences."

Kosher Jesus

Rabbi Shmuley Boteach's new book, *Kosher Jesus*, has caused an uproar in the Jewish community. Here are some media reports, including Boteach's defense of his book:

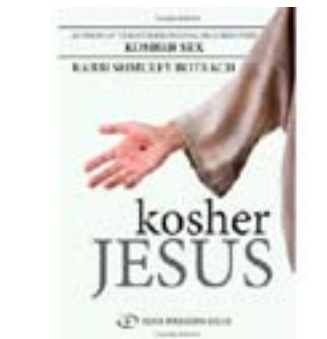
In an article in the Los Angeles Times, Mitchell Landsberg summarized the message of *Kosher Jesus*: "The book focuses on the Christian savior's Jewishness, portraying him as a hero who stood up to Roman rule of Palestine and paid with his life. In keeping with Jewish theology, it does not accept his resurrection or his divinity. And it emphasizes Boteach's belief that the New Testament intentionally deflected blame for the crucifixion from the ruling Romans and redirected it – unfairly, Boteach believes – on the shoulders of the Jews."

Landsberg wrote, "Given all that, one might expect Christians to take exception. But Boteach's Jewish critics

were way ahead of the curve." Landsberg then quoted Rabbi Yitzchok Wolf of Chicago: "Boteach's latest book is apikorsus [heresy] and must be treated as such." Landsberg then noted that the only part of the book Wolf read was the title! Immanuel Schochet, a prominent Orthodox rabbi in Toronto, wrote that it was "forbidden for anyone to buy or read this book, or give its author a platform in any way, shape or form to discuss this topic." Landsberg noted that Boteach's book is based on the work of the late Hyam Maccoby, a Jewish scholar in Britain.

Landsberg quoted Darrel Bock, a professor of New Testament studies at Dallas Theological Seminary: "The book is a mixed bag. There are some points that he's making about the Jewish roots of Jesus . . . that are certainly the case. But there are other points he is making about Jesus' mission and the way the Jewish leadership handled him that are probably not an accurate reflection of what took place."

The JTA reported that in an open letter published on the Jewish news website *The Algemeiner*, Rabbi Immanuel Schochet condemned Kosher Jesus as "heretical" and



pronounced it "forbidden" for anyone to buy or read it. Schochet said, "I have never read a book, let alone one authored by a purported frum (religious) Jew, that does more to enhance the evangelical missionary message and agenda." Boteach responded that his book "is the ultimate argument against Christian missionaries" [because it offers] "significant information to argue convincingly against any Christian attempt to evangelize Jews."

Kosher Jesus fails to deliver the goods

David Parsons, a Christian, reviewed *Kosher Jesus* in *The Jerusalem Post*. He noted that Boteach promises the reader that "in these pages . . . you will discover the authentic story of Jesus of Nazareth." But Parsons said that "Kosher Jesus fails to deliver the

goods." He categorized the book as "both overconfident in tone and underwhelming in its marshaling of credible scholarship to back the author's positions." He added, "By the time Boteach embraces Jesus, he has been radically reduced to just another patriotic Jewish agitator against Roman oppression, an ultra-nationalist rabbi cruelly slain by the enemies of his nation and only later deified by a misguided pseudo-Jew named Paul."

Parsons instead recommended a book titled *Jesus*, by the late Professor David Flusser of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Magnus Press, 1998). Parsons wrote, "Flusser considered the Gospels to be reliable historic accounts that remain among the most important Jewish documents from antiquity. He also viewed Jesus as his favorite rabbi, since he preached such a beautiful brand of ethical monotheistic Judaism. Flusser just said that as a faithful Orthodox Jew, he simply could not believe that Jesus was divine."

Susan Perlman
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Book review

The Jewish Annotated New Testament: New Revised Standard Version Bible Translation

Edited by Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011)
Reviewed by Rich Robinson, Senior Researcher with Jews for Jesus, San Francisco

The main significance of The Jewish Annotated New Testament (JANT) is that it exists at all. There have been

other books by Jewish writers about Jesus and the New Testament, but this is the first time the entire New Testa-

ment has been presented by mainstream Jewish scholars to Jews and Christians as something that both communities

need to read and understand. Its reception by the Jewish community has been both welcoming and critical, even sometimes hostile, as the two editors shared at last fall's meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in San Francisco.

The intentions of JANT

The introduction highlights what makes this a "Jewish" compilation: it is designed to enrich understanding of the NT; to compare the NT and its ideas with other Jewish literature; and to address for Jewish and Christian readers the problematic NT passages that have been used in anti-Jewish ways. The intentions of the volume vis-à-vis Jewish readers are spelled out in this way:

"Many Jews are unfamiliar with, or even afraid of reading, the New Testament. Its content and genres are foreign, and they need notes to guide their reading. Other Jews may think that the New Testament writings are irrelevant to their lives, or that any annotated New Testament is aimed at persuasion, if not conversion. This volume, edited and written by Jewish scholars, should not raise that suspicion. Our intention is not to convert, whether to convert Jews to Christianity, or to convert Christians away from their own churches. Rather, this book is designed to allow all readers to understand what the texts of the New Testament meant within their own social, historical, and religious context; some of the essays then describe the impact that the New Testament has had on Jewish-Christian relations" (page xii).

To accomplish this, some 50



Rich Robinson

contributors were assembled from the top tiers of Jewish scholars: Daniel Boyarin, Shaye J. D. Cohen, and Geza Vermes, to name just three. Besides the annotations to the NRSV, numerous sidebars are scattered throughout. At the end come over 80 pages of background essays in small type, which could well have been a separate book under a title such as *What Are Contemporary Jewish Scholars Saying about the New Testament?*

Each annotator introduces his or her book with matters of authorship, date, setting, relationship to Judaism, and so on. The conclusions are generally from a moderate-critical standpoint, though there is no uniformity of agreement among the contributors or editors, and m. Avot 5:20 is quoted in regard to "disputes for the sake of divine service."

Examples from JANT

To pick a few examples: the section on "Matthew and Judaism" highlights the commonalities with rabbinic methods of scriptural exegesis, but also interprets various Matthean passages to "sug-

gest a strained if not broken relationship between Matthew's intended readers and the synagogue." The introduction to Mark notes that "the 'Gentile focus' of Mark is not as certain as it was once held to be." John's Gospel "reflects deep and broad knowledge of Jerusalem, Jewish practice, and methods of biblical interpretation." Discussing the usage of the phrase "the Jews" in John, although its meaning "varies according to its literary context," that is not enough, since "more important than the referent of each usage is the overall rhetorical effect of the relentless repetition of the words *hoi Ioudaioi*. The Gospel's use of the term serves two important functions: it blurs the boundaries among various Jewish groups, and it employs the term to designate the forces that are hostile to Jesus." Importantly, though, "the Gospel is not anti-Semitic in a racial sense, as it is not one's origins that are decisive but one's beliefs. Nevertheless, it has been used to promote anti-Semitism."

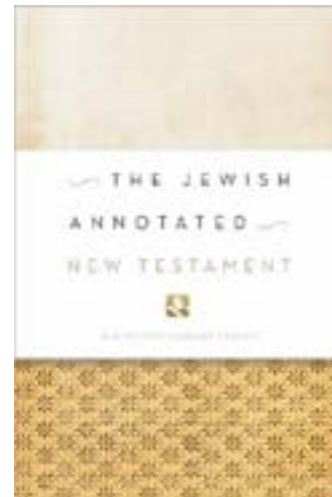
To take an example from the Pauline corpus, namely Galatians, "negative assessment of the Torah and those who follow it is striking: he [Paul] insists that the Torah does not come from God (3.19–20); no longer has a salvific role, and perhaps never did (3.21–22); and its observance is akin to the worship of the Greek gods (4.9–10)." Nevertheless, many today recognize that the audience is Gentile, and "nowhere in his letters, either in Galatians or elsewhere, does Paul attempt to convince Jews to abandon the Torah."

The annotations themselves are brief, usually highlight-

ing the Jewish background through citing OT, intertestamental, and rabbinic literature or noting similar ideas/practices in Judaism. The average Jewish reader, unless he or she has some familiarity with Jewish texts, may well be lost in the annotations without the aid of a teacher. Christian readers who come from a tradition emphasizing Bible study will not be quite as much at sea with the biblical references in the annotations, but again will need guidance for much else.

JANT – a landmark work

The general level of the essays too will be rather sophisticated for many lay readers without further guidance, depending on their familiarity with the topic at hand. Of great value are the introductory essays by the editors: Amy-Jill Levine's "Bearing False Witness: Common Errors Made about Early Judaism"



and Marc Zvi Brettler's "The New Testament between the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh) and Rabbinic Literature." Other essays cover historical and social backgrounds, literature, and theological ideas. Mark Nanos covers "Paul and Judaism," Joshua Garraway handles the term "Ioudaios," and five essays cover "Jewish Responses to the New Testament." Sev-

eral tables, a glossary, and an index round out the volume.

JANT is indeed a landmark work, one that would have been unthinkable a hundred years ago. Yes, Jewish scholars wrote about Jesus and portions of the New Testament, but never this comprehensively and with such intention to speak with clearly delineated goals to two faith communities.

If JANT can acquaint Christians and Jews with the Jewishness of the New Testament, it will have served its purpose. The editors and contributors undoubtedly hope that Jews will become better Jews as a result; readers of this Bulletin will hope for the recognition, among some at least, that becoming better Jews involves no less than faith in Yeshua.

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Book review

Called to Controversy: The Unlikely Story of Moishe Rosen and the Founding of Jews for Jesus

By Ruth Rosen (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2012)
Reviewed by Theresa Newell, Chairman, CMJ USA

A visionary by definition is one who sees what the people of their day don't see. Moishe Rosen was not only such a visionary but also a man of action. From the moment that he committed his life to Jesus as the Messiah and Lord, Moishe focused on getting the gospel to his Jewish people. This book details the steps that led this man of simple beginnings to create a mission which "exists to make the messiahship of Jesus



Ruth Rosen

an unavoidable issue to our Jewish people worldwide." It is a fascinating tale told by a daughter who has worked for years in the ministry her father founded in the 1970s and directed until 1996.

Two words on the cover

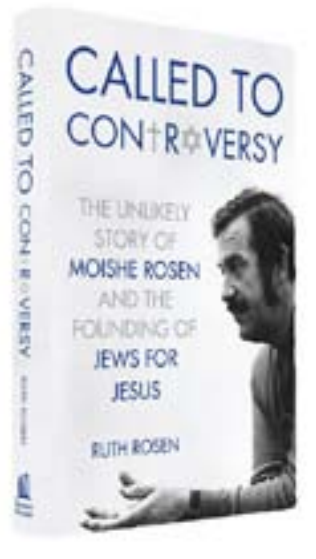
Two words on the cover of the book point to what the reader can expect inside: *controversy* and *unlikely*. Moishe Rosen's life was filled with the first, and the latter highlights the

ironies of his larger-than-life persona. Other words we might add as we think about the life of Moishe are *complex* and *unique*. His sense of humor, his doggedness, his radicalness, his ability to think outside the box, his devotion to family and friends, and, above all, his devotion to serving God in obedience to his Word are all captured through this telling of a life.

Though an introvert who sometimes stuttered, Moishe pushed forward a series of ideas, insights, and evangelism styles which resulted in a seismic shift in the world of Jewish outreach. The drive to reach his Jewish people with the gospel drove him beyond what he considered his natural gifts. As Ms. Rosen notes, "Moishe never considered himself God's gift to Jewish evangelism. Rather, he considered Jewish evangelism to be a gift from God, entrusted to him" (p. 300).

A catalogue of young people Moishe challenged

Several books have been published giving the history of Jews for Jesus. What Ruth Rosen offers the reader is the inside story of Moishe's life – from his origins in Kansas and Denver during the Depression, his immigrant European Jewish family, his finding the love of his life, Ceil, whom he married at 18, and his devotion to Ruth and her older sister Lyn.



The reader learns how this man was brought to faith by Gentiles who cared enough to share Jesus with him and by a praying wife who had come to faith a bit before he did. Together they suffered the loss of their Jewish families because of their public confession of faith in Jesus.

Familiar names run through this narrative which, in its own way, rehearses a history of Jewish mission in America over the last 70 years: Daniel Fuchs, Herb Links, and the group of young Jewish believers who joined Moishe in San Francisco in the countercultural '70s: Mitch Glaser, Stuart Dauermann, Tuvya Zaretsky, Amy Rabinovitz, Baruch Goldstein, Susan Perlman, Jhan Moskowitz, David

Brickner, Steve Cohen, Bob Mendelsohn, Avi Snyder, Steve Wertheim, and Lyn (Rosen) and Alan Bond. Familiar Jewish mission organizations also thread the narrative: Fellowship of Christian Testimonies to the Jews (FCTJ), American Board of Missions to the Jews (ABMJ, now Chosen People Ministries), the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE), and, of course, Jews for Jesus.

The book catalogues the many young people whom Moishe challenged to think about how their lives could count more for God. While he could be a tough and sometimes critical boss, calling people to adhere to the procedures, policies, and, above all, the principles that he was committed to for the Jews for Jesus organization, he also encouraged people to perform above their own expectations.

Moishe – a life-time learner

Moishe is characterized as a life-time learner – inquisitive, searching, thinking, questioning, and experimenting. It was his openness to new ideas – wherever he found them – that created what became Jews for Jesus. Incidents are recorded of his intuitive and daring methods which shocked the 1970s "establishment" during that era of change in the USA.

Ruth Rosen does an admi-

nable job of giving an honest picture of a very complex man, both his weaknesses and his strengths. Her mother's faith, love, and support of the family during her over fifty years of marriage to Moishe

highlights this biography.

Through interviews with people who interacted with Moishe before his death on May 19, 2010, the author sculpted a fuller picture of her father than could ever have

been given without her diligent work. She tells her dad's story with honesty, clarity, and a great deal of love.

*Theresa Newell
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Visit the website www.lcje.net

Mishkan

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LCJE MEETINGS

LCJE North America

March 4-6, 2013, in Florida
March 3-5, 2014, in Chicago
Contact Gary Hedrick
garyh@cjfm.org

LCJE AustralAsia

Third LCJE AustralAsian conference
August 7-10, 2012
Collaroy Conference Centre,
Collaroy (Sydney) NSW
Contact Bob Mendelsohn
australia@lcje.net

LCJE South Africa

24-25 August, 2012
Christ Church, Kenilworth,
Cape Town
Contact Cecilia Burger,
simchaministry@gmail.com

LCJE CEO Conference

27-31 May 2013
St. Chrischona, Basel, Switzerland
Contact Kai Kjær-Hansen
lcje-kai@post4.tele.dk

Those of us active in LCJE are part of Moishe's legacy. He was one of 17 believers working in Jewish evangelism at the 1980 mini-consultation of the Lausanne Consultation on World Evangelism in Thailand where LCJE was birthed. He remained a staunch supporter of LCJE throughout his life and attended its conferences as long as his health permitted.

Networking Jewish Evangelism



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