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ON JEWISH  
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## New LCJE Leaflet

To members of LCJE: You will find,  
enclosed with this Bulletin, a new  
leaflet about LCJE.



Additional copies can be ordered  
from LCJE's International Office  
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Help LCJE to get more members.

## LCJE Goes to Moscow

By Jim Melnick, Director of Friends of Soviet Jewry  
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Many payers were behind the dream that a consultation on Russian Jewish evangelization could be held in the former Soviet Union. Those prayers came to fruition on July 6-7, 1993, in a hotel on the south side of Moscow where representatives of missions to the Jews in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus gathered for a time of fellowship, shared reports, and prayer.

Avi Snyder of Jews for Jesus, who is ministering in Odessa, and I organized the consultation at the request of the International Coordinating Committee. The plan for the meeting grew out of a proposal to the ICC following the last international LCJE meeting in Zeist in 1991. It was originally thought that a meeting on Russian Jewish evangelism would be held in Israel; however, it was God's will that this meeting be held at this time in Russia.

### Background

A couple of days before the meeting, I found myself sitting in a worship service of the Choral Synagogue on Arkhipova Street in Moscow. Afterwards, I bought a 1993 booklet entitled *Jewish CIS Information* in the small synagogue store there. This is a very important booklet (I believe the cost was



Jim Melnick

something like 2000 rubles, or about \$2 at present prices). The booklet printed in both English and Russian, contains addresses and phone numbers for many of the synagogues and Jewish institutions of the former Soviet Union, including such far-off places as: Alma-Ata, Batumi, Birobidjan, Bukhara, Gomel, Gori, Kazan, Perm, Samara, Sukhumi, Tiraspol, and Ufa, to name a few (if any LCJE member needs this kind of information regarding a particular city of the former USSR, please write to me at this address: Friends of Soviet Jewry, P.O. Box 2567, Springfield, VA, USA 22152). The booklet also contains interesting tidbits of information, such as the fact that a "mikva" in Moscow is

available with 24 hours' notice.

But along with the renaissance in Jewish life which is now occurring in the former Soviet Union, there are very disturbing signs as well. I did not stay at the hotel where the conference was held but rather in the center of Moscow, at a hotel across from the Lenin Museum. Outside that museum, some of the most hardline and reactionary groups in the country gather and protest. Some of the most vile anti-Semitic and fascist materials one can imagine are sold there. These groups are small but their influence may increase as the economy falters or if there is further instability.

### The meeting

Our meeting, conducted mostly in Russian and partly in English, took place from 6-7 July at the "Central House of the Tourist" Hotel. Avi Snyder and I served as co-moderators. The meeting began with devotions on the theme of unity based on John 17.

The explosion of religious freedom in Russia following the August 1991 coup and the demise of the Soviet Union has brought with it a diversity of evangelical viewpoints over doctrine and methodology. Though this is nothing new for those



involved in Jewish evangelism or evangelism in general elsewhere for that matter, Russian and Ukrainian culture do bring their own set of challenges. Sometimes new believers in the former USSR find it difficult to accept others' approaches to evangelism and discipleship as valid if it is not similar to their own. This is something we wanted to face head on by emphasizing our oneness in Messiah and our unity as a Body. We recognized that though some had different perspectives, we were all one in the Lord, and that His desire was that we love and encourage each other. And God blessed this approach. One of the brothers from Kiev continued on this theme, sharing from his heart about our need to be on the same Rock together. And that set the tone for a time of rich fellowship and encouragement.

*The ministry reports*  
Many ministries were represented at the consultation, while others, such as Jonathan Bernis of "Hear, O Israel, Ministries", whose ministry is in St. Petersburg, wanted very much to come but were unable to attend because of schedule conflicts (Note: There have been some very exciting things happening in that ministry in St. Petersburg where a great number of Jewish people have responded to the Gospel just recently).

The consultation began with a presentation by a ministry which cultivates close relationships with the Jewish community. It has essentially a "synagogue ministry" and hopes to send its representatives to some 200 cities over the next 5-7 years throughout the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States), trying to visit as many synagogues as possible in various cities. The group share a great deal in the synagogues about the Holocaust. They've given some 2,000 Bibles to the military to be given to Jewish servicemen. They are very eagerly awaiting the Russian translation of Dr. Michael Brown's book, *Our Hands Are Stained With Blood*, which they believe will be especially helpful in their outreach. The representative of this ministry also had some very interesting things to say about the Georgian Orthodox Church - there is a great deal of love for the Jewish people in Georgia and much of it emanates, surprisingly, from the Georgian Orthodox Church!

*Peter and Ginny van der Steur (Moscow)*  
Peter and Virginia (Ginny) van der Steur, Americans who now minister in Moscow, started their outreach by playing guitar and preaching in the streets of Kiev. They previously worked with YWAM in Austria as hundreds of Soviet Jews were arriving

daily from the former Soviet Union and saw God's heart for the Jewish people. Peter recalled one Jewish family from the city of Gomel - they were atheists, very intellectual. Their little girl, however, had a diseased hand. Peter and Ginny prayed. The family witnessed how God restored their little girl's hand. They now live in Pittsburgh and recently said: "We can't believe it ourselves, but we are now Messianic Jews!"

Peter and Ginny have organized ministry groups to Jewish people in Moscow. They showed the "Jesus" film and 300 Jews came; 16-17 accepted the Lord. Meanwhile, several Hasids stood outside. Peter and Ginny worked together in ministry and then were married about a year ago - a Messianic band played at their wedding! They work a lot with Holocaust survivors and pass out tracts near the Israeli Embassy and OVIR (the Russian agency that handles emigration). Many of these Holocaust victims ("zhertvy Katastrophy" in Russian) are in their 80s and 90s, but their hearts are ready and open to the Gospel and some are coming to the Lord.

In addition to these and others who have prayed to accept the Lord, there have been four baptisms and several healings. The van der Steurs, whose ministry address is in Finland, also work with the Moscow Christian Center. Their

prayer requests and goals include: discipling new believers and helping some become missionaries to their people; praying for more men and young people to come to the Lord; to establish a strong committed core; as these home groups multiply, they will become a great way to raise up new leaders as well.

Kiril Polonskiy prayed for the van der Steurs' ministry, that powerful Messianic groups might be established in Moscow.

*Julia Chernushova (Chernovtsy, Lvov)*  
Julia's ministry includes the Ukrainian cities of Chernovtsy and Lvov. After she came to the Lord she was struck by the Scriptural passage of Jesus crying out over Jerusalem - as a new believer she wanted to shout from the streets: "The Messiah has already come!!!"

At first, after coming to the Lord, she said she felt very much alone and was very desirous of finding other Jewish believers: "A Jews for Jesus tract made its way to me in Kiev and I wrote to the address in San Francisco."

Julia has a quiet spirit but a heart on fire for God and reaching her people. She says: "My prayer is that my small service to God might touch others." It certainly is.

*Kiril Polonskiy (Moscow)*  
Kiril Polonskiy's grandfather



"Central House of the Tourist" on the south side of Moscow where the conference was held.

served with Lenin. His family was not proud of being Jewish. But God has raised up this young man to be a powerful voice of testimony to his people. Kiril's ministry is in Moscow through the "Raza Church". In March, 1993, Kiril started a Russian Jewish Messianic newsletter called "Shalom Aleikhem", which says under its title that it is "a published edition of Messianic Jews". The Jewish outreach meetings of the Raza Church are held every second and fourth Friday of the month. They invite Jewish people to write for Messianic literature at the following address: 107065, Moscow, a/ya 78.

*Nikolai Haskin (Minsk)*  
Nikolai ministers in Minsk, Belarus (Belorussia or "White Russia"). He is a musician and comes from a strong former Communist family. Nikolai says, "I didn't know there was such a thing as Messianic music." He has a real heart for youth

ministry and loves to distribute literature. Nikolai said this of Avi: "On voin Bozhii" (He is God's soldier). Avi has also encouraged Nikolai to write Messianic songs, which has meant a lot to him.

Nikolai says there are about 36,000 Jews in Minsk, including a number of Holocaust survivors. He believes there will be a great "Probuzhdenie" (Awakening) in the ministry there, and he said that God has performed a number of healings. They have about 33 people in one group, of which about half are Jewish.

He stated: "We need to drop all of our minor prejudices (and differences) and concentrate on (the main things): that Christ was crucified and raised on the third day." Nikolai says he was very upset to learn of a Christian group in England which said they would not preach about Jesus (to the Jews) but would just help Israel.



Please pray for Nikolai, whose sweet and gentle spirit is reaching many Jewish people in Minsk with that Good News.

*Dmitriy Reznik (Kiev)*  
Dmitriy began by saying that he can't read his own Chosen People Magazine which discusses his ministry and congregation in Kiev! This highly dedicated ministry leader shared about what God is doing in his congregation and in Kiev. He shared with the group newly translated Messianic literature by Albert Israeli (Note: Albert also very much desired to attend the consultation but had a schedule conflict).

Dmitriy then told an amazing story of an Hasid who came to Christ in Ukraine and then went to Israel. They lost contact with him, but then Albert Israeli found him a year or so later in Israel.

One of Dmitriy's chief prayer requests: that the Lord would open the doors to ministry in the Crimea.

*Mikhail Mistetskiy (Kiev)*  
Mikhail (or Misha) has been a believer for some three years. He is a leader of another congregation in Kiev. He said that his congregation has various contacts with the Jewish Community Center in Kiev and with other Jewish social groups. They are now trying to get their own permanent meeting place and in the meantime they have to keep

moving. The chief goal for their people: spiritual growth. Misha also believes that it is very important for new believers to be fully disciplined before they are baptized.

*Alik Mekhtiev (Kiev)*  
Alik is a young believer who says that he is connected with a Jewish ministry in the Kiev office of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. This is something brand new and little is known about it. Alik said that they recently showed the film "Joni" and that there was a very high Jewish response. They are beginning to do follow-up now.

*Nonna Borisova (Moscow)*  
Nonna serves with the Finnish Mission in Moscow, working with Hannelle and Hanna Suortti. One of their goals is to give a Bible to every Jewish family. They pass out Bibles regularly at the Israeli Embassy and also give out children's Bibles and Josh McDowell's *More Than a Carpenter* ("Ne Prosto Plotnik"). Their ministry has been there for many years, faithfully reaching Jewish people in Moscow with the Gospel.

*Avi Snyder (Odessa, Moscow)*  
Avi has had a profound effect on the lives of many of those who attended. As I said when I introduced him, much of what we were doing in Moscow had its genesis at a meeting Avi organized under the LCJE on Soviet

Jewish Evangelism in Pasadena, California, in 1990.

Avi talked a little about what is happening in Odessa: there are about 80 adults coming to their Friday night meetings. It is not a church but a service; two-thirds to three-fourths of the attendees are Jewish. One-third of those Jews attending are unsaved. Avi's staff includes his wife Ruth, his daughter Leah, Elizabeth Terini, plus nine national workers (Avi shared what a joy it was to see his daughter be an important part of their recent outreach to a number of Ukrainian cities). As of July 3, 1993, the following statistics held: 1,709,395 Jews for Jesus tracts have been handed out in the CIS since the start of their ministry; ALL were published there except for the first 16,000. He shared literature samples with the group, many of which are multi-color. He has one new tract which will strike a particular chord with people who ride the Moscow subway!

Avi discussed the JFJ Russian literature policy in the CIS. Other ministries can use JFJ literature freely as they wish as long as they keep the JFJ copyright and don't change any artwork or text or charge for the material. A JFJ Moscow Campaign this summer and a winter media campaign are planned. Also, a JFJ School of the Prophets is planned for December, 1994.

Later on, Avi introduced Ella, one of the JFJ national workers. He said that she distributes 4500 tracts a week; does 10 visits a week; is discipling 5 new Jewish believers per week, and talks with 20 other people on the phone each week dealing with various needs. Ella then shared a little about herself. She was raised in a Baptist church and found out about Jews for Jesus in Odessa through a JFJ School of the Prophets. She believes that, for evangelism, Odessa is a "soft" city compared to Moscow; Moscow is a very hard city: there is much more anti-Semitism. The rest of the group agreed. As I was listening there seemed to be somewhat of an analogy between Moscow and New York City - both in their own way are "hard" cities to evangelize.

#### *Founding votes of the consultation*

We then proceeded to some nominations and voting, laying the groundwork for, Lord willing, an eventual formal LCJE branch in the CIS! Avi Snyder and the Van der Steurs were nominated as the organizing committee for the next LCJE-CIS meeting to be held probably sometime in 1994. We shared concerning the need to write papers on various themes of interest to all, such as "Ministering to Holocaust Survivors". Another proposal I suggested was possibly inviting Kai Kjær-Hansen to

speaking some time to the group on "The Legacy of Rabinovich".

We then proposed that some kind of statement or procedure for taking a stand against anti-Semitism be voted on by the group. Avi was elected to represent the group in attempting to set up a theological committee denouncing anti-Semitism, made up of leaders in various denominations.

*Newspaper and songbook*  
I discussed with the group the vision of having a Russian Jewish Messianic newspaper, which is an ongoing project with *Messianic Times* in Toronto (for any LCJE members or others interested in supporting or participating in such a project, please write to me or *Messianic Times*). During the conference we met with Sveta Blinderman, who with her husband Konstantin are Moscow representatives of *Messianic Times*. Sveta also interviewed conference representatives for an article in *Messianic Times*.

I also showed the group the first prototype of my ministry's *Russian Jewish Messianic Songbook*, which we hope to have in production very soon - we received many orders at the consultation!

#### *Final thoughts*

Prayer was a powerful part of the conference. In the Russian tradition, we always stood when praying. Avi

made sure that some one would introduce another's ministry; then another would pray for that ministry.

For those trying to learn Russian, I'll add an important new word here: "videniye" meaning "vision". This word was used a lot by the various missions as they look forward in faith to what God is going to do among the Jewish people in the countries of the former Soviet Union.

Our additional highlight was that an elderly new Jewish believer who lives in Moscow, Mark Greenburg, was able to attend the first day. This was a great blessing, since Mr. Greenburg has been very desirous of fellowship with fellow Jewish believers, and at one fell swoop was able to meet a majority of the missionaries in the CIS to Jewish people! Arrangements were made for follow-up for him.

The groundwork was laid at this conference for establishing a future LCJE-CIS branch. The missionaries and mission and congregational representatives responded very enthusiastically to the LCJE concept, as we explained it to them. I assured them that we stood with them and would be praying for them. Please remember these dear brothers and sisters who are laboring sometimes under very difficult economic situations in a field that is truly "white unto harvest"!



# Messianic Jewish Aliyah – Update since the Beresford Decision of 1989

by David H. Stern, Ph.D., Jerusalem

Shortly after the December 25, 1989, decision of Israel's High Court of Justice ruling Messianic Jews ineligible to make *aliyah* under the Law of Return, I was asked to write an article called "The Beresford Case and Israeli Public Opinion About Messianic Jewish *Aliyah*"; it appeared in issue no. 20 of the LCJE Bulletin (May 1990). Now I have been asked to bring the matter up to date. And there is much to tell.

But before I do, I must say something about Israel's two immigration laws, the Law of Return and the Law of Entry. The Law of Return is Israel's unique law allowing both Jews and the non-Jewish descendants of a Jewish father or a Jewish grandparent to make *aliyah* (immigrate) to Israel and quickly receive citizenship. This law defines as a Jew anyone who was born to a Jewish mother or who converted to Judaism, but who is not a member of another religion or voluntarily converted to another religion. The Law of Entry is a standard-type immigration law under which any non-Jew may apply for immigration; in practice few are admitted.

## 1. Five Cases

In May the Messianic Jewish



David H. Stern

Alliance of America broke new ground by publishing in the International Edition of *The Jerusalem Post* a full-page advertisement opposing the High Court of Justice's verdict and explaining to readers why Messianic Jews are still Jews. By this time, in the aftermath of what I will call the First Beresford Case (Beresford I), Joseph Ben-Menashe, the lawyer in Beresford I, was busy with five Messianic Jewish families who had been refused *aliyah*.

The Ministry of the Interior had rejected four other families – the Kendalls, Speakmans, Marlowes and Lewins. All were prepared to fight their cases to the High Court of Justice if necessary. But in time the Lewins left. And the Ministry of the Interior eventually allowed the Marlowes to remain in Israel because their *oleh*

visas, granting residence under the Law of Return, had been issued prior to Beresford I, the court case which for the first time defined Messianic Jews as "members of another religion" and thus ineligible for *oleh* status.

The Kendall parents were ineligible according to Beresford I, but their four minor children would, at majority, become eligible to make *aliyah* under the Law of Return as the descendants of Jewish grandparents who had not changed their religion. Ben-Menashe attempted to gain permanent residence under the Law of Entry for the parents too, on the ground that they should be the guardians of their own children.

The Speakman situation was more confused. Linda Speakman, whose parents are Jewish, was ineligible by Beresford I. Sidney's mother was Gentile and his father a Jewish Christian, so by *halakhah* (Jewish religious law) and by the Law of Return Sidney is not Jewish. But the father's parents were understood to have been Jewish and not Christian, so Sidney should have made *aliyah* under the Law of Return as the non-Jewish grandson of Jewish grandparents. But for various



Martha and David H. Stern at the demonstration on 21 February, 1993, on a hill facing the Prime Minister's office.

reasons involving misunderstandings all around, this did not happen; and it took the High Court of Justice to set matters back on track.

The Beresfords too got back in the act. First they petitioned for a rehearing of Beresford I by five High Court justices, a procedure somewhat like appeal permitted where important issues are at stake. A letter from a number of Israel congregation elders requested them to desist from this step on the ground that a decision by five judges would further damage the cause of Messianic Jewish *aliyah*. This letter never reached the Beresfords, but the matter became moot when President Shamgar of the High Court of Justice turned down their request.

They then developed a new case based on the

reasoning of High Court Judge Aharon Barak in Beresford I. While the Orthodox Jew Menahem Elon's reasoning in that case, drawing on his understanding of *halakhah*, had excluded the possibility that a Messianic Jew could ever be considered a Jew for purposes of the Law of Return, Judge Barak had employed a "dynamic, liberal" criterion for determining who is a Jew, in which he had allowed that under changed conditions Messianic Jews might become eligible.

To my mind Barak meant that someday judges might perceive the general social climate among Israelis to be compatible with accepting Messianic Jews as Jews under the Law of Return and would then reverse Beresford I. But Ben-Menashe took "changed

conditions" to mean that if the Beresfords' own conditions changed enough, in ways conforming to Barak's criteria laid down in his decision, then the Beresfords personally ought to be admitted as Jews under the Law of Return.

The Beresfords' participation in the Ramat HaSharon Messianic Jewish congregation led by Art and Shira Sorko-Ram had been a key element in showing that they were "members of another religion", but now they were no longer members of it and had in fact moved elsewhere. This was part of their "changed conditions".

Also Ben-Menashe concluded that Barak's criteria for belonging to another religion consisted of a list of acts, not beliefs. More specifically, the proscribed acts were those



which served to win others to join one's religion. He advised the Beresfords to refrain from such acts, that is, from street evangelism, attending congregation meetings, and the like. With other Jewish believers I was present in his office when this approach was laid out, and to my shame I admit that I went along with it at the time. Clearly this strategy is inconsistent with Ya'akov (James) 2:14-26, which says, "Faith without works is dead." Restricting oneself to becoming a "closet believer" without deeds openly expressing one's belief is, to my now cleared mind, sin. All of us who let this happen are guilty, and we have acknowledged our sin publicly to the Body of the Messiah in Israel.

### 2. Beresford II - The Decision

In the summer of 1992 the High Court of Justice heard the cases of the Beresfords, Kendalls and Speakmans together; and on September 3, 1992, the verdict was published. All three families were refused entry, both under the Law of Return and under the Law of Entry - with the following exceptions: the Kendall children and the Speakman child would become eligible at majority for entry under the Law of Return as the non-Jewish descendants of Jewish grandparents; and if Sidney Speakman could provide adequate evidence that his mother was Gentile (!) and a

parent of his father Jewish, he too could enter in the same way under the Law of Return.

The opinion of Judge Shoshana Netanyahu, who chaired the panel, dealt with the issues directly concerning the three families. She quickly zeroed in on the "faith/works" issue mentioned above:

Religion is a matter of faith which is and will be expressed in acts ... Judge Barak did not see in [the Beresfords' membership in congregations of Messianic Jews and the dissemination of the matter of their religion] a fundamental element of the test, pursuant to which would be determined whether they are members of another religion, but, rather, an expression, an indication of their faith. The secrets of the heart, the thoughts and faith of a person, no one can know, unless he gives them external expression. The faith which is in the heart can be given external expression in acts, as it was in the activities of the petitioners, but it can also be expressed and revealed in other ways, such as in writing and verbally.

It is inconceivable that a test determining the religious status of a person according to criteria can be subject to change from day to day. It

is inconceivable that the status of a person as a Jew for the purposes of the Law of Return would be determined according to a changeable test of activity (or, perhaps, also its intensity?), so that he will act or cease to act whenever he wishes to do so. Today he believes in another religion but does not engage in any activity on its behalf, and he would be considered a Jew. Tomorrow he will return to his activity and be a member of another religion, and so on and so forth, heaven forbid.

[T]his is not what Judge Barak intended in his test ...

The Beresfords did not establish that the change, according to their argument, which occurred in their actions, is a sincere change which resulted from an inner conviction.

In short, Judge Netanyahu understood the substance of Ya'akov 2:14-26 much better than we did.

Judge Y. Maltz concurred without comment; and Judge David Cheshin in his opinion commented on the substantial latitude granted by the legislature (the Knesset) to the Ministry of the Interior in granting visas under the Law of Entry. Basically, the Ministry is not required to give any reason for refusing a visa under this law (and this is common in many nations' immigration

laws); yet there are limits to the Ministry's freedom of action, which the Judge enumerates and reviews.

On another topic raised above Judge Netanyahu wrote,

This attempt to build [the rights of the parents] upon the rights of minor children, which are conditioned on the declaration of their desire to settle in Israel, will not succeed ... The place of the minor is with his parents. Wherever they settle, he will settle, and not vice-versa. A minor is dependent on his parents. Parents are not dependent upon him.

However, concerning the matter of non-Jewish descendants of a Jewish father or grandparent, what she wrote has possibly disturbing implications. Section 4A(a) if the Law of Return provides, in part,

The rights of a Jew under this law and the rights of an immigrant under the Nationality Law 5712-1952, as well as the rights of an immigrant under any other enactment, are also vested in a child and grandchild of a Jew; except for a person who has been a Jew and has voluntarily changed his religion.

She comments,

This Section does not deal with a Jew but with someone who is not a Jew. The legislators thereof declared concerning it that it was enacted to resolve the 'problem of granting rights ... to those who are not Jews but have a connection with the Jewish nation by means of a spouse, parent, grandfather or grandmother who were Jews; and with the hope that in this manner the commandment would be fulfilled, "[Your] sons will return to their own border [i.e., country], and that those who were detached, taken out of the Jewish nation, would, by their coming to Israel, find the way to return to the bosom of their fathers, would rejoin the Jewish nation according to the definition, and would convert and become part of it ...' - from the words of the Chairman of the Constitution, Legislation and Juridical Committee, 2nd and 3rd readings (Knesset Speeches 57 [5730], pp. 1118-1119.

In other words, Section 4A(a) offers a Jewish environment to Gentiles with Jewish roots only so that they will convert to Judaism. Whether this citation from the Knesset debate reflects the majority view or only the view of the chairman at the time the legislation was passed is not clear to me. I

had thought, myself, that Section 4A(a) was made part of the Law of Return for a very different reason, namely, to offer refuge to anyone in the world with even one Jewish grandparent, since the Nazis systematically sent all such to the ovens and gas chambers. I have not done the research necessary to find out whether my view or Judge Netanyahu's is the correct one. But if her understanding of the legislature's purpose is right, one can imagine her opinion becoming ground for restricting entry under this Section only to Gentiles showing interest in converting to Judaism.

These and other points in the decision are important in understanding the whole picture of how the High Court of Justice has related to Messianic Jews. But, apart from my remarks above, I don't see much new ground being broken in this case. The "Brother Daniel", Dorflinger and Beresford I cases described in my earlier article created the landmarks produced by Israel's judicial system. Beresford II largely reaffirmed and solidified what had been said in Beresford I.

### 3. Since Beresford II: A Resistant Ministry and Good Publicity

Following the publication of the Beresford II verdict in September 1992 the Ministry of the Interior gave the three



families until January 19, 1993 to leave Israel. For the first two months nothing happened – nobody left, nobody engaged in organized discussion of the case: nothing. I suppose we were all in a state of shock or depression that what we had feared had come upon us.

But on November 9 two things occurred. My wife Martha and I had a meeting in our home with Ari and Shira Sorko–Ram, Joseph Shulam and Barry and Batya Segal – all people who, like us, had been involved for years with these court cases. In this and subsequent meetings, which were expanded to include the three families and persons in a pastoral relationship with them, we reached three conclusions:

1. It would shame the Body of the Messiah to permit these three families to be expelled from the Land of Israel without our doing all in our power to prevent it. So we must act to this end.
2. We seven who managed the court cases made serious mistakes, which we must acknowledge. Not only were we sinful and foolish in allowing the faith–without–the–works strategy in Beresford II, but we did less than we should have to maintain open lines of communication with Israel believers who were

opposed to the court cases for various reasons. Yeshua prayed for our unity (Yochanan/John 17:20–23), and while overall unity in the Body may be too broad a goal for our small forces, we can certainly do everything from our side to prevent needless divisions that result from failure in communication and lack of understanding.

3. The High Court of Justice has spoken and has defined Messianic Jews as "members of another religion" ineligible to immigrate under the Law of Return as Jews. Nothing further can be expected from the courts. The future of Messianic Jewish *aliyah* now depends on changing the wording of the Law of Return. Accomplishing this will involve a shift of our activity from the courts to the arena of politics, publicity and public relations. As of the time of writing, we have not, as a group, made a commitment to pursue this goal. Our commitment now is to a much narrower goal, insuring that the three families can stay in the Land. But this is not a bad thing: we are learning the ropes in these new areas.

The other thing that happened on November 9 was the publication in a Hebrew newspaper of a

sizeable article highly favorable to these families. Within days, Israel's reporters had begun a feeding frenzy, seeking out the three families and those of us who could provide background information on Messianic Jewish *aliyah* and on Messianic Judaism generally. It became evident that not only were these Messianic Jewish families a hot news item, but the reportage was highly favorable – they were being presented as Jews who love Israel, on whom Israel was perpetrating an injustice *pr* *æ*east an unkindness, not as apostates or enemies.

Moreover, we noticed a number of factors we could never have orchestrated. While born Jews were being refused admission, Bosnian Muslims were being offered refuge. While believers in Yeshua as the Messiah were being declared non–Jews, thousands of Lubavitch Hasidim were pronouncing their leader Menahem Schneerson the Messiah – and no one spoke of de–Jewing them. When some 400 Arab terrorists were deported to Lebanon, these three families facing deportation were not criminals or terrorists or enemies of the State, only lovers of Israel who wanted to live in the Land of their fathers. It seemed to us that God had prepared favor for our cause.

In January and February we held two press conferences; twenty–five

reporters came to the one for the international media. As a result, articles appeared in the international edition of *Time Magazine*, the *New York Times*, the *Chicago Tribune* and the various wire services. Cable News Network broadcast a 3–minute item of its 200,000,000 viewers. Israel television broadcast three public debates on the subject featuring the Beresfords, Joseph Shulam, and Gershon Nerel (the new Israel secretary of the International Messianic Jewish Alliance).

Meanwhile, the matter attracted the attention of a number of Knesset members, particularly those comprising the Human Rights Caucus. Three of these – Yossi Katz (Labor), Benni Temkin (Meretz) and Naomi Chazan (Meretz) – submitted a bill which would enable first–degree relatives (i.e. parents, children and spouses) of persons who had received the rights of a Jew under the Law of Return or who had served in the Israeli army to receive automatic permanent residence under the Law of Entry. As a result of their advocacy with the Ministry of the Interior, as well as a sizeable demonstration which we organized, the Kendalls and the Beresfords were granted visas to May 21, 1993 and the Speakmans to June 30.

A word about the demonstration and what led up to it. On February 11 we

had a meeting at Beit Immanuel Congregation in Tel Aviv to explain to leaders throughout the Body the radically changed circumstances – by which I mean: no further hope in the courts, the need to rally behind these families for humanitarian and other reasons, a newly favorable publicity climate, friends in high political places, the willingness of us who had led and encouraged the court fights to admit error and sin. At a second meeting three days later a significant reconciliation took place between ourselves and some who had previously opposed us. We were able to unite on the idea of holding a demonstration against deporting the three families. An estimated 150–300 believers from throughout the country showed up February 21 in Jerusalem on a hill facing the Prime Minister's office. Present among the placards were reporters from newspapers, magazines, radio and television; the demonstration was seen on at least three Israel TV programs. I think it is no coincidence that it was also on this day that the Ministry of the Interior extended the visas. Smaller demonstrations continued for four more days.

Since then, those taking the long view organized themselves into The Committee for Three Messianic Jewish Families, of which I am Chairman,

Shira Sorko–Ram Vice–Chairman, and Peter Tsukahira and Riki Drazni additional members of the "Bridging Committee", which discusses and guides activity. In March we decided to call for three days of prayer and fasting from Tuesday sundown to Friday sundown during the third complete week of each month from April to September. We have had three of these fasts, which have opened with prayer meetings on the Tuesday nights. The fasts have been publicized in newsletters, and we know that hundreds, perhaps thousands, of believers around the world have joined in these times of supplication before God. In addition, many have written letters requesting mercy in the matter from Interior Minister Aryeh Deri and Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin; and other officials have been contacted. A number of Israeli non–Messianic Jews have sided publicly with our cause; particularly visible and active has been tour guide Micha Ashkenazi, whose every third sentence begins, "I am not a believer, but ..."

Meanwhile, there has been little outward activity since the heady days of February. The Kendalls have left the Land for some rest and recuperation but are planning to return in July; we will be monitoring how they are dealt with and what kind of visas they get when they arrive. The Beresfords' visas



expired; their request for new ones has been met with silence. Gary Beresford has flown out Israel for the summer, and Shirley plans to follow in August; both intend to return in October, and we will be monitoring their return too. Sid Speakman has been researching his genealogy and has submitted the results to the Ministry of the Interior, which should have given an answer as of today (June 30) but has not. The Knesset bill is before the ministerial committee which decides whether the government coalition will back it (almost certainly crucial to its passage). Meanwhile, we fast and pray.

Also meanwhile, new facts are being created. Some Messianic Jews have made *aliyah*. Several have been turned back. The Gentile spouse of a born Israeli Jew who has come to believe in Yeshua is apparently being denied *olah* status; we hope her application for permanent residence will be approved. Particularly disturbing to me was the Interior Ministry's refusal to grant *amutah* (charitable organization) status to the Messianic Jewish Alliance of Israel on the ground (explicitly, but in my view mistakenly, based on Beresford I) that the name misled the public into thinking that the organization was Jewish. The Interior Ministry was trying to apply the Law of Return definition

of "Jew" to a different context entirely. As a board member of the MJAI I said it should fight for its rights in the court and not let the Ministry of the Interior grab this new territory. But the board's decision was not to fight at this time and to apply again later.

Substantial expenses were incurred in all of this. The court imposed a fine of 15,000 shekels (\$5,500). The three families have mostly had visas that did not permit them to earn a living in Israel, so their needs have had to be met. Lawyers, publicity activities and political campaigns require money. Persons interested in contributing, praying or receiving news may inquire through Maos, Inc., Post Office Box 1414, Raman HaSharon, Israel.

At present, we do not control the rhythm of events. The three families continue to hang there, sometimes with visas, sometimes without. The timing of events is determined by the Ministry of the Interior, Knesset committees and the media. If and when we bite the bullet and decide to campaign for a change in the Law of Return, we will be initiating events. Both ways of functioning have their place. The former is more relaxing, the latter more exciting!

We are aware that ultimately the battle is in the heavenlies. This is why we urge those who are with us to join us in our fasting and praying. Pray that the three



The Beresfords at the demonstration.

families will get permanent residence, that no more Messianic Jews will be turned away, that the Law of Return will be changed to allow Messianic Jews to make *aliyah* openly and with heads held high, that unity will prevail in the Body of the Messiah in Israel, and that all Israel will be saved - speedily and in our days.

LCJE's coordinator receives many letters from Mr Lloyd Jones, 15 Milestone Rd., Oakdale, Poole, Dorset, BH 15 3DR, United Kingdom. Mr Jones is involved in the struggle against Christian mission among Jews and is an active writer in e.g. *Biblical Polemics*, published by the Jerusalem Institute of Biblical Polemics.

But there are others who receive letters from Mr Jones. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, director of Ariel Ministries, is one of them.

Below the readers will find the first half of an article called The Racism of the "Christian Jew", published in *Biblical Polemics*, issue no. 54, November-December, 1992. In this part of the article Mr Jones levels his criticism against Fruchtenbaum. In the second part of Mr Jones' article he deals with The International Hebrew Christian Alliance.

Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum's response to the article is found on the following pages.  
kk-h

## The Racism of the "Christian Jew"

By Lloyd Jones

The concept of the "messianic/Christian Jew" is intrinsically racist. Without the underpinning of "race", its attending imagery and a justifying racist ideology, "messianic/Christian Jewish" identity could not survive. It is in reality a pseudo-identity, an ugly reminder of 19th century ignorance and intolerance.

The classic racist lumps "culture" (including social behaviour) together with physical characteristics such as skin colour under the general heading of "racist traits". Under this system of "thought", knowing your "culture", your physical characteristics, or both, is to know your "race". I have chosen two examples of "messianic/Christian Jewish" racism, one each to illustrate physically and culturally determined racism respectively.

*Racism at "Ariel Ministries"*  
"Ariel Ministries" is a

Christian mission to the Jews based in the USA. Its director is the Rev. Arnold Fruchtenbaum and in his books and leaflets he propagates a clearly racist concept of Jewish identity based on deterministic physical descent. This is best illustrated by allowing Rev. Fruchtenbaum to explain his grounds for believing that he is still a Jew despite his conversion to fundamentalist Protestant Christianity. "We are a nation because we are the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. By this definition, no matter what the individual Jewish person may believe or disbelieve, he remains a Jew.

A Negro who is a Christian remains a Negro. A Negro who becomes a Moslem remains a Negro. A Negro who becomes a Buddhist remains a Negro. A Chinese man who becomes a Christian remains Chinese. A Chinese man who remains

a Buddhist also remains a Chinese.

The same is also true of the Jewish person. He is a Jew because he is a descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Whether Orthodox, Reform, atheist or communist, he remains a Jew. If a Jew chooses to believe that Jesus is his messiah, he also remains a Jew. Nothing, absolutely nothing, can change the fact that he is a descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." [Jewishness and Hebrew Christianity', Chosen People Ministries Tract.]

He later moves on to the subject of who is a Gentile. Thus: "If the Scriptures are used as the objective standard, then the definition of a Gentile is equally simple. A Gentile is simply anyone who is not a descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In short, a Gentile is anyone who is not a Jew. The implication again is that no matter what a



Gentile does he can never become a non-Gentile. But this raises the question of Gentiles who have converted to Judaism. Can they properly be called Jews? On the basis of Scriptures, the answer is no. The Jew is the nationality; the religion is Judaism. Acceptance of Judaism by a Gentile does not make him a Jew but a proselyte." [Hebrew Christianity: Its Theology, History and Philosophy', Baker Book House, USA, 1974].

Rev. Fruchtenbaum has effectively divided the world's human population into two "races", the "Jewish race" and the "Gentile race". A "nation" whose members are determined by physical descent is a "race". Rev. Fruchtenbaum has even provided us with a simple-minded ideology to justify his racism. Gentiles can convert to Judaism because it is a religion, but they can never become Jews because Jews constitute a "race". For Gentiles to become Jews it would be equivalent to a "white person" becoming a "black person" or vice versa. Instead they would become "Jewish Gentiles" or maybe

"Judaic Gentiles". This racist theory denies Gentiles the possibility of ever reaching the status of Jew. It relegates Jewish converts from other faiths to an inferior "second class" status within the Jewish community. Rev. Fruchtenbaum has effectively created a "race" of "Judaic Gentile" untermenschen.

Rev. Fruchtenbaum's racism perverts the plain meaning of the Biblical text. For example, his "nation" idea owes much of his interpretation of Genesis 12.1-3, which he quotes thus:

"Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curses thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

[Jewishness and Hebrew Christianity', Chosen People Ministries Tract.]

His racist interpretation

turns on one phrase, "... and I will make of thee a great nation ..." In other words, "I will make of thee (Abram - he was not yet Abraham) a great nation." It does not say, "I will make of ALL your descendants a great nation." Thus as long as a nation arises from among some of Abram's descendants, which also warrants the adjective "great", God's promise to Abram is fulfilled. "Great nation" ("goy gadol") is not the all inclusive term that would be necessary if Rev. Fruchtenbaum's racist interpretation were to even stand a chance of being correct.

It should not be assumed that I would deny that authentic Jews constitute a nation. Only that it is not, as in Rev. Fruchtenbaum's version, a "race".

A real danger for the future is that Rev. Fruchtenbaum's racist ideology of "Jewish" identity might become standard fare for his fellow Evangelicals and other fundamentalist Christians. Such a "biblically" sanctioned racism would not help the future of Jewish/Christian relations.

unsuccessful to find out what Yeshiva he attended and from whom he received his rabbinical ordination. I will also refrain from calling him "Reverend," though he has claimed to have been ordained and once active in an evangelical church. I am still trying to discover in which church he was active and which church ordained him into the Christian ministry he claims to have been part of. Until Mr. Golding is forthcoming with this information about his claimed pedigree, I'll refrain from using either of the two honorable titles.

Now, let me go on to make some specific comments about your article.

Throughout the article you use a term "racist," and never really provide a definition for that term since you obviously use that term in a way that is contrary to the Webster's Dictionary, or common usage. Your opening statement that the concept of a Messianic Jew or Christian Jew "is intrinsically racist" is a rather foolish statement. And I am being kind. In fact, I would be kind if I was to say that it was an absolutely stupid statement. But for now I shall choose to be even kinder than kind. You begin by presenting the term "racist" as a negative statement (which it is), but then you dogmatically state that any identification of skin color, etc..., is intrinsically racist. How foolish! All anthropologists and biologists recognize the existence of racial traits and so recognizing that someone is Caucasian, Black, or Oriental is simply recognizing what is an obvious truth to any neutral observer. Here in the U.S.A., we make all kinds of national or ethnic distinctions such as; White, Black, Chicano, Latino, Oriental, etc. Even members of these various groups use these same terminologies for themselves and based upon your definition of racism, they are all "racists." However, that is not the meaning of racism. The recognition of different racial, ethnic, and national origins does not make one a racist. One becomes a racist only if he makes the assumption that being any of these things contains any negative elements. One is a racist if he says, for example, all Blacks are this or that. But if one says all racial groupings have both the good and the bad among them, that's hardly a racist statement. That's merely an observation of fact. The fact that the majority of looters in the recent Los Angeles riots were Black only says negative things about those particular Blacks who participated in the looting. It says nothing about Blacks in general and, in fact, most Blacks are never guilty of looting anything. There are Whites who loot and there also Whites who do not. So recognition of different races does not make one a racist. It only makes one an observer of humanity. But your article tries to imply that the mere recognition of differences makes one a racist. To give an example from another field: the recognition that there are differences between male and female does not make one a sexist. But if one says that all females are guilty of this or all males are guilty of that, then such a statement is what makes one a sexist.

Furthermore, you are rather selective in the way you apply that term. The Jewish-Gentile distinctives and differences are not only made by Jewish believers, but also made by the Jewish community, and the Jewish community itself distinguishes between Jews and Gentiles (*Goyim*). But you are very careful not to refer to Jewish community as being racist, only Messianic Jews are accused of racism by you though the distinction they make is no different than the distinction that the Jewish community makes. Would you accuse Raphael Patai of racism because in his book *The Jewish Mind*, he clearly implies that Jewish people have a greater intellectual ability? If you are consistent, you should certainly refer to him as a racist. But do you? And if not, why not? Is it because he is not a Messianic Jew? How about the Jewish Defense League and the Kach Party that favors the massive expulsion of the entire Arab population both within the state of Israel and from the territories? Are they racist? If not, why not? Is it because they are not Messianic Jews? In other words, I think you are rather inconsistent in the way you accuse Messianic Jews of being racist because of statements they make while ignoring that the Jewish community makes those same statements.

Your dishonesty shows in that you yourself recognize that the Jewish community itself makes a distinction between Jews and non-Jews. The very fact that they tend to determine

March 30, 1993

## AN OPEN LETTER TO MR. LLOYD JAMES

I received your letter of December 4, 1992 as well as a copy of the article from *Biblical Polemics*.

Letting me know that the origin was Shmuel Golding will help me understand somewhat where the paper is coming from. I am quite familiar with Mr. Golding's activities and claims. For now, I will refrain from calling him "Rabbi," since so far, after several efforts, being



Jewishness by birth from a mother definitely shows a racial attitude, or at least a biological one. One only has to read Orthodox Jewish writings, such as *The Jewish Press*, to show that if "racism" is prevalent in any Jewish group, it tends to be prevalent in that group. But you chose not to reveal these things because you have your own agenda--to paint Messianic Jews in the worst possible light and excuse, as you do in the closing paragraphs of your article, the viewpoint of Orthodox Judaism along the very same lines.

The basic fact is as follows: The Jewish community has always distinguished between Jews and Gentiles. So do Messianic Jews. It is inconsistent to claim that we are racist while they are not. The difference between Messianic Jews and non-Messianic Jews has to do with one question: Does believing in the Messiahship in Yeshua erase the Jewishness of the believer? They say yes, and we say no. The distinctive we hold about Jews and Gentiles is something we held before we came to faith and continue to hold and therefore, have not changed that perspective from our Jewish roots.

But you tend to be rather dishonest in your treatment. For example, on page 18 (first column, third paragraph) you accuse Ariel Ministries and myself of being racist because I claim that Jewish identity is based upon physical descent. What you obviously do not say, since it would also damage Orthodox Judaism, is that Orthodox Judaism says exactly the same thing; the child is Jewish if he happens to be the child of a Jewish mother. Of course, it is possible for a Gentile to convert to Judaism, but those who are born Jews are Jews simply because their mother was. In other words, personal belief is irrelevant. If a Jewish atheist had a Jewish mother, he is Jewish and that is all there is to it. If Ariel Ministries is racist, so is Orthodox Judaism. But I must point out to you that you only reveal what Ariel Ministries says about these things and totally ignore what Orthodox Judaism says about these very same things. In the third column, you accuse me of dividing the "world's human population into two 'races,' the 'Jewish race' and the 'Gentile race.'" First of all, I never used the term "race." You have chosen to read that into what I wrote because it fits your agenda of turning Messianic Jews into racists. You have already made a negative connotation of that term, and then implied to your readers that that's the terminology I used, which I did not. You did quote me, but you need to read exactly what you quoted me as saying. If you will take the time to carefully read what I wrote, nowhere do I even use the term "race," and your quotation shows that I did not use that term. I did use the terms "people" and "nation," but this is hardly the same as race, regardless of whether one uses a British or an American dictionary. Nor am I the only one who divides the world into the two groupings of Jews and Gentiles. In fact, I include a third group; the believers, comprised of both Jews and Gentiles. Here again, you chose not to reveal the fact that non-Messianic Jews have made the same identification. For example, Abba Eban, Israel's former Ambassador to the United Nations and a leading member of the Labor Party, in his work on Jewish history, clearly stated that identifying the Jews as either a race or a religion is inadequate and he chooses the word "people" in defining what the Jews are. This is exactly what I said. So will you be consistent now and call him a racist as well? If not, why not? Is it because he is not a Messianic Jew?

The classic definition of Zionism is that the Jews are a nation which is why they have to have their own land. There again you ignore these little historical facts. You want to label Messianic Jews as racist, but ignore that what we say about Jewish identity is no different than what Judaism and Zionism have to say about the Jewish identity. Orthodox Jews themselves, including Mr. Shmuel Golding, divide the world into two categories: Jews and Gentiles.

In other words, what you are guilty of, is what I would call "pseudo-scholarship". You are very selective in what you chose to quote, and even after quoting me, you insert terms such as "race," which I did not use, and then ignore the fact that what I did say about the Jewish identity is no different than what Orthodox Jews and Zionists say as well. This is truly an

example of the "straw-man" argument. The only point of difference between us and other groups is that we insist that believing in Yeshua does not erase one's Jewishness.

To quote from your article: "Reverend Fruchtenbaum has effectively divided the world's human population into two 'races,' the 'Jewish race' and the 'Gentile race.'" I did that? And all by myself? No, Mr. James, I did not distinguish between a "Jewish race" and a "Gentile race," but between the Jewish people and the Gentile peoples. But I cannot accept the credit for originating such a two-fold division. Actually, the division of Jews and Gentiles does not originate with either me or Judaism, but originates with the Bible itself. It is the Bible that divides the world into two groups: Jews and Gentiles. You have chosen to ignore that fact and deliberately avoid dealing with any of the biblical passages I cited. Of course, you do not dare label the New Testament as being racist as that might immediately "turn off" the audience you are trying to reach. But, in fact, that is exactly what you are doing, in a rather subtle way. If the New Testament distinguishes between Jews and Gentiles, and if such a distinction is racism, then the New Testament is racist. By the way, so is the Old Testament. But you so neatly ignore such niceties, which not only makes you a pseudo-scholar, but also makes you somewhat unethical.

A further example of your dishonesty is your implication at the end Page 18 and the beginning of Page 19 that I claimed all the descendants of Abraham constitute Jews. In the same work that you quote, I say the exact opposite; all the sons of Abraham are not Jews since Arabs are also descendants of Abraham. What I did say in those writings, that you quote and therefore obviously read but deliberately chose to pervert and misquote, is that all the sons of Abraham though Isaac and Jacob are Jews. That is what I did say and did write. But when one reads your article, the reader would not know that is what I actually wrote. One can hope the reader has enough intelligence and honesty to check out the sources you quote.

Again, the Orthodox Jews and Zionists claim to be a nation. In your second paragraph on Page 19, you obviously recognize this. So you yourself go on to claim that you do not deny "that authentic Jews constitute a nation." Of course you do not! That would also discredit you in the Jewish community. And of course, by "authentic Jews," you mean Jews who do not believe in Jesus. But you do not elaborate on this point. You simply tell the reader not to assume that you would deny that "authentic Jews" constitute a nation. But the very fact that Jews constitute a nation already gives it more than merely a religious emphasis. What you claim is that your belief about authentic Jews constituting a nation is not my version of "race." But, again, when did I ever use such a term? In other words, my identification of the Jews as a nation and a people is the same as that of Orthodox Jews and Zionists with one small exception. I insist that the Jews who believe in Yeshua do not cease to be Jews. Otherwise, it is basically and essentially the same. I said nothing about Jews constituting a race, though you keep insisting and putting that word into my mouth and my writings. A simple challenge to you would be: can you produce from any of my writings any such statement? You will be unable to do so.

Your last paragraph before going on to your next subject reveals exactly what is really troubling you: that our view of Jewishness would not help Jewish-Christian relations. That point is correct; a biblical view of the Jewish identity and its relationship to Yeshua would not help Jewish-Christian relations. The whole emphasis of present day Jewish-Christian relations is that Orthodox Jews are allowed to be Orthodox, but Evangelicals must not remain evangelical and must compromise their evangelism. Evangelicals are committed to Jewish evangelism and insist that Jews who believe in Jesus remain Jews. This is exactly what Orthodox Judaism does not like. That is why Judaism has made in-roads for Liberal Christianity, but are not quite as successful with Evangelical Christianity since Evangelicals insist on being just what they are entitled to be: Evangelical, and that in turn requires one to



be evangelistic. The leaders of the Jewish community have as their goal to neutralize Jewish evangelism. You apparently want to help their case. So you choose to malign Messianic Jews, and claim that we say things which, as I have already shown, we do not claim.

You then go on to deal with the International Hebrew-Christian Alliance, but you misrepresent them as you have misrepresented me and Ariel Ministries. Therefore, it is difficult to take what you say about the IHCA seriously. But you feel that it is a shame that the IHCA has tax status in England and you consider that a tragedy. Talk about racism! In other words, those who agree with your religious views should be qualified as a registered charity in the UK. But those that who do not agree with you should not have that privilege. Now that is racism, and it is racism to the very core. Racism with its intolerance says that only those who are of my persuasion should be recognized as legitimate religious and registered charities, but those I do not agree with should have that privilege removed. We Messianic Jews say that this privilege should be extended to all groups, including the group that you represent. That is equality. But to extend the privilege to you and to Mr. Golding, giving you and Mr. Golding the privilege to malign the New Testament and all believers in the New Testament, both Jewish and Gentile, while removing it from those you happen to disagree with is true racism.

With this letter, I am enclosing pages from my forthcoming book, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, that deals with the issue of the election of Israel and I hope you take the time to look up the passages of Scripture and notice how often in reference to Israel and the Jews, the words "nation" and "people" are used as being set apart from all other people. These pages show you both the fact of Israel's election as well as the reasons and purposes of Israel's election. Making the Jews a distinct people is not racism. The very reasons the *Torah* gives for Israel's unique election are not based upon racism, but are based on national distinctiveness. So whether you object to this or not, I will rather go with the definitions Moses gave in the *Torah* than the ones you gave in your article.

I will not comment further about your statements on the IHCA, since I am sure that someone from that organization will be responding to you and will be better qualified than I to speak on their behalf. But the best I can say about your article is that it is blatantly dishonest.

Yours for Israel's Salvation  
through Messiah Yeshua,

Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, Th.M., Ph.D.  
Director

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*Claude Montefiore and Christianity* by Maurice Gerald Bowler.  
Brown Judaic Studies, no. 157. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1988.

Reviewed by Rich Robinson,  
who works with Jews for Jesus in San Francisco.

Isn't it true that Jews don't  
proselytize? Aren't all  
religions valid, anyway?

We live in an age when  
advocates of one universal

New Age religion raise their  
voices alongside ardent  
defenders of religious  
pluralism who declare all  
faiths acceptable. In his book

*Claude Montefiore and  
Christianity*, Maurice Bowler  
opens a window on a  
significant 19th century  
Jewish movement which has

surprising relevance to these  
trends of our own day.

Section One, "Early  
Christian Influences and  
Their Outworking" sketches  
the background to  
Montefiore's thought in the  
English Judaism of his day  
and the various Christian  
influences that came to bear  
on him. As the founder of  
British Liberal Judaism,  
"Montefiore's declared  
purpose was to ensure the  
survival of Judaism" (p. 3).  
To accomplish this, he  
sought to devise a Jewish  
faith which would absorb the  
best of the outside - i.e.  
"Christian" - world. As  
shown later in the book, this  
"synthesis" meant not just  
the preserving of Judaism in  
isolation from the rest of the  
world, but to the contrary,  
making this synthesis into a  
universal religion  
commendable to all people.

How did Montefiore come  
to that position? We learn  
that English Christianity,  
especially as "cultural" rather  
than "religious," exercised a  
subtle influence over even  
Orthodox Judaism. Bowler  
presents several models in  
Montefiore's British culture  
that influenced him: the  
gentleman, the good  
Samaritan, the saint, the  
virtue of voluntary  
self-sacrifice. Throughout  
we find telling illustrations of  
the impact of one's cultural  
environment on theological  
formulations. For instance, it  
is noteworthy that  
Montefiore's concept of  
self-sacrifice depended less  
on the Akedah and themes

of Jewish martyrdom than it  
did on Christian models.

Additional chapters in this  
first section demonstrate  
parallels between the Jewish  
Religious Union (the Liberal  
Jewish organization which  
Montefiore founded) and the  
Tractarian Movement (a  
movement to revive certain  
pre-Reformation features of  
Christianity). Among the  
items of note, one of  
Montefiore's goals within his  
larger program was to  
combat assimilation, yet he  
did not consider missions to  
the Jews to be a significant  
threat. In regard to  
conversion to Christianity,  
"the Liberal Jew is a harder  
nut to crack than the  
Orthodox Jew" (p. 44).  
Christianity was not the real  
danger to Judaism; of  
greater danger were those  
who "resembled" Liberal  
Judaism, such as Unitarians,  
who would capture the  
allegiance of "drifters" from  
the Jewish community.  
These remarks raise the  
question of whether Christian  
missions to Jews enjoyed  
greater success among the  
Orthodox than among the  
Liberal Jews of the 19th  
century - and if so, why.

A fourth chapter relates  
Montefiore's philanthropy to  
Christian influence, while a  
fifth details his approach to  
Scriptural inspiration. We  
learn that he approached  
Scripture from a literary  
standpoint; the ethical was  
his primary criterion of  
evaluation; and he lacked a  
sense of history and  
development in Scripture.

The book then moves on  
to "Montefiore's Approach to  
the New Testament" and  
"Montefiore's Approach to  
Jewish Sources" in Sections  
Two and Three respectively.  
First, as to the New  
Testament. His three  
formative "mentors" were  
Solomon Schechter, Israel  
Abrahams (who also wrote  
on the Gospels, but  
identified more with the  
rabbinic position than did  
Montefiore), and the  
Orthodox Herbert Loewe, all  
familiar to students of  
Judaica. Striking is Loewe's  
remark (p. 81) on the  
"kindergarten teaching" of  
the pre-Mosaic faith - which  
he equates with the "simple"  
faith taught by Jesus. This is  
an interesting parallel, or  
rather contrast, with Paul's  
statement in Gal. 3:24 that  
the Law, not the pre-Mosaic  
faith, was a pedagogue to  
lead us to Christ.

Montefiore's positive view of  
much in the New Testament  
is best seen as an ingredient  
of his proposed synthesis  
with the Jewish factor  
dominant and Christianity as  
preparation for Judaism.

As to Jewish sources,  
Montefiore took the liberal  
position that placed  
"prophetic" faith above the  
law. As a result, Montefiore  
was positive regarding the  
midrash but not as regards  
the halakhah. He ended up  
using Jesus (more prophetic)  
as a model to evaluate the  
rabbis (more halakhic) rather  
than vice-versa.

Finally, Section Four on  
"Liberal Judaism" includes a



fascinating picture of Montefiore's idea of "the mission of Israel." This mission was "to disseminate throughout the world the knowledge of God." There was a danger, however, of the effect of going to the nations on Israel itself. Israel might win the world to Jewish truths yet lose its own identity. Franz Rosenzweig had thought the Church had done just that. Solomon Schechter, one of the three mentors of Montefiore, said that the Gentiles should rather join a traditional, not a Liberal, Judaism!

The Jewish Quarterly Review – founded and edited by Montefiore and Abrahams – carried arguments about the validity or usefulness of converting Gentiles. I found this chapter fascinating and wanted to read the original articles. Some thought Jewish missionary activity would be seen as an endorsement of Christian missions to the Jews, and some thought both endeavors were foolish.

To those whose thinking about missions to the Jews and about Christianity is shaped by the events of the 20th century, particularly the Holocaust, the value of this part of the book is great: it is important for us to know not just the history of Christian missions to Jews, but the discussions in Jewish circles of proselytization of Gentiles and the relation of that to Christian missions to Jews. To the statement we have all

heard, "Jews don't proselytize," our response is frequently to point to Jewish missionary efforts in the Second Temple period. Now it is evident how programmatic Jewish proselytization was for some British Liberal Jews of the late 19th century, and it would be effort well-spent to look up the references Bowler cites. One wonders if the British Jewish missions such as the London Society had anything to say in response to the debate in the larger Jewish community.

Following the rise of Hitler and the publication by the Jewish Religious Union of *Jewish Views on Jewish Mission*, we read that Rabbi Israel Mattuck advocated the "passive witness" of Israel as a fulfillment of her mission. This is a view is frequently adopted in the contemporary Jewish community if the question of the "mission of Israel" is raised at all. Again, it would be instructive to follow up Bowler's references. But to Montefiore, such a passive witness only "sanctified" Jewish inertia, for if Judaism were a universal religion, it must be made universally known.

Unfortunately, with the rise in anti-Semitism and the increasing prominence of Zionism, Montefiore's version of Universalism faded, and he ended his own life as a self-confessed disillusioned man (p. 101). Since his time, calls for conversion in the Jewish community have

sought to "replenish the synagogue" but not "win the world."

Ultimately, *Claude Montefiore and Christianity* is a missions book rather than a biography. Montefiore's life work was directed by his universal outlook to win the world to Judaism as a challenge to assimilation and as a means of dealing with the reality of the larger Gentile world. In this context, his well-known work on the New Testament is almost a byproduct of his overriding missions concern. This important book, which received the Diamond Essay Prize from the Jewish Historical Society of England, is recommended for all in Jewish missions as an introduction to Montefiore's thought, his Jewish world, and the Liberal "missions-minded" Judaism of his time.

If the book is reissued, it should be reset; the present typesetting is somewhat hard to read. It will also be helpful to list at least the key primary Montefiore works in the bibliography rather than referring the reader only to a secondary source for a listing. Finally, the index could use strengthening; is the "mission of Israel" discussed only on page 46?

## LCJE Activities in Argentina

by Peter Clarke, LCJE area coordinator for South America

Many of the leaders among Jewish believers in Argentina are involved in the activities of both the Argentine Messianic Jewish Alliance and the LCJE. Our policy is to avoid duplication of activities, and hence, for example, not to organize a separate Seder at Pesach. For Shavuot, however, we organized a day of study and celebration. A *night of study* remains a dream! Cold weather kept some people away, but those who came enjoyed a stimulating time of fellowship.



Our thinking was centred on Torah in the life of the messianic Jew. The discussions ranged from law and grace in Paul to Exodus 23:19! The distinction between biblical commandment and later

tradition still needs to be clarified for some.

The sessions were led by Guillermo Katz, Guillermo Sedaca, and myself, and we closed with a time of praise and worship led by the music group of the church where the meetings were held.

The local LCJE committee is preparing a Succot celebration, again in association with the Alliance, and is also stimulating mutual help in evangelism among the messianic groups.

### Meetings

Change of dates for the next international LCJE conference.

Due to various circumstances it has been necessary to change the dates of the next international LCJE conference.

It will take place in Israel, 18-23 June, 1995.

**LCJE  
North American  
Chapter**

Next meeting: April 11-13, 1994, New York.

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