



**LAUSANNE  
CONSULTATION  
ON JEWISH  
EVANGELISM**

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**LAUSANNE CONSULTATION  
ON JEWISH EVANGELISM  
BULLETIN**



**Issue No. 36 (May 1994)**





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## Jerusalem 95

### Fifth International LCJE Conference

After Pattaya 80,  
Newmarket 83,  
Easneye 86 and  
Zeist 91

we are now looking forward to  
Jerusalem 95  
- the Fifth International LCJE  
Conference.

The conference will be held in  
Jerusalem from 18 to 23 June 1995.

The price for the conference - accommodation in  
double room, all meals and conference fee - will be  
approx. USD 550 per person.

Program and registration form will be sent to all LCJE  
members in August 1994.

Immediately after the conference it will be possible to  
participate in a study tour of Galilee from 23 to 26  
June. Program and price for this tour will also be sent  
to LCJE members in August 1994.

It is not a moment too soon to think  
about Jerusalem 95!

*Kai Kjær-Hansen*

## LCJE Conferences

The North American chapter of LCJE held its eleventh meeting in mid-April. As usual, it was a fine program that had been laid by Kearney Frantsen, the North American coordinator, in conjunction with LCJE secretary Fred Klett.

As international coordinator I want to point out that the North American LCJE meetings set an example to other LCJE chapters in that they

- are well-prepared
- are held regularly
- demand from the speakers they hand in the manuscript of their papers
- with The Lausanne Covenant and a common aim as their basis allow divergent practical and theological view-points to be expressed

In this Bulletin a few

contributions from the meetings are printed. The August issue will also have a few. The papers, in their full length, can be obtained from Fred Klett (see page 12).

Later in April there was a meeting in CWI's new premises in Sundridge south of London, where there was a thorough discussion of a UK theological consultation. A work committee was set up with the task to raise funds for the consultation and plan the programme. If the financial resources can be found, the conference is scheduled to take place in September 1995.

There are also plans for a Nordic theological conference in August 1995. We hope this can be set in Sweden.

And then back to the regional LCJE conferences.

In Israel there was a meeting on 8 April in Beit

Immanuel, Yaffo. The next meeting will be on 1 November 1994, when the Habad-movement and Hasidism will be on the agenda. For further information contact Joseph Shulam.

The European chapter has planned a meeting in the London area 28-30 November 1994 with the theme: Jewish Evangelism in Europe Today. Invitations are on their way. Inquiries can be made to John Ross.

And then there is Jerusalem - next year! - with the fifth international LCJE conference. The very place ought to animate many to come - and to bring their spouse along. As to the program, the last few pieces are getting in place. In August all LCJE-members will receive the program.

*Kai Kjær-Hansen*

Ad from the Caspari Center, Jerusalem

### The Death of a Messiah - Before and after Schneerson

The Caspari Center in Jerusalem is working on a book to be ready for printing when Menachem Schneerson, the leader of the Habad movement dies.

The book has an evangelistic approach, it will not be patronizing about the Habad movement's frustrated Messianic expectations. But taking the renewed interest in the Messiah as its point of departure the book will proclaim Jesus the Messiah in a stimulating and challenging way.

The book, which will be of approx. 150 pages and cost \$7.99, is edited by Kai Kjær-Hansen. The other contributors will be Susan Perlman, Walter Riggans, Noam Hendren, Ole Andersen, Tuvya Zaretsky, Barry Rubin, Torleif Elgvin, Arthur Glasser, Louis Goldberg, Carol Calise, Tsvika Sadan, Ray Pritz, Arnold Fruchtenbaum, Bodil F. Skjøtt, Stan Telchin.

**Quantity discount price if ordered before 28 June 1994:** Please contact Bodil F. Skjøtt, Caspari Center, P.O. Box 71099, Jerusalem 91710, Israel  
Tel 997-2-233926 or 997-2-256095. Fax 997-2-251933



## Reflections on Lausanne-NA 1994

By Scott C. Rubin, pastor of Congregation Tiferet Israel, San Francisco

Congregation Tiferet Israel in San Francisco has been a member of LCJE since 1992. I have been privileged to attend the annual meetings of LCJE-NA held in Beverly Hills, Minneapolis, and the most recent gathering in New York City. The format of the 47 hour conference has remained the same over the years, but the amount of personal fulfillment has greatly increased.

The conference, at least for me, is primarily a time of RENEWAL. Not renewal in the spiritual sense, though that happens to some extent, but renewal through fellowship. There are so many people who I have either met or have heard about, and the conference affords an opportunity to spend time with them, to hear of their ministries, and to pray together. This year I was able to spend some wonderful time with a dear friend, Herb Links, who ministers in Philadelphia. Though I've only spent a few days visiting with Herb in the past, I've known of his work and have modeled some of my own ministry after his. Then on the last day of the conference Robert Specter introduced himself to me. I had heard of Robert through the ministry of Improbable People Ministries. He and Herb and I then enjoyed a great lunch of New York pastrami sandwiches (on

rye, of course!). Herb and I were glad to meet a brother and discover something about Rock of Israel Ministries where Robert serves as its president. I look forward to future meetings where we can gather to share how the Lord is blessing the ministries.

In addition to renewal, the conference also afforded times of REJOICING. We gathered for times of singing, enjoyed the music ministry from Beth Emmanuel Congregation, and dedicated a portion of time for prayer (ably led by Joan Lipis); all of which contributed to a deeply felt sense of corporate joy. The joy we experienced together bubbled over into the times set aside to hear what the Lord is doing through some of the ministries presented at the conference. Over the years there seems to be a growing appreciation for each other's ministries. At LCJE we come with a common purpose of affirming each other's ministries, and to the extent we attain that goal, the result is joy in seeing the unity we have in Y'shua. This joy is even evident in the face of some very strong theological differences, differences which at times are expressed and debated!

The conference also provides an opportunity to be intellectually REFRESHED.

The LCJE is blessed with a number of recognized scholars who bring highly relevant and informative papers to the conference. As a pastor I found Dr. Louis Goldberg's paper on the Mishnah in the Synoptic gospels to be both informative and also to be a pilot light for sermon topics. As a teacher preparing for a seminary course, I was eager to hear Dr. Arthur Glasser on the Talmud. When Dr. Glasser finished his presentation, I asked if I could use his paper as part of the class on Christianity and Judaism. I was delighted by his evident pleasure in being able to assist in any way possible.

Of course, there are also many ministries which are presented which REKINDLE an awareness of the King, whom one day we will all be worshipping together with no distinction made between Jew and Gentile, Male and Female, Free and Slave. As these ministries are presented we all have an opportunity to see the fruit and rejoice together. One session was devoted to the Christian Jew Foundation, for which Charles Halff came in from San Antonio. As he shared his testimony and the history of his radio ministry, I grew in appreciation for the amount of time and energy put into his daily program. I also saw the value of this

ministry as one brother asked relevant questions for his own radio ministry he is seeking to begin.

And as much as I enjoyed Dr. Halff, I was than much more moved by the panel presentation given by those in or affected by the Russian outreach in New York. To hear the testimonies of several Russian believers, and to see how they are growing in service to the Lord, touched deep within the hearts of everyone who was there. I believe we were all moved by seeing the power of God at work in our midst. For so long we have prayed for God to open up doors, and we have

heard how God has answered prayer, and at the LCJE we were able to see first hand how God has changed the hearts of some of our people. Of course, seeing the hands raised in response to the question, "How many here have parents or grandparents from Russia, Austria, or Hungary?" certainly set the tone for the personal relevance of this work among the recent immigrants.

And now, as I sit aboard the plane awaiting departure back to San Francisco, I have an opportunity for REFLECTION. I can reflect on how valuable the

association with LCJE has been, I can reflect on how good God has been to bless all of us with the opportunities to serve him together. And there is now time to reflect on how to take the challenges presented, to adapt them to our communities' context, and how to implement the ministry possibilities. Then perhaps next year I can bring a ministry update at the next LCJE-NA meeting to be held in Las Vegas, or even share at the LCJE-International meeting to be held next year in Jerusalem!



An LCJE meeting provides opportunities for personal talks and fellowship with others involved in Jewish evangelism. This is from the New York meeting, 11-13 April, 1994.



# Update on Media Coverage of LCJE Constituency Interest

Presented by Susan Perlman to the Eleventh North American Coordinating Committee Meeting of the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism, April 11-13, 1994.

This report covers the time period of March 1993 through March of 1994. Between these dates, over 730 newspaper articles were published and more than 75 radio interviews done on topics related to Jewish evangelism. I've chosen to highlight several categories where multiple articles were published. They are titled:

**The Schneerson Phenomena, Messianic Congregation News, Evangelism in the CIS, The Schindler Plan, Countering Missionary Work, Jewish Evangelism potpourri**

## 1. The Schneerson Phenomena

Schneerson made our media list last year as well. The bulk of the 1994 media on him has been in past months, however a full page ad did appear in the January 29 edition of the Jerusalem Post International. In large type it proclaimed "The Lubavitcher Rebbe Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson is the King Moshiach. Now is the time to accept his kingship!" There was a Bat Yam



address at the bottom of the ad.

The more recent articles include a piece by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency which appeared in numerous Jewish newspapers around mid March. It begins, "As Lubavitch Rebbe Menachem Mendel Schneerson lies unconscious in a Manhattan intensive care unit following a stroke last week, some Lubavitch leaders are viewing his illness, along with the recent shooting of Chasidic students on the Brooklyn Bridge as a sign that redemption is near."

Pamela Druckerman of JTA continued, "...Neil Gillman, an associate professor of philosophy at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York and longtime observer of the Lubavitch movement, predicted the rebbe's death could be justified along the same theological lines that propelled him into potential Messiah status, without rupturing the movement.

"They will quickly conclude that the generation wasn't ready, that they weren't good enough," Gillman said, referring to the Jewish belief that there is a potential messiah in every generation who will be revealed if and when the world is ready.

"But for the Lubavitchers who have invested tremendously in a version of history that many say points to Schneerson as the Messiah there is a determination to hold onto that vision."

This view that Schneerson is Messiah has been put forth in more definitive way by his associate Shmuel Buttman in his weekly column in New York's Jewish Press, Buttman quotes from the Talmud to make his case:

"The Rebbe, whose predictions have invariably been realized, has promised that our generation is the last in exile and will be the first of the Messianic era forecast by our Prophets. Even a cursory glance through the signs our Sages give (Sotah 49b, Sanhedrin 97a, etc.) for the time immediately before the revelation of the Moshiach, confirms that we are there. And examination of the signs Rambam gives (Hilchos Melachim 11:4) to determine who is qualified to be Moshiach points to the one person in this generation who, infinitely more than any other, has been responsible for "impelling the Jewish people to follow the Torah way."

Most recently, the New York papers have made it clear that Schneerson is "brain dead." At the same time, they are reporting that in Israel,

"60 Knesset Members have put their names to a statement in which they refer to the Lubavitcher Rebbe as the Messiah King.

The MKs, who include Labour's Dalia Itzik, Gedaliya Gal, and Yossi Katz, and the former Likud Knesset Speaker, Dov Shilansky, signed the statement to coincide with the rebbe's 92nd birthday."

A lengthy feature article in Moment Magazine a year ago speculated on "What happens if the Rebbe dies?" The article was made possible by a grant from the

THE WORLD CENTER FOR RECEIVING MOSHIACH

For out of Zion shall go forth the law. And the word of the L-rd from Jerusalem. (Isaiah 2:3)

The Lubavitcher Rebbe  
Rabbi

**MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON**

שליט"א  
IS THE

**King Moshiach**

**NOW IS THE TIME  
TO ACCEPT HIS KINGSHIP!**

All nations of the world:  
"Fulfill the 7 universal Noachide laws given to you in the Torah of Moses!"

All parts of the Land of Israel belong  
only to the Jewish people.  
A divine commandment eternal  
and unchangeable.

The L-rd shall be king over all the earth. On that day the L-rd shall be One, and His name One. Zechariah 14:9

67 HA'ATZMAUT RD., P.O.B. 3084, BAT YAM 59130, ISRAEL

יחי אדוננו מורנו ורבנו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד

The Jerusalem Post International Edition  
(Week ending January 29, 1994).

Religious News Service according to a blurb at the end of the piece. It gives a rather comprehensive biography of Schneerson, and has a side bar on

"Messiah in Jewish History" which is included in your media clipping pack. Now that the rabbi's death is imminent, explanations are already



appearing in Jewish publications. The Forward, has an article entitled "Awaiting the Messiah at Kfar Chabad which concludes, "The Rebbe will die, but Kfar Chabad will cope. It has already prepared its alibi. Jewish lore tells how once, as the sun was setting on a Sabbath eve, the holy Ari, the great 17th century Kabbalist, invited his disciples to walk with him from Safed to Jerusalem, a distance of over a hundred miles, to greet the Messiah. The disciples agreed, but asked for time to prepare. 'Alas, ' said the Ari, 'if we had set out at once, the Messiah would have come, but because our faith was not strong enough, he no longer will arrive."

There will no doubt be a flurry of articles at the time of Shneerson's official death and those of us involved in Jewish evangelism should be alert to the media possibilities. At the very least, an avalanche of letters to the editor should be encouraged to get the gospel out.

## 2. Messianic Congregation News

Feature articles and human interest pieces have regularly been done on a variety of messianic congregations across the country. I'd like to profile a few of them.

A local Louisville, Kentucky newspaper called *Neighborhoods*, did a feature

article on Louisville Messianic Fellowship in October of 93. Rick Mathley, spokesman for the fellowship, is a gentile who according to the reporter, "follows the Jewish faith but considers Jesus the Messiah." The article gives a little history of the messianic Jewish movement, quotes the local Rabbi who says, "Messianic Jews skipped over 2,000 years during which Judaism and Christianity developed in different directions. The distinction between us is very large." The messianic fellowship meeting time and phone number appears at the end of the article.

The Indianapolis News did a story on Jeff Adler and Charam Yeshua. A photograph of Jeff wearing a kippah has the blurb under it, "Jeff Adler, rabbi for Charam Yeshua studied at a Protestant seminary." The testimony of Adrienne Grechsky, who started the congregation in her living room, is quite animated. Again, a rabbi is set in juxtaposition to the believers. Jonathan Stein, senior rabbi of Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation called them, "deceptive, dishonest people." The reporter attended a Saturday service of about 70 people and recounts the event. One of my favorite quotes in the article is from Grechsky, who talks about her background growing up in New Jersey, where her parents were leaders in synagogue, "My

mother's worst regret is not that I believe in Jesus, but that I vote republican." She gives a very upbeat and encouraging testimony of how she came to faith in Jesus.

The November '93 Jewish Journal of San Antonio posed the question, "Who put the Mess in Messianic?" Marion Bernstein writes about messianic congregations in the San Antonio area who have advertised high holiday services: "We've always been told that if it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck and looks like a duck, it's a duck. And in this case, it may walk and talk like a synagogue, but it's not one. Not by a long shot." She then gives a list of reasons why and says that messianic Jews are coopting the word, "messianic." "I don't want the word messianic to become a synonym for Christian."

One final congregational article I want to mention appeared in the Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph on March 26 of this year in the front of their Lifestyle section. It is entitled, "Shalom and Praise Jesus. Christ is messiah to messianic Jews." There are some well put statements by Rick Trimble, congregational leader of Kehilat Aha'arit Yisrael as well as the standard refutation by the local rabbi. Religion editor Steve Rabi also has a side bar in which he gives a short history of the messianic

movement.

He also has a sidebar with paragraph descriptions of Jews for Jesus, Jewish Voice Broadcasts, Chosen People Ministries, The Christian Jew Foundation, Messianic Times and umbrella groups UMJC, MJA and FMC. Somehow they managed to omit LCJE from this list altogether. The color photo which accompanied the article has two members of the congregation reading from the Torah scroll with tallit and kippah.

## 3. Evangelism in the CIS

No doubt the increased missionary activity in the CIS has had its accompanying press. A JTA release last May on the Jews for Jesus activities in Odessa made its way into most Jewish newspapers abroad. The article questions "Why Jews for Jesus has targeted Odessa" but is convinced that it is "one of the missionary group's top priorities."

The work of Jonathan Bernis in St. Petersburg last May was reported in the U.S. press. "St. Petersburg last month hosted its first messianic music festival attracting more than 13,000 persons for three nights of concerts." Detroit Jewish News, June 18, 1993.

As is often the case, Jews for Jesus gets credit and blame for various missionary activities. The World Jewish Congresses, Dateline World Jewry said in its July 93 edition,

"Organized efforts are under way to counter attempts by Jews for Jesus to do missionary work in Russian cities, especially in St. Petersburg. Presenting themselves as rabbis, the Jews for Jesus wear prayer shawls during public meetings, and are often mistaken for Orthodox Jews by Russian Jews who have little or no knowledge of Judaism."

A September 93 feature article in a Moscow daily paper presented an interview with Avi Snyder: "A little man with an aristocrat beard and a bruise under the left eye opened the door. It was a missionary, Avi Snyder..." The reporter went on to describe the boldness of these Jewish missionaries who were getting punched in the streets of Moscow for their faith. Photographs in the article show young exuberant Jewish believers joyfully proclaiming the Messiah.

There were a significant number of articles on Russian ministry outside of the CIS, but most of those fall in the category of anti-missionary activity inasmuch as the articles center on opposition to work among Russians in places like Brighton Beach, Rogers Park or Fairfax. Which brings us to our fourth category:

## 4. Countering Missionary Work

Tovia Singer of Jews for Judaism, is the most often quoted anti-missionary

irregardless of what segment of the Jewish population is being "missionized." The Fall 93 issue of Viewpoint has a five page article by Singer on "Some mistaken notions we have about missionaries." Singer says that "Fifteen years ago sixteen messianic congregations existed in this country. Today, more than 160 actively attract and recruit Jews..." This article is filled with profiles on the different messianic ministries from Singer's perspective.

To give you a little taste of that, here is what he has to say about the Lausanne Movement: "With the year 2000 in sight, the fundamentalist Christian community, with foresight and vision, held two critical conferences a little more than a quarter of a century ago. One was held in Switzerland and the other in Thailand. The main question that was asked in those two symposiums were: Why has the Church been so unsuccessful in their past efforts to convert the Jews, and what new technique can be employed to attract masses of new converts by the turn of the century?" I'm sure that the planners of Lausanne and Pattaya would agree with Rabbi Singer as to the purpose of those two conferences.

Another anti-missionary feature article was in The Jewish Homemaker, March '93, entitled "Yad L'Achim, their brother's keeper." The article extols the work of



Rabbi Sholom Ber Lifschitz and profiles Jewish people who were ensnared by missionaries and cultists and then won back.

According to the article, Yad L'Achim regularly monitors the activities of 3,000 missionaries. I didn't know we had 3,000 missionaries! Maybe we could get their list. One of their crowning achievements according to this article is in "providing crucial information to the high court of Israel" regarding the Beresfords which led to their loss of citizenship. The Jewish Homemaker is a magazine put out by Agudath Israel.

An October 93 article in the Jewish Press points out the perceptivity of Yad L'Achim as well. "Yad L'Achim uncovers missionary-PLO collaboration. 'Yad L'Achim activists in Russia have uncovered a big missionary organization who came to Russia from the U.S. for the express purpose of spreading the New Testament among the ignorant among Russian Jewry. The most shocking element of the case is that the PLO is aiding and abetting this crime in their newspaper."

Another item of interest with regard to anti-missionary activity involves the Jewish Community Relations Council's Task Force on Missionaries and Cults. In a March 11 article in the Jewish Press, it says, "The

Passover holiday provides a time for missionary groups to reach out deceptively to those vulnerable individuals by inviting them to free messianic Jewish seders which, although appearing to be authentically Jewish, are actually Christian in ideology and ceremony." The JCRC is offering an alternative seder for all who fit this category.

One final item on the JCRC is the absence of much anti-missionary activity in the past year that involves the pressuring of establishments to rent to Jewish missions for events. This would seem to have a direct relationship to the JCRC lawsuit with Jews for Jesus in which they had to pay costs for inconveniencing Jews for Jesus through the Stevensville affair.

I brought up the subject of defections with last year's report. I'd like to keep this under the category of counter-missionary work as well. The Winter 93 edition of Reform Judaism included a lengthy article entitled "Inside Jews for Jesus" in which Ellen Kamensky was featured. A side bar on other Christian groups to avoid included Ahavat Zion messianic synagogue and other messianic congregations. The writer notes that "One third of the messianic synagogues in the United States were created by the Assemblies of God, the denomination of former TV preachers Jimmy

Swaggert and Jim Bakker."

Sherri Ross Gordon who wrote the highly biased article has had parts of it excerpted in major Jewish papers such as The Post and Opinion, The Washington Jewish News and the Palm Beach Jewish Journal.

##### 5. The Schindler Plan,

While anti-missionary groups step up their campaigns, one rabbi, Alexander Schindler, has been making the case for Jews to actively pursue converts. Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, is launching a five million dollar fund raising campaign to finance outreach activities. The 850 Reform congregations in the U.S. and Canada are being encouraged to open their classes to outsiders

Schindler was quoted in a sermon at the 62nd assembly of the UAHC that, "Jews historically did missionize to others but their efforts ended when the societies in which they lived began prosecuting them for their efforts." He was also quoted as saying, "If we have no mission, people suspect we have no message."

An interesting flurry of response has made its way onto the pages of much Jewish publications in response to Schindler's plan, which, he introduced about 15 years ago as well.

Jack Wertheimer, a

professor at JTS does not approve of Schindler's plan. He says, "Jews may pay dearly for Reform's proselytizing. Many Christian missionizing groups exist in this country - and they would be more than eager to proselytize among Jews. They have not unleashed their full arsenal of weapons because it is considered foul play in American society for a majority religion to pick on minority religions. Until now, Jews have been able to argue missionary activities on the grounds that the battle is one-sided. But Reform's new outreach undercuts that argument. At the least, it justifies Christian outreach to 'unsynagogued Jews' - that is, almost two thirds of U.S. Jews."

A provocative article in the January 94 issue of Sh'ma by Hayim Perelmutter on Judaism's missionary tradition was sparked by Schindler's missionizing plan. Perelmutter, who is the rabbi emeritus of Isaiah Israel Congregation and professor of Jewish Studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, says, "Mission is central to Judaism and to its development. The very fact that rabbinic Judaism saw Abraham not only as the first Jew, but as the first missionary, is indicative of this."

Included in your clipping packet are a number of letters to the editor on this very subject, of missionary

activity by Jews. One example by a Redwood City, California Jew says, "Our religion is something wonderful. America and the world needs God's message now more than ever. God revealed himself to us (Hebrews) and told us to spread his message. I think it is about time that we started doing just that."

##### 6. Jewish Evangelism Potpourri

A few odd items for which I do not have a specific category include a February '94 blurb in the Washington Jewish Week which lamented that in the religion events for that week, the only Purim event listed is "the one to be held by Jews for Jesus at an Episcopalian Church."

The February 9th edition of the National Jewish Post and Opinion included Rabbi Elliot Gertel's review of the film, "Shadowlands," the story of C.S. Lewis and Joy Davidman Gresham, and points out that Davidman is an "apostate." "The tragedy of Joy Davidman Gresham's death is the tragedy of her having become literature's and drama's most celebrated Jewish apostate."

Another item appeared in the March 25th Jewish Press saying that a significant archeological find was made in the Jericho area by Vendyl Jones. According to the Press, Jones has found the site of the Tabernacle. However this is located within the autonomous

Palestinian region and therefore they have given Jones three months to finish his work and cover up the site.

Testimonies of Jewish believers is always an encouragement. Leslie Wright's story is in the March '93 edition of Today's Christian Woman. Michael Brown's testimony appears in the April '94 edition of Decision Magazine. Born again commentator, Peggy Wehmeyer, though not raised a Jew has a Jewish background and says in a February '94 Jewish Week interview, "I consider myself a Jew and a Christian. I embrace the entire Old Testament. I certainly don't disavow my Judaism."

A feature article in the Des Moines Register is entitled, "A Look at Jesus Through the Eyes of a Rabbi." It recounted a rabbi's sermon at Christmas time on the topic, "Was Jesus a Nice Jewish Boy." Rabbi Stephen Fink says that there is no dispute over Jesus's Jewishness but says, "what is problematic is whether or not Jesus was nice."

He went on to say, "Nice Jewish boys do not try to overturn the established order. Fink said Jewish leaders turned Jesus over to the Romans to avoid disorder and revolution. 'It is better,' they reasoned, 'for one Jewish revolutionary to die by Roman hands than for thousands of Jews to be killed by Roman swords...'



At that time, they had no idea that the death of this one Galilean Jew would turn the world upside down."

There was a time when a rabbi would not put such a statement in print to the secular public. To me, this is a hopeful sign.

Even more hopeful is the caliber of interviews that are being heard around the world which lift up Jesus from our perspective. I'd like to close with the playing of an audio tape. This was a live interview on Easter Sunday morning, broadcast throughout Britain on BBC Radio Four. The interviewees were Richard Harvey, UK director of Jews for Jesus, and Richard Harris, the Bishop of Oxford and president of the executive committee of the Council of Christians and Jews in Britain. The commentator is Allison Hillyard.



Kearney Frantsen and Milton Kohut enjoy fellowship at the LCJE meeting in the Big Apple.

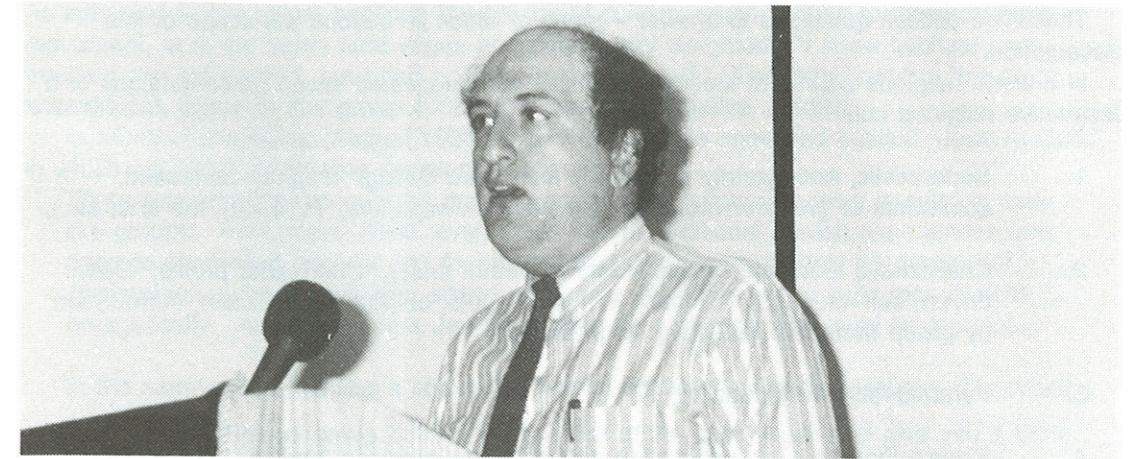
**Papers from LCJE North America, 11-13 April, 1994**

- Carol Calise: Habad Lubavitch Messianism
- John Fischer: *Foundations of Messianic Theology: Following in Yeshua's Steps?*
- Mitch Glaser: *A Survey of the History of Missions to the Jews in New York City 1900-1930*
- Arthur Glasser: *The Oral Torah and Hermeneutics (Why Jews Read the Tanakh differently)*
- Louis Goldberg: *Matthew, The Mishnah and Other Sources*
- Kai Kjær-Hansen: 1) *Update on LCJE International*  
2) *Jewish Evangelism in Post-Holocaust Europe*
- Milton Kohut: *For the Jewish Believer: Mainline or Messianic - Is There a Choice?*
- Eliezer Maas: *A Messianic Response to the Charge of Cultism*
- Susan Perlman: *Media Update*
- Fenton Ward: *Reaching the Assimilated Jewish Person: Is There Any Difference?*

Photocopies and postage to be paid for on receipt. The papers are available from the LCJE North American Secretary, Fred Klett, Box 133, Glenside, PA 19038, USA

# A Messianic Response to the Charge of Cultism

By Eliezer Maass, Th.M., director of training for American Messianic Fellowship International and pastor of the Vineyard Congregation of Long Grove.



**Outline:**

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The article below is the first part of the paper which Eliezer Maass delivered at the LCJE meeting in New York. A number of excursuses and notes have been left out.

**1. Cult Awareness Network Video:** *Saying No Under Pressure* narrated by Charlton Heston.

**2. Defining Terms**

Philosophers spend a lot of their time defining terms. Heidegger in his classic text *Sein und Zeit (Being and Time)* spends roughly 500 pages defining the word *Dasein*, roughly translated as "existence" or "being."

In a certain sense, this project is about defining terms. The problem of "cultism" is subsumed under the discipline of Philosophy of Religion - an effort to critique aspects of religious phenomena in light of philosophical inquiry.

The term "cult" is one of many in our language which suffers from the problem of equivocality (contains multiple meanings; explicitly vague). The term evolves and is adapted to various socio-religious settings. Its archaic usage includes that of a religious site, place of sacrifice, or ancient ceremony (e.g., the cult of Molech). Another definition of cult is evoked in Max Weber's classic *Sociology of Religion* where the term is viewed through the grid of the



social sciences. In a more recent study, *The Future of Religion*, scholars Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge construct a sturdy sociological framework in their bid to explain the survival of religion. Terms like church, sect (dissent, schism), and cult are methodically treated. What exactly do we mean by a religious "cult"? Is this a definable expression? In what way is the Jewish community using the term, and how do social scientists, behavioralists, and legal minds understand it? To what extent (if any) does the messianic movement qualify as a cult, and how ought we respond to the charge if it is brought? Are there organizations within the movement that exhibit "cultlike tendencies"?

These are difficult questions to answer – many of which lie beyond the scope of this presentation.

In a world religions course at Moody Bible Institute I suggested seven potential signs of a destructive religious cult:

1. Separatistic, anti-worldly philosophy actualized through a tightly-controlled, communal or group environment (shunning newspapers, TV, radio, the arts, etc.).
2. Charismatic leadership (usually one dominant male). Cult leader profile: Self-driven, self-taught, a visionary with blind spots, oblivious to criticism, surrounded by group members reflecting his philosophy.
3. Pyramid-scheme financing.
4. Bizarre theology: preoccupation with endtimes scenario, and/or UFOs, occult practices, dreams and visions, extra-biblical revelation.
5. Psychological intimidation: may take various forms, including sleep deprivation, the appearance of "brainwashing" or mind control, emotional manipulation (e.g., outbursts of anger, fear of hierarchy), etc.
6. Replacement family concept: initiates are assured that their "new family" will replace their original and represent an improvement over it (cult members are often recruited from problematic family situations).
7. Stringent requirements: members are often expected to distribute cult literature or sell products under adverse conditions, maintain ascetic lifestyles, adhere unquestioningly to leadership, etc.

### 3. Macro/Micro Positions

The point of this section is to assert that the term "cult" finds application in a variety of settings. Cultism is hardly restricted to the sphere of religion. Can we not say that any authoritarian model, including examples in the corporate world, in some way qualifies under this definition?

This, then, is the macro position: that cults and cultlike organizations appear in various guises and in a variety of formats. This illustrates the difficulty of defining cultism. Could we not describe some fast-food chains as corporate cults, their hierarchy reaping a financial benefit from minimum wage student labor? What about the use of persuasion in sales and marketing?

The micro reading refers cultism to the realm of religious sociology. But even here definitions are illusive. How do we differentiate a main line religion from a cult? How do we separate a sect from a cult? What commonalities do these groups share? Are not all

religious organizations cultlike in some fashion? For instance, how do we define "bizarre theology"? Marx thought that all theology was bizarre.

The point of the above line of reasoning is to emphasize that any charge of cultism is subject to inherent vagaries and difficult to substantiate. Where does normative religion end and cultism begin? There may be no determinable answer to that question. In fact, there may be no such article as normative religion.

### 4. What is the Accusation?

As intimated in the above sections the charge of cultism, when applied to the messianic movement, is at the same time vague and emotionally weighted: "I knew Michael was troubled and depressed, but I had no idea he'd join a cult." The term "cult," in this quick assessment, refers to any group considered outside normative Judaism.

In *Moment* magazine (August 1993/AV 5753) an article appeared entitled "Jews in Cults" in which we find the following sociological observation:

Three reasons may account for the disproportionate number of Jews in cults or cult-like groups. First, many Jews, even those tied to traditional Jewish experiences, are open to alternative political and theological ideas. Second, roughly 90 percent of Jewish high-school graduates attend college or university where cults recruit most energetically. And third, some Jewish families, in a strange way, may be too close.

In the same article we find a somewhat helpful comment regarding Hebrew-Christianity:

It is not the religious group behind every caller at the door wanting to give you a Bible or every Hebrew-Christian organization trying to convince Jews that the Messiah has already come...In a country devoted to free speech and freedom of religion, it is crucial that we distinguish alternative religions from objectionable cults.

A working definition of cult activity is then provided.

According to the Interfaith Coalition of Concern about Cults (ICCC), a coalition of Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish groups, destructive cults often:

1. have a self-appointed messianic type leader who focuses follower veneration upon him or herself, claims special or divine selection, and exercises considerable autocratic control over members' lives.
2. use deception and misrepresentation to recruit and retain members and to raise funds.
3. use techniques aimed at controlling individual thought and personal privacy that frequently lead to an effectively coerced reconstitution of personality.

Based upon interviews and a wide selection of readings, there appears to be a minority in the Jewish community who perceive that the messianic movement or specific organizations within it are somehow connected to cultism. Charges of mind control, totalism, personality alteration, and deceptive practices often accompany the cult accusation.

### 5. A Biblical Response

I would prefer to subsume the charge of cultism under the category of opposition. This is not to whitewash our problems but clearly the messianic movement cannot be painted in the



same colors as the Unification Church or Mormonism. After all, these groups are not even Christian and we are meant to represent the originary contextual model.

The Bible has much to say about handling opposition:

A. Yeshua anticipated it:

*If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you (John 15:18-19).*

B. Shimon predicted it:

*But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Sovereign Lord who bought them – bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping (2 Pet. 2:1-3).*

C. Believers suffer from it:

*In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Messiah Jesus will be persecuted while evil men and imposters will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you have learned it (2 Tim. 3:12-14).*

D. Believers persevere under it:

*Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him (Jas. 1:12).*

E. False accusation is part of it:

*Do not accuse a man for no reason – when he has done no harm to you (Prov. 3:30).*

*Then I heard a loud voice in heaven saying: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down" (Rev. 12:10).*

#### 6. Another Side of Jewish Missions

The current debate over intellectual freedom likely finds its roots in the Reformation. Luther's stand against the Roman Catholic Church sparked a string of events culminating in the formulation of Protestantism, the translation of the Bible into German, the Peasant Revolt, and the encouragement of independent investigation into matters of religion.

Freedom of thought and expression are, of course, dangerous concepts. Socrates was charged with sedition and forced to drink hemlock on account of them. Baruch Spinoza holds the ignoble distinction of being disowned by two religious traditions, Christianity and Judaism, for their sake.

This raises some interesting questions: Is freedom of thought a positive value in our circle? In his famous "wager," Blaise Pascal considered it expendable in exchange for the inherent blessings of salvation.

Do I have the right to question my beliefs, practices, congregational leadership, etc.? What are the biblical guidelines in this area? Have I ever asked: "Am I in a cult?" Would I recognize cultlike tendencies if I saw them? Are some individuals better suited to authoritarian structures than others? Is there a profile of a cult follower? Do I fit that profile?

A recurrent theme in literature on the subject involves the capacity for an individual to quit a religious organization. It appears to represent a litmus test of sorts. Is this a problem in our organizational structure? Can a person (without pressure, coercion, or intimidation) leave a given group should s/he feel the desire to do so? Does the group "blacklist" ex-members? Are they labeled "disaffected" or "subversive"? Is the tendency to blame them for some deficiency rather than to admit group responsibility?

The following represents some generic advice aimed at correcting the perception of cultism:

#### 1. Deal with dysfunctionality

Try to keep the insanity under control! Sometimes it's frightening to observe the level of instability in our congregations – a factor that lends itself to a perception of marginality. Recommend Bible-centered counseling for those in need. Make a specific effort to come across with a degree of normalcy and professionalism (if possible).

#### 2. Avoid leadership abuse

The Bible teaches plurality of eldership (1 Tim. 5:17) which operates along the principle of checks and balances. Avoid isolationism. Be open to constructive criticism. Wear the cloak of humility. Are we cavalier, haughty, or patronizing? Do we come highly recommended by ourselves? Do we really take 1 Corinthians 13 to heart when dealing with people we might categorize as *not* very important persons?

#### 3. Promote an educational orientation

In the messianic movement there are too many peripheral people without adequate training seeking leadership roles. We need to establish more careful academic criteria, a standard which will directly affect ordination. Should some form of psychological testing be instituted for certain ministry positions?

#### 4. Develop a well thought out philosophy of ministry

Explain symbol usage. In fact, explain everything! Why are we reading from a Torah scroll? Are prayers translated and understandable? Do we assume that our constituency is familiar with our traditions and liturgies? Make available a clearly written philosophy of ministry and statement of faith.

#### 5. Be careful how we come across to others

We need to watch the atmospheric conditions. Officious behavior can be the result of too much haranguing with the opposition. Are we brittle in our interpersonal skills? Is our professionalism tinged with brusqueness? On the other hand, an extreme mystical orientation (appearing as if one just received a day pass from Neptune) does little to promote our cause.

#### 6. Be concerned for community reputation

We might want to survey the community for special sensitivities or join an interfaith group which provides dialogue within the religious community (providing the latter does not entail theological compromise).

#### 7. Beware of extremist theology

Examples of questionable teachings abound, such as, "name it and claim it," "let go and let God," prosperity theology, prophetic alarmism, newspaper exegesis, emotion-based theology, etc.



8. *Avoid identification with and tactics of cult groups*  
These are too many and varied to enumerate but include Moonie-style "love bombing," excessive appeal to emotion, overt and covert manipulation, etc.
9. *Maintain an "inclusive" lifestyle*  
Incorporate interests and activities outside a directly messianic context (e.g., acceptable films, plays, art, literature, music, sports, etc.). Cultists operate within an exclusionary model which effectively separates them from other world views and perspectives. Read widely!
10. *Develop trust*  
As leaders in the messianic movement, resist the temptation to dictate to or interfere in the personal lives of congregants or staff members (unless obvious sin is present). No one has the right to tell someone whom to marry or how they should conduct their personal lives beyond scriptural admonition. Rav Shaul said: "Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12b). We are not to work it out for them!

## 7. Conclusion

Are some individuals more prone to cult recruitment than others? Following a survey of 125 young people, a psychologist in 1980 presented the following "profile" of those most vulnerable to cult recruitment:

- Idealists* who want to know God better;
- The *innocent* who naively believe that a cult messiah is God's divine representative;
- Inquisitive* young college or high school dropouts who suffer from severe and demoralizing family and personal problems;
- Independent* young people who run away from home seeking freedom from parental restrictions and authority;
- Identity seekers* having trouble believing in themselves;
- Insecure* youth looking for new experiences and a clarification of their own identity.

On the other hand, Stark and Bainbridge maintain that "under present sociocultural conditions, cults can have great success recruiting persons who are fully normal in terms of almost any characteristic one wants to measure."

Suffice it to say, anyone is vulnerable to the claims, proddings, and persuasion of cults and cultlike groups. This reality only reinforces our accountability as we press the claims of Israel's Messiah in our contemporary settings.

The charge of cultism directed toward the messianic movement is at the same time complex and misleading. While problems clearly exist, I prefer to back-pedal the terminology. A messianic response to the charge of cultism involves four Rs.

- Repent:** Regarding section 6, it is clear there are areas in our walk with the Lord that require turning from sin and the development of improved interpersonal skills. Pride, arrogance, and controlling behavior have no place in the life of a believer.
- Resolve:** We must also resolve to do better in the above areas by putting in place a system of checks and balances. Messianic leaders have a special responsibility not to engage in abuses of authority!
- Respond:** When someone accuses us of cultism that individual should lovingly be confronted. Demand a clarification of terms (e.g., What do you mean by the word "cult"? What specifically have you observed in order to draw that radical a conclusion?)
- Resign:** We have to resign ourselves to the fact that ministry in the late 90s exacts a high emotional price. The cost of discipleship in a postmodern

world involves (among other things) the distasteful charge of cultism. It is part-and-parcel of satanic opposition (which Yeshua predicted) and the general "dumbing down" of our culture wherein people fail to investigate a matter fully.

Perhaps there is something discomfiting about the kind of work we do. Is it tied to the power of the priesthood? Is evangelism by nature manipulative? Does it lead to subtle forms of abuse? Maybe there is a version of it (done in the flesh) which the Holy Spirit does not endorse.

## 8. Interviews

What follows are three interviews. The first two are fictionalized compilations bearing elements of conversations held with various Jewish believers and others who have attended messianic congregations and/or served in some capacity with Jewish mission boards. [NOTE: names of actual organizations and individuals are not mentioned to guard confidentiality and integrity.] The third is a transcript of the author's interview with Yechiel Eckstein, a rabbi with "some familiarity" with the messianic movement.

### *I. Fictional interview with a former congregant of a messianic synagogue*

Q: Can you tell us your name and where you attended congregation?

A: My name is Shirley, you know, like "surely goodness and mercy." For several years I attended Jerusalem's Hope Messianic Synagogue on the East Coast.

Q: How would you describe your time there?

A: Well, it's kind of complicated, you know. I really enjoyed it at first but after a while I wasn't really sure what I had gotten myself into. I really liked the music and the teaching and the fellowship, but I wasn't totally comfortable with some of the things that went on there.

Q: Like what?

A: Oh, it was just a few things. Like I was never sure what direction we were really heading in. It seemed like there was no real plan or if there was we didn't understand it.

Q: Can you be more specific?

A: One thing I thought was a bit much. We were encouraged to all move into the same area around the congregation so that we could walk over there on Friday nights. The leaders thought it would be a good idea if some people moved into the same apartment complex or even live together under the same roof if you didn't mind the arrangement. Nothing immoral like that, but I don't know. It just seemed a little weird.

Q: Maybe they admired the Hasidic communal concept.

A: I don't know. They never told us. Also it seemed like there was a lot of emphasis on charismatic experience – the gifts and all that, and they seemed very fixated on keeping kosher or keeping certain parts of the Law. I guess being raised Reform I had a hard time getting used to that. The way they used the term "Gentile" was kind of a put down. That bothered me, too.

Q: Would you use the word "cult" to describe your experience there?

A: No, no. Not "cult." That's way too strong. They weren't trying to control our minds or anything. "Cultlike" might be a better word. There might have been "cultlike" things they were trying to do. But mostly they were just excited about being Jews who had discovered the Messiah!



Q: Did you find the leadership approachable at Jerusalem's Hope?  
A: I don't think that was a real issue. You could talk to them, I guess, if you wanted to. They were very knowledgeable about the Bible. A little intense, but good-hearted people, really.

Q: What was your problem with charismatic expression? Isn't it good to praise the Lord?  
A: For sure. But at times it just got out of hand, I thought. Sometimes I was sort of embarrassed by it and was kind of nervous about inviting my friends or family. I was afraid they would think I was a little crazy...there was kind of a chaotic atmosphere at the place.

Another thing that bothered me was when we'd go out to a restaurant. The congregants would pray real loud over the meal. I mean it was quite obvious what they were up to. I guess they thought it was a good witness, but I would just cringe and pretend not to know them. When you really think about it, it seems obnoxious – especially if the tip was lousy.

The worship service was beautiful but then again there was a lot of dancing around with no real purpose. People just used to say "praise God!" over and over again like it was a Hindu mantra or something. Sometimes I would close my eyes and think I was at some religious event in La-La land. It had a real California feel to it. D'you know what I mean?

Q: What finally made you decide to leave?

A: Several things, I guess. When I told them I wasn't the least bit interested in moving into their "community," they weren't too happy about that. They labeled me "half in, half out." The last straw was this wedding. Besides the fact that they were always trying to marry me off with another congregant, my aunt and uncle came to a wedding ceremony there. They're Jews from Brooklyn and one of their friend's daughters became messianic so they got invited.

Well, of course the entire congregation showed up. And it was supposed to be a private wedding, I thought. People were informed that at the reception they couldn't sit with their friends, but made sure that a member from the congregation was seated at every table to proselytize. They turned the whole thing into a forced evangelistic opportunity. I was horrified! The bride didn't even get to plan her own wedding – or so it seemed. It just seemed like they undermined the reception. That left a bad taste, and I knew I wouldn't be staying around after that.

Q: Where do you attend now?

A: I go to an Evangelical Free Church. I just kinda got burned out by the whole messianic thing.

### *II. Fictional interview of former member of a Jewish mission organization*

Q: How did you get involved in Jewish ministry?

A: After coming to know Jesus I experienced a real love for my own people and prayed for their salvation. I joined Messiah's Branch Ministries because I wanted training in Jewish evangelism. I thought the group was interesting and creative, and I really wanted to serve the Lord.

Q: What kind of things did you do?

A: Oh a little bit of everything...handing out tracts, talking to people, making contacts, practicing my testimony, and performing skits. Lots of stuff.

Q: Did you feel you were growing spiritually through this involvement?

A: For sure! I attended Bible studies and worship services. It was very exciting and challenging. I think that I learned quite a lot.

Q: Did you make any friends in the group?

A: A few. We did have some good laughs. But there really wasn't much time to cultivate friendships. What brought us together was the ministry. It was kinda intense.

Q: Was there anything about their beliefs that disturbed you?

A: Definitely not. They were really upfront and straight about their faith in Jesus.

Q: Okay. Then what was the problem? Why did you leave?

A: ...It's a very hard thing for me to talk about. It's kinda personal. But, I thought the organization was a bit scary in a way. Maybe there was too much emphasis upon the opinions of its leadership and I was not always comfortable with their approach. I guess I'm basically a shy person and didn't really fit the mode too well.

Q: I'm not sure you're that shy. Didn't it take some guts to join them in the first place?

A: I suppose so.

Q: I'm still not clear what exactly the problem was....

A: Well, for one thing I was expected to do over fifty "church meetings" a year in order to maintain financial support. I thought that was ridiculous. The ministry turned into a rat race and the rats were winning.

Q: Sounds like a problem a little R&R could have solved.

A: No. You don't understand. R&R is not really in their vocabulary. The whole thing just starts to consume you. I felt overwhelmed. I remember thinking: "Am I going to be doing this for the rest of my life?" You see, it had nothing to do with my faith in the Lord. There was just something wrong – I felt it in the kishkes.

Q: It sounds to me like you were having an identity crisis. Don't we all at some point?

A: Yeah, but this was different, believe me. I was involved in this full time. I was always being told to do something or to be somewhere. In fact, we all were. But it was something nobody really talked about...and that in itself bothered me. I don't know. The whole thing just became intolerable. It wasn't an identity crisis. I was really beginning to have second thoughts about the organization I had become part of. The leadership wasn't that approachable. They seemed heavy-handed and intolerant. That didn't seem right. I wanted to remain in the Lord's work, but not under those conditions.

### *III. Interview with Yechiel Eckstein (January 26, 1994)*

*Rabbi of Holy Land Fellowship, Chicago, Illinois*

Q: Yechiel, what familiarity have you with the messianic movement?

A: I have met several messianic Jews and have appeared in the media with them on more than one occasion. Also, I have many acquaintances who would describe themselves as evangelical. They are all nice people, really.

Q: How would you define the word "cult"?

A: I suppose any group of people who have an allegiance to a charismatic leader who are in some way taken out of general life. They are swayed to leave their parents...there is a thin



line between genuine dialogue and where certain pressures are placed upon people. We think of cults in terms of brainwashing and absolute conformity to a standard of some kind.

- Q: Would you consider messianic Judaism or any of its organizations to be "cultic" along the lines you have described?
- A: No, absolutely not! In fact, I have had a long standing contention over this issue with the National Jewish Community Council via the Jewish Federations. I have also for years attended discussions regarding interfaith dialogue between Catholics and Jews, Protestants and Jews, and so forth. In many of these meetings evangelicals have been linked with cults. I have never agreed to this. I do think that messianic Judaism is itself a misnomer – I consider myself a messianic Jew without believing in Jesus.
- Q: Why do you think others in the Jewish community have placed this label on the movement?
- A: Actually I do not believe most Jews see it as a cult. Those who do are utilizing very convenient language which in some way captures their negative feelings toward the issue. From a halachic point of view, I see a Jew who believes in Jesus as a radical departure from historical Jewish faith – it is a form of *avodah zarah* ("idolatry").
- Of course, as far as we are concerned, if it is a monotheistic religion, then it is for the Gentile and not for the Jew. Essentially I think the shock element of this movement has dulled in recent years...There are many fine, decent, sincere messianic Jews whom I have met. If anything the attitude of the Jewish community has softened somewhat. Naturally no one is enthusiastic about proselytizing attempts.
- But actually I don't consider it to be a major issue at this point. The Jewish community is far more threatened by secularism, racism, and intermarriage. To quote Rabban Gamaliel from the New Testament: "In the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men" (Acts 5:38-39a). The Mishna in *Per-kei Avoth* has a similar discussion regarding that which is of heaven and that which is not.
- Q: From your perspective, then, what do you see as the future of this movement?
- A: There have been many divisions within Judaism over the centuries: Hasidim, mitnagdim, reform and orthodox, reconstructionist, conservative, and so on. I know that one of the tenets of messianic Judaism is that it will one day be accepted as a fourth or fifth branch. This is impossible. They will fall into the same type of destiny as the Karaites and others, and will always be on the outskirts of acceptability.
- Messianic Jews are lost in the middle – outcasts from the Jewish community and rejected by mainstream Christians. In that sense I have some sympathy for them. Another problem is that this form is not perpetuating itself in terms of children – *vishinantam livanecha* from the Shema. Judaism has been able to survive because of that.
- Q: What do you think of groups like Jews for Judaism?
- A: They are a waste of time and money. They are ineffective. In fact, I have publicly stood in opposition to them on several occasions – on Jewish-oriented radio programs in Phoenix and elsewhere. They reduce messianic Jews to the excesses of a few to panic the Jewish community. Jewish education needs to spend its funds promoting genuine causes and not fighting the missionaries.

## An Introduction to World Jewish Mission

Richard Harvey, Jews for Jesus UK Director

"Let us pray for the Jewish people, because Christ is their true Messiah. O Saviour of the world, who by thy cross and passion has redeemed us, we humbly beseech Thee, inspire our hearts with the desire to be fellow workers with Thee in the evangelisation of the world, and especially in striving to win the lost sheep of the house of Israel to the knowledge of their true Messiah for thy sake, who with the Father and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth, ever one God, world without end. Amen"<sup>1</sup>

In 1848 Rev. W. Pym of the London Society for the Promotion of Christianity Amongst the Jews (CMJ) gave a 58 page "address to the Children of Abraham" on the subject "What were you, what are you, what will you be?" This article attempts to survey the background and present state of World Jewish Evangelism, and to give some pointers to the future. Like the ministry of Christ the history of Jewish mission can be viewed in different stages.

### The Birth of Jewish Mission (0-32CE)

When Y'shua lived, there was no need for a church or missionary society. The method God used to communicate His love His Son, a perfect individual.



During his life on earth, Y'shua, the Sent One,<sup>2</sup> was both the missionary and the message of God's saving love to the world. It was primarily a Jewish message to Jewish people about the Jewish Messiah.

### Infancy (First to Fifth Centuries)

When the early church proclaimed the saving message of the crucified and resurrected Messiah the infancy of Jewish mission began. Within the New Testament we see the ministry of Peter, James and the Apostles in Jerusalem amongst their Jewish brethren, and the ministry to the Gentiles of Paul and his traveling band.

As the Great Commission<sup>3</sup> was applied the early church expanded to include Gentiles, but the Jewish side continued. From the time of the Resurrection (C.E. 32) to the destruction

of the Temple (C.E.70) the Jewish and Gentile sides of the church stayed together. By the closing years of the first century, the Jewish believers in Jesus, and their witness to their people, became separated from the larger church, Through the Birkat Minim<sup>4</sup> and other measures they were excluded from the redefined Judaism of the Synagogue.

The church historian Eusebius of Caesarea<sup>5</sup> records that there were fourteen Hebrew Christian bishops of Jerusalem up to 120C.E. This would indicate a substantial church and mission work. In the second century a number of apologetic works were produced, such as Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho (c150) and Tertullian's "Adversus Judaeos." The title came to represent a genre of controversial literature, sometimes more venomous than evangelistic, and often geared more for the encouragement of believers than to witness to Jewish people.

Nevertheless throughout the first ten centuries Jewish people came to faith in the Messiah. As Alexander McCaul wrote:

"In the beginning of the fifth century we read of the



conversion of the Jews in Candia: in the sixth, of the Jewish inhabitants of Borium, in Africa; in the seventh, of the Jews in Cyprus and other places; in the ninth, of some in France; in the eleventh, in Germany; in the twelfth, in Germany, Spain, Normandy, and England. On one of the rolls in the reign of Henry III the names of 500 Jewish converts are recorded."<sup>6</sup>

### The Hidden Years

The medieval period is not normally considered to have been important in terms of Jewish Evangelism. The conventional wisdom is that the attempts by the Church to evangelise the Jews were too closely linked with other less humanitarian motives. Yet there were some genuine attempts to put a programme of Jewish evangelism into effect. The

12th and 13th centuries saw a significant development of missionary work. Resources, personnel were provided, especially by the Benedictine and Franciscan monastic orders. Training was given in Hebrew, Aramaic, Jewish theology and missionary methods. A new strategy was developed which sought to prove the Messiahship of Jesus with reference to Jewish sources,

in particular the Talmud and Midrashim which were for the first time seriously studied. This strategy was put to the test in the debate that took place in 1263 between Paulus Christiani, a Jewish Dominican, and Moshe Ben Nachman, a Rabbi from Barcelona.<sup>7</sup> It was followed by a number of other Disputations, and apologetic works were written by Jewish and

Christian polemicists.<sup>8</sup>

That Jewish people became Christians during this period is evidenced by the *Domus Conversorum* (Convert's Home) to be found in major European cities<sup>9</sup>. Measures were passed by the Church concerning the welfare of Jewish Christians.<sup>10</sup>

During the Reformation period Emanuel Tremellius, a Jewish Christian who had

an influence on Luther and Calvin, published a "Catechism for Enquiring Jews" which was later translated into Hebrew and Yiddish<sup>11</sup>. The Puritans in England lobbied for the re-admission of the Jews to England, partly for evangelistic reasons and in their desire to see the spiritual and physical restoration of the Jews. The Synod of the Dutch

## Key Dates in World Jewish Mission

### The Birth of Jewish Mission

- 4bc Birth of the Messiah – first Gospel message of NT  
4–32 The Missionary is the Message  
32–45 To the Jew – only!

### 32 Infancy

- 32c Great Commission (Matthew 28)  
120c 14 Hebrew Christian Bishops of Jerusalem  
150c Justin Martyr's "Dialogue with Trypho"  
170c Hegesippus "Memoirs of the History of the Church" in Eusebius  
180c Tertullian "Adversus Judaeos"  
200c Epiphanius "Panarion" against Ebionites  
400c Jerome translates NT with Hebrew Christian assistance

### 500 – 1500 The Hidden Years?

- 1070 Crispin's Disputation  
1106 Dialogue of Pedro Alfonsi (Rabbi Moses of Huesca)  
1232 Domus Conversorum (Converts' Homes) in London and Oxford  
1263 Paulus Christiani debates with Nachmanides in Barcelona  
1278 "Pugio Fidei (Dagger of Faith)" Raymundus Martini  
1351–1431 Paul of Burgos (Rabbi Solomon Levi) "Scrutinium Sacrarum Scripturarum"  
1413–14 Tortosa Disputation

### 1500 Reformation Hopes

- 1554 "Catechism for Enquiring Jews" (Emanuel Tremellius – Hebrew/Yiddish published in 1820)  
1660 Puritan hopes for re-admission of Jews to UK

- and Restoration  
1676 Synod of Netherlands considers need of Jewish Evangelism  
1720 Rabbi Judah Monis shares testimony in Boston

### 1800–1939 The Growth of Jewish Missions

- 1806 Auguste Neander baptised  
1809 London Society for the Promotion of Christianity amongst the Jews (CMJ) (Joseph Frey)  
1812 Lewis Way sees "Point of View" and involves himself in CMJ  
"A Short And Easy Method With The Jews" (Charles Leslie)  
1813 Episcopal *Beni Abraham* (41 members)  
1817 Hebrew NT (CMJ)  
1819 Joseph Wolff joins CMJ. (1827 First travel Journal)  
1820 American Society for Ameliorating the Condition of the Jews (Joseph Frey)  
1821 Stanstead House Missionary Training School (McCaul, Wolff, Nicholayson *alumni*), Yiddish NT (CMJ)  
1822 Society for the Promotion of Christianity among the Jews in Germany (Lewis Way)  
1836 First edition "Old Paths" (Alexander McCaul)  
1837 Hebrew 1662 Prayer Book (CMJ)  
1839 "Narrative of a Mission of Enquiry to the Jews" (Andrew Bonar, Robert Murray McCheyne)  
1841 Church of Scotland Jewish Mission, Michael Solomon Alexander made Bishop of Jerusalem, Presbyterian Church Of Ireland Jewish mission (Arnold Frank of Hamburg)  
1842 British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews (Ridley Haim Herschell)(BJS, now CWI)

- 1845 Baptist Mission to the Jews, USA, Episcopal Church Mission to the Jews, USA  
1859 Pastor Falin in Kishineff, Aaron Stern in Ethiopia  
1865 Norwegian Lutheran Mission – Paul Caspari  
1866 Hebrew Christian Alliance of Great Britain, Aaron Stern regularly preaches to 500 Jewish believers  
1871 Evangelical Lutheran Mission – Germany  
1875 Swedish Lutheran Mission (Lindstrom)  
1876 Mildmay Mission (John Wilkinson)  
1879 Barbican Mission (Hebrew Christian)  
1728 Institutum Judaicum in Halle, revived 1880 in Leipzig, becomes Delitzianum 1886.  
1881 "What I really wish" (Rabbi Isaac Lichtenstein)  
1882 Hebrew Christian Mission, USA (Jacob Freshman)  
1883 Israelites of the New Covenant (Joseph Rabinowitz)  
1884 "Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah" (Alfred Edersheim)  
1887 Chicago Hebrew Mission (William Blackstone)  
1889 "Israel My Glory" (John Wilkinson)  
1902 "Christian Evidences for Jewish People" (A. Lukyn Williams)  
1910 Meal of the Holy King, London (Paul Levertoff)  
1915 HCA of North America  
1923 J.S. Conning advocates "Parish Approach"  
1925 International Hebrew Christian Alliance (Sir Leon Levison, Harcourt Samuel)  
1927 Budapest (95 delegates) and Warsaw (86) Conferences  
1928 Resolution on Hebrew Christian Church at Presbyterian Assembly  
1929 International Missionary Council forms IMCCAJ  
(International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jew  
1931 Atlantic City Conference  
1933 "History of Jewish Christianity" (Hugh Schonfield)  
1934 First Hebrew Christian Church of Chicago (David Bronstein Sr)  
1936 Berger D'Israel, France (Henri Vincent)  
1937 Conference in Vienna, Richard Wurmbrand baptised  
  
1939–1945 Dismantling and Decline  
1948 British Jews Society(CWI) South Africa (Jack Mundel, Ernest Lloyd)  
1965 "The Jewish People and Jesus Christ" (Jacob Jocz)  
1965 Arnold Frank dies aged 106  
  
1970–1993 The New Dawn  
1970 Fellowship of Christian Testimonies to the Jews  
1973 Jews for Jesus established  
1975 "Evangelicals and Jews in Conversation"  
1979 Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations (UMJC)  
1980 LCJE 1 – Pattaya, Thailand (20)  
1982 Messiah Has Come, London  
1983 LCJE 2 – Newmarket, UK (52)  
1984 "Evangelicals and Jews in an Age of Pluralism"; CMJ South Africa (Rodney Mechanic)  
1986 International Alliance of Messianic Congregations and Synagogues (IAMCS)  
1988 Fellowship of Messianic Congregations (FMC)  
1988 LCJE 3 – Ware, UK (160)  
1991 LCJE 4 – Zeist, Holland (208)



Reformed Church in 1676, aware of Jewish and Marrano communities in the Netherlands, also recognised the need of the Jews to hear the Gospel.

In 1720 Rabbi Judah Monis shared his testimony in Boston of how he "a Jew, had become a Christian." Due to the influence of Increase Mather the matter of Jewish evangelism was considered by leading churchmen in the New World to be of primary importance, despite the small number of Jews who lived there before the second half of the nineteenth century.

#### 1800-1939 Public ministry of Jewish missions

The nineteenth century saw the flowering of Jewish evangelism<sup>12</sup>. The opportunities presented by Haskalah, emancipation and the opening of doors around the world for missionary work were taken up by churches caught up in evangelistic ferment. In his survey of Jewish Christians compiled at the end of the century, Rev. I. Bernstein of the London Society records brief biographies of hundreds who came to faith, many of them from orthodox and rabbinic backgrounds. The historian De Le Roi, in the appendix to the third volume of his work on Jewish Evangelism, has a statistical estimate of 204,540 Jewish believers, based on baptismal records of all the main churches<sup>13</sup>.

By the end of the nineteenth century it was estimated by Thompson<sup>14</sup> that there were ninety Jewish missions with 648 missionaries working from 213 stations (branches) around the world. The annual income of the societies was estimated at \$673,000. In comparison the twentieth century missionary endeavour has a long way to go to catch up with the zeal, organisation and personnel of the previous century.

In the early years of the twentieth century the work of the different mission agencies was consolidated in the conferences of Warsaw, Budapest and Atlantic City. Here too attempts were made to influence the nascent World Council of Churches (then the International Missionary Council), without great success. The "Parish Approach" to Jewish Mission popularised by Conrad Hoffman, originally an innovative device to enlist the participation of the denominational agencies, called into question the continuing need for specialist and pioneer missionary agencies. The American missions disengaged from these developments, and some denominational European agencies questioned the continuing validity of their call. In the light of events to follow, which already overshadowed the work in the 1930's, a loss of nerve was inevitable.

#### 1970-1993 The New Dawn

The modern period has seen a similar renaissance. The Jesus movement in the USA, the existence of the State of Israel, the renewed confidence in evangelism and the development of contextualised approaches to Jewish evangelism have made the latter half of the twentieth century years of opportunity in Jewish evangelism. With the methods similar to those used previously, with a little more technological sophistication and "street creed", the growing number of Jewish Christians in ministry to their people has increased. We have yet to make the appeal of Jewish evangelism as relevant and supported as it was in years gone by, and the opposition to the work has not abated. Yet to those called into the field, the Master's words still hold true: "Do you not say 'there are four months, and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest."<sup>15</sup>

#### Notes

1. Intercessions for the Evangelisation of the Jews, Church Missions to Jews (CMJ), 1910.
2. John 3:16-17. The root of the term mission/missionary is "to send", a Latin equivalent of apostolos and Shaliach.
3. Matthew 28:18-20
4. The curse on heretics inserted into the Eighteen Benedictions, traditionally ascribed to Samuel the Small (B.Ber.28b-29a). The Cairo Genizah version applies it to Notzrim/Nazarenes.
5. Ecclesiastical History
6. Quoted by Gidney, *The Jews and their Evangelisation*, 1907, Student Volunteer Missionary Union, p93.
7. For the most balanced analysis of the encounter and its aftermath see Robert Chazan, *Barcelona and Beyond*, University of California Press, 1992. The account by Nachmani des published by Charles Chavel, KTAV, 1983, is seriously deficient and must be compared with the Vatican report discussed fully by Chazan.
8. See A. Lukyn Williams, *Adversus Judaeos*, Cambridge, 1935 for a historical survey, and David Berger, *The Jewish Christian*

*Debate in the High Middle Ages*, Philadelphia, 1979, for analysis of the arguments. The Torstosa Disputation lasted a year! Two classic apologetic works still in use today are the *Pugio Fidei* (Dagger of Faith) of Raymundus Martini (1278) on the Christian side, and *Chizzuk Emunah* (Faith Strengthened) by the Karaite Isaac Troki.

9. The London home continued until destroyed by fire in 1665. Residents in Oxford received an allowance of 1.5 pence per day.

10. Robert Chazan, *Church, State and Jew in the Middle Ages*, Berman, NY, 1980 lists both the positive and negative measures taken by government and church authorities.

11. Latin first edition 1554. The London Society reprinted it in 1820. The catechetical technique of question and answer has a continuing place in evangelism today.

12. Key events and people are mentioned in the table below. The nineteenth century should be more familiar to LCJE members, and will not be covered in detail by the present article.

13. Quoted in Thompson, p264ff. The total is made up from 72,740 Jews baptized into the evangelical churches, making with their

families 120,000 members of Protestant churches. 57,300 received in the Roman Catholic Church, and 74,500 into the Greek Orthodox.

14. *A Century of Jewish Missions*, Revell Press, 1902.

15. John 4:35 NASB

Richard Harvey is interested in information which can fill out the gaps in his *Statistics* on pp. 27-30, and in possible corrections. His address is: 174 Finchley Road, London NW3 6 PB, UK.

The map on p. 32 are from Martin Gilbert's *The Dent Atlas of Jewish History*, 5th ed. 1993, published by JM Dent Ltd, The Orion Publishing Group, Orion House, 5 Upper St. Martin's Lane, London WC2H 9EA, UK. They are here reproduced with the kind permission from the author. The Atlas is of 136 pages, UK price £9.99.



## Statistics of Missions to Jews 1993

Agency	Year began	Founder	Past workers	Current Director	Country of Origin	Stations	Staff JB	Decisions p.a.	Theological Emphasis	Distinctives	Publication	Income (if known)
American Messianic Fellowship (Chicago Hebrew Mission)	1953 (1887)	W.E. Blackstone	Max Wertheimer	Wesley Taber	USA	Israel, Mexico, Miami	12		non-denom charismatic Premillennial		L'chaim "Stand Firm" "Jesus is Coming"	
Ammi ministry	?	Ron Elkin		Ron Elkin	USA	Philadelphia	1		Reformed			
Arbeits-gemeinschaft für das Messianische Zeugnis (AMZI)	?			Andreas Meyer	Germany	Germany	?					
Aniel Ministries	1977	Arnold Fruchtenbaum		Arnold Fruchtenbaum	USA	USA, Israel	8	10 p.a. USA 10-20 p.a. CIS	Dispensationalist, Pre-millennial	Evangelism, Discipleship	Monthly magazine	
Assemblies of God, Division of Home Ministries	?			?	USA		?			Congregation Planting		
Baptist Society for the Evangelisation of the Jews	1845	Joseph Frey	G.R. Lederer, John Neander, Samuel Schereschewsky		USA		?					
Belgium Evangelical Mission	?			Leslie Message	Belgium	Belgium	?			work with all minority groups		
Bible Society in Israel	(1804)		Ray Pritz	Doron Even Ari	Israel		3			Bible bookshops	Hebrew NT, etc	
Caspari Centre (Norwegian Lutheran)	1982		Ole Kvarme	Torkild Masvie	Israel	Israel	7			Biblical/Messianic study centre	Caspari Centre newsletter	
Chosen People Ministries (ABMJ/Williamsburg Mission/Beth Sar Shalom)	1894	Leopold Cohn		Sam Nadler	USA	USA, Argentina, Canada, Israel, Ukraine	74	10*	Dispensationalist, Pre-millennial	Evangelism, Prophetic Teaching, Congregation planting	Chosen People	\$3.5m*
Christian & Missionary Alliance	?			Rev Louis Zeigler	USA	USA, Israel	6			Youth ministry, Camps, Messianic services		
Christian Approach to the Jew (Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church of the USA)	1917 (1872)			Rev Herbert Links	USA	USA	1	1	Presbyterian			

Agency	Year began	Founder	Past workers	Current Director	Country of Origin	Stations	Staff JB	Decisions p.a.	Theological Emphasis	Distinctives	Publication	Income (if known)
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Christian Witness to Israel (JIS, Barbican Mission to the Jews, Free Church of Scotland)	1842 (1891, 1879, 1900)	Ridley Herschel	Salkinson, Ginsburg	John Ross (UK), Baruch Maoz (Israel)	UK	Israel, UK, Australia, France, New Zealand, Canada, India	31	2	Reformed	Translation and literature	CWI Herald	1992 \$1m
Church of Scotland Mission	1841	Andrew Bonar, Robert McCheyne	Dr "Rabbi" Duncan Alfred Edersheim		UK		?					
Church's Ministry Among the Jews (LSPCJ, ITAC)	1809	Joseph Frey, Wilberforce, Simeon, Shaftesbury, Lewis Way (1815)	Solomon Alexander, Joseph Wolf, David Harley	Jos Drummond (Walter Riggins from 1994)	UK	UK, Israel, Argentina, South Africa	48	5	Anglican	Messianic congregation Teaching the Church	Shalom	1992 \$750,000
Comfort ye My People Ministries	1984			Rev Hans Vanderwerff	Canada	Canada	1			Messianic fellowships & music		
Danish Israel Mission	1885		Frederik & Axel Thorm	Peter Schmidt	Denmark	Israel, Denmark	5		Lutheran	Theological Education	Israelismis-ionens Avis	1992 \$275,000
Diakoniewerk Jerusalem E.V.	1848		Arnold Frank	Paul Gerhard Pawlitz	Germany	Israel	350#				Jerusalem Brief	
Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions & Charities (Shofar Committee)	?			John Nissley	USA	North East USA	?			Urban evangelism		
Evangeliums-dienst für Israel	1991			Hartmut Renz	Germany	Israel, Germany	3					
Fellowship of Messianic Congregations	1988			Louis Lapides	USA	USA & Canada	?		Messianic Non-charismatic Lutheran			
Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission	1967			Heikki Nurminen (area director)	Finland	Israel, France	45					
Finnish Lutheran Mission	1863			Matti Vaisanen	Finland	Israel, UK, Italy	7		Lutheran			
Friends of Israel	?			Marvin Rosenthal	USA	USA	?	1	non-charismatic Premillennial		Israel My Glory	
Good News for Israel	?			Rev Kearney Franzen	USA		2			Messianic		
International Board of Jewish Missions Inc	?	Jacob Gartenhaus		Rev Murray L. Hicks	USA	USA, Canada, Mexico	6					



Agency	Year began	Founder	Past workers	Current Director	Country of Origin	Stations	Staff JB	Decisions p.a.	Theological Emphasis	Distinctives	Publication	Income (if known)
International Messianic Jewish (Hebrew Christian) Alliance (IHCA)	1925	Sir Leon Levison	Hugh Schonfield, HL Ellison, Jacob Jocz	Ron Lewis	UK	Alliances in 15 countries	3	2	Hebrew Christian & Messianic	Uniting Jewish believers	IMJA Quarterly	1992 \$135,000
International Ministry to Israel	?			Murray Hicks	USA	USA, Canada, Mexico	6					
Jerusalem-kirche	1848	Arnold Frank		Paul-Gerhard Pawlitzki	Germany		3		Evangelical Lutheran		Jerusalem-Brief	
Jewish Voice	1972	Louis Kaplan		Louis Kaplan	USA		3	2	Pentecostal	Radio Ministry	Jewish Voice	
Jews for Jesus	1973	Moishe Rosen	Rachmiel Frydland (Messianic Outreach, Cincinnati)	Moishe Rosen	USA	Argentina, Canada, CIS, France, South Africa, UK, USA	102	50	864	Creative communication, media, tracts	Jews for Jesus newsletter, Issues	\$11m
Le Berger D'Israel (Chosen People/Messianic Testimony)	1936	Henri Vincent		Jacques Guggenheim	France	France, Belgium, Switzerland	6	1			Berger D'Israel	
Lederer Messianic Ministries	?			Barry Rubin	USA	USA, Canada, Holland, UK	3	2	Messianic	Literature ministry		
London City Mission	1874			Peter Adamson	UK		1			Visitation		
Love Israel Ministries	?			Mari Bodajji	Japan	Japan, USA	1					
Love Song to the Messiah	?			Dr Neil Lash	USA		2			Weekly TV program, Music		
Lutheran Free Church	1844			Odd Svein Grønsvund	Norway	USA, Norway, Israel						
Lutheran Institute for Jewish Evangelism	?			Rev Bruce Lieske	USA		1					
Menorah Ministries	1984	John Fischer		John Fischer	USA	USA, Israel	2	1	Messianic	Liturgy		
Messianic Hebrew Christian Fellowship Inc.	?			Rev Milton Maitman	USA		3	1	Messianic			
Messianic Jewish Movement International	1963	Manny Brotman		Manny Brotman	USA	USA, Argentina, Holland, UK	4	3	Messianic	Charismatic Messianic	MJMI newsletter	
Messianic Testimony (Mildmay Mission to the Jews, Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel)	1973 (1876, Wilkinson 1893)	John (David) Baron, CA Schonberger	Adolph Saphir	Tony Pearce	UK	UK, France, Israel, South Africa, CIS	15	5	Pre-millennial		The Messianic Testimony	\$535,000

Agency	Year began	Founder	Past workers	Current Director	Country of Origin	Stations	Staff JB	Decisions p.a.	Theological Emphasis	Distinctives	Publication	Income (if known)
Messianic Vision	1977	Sid Roth		Sid Roth	USA	USA	7	1	Messianic	Radio		
Midwest Hebrew Ministries	?			Ralph R. Winkel	USA		?					
Ministry of Hope	?			Rev James E. Hanson	USA		?					
Ministry to Jews of the Dutch Reformed Church	1908			Francois Wessels	South Africa	South Africa	2					
Norwegian Church Ministry to Israel (Norway Israel Mission)	1844		Carl Paul Caspari	Helge Aarflot	Norway	Norway, Israel, Hungary	18		Lutheran			
Novaya Ministries	?	Joan Lips		Joan Lips	USA	Portland	1	1				
Operation Mobilisation	1980	George Verwer	David Zeidan	George Verwer	USA	Israel, UK	6			Short term teams		
Oxford Circle Menomite Church	?			James R. Leaman	USA		?					
Presbyterian Church of Ireland	1841			John Seawright	Ireland					supports CMJ, Jews for Jesus		
Rock of Israel	?			Mr Hyman Spector	USA	USA, Brazil	10					
Shema Yisrael	1984	Jonathan Bernis		Jonathan Bernis	USA	USA, CIS	2	2			Shema Israel	
Task Force on Jewish Evangelism LC-MS	?				USA		?					
Youth With a Mission/Slavic Ministries	?			Mr Al Akimoff	USA	CIS, Israel, Toronto, New York	5					
Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations	1987	Dan Juster		Rich Nichol	USA	80 member congregations	1	1	Messianic	Uniting congregations Training		
YWAM Israel	?				USA		?					
Zola Levitt Ministries Inc.	?	Zola Levitt		Zola Levitt	USA	USA, Canada	10	2		TV program		
TOTALS							835	119	894			

\* - BEST GUESS  
# - LCJE FIGURE







## Book Review

The terrible history of anti-Semitism committed by Christians over the centuries is surveyed. The difference between anti-Semitism, anti-Zionism and anti-Judaism is described as well as the history of the anti-Jewish attitudes and actions. The effect of the Bar Kochba rebellion is omitted. This would have given more understanding about the beginning of Christian anti-Semitism.

The book deals gently but firmly with those who state that the gospel should not be preached to Jewish people because of the church's guilt, and affirms the Biblical necessity and spiritual priority of reaching the Jewish people with the gospel of Jesus. If the gospel is not relevant to the

Jewish people, it cannot be relevant to anyone else. Dr Riggans mentions the theories of those who do not believe this: dispensational theories and ideas of those who just want to comfort Israel. It would have been helpful to have had a critique of the two covenant theory. Dr Riggans confirms that it is possible to be involved in both dialogue and evangelism and affirms the rightness of evangelism with integrity, following a clear code of practice.

In his final chapter we are led to face the implication of the growth of Messianic Judaism and to understand the terminology describing Messianic Jews and Hebrew Christians, with their different emphases and practices.

The short bibliography is

listed according to the subject matter of each chapter and is useful for those who have been stimulated to further study.

Walter Riggans, in a short compass, is able to deal courageously and sensitively with the burning issues of today in the relationships between the Jewish people and Christians. This book is a welcome addition to the literature on this subject, written from a traditional evangelical standpoint, and it deserves a wide circulation. It needs to be in the hands of Christian ministers and leaders, to further Jewish evangelism, to counter the lack of understanding on Jewish-Christian relations and to combat anti-Semitism.

### Jesus Ben Joseph

By Anne Dexter

*Jesus Ben Joseph* goes some way to filling a relatively unperceived gap in the book shelves of Christian literature. Yet, paradoxically, it is as much a Jewish book as a Christian one. And why should Jewish people as well as Christians read this book? Because, as the title implies, Jesus was Jewish and belongs to Jews as well as Gentile Christians. With his wide experience of both church and synagogue,

Walter Riggans is quite aware of the historical resistance of both parties to this truth and ably explains and deals with the issues arising.

On page 12 he states, "In this book I hope to help Jewish people with an interest in Jesus to come some way to meeting him for themselves." He later assures Jewish readers, and he is true to his word, that there will be "no evangelical

hard-sell". They are free to make of the encounter what they will. Christians will also profit from meeting the Jewish Jesus. Chapter 3 shows that seeing Jesus in his own milieu greatly enriches their understanding of the Gospels.

Chapter 4 describes how when, at the turn of the century, a few open-minded Jewish scholars began taking Jesus seriously, they found him to be their "great

brother" and "the most important Jew who ever lived". His teaching, in the context of first century Jewish Palestine, created a recognisable harmony in their hearts.

Conversely, chapter 5 emphasises a truth that many Christians have never realised: Jesus is not a Christian. This statement is explored. Its implications are summarised thus: "Anchoring Jesus where he actually belongs helps us to resist the temptation to create him in our own image." Of course, Jewish people too can recreate a Jewish Jesus in the image of their own prejudices and conditioning. Therefore,

"Rediscovering the Jewishness of Jesus is an adventure waiting for both Jews and Christians." For a balanced perspective "Jewish insights must play their part alongside those of Christians in allowing Jesus to fully be himself in every generation and culture.

"Other chapters describe Jewish responses to Jesus from early times to the present day. With sympathy and understanding Walter Riggans explains why these attitudes developed and persisted. The church is considerably to blame. Sadly, Judaism has judged Jesus by the deeds of his followers and responded accordingly. Only in modern

times has any widespread change in the Jewish estimation of Jesus been possible. Reasons for this are explored.

I am always thrilled to discover new insights into my own faith through an understanding of its Jewish roots. I shall gladly offer *Jesus Ben Joseph* to my Christian friends. I have never found it easy to discuss Jesus with my Jewish friends for fear of giving offence or making them feel "got at". I can offer them *Jesus Ben Joseph*, both as a book and as a person, without qualm.

*Marc, Monarch and Olive Press, 1993, 151 pp. £3.99*

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Next meeting: 1 October 1994

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