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Editor: Kai Kjær-Hansen
Editorial assistant: Birger
Pettersen
Designed by: Flemming
Markussen

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From the Coordinator

27 Ways of Intimidation and Harassment

The following appeared in the Caspari Center Media Review (August 8, 2005) and calls to intercession for the congregation in Arad, Israel, and other Jesus-believing Jews who face similar opposition elsewhere.

Kai Kjær-Hansen

The Messianic congregation in Arad published a full-page open letter in Iton HaTzvi (July 7, 2005) to bring the persecution of the Messianic community by the Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) community to public attention.

The letter explicitly details 27 ways in which the Messianic community in Arad has undergone intimidation and harassment. These include intimidation in their meetings, at the chess club in Arad, and at believers' homes. The behavior of the Haredim is described as "insulting, frightening, and intimidating" and it "frightens children" and "shows no respect" for holocaust survivors. The Haredi behavior includes "cursing believers, threatening their children, destroying their personal property, and spitting on Bibles."

The letter says that this is "disgraceful" and that the actions of the Haredim are "criminal." The general public is called upon to ask themselves why the Messianic faith is so threatening to the ultra-Orthodox community, and why such demonstrations of "intimidation and terror" are not appropriate for a democratic society. It also says that if behavior like this continues, then the future of democracy in Israel is at stake.

At the end of the letter, readers are asked to come by and sign a petition if they do not agree with the Haredi behavior. If, however, the reader has no problem with their behavior then he is urged to do nothing, but is reminded that evil will thus prevail and that one day the Haredim will also get to the reader, the "good man" who sits and does nothing

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A Reminder From the Holy Mountain - Exodus 3 and 4

By Rev. David Sedaca, Chosen People Ministries

We come from different backgrounds, and we may have different roles, and yet we are united in our desire to reach the Jewish people with the saving knowledge of Yeshua, the Messiah of Israel. Sometimes, because we are so busy in doing God's work, or because we do not seem to have the success we would like, or perhaps because we are looking for reassurance of the work we are doing, we need to be reminded of who we are, who are we working for and the nature of our work.

With this in mind I want to share a few thoughts taken from a well-known passage in the book of Exodus chapters 3 and 4 where God commissions Moses to bring the children of Israel from under bondage. I hope that in this meditation we will find encouragement and motivation in carrying out our own calling.

In first place, we are involved in Jewish evangelism because this is in the heart of God. In Exodus 3: 7-8 "*I have*" is repeated again and again indicating that Israel's salvation is God's personal desire and stressing that the children of Israel are in God's heart. The love and passion we have for our own Jewish people is a reflection of God's love for His own Chosen People.

As Moses, we are involved in Jewish evangelism because we also have received a commission from God to bring his people from bondage. In 3:10 we read "*So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.*" Not all callings are identical, yet they are all part of God's plan. There is also a humbling fact that we must remember: as the power of God was clearly demonstrated in the Ten Plagues, God did not need Moses. Likewise, we are not essential, yet in His mercy he allows us to demonstrate our love for Israel by calling us to be the messengers of Israel's redemption.

Moses was assured of God's presence. In 3:12 God said, "*I will be with you.*" Sometimes we feel like Moses, "*Why me?... They will not listen... I can't speak well,*" yet, for every objection, God had an answer.

Verses 15-22 show that the Lord had a plan, Moses just had to follow and obey. The verb here is in the future-perfect tense, "*I will*" and Moses' order was to follow God's command. The Lord didn't ask Moses to come with a plan. The Lord doesn't need strategists; he needs faithful and obedient servants.

The passage also points to the fact that the Lord's plan shall be realized in his own time. From our point of view, God called Moses at the wrong time, in the wrong place and under the worst circumstances. Moses had lost his prominence, his influence and had "wasted" 40 years of his life in Midian guarding Jethro's flock. The Lord knows the urgency of our mission; Paul's calling required 14 years of training, Moses needed his 40 years in the desert. We can only see what we have before our eyes, yet the Lord looks through the eyes of eternity.

It follows that the Lord will give us the necessary tools with which to carry out our job, in Moses' case it was his shepherd staff (4:2-5). The Lord used Moses' only possession. After God asked Moses to surrender his staff, it became a serpent, but when Moses took it back it was no longer a serpent nor Moses' staff, but God's staff in the hands of Moses. We are assured that God will empower us by using what he has already given us.

As Moses was transformed by the encounter he had with the Lord on mount Horeb, I will humbly ask you to remember your own encounter with the Lord.

Let's revisit our own calling so we shall be renewed and strengthened in our work.

Let's remember our calling, who are we working for, what is our role, and the way we have been empowered by God to carry our His mission.

David Sedaca
david@chosenpeople.com.

Lausanne International Leadership Meeting in Hong Kong

By Doug Birdsall, Executive Chair, Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization

Eighty-one of us gathered in Hong Kong from June 19-22, 2005. This included our Administrative Committee; the Chairmen of the six Working Groups; Ted Yamamori, our International Director, along with our International Deputy Directors who represent eleven regions of the world; Senior Associates; National, Regional, and Special Interest Committee leaders, along with Lausanne staff and support team members. We also were served by six members of the support team from Campus Crusade for Christ.

There is a high level of commitment to Lausanne along with an excitement

about the future. At the end of the first day we experienced a *kairos* moment, when 81 individuals really began to come together as a cohesive team with a shared vision and with acknowledged leadership. The second two days were fruitful as we charted the course for the future of the movement.

Plans were enthusiastically endorsed for the Younger Leaders Gathering in Malaysia, September 24 – October 1, 2006. It is projected that that gathering will bring together 500 younger leaders from 135 countries around the world. I would appreciate any recommendations that you would make in terms of

younger leaders between the ages of 25 and 35 who should be invited to this gathering.

The leadership that was present in Hong Kong provided unanimous endorsement for a Third Lausanne Congress. It was proposed that it would be held in 2010, which will be the 100th anniversary of the Edinburgh Conference. In the midst of these developments in Hong Kong, it was wonderful to have the LCJE represented there by Susan Perlman, and it is my hope and desire that the LCJE will continue to be actively engaged in shaping the future of the Lausanne movement.

LCJE at Leadership Meeting in Hong Kong

By Susan Perlman, Jews for Jesus, San Francisco, USA

A meeting of The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization's (Lausanne) International Leadership Team including the International Deputy Directors, Senior Advisors, Senior Associates, 2004 Forum Issue Group leaders, National and Regional Committee representatives, organizers of the 2006 Lausanne Younger Leaders Gathering, the Lausanne Administrative Committee and Lausanne Staff met in Hong Kong June 20-22. This meeting was hosted by Dr.



Susan Perlman participated in Forum 2004 in Pattaya and contributed to the production of the booklet "Jewish Evangelism: A Call to the Church". At the subsequent Leadership Meeting in Hong Kong in June 2005 Susan Perlman represented LCJE.

Leung Wing Tai, chair of the Lausanne Communication Working Group, and CEO of Breakthrough Ministries based in Hong Kong. He brought an address that highlighted the rise of communication technologies and how they help and hinder evangelization. Given the effectiveness of the Internet and digital media in Jewish evangelism, this working group of Lausanne will hopefully provide good insights for us in the days ahead.

It was the first time all of the Lausanne team has been able to meet since the Forum in Pattaya last September. It is fitting that the LCJE was represented as well. Apart from the Chinese Coordinating Committee of Lausanne (CCOWE), we are the longest standing group that has regularly met in the Lausanne family. Inasmuch as our president, Tuvya Zaretsky and our international coordinator, Kai Kjær-Hansen were unable to attend, I was asked to take part as their proxy. My history with Lausanne goes back a long way. I first served on the full Lausanne Committee as well as on their Strategy Working Group. And I've been a part of LCJE going back to our inception in Pattaya in 1980. Perhaps my best qualification was the fact that I was available to take part in these meetings!

Several Purposes

This leadership meeting had

several purposes. One was to assess the work of the Forum 2004, which met in issue groups which identified barriers to world evangelism and how to overcome them. There were reports submitted on many of the 31 issue groups and an opportunity to hear first hand from some of the leaders what is now happening as a result of the meet last September. Here is where the LCJE is a model. When we first met 25 years ago, we knew that what had begun between a few of us in the field of Jewish evangelism needed to continue and encompass others who had the same heart and desire to see cooperation and communication heightened. Our many consultations since, our regional meetings, our joint projects from time to time, are what many of the other 30 issue groups are hoping for in their areas.

Issue Group 31

I had the opportunity to share that our group, Issue Group 31, which was the last group chosen and the smallest group as well (only 7 of us) was in some ways the most productive. I was able to hold up the completed work we did in the form of our booklet. While most of the LOPs (Lausanne Occasional Papers) are available on line, as is ours, only two have been published in hard copy. A good number of those present were eager to

read our LOP and get it disseminated to others. This included the leader of the Intercession Working Group of Lausanne. Now if those involved in serious and strategic praying want to know what to pray about when it comes to Jewish evangelism, I think we are making good progress.

LCWE and LCJE

After telling the full group about the progress on the action plans put forth in our 2004 paper, I went on to share about how we appreciate greatly the association we have with the Lausanne Movement and the recognition that the Lausanne has given to Jewish evangelism as a valid and necessary part of the church's mandate of bringing the whole church taking the whole gospel to the whole world.

Rev. Doug Birdsall, who is the Lausanne Executive Chair, was quoted as saying that the Lausanne Leadership Team is "the strongest it has been in fifteen years and that a new generation of leaders brings with them a high level of energy and a fresh commitment to advance the ideals of the whole church taking the whole gospel to the whole world."

I think this is a good thing for the Jews. Lausanne has had several what have been called "silent years". In that time, there has been a weakening in the resolve of the church to see Jewish evangelism on its agenda. It

is my hope that as Lausanne steps up to the forefront of the missions movement again, that Jewish evangelism will find new allies.

Birdsall noted that forty percent of the members of the Lausanne Committee have been added in just the last thirty months. He goes on to say that "This younger generation of leaders fully embraces the history and the rich legacy of the Lausanne movement and that these men and woman are committed to providing leadership and service that will enable the movement to press forward in the 21st Century with fresh ideas and renewed devotion to the Lord and the spirit of Lausanne."

LCWE in the Future

Another purpose for these meetings was to look at where Lausanne is going from here. In addition to hearing from the Communication Working Group head, Dr. Leung, the new chair of the Theology Working Group, Dr. Chris Wright spoke. He is putting together a group of top theologians from around the globe who will explore cutting edge issues impacting evangelism. The consultations to come will no doubt touch on issues key to our field as well. Dr. Wright is the International Ministries Director of the Langham

Trust, which is a charity that provides scholarships for young evangelical leaders in the majority world. He is the former principal of All Nations Christian College in Easneye, Ware, where our very first LCJE international coordinator, David Harley, was principal before Dr. Wright. Richard Harvey, one of our LCJE scholars, is now vice-principal at that missionary training institution. So we are very hopeful that Dr. Wright, who has spoken forthrightly in support of Jewish evangelism, will take the Theology Working Group forward in significant ways in the years to come.

Glenda Weldon is Chair of the Intercession Working Group of Lausanne and has a real heart for our cause. In talking with her at the Hong Kong meetings, I found out that she also serves on the board of Celebrate Messiah in Melbourne. It really is a blessing to see so many in the leadership of Lausanne having a commitment to Jewish evangelism as well.

The Hong Kong meetings were also the place where the planning team for a Younger Leaders Conference met face to face for the first time. This conference, to take place in Malaysia in the fall of 2006, is the first such meeting since the Lausanne Younger Leaders met in Singapore in

1989. I was part of that planning team and rejoiced to see a significant representation of Jewish leaders from around the world, including two from Israel. It is my prayer that among the younger leaders represented in Malaysia some will be from our LCJE network.

The Lausanne leaders at Hong Kong began exploring the possibility of convening a third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization. This could happen as early as 2010. Issues that would likely be addressed at such a world congress which have a direct bearing on our field would include the uniqueness of Christ in a pluralistic world, reaching diaspora people and impacting global youth culture.

Closing Prayer

Doug Birdsall asked me to bring the closing prayer for the closing session of the three days of meetings and so the group was blessed with the Aaronic benediction in Hebrew and English. As I was on the plane home, I reflected on that. Here we are, the LCJE, the last group to be included in Forum 2004 yet given the honor of bringing the last "word" at the 2005 Leadership Meeting. God has got to be smiling!

*Susan Perlman
SuperSu1@aol.com*

Second LCJE CEO Conference in France 2005

By Steve Engstrom, future Director for Caspari Center International

**LCJE CEO Conference
France
May 2005**

Perhaps since I am a new member of LCJE, Dr. Kai Kjær-Hansen asked me to give my impressions of my first LCJE conference. I was told that the accommodations were unusually extravagant, but they gave me warm first impressions! Our lodging at the medieval Abbey de Bussiere, nestled in the yellow mustard fields of Bourgogne, graced us with a peaceful ambiance. I returned refreshed – and well fed! I hope our capable host, Jean-Paul Rempp, was blessed as much for his hard work.

I have framed our discussions in two categories: the context for Jewish ministry, and the growth of our organizations.

The Context for Jewish Evangelism

Several of our speakers reminded us that Christianity is global, in contrast to the primarily North American and Northern European members seated around our table. Heinrich Pedersen shared his encounters with “Majority Church” Christians in Israel, and their experiences of evangelism. He reminded us that creative opportunities exist to engage global Christians in conversation about



Steve Engstrom

Jewish evangelism. As I reflect that the founding leader of my organization, Prof. Caspari, led his Norwegian countrymen in Jewish ministry when there were virtually no Jews in Norway, I am convinced that sharing our burden for Jewish evangelism with Christians in Africa, Latin America and Asia is important. I hope our membership will eventually reflect the diversity of the global Body of Messiah.

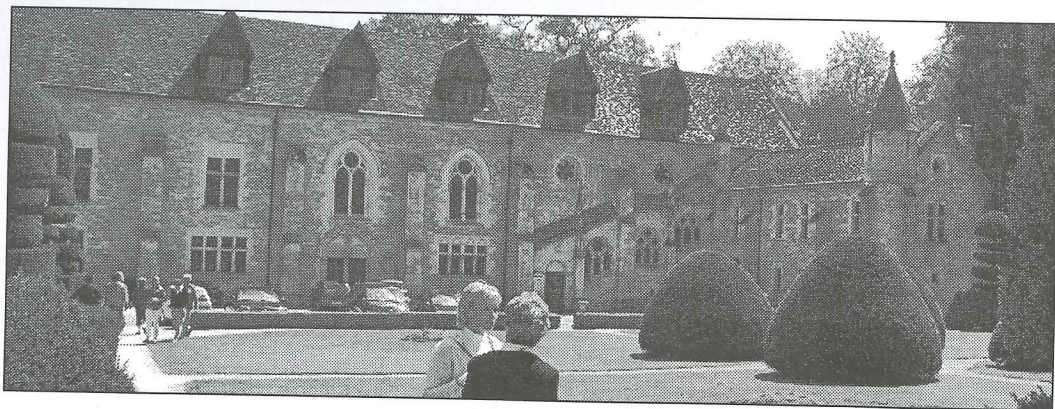
Further, Wes Taber raised insightful questions that emerge when we study Muslim evangelism. Muslim missionaries are deeply engaged in the questions of contextualization, hermeneutics, and culture. Wes asks us to consider the impact of contextualization on discipleship – and discipleship on evangelism. As Wes spoke, I was impressed with how much we can learn in dialogue with workers in other fields.

At least two presentations addressed the contemporary Jewish community.

Tuvya Zaretsky and Lawrence Hirsch reflected on intermarriage, Jewish life-cycles and opportunities for evangelism. Tuvya noted the high rate of intermarriage and assimilation in American Jewry, and discussed ways that congregations can serve Jewish-Gentile couples. As it often did, our discussion returned to the distinction between Jewish ethnicity and Jewish religion. Our challenge is to strengthen authentic Jewish identity in appropriate ways.

A second discussion reflected the degree to which we are all affected by circumstances in Israel. As every year passes, the original Zionist visions are challenged and transformed by political and cultural conflicts. Several members pondered whether we could make an unqualified affirmation of Christian Zionism. As Tony Higon shared statistics on the high rates of abortion, domestic violence, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder in Israel, I was again reminded how important it is for us to concentrate our efforts on proclaiming the Gospel and strengthening the resources of the congregations in Israel who are both struggling with these issues themselves, as well as reaching out to their friends and neighbors.

Finally, two presentations addressed Messianic



The CEO conference was held at Abbaye de La Busière, a former Cistercian abbey close to Dijon, France.

congregations, their practices, and their role in evangelism. Mitch Glaser expressed his vision to plant Messianic congregations that combine some degree of Jewish religious observance with Christian doctrine and practice. Jim Sibley clarified that we must not speak about Torah observance as a Biblical obligation. Again, the critical issue was how Jewish believers express Jewish identity. Andrew Sparks' presentation raised many questions about how Jewish identity and Torah observance relate to Messianic congregations. We are all aware of the historic tension between missions organizations and Messianic congregations, and I am sure that this dialogue has many more stages before the tension resolves.

Organizational Growth

Other discussions addressed staff and funding operations, and creative ways to work with churches

to expand staff and resources. Murray Tilles gave an encouraging demonstration of how his ministry works with volunteers from churches in Atlanta to serve more Jewish people. A benefit of this is that Christians in Atlanta have personal, not just financial, investment in Jewish evangelism.

I was especially challenged by Rolf Gunnar Heitmann's appeal for both healthy competition and honest cooperation among Jewish missions. He challenged us to work for the common vision of Jewish evangelism, not just the narrow vision of our organizations' prosperity. I noticed that as missions organizations, few among us represented specific denominations or traditional church structures. And so few of us are required to coordinate our efforts within a larger organizational framework. Most of us organize our efforts under the leadership of boards.

That means that it is really up to us to choose to work with others or ignore them. In some contexts, the harvest field is small and the laborers many. Israel happens to be one of those contexts. The possibility for duplicating services is high, and so is the likelihood that we will step on someone's toes. Whereas there are other locations where the laborers are few. Stephen Pacht mentioned that Paris is understaffed in proportion to the Jewish population there. Therefore the question of competition, and of working together to achieve a fundamental mission is an important one.

Conclusion

At week's end, the variety of issues and challenges we explored only strengthened our resolve to place evangelism at the front and center of our efforts. It seems like the mission to proclaim the Gospel of God to the Jew first is strongly challenged today from

diverse fronts.

Perhaps in relation to other missionary activity, Jewish missions especially cries out for God's direct intervention. After all, He covered with the veil, and He shall remove it. But I really wonder if while we await God's decisive future acts, Jewish evangelism will

progress through the struggle, cooperation, competition, exploration, affirmation and risk we share with each other.

I am sincerely thankful to be a part of it all. I am grateful for the affirmation I received from everyone as a new member. I am encouraged by the

testimonies of men and women who, year after year, struggle after struggle, victory after victory, remain faithful to the call. I pray that God will give me the strength, wisdom and joy that I witnessed among my brothers and sisters in Yeshua. I will need it.

sengstrom@caspari.com

Staff Development: Why Can't We Have the Staff We Want?

By David Brickner, Executive Director of Jews for Jesus

LCJE CEO Conference
France
May 2005

Introduction

I have five reasons to suggest and some thoughts on how we can move forward.

We don't have the mission staff we want:

1. Because missions and Jewish missions in particular is inherently difficult and people don't want to do it.

2. Because we aren't intentional enough in our efforts to recruit and develop potential and current staff members.

3. Because our structures are not sufficiently flexible to allow for us to take advantage of changing cultural attitudes and perceptions.

4. Because we haven't sufficiently set our own standards or given an accurate picture of the core responsibilities and competencies required.



An LCJE CEO meeting consists of a great number of short presentations and much time for interaction. – From left: Tony Higton, Hanspeter Obrist and Jean-Paul Rempp.

5. Because internecine squabbles and unhealthy competition between various agencies leads to disillusionment and disaffection among those who might otherwise seek to serve.

1. Because missions and Jewish mission in particular is inherently difficult and people don't

want to do it.

When it comes to recruitment, Jesus tells us, "The harvest truly is plentiful but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." (Mt.9:37-8) Jesus knew what any good recruiter knows. It is a rare thing to find quality people who are

willing to give their lives in service for God. For people in Jewish ministry we know that the response of those we are called to is not likely to be one of overwhelming appreciation. It is difficult to remain visible, vulnerable and available when there is the constant pressure of rejection and disdain from the Jewish community. Likewise Jewish ministry is not seen as a particularly high calling within the church. Many, especially Jewish believers, when challenged about Jewish missions, behave like Jonah when he was called to Nineveh.

Recently in our Jews for Jesus Council Meeting a number of our leaders were recounting how God called them into service in Jews for Jesus. One of the constant themes was a genuine and almost visceral initial reluctance to serve. It is good to have people who genuinely count the cost, so we need to be aware that the best potential staff are not going to be the ones who are pounding down our doors.

Notice that Jesus doesn't invite our prayer for people to become saved. He doesn't ask us to beseech the Lord that people will have open hearts to receive the message of the gospel. These factors are assumed by our Lord as already being in place. The real need for which we are exhorted to pray is for more laborers to help in the harvesting. The response to the need Jesus

challenges the disciples to make is to pray. Prayer under girds the work of recruitment as much as any other aspect of spiritual service. This is not only true because God is pleased to hear and answer. It is true because prayer changes the heart and mind of the one praying. Concerted prayer will most importantly sensitize us as servants to this need. It will open our eyes to see individuals who might serve with us. It will sharpen our minds and hearts to be alert to the people and the opportunities God brings us so that we can raise up more laborers. God is already at work bringing people along to serve with us. Time and time again I have seen Him raise up people to fill a need and do so from a very unexpected source. Yet God delights to answer our prayers. He will put feet to those prayers and most often they will be our own feet.

2. Because we aren't intentional enough in our efforts to recruit and develop potential and current staff members.

We need to cultivate a vision and a burden for recruitment in ourselves and in the staff that serve with us. We need to develop this burden in our training for new missionaries

Intentional and holistic.

Don't miss the fact that right after Jesus challenges the disciples to pray for laborers he sends them out to do

some harvesting themselves. I can't help but think that with the Lord's admonition ringing in their ears, the disciples were not only concerned with harvesting. When they went out they were looking for more laborers as well.

That must be the way we respond in our ministry. Harvesting and recruiting can never be an either/or proposition. We do the one while on the way to the other and vice versa. Our best evangelists will most likely be our best recruiters. That is the way it should be. But we tend to compartmentalize our ministries. Now we are doing evangelism; when we get a chance we'll do some recruiting.

Or now we are doing deputation; when we get a chance we'll do some recruiting. This is a prescription for continued failure. Jeanette Windle, who serves with Latin American Mission pointed out in a recent edition of EMQ that "a poll of missionary acquaintances shows that the majority of them first caught a vision of missions through visiting missionary speakers." (EMQ, Vol. 9, No.4, 10/03) We need to recognize for ourselves and train our missionary staff as well to see that recruitment feeds into all areas of our ministry.

Intentional and inclusive.

In order to bridge the gap that currently exists in the way we conduct our ministry, we need to

reemphasize the importance of developing a broader sphere of potential recruiters through volunteers. Perhaps most of us prefer working with professionals because we can expect more. You have to work a bit more with volunteers. You have to be more patient and do more by way of explanation. Developing volunteers takes extra effort. But nobody is going to be good at recruiting missionaries until they are good at recruiting volunteers. And by investing yourself in the lives of your volunteers, you will produce not only good recruiters of others but the volunteers themselves might be your future missionaries.

Intentional and insistent.

When you minister to people you should always want to bring them along to the next level of involvement. In your ministry to believers you should encourage them to take the necessary steps to fulfill their spiritual potential, which for some is missionary service. It is always appropriate to ask a believer to pray about whether God would have them serve as a missionary. This is especially true in the case of Jewish believers, where the need to reach their own people is so great and the number of Jewish believers is so small. Susan Perlman told me that as a new believer she attended the ABMJ bible studies in New York for six months without anyone inquiring as to whether she might

consider missionary service down the road. She honestly didn't think she was missionary material and she wouldn't have pursued it if she wasn't nudged to another level of involvement.

Intentional and personal.

Invite recruitable contacts into your life. Invite them to join you in ministry tasks and bring them into your personal life as well. As in the Biblical example where Jesus invited disciples to the place he was staying, invite potential staff into your home. Make them to be a part of your day-to-day life. Bring them to church meetings. Have them follow you and observe you doing your own ministry. During your time together you may discuss the things of the Lord. In so doing you can be building into your contact the awareness that ministry is not a job but a lifestyle. You are also building a mentor relationship that is necessary for the process of recruitment.

The need for a close relationship with the potential recruit is described well by Fuller Theological Seminary professor, Eddie Elliston, "The disciple's goals, calling and giftedness, ability or capacity for the task at hand, commitment, level of motivation and character are only a sampling of the issues requiring discernment. To know or discern any one of these issues requires a personal relationship..."

3. Because our structures are not sufficiently flexible to allow for and take advantage of changing cultural attitudes and perceptions.

I am not a big believer in all the marketing hype surrounding post-modern categorizing of gen-x, gen-y and millennial subgroups. I think it has been over done and over hyped. But I don't reject the notion altogether that there are some generational differences we would do well to pay attention to. If you haven't done much thinking along these lines I encourage you to visit the website, "postmission.com." It has many helpful articles on the subject. Many observers of post-modernity insist that gen-exers find it difficult to fit into the organizational forms and structures that are the common fare in missions today. They hold suspicion towards hierarchies and shun the kind of organization loyalty most mission CEO's value highly. Instead gen-xers value independence, individuality and interactivity. Technology has afforded them a culture that expects customization and so this generation wants to chart their own unique path. They aren't interested in fitting into the structures we devise for them. At the same time this group values relationship over program so inviting people into a structure that allows for a greater degree of interaction with peers, even if it is programmatic, does make it

more attractive.

No mission program today is more effective in recruiting young people than the somewhat laid back, group oriented approach of the YWAM DTS. We would do well to look for ways to model that kind of short-term approach for greater effectiveness in Jewish missions. Many are too impatient to invest enough time and energy in short term missions, but it is worthwhile for developing people into longer-term staff, kind of like going on dates before getting married. Here is one gen-xer's critique of mission structures today: "Today's world is a temporary place. There is hardly a job that comes with long-term security these days, but mission agencies still talk in terms of long-term and short-term, with short-term as somehow lesser. There is a view that says those interested in mission today are not as committed as previous generations because they will not offer their lives in long-term service. I believe this to be incorrect and see many who are committed to living out one day at a time for God, reflecting the temporariness of life and it's situations. This could actually be seen as a healthier, more honest commitment."

All of this may be true, but it may not be true for long. Research on the generation dubbed the millenials shows a very different mind-set according to the research of

academics Strauss and Howe in their book "Millenials Rising." This group which is set to come of age as recruitable staff from approximately 2007 onward, contrast sharply in their attitudes with those of Gen-xers. While rules, boundaries and organizational structures may be anathema to Gen-xers, Millenials are said to want explicit, clearly defined guidelines as well as strong mentoring relationships. They will likely be more willing to follow the ideas of those in leadership and will welcome established and well-grounded agencies. If this research is to be believed, shifts in recruitment strategy will be somewhat like the weather in San Francisco. If you don't like it, just wait long enough and it will change.

The point here is that change is one of the constants. We should look to develop sensitivity to those changes in our mission structures and short-term opportunities. We want to maintain our principles and the values that make our organizations unique, while seeking to be as flexible and accommodating as we can be to the changing culture and climate of the generations we are seeking to recruit.

Last month the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California Los Angeles released a survey of 112,000 college students.

Among the findings in the study:

80% were interested in spirituality
79% say they believe in God
74% have discussions with friends about the meaning of life
69% pray
47% consider it important to seek out opportunities to help them grow spiritually
26% said they were born again Christians.

These results should be encouraging not only in terms of the fields being white unto harvest, but also in terms of the potential for recruitment.

4. Because we haven't sufficiently set standards or given an accurate picture of the core responsibilities and competencies required.

One of the problems we have in catering to an increasingly indulgent and self-absorbed world is the temptation to focus more on the value of service for the individual and what benefits we have to give. There may be a tendency to downplay the costs involved in a commitment to missionary service. We need to do a better job of giving full weight to both the price and the privilege of mission service.

As Ajith Fernando has written, we want missionaries for the right reasons. "In inviting people to join you in your task, use biblical means, not promises of

excitement and fun. Come and see the world, meet wonderful people and all of that. To produce missionaries who know how to suffer, use biblical truth that can sustain them when the going gets tough." The challenge of obedience is a motivation as is the truth of the gospel message itself. You are much better off getting a fewer number of the right people than getting a larger number for the wrong reasons. Identifying potential recruits is initially a process of disqualifying people. We have set certain standards for our staff with regard to character, background and education. The first step in identifying recruitable contacts is to identify those who meet or potentially meet those standards and excluding those who do not. As you track with people it is crucial to keep the process open until they disqualify themselves.

Christian Testimony: It may seem unnecessary to state, but the individual must have received Jesus as their Lord and Savior and have evidenced a changed life. Three outward signs of this are:

1. They have confessed Christ openly (i.e., parents, friends, on the job)

2. They have been baptized.

3. They are regular and active in a local evangelical fellowship.

It should be noted that with new believers these

standards need to be upheld and encouraged but might be potential. Don't exclude a new believer unless they evidence an unwillingness to move ahead in these areas.

Jewish Testimony: This obviously does not apply to all organizations, but for Jews for Jesus, our missionaries must be Jews or married to Jews. With the enormous increase in intermarriage over the last couple of decades, we have had to become more specific in answering the question, who is a Jew, with respect to those who may serve on our staff. *A Jewish believer is one who has at least one parent who is fully Jewish (i.e. both grandparents on one side).* Anything less than this could only be considered as an exception.

Other Factors: A person who has been divorced since being saved would be considered for a full-time missionary position only if he or she has a commitment to remain single. Someone with serious health problems would not be considered for a full time missionary position. Is the person in debt? Financial considerations in taking on people with large families. A person who has served in another Jewish mission and doesn't come with a recommendation from that mission. Then there are age factors to consider. Are they newly married? Is their spouse fully supportive of all

that is involved in the missionary lifestyle? What about tardiness? Tentativeness? People who are difficult to lead? Someone who is unemployed or failing in his or her current career. All of these latter questions need to be dealt with on an individual basis and should be done so carefully.

A sign of a good leader is someone who is easily led. A good salesman responds well to being sold. Do the people you're trying to recruit receive your ministry? Do they recognize and utilize the benefit you are extending? Do they have a good breadth of interests? In school, did they belong to clubs, were they part of a team or were they loners? Have they shown the capacity for long-term commitment? How steady is their job history?

I have developed a lesson for our staff based on the word apostle and used it as an acrostic to highlight some of the qualifications we should alert potential staff to. I am referring here to apostle with a small "a". The "A" in apostle stands for availability. Apostles are ready to go whenever and wherever they are sent. The "P" in apostle stands for proclamation. Paul identifies himself in Romans 1:1 as called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God. People join missions for different reasons but hopefully all are willing to put themselves on the line to make Messiah known. The

"O" in apostle stands for ordination, to which I believe Paul refers when he says, set apart. There are many different views among us as to what ordination may mean, but philosophically we are talking about those who sense a special calling from God to set themselves apart for missionary service. The "S" in apostle stands for skill sets. Part of what enables us to recognize an apostle as such is the combination of natural and God-given gifts, abilities and skills that person will need to serve. Not every apostle is equally gifted. Some are strong in one area and weak in others. When God sets a person apart for service, he furnishes that person with the ability to carry out that ministry, and those gifts, those skills, those abilities become evident in due season. The "T" in apostle stands for testing. We ought to expect testing, not as a means to trip us up, but rather in order to prove and approve apostleship. Allow God to prove and test, develop and demonstrate his calling in your life on a daily basis. We also need to be testers of apostleship in those with whom we serve. The "E" in apostle stands for empowerment. The ministry of the apostle is empowered by the Holy Spirit, and the fruit of that ministry is seen in the empowerment of others in ministry. There is and must be an anointing, an empowerment from on high for the gifts of ministry for the work of the gospel.

A mistake that leaders often make is being too wary or cautious. Never allow yourself to think that a person is "too young in the Lord" to succeed in a given short-term endeavor. "Initial ministry assignment should follow close on the heels of conversion. Faithful obedience in small things contributes both to spiritual and ministry formation", writes Elliston. Don't be afraid to be aggressive in recruiting people, especially if these are individuals in whom you are investing a good deal of yourself. "People may not recognize their own abilities until someone discovers them and gives them opportunities. People emerge in leadership when they know they are wanted", writes Yousef .

While we never want to convey a false impression, we do want people to understand the possibilities for growth and satisfaction in the work that they might enjoy. If you enjoy what you do, people will be drawn to that same work. If you convey an attitude that majors on the difficulties and minors on the blessings, don't expect to be a successful recruiter. At the same time we need to pay attention to the cost of service, not just paint a rosy picture. You can model not only your satisfactions in the work, but how God has grown you and enabled you to meet the challenges Jewish ministry undoubtedly produces.

5. Because internecine squabbles and unhealthy competition between various agencies leads to disillusionment and disaffection from those who might otherwise seek to serve.

Moishe Rosen often told the leaders in Jews for Jesus, "if you find a better opportunity to serve the Lord than what you have here in Jews for Jesus you should take it." He was never really all that concerned to hear about staff members who were approached by other missions for employment. In fact, on any number of occasions he helped negotiate outplacement for staff members who felt it was time for them to move on. At the same time we have to recognize the natural tendency to be very guarded and territorial when it comes to our personnel. We are tempted to jealousy and unhealthy competition. I say unhealthy because we can't avoid competition. Some of that is healthy. It becomes unhealthy when we feel the need to belittle one another or seek to undermine another group's reputation in the process of our own recruitment efforts.

Maybe this kind of thing never happens with other ministries, but I see it quite a bit myself. For the last 20 years, our recruitment directors have had to ask a potential recruit, "what is the worse thing you have heard about Jews for Jesus?" After some initial reticence, they usually come out with some

kind of criticism, all of which we have heard before. Inevitably someone from another Jewish ministry has lodged the criticism. It may be that this is a common occurrence in missions generally, but somehow I doubt it. What is sad is that this problem has prevented more than a few potential recruits from entering any Jewish mission work. There is an old Yiddish saying, "when the bride can't dance she says the band can't play." The point being that criticism of another ministry is a transparent attempt to make your own organization look better and it rarely helps your cause. I have seen more than a handful of people seeking opportunities in ministry become

disillusioned by the backbiting and choose to look elsewhere.

Maybe we will talk about this this week. It seems to me that an LCJE CEO's meeting is a good place to openly discuss these issues. I have searched my heart and I believe I can genuinely say that I wish all biblically sound Jewish ministries well. I would want to see each of us have good, dedicated, well-trained staff in all of the areas we are working. While the laborers are few, there are certainly enough Jews to go around and probably enough financial resources as well. I recognize the natural tendency to competition and when it comes to quality personnel, there is no doubt

that we will want them for our mission. But I also think we need to recognize that each ministry has a different approach and corporate culture and that some people will fit better into one mission than another. If we genuinely believe that, then maybe we can commit ourselves to praying for laborers, not only for ourselves but for one another and helping each other out whenever possible. LCJE exists to foster networking and inter-agency relationship building and cooperation. Maybe that can happen in the area of recruitment as well.

*David Brickner
dbrick@aol.com*

Case Study: Utilizing the Local Church for Jewish Evangelism

By Murray Tilles, Light of Messiah Ministries

**LCJE CEO Conference
France
May 2005**

Jewish evangelism. All of us are involved in reaching Jewish people with the message of Jesus. We all have a burden. We all want to do a better, more effective job. However, in my 21 years of ministry to the Jewish community I have not heard a lot of new ideas, new methods, or new approaches. Mostly what I have heard, seen,

experienced, and done myself is a "variation on a theme". We hear about the new and different broadsides, new and more exciting media productions, new media or advertising campaigns, new messianic congregations. The discussions go on ad nauseam. How Jewish do we need to be? Is the messianic congregation or the Jewish mission the best model? Are we being overt enough? Are we being too aggressive? Is it ok to eat ham and call Him Christ? Are tracts the way to go?

The questions can go on and on.

But are we looking in the right direction? Are we seeing where God is really moving? Do we need to look in different places, think out of our boxes, and even change our paradigms? Are Jewish ministries being as effective as we can be? Can we do a better job and how? These are the questions I believe we need to be asking today.

It is my contention that Jewish ministries today are missing the most important and effective vehicle to

reach our people with the Gospel, the local church. We have a vast resource in the local church that we have never tapped into effectively. We have marketed our ministries, consciously or subconsciously, as "we are the experts". We do the work best. We are the marines. We go in first. We know our people. We are on the frontlines. We are on the cutting edge. Yet, it is not us, but the Gentiles who are reaching our people.

I have often heard it said, "The church isn't doing its job." "If the church was doing it's job, then our ministries would not be necessary." "Jewish people don't feel comfortable in the church." And yet, if the statistics are correct, they are doing a better job than we are. And, most Jewish people go to church after they come to the Lord, not messianic congregations. Gentiles do not need Jewish Evangelism Seminars; they are doing a very good job of reaching the Jewish people without us. More Jewish people are coming to the Lord at Willow Creek Church in Chicago and other progressive Bible churches around the country than through all of our ministries. The church isn't doing as bad a job as many people state.

So, What Do We Need To Do

I believe we need to recognize that the world around us is changing and

that we may need to change our models of ministry to tap into the way God is moving among our people.

I believe we need to be intentional. We may need to change our model of ministry thinking. If Jewish ministries have not been as successful as the local "Gentile" church in reaching Jewish people, then we need to help them do their job. We need to be more intentional in looking for Gentile believers who have Jewish friends. We need to be intentional about seeking out Gentile believers to help them do their job in the most effective way.

In order to accomplish this we must: Build Trust with the local church and Gentile believers.

What should our role be in the process?

1. Encouragers: We need to nudge, push, prod, provoke, and gently encourage our Christian contacts to share their faith...
2. Trainers: They will need help, they will be scared, they will not know it is ok to ask their Jewish friend, "May I pray for you?" or that it really is ok to use the name Jesus.
3. Testimony givers: Many Jewish people just need to hear that it is ok to accept Jesus from another Jewish person who has done it.

Because we, in Light of Messiah Ministries, are changing our ministry model to reach out to the Jewish community through their Gentile friends, we are

visiting with more Jewish people on a regular basis, having more fruitful and effective conversations, less of our time is spent with uninterested Jewish people, less time is spent building a caseload of contacts because our contacts are brought to us, and we are seeing more Jewish people come to the Lord through our efforts. In the past two years we have had 38 Jewish people accept the Lord. Five of those decisions happened through our nursing home ministry, three Jewish people accepted the Lord by calling us on the phone, and 30 decisions came to us through their Gentile friends. God is moving.

How Light of Messiah Ministries is doing it...

Shalom Baskets

Our shalom Basket Outreach accomplishes several things

1. Involves the local church and Christians: Christians get excited about building gift baskets for Jewish people for the Jewish New Year.
2. Encourages a Christian to do something proactive for their Jewish friend in a culturally relevant and non-confrontational way: Most Christians are afraid to extend a gesture of friendship to a Jewish person in a culturally relevant way. They do not know what to do or how to do it. Shalom Baskets give them the opportunity to step out in faith. This is the first

step to help them become a more effective witness.

3. Gets us on the doorstep of Jewish people's homes: Though we may not talk to the Jewish person about the Lord and may never meet the Jewish person we are delivering the basket to, we still have the opportunity to pray for them when we go to their home or place of business. This gives us personal contact with Jewish people who have Christian friends who care about them.

4. Builds the relationship between the Gentile and the Jewish person: The Jewish person always calls their Jewish friend to thank them for their kind gift and gesture of friendship. The believer may just say "thank you" or they may use the conversation as an opportunity to talk about deeper spiritual issues. The call may be used to wish the Jewish person a personal holiday wish. Never the less, Shalom Baskets build the relationship between the Christian and their Jewish friend.

5. Gives our ministry the opportunity to build a trusting relationship with Christians who have Jewish friends: In order for our ministry vision to grow, Christians have to trust us to protect their relationship with their Jewish friend and not violate their trust. The more they know they can trust us, the more personal they will become and the more entrance they will give us into their live and the lives of

their Jewish friends.

Building Bridges Seminars
Building Bridges Seminars are a modification of the traditional Jewish Evangelism Seminar that many ministries have. One of the problems we encountered with Jewish Evangelism Seminars was that the name itself turned people away. Even in the largest churches we had a very minimal turnout. People were afraid and even misunderstood the intent of the seminar. By changing the name to "Building Bridges: Understanding Jewish People" we made the name of the seminar more palatable and have seen an increase in attendance.

In addition to changing the name of the seminar we have made it our intent to not only teach on the Jewish roots of our faith, but to also meet Gentiles who have Jewish friend in order for us to follow up with them. Attendance at our Building Bridges Seminar means an invitation to start or join a Jewish Ministry Team at the church, get involved in prayer walking with our ministry, and getting involved in helping with our Shalom Basket outreach. So in addition to building bridges between the Gentile and their Jewish friend we are building bridges between the Gentile and our ministry.

Jewish Ministry Teams
We are developing the

concept of the Jewish Ministry Team in local churches to give us entrance into local churches on a more regular basis. A Jewish Ministry Team serves two main purposes:

1. Pray for our ministry and for the Jewish community. Have prayer in the church for Jewish people and Jewish friends of congregants.

2. Seek out people in the church with Jewish friends, give them encouragement, appropriate literature, and point them to our ministry for assistance.

Outline for Jewish Ministry Team Meeting

Place an announcement in bulletin and from the pulpit that there is a Jewish ministry team forming. "We will be praying for our Jewish friends and for the Jewish community. If you have a Jewish friend and need encouragement, literature to help you understand them, or just want to pray, please join us. You do not have to come to our ministry team meeting to let us know you have a Jewish friend so we can help you. You may contact.....at....."

Announce all meetings and make sure the JMT is known in the church.

Have special times of prayer and even special events for the Jewish holidays...apples and honey in the foyer for Rosh Hashanah? A Passover table set up in the foyer for Passover and the Feast of

Unleavened Bread?

Jewish Ministry Teams in local churches give our ministry a presence in the church on a regular basis. It lets people in the church know that we are here to help them if they have a Jewish friend or family member. Jewish Ministry teams serve as our liason into the local church. I am hopeful that as our teams expand in Atlanta that we will be able to bring this idea to other churches that we partner with in the southeast.

We are now working with five of the larger churches in Atlanta to begin Jewish Ministry Teams.

Prayer Walks

This month we began quarterly prayer walks in the Jewish areas around Atlanta. Prayer walking the Jewish neighborhoods of Atlanta is getting more Gentile believers involved with our ministry in a very non-threatening way.

Using the North American Mission Board literature as a model we have begun

College Campus Ministries

We are in the process of redefining how we do ministry on local college campuses. Rather than beginning our ministry by distributing literature and meeting people on the street

we are intentionally embracing the Christian students on campus in order to reach their Jewish friends. Once the relationship has been established we have been able to meet with more Jewish students alongside of their friends.

Emory University - Case Study:

Reach Gentile Christians to meet their Jewish friends. Build trust. Have office hours on campus. No literature distribution. Relationship building.

The end result: Decisions and Discipleship

Because we are working in and through the local church, discipleship of new Jewish believers becomes an easier process. The majority of Jewish people we pray with to accept the Lord have their Gentile friend with them during the seeking and decision making stage of their journey. Their Gentile believing friend is actively involved in and interested in the growth of their Jewish friend's spiritual life. Usually the Jewish person begins to attend church with their Gentile friend and gets grounded in a local church in that way. We only need to do minimal follow up, which we do. But the bulk of the responsibility for the discipleship of the new Jewish believer is left in the hands of their Gentile friend

and the local church. We help by making ourselves available to do the baptism, and answer questions regarding growth and discipleship from a Jewish perspective. We also help the Jewish person speak to their Jewish family members and process the uniquely Jewish problems associated with accepting Jesus and being raised in a Jewish home.

Because of the change in the focus of our efforts we are experiencing less opposition... we are flying under the Jewish community's radar... and more fruit for the Kingdom.

What I have shared with you today is not just a change in what we are doing, but a change in the way that we are thinking. It is not just a change in methodology, but a change in the philosophy of how we approach Jewish evangelism. It is a change in how we are intentionally trying to reach our Jewish people. With God's help and with the help of our Gentile brothers and sisters in Christ we will see a greater expansion of the kingdom among the Jewish community in Atlanta and the southeast.

I hope that these ideas have been helpful and challenging to you all.

Murray Tilles
tilles@mindspring.com

Contextualization in Jewish Ministry

A Complementary Approach with Cautious Admonitions

By Tim M. Sigler, Instructor of Hebrew and Biblical Studies, Moody Bible Institute

Tim Sigler's article is a shortened version of a paper he gave in Los Angeles at the LCJE NA meeting in March 2005.

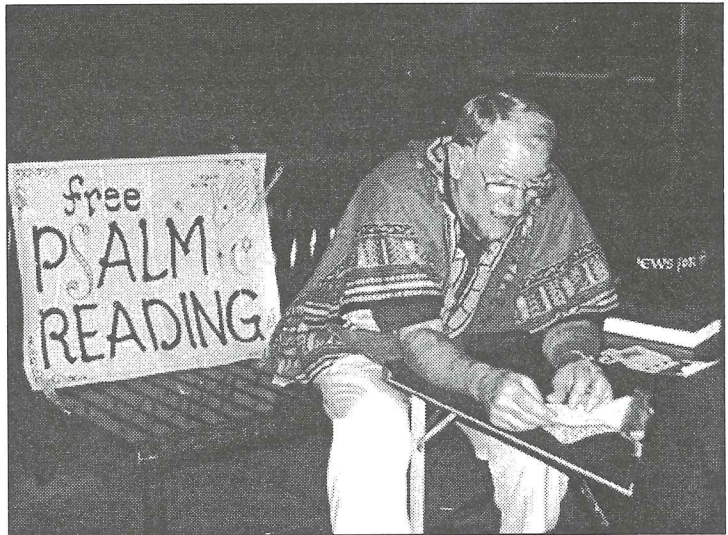
The need to address the subject of appropriate and inappropriate forms of contextualization in Jewish evangelism arises from the growing acceptance of Jesus as Messiah among Jewish people rather than from his rejection. With the tremendous reception of the gospel message among the remnant of Israel in recent years, success has provided its own challenges.

Therefore, the issues that follow are not to be understood as invalidating all forms of Jewish religious expression by believers in Jesus. Rather they serve as cautious admonitions to avoid theological errors that overshadow the goals of contextualization¹ and prove destructive to a truly Messianic faith in Jesus.

Contextualization - Its Value

As Missiologist Dean Gilliland points out,

The term "contextualization" first appeared in 1972 in a publication for the Theological Education Fund entitled *Ministry in Context*. This document laid out the principles which would



Free Psalm Reading at BYG Melbourne 2005. - "What are these people saying?"

govern the distribution of funds for the Third Mandate of the TEF. The scholarships were awarded for the graduate education of scholars in the international church. Contextualization was described as "the capacity to respond meaningfully to the gospel within the framework of one's own situation."²

Though the organization about which Gilliland writes was closely associated with the offices of the World Council of Churches, conservative Evangelicals were also beginning to ponder the issues of Christ and culture. Although many had understood this phenomenon in terms of

accommodation, indigenization, or inculturation, it was acknowledged that God communicated to humans in cultural contexts, that the Bible was given as divine revelation in the context of human language, that Jesus took on human flesh to become incarnate, and that if missionaries are to be God's messengers they must engage their receptor cultures in a similar incarnational fashion.³

There are, however, certain pitfalls to avoid when attempting to share the gospel within the context of a particular cultural milieu. Some aspects of cultural life may be incompatible with the gospel or unredeemable.

While contextualization seeks to give new and redeemed significance to cultural forms, it is possible to uncritically gloss over immovable forms and use them without changing their meanings. Thus, as Gilliland observes, a critical (thinking) approach centers on how features of traditional culture – rituals, songs, stories, customs, music – are brought under the scrutiny of biblical teaching. Here the culture and the Scriptures are evaluated concurrently in the search for new ways to express belief and practice. One must ask who will carry out the process, and how accurate are the meanings derived from both customs and the Scripture.⁴

Syncretism, on the other hand, avoids such critical analysis and moves immovable forms rather carelessly, thus attempting to blend the unblendable. As Wheaton missiologist A. Scott Moreau observes, "Case studies of syncretism are found throughout the Bible. Israel, forsaking the command to love God alone (Deut 5:1-6:5), borrowed from the Canaanites ideas such as idolatry (Judg 2:19; Ps 106:35-39), shrine prostitution (1 Kgs 14:24), and witchcraft (2 Kgs 17:16-17)."⁵ When anything other than Jesus and his Lordship comes to serve as the center of the missiological, ecclesiological, or practical life of the individual believer or believing community, the diagnosis may rightly be

called syncretism. Whether these central items include issues of cultural identity, familiar traditions, worship styles, acceptance by one's social group, or the idealization of the values of one's social framework, holding to anything other than the exaltation of Jesus as Lord as the central goal of the believer's life is syncretistic.⁶

Where the central goal of the believer remains the mission and majesty of the Messiah (Mt 28:18-20; Phil 2:5-11), a critical approach to contextualization will regularly examine ministry efforts for hints of syncretism. As Moreau explains, there are four methods of analysis that the careful contextualizer employs to test for the presence of syncretistic tendencies within a receptor culture. While some Messianic leaders would argue at this point that the Gentile world is the receptor of the blessings given first to the Jews as God's chosen people, one must not forget that as Messianic Jews we have been entrusted with the message of Jesus as Messiah – a message which once came to our people but was rejected (Jn 1:11). We now, as remnant recipients of God's gracious choice, must return to our own kinsmen with a life-changing message of salvation through Jesus the Messiah. The Jewish community at large is, in this instance, a receptor culture which stands in need of the

gospel. This gospel was, after all, preached to the Jew first and also to the Greek (Rom 1:16). Moreau's explanation is as follows:

To examine practices for syncretistic tendencies, we must first use a phenomenological approach in which we simply uncover what is actually happening or being taught. Built on that, we use theological and cultural analysis to understand what is happening. Finally, we evaluate what we have discovered in light of biblical truth. As a replacement of essential elements of the gospel with alternative religious practices or understanding, syncretism must be exposed and challenged. The means by which this is done are critical, and must be culturally informed.⁷

This last point should not be lost to over-zealous truth seekers. It is possible, in the name of biblical discernment to alienate undisciplined believers who are open to sound teaching before they have been carefully⁸ exposed to such. Care must be exercised to warn against false practices and teaching with gentleness and meekness (Gal 6:1). Once again, this critical approach to contextualization keeps its focus on the Lordship of Messiah so the message of his gospel confronts a culture where it is in conflict with that message.

A few presuppositional elements guide this approach to Christ and

culture.⁹ 1) Every culture has both good and evil. There are certain ways people tend to respond, certain views people hold, certain things one culture does that another finds repulsive. Not everything, due to its _____-ness (fill in the blank Jewish, American, European, Black, etc., with any particular cultural group) is necessarily the right, best, or morally good way of acting. 2) The gospel cannot be communicated apart from culture. As mentioned above, God communicated to mankind in a cultural context, the Bible was revealed in a cultural context, and we each receive and share the gospel in cultural contexts. 3) The gospel cannot be equated with any one culture. Rather, the gospel presents challenges to the sinfulness of every culture to cause us all to reconsider what has seemed natural, normal, and necessary. It challenges us to "Examine everything carefully, and hold fast to that which is good" (1 Thess 5:21). It leaves no culture untransformed.

Theological Concerns within Messianic Judaism

As Arnold Fruchtenbaum has suggested regarding the history of the Messianic Movement, "It is still undergoing many labor pains and growth pains and it has not always been stable theologically, but the movement has made the public aware that a Jew can believe in Yeshua and still

have a strong Jewish identity."¹⁰ Thus, these observations are not meant to give ammunition to those who would therewith deny the legitimacy of the existence of Messianic Jewish congregations where the following excesses are not present, but unfortunately, such places seem to be the exception rather than the rule.

With careful consideration of the suggestions of several concerned Messianic leaders, I have limited the areas of my greatest concern with Messianic Judaism to the following four issues:

1. The Deity of Messiah / Trinity of God

It is possible to object to certain terminology in creedal statements which communicate poorly to a Jewish audience or have a very non-Jewish tone or frame of reference.¹¹ However, it is not acceptable to reject the entire concept or essence of the biblical truth which has been worked out in the creed. This latter approach, unfortunately, is being permitted and promoted by some within Messianic Judaism concerning the issue of Messiah's deity and the trinity. Menachem Kalisher, an Israeli Pastor, laments that "the denial of the deity of Yeshua" is a problem among some Jewish believers.¹² Rather than debate whether or not the deity of Yeshua or the trinity need to be rethought,

Messianic leaders should call one another to a full and hearty affirmation of these clear biblical truths and beware of efforts to remove such elements from their organizations' doctrinal statements.¹³

2. Jewish Non-need of Salvation in Jesus

The two-covenant theology, promoted by Yekiel Eckstein and hinted at by some Messianics,¹⁴ suggests that God has two plans of salvation - one for Jews and one for Gentiles. This is untenable if one holds to the trustworthiness of the New Testament Scriptures. Acts 4:12 declares, "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Though not a sweeping phenomena, this issue is nevertheless of grave consequence. If the notion is accepted that Jews do not really need Jesus because God has another way for them, the danger is that we will lose sight of our evangelistic task and fail to call the remnant to the faith for which God has preserved them.¹⁵

3. Torah Observance in Rabbinic Fashion.

While believers through the centuries have neglected the positive value of the first five books given by divine revelation, some Messianic Jews are now trying to make up for this loss over-zealously. Here, the issue is not 'Are we under Torah?' but

'Who determines the halakah?' There have even been discussions about appointing a Messianic Beit Din to determine Messianic Jewish halakah. This is another example of the disturbing trend discussed by Israeli Pastor Baruch Maoz,

One of the greatest errors of the Messianic movement is the fact that it has placed Jewishness at the center of its life. That is where Jesus should be, no one and nothing else. He alone deserves to be the focus of our attention, devotion and commitment. He alone has the right to our hearts. A congregation or an individual that spends much time on cultivating, defending, promoting and insisting on its Jewishness has chosen to ignore the high calling of God in Messiah Jesus, because it has placed its focus where it should not be.¹⁶

It is unfortunate, and certainly not the example of Yeshua himself (Lk 4:16-21), to hold a Torah service with no mention of the One who fulfilled Torah. Such a focus is misguided.

In late 1999, a new Messianic Jewish forum was organized to promote "a mature Messianic Judaism." Stuart Dauermann is the organization's president, and the description from their website is as follows:

With the cry "Hashivenu" the Torah service concludes, imploring God to bring us back to himself. It is our conviction that HaShem brings Messianic Jews to a

richer knowledge of himself through a modern day rediscovery of the paths of our ancestors - Avodah (liturgical worship), Torah (study of sacred texts), and Gemilut Chasadim (deeds of lovingkindness).

Our goal is a mature Messianic Judaism. We seek an authentic expression of Jewish life maintaining substantial continuity with Jewish tradition. However, Messianic Judaism is energized by the belief that Yeshua of Nazareth is the promised Messiah, the fullness of Torah. Mature Messianic Judaism is not simply Judaism plus Yeshua, but is instead an integrated following of Yeshua through traditional Jewish forms and the modern day practice of Judaism in and through Yeshua. Messianic Judaism will only attain maturity when it has established communal institutions, which are capable of expressing its ideals and transmitting them effectively to ourselves, to our children, and to a skeptical world.

In light of the discussion of critical vs. uncritical contextualization, what is at the center of this organization? However, according to current Messianic approaches to Torah, "Who cares about contextualization? We keep Torah because God commands it."

It is my conviction that Jewish believers have liberty to live a Jewish lifestyle where this does not

contradict Scripture. But in light of the many urgings to place ourselves under the Torah as it has come to be understood according to rabbinic halakah, Jesus' warnings not to elevate the teachings of men as a commandment of God is most needed. And certainly the veneration of the Oral Torah is to be excluded. Though classes on Jewish literature and culture can be very enjoyable, it would be an excess in any congregation to offer expositions of rabbinic literature rather than Scripture.

4. The Mistaken Identity Crisis

How would you say it? "I'm a Jew, a Jew who believes in Jesus, a Jewish believer, Jewish Christian, Hebrew Christian, Messianic Jew, Jesus-believing Jew, a part of Israel, a part of the Church, a part of the remnant, . . . a bit confused!?" The apostle Paul lacks no self-understanding when he comfortably describes himself as a Jew and as one with the people called Christians. Granted, the word Christian arose as a pejorative term in Acts 11:26. But by the end of the book, the Jewish King Herod Agrippa II mocked Paul for trying to convince him to become a Christian. Here, Paul answers, "I would to God, that whether in a short or long time, not only you, but also all who hear me this day, might become such as I am" (11:29). Though some

may stretch the length of time before which the term Christian became a common designation for Messiah Jesus' followers, Paul did not find it mutually exclusive to identify as a Jew and as a Christian. Neither did he tolerate shame for Gentile brethren, but was fully connected to both Jewish and Gentile believers.

I fear that the value of contextualization is lost on many who grow up with the rhetoric promoted by some Messianic leaders. In a youth perspective article in *Messianic Jewish Life!* magazine, one young person shares her struggle to find a congregational home as she approaches an entry-level position in a competitive job market which is almost certain to land her in the hinterland of rural America. The following excerpt provides an example of a disturbing trend.

Some of my fondest childhood memories are from growing up in a Messianic synagogue. They include felt board lessons in Shabbat school to Purim puppet shows to Bat Mitzvah and beyond. I'm eternally thankful for these experiences that helped make me the person I am today. Now that I'm away at school, one of the few things I truly miss is my old congregation.

My childhood memories are also flavored by a wide variety of church experiences. Not unlike the children of other spiritual leaders, I

went with my father to countless speaking engagements. Between Passover demonstrations, pulpit supply, or even tagging along with friends, I've seen it all from A to Z. Or in this case, Baptist to Unitarian. As I grow older, I feel less tolerant of most Christian environments. Despite early exposure and an open mind - sometimes too open - I have problems with any spiritual environment different from my own Messianic Jewish roots. Except for an isolated experience at an Intervarsity conference for fraternity and sorority members, I find myself uncomfortable in Christian settings. I'm not always comfortable in Messianic congregations that are more charismatic than my own more traditional, conservative synagogue upbringing. (but that's another can of worms.) In psychology circles, I think this is what they call conditioning. Even simple terminology turns me off. The name Jesus Christ strikes a discordant note in my ear: His name is Yeshua, and He's my Messiah. My father is not a pastor; he's a rabbi, and he leads a synagogue, not a church. I am not a Christian - and I'm certainly not converted - I'm a Believer. And I am a Jew.¹⁷

Is it really the desire of some Messianic leaders to raise Jewish youth who emerge at adulthood understanding their Jewish identity in terms that put

them at odds with the larger body of Messiah made up of both Jew and Gentile? Through an imbalanced teaching of the Jewish roots of Messianic faith, has there been a promotion of a negative attitude toward the Gentile expression of Messiah's worship by branches, which have been grafted into the Olive Tree? I believe we have failed Messianic youth and adults when we insist on such a degree of Jewish terminological precision that the goal of contextualization - the accurate communication of truth - is lost. It is disingenuous to claim to be a "believer" on the one hand and to say emphatically, "I am not a Christian - and I'm certainly not converted . . ." on the other.

Unfortunately, terminology issues are not the only problems that emerge from such uncritical contextualization. The same youth perspective article continued to describe what has become a common dilemma for many who find themselves geographically displaced from their Messianic synagogue. The author continues,

So perhaps now my impending dilemma of relocation and spirituality is becoming a little clearer. If I have difficulty feeling at home with fellow believers - and sometimes my own Messianic family members - then what will I do when I find myself in Kalispell, Montana? I've been thinking and praying about this

question over the last year or so. And I think I've found an answer: traditional Judaism.

Don't worry I'm not renouncing my faith, far from it! But given the choice between a conservative synagogue and a small Bible church, I think I'd prefer to wake up early on Saturday mornings, not Sundays.

Aside from my comfort and terminology issues, I have other reasons as well. Because I've always believed that my relationship with Yeshua is one of the most personal elements of my faith, I don't need anyone else to maintain that relationship. But the Judaic elements of my faith - the traditions, the holidays, the prayers - depend on a community.¹⁸

Though some would downplay the significance of a youth perspective article in the theological evaluation of Messianic Judaism, this brief personal story is indicative of the issues facing the movement as a whole. Is traditional Judaism a valid option? Should Jews refuse to feel at home with non-Jewish believers in Jesus? Can a Messianic Jewish believer legitimately claim not to be a Christian? Is being a believer in Jesus just a personal *shtick* - though one's real community is found among Jewish non-believers? The answers to each of these questions should be an emphatic, "No!"

Why Do These Errors Plague Us?

Four possible reasons stand out when considering the source of the above-mentioned theological excesses:

1. *A Low View of the New Testament's Trustworthiness.* Messianic Rabbi and Adjunct Professor of Jewish Studies at Fuller Theological Seminary, Mark Kinzer, makes shocking statements about ecclesiology in his article/booklet titled *The Nature of Messianic Judaism*. He claims that instead of one *ekklesia* there are two: one Jewish and one Gentile. These two bodies are to function separately though with mutual respect. This seems untenable in light of Paul's explanation in Eph 4:4-5 regarding "one body." Much less does this fit the teachings of Jesus who clearly predicted, "I will build my church" [not churches] (Mt 16:18). However, Kinzer's conclusions seem less ironic when one realizes that Kinzer does not hold to a similar view of the New Testament's trustworthiness. He sees Paul's ecclesiology contradicting that of the book of Acts - where he wishes to see a permanent Jewish superiority from Jerusalem. Of course, Messianic Jewish Rabbis are to fulfill this authoritative Jerusalem church role today. Kinzer's doctrine of Scripture allow for such contradictions.¹⁹

Oddly enough, while

some strive with great effort to keep the minute details of the Mosaic Law, and the much more stringent commands of the rabbis, the same people are willing to dismiss commands of the New Testament claiming that its human writers may have penned their books in a less-than-accurate manner.

2. *An Over-Emphasis on the Social Sciences in our Theology of Mission.* The educational emphasis at many schools of missionary research and training today is driven by an emphasis on the social sciences. Rather than a robust theology of mission derived from the early church's success recorded in the book of Acts, it is possible for those in Ph.D. programs in world missions, now often called intercultural studies, to assume they know enough about the Bible and not enough about the way humans think.²⁰ When we learn our target audience well and understand their felt needs, we can take out the obstacle and they will accept our message. Since this idea works in modern marketing scenarios, why not pattern our missiological enterprise after it?

3. *The Predominating Adoption of Pragmatism.* Pragmatism's slogan is "Whatever works!" The misguided notion that "If we package it right, people will buy it" is an underlying attitude which fuels much uncritical contextualization. The question is no longer,

"What will communicate the clearest and with the least amount of necessary cognitive dissonance?" Today the uncritical missiologist and the short-sighted congregational leader simply asks "Is it Jewish?" - implying that "If it's Jewish, it will work!" This underlying principle of pragmatism appears subtly in David Stern's footnote about Franz Rosenzweig. After describing how this once assimilated Jewish intellectual considered becoming a Christian - but was lead back to Judaism through the beauty he admired at a Yom Kippur service - he speculates: "Had Messianic Judaism existed then, would Rosenzweig have become a Messianic Jew?"²¹ We should all be able to answer that hypothetical question in the negative without a second thought - unless we too have bought into a pragmatist gospel.

4. *An Unhealthy Dose of Ethnocentric Pride*. On the personal level, when Jewish believers speak of Gentile believers in pejorative or derogatory terms - implying that being Jewish makes one better, smarter, more likely to know what Jesus would want others to do today, etc. - we misuse the place of privilege God has given us. Let us forsake terminology and unhealthy attitudes which undo the shalom which Messiah established between us and our Gentile brethren (Eph 2:15). On the academic and

ministerial level, when Jewish believers consider themselves to be "the direct heirs of the early Jewish disciples of Yeshua" and therefore have no need, use or appreciation for the development of doctrine within the church's history, we deceive ourselves about our real spiritual mishpochah. Most Jewish people who are believers in Jesus today were led to salvation through the witness of a faithful Gentile Christian - who most likely has never worn the tallis or tzit-tzit. In this sense, though historically the gospel came to the nations through the Jews, today Jews most often become the talmidim (disciples) of Gentile followers of Jesus. We do have accountability to the church at large - we are one body after all.

In spite of the excesses and errors I was compelled to address, I would like to leave other concerned parties with a word of encouragement. Not all Messianic Jewish believers are convinced by the calls to return to Judaism. Rather than promoting a response of unbiblical overreaction, please accept this paper as a challenge to a robust, authentic Messianic Jewish expression of the gospel and biblical faith.

Tim M. Sigler
tim.sigler@moody.edu

Notes

1. Or "recontextualization" back into its original Jewish cultural context. I choose to use the term contextualization because of its familiarity in the missiological discussion and to make the following additional point. If Christian missionaries recognize the incarnational force of Jesus and his message for African, Asian, South American cultural contexts by encouraging the redeemed use of traditional rituals, stories, music and customs, how much more natural is it for Jewish believers to return to the redeemed use of traditional worship familiar to Jesus himself?
2. Dean Gilliland, "Contextualization," in *The Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, Ed. A. Scott Moreau (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 225.
3. See Paul G. Hiebert and Eloise Hiebert Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry: Planting Churches in Band, Tribal, Peasant and Urban Societies* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995).
4. Gilliland, 227.
5. A. Scott Moreau, "Syncretism," in *The Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, Ed. A. Scott Moreau (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 924. Here I also owe a debt of gratitude to Jhan Moskowitz, Chief of Station at the Chicago Branch of Jews for Jesus for a helpful conversation about the dangers of syncretism within the context of Messianic Jewish ministry

(Chicago, IL, June 2002).
Note: credit given to ministry leaders or scholars in this paper does not imply their endorsement of every view expressed by its author. I remain solely accountable for its content.

6. I am indebted to the expertise of veteran missiologist Paul G. Hiebert for these observations. He graciously granted me a lengthy personal interview to interact with me regarding the topic of this paper on July 10, 2002, at Trinity International University, Deerfield, IL. The outworking of some of his contribution to these issues may be found in the following volumes:

Anthropological Insights for Missionaries (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985);

Anthropological Reflections for Missionaries (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994).

7. Moreau, 924.

8. This is the place for genuine discernment rather than theological pride. Perhaps an otherwise mature believer might say, "Why are you still worshipping with them? I told you that they fail to emphasize . . . or have an inadequate view of . . . at that congregation. Frankly, they are *farmisht* theologically!" When the undiscerning disciple hears such arrogance and lack of kindness toward the members of the misguided congregation, he is likely to be more attracted to the loving doctrine-free fellowship and acceptance

he finds among the misguided. This scenario is exponentially more serious when cross-cultural communication barriers are added to the mix. As mature believers, we should be seekers of truth no matter what the format. But we dare not allow ourselves to pollute the truth with our pride and lack of kindness.

9. Hiebert (personal interview).

10. www.ariel.org/qaframe.html

11. Louis Goldberg, "Uncomfortable with the Nicene Formulation: The Doctrine of God Recontextualizing the Council of Nicea" *LCJE* (1996) 26 pages.

12. Menachem Kalisher, "Pros and Cons: On the Use of the Siddur in Messianic Jewish Congregations," *Mishkan* 34 (2001) 99. See also Fred Klett, "The Centrality of Messiah and the Theological Direction of the Messianic Movement," *LCJE Bulletin* 68 (2002) 25-28.

13. Note the concern raised by Gershon Nerel, "Creeds Among Jewish Believers in Yeshua between the World Wars," *Mishkan* 34 (2001) 68 n.32 [or, 73 n.133].

14. I spoke personally with a paper presenter at a recent Messianic conference. He suggested to me that Paul was ambiguous about whether or not pious Jews needed to be saved through faith in Jesus. I do not wish to oust him as he was timid about his private assertion and may still be won back to a biblical position if he is confronted prayerfully in

love with gentleness.

15. See Mitch Glaser, "Critique of The Two Covenant Theory," *LCJE* (1988).

16. Baruch Maoz, pre-publication manuscript of *Judaism is not Jewish: An Evaluation of Messianic Judaism* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1999), 38. Cited in Klett, 27
17. Eve Fischer, "On being a Messianic Jew in Quincy, Illinois, for instance," *Messianic Jewish Life!* 73/3 (2000) 18-19.

18. *Ibid.* 19.

19. See Mark Kinzer, *The Nature of Messianic Judaism: Judaism as Genus, Messianic as Species* (West Hartford, CT: Hashivenu Archives, 2000); but not without the excellent critique by Derek Leman in *Keshet: A Journal of Messianic Judaism* 12 (2001) 98-110.

20. This anecdotal scenario is not intended to imply that the name of a school's Ph.D. program in a particular area presupposes the content of the courses. However, some programs increasingly lend themselves to being rightly criticized. Fuller has turned out such unhealthy approaches as power evangelism, the church marketing movement, and now some very disturbing approaches to Messianic Judaism.

21. David H. Stern, *A Messianic Jewish Manifesto* (Clarksville, MD: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1991), 21 n.18.

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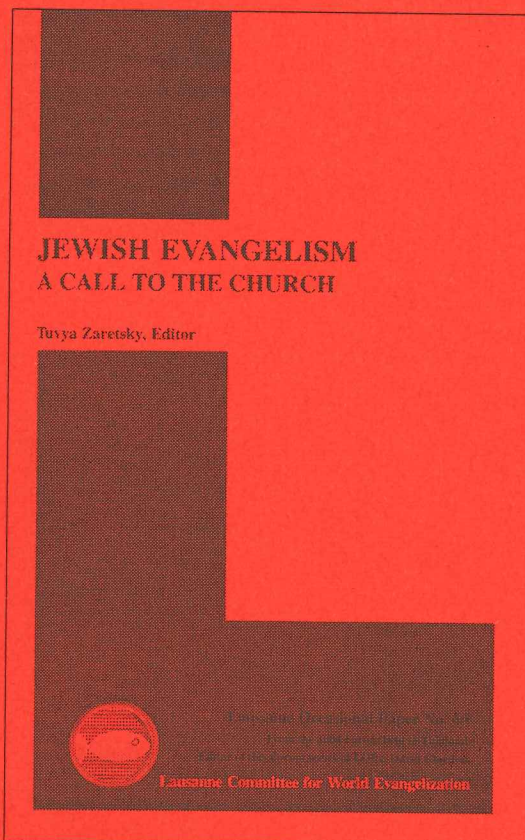
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lhirsch@celebratemessiah.com.au

Europe: Hartmut Renz, Evangeliumsdienst für Israel,
Postfach 200218, D-70751 Leinfelden-Echterdingen, Germany.
lcje@evangeliumsdienst.de

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Japan: Rev. Teiichiro Kuroda, c/o VIP Kansai Center 5F, 2_3_10,
Kitahama, Chuo_ku, Osaka, Japan 541_0041. lcjeyapan@nifty.com

North America: Dr Theresa Newell, 256 Thorn Street, Sewickley, PA
15143, USA. lcjena@comcast.net

Latin America: Mr David Sedaca, Chosen People Ministries, 241
East 51st Street, New York, NY 10022, USA.
David@Chosenpeople.com

South Africa: Rev. Roger Horwood, 36 Geneva Drive, Camps Bay
8005, South Africa. rhorwood@netactive.co.za.

International Coordinator & International Mailing Address:
Kjær-Hansen, Box 11, DK-8520 Lystrup, Denmark.
lcje-int@skjern-net.dk

Direktory Information: Birger Petterson, lcje-int@skjern-net.dk

LCJE Prayer Letter: Mary Chase, mchase@pobox.com

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