



**LAUSANNE  
CONSULTATION  
ON JEWISH  
EVANGELISM**

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**LAUSANNE CONSULTATION  
ON JEWISH EVANGELISM  
BULLETIN**



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## Anti-freedom Legislation

The big subject of conversation for people involved in Jewish evangelism in Israel has, in recent months, been whether the Knesset will pass a law proposal which curbs the freedom of expression for Messianic Jews and Christian mission in Israel.

The news of the law proposal had reached North America immediately before the beginning of the annual LCJE meeting in Philadelphia early in March, and it was bound to influence the meeting. Three press releases were issued which referred to the matter in different ways: "LCJE Meets in Philadelphia," "A Call to the Christian Community in North America" and "A Message to Israel - its People and Government". The last of these is quoted below. In this Bulletin you will find excerpts from the reports which the Messianic Action Committee in Israel has issued.

### A Message to Israel--its People and Government from the North American Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism

Whereas the Israeli Knesset is giving consideration to an amendment to its penal code (proposed paragraph 174c), which would prohibit, "the possession, printing, copying, distribution, sharing of, and import of advertisements to induce religious conversions,"

Whereas Israel is a free and democratic state whose founding documents and basic law guarantee the freedom of religious expression,

Whereas the right to freedom of speech and conscience are gifts, not of government, but of The Creator, and are thus inalienable and should not be restricted, Whereas the Jewish people, as a minority among the nations, have historically suffered similar restrictions of religious freedom which originated in the fears and prejudices of the prevailing authorities,

Therefore, be it resolved, that the above referenced amendment to the penal code must be seen as a flagrant attempt to censure the freedoms of speech and conscience of all facets of Israeli society,

Be it further resolved that we strongly urge the people and government of Israel to consider this proposal ill-advised, which will infringe not only on the right of religious expression, but could also lead to further and more broadly-based restrictions of political or social expressions.

## God's Promise to Abraham: Our Encouragement in the Face of Failure and Opposition

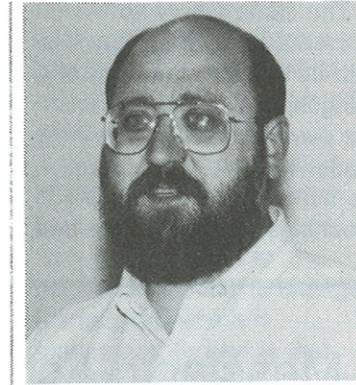
By Rev. Fred Klett, LCJE-NA Coordinator

*I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you (Genesis 12:2-3).*

God promised Abraham that through his seed would blessing come to the whole world. Of course, as followers of Yeshua we know that it is through the Messiah and the preaching of the gospel that this promise finds ultimate fulfillment (Galatians 3:8-9). There were times in the past, and times in the present, when our own failings, and opposition from powerful men seem to threaten the progress of the promise. Perhaps we can learn a lesson from Israel's history.

In early chapters of Exodus we see two opposing spiritual forces at work: the efforts of the evil one, manifested through Pharaoh, and the power of God, manifested through his people, his providence, his purpose, and his promise.

Pharaoh attempted to wipe out the seed of promise with a decree that every male child born to the Israelites was to be thrown into the Nile (Exodus 1:22).



Surely behind the scenes we can see wicked spiritual forces attempting to thwart the promise of God. Yet the Sovereign One had other plans. God always has his people who act in faith, even at the risk of their own lives. The mother and sister of Moses trusted God and acted out of their convictions. Through them God brought Israel's deliverer: Moses.

(Notice the interesting relationship between the name of Moses and the role assigned to him. Moses was drawn out of the Nile, so he was given a name with that meaning. Egypt was known as the land of the Nile, the river being central to that nation's identity. Just as Moses was drawn out of the Nile, so also God would use him to draw the people of Israel out of the Land of the Nile.)

Moses was a man of

action, a man of commitment to a cause, a man who identified with his people. He killed the Egyptian oppressor out of conviction, yet God needed to show things wouldn't work out if Moses did them his own way, by his own schemes and his own power. He had to flee Egypt and hide in the desert, yet the Lord was still with him. In his exile he came to Midian and met Ruel, also known as Jethro. Ruel means God is my friend and Jethro means excellence. Jethro was a fellow descendant of Abraham (see Genesis 25:22) and, especially being a priest, was probably aware of the promises God had made to Abraham. Midian was hundreds of miles from Egypt, but God's hand of providence has a far reach!

God is faithful. He always remembers his covenant and takes note of the cries and groanings of his people. God's merciful covenant of blessing through Abraham was the basis of the Pass-over deliverance (Exodus 2:23-25). No earthly leader can stop the progress of the promise, as Pharaoh would dramatically learn.

Does this encourage you? Nothing can stop God's purpose of bringing blessing to the world through the ultimate seed of Abraham, Yeshua, the Messiah. Today

Yeshua, the Messiah. Today we are opposed by those, like Pharaoh, who attempt to thwart the plan of God. Like Moses, our own fleshly impulsivity and reliance on our own strength may also get in the way. Yet God has provided a greater deliverer and we have been told: Thanks be to God who always leads us in a victory procession in Messiah.

Jesus said 'I will build my congregation and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it' (2 Cor. 2:14 and Matthew 16:18).

The same God who delivered Israel from Egypt is with us today in the work of the gospel, no matter what our own failures and no matter what the opposition. He hears our cries and groanings today. May we be

found trusting God in the midst of our own weaknesses and in the face of those who oppose us. Be greatly encouraged in the work of Jewish ministry, for we have the promise that all peoples, and certainly the Jewish people (Romans 1:16), will receive blessing through the ultimate Seed of Abraham, our strong deliverer, Yeshua.

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to do that and therefore is seeking to add the following clauses:

1. Whoever holds without legal permission, or prints, copies, distributes, delivers or imports brochures, or publishes material which includes that which is for purposes of proselytising shall be liable to one year's imprisonment.

2. A brochure or publication which includes materials for proselytising will be confiscated.

### Threat to Democracy

This proposed legislation goes contrary to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* of the United Nations (Articles 18 and 19) which defends the right to "freedom of thought, conscience and religion" including the right to change one's religion or belief. The declaration also upholds the "freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers". Israel's own Constitution, under Articles 15 and 16, guarantees, "Freedom of conscience and the free exercise of all forms of worship" and, "Freedom of speech and the free expression of opinion in writing or in any other form".

The proposed law outlaws any literature or notice of an activity in which

an appeal is made for the recipients to alter their religious opinions. Such a law could be used against any individual who informed another of a Christian activity, or of the availability of Bibles or other Christian books. The proposal forbids "any form of effort to persuade another to change his religion" which is tantamount to saying that, while Israeli citizens are free to make up their minds about their religious opinions, they should exercise that freedom with no information except that permitted by those who insist that they should not change their opinion in the first place!

### Consultation

On March 5th a consultation of local Christian leaders met at the offices of HaGefen Publishing in Rishon LeTzion.

Those gathered recognised that the proposed bill was an attempt to eliminate any legal basis for Christian evangelism in the land and March 14 was designated as a day of prayer and fasting in Israeli congregations. Churches around the world were asked to make March 23 a day of prayer and solidarity with their Israeli brothers and sisters.

The consultation was concerned that this anti--

Christian legislation may be used by those who have no love for Israel. They therefore requested that those who take up the struggle do so in the meekness of Christ and out of a sense of sincere goodwill toward Israel. This crisis should not be used as an opportunity for "Israel-bashing". They called for a kind but firm response from fellow-believers worldwide to help secure Israel's democratic principles and ensure freedom of religious expression in the country.

### Knesset support

According to the Israeli Government Press Office, of the 120 Knesset members, 78 have stated that they will support the bill. Knesset Member Nissim Zvili, one of the two proposers of the bill, when challenged about the undemocratic nature of the law on the BBC Sunday programme, replied, "Of course we want a democracy. But even in a democracy you can't have people changing their religion..."

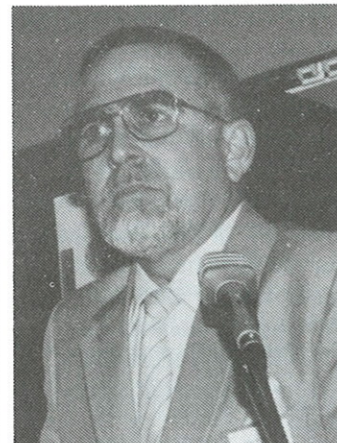
Those representing the Likud in the Knesset will support the proposed bill because of their strong nationalistic ideology, and because they need rabbinical Orthodox support to remain in power. Labour, which is the main opposition

## The Bill and the Messianic Action Committee

In "News from Israel" Spring 1997 - published by Christian Witness to Israel (CWI) - Baruch Maoz has written a presentation of and a comment on the law proposal which - if passed by the Knesset - makes it illegal to witness about Jesus in writing in Israel.

The article also describes what the Messianic Action Committee has done to prevent the bill from becoming law.

The Hebrew daily HaAretz reported on February 24th this year that Israel's parliament, the Knesset, had given preliminary approval to a new bill banning the printing and distribution of all evangelistic literature. The bill, sponsored by Moshe Gafni of the Torah Judaism Party and Nissim Zvili of the Labour Party, was passed in its preliminary reading by a



Baruch Maoz

vote of 21 to 7. If it becomes law it will be an offence "to hold, print, copy, distribute or hand out" literature which seeks to persuade others to change their religion. The penalty for violation would be one year's imprisonment.

### The Bill

The bill is an amendment to the "Enticement to Change Religion Law, 1977", which states:

1. Whosoever gives or promises to a person money, money's worth, or some other material benefit in order to induce him to change his religion, or in order that he may induce another person to change his religion, is liable to imprisonment for five years or a fine of £50,000 (Israeli pounds).

2. Whosoever receives, or agrees to receive, money, money's worth or some other material benefit in return for a promise to change, or to cause another person to change, his religion is liable to imprisonment for a term of three years or a fine of £30,000 (Israeli pounds).

In twenty years no one has been prosecuted under that law. Hence, Orthodox Members of Knesset have long felt that the wording of the 1977 law is vague and have wanted to make the phrasing more specific. The proposed amendment aims

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party, will support the bill in an attempt to curry favour with the same rabbinical parties. The Orthodox parties in Israel hold the balance of power and are able to determine which of the two main political parties will form the government.

### Face to face

On March 17th a group of 45 gathered from all over the country for the second National Consultation concerning the proposed law. Later that same day, a delegation of United Christian Council in Israel members and of the Action Committee met with Nissim Zvili.

Mr. Zvili received them kindly in his office and listened with interest to their protestations that the proposed law threatens the democratic nature of Israeli society, that it made possible the use of provocation, intimidation and abuse of police power and that the bill threatens Israel's status as the only true democracy in the Middle East. As a result, it threatens the USA's strong support of Israel because of the inevitable American grass-roots response to such a radical departure from democratic principles. The proposed law contradicts Israel's own constitution, as well as the international conventions to which Israel is signatory. The proposed law threatens to arouse the disgust of millions

of Christians worldwide, particularly of the Evangelicals who are Israel's most consistent allies.

### Who is a Jew?

Mr. Zvili inquired whether any of those present or those informally represented by them wished for Jews to cease to be Jews. When assured that such was not the case he insisted that, in light of such assurances, the law did not affect any of the communities represented because it referred only to those who laboured to cause Jews to cease to be Jewish. He chose to ignore the fact that the Supreme Court of Israel has handed down judgement on the effect that Jews who believe in and worship Jesus are no longer Jewish. Also, because they are no longer considered to be Jewish, there are clearly-defined legal restrictions placed upon Jewish Christians who wish to immigrate to Israel.

Mr. Zvili realised that one of the main tenets of Christianity is the propagation of its faith. He sought to assure the group by agreeing the present terms of the proposed law are too vague and need to be more clearly defined. He recognised that the present wording made room for unwarranted restrictions on civil liberties and promised to have the wording amended. He then explained that he

wished the law to criminalise any organisation in Israel whose primary purpose was evangelism. Such a law would outlaw the whole of evangelical Christianity! Mr. Zvili promised to work with the group on the final wording of the document but ignored their protestations that no wording which would make evangelism a criminal offence could be acceptable.

### Widespread response

The Messianic Action Committee in Israel has been encouraged by the world-wide response to its call for prayer and solidarity. Thousands of letters of protest have been received by Israeli embassies around the world. Letters have been received by the Prime Minister Mr. Binyamin Netanyahu, the Minister for Foreign Relations Mr. David Levy and the Knesset Chairman Mr. Dan Tichon and there appear to be signs of wavering on the part of the Israeli government.

But we must not be complacent. If the Israeli government has reason to believe that no further action will be taken when this initial wave of protest has rolled over them, we may be certain that the law will be enacted. The mere proposal of the law is already affecting the freedom to evangelise. In Eilat, a city inspector ordered a young man named Seth to stop

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distributing tracts, confiscated his literature and issued a fine. Seth refused to pay the fine and now faces a court case.

### Harassment in Eilat

The Eilat municipality has been harassing local believers for some time. Until now, when a case such as Seth's has come to court, it has been dismissed because at present evangelism is legal in Israel. Should the new bill become law, Seth would be imprisoned for one year. The Messianic Action Committee has asked the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) to take up the matter and to call for the court to order the municipality to cease these provocations. The ACRI is currently advising Seth but has not yet decided whether they will take up the case.

The Messianic Action Committee is also encouraged by the growing concern about the proposed law among a number of influential political and religious figures. The committee asks that we continue to write to Israeli officials and to encourage others who have not yet done so to write as well. If you have not yet written to the Israeli Ambassador and would like to do so a sample letter of protest is enclosed with this letter. The Action Committee asks that you write as a friend of Israel,

expressing concern that the Middle East's only democracy should even be contemplating such a course of legal action.

Above all, continue to pray that the Lord will overrule this attempt to crush the Body of Messiah in Israel. He is the sovereign Lord who, when the nations rage and the people imagine a vain thing, taking counsel against God and his Messiah, will laugh and hold them in derision.

\*\*\*

## A Letter to Each Member of the Knesset

**The Messianic Action Committee in Israel has so far (10 May) issued 19 reports. No. 17 has an English translation of a letter sent by the United Christian Council in Israel (UCCI). The letter is printed below.**

To Knesset Member .....  
date, 1997  
Knesset Israel  
Mishkan HaKnesset,  
Jerusalem

Dear Knesset Member ...

On Feb. 19 the Knesset passed in a Preliminary Hearing a proposed amendment (174C) to the

Penal Law 5757--1996. The undersigned represent the Messianic Jewish, Arab and expatriate congregations in Israel.

Many tens of thousands of fellow Messianic Jews in the USA and in Europe, as well as millions of Evangelical Christians (Israel's best and most active friends outside of the Jewish community), have been troubled to learn that our legislature is soon to discuss the above mentioned law. But we appeal to you as Messianic Jewish and Arab Christian citizens of Israel. The introduction of such a proposal threatens the democratic nature of our society and how it is viewed by the world.

Freedom of expression is a universally-recognized moral right which has been enshrined in Israel's Declaration of Independence, in our Basic Law: The Dignity of Man and His Freedom and in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights to which Israel is signatory and which explicitly states that all men are free to express and propagate their religion by any media. Israel is committed to maintain a free, democratic and pluralistic society. The institution of any form of religious censorship constitutes a negation of these worthy commitments. In a true democracy,

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minority rights are assiduously protected with the same vigor that the majority enjoys its own freedoms.

Claims are made to the effect that some have used immoral and illegal means in order to convince others to change their religion. We state here without reserve that neither we nor our co-religionists from among the gentiles engage in such abhorrent practices. Anyone who is willing to "buy converts" – be it a religious or a political view – is a criminal. Anyone who is willing to sell his soul for money does not have soul worth buying. We are all lovers of the truth and have no doubt that the truth has its own power to convince. It does not need the shameful support of disreputable acts.

Nothing can weaken the heartfelt commitment of Messianic Jews in Israel and abroad to the welfare of our State and our people. Nothing can undermine the goodwill of evangelical, non-Jewish citizens of the State. But it is already threatening to have a negative impact on the political, economic and moral support that our country enjoys among those who share our religious convictions overseas, including heads of government, leading reporters in the international media, policy makers, heads of churches and denomi-

nations and leaders in international commerce, tourism and industry.

Our country's moral standing in the world would be adversely affected by the passing of such a law. What is more, Israeli will be radicalised in the direction of an insular fundamentalism of the sort found today only in some pariah countries of the world. The extensive moral support our country enjoys from Evangelical Christians overseas will be put at risk. We are already hearing that governments, parliaments and influential persons in many countries have expressed their concern over this proposed amendment to the penal code, and that many thousands of protests have been coming to Israeli Embassies overseas.

In Israel today there are many religious expressions of Judaism, Islam, Christianity and other religions: Orthodox and Conservative Jews, Reformed Jews, Messianic Jews, Catholic, Russian Orthodox, Maronite and Evangelical and non-Evangelical Christians, and others. The civil rights and freedoms of all the adherents of these religious viewpoints would be infringed by the enactment of a law which forbade them to express the sincerity of their religious convictions by seeking to persuade others of their truth, such as the

above-mentioned amendment to the Penal Law proposes.

Messianic Jews and Evangelical Christians in Israel are like any other citizens of the state: we pay taxes, serve in the army, are active in all spheres of the national life, contribute to its culture and economy, promote immigration to Israel and faithfully maintain the laws of this country. In spite of libelous claims made by those who would oppose us, none of our evangelistic activity is conducted contrary to the law or to accepted moral mores. We have as much right to present our faith to all and any in an open and democratic manner as do the Habad Hassidim or Shas, who actively encourage men and women to join their ranks, sometimes by means we would never choose to employ.

Our people in Israel need to remember: there is a law of given to all men by God and which the best forms of legislative law can only seek to imitate and express. No government has the moral right to restrict or deny freedom of speech.

What is more, we wish to make it very clear: we will not, we cannot, obey the proposed law if it is ever enacted. Messianic Jews and evangelical Christians in Israel are bound by the same laws of conscience

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which bound Orthodox Jews through the centuries to prefer to suffer rather than deny their faith. You may fill the prisons with us, and still we will speak. You may forbid us to tell others what we believe to be true, but we will not and cannot be silent. How will the world respond when Israel imprisons its own citizens because they have distributed tracts describing their faith? How will the rest of the citizens of Israel accept such a reality?

We implore you to have the proposed law withdrawn from Committee and laid to rest where it belongs – on the ash heap of ill-conceived ideas.

Respectfully submitted by the Messianic Action Committee on behalf of the undersigned Elders and Congregational Leaders of Messianic congregations in Israel

Signature  
Name  
I.D. No.  
Address

**The following is the substance of an article that appeared in the Israeli Orthodox newspaper HaModiah on 7th March. It provides yet another indication of the current level of opposition to the gospel in Israel.**

Source: *CWI Factsheet*

### FORUM FOR STRUGGLE AGAINST MISSION FORMED BY ORGANISATIONS ENGAGED IN ABSORPTION OF RUSSIAN IMMIGRANTS

A joint meeting of major organisations engaged in the spiritual and social absorption of new immigrants from the CIS, announced the establishment of an "Immigrants' Organisational Forum for the Struggle against the Mission" that will co-ordinate the struggle against the various missionary groups, which have recently increased their activities among the new immigrants from the USSR.

The meeting was chaired by Yoseph Mendelewitzch, a former Prisoner of Zion, who immigrated to Israel some sixteen years ago and has since been active in the absorption of new immigrants from the CIS. He welcomed this initiative for co-operation between all organisations in this important struggle and expressed the hope of success in the struggle as public awareness increases.

A detailed review was presented of the methods used by various missionary groups active among the new immigrants from the USSR and the enormous resources invested by them to bring about a change in the religion of immigrants.

Attention was drawn to the legal implications of the present missionary law and to the efforts being made to bring about amendments to it.

Rabbi Ze'ev Steiglitz, the Co-ordinator of the Struggle against the Mission in the Lev Le'Achim organisation, revealed the plans of the missionaries who belong to the "Messianics" group to distribute booklets printed in Russia and imported to Israel which call for a change of religion. He called on the various organisations to consult together about how they can confront the extensive missionary activity and increase public awareness of the problem.

It was agreed, as a first step, to place the emphasis on increased public awareness of the need to amend the missionary law, in accordance with the bill which passed a preliminary reading in the Knesset, and, to that end, to form a broad lobby among Knesset members from all parties. It was further agreed that all the public organisations serving the new immigrants from the CIS that are members in the "Forum for the Struggle against the Mission" will sign a united petition directed to the Prime Minister, the Members of the Cabinet and the Members of Knesset, demanding immediate completion of the amendments to the mission law.

## REFLECTION PAPER ON 14TH LCJE-NA CONFERENCE MARCH 3-5, 1997

By Theresa Newell, Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry

As the Amtrak rumbled from Washington D.C. into Philadelphia's 30th Street Station mid-day on March 3, a mixture of snow and sleet had begun falling. In contrast to the northeast's late winter weather, the LCJE-NA conference offered warm, welcoming fellowship for the next two days. LCJE conferences (this was my fifth or so) are unlike most meetings I attend. Relaxed meetings with those involved in Jewish evangelism of every stripe, informative papers, worship and prayer filled each day. This year's conference did not disappoint.

Two issues dominated the discussions: the news which had come over e-mail just the previous weekend from Israel of the anti-missionary legislation which had gone to committee in the Knesset; and the Southern Baptist resolution on Jewish evangelism which had been passed June 13, 1996, and media reaction to it. Before the conference ended, an ad hoc committee had drawn up LCJE resolutions in response to the first to be sent to both Israel's government and to the US press. Concern was expressed not only because of the drastic effects the legislation, if passed, could have on believers and Christian witness in Israel,



but also the message that such legislation would send to the world community about Israel's lack of regard for basic human rights of conscience and religion to which all democratic nations subscribe. Those resolutions have been a tool I have been able to use since the meeting to both governmental and Christian agencies.

Jim Sibley, Southern Baptist NA coordinator for Jewish evangelism who wrote the resolution passed by his Convention in New Orleans last summer, reported on the long history of Southern Baptist work among the Jews and called for coordination among denominational churches who have ministries among the Jewish people. Jim's rejoicing that the media heat that this resolution brought has given international

opportunities for the Gospel via CNN and the other networks. (On March 16, the article, "Some of Their Best Friends are Jews" by Jeffrey Goldberg appeared in The New York Times Magazine - a not-unbiased interview with Jim and his Home Mission Board directors about "the conversion of American Jews." So it continues.)

Our '97 conference was on the home turf of North American Coordinator, Fred Klett, who called the 66 participants to order for each of the ten sessions of the conference by an impressive blowing of the shofar or by strumming his guitar and leading us in worship songs. One of the most joyful events of each conference is that local believers attend sessions, provide praise music, and give the history of Jewish mission in their area, as Herb Links did in Philadelphia - a city in which he has ministered since 1971.

Hearing papers by biblical scholars, renowned missiologists and theologians around the topic of Jewish evangelism and messianic congregational life is always more than worth the trip to any LCJE meeting. Dr. Arthur Glasser's counter to Rabbi Tovia Singer's anti-missionary lectures and tapes, Dr. Louis Goldberg's

paper on the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, Dr. Kai Kjær-Hansen's report on the "[new] Jewish universalists" and Dr. Barry Leventhal's apologetic for God in the face of the Holocaust were a sample of the rich fare offered at this conference. By the second day I felt as if I were holding the proverbial teacup under a waterfall!

With leaders attending the conference from 36 mission societies, congregations, resource agencies and theological institutions from across North America, it is impossible not to find friends to catch up with and new friends to meet between sessions. Processing information from each paper always gets put off till after the conference is over. Happily, papers are printed for savoring later. Over lunch I got a report from a Lutheran worker in the southern California and a messianic pastor from New England; at dinner we talked about cooperation among denominational churches working in Jewish evangelism. Plans were made to meet between conferences in our various locations around particular interests such as education for messianic pastors, coordination of prayer around the proposed anti-missionary bill in Israel, or training for summer evangelism campaigns. "Hineh ma tov" would be a good motto for LCJE gatherings.

A catalog of literature

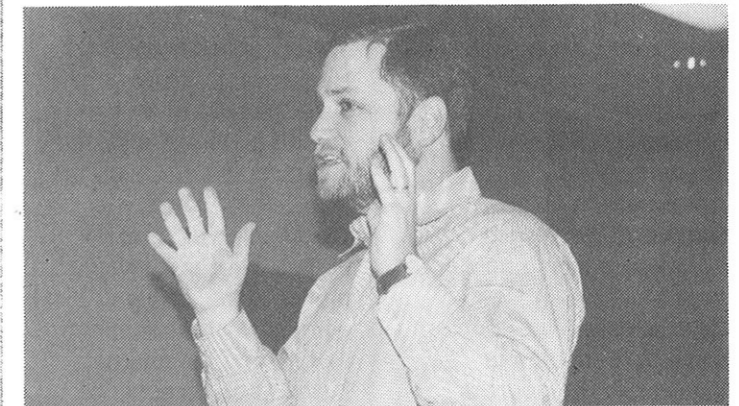
and videos for use among Russian Jewish immigrants, the announcement of Stan Telchin's new book, *Abandoned*, and materials for use by Messianic congregational leaders were additions to the growing resources available for Jewish work. Also, from conference to conference, I forget how much I depend on Susan Perlman's media updates. She not only collects a year's worth of articles which touch on Jewish evangelism (over 700 for the past year), but categorizes them by topic for discussion and for distribution.

Susan's offer of the media service updates is characteristic of the attitude I always meet with at an LCJE conference. While there are bound to be differences when such a wide variety of leaders gather together around the topic of Jewish evangelism, I am struck by the spirit of Jesus' love present in each meeting. The common call to "take the Gospel to the Jew first" binds this group together

with cords of the Spirit's love. As the newly produced LCJE-NA brochure declares: "There is really no other organization like the LCJE ... The LCJE is the only assembly providing fraternal interaction for leaders who represent the diversity found in the broad spectrum of Jewish ministry."

David Brickner, new director of Jews for Jesus, led the 8:30 a.m. devotions each day. David's calling for participants to pray for one another and their ministries on the last morning was a highpoint for me. I was reminded that coming into His presence effects more than hours of conversation or debate together. A spirit of hope and peace flooded the room and new levels of trust took root in those moments of prayer. It was the perfect way to say farewell.

The next North American consultation will be in San Diego, California, March 2-4, 1998.



*David Brickner, new director of Jews for Jesus, led the devotions each day.*

## Update on Media Coverage in the field of Jewish Evangelism

Presented by  
**Susan Perlman**  
to the 14th North American  
Committee meeting of the  
Lausanne Consultation on  
Jewish Evangelism  
March 3-5, 1997

This media report covers the time period of April, 1996 through February, 1997. Between these dates, over 700 English language newspaper articles were published and approximately 150 radio interviews were conducted, as well as dozens of news programs and cable television talk show interviews on topics related to Jewish evangelism.

This year I've chosen to concentrate on the following categories: Southern Baptist Resolution, Solovietchik, Counter Missionary Efforts, Charges of Infiltration, Jewish Believers who've fallen away, Gen X, the Internet and Jewish Evangelism, Messianic Congregations & Potpourri.

### 1. Southern Baptist Resolution

The Southern Baptist Resolution on Jewish Evangelism which passed on June 13, 1996 in New Orleans called on Southern Baptists to "direct our energies and resources toward the proclamation of the gospel to the Jews."



There have been literally hundreds of articles, radio talk shows, television news programs, etc., which have focused on this issue. I want to comment on a few.

In addition to all the wire services picking up the SBC Resolution story, all the major television networks reported it; National Public Radio as well as commercial radio networks did stories. The Lehrer News Hour has a feature coming out on this any day now. The New York Times, USA Today, the Hackensack Record and the New York Daily News carried editorials and many letters to the editor on the story. The Atlanta Constitution did a major feature on it and included a profile of the Zaubers. Most every Jewish newspaper did stories and the internet bulletin boards continue to buzz with items on this. There was even a Dry

Bones cartoon!

Articles of note by Jewish writers which have been written include Harvard Law professor Alan Dershowitz, Jewish scholar Jacob Neusner, Religion News Service writer Ira Rifkin and Jewish Telegraphic Agency writer Debra Nussbaum-Cohen.

Constitution law expert Alan Dershowitz, writing in the Baltimore Jewish Times, August 2, 1996, says,

"The marketplace of ideas, including religious ideas, is wide open, and the state may not place its heavy thumb on the side of any particular religion as opposed to irreligion. The state must remain entirely neutral in the battle of souls.

So what do Jews have to fear? We can just say no. If a Baptist can persuade a Jew that his salvation is in Jesus, so be it. If a Jew can persuade a Baptist to convert to Judaism, so be it. That is the American way. Are we as Jews, so insecure in the power of our ideas, our faith and our God that we are afraid of a little healthy competition? To the contrary, there is probably nothing better than a good fire and brimstone sermon from a born again Baptist to solidify the determination of a wavering Jew to return to his or her tradition."

In an editorial entitled

"Why the Southern Baptists aren't wrong" in *The Jewish Sentinel*, July 6, 1996 Jacob Neusner gives the rationale for the resolution by saying, "If Southern Baptists conceded that Jesus Christ saves everyone but the Jews, they would by their own lights, count themselves anti-Semites. No one should take offense when people affirm their religions - including their difference from, and their rejection of, all other religions. Monotheism allows no alternative."

On the other hand, James Rudin of the American Jewish Committee, called the resolution a "form of spiritual arrogance of the highest order" as well as saying that it provided a climate of "theological open hunting season on Jews." *Washington Jewish Week*, June 20, 1996.

Other prominent rabbis who took the posture of being offended included Rabbi Leon Klenicki, Rudin's counterpart at the ADL. Phil Roberts, director of the Interfaith Witness Department of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention did a side by side editorial with Klenicki in the *New York Daily News*, July 16, 1996.

Some who called themselves representative of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, Episcopal Church and Roman Catholic Church communities distanced themselves from the

Southern Baptist resolution by saying "targeting of Jews for conversion breaks 'bonds of trust.'" *Jewish Week*, July 5, 1996.

Even some Baptist stood apart. John Bisagno, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Houston advertised in the *Houston Chronicle* with an open letter to the Houston Jewish community;

"I want to take this opportunity to say to our Houston Jewish Community, as I have done recently in dialogue with some of the leadership of the organized Houston Jewish community, that I believe the intent in the hearts of our Convention messengers (delegates) may well have been overstated. I know of none of us who intend to single out any group for either more or less sharing of Christ's gospel than with others..."

Billy Graham was also quoted as distancing himself from an organization or project which "targets" Jews or others with the gospel. Appearing in the *Charlotte Observer*, his comments were not picked up in many places, but the *Jewish Week* of New York did a story in which they called Graham a moderate Baptist and featured a photo of him with the caption, "I have never taken part in organizations or projects that especially targeted Jews."

Another angle put forth on the resolution came from Ira Rifkin, writing in *Moment Magazine's* October issue. He said that the resolution

"had less to do with Jews than with a struggle within the denomination." He went on to point to what he called the "theologically moderate" wing versus the Fundamentalist elements in the SBC. Rivkin, said, "Not surprisingly, support of the dual covenant concept had become a cornerstone of Christian-Jewish dialogue."

Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, who tried to be a major player as the spokesman for the Jewish community in the Southern Baptist controversy was featured in Debra Nussbaum Cohen's article, "A Kinder, Gentler Evangelism?" While much of this four page article involved a profile on Jim Sibley, the SBC missionary to the Jewish people, Elwood McQuaid, director of Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry and Ari and Shira Sorko-Ram's Maoz Ministry, Eckstein merits several columns. According to Cohen "the entire \$5 million in Eckstein's budget has been raised from the roughly 20,000 Christians who donate money to the International Fellowship." The article says he's given \$3 million of it to the United Jewish Appeal for resettling Jews from the former Soviet Union.

I've included a few other clippings that will be helpful including the OpEd piece from the *New York Times* and the subsequent letters to the editor including one from our own Gerald Anderson. Also, the August 19th, USA

Today article which includes an interview with Gus Elowitz who leads services at Beth Yeshua HaMashiach Synagogue in Houston and Enid Steinberg, a member of Beth Yeshua Messianic Synagogue in Philadelphia.

And the Dry Bones cartoon which says, "The Christian Crusade to convert the Jews is a sign that they think we're too weak to defend ourselves." "...You'll notice that the Southern Baptists..." "Have NOT targeted..." "Farrakhan's Nation of Islam."

One final note, the Southern Baptist Resolution has been the impetus for several reflections on religious pluralism. Richard John Neuhaus, editor of *First Things* addressed this in his Public Square column in their December 1996 edition. He began his article saying that, "There are hot buttons and then there are nuclear triggers. In the latter category, it is commonly thought, is the question of evangelizing Jews." When it came to dialogue, he said, "We need always to be reminded that genuine pluralism does not mean pretending that our deepest differences make no difference."

The March 1997 edition of *First Things* carried several letters to the editor in response to that article that bear mentioning. I would like to advocate for increasing our coverage through the writing of more letters to the editor of the publications that

carry articles of note to our movement.

Two of the letters published in *First Things* spoke to the issue of including Jewish believers in Jesus in the Jewish/Christian dialogue. Anderson says, "... I increasingly believe it is artificial and dishonest if Jews who believe that Jesus is the Messiah are excluded from the dialogue - as they usually are." Brickner said, "It is refreshing to see that some in the dialogue movement are willing to acknowledge Jewish believers in Jesus as the missing partner. For a long time, we have sought a seat at the table without having to disguise our convictions or deny our heritage."

A third letter called into question the integrity and honesty of Jewish believers. It was written by Rabbi Balinsky of Evanston. And the fourth letter was a pro-Jewish, pro-Jewish evangelism apologia by Phil Roberts ending with the words, "It is our conviction that we must be busy about the task of sharing the gospel 'beginning in Jerusalem' - this is the same gospel which is the power of God unto salvation to the Jew first and also to the Greek. To be disobedient to this assignment would be spiritual high treason committed against the King of Kings and Lord of Lords."

One of the best things for Jewish evangelism to come out of this massive amount of media is the forthright way

the leadership in the Southern Baptist Convention has taken a stand based on a commitment to the veracity of the Scriptures. It is an encouragement to those of us who have labored in this field for many years to have a major denomination to stand firm and irenic in the midst of such attack.

## 2. Soloveichik Statement

This year I am not going to bring an update on Rabbi Shneerson. As you know, rumors of his resurrection are greatly exaggerated. Instead, I think an interesting development surrounds the statements attributed to Rabbi Ahron Soloveichik on the matter.

It began with a resolution. Not the Southern Baptist Resolution. The JTA reported on the June 12th meeting of the Rabbinical Council of America's resolution which reads as follows, "In light of disturbing developments which have recently arisen in the Jewish community, the Rabbinical Council of America in convention assembled, declares that there is not and has never been a place in Judaism for the belief that Mashiach ben David (Messiah son of David) will begin his Messianic Mission only to experience death, burial and resurrection before completing it." Though Shneerson wasn't mentioned, it was looked at as an indictment of Lubavitch statements about Shneerson. *Jewish Bulletin*,

June 21, 1996.

Then Rabbi Soloveichik, dean at Yeshiva University, came out with a statement reprinted in the Jewish Press and the Yiddish language-Algemeiner Journal in which he was quoted as saying, that it was "not outside the pale of Orthodoxy" to believe that Rebbe can be Messiah.

He didn't like the Lubavitch interpretation of his comments and so in the July 5 *Jewish Week* he said the following,

"That the Messiah predicted in classic Jewish theology can be someone who died and was resurrected;

"That he does not endorse those in Lubavitch Chasidic community who believe in the certainty of the Rebbe as messiah.

"And that the Jewish community should stop publicly attacking Lubavitch for its messianic beliefs."

In response, Jews for Jesus put out a press release. The July 12th *Jewish Week* responded in this way;

"As if it hasn't been confusing enough these last few weeks with various Orthodox rabbis and members of the Lubavitch Chasidic community arguing over who is eligible to be the Messiah, we now have Jews for Jesus taking advantage of all this theological commotion...In the newest wrinkle Jews for Jesus concluded that Rabbi Soloveichik who they call the Tzaddik from Chicago,

supports their view that Judaism allows for the concept of a resurrected Messiah."

## 3. Believers who've fallen away

The Jerusalem Report of January 23, 1997 carried a feature article entitled "The 'Rabbi' Who Lost His Faith...and Found Judaism." The reporter traces the story of Chuck Snow and how he "came home" to Judaism. Snow makes some telling statements in this interview. After he and Ruth moved to England in 1988 to lead the local messianic congregation, he began studies at a Jewish education center and finally found an Orthodox rabbi who would study with him. "Snow became increasingly desperate, feeling a growing dissonance between his commitment to the messianic movement and his inner questioning. Most devastating of all, he no longer believed that Jesus was the Messiah. 'I'd always prayed to God, not to Jesus. I'd never felt the need to substitute Jesus for a direct relationship with God.'

The article goes on to tell of how he met Rivkah at a Jewish deli and left his wife and son to take up with her. He moved to Israel and eventually married Rivkah. They live in Efrat. He now thinks of Jesus as "a Jewish teacher."

The *Forward's* December 12th edition ran the headline, "Extra, Extra!! 'Messianic'

Newspaperman Comes Home. The article reports on George Belloni, former publisher of the *Messianic Times*, being persuaded by Jews for Judaism's Mark Powers to renounce the faith. The story is a bit bizarre inasmuch as Belloni was raised Catholic, but his mother's family were supposedly Jews who converted to Catholicism. He became a Baptist, then Assembly of God and then Seventh-day Adventist. According to the article he is considering moving to Harrisburg to be closer to the Powers family.

A third article appeared in Canada's *Globe and Mail*, October 29, 1996. The article centers on Julius Ciss of Jews for Judaism, also once a professing Jewish believer. Various Jewish ministries in the Toronto area are mentioned. Quoted in this article is Baruch Goldstein who has left the faith. His comments are angry and bitter, calling Jews for Jesus a cult. Also a woman with the pseudonym, "Susan" is touted as a messianic Jew from Melech Yisrael whom Julius Ciss helped "abandon her messianic beliefs."

Two of the articles appeared in Jewish publications. The third was a puff piece on Julius Ciss. These kind of articles have not been picked up and reprinted in the secular press.



#### 4. Counter-Missionary Efforts

Organized opposition to the efforts of our agencies to bring the gospel to our Jewish people is not new. There are many players who have done their part this past year.

Jews for Judaism continues to tout itself as the major player in opposing missionary efforts in this country. Mark Powers, their national director, tends to be quoted most often by JTA and the major Jewish newspapers when it comes to our movement. An excellent example of this was in the Charlotte, NC *News Record* of December 7th. The religion writer for that paper profiled Powers and Jews for Judaism:

"The Talmud, Judaism's compilation of rabbinic teaching and law, says, 'Whoever saves a single Jewish soul is as if he saved an entire world.' Mark Powers takes that passage seriously." The article goes on to demonstrate the good work Powers is doing and ends with him quoted as saying "We're not so numerous that we can afford the loss of even one individual," he says of Jews who number perhaps 16 million worldwide compared with more than 1 billion Christians and 1 billion Muslims. Our goal is to keep Jews Jewish. If, as a side benefit, people in the non-Jewish community come to realize that (evangelization) is patently offensive to the

Jewish community, I'll accept that side benefit."

Powers was recently mentioned on the aoi newsprofiles as part of a piece on Bruce Morse of WNRB radio:

"February 24 - Mark Powers, National Director for a group called Jews for Judaism. The group was formed "to counter the insidious influence of Jews for Jesus and other messianic groups." Morse says he invited Powers as his guest in response to attempts by some of his audience to proselytize him (Morse). They, too, questioned why a Jewish boy, nice or otherwise, was given air time on a station that appeals primarily to practicing Christians."

Julius Ciss, Jews for Judaism's Toronto director, is also quoted. In a Canadian *Jewish News* article in January of this year, he tells of his "conversion" to Christianity and what "drove him back to Judaism." Ciss then gives his evidence for why Jesus is not the Messiah and how to fend off missionaries. Ciss also says, "there are over 600 different missionary groups that spend more than \$200 (US) million worldwide for the purpose of converting Jews each year. There are over 50 such groups in Canada."

Tovia Singer's Outreach Judaism regularly advertises in the *Jerusalem Post*, *Moment Magazine* and dozens of Jewish weekly

newspapers promoting his 15 tape package for \$59.00. I've included one of the ads in your packet.

The Jewish Community Relations Council of New York, ran a counter-missionary campaign this past July which was reported in the *Jewish Week*, July 5th edition. "The counter-missionary effort includes posting ads in subways and distributing leaflets by several dozen JCRC volunteers. The subway campaign will continue as long as it takes, said Philip Abramowitz, director of the JCRC's Task Force on Missionaries and Cults. He added, however, that it is limited because of funding. Costs were estimated at about \$36,000 for pamphlets and T-shirts, including \$4,000 to rent ad space in subway cars."

In conjunction with that same campaign, there were counter-missionary efforts by Agudath Israel to influence New York's governor to block the evangelistic advertisements by Jews for Jesus on subways and bus stops with the slogan "Be More Jewish - Believe in Jesus." *Forward*, September 13, 1996

A follow-up article on December 13th, reported, "Agudath Israel issued a formal protest [to putting up the ads]. Even Governor Pataki requested that the offending ads be banned. It appears however, that Jews for Jesus is even mightier than the Empire State. This

September, Mr. Pataki wrote to the Metropolitan Transit Authority urging it to investigate a legal remedy to ban the advertising, which he called "religiously offensive." The MTA attorneys felt they were legally bound to accept the ads.

Other counter-missionaries in the news this past year include mom and pop operations like Aaron Schwarzbaum who has a group called Torah Life and Living in southern Florida with a free hotline and anti-cult/anti-missionary exit counseling. The Washington *JewishWeek* profiled him in May with an article entitled, "Fighting back when proselytizers target Jews."

One final article in the general category of Counter-Missionary efforts, was a feature in the February 1997 edition of *Moment Magazine*. The writer primarily interviews Avi Snyder, Avner Boskey and Aleksandr Kinkinon from among the believers. Mark Powers of Jews for Judaism again gets some coverage here. Also mentioned is the Jerusalem Institute of Biblical Polemics as the main source of countermissionary literature. Says Powers, "Countermissionary work is handicapped by lack of funds and staffing. Powers who says that the annual budget of his Jews for Judaism is \$300,000 has organized several trips to the FSU to teach the basics of Judaism to community

leaders. But he had to drop the effort, he says, when he could no longer afford to have the group's literature translated into Russian. (By way of comparison, Powers charges that Hear O Israel spends up to \$500,000 a year just renting stadiums for its festivals."

#### 5. Infiltration Charges

In years past, Jewish community leaders accused us of being deceptive in the use of terms and symbols. Merely calling ourselves Jews who believe in Y'shua was considered a misuse of terms by some. The more recent charges against us use terms like "infiltrators" and "plants." Here are some examples:

The *Jewish Post & Opinion*, June 26, 1996 ran an editorial, "Two Messianic Jews are good Hadassah workers." The article reads, "They were nice to work with," said Lynn Waghalter, president. They seem to have Hadassah's best interest in their hearts." The two women are Carolyn Hyde and Amy Adler. Hyde is quoted as saying that she and Ms. Adler, "are not trying to shove Jesus down anyone's throat ... If someone asks, I'll talk." It goes on to mention that Hyde has hosted Hadassah members at her messianic congregation for her daughter's bat mitzvah.

The April 19, 1996 edition of the *Forward* explains the "infiltration strategy." "[the messianic movement] seeks

to infiltrate the mainstream Jewish community, including joining Jewish organizations like the Jewish community centers. One example of the success of this strategy is the messianic movement's support of Israel. By promoting itself as pro-Israel, the movement has managed to gain acceptance among some in the Jewish pro-Israel community, despite the fact that its primary goal is to convert Jews, even Israeli Jews, to Christianity.

Charges of infiltration were leveled when two gifts to the Jewish National Fund were highlighted in the *Jewish Press* in May and June of 1996. A controversy was cited over the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America and the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations planting over 10,000 trees in the state of Israel. The May 3rd article charged that "The tree planting is only the latest example of 'messianic Jewish' groups infiltrating the mainstream Jewish community in order to gain greater legitimacy and better access to potential converts."

Gabe Kahn then wrote in the *Forward* of May 17th, "Admitting an error in judgment, an international Jewish agency has rescinded its decision to plant a 'messianic forest' in Israel for a missionary group that seeks to turn Jews into followers of Jesus."

Next, JTA reported in the *Chicago Jewish Star* that another \$50,000 gift, this

time from Zola Levitt, was rejected by the Jewish National Fund. According to this piece, they did accept a \$5,000 donation from Baltimore's congregation Rosh Pina, but are now reworking their policy on receiving donations from messianic groups.

Another article in the *Forward*, February 7, 1997, begins, "Joel Chernoff wears many hats ... but perhaps his most controversial title is "coach." For, in addition to his duties as a prominent officer in the Christian movement that clothes itself in Jewish symbols in an attempt to convert Jews, Joel Chernoff coaches a youth basketball team at a local Jewish Community Center in Philadelphia." Kahn goes on to say, "Outright proselytizing, contend a number of counter-missionary experts, may be a thing of the past. Instead, "messianic Jewish" missionaries have adopted a milder approach geared toward normalizing their role within the Jewish community. In recent years, "messianic Jews" have rushed to join Jewish organizations and volunteer for Jewish causes in an effort to fit seamlessly into traditional Jewish life. I suspect this is part of a well-thought out plan to establish secular acceptance in the Jewish community" said Rabbi Charles Simon, executive director of the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs, a branch of Conservative Judaism."

An article entitled "Messianic covertly invading Jewish life" appeared in the Northern California *Jewish Bulletin*, August 2, 1996. It cited many of the stories told in this section of the report.

Finally, the New York Jewish Community Relations Council's Task Force on Missionaries and Cults have produced a set of guidelines to "help address the difficulty that many Jewish groups have faced in dealing with the growing problem of messianic "infiltration." Among the suggestions is "For synagogues, for example it recommends that applications for membership contain more than just "name, address and dues," include a statement reaffirming the synagogue's mission and provide a mechanism for revoking membership." *Forward*, May 3, 1996.

These guidelines came after the Kowalsky situation in Utica. The *Jewish Forward* carried an article entitled, "Conservative Bodies Debate Membership of a "Messianic Jew." It reads, "Utica, N.Y. Steven Kowalsky is convinced that he's good enough, observant enough and gosh darn it, people like him. So why is he being asked to resign from the board of the synagogue to which he has belonged all his life? It might have something to do with his announcement that believing in Jesus has made him more Jewish than ever." The issue is being debated with some

saying he should go and others saying that if he is allowed to stay he "could become a sort of Rosa Parks for "messianic Jews."

#### 6. Messianic Congregations

A few articles on some of the congregations around the county. The Bradenton *Herald*, September 22, profiled Jeremy Storch and Son of David Messianic Synagogue. Storch's testimony is recounted and a flattering photo of worship at the congregation is featured.

The Hartford *Courant's* July 20th edition carried the article, "They worship Jesus and yet they are Jews." John Fischer of Clearwater and Paul Saal of West Hartford are shown at the UMJC convention in Massachusetts. Saal was quoted as saying, "Jesus lived and died and was resurrected as a Jew and we are going to follow him as Jews. Parts of his testimony are included. Reform Rabbi Jeffrey Bennett of Temple Sinai in Newington says, "they [meaning messianic Jews] are using Judaism as an ethnic crutch rather than a religion. They are using the trappings of Judaism to make themselves feel connected."

The Ft. Lauderdale Sun Sentinel of November 9, 1996 features Aytz Chayim Messianic Synagogue in Boca Raton and interviews Ira Brawer and Harvey Koelner, whose congregation of 550, according to the

article, is 65% Jewish.

#### 7. Gen X, Internet and Jewish Evangelism

The Jewish *Exponent* of Philadelphia ran an article on Messianic Judaism link by Yahoo! stirs up Internet. Among their listings for Judaism is one for "Messianic Views." Many in the Jewish community protested. This controversy also appeared in the May 1996 edition of *Wired* Magazine. The spokeswoman from Yahoo! said, Our fundamental purpose is to provide intuitive access to information. Our categories are not meant to be informational."

The *Heritage Southwest Jewish Press* in Los Angeles ran a story on February 14th, "Responding to increased missionary activity over the Internet, in particular America Online, the dean of New York rabbinical seminary has instituted a mandatory course in combatting missionaries for those seeking ordination." Rabbi Yaacov Spivak goes on to say, "Jewish subscribers to America Online computer service are feeling the heat from missionaries who bombard the message boards on the Judaica sections with propaganda."

The Tanach on CD-ROM came with a free screen saver. A number of rabbis who purchased early editions of the electronic Hebrew Bible were startled to discover it came with a

screen saver that, while featuring pastoral scenes of rivers and lakes, flashed quotations like, "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." "For this is the will of God in Jesus Christ" and "I can do all things through Christ." *Forward*, May 17, 1996.

Two articles that should be helpful to you in getting somewhat of a range on Jewish GenXrs are "In Your Faith", *LA Times*, May 13, 1996 and "Tattoos and Taboos" from the March 6, 1996 edition of the San Francisco *Weekly*. The latter describes *Davka Magazine* which is aimed at Jews ages 13-40. The former article interviews Jewish GenXrs like Marina Vainshtein who is described "With her purple mohawk and pierced eyebrows, nose and lip" as well as a "star of David tattooed on her inner left arm and a tattooed armband in Hebrew on her right wrist that reads, "And now we are the last of many." She and other GenXrs define their Jewishness in unconventional ways.

I want to finish this section out with some print outs of Jewish News Source links on the world wide web. Here are several:

[www.libertynet.org/~anderson/newslist.html](http://www.libertynet.org/~anderson/newslist.html)  
[www.yahoo.com/SocietyandCulture/Religion/Magazines/Judaism/](http://www.yahoo.com/SocietyandCulture/Religion/Magazines/Judaism/)  
[www.jcn18.com/jhota2z.htm](http://www.jcn18.com/jhota2z.htm)

#### 8. Potpourri

The following articles run the spectrum of our movement.

There were two articles in the Winter 1996 edition of Reform Judaism that bear review. One is entitled, "Strange Bedfellows—Jews, Apostates and the Christian Right". This seven page article did profiles on Jay Sekulow, Paul Schenck, Louis Sheldon, Howard Phillips and Gary Polland. The articles states that "The top leadership of the religious right includes a number of former Jews." The writer is Barbara Simon, a practicing attorney in First Amendment Law.

The other article is by Mark Washofsky, "Why we reject Messianic Jews" and is worth a read. Washofsky is an associated professor of rabbinics at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati and chairs the Contemporary American Reform Responsa Committee.

He delineates the Reform Jewish response to Messianic Jews over the years which basically disallows any affiliation with Judaism. While he admits that Reform Jews have a broad number of commitments and oppose dogmatism and looks to include disparate opinions, he nevertheless, says the following:

"We define ourselves in continuity with Jewish history, a tradition of thought and response which we inherit from Jews who have preceded us. And if there is

one unifying thread that has run through Jewish tradition for two millennia, it is the affirmation that the story of Jesus is not a Jewish story. The theological claims made about him are irrelevant to our preception of God. The "New" Testament is not Torah. To the extent that these elements figure in a person's religious identity, our tradition regards the person as a Christian, even if born a Jew."

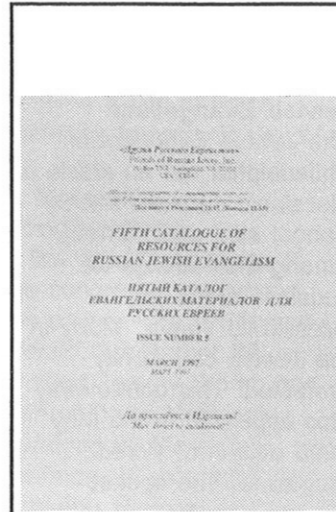
The articles begs a response from Contemporary Jews for Jesus Respona, don't you think?

February 1st, Los Angeles Times account of the dialogue on pluralism held at Fuller Theological Seminary had the banner, "No Religion Has a Monopoly on God's Truth, Clerics Assert" Jim Rudin of the American Jewish Committee and Ronald Thiemann, dean of Harvard Divinity School were quoted extensively. "Both men conceded that a theology of pluralism faces formidable obstacles." Then John 15:6 is quoted.

For all the Moody graduates here, I didn't want to leave out the Forward article of August 9, 1996, "At Moody Bible Institute, Students Major in How To Convert Jews" The article includes a description of the degree program, some of the course offered, a profile on D.L. Moody, and the statement that "students are trained to convert Jews to Christianity." They even

quote from the course catalog. They mention that Michael Rydelnik declined to be interviewed because "he lacked confidence" that his views would be accurately expressed. Likewise the dean of the Department of World Missions and Evangelism also declined to be interviewed.

The January 1997 edition of Evangelical Missions Quarterly carried a very positive article by Stan Guthrie on our movement "Jewish evangelism getting respect it's long been denied." Jim Sibley, David Brickner, Wes Taber, Art Glasser, Sam Nadler, Moishe Rosen and others were interviewed. The LCJE is mentioned in contrast to the distancing Graham gave the Southern Baptist resolution: "Graham's calibrated response was particularly disappointing to groups involved in the Lausanne Movement which Graham helped found. An offshoot of the movement, spearheaded by various Jewish Christian groups, is the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism. The LCJE formulated the Willowbank Declaration on the necessity of witness to Jews; it was incorporated into the Manila Manifesto at the Lausanne II conference in 1989. The LCJE which produces a journal and holds regular meetings, has brought Jewish believers into the evangelical mainstream, according to Arthur Glasser."



This Catalogue, first published in October, 1990, is in a constant state of being updated. There is an ever-growing body of new literature and resources being added, as well as changes to previously developed material.

As far as is possible, I am trying to make the Catalogue more and more bi-lingual, so that it can be profitably used by a person who knows either English or Russian.

The Catalogue can now be sent by fax anywhere in the world upon request. Send a request by letter, fax or electronic mail if you want to have a copy sent to someone to assist them in their ministry.

In His love and service,  
Jim Melnick  
Friends of Russian Jewry, Inc.  
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USA

## Contextual Issues for Israeli and American Messianic Congregations

By Jeffrey S. Wasserman, Adjunct Professor of Old Testament, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky

I want to preface my remarks by saying that although I am a Jewish believer, I come at the subject of Messianic Jewish Congregations for the most part as an outsider. Except for my recent research into this subject, I have not been involved in the life of Messianic congregations. In addition, I want to make it clear that I am an advocate for and supporter of the Messianic Congregational movement wherever and in whatever form it is found. I have some questions to ask of the Messianic movement, hard questions which some may find unwelcome. But let this in no way lend the impression that I am opposed to the Messianic contextual expression of life in Messiah. I firmly believe and assert that any indigenous, national, linguistic, or ethnic grouping has the right to assert itself in a manner which is expressive of its own internal dynamic. For Jews especially, this right exists.

My father once told me the story of a Jewish man who visited a Baptist church. Among the many activities which were strange to him, he took a special interest in the procedures that surrounded the collection of multiple monetary offerings.



On leaving the church service on that occasion the Jewish man asked his Gentile friend a significant theological question: "If Jesus was Jewish, the apostles were Jewish, and the early Church was Jewish, then who sold this business to the Gentiles in the first place?" It therefore follows that since Christianity was born out of Judaism, if any group has the right to its own contextual expression of life in the Messiah, Jewish believers do.

The questions with which I wish to deal in this paper have to do with context and especially the context of the Messianic Jewish congregation as it relates to Jewish evangelism. Of course, fulfilling Yeshua's Great Commission is not the only reason for

congregational life. Congregations also serve to provide a sense of identity and community and become the source of discipleship and spiritual growth for believers. Certainly this should be understood in Yeshua's commission to "make disciples" and to teach those disciples "all that I have commanded you" (Matt 28:19-20 NASV). But entrance into and participation in Messianic congregational life depends on the proclamation of the Gospel and the extension of the offer of Kingdom living to Jews and Gentiles alike. So, for us as believing Jews, we must first be concerned with Gospel proclamation as it impacts others from our own Jewish context.

### What Context?

It seems to be the "thing to do" in missiological circles these days to speak of contextualization and indigenization. Modern pioneers of contextual and indigenous models like Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson would undoubtedly be thrilled with the current literature on people groups, homogeneous units, and base communities. Another modern pioneer, Roland Allen once remarked to his grandson concerning his

own writings on contextual and indigenous missions, "Oh, yes, you can read them by all means – but you won't understand them; I don't think anyone is going to understand them until I've been dead ten years." Certainly Allen would be much encouraged to see the issues concerning which he wrote in 1912 being taught in Missions, Evangelism, and Church Growth curriculums in our contemporary seminaries.

Another pioneer said it this way, "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor 9:22b). So then, successful evangelism depends on becoming something to some one. This means that we must first correctly identify the context we seek to reach before accommodating our message to reach that context. The first issue is then correct identification of the context. The second issue which follows is adaptation of the message to the context. In international missions this means learning to communicate in the heart language of the people group one desires to reach. In Jewish evangelism, this means learning to communicate in culturally sensitive and appropriate forms which speak to the Jewish heart.

Those who seek to do evangelism out from Messianic congregations must then face two questions:

1.) Have we correctly identified the context?

2.) Is our communication speaking to the Jewish heart?  
It is my suggestion, based on my own research, that for the most part, both these questions can be affirmed in Israeli Messianic congregational life, but not necessarily in American Messianic congregational life. My research suggests that Israeli believers have both correctly identified their context and have successfully accommodated themselves to that context as reflected in their rapid numerical growth. I would further suggest that many American Messianic congregations, have to a great degree, lost track of the actual nature of the Jewish context in their communities and have become occupied with demonstrating their own Jewishness rather than seeking communication with the Jewish heart.

Someone might ascribe these suggestions to my being an outsider, not really having a good grasp of the Messianic congregational panorama. As I mentioned above, I am an outsider. Being an outsider, however, may allow me a view that others enraptured with the Messianic panorama cannot see. It is in a spirit of concern for effectual witness to my own Jewish people that I present this research, my conclusions, and these hard questions.

#### Research Methodology

Beyond general background reading on Messianic Jewish history, I have conducted my research both in person and by means of written surveys. In the United States I have conducted more than twelve personal interviews, visited six congregations, and received back 60 out of 210 surveys mailed out to the leaders of known American Messianic congregations. In Israel, I conducted 18 interviews and visited five congregations. In both cases, I have made every effort to be exposed to a wide sampling of Messianic life and doctrine, encompassing the issues of Torah observance, spiritual gifts, congregational polity, liturgy, rabbinic authority, and leadership. I realize that what I have seen is only a partial reflection of Messianic reality, but it is a view that any outsider might see. Since it is the outsider that we seek to reach in evangelism, this partial reflection becomes significant.

#### Differences in Contexts

The most significant contextual questions which we might ask about Messianic congregational life in Israel and America revolve around Jewish identity:

- 1.) Who is a Jew?
- 2.) How does a Jew live?
- 3.) What does a Jew do?

The answers to these questions should issue in a contextual Messianic congregational expression in

each setting.

In Israel a Jew is just about anyone. Except for those who are of Palestinian background or who are tourists, both of which groups have some obvious characteristics, it is assumed that everyone is Jewish. One does not ask the question as is common in among Jews worldwide, "You look Jewish and that sounds like a Jewish name; are you Jewish?" It is assumed that if you are living in Israel, it is likely you are a Jew. After all, "Who else would want to live here in this tension and traffic?" This means that the issue of Jewish identity is settled in Israel. Although rabbinic authorities would question the Jewish identity of those who believe in Yeshua, Israeli believers are confident in their identities as Jews. As a number of them said to me,

The rabbis try to tell people that when you believe in Yeshua you are no longer a Jew. But we know we are Jews. We live in Israel. What else could we be? We participate in everyday Israeli life. We speak Hebrew. We celebrate the national Jewish holidays. We serve in the Army. We pay our taxes. We do what all Jews here do, except follow the rulings of modern rabbinic Judaism.

This identity issue is not as clearly defined in the American context. Jewish believers, especially those in Messianic congregations, often find themselves

embattled over accusations of the abandonment of their Jewishness. For American Jews, being Jewish is expressed by participation in the life of the synagogue and the Jewish community. American Jewish believers are challenged to prove their Jewishness over and over again. It could be said that for those of us living in America, we have to reprove our Jewishness every time we meet another Jew with whom we desire to share the Gospel.

In America the result is that Messianic Jewish congregations must spend a considerable amount of time and energy in asserting and proving Jewishness. Much of what is done in our congregations is done to symbolize our Jewishness as existing in tandem with our Christianity. One often meets Jewish believers who are much more "Jewish" in their lives as believers than they ever were as non-believers. For many who did not wear them in their youth, the *tallit* and *kippah* have become the symbols of their Jewishness. In my surveys, 70% of the respondents said that keeping kosher, Sabbath observance, and "keeping the Mosaic Law" were *mandatory* for Jewish believers. This was in contrast to those in Israel where only a minority of Jewish believers even mentioned these issues. (Believers who are the most dogmatic about Torah observance in Israel are

transplanted Americans.) For American Jewish believers, it is easy to get the impression that it is Jewish identity as believers which is the focus in evangelistic effort, rather than the identity of Yeshua as the Messiah. I am NOT saying that American believers do not communicate Yeshua as Messiah, but that often the emphasis is on Jewish identity rather than on Yeshua's identity.

How does the Jewish community respond to these two contextual expressions? For the most part, in Israel, as the 1988 Dahaf poll survey revealed, Messianic believers are accepted by most Israelis as Jews and full-fledged members of Jewish society. This is not the case in America. My surveys indicated that where the American Jewish community was aware of the existence of Messianic congregations they were disdained at the worst and ignored at the best. Michael Schiffman's survey showed that only 2% of American Messianic believers had come to faith as a result of Messianic congregational life. My own surveys by 60 Messianic congregational leaders confirmed a similar figure.

The responses I received on my surveys indicate that there is some confusion among Messianic leaders with regard to the American Jewish communities they seek to reach. Most

indicated that the Jews in their communities were, for the most part secularly oriented and that more religiously oriented Jews would not pay any attention to their Gospel proclamation. The confusion is exhibited in the increasing fealty to rabbinic Jewish observances. Stuart Dauermann, in his recent article in *Missiology*, says that even secular Jews respond to guilt with regard to Jewish observance. He insists that this validates his approach to worship in a Jewish manner. The purpose would appear to be to make faith in Yeshua attractive to the religiously guilt-motivated secular Jew. This makes little sense to me. Doesn't it confuse the legitimate need for Jewish forms of faith expression among Jewish believers with the need for a Gospel hearing for non-believers? Furthermore, is it advisable to base evangelistic method on religious guilt?

If, as my surveys indicated, the majority of Jews are secular, what is the value of a religiously oriented approach, traditional or otherwise? It seems to me that when Yeshua and his disciples presented the Gospel in a Jewish context that they were interested in communicating life rather than ritual, truth rather than tradition, and love rather than dry orthodoxy. Is this what our American Messianic congregations reflect? To the contrary, my

research shows that there is a growing interest in and demand for traditional rabbinic interpretation and observance in Messianic congregations. Can stricter Torah observance lead to life? I doubt Yeshua would answer in the affirmative. Not surprisingly, my research also suggests that the greater the focus on Torah observance and Jewish symbolism, the less evangelistic success is experienced.

Who then is being won to our American Messianic congregations. For the most part, we must admit that the majority of members and leaders of American Messianic congregations are Gentiles. Many of these have little or no formal training in Judaism nor even a rudimentary understanding of Jewish culture. I am NOT saying that Gentiles are not welcome in our congregations. (Far be it from me to build up the walls of partition!) What I am saying is that if we hope to reach Jewish people, we need to be culturally educated and sensitive to the Jewish population we hope to reach. This applies to Jewish and Gentile Messianic believers alike. We need to understand the context and frame our evangelism sensitively within it.

Have you ever turned on television on a Sunday morning and flipped through the various religious broadcasts and come upon

the worship of a vibrant African-American congregation? They might be singing and dancing to soul-inspiring music. Certainly your foot begins to tap along with the music. But have you ever seen some big white guy like me up on the platform trying to dance along with them? It looks kind of silly doesn't it? I wonder if sometimes our American Messianic congregational practices don't look silly to those who are genuine members of the Jewish tradition? As Israeli Messianic leader Yosi Shulam says, "Jews see this stuff and they can smell the bacon!" Could it be that we are missing the context, or that we are trying to affect a Jewishness in which our contextual group has no interest?

Am I saying that we shouldn't try to be "Jewish" in trying to reach Jews? Of course not. We must continue to adapt our methods and the vehicle for our Gospel message to contexts. But we must do it in such a way that it can receive a hearing and may facilitate a positive response.

#### **What is the Problem?**

Why is it that Messianic congregational evangelism is working in Israel but not very well in America? I asked that question of a number of Israeli believers familiar with the American scene. Without exception their answer was that the American Messianic congregations were not

expressing themselves in a genuinely Jewish manner. They told me that American believers seemed to be so occupied with proving they were still Jewish that they had adopted Jewish mannerisms and practices which were just not "natural" for them. The issue it seems for Americans is not as much being a believer as it is being Jewish as a believer.

Yeshua often prefaced his proclamation with the phrase, "Verily, Verily." We know that this is the transliteration of the transliterated

Hebrew phrase which expresses veracity, faith, and belief. I believe it could be translated "genuinely." What Yeshua communicated was genuinely from the very depth of his being. It was not a costume he wore on Saturday mornings. It was not religious language that he spoke on religious occasions. Yeshua expressed himself with a genuineness that none, not even the religious scholars, could refute.

I believe that if the American Messianic Jewish community could focus on

genuinely and forthrightly giving expression to that which is real, that which comes out of their faith encounter with Yeshua deep within their beings, then whatever form, symbol, or style which was adopted would carry with it the genuine power of God to salvation.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (Rom 1:16 NASV)

## A RESPONSE TO THE INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN EMBASSY'S TEACHING THAT WE ARE NOT CALLED TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE JEWS

By Jacob Prasch, Moriel, Yeadon, Leeds

*Jacob Prasch is International Director of Moriel Ministries, a Pentecostal/ Charismatic oriented teaching, evangelistic, and church planting ministry with branches in Britain, Ireland, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand with an emphasis on The Hebrew Roots of The Christian Faith and in Jewish Evangelism.*

At the present time in history Pentecostal churches for all of their problems are at the forefront of evangelical church growth globally, particularly in the developing world but also in the industrialized nations. In the



countries of Eastern Europe, North America, South Africa, and in such Latin American nations as Brazil and Argentina where there are large Jewish populations,

significant numbers of Jews are coming to faith in Yeshua through Pentecostalism. For this we indeed Praise The Lord. Some would argue a distinctive Pentecostal contribution to Jewish Evangelism can arise due to the missiological implications of such passages as "Jews Seek A Sign", and our ministry works and invests a great deal in mobilizing Pentecostals to reach the Jews with the gospel message. Pentecostals have other potential advantages in Jewish missions as well. Traditional Pentecostalism is Pre-Millennial seeing a

prophetic eschatological dimension both soteriologically for Israel and The Jews (Romans 11:1-25), and prophetically for the national restoration of Israel climaxing with "The Time Of Jacob's Trouble" and the subsequent return of The Lord. Hence, barriers to Jewish evangelism that can spring from Replacement theology are diminished among most Pentecostals as they are not by doctrinal nature supercessionists, and do not negate a prophetic fore-plan both salvifically and nationally for Israel.

In recent years, however, this has come under threat from two sources. One is an influx of Restorationist Over Realized Eschatology, commonly known by such terms as "Kingdom Dominionism", "Kingdom Now", and "Triumphalism". These views assert that a victorious church exegetically associated with "Joel's Army, and "Manifest Sons" will conquer the entire world for Christ and establish His Kingdom prior to The Parousia. The doctrinal basis for this is often a mish-mash of reconstructionism (borrowed from hyper-Calvinists such as William Rushdooney, Gary North, and David Chilton) neo-gnostic hermeneutics (resembling Philo and Origen in the Pre-Nicean Church) and radical forms of post millennialism combined with extreme preteristic/historicist approaches to biblical prophesy which see little or

no place for Israel and The Jews. Hence we see the influx of such teaching into contemporary charismatic and Pentecostal Christianity through the influences of such figures as Rick Godwin who teaches "The Jews Get Nothing", "Israel is nothing but wasted money", and "Jews Have No Right To Be in The Land". Proponents of such Kingdom theology are not infrequently hyper-charismatics given to wild manifestations, prophetic predictions that fail to happen, and above all a theological base which is experiential and not biblical - resembling The Montanists of The Early Church, The Early Quakers, and The Muenster Ana-Baptists followers of The notorious Zwickau Prophets.

In the face of the incursion of such extreme replacementist ideas, (which some argue are actually anti-Semitic), into Pentecostalism, MORIEL is normally thankful for others who will affirm the ongoing love and purposes of God for Israel and The Jews. Some of these Pro-Israel groups, although not overtly evangelistic to the Jews, do demonstrate a sincere testimony of Christian love and support to them and may have a pre-evangelistic value helping pave the way for evangelistic ministries to bring The Jews the gospel. The problem arises when de facto forms of dual covenant theology or heretical notions that the church has no

biblical mandate for a kerygmatic ministry to The Jews are propagated by these organizations. Such is the unfortunate case of The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem.

ICEJ Director Jan Willem Van der Hoven is a regular speaker at Mission London, the largest Pentecostal Conference in Europe organized by Morris Cerullo, who has recently been forced to resign from the U.K. Evangelical Alliance for unethical fund raising, and has been found guilty of all four charges against him by The U.K. Advertizing Standards Council after a 4 year child pronounced healed by Cerullo died. Cerullo was exposed to millions on BBC TV teaching "Send Ten Pounds And See Two Jews Saved, And As An Added Bonus Two Members Of Your Family Will Be Saved". This devastated our testimony to British Jewry, yet Mr. Van der Hoven as usual remained associated with him, and it was The ICEJ which first brought Morris Cerullo into Israel to address their "Feast Of Tabernacles". The Christian Embassy leadership in Scandinavia particularly remains closely tied to such other money oriented preaching ministries of the so called "Faith Prosperity" camp as that of Kenneth Hagen whose doctrines and Christology as exposed in Hank Hannegraff's "Christianity In Crises" are plainly heretical.

The damage such money preaching inflicts on our testimony to an already sceptical Jewish community is in itself tremendous. Yet the ramifications of Mr. Van der Hoven's joining the Morris Cerullo platform and directly teaching against Jewish evangelism on video before 15,000 people including pastors, superintendents, and evangelists was far worse in its ramifications for seeing Jews saved. More seriously, the video is circulated throughout Eastern Europe where many Jews were being saved through a Pentecostal witness.

On the video, Mr. Van der Hoven argues against Jewish Evangelism on the basis of a gross distortion of the text of Isaiah 40: 1-2 "Comfort Ye My People, Say To Her Her Warfare Is Ended, Her Iniquity Is Removed, And She Has Received Double For Her Sins". Mr. Van der Hoven asserts that the text says to "Comfort, Comfort The Jews, and Not To Preach To Them". It was Satan's technique to divorce a text from its context in Matthew 4. The text read in its context however affirms that we are to comfort the Jews precisely by preaching to them in verse 9, where the Hebrew term "Besor" meaning gospel (and with the same etymological root to the Hebrew infinitive "Levasar" meaning 'to preach') is stated twice as the very means to do the

comforting. Moreover, the literary genre in Isaiah 40 shifts from narrative at the close of Chapter 39, to Hebrew poetry in the opening of Chapter 40, which forms the literary prologue to the Four Servant Songs of Isaiah, climaxing with Isaiah 52 and 53. Thus the preaching of "Besor" as the way to bring comfort is developed specifically by the time the Servant Songs reach chapter 52, where the term appears again as "How Lovely On The Mountain Are The Feet Of Him Who Brings 'Besor'" (Isaiah 52:7) which is defined in chapter 53 as the vicarious suffering and death of a risen messiah as the way of salvation for the Jews.

This exegetical position expressed by Mr. Van der Hoven is not his alone, but it is the officially published position of ICEJ in their Statement of Mission and its covering letter explaining the ICEJ position on Jewish evangelism, which is not to evangelize the Jews but rather comfort them on the basis of Isaiah 40. To claim that the church can comfort the Jews telling them that their sin is removed without the gospel is a grave doctrinal error striking at the very heart of both the Great Commission, Romans 1:16, and the cause of Jewish Evangelism. There is no other salvation for either Jew or Gentile other than the gospel. Some have even wrongly suggested that the holocaust was the ended

warfare of Isaiah 40 (seeing no place for The Great Tribulation, but maintaining only that God is to remove Israel's sin and bless the Jews apart from faith in Yeshua).

By aligning itself with Morris Cerullo however and introducing him into Israel, then by openly teaching massive numbers of Pentecostals that we are not called to preach the gospel to The Jews leaves Pentecostal ministries such as our own in a great dilemma. We strive to equip and exhort our fellow Pentecostals to reach the Jews for Yeshua in as scripture instructs. Speaking about Jewish evangelism Paul writes: "With No Preacher, How Shall They Hear"(Romans 10:14), a message we labour to proclaim, only to have ICEJ teach the same Pentecostal people a contrary message which goes directly against the plain teaching of God's Word.

ICEJ raises most of its funds among Pentecostals and Charismatics, and Jewish missions of other denominational affiliations are not continually confronted by the obstacles to seeing Jews saved that ICEJ causes Pentecostal evangelists to the Jews. Neither do most believers in Israel see how ICEJ goes around the world misrepresenting itself as the Embassy of a Jesus whom it refuses to preach when it is the local Israeli Congregations who do

preach Him who are His true Embassies and need and deserve the support. Few in Israel realize how ICEJ sets itself up as the international spokesman for what Jesus is doing in Israel, usually almost totally ignoring the true spokesmen – Israeli Jewish pastors, who can even be an embarrassment to them in their interest to groom good social relations with Israeli diplomats and government officials, rabbis, and diasporic Jewish Community leaders. In the process of this misrepresentation comes a PR and fund raising machine with which Jewish missions and Israeli congregations cannot possibly compete which diverts astronomical sums of support away from Jewish evangelism and the local Israeli congregations into the coffers of what amounts to a salvationless social gospel that withholds Yeshua as the way of salvation, often for fear of upsetting relations with the same Israeli politicians and rabbis engaged in persecuting local Israeli Jewish believers.

The positions of ICEJ have been challenged in published format by such Messianic and Jewish Evangelism leaders as Tuvya Zaretsky of Jews For Jesus, Baruch Maoz of Ha Geffen, John Ross of CWI, Arnold Fruchtenbaum of Ariel, Harold Sevens of Chosen People, and Walter Riggins of CMJ but to no avail. ICEJ itself does not

deny that many of the founders of ICEJ have left in dispute over these and other issues, often to form alternative ministries over the years. This sad pattern of events continues to this day with the Denmark resignation of their director there.

We ourselves at MORIEL however are not much interested in the internal affairs of ICEJ, nor for that matter do we see a need to re-challenge the ICEJ doctrinal premise theologically. The very well written articles in Issue 12 of MISHKAN are for theological purposes more than sufficient. No matter how serious our disagreements with them indeed are, neither do we see a need to carry out a campaign against them. Up to a certain point at least we are willing to accept that Christian Zionism can contribute something to the cause of Jewish evangelism (how be it indirectly) if it functions in harmony with the Jewish Missions and the local Israeli Congregations which some, such as 'Christian Friends of Israel' and especially 'Prayer For Israel', indeed do. These organizations also stand as an alternative to Replacementism, Christian Anti-Zionism and help point the church back to its Hebraic roots. We have no quarrel with such moderate Christian Zionist organizations, even when there may be certain areas of reservation.

With ICEJ, however, it is an entirely different situation. To bring men like Morris Cerullo into Israel, to openly teach people in our Pentecostal churches and denominations that we are not called to preach the gospel to the Jews, and to attempt to construct a doctrinal argument for withholding the gospel from them stating that we can comfort Israel telling her that her iniquity is removed without the blood of Yeshua by perverting scripture out of all exegetical context is a conflict we did not seek, but as Pentecostal Evangelists to the Jews it is a conflict we have been forced to face. No believer of a right Spirit seeks strife with other Christians if they can avoid it without compromising the call and command of God. Yet, from Brazil to Helsinki the salvation of Jewish souls and the cause of Jewish evangelism in the largest and fastest growing denominations in the world at this time in history is being negatively impacted by the openly published and video recorded message of ICEJ which stands in direct and unmitigated contradiction to plain teaching of The Word of God.

We are very sorry that the mere theological and ethical issues we publicly raised concerning ICEJ have never been met with a biblical response, but only personal attack for having publicly raised the issues after ICEJ repeatedly

refused to relent or even address the objections set forward in Issue 12 of MISHKAN. I profoundly wish that ICEJ would forget about personalities and deal with the hard biblical issues at stake. We also regret that our proposals to them to redirect some of the funds diverted away from Jewish evangelism into a fund to be administered by the Israeli congregations to finance Israeli evangelism, provide theological scholarships for Israeli seminarians and bible college students, and to assist needy families of believing Jewish immigrants was rejected by them out of hand as interference in their prerogative to establish for themselves the dispersion of funds, even though those funds are being rechannelled away from where they truly belong in our much

considered and prayed about opinion. The real issues however are not financial but evangelistic. The actions and teachings of ICEJ are not merely misguided but overtly damaging to the cause of Jewish evangelism to which we all aspire, but devastating to it within the ranks of Pentecostalism. When The Archbishop of Canterbury disenfranchised Jewish Evangelism within Anglicanism, we as Pentecostals stood by our Anglican brethren endorsing CMJ to defend the cause of Jewish evangelism within Anglicanism. When liberalism threatened Jewish evangelism within the Reformed tradition, we stood with our Reformed brethren applauding the Willow Declaration which our late brother and first LCJE President Murdo Macleod

helped draft. Now it is our turn. Jewish Evangelism is under assault from within Pentecostalism, and we are compelled to look to our brethren from other missions and denominations to help and support us.

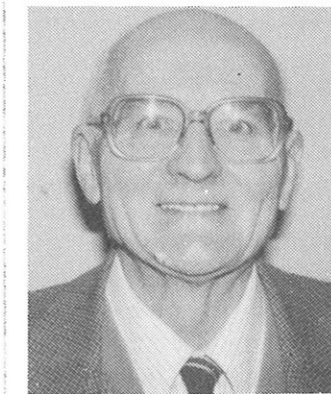
Our Ministry MORIEL operates in the sphere of Jewish Evangelism on basis of the LCJE Covenant documents to which we are signatory. These protocol documents state clearly that we all in Jewish Missions affirm the conviction that withholding the Gospel of Salvation from Jewish people is itself Anti-Semitic. It is a conviction we at MORIEL endorse, it is a doctrinal position we hold sacrosanct, it is a document we signed, and it is a commitment we will stand by.

## Next year in Banyas!

By LCJE member Peter Coleman, Birmingham, England

Next year in Banyas! This clarion call reminds us of the famous Zionist cry "Next Year in Jerusalem!" and of its wonderful fulfilment in May, 1948, the year of my baptism and of the recognition of the State of Israel by a majority vote of the United Nations Organisation.

I am now a lay member of the United Reformed Church (URC) and exercise



Peter Coleman

a voluntary "ministry" to the citizens of Greater Birmingham by contributing occasional articles of a religious nature to a local newspaper.

As a member of LCJE, I am happy to follow a modest ministry trying to raise the awareness of other members to the amazing but yet unexploited evangelical potentialities of the little town of Banyas in the far north of

Israel.

It is, as we all know, the authentic site – previously Caesarea Philippi – of the miraculous confession of St. Peter that the Rabbi the disciples has been following was none other than the long-expected Messiah and Son of God.

My ministry is mainly to those Jews who, with Maimonides, believe with a perfect heart that the Messiah will "eventually" come, and to those who, today, believe that "Messiah" is short-hand for "a future Messianic age". May the words which follow, aided by the Holy Spirit who blows where He wills – persuade them to "recognize" Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah who has already come and who says to them: "Have I been so long time with you and yet you have not known me?"

Caesarea Philippi is a village in the Middle East, formerly in Syria, but since the War of 1967 under Israeli authorities. The natural setting of this village, Banyas, as it is now called, is one of the most beautiful and luxuriant in Palestine. Banyas dates back to Greek times. The grotto of the Jordan's source was dedicated to the god Pan, and the town was once called Paneas. Herod had a temple erected in front of this grotto in honour of Augustus. However, the town only acquired any importance under his son, Philip, who made it the

capital of his Tetrarchy and called it Caesarea Philippi.

The city continued to be a place of importance in the later Roman and Byzantine periods and also during the Crusades; there are the remains of two fine Crusader castles in the area.

In New Testament times, Caesarea Philippi was an important city and a centre of Greco-Roman civilization. The population was largely pagan. But Caesarea Philippi has a much greater claim to fame than being merely the shrine of the pagan god Pan. For it was hereabouts that Jesus questioned His twelve disciples about His messiahship and that Peter replied that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, the Son of God.

In his book "The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah", Dr. A. Edersheim writes: "In Caesarea Philippi, or its immediate neighbourhood, did the Lord spend, with His disciples, six days after the Confession; and here close by, on one of the heights of snowy Hermon, was the scene of the Transfiguration."

Truly, this area is an authentic Holy Place. But why has this place been so sadly neglected, especially by the Roman Church, which has made so much capital out of the power of "the keys" there conferred?

Here we have a grotto out-rivalling that of Lourdes, with an unimpeachable account of a vision, not of the Virgin Mary, but much

more significantly, of a transfigured Christ, and a voice from heaven saying, in the presence of Moses and Elijah, "This is my beloved Son: listen to Him."

"Upon this rock I will build my Church," said Jesus. Truly what better place in all the world to erect also an actual church-building to the honour of our Lord? What name should be given to it? Church of the Great Confession? Church of the Messiah? Church of the Transfiguration?

Furthermore, what better site could there be than Banyas for the establishment of an International Centre for Messianic Studies? There is, in fact, a steadily growing interest in the Messiahship of "The Man from Nazareth". It is also significant that Jesus receives the title Messiah (Al-Masih) no less than eleven times in the Koran, the holy book of Islam.

In an article in The Times called "Significance of Israel in Christianity's Future" the Rev. Ian Thomson, director of the Bible Reading Fellowship, expressed his hope that the Jewish people would one day acknowledge their King. "The day of their return," he said, "will be the day of salvation, the final fulfilment and vindication of God's purpose."

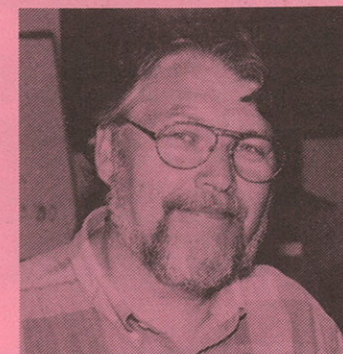
So, meanwhile, let us say: "Next year in Banyas! Shalom!

## Tribute to Helge Aarflot

It is with deep sadness that we have to announce that Helge Aarflot, secretary general of the Norwegian Church Ministry to Israel (NCMI), passed away on 25 February 1997.

Helge Aarflot had been struggling with a serious illness for some time, he spent his last time in his home surrounded by his family. He was 51 when he died. Helge Aarflot leaves behind his wife, Karoline, and two sons.

By education, Helge Aarflot was a theologian, and he was capable of cogent theological reasoning. He



served as NCMI's secretary general for eight years. He supported and was an active participant in the LCJE conferences. The Holocaust and the question of Jewish evangelism were matters of great concern for him. Everywhere – also in – dialogue circles where

Jewish evangelism was rejected – he acknowledged the Church's continued obligation to share the gospel with the Jewish people.

During Helge Aarflot's sickbed I quoted, in a greeting to him, the good words by Basilea Schlink: "Father, I do not understand you, but I trust you."

May those who are closest to him find rest in these words. And may the rest of us work while it is today.

All honour to Helge Aarflot's memory.

*Kai Kjær-Hansen*

### MEETINGS

#### LCJE North America

The next meeting to be held by the North American LCJE chapter will be in San Diego, 2-4 March 1998. For more information contact Fred Klett (address on back cover).

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