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ON JEWISH
EVANGELISM**

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BULLETIN**



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Congratulations!

There is every reason for LCJE to congratulate the Southern Baptist Convention in the USA on the resolution adopted last June on Jewish evangelism.

There is nothing new in the resolution. It calls on Baptists to pray for "the salvation of the Jewish people" and determines "that we direct our energies and resources toward the proclamation of the Gospel to the Jewish people". And then the words from Luke 24.47 are quoted: that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in Jesus' name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Although this is nothing new, it is nevertheless a rare thing that such a big denomination speaks up so clearly on this point.

The responses to the resolution have been predictable - among some Jews as well as Christians. In the magazine *Christians and Israel - A Quarterly Publication From Jerusalem* (Vol.V. No. 4, Autumn 1996) one can read: "The above-cited Baptist resolution is clearly not in the spirit of our time: the spirit of interfaith respect, cooperation and dialogue."

Which is quite true! When it comes to Jewish evangelism we will not allow ourselves to be determined by "the spirit of the time", but rather by "the fullness of the time" (Gal 4.4-5). And when all is said and done, it is probably not in the spirit of the time either that there should be only two peoples of God, the Jewish and the Christian. What about the Muslims? And what about other people of good will who worship their gods in their way?

In *Christians and Israel* it is furthermore said: "Implicitly or explicitly, it has been recognized in enlightened Christian circles that dialogue and evangelization cannot peacefully coexist."

The Southern Baptists - and the rest of us - need not be unduly worried that we are accused of bombing the relationship between Jews and Christians back to the dark Middle Ages. There is much for us in this relationship to be ashamed of. But we are not ashamed of the Gospel - the good news from Israel's God to the Jews first - and then to us non-Jews.

The matter is simple: If the Gospel does not mean anything for Jews today, then why should it mean anything for the rest of us today? *kk-h*

Sixth LCJE European Conference,
28-30 October 1996, Germany

Conference Statement

Over 40 representatives from Protestant churches, Mission agencies and Messianic Jewish congregations met in Stuttgart to reflect on Christian witness to the Jewish people in post-Holocaust Europe. The conference considered this challenge in the light of the clear teaching of Scripture that the Gospel is "to the Jew first" (Romans 1.16).

The conference made the following declaration:

We believe that only through faith in Jesus the Messiah is there salvation for Jew and Gentile alike.

We therefore call on the Church to engage with renewed energy in the task of Jewish evangelism in accordance with the clear witness of Scripture.

We acknowledge that the Christian faith is rooted in God's covenant with Israel.

We recognise the indebtedness of the Church to the Jewish people who under God have been used to bring to the world the light and truth of his grace.

We acknowledge with grief that the Christian Church must bear its share of responsibility for the suffering of the Jewish people throughout history.

We rejoice that a growing number of Jewish people are coming to faith in Jesus the Messiah. We are especially thankful that this includes Jewish people in post-Holocaust Germany.

We maintain the right of Messianic Jews to preserve both their Jewish identity and their essential unity with all believers in Jesus.

We oppose all forms of anti-Semitism, prejudice and racial discrimination.

We reject the two-covenant theory which claims that Jewish people have a separate way of salvation apart from faith in Jesus the Messiah.

In the light of the clear teaching of Scripture we recommit ourselves to the evangelization of the Jewish people worldwide.

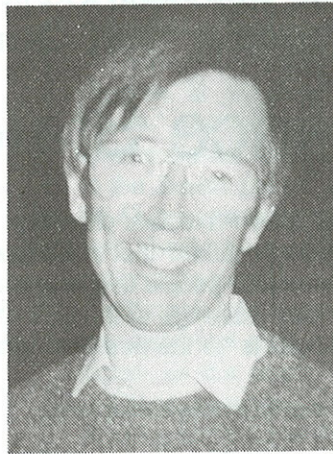
Reflections on the LCJE Conference in Stuttgart

By Rev. John Seawright, The Presbyterian Church of Ireland

The Sixth LCJE European Conference was held from 28th to 30th October, 1996 in Stetten outside Stuttgart. This was the third successive European Conference that I have attended. It is always an event that stimulates the mind as it provides opportunities to meet and interact with people involved in Jewish evangelism and in the ongoing debates which surround it.

The conference centre was Bernhäuser Forst, but a packed programme allowed only the briefest of opportunities to explore the picturesque setting. The gathering was full of interest and variety with many nationalities represented. This year for the first time translation was provided, and Adolf Burkhardt provided a wonderful service as he translated tirelessly and efficiently from English to German and from German to English.

The conference itself included discussion and reporting, conversation and prayer, with occasional moments of obvious deep significance and intensity. The atmosphere was one of unostentatious friendliness. The presence of Jonathan Bernd and Cindy Rudolph, members of the "Liberated Wailing Wall" singing group,



John Seawright

enriched the sessions of praise and worship, and an evening of testimony was a welcome innovation. Whereas previous conferences have included discussion of the practicalities as well as of the principles of Jewish evangelism there seemed little of the former this year.

There was good rapport between participants and a sense that certain basic convictions were shared however diverse other opinions might be. Almost half the conference comprised reports from the various parts of Europe. This was generally encouraging even if it remains indisputable that the enterprise of Jewish evangelism seems to involve only a very small minority of the Body of Christ. The

fact that the conference took place in Germany may have been a reason for an apologetical tone in many of the papers and discussions. The sheer scale of the suffering of the Jewish people during the time of the Nazis remains overwhelming and ultimately it is hardly possible to take it in. This was in no sense overlooked during the conference. Dr. Werner Neudorfer spoke of injustice screaming to heaven and various witnesses spoke of specific instances of dreadful anguish inflicted upon Jewish people during those years. The question of the Church's role was implicit in many remarks and statements. An occasional reference was made to the fact that a proportion of those who perished in the camps were Messianic believers or Hebrew Christians and that here and there the Church had spoken up for the Jewish people or given succour and refuge but the question remains. Someone stated that it was not only an invalid defence in the eyes of Jewish people to plead that those guilty of anti-Semitic crimes were not real Christians, but also that there is something organic about the Church - whatever one's ecclesiology may be - and that we are part of it

through baptism, and that we therefore share in the guilt of its baptised members.

Something of this awareness was latent in many contributions - and it would have militated against any triumphalism - but it was by no means the last word. The past needs to be studied so that its failures and sins may not be repeated, but what will also remain in my memory from Stetten are testimonies of those who in the midst or in the aftermath of suffering found in the suffering Christ a saviour and a hope. Alfred Burchartz in his paper expounded simply and tellingly the significance of the active and passive obedience of Jesus of Nazareth, but it was the witness of some who had suffered for being Jewish during the Nazi terror and had subsequently found release, relief and redemption through this Messiah that bore home to me afresh the unique efficacy of the good news that is "the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek".

The life and words of Martin Levy Bass were also remembered. His widow, Flora, was present at Bernhäuser Forst and celebrated her 80th birthday during the conference. Her husband, working in Germany in the aftermath of war and in the midst of the grievous heart-searching and talk of reparation, had

constantly recalled the reconciliation that Christ had accomplished, pointing out that no one living is without a burdening and incriminating past, that no one can release themselves from this past by their own decision and effort, and that Christ has entrusted to his servants the ministry of reconciliation - to lead people to the peace that the world cannot give and that is through his redemption.

As I listened to careful reasoning in defence of the ongoing validity of the New Testament mandate to make the Christian Gospel known to the people of Israel I often sensed that behind the words there lay not only conviction and integrity but also the very human pain of being misunderstood in spite of every endeavour to take account of understandable sensitivities. Even though this pain was often occasioned from within as well as from without the Church, there was a marked absence of bitterness or odium theologicum towards those who saw things differently. Arguments were marshalled against "the two covenant theory" or any theory that there was another way of salvation than through the one who was named Jesus because "he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). Stated positively, the participants held to the conviction that they had something immensely valuable to share, and a

commission to do so. The conference statement reiterated the conviction that "only through faith in Jesus the Messiah is there salvation for Jews and Gentiles alike".

More update on
Europe in the
next Bulletin



Flora Bass celebrated her 80th birthday during the conference

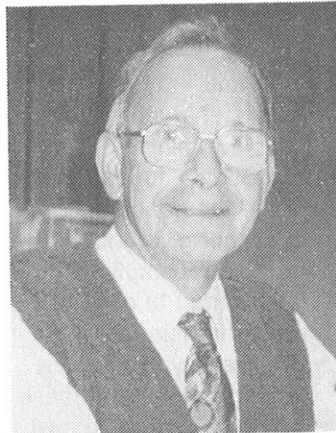
It was an intensive two days of listening, participation and reflection that considered some of the deepest of issues. There were no easy answers but what emerged was a reaffirmation of the truth of the message of Christ crucified and of its effectual power for salvation for all who believe. It was challenging but good to have been there.

Post Sho'ah Witness

Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism, Stuttgart, October 1996
By John Fieldsend, Tehillan Ministry, England

The purpose of this paper is to compare evangelistic witness amongst the Jewish People before and after the Sho'ah, and to establish in what ways that dreadful event has changed the scope and nature of Christian witness. Because of the limitations of space and time we have to limit our observations mainly to Europe, and to examine the work of two main bodies, The Church's Ministry to the Jews (now the Church's Ministry among Jewish People), and the Barbican Mission (now incorporated into Christian Witness to Israel). This is not to denigrate the tremendous explosion of witness in America, a phenomenon which will find a place in this paper, but because much of this witness has arisen half a century after the Sho'ah, it is subsequent, though not peripheral, to our main thrust. Neither have I had time to research the great work done by European, mainly Scandinavian societies.

There are at least two ways of understanding the title. First purely as a matter of dating, i.e. comparing witness prelate 1930s with that of post 1945. The second is to treat the Sho'ah as a matter of profound theological, as well as deep



John Fieldsend

historical significance. How we respond to that now is not the issue. The purpose of this paper is to try to tease out how it was understood then.

In conducting my research I have examined the published magazines of the societies to see how the events leading up to, and arising out of the period of the Sho'ah was seen by the leaders and workers of those Societies. I have not had time to examine the minutes of the meetings of their governing bodies where, within the confidentiality of those meetings, a more clearly defined picture might have emerged. Two main lines of thought have emerged from my research.

* With few exceptions, the real horror of what was developing with the rise of Nazism was not being

perceived. This was not primarily because minds could not imagine or grasp the real horror of what was being planned. The main reason would appear to be that the already existing and almost endemic antisemitism in the countries of central and eastern Europe was so great that, initially at any rate, it masked the significance of what was arising in what was happening in what was a part of western European democracy.

* Changes in the Church's witness during the period under consideration cannot be explained just by the events of the Sho'ah, immense as that tragic event was. Even if the Sho'ah had not taken place, World War Two would inevitably have itself created many of these changes, and it is clear that the events which led up to this war were far wider than the attempted extermination of the Jewish People. There is a frequently stated complaint on the part of some of the Jewish leadership that the combatting of these anti-semitic atrocities were not given a high enough profile. This may be understandable, but it shows that the Nazi threat was rightly perceived as far wider than the destruction of worldwide Jewry.

* The reemergence of the

State of Israel in 1948.

We will therefore have to take the liberty of slightly altering the title of this paper to something like 'Pre and Post War Witness to Jewish People' and we shall then have to examine the effect of the Sho'ah in the wider context of the other major changes.

* * *

Cultural Changes, Political Changes, Nationalistic Changes, Demographic Changes, Social Changes, Ecclesiastical Changes, Doctrinal and Ecclesiological Changes have in their own ways and cumulatively affected the way the Church (including the Evangelical Wing) perceives its witness. By way of example I take the formation of a society called Eclectics by John Stott in the Church of England after the war. (In fact it was the 're-formation' of a society first created during the 18C Evangelical Revival. Membership of this reconvened society was limited to evangelical Anglican clergy under the age of forty, and the reason that this society made such a powerful and specific contribution to the life and witness of the church was that the post-war evangelical clergy had a very different perspective on the life and witness of the church from those who had begun their ministry in the pre-war years. That this has nothing directly to do with Jewish evangelism is precisely the point, because

our purpose here must be to tease out those changes directly attributable (or, better – more directly attributable) to the Sho'ah from those which have arisen out of the wider influences. Far be it for a body like ours to want to play down the Sho'ah, but now we can begin to see it in the perspective of its history, and we have to admit that some, out of fear of this event being forgotten and repeated, are making it difficult to see it in its wider perspective.

The Context of Jewish Ministry in the 1920-30s

Eastern Europe

Reports from CMJ and the Barbican Mission show that they were working in a very antisemitic milieu in Poland, Hungary and Rumania and the region of Eastern Europe generally. There is every indication that this was not officially sponsored, and at times the Polish government made a quite strong attempt to counter it. Rather it was endemic in the senior educational establishments, especially the universities, whereas at the more junior levels the Jewish communities have their own schools. 'Economic antisemitism' was also endemic in many of the professions and places of work, so Jewish families frequently faced severe financial hardship and social deprivation. Organisations involved in Christian outreach were constantly

faced with the accusations from the Jewish leadership of 'buying converts' if they included material relief in their outreach programme, or being more concerned about souls than about human needs if they did not. In that situation the Christian workers also constantly needed to discern the motives behind frequent requests for baptism.

Germany

The position there was much more varied up to the early 30s. On the one hand there were many who faced the same situations as their fellow Jews in Eastern Europe. On the other, there were many who reached high places in the professions, in medicine, technology, commerce etc. Also, with the rise of the more liberal expression of the faith, many Jews became more integrated into German society. So whilst the rise of Hitler to power brought an immediate heightening of antisemitism, and a beginning to a more organised form of it, the discernment of what was to come was still masked by the greater tribulations of the Jewish community in Eastern Europe. However CMJ records several hundred German Jewish medical practitioners emigrating to the UK as early as 1933! Here we need to note with great sadness the way the Nazis were able to orchestrate the support of many in the churches in their programme.

Czechoslovakia

Of all the Christian witness amongst the Jewish community in Europe, the work in Czechoslovakia was probably unique, in that there was very little anti-semitism on the part of the Czech people, and the Jews, more than anywhere else, were more open and responsive to the Gospel. By the time the Nazis moved into Sudetenland, and then into the rest of the country in 1938, there were large numbers of Jews who had publicly professed faith in Jesus in baptism and open church membership. The outreach of the Barbican Mission workers was open and very fruitful, and they met with little opposition in a newly created nation that had become one of the models of democracy anywhere in the world. The oppressive antisemitic measures that the Nazis brought with them were seen in such stark contrast with what occurred before, that it was these events that opened the eyes of the wider Church in the still democratic lands as what Hitler's real intentions were. So whilst there had been a steadily increasing Jewish emigration from Germany and Eastern Europe to the USA, the UK, Palestine and elsewhere, mainly as an internally Jewish organised movement, it was from Czechoslovakia that a multi-faceted rescue of Jewish children was orchestrated from the UK as a matter of extreme urgency,

and the Barbican Mission was one of the main players in that rescue work. Even though many children were being rescued from the horrors of Nazism there were many voices of protest from leaders amongst the Jewish community here that a Christian evangelistic organization was highly involved in the rescue work, and even today there is a continuing 'love-hate' relationship with the church on the part of those rescued by the Barbican. This is largely why, whereas there was open witness amongst European Jewish children before the war, and whilst children's work has traditionally formed, and still forms, an integral part of Christian outreach amongst other ethnic groups without causing major offence, it has largely been dropped as counter-productive in Jewish evangelism, at least in the UK and USA.

* * *

It was not until the 'Anschluss' of Austria, and the events that led up to 'Kristallnacht' in Germany, that the churches really awoke to the realization as to how deeply the scourge of antisemitism lay as a latent force just beneath the skin of the general mass of European society, including many in their own congregations.

United Kingdom, Holland and the Scandinavian Countries

Whilst these lands have

been much more accepting of, and even supportive of the Jewish communities in their midst, it was mainly the churches of the UK that initiated evangelism specifically relevant to the Jewish people of Europe and Palestine. Since its founding in 1809 CMJ had, for much of this period, been able to rely on the support of its bishops and other senior church leaders, but by and large at the parochial level, with notable exceptions, the grass roots support was less enthusiastic, and manpower and finance were constantly recurring problems; and the Barbican Mission magazine carried similar reports.

Indigenisation and Indigenous Movements

Whilst the terminology of modern missiology had not been developed, and even the concept of contextualization hardly existed, there had been several interesting developments in the years before World War 2.

* The movement in Russia called Israelites of the New Covenant has been well documented and will only be referred to here. Suffice it to say that this was probably this first major Jewish indigenous movement since the days of the Apostolic Church, and is unquestionably the forerunner of present day Messianic Judaism.

* Palestine Place, a Hebrew Christian Community,

founded by CMJ in 1814, was probably the first major attempt by a mission at indigenising Jewish missionary work on a fairly major scale.

* There is a fascinating article in 'Immanuel's Witness' the organ of the Barbican Mission, of March 1937 entitled 'Jews Want a Church'. It is recorded that through the witness of Mr. Sameielevici, a Jewish headmaster who had become a believer in Jesus, two hundred of the best Jewish families in Bucharest were prepared to become Christians. They requested Patriarch Miron Christea to administer baptism to them, but at the same time stating that they wished to build their own church and form a separate congregation. The article goes on to describe the opposition that this request aroused and the stark refusal even to consider this request. The quandary new believers found themselves in is well described. "If he comes and desires to be absorbed into the church, then it is said that he has an ulterior motive: either social position or political gain. If he desires to form a church of his own and remain a separate unit, then he must be prevented because of the formation of a new sect". The fact that this group requested baptism from the Patriarch was precisely because they did not wish to be seen as a new sect bore no weight in

their argument.

The article goes on the record another mass movement when 97,000 Jews in Hungary became Christians, though it would seem that at that stage they joined the existing churches and were absorbed into the mainstream Christian community and lost their Jewish identity.

* According to a Reuter News agency report from Warsaw in a September 1929 edition of *The Times*, a new Jewish sect has been recently established on the eastern border of Poland, near Vilna, with headquarters at Kucewicze; its adherents, says the report, number 15,000. The Times reported

"This association has decided to form a Jewish Church, recognising the deity of Jesus of Nazareth and studying the New Testament, still adhering, however, to general rabbinic regulations."

I have not been able to ascertain what response this news report, in a mainline secular paper, received from within the corridors of the mainstream churches, either in Poland or elsewhere.

* But perhaps one of the most pregnant, and perhaps one of the most prophetic and visionary statements came in an address by the Bishop of Stepney during the hundred and fifteenth anniversary celebrations of the Church's Ministry to the Jews in June 1923. I shall

quote at some length from his talk so that we can not only receive what he said, but also feel something of the criticism he was expecting, even from within the ranks of those committed to Jewish evangelism.

"I want to say something ... that has been on my mind for the last three or four years. When I say I pray ... that all Israel shall be saved, what do I mean? I do not mean that every Israelite shall come to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, and be merged in the Christian Church in the nation among which he happens to be dwelling ... *I mean that in some way Israel shall take her place among the Christian nations, and the very foremost place, by virtue of that God-given call in the past ages*

May it not be much better - *I know that in saying this I shall have you up against me, but I am going to say it in spite of that - may it not be better to encourage our converts to form a Christian synagogue which could retain as much as possible some of the old Jewish peculiarities and some of the old Jewish distinctions? I venture to think that there is a good deal in that. That is my vision.*"(italics mine)

The Bishop then went on to thank God for the ministry of CMJ, and moved a resolution that "this meeting fully recognises the urgent need for the development of the work, especially in Palestine

and Eastern Europe, and pledges itself to do its utmost to clear off the deficit of £7,309. 16s. 4d. in order that the society may be in a position to develop the work."

But perhaps something of the Bishop's words struck home, because in June 1930, the Rev J.I. Landsman, addressing CMJ supporters on their hundred and twenty second anniversary, entitled his talk "A Unique Church", said "... On Sundays we have a Morning Service for the British Colony. In the evening our Jewish Christian Church assembles for Divine Worship. You must remember that we have in Warsaw a Jewish Christian Church, (which was) already in existence nineteen years ago, united with the Church of England. If you come in on Sunday evening, you will see all Jewish faces ... We call it the Hebrew Christian Church because it consists entirely of Jewish Christians. This is a unique Church. I do not know if I am right, but I believe it is the only Jewish Church we have in Europe."

We will now leave the pre-war years and move on to 1945. During the war the work in mainland Europe had all but shut down, though it is amazing how national workers of the societies were able to continue even some work amongst the Jewish communities even under Nazi

domination. We need also to understand that many Christian organisations who were involved in the rescue of Jewish children, far from getting the thanks of the Jewish leadership, were still being accused of underhand and unethical proselytism, an accusation that has become a pattern for any work amongst Jewish young people.

Leaving the Jewish scene aside for a moment, the post-war years saw the break up of the European dominated world empires, the declaration of independence of subject nations, and with it the creation of indigenous churches, usually in fellowship with the denominations that founded them. So, for example, the Anglican Communion became a fellowship of episcopal national (though not state) churches, of which the Church of England is just one member. But somehow, once again, any idea of a Jewish Church seemed to pass people by. In January 1946 the Jewish Missionary Intelligence (a CMJ magazine) editorial extolled the vibrancy of many of the newly established indigenous Churches, having just received generous gifts from some of those Churches in China and India; and they were favourably compared with the rather lukewarm "Christian pagans" in the Churches nearer home.

We have to recognize that the indigenisation of these churches was often the a

kind of 'spin off' from the political process of national independence rather than a theologically worked through process instituted by the founding European Churches. The European Churches were reactive rather than proactive, and somehow not even the founding of the State of Israel in 1948 led to even the consideration of a national Jewish Church in Israel. To be fair we have to recognize that there was not the same demand for indigenisation that there was amongst the newly emergent countries of the former empires. Many who might have become leaders of an emerging indigenous Jewish Church were content to remain within the older churches where they had come to faith in Jesus. There were those, like Jacob Jocz, whose sometimes radical writing challenged, and even 'discomfited' those Churches, but an indigenous Jewish Church seemed nowhere seriously on the agenda.

So what of Jewish evangelism post Sho'ah? We have to say that as far as the missionary societies and churches involved were concerned, they did their best to take it up where they had inevitably to lay it down during the war. Inevitable changes in international patterns forced changes in working. The devastation of European Jewry and the

Stalinisation of the USSR closed many of the previously most fruitful fields. The independence and Islamicisation of much of North Africa and greater Arabia led to the demise of that work also. Half of world Jewry now lived in the USA and another third behind the closed doors of the USSR. But as far as new creative theological thinking on the part of the Church, we have to say that there were only occasional hints which were not followed through.

In an editorial introducing CMJ's Annual Report of 1947 entitled "The Call of the Jews" reference is made to the "Sixth World Call Report" some twenty years earlier in which the late Bishop Burroughs of Ripon, speaking in York Minster, is quoted as saying

"There is much in both Old and New Testaments to suggest that part of God's plan for saving the world is to *use again* the Jewish people as the missionary nation *par excellence*, as He used them both in the pre-Christian ages and in the founding of the Christian Church. The plan of Christendom hitherto has been has been to deal ourselves, in some fashion, with the whole of this Gentile world, and devote the very small amount of energy left over to offering the Jew a place at the tail-end of our procession of converts. If God's plan for the Jew and for the world is so different, the surprising thing is that

we have made *any* headway with our own, especially when we have not yet even publicly and corporately recognised our share in estranging Jewry from Jesus Christ.

The editorial goes on to affirm that past sins of negligence, ignorance and betrayal have not gone altogether unacknowledged, and it presents a powerful call to renewal of loving evangelistic witness, but what we might have hoped for in a new age of recognition of independent indigenous national churches, which was not so self-evident at the time Bishop Burroughs spoke in York Minster, is that if the Jewish people are indeed a missionary nation par excellence, then they, of all people, should have an indigenous Church, and this church would not just be a Jewish Church in Israel, but a Church of the Jewish believers in Jesus world wide. It is this kind of radical missiological thinking that one might have hoped for in the post-Sho'ah days, in the new post-World War Two days of the fall of empires and the widespread emergence of new nations and churches.

On the contrary, and perhaps because these things have not taken place, and as a result of much 'Church Guilt Tripping' on the part of the Jewish leadership, there has been a massive crisis of confidence

regarding the validity of the evangelisation of Jewish people, and even some evangelicals with a real missionary concern have been affected by this crisis. The whole atmosphere became so tense and confused that in 1962 CMJ, whilst disclaiming any change in its stated evangelistic policy, changed its name from 'The Church's Mission to the Jews' to 'The Church's Ministry among the Jews'.

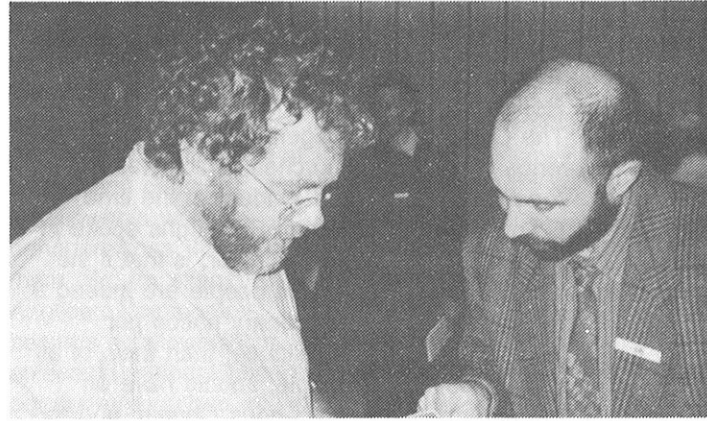
However those 'embryonic beginnings' such as the Israelites of the New Covenant in Kishineff, Palestine Place in London, the stated aspirations of many Jews in Poland and other parts of Eastern Europe, the clear vision of the Bishop of Stepney in 1923, and other such beginnings, did not bear fruit again until a move of the Holy Spirit began to bring numbers of American Jewish 'drop-outs' to faith in the late '60s and early '70s, leading eventually to the formation of 'Jews for Jesus', an indigenous Jewish outreach, and the formation of the present movement of Jewish Messianic Congregations, often in spite of opposition from many of the mainline Churches. We have no desire to 'idealise' these movements, but we have to say, I think with some regret, that once again the mainline Churches have been reactive to these

movements, responding either with warmth or with criticism, or more often with a mixture of both. It has frequently been said that the State of Israel arose, like a Phoenix, from the ashes of the Sho'ah. It would, I think, have been beneficial to us all if the Sho'ah had 'kick-started' the Church, and especially those in it who were actively involved in Jewish mission, to think proactively, biblically and missiologically about what God's Spirit was saying about his people Israel so that what is happening now, almost in spite of the Church, might have come to birth less painfully and less controversially with the Church as its midwife.

I accept that I haven't really addressed the question as to how our witness should have been influenced by the Sho'ah. But this paper has been in the nature of an historical survey, and the fact is that this question has not seriously been addressed in the context of evangelistic witness. Many Jewish and Christian theologians, philosophers and writers have given their energies to this from the viewpoint of theodicy and morality, but there it has remained. The generation of those who had first-hand experience of these terrible events is passing and the Sho'ah is becoming a focal point in the corporate folk memory of the Jewish people. Maybe now is the time to address the

issue missiologically. And let us not forget the families of the perpetrators, for they also need the Gospel. In the past five months two people have sought me out for prayer and ministry. One had, in her childhood been a member of the Hitler Youth, the other's father had been an officer in the SS. Both these people who came to me had been believers for some time but only recently

have memories and emotions arisen which had not previously been addressed. It is important that we try to evaluate the past, because those who do not learn from history are destined to repeat its mistakes. But as evangelists we are committed not just to ask "How should they have presented the Gospel then?" but "How shall we present the Gospel now"?



Networking together: Ian Campbell, Messianic Servant Ministries (left) and Anatoli Ouchomirski, EDI.

Singing and praising together with Jonathan Bernd and Cindy Rudolph.

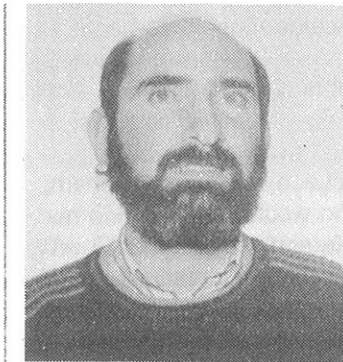


The History of Jewish Believers in Canada, 1759-1995: The Movement to Autonomy

By Daniel Nessim, Woodinville, WA, USA

Why This Study is Important

Canada, closely tied to both the United States and Europe, arguably typifies the modern movement of Jewish people to Yeshua in the western hemisphere since the French Revolution in 1789. In Canada, Jews who believe that Jesus is the Messiah prophesied in Tenach have a history that can be traced from the mid-eighteenth century. Many Canadian Jewish believers have consistently retained a strong sense of identity with their Jewish kindred and nation. Since Rufus Anderson promoted the "three-self" principle in the nineteenth century, many believing Jews in Canada have of their own accord sought to become a "self-propagating, self-supporting, and self-governing" movement. Only since the 1960s has this goal become a full reality. However, most Jews who believe in Yeshua continue to function within their historical place as members of local churches and denominations. The history of Jewish believers in both the indigenous movement and the church is the topic of this article. Their number has grown steadily over time, and they have increasingly formed associations which affirm their Jewishness and



Daniel Nessim

faith in Jesus as the Messiah prophesied in Tenach. Until recently, their history has never been systematically or comprehensively documented

The French Colonial Era (pre-1759)

Under French rule, prior to the British victory in 1759, Jews were banned as non-Catholics from France's Louisiana territories on the American continent by the infamous *code noir*. Understandably, there is no record of Jewish believers from that time period. Two anecdotal stories are worth sketching out however. One concerns Esther Brandau who, possibly inspired by Joan of Arc's stratagem, posed as a boy named Jacques La Farge to gain entry to the colony. When discovered, she was sent to a convent, but being steadfast in her refusal to

convert to Catholicism, was declared deranged and sent back to France at the king's expense. In another instance a Jew, being discovered aboard a French vessel bound for Acadia on Canada's east coast in 1752, did not have the same freedom of choice. Aaron Hart, Commissary-General in Halifax, within a British held territory, and one of the few Jews in Canada was "shocked to learn" of the Dutch Jew at the French fortress of Louisburg, on Cape Breton Island:

The ships officers compelled him to swear on the New Testament to be a true Christian "after he had been enlightened with the truth of the Roman Catholic and horror of the Judaic religion in which he had hitherto confessed faith."(1)

Such an event, while isolated, served to reinforce Jewish concerns about Christian missionizing. Extreme actions as those of the ship's officers were liable to inflame memories of persecution and injustices that had taken place in Europe.

The British Colonial Era (1759-1867)

Missions to the few Jews in Canada had a slow start in both "upper" and "lower" Canada under British rule.

Missions to the Jews in Europe, however, and the conversions of European Jews to Christianity had an inevitable impact upon the development of Hebrew Christianity in Canada, adding to the ranks of those introduced to Messiah in the New World. In the mid-nineteenth century, three Hebrew Christians made significant contributions to the church in Canada. One accepted Messiah while in Canada, the others while in Europe prior to emigrating.

The first, Charles Freshman (1819–c. 1880), was born in St. Micklosh, Hungary. The record of his life comes from his own autobiography, a lengthy tome of well over 300 pages which never seems to run out of anecdotes or homely recollections.(2) Written in 1868, it unfortunately does not record the later years of Freshman's life, although it richly conveys his own personality. While his father was a businessman, his paternal grandfather was a Rabbi, and maternal grandfather a synagogue sexton. Raised on the fables of the Toldoth Yeshu, he recalled being taught that "Jesus . . . was a bastard." From an early age Freshman was enrolled in training for the rabbinate. Thus it was that when in 1855 he arrived in Canada with his family, he promptly found a position as Rabbi in the Jewish congregation of Quebec City. While there he began to read a Bible, including both

the Testaments, which he had received in Cashaw, Hungary, from a unnamed Jewish missionary employed by the Scottish Church. His openness to Christian doctrine must have been evident, for he was solicited not only by Mr. Elliot, a Wesleyan minister, but at least two women, Mrs. McLeod and Miss Clapham, who would visit him and his wife and pray for her salvation (interestingly unaware that he was still not a Christian). Through the agency of a Mr. Elliot, he eventually took a public stand as a believer in Jesus. Soon he became thoroughly enamoured with the Wesleyan Methodists, and began to take an active part in ministry among Protestant churches. His contribution is recorded in his own words:

It will be eight years next conference since I began the German work in Canada. Then there was not a single German Wesleyan Methodist. Now, thanks be to God! (sic) we have eight missionary labourers in the vineyard, several local preachers and class--leaders, and over two hundred members in the society . . . Then we had not a single church or appointment; now we have twelve churches, and thirty congregations, . . . Besides all this, other German churches, which were becoming cold and dead, have been awakened and quickened through our instrumentality.(3)

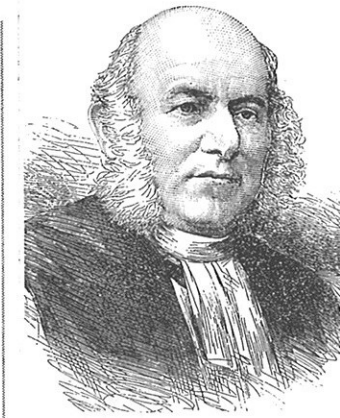
Charles Freshman never lost his desire to win his own people over to the Messiah. This desire was fulfilled through the labours of his son, Jacob, who moved to New York City to minister to Jews there, establishing "The first Hebrew Christian Church in America." According to Mitch Glaser, he was instrumental in leading Leopold Cohn to the Lord.(4) Leopold Cohn, in turn, founded the Williamsburg Mission to the Jews, which was to become the well known American Board of Missions to the Jews.

The second notable Jewish believer of this era was Jakob Meier Hirschfelder (1819–1902), a key pioneer in developing the academic field of Biblical Studies in the colony. Unlike Freshman, he was an Anglican. As there is no record of his conversion in Canada, it is assumed that he became a believer when in Europe, prior to emigrating to Canada. First arriving in Quebec city in 1837, by 1841 he was advertising in Toronto newspapers, offering instruction in Hebrew and German. While a "total lack of private papers" hinders our knowledge of Hirschfelder's person, it is known that he was "somewhat of a *bon vivant* in the cultural circles of early Victorian Toronto."(5) The fact that Hirschfelder was well versed in several Semitic languages suggests that his training in Europe was that of an educated, *haskalah* Jew.

Hirschfelder was not one to avoid issues, as his numerous publications attest. A key contribution was his critique of Bishop Colenso's inflammatory work undermining traditional views on the authority and authenticity of Scripture.(6) He clearly identified himself both culturally and religiously with Christianity and Christian culture. There is no evidence that he had any concern with proselytizing the Jewish community or maintaining relations with it. Rather, the impression one has is that Hirschfelder had a lot to gain academically by professing Christianity, and actually did quite well for himself as a professor whereas he would not have done so without converting. Nevertheless he clearly valued his Jewishness as far as it was valuable academically. Thus in some ways he remains an enigma.

The third Jewish believer was Isaac Hellmuth (1820–1901), the first Bishop of Huron (Anglican), and founder of what is now the University of Western Ontario. Born near Warsaw, he did not grow up poor or without a thorough Jewish upbringing.(7) His heritage accounts for much of his ability and understanding of Judaism, as His father was "a Rabbi 'of a highly respected Jewish family. Claims were made for a descent traced from the house of Judah and the Royal House of David.'"(8)

Through the agency of



The Right Reverend Isaac Hellmuth, D.D.

Dr. S. Neuman, a Hebrew Christian and missionary with the LSPCJ, Hellmuth became a believer while studying at the University of Breslau.(9) There he was (as might be expected) promptly turned out of his home and disowned. In England he was greatly encouraged by Hugh McNeile, a strong evangelical, and one of the first Anglican clergymen to accept premillennialism. Thus Hellmuth inherited a keen Evangelicalism, for which he became well known.(10) After a time in England, which was for him a place of refuge, he came to Canada in 1844.(11)

Hellmuth had a strong desire to present the Gospel to other Jews. Throughout his illustrious career in the Anglican Church of Canada, this remained a minor note in his activities. In 1877 the *Dominion Churchman* reported that

He believes in the restoration of the Jews to the fatherland, at no distant period. A belief in this he

firmly maintains in common with other Jews, whether believing that the Messiah has come or is yet to come to restore the kingdom to Israel.

His encouragement of and influence upon the LSPCJ upon his final return to England is well documented.(12)

While receiving the influential contributions of the three Hebrew Christians noted above, although not because of them, the church in Canada increasingly began to reach out to the Jewish community. Partly this was due to the enduring impetus imparted to the field of Jewish evangelism by the French Revolution. The cataclysmic events of the revolution had greatly sharpened the interest of the British Christian, and therefore the Canadian Christian, in eschatology, and in the speculation that the Jews must accept the Messiah as a prelude to His return.

In 1838, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland was stirred up on behalf of the people of Israel by Mr. Woodrow, igniting the enthusiasm of the General Assembly.(13) Looking back eighty years later Rohold recorded that "the wave of enthusiasm quickly crossed the ocean, and swept the Presbyterian congregations in Canada."(14) In 1847, an LSPCJ (the London Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Among the Jews) auxiliary was established by

James Cohen, who was sent from England for the purpose.(15) Prior to the confederation of Canada in 1867, the resultant Presbyterian and LSPCJ missions were, however, largely unstaffed and limited to fundraising for foreign efforts. Thus the British Colonial Era was marked primarily by an awakening interest in Jewish evangelism among Canadian Christians, and a few scattered Hebrew Christians, who were influential far beyond their numbers. Of them a record remains for their notable achievements.

The Era of Confederation (1867-1945)

The Era following Confederation, at which point Canada became a nation, became the era of Protestant missions to the Jew. Following the "three self" missionary promoted by Anderson and Venn, some of these missions moved Hebrew Christians gradually along the path that would lead them to establish "self-propagating, self-supporting, and self-governing" congregations after the Second World War. Prior to this era, Canadian Jewry was largely Sephardic in composition. That the Hebrew Christians mentioned above were all Ashkenazi, apparently is because little mission effort had been expended in reaching Sephardic Jews worldwide. Now, due to the pogroms following the assassination of Czar

Alexander III in 1881, the Jewish community in Canada swelled with thousands of Russian immigrants. Whereas in 1871 there were only 1,233 Jews in Canada, by 1911 there were 74,760.

To the new immigrants, evangelism was typically seen as an attempt to erode the freedoms they enjoyed in their new home, and an infringement upon Jewish rights to worship as Jews. The missionaries were prepared for resistance, for indifference, but not for this intense resentment which they met from the Jews. Immigrant Jews in these years were fleeing Christian Russia for their very lives, for the preservation of their being, and for their identity. As they saw it, the preaching of the missionaries came as a challenge to defend that for which they had sacrificed so much during many centuries.(16) Nevertheless, three significant attempts to present the Gospel to Jews in Canada were initiated during this period.

The first attempt, by the LSPCJ in 1863, was focused primarily in Toronto, building on the lapsed auxiliary previously established in 1847. While primarily focused on raising funds for the international work of the LSPCJ, from 1882 the work of the LSPCJ in Canada was spearheaded by Johnstone Vicars (17) who tirelessly laboured until his death to interest his fellow Anglicans in the work to reach the

Jews. A reference made by him to the Jews as a "perverted, persecuted and perishing people" suggests that in Johnstone's day, despite benevolent intentions, even those most dedicated to Jewish evangelism held attitudes that in themselves were an obstacle to success. This was one of the key factors that led to the employment of Jews themselves as witnesses to their own people. In an 1889 appeal, such are referred to as "Special Agents" able to speak the language of the Jews and understand their ways.(18)

In 1902, the mission expanded to include Montreal. After a false start, it achieved its greatest success under Rev. Neuge-wirtz, himself a Hebrew Christian. In 1911, Neuge-wirtz was joined by a Mr. Rosenthal, and Neuge-wirtz established a Hebrew Christian Church which endured until he left Montreal in 1940. The missionaries and their colporteur were energetic and enterprising, expanding their activities to Ottawa, and effective to the point that it was said that even "Spies [who] came to learn the methods of the mission . . . themselves often became enquirers."(19)

As a result of the LSPCJ's activities in Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa, three major centres of Canadian Jewry, it is evident that it had a part in developing Canada's small

population of Jewish believers. Nevertheless, it is hard to trace any direct results from this work that continue to the present. This may indicate that the Society encouraged full assimilation into Christian culture. However, the work begun in Toronto at the end of this time held great promise, and bore fruit in the notable endeavors of the Anglican Church.

The Anglican Church did not actively begin evangelizing Jews until 1912, possibly satisfied with supporting the efforts of the LSPCJ until then. Significantly, one of the church's most able workers was involved in the efforts, D.T. Owen being the future Archbishop and Primate of all Canada.(20) In 1916, the mission leased a property that it called "Nathanael House" and adopted the motto "Come and See." The foundations laid, Nathanael House was destined to become one of the most auspicious centres of Hebrew Christian life in the country until the 1960's. It is the subject of a recent extensive historical study by Laurie-Ann Zachar. The work progressed with some success, though hampered by rising anti-semitism in Canada and the Canadian church. Because of this, by 1931 the Institute suggested that there were a number of Jews who might believe in "Jesus as the Messiah" but remained secret believers.

The situation improved when Nathanael Institute

was finally able to include a Hebrew Christian missionary on the staff.(21) Morris Kaminsky, a Canadian born Jew, first appears in the 1932 Synod records as a part time worker who had been a Christian for twelve years.(22) The Institute found that all their hopes for him were "well founded" and the presence of a Hebrew Christian among those they were seeking to convert increased "the attendance and loyalty of our people."(23) Under his direction, the institute began to conduct baptisms. In its register are listed the names of many eminent Canadian Hebrew Christians such as Edward Brotsky, Malvern Jacobs, and Morris Chernoff. Chernoff's sons are active leaders today in the American Messianic movement.

The third notable mission to the Jews in Canada was conducted by the Presbyterian church. In 1907, the General Assembly, meeting in Montreal, decided to commence a mission to the Hebrew people in Toronto. The "exceptional" Shabbetai Benjamin Rohold was recruited from Glasgow to become superintendent. In the years he served as superintendent, Rohold (1876-1931) became one of the most influential Jewish believers of all time among Canada's Hebrew Christians. A ready writer and student of his people, Rohold played an active part in presenting the Gospel creatively and wholeheartedly. Rohold was

concerned that the salvation of his people not be dependent upon their becoming christianized in a cultural sense. Thus the mission was termed a "Christian Synagogue" and emphasized that acceptance of the Gospel did not abolish a Jew's Jewishness. This approach did not win him great popularity with the Jewish community at large.

During Rohold's leadership, the mission continued to enjoy significant success. Under his tutelage grew a small community of Jewish believers, among whom was Morris Zeidman, a Polish Jew born on the Jewish feast of Shavuoth (Pentecost) in 1894. Zeidman was but one of many Hebrew Christians associated with Rohold's mission. In 1914 when a special (the first) communion was held at the "Hebrew Christian Synagogue," Rohold was able to count "114 Hebrew Christians and friends who participated in the service."(24) This was only the beginning. Just one year later the Hebrew Christians of the city presented a petition through the agency of Dr. J. McPherson Scott to the Presbytery of Toronto, "asking permission to organize themselves into a Hebrew Christian congregation."(25) It is quite possible that their motivation came from the well publicized example of the Messianic Movement in Kishinev, which had received international attention under Joseph

Rabinowitz in the last fifteen years of the nineteenth century.(26)

Rohold's leadership expanded beyond the confines of Toronto, and even Canada. On April 7, 1915, he was elected the Hebrew Christian Alliance of America's first president. Following his return to Palestine in 1920, Rohold left the Hebrew Christian Synagogue in the hands of Morris Zeidman, who led the congregation until his death in 1964. It was he who obtained permission for the congregation to be organized on a self-supporting basis in 1928. Thus the synagogue grew to become Canada's first self-supporting and autonomous Jewish congregation.

The confederation era thus ended with a strong and growing Hebrew Christian movement in Canada. In many respects, it was a nascent Messianic Judaism that was both formed and pioneered by the Canadians. Space does not permit to explore the development of Hebrew Christianity across the country during the period, although it is fair to state that Toronto was surely its centre.

The Modern Era (1945 on)

The years following the Second World War have been marked by three overlapping trends. The first is the decline of church missions to the Jews. The second is the establishment of American based and

autonomous Canadian missions to the Jews. The third is the growth of Messianic Judaism.

Shortly after the second World War, two church based missions to the Jews were active in Toronto, and formed the centre of Hebrew Christian life. The first, led by Morris Zeidman, was the Hebrew Christian Synagogue. As mentioned above, this church persevered until Zeidman's death in 1964. In October of that year, the last service of the old Hebrew-Christian congregation took place. By then, a better established Jewish community no longer needed the material assistance afforded by the mission. Gradually the social outreach of the mission had overtaken its original function as a mission primarily concerned with preaching the Gospel to Jews. Particularly this was due to its leading part in servicing the city's poor during the great depression of the 1930s which won it great civic acclaim. It is not surprising then that Zeidman's son Alex, who succeeded him in leading the mission, was not primarily concerned with evangelizing Jews. These events contributed to the weaning of Toronto's Hebrew Christians from the support of church missions.

The second mission, the Nathanael Institute, continued to thrive under Morris Kaminsky. In 1949 Kaminsky tendered his resignation, later to withdraw

it, only to tender it again in 1955. From Toronto he moved to his wife's home town, accepting an invitation to "work in Chicago at Peniel and Aedus Community Centers (sic)." (27) At a special meeting on 21 October 1955, this resignation was accepted and the name of Dr. Jocz suggested as a replacement.(28)

With Dr. Jocz's 1957 appointment as Morris Kaminsky's successor, a new era for Toronto's Hebrew Christian community began to emerge. As Kaminsky's successor, Dr. Jocz became heir to "a small Jewish Congregation meeting on the premises." (29) Whether he knew it or not, it appears that Jocz was hired in part because he was perceived to be an appropriate candidate for a church re-evaluating its commitment to Jewish evangelism. Thus Jocz's leadership in evangelizing Jews was quickly undercut by theological and missiological changes in the Anglican church. In particular, the church claimed a desire to pursue "dialogue" with the Jewish community. Jocz's was a short employment, and his resignation in 1960 paved the way for a fundamental transformation of the mission. Thus Jocz's tenure at the Institute, against his will, initiated a period of transition that eventually distanced Nathanael Institute from Jewish believers.

Into the void created by

the removal of these two missions from their natural sphere of influence among Jewish believers came both Jews for Jesus and the American Board of Missions to the Jews. It is probably fair to say, however, that these missions do not constitute the core of Hebrew Christian or Messianic community in Toronto to the extent that their predecessors did. The reasons are clear. Although they both have held weekly meetings and sponsored congregational endeavours, they are now just part of an extensive Hebrew Christian and Messianic community. Secondly, their thrust is primarily evangelistic, and not pastoral. What is notable, is that both missions adhere to the policies of the previous missions in emphasizing that faith in Yeshua does not diminish one's Jewishness in any way.

The third trend that has affected Canadian Jewish believers has been the growth of Messianic Judaism. While Canada had its share of Jewish congregations, it was the American movement, in part spurred on by expatriate Canadians, that would bring about a paradigm shift in the way the Canadians viewed themselves. As Ben Volman wrote in 1992,

Now a new emphasis, the consequence of years of mission work, has emerged onto the Canadian church scene: a dynamic ethnic congregational movement

that crosses denominational lines.(30)

Hebrew Christianity very grudgingly made room for the much more organized, observantly Jewish, and high profile Messianic Judaism. Where Messianic congregations were established, they often took a significant role in creating a milieu in which Hebrew Christians could meet on occasion. Messianic Jews, motivated by a desire to maintain their Jewish culture, increased their association with one another and worked towards the establishment of more Messianic congregations across the country. By 1994 serious talks were already under way exploring the possibility of an association of Canadian Messianic congregations.

Notably, these developing trends and the resistance of many to Messianic Judaism resulted in the formation of the Canadian Hebrew Christian Alliance to "correct the anomalous situation of one nation's Hebrew Christian Community being part of another nation's Alliance, and be a natural recognition of the cultural differences between Canada and the United States."(31) Ernst Loewy and other Canadians, being very wary of Messianic Judaism, strongly opposed what was seen as a foreign influence on Canadian Hebrew Christianity. This too, must be seen as a sign of the growing strength of the movement of Jews towards

Yeshua in Canada. The Canadian Alliance has operated successfully since that time and has successfully overcome division among factions in the community. It is presently under the leadership of Mark Neugebauer.

The Present Situation

In 1995, I conducted an informal survey of the Messianic Community across Canada, in order to get a better picture of the present situation among Messianic Jews and Hebrew Christians. Although one very notable congregation in Toronto failed to respond, leaders in various urban centers were generally very cooperative, and responses were received from eight cities across the country. It is estimated that of some 1500 Jewish believers in these cities, about 500 would consider themselves Hebrew Christians, and the rest would consider themselves Messianic Jews. Most of the congregations have been formed within the last decade. Significantly, only three out of nine congregations were the outgrowth of a previous ministry, thus demonstrating the self-propagating impetus of the congregational movement. Most had somewhere between 25 and 50 percent Jewish membership, and had a total average attendance of about 350 in 1995, sharply up from 95 in 1990. This number is rapidly growing, although whether it

is from Jewish or Gentile attendees is not known.

Conclusion

The number of Canadian Jews who believe in Jesus has persistently increased over the entire period that can be documented. This increase was initially directly related to missionary endeavour and Jewish population growth. More recently, the movement has generated its own growth and momentum. Either as a result of greater numerical strength or developments in thought and self-perception among such believers, they have increasingly associated with each other. First isolated by time, distance, and lack of numerical strength, later brought together through the agency of evangelistic missions to the Jews, Jewish believers have increasingly formed autonomous indigenous organizations and congregations. What these congregations can achieve waits to be seen. For the time being there is no doubt that they are growing rapidly and effectively giving an authentic Jewish expression to faith in Yeshua.

Notes

- 1 I. Harold Sharfman, *The Frontier Jews: An Account of Jewish Pioneers and Settlers in early America* (New Jersey: Citadel, 1977), p. 5.
- 2 Charles Freshman, *The Autobiography of the Rev. Charles Freshman* (Toronto: Rose, 1868).
- 3 Ibid., p. 312. It may be that

- Freshman portrays himself as more effective than he actually was, minimising the important contributions of others and events beyond his control, yet there is clearly some factual basis.
- Freshman's autobiography was presumably published for the very people who would be most able to verify or dispute his claims.
- 4 Mitchell Glaser, "A Survey of the History of Missions to the Jews in New York City 1900-1930," Paper presented to the *Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism*, April, 1994.
- 5 Mel Starkman, "A Meshumad at the University of Toronto," *Journal of the Canadian Jewish Historical Society*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (October 1981), p. 73.
- 6 Jakob Meier Hirschfelder, *The Scriptures Defended; Being a Reply to Bishop Colenso's Book on the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua*. Toronto: Rowell, 1863. In his two volume refutation Hirschfelder attacks the "heretical work from so eminent a prelate" (p. iii).
- 7 James W. Talman, "Western" - 1878-1953; *being the history of the origins and development of the University of Western Ontario* (London: U. of Western Ontario, 1953), p. 5.
- 8 J.B. Richardson, *A Jubilee Memorial* (London, Ont.: Diocese of Huron, 1907), p. 78. quoted by A.H. Crowfoot, *This Dreamer: Life of Isaac Hellmuth, Second Bishop of Huron* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1963), p. 2. It should be noted that claims to Davidic ancestry are generally to be taken with a pinch of salt due to the desirability of the claim and the lack of means to prove it.
- 9 William T. Gidney, *The History of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews, From 1809 to 1908* (London: LSPCJ, 1908), pp. 167, 583. See also Jacob Gartenhaus, *Famous Hebrew Christians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), p. 91.
- 10 Crowfoot, op. cit., p. 12.
- 11 Talman, op. cit. It should be noted that Talman incorrectly by Hellmuth's own testimony gives the place of Hellmuth's conversion as

- England, on the same page.
- 12 Gidney, *History*, op. cit., pp. 328, 501, 503-504, 507, 583.
- 13 John Dunlop, *Memories of Gospel Triumphs among the Jews during the Victorian Era* (London: Partridge, 1894), p. 11.
- 14 Sabeti B. Rohold, *Missions to the Jews. Historical Sketch. The Story of Our Church's In Israel*. (Toronto: Christian Synagogue, 1918) p. 4.
- 15 David Max Eichhorn, *Evangelising the American Jew* (New York: Jonathan David, 1978), pp. 93-94.
- 16 David Rome, *Jacob's Opponents, The Immigration Story II* (Montreal: CJC, 1986), p. 3.
- 17 The following information was passed on to the writer by Dr. Donald M. Lewis: "Johnstone Vicars was an ordained Anglican minister who went to Newfoundland from England in 1852 to work as the superintendent of the evangelical Colonial Church and School Society's work in Newfoundland. It appears that he left the colony in 1856 and returned to England, but then worked for the same society in the Dioceses of Huron from 1857. Here he would have been under the supervision of Isaac Hellmuth who undoubtedly served to increase his interest in the evangelism of Jews. Cf. H.A. Seegmiller, "The Colonial and Continental Church Society in Eastern Canada," (Doctor of Divinity Thesis, General Synod of Nova Scotia, 1966), pp. 75, 84, 96-97, 110, 121 and 489.
- 18 T.S. Ellerby, *An Appeal*, (Toronto: LSPCJ, Diocese of Toronto), March 23, 1889, pp. 3-6.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Anglican Diocese of Toronto Archives, *Christian-Jewish Dialogue* (Toronto: c. 1970), p. 3.
- 21 Malvern Jacobs, "I Remember..." *The Menorah*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Spring 1995), p. 4.
- 22 *Journal of the Incorporated Synod of the Church of England in Canada in the Diocese of Toronto 1932*, (Toronto: Parker, 1932), p. 169.
- 23 Ibid., pp. 169-170.
- 24 Sabeti B. Rohold, *Missions to*

- the Jews. Historical Sketch. The Story of Our Church's In Israel*. (Toronto: Christian Synagogue, 1918), p. 15.
- 25 Ibid., p. 16.
- 26 For a history of this movement, the most authoritative work is by Kai Kjær-Hansen, *Joseph Rabinowitz and the Messianic Movement; the Herzl of Jewish Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).
- 27 Morris Kaminsky, *Letter to F.J. Nicholson* (Toronto: 11 April, 1949),

- and *Letter to Fellow-Members of The Toronto Diocesan Committee on Missions to Jews* (15 September, 1955). Peniel Centre was the outreach of Adat haTikvah, formerly The First Hebrew Christian Church, Presbyterian, in Chicago. Malvern Jacobs, op. cit., pp. 4-5.
- 28 Toronto Diocesan Committee on Mission to the Jews, *Minutes of Special Meeting* (Toronto: 21 October, 1955).
- 29 Elizabeth Louise Myers, *The*

- Literary Legacy of Jacob Jocz* (Pasadena: Master's thesis for Fuller Theological Seminary, June, 1989), p. 21.
- 30 Ben Volman, "Messianic Jewish Congregations: A new dimension of the church in Canada," *Faith Today* (November/December, 1992), p. 30.
- 31 Ernst Loewy, Personal Notes, kept in HCAC files with meeting minutes, 19 September, 1973.

LCJE President

Ole Chr. M. Kvarme, LCJE President since 1991, has taken up a new post. Having been General Secretary of the Norwegian Bible Society since 1986, he was appointed Dean at Oslo Cathedral, Norway, as of 1 November 1996.

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A NEW SONG - AN OLD SONG

By Menahem Benhayim, Jerusalem

When the ancient rabbis consolidated their sacred writings, they divided them into three main collections - Torah or Pentateuch (usually loosely translated "Law"), the Prophets, and the Writings. To this day the Hebrew Scriptures or Old Testament are known in Hebrew as "Tanakh", an acronym formed by the first Hebrew letter of each collection - Torah, Neviim, Ketubim. Beginning with the Septuagint (the most ancient translation from Hebrew),



Menahem Benhayim

however, this same order has been changed in most foreign language translations, although it is evident that Jesus followed the Hebrew order.

In his denunciation of the hostile religious authorities of his day, Jesus summarized the biblical time span "from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zecharias who perished between the altar and the sanctuary" (Matthew 23:35). It is in Genesis, the first book of the Torah that we read of the murder of

Abel, and in Second Chronicles, the last book of the Writings, that we find the story of the slaying of Zecharias toward the end of the First Jewish Commonwealth.

CULTURAL PARALLELS
This threefold division of biblical literature has striking parallels in the cultural world of the West. The division of music and art, and to some extent of literature, into a general triad of classical, romantic and modern (like the division of Western history into three categories – ancient, medieval and modern) suggests a pattern of human development that has significance for spiritual life. Many believers prefer to approach the different genres of biblical literature by advocating an almost mechanical uniformity in their approach to Scripture, in which all parts are neatly fitted together, usually to conform to a preconceived theological scheme. For thinking men and women, however, it isn't enough to declare doggedly that the Bible is one book from Genesis to Revelation. The unity of Scripture, as real as it is for believers, should be seen also in its diversity. It may even be better understood by comparing it to the world of culture where diverse trends and personalities often unite to form a common medium of creative expression while maintaining a dynamic tension within this common medium.

LAW OR TORAH AS CLASSIC

In the writings of the apostle Paul, for example, we see Torah described along classical lines, setting forth the character and requirements of a just God who insists not only on the strictest maintenance of divinely-ordained forms and rites which outwardly express the divine nature. "The law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good," the apostle exclaims (Romans 7:12). The many forms in which it was encased – ordinances of food, drink, the sacred calendar, sacrificial and cleansing rites – were "a shadow of things to come", an external formalized discipline necessary to express an ideal (Hebrews 10:1).

Like the classical spirit in the world of culture, it is nourished by ideals expressed in strict, often minutely-detailed forms, of music, literature, painting, drama, sculpture and architecture. The classical forms of music and art were as essential a part of culture in the classical world as their content. The powerful but formalized music of Bach and Haydn, the paintings of the medieval masters, European literature of the classical period, were powerfully affected by form which could not be lightly set aside. The guardians of these forms, whether clerical or educated lay persons,

saw to that.

PROPHETS OF PATHOS
When we approach the second category of the Hebrew Scriptures, "the Prophets," we meet less a systematic expression than a highly subjective and personalized spirit. Impassioned expressions of theme and mood alternate between joy and grief, triumph and defeat. The prophet hammers away at the divine message of judgment and repentance, catastrophe and redemption. Even the devices employed by the prophet are striking in their individuality and artistry.

The prophet Elisha calls for a minstrel: "And it came to pass when the minstrel played that the hand of the LORD came upon him" (2 Kings 3:15). The prophet Ezekiel is himself compared to a minstrel: "And lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song (or a singer of love songs), of one that has a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument" (Ezekiel 33:32).

The prophet may go barefoot through the streets of the city or carry a yoke about his neck, draw pictures in clay (Jeremiah 27:2; 28:10; Ezekiel 4:1-3) or even shrink from his calling in anguished self-awareness: "Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5). He may even

plunge into agonizing Job-like despair crying out, "Cursed be the day wherein I was born" (Jeremiah 20:14). Nevertheless, he can leap forward with ecstatic expressions of commitment and dedication: "Here am I, send me!" (Isaiah 6:8) Or again, "The Lord GOD has spoken; who can but prophesy?" (Amos 3:8)

There are diverse, even paradoxical chords, struck in the prophetic message. The prophet reveals "the man of sorrows...wounded for our transgressions" (Isaiah 53:3,5) as well as the powerful son of David who will bring in "the day of vengeance" of the LORD ... who will tread down the peoples in anger" (Isaiah 34:8; 63:6). He may at one time, like Elijah, lead the people in violent resistance to the enemies of God in the wake of the contest on Mount Carmel, commanding the people: "Take the prophets of Baal, let not one of them escape!" (1 Kings 18:40) Or like Jeremiah, bid them submit and "seek the peace of the city (Babylon) whither I have caused you to be carried away captive" (Jeremiah 29:7).

On the one hand, Isaiah and Jeremiah often stressed the worthlessness of ritual where content was lacking. Haggai and Malachi, on the other hand, protested the negligence of the divine ritual. Yet the overriding theme of the prophets, for all the clashing alternations of mood and message,

remained the sovereignty of God and his kingdom through a true union of form and spirit.

ROMANTIC INDIVIDUALISTS
In their intense subjectiveness and individual personality we may detect a parallel with the Romantic period which dominated Western culture in the 19th and early 20th centuries. We think of those powerful symphonic masterpieces of Beethoven and Brahms, the folk-oriented music of Tchaikovsky, Dvorak, Sibelius, the art of the impressionists in France, the surrealist paintings of Chagall, the novels, the drama and comedy following the reorganization of Europe after the French Revolution in which national and personal expression became dominant in the world of culture. In all of these expressions the personality and personhood of the writer, the artist, the composer, permeate the art forms and lead them far beyond formal boundaries.

THE WRITINGS
The third collection of the Hebrew Scriptures – the "ketuvim" – is known as the Writings, from which we derive the common title for the Bible in the Latin form of "scriptura" or Scriptures. Here we find a brilliant and diverse collection of literature that is far more than a mere anthology. Exalted poetry, dry factual prose, ecstatic

love odes, tormented threnodies, profound philosophy and pastoral narratives, all are contained in the Hebrew hagiography.

The Book of Psalms leads off with a collection of religious poetry conveying the cries of the human soul seeking after God. The American skeptic essayist H.L. Mencken once termed them "matchless Hebrew rhapsodies." Yet the Writings contain two works in which the name of God is not even mentioned: The Book of Esther, a racy Oriental historical romance, and the Song of Songs, aptly described as a "wedding idyll", which for both Church and Synagogue has been interpreted as a symbolic expression of divine love for the people of God.

Beside the simple and beautiful tale of devotion overcoming national and ethnic boundaries, the theme of the Book of Ruth, we find the weariness and earthly pessimism about all the things which are seen and done "under the sun," according to the writer of the Book of Ecclesiastes.

The Book of Proverbs – incisive, pithy, confident – presents the way of the righteous and the way of the transgressor with little if any doubt as to the outcome of the two divergent ways. By way of contrast, the Book of Job fairly sizzles with Job's questions about injustice and suffering, only to find a response in a whole series of divine questions from the

voice speaking out of the whirlwind; meanwhile, the self-appointed comforters who have all the orthodox answers, convinced "defenders of the faith," are left debtors to Job and to God. "You have not spoken of me what is right," declares God in the final chapter, "as my servant Job has."

The dry details of the returning Jewish exiles recorded in the Book of Ezra dovetail into the more vibrant personal memoirs of Nehemiah's work.

The Hebrew compilers, who we believe were divinely inspired, also included the book of Daniel and the two books of the Chronicles in this third category. One can hardly imagine two types of writing more diverse, one a collection of apocalyptic visions which have led to startling and cryptic interpretations of the Word of God. Sir Isaac Newton, the great physicist and discoverer of the law of gravity, worked for some time on the Book of Daniel in an unsuccessful attempt to fathom its mysteries.

The Chronicles, by contrast, are short, edited excerpts from the royal archives of Judah, with little that is mysterious or apocalyptic about them. Good doses of statistics, genealogies and prosaic annals, are mingled with occasional anecdotal sidelights, demonstrating again and again human folly and malice yet never frustrating the sovereign

purposes of God in history. It is surely significant that Second Chronicles ends in mid-sentence ("...let him go up..."), a sentence which is found in its complete form in Ezra 1:3 ("...let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah," etc.).

OPEN-ENDED SCRIPTURE

Is this open-endedness a prophetic indication of Scripture to come? Certainly such design is suggested by the opening of the New Testament canon with the Gospel of Matthew and the genealogy of the House of David largely adapted from the genealogies of Chronicles. The early Church in defining its canon sought to emphasize its link to the Hebrew Scriptures as a direct continuity in opposition to the Marcionite tendency which proposed a total discontinuity between the two Testaments. Contrary to popular thinking today and the arrangements of modern Bibles, the Scriptures that Jesus and the disciples knew DID NOT END WITH MALACHI'S THREAT OF A CURSE, but pointed upward toward a radical new phase in the life of the people of God.

It was therefore inevitable that the New Testament scriptures when they were developed should have "happened" in the informal and diverse manner which echoes the Writings of the Hebrew Scriptures, of which they are its true outgrowth.

THE MODERN IDIOM

If we may press the language of music and art a step further, we can benefit from comparing the Writings, the third category of Hebrew Scripture, to the modern idiom. Modernism is characterized by its free approach to form, going far beyond the freedom of the Romantics, exploring areas which, like all exploration runs the risk of leading to dead ends, disaster, chaos. In the world of modern music it has led to the use of dissonance and novel forms of tonality and atonality.

Some years ago a mass of concert-goers in Tel-Aviv all but stormed a concert hall in an attempt to unload their tickets (obtained in a series) for a Schonberg concert of twelve-tone music. It is well-known what a riotous reception was accorded the composer Igor Stravinsky when his "Rites of Spring" was first performed in Paris in 1913, which is now a rather conservative modern work.

The same mixed reception (sometimes justifiably, sometimes not) has been accorded new forms of painting (Van Gogh, Gauguin, Picasso, Chagall) as well as in other art forms. It takes time and adjustment to accept new forms unbound to more traditional modes of expression, and to learn to distinguish what is good and what is valid from what will eventually be discarded.

THE WRITINGS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the early part of the second century Justin Martyr wrote that the four Gospels with their fourfold view of Messianic foundations were known and read in the early church as "the Memoirs of the Apostles." Following the Gospels we find a fast-moving eventful narrative covering about thirty crucial years from the birth of the Church in Judea to its confrontation in Rome with imperial power. Then comes a bundle of instructive yet intensely personal "Letters to Young Churches" (as British translator Phillips called them) as well as several smaller epistles to pastors and church planters like Timothy and Titus, and several general letters by James, Peter, John and Jude, and one by an unknown author generally understood to have been directed to Hebrew believers.

Completing the collection is a dazzling series of apocalyptic exhortation and visions which foresee the time of "the new heavens and the new earth...(when) there shall be no night" (Revelation 21:25). Here is

the consummation of all things sweeping up history and nature in a cosmic liberation from bondage which the apostle Paul elsewhere described as "the glorious liberty of the sons of God" (Romans 8:21).

It took centuries of examination and debate among believers, especially for some of the Hebrew Writings (the Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes) and later compositions of the New Testament (Hebrews, 2nd Peter, Revelation), to be universally recognized as inspired, while other works were gradually set aside. The diversity of the four-tiered Gospel story, the epistles of Paul, James, John and Peter reflect a freedom too often missed by those determined to force an artificial harmony upon them.

A MODEL OF BALANCE AND BOLDNESS

When new forms of expression and culture develop in the world, there is often a neglect, even disdain for that which has gone before because of a constant hunger for novelty. For believers who accept the freedom of spirit in the Hebrew Writings as well as

those of the New Covenant Writings, there is nothing but appreciation and respect for the older forms which paved the way for newer ones.

Even as the apostle was writing, probably unaware that his words would one day be part of Holy Scripture, he reminded believers that "all scripture is inspired of God and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (2 Timothy 3:16) At that time the only Scripture available was what would later be termed the Old Testament. Though he approached those scriptures with a freedom that clearly disturbed many within the Church and certainly within the Jewish community, he provided believers with a model of balance and boldness in handling the Word of God.

The continuing impact of Scripture upon all levels of human experience and culture accurately reflects what they truly are - an immensely readable expression of truth in all its multiformity - truth forever singing the old songs, telling the old stories in new ways and new settings.

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Jesus for Israel – also in Finland

There is a wide-spread Israel interest in Finland, and many movements are involved in different kinds of work for Israel. "Therefore we had convened for a one-day seminar with the theme: Jesus for Israel," says Juhani Aitomaa, member of LCJE's Advisory Committee in Finland.

The meeting was held on 1 October 1996 in the facilities of The Finnish Lutheran Mission, and the number of participants – 70–80 – far exceeded the expectations of the Finnish LCJE. LCJE coordinator Kai Kjær-Hansen had been invited as main speaker. The seminar had two focuses: theological issues and an



Juhani Aitomaa

update on Jewish evangelism worldwide.

"Already in the opening session Finnish Committee member Rev. Seppo Norjanen set the tone," Juhani Aitomaa reports. "He stressed that the situation in Israel today in many ways is like the situation in Jesus' day. Radicals and extremists

are on the move. And although there is a constant pressure on us to commit ourselves politically, we need to stand fast: our main task is not a political one, it is a spiritual obligation to proclaim the Gospel."

Juhani Aitomaa emphasizes that it is appropriate to be reminded of the dangers of the two-covenant theology. He goes on to say: "Jewish thinkers cherish it, and so do many Christians. According to this theory a Jew can accept Jesus as the only way to the Father – for the Gentiles. But for the Jews Jesus has no meaning because they have always been with the Father on account of the



LCJE Advisory Committee in Finland together with LCJE's International Coordinator. From the left: Juhani Aitomaa, Seppo Norjanen, Eero Junkkaala, Kai Kjær-Hansen, Pirkko Säilä, Juhani Koivisto. Missing in the picture is Paavo Kilpi.

Sinai Covenant. According to the New Testament, however, there is only one way – the same way for all."

Although the two-covenant theology may have some advocates among Finnish theologians and a few laypeople, it is not a major influence on the Finnish Israel movements, according to Juhani Aitomaa. He continues: "The more important is it that this meeting drew our attention to an Israel romanticism which is as dangerous as the two-covenant theology. Israel romanticism is a fertile ground for statements like this: 'The Jews do not need the Gospel – at least not now.' As Christian believers we have a positive attitude to Israel because they are God's chosen people, but

this does not mean that we cannot be critical of the affairs in Israel. God does not love Israel because she is lovable – and the same is true about us. The Christians who do not think that Israel needs the Gospel feel that good relations with the State of Israel and with Judaism are more important."

The question of whether the Gospel should be proclaimed verbally to Israel was also touched upon in the closing debate where Mr Jouko Mustila addressed the question: Are good deeds and exemplary Christian lives testimonies in themselves without the Gospel? In many religions people lead exemplary lives. Good deeds and high morals are not as such a testimony of the Gospel. The person

may be glorified through them. But the life, death and resurrection of Christ is the only true testimony. Good deeds are natural consequences of a right relationship with God, but without the Gospel they do not glorify Jesus.

Juhani Aitomaa rejoices that they now have a national Finnish LCJE. Also in future they plan to arrange seminars. "The fine thing about LCJE is that people from different organizations can meet and be strengthened in the obligation that we Christians have to Israel. We are different, but we can live with that if we can agree that Jesus is for Israel – also today," Juhani Aitomaa concludes.

Birger Petterson

MEETINGS

LCJE North America

The next North American meeting will be in Philadelphia, 3–5 March 1997. Contact Fred Klett (address on back cover)

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