



**LAUSANNE  
CONSULTATION  
ON JEWISH  
EVANGELISM**

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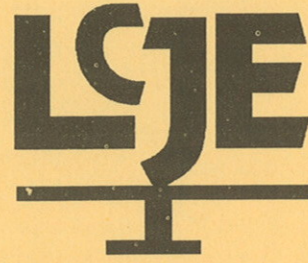
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ON JEWISH EVANGELISM  
BULLETIN**



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## From the Coordinator

In June LCJE's International Coordinating Committee (ICC) held its meeting in Jerusalem (see more about this on pp. 4-5). It goes without saying that one of the items on the agenda was the anti-freedom legislation in Israel - an issue which was treated in the latest number of the LCJE Bulletin (no. 48) but which has not yet been read in the Knesset. We bring an update on pp. 6-7.

From its meeting in Jerusalem the ICC sent the following letter to the Messianic Action Committee, which has stood in the front row against the undemocratic bill from some Knesset members:

### To the Messianic Action Committee

On behalf of LCJE we would like to extend our appreciation for your endeavours in connection with the proposed amendment to the "Enticement to Change of Religion Law, 1977."

The information you have shared with members bodies and individual members of LCJE has prompted many of them in action in their context, and in prayer we have followed your efforts to raise the issue of religious freedom before Israeli legislators and public.

Our responsibility to confess Jesus as the Messiah is also a public duty, and we are called to proclaim the Gospel also to people in authority. Sometimes this will lead to a situation of confrontation. We appreciate that your efforts in this regard have been implemented with a deep concern for the welfare of the State of Israel and the Jewish people and for the Jewish identity of Israeli believers targeted by the proposed legislation.

In the follow-up of your present endeavours we want to assure you of the availability of the LCJE network, and we look forward to remaining in close contact with you.

Yours in the Messiah,

*Ole Chr. Kvarme*

*Kai Kjær-Hansen*

## Repentance: A Key to Revival

By Rev. Kenichi Nakagawa, Harvest Time Ministries, Japan and LCJE Area Coordinator

*From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Mat. 4:17).*

Whenever I read an annual report on Christianity in Japan published by a Japanese organization called CIS (Church Information Service), I am a little bit discouraged by the meager results after all the intercessory prayers and the evangelistic activities conducted by many faithful churches, organizations, and individuals. It has been reported that the percentage figure for the Christians in Japan is about 0.8%. There will be several factors which can bring a revival to Japan. I personally feel that repentance is a very important key to a revival. Why then is it so difficult to truly repent?

1. *Because we are not willing to admit our sin.* By nature man has a tendency to cover up his sin and to pretend as if nothing is wrong with him. When this attitude of deception and stubbornness is elevated to the national level, interpretation of historical facts is changed. I see a great difference between Germany and Japan concerning the sins committed before and during World War II against their



neighboring countries. The former has publicly confessed her sin, while the latter still has been trying to escape her responsibility, thus ending up having political tension with other Asian countries, especially with Korea. There has been a new movement among the Japanese historians to reinterpret modern history with an intention to prove that Japan has done many respectable deeds and that she is not so bad after all. The battle ground for this movement is the text books which are used at public schools. Those involved in this movement feel that the children should be taught to be proud of their nation, not to be ashamed of. If this movement gets momentum, Japan will be further removed from receiving blessings which come only through repentance.

2. *Because we misunderstand the warnings of our heavenly Father.* Harvest Time Ministries,

which I now serve as president, publishes a monthly QT guide book called "Living Life" in Japanese. Last month the whole book was dedicated to the chapters from Ezekiel. It was not an enjoyable experience for me to read messages of doom and judgment by Ezekiel day after day. But in a few weeks I began to sense the unchangeable love of the heavenly Father which underlies those messages of doom. Motivated by love our Father is calling us to repent. The good news is that even those messages that had been delivered with the harshest tones can be changed if we truly repent. This is no fatalism. In fact our Father in heaven has always been patient and has been waiting for us to repent.

Early this year as I had been meditating on this theme of repentance, I began to have a strong sense of calling to confess our national sin to Korean brothers and sisters. Through a dedicated Korean couple, good friends of mine, a door was opened for me in April to visit twelve Korean churches in California to preach messages of repentance and reconciliation. I delivered 16 messages in total in less than two weeks. I never forget the first message. My

Korean audience on that evening didn't look much excited and even looked somewhat suspicious with an unknown Japanese preacher. When I was introduced to the pulpit, I was led by the Holy Spirit before I delivered my message to step down to the floor and to ask forgiveness for the sins that my forefathers had committed. I added that it would be very difficult to forgive such atrocity and that only the love of Christ would enable

them to do so. After that I bowed down my head for a few seconds to show my repentant heart in the Japanese fashion. There was an unexpected response of clapping which filled the sanctuary. I was moved. It was as if the audience were saying to me, "Yes, we forgive you." When I returned to the pulpit, I knew that the Holy Spirit had done a remarkable work of changing the heart of my audience. Many of them were crying

but they looked happy. I as a preacher felt a new sense of freedom at that moment. Praise the Lord! At all the meetings which followed, exactly the same thing happened. I am more that convinced that repentance is truly a key to revival in Japan.

Our Father expects us to confess our sin to each other and forgive each other. May reconciliation take place among us, especially between Jews and non-Jews!

## From the ICC Meeting in Jerusalem

LCJE's International Coordinating Committee met at the Caspari Center in Jerusalem, 22-23 June. Present were President Ole Chr. Kvarme, ICC members Susan Perlman and Tsvi Sadan, LCJE Coordinator for Israel, Arthur Goldberg, and the International Coordinator, Kai Kjær-Hansen. Bodil F. Skjøtt served as secretary.

It was the first time the ICC met after the Fifth International Conference in Jerusalem, June 1995. Therefore the intervening years' financial statements had to be approved, which they were, and the membership situation was discussed. LCJE gets new members every year, and every year members are suspended because they have not paid their dues. In the light of this the

International Coordinator summed up the procedures concerning renewal of membership:

Invoices are sent each year in January. In February together with the Bulletin those who have not renewed their membership receive a reminder. In May it is said that this is the last Bulletin they will receive and that they will be suspended if membership is not renewed. It is not the job of the International Coordinator to get in touch with suspended members, but the area coordinators have to do this based on the list they receive from the International Office.

Payment: It was underlined that the normal procedure is to send it to the International office in Denmark. This can be done

in all currencies. However, we want to be flexible and if it can be of any help, the area coordinator can receive the payment, give a temporary receipt and forward the payment to the International Coordinator who then sends an official receipt. Official receipts to individual members are otherwise only sent upon request.

It was decided to reprint the LCJE Brochure, which is out of print. It is hoped that the brochure can be printed before October 1997.

LCJE's Networking Directory from 1992 also needs an updating. It was decided to start work on a new Directory, and hopefully it will be finished by summer 1998. More about this in a later issue of the Bulletin.

A number of issues under

## From the ICC

the item Current Affairs were discussed, not least the question of the proposed anti-mission legislation in Israel. A letter was sent to the Messianic Action Committee expressing the ICC's appreciation for what they have done (see p. 2).

### Sixth International LCJE Conference in 1999

One of the main items on the agenda was the planning of the Sixth International LCJE Conference in 1999. This is the decision as reflected in the minutes from the meeting:

**Venue:** The discussion focused on the following five places: St. Petersburg, Helsinki, New York, Jerusalem, Johannesburg, Buenos Aires. Due to the travel costs for most of the expected participants Johannesburg and Buenos Aires were considered to be too expensive and were deleted from the list. St. Petersburg was also deleted from the list due to cost and it was foreseen that the practical arrangements would be up against many obstacles. It was furthermore decided not to go back to Jerusalem at this time. Left were Helsinki and New York.

For Helsinki speaks the strong concern for the Jewish people in Finland. Having the conference there would strengthen the agenda of the Finnish LCJE among

these people. Helsinki also has good conference facilities available and most likely this would be the cheapest solution.

For New York speaks that it is the home of several local Jewish ministries. The place is easily accessible and ticket prices are affordable. The conference price would be in the same range as last time in Israel.

It was decided to hold the next conference on the US East Coast, preferably New York and preferably a hotel unless better facilities could be obtained at a different locality. It was left to the planning committee to make the final decision.

**Dates:** The conference should run over a weekend in order to get cheaper tickets. Possibly in the last part of June or the last part of August.

So far the minutes.

Since the conference is held on the eve of the 3rd millennium this should be reflected in the program theme and content. The conference should seek to re-activate involvement in Jewish evangelism and show how LCJE can serve to make this happen. It is desired that also younger mission leaders become actively involved in the work of LCJE and the conference should seek to make this come about.

**Theme:** The final wording

of the theme was not decided but a working title was suggested: *How to take Jewish evangelism into the 3rd millennium.*

The conference committee consists of Susan Perlman and Kai Kjær-Hansen with Bodil F. Skjøtt as secretary. Suggestions for subjects and speakers can be sent to the International Coordinator, no later than 1 December 1997.

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The Sixth International LCJE Conference will be held in during the summer of 1999 on the US East Coast, preferably New York.

Dates in the next Bulletin.

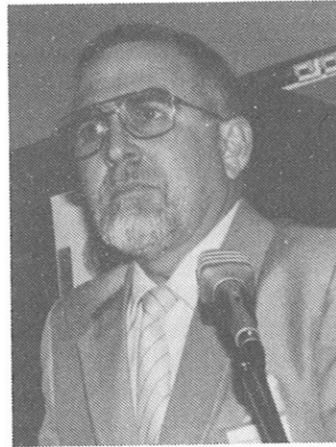
## The Battle Against the Bill

**An update on the efforts of the Messianic Action Committee, Israel, quoted by permission from "News from Israel" published by CWI, England.**

There has been progress in our struggle against the Bill. Three months ago 78 of the Israeli parliament's 120 members supported the proposed new legislation; now it enjoys the support of 70. That is due to your prayers and letters of protest. Thank you so much for the whole-hearted support you have shown for our brothers and sisters in Israel.

The Israeli press has begun to carry articles concerning the law. Ha'Aretz published an excellent article by Shachaf Ilan on 29 June. On July 11 Yediot Achronot published an article by one of Israel's leading reporters, Nahum Barne'a, in which he described the proposed law as a real threat and described the opposition to it. The latter article has provoked concern in some political circles – a concern which is fully justified if the Bill is not rejected. The implications of Israel establishing a religious censorship are horrendous, and the inevitable results of such an occurrence on Israel's foreign relations is beyond imagining.

Some have suggested that the Messianic Action



*Baruch Maoz*

Committee would do best to compromise by accepting some kind of limitation on our freedom of expression. We are fully aware of the fact that we will be subject to persecution at some stage in the unfolding of history. We are prepared to stand up and be counted, but to concede as right what is wrong is unacceptable. It also invites further encroachment upon our freedom to speak out boldly for what we believe to be true. Such a concession is equal to denying that Israel should accord any minority the right to believe and practice according to its conscience. Such a view implies the denial of a God-given right which no honest man should ever deny his fellow.

### **What the Papers said**

The Knesset Bill came to the attention of the British public

at large when The Times of 15th May carried an article by its Jerusalem correspondent. The paper quoted Baruch as claiming that the Bill "criminalises basic human rights. It limits the freedom of people to tell about their beliefs".

Developments over the last three months have demonstrated that the powers that be in Israel do take notice of the international community. On June 6th the front page of the Jewish Chronicle announced: Israel Envoy slams anti-missionary Bill. The UK Israel Ambassador Moshe Raviv had "launched a stinging attack on a Knesset Bill seeking to make Christian missionary activity in Israel punishable by a jail sentence".

An editorial backed the Ambassador: "Were the letter of such a law applied, it could even proscribe the New Testament... His message is one the Israeli government (a government which, it is worth noting, did not initiate the legislation) would do well to ponder – and to heed."

The Jerusalem Report of June 26th printed a letter from a perceptive reader: "Don't the sponsors of this proposed law realize that if they take away anyone's freedom of speech, they are also taking away their own, as soon as someone more powerful than they comes

## What the People said

*In the summer the Messianic Action Committee conducted a poll of Israeli citizens with the following results:*

87.5% of those polled agreed that, in a democracy, it is the duty of the public and of the government to protect the rights of the minority, even if their opinions differ from those of the majority.

81.5% agreed that, in a democracy, every faith must be free to explain or spread its principles even if these principles differ from those of the majority.

58.2% opposed any law that would restrict the rights of religious movements to promote their faith.

59.3% considered as undemocratic the proposed law to prevent certain believers from promoting their faith.

68% said that Messianic Jews should enjoy the same rights as other Israeli citizens.

into power?"

There has also been a significant international response to the Bill. British Euro-MP David Hallam expressed concern and a senior US congressman made clear his strong opposition, warning Israel that if the Bill becomes law it will have serious implications for relations between the United States and Israel. Mr. Duetoft, a senior member of the Danish parliament, expressed concern over the proposed law and assured Baruch he would be taking action. The Finnish press carried articles concerning the Bill and Jan Wilhelm van der Hoeven of the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem described the Bill, which originated with a member of "a party that believes in an open, pluralistic society" as "almost unforgivable".

### **What the Prime Minister said**

On July 4th the Jewish Chronicle reported that Prime Minister Netanyahu had pledged to oppose the Bill: "The government strenuously objects to this Bill and will act to ensure that it does not pass". The JC was quoting from a letter to Israel's "many Christian friends" which expressed the country's appreciation for their "friendship and commitment". Such assurances are encouraging.

Following tens of thousands of letters to Israel Embassies, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Knesset Chairman Dan Tichon and other important political decision makers in Israel, Mr. Netanyahu has committed himself to never to allow the Bill to pass into law. He has repeated that commitment to highly-placed

politicians overseas, assuring them that the proposed legislation will not even receive the support necessary to pass the first reading.

This has been heartening but, so long as a majority of the Knesset's members still support the proposal, the Bill is certain to become law. The Orthodox lobby have made it clear that this Bill is but the tip of an iceberg of repressive measures aimed at bringing Israel under the control of the rabbis. Opposition will not have succeeded until the Bill is soundly defeated on the Knesset floor. To that end, all concerned friends are invited to continue to pray and direct their correspondence to Members of the Knesset who could persuade others to vote against the Bill.

*Baruch & Bracha Maoz*

## A New Doctoral Thesis Approved

"Messianic Jews in Eretz Israel (1917-1967) Trends and Changes in the Shaping of Self-Identity" is the title of Gershon Nerel's doctoral thesis submitted to the Department of Comparative Religion at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The main issue of Gershon's dissertation focuses on expressions of self-identity of Messianic Jews in Eretz Israel. The central themes of the paper are discussed under the following topics:

1. Aspects of defining self-identity among Messianic Jews and Hebrew Catholics
2. The variety of designations for Jewish Believers in Yeshua (Jesus)
3. Grouping trends and theological positions in mandatory Palestine
4. Grouping trends and theological positions in the State of Israel
5. Liturgy and Mosaic Law: major issues in thought and practice
6. Theological positions on Jewish restoration and Zionism

Gershon Nerel, who is the secretary of "International Messianic Jewish Alliance" in Israel, first submitted his thesis in June 1995, thinking that he had finally come to the end of an already long road. "But I soon came to realize that it was only the beginning of the end," he says when asked to comment on the finalizing of his doctoral



Gershon Nerel

work. "My work was, as is the normal procedure with any thesis submitted at the Hebrew University, to go to three judges for their consideration and approval." One of the judges was his own supervisor. The two others were also from the Hebrew University.

Eight months passed before Gershon heard anything and what he got then was a request from the response committee to go back and do some more work and relate to the remarks of the three judges.

"At first I was both surprised and disappointed, but then I learned that my experience was the experience of most doctoral candidates. It is the exception not to have your work returned to you after you submit it the first time. Looking back on the last year I am very thankful to God for giving me the opportunity to go back and

correct myself. I used another eight months to rework the paper I hadn't worked on since I submitted it eight months prior to when I got the first response."

Gershon Nerel first enrolled at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem already in 1973 as a student of World History and International Relations. For his M.A. studies he specialized in Medieval history and Latin texts from the Crusader Period. The title of his M.A. thesis was "Jerusalem in the biblical exegesis of Albert Magnus and Thomas Aquinas". His great fortune, according to his own view, was that his supervisor during this time was professor Joshua Praver. Having done his M.A. studies under him and gained his acceptance many doors opened more easily later on. Professor Praver, the last editor of *Encyclopedia Hebraica*, was greatly respected by his colleagues and so were his students.

From he finished his M.A. until he again enrolled at the Hebrew University, Gershon took nine years off. Being the father of a family with small children and also working at the Moshav Yad Hasmona outside Jerusalem there was enough to keep one busy. With his family he moved to the moshav in 1987. The family then counted six members. Only

in 1989 did Gershon begin his doctoral work.

"For several reasons I am glad I took my time. I had to be convinced that this was the right investment of my time, considering both the needs of my family and being assured that this was according to the will of God for me. It also meant that a new generation of professors were in charge at the university. They were more open to accept the topic of my interest. Especially my supervisor shared with me the interest in the history of the land, and other professors were also open to seeing the history of the Messianic believers in the country as part of that. They realized that my topic formed part of the Yeshuv and its history and that they had very little information on it. This was also their opportunity to understand this chapter of the history of the land better. I had already been collecting material from people who had lived here, from newsletters they had written and sent back home to family and friends or organizations. I had collected books and memoirs written by people here. Other material I got access to through the archives of missionary societies that worked here, like the CMJ library in Oxford, Anthony College in Toronto, Canada and the Finnish National Library."

It is far from everybody in the Messianic community in Israel that have been

supportive of Gershon Nerel during this time. Many were convinced that he was wasting his time. Not only because they considered academic work useless to the community, but also because "Messianic believers are not accepted in society" so how could he, a Messianic believer himself writing on the history of the Messianic community in the country, be taken seriously.

But there were exceptions, says Gershon, and I want especially to mention the support I got from my predecessor, Menachem Benhayim, all the way through. It has meant a lot to me. The International Hebrew Christian/Messianic Jewish Alliance in Israel, whose secretary Gershon has been since 1993 when he took over after Menachem Benhayim, has also taken a very positive interest in the work. From my colleagues at the university I also received a lot of support and was always accepted on the same level as other students, say Gershon. Finally, Gershon mentions the support from his family, especially from his wife. Not only did she take a bigger load of the family work. She has also done the actual typing of the dissertation.

When asked what advice he has to other Messianic believers who are considering proceeding in the fields of academics, Gershon has the following advice to offer.

"Don't begin until it is your conviction that this is what you should be doing. It is not an easy thing to do and it is not for everybody to do so. I am convinced that doors were miraculously opened for me."

Personally he is grateful that he did not begin right after his M.A. "I needed time to grow also spiritually. When others told me I was wasting my time, it was important for me to be sure that this was indeed what God wanted me to be doing at this time.

"I know that what I have done is not a waste of time. We want to know our history, the roots and the beginning of the Messianic movement in this country and to learn from this history. I believe that the work I have done can help put the Messianic movement on the map. We are here and our history shows that we can no longer be ignored as we were in the past."

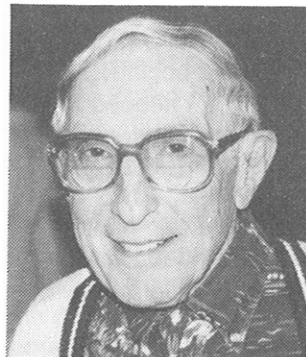
Bodil F. Skjøtt

**Gershon Nerel's dissertation is in Hebrew. It has a 25-page synopsis of the dissertation in English and the table of contents is also in English. For further details, contact Gershon Nerel at P.O. Box 28070, Jerusalem 91280, Israel**

## SELECTED OBSERVATIONS OF THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN EVANGELISM AND REGENERATION AMONG THE HOUSEHOLD OF ISRAEL

By Dr. Louis Goldberg, Scholar in Residence, Jews for Jesus, New York.

This article is an abridged version of a paper read to the North American LCJE meeting



In Philadelphia, March 1997.

**A number of references directly relate to the person and work of God the Spirit in the Old Testament, in particular, how did the Spirit convict people of sin in a pre-evangelism work in their hearts, and did He regenerate them when they came to faith? And, aside from the permanent presence of the Holy Spirit in believers within the body of the Messiah, was His ministry then any different than after Pentecost?**

### The Spirit in Pre-Evangelism and Regeneration

#### *A Work of Pre-Evangelism*

While a lot has been said how the Spirit came upon various individuals, aiding them in God's tasks of many kinds, the Hebrew Scriptures seem silent on how the Spirit works in the individual heart to bring about a sensitivity to what God desires from his people and even how a person can be regenerated through the Spirit to be born again. Many scholars have various ideas on this subject and some even might suggest that salvation was not even possible until the appearance of the Messiah Jesus.

The New Testament provides an abundance of description of how the Spirit works beforehand to create the interest in a person's heart for spiritual things, as with John:

"He will convict the world with guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned" (John 16:8-11). But did the Spirit work in such a way among the people of Israel under the Mosaic Constitution?

There must have been some work of the Spirit, judging from a few statements by various leaders and prophets, in the great prayer of confession (Nehemiah 9) after the revival under Ezra and Nehemiah. One the Levites prayed: "You gave your good Spirit to instruct them" (Neh. 9:20), referring to how the Spirit taught Israel through Moses, bringing out a consciousness of the possibility of God's presence in the lives of individuals.

Similarly, we also note this work by the example of what occurred when the great spiritual renewals came upon the nation and believers were revived, thereby providing a powerful example for the Spirit to speak to the hearts of unbelievers.

When Israel had sinned so miserably at the base of Mount Sinai, worshipping a synthesis of Israel's God with one of Egypt's gods, God's rejoinder was that Israel could proceed on their way to the promised land, but His presence would not go with them, declaring, "But I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way" (Exodus 33:3). The people's response was to begin to mourn and they stripped off their ornaments worn in their debauchery. It appeared many had genuinely turned to the Lord on

that occasion, but who is to say the Spirit did not do a pre-evangelism work in the hearts of many people at that time, whereby some could have even become believers as a result of His peculiar work.

In times of great spiritual renewal, the Spirit of God came upon people: 1) At the height of the renewal in the days of King Asa, when the assembled people from Judah and Benjamin gathered for worship, people were also present from Ephraim and Manasseh in the North. And they came because they "saw that the God his Lord was with him" (II Chron. 15:9). The result led to a revival of the believers and their response no doubt touched the hearts of many unbelievers who were also present in Jerusalem at the temple services (vss. 10-12);

2) During the renewal in Hezekiah's day, great numbers of people were present, at the rededication of the temple, but also at the observance of the Passover shortly thereafter, not only from Judah, Benjamin and Simeon, but "some men of Asher, Manasseh and Zebulun humbled themselves and went to Jerusalem" (II Chron. 30:11) and in addition, also from Ephraim, Issachar (vs. 18). The Spirit had already worked in great power, "it was done so quickly" (II Chron. 29:36) and the comment concerning this Passover was that not since the days of Solomon had there been anything like it in Jerusalem (II Chron. 30:26). Could it not be that many believers were revived and a good number of unbelievers came to the Lord as the Spirit worked in hearts and "He healed the people" (vs. 20)?

3) Again, in the days of Nehemiah, another spiritual renewal had come upon the people as Ezra read publicly the Torah of God and already by the end of the reading on the first day, believers began to cry as they heard the Word. Who is to say this was no work of the Spirit of God in people's hearts. No doubt the occasion spoke the hearts of unbelievers that both Nehemiah, Ezra, and the Levites declared, "This day is sacred to the Lord your God, do not mourn or weep. For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law" (Neh. 8:9,10). And yet, the Scripture does not specifically say how the Spirit of God was at work; we are left to recreate the situation, reading between the lines of Scripture, imagining ourselves present, and sensing His peculiar ministry as He strove with the hearts of the people.

#### *The Work of Regeneration*

Did the Spirit regenerate people, as they repented and turned to the Lord, and did He change people's hearts? Again, Scripture does not specifically say so as it does in numerous places in the New Testament.

We do know that the lessons concerning the atonement are already present in the Mosaic Covenant through the offer of the sin offering. There, as each one brought his particular animal, four major principles are attached to these animals:<sup>1</sup>1) he brought his particular animal had to regard it as his particular *Substitute*; 2) *Identification*, where the offerer put his hand on the head of the animal, and confessed his sins. The sins of the offerer were symbolically transferred to the animal-substitute, making it thereby, sin. 3) *The Death of the Substitute*, which called for the offerer himself to actually kill the animal. No doubt, the officiating priest helped the offerer to do so, but it was the latter's responsibility that he might learn that it was his own particular sin which caused the substitute to die in his place. 4) The principle of *The Exchange of Life*, and while it is not spelled out too clearly in the book of Leviticus, later prophets described how that as the animal died, it gave its life to the offerer.

Four noted responses occurred in the offerer of this sin offerings: 1) Where Israelites did not care at all for what Moses had prescribed for the forgiveness of sin and went off to worship at the pagan shrines. 2) The offerer brought his specific animal because he knew this is what Moses had prescribed, but he went through the worship as a ritual. The prophets excoriated this kind of worship because nothing changed with such an attitude (Isa. 1:10-15); 3) The offerer brought his animal, realizing he had to be obedient to what Moses prescribed,

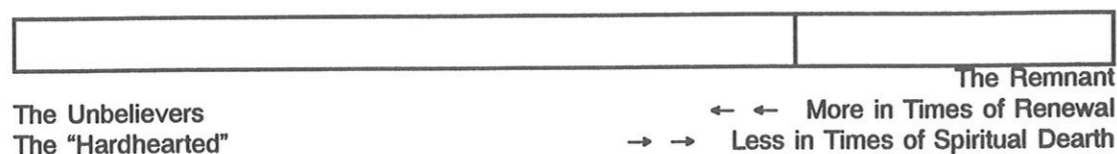
but he took a legalistic attitude toward the offering of the animal. For him, worship descended to a tit for tat relationship with the Almighty, no doubt thinking that he had done what God asked him to do and therefore, God owed him something. For the first three responses, nothing occurred; the offerer still remained unregenerate, even though the Spirit could have been at work, convicting the offerer of sin and judgment. The possibility God wanted was that the individual should respond by faith, accept the principles attached to these offerings, and because of his faith, the Spirit would work in his heart and change him. But once more, the Hebrew Scriptures do not discuss how it was done.

*A Possible Hint*

Several passages seem to imply some particular work of the Spirit in regeneration. In one pointed remark, Moses called upon Israel:

"To fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the Lord's commands and decrees..." (Deut. 10:12, 13).

But how was one to live this lifestyle? We already know that Israel can be divided into two classes of people, the remnant, who were believers, seeking to serve Him, while the other part were the hard hearts, the unregenerate. The picture is described as follows concerning Israel:



But how could the "hard hearts" be changed? Moses answer was interesting: "Circumcise your hearts, and do not be stiff-necked any longer" (Deut. 10:16). But how was this to be performed by each Israelite who took to heart the message for the godly walk? Was this not the particular work of the Spirit who touched the heart of the individual, and changed him or her?

In Jeremiah's day, the prophet faced a nation on the skids, after the days of Josiah and the spiritual renewal that occurred in his day (II Chron. 35:18). The course for Judah was ever downward to where ultimately the Temple was destroyed, many were killed and many went into exile. What was Jeremiah's message in the midst of such dire consequences? The only fitting reply was:

"Circumcise yourselves to the Lord,  
circumcise your hearts,  
you men of Judah and people of Jerusalem,  
or My wrath will break out and burn like fire  
because of the evil you have done --  
burn with no one to quench it." Jer. 4:4

The literal circumcision of cutting away the foreskin becomes the metaphor of what is necessary for a person's heart. Thompson explains regarding the passage in Deuteronomy:

"If that which hinders is cut away (the parallel with physical circumcision is obvious), then the circumcised heart becomes open and, being freed from hindering obstructions, it can become pliable and amenable to the direction of God ... Indeed without circumcision of the heart true fear of God and true love of God are both impossible" 2)

Keil observed concerning the Jeremiah passage:

"In the flesh all Jews were circumcised. If they then are called to circumcise themselves to

the Lord, this must be meant spiritually, of the putting away of the spiritual impurity of the heart, i.e. of all that hinders the sanctifying of the heart ... the foreskins are the evil lusts and longings of the heart ... 3)

From the comments by these two sources, it appears that the circumcision reflects the change of heart possible by the individual, he or she must make the decision to change their hearts, turning away from sin and impurity. In other words, the person must have a repentant attitude. Davidson reflects on this view regarding God's message to Jeremiah that people must circumcise their hearts but then questions whether this was possible, because " ... appeals to men to regenerate themselves are vain;" 4) in support of his position he asked if the Ethiopian could change his skin, or the leopard his spots (Jer. 13:23). In the light of this "impossibility" for change, Davidson declared that it would have to take the New Covenant as enunciated by God to Jeremiah to provide for this circumcision of heart, "The ethical unit becomes the individual mind, and sin and righteousness become matters of the relation of the personal mind to God." 5)

But does this mean that no Israelite ever became a believer? Was circumcision and regeneration only a New Covenant phenomenon? Obviously not.

Could the people themselves, living in the evil they had chosen, ever circumcise their own hearts? For a person to know the Lord, a work of repentance and regeneration is implied. No other course can be entertained but that the Spirit must enable a person to repent, turn to Him and experience the change only God can perform? Moses and Jeremiah called upon the people to circumcise themselves, obviously not that of the flesh, but the proclamation was a reminder that a supernatural work of God had to be performed to enable the person to turn away from sin and turn as well towards the God of Israel. We are left with no word describing such an action, but if the New Testament is any guide, there must have been some peculiar work of the Spirit in changing the individual.

A second message is the statement by the prophet Ezekiel, already alluded to in the above discussions; In a day yet to come, a restored Israel will know what it means to have a new heart and a new spirit within them where God the Spirit will take from them their heart of stone and instead, provide them with a heart of flesh (Ezek. 36:26). But is this message only for the future, a New Testament message, and for the future with regard to Israel when it will be restored? Could not this message also be the way the Spirit worked in the days of the Hebrew Scriptures within Israel; was it not possible that when a person was born again, the heart of stone was removed and the Spirit provided the heart of flesh in the work of regeneration.

Yeshua seemed to imply some reference to Ezekiel in his discussion with Nicodemus when he said that for a person to be born again, he must be born "of the Spirit" (John 3:3, 5, 8). Kaiser points out how Jesus was amazed that Nicodemus did not understand this message, asking,

"How could this man be a teacher of the Jews and not know either about being born again or being born of the Spirit? Where must this man have gone to Yeshivah or seminary? Had he never read Ez. 36:25-32 with its teaching about the 'new heart' and the 'new Spirit'?"

The point must be faced: Jesus expected Nicodemus (and all subsequent interpreters) to understand that no one (in any period of time) is ever converted into the kingdom of God without experiencing the new birth and the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. If the God of the New Testament is the God of the Old Testament, then the Holy Spirit of the New Testament is the Holy Spirit of the Old Testament - He is one, not several divided deities"? 6)

Concerning the message of Ezekiel, Montague states that it "is unprecedented in the pneumatology of the Old Testament. The need for a washing clean had of course already been stressed by the prophets (cf. Is. 4:4) but the *ruah* or 'spirit' there was the agent of the cleansing itself. Here the new spirit appears as the positive life

which follows the cleansing. The 'new spirit' (vs. 26) is the Lord's own spirit (vs. 27) and that is why it manifests itself in a willing observance of the Lord's mind for his people, the law (36:27)." 7)

Kaiser adds:

"... Ezekiel, like Jeremiah, has a form of inaugurated eschatology which embodies a 'now' and a 'not yet' aspect of the Spirit's work ... the new heart and the new spirit are likewise correctly connected to the Spirit's work in regeneration and the new birth." 8)

He also points out that the full aspect of Ezekiel's prophecy will not be fulfilled until that "final eschaton," but again, if the prophet Ezekiel could speak of a regeneration brought about by the peculiar work of the Spirit in his day, then he and others knew something of His distinctive work in the lives of believers.

This message and experience must have been known by Israel's leaders and prophets but unfortunately, until Ezekiel actually mentions this type of ministry, we can only read between the lines and surmise of what did take place among unbelievers at various times and when great spiritual revivals occurred.

So, in a very special way, the Spirit clothed various people upon whom He came, empowering them, giving them wisdom, providing them an unction from on high to serve the living God. Can we say that the Spirit ministered continually in certain individuals? It would not seem so for a number of people, as with Saul (I Sam. 16:14), although with some, the Spirit evidently enveloped the person and never left, as with Joseph and Daniel. While the Scriptures note certain individuals who had this work of the Spirit in their lives, who is to say He did not also work in countless individual believers who served Him in just the day to day walk with the Lord.

#### Conclusion

The burden of this portion from the longer paper is the concern over how the Spirit worked in pre-evangelism as well as that of regeneration. Obviously, one major difference between the two Testaments is that in the New, the Holy Spirit indwells the person when he makes a confession of faith, sealing him or her with the promised Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing this sublime inheritance (Eph. 1:13, 14).

Nothing seems to be mentioned in the Old Testament of the specific work of the Spirit in these respects, while in the New Testament, a number of passages can be adduced to demonstrate His work and involvement with individuals as well as the person who specifically made a decision concerning his faith. This writer would suggest the possibility that the Spirit worked in the same way, or else, how does one explain exactly what is meant where the heart is to be circumcised or where the heart of stone is removed and the heart of flesh is implanted in the believer. These are the pictures in the Hebrew Scriptures of what does take place with the person who becomes a believer and no doubt, many among the remnant in Israel could testify to this particular work of the Spirit.

1) Louis Goldberg, *Bible Study Commentary, Leviticus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), pages 26-33.

2) J.A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy*, in *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*, D.J. Wiseman, gen. ed. (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1974), page 149.

3) C.F. Keil, *The Prophecies of Jeremiah, Volume I*, in C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary of the Old Testament*, David Patrick, tr. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950), page 104.

4) A.B. Davidson, *The Theology of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1952), page 216.

5) A.B. Davidson, *Ibid.*, page 216.

6) Walter Kaiser, "The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament," in *Pentecostalism in Contexts: Tribute to Dr. William W. Menzies* (Sheffield: Journal of Pentecostal Theology, December 1996), eds. Wonsuk and Bob Menzies, page 30.

7) George T. Montague, *The Holy Spirit: Growth of a Biblical Tradition* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), pages 46, 47.

8) Walter Kaiser, *Ibid.*, pages 37, 38.

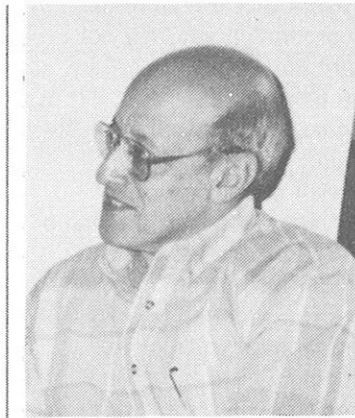
## A HISTORY OF MISSIONS TO THE JEWS IN PHILADELPHIA Part I

Rev. Herbert Links delivered a paper with this title to the North America LCJE Meeting in Philadelphia, March 1997. In this issue we bring the first part of it. The second follows in the November Bulletin. Herbert Links is Executive Director of the Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews.

The father of American Jewish missions was Joseph Samuel C.F. Free. Leaving England, where he had been the first Jewish missionary and a chief factor in the London Jews' Society, he sailed for America in 1816. A Society for the Evangelization of the Jews was formed. There followed two Jewish missionaries, John L. Liechtenstein and John Neander, both ministers of the Presbyterian Church in the United States who spent thirty-five years in this connection. After a period of activity from 1850-1855, colporteurs visited other cities, during which time nearly fifty proselytes were made. One of them, Bonhomme, was active in Philadelphia.

The Episcopal Church organized the Church Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews in America in 1878 and at different times missionaries were sent to major cities, among them Philadelphia.

The Rev. Jacob Freshman, son of an orthodox rabbi that had become a Christian, also labored in Philadelphia under the



Herbert Links

"Hebrew Christian Mission." "The Hope of Israel Mission" in New York City which was organized by the Rev. A.C. Gaebelein also had temporary stations in Philadelphia. In 1893 Mark Levi conducted Immanuel Gospel Mission for about three years in Philadelphia.

In 1894, under the direction of the Rev. D. Metheny, The Reformed Presbyterian Church of America, founded the Mission of the Covenant to Israel. He appointed a M. Greenberg who had been converted under his ministry to head the work among the 40,000 Jews of Philadelphia. Their annual income was

\$1,000.

An entirely new method in Jewish missions was adopted in 1898. They were known as "Bible Shop Windows." The promoters were T. F. Wurts and Wistar Brown of Philadelphia. A store was rented. Open Bibles and tracts in various languages were displayed in the window, and the stock for sale and free distribution was placed on the shelves and tables. At certain hours those in charge "did business with the head of the firm." In other words, they prayed. Jews were welcomed at these times as well as at any hour. There was no preaching. The mercantile aspect seemed to appeal to the Jews, and the work was quite successful. In 1898, there were seven missionaries stationed in five Jewish Bible Shop Window Missions in the city.

There had been a phenomenal increase of Jewish population in America during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Their numbers increased from a quarter of a million to considerably more than a million.



**THE EVANGELIZATION SOCIETY OF PHILADELPHIA (1911)**

The Evangelization Society of Philadelphia was the earliest Jewish mission to be formed in the twentieth century. In 1911, William L. DeGroff, a native Philadelphian, felt a call to reach the Jewish people with the Gospel. As a result of this burden, the Jewish Evangelization Society was organized with the help of Dr. William Pettingill and the founder of Berachah Church, Rev. O.R. Palmer. For several years the ministry consisted of prayer for Israel, distribution of literature and support of established missions to the Jewish people. The prayer meetings met in Center City at the American Sunday School Union and later at Philadelphia College of the Bible.

Just before 1919, the mission moved into a new home in North Philadelphia. The house was given the nickname "Beth Shalom" and the following year, the Society entered a more aggressive and direct labor among the Jewish people. After serving only a few months, Mr. DeGroff died and the Rev. Matt S. Gallagher followed as Director in 1920, but he served less than a year.

The Mission's third Director was Miss Alice M. Patton. She began laboring as a volunteer worker in 1917 under Rev. Gallagher

and upon his resignation she took over. The Jewish Evangelization Society became incorporated in 1928 and the name was changed to the Evangelization Society of Philadelphia, Inc. It is interesting to note that the change in the name of the Society was the result of a protest of the Jewish lawyers present at the time of the incorporation who did not want the word "Jewish" in the name of the organization. In order not to unduly antagonize the Jewish people or the lawyers, it was felt the name should be altered. Alice Patton also incorporated children's, young people's and women's ministries. Indoor Bible classes and meetings were carried on as well as visitation to Jewish homes. A reading room was opened and a special display was placed in the window. Prayer continued for Israel on a regular basis, weekly and monthly. As the work progressed under her leadership, open air meetings were conducted in several different areas of the city and the Lord blessed with souls being saved. Churches in the Philadelphia area became increasingly more burdened for Jewish mission work. Additional staff members and volunteers were added. It was also during this era that a very special family came to know the Lord through the door-to-door ministry of one very dedicated missionary, Fannie Miller. In 1950 after

witnessing monthly for two years straight in the Rosenthal's luncheonette, Marv Rosenthal (former Director of Friends of Israel Gospel Ministries and present Director of Zion's Hope), his mother, Stanley his brother and other family members were all led to the Lord through the witness of this one woman. Fannie had served as a missionary among the Jews in Boston and later became an actively involved member in Congregation Beth Messiah until her death in 198-. Her zeal never abated. No matter what a person discussed with her, she always brought the subject back to the Lord and relentlessly pressed the absolute necessity of accepting the Lord right then and there.

In 1954, through the gracious provision of the Lord, the Mission moved its headquarters to a new house at 5415 Rising Sun in the greater Northeast area of the city. Lillie Constable, one of the missionary workers remembered a youth camp in New Jersey, by the name of "Camp Hananeel". "Hananeel" means "the graciousness of God." The workers started to refer to the new headquarters as the "Hananeel House." Classes for men, women, children and young people flourished in this era. Weekly and monthly prayer meetings continued. A Saturday night fellowship for believers became a regular part of the outreach. The Lord granted

a fruitful ministry under Mrs. Hogg's directorship and after approximately 40 years of being associated with the work, she retired to live at the Quarryville Presbyterian Home in 1958. From 1959 until 1964, the Rev. J. Keith Whitney directed the work. Meetings were expanded under his leadership to more neighborhoods and to schools as well as door to door and store to store evangelism.

For the next several years the mission was led officially by a Director. From 1973-1979 the Rev. Charles App Jr. took the helm. He was responsible for the production of Hananeel House's multi-media production "Looking for the Promise." In 1980 a former missionary from the American Board of Missions to the Jews, Arthur Watson began his brief tenure as Director until he was taken home to be with the Lord the following year.

Once again the mission's faithful friend, Rev. Witney, began his second era as Director. When he returned from Hebrew Christian Fellowship, he brought another missionary, Ruth Hample. When the work was reallocated to 13065 Bustleton Ave, they encountered a conflict with the Somerton Civic Association which had a politically influential Jewish person as one of their members. The mission ended up operating under protest. Nevertheless, it was

**A CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF JEWISH MISSIONS IN PHILADELPHIA**

- 1893 IMMANUEL GOSPEL MISSION
- 1894 MISSION OF THE COVENANT TO ISRAEL
- 1885 HEBREW CHRISTIAN WITNESS
- 1896 JEWISH BIBLE SHOP WINDOW MINISTRIES
- 1911 THE EVANGELIZATION SOCIETY OF PHILADELPHIA
- 1926 THE AMERICAN BOARD OF MISSIONS TO THE JEWS
- 1936 THE CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO THE JEWS
- 1938 FRIENDS OF ISRAEL GOSPEL MINISTRY
- 1944 HEBREW CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
- 1950 TRUTH FOR ISRAEL
- 1951 SHOFAR COMMITTEE
- 1952 THE CHRISTIAN TESTIMONY TO THE JEW
- 1954 MESSIAH'S MISSION - CONGREGATION BETH EMMANUEL
- 1966 ALLIANCE JEWISH MINISTRY
- 1974 CONGREGATION BETH YESHUA
- 1984 AMMI MINISTRY
- 1984 JOPPA
- 1985 CHURCH'S MINISTRY AMONG JEWISH PEOPLE- CMJ/USA
- 1989 CHAIM
- 1990 CONGREGATION BETH SHILOH

a very productive period. Ruth wrote and produced a musical cantata entitled "Israel My Glory" which debuted at with a large choral production at The Doral Caterers in Northeast Philadelphia.

The present Director is the Rev. Thomas Huckel. Since 1992 he and his wife Sharon have plunged themselves into the work. They began recruiting new missionaries who are in training at the present time. Marion Eisen is pioneering a whole new outreach among the Russian/Jewish immigrants in the Philadelphia area. Her ministry has blossomed and many Jewish people are coming to know the Lord. Last year, Sharon Huckel produced her second Messianic Music tape entitled "Tabernacle" which has received excellent reviews.

#### **THE AMERICAN BOARD OF MISSIONS TO THE JEWS (1926)**

On December 21, 1926, Harry Burgen was appointed by the American Board of Missions to the Jews to open a new branch in Philadelphia. This was the first official branch of the Mission to be opened outside of New York with a full-time paid worker. The Jewish population in Philadelphia at the time numbered 240,000 and this

represented over 70% of the Jewish population of the entire state.

On January 1, 1927, Harry and his wife, Rebecca, moved to Philadelphia where he faithfully labored for over forty-seven years. Born in a small town in Lithuania in 1893 to orthodox parents, a Godly fear was instilled in his heart for the Word of God. He nevertheless was troubled because he saw himself a sinner before God and constantly sought assurance of forgiveness for his sins. At the age of twenty he experienced this assurance while attending a Friday evening Gospel meeting at a Jewish mission. "I listened attentively" he wrote "to the story of the Son of God and it touched my very heart strings. The words I heard were as a 'balm of Gilead' to my soul."

At the beginning, he rented a store front building at 535 Spruce Street in downtown Philadelphia. This was used as a reading room and as a meeting room until the mission purchased property at 717 Walnut Street in 1938. While serving at the store front building, Harry affectionately became known as the Mission's "Trap Door" missionary. He was given this name because of the way he worked in the store front building. Using all of his creative talents, he would cleverly decorate the store front window with Scripture verses, objects of art, or other items that he felt would

attract the attention of a Jewish passer-by. He would then wait behind the curtain at the window. As soon as a curious person would stop to look, like a trap-door spider springing out of its nest after its prey, Harry would quickly spring out of the door to engage the person in conversation. He was a master at this, and as a result of his patience and his loving witness, many Jews and Gentiles came to faith in the Messiah. Harry magnified the name of the Lord not in a spectacular flashy way but lifted Him up through his faithful and consistent witness. He wrote in 1938:

"Since coming ... we are meeting with increased opportunities of reaching Jews, Gentiles and Christians. The Lord is giving us a ministry among them all. Recently we have had contact with many Jewish refugees, who have fled for their lives. They pause at our window, hesitate and are fearful of coming in but finally take courage and step in. They ask for employment or seek to sell merchandise. Some ask for literature which is displayed in the window. In every case it is our chief joy to magnify the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ and endeavor to win each one of them."

By 1941, some 8,000 Jewish refugees had settled in the area, and the Reverend Otto Samuel, a native of Germany joined him in conducting weekly

gospel meetings and giving them lessons in English.

In 1970, Larry Jaffrey, a student at the Conservative Baptist Seminary in Denver was sent by the Mission to help develop the work in Philadelphia. He arrived with Terry Delaney who had served as the Missionary-in-Charge in Denver. Terry left in 1973, leaving Larry in charge. In 1974 Larry reported that the ministry was experiencing increased attendance at meetings, and several decisions for the Lord. In one of his reports he wrote:

"This past year was the beginning of four more Bible study groups in our area. The original Thursday evening study expanded to such an extent that we were able to divide the group into an adult study and a young people's study which is conducted by Mitch Triestman. A second study was started on Tuesday afternoon for those who could not come to the evening studies. Arthur Watson began a third study group in the Lower Bucks County area, reaching out to the Jewish population in that area. Finally, as a result of our prayers, a group is meeting in Wilmington, Delaware. As a result of our Bible studies and meetings, we have made many new contacts with unsaved Jewish people. From these contacts several have come to receive Jesus as their Messiah, and some have even followed Him in

baptism."

When Mitchell Triestman, who had just recently graduated from Philadelphia College of the Bible, arrived on the scene in the fall of 1973 and began serving under the direction of Larry, the work was moving in a different direction. The change of policy emphasized the work was no longer that of a building but on the individual missionary. In 1974, 717 Walnut Street was closed and another branch was opened in the Northeast part of the city.

From 1975-1978 Mitch taught Wednesday Bible studies at the Messianic Jewish Center. He began a Temple University student outreach program, a Friday afternoon youth group, Thursday adult Bible class, monthly special services that were well attended, at times drawing over 100 people. He started Beth Simcha Messianic Congregation in Hightstown, NJ, and Roeh Israel in Harrisburg. Milt Maimon was one of his earliest volunteers. He enlisted Tom Huckle as a volunteer in Northeast Philadelphia and Mark Dion in Hightstown, NJ.

Triestman attended Congregation Beth Messiah on Chestnut Street in 1972 while a student at Philadelphia College of the Bible and taught the Wednesday Bible study. He and the pastor, Herbert Links, became good friends and that relationship has continued unto the present

day. He continues to be a frequent speaker at the Congregation Sunday morning worship service. His strength in the field of personal evangelism is responsible for many coming to the Lord, some of whom now serve as leaders in Jewish missions: Tom Huckle and Milt Maimon.

Today the work continues. A Friday Shabbat service is being held under the direction the Rev. Kenneth Alpren, a native Philadelphian and graduate of Gordon College and Maryland Bible College Seminary. Frank Potter is involved with a flourishing ministry of home visitation and English as a Second Language (EST) program among the Russian Jewish community in the Northeast with Marion Eisen.

#### **THE CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO THE JEWS (1936)**

Daniel Finestone, the founder of the Christian Approach to the Jews, was a remarkable man. I only knew him for one year and never realized until after his death in 1971 how truly great he was. He had a gentle servant spirit. On one occasion when I told him that I would never be able to fill his shoes he replied, "Oh! mine aren't that big."

He was born in Odessa, Russia in 1894. After the death of his father, he was sent to school in England at

the age of five. He was exposed to the gospel early in life but inwardly rebelled against these teachings. His family eventually emigrated to Canada and he became a bank clerk. When World War I broke out, he enlisted for duty in France. En route he stopped at Toronto to say good-bye to his mother. He was much surprised when at parting from his mother, known as Mother Kendel, she smiled instead of crying and told him that God had given her assurance that he would return safely.

Shortly after returning home, he became a believer in Jesus. At first he purposed not to say anything about this matter. His Jewishness was not something he was proud of before his salvation experience. Afterwards, he no longer hid that fact and began to voraciously study Jewish history and his new Christian viewpoint. He soon came to appreciate his miraculous heritage. From that time on a new and personal interest in God's chosen people was formed.

A strange dream about preaching to a large crowd of Jewish people in a tenement area made a deep impression on him. He decided to go to New York City in search of employment in a bank. Roaming the East Side, he saw people and tenements as he had seen in his dream. He became involved in working in a mission which eventually led him to pursue further

education toward the ministry. He graduated from Dallas Theological Seminary with honors.

It was while assisting the East New York Neighborhood House, which was a Presbyterian mission to the Jews in Brooklyn, he met his wife, Olive, who was working there as one of the missionaries.

He pastored a Presbyterian church in New Jersey and in 1937 accepted an invitation to come to Philadelphia to begin a ministry among the Jews under the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church. It was a position that he would serve in for the next 32 years of his life.

The work over the next 30 years would be at various locations. First, the Barnes Memorial Center on South Broad Street where they conducted evangelistic meetings and open forums. The meetings were well attended and there was a Sunday evening service which drew large crowds filled with several hours of hot debates. In 1955 the work moved to 2018 Walnut Street where it continued for six years. Open air summer meetings were held in Mifflin Square which was a heavily concentrated Jewish area in south Philadelphia. There was singing, testimonies and preaching. Many Jewish people got saved and young Christian men helped. John Woods, Robert DuBois and Ed Rodisch later went into the ministry and served as

members on his Board. There was a great deal of ridicule that he endured from hecklers but it never deterred him from his preaching. For many years he also conducted a far-reaching radio ministry over WIBG in Philadelphia called "The Old Testament Hour" On it he would present the testimonies of outstanding "Hebrew Christians."

In 1960 an anonymous Presbyterian layman made it possible to make a down payment toward the cost of a \$75,000 building at 1907 Chestnut Street. The modern one-story building served as headquarters for the work, a place where people could stop in for information, as well as home for the First Hebrew-Christian Congregation of Philadelphia (now Congregation Beth Messiah.) At that time there was no other congregation available to minister to the needs of all the new Jewish believers who had come to the Lord. There were over 100 members and many family units. It is one of the oldest such congregations in the country and has continued for 37 years.

He and Olive formed intercessory prayer groups in local Presbyterian churches, presented programs in churches and served as pastor to the Congregation. His sermons were masterfully prepared and delivered. Someone once asked him why he decided on the name, "The Christian

Approach to the Jews" and he replied, "Is there any other?"

In 1970, Herbert Links, an ordained Presbyterian minister, and his wife Sandra came to succeed him. He has continued in much the same capacity; evangelistic outreach, presenting programs in local churches, and pastoring the Congregation. The Christian Approach to the Jews is the last remaining Jewish ministry within the Presbyterian Church USA.

#### **THE FRIENDS OF ISRAEL GOSPEL MINISTRY (1938)**

The Friends of Israel was founded in 1938 by Christians as an independent, fundamental, evangelical, faith Mission. Its purpose was to reach Jews throughout Europe and America during the time of the Hitler atrocities to "proclaim the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to the Jews at home and abroad."

The first issue of ISRAEL MY GLORY, the Mission's quarterly magazine, was published by Joseph Taylor Britan and the Rev. Paul L. Berman three years later, its name being taken from Isaiah 46:13. The first location was 710 Wither-spoon Building in Philadelphia and the subscription price was \$.50. In 1942 the magazine reported that the Mission had assisted more than thirty missionary

societies during its first four years of activity and that they planned to shortly undertake the support of a missionary or missionaries.

The following year, in 1943, they called Dr. Victor Buksbazen to be their first General Secretary He was born and educated in Warsaw, Poland, and forty years old at the time. After coming to the Lord when he was 19, he entered the University of Warsaw and completed a five year course in theology. God gave him a burden to reach the Jewish people. After being ordained, he became a missionary to the Jews of Warsaw and Krakow until 1937. Sensing the impending problems of Nazi Germany, he left Poland and ministered with the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews in England until the end of 1940. He was fluent in Polish, English, Hebrew, Yiddish, German, Russian, Greek and Latin.

Dr. Buksbazen came to the United States and worked among the Jewish people in Brooklyn until called to minister with The Friends of Israel on January 15, 1943. This would become the Lord's work for him for the remainder of his life.

Shortly after he came, the work started to expand. The first worker placed in the field was Mrs. Louise J. Johnson, who began her ministry in Atlanta. At approximately the same time, the Rev. Benjamin Sitenhof was placed in

Brighton, England. Shortly thereafter his son, Ernest, began a work on the southern coast of England. They gave much relief to Jewish people as they presented the gospel.

At approximately the same time, there was work begun in the United States. There were Tuesday night open air meetings held in Mifflin Square in Philadelphia, which was located in south Philadelphia. Many Jewish people confessed faith in Jesus as their Messiah.

By 1944, the ministry had grown to where aid was sent to eighteen foreign countries. The work had also expanded to Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, Atlanta, Brooklyn, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Oakland, CA.

As the war was nearing an end, the society was waiting to take the gospel message to the stricken lands of the continent. "We are anxiously awaiting the end of the war, preparing to go to the stricken lands of Europe with spiritual and material comfort for the little remnant of Israel, which, we pray, will have survived the greatest calamity in Jewish history," their publication reported at the time.

To get some idea of how small the Mission was, it was reported that the entire contributions for 1944 in the United States amounted to \$33,113.64

Shortly after the end of the war, there were new

workers added and the work continued to prosper. In 1947, Paul and Elizabeth Joscze came on staff. They had tried to flee Poland but were forced to live for six long years under the German occupation and then under the Russians. Only one miracle after another spared their lives and eventually they arrived in America and had an extended ministry with the Mission. They changed their last name to Yates and continued to serve until they retired.

By 1948 the entire annual income for the ministry had grown to \$73,102. As the income slowly grew, new workers were added. By Christmas, 1953, it was noted that there had been around three hundred conversions to Christ in 15 years. By 1958, the work employed 25-30 missionaries in America, Europe and Israel. Christian literature was now being published. In twenty years they had raised nearly one million dollars! The October/November 1960 issue of ISRAEL MY GLORY told that the lease on the Witherspoon Building was not going to be renewed so a new headquarter was found on 1218 Chestnut Street. "Sister Alice" began her ministry behind the Iron Curtain, and "Joel of Jerusalem" started appearing in the publications. The income had grown to just above \$100,000 per year. In 1964 the Mission moved to 475 White Horse Pike, in

West Collingswood, NJ.

Near the end of 1972, an event took place that would change the course of the ministry. Dr. Buksbazen and his wife, Lydia, had served in leadership capacity for thirty years. His health was rapidly declining, so he felt it necessary to prepare for retirement. He had hoped that his son, Victor, Jr would succeed him but unfortunately, an auto accident years earlier had left his son impaired. The Rev. Marvin Rosenthal, a Jewish believer serving as the pastor of a Baptist church in NJ, was called to succeed Dr. Buksbazen.

In 1974, the name of the Mission was changed to The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry better describing the work that was being done. During this period David Levy and Stanley Rosenthal, Marvin's brother joined the staff. The literature ministry was expanded and the tape ministry was soon begun. Trips to Israel with a prophetic emphasis were inaugurated. In 1967, a home was purchased in Atlantic City with a summer ministry outreach.

The property in West Collingswood was limited in carrying on all phases of the ministry, property covering one hundred fifty acres was purchased for offices and the Institute of Biblical Studies. In the spring of 1989 Dr. Elwood McQuaid assumed the position of Executive Director, having served with The Friends of Israel as their

Western States Director. His love for the Jewish people as well as the State of Israel is well known.

Today, they continue to serve in Canada, Israel, Argentina, India, West Germany, Poland, France and Italy. A new area of work overseas is with the many Russian Jewish immigrants. The major emphasis is upon proclaiming the need for personal salvation, through the Lord Jesus Christ, to the Jew and also to the Gentile. They are seeking to accomplish this through their field evangelists, missionaries, and their large body of quality books, tapes and literature. Their bimonthly magazine goes out to about 325,000 homes. The Mission also conducts a campus ministry, a growing home Bible study ministry and a relief program. Field evangelists provide local churches with missionary and prophetic conferences and evangelistic crusades. They also conduct workshops on the "How To's" of Jewish evangelism. The Rev. Mitch Triestman is their missionary in Philadelphia.

#### HEBREW CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP (1944)

After seven years as field representative for the Biblical Research Society, with the burden of God on his heart and with concurring experiences in his life, O.E.

Phillips founded the Hebrew Christian Fellowship in Philadelphia in 1944. God led five godly men to share the vision: Alex Dunlap, M.T. MacPherson, Carl Seitz, the Rev. C. Didden and the Rev. C. F. Yost.

A graduate of Potter Bible College in Bowling Green KY he pursued an active ministry as evangelist and pastor to a number of churches in Texas. Later he helped establish a Christian college and an orphanage in Oklahoma.

In 1936 he came to Philadelphia, his home town, as Eastern representative of the Biblical Research Society, an organization interested in reaching the Jews by mail. He had a unique way of bringing God's Word that challenged people.

In 1943, God burdened his heart to reach the then 400,000 Jews of Philadelphia. A request for meetings as a representative of the Biblical Research Society became his "fleece." If, after announcing his intention of starting a new work, the pastor wished him to come anyway, this he would accept as God's signal to continue. The pastor replied that this was a direct answer to prayer by himself and two of his men who had become burdened for the same need after a two-day trip to Philadelphia. They had a prayer meeting at the YMCA. asking God to start some definite work in the city. God's leading to him was the

answer to their very recent prayer. This in a real sense was the birth of Hebrew Christian Fellowship.

The first location was a Reading Room on Chestnut Street. People were contacted with the gospel and challenged to receive the Lord. Then followed the acquisition of the property at 1643 Chew Street in 1945. There people were reached, books and booklets were printed and distributed, souls were saved as believers prayed. His conference ministry took him over a large part of the country. He traveled extensively in Europe and Israel.

During a trip to Israel he met Rose Warmer and saw the need to reach the Jews there. He helped to purchase a car for her to replace a scooter used to distribute Bibles and literature. Later Miss Warmer became a part of the Fellowship. In 1960 the work spread to the Jews of Eastern Europe, then to Toronto, Canada.

He wrote numerous books: "Kingdom of God", "Out of the Night," "Birth Pangs of a New Age," and "Inside Iron Gates." He once wrote: "We of the Hebrew Christian Fellowship have given our lives for the cause of taking the gospel to the house of Israel. Our path is a difficult one because of the past history of the professing church and unbelieving Gentile world, both of which have persecuted her in nearly all parts of the earth ... These things are

hindering factors in reaching many of them with the gospel. But to us the matter is urgent. It is life or eternal death ... Woe be to me if I preach not the gospel! " This characterized his life and ministry.

Dr. Philipps experienced a long illness during the latter days of his ministry and was confined to the nursing facilities of the Open Door Estates until his death on September 7, 1974. During this time Keith and Ruth Whitney served in caring for the day-to-day functions of the mission. In May of 1974, the Rev. William J. Randolph, then pastor of Chelton Baptist Church, Dresher, accepted an invitation to become the Co-Director of the mission. The headquarters were then moved to its present location at 1033 Twining Road in Dresher, PA.

The very winsome manner of the present General Director, the Rev. Roger L. Wambold, has brought a refreshing infusion of life into the mission. With a pastor's heart he has plunged into the task of establishing new mission stations and recruiting missionaries. Their annual banquets are growing in numbers.

Rev. Charles E. Olewine, an ordained Presbyterian minister, has been actively involved in their ministry. In addition to serving on the Board of Directors of the Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, has a heavy burden for the work.

## A Response to Jacob Prasch From the International Christian Embassy

By Jim Schutz, ICEJ Soviet Jewry Dept. Coordinator and Liaison for Local Believers

For at least five years Jacob Prasch has been publicly attacking the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) as a heretical tool of Satan which has been doing great damage to the cause of Christ in Israel through the propagation of its "salvationless social gospel," and the diverting of "astronomical sums of support" away from where he thinks they ought to go. In the May, 1997 LCJE Bulletin, Prasch has continued his campaign in his "Response to the ICEJ's Teaching That We Are Not Called to Preach the Gospel to the Jews." Unfortunately for the part of the Body of Christ that has been influenced by these attacks, they have often been based on serious misrepresentations and distortions of what the ICEJ is, does and stands for. His article published in the Bulletin is no exception.

Mr. Prasch bases his article on a message given by ICEJ Spokesman, Jan Willem van der Hoeven, designated by Prasch as ICEJ Director, at a 1993 London missions conference organized by Messianic Jew, Morris Cerullo. According to Prasch, Van der Hoeven directly taught against the preaching of the Gospel to the Jewish people through a heretical misuse of Isaiah 40:1. Prasch's version of this

teaching, which he insists is the ICEJ's "officially published opinion," states that Israel can be comforted by "telling her that her iniquity is removed without the blood of Yeshua." Furthermore, he maintains that a video of Van der Hoeven's message is currently being circulated throughout Eastern Europe, and thereby influencing untold numbers of Pentecostals to believe "something which stands in direct and unmitigated contradiction to the plain teaching of the Word of God." These accusations have also been raised in Prasch's internationally distributed Moriel Newsletter, which currently calls for Christians "to pray against" the ICEJ after the publication in an Israeli religious newspaper of (unsubstantiated and misleading) remarks attributed to Van der Hoeven's wife.

For the record, Prasch's article contains numerous factual errors, only a few of which will be specified here due to lack of space, before addressing the crux of the issue. Van der Hoeven is not a "regular speaker" at Cerullo's London conference. He spoke there twice, in 1992 and 1993, well before Cerullo was censured by the UK Advertising Standards Council. Moreover, the assertion that Cerullo was first "brought into" and

"introduced into" Israel by the ICEJ "to address (its) Feast of Tabernacles is preposterous. He dates his own ministry to Israel back to 1967, whereas the ICEJ was founded in 1980. Cerullo never once "addressed" a general meeting of the Feast of Tabernacles. The most he did was lead an adjunct healing service in a Jerusalem hotel as part of the 1993 Feast. Finally, the ICEJ Scandinavian leadership is not in general "closely tied" to the "other money oriented preaching ministries" Prasch also condemns. In fact, the majority tends the other way.

Prasch would have his readership believe that one videoed message from a 4 year-old conference is currently sweeping through "massive numbers of Pentecostals" and corrupting them to withhold the way of salvation from the Jewish people. The supreme irony, however, is that Morris Cerullo himself, whose primary passion seems to be world, and particularly Jewish, evangelism, and who is the only one who distributes the video, would appear to have totally rejected its message. As Prasch well knows, Cerullo is currently thought of by many involved in Jewish evangelism as being the one person guilty of over-evangelizing

Jews by his million book, unsolicited mailout to virtually every Israeli household, thereby prompting the proposal of extreme anti-missionary legislation.

The answer to this mystery brings us to by far the most serious problem with Prasch's article: it is based on a clear and fundamental misrepresentation. His main thesis stands on a misquote, which is then taken totally out of context. Neither Cerullo nor the large group of fervent, evangelistically minded believers would have understood the message in the way Prasch presents it. According to Prasch, "Van der Hoeven asserts that the text (Isa.40:1-2) says to 'Comfort, Comfort the Jews, and not to preach to them.'" What he actually says on the video, however, is that "The Bible does not say 'Preach ye, Preach ye at my people, but 'Comfort ye, Comfort ye my people ...'" The key phrase is "Preach ye at my people." What he was preaching against, which any intelligent, open-minded believer would understand, was a shallow Christian witness to the Jewish people coming from the kind of arrogance and ignorance warned about in Romans 11. He exhorted gentile Christians to not simply pray easy prayers about the peace of Jerusalem while thinking about Israel as merely a subject of Bible prophecy, but to come to the place of sacrificial and loving

identification with them, as Ruth did with Naomi, and to learn about their history and suffering before trying to minister to them. Leading up to what Mr. Prasch misquotes, Van der Hoeven said:

"It's not words but deeds the Lord's after. My God did not throw me a book with the four spiritual laws from heaven on how to be saved. He sent His son to take my place. Are you willing to take the place of Israelis and live with them with all of your heart and with all that you have? That Christianity the Jews have rarely seen. We can preach at them, but the Bible does not say 'Preach ye, preach ye at my people,' but 'Comfort ye comfort ye my people and speak tenderly to the heart of Jerusalem.'"

Van der Hoeven never said not to preach to the Jewish people, but that Christians "have no right to speak one sentence to the Jew if (they) don't read two books on the Holocaust first; and then (they) will know from what agony the Jewish people came back." It was a message from the heart, mentioning his Arab (first) wife, who after receiving God's grace to overcome her inborn hatred of the Jewish people, gave her life for them. If understood from the heart in its true context, the message would only help make any kind of Jewish oriented ministry of non-Jews more genuine and authentic.

Prasch points out that "It

was Satan's technique to divorce a text from its context." This we can all agree with. But who is the one doing just that? It is ironic indeed that in his current Moriel Newsletter, Prasch himself castigates other specific evangelists for doing the same kind of thing Van der Hoeven was speaking against. "These people do not preach to people," Prasch writes, "but ... at them and probably do more harm than good."

In light of the above, Prasch's references to Isa. 40 and Rom. 10 as rebuttals to Van der Hoeven's message are obviously misplaced. But Prasch continues to insist that ICEJ's officially published position is similarly heretical. Since the ICEJ has never taught that the Church at large is not called to preach the Gospel to the Jewish people, Prasch's real objection seems to be that the ICEJ does not believe it is called to do so, and therefore influences other Christians likewise. Citing Rom.10:14, ("With no preacher, how shall they hear?") he asserts that the ICEJ actually teaches "a contrary message which goes directly against the plain teaching of God's Word." Rom. 10, however, does not end at verse 14. It continues on to ask the question: "But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: 'Their sound has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the earth.'"

The passage then proceeds

to refer to God's plan "to provoke (the Jewish people) to jealousy" by gentiles. Does this happen by preaching to a people who, for the sake of the gentiles by divine design, are in opposition to the message preached? Perhaps it can and does, but this is not the message that continues into Rom. 11. Grafted-in gentiles are instructed to not be arrogant towards Jews who have not believed in Yeshua nor ignorant of God's irrevocable plan concerning them. "Concerning the Gospel, they are enemies for your sakes, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers," Paul writes. He then proceeds to tell the grafted-in gentiles, "that through the mercy shown you, they also may obtain mercy."

Without compromise, we agree that the sacrifice of the Messiah is the provision for all mankind to obtain God's mercy. But the "plain teaching" of Rom. 10 and 11 is not simply that gentiles must go out and preach the Gospel to the Jewish people. It does not say that. But it does say that gentiles will provoke them to jealousy. And the subsequent implication is that this will happen through a right heart understanding of God's plan, love and irrevocable gifting unto them, and the demonstration of divine mercy (or compassion according to Strong) --something that is unconditional. This is, in fact, the kind of message Mr. Van der

Hoeven preached at "Mission London." And he preached it to a large group of fervent, evangelistically-minded believers (including a fair number of Israelis), whose overwhelming response was "Amen!"

Contrary to Prsch's charges, neither the ICEJ nor Van der Hoeven teaches a "de-facto form of dual-covenant theology" or that the sins of Israel are forgiven apart from the sacrifice of the Messiah. These conclusions can only be arrived at by twisting our words out of context or supplying interpretations to them that we reject. But we do see that God has a distinct plan for Israel. Without question Isaiah 40 is a prophetic chapter which heralds the good news of the Gospel and leads to the sacrifice of the Messiah as revealed in Isaiah 53. But it is not nearly as narrow in scope as Mr. Prsch wants to make it. Many believers and Bible teachers, Jew and gentile, embrace the prophetic relevancy of verses 1-2 to today without being confused in the slightest about the source of the forgiveness mentioned, because they know that God's Word declares "the end from the beginning," (Isa.46:10). Chapters 40 to 53 of Isaiah repeatedly mention Israel's unrepented of sins while simultaneously declaring that the Lord "has redeemed" her. It is precisely because Yeshua would bear their sins that this could be so.

But these chapters also speak much of God's plan to bring Israel back to the land and to Himself after their period of desolation, of feeling forsaken and forgotten by Him. Many believers, Jew and non-Jew, believe that the physical restoration of Israel is a prophetic sign to the world of God's favor beginning to turn back to the Jewish people while still in their partial blindness (see Psalm 102). Even in their period of perceived separation, Isa. 49:14-16 declares how God has continued to watch over them more closely than a mother does her newborn child. But once He begins to bring them back from the nations, He does so with "everlasting compassion," commanding the heavens to sing and the earth to rejoice (see Isa. 54:7; 49:13). And as a demonstration of that compassion, He calls gentiles to bring them back in their arms and on their shoulders, to be foster fathers and nursing mothers unto them, and to humble themselves deeply before them. By these very things, they "will know" who is the Lord! And "those (the foster parents?) that wait on Him will not be ashamed (Isa.49:22f)."

One way made clear by Romans 11 in which Israel has suffered "double for her sins" is that she has also suffered for the sake of the gentiles. The Jewish people have been kept in partial blindness, even as "enemies" of the Gospel, for such

a long time, so that the blessing of Abraham could go to the gentiles. God's great love for the gentiles allowed it to be so, despite His ongoing love for Israel and sharing of her afflictions. But both Old and New Testaments reveal God's longing for that time to end. And he has always expected grafted-in gentiles to not be ignorant of that longing, but to express it through the mercy they received.

Though the "good news" of Isaiah 40 is fulfilled in all that the Gospel means, we do not believe that the declaring of it is limited to what Prsch maintains. According to v.8, the message to be declared is that "... the Word of our God shall stand forever." The message in verse 9 is "Behold your God" and in 52:7, "Your God reigns!" This is exactly what the ICEJ endeavors to declare to Israel - that through Yeshua, we gentiles have come to 'their' God, and He is the one who reigns and shall fulfill every promise He has made to them - including to bring them back to their land and to Him, and to plant them there with all His heart and all His soul (Jer. 32:41). In Jeremiah 31:10 we read: "Hear the Word of the Lord, O nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say 'He who scattered Israel will gather him and keep him as a shepherd does his flock.'" We believe God has called us to declare this message to Jew and gentile - and

that it directly points to the coming of the King who will rule and reign over all. This was also part of Mr. Van der Hoeven's message.

Do we insist that this is the only way God will reveal Himself to the Jewish people? Of course not. But we do see that the biblical issue is not simply and only the preaching of the Gospel to individual Jews. God has a lot more in mind, i.e., "life from the dead" for the world as He still deals with Israel as a people in His time and way, and still deals with the nations through Israel. And we see that mercy on the part of grafted-in gentiles is a common theme in both the Old and New Testament writings in regard to the fulfilling of this plan, as He draws His people to Himself. Moreover, we understand that virtually from the beginning, Satan has sought to prevent such a testimony from ever being possible by sowing anti-Semitism into the Church.

The first and possibly greatest stumbling block for most Jews in considering the truths of the New Testament is, to our shame and God's grief, the testimony of historical Christianity's arrogance, ignorance and lack of mercy with respect to the Jewish people. By God's grace and against what often seem like impossible odds, we, along with many other Christians, are working to build another testimony - because we are persuaded that God has loved them all

along, and been afflicted in their afflictions. For this reason, certain anti-missionary organizations have attacked the ICEJ as being even more dangerous than Jews for Jesus. They know that our kind of ministry has the possibility to touch some of the deepest wounds of Jewish people. But, like our Brother Prsch, who has even vowed to send ICEJ material to them to discredit us, they are sure that our love and support are not truly genuine and godly. Although they regularly accuse us of secretly missionizing when we are not, it is the very fact that we are not that seems to provoke them the most. The real problem seems to be that they do not want a positive testimony coming from Christians who really believe that Yeshua is the Messiah. It is our faith that bothers them, not our deeds. Many other Jews, however, have been provoked in another direction, even to the point of expressing with tears and appreciation: "Baruch haba b'shem Adonai!"

For those who are unsure as to where we stand, let it be said that we are not ashamed of the name of Yeshua nor the Gospel of the New Covenant, which declares Yeshua as the prophesied redeemer for Jew and gentile. And contrary to Prsch's assertions elsewhere, the ICEJ has never signed a document with the Israeli Government not to preach this Gospel,

notwithstanding the fact that we exist in Israel by permission rather than by right. Neither do we oppose the authentic preaching of it by others. According to the Bible, it must be preached (though not necessarily in the "stop being a Jew, convert to Christianity" terms Jews have often heard). Also, we stand by the biblical right of Messianic Jews to identify themselves as Jews and to express their beliefs. But as guests in Israel, we believe that God has called us to demonstrate biblical mercy to the Jewish people and to stand with them in their trials, but not to proclaim to them that they must accept our faith. This is not out of fear and compromise, but out of faith in the Word and ways of God. While we are dedicated to being living testimonies of the life we have received through Yeshua the Jew, and want Him to be revealed for who He truly is, our love and support for Israel in an increasingly hostile world, are without conditions.

Prasch may well present himself as an expert on all our affairs and motives, and insist from a distance that we are "a PR and fund raising machine" causing devastating damage to the work of the Lord amongst the Jewish people. But we prefer to let God be God. And we know that many believers in and outside the land who know the ICEJ better, are much more appreciative. Although the

articles challenging the ICEJ in the MISHKAN (no. 12, 1990) raised important issues, they also contained many inaccuracies, to which the ICEJ did not then want to be forced into responding in that forum. The ICEJ has needed to walk a fine line between many sensitivities. Certainly, like every other ministry, it has suffered internal dissensions, had shortcomings and made mistakes, which it must endeavor to see and correct by the grace of God. How Brother Prasch imagines he is qualified to be our judge, however, is a great mystery. Nonetheless, the real question is whether we are growing in obedience to what God has called us to do. He desires Israel's salvation more than anyone. In spite of our failures, we believe He has given us much encouragement. Unfortunately, in all his years of publicly and privately attacking the Embassy, its staff and supporters, Prasch has never been willing to meet with us personally to discover what we really do and believe, and to give priority to sorting out the relationship problem. It is astonishing how he can state near the end of his article how "sorry" he is "that the mere theological and ethical issues (he) publicly raised concerning ICEJ have never been met with a biblical response, but only personal attack for having publicly raised the issues." The ICEJ has never once criticized our

Brother Prasch for raising valid issues, which we recognize exist. And, until now, it has never published one article against him nor mentioned him in a public meeting. But it is precisely because of the animosity, language, and character of his five-year onslaught against the ICEJ, that various Messianic leaders in Israel, irrespective of theological attitudes, have agreed that the relationship problem must receive priority according to Mt.5:23-24. We believe that we will lift up Yeshua to the Jewish people more by agape love for one another than by our doctrinal differences and biased condemnations, no matter how well-intentioned. This is not a "personality" issue, but the "hard biblical issue" that tops all others--and the place we have all fallen short. Forgive us, O Lord! *"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns!' Your watchmen shall lift up their voices, with their voices they shall sing together, for they shall see eye to eye when the Lord brings back Zion."* (Isa. 52:7,8)

May all the watchmen indeed see eye to eye and be faithful to their callings, so that the God of Israel may fulfill the irrevocable gifts and calling of His people. And may He have mercy upon us all (Rom. 11:32-36)!

## The Profile of LCJE

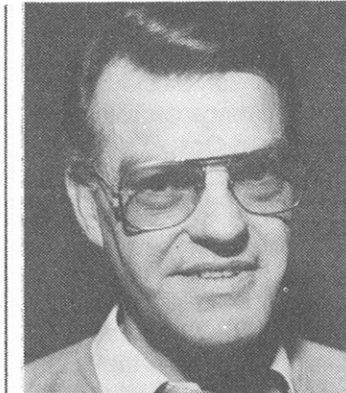
Samuel Roswall, Chairman of The Bible and Israel, Denmark

When you have followed the work of LCJE over a number of years, you must conclude that there's a lot to be pleased with and thankful for. LCJE has been a framework which has united and expressed many longings and dreams of evangelical Christians about reaching the Jewish people with the Gospel. A valuable help is hereby given us, both to stick to the biblical vision about the salvation of Israel, and to the obligation to return to Israel the best we've received from it.

A framework of this kind must of course have a profile. And in connection with this LCJE must express the specific conditions which are connected to Jewish Evangelism. Firstly that there is encouragement to reach the Jewish people with the Gospel, and secondly that there is disassociation with points of views and efforts which will weaken or prevent the task of Jewish Evangelism.

When we are talking about the Christian church's understanding for Israel, it has been common to speak about 4 different positions:

1. Jews and Gentiles have their own individual way to God - two-covenant theology
2. The church has taken over the promises and task of Israel - replacement theology



3. The whole of Israel will be saved in the end - eschatological understanding
4. The task of the church concerning Israel is to preach the Gospel - mission understanding

It is clear to everyone that LCJE is a spokesman for the 4th position.

Already at this point, I will make it clear that I personally reject positions 1 and 2, as I believe they are against what the Bible bears testimony to. Furthermore it is my belief that the Bible teaches us both positions 3 and 4 - in the same way that the Kingdom of God must be understood and seen as something present and something to come. In addition to this I'm of the opinion that positions 3 and 4 become insufficient if they are mutually exclusive of each other. One could therefore say that I'm a spokesman for a 5th position.

Can this 5th position be

contained and accepted in LCJE ?

I know that, in theory anyway, there is space for different understandings of God's plan concerning Israel, among these how God's promises in the Old Testament should be understood, when it comes to their fulfilment. But is it like this in practice ?

I agree with the fact that it is not LCJE's job to come to answer questions like this. I also understand that a discussion about it can easily create inadvisable discussions. I will not hide the fact that I find Israel's historical role in terms of salvation very relevant - also when it comes to proclaiming to Israel that Jesus is the Messiah of Israel. Jesus did not reject a literal fulfilment of the promises of the Old Testament about a visible Kingdom of God - as many gentile Christians have believed.

We must disassociate ourselves from any form of a belittling attitude towards missionary work among the Jews. But how has that been expressed in LCJE ?

It is for example said that the love for Israel can overshadow the obligation of mission. Furthermore that working with eschatological questions can lead to lower priority for missionary work, in favour of economical aid

supporting projects of a social character in Israel. Finally that the expectation of salvation of all Israel can make a Christian less concerned about the conversion of Jews today. But is this all that there is to say about this subject? Is it necessary only to speak about contrasts, that are mutually exclusive to each other?

I will not claim that I have read everything LCJE has said and written since 1980. But I can't remember that I over the past 10 years have

read a positive mention that it, for example, is biblically legitimate to be intensely concerned about the salvation of all Israel at the second coming of Jesus, and at the same time be intensely concerned about bringing the Gospel back to Israel. Instead there have been warnings about having an eschatological understanding as if it was almost the same as being against preaching the Gospel for Israel today – or in the best case that the understanding

of a future salvation of all Israel is an irrelevant personal point of view.

Conclusion: I agree that there is a risk that maybe these two understandings can exclude each other. But why only concentrate on this? Why not also say that these two can inspire and enrich each other?

Greetings in Jesus' name with

Rom.11,14 and 26  
("some of them" – "all Israel")

to understand the ingrained fear and distrust of the Christians.

The answer to the second question is: to a large degree – yes. In chapter six, where Telchin deals with the question: Who is a Jew? it is clear that the question of God and belief in God does not play a very important part for a majority of Jewish people. Telchin quotes another writer: "It is the rejection of Jesus as Christ that binds American Jews together. It is by the rejection of the Messiahship of Jesus that we proclaim to the world that we are still Jews." Telchin goes on to the observe what becomes some of the absurd consequences of the traditional religious definition of who is a Jew: "So from an ethnic point of view, we can say that even if a person born of Jewish parents is now an atheist, he or she is still a Jew. A person born of a Jewish mother who is now a Hare Krishna is still a Jew. A person whose mother is Jewish but who is now into Zen Buddhism is still a Jew. A person whose mother is Jewish and who now follows the religion of humanism is still a Jew." Even if you leave out of consideration what can be said from a biblical point of view, it is not very logical that the person whose mother is Jewish and who now believes in the Jew Jesus should have ceased to be a Jew.

So Telchin offers an alternative definition of who

is a Jew: "The word *Jew* comes from the name *Judah*, whose name means 'praise'. In God's sight we Jews have been called to be praisers of God – the one God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We are to serve Him, to teach our children to keep His ways, to represent Him to the nations.

"Accordingly, I put before you a thesis you may never have thought about: Jews who are atheists or agnostics or humanists or Zen Buddhists or Hare Krishna or any other religion, even Jews who seldom think about God, can hardly be considered praisers of God. So in a biblical sense, they can hardly be considered Jews. I am saying that any attempt that assign us an identity apart from God's Word is only self-serving."

In his answer to the third question, (Has God abandoned the Jewish people?) Telchin echoes the Apostle Paul: certainly not! The crucial chapters in Romans (9–11) are emphasized – to remind the reader that God has indeed not forgotten His promises to His people – and also to show that this indeed has implications for the church. "It is a fact that Jewish people all over the world are receiving the Lord. This has happened by the power of the Holy Spirit breathing life into dead bones. But many in the church don't understand what to do about this phenomenon. That's why I wrote this book,"

Telchin writes in conclusion.

The good news must be communicated – to all people, and if there are Christians who think that it is not politically correct to talk to their Jewish friends about Jesus, Telchin has this to say to them: "I believe with all my heart that the most anti-Semitic thing a Bible-believing Christian can do to the Jewish people is deny them access to the good news of Messiah Jesus."

In a direct and personal style, often seasoned with personal experiences, this book in a convincing way treats the question of God's will for the Jewish people and the church.

Birger Petterson

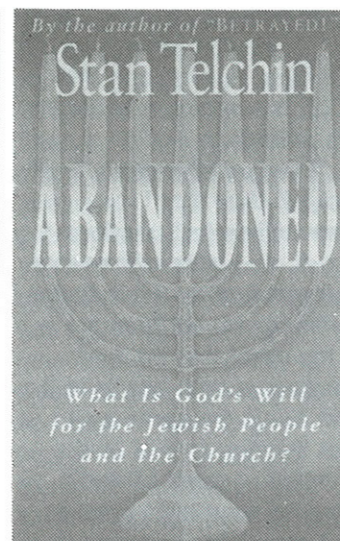
## Abandoned

Stan Telchin: *Abandoned*, Chosen Books, 1997

When Stan Telchin wrote *Betrayed!* in 1981, he told the moving story of his own and his family's way to belief in Jesus as Messiah – or as he later corrected himself (in *The Death of Messiah*): "It really should be the Messiah's way to me." If *Betrayed!* traced Telchin's spiritual odyssey, *Abandoned* is of a more reflective nature drawing on theological insight, (church) history, experience as leader of a congregation consisting of Gentile and Jewish believers.

The title, *Abandoned*, may require further explanation. This is what is given in the book. Telchin considers the meaning of the word in three perspectives:

Has the Church abandoned the Jewish



people?

Have the Jewish people abandoned God?

Has God abandoned the Jewish people?

The answer to the first question is: in some parts of

the church – yes. And to show how this came about Telchin turns to church history. The church soon forgot its Jewish roots. And let it be said at once: Chapter 4, with many quotations from the Church Fathers, is shocking reading. I am sure that many Christians have no idea that some of the leaders of the early church were responsible for such hateful assaults on the Jewish people, and that these same Church Fathers in centuries to come served as models in schools and seminaries where priests were taught to preach, and thereby had a lasting influence on Christian people's relationship to Jewish people. But repulsive as it is, this reading is also enlightening because it helps

### International Networking Directory

The LCJE International Networking Directory from 1992 is being revised and a new one is scheduled to appear in the summer of 1998. Copies of the old edition can be ordered for the price of postage and handling. Please indicate whether you want it sent by **Prioritaire** or **Economique** mail.