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CONSULTATION
ON JEWISH
EVANGELISM**

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ON JEWISH EVANGELISM
BULLETIN**



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From the coordinator

When this issue reaches the readers, people in Israel and in many other places in the world are busy celebrating Israel's 50-year anniversary. We are fortunately in the situation where we can congratulate a state which is still democratic and where mission and evangelization are NOT forbidden. On 1 April Knesset Member Nissim Zvilli withdrew his support to the so-called anti-mission law, a proposal which he and MK Rabbi Moshi Gafni brought forward a little more than a year ago. This took place in exchange for a statement which had the support of a number of Christian groups.

What is important to emphasize in this connection is what the Messianic Action Committee (MAC) writes in its Report No. 46 that "the whole Messianic community and most of the Evangelical Protestant churches (which are organizations represented by the United Christian Council in Israel (UCCI) declined to support the statement. Among these are the Evangelical Lutherans, the Southern Baptists, the Association of Baptist Churches in Israel, the Church of England, and the Christian and Missionary Alliance."

There is every reason to rejoice and to give thanks for what MAC has done in this matter!

But there are other reasons to rejoice!

We have now made arrangements with Hofstra University, Long Island, New York, where the Sixth International LCJE Conference will be held from 12 to 17 August, 1999. We do hope that agency as well as individual members will already now reserve the days for this conference - and make it known. This is the first time in history that an LCJE International Conference will be held in the USA.

The program for the conference will be published and mailed with the November Bulletin later this year. In subsequent issues of the Bulletin we shall update information about LCJE New York '99.

Kai Kjær-Hansen

Impressions and Reflections: The LCJE North American Meeting, 1998

By Darla Schmidt, The Apple of His Eye

I was asked by the International Coordinator to share my thoughts on the North American LCJE meeting recently held in San Diego, March of 1998. I have only attended two conferences and unsure of the usual style of a "response article", so I offer you my own.

Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism ... what do these four segments say about what our conferences are or should be? I'd like to explore possible answers to that question.

Lausanne - the roots of a specialized group; *Consultation* - a time for discussion; *Jewish* - an ethnic identity; *Evangelism* - taking out/sharing the message of Jesus' Gospel.

Lausanne brings to mind that there must be a history to this gathering, a foundational place or group, but I missed hearing that explanation when we gathered. From the bits and pieces I've gathered when I inquired (I am not the inhibited type), it may be a good idea to have a small group introduction for new attendees to be taught the history and movement of this organization and its "mother" group. Maybe this would give participation and membership more depth of meaning.

Consultation for me,



happened more during the meal times than in the plenary sessions. The papers being presented brought out some thought-provoking ideas, some new insights which would have been good fodder for a small group discussion (especially if we had received the papers a month in advance). The myriad of topics which could grace our platter could also pile high our platter if we allowed that to happen. Possibly it might benefit the gathering to cut back on papers given and insert a time for small group discussions after a couple minutes of questions to the paper's presenter.

If such a group discussion took place, think how many more opinions would be expressed and explored! (It would be fun to have colored/numbered name tags designating groups so to mix ministry staff/spouses/friends

to acquaint us with new faces.)

Also, as I inquired as to how the LCJE came to existence, several mentioned it was out of need and desire to acquaint with and exchange ideas/experience with others in this specialized area of Messianic ministry, uphold and encourage one another and pray together. I think that would be a significant purpose to emphasize again by building two significant time frames into the schedule for schmoozing; we in ministry often pack our schedules so full we don't shabbat and share as we could -- until after sessions when it gets late.

Jewish ... how I love being a "Ruth amongst His people", and I think more Christians would enjoy/benefit from being with us and learning a little about LCJE. Likewise, LCJE would certainly benefit from the presence of brethren who would be praying for us. Perhaps the first or second evening could be a "wine and cheese nosh" (with optional beverage, of course!), invitations going to area pastors/church mission boards. A member from our illustrious body could take 20 minutes and share why we know Jewish mission work to be vital in a church. This

could be a way for area ministries to connect with those pastors and possibly burden their hearts and those of their flock for Israel's salvation; and pastors could become aware of many resources available to minister to Jewish seekers.

Evangelism LET'S DO SOME!! I realize this conference may be seen by some as a time for a professional re-charging, an oasis in busy schedules, but does evangelism ever cease? Remember the recounting of the unsaved Jewish woman who came to the praise and worship gathering Tuesday evening? She came because of a prompting by Rev. Don Peymann, a first time attendee and brand-spanking new missionary (12/97) with *Apple of His*

Eye, St. Louis. They conversed at the desk and he invited her to come up and see what Jewish missionaries "looked like" since she challenged him that there was no such 'animal'. We also got the name and address of a young Armenian unbeliever while in La Jolla. The mo'edi God presents are exhilarating. What an opportunity to share this with one another in one two-hour spot of the schedule. We could go out with pamphlets or surveys and DO what we are about- and then rejoice with the angels and each other in seeing what God will do. We could even invite along those area pastors and set a strong, equipping example of how they could do this, too.

As you might have guessed, I do not do well to

just come together and sit. I truly did enjoy the variety of topics and updates; I think we could also benefit from a variety of activities.

I'm not sure this gives much feedback as was requested, although within the suggestions, I am relating that I think there could be more to the time we share through intentional interaction and action. And, yes, since it is in St. Louis next year I would be excited and open to assisting in implementing several activities if they strike a chord with the LCJE body. Please take time to think about and respond to the board if any of this "gets your heart pounding" -- or respond personally to me if I'm all washed up! DarlaSchmidt/email - inyshua7@aol.com

March 16, 1997, entitled "Some of Their Best Friends are Jews," features Jim Sibley and O.S. Hawkins, Pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas. Neither are put in a positive light. Abraham Foxman, National Director of the Anti-Defamation League, is quoted as saying, "Christians have been trying to make us disappear as Jews for 2000 years. Now they're trying a different method, which is for them to tell us that you can believe in Jesus and still be Jewish. It's baloney, of course."

I've included several clippings on this issue, one by Deborah Caldwell from the *Dallas Morning News*, and a series of articles on the *Southern Baptist* offer for dialogue with the Anti-Defamation League and the American Jewish Committee. The dialogue proposed would have involved the inclusion of Jewish Believers which was categorically rejected by Foxman and Klinicki. "We categorically reject the concept of 'Jewish Christians,' nor do we accept the idea that such converts are somehow 'completed' or 'fulfilled' Jews," wrote the National Director of the Anti-Defamation League Abraham Foxman and the Executive Director of the American Jewish Committee, David Harris, in a February 18 letter to the Southern Baptist Mission Board.

Another series of articles were generated when Fuller Theological Seminary in

conjunction with the American Jewish Committee sponsored a conference on dialogue and pluralism. Deborah Nussbaum Cohen of the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* attended and wrote several pieces, including one for the *Jewish Bulletin* on August 22, 1997 in which she quotes James Rudin of the American Jewish Committee as referring to Mouw as a "religious pilgrim whose search is not yet over." Mouw then wrote an editorial in the August 11th edition of *Christianity Today* which is included in which he says, "Let's be clear about this: evangelism is a mandate."

Other clippings in the area of dialogue include one from the *Jewish World* in Chicago which profiles Yechiel Eckstein, founder of the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews and his Wings of Eagles organization. The article says, "Eckstein is adamant that he will not cooperate with any evangelicals who are intent on converting Jews--or with any radical fringe groups. He is primarily referring to messianic cults, or Jews for Jesus, who seek out Jews for conversion." Eckstein ends the five-page article by saying, "Being secure in your faith gives you the comfort level to be able to work with others of a different faith who share a lot of your views; and when you don't share the same views, you just disagree," he said.

2. Messianic Congregations

A substantial number of articles came out this year profiling particular Messianic congregations and members. Marty Waldman and Baruch Ha Shem in North Dallas are featured in a May 10, 1997 article in the *Dallas Morning News*. Waldman's testimony is given in length as is Marty Cohen's who teaches at the congregation. Also quoted in the article is Joel Chernoff. In the article it's reported, "For 30 years most Messianic Jews have kept a low profile. But in the past year, Mr. Chernoff has made contact with American Jewish organizations and with government officials in Israel and the United States. His group is planting congregations, fostering a youth program and sponsoring conferences. 'We're just starting to lovingly, humbly insist we are part of the Jewish community,' he said."

There was also a media flurry in the Dallas area after the shooting at Baruch Ha Shem Messianic Congregation. The Anti-Defamation League criticized the congregation saying that they, "used a horrific situation to portray themselves as a legitimate part of the community."

Beth Israel Congregation in Garfield, New Jersey is featured in *Charisma* magazine's December 1997 issue, and is billed as "the largest Messianic Jewish congregation in the world."

Media Update

By Susan Perlman, Jews for Jesus, San Francisco

This media report covers the time period of March 1997 through February 1998. Between these dates over 800 English language newspaper articles were published and approximately 175 radio interviews were conducted as well as dozens of news programs and cable television talk shows on topics related to Jewish evangelism.

This year I've chosen to concentrate on the following



categories: dialogue, the Orthodox controversy, opposition in Israel, opposition everywhere else, Messianic Congregations, think pieces and potpourri.

1. Dialogue

We've continued to have a flurry of articles and interviews stemming out of the Southern Baptist resolution from June 1996. A three-page article in the *New York Times Magazine*

Jonathan Cahn is quoted extensively.

Locally, Rabbi Murray Silberling was featured in several articles in the press when his congregation, Beth Emunah moved to Agoura Hills. An article in the *L.A. Times*, "Expert on Cults Says New Temple Cloaks its Beliefs," quotes Silberling as saying, "We are very up front about who we are. We are not being deceptive. This is an alternative for Jewish people who are not affiliated - people who might not have the joy they want in their Judaism." He went on to say, "In the past, some of the Christian missionary groups used cult tactics to pull Jews in and try to convert. But that's not who we are."

Mark Greenberg, congregation leader of Melech Yisrael is featured in an in the *Herald American* in Syracuse, New York. Greenberg's testimony is given in the article and of course there are quotes from local rabbis and opposition to his congregation. There is a full-page photo as part of this article of two teen-aged girls that are part of the fellowship saying a prayer their bat mitzvahs, and I think that really speaks volumes.

Finally, I'm including a clipping from the *Star Tribune* in Minneapolis which features Ed Rothman in an article "Combining religions stirs soul-searching." The subhead is, "Although syncretism - or mixing of

religious traditions - isn't new, a movement by evangelical Christians who call themselves Messianic Jews is testing the limits of how much mainstream religions will tolerate." The article says, "Impetus for this week's gathering in St. Paul was Shavuot ... The gathering opened with a procession of 50 dancers in colorful robes. Several times during the service, worshipers erupted in ear-splitting cries of 'Alleluia' and 'Praise Yeshua.' Many danced in the aisles, waving colorful flags or shaking tambourines trimmed with streamers. Jewish symbols such as the Star of David visible around the room, but no Christian crosses were displayed." Sid Roth was featured as one of the speakers. He said, "We are going to see red-hot Jewish evangelism."

3. Opposition Articles/Diaspora

We've had a goodly number of anti-our movement articles in this past year. An interesting article in the *Jewish Post & Opinion* December 31, 1997, which put forth the rumor that Jews for Jesus, "are now sending or planning to send some of their own who were born to a Jewish parent (and thus qualify for admission) to Hebrew Union College Jewish Institute of Religion so that they may be ordained as Reform Rabbis. Then, if Israel recognizes a non-Orthodox brands,

Reform rabbis who style themselves "Jews for Jesus" will claim that they, too, now have rights in Israel."

An article in the May 16th *Forward* entitled "Movement Bids to Counter Messianics," profiles a new handbook entitled, "Countering Hebrew-Christianity," produced by the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs, part of the conservative movement. The handbook includes statements like, "Hebrew Christians, also known as 'Messianic Jews' are the footsoldiers in a rapidly growing movement - funded largely by evangelical Christians - that dresses up Christian worship in Jewish symbols and traditions in an effort to win new converts."

Jews for Judaism is quoted in the Canadian *Jewish News* with regard to its objection to the City of David Messianic Synagogue in the Thornhill area. Julia Ciss, "notes that the new Jews for Judaism location is the first in the world to be situated right next door to the adversary." "City of David is just the tip of the messianic Jewish iceberg, he added. According to Ciss, there are several other similar groups within a square-mile radius, including Chosen People Ministries, the International Messianic Jewish (Hebrew-Christian) Alliance of Canada, New Covenant House and two groups geared to Russian-Jewish emigres in the Bathurst-Finch area. As well, Jews for Jesus

continues operations operation on Mt. Pleasant Road, while Congregation Melech Yisrael on Ranee Road is active and even has a day school. In all, Jews for Judaism estimates that there are some 50 organizations in southern Ontario which are actively proselytizing Jews."

I've enclosed several articles on the City of David controversy, including one in the *Globe and Mail* of September 12th in which Jeffrey Forman is quoted extensively. The writer of the article says, "The debate between Mr. Forman and the Jewish community is not a civilized dialogue between two different philosophies but a fierce family feud. Mr Forman, a slight, soft-spoken man, was born and raised Jew. As a teenager, like many of his generation, he had a bar mitzvah and went to Israel. By the time he was in his early 20s, his family had joined Beth Yeshua in Philadelphia, one of the largest messianic synagogues in the United States." Forman comes across very well in this article and in light of the kind of attack he's been under, it speaks well to the movement.

Printed in an article entitled, "The Missionary Trap," which speaks to the issue of young Jews being vulnerable, particularly those on campus and how counter-missionaries like Mark Powers and Phillip Abramowitz can help you to

be aware. The Jewish Veterans are also in a scare tactic-type article entitled, "Saving Our Young People from Missionaries," dealt with our large numbers and budgets. You can all take a look and see what your budget in 1994 was according to Martin Warmbrand of the Jewish Veterans.

A very interesting article in the *Washington Jewish Week*, June 5, 1997 centered on the exhibition of Hebrew Christian artists at the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia and how they were "exposed" because they allowed these messianic artists and they ended up having to put a disclaimer by their work saying, "these views do not reflect the philosophy of the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia."

Again, opposition with the *Jewish Week*, July 4 article on the concert in Bensonhurst Park in which the believers were accused of luring people into the festival. The interview focuses on a Russian Jewish concert by Beth El which was advertised to people as free Jewish Music Festival concert. The concert was sponsored by Beth El messianic congregation. Another anti-article in the *Bay News* July 21, 1997, brings up the Beth El concert again and profiles Hope of Israel and Klaudia Zhelezny. Phillip Abramowitz is also quoted extensively.

And no opposition section would be complete without mentioning Toviah Singer and his set-up as Mitch Goldman in a Jews for Jesus T-shirt and his unmasking of himself as the rabbi afterwards. "Singer answers the question, 'so how do Jews for Jesus make inroads among people?' He points that it begins with a "lay gentile" evangelical initiating the discussion. And then he says, "What the Jewish target does not know is that this lay evangelical has been taught to hook him without setting off alarms." The article goes on to say that, "Singer likens the program he does to an inoculation that allows the students to recognize that a foreign body is trying to invade their belief system. Once students recognize that a sales pitch has begun, he suggests that they disengage. For the most part, he reminds listeners, you're up against people who are better prepared than you. They have been trained to respond to each of your objections, it's generally wiser just to say, 'No thanks.'"

Rabbi James Rudin in an April 18th article speaks to the issue of messianics appropriating Passover symbols. And in the *Detroit Jewish News* of April 25th, an article entitled, "Christian Missionaries and Anti-Missionaries," talks about how "a David and Goliath battle is going on between a number of Jewish Anti-

missionary groups and individuals and the evangelical Christian missionaries.

An ad for Jews for Judaism that I'm enclosing reads as follows, "Cults, comets and UFO's make headlines, but they are only a small part of the serious problem confronting the Jewish community. Over 250,000 Jews have already been lost to deceptive Christian missionary groups. Jews for Judaism is fighting back. The only international counter-missionary organization with highly acclaimed counseling and educational programs that work. Interested in an exciting program? Our dynamic, informative and entertaining speakers will enlighten your students and congregations." Following are listed their Jews for Judaism offices and their web page and say, "Please join us. Become a partner in this important work. Mail your tax deductible contribution to their Beverly Hills address."

4. Orthodox Controversy

A fourth category worth commenting on involves the controversy over the declaration from the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the U.S. and Canada under the leadership of Rabbi David Hollander who said that Reform and Conservative Jews do not practice Judaism. I've included the *Los Angeles Times* article of March 22, the *New York*

Times article of March 24 and a selection of editorials from Jewish newspapers on the subject, including one from the *Jewish Bulletin of Northern California* with the title "Presto, now you are no longer Jewish." I'd also like you to take a moment now and listen to a video clip from CNN when this whole issue came up.

This controversy provided a wonderful opportunity for a full page ad in the *New York Times* by Jews for Jesus entitled, "A word of advice to 80 to 90 percent of American Jews from Jews for Jesus." It really clicked as evidenced by the article in *Forward* of April 18 which begins with the statement, "Reform and Conservative Jews who are still smarting from the recent rebuke of Orthodox rabbis might like to know: Jews for Jesus feels your pain," and significant parts of the ad are then quoted.

An even more pointed editorial in the *Jerusalem Post International Edition* of January 17, 1998, by Jonathan Rosenblum entitled "Why stop at Reform?" addressed the *New York Times* ad. Jonathan Rosenblum points out the inconsistency of how the Messianic Jewish community is treated. He says, "The issues of legitimacy lies at the heart of the pluralism debate in Israel today. If the state puts its imprimatur on Reform conversions, why not on those of Messianic Jews, who outnumber Reform Jews in Israel today? If the

Supreme Court requires the Western Wall to be open only to "egalitarian" minyanim, why not the prayer services of the Jews for Jesus?" He ends the article by saying, "If neither history nor Halacha are any longer a guide to legitimacy, then history and Halacha cannot be used to deny equal rights to Jews for Jesus. Their ad said it all."

5. Pro-Movement

A brief section on articles of a positive nature on our movement included a feature in *Charisma* magazine's April 1997 issue six pages long entitled "Have You Hugged a (Messianic) Jew Lately?" written by Jonathan Bernis of Hear O Israel.

There was also a positive article in the *Washington Post*, October 21 entitled "Faith and Conviction" which profiled Jay Sekulow. The subhead reads, "A 'Messianic Jew' Raises the Banner for Christian Liberties." A caption under the cover photo reads "Jay Sekulow has won many court victories for religious causes, 'People say I'm rude and aggressive,' he observes. 'The Supreme Court was used to Christian lawyers being meek and mild and manageable. I'm a reasonable fanatic.'"

There is also an excellent article in the July 1997 edition of *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* by Tuvya Zaretsky on "Target evangelism: Ready, aim, witness!" and is a case for

focused ministry to the Jews that is well argued.

Another pro article that just came out on February 20, 1998 in the *Daily Telegraph* of England by Nick Howard, son of the former Home Secretary in Britain entitled "I believe in Jesus—not Hitler." Howard, a Jewish Christian student at Oxford, was part of a debate at Oxford University and had been accused of "spiritual Nazism" by one of the Oxford rabbis. He presents the case for Jesus' Messiahship. He is quoted as saying "If we are not prepared to face up to claims that are either wrong or right, and to try to persuade others of our views, how can we expect to stand up to any future Nazis? On what basis could we argue against their claims? We must contend for the things we believe to be true, with humility and respect, if we are to guard against the future domination of men like Hitler. This is not "spiritual Nazism" but its opposite: love for our fellow human beings." Howard has been interviewed in all the major British newspapers as well as the *Jewish Chronicle* of London. This is an ongoing story.

Another article that appeared in March 1997 in the *Washington Post*, "Looking at Christian Evangelism From Both Sides" put the movement in a positive light in an interview with David Brickner. Brickner is quoted

as saying, "Evangelism is confrontational by definition, and he has 'no apologies' for his passionate approach to witnessing for Jesus, whether he is passing out brochures on city streets or praying with people. 'We don't want to be offensive in our manner but forthright,' he said. 'That's something we won't back off of.'" The article is positive in as much as it contrasts Amy Schwartzman, a Reform rabbi in the area, as well as Shabbir Mansuri, a Muslim cleric, both of whom speak to the issue of pluralism.

6. Opposition Articles - Israel

The *Philadelphia Inquirer* of December 26, ran an article which has been reprinted in a few other newspapers entitled "As Messianic faith grows in Israel, so does the opposition." It features Mira Hudesman, a Messianic Jew in Israel and who is a member of Baruch Maoz's congregation in Rishon. Also interviewed was a Palestinian believer and a couple who are Israeli-born that came to know the Lord in North Carolina.

Articles regarding the Anti-Missionary legislation abound. The May 19th *Christianity Today* article by Sean Osborne entitled "Christians Protest Proposed 'Anti-missionary' Legislation" and the one in *Charisma* in February of 1998 titled "Messianic Jews Fight Proposed Law in Israel." are in your packet.

The *Jewish Week* in New York did a thought piece entitled "Missionizing to Jews in Israel," posing the question "Does the Jewish state have the right to curb missionary activity aimed at converting its Jewish citizens to Christianity?" In this article, according to Yad l'Achim, 24,000 Israeli Jews have converted to Christianity in the last 20 years.

An article in London's *Jewish Chronicle* entitled "Israeli envoy slams anti-missionary Bill" shows that the Israeli ambassador Moshe Raviv has attacked the bill. He is quoted as saying, "We seem to have a special talent for unnecessarily provoking anti-Semitism." The article ends with Mr. Raviv saying, "This is a private member's Bill which the government doesn't back," but added: "We have enough real problems without hurting people's feelings."

The March 1998 issue of *Charisma* magazine has an editorial by Stephen Strang entitled "A Crisis in Israel" in which he very forcefully speaks to the issue of the anti-missionary law, gives addresses and faxes for people to write to show support including the Messianic Action Committee.

My favorite article on what is happening in Israel these days appeared in the January 22, 1998 issue of the *Jerusalem Report* by Yossi Halevi. It's entitled "The Missionary" and he profiles a Puerto Rican from

New York named David Ortiz who ministers to Muslims on the West Bank. It says of Ortiz that he is married to a Messianic Jew, became an Israeli citizen and hands out Bibles in Arabic to Palestinians.

I quote, "Ortiz learned Yiddish working for two Holocaust survivors, Moish and Harry, in their clothing store on the Lower East Side. 'They treated me like a son. They taught me Talmud and Rashi. When I became a [born-again] Christian, Moish said to me, 'What are you doing, Duvid, getting mixed up in this goyishe business?'"

"In the eight years he's been preaching to Palestinians, Ortiz has managed to attract some 60 converts. 'The first question they ask is, 'Can I have more than one wife?' I say to them, 'You want more than one mother-in-law?' That ends it."

It's really an encouraging piece worth reading.

7. Thought Pieces

A final category is that of interesting thought pieces. Debra Nussbaum Cohen did a JTA release on The Bible Code by Michael Drosnin in which she has some interesting quotes from people like Rabbi David Wolpe who teaches modern Jewish thought at JPS. He says, "To pretend that God gave this evidence of faith and was waiting until we had pentium chips to uncover it, seems to me to be both

simple minded and wrong." He also quotes Elyahu Rips who was part of the Israeli team that formulated ELS process. He distances himself from Drosnin in several of the quotes.

Another article of interest in the EL Paso *Times*, April 18, 1997, "In Search of the Messiah - Lubavitch sect believes late spiritual leader may have been the One," begins with the statement, "Rabbi Yisrael Greenberg will spend today the same way he has done this day for the past two years—at the grave of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson in New York." The article speaks to the issue of how many of his followers still are hoping that he is, indeed, the messiah.

A more recent article of February 6 in the *Forward* in New York, entitled "Lubavitchers Prepare to Answer Charge of Idolatry," cites a article that appeared in the Israeli daily, "Ha'aretz," in which David Berger charges that many mainstream Lubavitchers are worshipping Schneerson as God. In the article entitled, "On False Messianism, Idolatry and Lubavitch," Berger writes that Jews must avoid contributing to institutions teaching idolatry on pain of death, etc. Berger characterizes that the deification of the rebbe as being "similar to a process that occurred in early Christianity and 17th century Sabbateanism. In both previous messianic movements that continued to

believe in a messiah after his death, the belief in his divinity developed, and this is now happening again."

Berger also says that orthodox authorities are "loathe to move against this idolatrous faction because the existence of the evident observance of the Torah makes it difficult for many observers to fully believe what is happening."

Another thought piece worth looking at by Jonathan Rosenblum in the January edition of the *Jerusalem Post* is entitled, "What if God really exists?" Rosenblum who is Orthodox takes some shots at the secular Jews in his midst in Israel and says, "What if God really exists? What if He controls and directs the world and what if as absurd as it may seem, He really cares about whether Jews live according to the commands set forth in the Torah. Wouldn't it be a good idea to have God on our side? We do not have any answer for nuclear warheads aimed at us from Iraq or Iran, but He might. And surely all will agree that if He exists, He might be a trifle displeased with his Chosen People. We haven't exactly been holding up our part of the bargain, etc."

USA *Today*, January 29, 1998 also has an excellent article entitled, "Jews can't decide who's a Jew." The article deals with the difficulty of putting different observances on the list of what makes a person Jewish or not and to a degree of

anguish and perplexity of American Jews in sustaining the sense of Jewish community. Included in this article are some charts on how Israeli Jews define themselves, where Jews in America live, how American Jews define themselves, and world Jewish populations. According to the 1997 annual survey of American Jewish opinion, American Jews define themselves: Orthodox, 9 percent; Conservative, 31 percent; Reform, 32 percent; Reconstructionist, 1 percent; and secular, 26 percent.

Another article from the *Forward*, of February 20, entitled, "Luther's Legacy: The Shoah Museum Film," is a transcript of an in-house film that was written on anti-Semitism and according to some had a very anti-Christian bias to it. Elliott Abrams and Michael Horowitz felt that the film obscured an honest discussion of true history of Christian anti-Semitism.

Michael Medved wrote an article entitled, "The Jewish Question," which includes a review of Elliott Abrams' book, "Faith or Fear: How Jews Can Survive

in a Christian America." Abrams quotes Irving Kristol who says that "the danger facing American Jews today is not that Christians want to persecute them, but that Christians want to marry them."

Another significant statement made by Abrams in his book is "today in a moment of historic reversal, Christians are becoming more respectful of Judaism than are Jews of Christianity. In short, the so-called Christian Right inspires terror in much of the Jewish community not because it represents a threat to Judaism, but because it represents a threat to secularism which has become a surrogate faith of too many American Jews."

I thought you might be interested in seeing a bit of a clip from the Charlie Rose show of last July 4th in which Abrams and Dershowitz and several others talk about the state of American Jewry.

Finally, an article in the February 19th edition of the *Jerusalem Report*, "Warning Millenium Ahead" by Gershon Gorenberg. In the article, it says that "belief that 2000

is the end could attract more of the half-sane and insane to Israel than usual." The article is six pages long and includes a web site on the end times and includes quotes from Zola Levitt, Mike Evans, Harold Camping, and David Bar-Illan. The article closes with suggestions for a plan for Israel to prepare for the coming masses of people to Israel. "Don't let anyone in without a round trip ticket and a place to stay and watch hot spots. I'd say to Israeli security, the Mount of Olives might be taken over by squatters waiting for Jesus to return. If in their disappointment, they dig in, you have an impossible situation."

The article goes on to say that in 2000, there will be more people, more intensity and more expectations. "When the Pope gets people to Rome, they expect to go home. Some pilgrims to Israel don't expect to go home. According to one source, the foreign ministry has reported that three congregations in the U.S. are selling their possessions, preparing to come here in 2000."

Papers from LCJE North America, 2-4 March, 1998

* Glaser, Mitch: History of Jewish Missions in Europe * Glaser, Arthur: Current Publications of Significance
* Goldberg, Louis: Another Voice by an Anti-Missionary and a Seeming Evangelical Concurrence * Johnson, Boaz: Rabbinic Intertextuality and the Post-Modern Jew * Kasdan, Barney: Growing a Messianic Congregation * Kjær-Hansen, Kai: LCJE International Update * Kjær-Hansen, Kai: The Jesus Codes Issue * Kolb, Erwin: Ethics for LCJE Members * Periman, Susan: Media Update * Peterson, Galen: Persuasively Communicating the Gospel in Light of the Holocaust * Robinson, Rich: The Torah Codes Issue * Rosen, Moisha: Jewish Ministry Then and Now * Rydelnik, Michael: Was Paul Anti-Semitic?: A Re-examination of 1 Thess 2:14-16 * Skjøtt, Bodil F.: Issues and Trends Among Messianic Believers in Israel Today
The papers can be ordered from Murray Tilles, P.O.Box 49558, Atlanta, GA 30359, USA. e-mail: dsqe77a@prodigy.com

Daslo Foldes and the Alliance of Jewish Believers

By Mitchell L. Glaser, Director of Chosen People Ministries

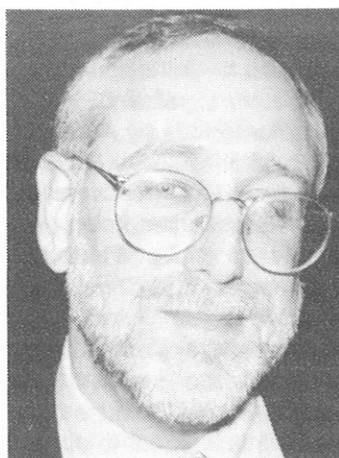
Mitchell L. Glaser is finishing his dissertation on "Jewish Mission In Hungary, Romania and Czechoslovakia". We print an excerpt from it here which he shared with the participants of the LCJE Meeting in San Diego.

Special attention should be given to a movement led by Daslo Foldes of Budapest. In time he was to become the first president of the HCA in Hungary.

Victoria Frame, Foldes' daughter, shared memories of her father in a personal interview (1994):

My father was born in 1875 and came from a religious Jewish background. Already his family was somewhat emancipated because he always said that his father had a haberdashery, somewhat akin to a general store. He spoke very good German, but not Yiddish. Actually, many Hungarians were unable to speak Yiddish and seemed proud of it.

My father went to the Catholic gymnasium, the academic high school, in Bratislava, which was both Hungarian and Slovak and enrolled some Germans. Later, he started to study law in Bratislava and then went to Budapest to finish his



university education.

While he was at the university in Budapest he encountered a group of German Methodist missionaries singing and preaching on a corner in town. Since my father spoke very good German, he stayed and listened to them. They invited him to church a few times and then they gave him a Bible. He was very interested and since he spoke such good German they asked him to translate their messages. He agreed. These missionaries were seeking to start a Hungarian church. It was then that he gained a friend named Mr. Barta. Barta proved to be a Yeshiva student but he soon left the Yeshiva and also became a law student. The two became friends and Barta went with him to the meetings. It took a while before they really decided

that they wanted to be Christians.

My father was baptized in 1922, but he had already been quite involved with the Methodists since 1905 or so, when he started the Christ Believing Jews group.

It should be noted that Foldes represents one of the many thousands of Jews who accepted Christ in 1922. His testimony is one among many Jews who sincerely embraced the message of the gospel.

Foldes continued his relationship with the Methodists. Some controversy arose over Foldes' baptism. Some thought that he did not submit to baptism because he wanted to retain his Jewish identity. This may have delayed his baptism. Actually, the Methodist Church did not have its own legal charter, yet when Foldes was eventually baptized, he still did not change his religious identity with the government. Being a Jew was legally recognized. Even so, as a Methodist he had no status and on his personal documents he remained identified as a Jew. Frame explained this in her 1994 interview:

My father was in the army during the War and was already a member of

the Methodist Church. But the Methodist Church did not have legal status and didn't really exist in Hungary, as the Methodist minister's daughter undertook Lutheran religious instruction. But I went to the Methodist Sunday school. When my father had weekly Christ Believing Jewish groups on Saturday evenings I was supposed to go and so I attended them also.

My father was a lawyer who served all minority Protestant groups at that time: the Baptists, Salvation Army, later the Seventh Day Adventists, even some Jehovah Witnesses. They needed lawyers because they were constantly in trouble. Actually, the Methodists did not have quite the same status as Catholics and Lutherans or even the Reformed and Jewish people. Rabbinic Judaism was a recognized religion. But the Jews appeared to have more status than the Methodists. Even so, though my father was a Methodist, his official government registration identified him as a Jew. Even after he was baptized, he remained legally Jewish (1994).

The IRM also reported on the witness and service of Foldes. It follows:

Foldes, a prominent lawyer of Budapest, is the leader of a spiritual movement in Hungary. Indeed, the whole land is astir and the movement is spreading throughout

Europe. Its members are Jews connected with either synagogues or churches. They accept both Testaments. The only requirement for admission into their Alliance [the movement was affiliated with the International Hebrew Christian Alliance] is a confession of faith in Christ. This is the sole bond that holds them together. They may differ in many things, observe either Saturday or Sunday as the Sabbath, but all unite in personal allegiance to Christ, and possess the sincere purpose to follow him (1930:544).

The MRW understood this movement to be perhaps more identifiably Jewish than it actually was.

Whoever wishes to be known as a Christian Jew acknowledges that he is first and foremost a Christian, while a Christ Believing Jew considers himself first and foremost a Jew (1928:593).

Some of the people in this group of CBJ were members of the Reformed Church. Others were members of other churches. Some were not identified with any church at all. Significantly, this is a situation that one often encounters today: believing Jews who do not feel at home in the synagogue or with secular Jews, and who tend to resist association with gentile churches because of the latter's lack of appreciation of the Jewish roots of the Christian faith.

In actuality this movement eventually became the

Hungarian branch of the newly formed IHCA. Foldes gave strong leadership to the Alliance as well as to many thousands of Jewish believers in Budapest. According to a report at the IMC-CAJ meeting in 1935, Foldes had written a book on the phenomenon of Christ-believing Jewry. His object was to make Christianity attractive to Jews (1935:2).

In our interview with Victoria Frame, we learned of the beginnings of the HCA in Hungary:

This Christ-Believing Jewish group was started because a Norwegian missionary student, Gisle Johnson, heard about the International Hebrew Christian Alliance conference in Hamburg. He had received a letter asking if he knew anybody who might be interested in it. Then he talked to my father and suggested that in Hungary a branch of this Alliance be formed (1994).

Frame went on to elaborate on the initial meetings of CBJ in Hungary.

We moved to the Methodist headquarters when I was 11 years old. We had an apartment and my father's office in that building. The meetings of this group were held in the Grand Hall. This was about 1930. Certainly from that time onward we always seemed to be having these meetings – maybe even before. On occasion we had meetings Saturday evenings in the Methodist Church in

Budapest. Sometimes ten, sometimes twenty or twenty-five took part. Attendance was not always the same, because believing Jews in the countryside occasionally came too. My father usually did the preaching.

This wasn't such a large group. Actually, I don't think that their services were particularly Jewish, but those who attended were Jews. How should I say, it was understood these were Christ believing Jews. This was the only group that insisted they were Jewish and had not become gentile Christians. You see, the other groups may not have publicized that they were Jews. Some would keep this quiet. On the other hand, there were those who would not keep this quiet. Even so, they did not actively confess their identity: "Well yes, we are Jewish." They did not hand out tracts on the streets of Budapest, neither did they preach in the open air. But they faithfully invited people to join them at their meetings.

They celebrated the Jewish holidays informally. This does not mean that they convened traditional Rosh Hashanah celebrations. But if a holiday came on the Sabbath it was preached about. Maybe some of them would fast and would even attend the local synagogue on such occasions. Actually, I don't remember my father going to the synagogue. He may

have fasted on Yom Kippur (1994).

Foldes described the ministry of the CBJ in the January, 1932 edition of the *Hebrew Christian*, the organ of the IHCA:

For the last five years we have had meetings every week; gradually our circle has widened and now there are always forty to fifty people at our meetings and on special occasions from eighty to one hundred. Jews come to our meetings who have never before had an opportunity at becoming acquainted with the truths of the gospel, and some come, though not belonging to any congregation, and take an interest in Christianity. Some come out of curiosity but when they learn that sincere Christian Jews are preaching the gospel with no hope of material profit; when they see men of different vocations and employment endeavoring to explain the Scriptures and the real meaning of the Christian gospel to them, their interest is aroused and they are generally favorably impressed (1932:21).

There was some continued discussion with the CBJ about baptism. Some were suggesting that baptism should not be accepted as it would somehow impair their testimony. This is the opposite problem, and one that the Jewish community does not discuss. Here we have a group who were so concerned about maintaining

their Jewish identity that they refused or delayed baptism.

Isaac Levison walked into a hornet's nest of controversy when he visited Budapest in 1931. He reflected on the following encounters regarding the issue of Jewish believers receiving baptism. It should be noted that the "Christ Believing Jews" name was perhaps used generically as well as in reference to the fellowship led by Foldes.

Levison wrote,

There are a large number of Christ Believing Jews who believe in the fundamental principles of Christianity, but do not want to join a Gentile Christian church, because they say there may be the appearance of Christianity in those churches, but not Christ. I have heard it said that these Christ Believing Jews number from fifteen to fifty thousand and various Jews have had their attitude and faith been put before me by a number of both Hebrew and Gentile Christians. It was therefore both a privilege and a great joy for me to come into contact with some of these people during my journey across Europe. My heart was filled to overflowing with praises to God for the wonderful testimonies to which I listened.

He continued,

In one capital that I visited, some of our brethren took me to task and desired me to set myself up as a judge. They maintained that because these Christ

Believing Jews were not members of churches, therefore they could not be counted as Christians. But in listening to the statements which they made to me, I felt that none of us dare set ourselves up in judgment, nor are any of us competent to do so, because God alone in Jesus Christ shall judge them.

Space does not permit me to write fully on this question for I could fill up more than one issue of the magazine. Let one or two examples therefore suffice. A., who has a wife and a family and is a dentist by profession, told me that he works from morning till late at night and shares his income with those of his believing brethren who are out of work and starving with their families. When I questioned him about his own belief in Christ, he told me that he believed that the Bible was the word of God from cover to cover, in the virgin birth, life and death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is his own personal savior and redeemer and died that he might be forgiven. He believed that Christ was one with God in soul and mind and sacrifice and love and that apart from Christ for him there is no other God; that he believed in his imminent second coming.

When I questioned him about baptism and why he did not become a member of the church he replied that he had a mother 80 years of

age who had come from a very pious home and who had not had an opportunity of knowing anything about the Lord Jesus Christ and he was afraid that if he were to be baptized, the shock might kill her. Apart from this he would not join the local Christian churches and be baptized because of the anti-Semitic feelings which prevail in the churches on the continent, and also the attitude of the local Christians in wanting him to give up his affection for his Jewish race. He concluded that if there were a Hebrew Christian church in the city, he would willingly join such a body and be baptized (1933:99-100).

This small but vigorous movement was given a realistic appraisal by the IMC-CAJ. It largely corroborated the perspective of Victoria Frame. It is possible that not a few were confused by its unique distinctives, as it tended to be contrasted with the general movement of Jews to Jesus in Hungary. According to one report of the IMC-CAJ:

In Budapest the most interesting meetings were with a local group of Hebrew Christians. This group includes the so-called "Christ Believing" Jews of whom there are far fewer than one was led to believe on the basis of the publicity given them and the movement some time ago. They are Jews who accept Christ but do not favor

Christian baptism. As yet, they constitute a mere handful of none too influential Jews. Foldes, the leader of the group, has recently been baptized in the local Methodist church.

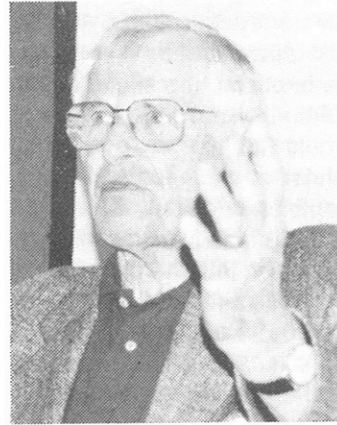
The Christ Believing Jews were well known, but were in fact only one group among many Jewish believers who were functioning in Hungary. They were unique because of their desire to maintain a strong Jewish testimony, albeit that testimony was not especially religious or ritually based. Their movement was well publicized, perhaps because of the leadership of Foldes, or their unique stand on baptism. It does seem though that there were many Jewish Christian groups, representing varied denominational and theological perspectives (1931).

Two Commentaries on Romans

By Arthur F. Glasser, Fuller Theological Seminary

In his paper "Current Publications of Significance" delivered at the LCJE Meeting in San Diego Professor Glasser paid particular attention to two commentaries on the Book of Romans.

But now I must call your attention to two significant, truly academic books by Messianic Jews. Both focus on the Apostle Paul's Letter to the Romans. Both are of great potential significance to the Messianic Jewish Movement, since both in no uncertain terms promote the thesis that when Jewish people respond to the claims of Yeshua, they do not cease to be Jews. Both are concerned to promote the Jewish roots and spiritual heritage of the Christian movement launched by Messiah Yeshua. When we reflect on the unique witness that Messianic congregations bear in the midst of Jewry and largely Gentile churches in our day, we find that there is a growing sense of missiological and even eschatological significance to this witness. These two books support this significance. But I must add that they radically differ when it comes to the insights they share with us from the Book of Romans. And these insights are not antithetical but supplementary.



COMMENTARY TO THE BOOK OF ROMANS -- This book has yet to reach bookstores, and is in the process of final preparation by the Lederer Foundation. It is a commentary on the actual text of Romans, verse by verse, and is about 450 pages in length. It was produced by Joseph Shulam and his Research Assistant, Hilary LeCornu. Both of them are currently identified with the Netivyah Bible Instruction Ministry in Jerusalem. The driving purpose behind their massive work is to indicate how Paul was influenced by and reflected the Jewish thought of the Second Temple period. It also reveals the manner in which the authors feel that Jewish thought shaped his apostleship to the gentiles. Romans is shown to be a distinctly Jewish book, intimately related to the Tanakh and yet at the same

time integrated to the redemptive realities that Yeshua the Messiah accomplished for Israel and the nations throughout his First Advent.

This is not a volume that one reads by itself, from cover to cover. Rather, it comes into its own when one is in one's study with several other key volumes in easy access on one's desk. They would include: 1)- primary language texts of Romans, whether in English or German or Modern Hebrew; 2)- a concordance of the Hebrew and Greek words of the Bible; 3)- several scholarly commentaries on Romans; and finally 4)- some solid texts that reflect in depth on Judaism and the Middle East in the First Century. Of course, if one wants to be serious in his/her renewed study of Romans as illumined by these two Israelis with the passages they have selected from all segments of Second Temple literature, then one must be well prepared. But in what way? Effort must be put forward to be reasonably familiar with the growing debate today concerning Paul. You know the present concern of some scholars -- that the Apostle Paul needs to be rescued from his "Gentile Captivity" and be divested of the clothing gentile theologians have made him wear ever

since the 16th century Protestant Reformation. This old clothing allegedly made him look as though he regarded the Tanakh as legalistic and hence largely irrelevant to the followers of Yeshua, whether they be Jews or Gentiles. His allegedly gentilized mindset must be replaced so that it conforms to what shaped his understanding of the Tanakh in those early days when the Messianic Movement was getting underway among Jews and Gentiles, and centered in Yeshua with His high regard for the Tanakh (Acts 2 ff). Then close the door of your study, but not before you have parked outside all that you have previously known about the meaning of the text of Romans. This will enable you to open your mind to the Jewish thought that Shulam and LeCornu contend actually shaped Paul's mind and is particularly reflected in his letter to the Romans. It is then that this Shulam/LeCornu production of 450 pages may really come into its own and reveals its worth. After all, theirs is primarily a *reference text* to which one turns when curious to understand how Jewish thinkers long ago expressed themselves on matters somewhat similar to the themes with which Paul was grappling in his most important book. What will particularly please you will be the ways in which Jewish people in their B.C. context and prior to Paul

occasionally expressed their faith in Yahweh and their confidence in His salvation without his personal encounter with Yeshua. As I read parts of their material, I felt myself drawn to exclaim: "Well, I've often thought of the existence of a believing Remnant within Jewry during the Intertestamental Period, but what I am reading right now must have been written by one of that Remnant, although in his/her B.C. situation. Yes indeed, this is nothing less than evidence of spiritual continuity from the B.C. world to the present A.D. situation in which I find myself today." Inevitably, I encountered matters that made me wish the authors had been more explicit. For instance, when the great statement of Habakkuk 2:4 that "the just shall live by faith" is under consideration in Romans 1:17, they focused on the alternative meaning of "faithfulness" for the Greek (p.23,24) but later, while discussing Romans 10:9,10, they stated that "inheriting life" is contingent the "inner attitude" (faith) and on the "external act" (faithfulness). See p. 294, 295. This has validity, but the cruciality of "salvation by faith, apart from works" needs to be more vividly emphasized in the light of Paul's treatment of "law" in Romans.

Frankly, I was a bit nervous when I began to study these two Jewish books on Romans. As a missiologist at Fuller I had

long held that Paul was not a "systematic" theologian in the traditional sense, but rather a missionary whose special gift from God was his calling to be a "task" theologian. For instance, when Paul wrote this letter he was burdened about three things: 1)- his forthcoming visit to Jerusalem taking a gift from Greek churches to the poverty-stricken believers in Judea (Would it be accepted as a symbol of Jewish-Gentile oneness in the Body of Christ?); 2)- his desire to overcome the frustrations previously experienced in his efforts to establish contact with Jewish and Gentile believers in Rome (Would they be willing to constitute themselves a world-conscious, mission-minded "Antioch-style" base from which his apostolic band might evangelize the peoples of the western Mediterranean?); and 3)- his expectation that these believers at Rome would themselves become a missionary church (Would they provide him with personnel, funds and prayer support for his mission to Spain?). Most scholars agree that he wrote Romans while a guest of "hospitable Gaius" in Ephesus. Some scholars argue that he must have been on a vacation, free from all distraction, and that this enabled him to write such a lengthy letter. Of course we can't be sure. Our tendency is to relax and take life easy, and not write

any tightly-reasoned theological essays while on our vacations! But in Paul's case and with his concerns previously mentioned, he now found no alternative but to begin to select certain themes that he felt would motivate the believers in Rome to "test and approve" what would be God's "good, pleasing and perfect will" for them in response to the possibilities that Paul was presenting to them.

What were these motivational themes? First: *the wrath of God* against sin – all people are exposed to it and are helpless to remedy their personal guilt (1:18 – 3:20); Second: the *grace of God* to sinners – Yeshua took to his innocence all their guilt and shame and suffered vicariously on their behalf, but God's forgiveness is only secured through personal repentance and faith (3:21 – 8:39); Third: the *redemptive plan for Israel* has been and shall be his key to the blessing of the nations (9 – 11); and Fourth: the specific details of the *will of God* for these believers in Rome (12:1 – 15:13). Thus a missiological approach to Romans. The "Good News" must be proclaimed worldwide (10:14,15). The opening verses (1:1–17) are introductory and we tended to follow Theodor Zahn's observation that Paul hinted but did not disclose fully why he wanted to visit the believers in Rome. Admittedly, we were puzzled that Paul wanted to "preach

the gospel" to people in Rome whose witness to Yeshua he had just praised to the skies. The closing verses referred to Paul's apostolic service (15:14–22), his travel plans (15:23–33), his commendations & greetings (16:1–16) and his warnings, messages & doxology (16:17–27). These varied matters were all of critical relevance to the believers in Rome and to Paul's expectation of future partnership with them in his mission to Spain.

But this Shulam/LeCornu *reference-commentary* produced in the context of Israel today has a different agenda. Its authors pointedly state at the outset: "It is our intent to indicate how Romans is a specifically Jewish text which reflects the Jewish thought of the Second Temple period." The authors then go on to add: "Historical and other considerations are rarely mentioned" and "the body of the commentary is taken up with textual illustrations of Paul's thought from similar passages in Jewish literature." Even so, they grant that "Paul's apostleship to the Gentiles is one of the motifs which dominates" his themes, since the religious literature of the Second Temple period is not without concern for the gentile world.

The premises on which this commentary has been developed lead one into a world of Jewish thought that is largely unfamiliar and remote from the typical

believer in Yeshua today, whether Jewish or Gentile. Here are the Apocrypha (Greek Septuagint documents not in the Hebrew Tanakh); the Pseudepigrapha (nine collections including the writings of Philo, Josephus, the Qumran texts and the Aramaic Tanakh); the Midrash (Jewish commentaries on the Tanakh), the "Oral Torah" of Mishna (200 C.E.) followed by the Gemara and the Talmud (c. 500 C.E.). Some of these materials are clearly from the Second Temple period, but the material contained in the "Oral Law" was only codified much later, and would not be considered Second Temple literature. But the authors disagree and state that "both the Written and Oral Torah are inspired and authoritative texts." One wishes that they had discussed further what they meant by this. Of course, they are well aware that when the Temple was destroyed (70 C.E.), the Sadducee party disappeared along with its fierce opposition to this alleged "Second Torah." And they know that the Pharisees dominated the Jewish religious scene in the centuries that followed. It was their sages that reconceptualized the biblical Judaism of the Temple and produced Rabbinic Judaism. But does this mean that the older pre-70 C.E. literature they edited and supplemented with further post-70 C.E. rabbinic literature was

"inspired" and hence "authoritative?" Furthermore, what about the resistance to Yeshua and to Messianic Jewry that one encounters in the Talmud and in some of the other literature used that was C.E. rather than B.C.E.?

THE MYSTERY OF ROMANS --

This brings us to the commentary on Romans by Mark D. Nanos (1996), a Jewish businessman. In many ways his book is the very antithesis of the work of Shulam/LeCornu we have just examined. And yet, its emphases are surprisingly similar. Nanos is likewise a Jewish believer in Yeshua, but is somewhat removed from the Academy although he is amazingly well versed in both the primary and secondary literature of Paul and Rabbinic Judaism. Here is a successful business man whose studies in Judaica and the Holocaust aroused in his mind much anxiety. They caused him to fear that because people have misunderstood the formative texts of the Christian movement, there is every possibility of the Holocaust happening again. This awakened his concern for Christian-Jewish relations, a concern that was greatly heightened when he deliberately refused to part company with the essential tenets and practices of Judaism revealed in Tanakh.

Nanos desires to rescue the Apostle Paul from the

crude judgments passed against him by Jewish leaders. He contends that Paul was no apostate, but rather a faithful, consistent Jew, quite willing to be known as a Pharisee (Phil 3:5), and content as a believer in Yeshua to function within the context of the Judaism of the synagogue. Furthermore, Nanos' book also represents a bold revision of Paul's theology and practice of mission. He particularly concerns himself with the social settings of the communities of faith Paul founded and nurtured. He endorses Paul's resistance to all forms of careless Christian-Jewish "exclusivism." And he is particularly concerned about the relationship between believing Gentiles and non-believing Jews. In this connection Nanos endorses Paul's rejection of the Gentile contention that because of Jewry's persistent NO! to Yeshua, Israel had been replaced as God's people by the new Jewish-Gentile community of faith in Yeshua (Rom 9–11). It is on this latter point that he resonates with that excellent book by R. Kendall Soulen: *THE GOD OF ISRAEL AND CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY* (1996) with its call to overcome "Christian doctrinal supersessionism while maintaining the continuing theological importance of Judaism for Christianity and not sacrificing the christological

claims historically considered essential to Christian identity" (Lindbeck).

Nanos resonates with Paul's distress that the God-fearing, Yeshua-believing gentiles in Rome who had been encouraged to worship with the Jewish people in their synagogues in Rome were prone to disregard the essentially Jewish behaviour expected of them. He denounces this (16:17–20). In his mind these gentile believers must be persuaded to continue to respect Jewish synagogue authority by obeying the Jewish rules of behaviour they embraced when first admitted to its fellowship as "God-fearers" and were allowed to continue even after believing the gospel. They must be thereby reminded of the demands of the "obedience of faith" and of the irrevocable priority of Israel's ultimate restoration. In stating this Paul upheld the Apostolic Council's behaviour rules for Gentile believers (Acts 15:24–29) even to the point of their submitting to the requirement that they also pay the obligatory synagogue taxes (Rom 13:1–7). (Of course, in stating this he completely breaks with the traditional view that this passage refers to the civil authorities of the Romans).

The entire focus of Nanos' 400+ page book is on the Jewish context of Paul's letter. Hence, he begins with a description of diasporal Judaism in Rome

and then makes a general statement: "There is good reason, then, historically, to suggest that Paul's instructions in Romans may have been directed to Christian gentiles who were in need of being 'reminded' boldly of their obligation to 'subordinate' themselves to the 'governing authorities' of the synagogues to which they were attached, including such matters as obedience to the operative *Halakot* for defining proper behaviour for 'righteous gentiles' (i.e., the Apostolic Decree & Noahide Commandments), and the payment of taxes and other Jewish community obligations. That is, Paul and the Christian Jews and gentiles of Rome both understood their community(s) as part of the Jewish community(s) when Paul wrote Romans, with Christian gentiles identified as 'righteous gentiles' who were now worshiping in the midst of Israel in fulfillment of the eschatological ingathering of the nations" (15:5-12, page 75).

I have taken the liberty of sharing this two sentence paragraph to introduce you to Nanos' style. His writing is tightly reasoned and heavy going in the sense that his lengthy sentences follow one another with little relief, page after page. I've read this book twice but am only beginning to get into his thought, perhaps because of his relentless, driving style. One becomes weary with sentence after sentence of

87, then 79 words, as on p.107.. For this reason I doubt whether this book will be widely read. Those in the Academy may be able to carry through to the end, but most of the believers I know will become impatient with this heaviness and will set the book aside unfinished, to their personal impoverishment and possibly to the ultimate impoverishment of the Jewish Messianic movement. The need is for a distillation of Nanos' ideas to be put into a more popular style. Then pastors and ordinary citizens in the Kingdom of God will begin to grapple with his venturesome exegesis. When that takes place they will join with others and ask Nanos questions not unlike the following --

First: You portray the early gentile believers in Yeshua in Rome as worshipping within Jewish synagogues and in need of corrective counsel on the issue of responding to the directives of the Apostolic Council (Acts 15: 23-29). Was this as typical a situation as you affirm? In the synagogues of the eastern Mediterranean where Paul had earlier proclaimed Yeshua, was not the gospel an explosive reality which invariably and early on disrupted the harmony that Jews, proselytes and God-fearers had previously enjoyed together?

Second: Does not the silence of the New Testament on the interaction

that Paul and his apostolic band allegedly had with organized Jewish communities make one question the situation that you seem to imply was widespread? Where, apart from Acts 28:17-28, do we have any evidence of genuine and semi-prolonged dialogue between unbelieving Jews and those who had come into the experience of Yeshua's liberating gospel?

Third: Does not the fact that Paul never mentions synagogues that functioned peacefully, even though their members were divided over the claims of Jesus Christ, mean that the congregations he planted were not only independent of any association with existing synagogues but were Messianic from the moment of their origin?

Nanos' volume probes deeply into the issue of Israel's election, the manner in which the giving of Torah at Sinai sealed both her covenant relation to God and the significance of circumcision all its males must bear. It explores quite extensively the relationship of gentile believers to the election of Israel and seeks insight into the deliberations of the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) that recognized the inclusion of gentile Christians into the election of Israel, yet removed from them the mandates to be circumcised and to bear the "yoke of Torah."

Some of these questions are fundamental to our

understanding of God's purpose for his people in the world today. Let me be explicit -- *First*, the revelation of the Kingdom of God in Scripture respecting the particularity of Israel as well as the universality of the gentile nations. *Second*, the relation between the faith that justifies and the obligation to observe Torah. *Third*, the grace of Yeshua that brings the possibility of personal victory over sin as well as the certainty of eternal salvation even though the sinful nature remains in the hearts of the regenerated.

Paul is personally convinced that God has made room for the gentiles within his redemptive purpose and has appointed him as their Apostle. He is convinced that a biblical understanding of the electing grace of God - for him personally; for Israel his people; and for the gentile nations - contains sustained and defensible answers to these questions.

What comes to one's mind when he/she ponders the title of Nanos' book? What is "the mystery" that Nanos is seeking to explore in Romans? Over the years scholarly commentaries on Romans have expressed varying measures of puzzlement that Paul did not use any term such as "church" or "congregation" or "synagogue" when he wrote: "To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints" (1:7). He then

disclosed his delight over reports of their faith being widely reported and even that they provoked widespread rejoicing and intercession on their behalf. This is frequently contrasted with Luke's account in the Acts that when Paul finally reached Rome, he was greeted by only a small group of brothers, presumably the same ones to whom he had written an earlier letter (28:15). And this is followed by Luke's account of Paul's two successive meetings, one rather official, but the second involving "great numbers" as well as the local leaders of the Jewish community in Rome (28:17-22 & vs. 23-28/29). Are we to infer that he more or less disregarded the first group of brothers who had initially contacted him? Does all this fit into Paul's earlier portrayal of a vigorous and sizeable community of faith in Rome that was a challenge to him and excited believers all around the eastern Mediterranean world (Rom 1:7-11)? Nanos observed: "It is almost as if the gospel had never before been proclaimed in Rome." This raises other questions. Why this departure from Paul's uniform pattern of proclaiming the gospel in the synagogues first (Acts 17:1,2)? What about his proclaimed eagerness "to preach the gospel to you also that are in Rome" (Rom 1:15)? He certainly was not the first witness to Yeshua in

Rome. This was doubtless made by those "visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes" who years before were in Jerusalem to celebrate Passover and who heard Peter speak at the Pentecost gathering before the Temple (Acts 2:10). Or should we attribute these apparent inconsistencies to Paul's unusual situation? He was in Roman custody and awaiting a hearing before Caesar.

Finally, what of Paul's desire to bring to these vigorous believers in Rome a "spiritual gift" so that their faith would be "strengthened" in the "fulness of the blessing of Christ" (1:11-13 & 15:29)? Wasn't he the person who had boasted of his unwillingness to build upon another person's foundation (15:20)? Nanos resolves this whole tangle by reminding us that Paul's missionary intention was to preach the gospel "to the Jew first" and "also to the Greek" (1:16). He encourages us to keep in mind that Paul's apostolic authority as Apostle to the Gentiles demanded that he "adhere to God's two-step pattern that begins with the restoration of Israel in each new location first, before the gospel proclamation can fully incorporate gentiles into the people of God" (1996:243). The situation in Rome was anomalous in that it led to a tragic human aberration that has frequently appeared in salvation history with tragic results. It has tempted

gentile believers to see their new status in Christ as "supplanting the role of Israel," often to the point of riding rough-shod over the biblically informed decisions of, for example, the Apostolic Council (Acts 15:24-29) on matters of ritual purity for believing gentiles. It was for this reason that Paul refused to authenticate the believing community in Rome as an "ecclesia" of God. The church as the temple of God "exists only where the apostle has laid its foundation" (1 Cor 3:10-17; p. 244). We dare not forget that Paul's theology of mission and his personal apostolic mission "from Zion" involved the restoration of "the dispersed of Israel" as well as bringing "light to the nations" (p. 246).

Needless to say, this is an exciting book. One is stimulated by it. But when one reads carefully the Summary with its two Appendices, unresolved

problems arise -- and then the book ends. An issue has come to the fore that cannot be easily resolved. How is one to reconcile Nanos' Paul of Romans with the other Pauline literature? We have learned that Messianic Jews are to continue to be Torah-observant and that believing gentiles are to be Torah-respectful when in their company. But why then did Paul charge Peter with hypocrisy in "the Antioch incident" (Gal 2:11-21)? He referred to this incident in his efforts to explain "his opposition to those seeking to persuade the Galatians to be circumcised and become Jews as a *helpful* obligation concomitant with their faith in Christ" (2:12; 3:1; 4:17; 5:1-12; 6:12,13). After much discussion Nanos speaks of this as a "direct contradiction" and admits that it is "an important anomaly in Pauline theology" (p.346). He also reflects on the edict of Claudius (49 C.E. but

possibly withdrawn in 54 C.E. when Claudius died) in which Jewish people were driven out of Rome. Some have contended that when Paul wrote his letter (57/58 C.E.) the situation in Rome had considerably changed and that the Jews who had returned to the city were neither contentious nor riotous. They were open to the gospel and genuine in their welcome to gentile truth-seekers seeking association in their synagogues. Nanos discusses this issue at length and then abruptly brings his book to an end. But doubts linger. A scholar in England stated that he found the book very stimulating, but was going to spend a whole month checking every text Nanos used before believing even one word of it. Perhaps on this cautionary note we should bring these "random thoughts" to an end. Actually, I fear that I have exceeded the time allotted to me!

admirable reflection of the Creator. For example, liberal Christian theologian Eva Fleischner contends that after Auschwitz, traditional Christian mission is no longer appropriate for Jews.¹ But even for those believers who uphold the proclamation of the gospel as an indispensable component of our faith, there is a tendency to employ methods that simply don't lead to genuine conviction and belief.

This paper is an attempt to identify the specific impact of the Holocaust on the Jewish community, and to delineate relevant features and strategies of communication of the Good News to the Jewish people within this context.

The general nature of the Holocaust

The one term that sums up the concept of a community that is experiencing ongoing effects of a catastrophe is the word *trauma*. The Holocaust is traumatic, in part, due to the *scope* of the genocide—fully one-third of the entire Jewish population worldwide was killed. Few Jewish families in the aftermath of the Holocaust can say they have no relatives who perished at the hands of the Nazis. This trauma also arises from the *nature* of the genocide—it was an destruction based solely on a factor beyond the control of the victims: their heritage. In Nazi Germany, Jews were maliciously labeled in subhuman terms culminating

in mass deaths that were characterized as the "extermination of vermin."

The double blows of widespread devastation and personal humiliation have produced a lasting mark of trauma on Jewish people far and wide; one that remains strong even now many decades later.

The effect of the Holocaust on survivors

Approximately one half-million European Jews were left alive at the end of the war. In broad terms, even though the number of survivors who have become psychiatric patients is limited, the majority of them have been emotionally wounded, and the effects linger throughout their lives. They frequently suffer from depression and "survivor guilt"—they cannot escape the inner pain of being unable to change history.

Stories of broken trust abound among survivors. Acquaintances and co-workers, many of whom identified themselves as Christians, readily assisted the Nazis in sending Jews to the camps. Countless Jewish families were betrayed by Gentile neighbors who were motivated by greed, hatred and "duty."

It is not surprising that the traumatic experiences of survivors have led them to question God and to stop practicing their faith. Unable to reconcile a belief in God with the circumstances of the Holocaust, many of them

have concluded, "God does not exist." Statistically, nearly half of the survivors who were religiously observant before the Holocaust no longer expressed belief in a personal God who is involved in the lives of people.²

The effect of the Holocaust on families of survivors

The impact of the Holocaust is not limited to first generation survivors. Because many families of survivors have been regularly exposed to depression, anxiety, overprotection and distrust, they have adopted many of these traits as well. The world was presented as being dangerous and bent on the destruction of the Jewish people. As a matter of survival, children were often expected to join in their parent's distrust of all Gentiles and most authority figures.

Children also became a way for giving special meaning to the empty lives of the parents. They enabled survivors to replace lost goals and dreams while vindicating past suffering. "My life was over long ago; you are all I now have" are words that typify this perspective. Thus for the children, the expectations have been enormous. As a symbol of prosperity in a new world, they are counted on to succeed in all they attempt. Faced with such pressure, many children have grown up to be highly

Persuasively Communicating the Gospel in Light of the Holocaust

By Galen Peterson, Executive Director of American Remnant Mission

Galen Peterson received his D. Miss. in 1998 for his studies in the Holocaust. At the LCJE Meeting in San Diego he concerned himself with meaningful communication of the Gospel in the light of the Holocaust.

It is my conviction that the Holocaust is the most important factor of modern times that affects the witness of the church to the Jewish community. Some Christians have become reluctant to witness to Jews out of guilt over the

widespread indifference and complicity during this dark moment in history. It is arguably the key catalyst in the development of the notion of formal dialogue between Christians and Jews—where witness is redefined as having an

successful professionals.

The ripple effect of the Holocaust from generation to generation has also carried over spiritually. The issues of sheltering, isolation, and distrust have direct spiritual counterparts. Many Jewish children from survivor families have received little or no religious training. They have been kept in isolation from a spiritual dimension in their lives and consider God to be untrustworthy, if He exists at all. Thus many offspring consider themselves atheists or agnostics who choose to be angry and resentful at the God of Israel. And for a vast number of Jews born in the wake of the Holocaust, their search for meaning is taking them outside traditional Judaism.

The effect of the Holocaust on the extended Jewish community

In the past 50 years, most Jewish people have become disciples of "civil Judaism."³ In the world view of civil Judaism, God plays an insignificant role. He has no specific activity in the affairs of humanity. Instead of God, civil Judaism's center of devotion is the commitment to Jewish survival. Given the history of the persecution of the Jews, it is understandable that causes of social justice have become so important. By defending democracy and the rights of all groups who are vulnerable to discrimination, the Jewish

community is able to work in a practical manner toward the prevention of another Holocaust. Likewise, the inclination toward humanism is also consistent with this emphasis on taking matters into one's own hands. If God failed in prior times, it will be up to the people to assure that their destruction doesn't happen again.

For a great many Jews today, the Holocaust has superseded the Exodus as the master story of the Jewish people. It is the Holocaust that most popularly expresses the nature of Jewish survival and provides the primary basis for meaning in the lives of Jews. While many Jewish families will still make a token acknowledgment of the Exodus account during annual commemorations of Passover, the Holocaust has become a theme for every day of the year. Books, motion pictures, the introduction of Holocaust curricula in public schools, and memorial services all serve to reinforce this master story dimension. *Yom Hashoah*, (Holocaust Remembrance Day), is the only observance throughout the year when secular, Reform, Conservative and Orthodox Jews will gather together in a common observance. Occurring on the calendar right after Passover, *Yom Hashoah* contrasts God's deliverance of the Jews from slavery in Egypt with the deliverance of themselves after the

Holocaust.

Seeking the "Latitude of Acceptance" in Witnessing

If it is true that the Holocaust has taken on such a central role, it follows, then, that any attempt to witness to Jews must take into account the issues presented by this new master story. In order to determine such a ministry strategy, we examined the many persuasive arguments that Christians have used over the years when interacting with Jewish people, and developed a profile for effective witnessing. We evaluated the ways that non-believing Jewish people responded to these arguments and found that some lead to greater openness to the gospel, to Jesus, and Christianity. On the other hand, there are certain arguments that drive people away from what we believe. Social researchers have found that the receptivity of an individual toward a persuasive communication is, in part, determined by the structure of the argument.⁴ The structure of each individual's attitude to a particular topic can be divided into a range of positions that he or she accepts, known as the *latitude of acceptance*, and a range of rejected positions, called the *latitude of rejection*. It has been demonstrated that if a persuasive message is judged to be within the latitude of acceptance, attitudinal change toward the

message will occur, but if a message is judged to be within the latitude of rejection, little or no attitudinal change will occur, or change away from the message may even take place.

What does this have to do with evangelism? This concept is highly consistent with the biblical model of witnessing. Just as this theory suggests seeking to find clear channels of communication to other persons, the early Church leaders sought to find the most effective ways of reaching the various audiences of their day. Consider the following examples:

Paul's approach consistently involved the communication of the good news but with a particular focus on the circumstances relevant to his audience. He recognized that not every person is ready to comprehend the full spectrum of the issues of godly living. This was his method in communicating to the the Corinthians whom he metaphorically gave "milk, not solid food" because they were not yet ready to receive the deeper things of God (1 Cor. 3:2). The basic elements of the biblical model of witnessing are twofold—a message of truth, and a sensitivity to the needs and experiences of the listener. Paul elaborated on these elements in his writings to the Thessalonians:

For the appeal we make

does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. On the contrary, we speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts. You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness. We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else. As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you, but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us (1 Thes. 2:3–8).

When Paul and Barnabas came to Lystra, their goal was to proclaim salvation through the one true Son of God (Acts 14:8–20). But communicating this ultimate form of revelation was initially beyond the point of reference for these Lycaonian people. Thus the disciples began by discussing the existence of natural revelation to lead them toward considering the living God. Athenians did not believe in monotheism. But rather than immediately refuting the plethora of Grecian gods, Paul alluded to the "unknown god" of their tradition who was worthy of worship (Acts 17:16–34). He then drew his audience in the direction of

considering a singular omnipotent God, previously hidden to them but now within their reach.

As Paul stood before the Sanhedrin, he prefaced his defense of the resurrection of Jesus with reference to his standing as a Pharisee and their common belief in the "hope in the resurrection of the dead" (Acts 23:6). Apparently he successfully found the latitude of acceptance of the Pharisees in attendance, for they immediately exonerated him.

Later, in Acts 26, he repeatedly touched upon his faithfulness to authority in his defense before Herod Agrippa. By addressing his own responsiveness to the authority of the chief priests (vv. 10, 12), Rome (cf. 25:10), and Agrippa himself (vv. 2,3), he was then able to boldly defend his obedience to the ultimate authority of Jesus over his life.

The model that we have recorded in Scripture is one in which communicators identified the existing beliefs of the audience, declared a statement of truth that fell within their latitude of acceptance and then sought to persuasively draw their them in the direction of deeper truths. Plainly their method was not the application of a formal scientific theory, but rather was intrinsically derived. Theirs was a common sense approach for the common man.

Application to the Context of the Holocaust

1. The existence of God

The study sought an answer to the question—Are Jews open to traditional perspectives that uphold God's existence in spite of the horrors of the Holocaust? Although this tragedy has caused the faith of many Jewish people to wane, it was demonstrated that a significant number of Jewish people will, in fact, respond favorably to arguments that affirm the existence of God, even in the context of calamities like the Holocaust.

Discerning the presence of God in a world that seemingly operates outside of His control is difficult for many people. We need to be sensitive to the fact that a great many Jewish people cried out to God during the Holocaust before perishing. There are no easy answers to this dilemma. Yet we do know that the very nature of faith is a sense of coping with the unknown. By remaining faithful in the face of severe opposition, we can demonstrate our sincere reverence and humility before God. As Job professed, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job 13:15). We also need to recognize that the silence of God does not necessitate His non-existence. For as God declared to the wicked in Psalm 50:21, "These things you have done, and I kept silent; you thought I was just like you; I will

reprove you, and state the case in order before your eyes." God's existence must be viewed in the context of His ultimate sovereignty and justice. Our goal, as witnesses, ought to be a positive affirmation of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and a search for answers in the Scriptures—an approach centered around a return to one's heritage.

2. Theodicy

How can God be just when incidents like the Holocaust occur? What role does humanity have in works of evil? It was found that regardless of the nature of persuasive arguments, Jewish people are inclined to hold mankind accountable for acts such as the Holocaust. Additionally, positions that place blame at the feet of humanity were shown to promote openness among Jewish people toward the compassion of God.

Our frustration with evil in the world should lead us to recognize the sinfulness of humanity, not to accuse God of failing us. We should be asking questions about God's holiness and the nature of sin. Contextual points of contact within the Jewish culture can be found that relate to issues of divine justice. For example, *Ani Maamin* is a song frequently sung at Holocaust memorial services. The words are taken from Maimonides' statement of faith: "I believe in the coming of the

Messiah." It is an expression of Jewish hope for vindication through the advent of the Anointed One of God. Ultimate vindication presents a bridge to discussion on eternal matters. A key point to recognize is that without life after death, there is no definitive justice for the victims.

3. Jewish rejection of Christ

Is the Holocaust exclusively God's way of bringing judgment upon the Jewish people for national disbelief in Jesus? The study showed that arguments which explain the Holocaust as being divine punishment on the Jews will severely impede their openness to talk about Jesus. In other words, initially telling Jews that God brought the Holocaust on the Jewish people for their rejection of Jesus as Messiah will almost always provoke defensive replies and thus hinder our testimony.

Scripture does depict an element of God's chastening of His people for disobedience. Deut. 28:15-68 is but one of several references to such discipline. Many commentators have concluded that God used Nazi Germany in the same way that He used Assyria to be "the rod of my anger" (Isa. 10:5) to chasten Israel for disobedience. The book of Habakkuk describes God's punishment of Judah's wickedness by Babylon, an even more wicked nation

(Hab. 1:6).

God's standards for Israel have been very high (perhaps Christians should expect the same!) and for anyone to reject God's Anointed One is truly an invitation for lost blessing. Yet in God's grace and mercy, He seeks to restore the lost and chasten those He loves, saying, "Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them or abhor them so as to destroy them completely, breaking my covenant with them. I am the LORD their God" (Lev. 26:44; cf. Rom. 11:1).

The problem that we face in witnessing is that non-believers tend to tune out when accusations abound—even if there is an element of truth to the argument. A significant reason for this phenomenon is that critical statements made by well-meaning people are often associated with similar ones made by persons bent on persecution and evil. The wise witness is able to communicate the seriousness of God's message without overwhelming and losing the respect of the hearer. In the course of arriving at some conclusions regarding God's standards for righteousness, the issue of disobedience does need to be faced. But, as demonstrated in this study, initiating it in an accusatory manner will only turn the hearts of Jewish people away.

4. Blame for the Crucifixion

Are Jews responsible for the death of Christ? Similarly to the previous witnessing principle, blaming Jews for the Crucifixion will devastate one's testimony. Furthermore, this accusation can be shown to be a misinterpretation of the biblical text. It is essential to explain the biblical teaching on the death of Messiah. The charge of Jews being "Christ killers" has long been rooted in Christendom. But Scripture does not single out the Jewish people as being responsible for the death of Jesus. Instead it makes it very clear that it was the sins of all humanity—Jews and Gentiles—that caused the death of Messiah and that it was part of God's plan (Acts 4:27,28). Moreover, it was His decision to willingly die for sinners—"I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again" (Jn. 10:17,18).

A more relevant question is this: why would Jesus willingly give up his life? The Bible gives this reason: the sins of the entire world demanded payment (cf. Isa. 53:5,8,12; Rom. 3:25,26). Because "all have sinned" and all people will stand before God in judgment, our witness must always remain universal in scope. God's message of love is truly impartial—it is the good

news for all people, not bad news directed only at Jews.

5. Suffering

Why does God permit suffering? It has been shown that people who seek some form of meaning in times of suffering are better able to cope with its effects. There is also a vicarious nature to suffering—the reality of the Holocaust continually renews a sense of sorrow, anguish and bitterness within the Jewish community.

Contrary to some widely held views, the Bible does not offer a simple answer to the question of suffering. It does in fact provide a multiplex explanation, with a strong emphasis on how suffering can lead people to live truly godly lives. The story of Joseph is one of many biblical accounts in which God brings forth good from evil intentions (Gen. 50:20). One significant benefit from the Holocaust has been the subsequent establishment of the State of Israel. Trusting God means believing that God establishes a purpose for everything, even those things that He may permit but does not cause. Our objective must be to lead people to recognize that God has brought them through their own life's journey to the present time in order to find spiritual satisfaction and a personal relationship with Him.

6. Christian Anti-Semitism
Is it important to recognize

the historical persecution of the Jewish people in the name of the Church? The study showed that a sincere admission of historical persecution in the name of the Church is an important step in witnessing. To trivialize it is a certain excursion into the latitude of rejection.

By genuinely confessing the persecutions of the Jewish people in the past in the name of the Church, we can heal wounds and provide a basis for a better relationship in the future. Not every Christian today is guilty of anti-Semitism and the persecution of the Jews has come from many other sources. But individualistic Westerners generally have difficulty grasping the notion of guilt by association. We would do well to demonstrate a sense of collective contrition—it is *our* community that has committed this sin—and by demonstrating a sober attitude we can mitigate the relational erosion all around us. Just as during Passover when each Jewish person is taught to consider himself as actually having come out of Egypt. Perhaps it is time for Christians to consider ourselves as having come out of Nazi Germany.

7. Justice for the perpetrators

Should we stress ways in which the perpetrators of the Holocaust face justice and punishment? Based on the study, justice for the crimes

against the Jewish people is an important topic of discussion. It was demonstrated that we can offer Jewish people a sense of greater resolution of issues related to the Holocaust by professing a coming day of judgment in which the perpetrators will stand before a righteous and just God.

We can use justice as a bridge to the concept of resurrection. Scripture depicts a future resurrection for humanity (Isa. 26:19) and God's judgment according to our acts of righteousness or unrighteousness (Dan. 12:1,2). The "everlasting contempt" described by Daniel will, in part, be the consequence of a coming Day of Reckoning for those people who perpetrated harm on the Jewish people. In that day, God declares, "I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will enter into judgment against them concerning my inheritance, my people Israel" (Joel 3:2). But without a resurrection of the dead, there can be no day of judgment and no true justice for the Holocaust.

8. Forgiveness

Should Jews be forgiving toward their persecutors? The study underscored the need to be careful in our application of forgiveness. It revealed a general agreement among Jews that there are benefits to being personally forgiving, but

forgiveness has limitations. It is apparent that the nature of the Holocaust still precludes a desire to extend forgiveness to the perpetrators on a national level.

There is a positive psychological dimension to personal forgiveness because it plays an important role in helping people overcome tragedy and the wrongs inflicted by others. But there is also a great spiritual dimension to forgiveness. For it is the cornerstone of salvation. Scripture abounds in references that link God's forgiveness of sins to our willingness to forgive one another (Matt. 6:14,15; 18:35; Col. 3:13). We can extol the virtues of God's willingness to forgive for us, but perhaps the most powerful way to teach forgiveness is to model it ourselves.

But to what extent does this admonition apply to a community that has been grossly violated and, to a great extent, without seeing complete repentance by those who sought their destruction? And can a person truly forgive on behalf of murdered victims? The biblical model on forgiveness is crucial to our understanding. The lone manifestation of corporate forgiveness in Scripture is *Yom Kippur*, the annual Day of Atonement, on which the sins of all people of Israel were covered. But the essential pre-requisite was collective *teshuvah*—

repentance (Lk. 17:3-4). This concept is consistent with the contemporary understanding of forgiveness in Judaism—transgressors need to be repentant before being forgiven.

Corporate forgiveness opens up a highly complex set of factors. Sensitivity to the unique experience of the Jewish community suggests that we ought to be cautious in expecting forgiveness from a people that has rarely received forgiveness from other peoples. Forgiveness on a national level can neither be prompted nor expected. But it may eventually result from the seeds planted in personal forgiveness. Lasting healing is possible, but only if the memory of the victims can be preserved and the lessons of the past learned for future generations.

9. The actions of bystanders and righteous Gentiles

Will descriptions of the actions of Christian rescuers of the Jews improve the Jewish perception of Christianity? According to the study we should be candid in admitting that the Church did not act in total compassion during the Holocaust, but we ought to uphold the sacrificial and loving deeds carried out at great risk by the rescuers in those days.

For survivors of the Holocaust, the actions of bystanders have long raised mixed emotions. Those who

rescued Jews are considered to be heroes. But unfortunately a great many more heroes were needed. In the course of our testimony, a balanced approach may be best. Again, honesty will go a long way toward building credibility. But we need to be prepared to recognize the sacrificial nature of the rescuers. There was something special about them—a Gentile "remnant" of sorts. There may be much to be gained if we can connect their actions to the faith that motivated them. Rescuers who were Christians often referred to the teachings of Jesus as motivation for their efforts. These include the golden rule (Matt. 7:12), love for one's neighbor (Matt. 22:34-40; Lk. 10:25-37), and future judgment for our response to people in need (Matt. 25:31-46).

10. The perception of Jesus as a response to the Holocaust and vicarious death

Can any good come out of the death of a community or an individual? How does the death of Messiah provide an answer to the Holocaust? As the study demonstrated, the perception of Jesus can be enhanced through comparisons of his life, teachings and ministry to real-life illustrations from the Holocaust.

Drawing parallels between the Holocaust and the ministry of Jesus is not an easy undertaking and may be best suited in written

form. It is important to avoid making them equivalent events and to allegorize the Holocaust. But in appropriate situations—especially in well-established relationships—we can use them to stimulate deeper thinking on biblical concepts. Our challenge as witnesses is to help people understand biblical principles. One effective way is to draw parallels with concepts or experiences that are familiar to them. The concept of vicarious death was shown to be one illustration of the way to cross that bridge. Other parallels that hold potential for witnessing include resurrection from the dead (Jesus as an individual and Israel as a nation), the sufferings of Israel and Jesus (cf. Isa. 53), and their respective humiliation and dehumanization (cf. Ps. 22).

See next page.

Notes:

1. Eva Marie Fleischner, *Judaism in German Christian Theology Since 1945: Christianity and Israel Considered in Terms of Mission* (Metuchen, New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, 1975), 205.
2. Reeve Robert Brenner, *The Faith and Doubt of Holocaust Survivors* (New York: Macmillan, 1980), 91-94.
3. Civil Judaism was coined by Jonathan Woocher in *Sacred Survival: The Civil Religion of American Jews* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1986), 77. See also Michael Goldberg, *Why Should Jews Survive?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).
4. Muzafer Sherif and C.I. Hovland, *Social Judgment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961).

WITNESSING STRATEGIES IN LIGHT OF THE HOLOCAUST

Latitude of Acceptance		BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES OF PERSONAL RELEVANCE
EXISTING BELIEFS COMMON TO THE JEWISH COMMUNITY	STRATEGIC WITNESSING BRIDGES	
God may or may not exist, and if He does, He is not in total control of the universe	Affirm the presence of God in our world and the role faith	I am subject to the sovereignty of God (Deut. 4:39; Rom. 14:11)
Humans are responsible for their own actions, including acts of evil	Stress the sinfulness of humanity	I am a sinner who will be held accountable to God (Ezek. 18:20; Isa. 59:2; Rom. 3:23)
Jesus is not the Messiah	Beware of blaming the Holocaust on Jewish rejection of Jesus	I must personally believe in Jesus as Messiah (Matt. 10:32; Rom. 10:9)
Christians blame Jews for the death of Christ	Assign the cause of Messiah's death to the sinfulness of all humanity	Jesus died for me (Zech. 12:10; Jn. 10:11-18;6) Rom. 3:25-26)
The Holocaust and suffering in general are meaningless	Explain the benefits of finding meaning in suffering and how Jesus understands our suffering	Jesus suffered on my behalf (Isa. 53:4-5; Phil. 2:7-8; 3:10; Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:21-23)
The Church is an alien body with detrimental intentions	Sincerely admit the role of the Church in the persecution of the Jewish people	Salvation means being part of the body of Messiah (Acts 2:1-10; 1 Cor. 12:12-14)
Justice for the perpetrators of the Holocaust is desirable	God will judge the perpetrators	I will stand before God in judgment (Ps. 50:1-6; Dan. 12:1,2; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:11-15)
Individual forgiveness is acceptable, but corporate forgiveness is not	Encourage people to be personally forgiving of one another	My sin must be forgiven by God (Job 10:14; Ps. 32:1; Heb. 10:16-18; 1 Jn. 1:7-9)
Christianity is deceitful and fraudulent	Be honest about the role of Christian rescuers during the Holocaust	Christianity/Messianic faith is the true way of salvation (Jn. 14:6; Acts 4:12)
The atonement of Jesus is irrelevant	Draw parallels to the life, teachings & ministry of Jesus	I believe in the atonement of Jesus (Lev. 17:11; Rom. 5:8-11; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14)

A Letter to the Editor

Dear Friends in the Messiah

Let me begin by saying how grateful we are for LCJE. We believe with all our hearts that Jewish evangelism is very much at the center for God's purposes.

We also appreciate Herbert Links "History of Missions to the Jews in Philadelphia." and his mention of CMJ/USA (now Shoresh) in the second part of his paper [LCJE Bulletin No. 50]. We would like to make a correction however.

While Shoresh did go through a period of downsizing during which we, in his words, did major on "conducting tours to Israel as a means of acquainting church members of God's plan for His people," the work has never been restricted to that part alone as he states.

In fact, we are growing again, with a national conference this past fall and with the addition of Dr. Barry Leventhal and Mr. Stan Kellner, both Jewish believers, as adjunct staff

who will continue the Jewish evangelism training we have done in the past. We are also raising up internationals to spread the vision of Jewish evangelism globally, most notably in Chile.

We have a long way to grow, as they say, but our heart beats with yours.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Neil G. Lebhar,
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MEETINGS

LCJE North America

The next meeting will be held in St. Louis, 8-10 March, 1999. Further information to follow in next issues of the Bulletin.

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