

1986
Frantsen

THE ROLE OF A GENTILE EMPLOYED IN A JEWISH MISSION

Kearney Frantsen, Director
Good News For Israel
Box 23018
Richfield, MN 55423

Lausanne Consultation on
Jewish Evangelism
No. America Area Meeting
April 2-3, 1986 -- Chicago

INTRODUCTION

I have chosen to deal with this theme by first looking at the background of God's dealings with Gentiles (GOYIM, GARIM. See Appendix word study) by means of His Jewish people. This is Section A, THE SETTING. Next I have taken up the relationship between the Church and the Jewish people in light of the Gentilizing (paganization) of the Church. This is Section B, THE SITUATION. Thirdly, I discuss in Section C, THE SOLUTION to our many problems involving Jewish Evangelism. Lastly, I lay out in Section D, THE SPECIFICS of the practical aspects of the theme.

I asked my friend, Hal Ronning, a teacher at the Institute of Holy Land Studies in Jerusalem, to share some of his insights with me on this theme. He sent me a long letter and also a paper that he has written that is still unpublished entitled THE RELATION OF THE MESSIANIC JEWISH BELIEVER TO THE TORAH. Quotes from Hal are liberally interspersed throughout this paper. I acknowledge and appreciate his helpful insights.

A. THE SETTING

To get a basic grasp of the theme, THE ROLE OF A GENTILE EMPLOYED IN A JEWISH MISSION, some background needs to be laid out.

God -- the one true God, the Creator God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of the Jewish people -- God loves His entire human family. In spite of our two huge problems of sin and death, God went to work in History (His Story) to effect a rescue operation of redemption and restoration. God the Father is intent on creating an eternal beautiful bride for His eternally begotten Son -- a companion fit for Him. God is intent on proving at the same time, once and for all, that more than one will in the universe

will not work. Therefore, Satan and the other fallen angels, along with fallen mankind, must learn through God's dealing with them in this little corner of eternity called Time, that arrogant rebellion is doomed to failure and destruction. Through it all, God uses literally everything that happens to accomplish His sovereign over-all purposes of creation and redemption and restoration.

Key to God's fulfillment of His plans was, and is, and will continue to be, His choosing of the Jewish people to be the AGENTS of Salvation and the ASSOCIATION of saved ones. I quote Hal Ronning at length here:

According to the Bible, God's STYLE is to CHOOSE. God chose Abraham as the one man through whose family He planned to bless the whole world. God's style was to prove His faithfulness in the case of that one elect sample, and then eventually to invite anyone impressed by such faithfulness to come under His blessings by associating with, and finally, even joining that family. The perfecting of that invitation was accomplished by God Himself when He entered into the family so as to show not only from outside what perfect faithfulness is, but from within the (Jewish) family to reflect back up to Himself that same perfect faithfulness which no one in that family had ever succeeded in doing.

People have responded variously to this notion of God revealing an interest in a particular CHOICE: One skeptical person reflected, HOW ODD OF GOD TO CHOOSE THE JEWS. A cynic retorted that, IT'S NOT SO ODD. THE JEWS CHOSE GOD. A Jew replied, IT'S NOT SO ODD. THE GOYIM ANNOY HIM. A proud humanist shouted, UNFAIR, YOU JEWS, YOURSELVES TO CHOOSE! A tired Jew sighed, LET GOD CHOOSE SOME OTHER STOOGE.

In view of all these various reactions, how can one express the proper biblical attitude? The Bible simply teaches that it is God's style to choose in order to demonstrate His faithfulness, so IF NOT THE JEWS, WHOM THEN TO CHOOSE? This is not a matter of merit, but a matter of the humble yet powerful style God has chosen to use in revealing Himself by 'choosing the foolish things of this world to confound the wise.' (1 Cor.1:27) God chooses and remains faithful 'Not for your sake, O Israel, but for my Holy Name's sake.' (Ez.36:22)

It is vitally important for a Gentile person to get a grasp of the importance of the Jewish people in God's Salvation History. It is vital for all Jewish people, too, of course. Jesus knew that SALVATION IS FROM THE JEWS. (John 4:22) The Jewish people were, are, and always will be, intimately and intricately involved with their Messiah (Greek, Christ; English, Anointed One). God climaxed Jewish History and all History with Messiah's Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection. The Name 'JESUS' literally

means SALVATION. He was called Jesus because He would save His people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21) Hal Ronning puts it this way:

Jesus is not the expression of a new Torah, but a new expression of God's Torah -- His saving will for the salvation of mankind through His choice of Abraham and the Israelite people to be priest for all mankind. (Exodus 19:6)

The crucifixion is not a Flood Story of God starting all over again. It is a Redemption Story of God confirming His love for Israel and enabling Israel to reach new heights by reaching out to include the rest of us -- bringing Israel out of bondage to itself in order to begin the work of establishing the world empire of Jesus.

To miss the significance of the Jewish nation in all of this is to get on the wrong track with God, and fall victim to all sorts of problems -- such as pride, hate, callousness, apathy, ignorance, and short-sightedness.

God promised Abraham (very aptly called the first Jew, even though the word 'Jew' came from Abraham's great-grandson, and was not coined and put into common use until the Babylonian Captivity) in Genesis 12:1-3, that his seed would be blessed to be a blessing to all the GOYIM of the world.

God chose the Jewish people to get a job done. They were to witness to all of us Gentiles the truth about God's reality, revelation, Redeemer, righteousness, and rule. (An excellent discussion of the purpose of God's election of Israel is found in Chapter One of THE REBIRTH OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL by Arthur W. Kac.) God also had an on-going need to teach these truths to Israel. He did this through His Torah and His Mighty Acts.

Always God's saving Truth was available to the Gentiles through Israel. The God of Israel desires all mankind to be saved. (1 Tim.2:4) God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. (Ez.18:32) Having chosen the Jewish people and given them forgiveness and life, they in turn were to love their God, and to also love the stranger (GARE) in their midst who came to be with them under their great God. Deuteronomy 10:12-22 is a key passage about this. God chastized His people for dealing wrongly with the stranger. (Ez.22:29) Gentiles were always welcome to become part of God's community of faith (Ex.12:48-49), though precious few did so because of

the extreme hardness of their sinful hearts. (Jer.17:9) Rahab and Ruth are prime examples of pre-Messiah 'born-again' believers, since they not only became part of Israel by faith, but they were given the honor of becoming part of the family tree of the Jewish Messiah. (Matthew 1:5)

Israel's purposes in History were not and never will be fulfilled without the Gentiles. And the reverse is also true: We Gentiles need Israel, the AGENT and ASSOCIATION of God's saving words and deeds.

Hal has a very interesting portion on this that I share here:

A Jew said to a Christian, 'Ours is an ASYMMETRICAL RELATIONSHIP.' 'What's that?' asked the Christian. The answer given was, 'You need us; we don't need you!'

But the answer is wrong! Though it may be sociologically correct as a description of the attitudes of many Jews in our time, I think it is fundamentally unJewish and certainly unbiblical!

The idea in that answer is that Jews can do just fine without Christians - thank you - if not even better -- but that Christians need the Jewish people as the historical root out of which they grow.

I claim that Jews need us Gentiles, if for nothing else than to be at least the objects on which their light shines. How can God bless others through them if there are no others around?

It is tragic when Judaism gets so ingrown that there is not concern for others. Blessing turned inward and not passed on becomes stale and dead, even destructive -- when it is accepted only as a gift and not as an example of what God's chosen ones are then in turn supposed to do -- bless others!

The Jewish people, be they in faith or in unbelief, have been, and still are, God's visible sign and strong voice to the Gentiles that He is the true and living God and that He keeps His Word. God says emphatically:

And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations (GOYIM), and which you have profaned among them; and the nations will know that I am the Lord, says the Lord God, when through you (Israel) I vindicate my holiness before their eyes. (Ezekiel 36:23)

God controls the destiny of Israel and also that of all the Gentiles.

Isaiah 46:9-11 makes this point even more clear:

I am God, and there is no other; .. declaring the end from the beginning ..., saying 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose, ... I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass.'

The Israelites were far from perfect. Even the most faithful found that next to God's Holiness his own righteousness was as filthy rags. (Is.64:6)

The Torah was God's standard that no one could keep. This was the point of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. He taught that we need a righteousness that exceeds that of the most law-abiding people. God knew this when He gave the Torah to His people on Mt. Sinai, and He provided for unbroken right relationship with Himself by instituting the substitutionary sacrificial system of blood atonement for sin. Hal Ronning puts it like this:

Under the previous covenant it was also possible to obey God, but never perfectly because no human was able to live up to all the commands of God. In fact, this deep reality of man's repeated failing is mightily present as a basic ingredient or constituent of the Torah given to Moses. This is so clearly evident from all of the ready-made built-in instructions on how to handle failure in following the instructions. A considerable part of the 'Law of Moses' deals with what a person is supposed to do when he has failed to do what he is supposed to do.

Through the thick and thin of repeated cycles of national feast and famine, spiritually speaking, there was always a most significant portion of the Jewish people who remained true believers. They constituted what is best called THE REMNANT. Through their faithfulness in remaining loyal to God's gracious and sovereign choice of them, they can safely be said to have NEVER FAILED GOD. Through them God gave the world His Holy Scriptures, His Redeemer Son, and the foundation of His New Creation, the Church. Paul says in Galatians 4:4-5,

But when the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

The long-awaited Promised One came to this world of sin and death through a Jewish mother, a virgin, and by His shed blood He burst the bonds of evil for Jewish and Gentile people alike, so that 'whosoever would believe in Him' could experience forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life. In what must have been a most fascinating Bible Study, Jesus, after His Resurrection, said to His disciples,

Thus it is written, that the Messiah should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in His Name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. (Luke 24:46-47)

The crucifixion and resurrection of Messiah released the presence and power of God's Holy Spirit in all who received it by faith. They were all Jewish who received Jesus as Savior and Lord and Baptizer with the Holy Spirit. And they were that continuation of the faithful REMNANT of Jewish believers since Abraham -- Biblical Judaism with blood atonement.

This REMNANT is likened in Romans eleven to the living (healthy and fruitful) natural branches of God's cultivated Olive Tree nation, Israel, whose Patriarchal roots are holy, since the Patriarchs were the first faithful responders to God's election. After Pentecost thousands of Jewish people were quickened to become living branches of their own Jewish Olive Tree nation, through faith in their Messiah, and the resulting dynamic union with Him in the Spirit. Neander, the Jewish Historian and Messianic believer, estimates that as many as one million Jewish people became believers in Messiah Jesus in the first two centuries. This great REMNANT was the first-fruit, approximately a tenth of the eight to ten million Jewish people living at that time.

As throughout Jewish History before Jesus, so, after His coming, the faithful Jewish REMNANT unselfishly welcomed Gentiles to become part of the REMNANT. This was God grafting in wild olive shoots into His special cultivated Olive Tree. They did not become Jews, as such, but their hard hearts were cut (circumcised) to the quick, and by repentance and faith they 'chose to be chosen' along with the Chosen people, and were welcomed into the family of faith. This phenomenon spread like wild fire to Gentiles far and wide. This was the most stunning development in History. After centuries of patient, and not so patient waiting, the most amazing and intriguing prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures were being literally fulfilled.

The sacrificial death (or cutting off, Dan.9:26) of Messiah, Isaiah 53.
The resurrection of God's Holy One, the Messiah, Psalm 16:10.
The new covenant written on Jewish hearts, Jeremiah 31:31-34.
The outpouring of God's Holy Spirit on all flesh, Joel 2:28-32.
Gentile nations sitting in great darkness seeing God's Light, Isaiah 9:2.

This is to list but a few.

B. THE SITUATION

Right now in our time the relationship between Christians and Jewish people is very confusing and unsettled. There are extremes of sentimentality and hatred, and there is a small middle ground where balanced truth and love is found. We need to briefly review the last two thousand years of the common era; the so-called Christian era. Our situation as it exists today did not happen overnight. Lots of water has gone under the bridge, so to speak. A Gentile in a Jewish mission needs to have a clear grasp of the relationship between the Church and the unbelieving Jewish people over the years. Every effort needs to be made to understand the ramifications of this sad History. How then, did we arrive at the situation we are now in?

Christianity exploded off the launching pad of Pentecost (as recorded in Acts two) with a mighty burst of the Holy Spirit's agape love, power to boldly witness, and ability to 'cut to the heart.' (Acts 2:37)

God's love (agape) has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us. (Romans 5:5)

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem ... (Acts 1:8)

And when He (the Counselor, the Holy Spirit) comes, He will convince (Greek, ELENCHO; King James, reprove; NASB, convict) the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. (John 16:8-11)

After the outpouring of the Holy Spirit believers multiplied by leaps and bounds. Luke's progress reports throughout Acts are good. (See Acts 6:7, 9:31, 12:24, 16:5, 19:20, & 28:31) At first there were only Jewish believers, but soon Gentiles began streaming to the Jewish Messiah by grace through faith. In Ephesians, chapters two and three, Paul does an inspired job of explaining what God was doing.

Gentiles once far off having no hope and without God in the world, were being brought near to God in the blood of Messiah, were given access to the Spirit, made fellow citizens with the saints (the faithful Jewish REMNANT), fellow heirs with them, and members of the Household of God.

However, the Jewish leadership was almost totally blinded to Jesus as their true Messiah. Greatly threatened by this dramatic new Messianic movement, they operated according to the light they had, and dug in their heels against Jesus and His followers to defend their power and the status quo. This hurt them badly. Jesus met one on a road to Damascus and said:

Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It hurts you to kick against the goads ... I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand upon your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and bear witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, delivering you from the (Jewish) people and from the Gentiles -- to whom I send you to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me. (Acts 26:14-18)

After the Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. the Pharisees gained the upper hand in the synagogues and began to battle in earnest the rapidly growing Jewish sect of followers of the Nazarene (the 'notzrim'). There was severe Jewish persecution of early Christianity. This was not a pretty picture. It was not a good witness by rabbinic Judaism to the Gentiles. An important part of the problem was that the Messianic Jews had opened the floodgates to Gentiles -- and they did this without insisting that Gentile converts comply with Mosaic Law. (Acts 15) Hal Ronning comments:

Pity the Jew who has rejected Gentile people against God's command (even though faithfully rejecting Gentile ways as God indeed commanded), and then have experienced horrible rejection by Gentiles.

The Jewish leaders went as it had been foretold of them. Peter spoke it plainly and boldly directly to the Jewish leaders. He said,

This (Jesus) is the stone which was rejected by you builders, but which has become the head of the corner. And there is salvation in no one else ... (Acts 4:11-12 and Psalm 118:22)

It is well to keep in mind that Jesus would not have been the Messiah if the Jewish leaders had accepted Him. The prophets proclaimed that they would not recognize Him, but rather, refuse and reject Him. Sad, but true. Unfortunately the Pharisee-Rabbis had lost their sensitivity to the

inspiration and instruction of the Holy Spirit. Hal Ronning says:

Father Abraham is a powerful example of the necessity for constant attention to God's will. Abraham received instructions to go to the Land of Moriah and there to sacrifice his only and beloved son Isaac. At the critical moment he was given the opposite instructions, namely, that he should NOT sacrifice Isaac. What if Abraham had insisted on following the first set of instructions and had refused to follow the second set of instructions???

Abraham illustrates what it means to respect God's will as really being GOD'S WILL. In so doing he symbolizes a humble attitude before God as over against a haughty attitude of taking the Torah of God into one's own hands.

Also, I want to note that it was the Tradition of the Elders that Jesus warned against. (Matthew 15:1-20, 16:11-12, 23:1-39) This Talmudic or Rabbinic Judaism became the order of the day. A Florida Rabbi once said to me very frankly, "Judaism took a sharp turn to the left two thousand years ago for obvious reasons." (Emphasis mine) The Jews were scattered away into the far corners of the world from their beloved 'Eretz Israel' after the Roman capture and destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 A.D. And they were scattered even more after the last gasp rebellion of the Jews led by Bar Kochba in 135 A.D. Separated from their homeland with no more Temple, or priesthood, or sacrificial system, and NO BLOOD ATONEMENT, almost every last Jew was dragged off into slavery or exile, in what became known as the Diaspora - the scattering.

The growing fellowship of believers in Jesus, however, thrived under Jewish persecution, and the even more ferocious attacks of the Gentile Roman persecution. This REMNANT was ~~not~~ the true Biblical Judaism. They proclaimed the necessary Blood Atonement available to all through the once for all sacrificial death of the Suffering Servant, the Jewish Messiah, on His first visit to our troubled planet. THIS WAS GOOD NEWS. As Paul said,

I am not ashamed of the Gospel, it is the power of God unto Salvation for all who believe, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek (Gentile). (Romans 1:16)

Pressure from the Rabbis on the scattered Jewish people to stay away from the Jesus people grew greater and greater. Consequently fewer and

fewer Jewish people became living branches in the Olive Tree of Messianic faith. But always a steady small stream of Jews found their way to their Messiah. This pattern has continued from about 200 A.D., when the Church became for the first time a majority of Gentile believers, until our present time. The door of opportunity seemed to swing almost shut to the Jewish people, while the door to the Gentiles swung wide open.

Lest you be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this mystery, brethren: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in, and so all Israel will be saved ... (Romans 11:25-26a; cf. vss. 12 & 15, too)

Right after 300 A.D., the great disaster struck the Church. It succeeded beyond its wildest expectations. It became the official religion of the whole Roman Empire. As a result, people flocked into the Church by the millions, but for all the wrong reasons. Fewer and fewer of those calling themselves Christians had the real love of Jesus in their hearts.

In this weakened condition, the Church fell prey to devastating attacks from Satan. His diabolical hatred of the Jewish people infected the Church's teaching and practise. Even though there had been hateful and unfair persecution of the growing Messianic movement by the Jewish leadership, nevertheless, the Church went directly against the specific orders of its Commander-in-Chief, Jesus, in its relationship with the Jewish people, once it gained political power. Satan filled large parts of the Church with a spirit of vengeance and counter-persecution in regards to the Jewish people. Jesus had given His followers strict orders:

But I say to you that hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you ... (Luke 6:27-31; cf. Matthew 5:38-48, Romans 12:14-21, 13:8-10)

If the Church had obeyed her Lord, the long sad history of persecution of the Jewish people in the Name of Jesus would never have gotten off the ground. Jesus told His Church not to go eye-for-an-eye or tooth-for-tooth, but that is exactly what it did to the Jewish people when it got its first

chance. Unbelievable as it may seem, the history of Anti-Semitism for the past 1700 years is largely the history of the relationship between the Jewish people and Christianity. This is truly something for Christians today to be ashamed of. Does it surprise us that centuries of abuse served only to harden the bulk of the Jewish people in their resistance to their Messiah? Does it surprise us that when the Church stopped being a blessing to the Jewish people and began to heap curses on them, that the Church lost the blessing of God and fell into the horrible decline called the Dark Ages?

As the Church left it's position as a persecuted minority and came to political power, it took an increasinly unbiblical stance toward the Jews. By 250 A.D. Hippolytus leveled the first charge of 'deicide' against the Jews. The label 'Christ-killers' was pinned on the Jews. An arrogant attitude to the Jews rushed into the Church, even though Scripture warned against that very thing. Paul warned the Church very clearly:

But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in their place to share the richness of the olive tree, do not boast over the branches. If you do boast, remember it is not you that support the root, but the root that supports you ... so do not become proud, but stand in awe. For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you. (Romans 11:17-18, 20b-21)

The Church declared itself to be the new and only Israel. It foolishly asserted that God was finished with the Jewish people. It presumptuously took all God's good promises to Israel for itself -- but conveniently avoided applying the corresponding judgments to itself. This was blatant hypocrisy. Eminent Church Fathers like Gregory of Nyssa, Jerome, and Chrysostom, blasted away at the Jews with a steady attack. In 632 A.D. forced baptism of Jews began. In 897 A.D. Jews began to be stripped of property rights. In the 10th Century the custom of hitting a Jew in the face on Good Friday began.

The Crusades and the Inquisition followed in the next 500 years and filled the lives of the Jewish people with extreme misery and loss of life.

This persecution was done 'in the Name of Christ' and under the 'sign of the cross.' No wonder that we don't wear crosses in Jewish evangelism.

The Reformation brought little relief to the beleaguered Jewish people. Martin Luther had sympathy for the Jews in his earlier years, but lashed at them angrily near the end of his life. His treatise written in 1543, ON THE JEWS AND THEIR LIES, is a black mark on Lutheranism. It is a real skeleton in the closet that has rightly been repudiated by world Lutheranism in recent years. However, the words of Luther became fuel for the fires of Anti-Semitism in future centuries. It is tragically true that Hitler republished Luther's hateful book in 1939 to further his purposes.

It is no wonder that a young Israeli believer, when he learned that I was a Lutheran pastor, challenged me with the words, "If you love the Jews, why don't you leave the Lutheran Church?" I knew where he was coming from, and could only tell him that I was sorry for what Luther had written, and still felt that my call from God was to stay in the Lutheran Church and work for responsible attitudes and actions regarding the Jewish people.

I never try to defend Luther in his harmful statements. However, in certain situations I do offer some helpful insight into Luther's great fear of God's Wrath, that lends some understanding to what he said. Uppermost in Luther's mind was stopping Jewish blaspheming of Jesus. He saw this as extremely perilous to them. Luther wanted all Jewish people to come to faith in Jesus, and he actually ended his controversial book with that prayer.

In the last few centuries Jewish people have suffered at the hands of 'Christian' nations such as Poland, Russia, and Germany. Now they also suffer at the hands of Islamic Arabs and from Communism. The myth of Aryan racial superiority led to the myth of consequent Jewish inferiority, and that led to de-humanizing and demonizing of them. Thus demented people like Hitler believed they were even doing 'God' a favor to wipe out the Jewish people.

The Holocaust (literally: the burnt-offering; In Hebrew called Yom ha-

shoah, or Day of Tempest) was "overwhelming in scope, shattering in fury, and inexplicable in its demonism."

In the face of this horror, we need to help our Jewish friends see that enemies of theirs are not true Christians. This parallels Jesus' saying that "Not every one who says, Lord, Lord, will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in Heaven." (Mtt.7:21) True Christians risked their lives and gave their lives to aid the Jewish people in their extremity. They are recognized by world Jewry with the name 'Righteous Gentiles.'

The outcome of this sad story is a vast historical polarization between the Jewish people and Christianity. The Church has great guilt over against the Jews. The sins committed against them in Christ's Name are every bit as serious before God as the sins of the Jewish people noted in Scripture and in subsequent History. Fundamental to why the Church got off the track of God's love, was its reckless and humanistic twisting of Scripture to make it say what it does not say. The Jewish theologians did this and they missed the main point of Torah -- Torah appearing in flesh to make full satisfaction for the sins of all mankind.

The Church theologians did this when they angrily and mistakenly read the Jewish people out of God's will; ie., when they vainly tried to disinherit Israel presumptuously by assuming that the Church superceded Israel. This was tantamount to attempting to wrench control over Scripture (Torah) into man's (the Church's) hands, usurping God's authority, and idolizing man and man's opinions. The Church lost its sensitivity to the Holy Spirit and this spelled disaster for it and its mission. It certainly lost any hope of catching the ear of the Jewish community. Hal comments:

I sometimes wonder whether God has not deliberately let rabbinic Judaism become the chief definition for what it means to be Jewish (ie. Jewishness without Jesus of Nazareth) precisely because the Church has tried to usurp the Jewish faith without the Jewish people.

Witness to the continuing power of the Devil in this world is the extent to which every form of sin can still be found among

those calling themselves Christians but not taking their faith seriously. Indeed the very fact that we Christians claim to have a more solid foundation for a relationship to God than any others means that when sin is allowed to reign in our lives, the potential for hypocrisy is exactly therefore more profound than anywhere else!!! It is impossible for anyone to sin more terribly than a Christian gone wrong -- and unfortunately the history of the Church bears this out -- and particularly in relationship to the Jews.

As a result of this hair-raising history, today we have a situation where Christianity seems to fall into three distinct categories:

1) Over-reaction to RECOGNITION. Large numbers of Christians are bending over backwards to accomodate the Rabbis. They literally love the Jews to death spiritually. We have 'Jewish/Christian Dialogues' ad nauseum, and they only serve to confirm Rabbinic Judaism in lifeless bondage to man's ideas. It also keeps most of the Church in apathy regarding Jewish Evangelism.

2) Over-reaction to REPLACEMENT. There is growing hatred for Jews on the part of more and more who call themselves Christian. Virulent Anti-Semitism is again raising its ugly head in fresh waves of lies and hatred. The Jews continue to be blamed for everything under the sun in most unreasonable fashion. Farmers in crisis, for example, are being hooked on making the Jews their scapegoats. I regularly get material from one such reactionary, who sincerely believes that white Anglo-Saxon protestants have totally replaced Israel.

3) THE REMNANT. In between the two extremes mentioned above are the true Jewish and Gentile believers in Messiah Jesus. I humbly count myself among this band. I rejoice that we are more and more working together to bring the saving truth of the Gospel to the Jew first and also to the Greek. Yet, distressingly, we still bicker and squabble, and all too often choose to emphasize what divides us (such as variant practices, policies, and polemics), rather than what unites us (such as the Gospel, the mandate to preach it to the whole creation, and the presence and power of Messiah working with us to confirm the message. Mark 16:15,20)

C. THE SOLUTION

When we in missions today look for the solution for Jewish/Christian relationships, we must sincerely and simply look to the One who always has been and always will be God's own Special Solution, Messiah Jesus.

My friend Hal was taking a New Testament class at Hebrew University. One day the professor came into the classroom and startled them by announcing that he would spend the period explaining what the name 'Christ Jesus' really meant. He first showed the class the Hebrew and English equivalents, Messiah Y'Shua and Anointed Savior. Then he pointed out that all six words were not commonly understood ecclesiastical terms to the man on the street. What did each name mean in everyday terminology? 'Anointed' he made out to mean SPECIAL and 'Savior' became SOLUTION. My friend, who was having troubles with his marriage, finances, and studies, saw that he was foolish to try to find his own answers when God had already gone to all the trouble in the world to provide His own Special Solution.

I believe we see emerging a healthy return to the Biblical pattern of Christians faithfully bringing the Gospel to all people in love, and taking rejection and abuse and persecution patiently for the Name of Jesus. I stay on the optimistic side. Perhaps the Messianic movement has leveled off in the last few years. Nevertheless, I see it as a pause to catch the 'Breath of the Spirit' once again. I believe we will be off and running again very soon. I may be wrong, but I want to pray and work as if I am right. And as a Gentile, I want to encourage my Jewish believer friends in every way possible. Our future is as bright as the promises of God. That may sound a little trite or simplistic, but isn't it true?

There are many divisions and problems within true Christianity, and within our ranks of the Messianic movement. But a movement is underway. There is progress in the right direction. More Christians are coming into renewal and into the blessing of a burden for the Jewish people. Little by

little there is growth. We are coming together more. We are helping each other more. We are caring less and less about who gets any credit. These are big growth factors.

More Christians are understanding and accepting the concept of REMNANT, for example. More Christians are beginning to appreciate our Jewish roots, and sense the importance of the Jewish people for God's purposes in History. More and more see the specific importance of the past, present, and future Jewish believers for Christianity's life and mission. Hal again:

I propose that there is no more powerful concept available to Christians for maintaining a proper biblical attitude towards the Jewish people (and thereby also safeguarding their continued existence) than the biblical concept of REMNANT. By giving Jewish Christians (Messianic Jews) their proper recognition as the REMNANT into which all non-Jewish believers have been joined, I believe we Christians will be prompted to show the proper God-appointed respect for the Jewish people in general ("beloved for the sake of the Fathers"), and for the Jewish Christians in particular (who are loved not only for the sake of the Fathers, but also because of the good news that they are ready to accept us Gentile believers into their family; ie., we can join them in the Family of God).

I feel that that is a powerful statement. I have come to the point, as a Gentile in a Jewish mission, of understanding these truths more clearly every day. I know this is where I want to be, and this is where I should be. Yes, all the barriers between Jews and Gentiles have been broken down by the blood of Jesus making peace between us. Yes, I know that in Messiah there is neither Jew nor Greek. Nevertheless, I want to have, I should have, I do have a healthy respect for the importance and uniqueness of the true REMNANT, the Jewish believers of the world that I am a part of. Hal again:

This could appear to be a case of the tail wagging the dog, but only to someone who thinks numerically and therefore is impressed because the number of the Jewish Christian believers is nowadays minute in comparison to the total number of Christians in the world. Numerical totals do not change God's Word. Neither do they change the fact that non-Jews join a family which already existed and whose family characteristics were already established.

Today, we in the Church really need to see ourselves the way God sees us. Had we done so from the time the Church became a majority of Gentiles, and

then became the official religion of the Roman Empire, we would not have gotten everything so messed up. The 'Gentilizing' of the Church has not accomplished any good for God that I can see. We need to get back to God's basics to get back to God's blessings. Hal Ronning again:

The solution is found in the world's strongest identity -- that of the Jewish Christian, because that identity has been personally ratified, or better, established by God Himself in Emmanuel.

It is these Messianic Jewish followers of Jesus who have seen the need to open the Family to us adopted children and share God's blessings with us. They did not say, 'We don't need you.' At first they resisted the idea of taking the Gospel to the Gentiles, true, but once the Lord convinced Peter and then Paul, they were finally able to graciously accept us and even rejoice over us! This means that the Messianic Jews represent the solution from the Jewish side.

I would add here, that in the Jewish REMNANT of true believers, whether they lived before or after Jesus, God has always found the absolutely important group that He could directly work through in History to accomplish His purposes. We Gentile Christians join this believing band that God can count on.

A very important principle running all through Scripture is that the redeemed one is not saved merely to live out his own life as he pleases: he is redeemed to serve God. T. A. Hegre, former Director of Bethany Fellowship out of Minneapolis, said it this way:

This principle --THE BLOOD CLAIMS ALL THAT IT CLEANSSES -- if it were well known would solve many problems.

The REMNANT is characterized by faith and obedience. It is the character of Messiah and from Messiah. Messiah Jesus is the ultimate Jewish believer. He is the REMNANT summarized or focused down to one person. We now stand in the gap for the world of unbelievers, be they Jewish or Gentile, because Jesus once and for all stood in the gap for us all and He now lives in us.

Our constant focus, whether we be Jewish or Gentile believers, must be on Jesus. The only really important fact about any of us believers is "Messiah in us, our hope of glory." (Colossians 1:27)

D. THE SPECIFICS

At long last I bring up some of the practical applications of the fore-going material for the role of a Gentile employed in a Jewish Mission. Parts A, B, and C have laid a general foundation that can be built upon.

In light of our long and mostly sad History, I feel that Gentile believers in relation to Jewish people (be they believers or unbelievers), and whether they are directly or indirectly involved with a Jewish ministry, must be working on developing these basic characteristics: prayer, humility, appreciation, sensitivity, obedience, anticipation, and Agape love. Keep in mind that all of us Gentile believers are in some stage of growth in regards to each of these areas. Personally, I see great need for personal growth in each area. And God is good; the growth is coming along. My heart is more and more in the right place -- I do want to be a more effective witness for Messiah to Jewish believers and Jewish unbelievers.

Prayer We all know the foundational texts for making this point. Psalm 122:6, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! May they prosper who love you!" Isaiah 62:6b-7, "You who put the Lord in remembrance, take no rest, and give Him no rest until He establishes Jerusalem and makes it a praise in the earth."

I will only say here that I believe prayer is the KEY par excellence for accomplishing what God wants to do, and likewise, for us accomplishing what we know the Lord wants done through our respective ministries. I confess that I do not nearly act in accordance with my faith here. It is, and it will remain, highest on my list of priorities until my prayer life more nearly reflects that of Jesus Himself. My great consolation is knowing that Jesus is making intercession for all of us right now. Blessed be His Name!

Humility Shame for the arrogant and boastful attitudes of our Church Fathers must come forth. Their guilt is our guilt. We cannot escape it. I have nothing to be proud of, except Jesus my Lord, and my Jewishness (my

chosenness) in Him. He has given me a Jewish heart and made me a part of His believing REMNANT. I did nothing to deserve or earn it. It is pure Grace.

Pride is basic to our human condition independent of our Creator/Redeemer. Pride is open defiant rebellion against God. Pride is the main derivative of the root word for GOY. (See my Appendix article on GOY.)

Arrogance and boasting is unattractive wherever it may be found. It does not further the Kingdom of our Lord, Messiah Jesus. Jesus humbled himself and even became obedient unto death. We are called in Him to 'humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God.' (James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:5-6) We Gentile believers are to do this in relation to the Jewish people.

The Gentile Roman Centurion in Luke 7:1-10 is a good example for us. His 'great faith' in Jesus showed itself in true humility. No haughty spirit, no presumption, no dependence on any worthiness of his own; he sensed the absolute authority of Jesus and submitted to it. A sign of his right spirit was that he 'loved the Jewish nation' and even contributed to build a synagogue.

The Syrophenician woman is another good example of a humble Gentile. From her story in Mark 7:24-30 we learn how she realized Jesus (the living bread from heaven, John 6) was first and foremost for the Jewish people. I am thinking specifically of Leviticus 23:22, where, in the middle of a chapter telling Israel to keep the prescribed feasts, there is this reminder to them to leave 'the gleanings' for the stranger (non-Jew, GARE). As I believe the Jewish Festivals are a basic outline of Jewish History, I see this verse indicating the gathering in of the 'full number of the Gentiles.' (Romans 11:25) This, to me, is the time in History when the Gentiles would be saved by the 'gleanings' of the Jewish people. The Syrophenician woman seemed to sense this. She said, "Yea, Lord; yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." In the Matthew account (15:21-28) she is commended by Jesus for her great faith. I commend her for her humility. If we could only have more of this humility that sees that just one crumb from Messiah's bread for His

(Jewish) children is all that we need to have more than enough for salvation and new life -- our arrogance would melt away.

Appreciation I make it a daily habit to reflect on the awesome fact that the only important thing about me is the Jewish Messiah, Jesus. Gratitude to the Jewish people for Him and His Word and His whole Body of Believers, the Church, is very real to me.

In certain right situations with unbelieving Jewish people I like to openly show this attitude of gratitude. It helps some of them to see that my heart is soft toward them, and that I recognize the great sacrifices of the Jewish people to make available to me all the treasures of God's redemption. Without the Jewish people I would be eternally lost. As Paul says, Gentiles without the Jewish people and their Messiah are:

separated from Messiah, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. (Ephesians 2:12)

I know that I am blessed immeasurably by being grafted into the blessed people, and by being a blessing to them. This is exactly the principle God put into effect with Abraham in Genesis 12:3.

I appreciate the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism and the privilege of meeting and working together. Jews for Jesus has especially been a big help to our ministry and to me personally. It is appreciated. I know this is the way we should work together in unity.

Sensitivity This is a particularly hard point for me because I tend to be a pretty insensitive person. In terms of the motivational gifts, I am an exhorter or encourager, and not what is called a mercy-shower.

I try to be sensitive regarding terminology -- using Messiah for Christ, Jewish people for Jews, tree for cross, etc. I am quite consistent on some, but not on all, as can be seen in this paper. It is not made easier by the fact that different Jewish people are turned off by some terms and not by others. And to be overly careful about word selection all the time gets to

be a legalistic hassle. I tend to use JESUS instead of Y'SHUA, for instance, because I personally feel that the term JESUS is not really that offensive to the vast majority of Jewish people. I resist using Hebrew terminology just for the sake of doing so.

In the area of humor it is important to be careful. Jewish jokes on the lips of Gentiles are never appropriate. Once at a camp I told such a story. It was not until six or seven months later that my associate, a Jewish believer, brought it up to me as something that had bothered him at the time and ever since it happened. I was glad he told me about it and only wished that he had done it sooner. I apologized and inwardly resolved to be more faithful in letting the Lord 'set a guard over my mouth.' (Psalm 141:3)

I have trouble with some of the practices of Messianic congregations. Sometimes I mention my little turn-offs in a spirit of friendly discussion, but I am aware that such thoughts coming from a Gentile can be seen as presumptuous, and so I have to be extra sensitive in this area. Most of the time I just keep my thoughts to myself and refuse to let them bother me. I do not want to be a thin-skinned person that others feel they have to handle with kid gloves. However, if something really does bother me, I feel that it is best to get it out in the open, and trust that the brother or sister I am sharing with is trying to be a sensitive person, too.

I happen to be the director of our organization, which has a Lutheran background and a mostly Lutheran constituency. My experience as a pastor, and my familiarity with the ins and outs of Lutheran churches, is a big help. It gives me patience (and sometimes impatience) with the indifference and ignorance I face so often. I am aware that I need to be particularly sensitive to the feelings of my associate. Sometimes I make mistakes, but each of us is growing in respect for each other in our respective roles.

This is a little thing, but it can be quite important. I learned quickly not to try to guess if someone is or is not Jewish when Marc & I are working

together, like at the university, on the road, or on the street. It is better to let the Jewish partner make such guesses. I might ask him sometimes what he thinks, but being a Gentile, it can be easily misunderstood if I am the one trying to determine another person's Jewishness from looks or actions.

It is very important not to generalize. Especially is this so in regards to the Jewish people. When I am out in different churches and am asked if 'the Jews do thus and so, or are like this or that, etc'; I try to sensitize them to the fact that each Jewish person needs to be taken as an individual. Commonly held stereotypes need to be confronted and broken down. All Jewish people are not rich, or disown their believing children, for example.

Obedience Am I a soldier of the cross? A Gentile in a Jewish ministry needs to be constantly alert to creeping carelessness. We tend to assume too much -- that a person is not interested in the Gospel, or that a person is not going to be lost without saving faith in Jesus, etc. We have the responsibility to take the Gospel to the Jewish people and there are innumerable creative ways to accomplish this. To be obedient to the leading of the Spirit and committed deeply enough to follow unhesitatingly where He directs is a big assignment. But it is necessary or the work flounders and goes nowhere. Along with this goes the need for boldness, expertise, confidence, discipline, and urgency.

Anticipation God is certainly not through with the Jewish people. The crystal clear words of prophecy regarding a large ingathering of Jewish believers in the last days should give anyone involved in Jewish Evangelism constant encouragement. Romans 11 and Ezekiel 36 & 37 are clear on this, as are numerous other chapters. My favorite is Hosea 3:4-5, and I quote it here:

For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or teraphim. Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and they shall come in fear to the Lord and to His goodness in the latter days.

A story I have told many times and that has helped many people see God's

faithfulness to His promises to the Jewish people (and thus to themselves, if they are believers), goes like this in summarized form:

A blizzard rages outside. There is no school. The little boy wants to go down the road and play with his friend. He begs and begs until at last his father gives permission. He is warned to be very, very careful. Out he goes into the storm. Does he make it? Yes. After he knocks on the door and is waiting for it to open, he thinks he saw something move out of the corner of his eye. Was it a bush in the wind? a bear? a ghost? a figment of his imagination? No. It was his father, who had followed him through the storm to make absolutely sure his son made it where he was going.

How like God shadowing His first-born son, Israel, through the storms of History to an ultimate successful and safe conclusion.

Agape Love Paul tells us in Romans 5:5 that God's love (agape) has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. This kind of love is unconditional. It both comforts and confronts. It is tough love. It is also bold because it knows that what it has to share is for the ultimate good of the recipient. This love is tenacious. It does not give up. This love is what we need in evangelism. Paul writes a whole chapter on it in First Corinthians and begins by saying that without this kind of love we are nothing. Without it we certainly have nothing worthwhile to give to anyone else.

I remember the president of our seminary coming to our college one day to speak to us pre-seminarians. He bluntly told us that unless we could go out as pastors and love people unconditionally -- whether they responded to our message or invitations or not -- we were not cut out to be pastors. I think of that often and just as often confess failure in living this way.

Nevertheless, though we are not perfect yet, this Agape Love is ours through our faith relationship with Messiah Jesus. A believer is 'in Messiah' and has 'Messiah in him or her'. If this union with Messiah is real then we will be filled with His love and it will naturally spill out to others.

I constantly remind myself, and those I speak to, that though there are many, many reasons to take the Gospel to the Jewish people, such as Gratitude, Blessings, Obedience, Anticipation, Their Need, the Truth and Power of the

Gospel, etc. --- the bottom line motive for Jewish Evangelism is that if we actually have been touched by God's Agape Love, we really can't keep it to ourselves. "The Agape Love of Messiah controls us." (2 Cor.5:14)

E. THE SUMMARY

The Jewish people need the Gentiles to have someone to be a light to, and the Gentiles need the Jewish people to behold God's Light. We are in this together.

God is calling both Jewish and Gentile people into a living relationship with Himself. Those who respond in faith are re-grafted or grafted, as the case may be, into the faith root of the Patriarchs, to be God's living and fruitful Olive Tree people, His REMNANT.

It is only God's faithfulness and choice that gets the job done. We who believe are necessary channels for God to work through because that is the way God chooses to work. But it is all His work and He gets the Glory. We all know the Scripture, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts." (Zechariah 4:6) Only God can accomplish God's work, but it is His nature to use people to help do it. It is a great privilege to be part of His Chosen people and to be used by Him to bring the saving Gospel full-circle back to the people through whom it came to the world in the first place. Paul says, "So they (unbelieving Jews) have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you (Gentile believers) they also may receive mercy." (Romans 11:31)

I consider it a real privilege and true blessing to be a Gentile involved in Jewish Evangelism. I need to keep learning and growing. I am still very new, and I know I have a long way to go. Right now I see my role as a Gentile in a Jewish ministry is to:

- 1) Recognize as clearly as possible what God is doing in History.
- 2) Repent and identify with man's sin in resisting God's saving work.
- 3) Rejoice in God's solution: His Messiah and believers in Him.
- 4) Respond by faith to the call to be part of God's solution.

APPENDIX. GOY (Gentile) and GARE (Stranger)

GOY (Plural, GOYIM)

= to mass; a foreign nation; hence a Gentile, heathen, pagan, people.

(Note: Gentile is from 'Gens' meaning 'that belonging together by birth, a clan or tribe. Gentile, then, means 'same race, or, foreigner'. From a Jewish perspective it means non-Jewish. In Greek it is TA ETHNAY, nations. In LXX it means non-Jewish. In the NT it means Gentile Christians usually.)

GOY is from the root GAW-AW, meaning to mount up, to rise, to be majestic, and thus, to grow up, increase, be risen, to triumph.

GAW-OHN, meaning pride (arrogance, haughtiness), is the main derivative from the root GAW-AW. It is used 53 times in the major prophets and the poetic books. It is often used in regards to the non-covenant peoples, GOYIM. Isaiah 16:6 says, "We have heard of the pride of Moab, how proud he was." It is used most often of Israel, however. Hosea 5:5 says, "The pride of Israel testifies to his face."

GARE (Plural, GARIM)

= a guest; and by implication a foreigner, alien, sojourner, stranger.

GARE is from the root GOOR meaning to turn aside from the road (for lodging, etc.), ie., to sojourn (as a guest).

Practically speaking, it has the same basic meaning as GOY, ie., a non-Israelite or non-Jewish person.

However, it well to keep in mind that, like GOY, it is sometimes used to speak of Israel, too. Israel in Egypt is called a GARE. Moses in Midian is a GARE. (Moses named a son GERSHOM, ie., a sojourner in a foreign land, Exodus 2:22.)

Israel is a great GOY, ie., a political, territorial, identifiable people. Israel is God's HOLY GOY because of the covenant status seen in its circumcision (Joshua 5:8), and its redemption by God, and even moreso by its divine election. In Exodus 33:13 Moses says: "This GOY (Nation of Israel) is Thy AM (people)."

GOYIM is the term used in Genesis 17:4-6 and 17:16, to refer to all the nations to come from Abraham and Sarah. Abram's name was changed to Abraham, meaning 'Father of a Multitude.' In the New Testament this is spelled out in this way:

Abraham is the father of all of us who believe. (Romans 4:6)

Abraham 'believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.'

(7) So you see that it is men of faith who are the sons of Abraham.

(8) And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would JUSTIFY THE GENTILES by faith, preached the Gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'In thee shall all the nations be blessed.' (9) So then, those who are men of faith are blessed with Abraham who had faith. (Galatians 3:6-9)

And if you are Messiah's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. (Galatians 3:29)

APPENDIX. GOY & GARE (Continued)

GOYIM came to refer basically to uncircumcised (Jer.9:25), non-covenant, non-believing, non-Jewish peoples. Thus it came to be nearly synonymous to the words 'heathen' or 'pagan'. For an Israelite to live and worship as a GOY caused him to share in the rightful judgment due to wickedly rebellious and independent GOYIM.

Yet, the GOYIM were not to be considered helplessly, or automatically lost. When God gave up on a nation, knowing they had crossed the line of no return in their relationship with Him, then Israel could also give up on them. And often Israel was used by God to measure out judgment against such 'lost causes.' Some of the saddest words in the Bible are 'God gave them up.' (Romans 1:24, 26, 28)

Because God is love, He gave all peoples the chance to know Him and be saved. See the great loving restraint of God. He witnessed to the Canaanites through the Patriarchs for nearly two hundred years. Then He gave them 400 years more to think about it and repent, while He was building Israel into a nation in Egypt. Genesis 15:16 says that they only used the time to fill up the measure of their iniquity.

Nevertheless, the GOYIM or Gentiles play a big part in God's redemptive activity. The GOYIM are eventually to participate in all the blessings God promised to give Abraham and his seed on condition of faith. This would be accomplished through THE SEED, THE MESSIAH. In the meantime God uses the GOYIM to punish unfaithful Israel. Eventually the GOYIM contribute to Israel's glory. GOYIM, too, are invited to seek the Jewish Messiah, for He is Light shining out to them with God's love. (Isaiah 42:6, 49:6, 11:10) The GOYIM are to join in the great procession to Mount Zion. (Isaiah 2:2f)

AND OF GOYIM CHILDREN IT IS SAID THAT THIS ONE AND THAT ONE WERE BORN IN ZION. (Psalm 87)

The GARE (stranger, sojourner) living in Israel was largely regarded as a proselyte or convert. These GARIM (strangers, Gentiles, non-Israelites) could come into the Jewish people's covenant of Grace with God by circumcision and thus participate in the Passover, etc. (Exodus 12:48) These believing GARIM were given full rights and responsibilities. They were expected to keep the rules and regulations of the Mosaic Law, and they were forgiven and cleansed of their sins by blood atonement, just like the Israelites. (Leviticus 17:8-13)

God's blessed people, the Israelites, had the responsibility to bless the GARIM. The love of God for GARIM is clearly seen in the many instructions He gave His Israelites regarding them. God's great requirement for His people was that they 'Love the Lord their God' and along with that to LOVE THE GARE FOR YOU WERE GARIM IN EGYPT. (Deut.10:12-22) In Numbers 15:15 God says to His people: AS YOU ARE, SO SHALL THE GARE BE BEFORE THE LORD.

Of course, this relationship was to go only ONE WAY. GARIM were OK if they became believers in the true God, but the Israelites were not to go and join in with the GARIM in their unbelieving wickedness, and thus bring down God's curses upon themselves. God's chosen were to be faithful and thus enjoy His blessings in their Land, and share those blessings with all other people.