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SCHWARCZ

## CHURCH PLANTING

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## The Basis or Reason for Planting Messianic Congregations

The Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20 is one of the foremost scriptural pillars which supports planting congregations. We have been sent by our Messiah to: (1) make disciples of all nations, (2) baptize those disciples in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, (3) and, teach them to observe all that the Messiah has commanded us. In order to accomplish this task Jesus instituted His Church. We know that there are two manifestations of the Church, visible and invisible. The invisible consists of all true believers in the Messiah, while the visible assembly is what we call the local church.

For centuries Jewish missions led a schizophrenic existence. They attempted to win and disciple Jewish people but had problems mainstreaming these people into the local church. For various reasons when brought into the local church, Jewish people stumbled, or in some cases fell away from the Lord. There have of course been notable exceptions; men such as Alfred Edersheim, Benjamin Disraeli, Neander, Schereschewsky, and many others.

A secondary obstacle to Jewish mission agencies was the agencies' reluctance to "lose" converts to the local church. This reluctance occurred because of the need to have Jewish believers involved in the missionary program. Jewish believers legitimized and reinforced the truth that it is acceptable to be Jewish and believe in Jesus. As supporting churches placed pressure on mission agencies to get these new Jewish converts into local churches, the Jewish missions feared the accusation that their work was "building a wall of partition" between Jews and Gentiles. The only way to assure that such a wall would never come about was to mainstream Jewish converts into Bible believing local churches. To embark on any other tack for a new Jewish believer was to go against the Scriptures and to jeopardize support from assisting churches.

Another concern was the assimilation of Jewish Christians. The classic argument leveled by the Jewish community against Jewish people coming to faith in Jesus was that there were no second-generation Jewish Christians. The children of Jewish believers were raised as Gentile Christians and were lost as a testimony to the Jewish community.

However, the work of men such as Leopold Cohn, David Bronstein, and Martin Chernoff helped to break ground in the United States for what has become a mighty movement of the Holy Spirit in Jewish Evangelism; the planting and establishing of Messianic congregations. These men persevered in the face of much opposition. The opposition came as expected from their lost kinsmen, but what was even more disheartening was the opposition that came from fellow Christians.

These Christians feared that by establishing Messianic congregations a separation between Jews and Gentiles would be encouraged. It was feared that these congregations would be guilty of the heresy outlined in Galatians. John Bell, in his excellent tract, "Why plant Jewish Oriented Churches?" published by Chosen People Ministries, answers these legitimate concerns.

"It is obvious that God intended the message of salvation to cross all regional, racial, and cultural lines to permeate all peoples of all times, to be universal. If this is true, why not encourage all new believers to enter the closest evangelical church? Simply this: Christianity is not an activity. It is a life-style. This life-style not only glorifies Christ within the body, but it manifests itself in the culture and society in which it resides."

"The Scottish believer can come to the assembly in his kilt and tam-o'-shanter. The Japanese believer can enjoy raw fish at a potluck dinner... This is the beauty of the gospel message: people may not only retain their culture, but by doing so they show the fullness and relevance of God to their own people."

"Throughout the history of missions, however it has been feared that the purity of the gospel light would dim if old things were not passing away and all things were not becoming new. This was something that the early church, which was dominated by Jewish believers, did not understand. They were suspicious of the Gentiles for the Gentile customs were considered ungodly. A council was finally convened where it was determined that Gentiles could believe in Jesus without accepting Jewish manners, customs, and habits. God showed the church leaders that Gentiles should be allowed their expression of Christianity in a Gentile culture as long as they did not engage in practices which violated Scripture or damaged their own testimony. It is important to note that God did not tell the Jewish Christians to follow Gentile culture. He did, however, make it clear that the Gentiles were not to be forced into Jewish culture". (Bell, John Why Plant Jewish-Oriented Churches?, Chosen People Ministries, pp.2-3.)

Messianic congregations then should be accepted and encouraged to communicate the Gospel in a Jewish cultural context. The context however, must not limit membership and involvement to Jewish people exclusively. If Gentiles desire to commit themselves to the ministry and calling of the Messianic congregation they should not be excluded.

In order for a Messianic congregation to be established we have to be convinced that there is a need for such a congregation. We need to know that the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit bear witness to such an endeavor.

We want to emphasize that the planting of a congregation is not a matter of technique. There is a spiritual and Biblical basis that is foundational to establishing a Messianic congregation. It is this foundation that will enable the leader or leaders to endure in the certain hardships that will come.

### The Biblical Basis of Church Planting

In order to successfully plant a Messianic congregation one must be firmly convinced of the theological and Biblical basis for the establishment of such a congregation. The local congregation provides a Biblical means for evangelization, baptism, and discipleship. It provides God's means for bringing together Jews and Gentiles in a fellowship and unity that God desires.

The Messianic approach allows us to effectively communicate the message of the gospel cross-culturally to our kinsmen. It also allows us to link Gentiles with the Jewish roots of the faith that Paul outlines in Romans 11. Presenting the Gospel in a Jewish context truly allows both Jews and Gentiles to become one in the Messiah. It is not the purpose of this paper to deal with the various arguments and debates over the issue of planting Messianic congregations. These issues have been effectively dealt with in various papers and articles. It is rather our purpose to share with the Lausanne Conference the steps the writer took in planting three congregations.

The basis for establishing a congregation is found in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), as we have mentioned. Dake defines the local church as "a company of redeemed people in any locality or community, who unite themselves voluntarily together as a part of the universal church for the purpose of establishing themselves in the faith of the gospel and to evangelize their community and to propagate the gospel to the ends of the earth." (Dake, Rev. Finis Jennings God's Plan for Man, Dake Bible Sales Inc., Lawrenceville, Georgia, p.518)

Elmer Towns defines a church as "an assembly of baptized believers, in whom Christ dwells, under the discipline of the Word of God, organized for evangelism, education, fellowship and worship; administering the ordinances and reflecting the spiritual gifts." (Towns, Elmer J. Getting a Church Started, 1982.)

Planting a Messianic congregation must involve believers who are committed to God through the Messiah Jesus. They must understand that in beginning a congregation they are committing themselves first to the Lord, submitting themselves to the Word of God and then to one another. They are binding themselves together to grow in their faith and to spiritually reproduce themselves.

With this in mind one cannot overemphasize the importance of having a covenant and doctrinal statement prepared before attempting to begin a congregation. Establishing the congregation's perspective on faith and practice at its inception will eliminate problems that you will almost immediately encounter. I have included samples at the conclusion of this paper.

#### The Role of the Congregational Planter or Planters

"Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained" Prov. 29:18a. The congregational planter must have a vision for the establishment and development of a congregation if it is to succeed. It is his vision that will sustain the congregation in and through the hard times that are certain to come.

Church planters need to be gifted by the Spirit of God in order to succeed in the successful planting of a congregation. They must have the gifts of pastor, teacher, and evangelist foundationally. They should also be endowed with the gifts of helps, ministry, administration, ruling, wisdom, knowledge, faith, prophecy, giving, exhortation, showing mercy, and love. It is unlikely that all of these

gifts will be present in one man. That is why it is wise to begin a congregation with more than one church planter. None of the congregations that were begun by this writer were begun alone. There was always someone near or with me in every stage of planting the congregation.

It is important to note here that if more than one church planter is involved, one of them, from the beginning, must be designated or understood to be the senior pastor. There will be many times when two people may not be perfectly agreed on a decision that must be made. In these cases the senior pastor must be allowed to make the decision. The senior man must understand that true leadership involves being a servant and demonstrate this attitude if he expects to prosper both as pastor and as a believer.

### The Role of Pastor

The pastor is the one responsible before God for the spiritual welfare of the congregation. When the Messiah returns, He will judge and reward pastors according to their faithfulness in leading the congregation to do the will of God. The congregation's spiritual growth and maturity is usually a reflection of the pastor's relationship with the Lord. When I as pastor was spending time in the Word and in prayer, I found that the congregation would prosper. When my devotional life wavered so too did the spiritual growth and life of the congregation.

Biblically there are many roles that a pastor assumes in his role as leader and planter of the congregation.

1. Elder - This role assumes that the leader of the congregation has demonstrated that he has a deep relationship with the Lord. A relationship that has been proven over time. He must demonstrate maturity and character. It should be noted that the Scriptures indicate a plurality of elders. As I have mentioned, if at all possible it is wise to plant a congregation with more than one person who is qualified to be an elder. If this is not possible, the founding pastor should make it a priority to pray that the Lord would raise up elders to help in the ministry of the congregation. The planter should assume the role of senior elder.
2. Bishop - The term bishop is also used to describe the office of pastor. Acts 20:28 translates this word as overseer. The title speaks of one who is responsible for the oversight of the congregation. This role speaks of the administrative duties of leading the congregation. Before the congregation is actually a functional congregation, the planter will have to make many administrative decisions. He will oversee the finances, and the myriad of aspects regarding the physical requirements of starting a congregation, e.g. renting facilities, providing for seating, a lectern, stationery, publicity, and a multitude of other details.
3. Pastor - This role could also be translated "shepherd". In this role he is responsible to watch over those whom the Lord has entrusted to him. When a member or regular attendee falls out of fellowship it is the role of the pastor to seek out that person. It involves a willingness to nurture and care for the people who are a part of

your congregation. It involves teaching the congregation, or feeding the flock. He must involve himself in the selection and training of Sunday or Sabbath school teachers. These teachers in a sense act as undershepherds as they are responsible for training a part of the congregation.

4. Preacher - This refers to the work of proclaiming the Word of God. Someone has defined preaching as "the communication of the Word of God with persuasion through the personality." In a Messianic congregation one must preach to the unsaved Jew, to the Gentile and also to the believers assembled. Every preaching opportunity should be used to present the Good News of Redemption. The proclamation should also exhort the congregation to a deeper walk with God. The congregation must regularly be challenged to assume their responsibilities as priests unto God.
5. Teacher - A twofold task faces the planter of a congregation. He must teach new believers in order to ground them in the faith. Next, he needs to teach the congregation so they are prepared to assume their responsibilities for governing the congregation.
6. Servant - The word in the New Testament might be better translated "slave." The planter of a congregation must be a servant to the congregation. This attitude must be in the heart of the planter if he is to succeed. There are a multitude of tasks that must be accomplished; thankless jobs for which few, if any, will volunteer. (Setting up chairs, cleaning, etc.) I have found that it is much easier to get new people involved in these tasks when they have seen that the spiritual leader of the congregation is willing to do them. A servant attitude is the one that our Messiah demonstrated in the upper room on his last Passover.
7. Steward - The congregation planter is to be a steward. One who is responsible for overseeing the property of his master. In this role we are also to be found faithful. One of the most difficult aspects of this role is "giving away" the organization that has been founded.  
The congregation belongs to the Master. For we who are planting congregations with the sponsorship of a missionary organization this is especially difficult. We must teach the congregation the importance of being independent. When the time comes that the congregation has grown financially and spiritually, the planter must willingly let go of the congregation. We are tempted to try to keep our influence upon the congregation that it might remain faithful to our organization to the exclusion of other organizations. If we are truly planting an independent congregation we must be willing to let go.

The planter of a congregation must wear many hats and be gifted by the Spirit of God to successfully accomplish the work of planting a congregation. To be a parent is a difficult and many times thankless job. Children seem to think of themselves and are not too concerned about the problems that their parents face. Yet we who are parents accept the responsibility, rejoicing in the growth and

maturity of our children. It is the same with giving birth to and parenting a congregation.

### Methods of Planting a Congregation

Elmer Towns lists six methods of planting a congregation:

1. The mother-church concept. In this method a congregation sends part of its membership to another section of town to begin another congregation.
2. A Mission Sunday school. These are satellites of a local congregation established for educational purposes and not primarily for the establishment of a local congregation. Many of these schools have eventually gone on to become independent congregations.
3. A Bible Study Group. This is a group that is established with the purpose of studying the Scriptures. These are generally held in the home of a participating family.
4. Planting a congregation through a local association or denomination. This approach is utilized by the Evangelical Free Church, Conservative Baptists, and many other similar fellowships.
5. Planting congregations through a church split.
6. A pioneer church planter going into an area to plant a congregation.

The Olive Tree Congregation of Chicago was planted utilizing method six above.

The Vineyard Congregation was begun as a result of a home Bible study in Hoffman Estates, a northwest suburb of Chicago.

The Olive Tree Congregation of Toronto was begun by a Bible study and special monthly services sponsored by Chosen People Ministries. These studies were attended by a small group of Jewish and Gentile believers. We spent a good deal of time studying the demographics. We chose a neutral location in a hotel that was easily accessible to the Jewish community. We determined a date to begin services and began the congregation by having bi-weekly meetings. Galen Banashak and I were co-pastors. Both of us lived in Chicago and would commute by air to lead the congregation. I was still pastor of the Vineyard Congregation at the time. For this reason our services were held on Saturday so that we could return for Sunday services at the Vineyard.

I learned that there are distinct advantages to having services on the Sabbath; first, because of the identification with the Jewish community, and second, because it enabled many believers who were members of others churches to attend our services without conflicting with their home fellowships.

Six months after starting the Olive Tree Congregation in Toronto we went to weekly services. Two years after we began the congregation, Chosen People Ministries hired Ben Volman and Rob Styler to continue the work. Ben Volman presently leads the congregation as full-time pastor.

#### Determining Where the Congregation Should be Planted.

A key principle in a successful business, it is said, is found in three words - location, location, location. I believe this is very true for the Messianic congregation as well.

It has been my observation that the sector of the Jewish community most open to the Gospel is found among those who have intermarried and those who are most secularized. These people are our modern day equivalents of tax collectors and sinners. They have removed themselves for the most part from the authority of the Rabbis. The Vineyard Congregation is located in a very fast growing Jewish community. The Jewish community of Buffalo Grove is new and not well established. There are many mixed-married couples who are looking for a congregation in which to participate. Most of these couples have children and want them to have a religious education. One spouse may be from a Catholic or Protestant background and the other from a Jewish background. Seeking a compromise between their two diverging religious backgrounds, they will make inquiry into our congregation.

The Olive Tree Congregation of Chicago, was planted where we had a facility we could use rent free. It was located in the heart of an old and well established Jewish community in Chicago. It turned out to be a wonderful location but, there was not much real thought given to the location. The price was right and the location was favorable as well.

In seeking where to plant the Vineyard Congregation we spent a great deal of time trying to determine where we would have the most success. The people who had been most attracted to the Olive Tree Congregation were mixed-married couples. Northbrook, Highland Park and Glencoe, were communities that were well known for their high concentration of Jewish people and synagogues. While these were well established Jewish communities, they also were populated by Jewish families who were well established and secure in their unbelief. These people were prosperous and not as open as younger, struggling couples might be. Buffalo Grove, on the other hand was populated by newly married and young families. These families in the majority were Jewish or half Jewish and presented a prime target for our type of congregation. Each month would bring more new families. Buffalo Grove is the second fastest growing suburb in the Chicago area. These factors clearly made Buffalo Grove the logical choice to begin a congregation.

In all our advertising and publicity we have emphasized that we are a "Jewish Christian" congregation. This identification has brought far more response than the title "Messianic Congregation." I believe it is because most mixed-married couples see themselves as being Jewish and Christian. Most unbelievers are still not yet familiar with the term Messianic. Each week I receive calls asking for an explanation of what a Jewish Christian congregation is. Many of these inquiries lead to a visit to our congregation. Many visitors, will never return when they



see that we as Jews believe that Jesus is the promised Messiah. Some will come again, and some will come to faith.

The key to the volume of visitors to the congregation is our location and I believe, our appellation, "Jewish Christian."

### Techniques in Preparing for the First Service

The plans for planting The Olive Tree Congregation in Chicago were begun in June of 1978. John Bell and I determined to take action enabling us to begin services for a new congregation on the first Sunday in October. It was determined that I would be the pastor, since I am Jewish.

I must confess I had no idea what was involved in being a pastor. I think if I knew then what I know now, I would not have so easily agreed to assuming that responsibility. I was a full-time student at Moody Bible Institute and a brand new father. I saw the need and felt that God would provide what I lacked. God did in fact provide what I lacked, but pastoral training would have been most helpful.

Two other workers comprised our team for starting the Olive Tree Congregation -- Michael Schiffman, now pastor of Beth Messiah Congregation in Columbus, Ohio. Michael was a student at Trinity Seminary, and also worked part-time for Chosen People Ministries. And, Linda Block (now Herman) was our other co-worker. Linda was also a part-time worker with Chosen People ministries and a full time student at Wheaton College. The only full-time worker was John Bell.

The first thing we did was to write a brochure promoting our congregation. We printed thousands of copies. These brochures were distributed in our door-to-door visits. We also purchased advertising in a local T.V. guide, that was distributed for free throughout the community.

Furthermore, we developed a covenant and articles of faith. Initially these were very basic, and it was necessary over the years to be more specific in stating what we did and did not believe. It is amazing how many strange doctrines and divergent theologies are brought into a congregation. These problems are quickly eliminated by having a doctrinal statement which declares what your congregation holds to be true. I cannot give enough emphasis to the importance of having a comprehensive statement of faith before beginning your congregation.

The four of us began daily door-to-door visitation in the neighborhood surrounding our location. West Rogers Park at the time was populated by a very broad based Jewish community. There were Ultra-Orthodox as well as secular Jewish families in the homes we visited. The responses were as varied as the people. Some would slam their doors in our faces, others would warmly receive us into their homes. There seemed to be a different response to our visiting on behalf of a congregation as compared with visiting as a "missionary." It was our impression that people were more amenable to our visiting on behalf of a congregation. In the past we would visit homes as missionaries not affiliated with any congregation. This is a subjective observation and not based on any factual data.

Our first service was on Sunday October 1, 1978. Sunday was chosen for a number of reasons. We wanted to identify with the majority of the body of believers. At the time the Messianic movement was emphasizing their identification with the Jewish community. The slogan popular at the time was that Messianic Judaism was a fourth branch of Judaism. Some were making the accusation that the Messianic congregations meeting on the Sabbath were being deceptive. We wanted to avoid the accusation of being deceptive. I am not saying that the Messianic Congregations were being deceptive; we just did not want this to present an obstacle or objection to attending or affiliating with our congregation. Second, Sunday was a day that most of our contacts were free to attend worship services. Many Jewish people who had come to faith worked on Saturday. These people especially needed to be able to attend our services.

We were amazed that 35 people came to that initial service. We had no idea how many might attend. There was no weekly Bible study that we led that would be able to draw people to attend our first service. The following Sunday there were about 25 in attendance. By the time we left two years later attendance averaged about 75 people each week.

Barry Berger, one of the first elders of the Congregation, accepted a call to become pastor of the Olive Tree Congregation. His salary came completely from the congregation. However, the congregation continued to receive support from Chosen People Ministries in the form of free rent for the facilities that it used for its meetings. Chosen People Ministries also provided housing for Barry Berger. In May of 1983, the Olive Tree Congregation moved to larger facilities in Niles, Illinois. In September of 1983, Barry Berger left the Olive Tree Congregation. Stuart Rothberg was then called to be pastor. Under Stuart Rothberg the Olive Tree Congregation became truly independent of Chosen People Ministries.

Here is a compilation of some statistics through early 1984 for the Olive Tree Congregation:

- 122 Jewish people had come to know the Lord.
- 132 Gentiles came to know the Lord.
- 88 new believers completed a 36-week program of discipleship.
- 53 completed a 17-week course in Evangelism.
- 5 men were called into full-time ministry.
- 3 men were ordained.
- 5 Jewish missionary agencies had members in the congregation. This helped to break down barriers and promote unity of ministry.
- 6 missionaries were supported at \$100.00 per month.
- Thousands of homes were visited with 80,000 pieces of literature distributed.

The Vineyard Congregation was begun as an outgrowth of a Bible study in the home of a family in Hoffman Estates. John Bell was leading this study. One Jewish believing woman was involved in this study. The balance of attendees were Gentile Christians. John taught the Scriptures from a Jewish perspective and those who were gathered began to develop a burden for Jewish evangelism. They desired to begin a congregation that would attract Jewish people. John Bell then asked me to work with him once again in beginning another congregation.

We determined, as we have discussed, that the best area for starting the Vineyard Congregation would be the newly developing Jewish community of Buffalo Grove, Illinois. We once again established our covenant, and articles of faith. We also printed a brochure promoting the congregation.

This time we began with a Bible study on Friday nights at the same location we would be holding our services. These studies began on March 5, 1982. We set May 2, 1982 to be the date for our first Sunday service. We met in a classroom of a closed school. A traditional synagogue met in the same building, and there were a number of times when people would wander into our congregation by mistake and ended up staying for our service.

We pursued different means of promoting the congregation. We were given free advertising in the local papers in the "Where to Worship" column, as well as free promotions for special services in a column for special events. We always prominently displayed our Jewish Christian perspective.

In 1986 the building in which we met was purchased by the local park district for their administrative headquarters and programs. They began to put pressure on us to move. We were meeting in the gymnasium and they needed those facilities. We began praying for a new location. In 1987 we were approached by a Baptist church that was struggling to survive. They asked us to consider merging with them. They owned a wonderful property in Long Grove. Long Grove borders Buffalo Grove and their building sat on about five acres of land. We shared with them that it would be impossible for us to be effective and have the name "Baptist" in our name. Through much prayer and discussion it was decided that we would merge with Twin Grove Baptist Church and the church then would change its name to the Vineyard Congregation. In November of 1987 we moved into our new facilities. Our merger brought with it an association with the North American Baptist Fellowship. This fellowship was formerly known as the German Baptist Fellowship. The NAB is thrilled to have a part in reaching the Jewish community. We hope to have an influence on their fellowship for even more involvement in Jewish evangelism.

### Conclusion

There is little doubt that the times in which we are living provide us with dramatic opportunity. The Spirit of God is moving among the Jewish people and they are responding. God is blessing the planting of congregations, and there are many areas that are ripe for the planting of these congregations. This paper is written in the hope that it might encourage fellow missionaries and workers to be involved in the planting of congregations.

## Discussion

Fruchtenbaum: Since obviously membership is not limited, you don't have to be Jewish to be a member, how do you maintain the Jewish nature of the congregation and, secondly, you mentioned that one of the congregations met Saturday so it wouldn't conflict with those going to their own churches on Sunday. Since these are churches themselves, these congregations, how do you avoid a split loyalty situation when they are not really totally in one or the other, and they seem to be in two congregations rather than just one.

Schwarcz: To answer your first question, that's a risk we take. At least, that's a risk I took in establishing this congregation, by allowing Gentiles to be full members of the congregation, but that's the commission of the church as I understand it, that the church is for Jew and for Gentile. However, part of our covenant, part of our constitution, and part of our articles of faith delineate clearly where the congregation stands in bringing the gospel to the Jew first and also to the Gentile. Those who become part of our congregation, whether they be Jew or Gentile, must fully understand and embrace the covenant, articles of faith and constitution. Periodically, every year and a half, we go over them during a Sunday school class and make sure that we correct our bearings in case we're drifting off. Over and over again, in both the Olive Tree and the Vineyard Congregation, invariably a year after a Gentile, or even a mixed married couple, will come to our congregation they'll say, "Alright, enough of this Jewish stuff, let's move on," to which we have to deal very clearly from our articles of faith, our covenant and our constitution, that the gospel and the flow of this congregation is to bring it to the Jew first. And we must celebrate these days, we must have an emphasis on these things. So that's how we deal with that. And the Olive Tree Congregation is now ten years old and is still going strong; it has a very effective outreach, both to the Jew and to the Gentile, and has a distinctly Jewish flavor.

As to meeting on Saturday and having others from other churches come, essentially these are people who are able to visit. These are not people who are committed to our congregation unless they become committed to our congregations and then embrace the same doctrinal statement and articles of faith. The only reason I say it is an advantage is that you will have visitors who will come, who will see, who will put in the pushke, it wouldn't hurt, who will give and help pay your expenses, as well as learn the Jewishness of Christianity. So there are advantages to that.

Fruchtenbaum: But you don't encourage double membership.

Schwarcz: No, absolutely not. That's in the articles again, that one must be a member of only one congregation.

Rubin: You've planted three congregations and I think you are pretty gifted as a planter. What now do you think about Saturday or Sunday worship? Do you have any thoughts on that? That also seems to be an issue in the movement.

Schwarcz: I've worked under both and I think both have advantages. Personally, the Jewish people that I have been leading to the Lord and discipling, many of them work on Saturday. So Sunday is just a more appropriate day; at least for me. But, again, in Toronto it has worked out beautifully on Saturday, and they continue to keep it on Saturday. Either day is fine with me. I think it should be a day. I don't think that a congregation really can be

established with a Friday evening service. I think it should be a sacrifice and that one brings the children. Again, Friday night you have trouble bringing children, having children's congregations and so on.

Rubin: At this point it's more a matter of what works best for that congregation rather than a particular conviction.

Schwarcz: No, I don't think we should be under any law one way or the other.

Kohut: How have you dealt with those who belong to other established congregations, whatever denomination, and then had to leave that in order to become members of yours because of the conflict of Sunday worship. If you have to deal with that, it seems to me that the congregation which lost the members to the Olive Tree, that it would have been a difficult situation to explain.

Schwarcz: Those kind of people who would come to our congregation, leaving their other congregations, would be those who might be in a mixed marriage situation. Our congregation would provide a way of communicating with the unsaved spouse. A person would leave their home congregation where the husband or wife would have nothing to do with it and would come to our congregation because at least they would come on the High Holy Days. We encourage that. I know it sounds like sheep stealing, but for the sake of the unsaved one we don't see it as sheep stealing, we see it as missionary activity. We celebrate all the feast days and how they relate to the Messiah and how the two are made one. We're teaching Gentiles the Jewishness of Christianity, and we're teaching Jews that Christianity is Jewish. We have a congregational succoth.

Fruchtenbaum: You are paid by Chosen People Ministries and you plant congregations. When do you decide that you have to leave that congregation?

Schwarcz: When they are strong enough to support their own or when we can make arrangements for an interim that can be supported by other means.

Fruchtenbaum: What role do you play as far as finding a full time man who is unrelated to Chosen People?

Schwarcz: I'm in that process right now. I am one of the elders. Initially I told the congregation a year ago that I have to go, let's form a pulpit committee, and let's choose a pastor. Unfortunately, there are not many Jewish Christian men available for the pastorate. The one person we wanted to pick, there was not a unanimity so we sort of languished and for a year and a half we've been waiting for the Messiah. Basically, the tact I am taking now, I have told the congregation that on July 1st I'm definitely . . . I might be convinced to stay until August 1st . . . but either July 1st or August 1st I'm gone. My suggestion to the congregation is that they appoint an interim pastor who would not be a candidate. This is someone who can run the congregation, but who is not being put forth as a candidate, or is eligible to be a candidate. Therefore, it eliminates the controversy of, "Well, I didn't really want this guy," or "I didn't pick this guy," but at least he's there in the interim. When they start seriously looking for a pastor, more than likely they are going to select this person. That's my hope.

Kolb: The hottest thing in starting new congregations among most Protestant groups today is the telemarketing approach. My question is, would that work?

Schwarcz: I think Lauren Jacobs has utilized that, and with great effect. I believe it takes people who know how to communicate on the phone to do this. I'm not adverse to trying it. Advertising to me has always been the most successful.

Rubin: I find it interesting the way you describe that you're "out of here" July 1st. It's like you have other congregations to plant. My question is, is there a certain personality, gift, etc., to planting that maybe not everybody can be a planter. I really think that you seem to have exhibited that gift.

Schwarcz: Maybe so. I personally think it's a willingness to let go. Maybe it is a gift, but I think many of us are reluctant to let go of that which we have and we fear the unknown. I'm not afraid of failing.

Perling: I was interested in a comment you made, almost an off hand comment, about the reaction that people gave to you when you came as a missionary, as opposed to when you came representing a congregation. I found the same type of thing true. I'm pastor of a fairly good sized congregation in Beverly Hills. When our group goes out, they will often first be asked, "Are you with this group, this group or this group." And when we say "no" to those, only then does the entre normally occur. I would underline what you said and that is, an approach, not that the other approaches are wrong or evil, but we find a warmer welcome.

Schwarcz: That was my observation. And the only reason I made that observation was as another encouragement to planting a congregation. There's room for hundreds, maybe thousands of congregations, sure. Think big. There's room for tons of congregations. Let's do it. So that's one more reason.

Perling: That becomes a type of indictment against the very congregations who are in a Jewish community and not doing evangelism among Jewish people. They have an entre that they may not even realize that they do have.

Ward: I would like to come back and respond to a question here. I think there is a definite, specific gift to be a church planter. I think there are primarily three factors: No. 1, you have to be able to work alone, without emotional support from anybody except Jesus, and not that many people have that gift.

Schwarcz: I don't. I have other people who help me or who I can call all the time.

Ward: But you need to be a self-starter, who can do it by yourself. Ten percent of the population have that capacity. The other ninety percent don't. That's true with ministers too. No. 2, you have to be a Jack-of-all-trades. No. 3 is that special quality where people give you authority almost automatically. If you have those three qualities, then you ought to be doing what Roy does.

Fruchtenbaum: Apparently you try to get some kind of a core group together, as a basis for a congregation. Do you specifically seek out Jewish believers?

Schwarcz: We started the Olive Tree without a net. We did have a Bible study. Generally, non-Jewish believers will avoid us. We'll present the gospel to everyone, but if they are believers, and they're not Jewish, or if they're not believers and they're not Jewish, when they come to our congregation they'll be repulsed.

Fruchtenbaum: I'm talking about starting one, not when they come when they first get going. I mean in the planting stage of things.

Schwarcz: Those who are not Jewish believers, Gentile believers who want to be a part of this, have got to be apprised of the cost of dealing with Jewish people. We make it clear.

Fruchtenbaum: It's a unique situation. Generally, a Baptist or Lutheran or Episcopal doesn't go in looking for Episcopalians or Lutherans. They'll just present the gospel, and when some people are led to the Lord they plant that type of congregation. But here you are deliberately going in not just to begin a congregation, but a Jewish one, and you are looking for a national situation which is not true for others.

Schwarcz: I haven't really thought about it. Again, its all in our articles of faith, covenants, and so on. This Bible study wasn't initially enamored to Jewish people. It was just that the leader, John Bell, who is a leader of the congregation, began to open their eyes as he would study the Scriptures to the Jewishness of this and the importance of bringing the gospel to the Jewish people. As a result, they began to get a burden. He was leading this Bible study for two years before they were at a point where they wanted to start a congregation, and it was only about ten or twelve people.

Butler: As a congregational planter myself, we had an almost identical situation where we became a home Bible study from a mainline denomination and at first we had a magnificent response among Jews. It was open to everyone, but the way I was teaching was the Jewishness of the Scriptures. Little by little the Bible study dwindled to three people. But we just kept on teaching from a Jewish perspective and little by little God would send a person somehow by His Spirit and that's the way we began. I don't think there's a formula for planting and saying, "Will this medium work or will that medium work." You see what God has chosen you to do and what He is doing. There seems to be a grassroots phenomenal experience that God is doing. There is no real key to "doing it." Am I a Lutheran, am I a Methodist, am I a Catholic? No matter.

Leventhal: One of the things I would like to challenge your thinking with and others in this field, is asking ourselves not how we can plant a church, but how we can reach a community. It seems to me that you can create all kinds of wonderful vehicles that can be sponsored by the congregation, that are need-oriented for the community. For example, Israel independence night sponsored by the congregation. Counselling centers sponsored by the congregation. Gym night for families sponsored by the congregation. Marriage and family seminars, child rearing seminars. Weekend seminars like that go over like crazy. They are outreaching into the community. You're not deceiving people, you tell them who's sponsoring. But the point is that often we try to create a congregational image so that they will come to us rather than asking ourselves what are their needs so we can go out to them. All of these different vehicles, whether they're banquets or whatever, there are so many things across the board that we can do to merge into the community, or go out to where they are. Tell them

who is sponsoring it so there's nothing hidden about it, where they can get a much better taste for the first time something they're interested in rather than walking into a congregation because it has a certain name, a certain logo, and others things that we use to draw them in. I'm talking about the Jewish community. There are so many unbelievable needs in terms of kids and drugs, marriage and divorce and splits, financial planning seminars. There are people all over the country who will come in and do these for you, under your banner, if you don't have the particular gifts and training right there in your congregation. So rather than asking ourselves, "How can we build a congregation," we should be asking ourselves, "How can we reach this community," which in this case is primarily Jewish. I think that if we think more along those lines, then we can start praying more creatively about the kind of vehicles the sphere can use to tap into where they're hurting rather than having the idea that because we meet on Friday night, or we have the right songs, and all these things are important, so that they will come to us. It seems to me we should be going out into the community and merging into it everywhere we can. We should go down to the police station and find out where the highest crime rate is, where the trouble spots are, and get ourselves into some volunteer work there, and into the hospitals, all these vehicles where we can tap into the community with our congregations.

Schwarcz: Is there a territorial guideline? There's plenty of territory available without stepping on anybody's toes. There are three areas that I'm praying about in the Chicago area, about where to go next. The near north side, which is yuppie area right around Moody church; another area is the Glencoe/Highland Park area, Northbrook; another area is Crystal Lake, a new community that's just beginning to go. I probably would not go into the Highland Park/Glencoe area because there's a Messianic congregation there now. They're struggling, but that would make me a little bit reluctant to start a congregation there. There are still other areas. There's the south side of Chicago where there is no congregation now, where there are thousands of Jewish people. We need a congregation there. New York . . . you could start one on every corner and not step on anybody's toes. There's plenty of room.

Butler: Most Messianic congregations that I know of, the people who have come in that are non-Jewish have come primarily from either no background in Christianity or from a hyper-evangelical charismatic background. I don't think there is a concern of large denominations losing people to us. There are just too many people out there.

Leventhal: Something we have not thought through very well are the four basic elements in the life of the church: worship, instruction, fellowship and evangelism. The first three are always going to be easy to do because you're around other believers. There's no threat to get together to worship, they want to hear the Bible taught and they want to fellowship together. The one that has to be targeted, prayed for, planned for, strategized, and laid on the counter is evangelism because that is where the fear element is. That's where we are afraid to go because there's a natural fear element and we're not training our people to do that. If you're not planning, praying and strategizing for evangelism, you're not going to see growth. It seems to me we need to hit that factor more than any of the others. It comes back to the same thing; a lot of us think that if we have the right worship service, we have the most dynamic teacher in town, we have the opportunity for fellowship, that they'll automatically come to us. But we're not doing any prayer for our neighbors, we're not planning to have banquets or seventeen weeks for evangelism training. That's the one you have to emphasize because that's the hardest and the most fearful one, but is an aspect of the life of the church.



Kolb: I can't get off of this telemarketing thing. If you were to start a new congregation, that would be a real challenge for you to test. It has been tested with different denominations and it works. It starts like this: You organize a group and make 20,000 telephone calls in the community, just short brief telephone calls. Tell them you're going to start a new church and ask them if you could send them some literature. Of 20,000 calls the average is, and you can tell them any denomination, you'll get 2,000 people who will say, "Yes, send me some literature." For four or five weeks you send them some literature, set your date, give those 2,000 another call, tell them the date the church is going to start and you'll have 200 people at your first service. I'm saying that in a general community where you are going to start a Jewish Christian congregation, you'll have Jews and Gentiles.

Ice: In my community five different churches have done it and only the first one did okay.

Derechinsky: Larry Feldman, who is planting a congregation in New Jersey, invested in a computer that made 3,000 calls over a period of three months and they had two people come. He's continuing to experiment. We're in a community that is 70% Jewish, so there are 12,000 Jews in my town out of 17,000-18,000 people. We have five synagogues and we have a Hebrew academy. One of the things that we have been talking about is having a plan with telemarketing. We are being told that what we need to do is target a specific festival or holiday. You have to plan, say, Channakah, you want to have a Channakah concert, its not too threatening. You go through a long program of planned attack by mailing out information, following up with calls, mailing out more information on that. I think Larry's going to try that.

Pittaway: I've been a part of two different Messianic congregations now. The first one grew out of a Bible study from a large Christian church. We moved from, "Gee, all this stuff is fun to study and its okay to study, why aren't we doing it?" So we became a Messianic congregation. That's easier to say than it was to actually do. However, my wife and I discovered something interesting. We built a succa in our backyard. I'm reasonably outgoing, but my wife has difficulty witnessing. We found that was a powerful witnessing tool. Our neighbors got real curious about, "Why are you building that in your backyard." A succa is a tabernacle, by the way. It's like a shed; you live in it for seven days. The neighbors come in to share the evening with us. We get a great chance to share the gospel. The Jewish people I dealt with, because I am a Gentile, were very curious.

**COFFEE BREAK:** 3:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

**THIRD SESSION:** 3:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

REPORT: Replacement Theology - Philip Bottomley