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The Zion Society for Israel, 1878-1990 (Including Good News for Israel, 1975-1990)
Kearney Frantsen

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By Pastor Kearney Frantsen, Director

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June 6, 1878, a small group of Lutheran laymen and pastors, who were known as the 'Jewish Mission friends', met to organize what they called 'the oldest Jewish Mission Society in America' - the Zion Society For Israel.

This short History of the Zion Society will try to give a special feel for its beginnings and its basic ministry over the years. Some background details will be given on some of the missionaries, to show the remarkable number of Russian and other European Jewish believers that were involved with the Zion Society over the years. I regret that this is not the place to tell their many amazing stories in detail.

In the quotes especially, but also in some of the text, the language used will be that of years gone by. It may sound somewhat strange or insensitive to our ears. Rightly or wrongly, helpfully or hurtfully, that is the way they spoke and wrote. To change their words to suit our hearing today would not do justice to the historical record.

THE BEGINNING OF THE ZION SOCIETY FOR ISRAEL

Two men were instrumental in starting the Zion Society. Both were immigrant Norwegian pastors. Both were influenced by the Norwegian Israel's Mission (Den Norske Israelsmisjon), which was founded in 1843 as a result of the Hauge revival that swept Norway the first part of the Nineteenth Century.

Rev. Johan P. Gjertsen, "The Father of the Zion Society", came to America in 1864 and served as pastor in Racine, Wisconsin. He saw in the unfulfilled prophecies the bright future in store for the Jewish people. He also saw the sacred obligation resting upon the Church according to the Word of God to bring the Gospel to Israel. And, he saw the Church neglecting this mission. He travelled considerably lecturing and soliciting funds. By early 1878 a small number of Lutherans had been aroused to concern for

the conversion of Israel. He had raised \$224 from 188 persons.

Professor Sven R. Gunnensen, a 'budding theologian', came to America in 1874 to teach at Augsburg Seminary in Minneapolis. He was a great encouragement to Gjertsen, and together they worked toward establishing a Jewish mission. Gunnensen published two key articles in the 'Lutheraneren', the official organ of the Norwegian Lutheran Conference. He quoted from Prof. Frantz Delitzsch speaking in Leipzig, Germany, at a General Jewish Mission Conference. This carried much weight with his readers. He added his own eloquent appeal urging love for the Jews.

From Prof. Delitzsch: "As truly as the Gospel is the power of God unto Salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first .. just as true is it that the Church that one-sidedly limits her preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles is not the object of God's power. For the Church to evangelize the world without thinking of the Jews is like a bird trying to fly with one wing broken. Let us without wearying, labor for the conversion of Israel, because it is not our honor, but God's and the Church's honor that is concerned. Shall our appeals year after year fall like snowflakes on the frozen ground?"

From Prof. Gunnensen: "How is it possible that he, in whose heart the love of God is shed abroad by the Spirit, should not love the brethren of Christ according to the flesh, and should not be willing to labor that they also might become his brethren according to the Spirit? But we, yes we, understand very little what it is to love, because we are not spiritual, but carnal-minded. Nevertheless we call ourselves Christians ... I will gladly do all I can to encourage others to love the Chosen People of God."

On March 13, 1878, a meager few responded to an invitation to meet at Rochester, Minnesota, to organize a Jewish Mission. Only some preliminary steps were taken, but it was decided to call their mission "The Gobat Society" after the well-known Jewish missionary, Bishop Gobat in Jerusalem.

Finally, in June the actual organizational meeting took place following a convention of the Norwegian Lutheran Conference in Stoughton, Wisconsin. Gjertsen preached on Hosea 3:4-5, and Rev. Lanslund preached on Romans 9:3, contrasting Paul's love for Israel and concern for her Salvation with 'our indifference to this cause.' The offering was \$88.56. At the Business Meeting they changed their previous decision, and called the new mission the Zion Society For Israel, with the object 'to work for the conversion of Israel.'

They urged the forming of local Jewish missionary societies, and rejoiced that two had already been formed in Rochester and Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Thus, the Zion Society was launched. For forty years it was entirely Norwegian. Then some Swedes joined in 1918, Danes in 1927, and later some German Lutherans became involved. It gradually grew in strength and influence in the midst of much indifference and opposition within the Church. Its Motto was "The Jews for Christ." It had a two-fold purpose: 1) To reach the Jewish people with the Gospel, and 2) To acquaint the Church with Israel's spiritual need.

During the first year President Gjertsen often left Racine to do field work for the Society. He raised \$528 and started fourteen fledgling local societies. At the first annual meeting in Minneapolis, they decided to divide the mission money raised, between Rev. Faltin's Jewish mission in Kischineff, Russia, and Bishop Gobat's mission in Jerusalem.

I. THE MISSIONARY APPROACH

September 9, 1880, the Central Committee met in Prof. Gunnersen's office in Minneapolis. On the advice of Prof. Delitzsch in Germany, they chose between two Jewish Lutheran pastors, and sent a Call to Rev. Theodor C. Meyersohn, a Russian Jew just graduating from the seminary in Berlin. His Call was to Palestine for a salary of \$700 yearly in gold, plus travelling expenses to his field of labor.

When he accepted the Call, the Zion Society rejoiced that the Lord had given them this educated, gifted, and Spirit-filled missionary. Meyersohn was born in Russia in 1850. He learned Hebrew as a boy, and had a hunger for Scripture. From age eight he devoted himself to the Talmud. But the emptiness of orthodox Judaism discouraged him. Exposure to a simple Gospel tract started him on the way to becoming a believer. Rev. Gurland at Mitau was most instrumental in his coming to confess Christ. After his baptism in 1874 he studied theology in Berlin. In February of 1881 he was in Palestine as the

Zion Society's first missionary. In seven months he gave up and got permission to return to Russia. There he worked for over thirty years till his death in 1913. He had baptized 438 sons and daughters of Israel. We may note that his father-in-law and others worked faithfully alongside him during most of those years.

In 1882 the Zion Society called Rev. Paul Werber to work among the Jewish people in Baltimore. His salary was only \$500 a year, but he accepted it because of his strong sense of Call from the Lord. Born in Galicia in 1844, he tired of the dry Talmud and began studying Scripture under a Hebrew teacher, who turned out to be a secret believer. Searching for truth he went to Germany. With the help of Prof. Cassel in Berlin he found peace through faith in his Messiah. In 1868 he was baptized, and after seminary in Berlin, he emigrated to America in 1872 and served several parishes before joining the Zion Society. He labored faithfully in Baltimore until his death in 1896. For nearly twenty years he personally regularly published a Jewish missions periodical called 'Der Freund Israels', which had nearly 700 Jewish readers.

In 1892 the Zion Society called Rev. Rudolph Gurland as its third missionary. He accepted the Call on the condition that he be allowed to work in Russia, where he had already pastored 25 years, and had been in close touch with Jewish missions. His salary was \$1200 yearly. He was born in 1836 in Wilna, Russia, the son of a rabbi. He became a rabbi, but despaired of fanatical orthodoxy. He resigned to write a book, but then a book called the New Testament changed his life. He went to Rev. Faltin in Kischeneff and in 1864 he and his wife were baptized as Lutherans. After study in Berlin he served as Faltin's assistant pastor. For the Zion Society he worked in the Baltic provinces, Poland, Finland, and especially in Odessa, Russia.

II. THE CENTER APPROACH

After the turn of the Century the Zion Society's ministry became focused on Jewish Mission centers that it established in various cities where there

were many Lutherans and Jewish people in close proximity. The Center approach lasted from 1903 to 1952.

Lutherans and Jews migrated to America almost simultaneously. The Jews came usually because of the unbearable circumstances due to Anti-Semitic actions, and they came with little worldly goods. The idea of the Centers was that Lutherans could ⁿled aid to Jewish immigrants in need. Jewish people found a friendly atmosphere and ready assistance - yes, even with day-care programs for their children. They were also given Bible Study and religious rap sessions, if they chose to participate. Loving and tactful witnessing of God's grace in the Messiah was a prime function. In addition to the Centers, the Zion Society had missionaries working in Omaha, Duluth, San Antonio, and Los Angeles, off and on for many years.

THE CHICAGO FIELD In 1903 Rev. Emanuel N. Heimann was called to begin a work in Chicago. He had already done Jewish mission work there for ten years for the German Lutheran Iowa Synod. He was the fourth Russian Jewish believer called by the Zion Society. His story is similar to that of Meyersohn, Werber, and Gurland. His father was a learned Orthodox Talmudist. Studying in Germany, he first heard the Gospel when he heard a Lutheran pastor, Prof. Cassel, preach on the Great Wedding Banquet. After his conversion and seminary training, he emigrated to America and began his ministry as an assistant pastor in Iowa for \$10 per month plus room and board.

Heimann is credited with laying a solid foundation for the Zion Society's Chicago mission. In 1909 a two-story building was purchased for \$18,250 at 13th and Halsted Streets. It was soon too small. In 1914 it was demolished and a new four-story building was erected on the site for \$35,000. It was called 'The Zion Building.' They rented out the first floor. To follow the movement of the Jewish people the Society moved its location several times, and operated two and even three Centers at the same time in Chicago.

Sister Minnie Nyborg, Emma Larson, Esther Olson, Agda Olson, and Greta

Wiking, were some of the Chicago workers. Sister Nyborg, however, had to sever her connection with the Society when she joined a non-Lutheran Church.

A number of the Hebrew Christians who served the Zion Society over the years, were won for Christianity by missionaries of the Society. One of these was Rev. Isadore Schwartz. He served in Chicago from 1918 to 1922, and again from 1942 to 1964. He was the Director for 16 years. Resnick was his spiritual father, who came through Meyersohn, who came through Gurland, who came through Faltin's ministry, which was supported by the Society at first.

Rev. Victor Sternherz was born in Russia in 1865 to strictly orthodox parents. As a young man he met Christ, and after 18 months of earnest study of God's Word, was baptized in 1891. After work in Budapest and London for the Swedish Mission Society, he came to America in 1906 and eventually became a Lutheran pastor and served the Society in Minneapolis, and Chicago.

Rev. John S. Dallmann was another Jewish believer who came to Christ from strict Jewish orthodoxy in Germany. After study and service in England, Switzerland, and Germany, he came to America as a Lutheran pastor in Texas, then with a Hebrew Mission in New Orleans, and from 1929 until 1948, as head of the Zion Society's Chicago work.

THE MINNEAPOLIS - ST. PAUL FIELD In 1913 Rev. A. H. Gjevre, who had served in New York earlier, was called to divide his time between missionary work in Minneapolis and field work in the congregations. Charles and Inga Wallgren began a work for the Society in 1918 by offering their little mission on Jackson Street to the mission. They also gave and ran the Zion Camp on the east side for many years. Other early workers in the Twin Cities were Sister Ida Lindquist, Esther Sandberg, Minnie Froseth, Hannah Resnick, Agnes Tangjerd, Emma Larson, Rev. A. G. Dahle, Rev. J. Landsmann, Rev. S. J. Rude, Rev. Elias Newman, Ethel Berquist, Clara Isaacson, and Edward M. Johnson.

In 1922 a church building at 2021 17th Ave. So. was bought in Minneapolis for \$3500. Later a building was rented on the North side and became the

actual Center, while the South side property was used as the Headquarters. Directors changed often during these years: Sternherz in 1919, Dahle in 1923, and Johnson in 1929.

The first full-time General Superintendent of the Zion Society was Rev. John Resnick. He came to his Messiah through the ministry of Meyersohn in Russia. Born in 1874, he fled to Sweden after his conversion, and was baptized there in 1892. He came to America in 1899, where he pastored in Brooklyn five years, and then served in Romania with the Swedish Jewish Mission for twelve years until WWI forced him out. From 1918 to his death in 1924 he served as the head of the Zion Society. During those years the work developed to an almost unbelievable degree. Losing him at the age of 50 was a tremendous blow to the Zion Society.

At the Minneapolis headquarters Rev. C. S. Vang served as Gen. Supt. after the tragic loss of Resnick, from 1925 until 1940. Rev. Gerhard A. Peterson followed him until 1952, when Rev. Clarence M. Hanson took over until 1971 under the new title of Executive Secretary.

In 1933 Rev. Elias Newman came on staff in the Twin Cities. He directed both Centers until 1949. He was born in Poland in 1888 to orthodox Jewish parents. His family moved to England and he grew up there. He was converted in 1903 through the work of the Mildmay Mission. He had been a secret believer for three months before he told his parents. He was promptly disowned. During 1908 and 1909 he studied in Germany with Lutheran teachers. He came to America in 1912, worked in Canada for three years, in Chicago for four years, and from 1924 to 1929 in Damascus, Syria, doing a great work through two schools with over 600 Jewish students. Then he was in St. Louis with the Presbyterians, and got turned off by their modernism and became a Lutheran. He had been involved in founding the Hebrew Christian Alliance of America.

He was a prolific writer. He wrote over 400 articles in 70 different magazines and papers before he started with the Zion Society in 1933. In 1949

he began a branch of the Haifa "Carmel Institute" in Minneapolis. The next year he and his followers severed relationships with it after a visit to Haifa showed him that he did not agree with their methods. He organized a new committee under the auspices of the Norwegian Israels Mission. This work lasted ten years, until he retired and turned it over to the Zion Society. He published a bi-monthly magazine during those years, and in 1990 there are still two of his "Friends of Israel" groups still meeting regularly in Minneapolis and St. Paul.

THE BROOKLYN FIELD In 1893 the Zion Society began to actively look for seminary students that they could send to study in Germany under Prof. Delitzsch. In 1899, one such student, Rev. A. H. Gjevre, accepted their Call to begin a Jewish mission station in New York City. Due to sickness he was compelled to resign within three years. He later served in Minneapolis.

The Zion Society had long wanted a permanent work among the two million Jewish people in Greater New York. Finally in 1923 they called Dr. Harry Zeckhausen, a Hebrew Christian, and a missionary-physician, to work in the Williamsburg District in Brooklyn, which was 98% Jewish. He opened an office at 810 Keap Street, and ministered to the sick and suffering and to inquirers. He was another Russian Jew of orthodox parents who eventually found Christ. During his eleven years in Brooklyn, 106 Jews accepted Christ and were baptized under his ministry. 22 of these gave themselves to full-time Christian service. Due to lack of funds the Brooklyn mission closed in 1934.

In 1936 the work was taken up again by Rev. Walter Atkinson, a German Jewish believer who met Christ through the Chicago mission of the Zion Society. He came to be assisted in 1937 by Rebecca Millunchick, and Ruth Christenson. The Zion Society gratefully accepted the help of the Lutheran Daughters of the Reformation, and the Women's Missionary Society of the Augustana Synod, who sponsored these women missionaries. Many such sponsoring relationships helped the Society to field workers over the years, and do other projects.

The FRIEND OF ZION magazine was published eleven times a year from 1923 until 1964. The Norwegian language magazine ZION'S RÖST was published from 1910 until 1952, the last three years of which, it was part of the FRIEND OF ZION. Most of those years the subscription price was 50¢ a year 'paid in advance.' They contained articles, reports, poems, testimonies, biographies, news of the world's Jews, announcements, and appeals. Some of the headlines read like this: "A Jewish Baptism in Chicago", "Youn Jew Baptized in Minneapolis", and "Victories at Zion Camp", etc.

FRESH AIR CAMPING was a big part of the work in Chicago and the Twin Cities. Chicago Jewish children were taken in the summer to a camp 35 miles southeast in Indiana. In 1925 the Zion Society bought three acres with buildings on Lake Minnetonka for \$4000. It was not used many years before it was sold. They should have kept it. The main fresh air facility was the St. Paul Zion Camp started in 1913 by the Wallgrens. They built a one room cottage on a few acres of land they owned. That first summer twelve Jewish children stayed until school opened. By 1950 there were 90 campers in three sessions. There was lots of recreation, good food, activities, Bible stories, and memorization. The camp record for memorizing Bible verses was 120 by a twelve year old girl, and 92 by a 14 year old boy. Two four-year-olds got up to 13 verses, and a mother got up to 61.

A sample article about one of the youth they worked with reads like this:

"Ben, a Jewish youngster of 16, had attended the picture programs only three times when the Holy Spirit convicted him of sin and constrained his heart to yield to Jesus. He writes me as follows: 'Dear Mr. Oslender, The reason I have accepted Christ is because of the interesting pictures you share at the Zion Center every week, in which I have taken great interest. Since attending these meetings I have a great interest in Christ whom I now accept as my Savior and Messiah, who will take away all my sins and one bad habit which I have. Sincerely yours, Ben.'"

An example of some of the strong reaction from the Jewish community to the Zion Society youth program is seen in this article from the Chicago Jewish Courier of May 18, 1931. It reports:

"We have learned that on the North side the missionaries have become

very active. Jewish children are lured into Jewish Mission-houses. Alarming reports about this have reached us. It is not the first time that these soul-stealers have been active. We can only say that the best cure for this would be if the Talmud Tora Schools on the West side would have organized clubs and started extensive activities among the children, and this would have kept the children from going to those places. This, in our opinion, would be the best way to keep them away from the influence of those audacious soul-catchers."

The Zion Society faced much opposition within the Lutheran churches, as well. Anti-Semitism was one of the biggest barriers to Jewish evangelism. Heard out of the mouths of Ministers of the Gospel: "I don't want my good blood 'swinified' with Jewish blood", and "We don't want our churches Judaized." ... and these words were not heard in Germany.

THE ZION HOUR, a weekly radio program was produced in Minneapolis and aired over WDGY, and in Chicago over WAIT. Later it was broadcast over WCAL radio of St. Olaf College in Northfield, and still later, over KEYD in Minneapolis. This program went off and on from 1943 to 1951.

War relief efforts were made after WWII. In March 1947 an appeal for food and new and good used clothing was made for the relief of Hebrew Christian survivors of the Nazi terror. The Hebrew Christian was often caught in the middle: Jews excluded them because they were Christian, and non-Jewish relief agencies generally excluded them because they were classified as Jews. Thousands of parcels were sent to Germany in the late 1940's. By July 1948 the So. Minneapolis Auxiliary alone had sent over 300 packages.

The Auxiliaries of the Zion Society grew in number until there were 28 of them in the 1950's and 1960's. They are listed here to show the areas of the country that gave the strongest support: Minnesota (12) - So. Minneapolis, No. Minneapolis, St. Paul, Jackson, Kenyon, Lyle, McIntosh, Northfield, Pelican Rapids, Petersburg, Bergen, and Windom. Iowa (8) - Badger, Eagle Grove, Jewell, Roland, Ruthven, Sioux City, Story City, and Wallingford. Illinois (3) - North, South, and West Chicago. Also Brooklyn, Canton (SD), Seattle, Tacoma, and Eau Claire (Wis).

A typical Annual Report contained many detailed statistics about the

Society's work done during the year. Gen. Supt. Peterson noted the following in his 1950 report:

12,179 calls made (5438 short calls & 3799 longer calls & 2942 not home) "An aggregate of 675 personal approaches was made to people through means other than visitation." 275 services with 4405 attending. 793 classes with 7060 attending.

Distribution: 89,577 tracts and papers
2,769 Bibles, New Testaments, and Scripture portions.
5,481 Invitations and bulletins printed and sent.
211,337 pieces of literature for our own people to
acquaint them with the work.
297,325 periodicals printed.
164,966 tracts and leaflets printed.

The years after WWII found the Zion Society in another financial crunch. Basically, the reasons were the starting of a Jewish Mission Department by the new National Lutheran Council (NLC), and therefore the loss of the exclusive identification, 'The Jewish Mission', plus post-war fund-drives by Lutheran World Action.

There was a great debate within the Zion Society over whether or not to merge into the NLC. The arguments for this were: 1) We need the official seal of recognition and authorization of the Lutheran Church to gain entrance to many churches. 2) We need training facilities. 3) We are proof that Lutherans can labor together in complete harmony in their approach to the Jews.

Elias Newman spoke out sharply against such a merger and loss of identity:

"Our example should be the Jewish Mission Societies of Europe. The London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews is strictly a Church Society. It is recognized officially by the Church of England as its mission agency for Israel, but it runs its own affairs through contributing members and auxiliaries who elect the Board of Directors. If this proposed merger takes place, the Zion Society will cease to function as an independent agency. In the NLC we would be a sub-committee of a sub-committee of a sub-committee. In Canada, shortly after such a plan was adopted, all specific and definite work among Jews was abandoned in less than a year."

By May of 1946 results of a special ballot showed 426 against the proposed merger and 68 for it. Thus ended a two year debate and struggle that had paralyzed the work.

But three years later in 1950 it was voted in convention to

"unite our forces with those of the 'Christian Approach to the

Jewish people' under the NLC, but continue to exist as a corporation to stir up interest in the churches and gather funds to support the work."

This development united the Zion Society with other Lutheran Jewish missions: in Baltimore (Rev. Henry Einspruch), Philadelphia (Rev. Nels Bergstrom), and Pittsburgh (Rev. Dan Bravin). This relationship lasted ten years until the NLC discontinued its Jewish mission program. In spite of Newman's warnings, the Zion Society survived its decade within the NLC fairly well. Its structure and independence had not really been harmed. Newman's warnings, however, were to be prophetic of the next merger of the Zion Society -- going into the American Lutheran Church in 1964.

III. THE PARISH APPROACH In June of 1946 Rev. Earl Duane was ordained as Assistant Pastor of Russel Avenue Lutheran Church in north Minneapolis - an area over 75% Jewish at the time. His specific ministry was to reach out to the Jewish people around the church with the Gospel. This became a model for the parish approach to Jewish evangelism that characterized the Zion Society after 1952. A similar 'parish approach' was in Manhattan out of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church. Also, this was a time when Jewish people were moving out of their first areas close to city centers, and heading for the suburbs scattering far and wide. The Zion Society's centers closed one by one.

Rev. Clarence M. Hanson became the Executive Secretary of the Zion Society Sept. 1, 1952. He championed the parish approach, which focused in on the local congregation to assume the responsibility for Jewish mission in its own local, and for equipping its own members to evangelize the Jewish people. The Zion Society devoted itself to assisting the local congregations with Jewish evangelism.

In 1953 a motion picture, 'THEY WAIT FOR YOU', was produced as a 75th anniversary message to the whole church. Nels Bergstrom stated:

"The Society has been instrumental in awakening the conscience of the Church. Through its constant reiteration of the message

of responsibility the churches are coming to see that the Jews at their doorstep need Christ."

For over three months in the Spring of 1953, C. M. Hanson made a Europe-Israel survey and study trip in the interest of Jewish missions. He met many of the biggest names in theology and missions, and had numerous experiences that shaped his thinking and speaking the rest of his life.

Seven years later in 1960 he took a 35 day trip to South America to do a Jewish Mission survey visiting missionaries in Sao Paulo (50,000 Jewish people), Montevideo (55,000), Buenos Aires (300,000), La Paz (4000), Lima (3500), Quito (2000), and Bogata (5000). The Zion Society was interested in and attracted to South America because most of the Jewish people there were refugees, and thus more open to the Gospel. Basically, the trip was an encouragement to the missionaries to include the Jewish people in their outreach, and to determine the needs of the missionaries for specialized literature for Jewish evangelism. For many years after this, the Zion Society translated many of its tracts into Spanish and sent Jewish evangelism packets to the S.A. missionaries every other month.

In June of 1960 the Zion Society presented a 'Training School For Jewish Evangelism' at the Zion Camp in St. Paul. This was a first. Especially invited were pastors and parish workers who had Jewish people in their parish areas. The guest faculty were Dr. Jacob Jocz of the Nathanael Institute in Toronto, Dr. John Milton of Luther Seminary in St. Paul, and Rev. C. M. Hanson. This became an annual event and was moved to the Mt. Carmel campgrounds near Alexandria, Minnesota, a few years later, as the Zion Camp was liquidated in 1964.

Elias Newman retired in May of 1960 and turned his organization, The American Committee for Mission Work in Israel, over to the Zion Society. For four years the Zion Society supported four missionaries in Israel who worked with the Norwegian Israels Mission: Berit Skjeie, Sister Olga Olausen (who had been a missionary in Romania many years), and Rev. and

Mrs. Janou Moscovici. This ministry was integrated into the ALC's World Missions program in 1964.

In October of 1962, Jerome Azen, a 37 year old Luther Seminary student, died suddenly of illness. He was the first Jewish student to attend Luther Seminary. He was a direct result of the parish approach of Jewish evangelism. A door-to-door parish worker had found him and won him to the Lord. His death dashed very high expectations that he would become a strong leader of the Zion Society one day.

THE END OF THE ZION SOCIETY The 1960 merger of Norwegian, German, and Danish Lutherans, to form THE AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH, changed things drastically for the Zion Society. It had just recently been cut adrift from the NLC, and now the Zion Society's leaders were eager to take it into the ALC.

In convention they resolved "that favorable consideration be given to tranfering the responsibility of evangelization of the Jews from the Zion Society to the congregations of the ALC, with impetus and guidance given by the Commission on Evangelism."

Assurance was to be given by the ALC that all monies and properties designated for Jewish evangelism actually be used for that purpose. This merger was to spur on the work of the Zion Society from within the big church and foster the further development of the parish approach.

Rev. C. M. Hanson said to the Zion Society constituency, "we are determining the future of a soul-winning program amongst the Jewish people."

And so it was indeed. The Zion Society in Special Convention in January of 1964 voted unanimously to merge into the ALC. Hindsight shows that this move was a disaster. Emphasis on evangelism swiftly ebbed out of the ALC.

The Zion Society tried to maintain its uniqueness and identity within the ALC, but they had little or no control over their destiny as a mission. All Zion Society properties and liquidated assets were now the property of the ALC, and the auxiliaries dropped out of existence one-by-one until they were nearly all gone.

Pastor Hanson wrote several books: SPEAK TENDERLY TO JERUSALEM,

ISRAEL: HOW RICH YOU ARE, and a Passover Seder booklet. He retired in 1971 at the age of 68. His co-worker, Rev. Stanley Olson, continued in charge of Jewish evangelism (among other duties pressed upon him), until the ALC's re-structuring in 1973 dismantled the entire Evangelism department.

Thus, in nine years within the ALC, the Zion Society disappeared; though it continues to exist to this day (now within the ELCA) as a paper corporation for the receiving of monies willed to it.

Needless to say, these events were extremely disappointing to Rev. Hanson, and to all those who cared about Jewish evangelism within the Lutheran Churches. Especially regretful was the fact that the solemn promises of ALC churchmen were not kept.

To his lasting credit, in 1974 and 1975 Pastor Hanson sought out those in the Lutheran Churches who were still concerned, and were willing to help support the resurrection of an independent Lutheran ministry of Jewish evangelism. Thus it was, that he formed a new Board of Directors, raised some money, and they called Rev. Kenneth Roufs to be the first full-time Director of the successor body to the Zion Society -- GOOD NEWS FOR ISRAEL.

In 1981 Rev. Kearney Frantsen came to be the second Director. He had a Jewish believer, Joel Baker, for an assistant in 1982 to 1983. In 1984 Marc Danzis was called and served until 1987. Jeff Kipp, a third Jewish believer, has been the Staff Evangelist since June of 1987.

Rev. C. M. Hanson died January 6, 1990, at the age of 87.

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