

### JEWISH EVANGELISM IN THE SOUTH

THERE WERE JEWS IN THE SOUTH BEFORE THERE WAS A SOUTH. SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE JEWS FROM THE BARBADOS ESTABLISHED THE INDIGO TRADE IN THE CAROLINAS AS EARLY AS 1720.

IN THE MID TO LATE 1700'S THERE WERE ABOUT 3,000 JEWS IN ALL THE 13 COLONIES; AND OF MORE THAN 3,000 HOUSES OF WORSHIP AT THE BEGINNING OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR, ONLY 5 WERE JEWISH AND ONLY 2 OF THEM WERE IN THE SOUTH.

MIKVAH ISRAEL WAS IN SAVANNAH, GA, BUT THERE WERE ONLY ABOUT 40 JEWS IN ALL OF GEORGIA. BETH ELOHIM IN CHARLESTON, S.C. HAD THE BIG POPULATION OF ABOUT 68 JEWISH FOLKS.

GEORGIA HAD THE FIRST JEWISH GOVERNOR IN AMERICA. HE WAS DAVID EMMANUEL, GEORGIA'S 6TH. GOVERNOR.

AND IN THE EARLY 1800'S ABRAM MORDECHIA FOUND<sup>(A)</sup>ED THE CITY OF MONTGOMERY, ALA. MORE THAN 40,000 JEWS CAME TO THE SOUTH BETWEEN THE CIVIL WAR AND W.W.1.

THERE WERE JEWS IN ATLANTA BEFORE THERE WAS AN ATLANTA. JACOB HASS CAME TO AMERICA FROM GERMANY IN 1803, SETTLED IN A TOWN CALLED MARTHASVILLE. . . LATER IT WAS RENAMED ATLANTA.

SOUTHERN JEWS KEPT CLOSE KNIT COMMUNITIES, DESIRING TO MAINTAIN A LOW PROFILE, AND THE OLD GUARD OF ATLANTA, SAVANNAH, ALA AND THE CAROLINA'S ARE STILL, TODAY, CLOSE KNIT COMMUNITIES.

THERE WERE ALWAYS RUMORS OF JEWISH BELIEVERS IN JESUS, BUT NOTHING REALLY CONCRETE BEGAN TO HAPPEN UNTIL THE LATE 30'S WHEN JACOB GARTENHOUSE CAME TO ATLANTA. THROUGH HIS MINISTRY MANY JEWISH PEOPLE CAME TO KNOW THEIR JEWISH MESSIAH.

*Both are misspelled*

PROMINENT WOMEN FROM THE OLD GUARD JEWISH FAMILIES, SUCH AS ANN POTHUSER, NETTIE HEIFLER, MRS. HOSHBERG AND MARIE WALLERSTEIN. MARIE REMEMBERS HAVING MATZO BALL SOUP WITH GARTENHOUSE AND TALKING ABOUT JEWISH EVANGELISM WITH HIM JUST BEFORE HE MOVED HIS MINISTRY TO CHATTANOOGA, TN. ABOUT 1965.

BECAUSE OF THE CLOSENESS OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY BACK THEN, IT WAS VERY DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT YESHUA AND NOT BE OSTRACIZED. NETTIE HEIFLER'S AUNT WAS COMMITTED TO A MENTAL INSTITUTE WHEN SHE RECEIVED THE L-RD.

OTHER EVANGELISTS SUCH AS HYMAN APPLEMAN, JERRY FLEISHER, ARTHUR GLASS. . . AND FAMILIES, SUCH AS MARTIN AND YOHANNAH CHERNOFF CAME THROUGH GEORGIA AND OTHER SOUTHERN STATES.

THEY ALL PLANTED SEEDS AND WATERED THE SEED THAT HAD BEEN PLANTED BEFORE THEM. A NUMBER OF JEWS ACCEPTED THE MESSIAH UNDER THEIR MINISTRIES. . . BUT HISTORY SEEMS TO SHOW IT WAS NOT G-D'S TIMING.

EACH OF THEM FOUND THE SOUTH, ESPECIALLY AROUND GEORGIA, THE BIBLE-BELT, TO BE A HARD NUT TO CRACK. AGAIN, IT SIMPLY WAS NOT G-D'S TIMING.

OTHER SMALL GROUPS WOULD SPRING UP FROM TIME TO TIME, BUT IT WAS NOT UNTIL 1977 THAT G-D OPENED THE DOOR FOR A CONTINUING MESSIANIC JEWISH WORK IN ATLANTA.

**FROM THIS POINT ON I CAN SPEAK FROM FIRST-HAND KNOWLEDGE.**

G-D SPOKE TO PASTOR BRYAN LEE ISAIAH 40:1, TO "COMFORT YE, ~~COMFORT~~ YE, MY PEOPLE". THIS PASTOR SUPPORTED, UNDERGIRDING AND ENCOURAGED MY WIFE AND I IN THE JEWISH MINISTRY HE WAS CALLING US TO.

THE MINISTRY, KNOWN AT THAT TIME AS "JEWISH BELIEVERS AND FRIENDS" BEGAN AND REMAINED A MONTHLY OUTREACH FROM 1977 - 1981, DURING WHICH TIME MANY JEWISH MEN AND WOMEN ACCEPTED YESHUA AS THE PROMISED MESSIAH.

IN 1979 JEWISH BELIEVERS AND FRIENDS WAS GRANTED A NON-PROFIT STATUS WITH THE STATE OF GEORGIA, AND IN DECEMBER 1980, A NON-PROFIT STATUS WAS GRANTED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT.

G-D WAS PREPARING FOR A MORE EXTENDED MINISTRY, AND IN MARCH 1981 HE CALLED US TO REACH OUTSIDE THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH TO OUR JEWISH PEOPLE WHO COULD NOT, FOR WHATEVER REASON, COMMIT TO WORSHIP IN A NON-JEWISH MANNER.

HENCE, THE FIRST INDEPENDENT MESSIANIC JEWISH CONGREGATION IN THE SOUTHEAST WAS FORMED. CONGREGATION BETH HALLEL. THE INFANT MINISTRY BEGAN IN LEASED FACILITIES. . . OFFICE SPACE WHICH WE CONVERTED INTO A SANCTUARY.

WE BEGAN WITH A HANDFUL OF PEOPLE WHO BELIEVED IN THE VISION G-D HAD GIVEN TO MY WIFE, DOTTI, AND ME.

WITHIN TWO YEARS WE PURCHASED SEVEN ACRES OF LAND AND, BY THE GRACE OF G-D, IN 1985 WE ERECTED THE BEAUTIFUL MESSIANIC JEWISH SYNAGOGUE WE NOW WORSHIP IN.

SINCE 1981 APPROXIMATELY 367 PEOPLE HAVE COME TO THE MESSIAH, AND APPROXIMATELY 1/4 OF THOSE WERE JEWISH. WE HAVE 200 MEMBERS, 60% ARE JEWISH AND 40% HAVE "PITCHED THEIR TENT IN THE CAMP OF ISRAEL"!

CONGREGATION BETH HALLEL CONDUCTS A YEARLY "TRACT" MINISTRY WHERE WE HAND OUT APPROXIMATELY 24,000 JEWISH TRACTS IN ATLANTA.

G-D'S BLESSING IS ON THIS WORK, HIS HAND IS CLEAR IN EVERY ASPECT OF THIS MINISTRY, NOT BECAUSE OF ROBERT AND DOROTHY SOLOMON, BUT BECAUSE ITS G-D'S TIMING.

## Discussion

Bob says that there are 400 attending two services and sixty percent are Jewish. They prefer to call him rabbi and the building is a synagogue. They do get some flack from the Jewish community. Art suggests that using the term Messianic Judaism conveys rabbinic leanings. Bob says they use Messianic Jewish Congregation. In the early eighties there was not a good follow up program, but they're doing better now. They have an altar call, followed by one-on-one in the office and a new believer's class is taught. Congregational involvement is encouraged. Five to six missionaries have gone out of Beth Hillel. The Deep South has 1 or two messianic congregations in Florida, one in Georgia, one in Nashville, one in Memphis; the Carolinas, Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Kentucky have no mainline Jewish work.

Bob's congregation has a Friday night and Saturday morning worship service to witness to the Jewish community in a Jewish way. There is a mezuzah on the door and the Shema is on the threshold. Tallis and yamulkas are available if someone wants to use them. "I feel like I've come home," or "I didn't think it would be this Jewish" are common statements made. The Torah reading is done from the Bible in English. Torah doors are opened to view the Torah. There is traditional Jewish singing. They have the same service Friday and Saturday. Liturgy and musical instruments are used. They use a hardback Siddur, by David Bronstein and John Fischer. There are also monthly home groups of ten to twenty-five, seven home cell groups.

Because the vision is being given to people of God, God blesses with Gentile conversions. They have a great relationship with the Baptist church.

Moishe compliments Bob's personal integrity. What can the Jewish community say against you if you have integrity! Bob says he tries to keep high credibility for the Lord's work and believes the Lord honors that. One local rabbi announced that Messianic Judaism is not a cult.

When asked if there are any distinctives to witnessing to Jews in the Deep South, it is stated that you can't get away with as much bluntness and persecution isn't evident. There is an inherent softness of the Jewish community here. It's harder because of the polite "kiss off," which is different that a definite "not interested."

Born again black servants worked in Jewish homes and it would be interesting to know what influence they may have had.

When asked if there is more anti-Semitism here because of the KKK, Moishe suggests that the South gets a bum rap about prejudice. Anti-Semitism is not virulent or long lasting as in, say, Boston where you have a certain kind of Catholic Church. Prejudices do not last long unless taught by the church.

**THIRD SESSION: 4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.**

**UPDATE: Media Coverage of the Messianic Jewish Movement - Susan Perlman**