



Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization

The Whole Church taking the Whole Gospel to the Whole World

JEWISH EVANGELISM

A Call to the Church

Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 60

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“A New Vision, a New Heart, a Renewed Call”

In encouraging the publication and study of the Occasional Papers, the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization does not necessarily endorse every viewpoint expressed in these papers.

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The context for the production of the Lausanne Occasional Papers

The Lausanne Movement is an international movement committed to energising
“the whole Church to take the whole gospel to the whole world.”

With roots going back to the historical conferences in Edinburgh (1910) and Berlin (1966), the Lausanne Movement was born out of the First International Congress on World Evangelization called by evangelist Billy Graham held in Lausanne, Switzerland, in July 1974. The landmark outcome of this Congress was the **Lausanne Covenant** supported by the 2,430 participants from 150 nations. The covenant proclaims the substance of the Christian faith as historically declared in the creeds and adds a clear missional dimension to our faith. Many activities have emerged from the Lausanne Congress and from the second congress held in Manila in 1989. The Covenant (in a number of languages), and details about the many regional events and specialised conferences which have been undertaken in the name of Lausanne, may be examined online at www.lausanne.org.

The Lausanne International Committee believed it was led by the Holy Spirit to hold another conference which would bring together Christian leaders from around the world. This time the Committee planned to have younger emerging leaders involved and sought funds to enable it to bring a significant contingent from those parts of the world where the church is rapidly growing today. It decided to call the conference a **Forum**. As a Forum its structure would allow people to come and participate if they had something to contribute to one of 31 issues (around which were formed Issue Groups). These issues were chosen through a global research programme seeking to identify the most significant issues in the world today which are of concern in our task to take the *good news* to the world.

This Lausanne Occasional Paper (LOP) is the report that has emerged from one of these Issue Groups. LOPs have been produced for each of the Issue Groups and information on these and other publications may be obtained online at www.lausanne.org.

The theme of the Forum for World Evangelization held in 2004 was “**A new vision, a new heart, a renewed call.**” This Forum was held in Pattaya, Thailand from September 29 to October 5, 2004. 1,530 participants came from 130 countries to work in one of the 31 Issue Groups.

The Affirmations at the conclusion of the Forum stated:

“There has been a spirit of working together in serious dialogue and prayerful reflection. Representatives from a wide spectrum of cultures and virtually all parts of the world have come together to learn from one another and to seek new direction from the Holy Spirit for world evangelization. They committed themselves to joint action under divine guidance.

The dramatic change in the political and economic landscape in recent years has raised new challenges in evangelization for the church. The polarization between east and west makes it imperative that the church seek God’s direction for the appropriate responses to the present challenges.

In the 31 Issue Groups these new realities were taken into consideration, including the HIV pandemic, terrorism, globalization, the global role of media, poverty, persecution of Christians, fragmented families, political and religious nationalism, post-modern mind set, oppression of children, urbanization, neglect of the disabled and others.

Great progress was made in these groups as they grappled for solutions to the key challenges of world evangelization. As these groups focused on making specific recommendations, larger strategic themes came to the forefront.

There was affirmation that major efforts of the church must be directed toward those who have no access to the gospel. The commitment to help establish self sustaining churches within 6,000 remaining unreached people groups remains a central priority.

Secondly, the words of our Lord call us to love our neighbour as ourselves. In this we have failed greatly. We renew our commitment to reach out in love and compassion to those who are marginalised because of disabilities or who have different lifestyles and spiritual perspectives. We commit to reach out to children and young people who constitute a majority of the world's population, many of whom are being abused, forced into slavery, armies and child labour.

A third stream of a strategic nature acknowledges that the growth of the church is now accelerating outside of the western world. Through the participants from Africa, Asia and Latin America, we recognise the dynamic nature and rapid growth of the church in the *South*. Church leaders from the *South* are increasingly providing exemplary leadership in world evangelization.

Fourthly, we acknowledge the reality that much of the world is made up of oral learners who understand best when information comes to them by means of stories. A large proportion of the world's populations are either unable to or unwilling to absorb information through written communications. Therefore, a need exists to share the "Good News" and to disciple new Christians in story form and parables.

Fifthly, we call on the church to use media to effectively engage the culture in ways that draw non-believers toward spiritual truth and to proclaim Jesus Christ in culturally relevant ways.

Finally, we affirm the priesthood of all believers and call on the church to equip, encourage and empower women, men and youth to fulfil their calling as witnesses and co-labourers in the world wide task of evangelization.

Transformation was a theme which emerged from the working groups. We acknowledge our own need to be continually transformed, to continue to open ourselves to the leading of the Holy Spirit, to the challenges of God's word and to grow in Christ together with fellow Christians in ways that result in social and economic transformation. We acknowledge that the scope of the gospel and building the Kingdom of God involves, body, mind, soul and spirit. Therefore we call for increasing integration of service to society and proclamation of the gospel.

We pray for those around the world who are being persecuted for their faith and for those who live in constant fear of their lives. We uphold our brothers and sisters who are suffering. We recognize that the reality of the persecuted church needs to be increasingly on the agenda of the whole Body of Christ. At the same time, we also acknowledge the importance of loving and doing good to our enemies while we fight for the right of freedom of conscience everywhere.

We are deeply moved by the onslaught of the HIV/AIDS pandemic – the greatest human emergency in history. The Lausanne movement calls all churches everywhere to prayer and holistic response to this plague.

"9/11," the war in Iraq, the war on terror and its reprisals compel us to state that we must not allow the gospel or the Christian faith to be captive to any one geo-political entity. We affirm that the Christian faith is above all political entities.

We are concerned and mourn the death and destruction caused by all conflicts, terrorism and war. We call for Christians to pray for peace, to be proactively involved in reconciliation and avoid all attempts to turn any conflict into a religious war. Christian mission in this context lies in becoming peacemakers.

We pray for peace and reconciliation and God's guidance in how to bring about peace through our work of evangelization. We pray for God to work in the affairs of nations to open

doors of opportunity for the gospel. We call on the church to mobilize every believer to focus specific consistent prayer for the evangelization of their communities and the world.

In this Forum we have experienced the partnership of men and women working together. We call on the church around the world to work towards full partnership of men and women in the work of world evangelism by maximising the gifts of all.

We also recognize the need for greater intentionality in developing future leaders. We call on the church to find creative ways to release emerging leaders to serve effectively.”

Numerous practical recommendations for local churches to consider were offered. These will be available on the Lausanne website and in the Lausanne Occasional Papers. It is our prayer that these many case studies and action plans will be used of God to mobilise the church to share a clear and relevant message using a variety of methods to reach the most neglected or resistant groups so that everyone will have the opportunity to hear the gospel message and be able to respond to this good news in faith.

We express our gratitude to the Thai Church which has hosted us and to their welcoming presentation to the Forum. We are profoundly grateful to God for the privilege of being able to gather here from the four corners of the earth. We have developed new partnerships, made new friends and encouraged one another in our various ministries. Notwithstanding the resistance to the gospel in many places and the richness of an inherited religious and cultural tradition we here at the Forum have accepted afresh the renewed call to be obedient to the mandate of Christ. We commit ourselves to making His saving love known so that the whole world may have opportunity to accept God’s gift of salvation through Christ.”

These affirmations indicate the response of the participants to the Forum outcomes and their longing that the whole church may be motivated by the outcomes of the Forum to strengthen its determination to be obedient to God’s calling.

May the case studies and the practical suggestions in this and the other LOPs be of great help to you and your church as you seek to find new ways and a renewed call to proclaim the saving love of Jesus Christ

David Claydon

Note from the Authors

This Occasional Paper was prepared by the 2004 Forum Issue Group No. 31, "Reaching Jewish People with the Gospel." It was the smallest of the Issue Groups at the 2004 Forum. This report is the combined effort of the seven-member team that referred to itself as the Jewish Evangelism Working Session (JEWS); all long-time members of the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE), a network that formed out of the 1980 LCWE meeting also at Pattaya (see Appendix A). As a group they speak for themselves in this report. LCJE's *Rules and Procedures* give them no mandate to speak on behalf of the entire LCJE network.

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This report is released with our prayers and the hope that it will stimulate our brothers and sisters in the body of Christ to a new vision, heart and call for Jewish evangelism.

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We are Not Ashamed of the Gospel

Jewish evangelism means to share the gospel with Jewish people. Jesus did it and the apostles did it. The first communities of Jewish believers in Jerusalem and Galilee did it. The early church took shape through Paul's evangelistic ministry to Jewish communities around the Mediterranean. Sharing the gospel with Jewish people was the beginning of world evangelism.

In every generation throughout Christian history Jewish believers in Jesus have been part of the church. However, that history has at times been difficult and the experience of Jewish people with the church has, during various periods, been characterised by suffering. Today the church is called upon to welcome and appreciate the renewed presence of Jewish believers in Jesus within the body of Christ – both in Israel and in other countries around the world.

The theme of the 2004 Forum was "A New Vision, a New Heart, a Renewed Call." The Jewish Evangelism Working Session (JEWS) of the Forum wants to challenge the church:

- To develop a new heart for the Jewish people
- To acquire a new vision of the church that is composed of the Jewish people along with all the nations of the earth
- To demonstrate a renewed call to share the good news with Jewish people everywhere

A New Heart

In an era of global pluralism and terrorism it is time for the church to develop a new heart for the Jewish people. The history of the wrongdoings by the church against the people of Israel throughout the ages cannot be unwritten. This record, as evidenced by the Holocaust of the last century, has been so difficult that many Christians are of the opinion that the church has forfeited its credibility and its right to share the gospel with Jewish people. In this regard we state:

We are ashamed of the church's atrocities against the Jewish people and the teaching of contempt that has taken place through the history of the church, and we denounce it.

We pledge ourselves to remember the misdeeds of the church against Jewish people. Only with this memory in mind can Christians develop a new heart for the Jewish people. Such tragic history should also be a mirror through which evangelistic efforts today may be critically analysed – for Jews first and also for non-Jews.

A New Vision

In this age of globalisation the church needs to acquire a new vision for the salvation of the Jewish people and of all nations of the earth. When Jewish people today together with the other nations confess faith in Jesus as their Saviour, it is a sign of hope for the church and for the world. Therefore, we also state:

We are not ashamed of the gospel. In the words of the Jewish apostle Paul, the gospel is "the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile" (Romans 1:16).

We therefore also pledge ourselves to uphold such a vision for the church that affirms that in Christ we are one, Jew and gentile, and that in Christ alone is the hope of salvation for both Israel and the nations.

A Renewed Call

As those who maintain that in the gospel of Jesus alone is salvation for both Jews and gentiles, we realise that we also make ourselves vulnerable to accusations of spiritual arrogance, religious imperialism and supersessionism vis-à-vis the synagogue.

Yet, we affirm that Jewish evangelism, and world evangelism, is not triumphalistic. Genuine evangelisation of Jews and non-Jews is accomplished only by the victory of God, who raised Jesus from the dead and calls all people to Him through faith in the crucified and resurrected Saviour. The evangelist who brings the good news to others needs to receive the same gospel just as much.

We therefore pledge ourselves to encourage the worldwide church to demonstrate a renewed call to share the grace and the truth of the Lord with Jewish people everywhere and to realise afresh the importance of Jewish evangelism.

Much is at stake when some in the church denounce Jewish evangelism. Many do so today without realising the theological and missiological implications of their position. This report will describe some of the most important implications of any failure to evangelise the Jewish people. It will briefly describe the Jewish world, some of the issues facing Jewish believers in Jesus and a variety of current practices in the field of Jewish evangelism.

For what is at stake?

If Jesus is not the Messiah for the Jewish people then neither is He the Christ for the nations.

1. God's Covenant with the Jewish People and Jewish Evangelism

Jewish evangelism is happening today but is under severe attack. Many Christians question the need and the legitimacy of sharing the gospel with Jewish people. This chapter will attempt to show that, from a New Testament perspective, Jewish evangelism is most appropriate. Those who oppose it are therefore out of step with the biblical understanding of mission.

(a) The Jew Jesus and the First Recipients of the gospel

Historically speaking, Christianity began as a Jewish phenomenon. The first to believe Jesus to be the Messiah were Jews. According to their understanding *the place* of revelation was the land of the Jews, *the source* of revelation was the God of Israel, *the first recipients* of revelation were the Jews and *the main character* of revelation was the Jew Jesus. This Jesus was born to a Jewish mother, was given a good and normal Jewish name, Yeshua, "the Lord's salvation." According to Matthew 1:21 the significance of what Jesus did is understood from His name: He came to save – to save His people – from their sins. The *kind* of salvation this Jesus/Yeshua offered His people is here made clear. This is the theme that runs through all of the New Testament.

After the disciples of Jesus had experienced that the God of Israel had raised Him from the dead, and they had received the Holy Spirit, they preached the gospel – to Jews first. The first Jesus-movement was made up of Jews, and these Jewish believers saw Jesus as the fulfilment of God's promises to Israel. God revealed and poured out His love for Israel and the world through Jesus. The Lord made known His providential and saving love for all those who believe in Him.

Salvation came to Israel through Jesus. This meant good news also for the gentiles. The nations could likewise obtain adoption through him. Together Jews and gentiles call upon the one same God of Israel, addressing Him as *Abba*, Father, in the name of Jesus and by the Holy Spirit (cf. Galatians 4:6-7).

This fundamental New Testament perspective is critical. If we lose sight of the first recipients of the gospel its significance is diminished for all peoples. So how can it be that anyone would withhold the revelation and the outpouring of the saving love of the God of Israel from Jewish people or from anyone else?

(b) Jewish-Christian Dialogue after the Holocaust

The Holocaust has become the decisive turning point in Jewish-Christian dialogue. This dialogue has to a large extent influenced views within the church regarding the legitimacy of Jewish evangelism.

Jewish-Christian dialogue after the Second World War produced positive results in many areas. It is a dialogue that *had* to occur and which *had* to lead the church to a reconsideration of its own theology and practice with regard to the Jewish people. Numerous conferences have been held and the documents produced as a result are numbered in the hundreds.¹ Some of the key issues dealt with in past Jewish-Christian dialogues are:

- The Holocaust and the role of the church - recognition of its guilt.
- Anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism within the church - recognition of its sinfulness.

¹ For a huge collection of documents, see (1) Rolf Rendtorff and Hans Herman Henrix, eds., Die Kirchen und das Judentum: Dokumente von 1945 bis 1985, (Paderborn/München: Bonifatius Verlag/Christian Kaiser, 1988). (2) Hans Herman Henrix and Wolfgang Kraus, eds., Die Kirchen und das Judentum: Dokumente von 1986 bis 2000, (Paderborn: Gütersloher Verlagshaus/ Christian Kaiser/Bonifatius Verlag, 2001).

- The establishment of the State of Israel - willingness to consider this as a sign of God's faithfulness towards His Jewish people.
- The God of Israel as the father of Jesus Christ - renunciation of Marcionism (the heretical position that God as revealed in the OT was not the Father of Jesus).
- The Jewish roots of the church – recognition that the New Testament can only be understood against the background of the Hebrew scriptures (which the church calls the Old Testament).
- Israel's permanent election and God's enduring covenant with His people – denouncement of the view that the church is the new Israel or has replaced Israel in God's history of salvation.

These and similar issues deserve a renewed and intensified reflection by the church (see below discussion in chapter 4). Dialogue to create understanding between different faith communities is valuable, especially between adherents of Judaism and Christianity. Preconceptions need to be avoided and misconceptions overcome. Dialogue can help both communities to observe the commandment "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour." Such goals are positive and make important contributions to improved understanding.

Yet difficult questions remain. If God has not annulled His covenant with the people of Israel do Jews then still need Jesus for salvation? This simple yet complex question can not be avoided.

From a New Testament perspective God's enduring covenant with the people of Israel does not make Jewish evangelism unnecessary. Those who insist otherwise not only oversimplify theologically, but undermine the very essence of the new covenant.

(c) Jewish Evangelism since World War II

At the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC), in 1948, anti-Semitism was defined as sin against God and man. The many failures of the church towards the Jewish people were acknowledged. At the same time it was maintained that Jews are included in the evangelistic work of the church. Today the WCC, along with some other church bodies, question as to whether the gospel needs to be shared with the Jewish people. During the course of Jewish-Christian dialogues, Jewish evangelism has been denounced frequently, although some have attempted to maintain the position that the church still has an obligation to witness to the Jewish people. Nevertheless, over the years it has become more and more difficult to see what is the nature of this witness.

Not everybody will express it as categorically as a German theologian did in 1979, when he wrote that Jewish evangelism is the "Endlösung der Judenfrage mit anderen Mitteln" – the final solution to the Jewish question by other means. Nevertheless, the rejection of Jewish evangelism has been strengthened in the last decades. Some have suggested that Israel and the church both belong to the one people of God. Therefore, goes this reasoning; neither of them can proselytise the other. Hence, they conclude, Jewish evangelism is an anachronism.

Today it is an exception when larger Christian denominations give their unreserved support to Jewish evangelism. Many denominational and independent Christian mission organisations to the Jews have ceased to exist, while others have redefined their purpose to accomplish something other than evangelism. The majority of the forums in which Jewish-Christian dialogue takes place today reject direct Jewish evangelism and regard it with contempt (see chapter 4). Jewish resistance to evangelisation is to be expected, but it is puzzling that Christians would deprive Jews of the gospel of Jesus. He is, after all, the very best gift of God, and gentiles have received Him from the Jews.

It is apparent that some of the major obstacles to Jewish evangelism today come not from outside the church, but from within it.

(d) Documents in Favour of Jewish Evangelism

Although the majority of recent Christian statements either speak vaguely or directly reject Jewish evangelism, there are some exceptions. We will mention three statements which clearly give an unambiguous “yes” to Jewish evangelism and which are all endorsed by LCWE (see Appendix B):

- (1) *Christian Witness to the Jewish People* (1980)
- (2) *The Willowbank Declaration on the Christian Gospel and the Jewish People* (1989)
- (3) *Manila Manifesto* (1989)

These documents affirm that the people of Israel remain God’s covenant people and as such have a continued role to play within God’s salvation history. These statements also reject the idea that God’s enduring covenant with Israel renders faith in Jesus unnecessary. The obligation to share the gospel with Jewish people remains. That responsibility abides, even after the Holocaust.

It is understandable that Jews disagree with such a positive view of evangelism. Their disagreement has been expressed in such sharp terms that are usually avoided in Jewish-Christian relations. In reaction to *The Willowbank Declaration* the then National Director of Inter-Religious Affairs for the American Jewish Committee called it a “blueprint for spiritual genocide that is shot through with the ancient Christian ‘teaching of contempt’ for Jews and Judaism.” Elsewhere he referred to the Declaration as “wrong-headed” and “arrogant.” The President of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations at the time described the Declaration as “retrograde and primitive,” and “the worst kind of Christian religious imperialism”.² Such language does not create a constructive atmosphere for the discussion of different opinions.

(e) Dabru Emet: Against Jewish Evangelism

At the beginning of the third millennium we note a radical change of position. It can best be illustrated by considering a Jewish document entitled *Dabru Emet: A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity*. It was published by a small interdenominational group of Jewish scholars in the year 2000.³ *Dabru Emet* is the Hebrew for “Speak the Truth” (cf. Zechariah 8:18).

Dabru Emet contains the following eight theses:

1. Jews and Christians worship the same God.
2. Jews and Christians seek authority from the same book – the Bible (what Jews call *Tanakh* and Christians call the Old Testament).
3. Christians can respect the claim of the Jewish people upon the land of Israel.
4. Jews and Christians accept the moral principles of Torah.
5. Nazism was not a Christian phenomenon.
6. The humanly irreconcilable difference between Jews and Christians will not be settled until God redeems the entire world as promised in Scripture.
7. A new relationship between Jews and Christians will not weaken Jewish practice.
8. Jews and Christians must work together for justice and peace.

² Cf. Kai Kjær-Hansen, “The Problem of the Two-Covenant Theology” in *Mishkan* 21 (1994), 56-57.

³ *Dabru Emet*, (September, 2000). Online: www.jcrelations.net Books sympathetic to *Dabru Emet* include (1) Tikva Frymer-Kensky and David Novak, Peter Ochs, David Fox Sandmel and Michael Signer, eds., [Christianity in Jewish Terms](#), (Boulder, Colorado/Oxford: Westview Press, 2000). (2) Carl E. Braaten, Robert W. Jenson, eds., [Jews and Christians: People of God](#). (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2003).

An introduction to the statement asserts that recent years have witnessed “a dramatic and unprecedented shift in Jewish and Christian relations.” The transformation is attributed to Christians who no longer characterise “Judaism as a failed religion, or, at best, a religion that prepared the way and is completed in Christianity.” It rightly maintains that an “increasing number of church bodies, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, have made public statements of their remorse about Christian mistreatment of Jews and Judaism.” In these statements Christians have acknowledged “God’s enduring covenant with the Jewish people and celebrate the contribution of Judaism to world civilisation and to Christian faith itself.”

Dabru Emet further maintains that the time has therefore come for Jews to be taught about “the efforts of Christians to honour Judaism.” Since Christianity has changed its view on Judaism, goes the reasoning; the time has come for Jews to reflect on “what Judaism may now say about Christianity.”

Dabru Emet takes the position that “Christian worship is not a viable religious choice for Jews”. With that core assumption the document continues, “as Jewish theologians we rejoice that, through Christianity, hundreds of millions of people have entered into relationship with the God of Israel.” It further maintains the mutually contradictory positions that “Christians know and serve God through Jesus Christ and the Christian tradition. Jews know and serve God through Torah and the Jewish tradition.”

Does such sentiment sound promising for Jewish-gentile relations? Some Christians feel a great temptation to agree with the *Dabru Emet* document. However, the greater obligation of all Christians is to the one who is the *Truth*. That commitment should prevent Christian believers from following the way that *Dabru Emet* proposes. Jesus said, “*I am the way, and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me*” (John 14:6). The following sections explain further.

(f) God’s Covenant with His People

“Covenant” and “election” are key terms in the Old Testament and are of the utmost importance for an understanding of Jewish identity today. In a similar way “covenant” and “election” are central concepts in the New Testament and of the utmost importance for Christian identity and a correct understanding of the church.

The God of Israel has not annulled the unconditional election of His people Israel. That simple statement is contrary to what has often been held by the church through the ages. However, it does correspond with biblical thought and the understanding found among most of those involved in Jewish evangelism over the last two centuries.

God called Abraham from among the nations to establish a universal covenant with the patriarch and his seed to be a blessing to all peoples of the earth (Genesis 12:1-3). This promise includes the everlasting preservation of Israel in order to carry out God’s purpose (see Jeremiah 31:35-37). Paul echoes the promise in Romans 11:1, “*Did God reject his people? By no means!*” and again in Romans 11:28-29, “*...but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, for God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable.*” God has therefore preserved Israel and He has not finished with the Jewish people in His redemptive plan.

When Christ came to die for the just forgiveness of sin and then rose again, He fulfilled the promise of the new covenant (Jeremiah 31:33-34) and also what was promised to Abraham (Galatians 3:15-29). After Christ ascended to heaven the Holy Spirit was poured out on His disciples at the Jewish feast of Pentecost. They received the Spirit of God as the affirming sign and the signature of the new covenant (Acts 2:32-36). In the days of the apostles, a remnant of Jewish people recognised this unique prophetic fulfilment and received the Messiah in faith. In the same manner, a remnant has always belonged to the new covenant in the one body of

Christ. While a portion of Israel continues not to believe in God's Messiah, it remains God's will that the church reach the remnant of Israel in every generation until the day when "*all Israel will be saved*" (Romans 11:26).

Paul did not describe the church as having replaced Israel in God's salvation history. Neither did he exclude the people of Israel from needing the gospel of Christ for salvation. Paul makes it clear in Romans 10:9, "*That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.*" Regarding the way of salvation there is "no difference between Jew and Gentile" (Romans 10:12).

Contemporary thinking on covenant, which has dominated recent Jewish-Christian dialogue, wrongly places Jews and gentiles in different positions for receiving salvation. When the significance of the unique person of Jesus for the salvation of all people is rejected or diminished, then Christian theology and mission suffer irreparably.

(g) Contemporary Thinking on Covenant

The covenant thinking, which has dominated Jewish-Christian dialogue, is often described as a *two-covenant theology* or a *double/dual-covenant theology*. Such a description is not accurate. There is also sometimes presented a *single-covenant theology* in which Christianity is seen as a kind of Judaism for gentiles. Furthermore, some two-covenant theologians really subscribe to a multi-covenant theology or a covenantal pluralism, where the God of Israel has a covenant relationship with all people and with all religions. These notions did not just arise in the modern era.

During the early Middle Ages Jewish scholars considered Christians to be idol worshippers. From the late thirteenth century onward an accommodation was reached. If gentiles wanted to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, in His divinity, and the tri-unity of God this should not be challenged, but Jews who held such beliefs were still be considered idol worshippers.

Only in the beginning of the twentieth century does a systematic theology – or rather philosophy – actually teach the notion of the two ways of salvation. The German-Jewish philosopher of religion, Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929), plays an important role in this matter. He came very close to embracing Christianity, but then reconsidered. The following is a famous quote by Rosenzweig from 1913 in which he refers to John 14:6 and Luke 15:31. It reads,

We are wholly agreed as to what Christ and his Church mean to the world: no one can reach the Father save through him. No one can reach the Father! But the situation is quite different for one who does not have to reach the Father because he is already with him. And this is true of the people of Israel...⁴

This poor exegesis of John 14:6 and of the parable regarding the prodigal son in Luke 15 still served an apologetic purpose. According to Rosenzweig, the Jewish people need no mediator. The Jew is already with God. Gentiles, however, need a mediator, the Jew Jesus. According to Rosenzweig Jews and gentiles, therefore, complement each other. Both have a God-given role to play in the world. Until Rosenzweig, no Jewish thinker had spoken so positively about Christianity. The tone is similarly positive in current covenant thinking. The arguments can vary, but the main conclusions are the same. They are, firstly, that God has an enduring covenant with the people of Israel that has not been annulled. Secondly, this covenant renders faith in Jesus unnecessary for Jews, and thirdly, that faith in Jesus has brought gentiles into a covenant relationship with the God of Israel.

4 Cf. Nahum N. Glatzer, Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought, (New York: Schocken Books, 1953), 341.

Many people find that this modern covenant thinking, and its variations, has an almost “evangelical” ring to it. An illusion is created that a solution has been found to the difficult relationship between Judaism and Christianity. Both are viewed as equal, and desired by the same God. Both have a divine assignment in this world. There is no competition with each other about Jewish or gentile souls. Therefore, Christian mission to the Jewish people should come to an end. It is offered that the Christian church no longer needs to have a bad conscience over its failure to bring the gospel to the Jewish people. The church then has been released from what it previously considered a God-given missionary obligation. This has happened, so it is said, not because of a negative prohibition, but because of a positive theological reason. But is it really that simple?

Indeed, God does have an enduring covenant with His people Israel. Yes, gentiles have found a covenant relationship with the God of Israel through faith in Jesus. However, Jews and gentiles can only enjoy the promised blessing of this enduring covenant through faith in Jesus. The reality of that relationship is confirmed by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

(h) Regarding Truth Claims - As if Judaism and Christianity Make no Truth Claims!

Dabru Emet tries to make it sound simple when it maintains that “*Jews can respect Christians’ faithfulness to their revelation just as we expect Christians to respect our faithfulness to our revelation.*” However, this is an oversimplification of what is at stake. The matter is far more complex. A Jewish scholar, critical of *Dabru Emet*, has defined what is at stake for both Judaism and Christianity. He wrote, “*Dabru Emet* is not wrong to draw attention to common scriptures and ‘similar lessons.’ The problem is that it reduces what is not common to mere differences of opinion – as if the two traditions make no truth claims.”⁵

It is indeed easy to “respect” each other when what separates is reduced to mere difference of opinion and matters of little importance. Genuine “respect” for the revelation of the other is necessary. The “problem” is, however, that it is the focal point of Christian revelation that the God of Israel speaks and acts in and through Jesus and that He does so out of love for the people of Israel. If this aspect of Christian revelation is ignored, then it is emptied of its real content.

It is appropriate to ask where did the claim that Jewish people need the gospel for salvation first come from? Did a later triumphalistic gentile church invent it? No! It originated when *Jewish* disciples of Jesus first preached the gospel to Jewish pilgrims at the Jewish feast of Pentecost. Regarding Jesus, they claimed that “*Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved*” (Acts 4:12).

The New Testament itself makes the exclusive claim that salvation can only be found through faith in Jesus. Non-Jewish Christians who joined the church subsequently can take neither honour nor blame for the declaration. Hence, Jewish evangelism cannot rightly be labelled as anti-Semitism, anti-Judaism, or supersessionism (i.e. replacing the Jewish faith).

(i) Theological Inconsistencies

It is beyond doubt that the New Testament witness presents Jesus as the Messiah for the Jewish people. Yet, acceptance of His Messiahship can only be given through faith. Some may hold the view that Jesus was a false Messiah or a failed Messiah. To claim that Jesus is irrelevant for the salvation of the Jewish people whilst being relevant for the salvation of the gentiles is unbiblical and illogical.

⁵ Jon D. Levenson, “How Not to Conduct Jewish-Christian Dialogue” in *Commentary* (December, 2001), 31-37.

The two-covenant theory and its recent expressions seem a natural solution to the relationship between Judaism and Christianity from a modern Jewish perspective. It is not easy to understand how Christian theologians can advocate it in light of the self-defeating logic on which it rests.

How can the same Jesus be the Saviour for the entire world, on the one hand, and not be the Saviour for the Jewish people of that world, on the other? How can the Jesus Who met first His own Jewish people with the radical invitation to receive God's saving love, and with the equally radical call to follow Him in obedience, be no longer relevant for that same Jewish people? Unless God is inconsistent and partisan, how can He provide a means of salvation that is no longer available or relevant for Jews, but only for gentiles?

Jesus is not an irrelevant Jew nor is He a Jewish irrelevance. If He is not Messiah for Israel, then He is not Christ for the nations.

Jesus is either the Messiah for all, or He is not the Messiah at all.

(j) Other Forms of Replacement

Based on the New Testament, Jews need the gospel for salvation as much as anyone else does. However, it is puzzling that there are bible-believing Christians who are eager to proclaim the gospel to all other peoples, but who would exclude the people of Israel from evangelistic mission, replacing gospel proclamation with acts of charity. How is it that some Christians even leave the door ajar for a salvation to Israel that is *without* Jesus? A few examples follow.

Christian dialogue with Jewish people can be beneficial. However, dialogue that becomes a replacement for mission does not live up to the command to make disciples.

Christians who aid in the return of Jewish people to the State of Israel show genuine care and compassion. However, if aid and compassion become a replacement for or a hindrance to the preaching of Jesus here and now, then it does not live up to the command to make disciples of all nations.

Christians can lend political and financial support to the State of Israel. However, if such support becomes a replacement for evangelistic mission among Jews, then it does not live up to the command to make disciples of all nations including the nation of Israel.

Eschatological beliefs about the future of Israel in God's plan of salvation are important. However, if such thinking concerning God's future for Israel becomes a replacement for Jewish evangelism here and now, something is wrong. Regardless of how the future of Israel might develop in God's plans, the time for Jewish people to hear of salvation is today.

A false alternative to organised Christian missionary activity is found in the claim that Christian witness to Jews consists only in the loving quality of communal life. But one does not preclude the other. The loving manner of Christian life is a proper discipline, but faith comes by hearing the gospel (Romans 10:17). The church was not birthed solely through the apostles' communal life, but also through their public proclamation of the gospel and their missionary activity.

These evangelical forms of "replacement theology" are obstructions to the advance of the gospel among the Jewish people. They are just as harmful to the cause of Christian outreach to Jewish people as other forms of replacement theology have been for the church's appreciation of Israel's place in salvation history.

(k) The Test of Tolerance

Without doubt the accusations of supersessionism and religious triumphalism will continue to be raised against those who subscribe to Jewish evangelism. Christians, among who are

Jewish believers in Jesus, who have met the grace of God and are committed to *the Truth* in the gospel, can live with such an accusation.

Religious pluralists advocate tolerance towards others, but are often intolerant of those who believe in the revelation of absolute truth. Both Judaism and Christianity do that, and members of those faith communities should take note. It is worth reflecting on the statement of a Jewish thinker, the late Arthur A. Cohen. He said, "*The test of tolerance is where men combat for truth but honour persons.*" As those called to a ministry of Jewish evangelism we must accept this test and, with God's help, pass it.

Whilst Cohen cannot be viewed as supportive of Jewish evangelism, it is worth noting that he added:

I cannot, in conscience, oppose missionary activity to the Jews, and I endorse missionary witness to Christians. It is an activity I find ultimately unrewarding, for the activity is designed more to enable the missionary to witness to himself than to bring the unbeliever to believe. Needless to say, where the special psychology of the aggressor is self-vindication, the temptation to misrepresent, to connive and insinuate, to deceive and to trick is often too great. But if to missionize is to bear witness, not to one's self but to the truth and it is in the discourse of truth that the missionary confronts the missionized, it is justified.⁶

All involved in world evangelisation should heed this warning, as missionaries must avoid the danger of self-promotion. There must be guidelines for ethical conduct in evangelism, and appropriate self-examination and reflection on motives.

Contemporary covenant thinkers should take the divergent truth claims of the respective faith communities more seriously as should all that are engaged in Jewish-Christian dialogue. It is a loss to both Judaism and Christianity that too many theological concessions are made on critical issues in the interests of mutual acceptance.

Those committed to Jewish evangelism are not about to give up the conviction that Jews need Jesus, despite the fact that some representatives of contemporary Judaism are willing to recognise Christians as a people who have a covenant relationship with the God of Israel. It is strange that such Jews would depart from the fundamental given of the Hebrew scriptures that Israel is *the* chosen people, to replace it with the idea that Israel is only one among many other chosen peoples.

Christians need to recognise Israel as the chosen people in order to understand correctly their own relationship with the God of Israel through Jesus the Messiah – God's chosen one. A biblically consistent theology prioritises truth over mere tolerance.

(I) Jewish Evangelism – for the Sake of Whom?

For whom is Jewish evangelism undertaken? Five summary points are outlined.

1. For the sake of the Jews

God's continued covenant with the Jewish people does not annul their need of Jesus for salvation. Neither does the covenant imply that they are saved in a manner that differs from non-Jews. Faith comes through the proclamation of the gospel and therefore the gospel needs to be proclaimed to the Jewish people. A "yes" to Jewish evangelism insures that Jewish people are not deprived of the possibility of salvation through faith in Jesus. There is no basis in

⁶ Arthur A. Cohen, *The Myth of the Judeo-Christian Tradition*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), 216-217.

the New Testament for saying that Israel has any qualification that provides forgiveness of sins other than through faith in Jesus.

2. For the sake of the church

Jewish evangelism leads the church into a close contact with the Jewish people. This is important for the church itself. It forces the church to denounce any form of Marcionism (see below in chapter 4). A close contact with the Jewish people sharpens the church's understanding of its biblical roots. The roots of the church are to be found in Israel's salvation history. The structure of the church is built upon Israel and the hope of the church is closely connected with Israel. The church has an incomplete self-understanding without Israel. A "yes" to Jewish evangelism presents the church with a challenge to understand its bonds to Israel and the God of Israel. The fact that these matters are discussed within the Jewish-Christian dialogue does not exempt the church as such from dealing with them.

3. For the sake of world evangelism

Jewish evangelism is not a higher calling or more important in God's sight than evangelisation of other peoples. However, theologically and missiologically Jewish evangelism has a unique role to play. Jewish evangelism has maintained that if the people who have been historically closest to God need the gospel for salvation, then all other peoples need the gospel as well.

When the legitimacy and the necessity of Jewish evangelism are questioned, then the door is open to religious universalism. The uniqueness of Jesus would be denied.

4. For the sake of Jewish believers in Jesus

Jewish believers in Jesus are often ostracised by their own people for their faith in Jesus. They need understanding and support from the rest of the church. A "no" to Jewish evangelism leaves Jewish believers in Jesus isolated. They would be affirmed by neither the Jewish community nor by the church (see chapter 4).

5. For the sake of God's love and glory.

Finally and fundamentally Jewish evangelism is necessary for the sake of God's love and His glory. A "no" to Jewish evangelism implies that the death of Jesus for sin was insignificant and would lead to a great omission from the Great Commission. A "no" to Jewish evangelism withholds God's saving love from the people of Israel. A "yes" to Jewish evangelism opens the door for Jewish people to share in God's glory as revealed in the new covenant or "testament."

The church must consider these matters and again endorse and commit itself to Jewish evangelism.

Much is at stake.

*If Jesus is not the Messiah for the Jewish people then neither is He Christ for the nations.
Either Jesus is the Messiah for all, or He is not the Messiah at all.*

2. The Jewish Community and Jewish Evangelism

C.S. Lewis wrote in the introduction to Joy Davidman's book, *Smoke on the Mountain*:

In a sense, the converted Jew is the only normal human being in the world. To him, in the first instance, the promises were made, and he has availed himself of them. He calls Abraham his father by hereditary right as well as by divine courtesy. He has taken the whole syllabus in order, as it was set; eaten the dinner according to the menu. Everyone else is, from one point of view, a special case, dealt with under emergency regulations.

Today there are less than 14 million Jews in a world of 6.4 billion people. Jews comprise a mere one fourth of one percent of the world's population. Residing in over 130 countries, Jewish population by region breaks down as follows: North America (6 million), Israel (5.2 million), Europe (2 million), Latin America (500,000), Australasia (100,000) and South Africa (90,000). See Appendix C for further details.

The Jewish world today is filled with paradoxes: diversity and commonality, secularism and spirituality, rigidity and mobility. Following is a snapshot of that world, a brief glimpse of Jewish missions in the past, what the field looks like today and why there is so much of an uproar over what should be normal in God's economy.

(a) A Diverse Community

A common Jewish adage is that if you ask two Jews one question you will get three opinions. Jews are a diverse people in thought, culture, religious expression and self-identification.

There are diverse cultural differences among Jews who come from Ashkenazi and Sephardi backgrounds. They include food, music and how one observes holiday and life cycle events. Ashkenazi Jews descend from German, Polish, Austrian and Eastern European Jews. A large proportion of North American Jewry is of this background. Sephardi Jews are descended from the Jews of Spain and Portugal who settled in North Africa and Southern Europe. In modern Israel, Sephardi also refers to Jews of Near Eastern descent.

There is a diversity of religious expressions amongst Jews. Some follow Orthodox, Conservative, Liberal [Reform] and Reconstructionist, Humanistic or Hassidic forms of Judaism while others identify as secularists, agnostics or atheists. Contemporary Jewry has also embraced alternative religious forms in Kabbalah (mystical Judaism), New Age, a form of Jewish Buddhism and Jewish Hinduism.

Self-identification among Jews is a reflection of their geography. Israeli and Diaspora Jews live out a respective Jewishness with differing perspectives. A majority of Israeli Jews are secular without a need for religious affiliation. They speak a Jewish language, Hebrew. They defend the Jewish State by service in the Israeli military. Their calendar includes Jewish festivals and their children study the Bible in schools as part of their history. On the other hand, Diaspora Jews live as a minority presence in the diverse countries they inhabit outside of Israel. They often define themselves by what they are not (e.g. "We Jews don't believe in Jesus").

(b) Commonalities

While the Jewish people are not monolithic, there is much that they hold in common.

1. *Suffering and victimisation*: Anti-Semitism transcends the divergent cultures, religious expressions and self-identification of Jewish people. Anti-Semitism is an ideology that blames

Jewish people for the evils of the world. It is often politically linked with opposition to the State of Israel. It is prevalent today. The language of anti-Semitism proliferates on the Internet. International anti-Semitic hatred has recently been seen in the form of synagogue bombings, desecration of Jewish cemeteries, attacks on Jewish tourists and the various forms of terrorist attacks on Israelis at home and abroad. Jews feel the sting of anti-Semitic hatred whether they live in Jerusalem, Paris, Wellington or Northridge. One result is a Jewish mistrust of a perceived hostile gentile world. The call to the church includes making a change in that perception.

2. *Identification with Israel:* The fulfilment of God's promised land to Abraham, the father of the Jewish people, holds a special place for many Jews today. Modern Israel was created as a safe home for Jewish refugees. Any threat to Israel's security is perceived as a threat to Jews around the world. Jewish survival is linked to the homeland security of Israel today. Therefore, Israel is inextricably a part of the Jew psyche everywhere.

3. *Thirst for spirituality:* Spirituality in the Jewish context is bound up with becoming a better, more knowledgeable, Jew. The meaning of Jewishness is sought in historical roots and the biblical meaning of being chosen by God. The quest for that meaning is sought in Jewish mysticism, Torah study or Law-keeping, the pursuit of justice and social causes and higher learning in all disciplines.

4. *A community on the move:* Emigration of Jews from Arab countries in the 1950's was a significant population shift. Fifty years later Jews from the former Soviet Union are on the move again. Figures on this emigration from 1990 to the present include roughly 875,000 to Israel, 200,000 to New York and 200,000 to Germany. These newcomers are more open to the gospel than are the Jews who are already entrenched in society. Other movements include shifts within geographic regions. For example, in the US, Jewish people are moving out of eastern seaboard cities to growing centres like Phoenix, Las Vegas and south Florida. Israeli population continues to grow. It is projected that by the year 2020 the Israeli Jewish population will be the largest in the world. These shifts have major implications for Jewish evangelism strategy.

5. *A changing generation:* World Jewry is changing. Most of the 400,000 American Jewish university students avoid campus Jewish institutions. American Jewish divorce rates have increased, rivalled only by the intermarriage rates. Recent surveys indicate an 80 percent intermarriage rate among Russian and Ukrainian Jewry. German and Hungarian Jewish communities follow with 60 percent intermarriage rates. Jews in the United States intermarry at a 54 percent rate; Jews from France, Britain and Argentina follow at 45 percent. Canadian Jews intermarry at a rate of 35 percent, Australians at 22 percent, South Africans 20 percent and Mexicans 10 percent. In Israel, the rate of intermarriage is only five percent with most intermarried families coming from the former Soviet Union.⁷

These factors provide opportunities for the practitioners of Jewish evangelism. They are the grounds for potential new initiatives to reach a diverse Jewish world with the gospel.

(c) Jewish Mission through the Ages

The Jewish community at the time of the second Temple was just as diverse as the Jewish community is today. The disciples of Jesus came from different cultural backgrounds

⁷ Sergio DellaPergola, Uzi Rebhun and Mark Tolts, "Prospecting the Jewish future: population projections, 2000-2080" in David Singer and Lawrence Grossman, eds., American Jewish Year Book, 2000 (New York: American Jewish Committee, 2000).

within diverse Jewish societies and they held a variety of religious and political views. Their mutual response to the teaching of Jesus is what united them.

The Acts of the Apostles tells how they first proclaimed the gospel among the Jewish pilgrims in Jerusalem during the festival days of *Shavuot* (Pentecost). There have always been Jewish members in the Body of Christ ever since. Jewish believers in Jesus were the first missionaries, church planters and martyrs. They were the first to spread the good news of the Messiah throughout the Greco-Roman world.

Jewish believers in Jesus have been identified throughout the ages since. Whole groups of Jews are recognisable in the church, living out expressions of Jewish identity and Christian faith even at the end of the fourth century. Around that time the separation between church and synagogue had become complete. Jews in churches were forbidden to maintain their Jewishness and Christians were forbidden in the synagogues. Jewish believers in Jesus became a marginalised group, seen as neither fish nor fowl. They were regarded as a threat to the integrity of both Judaism and the Christian church. Even so, in every century there have been Jewish people represented within the church. Some came by forced conversions, which is a tragic part of church history. Others in every era became followers of Jesus out of genuine belief.

Beginning in the seventeenth century pietistic and evangelical movements found a renewed interest in the Jewish people and their continuing role within salvation history. At that time trained missionaries were sent out to work amongst Jewish people, particularly in Eastern Europe.

The Evangelical Awakening in Great Britain and North America in the nineteenth century saw the establishment of modern Jewish missionary societies. Many of the missionaries were Jewish believers, reaching out to their own people in the name of Jesus. Jewish believers have contributed significantly to the mission of the church even into our present times.

In the nineteenth century Jewish believers began to challenge the historical notion among the church and Jewish communities that held Jewishness and Jesus as mutually exclusive. By the end of the twentieth century a revitalised movement of Jewish followers of Jesus was growing rapidly and internationally. A new day has dawned in Jewish history when once again Jews are proclaiming the gospel of Jesus the Messiah in Jerusalem and in other parts of the world.

(d) Jewish Believers and Jewish Evangelism

Estimates of the number of Jewish believers in Jesus worldwide vary greatly. Christian researcher Patrick Johnstone offers the international figure of 332,000.⁸ Anti-missionary organisations have speculated 275,000 as their number.⁹

Jewish evangelism mission workers would certainly be encouraged by either of the above. However, Jewish missionary statesman Moishe Rosen addressed the issue of exaggeration at the 2003 LCJE international conference in Helsinki, Finland, "...when I look for them [Jewish believers] I don't find them and I'm sure the reason I don't find them is because they are not there. At least not in the huge numbers we are given."¹⁰

8 Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk, (21st edition) Operation World: When We Pray God Works, (London: Paternoster Press Publishing, 2001), 362.

9 See Jews for Judaism web site: www.jewsforjudaism.org/web/mainpages/missionary_cult_challenge.html

10 Moishe Rosen, "The Fact of Failure" in LCJE Helsinki, Finland 2003, (Århus: LCJE, 2003), 297-298.

In Israel, there are more non-Jews converting to Judaism each year than there are Jews coming to Christ. It has been said that in the US alone there are 200,000 “Jews by choice” who identify as coming from a non-Jewish background.¹¹ A conservative estimate of the number of Jewish believers in the world today is 50,000 to 90,000. It is difficult to be more precise.

Below is a representative look at some of the areas where Jewish believers in Jesus live. Their Messianic Jewish identity is diverse yet provides a clear testimony of faith in Jesus for their non-believing Jewish counterparts.¹²

Israel

A 1999 survey of Messianic congregations in Israel found about 5,000 believers attending Messianic congregations. That figure includes non-Jewish spouses, their children and some gentiles.¹³ Since that time the number of Jewish believers in the land has increased.

Most are part of the approximately 100 congregations or independent small groups. However, there are national structures for them to network together under a leadership conference, a national evangelism committee and through children, youth and camping programmes. These serve to bind the movement together. Independent mission agencies operate in Israel working in co-operation with local congregations as well. With the arrival of Russian-speaking Jewish believers, new congregations have sprung up. Likewise, the Ethiopian Jewish believers in Jesus have also established congregations.

Theological and practical training is now available in country at accredited bible schools like Israel College of the Bible. Founded in 1990, ICB provides undergraduate education for Israelis who previously had to leave the country for an equivalent course of study. The Caspari Center for Biblical and Jewish Studies was established in 1983. It offers classes in leadership and children’s work for local congregations and individuals. Both are situated in Jerusalem.

It is a myth that evangelism is illegal in Israel. Under Israeli law, believers in Jesus are free to express and share their faith with the adult population. Evangelistic literature, books and videos are distributed. Personal evangelistic visits are conducted and gospel outreach is done at public events like the New Age festivals. Organised evangelistic campaigns are held and evangelism among Israeli Jewish and Arab students takes place on university campuses in Israel throughout the year. Youth and children’s ministry is conducted through Bible clubs, humanitarian aid, youth camps and conferences. Evangelism efforts have not been free of harassment. Some Jewish believers face negative reaction, polarising newspaper coverage and physical harassment.

A significant number of the Israelis who come to faith in Christ do so while travelling abroad. Some suggestions for evangelistic strategy can be found in the final section of this paper.

Russia and the Former Soviet Union

A significant demographic shift has occurred, though there is still a large number of Russian speaking Jews in the former Soviet Union (FSU). A major evangelistic effort continues even while the degree of openness has decreased. Jewish people continue coming to faith in

11 See e.g. www.jbuff.com

12 In this report we use the term “Messianic Jew” in the broadest sense to refer to all Jewish believers in Jesus. Other terms are also used and no one term has met with universal acceptance. See chapter 3 for further discussion under “What’s in a Name?”

13 See Kjær-Hansen and Skjøtt, *Facts & Myths*, (1999), (cf. Bibliography).

Christ. Dozens of mission works are reaching out to the Jews in nine provinces, Ukraine, Russia, Byelorussia, Moldova, Estonia, Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

These ministries include street evangelism and literature distribution, personal visits and outreach concerts along with music and dance festivals. They have been planting congregations of Jewish believers in Jesus, conducting public holiday celebrations; holding small group bible studies, engaging in discipleship, offering children's ministries, using radio broadcasts and internet evangelism. They do prison outreach, Messianic conferences, literature distribution, bible translation, humanitarian aid and medical assistance along with bible education and training in Jewish evangelism.

There are many challenges facing Jewish evangelism in the FSU at this time:

Rise of anti-Semitism: Random acts of violence against Jewish institutions and Messianic events alike. Missionaries to the Jews are physically and verbally abused by nationalists who dislike them simply because they are Jews.

Return of Soviet-era restrictions: Restrictions are most prevalent in the central Asian republics. Registration laws are restrictive and visas for new workers are limited. Laws are pending which would threaten the current legality of street proclamation.

Rise of organised anti-missionary activity: The anti-missionary Magen League engages in counter-leafleting, destruction of personal property, verbal abuse and physical attacks. They also file false accusations in the press and with local police authorities.

Despite the rise of religious opposition and political restrictions, the gospel is going forth. The best evidence of this can be seen not only in the FSU, but also by implication in the rest of the world. Russian Jewish believers in Jesus, who first heard the gospel in the FSU, are currently witnessing in Israel, the US, Canada, and Germany.

Germany

In contrast to the devastation of Germany's Jewish community (population was 565,000 in 1933 but only 20,000 in mid 1960's) there is a brighter picture today. Since 1990, Germany has become the fastest growing Jewish population in Europe. Of the approximately 200,000 Jews in Germany, 80 percent are Jewish immigrants from the FSU. Several hundred have come to faith in Jesus.

Messianic congregations are found in key centres of the country. Russian-language evangelistic literature is produced and distributed. Jewish evangelism training materials are available in German.

Russian Jewish believers in Jesus have some unique characteristics. They possess a strong Jewish identity yet lack knowledge of Judaism and Jewish traditions. Most would consider themselves atheists and humanists. They are well-educated professionals, yet many are unemployed. Most of the young people are university students. They are open to ideas and to conversation. They have a deep respect for Germans, yet have a difficult time adjusting to their new culture.

The challenges to reach this community are great. Jewish mission agencies from the US and Western Europe have directed resources to ministry in Germany. These ministries include direct evangelism through literature distribution, one-on-one discipleship, public outreach events, planting congregations, bible translation, Internet, radio broadcasts and humanitarian aid.

North America

Canada: There are three main centres for Jewish life and therefore mission in Canada. Toronto has a high number of Holocaust survivors residing there. Montreal has a significant

Hassidic community. Vancouver is a university city with its highest Jewish concentration on the campus. About a dozen Jewish mission agencies and more than a dozen Messianic congregations span the country.

United States: The number of US Jewish believers is estimated between 40,000 and 60,000. Many are part of mainline churches. However, there are 400 Messianic congregations and fellowship groups covering most of the fifty states where a significant number of Jewish believers in Jesus worship. Jewish evangelism agencies field approximately 150 full time missionaries to minister in the US. They are doing direct evangelism, literature distribution, personal visits, door to door, campus outreach, camps and youth work, planting Messianic congregations, holy days events, public meetings, music concerts, drama, debates, film screenings, evangelistic advertising, evangelistic web-sites, chat room ministry, Jewish evangelism seminars, radio and television programmes and relief work.

Some agencies are very specialised and are structured to reach one segment of the American Jewish population such as Israelis living in Los Angeles or Hassidic Jews in New York. Some focus on one methodology such as church planting or radio ministry. Others work broadly doing direct outreach and educating churches in Jewish evangelism. The theological spectrum is diverse although most are able to subscribe to the Lausanne Covenant.

(e) Opposition to Jewish Evangelism

Opposition to Jewish Evangelism is not new. It has roots in the spiritual realm. God chose to convey His truth to the world through the Jewish people. "Salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22). God's character, the trustworthiness of the Bible, and the promises concerning future world redemption will be demonstrated through the survival of the Jewish people and in their salvation through Christ (Romans 11:12 & 15). Therefore, spiritual forces are arrayed against God and His chosen people.

One of the most significant aspects of Jewish evangelism is the organisations that have formed with the sole purpose of combating the missionary "threat." Such groups are found as Yad L'Achim in Israel, Magen League in the FSU and Jews for Judaism in North America.

Other agencies like the network of Jewish Federations in North America, Jewish Boards of Deputies in the UK, Australia and South Africa and various rabbinical associations also engage in anti-missionary activity as just one item on their agendas. All of these various groups are considered opposition, not the enemy. They are also Jewish people, for whom the Messiah died.

(f) Opposition strategies

Educational: Opposition groups have produced apologetic literature, videos and audio tapes attempting to contradict New Testament Messianic claims fulfilled in Jesus. Such materials also present the historic persecution of Jews at the hands of Christians as the case upon which it is claimed that Jewish faith in Christ is allegedly tantamount to disloyalty to the Jewish people and to joining their persecutors. They have developed seminars to instruct Jewish individuals on how to respond to missionaries.

Sociological: Opposition agencies work to create an inflammatory climate where Jews who consider the claims of Christ fear being regarded as outcasts. The authenticity of the Jewish identity of Jesus' followers is questioned. Their loyalty to the Jewish people is challenged. Their access to the Jewish community networks is jeopardised by being barred from traditional synagogue life or burial in Jewish cemeteries.

Situational: These organisations also seek to shut down Jewish evangelistic efforts by putting pressure on both governmental authorities and private sector groups. They utilise letter

writing and phone campaigns, expressions of offence that are orchestrated to get radio stations to drop ad campaigns and bring pressure to bear on private establishments to break contracts for hosting evangelistic events.

Dialogue: The ostensible goal of Jewish-Christian dialogue is better mutual understanding. True dialogue is worthwhile. However, the Jewish dialogue partners want Christians to understand that Jews do not need Jesus. Thus, dialogues become one-sided propaganda opportunities. Evidence for this is the Jewish ground rule or demands that Jewish believers in Jesus not be allowed to take part in any of the dialogues.

Organizational: Some opposition efforts aim at effecting change in denominational and church mission policies. The goal is to marginalise Jewish evangelism or eliminate it completely from the church mandate to make disciples of *all* nations. Under the guise of “interfaith understanding” full-time Jewish professionals are employed to lobby church bodies to forgo forthright evangelism to the Jewish people. For example, US Jewish leaders, in consultation with a subcommittee of national Catholic Bishops, helped prepare a major document labelling the conversion of Jews to Christianity as no longer theologically acceptable in the Catholic Church.¹⁴

Methodological: Evangelicals are hard pressed to recant the need for gospel witness to all peoples of the earth. When opposition to Jewish evangelism fails to gain the exclusion of Jewish people from the great commission, they attack the motives and methodology of Jewish mission efforts. False and unsubstantiated charges of unethical tactics, misleading, deceptive, cult-like, exploitative, insensitive practices and of preying on vulnerable people are levelled against the practitioners of Jewish evangelism. Pressure is brought to bear on evangelical Christians to disassociate from Jewish mission efforts and agencies. They are expected to respond to the demands of “offended” Jewish community leaders, by choosing to affirm the traditional faith of Judaism without need for Jesus. This is sometimes attempted through well-publicised statements asking evangelicals not to single out Jews for evangelism. They are urged to “sign on” in order to distance their churches from “inappropriate” Jewish mission efforts. Some evangelical leaders have capitulated, fearing that their support of Jewish evangelism might jeopardise their friendship with Jewish community leaders. The cost of such “friendship,” at the sacrificial price of Jewish evangelism, is the jeopardy of Jewish souls.

(g) Summary

Jewish evangelism is one of the more difficult fields of Christian mission. However, opposition to the gospel is to be expected and those who labour in this field are not discouraged by it. Many look for a potential “Apostle Paul” among those who care enough to oppose so vigorously. The large majority of the Jewish people are not involved in the types of opposition listed above. Most would defend the right of Jewish missions to exist and to freely present the message of Jesus for consideration by Jews and gentiles.

¹⁴ See United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ website August 12, 2002, “Reflections on Covenant and Mission.” At <http://www.usccb.org/comm/archives/2002/02-154.htm>

3. Jewish Believers in the Church

This section considers the role of Jewish believers in Jesus in the church. What are the theological issues and practical concerns they bring? How does their presence in the body of Christ point towards the future in-gathering of Israel and the nations? How do they identify themselves? What forms of worship and ecclesiology do they adopt? How do they express their faith in Yeshua (Jesus) in the light of Jewish culture, tradition and religious thought? How do they see the political realities and prophetic significance of the Middle East conflict, and what are they doing practically to seek peace, justice and reconciliation with their Arab Christian brothers and sisters? These matters of contextual theology challenge not only Messianic Jews but also all Christians who wish to understand the significance of the Jewish roots of their faith and the nature of the people of God. How they are resolved will have a significant effect on Jewish evangelism.

(a) Messianic Jewish Thought

Here is some reflection on theology by and about Jewish Believers in Jesus. The fact that Jewish believers in Jesus still exist after 2000 years has theological significance. It is a matter upon which all Christians are called to reflect. Jewish believers in Jesus represent the remnant of Israel saved by grace, the re-grafted natural olive branches, and the token of the continuing election of Israel. They want their lives to demonstrate these fundamental truths and they invite both Jew and Christian to witness the resurgence of a Jewish expression of New Testament faith. Messianic Jews contribute to the character and work of the whole body of Christ. They bear witness to their biblical heritage as children of Abraham and its fulfilment in the Messiah. Their presence inspires the church in its mission. They challenge the church to a deeper understanding of the purposes of God and to echo Paul's heartfelt concern that all Israel might be saved.

The Scriptures are the starting point for this theological reflection. Messianic Jews read the Scriptures through the dual hermeneutical frameworks of Jewish and Christian interpretative traditions. The life, teaching and ministry of Jesus and the early church is their model and is normative for their belief and practice.

Messianic Jews see themselves as belonging to both the Jewish people and the body of Christ. They construct their identities by negotiating within the boundary lines of both communities. Messianic Judaism can be defined as a Christian form of Judaism and a Jewish form of Christianity. It sets the agenda for full discussion of the problematic issues raised by such a paradoxical formulation.

Messianic Jews have sometimes been accused of "going back under the law" from a Christian perspective and of producing a "false and deceptive form of Christianity masquerading as Judaism" by the Jewish community. So it is necessary for them to reflect theologically on their beliefs and explain their position. Just as the first believers in the book of Acts were summoned before the bar of public opinion, religious leadership and political authority, so too today Messianic Jews are called to account before Jew, Christian and state.

(b) The Need for Theology

In the last thirty years many Jewish people have come to believe in Jesus, bringing out the need and opportunity for theological reflection on the significance of a growing Jewish presence within the Body of Christ. Attention has focused on evangelism, congregational planting and pastoral ministry, often in circumstances where misunderstanding and opposition

have been the main challenges. Consequently few theologians have emerged from within the movement. The modern expression of Jewish believers in Jesus is barely one generation old, although their illustrious forbears such as the nineteenth-century Joseph Rabinowitz outlined important theological concerns on ecclesiology, contextualisation and spirituality. Few present-day leaders have had theological training in Jewish or Christian seminaries or academic theology departments. Nevertheless, their practical wisdom derived from the thirty years' hands-on experience in evangelism and pastoral ministry has brought invaluable resources from which to construct such a local theology, or "ethno-theology."

Another challenge to theological reflection is that Jewish tradition has criticised the discipline of theology, regarding it as abstract, cerebral and overly systematised, whereas Jewish thought claims a more holistic, eclectic and pragmatic orientation. Whilst the church has a long tradition of creeds and statements of faith, in Judaism this has been the exception rather than the rule. Some Jewish believers are reluctant to draw up or sign up to statements of belief. Such reluctance can be addressed sensitively yet firmly, recalling the scriptural mandate to hold fast the teachings of the Lord and his disciples. This will lead to a firm and confident acclamation of faith.

Messianic Jews are faced with many questions arising from the combination of their background as Jews and their belief in Jesus. They also have rich possibilities for the integration of Jewish and Christian life and faith. Celebration of Jewish festivals and observance of Jewish practices such as circumcision and *bar mitzvah* (coming of age), allow Jewish believers to promote Jewish life and culture whilst demonstrating the Messianic fulfilment that Jesus brings. Both in Israel and the Diaspora they seek to integrate their faith with their membership of the Jewish community, adopting, adapting or, where necessary, abandoning aspects of their Jewishness depending on how this affects their Christian testimony. How they process these questions is the task of Messianic thought and calls for the prayers, support and empathetic engagement of the wider Christian community.

(c) Messianic Jewish Identity

Just as the Jewish community continues to wrestle with the questions "Who is a Jew?" and "What shapes Jewish identity?" Also Messianic Jews are concerned with identity issues. What they are called prioritises these concerns and raises important theological and personal considerations. A variety of terms are used to describe Jewish believers in Jesus, and each can have a range of meanings.

"Jews for Jesus" can apply broadly to all Jews who believe in Jesus and this is the name of one of the best-known mission agencies. "Messianic Jew/Judaism" is now the most commonly used term (Hebrew: *Yehudi Meshichi*). It may refer to all Jewish believers in Jesus, the majority of whom worship in mainstream denominational churches, or specifically those who belong to Messianic congregations and synagogues. The earlier term "Hebrew Christian/Christianity" identifies those worshipping in mainstream denominational churches but can also have a wider application.

Some prefer "Messianic Jewishness" to "Messianic Judaism" because the term "Jewishness" appears more focused on ethnic and cultural rather than religious issues or "Judaism." Both signal a change in orientation. The primary loyalty of a "Messianic Jew" is to believe in Jesus as Messiah. Others in the Jewish community have objected that all Jews are "Messianic" in that they await the coming of the Messiah. The term "Messianic Jew" has also been used to describe religiously motivated political supporters of Zionism. Whilst this has led to some confusion in the Jewish community about Messianic Jews, it has been of strategic

value in raising the question of the identity of Israel's Messiah and stating clearly that Jewish people who believe in Jesus are still Jews.

"Jewish Christian/Christianity" focuses on the primary identity of a "Christian" who comes from an ethnic and cultural Jewish background. Some use the more neutral "Jewish Believer in Jesus" or "Jewish believer." In Israel a popular term is "Jewish Believer in Yeshua" (*Yehudi Ma'amin b'Yeshua*).

Whilst this debate on terminology has yet to reach a conclusion, Messianic Jews must focus on the real issues underlying such discussion, namely the Messiahship of Jesus and the rightness of following Him. It is unrealistic to think that the terms themselves will make any difference to one's self-perception or the views of others, when the key question is not one of personal identity but of divinely revealed truth about the Messiah.

(d) A Theology of Cultural Identity

The Bible has divine authority for Messianic Jews and is the key resource for them. Yet there are different understandings of how to interpret Scripture in the light of Jewish tradition. This can become the controlling hermeneutical factor in biblical interpretation, leading to an overemphasis on the "Jewishness" of Messianic Jewish identity, at the expense of the Christ-event. Alternatively, it is possible to read Scripture with an over-emphasis on the divine aspects of Christ's nature whilst not always appreciating how the incarnation took place in a particular human culture and Jewish context. A helpful balance to this is the theological teaching about creation that places high value on the goodness of the created order. Ethnic, cultural and gender differentiations are part of the purposes of God for humanity but there should be no sense of ethnic, national or racial pride which makes one group feel superior to another. Messianic Jews, alongside their sisters and brothers in Christ, must think through these issues carefully and clearly in order to formulate a theology of culture from which a mature evaluation of Jewish identity fulfilled in the Messiah may emerge.

Jewish community concerns over identity and survival in the light of the threats of assimilation; secularisation and anti-Semitism are reflected in the lives of Messianic Jews concerned for an abiding testimony to their people. The additional factors of belief in Jesus and membership of the body of Christ present big challenges to the nature of Jewish identity and Messianic Jews are well aware of the difficulties they face as they define and construct an "authentic Messianic Jewish identity."

(e) Authentic Messianic Jewish Identity

Religious Jews define Jewishness as primarily a religious identity resulting from the religion of Judaism (as practised by the Orthodox and other denominational varieties of Judaism). However, the majority of Jews do not have a religiously defined identity, preferring to see "Jewishness" as a complex of factors that combine to create ethnic and cultural identity. These include language, history, culture, territory, religion, politics, humour and demographic factors.

How do Messianic Jews put their religious identity in practice? Their ecclesiology expresses their debt to the historic Christian denominations and the work of the mission agencies that came from them and their own desire to integrate and incorporate aspects of synagogue worship and Jewish traditional elements. The use of the *siddur* (Jewish prayer book), celebration of the Jewish festivals and life cycle, are held in tension with the pattern of Christian worship, its creeds and festivals. There are a considerable variety of practices found throughout the Messianic congregations and among those in mainstream churches.

(f) Messianic Identity in Israel

Jewish believers in Jesus reflect the diversity of the global Jewish community. In Israel, Messianic Jews feel under pressure from the orthodox rabbinical establishment that is influential on matters of immigration, citizenship and religious freedom. Whilst the majority of Israelis are secular and have little objection to Messianic Jews, the orthodox groupings have challenged their right of return to the land.

Within Israel the mix of immigrants from the former Soviet Union, the US, Ethiopia, alongside native born *sabras*, leads to a diversity of practices, styles of worship, congregational leadership and some tensions. There are also contrasts between the older and younger generations of Jewish believers. The youth movement in Israel is finding ways to relate to the pluralistic and post-modern culture around them whilst affirming the truths they have received through the relatively conservative congregational structures of their parents. The Israeli congregations exhibit the same breadth of belief and practice that is found in the worldwide church. Denominational links, the charismatic movement, evangelistic strategy and the role of women in ministry are issues on which there is much diversity, in addition to the particular issues that concern Jewish believers in Jesus.

Messianic Jews need to be particularly concerned about issues of peace, justice and reconciliation. The ongoing quest to develop a distinctive Jewish identity highlights the need for right relationships with Arab brothers and sisters in Christ. Many have views on prophecy that leave little room for negotiation over territory and little confidence in the peace process. Nevertheless, at the practical and personal level initiatives have been taken to bring Jewish and Arab believers together to experience the reconciling love of the Messiah across the boundaries of ethnicity. Regular meetings for pastors, young people and women in formal and informal contexts are a vital demonstration of the difference that Jesus makes. There are encouraging signs challenging the *status quo* of cultural myopia, political intransigence and the cycles of violence and hatred. Such activities take place at great personal cost to those involved and Christians should support these initiatives with prayerful concern, refusing to allow themselves to be polarised into a simplistic allegiance to one side against the other.

(g) Evangelism and Gentiles in Jewish Evangelism

Messianic Jews are divided on the role of gentiles in Jewish evangelism. Whilst some resent the interference of the so-called “gentile church” and mission agencies in Jewish evangelism, others welcome this. They point to their own coming to faith as the fruit of the efforts of mainstream churches and Christians and to the evidence that most Jewish people who come to faith in Jesus do so through the witness of Christian friends. However, some Messianic Jews argue for a “Post-Missionary Messianic Judaism” (the title of a forthcoming book by a Messianic leader in the US) which specifically disassociates itself from the missionary enterprise. Their concern to “have Jewish grandchildren” leads to an antipathy to involvement in the wider church, including support for mission agencies. Others argue that all missionaries should leave the land of Israel and leave evangelism to the local believers. Such a view is extreme, impractical and falls short of the biblical model of the church’s united worldwide mission of God to the world - reflecting *missio Dei*.

A small but vocal minority would seek to delegitimise and neutralise the effects of Jewish evangelism. However, the majority of Jewish believers, longing for their families to receive the good news, are grateful that Christians care enough to pray and to witness. They are unconcerned whether Jewish or non-Jewish friends present the gospel. There is a great need

for Jewish believers to be called into ministry among their own people, in addition to the many who are already involved.

The relationship between missions and Messianic congregations reflects the church/parachurch tensions commonly found in missionary contexts, with the activities of the historic denominations in Israel posing the dangers of “empire building” but allowing for the possibility of handing over responsibility and leadership to truly indigenous local believers. There are numerous examples of both practices and the more forward-looking expatriate agencies have focused on the training and empowering of local leaders wherever possible.

(h) What about the Law?

The term *torah* means more than just law. It includes teaching, instruction and revelation. It is used to refer both to the Pentateuch and Mosaic Law, the Hebrew scriptures of the Old Testament, the Jewish religious tradition (the Mishnah, Talmud and later Rabbinic writings) and as a general term for revelation or teaching. The intended sense of *Torah* is not always clear.

Jewish religious groupings interpret Torah differently. Orthodox Jews are strict in their observance of the laws of the Pentateuch, which are further expanded, interpreted and applied by Rabbinic tradition. Conservative Jews modify this traditional observance in the light of modernity. Reform, Liberal and Reconstructionist Jews adopt a humanist, post-modern position that looks to the *Torah* for moral principles and cultural norms, but these may be re-negotiated and there are few absolutes. Most Jewish people observe some aspects of the Mosaic Law as customary and traditional rather than out of the conviction that God commands them.

Messianic Jews believe that the Law has been fulfilled by Jesus (Matthew 5:17) and that He is the goal of the Law (Romans 10:4). Just as there are different understandings of the relationship between law and grace in the church and different Christian evaluations of the law, so there are different views among Messianic Jews. Some see the Law of Moses as obsolete. Jesus has inaugurated the new covenant. The old has gone. The laws of sacrifice have been fulfilled in Christ. The civil laws were only relevant to ancient Israel. Only the universal moral law as exemplified in the Ten Commandments is still applicable. It is therefore misguided to observe aspects of the Mosaic Law and leads back to bondage in legalism. If Messianic Jews observe the Mosaic Law they are denying the grace of God and justification by faith alone. They rebuild the middle wall of partition, attempting to justify themselves by works of the law.

A second view affirms the cultural and social practices of the Mosaic Law yet this is not for religious reasons. Customs that make up Jewish identity have been incorporated into Jewish life by tradition over the centuries, such as the calendar, circumcision and the food laws. These are still normative for ethnic, cultural and national identity but have no theological merit and do not add to righteousness. Consequently they are not prescriptive on Jewish believers in Jesus, who are free to observe them if they choose.

A third approach recognises the continuing validity of Jewish tradition as the interpretative context for understanding the biblical *Torah* of the Old and New Testaments. Jesus, in His teaching and example, and the practice of the early church, defined a new *halacha* (rule of conduct) for the new covenant community. This *halacha* is developed today following the first Christians' example in the book of Acts. They observed Jewish lifestyle and practices, adapted some, abandoned others and applied only a few to the nations. Messianic Jews who observe *Torah* in this way both acknowledge its value but challenge its interpretation by the main branches of Judaism. They propose a new interpretation of *Torah* based on the teaching and practice of Jesus and the first disciples.

A final and controversial position argues that Messianic Jews should in general observe the *Torah* according to Orthodox or Conservative tradition, with only a few exceptions. This will enable them to develop their “primary identity” within the Jewish community rather than the “mainstream church.” They should see themselves as members of the community of Israel and as part of the synagogue, even if others do not accept them. This challenges Messianic Jews to identify fully with their cultural and religious heritage rather than deny, ignore or approach it in an adversarial manner.

The great danger of this last approach is a compromise on the uniqueness of Christ and the freedom the gospel brings. Whilst such an option may be attractive for those wishing to receive a validation of their identity from the Jewish community, it can lead to a diminishment of effective testimony. The self-understanding that may be gained from such an approach leads to isolation from other believers. *Torah* observance at the cost of the visible unity of the Body of Christ can only result in loss of fellowship and faith.

The outworking of the above-mentioned positions is seen in the way Messianic Jews worship. Some follow the liturgy of the synagogue, using the *siddur* (Jewish Prayer Book) and Jewish liturgy. Others produce contextualised liturgies that combine elements of Jewish and Christian worship. This can result in a creative, holistic liturgy reflecting the worship-styles and backgrounds of its participants in a way that is relevant and expressive to Jewish visitors, but at worst it leads to an undignified and irreverent mess. Some attempt to have no liturgy at all. Most Messianic Jews are happily integrated in mainstream churches where they follow the liturgies of the denominations to which they belong. Many appreciate additional opportunities to celebrate Jewish festivals such as Passover and the Jewish New Year, with other Jewish believers, acknowledging how such festivals point to Jesus and are fulfilled in Him.

These understandings of *Torah* impact on Jewish life and lifestyle. Many Jewish believers observe Jewish holidays and life cycle events (circumcision, *bar mitzvah*, etc) using them as opportunities to witness to the Jewishness of Jesus and His own teaching at such events. Some go further, observing various degrees of *kashrut* (the kosher food laws), the Sabbath. A few consciously seek to fulfil the requirements of Orthodox and Conservative Jewish observance. One community of Messianic congregations is developing its own *halachic* formulation (Jewish religious law). While there is no broadly recognised authority in the Messianic Jewish community, there are ongoing discussions on the need for a Messianic *beth din* (legal council) that will have authority to rule on disputed religious issues.

(i) Messianic Jews and Prophecy

Many Messianic Jews understand the return of their people to the land of Israel as a fulfilment of biblical prophecy. They hold different views on how the state of Israel should respond in the Middle East conflict. They see Israel’s survival as God’s providential purpose in bringing His people back to the land and giving them renewed sovereignty. Whether they live in Israel or in the Diaspora, they have strong attachment to Israel and long for peace and security in the region. Messianic Jews serve in the army, put their children through the Israeli school system and contribute as good citizens to the life of the country. They share the passion and the pain of Zion and they pray for a solution.

Among some there is a “millennial fever” which does not always promote sympathy with those who suffer now. Others are deeply involved in the ministry of reconciliation. Many, whilst sympathetic to the Zionist position, are cautious in expressing political and prophetic views. For them a healthy emphasis on evangelism and unity in the body of Messiah overrides political and prophetic opinions. A variety of prophetic expectations and political opinions are found, but

there is no united view on the principles of biblical interpretation, let alone how the biblical data meshes with contemporary events.

Among Jewish believers in the Diaspora there is a small but steady flow of those becoming Israeli citizens. The majority of Jewish believers in Jesus still live outside the land and do not believe they are called to immigrate to Israel. Whilst the majority of Jewish believers in the land would be unwilling to concede territory to the Palestinians, there have been several initiatives at local level for reconciliation with Arab Christians. These operate under the difficult circumstances of the *Intifada*. Arab and Jewish pastors, young people and women meet regularly for prayer and the sharing of their lives together. Friendships made across the political divide are a powerful expression of the reconciling love of the Messiah.

(j) The Unity of God and the Uniqueness of Christ

Messianic Jews formulate the doctrines of the trinity and incarnation in Jewish terms. The majority hold firmly to these truths. Yet Jewish tradition denies the divinity of Christ and the plural unity of the Godhead and these issues are frequently debated. Messianic Jews have a vital contribution to make in this discussion. The challenge for apologetics is to express Christian truth in Jewish terms with biblical integrity, theological accuracy and intercultural sensitivity. The same issues occur in witness to Muslims and the two ministries have much to learn from one another in these areas.

One helpful approach expresses the historic creeds in terms and thought-forms of Jewish discourse. The challenge here is to correctly articulate the complex understandings of the nature of Christ and the Trinity. The scriptures are the basis for the creeds and the appropriate means of explaining them to Jewish enquirers. Discussion of key passages focuses on the evidence for the plural unity of the Godhead, the divine/human characteristics of the "Angel of the LORD" and the role of the Messiah.

Some Messianic Jews also use Rabbinic tradition and *midrash* (Jewish commentary on scripture) to explain these truths. This provides useful illustrative material, but care must be taken not to over-interpret these extra-biblical texts or rely too heavily upon them. The New Testament shows a more developed understanding of the Messiah in the light of Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension. Rabbinic tradition speculates on these issues, but does not provide a definitive formulation of what is clearly revealed in Christ and made known by the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

Some express their understanding of the Trinity and the incarnation using the terms and conceptual framework of the Jewish mystical tradition, the Kabbalah. In its complex literature is found the plural nature of the Godhead, and the Messiah as divine intermediary and emanation of the Divinity. There is some apologetic value in showing how ideas of the plural nature of God and the divinity of the Messiah are not completely alien to Judaism. In fact the subject has been a matter of speculation in some Jewish circles for many centuries, expressive of the longing for true redemption. There are many analogies between the Messianic idea in kabbalistic thought and the New Testament presentation of Jesus, such as His pre-existence, agency in creation, incarnation, suffering, atonement and resurrection. However, the Jewish mystical tradition compromises on the nature and being of God, using a gnostic and dualistic understanding of the immanence of the good Creator within an evil creation that awaits redemption. Such parallels in Jewish tradition should not be pressed too far, as they lead to a defective cosmology and Christology.

Others search for a post-modern formulation of the Trinity. This reflects on the work of some Jewish thinkers who acknowledge the possibility of God's incarnation in the people of Israel, but have difficulty relating this understanding of incarnation to Jesus.

A small minority have acknowledged Jesus as human Messiah but denied His divine eternal nature. They see this as incompatible with the strict monotheism of Jewish tradition, which affirms the singularity and indivisibility of God. There are some Messianic Jews who deny the divinity of Christ, choosing Arian and Adoptionist Christologies and a Unitarian view of the nature of God. Their desire is to set the Messiahship of Jesus within traditional Jewish categories, which regard worship of any being, other than the invisible God, as idolatry. This is a minority position held by less than 5%, but is indicative of the seriousness of the problem.¹⁵

(k) The Future of Messianic Jews

In church history, a distinction was made between the heretical "Ebionites" and the orthodox "Nazarenes" by the early church fathers. This generalisation reflected the perspective of non-Jewish Christians on their Jewish brethren and was not entirely accurate or charitable. Yet there are some similarities with present-day Jewish believers in Jesus. Various outcomes are possible for the movement. With many thousands in the worldwide church, there are signs of healthy growth and development, in personal discipleship, leadership training, congregational maturity, youth movements and theological reflection.

For Messianic groups some important principles apply. Efforts at contextualisation must be faithful to Scripture and cannot include anti-Christian elements that might be common Jewish understandings. These include prayers for forgiveness without substitutionary atonement, or what is commonly understood as prayers for the dead. Messianic Jewish worship practices and retention of Jewish customs must be authentic expressions of individuals and members of the group. Care should be taken to affirm the unity of the Body of Christ, both in the Diaspora with all Christians and particularly with Arab Christians in Israel.

It is to be hoped that engagement with these issues will produce an informed and theologically mature next generation. If the Messianic movement can retain the supremacy of the Messiah and the authority of Scripture in its faith and practice, it will avoid a pride and parochialism that could threaten its wellbeing. If it can deepen its understanding and love for the Messiah and walk in his path of humility and servanthood, it will continue to grow, bearing effective testimony to the Jewish people about her Messiah, and bearing light to the nations as the saved remnant of Israel.

Christians who are concerned for the salvation and welfare of the Jewish people can rejoice at the increasing number of Jewish people coming to know their Messiah. They exist as a renewed expression of God's faithfulness to His ancient people. We pray that they will fulfil the vision of their destiny, commit their lives to loving service and respond to the Lord's call to be a light to the nations as they bear witness to the Messiah of Israel. May they benefit from the theological resources, pastoral support and loving encouragement of their wider Christian family.

¹⁵ See *Mishkan* 39 (2003). This issue of *Mishkan* is devoted to the topic "The Divinity of Messiah".

4. Challenges Facing Jewish Evangelism

As the church renews its vision for Jewish evangelism it must face several challenges associated with this difficult task. This section outlines these for consideration, in the hope that deeper understanding of and engagement in Jewish evangelism will result.

(a) Irreconcilable Truth Claims

Some Christians argue that dialogue is all that Christian mission to the Jewish people requires. However, dialogue that aims at nothing more than mutual understanding fails to fulfil the Christian obligation to make disciples of all people, including Jews. Both classical Judaism and classical Christianity make truth claims. The Jewish scholar Jon D. Levenson points this out. He thinks, for example, that *Dabru Emet* suffers from one of the great pitfalls of interfaith dialogue over the past several decades, because people have attempted “to avoid any candid discussion of fundamental beliefs and to adopt instead the model of conflict resolutions or diplomatic negotiation”. He maintains:

The easygoing relativism profoundly impedes any sophisticated understanding of the two millennia of Jewish-Christian dialogue and dispute over the meaning of Scripture. A more accurate statement would note that it is precisely the points of commonality that make disputation over the differences inevitable – at least within communities committed to the idea of religious truth and not simply to the theological equivalent of “I’m, OK, you’re OK.”

Levenson further adds: “Participants in Jewish-Christian dialogue often speak as if Jews and Christians agreed about God but disagreed about Jesus. They have forgotten that in a very real sense, orthodox Christians believe Jesus *is* God.”¹⁶

(b) In Denial: “Jews Do Not Believe in Jesus”

In recent years, some Christians have entered into interfaith dialogue with Jewish leaders, being willing to accept the condition that Jewish believers in Jesus are excluded even when they are qualified to participate. Christian scholar, Wolfhart Pannenberg, professor emeritus of Systematic Theology from Munich, criticises this viewpoint in a response to *Dabru Emet*, Pannenberg states:

One of the new developments made possible by the reestablishment of a Jewish state in Palestine has been the emergence of groups of “messianic Jews” within Israel, Jews who confess their faith in Jesus the Messiah without leaving the Jewish community and a Jewish way of life. Since the end of the Jewish congregation of Jerusalem in the first century, this is the first time that a Jewish-Christian church re-emerges so that a Jew need not turn to a gentile church when he or she comes to believe in Jesus the Christ. The “messianic Jews” intend to remain Jews while professing Jesus to be the Messiah. Sooner or later Christian-Jewish dialogue will have to take notice of this fact...¹⁷

Rabbi Barry Cytron, Director of Jay Phillips Center for Jewish-Christian Learning, comments on this by saying:

¹⁶ Jon D. Levenson, (cf. note 5), 33, 35, 37.

¹⁷ Wolfhart Pannenberg in *Jews and Christians: People of God*, (cf. note 3), 185.

In his remarks on “messianic Jews,” Prof. Pannenberg touches on a sensitive, hurtful area in interfaith relationships. To many in the Jewish community, the tactics employed by “messianic Jews” to spread their beliefs are often unseemly. Several recent books have documented these efforts at conversion and the ill-will that lingers from such attempts. The guidelines of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on Jewish-Christian relationships forthrightly address this issue: “Groups such as ‘Jews for Jesus’ or ‘Messianic Jews’ consist of persons from a Jewish background who have converted to Christianity and who wish to retain their Jewish heritage and identity. Lutherans should be aware that most Jews regard such persons as having forsaken Judaism, and consider efforts to maintain otherwise to be deceptive.”¹⁸

Unable to disprove the unique identity of Jewish believers in Jesus, Cytron attacks only their methods of evangelism.

(c) Anti-Semitism

Despite the presence of Jewish believers in Jesus in the church throughout the centuries, ecclesiastical and civil authorities often persecuted Jews. Because attacks against the Jewish people during the crusades, inquisitions and pogroms were committed against the Jewish people in the name of Christ, it is little wonder that Jews have associated the good news of Jesus with bad news for the Jews.

Not all Christians or churches were responsible for such anti-Semitic acts. Yet the perception among Jewry at the start of the twenty-first century is that both Christians and the message of Christianity are responsible for the wrongs of the past. Whilst that misimpression is an obstacle to Jewish evangelism, it does not justify its curtailment. Those who conducted such hateful acts in the name of Jesus will be held to account by God. Vengeance is His alone. The gospel is no less true.

The teaching that the New Testament itself is anti-Semitic is to be rejected. Indeed, there have been terrible anti-Semitic misuses of the New Testament within church history. However, taking the New Testament scriptures out of their biblical and historical contexts to support anti-Semitic hatred does not make the word of God anti-Jewish.

The harsh words found in the Gospels against the Jewish people reflect the internal debate among Jews at the time about the Jew Jesus. They are similar to the unflattering intramural depictions of a disobedient Jewish people in the Old Testament that were uttered by Moses or the prophets. Whilst strongly expressed, the Gospel challenges are to be seen in the context of God’s covenant faithfulness to His people and His longing for their repentance, as well as in Jesus’ love for His people.

It should be categorically denied that the Jewish people alone were to blame for the death of Jesus. They were no more responsible for His crucifixion than were all humanity. So who is to blame and who is without guilt? Since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, then all bear guilt for the death of Jesus. Yet, God in His loving grace made the death of His Son possible, in His wisdom and love, to save the lost, both Jew and gentile alike.

(d) Modern Marcionism

Marcion, a theologian of the second century, denied that the heavenly Father of Jesus was the same as the God of Israel as portrayed in the Hebrew Scriptures. He believed that the

¹⁸ Barry Cytron in Jews and Christians: People of God, (cf. note 3), 193.

Old Testament God was an evil God of wrath, while the Father of Jesus was a good God of love.

The early church rightly declared Marcion a heretic. Nevertheless, a modern Marcionism exists in the church today. It is right to combat the false notion today that the God of the Old Testament is a wrathful God and the God of the New Testament is a God of love.

The starting point for biblical theology is the unity of the Scriptures. The one true God is revealed throughout the entire Bible. That God is a God of righteousness exhibiting wrath at times. He is also the God of grace, extending loyal loving kindness, pouring out His mercy and goodness with infinite measure. The God of Israel in the Old Testament is the same heavenly Father of Jesus in the New Testament. Christians are called on here to reject and correct popular notions that reflect modern Marcionism. Such false ideas can hinder Jewish people from understanding the true nature of God as rightly found throughout the Bible.

(e) Eschatology

Evangelicals have different interpretations of Old and New Testament prophetic texts concerning the Jewish people and the land of Israel. Some are hesitant to speak about the fulfilment of specific prophecies with regard to the establishment of the present-day state of Israel. Others are not. Some await further fulfilment of prophecy in the spiritual restoration of ethnic Israel and the coming of the Messianic kingdom. Others do not apply these prophetic texts exclusively either to ethnic Israel or to the church. This view does not detract from the reality of the promises but is open to how they will be fulfilled, either to the church or to the Jewish people in their homeland.

Christians must note that the land promised to Abraham is today the home for both Jewish and Arab peoples. Any view of future outcomes that does not respect the present inhabitants or fails to see them as precious in the sight of God is at risk of being unchristian. The love of Christ is available for all and forever. Enthusiasm for the potential fulfilment of prophecies associated with the state of Israel must not overshadow or miss the centrality of the crucified and resurrected Christ. The present return of Jewish people to the land and the rebirth of Israel as a gathered nation are evidence of God's faithfulness. If God's loyal love to Israel endures, then surely likewise His love for all in Christ is secure.

Indeed, expectation of the imminent return of Christ should be a strong inspiration for the task of Jewish evangelism. He will return in glory and power to fulfil His purposes of judgement and salvation. Before that day, the gospel must first go out to all nations and to all Israel. This glorious future hope should guide all Christians in setting evangelism as their priority both now, and until the Lord returns in glory.

(f) Reconciliation

The promised land of the Bible is the home today of both Jews and Arabs. The continuing tension between Israeli and Palestinian people is tragic. Christians everywhere cannot allow themselves the luxury of a dispassionate regard for the suffering of all peoples in that land.

Christians, wherever they are, must guard their hearts against the pressures of nationalism and the urge to take sides in the political disputes raging in the State of Israel and the Occupied Territories. Christians must pray for and support their Palestinian and Jewish brothers and sisters in Christ as they are engaged in the pursuit of a just peace.

It must be remembered that God's loving grace extends to all the descendants of Abraham. Therefore, Christians should pray for God's work of salvation and reconciliation through His Spirit among the peoples of the land of Israel and its neighbours.

The Lord is growing His church among Israelis and Palestinians, some of whom are worshipping together in local congregations. The Lord Jesus alone is the One who can bring a true and lasting peace into the hearts of the people in His land.

(g) Jewish and Muslim Evangelism

There are many parallels and similarities between Jewish and Muslim evangelism. The church has much to gain in sharing the common challenges they present and learning from both. A commitment to both outreaches prevents polarisation within the body of Christ.

Those involved in Christian-Muslim dialogue often encounter similar opposition to that experienced by those engaged in Jewish-Christian dialogue. The Islamic faith in the one God and Muslim identity as descendants of Abraham are often presented in such a way as to exclude any need for their salvation in Jesus Christ. Once again, the key theological issue is the uniqueness of Christ for salvation as the ultimate expression of the loving God.

Baptised Jewish believers in Jesus, along with Muslims who come to faith in Christ and are baptised, are often ostracised from their respective communities. Even worse, many that publicly identify themselves risk martyrdom for their Christian faith. Today, the church can support Jews and Muslims who come to Christ by advocating strongly for their religious freedom as brother and sister believers in their home communities. In addition, the Christian church can do more to encourage contextualised expressions of Jewish or Arab Christian identity among their respective people groups. These new believers should be encouraged to develop appropriate cultural identities and practices as followers of Jesus within the Body of Christ.

5. Case Studies: Strategies and Initiatives in Jewish Evangelism

Good things are happening globally in the field of Jewish evangelism. Following is a selection of current and prospective Jewish evangelism initiatives that are encouraging. It should be remembered that each of these initiatives needs the ongoing support of the Body of Christ, through prayer, finances and volunteer help. These case studies, strategies, programmes and plans are signs for us that God is still at work among Jewish people and they are hearing and receiving the good news of Messiah Jesus. The continued involvement of Jewish people in Jewish evangelism is living testimony that God is faithful to His plan to make Israel a light to the nations.

(a) Jewish Evangelism at the Local Level

(i) City-wide Evangelistic Campaigns

Jewish mission strategists realise that Jewish people rarely seek out the truth about Jesus on their own. Jewish missionaries must go out and actively seek to engage people who may be open to the gospel. Since many Jewish people tend to gravitate towards urban centres, these locations become prime areas for direct outreach.

For several years, various Jewish evangelistic agencies have conducted outreach campaigns in urban centres. In 2001, the Jews for Jesus organisation launched Operation Behold Your God (BYG). It is a focused, long-range initiative to conduct a significant evangelistic outreach in every city of the world, outside of Israel, with a Jewish population of 25,000 or more before summer, 2006. Campaigns are composed of a combination of Jews for Jesus staff, co-operating with other mission agencies and teams of well-trained volunteers from local churches and Messianic congregations. They engage in evangelistic literature distribution, phone calling, door-to-door witnessing, multimedia outreach and special events. BYG campaigns have required the development of new evangelism strategies for cities that present special city-specific opportunities and unique problems such as government regulations that are resistant to gospel penetration. Each campaign is less than a month in duration and includes a follow-up programme with trained local co-ordinators for continued discipleship ministry. Outcomes have been tracked, with more than 700 Jews and over 2,700 gentiles making professions of faith by 2004.

(ii) Holiday Outreaches

Jewish mission agencies and Messianic congregations conduct outreaches during the Jewish High Holy days. Constituents and congregational members are encouraged to bring Jewish friends and family to Rosh HaShanah (New Year) and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) services. These are often worship services with evangelistic emphasis.

Light of Messiah Ministries in Atlanta, Georgia, developed a creative initiative involving local churches in outreach to their Jewish communities during Jewish holidays. Christians are invited to sponsor food gift baskets for their Jewish friends. They are then hand-delivered by Jewish believers to the homes of Jewish families as a way of wishing a "Sweet New Year" or a "Happy Passover." An opportunity is presented to share the gospel.

(iii) Direct Mail to Jewish Homes

Direct mail to Jewish people is an important component of Jewish evangelism. During evangelistic campaigns mailers are sent out to Jewish homes, offering a free book or multimedia presentation or an invitation to attend an event like an apologetics debate or a holy day service. Most of the missions publish newsletters that address subjects of interest to Jewish people from a Messianic Jewish perspective.

Shema Yisrael, a ministry near Detroit, Michigan, sends out regular evangelistic mailings to Jewish homes in their area. They partner with local churches, which help provide postage and people to address and stuff envelopes. Postcards are also mailed with a brief message appealing to anyone who might be interested in knowing why some Jews believe in Jesus. The cards offer a free book or video and contact information to reach the congregation. Mailing responses include phone calls and people who visit their congregation as a result.

(b) Reaching Specific Jewish Groups

Diversity of Jewish communities and culture requires development of different methods to reach specific segments of Jewry. Following are examples of some strategies for reaching sub-groups of world Jewish population with the gospel of Jesus.

(i) Reaching "Generation J"

Mainstream Judaism wrestles with the question of how to reach the younger Jewish generation. Jewish missions face the same challenge. Materials are being developed for younger Jewish people today, referred to as "Generation J", but there is still much more to be done. This age group is uniquely caught in the modern to post-modern paradigm shift. Some ideas that have been tried are "web-zines", outreaches to Jewish college students over school holiday periods and evangelistic nightclub outreaches. Campus ministry is a vital component to reach "Generation J."

Hope of David, a Messianic congregation in Atlanta, Georgia, conducted a significant outreach from 1999 to 2002 at the University of Georgia, where 1,000 out of 30,000 students declare themselves Jewish. The outreach strategy used four methods: literature distribution, public lectures, information displays in the student square, and a student-led organisation that partnered campus Christian groups and Messianic Jews. To form on-campus ministry, most American public universities require that initiatives come from registered students rather than outside agents. Hope of David began by enlisting the co-operation of Christian student organisations that already existed. Once the required minimum number of students had signed up, the group could distribute literature advertising public lectures on subjects with controversial twists in order to draw students. Topics included: "A Jewish Perspective on the Resurrection of Jesus," "Astrology and the Birth of Messiah" and "A Jewish Christmas." The student-led organisation met weekly for Bible study and worship. Volunteers ran information tables and distributed literature, helping to develop crowds for the public lectures. Hope of David found the college age group ideal for reaching young Jewish adults who were in the process of making their own decisions about new ideas. Jewish students are not easily introduced to the gospel. It is therefore important to keep proclaiming and keep learning more effective ways to reach "Generation J."

(ii) Ministry to Jewish "New Agers", "JuBus" and "HinJus"

New Age and Eastern religions and practices are filling a spiritual vacuum among Jewish people. Reaching JuBus (Jewish Buddhists) and HinJus (Jewish Hindus) and the practitioners of New Age Judaism requires unique approaches to these worldviews. However, specialised training and materials are available.

This area is an especially important outreach for Israeli Jews. Many young Israelis are turning to Eastern and New Age religions. After serving their term of service in the Israeli army, many choose to sojourn to India to explore these beliefs. At the same time, some of these young people are open to the gospel. A joint initiative through the co-operation of the Caspari Center in Israel and the Danish Israel Mission seeks to minister to Israeli people via short-term mission programmes. Teams of Israeli Jewish believers with volunteers and staff from Jewish mission agencies undergo a month-long orientation, coinciding with New Age Festivals taking

place in Israel. Teams then spend three months in India ministering to Israeli New Agers who are also open to the gospel.

(iii) Reaching the Intermarried

Demographic evidence points to an increasing population of Jewish-gentile couples and indicates a community that is already experiencing cultural change. That phenomenon is an opportunity for appropriate Christian evangelistic efforts. While Jewish communities tend to view intermarriage as a threat to Jewish survival, no similar alarm is sounded in the Christian church. Hence, the overwhelming response to the needs of dating, cohabiting and intermarried Jewish-gentile couples and their families has come from traditional Jewish agencies. Christian churches should become alert to this ministry opportunity in their area and mobilise for outreach to a segment of Jewish people that is ready to respond to a hope for spiritual harmony.

The single greatest challenge expressed by Jewish-gentile couples is the struggle to find spiritual harmony.¹⁹ The Christian message offers couples the means to know the one true God without obliterating the ethnic distinctions of the partners. Sensitivity to provide the accurate gospel message must consider the different cultural perceptions of Jewish-gentile partners. Already, a few Messianic congregations have effectively responded to the opportunity by providing specific ministry for the Jewish-gentile intermarried couples. See Appendix D for more.

(iv) Reaching Israelis in Bolivia

A missionary couple with Avant Ministries, based in Cochabamba, Bolivia, and working with the Yuquis Indians, also have an unusual opportunity for evangelistic ministry to Israelis. Their region is a popular destination for Israeli backpackers who stumbled upon the mission station, noted the gracious hospitality and wrote them up for an Israeli travel guidebook. Israelis subsequently came to their home intentionally. The mission family now regularly receive Israeli visitors. A typical visit includes a tour of the mission facility, a slide show of the Yuqui mission work and an Israeli meal. Hebrew Bibles, including New Testaments, are distributed. Discussions about the Christian mission and true Christian beliefs take place over a typical Israeli dinner. Thus far, their mission has been a witnessing hub to over 8,000 Israelis.

(v) Strategy for Hassidic Jews

Hasidic Outreach Partnership for Evangelism (HOPE) is an outreach to Hassidic, ultra-orthodox Jews who live in a very closed community. They are among the most difficult Jews to reach. The aim of HOPE is to network ministries and workers from around the world to concentrate resources and prayer in reaching these people for Christ. Other Jewish ministries, while not specifically targeting any one Hassidic community, conduct outreach to Hassidic Jews. Staff members of Jewish evangelistic ministries with offices in metropolitan centres like New York or London, for instance, meet with inquiring Hassidic Jews from time to time.

(vi) Reaching Post-modern Jewish people

The profound cultural change that has occurred in the past few decades, as a result of post-modern thinking, has impacted Western Jewry. One aspect of post-modern thought rejects the notion of objective truth claims and instead maintains that each person's story and experience is valid and deserves to be heard as truth. Many Jews are therefore open to new narratives about spirituality. Mission efforts must prepare to interact with post-modern thinking Jewish people.

One resource grappling with post-moderns is "The Y Course" co-authored by London-based Jewish believer Joseph Steinberg. It is an eight-week series on DVD that is based on the book *Beyond Belief?* The Y Course confronts the reality that post-modern society, including Jewish people, does not know who Jesus is, what He did or what He said. The course

¹⁹ See Wan and Zaretsky, *Jewish-Gentile Couples*, (2004), (cf. Bibliography).

distinctively explores life, rather than religion. It tells the story of Jesus, rather than studying Christian discipleship subjects like prayer or healing. It examines real life questions like suffering, the validity of other religions, and life after death. It gives people time to process what they discover. The Y Course uses relevant illustrations and stories that relate to the culture and experience of the post-modern audience. It is one more resource for churches that are using seeker-based evangelism courses to reach out to Jewish and gentile post-moderns.

(vii) Ministry to Children

Reaching Jewish children directly with the gospel poses ethical concerns. Evangelism among Jewish children often occurs in the context of ministry to Jewish believing children.

Club Maccabee in Chicago recognises the need of Messianic Jewish children for regular Bible instruction and fellowship with other Jewish children. The Club programme is structured into 25 weekly sessions. Both believing and non-believing Jewish children take part. Parental permission is a prerequisite for participation. Children receive Jewish education, Holy Day instruction, Hebrew language lessons and teaching from the scriptures reflecting a Jewish perspective. In four years Club Maccabee has developed an organised programme which is now being used by several Messianic congregations in America, Argentina and in the Former Soviet Union. The club in Chicago has grown, expanding from primary grades into high school programmes.

Backyard Bible clubs and summer camps are also offered for Jewish children. Extensive mission and congregational programmes are functioning in the United States and in Israel.

(c) Media Evangelism

One of the most exciting resources that Jewish missions have at their disposal is the media. Knowing how to effectively utilise the media in all its aspects is crucial for those in Jewish evangelism.

(i) Cyber Evangelism

The World Wide Web has become the internet street corner, coffee shop or marketplace for witnessing and religious discourse around the world today. A wide selection of apologetic materials are available online to answer the questions Jewish people are asking. Bulletin or message boards are available for individuals to express their thoughts and interact with others. Perhaps the most exciting salon for electronic communication is with Internet chat rooms. PALtalk and webcams enable text conversations to take on tone and texture.²⁰

(ii) Timely Response to Events

Contemporary culture requires that those engaged in Jewish evangelism be ready to respond immediately to current events in a manner that is relevant to Jewish community interests. One example was the phenomenon around the film "The Passion of the Christ."

Mel Gibson's movie, and the controversy surrounding it, provided opportunities for gospel proclamation to Jewish people. Jews were already talking about the implications of the film so it was not missiologically difficult for mission agencies to enter the conversation, focusing on the message of Jesus. Several ministries immediately produced literature to answer questions raised by the film and that addressed the message of the "Passion" and Christ's passion depicted in the Bible. Chosen People Ministries maintained prayer stations on the film's opening night to engage people before and after the film. Jews for Jesus ran full-page ads in *Variety* and the *New York Times* entitled, "An Open Letter to Mel Gibson from a Jew for Jesus." They created opportunities for more coverage and additional discussion of the subject through subsequent media interviews and articles. The church and those involved in Jewish evangelism

²⁰ See Rich Robinson, "Using the Internet in Evangelism" in *LCJE Bulletin* 69 (August, 2002), 10-14.
Online: www.lcje.net

must be as media savvy and culturally aware as is the Jewish audience that is available for the gospel.

(iii) Radio and Television Ministries

Radio and television programmes that feature Messianic Jews are developing as interest in Jewish influences on Christianity and Jewish evangelism continues to grow. Some of the more widely known US television programmes are “Zola Levitt Presents”, “Jewish Voice Today”, “Sid Roth’s Messianic Vision,” “Jewish Jewels” and elements of “Middle East TV” broadcasting into Israel. Shows focus on educating Christians about Jews and Jewish evangelism, while reaching an over-heard audience of interested Jewish people. The increasing popularity of radio via Internet has enabled radio efforts such as Messianic Bureau International’s “Messianic Jewish Radio” and “Messianic Minutes.” Programmes typically feature testimonies of Jewish believers in Jesus, Messianic music and bible teaching.

(iv) The Power of Story in Jewish Evangelism

Testimonies through suffering: “Survivor Stories” is a video project featuring seven poignant testimonies of Jewish Holocaust survivors who have come to faith in Christ. They make a powerful case for the gospel. It has been shown to seekers in secular venues in the US, France, Ukraine, Russia, England, Brazil and Canada. Evangelistic newspaper ads, billboards and radio spots have offered seekers a study guide or a free copy. They can learn about the power to forgive and overcome hatred through the Messiah Jesus. Over 21,000 copies of the video have been distributed in this manner. In light of the atrocities committed in a Christianised Europe, this film offers an opportunity to present the loving Jesus of the Bible to a hurting segment of the Jewish community.

Testimonies through conflict: “Forbidden Peace” is a documentary video of Muslim background Palestinians and Israeli Jews who share their stories of faith in Christ. Beginning with their need to be reconciled to God, they take their stories further to their need to be reconciled to one another. The message of the video is that the only hope for true and lasting peace in the Middle East, or anywhere, is in Jesus. This film has been used on college campuses, with the sponsorship of campus Christian ministries. Often, after it was shown, a team of a believing Arab and Jew, field questions. A follow-up survey for further information is offered along with a study guide for post viewing consideration.

Testimonies of the self-sufficient: Jews are thought of, for the most part, as well educated and fulfilled with material satisfactions. So, stories of Jews who are successful by the world’s standards, yet recognise their spiritual poverty, are powerful evangelistic tools. The account told by a successful Jewish businessman, Stan Telchin, in *Betrayed*, has been translated into over 30 languages. Hundreds of Jewish readers of his story have come to faith in Christ. It is listed in the bibliography section, along with other testimonies of Jewish believers who are physicians, lawyers or concert pianists.

A media savvy missionary: Secular radio, television, print and Internet media outlets can be valuable resources for communicating the gospel in public discourse. It is therefore necessary that the church and Jewish missions develop and maintain strategies for encouraging media opportunities locally, nationally and internationally. That includes knowing how and when to write attention-grabbing press releases, cultivating media contacts, making the most of a story and being ready to comment on current events that pertain to Jews around the globe. It is more than five years since a well-known Jewish mission leader (along with two rabbis and a Christian educator) was a guest on “Larry King Live” via CNN in the US. Yet that show has been re-run in Israel and North America with responses still coming from hearts that have been spiritually moved. The church needs to know what to say and when to say it in developing media as an evangelistic resource.

(d) Training and Education

Leadership training and education of Jewish missionaries and church mission workers is a long-term investment in the field of Jewish evangelism. A vision for more is needed.

(i) Jewish Evangelism in Bible Colleges and Seminaries

Many Bible colleges and seminaries offer opportunities to study in Israel. A few, like Nyack College in New York, Philadelphia Biblical University and Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, have chosen to emphasise Jewish evangelism. By and large, the task of generating excitement about Jewish missions is left to Jewish mission agencies. Finding a platform to encourage Jewish evangelism on some bible college campuses can be difficult. So then, Jewish missions often have to find creative means of informing Christian students about short-term evangelism opportunities, internships and the possibility of serving in the field. To increase awareness and enthusiasm for Jewish evangelism, mission programmes may include discussions, lectures and in missions courses for Jewish studies on Bible College and Seminary campuses.

(ii) Training for Leadership in Jewish Evangelism

Leadership training for the twenty-first century missionary in Jewish evangelism needs specialised preparation to meet emerging trends in the field. Graduate level programmes are being developed to equip Jewish mission leaders to meet sociological trends such as intermarriage and youth work. There is also a need for more active mentoring programmes.

(iii) Opportunities for Teen and College-age Jewish Believers

Young Jewish believers in Jesus are interested in Jewish evangelism. To foster that enthusiasm, Jewish mission agencies must develop appropriate entry-level programmes. For instance, Jews for Jesus offers *Halutzim*, a study-tour for 16-18 year old Jewish believers. They travel to a major city, like New York, to engage in street evangelism training and experiences. They also get a taste of Jewish New York, time to fellowship with local Jewish believers in the same age group, with time for Bible study to seek God's direction for their lives.

College-age Jewish believers can also engage in *Project Joshua*, two weeks for training in evangelism in the land and with the people of Israel. *Project Joshua* takes place during the December school break, beginning in New York with lectures and basic training for outreach in Israel. Students are equipped with gospel tracts and Hebrew New Testaments. They evangelise through tract distribution and one-on-one conversations on the streets in Jerusalem, Haifa, and Tel Aviv. They also receive instruction in biblical and historical geography. Besides exploring Israel they meet with Israeli Jewish and Arab college students. Chosen People Ministries also offers *eXperience Israel*, a two-week mission and training trip to Israel for those between 18-30 years of age and *Teen STEP*, a one-week mission trip to New York City for younger people between 14-17 years old.

Youth camp programmes in the US are featured divisions of the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America (MJAA) and the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations (UMJC) and the Jews for Jesus' *Camp Gilgal*. The latter now operates four regional camps for youth through college age Jewish believers and unsaved Jewish young people in the US. A variety of youth camps and conferences have already been mentioned as functioning in Israel under the aegis of congregations and mission agencies.

Younger Jewish believers need opportunities for discipleship and outreach ministry to others their own age. The church and mission strategists can help by encouraging younger Jewish believers to invest their lives in reaching other Jewish youth with the gospel. Many young people who participate in the programmes above continue in the field of Jewish evangelism.

(e) Co-operation and Networking: Jewish Missions and the Church

Jewish mission societies seek to facilitate co-operation with one another and with the church as much as possible. In many ways, this is already happening. That gives hope for further partnerships, which are surely needed in an increasingly globalised mission world.

(i) Networking among Jewish Missions

The Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE) is a network of mission agencies and individuals that are committed to partnership and co-operation in evangelism. The conference statement from the LCJE international conference in Helsinki 2003: "Jesus and His People" reads, "We call on one another, as those involved in the ministries of evangelism, teaching and congregational planting, to work in cooperation to bring *Jesus and His People* together."²¹ The unique purposes of the LCJE include sharing information and resources with other workers in the field of Jewish evangelism. Partnerships and co-operative evangelistic efforts encourage efficient use of God's resources for the cause of Jewish evangelism. Appendix A has more information.

(ii) Financial Accountability to the Christian Community

Jewish mission efforts are a sort of "niche" ministry with a target population of only fourteen million people spread all over the globe. They face many unique challenges. One involves reports and accountability to Christian supporters. The question is often posed, "how many Jewish people came to Christ this year?" The answer is not particularly impressive in most cases. Jewish evangelism has rarely seen responses like a Billy Graham Crusade. It is more like a handpicked harvest, with fruit collected one by one. Yet, ministries feel pressure to put their best foot forward when it comes to reporting results. They are tempted to trumpet successes and downplay failures. Hence, some reports are vague and unspecific regarding ministry efforts. To quote the late Menahem Benhayim, a pioneering Messianic leader in Israel,

The lack of hard information has often led to wild estimates and misleading publicity about the size and the scope of the movement. Much of the information promulgated was fuelled by anti-mission extremists and sometimes by well-meaning Christian and Messianic enthusiasts to encourage friends and supporters about the movement's growth and impact upon the Jewish community in Israel; and there have also been outright liars who have provided their supporters with fabricated tales of success.²²

Some mission leaders fear that if people knew the numbers they might feel less inclined to support the efforts. Still, even those who do report specific statistics can be misleading. Occasionally, anti-missionaries take annual mission income and divide that by the number of Jewish people reported to have made professions of faith. They use the figures to equate each "convert" as a per dollar ratio. It is a method that is intended to discourage Christians from supporting Jewish evangelism. Opposition to Jewish evangelism wants the church to believe that they can "get more for their money" by shopping elsewhere, since Jewish souls are no bargain for the mission budget! However, accountability between Jewish missions and the churches that support them only encourages partnership in a difficult field and the need and value of support.

(iii) Co-operation with the Church in Prayer/ Intercession

The Apostle Paul offered these words, "*Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved*" (Romans 10:1). Passion in proclamation of the gospel must be undergirded with the fervency of intercessory prayer as the priestly ministry of evangelism.

²¹ LCJE *Bulletin*, 73 (September, 2003), 5. Online: www.lcje.net

²² Cf. Lisa Loden, "Facts & Myths: A Selective Evaluation" in *Mishkan* 32 (2000), 11.

The church can further the work of Jewish evangelism by including the salvation of Jews on the prayer agenda. Parachurch groups, like Watchmen on the Wall, consider prayer for Jewish people and Israel as their chief ministry. These groups are known for conducting all-night prayer vigils on behalf of Jewish people and Israel.

(iv) Co-operation through Compassion Ministries

Jewish people are generally regarded as being philanthropic. It is fitting that ministries to Jewish people are seeking to help Jews in need. There are a number of compassion ministries, many helping Jewish people in Israel, the Former Soviet Union and Ethiopia.

For example, the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America sponsors the *Joseph Project*. It supplies food, clothing, basic toiletries, medical supplies, toys, building materials and other necessities to impoverished people in Israel. *The Russian Emergency Aliyah Relief Fund* helps Russian Jews immigrate to Israel. *The Messianic Jewish Israel Fund* helps meet the financial needs of Messianic Jews in Israel and *Operation Tikvah* helps Jews in Ethiopia. Many of these efforts involve short-term mission projects to deliver aid and comfort. Gentile Christians who have a heart for Jewish people and specifically Israel have formed agencies such as Christian Friends of Israel. Compassion ministries in the Body of Christ make a proper methodological connection between their relief efforts and gospel proclamation.

(v) The South - Majority Church and Jewish Evangelism

Extraordinary growth is occurring in the church of the "majority world." Most of Asia, Africa and Latin America have small Jewish populations. Nevertheless, churches in these regions have the same obligation to pray for Jewish people and encourage witness to them, as do churches everywhere else.

A helpful model is seen in the LCJE Japan network. Through the efforts of LCJE Japan, guest speakers from the Jewish mission world are brought to Japan to teach and inspire local church groups. The Japan network of agencies also organises local prayer groups, arranges for biblical study tours to Israel and produces appropriate literature. Majority world leaders can connect with missions, with a special calling to Jewish evangelism, to building bridges of encouragement, prayer support and sharing for mutual benefit.

Following are some practical suggestions to enable the church in the majority world to be a vital part of the Jewish evangelism effort:

1. Pray that God will send missionaries to the Jewish people.
2. Christian world organisations in the west might raise scholarship funds to enable majority world pastors and Bible teachers to study in Israel, learning about Jewish evangelism and the Jewish roots of the Christian faith.
3. Pray faithfully for the salvation of Jewish people.
4. See to it that libraries at theological institutions in the global south have literature and journals on the subject of Jewish evangelism.

6. Today We Pray: Our Father in Heaven

During the 2004 Forum for World Evangelization we have asked ourselves what God is saying to the church. What does the word of God say about the Jewish people and sharing the good news with them? Today we pray:

- Lord, give your church *a new heart* for the Jewish people, a heart which is rooted in your love for them, and which blesses this people and prays for its peace and salvation.

- Lord, give your church *a new vision*, a vision which appreciates today the presence of Jewish believers in your church, and which hopes for the in-gathering of a full number from the Jewish people and the nations.

- Lord, give your church *a renewed call* to share the good news in word and deed with Jewish people everywhere and to live out your great commission from Jerusalem and to the ends of the world.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our debts,
as we also forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.
For yours is the kingdom and the power
and the glory forever.
Amen.

Appendix A: Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE)

LCJE is the only global organisation today in which people involved in the field of Jewish evangelism can come together and...

- Share information and resources
- Study current trends
- Stimulate one another's thinking on theological and missiological issues
- Strategize on a global level so that more Jewish people will hear and consider the good news of Jesus
- Arrange consultations that will be useful to those engaged in Jewish evangelism

How did it begin?

In 1980, the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE) sponsored the Consultation on World Evangelization (COWE) in Pattaya, Thailand. "Reaching Jews" was one of 17 mini-consultation groups at that event. This group has continued as a task force, now called the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE).

What has happened since?

LCJE has met for international consultations every 3-4 years and more often on a regional basis. There are chapters in North America, South America, Europe, Israel, South Africa, Australia and Japan. In Germany and in Finland there are local LCJE groups.

The *LCJE Bulletin* is published quarterly to keep its members abreast of what is happening between international conferences. Over the years a lot of written resource material has been collected: reports on Jewish mission work from different parts of the world, history of Jewish believers, theological issues, etc. Some of the material from more recent conferences can be found online: www.lcje.net

Who can join LCJE?

Jewish evangelism agencies, congregations engaged in Jewish evangelism, scholars and writers in the field, individual agency workers, and congregational leaders.

Membership is open to any agency, congregation or individual that is recommended by two other members. All members need to be in substantial agreement with the Lausanne Covenant. Online: <http://www.Gospelcom.net/lcwe/covenant.html>

International Coordinating Committee (ICC) – 2003-2007

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Appendix B: LCWE Statements in Support of Jewish Evangelism

Christian Witness to the Jewish People (1980)

Drafted by members of the “Mini-Consultation on Reaching Jewish People” in Pattaya, Thailand in 1980 and sponsored by LCWE. Online: <http://www.Gospelcom.net/lcwe/LOP/lop07.htm>

The last paragraph of the report reads,

Including Jewish people is a test of our willingness to be involved in world evangelisation. It is a test of our faith in the one exclusive way of salvation and of our proclamation of Christ as an adequate Saviour for those who are apparently adequate so far as worldly righteousness is concerned.

The Willowbank Declaration on the Christian Gospel and the Jewish People (1989)

The *Declaration* came out of a theological consultation held at Willowbank, Bermuda that was sponsored by the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF) and supported by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE) in 1989. Online: www.lcje.net

The following is taken from the Preamble:

In recent years, “messianic” Jewish believers in Jesus, who as Christians celebrate and maximize their Jewish identity, have emerged as active evangelists to the Jewish community. Jewish leaders often accused them of deception on the grounds that one cannot be both a Jew and a Christian. While these criticisms may reflect Judaism’s current effort to define itself as a distinct religion in opposition to Christianity, they have led to much bewilderment and some misunderstanding and mistrust.

Manila Manifesto (1989)

This document was released by LCWE at the Second International Congress on World Evangelization in Manila. Online: <http://www.Gospelcom.net/lcwe/statements/manila.html>

The following paragraph is from a section on the uniqueness of Jesus Christ for salvation,

It is sometimes held that in virtue of God’s covenant with Abraham, Jewish people do not need to acknowledge Jesus as their Messiah. We affirm, that they need Him as much as anyone else, that it would be a form for anti-Semitism, as well as being disloyal to Christ, to depart from the New Testament pattern of taking the Gospel to “the Jew first...” We therefore reject the thesis that Jews have their own covenant which renders faith in Jesus unnecessary.

Appendix C: Jewish Population

Countries with the largest Jewish population in the Diaspora:²³

United States	5,800,000	Australia	100,000
Israel	5,094,200	Brazil	97,000
France	498,000	Ukraine	95,000
Canada	370,500	South Africa	75,000
United Kingdom	300,000	Hungary	50,000
Russia	252,000	Mexico	40,000
Argentina	187,000	Belgium	31,400
Germany	108,000		

Metropolitan areas with largest core Jewish populations (outside of Israel)

New York, USA	2,051,000	San Francisco, USA	218,000
Los Angeles, USA	668,000	London, UK	195,000
South Florida, USA	498,000	Toronto, Canada	175,000
Philadelphia, USA	285,000	Buenos Aires, ARG	168,000
Paris, France	284,000	Washington, DC	166,000
Chicago, USA	265,000		
Boston, USA	254,000		

²³ See David Singer and Lawrence Grossman, eds., 2003 American Jewish Year Book: the Annual Record of Jewish Civilization, 103, (New York: The American Jewish Committee, 2003).

Appendix D: Intermarriage Ministry

Increasing numbers of mixed couples in the Jewish communities of the world present a significant missiological opportunity, especially in America. Sociological studies indicate that exogamous marriages are at a higher risk of ending in divorce than where the partners' ethnicity and religion are the same. Therefore, a growing number of Jewish-gentile couples are seeking resources for preserving cross-cultural spousal relationships and for raising bi-cultural children.

Evangelicals ought to see intermarriage as a missiological opportunity. Recent research indicates that one of the most significant challenges reported by Jewish-gentile couples in America is the longing for spiritual harmony.²⁴ It is possible to introduce these culturally mixed couples to spiritual unity through sensitive presentation of the good news in Jesus Christ.

The American Jewish community is undergoing a dramatic cultural shift with intermarriage rates in the last fifteen years in excess of 50%. Interfaith couples often describe feeling as if they are on the fringe of their respective Christian and Jewish communities. American missiologist Paul E. Pierson observed that "movements of renewal and mission have normally risen on the periphery of the broader church and usually existed in some tension with it."²⁵ Here, then, is a place to work and pray for a fresh initiative of the Holy Spirit among Jews and gentiles.

Christian churches generally do not have a special evangelistic ministry for the Jewish spouses of their intermarried gentile members. Christian clergy are not concerned about communal survival in the face of intermarriage, as is the case with the Jewish community. The percentage of Christians who intermarry is comparatively insignificant compared to the ratio of Jewish people who marry "out" of their community. So Christians have not felt the same urgency for dramatic action, as have American Jewish leaders. A few Messianic congregations have focused on ministry to Jewish-gentile couples; but much more could be done.

Pastor Scott Brown and the Son of David congregation in Rockville, Maryland, dedicated themselves in particular to embrace Jewish-gentile couples. They also proclaim the Messiahship of Jesus without embarrassment about the cause of Jewish evangelism²⁶

Another resource for ministry to intermarried couples is a video project of Chosen People Productions in New York. "Joined Together?" was professionally produced in 2002. The forty-five minute video offers testimonies for "discovering a spiritual basis for unity in your interfaith marriage."

Intermarriage Ministry: Case Study

The following case study is offered as an illustration of effective practice in ministry with a Jewish-gentile couple on the West Coast of the United States. (The names "Marc" and "Sharon" are pseudonyms):

Marc was raised in New York, the son of Holocaust survivors and an observant Jew. When I first met him, he was dying of abdominal cancer. At the time of our first

24 See Wan and Zaretsky, Jewish-Gentile Couples, (2004), 98, (cf. Bibliography).

25 Pierson, Paul E, Emerging Streams of Church and Mission, (Pattaya: Forum for World Evangelization, 2004), 1-3.

26 See web site at www.sonofdauid.org

visit, he was living with Sharon. She was a Christian who had not been walking with the Lord for several years. It was Marc's diagnosis of a terminal illness that rekindled her desire for the Lord. It also compelled her to find a way to share the hope of eternal life with Marc.

He was culturally disposed to reject the Christian message. We met to discuss the biblical basis of marriage, not how he could find the Messiah. However, as he engaged with the Bible, his curiosity about the living God grew. Ultimately, Marc wanted to know what Sharon believed that was giving her peace in the face of their dawning separation in death.

Eventually, Marc found spiritual harmony with Sharon, through the gospel. He came to faith just nine months before he died from his long battle with cancer. Through their faith in the salvation of Jesus, he and Sharon found a basis on which to share their life together that was previously impossible.

At Marc's request I officiated at his funeral. He gave specific instructions to tell his Jewish family about Jesus. Marc found peace in knowing the Messiah of Israel during his last months of life with Sharon, but the hope for others lives on in their testimony.

By Tuvia Zaretsky
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Libraries

Several mission organisations have compiled resource libraries. The largest, comprised of some 6,000 volumes is currently maintained at the international headquarters of the Jews for Jesus ministry in San Francisco, California.

Resources Produced by LCJE

LCJE Bulletin, Issue 77 was published in August 2004. Recent issues can be found online at www.lcje.net

Proceedings of the International LCJE conference material:

LCJE Zeists 91, Fourth International Conference 1991, vol. 1-4.

LCJE Jerusalem 95, Fifth International Conference 1995, vol. 1-5.

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LCJE Helsinki, Finland 2003, Seventh International Conference, vol. 1-5.

Papers from LCJE-North America conferences; see www.lcje.net

Information on magazines and newsletters published by LCJE member ministries can be found at www.lcje.net

Jewish Missions History Project, see www.lcje.net/history. An on-line digital library of primary source documents from the history of Jewish missions, particularly those prior to 1945.

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Scripture quotations are from the New International Version of the Bible.