



# Witnessing to Jewish People

by Bruce J. Lieske





# **Witnessing to Jewish People**

**by Bruce J. Lieske**

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With a new foreword in 2017.*

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## **Foreword to the 2017 edition:**

Much has changed in our ministry since these companion editions were published. So I thought I would take this opportunity to update the reader on what is going on in the LC-MS within Jewish missions.

In 1973, at the encouragement of Rev. Bruce Lieske, their pastor, St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Philadelphia submitted a memorial to the 1973 convention of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, titled "To Facilitate Gospel Proclamation among Jews." The synod ultimately referred this issue to an ad hoc committee, headed by Dr. Erwin J. Kolb then the Executive Director for Evangelism of the LC-MS. You can find these and related documents in Appendix A on page 148.

This beginning grew into what is now Lutherans in Jewish Evangelism (LIJE), founded in 1981. Rev. Lieske became its Founder and first Executive Director, and LIJE became the first mission society outreach of the LC-MS since World War II. There are 6,000,000 Jewish people in the United States, accounting for 45% of world Jewry.

To minister to this community, we help prepare congregations for ministry to Jewish people through preaching, teaching, writing and workshops while developing branches that are active and intentional in evangelism to the communities where God has placed them. We affirm and seek to be faithful to St. Paul's proclamation, "***For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile***" (*Romans 1:16*).

The vision of LIJE is two-fold:

- First, LIJE seeks to engage in intentional evangelism within every significant Jewish community in the United States, sharing Y'shua (Jesus) with all people and especially the Jewish people.
- Secondly, LIJE seeks to connect congregations for training in evangelism and to help our churches understand the Jewish roots of their faith.

These companion books were written to help facilitate those goals with the expressed goal of opening mission branches in every city in the United States with a population of 20,000 or more Jewish people. There are 39 such areas in this country!

When these books were written, I was a fairly new believer, having come to faith in 1991 through the ministry of St. John's Lutheran Church in Denver, and began my ministry with a Jewish outreach organization in Denver, CO, called Menorah Ministries where I was serving as a volunteer missionary on the campus at the University of Colorado. By 1996 I was attending Concordia Seminary and had not heard much about the existing Lutheran mission to the Jews when I met Steve Cohen. He was then the field counselor and advisor to LIJE. In 1996 he left Jews for Jesus and came full-time with LIJE and

moved to St. Louis. We worked together to found The Apple of His Eye Mission Society, which was ostensibly intended to be a missionary training center, working with LIJE. But it ended up effectively operating as a competing mission to the Jews, causing a lot of confusion within our church body. So Steve and Bruce decided to separate their work. Steve left the ministry of LIJE but continued to operate under LIJE's street name of "The Apple of His Eye."

Because of all this confusion, LIJE determined to open new mission branches under the name of "Burning Bush Ministries" to distinguish itself from Steve's new ministry, and in 1999, opened a new branch of mission in Detroit, MI, the first of "Burning Bush Ministries."

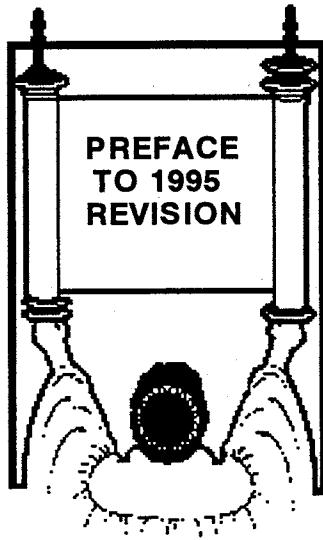
However, two branches of ministry were still open, St. Louis and New York, operating under the "Apple of His Eye" name. Both branches were attached to messianic-Lutheran congregations, Congregation Beth El in Queens, New York, and Congregation Chai v'Shalom in St. Louis, where I have the privilege of pastoring.

Congregation Chai v'Shalom was founded in 1998, celebrating its first worship service on April 18, 1998, about a year-and-a-half since beginning mission work in St. Louis. Then, in 2005, Bruce retired and LIJE called me to serve as its second Executive Director, and has moved its offices to St. Louis, MO, where it continues a variety of ministries under the structure of LIJE, such as The Apple of His Eye, Burning Bush Ministries, and Aish HaEmeth, our Center for Jewish-Christian studies.

Unfortunately, in 2008 our ministry and congregation in Queens, New York closed as the missionary there took a call to serve a traditional Lutheran congregation. But, we have opened new mission stations in Atlanta and S. Florida, and continue to minister in Detroit, St. Louis and Orlando, and work with partner ministries to serve in the Ukraine and in Israel. We are actively working with congregations in the New York metro area to reopen our New York branch. **LIJE continues as a faith-ministry of the LC--MS, and as such relies on the regular support of those to whom God has called to sustain it with their gifts and prayers.**

*Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Matthew 9:35-38).*

--Rev. Kevin Parviz, Executive Director



I wrote the prefaces to the first three editions of *Witnessing to Jewish People*, and I referred to ...

-- In 1975, a "new spirit abroad" in our attitude toward the Jewish people reflected in the appointment by the Missouri Synod of the Committee for Witnessing to Jewish People, the first of its kind since 1932.

-- In 1978, the powerful national Jewish organizations who were pressuring the LCMS to abandon its "anti-Semitic" efforts to "proselytize" the Jewish people.

-- In 1984, new Jewish evangelism organizations and a resolution by the Synod deplored and disassociated ourselves "from Luther's negative statements about the Jewish people."

In 1995, things are different! Yes, the "ultimate question," stated in the first preface, is still basic: "Must the Jewish person believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah in order to have peace with God and eternal life with Him?" And the answer is the same! John 14:6 and Acts 4:12 have not changed. Jesus Christ is the one way for Jew and Gentile alike. But in the '90s it is becoming harder for many Lutherans to do Jewish evangelism for these reasons:

1. **Local intimidation.** At a recent Jewish evangelism workshop in Wisconsin, both the public and the religious press chastised the host congregation and the local pastor for this "offensive act" against the Jewish people in the neighborhood. The negative publicity intimidated many Lutherans to back away from a bold witness to Jesus Christ. Here, at the local level, is the challenge to implement the theme of the 1992 LCMS convention: "With Great Boldness Tell Everyone What He Has Done."

2. **Pluralistic toleration.** According to the surveys of George Barna (*What Americans Believe 1991*) 64% of all Americans believe that all faiths -- Buddhist, Muslim, Jewish or Christian -- believe in the same God. Many Lutherans reason: If Jews really have the same God we do, why should we violate the American spirit of freedom and tolerance, and try to convince them to believe in Jesus?

3. **Ease in Zion.** Church members get comfortable in padded pews, air-conditioned halls and warm fellowship. Why "pound the pavement" for converts who are only going to make us uncomfortable with their different culture and styles, and their prodding questions?

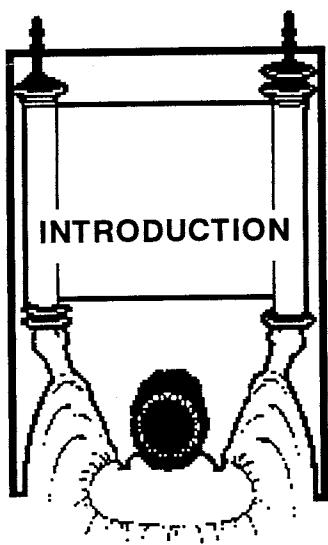
It is my prayer that this revised and updated manual will serve as a new call to respond as St. Paul: "My heart's desire and prayer to God for them (the Jews) is that they may be saved" (Rom. 10:1).

-- Erwin J. Kolb

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1995 marks the 21st year of recent synodical work in Jewish evangelism. In March of 1974, the Ad Hoc Committee for Evangelism Among the Jews met for the first time in Philadelphia. Operating under the auspices of the Board of Evangelism, the committee later changed its name to the Committee for Witnessing to Jewish People. When the Synod was restructured in 1981, the name of the committee changed again to Task Force on Witnessing to Jewish People.

Because it has not been emphasized in recent church history, Jewish missions may appear to be something of a novelty. However, from 1884 to 1932, the Missouri Synod had a *Kommission für Juden Mission*. This manual, now in its fourth revision, is a direct result of the Synod's concern that Jewish people be reached with the precious Good News of eternal life in Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few; ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Matt. 9:37-38). This manual is offered to the Synod and to other interested Christians with the fervent prayer that all Christians might be awakened, sensitized and trained in their joyful privilege of sharing Messiah Jesus with Jewish people. It is hoped that it will help win for Christ many of the lost sheep of Israel.

Romans 9 to 11 reveals God's plan of salvation in the history of mankind, especially as it touches the interaction of Jews

and Gentiles. This manual is organized around thematic statements taken from those chapters.

**Chapter 1** gives the personal testimonies of faith in Jesus Christ of four Jewish Christians who are members of The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. They clearly identify themselves as both Jewish and Christian, thus shattering the popular fallacy, held especially in the Jewish community, that one cannot be both Jewish and Christian. **Chapter 2** identifies the Jewish heritage of the Christian church. Because many of our traditions and practices have come from the church in western Europe, replete with Latinisms, we have usually overlooked the original Jewishness of Christianity. **Chapter 3** points out a "blind spot" for many Christians: Jews do need the Gospel! **Chapter 4** examines contemporary Judaism and how it influences the thinking of the Jewish community. **Chapter 5** deals with the unpleasant topic of anti-Semitism, and comments briefly on some of the more significant episodes involving the Christian church. **Chapter 6** suggests methodologies for bringing the Gospel to Jewish people and challenges congregations to develop an approach which is uniquely effective for them. **Chapter 7** presents hope for the future—for Lutherans as they grow in their ability to evangelize among Jews and for a strengthened Body of Christ which has a new awareness of, and new appreciation for its Jewish members. All the chapters, except for Chapter 7, conclude with discussion questions which can be used in seminar, Bible class or workshop settings. The footnotes should not be overlooked and we encourage the reader to dig deeper into this fascinating mission field.

The seven appendices provide resource material for the development of evangelistic strategy and the enhancement of witnessing skills. **Appendix A** contains synodical statements on Jewish evangelism made in the last two decades, including Resolution 3-09 of the 1983 St. Louis convention which, in the 500th anniversary year of Luther's birth, was bold enough to "deplore and disassociate ourselves from Luther's negative statements about the Jewish people." **Appendix B** gives updated demographic data for Lutherans and Jews in the United States. The reader may find it useful in developing a strategy of Jewish missions in his area, and possibly in understanding anti-Semitic attitudes should they be found among Lutherans. **Appendix C** lists some

of the available resources—books, periodicals, audio-visuals, and agencies that can provide help for Lutherans. **Appendix D** is a word study on the words "Hebrew," "Jew," and "Israel"—useful for understanding the Jewish background of Christianity. **Appendix E** is a reprint of a *Lutheran Witness* article on anti-Semitism written by one of the former members of the Committee for Witnessing to Jewish People. **Appendix F** is a reprint of an essay published in the May 1976 *Concordia Journal*, which gives a brief synopsis of Lutheran missions to the Jews in the last five centuries. It points out that Lutherans have been actively and successfully engaged in leading Jewish people to accept Jesus as their Messiah. **Appendix G** explains the growing phenomenon of Messianic synagogues and explores their suitability for our own church. **Appendix H** is an essay on anti-Semitism with a particular emphasis on Lutheran issues, written by Jean Kiefer, a current member of the LCMS Task Force on Witnessing to Jewish People.

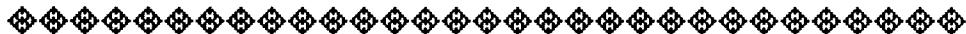
It was with a measure of fear that the three previous revisions to the manual were offered to the church. Jewish evangelism is a new mission field for many Lutheran Christians and many of the issues are not well understood. We wondered in recent years whether misunderstandings would arise the work get bogged down in theological polemics, or if unfruitful dialogue would develop with the Jewish rabbinical community. None of these things happened! Lutheran interest and understanding of Jewish evangelism has grown enormously since the inception of the work in 1974. For example, Good News for Israel, a small independent faith mission working mostly with ALC Lutherans in the 1970s, has continued to expand its work. In 1981, the Lutheran

Institute for Jewish Evangelism, an independent LCMS faith mission, was formed (with a recent name change to Lutherans in Jewish Evangelism). And in 1989 the LCMS Task Force on Witnessing to Jewish People was transferred from the Board for Evangelism Services to the Board for Mission Services, reflective of a more pro-active posture towards the work. Since that time the task force has helped sponsor three street witnessing campaigns in New York City (1990, 1991, 1992) and another "Apple of His Eye" campaign is scheduled for 1993.

Liberal Christianity scolds the Christian who dares to bring the Gospel to Jews, accusing him of triumphalism or particularism regarding religious truth. Jewish religious leaders are both offended and horrified at Jewish missions because they fear a resumption of the Christian anti-Semitism of the past, and because they believe (erroneously) that a Jew who accepts Christ is lost to the Jewish community. But we must be faithful to our Lord Jesus, who commissioned and empowered us to bring Jew and Gentile alike to Him.

The author is indebted to many people for the ideas, knowledge and encouragement needed to revise this work. In particular I wish to thank Mrs. Jean Kiefer and Mrs. Dorothy Holtz for their encouraging words, Dr. Erwin Kolb for his continuing support, and to my wife, Ann, who nudges me to write. Thanks is due to Rev. David Born who used his expertise in computers and editing to typeset the copy for this work. May God use what is here written to build the one flock, the one new man, the one olive tree of our Lord Jesus.

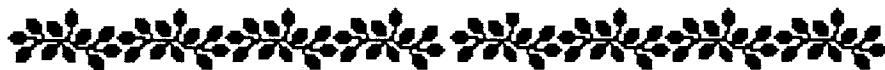
Bruce J. Lieske  
April 18, 1993





# Chapter 1

## FOUR TESTIMONIES



*I speak the truth in Christ— I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit— I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race (Rom. 9:1-3).*

### A. Risa Baldauf

Why me? We often ask that question when something terrible happens to us. But the questions can also arise when something especially good happens to us. That is how I feel about being a Jewish believer in Jesus.

I grew up in a conservative Jewish home although the relatives on my mother's side were orthodox and Hasidic, so I often experienced their religious intensity at family gatherings. As a child I was very interested in worshiping God and attended synagogue and Hebrew school regularly. But difficulties arose when I entered adolescence because neither my parents nor my Hebrew teachers were able to offer any personal basis for their faith. The only answer they offered was "tradition," like the well-known song in "Fiddler on the Roof." Traditions are fine, but I needed something more solid upon which to base my hope and life. My Hasidic relatives tried to help me but all they could offer was a life filled with many rules. I admired their fervor but felt I could never live up to their strict standards.

My dissatisfaction led me to an active search of many religions and philosophies. For several years I studied Taoism, Buddhism, Hinduism, occult meditation and even Christianity. This involvement finally made me realize that no matter how hard I tried, I could never be clean or holy. My own traditional faith as well as all the others left me wondering how anyone could be close to God.

At that point in my life the New Testament words about a Savior fascinated me. But was this Jesus real? Were His life and death really God's gift for our darkened souls? Was Jesus unrelated to the Torah and prophets, or is He actually the fulfillment of the holy Jewish writings? Do we Jews have our own God and the Gentiles another? Questions like these perplexed me.

One of my sister's teachers and some nuns who knew of my involvement in the occult made me and my family a matter of prayer. Their prayers for me were effective, and I believe their continuing prayers will bring results for other members of my family. Soon the Holy Spirit convinced me I was not the nice little girl I thought I was. I found myself to be rebellious and selfish. Still I struggled with the dogma of my science teachers— that the universe was a complex chemical happening with no Master Creator to whom we are all accountable.

But eventually through the prayers of a whole church, I was drawn by the words of Jesus that He is the way, the truth and the life.

The first few months as a believer were times of intense Bible study. I finally became convinced that to follow Jesus in faith is exactly what Moses commanded and that faith in Him was the vision of the psalmists and the prophets. As I recalled from my early childhood the stories about Moses conversing with God, and Joseph with his brothers, I realized that the Lord

who called me has had quite a long history with us Jewish people. Though we usually recall the great heroes of the faith, His promises are also for ordinary and unknown people!

I am finding that my relationship with God challenges many of my attitudes and habits. Through these difficult struggles I cling to His Word that He does not forsake the work of His hands (Psalm 138:8) and that He is working in me both to will and to act according to His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13). I find joy in God's gifts: forgiveness, guidance through this life, the privilege of personal prayer and the promise of an even closer life with Him in eternity.

(Risa Baldauf is the wife of Steve Baldauf, a LCMS pastor.)



## B. Steve Cohen

In cities where there are not large Jewish populations, the custom of the congregation is to have laymen lead the weekly worship services, and a special rabbi is hired from a nearby large city for special services and holy days. Such was the case in the small town in eastern Washington where I grew up. My parents made sure I had some religious training. But, for the most part, any formal religion was downplayed. However, I was always taught that it was important to be a good person, to respect my fellow man, and to

remain loyal to Judaism (regardless of how I chose to express that loyalty). When I went off to Seattle for college, I might well have been described as a steadfast and sincere young man, and that was pretty much how I pictured myself.

After my third year of school, I decided to get my military service out of the way. I joined the Air Force Reserves and was sent to San Antonio. There I met a student named Alan Rither, who was much like me (also in the midst of law school). I knew Alan was religious and a good person, but I never paid much attention to the various religions of the Gentiles. We became fast friends. When we both returned to Seattle, we continued to get together regularly. I knew he had something in his life that I wanted in mine, but I didn't know what it was.

Returning to my studies, I completed my undergraduate work at the University of Washington and made plans to move to Tacoma to attend the University of Puget Sound Law School. One day, I went to take a last look at Seattle when a very strange event occurred. A black Lincoln Continental drove up the hill on which I stood and stopped next to me. A man got out of the car, approached me, and without any introduction said that he knew I was Jewish and he had a message from God for me. Then he said, "You should study the Bible and turn your life over to Jesus, the Messiah. Your mission in life will then be to bring the message of the Messiah to your Jewish people." Then he got back into his car and drove away. Talk about crazy! I thought I had encountered a genuine nut! But I couldn't quite forget what he had said.

My life proceeded according to my schedule; law school was going well; I had friends, a wife and a meaningful existence. One night over dinner with Alan, my comfortable existence was challenged when he said, "Steve, what do you think is man's purpose for living?" I spent the next three hours answering his question just as if I were delivering a peroration in court. I was actually quite pleased with myself.

Then he picked up a Bible and read, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, . . . and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us . . ."

All my logic went flying out the window. "But I'm Jewish. I can't accept that," I told him.

Soon my life changed. All my best-laid plans were falling apart. School presented problems; my great future lay in jeopardy. I longed for a stability that I couldn't produce within myself. One night I challenged God. "Are You there? If You are, show me. Make the street lamp go out." SNAP! Out it went. I figured God got lucky. It would never happen again in a million years. It was just that we were in the middle of a storm. But something told me that it wasn't just a coincidence. "Okay," I ventured, "if it was really You, make it go on again." CLICK! On it went! That night I went to bed with the realization that God might have something to say to me. I began reading the Bible to find out for myself what God had to say.

On Dec. 23, 1973, six months after the street lamp incident, Alan was over at my house again. On this night, he did a foolish thing. "Steve, would you like to receive Jesus as your Messiah?" he asked.

I froze. Silently I prayed, asking God for some indication that this was really what He wanted for me. Still silently, I prayed, "If you, the God of Israel, want me to accept Jesus as the Messiah, give me one last sign. Make one of the candles in this room go out." For no apparent reason, Alan got up and blew out one candle.

As Alan walked back to sit on the couch, I told him I was ready to believe and receive Jesus. He opened his Bible and read to me Romans 10:9 [KJV]:

*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

We prayed together as I received Christ. I'm grateful for this faithful friend who cared enough to pray for two years before God answered him, and even more grateful to the God who cared enough to answer.

(*Mr. Steve Cohen is the LCMS field counselor for Synod's Task Force on Witnessing to Jewish People, and resides in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida*)

#### **Postscript**

When I joined Jews for Jesus back in 1976, I wanted everyone to know about Y'shua. But of course like any Jewish believer, I had an even deeper desire to see my own family come to faith.

At first I urged my parents to read the evidence about Y'shua in the New Testament. Then I asked them if they would consider what my faith meant to me. Ultimately, I had to face a very harsh reality.

One frigid January afternoon in 1977, my wife Jan and I were at my parents' home in the State of Washington. On a nationwide speaking tour, we were telling people in churches about the Jewish roots of their faith and our evangelistic ministry. We had hoped that Mom and Dad would be willing to attend one of our presentations.

We thought we were coming for dinner, but we were met with something far different. "You have broken with Jewish tradition," my parents told me. "Jews don't believe in Jesus. You are to leave us alone. Do not write, call or visit us ever again!" Jan and I left their home that afternoon with shattered illusions and heavy hearts.

Frequently after that we asked others to pray with us that the Lord would break through where we could not. We hoped that God would raise up another believer who cared and would share unashamedly with my parents that our Messiah has come.

During that period of fifteen years, we moved several times before coming to our latest assignment, where I am the head of our Jews for Jesus South Florida Branch. At each move, we wrote to inform Mom and Dad of our new address. With the birth of each of our five children, we sent them announcements. We sent pictures, even flowers on occasion, but never received a response.

Then, late one evening a couple of years ago my brother called us. He said, "Dad has cancer. The doctor said it is a type that spreads rapidly and he doesn't have much time to live. Furthermore, he is refusing any kind of treatment. He has decided that he would rather take his own life when things get too bad."

What should I do? I knew that I was not welcome in my parents' home. Yet it was clear that I might never have another chance to see my father alive. I decided to try.

Jan brought me some clothes from home, and I went directly from a conference to Logan Airport. The next thing I

knew I had landed in Pasco, Wash. My brother, Dennis, picked me up. He said, "They don't want to see you. I am instructed not to bring you to their home."

Well, I had not flown all that way not see them. Even though they were resisting me, I would not receive it. The next day I met with Alan, the Lutheran person who had led me to the Lord. We prayed that the Lord would break through the years of separation from my parents and heal our relationship.

I went to my parents' home once again. I had no idea what to expect as I rang the doorbell. But my brother came out of the house and said, "I don't understand it! They said that they will see you now!"

With rivers of tears and huge bear hugs, nearly fifteen years of separation ended that day. While sitting around the table, my parents said, "We don't understand it. It seems that your faith in Jesus has made you even more Jewish than before!" Aware of our celebration of the Jewish holidays and how we were rearing our children, they realized that believing in Jesus had not turned me into a Gentile.

The cancer progressed, and finally my cousin Nancy talked Dad into going into a hospital, at least to get relief from the pain. Amazingly, Dad agreed. He needed surgery, and there was a chance he would not survive the operation. Again I found myself on a plane to the West Coast—this time to St. Vincent's in Portland, Ore., the same hospital where I was born.

My cousin Susan, who is a believer, came up from Eugene. Susan and I had discussed over the months how she was in a better position to witness to my Dad than I was. Dad had helped raise Susan while her father was in the army; they were very close. Susan had given Dad a Bible, which he cherished. As she and I were together in the hospital, we prayed that God would show Dad the truth about Y'shua.

When it became clear that Dad would survive the surgery, I returned home. But I knew that it was the last time I would see him.

On Thanksgiving morning at 1:30 a.m., Susan called me. "Steven, I couldn't wait. I had to call and tell you that I just got off the phone with your Dad. And Steve, guess what? Your Dad prayed with me to receive Y'shua as his Messiah." I was

instantly awake. I knew the angels in heaven were rejoicing, and so was I!

The next day I had my last conversation with Dad, and I told him how grateful to the Lord I was about his salvation. My family and I were getting ready to move to our new home in Florida. The movers had just come, our housing details were settled and we were soon on our way. The next few days the Cohen family was on the road, driving down to Florida. When we arrived in the Ft. Lauderdale area, I called my mom to let her know we were safely there.

She told me that Dad had died two days ago. "But fifteen minutes before he died," Mom said, "Dad sat straight up in bed and said, 'I'm starting my journey now.'"

I know that Dad is in the presence of the Lord, and I rejoice that the prayers of many have been answered. My mother is still considering what has happened, and she is willing to listen now, more than ever, about how good our God is.

Please pray that others will not give up on their families. God's timing is perfect. We need to remember that while a situation looks impossible to us, from his vantage point, everything is under control.

(This postscript to Steve Cohen's testimony is condensed from a longer version that appeared in *The Jews for Jesus Newsletter*, Vol. 6:5751, 1991).



## C. Gene Dworkin

I was born in Brooklyn, N. Y., almost 48 years ago. Our neighborhood was almost 100 percent Jewish. I knew only Jewish people for the first 13 years of my life. It was a comfortable surrounding. My entire family lived within an eight block area. This enabled us to see each other constantly, and especially on the important Jewish holidays of Rosh HaShanah, Sukkot, Purim, Passover and Simchas Torah. I can say my life was full of joy and love. At age eight, I attended *Cheder* (a Jewish religious school for young children) from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m., after public school. We learned Hebrew readings from the *Siddur* (Jewish prayer book) and read stories from the *Tenach* (the Jewish Bible or Christian Old Testament). I found this to be exciting. I was proud I was a Jew because I believed God had specially chosen my people. In fact, I could not imagine what it would be like not to be Jewish and did not care to know.

When I was 13 years old, I was *bar mitzvahed* at my grandfather's *schul* (synagogue) in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn. It was an old congregation where my grandfather had attended for years. He was one of the officers and often read from the Torah. Grandpa was pious and loving and was loved by all who knew him. I can still feel my cheeks being pinched by the old men treating me in a very special way the day I was *bar mitzvahed*. As I read my portion of the Torah that day, I felt that I was filled with the Spirit of God. I would now take my place as a young man and try to uphold the law God had entrusted to me. My inner thoughts at that moment were: "How can I fail?"

After my *bar mitzvah* something happened that would change my life. My family moved to a very small town in upstate New York. There were very few Jews in that town. For the first time in my life I was exposed to "*THEM*"— Christians. I had never known one before, and I was scared.

Nothing eventful took place the first few days in my new school. But on the fourth day, something unusual did happen. As was the custom of the time, we were dismissed early one day a week for what was called "Religious Release." We were to go to our church or synagogue for study. When the other boys asked me that afternoon what church I would be going to, I told them I was Jewish and attended a

*schul*. They looked at me strangely—but I thought they were funny, so didn't think much of it. The following day after school I found a delegation waiting for me. They accused me of being a Christ-killer. To this day, I clearly remember yelling back at them: "I don't even know him! I didn't even touch him!" Then I ran home.

When I informed my parents what had happened, they were very concerned and took me to the rabbi because the rabbi knows everything for everybody. After hearing my story he just said: "That's the way it is." For many, many years, that's the way I thought it was.

We became active in the small town synagogue. As the months went by I thought about my *bar mitzvah*. In Jewish tradition, all the sins a boy commits before his *bar mitzvah* are his parents' responsibility. *BUT*, after he is *bar mitzvahed*, he is accountable for his sins. I thought I could uphold the laws of my faith. In the beginning I found I could uphold most of them, and believed that would serve to put me in a right relationship with God. As I went further on I found I could only uphold half of them, but I still felt good about my relationship with God. As years went by I found that I could only keep perhaps two or three of the laws. I still thought that would be OK with God.

Actually, my theology kept changing as I found the pressure of sin too great upon me. In my mind's eye, as I looked at Moses carrying the stone tablets down from the mountain, the stones were becoming heavier and heavier. For me my sins were becoming heavier and heavier and the only thing I could do was "drop the stones." I didn't have real stones to drop, so I dropped God.

During my late teens, I became agnostic. As I grew older became an atheist—at the same time that *Life Magazine* had on its front cover "God Is Dead." I told myself: "Perhaps I was right. God IS dead and there is no God."

With God out of my life, I went into the secular world and obtained a job in sales. Success came to me rapidly. I was very content with my job, success, the money I was making and with my new-found sins—not having a God and nobody to answer to. Yes, I could sin all I wanted.

But a few years later somebody presented the Gospel to me for the first time. My

opinion of the Gospel? It was a wonderful fairy tale and if it made some people happy, that was fine. But I was Jewish so it had no meaning for me. Besides, there was no God, and if there was no God, how could there be a Messiah?

After hearing the Gospel message, and thinking it did not apply to me (or so I thought), something happened. It ruined my sin. I could no longer enjoy the sins that gave me pleasure. My sins began to give me nothing but misery. I tried unsuccessfully to alleviate the misery of my sins through drugs and alcohol. I simply could not understand what these people found in the Messiah, that they claimed to know personally. Even though I had more money, more success, a bigger car and a bigger house, I was miserable and they were happy. They had peace and I had misery and I was jealous of them. I began to understand what Paul wrote in Romans 11: "I make much of my ministry in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them."

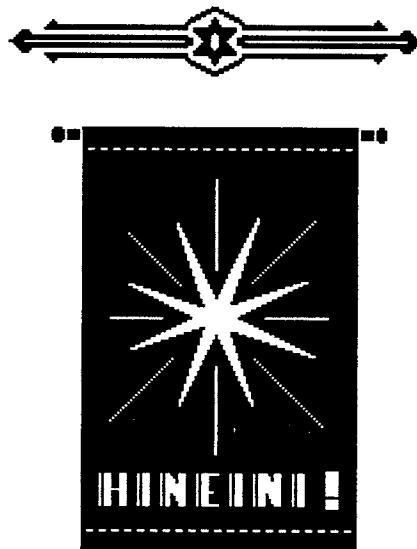
I was envious of that Gospel — that *shalom* — that others had. I wanted it, but didn't know how to get it. One day, during a drive to Kingston, N.Y., I prayed: "If there is a God, and I don't believe there is, show yourself." I can only describe what happened as a miracle; God sent an angel to witness to me. On that late afternoon in Kingston, I received *Y'shua Ha-Mashiach* (Jesus the Christ) as my Lord and Savior. That evening I telephoned my wife and told her to schedule a meeting for me with her pastor. Two weeks later I was baptized at Zion Lutheran Church in Schenectady, N.Y. My life has been wonderfully different since I received Christ.

Since accepting Christ as my Savior, I have found that I haven't "converted" — in the sense of rejecting my people. Receiving Jesus as the Living Messiah is the most Jewish thing I could have done. No, my conversion was not from the Jewish people. My conversion was from sin to Christ.

Even though my life hasn't been perfect or free from problems, the Gospel light always shone through with strength and promise, enabling me to walk as a friend of God, like Abraham, in spite of my burdens.

(Mr. Gene Dworkin is a member of the Board of Directors of Lutherans In Jewish Evangelism and resides in Orlando, Fla.

*His testimony is reprinted from the June 1983 issue of "The Burning Bush" newsletter of Lutherans In Jewish Evangelism.)*



"Here am I"



## D. Robin Greenspan

"Listen, let me tell you something. You ought to obey, 'Honor your father and mother' in the Ten Commandments rather than listening to Nazi pastors." I was stunned. Could this be my usually mild-mannered father-in-law raging at me? It reminded me of some of the confrontations I had when as a single person 15 years ago I received Jesus. Ironically, my father-in-law, Sid, hadn't raged when my husband, Herb, announced his belief in Christ 20 years ago. In fact, Sid and my mother-in-law, Regina, had affirmed Herb's right to follow truth as he saw it. That was unusual. Sid and Regina were observant Jews. Thereafter the family engaged in intellectual discussions regarding what is the true religion.

It wasn't the intellectual discussions, though, that brought Michael, the second of the family's three sons, to faith in Jesus four years later. Michael was impressed by the change in Herb's life. Herb had become unselfish and generous.

Another 14 years of intellectual discussions passed. Regina contracted ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease. After three years of ALS, Regina became a quadriplegic and could communicate only by blinking her eyes. As horrifying as the illness was, the LORD brought good from it. Regina accepted Jesus as Messiah. Shortly thereafter, Sid and Herb were walking in the woods and Sid told Herb, "I want to take the oath. You know, the oath to believe in Jesus." Something happened between the Almighty and Sid that day. A year later, the LORD called Regina home.

As I reviewed the family history, Sid's current anger seemed fantastic. And yet, I was reminded that to many, maybe most Jews, becoming a Lutheran was more offensive than other forms of Christianity. I left my thoughts and responded to Sid.

"Who's a Nazi pastor?" "All of them. All Lutherans are Nazis." "I know pastor well. He's the farthest thing from a Nazi. He deeply regrets the Holocaust and he has a special interest in befriending the Jews," I affirmed Sid's prerogative to choose where he wants to live in eternity, whether in heaven or in darkness. I also clarified that the Nazis were adherents of

National Socialism, not Christianity. Later Herb and Sid continued the argument. Herb brought the discussion to a personal level. "Dad, you said all Lutherans are Nazis. I'm offended by that. I am a Lutheran. You know my commitment to maintaining Jewish culture in my home, to keeping the holidays and supporting the Jewish community."

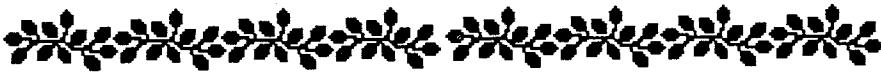
Sid became apologetic. "Well, maybe not all Lutherans." Sid was not the only one shocked when we joined the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Almost all our Jewish believing friends were surprised. Herb had become a believer through Reformed friends. I had come to the Lord on my own and worshipped in baptistic circles. We met when we committed ourselves to a Messianic Jewish fellowship. In the last few years, Herb, who had a degree from a Reformed seminary, became convinced of Lutheran doctrine.

A postscript on Sid. Sid changed his mind and did want Pastor Buchmann to visit him. When he did, Sid agreed to be baptized and to start attending membership classes. How we praise the LORD for that!

*(The above testimony is abridged from a longer testimony that appeared in the December 1989 issue of "The Burning Bush" newsletter of Lutherans In Jewish Evangelism. Robin Greenspan and her husband, Herb, are members of Christ Lutheran Church in Southwick, Mass.)*



*Today, many LC-MS congregations have Jewish believers as members, and a number of them are host to messianic congregations.*



## Chapter 2

### OUR JEWISH HERITAGE



*...The People of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised. Amen (Rom. 9:4-5).*

#### A. A Covenant People Out of a Covenant People

Every American recognizes the signing of the Declaration of Independence date of 1776 as the point of history when Americans consciously identified themselves as a nation, as a people. For the Englishman the Battle of Hastings in 1066 marks the beginning of modern England and the English people. The Jewish people discover their identity far deeper in antiquity. What is more important, they find it in a divinely wrought covenant dating back almost 4,000 years to the time of Abraham.

Originally, Abraham was neither Jew or Gentile. God called him, so that through him He could make a people. Thus Abraham, by the action of God, became the physical and spiritual father of the Jewish people. God spoke to Abraham:

*I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you. I will make your name great and you will be a blessing... and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you... To your offspring I will give this land.*  
(Gen. 12:2-3,7)

This is the Abrahamic Covenant, which was reiterated to Abraham's son and grandson, Isaac and Jacob (Gen. 26:24; 28:13-14; 35:10-12; 46:3). Given without conditions as a pure promise (as Gal. 3:18 indicates), the Abrahamic Covenant promised the descendants of Jacob (Israel), viz. the "Israelites," at least three things:

1. Identity as a great nation of people associated with God.

2. Land.

3. Blessings for all families of the earth through a descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Gal. 3:16).

Four hundred thirty years after the Abrahamic Covenant was given to Abraham, this covenant was expedited by another covenant made with those same descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Israel) at Mt. Sinai. The covenant at Sinai solidified the Israelites as a people and clarified their role as a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:5-6). This covenant with the Israelites, or "Israel," is called in the Letter to the Hebrews the "old" covenant (cf. Heb. 8). In his Letter to the Galatians Paul clearly distinguishes between the Abrahamic Covenant and the Old Covenant (Gal. 3:15-18). Already in the time of Jeremiah (Jer. 31:32-34) God indicated that the Old Covenant made at Mt. Sinai was of temporary nature, and would become obsolete when a new covenant was made.

The Book of Hebrews holds up the New Covenant as being superior, and tells us that the Old Covenant (also called the "Mosaic Covenant") with its many regulations for worship and ritual, is obsolete:

By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear. (Heb. 8:13).

Clearly, the Old or Mosaic Covenant has been fulfilled by the Messiah, making obsolete the many laws and ordinances concerning foods and festivals, and negating the possibility of the restoration of

Mosaic Covenant temple worship in Jerusalem, or any sort of millennial kingdom (cf. Article 17, *Augsburg Confession*). And clearly, the New Testament indicates that the real or true children of Abraham are those who have faith in the Messiah—both Jew and Gentile (Gal. 3:17; Rom. 4:9-17). It is our fervent hope and prayer that through the proclamation of the Gospel to Jews, many will believe in their Messiah, Jesus, and become true children of Abraham!

We hesitate to conclude that Israel according to the flesh is no longer a chosen people. Although the Old Covenant, made at Sinai with Israel (the Jews) is obsolete, nowhere does Scripture say Israel has been rejected by God. Christ and the Gospel are prime, as Paul writes in Gal. 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." But the primacy of Christ does not destroy our identity as Jew or Gentile any more than it destroys our gender identity as male or female.

Indeed, during the gross apostasy of the golden calf incident, Moses successfully argued with God to **not reject Israel** (even though they deserved rejection), on the basis of the Abrahamic Covenant (Ex. 32: 13-14). Paul deals with the issue of possible rejection by God in Rom. 11, and concludes that Israel has **not** been rejected. (1)

The reader must not at this point confuse God's election of a people with individual election to salvation. Never in the history of Israel, and certainly not now in New Covenant times, could an individual Israelite wave his pedigree in front of God's nose and be saved. Although Korah enjoyed the privileges of being a member of the chosen people, he did not personally appropriate God's intended blessings. We recall that Korah, Dathan and Abiram were leaders of the Israelites at the time of the exodus, but they rebelled against Moses and Aaron. Consequently, the earth opened up and swallowed them up alive (Nu. 16; Jude 11). The behavior and fate of the sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, further illustrate that being a member of God's ancient chosen people does not inherently include personal salvation (1 Sam. 2-4). Paul teaches this when he writes, "Not all who are descended from Israel are Israel" (Rom. 9:6).

There is a question then, which must be asked of the Jew: "Are you saved; do you

have a personal relationship with God?" And another question comes also to the church: "Have you recognized that God continues to call Jews His chosen people, continues to chasten them, continues to preserve them?" The dignity that God has granted to Israel is no anachronism. And if history has shown that God has severely chastened the Jews,(2) the church can indeed stand in awe and amazement, but also in terror, not with complacency and certainly not with applause.

Within Israel there was always—a remnant of what we could say was "True Israel." From this remnant came the long predicted Messiah, our Lord Jesus. Paul says, "From them, in natural descent, sprang the Messiah" (Romans 9:5 NEB). Through Jesus the Abrahamic Covenant is implemented, in Him the Old Covenant is fulfilled, and around Him is based the New Covenant. Jesus said to His Jewish disciples, "This is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matt. 26:28).



The Book of Hebrews reveals that the Mosaic Covenant is obsolete and was fulfilled through the New Covenant which we could call the "Jesus Covenant." Jesus Christ is at once the perfect sacrifice and perfect high priest (Heb. 8:7-13; 10:9-18). Unlike the Mosaic Covenant, the New Covenant is unconditional. All who trust Jesus Christ and His work of redemption, be they Jew or Gentile, comprise the "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:6), the "one new man" (Eph. 2:15), and are indeed the "New Israel," which is a "chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people" (1 Peter 2:9).

## B. The Early Church Was Jewish

The early Christian church was almost exclusively Jewish. Most of the first missionaries were Jews. We are particularly indebted to the Jew Paul for his evangelistic activity among the Gentiles. At first only proselytes to Judaism were evangelized (Acts 6:5, 8:27f). When Peter reported the conversion of Cornelius to his fellow Jewish believers, they admitted with some surprise, "So then, God has even granted the Gentiles repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18). Almost two decades later, in the more formal action of the Apostolic Council in Jerusalem, comprised of Jewish Christians, the Jewish believers permitted Gentile believers to disassociate from Jewish customs by the

statement: "We should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God" (Acts 15:19). Thus it was only with considerable difficulty that the Gospel broke loose from its Jewish moorings and Jewish culture sufficiently to reach out to the Gentiles.

The Christian church of today, mostly Gentile in its makeup, owes a great debt of gratitude to those early Jewish Christians who labored, suffered and died in their efforts to proclaim Jesus as Lord and Savior to all people. An unknown Christian wrote the following poem to call Gentile Christians to gratitude and evangelistic activity towards the Jewish people:

#### The Jew

Scattered by God's almighty hand,  
Afflicted and forlorn,  
Sad wanderers from their pleasant  
land,  
Do Judah's children mourn;  
And e'en in Christian countries, few  
Breathe thoughts of pity for the Jews.

Yet listen, Gentile, do you love  
The Bible's precious page?  
Then let your heart with kindness move  
To Israel's heritage;  
Who traced those lines of love for you?  
Each sacred writer was a Jew.

And then as years and ages passed,  
And nations rose and fell,  
Though clouds and darkness oft were  
cast  
O'er captive Israel  
The oracles of God for you  
Were kept in safety by the Jew.

And when the great Redeemer came  
For guilty man to bleed,  
He did not take an angel's name,  
No, born of Abraham's seed,  
Jesus, who gave His life for you --  
The gentle Savior -- was a Jew.

And though His own received Him not,  
And turned in pride away,  
Whence in the Gentile's happier lot?  
Are you more just than they?  
No! God in pity turned to you --  
Have you no pity for the Jew?

Go, then, and bend your knee to pray  
For Israel's ancient race;  
Ask the dear Savior every day  
To call them by His grace.  
Go, for a debt of love is due  
From Christian Gentiles to the Jew.

-- Author Unknown

#### C. Recognized by Luther

Early in his ministry, Luther recognized and appreciated the Jewish heritage of the Christian church when he wrote his treatise in 1523, "That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew."(3) He wrote warmly of the Jewish people:

When we are inclined to boast of our position we should remember that we are but Gentiles, while the Jews are of the lineage of Christ. We are aliens and in-laws; they are blood relatives, cousins, and brothers of our Lord. Therefore, if one is to boast of flesh and blood, the Jews are actually nearer to Christ than we are, as St. Paul says in Romans 9:5. God has also demonstrated this by His acts, for to no nation among the Gentiles has He granted so high an honor as He has to the Jews.(4)

Respecting the Jewish heritage of Christianity, Luther unhappily noted the anti-Semitism of his time:

Our fools, the popes, bishops, sophists, and monks—the crude asses' heads—have hitherto so treated the Jews that anyone who wished to be a good Christian would almost have had to become a Jew. If I had been a Jew and had seen such dolts and blockheads govern and teach the Christian faith, I would sooner have become a hog than a Christian.(5)

He instructs Christians to evangelize Jewish people when he writes: "I hope that if one deals in a kindly way with the Jews and instructs them carefully from Holy Scripture, many of them will become genuine Christians and turn again to the faith of their fathers, the prophets and patriarchs."(6) Luther concludes his treatise of 1523 with an exhortation to Christian love:

If you really want to help them, we must be guided in our dealings with them not by papal law but by the law of Christian love. We must receive them cordially, and permit them to trade and work with us, that they may have occasion and opportunity to associate with us, hear our Christian teaching, and witness our Christian life. If some of them should prove stiff-necked, what of it? After all, we ourselves are not all good Christians either.(7)

## D. Retention of Jewish Things in the Lutheran Church

Later in his life, Luther fell prey to the anti-Semitism of his time. Lutheran Christians have been no exception to the rest of Christendom in that anti-Semitic attitudes sometimes poisoned both their theology and practice. And yet much of our Jewish heritage is liturgically expressed. The pastor, robed in vestments in the tradition of Aaron, clearly performs a priestly function—leading His people to God and asking God's mercy for them through his prayers. The offertory, "Create in me a clean heart," echoes the supplication of the great Jewish leader, David. The benediction of Aaron, still used in the synagogues of today, generally concludes a Lutheran worship service (Nu. 6:22-27). After the Epistle lesson a grand Hebrew word is sung, "*Hallelujah*," the translation of which is "Praise the Lord!" (probably not known by many Lutheran worshipers).

The *Sanctus* (Latin for "Holy"), begins with the words "Holy, holy, holy" and has been called "the most ancient, most celebrated, most universal of all Christian hymns." The words come from Isaiah's temple vision (Is. 6) and the Palm Sunday story (Mk.11). The *Sanctus*—more authentically the *Kadosh*—beautifully weds the Old Testament and New Testament together in praise of Jesus.

The architecture of a traditional Lutheran church building also reflects the life and culture of both ancient and contemporary Israel. In the Western Hemisphere, synagogues and Lutheran church buildings alike frequently face the East, pointing towards Jerusalem.(8) The nave/ chancel arrangement of our churches—with communion rail dividing them—imitates the tabernacle and temple holy place/holy of holies design, the communion rail representing the ancient veil. In most of our churches, the railing is open directly in front of the altar. The worshiper has then an open view of the altar and the cross. This powerfully depicts the fact that we can come into the presence of God through our great high priest, Jesus.

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body...

(Heb. 10:19-20).

The altar reminds us of the sacrificial system of the Mosaic Covenant, a system kept by ancient Israel but impossible for contemporary Israel to keep because the Second Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. The altar is a continual reminder that the Mosaic Covenant, with its sacrificial system, Sabbath laws, kosher food laws, and prescribed liturgy, was fulfilled by Jesus, the Lamb of God. The altar also symbolizes a passover table, reminding us that it was during a passover *seder* that Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, or as we sometimes call it, the Sacrament of the Altar. The sanctuary lamp found in many Lutheran church buildings, has a counterpart in the "eternal light" or *Ner Tamid* of the ancient tabernacle and modern synagogues.

Jews of all ages, whether they be ancient Israel following the course of biblical Judaism or contemporary Israel following the course of Talmudic Judaism, have always adhered to a fixed calendar of religious holidays. These holidays express God's activity in history, and remind the worshiper of His activity today. The contemporary observant Jew delights in, and looks forward to, his sacred round of holidays, even as the liturgically sensitive Lutheran Christian appreciates the drama and beauty of the Christian church year. The more important Jewish festivals, in their chronological order are:

- |                                  |         |
|----------------------------------|---------|
| 1. Rosh Hashanah, New Year       | Sep-Oct |
| 2. Yom Kippur, Day of Atonement  | Sep-Oct |
| 3. Sukkot, Tabernacles or Booths | Sep-Oct |
| 4. Hanukkah, Festival of Lights  | Nov-Dec |
| 5. Purim, Day of Lots            | Feb-Mar |
| 6. Pesah, Passover               | Mar-Apr |
| 7. Shavuoth, Pentecost           | May-Jun |

The Christian church also observes several important festivals. Given in chronological order they are:

- |                  |         |
|------------------|---------|
| 1. Advent        | Dec     |
| 2. Christmas     | Dec     |
| 3. Epiphany      | Jan     |
| 4. Ash Wednesday | Feb-Mar |
| 5. Good Friday   | Mar-Apr |
| 6. Easter        | Mar-Apr |
| 7. Ascension     | Apr-Jun |
| 8. Pentecost     | May-Jun |
| 9. Trinity       | May-Jun |

In the Sabbath worship of the synagogue, regularly appointed readings of the Pentateuch are kept, the cycle being completed each year with "Simchat Torah," which concludes the festival of Sukkot. Following the Torah reading in the synagogue there is read the "*Haf-tarah*," from the prophetic books of the

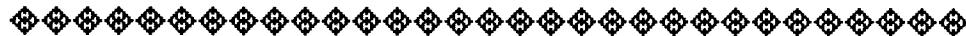
Old Testament. Jesus followed this custom, as recorded in Luke 4:16-20. The custom of regular readings from the Pentateuch-Prophetic books is perhaps the origin of our Epistle-Gospel lesson tradition. In many ways, the liturgical churches retain more of our Jewish heritage than the non-liturgical churches.

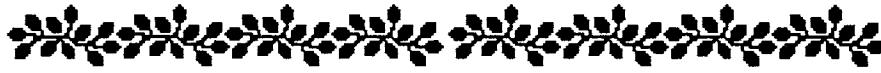
## E. Questions for Discussion

1. Where in the Bible does it say that the Jews have been rejected by God?
2. With whom did God make the Mosaic Covenant? The New Covenant?
3. Was Abraham a Jew?
4. What three promises does the Abrahamic Covenant include?
5. If the Christian church grew out of a Jewish/Hebrew language heritage, how can we explain the existence of Latin terms in our liturgy like: *Introit, Gloria Patri, Gloria in Excelsis, Sanctus, Agnus Dei, Nunc Dimitis, Pax Domini, Venite, Te Deum Laudamus and Benedicamus*?
6. Does baptism, as practiced by Lutherans, find any counterpart in the cultus of the Mosaic Covenant? (Phil. 3:2-3, Col. 2:11-12).
7. Do you think that most Christians know that the early church was predominantly Jewish?
8. Were the Israelites a chosen people before or after they crossed the Red Sea at the time of the exodus?
9. Discuss the five principal covenants of the Bible (Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, New) and in your discussion try to answer the following questions:
  - a. Who did God make the covenant with?
  - b. Was the covenant conditional or unconditional?
  - c. What did the covenant promise?
  - d. How are all the covenants related to one another?
10. The word "Israel" can have six different meanings depending upon the context:  
1) the man, 2) the land, 3) people descended from the man Israel (Jews), 4) saved remnant of the Jews, 5) unsaved Jews, and 6) the church (saved Jews and Gentiles). Assign the proper meaning to each use of "Israel" as it is found in the following Scripture verses, placing the correct number in the blank:
  - a. Rom. 9:27 "Isaiah cries out concerning Israel"
  - b. Rom. 9:6a "For not all who are descended from Israel"
  - c. Rom. 9:6b "belong to Israel"
  - d. Gal. 6:16 "upon the Israel of God"
  - e. Rom. 9:31 "Israel who pursued"
  - f. 2 Ki 5:2 "from the land of Israel"

*Answers to #10 above*

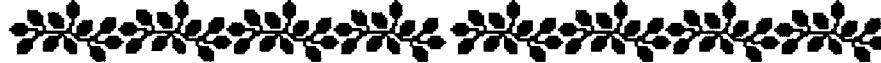
a, 3; b, 1; c, 4; d, 6 or 4; e, 5; f, 2





## Chapter 3

### JEWS NEED THE GOSPEL



*Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved (Rom..10:1).*

#### A. Jews Are Included in the Great Commission

In the past Christian missionaries have gone out to share not only the Gospel, but many worldly benefits in the way of medicine, education and technology. This is proper. This is showing the love of Christ. But when it comes to the Jew, the Church has little to offer in those areas. Moishe Rosen, a prominent Jewish Christian evangelist writes:

Israel has a surplus of people involved in the medical profession; and throughout the world, many Christians have Jewish physicians. We cannot offer the civilizing benefits of education because the average Jew in the same socioeconomic bracket has 2.5 more years of education than his Christian counterpart. When it comes to agricultural or industrial help, what has the church to tell people who make the desert to bloom and develop a highly industrialized society with little or no raw materials? No, we have nothing to give the Jews but Christ; and we are confronted with the question: "Is Christ enough?"(9)

The Great Commission (Mt. 28:18-20) certainly did not mean to exclude the Jews. Its *sitz im leben* was that the Jewish disciples of Jesus were charged specifically to go to the Gentiles. It was assumed that the Good News of the Messiah would be preached to Jews. Jesus' Great Commission was an elaboration on his previous statement:

*I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. (John. 10:16).*

John the Baptist, quoted by John the Apostle, spoke to a Jewish audience when he said: "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God rests upon him" (John 3:36). Certainly Jesus' conversation with the Jewish religious leader, Nicodemus, clearly indicates that He is for the Jews:

*I tell you the truth, unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God... Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. (John. 3:3.14-15)*

The normal situation of the Christian Church is that Jews and Gentiles—owning a common need for salvation in Christ—be united in the one Christian Church with the Lord Jesus as its head. St. Paul speaks of Jews and Gentiles when he writes:

*For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility... His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace. (Eph. 2:14-15)*

The "dividing wall of hostility" is nowhere so vividly portrayed today as between the Jews of Israel and the Arabs

who live in Israel as aliens, or even those who have been granted Israeli citizenship. Jew and Arab are frequently at each others' throats. In August 1991, the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism held a meeting in Zeist, The Netherlands. The majority of the participants were Jewish believers, many of whom reside in Israel. Also at the conference was Mr. Salim Munayer, an Arab Christian who is also an Israeli citizen. In 1990 Mr. Munayer founded an organization called *Musalaha* — an Arabic word that means forgiveness and reconciliation. The purpose of *Musalaha* is to seek to promote reconciliation between Arabs and Jews, with the cross of Jesus as the central focus of its activities, as stated in the words of Ephesians 2:13-16. Mr. Munayer was enthusiastically received at the LCJE conference — and his ministry has seen success in Israel, especially among young Jewish and Arab believers.

In recent years, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has affirmed its eagerness to share the good news of Messiah Jesus with Jewish people. Resolution 1-20 of the 1983 convention states:

**Resolved**, That The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod affirm its belief that the Messiah, Jesus, is the only way for all people to be reconciled with God and affirm its desire that Jewish people be included in the proclamation of this truth,

And again, more recently the Synod spoke at the 1989 Convention in Resolution 1-12:

**Resolved**, That we as a Synod continue to pray for a mission concern for Jewish people throughout the world and encourage congregations and districts with larger concentrations of Jewish people to reach out to them with the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ.



## B. Jewish Resistance to Evangelism

Jewish resistance to evangelism is well known. It is not within the scope of this manual to explain what Paul meant by "a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in" (Ro. 11:25). Suffice it to say that the Greek word used here, *porosis*, does not connote a permanent hardening (cf. Eph. 4:17-18 regarding hardness of heart of the Gentiles) as does the use of *skaroono* in connection with Pharaoh in Rom. 9:18.

The resistance of Jews to the Gospel, once it is presented, stems from at least three reasons: sinful human nature, theological conviction, and the fear of assimilation with consequent loss of identity with the people Israel.

Paul tells us that "the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing" (1 Cor. 1:18), and that:

*The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.* (1 Cor. 2:14).

Any unsaved person -- Jew or Gentile -- resists the Gospel because it at once tells him that he is helpless in his sins and that he needs a Savior, Jesus.

Theological resistance is generated by Rabbinic Judaism which cannot accept the Messianic claims about Jesus -- that He is the Son of God who has borne the sins of the world and thereby made atonement for sin for all who accept Him. In medieval times there were "disputations" or "debates" between Christian leaders and Jewish leaders. They were staged by the Christian rulers so that the Jewish "loser" would suffer cruel consequences, either individually or the entire Jewish community. (See Chapter 5 on Anti-Semitism).

Interreligious dialogue between Christians and Jews is frequently a subtle form of Gospel resistance on the part of the Jewish religious community, and an attempt to prevent anti-Semitism through mutual understanding. On several occasions this author attended meetings of the "National Workshop on Christian-Jewish Relations." Although these meetings are billed as efforts at honest dialogue, the Christian evangelistic viewpoint is not welcome, nor do many orthodox Jews attend. They are, however, very helpful to the evangelical

Christian in learning more about the Jewish people and Judaism.

Although over the centuries there have been a few writings of Jews that were derogatory against Christianity, most Jewish apologetic writings were done primarily for the purpose of defending Judaism to Jews in order to help Jews resist Christian evangelism efforts. For example, Nahmanides (13th century A.D.) argued that Jesus could not be the Prince of Peace, for with him peace did not come to the world; on the contrary, there was a serious eruption of religious wars among the Christians themselves as to the nature of their own beliefs.(10)

The position orthodox Christianity takes regarding the evangelization of the Jews treats Judaism as either an "inferior" or an "incomplete" religion. Jewish religious leaders therefore resent Jewish missions since they see their faith as complete and adequate. Christian missionary activity to them is theologically unnecessary, offensive, arrogant and expressive of "triumphalism." The Jewish religious community feels more comfortable with a type of religious pluralism that sanctions Judaism as the religion of the Jews and Christianity to be the religion of the Gentiles— with neither being superior to the other. The growing success of Jewish missions in the last decade has prompted Jewish religious agencies to produce literature to help Jewish people resist Christian and non-Christian "missionizing."(11) And yet the Bible teaches that there is one true God and one true religion for all people! One Jewish writer faces this issue directly and writes honestly:

Sweeping though it may seem, there is no escaping the truth which Judaism enunciates, and for which Jews have been ready to suffer martyrdom, that there is only One God and that the Torah... has not been superseded by any other religion... the position one ought to adopt is that there is more truth in Judaism than in other religions.(12)

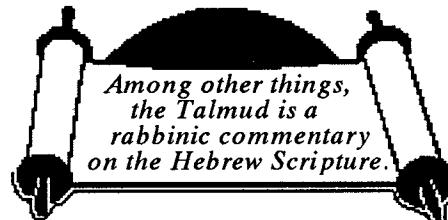
The basic teachings of Talmudic Judaism, or as some prefer to call it, Rabbinic Judaism, differ radically from Christianity in the area of salvation. Abba Silver has contrasted Judaism and Christianity in his book, *Where Judaism Differed*.(13) In "That Men Need to Be Saved," he writes:

Judaism is not constructed around any drama of redemption. There is no term

in the Hebrew language for "salvation" in a sacramental, redemptive sense. In Judaism the soul of man required no "liberation," because the soul of man is not enshained. The idea that man needs to be "saved" either from the toils of life or from some Original Sin or from the prison house of matter or from baleful astrological influences is not part of Judaism.(14)

Judaism does not emphasize those portions of the Old Testament that speak of personal atonement for sin, such as Psalms 32 and 51. Of course, disavows the idea of progressive revelation, which finds its denouement in the writing of the New Testament. It is in the New Testament that we find the most pointed statements of man's need for deliverance from guilt through the atonement, which God provides in His Messiah— and the need for a personal relationship with God.

Thus it is not upon the lips, though it lurks deep in the heart, of many Jewish persons to ask the question posed by the Philippian jailer, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). The peace that every Christian possesses in Jesus Christ cries out to be shared with Jew and Gentile alike. Many a Jewish person, though he pretends otherwise, lives daily in the words of David: "When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long." (Ps. 32:3).



The fear of assimilation and consequent loss of identity as the people of Israel is another reason Jews resist the Gospel.. In the earliest centuries of the church/synagogue clash, Jewish believers were accepted as members of the Jewish community, although considered to be apostate. In later centuries the church expected the Jewish Christian to break away from his former Jewish life style, and even from contact with other Jews. Finally, the falsehood became accepted as true that "Jew" and "Christian" are mutually exclusive terms. Today, when a Jew becomes a Christian the Jewish community feels the pain of another member of Israel lost—DEAD!

### C. Christian Theological Pitfalls

Certain tragedies are evident in the church's theological posture regarding Jewish evangelism. In recent years an unorthodox view of Jewish missions has infiltrated Lutheran theology — that the individual Jewish person is accepted by God on the basis of the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants. The logical conclusion of such theology is that efforts to evangelize Jewish people are both offensive and redundant.(15) One Lutheran theologian has advocated that church mission *excludes* Jews, and that we should have a "theology of coexistence."(16)

If a Lutheran succumbs to the popular opinion, "The Jew has his own religion, don't trouble him," he rejects the writings of St. Paul and says that law is equal to grace in the matter of salvation — the very issue that vexed Luther, and which caused him to precipitate the Reformation. We note also that Peter and John, standing before the rabbis, high priests and leading representatives of Judaism, said of Jesus Christ: "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). Peter's statement disavows any theological approach that claims Jews can be saved apart from Jesus Christ.

the tenor of their approach possesses a harshness which ill befits the proclamation of our beautiful Savior.(17) A scholar of Jewish-Lutheran interaction, Harold Dittmanson, gives a proper warning to orthodox Christians who seek to evangelize the Jews:

There is something unstable and potentially dangerous about the policy of treating Jews with respect but at the same time rejecting their religion as defective. While such a policy may achieve peaceful coexistence, the danger is ever present that whenever the social, political, or economic sections of Christendom suffer a severe setback, attitudes can easily turn into hostility and "scapegoating."(18)

And why not? If a Christian believes that the Jews, once a chosen people, are now rejected by God, it follows logically that they are causing society's problems. Should we not reject what God rejects, and condemn what God condemns? The argument is indeed logically consistent, but based on a false premise.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has recognized this danger, and in "A Statement of Jewish Lutheran Concerns" (see Appendix A) the Synod in convention (St. Louis, 1979) made its commitment:

That we do love the Jewish people, that we stand with them in opposing all forms of anti-Semitism and injustice, that we join them in humanitarian concerns, and will continue to love them even when they choose not to accept our witness.



Orthodox Christianity falls neither into the snares of universalism nor of espousing Abrahamic/Mosaic covenant salvation (the so-called "two covenant theory"), but can fall into another trap. Believing the Jews to be rejected by God contrary to what the Bible says many churchmen have traditionally been interested in the Jewish people mostly as an example of God's judgment.

Although orthodox Christians of this persuasion will always admit to the survival of an elect remnant of saved Jews,

### D. Historical Barriers

It is hard to forgive. Jewish history is filled with incidents of Christian anti-Semitism (described in Chapter V) and most Jews do not differentiate those acts from anti-Semitic acts caused by non-Christian Gentiles. Thus the cup of historical Jew-hatred is filled to the brim in the eyes of most Jewish people. Even the Gospel has been preached in harshness to the Jew.(19) Many atrocities committed against Jews happened in lands which were known as "Christianized," such as Germany and Poland in World War II, and Spain during the Spanish Inquisition of the 15th Century. Jews frequently view with suspicion Christian claims of love and peace in view of the historical track record.

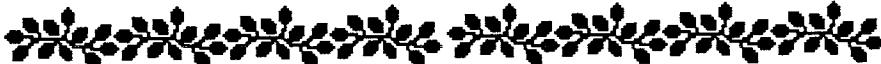
Lutherans have a unique problem in that their namesake, Martin Luther, made many negative statements about Jews, and even advocated burning their homes and synagogues in his book *On the Jews and*

*Their Lies* (see Chapter V). Fortunately the 1983 convention of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod officially deplored Luther's anti-Semitic statements (see Appendix A, Resolution 3-09).

## E. Questions for Discussion

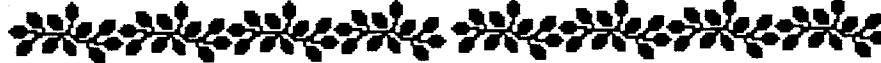
1. Using Galatians 3:27-28 as the basis for your discussion, discuss whether a Jewish person who has accepted Christ as personal Savior is still to be considered Jewish. What about a Gentile (or "Greek")? A female?
2. How would you respond to the idea that "Christianity is the religion of the Gentiles and Judaism is the religion of the Jews"?
3. Have you known any Jewish people who have expressed their need for God's forgiveness?
4. Discuss the statement: "If we do not share Christ with our Jewish friends we either believe that our Gospel is unworthy of Jewish people, or that Jewish people are not worthy to hear the Gospel."
5. In medieval times the Church understood that it had a "duty" to preach the Gospel to the Jews. What errors can enter into the missionary activity of the Church when it understands evangelism as a "duty" or "obligation"?
6. Discuss the statement of David Hunter (footnote No. 16) in the context of Acts 4:12 and John 14:6. See also the statement by Rabbi Silver: "'No one comes to the Father, but by me' (John 14:6) is a concept alien to Judaism." (cf. footnote 24)
7. The organized Jewish community is strongly opposed to any type of "missionizing" efforts by Christians among Jews, and yet individual Jewish people have a deep need to find God. Discuss this paradox in the light of John 12:42-43.
8. C. S. Lewis has written somewhere that we usually get what we want, but we don't always like it. A corollary statement is that we frequently don't want what we would like if we had it. Do you think that Jewish people really understand what they are rejecting?





## Chapter 4

### JUDAISM TODAY



*For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. (Rom. 10:2).*

#### A. The Talmudic Judaism of Today Is Not Biblical Judaism

The story is told of a Christian woman who visited a synagogue. After the service she chatted with the rabbi. In a friendly manner, he encouraged her to ask questions. The woman, thus encouraged, asked the question that was uppermost in her mind: "Where do you keep the sheep and bullocks, and where is the sacrificial altar?" As ludicrous as this incident might seem, it illustrates the ignorance and misconceptions that Christians have about Judaism. Christians familiar with the stories of the Old Testament, unconsciously equate the Judaism of Bible times with the Judaism of today.

We must clearly differentiate between the biblical Judaism of three millennia ago and the rabbinical or Talmudical Judaism of today. The high priest of Bible times, clad in elaborate vestments and entering the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur with sacred blood, finds no counterpart in today's rabbi, who functions not in a priestly but in a pedagogical manner. The word "rabbi" means "my teacher" or "my master." Integral to biblical Judaism and the Mosaic Covenant was the altar in the tabernacle or the temple and the carefully specified sacrificial system. With the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 A.D. sacrifices ceased. And for first-century Jewish Christians the sacrificial system ceased 40 years earlier in 30 A.D. when the Lamb of God was slain upon the altar of the cross. Today no synagogue has an altar for sacrifices.

Judaism was profoundly affected by the emergence of Christianity. In the first century, Jews disputed with Jews on Jewish soil concerning the person of Jesus. Peter and John preached the crucified and risen Jesus as the Messiah. Official Judaism took its stand: "Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus." (Acts 4:18). This conflict between church and synagogue which unfolded during the first century, shaped the destiny of Judaism. For all its many facets and lack of dogma, Judaism became a-*Christological* and developed in clear contrast to Christianity. By a-*Christological* we mean that normative Palestinian Judaism of the first century A.D. clearly taught that Jesus of Nazareth was not the Messiah.

However, Judaism remained messianic. After the first century rejection (by official Judaism) of Jesus as Messiah, the Jewish people continued to expect a personal Messiah. They met with tragedy after tragedy when they followed false messiahs.<sup>(20)</sup> In the past three centuries Judaism has redefined the idea of Messiah in far different terms from the traditional concept of a personal savior descended from David. Today, for many Jews, "Messiah" means the future advent of a "messianic era" of peace and good will among all mankind. However, some orthodox and Hassidic Jews still look forward to the coming of a personal Messiah. Today it is misleading to explain the difference between Christianity and Judaism by saying that Judaism still looks for a personal Messiah, but Christianity recognizes that he has come already in the person of Jesus. Most Jews do not ask

the Messianic question in those terms. This is one of the challenges of Jewish evangelism.

Judaism today is a religion of the *book*. Synagogues, diverse in architecture and teaching, do have one feature in common. Every synagogue possesses and enshrines at least one copy, in scroll form, of the book known as the *Torah*. By "Torah", we mean here the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Housed in an ark or cabinet in the front of the synagogue, the Torah scroll, together with a congregation, makes the synagogue as a synagogue, that is, a place set apart for Jewish study and worship.

Although the word "Torah" can be translated as "law," to do so may give the average Christian a misunderstanding. Torah is a Hebrew noun derived from a verb that means "to guide" or "to teach." Therefore, Torah stands for guidance and teaching. Judaism, of course, acknowledges that divine revelation did not stop with the Torah, but continued with the other 34 books, called the "prophets" and the "writings." The Jewish Bible, comprising the Law (*Torah*), the Prophets and the Writings, is called the *Tanach*, and is identical with the Old Testament as used by Protestant Christians. The word "*Tanach*" (or "*Tanakh*") obtains as an acronym formed from the Hebrew *torah* (Law), *nebiim* (Prophets) and *ketubim* (Writings). Jesus used this same organization of the Old Testament when he said:

*This is what I told you while I was still with you: everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.* (Luke 24:44).

Psalms is the first book of the *ketubim*, or Writings.

The third century B.C. to the fifth century A.D.(21) is known as the classical rabbinic age. Rabbis studied, taught and struggled to interpret the Scriptures. Their writings were set forth in the Mishnah and Gemarah (together comprising the Talmud), and the Midrash—a collection of rabbinical commentary on the moral teachings of the Jewish Bible. The Talmud was edited about 500 A.D., and in its Babylonian form comprises 63 tractates of legal, ethical and historical writings. It has for centuries been a major series of textbooks for Judaism. Even today, knowledge of its contents forms the most im-

portant part of the curriculum for the training of orthodox and conservative rabbis. Reform rabbis study it extensively. The Talmud contains much popular wisdom and many beautiful sayings. For example, the Talmud instructs us:

"Don't look at the flask but what it contains."

"Do not threaten a child. Either punish him or forgive him."

"Judge a man not according to the words of his mother, but according to the comments of his neighbors."



In one sense the Talmud is analogous to *The Lutheran Confessions* because it renders interpretations of Scripture. However, these interpretations are not taken to be authoritative by most Jews. Differing opinions are presented within the Talmud. The Talmud is much more than a commentary on the Jewish Bible (our Old Testament). Morris Adler suggests that it "is the extensive record of the intellectual, social, national and religious activity pursued by Jews during the approximately thousand-year period of its formation."(22)

A study of the Talmud, whose volume content approximates the World Book Encyclopedia, would take a lifetime. Once a Christian friend of mine, eager to witness to a Jewish neighbor but naive in his knowledge of Judaism, promised to read the Talmud if his friend would read the New Testament! A curious paradox presents itself in Judaism. Although Judaism is a religion of the book, and the Torah is enshrined in every synagogue and read through annually in regular pericopal fashion, Judaism is based more upon the Talmud than on the Jewish Bible (*Tanach*). Once again, we note the difference between ancient biblical Judaism and the Talmudic or Rabbinical Judaism of today.

## B. Jews and Judaism

It should not be assumed that all Jews are practicing the religion of Judaism. Today many Jews are involved in non-Christian cults like the Unification Church, the World Wide Church of God (Armstrongism), and Hare Krishna. In fact, many of the Jews in the United States belong to no synagogue, and do not feel that the Jewish religious leaders represent them except when the leaders touch upon the identity, peoplehood and survival of the Jews.

Many Christians hesitate to discuss the Bible with Jewish people, fearing they will be embarrassed by superior Jewish knowledge of the Old Testament. These fears are generally ill-founded. Most Jewish people have very little knowledge of their Bible (our Old Testament). They may have received a Jewish education in a synagogue school, but that education generally emphasizes knowledge of the Talmud, Jewish culture and Jewish history rather than the Jewish Bible.

Even if we define "Bible" as the Jewish Bible (Old Testament) the fact remains that most Jewish people in the United States are biblically illiterate. Studies indicate facts similar to that of the Jewish National Population Study of 1971 which noted only 47% of American Jews were affiliated with a synagogue.(23) Different sources indicate different trends. Some speak of declining synagogue affiliation while others speak of a rise in recent years, which may be signs of a religious revival taking place in all branches of modern Judaism, comparable to that in parts of the Christian Church. In either case the evidence is strong that many Jewish people are not well read in the Bible. This presents a wonderful opportunity for Christians today. Every author of the books of the Bible (Old Testament and New Testament—with the possible exception of Luke) was a Jew. Gentile Christians have the exciting opportunity to bring the Bible back to the Jewish people.

## C. The Three Major Branches of Judaism

Most of the Jewish people who are affiliated with a synagogue, the 47% mentioned above, belong to the one of the three major branches of Judaism — Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Judaism. These customary divisions of Judaism are, how-

ever, not rigid divisions, but quite flexible. An orthodox rabbi may serve a conservative synagogue, and some Jews are members in good standing of different synagogues representing two or even all three branches of Judaism.



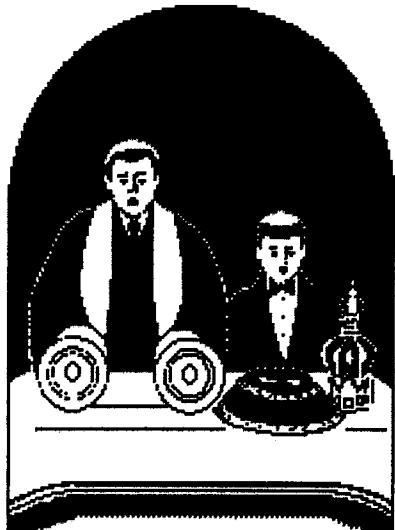
*An Orthodox man at prayer.*

**Orthodox Judaism** accepts the Jewish Bible (our Old Testament) as the inspired, inerrant revelation of God and attempts to keep the 613 commandments. Orthodox Jews are strict observers of the Sabbath (sundown Friday to sundown Saturday). They do not ride in automobiles on the Sabbath and so their homes are close enough to the synagogue to walk to the Sabbath services. In the synagogue, separate sections are maintained for women. Only Hebrew is used in prayer and ceremonial services. Orthodox men and women both wear a head covering at all times. Children receive religious instruction daily after public school, or in parochial schools that combine secular and Jewish studies. Orthodox Jews pray three times daily: in the morning, at late afternoon, and after sunset (the exact time being fixed by the sun).

The presuppositions of **Reform Judaism** are rationalistic. Scripture is not accepted as inerrant and inspired divine revelation. A Reform Jew accepts as binding only the moral laws of the Bible. He does not abide by customs and laws that he feels are incompatible with modern civilization. Reform worship departs from the traditional Jewish forms. Worship is in a "temple" rather than a synagogue, and with complete equality of the sexes. The services are conducted mostly in English (or any vernacular). Instrumental music is permitted, unlike in orthodox synagogues.

Women rabbis are permitted. Usually keenly politically and socially conscious, Reform Judaism arose as a religious movement in Germany in the 19th Century. After centuries of oppression and life in the ghetto, Jews living in an enlightened scientific state with equality of rights found the traditions of Orthodox Judaism untenable in a scientific age.

Midway between Orthodox and Reform Judaism is **Conservative Judaism**, the largest grouping of affiliated Jews in the United States. They regard Reform Judaism as too sharp a break with the past, and Orthodox Judaism as incompatible with modern civilization. The Conservative Jew adheres to the dietary laws with only minor exceptions. Both Hebrew and English are used in the worship services and experimentation in worship forms occurs, including the use of organ music and the Bas Mitzvah ritual for girls on the first Sabbath after their 12th birthday (corresponding to the Bar Mitzvah for boys after their 13th birthday).



*A Conservative Bar Mitzvah*

Modern Jewish scholars persistently maintain that Judaism has no dogmas and that the stress is not on orthodoxy but "orthopraxy," - the living out of a moral life. Judaism, indeed, is not a dogmatic religion, nor does it possess organs for controlling or regulating faith. But it does have certain definite dogmas which are held in common by all branches of Judaism, though they may be variously interpreted. The closest statement to a

creed of Judaism is the *Sh'ma*: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one" (Deut. 6:4). Judaism maintains a strict and unyielding monotheism. When Jewish theology says that God is One it explains this in four ways. God is one, and not many—thus drawing the line between itself and the polytheism of the ancient pagan world. God is One, not two—thus rejecting the dualism of Zoroastrianism. God is One, not three— thus rejecting the Christian dogma of the Trinity. (Concomitant with this statement is the rejection of the idea, integral to the Trinity, of a God-man). God is One, not none— thus Judaism declares its opposition to contemporary atheism.

The medieval Talmudist, philosopher, and physician Maimonides formulated 13 principles of faith, which are popularly, but not officially, accepted as dogma of Judaism. The principles are a belief that: 1. God exists, 2. God is one, 3. God is a spirit, 4. God is eternal, 5. God alone must be worshiped, 6. the prophets are authoritative, 7. Moses is the chief of the Prophets, 8. the Torah is divinely inspired, 9. the Torah is eternal and unchangeable, 10. God is omniscient, 11. God commands reward and punishment, 12. the Messiah will come, and 13. there is a resurrection of the dead.

Concerning the doctrine of man, Talmudic Judaism teaches that man is capable of doing God's will. The total depravity of man is rejected by Judaism. If man has committed a sin, he may repent and be forgiven by God, but the initiative can and must come from man himself. Redemption begins with self-redemption.

Judaism avows that man can keep God's laws because he is made in the image of God. Thus man does not need a savior, nor does he need a mediator between himself and God. Rabbi Silver writes: "'No one comes to the Father, but by me' (John 14:6) is a concept alien to Judaism." (24)

Thus, man is not justified by his faith, but by his works. "The key Protestant doctrine of Justification by Faith alone, and not through good works, finds no place in Judaism, nor does the Catholic doctrine that man is justified by faith and works. . ." (25) Judaism does not accept the idea of original sin, although its literature speaks frequently of the "*yetzer hara*" or evil inclination within man that often leads him astray. Because man is not stamped inevitably with sin, man has the capability to overcome the evil in him

and in the world. Redemption is not solely from God; it is to be won by man here on earth.

Resistance to evangelization is thus rooted not only in the historical travesties committed by the Church to be discussed in Chapter 5) but also in theological and anthropological beliefs. Once the author shared Christ with a Jewish woman whose life had been marred by many years of personal problems and family alienation. When she was asked about her own sins, she was puzzled. Finally she said that it was possible that she might have committed a sin, but she could not recall one. This, of course, is not in the deepest tradition of Judaism— a tradition that exhorts repentance and seeks atonement. The Talmudic Judaism of today makes self-justification part of the means for atonement with God.(26)

We have emphasized theological differences between Christianity and Judaism. There are, however, many points of similarity, and much of ethical value in Judaism. We do well to acquaint ourselves with the writings of men like Abraham Heschel, and to ponder thoughts like:

The test of a people is how it behaves towards the old. It is easy to love children. Even tyrants and dictators make a point of loving children. But affection and care for the old, the incurable, the helpless, are the true gold mine of a culture.(27)



#### D. Other Types of Judaism

A parallel religious movement to Lutheran pietism in the 18th century was **Hasidic Judaism**, founded by Israel ben Eliezar (1700-1760), the Baal Shem Tov, "Master of the Good Name." Initially the movement was a reaction against the somewhat unemotional Rabbinic Judaism of the time in Eastern Europe. The *chasidim* (pious ones) possessed an ardent faith in God and tried to serve Him with joy and even ecstasy. Chasidic Judaism today attempts to defend traditional Orthodox Judaism. A missionary-type of Chasidic Judaism is found in the Lubavitcher movement— missionary in the sense of urging Jews to repent and return to a pure Judaism. Founded in the 1700's in Lyubavichi, Russia, the Lubavitchers

today have their international headquarters in Brooklyn, N.Y.

**Reconstructionism** is a movement that interprets Judaism as a civilization, with the Jewish religion as its core. Although emphasizing the necessity for a Jewish community, the movement denies that the Jews are a people chosen by God. The movement was begun by Mordecai Kaplan with his book *Judaism as Civilization* (1934). Kaplan's teachings are highly controversial among Jews. He was excommunicated by the Union of Orthodox Rabbis, a rare and unusual event among Jews.

Running cross-grain to the broad spectrum of Talmudic Judaism is a new group of people who use the term **Messianic Judaism**. This is not to imply that other types of Judaism are not messianic, but only to affirm that the emphasis of Messianic Judaism is upon the person of the Messiah, Jesus. Actually Christianity is "messianic Judaism". Christianity is Biblical Judaism which acknowledges and confesses that the Messiah has come in the person of Jesus, and that, true to the prophets, Judaism is open to all people. Simeon saw the Messiah and said, "A light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel" (Lk. 2:32).

Increasing numbers of Jews are becoming Christians today— or as some prefer to be called, "completed Jews." Some of these Jewish believers have formed affiliations which call themselves a "Messianic Synagogue" or "Messianic congregation."(28) Such congregations of Messianic Jews or Hebrew Christians are condemned by the Jewish community as traitorous. They have gained only uneasy acceptance by the Christian community, which suspects them of Judaizing tendencies. Such congregations need to be evaluated by biblical standards and not prematurely condemned merely because they are different.

Jewish people who enter the one flock of the church through the Good Shepherd, Jesus, should understand that the Mosaic Covenant has been fulfilled by Christ. Thus, there exists for Jewish believers no divine command to make animal sacrifices, keep kosher laws, keep Sabbath laws, or keep any other of the ordinances associated with the Mosaic Covenant — other than the 10 Commandments. To bind consciences to such ordinances would mix Law and Gospel.

However, as with other groups, we Christians respect the culture and heritage of the Jewish people even when its customs and mores differ from our own. Furthermore, we believe that it is God-pleasing for Jewish believers retain their identity as Jews, particularly because Israel has a divine origin and heritage. If Jewish Christians choose to form churches called "Messianic synagogues," or to express their Christian faith in other Jewish ways, we should not trouble them. We ask only that they not exclude Gentile believers (which would raise again the dividing wall of hostility Christ has broken down), and that the ordinances of the Mosaic Covenant be regarded as adiaphora.

The future holds a great challenge to the Christian Church. Can it allow the Jewish convert to still express his Jewishness and yet experience full and loving fellowship within the context of a Christian congregation? And can the Gentile Christian learn to love and appreciate Jewish culture, along with God's promises to His ancient chosen people, Israel? St. Paul, a Jew and lover of the Jews, out of love for his Lord, was "all things to all people" (1 Cor. 9:22) and proclaimed the Gospel to the Gentiles. Can the Gentile Christian also be "all things to all people" and proclaim the Gospel to the Jews?

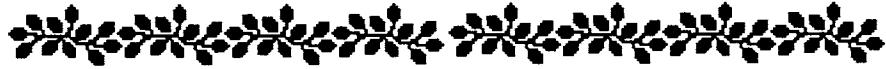


## E. Questions for Discussion

1. How can the three part division in contemporary Judaism (Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform) be compared to the theological differences in present day Christendom?
2. In what way is Judaism a "religion of the book"? In what way is it not?
3. What writings do Lutherans cherish in a manner similar to the Jewish respect for the Talmud?
4. Discuss beliefs about the nature of man as held by Judaism. Compare them to those that might be held by an unsaved Gentile.
5. Judaism teaches that it is within the power of every man to redeem himself from sin by resolutely breaking away from it and by repenting or returning to God. Discuss this statement in the light of Jeremiah 17:7-9,14; Psalm 51:7-14; and Romans 3:19-26.
6. What truth do you see in the following statement:

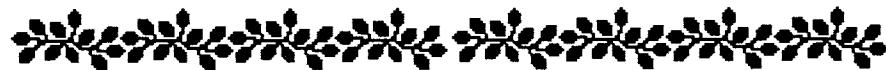
Cults, like Jehovah's Witnesses, the Mormons, Christian Science and the Unification Church are a counterfeit Christianity, perverting the central doctrines of the Christian faith, and thereby deceive people by what they say. However, Judaism errs not so much by what it says as by what it does not say.

7. Discuss the statement, "Judaism is the mother religion of Christianity, therefore Christianity should honor the fourth commandment and not proselytize (evangelize) Jewish people."
8. What is the religion of the Jews?
9. Why do you think so many young Jewish people of today have become involved in cults like the Unification Church and other false religions like Hare Krishna? Why do you think so many young Christian people are becoming involved in the cults?
10. Do you see anything unbiblical about a group of Jewish believers calling their church a "Messianic synagogue" if they do not restrict membership to Jews only, but conduct their services in a Jewish manner? What would you say if a Messianic synagogue taught the necessity for worship on the Sabbath?



# Chapter 5

## ANTI-SEMITISM



*I ask, then, did God reject his people? By no means! (Romans 11:1a)*

It does not lie within the scope of this work to review or summarize the history of anti-Semitism or even the history of Christian anti-Semitism. For that the reader is referred to standard works such as Edward Flannery's *The Anguish of the Jews*, Solomon Grayzel's *A History of the Jews*, and *The Teaching of Contempt* by Jules Isaac. The literature is voluminous. We present here only a few examples from the history of anti-Semitism. But the indictment of the Church is conclusive. Jacob Jocz observes:

It is no exaggeration to say that the empirical Church, i.e., the Church of history, has shown itself the greatest enemy of the Jewish people. The Church has, therefore, been the first and foremost stumbling block in the Jewish appreciation of Jesus. (29)

### A. Can a Christian Hate Jews?

Can a Christian hate Jews? Sadly, we must conclude, yes. John Chrysostom, a highly influential church father in 4th century Antioch, wrote "Eight Homilies Against the Jews." He castigated the Jews with unparalleled energy, writing that Jews are "most miserable of all" (*Homily 4,1*), are . . . "lustful, rapacious, greedy, perfidious bandits." He described the synagogue as a "repair of wild beasts" (6,5), a place of "shame and ridicule" (1,3) and "the domicile of the devil" (1,6).

Chrysostom says that the Jews are degenerate because of their "odious assassination of Christ" (6,4) and because of this

deicide there is "no expiation possible, no indulgence, no pardon" (6,2). The Jews will always remain without temple or nation (6,2). God hates the Jews and always hated the Jews (6,4; 1,7). Therefore it is the duty of Christians to hate Jews: "He who can never love Christ enough will never have done fighting against those (Jews) who hate Him" (7,1). Tragically, Chrysostom's ungodly remarks not only marred his reputation as a great churchman and gifted preacher, but they fueled the fires of hatred. Flannery concludes his remarks on Chrysostom with the statement: "A generalized popular hatred of the Jew was now rapidly under way; and among the literati the tone of Chrysostom's diatribe found an echo in and out of the Church for centuries."(30)

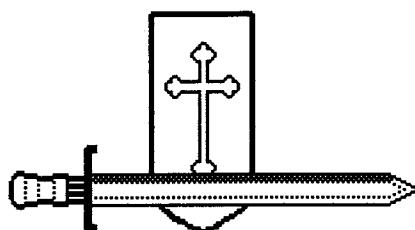
The weeds of anti-Semitism continued to grow in God's vineyard through the centuries and as a result history records three horrible episodes of anti-Semitism that marred the reputation of the Church, and her Lord and which continue to stand as barriers between Jewish people and Jesus.

### B. Three Horrible Episodes

Any Christian who desires to share the Gospel with Jewish people should be aware of what happened during the "Christian" Crusades. The word "crusade" has a popular connotation in Christendom as a form of mass evangelism. But in Jewish consciousness it conjures up the horrors of Christian anti-Semitism practiced during the three crusades of 1096,

1144, and 1189 A.D. Ostensibly organized to recapture the Holy Land from Muslim domination, the crusades were an exploitation of popular piety for political purposes by rulers in Europe. But the crusades were preached by the clergy, and supported by the Church.

The first crusade was poorly organized. Before long the crusaders began to argue that it was ridiculous to go to a distant land to kill God's enemies while the Jews, close at hand and equally opposed to Christianity, were left behind unharmed. Eventually the cry was heard throughout Europe, "Kill a Jew and save your soul!" Jews died merely because they were Jews. Approximately 10,000 Jews lost their lives in central Europe to the crusaders.



*Modern Jews remember the crusades as a time of persecution by people called "Christian"*

When one crusading army captured Jerusalem they drove the Jewish inhabitants into the synagogue and set fire to it, singing a Christian hymn while the flames roared. The second crusade would have resulted in more lost Jewish lives had it not been for the intervention of Bernard, the Abbot of Clairvaux, one of the most respected churchmen of his time. Bernard denounced those monks and priests who were urging the murder of Jews. Grayzel comments, "He did this not because he honored Jews and Judaism, but because of a deeper understanding of Christianity."(31)

Much of the crusaders' activity was directly contradictory to Jesus Christ and His teaching. "Crusader" is derived from *crux*, the Latin term for cross, the symbol of redemption and God's love. Jesus said, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me"(Mt. 16:24). But the crusaders took up the sword and butchered Jews and Moslems indiscriminately.

The Inquisition began in Spain in the 15th century under the rule of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. Ostensibly

an expression of Christian piety, it had as its immediate objective the ferreting out of insincere Jewish converts, and disciplining them. As a result of forced attendance at evangelistic sermons, threats, and political pressures to "convert," many Jews had consented to Christian baptism and were considered "new Christians." But most of them continued to secretly practice Judaism and were not really Christians. The clergy were scandalized. Soon the Jewish "converts" came to be called "Marranos," which meant "pigs."

Under the leadership of the Grand Inquisitor Torquemada, the Inquisition grew in scope. Thousands of Jews were tortured and burned alive at public executions. *The Auto-da-Fe'*, or Act of Faith, was the name given to public discipline dispensed by the Inquisition. Typically, as the church bells tolled the procession filed into the town courtyard, comprised of soldiers, hooded monks and priests chanting praises to God, and the gaunt Jewish prisoners. A preacher delivered a long sermon. After this the chief inquisitor announced the punishments: penance, stripes, confiscation of property, imprisonment or death. Those destined to die were given the opportunity to repent. If the Marrano-heretic repented, he was mercifully strangled to death, then laid upon the faggots alongside living Jewish men and women. Usually a prominent government dignitary, sometimes the king himself, ignited the faggots. Grayzel describes how it ended:

The tolling of the bells and the cheers of the spectators mingled with the shrieks of the dying. Sometimes, above the agonized tumult, floated the defiant cry: *Shema Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Ehad!* (32)

The Edict of Expulsion, signed by Ferdinand and Isabella on March 31, 1492, mandated that all Jews leave Spain by August 1, 1492. The last groups of Jews left Spain on August 2 — an odd coincidence because that date was the 9th of Ab, the fast day which recalls the destruction of both the first and second Jewish temples. By another unusual coincidence, Christopher Columbus boarded his ships also on August 2 — the absolute deadline for any Jews to be in Spain. Columbus' journal makes mention of the last Jews leaving Seville. There is abundant evidence that Columbus was a committed Christian, and recently some scholars have suggested that he was Jewish as well.(33)

The third horrible episode took place in our generation. On November 10, 1938, all over Germany there occurred the *Krystallnacht*, a night of horror in which more than 100 Jews died, 7,500 Jewish shops were looted and 600 synagogues were burned.(34) On January 1, 1939 by law all Jewish businesses were liquidated.

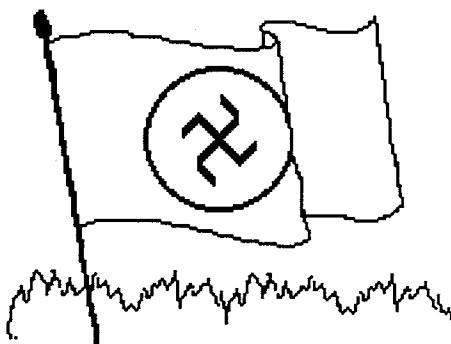
Forced labor, concentration camps and government sponsored murder of an estimated six million Jews continued from then on to the end of World War II. It was Hitler's aim to make Germany, and all of Europe, *Judenrein*.

This episode is known as "the holocaust" to world Jewry. In this manner one third of world Jewry was eliminated. The author was once involved in a discussion between a young Jewess and a Gentile Christian college student. When the word "holocaust" was mentioned the college student asked, "What's that?" The expression of pain on the Jewish girl's face reminded me that any Christian who attempts to witness to Jews must be sensitive to the fact that almost every American Jew now alive had at least one relative murdered in the holocaust -- a human tragedy that had its origin in "Christian" Germany, the home of the Protestant Reformation.

To what extent the Christian Church is culpable for the holocaust only God knows. Rather than an offspring of the church, Nazism was more an outgrowth of ancient Germanic paganism wedded to the anti-Semitic obsession of Adolf Hitler, and fertilized by the prevalent anti-Semitic attitudes of people in Germany, Poland, France and other European countries. However, almost all the Jews who escaped the holocaust were helped by committed Christians like Corrie Ten Boom.(35)(36) Milton Meltzer in his book *Rescue* (subtitled "The Story of How Gentiles Saved Jews in the Holocaust") cites numerous examples of Christians who risked their lives to help Jews escape death.(37) We mention also the *Kirchenkampf* (church struggle) of the Lutherans in Nazi Germany. Men like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, active in the "confessing church," and Friedrich Bodelschwingh of the Bethel Mission boldly resisted Nazi policies. Propst Heinrich Grueber of Berlin organized an office which helped to get many Jews out of Germany until he and his fellow worker Sylten were imprisoned.(38)

Nonetheless, in Jewish thought a stigma of guilt rests upon Christendom. In her book, *The War Against the Jews 1933-1945*, Lucy Dawidowicz writes: "A line of

anti-Semitic descent from Martin Luther to Adolf Hitler is easy to draw ... Modern German anti-Semitism was the bastard child of the union of Christian anti-Semitism with German nationalism."(39)



*As ugly a memory of the holocaust is, it must not be forgotten, lest it happen again.*

### C. Martin Luther and the Jews

In 1543 Martin Luther wrote a book titled, "On the Jews and Their Lies." The book is 169 pages long in its English translation. Some of its more scurrilous remarks are well known to the Jewish community of today, and represent an obstacle for Gospel-sharing with Jews by Lutherans. Luther wrote "what shall we do with this rejected and condemned people, the Jews?... I shall give you my sincere advice:..." We here summarize Luther's seven point program:

First, to set fire to their synagogues or schools and to bury and cover with earth whatever will not burn, so that no man will ever again see a stone or cinder of them. This is to be done in honor of our Lord and of Christendom, so that God might see that we are Christians . . .

Second, I advise that their houses also be razed and destroyed . . .

Third, I advise that all their prayer books and Talmudic writings in which such idolatry, lies, and cursing, and blasphemy are taught, be taken from them . . .

Fourth, I advise that their rabbis be forbidden to teach henceforth on pain of loss of life and limb . . .

Fifth, I advise that safe conduct on the highways be abolished completely for the Jews . . .

Sixth, I advise that usury be prohibited to them, and that all cash and treasure of silver and gold be taken from them and put aside for safekeeping, . . .

Seventh, I recommend putting a flail, an ax, a hoe, a spade, a distaff, or a spindle into the hands of young, strong Jews and Jewesses and letting them earn their bread in the sweat of their brow, . . . (40)

Luther's contemporaries were horrified at his book. His program was not carried out, nor was it taken seriously. But Shakespeare's immortal lines came true: "The evil that men do lives after them. The good is oft interred with their bones." Certainly Luther's anti-Semitism was a natural outgrowth of the Christian anti-Semitism of medieval times. But still, scholars have wondered why the older Luther became so harshly anti-Semitic when some of his earlier writings had been complimentary to the Jews. Among the possible reasons suggested by church historians are a yet undiscovered booklet published by rabbis against Luther, illness, or the general disappointment that so few Jews had accepted the Gospel. In any case we must disavow and condemn Luther's "Seven Point Program." Unfortunately, we doubt that Luther changed his views on the Jews, but in the final sermon of his life, preached at Eisleben on February 15, 1546, three days before his death, he said:

We want to act in a Christian way toward them and offer them first of all the Christian faith, that they might accept the Messiah, who after all, is their kinsman and born of their flesh and blood and is of the real seed of Abraham of which they boast . . . We want to treat them with Christian love and to pray for them, so that they might become converted and would receive the Lord.(41)



*Jewish people are often more aware of the anti-Semitic writings of Martin Luther than most Lutherans.*

## D. The We-They in Jewish Communal Thought

Given the history of the Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition, and the Holocaust of Nazi Germany, it is not surprising that most Jews think in terms of "we" and "they" in their relationships to Christians. Samuel Sandmel expresses this sociological reality in the title of his book, *We Jews and You Christians*.(42) Sandmel, however, does differentiate between a Gentile Christian and a Gentile non-Christian, which most Jews do not.(43)

Because of the horrors of the past there was a time when most Jewish people made no distinction between "Christian" and "Gentile"; the words were synonymous. This kind of thinking would lump into the category "Christian," Adolf Hitler, Billy Graham, Bernard of Clairvaux, the Grand Inquisitor Torquemada of 15th Century Spain, Charles Manson and you, the average Lutheran Christian. We are thankful that these sort of mind-sets are passing. While some Jews may still be suspicious of Gentiles (or Christians), or even wary and distrustful, many Jewish people are ready to accept you as a friend, and treat you with courtesy and warmth.

Jews who accept Christ as their Savior and who are baptized are looked upon as traitors to the Jewish community. Jews in general do not accept the fact that a Jew can be a Christian, as were all the first Christians. To them the terms "Jew" and "Christian" are mutually exclusive. A Jewish convert is called a *meshummmed* (traitor) and is subject to the hatred and ostracism of the Jewish community -- and of his own family. Attempts and programs of Christians to evangelize Jews are considered acts of intellectual anti-Semitism and are considered as channels by which Jews are forever lost to the Jewish community. Some Jewish agencies include in their public relations activities an effort to dissuade church leaders from encouraging Jewish evangelism.

In conclusion, a quote from the writings of Michael Wyschograd, an Orthodox Jew who has long been involved in religious dialogue with Christians:

Christian anti-Semitism is a function of a certain kind of Christian self-confidence. If one believes with unquestioning conviction that Jesus was the saviour who died for the sins of the world, then it becomes a source of

serious concern and irritation that he was not so recognized by his own people. Such classic Christian anti-Semitism tends to be diminished in one of two ways. When Christian faith becomes more genuine and obedient, it discovers that all—or almost all—men reject Jesus and that the Jew is but representative of the rest of humanity. . . . Finally, I fear the destruction of Christianity, because the twentieth century has taught me

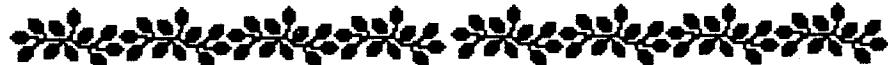
that the two greatest enemies of Jews and Judaism in this century—Nazism and Communism—are also the most virulent anti-Christian forces of this century. Jews have learned that while Jewish existence under Christian rule left much to be desired, Jewish existence under anti-Christian rule is far, far worse. One need only compare Christian with post-Christian Russia to become convinced. The continuation of living Christianity is therefore vital to Jews.(44)

## E. Questions for Discussion

1. Discuss the statement of Jacob Jocz: "The supposed rejection of historic Israel stems not from theological considerations but from empirical observation."(45)
2. What responsibility do we have today for the book of Martin Luther, "On the Jews and Their Lies"?
3. According to the Biblical record, who crucified Jesus? Cf. Mark 11:18; 14:55; 15:1; 15:11. Who are the "they" of Mark 15:24? What does the Apostles' Creed say about the crucifixion of Jesus? On Good Friday what does Luke tell us about the reaction of the Jewish population to the crucifixion of Jesus? Cf. Luke 23:27. 48.
4. Early church fathers like John Chrysostom made many anti-Semitic statements. Why do you think they spoke the way they did? Can you differentiate between anti-Judaism, anti-Zionism, and anti-Semitism? Søren Kierkegaard once said there is nothing quite like the hatred of theologians. Do you think it is easy to love someone who has a theological view different than your own?
5. According to the extended quotation of Michael Wyschograd, can a committed Christian hate Jews? What does the Bible say? Cf. Ro. 9:1-5; 10:1; 11:1; 13:8.
6. Discuss the following statement by Charles Glock and Rodney Stark, found on page 208 of their book *Christian Beliefs and Anti-Semitism*:

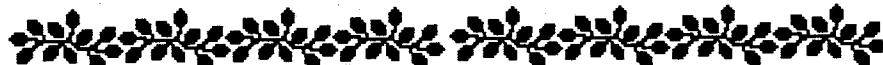
The casual chain that links Christian belief and faith to secular anti-Semitism begins with orthodoxy—commitment to a literal interpretation of traditional Christian dogma. Orthodoxy, in turn, leads to particularism—a disposition to see Christian truth as the only religious truth. Particularism produces a two-fold response toward religious outsiders. On the one hand Christian particularism prompts missionary zeal: The faith is open to all mankind if only they will accept it. But when others reject the call to conversion the hostility latent in particularism is activated.(46)

7. Using Genesis 12:3 and Zechariah 2:8-9 as a basis for your discussion discuss the history of Russia, Poland, Spain, Germany, the United States and Holland. (The first four countries have persecuted Jews actively, and the last two countries have befriended them.)
8. The Bible says that vengeance is God's work; not men's (cf. Ro. 12:19). Do you think that God has used the sins of those who are not His people to chastise those who are? As you answer this question relate the destruction of the first temple to 2 Chronicles 36:14-17, the destruction of the second temple to Matthew 23:37-38 and Luke 21:24, and the holocaust to Leviticus 26:44-45. Has God chastened the "New Israel," the Church, by the sins of unbelievers?



## Chapter 6

### METHODOLOGIES FOR JEWISH EVANGELISM



*I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. (Rom. 11:13-14).*

#### A. Love for Jewish People

Basic to successful Jewish evangelism—and to any evangelism—is genuine love for those being evangelized. This is the essence of Christian discipleship, that we might love others the way our Lord loves us. The love of the Christian is expressed not only in the inner circle of "our own kind," but to all people.

What the Jew sees in the average Christian usually does not impress him. Nor does it attract him. But when a Christian lives in the presence of the Lord Jesus, day by day, and walks with Him, then Christ's love radiates from him. When Paul spoke in Romans 11 of arousing the jealousy of his fellow Jews, he was alluding to the positive spirit of love he had in Christ. When Christians genuinely express love towards Jewish people, it gains them a hearing for the Gospel. Love, of course, is not enough. The Gospel must eventually be spoken and applied in a personal manner.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has taken a clear stand in its "A Statement of Jewish Lutheran Concerns" on the matter of love for the Jewish people:

"That we do love the Jewish people, that we stand with them in opposing all forms of anti-Semitism and injustice, and that we join them in humanitarian concerns, and will continue to love them even when they choose not to accept our witness" (LCMS Convention Resolution 1-30, St. Louis, 1979).

This statement is made in the spirit of Rom. 13:8, with the hope that every Christian who shares his faith with Jewish people will concur.

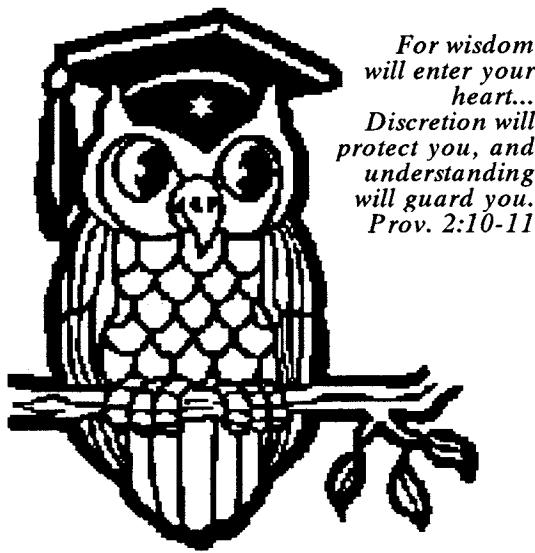
#### B. Love is Considerate of Jewish Sensitivities

To be effective, love given to Jewish people must be genuine, considerate of the feelings of Jewish people for their religion and culture. Like God's love for us in Christ, it should be unconditional. Love which is merely spiritual bait in order to win a hearing for the Gospel is hypocritical and insincere. If the Christian is prepared to be patient in continuing his witness to the Gospel even when there is no apparent response, there will be good results. The Gospel seed may grow very slowly. It may take years to germinate. God calls us to be witnesses, sowers of the seed of the Gospel. He is responsible for creating germination, new birth.

As one goes about the joyful task of bringing the Word of God to Jewish people, it would be helpful to have some awareness of certain Jewish sensitivities. Among them are:

1. Most Jews think in terms of a "we-they" relationship with regard to Christians. They make no distinction between Christians and Gentiles.
2. Many Jews lean towards the liberal end of the political spectrum because they believe it is more protective of the rights of minority groups, such as themselves.

3. Gentile criticism of Jewish leaders may be taken as anti-Semitism. However, Jews frequently criticize their leaders openly.
4. There are cultural differences. We remember that Paul was "all things to all men." What the Gentile interprets as "pushy" and "rude" in a Jewish person may well be an expression of candor and openness.



5. A Jewish person feels it would be traitorous to accept Christ and join the side of the "enemy." He does not want to betray the Jewish people by becoming a Christian.
6. Jewish people (and many unchurched Gentiles) do not understand Christian jargon such as: born again, blood of the Lamb, justified, Trinity, saved and cross. At the right time one can explain these terms but it is usually best not to use them right away.
7. Telling jokes about Jews may be offensive. Why take the risk of alienating your Jewish friend?
8. Like all people, Jews will respond better to love that is demonstrated in actions rather than to love that is only stated.
9. The holocaust is still a sensitive point. Most American Jews now alive had a relative murdered in the holocaust. Many Jews see in the holocaust and founding of the modern state of Israel as a "crucifixion/resurrection" event.

10. Concerning the modern state of Israel, for the Jew the issue is not so much geopolitics as it is the survival of the Jewish people. It is helpful to be aware of the Bible references to the holy land, and even for those who have no "theology of the land" acquaintance with the Zionist movement begun in 1897 by Theodor Herzl is valuable.

In the last three decades, Jews and Christians have increasingly been involved in interreligious dialogue. Such dialogue, usually conducted on a high theological and intellectual plane, and is not intended to be a platform for witnessing. However, Christian-Jewish dialogue has been helpful in teaching Christians about Jewish sensitivities, and in helping them to "speak the language of the Jewish people." Some suggestions are given below for tactful, non-offensive terminology that communicates well.

- Use of the word "Jesus" may bring to mind recollections of persecutions of Jews that were done in the name of Jesus, so it may be helpful to point out that "Jesus" is actually the Greek form of "Joshua." Jewish Christians of today prefer to say "Y'shua" or "Yeshua," which transliterate the Hebrew. The term "Christ" does not have any specific meaning for the average Jewish person. It is better to use the word "Messiah."
- Unfortunately, the word "Christian" does not have a positive connotation for the average Jewish person. All non-Jews, or Gentiles, are considered to be "Christians." Most people do not grasp the fact that only 25% of the earth's population even claims to be Christian. If Messiah Jesus has not brought peace on earth, a good bit of the problem could be that His kingdom is still in the minority. Rather than use the term "Christian" it may be better to speak in terms of "Bible-believers."
- The word "Jew" is a perfectly good word, but it has been slurred over the years. Many words in the English language have been harmed by slanderous use. Expressions like "dirty Jew" or "to Jew somebody down" have tarnished the word and magnified prejudice. Sometimes it may be better to say "Jewish person."
- For the Jew the verb "convert" means to *take away* Jewishness and go over to the side of the historic enemy (*the goyim* or Gentiles). A convert (noun) would then be a traitor, or *meshummad*. Some prefer to speak of a "completed Jew," which indi-

cates that more Jewish heritage has been added on, atonement has been made, the Jewish Messiah accepted and a new appreciation of the Jewish Bible gained. Perhaps the best option is to simply say "Jewish Christian" or "Jewish believer."

■ With good intentions a Christian may invite his Jewish friend to "come and worship with us." But in good conscience the unsaved Jewish person cannot worship the "three gods" of the Christians. However, he may be willing to attend the worship service as a visitor.

■ The cross has been a symbol of Jewish persecution from the days of the Spanish Inquisition to the cross burnings of the Ku Klux Klan. And 100 or so years ago cross-carrying priests in Poland and Czarist Russia led their parishioners in pogroms (organized riots) against Jewish citizens. There is good biblical basis for speaking of the "tree" Jesus was crucified on (see

Acts. 5:30; 10:39; Gal. 3:13; and 1 Peter 2:24) rather than using the term "cross."

■ When we speak of the New Testament, we must recognize that Jews do not accept it either as holy or as the Word of God. In fact, most Jews believe it to be a book written by Gentiles. It can be pointed out that the New Testament (or the "Christian Scriptures" according to Jews) is a *Jewish* book. We can call the New Testament the "New Covenant," and indeed Jeremiah promised a New Covenant (Jer. 31:31ff).

■ The word "church" connotes something that is strictly Gentile. The word "congregation" has a Jewish flavor.

As we try to "speak the language of the Jewish people" we should never deceive, but strive to use words that respect Jewish culture and history, and that communicate accurately.

### C. Messianic Prophecies/New Testament Fulfillment

The Word of God is the Sword of the Spirit. We need to learn to use that Sword, not as a club that bashes stubborn skulls, but with the finesse of a skillful fencer so that the Word of God might pierce the heart, "discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb. 4:19). When the Holy Spirit desires us to use His sword in a witnessing situation, we need to be prepared. Witnessing to Jewish people requires a knowledge of Messianic prophecies from the Old Testament. Among the more important ones are:

Old Testament	Prophecy	NT Fulfillment
Gen. 3:15	Seed of the woman	Gal. 4:4
Gen. 9:26	Descendant of Shem	Matt. 1
Gen. 12:1-3.7	Abrahamic Covenant	Rom. 9:4-5
Gen. 49:10	Of the tribe of Judah	Matt. 1
Deut. 18:15-19	Prophet like Moses	Acts 3:22-23
Psalm 110	Son of God and of David	Matt. 22:44
Is. 7:14	Born of a virgin	Matt. 1:18-20
Is. 9:6	Birth of Savior	Luke 1:26-35
Is. 11:1.10	Descendant of Jesse	Rom. 15:8-12
Is. 53	The suffering servant	Phil. 2:5-11
Is. 61:1	Messiah brings good news	Lk. 4:16-21
Jer. 31:31f	New Covenant	Heb. 8:1-13
Ezek. 34:15.23-24	Son of God and of David	John 10:27-30
Mic. 5:1	Messiah born in Bethlehem	Luke 2:1-11
Zech. 9:9	Messiah enters on a donkey	Mark 11:1-10
Mal. 3:1-4	Messiah comes to temple	Matt. 11:2-10

The list is hardly exhaustive. We can discover in the Old Testament hundreds of prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah, which are fulfilled in Jesus. But it is advisable to thoroughly understand and be proficient in the explanation of a smaller number of Messianic prophecies.

The Gospel itself is best presented from Scripture, using both Old and New Testaments:

1. Membership in the chosen people Israel does not ensure personal salvation. A man must be circumcised in heart, born again, converted to God. Jer. 4:4; John 3:1-3; Rom. 2:28-29.
2. All men have sinned and need atonement with God. Eccl. 7:20; Is. 63:6; Ps. 14:2-3; 51:1-6; Rom. 3:23.
3. The results of sin. Is. 59:1-2; Ezek. 18:4; Rom. 6:23a.
4. God's way of taking away sin by sacrifice. Lev. 17:11; Is. 53:3-8; John 1:29; Rom. 6:23b.
5. God takes away the guilt of sin and changes the heart (no self-redemption). Ps. 51:7-13; Gal. 2:15-16; 5:22-23.
6. Personal appropriation of salvation by faith. Gen. 15:6; Is. 55; 1 Kings 18:21; Gal. 3:6-7; Rev. 3:20.
7. God's promise of the resurrection. Job 19:25-26; Is. 26:19; 1 Cor. 15:20-22.



#### **D. An Old Testament Scripture Chain You Can Use**

Explain to the Jewish person who is willing to listen that the Jewish Bible (the Christian Old Testament) is a proper place to begin a religious discussion about the Messiah. Tell him or her that in order to consider Y'shua as Messiah, we need to know what God demands of us so that we can understand what Messiah did for us.

The Old Testament Scripture chain consists of eight references, from five Old Testament books. Begin with Isaiah 59:1-2.

##### **Isaiah 59:1-2**

This passage tells us four things: 1) There is a God; 2) We are accountable to God; sin has consequences; 3) Man is separated from God by sin; and 4) While you are in your sin God will not hear you; He has hidden His face from you..

##### **Ezekiel 18:1-4**

This passage tells us that although sin has consequences for future generations, each

person is individually accountable to God for his or her sins. We must not focus on the sins of former generations, even when they have harmed us. The penalty for our sins is death, both temporal and eternal.

##### **Daniel 12:2**

God will bring upon mankind a "Day of Judgment" in which all will be accountable. Both the good and the bad will experience a physical resurrection—some to everlasting life and some to everlasting death, shame and contempt. The question is: who gets life and who gets death? Most people will say that those who do enough good works will be saved. If this is the response, proceed with the next Scripture.

##### **Isaiah 64:6**

Our good deeds in God's eyes are not adequate to settle the account of our sins. Even our best efforts are considered as "filthy rags." (The Hebrew words here *beget iddim* can be translated literally as "menstruous rag.") How then can we be saved? What provision does God give us?

## **Leviticus 16**

This passage outlines what the high priest must do on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. God specified the sacrifice of a goat, bull and ram on that day. The manner of sacrifice was exactly specified.

## **Leviticus 17:10-11**

This passage makes clear that atonement is not possible without blood. The principle of *substitutionary atonement* is taught. Three important truths are then apparent: 1) Central to atonement with God is the shedding of blood. 2) Since the destruction of the Jewish temple in 70 A.D. there have not been blood sacrifices for atonement. 3) Because God's Word never changes, how do we then find atonement with God?

The traditional Rabbinic response is that after the destruction of the Temple we now make our own atonement through three reasonable substitutions for the blood sacrifices:

1. Fasting (Some rabbis say we diminish our own blood in this way).
2. Prayer and repentance
3. Doing good deeds.

But at this point you should ask your Jewish friend, "Where did the rabbis get the authority to change God's way of dealing with our sins by taking upon themselves the means for atonement?" The answer is that they cannot change God's provision for atonement.

## **Jeremiah 31:31-34**

God promised a New Covenant that would fulfill the Old Covenant with its difficult provisions and blood sacrifices. The New Covenant would not abrogate the Abrahamic Covenant. It would demonstrate that God will forgive our sins based on what He does, not on what we do.

## **Isaiah 53**

Ask your Jewish friend who this speaks of. Is this not Y'shua, who takes our place and who bears all of our sins? Emphasize especially Is. 53:4-6.



## **E. Jewish Objections to Christianity**

Manuals on evangelism methodology frequently list common "objections" to the Christian faith that the evangelist will encounter. These would, of course, also apply to Jewish people. But, because of previous religious training and tradition, Jews have additional objections. Among them are (with suggested answers):

1. *Christians believe in three Gods, we believe in one.*

We believe that the one God has revealed himself as three persons. In Deuteronomy 6:4 the word *echod* according to some scholars is better translated as "unity." Cf. also Gen. 2:24.

2. *Concerning the incarnation, how can a man become God, as Christians teach?*

We teach that God became man, not vice versa. God is all powerful, why couldn't He do that?

3. *The Bible cannot be taken too seriously. It is made up of legends and myths.*

Are you saying that the history of the Jewish people is a myth, that they never came out of Egypt? What about the archaeological discoveries in Israel? Archeology supports the Bible and the Bible has not failed for accuracy.

4. *I was born Jewish and I will die Jewish.*

You don't become a Gentile when you become a Christian. You become a completed Jew. Nobody is born a Christian.

5. *How can we be the chosen people if God let six million Jews die in the holocaust?*

Satan hates God's chosen people—be they Jewish or Gentile. The last book of the Christian Bible, Revelation, tells us this. (Cf. Rev. 12:9, 13, 17.) Because of this, Satan is very active in attempting to devastate God's people.

6. *Why do you try to convert us when there are so many Gentiles to convert?*

We don't want to exclude Jews. We have something precious that we want to share with everybody.

**7. You cannot be both a Christian and a Jew. The terms are mutually exclusive.**

All the first Christians were Jews and were accepted as such by the Jewish community. Why shouldn't Jews have a right to their own religious convictions?

**8. Christians have done terrible things to Jews. What about the holocaust, which originated in the Christian country of Germany? What about the crusades? What about the Inquisition? If I were to become a Christian, I would be a traitor to my own people.**

Not all who say they are Christians are. Most Gentiles are not Christians. But Christians do sin. Martin Luther is an illustration of that. We are not proud of his anti-Semitic statements, and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod condemned them in their 1983 Convention.

**9. Are you suggesting that Judaism is an inferior religion?**

Christianity could really be considered a form of Judaism—a completed form, which believes that Jesus is the long-promised Messiah. For the past 2,000 years there have been many different types of Judaism: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Qumranians, etc. Today we have Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Hasidic and Messianic Judaism. Naturally, we feel that our type of Bible-based religion is the true one, and so we want to share it.

**10. Are you suggesting that if I don't become a Christian, God is going to send me to hell?**

Who goes to hell is not for me to judge. God only sends those people to hell who first reject Him and His way of salvation. In Ezekiel 18:32 God says: "I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord God; so turn, and live." God desires repentance, and the acceptance of His mercy. God is pleased to have people come to Him like King David did in Psalm 51. Messiah Jesus said that He is the only way to God (Jn. 14:6).

**11. I don't need the Messiah. I think I have done enough good things in my life to balance the scales of righteousness in my favor.**

Isaiah says: "All our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment" (Is. 64:6). And God says in the Torah: "You shall

be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy" (Lev. 19:2). God expects perfection. Are you perfect? If not, how do you find atonement apart from Jesus' sacrifice?

**12. The Christian New Testament is a Gentile book, so why should Jews seek their religion in it?**

Although used predominantly by Gentiles, it was written entirely by Jews, with the possible exception of the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts.



*The objections of Jewish people to the Gospel are not philosophical; they have the perception that Christianity is a real threat to their identity.*

## **F. Controversial Scripture Passages about the Jews**

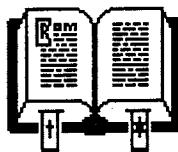
Lutherans historically have not agreed on certain prophecies concerning the future of the Jewish people (Israel). Many Christians are convinced that the Scriptures do predict in a general way the destiny of Israel, and that one cannot equate the word "Israel" with "Christian Church" wherever it appears in the Bible. Proclamation of the Gospel is our priority work, but some consideration needs to be given especially to four biblical issues: 1) The dispersion and persecution of Israel, 2) The regathering of Israel and restoration to the land, 3) The overall repentance and conversion of Israel in the end times, and 4) Millennialism.

The dispersion and persecution of Israel were predicted by Moses, and were to happen as a result of unfaithfulness to the Mosaic Covenant. Cf. Lev. 26:14-46; Deut. 28:15-68. However, Moses made it clear that God would never totally destroy or reject Israel because of the Abrahamic Covenant (Lev. 26:44-45). Nowhere does

the Bible say that Israel will be dispersed forever, and many Christians believe that the Bible predicts a regathering of scattered Israel and restoration to the land of Israel (Deut. 30:1-10; Is. 11:10-12; Jer. 16:14-15; Ezek. 36 and 37; and Luke 21:24).

Most Lutheran theologians have held that the above Old Testament passages refer to the restoration of Israel under Zerubbabel (c. 516 B.C.), or that they are figurative representations of the future glories of the church. The promise of land to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Israel (Gen. 12:7; 15:18-21; 28:13-14; 35:10-12; Psalm 105:7-11) is held by many Lutheran interpreters to have been fulfilled under the United Kingdom of David and Solomon.

However, some interpreters take this promise of land to be a permanent deed given to Abraham, Isaac and Israel and their descendants, one of God's unconditional promises. These interpreters say that the use of the land falls into the category of the conditional, according to Lev. 26:14-45 and Dt. 30:15-20. Taken in this light, the modern state of Israel could be a fulfillment of prophecy.



The teaching of the overall repentance and conversion of Israel in the end times finds basis in Hosea 3:4-5; Ezek. 36:24-32 and Rom. 11:25-27. The opinions of Lutheran exegetes vary widely on this passage. Most hold that the "all Israel" of Rom. 11:25-27 is the Church, comprised of Jewish and Gentile believers. Others hold that "all Israel" is the timewise integration of the remnant of Israel, *viz.*, Jewish believers of all the ages. Some, including this author, believe that "all Israel will be saved" means that in the end times there will be an overall conversion of the Jewish people to Christianity.

The Romans 11:25-27 passage might well be considered an open question. However, if one opts for the interpretation of a future general conversion of the Jewish people in the end times, this interpretation must not be construed to be part and parcel of a millennialistic scheme. And if there is to be such a general conversion of the Jews, we presume that it would come about by the ordinary preaching of the Gospel, with the

Holy Spirit bringing individual Jews to saving faith in Jesus Christ.

Regarding the subject of millennialism, The Augsburg Confession, Article 17, says:

"Rejected, too, are certain Jewish opinions which are even now making an appearance and which teach that, before the resurrection of the dead, saints and godly men will possess a worldly kingdom and annihilate all the godless."

Amillennial Lutheran doctrine interprets Article 17 to mean a rejection of millennialism. A dictionary definition of "millennium" is: "the period of 'a thousand years' (a phrase variously interpreted) during which Christ is to reign on earth, according to the prophetic statement in Rev. 20:1-7." A synonym of "millennialism" is "chiliasm" which is defined by the dictionary to be "the doctrine of the reign of Christ on earth for a thousand years."

Some Lutheran theologians deviate from the dictionary definition and define chiliasm in a broader, more ambiguous way. Included under the umbrella of chiliasm is the teaching of the restoration of the Jews to the land, and the general conversion of the Jews. As Lutherans re-explore these issues it is important that they be guided by the Holy Spirit and be faithful to both Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, permitting both to say neither more nor less than the Author and authors intended.

## G. A Creative Parish Approach

As we consider Jewish evangelism methods, we must not fall into the error of thinking there is a way that is best, or that we must restrict ourselves to certain techniques. Michael Green in the epilogue of his book *Evangelism in the Early Church* remarks on the creativity in evangelism evident among the early Christians.

We have seen that house meetings of various sorts and personal conversations between individuals played a very prominent part in the progress of the gospel in ancient times. The hospitality and even the decoration of their homes, their chance conversations indoors or in the open air, visiting, open-air preaching addresses in church and synagogue, arguments in the market place and the philosophical school, personal testimony, letter writing and the explanation of

Scripture were all used to further the supreme aim which these early Christians cherished, of making Christ known to others.(47)

But more basic than method and creativity is *motivation*. Green comments:

Indeed, it is the motivation of these men and women which impresses us more than their methods. Their moving allegiance to God, their profound sense of discovery, their deep concern for their Christless fellows drove them out into unremitting service in the cause of the gospel.(48)

In the United States there are nearly 200 evangelistic societies and agencies involved in bringing the Gospel to the Jewish people. Most of these groups are quite small and many are short lived. They vary greatly in their methods. Some have special "centers" where evangelistic meetings and Bible studies are conducted, including Jewish-Christian observances of the traditional Jewish festivals. Some witness openly on the sidewalks, using tract-type literature and even give impromptu sidewalk dramatic presentations in areas of high Jewish population density. Jewish-Christian music has been increasingly used as a medium for the Gospel. Radio and TV presentations are also used by some of the larger organizations.

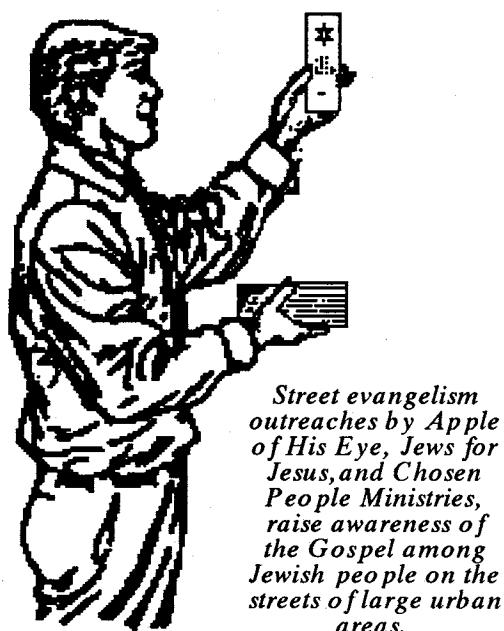
While the work of numerous para-church agencies has been successful in winning Jewish people to Christ, a greater proportion of Jewish people who become Christians do so through the witness and concern of ordinary lay people in Christian churches. Perhaps the agencies have their greatest impact and importance for kingdom work in that they arouse, sensitize and train Christians to share the Gospel with Jewish people.

The "center" approach to Jewish evangelism has had two inherent limitations: 1) The Jewish person eventually senses that he is an object of special concern by the center personnel, but that he may not be so welcome in the neighborhood Christian church, and 2) Frequently Jewish people who come to Christ through the ministry of a "center" do not join a Christian congregation -- hence their growth in Christ and contribution to the whole Church are hindered. Such Jewish Christians are more often than not reluctant even to visit a Christian congregation because they fear rejection, have historical hangups about German Lutherans, or think that the services will be too "goyish," or Gentile oriented.

The latter is an important challenge to Lutheran congregations in Jewish population areas. Congregations must continually ask the question, "Does our worship service language speak the heart language of the people we are trying to reach?"

A congregation with a number of Jewish Christians does best if it is in creative tension about *how Jewish* it chooses to design its worship services and programs. And Jewish Christians need to understand that the essence is Christ and the Word of God, and not place excessive importance on the expression of the Christian faith in a Jewish way. Liturgy in Jewish-Christian worship is a fertile area in which to explore new modes of worship which can be deeply meaningful for Jewish and Gentile believers alike.

As there are many Jewish evangelism agencies and societies with varying approaches and theologies, the field of Jewish evangelism can present a confusing picture. At times, this picture can have some unpleasant scenes. Sometimes agencies compete with one another for funds, prospect lists, and attention from a limited number of Christians who feel a deep burden for the salvation of Jewish people.



*Street evangelism outreaches by Apple of His Eye, Jews for Jesus, and Chosen People Ministries, raise awareness of the Gospel among Jewish people on the streets of large urban areas.*

What is needed is a **creative parish approach**. The local congregation should be a microcosm of the *entire* Body of Christ, the one flock of the Good Shepherd seeking to unite both Jew and Gentile in Christ.

The parish approach to Jewish evangelism places the responsibility for evangelizing a Jewish community squarely upon the congregation that has its people active in that area. Those who criticize the parish approach usually do so on the basis that "the churches are not ready" or that it has been tried and does not work. Albert Huisjen in his book *The Home Front of Jewish Missions* has written a chapter advocating the parish approach to Jewish missions.(49) C.M. Hanson, for many years a luminary for Jewish evangelism in Lutheran circles, also strongly advocated the parish approach.(50)

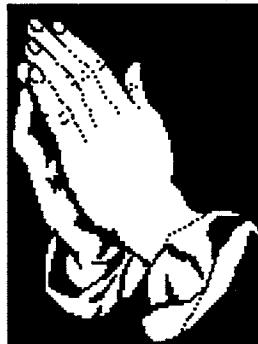
The logical place to begin is with the parish evangelism committee. A planned program of Jewish evangelism should be established, a program that is subject to regular evaluation and accountability. As with all evangelism outreach, It is too easy for a church to develop a *laissez-faire* attitude to Jewish evangelism, or adopt a "wait and see" attitude. Now is the time of salvation!

The program that is developed should certainly seek the aid and counsel of qualified Jewish evangelism agencies, but the program that is finally planned should be *owned* by the church itself.

Some members of the evangelism committee should be chosen to include Jewish people in their visitation. They should be intelligent, tactful and committed to Christ because they may meet some very intelligent, cultured and educated people. As the joys and successes of their witness become known over the years, their expertise and enthusiasm can spread through the *entire* congregation.

Prayer is essential. Certainly it is God's gracious desire that His ancient chosen people be saved. When a Christian shows a willingness to bring the Gospel to Jewish people, and asks God to help him or her witness, the Holy Spirit will arrange the witnessing situations and help that person speak. And Christians need to pray for those who have been witnessed to, that the seed of the Gospel might germinate, grow and bring forth fruit unto eternal life.

Many Lutheran Christians feel a deep sense of inadequacy about witnessing to Jewish people. But there is a world of difference between saying "I can't" and "I won't." The Christian who says "I can't" and brings that burden of weakness to the Lord in prayer will eventually discover that *he can*. He can because the transcendent power in all witnessing belongs to God, not to our own sinful flesh. As a Christian learns to witness, he can at least invite Jewish neighbors to church services and special gatherings, pray for them and show the love of Jesus to them. This is especially true for members of churches that are sensitive to their Jewish neighbors.



*Prayer is essential to an effective witness..*

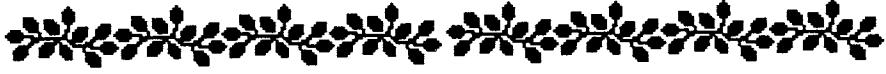
## **H. Questions for Discussion**

1. According to the Bible, how does one obtain power for witnessing? Cf. Acts 1:8, 2 Cor. 4:5-7.
2. Why do you think Jewish people do not visit our Lutheran churches more often? Have you ever invited a Jewish person to visit your congregation's services?
3. Discuss the word "convert" in the context of the following statements:

He was a convert to Lutheranism.  
The Jewish man converted to Christianity.  
He converted his dollars to Russian rubles.  
Unless one is converted, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4. What kind of emotional freight might a Jewish person be carrying when he "talks about religion" with a Lutheran Christian? Consider the commitments to his faith, his pride in the heritage of an ancient and proud people, the warmth of the Jewish religious home, as well as possible feelings of resentment because of the past history of German attitudes and actions towards Jews.
5. Most mainline denominations do not have any special program for Jewish evangelism. Why do you think this is so?
6. What is your stand on the modern state of Israel? Do you think that your personal convictions about the state of Israel could hinder or help you in a witnessing situation?
7. What ways can you work together with Jews in human rights?
8. Do you think that interreligious dialogue between Lutherans and Jews is a good way to evangelize?





## Chapter 7

### THE HOPE FOR THE FUTURE



*After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree! (Rom. 11:24).*

One of the greatest privileges for any Christian is to be part of God's process in leading someone to know the Savior. This privilege has not been exercised by the Christian church towards the Jewish people to any degree for many centuries. In this way the church has harmed herself. By her negligence, the church lost her opportunity to win Jews for Christ. At the root of that dreadful loss is the erroneous teaching that God has rejected the Jewish people. Israel is still chosen as a people—and special for that reason—but individual Jewish people are saved the same way that Simon Peter announced to the Sanhedrin as he spoke of the Name of Jesus:

*He is "the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone." 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 4:11-12).*

Indeed, not only the sins of the church, but also the "builders" of the Jewish people—their religious leaders—are responsible for leading the Jewish people away from Messiah Jesus throughout the centuries. Jesus said: "I have other sheep, that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So there shall be one flock, one Shepherd," (John 10:16). When our Lord said that, the "other sheep" were the lost Gentiles. Today it is God's Jewish sheep who are lost. Do we care? Do we have the heart of the Good Shepherd who seeks the lost?

God has a dream for us to make into a reality. Paul, speaking to Gentiles, said:

*But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility. (Eph. 2:13-14).*

The wall of hostility between Jew and Gentile has been removed by Jesus Christ. Now it is possible for Jew and Gentile to be "one man"—the Body of Christ. The dream has been expressed by the medieval hymn writer with the familiar Advent hymn, "Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel" (No. 1 of *Lutheran Worship*):

Oh, come, oh, come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

The 12th century A.D. hymn writer may well have had the Jews in mind—that they might accept the ransom of the Son of God as indicated by the words of the third stanza:

Oh, come, oh, come, Our Lord of might,  
Who to your tribes on Sinai's height  
In ancient times gave holy law  
In cloud and majesty and awe.

But captive Israel will not understand that she has been ransomed by her Messiah unless Christians are bold, take risks, and even suffer. Since the Synod has undertaken to be faithful to the Great Commission in proclaiming her Lord to the Jews, it has been criticized by Jewish organ-

izations and by liberal Christianity. The cross of Christ is indeed a scandal. It causes embarrassment. It puts its proclaimers into jeopardy. But, we ask, is there really any evangelism without risk, without danger, without suffering? Paul says that he was "in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers." (2 Cor. 11:26).

Our objective — in spite of dangers — is graphically expressed in the Parable of the Olive Tree. The parable is explained below.

#### **Jesus Christ Is the Trunk of the Tree**

*A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit . . . In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations (goyim) will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious. (Is. 11:1,10).*

#### **Jews are the Natural Olive Branches and Gentiles are the Wild Olive Branches**

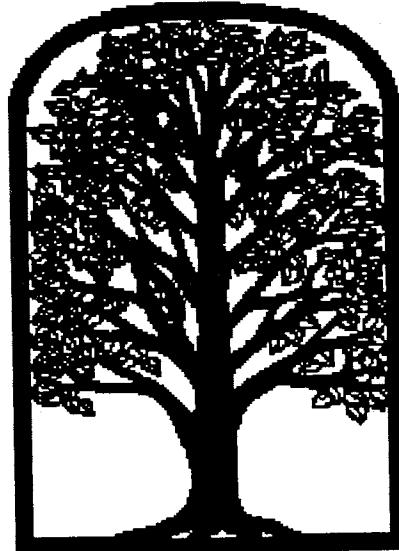
*I am talking to you Gentiles . . . If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not boast over those branches. (Rom. 11:13, 17-18).*

#### **The Whole Tree is the "New Israel" -- both Jew and Gentile**

*Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God. (Gal. 6:16).*

As we look with hope to the growth of this olive tree — which is the Christian Church — let us remember Paul's words. Gentile Christians should not boast that they are saved, and the Jews were cast off due to unbelief. Neither should Gentile

Christians despair of bringing Jews into the Christian church because Paul did say "how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree" (Rom. 11:24). It is not so much that Jewish evangelism has been tried and failed, but rather that it has hardly been tried. Let us rely upon the promises of God, and not on our own understanding. "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out" (Rom. 11:33).

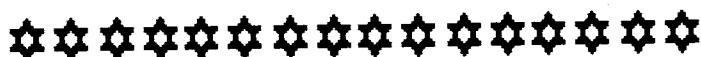


We conclude with a prayer, an act of worship, taken from *The Lutheran Hymnal*, Prayer No. 23, "For the Jews." (51)

Almighty and everlasting God, who lovest to show mercy, hear the prayers which we offer unto Thee for Thine ancient people, that, acknowledging Jesus Christ, who is the Light of truth, they may be delivered from their darkness; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord.

*Kai Kavod Laylohim!*

(All glory be to God)



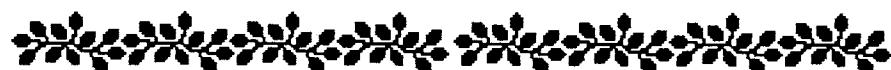
## FOOTNOTES

1. Affirmed by Paul in Romans 11: "I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew." (Ro. 11:1-2). Cf. also Jer. 31:35-37.
2. The awesome chastisement of God is set forth in predictive outline in Lev. 26:14-45; Deut. 28:15-68. Cf. also 1 Thess. 2:15-16.
3. Walther Brandt (Ed.), *Luther's Works*, Vol. 45 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1962), pp. 199-229.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 201.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 200.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 200.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 229.
8. "Whenever possible, the church building may be built with the chancel and altar facing the East . . . the earthly home land of our Lord." Luther D. Reed, *Worship* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1959), p. 20. "Synagogue architecture has varied from place to place and has always been influenced by general architectural style. But one thing is constant -- the ark was placed against the wall facing Jerusalem, and it was in this direction that the congregation faced to pray." Ben Isaacson and Deborah Wigoder (editors), *The International Jewish Encyclopedia* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1973), p. 288.
9. Moishe Rosen, *Our Messianic Mission* (Minneapolis: Messianic Ministries), page 5.
10. Sidney Hoenig, "The Jewish Response," *Face to Face*, Fall/Winter 1977, ADL of B'nai B'rith, pp. 9-12.
11. In the introduction of *Missionary and Cult Movements*, produced by the Department of Interreligious Affairs, Union of American Hebrew Congregations in 1977, Balfour Brickner writes: "American Jewry is concerned with the proliferation of cults and of missionary efforts directed towards Jews by those who call themselves 'Jewish Christians'."
12. Louis Jacobs, *A Jewish Theology* (New York: Behrman, 1973), p. 289.
13. Abba Hillel Silver, *Where Judaism Differed* (New York: Macmillan, 1972).
14. *Ibid.*, p. 183.
15. David Hunter, Deputy General Secretary of the National Council of Churches, writes in the January 1974 edition of *A.D.*:
 

What are we Christians doing to God when in our arrogance we refuse to recognize the living reality of the covenant Jews have with God? How dare we infer that God acts as we do in cutting ourselves off from portions of His creation? The olive tree is alive today in modern-day Judaism as is the Body of Christ in the Church.
16. Harold Ditmanson, "Some Theological Perspectives," *Face to Face*, Fall/Winter, 1977, ADL of B'nai B'rith, pp. 6-8. "Witness is not ruled out, but in relation to the Jews it should be thought of as an ecumenical engagement for the sake of fuller understanding and a mutual ministry of compassion and justice rather than for the sake of conversion."
17. "When you consider that in the new dispensation God has finished His dealings with the nation of Israel as such, so that they are no longer God's special people and there is no difference between Jew and Greek . . . true, if you think of what the Jews did with their Messiah, how they wickedly rejected Him and nailed Him to the tree..." Herman Hoeksema, *God's Eternal Good Pleasure*, (Grand Rapids: Doorn, 1940), pp. 304-305.
18. Ditmanson, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
19. In medieval times in Europe Jews were forced to listen to conversionary sermons, threatened with death if they did not submit to baptism and had their children taken from them to be forcibly baptized and raised in Christian foster homes. Comments Solomon Grayzel, "The majority of those who left the Jewish fold undoubtedly did so through force or fear. Every attack upon the Jews

- started with the proclamation that those would be spared who submitted to baptism. To be sure, the rule of the Church was against the use of force in conversion, but in actual fact this rule was interpreted very liberally in favor of Christianity." Solomon Grayzel, *A History of the Jews* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1970), p. 361.
20. Among them were Bar Kokhba (2nd Century), David Alroy (12th Century), and Shabbetoi Tzevi (17th Century) who uprooted a million Jews from their homes and led them towards the land of Israel. The result was disaster and Tzevi himself was forcibly converted to Islam. The list of false Messiahs that the Jewish people have followed is long and the end result has always been the same -- failure and disappointment. Cf. Matt. 24:23-25.
  21. Jewish literature does not acknowledge B.C. and A.D. ("before Christ" and *Anno Domini* or "in the year of the Lord"), and substitutes B.C.E. and C.E., respectively "before the common era" and "common era."
  22. Morris Adler, *The World of the Talmud* (New York: Schocken, 1971), p. 17.
  23. Simcha Cohen, "The Orthodox Synagogue: Challenges of the Inner City and Suburbia," *Jewish Life*, Fall/Winter 1977/78, p. 69. The results of the survey were: 23.1% Conservative, 13.5% Reform, and 8.9% with membership in an orthodox synagogue.
  24. Silver, *op. cit.*, p. 201.
  25. *Ibid.*, p. 203.
  26. *Ibid.*, p. 201. "A man rises and is brought nearer to God by sincere actions and good works. It is 'deeds which make atonement for man.'"
  27. Ruth Goodhill (Ed.), *The Wisdom of Heschel* (New York: Farrar, 1975), p. 108.
  28. Phillip Gable, *Everything You Need to Grow a Messianic Synagogue*, (South Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1974).
  29. Jacob Jocz, *The Jewish People and Jesus Christ* (London: S.P.C.K., 1962), p. 92.
  30. Edward Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), p. 49.
  31. Grayzel, *op. cit.*, p. 343.
  32. *Ibid.*, p. 411.
  33. Newton Frohlich, "Was the Discoverer of America Jewish?" *Moment*, December 1991, pp. 34-43.
  34. November 10 is an important date in German history— Martin Luther's birthday (1483) and of the end of the Berlin Wall (1989).
  35. Sherrill, John and Elizabeth, with Corrie ten Boom, *The Hiding Place* (Old Tappan: Spire, 1971), 241 pp.
  36. Donald Lowerie, *The Hunted Children* (New York: Norton, 1963). The book describes how thousands of Jewish children were saved from the Nazis in southern France by the cooperation of Jewish and Christian relief agencies and by the great courage of Christian families.
  37. Meltzer, Milton, *Rescue, the Story of How Gentiles Saved Jews in the Holocaust* (Cambridge, Philadelphia: Harper and Row, 1991), 168 pp.
  38. Julius Bodensieck, *The Encyclopedia of the Lutheran Church*, Vol. 1, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1965), p. 527.
  39. Lucy Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews 1933-1945* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1975), p. 23.
  40. Franklin Sherman (Ed.), *Luther's Works*, Vol. 47 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), pp. 268-272.
  41. Armas Holmio, *The Lutheran Reformation and The Jews* (Hancock: Finnish Lutheran Book Concern, 1949), p. 127. Found in the original German in *Luthers Werke*, Wa., Vol. 51, p. 195.
  42. Samuel Sandmel, *We Jews and You Christians* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1967).
  43. *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.
  44. Michael Wyschograd, "The Future of Jewish-Christian Relations," *Face to*

- Face*, Winter/Spring, 1976, ADL of B'nai B'rith, pp. 19-20.
45. Jocz, *op. cit.*, p. 151.
46. Charles Glock and Rodney Stark, *Christian Beliefs and Anti-Semitism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 208.
47. Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), p. 278.
48. *Ibid.*, pp. 278-279.
49. Albert Huisjen, *The Home Front of Jewish Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House), pp. 159-169.
50. C.M. Hanson, *Speak Tenderly to Jerusalem* (Minneapolis: Commission on Evangelism, The American Lutheran Church, 1970), 117 pp.
51. *The Lutheran Hymnal* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1941), p. 103.



## Appendix A

### STATEMENTS ON JEWISH EVANGELISM BY THE LUTHERAN CHURCH-MISSOURI SYNOD



#### Convention Resolution 1-23, New Orleans, 1973

##### "To Facilitate Gospel Proclamation Among Jews"

(Overture 1-13, CW p. 27)

WHEREAS, The task of proclaiming the Gospel among all people is a continuing one -- a task to which the Synod has been committed since its founding; and

WHEREAS, Our Lord's command to proclaim the Gospel to all peoples certainly includes God's original chosen people, the Jews; and

WHEREAS, Our concern for the proclamation of the Gospel to the Jews should be no less than that of the Apostle Paul (Rom. 9-11); and

WHEREAS, There are special problems inherent in the successful pursuit of this work; therefore be it

**Resolved**, That the Synod instruct the District Board for Evangelism to focus their attention also on this task of bringing the Gospel of the atonement through faith in Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah to the Jewish people; and be it further

**Resolved**, That the Synod's Board for Evangelism produce guidelines and materials which will aid individuals, congregations, and Districts in this effort.

**Action:** None, Referred under omnibus Res. 4-47 to the Board of Directors.

Board of Directors referred to Board for Evangelism for action.

## **Convention Resolution 2-27, Dallas, 1977**

### **"To Encourage Evangelism Among the Jews"**

(Report 20-2, Rec. 6, CW, p. 27; overtures 2-08A-B, 10-18, CW, p. 31 and p. 326)

WHEREAS, God has made from one man all people to live on the earth as a loving family in harmony and reverence before Him as the only true God (Gen. 1:26, Acts 17:26-27); and

WHEREAS, This relationship was broken by the fall of man into sin; and

WHEREAS, Jesus Christ is the Mediator between God and all mankind and the Savior of the world (1 Tim. 2:3-6); and

WHEREAS, Jesus Christ has broken down the wall of hostility between God and man, between man and his fellow man, and thus also between Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2:14); and

WHEREAS, So many Christians have not been sensitive to opportunities the Lord has given for cultivating creative, positive relationships; and

WHEREAS, We of The Lutheran Church Missouri — Synod have too often not included the Jews in our mission; therefore be it

**Resolved**, That we adopt a two-year goal of persuading 50 percent of our congregations to prepare themselves for effective witness to Jewish people by working through the Bible study materials and witness resources prepared by the Committee on Witnessing to Jewish People; and be it further

**Resolved**, That we direct the Board for Evangelism to give priority to materials and programs for witness to Jewish people; and be it further

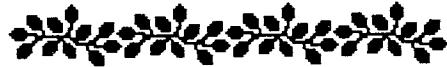
**Resolved**, That we adopt a two-year goal of 10 District workshops to stimulate interest and equip our members in witnessing to Jewish people; and be it further

**Resolved**, That we direct the Board for Social Ministry to include among its concerns the problem of anti-Semitism; and be it further

**Resolved**, That we urge congregations to share with the committee their reactions to the study materials and witness resources prepared by the Committee on Witnessing to Jewish People to aid in further study; and be it finally

**Resolved**, That we encourage especially those congregations located in or near Jewish communities to reach out to the Jews and share our faith that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah.

**Action:** Adopted.



## **Convention Resolution 1-30, St. Louis, 1979**

### **"To Adopt 'Statement of Jewish Lutheran Concerns'"**

Report 1-02 (CW, p. 44); Overtures 1-26--1-28 (CW, pp. 51-53)

WHEREAS, When the Board for Evangelism sought to carry out Dallas Res. 2-27, "To Encourage Evangelism Among the Jews," strong objections were received from various Jewish organizations and from some pastors and some congregations; and

WHEREAS, The position of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in its relationship to any group is one of love and concern patterned after the example of our Lord and is not based on personal opinions or prejudices; and

WHEREAS, The efforts to provide materials and workshops to understand the American Jew and to help find ways to share the Gospel with him was received by some Districts, pastors, and congregations with great interest and enthusiasm; and

WHEREAS, The truth of Scripture remains unchanged that there is no other way to salvation but through Jesus Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:12); and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is committed to carrying out the Great Commission of "making disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:18-20); therefore be it

**Resolved**, That the Board for Evangelism and its Committee on Witnessing to Jewish People continue to carry out the various aspects of Dallas Res. 2-27; and be it further

**Resolved**, That the Board for Evangelism refer official requests for Jewish-Lutheran dialog to the Commission on Theology and Church Relations; and be it finally

**Resolved**, That the Synod adopt the "Statement of Jewish Lutheran Concerns," which reads as follows:

I. We desire to be SENSITIVE

1. To the priority place of the Jews as chosen people of God both in the past, wherein lie roots of our own religious beliefs and practices, and to the present, where God's plans for both the Jews and Gentiles continue to unfold.
2. To the unique history of the Jewish people, in which they have suffered much injustice and cruelty at the hands of the Christian church and non-Christian Gentiles. We deplore and repudiate this most unfortunate history and pray for a new understanding and spirit.
3. To the danger that witnessing to Jewish people can result in misunderstanding and potential nurturing of anti-Semitic attitudes.

II. We plead for UNDERSTANDING

1. That we are not singling out the Jewish people as a special target for our evangelistic endeavors. We are committed to a parish approach in which the local congregation is committed to share the Gospel with all people in its community, Jew and Gentile alike. In the past we have often bypassed some segments of the community, such as the Jewish people.
2. That we are not mounting a campaign to convert Jewish people with techniques of evangelism involving manipulation, pressure and disrespect of the individual. Unfortunately, most of our people are not aware of the past injustices.

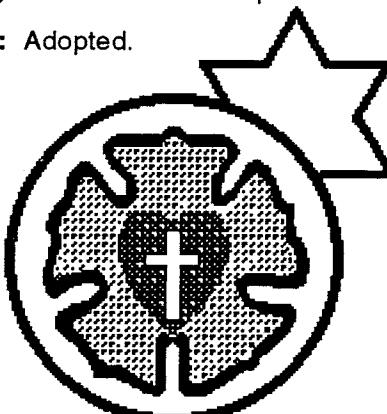
Therefore we seek to help our congregations understand the contemporary Jewish people who live with them in the community and share their faith with

them in a sensitive and respectful way. We need to provide special helps for this purpose just as we do for other groups of people, such as Blacks, Hispanics, Indians, cults, etc. We have full-time pastors to deaf, Estonians and Puerto Ricans, etc.

III. We state our COMMITMENT

1. That Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah, who fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament and by His life, death, and resurrection provided complete atonement for the sins of all people, Jew and Gentile alike.
2. That since the New Testament, as well as the Old Testament, is the verbally inspired Word of God, the words of Jesus remain true for us today: "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father but by Me" (John 14:6); as do the words of Peter: "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name (than the name of Jesus) under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).
3. That we are obligated to share the Gospel of Jesus as Lord and Savior with all people, Jew and Gentile alike (Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-49), and we seek to follow the example of our Lord and the early apostles with the zeal expressed by St. Paul when he said, "My heart's desire and prayer to God for them (Jews) is that they may be saved" (Ro. 10:1).
4. That we do love the Jewish people, that we stand with them in opposing all forms of anti-Semitism and injustice, that we join them in humanitarian concerns, and that we will continue to love them even when they choose not to accept our witness.

Action: Adopted.



## **Convention Resolution 1-13A, St. Louis, 1981**

### **"To Expand Jewish Missions Work"**

Overture 1-34 (CW, pp. 38-39)

WHEREAS, The Board for Evangelism, through its Committee on Witnessing to Jewish People, has for the past six years conducted an expanding ministry of evangelism to the Jewish people; and

WHEREAS, The Synod through its resolutions (2-27 in 1977 and 1-30 in 1979) has mandated that this work be done; and

WHEREAS, The interest in Jewish evangelism in our Synod continues to grow, as evidenced by the fact that more than 2,000 people visited the Jewish evangelism booth at the Great Commission Convocation and more than 300 people requested further information; and

WHEREAS, The Committee on Witnessing to Jewish People, as presently constituted, is unable to meet adequately the demands for services that our people are requesting, thus necessitating them to seek the help of other Christian agencies; therefore be it

**Resolved**, That the Committee on Witnessing to Jewish People endeavor to expand its work and to prayerfully study new avenues for defusing the new increasing anti-Semitism in our land and in the world; and be it further

**Resolved**, That the Synod request that our seminaries, in preparing future ministers for mission outreach in various ethnic and non-Christian communities, emphasize the challenges also provided by Jewish communities, and stand ready to assist the Committee on Witnessing to Jewish People.

**Action:** Adopted.

## **Convention Resolution 1-20, St. Louis, 1983**

### **"To Encourage Bringing the Gospel to Jewish People"**

WHEREAS, When Jesus came in fulfillment of the prophecies God gave to the Jewish people, He came to be the Messiah for Gentiles as well as Jews; and

WHEREAS, While some early Jewish believers had difficulty accepting the fact that Jesus should be proclaimed to the Gentiles, the opposite is true today in that some Gentile Christians have difficulty accepting the fact that Jesus should be proclaimed to the Jewish people; and

WHEREAS, There is an openness to hearing the Gospel among some Jewish people today; and

WHEREAS, Helps in bringing the Gospel to Jewish people provided by the Synod's Task Force on Witnessing to Jewish People have been well received by individuals, congregations, and Districts which have contact with Jewish people; and

WHEREAS, All forms of anti-Semitism hinder bringing the Gospel to Jewish people, either in discouraging Christians from sharing it or Jewish people from believing it; therefore be it

**Resolved**, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod affirm its belief that the Messiah, Jesus, is the only way for all people to be reconciled with God and affirm its desire that Jewish people be included in the proclamation of this truth; and be it further

**Resolved**, That we instruct the Board for Evangelism Services and its Task Force on Witnessing to Jewish People to continue to provide help to districts and congregations for proclaiming the Gospel to Jewish people and for dealing with anti-Semitism; and be it further

**Resolved**, That we commend the Commission on Theology and Church Relations for providing guidance for bringing the Gospel to Jewish people; and be it further

**Resolved**, That we encourage the Board for Parish Services to cooperate with the Task Force on Witnessing to Jewish People in providing study material on the Jewish people today, the problem of anti-Semitism, and Jewish evangelism; and be it finally

**Resolved**, That we encourage the Board for Social Ministry Services to include concern for anti-Semitism and prejudice against the Jewish people in its materials and programs which deal with all forms of prejudice.

**Action:** Adopted.

## **Convention Resolution 3-09, St. Louis, 1983**

### **"To Clarify Position on Anti-Semitism"**

WHEREAS, Anti-Semitism and other forms of racism are a continuing problem in our world; and

WHEREAS, Some of Luther's intemperate remarks about the Jews are often cited in this connection; and

WHEREAS, It is widely but falsely assumed that Luther's personal writings and opinions have some official status among us (thus, sometimes implying the responsibility of contemporary Lutheranism for those statements, if not complicity in them); but also

WHEREAS, It is plain from Scripture that the Gospel must be proclaimed to all people—that is, to Jews also, no more and no less than to others (Matt. 28:18-20); and

WHEREAS, This Scriptural mandate is sometimes confused with anti-Semitism; therefore be it

**Resolved**, That we condemn any and all discrimination against others on account of race or religion or any coercion on that account and pledge ourselves to work and witness against such sins; and be it further

**Resolved**, That we reaffirm that the basis of our doctrine and practice are the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions and not Luther as such; and be it further

**Resolved**, That while, on the one hand, we are deeply indebted to Luther for his rediscovery and enunciation of the Gospel, on the other hand, we deplore and disassociate ourselves from Luther's negative statements about the Jewish people, and, by the same token, we deplore the use today of such sentiments by Luther to incite anti-Christian and/or anti-Lutheran sentiment; and be it further

**Resolved**, That in our teaching and preaching we take care not to confuse the religion of the Old Testament (often labeled "Yahwism") with the subsequent Judaism, nor misleadingly speak about "Jews" in the Old Testament ("Israelites" or "Hebrews" being much more accurate terms), lest we obscure the basic claim of the New Testament and of the Gospel to being in substantial continuity with the Old Testament and that the fulfillment of the

ancient promises came in Jesus Christ; and be it further

**Resolved**, That we avoid the recurring pitfall of recrimination (as illustrated by the remarks of Luther and many of the early church fathers) against those who do not respond positively to our evangelistic efforts; and be it finally

**Resolved**, That, in that light, we personally and individually adopt Luther's final attitude toward the Jewish people, as evidenced in his last sermon: "We want to treat them with Christian love and to pray for them, so that they might become converted and would receive the Lord" (Weimar edition, Vol. 51, p. 195).

**Action:** Adopted.



## **Convention Resolution 1-13, Indianapolis, 1986**

### **"To Expand Witness to Jewish People"**

Overtures 1-17, 1-19 (CW, p. 31)

WHEREAS, There is an openness to the Gospel among many Jewish people both in North America, Israel and other parts of the world, and many are coming to faith in Jesus as the Messiah; and

WHEREAS, The Gospel is the "power of God for salvation" to both Jew and Gentile; and

WHEREAS, The Synod established a Committee on Witnessing to Jewish People in 1974 through the Board for Evangelism, which is now a Task Force on Witnessing to Jewish People, and has encouraged Jewish evangelism in recent conventions; and

WHEREAS, There is a growing interest in Jewish evangelism among the congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod; and

WHEREAS, Many congregations of the Synod are looking to other Jewish evangelism agencies for materials and programs, both Lutheran and other Christian agencies, and new organizations continue to be created to provide materials and programs; therefore be it

**Resolved**, That the Synod's Task Force on Witnessing to Jewish People increase its services to the congregations of the Synod through materials, workshops, consultations, and mailings; and be it further

**Resolved**, That the Synod command those districts that are encouraging Jewish evangelism and assisting their congregations (especially the Atlantic, Ontario, New Jersey, and Southern California Districts) and encourage other districts to take similar action; and be it further

**Resolved**, That the congregations of the Synod try various methods of reaching Jewish people in their parish areas, including the Messianic Bible study group or congregation; and be it finally

**Resolved**, That the Board for Mission Services include in its planning a staff position that will deal with the concerns of reaching Jewish people with the Gospel both in North America and other parts of the world.

**Action:** Adopted.



*Logos for the first two Apple of His Eye ministries in New York and Los Angeles. Subsequent ministries have opened in Chicago and Orlando.*



## **Convention Resolution 1-12, Wichita, 1989**

### **"To Strengthen Witness to Jewish People"**

Report R1-03 (CW, pp. 18-19); Overtures 1-16--17, 1-19--22 (CW, pp. 152-53)

WHEREAS, Our mission of making disciples is to all nations, including both Jews and Gentiles; and

WHEREAS, The Synod in convention has adopted resolutions supporting Jewish evangelism in each convention since 1977; and

WHEREAS, The Board for Mission Services is now responsible for this work and has assigned a staff person to work with the Task Force on Witnessing to Jewish People; and

WHEREAS, God has blessed this work with the result that Jewish people have come to faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior; therefore be it

**Resolved**, That we thank God for the positive results produced by those who have been involved in supporting this work, developing resource materials, and implementing Jewish evangelism; and be it further

**Resolved**, That we reaffirm our Synod's sincere commitment to an expanded emphasis in Jewish evangelism by accepting the goal set by its Task Force on Witnessing to Jewish People that teams of at least 3 trained workers in 5 major cities of Jewish population be established in the next 10 years; and be it finally

**Resolved**, That we as a Synod continue to pray for a mission concern for Jewish people throughout the world and encourage congregations and Districts with larger concentrations of Jewish people to reach out to them with the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ.

**Action:** Adopted as amended by common consent (15). (The words *by accepting ... next 10 years* were added to the second resolve by common consent.)

# APPENDIX B

## LUTHERAN AND JEWISH DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

**TABLE 1 Lutheran Population by States [1990 estimated]**

STATE	POPULATION	ELCA	LCMS	WELS	OTHER	TOTAL LUTH
AL	4,102,000	5,263	13,337	289	20	18,709
AK	524,000	9,638	3,066	798	46	13,548
AZ	3,489,000	53,262	22,743	10,922	495	87,422
AR	2,345,000	5,045	14,048	206	0	19,299
CA	28,314,000	197,895	143,101	9,165	1,302	351,463
CO	3,301,000	61,096	47,323	2,919	373	111,711
CT	3,233,000	35,765	15,557	235	221	51,778
DE	660,000	7,265	2,006	118	0	9,389
DC	617,000	4,311	1,425	0	0	5,736
FL	12,335,000	90,761	65,145	4,301	1,000	161,207
GA	6,342,000	31,053	8,614	594	150	40,411
HI	1,098,000	3,843	1,803	96	0	5,742
ID	1,003,000	12,564	13,533	140	102	26,339
IL	11,614,000	298,047	299,273	10,282	1,177	608,779
IN	5,556,000	79,468	110,618	1,184	15	191,285
IA	2,834,000	266,226	124,150	1,610	2,931	394,917
KS	2,495,000	44,898	62,306	889	0	108,093
KY	3,727,000	10,070	5,436	91	0	15,597
LA	4,408,000	5,485	19,308	380	42	25,215
ME	1,205,000	4,008	547	67	0	4,622
MD	4,622,000	107,079	31,727	401	23	139,230
MA	5,889,000	28,614	6,994	89	429	36,126
MI	9,240,000	166,423	248,425	48,174	3,520	466,542
MN	4,307,000	812,132	216,154	59,284	23,616	1,111,186
MS	2,620,000	2,229	4,175	56	0	6,460
MO	5,141,000	28,720	145,255	998	681	175,654
MT	805,000	48,578	16,712	1,095	840	67,225
NE	1,602,000	128,325	114,251	6,356	218	249,150
NV	1,054,000	7,425	5,677	530	0	16,632
NH	1,085,000	3,223	1,726	102	1,100	6,151
NJ	7,721,000	86,111	25,104	317	572	112,104
NM	1,507,000	11,263	6,352	323	7	17,945
NY	17,909,000	188,234	94,253	502	1,294	284,283
NC	6,489,000	87,410	18,876	307	40	106,633
ND	667,000	181,230	26,318	1,894	6,374	215,816
OH	10,855,000	320,982	83,017	4,304	227	408,530
OK	3,242,000	10,926	24,671	613	0	36,210
OR	2,767,000	49,487	27,138	1,338	1,071	79,028
PA	12,001,000	689,038	23,941	533	82	713,594
RI	993,000	5,489	1,357	108	76	7,030
SC	3,470,000	61,614	2,828	194	316	64,952
SD	713,000	114,540	33,061	10,431	2,488	160,520
TN	4,895,000	15,573	13,616	278	26	29,493
TX	16,841,000	155,768	133,749	4,235	478	294,230
UT	1,690,000	4,948	4,622	130	0	9,700
VT	557,000	1,547	400	110	0	2,057
VA	6,015,000	63,868	16,695	731	19	81,313
WA	4,648,000	132,154	42,517	3,550	5,818	184,039
WV	1,876,000	14,794	641	75	0	15,510
WI	4,855,000	457,195	249,244	223,750	10,564	940,753
WY	479,000	9,219	11,271	322	122	20,934
<b>Total</b>	<b>245,807,000</b>	<b>5,220,095</b>	<b>2,604,278</b>	<b>415,389</b>	<b>67,875</b>	<b>8,307,637</b>

**TABLE 2**  
**COMPARISON OF LUTHERAN AND JEWISH POPULATION BY STATE**

STATE	TOTAL LUTHERAN	TOTAL JEWISH	%LUTH	%JEWISH
ALABAMA	18,709	9,300	0.5	0.2
ALASKA	13,548	2,400	2.6	0.5
ARIZONA	87,422	71,500	2.5	2.1
ARKANSAS	19,299	2,000	0.8	0.1
CALIFORNIA	351,463	919,500	1.2	3.2
COLORADO	111,711	50,000	3.4	1.5
CONNECTICUT	51,778	113,200	1.6	3.5
DELAWARE	9,389	9,500	1.4	1.4
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	5,736	25,400	0.9	4.2
FLORIDA	161,207	567,000	1.3	4.6
GEORGIA	40,411	72,500	0.6	1.1
HAWAII	5,742	7,000	0.5	0.6
IDAHO	26,339	450	2.6	0.1
ILLINOIS	608,779	257,400	5.2	2.2
INDIANA	191,285	18,300	3.4	0.3
IOWA	394,917	6,350	13.9	0.2
KANSAS	108,093	14,000	4.3	0.6
KENTUCKY	15,597	11,800	0.4	0.3
LOUISIANA	25,215	15,700	0.6	0.4
MAINE	4,622	8,400	0.4	0.7
MARYLAND	139,230	211,000	3.0	4.6
MASSACHUSETTS	36,126	276,000	0.6	4.7
MICHIGAN	466,542	107,300	5.0	1.2
MINNESOTA	1,111,186	30,500	25.8	0.7
MISSISSIPPI	6,460	1,900	0.3	0.1
MISSOURI	175,654	61,600	3.4	1.2
MONTANA	67,225	450	8.4	0.1
NEBRASKA	249,150	7,400	15.6	0.5
NEVADA	16,632	20,500	1.3	1.9
NEW HAMPSHIRE	6,151	7,000	0.6	0.6
NEW JERSEY	112,104	430,000	1.5	5.6
NEW MEXICO	17,945	6,400	1.2	0.4
NEW YORK	284,283	1,843,000	1.6	10.3
NORTH CAROLINA	106,633	16,300	1.6	0.3
NORTH DAKOTA	215,816	750	32.4	0.1
OHIO	408,530	130,800	3.8	1.2
OKLAHOMA	36,210	5,300	1.1	0.2
OREGON	79,028	12,500	2.9	0.5
PENNSYLVANIA	713,594	330,500	5.9	2.8
RHODE ISLAND	7,030	16,100	0.7	1.6
SOUTH CAROLINA	64,952	9,300	1.9	0.3
SOUTH DAKOTA	160,520	350	22.5	0.1
TENNESSEE	29,493	19,400	0.6	0.4
TEXAS	294,230	109,000	1.7	0.6
UTAH	9,700	3,100	0.6	0.2
VERMONT	2,057	4,800	0.4	0.9
VIRGINIA	81,313	67,600	1.4	1.1
WASHINGTON	183,039	32,800	4.0	0.7
WEST VIRGINIA	15,510	2,400	0.8	0.1
WISCONSIN	940,753	34,700	19.4	0.7
WYOMING	20,934	450	4.4	0.1
TOTAL USA	8,307,637	5,981,000	3.4	2.4

**TABLE 3**  
**COMMUNITIES WITH JEWISH POPULATIONS OF 1,000 OR MORE**  
**[1990 estimated]**

ALABAMA			
Birmingham	5,100	Stamford	11,100
Mobile	1,000	Waterbury	2,700
Montgomery	1,300		
ALASKA		DELAWARE	
Anchorage	2,000	Wilmington (inc. rest of state)	9,500
ARIZONA		DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	
Phoenix	50,000	Greater Washington	165,000
Tucson	20,000		
ARKANSAS		FLORIDA	
Little Rock	1,300	Boca Raton-Delray Beach	52,000
CALIFORNIA		Broward County	3,000
Alameda County (inc in SF Bay area)	30,500	Dade County	201,800
Bakersfield & Kern County	1,400	Daytona Beach	2,500
Fresno	2,000	Ft. Lauderdale	116,000
Long Beach	13,500	Gainesville	1,200
Los Angeles Metro	501,000	Hollywood	60,000
Monterey Penin	1,500	Jacksonville	7,300
Orange County	95,000	Lee County	4,000
Palm Springs	9,600	Orlando	18,000
Pasadena	2,000	Pasco County	1,000
Pomona Valley	6,750	Palm Beach County	
Riverside	1,620	(excl. Boca Raton Delray Beach)	60,000
Sacramento	12,500	Sarasota	9,750
San Bernardino	2,800	St. Petersburg/ Clearwater	
San Diego	70,000	Stuart-Port	9,500
San Francisco Bay area	196,000	St. Lucie	3,000
San Luis Obispo	1,500	Tallahassee	1,500
Santa Barbara	3,800	Tampa	12,500
Santa Cruz	1,200		
Santa Monica	8,000	GEORGIA	
Stockton	1,600	Atlanta	65,000
Ventura County	8,000	Augusta	1,400
COLORADO		Columbus	1,000
Colorado Springs	1,500	Savannah	2,750
Denver	45,000		
Ft. Collins	1,000	HAWAII	
CONNECTICUT		Honolulu	6,400
Bridgeport	18,000		
Danbury	3,500	IDAHO	
Greenwich	3,800	None over 1,000	
Hartford	26,000		
Lower Middlesex Co.	1,475	ILLINOIS	
Meriden	3,000	Champaign-Urbana	1,700
Middleton	1,300	Chicago Metro	248,000
New Haven	28,000	Quad Cities	1,250
New London	4,000	Springfield	1,000
Norwalk	9,500		
Norwich	1,800	INDIANA	
		Bloomington	1,000
		Ft. Wayne	1,100
		Indianapolis	10,000
		NW IN-Calumet area	2,300
		South Bend	1,800

<b>IOWA</b>			
Des Moines	2,800	NEBRASKA	
KANSAS		Lincoln	1,000
Wichita	1,000	Omaha	6,500
KENTUCKY		NEVADA	
Lexington	2,000	Las Vegas	19,000
Louisville	9,200	Reno	1,400
LOUISIANA		NEW HAMPSHIRE	
Baton Rouge	1,200	Manchester	2,500
New Orleans	12,000	Nashua	1,000
Shreveport	1,000		
MAINE		NEW JERSEY	
Bangor	1,250	Atlantic City	15,800
Portland	3,900	Bergen County	85,000
Southern Maine (incl. Portland)	5,500	Cherry Hill	28,000
MARYLAND		Essex County	76,200
Annapolis	2,000	Hudson County	13,950
Baltimore	94,500	Middlesex County	58,000
Harford County	1,000	Monmouth County	33,600
Howard County	7,200	Morris County	33,500
Montgomery & Prince Georges counties	104,500	Ocean County	9,500
MASSACHUSETTS		Passaic County	18,700
Andover	3,000	Princeton	3,000
Boston	228,000	Somerset County	7,750
Cape Cod	2,900	Sussex County	4,100
Fall River	1,780	Trenton	6,000
Haverhill	1,500	Union County	30,000
Lowell	2,000	Vineland	2,500
Lynn, N. Shore	25,000		
New Bedford	3,000	NEW MEXICO	
Pittsfield	3,100	Albuquerque	4,400
Springfield	11,000		
Tauton	1,200	NEW YORK	
Worcester	13,700	Albany	12,000
MICHIGAN		Binghamton	3,000
Ann Arbor	4,500	Buffalo	18,125
Detroit	94,000	Ellenville	1,600
Flint	1,825	Elmira	1,100
Grand Rapids	1,500	Ithaca	1,250
Kalamazoo	1,000	Kingston	4,500
Lansing	2,100	Liberty	2,100
MINNESOTA		Monticello	2,400
Minneapolis	22,000	New York City	
St. Paul	7,500	metro area	1,671,000
MISSISSIPPI		Orange County	10,000
None over 1,000		Poughkeepsie	6,500
MISSOURI		Rochester	23,000
Kansas City metro	19,100	Rockland County	60,000
St. Louis	53,500	Schenectady	5,200
MONTANA		South Fallsburg	1,100
None over 1,000		Sullivan County	7,425
		Syracuse	9,000
		Utica	1,900
		NORTH CAROLINA	
		Asheville	1,350
		Chapel Hill-Durham	2,900
		Charlotte	4,000
		Greensboro	2,700
		Raleigh	2,775

OHIO		TENNESSEE	
Akron	6,000	Chattanooga	
Canton	2,400	Knoxville	1,700
Cincinnati	23,000	Memphis	1,350
Cleveland	65,000	Nashville	10,000
Columbus	15,200		5,560
Dayton	6,000	TEXAS	
Toledo	6,300	Austin	5,000
Youngstown	4,000	Corpus Christi	1,400
OKLAHOMA		Dallas	34,000
Oklahoma City	2,300	El Paso	4,900
Tulsa	2,750	Ft. Worth	5,000
OREGON		Houston	42,000
Eugene	2,300	San Antonio	10,000
Portland	9,000	UTAH	
PENNSYLVANIA		Salt Lake City	2,800
Allentown	6,000	VERMONT	
Bucks County-Lower	14,500	Burlington	3,000
Easton area	1,200	VIRGINIA	
Harrisburg	6,500	Alexandria area	35,100
Lancaster	2,100	Newport News-	
Philadelphia area	250,000	Hampton	2,000
Pittsburgh	45,000	Norfolk-VA Beach	
Reading	2,800	area	18,000
Scranton	3,150	Richmond	8,000
Wilkes-Barre	3,500	Roanoke	1,050
York	1,500	WASHINGTON	
RHODE ISLAND		Seattle	29,300
Providence area	14,200	Tacoma	1,100
Washington County	1,200	WEST VIRGINIA	
SOUTH CAROLINA		Charleston	1,025
Charleston	4,500	WISCONSIN	
Columbia	2,000	Madison	4,500
SOUTH DAKOTA		Milwaukee	28,000
None over 1,000		WYOMING	
		None over 1,000	



### Sources of Demographic Data

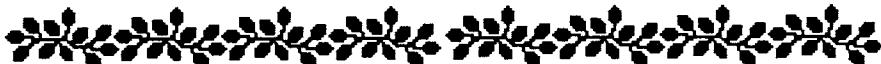
Total population by state: *American Jewish Yearbook 1991*, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), pp. 207-208.

Jewish population by state: *Ibid.*

ELCA and LCMS baptized members by state: *1990 Statistical Yearbook* (St. Louis: LCMS, 1991), pp. 226-227.

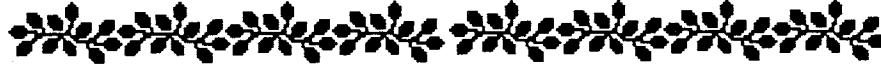
WELS and other Lutheran baptized members by state: Data are 1985 statistics; personal correspondence with LCMS Department of Human Resources, Office of Rosters and Statistics.

Jewish population by city, county or area: *American Jewish Yearbook 1991*, pp. 210-219.



## Appendix C

### RESOURCES



Resources for Jewish evangelism are listed below under the categories of books, periodicals, audiovisuals and agencies. But perhaps the greatest resource of all, second only to the Holy Spirit, is a Christian friend who has the gift of being able to lovingly present Christ to Jewish people and who is willing to teach others.

#### Books

##### **On Jews and Judaism:**

Baeck, Leon. *The Essence of Judaism*. New York: Schocken, 1970. 287 pp. Paperback.

Bernstein, Philip S. *What the Jews Believe*. New York: Farrar and Strauss, 1950.

Gilbert, Arthur and Oscar Tarlov, *Your Neighbor Celebrates*. New York: Friendly House, 1957. 118 pp. Hardcover.

Glock, Charles Y. and Rodney Stark. *Christian Beliefs and Anti-Semitism*. New York: Harper and Row, 1969. 226 pp.

Goldberg, L. Hirsch, *The Jewish Connection*. New York: Bantam, 1977. 273 pp. Paperback.

Goldin, Judah. *The Living Talmud: Wisdom of the Fathers*. Menton: New American Library, 1957.

Kaduschin, Max. *The Rabbinic Mind*. New York, Toronto and London: Blaisdell Publishing Company, 1975.

Kertzer, Morris. *What Is A Jew?* New York: Macmillan, 1970. 189 pp. Paperback.

Newman, Louis J. *The Talmudic Anthology*. New York: Behrman House, 1945.

Silver, Abba Hillel. *Where Judaism Differed*. New York: Macmillan, 1972. 270 pp. Paperback.

Steinberg, Milton. *Basic Judaism*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1947. 172 pp. Paperback.

Strack, Hermann L. *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*. New York: Meridian Books and Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1959.

Strassfeld, Michael. *The Jewish Holidays*. New York: Harper and Row, 1985. 248 pp. Paperback.

Yaffe, James. *The American Jews*. New York: Paperback Library, 1969. 382 pp. Paperback.

##### **Jewish History:**

Berger, David (trans.). *The Jewish-Christian Debate in the High Middle Ages*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979. 586 pp. Hardcover. A critical edition of the *nizzahon vetus*, which sets forth scholarly rabbinical refutations of the Gospel.

Dawidowicz, Lucy S. *The War Against the Jews 1933-1945*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975. 460 pp. Hardcover. A holocaust history.

Flannery, Edward. *The Anguish of the Jews*. New York, Macmillan, 1971. 332 pp. Paperback.

Friedman, Thomas L. *From Beirut to Jerusalem*. New York: Doubleday, 1990. 541 pp. Paperback. Analysis of recent Middle East tensions involving Jews and Arabs.

- Grayzel, Solomon. *A History of the Jews*. Philadelphia: JPS, 1970. 881 pp. Hardcover.
- Schweitzer, Frederick. *A History of the Jews Since the First Century A.D.* New York: Macmillan, 1971. 319 pp. Hardcover.
- Jewish Evangelism:**
- Fruchtenbaum, Arnold. *Hebrew Christianity, Its Theology, History and Philosophy*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977. 139 pp. Paperback.
- Fuchs, Daniel. *How to Reach the Jew for Christ*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1965. 116 pp. Hardcover.
- Goldberg, Louis. *Our Jewish Friends*. Chicago: Moody, 1977. 188 pp.
- Hanson, C.M. *Speak Tenderly to Jerusalem*. Minneapolis: Commission on Evangelism, The American Lutheran Church, 1970. 117 pp. Paperback.
- Hedenquist, Gote. *The Church and the Jews: A Study Handbook*. London: Edinburg House, 1961. 47 pp. Hardcover.
- Huisjen, Albert. *The Home Front of Jewish Missions*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1962. 222 pp. Hardcover.
- Huisjen, Albert. *Talking About Jesus with a Jewish Neighbor*. Grand Rapids: Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions. 48 pp. Pamphlet.
- Jewish Evangelism: Idea Series No. 10*. Evangelism Department; Board of Home Missions, Christian Reformed Church. 125 pp. Manual.
- Jocz, Jakob. *The Jewish People and Jesus Christ*. London: S.P.C.K., 1962. 448 pp. Hardcover (out of print; copy in LCMS library).
- Rosen, Moishe and Ceil Rosen. *Share the New Life With a Jew*. Chicago: Moody, 1977. Paperback.
- Rosen, Moishe. *Y'shua*. Chicago: Moody, 1982. 149 pp. Paperback.
- Rosen, Ruth. *Jesus for Jews*. San Francisco: A Messianic Jewish Perspective, 1987. 320 pp. Paperback. Includes testimonies to Christ of 15 Jewish believers.
- Rubin, Barry. *You Bring the Bagels, I'll Bring the Gospel*. Old Tappan: Chosen Books, 1989. 201 pp. Paperback.
- Schiffman, Michael. *Return from Exile: The Re-emergence of the Messianic Congregational Movement*. Bay Terrace: Teshuvah, 1991. 161 pp.
- Theology and Miscellaneous:**
- Born, David J. *Bible Studies on the Feasts of Israel*. St., Louis, 1993. Board for Mission Services, LCMS. 120 pp. Paperback.
- Buksbazen, Victor. *The Gospel in the Feasts of Israel*. W.Collingswood: Friends of Israel, 1978. 102 pp. Paperback.
- Hefley, James and Marti. *Where in the World Are the Jews Today?* Wheaton: Victor, 1974. 175 pp. Paperback.
- Hulse, Erroll. *The Restoration of Israel*. Worthing: Henry Walter, Ltd., 1971. 192 pp. Paperback.
- Isaac, Jules. *Jesus and Israel*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971. Hard-cover.
- Munck, Johannes. *Christ and Israel, An Interpretation of Romans 9-11*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967. 156 pp. Hardcover.
- Opsahl, Paul D. and Marc H. Tannenbaum. *Speaking of God Today— Jews and Lutherans in Conversation*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974. 178 pp. Hardcover.
- Rosen, Moishe and Ceil. *Christ in the Passover*. Chicago: Moody, 1978. 112 pp. Paperback.
- Tannenbaum, Marc, Marvin Wilson and A. James Rudin (Ed.). *Evangelicals and Jews in Conversation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978. 326 pp. Hardcover.
- Wurmbrand, Richard. *Christ on the Jewish Road*. Glendale: Diane, 1972. 192 pp. Paperback.
- Periodicals on Jews, Judaism, and Jewish Evangelism**
- Eretz. Israeli equivalent of the *National Geographic Magazine*. Beautiful photography. Quarterly. US \$32. PO Box 8074, Syracuse, NY 13217.

**Hineh Mah Tov.** Semi-annual. Free. LCMS Task Force on Witnessing to Jewish People. LCMS World Mission, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122.

**Jews for Jesus Newsletter.** Bimonthly. Free. Jews for Jesus. 60 Haight St., San Francisco, CA 94102.

**Mishkan.** A theological forum on Jewish evangelism. Published semi-annually by the United Christian Council in Israel. \$15/year. PO Box 116, Jerusalem, 91000, Israel.

**Moment.** A bimonthly magazine of Jewish culture and opinion. Subscription \$27/year. PO Box 7028, Red Oak, IA 51591.

**The Burning Bush.** Quarterly. Free. Lutherans in Jewish Evangelism. 7207 Monetary Dr., Orlando, FL 32809.

## Audiovisuals

Filmstrips: "Michael Brought Them"—the story of how a little boy witnessed to a Jewish family; "The Apple of God's Eye"—a comprehensive look at 1900 years of Jewish evangelism and anti-Semitism. Filmstrips available on loan from Lutherans in Jewish Evangelism or for purchase from Task Force on Witnessing to Jewish People.

Videos: "Michael Brought Them" and "The Apple of His Eye" filmstrips (described above) on videotape. "Oneg Shabbat"—a Friday evening mission activity done by Lutheran congregations in order to bridge the culture gap between Gentile Lutherans and Jewish people. All available on loan from Lutherans in Jewish Evangelism.

Video: "The Apple of His Eye - Street Witnessing" - street witnessing in New York City by Lutherans. Available on loan from LCMS World Mission.

Records, cassettes, Jewish Christian music, seder plates, etc., available from Purple Pomegranate Productions, Division of Jews for Jesus, 80 Page St., San Francisco, CA 94102.

## Agencies

There are approximately 200 Jewish evangelism agencies in the United States. A full, accurate listing would be impossible to compile because many of the agencies are short-lived. *Although evangelical, most of the agencies espouse anabaptist and millennialistic doctrines, so individuals using their materials should carefully evaluate their theological views.* We have listed below those agencies that are most helpful, and have included all known Lutheran agencies.

**American Messianic Fellowship.** 7448 N. Damen Ave., Chicago, IL 60645. Founded in 1887. Publishes tracts, the bimonthly periodical *AMF* and correspondence courses.

**Chosen People Ministries** (formerly American Board of Missions to the Jews), 1300 Cross Beam Dr., Charlotte, NC 28217. Founded in 1894 by a converted rabbi, Leopold Cohn. One of the largest agencies with approximately 80 missionaries. Publishes periodical *The Chosen People*, and a wide variety of tracts. Has centers in many of the larger U.S. cities.

**Christian Jew Foundation.** P.O. Box 345, San Antonio, TX 78292. Its radio ministry is the largest Hebrew Christian broadcast in the world. Sponsors missionaries and publishes tracts. Bimonthly paper, *Message of the Christian Jew*.

**Christian Witness to Israel.** 44 Lubbock Road, Chislehurst, Kent BR7 5JX, ENGLAND. Work began in 1842. Bimonthly periodical, *CWI Herald*. Supports evangelists in British Isles, Europe, Israel, India, South Africa, New Zealand, Australia, and North and South America.

**Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry.** P.O. Box 908, Bellmawr, NJ 08031. Publishes tapes, tracts and correspondence courses on Jewish evangelism. Bimonthly magazine *Israel My Glory*.

**Good News for Israel.** Box 23018, Richfield, MN 55423. An independent Lutheran faith mission founded in 1974 as an outgrowth of the former Zion Society for Israel, which was the first Jewish evangelism society founded in the U.S. (1878). Bimonthly newsletter, *Good News*.

**Jews for Jesus.** 60 Haight St., San Francisco, CA 94102. Perhaps the largest Jewish evangelism agency. Mobile evangelistic singing group "The Liberated Wailing Wall" and drama group "New Jerusalem Players." Known for conducting successful street evangelism using cartoon-type tracts known as "broadsides." Monthly newsletter, tapes, records and tracts.

**Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism.** International Headquarters at: Ellebaekvej 5, DK-8520 Lystrup, DENMARK. North America Headquarters: GNFI, Box 23018, Richfield, MN 55423.

**Lederer Messianic Ministries** (formerly The Lederer Foundation). 6204 Park Heights Ave., Baltimore, MD 21215. Originally founded as a Lutheran work by Rev. Henry Einspruch. Publishes excellent Jewish Christian literature.

**Lutherans In Jewish Evangelism** (formerly Lutheran Institute for Jewish Evangelism). 7207 Monetary Dr., Orlando, FL 32809. An association of LCMS congregations with the objective "to win Jewish people as disciples of Y'shua Ha Mashiach (Jesus the Messiah)." Publishes a quarterly newsletter *The Burning Bush* and other Jewish mission materials.

**Ministry of Hope.** P.O. Box 1382, Pasadena, MD 21122. Pan-Lutheran work began in 1983. Begun with help of the Norwegian Church Ministry to Israel. Monthly newsletter *Hope for Israel*.

**Song of Israel.** P. O. Box 730012, Ormond Beach, FL 32173. Features testimony and piano concerts of Alyosha Ryabinov, a Russian Jewish believer.

**Task Force on Witnessing to Jewish People,** The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. 1333 S. Kirkwood Rd., St. Louis, MO 63122. Committee of the LCMS under the auspices of the Board for Mission Services. Works with LCMS districts and congregations to initiate and coordinate missionary work to the Jews.



## Appendix D

### WORD STUDIES ON "HEBREW," "JEW" AND "ISRAEL"

#### Hebrew

##### Old Testament

The word "Hebrew" ( **יְהוּדִי** ) occurs 33 times in the Old Testament. Twenty-eight (28) of the passages occur in Genesis, Exodus or 1 Samuel.

6 times in Genesis - 14:13; 39:14.17;  
40:15; 41:12; 43:32  
14 times in Exodus - 1:15.16.19; 2:6-7,  
7.11.13 and as "Yahweh, the  
God of the Hebrews" in 3:18;  
5:3; 7:16; 9:1.13; 10:3; 21:2  
8 times in 1 Samuel - 4:6.9; 13:3.7.19;  
14:11.21; 29:3

"Hebrew" and "Hebrews" are to be contrasted to "Israel" or "Sons of Israel" in that the later word set was a patronymic derived from the ancestor of the people (the man Israel) and was used among the people themselves. However, "Hebrew" or "Hebrews" were appellatives applied by Gentile peoples to that group of people that crossed the Euphrates and immigrated into Canaan. "Hebrew" ( **יְהוּדִי** ) may be derived from the word **יָהוּדָה** (region on the other side of a stream or sea) or from **עֹבֵד** which means "to pass over." Note the interesting paronomasia in 1 Samuel 13:7 ( **וְיַעֲבֹרֶם עֹבֶדֶת** ) which can be translated "And Hebrews went over [the Jordan]." The first usage of "Hebrew" in the Bible is to describe Abraham: "The one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, who was living by the oaks of Mamre" (Gen. 14:13).

We note that Abraham and his descendants are only called "Hebrew" when Gentiles are introduced as speaking, when they speak of themselves to Gentiles, or

when used in opposition to other nations, for example.:

Potipher's wife of Joseph: "See, he has brought among us a Hebrew to insult us" (Gen. 39:14).

Joseph to the Egyptian chief butler: "For I was indeed stolen out of the land of the Hebrews" (Gen. 40:15).

Customs of the Egyptians and Hebrews contrasted: "the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians" (Gen. 43:32).

Other occurrences of "Hebrew" in the Old Testament are Deut. 15:12 (twice); Jer. 34:9.14 and Jonah 1:9.

##### New Testament

In the New Testament "Hebrew" ( **Εβραῖος** or **Ἑβραῖος** ) occurs 14 times. In 10 instances "Hebrew" refers to the Hebrew (actually Aramaic) language: John 5:2; 19:12.17. 20; 10:16; Acts 21:40; 22:2; 16:14; Rev. 9:11; 16:16. John writes "Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, in Hebrew called Bethzatha" (John 5:2). And Luke reports of Paul's defense in Jerusalem: "He spoke to them in the Hebrew language . . . (Acts 21:40).

The other instances are Acts 6:1; 2 Cor. 11:22 and Phil. 3:5. These passages identify a person, particularly one who speaks the Hebrew (Aramaic) language. Thus in Acts 6:1: "The hellenists murmured against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution." Both groups were, of course, Jews.

## Jew

### Old Testament

The word "Jew" (יְהוּדִי or יְהוּדָה) derives from יְהוּדָה (Judah) and was originally a patronymic for those people descended from the man Judah, the fourth son of Israel. Early use includes the following passages: 2 Kings 16:6; 25:25; and 1 Chron. 4:18. The term "Jew" is used much more frequently during the exilic and post-exilic periods. We recall that the Southern Kingdom, or Kingdom of Judah, was comprised mostly of descendants of Judah. When the exiles of the Kingdom of Judah returned from Babylonia they wanted to differentiate themselves from those descendants of Israel who had a mixed heritage with Gentiles, who became known as "samaritans." Thus in post-exilic times the use of the word "Jew" probably connotes a degree of ethnic and religious purity (cf. Ezra 10:1-3).

Some of the exilic and post-exilic references are: Ezra 4:12.23; 5:1.5; 6:7.8.14; Neh. 1:2; 3:33; 4:6; Jer. 32:12; 34:9; 38:19; 40:11.12; 41:3; 44:1; Dan. 3:8.12; Zech. 8:23. The word "Jew" occurs often in Nehemiah and about 45 times in Esther.

Zechariah 8:23 gives us a striking example of post-exilic usage of the word "Jew": "In those days ten men from the nations of every tongue shall take hold of the robe of a Jew, saying, 'Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.'"

### New Testament

In the New Testament the word "Jew" translates Ἰουδαῖος and related forms. It is used rarely in the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) but 71 times in the Gospel of John. In the synoptic gospels "Jew" is used 17 times, 12 times as "King of the Jews" (11 of the 12 are in the passion account). The only other mention of "King of the Jews" is in Matt. 2:2 where the wise men from the east come to Jerusalem and ask, "Where is he who has been born King of the Jews?" The remaining uses of "Jew" in the synoptics are found in Matt. 28:15; Mark 7:3; Luke 7:3; and 23:50.

The word "Jew" is never used in the synoptics as a proper name for the people to whom Jesus came. And neither Jesus nor his disciples refer to him as the "King

of the Jews." This is a term used by aliens (cf. Matt. 2:2; 17:11). The term "Jew" is usually used on the lips of non-Jewish people, or in the dealings of Jews with non-Jews, while "Israel" is the preferred term used by Jewish people to denote themselves.

Therefore John's frequent use of "Jew" in his gospel seems extraordinary. Perhaps he has a Gentile readership in view. Cf. Jn. 3:1 when John describes Nicodemus as "a ruler of the Jews" and 3:10 where Jesus' appellative for Nicodemus is "a teacher of Israel." Frequently "Jews" in the Gospel of John denotes those of Israel who reject Jesus as the Messiah, but not always. In John 4:9 Jesus himself is called a "Jew" by the Samaritan woman. Note also that Jesus said "salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22).

Paul's writings use "Jew" to contrast with "Gentile" and he perhaps uses "Jew" rather than "Israel" because it more clearly communicates to his Gentile readership: Rom. 1:16; 2:9.10.17 and cf. Rom. 2:28-29 with the use of "Israel" in Ro. 9:6. Other Pauline usage of "Jew" can be found in: Ro. 3:1.9.29; 9:24; 10:12; 1 Cor. 1:22-24; 10:32; 12:13; Gal. 2:13-15; 3:11.

Certain passages in the New Testament give a negative connotation to "Jew" -- as those who resist the Gospel. Examples are: 2 Cor. 11:24; 1 Thess. 2:14-16; Acts 9:23; 13:45ff.; 18:5-6. But these must be compared with others that lead us to believe that the use of "Jew" in the New Testament does not carry an implicit negative connotation (cf. 1 Cor. 9:20; Acts 11:19; 18:1-4).



## Israel

### Old Testament

The word "Israel" ( שִׂמְאָל ) is first used in Genesis 32:28 when Jacob struggled with God during the night at the ford of the Jabbok: "Your name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed." The word derives from the Hebrew שַׁיִלּוּ, which means "to fight." Thus "Israel" means basically a "contender" or "soldier of God." Cf. also Genesis 35:9-12 where God confirms the change of name from Jacob to Israel.

Israel came to signify the descendants of the man Israel as evidenced by Genesis 34:7; 49:7; Exodus 19:3 and Josh. 24:1- 2. These descendants were a special chosen people in the eyes of God. Cf. Ex. 3:10 ff.; 19:5-6; Dt. 6:4-9; 9:1-5; 14:2. "Israel" also signified a political entity during the united kingdom: 1 Sam. 13:1-2.4; 2 Sam. 8:15. It was also used to identify the Northern Kingdom (922-722 B.C.) as evidenced by 1 Sam. 24:1.9; 2 Sam. 2:9.17; 3:10; 19:41; 20:2; 1 Kings 14:19. After the fall of the Northern Kingdom the word "Israel" was taken over by the Kingdom of Judah and acquired a use, not just as a political title, but as the name of the chosen people of God and became normative for subsequent generations in spite of political and geographical changes. Cf. Ezra 1:3; 10:1.10; Mal. 1:16; and 1 Macc. 4:11 which says "Then all the Gentiles will know that there is one who redeems and saves Israel." The land is sometimes called "Israel" as in 1 Sam. 13:19; 2 Kings 6:23; Ezekiel 27:17; Is. 19:24; Mal. 1:5.

### New Testament

The word "Israel" ( Ἰσραὴλ ) is used in the New Testament approximately 70 times. Matthew and Luke each use "Israel" 12 times, Mark only twice, and John 4 times. Paul uses "Israel" only 18 times in the New Testament, and 12 times in Romans 9-11 (the only part of Romans where he uses it).

With one possible exception, "Israel" refers in the New Testament to the chosen people of God, lineal descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Examples are:

"Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10:6)

"I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24)

"Let the Christ the King of Israel come down now from the cross" (Mark 15:32)

"That he might be revealed to Israel" (John 1:31)

"You are the King of Israel" (John 1:49)

A clear example of this meaning is found in the *Nunc Dimittis*. The words of Simeon are: "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to thy people Israel." It is important for us to understand the meaning of the word "Israel" even as we sing the hymns in the hymnal. What does the unknown Latin author mean in "Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel" (*Lutheran Worship*, No.1) when he writes: "Oh, come, Oh, come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear"?

The passage "Not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel" (Ro. 9:6) is to be compared with Ro. 2:28-29: "For he is not a real Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision something external and physical. He is a Jew who is one inwardly..." Here we grasp the idea of a true Israel, or remnant, that exists within Israel. In Ro. 9:6 we are not told that Gentile Christians are part of the true Israel. Other important passages to study are: Ro. 10:21-11:2; 11:25-26.

It is also possible to think of all believers as a "spiritual Israel" for in Gal. 6:16 Paul says: "Peace and mercy be upon all who walk by this rule, upon the Israel of God". Cf. with Gal. 3:6-9,14.



## Appendix E

### Anti-Semitism: What Keeps It Going? by William F. Meyer

*Day after day a vicious war of hatred is waged against people because of differences in color, race, religion or profession.*

If prejudicial hatreds against people were perpetuated only by organized groups, we could critically reject such viewpoints as representing a propagandistic program or an isolated opinion.

However, we find that we ourselves frequently reflect similar viewpoints. We too, tend to reject people because they are not one of us, have a different color, believe in principles we do not accept or have never tried to understand, or follow a life-style different from our own.

One prejudice that has fostered hatred and the rejection of an entire ethnic group throughout the centuries is anti-Semitism-hostility toward Jews. Within religious groups anti-Semitism continues because many people feel the Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus.

Blame could more easily be laid at the feet of the priests, who declared Christ a national criminal, and Pilate, whose desire for acceptance among the Jewish people perverted his sense of justice.

But well-taught Christians must know that ultimate responsibility for the death of Christ rests with God. He knew the need for a Savior for all people, and His answer to that need was to give the life of His own Son for all of us.

How did anti-Semitism develop? Why does it continue?

Throughout history the Jews have been a minority. Their homeland has been coveted and fought for by many nations attempting to enhance commercial trade or fortify national boundaries. Jews were

taken captive and deported to foreign lands in an attempt to weaken the ability of the Jews to reclaim or reestablish a national center.

In foreign countries Jews stood out as ethnically and religiously different. To protect and preserve their identity the Jews continued to cultivate their language, religion, and customs. As foreigners without property or capital, they were forced into occupations that were most lucrative in order to establish themselves as free men.

Anyone in a similar position--Jewish, German, or American--would find it necessary either to blend with his neighbors or to protect his identity by appealing to his childhood training.

Certain qualities are often alleged to separate Jewish from nonJewish groups. Because one or more of these traits can contribute to anti-Semitism, let's assess some of the characteristics frequently associated with Jewish people on the American scene.

*Jews are an urban people.* Jews constitute 3.5 percent of the total population of the United States. Forty percent live in New York City and most of the remainder in other large cities.

There are reasons: (1) Most immigrants from Europe came to work in factories and therefore lived in cities. (2) In the countries they came from, Jews were rarely permitted to own land; their traditions and skills were therefore not agricultural. (3) Orthodox Jewish immigrants were not allowed by their religion to travel on the

Sabbath and so had to live in the vicinity of the synagogue.

*Jews tend to choose certain occupations.* This would be like saying that Lutherans tend to be farmers. Jews are involved in all occupations. The old stereotype of Jews as America's bankers no longer holds up; only six-tenths of one percent are bankers. Notions that Jews dominate private risk-taking ventures, government and professional services are dispelled by the facts.

*Jews are ambitious and work hard.* There are no yardsticks to measure this assertion. Personality types tend to be ambitious and hardworking, not ethnic groups.

*Jews have high intelligence.* Using mental tests as a criterion, we can say that some Jews do and some Jews do not have high intelligence.

*Jews greatly love and respect learning.* Observation seems to confirm this claim. College attendance statistics note the trend of high enrollment for Jews.

*Jews have strong families.* On this point there is some slight evidence that Jewish families possess more solidarity than other families, although the weakening of traditional family ties today is felt among Jews and non-Jews.

*Jews are clannish.* If this statement means that Jewish charity is well organized and that needy Jews receive generous aid from Jewish groups, the "clannishness" can be substantiated (and can certainly be a lesson for others). But if the "clannishness" refers to a tendency for Jews not to mingle with nonJews, the evidence does not substantiate this claim.

*Jews sympathize with the oppressed.* Various studies of prejudice show that Jewish attitudes seem to be slightly more tolerant than attitudes in Catholic and Protestant groups. (To read a history of the Jewish people is to recognize that they have suffered more than their share of oppression and therefore sympathize with oppressed groups.)

*Jews are money-minded.* Probably all of us have heard or read adages which imply that Jewish people are avaricious. One study, however, reports that Jewish students show "economic values" no more prominently than students of Protestant or Catholic background.

All these prejudicial characteristics fall far short of establishing an objective basis justifying hostility toward Jews. Even when slight ethnic differences appear, they are never large enough to warrant the prediction that any given Jew will possess certain qualities.

Too often characteristics cited as marking a Jew from non-Jew are based on a "minority" report or on a sampling of one. We must guard against making the characteristics of one Jew distinctive attributes of all members of that ethnic group.



A Jew is a human being, one of God's creatures, just like every other person. If he is *considered* something more or less, he is *made* something more or less than what he really is.

As we examine the basis of our preconceived notions, we must ask ourselves: What should we do about our own prejudices against the Jews?

It would be simple to say, "Stop being prejudiced." No one, however, can simply erase deep-seated feelings or attitudes. But we can learn to deal with them with the help of the God who created us and made us responsible for other people.

When I paint other people in the colors of my own prejudices, I am forgetting a very important fact. In the beginning God created *all* men in His own image and included them all in His evaluation "very good."

Still another equalizer is the reality that we are all sinners -- and the wonderful truth that Jesus came to be the Savior of all people. We find our common worth at the foot of Jesus' cross on Calvary.

Jewish people need our Savior, too, just as much as other people. My claim on God's redemption is not exclusive but really *inclusive*: "Go and make disciples of *all* nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with

you always, to the close of the age."

At first the bold mission thrust of Scripture may seem more than we can personally handle. But our apprehensions become more manageable with one small step at a time.

Meet a Jew. Talk to him.

Discover for yourself that he is more like you than you thought. Those of us who have made that discovery have also found that the problem of prejudice can be solved by God's grace, forgiveness and healing.



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## Appendix F

### A Lost Heritage: A Brief Synopsis of Lutheran Missions to the Jews by Bruce J. Lieske



We want to act in a Christian way toward them and offer them first of all the Christian faith, that they might accept the Messiah, who, after all, is their kinsman and born of their flesh and blood and is of the real seed of Abraham of which they boast... We still want to treat them with Christian love and to pray for them, so that they might become converted and would receive the Lord.(1)

Thus spoke Martin Luther in the last sermon of his life, preached to the peoples of Eisleben on February 15, 1546, just three days before his death. His final remarks are subtitled, *Eine Vermahnung wider die Juden*, "A warning against the Jews," and they comprise the conclusion to his sermon based on Matt. 11:25- 30.(2)

Luther's feelings toward the Jews were complex and ambivalent, sometimes filled with compassion and love but at other times vulgar and abrasive. Yet one theme persists: his hope for their salvation. All throughout his active ministry Luther was troubled by the general Jewish rejection of Jesus the Messiah. Paradoxically, in an era that church historians do not view as evangelistic, Luther showed a profound interest in Jewish evangelism and wrote five books on this subject.(3) Living and working in an atmosphere charged with theological polemics, and accustomed to the coarse vernacular of his society, Luther's "mission methods" probably would not bear fruit in the twentieth century. Regardless of his choice of expression, even in his worst statement, Luther's objective was always to bring the

Jews to Christ. He closes his book, *On the Jews and Their Lies*, with this hope: "May Christ, our dear Lord, convert them mercifully and preserve us steadfastly and immovably in the knowledge of him, which is eternal life."(4)

Armas Holmio suggests that the beginning of evangelical Jewish missions is to be found in Luther's first book on the Jews, *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew*.(5) In that book Luther wrote hopefully:

Our fools, the popes, bishops, sophists, and monks--the crude asses' heads--have hitherto so treated the Jews that anyone who wished to be a good Christian would almost have had to become a Jew. If I had been a Jew and had seen such dolts and blockheads govern and teach the Christian faith, I would sooner have become a hog than a Christian. They have dealt with the Jews as if they were dogs rather than human beings. . . . I hope that if one deals in a kindly way with the Jews and instructs them carefully from Holy Scripture, many of them will become genuine Christians and turn again to the faith of their fathers, the prophets and patriarchs.(6)

Luther was to be disappointed in this hope. Except for occasional conversions, like a certain Bernhard, formerly Rabbi Jacob Gipher, and Antonius Margarita, son of Rabbi Samuel Margolit, few Jews came to accept Christianity; and the optimism of the younger Luther evaporated in his later years. He was stung by the publication in the spring of 1542 of a certain book written by the rabbis against his work, *Against the Sabbatarians*. In the rabbis' book a Jew and Christian converse, with the outcome that the Christian faith is proved false -- a theological inversion of Justin Martyr's "Dialogue with Trypho the Jew".(7) This book (as yet unidentified by historians) occasioned Luther's most vituperative book, *On the Jews and Their Lies*. Unhappily, the contents of this book are not only well known to the Jewish community, but have also been frequently used by anti-Semitic organizations to foster hatred of Jews. The Nazis made copies available free of charge at the University of Halle.

The book is basically an exegetical apology based on Genesis 49, 2 Samuel 23, Haggai 2, and Daniel 9. Luther, always an exegete, was vexed by the Jewish interpretation of those passages: "That is

the way the Jews tear apart the text, wherever they can, solely for the purpose of spoiling the words of Scripture for us Christians, although it serves no purpose for them either."(8) Luther lapses into a literary temper tantrum when he writes:

Shame on you, here, there, or wherever you may be, you damned Jews... You are not worthy of looking at the outside of the Bible, much less reading it. You should read only the bible that is found under the sow's tail, and eat and drink the letters that drop from there.(9)



Luther goes on to ask: "What shall we Christians do with this rejected and condemned people, the Jews?" He answers with a seven-point program which includes "to set fire to their synagogues or schools" and to see that "their houses also be razed and destroyed."(10)

Luther's radical views were not accepted by other leaders of the Protestant reformation. Bullinger, Osiander, and Melanchthon were appalled at Luther's book. When Melanchthon apologetically forwarded the book to Philip of Hesse he made only one comment: "That Your Princely Grace may see with what he at present busies himself."(11) In 1541 Luther's arch-antagonist, John Eck, had published a treatise titled, "Refutation of a Jew-Book" which parallels Luther's *On the Jews and Their Lies* in its vehemence. The Lutheran theologian and pastor, Osiander, was the author of the "Jew- Book" which defended the Jews against the charge of ritual murder. Osiander remained sympathetic to the Jews all his life, defended them publicly, and even had personal friendships with Jewish scholars—conduct that was socially unacceptable then.

Mild-mannered Philip Melanchthon also defended the Jews. The great 16th century Jewish leader, Josel von Rosheim, stated that during the Frankfurter *Anstand* in 1539, Melanchthon had violently criticized the judicial murder of 48 Jews, committed almost 30 years before, and that he had publicly exposed the responsible clergyman, who was still alive at the time of the assembly.(12)

One other Lutheran who concerned himself with Jewish evangelism during the Reformation era was Sebastian Muenster (1489-1552), a Franciscan monk who

joined Lutheranism in the early years of the Reformation. He was a professor of Hebrew and theology at Heidelberg and Basel. In 1537 he translated the Gospel of Matthew into Hebrew, and the preface to his translation is a 33-page treatise on Christianity, written in Hebrew and Latin. The work was intended specifically as a mission thrust to the Jews. Two other books were published in 1539; and a Hebrew translation of the Letter to the Hebrews was published posthumously in 1557.(13)

We conclude our synopsis of Lutheran missions to the Jews in the Reformation times with a "Table Talk" quotation of Luther, in which he shows practical pastoral concern for the conversion of Jews, even to the point of giving specific instructions as to how a Jewish person ought to be baptized:

Fill a large tub with water, and, having divested the Jew of his clothes, cover him with a white garment. He should then sit down in the tub and you ought to submerge him in the water.(14)

Other writings of Luther contain references that Lutherans did baptize Jews into the Christian faith, and that instructions on how to baptize were not abstract scholarly speculations. One wonders when the concern of Luther and the other reformers for the conversion of Jews will reappear in the Lutheran Church of today.(15)

It is difficult to find much evidence for Lutheran missions to the Jews in the 17th century. Albert Huisjen observes that "for more than two centuries after the Reformation there was scarcely heard a Protestant voice in behalf of the salvation of the Jews."(16) However, there is considerable evidence that in the 17th century the Reformed churches in Holland had a strong concern for Jewish missions. At first the concern was harsh; the National Synod of Dort (1618-1619) petitioned the States General, requesting that they pay attention to "Jewish blasphemies" and find a means for the conversion of the Jews. In their marginal notes on Romans 11, the translators of the 1637 Dutch version of the Bible--all strictly orthodox Reformed theologians--followed the line of Beza rather than Calvin in looking for a future general conversion of the Jews.(17,18) Toon sums up the attitude of 17th century Dutch Christians as follows:

With most theologians of those days we find the expectation of a future conversion of the Jewish people, which in its turn led to sincere interest in the ways and means of their salvation.(19)



In the 18th century Lutheran interest in the evangelization of Jews reappeared through the Pietists. Philip Spener, perhaps, was the one who replanted the seed of Lutheran interest by some of his comments in his book, *Pia Desideria*. The first edition appeared in 1675, but in 1678 Spener's Latin translation had appended to it a section on the conversion of the Jews.(20) Commenting on the impious lives of many Christians Spener mentions the Jews:

They cannot believe it possible that we hold that Christ is true God because we do not obey His commands, or they conclude that Jesus must have been a wicked man when they judge him and his teachings by our lives. We cannot deny the offense which we have given these poor people has been a major cause (emphasis added) of the past hardheartedness of the Jews and a major impediment to their conversion.(21)

Spener treats Romans 11:25-26 briefly in his *Pia Desideria*, saying : "So if not all, at least a perceptibly large number of Jews, who have hitherto hardened their hearts will be converted to the Lord."(22) He calls Christians to action: "It is incumbent on all of us to see to it that as much as possible is done, on the one hand, to convert the Jews and weaken the spiritual power of the papacy and, on the other hand, to reform our church."(23) Jakob Jocz, himself a Jewish Christian, discusses the transition from the crude evangelization methods of medieval times to more enlightened and Christlike methods. He observes:

But the great pioneer in this direction was Philip Jacob Spener (1635-1705), who was the first to work out a detailed missionary plan of the Christian approach to the Jews. Its main significance was the renunciation of all forms of coercion.(24)

Before He died, Spener was able to pass the mantle of concern for the Jews on to

another man. While in Dresden, Spener became friends with a young instructor, August Francke (1663-1727), who was to become, in many respects, Spener's successor in the pietistic movement.



owards the end of his life, Francke laid the groundwork for the *Institutum Judaicum* which was founded at Halle in 1728 and was led by Stephan Schultz. The first organized mission to the Jews on the continent of Europe was the Berlin *Israelmission*, founded in 1822. Its most well-known participant was Professor H.L. Strack (d.1922), who started an *Institutum Judaicum* in Berlin in 1883.(25) He was at one time chairman of the International Conference of Jewish Missions. After his conversion from Judaism, Franz Delitzsch (whom Dr. Walther was at the point of inviting to teach at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis) became not only an outstanding exegete, but "by his example and his writings, stimulated to missionary activity not only the Lutheran, but the Protestant church at large."(26) In 1869 F. Delitzsch gathered several Jewish missions into the *Evangel. Luth. Zentralverein fuer Mission unter Israel* with headquarters in Leipzig. In 1870 he created the *Institutum Judaicum (Delitzschianum)* which is now located in Muenster, Westphalia.(27) The Leipzig institution was a seminary for training candidates of theology for Jewish missions. Delitzsch's translation of the New Testament into Hebrew, a labor of love, was completed in 1877, after years of hard work.

German-Lutheran Jewish evangelism bore rich fruit in the Jews who became Lutheran theologians. Among them were: Carl Caspari (1814-1892), Old Testament scholar; the church historian, Neander (1789-1850), known originally as David Mendel; Friedrich Philippi (1809-1882), New Testament exegete and staunch defender of the Lutheran Confessions; and Franz Delitzsch (1813-1890) whom we have mentioned previously.

The zeal of the German-Lutheran pietists for Jewish missions spread to Scandinavia and beyond. The "Norwegian Jewish Mission" (*Den Norske Israelsmisjon*) was organized in 1844. Until 1890, the mission supported English and German missionary societies working chiefly in southeast Europe, but in 1891, it sent missionaries directly to Romania and Hungary. The

work continued there until 1948-1949 when Communist rule forced its cessation. The "Swedish Mission to the Jews" (*Svenska Israelsmissionen*) was organized in 1875 and has worked chiefly in eastern Europe, especially Austria. The "Danish Jewish Mission" (*Danske Israelsmission*) was founded in 1885 and worked in Poland and later in other parts of eastern Europe and Africa. The "Finnish Missionary Society" (*Finska Missions-saellskapet*) was founded in 1859 and began Jewish work in 1863 by establishing a school for Jewish children. Later on missionaries were sent to eastern Europe. All four of the Scandinavian Jewish missions are represented in Israel today.(28)

We are obliged to mention other Protestant Jewish missions that arose in the 19th century. The "London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews" (LSPCJ) was formed in 1809 and has been called the oldest and most extensive Jewish missionary organization in the world.(29) De Jong believes that the impetus for LSPCJ was independent of German-Lutheran pietism.(30) The LSPCJ was eventually taken over by the Anglican Church and is now called, "Church's Ministry among the Jews."

One naturally asks, What success did the zeal for Jewish missions have? The Jewish rabbinical community has always both resented and disavowed any success Jewish missions have had in converting Jews to the Christian faith. However, Forbert Blumstock , citing as his source, *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, 1916, Vol. IV, says that in the 19th century, 250,000 Jews converted in the British Isles and Germany. This source also gives a list of 14 mission societies, which collectively claimed 12,394 conversions in the 19th century. These data show that *most Jewish evangelism work was not done by the societies themselves (which serve mostly to stimulate and educate), but by local parishes.*(31)



We turn our attention now to Lutheran Jewish missions in the United States. The first organized concern for Jewish evangelism from Christians in America came out of Norwegian-Lutheran piety. In 1878, at a church conference in Stoughton, Wisconsin, the "Zion Society for Israel" was organized. An inter-Lutheran

agency, it had as goals to encourage, promote and conduct a missionary program among the Jewish people of the world. At the time of its founding, American Lutherans were primarily concerned with reaching those of their own ethnic backgrounds; hence the various Lutheran Church bodies did not respond enthusiastically to the challenge of Jewish missions. For that reason, mission activity focused on work overseas, especially Russia and Romania. In this country the "center" approach was used. Professional missionaries were hired to work out of rented "centers" or "mission houses" rather than to conduct a parish-oriented approach to the Jewish people in the community. As the work grew, the Zion Society gradually relinquished its overseas work to European societies, and by the turn of the century all of its active mission work was being done in this country. A close liaison was kept throughout its history with the Norwegian Israel Mission. Centers existed at one time in Baltimore, Brooklyn, Chicago, Twin Cities, and Omaha.(32,33)

In 1948 the National Lutheran Council invited various U.S. Lutheran Jewish missions to unite in a common effort called, "Christian Approach to the Jewish People." The Zion Society affiliated itself with this work of the N.L.C. for 14 years and was helpful in promoting Jewish missions especially in the Evangelical Lutheran Church (later the American Lutheran Church). One important study, published by the N.L.C., was *The Lutheran Parish and the Jews*, prepared by Rev. Harold Floreen. The study revealed that Christians in the Evangelical Lutheran Church showed significantly more friendly attitudes towards Jews than those in other Lutheran bodies—no doubt a result of the work of the Zion Society of Israel.(34) In 1962 the work of the "Christian Approach to the Jewish People" was terminated by the N.L.C. and the Zion Society for Israel resumed its work as an independent inter-Lutheran faith mission. On February 1, 1964, the Zion Society merged with the American Lutheran Church and the work came under the auspices of the Commission on Evangelism. Properties, annuities and other fixed assets were transferred to the American Lutheran Church. The rationale for the merger was that Jewish evangelism should be a work of the whole church and that the parish approach is more effective than the work conducted through special centers.

In 1974, the American Lutheran Church restructured itself, and the Department of Messianic Ministries was phased out of existence. Under a new administrative structure, ministry to the Jewish people is encouraged at the district and congregational level. At the national level a standing committee was established. It is known as the "Committee for Lutheran-Jewish Concerns." It is the opinion of the new committee that the concept of Jewish missions must include dialogue, as well as witness.(35) Although the new ALC Jewish missions approach offered certain advantages in opening up channels of communication with institutional Judaism, it has lost the boldness and energy of the former programs under the old Zion Society for Israel and the Department of Messianic Ministries. Now that the ALC has merged into the ELCA, there is even less interest in a gospel witness to Jewish people.

Wishing to fill this need, the Rev. C.M. Hanson and the Rev. S. Olson were instrumental in establishing a new inter-Lutheran Jewish mission society in 1974 called, "Good News for Israel." This society's goals and theology are patterned after the old Zion Society for Israel charter, but the approach to missions is parish-oriented rather than "center" oriented. Good News for Israel takes the position that Jewish missions are a responsibility of the whole church, of the local parish in particular; but it recognizes that the special skills, attitudes and materials needed are best generated by an independent society, which will then, in turn, serve as a resource to congregations and larger church bodies.

We have briefly followed one historical thread of Lutheran evangelistic concern for the Jews which arose out of Norwegian-Lutheran piety, and manifested itself in the American Lutheran Church. Now we shall follow another historical thread within the Missouri Synod. In 1881 the Central Illinois District of the Synod petitioned the Synod "to consider its responsibility for establishing a synodical means for enlisting and coordinating the interest and obligation of every Christian to bear witness to his Jewish fellowmen."(36) The Synod delegated the responsibility of organizing

Jewish mission work to its constituent districts. However, in 1884 the Synod established a "*Kommission fuer Judenmission*," which functioned until 1932.(37) The original enthusiasm of 1881 in the Missouri Synod was timed perfectly to the arrival in this country that same year of Daniel Landsmann, a Jewish Christian missionary.(38) In 1863, Landsmann had become a Christian while residing in Jerusalem. For 18 years he had been a Protestant missionary to the Jews in Constantinople under the auspices of the Scottish Society for Jewish Missions. Missouri Synod emigrant missionary, Samuel Keyl, had invited Landsmann to come to the United States and work in Jewish missions. When Landsmann arrived he expected to find an assignment waiting for him, but he "was soon to learn that outsiders did not break into the Synodical ranks of membership without first passing formidable doctrinal tests."(39)

Sponsored by the Central Illinois District, Landsmann was sent to Concordia Seminary, Springfield, Illinois for grounding in Lutheran doctrine. But Landsmann, in his mid-40s and a veteran of nearly two decades of missionary service, was eager to begin work. In May of 1883 the New York City pastoral conference bypassed the synodical delay on Landsmann. Three parishes pledged themselves to support his work for the Missouri Synod, which finally terminated in 1896 with his death.

Landsmann was never ordained by the Missouri Synod; nor was he installed as an associate in any of the New York City parishes. Official records of the Eastern District indicate that his status was that of "evangelist."(40) His work was hindered by the cultural hiatus between the Jewish community and the German-Lutheran community. Because the Synod insisted upon a parish approach, and that new converts be integrated into congregations, at a certain point in his instruction of new Jewish converts, Landsmann had to turn the person over to a Missouri Synod pastor. The pastor then completed the training as a bridge of integration into the German-Lutheran parish life. Under these difficult conditions, Landsmann was able to see, as fruits of his 13-year ministry, a total of 37 Jews who finally reached the baptismal font of Lutheran churches. The work did not cease after Landsmann's death. In the 1890s, a rabbi named Nathaniel Friedmann, came to New York City from Russia. Through Landsmann's witness, he was converted, and became a

Missouri Synod missionary to the Jews from 1896 until his death in 1941.(41) The Missouri Synod also conducted Jewish mission work in Chicago from 1930-1939 under Isadore Schwartz, and in St. Louis, Missouri from 1930-1934 under Kenneth Frankenstein. In 1974 the Synod established a standing committee, under the Board for Evangelism, called "Committee for Witnessing to Jewish People," which resurrects the old *Kommission fuer Judenmission* and promotes a new outreach.



ver the years several Lutheran missions have existed in this country. Among them are the "Minneapolis Friends of Israel" and the "St. Paul Lutheran Friends of Israel." One of the oldest independent missions is "Christ's Mission to the Jews, Inc.," located in Pittsburgh, Pa. Founded in 1906 by the Rev. John Legum, the mission was served for a period of 30 years by the Rev. Dan Bravin. Christ's Mission to the Jews Inc. currently operates a center and is staffed by three full-time missionaries. As an inter-Lutheran independent faith mission, it has Lutherans of ELCA and LCMS on its board of directors.(42)

To His Jewish apostles, Jesus spoke in the land of Israel: "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witness in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Through the mouths of Jews of the land of Israel the Gospel went out to the Gentiles. Now from the Gentiles, at the ends of the earth, the Gospel is returning to the Jews in the modern state of Israel. Today a large number of Christian churches and missionary societies are at work in Israel.(43,44) Among them are the four Scandinavian missionary societies previously mentioned.

The Finnish Mission Society has been in Israel since 1924 and has a boarding school with church in Jerusalem. The Norwegian Lutheran Mission worked in Palestine from 1923-1929. It has been in Israel from 1949 to the present. Its two congregations of Jewish Christians in Haifa and Jaffa are the largest in Israel. The Swedish Israel Mission provides funds for the maintenance of The Swedish Theological Institute, founded in 1951 and located in Jerusalem. Permission to build the institute was given by the Israeli government only after the Archbishop of

Sweden had given assurances that the institute would not have evangelistic objectives but would devote itself to study and research. In 1968 three of its eight-man board of directors were Jewish. The Danish Mission to the Jews has been in Israel since 1953 and is located in Jerusalem. Osterbye sums up the Lutheran work in Israel: "The societies specialize in their own field; the Norwegians in evangelizing, the Swedes in theological studies, and the Finns and the Danes in schools."<sup>(45)</sup> One other Lutheran institution exists in Israel, the Karmel Institute (the Scandinavian Bible Institute) founded in 1945 and established in Israel in 1949. This group emphasizes Zionist theology and does considerable study on Biblical prophecy as it relates to the land of Israel. However, it has no missionary activity, and is in fact *hostile* to the work of Christian missions to the Jews.<sup>(46)</sup>

### Conclusion

In America today the Jewish mission field is dominated by Baptist groups, such as the American Board of Missions to the Jews Inc. and many small non-denominational groups. The Lutheran Gospel outreach to Jews in this country is insignificant compared with what other Christians are doing. However, the roots of Jewish missions reach back into the Lutheran heritage.

Martin Luther was profoundly concerned for the salvation of Jews. He wrote five books relating to Jewish missions. His other writings also have many references to bringing the Gospel to the Jews. A victim of the polemical spirit of his times, of medieval church prejudices against Jews, and of his own sinful flesh, Luther at times wrote of Jews in a harsh and abrasive manner. Tragically, his book, *On the Jews and Their Lies*, has hindered rather than helped mold Christian attitudes towards the Jewish people. Other Lutheran reformers showed a more compassionate stance towards the Jewish people. The father of modern Jewish missions was the great leader of German-Lutheran pietism, Philip Spener. He was in turn followed by August Francke, who founded the *Institutum Judaicum* at Halle in 1728. In the 19th century Protestants in Europe were greatly stimulated in Jewish missions by the German Lutheran, Franz Delitzsch, who was himself a Jew. From Germany the pietist zeal for evangelizing the Jew spread to Scandinavia and from there to America. The first Jewish mission society

in America was a Lutheran institution, the Zion Society for Israel, founded in 1878.

Lutherans have generally recognized that the evangelization of Jews is a responsibility of the *whole church*, and thus have tried to incorporate Jewish missions into ecclesiastical structures. This has not been successful in most instances. Historically, the ecclesiastical structures have either eventually abandoned the Jewish mission work, or given it such a dimension of dialogue that the Gospel proclamation was lost. The most successful Lutheran Jewish mission work has been done by the independent lay societies and institutes, which have worked to stimulate congregations to accept their joyful responsibility of winning Jews for Christ.

The missiology of Jewish missions is far more complex today than it was in Luther's time. The Nazi holocaust, emergence of the modern state of Israel in 1948, the growth of liberal theology which disavows the need for Jewish evangelism, and the current growth of "Messianic synagogues" of Jewish believers, all introduce new theological problems. The time has come for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to present a Biblical stance towards these problems. In 1972 the General Convention of the American Lutheran Church requested that a special committee prepare a statement about the relationship of American Lutherans to the Jews. At the 1974 General Convention the report was titled "The American Lutheran Church and the Jewish Community."<sup>(47)</sup> This report summarizes the theological spectrum among Lutherans, but presents no clear-cut theological stance, nor does it suggest any course of action. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod can render service to the kingdom not only by continuing its Gospel outreach to Jews through its "Committee for Witnessing to Jewish People," but by presenting a theological posture towards the Jewish people and Jewish missions through convention resolutions.

The Lutheran heritage of Jewish missions needs to be rediscovered. We pray that the Lord of the Church will inspire us to bring more of His ancient chosen people, the Jews, back to the one flock.



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## Notes

1 Armas Holmio, *The Lutheran Reformation and the Jews* (Hancock: Finnish Lutheran Book Concern, 1949), p.127. Found in the original German in *Luthers Werke*, WA., vol. 51, p. 195.

2 The English translation of the German is available in *Luther's Works*, Am. ed., vol. 51, Sermons 1, pp. 382-392. However, the translator omits the final page and a half of the remarks subtitled, "A Warning to the Jews," which can be found in the Weimar edition of Luther.

3 The five books are: *That Christ was Born a Jew* (1523), *Luther's Works*, Am. ed., vol. 45, pp. 199-299; *Against the Sabbatarians; Letter to a Good Friend* (1538), *Luther's Works*, Am. ed., vol. 47, pp.65-98; *On the Jews and Their Lies* (1543), *Luther's Works*, Am. ed., vol. 47, pp. 123-306; *Von Schem Hamphoras und vom Geschlecht Christi* (1543). *Luthers Werke*, WA., vol. 53, pp. 573-648; *Von den letzten Worten Davids* (1543), *Luthers Werke*, WA., vol. 54, pp. 16-100.

4 *Luther's Works*, Am. ed., vol. 47, p. 306.

5 However, Holmio himself observes that as early as 1521 Luther wrote: "Therefore we must not treat the Jews so unkindly since from among their number shall come Christians, every day and in the future." Holmio, op. cit., p. 77 and p. 155.

6 *Luther's Works*, Am. ed., vol. 45, p.200.

7 Holmio, op. cit., p.101.

8 *Luther's Works*, Am. ed., vol. 47, p.244.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 212.

10 *Ibid.*, pp. 268-269.

11 Holmio, op. cit., pp. 121-122.

12 In the chapter, "Bucer and the Jews" (pp.38-72) in W. Nijenhuis' *Ecclesia Reformata: Studies on the Reformation* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972), pp.40-42.

13 Holmio, op. cit., pp. 136-138. The two books published in 1539 were: *The Dialogue of a Christian with a Jew*

*who Persists Stubbornly in his Pernicious Beliefs and Wrong Interpretation of the Bible, and The Messiah of the Christians and Jews, Hebrew and Latin.*

14 WA. Ti, 1531-46, No. 229, vol. 1, p. 124.

15 The issue of Jewish evangelism is not unrelated to the current controversy between conservatives and moderates in The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod. Robert Blumstock, an unconverted Jew, writes perceptively: "The importance of Jewish missions is a central issue which today divides religious modernists from fundamentalists. While it is not the only issue, it is one of the main differentiating points. This is not to imply that all fundamentalists see a need for Jewish missions, and that all modernists do not. This would again imply a uniformity of doctrine, which has rarely, if ever, characterized Protestantism." Robert Blumstock, *The Evangelization of Jews: A Study in Interfaith Relations* (University of Oregon, Ph.D., 1964), p. 107.

16 Albert Huisjen, *The Home Front of Jewish Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1962), p. 142.

17 Peter Toon, *Puritans, the Millennium and the Future of Israel: Puritan Eschatology 1600 to 1660* (Cambridge: Clarke, 1970), pp. 138-140.

18 *Ibid.*, p.142. G. Voetius in *De Judaismo* (1637) wrote that the true means to convert Jews included "prayer, pious life, a living faith, sympathy and beneficence towards the Jews, a sound interpretation of the Scriptures...."

19 *Ibid.*, p.153.

20 Theodore Tappert (trans.), *Pia Desideria* by Philip Spener (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1964), p. 15.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 68.

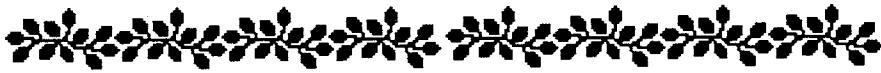
22 *Ibid.*, p. 76.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 78.

24 Jakob Jocz, *The Jewish People and Jesus Christ* (London:S.P.C.K., 1962), p. 222.

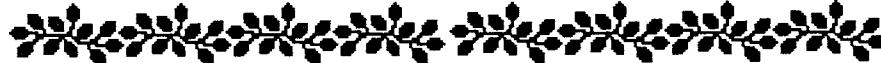
- 25 Stephen Neill, Gerald Anderson and John Goodwin (eds.), *Concise Dictionary of the Christian World Mission* [74] (Nashville and New York, 1971), p. 309.
- 26 Jocz, *op. cit.*, p. 396.
- 27 Neill, *op. cit.*, p. 309
- 28 Julius Bodensieck (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of the Lutheran Church*, Vol. II (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1965), pp. 1172-1173, under "Jewish Missions."
- 29 Huisjen, *op. cit.*, p. 144.
- 30 J.A. De Jong, *As Waters Cover the Sea* (Kampen: Kok, 1970), p. 193. "Not since the 1650's had the thought of the conversion of the Jews received as much attention in Anglo-American missions as during the period under study (1776-1810). Although the *Institutum Judaicum* had been established at Halle in 1728, little of the pietist zeal for the conversion of Jews appears to have been communicated to England."
- 31 Blumstock, *op. cit.*, p. 71, Blumstock comments: "Approximately five per cent of all conversions were obtained by the mission societies, while the remaining ninety-five percent were outside the missions. The differences in these figures are accepted by those currently active in Jewish mission work."
- 32 Julius Bodensieck (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of the Lutheran Church*, Vol. III (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1965), pp. 2571-2572, for a brief history of the society written by Stanley Olson.
- 33 Burton Goddard (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Missions* (Camden: Thomas Nelson, 1967), p. 187, for the article by C.M. Hanson.
- 34 Harold Floreen, *The Lutheran Parish and the Jews* (Chicago: The National Lutheran Council, 1949), p. 9. The study did not include the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, but was based on a questionnaire sent to nearly 7000 Lutheran pastors in other Lutheran bodies, of which 12.9% responded, representing 971 congregations.
- 35 Personal correspondence from Lawrence W. Denef, Lutheran-Jewish Concerns Committee.
- 36 F. Dean Lueking, *Mission in the Making* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1964), p. 159, quoting from the *Proceedings of the Eighteenth General Synod*, p. 78.
- 37 Marvin Huggins, *Research Report on Jewish Missions*, Missouri Synod, Concordia Historical Institute, September 12, 1974. "This committee, along with several others, ceased to function around 1932 because of the depression. At its convention that year the Synod turned much of its specialized home mission work over to the districts in which the work was being carried on."
- 38 Lueking, *op. cit.*, Landsmann's story is told in the chapter, "One Man's Labor Among the Jews" on pp. 159-173.
- 39 *Ibid.*, p. 163.
- 40 *Ibid.*, p. 167.
- 41 Huggins, *op. cit.*, and *The Dawn*, July 1974 (official publication of Christ's Mission to the Jews, Inc.).
- 42 Personal correspondence from Elmer Wentz, 1973.
- 43 Twenty-five Protestant agencies are working in Israel today, thirteen of them church denominations or church-related. At the end of 1972 the Christian population of Israel and occupied lands was 110,000 of which not more than 5,000 are Protestants and about 500 are Jewish Christians. The total population is about 3,100,000. H. Robert Cowles, "Perspective on Israel--the Confusing Choices," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, July 1974, p. 242.
- 44 Per Osterbye, *The Church in Israel* (Lund: Gleerup, 1970), p. 45. In 1957 sixteen groups combined to form the United Christian Council in Israel, including the Finnish Missionary Society and the Norwegian Lutheran Mission.
- 45 *Ibid.*, p. 185.
- 46 *Ibid.*, p. 21.
- 47 1974 Reports and Actions, Part 2, *Seventh General Convention of the American Lutheran Church*, October 9-15, 1974.





## Appendix G

### THE QUESTION OF MESSIANIC SYNAGOGUES



In recent years the numbers of Jewish people who have become Christians have increased so much that many seek a Christian worship experience in a Jewish setting. This need is not unlike German, Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish, Danish and Slovak Lutherans who established Lutheran congregations in this country a hundred or so years ago when immigrants were coming to America in large numbers. These congregations held services in the native languages of their members, and conducted their affairs with the unique ethnic flavor of their old world background. There is no reason why Jewish identity should be abandoned when a Jew becomes a Christian, and in fact, many feel that it should be more deeply appreciated.

Paul affirmed a unity in Christ that transcends every human barrier when he said: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). But this passage does not destroy or blur categories of human identity, be they male or female, Jew or Gentile. The recent movement within Christianity for the development of Messianic synagogues does not violate biblical principles.

However, the concept of a Messianic synagogue has generated some concern about theology and practice. Are Gentiles welcome? Is this a Judaizing tendency similar to that which occasioned Paul's letter to the Galatians? Should Christian groups use the word "synagogue" which has been the exclusive domain of non-Christian Jews practicing the religion of Judaism?

In the last ten years, two LCMS pastors have had intimate experiences with Messi-

anic synagogues, Rev. David Born, Pastor of the Lutheran Church of Our Saviour, Rego Park, N.Y., and Rev. John Perling, Pastor of Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, Beverly Hills, Calif. Rev. Perling's church consented to having the Ahavat Zion Messianic Synagogue meet in their congregation's former church building, now used for educational and fellowship purposes. Ahavat Zion is a viable, authentic Christian group, and draws two to three hundred worshipers for high holy day services. Although the Jewish community has been outraged at the existence of this Messianic synagogue, and at its residency in the building of a mainline Christian congregation, Rev. Perling has been able to keep the lines of communication open to many of the local rabbis. Ahavat Zion (which means "for the love of Zion") and Mount Calvary Lutheran Church are not organically tied together, although each is supportive of the other. This "partnership in the Gospel" serves to legitimize Ahavat Zion to the Jewish community as an authentic expression of the Christian faith in which Jews are accepted as Jews. This situation, together with LCMS convention resolutions that affirm Jewish evangelism have evoked condemnation of the LCMS by the local rabbinic community on the grounds that Jewish evangelism is an effort to destroy the Jewish people.

Rev. Born's church in New York City also hosted a Messianic synagogue, officially incorporated in January 1984, as Beth Tifeleh by a group of over 50 Christians. Beth Tifeleh met in the school building of Our Saviour, a location removed from the church building by some eight blocks, thus helping to remove the stigma of Gentile "churchiness" from the meeting place. This permitted new Jewish inquirers to feel more comfortable. The story of the founding of this congregation

spans seven years and began when Rev. Born was instrumental in leading a Jewish spouse of one of his members to Christ. The new Jewish believer did not feel comfortable in a Gentile Christian church setting, although he admitted that was not the church's problem but his. As a result, Rev. Born helped to start a Friday evening Messianic fellowship in a home setting—consisting of Sabbath meal, Bible study, singing and other Christian worship using Jewish forms. This new group had its ups and downs. Known as Beth Chesed, nearly died out and then was "reborn" as Beth Yaakov which eventually experienced some growth in 1982-83 and became incorporated as Beth Tifeleh. Beth Tifeleh eventually became completely independent of Our Saviour Lutheran Church, and they now have their own facility in south Queens, New York City. Beth Tifeleh postures itself as a Messianic congregation rather than Messianic synagogue in order to avoid confusion with Jewish synagogues and to soften the ire of the Jewish rabbinical community.

The New York City area has nearly 2 million Jewish people. In 1990, the Task Force on Witnessing to Jewish People, part of the Board for Mission Services of the LCMS, working in cooperation with Our Saviour Lutheran Church, held the first Apple of His Eye annual summer outreach to Jewish people on the streets of New York City. As a result of this ministry, as well as other encouraging local developments in Jewish evangelism, the Atlantic District of the LCMS extended a contract to Marc Danzis, a Lutheran Jewish believer, to develop a mission to the Jews in that area. A worshipping community of Jewish and Gentile believers has been established, in cooperation with Our Saviour Lutheran Church, and calls itself Beth El (House of God). Approximately 20-25 people gather for Bible study, worship and fellowship on Friday evenings. This is the first LCMS Messianic congregation, and it is hoped that it will eventually grow large enough to be included as a congregation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

More recently, under the leadership of Rev. John Perling, Pastor of Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, Beverly Hills, Calif., a movement has begun to establish a Lutheran Messianic congregation in Los Angeles. Mount Calvary has contracted with Rev. David Tengbom to plant a Messianic congregation. In late winter, 1993, more than 70 Lutherans participated in a combined telephone/street witnessing

outreach to Jewish people in Los Angeles, resulting in more than 300 Jewish people giving their names and addresses—saying they would be interested in receiving more information about a Messianic congregation.

The Los Angeles "Apple of His Eye" outreach used successful techniques developed in New York City by Born and Danzis in 1990, 1991 and 1992. The street witnessing campaign in 1992 involved 29 Lutherans and distributed over 100,000 "broadsides"—humorous Gospel tracts.

In September 1992, Darla Schmidt, a LCMS deaconess, was contracted to begin an outreach in Chicago, which also held an "Apple" training event in 1993 sponsored by LCMS World Missions. Another outreach will begin in Orlando, Fl., in October 1993. Rev. Bruce Lieske, the author of this work, has accepted the call to lead this new mission. It is hoped that messianic congregations will form in both of these locations in the future.

Most Messianic congregations in this country are independent of any denomination, have no ecclesiastical credentials and do not conform to any standard theology and practice. Some are charismatic, others are not. Although their theologies are not 100% in harmony with the Lutheran Confessions, most are Messiah-centered and Bible-centered, perhaps like the first Christian congregations in the Holy Land of the First Century A.D.

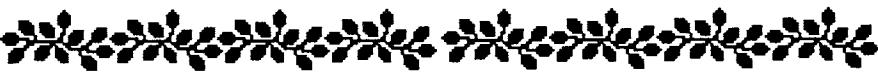
The question should then occur to us, as members of a mainline denomination, why not Messianic congregations in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod? If we can recognize that there is a Jewish culture and ethos, can we not accommodate ourselves to that—even as we have done so with mission work to other countries and cultures—and encourage the formation of Messianic congregations, which would be member congregations of the Synod?

Such congregations, though Jewish in flavor, should have their doors open to Gentiles because Christ "is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, . . . and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility." (Eph. 2:14-16). Sabbath laws and other Jewish customs should be non-obligatory, lest the congregation be

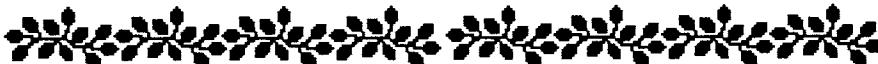
accused of repeating the Judaizing mistake of the Galatian Christians. For such congregations to become affiliated with the LCMS would be a giant step for Jewish evangelism in our denomination. Those congregations would be living examples of the unity of Jew and Gentile in Jesus.

There are an estimated 100,000 Jewish believers in the United States today, of which perhaps 30% worship in Messianic congregations. The majority of Jewish believers probably still worship in ordinary congregations. We need to preserve and

develop both options. And we must be open to a variety of patterns for Jewish missions. The Pacific Southwest District has a Missionary at Large to the Jews in Milton Kohut, a Jewish believer who speaks in churches, leads Passover seders and conducts Jewish evangelism workshops, among other activities. Moreover, many of our Lutheran congregations observe Passover Seders and regularly host presentations by missionaries to the Jews. We must be open to the creativity of the Holy Spirit as He leads us into a variety of evangelism methods, including the Messianic congregation.



## Appendix H



### Anti-Semitism, Martin Luther and Jewish People Today by Jean Kiefer

What is anti-Semitism? First, it is a misnomer. A Semite by definition is one of a people of Caucasian stock, now represented by Jews and Arabs. Thus, the word "anti-Semitism" as applied today exclusively to Jews, and not to all Semites, is inaccurate.

Menachem Begin, past prime minister of Israel, said that "anti-Semitism is a term of German invention . . . , a term that applied exclusively to the Jews, never to the Arabs although they are Semites exactly as are the Jews." Anti-Semitism is one type of prejudice. Some examples of prejudice might be: "If I have a shop, and in the process of purchasing an item from me, you get me to lower the price, you might say that you 'Lutheraned me down.' If you didn't succeed in getting the price lowered, you might say that you don't want to

deal with me anyway since I am just a 'cheap Lutheran.' If my shop isn't successful and I have a fire, you might call that 'Lutheran lightning.' And as you leave my shop, you might comment on my appearance and say that I certainly look like a Lutheran since I have a prominent beer belly."

When this kind of prejudice is aimed toward Jewish people it is called anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism is an attitude or action of suspicion and hostility toward Jewish people, a feeling or way of acting that shows that you don't like Jewish people, that you don't trust them, that you are angry or afraid of them. All of this then gives you an excuse to hurt them before they can hurt you. Jakob Jocz in his book *The Jewish People and Jesus Christ after Auschwitz* writes that anti-

Semitism is "a pathological phenomenon which is rooted in the human psyche and has to do with self-hatred." It "lives by primitive impulse" because the anti-Semite needs "to find a scapegoat for his ills."

Anti-Semitism is basically a part of our sinful nature, and it is a barrier to communicating the Gospel to Jewish people. Anti-Semitism is the name of the deep dark chasm of suspicion and fear constructed by Christians in the past and also today—a chasm that has contributed to the resistance of the Jews to the Gospel and Messiah Jesus. Anti-Semitism is everywhere—in the world, in the church and in you and me whether we recognize it or not, and it cripples and undermines our ability to witness.

In order to analyze anti-Semitism it is helpful to identify several time slots. The first time period is prior to the Protestant Reformation. At this time Jews were not considered as a second class people, but rather as something less than human. Listed below are some official acts which essentially dehumanized Jewish people during those years:

1078 Pope Gregory VII— a law forbidding Jews from holding public office anywhere in Christendom.

1189 John Lackland — during the coronation of Richard the Lion-hearted, confiscated all Jewish property.

1209 Pope Innocent III—The Council of Avignon forbade Jews and harlots from touching "bread or fruit for sale."

1215 4th Lateran Council — called Jews "enemies of heaven" and forced them to pay tithes to the church and "present as a gift" certain monies at Easter-time and wear a yellow badge to identify them as Jews (yellow also being worn as a badge by prostitutes, criminals and heretics).

1290 Edward I— issued a decree of expulsion for all Jews living in England.

1356 Aurea Bulla, or "Golden Bull," a state law of Germany that gave electors the special prerogative to keep Jews on their land and to tax them.

1394 A decree of expulsion for all Jews living in France was issued.

1412 King John II of Castille— forbade Jews to function as doctors and apothecaries.

1431 Council of Basel — no Jew could receive academic honors at any university and forbade converted Jews from intermarriage.

1492 Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain— issued a decree of expulsion for all Jews in Spain.

1496 A decree of expulsion for all Jews living in Portugal was issued.

1509 Emperor Maximilian I — decreed that all Jewish works except the Old Testament were to be destroyed.

Before we can understand the persecution of the Jews in these times, we need to have a "Medieval European mind-set." Bishop George of Speyer said in 1519: "They are not human beings, but dogs." Medieval passion plays portrayed Jews as devils with beards and the horns of a goat. Popular imagination transformed them into demons, and like other demons, they were shown in close association with creatures that symbolize lust and dirt, *viz.*, horned beasts, pigs, frogs, worms, snakes and scorpions. Satan himself was commonly given Jewish features and was referred to as "the father of the Jews."

People really believed that Jews had horns on their heads hidden under their yarmulkas. This belief even carried across the ocean to this country as evidenced in an episode of "Little House on the Prairie." The children in a Midwest town tried all kinds of schemes to get an itinerant Jewish peddler to remove his yarmulka so that they might see the horns on his head. That same kind of ignorant superstition caused people in this century to believe that heart attacks were caused by demons, and that fireflies were the souls of infants who died before baptism.

There were three main reasons for the persecution of Jewish people during the Middle Ages:

**1. Money-lending or usury.** Sometimes the whole populace — from peasant to prince — was so deeply in debt to Jewish moneylenders, that destruction of the

moneylender and the evidence was the only way out. The Christian Church prohibited Christians from loaning money (*cf.* Deut. 23:19). Jews were not under church rule so they were permitted this vocation. Also, the insecurity of their existence, the constant threat of exile, and recurring confiscation of property made owning property risky—so the Jews chose an occupation that permitted them to own an easily hidden commodity.

**2. Superstitious fear.** The Jews appeared to be a strange people with alien customs and language. They were in the vanguard of medicine. So where a Jewish physician functioned, the income of monks and lower members of the clergy from fees for relics was decreased. This aroused jealousy and hatred. Epidemics and plagues were easily blamed on the Jewish physician who had access to all kinds of substances that could poison the water supply. Medicine was not considered a profession, but an art. The art of medicine and the art of magic became Siamese twins to the medieval mind, and were viewed cautiously because they were considered almost as evil as the art of witchcraft.

Other disasters such as floods, fires and blighted crops were readily blamed on the malevolent powers of Jewish physicians. Many Jewish doctors had been educated in Jewish schools and universities in Arab countries, one of the few places where Jews could live openly without fear for life and property. Based on this friendship with the infidels who had controlled the Holy Land, Jews were barely tolerated at the best and treated with ignorance, superstition and persecution at the least. In the book *Ivanhoe*, Rebecca and her father nursed the wounded Ivanhoe from near death back to health, and even used their gold as a bribe to gain his safe conduct over the roads and later for armor, weapons and a horse for the tournament. But in spite of all that, Ivanhoe treated them shamefully and ungratefully.

**3. Religious fanaticism.** Jews were shamefully slandered in the Middle Ages. Secret rituals were reported to occur within the walls of synagogues, including the killing of Christian children so that their blood could be used in Passover rites. Stories were told how consecrated hosts had been stolen, and forced to "suffer the agonies of crucifixion by being pierced with knives." Wafers were said to have shed drops of blood when this was done. Actually, there were mold-like

organisms that formed on stale wafers kept in a dry container. The mold was scarlet, thus the "miracle" of the blood. The first instance of this on record occurred near Berlin in 1243, and a large number of Jews were burned at the stake. During Lent the "Old Crime," killing Christ, was remembered. In many places a straw "Judas" figure was burned during Holy Week. But at times, the straw symbol was not enough to satisfy the crowd's lust for blood, and then Jews themselves were persecuted. Monks and priests sold or pawned sacramental vessels, and Jews were accused of purchasing this sacred ware—again for use in secret rituals which desecrated Christ. The populace was convinced that in the synagogue, Jews worshipped Satan in the form of a cat or a toad.

Many of the prejudices and superstitions of the Middle Ages carried over into Reformation times. Some of what Luther said and wrote definitely seems anti-Semitic today. Scholars have tried to understand Luther in the context of his times. He spoke and wrote bluntly what Christians had been saying throughout the Middle Ages and even before. Let us sit with the students at Luther's table in the Black Cloister in Wittenberg, and note some of the things Luther said.

One frequent quote is: "The Jews are the most miserable people on earth. They are plagued everywhere and scattered about all countries, having no certain resting place. They sit as on a wheelbarrow, without a country, people or government." With biting witicism Luther related how Duke Albert of Saxony punished a certain Jewish rogue who came to him to sell a talisman that supposedly would protect against sword and dagger. The Duke hung the talisman around the Jew's neck, then ran the poor creature through with his sword saying, "Thou feelest, Jew, how it would have been with me, had I purchased thy talisman."

Luther told the tale of a rich Jew on his deathbed, who ordered that his remains should be conveyed to a distant city. His friends, knowing that even the corpse of a Jew could not travel without paying heavy toll, devised the scheme of packing the body in a barrel of wine, which they then forwarded in the ordinary way. The wagoners, not knowing what lay within, tapped the barrel, and, according to Luther, "Swilled away right joyously, till they found out that they had been drinking

Jew's pickle. You may imagine how it fared with them!"

Sometimes a more bitter spirit was heard under the gay banter. Once the subject came up of how the Jews mocked Christianity. A table companion asked Luther if it were possible to give a "colaphum" or cuff to a mocking Jew if a person happened to be alone with him. Luther said he was prepared to slap him across the mouth in his anger and even to run him through with his sword if he could.

Once someone remarked that the nobility and the wealthy favored Jewish physicians because they were more skillful than the German Christian physicians. Luther burst out with, "The devil can bring great things about!" And in relation to money lending, Luther was reported to have shouted, "Let those ne'er-do-wells be rightly banished for their impenitence and their usury." In his book *On the Jews and Their Lies* he commented, "when a thief snatches ten gulden he is hanged, and if he commits highway robbery, he is beheaded. But when a Jew through his usury steals and robs ten tons of gold, he still is dearer than God himself." Luther also averred that the Jews were "veritable liars and blood-hounds" since they twisted about the whole Bible.

While we today agree that Luther certainly seemed to be an anti-Semite, Jews looked at him in a different light for almost twenty years. There had been some peaceful mission work among the Jews in England before their expulsion in 1290, and on the Continent it was customary to discuss the Christian religion with Jews in their business houses and homes. But, paradoxically, in spite of his anti-Semitic statements, it was Luther who became known as the father of Protestant Jewish missions.

In 1523 he wrote the book *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew*, hoping that some Jews might be "enticed to the Christian faith." In one year's time it appeared in 10 editions in German and two in Latin, and was received with enthusiasm by Jewish readers throughout Europe. Jews widely circulated Luther's book, sending copies to Spain in the west and as far as the Holy Land in the east. Some Jewish people even hailed Luther's work as a prophetic sign of the coming of the Messiah. In conversations with rabbis many theological problems that were stumbling blocks for the Jews were discussed, and rabbis assisted Luther in his translation of the Old

Testament. Luther originated the idea of using converted Jews in winning other Jews to Christ. Because of his pro-Jewish stance in his early years, Luther's papist enemies branded him a Jew, or a half-Jew. Luther's early liberal attitude toward the Jews influenced some German rulers to grant them certain rights.

However, around the year 1536, Luther's attitude began to change. Three Jewish teachers came to Wittenberg to discuss the interpretation of Old Testament Messianic passages, and there was little agreement. Luther indicated that dialogue seemed almost useless. He saw obstinate rabbinic views as another form of the "lies" of the Jews and called it willful blindness. Luther refused to intervene in 1536 when Jews were banished from the lands of John Frederick, the elector of Saxony. In a letter to Rabbi Josel of Rosheim, Luther gave as his excuse that the Jews "were committing such deeds as we Christians could not countenance on their part," alluding to the fact that some Moravian Jews had persuaded a few Christians to believe that Christ had not yet come, that the Mosaic law was to remain in force forever, and that the Gentiles would accept it also.

Indeed, a few Christians had joined the Jews and had even been circumcised. They observed Saturday instead of Sunday, and called themselves "Sabbatarians." Luther was furious. In 1538, he wrote an open letter titled *Against the Sabbatarians*. The rabbis answered with a pamphlet in which two characters, one Jewish and the other Christian, converse--and the Christian faith is proved false. Count Wolfgang Schlick zu Falenau sent a copy of this booklet to Luther in May of 1542 with a request that he refute it. Not surprisingly, Luther took the challenge and wrote the book *On the Jews and Their Lies*, which was completed in 1543.

It was at this point that Luther advocated his "Seven Point Program," his "final solution," for dealing with the Jews. He advocated setting fire to synagogues and schools, the razing and destruction of Jewish homes, the confiscation of Jewish prayer books and Talmudic writings, the forbidding of rabbis to teach, the abolishing of safe conduct on the highways for Jews, the confiscation of Jewish money, and the reduction of the Jewish people to menial labor.

Should we consider these "seven points" as original ideas of Luther? Not at all. In

1509 Johannes Pfefferkorn, a German Jew who had become a Dominican Christian in 1505, had written *The Foe of the Jews* in which he advocated forcing Jews into occupations of menial labor. He also stated that the Jews should be made to give up their books even if torture had to be used. This idea was not original with Pfefferkorn either, and can be traced back to Dominican writings as early as 1264. In 1512-13 Pfefferkorn wrote *The Brand-mirror*, in which he stated that the property of the Jews was to be confiscated and given to the poor and the sick and to monasteries.

In 1539 Martin Bucer, another Protestant reformer, wrote a treatise titled *On the Jews* which stated that no new synagogues were to be built, that Jews were to refrain from insulting Christianity, that they were to be compelled to hear Christian sermons, that they publicly retract whatever the Talmud had added to the Scriptures, that they be barred from all business activity, and that they be assigned to do menial tasks. The overlap between Bucer's writings of 1539 and Luther's work of 1543 is obvious, although Bucer's program was moderate compared to Luther's.

In 1541 John Eck wrote a treatise called *Refutation of a Jew Book*, which was similar in content to Luther's book. We conclude then that Luther's "final solution" was only a later version of many "final solutions" which were presented during this fast-moving period of reform. Luther, like the reformer Ulrich Zasius, a German Catholic humanist who had proposed just such a solution in 1508, agreed with the other reformers that all of this should be done legally and in an orderly fashion, not as a result of mob action. Luther's motive for writing *On the Jews and Their Lies* was primarily theological. He wrote this infamous book as a warning to Christians against Jewish misuse of the Old Testament, and as Jewish missions material. He actually called it a "mission epistle."

In 1531 Luther had written a tract, "Luther's Warning to his Dear German People," in which he justified the use of force against the pope or the emperor if they should reject the promise of the Gospel that we are right with God by faith in Christ alone rather than by good works. To him the Gospel was always the issue, and Christ must be glorified no matter what the consequences. If Luther could justify on paper the use of force against the pope or emperor, it should not surprise us that he could justify on paper the

use of force against reluctant Jews. When Luther translated Luke 14:23 where Jesus says, "Compel them to come in," Luther apparently felt that the Jews should literally be forced to come in! Martin Bucer believed the same way, and wrote in his book *On the Jews*:

"If those in authority who have been born and baptized as members of Christ would see to it that everybody was forced into godliness, the good God would lay the question to their hearts how they could lead to Christ such as had been strangers to Him from birth, like Jews, Turks and pagans."

Bucer favored allowing the Jews to remain in Germany and to force them to attend Christian worship (which was to be arranged specifically for them). It was his hope that at least a few of them would be converted. This idea was not new. As early as 1434, at the Council of Basel, such a decision had been made.

Bucer's and Luther's idea about "compelling them to come in" was put into effect in Hesse in 1543 when the Landgrave decreed that the Jews and their wives and children over eight years old were to attend all church services and listen diligently to the Word of God. The rectors of churches, the curates and beadles were to see to it that if the Jews neglected to attend worship, they were to report it to the authorities.

Such harsh decrees were reissued by church authorities as late as the time of Pope Pius VII (1800-1823) and Pope Leo XII (1823-1829). During the reign of Pope Pius VII it is documented that 300 Jews were required to come each Saturday from the Roman ghetto to listen to a Christian sermon.

Scholars, embarrassed by Luther's anti-Semitic utterances and writings, have suggested various "excuses," such as "his nerves being at times overwrought" because of being on "death row" or that there were Jewish death plots against him.

Other theories about Luther include: frustration with competing splinter groups among Protestants, Judaizing tendencies among Eastern Protestants, deep disappointment with Jewish reluctance to accept Christ, and Luther's declining health— which included gallstones, kidney stones, depressions, headaches, angina and various psychosomatic ailments.

Luther must be understood in historical context. He could not visualize a pluralistic society in which people live together but still have differing faiths. Luther has been called an angry man, and it has been said that anger was Luther's "special sin." He has been quoted as saying, "Anger refreshes all my blood, sharpens my mind, and drives away temptations." Luther violently and abusively attacked the Roman Church, and his attacks on other Protestants and the Turks were only slightly more restrained. Luther scholar Jaroslav Pelikan says that Luther "loved a good fight."

One surprising explanation for Luther's change of attitude toward the Jews from 1523 when he advocated "dealing gently" with them to the later Luther is that he did not undergo such a great change in his attitude toward the Jews as has commonly been thought. Wilhelm Maurer has shown that Luther's earliest lectures on the Psalms of 1513-1515 already contained in essence all of his later charges against the Jews. In these lectures Luther asserts that the Jews: suffer continually under God's wrath; are paying the penalty for their rejection of Christ; spend all their efforts in self-justification but God will not hear their prayers; neither kindness nor severity will improve them since they become more stubborn and vain; are active enemies of Christ and blaspheme and defame him, spreading their evil influence even into Christian hearts; and forsake the Word of God and follow the imaginations of their hearts. Luther concludes that it would be quite wrong for Christians to extend tolerance to those with such views! Luther expressed similar sentiments in his *Lectures on Romans* of 1515-1516.

Luther was very much the son of medieval Christendom, a part of the times, regardless of the reason for his sinful attitude toward the Jews. But this neither whitewashes nor exonerates him from the charge that he was a 16th century anti-Semite. Quite clearly, he was! Fortunately, Luther's Seven Point Program did not meet with favorable response from his peers, or from the authorities. The book *On the Jews and Their Lies* sold fewer copies than his earlier book *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew*. In no case were his suggestions for burning synagogues, razing houses and seizing books followed. One writer states that had Luther been serious about burning synagogues, the students in Wittenberg would have done this unquestioningly. In Neumark the right of safe-conduct of Jews was withdrawn,

and also in electoral Saxony where elector John Frederick revoked certain concessions he had made to the Jews in 1539. John Frederick specifically cited Luther's writings for having alerted him to the Jewish problem. Philip of Hesse also introduced new measures prohibiting Jews from engaging in money lending, and requiring them to attend Christian sermons. The immediate effect of Luther's proposals was small.

However, a later century refined them and applied them on a massive scale. Past Prime Minister of Israel, Menachem Begin, was quoted as saying in 1980 at a gathering of Holocaust survivors in Jerusalem that Luther's advice concerning the Jews in the 16th century was later carried out by Hitler and the Nazis.

Let us investigate this statement to some extent. In 1919, Hitler prepared an official party program made up of 25 points and has been quoted as saying: "These points of ours are going to rival Luther's placard on the doors of Wittenberg!" In February 1920, Hitler presented this 25-point program to almost 2,000 people jammed in the Festsaal of the Hofbrauhaus in Munich. Not one of these 25 points was in the best interests of the Jews. Jews were to be treated as aliens, they were to be denied the right to hold any public office, they were to be deported if the state found it impossible to feed its entire population, and they were to be expelled immediately if they had emigrated to Germany after August 2, 1914.

John Toland in his two-volume biography of Hitler wrote: "Martin Luther and all the other anti-Semites before Hitler merely talked of eliminating the Jews, but with his new blueprint for the future he hoped to materialize their dream. . . and become Haman II." In 1939 Hitler had prophesied that the Jews would be destroyed. In 1941, Hitler's "Final Solution" came into public notice: deportation to the East to Auschwitz in Poland near the German border for all Jewish people. The Holocaust had officially begun.

In her book *The War Against the Jews 1933-1945*, Jewish author Lucy Dawidowicz concludes: "A line of anti-Semitic descent from Martin Luther to Adolf Hitler is easy to draw. . . Modern German anti-Semitism was the bastard child of the union of Christian anti-Semitism with German nationalism." The world and the church did look on in silence as 6 million Jews, of which two million were children

under the age of 15, were slaughtered during the Holocaust. Additional millions of non-Jews, classified as "undesirables," were persecuted for what they believed, said or did. Only Jews suffered for simply existing. Lutherans are said to "bear a special kind of burden vis-a-vis the Jewish people because the birthplace of Lutheranism is the graveyard of millions of Jews." It is not surprising to find it documented that several of Hitler's lieutenants tried to defend themselves before the Nuremberg tribunal by appealing to Luther's writings.

In 1948 the State of Israel rose like a phoenix out of the ashes of the Holocaust. World Christendom, and especially the Lutheran Christians, reexamined their relationship with the Jewish people, and the barriers of misunderstanding and prejudice which they had erected over the centuries. In 1964, the Department of World Mission of the Lutheran World Federation convened in Logumkloster, Denmark, and issued the document "On the Church and the Jewish People." This document said:

"Christian anti-Semitism is spiritual suicide.... No Christian can exempt himself from involvement in this guilt. As Lutherans, we confess our own peculiar guilt, and we lament with shame the responsibility which our Church and her people bear for this sin. We can only ask God's pardon and that of the Jewish people."

Arthur Gilbert, the first official Jewish participant at this meeting, wrote in his report that although the contributions of Martin Luther to Jew hatred were documented, and the Lutheran Church was called upon to disassociate itself from, and repudiate those aspects of Luther's teachings, the consultation was not ready to denounce Martin Luther specifically. However, he did conclude his report with the statement:

"The courage of these Lutherans, the first Protestant denomination to explore this issue in such depth, is to be applauded. They have marked out a path for others to follow. The time is long overdue."

As the 500th anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther approached in 1983, many others did explore the relationship of Jews and Lutherans. One Jewish newspaper published an article stating that

while Jewish publications do not usually take note of anniversaries of Christian theologians, the case of Martin Luther was an exception. They wrote that they declined to honor Martin Luther during his 500th anniversary year because he was the "first and among the most powerful of the anti-Semitic pollutants that poisoned German society." The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith reexamined and reinterpreted Martin Luther's relations with the Jews in a special edition of their interreligious quarterly, *Face to Face*, issued to mark the 500th anniversary of Luther's birth. In two articles written by Christians and two by Jews, Luther's anti-Semitic writings were analyzed with particular emphasis on the influence his preaching had upon the Nazi plan to exterminate the Jewish people.

On a more positive note, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod met in convention in 1983 in St. Louis and adopted Resolution 3-09 "To Clarify Position on Anti-Semitism." This resolution said:

"We condemn any and all discrimination against others on account of race or religion... we reaffirm that the basis of our doctrine and practice are the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions and not Luther as such... We deplore and disassociate ourselves from Luther's negative statements about the Jewish people... and we personally and individually adopt Luther's final attitude toward the Jewish people, as evidenced in his last sermon: 'We want to treat them with Christian love and to pray for them, so that they might become converted and would receive the Lord.'"

In that same year of 1983 the Lutheran World Federation and the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations co-sponsored a conference in Stockholm, Sweden, on "Martin Luther, the Jews, and Anti-Semitism." The conference pledged that the writings of Martin Luther "will never again serve in our churches as a source for the teaching of hatred for Judaism and the denigration of the Jewish people." Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, National Interreligious Director of the American Jewish Committee, hailed the LWF declaration that repudiated "the sins of Luther's anti-Jewish remarks... and his violent verbal attacks against Jews" as one of the most significant achievements of Luther's birthday observances.

A joint statement issued by Lutheran and Jewish spokesmen at that conference "also declared the far-reaching agreement that 'we affirm the integrity of our two faith communities and repudiate any organized proselytizing of each other.'" It further acknowledged "with deep regret that Luther had been used to justify anti-Semitism and the Nazi period" and that "his writings lent themselves to such abuse." It should be noted that The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod was not at that time, and is not at present, a member denomination of the Lutheran World Federation.

In reaction to the resolution adopted in 1983 by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Jewish leaders "welcomed the renunciation of Luther's anti-Semitism while expressing regret that the resolution contained the hope that Lutherans might seek to gain converts among the Jewish people." It is important to note the difference between the LCMS resolution and the joint statement issued by the Lutheran and Jewish spokesmen at the LWF 1983 Stockholm meeting in which they "affirm the integrity of our two faith communities and repudiate any organized proselytizing of each other." This statement means no sharing of the Gospel with Jews. The LCMS resolution specifically states "WHEREAS, it is plain from Scripture that the Gospel must be proclaimed to all people—that is, to Jews also, no more and no less than to others (Mt. 28:18-20)."

Yes, we must be confident and unashamed of the Gospel. Some Jews who also are capable of unfair prejudice (which might be called anti-Christianism) would obviously prefer that Christians give up their faith in Jesus Christ as the incarnate Son of God and only redeemer of both Jew and Gentile. They apply the label of anti-Semitism even to the Christian's acceptance of biblical teachings which we hold to be the Word of God. Obviously, Christians who are true to their Lord and His Word will not be intimidated or prompted to a greater love of Jewish people by a labelling of New Testament teachings and belief in them as anti-Semitic.

Some Jewish people perceive a presentation of the Gospel as anti-Semitic, yet Jesus commanded us to go and take the Gospel to all the world. Rather, we should consider it anti-Semitic to withhold the Gospel, for how shall they find eternal life apart from Jesus? Let us make the "Jewish problem" a "Christian problem,"

and personally and individually adopt Luther's final attitude toward the Jewish people as evidenced in his last sermon: "We want to treat them with Christian love and to pray for them so that they might become converted and would receive the Lord."

Finally, I would like you to remember a quotation from Jakob Jocz's book *The Jewish People and Jesus Christ*: "God is no respecter of persons. Before Him, the Holy One, men stand not as Jews and Gentiles but as sinners who are in need of grace."

We conclude with the following:

1. Martin Luther definitely was a 16th century anti-Semite.
2. His anti-Semitic writings had only minimal effects on 16th-century Germany.
3. Because Luther was one of the most well-known of the German reformers, his anti-Semitic writings have been blamed for forming the foundation of Hitler built his program against the Jews.
4. Hitler researched Luther, quoted Luther, and patterned some of his ways after Luther.
5. Luther's writings are known to the Jews. In the past the Jewish people used them as a barrier against Christian witness. This barrier has finally been removed, and now we are free to "take the Gospel to all the world."



Jean Kiefer is a member of the LCMS Task Force on Witnessing to Jewish People, and a member of the Board of Directors of Lutherans in Jewish Evangelism. She lectures on the topic of anti-Semitism.

