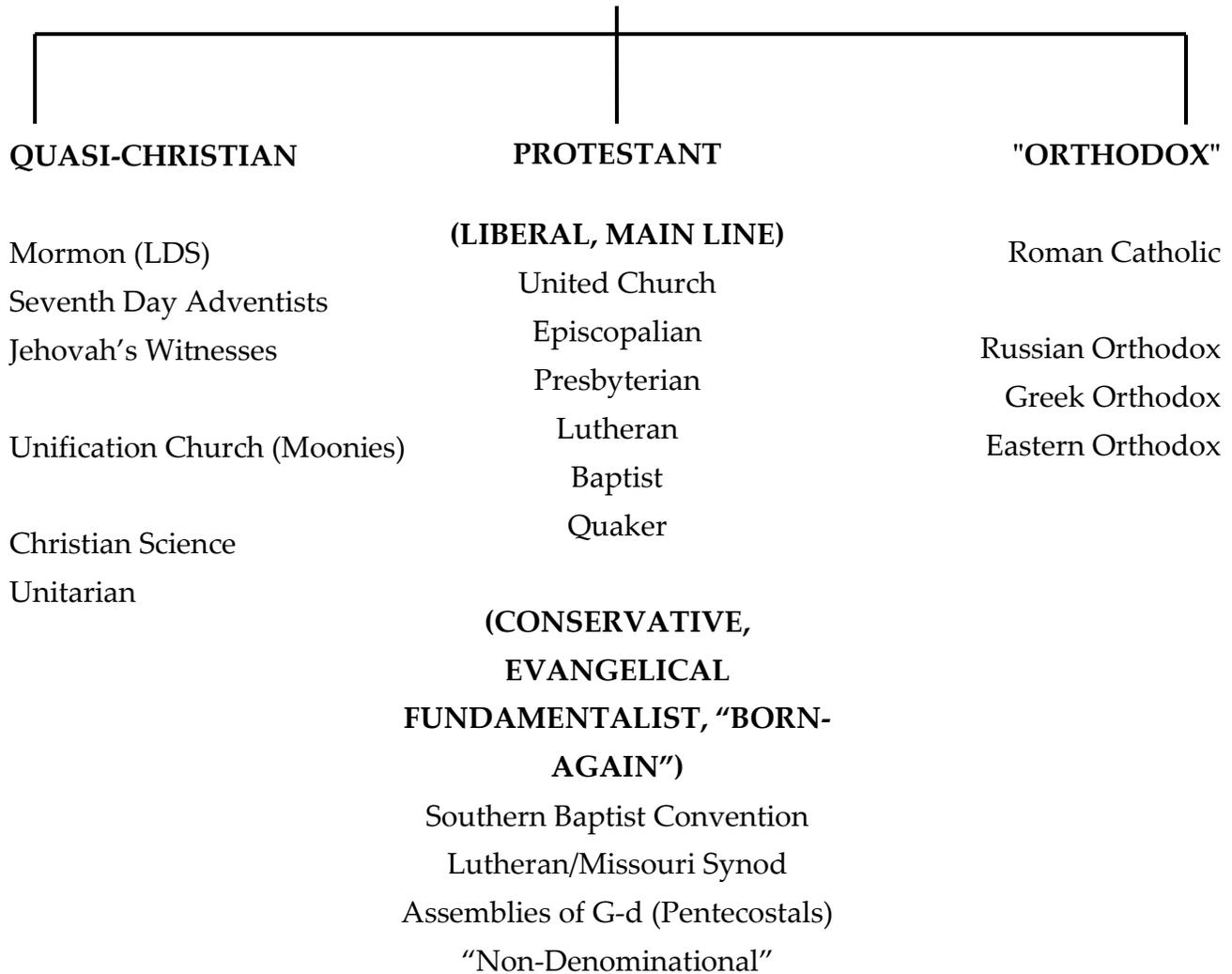




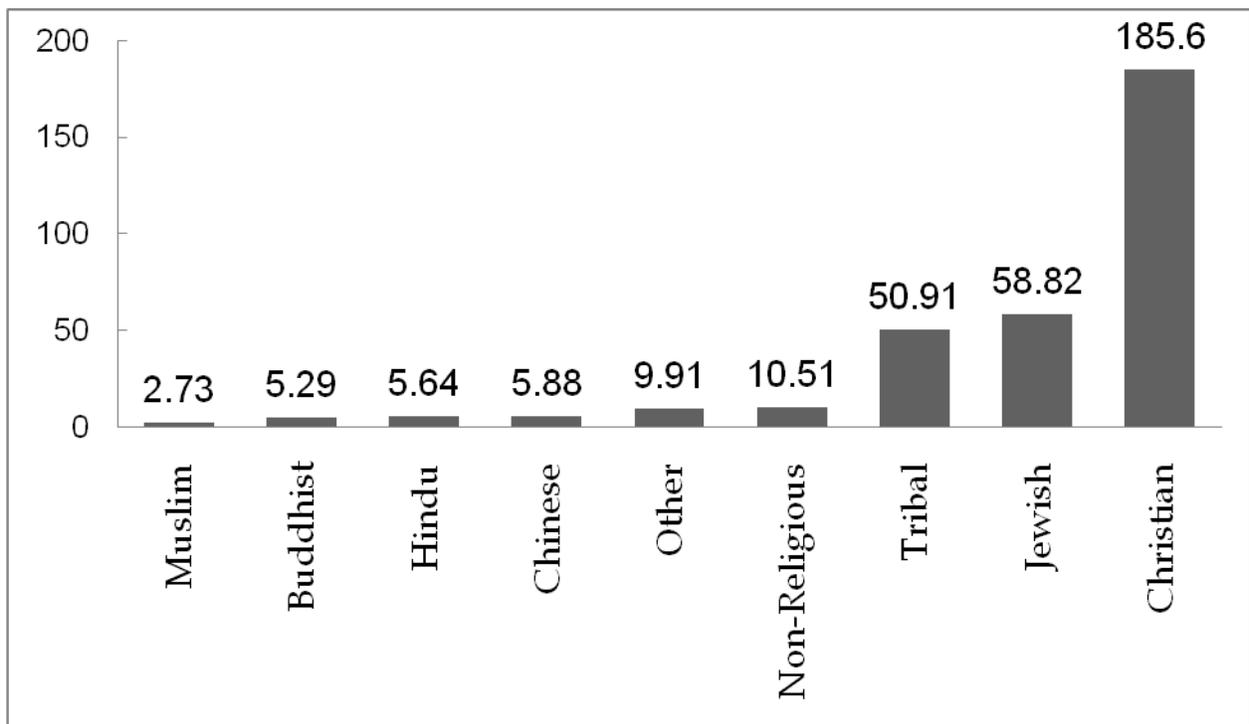
**COUNTER-MISSIONARY
SURVIVAL SEMINAR**

**Session 1:
The Battle for the Jewish Soul**

CHRISTIANITY



Number of Foreign Missionaries Per Million in Major Cultural Blocs



Source: Todd M. Johnson

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THE OBSESSION TO CONVERT THE JEWISH PEOPLE

JOHN 3:16

For god so loved the world that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish, but may have eternal life.

JOHN 14:6

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the father, but through me."

MATTHEW 4:18-19

¹⁸ And walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ And he said to them, "**Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.**"

MATTHEW 28:18-19

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and **make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the father and of the son and of the holy spirit."

EVANGELISTIC CAMPAIGN

Church Mails

Tract to Millions

When you check your mailbox next month, you will find a multicolored booklet with a red, white, and blue logo, if all goes as planned for Sycamore Church of Christ of Cookeville, Tennessee. The 530-member church has targeted 100 million American homes to receive the eight-page booklet, entitled *One Nation Under God*, with the message "Jesus Christ is the solution to the world's problems."

Campaign organizers say it is the single largest mailing ever to be distributed by the U.S. Postal Service. (A few years ago a U.S. Government brochure on AIDS reached 86 million homes.) In addition, 44 television stations and four satellite networks, with a potential audience of 135 million, will air an hour-long special containing the same evangelistic message, produced by the Christian Satellite Network in Dallas.

By late May, the campaign, spearheaded by millionaire businessman Horace Burks, a deacon in the Cookeville church, had \$6.3 million of its \$9 million goal. Burks's church has donated \$200,000, and the church's members are prepared to mortgage their church building and their homes for the campaign, he says. At least 800 other autonomous Churches of Christ congregations have also pitched in. "Some supporters have even sold stamp collections, livestock, and household goods to help out," says Burks.

The \$6 million raised thus far will cover TV air time, production costs, and postage for mailing to at least 60 million homes, Burks says. The remaining homes will get their booklets throughout July as additional money comes in. A 24-hour 800 phone number will give free information and offer a Bible correspondence course.

DO YOU HAVE TO BE JEWISH TO BE OK WITH G-D?

- **The righteous of all nations will have a share in the world of eternal bliss.** (Tosefta Sanhedrin, XIII:2)
- If a pagan prays and evokes G-d's name, Amen must be said (Jerusalem, Berachot 8).
- Antonius once asked Rabbi Judah the prince, "Will I have a share in the world to come?" To which the later answered "Yes." But is it not written (Obadiah 1:8): "Nothing will remain in the house of Esau?" "true," Rabbi Judah answered, "but only if they do the deeds of Esau." (Avodah Zarah, 10b)
- The Midrash (Numbers Rabba, 8) says: "No one can become a Kohen or a Levite unless he is so born. But if anyone wishes to become a holy and religious man, he can do so even though he is a pagan. Kindness, holiness and piety are not hereditary and are not the possession of an exclusive race or nation. Justice and piety are acquired through one's own deeds."
- Moses Maimonides (Mishna Torah, Hilchot Shemitah) says: "Not only the Jew is sacred, but everyone who is loyal to G-d and walks in the path of righteousness has in himself some particle of the Divinity and G-d will provide for him in time of need, as he provided for the Kohen and the Levite in days of yore."
- **Heaven and earth I call to be witnesses, be it non-Jew or Jew, man or woman, man-servant or maid-servant, according to the work of every human being does the holy spirit rest upon him** (Yalkut, Section 42)
- Whether Israelite or heathen if he only executes a righteous deed, G-d will recompense him for it. (Tanna Debe Eliyahu, Section 13)

Non-Believers are Doomed to Eternal Damnation:

- MARK 16:16** He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believes not shall be damned.
- JOHN 3:36** He that believes in the son will have everlasting life, and he that doesn't believe the son shall not see life, but the wrath of god abides in him.
- LUKE 19:27** And those enemies of mine who didn't want me to be king over them, bring them here and slay them in my presence.
- II THES. 1:8-9** ⁸ Bringing judgement on those who don't know god and on those who refuse to obey the good news of our lord Jesus, ⁹ they will be punished with everlasting destruction, forever separated from the lord...
- REVELATION 21:8** But those who turn away from me, and unbelievers...their doom is in the lake of fire.

The first day that I started as a full-time missionary, Mitch Triestman drove me to a Jewish cemetery in Philadelphia. We got out of the car and walked up to the fence. I couldn't help but notice the many tombstones with common Jewish last names; many had the star of David on them. At that point Mitch asked me a question that I'll never forget! He said, "Tom, how many of these Jewish people do you think died without knowing the Lord?" It was if a magnet drew my eyes and now my heart with them back to gaze at the tombstones once again. I shuddered at the very thought of what his words meant. At the same time however, I suddenly found myself feeling very fortunate to be saved. Without even waiting for my answer (I was speechless anyhow), Mitch then turned to me and said, "Well, then I guess we still have a lot of work to do." Yes, we do Mitch!

(From *To The Jew First – A Textbook on Jewish Evangelism*, by Mitch Triestman, from the Forward by Tom Huckle)

The Jewish People are G-d's Chosen:

- GENESIS 12:3** And I will bless those who bless you (Abraham and his descendants), and those who curse you, I will curse.
- EXODUS 19:5** ...you will be a special treasure unto Me above all peoples.
- DEUTERONOMY 7:6** For you are a holy people to the L-rd your G-d; the L-rd your G-d has chosen you to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.
- PSALMS 135:4** For the L-rd has chosen Jacob unto Himself, and Israel for His special treasure.
- ZECHARIAH 2:8** ...he who touches you (Israel) touches the apple of His eye.
See also Deuteronomy 32:10

From the Christian Scriptures:

- ROMANS 11:28** As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes, but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sake.
- ROMANS 3:1-2** ¹What advantage then, has the Jew? Or what profit is there of circumcision? ²Much every way- chiefly, because unto them were committed the oracles of god.
- ROMANS 9:4** ...the Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the law and the temple service and the promises...

MATTHEW 10:5-6

⁵ These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: **"Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans. ⁶ But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.**

MATTHEW 15:21-28

²¹ Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²² Just then a Canaanite woman from the region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, lord, son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon."
²³ But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." ²⁴ He answered, "I

was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." ²⁵ But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." ²⁶ He answered, **"It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs."** ²⁷ She said, Yes, lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." ²⁸ The Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed instantly.

ROMANS 1:16

For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of god for salvation to everyone who has faith, **to the Jew first and also to the Greek.**

MATTHEW 23:39

For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the L-rd."

"The fact that Yeshua will not return until Israel receives national salvation is a powerful motivator for evangelizing Jewish people; in fact Jewish evangelism can hasten his coming."

David Stern, Jewish New Testament Commentary Page 71-72

THE TRUE BELIEVER by Eric Hoffer

Whence comes the impulse to proselytize?

Intensity of conviction is not the main factor which impels a movement to spread its faith to the four corners of the earth: "religions of great intensity often

confine themselves to condemning, destroying, or at best pitying what is not themselves." Nor is the impulse to proselytize an expression of an overabundance of power which as Bacon has it "is like a great flood, that

will be sure to overflow." The missionary zeal seems rather an expression of some deep misgivings, some pressing feeling of insufficiency at the center. Proselytizing is more a passionate search for something not yet found than a desire to bestow upon the world something we already have. It is a search for a final and irrefutable demonstration that our absolute truth is indeed the one and only truth. The proselytizing fanatic strengthens his own faith by converting others. The creed whose legitimacy is most easily challenged is likely to develop the strongest proselytizing impulse. It is doubtful whether a movement which does not profess some preposterous and patently irrational dogma can be possessed of that zealous drive which "must either win men or destroy the world." It is also plausible that those movements with the greatest inner contradictions between profession and practice - that is to say with a strong feeling of guilt - are likely to be the most fervent in imposing their faith on others.

The more unworkable communism proves in Russia, and the more its leaders are compelled to compromise and adulterate the original creed, the more brazen and arrogant will be their attack on a non believing world. The slaveholders of the South became the more aggressive in spreading their way of life the more it became patent that their position was untenable in a modern world. If free enterprise becomes a proselytizing holy cause, it will be a sign that its workability and advantages have ceased to be self-evident.

The passion for proselytizing and the passion for world dominion are both perhaps symptoms of some serious deficiency at the center. It is probably as true of a band of apostles or conquistadors as it is of a band of fugitives setting out for a distant land that they escape from an untenable situation at home. And how often indeed do three meet, mingle and exchange their parts.

II CORINTHIANS 3:13-15

¹³ Unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. ¹⁴ But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. ¹⁵ But even to this day,

when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart.

II CORINTHIANS 4:3-4

³ But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴ whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ,

who is the image of God, should shine on them.

ROMANS 11:7

What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

ROMANS 11:25

For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has

happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

ACTS 9:17-18

¹⁷ And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸ Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.

"The Devil and the Jews"

Joshua Tachtenberg, pgs. 15-18

Medieval Christendom was so firmly convinced of the incontestable truth of its own tradition and teaching that it could conceive of no rival truth. Curious as this may seem, there is overwhelming evidence that the Catholic world believed that the Jew himself recognized the truth of Christian doctrine!

According to this view, the Jews knew that the coming of Jesus was foretold in Scripture, even though they stubbornly denied this. To the Christian the conventional interpretation of Scripture was the only possible and sensible one; the Jewish interpretation could not therefore fail to seem the product either of wilful misunderstanding or falsification. Jerome and other early Church Fathers frequently complained that the Jewish teachers consciously and deliberately perverted the meaning of the original text, and Justinian went so far as to embody this complaint in law, requiring the reading of the Torah in the synagogues in a language comprehensible to the hearers, and forbidding the customary explanation that followed the reading: "Thus there shall be no opportunity to their

interpreters, who make use only of the Hebrew, to corrupt it in any way they like, since the ignorance of the public conceals their depravity." Medieval scholars did not hesitate to impute to Jews even the crime of tampering with the text of the Bible in an effort to destroy its Christological meaning. One fifteenth-century writer adopted the conspiratorial theme and told how the rabbis "assembled in great multitudes at the Babylon of Egypt, which is called Cairo, where they, with as much secrecy as possible, falsified and corrupted the Scriptures. . . ." Martin Luther frequently exploded in bitter and even foul denunciation of the Jews for what he considered their wilful refusal to acknowledge the plain sense of the text."

The Jews, moreover, had actually witnessed the events attendant upon the Passion of Christ, and if they perversely denied what their own eyes had beheld, at least one of the eyewitnesses had been providentially preserved to give them the lie direct with his living testimony of the correctness of the Christian tradition, and of the truth and power of the

word of Christ. It was in the thirteenth century that news of the Wandering Jew, who had taunted Jesus on the way to the crucifixion and had been told by him to "go on forever till I return," first reached Europe. In 1228 an Armenian archbishop, who was visiting St. Albans in England, reported that this character, Joseph Cartaphilus by name, lived and was widely renowned in the Orient; and in 1252 this statement was confirmed by other Armenian pilgrims to the same monastery." This information was promptly recognized and hailed as a most weighty proof of the truth of Christianity, and continental writers did not fail to apply its full apologetic force against Jews and heretics. Stories of his odd experience multiplied. In most of the accounts the Wandering Jew had forsaken his false faith and adopted the true faith of Jesus, in contrast to the obduracy of his fellow Jews; several versions, however, have him remain a Jew, refusing to acknowledge through baptism the truth to which his own unique career testified, and thus typifying the attitude of all Jews.

Christians were convinced that the later Jewish literature contained proofs and admissions of the truth of Christianity. The Jews, it was widely believed, had attempted to disguise or delete such passages—an open confession, of course, of their damaging existence! Nor was this all. The charge of mutilation of the host by Jews rested upon the belief that they too accepted the dogma of transubstantiation, the most peculiarly sectarian of Christian dogmas. Marlowe's Jew of Malta even swears by the *Corpo di Dio!* The plenitude of miracles that accompanied alleged Jewish criminal acts against Christianity, such as the mutilation of the host and of images of Jesus and the saints, as well as the so-called ritual murders, were constant and inescapable evidence which the Jews presumably could not deny (though they did). Several times, indeed, pious Jews are represented in the miracle dramas as acknowledging the miracle-working powers of St. Nicholas and revering his image.

Obviously, then, the refusal of the Jew to identify himself with Christendom in the face

of such apparently conclusive evidence that he was aware of the truth of its religious position perplexed and enraged the pious Christian. As Cecil Roth points out in his recent study of the problem, "the medieval mind was as keen, as logical and as eminently reasonable as is ours." It demanded and found—an explanation of this seemingly inexplicable behavior, an explanation which accounts for the intense emotional antipathy that has ever since characterized Christian-Jewish relations.

What was this answer? Roth's too-ready acceptance of the usual view that Catholic Europe ascribed the bigotry of the Jew to sheer perversity and stubbornness leaves something to be desired. If his postulate of the reasonableness of the medieval mind is correct, as undoubtedly it is, then it is strange indeed that "such a mind should ascribe to a group of people a type of psychology which is contrary to all human experience." It is an explanation which cannot satisfy us, and therefore we may assume that it did not satisfy medieval Europe either.

We must seek further. That Jews were possessed of the spirit of perversity and stubbornness the medieval mind did not doubt. But whence came that spirit? How was it that the psychology of the Jews should be contrary to all human experience? The answer was that the Jew was *not* human—not in the sense that the Christian was. He was a creature of an altogether different nature, of whom normal human reactions could not be expected. "Really I doubt whether a Jew can be human for he will neither yield to human reasoning, nor find satisfaction in authoritative utterances, alike divine and Jewish," protested Peter the Venerable of Cluny. What then? He was the devil's creature! Not a human being but a demonic, a diabolic beast fighting the forces of truth and salvation with Satan's weapons, was the Jew as medieval Europe saw him. One might as soon expect the devil himself to submit of his own free will to Christ, as the Jew. And against such a foe no well of hatred was too deep, no war of extermination effective enough until the world was rid of his menace.

"After all, unconverted Jews make Christians wonder if perhaps Jesus is not the Messiah after all."

James Christison
Former General Secretary
American Baptist Churches National Mission Society
PRESENT TENSE interview with
Rabbi James Rudin

"By standing with the Jewish people in love and support, we can provoke them to jealousy, as the apostle Paul said, so as to win them to Christ. Not by cramming the Gospel down their throats, but by showing that our faith produces fruitful works. I have told the Jewish agencies that we're not an evangelical group as such, and this is true. We are not actively trying to win Jews over to Christ - but by taking this stand, the Jewish people don't run away from us, and we are able to witness to them indirectly."

Joe Dean
Founder, Christians for Israel
NATIONAL COURIER
December 10, 1975

The New Trojan Horse

Rabbi Michael Skobac

(*The Jewish Press*, Friday, May 24, 1991, p. 72)

It's the Jewish problem. At conferences and meetings throughout the world, evangelical Christians have been pondering their abysmal lack of success in converting us. Hampered by their spiritual nearsightedness however, they have difficulty imagining that we have any substantive objections to their religious claims. Consequently, most of these Christians have opted for convenient rationalizations to resolve their frustrating dilemma. One of the more popular theories offered up suggests that Jewish people, because of their tragic history, have become prejudiced against Christianity. They sense that their product is suffering from an image problem.

Missionaries posit that etched into the consciousness of contemporary Jewry is the collective memory of centuries of Christian anti-Semitism. Generations of Jews have experienced the horrors of the Crusades, Inquisitions, pogroms, and the Holocaust. Of course, evangelicals dismiss these atrocities as misdeeds committed by nominal Christians who were not "real" followers of the Nazarene.

Clearly though, this thesis of Jewish victimization fails to adequately answer the question at hand. In reality, the Jewish people 2000 years ago didn't reject J... because he was anti-Semitic. Rather, he was ignored by the Jews of this time because his project was a non-starter. He wasn't the Messiah; and all the Christian love in the world won't make him the Messiah.

Lamentably, many Jewish people today are incapable of articulating what lies behind their knee-jerk reflex that "Jews don't believe in J..." When missionaries probe this defensive posture, they rarely meet with anything more than "well, we just don't." This superficiality may be what prompts the conventional missionary wisdom that Jewish resistance to conversion simply stems from their negative associations with Christianity.

Into the breach steps Dr. Frank Eiklor, director of an organization called Shalom International. Like many similar outfits, Eiklor's group works tirelessly fighting anti-Semitism and drumming up support for the State of Israel. Shalom International has set up a Task Force to take on neo-Nazis, skinheads, and historical revisionists.

When a Los Angeles synagogue was burned to the ground in January, Eiklor dispatched a contingent of born-again motorcyclists to stand guard outside the congregation's temporary quarters during Shabbat services. Shalom International has sponsored rallies of solidarity with the State of Israel, and recently returned from the Holy Land after several weeks of volunteer work.

Shalom International's activities have won them many friends and wide support in the Jewish community. Eiklor states that his effort aim to build "bridges of love" to the Jewish people, and insists that there is no hidden agenda behind his demonstration of "unconditional love." Even though he bristles at any suggestion of ulterior motives, we need only examine what he says when he assumes we are not listening to hear him speaking out of both sides of his mouth.

In recent letters to his supporters, Dr. Eiklor reveals the true goal of his campaigns: "It's a name that caused Jews to blink and shrink back in fear. It's a name that was used most frequently by those punching Jewish faces, destroying Jewish property, and even killing Jewish people. The name as not Adolf Hitler. It was J... C..."

Those hating in his name never knew him. But Jews didn't know that. They just knew that J... and pain went together. But not any more! Every time that we absorb some of the hate aimed at the Jewish people, every time we rush to their side when they are lied about, every time that we are the first gentiles to identify with their fears and pain and loneliness... they see another J...! The real one!" "I want to see Christians all across America wake up and stand up for the Jewish people. Only then will Jews be impressed and one day want J... as their Messiah!"

Just as there were Greek soldiers concealed within the giant wooden gift horse to the Trojan, Frank Eiklor's ultimate agenda is carefully hidden from the beneficiaries of his good will. It is simply an oversight that explains why his Jewish audience never hears the following words which typify the message he sends to his Christian supporters? "There are almost six million Jews living in the United States -- what a harvest field we have right under our noses! The key to Jewish hearts is

unconditional love. More Jewish people are loving J... today than at any time in history, and we're told that this ministry is a big reason for that happening."

Before founding Shalom International, Frank Eiklor was the director of The Hebrew Messianic Center.

The Center sent missionaries into Jewish neighborhoods, trained Christians how to "witness to" (convert) their Jewish friends and neighbors, and held mass rallies in support of Israel. Although Shalom International sounds rather benign in comparison, the name has simply been changed to protect the guilty.

Eiklor's new incarnation is essentially geared to making Christians into better salespeople to the Jewish community. Eiklor spells out his strategy of soft-selling Christianity in a tape he distributes through Shalom International called "How to Reach Out to the Jews." In this training tape, he explains that if Christians are serious about witnessing to Jewish people, they need to understand that "it's not enough just to quote Bible verses... you can't preach the gospel with mere words, you must show unconditional love."

Eiklor is usually careful not to openly associate with missionaries who overtly target Jewish people for conversion. Recently though, he let his guard down by appearing as the featured guest on a major Hebrew-Christian radio program. Introduced by the host as "the most dangerous man to the Jewish community today," Eiklor expounded on his conviction that Christian kindness would result in the Jewish people accepting Jesus. Obviously this viewpoint is either very naïve or very arrogant. Either Frank Eiklor believes that any belief can be validated by the altruism of its adherents, or he believes that Christians have a monopoly on goodness.

We understand Dr. Frank Eiklor. In an editorial, he once wrote that "witnessing to all people of J... love, is like breathing to a Christian." We understand that he is sincere, and that he regrets the evil done to us in the name of his religion. However, by not fully sharing the true motivation of his endeavors on behalf of our community, he presents a stark example of what is clearly a hidden agenda. It is true that actions speak louder than words, but Frank Eiklor's words speak much about his actions.

Fuller Theological Seminary
School of World Mission

March 24, 1986

Dr. Phil Goble
Artists for Israel
P. O. Box 2056
New York, New York 10017

Dear Phil:

Many thanks for your careful and illuminating answer to my recent letter. I am pleased to know of the many ways in which you are getting in the ripened grain and bringing sheaves to the master's barn.

I am increasingly confident that messianic synagogues are the answer. It must be possible for Jews to become Christians while still remaining Jews and cherishing their Jewish ancestry. Swedish Americans cherish their Swedish ancestry. Chinese Americans treasure their Chinese ancestry. Hebrew Americans ought to cherish their Hebrew ancestry and remain strongly Jewish. They should proclaim, "I am a Jew. I go to synagogue. I invite you to my synagogue. It means on Friday evening."

Those who go there should feel right at home. The singing should be led by a cantor. The men should wear little skull caps. The Torah (scripture) should be taken out of a cupboard as a big roll and laid on the pulpit. In short, every aspect of synagogue worship should be duplicated. I further think, Phil, that it would be advisable for non-Jews to be encouraged to worship in congregations which met on Sunday. Let the messianic synagogues be 100% Jewish. Let them never serve ham or bacon at their meals.

When you are here in August, by all means give me a call (818 449-1745, Ext 3715) in the mornings between 9:30 and 12. I am here five weekday mornings every week. Better still, write me a letter a couple of weeks ahead of time.

What you are doing is most important, and I am confident that the 50 messianic synagogues of today can easily become 500 tomorrow—or maybe day after tomorrow.

God grant you His richest blessings.

1 CORINTHIANS 9:19-23

¹⁹For although I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. ²⁰**To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law.** ²¹To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from G-d's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. ²²To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. ²³I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.

Sincerely yours in
Christ,

-McGavran

Though you've turned your back on Him, Larry, Jesus will never leave you."

As I closed the door on a chapter of my life that had lasted one and a half years, the words of that kindly Christian pastor echoed in my ears. Had I really once been a member in good standing of the militantly proselytizing Hebrew-Christian community, which proudly styles itself as "Messianic Jewish?" Already the episode seemed a distant dream — or perhaps a nightmare.

"Larry Levey? I'm very pleased to meet you," said the plump, broadly smiling, middle-aged Italian woman seated in front of me at the Vineyard Christian Fellowship, a large charismatic Christian congregation in Los Angeles where members of Jews for Jesus worship. It was a hazy Sunday morning in January 1981 and, as I joined my new friends from Jews for Jesus to sing "Amazing Grace," I reflected on what had led me — a liberal corporate lawyer, the product of a suburban, Conservative Jewish family, a former Torah reader and member of the Jewish Defense League — to cast my lot with the growing ranks of fundamentalist Christians.

Although the reasons that Jews become involved with fundamentalist Christianity are perhaps as unique and numerous as the individuals involved, my story is far from atypical. For as long as I could recall, I had been a "seeker," like so many of my generation. Somehow, in benignly materialistic suburbia, a spark had been ignited in my soul. I was on a quest for answers that seemed to lie far beyond the upwardly mobile, conforming lifestyle so carefully constructed by my well-meaning parents. The Judaism I had known, those pre-bar mitzva remnants dimly recalled and perhaps never believed, seemed irrelevant to my search.

I had tried drugs, psychiatric analysis, Eastern meditation, political militancy and Werner Erhardt's est, and had emerged from these experiences relatively unscathed. Still, a restlessness remained. Would I ever find the security, the fulfillment, the cosmic understanding that, as a child, I had assumed to be the due of every "grown-up?"

In my professional life, I was in charge of litigation for the Washington, D.C., office of a Los Angeles-based law firm. Then I was transferred to my law firm's Los Angeles office for a three-month stretch. I knew no one in Southern California. On the evening of Janu-

ary 13, 1981, I sat alone in my furnished apartment reading an account of the life of Jesus from a Christian Bible that a client had given me months before. I had been reading the Bible, first out of curiosity, and had become fascinated by the character of Jesus. He seemed so human, and yet so certain; beyond that, he seemed so Jewish, far different from the Gentile God I had always assumed him to be. He prayed to God, preached in synagogues and exhorted his followers to obey Biblical commandments. That night, I experienced what used to be called an epiphany, and is now commonly referred to as being "born again" — an ecstatic spiritual encounter with what I assumed to be the living Jesus. Non-believers would later attempt to explain my experience in terms of the psycholog-

The Judaism I had known as a child seemed irrelevant to my search for security, fulfillment, cosmic understanding.

ical phenomenon known as projection — a strong yearning to believe in Jesus that had been externalized — or as an encounter with the world of spiritual forces. But I would dismiss their words. I did not permit myself the luxury of doubt: I had seen the immortal Son of God. I turned my life over to this Lord and Savior. That night in January, I fell asleep enveloped in what the Christian Scriptures assured me was "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding."

The next day, I contacted the California-based Jews for Jesus organization, which seemed to me the proper organization to explain my spiritual encounter. I was informed that merely "believing" in Jesus was not enough. I would have to accept in literal terms every word of the "Old" and "New Testaments," with a decided emphasis upon the latter. Those portions most difficult to believe became the supreme tests of faith, I was told — the lines of demarcation between true believers and those destined for eternal torment. Daily Bible reading, regular attendance at a "Bible-believing" church, "witnessing" to the unenlightened, were all essential to avoid the ultimate peril — damnation in hell, as graphically described in the Christian Bi-

ble. We were at war with the forces of darkness, I was assured by the preachers, and could not afford to yield an inch.

I was proud to be a soldier in God's army. No longer plagued by uncertainties, troubled by change, anguished by doubt, I was, as the Christian Bible said, "a new creature" and "born not of blood, but of God." My mission was clear — I was to hold the fort until the imminent return of Jesus, bringing as many into the Kingdom as possible, fighting on God's behalf and in His power against the wiles of His many foes. Secular humanism, evolution, public education, premarital sex, Marxism, Catholicism, feminism, Ouija boards, psychology and the Supreme Court — all loomed large on our ever-expanding enemies list. With a zealotry bordering on fanaticism, we were bound by divine mandate to convert or discredit them all. We lived in a world of neat dualities — right and wrong, God and the devil, us and them. And we were confident that God was on our side.

Only one thing troubled my conscience during my early months as a "believer": Somehow, Jews for Jesus didn't quite seem Jewish. Nor was it acceptable to the Jewish community. "Not that," said my mother, a look of shock, hurt and profound disappointment in her eyes when I told her.

The Jews for Jesus organization, as a missionary group financially dependent upon contributions from Christian individuals and churches, routinely directs its members to fundamentalist churches — it has no "synagogues." I entered the Gentile world with a certain uneasiness, never feeling quite at home despite the inordinate attention and extremely cordial welcome accorded me as a hyphenated entity: a "Hebrew-Christian."

When my job took me back to Washington, D.C., I visited a Messianic Jewish congregation in the Washington suburb of Rockville, Maryland — one of a growing number of Messianic Jewish congregations that are located in most metropolitan areas with a sizable Jewish population. (Although the Messianic movement has much in common with Jews for Jesus, it is a separate movement and prays in its own synagogues, not churches.) The congregation's pastor, an ordained Presbyterian minister and the son of a Jewish father and Gentile mother, is a prolific writer and the president and founder of a Hebrew-Christian network — the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations. Under his leadership, the Rockville congregation has established a day school, a counseling center and a missionary apparatus aimed largely at college-age Jewish youth. The standing-room-only Sabbath services attest to the success of the congregation's outreach. Each Saturday morning, about

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125 worshipers attend, three-quarters of them Jewish.

At most Messianic Jewish congregations, Sabbath services almost parody the traditional synagogue service. Most communal prayers are in Hebrew, derived from the traditional Jewish liturgy; the Torah scrolls are paraded among the congregants prior to the reading of the prescribed Torah portion; yarmulkes and tallitot are worn; the Priestly benediction concludes the worship service; prayers for the "salvation" of the Jewish community and the State of Israel are common. "It's really Jewish," is the unspoken cry of the mostly youthful congregants. But within this "Jewish" framework lie a theology and world view nearly identical to that of Baptist fundamentalism. Jesus stands as the center of adoration; He alone can save us from the forces of eternal destruction soon to be visited upon our sinful world.

The congregants are assured that their course is right. Though the will of the Almighty often bears a remarkable resemblance to the agenda of the political right, they pretend not to notice, particularly in view of the virtual abandonment of Israel in more liberal political circles. So they dance, sing, babble in tongues, receive Communion and anoint the sick with oil. And as long as tithes are dutifully paid, the cliché holds: "God's in His heaven and all's right with the world."

Three weeks after my first visit to the

Messianic congregation, Pastor Dave (not his real name) informed me of my divinely ordained role in "the body": evangelistic outreach. For the next several months I learned the techniques that leaders of the Messianic movement had developed to win Jewish souls. Words that elicit strong negative reactions among Jews were avoided at all costs—at least in initial stages of contact. Jesus was "Yeshua," Christ was "Messiah" or, better yet, the Hebrew "Mashiach," a Hebrew-Christian was a "Messianic Jew," and baptism was "immersion in the mikveh." The wearing of crosses and crucifixes was strongly discouraged; a Jewish star would do nicely. Perhaps most crucial was the out-of-context memorization of purported Messianic prophecies from the Hebrew Bible (*300 Old Testament Prophecies Fulfilled in Yeshua* is the title of one piece of literature). These were the means to demonstrate an unbroken continuum leading from Abraham to Jesus to modern-day Christianity in its purest form — Messianic Judaism. With the mastery of a revisionist, Christ-centered view of the Jewish holidays (for example, Jesus as the real Passover lamb, his broken body symbolizing the Afikomen) I had completed my preparation. My task was to coordinate evangelism directed at Jews at major Washington-area college campuses.

The success of our campaign to promote Yeshua exceeded my initial ex-

pectations. With the assistance of sympathetic Christian fundamentalist student groups, we reserved tables each week in a number of campus student centers. Our brightly colored signs — "Choose Life! The Messianic Jewish Alternative" — found a ready audience in the confusing supermarket of religions that vie for the lost, naive and lonely. Woefully ignorant of things Jewish, our dozens of daily inquirers (most of them Jews, a few curious Christians) were no match for our well-prepared and attractively packaged conversion campaigns. The product we loudly proclaimed — a "personal relationship with God" — enticed many students to return frequently to our tables or to visit our congregation. We also furnished Jewish-targeted evangelistic literature (including a "Kosher New Testament" referring to "Miriam" and "Yeshua" instead of "Mary" and "Jesus") to Christians anxious to share the Good News with Jewish friends. Everything seemed to move in accordance with some eternal plan. The periodic displays of opposition — hostile campus chaplains who, in their ecumenical role, did everything they could to remove us from their campuses; Orthodox Jewish passers-by who spit on our signs — fortified us. "Hallelujah! Would that we were all spit upon for Yeshua," intoned one congregational elder.

The troubled, the unstable, the malcontent: We received them all with a ready welcome, a warm embrace and an offer of help from the congregation's counseling center. In a congregation where marginal individuals had become the norm, my professional status, relative stability and oratorical abilities were assets. [I continued working as a lawyer.] I was repeatedly invited to consider a leadership position, perhaps as an elder-in-training or a leader of one of the weekly home prayer and study groups to which all members belonged. The opportunity for leadership is an exalted prize in the Messianic Jewish community. Their leaders were the elect of God, their opinions and decisions were deferentially received.

Despite the considerable temptation, I politely declined each invitation because of doubts that I was loathe to acknowledge but that refused to recede from the far recesses of my consciousness.

In our tightly controlled world, every expression of uncertainty or longing would hamper the ability to "witness." A doubter was dangerously close to the precipice that lay on all sides of the thin, nearly invisible line designated as "God's will." My doubts made me feel somewhat sinful, but I could not dismiss them. For example, why did we have no answers when confronted with questions about

COMMUNICATIONS CARD

1. USE THE RIGHT TERMINOLOGY
(1 Cor. 9:20)

DO SAY

- (a) MESSIAH YESHUA
- (b) BECOME A "COMPLETED JEW"
- (c) A BIBLE BELIEVER
- (d) COME TO A MEETING OF BIBLE BELIEVERS
- (e) 2ND PART OF BIBLE or NEW COVENANT
- (f) TREE

EXPLANATION:

- (a) The term "CHRIST" does NOT have a Jewish connotation to the average Jewish person.
- (b) "Convert" means to TAKE AWAY Judaism and to become a "goy," a Gentile. "Completed Jew" means to BUILD UPON OR ADD TO his Jewish heritage by gaining the atonement, gaining the Messiah and gaining a personal relationship to God.
- (c) ALL non-Jews are considered CHRISTIANS, even Hitler.
- (d) The term "Church" is too Gentile.
- (e) The New Testament is considered a NON-JEWISH book. Don't emphasize it; USE IT.
- (f) The "CROSS" has been a symbol of Jewish persecution.



DON'T SAY

- CHRIST JESUS
- CONVERT
- CHRISTIAN
- COME TO CHURCH
- NEW TESTAMENT
- CROSS

(OVER)

the eternal fate of the six million Jews who died in the Holocaust? Was not the Christian Bible clear that, without a belief in Jesus, these martyrs were suffering eternal torment?

Despite my doubts, I stayed in the congregation. I believed much of the Hebrew-Christian theology. I found the intense spirituality exciting, and, perhaps, most important, I was part of a community.

But as the months went by, my memories of the past assumed a wistful quality. Had there really been a time when I could appreciate friends and family for themselves and what they had to offer, apart from the ulterior motive of finding a weakness or need through which I could bring them the message of salvation through Jesus? Others had to be brought into the Kingdom while there was still time, and every personal encounter was to be viewed with this goal in mind. Like the Apostle Paul, I was to "become all things to all men that I may by all means save some." Was I in danger of losing my individuality, my ability to express myself honestly and openly?

Then one day, a law clerk I had hired, the brother of a high school friend, gave me some antimissionary literature published by the National Conference of Synagogue Youth. Be not deceived, said the writer: Jesus was not the Jewish Messiah and Christianity is not Jewish. The writing was forceful and well reasoned. As I read, a sense of emptiness engulfed me. Had I been living and spreading a lie?

My doubts were reinforced by two other events that occurred that same day: I came across an article in *Commentary* by a Jew entitled "My Life as a Christian," and I ran into a former member of my congregation who had turned to Orthodox Judaism. Since I believed, in line with Hebrew-Christian doctrine, that every action has a cosmic purpose, I felt that I had to find the meaning of these coincidences. But when I voiced my concerns to friends in the Messianic movement, they only told me that Satan was trying to deceive me. Nevertheless, I began a concentrated study of the Christian Bible using a tool that I had shelved for too long: a critical mind.

From my earliest days as a Hebrew-Christian, I had been trained in the doctrine of Scriptural inerrancy; as a hallmark of faith this doctrine was second only to belief in Jesus. Every word of the Bible, I was told, had been inspired directly by God, and divine perfection precluded contradictions or inaccuracies; a count given as 70 in one place and 75 in another was not evidence of error but of our limited and defective understanding. Scriptural study thus had become one-dimensional. "How can I apply this to my life?" was an appropriate question. "What social, cultural, political and economic factors impelled the

writer to state this?" was not.

I began my critical reading with a study of the "fulfillment texts" — alleged "Old Testament" Messianic prophecies whose fulfillment by Jesus was loudly heralded by writers of the Christian Bible. In almost every case, these texts appeared to have been wrenched from the Hebrew Bible out of context, sometimes with erroneous attributions. Proceeding to an intensive study of the Gospels, I noted contradictions so numerous that the most inept first-year law student would have had little trouble impeaching the credibility of their authors. Even accounts of Jesus's resurrection — so central to the faith — were problematic. How had I, an experienced litigator, been so blind?

Was I in danger of losing my individuality, my ability to express myself honestly and openly?

A chasm seemed to emerge between the teachings of Jesus and his actions — his "new" commandment to "love one another," for example, was seemingly forgotten in his dealings with Jewish religious leaders, whom he reviled as "serpents," "vipers" and descendants of the devil. The violations of Torah and Rabbinic principles by Jesus and his disciples appeared to mock his injunction to "do and observe" all that Rabbinic leaders had commanded. Further, the Christian Bible's understanding of concepts central to the Jewish faith — Torah, sin, atonement and the Messiah, to cite a few — diverged from the Hebrew Bible. While King David termed the Law of the Lord a "delight," Christian Bible writers called it "the ministry of death in letters engraved on stones" or "a yoke of slavery." And somehow, that Jesus was born in Bethlehem or rode into Jerusalem on a donkey — in fulfillment of Messianic prophecy as interpreted by Christianity — seemed far less significant than his apparent failure to initiate the Messianic age of peace and justice that figured in the visions of the Hebrew prophets.

Finally, I became aware of the anti-Semitism of the Hebrew-Christian movement. Previously, I had viewed occasional anti-Jewish utterances by friends and associates as unenlightened aberrations, foreign to the central tenets of faith. I had let pass remarks about an uncon-

scious link between the Jewish "guilt syndrome" and the Jewish people's collective deicide"; agreement with a Southern Baptist leader's statement that God is deaf to Jewish prayer; exasperation about the "demonic nature" of the Orthodox. But what was I to make of Jesus's statement to the Jews that "you are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father"; of the Gospel accounts of the Jews crying "crucify him" to a reluctant Pontius Pilate; or of Jesus's declaration to the assembled Jewish leaders that upon them would fall "the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah . . . whom you murdered between the Temple and the altar?" Do we not detect the precursors of modern anti-Semitism in the revisionist view of Jewish history formulated by Stephen, hailed as the first Christian martyr, who summarizes his anti-Jewish diatribe with the words, "Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become?" How had I failed to comprehend the significance of the words of the Apostle Paul, who, after turning from the Jews for having judged themselves "unworthy of eternal life," noted that, as a result of "having killed the Lord," the Jews were "under a curse" and were "not pleasing to God, but hostile to all men?"

Secret sin, demonic deception, intellectual pride — these were explanations offered by my one-time brothers for my fall from grace. "My brother, I plead with you that there remains no redemption if, after we have been enlightened, we crucify him afresh," wrote Pastor Dave, urging me to reconsider. With mixed emotions I watched the curtain fall on a chapter of my life once so dear.

Perhaps I should dismiss this entire episode as an unfortunate mistake, another detour in a life in which quixotic diversions have become all too common. Yet that would virtually insure its repetition, albeit in some other form. And yes, there was value in the experience: comfort in the certainty of absolute belief; security in the warm, supportive community; delight in the notion that I was no longer bound by my past, but was in fact "born again." But such things were purchased at the cost of a submersion of much that was truly me. What is it about freedom of choice that makes a circumscription of that freedom so attractive? And how tenuous were my moorings to reality, that I relinquished all reason to pursue a chimerical utopia? I have no answers, only questions. But maybe that's a start.

Perhaps someday I will find the object of my quest — an inner voice whispers that even now it lies in my own backyard. □