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A CASE STUDY OF THE MESSIANIC HEBREW CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
(Jewish Evangelism in a Small Town)
by Milton Maiman, Director

REPORT OBJECTIVE

When MHCF incorporated as a mission to reach the Jewish people in Harrisburg, there were very few resources from which to draw ideas. How did the mission start? Where did we go for help? It is my prayer that this report will be helpful to those who live in smaller towns, as well as those who work in the larger missions. I have attempted to give a short history, along with some of the obstacles and encouragements which we faced from believers and unbelievers. As you will see, some methods are the same for large cities and small towns, while other methods require some variation.

As always, the Holy Spirit works in an individualistic way. What may be good for one mission is not always good for another. Perhaps this report may be used as a guideline for others to begin their own work. If so, may God use it for His Glory.

HISTORY

Location: The location of the Fellowship in Harrisburg came about simply because I lived there when I received Jesus as my Lord and Savior in the summer of 1974. I became God's instrument in answering the prayers of many saints who had been asking the Lord to raise up a Work in Harrisburg. I can honestly say that the Lord chose me for this work; it was not my idea at all.

Jewish Community: While the Harrisburg area has an approximate population of 500,000, the Jewish populace numbers around 12,000. There are five active synagogues, plus one Chassidic congregation whose members usually go to New York on weekends, and one historic synagogue which opens only for High Holy Days. More and more Jews are moving here from New York and Philadelphia, plus the recent influx of immigrants from Russia and Israel, so the community is growing.

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The Jewish community is spread throughout the Harrisburg area, so that there is no one section which could be singled out as a "Jewish" neighborhood. However, the community has been well established for several generations and almost everyone knows or is related to everyone else. It is very secular in its orientation. It is an upper middle class to wealthy community and heavily involved in politics, since Harrisburg is a capital city.

There is a small number of poor and elderly Jewish people. They are hard to reach since they are taken care of by the excellent social programs and are rather distrustful of "outsiders".

Christian community: Harrisburg is in the midst of a "Bible Belt". There are many fundamental (and legalistic) churches who know the Jewish people should be reached, yet they suffer from the common fear of witnessing lest they offend. On the other extreme, there are many charismatic churches who are eager to witness to the Jewish people and do. All too often, offenses are made for the wrong reasons. There are also the liberal churches who busy themselves with panel discussions in the Jewish Community Center, etc.

The separatist ideology is so pervasive in the Harrisburg area that even the charismatic churches are affected by it. Each church does their "own thing". For example, twice, Billy Graham's advance teams were unable to get people together for a crusade. As a result, no effective outreach has ever been able to get off the ground.

When we realized the apathy of the organized churches toward evangelizing the Jewish people, we contacted the Philadelphia branch of the American Board of Missions to the Jews. My wife and I offered our services on a volunteer basis. I was going to Bible School at the time (1975) and did not feel qualified to lead services; so we took care of advertising and mailing, and arranging the place to meet, and Mitch Triestman and others from ABMJ would come up to do the teaching. We held monthly meetings during this time in a local bank community room. It was a good training period which lasted about 3 years.

This period of training was essential as we learned about the people to whom we were trying to minister. I am Jewish, but the Harrisburg community is very different from the Jewish community in Brooklyn. We also met and compiled a list of Jewish believers who were "buried" in the local churches. We tried to establish regular communication with the Jewish believers, but were not successful because they were not ready to be disinterred.

Necessity of a Messianic Center

Results: We really did not have any great impact on the community by advertising monthly meetings. We felt the need to have a visible permanent reminder to the community; a place where someone could go to study or ask questions. About the same time, the manager of the bank in which we were holding our meetings informed us the room was no longer available.

Up to this point in time, our volunteering was simply our own effort in response to the need we saw in the community. Other than what we were doing, there was no organized attempt to reach the Jewish people in a way they could understand. However, our presence in the city of Harrisburg was not taken seriously by the Jewish community or the churches, with the exception of a few individuals. I think God wanted us to take ourselves seriously first, before allowing any kind of support. It required a true commitment on our part. How far were we willing to go?

We decided to call all the Jewish believers in the area and ask them to come to a meeting to talk about one question: "Does the Harrisburg area need an outreach to the Jewish people?". Half of the approximately fifty known Jewish believers, then in Harrisburg, came to the meeting. After a very noisy and typically Jewish discussion, everyone came to the same conclusion. Yes, Harrisburg did need an outreach to the Jewish people. It was the only time this group ever came to a unanimous decision.

Branch of ABMJ?: My idea was to establish another branch of the American Board without costing them any great amount of funding. We were willing to speak in churches to try to raise funds for a building. We asked the ABMJ if they would sign for a building if we raised the support needed to maintain it. At that point in time, they felt unable to do that. The city of Harrisburg was not on their list of goals. It was too small to qualify for any kind of financial investment such as an office or meeting place. They were quite willing for us to continue on a volunteer basis. But, we felt the gentle nudge of the Holy Spirit to get a place of our own.

Independent: It's quite possible, that the only way a mission can be started in a small town is the way this one started. God begins with people who are there. It is not a cost-effective venture for a mission which is concentrating on the larger cities. How can an established mission spend funds for a small town when the larger cities are still unreached?

We decided to incorporate as an independent mission. On March 13, 1978, the Messianic Hebrew Christian Fellowship became official.

Step of Faith: Although we had no money of our own, we looked for a place to meet. There was a vacant house and office building across the street from the Jewish Community Center. We met with the owner and told him honestly that we had no money but we felt that the Lord wanted to use this place as an outreach to the Jewish community. He did not seem too surprised. It turned out that he was a very committed believer who had his own inner-city ministry in a nearby city. He said he would pray about it and let us know.

A Messianic Center: Later, he asked if we were willing to pay for the utilities for six months while using the building and we could see if the Lord was really in this. We said "Yes!". We still had no money, but we sent out flyers advertising the next meeting in this building. The owner gave us a key to the place and the next day, the furnace ran out of fuel oil. God began to bring in the money from various sources; just enough to pay each bill as it came. There was never any extra. We sent out our first newsletter to about 150 people & churches.

We also learned that, prior to meeting us, the owner's wife had awakened him in the middle of the night and told him that God wanted to use his building to reach the Jewish people. In order to fully appreciate this, you should know that his wife is a very practical, down-to-earth kind of person who gets very nervous whenever he "steps out in faith". She also wasn't the least bit interested in Jewish missions. She has since changed her mind concerning Jewish missions.

We also learned that the building had been district headquarters for the Christian & Missionary Alliance Church. When we met the secretary who had worked there, she told of a staff prayer meeting before they left the building. They were burdened for the many Jewish people in the surrounding neighborhood and they prayed that God would somehow use this building for a light to the Jewish community.

This, of course, was a great encouragement to us. Whenever times are tough and funds are low, we have made a point of going back over these events. We know that God set up this work. We know that He will keep it going for as long as He wants.

We advertised the new address before we received the key for the building. The night before the meeting, the owner gave us the key. We had about 35 people come to the first meeting. Oddly enough, the flyers we had mailed arrived a week late. Still, by word of mouth, people came.

Response: A few people responded to our newsletter in a positive way, while the churches ignored us. One exception was the church my wife grew up in. They had been praying for a Jewish work and saw us as the answer to their prayers. They began to support us for \$35 a month. They were a note of encouragement in the midst of great misunderstanding. We were told by one Jewish believer that we would be run out of town. Others accused us of "judaizing", although at that time we were not incorporating any Jewish customs in our meetings. Still, the Lord sustained us and brought in the necessary funds.

Our own pastor encouraged me to go ahead with the ministry, but in my own church, a lot of subtle anti-semitism from other members began to surface. I began to realize that I had to keep my eyes on the Lord and His desires, not expecting too much help from other believers.

More Faith: When the time came to sign for the buildings, the owner lowered the cost to \$50,000. and told us he would carry the mortgage himself at 8 1/2%. We went to the court house with our check book to pay closing costs. We had no money in the bank, but we went anyway. When we arrived, the owner's lawyer had forgotten something, so the closing was put off for a week. During that week, money came in and we thought we had enough when we went back to the court house. After we gave them a check, my wife informed me that we were \$3. overdrawn. We decided that the Lord was overdrawn on His account. When we arrived home, there was one check in the mail...for three dollars. We now refer to this as our 3 dollar miracle.

Full Time: I began to see the need for weekly meetings and was impressed with the desire to go full time into this ministry. This was something new for me, as I had never considered myself a missionary. I did not start out with the idea of going full time. This meant selling my home, and quitting my job, and trying to live on my military pension. I talked with my Board of Directors and they asked my wife and I to move into the Center. In May of 1979, we did that. Our children were grown up and on their own, so I quit my job, sold my house and moved into the Center.

Ministry: We began weekly Tuesday night Bible Studies, then later we added Friday evening meetings and a Saturday coffee house ministry. We had extra bedrooms which were used for a live-in discipleship program for Jewish believers. The ministry quickly grew into a full time proposition. My wife and I regularly handed out literature on the streets, attended functions in the Jewish Community Center, and made friends wherever we could.

We paid close attention to the newspaper and collected names for a list of Jewish people. We encouraged Christians to give us the names of their Jewish friends, so we could send them invitations to various programs, such as a Pass-over Seder, etc. This kind of activity usually resulted in nasty phone calls, and one or two unsaved people showing up for the function.

Publicity: A Chassidic synagogue moved in behind us and took it upon themselves to defend the community from the "threat" we posed. They posted flyers warning the people about us. It was free advertising and we received inquiries because of the flyers. We also acquired a van about this time. My wife painted our name along the sides. On the back, she put "We believe in Moses, the Prophets and Jesus the Messiah", along with a Star of David.

Between the publicity generated by the Chassidic community and the Van, the Jewish community began taking sides; some for us, some against. It was the biggest breakthrough yet. There were many rumors flying, some so outrageous even our "avowed enemies" did not believe them. We received a lot of nasty phone calls, and got a few broken windows, had our vehicles vandalized, and praised the Lord! The community was suddenly very much aware of us. I was invited to a closed debate with the Rabbi in the Chassidic synagogue. The Rabbi invited Moti Berger, head of Jews for Judaism and an anti-missionary Rabbi to debate me. The result of that debate was a meeting of all the Rabbis in Harrisburg: "What can we do about the Maimans?". Consequently, a branch of the anti-missionary JEWS for JUDAISM opened up in Harrisburg. They have regularly picketed churches where we speak.

News travels fast in a small town. When the Jewish Community Center banned Jewish believers, and all Christians sympathizing with them, from taking classes; we asked our lawyer to write a letter for us. She wrote, "Is it true that you are practicing religious discrimination? We would like a clarification of your position. Perhaps you would like to consult with your lawyer first before replying."

The Jewish Community Center backed down, however, this simple query quickly turned into a rumor that we were suing the JCC. This brought a new respect into conversations with unsaved Jews. We were not perceived as doormats, but as real people. We also received some calls from pastors offering their support. I am sure this has been good for our ministry, but I am equally sure this has not been helpful in the way the Jewish community is perceived by the Christian community. When the organized church sees the Jewish community harrassing or discriminating against Christians, it is all too willing to lash out, verbally or otherwise. We must be very circumspect.

Jewish Customs: We began emphasizing the Jewish traditions in our services. We were very careful to research the customs and make sure they were not unscriptural. This also gave an added emphasis to our evangelistic efforts. We were not being called gentiles any more. I cannot emphasize the importance of this enough. A huge barrier is removed when Jewish customs are used properly. We are no longer accused of destroying the Jewish people, and the gospel truth can be shared without that barrier of fear.

Friendship evangelism: The central core of our presence in the community has been the "deli ministry". There is only one real jewish delicatessen in Harrisburg. I spend several mornings a week there. For one year, no one would talk to me, then one by one the men have been sitting down with me to discuss God and the Bible. I have been privileged to build some real friendships in this deli, and God is working in the lives of several men. It is exciting to see him work.

Necessity for Discretion

Methods: Because of the closeness of the Jewish Community here, it is virtually impossible to meet with one person and keep it a secret. It takes a certain courage for a Jew to walk into our Messianic Center. He does not have the anonymity of the big city in which to hide. Therefore, to reach people without compromising their own free will, we use various methods which do not require face-to-face confrontation. We have a telephone message which is advertised in the newspaper. A person can call in and hear a short message and leave a message of their own. We also distribute literature to houses, without knocking. When this is done on a regular basis, people soon come to the door looking to talk.

We do use direct confrontation methods also, but they are secondary. We pass out broadsides on the street, hold Passover Seders every year, celebrate the Holy Days, attend various functions at the Jewish Community Center. We are recognized everywhere we go in Harrisburg. (How's that for accountability!)

It is difficult to share testimonies about Jewish believers in Harrisburg, since anything that is published will be twisted by the Jews for Judaism and used to discredit the believer's standing in his own family. This has probably hindered us in the area of motivating Christians to support this work. Our newsletter rarely has personal testimonies because we do not want to compromise the believer's

witness in his family. Many believers have unbelieving spouses, who are active in the community. Even if we write testimonies with pseudonyms, the community is small enough to know from the events just who is being written about.

Lately, the Jews for Judaism have been sending letters to people who have parked outside our Center. One night, after Friday services, they followed a believer to her home. She was so frightened by the time she arrived home that her husband, an unbeliever, told her she was not to go to the Center at night anymore.

We experience the usual harrassment of any mission to the Jews, with one small difference. The liberal views of Harrisburg's close-knit Jewish community almost always result in our defense against the orthodox minority. It works to our benefit, I believe, more so than it would in a larger city. Two years ago, our succah was stolen during the Feast of Tabernacles. So many people in the Jewish community aired their displeasure that Jews for Judaism publicly denied taking it. We have been approached in public places by Jews who wanted us to know they were not in agreement with the radical element. It has been the start of more than one fruitful conversation.

Unfortunately, harrassment sometimes turns new believers away. They are too afraid, and do not understand enough Bible to grow under the pressure. At times, these baby believers have been saved for a while, but have not received appropriate teaching to prepare them for persecution.

STRENGTHS OF MINISTRY

Flexibility: Being flexible is necessary, of course, in every ministry. Our life-style has to be very adaptable. There is very little in the way of a fixed work schedule. Since my wife and I live in the Center, we are "on call" all the time. We must be ready to minister to those who call when their family is asleep, or to those who stop by on their lunch hour.

Because our children are grown, my wife and I do not have as much strain in living where we work, as others might. This would be a great problem if we had small children. We are both old enough to realize we need to set time aside each week for one another. We both try very hard not to let anything interfere with our day off.

As far as the outreach is concerned, we have gone through a number of changes. ABMJ personnel suggested we begin with a Saturday night coffee house, since it worked in Philadelphia. This did not work in Harrisburg. We are located too close to the Jewish Community Center for people to drop in and talk. We did get two Jewish men who had severe mental problems and did not care what anyone else thought. They were not interested in the gospel, but in the free coffee. After one year, we discontinued the coffee house.

We had much success with Friday night services for a number of years. After a Messianic Congregation began to meet on Saturdays, interest dwindled in the Friday night services, so we discontinued them. Tuesday evening Bible studies are well attended, and we also have had numerous daytime Bible studies in private homes over the years. We recognize that most real ministering is done on a one-to-one basis outside the Center. Too many programs take precious time away from the tasks the Holy Spirit wants to accomplish through us.

One of our long-term goals was to send missionaries to Israel. It became a short-term reality. God obviously had a different timetable.

We realized this when we met a young man and were impressed with his potential. We asked him and his family to live with us for a period of training. They had lived in Israel for two years, but did not have the necessary understanding of Scripture or Jewish people. They agreed to stay with us and try to raise their own support. I trained him personally, and when the Board of Directors felt he was ready to go, we sent him. Again, God provided the money for this. As of this writing, they have been in Israel for two and a half years and have recently received a temporary residency visa, even though he is a gentile. I was in Israel in November to work with him and am well pleased with the way his ministry has developed.

Being flexible with goals is necessary, as long as the main thrust of the mission is kept in sight. I had the privilege of leading two Jewish people to the Lord in prison. I had gone to visit them at their request. While I was there, so many other people responded to the Bible teaching, that I began to spend more time in prison ministry. Even after the Jewish prisoners were released, I was being called to counsel at the prison. It took me a short time before I realized that others were already active in this ministry and it was not my place. I was using time which should have gone to the Jewish people. I turned the prison ministry over to others. It was not in keeping with the main reason for our mission.

We all need to keep in touch with the Master and His direction.

Discipleship: I need to give Arnold Fruchtenbaum some credit here. I met him right after I was saved. His teaching at Camp Shoshanah, along with the teaching I received from some Godly men in Harrisburg helped me to realize that discipleship is of prime importance to new believers. Without good teaching, there is no growth. We require attendance at Bible studies, or completion of regular assignments for everyone in our discipleship program; Jews or Gentiles. We have a lending library available, which includes books and tapes.

The churches contact us whenever they want to know something about the Old Testament, Jewish customs, etc.

Good Reputation: Our ministry is in good standing in the community, both Jewish and Christian. We are known for being fair, and honest. When a Jewish woman was witnessed to by a Christian, she told the Christian that she knew where to go to learn about God; the Messianic Center. She had never met us, but she knew where to go.

We have been watched carefully for nine years. One of the local Rabbis visited and questioned us when we first opened in Harrisburg. We have been opposed because of fear. Because of that fearfulness, some of the children from the Jewish Community Center threw rocks through our windows. Men used to spit on our sidewalks or cross the street to avoid us. Now they talk and ask questions. Communication has been established. The seed sowing during those years is just now beginning to show signs of fruition. Trust takes some time to establish, especially in a politically-oriented city like Harrisburg.

Even the Jews for Judaism said we were good people, just misguided, in their opinion. There are a few times when they are right.

I think we are building bridges between Jews and Gentiles in the proper way...without compromising the Gospel.

Impact: When the Jewish community is quiet, then we pray harder. It is only when they are talking about us that they are being confronted with Jesus. The Lord brought the Chassidic synagogue to Harrisburg just for our benefit, I'm sure. We try to remain visible. They have helped to make us visible to the community. We no longer have the van with its message, but at this point in time, we do not need it. We might have to get another to open the Scranton work. Visibility is definitely one of the strengths of the Harrisburg work.

Cooperation: When the American Board of Missions to the Jews receives a request for information or visitation in central Pennsylvania, they send it on to us. The same thing happens with Jews for Jesus or Ariel Ministries. We have traveled all over Pennsylvania to follow up contacts. In turn, we regularly refer people to other ministries.

One young Jewish woman needed help while traveling through Harrisburg. We gave that help and were able to share the gospel. Several months later, she wrote a letter asking if we knew anybody in San Francisco who believed like us. We referred her to Jews for Jesus. She was born again that same month. We had a young man who moved from Harrisburg to Pittsburgh and wanted someone to continue talking to him about the Lord. We could not get any cooperation in that city. We drove to Pittsburgh several times to meet with him, then prayed with him as he accepted the Lord. How much easier it would have been if someone in Pittsburgh were willing to take the time to talk to him.

For such a small mission, we are responsible for a lot of territory. Because Harrisburg is a capital city, people travel from various areas to work or conduct business there. The more publicity we receive, the further spread out the ministry becomes. There is enough work for two more full time couples right now.

Another area of cooperation which I want to mention is Camp Shoshanah. Every year I volunteer my services to the camp, which is sponsored by Ariel Ministries. Because this camp is the only one of its kind, and it performs such a valuable service to all the missions, I think it deserves our attention, support and cooperation. Just two instances out of the many will show you why I feel this way.

Jerry Gross went to the camp. He needed a place to stay afterwards where he could continue to learn more about the Bible. The Camp stimulated his appetite for Scripture. We were able to meet his next need, and provided the place to stay. Today he is in the ministry with ABMJ. Patricia Meese started out in Harrisburg asking my wife to disciple her. We brought her to camp. she continued with her studies in Harrisburg, went full time with our ministry, then decided to go to seminary and is now with Ariel while she completes her degree.

We all benefit from this camp. I use many of the tapes from the teaching at the camp in discipling people in Harrisburg. Jewish believers especially need an intensive three-week period of study to get them to settle down in their spiritual life.

SHORTCOMINGS OF THE MINISTRY

Lack of Support: I'm sure we can identify with Jesus' words about a prophet being without honor in his hometown. The churches continue to invite other Jewish ministries in to give Passover demonstrations, etc. when we are right in their own backyard doing the same thing. Meanwhile, we travel outside Harrisburg to give Passover demonstrations to other churches. It doesn't make sense, but that's the way it is. I'm not sure anything can be done to change that, but it sure would save on expenses if local churches would support local ministries, as well.

The apathy of the area churches in supporting local Jewish missions is something to behold. The pastors seem to feel threatened by any reference to Jewish missions. To this date, our work is supported by individuals for the most part. Two Sunday School classes help, and five churches support us regularly. Some pastors are very friendly to my face yet very hostile behind my back. There is a lot of anti-semitism in this area. Perhaps over the years, some of it will be dealt with and dissipated. I hope and pray it will.

I believe much blessing has been sidetracked because of the area pastors' attitude toward the Jewish people.

We recently sponsored a concert in Harrisburg and advertised it. We mailed personal letters to the pastors and asked them to announce it in their churches, since it was an outreach to the Harrisburg area. We told them we needed to have churches where we could send newly-saved people. As far as we know, only one announced it from the pulpit. A few put it on their bulletin boards. If we had to depend on the organized churches to support this outreach, it wouldn't be here. Thank God for His true believing church, the faithful remnant!

We spend a lot of time trying to keep communications open with the area churches. We mail out newsletters regularly, plus flyers and invitations, prayer letters, etc. At times, I wonder if it is worth the trouble. I go to pastors luncheons, and have great fellowship but each church seems like an island unto itself. We are concentrating on churches outside Harrisburg now.

Fragmented Messianic Community: I have heard the same lament from every other missionary to the Jews; there is no unity among the Jewish believers. It is the same in Harrisburg. Part of the problem is the church's ambivalent attitude toward believing Jews. They treat them as trophies, giving them lots of attention until they tire of them. Then the believer church-hops to the next place where the scene is repeated. Part of the problem is definitely due to lack of discipline in studying the Scriptures. If anyone has any ideas on what I can do about this problem, please feel free to contact me. I've been praying.

When six Jewish believers came together for a debate with the Rabbis, it shook the entire community. They thought the mission consisted of me and my wife. Just think what would happen if 100 believers came together!

Finances: When we began this ministry, we had no experience in raising funds, or speaking in churches. I was very shy about asking for money, even though I felt this was God's Work. I thought the Holy Spirit would lay a burden upon peoples' hearts and they would send the money to support the work. That's probably the way things are supposed to work, but we are living in a very disobedient materialistic society and there aren't that many people listening to the Holy Spirit.

I have learned a few things since then. First, the people need to know the needs. Second, in order to tell them the needs of the ministry, you have to get their attention. Anyway, funds have been in short supply ever since we started this ministry. Our bills are paid except for the mortgage, which is about six months behind in payments. The landlord is not complaining, in fact, he just informed us that he is not charging us any interest on the 15 year mortgage and that removes about six years off the payments. In seventeen monthly payments, we will own the buildings. We have a woman doing full time missionary work with us, trying to raise support. She's working for about \$100. a month. Our missionary in Israel also needs more support. He is working and raising a family under very stringent conditions. My own support is not in. If it were not for commitment on my part and the part of the workers, there wouldn't be a work in Harrisburg. We have managed to pay a secretary for the past year. Finances are the hardest part of the ministry to deal with.

I believe that if this ministry is to grow and spawn a few other small town ministries, that the local churches need to support it. Is a small town ministry worth the cost? It is hard to gauge the spiritual worth of something in terms of money spent. There are over twenty new Jewish believers as a direct result of this small town ministry, plus one Jewish believer already mentioned, Jerry Gross, who as a result of the discipleship program went on to Moody and is now a minister with ABMJ. Mottel Baleston also worked with us then went full time with the Conservative Baptist Jewish Missions, and is now heading up Messengers of the New Covenant. Many other lives have been enriched by Bible teaching, believers have grown in grace, and marriages have been healed. How do you count the cost? We have been in existence a mere nine years. Is it worth it? I think so.

Volunteers: Volunteers have helped somewhat over the years, however, we have found them to be rather unreliable, with a few exceptions. There is a certain mystique which surrounds the concept of Jewish missions, especially in the mind of immature Christians. Once they discover that Jews are people, the mystique goes and so does the volunteer.

SYNOPSIS

When we first opened the Messianic Center, we were watched, literally, day and night. There were rumors that we were going to grab children from off the sidewalks and brainwash them, etc. So the JCC set up a watch to make sure we would be caught if we tried anything. We received a good report.

It was reported every time I opened the clogged storm drains for my neighbors, or shoveled the snow from my walk and my neighbors. I drove the Jewish Women from the JCC to Lebanon Veterans Hospital every month and it was talked about. We took our Jewish neighbor to the supermarket or ran errands. We had to earn the right to speak. This is true in any ministry, but especially so in a small town. We decided that God had called us to this work and we would hold meetings even if no one showed up. Consistency is important. It shows that your word is good.

I have not touched upon all areas of the ministry. In many ways we are similar to any mission. There is always visitation, whether it is in private homes, hospitals or rest homes. There is always counseling to be done, with believers and unbelievers, Jewish or Gentile. I have assumed that everyone realizes these things and have not gone into detail regarding them.

At this time, the ministry has five adults involved full time; two couples and a single woman. We have a full time secretary and a need for a part-time office worker. As stated before, there is enough work for two more couples in central Pennsylvania, but they would have to raise their own support as we are not financially able to hire anyone at this time. We would also like to have another couple to work in Israel, preferably a Jewish believer. The combination of Jew and Gentile works very well. We are growing and would appreciate your prayers.

The organized churches seem to be improving ever so slightly in their acceptance of us and I am expecting them to continue this trend. The Jewish community is still divided concerning us, but they are talking and thinking Godward. When they see us, they know Who we stand for. My name is brought up in public debates in the Jewish community. My opinions about God are considered valid. I am recognized as a Jew who believes in Jesus. The Messianic Center is recognized as the place to go if you want to know about God. What more can we ask?

News, and Opinion

Rabbi, Minister

An "irritant," "insult," "troublesome factor," "hustle," "con," something "deceptive" which "could become a danger" are among the many ways one or both participants in the February 26 community forum on "Christian Proselytizing of Jews" described the current push by messianic movements to lure Jews away from Judaism.

Rabbi James A. Rudin, National Interreligious Affairs Director, American Jewish Committee, and Rev. William H. Harter, Founding Member, National Council of Churches Committee on Christian Jewish Relations, discussed the problem respectively from the Jewish and Christian viewpoints at the forum sponsored by the Community Relations Committee of the United Jewish Federation in the Jewish Community Center.

The two native Pennsylvanians, Rabbi Rudin, born in Pittsburgh, and Rev. Harter, born in Titusville, have worked together on a national level to improve relations between the Jewish and Christian communities. While both grew up out of state, Rabbi Rudin in Alexandria, Va. and Rev. Harter in western New York state, Rev. Harter and his wife, Linda, are co-pastors of the Church of Falling Spring, Chambersburg.

Position Paper

One of the items on which both worked, which Rev. Harter described as the "fruit of seven years of work," is a paper which Rev. Linda Harter will present in June for adoption by the Presbyterian General Assembly in Biloxi, Miss., declaring that Christians and Jews both worship the same living G-d, that the two

religious groups are joined as partners and that the earlier teachings of contempt for Jews must be repudiated.

Rev. Harter said that, while the ultimate responsibility for publicizing "the new Christian thinking" among Christians belongs to the Christian community, one of the ways in which the Jewish community can help combat proselytizing efforts directed against Jews is to help publicize the changing attitudes of main stream churches among their Christian neighbors.

Rabbi Rudin advocated "assertiveness training" for young Jews as a means of combating the threats of missionaries to the Jews. He said that no one should leave a Jewish school without having been taught about the rise of Christianity (and Islam) from a Jewish viewpoint. Jewish school graduates should have a knowledge of Christianity and of its Jewish roots, he declared.

According to Rabbi Rudin, every graduate of any Jewish day, afternoon or weekend school should have learned the Messiah has not come, the unity of one G-d with no bodily form, that only the Tanach (Five Books of Moses) is sacred, the covenant made on Sinai is as operative today as it was yesterday and will be tomorrow, that each one must atone for his own sins and no one else can atone for them, that Judaism is a viable religion despite the difficulties of fulfilling the covenants and that there is no mention of Jesus in the Bible.

Rabbi Rudin said that while parents are not responsible for such groups as Jews for Jesus who use slick tactics to lure new members, they should engage in "G-d talk" with their pre-teens and

Airs Views on Prostelytizing of Jews



Rabbi James Rudin

teenagers who ask about the spiritual meaning of life. Shunting such queries off to the rabbi might be helpful, he added, but children really are seeking the answers from their parents' prospective. The Holocaust and the birth of Israel are history to the present generation, he pointed out.

According to Rabbi Rudin, one of the essentials in "retrieving" a former member of a Christian messianic group or of an eastern religious cult is utilizing someone who personally has experienced membership in such a group.

Really Christians

Both speakers agreed that "despite the frequent use of the Hebrew language and symbols realted to Judaism," the messianic groups are Christians and not Jews.that they target high school and college age Jewish youth and that such youths are ill-equipped to debate religion with the missionaries who have been schooled in quoting scriptures. According to Rev. Harter, many



Rev. William H. Harter

Christian ministers also could not play the game of quoting verses as the messianic groups have trained their members to do through pre-packaged well-rehearsed materials.

Citing the rise of evangelical Christianity during the past 15 years, Rev. Harter said that it is important to recognize that even among the evangelists and fundamentalists there are different viewpoints. He said that Rev. Billy Graham has taken a public stand and Rev. Jerry Falwell has privately expressed similar views of being opposed to targeting a specific group, such as Jews, for messianic activities.

Rev. Harter said that asking Christians to "witness or speak out about their faith" is different from targeting a group for conversion and that the latter is dishonest. He advocated the teaching of the dishonesty of proselytizing, the unique relationship of Christian churches to the Jewish people, the Scripture probes by 20th Century scholars which led to the rediscovery of the Jewishness of Jesus, the "two covenant" theory the continuing role of both Christianity and Judaism and the revolution in Christian theological thinking which is leading to such doctrines as his wife will present for adoption in June.

Difficult Task

Trying to change texts for teaching in Protestant churches is very difficult, according to Rev. Harter, because there are more than 650 Protestant denominations and more continue to be developed. While some progress is being made on changing the literature used in Protestant churches, Rev. Harter pointed out that it has been easier for the Catholic church to alter its teaching dogma because that church is under one spiritual head.

During the question and answer period, Rabbi Chaim E. Schertz, spiritual leader of Keshet Israel Congregation, expressed his fear that as relationships improve between Christians and Jews and they get along better, it will be easier for Christians to convert Jews to Christianity.

Expressing his hope that the paper to be presented at the Presbyterian General Assembly by Rev. Linda Harter be adopted, Rabbi Charles D. Mintz, spiritual leader of Temple Ohev Shalom, asserted, "the Christian community has an enormous role to play with the problem of messianic groups as the integrity of the Christian church is on the line." He pointed to the funding by main stream churches of messianic activities at Messiah College, Grantham, and Rev. Harter agreed that the role area churches can play in checking this "needs to be explored."

Mark Powers, anti-missionary coordinator for Jews for Judaism in the Harrisburg area, expressed his concern about what he sees as an "alarming trend of conversion of Jews more and more becoming the policy of evangelical churches" and Rev. Harter agreed that main stream churches should be made aware that such a policy "could become a danger."

The forum was chaired by Nevin Mindlin, Community Relations Consultant.

*DISCUSSION ON THE ABOVE

Larry Rich asked what the size of Melech Yisrael in Toronto was. Ben Volman estimated it to be about 100. Larry Rich asked how the congregations are inter-relating with the Hebrew Christian Alliance of Canada. Ben Volman answered that it is regrettable that any congregation would not associate with the HCA, since it is seen as a neutral ground. But it has been difficult to get people excited about the HCA, since they were doing different things. One person asked why Canada was slow in getting involved in Jewish evangelism, as compared to the United States. Alan Gilman answered that as far as Montreal is concerned, it's hard to even know where the Jewish believers are, let alone organize them into an effective witnessing community. Furthermore, the evangelical church in Quebec is very small. Roy Schwartz asked if the separatist issue has dampened evangelism in Quebec. Alan Gilman answered that in Quebec, the separatist issue is now a dead issue. Ben Volman added that in the past, the Anglican Mission in Toronto was very strong, until World War Two. At that time, they exchanged evangelism for dialogue.

Larry Rich said he was impressed with Milt's courage and willingness to expose himself to all levels of society. Milt Maiman answered that he learned that when we fall down, we need to put our hands in front of our face, and that we needed to watch out for the cracks. He didn't want to be put into a position of leadership until he knew what he was doing.

Susan Perlman asked how we could be more sensitive to the Canadians. Alan Gilman responded, pointing out that although Canada is in North America, people assume that they are Americans, but Canadians don't call themselves Americans. Therefore, don't assume that they are, but let them say it. Ben Volman pointed out that there is in Canada a fear of the "American invasion," and therefore they tend to be very mildly anti-American. Larry Rich asked if there is anything we are doing that tends to irritate those in Canada. Alan Gilman said he couldn't point to anything specific, except a general attitude that Americans have of coming to a foreign country, and Canada is a foreign country, and then taking over as the only ones who know how to do things right. Ben Volman then asked Moishe Rosen how he perceives Canada. Moishe Rosen answered that he's not so aware of national differences. The common attitude is, "you're just part of us," and vice versa. Some things do happen in Canada that just couldn't happen in the United States, such as Steve Cohen being arrested for broadsiding in Canada. Moishe Rosen pointed out that whatever differences there are between Americans and Canadians are not even as great as the difference between Americans living in Boston as over against Americans living in Atlanta. He did not feel there was much difference among the Jews, because there is a brotherhood among the Jewish people, or a universality. He saw no major differences among the Jews between England and Cleveland. Alan Gilman responded that as far as giving people an identity, an American organization that works in Canada should have for its goal indigenous Canadian work and workers.

Sue Perlman raised the question about brainstorming concerning techniques in Jewish evangelism in a small-town mission. Milt Maiman responded that he could not state on paper how it works. The methods and problems are the same in any mission, regardless of whether they are in a big city or a small town. The bottom line is that there needs to be people who are willing to do it. And what they really need are committed people.

*SUPPER: 5:30-7:30 p.m.

*FOURTH SESSION: 7:30-9:30 p.m.

REPORT: A JEWISH MINISTRY ON A UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - Fred Klett

REPORT: MORE MEDIA UPDATES - Sue Perlman