

Stephen S. Rosenfeld examines
Jack Javits' very special role

Jack N. Porter reports on a
Nazi's campaign for mayor

Bernard Lefkowitz remembers
Dolly Schiff's New York Post

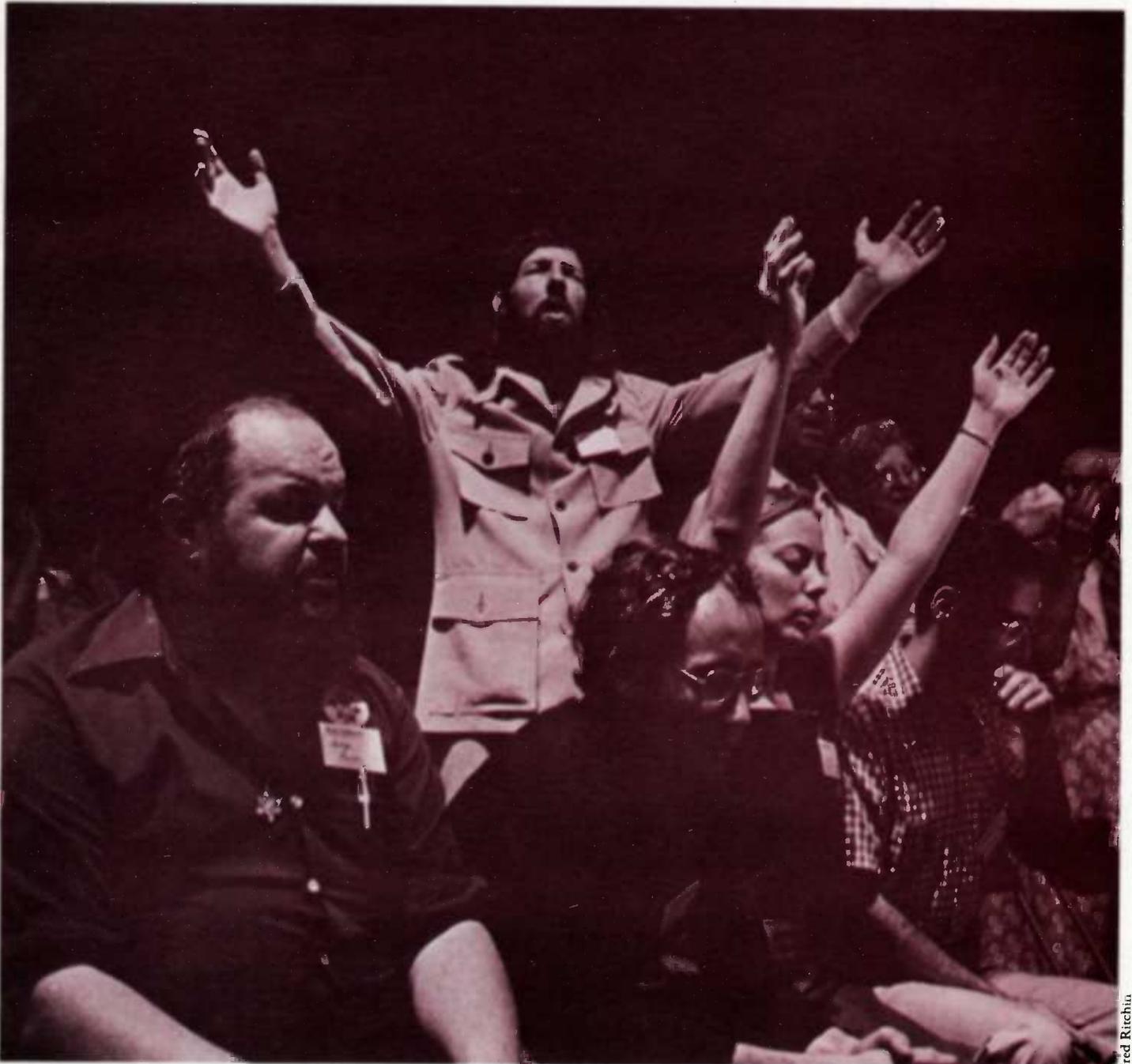
Teddy Kollek reflects on
Jerusalem

Sylvia Rothchild profiles Rav
Soloveitchik, "An absolute genius."

Summer 1977, Volume Four, Number Four/\$2.50

Present Tense

The Magazine
of World
Jewish Affairs



Fred Ritchie

**The Jews for Jesus (and the others too) are out to get your kids.
By A. James and Marcia R. Rudin**

Onward (Hebrew) Christian Soldiers

They're Out to Grab Your Kids



An impassioned moment at a Hebrew Christian revival meeting.

“Jesus is in my heart,” she says. “You can’t have my heart. No one can make me stop believing in Jesus. I know what I am in God’s eyes. I am a follower of Yeshua, the Jewish Messiah.”

You can believe in Jesus as the Messiah and still be Jewish!

Such is the dramatic claim of the Hebrew Christians. In fact, they explain, Jesus is the fulfillment of Judaism, and without him, Judaism remains an incomplete religion. In

Rabbi Rudin is assistant national director of interreligious affairs of the American Jewish Committee. Marcia R. Rudin formerly taught philosophy and comparative religion at William Paterson College. They are currently writing a book about religious cults.



*A. James Rudin and
Marcia R. Rudin*

order to be fully, truly Jewish one must accept and believe in Jesus. “Through Christ [Jews] are returning to their heritage,” says Moishe (Martin Meyer) Rosen, the leader of Jews for Jesus, one of the most publicized

Hebrew Christian groups. “They are living as Jews and loving it.”

“Hebrew Christians” is the collective term for a variety of groups which evangelize among Jews in many parts of the world, including the United States. But not all those who are involved in these groups are Jews. Some Christians seek to make their religion more meaningful by stressing the Jewish roots of Christianity, even adopting many Jewish symbols. They believe that everything “Jewish” draws them closer to Jesus, their Messiah. Such Christians often join the Hebrew Christian movement; in some places, they even outnumber Jewish participants.

In this country, Hebrew Christians operate in forty states, with large concentrations in every major Jewish population center. In the New York area, where the movement is especially

They attempt to lull the Jew into the belief that he is not actually changing his religion, when in fact the ultimate goal is to convert him to Christianity and have him join an established Christian church.



Two Texas supporters chat with Mike Evans (right).

strong, it is estimated that there are sixty Hebrew Christian groups.

On the international level, the American Board of Missions to the Jews (ABMJ), oldest of these organizations, boasts thirty-three missions in such places as Israel (Haifa, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem), Athens, Paris, Buenos Aires, Toronto and Montreal. It also has centers in thirteen American cities.

How many people are actually members of Hebrew Christian bodies? The groups themselves make inflated claims for publicity purposes. On the other hand, some Jewish observers tend to minimize the extent of the Hebrew Christian following. Estimates of the total number vary widely. One hears that there are fewer than 1,000 in the entire United States—and several thousand in Long Island alone. (In that area, which contains the third-largest Jewish community in the United States, a concentrated drive to gain Jewish converts is now being waged.) An estimated 500 to 700 Hebrew Christians make up the Beth Yehoshua (House of Joshua) group, led by 46-year-old Lutheran minister

Jack Hickman in Long Island. Mike Evans, in his late twenties, head of the pentecostal B'nai Yeshua (Children of Jesus), who moved from Texas to Stony Brook, Long Island last year, claims 800, and says there are "thousands and thousands of Hebrew Christians in the United States."

Probably the most reliable estimates of Hebrew Christian numbers come from Malcolm Hoenlein, executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York, which closely monitors the movement through its Task Force on Missionary Activities. He says there are at least 1,000 Hebrew Christians in the New York area and perhaps as many as 10,000 in the United States.

There is also disagreement about the number of professional Hebrew Christian missionaries at work. The ABMJ claims to have 100 full-time missionaries. Jews for Jesus, originally a small storefront operation in San Francisco, and B'nai Yeshua have about seventy staff members each. Hesh Morgan, leader of the Anti-Missionary Institute, a New York-based

group that "deprograms" young Jewish Hebrew Christians, declares 5,000 Hebrew Christian missionaries are working in the New York area, but Moishe Rosen says the total is only about fifty.

And it is impossible to ascertain how many or what percentage of Hebrew Christians are Jews. Rabbi Samuel Glaser, president of the Long Island Board of Rabbis, believes there are only 300 to 400 Jews in the groups in the New York area. But Rosen claims there may be as many as 30,000 Jews who have accepted Jesus since his movement began in 1970.

Hebrew Christians work on the streets, in storefronts, apartments and private homes, as well as in churches. They sometimes even appear in synagogues where unsuspecting rabbis, impressed by their commitment to Israel and Soviet Jewry but unaware of their true purpose, give Hebrew Christian singers, dancers and drama troupes an opportunity to perform. National Jewish community leaders accuse them of infiltrating Jewish organizations such as sisterhoods, brotherhoods and Zionist groups.

Originally they pitched their appeal largely to the age group between 15 and 30, but recently they have expanded their drive to include the very young—opening nursery schools and presenting programs in primary schools—and the elderly—evangelizing in nursing homes and hospitals. (They get into public schools by offering free "educational" programs and entertainment for student assemblies.) Critics also charge them with preying on helpless and vulnerable Jews in foster homes and mental institutions.

For young Jews who are often ignorant of their Jewish heritage, unsure of their status in a predominantly Christian society and unsettled in their personal lives vis-à-vis mates and careers, they hold "rap sessions" in storefront centers, then follow up with mail and telephone solicitations. They help find jobs and places to live, and provide counseling services for the deeply troubled.

They combine their Gospel message with cultural and ethnic aspects of Judaism, such as the Hebrew language and Jewish humor, food and holidays. They profess strong support of Israel and actively rally in behalf of Soviet Jewry. Thus the Hebrew Christians seek to assure prospective converts that they are not renouncing Judaism

or the Jewish people if they accept Jesus as the Messiah.

And they use Jewish symbols, often in distorted form, to get their message across. For example, the three matzoth on the Seder plate represent for them the Trinity, and the broken *afikoman* the crucified Jesus. The *shamash* on the Chanukah *menorah* represents Jesus as the light to the world. They assert that 6,000,000 Jews died in the Holocaust unredeemed, that the 6,000,000 Jews in the United States should not remain unredeemed.

Barbara Janov, executive director of Hineni, a Jewish anti-conversionary group, contends that the Hebrew Christians are "brainwashed." "They repeat the same thirty-five or forty Bible passages to us. That's all they know. They have that glazed look."

A former Jew for Jesus left the group in California when "they got us into 'speaking in tongues.' I was a speech major and I know that glosso-lalia is the road to senility and loss of reason. I had to get out."

Hebrew Christianity, or Messianic Judaism, is not a new phenomenon.

Hebrew Christian missions to the Jews began operating in Great Britain and the United States early in the 19th century. The First Hebrew Christian Church in America was founded in New York City in 1885. In 1894, Hungarian immigrant Leopold Cohn, a former rabbi, founded the American Board of Missions to the Jews. In 1915, the Hebrew Christian Alliance of America, a loose confederation of proselytizing groups, was formed in Chicago. Six years later, the First Hebrew Christian Presbyterian Church of Chicago was launched. And in 1960, Martin Chernoff established a Hebrew Christian church in Cincinnati. Other churches have sprung up recently in several American cities.

For many years the Hebrew Christians remained fairly quiescent, beyond the fringes of Judaism and Christianity, somewhat seedy and old-fashioned. But in the last decade or so the movement has undergone a startling revitalization and growth.

Hebrew Christians now employ sophisticated media and marketing techniques. They produce slick publications. They purchase full-page ad-

vertisements in major newspapers with large circulations among Jews, such as *The New York Times*; they buy expensive television and radio time.

The highly provocative, almost baiting advertising techniques used by the Hebrew Christians have made them well-known and controversial. Moische Rosen claims: "There is hardly a Jew on the North American continent who has not heard of us." A few years ago, for example, the *Jewish Post and Opinion*, a national weekly newspaper, carried a full-page advertisement paid for by the ABMJ, featuring smiling men and women under a giant caption which read: "Why Are These People Smiling?" Readers who mailed the attached coupon received a handsome ABMJ missionary brochure.

The fact that a Jewish newspaper would accept such an ad sparked bitter public reactions among Jews. Other irate public responses by Jewish and Christian leaders to Hebrew Christian publicity tactics have unwittingly given them free and extensive exposure.



Ecstatic converts at Shechinah '77 revival meeting.

“Through Christ [Jews] are returning to their heritage,” says Moishe (Martin Meyer) Rosen, the leader of Jews for Jesus, one of the most publicized Hebrew Christian groups. “They are living as Jews and loving it.”



Stan Telchin, a former Jew, testifying on his newly discovered faith.

Sixty-four-year-old Reverend Daniel Fuchs, whose Jewish parents were converted by Leopold Cohn, has parlayed the original modest ABMJ storefront center into a \$2,000,000-per-year operation with headquarters in Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. It has tried to rid itself of its missionary image by changing its name to Beth Sar Shalom (House of the Prince of Peace) in some of its New York centers.

Fuchs' staff members, both Jewish and non-Jewish, undergo a rigorous, six-month training program which includes psychological testing and screening, and doctrinal examinations. The non-Jewish missionaries are trained in Jewish life (Yiddishkeit, Jewish food, literature, etc.) so that they can better relate to Jews. All the missionaries also study the latest canvassing and mass media techniques.

The ABMJ annually spends more than \$180,000 on mass media and \$190,000 on printed missionizing literature. Hour-long evangelistic broadcasts are beamed every night to Israel in Hebrew, English, French and Yiddish via Trans World Radio, an

Evangelical Christian network. Similar programs are transmitted to other countries where it maintains missions.

In addition to attention-grabbing, full-page advertisements, the ABMJ uses personal columns, such as this simple appeal in the University of California at Los Angeles *Daily Bruin*: “If you are Jewish and believe in Jesus, please call Bill, 824-1565.” An item in the *Village Voice* in New York also reflects this low-key approach: “We are some Jews who think that Jesus is beautiful. He has made us happy and we want to share this happiness with you. Let me tell you what it's all about.”

One of the ABMJ's most successful tools is its Jewish Art Calendar, in English, Yiddish and Hebrew. Outwardly it looks like the calendars familiar to Jews, but closer examination reveals subtle proselytizing passages. One hundred thousand are distributed each year in the United States, Israel and other countries.

Each month features a conversionary message printed above the Sabbath candle-lighting times and the

weekly Torah portions. In January 1977 it was: “Only one Jewish man has succeeded in fulfilling hundreds of prophecies.” For March, the reader was asked to consider: “Why such an apparently insignificant person as Jesus . . . the Word of God . . . the Messiah of Israel . . . should have such a tremendous effect on history.”

Though the printed materials and media exposure produce results, the ABMJ and other Hebrew Christian groups find that the one-to-one personal encounter is still the most successful approach. A senior staff official of a national Jewish organization talked about his experience in Washington's Dupont Circle a few months ago.

He was in a depressed mood and his face reflected his feelings. Two ABMJ missionaries approached and asked, “Are you Jewish?” The official grunted, “Yes.” The pair replied that even though he was upset and sad, they—and Jesus—still loved him. “I didn't know whether to laugh or cry,” the official remarked later. “Actually, I did neither. I thanked them for their concern and walked away. And you know, I felt better. Somebody seemed to care.”

ABMJ missionaries are encouraged to form friendships with Jews. “Most Jewish people do not consider it [religion] a topic to be discussed with a stranger. If you want to witness to someone whom you do not know, form a friendship first,” Fuchs tells them. He provides a printed guide for promoting dialogue, with sample lists of questions and answers.

Moishe Rosen also stresses the effectiveness of the one-to-one approach to his Jews for Jesus staff. Born nearly fifty years ago in Denver into what he describes as a “typically secular” Jewish family, he was converted to Christianity in 1953 after his wife began studying the New Testament. He was graduated from Northeastern Bible Institute and was ordained as a Baptist minister in 1957. He worked for the ABMJ for ten years in New York and Los Angeles. In 1970, when Rosen went to San Francisco to begin a storefront ministry to “hippies,” he broke away from the ABMJ and formed his own group. He decided to call it “Jews for Jesus” for its shock value for Jews and to catch the eyes of the media. It did indeed, and before long the group gained national attention.

In 1973, Jews for Jesus, along with B'nai Yeshua, took over the Hebrew Christian Alliance of America, changing its name to Messianic Jewish Alliance of America, as part of Rosen's carefully orchestrated campaign to downplay his group's "Christian connection" for prospective Jewish converts.

Rosen, a believer in what he calls "creative communications," has originated over 150 humorous, cleverly written, illustrated brochures which proclaim, among other things, that "Jesus made me kosher," that there are "goyim for Jesus," that "hitching" with Jesus pays off ("He picks up all riders who want to go . . . and there's plenty of room for you! Jesus is just down the road—out of sight!"). Mary Hartman's problems would be solved, he declares, if she turned to Jesus. ("When it comes time for the Final Ratings you won't have to worry. God will never cancel you!") "If being born hasn't given you much satisfaction . . . Try being Born Again!" another asserts. "Jesus Delivers Life" (JDL) is a parody of the Jewish Defense League's slogans and methods. Rosen claims that more than 9,000,000 "communications" have been distributed, with excellent results.

Recognizing that classic Christian hymns are often offensive to Jews, Rosen devised a new kind of "Jewish gospel music" in which the melodies are Middle Eastern and "Jewish," but the lyrics bear New Testament messages. Jews for Jesus followers sing such Hebrew songs as "L'Cha Dodi" ("Come, My Beloved") and "Am Yisrael Chai" ("The People Israel Lives") at the opening of their study sessions.

Rosen also employs drama, presenting "distinctive Jewish-Christian plays" in churches and, where possible, in synagogues. His troupes—The Liberated Wailing Wall, the New Jerusalem Players and Israelite—which, according to Rosen, deal "with many aspects of Jewishness and Christianity," actually demean Jews and Judaism. Non-Jews are given a "Certificate of Acceptance into the Ancient Family of Abraham," announcing they are no longer gentiles but part of the proud heritage of Judaism.

Like the workers in the ABMJ, Rosen's staff is highly trained in New Testament theology and the latest public relations and missionizing techniques.

Thirty of the Jews for Jesus staff are now in four Texas cities—Houston, Dallas, San Antonio and Fort Worth—running Operation Lone Star of David, a concentrated one-state campaign. "If this pilot evangelistic project is successful," Sue Perlman, information officer for the organization, told us, "we will use it all around the country."

The Beth Yehoshua Hebrew Christians worship with Reverend Jack Hickman at his St. John's Lutheran Church in Massapequa or his Saturday evening service at the Christ Lutheran Evangelical Church in East Meadow. Several Jewish observers have estimated that at least three-fourths of his followers are Christians. Hickman, whose mother was Jewish, is known as "Pastor Jack" or "Abba" to his followers. He also runs Rebirth, a storefront counseling center, and a coffee house for Jewish teenagers, an elementary school and a retreat center.

Hickman's Hebrew Christian activities have drawn sharp criticism from other Lutheran ministers. Last

year Reverend Ronald Bagnall of Wyandanch, New York and other clergymen termed Hickman's movement "extremely divisive for Lutheran congregations." They accused him of "severe manipulation . . . sometimes leading to psychological disorder" among the group's members.

Last fall, B'nai Yeshua purchased the eight-and-one-half-acre former Stony Brook School for Boys for \$480,000, and has reportedly spent more than \$65,000 converting it into its headquarters.

Mike Evans, a handsome, modishly dressed young man, is the major force behind Operation Gideon, an intensive three-month recruitment and training session to improve missionizing techniques among Hebrew Christian proselytizers, which he started in May. He sponsored Shechinah '77, a national gathering of Hebrew Christians from all over the country, in June in Stony Brook, climaxing an eight-week drive (Messianic '77) to convert Long Island's Jews.

Evans speaks in strong revivalist



A segment of the audience at a Hebrew Christian meeting.

They assert that 6,000,000 Jews died in the Holocaust unredeemed, that the 6,000,000 Jews in the United States should not remain unredeemed.

terms of this project:

After four months of prayer, God confirmed to us . . . that the Jew we beheld was in the City of New York and that we were to go there and that He was going to anoint us to come against demonic forces and principalities and that a revivalist was going to come. He would speak to the hearts of Jewish young people and would join with us in proclaiming His message and *share* the message of the Messiah [emphasis his] throughout New York City. We have determined with all our hearts that we will not keep silent in the midst of the fact that Satan is coming against us in every possible way.

Evans plans to cap his 1977 activities this fall by leading B'nai Yeshua members on a tour of Israel which will culminate in prayers at Jerusalem's Western Wall on Yom Kippur.

A wide range of opinions has been expressed about the impact of the Hebrew Christian movement on its major target—Jewish young people—and about its potential threat to the Jewish community as a whole. A recent B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League report concludes that the Hebrew Christians as well as other religious cults have failed "dismally,"

and that, "while conversion attempts among Jewish youth are obviously a matter of considerable concern, Christian evangelicals constitute no real threat to Jewish survival." The Synagogue Council of America's Committee on Interreligious Affairs cautions the Jewish community not to overreact. Rabbi Allen Maller of Culver City, California, who has made intensive studies of these problems, argues that in spite of all their money and effort, missionaries convert only a few hundred Jews a year, with the per capita costs as high as \$3,000 to \$4,000. Maller says that the number of Jews lost to Christianity should be balanced against the number of Christians who convert to Judaism, which he estimates at between 7,000 and 8,000 per year in the last decade.

Malcolm Hoenlein strongly disagrees with this view, declaring that "The problem, regardless of the numbers of converts one accepts as valid, is already one of major proportions." The Hebrew Christians constitute a more serious problem than the exotic religious cults, Hoenlein says, because the former have "learned their mistakes of the past . . . and because youth are more vulnerable today." He agrees with a B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation survey which warned: "Even Jewish

students who do not convert may be gravely troubled by challenges to knowledge, faith and identity which they are not prepared to cope with."

Some Jews feel that Hebrew Christian groups threaten the very existence of the Jewish people. Says Rabbi Morris Shapiro of the Suffolk County Board of Rabbis: "We have just experienced a Holocaust, and the attempt to convert Jews is another attempt to annihilate them."

Where do the Hebrew Christians get their money? They assert that they receive funds from members' contributions—many small contributions which add up to large sums—and donations from wealthy supporters and sympathizers, such as Texan Evangelical leader David Wilkerson, who reportedly gave \$60,000 as a gift and \$65,000 as a loan to B'nai Yeshua. The ABMJ claims it receives funds from 3,000 churches and 30,000 individual contributors. Jack Hickman's Long Island church, which reportedly has a budget of \$340,000 this year, tithes its members. According to Hoenlein, "The Jews for Jesus can raise \$100,000 in one month in New York."

It is logical to ask whether Hebrew Christians receive financial support from Christian Evangelical churches



Typical literature used to seduce Jewish youth.

which are currently experiencing an extraordinary growth in members and income. Historically, Jews, along with other "non-Evangelicals" have long been targets of Evangelical proselytizing. In a confidential report prepared especially for Evangelical Christians, Rosen directly solicits funds for Jews for Jesus, declaring:

We do not have the financial backing of any denomination, nor would we accept such help. We feel that it is God's will for us to look to concerned Christians to supply the finances to continue this ministry. If you believe in what we are doing and how we do it, we invite you to become a contributor.

Barbara Janov asserts that the Hebrew Christians are given large sums of money by the Campus Crusade for Christ, a well-financed national missionary group which appeals directly to students and sponsors the "I Found It—Here's Life, America" campaign. The Crusade, which seeks to convert all people, including Jews, reportedly refers interested Jews to the Jews for Jesus group.

What about financial help from the mainline liberal Christian denominations? James Christison, former general secretary of the American Baptist Church's National Mission Society, says that, so far as he knows, no money is given to the Hebrew Christians by national church organizations. Individual church members may contribute, he says, but "there is no funding on a national level."

The question of funding leads to other intriguing questions. What are the Christian community's reactions to the Hebrew Christian phenomenon? Do the Hebrew Christian groups receive moral, if not financial, support from mainline Christian individuals and churches—or do these churches oppose efforts to convert Jews? Our findings, based on extensive conversations with Christian clergy and lay people, reveal a certain ambivalence.

The official reactions of the Christian community are negative. Reverend Lawrence McCoombe, chairman of the Episcopal Church's Diocese of Long Island Commission on Christian-Jewish Relations, considers the activities of Hebrew Christians "distressing." He says:

It is upsetting to Jews because it impugns the integrity of Jewish belief. It is alarming to Christians be-

What are the Christian community's reactions to the Hebrew Christian phenomenon? Do the Hebrew Christian groups receive moral, if not financial, support from mainline Christian individuals and churches?



B'nai Yeshua gift shop specializes in Jewish and Israeli goods.

cause it misrepresents Christianity. It is disturbing to both Jews and Christians because it undermines the basis of mutual respect which it has taken so long for us to establish. "We wish, therefore," McCoombe concludes, "to make it clear that as Christians we acknowledge and affirm the integrity of Judaism and disavow completely the message and methods of these 'Jewish-Christian' groups."

Earlier this year, the board of governors of the Long Island Council of Churches released a strong statement of condemnation:

The Board . . . notes with alarm that certain groups are engaging in subterfuge and dishonesty in representing the claims of their faith groups . . . there is a confusion which results in mixing religious symbols in ways which distort their essential meaning. The Board also deplors the pressures which result when any faith group calls into question the right to continued existence of another faith group.

However, there is evidence that the Christian community is more receptive to the aims, if not the methods, of

the Hebrew Christians than such official statements indicate. "After all," says Christison, "unconverted Jews . . . make the Christian wonder if perhaps Jesus is not the Messiah after all. . . . Besides, it is an integral part of Christianity to spread the gospel." So, concludes Christison, mainline Protestants look upon groups such as the Hebrew Christians as a species of "surrogate conversionary agents" who do the rather unpleasant job of attempting to convert Jews for them. "If they [the mainline churches] don't approve of the efforts, they certainly do nothing to stop them. They couldn't stop them even if they wanted to," Christison adds, "because of pressures from their local member churches." Reverend Nathan VanderWerf, a Presbyterian minister and an official of the National Council of Churches, agrees with Christison: "I abhor the Hebrew Christians, but there is latent support for them within the mainline churches."

Written evidence exists suggesting a close tie between Rosen's Jews for Jesus organization and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. In 1976,

Non-Jews are given a "Certificate of Acceptance into the Ancient Family of Abraham," announcing they are no longer gentiles but part of the proud heritage of Judaism.



Believers collapsed following a laying on of hands ceremony in Stony Brook, Long Island.

Rosen sent a letter to Lutheran pastors, enclosing a "Jewish Evangelism Survey." "As we have won people to Christ, we have followed the policy of referring these converts to the local Church," he wrote. "Where possible, we like to be able to refer these new Christians to evangelical congregations such as yours." (Says one former Jew for Jesus in the Los Angeles area: "We were made to attend church services seven days a week, and every day it was a different church.")

Rosen's letter clearly spells out his true aim—to channel Jewish converts into the established Christian church. It is significant that, while Rosen says Jews for Jesus is a unique and independent entity ("Jesus, Yes, Christianity, No!" is a favorite slogan) and that Jews who have accepted Jesus as the Messiah are not converts but rather "fulfilled Jews," in this letter he refers to "converts" and "new Christians."

When Reverend John F. Steinbruck of the Luther Place Memorial Church in Washington, D.C. received Rosen's letter and survey, he was dismayed and angered. He sent a copy of Rosen's correspondence, along with his own protest, to a high official of the Lutheran Church in America. The response is revealing:

A number of Lutheran congregations . . . are moving toward a conversion approach in relation to

working with Jewish people. *Moishe Rosen is one of the resource persons who has been used in this capacity.* (Emphasis added.)

One aspect of Rosen's role was demonstrated in 1975 when a national programming agency of the Missouri Synod issued a sixty-eight-page booklet, "Witnessing to the Jewish People," and sent it to Lutheran pastors, along with other conversionary materials. Included in the package were several of Rosen's Jews for Jesus brochures.

Other recent evidence shows that Rosen's alliance with Christian evangelical churches is more than casual—that, in fact, it underlies his policy of operation. In a document entitled "What Evangelical Christians Should Know about Jews for Jesus; A Confidential Report: Not to be Distributed to Non-Christians," Rosen again reveals his goal:

We define ourselves as evangelical fundamentalists and we seek the cooperation of individuals and Christian bodies meeting this description. . . . We believe in affiliation with a local church and being accountable to the church for service and discipline. *We will uphold the local church wherever we can.* (Emphasis added.)

We consider ourselves an arm of the local church. We are primarily evangelists and we are always mindful that we should not usurp the au-

thority of the local pastor. As we win and disciple [convert] Jewish people, we urge them either to take their place in a local evangelical church or establish a congregation and call their own minister. *Our duty is to aid the church at large and we work as an arm of that body to gather in the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel.* (Emphasis added.)

It seems clear that Rosen carefully changes his message to meet the specific needs of his audience, and as a result says certain things to Jews and exactly the opposite to Christians. His believers in Jesus are not really "Jews for Jesus," but rather converts to Christianity. Moishe Rosen may have changed the bottle's shape and appearance, but the wine inside is the same 1900-year-old vintage.

Because of this apparent duplicity, Jews for Jesus and other Hebrew Christian groups are perhaps even more dangerous to Judaism than other cults and other Christian conversionary movements. They attempt to lull the Jew into the belief that he is not actually changing his religion, when in fact the ultimate goal is to convert him to Christianity and have him join an established Christian church.

The Hebrew Christians also present a challenge to Judaism because they offer a "quick fix" religious product and a vibrant and emotionally charged experience. Acceptance of Jesus often provides the convert with concrete answers to ultimate questions, especially those concerning death and afterlife, which Judaism, because of its complex nature, cannot so easily and dogmatically provide. The impact of the convert's beliefs on his personal life is very strong, and he is usually eager to share them with others. Thus each convert—who by then is a believing Christian—becomes a potential missionary.

The case of Leonore Diamond, a Jewish, 32-year-old, Long Island mother of three, provides a good example of the power of these ideas. She found a commitment in Jesus that guided her through a period of intense emotional difficulty after her father died. "I needed a miracle, and I got one," she declares. Now a member of B'nai Yeshua, she is devoted to her new faith—though her acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah has caused tensions in her marriage and may create identity problems for her children be-

cause her husband adheres to basic Judaism. "Jesus is in my heart," she says. "You can't have my heart. No one can make me stop believing in Jesus. Other Jews may say I am no longer Jewish in their eyes. I don't care what I am in their eyes. I know what I am in God's eyes. I am a follower of Yeshua, the Jewish Messiah."

What is being done to counteract the effects of Hebrew Christian activity? And what should the Jewish community do in the future?

The Task Force on Missionary Activity of New York's Jewish Community Relations Council, organized in December 1976 and chaired by Dr. Seymour P. Lachman, former president of the city's Board of Education, gathers information about missionary groups, particularly in the New York metropolitan area, and disseminates it to the widest possible audience. The JCRC is pushing for New York State legislation to prohibit evangelizing in homes for the mentally retarded, homes for the aging, hospitals, foster homes, etc. The American Jewish Committee and other major Jewish organizations are alerting their constituencies to the existence, techniques and dangers of the Hebrew Christian groups. The Board of Jewish Education of New York City arranges counter-missionary programs for parents and children in their schools, and helps parents to provide stronger Jewish education in students' homes.

Hesh Morgan is the founder and active leader of AMI, the Anti-Missionary Institute. (AMI means "my people" in Hebrew.) A burly, outspoken man, Morgan is so angered by the Jews for Jesus, B'nai Yeshua and the ABMJ that he is "prepared to do anything" to "reclaim" young people from the missionaries. Jews for Jesus leader Rosen charges that AMI uses illegal and violent tactics in its rescuing and "deprogramming" activities, and claims that Morgan's group is associated with the Jewish Defense League. AMI denies both charges.

A few years ago, Esther Jungreis, wife of an Orthodox rabbi in Woodmere, Long Island, founded a group called Hineni (Hebrew for "Here I am"). In a personal and individual way, she works with Jewish youth who have become Hebrew Christians to create a sense of community and warmth based on the richness of the Jewish heritage. Operating out of her home and through lectures in many

parts of the country, she provides an atmosphere of support—even to the point of taking young people in to live with her, sometimes for long periods. Among her achievements, she says, was the return of Lisa Levi, a Miami leader of the Jews for Jesus, to the Jewish fold. She claims she convinced sixty Jews for Jesus, including many top leaders, to "abdicate" the Hebrew Christian movement. "This shattered the Jews for Jesus," Mrs. Jungreis claims.

In New York, the Board of Jewish Education established Jewish coffee houses, which seek to create a total Jewish environment in cultural and spiritual terms for Jews of all ages. The Bilu coffee house in Massapequa, Long Island, set up by the South Bay Jewish Community Council primarily for high school and college students, counters Jack Hickman's outreach program. The Los Angeles Hillel Council operates storefront coffee houses near each high school and college in the area. Similar efforts are being undertaken by concerned Jewish communi-

ties across the country.

But more than coffee houses are needed. We have spoken to many rabbis, teachers, Jewish community leaders, parents, young people and Hebrew Christians, and it is clear to us that defection from Judaism does not happen only to those with weak Jewish backgrounds. We believe it can happen in any Jewish family. Rebellion against parents and rejection of one's religion often go hand in hand.

And sometimes the source of the problem may be basically psychological. Moshe Adler, a Hillel director in the Los Angeles area, believes that the cause of defection from Judaism may be "alienation of self, that is, a sense of having no personal worth and therefore no real home." He points out that "at the heart of many religious problems there are hurt human beings," and that it is essential to try to "heal their hurts within a religious Jewish milieu before they begin trying non-Jewish trips as balm."

If our two daughters ran away from



Dancing the hora at a recent Hebrew Christian meeting.

Hebrew Christians now employ sophisticated media and marketing techniques. They produce slick publications. They purchase full-page advertisements in major newspapers. They buy expensive television and radio time.

"An Adventure With Jesus"

It is 6 p.m. on a beautiful spring Saturday, moments before Jack Hickman's "Havdalah" service—which, among Jews, marks the end of the Sabbath and the beginning of the new week. Young men carrying walkie-talkies are standing guard around the Lutheran church in East Meadow, Long Island. Inside, other boys, at approximately six-foot intervals, line the walls of its large gymnasium.

About 500 people are there, nearly everyone sitting on the floor. Men and women are segregated. All the men wear *yarmulkes*; many of the women wear Mogen David necklaces or *mezuzas*. One little girl sports in her pierced ears tiny dangling Mogen Davids which match her Mogen David necklace.

The crowd consists primarily of teenagers, college students and young families with small children. Mothers with tiny babies look down on the proceedings from the glass wall of the nursery room above. (Colored letters spell out "An Adventure with Jesus" on the nursery wall.) Small children are held on their mothers' laps or sit alone, dispersed throughout the crowd. There are some middle-aged, but only one or two old people. The group is middle-class, wholesome, clean-cut; it contains one black girl and a smattering of Orientals.

Everyone listens raptly and participates enthusiastically in the nearly two-hour service, most faces reflecting joy. Clearly, practically all of these people have been here many times before and know the procedure well.

In the center of the room are a temporary Ark, and a large square platform which functions as a *bema*, decorated with blue candles at each corner. A band plays Hebrew folk songs; everyone sings along and claps enthusiastically. Dancers leap onto the *bema* and perform Israeli-style folk dances.

Reverend Jack (Abba) Hickman begins his sermon. He is a heavy-set, bearded, middle-aged man, in an open-necked sportshirt. His approach is casual and informal. Several young girls pull out Bibles and notebooks. They take notes as he begins his talk.

Hickman starts with a scripture reading from the New Testament, then rambles for a half hour. God is a Living God, he says, working miracles in the world. (He frequently refers to God as "Ha Shem"—"The Name.") God promised that the living Spirit would come into the world, and he has kept that promise. The Commandments and the Law are a means to an end only. One must believe and have faith. God is an exciting God—we never know quite what he is going to do—"whether he is going to send us to the ovens or part the Red Sea for us." God's purpose can't be realized within the Christian Church or by Jews, but only by people dedicated to His Purpose. We must be ready to do whatever has to be done for the Plan, we must be ready to make any sacrifice, to give ourselves completely, to "proceed with absolute faith."

Jesus is mentioned only once, and then Hickman refers to him as "Yeshua." (Nor are Jesus, or "savior" or "Messiah" mentioned elsewhere in the entire service.)

After the sermon the singing resumes again, and then the audience forms small clusters, holding hands, their arms around each other. They close their eyes and begin to pray. Hickman puts a large *talis* over his head and circles the *bema*. Then he blesses a large container of wine, and aides pour it into smaller goblets which are passed along to the group. A young man distributes pieces of a huge *challah*. All eat and sip together communally.

Hickman loudly sings a sort of chant praising and reciting Hebrew names for God. Individuals spontaneously repeat his phrases. One person offers an informal prayer, another quotes a scriptural passage. Everyone sways, eyes closed. Some people hum. Faces reflect ecstasy.

All then turn to face the Ark. It is thrown open; one glimpses the Torahs inside. The band once again plays joyous Hebrew songs. Everyone sings and claps, then raises his arms to the Ark. There is a loud cheer.

The service is over.

Friends greet each other; there is much chatting and laughing. They seem very close. No one approaches to welcome me, an obvious stranger—nor am I given material about the group or solicited to join it. I see a long line and follow it to a table containing four bowls, two for general contributions and two labelled "tithes." The bowls overflow with checks.

Outside, people are still lingering. Children romp on the ample church lawn. The sun is beginning to set.

M.R.R.

home, would they find refuge in a Jewish hostel for runaways, rather than one provided by the Hebrew Christians? Would a 24-hour telephone "hot line" manned by rabbis and psychiatrists be available to them? Young Jews are asking for walk-in, store-front counseling centers so they can talk about their personal problems. Would there be retreat centers for the entire family? Though such services do exist in some cities, their availability needs to be better publicized—and where there are none, they should be established as soon as possible.

We strongly believe that the American Jewish community must become aware of the new realities and needs—especially of Jewish young people—and be ready to take whatever steps are necessary to aid them. We must provide solutions to youths' problems as the Hebrew Christians seem to do, and retool our resources to meet our young people "where they're at."

But ultimately the core of the Jewish response lies in increasing and deepening quality Jewish education, within the home and outside it. Hebrew Christians and other cults appeal primarily to those who are unsure or ignorant of their own heritage. Often young Jews are attracted to the missionaries because they are unaware that they can find the answers they seek within Judaism. They are easily swayed by the confident, Bible-quoting proselytizers. Educational efforts should begin at nursery school age and extend upward to adult education.

Training programs should be initiated for day school and Talmud Torah educators and youth leaders to prepare them to counteract the proselytizers. These should include Christian theology and the Bible passages most frequently cited by the Hebrew Christians and should familiarize them with the sophisticated techniques of Hebrew Christian missionaries and how to refute them. They should also be told about resources—such as synagogues, boards of Jewish education and Jewish community relations councils—within the community, for further aid in confronting these groups.

American Jews must seek ways to satisfy basic emotional and spiritual hungers. It is time to return to "God-talk," prayer and the search for personal relationship and communion with God. Judaism should be a vibrant and living experience, an emotionally satisfying faith for Jews of all ages. □