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HEBREW CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS IN OTTOMAN JERUSALEM: JEWISH YESHUA-BELIEVERS FACING CHURCH AND SYNAGOGUE

RÉSUMÉ

Entre 1842 et 1904 on a tenté de faire renaître dans la Jérusalem ottomane une communauté de juifs croyants en Yeshua (Jésus) sur le modèle de celle du I^{er} siècle telle que la décrit le Nouveau Testament, à l'instigation, en particulier, de la *London Society for promoting Christianity amongst the Jews*. La ville sainte devint le foyer des idées et des menées restaurationnistes aussi bien des Chrétiens de la gentilité que des juifs attendant avec ferveur le prochain retour du Messie. Après avoir, d'abord, approuvé l'établissement de communautés de chrétiens hébreux, les représentants de l'Église anglicane se firent réticents et retirèrent leur soutien enthousiaste dès lors que les associations de chrétiens hébreux tendirent vers une plateforme en vue de la création d'une nouvelle Église juive, considérée par les Églises instituées, anglicane et luthérienne, comme un développement nuisible et schismatique. En conséquence, les juifs croyant en Yeshua furent incités à renoncer à leurs tendances à l'indépendance et invités à renoncer à toute pratique juive pour rejoindre les Églises de la gentilité.

SUMMARY

Between the years 1842-1904 there were special attempts in Ottoman Jerusalem to revive the Jewish community of believers in Yeshua (Jesus) — following the model of the first century, as portrayed in the New Testament. Behind these endeavors stood particularly the *London Society for promoting Christianity amongst the Jews*. As both Gentile and Jewish Christians fervently anticipated the forthcoming return of the Messiah, the Holy City was the focus of their restorationist ideas and activities. Although initially the representatives of the Anglican Church endorsed the establishment of Hebrew Christian communities, eventually they became reluctant and withdrew their enthusiastic support. This reversal took place while the Hebrew Christian associations tended to form the platform for the creation of a new Jewish Church, which was viewed by the historic Churches, both Anglican and Lutheran, as a negative and schismatic development. Consequently, Jewish Yeshua-believers were discouraged from continuing their independent tendencies, and rather were

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expected to abandon any Jewish customs and join the existing Churches of the Gentiles.

The story of the Hebrew Christian communities in Ottoman Jerusalem has not yet been fully told. In fact the perspectives of those Hebrew Christians have hardly been considered from an interior view¹. In recent years new documents were discovered about various groupings of Jewish believers in Yeshua (Jesus) during the final decades of Turkish rule in Jerusalem. Significantly, such "domestic documents" disclose the self-identification and the group efforts of dozens of Jerusalemite Jews that, out of personal conviction, adopted the faith in Yeshua as Messiah and Son of God, yet refused to abandon their Jewish identity. Furthermore, even some accepted conclusions have to be re-examined, and fresh interpretations need to be provided to certain prevalent contemporary views. This article aims to present a new look at the existing data concerning Jewish Christian groupings in Ottoman Jerusalem. As individuals, as families and even as corporate associations, the most friendly place that those Jewish believers in Yeshua (= JBY) could find in Ottoman Jerusalem was within the Anglican Church and its Mission, the *London Society for promoting Christianity amongst the Jews*, also known as the *London Jews Society* (= LJS). As a matter of fact, JBY joined the Anglican Church because only there did they receive encouragement and support². In order to survive and to publicly maintain a unique position, JBY had to act upon the no-man's land between Church and Synagogue, as only in such a territory they could shape their nonconformist identity. Traditionally, mainstream Jewry automatically "vomited" Jewish followers of Yeshua out of the synagogues. For almost two millennia Jewry regarded JBY as *meshumadim*: apostates and renegades. The *Old Yishuv*, the Jewish community in Ottoman Palestine, also treated such "traitors" as unfaithful dissidents and opportunistic Jews who merely sought to obtain benefits from the majority society, mainly from the Christian mainstream³. Yet in Eretz-Israel many JBY emphatically insisted on their right to hold and preserve their Jewish national identity. Consequently, they were completely banned and excommunicated from norma-

1. See recently, for example, an updated research by Y. PERRY, «The London Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews in Eretz Israel (1809-1914)», Ph.D. Dissertation, Haifa University, 1999 (in Hebrew). Cf. M. DAVIS and Y. BEN-ARIEH, *With Eyes Toward Zion – Western Societies and the Holy Land*, vol. 3, New York, London, 1991.

2. Cf. A.A. ISAACS, *Biography of Henry Aaron Stern*, London, 1886, pp. 24-26.

3. T.M. ENDELMAN (ed.), *Jewish Apostasy in the Modern World*, New York, London, 1987, pp. 1-19.

tive Jewish life. On the other hand, however, many within the churches expected Hebrew Christians to fully comply with the traditions and creeds of the universal Church, and eventually to assimilate into it⁴.

A Jewish bishop in Jerusalem after two thousand years

Michael Solomon Alexander was born to strict orthodox Jewish parents in Schönlanke, a small manufacturing town in the Grand Duchy of Posen in Germany (now Poland) in May 1799. From an early age he excelled in the study of languages and the Talmud, and in 1820 he came to England to assume the responsibilities of a teacher and *Shohet* (ritual slaughterer)⁵. During the time that Alexander was appointed to the position of rabbi of the Jewish community in the city of Plymouth, he studied the New Testament and eventually decided to adopt the faith in Yeshua. Consequently he was obliged to leave his synagogue. On June 22, 1825 he was baptized in St. Andrew's Church, Plymouth. His wife, from the Levy family of that town, was baptized six months later in Exeter. In 1827 Alexander took deacon's and priest's orders in the Irish Protestant Church in Dublin. During the decade from 1830 to 1841 he served the LJS as missionary and held the position of Professor of Hebrew and rabbinical literature at King's College, London⁶.

Surprisingly, and in fact by accident, Michael Solomon Alexander was appointed the first Protestant Bishop in Jerusalem. He was elected to the unprecedented office of Protestant Bishop not because of his erudition but mainly because he was "a son of Abraham, a Hebrew of the Hebrews." Originally, in fact, the episcopal dignity was offered to another person coincidentally named Alexander – Alexander McCaul, who was a respected Professor of theology in London⁷. However, McCaul decided to decline the offer in order that the Protestant Episcopate at Jerusalem might be conferred on a "Christian Israelite."

The unexpected refusal of McCaul to accept this offer presented to the Gentile Anglicans a special challenge: how to deal with an ordained Hebrew Christian bishop who took his national Hebraic vision too far and too seriously. As long as this Hebrew Christian bishop could serve the immediate interests of Anglicanism, particularly in its relationship with Roman Ca-

4. Y. ARIEL, *Evangelizing the Chosen People: Missions to the Jews in America (1880-200)*, Chapel Hill, London, 2000, pp. 13-21, 128-134, 205-207, 247-251.

5. Cf. A. ZOLONTZ, "Bishop of Jerusalem," in H. EINSBRUCH (ed.), *Would I? Would You?*, Baltimore, 1970, pp. 58-61.

6. A. BERNSTEIN, *Some Jewish Witnesses for Christ*, London, 1909, pp. 77-81.

tholicism, such a person in this position was acceptable to the Church of England. However, when the Jewish Church in Ottoman Jerusalem started to become "too Jewish," this became a problem to the mother Anglican Church. Eventually, Canterbury changed its policy towards Hebrew Christian clergy, and after short experiments in Ottoman Jerusalem it systematically avoided any possibility of having an influential Jewish presence within its episcopal ranks.

The story began with the solemn consecration of Michael Solomon Alexander by the Archbishop of Canterbury at the Lambeth Palace in London, on Sunday, November 7th, 1841. The establishment of a Protestant Bishopric in Jerusalem was a Lutheran-Anglican joint project, initiated by the King of Prussia, Frederick William IV and Queen Victoria. Although the new Jerusalem Bishopric was "Made in Germany,"⁸ its concept was basically fueled by the millennial hopes that prevailed in the English-speaking world. Within influential Anglican circles, both aristocratic politicians and Church dignitaries, and the laity, it was deeply expected that prior to the Second Coming of Christ, the Jews must return to the Holy Land and restore their nationhood. It was particularly in Great Britain that eschatological expectations were strongly correlated with a literal Jewish territorial and spiritual renaissance, and Christ's return⁹. Thus, the appearance of a Jewish Bishop in modern Jerusalem, a "Bishop of the Circumcision on mount Zion," immediately stirred the imagination and support of Anglican millennialists. The concept of a restored authentic Jewish Church was not just a dream, but now became a realistic and visible fact. Therefore, although Alexander was the official Episcopal representative of the Church of England in Jerusalem, clerically garbed, he was also regarded as a unique representative of the original Jewish Church. A contemporary book enthusiastically described the bishop, "conveyed to the land of his fathers and to the city where David reigned, where the Son of God suffered for the redemption of mankind; and where the Apostle St. James, the first {Jewish} Christian bishop, presided over the first Christian Church — the Church of the Circumcision"¹⁰.

7. A. McCaul was Professor of Divinity at King's College, London, and Prebendary of St. Paul's. He authored *The Old Paths (The Talmud Tested by Scripture — Being a Comparison of the Principles and Doctrines of Modern Judaism with the Religion of Moses and the Prophets)*, London, 1886.

8. A. DEVINE, "Abyssinia and the Holy Places — The Chevalier Bunsen and the Jerusalem Bishopric," in *The Palestine Weekly*, Jerusalem, October 8th, 1926, pp. 347-349.

9. See, for example, I.H. MURRAY, *The Puritan Hope: A Study in Revival and the Interpretation of Prophecy*, London, 1971, esp. pp. 44-55, 142. Cf. Y. ARIEL, "The Rise of Christian Eschatology in the Wake of the French Revolution," in R.I. COHEN (ed.), *The French Revolution and Its Impact*, Jerusalem, 1991, pp. 319-338 (in Hebrew).

10. J.B. CARTWRIGHT, *The Church of St. James: the Primitive Hebrew Christian Church of Jerusalem*, London, 1842, pp. vii-viii.

Many Gentile friends of Israel in England expected that the newly established Jerusalem Bishopric would soon become the most important and influential diocese in the world, and earnestly prayed for the full success of Alexander in this "Mother of all churches." Furthermore, the supporters of the appointment of an Israelite bishop to succeed the Jewish See of St. James regarded the circumstances as a significant victory over the domineering spirit of the Church of Rome "which requires all to bow down to the idol of her pretended supremacy." Obviously, at the very first stages of shaping the concept of a modern Jewish bishopric in Zion, those Anglican millennialists strongly wished to revive the See of St. James. For them it became a living testimony that Jerusalem, not Rome, is the "mother of us all." Namely, "that the western Papacy is neither fitted nor destined to be the great center of unity to a distracted Church, or the channel of salvation to a ruined world"¹¹. As a matter of fact, we should note that the establishment of a Protestant-Jewish bishopric in Ottoman Jerusalem, headed by a dignified and authoritative Jew, was not grasped by those millennialists merely as a competent rival to the See of Rome. They actually regarded the Jewish bishop as one able to introduce a fresh and "striking pledge to the depressed churches of the East," and, while he will not claim dominion over their faith, he will still offer no compromise with their "lamentable corruptions"¹². In other words, from the very outset of the Protestant-Jewish bishopric, it was viewed by its founders as an historic homecoming to the starting point of their authentic and pure faith¹³. It was very quickly and very easily understood throughout the Protestant world that a restored Jewish bishopric in Jerusalem implied not only a return to the Jewish roots within the Roman and Eastern churches; rather, all Gentile churches and denominations, including the Anglican, had to re-evaluate their approach to the practicalities of a functioning Jewish bishop in the Holy City. Thus, with the arrival of Michael Solomon Alexander to Jerusalem, the question of the supremacy and authority of the 'Jewish Mother Church' in Jerusalem relating to all churches received a new meaning.

11. J.B. CARTWRIGHT, *ibid.*, p. xii.

12. J.B. CARTWRIGHT, *ibid.*, p. xii. It should be noted that Cartwright held the position of Minister of the Episcopal Jews' Chapel in London.

13. The painter William Bartlett, who visited Jerusalem in summer 1842, made the following observation on this same situation, as follows: "The influence of the corrupt and superstitious forms of Christianity existing at Jerusalem, in fortifying the contempt of the Mussulmen (*sic*), has often been noticed, nor is it less fatal in its effect upon the Jews; perhaps a purer form of that religion, substituting practical benevolence for angry denunciation, might have some effect in softening the stubborn prejudices which have gathered strength from the oppressions of past ages." See William Henri Bartlett, *Walks About the City and Environs of Jerusalem*, First published in London, 1844, reprinted in Jerusalem, 1974, pp. 190-191.

The first modern Hebrew Christian congregation in Jerusalem

Bishop Michael Solomon Alexander did not waste any time to rest upon his laurels, but immediately started to consolidate a Hebrew Christian congregation around him. He aimed at organizing a settled Church of JBY, clinging naturally to their birthright as the children of Abraham. On a daily basis in Jerusalem Alexander actively used his knowledge of Hebrew, and both taught and preached to his small Jewish flock in that language. In addition to that, Alexander publicly used the Hebrew New Testament that he himself had revised in London in 1838¹⁴.

A close companion of Bishop Alexander in Jerusalem was Ferdinand Ewald, a Jewish co-laborer within the LJS, who was a member of the party that accompanied the bishop to his diocese. Ewald also served as Alexander's chaplain during the prelate's occupation of the See, and remained in Jerusalem for ten years from 1841 to 1851. As for the numbers of JBY in the Jerusalem Hebrew Christian Church in March 1842, Ewald reported as follows: "Our small congregation of believing Jews on Mount Zion consists at present of twenty-five souls. May the Lord soon add many, many more! Zion, with its small number of believing Jews, will still become a place of attraction to many sons of Abraham"¹⁵. At that time the Jewish population of Jerusalem was around 6,000, out of a total population of about 17,000¹⁶. In his records, Ewald also mentioned that in Jerusalem there were many secret believers who out of the fear of their rabbis refused to contact the missionaries openly, yet often came secretly to their private residence¹⁷. On the other hand, Ewald also wrote about two rabbis, named Eliezer¹⁸ and Benjamin¹⁹, who were baptized and incorporated into the re-

14. A. BERNSTEIN, *Some Jewish Witnesses for Christ*, p. 81. Bishop Alexander's private book of the Hebrew New Testament is still kept at "Christ Church" in the Old City, Jerusalem. It should also be noted that in London, several years before his departure to Jerusalem, Alexander also took an active part in the translation of the Anglican Liturgy into Hebrew.

15. F.C. EWALD, *Journal of Missionary Labours in the City of Jerusalem (During the Years 1842-3-4)*, London, 1846, p. 92.

16. See, for example, R. KARK and M. OREN-NORDHEIM, *Jerusalem and Its Environs: Quarters, Neighborhoods, Villages, 1800-1948*, Jerusalem, 1995, p. 24 (in Hebrew). Cf. A. BERNSTEIN, *Some Jewish Witnesses*, p. 212.

17. F.C. EWALD, *Journal*, pp. 103, 212, 216, 250.

18. Eliezer was baptized under the name Christian Lazarus Luria, on May 21st, 1843. See the *Baptisms Register* of the LJS in Jerusalem, kept at "Christ Church," Jerusalem, p. 3 (From 1839 to 1985).

19. Benjamin was baptized under the name John Benjamin Goldberg, on the same day as Eliezer, May 21st, 1843. See the *LJS Baptisms Register*, Jerusalem, n.d., p. 3.

stored Hebrew Christian Church on Mount Zion²⁰. This stirred up strong opposition from the other rabbis, yet, not surprisingly, in his diary Ewald also referred to the "influence of the Hebrew-Christian Church upon the Jews of Jerusalem," which included the following passage:

In fact, all our converted brethren in their various spheres, are living testimonies that the Lord is among us of a truth; they are knit together by the best of bonds, they prosecute their respective labours, live peaceably with all men, and worship the Father in spirit and in truth. This is a novel sight to the Jews at Jerusalem, the gathering together morning and evening of a number of their own people, and offering up their prayers to God, through Christ the Lord, in the holy tongue; and the question is often asked among them, 'What do these things signify?' Some are thereby led to read the New Testament²¹.

Ewald's personal records did not hide the tensions and arguments between the rabbis and those Jews who adopted faith in Yeshua. In one case, for example, after the rabbis discovered that a Jewish family had joined the Jerusalem Hebrew Christian congregation out of their own wish and will, with no compulsion, they still tried to force the wife to separate from her husband, whom they fiercely attacked for joining the 'impostor missionaries.' After the wife told the interrogating rabbis that she freely believed in Yeshua and therefore followed her husband who believed the same, the rabbis again threatened her and tried to stop her decision. They told her "she was lost, that she would not be buried in the Jewish burying ground, that she would cause her parents to be driven out of Paradise"²². In another case, however, the wife eventually divorced her husband for suspecting that he had become a Christian²³. The sharp personal and economic pressures that were put upon JBY in Ottoman Jerusalem, first by rabbis and later also by national Jewish leaders and journalists were enormous²⁴. Yet such facts are often ignored or simply marginalized by Israeli historians²⁵. Thus, for example, Yehoshua Ben-Arieh mentions in his narrative about JBY in Ottoman Jerusalem only those sources that provide disapproving negative information concerning "the mission." First, for example, that Jewish missionaries were to be blamed for family splits, and that they were responsible for

20. A. BERNSTEIN, *Some Jewish Witnesses for Christ*, pp. 203-211.

21. F.C. EWALD, *Journal*, p. 219.

22. F.C. EWALD, *ibid.*, pp. 210-211.

23. F.C. EWALD, *ibid.*, pp. 196-197.

24. See, for example, Joseph Lang, "The Struggle Against Missionary Activity at the Beginning of the First Aliyah and its Reflection in the Jerusalem Press," in *Cathedra* 80 (1996), pp. 63-87 (in Hebrew).

25. Cf. B.-Z. GATT, *The Jewish Yishuv in Eretz-Israel (1840-1881)*, Jerusalem 1963 (in Hebrew).

the suffering caused to families because of separation between husbands and wives divided on matters of personal conviction. Second, that most of the Jews who believed in Yeshua did so for the sake of financial benefits offered to them by the "Messitim" ("inciting" missionaries)²⁶. However, within the same narrative Ben-Arieh fails to mention also other significant facts that were an integral part of the whole story; first, that rabbis in Jerusalem publicly harassed, frightened and excommunicated inquiring couples, to stop them from joining the Hebrew Christian community²⁷. And second, the entire rabbinical system of those days for collecting and distributing alms, the *Haluka*²⁸, which was a vital economic resource to make a living, totally excluded JBY from benefiting from it. In other words, JBY had no choice but to remain dependent upon the help of their "flesh and blood bishop" and his connections within the Church. Yet the "Bishop of the Circumcision" hardly completed a half-decade in his unique position in Jerusalem. During the four years that Alexander labored in the city, he managed to gather a small group of thirty-one JBY that formed the nucleus of the revived Church of St. James. Both the new bishop and his Jewish congregation, which de facto also included gentile Christians, wholeheartedly supported the cause of Israel in the land. This band strongly shared Alexander's vision to link up with the primitive Hebrew Church in the Holy City²⁹. However, November 23rd, 1845 Dr. Alexander suddenly died on his way to Egypt, probably of a heart attack. Thus the bishop's unexpected death brought a dramatic change into the life of his local Hebrew-speaking congregation.

From the Jewish Church of St. James to the International Christ Church

The English supporters of Bishop Alexander especially prayed that the spirit of the first Jewish bishop in Jerusalem, St. James, would rest upon him³⁰. Ignoring the chronological gap of two millennia, contemporary believers in England and in Jerusalem addressed the restored Jewish Bishop

26. Y. BEN-ARIEH, *A City Reflected in Its Times: Jerusalem in the Nineteenth Century, The Old City*, Jerusalem, 1977, pp. 299-300 (in Hebrew).

27. Cf. F.C. EWALD, *Journal*, p. 257.

28. F.C. EWALD, *ibid.*, pp. 74-75;

29. M.W. COREY, *From Rabbi to Bishop: The Biography of Michael Solomon Alexander*, London, n.d. (mid 1950's), pp. 110-111. Cf. A. BERNSTEIN, *Some Jewish Witnesses for Christ*, p. 89.

30. J.B. CARTWRIGHT, A Dedication "To the Right Reverend Father in God, Michael Solomon, Lord Bishop of the United Church of England and Ireland at Jerusalem," in *The Church of St. James*, the front page.

as a "fingerprint" of *Ya'akov* (James), the authentic leader of the primitive Hebrew Church. Alexander was expected to re-establish the purest model of the apostolic constitution and government to the Christian world. Although the number of JBY in Jerusalem was very small, about three dozens when Alexander died in 1845, still they regarded themselves as the "firstfruits" to be found not merely in Jerusalem, but to a large extent also in other parts of Eretz Israel. Thus, the physical revival of the Jewish Church in the Holy City was seen as a concrete forerunner of the entire national revival of Israel in her homeland³¹. As a matter of fact, the ancient history of the Jewish Church of Jerusalem, as well as the new Bishopric led by M.S. Alexander, became for the Reformed Churches a most valuable testimony for their ecclesiastical platform. It was particularly the Episcopalians who related to the pyramidal hierarchy of the primitive Jewish Church of St. James as an example for having a Bishop, priests and deacons in the Church. *Ya'akov* (James) was presented as the chief pastor or bishop of the Church, surrounded by elders³², so that this stood as a model for the Episcopalian government of the Church. Thus for a short period of time, between 1841 and 1845, a unique symbiosis was formed between the Gentile Anglicans and Hebrew Christian groups in the Holy Land. The Anglican Church wanted to recreate the model of the authentic Jewish Church in order to substantiate ecclesiastical polity against the "Romish Church."³³ On the other hand, Jewish Christians and their millennialist supporters wished to revive the national Jewish Christian Church as a part of Israel's national restoration³⁴. In other words, this Anglican-Hebrew Christian cooperation relied greatly upon the idea of solving the elementary problem of Apostolic Succession, i.e. the system whereby the Church ministers hold their authority by continuous succession since the times of the twelve apostles. It was clear that both the Reformed Churches and the modern Jewish Christians did not receive their legitimacy and credentials from the traditional Catholic Church. Roman Catholicism exclusively focused upon the principle of Apostolic Succession, originating from the foundation and legacy of the Apostle Peter³⁵. In fact the subject of Anglican Ordinations was always ques-

31. Cf. J.B. CARTWRIGHT, *The Church of St. James*, pp. 297-303. See also K. CROMBIE, "Michael Solomon Alexander and the Controversial Jerusalem Bishopric," in *Mishkan* 15 (1991), pp. 1-12.

32. See the *Book of Acts*, 21:17-20.

33. J.B. CARTWRIGHT, *The Church of St. James*, pp. 62-63.

34. Cf. B.Z. SOBEL, *Hebrew Christianity: The Thirteenth Tribe*, New York, London, 1974, pp. 136-155; 177-182. See also H.J. SCHONFIELD, *The History of Jewish Christianity*, London, 1936, pp. 211-236.

35. See, for example, "Apostolic Succession," in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian*

tioned by the Popes, and eventually in 1896 (!) Pope Leo XIII formally condemned all Anglican orders as invalid through defect of both form and intention³⁶.

The modern linkage to the position of St. James and the primitive Jewish Christian community, as portrayed in the New Testament, provided a facile solution for the legitimacy of ordinations and theological authority within Anglicanism. St. James had the authority and the pre-eminence in the ancient Jewish Church of Jerusalem, which, on the one hand, placed him above the other elders, and, on the other hand, was totally distinct from the apostleship of the twelve original disciples. Therefore, as James did not preside merely by virtue of his apostleship³⁷, his unique position was automatically viewed by the Anglicans as undermining the historic arguments of the Bishop of Rome. From the point of view of the modern "Church of the Circumcision" in Ottoman Jerusalem, the resurrection of the Hebrew Christian Church followed a divine model for future imitation. Therefore, Bishop Alexander printed on his personal visiting card only one brief, yet meaningful, sentence, as follows: "*Bishop of St. James, Jerusalem.*"³⁸ Undoubtedly, by this brief significant statement Alexander pointed to his See as a direct bridge to the Jewish Episcopal dignity and authority of St. James, the "Brother of the Lord." As for the Anglican ecclesiastics, this situation opened an unexpected way to bypass the Papal interpretation of ordinations and Apostolic Succession.

A major backing to the aspired linkage with the authentic Jewish Church came through the plans to construct Alexander's cathedral church that was originally named after St. James. The English architect, J.W. Johns, was convinced, as he wrote, that the "Anglican Cathedral Church of Saint James" was to be erected on Mount Zion and anticipated that in it believers would discover the apostolic faith and a pure form of worship³⁹. Thus the name of St. James also appeared on the inscription roll laid in the foundation stone by Mrs. Alexander in November 1842⁴⁰. Yet the building process was interrupted by the Turks and was dedicated only during the episcopate

Church, F.L. CROSS, E.A. LIVINGSTONE (eds.), 2nd ed., London, 1974, p. 76 (= ODCC), especially "Anglican Ordinations," *ibid.*, p. 57. Cf. G. NEREL, "The Authoritative Bible and Jewish Believers," in *Messianic Jewish Life* 73 (2000), pp. 19, 30.

36. S. v. "Apostolicae Curae" in ODCC, p. 77.

37. J.B. CARTWRIGHT, *The Church of St. James*, pp. 62-63, 305-311.

38. The original visiting card of Bishop Alexander is placed at the archives of 'Christ Church,' Jerusalem.

39. J.W. JOHNS, *The Anglican Cathedral Church of Saint James - Mount Zion, Jerusalem*, London, 1844, p. 3.

40. J.W. JONES, *ibid.*, p. 13, and pl. no. 6.

of Alexander's successor, the Swiss Bishop Samuel Gobat, in 1849. However, the completed Cathedral Church was named "Christ Church," so that the original name of St. James, bearing a special Jewish heritage, was altered. Obviously the dedication of the new Anglican Cathedral Church in 1849 after the name of the Lord Messiah himself, and not after the name of his brother, could have been presented as receiving a higher authority and an unquestioned legitimacy. Yet one cannot avoid asking the following question: why was this change in the original and unique Jewish name of the church introduced soon after the Jewish bishop passed away? And, did the change in the name of the cathedral church rather reflect a sharp change of policy and direction not merely within the Jerusalem Bishopric, but also within the leading prelates of Protestantism in the European hinterland? Did the change of the name of the Church, its building and its congregation, reflect a dramatic shift from a clear Jewish orientation of a *minority* within Protestantism to a Gentile-universal orientation within the Church?

Bishop Samuel Gobat himself provided a basic answer to the above mentioned questions. In his autobiography he wrote, as follows:

La conversion des Juifs avait été toujours une de mes plus vives préoccupations, depuis le temps où ma mère, me tenant sur ses genoux, me parlait avec émotion de leur sort malheureux, et surtout depuis qu'il avait plu au Seigneur de se révéler à mon âme. Aussi étais-je résolu, en arrivant à Jérusalem, de travailler au bien spirituel et matériel de l'ancien peuple de Dieu... Toutefois je savais que ce n'était pas là le but spécial de ceux qui m'avaient appelé et envoyé à Jérusalem, et je compris que ce n'était pas la volonté de Dieu à mon égard que je me renfermasse dans le rôle de missionnaire auprès des Juifs, pas plus que dans celui de pasteur de la petite communauté chrétienne de Jérusalem. Je sentais, pour parler avec S. Paul (mais toute proportion gardée), que je me devais non seulement aux Juifs mais aussi aux Grecs et aux barbares, aux savants et aux ignorants, catholiques grecs, catholiques romains, arméniens, turcs, etc., dont je connaissais depuis vingt ans...⁴¹

This short record speaks for itself. Neither Bishop Gobat nor his superiors shared the original vision of Bishop Alexander to re-establish a Jewish Church in Jerusalem. In his own words, Gobat confessed that the work among the Jews did not capture the focus of his heart and mind. He also made it very clear that those Protestant churches that initiated the Jerusalem Bishopric did not appoint him as bishop in the Holy City just to remain limited to a "narrow" Jewish mission. Even Gobat's reliance upon the words

41. S. GOBAT, *Missionnaire en Abyssinie et évêque à Jérusalem: sa vie et son œuvre*, freely translated from German by A. ROLLIER, Bâle, 1885, p. 279.

of St. Paul can be observed as totally out of the unique Jewish context while he was the close successor in the See of Bishop Alexander. Thus, after Alexander's death it became more and more obvious that a restored Jewish bishopric in Jerusalem was no longer on the agenda of Protestantism. One may only surmise that such a Jewish Bishopric, in the most sensitive and prestigious place of Jerusalem, created a challenging threat not only to the historic respectability of the Gentile ecclesiastical potentates, but also to their substantial authority and leadership⁴². This seems to have been the *real* question that bothered the Anglican and Lutheran Churches that stood behind the new Bishopric in Jerusalem. Many Gentile ecclesiastics during the nineteenth century still felt threatened by having too much of a Jewish character within the Church. Thus, for example, Gentile Christians continued to talk, without discernment, about "the emancipation of the Church from the trammels of Judaism and... (instead, to foster) the concept of an Universal Ecclesia"⁴³. Accordingly, non-Jewish Anglicans could do nothing but to admit publicly that they expected JBY to join the churches, yet at the same time they also neutralized any significant Jewish Christian attempts to establish their own independent congregations. Such entities that had the potential to become too influential were de facto labeled by Gentile Christians as "Judaizing" elements.

Establishment of the Jerusalem Hebrew Christian Association (JHCA)

Three years ago, while researching the archival material of the *Church Missions to Jews* (CMJ)⁴⁴ at the Bodleian Library in Oxford, I unexpectedly discovered a small wrapper that was lightly marked with two words: "Hebrew Christians." Inside there were two booklets bearing the same title: "Constitution and By-Laws of the Jerusalem Hebrew Christian Association." Both booklets were printed at the Mission's "House of Industry" in

42. For some further comparisons, see for example, G. NEREL, «"Messianic Jews" in Eretz-Israel (1917-1967): Trends and Changes in Shaping Self-Identity», Ph.D., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1996, pp. 183-197 (in Hebrew).

43. F.J.A. HORT, *Judaistic Christianity*, Cambridge, London, 1894, p. iii. See also pp. 2-9.

44. Today mostly known as Church's Ministry among the Jews, founded in London, November 15th, 1809, under the heading The London Society for promoting Christianity amongst the Jews. For brevity's sake it was also known as the London Jews Society (LJS). Concerning the global scope of the millenarian background of the Protestant missionary movement to the Jews see, for example, K. CROMBIE, *Anzacs, Empires and Israel's Restoration (1798-1948)*, Osborne Park (Western Australia), 1998, esp. pp. 14-50; cf. E. BASHAN, *The Anglican Mission and the Jews of Morocco in the 19th Century*, Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan, 1999.

Jerusalem, one bearing the date of 1899, and the other 1901⁴⁵. In addition, this envelope contained a one-page typed statement of the *Jerusalem Hebrew Christian Association*,⁴⁶ and few letters, dated 1904, in manuscript form. This correspondence dealt with various needs of the "Hebrew Christian Association" in Jerusalem⁴⁷. The "Constitution and By-Laws of the Jerusalem Hebrew Christian Association" reveals that the formation of a unique society of JBY originated with a general gathering of Hebrew Christians which was held in the city on August 12, 1898. This meeting took place at the house of Canon Kelk, head of LJS in Jerusalem for 22 years (1878-1901)⁴⁸. Kelk delivered a special address, in which he earnestly advocated the formation of a Hebrew Christian Union in Jerusalem. As a matter of fact, such a "Union" already functioned sporadically in the city about a decade earlier⁴⁹, yet Kelk's new initiative points to the fact that it was needed to fully reorganize that group. Anyhow, Canon Kelk may be described as the founder of the Jerusalem Hebrew Christian Association. Kelk's proposition was well received and enthusiastically endorsed by those who were present, a group of about thirty Hebrew Christians⁵⁰. A week later, August 19th, 1898, the Hebrew Christians of Jerusalem convened at the residence of I.Th. Altaresky, and unanimously approved and adopted their own constitution and by-laws. The Constitution read as follows:

Whereas the scattered and isolated condition of our Hebrew Christian brethren and their non-aggressive and non-resisting disposition has made them the objects of attack for both the Jew-hating Antisemites and the Christ-hating Jews, being patronized by neither and buy-cotted [*sic!*] by both, we therefore deem this a proper time and Jerusalem as the most appropriate place for all Hebrew Christians who should be of one heart and of one soul, and who ought to be cemented and united by the two-fold bonds of the Old and New Covenants, to cast off their swaddling clothes and assert their manhood, and take their places

45. The Bodleian Library, Oxford; Department of Western Manuscripts, CMJ Miscellaneous Papers, no. 247. Since 1887 new premises outside the Jerusalem City walls were used for the House of Industry, located near the traditional tomb of Simon the Just. See *The Jewish Intelligence* (Monthly Record of the London Jews Society), n.s., vol. 3 (1887), 182 (= *TJI*).

46. The Bodleian Library, Oxford, CMJ Miscellaneous Papers, no. 247 (A).

47. The Bodleian Library, Oxford, CMJ Miscellaneous Papers, no. 247 (B).

48. Arthur Hastings Kelk (1836-1909). See, for example, D. PILEGGI, "The Experiment at Artouf," in *Mishkan* 12 (1990), pp. 42-55. See also "The Annual Prayer Meeting," in *TJI*, March 1904, p. 34. In January 1904 Kelk became the Superintendent of the Wanderers' Home for Jews in London. *Ibid.*, p. 42. December 1904 he was placed in charge of the Leeds Mission. *Ibid.*, p. 177.

49. J.E. HANAUER, "Jerusalem Notes," in *TJI*, February 1891, p. 21.

50. A list of names, under the heading "Organizing Members," appears in the "Constitution and By-Laws," Jerusalem, 1899, pp. 4-5.

in the ranks of the Christian hosts, not as drones but as most active and leading witnesses, as their primitive Hebrew Christian brethren did, whom the Lord declared to be His Witnesses, from the beginning.⁵¹

This brief "Declaration of Independence" very concisely dealt with the major issue of the Hebrew Christian community in Jerusalem: presenting their strong wish to be freed of any external pressures, either from the Antisemites within the Church, on the one hand, or their opponents within the Synagogue, on the other. This aspiration for liberty and for maturity clearly revealed their frustration at having to constantly struggle for recognition and legitimacy by Gentile Christians and mainstream Jewry. Basically, their theological and national anchor for validating their unique position was in their emphatic linkage to the original Jewish "Church of the Circumcision" in the early centuries⁵². The official name of this corporation was the "Jerusalem Hebrew Christian Association," and its members adopted for themselves the motto "You are my witnesses."⁵³ The objectives of the Association were as follows: to promote the moral, intellectual and social culture of its members, and to inculcate the exercise of mutual sympathy, assistance and protection. The members committed themselves to maintain their daily contacts with the surrounding society; that people would see their motto verified in their lives. They openly asserted that it was their aim to defeat the efforts of those who constantly defamed the character of Hebrew Christians by casting doubts upon the sincerity of the conversion of the Jews — "thousands of whom, beginning with the Apostles, have dared, for Christ's sake, to sacrifice everything which the world and *Nominal* [*sic!*] Christians, including their traducers, hold most dear."⁵⁴ Here again, one observes the two targets they addressed, finding their offenders in two camps: at the same time confronting both Church and Synagogue. On the one hand there were the "nominal" Christians, who were no different from the rest of the "world," and on the other hand, there were the attacking Jews, "Yeshua haters." Thus JBY criticized both mainstream Jewish and Christian camps for not being able to really grasp the heavy personal sacrifices that the "converts" made and the price that they paid for their conviction.

51. "Constitution and By-Laws," Jerusalem, 1899, p. 2.

52. Cf. G. NEREL, "Primitive Jewish Christians in the Modern Thought of Messianic Jews," in S.C. MIMOUNI (ed.), *Le judéo-christianisme dans tous ses états*, Paris, 2001, pp. 399-425.

53. Isaiah, 43:10, 12; 44:8. Acts 1:8.

54. "Constitution and By-Laws," Jerusalem, 1899, p. 3.

According to the Constitution of this Association, seven persons were elected to function as officers with specific titles. The patron, Bernard Heilpern, was placed in the first place on the top of the list, and was mainly expected to provide financial assistance. He was a wealthy man, who held the position of manager of the *Thomas Cook and Son's Travel Agency* in Palestine⁵⁵. Second was the president, Dr. Morris J. Franklin, originally from the USA. Dr. (M.D.) Franklin was frequently in connection with American Hebrew Christian alliances⁵⁶. Third was the vice-president, C. A. Hornstein. Fourth was the recording secretary, Albert Abramson. Fifth was the corresponding secretary, Joshua Eliahu. Sixth was the treasurer, Albert Singer. The seventh was the collecting treasurer, I. Metzger⁵⁷. In addition, an executive committee was formed, which included twelve members, as follows: Albert Abramson, J. Th. Altaresky, Joshua Eliahu, Dr. M.J. Franklin, David Gold, Morris Hall⁵⁸, C.A. Hornstein, J.E. Hanauer, who then resided in Jaffa⁵⁹, I. Metzger, Albert Singer, N. Grossman and Simon Bauer⁶⁰. The executive committee had to consist of the minimum of nine members, and the officers of the Association were *ex officio* also members of the same. The By-Laws of the Association contained twenty short paragraphs, which provided the basic guidelines for the activities of the group. These rules combined both matters of organization and faith, emphasizing from the outset that it was intended for Yeshua-believers from Jewish background. Membership was specified for every Jew or Jewess who publicly professed their faith in Yeshua as Lord and Messiah. However, it was no-

55. Bernard Heilpern was in charge of the visit of the German Kaiser Wilhelm II in Palestine in October 1898. See B.S. VESTER, *Our Jerusalem (An American Family in the Holy City, 1881-1949)*, Jerusalem, 1988 (new edition), pp.195-197.

56. L. MEYER, "Hebrew-Christian Brotherhoods, Unions and Alliances of the Past and Present," in *The Glory of Israel*, vol. 1, Pittsburg, 1903, p. 252.

57. "Constitution and By-Laws," Jerusalem, 1899, on the inner side of the front cover page.

58. Morris (Moritz) Hall was born in Poland. As a missionary in Eretz Israel he was greatly involved with the Artouf settlement. See recently N. ROGEL, *The Imber File: In the Footsteps of Naftali Hertz Imber in Eretz Israel*, Jerusalem, 1997, pp. 54-55; 139, n. 50; 142, n. 11.

59. James Edward Hanauer was born in Jaffa and died in Jerusalem (1850-1938). He was a key personality in the Jerusalem Hebrew Christian community and a leading researcher of Eretz-Israel in the nineteenth century. He published dozens of articles and several books. See recently J. MIGRON, "Youth Reminiscences from Jaffa and Jerusalem: Chapters from the Diary of J.E. Hanauer," in G. BARKAY and E. SCHILLER (eds.), *Seven Monographs on the Theme of Eretz-Israel*, Jerusalem, 1996, pp. 89-118, [*Ariel*, vols. 112-113], (in Hebrew).

60. Simon Bauer was born in Sweden. As a child he moved with his Jewish parents to Denmark. In 1896 he moved to Jerusalem with his wife and son, and labored there independently as a missionary. See "Story of Mr. Simon Bauer," in D. BARON (ed.), *The Scattered Nation*, Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel 18, 1899, pp. 286-288.

where said in the Constitution that it was exclusively limited to Jewish believers in Yeshua, yet practically, it was obvious that the principal aim and policy was to preserve among themselves Jewish characteristics⁶¹. While this introductory clause definitely talked about membership for Jews and their relatives, *de facto* it meant that non-Jews, or those who had no Jewish relatives, could not become ranking members nor hold the positions of officers. The status of associate-membership was not mentioned.

Every resident member had to register his name, date and place where and when he had made a public profession of his Christian faith. Strangers were required to produce satisfactory documentary evidence⁶². This clause reveals that not all members were locals, as "Christ Church" always attracted many visitors, staying either for long or short periods, but eventually leaving Jerusalem. Interestingly, however, it should be noted that the article on "public profession" did not openly mention baptism in water, yet one can undoubtedly conclude that the ceremony of water-baptism was the basic meaning of this clause. Probably the reason for avoiding the clear use of the wording "baptism" was intentional in order to prevent questions on controversial issues like infant and adult baptism, or, baptism by immersion or sprinkling. Anyhow, the families of these candidates were also eligible for membership; however, nowhere was it categorically prescribed that family members also had to profess their faith in public.

Dues for membership were requested. Every member had to pay an entrance fee of six piasters and a monthly fee of three piasters. Children of members under 16 years of age were exempt⁶³. Those members who were absenting themselves from six consecutive meetings or whose dues were in arrears for more than three months, were declared as having withdrawn themselves from the Association, except when occasioned by sickness or inability. The duty of the president was to preside at all the meetings of the Association and Executive Committee – to preserve order and to prevent any violation of the constitution and by-laws, and to sign bills ordered to be paid. In the absence of the President, the Vice-President had to perform all the duties of the President. The duties of the Recording Secretary were to keep a full and true record of all the proceedings of the Association and those of the Executive Committee, and to prepare an annual report to be presented at the Anniversary of the Association. Unfortunately, no such records have been discovered to date. The regular meetings of the Association had to take place on the last Friday of each month, at such a location as was from time to time designated. These meetings had to "commence at 8

61. "Constitution and By-Laws," Jerusalem, 1899, article no. 1, p. 6.

62. *Ibid.*, no. 2, p. 6.

63. *Ibid.*, no. 3, p. 6.

o'clock sharp."⁶⁴ The President was authorized to call special meetings in cases of emergency. It should be noted that these meetings were not automatically intended to take place at "Christ Church." Rather, the group maintained its liberty to choose the place at its own discretion. Anyway, a fixed day was set as the annual Anniversary day of the Association, on August the 19th. All officers had to be elected at the last regular meeting of the Association just preceding the Anniversary.⁶⁵ As a matter of formality, the Association had its own seal, designed by its Executive Committee and in the safekeeping of the Recording Secretary⁶⁶, yet this too has disappeared.

Paragraph seventeen of the By-Laws dealt very vaguely with creedal matters. Only in one sentence it stated as follows: "No sectarian dogma shall under any circumstances be introduced or discussed."⁶⁷ No specific Articles of Faith were mentioned. Yet the general commitment for the theological *status quo* indicates that although members of the Association insisted on the fact that they did not lose their Jewish identity, mainly nationally, they still refused, at least openly, to question the Anglican creed and worship. Thus, in fact they were "Judeo-Anglicans," and theologically they were closely attached to the Anglican Prayer Book, which was translated into Hebrew and used in the Jerusalem Church from the times of Bishop Alexander⁶⁸. Doctrinally, therefore, the Jerusalem Hebrew Christian Association upheld basic Protestant beliefs.

Development and dissolution of the Jerusalem Hebrew Christian Association (JHCA)

In September 23rd, 1899 the Association celebrated its first anniversary. Leopold Zeckhausen⁶⁹, the honorary secretary and treasurer of the Association, described this event as follows:

64. *Ibid.*, no. 13, p. 9.

65. *Ibid.*, no. 15, p. 9.

66. *Ibid.*, no. 18, p. 10.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

68. In Hebrew it was called *Seder Hatefila Kefi Minhag Hamashiach shel Medinat England Velrland*, namely the Liturgy of the Church of England and Ireland, London, 1840. Cf., for example, G. NEREL, "Creeds among Jewish Believers in Yeshua between the World Wars," in *Mishkan* 34, 2001, p. 78.

69. Leopold Zeckhausen was born in 1862 at Kovno in Russia, and was baptized in Amsterdam in 1888. He joined the LJS in Jerusalem in 1899. In 1902 he and his wife (maiden name Sara Jane Ellison) were transferred from Jerusalem to Cracow. His son, Harry L. Ellison, was closely involved with the International Hebrew Christian Alliance. See A. BERNSTEIN, *Some Jewish Witnesses for Christ*, pp. 528-535. See also E. LLOYD, "H.L. Ellison, an Appreciation," in *The Hebrew Christian* 56, 1983, pp. 71-72.

This Association celebrated its first birthday by giving a picnic for all Hebrew Christians in and around Jerusalem. The place chosen for the picnic was the high ground in the Nocophorie, where tents were erected, and everything prepared in the best style, thanks to the kindness of Mr. Heilpern, Patron of the Association. Sixty-nine persons, besides twenty-one children sat down to an excellent lunch. Afterwards there were games of various kinds for those who chose to join them. At 4:30 tea was provided, at which were several visitors other than Hebrew Christians. After this there was an informal meeting with the president, Dr. Franklin, in the chair, when the report of the first year was read. This shows that considerable sums had been raised, which were principally used in helping Hebrew Christian brethren in time of need. After the report, three or four speeches were made, and the meeting was closed with the benediction.⁷⁰

A brief note in this communication highlighted two facts: first, that the Association had officially about fifty members on its list, and second, that the members met regularly once a month at the house of one of their number. In other words, during the entire year of the Association's existence, its members persisted in their efforts to meet outside the Church building. In this way they manifested an independent direction of their own. This, however, was the maximum they could do, subject to the circumstances, to "cast off their swaddling-clothes and assert their manhood," as they declared in their constitution. Alongside his report, Zeckhausen also published a large photograph which was taken on the picnic, showing the tents and the members of the Association. All who were present were well dressed in their festive attire.

In 1901 the "Jerusalem Hebrew Christian Association" published a new text of its Constitution and By-Laws. This was an amended edition of the first constitution, lastly approved by a general meeting convened on April 26th 1901. A comparison between the first and second texts of this similar document reveals some basic changes. Thus, for example, the number of officers was reduced from seven to four, and the membership in the executive committee was reduced from twelve to nine. The patron remained Bernard Heilpern, but the position of President was vacant. The By-Laws were reduced from twenty to sixteen, while the date for celebrating the annual anniversary was made more flexible, *about* August 19th⁷¹. However, the paragraph concerning doctrine (article 14) remained the same as in the first constitution. A significant sentence which appeared in the first Constitution, talking about "casting off their swaddling-clothes and assert their

70. L. ZECKHAUSEN, "Hebrew Christians of Jerusalem," in *Jewish Missionary Intelligence*, n. s., February 1900, p. 20 (= *JMI*).

71. *Ibid.*, Jerusalem, 1901, article no. 12, p. 6.

manhood," was omitted in the second. Another sentence, criticizing the "nominal Christians" and the Jewish traducers was also deleted. One may assume that this omission followed pressures from the Gentile members of the Church, trying to lower the expectations of JBY to become more (too?) independent. At the same time, however, as in the first Constitution, the second also confirmed their vision "to rise and take their place in the ranks of the Christian hosts, as active and leading witnesses, even as the primitive Hebrew Christians did."⁷²

In the Yiddish and Hebrew languages those Hebrew Christians were named *Yehudim Meshihiim*, "Messianic Jews." Thus, for example, Prof. Gustav Dalman, the renowned German scholar, reported in the beginning of 1902 that a new society of Messianic Jews was active for three years in Jerusalem. Dalman emphasized in his report that the Jerusalemite Jewish Yeshua-believers would not become a new congregation (*Kehila*) or a new Church. Rather, Dalman wrote, those JBY merely intended to form their fellowship for common prayer and for mutual help as much as they could⁷³. In other words, Gustav Dalman openly and directly talked about the central questions that arose among the Gentile Christians who closely watched the new organizational patters of JBY. Namely, will the Jews, in one way or another, recreate the Church of the Circumcision? Will the Jews establish their own creeds and liturgy, and consequently, even separate themselves from the Gentile Churches? These questions increasingly bothered the Gentile ecclesiastics. Eventually they reached the conclusion that *they* have to stop the tendency of what they saw as the Jewish "danger" of building up the "wall of partition" between Jew and Gentile in Christ⁷⁴. Gentile Christians adopted polemical measures to stop even the slightest possibility, especially in Jerusalem, of re-establishing the model of the early Jewish Christian Church. Thus it was realized not only in Jerusalem but also at the LJS Headquarters in London that the JHCA could suddenly become a distinct Jewish Church. The formation of a Hebrew Christian Church, functioning independently, was seen in strict Anglican eyes as a "Judaizing peril" that needed to be dealt with quickly. Therefore, only one year after the publication of the second "Constitution and By-Laws of the Jerusalem Hebrew Christian Association," the formal Anglican reaction came from London in May 1902. The official monthly organ of the LJS, the

72. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

73. G. DALMANN, "Hevrat Yehudim Meshihiim Birushalayim," ("A Society of Messianic Jews in Jerusalem," in *Berith Am* (Leipzig) 10, April 1902, p. 158 (in Yiddish).

74. Ephesians 2:11-22. Cf. M.I. BEN-MEIR, *How a Jew explains Ephesians*, Jerusalem, 1978.

Jewish Missionary Intelligence clearly and sharply attacked the “desirability” of forming a Hebrew Christian Church. The editor of this magazine expressed himself, as the spokesman for the Church of England, as follows:

To ourselves, the formation of a separate Hebrew Christian Church seems most undesirable in every way, and chiefly for three reasons. It is neither scriptural, necessary nor likely to succeed. The New Testament knows of only one Church of Christ, in which there is ‘neither Jew nor Greek.’ It would be a great mistake, and open to many objections, to allow Jewish Christians to become a separate caste or class, instead of leaving them to join the ranks of the general body of Christians. The Hebrew Christian Church of Jerusalem came to an end with the destruction of Jerusalem, when the old order of things vanished away. The idea of a separate Church of Hebrew Christians preaching the rite of circumcision, observing the Sabbath day on the Saturday, and conforming to special dietary laws is, in our opinion, a retrograde movement, tending to Judaize and degrade Christianity below the high level of the New Testament.⁷⁵

Obviously these words were not uttered in a vacuum. In the background there was the concrete existence of the Jerusalem Hebrew Christian Association. A separate Jewish Church, even if it had a tiny or marginal membership, was actually out of question for the Anglicans. Such a phenomenon was a matter of principle, on which Gentile Christianity had its own position. The act of circumcision and keeping the Seventh-day Sabbath were regarded as belonging to an obsolete dispensation. In the beginning of the 20th century Gentile Christianity did not welcome Hebrew Christians who wished to practice their “Judaistic customs,” be it circumcision, be it observing the Saturday Sabbath or keeping *Kashrut*, the Jewish dietary laws. However, in the same passage it was also stated that when the Jews are again a nation in Eretz Israel, should they become nominally Christian, a Church of Palestine would be as natural and proper as a Church of England. The conclusion of the writer was that “a national Jewish Church is at present, indeed, altogether unnecessary and impossible. For it could be formed merely out of ‘the remnant according to the election of grace,’ now being gathered in from the race dispersed throughout the world.”⁷⁶ In other words, the Anglicans did leave an open option for the formation of a national Jewish Church in the land of their forefathers, but *only* after their complete national ingathering, when the Jews would become the majority of the population in the land. Yet in Anglican eyes this situation still looked quite remote, and meanwhile they totally disapproved of the Hebrew Christian experiment connected to their Church in the Holy City. In fact, it seems

75. “By the Way,” in *JMI* 18 (1902), p. 65

76. *Ibid.*

that the Anglicans understood the entirety of “nominal Christian Jews” to become in the future part and parcel of Anglicanism. Namely, an Anglicanism that was not “degraded” by any Jewish characteristics that were described in the same paragraph. In order to substantiate this position, the *Jewish Missionary Intelligence* also published a lengthy article on this subject by the then well-known Hebrew Christian, Aaron Bernstein. Bernstein joined the LJS in 1871 and labored as its missionary in Jerusalem for about a year and a half⁷⁷. Theoretically, the conclusion of Bernstein was, after summarizing the arguments for and against the formation of a Hebrew Christian Church, that there was still a *via media* (middle way) between the two extreme contending parties. Practically, however, he took a position against the establishment of one broad Hebrew Christian Church. Bernstein explained that a Hebrew Christian National Church, constituted by the authorities of the Church, with the concession to keep certain Mosaic ordinances, was neither desirable nor practical. It would be the establishment of another sect, and a sect subdivided into several others, as the Hebrew Christians belonged to various denominations, many of whom would neither accept Episcopacy nor the Prayer Book of the Church of England.

Bernstein’s *via media* meant *de facto* not the formation of a Hebrew Christian Church, but a variety of Hebrew Christian churches or congregations, established by the various denominations in every land. As to the keeping of the Jewish Sabbath, circumcision and the dietary laws, he thought that there needed not to be an authoritative decision on the subject. All this he presented as follows: “If a Christian Jew who, as a matter of conscience, wishes to keep Sabbath two days in succession (*i.e.* both Saturday and Sunday – GN), or refuses to eat bacon, or desires to circumcise as well as baptize his son, by all means let him do so. In a word, the keeping of the law to a Jewish Christian should mean the royal law of liberty, of which St. James speaks.”⁷⁸ This *via media* offered by Bernstein actually advocated the creation of many local Jewish Churches, for example, “Anglican Jewish Christianity,” “Lutheran Jewish Christianity,” “Baptist Jewish Christianity,” etc. The schisms that he so earnestly wanted to avoid would thus be introduced in many other ways. Yet still, as a matter of principle, the reality on the ground provided the strongest proof that when the Gentile mother Church realized that there appeared the “danger of Judaizing,” it refused to allow the physical presence or development of a free Association or Church of JBY. Thus the Jerusalem Hebrew Christian

77. See A. BERNSTEIN, *Some Jewish Witnesses for Christ*, pp. 119-120.

78. A. BERNSTEIN, “The Formation of a Hebrew-Christian Church: Is it Desirable?,” in *JMI* 18, 1902, pp. 67-69. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 189.

Association did not last long. After 1904, there is no evidence whatever for its continued existence. The Jewish Missionary Intelligence completely ignores it. Even Bernstein, in his famous book, *Some Jewish Witnesses for Christ*⁷⁹, where he mentions alphabetically and systematically many key persons who lived and labored in his times in Jerusalem, totally ignores the names of the leaders of the JHCA. This method of "killing by silence" seems to speak for itself. It looks therefore that the pressures from above, mainly from Canterbury, were to stop the independent development of the JHCA, lest it becomes the source and forerunner for the establishment of a broader Jewish Church. This "danger" was particularly visible in such an influential place as Jerusalem. Eventually, the ecclesiastical pressures, direct and indirect, resulted in the dissolution of the JHCA. Most of its learned and able members left the city⁸⁰. In fact they were pushed to leave Jerusalem and to start new careers overseas. This "exodus" of JBY from "Christ Church," mostly to the U.K., can hardly be defined as purely voluntary. It was greatly encouraged by the LJS policy. The LJS could also offer to the emigrants its worldwide contacts at Bible schools and colleges.

Thus although in the beginning it was the LJS that initiated and supported the existence of the JHCA, after a very short period of four years, the Anglicans feared that the *golem* ("robot") which they themselves engineered could become self-willed and uncontrolled⁸¹. Consequently, the factual truth was that those JBY who were connected to the LJS were discouraged from continuing to develop their independent identity through their own organizations and worship⁸². At the same time, however, some other JBY in Jerusalem, led by Mr. Joseph and who were not connected to the LJS, did also try to develop their own groupings without being members of the Church of England, but eventually they left the Holy City and started an independent work in Haifa⁸³.

79. Printed by the LJS at the Operative Jewish Converts' Institution, Palestine House, London, 1909.

80. "Where are our Converts?" in *Bread Cast Upon the Waters* (A Record of Mission Work amongst the Jews), CMJ, London, 1925-1926, pp. 81-82. Cf. J.E. HANAUER, "Report from Jerusalem," *ibid.* See also *Bread Cast Upon the Waters* for the years 1926-1927, pp. 84-87.

81. Concerning the real practicalities of forming a Hebrew Christian Church at the turn of the century see also, for example, F.J. EXLEY, *Our Hearts' Desire* (The Story of the British Society for the Propagating of the Gospel among the Jews), London, 1942, pp. 44, 80.

82. See G. NEREL, "Attempts to establish a 'Messianic Jewish Church' in Eretz Israel," in *Mishkan*, 28, 1998, pp. 35-38.

83. D.C. JOSEPH, *From Darkness to Light*, vol. 2., London, n.d. (1893?), esp. pp. 49, 168-176.

An attempt to establish a Hebrew Christian colony

While most of the ambitious and able JBY left "Christ Church" and Jerusalem, the poor and needy among them had no choice but to remain there. As JBY could not benefit from the *Haluka* (alms distribution) system, completely controlled by rabbinical Jewry, they appealed to their brethren abroad, Jews and Gentiles, particularly in England. Bernard Heilpern, who still carried proudly the title of Patron of the JHCA, took the initiative and wrote a personal appeal letter to the Secretaries of the LJS in 1904, asking for their financial support for the needy Hebrew Christians. Heilpern's personal letter bore his private logo, saying "Heilpern's Villa, Jerusalem, Palestine."⁸⁴ In this letter Heilpern explained that he intended to collect money for the poor and despised Hebrew Christians in Jerusalem. He asked for contributions to buy some land and build up houses for those needy believers "as they get no help neither from Jews nor Christians as all the other sects have in Jerusalem."⁸⁵ The special need was to overcome the housing problems in the Old City between the walls, mainly the situation of overcrowded and unhealthy flats. The idea for this scheme was to build houses outside the walls and to let them out for very low rent. Heilpern even complained that as some Hebrew Christians could not pay the requested rent, they were in danger of being thrown out to the street. He further wrote that "our Association helped till now, but how long can we help? There is not one of the Hebrew Christians in Jerusalem except myself who has got independent means. But one swallow can't bring the summer."⁸⁶ Heilpern urged the leadership of the LJS not only to pray for the desperate situation of the Hebrew Christians in Jerusalem, but also to contribute generously towards the planned building project, as he was sure that this was "to the Glory of God and his people Israel." In fact Heilpern reminded the secretaries of the LJS that they already had supported him in the past, when in 1894 he had built the "Bath Zion" Chapel that served as a house of worship for the Hebrew Christians of Jaffa⁸⁷. However now, he emphasized, he expected from them much more than the grant of £75 that they gave him then, "as it is a much larger work."⁸⁸

84. Bernard Heilpern to the secretaries, Society's House, 16 Lincoln's Inn, London, March 23rd, 1904. CMJ Archives, Bodleiana, Oxford, Miscellaneous Papers, 247B.

85. Bernard Heilpern to the secretaries, p. 2.

86. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

87. About the Hebrew Christian congregation in Jaffa see L.P. WEINBERG, "Jaffa," in *TJJ* 5, 1889, p. 59.

88. Bernard Heilpern to the secretaries p. 4.

To his personal letter Heilpern attached a general statement formulated by the Jerusalem Hebrew Christian Association. In this document members of the JHCA declared that for a very long time they felt the necessity of doing something by which their members would be *permanently* benefited. What they wished was to start a special building project for themselves both for getting more closely united, and for "obtaining a standing" among the other communities in Jerusalem⁸⁹. This statement also revealed that at an exceptional meeting of the JHCA held February 13, 1904, various plans were discussed, and at last it was unanimously decided as follows: "to buy a piece of land, somewhere outside the city, and to build a dozen houses on it. These would be let to the poorest families of the Association at a low rent, which would go towards paying the taxes, and keeping the houses in repair... Thus forming a Hebrew Christian colony, our poor brethren would be relieved of much anxiety, live in better houses, in a healthier locality and pay much lower rent. This, however, will entail a considerable outlay, at least £4,000..."⁹⁰ In other words, alongside mainstream Jewry in Jerusalem, also JBY planned to develop their own colony on the terraces surrounding the walls of the city. Such colonies were not agricultural colonies but simply groups of houses, miniature villages that *de facto* started with the philanthropical activities of Sir Moses Montefiore⁹¹. In those colonies Jews could manage their own affairs to a large extent with their particular institutions. Thus there is no doubt that the many flourishing Jewish colonies/settlements outside the walls of Jerusalem served as a model for the small community of JBY⁹². Practically, such an enterprise also coincided with the Zionist aspirations of those JBY, which developed in parallel to the Herzlian Zionist movement⁹³.

In order to substantiate his letter of appeal, Bernard Heilpern also attached a brief letter of recommendation, not longer than half a sheet of paper, which was signed by the English and the American Consuls in Jerusalem⁹⁴. John Dickson, "His Britannic Majesty's Consul in Jerusalem" was

89. Statement Sheet, "Hebrew Christian Association of Jerusalem," March (?)1904, CMJ Archives, Bodleiana, Oxford, Miscellaneous Papers, 247A.

90. Statement Sheet, *ibid.*

91. See R. KARK, M. OREN-NORDHEIM, *Jerusalem and Its Environs, op. cit.*, esp. pp. 146-150.

92. See, for example, E. W. GURNEY MASTERMAN, "Jewish Settlements Outside the Walls of Jerusalem," in *JMI* 20, 1904, pp. 50-53, 67-69.

93. Cf. G. NEREL, "Messianic Jews and the Modern Zionist Movement," in Torleif Elgvin (ed.), *Israel and Yeshua*, Jerusalem, 1993, pp. 75-84.

94. The sheet of paper (draft?), only pointing to the signatures of the British and American Consuls in Jerusalem, was attached to Bernard Heilpern's letter in the same envelope, but was not specifically marked. See Bodleiana, Oxford, CMJ, Miscellaneous Papers 247B.

willing to write merely one sentence, stating as follows: "I can highly recommend the benevolent scheme of the Hebrew Christian Association." The other signature belonged to Selah Merrill, U.S. Consul in Jerusalem⁹⁵, who wrote even a shorter sentence: "The plan seems to me a good one." Interestingly, these two short consular sentences were presented on one plain piece of paper, not on separate and official letterheads. They rather looked like "remarks," which were probably given offhandedly, perhaps just in order to get rid of those who requested the recommendation. Eventually all these efforts failed. The money needed for building the Hebrew Christian colony was not raised. Between 1900 and 1905, there were about 83 Hebrew Christians, including children, living in Jerusalem⁹⁶. Yet their Association did not survive, as ideologically and financially it was not supported by the mother organization, the LJS. In fact the Anglican Church and most of the Protestant world were not willing, theoretically and practically, to accept a situation in which Jewish Yeshua-believers would establish their independent Church.

Lastly, we should also note that while both Hebrew Christians and Arab Anglicans formed associations to give themselves independence from their mother organizations⁹⁷, only the Arab Anglicans succeeded to realize their aspirations. Besides the theological positions that played a significant role in these relationships, we should also point to another basic reason for the "Arab success and the Jewish failure;" namely, the issue of numbers. The numbers of Hebrew Christians in Ottoman Jerusalem was never proportional to the numbers of Arab Christians, who always outnumbered the Jewish Christians.

Conclusion

In this article I have examined major attempts of Jewish believers in Yeshua in Ottoman Jerusalem to establish a unique presence within — or alongside — the Anglican Church. During the period of about sixty years (1842-1904) we observed that despite Gentile actions to impede the development of a particular Jewish Church, the Jewish members within "Christ

95. See, for example, H. DUDMAN and R. KARK, *The American Colony* (Scenes from a Jerusalem Saga), Jerusalem, 1998, *passim*. Cf. Y. ARIEL and R. KARK, "Messianism, Holiness, Charisma, and Community: The American-Swedish Colony in Jerusalem, 1881-1933," in *Church History* 65, 1996, esp. pp. 653-654.

96. K. CROMBIE, *For the Love of Zion* (Christian Witness and the Restoration of Israel), London, 1991, p. 144.

97. K. CROMBIE, *ibid.*

Church" always insisted on expressing their particular Hebraic identity. However, except for several years, all their group efforts did not last long.

Unlike in the *Gola*, the Jewish Dispersion, we could see in Eretz Israel, and especially in Jerusalem, a new phenomenon. When JBY adopted the faith in Yeshua they actually did not receive an "entry ticket" into the mainstream society, but rather acquired an "exit ticket" from the majority. They became a minority group within the Church that they joined, a Church which was a minority itself in the land. On the other hand, JBY remained a despised, excommunicated and marginalized group outside the Synagogue. The unexpected appointment of a Jewish Bishop in Jerusalem, instead of a Gentile one, to a position initially designated for Prof. Alexander McCaul, had been temporarily used by the Anglican Church for its own needs. In the middle of the 19th century Anglicanism was still struggling with Catholicism to prove its legitimacy. Thus an Anglican Jewish apostolic authority in Jerusalem was a timely opening in its confrontation with the Roman Church on the issue of Apostolic Succession. Yet as soon as the Anglican Bishopric in Jerusalem was established and received worldwide recognition, the specific Jewish aspect was no longer that significant for the Church of England. Therefore, after Michael Solomon Alexander was succeeded by the Gentile Samuel Gobat, the "accident" of re-appointing a Jewish bishop in Jerusalem was never again repeated. Although there was never again a Jewish bishop in the Anglican Bishopric in Jerusalem, the Jewish component was not completely removed from the Protestant Church in the Holy City. A small Hebrew Christian community was always found at "Christ Church," but no Jewish Yeshua-believer was again promoted to the top leadership of this church. Surely, the reason for that could not have been the absence of another suitable Jewish believer in Yeshua.

In general, we should note that the ideas and the deeds that were behind the revival at Jerusalem of the ancient See of St. James were, *de facto*, not original thoughts of the 19th century, but rather the maintenance of models that had reached fruition already in the 16th century. The cooperation between Jewish and Gentile believers in Yeshua around this scheme in Jerusalem had the ideals of the Protestant Reformation in the background, namely the return to the authentic roots of the Church, based upon a Jewish platform with a Jewish remnant. Thus in a sense one can see the attempts to form a Hebrew Christian Church in Jerusalem as a later outcome of the 16th century Reformation — in the direction of preparing a modern Jewish Christian Reformation. With the rise of modern nationalism, and even before Herzlian Zionism, JBY increasingly endeavored to introduce a "New Jewish Emancipation" — namely, that they may legitimately hold a unique

position as contemporary Jewish disciples in Yeshua, facing both Church and Synagogue from a restorationist standpoint. After returning to Eretz-Israel, modern JBY aimed at restoring the ancient Hebrew Christian branch, following the model of the first century Jewish Church. It was especially in the city of Jerusalem that they attempted to revolutionize the almost axiomatic notion, commonly rooted within both Church and Synagogue, that a Jew who believes in Yeshua becomes totally detached, nationally and theologically, from Jewry.

The Jerusalem model of Hebrew Christian associations, which demonstrated the viability of a renaissance of a Jewish Church in the Holy City under the leadership of a Jewish Bishop, especially between the years 1842-1845, had inspired a consciousness worldwide among JBY of the possibility to establish their own corporate entities. Thus, such organized groups appeared simultaneously in various parts of Europe and America during the second half of the 19th century. For example, Carl Schwartz and his friends founded in Great Britain the Hebrew Christian Alliance in 1866⁹⁸. In Russia, Joseph Rabinowitsch founded in Kischineff the Hebrew Christian Church in 1885⁹⁹. In America, before the end of the 19th century, various Hebrew Christian Brotherhoods were established in New York and in Chicago¹⁰⁰.

All these developments still need to be researched and interconnected as a global phenomenon. Furthermore, at the same time another dimension of this subject needs additional investigation; namely, similar trends among JBY who were linked to the Roman Catholic Church. Thus, for example, the Christian Zionism of the Ratisbonne brothers, Theodor and Alphonse¹⁰¹, is most significant for completing the picture of the modern phenomenon of Jewish believers in Yeshua¹⁰².

98. See, for example, I. STANFIELD, *Messianic Jews in the 19th Century and the Founding of the "Hebrew Christian Alliance" in England (1866-1871)*, Jerusalem, 1996, Master's Thesis, Hebrew University (in Hebrew).

99. See K. KJAER-HANSEN, *Joseph Rabinowitz and the Messianic Movement (The Herzl of Jewish Christianity)*, Michigan, 1995.

100. Cf. L. MEYER, "Hebrew Christian Brotherhoods, Unions and Alliances of the Past and Present," in *The Glory of Israel* 1 (1903), pp. 230-232.

101. Cf. E. FRIEDMAN, *Jewish Identity*, New York, 1987, esp. pp. 133-141.

102. See also G. NEREL, "A Marginal Minority Confronting Two Mainstreams: Jewish Followers of Jesus Confronting Judaism and Christianity (1850-1950)," in Shulamit Volkov, ed., *Being Different: Minorities, Aliens and Outsiders in History*, The Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, Jerusalem 2000, pp. 283-297 (Hebrew); M. Benvenisti, *Jerusalem's City of the Dead*, Jerusalem 1990, pp. 21-25, 152-174 (Hebrew).