

# The Mission of the Jewish Christian Community

by Pauline Rose

The name “Jewish Christian Community” usually raises a number of queries in the minds of those who hear it for the first time: What is the Jewish Christian Community? Why should there be a Jewish Christian Community? What is the purpose and mission of the Jewish Christian Community?

We would reply to these questions by saying:

1. We are a community of Jews who believe Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah of Israel, the Saviour of the world; we remain united with our Jewish people, not becoming members of any Gentile Church.
2. We believe that we are called into being to be a group witness for our faith in Israel and to be a spiritual centre and home for all Jews who seek the Messiah.
3. Our mission is to rekindle the light of the Messiah in the synagogue and to proclaim the message of the Kingdom to the Jews and to all nations. We believe that the return of the Messiah is very near, and our message is a call to all Christians to unite under the banner of the Messiah in Israel, and prepare the way to His Kingdom.

We stand in a peculiar position to-day being rejected by both Jew and Gentile. The Jews cannot accept a Jewish Christian Community. They say that if a Jew becomes a Christian he is a traitor to his people and is no longer a member of

the Jewish nation. The Gentiles say that when a Jew is converted he should become a member of one of the existing Gentile churches and be absorbed by the church and nation in which he finds himself.

Thus both sides urge the Christian Jew to renounce his ties with the nation of Israel. The church does not require a Frenchman or a Spaniard or an Indian to sever his connection with his people when he becomes a Christian, nor does a Jew who becomes a theosophist or a spiritualist or a communist cease to be a Jew; Jesus — the crucified and risen Messiah — is the stumbling block (1 Cor. 1: 23).

It is often said by Gentile Christians: Why should there be a separate Jewish Christian Community to add to the numerous Christian communities that already exist?

It seems to be forgotten that the first Christian community was an entirely Jewish one, formed by Jesus Himself, who was a Jew and never severed His connection with His people or negated the law of Judaism, but came to Israel as their promised Messiah, to fulfil the Law completely.

The first church was a Jewish church, a synagogue in which Jesus preached and in which later His disciples preached the gospel of Christ. The Gospel was then passed on to the Gentiles, not because Israel and the synagogue were to be rejected *completely* in God's plan; but they were to be set aside only for a time,

for a period during which grace was given to the Gentiles and the mission of preaching the gospel of salvation passed on to the Gentile church.

From that time until now there has been no Jewish church, no synagogue in which the Gospel, the message of the Kingdom, has been preached. There have been individual Jews throughout the centuries who received the revelation of Christ as the Saviour of the world, but as there was no spiritual home for them amongst their people, they either joined the Gentile Church or remained lonely and unacknowledged by both Jew and Gentile.

For two thousand years this has been the accustomed way of Christianity in the world, and has come to be accepted generally as the only way. It is like many other things shaped by the spirit for a particular function, taking a visible form which is retained by habit long after the spirit has left it and its function has been fulfilled.

So it is with the Gentile church to-day. Its form remains but its function is coming to an end, the power of the spirit is leaving it.

Because the mission of the Gentile church has been a form so familiar as to become almost a habit, not requiring any new thought or action, the appearance of a Jewish Christian Movement causes a disturbance on these smooth unruffled waters. Why the need to be disturbed ?

The fact that a Jewish Christian Community appears again in our time, continuing in the way of the first Jewish

Christian Community is indeed something that demands attention. Is it not the most significant sign that the "fulness of the Gentiles be come in" and that the "blindness in part" that happened to Israel is beginning to be removed ?

Those who do not wish to be disturbed on their accustomed path reject it, fight against it and return to the comfort of

their established niche in the scheme of things handed down to them. Others listen with reservation, not wishing to enter into any battle, but preferring to remain in familiar

surroundings. Then there are those who read their Bibles with eyes opened by faith, and long before the appearance of a Jewish Christian Community, waited for this sign from God that His grace was returning to His people Israel, that He was preparing them for the return of the Messiah into their midst, to establish His Kingdom on earth. These, chosen by God to rejoice with His people, were the ones who prayed for us while we were still traversing the difficult path which led us to our Messiah; who greeted us with joy, with love and understanding when we appeared; who by their prayers and faith have helped us to receive the power to remain firm in our faith, united in love and prepared to follow our Messiah to the end—to the day of His return.

Our mission is two-fold: to the Jews and to the Gentiles. Our Community is established in Jerusalem, where the synagogue of Christ appears once more in Israel, continuing in direct succession to the first Jewish church. That is the centre

of our work, where the light of the Messiah is kindled. It is a spiritual home for the lonely ones who have confessed their faith in Jesus and are misunderstood by Jew and Gentile alike. It is also a home where help and support are given in time of need, both spiritual and material, and it is a centre of prayer, where channels are opened up for the healing and blessing of Israel and the nations.

In this country and others, it is our mission to proclaim the message of the Kingdom, the urgency of the times in which we live, when all signs point to the nearness of the return of Christ. It is a call to all Christians to abandon those things which cause division, and dwell only upon the things which unite—to be made one in the redemptive blood of Christ. It is also a call to prayer.

The message of the Jewish Christian Community in these days disturbs and separates. It disturbs those who dislike being shaken out of their spiritual torpor and numbness; it separates those who do not wish to take the word of God seriously from those who accept the prophecies as God's promises to Israel, and have faith in their complete fulfilment in God's appointed time. In this way it divides, but its mission is to unite all who have been

given the vision of the approaching Kingdom of God on earth. The Jewish Christian Community is one with all Christians everywhere who share this vision, no matter to what church, religious group or nation they belong.

We have the promise that when Christ returns all Israel will see Him as their Messiah and King, and through Israel all the families of the earth will be blessed. The Jewish Christian Community is the beginning of Israel's conversion. To-day we are only a few, forming a bridge leading from the time of the Gentiles to the Kingdom of Israel.

John the Baptist preached the first coming of the Lord in Israel; we preach the second coming, and with his words we call: "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of God is at hand."

The Jewish Christian Community is a community of Jews, separated for its particular mission, but the Jewish Christian Brotherhood of the Kingdom founded in Basle in 1952 is the development of the Movement embracing Christians from every denomination and every race, a Movement which begins in the last days of this age and leads to the beginning of the coming age — the millennial Kingdom.

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