

## EDITORIAL

Welcome to the first edition of News and Views for 2022.

I am now back from my sabbatical and looking forward to all the opportunities 2022 will bring. In terms of my sabbatical, I have placed my sabbatical report on the Romans 15:8 blog (Feb), so please have a look at this if you are interested in my sabbatical activities.

Clearly, we are all within CMJ looking forward to an emerging ministry context which has fewer covid restrictions and many more 'live' meetings and ministry events. These 'live' meetings will compliment and build upon the excellent online meetings which CMJ has been hosting. For example, over 300 booked in for our Shofar Event which featured the teaching of Dr Lois Tverberg. How we adjust and plan to a post pandemic context seems

particularly relevant as I am writing this editorial on the day when the UK government announced a lifting of many covid restrictions, and in many ways the immediate future looks encouraging. Yet we must proceed with empathy, care and caution.

In terms of this edition of News and Views the focus is on the historic event which took place at Rochester Cathedral (see center page article). In addition to this we have a key article on a Holocaust Memorial Day Service, as well as the regular Thinking Aloud reflection. I trust that there will be much here which will inspire and encourage you.

With thanks for your interest and on-going support for CMJ,

Shalom

Alex

The **AGM** of the Vincent Society (the legal name of the charity known as CMJ) will be on **Friday 8th July 2022 at 9.00pm** at **Yarnfield Conference Centre, Yarnfield Park, Yarnfield, Stone ST15 0NL**. All members are very welcome to attend and vote - in particular to vote on the election of trustees. Nominations for new trustees must be received by **31st May 2022** - for more details of how to make a nomination see our website [www.cmj.org.uk](http://www.cmj.org.uk) or call **01623 883960** if you do not have internet access.

We give thanks for those who have remembered CMJ in their wills during 2021, this has generously provided over **£97,000** to support the ongoing ministry. If you would like to know more about investing in the work of CMJ UK through a legacy just contact the Office (**01623 883960 / [office@cmj.org.uk](mailto:office@cmj.org.uk)**) for our Legacies leaflet.

## Thinking Aloud: A Tradition on Wheels



**"A tradition on wheels"** is the intriguing phrase used by author Amos Elon in his book - *Jerusalem, Battlegrounds of Memory* (Kodansha Globe, 1989), to describe how exiled Jewish communities viewed the Torah. This understanding of Torah meant that communities could be sustained whenever and wherever they were forced to settle following exile or persecution. In addition to this **'tradition on wheels'**,

Jewish communities also took with them their memories, especially their memories of Jerusalem. Such memories reinforced with the Passover exhortation - "Next year in Jerusalem" gave to many Jewish people their hope and cultural identity.

During the run up to Easter, I will be leading several CMJ Passover meals. This will be the first time in three years for leading such meals due to covid protocols. As I prepare to do this, I was thinking aloud about what we take with us on our journeys of faith, and what we look to in order to sustain our hope and identity. I don't think we have **'a tradition on wheels'** but we do celebrate the reality of Jesus - we look back and remember His death (Messiah has died), here in the present we share His presence (Messiah is risen) and we look forward to His coming again (Messiah will come again). I hope this reality will sustain us in the journeys ahead.

Happy remembering and travelling.

Alex

# HISTORY UNFOLDING BEFORE OUR EYES

Sometimes, hopefully often in ministry we sense what has taken place has been 'worthwhile'. Occasionally we may believe something may have been 'significant'. Very rarely, if at all would we dare to claim something to be of 'historical importance'. However, what took place at Rochester Cathedral at 12 Noon, on 28th October 2021 was worthy of such a description.

As the Cathedral clock struck twelve the Dean of Rochester Cathedral, the Very Revd Dr Philip Hesketh called the congregation who were packed into the 7th century Ithamar Chapel to worship, and spoke the following words of introduction- "In the Name of Jesus, the Messiah of Israel and head of the Church, and following appropriate decision making at a local level, we meet to celebrate the identity of Paul Louis Stevens as a Jewish Believer in Jesus within our Church community."



*Paul Stevens celebrates*

Following on from this welcome and introduction, prayers were offered, key Biblical texts read, the Shema was sung, and the following statement was made by the Church community - "As a local Church community and within this context of welcoming Jewish Believers we joyfully affirm the following six core convictions:

- We affirm the election of Israel and the irrevocable nature of God's unfinished work with the Jewish people regarding salvation and the role of Israel as a blessing to the nations.
- We affirm the calling upon Jewish people who come to a saving faith in Jesus to foster their Jewish identity and live faithfully as Jewish people in ways consistent with the New Covenant.
- We affirm our commitment to share the Gospel with Jewish people with diligence, sensitivity and faithfulness.
- We affirm our commitment to root out all forms of anti-Semitism from our Church community and wider society.
- We affirm our commitment to be a voice within our wider Church structures in order to help others understand and value these convictions.
- We affirm our willingness to work in partnership with others and to share our resources in ways which honour and reflect these convictions."

At this point Paul Stevens shared his testimony and told how his father a refugee from Odessa, had changed his name from Shlisselman to Stevens. Paul also spoke movingly about his faith in Jesus and how the LORD is leading him in his life and ministry. Following this testimony and an affirmation of faith a prayer of affirmation and anointing took place as Paul knelt before the congregation - the prayer took this form - "Most Merciful God and Father, You have set the Church in the world to be a living witness to the Gospel and You equip us with the gifts we need to do this. We thank you for the unity within diversity of Your Church, and today we thank you for and celebrate the presence within the Church of Jewish Believers in Jesus. We rejoice in the significance of this and the promise of blessings this brings. We pray now for Paul and anoint him with this oil, we ask that You will pour out your Holy Spirit afresh on Paul. Protect, guide, and empower Paul so in the fulness of Your plans Paul may walk closely with You and will bring many blessings to the Church and to the wider Jewish community. We ask all of this in the Name of Jesus, the Messiah of Israel and LORD of all, Amen."

As the service concluded many from the congregation including Gerry Cohen representing the British Messianic Jewish Alliance shared how blessed they had been to be part of this occasion. Special thanks were also given to Jonathan Newman of the Barn Torah Group who led the music.

This service has come about through many years of hard-work, theological networking and pastoral discussion led by Rev Alex Jacob (CEO CMJ UK). CMJ sees this work as part of the encouragement and educational ministry within the wider witness of CMJ. It is our hope that this service sets a historical and theological precedent for celebrating the identity of many Jewish Believers within the Church. While we appreciate this service may not be helpful in every context, nevertheless in the months ahead we hope and pray many will follow on from Paul and will have similar acts of celebration and affirmation within their own Church networks. CMJ will prioritize helping this happen.

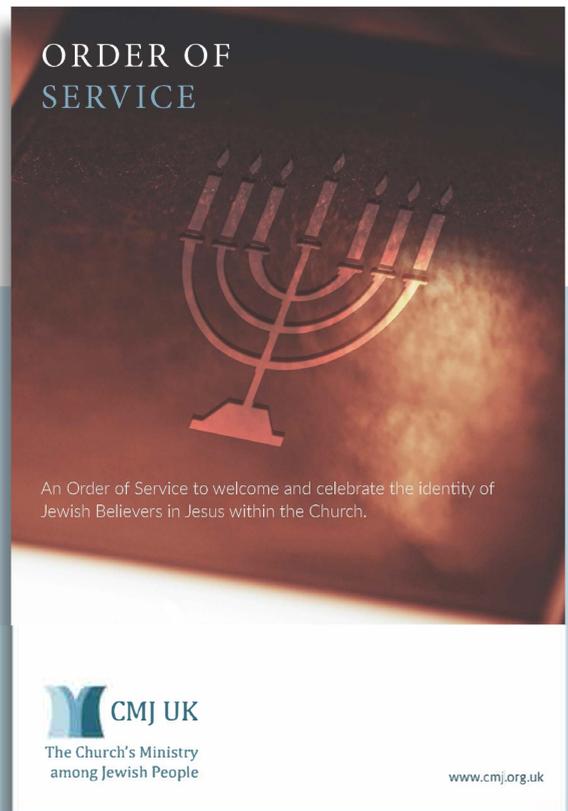
If you are a Church leader and/or a Jewish Believer in Jesus wanting to explore issues around this service, please feel free to contact in confidence Alex Jacob via email - alexj@cmj.org.uk Also please note that packs containing Orders of Service, certificates and a booklet containing background information is available from the CMJ shop via the CMJ UK website.

**An additional insight to this event is given by Dr. Richard Harvey who was at the event and wrote these words:**

The service sets a historic precedent for the recognition and welcoming of Jewish disciples of Jesus within the Anglican Church. It also raises again the ongoing challenge of responding to the statues of Ecclesia and Synagoga (Church and Synagogue) that have adorned the entrance to the Cathedral Chapter Room (now the Chapter Library) since the 14th century. The two female figures represent Ecclesia and Synagoga, the Christian Church and the Jewish people. Synagoga holds a broken staff and the tables of the law held upside down, wearing a blindfold to symbolise ignorance of the Messiah. They reflect that belief that Judaism as a religion was made unnecessary after the coming of Christ. It is starkly anti-Semitic, dating from some 50 years after the Jews were expelled from England in 1290.



*Ecclesia and Synagoga*



Can the welcome, recognition and consecration of Paul Stevens begin to make amends and put right the centuries old "teaching of contempt" that led to modern antisemitism?

*Dr. Richard Harvey*

# Wimborne Minster Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) Service 29th Jan 2022

This annual HMD Service has been organised by CMJ Rep Edith Powney since 2017. It is a highly respected event with carefully chosen input and very well attended.

This year, CMJ Rep Rev Greg Price both led the service and gave the address.

CMJ Rep Cynthia Wilson played the grand piano and accompanied Alex Cook who sang two psalms, one being, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord' from Psalm 118 in his deep resonant tone. CMJ Rep and Jewish Believer Rev Ralph Goldenberg took part in the service and CMJ Reps David and Ruth Clinch and many other CMJ supporters attended as did I.

Rev Canon Andrew Rowland opened the service with a warm welcome and a beautiful prayer.

The Rev Price spoke about the elephant in the room - how we are not supposed to talk about the Holocaust and Jesus in the same breath or to speak to Jewish people about Jesus.

He went on to say how it was love that had been the motive for the work of CMJ as they went out to Israel in the early 19C, 'When the Jewish people were hungry they fed them, when they needed medical care they gave it, and when they needed education they provided it. Love made them do these things.' he said.

Greg spoke about volunteering with CMJ in Farnsfield and also his many years in the Holocaust Museum in Laxton, where he counted it a privilege to serve Holocaust survivors in the cafe.

This Holocaust Service was aimed at the Church this year and Rev Price showed how the Church had been a mixed blessing to the Jewish people and throughout history had persecuted the very people who had given us the Bible and the Jewish Messiah, Jesus. The Church is called to repent. To mark the 400th anniversary of the Synod of Oxford where Britain decided to expel the Jewish community from Britain. He spoke about a coming service of repentance on 8th May led by the Anglican Church.

Rev Price continued to outline the anti-Semitic views and rhetoric found in some of the early Church Fathers and mentioned some such as Martin Luther. He also spoke of those Righteous Gentiles, such as Prince Phillip's mother, Princess Alice, who saved many Jewish people from death and of the thousands who were believers in their Messiah, Jesus and who also perished alongside their fellow Jews in the Holocaust.

Where was God in the Holocaust? It is a question frequently asked and one no one should answer lightly. Rick Wienecke, a Canadian sculptor created The Fountain of Tears. Rick says it is a "Sculptured dialogue of suffering between the Holocaust and the Crucifixion," pointing to its different elements which represent the progressive stages of both the Holocaust and the crucifixion.'

Pastor Werner Oder, whose father was a Nazi Officer, spoke on Rick's sculpture with insight and compassion.

The congregation was silent, moved by the messages they had heard and the personal impact and responsibility we share.

Whilst many Jewish people who normally attend did not come because we were also hearing about Jesus, some were there. A holocaust survivor who attended with his daughter wrote that whilst he still couldn't understand the connection with The Fountain of Tears and the Holocaust, he went on to say "I was, however, very impressed with both Pastors whose messages were very much from the heart and give me great hope in Anglo Christian-Jewish relationships."

Love was CMJ's motive when they went out across the world and to Israel and love was the motive of those who organised or took part in the Wimborne Holocaust Memorial service. Love must be our motive as we engage with the Jewish community. It is time for the Church to repent and change. A visible stand against anti-Semitism would be an apt beginning.

Jane Moxon

*A transcript of Rev Greg Price's sermon is available to read of the CMJ website soon [www.cmj.org.uk](http://www.cmj.org.uk) or request a copy from the CMJ UK Office.*

You can now keep up to date with Rev Alex Jacob's Romans 15:8 Blog on our YouTube channel. Each month Alex will be recording his Blog as a Podcast!

There will be added teaching to the Podcast so please do subscribe to our YouTube channel [www.youtube.com/c/cmjuk](http://www.youtube.com/c/cmjuk)



Did you know you can join our Zoom meetings by dialling up from a land line?

If you'd like to join our meetings by phone, we can send you the number! Please get in touch on **01623 883960**



Eagle Lodge, Hexgreave Park, Farnsfield, Notts, NG22 8LS, England.  
Tel: 01623 883960 Email: [office@cmj.org.uk](mailto:office@cmj.org.uk) Web: [www.cmj.org.uk](http://www.cmj.org.uk)

News & Views Editor: Rev. Alex Jacob  
Layout Design: Good News Design

CMJ UK is a working title of The Vincent Society, a charitable incorporated organisation, England & Wales Registered Charity Number 1153457