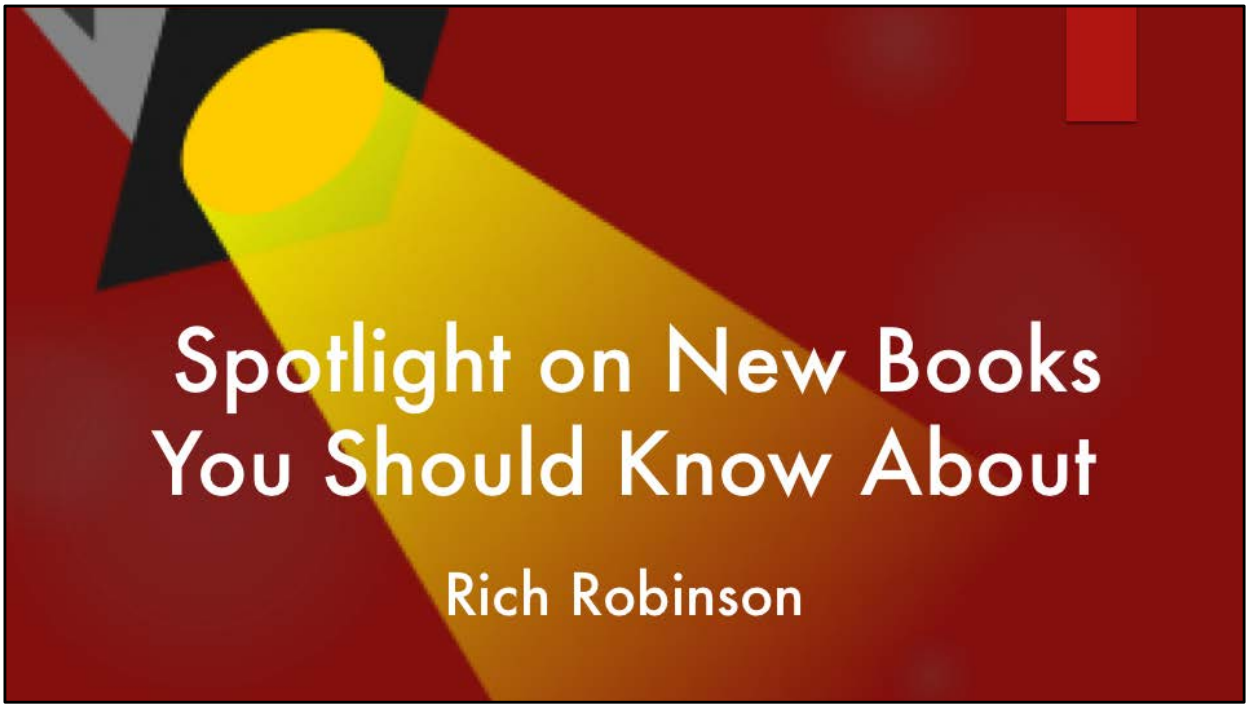
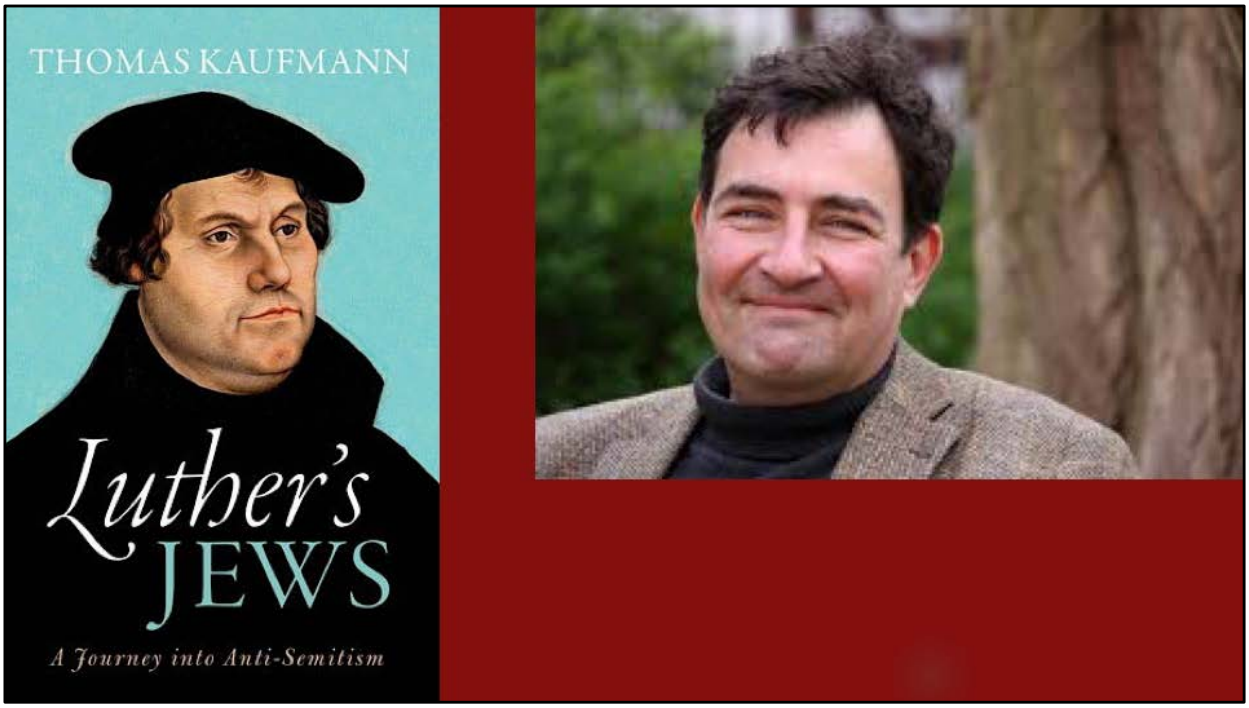
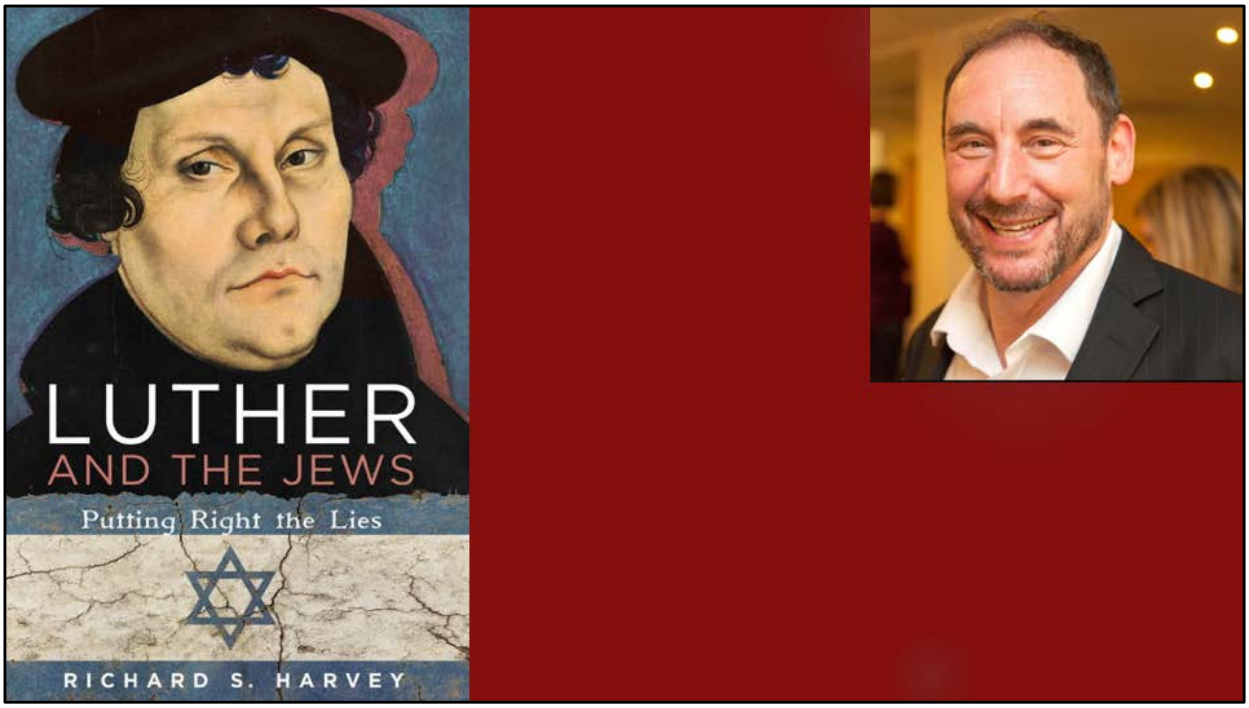

Spotlight on New Books
You Should Know About
Rich Robinson

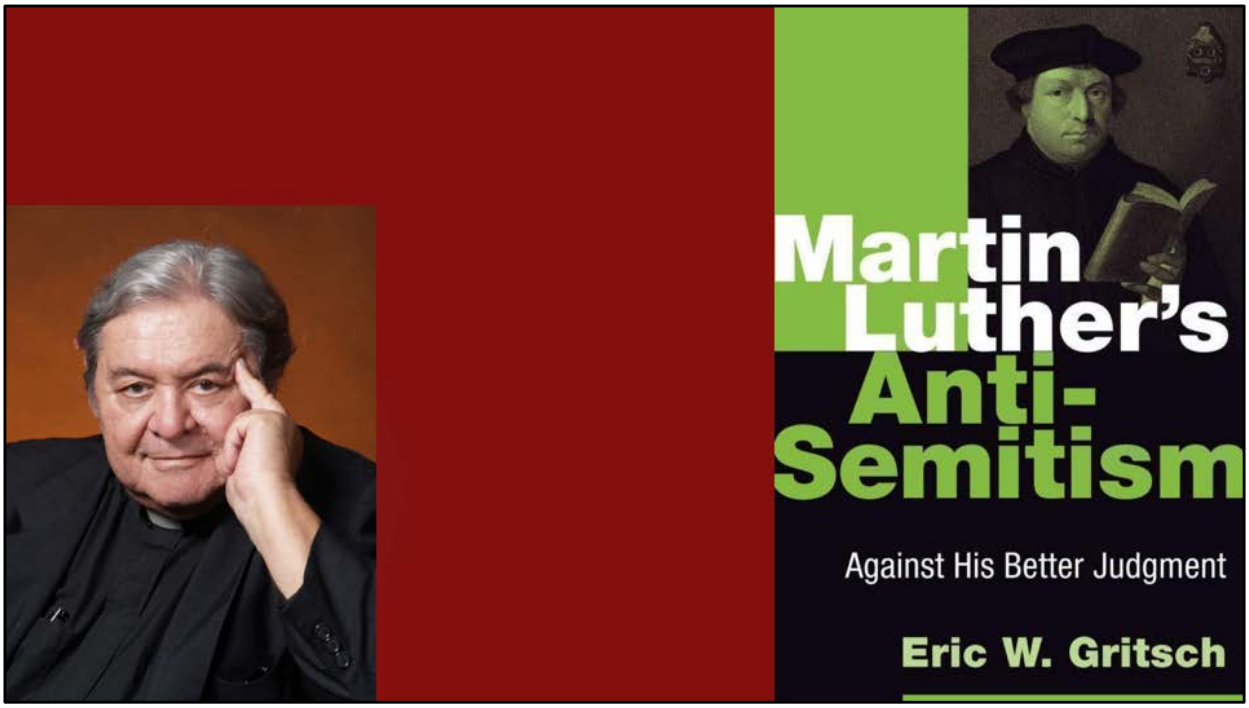
HISTORY



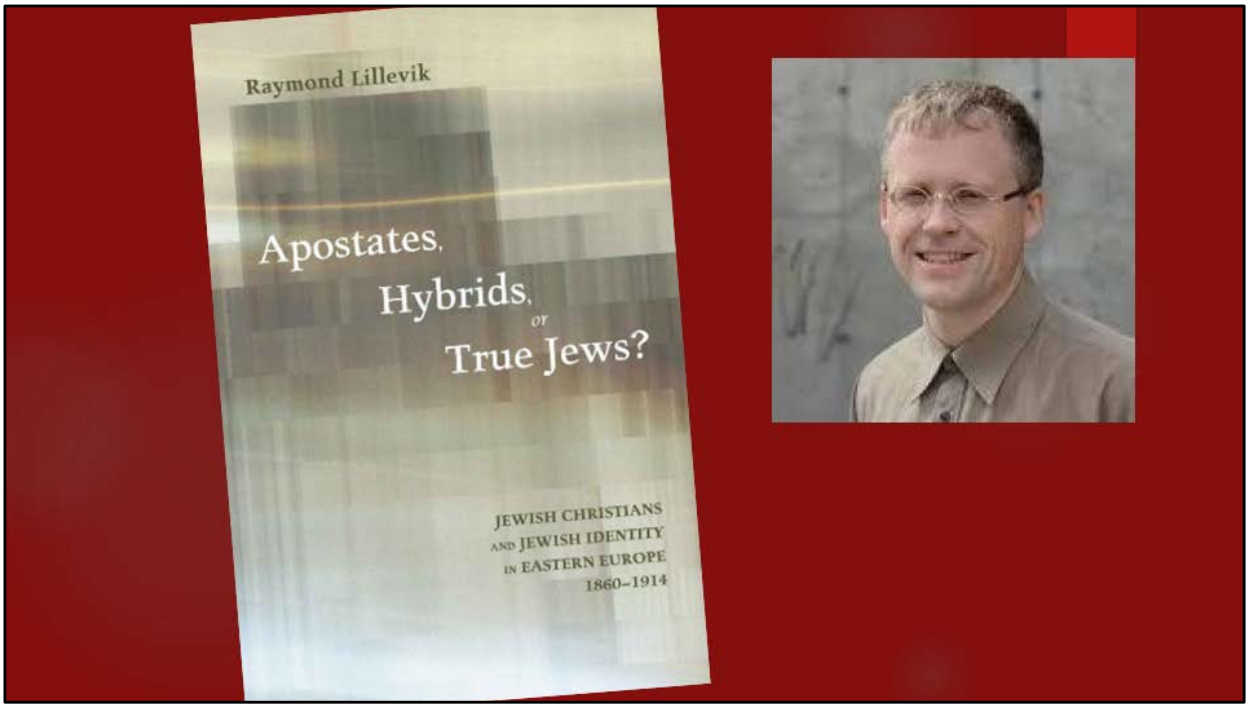
2017 marked the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Among other things, that meant a renewed spotlight was focused on Martin Luther and his attitude towards the Jews. Three books on the subject were noteworthy, though one of them was actually published five years earlier. Thomas Kaufmann, a German theologian in Göttingen, penned *Luther's Jews: A Journey into Anti-Semitism*. One of the main takeaways is that the common picture we have of Luther is wrong. Very often we hear, and repeat, that Luther began friendly to the Jews and only turned vitriolic when they failed to respond to the gospel. Kaufmann shows, however, that Luther was a product of his age. He was never philo-Semitic. His somewhat more positive attitude toward Jews early on was really part of his polemic against the Catholic Church, for he felt it was the failure of the Catholics that prevented Jews coming to Jesus. In fact, his more open early attitude was really a "social experiment"—he would act positively towards the Jews "until I can see what effect I have had." Interestingly, in later centuries the more open or the more anti-Semitic Luther was given prominence according to the attitudes of the time. Like Jesus himself, Luther has at times been molded into the exemplar du jour for whatever cultural currents happen to be running.



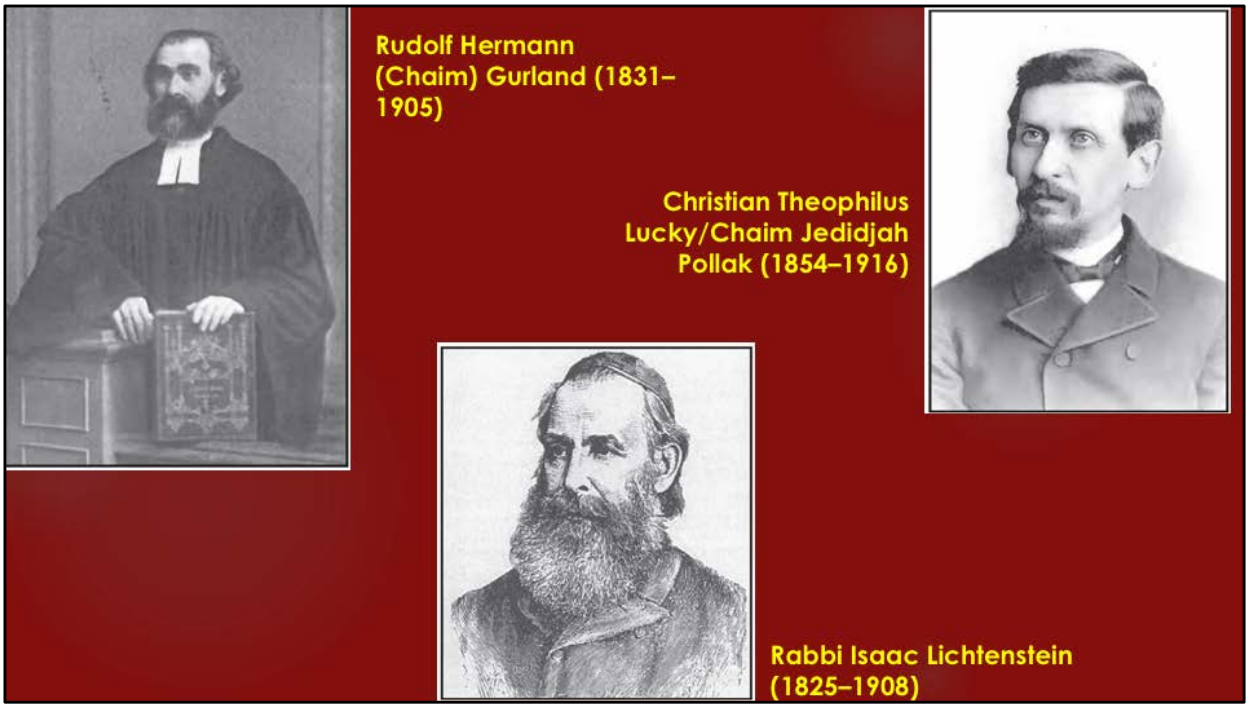
Richard Harvey, of course known to many of us in LCJE, wrote *Luther and the Jews: Putting Right the Lies* as part primer, part personal journey and part call to action. Harvey rehearses the untruths about the Jews that Luther promulgated, covering four of his book, though he also spends time on the positive accomplishments of Luther. At the end of the day, the book is a call for reconciliation. This includes advocacy for the removal of the *Judensau*, the "Jew-Pig" sculpture which remains to this day on the façade of the Wittenberg church and depicts a rabbi inspecting beneath the tail of a sow (=studying the Talmud) and Jews as suckling piglets. He includes a copy of his petition for the removal. Those who have followed the author over the past several years will be aware of his involvement in a number of conferences seeking reconciliation among various groups of believers, so this book is of a piece with his activities in that area. And *Luther and the Jews* provides a much-needed voice: that of a Messianic Jew.



The final Luther contribution dates to 2012; it is the late Eric Gritsch's *Martin Luther's Anti-Semitism: Against His Better Judgment*. Gritsch was an American Lutheran scholar. This book includes a wide-ranging overview of anti-Semitism. Gritsch seems more inclined to attribute Luther's changing attitudes to failed attempts at evangelization, and tells us that Luther's views of Jews were "against his better judgment," that is, against his very own principles that he enunciated. Gritsch includes many primary quotes from Luther. His book useful for seeing what Luther himself had to say, as well as for his excellent historical treatment of anti-Semitism. Readers may wish to decide if Luther's anti-Semitism was indeed "against his better judgment," or whether it was more thoroughly embedded in his life and theology than the phrase would seem to indicate.

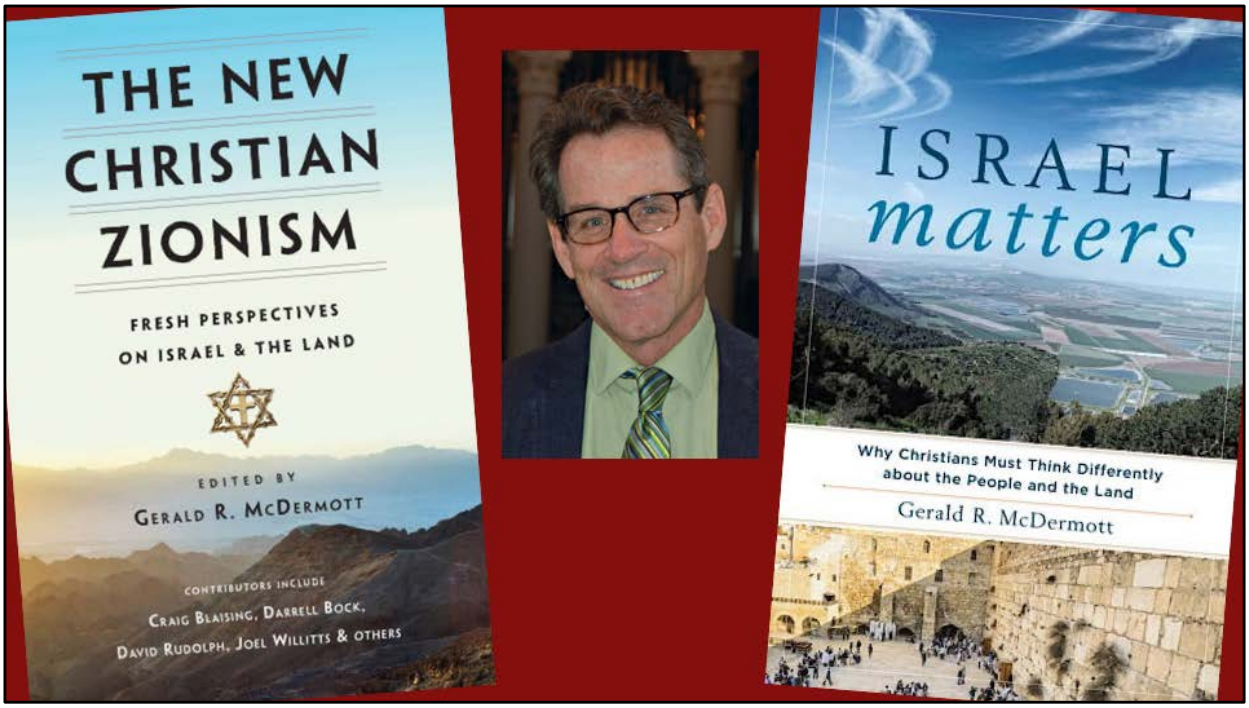


On a completely different note, we have Raymond Lillevik's 2014 book on *Apostates, Hybrids, or True Jews? Jewish Christians and Jewish Identity in Eastern Europe, 1860–1914*. This is a revision of the author's Ph.D. dissertation at the Norwegian School of Theology. Two of his professors, Reidar Hvalvik and Oskar Skarsaune, will be known to many in the LCJE circles. In the same stream of judicious Scandinavian scholarship, Lillevik provides a balanced, thought-provoking and often lively look at three late nineteenth-early twentieth century Jewish followers of Jesus, and the identity issues that surrounded their faith.



Some readers will want to bypass the opening chapter on methodology and dive right into the biographies of three Messianic Jews from Eastern Europe: Chaim (Rudolf Hermann) Gurland, Chaim Jedidjah Pollak (aka Christian Theophilus Lucky), and Isaac Lichtenstein. Gurland turned from what he called his "claustrophobic" upbringing in Orthodox Judaism, and for his faith in Yeshua paid the price of two annulled marriages, and removal of the children from a third marriage to a Jewish believer. He also became a missionary and pastor. Pollak or Lucky studied at a Presbyterian school, was ordained Lutheran, and was affiliated with the Seventh-Day Baptists. He opposed Jewish missions, affirming that Jewish believers should stay within the orbit of the Jewish people — perhaps more of an either/or situation than it would be today. He produced a magazine directed towards Jewish nonbelievers in Yeshua. Finally, Lichtenstein publicly professed his faith in Jesus while still a rabbi in Hungary, and continued to remain in his pulpit due to a variety of social and religious factors that Lillevik analyzes. He would not involve himself with the Jewish mission societies; and he was never baptized into any particular church body, but baptized himself in a *mikveh*! In some ways he acted as a free-floating missionary to the Jewish people. Lillevik finally describes how each of them related to Judaism, the Christian community, and the Jewish believing world. As you can imagine, there is much to contemplate vis-à-vis the situation of modern Messianic Jews.

ISRAEL



Moving on to the subject of Israel, Gerald McDermott is Anglican Chair of Divinity at Beeson Divinity School. *The New Christian Zionism* collects essays while *Israel Matters* is a popular and personal statement. Both make the case that the people of Israel as well as the land of Israel need to be seriously reckoned with in Christian theology, and that such a reckoning cannot be confined to dispensationalism. These are really two very significant books that I would put at the top of my reading list. Keep in mind that the essays can be quite academic, while the other book has a more general audience in mind.

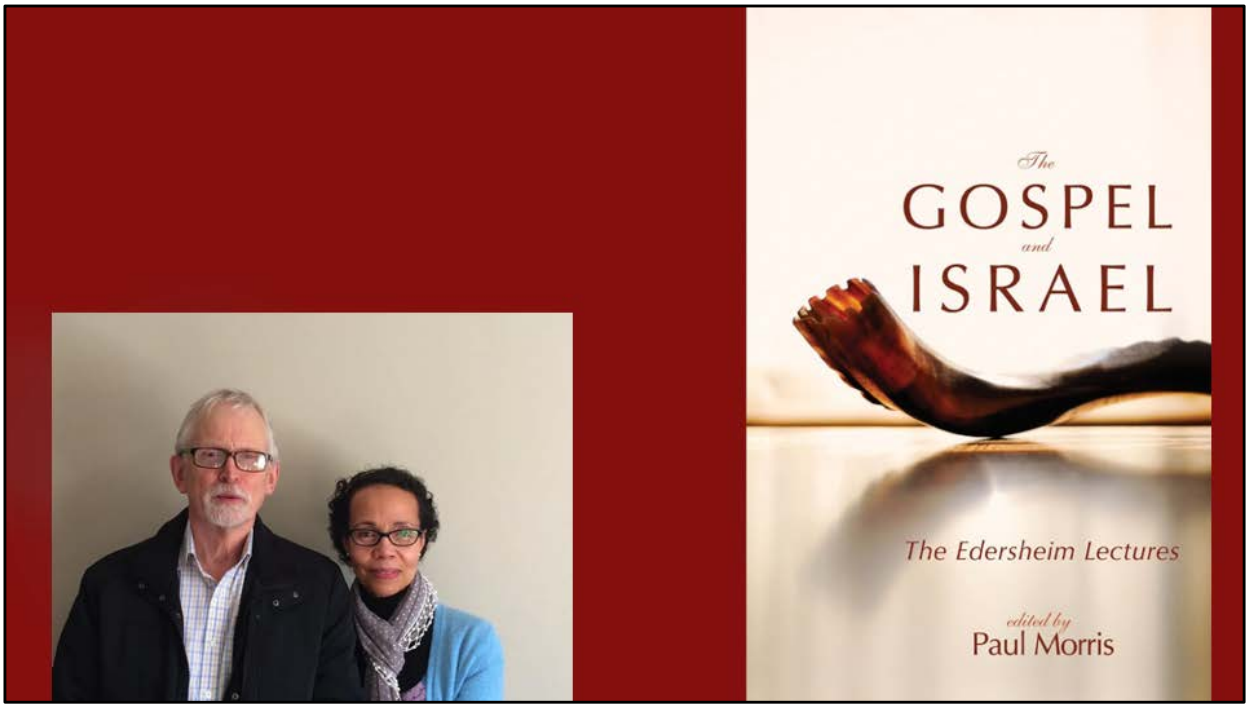
The New Christian Zionism is an important argument both for the very existence of the State of Israel and for the theological place of that state in God's plan. Its importance lies in large measure in going beyond the scholarly "near obsession with dispensationalism" when it comes to discussions of Israel and Zionism. This is what is "new" about this Christian Zionism. The intent is not to denigrate dispensationalism but to give a fresh start to the discussion in which the point at issue runs counter to the views of many non-Zionists. The essays are divided out into historical, biblical, theological, and practical "so-what?" sections. The authors range from Craig Blaising and Darrell Bock, both from Dallas Theological Seminary, to David Rudolph and Mark Kinzer. The strong suit of the biblical section is that is offers fresh arguments for the

importance of the Land of Israel in the New Testament. In my opinion, it really takes the discussion to whole new exegetical level. Then there is the more popular book *Israel Matters*. This actually includes biblical material not in the essay volume, such as the book of Hebrews. And Since McDermott is the sole author of *Israel Matters*, we catch glimpses of his exegesis and theology not evident in the earlier book. Of particular interest may be his view of the "Israel of God" in Galatians 6:16. In McDermott's view, the Israel of God is neither the church nor (as some have argued) Jewish believers in Jesus, but the totality of (largely) nonbelieving Israel, or Israel including Gentiles as "associate members."

This is part of a series where evangelicals of different theological viewpoints address particular topics. Here we have the subject of the relationship between Israel and the Church. Chad Brand, a Baptist, is overall editor of this volume. The format, like most in the series, has an essay by each writer followed by responses from the others. I'm not sure what I really think of this format. It might work better in a panel discussion than in a book, and I think some readers might end up unresolved in their own minds — even though the intent is to help people think through the issues and, hopefully, arrive at a conclusion.

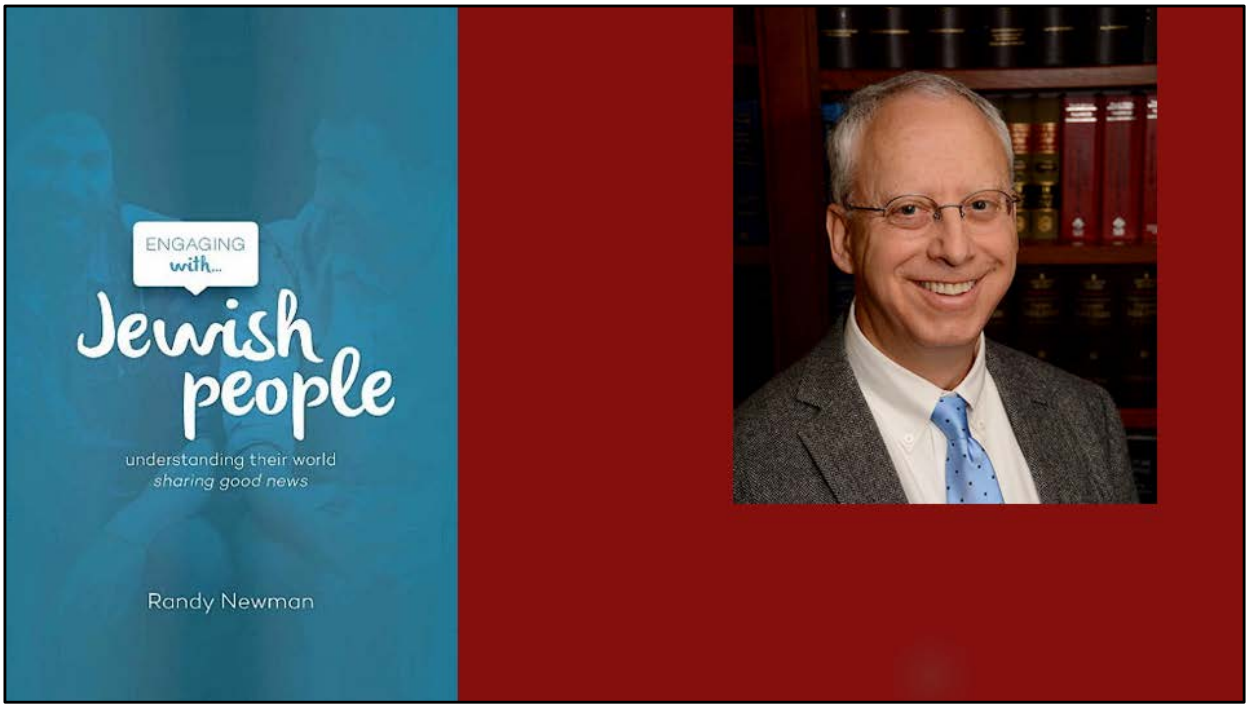
In any event, Chad Brand is himself a Baptist. The book includes a chapter on "the traditional covenantal view" by the late Robert Reymond of Knox Theological Seminary, while Robert Thomas from The Masters Seminary gives us "the traditional dispensational view." However, that is not the end of the story. Robert Saucy from Talbot offers "the progressive dispensational view," and finally Chad Brand and Tom Pratt Jr., a Christian writer, together offer something you might not have heard before, "the progressive covenant view." Without going into detail on this last view, we can note that the authors disagree with the idea that the church replaces Israel, and quote Richard Bauckham that the biblical picture "indicates not so much the replacement of the national people of God as the abolition of its national limits."

However, in common with most other covenant theology, the authors do not see a return to the Land but rather that the land promises are now to be fulfilled in their entire cosmos. The support the modern state of Israel, but on grounds of justice rather than fulfillment of divine promises. Well, I can't unpack anything more here but it's a good look at some of the options, though academic and pretty detailed. And there's no summing up chapter, which leaves the reader pretty much to piece together everything as best he or she can.

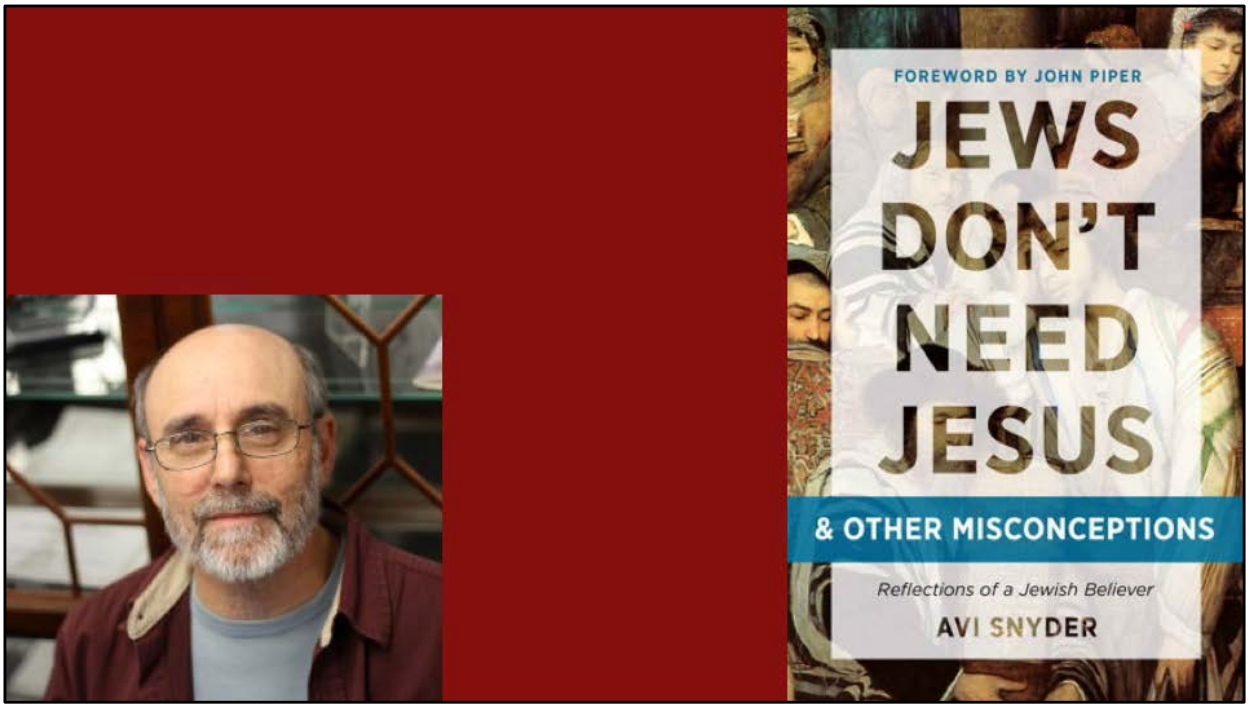


In 2014 we also saw Paul Morris's edited collection of nine stimulating lectures, *The Gospel and Israel*, given at the annual Edersheim Lecture. This is a lecture series established by Christian Witness to Israel, with whom Morris serves. Not all the authors would agree on all matters surrounding the theological significance of the Jewish people and their future in God's plan (as one example, we have several views on Gal. 6:16, "the Israel of God"). But they all reflect a broadly Reformed theological outlook, one that is supportive of Jewish evangelism and that generally affirms a positive theological significance to the Jewish people (though not always in the identical way). The emphases in this book need to be heard among Reformed churches, just as McDermott's books need to be read among non-dispensationalists.

JEWISH EVANGELISM

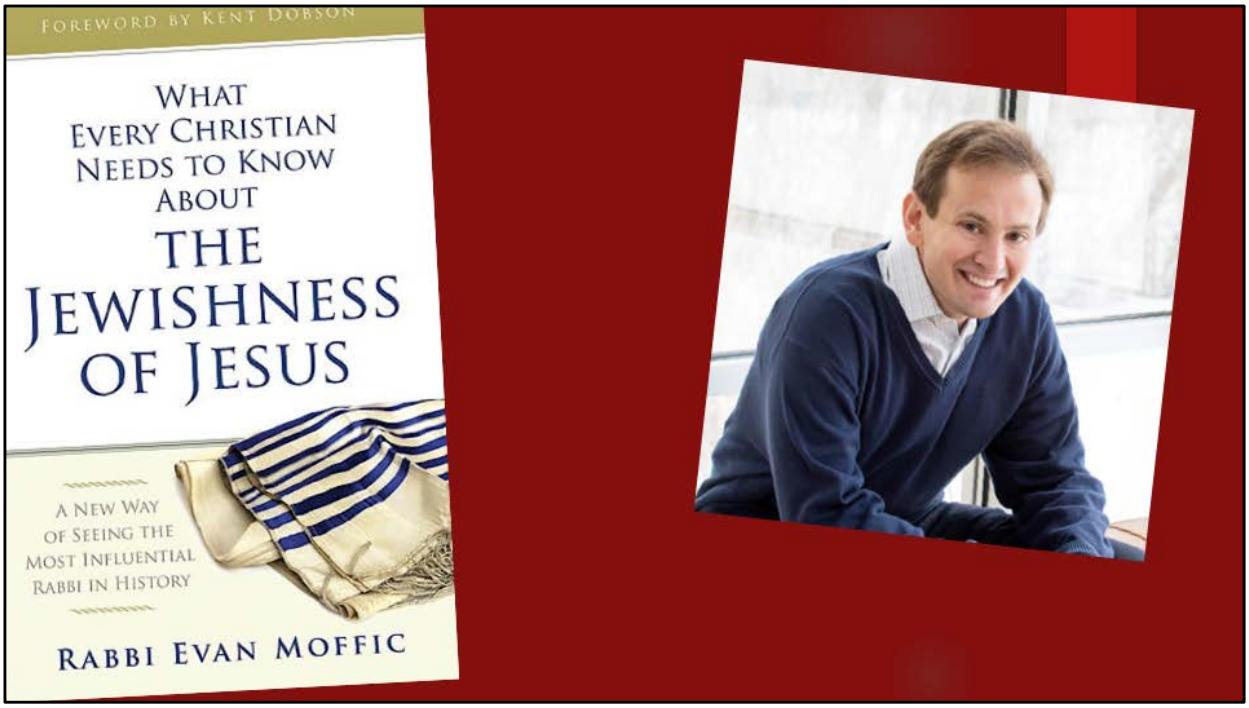


Here I can mention two books. Randy Newman has given us *Engaging with Jewish People: Understanding Their World, Sharing Good News*. Newman is a Jewish believer who has worked with Campus Crusade for Christ, so has a heart for evangelism. While I didn't find this quite as good a read as another one of his books, *Questioning Evangelism*, it's a helpful guide to understanding and then engaging with Jewish people about the gospel. At 128 pages, it's a short read, has good humor and Yiddishkeit. Plus, he gets in a quote from Moishe Rosen, a warning about Yechiel Eckstein, and a version of the four spiritual laws.

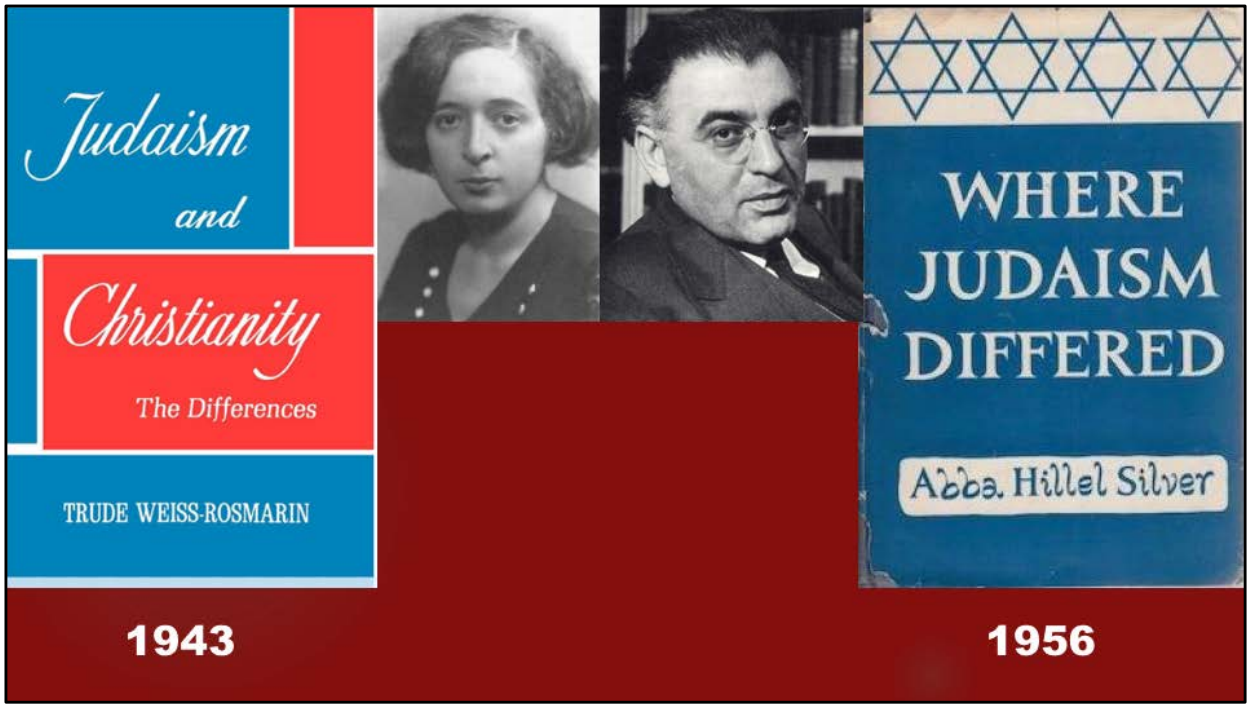


My colleague at Jews for Jesus, Avi Snyder, has written *Jews Don't Need Jesus and Other Misconceptions: Reflections of a Jewish Believer*. Avi addresses some sixteen objections to bringing the gospel to the Jewish people. Here at LCJE-NA, we're more than familiar with those in North America even in the evangelical orbit who are confused about or disagree with Jewish evangelism. As Avi serves as our European Director, he has encountered similar views especially in Germany. This is really a resource book to address very specific objections that we've either heard or will hear at some point. For example, "Silent Love Speaks Louder than Gospel Words" or "It's Time to Comfort, Not Confront" or "Jews Are Already Saved because They're Natural, Elected, and Chosen." As Avi writes, "Perhaps . . . you view silence as a gesture of love. However, as Messianic Jews, we cannot be silent, because our love compels us to speak. Two loves—one arguing for silence, the other pleading for utterance."

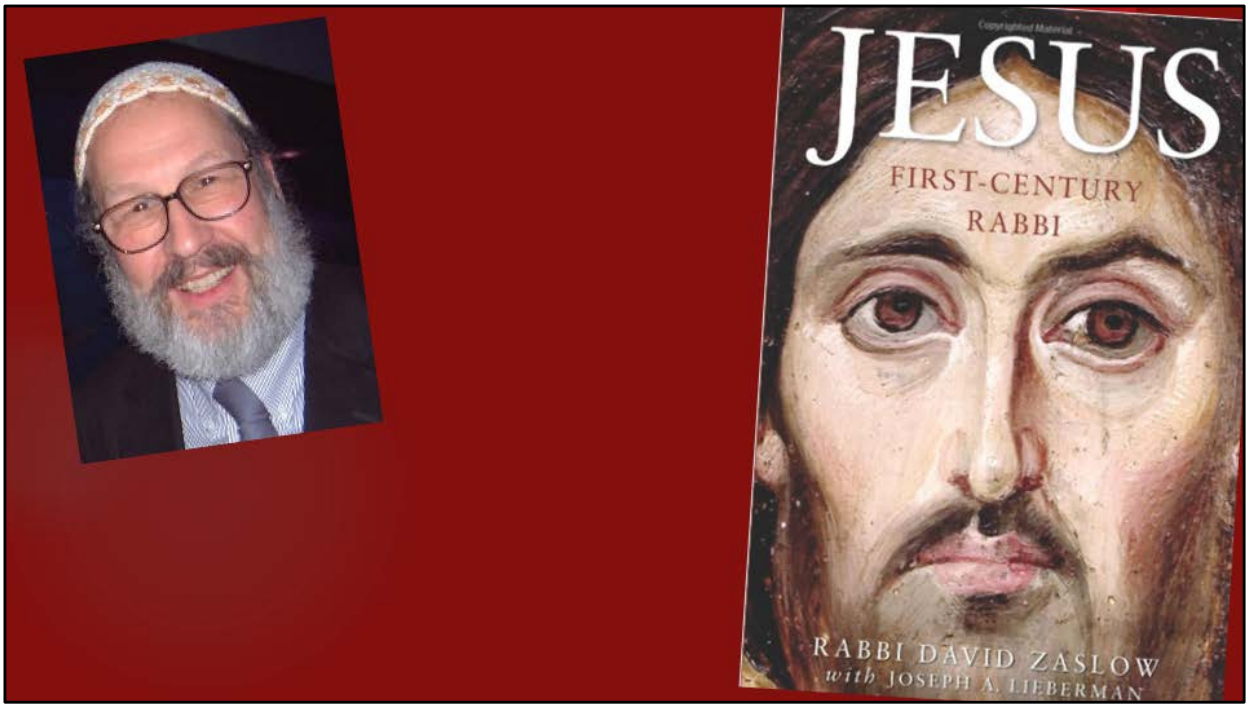
JEWS & JESUS



Meaning, Jews who aren't believers in Jesus but have something to say about him. How do we keep a finger on the pulse of the contemporary Jewish community? One important way is through reading what the people of the book are writing about. Rabbi Evan Moffic is the thirty-something rabbi of Congregation Solel in Highland Park, Illinois, a Reform congregation near Chicago. Moffic has written *What Every Christian Needs to Know about the Jewishness of Jesus: A New Way of Seeing the Most Influential Rabbi in History*. I believe that Justin Kron knows Rabbi Moffic and I think he's spoken at the Kesher Forum that Justin sponsors. From his web site, we learn that his purpose is to "help Jews appreciate their heritage and Christians uncover the Jewish roots of their faith." In his book, he covers the life of Jesus in roughly chronological order. One particular strength is that he does not focus on whether or not certain events recounted in the New Testament actually happened. Instead, he takes the text at face value and points to how the story of Jesus echoes the Hebrew Bible, linking the two together. For instance, he parallels Jesus' birth to that of Moses as well as to the life of King David. Even Paul fits in to a Jewish pattern of "Prophetic Judaism." What is unique about Moffic's approach is his textual approach that highlights the intimate Old and New Testament connections both thematically and in his reading of the ethics that emerge out of both.

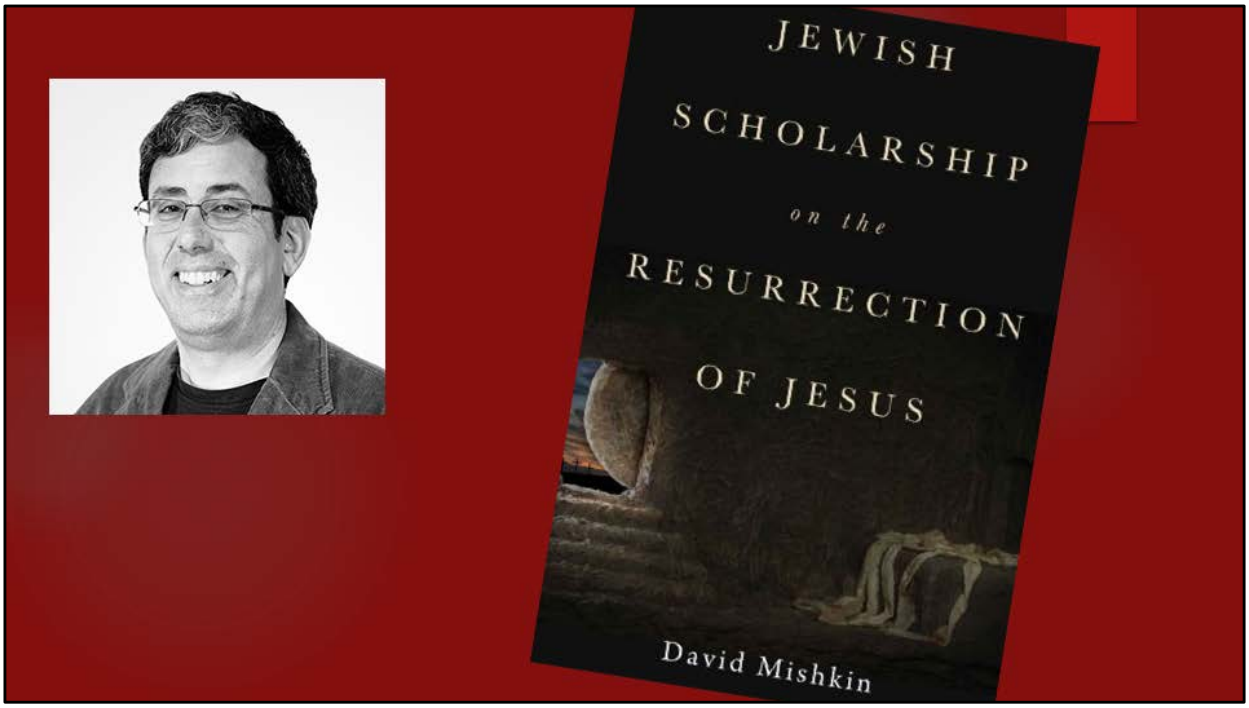


My sense is that Moffic is of a generation that is looking more to what unites than what divides. Compare the title of the 1943 treatise by Trude Weiss-Rosmarin, *Judaism and Christianity: The Differences*, or even Hebrew Union College's Michael Cook (also Reform), whose recent volume was titled, *Modern Jews Engage the New Testament: Enhancing Jewish Well-Being in a Christian Environment*. That book sought to show, as a great deal of modern scholarship has, why the New Testament reflects the beliefs of the later church rather than of Jesus himself; its protective subtitle suggests a Jewish community ill at ease among Christians. Moffic, from a different point of view, wants to open doors of understanding for Christians and Jews alike.



For over twenty years, David Zaslow has been spiritual leader at Havurah Shir Hadash, which is a Jewish Renewal congregation in Ashland, Oregon. Jewish Renewal is more mystical and we might say "New-Agey" than is Reform, and his perspective differs from Evan Moffic's. The Joseph Lieberman who is listed as the co-author, by the way, is not the politician but a photojournalist. In the interests of Jewish-Christian relations, Zaslow is no fan either of missionaries nor of counter-missionary books. "Do we need to criticize each other's faith in order to explain or exalt our own faith? I hope not," he writes. Instead, he says, "What we need are more passionate, joy-filled discussions and dialogues with an underlying celebration of what we have in common." But in a move many will find untenable, he tells us that, "How can these two positions [the Jewish and the Christian] be reconciled? Do they even need to be reconciled? I do not think they can be, nor should they be. … An evangelical pastor once said to me, 'Either Jesus is the Savior or he is a fraud.' I asked, 'Why? Where did you come up with such a clear either/or choice? Maybe he is Savior to you and great rabbi to me, and we're both right.' " For Zaslow, "we're both right" is the viewpoint that allows for "contradictions," "mystery," "riddle," and "paradox." At other points, Zaslow is spot on, for instance when he writes: "My editorial goal has been to try to uncover what I believe to be artificially contrived separations between our theologies. For example, Jews certainly do not define the notion of mediator, son of

God, vicarious atonement, Trinity, and original sin in the same manner as Christians—but functionally speaking, Judaism does in fact have all five of these elements within our faith." At the end of the day, the book is a testament of interfaith work, reclaiming Jesus and upholding the validity of both Judaism and Christianity for their own people. Nothing too new in all this, but again, a way to keep your finger on the pulse of the Jewish community.



Finally, David Mishkin—who teaches at Israel College of the Bible—has revised his dissertation and given us *Jewish Scholarship on the Resurrection of Jesus*. Many may recall the Orthodox Jewish scholar Pinchas Lapide who some decades ago affirmed the reality of Jesus' resurrection—but not his messiahship. Mishkin covers the views of fifteen different mostly Jewish scholars—the non-Jewish scholars wrote about what Jews believed on the subject. He then writes about six different theological areas that affect the discussion, and breaks down Jewish view on the Resurrection according to genre: historical fiction, Jewish history, biographies of Jesus, and more. It's a comprehensive compendium on the topic and a great resource guide.

JEWS & THE NEW TESTAMENT

So much for Jesus; now on to the New Testament. Here we have the second edition of *The Jewish Annotated New Testament* (*JANT*), edited by Jewish scholars Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler. The first edition included copious notes linking the New Testament to Jewish texts and backgrounds, along with a large selection of essays illuminating some portion of the New Testament as seen from a Jewish lens. This new edition includes thorough revisions and 25 new essays on a variety of topics. As a small example, the essays include topics such as "Revolts against Rome, "Ioudaios," "Jewish Family Life in the First century CE," "Paul and Judaism," "Jewish Views of Gentiles," "A Jewish Reflection on Christian Claims," "Jesus in Rabbinic Tradition," "Messianic Judaism" (by our old friend Yaakov Ariel), and many more.

I have not yet looked at the revised and enlarged volume, but I did examine the first edition back in 2012. What I said then was that he main significance of *JANT* is that it exists at all. There have been other books by Jewish writers about Jesus and the New Testament, but this is the first time the entire New Testament has been presented by mainstream Jewish scholars to Jews and Christians as something that both communities need to read and understand. Its reception by the Jewish community has been both welcoming and critical, even sometimes hostile. *JANT* is designed to enrich understanding of the New Testament; to compare the New Testament and its

ideas with other Jewish literature; and to address for Jewish and Christian readers the problematic New Testament passages that have been used in anti-Jewish ways.

To accomplish this, some 50 contributors were assembled from the top tiers of Jewish scholars: Daniel Boyarin, Shaye J. D. Cohen, and Geza Vermes, to name just three. Besides the annotations to the NRSV (New Revised Standard Version), numerous sidebars are scattered throughout. At the end come over 80 pages of background essays in small type.

I think the average lay reader of the first edition will need help navigating both the annotations and some of the essays. And of course, not everyone will see eye-to-eye with each annotator. But the fact is that with *JANT*, the New Testament is being treated as a Jewish book, as it should be, and an effort made to understand it on its own terms rather than treat it as, say, no more than a biased polemic. If you pick up *JANT*, be sure to get the new, expanded edition.

GENEALOGY (MT 1.1–17)

Genealogies appear throughout early Jewish, Greek and Roman literature (e.g., Gen 10.1–32; 11.10–26; 25.12–18; Ex 6.16–25; Ezra 7.1–5; 1 Chr 1.1–9; Tob 1.1; Jdt 8.1; Bar 1.1; 2 Esd 1.1–3; Quintilian, *Inst.* 3.7.10; the *Aeneid* 7.1–4). They served to praise heroes and heroines by glorifying their past as well as adding legitimacy to their narrative. The genealogy in Mt 1.1–17 (cf. Lk 3.23–38) locates Jesus as the heir of Abraham and David and the epitome of Israel's history. Matthew's opening words (Gk *biblos geneseos*, "account of the genealogy," convey a textual link to the creation narrative, Gen 2.4, as well as the account of the descendants of Adam in Gen 5.1.

Matthew traces Jesus' descent from the patriarch Abraham (see Lk 3.23–28), a symbol of Jewish identity and piety (3 Bk 8.11–12; 4 Macc 6.17,22; *t. Ned.* 2.5; *Pesiq. Rab.* 11.4). Yet Abraham is also the first "convert" in that he turned from idol worship to heed God's call (Gen 12.1–4). Thus he represents both Jewish and Gentile fidelity to the God of Israel.

Matthew's genealogy also depicts four women whose symbolic value is complex. First, several of the women have Gentile connections. Tamar (Gen 38) may be an Aramean or Canaanite, although she may also be within the family of Israel; one rabbinic legend claims she was an orphan who converted in order to marry into Judah's family (*b. Sot.* 10a). Rahab (Judg 2–6) is a Canaanite; Ruth is a Moabite; and "the wife of Uriah," Bathsheba, is married to a Hittite (2 Sam 11). Therefore, the women, like Abraham, may suggest the unity of Jews and Gentiles among the followers of Jesus. The unexpected sexual relationships of the women — Tamar has relations with her father-in-law; Rahab is a prostitute; Ruth, who has Moabite ancestry (Gen 19), places Boaz in a potentially compromising position (Ruth 3); Bathsheba commits adultery with David — are not indications of sinful behavior. To the contrary, Jewish tradition praises these women (*J. A.B.* 3.14; *Avot de R. Natan* 45 B; *Pesiq. Rab.* 40.3–4). In addition, they anticipate the surprising conception of Jesus as well as Joseph's initial reluctance to marry his pregnant fiancée.

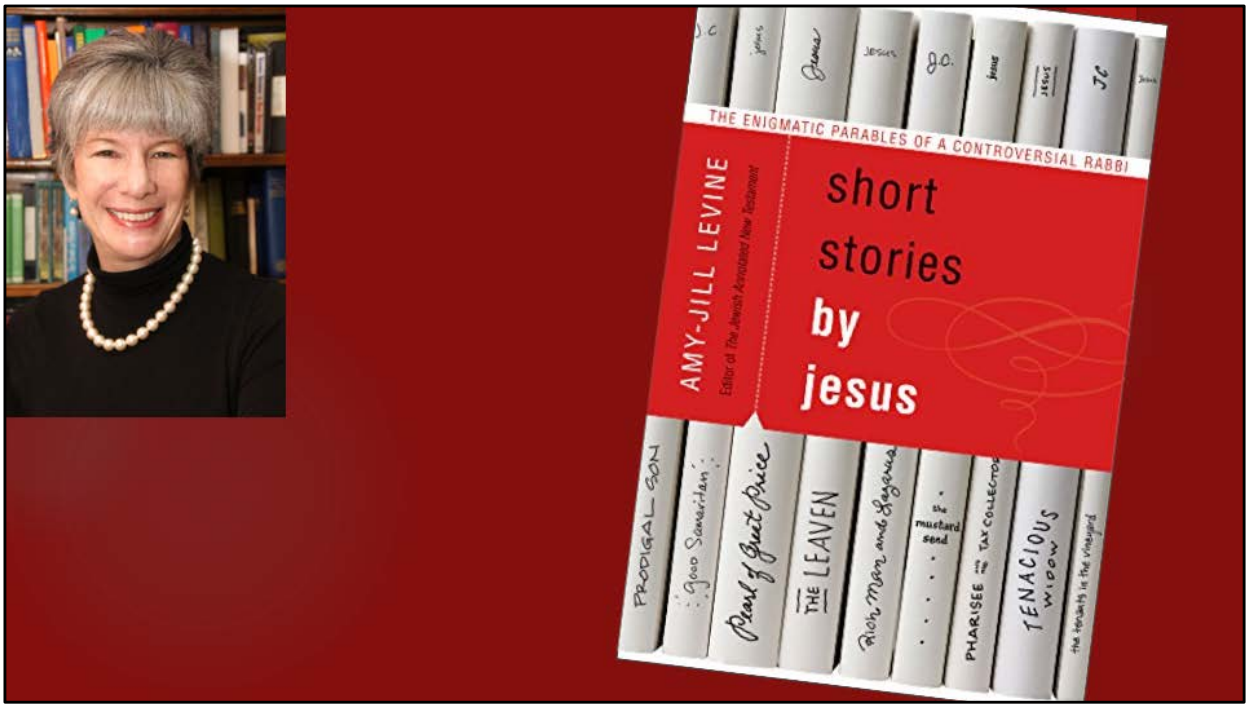
Matthew's genealogy may also contain an example of gematria, a literary technique that recognizes that Hebrew letters have numerical equivalents. The genealogy centers upon the number 14, the sum of the Hebrew consonants contained in the name "David" (*dalet* = 4, *vav* = 6, *dalet* = 4). Fourteen is also 2x7, where seven, the number of days in the week, may symbolize completeness. To keep the generational pattern intact at fourteen, Matthew is forced to omit five kings: Ahaziah, Joash, Amaziah, Jehoahaz, and Jehoiakim. In addition, the third and final set contains thirteen names, which may suggest that the fourteenth and final generation is that of the church.

1 An account of the genealogy[a] of Jesus the Messiah,[b] the son of David, the son of Abraham.

[2] Abraham was the father of Isaac, and
Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father
of Judah and his brothers, [3] and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, [4] and Aram the father of Aminadab,

[a] Or *birth*
[b] Or *Jesus Christ*

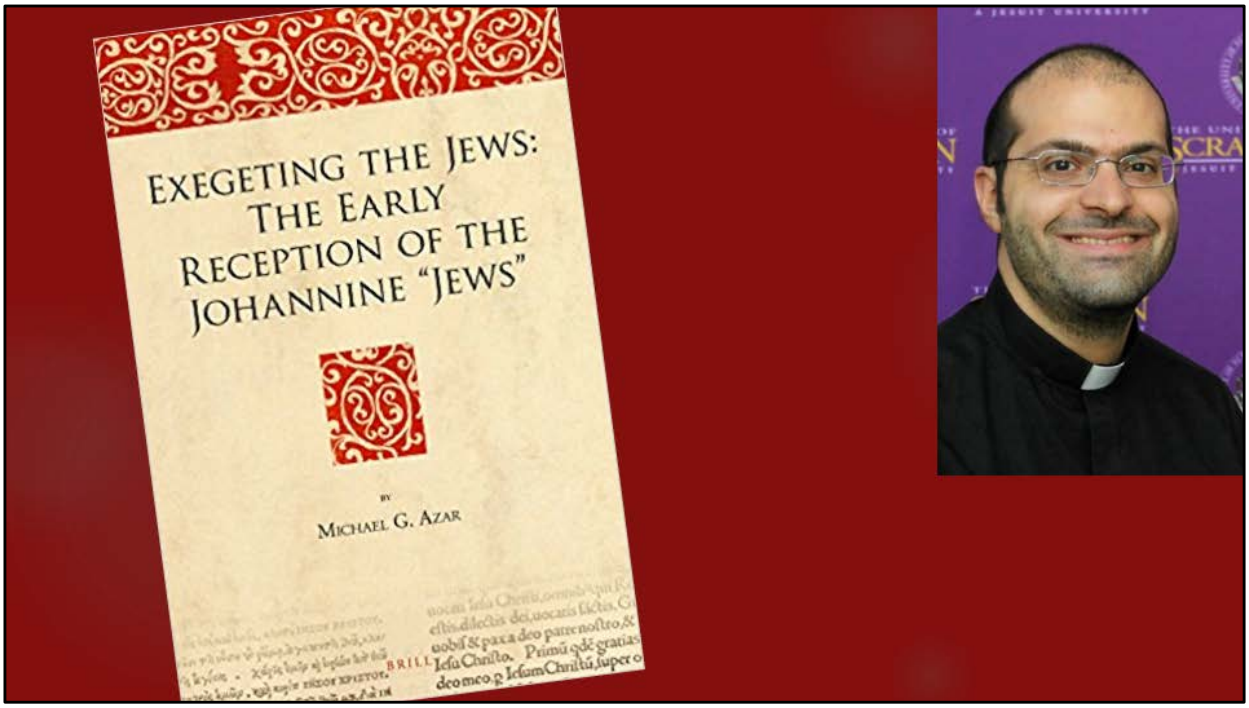
1.1–17: The genealogy. The genealogy is unusual in citing women and non-Jews, and in alluding to morally questionable circumstances. **1:** *Genealogy*, Gk "geneseōs," perhaps an allusion to the book of Genesis. *Messiah*, from the Heb "anointed one"; Gk "Christos" (see 1.16–17; 2.4n.; 8.29n.; 11.14–15n.; 16.16; 17.12–13n.; 26.53–54; see also Dan 9.25,26 [LXX]; 11QMelch 2.9–13). This term is never used in Tanakh (the HB) of the future ideal Davidic king, though it is used that way in rabbinic literature (e.g., *b. Sukk.* 52a on "Messiah, the son of David"; see also 9.27; 12.23; 15.22; 17.15; 20.30; 21.9; cf. *T. Sol.* 20.1). *David*, traditional Jewish belief held that the Messiah would descend from King David (Isa 11.1; Jer 23.5; *b. Sukk.* 52a; *b. Sanh.* 97a), perhaps based on the idea of an everlasting line of Davidic kings in 2 Sam 7.12–16. **2:** *Abraham*, see 3.9, was regarded as the father of Judaism, as Jewish literature indicates (e.g., *b. Ned.* 32a; "Our father Abraham"). Luke (3.23–38) traces Jesus' genealogy to Adam; from David to Jesus, the genealogies of Matthew and Luke are inconsistent. **3:** Tamar, ancient sources variously consider her a Gentile, a proselyte to Judaism, or an Israelite (Gen 38; Ruth 4.18; 1 Chr 2.4;



Amy-Jill Levine, author of The Misunderstood Jew, in 2014 brought us *Short Stories by Jesus: The Enigmatic Parables of a Controversial Rabbi*. "Parables," she writes, "are a major part of Jewish culture" and Jesus' parables are no exception. Levine thinks we have "domesticated" Jesus' parables, and need to look at them in a fresh way to that they once again confront and disturb us. In fact, each parable has no one fixed meaning, and she thinks the New Testament writers are also guilty at times of of domesticating Jesus' meanings. Luke turns the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the Prodigal Son into allegories. And modern readers also read these as revealing something about God that Jews never knew, one of Levine's ongoing themes in her writing: she writers that "not only do many of Luke's readers, as numerous sermons and studies attest, regard the three parables as about sinning and repenting; they also see the parables as correcting an artificially constructed, pernicious Judaism—and at this point a harmless allegory become a dangerous stereotype." Specifically, "common is the interpretation that the prodigal, given his connection to pig farming, represents gentile Christians, whereas the older brother, the stereotypical Jew, resents God the Father's outreach beyond the so-called chosen people, with their elitist, nationalistic attitudes." Levine is great at correcting spurious ideas about Jewish people and Judaism—though when she makes the New Testament the culprit, we will find that we often want to differ with her. She is, by the

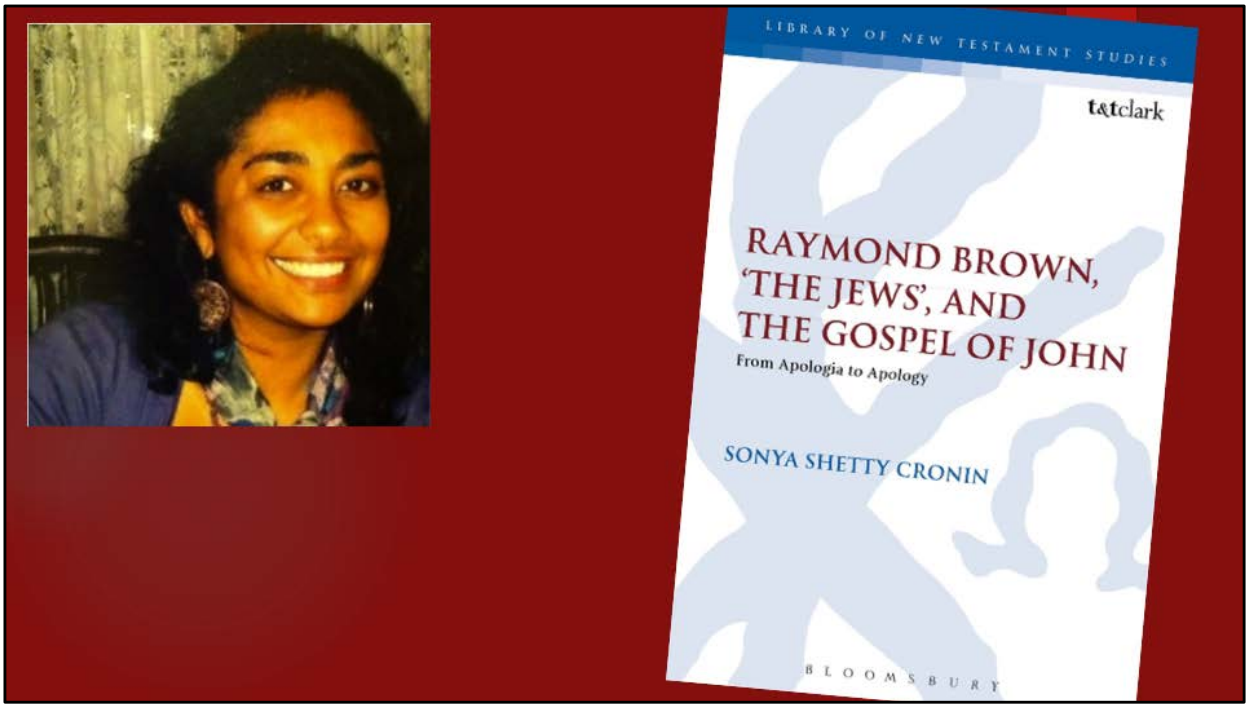
way, an entertaining writer. I don't know too many others who would use Rocky and Bullwinkle to explain the importance of context in understanding Scripture.

JEWS & THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

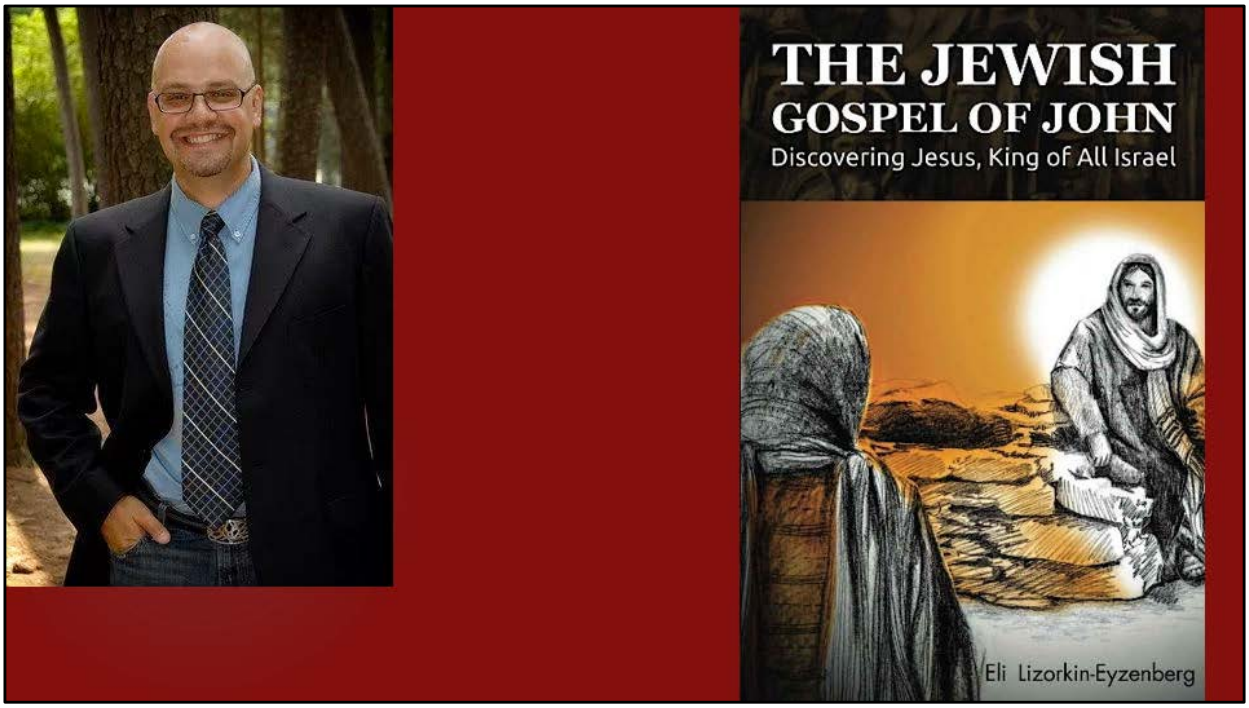


From the New Testament in general, we come specifically to the Gospel of John. As we know, this gospel has been singled out for its supposed particular anti-Semitism, in particular its usage of the term *Ioudaioi*, "the Jews." Michael G. Azar, Assistant Professor in the Department of Theology & Religious Studies at the University of Scranton (Pennsylvania), a Jesuit school, has written *Exegeting the Jews: the Early Reception of the Johannine "Jews"*. "Reception," in biblical studies, means how biblical texts were understood and applied after their time of writing. How were later readers influenced by their understanding? What effects did later interpretations have for good or for ill? Azar's book is a specific look at three church fathers—Origen, Chrysostom, and Cyril of Alexandria—from the third to the fifth centuries CE. Did they uniformly read the "Jews" in an anti-Semitic fashion, using the Fourth Gospel in the service of hostility against the Jewish people? Without minimizing the fact that the early church fathers could be anti-Jewish, Azar still write that, "Rather than appropriate the Gospel's unsympathetic portrayal simply against their Jewish contemporaries, these writers primarily employ John's narrative typologically in the service of their theological and pastoral concerns, shaping the situation in the Fourth Gospel into a type of their own ecclesial struggles and those "Jews" who resist Jesus into a type of their opponents."

A comparison with contemporary times can help you understand this, though Azar himself does not explore it. The three church fathers' typological understanding of the "Jews" also has counterparts in the contemporary church's reading of Scripture. It is not unusual to find that informed listeners to sermons on the Fourth Gospel will make a mental distinction between John's "Jews" and Jewish people that they personally know. For them, the "Jews" function as historical referent and/or as an example of hostility to Jesus that is to be avoided. For such churchgoers, their understanding of the "Jews" does not lead to anti-Semitism(though it can be argued that it nevertheless leads to a skewed or unfair understanding of Jewish people, with the consequences that ensue). It would be most interesting to devise a well-constructed survey of modern Christians both mainstream and evangelical, to see what they understand by John's "Jews"—and how it influences their understanding of Jewish people. What then is the *modern* reception history of John's "Jews"?

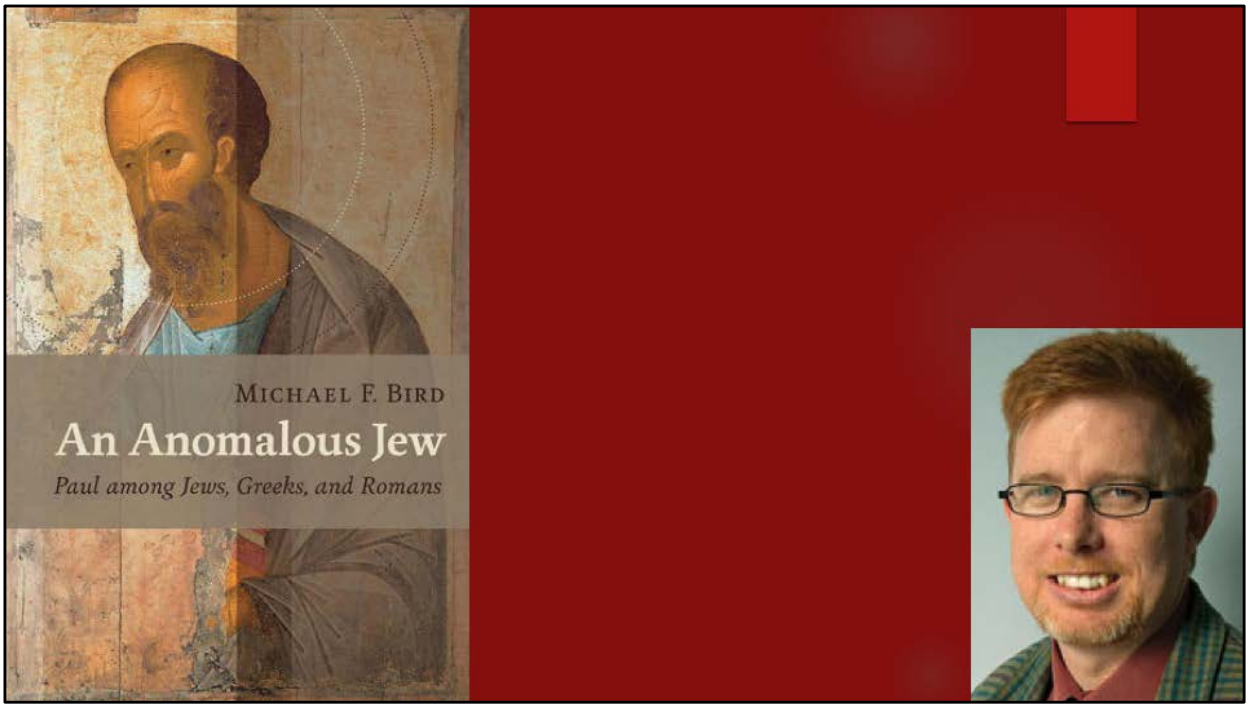


Another book on John and "the Jews": *Raymond Brown, 'The Jews', and The Gospel of John: from Apologia to Apology* by Sonya Shetty Cronin, who is Lecturer at Florida State University. This book focuses not on ancient writers like the church fathers, but on a modern Catholic scholar of John, Raymond Brown. Brown's commentary on John used be one of the go-to commentaries back in the 70s when I was at seminary. The book tracks Brown's trajectory over nearly four decades, during which he changed from defending John's references to "the Jews" to apologizing for it. Cronin's book is useful partly for showing how the sea change in Catholic-Jewish relations during the 20th century has affected scholarship. The increasing awareness of the impact that John has had in shaping negative attitudes towards the Jewish people has led to a variety of strategies to mitigate those attitudes—some of which Brown followed, some of which others took in hand and with whom Brown disagreed. It's a bit of a niche book as far as its focus on Raymond Brown, but of broader value for seeing how the understanding of John's references to "the Jews" has changed over time.



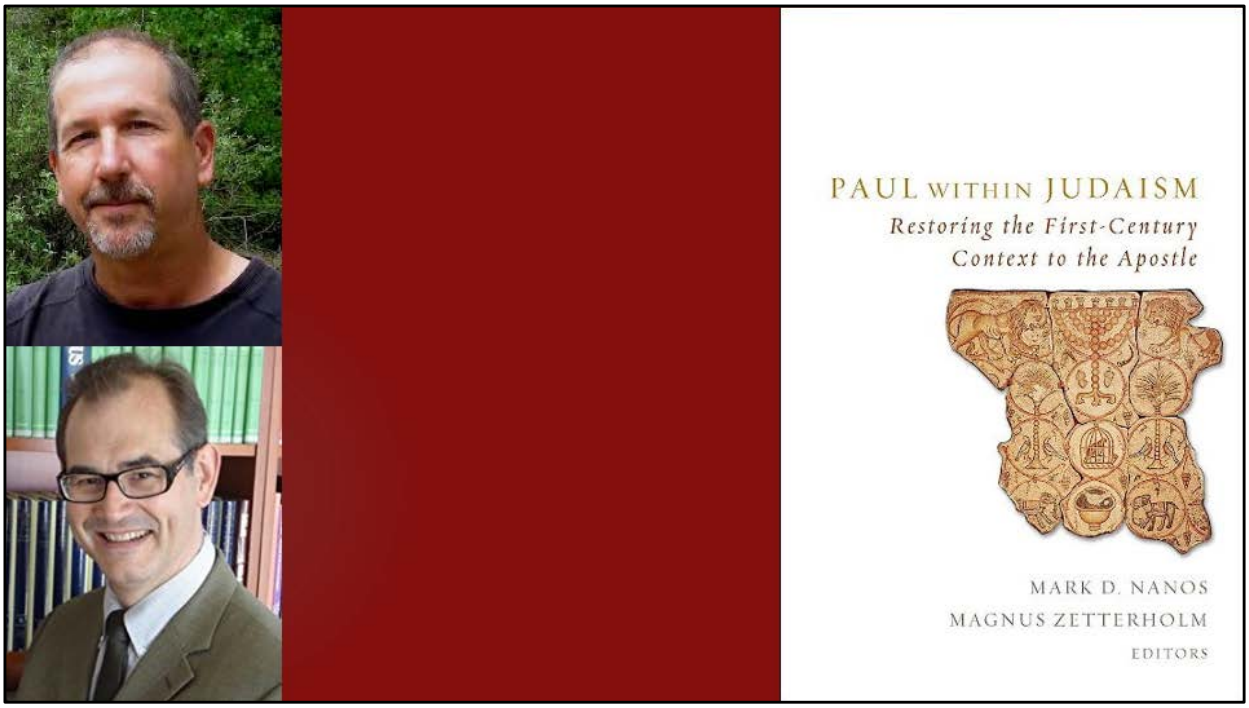
Eli Lizorkin is a Jewish believer currently living in Israel, where he heads up a teaching organization that seeks to teach Christians to read the Scriptures through Jewish eyes. This book on John's Gospel does a pretty good job of that, Lizorkin sometimes presents new, thought-provoking views that are not consensus views, but are worth consideration. For example, he strongly believes that John's Gospel was written for various Jewish groups including "Samaritan Israelites" in order to reach them (among others) with the gospel. Similarly, he takes the word "world" in John to refer primarily to "the current *Ioudaioi* and their leadership structure." Very interesting views, whether you agree or not. One question that came to my mind was exactly what he means when he says that John is an alternative to Matthew's anti-Samaritan views—how does he view that diversity, if it fact exists, within the context of the basic unity of Scripture? On another note, I think he does a very good job handling the term *Ioudaios*, usually translated, "Jew" or "Judean" but as he explains, really more nuanced that either of those choices. Lizorkin holds a doctorate in Ancient Cultures from Stellenbosch University. This book, however, is not an academic commentary but is oriented toward "serious Christian lay persons and clergy members." He has a few other books as well. Get acquainted with at least one of them. The full review in my paper, by the way, was done by Sam Rood, a colleague of mine at the New York City branch of Jews for Jesus.

JEWS & PAUL



Mike Bird is an Australian New Testament scholar. He is lecturer at Ridley College, a former atheist, and recently an ordained Anglican priest. He is a prolific author, a blogger with a quirky sense of humor, Reformed in his theology, but very well-tuned into the Jewishness of the New Testament and in my opinion, very judicious and well-balanced among various positions. The aim of *An Anomalous Jew* is "to identify how Paul could be thoroughly Jewish and yet become a figure of notoriety and controversy among his Jewish compatriots. My answer, in short, is that Paul was an anomalous Jew, a strange figure with a blend of common and controversial Jewish beliefs that brought him into conflict with the socioreligious scene around him." Some of the chapters were previously published. The first chapter covers views that various scholars hold about Paul—some think he is a former Jew, others a transformed Jew, still others a faithful Jews, or else a radical Jew, and then his own description, an anomalous Jew. To quote Bird, "What we call Paul's "anomaly," he would probably call the "revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal 1:12) that he received, which discloses how faith in Christ without Torah was the instrument that brings Jews and Gentiles into reconciliation with God and into the renewal of all things. In my estimation, the anomalous nature of Paul's thought consists of his apocalyptic interpretation of the Messiah's death and resurrection, which forced him into a rereading of Scripture and into a different praxis that yielded a transformation of

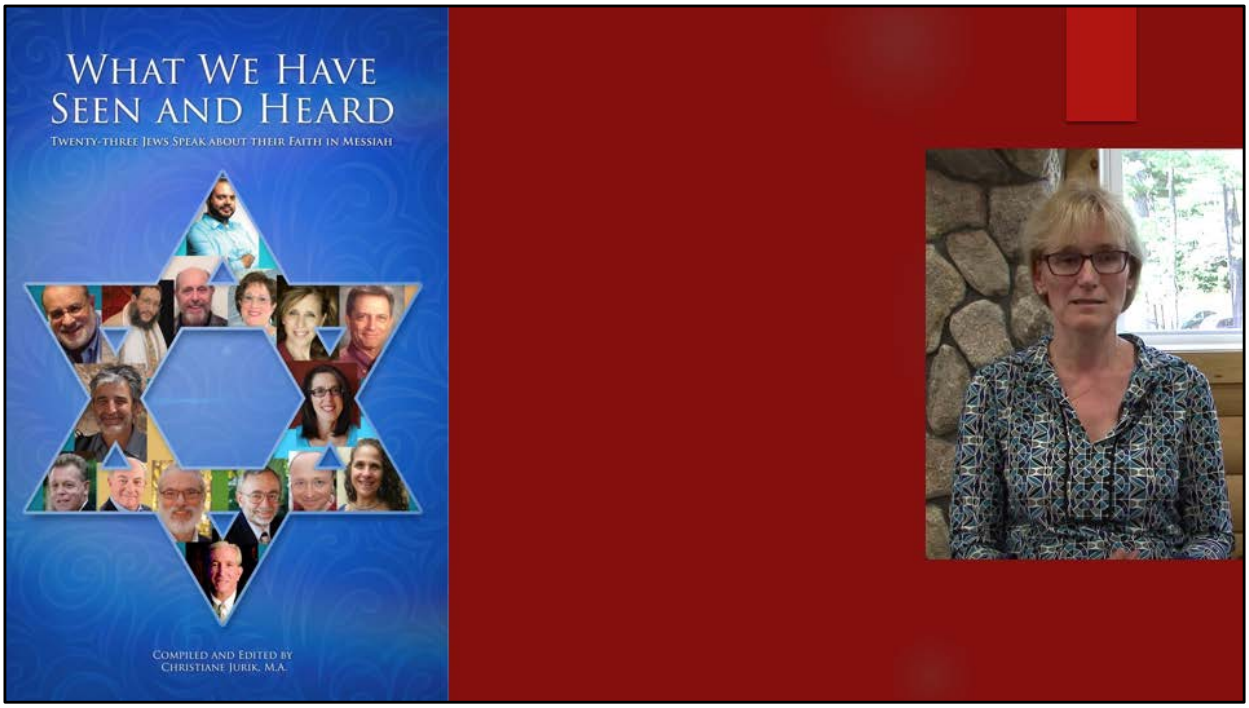
“common Judaism” whereby the story and symbols of Judaism were now redrawn around Jesus the Messiah and his followers, who constituted the renewed Israel of an inaugurated eschaton. Furthermore, the religious claims of Paul the anomalous Jew had the social effect of making Paul a marginal Jew.” I’d say this book is at a serious lay level—I like Bird’s writings and commend his book to you. To paraphrase the book of Deuteronomy, “For this book is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and understand it?’ Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and understand it?’” Bird is not Jewish, but he has his pulse on the subject of Jewishness and Paul.



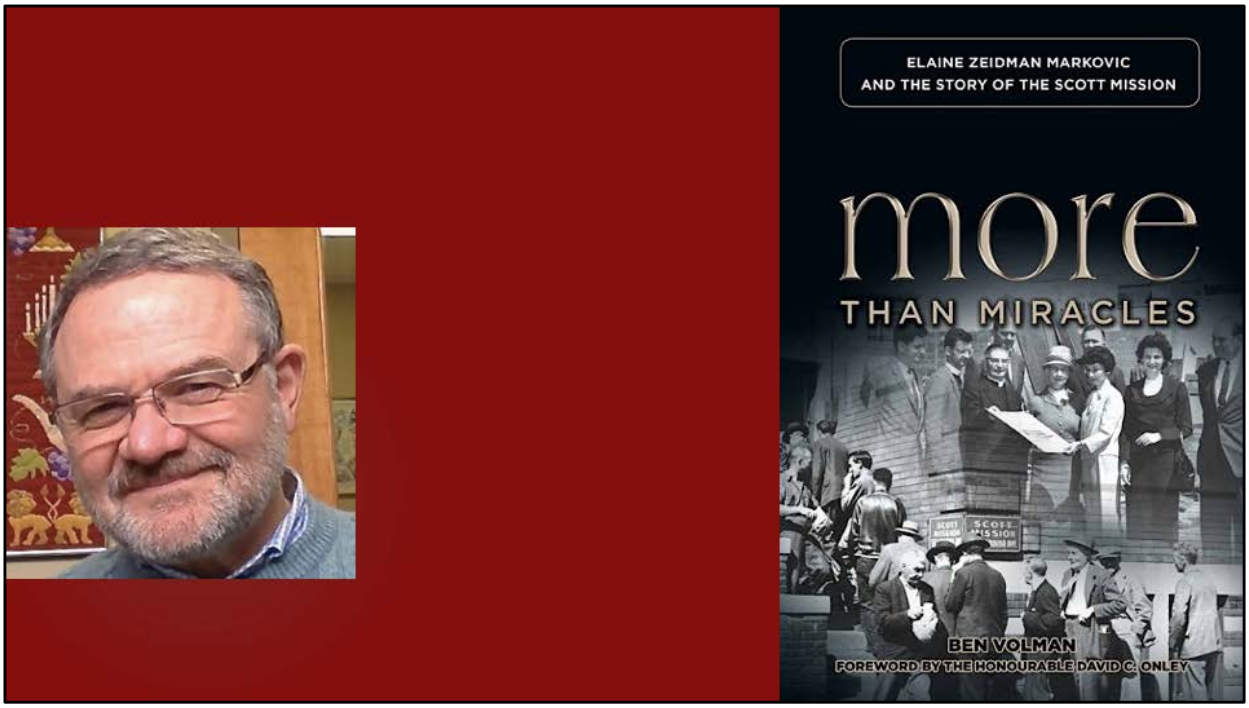
This book has two editors. One, Mark Nanos, is a Reform Jewish writer, a rather prolific one, and not a believer in Yeshua. Some decades ago he began to write about Jesus, Paul and the New Testament from his particular vantage point and has since become a well-known scholarly voice in New Testament circles. Magnus Zetterholm is the other editor, and he is Associate Professor in New Testament Studies at Lund University in Sweden. The book consists of eight essays and a response essay at the end. This is a pretty academic volume. Essays include "Paul within Judaism: The State of the Question, "Torah Observance in the First Century, "The Question(s) of Gender: Relocating Paul in Relation to Judaism," and others. The response essays is a "Critical Evaluation from a 'New Perspective' Perspective." On the whole, the authors take issue with the usual view of Paul as someone who found something wrong with Judaism, developed something different called "Christianity," and opposed "the value of Jewish identity as well as Torah-defined behavior." They take a stance vis-à-vis the "New Perspective on Paul," which traditional interpreters find too new and these find not new enough. It's a conversation among scholars of Paul, and this book is not for the faint of heart. But it's very representative of discussions now taking place among Jewish and non-Jewish scholars of Paul, particularly exactly how Paul is "within Judaism" and how exactly his non-Jewish converts related to communities of believers and to the Torah. One big takeaway: these scholars, Jewish or not, view Paul

in close connection with the Judaism and Jewish world of his day, and not as some guy who came along, added paganism to the original Jesus, and made faith in Jesus palatable to the pagan world. What we have here is really, a Jewish and non-Jewish reclamation of Paul.

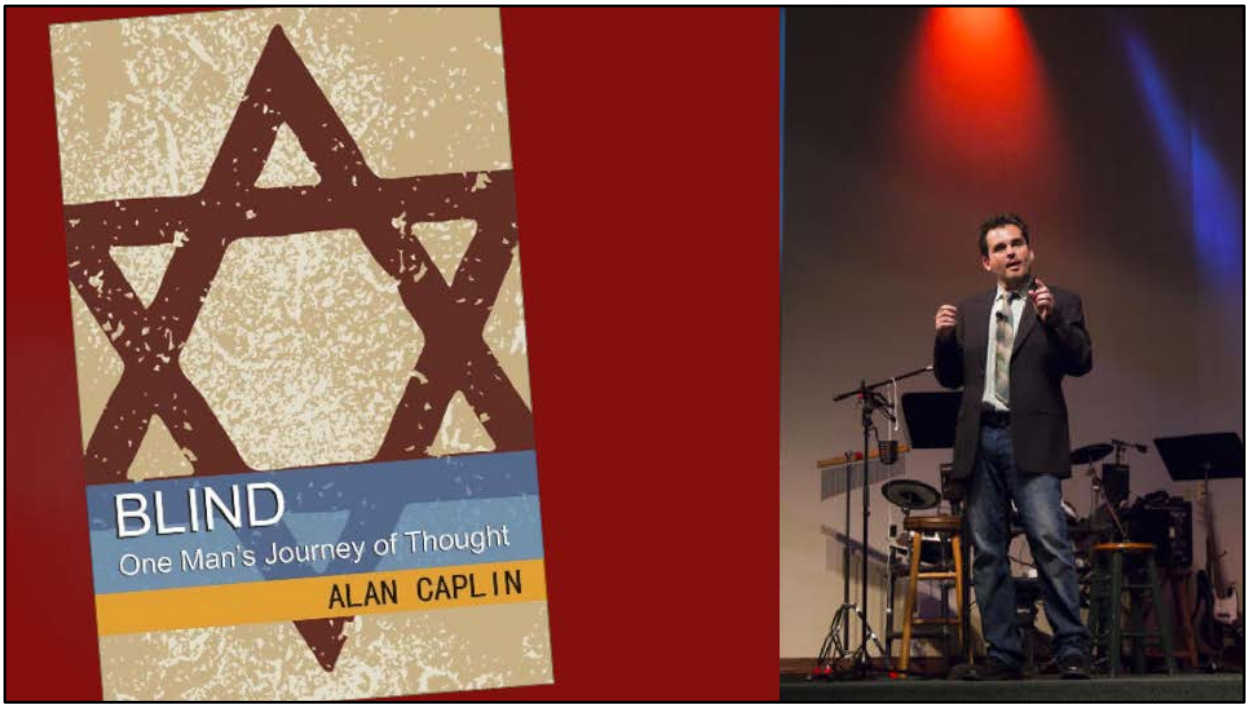
LIFE STORIES



We can never have enough testimonies and stories of coming to faith from Jewish believers in Jesus. Each one may be of inestimable value on someone's own journey to Yeshua. Ariel Ministries now has the second edition out of *What We Have Seen and Heard: Twenty-Three Jews Speak about Their Faith in Messiah*, edited by Christiane Jurik. Christiane serves as editor-in-chief at Ariel Ministries. Each testimony is nicely illustrated with a photograph, and we get to hear from, among others, Mottel Baleston, Jacques Gabizon, Lori Rothbard, Bob Morris, Jack Sternberg, Olivier Melnick, Sam Nadler, and Diann Parkas. Many of you will know some of these names.



Ben Volman, who serves with Chosen People Ministries in Toronto and is Messianic Rabbi of Kehillat Eytz Chaim/Tree of Life Congregation, takes an extended view of one family in *More Than Miracles: Elaine Zeidman Markovic and the Story of The Scott Mission*. Here's what I like about this book. It's very *relevant*. At a time when so many churches are rediscovering the place of *tikkun olam*—as it's used today, meaning acts of social compassion—in their life and witness, here we have the story of a man, and his family, and his organization, who dedicated their lives to *tikkun olam* before it was fashionable to call it that. At the same time, they also maintained an evangelistic witness, never forced, never required in order to receive compassionate attention, but strong and enduring. Though in its earliest incarnation it was intended to focus on Jewish missions, as time went on and the needs of the community changed, it ended up being geared towards meeting physical and social needs. Over the years, the Mission would become Toronto's premiere faith-based charity, garnering respect and admiration even, cautiously, from the Jewish community. The book is not a hagiography, however; the ups and downs and stresses and strains of the work are also told, much of it through the memories of Morris and Annie Zeidman's daughter Elaine. The Scott Mission remains in operation to this day and this is well worth your time to read.



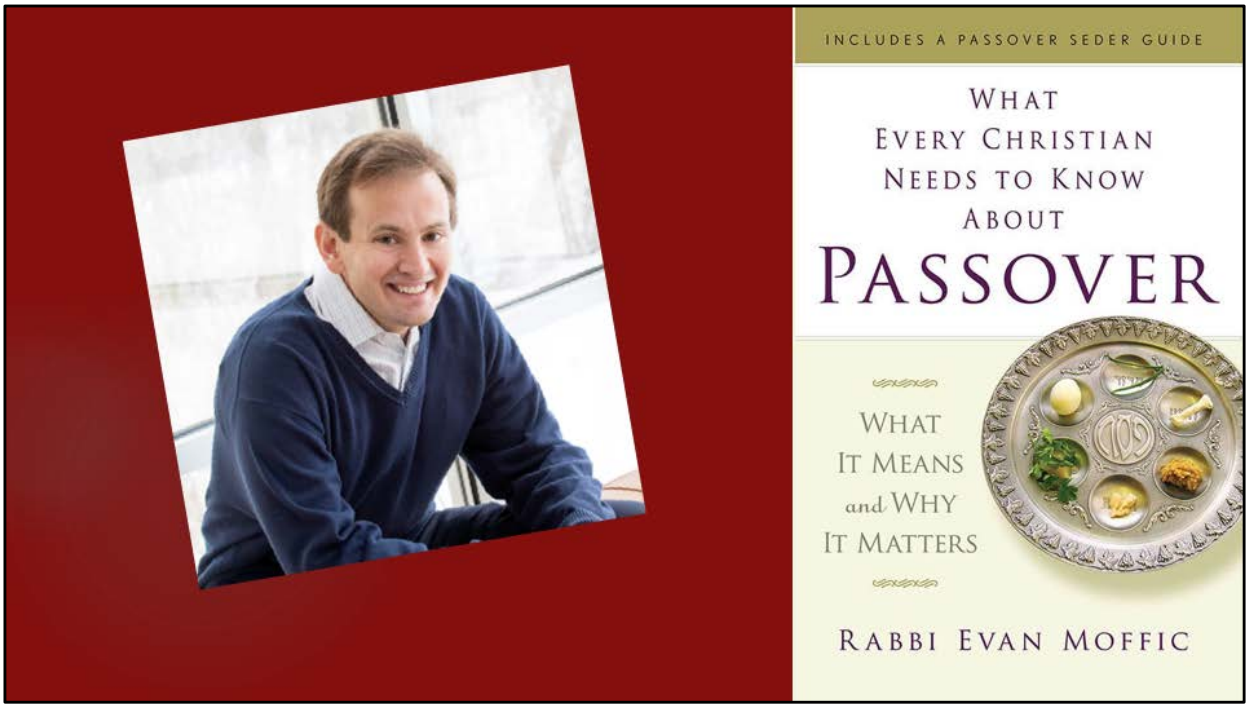
Alan Caplin was born and raised in a Reform Jewish home in Baldwin, New York — and like all good little Jewish boys do — was bar mitzvahed in 1981. Alan and his wife Lori moved to Dallas, Texas in 1991, where Alan has spent over 20 years working as an educator and counselor. Alan and Lori have one son, Maxwell

From the back cover: "'No, Lord, not the Jews.' That's what Maisie Pellemer (herself Jewish) first told God as she wrestled with Him about a career to evangelize her own people." Maisie worked for many years in South Africa with the SAJS or South Africa Jews' Society. In the booklet Laura Barron says, "She was semi-retired at that point yet had the courage to try new things. I still think of Maisie in her flowered house dress and white orthopedic shoes gleefully putting on a Jews for Jesus T-shirt and handing out gospel tracts with me in Berea and Hillbrow. She was a fantastic example to me of faithfulness and fervour."

Finally, from France we have *Ils Ont Découvert Leur Messie*, compiled in French by Joshua Turnil. The title translates to “They Discovered Their Messiah” and includes 17 journeys of faith, including David Filippi, Ruth Gottlieb, François Blum, Jacques Guggenheim, William Raccah, and many others. An appendix of messianic texts is included making this ideal for French-speaking Jews. Although I could not read much of it myself, those who know the language will certainly find it a useful compendium.

HOLIDAYS

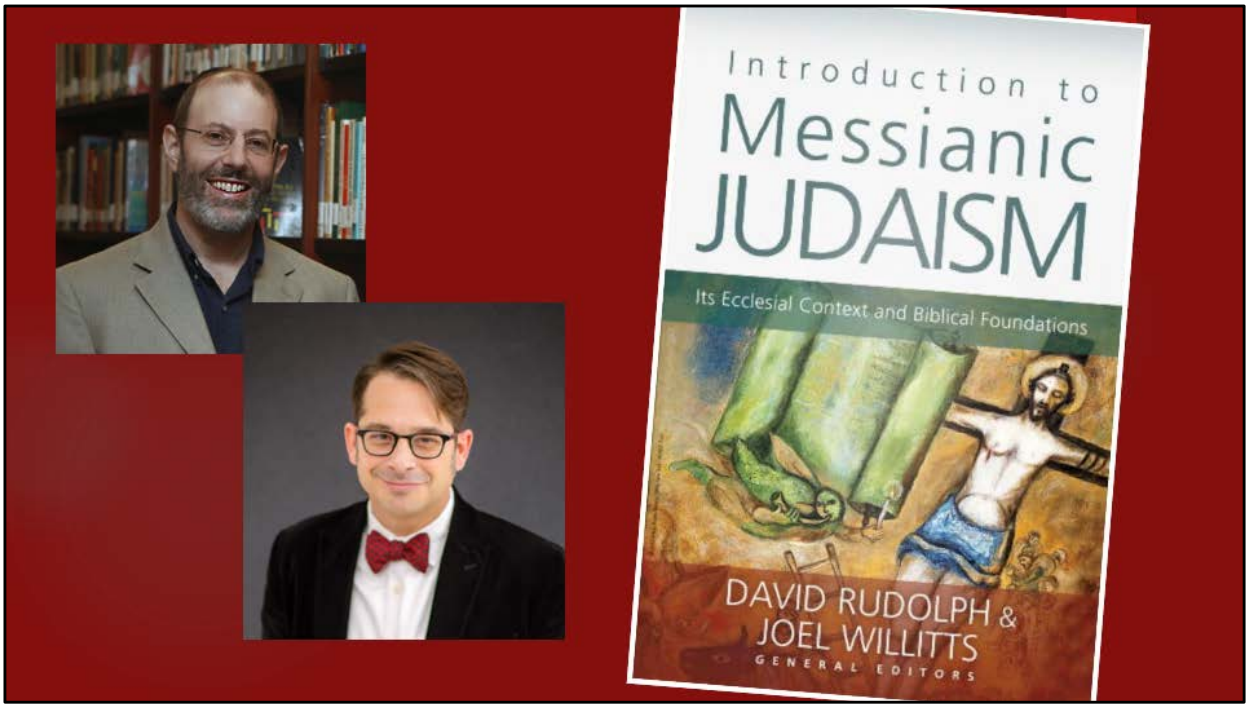
Moments and Days: How Our Holy Celebrations Shape Our Faith is a unique book by a Michelle Van Loon, who has been involved with the Caspari Center in Jerusalem. It is unique because it includes both the Jewish festivals and the Christian calendar. A bit of her own story is included as well. Michelle been part of both Messianic congregations and mainstream churches, and this enables her to speak to a variety of spiritual communities. In her book you will find lots of great spiritual application and an awareness of Jewish things that is communicated well. The author addresses the supposed pagan origins of some Christian festivals with grace and knowledge. It's well worth reading for its dual Jewish/Christian holiday perspective from a Messianic Jewish point of view.



Evan Moffic's first book prior to *What Every Christian Needs to Know about the Jewishness of Jesus* was *What Every Christian Needs to Know about Passover*. It begins explaining why Passover even matters to Christians. Then it moves on to the biblical exodus story, Passover in the time of Jesus, the home-based nature of the holiday, several chapters running through preparation for and the actual celebration of the seder, its relevance to universal themes of freedom, and finally includes a haggadah that Christians and Jews can both use, followed by a Study Guide. In a nutshell, the author writes that the seder "can in fact change your life" and that Passover "is God's invitation for each of us to become free." Of course, Moffic is Reform, so we find sentences such as, "Like God, we are dynamic, evolving, every changing, and ever growing." "For me, the greatest spiritual freedom is the capacity to grown and change." But it's great for giving an overview of one Jewish view of Passover, complete with rabbinic interpretations and midrash. When it comes to the three pieces of matzah, Moffic is not averse to Christians interpreting in their own way: "The three pieces of matzah and the breaking of the middle matzah have generated thoughtful Christian interpretation as well." That's a long way from some rabbis who have decried Christians who, in their view, distort the meaning of "Jewish sancta" — or as it would be said today, are guilty of cultural misappropriation. At one point he compares the wicked child, which he prefers to translate as wayward, with

the Prodigal Son. Also noteworthy is that Moffic is very encouraging of Christians' having their own seders (on a night other than the traditional Jewish one) at a time when some rabbis are adamant that, again, this is nothing but cultural misappropriation. Strangely, the chapter on Passover in Jesus' time includes no mention of the Last Supper, though the Last Supper is mentioned often in the Haggadah that Moffic provides. Moffic tries to unite, not divide, over Passover. I enjoyed the book, so be sure to check it out for yourself.

MESSIANIC JUDAISM



Though five years old at this point, the collection entitled Messianic Judaism, edited by David Rudolph and Joel Willitts, is critical reading for anyone interested in the theology of the Messianic Jewish movement. Part One are essays by those within the Messianic Jewish community, such as David Rudolph himself, Seth Klayman, Russ Resnik, Akiva Cohen, Mitch Glaser, Mark Kinzer, Dan Juster, and others. Part two are essays from top-flight non-Jewish Christian scholars, including Darrell Bock, Richard Bauckham, Craig Keener, Kendall Soulen, and others.

In the introduction, David Rudolph offers reasons why the Messianic Jewish movement, or Messianic Judaism is relevant to Gentile Christians. The essays in Part One focus on aspects of the Messianic Jewish community: there are chapters on its history, on messianic Jewish synagogues, on worship, relationship to Scripture, to Jewish tradition, to ethics, to outreach, to women, to Israel, to the Jewish world, to the Gentile world, and a chapter on Messianic Jewish national organizations as well as on Jewish-Christian dialogue — all as seen through a particular author's Messianic Jewish lens.

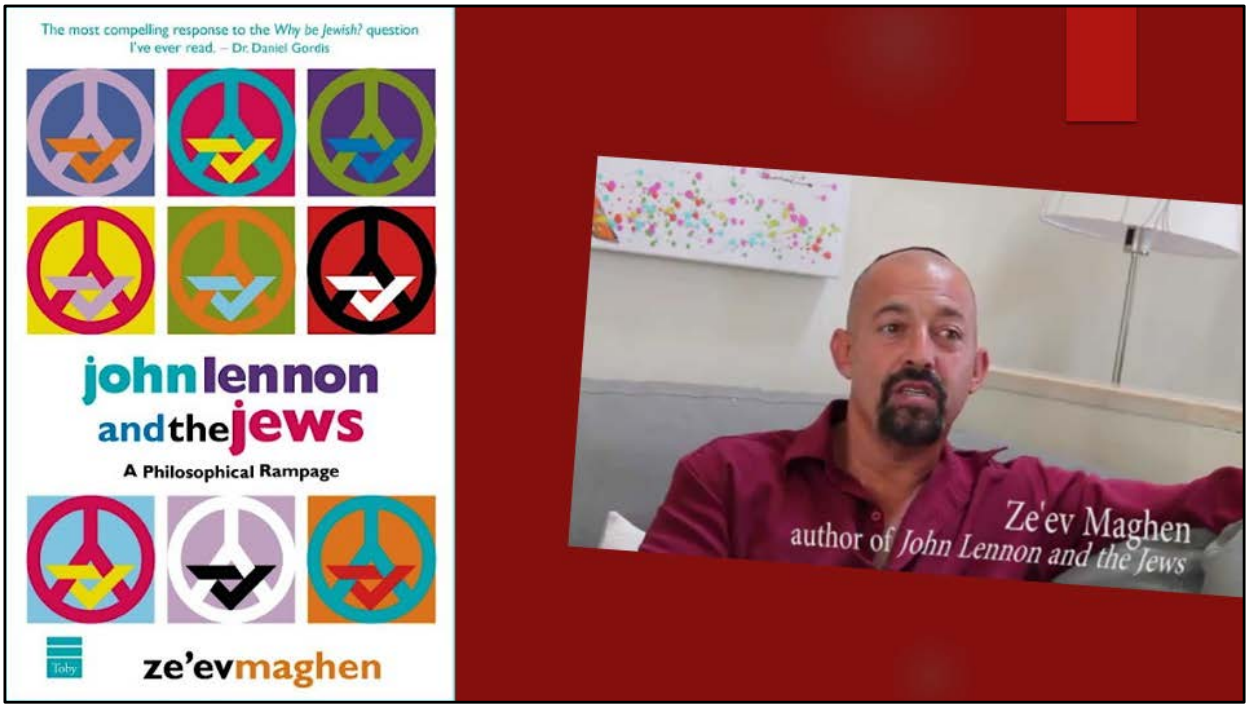
Part two is more directly biblical/theological, at least going by the chapter titles. There's a chapter on Matthew, on Luke-Acts, on the Jerusalem Council, on Jewish-

Gentile interdependence, on Israel and the Church, on supersessionism, and so on — all in relationship to Messianic Judaism through particular non-Jewish authors' lenses. Each chapter includes suggestions for further reading and a summary of all chapters is provided by co-editor Joel Willitts. Must reading, though at a fairly academic level.

Stuart Dauermann's *Converging Destinies* is a serious piece of writing that is representative of one segment of the Messianic Jewish community today. It's a bit of a manifesto, and could have gone into my next section on "Manifestos." The book addresses the nature of Israel and the Church and the mission of each one, and hopes that there will come to be a "post-supersessionist paradigm of mission." I have an extended review of the book. Let me just summarize here that the book deals first with the election of Israel; the comes a rather negative chapter on how Christian theology portrays a different Jesus, a different *ekklesia*, and a different final consummation than the author finds in Scripture. Then we are onto the concept of "mission," and how both the World Council of Churches and the Lausanne Consultation on World Evangelization are both supersessionist despite their other differences. Then comes an overview of the Roman Catholic Church's and others' theologizing about Israel, and Dauermann's own "Converging Model" for how Jews and Christians understand themselves and one another. There is, Dauermann writes, "a divinely ordained distinction between the Christian and Jewish historical streams within an underlying unity" in which "both communities living in faithfulness to their own religious commitments" — both Christians and Jews are on a journey together on their own particular paths. Time fails me to talk about the discussion on what the gospel is and how we are to communicate it. You'll have to read the book and my full

review for more. Dauermann is good on interacting with many authors of a variety of theological positions, he's good on supersessionism and on Protestant and Catholic approaches to a theology of the Jewish people. Its weaknesses include an insufficient exegetical basis for the paradigm of "converging destinies," a failure to spell out the practical ramifications of this paradigm, frequent caricaturing of those who hold to different positions, and "either-or" approach to certain Scriptural teachings that are really "both-and." But it's an important statement from that wing of the Messianic Jewish movement.

"MANIFESTOS"



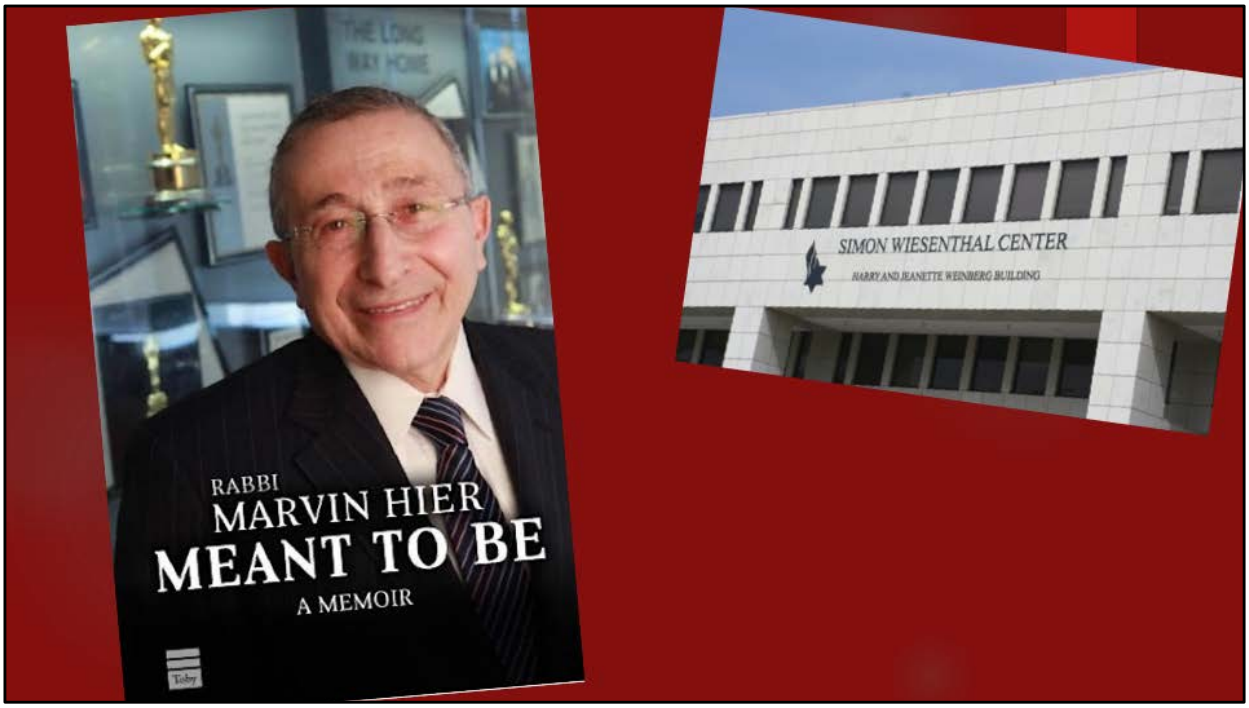
Then we come to Ze'ev Maghren's *John Lennon and the Jews: A Philosophical Rampage*. Maghren is at Bar-Ilan University in Israel, chairing the Department of Middle East Studies. His book is devoted to answering the question, "Why on earth be a Jew in the (post) Modern world?"

It is almost impossible to describe this book. Sometimes it reads like an underground college newspaper written at 3 a.m., with both Norman Mailer and Allen Ginsburg on the staff. Throughout, it is a volcano of words, seriously angry and at other times incredibly funny. The title comes from his reflection on John Lennon's song "Imagine," in which he objects to the universal idea of loving everyone. He then objects to Christianity on the same grounds. Real love has to be preferential, as we see with God's special love for Israel. But why connect with Jews in the first place? Maghren confesses, "I don't know." Jewish experience is intangible and emotional.

From here he talks about the objection that Judaism makes no rational sense, and here is the funniest section of the book. He agrees, and tells a long story of his adventures with a highly observant family in Israel who wouldn't eat matzah ball soup because their brand of Judaism forbids matzah to have any contact with liquid. Along the way, he also manages to get mad at messianic Jews and how nothing should,

quote, “discourage you from physically assaulting these devious sons-of-bitches if they ever get within a kilometer of your kids,” end quote. And in the end, holding on to Jewishness is all about emotion, connectivity, and love. It’s quite a ride all the way.

PERSONALITIES



Marvin Hier is a 77-year-old Orthodox Jew and Dean of the world-famous Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles. You may remember a three-part debate/interview on *Larry King Live* some years ago, when Hier, David Brickner, and Shmuley Boteach were all on the same show at the same time. It was especially memorable for Larry King constantly telling Shmuley, "You're interrupting, rabbi. You're interrupting."

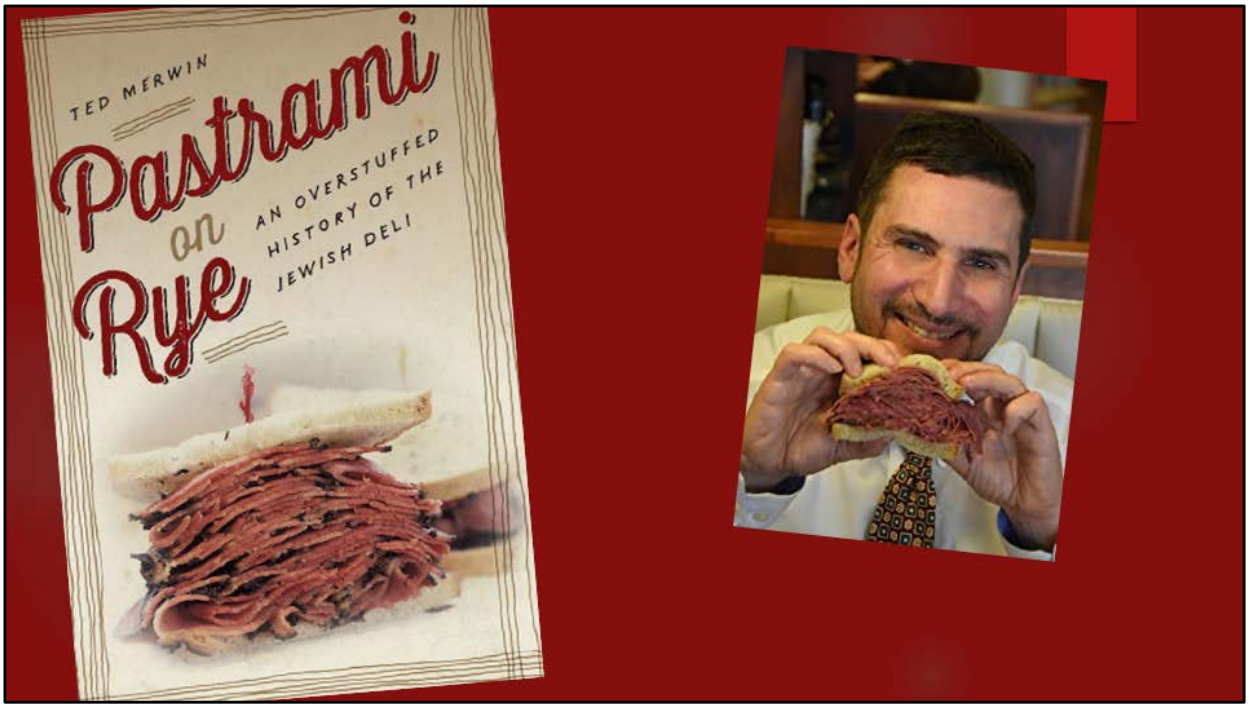
So now we have Rabbi Hier's *Meant to Be: A Memoir*, part warm memoir and part publicity piece. The best parts come early on. With warmth and honesty, Hier recounts his Orthodox upbringing in New York's Lower East Side, often told via entertaining anecdotes. There was the time his mother was charged $21.00 for tea at a hotel, and amazed at the high price, decided that it had to include the teapot—which she then packed up and brought home! The book goes on to tell Hier's journey to eventually founding the SWC, and it's nice to see that it includes up-to-date material on the anti-Semitic French comedian Dieudonné as well as recent events in Germany and Hungary. As for America, there is no love lost between Rabbi Hier and Jimmy Carter over the latter's 2006 book *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*; there is also a good accounting of the BDS movement, a kerfuffle with UNESCO, and Islamic extremism. You'll read about the SWC's forays into politics with "goodwill" visits to other countries and a burgeoning film venture as well as its Museum of Tolerance.

Unfortunately, by this point the book has left Hier the person behind; we hear very little about his hopes and struggles, or his inner life. The memoir, such as it is, increasingly becomes a chronicle of activities, almost as though the SWC has gone on autopilot with its numerous programs and institutions.

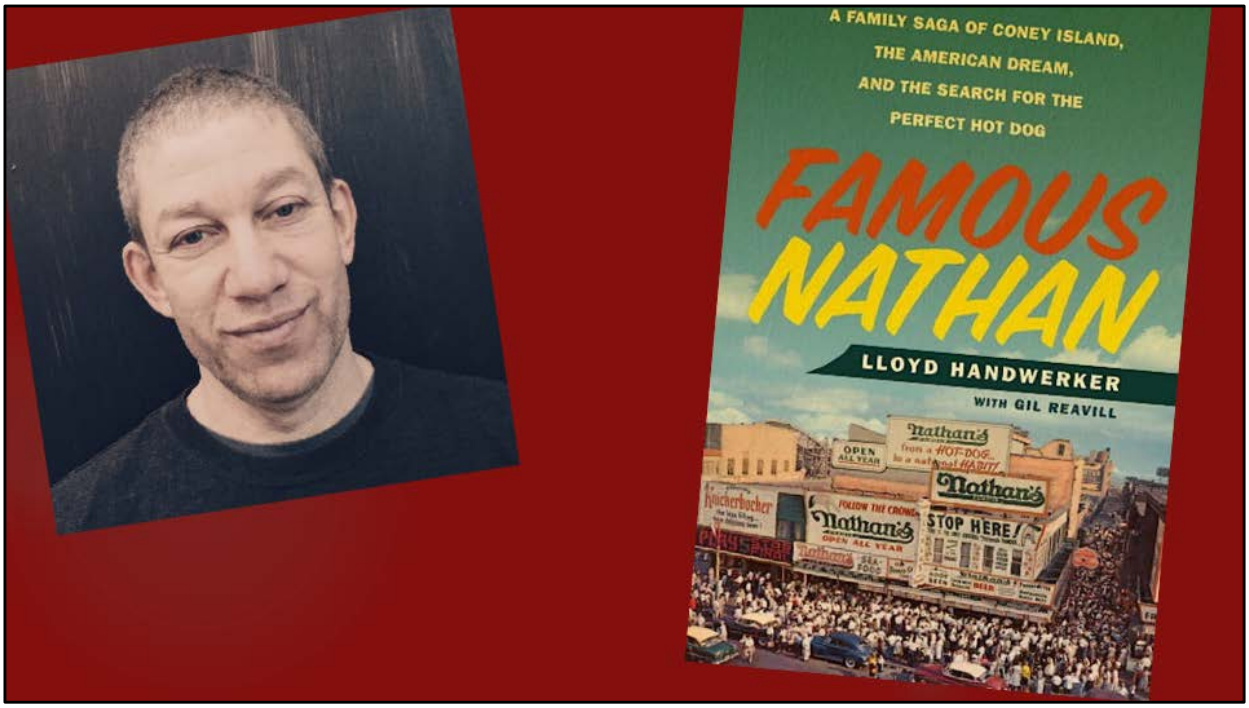
By the end it has turned into a version of *People* magazine for Jews. Numerous celebrities appear in support of the SWC's work or obliquely, as a foil to highlight that work: Jerry Seinfeld, Tommy Lasorda, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Angelina Jolie, Marlon Brando (who knew Yiddish!), Will Smith, Mike Tyson, Michael Jackson, Mel Gibson, Steven Spielberg, Jane Fonda, and Tom Cruise.

Like any establishment organization, the SWC has not been without its critics, including those from within the Jewish community. One might have hoped that the memoir would at least mention some of these along with Hier's response (e.g., criticism that the SWC overplays the Holocaust card to fundraise; concerns over Hier's salary; questions surrounding Simon Wiesenthal himself. One 2011 article in *The Atlantic* by Jewish author Jeffrey Goldberg was memorably titled, "Oh, Cut the Crap, Simon Wiesenthal Center!") However, *Meant to Be* is not intended as an evenhanded evaluation but as Hier's own chronicle of his legacy. His book will familiarize you with one of the many mainstream Jewish community organizations and is worth your time to read.


FUN



Did you know that pastrami started out in Turkey, then came to Romania when Turkey conquered southeastern Europe? Did you know that 150 deli owners got together in 1895 to try and force the New York City authorities to let them stay open on Sundays? Teddy Roosevelt, then the police commissioner, ended up allowing them to sell till church services began at 10 in the morning. Did you know the deli waiters were typically like Don Rickles with a bowl of borscht and a platter of pastrami?


A FAMILY SAGA OF CONEY ISLAND,
THE AMERICAN DREAM,
AND THE SEARCH FOR THE
PERFECT HOT DOG
FAMOUS NATHAN
LLOYD HANDWERKER
WITH GIL REAVILL
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OPEN ALL YEAR
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STOP HERE!
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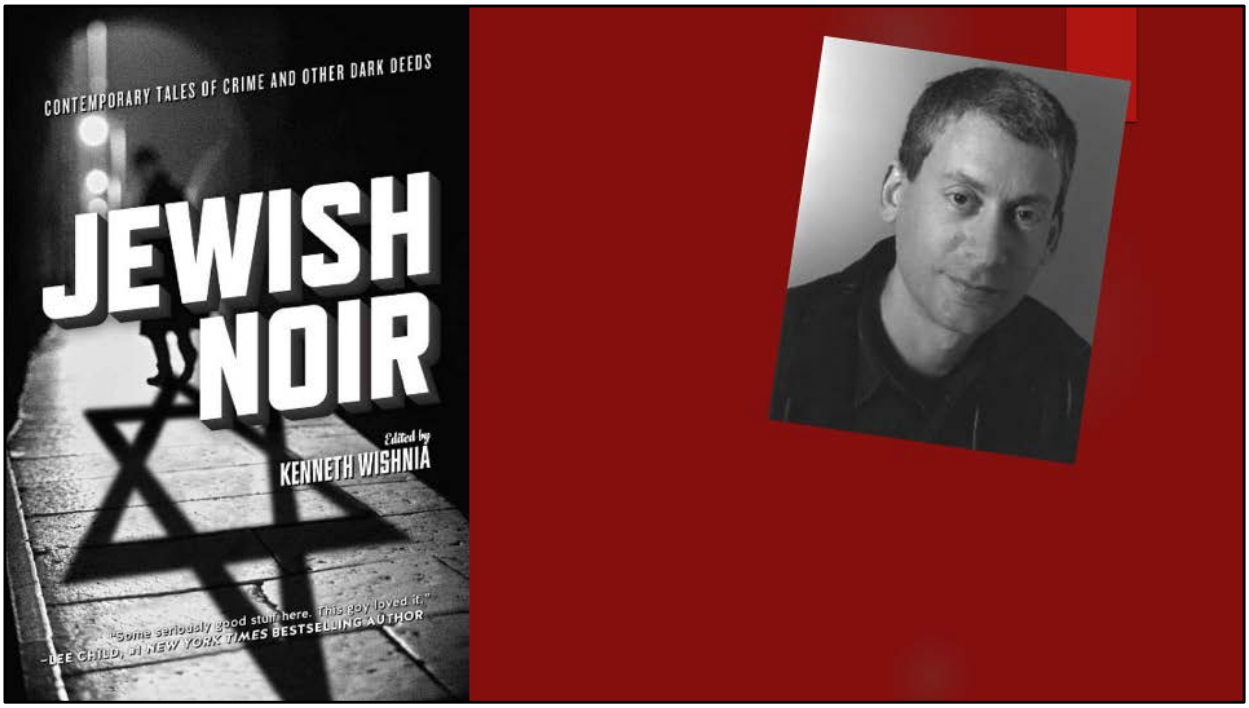
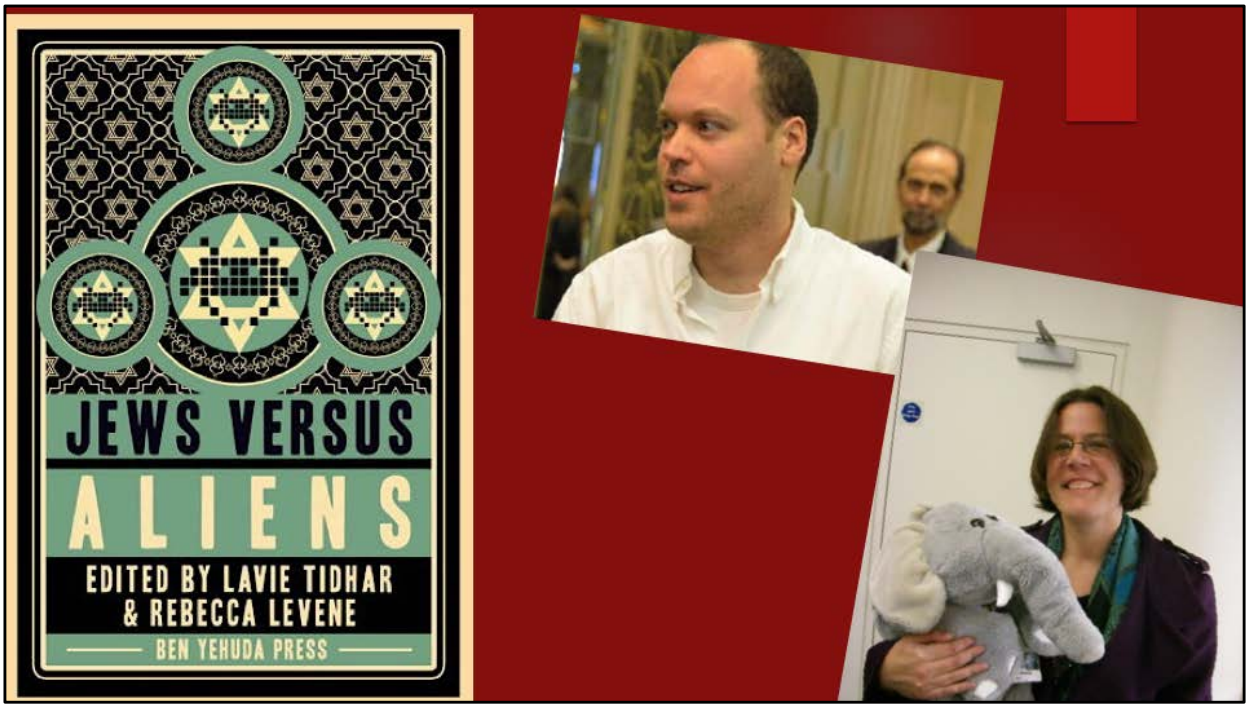
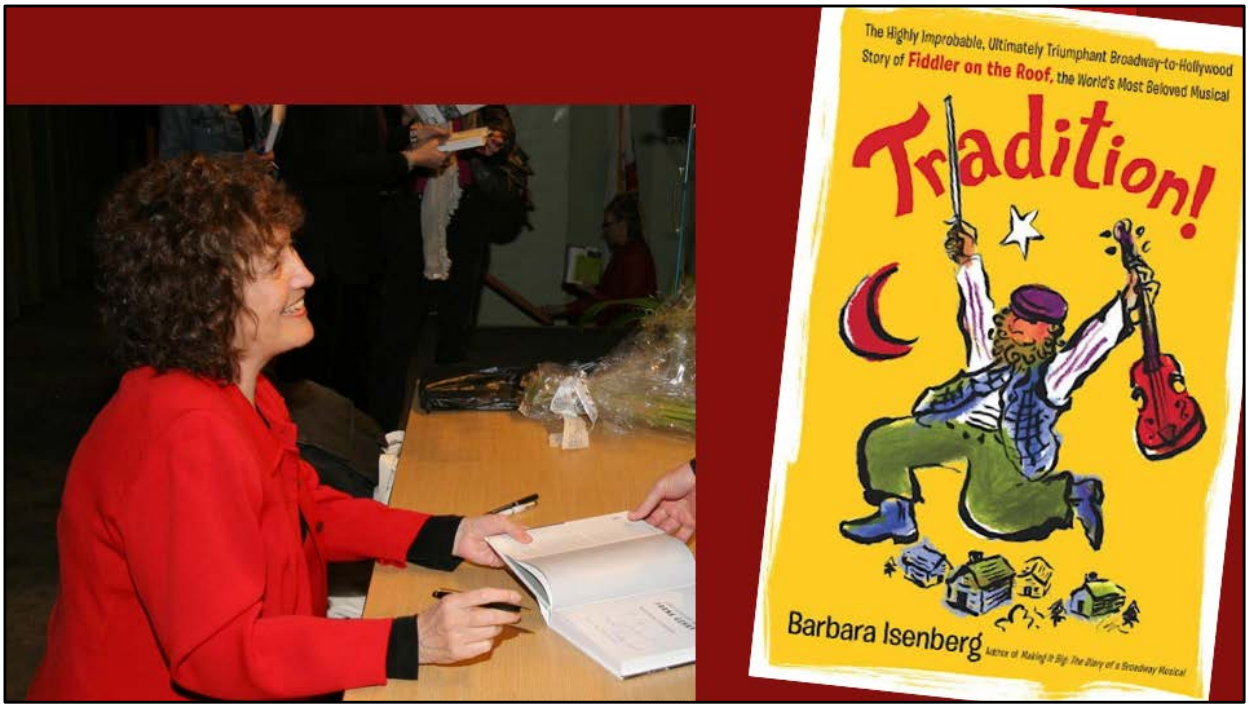
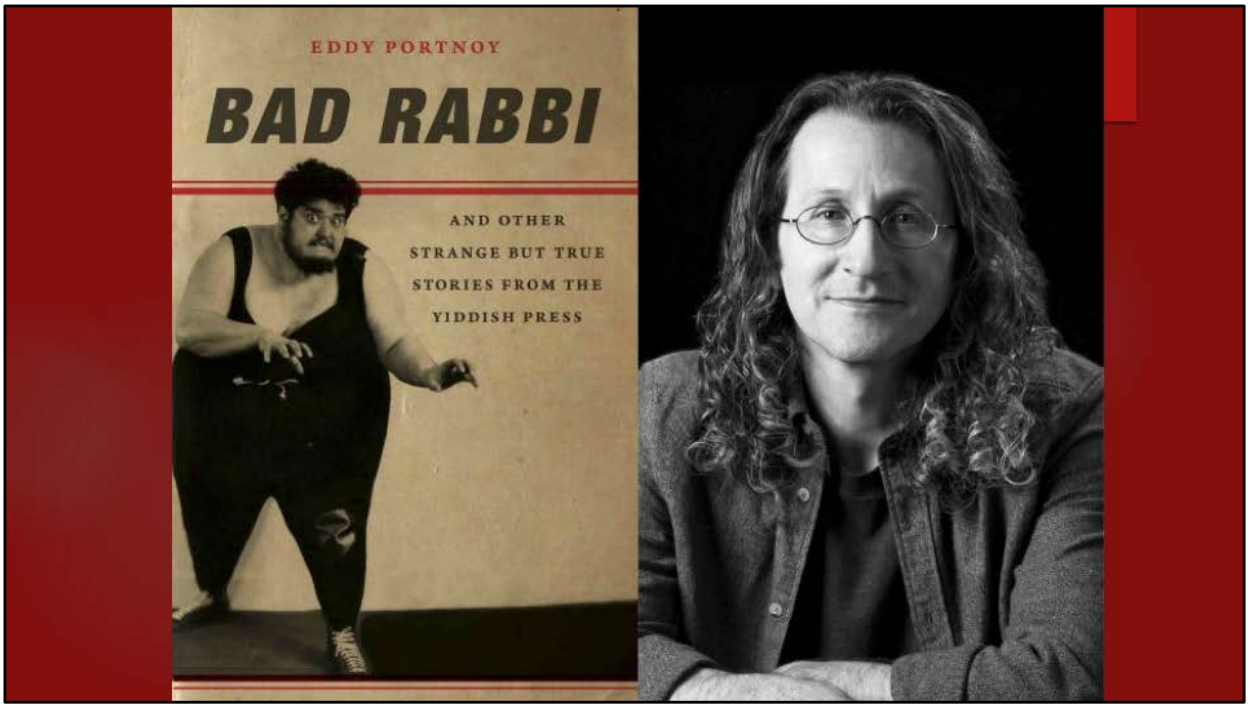
OPEN ALL YEAR

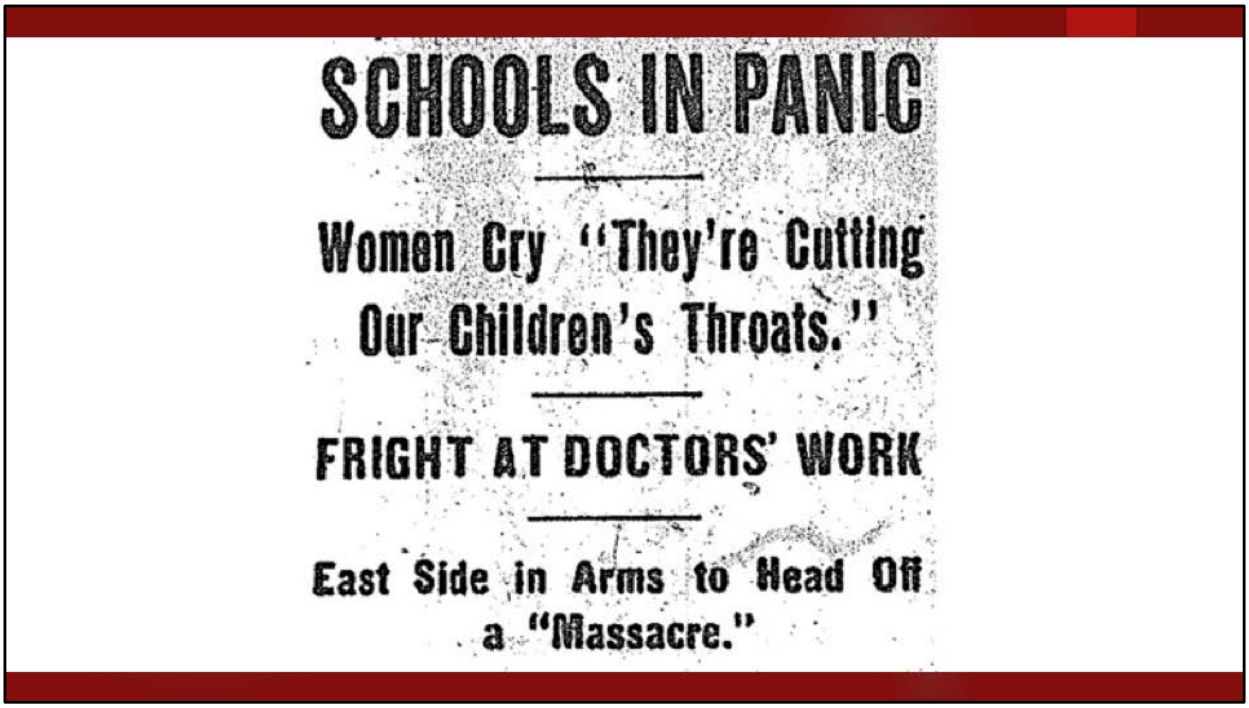

CONTEMPORARY TALES OF CRIME AND OTHER DARK DEEDS
JEWISH NOIR
Edited by
KENNETH WISHNIA
"Some seriously good stuff here. This guy loved it."
–LEE CHILD, #1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR


JEWS VERSUS
ALIENS
EDITED BY LAVIE TIDHAR
& REBECCA LEVENE
BEN YEHUDA PRESS

From a blurb: “Told in a wry, understated voice, ‘Something Is Rotten in Fettig’ satirizes the travails of Leopold Plotkin, a failing kosher butcher with a pathological aversion to conflict. After Plotkin commits an act that ignites a crisis in his Republic, he is propelled into conflicts with every branch of government.”


The Highly Improbable, Ultimately Triumphant Broadway-to-Hollywood Story of Fiddler on the Roof, the World's Most Beloved Musical
Tradition!
Barbara Isenberg
Author of Making It Big: The Story of a Broadway Musical


EDDY PORTNOY
BAD RABBI
AND OTHER
STRANGE BUT TRUE
STORIES FROM THE
YIDDISH PRESS



SCHOOLS IN PANIC

Women Cry "They're Cutting Our Children's Throats."

FRIGHT AT DOCTORS' WORK

East Side in Arms to Head Off a "Massacre."

THE WORLD: WEDNESDAY EVENING, JUNE 27, 1900.

EAST SIDE SCHOOLS MOBBED BY HORDES OF PARENTS

Aroused by False Rumor of Children Being Slaughtered.

POLICE RESERVES OUT.

But They Could Not Handle Crowds About Twelve School Buildings.

RIOT ON THE EAST SIDE

Mob of Hebrews Again Attacks Diners in Division Street.

THE POLICE ARE KEPT BUSY

Crowd Could Not Stand the Sight of Their Co-Religionists Eating on the Day of Atonement.

Headlines of events at Herrick Brothers Restaurant. Source: *New York Times*, September 27, 1898.