

Emilia Baeyertz, the “Jewish Lady Evangelist”

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For this “Women’s” edition of *Mishkan*, I wanted to write about a Jewish believer in Jesus who influenced the lives of thousands of people during her decades as an itinerant evangelist. She remains largely unknown to many, partly because her ministry was for quite some years centered in Australia, with little attention being paid to her outside of students of the Australian revival circuit. Moreover, she is little known even among those who study the lives of Jewish believers in Jesus, for (except for one brief period) her ministry was not specifically to Jewish people.

Nor have her biographers had much to say about her Jewish background. As politically incorrect as it sounds today, Emilia Baeyertz—the subject of this essay—was known by the sobriquet of “the Jewish Lady Evangelist.” Her Jewishness was thereby frequently alluded to in publicity materials, in the press, and in her own messages. But although Baeyertz made no secret of her Jewish background and often mentioned it to underscore one point or another in her public speaking, very little exploration has been done of that aspect of her life.

There is already some significant material on Baeyertz. The most extensive biography is by Robert Evans in a 2007 publication,¹ the premier source of information on Baeyertz, which includes a huge and invaluable assortment of primary-text newspaper reports of her ministry. Additional papers and monographs exist,² including a biography and her own testimony³ and a fictionalized biography with a well-researched companion volume.⁴ Brief notices appear in various publications on Australian biography,⁵ and information can be found in publications

¹ Robert Evans, *Emilia Baeyertz, Evangelist: Her Career in Australia and Great Britain; An Historical Study, and Compilation of Sources* (Hazelbrook, N.S.W., Australia: Research in Evangelical Revivals, 2007). The several hundred pages of contemporary news reports of her ministry are invaluable.

² Wilson, E. K. “‘Totally devoid of sensationalism’: Mrs Baeyertz, the ‘Jewish lady evangelist from Melbourne,’” *Tasmanian Historical Research Association Papers and Proceedings* 49:3 (2002), 153-166.

³ The biography is Sydney Watson, *From Darkness to Light: The Life and Work of Mrs. Baeyertz* (Cork, 1895). Her testimony is found in *Five Lectures Delivered by Mrs. Baeyertz, the Converted Jewess with the Story of Her Conversion from Judaism to Christianity* (Toronto, Canada, 1891).

⁴ Betty Baruch and Amanda Coverdale, *This Is My Beloved: The Story of Emilia Baeyertz, Jewish Christian Lady Evangelist* (n.p.: Emilia Baeyertz Society, 2017); Garth Coverdale, ed., *This Is My Beloved Companion: For Readers of This Is My Beloved, The Story of Emilia Baeyertz* (n.p.: Emilia Baeyertz Society, 2017).

⁵ E.g., *Australian Dictionary of Evangelical Biography*, <https://sites.google.com/view/australian-dictionary-of-evang/>

dealing with Australian revivals and the like.⁶ Much of what I write here of the general contours of her life and ministry are taken from these existing materials. What I have tried to do is to present them in a compact and useful way, and then to explore the Jewish aspects of her life and ministry. The latter sometimes involved synthesizing existing material in a new way. It should be noted that much relevant material is to be found in Australian libraries and is not yet digitized; thus I have worked at something of a disadvantage in regards to primary-source research.

1. The Jewish Community of North Wales and Baeyertz' Upbringing

A number of accounts of Baeyertz's early life mention either her "strict" religious upbringing⁷ or that she was born into a "wealthy" Jewish family.⁸ Her family was indeed Orthodox, as were all of Welsh Jewry till the middle of the 20th century;⁹ however, they were most certainly not wealthy, at least not at the time she was born in 1842.¹⁰

Wales is not generally the first place that comes to mind in connection with Jewish emigration, but for very good reasons there ended up a sizable enough Jewish presence there. Jews from Prussia or the Netherlands had by the early 19th century established themselves in England. That emigration had as much to do with limited economic opportunities in Eastern Europe as it did with persecution, and maybe more so. From England, Jews established communities first in south Wales, and later in north Wales, the former being the larger of the two communities. Little contact ensued between north and south due to the geography of the country; it was easier to connect with cities in England than to traverse Wales north to south.

Among the cities in England settled by Jews were Manchester and Liverpool; Manchester remains a leading Jewish population center. In the

⁶ See bibliography at end.

⁷ So Baeyertz herself: "Before proceeding, I must tell you that I and my family for ages back were strict Jews, . . ." [*Five Lectures Delivered by Mrs. Baeyertz, the Converted Jewess with the Story of Her Conversion from Judaism to Christianity* (Toronto, Canada, 1891)]. "Strict" seems to have been a common trope for describing "Orthodox" in many writings of the period.

⁸ "Born in North Wales in April, 1842, into a wealthy, orthodox Jewish home, . . ." (Evans, "Introduction" (no page numbers are provided). Similarly in "Chapter Two: A Short Biography." "The daughter of wealthy Jewish parents . . ." (from "Christians of the Australian Clay," australiansaints.blogspot.com/2011/09/b-c-d-surname-list.html).

⁹ Cai Parry-Jones, *The Jews of Wales: A History* (Cardiff, Wales: University of Wales Press, 2017), ch. 2.

¹⁰ Cf. Parry Jones, ch. 2: "Indeed, Bangor's Jewish community was so poor and few in number in 1894 (around fourteen families) that they required financial support from co-religionists through the United Kingdom to help pay for a rented room they had 'fitted up for synagogal purposes' . . ." If that was true in 1894, how much more so in 1842!

early 19th century, as population and economic competition grew in the English cities, Jews would often commute to north Wales as peddlers, a trip of about 100 miles, soon facilitated by a steam-packet between Liverpool and Bangor which, according to an 1830 news article, included “Jew pedlars” among its passengers.¹¹ North Wales was more rural than the industrialized south, and provided a place to peddle jewelry and the like during the week, then to return to Liverpool or Manchester for the Sabbath.



The pin marks Bangor, to which Liverpool and Manchester Jews could commute as peddlers. Image from Google Maps.

It was not long before some peddlers permanently settled in North Wales. By the 1820s, the Hyman brothers, Michael and Joseph, had opened a watchmaking business.¹² By 1828, so too did brothers John and Solomon Aronson, who settled in the town of Bangor. These were not people of wealth, but those who sought opportunity and found it; the Jewish community remained miniscule for quite some years, a few dozen people maybe. For a long time there were no funds for a synagogue, and when one was finally established in the 1890s, it did not meet in its own building. Nor was there a *mikveh* or a Jewish cemetery nearby, Manchester and Liverpool serving as destination points for those. Common occupations of those who settled north Wales included jewelry salesman, watchmaker, clothier, or pawnbroker.¹³

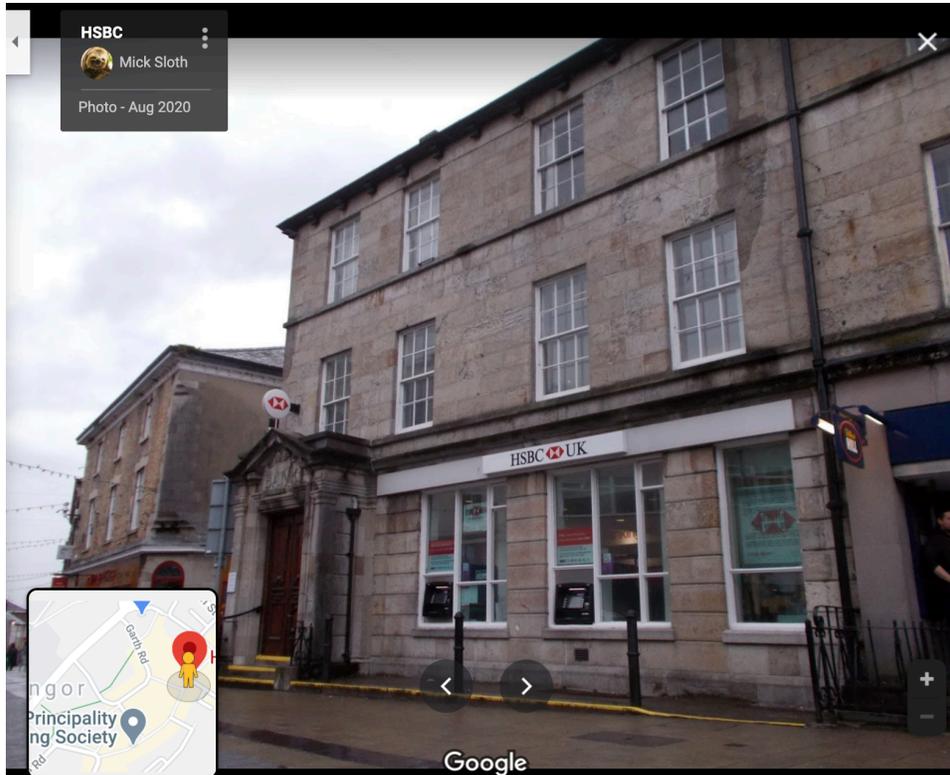
It was in this environment that Emilia Louisa Aronson was born on March 29, 1842 to John and his wife Maria (née Lazarus), one of an eventual

¹¹ Cai Parry-Jones, “The History of the Jewish Diaspora in Wales,” PhD diss., Bangor University, 2014, pp. 50-51.

¹² <https://nation.cymru/opinion/the-secret-jewish-history-of-wales-high-streets-is-hidden-in-plain-sight/>; Parry-Jones, “History of the Jewish Diaspora in Wales,” pp. 49-50.

¹³ For many details, see Parry-Jones, “History of the Jewish Diaspora in Wales.”

eleven siblings.¹⁴ One source reports that nine years later, in 1851, her father John opened a jewelry store at 272 High Street, perhaps a relocation from an earlier shop. That building, built in 1849, still stands today, occupied by the HSBC Bank.



The Aronson jewelry store was located in this building.

The Aronsons were not the most prominent members of Bangor’s Jewish community; more well-known were the Wartskis (selling jewelry and drapery) and the Pollecoffs (drapery).¹⁵ That may have been true in due time; in the early years, at least, no one would have had time to become “prominent” as they transitioned from peddling to settling down and opening businesses.

An 1851 census reveals that the Aronson family lived at 47 High Street in Bangor.¹⁶ Jewish education in the Aronson family would have taken place in *cheder*, if a teacher were to be found, or else at home. No Jewish day schools existed at the time outside of London and Birmingham, and lay

¹⁴ https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/15696360/person/18016818566/story?_phsrc=ZAO98&_phstart=succSource1. A grandson kept the name Aronson in addition to Baeyertz: Rudolf Emil Aronson Baeyertz, <https://archives.library.auckland.ac.nz/agents/people/249>

¹⁵ Parry-Jones, “History of the Jewish Diaspora in Wales,” p. 57.

¹⁶ An inquiry to the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales was inconclusive in locating this address for 1851 but provided tools to research in the future.

teachers would often need to be procured.¹⁷ As a girl, Emilia would likely have not have had much of a religious education compared to the boys, and especially not in the mid-19th century. But surely she imbibed some things only if by overhearing conversations at home, or at a Shabbat meal, or by participating in holidays that included both genders, such as Passover.

In passing, we can note that another Aronson in the family, Lewis, co-founded with Morris Wartski the first synagogue in north Wales in the 1890s; it lasted till the mid-20th century. Lewis served as the first synagogue president 1894–1899.

Such was Baeyertz’s early Jewish life. Religious, warm, and for a while, uneventful.

2. The Move to Australia and Her Journey to Faith

While her recollections of her early life at home are warm, tragedy struck Baeyertz early on. While still at home in Bangor, she was engaged to be married to a young Jewish man who, however, died of “consumption” (tuberculosis) not long after.¹⁸ In ill health after this tragic turn of events, she accompanied one of her brothers to Australia where a sister had already settled in Melbourne, with the aim of restoring her physical and emotional well-being. This trip took place in February of 1864,¹⁹ meaning that her engagement probably occurred at age 21 or 22 years of age. (Two of the Aronson brothers, George and Saul, also eventually settled in Melbourne in the jewelry business.)

Baeyertz has left us with the story of her testimony.²⁰ While it is a valuable document, it was designed for public consumption and for re-telling as occasion arose. Certainly there is much left unsaid that a full autobiography would have included. According to her own account, once in Australia, she embarked on a life of “pleasure”²¹ and was busy making the social scene. This would have been a pleasant distraction after the death of her fiancée as she participated in the world of young party-goers. After a time she met Charles Baeyertz, an Anglican and a bank employee with whom she fell in love. Their relationship did not sit well with either family, and in the end they opted for a secret marriage at Christ Church, Hawthorn, on October 16, 1865, when Emilia would have been 23 years

¹⁷ Parry-Jones, “History of the Jewish Diaspora in Wales,” see ch. 2 under “Education.” For all these references, see also Cai Parry-Jones, *The Jews of Wales: A History* (University of Wales Press, 2017).

¹⁸ Watson, *From Darkness to Light* (Cork, 1895), p. 10.

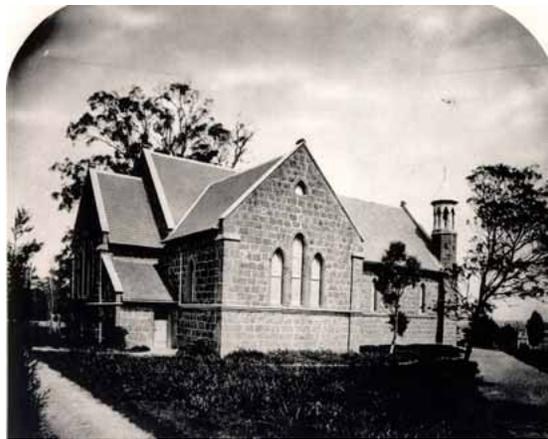
¹⁹ Evans, *Emilia Baeyertz, Evangelist*, Introduction (no page numbers provided).

²⁰ See footnote 3.

²¹ Baeyertz, *Five Lectures*, p. 5.

of age.²² Emilia's family proceeded to disown her, even though from her own account, her proviso in agreeing to the marriage was that no attempts be made at converting her.

Interestingly, upon the birth of their two children Charles (b. 1866) and then Marion (b. 1869), Emilia decided that she wanted them brought up in her husband's faith. Marion was baptized, and Emilia herself was baptized as well (!) so that she would have some part in Charles Sr.'s Anglicanism. She continued on as a pseudo-Anglican, so to speak, by getting confirmed and participating in communion. Why she agreed to raise the family in the Anglican church is not clear, whether it was simply love for Charles or a Victorian-era ethos in which Charles as the father should set the religious direction for the entire family.²³



Christ Church, Hawthorne, site of the secret marriage of Emilia and Charles. It looks much the same today.

At that point tragedy struck yet again. After six years of marriage when they both were 29 years old, Charles died in a shooting accident that took place on March 4, 1871, while he was out hunting quail. A detailed report in a local newspaper indicates that he lingered for two days and had his arm amputated before dying on March 6—and that “this is the second accident the unfortunate gentleman has met with while shooting having on a previous occasion shot two of his toes off.”²⁴

²² Evans, *Emilia Baeyertz, Evangelist*, Chapter Two: A Short Biography.

²³ I am not an expert on Victorian mores. However, see e.g., “Parenting in Victorian England,” part of The North and South Project at Duquesne University, annagibson.com/northandsouth/?page_id=30

²⁴ “Melancholy Accident,” *Colac Herald*, March 7, 1871. Reproduced in Garth Coverdale, ed., *This Is My Beloved Companion: For Readers of This Is My Beloved The Story of Emilia Baeyertz, Jewish Christian Lady Evangelist* (Melbourne: Emilia Baeyertz Society, 2017), pp. 13-14. See also <https://ourgen.es/1940>.

It is not easy to piece together all the dynamics that go into someone's journey of faith. In Emilia's case, based on her own words and those of her biographers, it seems that she was driven by a desire to be with Charles after death. She began reading the New Testament, and in conjunction with conversations with Christian friends,²⁵ finally came to faith while reading John's Gospel. How long this process took is not certain. What is clear, piecing together several accounts, is that it involved both friendships with Christians and the reading of the New Testament, catalyzed by grief and a desire to sort out questions about the afterlife. A felt need, a Christian friend, the Bible—these are certainly the components that come together in many people's coming to faith.

3. The Beginnings of An Evangelistic Career

Following Charles' death, Baeyertz relocated with her two children to Geelong, about an hour's drive southwest from Melbourne. According to Evans' biography, she right away started evangelizing in the prison and hospital under Anglican auspices, as well as teaching Sunday School to teens.²⁶ At this time, as Evans and others report, she underwent a period of great consciousness of sin, leading to the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" (though not of the emotional Pentecostal variety) and involvement in what we would call the "Holiness" movement. Thus began her long and fruitful career as an itinerant evangelist.

At this point rather than proceed chronologically, it will be more helpful to engage with Baeyertz's life and ministry under several topics.

4. The Overall Context of Her Ministry

The Social and Theological Context

There are numerous sources available which detail the revival movement in Australia at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. The Methodists and Wesleyans were prominent in the movement, and those denominations also allowed for women preachers. Despite that, there was also a strong social countercurrent in Victorian society that demarcated a woman's sphere to be within the home. Although societal changes were soon afoot in regard to gender roles, Baeyertz had a struggle when it came to the propriety of speaking to "mixed" audiences. Eventually she simply felt that God called her to speak to such audiences, though she also ended up holding separate meetings at set times for

²⁵ See her own testimony book. ". . . and raised up dear friends who showed me that only in one way could I ever hope to see my husband again." (p. 6)

²⁶ Evans, *Emilia Baeyertz, Evangelist*, Chapter Two: A Short Biography.

women only and for men only. She gave two rationales for holding separate-gender meetings:

I was at the time holding a mission, and assisting one of the ministers. The church was full whenever I spoke, but like it is everywhere else—I suppose it is very much the same in Nelson—there were very few men present; so the minister consulted with me. ‘Can’t we do something,’ he asked, ‘to get the men to come? What do you say to holding a meeting for men only?’

“The very thing,” I replied, “about which I have been seeking guidance; I’ll do it. And I did, and found it a great success; and that was how I adopted the plan. It has this great advantage, too, that among the poorer classes, where both the father and mother can’t very well get away at the same time, one can come one night and one another.”²⁷

Evans remarks that “While Mrs. Baeyertz’s teaching was normal Nineteenth Century Protestant Evangelical theology, it had perhaps a Baptist flavour, instead of the more normal Methodist or evangelical Anglican flavour.”²⁸ He points to several prominent features of her preaching: the deity of Jesus; the fulfillment of Passover and the Day of Atonement in Christ (more on this below); the beauty of Christ, arising from her own personal experience; and the doctrine of holiness.

In regard to the latter, Baeyertz was what today we would call “fundamentalist” in her approach to the “world.” This was likely a combination of reacting against her early forays into “pleasure” as well as the result of teaching in the circles she moved in as a new believer. As a result, she opposed the theater, concerts, dancing, card playing, and the reading of novels. (More on this below.)

Her Schedule, Audiences, and Follow Up

Her “missions,” as reported in numerous newspaper accounts reproduced in Evans, usually lasted sixteen days in length. I have found one reference to a fourteen-day series, but in general she would come into a town for around two weeks at a time. Noteworthy is the cross-denominational sponsorship of these meetings. Afternoon meetings were aimed at those already Christians, to encourage them in their spiritual life and to a deeper consecration. Evening meetings were evangelistic, aimed at the nominal churchgoer or the nonbeliever. Some meetings were for families, others were conducted separately for women and girls and for men and boys.

²⁷ Watson, *From Darkness to Light*, p. 75.

²⁸ Evans, *Emilia Baeyertz, Evangelist*, Chapter Four: Her Theology.

Meetings were followed by an “after-meeting” at which those who desired further conversation about the gospel were invited. At one such meeting, at Sandhurst, at least 2,200 people were in attendance,²⁹ and “sixty or more remained to the after-meeting; about twenty of these were men; those who usually remained at the close of the former services had been mostly women and girls. After Mrs. Baeyertz had spoken to them a few words, several rose to testify that they were now enabled to rest on Christ. After these had left, Mrs. Baeyertz and the Christian workers went down amongst the anxious ones remaining, not a few of whom also professed their faith in the Lord Jesus before leaving.”³⁰

Baeyertz’s approach in these after-meetings was unique, according to the contemporary accounts. “This evangelist makes much of the after-meeting, which she conducts after the fashion of a Bible-class, each inquirer after truth being supplied with a copy of the Book and directed to this passage and to that bearing directly on the way of salvation.”³¹

Another look at the nature of these after-meetings comes from the pages of *The Christian*:³²

The after-meetings were a feature of the mission, being conducted on (to us) new lines. Anxious ones³³ were invited into a separate room, but there was no personal dealing unless specially requested. Each person was provided with a “marked” Testament, and after verses bearing on salvation had been read aloud by Mrs. Baeyertz, and brought forcibly to the minds of the inquirers, they were asked to speak silently to God on the matter, thus bringing the soul into direct contact with God, and leaving Him to do His own work with His own Word. The result more than satisfied those who were inclined to doubt this new method of dealing with souls. Scores who came into the room, looking sad and sorrowful, left with bright, rejoicing faces, only to return the following evening to lead some friend into similar blessing.

²⁹ That is the reported capacity of the meeting hall, which was maxed out, people being turned away. *Willing Work*, Aug. 1, 1879, p. 92, reproduced in Evans.

³⁰ *Willing Work*, August 1, 1879, p. 92, reproduced in Evans.

³¹ *The Christian*, July 21, 1898, p. 23, reproduced in Evans.

³² *The Christian*, November 5, 1903, p. 28, reproduced in Evans.

³³ “Anxious” was a common term for those inquiring spiritually. In the U.S. a term in use was the “anxious seat” or “anxious bench,” defined as “a seat reserved at a revival meeting for those troubled by conscience and eager for spiritual assistance,”

<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/anxious-seat>

As an example of Baeyertz's schedule, here is a four-page brochure of invitation to a mission in 1897.³⁴ Note some of the meetings marked "Women and Girls" and "Men and Lads."



³⁴ I no longer recall where I found this piece of "ephemera."

ORDER OF

FROM OCTOBER 10

Sundays and Week Evenings.

Sunday,	October 10th,	at 3.30,	"Mary, Martha and Lazarus."
"	"	" 7.0,	"Unpardonable Sin."
Monday,	October 11th,	" 7.30,	"My Conversion from Judaism."
Tuesday,	October 12th,	" 7.30,	"Atonement"—from Genesis
Wednesday,	October 13th,	" 7.30,	<i>Women and Girls.</i>
Thursday,	October 14th,	" 7.30,	<i>Men and Lads.</i>
Friday,	October 15th,	" 7.30,	"Passover" (with table spread Modern Jewish way).
Sunday,	October 17th,	" 3.30,	"The Conditions of Effectual Prayer."
"	"	" 7.0,	"The Master is come, and calleth for thee."
Monday,	October 18th,	" 7.30,	"Jewish Day of Atonement."
Tuesday,	October 19th,	" 7.30,	"The Lord's Coming; how to get ready for His appear- ance."
Wednesday,	October 20th,	" 7.30,	"Impossible to renew them again unto repentance. Whom?"
Thursday,	October 21st,	" 7.30,	"Great White Throne."
Friday,	October 22nd,	" 7.30,	"The Lord's Coming to the earth. Return of the Jews to Jerusalem. Ushering in of the Millenium."
Sunday,	October 24th,	" 3.30,	"Perfect Heart."
"	"	" 7.0,	"Come."

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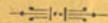
SERVICES.

OCTOBER 25TH.

✦ Bible Readings. ✦

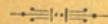
DAILY AT 3 P.M.

Monday,	October 11th,	...	"Secret of Failure."
Tuesday,	October 12th,	...	"Consecration."
Wednesday,	October 13th,	...	"Fruit-bearing."
Thursday,	October 14th,	...	"Seven Steps in the Blessed Life."
Friday,	October 15th,	...	"Clean Heart."
Monday,	October 18th,	...	"Worry."
Tuesday,	October 19th,	...	"Christian Joy."
Wednesday,	October 20th,	...	"Temptation."
Thursday,	October 21st,	...	"Always."
Friday,	October 22nd,	...	"Secret of Victory."



Last Day of Mission.

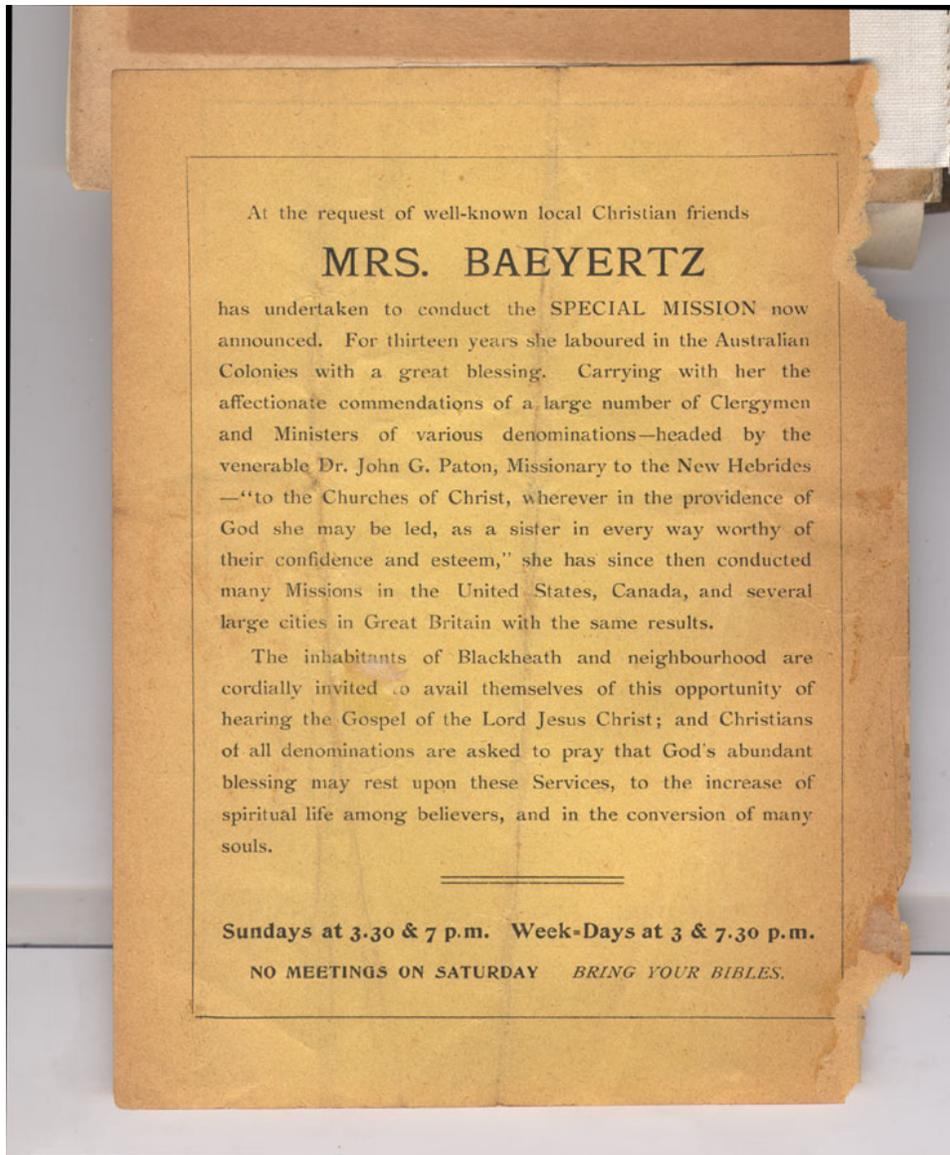
Monday,	October 25th,	at 12.0,	"Five Talents or One."
"	"	" 3.0,	"Baptism of the Holy Ghost."
"	"	" 7.30,	"Holiness."



A Hearty Invitation and Welcome to All.

SANKEY'S HYMNS WILL BE USED.

Collections to Defray Expenses.



Large audiences attended her missions. Newspapers reports from a variety of cities and dates reveal a general pattern of overflow crowds which she gathered, in many cases remarking that people had to be turned away. In Sandhurst, “Mrs. Baeyertz entered the densely packed building—which we are told holds twelve hundred . . .”³⁵ Los Angeles, she could “pack to the doors the largest church in town with over 4,000 people present.”³⁶ In Hull, “Prospect-street Church was packed in every corner where standing ground could be had, and an overflow of nearly 1,000 filling Albion

³⁵ *Willing Work*, July 25, 1879, p. 84, reproduced in Evans.

³⁶ No source, no date, reproduced in Evans. But her Los Angeles missions would have taken place in 1891 (see Evans, Appendix: List of Missions Conducted by Mrs. Baeyertz.”

Congregational Church.”³⁷ In Hawick, “the last Sunday’s services will be especially memorable, the large Public Hall, accommodating over 2,000 persons, being packed, while, unfortunately, hundreds had to be turned away.”³⁸

We can note one convert at her meetings, famous in some Christian circles: T.C. (Thomas C.) Hammond,³⁹ whom those of a previous generation may remember as the author of the discipleship book *In Understanding Be Men*. The title is taken from the King James version of 1 Corinthians 14:20, which is rendered in more modern versions as “be mature” or “be adults.” Written in the 1930s and in use probably till the 60s or 70s, its title would today be quite problematic, as few women would want to be men, in understanding or in any other way!

Finally, we should note that Baeyertz’s manner was dignified, forceful, and effective. One publication noted “her pathetic [that is, speaking to the emotions] manner and earnestness in delivery . . .”⁴⁰ She “excels all whom we have heard in Nelson in fluency of speech, and in plain speaking upon the truths taught in the old evangel.”⁴¹ “Her style is clear and forcible, her diction easy and elegant, and her manner of elucidating passages of Scripture plain and easily understood.”⁴² “Mrs. Baeyertz is a lady of prepossessing manner and appearance, while her voice is soft and musical, and her articulation clear and emphatic.”⁴³ Her clothing was plain: “A simple black dress made in a manner neither ultra-fashionable nor antediluvian . . .”⁴⁴ “Mrs. Baeyertz had a dress code which militated against colourful or expensive clothing or ornamentation. She was noted several times for wearing tastefully designed clothes, though black.”⁴⁵

Overall, one gets the impression of a refined, cultured English lady who bore herself with dignity, composure and assurance.

³⁷ *The Christian*, February 18, 1896, p. 21.

³⁸ *The Christian*, November 8, 1900, p. 36, reproduced in Evans.

³⁹ Evans, *Emilia Baeyertz, Evangelist*, Chapter Seven: Her Achievements as an Evangelist, and his footnote 67.

⁴⁰ *Willing Work* (January 19, 1878), 31, reproduced in Evans.

⁴¹ No source, no date, reproduced in Evans.

⁴² *Truth and Progress*, July 1, 1881, p. 81, reproduced in Evans.

⁴³ *Launceston Examiner*, June 28, 1886, p. 2.

⁴⁴ No source, no date, reproduced in Evans.

⁴⁵ Evans, *Emilia Baeyertz, Evangelist*, Chapter Five: Her Spirituality.

5. Emilia Baeyertz and Jewish Evangelism

With the above to set the context, we can now begin to explore Baeyertz's experience with Jewish evangelism. This falls into three areas.

Direct Jewish Evangelism

According to Evans,

After this period in Geelong, she was asked to move to Melbourne and commence a missionary outreach to Jewish people. She responded, but found that this of work did not succeed. The Jews looked upon her as an apostate. There were threats against her life. She had to withdraw, and re-direct her efforts.⁴⁶

Who made this request of her? Wilson provides further details:

Her next move was to Melbourne, where Rev. H. B. Macartney, an Anglican minister in Caulfield, asked her to be a missionary to the Jews. Two aspects of Mrs Baeyertz' circumstances gave her freedom which other women did not have: she was a widow in comfortable financial circumstances, and she had been [*sic*] Jewish. She was often advertised as "the converted Jewess". This latter gave her the advantage of being already rather unusual, if not an object of some curiosity, and her behaviour [e.g., speaking to mixed gender groups] could be to some extent explained away on this basis if necessary.

The Jewish ministry was not successful (in fact she received death threats), and she soon began work among factory girls.⁴⁷

In regard to the sort of opposition she received, a rather colorful incident is recounted in Baeyertz's testimony booklet *From Darkness to Light*:

[Baeyertz] was visiting in rather a poor part of the city, and called at a house where she had once been before. She had only just entered, when the daughter said, "Father has sworn by an oath, which he would not break, that if he catches you here again he will kill you!"

The words had scarcely escaped the lips of the girl, when the father—who was out when Mrs. Baeyertz called—passed the window on his way to the front door. The girl raced to the door and

⁴⁶ Evans, *Emilia Baeyertz, Evangelist*, Chapter Two: A Short Biography.

⁴⁷ Wilson, E. K. 'Totally devoid of sensationalism': Mrs Baeyertz, the 'Jewish lady evangelist from Melbourne,' " *Tasmanian Historical Research Association Papers and Proceedings* 49:3 (2002), pp. 153-166.

locked it; then seizing Mrs. Baeyertz's hand, she whispered, "Come with me quickly! This is your only chance."

Following the girl through the narrow passage, Mrs. Baeyertz found herself thrust hurriedly through a small door in the rear [sic] of the house, while the trembling voice of the girl whispered hurriedly, "Run for your life!"⁴⁸

Let us note several things about her foray into Jewish evangelism. First, it came at the advocacy of H. B. Macartney, Jr., not to be confused with his more prominent father. Macartney Jr. was a huge advocate of mission work to all sorts of groups,⁴⁹ and he undoubtedly enthused over the prospect of Baeyertz ministering to her own people. An evangelical Anglican, he was among other things a supporter of women's missionary work (as were others in the late 19th century) and interdenominational evangelism. He also participated in the "Higher Life" (Keswick) movement, which espoused the idea of "entire sanctification," and produced the periodical *The Missionary at Home and Abroad*. We can imagine that his influence on Baeyertz was a strong one in terms of her doctrine and teaching as well as in her missionary career.



H. B. Macartney, Jr.⁵⁰

The second point of note is that Baeyertz had no training in Jewish missions nor did she have a team to work with. Nor for that matter was she

⁴⁸ Watson, *From Darkness to Light*, p. 61.

⁴⁹ For this, see Darrell Paproth, "Hussey Burgh Macartney Jr: Mission Enthusiast," *Lucas: An Evangelical History Review* 2.4 (2011–12).

⁵⁰ As reproduced in Elisabeth Wilson, "Wandering stars": The impact of British evangelists in Australia, 1870s–1900." Ph.D. diss., University of Tasmania, 2011, p. 42.

under the auspices of an existing Jewish mission. Her method, during this time, was to go door to door and seek an invitation in, in order to read the Bible, New Testament included.⁵¹ In those circumstances, it is not surprising that her “Jewish ministry” was short-lived in the face of opposition. Or was it? It is quite possible that a lack of funding may have contributed to her change of plans. Wilson writes:

“See a plea in *The Missionary, At Home and Abroad*, November 1877, p. 163: ‘The Editor has for many reasons concealed from all but a small circle of friends the fact that for the last two years a most fitting agent has been employed to watch every opportunity of carrying the gospel to the Jews of Melbourne. The circle of private contributors has so seriously diminished that the Editor, half heart-broken at the apathy of the whole Church regarding the “Israel of God” ventures to ask some reader of *The Missionary* for £50.’ This may refer to Mrs Baeyertz.”⁵²

If this indeed refers to Baeyertz, it would not be the first time that Jewish missions found themselves under-funded. After all, two years is a good amount of time to persist in the face of opposition and death threats; while the latter makes for good stories, it is just possible that financial problems contributed as much or more to the situation.

The third thing to note is that what counted as “success” in Jewish missions was not necessarily the same as it is today. Those engaged in Jewish evangelization efforts today see opposition as a necessary concomitant of the work (though granted that actual death threats are rare today), and expect only a relatively small number of Jewish people to come to faith at any given time. Faithfulness in the work is coupled with modest (compared to some other mission field) expectations and the hope expressed by Paul that ultimately “all Israel will be saved.” In addition of course, the contemporary Jewish community’s attitude to Jesus is far more positive than it was in the 19th century. It is quite possible also, that the revivals that were part of Australian religious life in the 19th and early 20th centuries⁵³ led to expectations that Jewish people would come to faith in large numbers. For whatever reasons, then, Baeyertz’s time in direct Jewish evangelism lasted around two years.

⁵¹ Watson, *From Darkness to Light*, pp. 60-61.

⁵² E. K. Wilson, “Wandering Stars,” footnote 158.

⁵³ Evans mentions two books he published on Australian revivals and notes that 1880–1914 was “the hey-day of evangelicalism in Australia” (Evans, *Emilia Baeyertz, Evangelist*, Introduction.)

Jewish People in Attendance at Her Meetings.

When Baeyertz began her missions to the general public, the only distinctions made in audience makeup were when at certain times she addressed women and girls separately from men and boys; otherwise they were mixed gender events open to all.

In the many reports from the time preserved by Evans, we note the occasional presence of Jewish attendees. On one occasion, we note opposition being defused, though we could wish for further details on this rather unusual report:

It is worth noticing that on the last night of the meeting a Jew came forward and confessed that he left home with the intention of disturbing the meeting, but on his way the Lord said to him, “Touch not Mine anointed, and do My prophets no harm.”⁵⁴

And various publications remarked on the presence of Jewish visitors at her meetings:

It is especially gratifying to notice how the Jews flock to hear her and how faithfully she proclaims the message that Christ is the true Messiah, the King of the Jews.⁵⁵

Many Jews and Jewesses have attended the meetings, and some of them are anxious to know more about the Saviour whom their sister has found.⁵⁶

In the vestry there was a young Christian lady — once a pronounced infidel, but who some years ago had been converted through Mrs. Baeyertz — dealing with Jews and Jewesses anxiously seeking the truth; reasoning with them out of their own Scriptures that our Jesus is the promised Messiah they look for.⁵⁷

“Last night we were packed out the demand for tickets for the holiness meeting is so great that we shall have to take Queen’s Hall for Monday, seating 1,500. The Jews have come wonderfully. I go to Freemantle (sic) the second week in September, then to Calgoorlie (sic) in October, and to Geraldton in November.”⁵⁸

⁵⁴ *The Christian* (October 27, 1910), p. 24, reproduced in Evans.

⁵⁵ No source, no date, reproduced in Evans.

⁵⁶ *The Christian* (February 2, 1893), p. 20, reproduced in Evans.

⁵⁷ *The Christian* (December 5, 1895), p. 12, reproduced in Evans.

⁵⁸ Baeyertz’s own words, in *The Christian* (September 29, 1904), p. 27, reproduced in Evans.

Of course, without numbers it is impossible to know what “flocking” to meetings means, or “many” attending, or how “anxiously” they were seeking to know the truth, or in what numbers they were “coming wonderfully.” It seems, though, that Baeyertz was restrained in her communications and not given to exaggeration. And since she was invariably billed as the “Jewish Lady Evangelist” that in itself would have attracted curiosity on the part of some Jews. And because large attendance was common at the time for events such as her missions, we can well imagine that out of 2,500 people at a given meeting, some, maybe even a good number, could have been Jewish. So it may well be that Baeyertz had a wider influence in reaching Jews for the gospel than she had previously in her earlier attempts at exclusively Jewish evangelism.

We can note at this point that, as mentioned earlier, two of Baeyertz’s brothers had located to Melbourne and were engaged in the jewelry business. One can only wonder at their response to the highly-publicized meetings that their sister conducted!

Lack of Involvement with Jewish Missions Organizations

Evans points out:

The other side of this matter, however, also needs to be stated clearly. In the volumes of *The Christian*, through the years when Mrs. Baeyertz worked in Great Britain, mention and detail is made of many activities of Christian Missions to Jews—in Jerusalem; in many European cities; in London, and in provincial English cities. So far as I am aware, there is no indication at all that Mrs. Baeyertz became involved in any of these missionary activities, or that she attended or spoke at any of their meetings. It does not seem that she actively supported these missions to Jews at all. If this judgment is not correct, I certainly hope someone will point it out to me.⁵⁹

This may not be as perplexing at it seems. Baeyertz had her own sense of God’s calling, and in addition the Jewish missions did not usually move in the holiness/Wesleyan/Methodist circles that influenced Baeyertz. True, she was often associated with Anglicans as well, and worked cross-denominationally. But it may have been a mix of her associations and her conviction as to the nature of her own ministry that led to her lack of association with the Jewish mission agencies. Furthermore, she conducted her missions on invitations from groups like the Y.M.C.A. and local church associations. Had a Jewish mission agency invited her to speak, she may well have accepted, though large two-week events were not the

⁵⁹ Evans, *Emilia Baeyertz, Evangelist*, Chapter Seven: Her Achievements as an Evangelist.

modus operandi of the Jewish missions. And perhaps her own experience with Jewish opposition and/or lack of funding had something to do with it as well. This is an area where we would like to know more.

6. Jewish Influence on Her Messages and Meetings

Baeyertz was always billed as the “Jewish Lady Evangelist,” and made frequent mention of the fact that she was raised Jewish. As we read in *From Darkness to Light*:

Mrs. Baeyertz is evidently proud of her Jewish extraction. Twice she referred to it last evening, and both times with an emphasis of voice and manner which was singularly impressive. ‘I am one of God’s chosen,’ she said, ‘one of the seed of Abraham, the friend of God; and yet I have had need to be born again before I could be saved and gain eternal life. How much more do you Gentiles need to be born again!’ And once again she said, ‘I was brought up a strictly religious Jewess. My father was an orthodox Jew. On the day of atonement I fasted, and did all I could do for the atonement of my sins, and I lived up to the strict tenents [sic] of my faith. I will never allow anyone to speak in my presence disrespectfully of Judaism. I love it, and respect it. Christianity is not antagonistic to Judaism, but it is supplementary to it, and a fulfilment of it.’⁶⁰

Her Passover and Yom Kippur Messages

Among Baeyertz’s “stock” repeated messages were one on Passover and one on Yom Kippur. Much as Jewish mission organizations do today, she presented Passover to her church audiences utilizing a table laid out with the usual seder items.

And the Passover message seems to have garnered the most popularity. Evans write that, “The most popular address was based upon the Jewish Passover, both as it was practiced amongst orthodox Jews in the late Nineteenth Century, including in her childhood home, and as it was practiced when the Biblical Passover actually occurred.”⁶¹ On another occasion, *The Christian* observed that: “The address most looked forward to, however, was that on the ‘Passover.’”⁶² At that particular occasion, the same publication waxed poetic when it observed, “By a strange coincidence the address took place at the hour the Jews were celebrating the Passover, and the Paschal Moon streamed in all the windows during

⁶⁰ Watson, *From Darkness to Light*, p. 101.

⁶¹ Evans, *Emilia Baeyertz, Evangelist*, Chapter Six: Some Major Preaching Themes.

⁶² *The Christian*, April 16, 1896, p. 21, reproduced in Evans.

the service.”⁶³ One man was reported as saying “that he would not have missed the ‘Passover’ address even if it had involved walking back to Cardiff.”⁶⁴ Baeyertz’s address was given in Newport, Wales, and on Google Maps estimates a four-hour walk time to Cardiff!

Her Passover Table

The table setup was noted in several publications. “Special interest was awakened by Mrs. Baeyertz’s address on the Passover, illustrated by a table furnished in the modern Jewish fashion,” reported *The Christian*.⁶⁵ And “... her address on ‘The Passover’ was illustrated by means of a table spread in the modern Jewish fashion, as she had often seen it spread in her father’s house, with its piece of burnt bone as the miserable relic and memento of the Paschal Lamb.”⁶⁶ Nine years later we still read that she presented Passover “with table spread in modern Jewish fashion.”⁶⁷

An 1892 account from Belfast describes Baeyertz’s display in detail:

The first thing that was done was to spread a clean, white tablecloth upon the table. At a corner of the table was wine, not intoxicating wine, but ordinary wine, which was made by the master of the house. There was always great controversy as to what wine ought to be drunk at the Lord’s Table. While the Passover was going on intoxicating wine was not allowed to be touched at all, it was just the same as the Children of Israel eating leavened bread at the time of the first Passover when commanded to eat nothing but unleavened [sic] bread. The wine that was consumed at the Passover was simple non-intoxicating wine, and if they cared about what kind of wine ought to be consumed at the Lord’s Table they should first do away with the bad wine that was used at the Lord’s Table, and use the wine which from, a Jewish point was the wine used by our Lord himself. At the end of the table was a round dish, on which was laid unleavened bread. On the top of that was hyssop, and there was also a small plate of roasted lamb bone,

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ *The Christian*, February 6, 1908, p. 24, reproduced in Evans.

⁶⁵ *The Christian*, May 4, 1893, p. 24, reproduced in Evans.

⁶⁶ *The Christian*, October 26, 1893, p. 16, reproduced in Evans.

⁶⁷ *The Christian*, June 5, 1902, p. 28, reproduced in Evans. So too in 1908, “the hall was packed for the address on the Passover, when the evangelist spread a table according to the modern Jewish fashion of keeping the feast” (*The Christian*, April 2, 1908, p. 24) and 1913, “the ‘Passover table’ being spread in the sight of the people, as the Jews have it today at the beginning of Passover Week” (*The Christian*, February 6, 1913, p. 24). And 1914: “This address was made more effective on account of a table which she spread before her, as she used to spread the table in her father’s house, in her girlhood days” (*The Christian*, June 4, 1914, p. 24.)

burned quite black with the fire, which was emblematic of the Lamb that had been slain. There was also another plate of bitter herbs, and that was to keep in memory the time of their slavery in Egypt. Between those two plates there was generally a sort of mixture, the secret of which only the head of the family, but which was handed down from generation to generation. At sundown every evening all the members of the family engage in prayer in a very solemn and impressive tone of voice. That was continued for some time. After which a psalm was sung called the Hallow [sic—of course this is the Hallel], and which was the 118th Psalm. Altogether, the scene was a most impressive one. She then, went on to give an account of the history of the Jews.⁶⁸

Noteworthy here is the emphasis on the non-intoxicating kind of wine used; that it was homemade; the presence of hyssop; the “secret” recipe for *charoset*; and the remark about the “bad” kind of wine usually used at Communion (!). Did these details reflect an Orthodox seder table in 19th-century Wales? It would be interesting to find out.

Her Passover Message

Here is a précis of one such message from 1879. I quote the following extract at length since it is probably the closest we can come to her actual text:⁶⁹

In the afternoon, the subject of address was from Exodus xii. 13. The Passover lamb represented the first-born; and he represented the family. It was not enough that the lamb should be slain, the blood must be sprinkled on the doors. The speaker then led her hearers thoughts to Calvary; to the holy Lamb of God hanging there, for sin, not His own, but of the world. There was no atonement but through blood. The blood was to be put upon hyssop, where it was applied to the door. What was hyssop? Was it a plant very difficult to get? No, it grew in abundance in every corner and crevice, a simple little plant; it was not hyssop that saved them, but the *blood*. It is not faith that saves, it is the blood; some persons think too much about their faith, instead of the object of their faith, who alone could save them. After the unsaved had been earnestly and faithfully pleaded with, and shown the awful

⁶⁸ From the “Belfast N/L” of May 20, 1892, a scan of which was kindly provided to me by Elisabeth Wilson.

⁶⁹ *Willing Work*, August 8, 1879, p. 101, reproduced in in Evans. It is hard to know when the reports intend to reproduce a more-or-less verbatim transcript or whether they are only summarizing the messages. Often it is the latter, and in the process the reports omit the illustrations Baeyertz used.

responsibilities of turning away from the blood of the Lord Jesus, a few words were addressed to Christians. They were to feed on the Lamb as the children of Israel did—living in communion with the Lord—if they wanted to be real fruit-bearing servants. Their loins girded, always ready to do His bidding. Their shoes on their feet; their houses in order, and their wives not to be engaged in anything in which they knew they had no right to be as God’s servants. Leaning on their staff, something outside themselves; so to be always leaning on Jesus.

Another undated account gives this:⁷⁰

. . . The angel unsheaths his sword and the firstborn dies.

He passes through Egypt, and now he comes to the land of Goshen. Here is a humble dwelling, but God sees the blood on the doorpost. The lamb has been slain. The firstborn has already died in the person of the lamb, and the child is safe. *The best way to keep out death is by dying.* “I have died upon the cross, but not in my own person, but in the person of Christ.”

The Israelites had only to keep within the houses and they were safe. “Trusting” and “taking shelter” mean the same thing. But where is the blood that we may take shelter behind it? Do we not read in the epistle to the Hebrews that Christ has gone into heaven with his own blood? God sees the blood. I do not see it. I only *trust* it, and thus I am taking shelter, and am safe.

The blood was on the two sideposts and overhead on the lintel. On one place there was no blood. There was none on the ground. It was not to be trampled on. It was not to be counted an unholy thing. To trample on and despise the blood of Christ is the sin alluded to in Heb. x., 2-9. This is “the unpardonable sin.” God save you from rejecting the atonement of Jesus Christ! There is no other way of salvation but by the blood of Jesus.

Much is made of symbolism, though in a different way than would be usual today, relying more directly on Christian tropes than on connecting the symbols with Jewish understandings. In addition, “Even her most directly evangelistic messages . . . assume a considerable degree of familiarity with the Bible.”⁷¹ The fact that she would weave her own Jewish upbringing into the message undoubtedly helped attract audiences. It might be recalled that Baeyertz’s style was regularly reported as decorous. It greatly contrasts with the Passover program of Hermann Warszawiak, missionary to the Jews in New York City in the 1890s. The *New York Herald* (March 27, 1893, p. 4), breathlessly reported on

⁷⁰ No source, no date, reproduced in Evans. But the place is given as Wellington.

⁷¹ Elisabeth Wilson. “‘Wandering stars’: The impact of British evangelists in Australia, 1870s–1900” (Ph.D. diss., University of Tasmania, 2011), p. 256, n. 193.

Warszawiak's flamboyance with that era's typically long headline and subheads: "LIFTED A KNIFE OVER A LIVE LAMB.—Realism of the Rev. Hermann Warszawiak, Converted Hebrew, in a Sermon.—HAPPILY THE PET WAS SPARED.—Besides the Lamb and the Knife Were a Passover Table and Cloths to Represent Houses.—AFTER THE SERMON A SCENE." The 28-year-old Warszawiak "excused himself from killing the lamb outright out of consideration for the audience." It may have well been powerful and effective, but Baeyertz's effectiveness came simply through in other ways. At least it all reminds us that Jewish culture is not monolithic; Warszawiak's "rough" Eastern European manner contrasts sharply with Baeyertz's refined Welsh bearing.

Her Day of Atonement Message

Likewise with the Day of Atonement, she described both ancient and modern practices.⁷² Her description of the Yom Kippur she grew up with runs as follows, with some rather unusual transliterations of the Hebrew:

. . . let me tell you how it is now kept up among the Jews. Every fast and feast of the Jews begins at sundown. So in the evening, "*Yaum Kippour*" is ushered in by the Jews going down to their synagogues, where a very solemn service is gone through. They return home after that and early the next morning they return to the synagogue again, where they spend the whole day, sometimes from seven o'clock in the morning, in fasting and prayer, and by fasting I mean that not one morsel of bread, and not one drop of water, is taken from sundown one evening to sundown the next evening, and all through the day the prayers are kept up—they confess their sins, they weep, they smite upon their breasts. Then towards the end of the day the "*shauphor*" (or ram's horn of consecration) is blown. The service closes with the intoning of the additional prayers, and then, when it is all over, they go away to their homes, believing that through their prayers, their fasting, and their confession, their sins are all forgiven. For how long? Until the next Day of Atonement, when the same thing has to be gone through again.

From there Baeyertz goes on to Leviticus 16, described in great detail. She makes distinctively Christian application of the various elements of that chapter. For example:

⁷² "The Jewish Day of Atonement," in *Six New Addresses Delivered by Mrs. Baeyertz (Jewish Evangelist)*. Perth: City Printing Co., 1904, <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-52821324/view?partId=nla.obj-98977664#page/n6/mode/1up>. All the following quotations from the message are to be found here.

First of all there is the *ephod*, . . . and the high priest was to bear these names before the Lord upon his shoulders, for a memorial, continually. The shoulder is the place of strength, and that is where Jesus bears His people. The next thing was the breast-plate, . . . The breast-plate was worn on the heart, the place of the affections; and that is where the Lord Jesus carries us.

The bell was for sound, that Aaron might be heard when he went into the Holy Place before the Lord. The pomegranate meant fruit. And, as it is said, “*one* bell and *one* pomegranate,” it is to teach us that God expects as much fruit as sound. How is it with our lives?

And, perhaps the most imaginative of all:

Now the people hear the tinkle of the golden bells as the blue robe is put on again, and they rejoice, for they know that soon the high priest will come forth to bless them. And have we nothing to correspond to the tinkle of the bells? Yes, indeed we have. Every time we get an answer to prayer, every time the Holy Spirit brings Christ’s words to our remembrance, or the love of God is shed abroad anew in our hearts, it is a tinkle—tinkle from the golden bells on the robe of our High Priest, and we know that He is within the veil for us, and that soon, very soon, He will come forth to bless us. Have you heard the tinkle of the bells to-day?

And as she moves from atonement to the resurrection, Baeyertz rounds up with an explanation of why Jesus told Mary to not touch him (John 20:17):

Why was she not to touch him? If you will turn to Leviticus, 16th chap. 17th verse, you will see—“There shall be no man in the Tabernacle of the Congregation when the High Priest goeth in to make an atonement in the Holy Place *until he come out*. Under the Levitical Law it was defilement for the priest to come into contact with anyone on the *Day of Atonement until the atonement was complete*; and Jesus wished to fulfil the whole Law; until He had gone into heaven “with His own blood” the atonement was not complete.

To those used to “historical-critical” methods of interpretation, these sorts of applications can seem fanciful in the extreme, if not approaching allegorical—though not without a certain appeal. And perhaps we have all seen examples of Christian interpretations of this kind. While Baeyertz may have learned from her teachers to approach the Scripture in this way, it also has overtones of midrashic methods. And so I would like to turn to the possibility of the influence of midrash on Baeyertz’s messages.

Influence from Midrash?

As a child Baeyertz would likely not have had recourse to the same Jewish education as her brothers, though she likely overheard enough conversation. Some of her methods and content are reminiscent of traditional Jewish approaches to the biblical text, and it should not be ruled out that there was an influence, albeit unconsciously, from that realm.

In midrash and rabbinic exegesis, much can be made even of a single word from which multiple meanings can be extracted. Evans reports that “Another technique that Mrs. Baeyertz used from time to time was to choose one word which appeared several times at least in the Bible, and she would use several of them as points in her sermon.” Examples include sermons on “Tears,” “Behold,” “Doors,” and “But” (!). Here is one summary of such an address:

On the evening of Wednesday, May 26th, Mrs. Baeyertz gave an address, even more than usually tender and solemn, her subject being the word “Now,” in seven different passages of Scripture. The first was for the unconverted, from 2 Cor. vi. 2. “Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” She referred her hearers to the 4th chapter of Luke, where the Lord Jesus, after he had read the passage from Isaiah, ending “To preach the acceptable year of the Lord,” closed the book, and sat down. She reminded any unsaved who might be present, that the book is still closed; it is still the acceptable year of the Lord; and earnestly begged them not to delay any longer, but to accept that very night the salvation freely offered to them. Another “Now” was from 1 John iii. 2. “Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” Then will be the harvest time for the Great Sower, then the full ingathering from that “corn of wheat” which bringeth forth much fruit. Mrs. Baeyertz spoke of God’s purpose that we should be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. viii. 29), and this led to 1 Cor. xiii. 12, “Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” Here are two “*nows*” and two “*thens*;” *now* we see only from or by “a dim window,” as it may be rendered, but *then* we shall see Him as He is, and the conformity to His image, which is being slowly wrought here, will be suddenly made perfect. *Now* we know in part, but *then* as we “have been known.” It is not too much to think that the Lord will then explain the way He has led us, and make clear all that seems now so mysterious. The concluding “now” was

from Rom. xiii. 11. “Now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.”⁷³

Midrash would typically take the word “now” in a single verse and find multiple meanings, but in the process citing verses from elsewhere in Scripture. This example from Baeyertz is at least a cousin to the midrashic approach. Of course it is impossible to sort out where the influences from her youth overlapped with the teaching and examples she received from her Christian mentors. At the least we can ask how certain Christian approaches to Scripture may overlap with Jewish methods of interpretation—and what that means for our evaluation of them.

Her “Fundamentalism”—Jewish or not?

Above we mentioned Baeyertz’s negative attitude to secular culture. According to one account, here is what she had to say at one of her meetings:

Take warning, Christians; and if you have given way to sin confess it at once. The prodigal son was sent to feed the swine; think what a disgrace to a Jew. He would have eaten the husks, the swine’s food, but he was not allowed. I remember before I was converted a Wesleyan Christian said to me, “I cannot dance, it is not allowed with us.” I wish there were such rules among all Christians. Your taste for it, Christian, will soon go. Some Christians read novels. I could not descend to read them, after reading the Bible. Dear young Christians, put away all this trash. A young girl was awakened, and weeping about her sins; her parents were worldly, and tried to make her forget all serious thoughts; they got up a grand ball, and had a beautiful dress made for her; she was the bell [sic] of the ball; a few weeks afterwards she was taken ill; she asked her mother for her ball-dress, when brought, she pointed to it saying, “That is the price of my soul,” and so she passed out of this world.⁷⁴

Certainly, this betrays the influence of the particular holiness movements in which Baeyertz moved. And equally likely, it could have been an (over)reaction to her pre-Christian life. At first blush, it seems distinctly non-Jewish. But of course there are Jews who would resonate with this sort of approach to life, such as the Haredim who live insular lives and seek to deflect the influence of the outside world on their communities. Baeyertz didn’t grow up Haredi; she was part of the Orthodox Jewish

⁷³ *Willing Work*, June 4, 1880, p. 446, reproduced in Evans. Italics original.

⁷⁴ *Willing Work*, July 25, 1879, p. 84, reproduced in Evans. The meeting took place in Sandhurst.

world of Europe which was not nearly so insular. But we have to wonder if in fact her Orthodox upbringing made her more amenable to a “fundamentalist” Christian mindset and the influences of “world-avoiding” Christian friends. Again we have a question to ponder: how do certain kinds of Christian and Jewish “fundamentalism” look like when compared and contrasted? And what can we learn from that?

7. Conclusion

Emilia Bayertz died in London in 1926. She was an influential figure on the Australian revival circuit. Her ministry there and in other countries bore much fruit time after time. In this paper I have tried to highlight the neglected Jewish aspects of her life and career. There is much to yet be researched, but for now we come away with a picture of a refined Welsh Jewish lady whose faith was born in personal tragedy and who never lost sight of her Jewishness—or neglected to remind others as well.

I want to especially thank Elisabeth Wilson and Garth Coverdale for their help on various matters as we corresponded by e-mail over the past few months.

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