

# **“The Feinberg Connection: Charles L. Feinberg’s Contribution to Jewish Evangelism”**

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## **Purpose**

Originally, this paper was to be delivered last year at the LCJE Conference scheduled to meet at Biola University. Dr. Paul Rood of Biola would have talked about how crucial Jewish evangelism was in the development of Biola University and Talbot School of Theology. Today’s presentation was to focus more on the specific role played by Dr. Charles L. Feinberg in that process. Included in that, of course, is the reason why Chosen People Ministries chose to honor him by naming the Talbot seminary extension The Charles L. Feinberg Center for Messianic Jewish Studies, a partnership between Talbot School of Theology and Chosen People Ministries.

The topic was broadened somewhat with a request to add material which highlights how the Lord used Charles Lee Feinberg’s life to contribute to Jewish evangelism in general. This includes his personal history prior to his profession of faith in the Messiah and the circumstances around that defining moment. It also includes his unusual level of natural intelligence, his deep commitment to scholarship, his early theological training, his writing, his teaching, and his radio presence.

It goes without saying that the academic achievements of this Jewish scholar account for untold contributions to the education of Jewish and Gentile believers. Dr. Charles L. Feinberg’s writings have arguably supported the conservative, evangelical cause of Biblical and theological education as much or more than any other person over the past several decades. There is no way to estimate how many Jewish people were persuaded of the truth of the Scriptures after reading works written by Feinberg. Many came to faith, and many more grew in their faith. This, in itself, was effective evangelism.

However, most would agree that his primary contribution to Jewish evangelism was in training others to be effective. His writing helped undergird the confidence of believers in the Scriptures. His exegesis and exposition of the Word taught hundreds, if not thousands, to carefully handle Biblical truth and theology. It is always good to remember the important connection that should exist between scholarship and evangelical outreach. Many in the Messianic Jewish movement (no doubt all who are listening to this presentation) are keenly aware of the need for serious study and preparation in the effort to make the good news known to a Jewish audience.

Bridging the gap between the theoretical and the practical was important to Dr. Feinberg. So while all would agree that his scholarly work made it possible for many Jewish missionaries to speak boldly to their Jewish families and friends, not everyone may realize the depth of his zeal for evangelism. This presentation seeks to touch on the driving force behind Dr. Feinberg's stellar career as an eminent Jewish Christian scholar and a practical Jewish evangelist.

### **A "1<sup>st</sup> Person" Personal Note**

We teach our students to avoid the 1<sup>st</sup> person personal pronoun in academic writing, but allow me to explain why this story is such a joy for me to tell. Before I became a believer in Yeshua, over 60 years ago, Charles Feinberg played a role in my spiritual journey. Allow me to explain.

In the summer of the early 1960's I was driving home from somewhere in my old rusted out 1953 flathead V-8 Ford. When I turned on the radio it was tuned to a static filled station where a preacher with a rather loud and high pitched voice was talking about Jews and Jesus Christ. My first inclination in those days was to turn off such things immediately, but there was something quite intriguing about the program. I was mesmerized by the speaker and by what he was saying.

I did not know much of anything at that time, but I knew that Jews and Christians were supposed to be different. They were mutually exclusive in my non-Christian mind. Yet this was a show called the "Jewish Hour" (later called the Messianic Hour) with a Christian speaker who was a Jew. Impossible! This was one of the first times I ever heard the gospel, and I heard it from a Jewish perspective. As you can tell, I never forgot that divine encounter. A couple of years later I responded to an invitation to trust the Messiah for my eternal life. Fast forward a few decades to 2007, after seminary training and a doctorate in Hebrew and Judaic studies, and here I am, the Program Director of the Feinberg Center for Messianic Jewish Studies.

So for me, there is a personal, educational, inspirational, and professional component to this brief story. The Lord has His mysterious ways.

### **Primary Resources**

For those who are interested in a more detailed account of the life and ministry of Charles Feinberg, there are several sources to consult.

This paper draws from the excellent little booklet published by CPM several years ago in 2013 at the dedication of the Feinberg Center in Brooklyn. Dr. Feinberg's granddaughter, Sarah

Feinberg Giddens, penned a few personal memories of her famous grandfather called *The Story of Dr. Charles Lee Feinberg: A Chosen Servant of the Messiah*. It is still available through Chosen People Ministries.

Another important source for this topic coming from his family is the festschrift done in his honor, *Tradition and Testament: Essays in Honor of Charles Lee Feinberg*. This was prepared in 1981 by his two sons, exceptional scholars in their own right, Dr. Paul Feinberg (deceased) and Dr. John Feinberg. The Apostle John was speaking about his spiritual children when he said, “I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth,” (3 John 4). Charles could say this of his own two sons—believers in Yeshua and prominent scholars as well. This may be the most significant evidence of his practical Jewish evangelism.

*A Rabbi's Vision: A Century of Proclaiming Messiah*, by Harold A. Sevenser, former President of CPM, is the most thorough account of the history of Chosen People Ministries written to date. It includes many details about Dr. Feinberg's faith journey, his educational background, and his service in the American Board of Missions to the Jews (later changed to Chosen People Ministries). Much of the information for this paper comes from Sevenser's book.

Sevenser made use of the archives of the CPM publications, *Shepherd of Israel*, which was an English/Yiddish short pamphlet, and *The Chosen People* magazine, which contains most of Feinberg's missionary writing apart from tracts and books. These were written during his tenure at Talbot Theological Seminary, which indicates that he was heavily involved in Jewish evangelism, at least a writing ministry, while teaching and doing research at a high academic level. These articles are as valuable today as they were then, and it was an education in itself to read them in preparation for this paper. Here are the titles of a few articles preserved in the Chosen People Ministries digital archives. They demonstrate Feinberg's ongoing devotion to apologetics and evangelism.

### *Shepherd of Israel*

“Can A Jew Believe In The Trinity?”	June	1954
“Can A Jew Believe in a God-Man?”	September	1954
	January	1958
“Can A Jew Believe in the Virgin Birth?”	December	1954
“Without Blood No Remission”	October	1956
“Judaism's Desolate House”	November	1957
“Why Did Messiah Have to Die?”	February	1958

### *The Chosen People*

Judaism, the Heart-sick Religion	(VOL. LX . FEBRUARY, 1955 No. 5, pp. 18-20)
The Prodigal Nation	(VOL. LXI SEPTEMBER, 1955 No. 1, pp. 14-16)
The Snare of Tradition	(VOL. LXI OCTOBER, 1955 No. 2, pp. 14-16)
"They Have Moses and the Prophets"	(VOL. LXI NOVEMBER, 1955 No. 3, pp. 14-16)
Messiah's Preview of His Kingdom	(VOL. LXI FEBRUARY, 1956 No. 6 , pp. 14-16)
God Shall Reign in Zion	(VOL. LXI MARCH, 1956 No. 7, pp. 14-16)

What Does God Think of the Jews?	(VOL. LXII DECEMBER, 1956 No. 4, pp. 14-16)
The Jew After the Rapture	(VOL. LXII FEBRUARY, 1957 No. 6, pp. 14-16)
The Testimony of All Hebrew Believers	(VOL. LXII MARCH, 1957 No. 7, pp. 14-16)
The World's Valley of Decision	(VOL. LXII APRIL, 1957 No. 8, pp. 14-16)
Give Ear, O Shepherd of Israel	(VOL. LXII MAY, 1957 No. 9, pp. 14-16)
How Shall We Deal With the Jews?	(VOL. LXIII SEPTEMBER, 1957 No. 1, pp. 14-16)
The Book of Ezekiel	(VOL. LXIII NOVEMBER, 1957 No. 3, pp. 12-16)
The Book of Ezekiel	(VOL. LXIII FEBRUARY, 1958 No. 6, pp. 12-16)
The Book of Ezekiel	(VOL. LXIII MAY, 1958 No. 9, pp. 13-16)
The Book of Ezekiel	(VOL. LXIV SEPTEMBER, 1958 No. 1, pp. 12-16)
The Book of Ezekiel	(VOL. LXV OCTOBER, 1959 No. 2, pp. 12-16)
The Book of Ezekiel	(VOL. LXV MARCH, 1960 No. 7, pp. 12-16)
The Book of Ezekiel	(VOL. LXV JANUARY, 1960 No. 5, pp. 13-16)
The Book of Ezekiel	(VOL. LXVII MAY, 1962 No. 9, pp. 14-16)
The Book of Ezekiel (27)	(VOL. LXVII JUNE, 1962 No. 10, pp. 13-16)
The Book of Ezekiel (28)	(VOL. LXVIII NOVEMBER, 1962 No. 3, pp. 13-16)
The Book of Ezekiel (29)	(VOL. LXVIII FEBRUARY, 1963 No. 6, pp. 14-16)
The Book of Ezekiel (30)	(VOL. LXIX OCTOBER, 1963— No. 2, pp. 15-16)
The Book of Ezekiel (32)	(VOL. LXXI SEPTEMBER, 1965 No. 1, pp. 14-18)
The Book of Ezekiel (34)	January 1966, pp. 16-18
The Book of Ezekiel (37)	June 1966, pp. 16-18
The Book of Ezekiel (38)	October 1966, pp. 16-18
The Book of Ezekiel (38)	November 1966, pp. 16-18
The Book of Ezekiel (39)	December 1966, pp. 16-18
The Book of Ezekiel (40-48)	March 1967, pp. 16-18
The Book of Ezekiel (45)	February 1968, pp. 16-18
The Book of Ezekiel (47)	June 1968, pp. 17-18
The Book of Ezekiel (48)	September 1968, pp. 16-18 <sup>1</sup>

This is a mere sampling. Not all of the publications are preserved digitally, but the main source for these lists comes from the CPM archives, which are still being collected. Feinberg wrote in almost every issue from 1954 through 1968, and *The Chosen People* was published monthly most of that time.

Nearly every article concluded with a practical illustration and a clear invitation for the readers to place their trust in Messiah Yeshua. These fitting conclusions, in particular, were a joy to read. Although many articles highlighted Feinberg's grasp of eschatology, his commitment to Jewish evangelism led him to share the gospel in every issue.

Clearly, from 1957-1968, Dr. Feinberg concentrated on his major work in Ezekiel. These studies formed the basis for a book that was published by Moody Press in 1969. Throughout the articles, he regularly included a gospel invitation, and those who have made use of his

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<sup>1</sup> These articles are found on the Chosen People Ministries website and are password protected.  
<https://media.chosenpeople.com/archive>

commentary, *The Prophecy of Ezekiel*, realize how practical and evangelical it is. Other books by Dr. Feinberg are discussed later in this paper.

Perhaps one example from his articles will suffice as evidence concerning Feinberg's evangelistic zeal. In an article of *The Chosen People* entitled "How Shall we Deal with the Jews?" he writes,

According to the Word of God there is no greater privilege nor joy nor wisdom than presenting the way of life to the lost and winning them to the Savior. Proverbs 11:30 reads: "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that is wise winneth souls." The prophecy of Daniel concludes with these words of bright promise: "And they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament [*sic*]; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (12:3). This goal must ever be kept in mind in all our service for the Lord. But how shall we deal with the lost, and especially the lost sheep of the house of Israel? Can we learn to witness to them of the saving grace of the Messiah and do it effectively? Should indifference or antagonism cool our zeal or render our testimony ineffective among those who need the Savior? There are certain basic elements and factors that must be present which God can use to bring lost souls to the Messiah and Redeemer of Israel.<sup>2</sup>

#### *Bibliotheca Sacra*

Feinberg also wrote extensively in Dallas Seminary's *Bibliotheca Sacra* and Moody Bible Institute's *Moody Monthly*, among other publications. Although time did not permit this, there is little doubt that a thorough examination of these writings would also reveal his evangelistic commitment. Here is a chronological list of articles in *BibSac*.

- (Jan 1943). "Old Hundredth' - Psalm C" *Bibliotheca Sacra*:53–66.  
 (July 1947). "Parallels to the Psalms in Near Eastern Literature" *Bibliotheca Sacra*. 104:290–97.  
 (Oct 1947). "The Date of the Psalms" *Bibliotheca Sacra*. 104:426–40.  
 (Jan 1948). "Are There Maccabean Psalms in the Psalter?" *Bibliotheca Sacra*. 105:44–55.  
 (Apr 1948). "The Uses of the Psalter: Pt. 1" *Bibliotheca Sacra*. 105:154–69.  
 (Jan 1954). "The Old Testament in Jewish Thought and Life Part 1" *Bibliotheca Sacra*. 111 (441):27–38.  
 (April 1954). "The Old Testament in Jewish Thought and Life Part 2" *Bibliotheca Sacra*. 111 (442):125–136.  
 (Oct 1955). "The State of Israel" *Bibliotheca Sacra*. 112 (448):311–319.  
 (Oct 1958). "The Scapegoat of Leviticus Sixteen" *Bibliotheca Sacra*. 115 (460):320–333.  
 (July 1959). "The Accuser and the Advocate in Jewish Liturgy" *Bibliotheca Sacra*. 116 (463):212–220.  
 (Oct 1960). "The Virgin Birth in the Old Testament" *Bibliotheca Sacra*. 117:313–324.

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<sup>2</sup> Charles Feinberg, "What Does God Think of the Jews?" *The Chosen People*, VOL. LXII DECEMBER, 1956 No. 4, p. 14. (<https://media.chosenpeople.com/archive>)

(July 1962). *"The Virgin Birth in the Old Testament and Isaiah 7:14" Bibliotheca Sacra. 119:251–258.*<sup>3</sup>

*The Radio Broadcasts (Jewish Hour or Messianic Hour)*

Recordings of Dr. Feinberg's radio sermons are also available through the Biola University website at Digital Commons (password protected). Listening to many of those broadcasts evoked a pleasant trip down memory lane. Nearly 300 are preserved on the Biola website along with transcripts. Like his writing, he emphasized teaching rather than evangelism, and he stressed prophetic themes throughout. However, the gospel was constantly presented to the radio audience. A careful examination of these programs and transcripts reveal numerous themes about Jewish evangelism, which show how devoted he was to the clear proclamation of the gospel. One example underscores his passion to share the faith with Jewish people. In his concluding remarks in a program called "Why Preach Christ to the Jews?" he said,

Now then, very briefly, why should we preach Christ to the Jews? Why should we share our savior with them? Because of the command of Christ, the example of Paul. The need of this people, how needy they are, how real and deep is the need. Because of the wonderful opportunity in America, Because of our sense of gratitude enjoined upon us by the word of God through the Apostle Paul, and then because of the fruitful character of the work Among Israel. My dear friends, if your heart be right with the Lord, intent to do his will, I assure you, you will find ample opportunities. You will find them among your merchants, you will find them among your doctors, you will find them among neighbors, you will find them wherever you seek. Where the heart is, where the desire is, that's what God will see to it that you have an opportunity. and oh, as I've gone up and down the lands, into the lands, as I've talked to precious friends near as family to us, and talked to these about their concern for Israel, how their faces light up with joy that they've ever been given the privilege to minister to the brethren and sisters of the Lord Jesus Christ. I challenge you on the basis of the Living Word, of the living God, I challenge you to find out for yourself, and that right soon, the glorious privilege, the glorious joy of giving the gospel to some Jewish soul.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to these programs, Dr. Feinberg recorded numerous taped lecture series on Daniel, Revelation, the Olivet Discourse, the Tabernacle, Prophecy, Truth and Error about the Holy Spirit, and Isaiah 53. Interestingly, the topics for the first few tapes listed are

The Bible is God's Word  
 "Beginning at Jerusalem"  
 Testimonies of the Hebrew Christians  
 Why Preach Christ to the Jews?

To summarize, the connection between Charles L. Feinberg and Jewish evangelism is evident from his articles, radio programs, and the books that he wrote.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles\\_L.\\_Feinberg#Books](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_L._Feinberg#Books)

<sup>4</sup> Download from Biola University's website at Digital Commons  
[file:///Users/gregoryhagg/Downloads/Feinberg\\_WhyPreachChristToTheJewsPt2.pdf](file:///Users/gregoryhagg/Downloads/Feinberg_WhyPreachChristToTheJewsPt2.pdf)

## Early Life of Charles L. Feinberg

Charles Feinberg was a son of Eastern European immigrants who came to America prior to WWII. His father married in 1902, and the family settled in “the Hill” in Pittsburgh, PA, which was the center of Jewish immigrants to that city. This location is seared into modern day conscience because of the massacre of 11 Jewish worshipers by an anti-Semitic lunatic at the Reform congregation, the Tree of Life Synagogue, only a few years ago on October 27, 2018,.

In the list of members of that reform synagogue for the year 1932 is the name, Israel Feinberg, but there may be no connection with Joseph Feinberg, the father of Charles. Joseph was an Orthodox Jew raising his son in his own form of Judaism in hopes that he would become an Orthodox rabbi someday.

Concerning just how Jewish his background was, Sarah Feinberg Giddens writes,

Even as a boy, Charles was invigorated with the same zeal for Judaism, and he applied himself with great industry learning the Hebrew language and scriptures. At the age of thirteen, he was bar mitzvahed in the synagogue, stood for the reading of the law and responded with his related portion. Holding tightly to tradition, Charles accepted his place of responsibility under the law as custom and the prophets before him had dictated.<sup>5</sup>

However, several years later in the year 1930, after Charles had spent many years studying Hebrew, Jewish history, the Scriptures, and Judaism a defining moment occurred in the Feinberg home. Charles announced his faith in Yeshua. One can only imagine the magnitude of this event since, “Within the orthodox community, no family was more respected or exemplified more fully a devout Jewish home than the Feinbergs.”<sup>6</sup>

Giddens continues in her description of that defining moment in the life of young Feinberg.

Charles (now twenty-one years old) had known it would be difficult for his family to accept his decision—but he also knew that there was no turning back. Joseph, spurred on by feelings of condemnation, grave disappointment, and betrayal, declared Charles dead. No one in the family was even permitted to mention his name.<sup>7</sup>

So the Feinberg family, his parents and five siblings sat *shiva* for the one who aspired to become a rabbi in the Orthodox community. The details of his coming to faith will be given later in this presentation, but it is instructive to examine the depth his family’s reaction to his experience, especially in light of their orthopraxis.

Charles Feinberg’s salvation in itself is a major contribution to Jewish evangelism. If someone as deeply ensconced in his Jewish language, literature, religion, and culture as Charles Feinberg

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<sup>5</sup> Sarah Feinberg Giddens, *The Story of Dr. Charles Lee Feinberg, A Chosen Servant of the Messiah*. NY: Chosen People Ministries, 2013, p. 1-2.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 3

was could come to faith in Yeshua, so can others. This should encourage those who are sharing the faith with people in the Orthodox Jewish community today.

### **Scholarship in Feinberg's Youth**

Just how extensive was Charles' training in Jewish thought? Often the charge is made by the Jewish community that only the untaught and vulnerable youth are led astray by Christian witness. It is good to note that his brilliant mind received a solid Jewish education before he ever heard the gospel of Yeshua. Rather, it seems that Charles was simply being drawn by the Holy Spirit toward faith in the Savior. God certainly used human instruments to bring about this change of thinking, but the process was driven by a sovereign God. It certainly was not a dearth of Jewish understanding that caused his change of mind and heart.

It is true that his faith in Yeshua was preceded by a gradual shift in his allegiance to Judaism. He moved from a rigid observance of the Law to a more relaxed understanding of the Law's role in his life. His critics would surely say that he strayed from Judaism in the years subsequent to his Bar Mitzvah. Others, however, would say that he merely recognized the diversity of adherence to the Law within the Jewish community in general. As is the case for many Jewish people who have moved from strict orthodoxy to other permutations of Jewish life, Feinberg maintained a life of strict observance at home while exploring other views outside the home. Giddens comments that before there was any direct witness of believers, her grandfather experienced a natural movement away from the tenets of his family religion. Sarah quotes him as saying, "in this state of drifting away from the old customs, I continued until I went to the University."<sup>8</sup>

One can sense the spiritual and intellectual struggle that must have been going on in his life in those early years. Clearly he was conflicted as he explored secular thought outside the synagogue. He was experiencing both worlds. He studied in the public school system while attending the Hebrew Institute for two hours per day from the age of six.<sup>9</sup>

It is quite interesting to note that when he graduated from the Hebrew school he was asked to recite Ezekiel 37 at the ceremony. Who would have guessed that later in life he would write a commentary on the Book of Ezekiel and be one of the strongest proponents of a dispensational premillennial understanding of eschatology. Early exposure to God's Word is critical for future commitment to it. It is fascinating how God uses pre-salvation experiences (even radio programs) to influence post-salvation ministry.

As a young public school student he explored the non-Jewish Greek world of literature. His story is reminiscent of the novels by of Chaim Potok, such as *My Name is Asher Lev* and *The Chosen*. Feinberg actually wrote a play based on Virgil's *Aeneid*, as one of his many academic achievements, which included graduating with honors.<sup>10</sup> This experience may have laid the groundwork for his later graduate studies, the archaeology of the regions circling the Eastern Mediterranean Sea.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 4.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

## Coming to Faith

Perhaps the best way to learn about Charles Feinberg's attitude toward Jewish evangelism is to review the way he was exposed to the gospel in his own life. Persistence and patience characterized the witness of a woman early in his life. A neighborhood friend, an African American Gentile woman named Mrs. Carmen McKnight, prayed for the salvation of young Feinberg for several years. Her prayers for him were coordinated with her thrice daily prayers for her husband. But she did not just pray. She also gently confronted her very Jewish young friend with questions. Sarah Giddens had special access to her grandfather's memories of those questions. One can imagine him recounting to her the way those questions penetrated his mind and heart. When we list them we realize that Mrs. McKnight, the neighbor, knew how to get to the heart of the matter.

Why do your people have no more prophets? Why do they have no more sacrifices? Why have they been dispersed and scattered and persecuted these many years? If the Babylonia captivity was a punishment for idolatry, the worst of all sins, what greater sin had been committed to bring about an exile of so many hundreds of years? Why, since God designated Jerusalem as the only place for His name and service, had He allowed the temple to be destroyed?<sup>11</sup>

This was seed planting at its best. Of course, it was not well received initially. When this well intentioned friend told him that salvation was only available through Jesus, the Anointed One of Israel, he considered the idea ridiculous. It may well be that young Feinberg did not give much credence to the views of an untaught woman. But it was a necessary witness, and he evidently remembered the simplicity of a caring Gentile who had become a friend before she witnessed like an "evangelist." Clearly, the result (if not the very purpose) of her own salvation was to provoke Charles Feinberg to a kind of inquisitive jealousy, (Romans 11:11).

A few years later it was Rev. John Solomon, a missionary with the American Board of Missions to the Jews, who watered the seed and reaped the harvest. Solomon, a Romanian Jewish immigrant to America was perhaps the most influential witness to Charles. A moving account of Solomon's own personal testimony of faith is found in Harold A. Sevens' book, *A Rabbi's Vision: A Century of Proclaiming Messiah, A History of Chosen People Ministries, Inc.* To the point of this presentation, however, is Sevens' treatment of the outreach to Feinberg.

Charles was attending the Yeshiva (rabbinical school) in Pittsburgh. The impact which the life and testimony of this young rabbinical student had upon the Mission, and upon evangelical Christianity, can never be measured . . . John Solomon's life and selfless ministry touched Charles Feinberg and many other Jewish people in the Pittsburgh area. He was a faithful and beloved worker for our Lord.<sup>12</sup>

In his research for the book Sevens made use of the publications of *The Chosen People*, the magazine of the American Board of Missions to the Jews. In the December, 1930 edition he

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid, pp. 7-8.

<sup>12</sup> Harold A. Sevens, *A Rabbi's Vision: A Century of Proclaiming Messiah, A History of Chosen People Ministries, Inc.* Charlotte: Chosen People Ministries, Inc, 1994, p. 99.

found John Solomon's account of Charles Feinberg's profession of faith and the events leading up to it. They had first met in the Carnegie Library, but to avoid that public arena, they continued to meet in Solomon's private office.

Feinberg had received several Christian tracts and copies of the English/Yiddish publication, *The Shepherd of Israel*. He would read them and promptly destroy them before his Orthodox Jewish parents found out. But the publications raised questions, as they are intended to do. A fellow university student added to the watering process by telling him about Rev. Solomon, and he contacted him to discuss their content. He had not known that Solomon, himself, had placed the material in his mailbox!

For several hours we talked on sin and repentance, 'How can a sinner approach God direct without a mediator, or High Priest?' With the Bible open, I tried to persuade the young man to accept the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. But he said, 'I cannot say anything just now; please give me time to consider the matter very carefully. Goodbye.'<sup>13</sup>

Turning back to John Solomon's account of Feinberg's coming to faith, it is noteworthy that his testimony clearly sets the stage for a lifetime of Jewish evangelism.

After he left, we prayed earnestly asking the Holy Spirit to touch his heart and bring conviction to his soul. About ten days later he came again to the Mission and said, 'I am ready to be in the will of God, and to do whatever He wants me to do.' From that day, he attended the services regularly, also told us that he is fully convinced that Jesus is the Messiah and Savior of Israel. 'I want to be a shining light to my Jewish brethren.'<sup>14</sup>

One wonders if the patience of John Solomon, the fact that he allowed time for careful study, and, most importantly, his emphasis on the faithful prayer of believers, played an important role in Feinberg's approach to Jewish evangelism later in his ministry. Academic and apologetic defense of the gospel became central to his contribution to Jewish evangelism.

From all these experiences with Mrs. McKnight, a fellow university student, and John Solomon, Feinberg must have learned the importance of planting, watering, and harvesting in Jewish evangelism. In an article for *The Chosen People* called "How Shall We Deal with the Jews?" he concluded with these words, "Friends, may we deal with the Jews, God's beloved people, in love, knowledge, and patience."<sup>15</sup> This was his own experience of Jewish evangelism.

In the January edition of *The Chosen People*, 1964, Dr. Feinberg gave more detail about what caught his attention specifically. This should ever remind the missionary to the Jewish people about the centrality of the "Fifth Gospel."

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 117.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Charles Feinberg. "How Shall We Deal With the Jews?" *The Chosen People*, VOL. LXIII SEPTEMBER, 1957 No. 1, p. 16.

What held [my] attention . . . was a striking picture of a bearded, venerable aged Jew. He was reading the Scriptures at Isaiah 53, and the Hebrew text was reprinted in the paper in full. At the top of the Spiritual portion was the question, “Of whom is the prophet speaking?”<sup>16</sup>

In the full quotation Feinberg goes on to say that the aged Jewish man was standing with his back to the light, that is, blocking the light as he stood there with his prayer shawl. In other words he could not see the Messiah in the text because he, himself, got in the way of the illuminating light from the Spirit. This genuinely affected Feinberg’s connection to Jewish evangelism. While valuing his Jewish background, he taught that rabbinic trappings could jeopardize a Jewish person’s ability to comprehend the truth. In any case, this was a seminal moment in his thinking just before he returned to John Solomon’s office to profess his faith in the Messiah. Sevens records his words as follows.

The impression made upon me at the time has never left me, and it proved to be seed sown upon good ground, which the Spirit of God caused to bring forth fruit to eternal life in the days that followed. The words proved to be a shaft from the Lord which went directly to the heart and ultimately wrought conviction.<sup>17</sup>

### **Early Theological Training and Teaching**

Charles Feinberg’s contribution to Jewish evangelism would not have happened had he not been thoroughly trained in the Word of God. Soon after his defining moment of faith he was sent to a new theological institution, which had taken a stand on the inerrancy of Scripture and had affirmed a dispensational, premillennial approach to the Bible. Founded in 1924 as the Evangelical Theological College of Dallas, later to be called Dallas Theological Seminary, this school provided the conservative Bible and theological training he needed to succeed.

One could argue that his master’s thesis was the beginning of an academic career devoted to Jewish evangelism. It was called *The Mystery of Israel’s Blindness*. A careful review of this writing by Feinberg would likely reveal some very interesting concepts regarding the Jewish rejection of their Messiah Jesus and its consequences for today and the future.

As a side note, he did not leave his rabbinic studies behind entirely. Sevens records a letter from Feinberg to Joseph Hoffman Cohn, then President of CPM, stating that, while he was studying at Dallas, he had been teaching on *The Messiah in the Talmud* at the Scofield Memorial Church.<sup>18</sup>

As already mentioned, the Hebrew Institute of Pittsburgh is where he studied for fourteen years in preparation for the rabbinate. He also graduated from the University of Pittsburgh in three years (a four-year program) with numerous honors. He graduated from Dallas Seminary, *Magna Cum Laude*, with the Bachelor and Master of Theology followed by his Doctor of Theology,

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<sup>16</sup> Sevens, *A Rabbi’s Vision*, p. 118.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

*Summa Cum Laude*. All of these DTS degrees were earned in three years, a truly remarkable feat.

His terminal degree at Dallas was in Systematic Theology, but his commitment to secular education never waned. As Sevener puts it,

Recognizing the important role that a Jewish believer could have in the educational world—both religious and secular—Charles went on in his education to complete a Master’s degree at Southern Methodist University in Old Testament, and then to complete a Ph.d [*sic*] degree in Archaeology and Semitic Languages at John [*sic*] Hopkins University.<sup>19</sup>

Most noteworthy, however, is that he was consistently active with the American Board of Missions to the Jews, whether as a student, a teacher, or a retired professor. “He influenced countless young men and women who were considering going into Christian ministry, always impressing upon them the need of sharing the Gospel with the Jews.”<sup>20</sup>

Feinberg graduated from Dallas Seminary in 1935 where he taught Church History while finishing his Th.D. Except for two years spent in Baltimore at Johns Hopkins getting his Ph.D. in Archaeology under William Fox Albright, he taught Semitics and Old Testament at Dallas until 1948 when he took a position at Talbot Seminary described below.

As his granddaughter points out, “Throughout all of Dr. Feinberg’s work and ministry, his love and concern for his fellow Jews were evident. He took every opportunity to encourage men and women to bring the good news of Yeshua to the Jewish people.”<sup>21</sup>

### **First Academic Dean of Talbot Theological Seminary**

Dr. Paul Rood is the expert on this phase of the life of Charles Feinberg. Rood has provided an excellent history of Feinberg’s connection with the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (Biola). He details the extensive involvement of the California school in Jewish evangelism from its earliest days. It had a Jewish Department and a radio program called the “Jewish Hour.” This is what attracted young Charles Feinberg to the school. He taught Old Testament there until Talbot Theological Seminary was officially formed in 1952, and he became the first Dean. The seminary was later renamed Talbot School of Theology when Biola achieved university status.

It is no surprise, then, that when Chosen People Ministries and Biola’s Talbot School of Theology joined forces to establish an extension of the seminary in New York it was named in his honor, The Charles L. Feinberg Center for Messianic Jewish Studies.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Giddens, p. 32.

While at Talbot, Dr. Feinberg not only taught, but he evangelized. From teaching in various churches to speaking on the radio program, he consistently emphasized the critical need for sharing the gospel with the Jewish people.

An interesting vignette of this commitment occurred when a popular TV personality, Les Crane, recorded a program about Jews believing in Jesus on the Biola campus in 1972. Some in this audience were probably there, and a copy of that event circulates to this day. This was when Jews for Jesus was still part of ABMJ. Who was interviewed?

The program was filmed on the campus of BIOLA college. Dr. Charles Lee Feinberg served as the most prominent guest being interviewed, although seventy-five other Messianic Jewish believers were assembled on campus. The purpose for having so many Jewish believers there was to show that being a Jewish believer in Jesus is not uncommon.<sup>22</sup>

### **Books by Dr. Charles Lee Feinberg**

Feinberg dedicated his single volume book on the Minor Prophets to the man who led him to faith, John Solomon, the Jewish evangelist. It is appropriate that in this dedication he would state clearly his purpose for writing, which surely applied to other books he authored. He wrote about a missionary zeal.

. . . in order to awaken a scriptural and lasting love for God's chosen people, Israel, and to arouse to a missionary zeal on behalf of their salvation. . . . If these pages will be used of God to turn many more hearts to Israel in her sad plight in these epoch-making days in order for us to make known to them their Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be grateful to God.<sup>23</sup>

Dr. Gleason Archer, in his glowing foreword to the same book, remarks concerning Feinberg's intent that there be a spiritual nature to his research and writing.

Along with the succinct lucidity, Dr. Feinberg displays a warm interest and concern for the spiritual growth of his readers. Quite frequently he proceeds from interpretation to exhortation, urging upon them the duty of embracing the revealed will of God with true faith and love, so that it will make a real difference in their lives."<sup>24</sup>

In the March, 1957 issue of *The Chosen People* Ray Stedman, at that time the editor of *Our Hope* magazine, provided a review of Feinberg's book *Israel in the Spotlight* in which he said,

Dr. Feinberg writes with keen insight into the Scriptures and with full understanding of Jewish viewpoints and struggles . . . his splendid gifts as a Christian scholar permit him to enrich these messages with many illuminating and stimulating illustrations . . . There is a pulsebeat of concern for Jewish evangelization that throbs throughout the whole book.

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<sup>22</sup> Sevenser, p. 406.

<sup>23</sup> Charles L. Feinberg, *The Minor Prophets*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1976, p. 12.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 7-8.

It is an excellent antidote to the Gentile high-mindedness that Paul warned against. A Christian Jew weeps over Jerusalem.<sup>25</sup>

The ideal way to demonstrate Charles L. Feinberg's most significant connection to Jewish evangelism would be to carefully analyze his academic writing. His comments on specific "evangelistic" passages regarding outreach to Israel would likely reveal a passion that is not typically seen in a such works devoted to scholarship as Feinberg's were. This is an idea for future research.

The following is a current and nearly complete chronological list of books by Charles Lee Feinberg as found on Wikipedia. Several small books on the Minor Prophets were merged into one volume, and some books are reprinted.

- (1954). *Premillennialism or Amillennialism? The premillennial and amillennial systems of Biblical interpretation analyzed and compared (2nd enlarged ed.)*. Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press.
- (1958). *The Fundamentals for Today*. Grand Rapids, MI: [Kregel Publications](#). [OCLC 5886368](#). (Editor)
- (1964). *Focus on Prophecy: messages delivered at the Congress on Prophecy convened by the American Board of Missions to the Jews at the Moody Memorial Church in Chicago*. Westwood, NJ: Revell. [OCLC 3080229](#). (Editor)
- (1968). *Prophetic Truth Unfolding Today: messages delivered at the Congress on Prophecy convened by the American Board of Mission[s] to the Jews, inc., in the metropolitan New York area*. Westwood, NJ: Revell. [OCLC 184035](#). (Editor)
- (1969). *The Prophecy of Ezekiel: The Glory of the Lord (1st ed.)*. Chicago, IL: [Moody Press](#). [OCLC 72075](#).
- (1971). *Prophecy and the Seventies*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press. [ISBN 978-0-802-46898-7](#). [OCLC 138668](#). (Editor)
- (1975). *Israel in the Spotlight*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press. [ISBN 978-0-802-44178-2](#). [OCLC 1926019](#).
- (1975). *Jesus the King is Coming*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press. [ISBN 978-0-802-44331-1](#). [OCLC 1205983](#).
- (1976). *The Minor Prophets*. Chicago, IL: [Moody Press](#). [OCLC 1975342](#).
- (1979). *God Remembers: A Study of Zechariah (Reprint ed.)*. Portland, OR: Multnomah Press. [ISBN 978-0-930-01433-9](#). [OCLC 5708009](#).
- (1980). *Millennialism - The Two Major Views (3rd enlarged ed.)*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press. [ISBN 978-0-802-46815-4](#). [OCLC 6200112](#). – 1st-2nd ed. published under title: *Premillennialism or amillennialism?*
- (1980). *Israel at the Center of History & Revelation (Reprint ed.)*. Portland, OR: Multnomah Press. [ISBN 978-0-930-01438-4](#). [OCLC 6200173](#). - previous editions published under title: *Israel in the Spotlight*
- (1982). *Jeremiah: a commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: [Zondervan](#). [ISBN 978-0-310-45330-7](#). [OCLC 8727824](#).

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<sup>25</sup> *The Chosen People*, VOL. LXII MARCH, 1957 No. 7, back cover.  
<https://media.chosenpeople.com/archive/400000462.pdf>

- (1990). *The Fundamentals: the famous sourcebook of foundational biblical truths*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications. [ISBN 978-0-8254-2633-9](#). [OCLC 20991703](#). - Updated ed. of: *Fundamentals for Today* (Editor with R.A. Torrey)
- (2003). *The Prophecy of Ezekiel: The Glory of the Lord* (Reprint ed.). Eugene, OR: *Wipf and Stock*. [ISBN 978-1-5924-4270-6](#).<sup>26</sup>

No one would deny that scholarship has been the primary contribution of Charles Lee Feinberg to Jewish evangelism. From the simple gospel of salvation which he believed as a young man to his distinguished academic career, he always had the goal before him of reaching his Jewish brothers and sisters.

However, his commitment to excellence in scholarship served to encourage bridge building with the Jewish world of academics. In the fall of 2019 Chosen People Ministries sponsored the Feinberg Lecture Series called “The Life and Times of Leopold Cohn.” Of course, this series is named in honor of Charles L. Feinberg.

It was unique that year in that it included a few Jewish scholars who are not yet believers in Jesus the Messiah. However, the legacy of Dr. Feinberg was seen in that all participants interacted with genuine respect for each other. It is a tribute to Dr. Mitch Glaser, the current President of CPM, who brought these leaders together for such a conference. The event took place at the Feinberg Center for Messianic Jewish Studies in Brooklyn, NY.

Dr. Alan Shore spoke to this remarkable interaction between Jewish scholars when he summarized the content of *A Rabbi’s Vision Continues*, which became the book based upon the lectures.

A special thank you to the very capable authors of the chapters included in this book. . . . This center, owned by Chosen People Ministries, is not very far from the Brownsville and Williamsburg sections of Brooklyn. The conference and the book are presented in celebration of 125 years of ministry among the Jewish people. They also represent what we sincerely hope will become a strengthening relationship between Messianic and non-Messianic scholars who meet in the neutral territory of academic enquiry and in an atmosphere of growing mutual respect.<sup>27</sup>

Academic inquiry and mutual respect characterized the life of Charles Lee Feinberg.

### **A Scholar with a Pastor’s Heart**

Evangelism and discipleship go hand in hand. Most anecdotal evidence emphasizes the challenging classroom experience of being under the tutelage of Dr. Feinberg. He was relentless in his pursuit of excellence in his students. This often was accompanied by the stern demands of

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<sup>26</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles\\_L.\\_Feinberg#Books](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_L._Feinberg#Books)

<sup>27</sup> Mitch Glaser, Gregory Hagg, and Alan Shore, editors. *A Rabbi’s Vision Continues*. NY: Chosen People Ministries, 2021, p. 244.

a humorless professor. However, there was no doubt about his compassion for those who encountered obstacles of any kind.

Dr. Mitch Glaser wrote the introduction to Sarah Feinberg Gidden’s booklet, *The Story of Dr. Charles Lee Feinberg*. He stressed the essential role Dr. Feinberg played in the lives of so many young Jewish believers who did not have the background in Judaica that he possessed. His scholarship was able to lend credibility to the Messianic Jewish movement. Glaser continued,

. . . but he was also one of the most warm-hearted individuals I’ve ever met. He had a crusty and tough exterior, which reminded me of one of my rabbis in Hebrew school. He was demanding because he wanted you to excel—but on the inside, he was a compassionate and caring man. Dr. Feinberg loved the Lord and loved his students. I remember going into his office many times during my first couple of years at seminary and sitting down with him to talk. Usually, I had some problem with the way he had graded one of my papers, but most often he was not all that interested in talking about academics. Dr. Feinberg would first ask me about my family and about my ministry. Then, like a Jewish grandfather, he would take my hand, hold it warmly, and begin praying for me, for my family, and even for my ability to accept the grade that he would not change!<sup>28</sup>

Dr. Charles Lee Feinberg was a role model for academic excellence and compassionate concern. The Feinberg Center for Messianic Jewish Studies bears his name and shares his commitment to thoughtful Jewish evangelism and caring discipleship.

In her concluding remarks Sarah Feinberg Giddens reminds the reader of her grandfather’s initial desire to contribute to Jewish evangelism as well as his lifelong connection to the cause.

“I want to be a shining light to my Jewish brethren,” Charles had told John Solomon back in 1930 when he first believed that Yeshua was the long-awaited Messiah. True to his word, Dr. Feinberg gave much of his life to ministering to his Jewish people in tandem with Chosen People Ministries and Talbot School of Theology through a variety of venues and media.<sup>29</sup>

He passed into the presence of the Lord he so faithfully served on August 22, 1995. “Well done thou good and faithful servant.”

Gregory Hagg, Ph.D.  
 Professor, Talbot School of Theology, Biola University  
 Director, The Feinberg Center for Messianic Jewish Studies  
 Vice President, Chosen People Ministries

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<sup>28</sup> Giddens, p. x.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 43.