



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

Preserving American Jewish History

MS-603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945-1992.

Series C: Interreligious Activities. 1952-1992

Box 38, Folder 8, Mission to Jews, 1973.

*cc: Rabbi Marc
Tanenbaum*

memorandum

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

FO-MW
date February 27, 1973
to Eugene Du Bow
from Judah Graubart
subject JEWS FOR JESUS RALLY - FEBRUARY 22

On February 22nd, I attended the "Jews for Jesus" Rally at the Arie Crown Theater in McCormick Place. Following is my report which has incorporated some of the insights you suggested in our conversation about the rally.

The event was scheduled to begin at 7:30, but by that hour, the auditorium was already about 95% filled, with about 4,000 people. In terms of the religious make-up of the attendees, while there was, of course, no exact way to determine their affiliation, I would suggest that nearly all were Christian. Indeed, the only Jews I succeeded in encountering were a small bloc of students from the Hebrew Theological College who were quietly distributing leaflets in front of the hall as well as various observers from Jewish organizations, congregations, etc.

As to the program itself, at the time of my arrival, it was already in progress with a young man about 25-30 years old leading the audience in the singing of traditional Christian hymns, songs, etc.

Following the singer, who was later introduced as Joe Jacobson, the evening's chairman, Robert Schroy, Director of the Chicagoland Christian Center came on stage. Schroy, like Jacobson, was a younger man (definitely under 40) and thus made clear one of the evening's underlying facades, i.e., its emphasis on wholesome, all-American type youth who were involved with promoting the Christian ethic. Schroy began his remarks by eliciting testimonials from the audience such as "Isn't it great to love Jesus?" to which the audience responded "Amen," (thus indicating, as you suggested, that the overwhelming number were Christian, since Jews would hardly have known the proper response.)

Following these opening remarks, Schroy then introduced a young, heavily bearded man, with a yarmulke, Baruch Goldstein from San Francisco. In what seemed to be a very carefully scripted conversation between the two about how Goldstein "came to Jesus", the latter

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explained although he had experienced satisfaction in his life before his enlightenment, it was a rather shallow kind of satisfaction, and how, through his acceptance of Jesus, he was a full and "completed" Jew.

Succeeding Schroy and Goldstein on the program were two young folk singers from Cincinnati, Joel Chernow and Rick Cosdell, both of whom were "completed" Jews, and both of whom had extremely long hair accompanied by dungaree style dress. Their repertoire, which was quite lengthy, consisted of various gospel songs and hymns all of which were done quite professionally. Some incorporated Hebrew, and one in particular from a text in the Song of Songs, which they had learned in their recent "visit to the Promised Land" actually utilized the Tetragrammaton. It should also be noted that at one point, Chernow, in introducing one of the songs explained its special significance to him since it related to the fact that he had kicked his \$200/day heroin habit by finding Jesus. (He also announced that the song was on their LP which was for sale outside the hall for \$4.98).

Succeeding the folksingers, Schroy came back on stage and briefly spoke about the work of his Chicagoland Christian Center which was responsible for the rally that night and for the approximately 30 preceeding rallies. He described the work of the Center in detail (rallies, mailings, about 20,000 pieces of mail every three weeks, various religious-oriented community services, etc.), (see attached), and then followed with an appeal for funds. He urged donors to write checks, and simultaneously suggested that if a large figure appeared in the mind of an individual, it should not be denied since it was the "Holy Spirit" motivating him to make the substantial donation. Again, for a program that was aimed at converting Jews to Jesus, Schroy's pitch was hardly one that would have appealed to a Jewish audience. While the collections were being made, a young girl wearing a "granny dress" with long hair, strummed her guitar and led the audience in the singing of a traditional hymn with which they seemed quite familiar.

After the collection was taken, Jeff Adler, the local representative of the Young Hebrew Christian Alliance came on stage to introduce the principal speaker, Moishe Rosen. In comparison to his predecessors, Adler was most unpolished, and spoke of the "emptiness" which "we Jews were getting sick of" until he and others came to Jesus. Adler's remarks were the first (aside from the use of the Tetragrammaton which I found extraordinarily repugnant), which anyone who was Jewish in the audience might have taken offense at. Quite clearly, he was not part of Schroy's regular program.

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At any rate Adler, following his brief remarks, introduced Moishe Rosen. Rosen walked on stage accompanied by two youthful men, both modly dressed and both of whom stood in back of him, legs slightly spread, arms folded across their chests, giving the distinct impression of being some kind of bodyguards.

Rosen's presentation was quite low-key and was based on a text from Isaiah, the meaning of which was (according to Rosen) that man is essentially sinful and can only be saved through Jesus. It was difficult to assess Rosen's impact on the audience. His delivery was extraordinarily boring and monotonous, and there was a noticeable restlessness among some young people. However, the audience did appear to be paying attention to his remarks.

Following Rosen, another folksinger came on and gave the traditional closing benediction in Hebrew. After he finished, Schroy then invited members of the audience who had not yet been Baptized to come forward and do so, and in the end, probably two hundred or so people went up to the stage.

One final note may be of interest. After leaving the theater I was accosted by a gentleman with a group of teens around him who was probably a minister with some of the children of his congregants. He asked me my opinion of the rally, and I explained that while I thought the rally and Key '73 in general was good for Christians, I felt that it was not something favorable to the Jews. He immediately replied that nothing anti-Semitic was implied, but that their purpose was to bring Jews to Jesus. I explained that while Judaism has had great respect for Jesus as a theological and historical figure, it could not accent his Divinity. For us to do so would mean that we would have to deny the validity of 4,000 years of tradition. The gentleman then asked me if I was genuinely satisfied with my beliefs, and I assured him that I was and he in turn appeared to be quite satisfied, and even pleased with my reply to his query.

Thus, as we discussed, it does not appear that this particular rally was aimed at Jews. It had little or nothing of familiarity to anyone from the Jewish community, and indeed, had little that would immediately appeal to a Jew who was unfamiliar with Christianity. However, in terms of relating to the Christian community, it obviously had much appeal and theological meaning, and indeed, it appears that it was to that element of Chicago to which it was aimed.

JG:ps

Enclosures

cc: Maurice Klinger, Executive Secretary, Public Affairs Committee
of the JUF

bcc: Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, Rabbi A. James Rudin, Gerald Strober
Will Katz, Isaiah Terman

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

date January 4, 1973
to Marc Tanenbaum ✓
from Brant Coopersmith
subject

Enclosed is a mailing from Beth Sar Shalom which apparently a Mrs. Anne DeHart, 326 W. Maple Avenue, Vienna, Va. mailed to Cantor Noah Griver of Congregation Beth Shalom in Silver Spring, Maryland. This kind of material is circulating more. I will try to get a run-down on the principle involved.

Of more than some passing interest is the Emmanuel Presbyterian Church which is described as a Hebrew Christian Congregation in Baltimore. I will pass along the enclosed brochure from that church to Lois Rosenfield.

Regards,

Brant
gcp

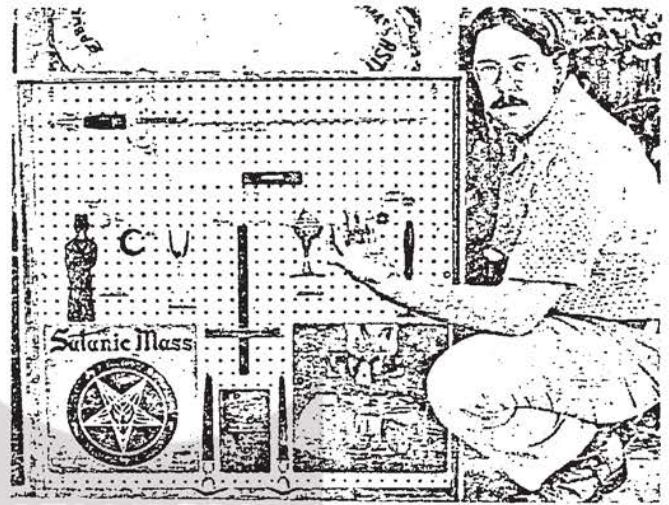
BC:gvp
Enclosures
cc: Will Katz
Isaiah Terman

Dictated by Mr. Coopersmith
Signed in his absence

JESUS RALLY

FORMER
SATAN SELLER

MIKE
WARNKE



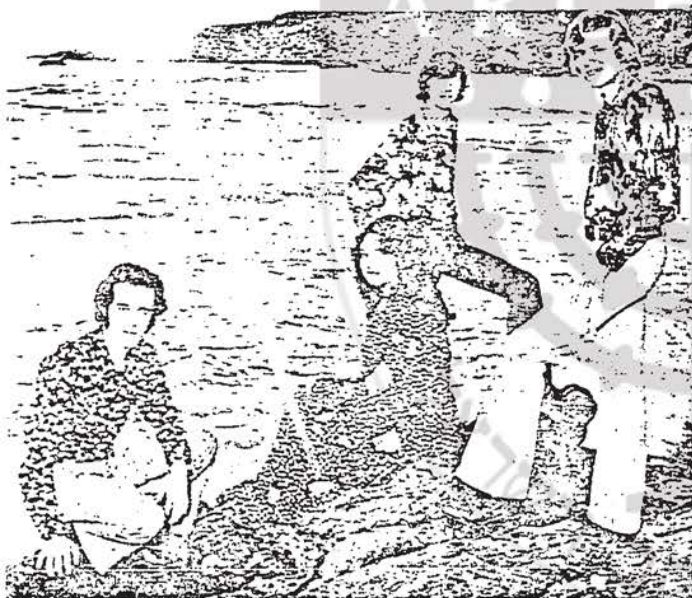
SATAN-worship in DeKalb today a joke? Rosemary's Baby meets the Exorcist? Some guy in a red hood on the cover of TIME? Child's play or as real as its practioners would have us believe?

In the San Bernardino-Riverside area, just east of Los Angeles, young Mike Warnke dropped out of college and became involved in Satanism. In time he brought 1,000 people into the cult and he became high priest of the 1,500 devil worshippers in three California towns.

As a Satanist he profaned every tenet and sacrament of Christianity. Satanists practice hate instead of love, greed instead of sacrifice, sensuality instead of purity. Even the crucifix is stood on its head.

Above, Warnke is pictured with a display case of items used in Satanic worship. To the left of his hand is a censor used for incense at the black masses, an inverted cross, and a chalice from which human blood is drunk.

Having lived in both worlds, Mike Warnke is able to compare and present the love of Jesus in a way that few of us can understand.



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'You called, lord?'

Here's the man behind the Jesus rallies — and a dozen other ministries

By KATHI KAMIENSKI
Lerner Newspapers
Staff Writer

DES PLAINES—Bob Schroy was driving around Oregon one warm summer day when the Lord told him he was going to Chicago.

At the time he was serving as director of special ministries at Melodyland, a 3,500-member church in Anaheim, Calif.

"But the Lord put the image on my mind and heart that I would be going to Chicago and that a replacement would be found for me at Melodyland," Schroy said.

A replacement did come to the church and in early 1971 Schroy and his wife were looking for a place to live in the Chicago area.

SCHROY BEGAN his work here by starting a youth "hot-line" in Waukegan, which now receives some 4,000 calls per week.

It was at a prayer meeting later in the year that he and several others got the idea to invite singer Pat Boone to Chicago for the first of the now monthly Jesus rallies.

Some 5,000 persons attended the rally in the Arie Crown Theater at McCormick Place. And about the same number attend subsequent events.

The rallies became a start for what is now the fast growing Chicagoland Christian Center. Schroy is the center's founder and director.

THE CENTER, AT 2584 DEVON, Des Plaines, is an umbrella organization for a variety of ministries, began in a room of the Schroy's apartment. It has expanded from office building to office building, and staffers now are settling in new quarters again.

Schroy estimates the new quarters will be big enough for just a few months and then the center will outgrow its quarters again.

The center's chief activity is sponsoring the monthly Jesus rallies. Moishe Rosen, the unofficial leader of the Jews for Jesus movement will speak at next month's rally. Pat Boone will appear again in March.

MONTHLY JESUS SEMINARS for Christian education also are arranged by the center. On the program for January 27 is Larry Christianson, author of "The Christian Family."

"Chicago Aglow," a Channel 44 TV program, is also a center project. One result of the rallies, Schroy says, is the development of volunteers who want to work with the center's other ministries.

The special ministries include a women's fellowship and outreach program, work with minority and racial groups, hospital visitation, work with handicapped persons, alcoholic rehabilitation, a high

school outreach program, coffee houses and prison visitations.

Also planned is work in orphanages, old age homes, family counseling, drug addict rehabilitation, a hot-line, street witnessing, college campus outreach programs and work with books, literature and tapes.

SCHROY SAYS CHICAGO has always been viewed as a "spiritual wasteland."

"Very few evangelists ever used to come to Chicago. Only Billy Graham has had notable success and then not the best crowds of his career," Schroy says.

He's delighted at the way the programs seem to be growing. But five years ago, he explains, "People would have thought you were strange if you held a Jesus Rally. But now it's a spontaneous coming around to Jesus. People want spiritual reality."

The center is preparing to expand its staff in the next few weeks to include an associate director and a director in charge of following up the activities that come out of the rallies.

LERNER TIMES NEWSPAPERS, WEEK OF JANUARY 10, 1973

Section One—Page Nine

Kids fill Arie Crown

Don Kessinger goes to bat in Jesus Rally

By Ridgely Hunt

DON KESSINGER has achieved fame and fortune as a Chicago Cubs shortstop, and he owes it all to Christ, he told a Jesus Rally at the Arie Crown Theater Friday night.

"I don't believe it was an accident," said Kessinger, "that took a little boy like me from a small town in Arkansas and allowed me to become a professional athlete. I was born of wonderful Christian parents, and I was raised in a home with prayer at mealtime, daily devotionals, and services three times a week."

Kessinger stood center stage—four-square and manly in a dark blue suit—and gripped the audience in his mighty hand. For him it was as easy as snagging a pop fly. About 4,000 kids had filled the house nearly to capacity.

BOB SHROY, the promoter of the Jesus Rallies in Chicago, likes to assert that 40 per cent of his crowds are 30 years old or more, but this was a children's crusade. Most of them looked about 16, all clean-cut and well-scrubbed adolescents, the boys in clean Levis, the girls with their long hair brushed. Almost all were white.

"The Lord has blessed my life wonderfully," Kessinger told them. "I just turned everything over to the Lord, and of course our ball club has improved a great deal." He told several baseball anecdotes to illustrate the latter point.

But his central message was



Don Kessinger . . . "I was born of wonderful Christian parents."

this: "If you don't know Jesus Christ in a very personal way, then I would just ask you tonight to open your hearts."

INDEED, this was the message that permeated the theater and the lobby outside. "Do you know Jesus?" a rally counselor asked a stranger, in the same matter-of-fact tone in which he might have asked, "Do you know Mayor Daley?" Most of the old hands there claimed a personal acquaintance with Christ and asserted

that He guided them in various decisions.

Shroy says that Christ first sent him to Chicago and also suggested that singer Pat Boone be engaged for the first rally last March. It was an enormous success.

Out in the lobby were the tables, loaded with books and phonograph records and tape cassettes, some of them bearing famous names [Pat Boone, Baroness Maria Von Trapp, Billy Graham] and all devoted to religious themes. Tho he does take a collection, Shroy charges no admission to his rallies and uses the proceeds from books and recordings to pay the bills, which are considerable. The theater costs him \$1,850 a night, the stagehands take another \$850, and that's not counting the cost of printing, office expenses, and guest artists.

TWO OF THE guest artists, Merv and Merla Watson, warmed up the house by singing and playing a variety of instruments, including accordion, guitar, violin, and tambourine. "We are establishing a climate of praise for Jesus to dwell in here tonight," Merla told the audience. When her voice took flight and soared in descent above her husband's gentle baritone, the climate seemed about right.

Shroy took it from there. "Jesus is alive in Chicago!" he proclaimed from the microphone. "How many of you believe that?"

The kids responded with enthusiastic cheers.

NEXT, SHROY introduced his secretary, an attractive English girl named Linda Cummings. "About two months ago," he said, "we were in need of a girl who is in love with Jesus to help us in the office." Miss Cummings had appeared as if by a miracle.

"Believe me, you can't run away from God," she assured the audience.

After the speeches and singing and the collection, Shroy led them all toward the climax of the evening.

"DO YOU WANT to be baptized in water tonight?" he asked. "We've baptized over

700 people right here. We have all the provisions for you. We have robes and towels. . . ."

Slowly, at first reluctantly, about 400 people began to file up onto the stage from both sides of the theater. Some were self-conscious and some transfixed, trembling with the ecstasy of religious awakening.

One of Shroy's assistants exhorted them and led them in prayer. Most would receive counseling and a card to fill out. The rest changed into blue robes and stepped into a blue plastic swimming pool where two more assistants ex-

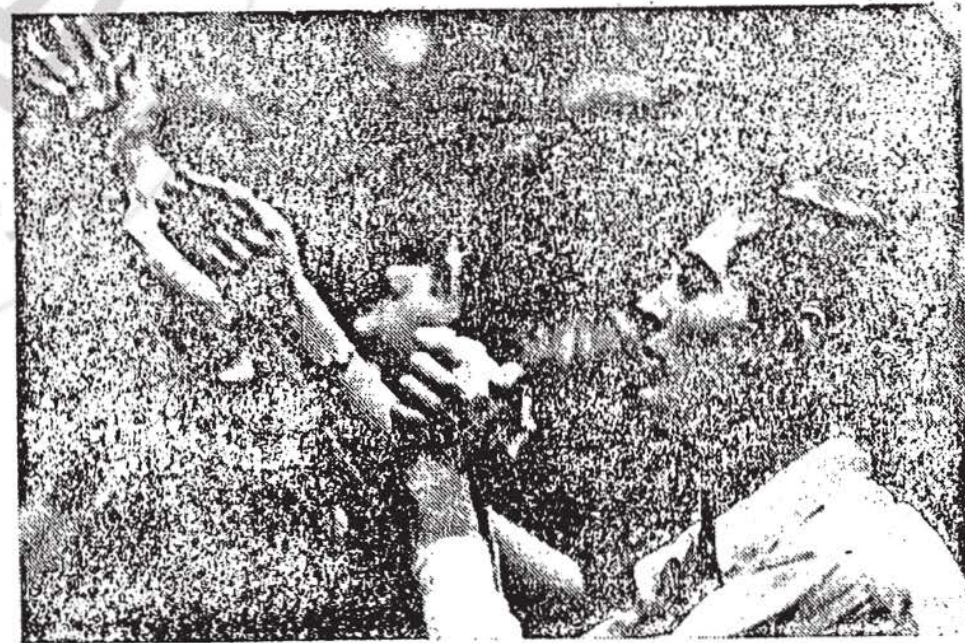
actly flipped them backwards and submerged them.

"**PRAISE THE LORD, Phil!**" cried an exultant mother as she stepped to the edge of the pool to embrace her dripping son.

"Praise the Lord!" others repeated with arms upraised.

They were saved.

Outside in the lobby, a 14-year-old boy put a cigaret in his mouth and bummed a match from a passing stranger. "I love the Lord and all that," he confessed, "but mostly I came to see Don Kessinger."



Tribune Photos by John Bartley

Listening to Don Kessinger . . . in search of salvation.