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KEEPING THE VISION...

Retelling the story for each generation!

The continuing chronicle of CMJ's
Bible Comes To Life Exhibition



BY PAUL AND JANEY HAMES

AN OLIVE PRESS
RESEARCH PAPER

Welcome to the Olive Press Research Paper – an occasional paper featuring articles that cover a wide spectrum of issues which relate to the ministry of CMJ.

Articles are contributed by CMJ staff (past and present), also by Trustees, Representatives, CMJ Supporters or by interested parties.

Articles do not necessarily portray CMJ's standpoint on a particular issue but may be published on the premise that they allow a pertinent understanding to be added to any particular debate.



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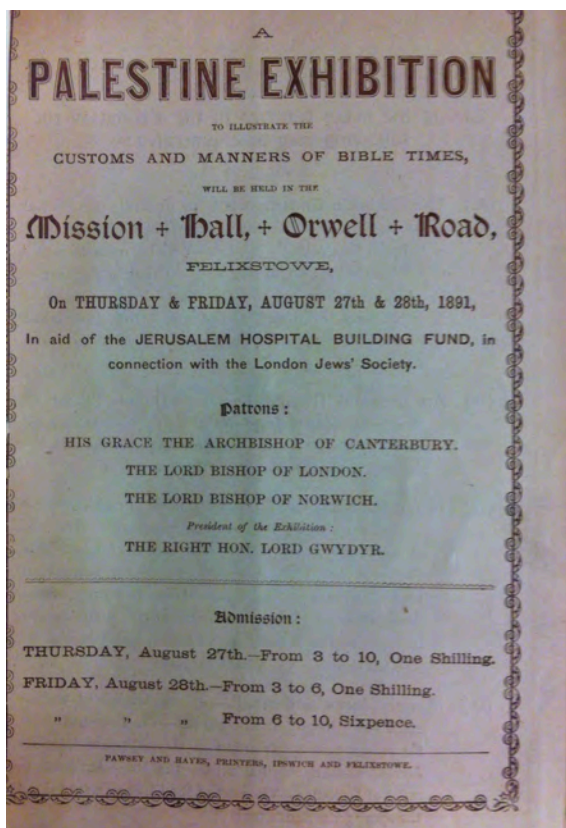
The Church's Ministry Among Jewish People (CMJ) is one of the oldest Anglican Church mission organisations. It began in 1809 with the aim of sensitively presenting Jewish people with the good news about Jesus the Jewish Messiah and enlightening Christians about their Jewish heritage in the Bible. Today CMJ operates ministry centres in the UK, Ireland, America, Australia and New Zealand, Hong Kong, South Africa, France and Israel.

Find out more at our website www.cmj.org.uk or www.cmj-israel.org

1 INTRODUCTION

We hope you enjoy this Olive Press Research Paper (OPRP) and that it sets you on a journey of discovery. We think it is a significant contribution to the enduring vision and legacy inspired by one of CMJ's most famous workers and our "Heritage Hero", the Reverend Samuel Schor. We hope it will become an indispensable part of CMJ's toolkit for anyone wanting to explore the context and history of the Bible - the book Christians hold so highly, but are so often ill equipped to understand.

An exhibition exploring the Biblical worldview has been an integral part of CMJ's ministry since 1891.



Felixstowe Event Guide

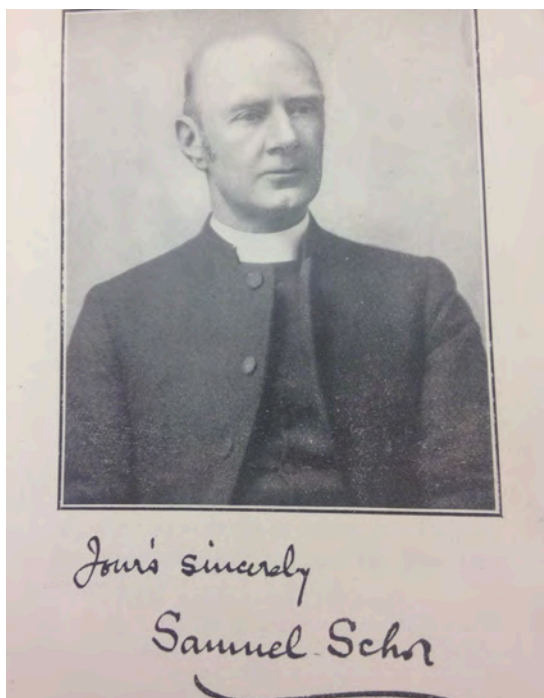
It has gone through several name changes and is now known as the Bible Comes To Life Exhibition (BCTL). The first section of this OPRP tells how the exhibition came to be, and the second section explores the items that are on display in the exhibition today and how they answer some of the questions posed in the Bible. The final section contains nuggets of teaching from some of our trusted co-workers whose contributions are vital to the rich tapestry that is the Bible Comes To Life Exhibition. We've also interspersed the narrative with comments made by visitors. Some were made by primary school children and we hope that you will excuse their quirky spelling and grammar!

"Thank you so much, I have lurnt lodes and I think my friends have to. I really enjoyed it".

Lucy aged 9

PART ONE – A SHORT HISTORY OF THE EXHIBITION

On 17 August 1859 a baby boy was born to Jewish parents who had come to faith in Jesus through the work of CMJ's Christ Church mission station in the Old City of Jerusalem. His name was Samuel Schor and like his parents he became a follower of Jesus¹. He trained as a missionary at St Chrischona Theological College in Basel, Switzerland. After training he worked for a time in London's East End before moving back to Jerusalem with his wife to continue his mission work at Christ Church. Mrs Schor's poor health made it necessary to move back to England in 1885. Around that time Samuel felt a call from God to become an Anglican minister and he became ordained as a church leader in Felixstowe on the English east coast.

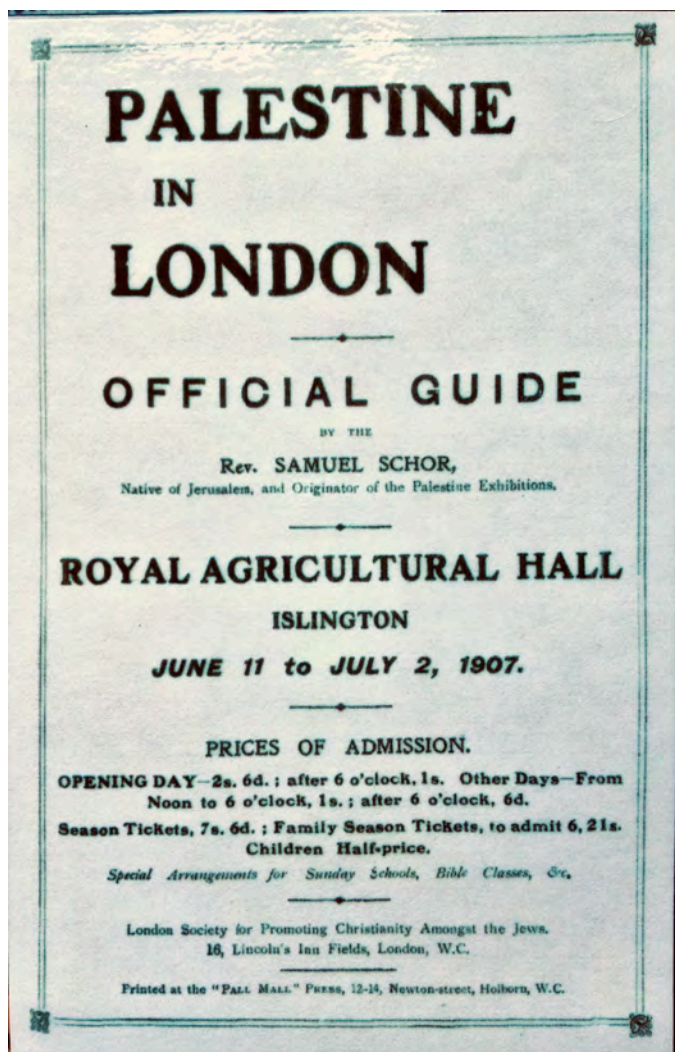


Samuel Schor

It soon became apparent to him that English Christians did not understand the Bible properly because as he wrote in a letter “it is an Eastern book. It bristles with difficulties, peculiar customs and expressions.” His answer, again in his words was “Could we but take all our people to Palestine! But it would be out of the question. Why not bring Palestine to them?” Samuel’s background as a Middle Eastern Jew gave him a depth of understanding that his congregation lacked so he began to draw together some interesting things such as menorahs, prayer shawls, shofars and Bible scrolls as well as sumptuous items of Middle Eastern clothing, to illustrate his sermons. As his sermon repertoire grew so did his collection of artefacts. CMJ workers returning home from mission trips brought “things” back for him, his family in Jerusalem sent him more “things” and Samuel also commissioned illustrative models of the Tabernacle and the Temple along with topographic models of Biblical places, and scale models of synagogues, Biblical houses and many of CMJ’s worldwide mission stations.

He soon realised that what he had was a collection that could be displayed in churches and other public buildings and that could be used to further his vision of helping Christians have a better understanding of their Bibles and educating interested non-church people. He also recognised that most people would never have the opportunity to visit the land of the Bible and that what he had collected could be the next best thing - if you couldn’t afford to visit the real Holy Land then come and visit CMJ’s travelling virtual Holy Land. The exhibition soon began to tour Great Britain in response to invitations. Places as far apart as Torquay and Preston, Broadstairs and Dublin, Belfast and Sidmouth played host to the growing collection, and in 1912 it even visited Canada. Along with members of the public;

Archbishops, Bishops, Lord Mayors, MPs and even a former Governor of Mandate Palestine attended the exhibition. We have a record that in 1907 the exhibition was held for 19 days in the Agricultural Halls in Islington, London and over 350,000 people visited!



Agricultural Halls Guide

Schor had to charter four railway carriages to move the exhibition from venue to venue, a major logistical challenge as the exhibition material had to be transferred from the station to the church on arrival and then back at the end of the visit. Later it was transported in CMJ's purpose designed vehicles which made direct access to the venues much easier.



"The Church owes him a debt of great gratitude, both for the conception and for the way in which he has carried it out. It may be said that Mr Schor is the Palestine Exhibition. I hope that he may be spared to give another 10,000 lectures."

H S Gedge, Rector of Aylestone, Leicester in 1910.

Wherever it went the exhibition was a newsworthy event. Local newspapers and the church press loved the concept of CMJ workers and volunteers dressing in Biblical costumes telling stories and explaining the artefacts on display.



Volunteers dressing in Biblical costumes

When you visited the exhibition you were sure to come across a woman grinding corn in a hand turned stone mill, a scribe writing a Torah scroll (a role played by Samuel himself in the early days),



Samuel in costume

a shepherd or the High Priest and at the climax of the visit you would join with a family celebrating Passover. You would have seen the magnificent model of the Jewish Temple from the time of Jesus, explored its predecessor the Tabernacle, and perhaps even caught a glimpse of the magnificent Ark of the Covenant. The whole experience was like nothing else - touching, feeling, hearing, tasting and smelling really made the Bible Come to Life! Many of CMJ's supporters have said that a visit to the exhibition was the catalyst to them becoming involved in Jewish ministry and Hebrew roots Bible study. Some church ministers began their careers organising and co-ordinating the exhibition, and several went on to become CMJ workers at home and overseas.

Samuel Schor eventually became Director of the Barbican Mission where he opened an outreach centre amongst the Jewish community in Warsaw. As he took up his new position he handed his priceless collection over to CMJ. The names of the directors who followed him is a list of some visionary home workers - Ivy Gollmick, Leonard Pearson (who had married Schor's daughter), Bill Medcalf, Philip Meader, John Taylor, Miles Maylor, Philip Bottomley, Walter Barker, Howard Roberts, John Wood, Paul Halliday, James Stedeford, David Scott, Humphrey Gillott and others all brought their unique gifts to the exhibition. For over a hundred years they made the exhibition an unbroken arrow in the quiver of CMJ's ministry. Apart from an enforced break during World War II the exhibition was continually on the road. Inevitably its popularity rose and fell and by 2007 there was a decline in church interest in the Bible Comes To Life and events were temporarily suspended. Some exhibits were loaned out to other ministries, some were put into storage, some were sent to CMJ's Heritage Centre in Israel and for ten years there was no Bible Comes To Life in the UK. For a variety of reasons related to the age and health of the "borrowers", late in 2012 and through 2013 many of the on-loan items were returned to CMJ including the stunning Temple Model. This posed a question - what was CMJ supposed to be doing with this unique collection? Were we seeing God raising up this unique ministry once again?

We saw earlier the different ways the exhibition had been carried from town to town. In 2013 CMJ had no finance for purchasing a vehicle to transport the revived exhibition, but God always provides when he has a task that needs doing! A Citroen van was given to the society by an English city council who had had it donated to them for an educational charity work project. After 10 years their project came to an end and the vehicle was no longer needed. British charity law meant it could not be sold, but only given to another charity who would use it for a similar purpose. In the summer of 2013 CMJ took possession of the vehicle - 10 years old but with only 3000 miles on the milometer.



Vincent the Van!

CMJ's official charitable name is the Vincent Society so it was inevitable that the van would carry that name. A generous local printer donated the new livery, and even added his name on the bonnet and "Vincent" was born! Vincent was the ideal transport for all CMJ's display materials, and amazingly the exhibition fitted inside perfectly. At that time Paul and Janey Hames, who had served with CMJ-Israel in Jerusalem, were back in the UK representing CMJ at church meetings, conventions and conferences. Whilst managing CMJ's Christ Church guest house in Jerusalem Paul and Janey worked alongside CMJ-Israel's Heritage Centre team where they witnessed how effective using historic artefacts was as a way of connecting with the public. In 2013 they took Vincent carrying the Temple model and a small selection of other artefacts to the "Yachad" conference in Aviemore, Scotland; in 2014 a small exhibition was displayed supporting CMJ-Ireland at the "Summer Madness" youth convention near Belfast and in March 2016 the Temple Model went to the Tron church in

the centre of Glasgow. The events in Aviemore and Belfast were primarily held for CMJ supporters, but at the Tron Church the exhibition was advertised widely for the first time and it attracted a lot of attention from the Glasgow public. It was clear that the exhibition was still captivating for Christians and non-Christians alike.

It was also clear the time was right to get the exhibition back on the road again! The collection of artefacts and clothing was reviewed and catalogued, the models renovated and in the Summer of 2016 some of the exhibition was put on show at CMJ-UK's annual conference. Renewed interest resulted in bookings for five exhibitions in 2017 and the Bible Comes To Life Exhibition was back up and running! Before we began to advertise we had to decide on how our publicity should look. The response from people at the first few venues was that the "non use" of technology and the traditional vintage feel of the exhibition was part of its charm and attraction so we decided to re-vamp the 1922 Ealing Town Hall exhibition poster as our identifying logo.



*“Fabulous - so interactive and children so engaged. Many thanks.”
Primary school teacher Bangor NI.*

The way the exhibition is presented was revised (we'll look at how it is staged today in the next section) and there were soon bookings for 2018 and 2019. In three years 17 exhibitions were held from Broadstairs to Paignton and Enniskillen to Cambridge. Right back as far as Samuel Schor's day, a team of willing volunteers has always been an essential part of making the Bible Comes To Life Exhibition work. The last three years has been no exception. Paul and Janey recruited a willing group of people with a heart for God and for the ministry of CMJ each with teaching, storytelling and other creative talents. Some of those inspirational volunteers have shared their experiences of exhibition life in the last section of this OPRP.

As we have travelled to the different venues we have found that each event has taken on a unique character and a seemingly different emphasis. The exhibition is always warmly welcomed and the local organising team invariably gels with us as we work together to achieve the church objectives - the exhibition doesn't seek to be a stand alone CMJ led event, but always to be a partner with the local church in their community outreach ministry.

In 2017 our first exhibition was in Southwell, close to the exhibition's current home in Farnsfield, near Nottingham, and by the end of 2019 the exhibition had been to England, Wales and Northern Ireland.



By January 2020 there were seven exhibitions booked including two in Scotland, in addition to two major Christian summer conference events. But as you will already know 2020 was a special year. In March the COVID-19 virus hit and we were forced to postpone our Easter/Passover event in Mansfield. As the year progressed it became clear that we needed to postpone the whole 2020 programme. As we begin 2021 with travel and meeting restrictions still in place we hope and pray that Summertime will bring the opportunity to reschedule some of the postponed exhibitions and establish new ones. The exhibition has never travelled overseas except for the 1912 trip to Canada, but we are excited to be planning a trip to Warsaw in Poland, where the Bible Comes To Life will be part of an international outreach project in conjunction with organisations from America, Europe and Israel.

PART 2 – THE EXHIBITION TODAY

The current version of the exhibition continues to be an exciting and unique resource for churches and schools.



The displays have been redesigned and the teaching presentations developed to meet current school curricula requirements in general religious education, comparative religion, history and social studies; and our station guides have prepared teaching presentations that aim to answer the questions asked by our visitors. The exhibition's overarching objective remains true to Samuel Schor's original two fold vision of helping Christians understand their Bibles in order for them to become more effective ambassadors for Jesus and using the exhibits as a platform to share the gospel message.

When you visit the exhibition you will see it is divided into six sections that we call stations, each exploring a particular aspect of Biblical life -

1. Worship
2. Divine Language
3. Biblical Feasts and Festivals
4. Judaism
5. Desert Life
6. Christianity

To make the visit feel as authentic as possible we make the displays vibrant and colourful and all of our station guides and volunteer helpers are dressed in replica Biblical costumes. We create a welcoming and intriguing atmosphere by burning frankincense, playing Middle Eastern music, and offering a taste of delicious typical Biblical foods. The aim is to make the whole visit an immersive and interactive experience.

To get the best experience of the exhibition and to ensure that they hear about the artefacts, school classes are divided into six groups at the beginning of their visit. When they arrive the whole team give them a warm and enthusiastic welcome and seat them by the desert tent. One of our guides explains what will happen during their visit. This is followed by an animated talk and question time at each station. The children's visit then ends with a short, and often amusing 'first person' talk by a Biblical character. This might be Anna and Simeon from the Temple courts, the woman who lost her coin, the tribal leader or even the Roman centurion who knelt at the foot of the cross.

*"I thought this was going to be really boring but it was wicked!"
A schoolboy aged 10*

On public open days visitors are free to wander around the six stations and ask questions. The day will be interspersed with longer more detailed talks on any one of the six stations. Let us look now at the exhibits in more detail and learn some of the interesting facts that would be shared at each station during a visit. In part three of this book our volunteers have shared some extra thoughts about some of the exhibits.

1) **Worship** - Tabernacle, Temple, the High Priest and the Ark of the Covenant.

The Tabernacle was the focus of Israelite worship whilst the Jewish people were wandering in the desert after they left Egypt at the first Passover. God gave to Moses the building pattern explaining that the portable building He wanted constructed was only a copy of the real focus of worship in heaven - (See Exodus 25 and Hebrews 8:6).



The Tabernacle

Using the model we can look at the different coverings (See Exodus 26) and explain their significance - The first cover made of linen with Cherubim embroidery signifies the holiness of the Tabernacle, the second goat hair cover had physical properties we explain at the desert tent in Section 5. The third cover of red dyed ram skins points to the sacrifices and atonement which were part of worship in the tabernacle and the fourth cover is the mysterious animal skin. The word occurs in Exodus 25:4 and 36:19 which, depending on your Bible version, is translated as goat skins, badger skins, dolphin skins or dugong skins is a Hebrew word for an unknown animal. During a theological discussion with a group of Jerusalem rabbis, one of CMJ's workers in Jerusalem was told that the important thing about the outer layer was not identifying the animal but

recognising that God acknowledges the human need to worship “something with skin on”. A perfect springboard to talking about Jesus! The Tabernacle furniture is significant. In Exodus 25 we read about the Ark of the Covenant - the gold covered wooden



The Ark of the Covenant

chest surmounted by two cherubim facing God’s mercy seat - the very centre of God’s presence among his people. The ark contained the two stone tablets with the ten commandments inscribed by God’s own finger, a jar containing manna - the mysterious food provided by God when the people of Israel were wandering in the wilderness, and Aaron’s almond wood staff which miraculously budded, flowered, fruited and stayed alive - the account of which we find in Numbers 17. These three items represent God’s law, God’s provision, and God’s choice of the Jewish people as his representative people. The ark was placed in the most holy part of the Tabernacle - the

Holy of Holies, behind a heavy embroidered curtain. Only the serving High Priest was allowed access to this part, and only once a year on the Day of Atonement. In the other part of the Tabernacle known as the Holy Place, we find the menorah - the oldest symbol used by the Jewish people to represent their relationship with the Living God - which is explored more fully in section 4; the table with 12 special loaves which are renewed each day and represent the Jewish people renewing themselves regularly in God's presence and the Altar for burning incense which traditionally represents the prayers of the people. The table and the incense altar were perpetually illuminated by the light of the menorah. Outside was the ritual bath where the priests made themselves ceremonially clean, the sacrificial altar for the burnt offerings, the fabric wall surrounding the Tabernacle court and the entrance curtains, all designed according to the heavenly plan.

The Temple - Once the Israelites settled themselves in the promised land, King David established Jerusalem as his capital. This was around 1000 BC. David then prayed to God for permission to build a Temple. The Lord graciously said yes, but David's son and successor Solomon was to be the builder on account of David's violent military past. The Temple became the static centre for Jewish worship for around 1400 years. Solomon's original temple was destroyed following the Babylonian invasion of Israel in 586 BC. It was rebuilt when the Jewish people returned from their exile around 40 years later under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, and then extended and renovated by King Herod between 20 BC and 70 AD when it was again destroyed; this time by the Roman army under General Titus as punishment for a Jewish rebellion. Our scale model shows Herod's Temple.



Herod's Temple

It was made in the mid 1940s according to the dimensions in the Bible, contemporary accounts and archaeological discoveries made up until that date. A lot of archaeological work has been done on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem since then but the essential location and design of the Temple has not changed so our model is as authentic as possible. The surrounding skirt representing the retaining wall of the platform shows the position of todays Western or Wailing Wall, the remains of the staircase known as Robinson's Arch, the Kidron valley, the Eastern wall and its Golden Gate and the monumental Southern Steps with the Huldah Gates. The various courts are clearly shown by a series of remote controlled LED lights. This enables us to explain who had access to the various areas of the complex. We can explore the sacrificial process from the ritual bath at the Pool of Bethesda situated North of the Temple, through the Kidron Valley and up the Southern Steps across the court of the Gentiles into the Court of the Priests where the sacrifice was made. Our explanation culminates with a plume of smoke rising from the altar to signify that the sacrifice has been made.

"A really great event, the students thoroughly enjoyed it!" Year 8 teacher, Bangor NI.

2) Divine Language - Scrolls, Books and Tablets

The basis of faith for Jewish people are the 39 books of the Hebrew Bible. Those 39 books together with the 27 New Testament books make up the Bible read by Christians. Both synagogue and church communities agree that all the Scriptures were written by people who experienced divine inspiration, and that they explain God's desire to save people from the results of their rebellion against Him. The Bible is held to be the Word of God and is the key to interpreting how God wants His people to relate to Him and to each other. For Christians the Hebrew Bible is interpreted by Jesus in the light of His divine origin and purpose and further explained by some of the Apostles who wrote in the 60 years following Jesus's death. The earliest part of the Bible was written well before the exile to Assyria in 722 BC, possibly as early as 1300 BC and the latest part around 80 AD. The collection of what we call the "books" of the Bible were originally written on scrolls. By the time of Jesus every synagogue had a set of scrolls, parts of which were read aloud in public worship in a common set pattern.



A good part of Jesus's earthly work was teaching the meaning of these familiar passages to all those who cared to listen. His teaching, written in the four Gospel accounts of his life and the commentary Epistles, written by His disciples, became the New Testament. By the 4th Century AD, scripture was being copied onto scrolls of either papyrus (made from beaten reed stems) or parchment (treated animal skin). They were meticulously copied, very beautiful, but very bulky and very expensive to produce and maintain. It wasn't until the invention of the printing press in the 15th Century that Bible manuscripts could be collated and printed in a convenient book form. Together with the religious reforms that occurred in Europe at this time, printing made it possible for ordinary people to own a Bible for the first time. Whether it was hand copied or printed those involved in the copying process went to great lengths to ensure that each copy was an exact replica of the original, ensuring that over time the meaning of the text never changes. In the exhibition you will see a Yemenite scroll that is over 150 years old. It is made up of the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy and is over 30m long. These first five books of the Bible are known as the Torah and they form the basis of Jewish belief and religious practise. There is a scroll of Esther which we believe dates from the Middle Ages, a Hebrew-English Bible, a Victorian family Bible, a modern English translation and an electronic Bible on a device that can fit into your back pocket. It is interesting to note that there are more ancient copies of Biblical manuscripts than there are of any other ancient document. The original Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek may have been translated into many languages and the language styles may be current, but we can be sure that the sense and the intent of what we read in our Bible today is what God Himself conveyed to the original writers.

3) Feasts and Festivals - The Sabbath and Seven Biblical Feasts.

Our exploration of the Biblical Feasts and Festivals begins with the Sabbath.



At the beginning of the creation account in Genesis, God sets aside the Sabbath day and calls it holy. This is the first use of the word holy in the Bible and it is significant that the idea of holiness is first applied to a block of time rather than to an object. God clearly intends for His people to experience and to mark the rhythm of time passing and the foundation for this marking of important times is the weekly celebration of Sabbath rest and worship which is intrinsic to both Judaism and Christianity. In the Bible whenever the Jewish people are commanded to mark a specific time it is an aid to help them remember a special event; so for Purim they remember their deliverance from the Persian tyrant Haman's murderous plans, at Passover they relive their deliverance from slavery in Egypt, Pentecost marks the wheat harvest festival - a time of thanksgiving, the Feast of Trumpets sees the beginning of the Days of Awe - a period of reflection and self analysis leading to the Day of Atonement, when the collective sin of the Jewish people is covered or atoned for. This is closely followed by the Feast of Tabernacles, a celebration of God's provision and protection. These feasts are laid out in detail in Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy and have been the rhythm of Jewish life for over 3000 years. We look at what the feasts might mean for Christians as there are clear pointers towards the coming of a Messiah in every one of them as well as prophetic elements pointing towards God's plan to live for a time physically amongst mankind and His future plans for His creation.

4) Judaism - Exploring some familiar symbols

Here we look at the Biblical origin and meaning of some common Jewish symbols and religious objects and how they fit with Jewish belief and practice. We start with the Menorah.



The Menorah

The seven branched candlestick is probably the oldest and most enduring symbol representing the Jewish people. Once again we find the instructions for constructing it were given to Moses, by God himself in Exodus 25. It is thought that the design of the Menorah is based on the wild sage or salvia, a desert plant which it resembles and which would have been very familiar to the Israelites. In the book of Isaiah chapter 11 there is a prophetic description of the seven characteristics of God which will be borne by the Messiah. The Menorah is also said to reflect those characteristics. It is also used to represent the seven major Biblical Festivals of Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, Pentecost, Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Tabernacles.



The Shofar

The Shofar was originally a ram's horn but they may now be made of antelope horns. It was blown in times of war as a warning and a rallying call, as a call to worship, repentance or prayer and as the herald of an arriving monarch or leader. Biblical instructions in Leviticus 23 and Numbers 29 are good places to begin looking at the significance of the Shofar. In the new Testament the last trumpet that the Apostle Paul tells us will sound to herald Jesus' return is a Shofar and not a silver trumpet! (See 1 Thessalonians 4:16)

One of the most recognisable Jewish symbols is the kippa or yarmulke, the skull cap worn by Jewish men. The kippa is not actually a Biblical garment; but its use comes from the idea that by covering his head a man shows he is in submission to a higher authority, which is a Bible teaching.

The Talit or prayer shawl usually worn by Jewish men was developed in response to God's command that a man is to wear tassels on the four corners of his garment (see Numbers 15:39-41 and Deuteronomy 22:12). Traditionally there is a combination of tassels and knots which represent

God's commandments and authority and are designed to keep the Torah uppermost in a man's thinking.

The tefillin, or phylacteries, are small boxes attached to leather straps which wrap around the head and left arm. They contain excerpts from the Scriptures.

The mezuzah is a tefilla for the house. It is a small box attached to the door post of your home. The tefilla and mezuzah are both used in fulfilment of the command to reflect on the law wherever you are and whenever you go in and out of your home (see Deuteronomy 6:8).



Kippa Tallit Tefillin

5) Desert Life - The tent, clothes and life's necessities

The early history of the people of Israel is lived out in the desert. The next section of the exhibition is centred on a desert nomad's tent and the stories and teachings are based on things that reflect that lifestyle. Between Bible times and the early twentieth century, clothing styles in the Middle East did not change significantly. The clothes that our mannequins display are around 150 years old but almost identical to what a bride and a shepherd from Bible times would have worn.

Our bridal mannequin is dressed in an exquisite wedding gown from Bethlehem. The patterns woven into the dress fabric especially on the front panel show where she came from and which family she belonged to and the multicoloured lining of her jacket show her to be from a wealthy family. Her hat with its many coins, is not just decorative but reflects her fathers love and reveals how much he values her; it is her dowry, the gift given by a father at the marriage of his daughter. This beautiful outfit helps us visually as we retell the story and meaning of Jesus' parable about the woman who lost a dowry coin in Luke's Gospel chapter 15.



Bride

A person's wealth was tied up in livestock especially sheep and goats so there are lots of stories about shepherds. Shepherding was a lowly job often given to the youngest son or daughter - they were responsible for protecting the wealth of their father and ensuring that the flock was fed and watered; a perfect spiritual ideal to aim at for anyone called to leadership. Several great names from the Bible were shepherds - Abraham, Isaac, Rachel, Jacob, Moses, David, and Amos all tended livestock, but the ultimate Good Shepherd is Jesus, who tends and feeds His father's flock of people.



Shepherd

Our shepherd wears a rough tunic with a belt and a sheepskin overcoat. He has a rod and staff for disciplining the sheep, fighting off predators and helping him walk in the rocky hills of Israel. He would no doubt have been a smelly character but he had to have a special kind of wisdom which God requires his leaders to have.

The nomads tent would have been made from goat hair (ours is hessian, but we have samples of goat hair material to look at and feel). The thick coarse hair was spun into thread that was about half a centimetre thick. This was then woven into lengths of fabric. These were then sewn together make the tent. The women did the spinning, the weaving, the sewing and the tent erecting. Goat hair gives the resulting fabric some interesting properties. The tiny scales that make up each hair are closed tight when they are dry. This gives an open weave allowing air movement and the entrance of light. As the fabric is dark brown the roof heats up in the sunshine. This causes the air above the tent to rise. In turn this draws air from inside the tent through the roof. By adjusting the gap at the base of the walls air from outside is drawn in at the bottom by the movement and a simple air conditioning system operates. If the fabric gets wet the scales on the hairs open, swelling the hair and closing the weave. The tent fabric is now waterproof.

Rain is an important but rare commodity in the desert so ways of collecting, containing and transporting water were important practical skills. In the exhibition we have a goatskin which would be filled with water - far more eco friendly than a plastic bottle.

6) Christianity. "What's in a name?" is the theme.

We look at how the Hebrew name "Yeshua" became the very Anglicised "Jesus" via Greek and Latin and how that change can affect our view of who Jesus was and is.

We know Him as 'Jesus Christ' but what does that tell us about his character? Not very much! But a little understanding of Hebrew will reveal who He is.

Yeshua HaMashiach



Chet Yod Shin Mem Heh

Ayin Vav Shin Yod

Jesus Christ

The root letters in the name “Yeshua” are Yod, Shin, Vav and Ayin as you see above.

In Hebrew these four letters form the root of all words to do with salvation, deliverance and victory. In the Christmas story, the angel comes to Joseph and tells him that Mary is going to have a baby who is to be called ‘Jesus’, because He will save His people. In English the name Jesus doesn’t have much connection to the idea of salvation. But the Hebrew name makes abundantly clear what His title, nature, character and mission will be. He will be called Saviour, Deliverer and Victorious One because He will fulfil all of those roles. The word Christ is not His family surname; it is a Greek word meaning one who is anointed - set aside by God for a special job or purpose. It translates a Hebrew word “Mashiach” from which we get the English word Messiah. So when we know that Jesus Christ is a translation of the Hebrew Yeshua HaMashiach, we understand that His name tells us what His mission is and Who sent Him to do it.

Based on the account of Jesus birth in Matthew’s gospel we have the prophetic gifts brought by the wise men - gold, frankincense and myrrh.



Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh

We explore Jesus's ministry of being king, priest and sacrifice. Gold represents Jesus' royalty - He often spoke of His kingdom, and the authority given Him by His heavenly father - the King of the Universe. Frankincense was used in the Tabernacle and the Temple and represents the priests' ministry and prayer. The priests, especially the High Priest acted as intermediaries between God and His people. Jesus is referred to as the Great High Priest in the New Testament letter to the Hebrews. (4:14). In John's Gospel we hear Jesus praying for his people (chapter 17). Myrrh was a fragrant gum made from tree sap that was used to stop decomposing bodies from smelling. It is symbolic of death. In dying and being buried (with spices - most likely including myrrh as we read in Mark chapter 16), Jesus became the ultimate sacrifice.

Also on display is an authentic centurion's helmet with the testimony of the wearer having witnessed Jesus' arrest, trial



An authentic centurion's helmet

and crucifixion and of him finding himself kneeling at the foot of the cross proclaiming "Surely this man is the son of God!" (Matthew 27:54) There is an ancient tradition that the centurion's name was Longinus and when his soldier's tour of duty in Judea ended he returned to Rome and became one of the earliest members of the church in Rome.

This ends the section looking at the six stations. The teaching here only scratches the surface of what we talk about at each exhibition and we are constantly updating our material. If your curiosity has been kindled look out later in 2021 when we will be celebrating 130 years of the exhibition and this OPRP will be augmented with some more detailed explanations and more pictures.

*"This was so amazing. I just can't express how much I enjoyed it."
High school student, Belfast*

PART 3 - DIFFERENT VOICES

We are blessed that at every exhibition volunteer helpers, from the local church community, dress in Biblical clothes, welcome visitors, provide food and drink, organise rotas, act as guides, turn on the heating and lock and unlock premises. We have also been blessed to be joined by Bible school students, Youth With A Mission interns, Open The Book volunteers and members of other organisations who support our work. But we are especially thankful for our team of volunteer station guides. This amazing group of people give up their free time and home comforts to work hard for what can be very long days to make the exhibition work. We want to record our thanks to the following people who have been integral to the success of Bible Comes To Life these last three years - Graham and Suky Bright, Dave and Yvonne Evans, Naomi Oldham, Leo Deacon and Rose Mee, Roy and Jackie Thurley, Mike Scott and Gerry Cohen. All have enthusiastically offered their time and knowledge to help share the gospel using exhibition materials. Without these wonderful folk the exhibition events would be much poorer and less effective.



Here are some of their experiences -

Naomi says

“The Bible Comes To Life is always such an adventure and I love being able to talk about Jesus to so many people. The visitors are fascinated by the artefacts we have to show them, each one focusing on different aspects of Jesus’ birth, His life and His death. Almost everyone who visits leave with at least some knowledge of who He is, and the artefacts we have are an incredible tool to expand that knowledge.

On the Christianity station we have some gold, frankincense and myrrh, the gifts brought to Jesus by the Wise Men. These items are something that even the youngest of our visitors know a little bit about and it is great to engage them in conversation and talk about why the Wise Men may have brought such unusual gifts.

Gold is the gift that almost every child we see knows about – we are able to share why this was such an important and significant gift; that the gift is unusual for a baby, but that this baby was different, He was born to be Jesus our Messiah, the Saviour of the World. We discuss how gold was expensive, that it was often used at that time to show the purity and the divinity of God and that the Tabernacle and Temple where Jewish people worshipped God were both adorned with gold. They wanted their place of Worship to bring honour to God. So, when the wise men brought gold as a gift to Yeshua, they were showing Him honour in bringing Him the best they could, and acknowledging Him as King of the Jews.”

Roy remembers

“It came about quite accidentally. At my first Bible Comes To Life Exhibition I was given a robe to wear, which turned out to be that of a rich man - I wish! Thinking about which character I should

adopt I decided on Joseph of Arimathea. We don't know a great deal about him from the scriptures, but we have enough to make him 'live'. A rich, important man, the owner of an unused tomb in Jerusalem. A member of the Sanhedrin Council that had handed Jesus over to the Romans. He is referred to in John's Gospel as one of Jesus' secret disciples, but fearful of the other Jewish religious leaders.

Joseph was probably a good friend of Nicodemus, another member of the Sanhedrin. From his description as a disciple, we can assume that he was not in favour of the Sanhedrin's decision to arrange for Jesus to be executed. Maybe the offer of his newly-hewn tomb, after the crucifixion, was when he made his discipleship public. He was not to know that Jesus would only need his tomb for a few days!

There was certainly enough in the character of Joseph to enable me to share the Gospel with the public in an entertaining way. And I enjoy being Joseph!"

Graham says

"The Yemenite Torah Scroll contains the first 5 books of the Bible. These books are read in order in the synagogue every Sabbath. On any Sabbath, whichever synagogue you visit, wherever you are in the world you will find the same scripture portion being read and explained.

To write scrolls you had to be trained as a Scribe. The scribe was a very skilled copyist and a very important person in the community. He had to be a person of proven good character and who lived a fully Jewish lifestyle.

The earliest scrolls were hand written on vellum, a kind of paper made from animal skin. The ink was made to a unique recipe and was always black. It was considered special and could only be

used for copying scrolls. The scribe would use either a reed or quill pen. The scribes would wipe the pen clean and wash their hands before starting, because they wanted to prepare their body, mind and heart to do something holy. If they had to write the word for “God” they would wash their whole bodies.

To attach all 5 books together, the scribe would stitch sections of animal skin together to form one long scroll. In written Hebrew there is no punctuation, chapter or verse numbers and you read from right to left. Anyone reading the scroll would use a hand shaped pointer called a Yad so as not to touch it with his own hands.”

Jackie says

“Olives, grapes, figs, dates, wheat, barley and pomegranates. What a colourful display for a harvest festival. Yes, and in a sense looking at the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths is just that. The Hebrews were giving thanks to God, our Creator, long before the Church started their services of thanksgiving for harvest time. This has got to be one of my favourite times of the year, the colours, sounds, smells and building a succah or temporary shelter, a flimsy construction and then getting to sit inside and play, eat and rest does a lot for the soul, calling to mind the simple joys of life.

Volunteering on the Feasts and Festivals Station of the exhibition is so rewarding when sharing with visitors and especially children the wonders and meanings of the biblical feasts. There is so much richness in discovering how all the feasts, instigated by God had meaning not only for the Jewish people but also for us too today. They all point to the Messiah and what a joy it is to share with visitors the greatness of God and His purposes for mankind.”

Suky explains

“It is very exciting to meet the children at the Judaism station. I

use lots of artefacts to explain this fascinating subject to them - the children can look at, touch and even try some on. The shofar is a particular favourite! I explain how the Israelites often had to fight tribes who wanted to destroy them, but when the Shofar was sounded by the watchmen it warned them of danger. It was also used to call to prayer, to worship and to begin feasts. The children really enjoy having a go at blowing the shofars; their attempts produce a range of sounds from the squeaky to the thunderous. Lots of giggling and red faces ensue!

I also talk about the Menorah, the 7-branched candlestick placed in the Temple as an everlasting sign of God's presence. Sometimes adults ask about what the Menorah symbolises so I show them the prophecy about the Messiah found in the book of Isaiah Chapter 11:

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse;
And a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.
And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.
and his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

Each branch of the candlestick represents one of the attributes of Messiah Jesus.

It's wonderful to see the eyes of young and old alike, opening wide as understanding dawns, as though a light in their understanding is suddenly lit!"

Mike says

"A scribe explains to a school group.....

So now, children, we come to our next item from our table. Any

ideas what this could be? Yes, it does look like a tablecloth - it's white, rectangular and it's made of wool. Yes I suppose it does look like that Israeli flag behind me with these border stripes. No, there is no star in the middle. In fact they used this thing here as a model for that flag there. But this item has tassels hanging from each corner. It's a talit or a prayer shawl - because it's worn by Jewish people when they pray.

Over 2000 years ago people wore a robe or a cloak with tassels like these at the corners. Each fringe had a thread of a light blue colour like the sea or the sky to remind the Jewish people that God made the world around them beautiful. Whenever they looked at the fringes of their prayer shawls they were to remember all the good things the Bible teaches us such as caring for people in need.

In the New Testament book of Matthew in chapter 9 there is a story about a very sick lady who is looking for a doctor to heal her. She's spent all her money on many doctors but none could help her. In that story the hem of Jesus' cloak that she touched was in fact like these special fringes. And she was healed. How do you think she felt?

You know at a certain point during the synagogue services on Saturday mornings a Jewish person walks around the room carrying a dressed scroll just like that one there. The people touch the scroll one after another with their fringes and then they kiss them. This shows that they love and respect the teachings of God written in the scrolls. They believe that God can bless their lives like the fruit of a tree can bring life to those who taste it. In the same way the sick lady believed in the authority and power and love of Jesus and she trusted him to heal her which amazingly he did. There is a verse in Malachi 4 that says, "The sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings for those who respect God's name and that the people will go out leaping like calves." This is like the lady finding that Jesus could save her from

her sorrows and troubles. She found healing in his wings. In Hebrew which is a language Jesus knew, wings can mean both a bird's wing and also the corner or edge of the garment just like these tassels here. Isn't that amazing?

"So long and Shalom Aleichem!"

Our Iranian helpers - fruit of seeds sewn in Iran!

In the 1820-40's, intrepid CMJ missionaries such as Wolff, Stern and Sternschuss spied out the land of Persia, visiting many towns with the Gospel and finally establishing the first base in Isfahan and later Teheran - under much resistance. The boys and girls schools that were established were very popular due to the excellent education on offer. A New Testament given to a Jewish court physician by a CMJ worker was read, believed and this led to the further expansion of the kingdom of God in Persia. A succession of CMJ workers have laboured hard and brought much fruit during the intervening years. Many years later we delight in the fruit of their labours as we see growing numbers of fleeing Iranians seeking asylum in England and joining our churches. The Jewish roots of the Christian faith is not an obstacle for them - in fact quite the opposite! We are privileged to have had several of these brothers and sisters - some from Muslim and Jewish backgrounds - join us in the exhibitions. Seeing Masoud, Maryam, Banafsheh, Shadi and Fahad and others go out onto the streets in Biblical costume, and enthusiastically encourage people to come in to have a look around was a joy to behold and is testimony to God's faithfulness and saving grace through the generations.

We quote Masoud who says:

"I involved in the CMJ exhibition for many days and I had very good time in there exhibition and I was wearing some of the traditional clothes and we gave a wonderful impact to the visitors in the exhibition."

and Banafsheh who says:

"It was such a unique experience for me to see and be part of this amazing event. A joyful opportunity to know and learn deeper about the biblical culture and lifestyle of Jewish and Christian in old-time. The Bible Comes To Life helps me to understand more about the root and foundation of my Christian faith."



Iranians

We mentioned at the beginning that some of CMJ's renowned workers had been inspired by the exhibition in their early years. We'd like to finish with this remarkable story. Reverend John Colbourn was one of CMJ's longest serving supporters. In 2014 not long before John passed away, Paul was able to sit and listen to him reminisce. John remembered that his father Rev Martin Colbourn was the minister at the Church of St Swithin, Walcot in Bath when the CMJ exhibition was booked to visit in 1942. John's father was a CMJ supporter, but apparently much more

spiritual than practical. A new assistant minister had just joined the church so John's father gave him responsibility for managing the exhibition visit - a challenging task for a newly qualified man! Young John was so excited about the upcoming visit that he took his model railway layout on tour to the homes of all his friends and charged visitors 8d (about 31/2 pence) to see it - all proceeds going towards the expenses of hosting the exhibition. The young assistant was also inspired by the exhibition and became interested in CMJ. His name was Eric Payne. Eric went on to be one of CMJ's most well known mission workers in Ethiopia.

As we come to the end of this OPRP, we can bring everything we have written together and say that for almost 130 years CMJ's superb collection has been used to fulfil Samuel Schor's original vision to educate Christian people about the Jewish roots of their faith and share the good news about Jesus the Messiah with whoever comes to visit the exhibition.

Wherever the Bible Comes To Life Exhibition is staged it attracts visitors from all walks of life not only Christians but Jews, Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus, atheists, New Age followers and everyone in between!



Deaf and blind groups

We have been privileged to personally escort blind, deaf and disabled groups around the exhibition. It has united local churches and helped train up those in the church to be more effective disciples of Jesus. It has introduced thousands of school children to the love of God and the Bible, possibly for the first time. We regularly see children return with their families in public sessions to share in their exciting and inspiring school trip experience. At one venue we hosted a church youth group. These were not believers but teenagers with issues around crime, drug and alcohol abuse and family abuse. The Youth Worker texted us the next day -

“Thank you so much for Friday’s youth talk. Our young people were a bit freaked out by the aptness of the Bible verses and one said she sensed something had really “messed her mind up”; I believe basically they had an encounter with God!”

This leaves us with some questions for you:

- Have you been inspired reading this?
- Would you like to see hundreds of visitors in your church and give them the opportunity to experience something unique that could change their lives forever?
- Would you like to organise an invitation - we can tailor an exhibition to fit your space and time available?
- Would you pray for us as we prepare to take the Bible Comes To Life on the road again in the future?
- Could you take your train set out to your friends or walk 100 times around your garden to help us raise funds to look after the growing collection of wonderful things that make up CMJ’s unique Bible Comes To Life Exhibition?

If the answer is yes to any of the above and you’d like to discuss possibilities, then please email Paul and Janey paulandjaneyh@cmj.org.uk or call Paul on 07921 860433 or Janey on 07905 833047 and let’s begin planning!

END NOTES

¹ At CMJ we often use Hebrew versions of Anglicised names interchangeably. The most common example of this is the English name Jesus and its Hebrew original Yeshua. There is a section below explaining how Yeshua, with all its rich root meanings related to salvation, became Jesus. We decided that although Yeshua is linguistically accurate, most people will be more familiar with the name Jesus and so we will use that name throughout this OPRP. It also saves us having to translate other Hebrew names such as Yeshiyahu-Isaiah, Yochanon-John etc.

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