ceremonials, but rather the essence of high morality — justice, kindness, brotherhood, and peace. He meant that as God is the essence of all that is good and fine, so men achieve that holiness by trying to lead good lives in the everyday world."

Tarshish finds what others overlook in Deuteronomy, a message of God's universality, of Israel's specialness combined with its mandate to treat all men as brothers. He states, "Once we accept the idea, not only intellectually, but with our whole being, that there is one universal God over all the world, it follows naturally that all men are His children, that all men are brothers, and that therefore every man should treat his fellow human with consideration, kindness, justice and love."

The prophets' interpretation of chosenness led to a change in the basic essence of Judaism. Under the covenant, which was modeled on a typical ancient Middle Eastern treaty between ruler and ruled, God promises to protect and bless His faithful people. No other nation enjoyed that privilege. But with the help of the prophets, the Chosen People realized that their obligations might be weightier than their privileges. This change in the concept of chosenness coincided with the transformation of the tribal God of the armies to a universal, transcendent God who symbolized compassion. Armstrong points to Amos as the first of the prophets to emphasize social justice and compassion. In vibrant terms, he informed the Chosen People that the covenant represented responsibility, not privilege:

"Hate evil, and love good, and establish justice in the gate; it may be that the Lord, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph." Amos 5:15.

God of All Nations

God, in the words of the prophets, was no longer interested in elevating the Israelites above other nations. Instead, as the God of all nations, he manipulated Assyria as a scourge to punish the sinful Israelites. Armstrong explains that, "The covenant meant that *all* the people of Israel were God's elect and had, therefore, to be treated decently. God did not simply intervene in history to glorify Israel, but to secure social justice. This was his stake in history and, if need be, he would use the Assyrian army to enforce justice in his own land."

When the Hebrews came out of Egypt, they enjoyed the leadership of Yahweh, their national God, who cared about the Chosen People and them alone. In return the Israelites cared for Him and Him alone. But the concept of God as a universal deity, which flourished in the 8th century BCE, seemed to conflict with the idea of God as Israel's national God. Gradually the prophets harmonized these conflicting principles, beginning with Amos and culminating with Deutero-Isaiah or Second Isaiah.

Every catastrophic political event was accompanied by the colorful preaching of the prophets. In the year 604 BCE, when Nebuchadnezzar ascended the throne of Babylon, the prophet Jeremiah not only warned the Hebrew people, but associated the upcoming disaster with their wicked ways. He gave the Hebrews the bad news that, God would not favor one nation over another: "Am I a God at hand, says the Lord, and not a God afar oft? Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? says the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? says the Lord." Jeremiah 25:23-24.

In fact, Babylon was God's instrument for punishing Israel. Because the Jews were chosen, they were obligated to uphold a higher level of virtue. His words symbolize the opposite of the Mosaic triumphalist view of the Chosen People:

"Because you have not obeyed my words, behold, I will send for all the tribes of the north, says the Lord, and for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants, and against all these nations round about; I will utterly destroy them, and make them a horror, a hissing, and an everlasting reproach." Jeremiah 25:8-9.

Seventy Year Exile

From 605 to 601 BCE Nebuchadnezzar consolidated his empire. In 600 BCE he invaded Syria and Palestine and all the nations, including Judea, submitted to him. The Temple treasury began to pay tribute to the Babylonians. In 597 BCE, despite Jeremiah's advice, Judea rebelled. In 587 BCE Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and deported 10,000 of Jerusalem's leaders to Babylon. The seventy year Exile had begun. Jeremiah softened his tone to one of consolation. Here too his words constitute a radical transformation of the Chosen People concept. The new covenant he proposes is entirely different from the first covenant between God and the Hebrews. The new covenant offers no promise of a particular place where the Hebrews may worship God. The Temple is in ruins. The new covenant will be enacted within the heart of each individual Jew, who is instructed to carry out God's mission of mercy and justice wherever he may go:

"Behold the days are coming says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Jeremiah 31:31-33.

As we shall see, Judaism"s view of God slowly expands beyond the early narrow covenant relationship to the role being a "light to the nations that my salvation may reach the end of the earth." (Isaiah 49:6). •

(Part II of this article will deal with the question of what it means to be a "light to the nations.")

Klaus J. Herrmann

1929 – 1997

Klaus J. Herrmann, for many years a member of the Board of Directors of the American Council for Judaism, and in recent years a Vice President of the Council, died on December 23 in Berlin.

Klaus was born July 21, 1929 in the German region of Pomerania, an area which became part of Poland in the post-World War II years. The family moved to Berlin where Klaus attended school until August, 1940, when it became clear that the rise of the Nazis and the increasing disabilities under which German Jews were forced to live made it necessary to leave.

At the age of 11, Klaus and his younger brother Fritz traveled with their family by train, plane, Trans-Siberian Express and ship over Russia and Manchuria to Shanghai, where they lived through the years of World War II.

In 1947 the family left for the U.S. and lived in Minneapolis. Klaus joined the U.S. Army in 1948, becoming a 2nd Lt., and was sent to Germany as a member of the Intelligence Section, interrogating deserters.

Klaus received his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota in 1958 and became a professor of political science for the European division of the University of Maryland. He traveled to various U.S. military bases throughout Europe and North Africa. Later, he taught at Lakehead University in Canada and the American University in Washington, D.C.

In 1965, Klaus married Shirley Mackie, formerly of New Zealand, and became a member of the political science faculty at Sir George Williams University in Montreal, later to become Concordia University. He retired in 1996 and was an Adjunct Professor at the time of his death.

For many years, during the summer months, he was guest-Professor at the German University in Munich and he spent one summer teaching in Rostock, East Germany, before the fall of the Berlin Wall. He also taught at the City College of Chicago and the Postgraduate Program of Boston University as well as in Brussels for NATO and in Italy for the U.S. Air Force.

As a lay person, Klaus led religious services in various cities in Germany, in hospitals in Quebec, in Cali, Colombia and in Poland. At the time of his death, he was involved in a number of scholarly projects in Germany and Poland, including family genealogical research.

His commitment to classical Reform Judaism, to a universal religion free of nationalism, was one of the guiding forces of his life. He saw first-hand what damage unbridled nationalism could cause and knew that the combination of religion and nationalism represented an explosive mix. His articles on this and related subjects appeared frequently in *Issues* and other journals.

Particularly conscious of the blessings of liberty which he and his family found in the United States, Klaus was a staunch patriot. He understood that the fight against Nazism during World War II and the Cold War against Communism in the post-war period represented the price free men and nations must pay in order to resist the totalitarian forces which have plagued the twentieth century.

His vision of a Judaism true to the philosophy of the l9th and early 20th century reformers never wavered. His encyclopedic knowledge of Jewish history is a resource which will be sadly missed, as will Klaus' boundless energy and infectious humor.

Klaus lamented the many changes in Reform Judaism in recent years as the movement embraced nationalism, declared that Israel and not God was "central' to their Judaism and replaced traditional Reform music, hymns and prayers with substitutes which reversed Reform's earlier changes in the traditional Orthodox liturgy and approach to religious worship.

In an article entitled "Can Reform Judaism's Steady Retreat From Its Roots Be Reversed?" in the Winter 1994 *Issues,* Klaus declared that, "Reform Judaism, in recent years, has been in steady retreat from its universal and ethical spiritual roots." He believed that "the current period provides exactly the right atmosphere in which to move Reform back to the idealistic formulations of its bold pioneers."

When Klaus attended our board meeting in Alexandria, Virginia, in October he was ailing, having recovered very slowly from surgery for cancer he had undergone a year earlier. His death came while he was in Berlin undergoing further medical treatment.

Klaus is buried in the Weissensee Cemetery, the largest Jewish cemetery in Europe with 115,000 grave sites, but relatively little used in latter years due to its location in the former East Berlin.

We extend our condolences to his wife Shirley, his daughter Stephanie and his son Marcus. He will be missed by all who knew him and, particularly, by those in the American Council for Judaism who valued his leadership and friendship so dearly.