

Yearning For Peace of Mind Leads Jewish Couple To Utah

By STEPHEN W. GIBSON

Church News Staff Writer

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Al Moelling was the husband of Sister Elissa Moelling and father of Mitch and Troy Moelling, core members of Bnai Shalom.



SAN JOSE, CALIF.

Al Moelling, member of the San Jose Third Ward, San Jose Stake, went on a quest for peace of mind and found it in the Provo Branch of the Deseret Industries.

Just when his search began, he isn't sure, but he spent 15 years as a merchant seaman traveling to Europe, the Orient, the Far East and South America.

Wherever he went he was teased and often hated because of lineage. Al Moelling is Jewish.

"I could never understand hate, yet I felt it from many, even strangers."

He said during those years the only time he ever mentioned the Lord's name was in vain.

"I met my wife in Brooklyn. She tried to teach me that everyone has a little good in them, even Hitler. I just couldn't understand this type of attitude coming from a Jewess."

The first contact the Moellings had with the Church was when some of their friends joined the Church,

"We continued to be friends with them for awhile, but they didn't want to play cards or go to the nightclubs anymore. When we did get together with them they wanted to play games such as 'Seek' and their phone was always ringing like ours is now that we are members," he continued.

Mrs. Moelling continued to have a friendship with the family and when her six-month-old son became dehydrated, her friend offered to call in the elders to give him a blessing.

"I thought at the time that we should give the boy a shot of vodka, but instead the bishop came. Soon the boy got better," Mr. Moelling said.

The missionaries taught his wife, but Mr. Moelling still remained aloof.

"I remember hearing them ask my wife if she believed that Jesus Christ was the son of God and our Savior. When she answered, 'Yes', I felt as if the floor would open up and we would both be swallowed up."

"I remember taking my wife to our Rabbi and telling him how she felt," Mr. Moelling continued.

The Rabbi's words to us were,

"To be one with God, you must be one with yourself. Of all the faiths she could have found, I am glad she has found the Mormons. You couldn't have found a better one."

Mr. Moelling gave permission for his wife to be baptized although he.

didn't believe in what she was doing.

After his wife had been baptized, nothing seemed to go right for Mr. Moelling. He was hurt, confused and angry all at the same time.

He heard W. Cleon Skousen, professor at BYU, speak in the Bay Area about the role of the Jews and Mr. Moelling felt that if any man could help him be converted it was Mr. Skousen.

"Everything was getting worse' and I didn't seem to want anything to go right." he continued. "Finally. one night late, I told my wife, 'Let's go to Salt Lake City!"

They left the children with a Mormon family and drove straight through to Provo. There the quest took another step.

The Moellings met [Mr. \[Cleon\] Skousen](#), Gabriel Dan Tahor, converted Jew and teacher at the BYU, [Rose Marie Reid](#), who has taught many Jews in southern California where she owned a bathing suit manufacturing company, and [Elliott Landau](#) who is also a converted Jew.

Mr. Moelling was impressed but not converted, he explained.

He traveled to Salt Lake City where he was given a tour of Temple Square, the Church Office Building and Welfare Square.

"I was burning up inside and they were taking me through a cannery. I felt I wasn't getting anywhere. I wanted to see the prophet."

President McKay was not well, so it was impractical for him to visit with Mr. Moelling.

He did visit with Elder LeGrand Richards of the Council of Twelve who has written the book, "Israel, Do You Know?"

He met a special missionary who has been set apart to work with the Jews. It was an usual meeting and this had an effect on Moelling.

Still he didn't have the testimony he wanted. He sent his wife home and continued the quest.

He attended April Conference and during one of the talks by the General Authorities, he felt something. He had been told and carefully instructed the night before by one of his newfound friends about prayer.

He had prayed as he was told to do and the following day in conference he felt something.

"I felt a love for Jesus Christ. I felt full of the spirit for hours."

Yet his quest wasn't over.

When he sent his wife, home, he had said his intentions were to go to Temple Square, feed the pigeons and read books until he was either convinced that Joseph Smith was a prophet or convinced he wasn't.

A few evenings later he was at the home of Rose Marie Reid when she received a call from the Provo Branch of the Deseret Industries.

"The person in charge of the devotional held each morning at the plant asked her to speak She said she couldn't but that I would be there," he related.

"On the appointed morning I was there to speak.

"I stood in front of 190 people and right in the middle, I told them I knew Joseph Smith was a prophet of God and that I wanted to be baptized!"

The next Saturday afternoon there was a large gathering at the

Tabernacle baptismal font. Jewish converts from throughout Salt Lake and Provo valleys were there and many others.

Al Moelling's quest had ended.