

NOTE TO READERS: The material in NEWS CLIPS is abstracted from mainly Israeli media sources relating to news and comments of interest to Evangelicals. Some of these sources are extremely hostile to mission work, to Messianic Jews and to the New Testament. The editor suggests that readers take this into consideration when reading NEWS CLIPS, nor does he vouch for the accuracy of the reports abstracted herein.

"THE MISSION"

HARISH: "CALL THE POLICE": The police investigation in Tiberias of Mission heads was recently renewed following instructions by the Attorney General. This came in the wake of charges that the Galtronics company heads up the Mission in Israel and is out to convert Jews, especially new immigrants from the USSR. Complaints have been filed with the police by J. Hoffman and Y. Minran, director of the anti-mission society El-hai, in the framework of the law forbidding bribery to induce conversions.

This was the result of the "exposes" by ultra-orthodox journalists and pressure by former M.K. Rabbi Abramowitz, author of the anti-bribery mission law, who wrote to the Attorney General complaining about guidelines issued by the State Attorney at the time of the enactment of the law, which required approval by the State Attorney or Attorney General before a police investigation of complaints could be undertaken.

In his response, the present Attorney General Harish defended the above-mentioned guidelines on the grounds of the sensitivity of the issue. "Israel is a holy place for members of many religions and in its declaration of independence the State of Israel guarantees freedom of religion," he wrote. "The main purpose of the guidelines provided by the State Attorney was to guarantee freedom of religion on the one hand and to prohibit bribery for conversion on the other hand, and in consideration of these factors the Attorney General sees no reason for ordering the cancellation or alteration of these guidelines." The Attorney General concluded that, "if it is indeed known to you that missionaries are regularly violating this law, as you claim, then like any other citizen, you have the right to submit a complaint to the police. Meanwhile, the police have been instructed to continue their investigation of the complaints (in Tiberias) based on suspicions of violation of the aforesaid law."

What remains now is to hope that the police will indeed properly deal with the copious material now in their hands. (YATAID NE'EMAN 19.4.91)

On 25.4.91 the same paper published in full the letter of Rabbi Y.M. Abramowitz in his capacity as chairman of the ultra-orthodox worldwide Agudat Yisrael movement. In an article in the ultra-orthodox organ of Agudat Yisrael in Israel (HAMODIYA 29.4.91) by the aforesaid Rabbi Abramowitz, "an urgent appeal to anti-mission activists" was made to "act with double force against missionary propaganda in Israel for conversion," and to enforce the anti-bribery law. The law should be amended "to prohibit absolutely missionary propaganda," he wrote.

SOVIET JEWS TARGETED: A resident of Migdal near Tiberias who asked to help new immigrants in Tiberias was removed from her post on orders from Tiberias mayor Yossi Peretz after she was suspected of missionary activity. She had approached the mayor with an enthusiastic offer to provide funds and other means to help in immigrant absorption. Later she was discovered to be engaged in missionary activity. (MAARIV 2 Apr)

The Yiddish-language paper "NAMAHANE HAHAREDI" ("The Ultra-orthodox Camp") published a lead article about hungry Soviet Jews who are being allegedly approached by "criminal" missionaries with food in order to win them to Christianity. The State of Israel must act to correct this situation so that they should not be prey to missionaries. (10 Apr 91)

The organ of the National Religious Party, HATSOFEH (4.4.91) summarized a report in a California Jewish publication about Soviet Jews in the U.S. targeted by missionaries and sects. It alleged that an estimated 12% of the "cult" population in America (numbered at five million) are Jewish, although Jews comprise only 2.6% of the total U.S. populace.

"THE MISSION WANTS TO BUY MY BOY FOR \$45,000": Under a gaudy front-cover magazine page with this heading, the weekly "OLAM HAZEH" (24.4.91) published a three-page story of the alleged enticement of Mary Ron Spiegel, a Canadian Jewish immigrant in Tiberias, by the "missionary sect" in Tiberias to convert her to Christianity and to have her children baptized; also to sell a baby she was carrying while unmarried to the "missionary couple Terry and Eric Morey" for \$45,000. The missionaries also allegedly provided her with food, clothes, money and much missionary persuasion from the time she was in the absorption centre. A polygraph test sponsored by the magazine was said to have proved her story to be the truth.

In response to the article, the P.R. man of the Gal-Group to which the Moreys belong stated that the charges were part of "a campaign of intimidation and threats by anti-zionist religious extremists...that the woman is a neighbour of Eric and Terry Morey, that it was Spiegel who offered the child for adoption, that no sum of money was ever discussed, that she has been instigating the neighbours against them." In its conclusion, the magazine "wishes to emphasize that the polygraph proves that Mary Ron Spiegel is speaking the truth."

ARAB MESSIANICS: In a two-page feature article in the Acre local weekly "ZAFON 1" headed "WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A COUNTERFEIT CHRISTIAN AND A REAL ONE?" Zuhair Andreous writes about "a tiny Christian group, a minority within a minority, in Kfar Samiya and Kfar Yasif called 'The Closed Door,' which sets itself up as true Christians while the others are counterfeit."

A photograph of Elias Gubran, age 47, shows him conducting a communion service. "The whole world with all its communities are in error, and only he is right. Go and argue with a person whose every second sentence is a quotation from the Old or New Testament!" the reporter comments. Gubran and his "sect" don't watch TV, their women don't cut their hair "because Jesus 2,000 years ago said that a woman who cuts her hair is a prostitute;" they don't listen to the radio or read a newspaper.

Meanwhile, the sect has gathered momentum in Kfar Samiya; out of 300 Christians, 60 are members of the Messianic sect. They also have "strange customs" like requiring Christians to be baptized again because infant baptism is "counterfeit", and they only marry among themselves. Their weddings are also different; no alcoholic beverages, no priests, no dances or songs; only religious music. They do not do mission work among Jews, only among Arabs; neither do they work among new immigrants who are non-Jews. "In conclusion, after spending three days with the group, we are dealing with a group of people living in a closed circle, almost entirely cut off from the outside world, not ascetics but living modestly, reading the Bible, with strange customs, without any kind of rituals, and only they, according to their testimony, are in position for the coming of the Messiah; and when he comes it will be the end of the world." (22.3.91)

In response to the article, Elias Guvran wrote in a letter published the following week (29.3.91): "We, the congregation of Messianic believers in Kfar Samiya and Kfar Yasif and in the rest of Israel, strongly protest the article published. It is a principle of our faith not to slander others, and the commandment to "love your neighbour as yourself" is sacred in our eyes. The expression "counterfeit" is not one we have used. We respect every community. We do not see ourselves as a sect and have no leader on earth. We do not lead secret lives, but are children of light who do not walk in darkness, and we are permitted to read a newspaper, listen to the radio and to watch TV. As to women's hair: In ancient times it was the custom to shave the hair of a prostitute, but it was not Jesus who spoke of this, but it is written: "It is a shame for a woman to shave her hair..." We are not extremists, and obey the laws of the State. Our nationality is Messianism, whose head is the prince of peace, the Messiah in heaven. Concerning income, the members of the congregation tithe for the needs of the congregation, which we also use for our assembly buildings.

"BARUCH MAZ WILL DO ROOT CANAL WORK FOR YOU: The local YEDIOT AHKRONOT weekly supplement "BAMAKOM" published a brief article under this heading with a photograph of Baruch Maoz of the Hagefen Publishing Company in Rishon LeZion (29.3.91), describing the dental service being provided to new immigrants. (SEE NEWSCLIPS No.13, pages 5 - 8) Vered Kaminsky reports that the clinic is in the process of being set up; three women dentists, including two Soviet Jewish immigrants, have signed a contract, and Maoz declares that "there will be no missionary work of any kind" at the clinic. City Council member Tal has stated, in reaction, "We will not permit an apostate to apostacize others. I hope that the mayor will act to close this door to a man who wants people to change their religion." The municipality spokesman, Izzy Canaan, responded: "The municipality will act within the framework of the law with respect to the opening of a dental clinic."

EMANUEL HOUSE: A sarcastic feature article by Ravit Pessi appeared in the Tel-Aviv weekly ROSH-1 (11 Apr 91) about the Messianic movement in the context of a worship meeting and a youth meeting at the Emanuel House congregation (Beit Emanuel) in Jaffa. Excerpts follow:

"When I phoned Beit Emanuel, the Messianic Jewish centre in Tel-Aviv, my 'hello' was answered with a 'haleluyah'. The Messianic Jews are a strange sect, calling themselves Jews even though they're baptized, pray in a church, wear crosses, believe in Jesus and other Christian motifs, and believe the Messiah has come in the form of Jesus Christ."

(A description of what appears to be a communion service at the Emanuel Church follows, with an invitation extended to attend a youth service at another date in the "Blue Room.") The youth service is said to have lasted four hours, and quotations from the prayers for immigrant believers from Russia and Ethiopia, for illness in family, for young people under temptation, for Messianic Jews under attack, are supplied, as well as a description of "ecstatic worshipers", followed by an interview with a 17-year-old Messianic Jewish girl.

In a sidebar the Messianic Jews are said to use the traditional Hebrew prayer book but to apply it to Jesus, and that they conclude their worship with the singing of "Hatikva," the Israeli national anthem. "They are not recognized in Israel as Jews, but like the Black Hebrews in Dimona, they don't receive work permits," the writer concludes. In another sidebar accompanying the article, Freda Danieli, "an expert in adolescence" explains the phenomenon of adolescent attraction to sects, but advises against "excessive pressure, or they are likely to find a 'moderate' replacement for the sect in the ultra-orthodox penitents movement!"

ETHIOPIAN JEWISH CHRISTIANS: "In addition to the 18,000 Jews waiting to emigrate to Israel in Addis Ababa, there are an additional 20,000 Jewish conversos who were forced to assimilate. These must also be brought to Israel, because they are flesh of our flesh and bone of our bones, but the Jewish Agency is preventing this on the grounds that they are Christians and cannot benefit from the Law of Return. It's inconceivable that Israel will race to help the Kurds but abandon 20,000 Jews to their fate in Ethiopia even if there is a halachic (Jewish religious) dispute over them."

This statement was made by Rahamim Elazar, Israel Secretary of the roof organization of Ethiopian Jews. He speaks about the "Feres Mora", Ethiopian Jews living among Christians who were pressured to convert to Christianity, and many of them have close relatives in Israel. About 5,000 have allegedly returned to traditional Judaism, and many are streaming into Addis Ababa hoping to reach Israel.

The Jewish Agency General-Director of Immigration, Arnon Mantover, states that "the problem of the converts to Christianity is long-known, and the Jewish Agency acts according to the terms of the Law of Return, as amended, but whoever has forsaken Judaism and converted to Christianity cannot be legally brought to Israel." The anthropologist Dr. Shalva Weil of the Hebrew University states that the Feres Mora are Jews who converted to Christianity about a century ago. "In my opinion, we can regard them within the framework of the Law of Return as Jews because their mothers and grandmothers were Jews in every sense," she states. (MAARIV 15.4.91)

Under the heading "The Unwanted Jews of Ethiopia", the weekly JERUSALEM REPORT published a full-page feature article on the Feres Mora by Micha Odenheime in Addis Ababa. Estimates of their numbers range from 14-50,000 or more, and in the first wave of Jewish immigration they were assisted by the Israeli authorities in Ethiopia, but since January 1991 this has stopped "in order to discourage more Feres Mora from leaving their villages," according to one Israeli official. The Chief Rabbinate in Israel seems more willing to take a lenient stand with regard to them than the Jewish Agency. Most of them have four Jewish

grandparents and were not formally baptized, and retained ties with their orthodox Jewish kinfolk. (25.4.91)

"CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE ON THE ASHDOD MUNICIPALITY AGENDA" Under this headline the Ashdod weekly (HASHAVUA B'ASHDOD) published another article about sanitation worker Mostart (Conrad) Kuhn, who is alleged to engage in missionary work. (SEE NEWSCLIPS No. 12, page 5) The ultra-orthodox parties in Ashdod were "furious" over Mostart's missionary labours in Ashdod. He was invited to an interview before the personnel manager of the Ashdod municipality, Eli Ben-hamu, himself a devout Jew, who was astonished to learn that Mostart "full of self-confidence" affirmed that he distributes New Testaments, and tries to persuade people to convert to Christianity, and that as long as he lives he would continue to do so. He was not deterred by the threat of dismissal should he persist in his missionary activities. Ben-Hamu has demanded his dismissal, but the question remains how to discharge a man with job tenure with the highest character and work references in his personal file. The writer, Yossi Asulin, concludes: "The fact that he promulgates Christian teaching is a challenge to the ultra-orthodox parties who will face a test, either to dismantle the coalition or to restrain themselves. What's sure to come is another episode."(29.3.91)

GALTRONICS, THE KAPLAN PRIZE AND "THE MISSION": The 37th annual Kaplan Prize awarded by the Israel Productivity Institute to individuals and groups from all sectors of the economy for outstanding achievement in their fields was marred by the attack of ultra-orthodox Deputy Minister of Labour and Welfare Menahem Porush on one of the recipients, the Galtronics plant of Tiberias. The firm has been sustaining constant attacks by anti-mission activists for alleged missionizing of Jewish employees and conspiring with Messianic Jews to "take over" Tiberias.

When it was the deputy minister's turn to greet the recipients of the award, he blasted the Galtronics firm before the astonished audience of 1,000. "I would not be at peace with my conscience after hearing from workers at the Galtronics firm today that the management has active missionaries who compel the workers to take part in missionary activity, and it is my duty to protest," he charged, while cries of protest went up from many who were present, and the words, "You're lying," were heard from the audience. Photos and writeups of the event were widely reported in the press, including plant director Danny Yahav's presentation at the ceremony and an interview (YEDIOT AKHRONOT 15.4.91) in which he affirmed that he was a Messianic Jew but denied that missionary activity was conducted at the plant.

The day after the award ceremony Rabbi Porush continued his attack on Galtronics, as reported in most of the Hebrew press (17.4.91), with an official statement to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry requesting that the company be deprived of its approved status, which entails tax rebates and state aid for investments, because of its alleged missionary activity. He concluded his letter to the minister with an appeal to "avoid giving economic support of the State to missionary activity." He also claimed that 235 families have joined the sect of the Messianic Jews in order to keep their jobs. In response, a company spokesman flatly denied the accusations of missionary activity at the plant or required prayer sessions for employees. MK Mordecai Virshubsky of the Citizens Rights Movement blasted Porush and termed his campaign against Galtronics "a combination of stupidity and racism,

which proves that the high-level positions heaped upon the ultra-orthodox have driven them out of their minds." The company is one of the world's leading manufacturers of portable telephones. The same day the company published a full-page advert in the Hebrew paper HAARETZ (17.4.91) with photos of the plant and a description of its activity, plans and earnings in the framework of the Kaplan award received for 1990, but made no mention of the ultra-orthodox attacks on it. The advert was headed: "GALTRONICS WILL DOUBLE ITS EXPORT QUANTITY IN 1991".

The Galilee weekly KAWL HAEMEK V'HAGALIL (17.4.91) published an article about former "Prisoner of Zion" Soviet Jewish activist Ida Nudel who had refused to meet with Tiberias Mayor Yossi Peretz during her stay in Tiberias recently because of his involvement with Galtronics. She was a guest of the anti-mission El-Hai society and was invited to help in their anti-mission campaign.

Several newspapers carried the response of the Galtronics spokesman inviting Deputy Minister Porush to visit the plant and see for himself that there is no mission work or compulsory employee prayer sessions, and that there are many Soviet and Ethiopian new immigrants as well as traditional Orthodox Jewish employees in the plant. The spokesman compared the situation to "the dark days" when Jews were persecuted for their faith. The Histadrut Labour paper DAVAR (26.4.91) carried a four-column feature article on the "Galtronics Torah" by Shimon Weiss, detailing the Galtronics story from its commencement in 1976 and its impressive development, followed by the campaign of ultra-orthodox politicians against it despite strong support from Israeli government sources reaching to the Prime Minister's office. Until recently, the company heads followed a policy of restraint, but now they "have taken off their gloves" and are striking back at their opponents through the courts and public relations.

The ultra-orthodox Hebrew daily YATAID NEEMAN reported that Attorney Aminadab Yavor of Tiberias, acting on behalf of his client, Rabbi Rafael Cohen, a Tiberias city councilor for the ultra-orthodox Sephardi party SHAS, had submitted a written demand to Tiberias Mayor Peretz to immediately halt work at a site recently purchased by Galtronics because of alleged "criminal" violations of the Mission Law prohibiting bribery to induce conversions to another religion.

A letter from David Coddington of Mevo Hanna to the JERUSALEM POST (29.4.91) protested "the narrow-minded stupidity of the power-hungry religious parties" in Israel. "I have had a long-time business relationship with the (Galtronics) company (and) became socially friendly with certain members of the management. Never at any time was any mention made of religion or any attempt made at religious coercion.... Today Ben-Gurion Airport (threatened by Porush with Sabbath closure) and Galtronics. Tomorrow - who knows? Maybe it will be your company, your university..." the writer concludes.

RETARDED CHILDREN: Deputy Minister Porush, in the presence of President Hayim Herzog at the ceremonial opening of the annual funding campaign on behalf of AKIM (for retarded children), announced that, despite the High Court petition filed by AKIM against him, he would not be deterred by it, and would continue to oppose placement of Jewish children in Christian "missionary" institutions. (HAMODIYA 16.4.91)

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CHRISTIANS & JEWS

JEWISH "CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT": Professor Jerzy Einhorn, director of a cancer clinic in Sweden, a Polish-born Jew and Holocaust survivor, has agreed to run for parliament on the Swedish Christian Democratic party. Asked whether a practicing Jew can represent a Christian party, Prof. Einhorn replies: "My rabbi advised me to go ahead." Besides, he notes, it isn't a religious Christian party. "The party platform speaks about preserving the Judeo-Christian ethic," he comments. While the party is very small in Sweden, and the Swedish Jewish population is small (15,000) with few Swedish Jews involved in politics, Einhorn says he was encouraged by Gentile friends to run for office. "It felt strange, but good - especially considering my experience with the (anti-Jewish) Polish Christian environment," he remarked. (JERUSALEM REPORT 18.4.91)

LIBERATION MESSAGE: "The message of Pesah (Passover) is a message of liberation for all people, for the Israeli people and the Palestinian people as well." Michael Sabah, first Arab Roman Catholic Patriarch of Jerusalem in an Easter Sunday message. (JLM REPORT 11 Apr 91)

CHRISTIAN TOURISM: The Israeli Tourism Ministry has honored pop singer Pat Boone and made him official spokesman in a drive to promote Christian tourism to Israel. Boone has been featured in Christian media ads endorsing visits to Israel. "I feel closer to the Lord in the Land He called home. You still feel His presence everywhere," he states. (JLM REPORT 11 Apr 91)

BAPTISTS FOR ALIYA: U.S. Christians will be urged to help hire chartered planes to aid Soviet Jews in Budapest waiting to make aliya (immigration) to Israel. Evangelist Sonny Holland of Clinton, Louisiana is cooperating with Ed McAteer in the campaign, because they are committed to the return of all Jews to their spiritual homeland, which would portend the second coming of Jesus. (JLM POST 21.4.91)

PEACE BREAKFAST: Ed McAteer, founder and president of the Religious Roundtable, a conservative coalition of top U.S. Christian business, political, military and religious leaders, plans to hold the Religious Roundtable's eleventh annual prayer breakfast to "pray for the peace of Jerusalem" next winter in the Holy City. It will be part of an eight-day event to promote Christian involvement with Israel and Soviet-Jewish immigrants. He plans a series of mass rallies in major U.S. cities to drum up support and to take advantage of the "strong support base among Evangelical Bible-believing Christians for Israel," he stated. (JERUSALEM POST 28.4.91)

FINNISH CHURCH & EXODUS GROUP: A Finnish evangelical congregation called Exodus Group is preparing for a mass Jewish exodus from the USSR, according to Hela Brand, travel co-ordinator for OPERATION PRAISE headed by Jerusalem-based U.S. evangelist Billy Watson. Meanwhile, the Jerusalem Bible Institute headed by Professor Ori Mazar has announced its intention to bring 5,000 Christians to Israel for a Thanksgiving celebration. (JERUSALEM POST 15.4.91)

RAPTUROUS CHRISTIANS: The Hebrew daily HA'ARETZ (9 Apr 91) reprinted in translation an article in NEWSWEEK by Kent Woodward about the impending apocalypse following the Gulf War, an imposed peace on Israel

and the rise of Anti-Christ, followed by the rapture of the true church and the return of Christ "the Avenger" to establish His millennial kingdom on earth.

CHRISTIANS FOR ISRAEL: In a book review of the German edition of Israeli diplomat Michael J. Pragai's 1985 work on Christian Zionism ("FAITH AND FULFILMENT"), writer Schalom Ben-Chorin of ISRAEL NACHRICHTEN (4.4.91) outlined the work and commended it to German readers with the hope it will enlighten those who know little about Christian friends of Israel from the 17th century onward.

HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR: "The army uniform symbolizes for me the victory of my mother who forcibly detached herself from her son and gave him to Christians to spare him from the executioner. (It) is a victory over anti-semitism that soaked Europe with Jewish blood." Major-General Yossi Peled, whose mother gave him to a Christian family to save him from death during the Holocaust, speaking at a farewell party on his retirement from the IDF. (JLM REPORT 18.4.91)

JEWISH-CHRISTIAN BRIDGE: A newly-issued disc entitled "The Sacred Bridge" is based on a study of the interaction of medieval Jewish and Christian music on one another by musicologist Eric Werner. A professional musical ensemble from Boston renders the music, with the original texts provided beside English and German translations. Available through HED ARTZI No. 2292-45513. (HAARETZ 23.4.91)

SUNDRIES

"RESURRECTION" : The visit of Nicaraguan President Doria Violeta to Washington was supposed to be a perfect triumphant procession, almost a religious miracle of Lazarus risen from the dead." (Yoav Karni, writing in HAARETZ from Washington 15.4.91)

"BORN-AGAIN ZIONIST" : Under this heading a JERUSALEM POST article described Israel TV's Haim Yavin, who "rediscovered his Zionist roots during a trip to Russia for filming a series on Soviet aliya." (15.4.91)

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