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"THE MISSION"

TIBERIAS: (THE GAL-GROUP) In a series of articles, mainly in the ultra-orthodox press, the Galtronics company, which produces cellular phone systems mainly for export and enjoys preferential treatment as a government-approved exporter, was blasted as a missionary front alongside related companies (Galadon, "Write Connection," Bezalel).

In a two-page feature article headed "APOSTASY WITH GOVERNMENT FUNDING", S. Kaufman of the ultra-orthodox weekly YATAID NE'EMAN (7 Sep 90) "exposed" the "Gal-Group Industries Ltd." prospectus and its Christian missionary aims: "to establish a witness in areas where there is none, and to support the building of the local church, to provide employment...allowing Jews, Arabs and Gentiles to work together in a Christian environment, to bless the nation of Israel by establishing companies that operate on biblical principles...which will result in a strengthened economy."

Kaufman also claims having heard that the Group obtains tax concessions in the U.S. by claiming a religious framework for its existence while concealing its economic base.

Reference is also made to the UCCI and its link to MEGAVOICE of "Galcom" through Dr. Alvin Martin and other missionaries, such as Ian Mitchell and Ralph Winter from Jerusalem. Some of the others "exposed" are Uri Marcus, Daniel Yahav, (a Reserve I.D.F. officer), Hanan Lukash, Paul Phelps, John Baker, the Marlows, Claude and Michel Azgura, and Eric Morey. Most of them are Messianic Jews who, according to the recent decision in the Beresford case, should not be considered Jews. There is heavy pressure exerted on behalf of the Gal Group, the writer alleges; former U.S. Ambassador Thomas Pickering (who is also one of the Christian Embassy leaders) intervened in their behalf, as have top U.S. politicians. Workers who are not Messianic Jews are under heavy pressure to "convert" or they are dismissed on flimsy grounds, or simply underpaid and harassed until they leave.

The man leading the battle against the Gal-Group Industries is Yossi Mimran who has founded a group called "El-hai" for promoting Jewish life. In cooperation with religious and secular elements in Tiberias, including Mayor Yossi Peretz, they are pressing for the cancellation of the preferential status the company enjoys and the closure of the plant. Mimran claims there are six sects in Tiberias: The Messianic Jews, the Mormons, the Jews for Jesus, the Witnesses, Syvanto, and the Scottish Church.

In a similar "exposé" published the same day in the ultra-orthodox weekly YOM HASHISHI (7 Sep) by B. Z. Eshel, a disgruntled former employee gave his version of Galtronics. Identified only by the initials Y. S., he described himself as an American Jew from Atlanta, Ga., with an electronic employment background, who refused to be persuaded to accept the Messianic belief. He too joined "El-hai" and Mimran. Several other disgruntled employees - Elyahu Nissim, Moshe Zabri, Moshe Gigi - who were dismissed four years ago are also active in fighting against Galtronics. Eshel claims that a U.S. Christian

disgusted with the Gal-Group missionary approach has participated in organized tours for prospective "partners" and passes on information to the anti-missionaries. Accompanying the article is a vignette of Mimran, an ex-fisherman and kibbutznik who has become "an anti-missionary "hunter" and a newly-religious Orthodox Jew.

Three additional articles were published in YATAID NE'EMAN (13-14-18/9/90) under the Kaufman by-line reporting "unprecedented anti-mission organization against the Gal-Group Industries and the Galtronics Company." The heads of neighborhood councils have signed a petition organized by Mimran calling for the closure of the Gal-Group operations in Tiberias. (13.9) A complaint has been filed with the Tiberias police by Mimran and Hoffman alleging violation by owners of Gal-tronics of the anti-mission law against enticement to change religion and the conversion of a minor (without parental consent). (17.9)

In a news story published in the national daily YEDIOT AKHRONOT (30.9.90), Hoffman, a 33-year-old new immigrant from the U.S., charged that he was dismissed from his job at Galtronics, "only because I refused to join the Messianic Jewish sect." Danny Yahav, a Messianic Jew and manager of Galtronics, denied that he had tried to influence Hoffman to join the sect. "He's very skilled, but unsuitable to our work standard," Yahav said. (BY-LINE: MOSHE TOV-EL)

"Exposé" of THE GALILEE EXPERIENCE, a multimedia show located in the Tiberias marina and sponsored by the Gal-Group in Tiberias, appeared in ultra-orthodox journals. Scheduled for six daily performances in English for tourists, followed at a later date with simultaneous Hebrew translation for locals, the anti-"Gal" "El-Hai" group headed by Mimran succeeded in delaying its opening. As a result, Mayor Peretz has ordered a delay in issuing a license to the enterprise. (30-31/8/90) During September (6-7-14) allegations were made that "Galilee Experience" was part of a coordinated U.S. Messianic Jewish strategy to infiltrate Israel. The battle continued throughout September and on the 27th it was reported that the licensing issue was discussed in the City Council, and it was decided to await a legal opinion from a neutral source before making a ruling.

A missionary school called Peniel has been opened in Tiberias with 45 pupils and is located in a building owned by Galtronics. The children will be taught the New Testament, Messianic Judaism and regular subjects. The information has been passed on to Mayor Peretz by Mimran of "El-Hai," who has ordered an investigation into the matter. (9.9.90 YATAID)

The local Galilee weekly "KAWL HA'EMEK V'HAGALIL" (15/6/90) reported that missionary booklets were being sent to Tiberian residents under the guise of teaching Hebrew. Entitled "LIVING WATERS," they contained the Gospel of Matthew, and displayed clearly Jewish symbols (menora, Star of David, tablets of covenant), with an offer of additional portions of the New Testament by writing to POB 204, Tiberias. The police commented that there was no legal violation involved nor reason to investigate the box number. (BY-LINE: Shahar Shahar)

SAFED: Ethiopian Jewish immigrants in Absorption Centers in Safed have been happy to receive Christian literature in Arabic, Amharic, Hebrew and English from missionary distributors. When employees of the centers found the literature in their rooms, they gathered it up and threw it into the dustbin. (VARIOUS PAPERS 13.8; 17.8; 28.8)

ARIEL: Some 12 families in Ariel are suspected of being involved in missionary activity in the category of Messianic Jews or Hebrew Christians, mostly immigrants from the U.S.A. Ariel rabbi Shalom Nagar reports that the rabbinate and the local Religious Council have been locating the families and receiving advice from "Yad L'Ahim" on how to deal with the problem within the framework of the law. The "Messianics" wear skullcaps and Jewish prayer shawls, and one of them was forcibly ejected from a local synagogue when he appeared with a prayer shawl which had Messianic symbols. (MAARIV 14.9.90)

HOLON-BAT YAM: Missionaries have been circulating in town distributing hundreds of colored tracts, especially among children, with Creation stories, description of Jewish festivals...and preaching that Jesus was Messiah. Among the literature was one called "MAYAYT L'AYT", which had a crossword puzzle which required expertise in the New Testament scriptures. Motti Mann of "Yad L'Ahim" stated that "in Holon there are known Messianics who are Christians in every sense, but they preach faith in Jesus under the guise of being Jews, and are financed by the Mission." He also claimed that the Messianic sects were beaming in on the new Soviet immigrants enticing them with material benefits. "The Russians don't understand a thing (about Messianics) and think that they're all Jews," he concluded. (HOLON-BAT YAM WEEKLY 13.7.90)

HAIFA: BETHESDA ASSEMBLY. The local weekly "KOL HAIFA" of YEDIOT AKHRONOT (6 Jul 90) described a Bible Study at the Bethesda Assembly (BY-LINE: Oren Ben-Amra) on a Wed. eve. at Allenby, 59, in Haifa. Some 50 believers (including many Russians) heard an exposition verse by verse from Zechariah in English, Hebrew and Russian, as well as hymn singing and prayer. Bezalel Steiglitz of "Yad L'Ahim" claims that missionaries from various sects operate among new immigrants and lure them by material benefits and friendship, exploiting their ignorance of Judaism and their loneliness. The writer noted that he could not contact leaders of Messianic congregations for their reactions. The members are mostly pleasant and good-natured "but all my attempts to get their reactions were in vain."

DISAPPOINTING TRACT: A tract in the form of a U.S. \$20 bill has been found which attracts attention by its likeness to U.S. currency. It has a missionary message on the reverse side written by the Living Faith World Outreach Church. (A photograph accompanied the article.) MODIYA 28.9.90

MISSIONARY WORK: THE JEWISH CHRONICLE (LONDON 20.7.90) published two letters, one from an anti-New Testament Jew, another from a Christian missionary to Jews: "To tell the Christians that the N.T. is false is to undermine their faith, and our rabbis tell us that Christian faith is acceptable for gentiles. Our rabbis have ignored the fact that this faith has been the cause of untold suffering for the Jewish people, and Christian theology teaches the worship of a man as God. We were commanded to be a light to the gentiles, but we have allowed the Christians to walk in the most awful darkness. Is not this neglect of our neighbors the true explanation of the Holocaust?" (Recommends proselytization of Christian world.) Russell Gallon, London. Responding to an article by Melvyn Rose about the divinity of Jesus, Mike Moore, Publications Secretary of Christian Witness to Israel in Kent, writes: Melvyn Rose (June 1) has found out that we believe Jesus is God and demands we come clean. I wonder who blew our cover. Probably one of those Christian missionaries.

PRISON CHAPLAIN: A former prison chaplain to U.S. Jewish prisoners who is now in Jerusalem, reported some 5,000 Jews in U.S. prisons, and some have become interested in reverting to Judaism. He mentioned a 28-year-old who saves his meager earnings to buy prayer books. "He used to be involved in Christianity because missionaries visit the prisons, and some are willing to join anything to pass the time. This man found Judaism."

MESSIANIC JEWS & OTHERS

COURT CASES: Dr. F.S. Perles, in a feature article in the German-language Israeli paper ISRAEL NACHRICHTEN (31.7.90) headed "DO MESSIANIC JEWS BELONG TO ANOTHER RELIGION?", summarized the rulings in the Beresford petition under the Law of Return and the Soroko-Ram appeal to the High Court in the matter of his transfer from an army unit because of his missionary activity. Both appeals were dismissed.

"CAN JEWS BE FOR JESUS?" Under this heading, the U.S. weekly news magazine, "NEWSWEEK", featured an article in its RELIGION page by Susan Greenberg and Theodore Stanger in Jerusalem above the "Messianic fight for recognition in Israel." The article contained interviews and descriptions of Joseph Shulam, the Netivya congregation, the Beresford ruling and comments by Moishe Rosen of JEWS FOR JESUS, as well as comments by Israeli and British anti-Messianic groups. (3 September, 90)

HAIFA: Two feature articles about Messianics appeared recently in local weeklies, one focusing on the Beit Elyahu congregation in Haifa, the second on an evangelistic campaign in the Haifa area. KO-BO HAIFA (15.6.90) featured Orna Mendelson's slightly skeptical (but not hostile) description of worship and activities at the Elias congregation, its pastor Helge Hoyland and his family, its multi-national congregation (Jewish, Arab, expatriate), a testimony of Elias member Shlomo Drori, and its Norwegian Lutheran links, first in Romania and later in Israel.

Epi Cohen (ZAFON 1, Akko; 14.9.90) reported a press conference called by Israeli Messianic Jews in advance of an evangelistic campaign in the Haifa area. Spokespersons were Baruch Maoz, (47) Shmuel Smadja, (27) and Shira (25) a member of Kibbutz Maayan Carmel. The article focused on Cohen's questions about their faith and his skeptical reactions also testimonies of how they came to faith from various backgrounds, and the hoped for return of Yeshua. Shmuel Smadja proposed that Cohen read the New Testament to find answers to all his questions: "Promise me that you will do that before we meet again," he challenged; "but I did not promise." **POLISH-JEWISH CATHOLIC:** A full-page feature article by Rahel Siloni (MAARIV-TEL-AVIV 14.9.90) told the story of Fr. Gregor Pavlovski of St. Peter's monastery in Jaffa. He had emigrated to Israel from Poland in 1970 as a priest to the Polish Catholic community in Israel, many of them intermarried with Polish Jews or the offspring of such intermarriages. A Holocaust survivor (in which his mother and two sisters perished), Fr. Pavlovski regards himself as "a child of the Holocaust; the fear has not left me," he confesses. Nevertheless, he identifies himself as a Jew, Israeli and Catholic priest for Polish people. In Israel he found one surviving brother in Haifa, an Orthodox Jew. Although they are on friendly terms, the brother cannot accept his conversion.

YAAKOV DAMKANI: Full-page advertisement, appeared in the Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv weeklies, "KAWL HA'IR" and HA'IR" (28.9.90) on the theme of the ram's horn, the Hebrew New Year and the Messiah, couched in the format of Questions and Answers by the Israeli evangelist, Yaakov Damkani, answered questions about the true meaning of Jesus's Hebrew name YESHUA (not "Yeshu"), the spiritual nature of being Jewish, the differences between the rabbinic and the Messianic approaches to faith, Scripture, prophecy, remission of sin, the remnant in Israel, and the spiritual significance of the crisis with Iraq. An address and phone number are provided for further inquiry.

AUSTRALIA: The Australian JEWISH NEWS (Melbourne, 13.3.90) carried a two-page special report on Messianic Jews by Walt Secord. The article focused on the Australian Messianic Jewish Alliance led by George Mansberger and Emmanuel Messianic Fellowship led by Moshe Elijah, both based in Bondi. It also noted "a group of Jews who converted to Catholicism in Victoria" and "a pocket of Messianic Jews in Melbourne." The report quotes the Messianic Jews directly as well as Jewish leaders opposing them in Oceania and elsewhere in the Diaspora; also the Israeli High Court ruling in the Beresford case, and the Israeli Consul General Zvi Gabay.

"FASHIONABLE" CROSSES: Several daily Hebrew papers reported a new fashion affecting Israeli Jewish high school students in the Rehovot area: young people wearing crosses and quoting the New Testament. While some denied any religious significance to the fashion, linking it to rock music and to hearing or reading quotations from the New Testament, some parents and teachers decried the fashion as "grave" and symptomatic of educational flaws. (DAVAR 27.9; HADASHOT 28.9; HATSOFEH 30.9)."

SECTS AND SUNDRIES

ZICRON YAAKOV: The German sect "Bethel" founded by Emma Berger has offered the local council in Zicron Yaakov land for the construction of housing for new immigrants. The proposal has embarrassed the council, and because of its "sensitivity" has been passed on to government authorities for resolution. The anti-mission organization "Yad L'Ahim" has charged that "this is but another attempt of this missionary sect to entrap Jewish families into its net by exploiting the housing stress of immigrants." (HATSOFEH/YATAID NE'EMAN 13.9.90) **NEW SECT NAME:** The Bajwan Sheri Rajnish sect has adopted a new name - "Osher" (Hebrew for happiness), a Yad L'Ahim spokesman claimed, but they are the same group operating in Tel-Aviv that once operated communes in Jerusalem since the 1970s. (HAMODIYA 26.9.90)

THE BIBLE AS THE WORD: Isaac E. Mozeson in his book "The Word: The Dictionary that reveals the Hebrew source of English and other languages" theorizes that the Hebrew Bible is the source of all words, and lists some 22,000 words that allegedly derive from Hebrew (t'rufa/therapy; nafal/fall; shakal/scale). IN JERUSALEM 10 Aug 90.

FIJI CHRISTIANS: Despite their conversion to Christianity some 150 years ago, Fiji Methodists still cling to deep-seated beliefs in the super-natural with respect to forests and trees, reports Michael Sofer of Tel-Aviv University, an economic geographer. (IN JERUSALEM 17.8.90)

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