

"THE MISSION"

"DANGEROUS CATHOLIC SECT": Rabbi Shalom Bar Lipschitz, one of the original activists of the anti-mission YAD L'AHIM, in an interview in the ultra-orthodox weekly EREV SHABBAT (9.2.90) described the founding of the group in 1949 in response to secularist influences on ultra-orthodox Yemenite Jews in the new immigrant camps. The children were spirited off to religious institutions to prevent secularization. It was a "rescue" operation from secularists. This led to the anti-mission campaign because of the alleged ignorance of Eastern Jews about Christian missionaries. The most dangerous Christian sects are the Messianic Jews ("a Catholic sect of the most dangerous type") and the Jehovah Witnesses, who work chiefly to bring other Jews into apostasy. The Christian Embassy also has ties with missionaries. The annual budget of YAD L'AHIM is \$1.5 million, and with it they manage 13 community centres for "educational and religious strengthening" in addition to the war against the Mission.

CARMIEL: The Rabbi of Carmiel, Abraham Margalit, has warned against increased missionary activity on the part of JEWS FOR JESUS sectarians, chiefly among new immigrants from the USSR, and called upon citizens to report to him on such activity. (MAARIV 1.3; HAMODIYA 2.3)

PARLIAMENTARY QUERIES: Religious Affairs Minister Zebulun Hammer, in response to queries about alleged missionary activity in Jerusalem (near Jaffa Gate) and Haifa (the Carmelite centre), replied that, "within the framework of existing legislation, nothing can be done to stop missionary activity which is connected to the Church." Missionary activity involving bribery and deception relating to "specific and concrete" acts in violation of existing legislation should be documented and sent to his office. The information now available to his office is "fragmentary." (YATAID NE'EMAN 18.1.90)

J.F.J. VS. U.S. AGUDAS YISRAEL: "JEWS FOR JESUS" in the U.S. has filed suit against the ultra-orthodox AGUDAS YISRAEL U.S. branch in a Federal court on the grounds that the ultra-orthodox group pressured hotel owners to cancel a JFJ conference scheduled for the hotel. (SHEARIM 15.11.89)

THE MESSIANIC JEWS

THE BERESFORD CASE: Reports on the ruling of the Israeli High Court against the Beresfords, Messianic Jews seeking to settle in Israel under the Law of Return, were reported in major newspapers, such as the NEW YORK TIMES, WASHINGTON TIMES, as well as in Jewish community papers in the Diaspora. In a letter from Tunbridge Wells, Kent, to the JERUSALEM POST, Paul Ogle, "a gentile who loves Israel," responds "with dismay" to the ruling. "No court can legislate away a person's identity," he concludes; "surely this cannot be the end of the issue." (30.1.90)

TIBERIAS: A solution has been found to the education problems of the

children of the Messianic Jew of Tiberias, Shaul Zualla. A former yeshiva student, Zualla is the father of eight children who were removed from the national school system in violation of the compulsory education law. The case was heard in the local court which ruled that the children could study by correspondence the curriculum of the Jerusalem Anglican School, which is recognized by the Ministry of Education as an accredited school. Zualla will serve as teacher for six of the children of school age. "As long as the children comply with the law, we have no interest in harassing the family because of their faith," the director of the Tiberias Board of Education, Mordecai Luz, told the local press. Zualla also expressed satisfaction with the new arrangement. (YEDIOT HAGALIL 2.2.90)

THE MEDIA & THE MESSIANICS: In reaction to identical full-page articles in three Hebrew dailies (HAARETZ/HADASHOT 16.2; DAVAR 23.2) by the "Institute for Researching the Eternal People" (MACHON LE'HAYKER AM OLAM) under the heading "A DEFENCE OF FREEDOM AND THE DIGNITY OF MAN: WHAT IS THE MESSIANIC FAITH?" Orthodox newspapers (HAMODIYA 23.2, 25.2; HATSOFEH 27.2) denounced the access provided to the media to missionary propaganda and reported "widespread anger" among readers of the papers. The article itself was signed by the Chairman of the Institute, Klaus Moshe Pulz and his assistant chairman, Dr. Joseph Alcahai, Attorney. It sought to answer the question of "Who are we?" in terms of its religious credo, and also related to the Beresford decision which ruled that Messianic Jews are not Jews (for purposes of the LAW OF RETURN), and referred to the harassment of Messianic Jews by the Orthodox. The article also related at length to the prophetic significance of the return of the Jews to the Land of Israel, the opposition of the nations, including apostate churches, and calls for repentance by Israel and acceptance of Yeshua as Israel's Messiah. Readers are also offered a free Bible and a book entitled "THE DESTINY AND FUTURE OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL."

#### CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

HOSPITAL VOLUNTEERS: Six young Christian volunteers from Finland and Sweden are spending six months preparing the unoccupied top storey of Misgav Ladach Hospital for patients because "God told us to help the Jews, who have given the world so much spiritual good we wanted to make a practical gift to them." When completed, it will serve as an expanded premature-infant unit and an intensive-care and recovery unit for gynecological and obstetric patients. (IN JERUSALEM, 26.1.90)

"MISSION TO MANKIND": In a letter to the J'LM POST published in the Overseas Edition, Rabbi Daniel Tropper, Founder and Director of The Geshar ("Bridge") Movement, described a meeting in Vevey, Switzerland involving two Jews and two Christians who discussed for three hours "the mystery of Israel, a nation reborn." He asks: "If we Jews take our mission to mankind seriously... as bearers of a universal message, have we today any tool other than the Jewish State?"

JESUS AND THE ARTS: M.K. Rabbi Yosef Azran (SHAS) was a minority of one in the Knesset Education Committee which dealt with his demand to exclude from public school all art studies with "Christian motives" like the crucifixion of Jesus and the Holy Trinity. The "concentration" of

Christian material "can harm Jewish youth," he charged. High school students present at the hearing stated that, until the subject was raised, they were not aware they were "studying Christianity." (HADASHOT 27.2) In an interview the rabbi gave to YEDIOT AKHRONOT, he denied that he was "anti-culture," and claimed he had visited the Louvre in Paris and even read the New Testament on the principle of "Know your enemy," but the children were not equipped to do so. "Let them study the vessels of the tabernacle, or about the veil in the Holy Temple," he remarked. (28.2.90)

YMCA-WEST JERUSALEM: Rev. Alfred Sawyer, rector of Christ Church in Jerusalem, the oldest Protestant church in the Middle East, has been elected chairman of the board of directors of the Jerusalem International YMCA. He has been pastor since 1983. (CHRISTIAN LIFE IN ISRAEL No. 31 WINTER 89/90)

Rev. David Johnson is the new director of the Lutheran World Federation - World Service program in Jordan and the West Bank, succeeding Dr. Otto Walther. He will have responsibility for the entire Lutheran World Service program in this area, including Augusta Victoria hospital, a vocational training school, village health clinics and scholarship and loan funds. (C.L.I.I. No. 31)

BIBLE LAND: 31 Christian clergy and community workers from French-speaking Africa and Haiti attended an intensive eight-week seminar in Israel last summer under the heading of MODERN AGRICULTURE & INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE LAND OF THE BIBLE. Among the topics were Bible Land geography, Jewish history, Christianity, arid zone farming, irrigation and community development, and meetings with local Christian communities. In 1990 a similar seminar is scheduled for English speakers. (CLII 31)

"BRIDGES FOR PEACE": In a full-page interview in C.L.I.I. (No. 31), Clarence Wagner, executive director of BRIDGES FOR PEACE, founded in 1976 as an international association of Evangelical Christians for improving relations between Christians and Jews, discussed the complexities of the Middle East situation, especially since the intifada became a major news topic, and their role in interpreting the situation without reflecting "any particular Israeli political party position (but) both sides of the issue."

#### SUNDRIES

FIRST TEMPLE RESEARCH: A week-long seminar dealing with 150 years of research of the first Temple period (beginning with the arrival of U.S. Protestant scholar, Prof. Edward Robinson, founder of modern scientific Biblical geography), was recently held in Jerusalem. One question dealt with the mystery of the burial of some 100-200 thousand Judeans. "We've found only 120 tombs," Archaeology Prof. David Ussishkin observed. "Where are all the others?" he asked. (CLII 31)

THREATENED CLOSURE OF TEL-AVIV J.W. CHAPEL: A building used by the sect "JEHOVAH WITNESSES" is threatened with closure for allegedly being used as a house of worship in an area designated as a pedestrian

mall. The sectarians are determined to fight the decision of one of the municipal committees dealing with the zoning issue. They charge that pressures by ultra-orthodox zealots, who have been harassing them for years, were behind the conflict. Meanwhile, a municipal spokesperson has denied that a final decision has been made. (LA'INYAN, TELAVIV 29.12.89)

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