

Z. Goltzman Expansion
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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 below.

"THE MISSION"

LET JEWS: Several ultra-orthodox items appeared (18 to 22 July '91) announcing "EXTENSIVE INFORMATION CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE MISSION AMONG U.S.S.R. JEWS." The Anti-Mission Society "Yad L'AHIM" has published literature in the Russian language for new immigrants warning the immigrants about Mission activity, describing their aims, who are their emissaries, and the short-term and long-term dangers of the Mission. The pamphlets, which come in a very attractive format, also explain the essence of Judaism and give elementary information about it, and conclude with a warm appeal under the heading "HEAR, O ISRAEL: You, in whose hands is a heritage of generations which was forcibly cut off, have an historic opportunity to return to this heritage that the Communists amputated from you; this is the spiritual strength of the Jewish people throughout the generations, and it is also your personal strength."

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Thousands of these pamphlets were sent this week to the U.S.S.R. and thousands more will be distributed among concentrations of new immigrants in Israel. There will also be public meetings for the immigrants in which the voice of the Jewish people in its persistent and stubborn warfare against the uprooters of God's covenant will be heard. There will also be announcements in the Russian language newspapers, among which regular missionary notices are being published (HAMODIYA, YATAID NEEMAN, SHEARIM).

FINNISH CHRISTIAN DORMS: The orthodox press reports (15 - 19 August '91) that "Jewish youth are being sent to Christian dormitories in Finland". Rabbi Lifshitz, Chairman of Yad L'Achim, recently returned on a 20-day visit to the U.S.S.R. where two offices of his organization were opened in Moscow and in Leningrad and are staffed by local activists, who will be engaged in Torah activities among Soviet Jews, but their main aim is to battle missionary activity in the U.S.S.R. As a result of talks with rabbis and senior government officials, he learned that missionaries have been organizing Jewish children and youth, sending them to Christian dormitories in Finland, while their parents think that these are Jewish institutions which will provide them with professional academic certificates. At the same time contact is being made with Finnish rabbis so that they will be vigilant in preventing the conversion of Jewish children who arrived from the U.S.S.R.

"BUSES FOR SOVIET JEWS!" The ultra-orthodox weekly EREV SHABBAT (9 Aug. '91) headlined a news item about the alleged cooperation between the Jewish Agency and the Mission. Correspondent R. Pe'eri writes in an "exclusive" story that the Jewish Agency has been cooperating with missionary elements in bringing new immigrants to Israel from the U.S.S.R. The Jewish Agency itself stated that it knows of no missionary intent of the transport company with which it is in contact. Christian sources in Britain state that the Jewish Agency signed a

"SOULS ON TARGET": The ultra-orthodox weekly (SHEARIM 5.8.91) published a full-length feature article under this heading, claiming that some 5,000 missionaries are active today in Israel. Several instances are given, involving mainly Baptist Christians, such as Reverend James Smith in Ashkelon, a young Puerto Rican Christian by name of Ricardo and his wife Daniella (who have suddenly "disappeared from town") and the Baptist village. A fuel station employee at the entrance to the Baptist Village near Petach Tikva is quoted: "Every Shabbat a mass of Israelis come here. If you ask them, they tell you that they are coming for a picnic in the park at the centre of the village, but in truth they are taking part in various strange prayers and masses." An excerpt from the magazine CHARISMA AND CHRISTIAN LIFE (June '89) is also published about Messianic Jews or Jewish Believers living in Israel, citing Dolan that "an estimated 3,000 live in the country."

THE TEL-AVIV WEEKLY "HA'IR" (23.8.91) published a half-page article by Yigal Even-Or, which was based in part on YAD L'ACHIM sources as well as interviews with Yaacov Dankani, age 39, the head of the Mission organization in Israel. Tel-Aviv Chief Rabbi Lau has stated: "I have no information whatever testifying to intensified missionary activity in Tel-Aviv, and neither have I given my blessing to anti-mission activities."

The Messianic Jewish organization has 30 congregations throughout Israel, numbering several thousand, some of whom keep their faith a secret from members of their family. When Dankani was interviewed, he expressed disdain for the YAD L'ACHIM accusations, "which prove their ignorance about Messianic Jews." Asked whether they are Jews or Christians, he replied: "Christianity distorted Jesus, while Judaism distorted Moses. Jesus was Jewish and we follow his way; it is possible to say that we exist for 2,000 years."

Moshe Friedman, YAD L'ACHIM spokesman responds: "The Messianic Jews are dangerous precisely because they represent themselves as Jews, whereas they are fully Christian; they are not satisfied with literature distributions but they know how to sell themselves and to trap weak people who are in financial distress and the like." The Anti-Mission Society claims that they approach homeless families with enticements, although in Tel-Aviv they know of no instance where the missionaries have succeeded; in Jerusalem they did succeed with two families. To these charges Dankani replies: "We offer no financial benefits; this is what they, the orthodox Jews are doing, taking money from the State and giving it to those who convert to ultra-orthodoxy, but we work only on the basis of persuasion."

ULTRA-ORTHODOX MISSIONARIES: The Jerusalem weekly KOL HA'IR (12 July '91) in a news article by Nurit Vargeft, charged that over a sixth of the Absorption Ministry budget for spiritual and social absorption (NIS 266,000) was invested during the past year in seminars to lead new immigrants into ultra-orthodoxy, and 1,000 new immigrants took part in these seminars. This was revealed by the replies of the Minister of Absorption to the parliamentary queries of Haim Oron and Yair Sabban. Many of the immigrants were encouraged to attend seminars in hotels with full accommodations.

THE REFORM JEWS AND THE MISSION: The Petah Tikva weekly (24.5.91) writes: The Movement for Progressive Judaism (the Reform) on one side and the Mission on the other are making efforts to enlarge their ranks among Petah Tikva residents. The weekly paper SHACHAK interviewed

Dr. Yaacov Weber, recently elected reform leader in Petach Tikva, who offered the following gems: "Sabbath travel need not be based on a prohibition but on what is the purpose of such travel; if it is for purpose of pleasure it should be permitted. We place more emphasis on candle lighting and aesthetics; therefore we favor instrumental music on the Sabbath. The principle of female defilement is not acceptable with us; we just don't believe in it. Most women feel humiliated when they are immersed in the mikva." Their rabbi is a woman graduate of Hebrew Union College with an M.A. in Judaism and History. The interview concludes with the Reform leader stating that the City Council "has promised to give us land for building a synagogue." Meanwhile, another local paper published an offer free of charge by a messianic group (Keren Ahva Meshihit) of the book "The Messiah in the Hebrew Bible in the Light of the Writings of the Sages of Israel."

CONVERSION THREATS: The Upper Nazareth weekly YEDIOT HAGALIL (14.6.91) headlined a story about a family of five threatening to convert to Christianity because of housing problems. Prosper and Lilian Lugassi, parents of three children, removed their furnishings into a public shelter near the building from which they had to remove because of rental increase. The husband has been unemployed for six months now and is no longer entitled to unemployment insurance. "We have no other way to get out of this trouble except to convert to Christianity. Look how they care for new Russian immigrants, even those without children, while I don't even have bread for the children. The government allows landlords to run riot with exaggerated rentals uncontrolled. Let the immigrants come, but not on our account. The Municipality responds: "The painful problem of the Lugassi family is known to us and we are doing everything we can to assist them to find a solution to their housing problem."

AL HAMISEMAR (4 Aug.91) carried a similar story about a hunger strike of seven homeless families living in the Jessa Cohen neighborhood in Holon. One of them claimed that two missionaries visited them trying "to fish in troubled waters; we have no choice but to convert to Christianity." The strikers are not willing to move to the caravans that have been offered them because they claim they are not suitable for family life. Municipal spokesman David Golan states that it is not a municipal problem, but it was the Housing Ministry which brought in these caravans.

LAUNDRY MISSION IN JERUSALEM: The weekly JERUSALEM (12 Jul 91) reported on "the pretty laundry of Jesus", with photos accompanying revealing a placard in the show window "HOUSE OF PRAYER" and a rack full of Christian literature. It is operated by Brother David, an English-speaking person representing the "born-again Christians" who believe that Jesus is the true Messiah, accept the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, and deny the Holy Trinity. Although there is a large sign stating it is the "City Laundry," actually there are no laundry machines in the place, but lots of Jewish and Christian holy books, statuettes, pictures and other religious objects. Laundry is only collected there and returned clean the following day. The shop owner, Shlomo Amit, said that the original lessee operated a laundry but left the country and turned it over to Brother David. "My sole interest is that the rent be paid." Two ultra-orthodox weeklies (YATAID NE'EMAN & EREV SHABAT - 16-19 Jul 91) denounced the "dirty laundry of the Mission" in downtown Jerusalem, and quoted YAD L'AHIM spokesman Moshe Friedman who called it "a scandal, and we demand that the place be closed at once, since they have no license to sell books and the whole

enterprise is illegal."

ARIEL: The ultra-orthodox daily HAMODIYA (5 July 91) published a 1-1/2 page feature article about "THE MISSION (WHICH) CONTINUES TO STRIKE AT ARIEL," including a lurid account of a young Jew (initial D.) whose mother was ensnared by missionary cultists, destroying family unity. Several missionaries are named: Ortiz, Kendall, Barbara & Grant Livingstone, and others, who frighten the local Jews with threats of hell. A campaign has been mounted by the rabbinate and anti-missionaries to warn the people about the mission menace. The public library is monitored, since the discovery of a "defiled" New Testament was found in the book racks, presumably placed by the missionaries.

POSTAL MISSION: The postal authorities do not intend to comply with the Habad (hassidic sect) demand to prevent distribution of suspected missionary material. This was in response to the leaders of the Habad in the north of Israel who sharply protested that a public body like the postal authorities contributes to "missionary soul hunting", especially among Soviet Jews. The postal authorities state that their responsibility is only the technical transmission of mail and they have no legal right to detain or prevent the delivery of any mail (Nazareth Elite Weekly 21.6.91).

In August '91 there were seven additional news items about missionary mail, with hundreds of book arriving daily in Israel. "TWO MEN FROM EDEN," a 70-page book, written in Hebrew, without indication of printer or author, was apparently sent to addresses listed in telephone directories of the larger Israeli cities (DAVAR 9 Aug. '91). The press also noted that police sappers in Tel Aviv were exhausted by calls from citizens receiving suspicious envelopes from the Dominican Republic. Hundreds of the addressees called police sappers who eventually discovered the suspicious objects were Hebrew books entitled "TWO MEN FROM EDEN," the senders being members of a missionary sect. Since there is no criminal offense involved, the police are not investigating the matter, but for safety sake the sappers respond to every call (MAARIV 11 Aug. '91). The Hebrew daily (YEDIOT AHRONOT) on the same date, noted that the last page contains an English address for replies in Dallas Texas, POB 764117. Meanwhile, the ultra-orthodox press reported attempts to prevent the distribution of the material and are pressuring the Justice Department to "uproot this shameful phenomenon." The YAD L'ACHIM organization intend to gather up all the booklets at hand in order to convey them to the Justice Department and expedite the law prohibiting distribution of hostile propaganda. They appealed to persons receiving this type of literature to bring them to their offices in Israel. The ultra-orthodox community is pressuring their Knesset representatives to act immediately to pass a law to forbid missionary mail distribution.

GALTRONICS: Several articles on the company appeared in the local and national press concerning the ultra-orthodox campaign against the company. Of particular interest was the retraction by a former employee, Ilan Alkobi, of charges he had once made that the company engaged in mission activity; also present was a politician, Avraham Kugel, who warned that defamation of the company would discourage investors from investing in Tiberias. Kugel insisted that the charges against the company were without factual basis, and that persons like Yossi Mimran, who are leading the campaign against the company, lack credibility. (Upper Nazareth Weekly 24.5.91). The weekly KOL HAIFA (31.5.91) noted in a news brief that the company had received the

Kaplan Prize for their distinctive communication products on an international scale; however, they are followers of the belief in Jesus as the Messiah and they are called Messianic Jews, which has stirred the Orthodox circles no end, ever suspicious of missionary activity. It appears the religious have not apparently heard the sentence, "Let a man live by his faith"; in the matter of economic productivity, that really doesn't interest them (the orthodox)."

The Upper Nazareth Weekly (7 Jun 91) reported on a T.V. feature about Galtronics and ultra-orthodox opposition, with a photograph of T.V. interviewer Yigal Goren speaking to Rabbi Rafael Cohen, who stated: "We see the war against missionaries as a sacred ministry." The weekly HAOLAM HAZEH (7 Aug 91) published a one-page feature article "exposing" Yigal Goren and his alleged "cover up" of Galtronics, which was related to other private interests involving a building contractor in Tiberias. One of the sources for the "exposure" was Yossi Mimran, the zealous anti-missionist activist in Tiberias.

The T.V. commentator of HAARETZ (16.6.91), Hedda Boshes, in her column referred to the broadcast in connection with the ultra-orthodox leader, Rabbi Yitzhak Peretz. "In Tiberias they are pursuing those Jews whom they regard as apostates who act as missionaries and compete with the (secular) kibbutzim. We heard contradictory testimonies from workers and managers of Galtronics, the managers being Messianic Jews. It is hard to take a stand in the matter; but as far as is known, Christians are also permitted to live and work in Israel! When Jews are persecuted in other countries, we come out with shattering outcries about anti-semitism; the ultra orthodox fanatics, however, know no bounds, for they are privileged persons and they run riot, with no-one daring to restrain them, even the Prime Minister whose silence thunders.

The same telecast was reviewed by Shlomo Salomon of Gesher in the left-wing daily AL HAMISHMAR (3 Jul 91): "On the telecast of 14.6.91 most of the interviewees testified that the accusations against the Jewish followers of Yeshua in Tiberias of missionary activity are absolutely false. As if to reinforce their claims, a recent news report indicates that the "success" of all Christian missionary activity in Israel amounts to two converts per year. Why, therefore, are our holy vessels so frightened of the Mission more than ever? I need not recall the holy water sold by the Saint of Netivot (who has sat in jail). It is enough to hear the hateful absurdities of that gallant who dared to slander one of the remnants of beautiful Israel, the kibbutzim."

GALILEE EXPERIENCE: A series of news items and feature articles appeared in the media following the ruling of the High Court that the Tiberias Municipality must issue a license to the Messianic Jews operating the multi-media "Galilee Experience", which describes the history of the Galilee during 5,000 years. The daily HAARETZ (24.7.91) published a feature article headlined "In the Shadow of Jesus" relating the events which lead to the appeal to the Court. Zvi Harel, the feature writer, reported that Likud Tiberias Mayor Yosef Peretz was at first delighted with the project and expressed this in writing to the project initiators. In August 1990 they completed preparations for the project, involving theatre, music, film and other artistic devices. When they applied for a business license, they discovered that the initial municipal enthusiasm had been diverted by ultra-orthodox pressures into a series of delaying tactics. It was some time before the "cat was let out of the bag" in Court, and the attorney representing them, Amnon Goldenberg, produced a copy of the minutes of a Municipal Council meeting which proved that all the formal arguments for delay were a subterfuge to combat alleged missionary connections of

the project initiators, even though testimony was produced that the multi-media event was not missionary in its aim but was directed at both Christian and non-Christian tourists and pilgrims.

The Court, which comprised Menachem Eilon and Shoshana Netanyahu, ordered the Tiberias Municipality to grant a permanent business license to "Galilee Experience; and to express their displeasure at the tactics of the Municipality, the judges obliged the municipality to cover all legal expenses totalling 30,000 Shekels.

In its business and finance section the JERUSALEM POST (2 Aug 91) published a half-page feature article by Jacob Wirtschafter headlined "GALILEE EXPERIENCE PROFITING BY PILGRIMS". The writer noted that the Court had re-asserted the principle of religious freedom, holding that the Tiberias City Council had no right to censor the project slide show for its emphasis on Jesus. With commitments from four companies pouring in, "Galilee Experience" looks to be well on its way to profitability. U.S. businessman and photographer Eric Morey, the man behind the project, arrived in Tiberias in May 1983. Eric is an Evangelical Christian, his wife Teri a self-described Messianic Jew. Morey had noticed that there was nothing aimed at Christian tourists in Tiberias, even though seven out of eleven Christian holy sites in Israel are within a 45-minute drive from the city, and conceived the project to meet the need. The opposition by ultra-orthodox zealots associated with the Shas Party proved counter-productive, inasmuch as Yair Webman, an independent member of the City Council, decided that "if these people don't like you, it's even more reason for me to go with the deal." The owner of a hotel, Webman resisted all pressures and pushed ahead for approval of the project. Since the court decision, the El-A1 tour department has put the show in its tour packages and Egged Tours and 18 other operators and guides have signed on as well. "The Court decision, the response of the tour operators, and of open-minded Israeli visitors, all say something positive about this country" says Morey.

The local weekly of Upper Nazareth (26.7.91) published a lengthy two-page feature article and photos of the "Galilee Experience" and Eric Morey, headed "1:0 for Jesus" by Yaacov Sharon. Morey says, among other things, that of the 36-minute multi-media show, 7 minutes relate to Jesus from a historical perspective, 5 minutes about Zionism, 3 minutes about the Mishna, 5 to 6 minutes about Abraham, Saul, and Elijah the Prophet. Following his Court victory, Eric stated: "I do not hate them (the Shas people and the anti-Mission activists). I pray for all Israel and for them as well. I think most orthodox Jews in Israel really want to serve God, but among them are people who use religion in order to steal and operate crookedly. They are a minority, but as always the minority is the noisiest."

In an interview that appeared in the Upper Nazareth Weekly on 26.7.91 in response to the above-mentioned interview with Eric Morey, Tiberias Deputy Mayor representing Shas, Zvika Cohen, warned that many new immigrants would now be estranged from Judaism because they would be attracted to the Mission because of financial distress. The ultra-orthodox weekly YOM HASHISHI (2.8.91) published a response to the Court ruling based on already published material and interviews with ultra-orthodox activist Mimran, and Morey, headed "A Difficult Experience", by writer A. Aviad. The article concludes that the campaign against the Gal-group has not ended, and police have been investigating charges that employees are being enticed into Christianity contrary to the law.

MESSIANIC JEWS/HEBREW CHRISTIANS/"CHRISTIANIZED" JEWS
ETHIOPIAN "CHRISTIANIZED" JEWS: Some 40 news clippings were collected

during July and August concerning the Falash Mura, the so-called "Christianized" Ethiopian Jews (also termed "Christianizers"). A summary of these reports follows by date: The Beersheva Weekly (31.5.91) featured an Ethiopian Jew who took part in "Operation Solomon", who is employed in the Welfare Department of the Beersheva Municipality, and was flown to Ethiopia for the airlift. He related "heart-rending scenes" involving Jews who had relatives in Israel but could not depart on the airlift because they had converted to Christianity. A Hadera weekly (31.5.91) quoted Rabbi David Chelouche, Chief Rabbi of Netanya, who stated that he had no doubts whatever about the Jewishness of the Falashas, including those who had converted. "A Jew who converts to Christianity remains a Jew. It is forbidden to leave these Jews in Ethiopia, except for those who converted and married Gentile wives; then there is a problem."

The "JEWISH ECHO" (7 Jun 91), an Anglo-Jewish Diaspora paper, carried two articles by Jerusalem-based correspondents Gil Sedan and Haim Shapiro on the "converts" in Ethiopia. Sedan's article quoted a senior American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee official in Addis Ababa, Kobi Fredman, opposing the transport to Israel of Ethiopian Jewish converts to Christianity, because it would be an endless task; nevertheless, if the Israeli Government decides to bring them to Israel, JDC will assist. Shapiro reported that the Israeli Chief Rabbinical Council will send a delegation to Ethiopia to bring back to Judaism the 3,000 Jewish converts now in Addis Ababa. Rabbi Joseph Adani of the Ethiopian Jewish community in Israel said he was happy with the decision.

A series of conflicting and inconclusive reports appeared in the daily press about handling this (convert) issue. The PM Office was reported to be delaying the departure of rabbis for Ethiopia to investigate the Jewishness of the "converts" while Uri Lubran, the Israeli diplomat most involved with "Operation Solomon", Mika Feldman and other officials of the Jewish Agency and the Absorption Ministry reportedly urged the PM not to admit the "converts" despite pressures from religious Jewish sources, especially Gush Emunim, to admit them (HADASHOT 9 Jul 91). Minister of Religious Affairs Avner Shiki explained that the delegation of rabbis and rabbinical court judges due to leave for Ethiopia to examine "Christianized" Ethiopian Jews has not set a date for departure because of the dangerous situation there. He told Haim Shapiro of the JERUSALEM POST (10 Jul 91) that the Chief Rabbis wanted to help this community. The ultra-orthodox weekly EREV SHABBAT (12 Jul 91) reported that Knesset Member Hanan Porat is conducting a public campaign to expedite the immigration of 2600 Ethiopian "converts" who are in dire straits, and are ready to be reclaimed for Judaism.

MAARIV (16.7.91) reported that representatives of the Jewish Agency in Ethiopia recently visited the Gondar region for a first-time meeting with village officials where thousands of the Falash Mura are living. They regard themselves as Jews, and are aware (through contacts with relatives in Israel) of the debate over their immigration; and one of the aims of the discussion was to persuade them not to abandon their villages and come to Addis before a positive decision was made about their future. The Labor daily DAVAR (17.7.91) reported that Labor M.K. Yaacov Tsur had written to the Prime Minister and asked him to implement the decision about sending a rabbinical delegation to Ethiopia to deal with the "converts". He also said humanitarian aid should be provided at once because of their difficult situation. The daily YEDIOT ACHRONOT (18.7.91) also reported that the "converts" were in a desperate situation, "hungry and frightened by the possibility that they would be evacuated from Addis Ababa and sent to the Gondar

region," according to Knesset Member Michael Kleiner, who also appealed to the Prime Minister to act swiftly to bring them to Israel. His sources of information were from American organizations who are trying to help them, such as the JDC. (A similar report appeared in DAVAR on 21.7.91).

Natan Roi of DAVAR (29.7.91) cited a detailed memorandum written by Joel Ben-Nun of Gush Emunim who attacked the strict approach to Ethiopian Jews which, "if it had been applied to Russian Jewry, there would have been almost no immigration from there." He charged that there was an odour of racism in the Israeli policy governing Ethiopian Jews. He claimed that about 3,000 of them were in Addis Ababa and another 10,000 in 23 villages; and tales of 200-500,000 "Christianizers" were pure fantasy. Ben-Nun also charged that the label "Christianizers" was stuck on them by Jewish Agency officials and the media. For most of them this is a lie and wrong. A more accurate definition would be that they were secular or traditional; but since Ethiopian Jews do not have such Western concepts, their equivalents are called "converts" (or apostates) even if they sin by eating unkosher meat.

The JERUSALEM POST (2 Aug 91) published a feature article by Haim Shapiro headlined "Never Forced to Convert". The groups known as Falash Mura date from the mid-19th century when Protestant missionaries from Europe became active in North-Ethiopia where many Jews lived. This mission activity, and publicity about it, resulted in revived interest by European Jews in their Ethiopian brethren. Rabbi Menahem Waldman, an expert on Ethiopian Jews, claims they were always converted for economic reasons and never forced to convert, so they cannot be called Marranos. He also confirmed the reports that Ethiopian Jews regarded anyone who did not act according to their traditions as a convert, whether or not they formally accepted Christianity. He admitted that there were some who had been genuine converts and even worked as missionaries. An official delegation to Ethiopia should investigate whether there is a real desire to return to Judaism.

The ultra-orthodox weekly EREV SHABBAT (2 Aug 91) had a news item and a feature article about the issue, the latter citing the memorandum of Yosef Bin-Nun mentioned above. The daily DAVAR (6 Aug 91) reported that the Chief Rabbinical Council is divided in its opinion about returning the "converts," with the Ashkenazi Rabbi Shapiro taking a strict view while the Sephardi Rabbi Eliahu inclined to be lenient and to regard them as Marranos. The National Religious Party Organ HATZOFEH (16.8.91) reported pressures exerted by U.S. and Canadian Reform rabbis on the Jewish Agency to bring the "converts" to Israel, as well as pressures from the spiritual leaders of Ethiopian Jews in Israel and within the National Religious Party to bring them all in.

The daily MAARIV (18.8.91) reported the desperate pleas of relatives of "converts" in Israel separated from kinfolk who were not permitted to join "Operation Solomon". Several daily papers reported in mid-August that within the next few weeks, the 2600 remaining Ethiopian Jews would arrive in Israel, but the problem of the "converts" had to be dealt with separately. Jewish Agency Director Simcha Dinitz stated that the "converts" issue could not be dealt with along with the general exodus of Ethiopian Jews.

A committee made up of representatives of the Jewish Agency, Interior Ministry, Religious Affairs Ministry, and Cabinet Secretary Rubinstein is scheduled to present its findings on the issue shortly. Meanwhile, the Chief Rabbinate has set up a Committee of Rabbis, rabbinical judges and traditional Ethiopian Jewish religious leaders to go to Ethiopia, but will not leave before having the conclusions of the Rubinstein Committee. Mika Feldman, Israel Consul in Addis Ababa who

also heads the Jewish Agency Ethiopian Desk, estimates the Falash Mura at 50,000 and advised against bringing the whole community to Israel at once but only in small groups who would be observed as to their integration. He also added there is a danger that a small number among them still believe in Christianity, which would stigmatize the rest of the Ethiopian immigrants. People will generalize about them and say, "We endangered our soldiers to bring them here, and they are praying to Jesus". Feldman said the issue had also split the Ethiopian immigrant community and there were those with "converts" in their families who were adamant that they be brought here. (JERUSALEM POST 19.8.91).

The same day most of the papers carried items about the issue, reporting an imminent decision in the matter. HADASHOT reported that the Rabbinate is developing a policy that will oblige the converts to be reconverted to Judaism while in Ethiopia and before they are allowed to immigrate to Israel. The JERUSALEM POST on 26.8.91 reports that the Inter-Ministerial Committee appointed by PM Shamir and headed by Cabinet Secretary Rubinstein has finished its work and submitted its recommendations to Shamir. The central recommendation was to send a delegation of rabbis, experts on Ethiopian Jewry, and Ethiopian religious leaders to deal with specific cases of "converts". A list of about 11,000 has been compiled, and the delegation will check into what degree those desiring to immigrate have cut themselves off from Christianity and to what extent they want to be Jews. Those with a sincere interest in Judaism would undergo a ceremony similar to conversion and be permitted to immigrate.

The same day DAVAR reported that the new Ethiopian President had warned that Israeli activity in the matter of the "converts" was liable to lead to "a dangerous political development which would impact negatively on relations between the two countries". The Ethiopian President's sharp remarks in conversation with two visiting US senators last week in Addis Ababa was reported to the Foreign Ministry by Israeli Ambassador in Ethiopia, Asher Naim, who recommended that the government severely limit for the present all its occupation with the issue. "At times the impression is created that we are acting on a subject of our own without taking into consideration that Ethiopia is a sovereign state," Naim remarked. Meanwhile, it was reported that PM Shamir has not yet decided how to respond to the recommendations of the Interministerial Committee, which are backed by most of the religious Jewish establishment. It was also claimed that the religious society "Amichay" headed by Hanan Porat was gaining supporters for the "converts" at top Israeli political levels. The following day HAARETZ (27.8.91) reported that Jewish Agency Director Dinitz proposed a freeze on the whole issue of the "converts" for the time being in order to complete the immigration of all other Jews.

Hannah Sahalu has appealed to the Israeli High Court to grant her husband Israeli citizenship and a new immigrant certificate despite the Interior Ministry refusal on the grounds of his conversion to Christianity. A 24-year old mother, she stated that she was married in 1981, and in 1984 came to Israel in "Operation Moses", returning last year for nearly a year to be with her husband; but when she applied to have her husband join her in Israel, the Ministry of Interior refused to grant him entrance. The Interior Ministry attorney has denied some of the facts in her petition; in particular, that she was married to the man and that he is a proven Jew (MAARIV 28.8.91).

The same day MAARIV reported that the 76-year old Ethiopian religious leader who had reconverted some 3,000 Jewish "Christianizers" died last week after a long illness. He had immigrated to Israel in March after ministering to many of the Ethiopian "Christianizers" who

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had become estranged from Judaism and who were restored by him. The financial paper GLOBUS (28.8.91) reported that the Interministerial Committee had in principle backed the Chief Rabbinate in recommending a rabbinical delegation to Ethiopia for dealing with the converts.

RABBINIC COURT: The Rehovot Rabbinic Court has recently verified the Jewishness of a mother and daughter, new immigrants from the U.S.S.R., after discovering that the mother, a born Jewess, had grown up in a foster family as Christian contrary to her own desire and that of her father. During World War II the father left home to fight against the Nazis with the Red Army, leaving behind a wife and four children. Shortly after, the mother died; her three daughters and son were sent to an orphanage and then to foster homes. After the war, the father found only three of his children, and it turned out that the fourth had been adopted by a Christian family near Siberia, but refused to return the child, saying, "You have three children and we have only her", and the U.S.S.R. Court supported the claim of the adoptive parents. Eventually the adopted girl married, but longed to reunite with her father and brother, and eventually found them. This resulted in her husband's discovery that she was Jewish, and he abandoned her and their child. Two years ago the family decided to emigrate to Israel but had to leave the mother and daughter behind because they were registered as Christian Tartars. A few months ago the mother and daughter came to Israel as tourists, and following a hearing at the Rabbinate with witnesses present, their Jewishness was confirmed and they were granted certificates to prove it. (HATZOFE 19.8.91)

POLISH JEWISH CHRISTIANS: In an article in YEDIOT AHRONOT (12 Aug 91) Sabar Plotzker described a meeting with two Polish entrepreneurs who organized a company in Poland under the slogan "Economic Prosperity and Jesus Christ". They also were involved in various other Christian communication projects. This week one of them, Bogaslav Bagshik, was in Israel emphasizing his Jewishness. His Jewish parents had died when he was four years old, his four children bear Bible names and he is a contributor to LIBI (IDF Soldiers Aid).

"GRACE AND TRUTH": The Russian language paper NOVOSTY NIDELA (Tel Aviv 2 Jul 91) published an advertisement giving the address and telephone number of "Grace & Truth Messianic Congregation" and inviting inquiries about their congregation.

A feature article from Moscow by Walter Ruby was published in the JERUSALEM POST (14.4.91) headed "The Jews Who Go To Church". It dealt with Russian Orthodox Christians of Jewish origin. The writer described services at a Russian Orthodox Church some 40 km north of Moscow in which a third of the worshippers (perhaps a thousand) are of Jewish or partly-Jewish background. Fr. Alexander Myen, "a charismatic and liberal cleric, was highly successful in bringing the Christian faith to the Christian intellectual elite of Moscow". Himself of Jewish background, Myen reached a thousand or more Jews for Russian Orthodoxy, and taught that Judaism, like other non-Christian religions, contained a great deal of truth and should be studied and respected. At 56, he was murdered last year by an unknown assailant, and his killing was widely held to be a political assassination because he was detested by "national patriots" inside and outside the church. Several interviews with Jewish visitors to the church were quoted in the article.

"JEWS FOR JESUS" IN TEL-AVIV: Thousands of pamphlets promoting JFJ propaganda in mail boxes from Holon to Bnai Brak have aroused concern

about mission activity, sparking anger among religious groups. Activists in Tel-Aviv's "Jews for Jesus" community deny that they are proselytizing. Avi Mizrahi, Manager of Dugit Bookstore in Tel-Aviv, stated: "We aren't missionaries like Habad". He claimed that there are 2,000 Hebrew-speaking members of his organization, and there are four congregations operating in the Tel-Aviv area. (JERUSALEM POST 19.8.91)

JFJ IN NEW YORK: A US district court in New York City dismissed a law suit by JFJ against the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of New York, which had been sued because it threatened a Jewish hotel president that if he hosted the JFJ group, other Jewish groups would stop patronizing the hotel. The ultra-orthodox Agudat Israel of America, scheduled to hold an annual convention a few days after the JFJ gathering, was ready to cancel reservations. The hotel president then cancelled the JFJ contract and returned the deposit, whereupon JFJ sued the JCRC, alleging a conspiracy to violate the group's civil rights. Judge Richard Owens of New York ruled that the Jewish Community Relations Council was protected by the first amendment to the U.S. Constitution and its efforts were "definitely not an unlawful economic boycott". Meanwhile, the lawyer for JFJ, Jay Alan Sekulow, said that they will "definitely" appeal the decision up to the Supreme Court, if necessary. (JERUSALEM POST 27.8.91)

MESSIANISM: The JERUSALEM REPORT in its August 8th weekly featured a 6-page story headed (on the front cover of the magazine) "Summer of the Messiah", and the Habad slogan, "We Want Messiah Now", with both critical and sympathetic reports of the Habad movement and its Messianic absorption, including those who believe that their rebbe is the Messiah. One critic, David Hartman, an "iconoclastic rabbi," an orthodox philosopher and head of the Shalom Hartman Institute for Advanced Jewish Studies in Jerusalem, argues that "Jews should leave Messianism to God; it's not our task to implement it." He attacked the "cheap and vulgar" Habad approach to the Messiah, adding that, "when you play Messianic fervor you become manic-depressive; it means God loves you in the 6 Day War and in the Yom Kippur War he stops loving you."

In a brief article in THE JERUSALEM POST (4.8.91) Haim Shapiro referred to Rabbi Eliezer Schach who had made public his support for an international conference to resolve the Israel-Arab dispute. Shapiro noted: "This stand may be considered in keeping with the non-Messianic view of Judaism" (of his followers).

CHRISTIANS AND ISRAEL

The weekly "IN JERUSALEM" Supplement (16.8.91) published a profile of a Vietnamese Christian living in Israel: "When I came to Israel I became Christian. One night in 1983 when I was managing the Phoenix Restaurant in Jerusalem, Jesus came to me in my dreams. The day after that, several things happened to me to make me a believer... God had guided me to come to this country."

ALEX AWAD VISA: The Reverend Alex Awad has lost a 2-1/2 year battle for a visa to serve an East Jerusalem congregation. Awad is the brother of deported Palestinian activist Mubarak Awad. (IN JERUSALEM 16.8.91)

PAT BOONE: US Pop singer Pat Boone, one of the stars of the '60s, will now star in a publicity campaign on behalf of the Israeli Tourist Ministry. Now a Christian Gospel preacher, he also owns a TV and radio station and has agreed to be at the centre of a sales campaign in the Christian community for Israeli Tourism. The Ministry Director Avi

Rosenthal noted that in America there are 100 million Christian Evangelicals who are an important segment for potential visits to Israel. Boone will appear on radio and TV segments and has been here for a week preparing the campaign, which will cost 400,000 Dollars. The campaign theme is Boone's statement: "I feel closer to the Lord in the land He called home." He hopes to persuade the 50-60 million Christians in the US Bible belt that it is safe to come to Israel again. The campaign is the brainchild of his Jewish producer, Ed Lubin, who succeeded in persuading the Tourist Ministry to go ahead with the campaign (VARIOUS PAPERS 10-11 July 91)

CHRISTIAN RALLY FOR ISRAEL: US Housing and Urban Development Secretary, Jack Kemp, led over 1,000 Evangelical Christians in a spectacular gathering in Memphis, Tennessee to support Israel and raise funds for Soviet Jewish immigration to the Holy Land. The rally, under the banner "On the Wings of Eagles", brought together mainstream and fundamentalist Christians who mixed prayer, song and speeches in a rousing spectacle that filled the Memphis Coliseum with emotional support for Israel. Israel Ambassador Zalman Shoval was received with rousing cheers as he stressed the challenge of absorbing a million Soviet Jews over the next five years, while Kemp took issue with administration statements that Israeli settlements are counter-productive and an obstacle to peace. A major goal of the rally was to challenge Evangelicals to purchase airline seats at \$500 each on charter flights to Tel Aviv for Soviet Jews. Organizers are also planning a massive prayer breakfast next March 24th to be combined with a 9-day tour package stressing Bible history and modern Israel. Ed McAtear, President of the Memphis-based Religious Round Table, organized the event, which was the first in a series of mass gatherings to be held throughout the U.S. (JERUSALEM POST 5.7.91; also DAVAR 8.8.91).

KOL HA'IR (30.8.91) reported the visit of 150 Christian American leaders, members of the Religious Round Table, who visited Israel and offered prayer for peace at the Promenade in East Talpiot. The following day the "Knights of the Round Table" toured the Moslem Quarter escorted by nearby Yeshiva students. Meanwhile, ISRAEL TRAVEL NEWS in July '91 reported on "Operation Praise", a program developed by Pastor Billy Watson, a Jerusalem-based minister, to bring what its organizers claim will be 400,000 Evangelical Christians to Israel to celebrate Israel's 44th anniversary. According to Hela Brand, the Travel Agent assisting Watson, the plans call for two groups of 200,000 each to come to Israel for 10-day pilgrim tours.

JERUSALEM PRIZE: The Jerusalem Prize for Advancing Construction, named in honor of Joseph Pepperman, was awarded to contractor Simon Spiegel by the Jerusalem Mayor. The prize is awarded for excellence in building public structures and renovating existing structures, among them the Dormition Abbey on Mount Zion, the Ethiopian Church, the Russian Church and the Tower of David. "During this period, was there no renovation of a synagogue or a Torah institution?" senior officials in the Jerusalem Municipality were asking, as they expressed surprise at the award for reconstructing Christian holy sites which were originally built by Christian sects in various periods over the centuries (HAMODIYA 26.7.91).

LAND FOR PEACE: German Protestant theologian Kurt Hennig in a lecture has stated that the demand for Israeli withdrawal from the territories contradicts biblical promises to the Jewish nation, and he called upon the church to place the validity of Holy Scripture above other

viewpoints. (idea 2/91/7) Jewish and Christian speakers at the Protestant Church Convention in the Ruhr District in Germany complained that the peace movement and large sections of the population opposing the Gulf war had not considered the consequences of the war for Israel and the Jewish people which set back German-Jewish relations. (1/91/3 idea) Susanne Kahl-Passoth, a youth vicar from Berlin, criticized the Pope for comparing abortion to the extermination of Jews by Nazi Germany. (1/91/4 idea) Considering all the atrocities committed against Jews in the name of Christianity, it is a "miracle" that, according to Jewish sources, an estimated 350,000 Jews (mostly in USA) recognize Jesus as Messiah, the secretary of "Gospel Ministry for Israel" stated. The ministry calls attention in Germany to Christianity's Jewish roots and also supports proclamation of the Gospel in Israel. (1/91/4 idea) The German Evangelical Karmel Mission during a visit to Cairo confirmed that 235 Christians are detained in Egypt for religious reasons. (1/91/4 idea)

SECTARIANS

JERHOVA WITNESSES: In an appeal to the High Court, the J.W. sect in Israel has charged that elements in the Tel-Aviv municipality have for irrelevant reasons turned down their requests for a permit to build a house of worship in a building they purchased on the Nahalat Benjamin mall. Although they require a special authorization to do so because of zoning regulations in the area, the petitioners claim that the municipality has not prevented Jewish synagogues from occupying premises in the area despite its being a commercial and entertainment centre. The petitioners also claimed that they do not entice people to join their sect nor engage in missionary activity. (HAARETZ 18.7.91)

"SONS OF NOAH": During July a series of news items reported the arrival in Israel of a delegation of former Christians who head up a movement founded by former Protestants which is based upon talmudic interpretation of the alleged "seven laws of Noah" that Gentiles are required to keep for salvation (establishing courts of law, prohibiting blasphemy, idolatry, illicit sexual relations, murder, theft, eating the limb of living creatures). Meanwhile, the Jerusalem Temple Foundation, devoted to creating utensils for the Temple when it is rebuilt, has designated as its official representatives to the Gentile world, "the Sons of Noah," many of whom live in the U.S. Bible Belt. They reject Christianity as idolatry. (22.7.91 JLM POST)

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contract with a Russian Christian company whose name is "Good News" in order to transport Jews from Kiev to Warsaw en route to Israel. The affair has stirred a tempest among British Jews who ask why Christian organizations are permitted involvement in the immigration project, but the agency denies the charge that the transport expense is borne by the Christian organizations raising funds in British churches.

The International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem (ICEJ) is also involved in the contract with the company and it has been sending aid for new immigrants through its office in Poland. Although the Christian Embassy claims that there is no hidden Christian agenda, its activists do not deny that they would like to see Jews accept Christianity, thereby bringing redemption to the world. A copy of a notice headed "Buses for Soviet Jews", is reproduced, containing an appeal to Christians for gifts to help support the project. Meanwhile, the Jewish Agency has responded by saying that the contract is purely commercial and "we have no knowledge of the information in your hands but we thank you for bringing it to our attention, and we shall investigate what is behind the notice. If it becomes known that in the course of the journey of 6 hours, there are missionary preaching attempts, whether orally or in the form of literature, we shall immediately draw our conclusions (9 Aug. '91).

The ultra-orthodox Yiddish newspaper (HAMACHANE HACHAREDI 21.8.91) has reported that mission activities have recently increased in the State of Israel, especially among new immigrants from Russia. An estimated 5,000 missionaries, linked to various missionary organizations abroad, are estimated to be involved. The ultra-orthodox daily (HAMODIYA 28.8.91) has warned of increasing missionary activities by "Jewish Christian" groups following an international conference of these groups recently held in Utrecht, Holland. An American Jewish organization leader has warned that these groups also have intensified their activities among Russian Jews.

NEW ANTI-MISSION GROUP IN U.S.A.: Orthodox Jewish sources reported that "Hebrews for Jesus" have lately been enticing Soviet Jews arriving in the U.S.A. to abandon Judaism and join Christian sects. These "Hebrew Christians" and "Jews for Jesus" have been observed lately to be especially active among Soviet Jews in the New York and Baltimore areas, two major centres of Soviet Jewish dropouts. It is reported in the Hebrew emigre newspaper (OUR ISRAEL 5 July '91) that missionaries are offering the immigrants Hebrew Bibles and studies of Judaism focusing on Jesus in order to lead them into Christianity. The organization "Jews for Judaism" has been set up to battle "Jews for Jesus" and will fight this phenomenon with all means at its disposal. Meanwhile the Orthodox daily (HATZOFE 28.8.91) correspondent reported that swift action thwarted an attempt by "Messianic missionaries" to lead 200 Jewish emigres from the U.S.S.R. into apostacy in the U.S.A. A number of Jewish organizations spread out in the neighborhood of Russian Jews to explain to them the dangers of "the Messianics" who are leading them out of the Jewish people. At the same time they invaded the church where these Jews were taking part in a ceremony, and began to sing "The People of Israel Live" amid cries of "Hear, O Israel" so that the missionaries were compelled to leave the place. With the success of this project, they decided to start an information campaign among Soviet Jews in order to explain their religion and their national identity.

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