

CHRISTIANS AND PROPHECY+

SELECTIONS No. 42

(to 30.10.78)

DATE: 29.10.78 JOURNAL: YEDIOT AKHRONOT (HEBREW P.M. INDEPENDENT) NEWS ARTICLE
HEADING: "SISTER OF CARTER ARRIVING IN ISRAEL ON "CHRISTIAN MISSION" (NB: Hebrew word used is "shlikhut" and not "misyon", the former sense being quite different.)
BYLINE: Reuben Leib, Yediot Akh. Correspondent TRANSLATOR)
QUOTE: A group of about 240 Christian tourists from the U.S.A., which has taken upon itself a special mission connected with the "fulfilment of the vision of the prophet ~~Isaiah~~ Ezekiel" will be arriving in Israel the day after tomorrow. (31.10.78) Involved are Christians numbered among the movement "Mission America", and which numbers in the U.S.A. some five million members. Among others, the sister of the American President, Mrs. Ruth Stapleton-Carter, belongs to this movement. The leader of the movement is the preacher Hilton Sutton who will be arriving in Israel as head of the group.

According to their belief, it is indeed the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who is fulfilling in these days that which was intimated by the vision of the prophet Ezekiel. The fulfilment of the prophecy is finding expression, among other things, in the making of peace in the Middle East. END ARTICLE

DATE: 30.10.78 JOURNAL: OMER (Vowelled simplified Hebrew daily) NEWS ARTICLE
HEADING: "240 CHRISTIAN PILGRIMS WILL BE COMING TOMORROW TO ISRAEL"
BYLINE: Omer Correspondent for Tourist Affairs
QUOTE: Tomorrow a group of 240 Christian pilgrims from the United States is due to arrive in Israel, members of a religious movement which believes in the fulfillment of the vision of the prophet Ezekiel. There are four to five million members in the movement, which includes many public figures, among them the sister of the President of the United States, Ruth Stapleton-Carter. END ITEM.

DATE: 30.10.78 JOURNAL: JERUSALEM POST (ENGLISH A.M. IND.) NEWS ARTICLE
HEADING: "AMERICAN CHRISTIAN GROUP ARRIVING; PLAN PREMIERE OF FILM ON EZEKIEL"
BYLINE: Jerusalem Post Reporter. (PHOTOGRAPHIC INSET: The Rev. Hilton Sutton)
QUOTE: TELAVIV.--A group of 240 American Christians, members of a "Mission to America" group, are scheduled to arrive this Tuesday for an eight-day visit during which they will hold the world premiere of a religious film, "The Ezekiel File." The group is led by Hilton Sutton, and the film will be shown to invited guests at the Diplomat Hotel in Jerusalem at 8:00 p.m. on November 5th. The film, based on the prophecies of the prophet Ezekiel, expresses two themes: that there must be "watchmen" in the House of Israel, and that Israel is threatened by Russia and must be so warned.

The movement itself claims between four and five million Americans as members, including the sister of President Jimmy Carter, Ruth Carter Stapleton. Rev. Sutton is a well-known American pastor, lecturer, author and popular speaker. "During the past 20 years Rev. Sutton has kept a special eye on the Land of Israel," according to a release published by the "Mission to America" movement. "The reason is that Israel is the barometer of the world, and by watching Israel and the Old Testament scripture, one knows exactly what the outcome of the Middle East conflict and eventual peace will be. END ARTICLE

SUBJECT 2: CHRISTIANS IN ISRAEL

DATE: 5.5.78 JOURNAL: ALLGEMEINE JUDISCHE WOCHENZEITUNG (Dusseldorf W. Germany) (General Jewish Weekly Journal) FEATURE ARTICLE
HEADING: "THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN THE HOLY LAND" BYLINE: Meir Faerber
SUMMARY: A review of Jewish-Christian relations in Israel on the backdrop of 30 years of independence in a democratic regime with ~~significant~~ ^{significant} religious minorities--Moslems, Christians, Druze, Bahai, Samaritans. There are 100,000 Christians in Israel divided into 35 groups among Eastern and Western churches. Population centres for Christians are in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Ramallah, Jaffa, Haifa and in the Galilee (especially Nazareth), being mostly Arabs ethnically. There follows a brief description of various church groups and their history in the Holy Land. This is followed by a more extended description of Christian groups involved ~~xxxx~~ sympathetically with Israel and the Jewish people: (1) the Nes Amim moshav in Galilee, (2) the YMCA (3) "International Evangelical Congress in Jerusalem (should be "International Congress for the Peace of Jerusalem") in February 1978. "The participants characterized themselves as Christian Zionists."

The article concludes with a three-paragraph description of Jewish-Catholic relations from pre-State times: It relates to the conversation of Theodore Herzl with Pope Pius X, Nahum Sokolow with Benedikt XV, contacts with John 23, the Holy Land pilgrimage of Paul VI, and his meetings with Abba Eban, Golda Meir & Moshe Dayan in the Vatican.

MOPE

DATE: 25.3.78 JOURNAL: AUFBAU NEW YORK (GERMAN JEWISH N.Y. PUBLICATION) FEATURE ARTICLE
HEADING: "FAITH BUYING IN ISRAEL: FORBIDDEN"

BYLINE : Meir Faerber

SUMMARY: This is an article about the "Mission Law" and the "sharp" reaction of many Christian circles to it. It is admitted that only a few mission societies employ material aid as a means of obtaining the conversion of Jews. There are no reliable statistics about the number of Jewish converts to Christianity since in many cases baptism occurs after the person has emigrated from Israel. Missionary activity is conducted among families in material distress or among those experiencing other kinds of crisis. (A verbatim citation of the "Mission Law" is given.)

While the law makes no mention of any particular religion, the writer notes, it is clearly aimed at Christian missionary activity in Israel. Jews are not missionaries, and indeed, potential converts to Judaism encounter difficulties from the Rabbinate. While Islam is a missionary religion, the number of Jews in Israel converting to Islam is very negligible. Nevertheless, conversions by themselves are not prohibited by the new law, only the immoral use of material enticement to convert are prohibited.

An official of the Ministry of Religious Affairs with whom the writer discussed the issue noted that, although the law was passed in December 1977, to date not one case has been prosecuted. In addition, the Government has decided that the police are not to take action in any case without the prior agreement of the State Attorney.

The disquiet caused by the law in many Christian circles, especially Evangelical, must be balanced by the fact that "in Christian Europe in this generation six million Jews were murdered by the Nazi regime, and that in the Jewish State today there is an emotional resistance to material enticements to abandon Judaism and to baptism and to soul buying by the Christian mission. The UCCI has demanded that an international commission be organized to investigate conversions in Israel. The Council also charges that further more drastic antichristian statutes are in preparation. But these charges are without foundation. In contrast, Israel and its institutions strive always for the advancement and deepening of ties with all religions, and especially with the Christian religious institutions. The late Pope Paul VI in conversation with Israeli representatives also acknowledged the Israeli faithful care of the Christian Holy Places in Israel."

The article concludes with a brief review of the protests made to former President Katzir against the law by Greek Orthodox, Armenian Patriarchate, and Franciscan Custos, and these protests were refuted by the President, the Attorney-General, the Justice Minister, the Minister of Religious Affairs, who affirmed that there is "absolute religious freedom for all Christians" in Israel, and noted that the law only deals with material enticements. Reference is made to statements by Christian bodies, such as the WCC in 1960 and the Vatican in 1971 opposing the use of material inducements to obtain conversions.

END SUMMARY OF ARTICLE.

END TRANSCRIPTION 2 Nov 78/mb