

SUBJECT 1: "THE MISSION"

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DATE: 1 Sept. 1978 JOURNAL: "GENERAL JEWISH WEEKLY" (GERMAN--DUSSELDORF) FEATURE ARTICLE
 HEADING: "PROBLEMATIC FRIENDS: JEWISH MISSIONS TODAY"
 BYLINE: Schalom Ben-Chorin
 SUMMARY: This is a reprint of an article which originally appeared in "ISRAEL NACHRICHTEN" (For translated summary see SELECTIONS No. 38, top page 1, dated 18.8.78 under same heading.)

DATE: 17.11.78 JOURNAL: "SHEVA" (Beersheva) FEATURE ARTICLE WITH PHOTOS (HEBREW LANG.)
 HEADING: "BIBLE HOUSE FOR ALL WHO WISH"
 BYLINE: Dov Rubin PHOTOS: (1) Front View of the Bible House in Beersheva
 (2) Inside the store there are postcards, books and souvenirs for pilgrims
 (3) Photo of Olivi Syvanto.

QUOTE: Since 1957 the Bible House situated on Rehov Rambam serves as a depot for the distribution of the Tenakh (O.T.) and the New Testament to all comers. We went, therefore, to visit with Mr. Olivi Syvanto, the man in charge of the store, in order to hear directly from his lips something about his business and, incidentally, we heard also about the tiny congregation in our city among whom are numbered Messianic Jews ("yehudim meshikhiim"), and according to another definition, Jews who believe in Jesus ("Yeshua"). But first of all, something about the man himself.

Mr. Syvanto, a native of faroff Finland, has traveled a long way with his father who, after a one-year stay in Sweden, emigrated to the Land of Israel in the year 1949. His father, who is from the Protestant stream of Christianity, conceived his spiritual destiny as a distributor of the Holy Scriptures in the Holy Land, and established his place of residence in Tiberias, the capital of the Galilee, where the young Jesus ("Yeshua") took his first steps. ("first steps" is used figuratively. TR.)

The son, Olivi, joined Kibbutz Netzer Sireni, of which he was a member until 1957. That year he decided to move to Beersheva, where he has been managing the Bible House until this very day. The purpose of the store is to distribute the books of the Bible, and indeed you will find there the Book of Books in thirty languages. A brief tour of the attractive and orderly shop informs us that it is possible to obtain other books as well, hundreds and hundreds, whose subject is the Messianic faith, and also souvenirs, pictures of religious subjects, and in fact just about anything that would likely interest a pilgrim or a plain tourist, Jew or Gentile, who chances to find his way to Beersheva. It appears that not a few of the shop visitors are Jews of Beersheva who make their way abroad, and they come to the shop to buy souvenirs for their friends of the Christian religion. High School students also seek out the shop entrance and come to purchase a Tenakh (O.T.) in variegated editions, and they also buy the New Testament, sometimes out of personal interest, and at times as part of their studies. New immigrants also come to purchase Bibles in their native tongues... Russian, Roumanian, Polish, and there is even a Bible in Chinese or Swahili to be found there, not to mention Latin, a fact which constitutes a drawing card for researchers and scholars as well.

Mr. Olivi Syvanto, heaps praises on Beersheva and its citizens, and quite justly, inasmuch as other towns, such as Rishon Letsion and Tel-Aviv, where there are also communities of Messianic Jews, where not so long ago there occurred many vicious attacks, the worst taking place in Tel-Aviv, when fanatical hoodlums shattered and set on fire a synagogue where the members of the congregation were wont to pray, in the town of Beersheva, by contrast, nothing like this has ever taken place, praise God, a fact which testifies to the spirit of tolerance and liberalism of the citizens of the town.

In a fluent and rich Hebrew Mr. Syvanto explains the principles of the Messianic faith. It does not distinguish between Jew and Gentile, it is not an establishment, it does not contain elements of preachments and mission, nor does it... cultivate an official clergy. In the shop itself you will not find a single cross, inasmuch as this faith has no external symbol which finds expression in a visible article or symbol, in ceremony or in ritual. The matter sounds simple enough: This is a faith which is in the heart... either you believe or you don't believe, and furthermore, Messianism does not lay down commandments of one kind or another. At the heart of the faith lies the recognition that the New Testament is nothing but a direct continuation inevitably of the Tenach (O.T.), and that the appearance of Yeshua the Nazarene on the stage of history is anchored in the words of the prophets (Isaiah 53): "SURELY HE BORE OUR SICKNESSES AND CARRIED OUR PAINS AND WE COUNTED HIM STRICKEN, SMITTEN BY GOD AND AFFLICTED." (v.4) The only unimpeachable source (of faith) is what is stated in the Tenach (O.T.) and the New Testament as one unit. For this reason, the Messianic faith does not recognize the Vatican, nor see

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in the Pope a faithful representative of the true Christian faith.

As far as Jews who believe in Yeshua are concerned--and several of them are residents of Beersheva, as noted previously--they are Jews in every respect, but the Messianic faith claims that Judaism, like Christianity, being formalistic and establishment religions, have moved far away in the course of time from their sources, and on the part of Messianism, like their Christian partners in faith, they see in Yeshua the embodiment of the words of the prophets, and it is indeed He who is the Messiah according to their prophecies.

On the other hand, the Christians see the Jews as the fulfilment of the divine promise, and as a result the Land of Israel in its entirety is the Promised Land for them. In this connection Mr. Syvanto has an instructive tale to tell: One day he encountered a Palestinian Arab who lived in a refugee camp near Bethlehem who was known as a sworn enemy of Israel. But one day he found his way to the Messianic faith, and as a result of studying the Old and New Testaments, he repudiated his previous opinions that the Jewish people have no portion or inheritance in the Land of Israel. Mr. Syvanto himself thinks that it is a mistake to grant autonomy to the Arabs in Judea and Samaria because this is in opposition to what is stated in the Holy Scriptures, for what is written there is that the Land of Israel is for the people of Israel. In other words, Mr. Syvanto is an adherent of the "Land of Israel" (movement)...

The number of the Beersheva community is very tiny, and they can be numbered on the fingers of two hands. They gather at appointed times for the most part in private homes for reflection and study of the Holy Scriptures. In these gatherings there are no elements of ritual, for such is not found in the Messianic faith. Mr. Syvanto adds a note that to the best of his knowledge already in 1924 or thereabouts, there was a community of believers in Beersheva, apparently among the members of the British administration of the time, and there was even a church at their disposal. The building itself is standing on Rehov Avot (Street of the Patriarchs), and it is still possible to detect the small bell tower on its roof. Olivi Syvanto adds another remark: "Just as there is a need for physical construction and in physical development, there is also a need for spiritual construction. In the Bible everything is found, and it is the wellspring from which we draw spiritual power." END ARTICLE.

DATE: 30.12.78 JOURNAL: "BUL" (Tel-aviv) HEBREW "EXPOSE"

HEADING: "PLANT IN TIBERIAS--A TRAP OF THE MISSION"

BYLINE: Moti Aviram, Special to BUL

QUOTE: The Christian Mission has struck again! This time the Christian bait is wrapped in candy in the form of lucrative work, lots of money, and various benefits! Only after you have been enticed will you hear the terms: In order to obtain all these, you must change your religion! This is the danger hovering over the youth of Tiberias these days!

If you are a Tiberian it would be well worth your while to remember the name YESHURUN! This is the name of the plant which serves as a mask for the present missionary activities. The setting up of the plant was already begun several weeks ago. The reason the entrepreneurs gave: To supply a place of work for new believers!

The organization "Yad L'akhim", which is fighting the mission system and its enticements, has discovered this novel attempt of the emissaries of the Christian religion. It appears that the initiators of the new plant succeeded to outwit the governmental bodies and received the necessary permits from the managers of the Bureau of Commerce and Industry! At this time the initiators of the plant YESHURUN, which will deal in the production of various electronic products, are continuing to set up the structure. According to all signs, as soon as the building is ready, the missionaries will go out to recruit new souls to the Christian religion! END ARTICLE.

SUBJECT 2: THE CHRISTMAS STORY

DATE: 22.12.78 JOURNAL: JERUSALEM POST (ENGLISH A.M. INDEPENDENT) FEATURE ARTICLE

HEADING: "A SCHOLAR PROBES THE CHRISTMAS STORY"

(CHRISTIAN COMMENT: OIKOUMENIKOS)

PHOTO INSET: PROF. Raymond E. Brown

QUOTE: The stories about Jesus' birth in Bethlehem are among the most popular among Christians, but they raise problems for the historian and other scholars. Can a thinking person, perhaps "turned off" by the sentimentality of the naive New Testament narratives about Jesus' infancy, find any relevance in them for life today? A distinguished biblical scholar, until recently president of the Society of Biblical Literature and now completing a sabbatical leave at Jerusalem's Albright Institute of Archaeological Research, believes the answer is a definite "YES".

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Professor Raymond E. Brown, holder of nine honorary doctorates spent almost ten years of research in the preparation of his 600-page book, "THE BIRTH OF THE MESSIAH: A COMMENTARY ON THE INFANCY NARRATIVES IN MATTHEW & LUKE." Reginald H. Fuller called its publication by Doubleday the "major event of New Testament studies in 1977," and it has been praised by James A. Sanders as "a shining, brilliant example of what biblical criticism was intended to do."

How does a critical biblical scholar handle the narratives about Jesus' birth in Bethlehem and related events? Fr. Brown, the only Catholic teaching at N.Y. Union Theological Seminary, asserts that people of faith have absolutely nothing to fear from rigorous use of the tools of biblical criticism in the study of Scripture. Brown feels that, whatever may be the problems with the historicity of the accounts, a more important question is WHY were these accounts included in Matthew and Luke? For him, the answer lies in the way the narratives underscore Jesus' identity.

Mark's Gospel sees the baptism as the point of beginning, when the Holy Spirit descends on Jesus and marks him, in Christian belief as God's Son. Did that mean that Jesus was "adopted" at his baptism? Brown believes that Matthew's and Luke's accounts are there precisely to make it clear "that Jesus was God's Son during his whole earthly life, from the moment of his conception through the Holy Spirit."

To understand the infancy narratives, says Brown, it is important to recognize that in the course of transmission, "the Gospel material has been coloured by the faith and experience of the Church of the 1st Century." That early church had its roots deep in Jewish tradition. One is struck by the echoes of stories in the Hebrew scriptures when reading the infancy narratives "to an extent unparalleled in the rest of the Gospels."

In a public lecture given recently at the Ecumenical Institute for Advanced Theological Research at Tantur in Jerusalem, Fr. Brown focused on the four poetic canticles or hymns that one finds in Luke 1 and 2. He pointed out the many allusions to the Hebrew Scriptures in these hymns, and suggested that they came to us through Jews who believed in Jesus—for example, the Jewish Christian community in Jerusalem. Reference to the "anavim", the poor ones of God, he said, may be allusions to Ps. 149:4, and other passages. Mary's hymn of praise, called the Magnificat in Christian tradition, was shown to contain allusions to Hannah's hymn (1 Sam. 2). Leah's remarks after childbirth (Gen. 29:32, 30:13), and passages in Psalms and Isaiah. Brown asserted that these hymns, with their strong Jewish flavour, may reflect the earliest stage of Christian prayer. The attachment to the Hebrew scriptures is also strikingly seen in Matthew's narratives.

"Matthew's portrayal of Joseph, who receives revelation in dreams (1:20, 2:13, 19) and who goes down to Egypt (2:14), resembles the portrait of Joseph in the Old Testament, the patriarch who was "the dreamer" par excellence (Gen. 37:19), and who went down to Egypt, escaping an attempt on his life. (Gen. 37:28) "Jesus' escape from Herod," added Brown, "is remarkably like the Jewish story of Moses' escape from the Pharaoh—the Moses who, like Jesus, came back from the Egypt to which Joseph had gone."

Matthew's account of the coming of the Magi seems to anticipate the Christian understanding of the goyim, the Gentiles, coming to believe in Jesus, but here again, the role of the Jews in the history of salvation is vital. Matthew shows that the Magi, like the Gentiles, had some revelation from God (thru' the birth star in 2:2, 10), but it was imperfect and incomplete without the explicit revelation given to the Jews through the Scriptures. "The Gentiles come to worship, but they must learn from the Jews the history of salvation," remarked Brown. According to Brown, Matthew's narrative foreshadows what ultimately happens in Jesus' death and resurrection. "Those who have the Scriptures and can see plainly what the prophets said are not willing to worship the newborn king." On the contrary, there is a conspiracy—led, says Matthew, by Herod—to kill Jesus, "but God spares Jesus and ultimately brings His Son back from another land." (2:15-16) The cast of characters seems similar to that found in the end of the Gospel: a secular ruler, some leaders and scribes who know the Scriptures and reject Jesus, but God makes Jesus victorious by bringing him back. However, there are also Gentiles who come, and the help of Scripture, find and adore him.

For Fr. Brown the narrative in Luke also highlights an announcement of Jesus' birth and a response. The revelation that the Jewish shepherds receive, outside David's native town, like that to the Magi, guides them to Bethlehem where they find the infant, Mary & Joseph. They praise God for what they have seen and heard, and return to where they came from. These symbolize in Israel those who hear and recognize in Jesus the anointed one of God, asserts Brown.

For the Christian the two Gospels are complementary, one telling Joseph's story, the other, Mary's, the Magi, symbolic of the Gentiles, and the shepherds, symbolic of Jews who

believe, together make up the community of faith. Some of the claims for Jesus in Luke's narrative may be better understood when one discovers the earlier claims for Caesar Augustus, writes Brown. Augustus was hailed at Halicarnassus as "the saviour of the world," and the Priene inscription grandiosely proclaimed: 'The birthday of the god (Augustus) marked the beginning of the good news for the world.'

Luke asserts a counterclaim to these statements in the words of the angel of God: "I announce to you the good news of a great joy which will be for the whole people: To you this day there is born in the city of David a Saviour who is Messiah and Lord."
(Luke 2:10-11)

Brown recognizes that the problems of historicity are real, but his efforts to probe behind the accounts to the underlying message, the "why" of their inclusion in the Gospel records, have already helped many toward "developing a mature response to the Gospels' most popular story," as Kenneth Woodward put it in "Newsweek." Even in those infancy narratives, Brown has underscored both the Jewish roots and the essential message of Christians through the centuries. END ARTICLE.

SUBJECT 3: POSTSCRIPTS (& Miscellaneous)

DATE: 14.1.79 JOURNAL: JERUSALEM POST POSTSCRIPTS FEATURE

QUOTE: Among the many alumni who have happy and nostalgic memories of their residence at the well-known Ulpan Akiva in Netanya is Abbot Leo Rudloff of the Benedictine Priory at Weston, Vermont. The Abbot recently wrote to us on the occasion of his "20th anniversary" as an Ulpan Akiva graduate, and expressed his appreciation of both his experience there as a student and of the opportunity he had to meet "Israelis from every walk of life." (There follows some biographical material about the Abbot's background in Israel dating from 1949.) The Abbot fondly remembers his instructor Shulamit Katznelson, and many of his classmates who, he says, would remember him as "Arieh." The Abbot concludes with this wish: "May Ulpan Akiva always play its role in the building up of Israel, and in gaining friends for Israel in the wide world." (There is also a reference to his friendship with the late Hebrew University Prof. Hugo Bergman.) END ITEM.

DATE: 16.1.79 JOURNAL: JERUSALEM POST FEATURE ARTICLE

HEADING: BRACED FOR A BATTLE AGAINST CAMPUS ANTISEMITISM IN UK"

BYLINE: Hyam Corney, Jerusalem Post Correspondent

SUMMARY & EXCERPTS: This is an article about Jewish students in the U.K. contending with antizionist and antisemitic elements on a number of campuses throughout Britain, and the remarks published in Moslem and Arabic-oriented student publications. There follows a reference to an anti-Jewish, anti-Christian attitude:

"The dossier contains several extracts from a publication called "Flocks," which is produced fortnightly by the Islamic Society at Essex, where there are over 200 Moslem students. An editorial in one issue last year began: "The Moslems will not forget for one moment their primary enemy, Marxism... Every Moslem must understand what Karl Marx, the Jewish founder of Marxism, said." Another issue spoke about the "Judeo-Christian conspiracy" being far above the intelligence of Mr. Sadat. Perhaps he is ignorant that the Jews and the Christians have committed genocide of the human race since the dawn of civilization." It referred to Sadat's visit to Jerusalem as "disgraceful," and quoted anti-Jewish passages from the Koran..... One positive byproduct of the continuing antizionist battle on the campuses is that membership of the Union of Jewish Students has soared to about 4,000, almost double what it was 2 years ago. "This battle has alerted Jewish students to their identity," says Metliss. "You're made to feel a Jew. It's like being made to wear the yellow star."

END ARTICLE

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