

7.16

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Director of Yad L'Ahim in Jerusalem, Mr. Joel Wasserman, an immigrant from the USA who related that his mother is a "Jew for Jesus", that he was sent to Israel by the Mission without money in order that he might be completely dependent on them, that he is constantly "pursued" and that "life was made so difficult for me that I tried to commit suicide in the Army." Yigal Bibi, the Tiberias Mayor, testified that he was especially frightened by Jewish converts who were the most extreme, while Shaya Segal, a MAARIV journalist testified that the missionaries offer money, clothing and tickets abroad. He also charged the Christian TV program in South Lebanon with the dissemination of Christian propaganda.

MK Yehuda Perah stated that the public does not know the dimensions of the mission work in Israel and its sophistication. MK Pinhas Goldstein said that the representatives of the Tel-Aviv municipality deserve rebuke if indeed they told the Yad L'Ahim representative that it is better for Jewish children to study in a Christian school than to roam the streets. "In view of the consensus that exists among all of us, you must involve secular Jews also in the struggle against the Mission." MK Michael Bar-Zohar stated that one must use every means to disturb and hinder the missionary elements, but he is opposed to the enactment of legislation in this matter, which would restrict freedom of religion and could be a two-edged sword against Jews in the Diaspora. MK Nahman Raz said that the greater part of the volunteers on kibbutzim are Christians, some of whom are ambassadors for Christianity. "I am against the use of violence and offensive graffiti against Christian groups," he added. Rabbi Moshe Solomon, Gen. Direc. of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, stated that his Ministry had no formal standing in law in the war against missionary activity. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Chair Person said she was astonished that those involved in education and religion in Israel have so little information relating to mission activities in their fields. The enactment of legislation would not solve the problem. She appealed to all the bodies to submit to the committee suitable data and the details of existing legislation within two weeks. (HATSOEHEH 1.2.84)(NB: HAMODIYA carried same story dated 18.1.84) In an angry lead article headed "DANGER AND ITS NAME IS CHRISTIAN MISSION" the Aguda daily HAMODIYA (20.1.84) called for stronger measures to deal with this "threatening menace."

MAARIV: 20.1.84--Moshe Porush is not a rabbi...but he is the director of the J'lm branch of YAD L'AHIM and in charge of the Division for the War Against the Mission & Cults. In the wake of the Lausanne Document, which is being distributed by Yad L'Ahim, he was interviewed by the reporter. "This frightful document of the worldwide missionaries deals in a most fundamental way with the sensitive subject of the spiritual destruction of the Jewish people," he declares. "The most dangerous ones are just those who appear to us as friends of Israel...We are not fighting against Christianity. We recognize the right of members of other religions to live in Israel and to respect their religion. Our struggle is against the attempt to intrude into our lives..." he states. Now, due to the pressure of circumstances, they are transferring most of their forces to the second front--the war against the cults and the Mission. "Whoever declares that he is a good Christian but is not a missionary," says Porush, "either is lying or isn't a good Christian. Whoever is familiar with theology knows that in their eyes mission is an obligation."

YOM HASHISHI: 20.1.84--A mobile exhibition of missionary methods and photographs of missionaries is being prepared for areas where missionary activity is going on in order to deter the public from contact with the missionaries.

SIEARIM: 13.1.84--The Mission and the idolatrous cults are penetrating the secular kibbutzim, according to Yad L'Ahim, the anti-mission society of Israel. Kibbutz psychologists identify it as a severe crisis in values. This, however, is related to the general crisis of secularism in Israel in the wake of anti-Tora campaigns.

BUL#27.12.83--Report from London on a racist sect preaching the destruction of Israel and Jews under the label "Lobby for Jesus." They allegedly provide attractive young women ready to offer sexual favours to potential adherents to the sect.

EXAGGERATION: A letter by Rabbi Dr. Chaim Pearl (JLM POST 11.1.84) disputes the figures "regularly published in Rabbi Shmuel Golding's advertisements" of 2,000 baptised Jewish converts, 10,000 Israelis in cults, 6,000 unauthorized missionaries. Rabbi Pearl warns against "a frenzy of anti-gentilism...By countenancing such irreligious hatred, we will only help set off an explosion which will destroy us all."

MESSIANIC ASSEMBLY JERUSALEM: (SEE SELECTIONS No. 119, pages 1-2) Additional news items about the fire appeared in JLM POST (8.1.84), ISRAEL AUJOURD'HUI, TELAVIV (9.1) and "STARS & STRIPES" (U.S. Armed Forces Publication, 8.1.84) headed: MESSIANIC JEWS TARGET OF ARSONISTS IN J'LM. (The latter article also referred to the harassment of the Tiberias "Meniel" fellowship.) A letter signed by David Price, Convenor of the Liaison Committee of the UCCI, was published in the JLM POST (20.1.84), expressing appreciation for the prompt and clear reporting on the arson attack, for Mayor Kollek's "condemnation of this wicked deed," and pointing out that the Messianic Assembly has no connection to the Anglican Church or School. It concludes: The UCCI regard the members of the Assembly as our brothers and sisters, but they are not affiliated to our society and I understand that membership is confined to citizens of the State of Israel.

TIBERIAS: (SEE ALSO SELECTIONS 118, pages 1-3; and SELEC. 119, pages 2-4) Additional news items and feature articles about the Tiberias "mission" appeared in "NOW" (15.12.83) under the heading: "SHEDDING THE WORD: AGGRESSIVE MISSIONARIES IN TIBERIAS WORRY CITIZENS" by Shaiah Segel; in "Erev Shabat, Bnei Brak" headed: "DISCLOSURES ON THE MISSION IN TIBERIAS", with a photograph and remarks about the home and carpentry shop of a family of believers in nearby Yavneel; in the JLM POST (20.1.84) a feature article by Helga Dudman headed: MISSIONARIES & CEMETERIES, linking ultra-orthodox violence against the Ganei Hammat Hotel near the Hot Springs (on the basis of ^{ancient} cemeteries located at or near the site) and the Nitzan Hotel targeted by extremists for hosting members of a local prayer meeting of "Christians and Jewish believers in Jesus as the Messiah." Dudman ridiculed most of the charges made against "the Mission" following interviews with many of the parties involved on both sides of the issue. There were also several news items in local supplements and weeklies.

HAIFA AREA: Increased aid to needy families in Haifa is being provided by the anti-mission society "Keren Yaldenu" to counteract alleged enticements of missionaries to families in distress. (HATSOBEH 28.1.84) The Chief Rabbi of Akko has stated that there is no concrete information concerning the intensification of missionary activity in the town among Jews, although Muslim families have been turning to the Mission for aid. (ZAFON 1, AKKO) A Hebrew version of the "NOW" article ("Friday Evening With Jesus" by Joshua Wallace), somewhat toned down, appeared in KOL-BO HAIFA (6.1.84) headed "THE MESSIAH WILL COME TO BETHEL" and subheaded: "Bethel is essentially an apparently friendly hostel where the young people love the State and its way. There are no aggressive missionaries here."

NAHARIYA: The Mayor of Nahariya, Religious Council heads and the local rabbinate were astonishingly indifferent to the missionary problem, even though it was going to be discussed in the Knesset soon. Nahariya Mayor Levav stated that he did not know the problem in depth and could not relate to it at present. The local chief rabbi, Dr. Aharon Keller, related the "puffing up of the issue" to the desire of local Yad L'Ahim anti-mission stalwarts to demonstrate their presence and justify their activity. (SEE SELECTIONS No. 117, page 1) ZAFON 1, AKKO 16.12.83)

A feature article in MAARETZ (20.1.84) by David Oren explored stories and rumours about missionary activity in Nahariya. The main source was the Gaz family, the father Yaacov, a municipal inspector, disgruntled over his daughter's faith in Jesus following her marriage to a Norwegian UNIFIL soldier, another son (Shlomo) who flirted with local believers, was baptized, and then reneged on his alleged "conversion," and co-operated with anti-mission elements. Also interviewed was the local rabbi who again stated that "there is exaggeration in Nahariya on the subject of missionary activity, even though one dare not belittle it." The journalist tends to concur with the rabbi's estimate that the subject is blown up out of all proportion.

VOICE OF HOPE: "The Society for the Upbuilding of Safed" has called on the Northern Military Commander of the IDF to put an end to the telecasts of "Middle East TV", an outgrowth of the "Voice of Hope" broadcasts sponsored by Evangelical Christian groups. Claiming that the station is a source of missionary propaganda aimed at Israelis, the protesters ask the military officials to close the border into Lebanon to the TV staff which resides in northern Israel but regularly crosses over into Lebanon where the station is located. (MAARIV: HAIFA & NORTHERN SUPPLEMENT--2.1.84)

BETH SHALOM: Additional clippings were received ~~about~~ the controversial plan to establish a hotel and world centre for the pro-Israel "Beth Shalom" movement. (SEE SELECTIONS 119, pages 6-7), from which the organization withdraw following a hectic campaign by mainly Orthodox Jewish elements to cancel the plans for the centre in the Jewish neighbourhood of Gilo in Jerusalem. Opponents charged that the movement was a missionary front.

ICEJ: The Int'l Christian Embassy in J'lm strongly denied that it has ties with missionary bodies in Israel. Col. Orde Dobbie, a cousin of the legendary "Christian Zionist" military genius Orde Wingate, during a recent visit to Britain on behalf of the ICEJ, addressed several Jewish groups in Britain. (JEWISH CHRONICLE, LONDON; "LAND OF ISRAEL" TELAVIV, Nov. 83) An interview with Jan van der Hoeven, official spokesman for the ICEJ, was carried in "NOW" (15.12.83) in which he angrily denied charges of missionary activity by the ICEJ, affirmed the right of Jews to believe in Jesus within a Jewish framework in Israel, attacked "Yad L'Ahim" as "fanatics", and the charges of bribery and enticing Jewish children to Christian meetings in Tiberias as "lying and slander," also commenting on his visit with the Tiberias Mayor Bibi. In a letter of reply by Moshe Porush of Yad L'Ahim, Jerusalem, it was claimed that "we have sufficient documented evidence on file to prove beyond any shadow of a doubt that the ICEJ and their associate and affiliate offices outside Israel have engaged in missionary activity since they first opened their doors in Israel...The establishment of the ICEJ was a premeditated attempt to carry out a systematic program of proselytizing the Jews." (NOW 22.12.83)

MISSION IN JERUSALEM: Charges were ^{levelled against} the Orthodox Jewish hospital "Shaarei Tzedek" in Jerusalem because it transfers children suffering from incurable retardation to a Christian institution, allegedly missionary. The hospital director rejected the charge, and pointed out that the institution was recognized by State agencies. (MAARIV:6.2.84) The cancellation of a missionary event in a Jerusalem hall was credited to the deputy chairman of the Jerusalem religious council as a result of pressure exerted on the manager. (JEWISH TRIBUNE, LONDON: 14.10.83) The "One Jerusalem" faction in the Municipality expressed regret over the decision of the Beth Shalom movement to cancel its plan for a hotel centre in Jerusalem, but at the same time the faction reaffirmed its unqualified opposition to all missionary activity by non-Jews in Jerusalem. It does not, however, reject the activities of pro-Israel Christian groups who are of a non-missionary character, and continues to view the Beth Shalom movement in a positive light. (AL HANISHMAR 12.2.84)

CHRISTIANS IN ISRAEL

RE-INTERMENT: (SEE ALSO SELECTIONS No. 118, page 8 bottom) A ruling by the rabbinat that the body of Teresa Engelovich of Rishon Le Zion must be re-interred in a Christian cemetery is being contested by the family, and a High Court order for a hearing in the matter has been scheduled. Meanwhile, religious authorities insist that the burial in a Jewish cemetery was obtained by deceit with information about the woman's being a Christian withheld from the burial society. Meanwhile, the daughter of the deceased, who converted to Judaism formally some years ago, has threatened to re-convert to Christianity should the re-interment of her mother take place. The rabbi responsible for the ruling claimed that he had consulted with local Christian authorities who shared his opinion that it was permissible to reinter someone buried in the cemetery of another community, and that they would act likewise if the situation were reversed. (MAARIV 12.12.83; SHEARIM 11.12.83; HATSOBEB 9.12.83; HAAHETZ 9.12.83)

CONVERT TO JUDAISM: David Terrell, a 27-year-old American who nine years ago spent a period of two years as a volunteer at the Baptist centre "JERUSALEM HOUSE", and subsequently became interested in Yemenite Jews and was imprisoned during a visit to Yemen as an Israeli spy, has formally converted to Judaism and adopted a Yemenite Jewish life style in Israel. He is now named David Ben-Avraham. He is now living in Moshav Azriel and working in Netanya. He appeals for a campaign to obtain the release of the remnant of Yemenite Jewry and their emigration to Israel, which he estimates numbers between 4-5,000. (HAAHETZ/YE DIOT AKHROMOT: 20.2; DAVAR 21.2.83)

GERMAN CHRISTIANS ADOPT THREE ISRAELI JEWISH CHILDREN: An Israeli mother judged incompetent to raise her children because of mental illness who subsequently agreed to the adoption of her children by a German Christian family recently sought to reverse her consent to adoption in a German court, but was overruled, because insufficient evidence was presented to justify uprooting the children again from their new home. Meanwhile,

an investigation was undertaken in Israel to discover the reason the mother was permitted to ~~take~~^{take} the children to Germany when it was known by the Welfare Dept that she intended to offer them for adoption ^{in Germany} (MAARIV 27.1.84)

DEVOUT CHRISTIAN COUPLE REJECTED FOR KIBBUTZ MEMBERSHIP: The left-wing Kibbutz Maanit by a majority vote of its 70 members rejected the application ^{FOR MEMBERSHIP} of Evelyn and Gary Raynor, devout Baptist Christians from Australia on the grounds that their strong religious faith would not fit in to the stream of kibbutz life. The couple, who had spent two years in the kibbutz with a baby girl born during that time, plan to return to Australia. "We wanted to live in Israel and we loved kibbutz life. We are Socialists and we wanted to learn Jewish culture and live in a Jewish atmosphere," they told the press. "I love Israel and believe it has a special future destiny when the Messiah comes to her," Gary adds. They expressed no bitterness about the decision and said they would continue to support Israel and the kibbutz idea. Meanwhile, two left-wing columnists (Aharon Megged and Yorum Kanyuk in DAVAR and MAARIV respectively, 20.1 & 2.2.) sharply criticized the decision of the kibbutz. In response, kibbutz members claimed that a similar decision would have been made for a devoutly Orthodox Jew who would also not fit in to the secular stream of kibbutz life.

RABBINIC RESPONSE: In response to a newspaper query in an Orthodox weekly (EHEV SHABBAT B'NEI BRAK 9.12.83), former Sefardi Chief Rabbi Ovadia Yosef stated that "it is absolutely forbidden to visit Christian churches, and observant Jewish guides must take great care not to stumble nor to cause other Jews to stumble by leading them into visits at Christian churches." He cited talmudic teachings forbidding entrance into a "house of strange worship" (idolatry).

NON-JEWISH RELIGIOUS STUDENTS: New rules of Min. Relig. Affairs provide for extra children's allowances for married students in religious seminaries, but will mostly benefit Jewish religious students inasmuch as there are no Moslem religious seminaries in Israel (parallel to Jewish seminaries) and there are few Christian seminarians who are both married and Israeli. The main aim of the new ruling is to care for married students in the yeshivas (Jewish religious seminaries).

LUTHER ANNIVERSARY: Under the heading "DISAPPOINTED HOPE: MARTIN LUTHER & THE JEWS," Shalom Ben-Chorin, editor of "ISRAEL NACHRICHTEN", published two full-page articles on the German Reformer (9.12.83 and 16.12.83) surveying Luther's life and thought and its impact on Nazism as well as other areas of German, European and Jewish life.

GERMANS & JEWS: Under the heading "A TWO THOUSAND YEAR AFFAIR," HAARETZ (30.12.83) published a feature article about the two-millennia experience of the Jewish people with Germany.

MARTIN LUTHER KING: A report on the Martin Luther King Forest in Galilee. (29.11.83)
(ISRAEL NACHRICHTEN TELAVIV)

CHRISTIANS PRO-ISRAEL: Rev. Mike Evans of Texas, in Israel with a group of pro-Israel clergy, presented P.M. Shamir with two volumes containing 350,000 signatures of U.S. citizens who expressed enthusiastic support for the State of Israel. The signatures were gathered following the filming of a strong pro-Israeli movie throughout the USA. The premier was reportedly very moved by the gesture. (MAARIV/AL HANISHMAR)

A tour headed by Jerry Falwell, U.S. Moral Majority leader, comprising some 600 parishoners of the Baptist minister and TV viewers of the Old Time Gospel Hour, visited Israel in the winter. A feature article by Haim Shapiro (JLM POST 2.12.83) headed FUNDAMENTAL FRIENDSHIP surveyed the man, the movement, his friends and opponents, Jewish and Christian.

"LIBERAL EVANGELICALS": A full-page interview of two Baptist officials visiting the region as part of a 20-member delegation sponsored by the Palestine Human Rights Campaign appeared in the English-language East Jerusalem journal "Al-Fajr". Attacking U.S. policy in the Mideast, and Falwell-type Evangelicalism, they denied any link between biblical Israel and modern Israel or the concept of a "chosen nation." They affirmed the right of Israel and the Palestine ^{peoples} ~~peoples~~ to exist. (30.9.83)

A brief report on the WCC Vancouver meeting reiterating WCC views on the Mideast issue appeared in NEW OUTLOOK TELAVIV (Dec.83).

CHRISTIAN FESTIVALS: Further attempts to have a common date for major Christian festivals in the Holy Land were made at an ecumenical conference in Nazareth on the 18th February 1984. The previous conference 1½ years ago submitted a report on efforts made to date to persuade the various churches and denominations to arrive at a commonly-accepted solution for the divergent dates of Christmas and Easter. It was decided to set up ecumenical committees in various villages and settlements to promote the proposal for unified dates. (HAARETZ/AL HAMISHMAR)

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR FEELS: The Armenians celebrated their Christmas last, bringing the country's long Nativity season to a close, but the holiday devoted to the Prince of Peace was not without violence this year. The clash came in Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity (when) a fight broke out between Greek and Armenian monks who both claimed the right to clean a small section of the wall above the crypt. During the Orthodox Christmas celebrations two groups of Syrian Orthodox Boy Scouts began fighting over the place of ^{each of} its marching bands in the procession. Knives were pulled and four scouts were taken to the hospital. (JLM POST 27.1.84 HAIM SHAPIRO) Concern over the repair of a leaking roof was allayed earlier this year when it was quietly mended although the Greek Orthodox, Armenians and Catholics could not agree over whose right it was to act. (JLM POST 25.12.83) The periodic expressions of concern by Jewish religious authorities over widespread Jewish Israeli attendance at Christmas rites and the celebration of New Year's Eve were again voiced. (VARIOUS PAPERS)

SECTS & CULTS

Arye Dulzin, Gen. Dir. of the Jewish Agency alleges that about half of the membership of the mystical cults worldwide are Jewish. Dulzin has prepared a new educational program for the Diaspora to promote Jewish spiritual continuity and prevent assimilation and loss of Jewish identity. (HAARETZ 18.11.83) Meanwhile, reports on several imported and home-grown cults have appeared in the Israeli press, such as the local "FINGER OF GOD" sect, the U.S. "Jehova's Witnesses" which, despite considerable harassment by Jewish religious extremists appear to be growing. A reporter from YEDIOT AKHRONOT (2.12.83, Leah Etgar) describes a visit to the Tel-Aviv centre. The Orthodox weekly "YOM HASHISHI" (25.11.83) also published an exposé on the sect headed: "JEHOVA'S WITNESSES: THE MOST DANGEROUS OF THE MISSIONARY SECTS". Reports on the "Moonies" and an Israeli connection appeared in MAARIV (5.10.83), HAOLEM HAZEH (4.10); on the Scientology cult (HAARETZ, a series), MAARIV (11.10), report on a split in the leadership of the cult (HAARETZ 9.12), the Emin sect (25.11.83) and various other sects in the wake of a campaign of exposure and investigation by various agencies in Israel, including the press. An anti-Jewish sect with ties to the extreme Right is described in "AL HAMISHMAR" (15.6.83) teaching that "the Jews are the children of Satan."

Charges and countercharges concerning the "penitents" movement (secular Jews "returning" to Orthodox Judaism) continue to be exchanged in the local media. An organization of parents whose children have become ultra-orthodox within the context of this movement has been formed to combat and "expose" it as a sect. Opponents of the movement claim that it leads to total alienation from family and friends, an abnormal lifestyle, religious fanaticism.

JESUS AS A SALES PITCH: A minor tempest was recently stirred up by the use of a medieval-style drawing of the crucified Christ captioned: "YOU DON'T HAVE TO PAY DEARLY IN ORDER TO BE FAMOUS" It was designed to promote the sale of advertising by a local firm. There were protests against its banality and offensiveness. (HAARETZ 24.1; YEDIOT AKHRONOT 26.1.84) Two brief articles appeared about the U.S. JEWS FOR JESUS publicity campaign (JESUS IS YESHUA) MAARIV 6.1.84, and a theory about Jesus' death and burial. (DAVAR 19.12.83)

SCRIPTURE: An independent research project ^{this} year disclosed that 12 percent of Israeli ^{Jewish} households own a New Testament. (HAARETZ 13.11.83) A book review on a monograph by Arye Newman (Academic Publishing Co., Leuven, Belgium) entitled **MAPPING TRANSLATION EQUIVALENCE**, is mainly concerned with Bible translation. (JLM POST 17.6.83) Another deals with "THE DISCOVERY OF HEBREW IN TUDOR ENGLAND" (Manchester Univ. Press, by Gareth Lloyd Jones) and its impact on Bible translation, Jewish studies, and the readmission of Jews to England. (JLM POST 6.1.84)

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