

REHOVOT "GRACE & TRUTH" ASSEMBLY

A total of 19 clippings between the 9th & 28th Dec. 1984 dealt with the situation facing "Grace & Truth Christian Assembly" in Rehovot. (SEE ALSO SELECTIONS No. 127, page 1.) "A thousand demonstrators danced in protest against the Messianic congregation," MAARIV's Gil Yudelovitz informed readers, blocking traffic, while police kept order without interfering with the demonstration. The members of this strange Messianic sect are led by a man named Baruch Maoz. "Their activity is contrary to planning and building ordinances," the Rehovot Mayor declared. The group had recently moved to Weizmann Street adjacent to synagogues and Jewish religious schools. (9.12.84) There are daily protest vigils at the site consisting of three youths on six shifts who warn those who come to the sect's meetings that they are aimed at converting Jews to another religion. Three of the youths were arrested by a police patrol car, which resulted in protests by many public figures as a result of which the youths were released. Meanwhile, a local public committee is being organized in cooperation with the anti-mission society YAD L'AHIM for curbing this missionizing activity. The local YAD L'AHIM group has distributed literature about the missionary Baruch Maoz, describing him as <sup>one of</sup> the heads of the messianic movement in Israel and a leading distributor of missionary literature aimed at Jewish readers. (HAMODIYA: 12.12.84)

At the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot an investigation is being conducted into the printing of Christian missionary prayers on computer paper belonging to the Institute's computer centre. Several scientists at the Institute have despatched a letter to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Police and Knesset Members about missionary activity in Rehovot, charging that there have been instances when young people traveled abroad and changed their religion under the influence of the Mission. (MAARIV:14.12.84) The Orthodox public in Rehovot are mounting a campaign against the Mission in town. This Sabbath <sup>there was</sup> a quiet demonstration outside the home of the apostate Baruch Maoz at 29 Weizmann, Rehovot. (A biographical description of Maoz follows...his conversion to Christianity in Eilat while working at Timna mines, his seminary studies in Wales, his claim that Messianic Judaism is an authentic part of the tradition of Israel, his leadership in the Mission in Israel, etc.) (EREV SHABAT 14.12.84)

The "Emunan" branch of Orthodox Jewish women in Rehovot organized a demonstration of hundreds of women and children against the missionary activities in Rehovot centered on Renov Weizmann. They heard the <sup>mother</sup> ~~voice~~ of local chief rabbi Simna Kook (who resides opposite the mission centre), Prof. Hadassah Melamed, a research biologist at Weizmann Institute, and others denounce the mission. (HAMODIA 14.12; DAVAR 16.12; HATSOFEH 18.12)

A temporary injunction has been issued in Rehovot by local magistrate Shlomo Shonam ordering a halt to the use of the premises at 29 Weizmann St. for worship or as a publishing house, at the request of Rehovot Mayor Harmelech. It was argued that such uses are illegal in a residential area. The Mayor claimed that he would have acted against any religious group violating city ordinances, but also stated that for the Mission "to move into an area of synagogues and religious and secular schools is more than ordinary provocation!" Charges were also made that Maoz and his followers appeared in a local school and distributed candies and playing cards with drawings of Jesus Christ crucified, and one lad of 11 complained to local rabbi Kook about the matter. (MAARIV, HATSOFEH, HAMODIYA--17.12; HADASHOT 16.12) An emotional editorial against the backdrop of Rehovot appeared in HAMODIYA (17.12) headed "LET US LIVE AS JEWS!" Linking the reports of missionary activity in Rehovot to Tiberias, Zikron Yaacov and elsewhere, the writer calls on the authorities to enact more stringent legislation against Christian preachments even where it is "wrapped as 'Messianic Jewish,'" There should also be an examination of the causes that lead certain segments of the population to be vulnerable not only to the Christian missionaries but also to the various <sup>idolatrous</sup> sects "which have spread like leprosy in the body of the Jewish people." Faith must be restored in the hearts of those who have strayed from the divine faith and Torah of Israel, the writer concludes. (MORE)



A long two-column feature article headed "MESSIAH'S EMISSARIES LAND IN REHOVOT" appeared in AL HAMISHMAR (19.12.84) bylined Zehava Moses. The article described the Orthodox campaign against the Messianic congregation and the HaGefen publishing house on Weizmann Street as well as the background of Baruch Maoz and quotation from the "Messianic children's periodical 'Raya Ne'eman'" ("Faithful Friend") defining Messianic (or Christian) in Evangelical terms. Maoz claims there are some 30 congregations of Messianic Jews in Israel numbering about 3,000 Israelis, with some 1,500 being Gentiles who have settled in Israel. Each congregation is autonomous, but there are informal ties among the congregations, and the leaders gather together for consultation, study and sharing thoughts, but they are not under any obligation to this body. The Messianic Jews believe in God and in His revealed will according to the Old & New Testaments. "People need reformed hearts and God's gracious merits which come through the Messiah, Yeshua, which is the original and true faith of Israel," he says. The article goes on to describe the practice of immersion and the Lord's Supper, Sabbath and midweek meetings and membership requirements at the Rehovot congregation.

The charges of anti-mission personages are quoted, including the local rabbi Simha Kook, the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Bar Ilan University (an Orthodox Jewish body), and the local representative of YAD L'AHIM. The rabbi is particularly incensed over the approach of the congregation to secularist Jews who have no roots in Judaism. "They are strangling us, and we quibble over whether this is democratic or not. They are traitors, apostates upsetting the delicate balance in town between religious and secularist Jews," the rabbi charges. Nevertheless, curious neighbours who ventured out during the protest vigils held daily remarked that "the members of the congregation are very much liked by us, they are quiet and don't trouble us. True, they knocked on our doors to invite us to their Bible studies, but when we refused they stopped coming." Other neighbours stressed that in a democratic country everyone can engage in his own affairs as long as it causes no public damage. These are friendly people who harm no one."

Demonstrations outside the home of Baruch Maoz were reported in two ultra-orthodox journals (HAMODIYA 27.12; EREV SHABAT 21.12) as part of a series in the campaign against Maoz and "the Mission" in Rehovot. JERUSALEM POST (27.12) reported briefly that "Rehovot residents (took part) in anti-missionaries demo," which involved "dozens of residents including Rabbi Simha Kook." Former Rehovot Mayor Shmuel Rechtman, who was convicted several years ago of accepting bribes from contractors, broke a long silence on public issues by congratulating the local rabbi for his war against the Mission. Writing in a local journal, Rechtman stated: "There is no doubt that the City Council must denounce the acts of the missionary sect and drive them out of town, and not only be content with administrative steps such as charging them with violations of (municipal) ordinances." (YEDIOT AKHRONOT: 25.12.84)

MAARIV (27.12) and HAARETZ (28.12) each published feature articles about the Rehovot situation, including photographs of Maoz, several congregation members and opponents, secular and rabbinic. The MAARIV article bylined Gil Yudilovitz claims that the congregation distributes sweets and Christian literature to children, and some of the literature is quoted verbatim. Local negative reactions to the congregation are described with remarks about Maoz and a German organization F.D.I. allegedly providing financial backing. The HAARETZ feature, two full pages including photographs, is based mainly on an interview with Maoz and visits to the "Grace & Truth" congregation, as well as a description of a Hanuka party in the home of a member. The reporter, Amnon Barzilai, is somewhat skeptical about the outlay for such a small group of people and unimpressed by the Hanuka celebration, but he quotes at length Maoz and Yaacov Damkani, a paid employee of the congregation as evangelist.

TIRAT HACARMEL: Missionary activity by the Jehovah Witness sect in this town south of Haifa has reportedly caused a storm. Two JW missionary women were reportedly threatened with physical violence if they did not desist. Emergency meetings have been held to alert the townspeople. (KOL-BO HAIFA 7.12; MATSORE: 16.12; HAMODIYA 17.12; EREV SHABAT: 21.12)



**CROSSES ON MEZUZOT!** Hundreds of forged "mezuzot" "decorated" with crosses integrated into the Divine Name have been sold in Tel-Aviv. An investigation by "EREV SHABAT" (ultra-orthodox weekly) has disclosed that a Christian "scribe" is distributing them through merchants and storekeepers as if they were kosher. This is the first time such a thing has happened in Israel. (An enlarged photograph of the mezuzah scroll indicates that the "leg" in the "he" of the Divine Name (YHVH) resembles an x, but in ordinary size it appears to be a slightly thickened dot.)

**COMPUTER VS. MISSION:** In order to handle the copious material recently gathered by anti-mission activists, a giant computer has been purchased for several thousand dollars, into which will be fed data concerning the activities of the missionaries. (EREV SHABAT : 30.11.84)

**RAMLE:** Residents of Ramle have complained that members of a Christian missionary sect have begun to visit their homes; one was a young invalid on crutches/<sup>and a young woman</sup> with a Russian accent. They left tracts behind. (HADASHOT 18.12)

**LOD (LYDDA):** An interview with Rabbi Ortner of Lod appeared in "HAMAHANEH HAHAREDI" ("The Ultra-Orthodox Camp") on 20.11.84, with about half devoted to the fight against the missionaries, apparently J.W.s, especially a cleaning woman in a local school. (SEE SELECTIONS #126, top page 2: LOD)

**R. DRUCKMAN:** Religious M.K. Druckman has called for action to curb increased missionary activity in Israel, especially that of the missionary sect "JEWS FOR JESUS." (HATSOFEH 12.12.84; SHEARIM 14.12.84)

**OBITUARY:** Anti-mission activist Rabbi Gershon Segal of the hassidic sect HABAD has returned his soul to his maker. (KFAR HABAD 5th Kislev 5745)

#### DIASPORA RESPONSES TO THE MISSION

**ENGLAND:** The JEWISH TELEGRAPH (23.11.84) of Manchester reported that a new anti-missionary group has 'hit the streets' in Jerusalem in order to protest the presence of four major mission centres, NETIVYA, BAPTIST HOUSE, MESSIANIC ASSEMBLY & CASPARI CENTRE. The group is called NAHAR and it is linked to YAD L'AHIM. (SEE SELECTIONS #125, page 2, ANTIMISSION PROTESTS)

**SOUTH AFRICA:** JEWISH HERALD (30.10) of Jo'burg provided a condensed version of the JLM POST story about MISHKAN, the new theological journal on Jewish Evangelism. (SEE SELECTIONS #126, near top page 3.) The SOUTH AFRICAN JEWISH TIMES (Sept. 1984) of Jo'burg published a feature article by Rabbi Professor Solomon Rappaport examining "JUDAISM & MISSIONARY ACTIVITY." In a relatively ironic article the professor rejects mission, although he understands the motives of Christians and others who believe they have the key to salvation. Judaism once was missionary (and he cites among other evidences Matthew 23:15) but was deprived of this instinct by anti-Jewish legislation formulated by the established churches as well as suspicion of converts on the basis of Christian conversionary practices in addition to its rejection of exclusivist salvation. He also cites Niebuhr and Parkes in denying the validity of continued Christian missionary activity among Jews. He concludes that "Jews & Christians have many things in common without having to agree in matters of creed."

**U.S.A.:** B'NAI BRITH MESSENGER (12.10.84) of Los Angeles, carried a brief photo story about some 1200 Jews marching on Congregation BETH YESHUA (House of Jesus) in the Overbrook section of Philadelphia in protest against the group's deceitful missionary tactics. The demonstration was arranged, sponsored and financed by the Anti-Missionary Coalition of Greater Phila. JEWISH WEEK (31.8.84) of New York featured an editorial headed BEWARE OF MISSIONARIES concerning The Task Force of Missionaries & Cults of the Jewish Community Relations Council, and spotlighted especially Hare Krishna, American Board of Missions to the Jews, Jews for Jesus. "The need for vigilance against this plague has never been greater," the writer concludes. The JEWISH FLORIDIAN (21.9.84) of Miami, Fla. published a similar warning and referred to The Committee on Cults & Missionaries, an arm of the Greater Miami Jewish Federation's Community Relations Committee, "formed to counter the influences of these deceptive groups in South Florida." (MORE)



"OUR ISRAEL" (Hebrew-language newspaper in New York City) reported on 23.11.84 that the "JEWS FOR JEWS" organization headed by Rabbi Dubin, headquartered in Miami Beach, Fla., claims that missionary activity in Israel has reached "astonishing proportions." Rabbi Dubin was aided in his findings by YAD L'AHIM and its head Rabbi Porush, who claims that an estimated 30,000 Israelis are linked to <sup>Christian</sup> missionary activity. Rabbi Dubin also referred to the UCCI and its publication "MISHKAN", a journal for Jewish Evangelism. Dubin has sent his report to P.M. Peres and pressed him to liquidate illegal missionary activity in Israel. On 21.12.84 the same paper carried a report of a sharp attack on missionary activity initiated by mainline bodies of the Jewish community in Los Angeles. The report referred to advertisements in the U.S. press "seeking to represent Xmas as a Jewish holiday, and Jesus as the Jewish Messiah... We call on all decent Americans to denounce these fraudulent acts and to refrain from supporting organizations behind these acts." An appeal was also made for greater observance of Jewish rites and lifestyle.

A reader of the JEWISH STANDARD (Jersey City, N.J.) of 7 Sep 84 objected to a letter to editor by a member of Cong. Beth Israel, a messianic congregation. "It certainly does not behoove a JEWISH paper to give such a group a platform to espouse their views. This was the third time this messianic congregation has been given such space." The editor in a postscript to the letter noted that the letter was published in connection with a news story and disclaimed any support for the writer's views and regretted that the publication has offended readers.

YOUNG ISRAEL VIEWPOINT (New York, NY) in Sept. 1984 published a report about a walkout of Jewish producers and announcers connected with WEVD, a New York City Yiddish-language radio station sold to <sup>general Jewish</sup> Christian missionaries. At first the new owners provided a variety of programming at prime time, but later attempted to intrude upon the content of the Jewish programs, resulting in the walkout and the transfer of the programs to another station.

JEWISH CHRONICLE (Pittsburgh, Pa.) on 20.9.84 reported that the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, representing 770 Reform synagogues in the U.S. and Canada, has set up a national Committee on Cults & Missionaries "to combat the activities of deceptive proselytizing groups." The ultra-orthodox weekly ERUV SHABAT (28.12.84) commented on this development by reporting the reaction of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis in the U.S.: "It is truly ironic that the Reformed are now entering this struggle. Do they not feel that it is their movement which actually pushed young Jews to the fence, on the other side of which the missionaries were waiting?" A report submitted to Reform leader, Rabbi Alexander Schindler, noted that 12% of cultists are Jewish, a proportion to the general population 400% higher, and this has led to grave concern in the Reformed movement.

JEWISH COMMUNITY VOICE (Cherry Hill, NJ) of 26.9.84 published a report of a meeting of the Adult Enrichment Committee of Temple Beth Shalom on the subject of missionary activity. The main speaker was Scott Gould, former J.D.L. member and now director of the Philadelphia Anti-Missionary Institute. A psychology major and weightlifting champion, Gould has been involved in anti-mission work since 1975 and claims to have infiltrated the Beth Yeshua Congregation of Philadelphia and missionary conferences until suspicions about him were aroused. He called for a strong aggressive response to the missionaries, including "a return to the basic tenets of Judaism."

JEWISH WEEK (New York NY) on 5 Oct 84 reported that two Jewish groups have filed legal papers with the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office opposing the application of a travel agency run by Christian missionaries to trademark the name "SEE ISRAEL THRO' JEWISH EYES." They charged that the American Board of Missions to the Jews, Inc. (ABMJ) was fostering efforts to convert Jews to Christianity thro' Israel tours, inducing people to join their tours as though it were under Jewish auspices, and this was deceptive use of a registered trademark.

JEWISH PRESS (Brooklyn NY) on 27.12.84 published another appeal for Beth Shifra in B'klyn in its campaign to rescue Soviet Jews in B'klyn from "soul-snatching missionaries... brainwashing (them into) baptism."

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Two columns in the feature VIGIL by Rabbi Yaakov Spivak appeared in the JEWISH PRESS (BKLYN NY) passionately attacking missionaries. The first, AN OPEN LETTER TO MISSIONARIES (21.9.84) described an incident in Monsey, an orthodox Jewish community, in which a Missionary Mobile was routed by the EMES organization. The missionaries were apparently JEWS FOR JESUS and the rabbi promised to confront them on their home ground in Manhattan. "If you try to convert Jews, we will stop you cold. And when you finally decide to give up this folly we'll be there to welcome you back," he sums up. On 21.12.84, under the heading MISSIONARIES: EICHMANN'S ACCOMPLICES, the rabbi quotes from a statement by a cohort of Eichmann about the destruction of East European Jewry and the assimilation of Western Jewry, linking the quote to contemporary missionary activity. "The next time you see a missionary on the street, you can mentally paint a swastika on his face," he writes. He also reports on plans for a demonstration in front of the J.F.J. headquarters in Manhattan during Hanuka.

"VOICE OF HOPE": Four Jewish journals (JEWISH FLORIDIAN; JEWISH WORLD, Albany NY; JEWISH NEWS, Detroit; JEWISH CHRONICLE, Pittsburgh) all carried reports between 23 August 84 and 30.8.84 relating to charges by the JEWS FOR JESUS organization that the VOICE OF HOPE radio station in Lebanon sponsored by George Otis' HIGH ADVENTURE is mission-linked with JEWS FOR JESUS notwithstanding its appeal for support in the Jewish community for its pro-Israel stand.

JEWISH TRIBUNE (London, England) on 31.3.84 reported on the visit of Rabbi Shlomo Kohn, director of YAD L'AHIM's New York office, in Melbourne and Sydney in Australia for fund-raising purposes. THE JEWISH GAZETTE (Manchester England) on 9.Nov.84 reported that stronger efforts by the Jewish community to condemn missionary activity have been called for by a delegate to the Manchester Jewish Representative Council, Mr. Saul Wachtel. Reference was made to the Church's Ministry to the Jews (CMJ), whose Home Director, Derek Ryder, told the paper: "We believe we have a responsibility to offer Jesus to the Jews," and expressed the hope that they could accept Jesus and still remain Jewish. Leaders of the local and national Councils of Christians and Jews have made it clear that they do not support missionary activities.

"CHARISMA": A summary of an article in the Christian monthly "CHARISMA" dealing with the "radical sect, terrorist group" known as YAD L'AHIM was published in the ultra-orthodox journal SHEARIM on 30.11.84. It cited the English-language bulletin of YAD L'AHIM ("ACTION") and various incidents during the past year directed against Christian institutions and groups.

JEWS FOR JESUS & MESSIANIC JEWS: THE JEWISH WEEK (New York) on 5 Oct 84 reported the experiences of two Hebrew-school teachers (Steve Albert & Gershon Allweiss) who "infiltrated" a JEWS FOR JESUS Bible study by claiming interest in Christianity, using "pseudonyms and concocted false backgrounds." They secretly taped their discussions with a JFJ missionary. They are sharing their experiences with Jewish groups. "They're very sincere, convinced that what they're doing is true," they commented about JFJ. They also agree that Jews living in a Christian society should learn about the Christian religion. "Let Jews hear what's wrong with it from Jewish sources," they say. HAARETZ (20.12.84) published a brief item about the J.F.J. full-page advertisement in TIME MAGAZINE about Christmas being a Jewish holiday, most of it being brief quotes from the ad. In a brief tongue-in-cheek item headed "JEWS FOR JESUS," YEDIOT AKHRONOT (24.12) reported that one of the most beautiful churches in the world, soon to be dedicated by the Pope in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, in Africa, was constructed by the Israeli firm Solel Boneh.

"MESSIANIC" MOTHER REMOVED FROM PLANE: A Christian resident of Netanya, a member of the sect of the "Messianic Jews", who was about to leave Israel, was removed yesterday from the plane with her two daughters by order of the rabbinic court in Tel-Aviv at the request of her husband. Mrs. Tamara Ronen (Roninson), born in Leningrad, emigrated to Israel from the USSR 14 years ago, and joined the congregation of the "Messianic Jews" four years ago. Her husband Jacob, 55, left their Netanya home, and divorce proceedings have been initiated. The couple have four children; one of them is

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aged 17½, intends to remain in Israel to perform her military service. The mother has found employment in the U.S.A. with a Russian paper in Sacramento, California. Following lengthy negotiations, her husband had agreed to her leaving with the two youngest children and she had sold all her belongings, but when she arrived at the airport at Passport Control, she was told she could not leave the country, and her baggage was removed from the plane. She proceeded to the Tel-Aviv rabbinical court, where she was informed that the order barring their departure would not be canceled except with the consent of her husband. (YEDIOT AKHRONOT, Yehezkiel Adiran, 11.1.85)

### CHRISTMAS IN ISRAEL

(CARRIED)

The Jerusalem weekly "KAWL HA'IR" (21.12.85) 1½ pages of photographs and descriptions of the life of Jesus, as related to Jerusalem Holy Places, under the heading: "TODAY 1,984 YEARS AGO: JESUS WAS HERE." This week 1984 years ago there was born in Bethlehem the man who founded Christianity. Chapter headings in his brief life and its finale were spent in Jerusalem, which has provided the city an abundance of holy places, not only for Christians. (8 photographs with comments below each are provided for THE CHURCH OF THE VISITATION: MEETING OF MARY & ELISABETH; BETHLEHEM'S CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY: BIRTH IN A STABLE; EL AZARIYA: THE RAISING OF LAZARUS; MT. ZION: THE LAST SUPPER--THE TRAITOR; GETHSAMANE; THE CHURCH OF CONDEMNATION: PILATE SEEMS TO FREE HIM; VIA DOLOROSA: THE CROWN OF THORNS FOR THE KING OF THE JEWS; THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE: "BY THIS STONE THEY PLACED HIM ON THE CROSS.") The comments of Motti Rozitsky (Photos Rolli Rosen) are mainly based on quotations or references to the Gospels, custodians of the various sites and teachers and tour guides.

The Orthodox daily HATSOFEH (21.12.84) carried a feature article under the heading "IDOLATRY UNDER THE NAME OF CHRISTMAS & SYLVESTER (NEW YEAR) CELEBRATIONS." The writer, N. Golan, refers to Theodore Herzl's Christmas tree and those of others in the 19th Century, assimilated Jews like "the Seer of the Jewish State." Meanwhile, devout East European Jews "observed" Christmas by abstaining from Torah study and playing cards on the day that "that Man" (Jesus) was born. But multitudes of Israeli Jews celebrate Christmas and New Year's Eve, even if they don't give any Christian significance to their celebration. Netanyahu's Rabbi Lau denounces the practice and calls it idolatrous. Aren't there enough joyous Jewish festivals that Israelis have to go into the fields of strangers to find occasions for rejoicing? he asks plaintively. In Netanya, anyway, the rabbinate has succeeded in preventing the hotels under its supervision for kashrut to advertise celebrations of this kind, but in Tel-Aviv the hotels flourish on these days.

CHRISTMAS MUSIC: Christmas carols were heard at the Nof Yam public school in Herzliya-Pituhah, to the dismay of several of the neighbours. (YEDIOT AKHRONOT 17.12.84) In a letter of response, the school principal expressed astonishment inasmuch as the offending music was based on Scottish folk song which had been given Hebrew words and was approved by the Ministry of Education for use in Sixth Grade musical education. (30.12.84) During the Christmas season the scheduling of a children's program with a Christian guest clergyman to answer listeners' questions about Christmas was canceled following protests by Orthodox Jews and the intervention of two broadcasting managers, Gideon Lev-Ari and Micah Yinon of the B'cast Authority in Israel. (HADASHOT:30.12; EREV SHABAT 28.12; HAMODIYA 25.12.84) An article headed "JESUS IN JEWISH EYES" by David Tamar, an Orthodox Jewish scholar, was featured in YEDIOT AKHRONOT (28.12.84) with a photo of the Jewish artist Mark Chagall's "White Crucifixion" (1938). The writer discusses Jewish-Christian polemics over biblical texts; rabbinic prayers, talmudic and other references to Jesus, almost all negative, and the origin of Orthodox Jewish practices on Christmas Eve based on the Latin word "natus" (nativity)

CHRISTIAN PRESENCE: A feature article by Haim Shapiro in JERUSALEM POST (21.12.84) dealt with the Christian presence in the Holy Land. Various sources are quoted, offering conflicting views about the trend of the Christian presence in Israel. Census figures for 1983, for the first time since 1948, show an increase in Christian population in Israel; also in Jerusalem.

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The article relates almost entirely to Christians of the traditional churches (Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic) and brief references to Protestants.

**BAPTIST CHURCH:** The continued campaign by ultra-orthodox Jews to block plans to rebuild the Baptist Church (burned down in Oct. 1982) was reported recently, especially a threat of the new ultra-orthodox "Shas" Sephardi party, which threatened (JLM POST:28.12.84) to quit Jerusalem coalition if plans are finally approved. Final approval is in the hands of the newly-appointed Interior Minister and "Shas" leader Yitzhak Peretz.

**CHRISTIANS AND JEWS:** The I.D.F. will investigate the participation of an entire unit in a Christian Church worship, at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It was part of an educational program for the soldiers, and was justified by the Chief Education Officer of the I.D.F. at a press conference this week. While no soldier is required to enter the church if he has objections to it, it is considered important that soldiers learn about other religions in Israel. An investigation was authorized following complaints by soldiers that they were taken into the church while a religious rite, including the sprinkling of incense on them, was going on. (EREV SHABAT 21.12.84) (KAWL HA'IR of Jerusalem carried a brief account of the matter but discounted the charges by the ultra-orthodox that the soldiers were participants in the rites. 4.1.85)

"THE JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN TRADITION" is questioned in an article by Yaakov Rabi (AL HAMISHMAR 5.Oct.84) basing himself on a study of H. Sassoon which affirms that such a tradition was in effect paradoxically during the Middle Ages and had some effect on modern Jewish-Christian relations, but Rabi downgrades its present significance and refers to Jewish-Christian antagonisms throughout history and basic incompatibilities. HAARETZ (31.5.84) carried a feature article on Interfaith Dialogue in Mobile, Alabama by Dr. Haim Gordon. DAVAR (21.10.84) carried a news article about Pres. Reagan's attempt to improve Jewish-Christian ties through Vatican ties, including official recognition of the State of Israel by the Vatican, but these were reportedly rejected.

**CHRISTIAN LIFE IN ISRAEL,** a publication of the Israel Interfaith Assn, in its New Year Edition (Winter 1984-5) published brief reports on Christian activities in Israel, such as: Christian population growth in the country; the Prime Minister's affirmation of freedom of worship for all faiths (at the Feast of Tabernacles celebration); the UCCI Conference in Tiberias (with reference to the document "Freedom of Worship & the Messianic Jew in Israel", a legal opinion prepared by an Israeli lawyer); Nes Amini Seminars comparing concepts of Messiah in Judaism & Christianity; Catholic participation in a Presbyterian service in Jerusalem; and the planting of 120 cedars of Lebanon in Jerusalem's Gilo neighbourhood donated by the Lebanese Christian Agency to the people of J'lm. The issue also contained an interview with Dr. Gerios Sa'el Khoury, director of the "Christianity in the Land" project at Tantur Ecumenical Institute in which he complained about the "westernization" of Christmas, also noting the Church's favouring of Western pilgrims over local Christians. "Sometimes we have the feeling that our spiritual welfare may be of secondary importance," he remarked.

#### PRO-ISRAEL CHRISTIANS :

**PROJECT KIBBUTZ:** A report in the ultra-orthodox daily SHEARIM (19.12.84) notes the stated purposes of PROJECT KIBBUTZ, which supplies Christian volunteers to Israeli kibbutzin, including the establishing of "fellowships" (which the paper interprets to mean churches) in kibbutzin for Christian ends. MAARIV (25.12.84) reported that PROJECT KIBBUTZ leaders were ordered to leave the country by the Ministry of Interior because their visas had expired in August and they were remaining illegally. The leaders charged that their exit would lead to the collapse of their work, but they were considering the return of the founder, Art Carlson, who had obtained Permanent Residence status in Israel some years ago.

In a letter to the JERUSALEM POST (14.12.84) Alexander Feldman, former Prisoner of Zion in the USSR, expressed "deep concern about a growing



tendency among certain circles to attack Christian friends and supporters of Israel." He denounced the campaign against "Beit Shalom" in Gilo, also the rebuilding of the Baptist Church, and noted the active support he had received in his own campaign on behalf of imprisoned friends in the USSR from the staff of the Int'l Christian Embassy in J'lm, and denied that any attempt to influence his "world view" in any way was made by Christian friends at the ICEJ. "If even a third of the world's Jewish population were as ardent Zionists as these Christian Zionists, I think the future of the Jewish State would be secure," he concludes. On 9 Dec.84 the JLM POST carried a lead editorial headed SYRIA'S NEW ENEMY, referring to a recent issue of the SYRIAN TIMES which accused Jan Willem van der Hoeven, a prominent leader of the I.C.E.J. of stating to the POST that "he believes in rebuilding the Temple on the debris of the holy Al-Aksa Mosque." Actually, he told the POST the exact opposite in an interview; but the Syrians are evidently disturbed by the estimated 40 million U.S. evangelicals or "Biblical Christians" who support Israel. "Syria would do better if it shared that hope (of peace) rather than turn the guns of the Big Lie on Jews & Christians alike," the editorial writer concludes. YEDIOT AKHRONOT (9 Jan 85) reported on a new book set for publication by Barbara & Michael Layden of Washington, D.C. which claims that devout Christian Evangelicals seeking to expedite the return of Jesus Christ are backing extremist Jewish attempts to remove Muslims from the Temple Mount in anticipation of the coming of Messiah. "They believe if the Temple is rebuilt, Jesus will come again; we believe if the Temple is rebuilt, the Messiah will come for the first time, so let us build the Temple and we'll see who comes," a Jewish militant was quoted. (SEE SELECTIONS #123, pages 7-8 CHRISTIAN FUNDAMENTALISTS & THE JEWISH UNDERGROUND)

#### CULTS AND SECTS

MOONIES: The Moonies, or Unification Church, came to Jerusalem for a Youth Seminar on World Religions, in which some 120 youths from around the world visited Israel with 30 staff members. At a press conference in Jerusalem they denied charges by anti-mission activists that they would proselytize. Among Israelis addressing the conference are the head of the Kiryat Arba yeshiva, Rabbi Waldman, Prof. Peli of Ben-Gurion University, and author Moshe Shamir. (JERUSALEM POST : 10 Jul 84)

MAKUYA: A feature article entitled "THE LAST OF THE SAMURAI" in the POST (14.9.84) by Yossi Galzu discusses sympathetically the founder of the Japanese pro-Israel Makuya movement.

EST: The ultra-orthodox weekly EREV SHABAT (30.11.84) reports that the EST sect, which is characterized in a negative way in cult-investigation reports of the Knesset, is behind the recent campaign to encourage drivers to fasten seat belts in town (where it is not compulsory) in order to improve its public image. It allegedly raised money and personnel for the campaign.

#### CULTURE & SUNDRIES

ZIONISM AS A CRY FOR MESSIAH: A memorial article on the 40th anniversary of the death of pioneer Hebrew novelist A.A. Kabak, author of "The Narrow Lane", a novel about Jesus of Nazareth, written after a serious spiritual crisis, which led him to return to Orthodox Judaism. (YEDIOT AKHRONOT 11.1.85)

JESUS AND ESSENES: At the International Congress on Biblical Archaeology in Jerusalem, Prof. David Flusser claimed that Jesus knew the Essene sect and referred to them in the New Testament in Luke 16:1-2 about "the children of light"; but he opposed their <sup>economic</sup> separatism and this explains his counsel "to make friends by means of the unrighteous Mammon." (JLM POST : 6 Apr 84)

FR. BARGIL PIXNER: A feature article about Fr. Bargil Pixner of Mt. Zion appeared in CHRISTIAN COMMENT/OIKOUMENIKOS (JLM POST 4.Nov.84), a specialist in Christian archaeology and Church history.