

UCCI NEWS CLIPPINGS DIGEST

CHRISTIAN EVANGELICALS AND ZIONISM

An article headed "DOUBTING THE BLESSINGS OF CHRISTIAN ZIONISM" by Pnina Peli was published in the JERUSALEM POST (20.9.85; Int'l Edition 12.10.85) in the wake of the International Christian Zionism Congress held in Basel, Switzerland during the summer. (SEE SELECTIONS No. 134, p.8) The writer expresses "some uneasiness" and sees a need to "better acquaint ourselves with the long-term goals as well as with the present policy of Christian groups aligning themselves with Israel." The Christian Zionist Congress "smacks of over-identification," reflecting "the relentless determination of the other monotheistic religions to take over (Israel's) rightful inheritance, historical and geographical." Peli finds particularly offensive the "legitimation given to missionizing Hebrew-Christian groups on the basis of their pro-Israel activities... and most questionable of all the Embassy's close association with the Hebrew-Christian or Messianic Jewish groups... (who) lure new believers from among Israelis into their fold by bringing them the 'good news' that as Christians they will actually become better Jews." Reference is made to the Hebrew-Christian quarterly and various Jewish believers in Jesus living in Israel, one of whom, Rev. Baruch Maoz, was a featured speaker at the congress and spoke on "The Church's dilemma in relation to Messianic Jews." These groups are "intent on fudging the historical lines separating Christianity from Judaism," she writes, and they are people "who seek to undermine the heritage of Judaism and the existence of Israel." Judaism, Israel and Zionism are questions of self-determination, and Christians should not usurp "cherished and unique Jewish symbols such as the menorah or, for that matter, by holding a Christian Zionist Congress." The article concludes that "Israel has no obligation to promote, or even tolerate, either Moslem imperialism or Christian triumphalism."

A sharp response to the Peli article appeared on 1 Oct 85, written by "POST" staff writer David Krivine, headed "MARKET PLACE OF IDEAS." Refuting Peli's arguments that "Christian Zionism" is a threat to Israel and Jewry, Krivine underscores Israel's existence as a sovereign state, and notes that Jews "are no longer at the mercy of the Gentiles who might wish to impose their religious views on us." The fact that for Christians belief in Jesus as Messiah is a key to salvation for all peoples is no doubt frustrating for Christian Zionists who are willing to "wait patiently until the Jews come round of their own accord to recognize the truth...it is going to be a long wait".

Other Christians who do not refrain from preaching the gospel do convince some Jews, "which drives bigots of Jewish orthodoxy out of their wits." They are the real problem, with their fantasies about missionaries, who "are in fact ordinary human beings with a bee in their bonnets, like our own clerical dogmatists." In any case, "the world is a marketplace of ideas and Peli wants to slam the door on all that." Freedom of choice is anathema to "fundamentalist" Orthodoxy, "but democracy means letting people talk, even missionaries, and letting people listen, even Jews. The antimissionary society Yad L'Ahim prefers the hostility with which it is familiar, to be rejected by humanity at large; antisemitism serves the Orthodox purpose. The Jew then remains cornered in his ghetto, frozen in his own past, isolated from the world - a puppet in the hands of his rabbinical masters," he concludes.

A number of letters appeared in the JERUSALEM POST on the subject by Evangelicals (Grant Livingstone, 13.10; Lurabelle D. Annis, 22.10; Pauline Young, Cambridge, 22.10); Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, President, Holyland Fellowship of Christians & Jews, commending the Peli article (7 Nov. 85), and Menahem Benhayim, Israel Secy. Int'l Hebrew Christian Alliance (4 Oct 85), and ultra-orthodox Lee M. Spetner of Rehovot (20.10) attacking David Krivine and "liberal-minded Jews".

Reports on the annual Christian celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles sponsored by the Intl Christian Embassy in Jerusalem appeared in the Israeli press in early October, particularly focusing on the participation of the 5,000 pilgrims from 45 countries in the annual Jerusalem March in colorful national costumes, carrying banners of solidarity with Israel and the Jewish people, as well as the appearance of P.M. Shimon Peres at the closing event of the celebration in the Sultan's Pool. An article by Haim Shapiro of the JLM POST (2 Oct 85) noted that the Christian Embassy appears to be "torn by dissent" which has affected the U.K. branch as well as groups in New Zealand, USA, Canada and Denmark. The Embassy Director stated in response that the only serious problem was with the British board.

VOICE OF HOPE: A suicide attack on the Evangelical broadcasting station "VOICE OF HOPE" in South Lebanon succeeded in destroying the station but not silencing it. "They destroyed the building with its expensive equipment, but they will never succeed in destroying our words," spokesmen for the station declared following the attack. Three terrorists and two guards died in the attack. Nevertheless, broadcasting was resumed from a nearby site the following day. (YEDIOT AKHRONOT 18.10) An activist in the anti-mission society YAD L'AHIM, on learning of the attack, was quoted in the ultra-orthodox "HAMAHANE HAHAREDI": (23.10) "So perish all thine enemies, O Lord. Our work is being done by others. May the Christian TV draw the right conclusions and stop subverting Jewish souls." A Parliamentary Query was submitted by Sephardi Orthodox M.K. Rabbi Rafael Pinhasi to the Minister of Defence with respect to the missionary radio and TV stations in South Lebanon. Pinhasi inquired why Israeli assistance to the stations was not conditioned on an end to missionary preaching and also an end to Hebrew subtitling of Christian telecasts which are received in Israel.

CHRISTIAN PENANCE MOVEMENT: Ara Tchividjian, age 72, arrived in Israel with six of his children to found a movement of Christian penance to give expression to the regret Christians feel over the wrongs perpetrated against the Jewish people during the past 2,000 years. Himself a penniless refugee from Armenia, Mr. Tchividjian amassed a fortune in real estate and business in Switzerland. The founding meeting took place at LaRomme hotel in Jerusalem with some 50 guests flown to Israel, including heads of Jewish organizations, professors, clergy, theologians, and several Israelis (Professor David Flusser of the Hebrew University and an anonymous local rabbi.) Tchividjian is seeking permission to establish headquarters for the movement, which will combat antisemitism and anti-zionism and promulgate love for Israel. He has assured Mayor Kollek of Jerusalem that the movement will not engage in any form of missionary activity. (KAWL HA'IR 23.8.85)

FRENCH PROTESTANT PHILANTHROPY: A French Protestant pastor was awarded special honours by the Government Hospital of Safed for his fundraising efforts which enlisted a quarter-million dollars worth equipment for the hospital. The pastor expressed his faith in Israel's destiny as the Chosen People, saying: "Whoever attacks you will pay for it, and whoever stands at your side is assured of God's help." (MAARIV 23.10; OMER 23.10)

"BRIDGES FOR PEACE": The nonprofit Jerusalem-based pro-Israel Christian group founded by the late Dr. G. Douglas Young, founder of the Institute for Holy Land Studies on Mt. Zion, reports on its new "outreach program" of pilgrimage/study mission tours. Meetings between Christian Professionals and their Israeli counterparts are featured. Norma Nation, Israel Programs Director, reported that nine groups participated last year, some 500 participants this year, and an estimated 12-14 groups are expected for 1986. "The response has been terrific," she states. (ISRAEL TRAVEL NEWS: OCT 1985)

"THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO FALWELL": A 2½ page feature article in the weekend edition of YEDIOT AKHRONOT (18.10) under this heading, produced an extremely negative portrait of Rev. Jerry Falwell by Richard Ostling and Robert Eisman in cooperation with "TIME" magazine. Falwell is portrayed as a supporter of South African apartheid, a fundamentalist-literalist with respect to the Bible, a preacher of salvation through Jesus, a partisan of Christian (Fundamentalist) involvement in politics, the prime mover of the Moral Majority movement, and a major figure in the "electronic church" reaching an estimated 34 million homes. Falwell shares with other "electronic" preachers like Billy Graham and Pat Robertson vast resources. The rise of Falwell is traced from a nonreligious home, following a salvation experience in 1952 (influenced in part by the radio preaching of Chas. Fuller), through Bible College, ordination, pastoral, radio and TV ministries, the accumulation of wealth and power on the U.S. political and religious scene, and his special relationship to Pres. Reagan. "What do Jerry Falwell and his colleagues Billy Graham, Pat Robertson, Tim LaHaye and their like actually want?" the writers ask rhetorically. "They want an America which is religious, believing, conservative. As one new believer recently expressed it, 'We Christians stood aside and let others write the laws, but the situation has deteriorated so badly that now we're saying it's enough.'" Some of the issues involved are abortion (the right-to-life campaign), homosexuality (opposing "gay rights"), pornography and violence in the media (supporting boycotts and pressure on advertisers and media), prayer and creationism in public and private schools, support for Israel on the grounds of biblical prophecy and on the same ground opposition to antisemitism. Yet the wave of revivalism may have peaked, the writers conclude, as a reaction to the permissiveness of the previous generation, and Falwell may well feel that his own personal day of judgment is at hand.

"THE MISSION"

ANNUAL REVIEW: A summary of the anti-mission activities of YAD L'AHIM, the ultra-orthodox anti-mission warriors, during the previous Hebrew year 5744 was portrayed as the battle between little David ("Yad L'Ahim") and Goliath ("the Mission"). A 1½ page rundown of the campaign included Netanya (the "Loden Congregation" and the Ethiopian Jews), "the Messianic Jews" ("sophisticated literature distribution" and legal actions), the Baptist Church in Jerusalem, Middle East TV ("Star of Hope"), the Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv book fairs ("Good News Publishing" and "Yama" "missionary" literature at rented stalls), "Project Kibbutz" (success in preventing renewal of visas for Christian leadership of kibbutz volunteers), and the campaign against the extension to the Mormon-sponsored Brigham Young University on Mount Scopus. (EREV SHABAT 13.9.85) A similar annual review in the "Ultra-orthodox Camp" (HaMahane Haharedi 16.10.85) included many of the campaigns noted in the previous review, but also included Lydda, Rehovot (Baruch Maoz), and various sects (EST, Emin, and "Jehovah's Witnesses").

BUDGET CUTS: M.K. Rav Avraham Shapiro protested against budget cuts which were affecting synagogues and other Orthodox Jewish institutions at a time when missions and churches were enjoying tax benefits. (HAMODIYA 15.10; 18.10)

MISSIONARY ENTERTAINMENT: "On the talk show "Now is the Time" it was made clear beyond the shadow of a doubt that (the right wing party) "Tehiya" has a spiritual partner in the person of the preacher Van der Hoeven who spoke about the Kingdom of Heaven on earth and Judaism's contribution to humanity - the New Testament...Jesus... I'm a bit confused since I'm more expert on the politics of "Tehiya" and less on under-cover missionizing, which in my eyes is more like entertainment for the masses, and not very successful entertainment at that." (HAARETZ 1 Nov 85)

"SOUL HUNTING": "We are witnesses to an increase of the number of ultra-orthodox institutions and to the soul hunting for these institutions, which educate their students in the spirit of ultra-orthodox values with all that that implies." (Avraham Goldberg, moderate orthodox educator, in a letter to the Minister of Education.) KOL YERUSHALAYIM 6 Sept 85.

"BORN AGAIN": Rami Feller is an Orthodox Jewish "born again" penitent. It happened about five years ago shortly after the collapse of "Rampal" in the late 1970's, a company which rose rapidly in the wake of a massive sales campaign of imported electrical appliances, and then suddenly collapsed because of a failure of liquidity and overextension. It was then that he discovered Orthodox Judaism and became an expert on "the mission" and sects, especially the latter. Now he works for YAD L'AHIM, often as an under cover agent among various sects. He would like to see them barred from Israel. As to the Christians, he replies that Christianity is not a sect but a religion, and like Islam has a right to be here provided it does not engage in missionary activity. The Mormons are a sect within Christianity who also have a right to be here, but not to missionize. "We are the ones who are to be the light to the Gentiles," he says. Meanwhile, he labours to rescue Jews from the sects, a difficult task, he admits, and quite often the "saved" lose their interest in all faith as a result. (YEDIOT AKHRONOT 25.10.85)

HERZLIYA: A Christian missionary sect has begun to operate in the Herzliya and Ramot HaSharon area, headed by the apostate Klaus Moshe Pulz and his aide Alkahai. In the past the two organized missionary activities by means of a postbox, and many innocent Jews fell into the trap. Rabbi Moshe Porush of YAD L'AHIM states that the two operate independently without support from any local or foreign Christian organization. In the past they were stopped by YAD L'AHIM exposure, but they have resumed newspaper advertising. (YETAID NEEMAN 23.9)

TIBERIAS: The missionaries in Tiberias are now marketing wines for Christian rituals and will soon open a winepress named "Golden" in Tiberias, near "Galtronics," the electronic parts firm owned by them. Former Jewish employees of this firm have told Yad L'Ahim of the attempts made by the managers to have them join the followers of "that Man" (Jesus). Mordecai Mekais, in a written statement, wrote that "they tried to pressure me into joining their movement...and after I realized that their aim was to convert me I decided to resign. Mr. Farah (one of the foremen) gave me as a parting gift a "New Testament." Letters have been sent to Cabinet Minister Ariel Sharon, Tiberias Mayor Bibi and others concerning the missionary activities of these people. This project appears to be linked to the Christian Zionist Congress in Basel this past summer. (EREV SHABAT 18.10.85)

MISSION NEWS (DIASPORA):

AUSTRALIA: Some 500 Jewish youth are involved in mystical sects in Australia to the dismay of Australian Jewish leaders. (Erev Shabat 25.10.85)

ENGLAND: Antizionism was a greater threat to Jewish students in Manchester than missionaries who were not very active in the north as in the Midlands. (JEWISH TELEGRAPH 28.6) "JEWISH GAZETTE" readers of Manchester should be warned that missionaries are again active in the city centre. (12 Jul 85) Jewish attitudes to Christian evangelism are discussed by a former Leeds rabbi in an article written for a missionary booklet, "Shalom" of the Church's ministry among the Jews (CMJ). Rabbi Douglas Charing wrote to suggest that CMJ engage in dialogue with Jews instead of trying to convert them, and also try to see the Bible through Jewish eyes. "What worries me most about missionaries to the Jews is their woeful ignorance of Judaism....Christians will find only suspicion (of missionary endeavours) from the Jewish side. Let us continue to disagree but in the spirit of understanding and knowledge." (JEWISH TELEGRAPH 12 Jul 85) Leeds and Birmingham have become prime targets for mission activities by the U.S. based World Evangelist Society, according to Rabbi Joel Portnoy of the Jewish Students Chaplaincy Board. (JEWISH CHRONICLE 19.7.85) A letter by E.J. Rosenthal of London to the "CHRONICLE" (9 Aug 85)

describes ways of handling door-side missionaries "firmly" without shouting matches and offensive language, underscoring to them the "thousands of their own estranged Christian brothers who have left their ranks...and the many empty churches."

A "JEWS FOR JESUS" rally in Edgeware with "ten attractive young people and very professional musical performance" was reviewed in the "CHRONICLE" (16.8.85). Led by David Brickner, JFJ evangelism was described, as well as the testimony of a young English Jewish missionary, Richard Harvey. A local rabbi led a group of 20 congregants in a protest demonstration outside the church. The "CHRONICLE" (same date) ran a full-page analysis of "missionaries" by Moshe Davis, adviser to the World ORT Union on Jewish Education, including a photo of the Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel in London and an advertisement for the International Hebrew Christian Alliance appearing in the "Baptist Times" in 1980. Davis proposes ways for "strong" and "weak" Jews to cope with missionary "guile" by understanding the "methods and motives" of Christian missionaries. Among others, he proposes that "some understanding of Christianity be imparted" to Jewish students so that by knowing the differences of Judaism "we are able to understand the real values of Judaism." Davis estimates 100 or more "conversions" per year in England, and concludes: "Do we now resign ourselves to a conscious and ultimate denial of our faith that conversion implies?"

JEWISH TELEGRAPH (21.8) published a letter by Rabbi Y. Levy attacking "the falsifiers with their twisted interpretations of our Holy Bible." Jeremiah's prophecy of "a new covenant" does not mean the New Testament, the rabbi asserts. The "CHRONICLE" (23.8) reported a J.F.J. procession in Finchley, and the favourable and unfavourable responses of a local vicar and rabbi respectively. The same date two responses to the Davis article appeared, one by the Executive Director of the Council of Christians and Jews asserting that "many Christians (also) deplore the missionary methods used by some Christian groups; the second by the rabbi of the North London Progressive Synagogue in basic agreement with Davis but advocating a more aggressive approach, challenging "lovers of Jesus to convert to the religion of Jesus rather than accept the semipagan version advocated by Paul and later Church councils." YETAID NEEMAN (4 Sept.85) reported that the rabbi of the London ultra-orthodox community has issued "an emotional appeal to all Jews living in London to beware of missionary activity...and not to engage in any conversation or debate with these people." "JEWS UNDER ATTACK" is a half-hour video program highlighting the danger of missions in England. (CHRONICLE 6 Sept.85)

U.S.A. "THE MISSION": Hebrew Christians are seeking to convert Jews to fundamentalist Christianity, Rabbi Yehuda Fine, a nationally recognized authority asserted during a lecture in Miami. The rabbi claims that "Fundamentalist Christians really believe that in the year 2,000 the Messiah will return," and one of the preconditions is that "as many Jews as possible accept Jesus as Messiah." He appealed for Jewish counteraction to Hebrew Christian and other missionary activities, by "providing the services and fulfilment that (they) claim to offer." (JEWISH FLORIDIAN 5.4.85)

A review of books published for Jewish readers in America includes a "how-to-cope" with Christian missionary sects such as "Jews for Jesus". (HATSOFEH 24.5.85) Reprint of a tract for Jews attending synagogue during "Shavuot" (Hebrew Pentecost) is featured with caption "Low Blow". (BNAI BRITH MESSENGER, L.A. CALIF 31.5.85) The same periodical reported hassidic opposition to "blatant proselytism by missionary groups and cults" at the World Games for the Deaf in L.A. (26.7.85) A report in "OUR ISRAEL" (Hebrew-language U.S. journal) informed readers about the Jewish community Task Force against missions and cults, especially "the Hebrew Christians and Messianic sponsored Jewish groups, and other cults". (NEW YORK 20.9.85) A report on a public meeting sponsored by "Messianic Vision", based in Bethesda, Maryland, directed by Sid Roth, described confrontation between

Messianic Jews and Orthodox and other Jews. (JEWISH TIMES OF BALTIMORE MARYLAND; date blurred) The article with photographs was headed "RELIGIOUS RUMBLE"

A monthly Jewish review, "MIDSTREAM, published by the Theodor Herzl Foundation in New York, featured a sharply critical article in its Aug/Sept 85 issue by Rafael Medoff. Entitled "MISSIONARIES IN ISRAEL", it focused on Rev. Robert Lindsey and the Jerusalem Baptist Church, leading into the "JEWS FOR JESUS" movement, the anti-mission law, UCCI activity, and the alleged "coddling" by the Israeli press and officials and American Jewish leaders of the phenomenon of Israel's Christian missionaries.

An article in the Flemish-language Belgian Israelite Weekly of Antwerp (22.7.85) reacting to the full-page advert. of J.F.J. in TIME Magazine, led into the various aspects of Christian evangelism among Jews in the Diaspora, including Belgium, and in Israel.

ARYE BEN-ISRAEL: Some 4,500 persons attended a "reconciliation assembly" organized by the Messianic Jew Arye Ben-Israel in cooperation with a Christian missionary organization to mark the 50th anniversary of the enactment of the Nuremberg Nazi racial laws on 15.9.35. Israeli flags were borne in procession through the city streets and on the speakers platform, but Jewish, Israeli and official church organizations did not take part, except for Jewish converts to Christianity. Ben-Israel, a former Soviet-Jewish immigrant to Israel, has lived in Germany for several years. (VARIOUS ISRAELI PAPERS)

MORRIS CERULLO: The missionary preacher from California, Morris Cerullo, conducts a worldwide correspondence with Jews to teach them Christianity. He himself is an apostate, and will not be permitted to use Jerusalem's hotels during his current visit for the purpose of meeting his Israeli penpals. YAD L'AHIM has persuaded the hotels scheduled to host his meetings to cancel the invitations. (ULTRAORTHODOX JOURNALS 31.10)

THE KIBBUTZ AND THE GENTILES: A 2½ page feature article in HAARETZ (1 Nov 85) dealt with the issue of Gentiles in various secular kibbutzim, an estimated thousand or more. It reported diverse reactions of kibbutzim and Gentiles to problems of inter-marriage, conversion to Judaism, or refusal to convert, continued belief in some form of Christianity, rejection of it, atheist views, as well as commitment to Judaism and the Jewish people. Some kibbutzim insist that Gentile candidates for membership convert to Judaism, others do not, and some refuse to consider any Gentile membership. An ultra-orthodox paper claimed that the matter is causing concern among leaders of the kibbutz movement. (SHEARIM Sept 85)

THE MORMONS (CONTINUED) SEE SELECTIONS No. 134, pp 9-10:

The campaign against the construction of an extension to the Brigham Young University of Utah on Mt. Scopus continues to win major attention in the Israeli and Diaspora Jewish media, especially the Orthodox Jewish outlets. A total of 167 clippings of news items and radio transcripts were gathered since the previous issue of SELECTIONS. In addition to material related to the unrelenting campaign to halt construction of the branch, testimonies by former Mormons, Jewish and Gentile, and a few favourable comments by Jews who have had contact with Mormons in the U.S. or Israel have appeared.

A full-page spread in "COUNTERPOINT JERUSALEM" (Aug/Sept) carried the testimony of Devora Bloom (written by Rachel Katsman), an American-Jewish girl of Reform background who was a committed Mormon for five years until coming to Israel for a kibbutz study program. Contact with Orthodox Jewish relatives led to a conversion to orthodoxy and marriage in 1977. "The Mormons are good people," she says, "but the danger to us is that they are good missionaries as well, the best in the world, (especially) with college-aged youth." In contrast, a sharp attack on

YAD L'AHIM and a defence of the Mormons was published in the women's magazine "LA ISHA" (26.8.85), based on an interview with Michael Shani, the Israeli director of the Philharmonic Choir since 1981, who studied choir music under the Mormons in Utah. "The fanatical voices of hatred of the YAD L'AHIM organization are unfortunately prevailing over the voices of reason," Shani remarked angrily. He insists that the Mormons are "Israel's best friends," and that he was never subjected to any "brain-washing" when he was among them.

JEWISH PRESS, the right-wing Orthodox Jewish weekly, published a letter by Ed Decker, former Mormon, now anti-Mormon campaigner, to Yehuda Schwartz, a supporter of YAD L'AHIM. Decker encourages his "brother Yehuda" to "go for the throat" in "standing up against the Mormon lie in Jerusalem." (13.9.85)

A flurry of news items excited the Orthodox Jewish press in the early autumn over reports that the Israeli consul in Los Angeles, Jacob Even, had allegedly flown to Utah to encourage the Mormons in their University project and to tell them to disregard Orthodox Jewish protests, which would die down. The report originally appeared in the Salt Lake City "Tribune", but Foreign Minister Y. Shamir reportedly denied the news story, and later allegedly promised Orthodox Jews to work against the project.

A new angle to the anti-Mormon campaign emerged in October when rabbinical authorities charged that the university site was located in an area containing Jewish graves from the Second Temple era, and called for an immediate halt to construction on the site. The Jerusalem District archeologist, Dan Bahat, denied this charge almost immediately, but the Chief Rabbis persisted in using the charge as an additional reason for halting the project.

Meanwhile, in early November at cornerstone laying ceremonies on Mt. Scopus, several hundred Mormons were confronted by Orthodox Jewish demonstrators calling for the Mormons to "go elsewhere". A week later a group of Orthodox Jewish members of the Knesset proposed that the Mormon site be bought out and an alternate site offered them in the West Bank (in the Bethlehem or Nablus area). (HAARETZ 10 Nov. 85)

MESSIANISM: In a book review on "Messianism and the Jewish Settlement in the Land of Israel", Meir Shalav discussed the Messianic fervor which affected Jews in the Holy Land in 1840 and led to the conversion of two Jews to Christianity when the Messiah failed to appear. Shalav commented that it "should be a good lesson to the great congregation of fools who still live among us" (waiting for the Messiah). A letter in response was published in which M. Ben-Hayim pointed out the failure of various forms of "secular messianism" since 1840 which had failed to produce universal or Jewish redemption and had also "claimed far more victims" than all the religious messianic movements put together." (KAWL HA'IR 13.9.85; 20.9.85)

END TRANSCRIPT

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