

UCCI NEWS CLIPS DIGEST

THE MORMON UNIVERSITY: (SEE PREVIOUS SELECTIONS 135, page 6-7)

A veritable torrent of newspaper and magazine items, radio and TV transcripts, commentary and editorials on both sides of the controversy over the construction of an extension on Mt. Scopus in Jerusalem to the Mormon-sponsored Brigham Young University continued unabated throughout the autumn and winter of 1985 and into the new year. The Jewish Orthodox leaders of the campaign, in an exercise of "realpolitik" have succeeded in enlisting personalities in the non-Orthodox community (Conservative Judaism) and secularists (of left-wing kibbutz orientation) in their massive lobbying campaign.

Mounting pressures within the Knesset and on the Prime Minister resulted in the formation of a ministerial committee to investigate the Mormon project. The prime minister remained adamant in refusing to call for a halt to construction, since all the necessary permits had already been obtained, to the chagrin of the religious campaigners, during the previous coalition when several Orthodox politicians were involved.

The tiny ultra-orthodox Agudas-Yisrael faction in the coalition took the highly irregular step of offering a motion of no confidence in the government because of its alleged failure to meet the requests of the Orthodox, chiefly in the matter of the Mormon university. The motion was overwhelmingly defeated, but the ultra-orthodox faction insisted on its right to remain in the government!

While anti-Mormon zealots were busily harassing Mormon leaders and their families in Israel, a significant backlash has developed within the country, led by Jerusalem Mayor Kollek, leading members of the Labour Party (Abba Eban, Gad Yaacobi, former Pres. Yitzhak Navon), moderate Orthodox Jews, liberals and secularists, academics rallying behind Mormon University colleagues, and leftists antagonistic to religious Orthodoxy.

Much concern was voiced about a backlash from Mormons and others in the U.S. to the anti-Mormon campaign. It was claimed that the Mormon lobby and its friends could be as effective as any pro-Israel lobby had ever been, and that it included not only the Mormon church and its followers but powerful U.S. political figures in and out of Congress who were warning against the ongoing harassment of Mormons in Israel and the campaign to cancel the university project. The Mormons themselves took full-page advertisements in the local Israeli press to explain their position and their undertaking not to engage in "proselytizing."

The aging National Religious Party minister, Joseph Burg, who as Minister of the Interior in the previous coalition, had helped the Mormon university get its permits, with a characteristic bon mot sighed: "I haven't the hormones to deal with the Mormons!" Meanwhile, during a visit to Israel the national director of the prestigious Anti-Defamation League of U.S. Bnai Brith, denounced the anti-Mormon campaign as "reminiscent of the middle ages, and a threat to Israel's image as a democracy.

MESSIANIC JEWS IN ISRAEL

JEWISH EVANGELISM IN TEL-AVIV: Recently there have appeared in the letterboxes of many Tel-Aviv homes illustrated tracts decorated with the picture of an old Jew bowed over a book with two lighted candles beside him, and a caption reading: "I TOLD THE RABBI". A study of the six-page tract discloses that the "teller" is a missionary named Israel Harel hiding behind a Tel-Aviv postbox number, and he tells how he debated with an imaginary rabbi and "convinced" him that Jesus of Nazareth is King Messiah! Why then did the Gentiles persecute the Jewish people?... For this, too, there is an answer; of course, from the New Testament.

Missionizing with Jewish disguise (Israel Harel represents himself as a "Messianic Jew") is far more dangerous than an undisguised Christian sect, say the people from YAD L'AHIM, who labour to counteract missionary propaganda. They claim that an "innocent" tract like this can have a ruinous

effect on people whose spiritual world is feeble. "There are also material enticements, assistance to emigrate from Israel and extensive activity in the Israel Defence Force (IDF)." they say. Most recipients of the tract of "the Messianic Jew" Harel discard it as they would an advertisement for installing antennas, but I've heard of groups meeting once-twice weekly to study the "Torah" of Harel, the prophet of the "Messiah." Shall we awake to this menace too late? K. NAFTALI (MAARIV TEL-AVIV EDITION 15.11.85)

A similar article with a photograph of a Messianic tract appeared in the ultra-orthodox weekly (EREV SHABAT 29.11.85) surveying three tracts currently distributed: (a)"I TOLD THE RABBI" (b)"INFLATION: HOW WILL IT END?" (c) "IT IS GOOD TO DIE FOR OUR COUNTRY". This last, based on the famous last words of Joseph Trumpeldor, is also "assisted" by Hanna Senesh, Dov Grunner and others for the purpose of selling the "persecuted" man of Nazareth to the masses, "who because of the causeless hatred with which we hated him our Holy Temple was destroyed". These tracts were displayed at a press conference called by YAD L'AHIM to underscore the growing missionary attack in the face of the "world's end", which Christians believe will take place in the year 2,000 of their calendar.

GREAT DEBATE: In a violent polemic Yehuda Schwartz, editor of the right-wing Orthodox Jewish Press of New York recapitulates his debate with Yosef Goell of the JERUSALEM POST over the Mormon threat and the "meshumadim" (Jewish "apostates"), recalling the medieval debate between Pablo Christiani and the Ramban (Rabbi Nachmandes). Implying that Goell is a "shyster journalist" writing for the "self-hating, anti-religious JERUSALEM POST", Schwartz attacked Christianity and its "false Messiah", the "meshumadim" who were "the worst enemy of the Jewish people", and "the idol of religious tolerance in Israel". (18.10.85)

BAPTISED JEW SEEKS FAMILY: A 58-year-old man born in Haifa to Jewish parents, and baptised by a Catholic nun who became his foster mother, has petitioned the rabbinate to be declared fully Jewish. The parents of Yosef Shufani separated when he was an infant and his mother turned him over to a Catholic priest who found the nun, the headmistress of a Haifa school, to take care of him. Married to a Christian Arab, he seeks to be reconverted. "My wife agrees with what I want to do, and she will maintain her beliefs and I mine", he states. The Haifa rabbinical court is to hear the petition. (JLM POST 22.11.85)

JEWISH CHRISTIAN "MENACE": The B'NAI BRITH MESSENGER OF LOS ANGELES (20.9.85) headlined the "growing menace" of Jewish Christians and reported a visit by "JEWS FOR JUDAISM" at the annual conference of "Messianic Jews and Jews for Jesus" held in L.A. Over 500 were in attendance, mostly Jewish, of all ages, including Holocaust survivors. The movement was related to some 50 congregations across the country, and "growing rapidly." An article which appeared in the LOS-ANGELES HERALD EXAMINER on the subject was reprinted. It compared the idea of "Jewish Christians" to "Kosher pig", and termed it "a biblical paradox regardless of what anyone wants to believe."

LADY REFORM RABBI: Rabbi Kinneret Shiryon, Israel's first Reform woman rabbi, thinks being a woman is an advantage in her profession, since it attracts the curious. Despite her unorthodox profession and approach to Judaism, Mrs. Shiryon is convinced that "Jews for Jesus aren't Jews," because "everyone still knows when a wheel is a wheel, and when it stops being one." (JLM POST 29.6.85)

BOB DILLON: (U.S. FOLKSINGER) "I believe in the Bible in its plain meaning, the New and Old Testament are equally valid. I can find common ground with religious Christians and Jews...It's possible that I'll want to live in Israel...but the war of Gog and Magog will transpire in the Middle East, that is clearly written."

INTOLERANCE: Rabbi David Rosen, former Chief Rabbi of Ireland, addressing the International Council of Christians & Jews in Dublin, referred to "examples of intolerance in Israel today towards Christianity and Christians". It was caused by "a historical sense of threat on the part of people who seem to have no proper perception of the changed historical context and condition in which Jews and Christians find themselves today". (JEWISH TELEGRAPH, Manchester 2 Aug 85)

"THE MISSION" IN ISRAEL

PETACH TIKVA: Recently missionaries have distributed Christian literature including the Christian Bible among the Yemenite residents of the Shaariya neighbourhood in Petach Tikva. The unwary residents accepted the "gift" and even gave it to their children for use in school studies. The principal of the local ultra-orthodox school gathered up the books from the school children as well as from among local residents for burning. (HAMODIYA 6 Dec 85)

HAIFA: The antimission society YAD L'ACHIM claims that the naturepath clinic "Maon Penuel" on Retzif Margolin street in Bat Galim, Haifa, engages in extensive missionary activity under the guise of medical treatment. Operated by Dr. Gisela Finger, a pediatrician and naturepath, the clinic has been the subject of complaints from several women who claim that it "exploits the weakness of sick people to introduce them to Christian faith". While refusing admittance to an inquiring reporter, two employees admitted that there were New Testaments in the clinic and that in the morning they sing songs based on biblical texts, including the New Testament. The antimission society has asked the General Director of the Health Department to investigate Dr. Finger's activities. (MAARIV 11 Dec 85; EREV-SHABAT 13.12; SHEARIM 18.12)

An angry letter has been dispatched to Minister of Tourism Avraham Sharir in connection with the recognition granted by his ministry to the missionary hostel in Haifa. "Unwary Jews, relying on the certificate of the Ministry of Tourism displayed there, are subject to brainwashing from the missionaries," they wrote, and requested that the certificate be withdrawn. ("ULTRA-ORTHODOX CAMP" 24.12.85)

BAT YAM: Two Bat Yam school children who were studying at the mission school in Jaffa have been restored to a school in Bat Yam as a result of the efforts of the "Center for the War against Alien Education," who allege that 1,000 Jewish children are studying in missionary institutions in Israel. (HAMODIYA 20.12.85)

"DANGER MISSION!" A reprint of the address of M.K. Avraham Wirdiger of the ultra-orthodox party in the Knesset was published in SHEARIM (6 Dec 85) surveying the menace of the Mission from 1974 onward, and the awareness of secular elements in Israeli society of it. Among those related to the Mission are Baptists, Lutherans, Anglicans Messianic Jews, the Christian Embassy, Project Kibbutz,, Beth Shalom..." all, without exception with one aim, to destroy the House of Israel".

TORAH VOICE: "KOL YISRAEL", Israel's national radio, has not yet bought the idea of "KOL TORAH" ("VOICE OF THE TORAH") as a counterpoint to "KOL TIKVA" ("VOICE OF HOPE"), the Christian radio station in South Lebanon, which is broadcasting missionary propaganda to the homes of Israel's northern settlements. Meanwhile, the VOICE OF ISRAEL hosted a program in which a Christian clergyman and Christian children responded to the questions of Jewish children about the Christian religion and its worship. The fact that a rabbi was also on hand to answer questions does not detract from the basic fact that the "KOL ISRAEL" channel was available to the Christian religion and its worship. As usual, the religious members of Knesset passed over it in silence. (EREV SHABAT Ultra-orthodox weekly 3 Jan 86)

HITCHHIKERS: A military chaplain on the Lebanese border discovered two soldiers in his unit reading the New Testament they had received while hitchhiking back to base. It appears that a group of missionaries has been operating along the roads in the north with an original method for promulgating the Christian Gospel and the New Testament. The soldiers were picked up by two well-dressed persons in a luxury car who stopped at a soldiers hitchhiking station and offered to take them wherever they wanted. Shortly after entering the vehicle the driver and his companion began speaking about Jesus and Christianity and tried to convince them to join one of the groups in Israel. They gave them detailed information about their activities as well as a New Testament, they stated. (EREV SHABAT 3 Jan 86)

"ROOM IN THE INN": Hotels and hostels in Bethlehem with Old-world charm and atmosphere are available to pilgrims, tourists and local Israelis "in the footsteps of Jesus on less than USD 20 per day," the JLM POST's Haim Shapiro (19.8.85) reported in a feature about Israel's offbeat tourist spots. "And just in case you're worrying that there might be no room at the inns in Bethleh em, set your mind at ease," he writes, but adds, "they are all booked up at Christmas!"

"WAITING FOR MESSIAH": "Almost 2000 years have passed since that bright hot Jerusalem morning when his flesh was scourged with the 39 blows of the whip, his head crowned with thorns, and he was goaded through the narrow lanes of the city, under the weight of the cross to which he would be nailed a short time later. None of our forefathers watching him then - whether with a smile of triumph on their lips or whether with tear-filled eyes - could ever imagine the calamitous impact of that day upon the future, that his cruel death would become an international best seller. But we have forgotten, or wanted to forget, that despite everything, he was born in our midst and died here..."

This is the lead paragraph of Naam Berkovitz in a two-page spread with four photographs headed "Waiting for Messiah" which was carried by the daily tabloid HADASHOT (8 Jan 86) sketching Christian life in Israel, and especially the involvement of Jews in it. The writer describes a Hebrew-language funeral service in a Catholic cemetery conducted by Fr. Gregory of St. Anthony's Church in Jaffa, a Polish-born Jew (whose brother is an Orthodox Jew in Bnei Brak). The deceased, a Polish Catholic, was married to a Jewish woman and raised a family in Israel. The funeral was attended by Jewish co-workers and military personnel who serve with the son. Fr. Gregory continues to regard himself a Jew and has contact with his Orthodox Jewish brother.

In an interview Fr. Daniel Rufeisen, the Polish Jewish Carmelite monk who once challenged the Law of Return as a Jew ethnically and Catholic by religion (which was rejected by the majority of the High Court), expressed opposition to all missionary activity. "I deny the right of the Lutherans, the Baptists, or the Catholics to hunt souls. Christianity is a recognized religion. Whoever wants to convert knows where to find me," he says. He claims to be seeking the way back to the primitive Jewish Church.

There were also interviews with an anonymous Jewish Lutheran at the Emanuel Church in Jaffa and an extended description of the church, its activities and leadership. They believe in a quiet unprovocative witness to their faith, and combine elements of Judaism with it, such as an Easter-Passover celebration. "In burning down a bus station, the Orthodox Jews may attract a few believers, but they alienate thousands," he remarks. He insisted that Messianic Jews harbour no hatred for the Orthodox, pray for them, and respect their "moral warfare" in areas like abortion, prostitution, and welfare to the indigent.

A brief interview with Norman Lytel of the Baptist Village elicited the claim that there are "some 200 Jewish believers" in the Israeli Baptist community. He claims that there isn't the kind of religious freedom in Israel as in the U.S.A. when it comes to people choosing to change their faith. "Jewish believers" are harassed by ultraorthodox zealots, he said.

JEWISH BURIAL DENIED: The roof organization of Philadelphia's rabbis prevented the burial of the apostate convert Rev. Martin Chernoff in a Jewish Cemetery, the ultra-orthodox daily HAMODIYA (27.11.85) reported. The members of his sect sought the burial permission, but the Jewish community was adamant in its refusal and published a statement in opposition to the sect and its strange request.

"WHO'S A JEW?" A Hebrew-language Jerusalem weekly published an ironic comment on Jewish Orthodoxy: An Orthodox Jew is one who burns down bus stations (in protest against poster ads), is Orthodox in stoning Sabbath desecrators, and Orthodox in injuring policemen during the week, attacks archaeologists and pathologists, banishes Ethiopian Jews, burns churches, attacks mosques, fights against the Mormon university, and sends Jewish missionaries to bring us heretics back into Orthodoxy! (27.12.85) "KOL YERUSHELAYIM"

MISSION CAIRO: The Egyptian police have arrested five Americans, an Englishman and a Frenchman in Cairo for engaging in missionary activity. This is in sharp contrast to the situation in Israel where the missionaries operate undisturbed. (ULTRA-ORTHODOX CAMP - Yiddish - 6 Nov 85)

ARAB CHRISTIAN: Rev. Samuel Hosain, an Arab Christian of the Church of Scotland, in a letter to the London JEWISH CHRONICLE (20.9.85) expressed a "deep interest in Judaica" and agreed with Rabbi Arkush of the student chaplaincy that "any Christian who doesn't believe in missionary activities is a hypocrite or ignorant or a fool". He adds: "I cannot see how a Christian can reject his Church's missionary obligation to the world. To do so is to empty his Christian Gospel of a very vital substance".

SOVIET JEWRY: A report in HAARETZ (13 Dec 85) on preparations by "missionaries" in Finland to host "hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews" who are expected soon to receive exit visas to Israel, was filed by the paper's British correspondent. Called "PROPHECY TODAY" and "FULL GOSPEL INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP," the societies behind the mammoth enterprise have put themselves on the alert for the anticipated massive exodus. They are headed by Dr. Clifford Hill and Michael Fenton Jones, and the latter told the correspondent that they are ready to absorb two million Jews in countries bordering the USSR. Steve Lyttel is the man behind the scenes of a number of these groups, and he now lives in Jerusalem. Prof. Yehuda Nuni, a Tel-Aviv university lecturer, reported seeing the huge stores of supplies in warehouses in Helsinki two years ago. "They have prepared the groundwork for absorption camps for the masses that will cross the borders," he stated. The same report was also carried in several ultra-orthodox newspapers in Israel.

DANISH MISSION TO ISRAEL: A feature article by Ellyahu Zehavi appeared in HAARETZ (15.12.85) on the centenary observance of the Danish Mission to Israel. After a description of the historical background to the mission, "one of dozens of missions with a similar name which were established in 19th century Europe," Zehavi noted its financial difficulties outlined in a detailed report given at a conference meeting. Politically, he reports, Israel has no more loyal friends than the missionaries, whose support for Israel is unreserved. They are thoroughly imbued with the sense of mission to bring the Gospel of Yeshua to the Jewish people, and they resist all anti-Jewish manifestations in the Church. An interview followed with their representative in Jerusalem, who lives on Palmach Street, with his wife and three children. She works as a nurse; he is studying Hebrew, "without any noticeable success". He replaced the previous missionary who had been in Israel for five years, a man by name of Nicolaysen. "You have an impossible task, I told him, and he nodded silently".

UNDER COVER: "Hadashot" (27.12.85) published a full-page article by Amnon Levy on the "under cover" operations of the "Peilim" (activists) of YAD L'AHIM, the anti-mission society. He reported on a group of six young Orthodox Jewish seminarians making an after-midnight raid on a missionary center where, with the aid of information allegedly obtained from an under cover operator within the mission, they switched a list of potential converts to Christianity with a false list. Almost every week there is a "sortie" by volunteers into mission territory. Although the ultra-orthodox community is split into countless cliques, the one point of unity is the "sacred work" of YAD L'AHIM in its war against the Christian mission. Aged rabbis tell their less-successful seminarians, "If you have no desire to study, go and help the activists against the Mission". During the High Holy Days special "ransom money" is appealed for in their community, a minimum of 5,000 shekels per head for YAD L'AHIM.

It is quite difficult for the secular Jew to follow this war for souls. It is incredible what the ultra-orthodox street is capable of in its struggle to prevent "this fearful pestilence" of Missionary activity. For them it is a matter of life and death. According to YAD L'AHIM there are some 3,000 converts to Christianity in Israel. For the ultra-orthodox this is not a marginal phenomenon, a fraction of a percent of the total population. Moshe Porush, the head of the organization, admits that "we have an espionage network tracking the Mission, committed people who are working for us". He claims that he winnows out people with violent disposition, and is highly selective in recruiting agents who "must have a good cover story (the missionaries are very suspicious nowadays) and know how to manage in every situation". Many of his workers are former converts who have been won back from the missionaries by YAD L'AHIM. Every bit of information is checked out, and they check everything about the clergy and persons suspected of missionary activity. They also bribe clergy and workers at missionary centers with handsome sums in order to obtain information, they claim.

The work of YAD L'AHIM is mainly directed against the strongest pro-Israel organizations. They have a strange formula: The more a Christian group is pro-Israel the more is it likely to be missionary. This, according to Porush, is based on Christian theology, especially of Protestant believers who believe that the coming of Messiah is based on two conditions: the return of the Jews to the Land of Israel (which explains their support of Zionism), and their conversion to Christianity in their homeland (which explains their extensive mission activity; no less than 100 groups). According to Porush, with the coming of the year 2000, they are intensifying their activities, because the Messiah comes then, and until then the Jews must become Christians.

ISLAMIC CRUSADE: Gadaffi's campaign against Christianity was described in a remarkably frank speech he delivered in Rwanda (a strongly Christian country) last August when he opened a mosque and an Islamic school. "The Christian Church", he said, "wants to do away with Islam everywhere, despite the fact that the church is not right and has no case". He urged Rwandan parents to teach their children Arabic. "Christianity is the religion of the French, Belgian, German and American enemies; it is also the religion of the Jews". (JLM POST 22.9.85)

SECTS:

THE JAPANESE IDOLATERS: The poorest recommendation for Jewry is its fear of missionaries and foreign religious sects to such an extent that we are willing to persecute them. This is because Jews feel that Judaism is bankrupt. It's "davka" the Japanese, for example, who are idolaters; who are known as an ethical people. Instead of ethics we take pride in our circumcision, and this is evil in the sight of God. All attempts to liquidate foreign religious movements have failed and will continue to fail. They only increase antisemitism and encourage the spread of the sects. (HA'IR TEL AVIV, Ram Parina, HOLON 29.11.85)

"UNIFICATION": The International Middle East Alliance, an organization whose alleged purpose is "to promote peace, friendship, religious harmony and love in the Middle East", is a Unification Church front...attempting to build bridges with Jewish organizations and gain credibility and acceptance amongst the world's established religions. Julius Berman, Chairman, Task Force on Missionaries & Cults. (JEWISH-PRESS Bklyn NY 19.7.85) A jaundiced but somewhat informative review of a "Unification" ("Moonie")-organized six-weeks world tour of youth from a variety of religious backgrounds, including Judaism and a tour of Israel, appeared in the ultra-orthodox EREV SHABAT (20.9.85). In Israel the group was entertained by the dancing rabbi Shlomo Karlebach and addressed by several experts on Judaism, some of Orthodox practice.

EMMA BERGER: The Germans have stopped buying up lots. A year ago Emma Berger, (age 64) died, the founder of the local German sect "Bethel". It appears that they are in a state of uncertainty, lacking the charismatic leadership of "Schwester Emma". Her sister and co-worker doesn't stand out. Gunther Ilmer, their sole work manager, who is fluent in Hebrew and a Temporary Resident in Israel, has been thrust aside for reasons unknown, and he works as a farmer's helper locally. They are keeping a low profile, and there is no evidence that Jews have been influenced by them. (VOICE OF NETANYA & Hadera: 18.10.85)

JEHOVAH WITNESSES: A steady but not excessive flow of articles has appeared in the Israeli press about this sect, much of it in local areawide weeklies and the Orthodox press. Most are "exposé" articles but a few have been objective journalistic pieces. While the J.W. meeting places--especially Tel Aviv--have been under heavy pressure from ultra-orthodox zealots, they have been willing to expose themselves occasionally to the media spotlight, and several feature articles included photographs of members and leaders, meetings, and interviews with active members. There are approximately 400 JW's in Israel, about equally divided between Jews and Arabs. The Jewish interviewees almost all indicated a total detachment from Jewish life and an abhorrence of all forms of Judaism, as well as Hebrew national life. Their children attend the State schools but abstain from all social, national and religious observances, including the celebration of birthdays, which they consider pagan. While the media generally refer to them as a "Christian" sect and stress their commitment to "Yeshu" (Jesus) and the New Testament, they themselves do not hesitate to disclaim any ties to Christianity, or "notzrim" (Christians), at the same time relegating their Jewishness to a place of no significance. There are four meeting places in Israel proper (two in Tel Aviv, two in Haifa) and two in the West Bank (Bethlehem & Ramallah). An estimated ten new adherents are won each year by their active house-to-house solicitations, but the same number are said to drop out each year. Several dropouts were interviewed, one who had grown up in the sect and one whose wife refused to leave and ended up in a broken marriage. Their opposition to blood transfusions has come to the attention of the Health Dept., which has stocked blood substitutes for sectarians. The Israel Defence Force has come to terms with their refusal to serve in the armed forces, and does not call them up any longer, although formerly they were imprisoned for refusal to do their military stint.

During December 1985 there was a flurry of clippings in the Orthodox Jewish press about the sect's activities. "Who would have believed that here in the Holy Land such a grave thing would occur", said Eliyahu L., a resident of Lod, whose daughter was trapped by the JW mission operating in Lod. "For me she is like dead", says the unfortunate father, a Soviet Jewish immigrant. "Who ever heard of missionaries in Russia? But here in the Jewish homeland I have to be afraid of such a phenomenon?" The sect's successes in Lod were the subject of a Parliamentary Query by Avraham Shapiro of Agudas Yisrael. A week later another Query was

submitted by the Sephardi ultra-orthodox party on the same matter. In his reply, Min. of Relig. Affairs Joseph Burg admitted that there was little to do within the framework of the law to prevent the sect's aggressive missionizing except if they are caught offering material benefits to potential converts, in which case complaints should be made to the police. Meanwhile, the best method was persuasion and alertness by the public to the danger, he stated.

PENITENTIAL SECTS: Dr. Mordecai Kaufman, family and child psychiatrist of the kibbutz movement seminary, replying to a query about the linkage of the "universally abhorred mystical sects" and the Jewish penitents movement, stated in the United Kibbutz Movement organ "Yahad" ("Together"): "There is a similarity, both with respect to the obtuse blind faith and the extreme and unexpected upheaval in values and lifestyle" (of both mystical sects and Jewish penitents). He noted with alarm the rise in the numbers of kibbutz members involved with sects and the Jewish Penitents movement. (EREV SHABAT 29.11.85)

CHRISTIANS IN ISRAEL:

BAPTIST CHURCH: The Baptist Church in Jerusalem has appealed to the Israeli High Court to overrule the decision of the Planning and Building Commission to restrict the size of the rebuilt chapel burned down some three years ago by unknown arsonists. The appeal caused astonishment among members of the committee working to remove the church from the downtown area. The move was allegedly linked to mayor Kollek's support of the Mormons, which has emboldened the Baptists. (YETAID NEEMAN 6 Jan 86)

CHRISTIAN EMBASSY: "ISRAEL SCENE" (Jerusalem) in its November 1985 issue published a full-page feature article entitled "The Life in a Day of Jan Willem Van der Hoeven", founder and spokesman of the ICEJ, with photos of JWV, his wife Widad, and their children Jan Jr. (a volunteer in the I.D.F. tank corps serving in the Golan Heights) and Farida Regina, a high school student. He surveyed his Dutch background, his wife's Sudanese background, their links to P.M. Begin ("I still visit Begin"). "We are establishing a \$100 million fund, together with Israeli lawyers, for investment rather than philanthropy". He also quoted James 5:16.

The Orthodox Jewish daily HATSOFEH (30.10.85) published an article by MA"N headed "LIGHT TO THE GENTILES OR DARKNESS ON THE SCREEN?", lauding the appearance of J.W. Vanderhoeven on the "NOW'S THE TIME" talk show. He complained about the interviewer Ron Yeshai's "hasty uncivilized behaviour" in cutting short the remarks of JWV while he was speaking about Israel's prophetic destiny as "a light to the nations". A brief review of the same show in the German-language "Israel Nachrichten" (31.10.85) noted the "aggressiveness" of the interviewer in trying to elicit whether JWV engages in missionary endeavours. The reviewer, Alic Schwarz-Gardon concluded that not everyone preaching is a missionary!

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEARS: While Christmas trees are provided for Christians and foreign diplomatic institutions and their representatives as well as individuals by the Jewish National Fund, the rabbinate strenuously opposes the display of Christmas trees and decorations, as well as festive celebrations of Christmas and New Years, in Jewish hotels which offer Kosher food. Since such hotels must receive a certificate from the rabbinate attesting to their "kashrut", the rabbinate has threatened to withhold such certificates from any hotel displaying Christmas trees or hosting holiday festivities.

Israeli civil libertarians have charged that this is in violation of Israeli law and have urged hoteliers affected by the regulation to appeal to the courts.

These have so far been unwilling to risk the loss of their kosher certificates which could affect their drawing power for Jewish clientele who would not patronize a hotel that is not certified as Kosher. The hotels also claim that many of their clientele are Gentiles who wish to have a holiday atmosphere, but it is known that many Jewish and Israeli visitors do celebrate the season in a non-religious way, to the chagrin of many traditional Jews, in places not dependent on rabbinical certificates.

"The time of the birth of the Messiah Yeshua is the time to praise the name of the Name (God), and in this city beginning 28.12.85 the week of liturgical music commences for the 8th time, Liturgica '85". KOL HA'IR (20.12.85) The Orthodox daily HATSOFEH published two articles protesting "Liturgica" as a violation of Jewish law according to the ruling of various local and chief rabbis. Christian music, to play it, to broadcast it, to listen to it, is considered "idolatry"; nevertheless it continues to be played, broadcast and listened to, the Orthodox critics lament.

BAPTISMAL SITE: The Franciscans have renewed the pilgrimage to the site of Jesus' baptism in the Jordan after 18 years. In the church adjacent to the site a mass was celebrated for the pilgrims. (HAARETZ 28.10.85; YEDIOT AKHRONOT 1 Nov 85)

BIBLE RESEARCH: An interdisciplinary team of Technion experts believes it has settled the longstanding biblical controversy over the right order of the five chapters of "Lamentations". Employing computer analysis methods, Prof. Pollatschek, a computer expert, and Prof. Raddy, a specialist in Jewish Studies, have concluded "that the order of the chapters is in fact exactly as it appears in Scripture". In a previous computer-assigned authorship study of Genesis, it was concluded that Genesis was written by a single author, and not by two or more, as some scholars maintain. (JLM POST 21.12.85)

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