

"HOSTEL FOR THE HUNGRY IN EILAT": A weekly local paper in Eilat (KOL EILAT) in its Issue No. 19 (18.2.87) published a feature article (under this heading by Betty Bleicher) about the ministry of John and Judy Pex of Eilat. Excerpts follow:

In 1970, after a time of much roaming the world with a knapsack on his back, John Pex at last arrived in Eilat. In Neviot (Nueiba) he met his future wife, love blossomed and the couple were soon married. His wife Judy is Jewish, John is a Christian, but love prevailed, and the couple now have four children.

One bright morning John awoke and decided that his life was empty, and he had to act quickly. So he decided to devote his life to helping others. John had never been religious, although born a Christian, but he felt this strong and unexplained need to read the Bible. There he found a word which he adopted for himself as a signpost for spiritual (and not necessarily religious) life. In the Bible, God promises "a new heart and a new spirit."

It may be that the Yom Kippur War helped John to think about the meaning of life. The Bible teaches that everyone must be born again, from a spiritual viewpoint, and to return to God the Source. ... This is obtained by faith, as it is written. "The just shall live by his faith." The New Testament is focused on belief in Joshua (sic!) as Messiah, according to what is written in Isaiah 53.

Every Friday evening the down-and-outers, the unfortunates and all those too poor even to buy a hot meal can come to John's home and get a free meal, without any questions asked or ceremonies, and without distinction of religion, race or sex. So I decided to see for myself, and I found at least 150 people crowded together around John as close as possible so as not to miss any of his words. John read whole chapters from the Tenach ("Old Testament") and afterwards a chapter from the New Testament. And then they suddenly began singing Hebrew songs and sometimes songs in English, French and even Japanese. The place is visited by Jews, Druze, Japanese, North and South Americans, Chinese, Scandinavians; in short from all the continents, including sometimes Orthodox Israeli Jews with skullcaps on their heads to argue in a good spirit about religion and the commandments.

John is not only married to a Jewess but also does reserve duty like the rest of us. His aim is preaching peace and brotherhood without war and hatred. Thus, on Friday evenings, after the songs and Bible reading, John brings out his large pots and ladles out the food free of charge to all comers ... soup, rice, vegetables, beans ... sitting on the floor, on the bench, on stones, wherever there is place.

Three young women, well-dressed, were eating and laughing and speaking Hebrew. "Are you Israelis?" I asked. They answered affirmatively. "What are you doing here?" They answered: "To get a free hot meal ... our money ran out, and we haven't eaten for two days, so we came here. Here there's a listening ear, a warm spirit and free food, so why not? Sunday we're going home."

I spotted two young well-dressed Druze men who didn't seem in need of a meal. I asked them what they were doing there, and their response was a desire to see how one man is trying to bring peace between all peoples. Others were attracted to the singing, to being together and even the Bible reading. ... Some looked tattered, barefoot, unwashed, people I thought, who really came for the food. The painter David moved among them making sketches of the more interesting figures among

them. Meanwhile, an old bowed man begged me not to photograph or write about him, so that his children and grandchildren would not know about his unhappy situation in need of at least one hot meal a week. I wondered how it was that his children did not detect the condition to which he had been reduced. I promised not to mention his name.

On my way home I could still hear their singing after they had eaten well and had coffee and cake, still staying on as though reluctant to leave, and the words of their song could be heard: "Behold how good it is and how pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

MISSIONARY SHELTER: In response to the article about the Pex hostel, a letter was published in the local weekly KOL EILAT (25.2.87) denouncing the hostel as a "missionary shelter" and the reporter as deluded. "Hunger must have blurred her senses so that she forgot her sources and savoured forbidden food; that is, the New Testament (Christianity)." The letter-writer (who signs his epistle "Blue Pen") denounced Pex as one who believes in the New Testament which "nullifies the Old Testament (which is OUR testament) and all our books except selected chapters, in order to carry on the ancient battle between the Jews and the Christians, Yeshua the Nazarene ...

Young men and women from all over Israel crowd into that place, even some from Eilat ... and we have all read how our people's numbers are dwindling ... John also manages a hostel in Eilat which is listed by the Christian hostels organization as 'The Shelter.' I have met transients of various nationalities who have filled their empty bellies and have called that place a clearly missionary activity. I enclose a clipping from the JERUSALEM POST entitled 'MISSIONARY IN EILAT' (See SELECTIONS No. 146, page 4 "EILAT MISSIONARY"; The Letter by Henrietta Boas of Holland is reproduced in full.)

"ULTRA-ORTHODOX FOLLOWERS OF JESUS": HAARETZ (13 FEB 87) carries a three-page feature in a weekend supplement with front-page cover photo about "Kfar Yeshua," an eccentric settlement in the Arava called "Ir Ovot" and founded by Simha Pearlmutter. The feature included color photographs of Pearlmutter, his elderly parents, a long-time resident considered mentally disoriented, Simha's present wife Clement Jean Allen, a young man from Manchester named Judah, three young Beduin hired hands, and archaeologists working on a dig in the area.

The settlement is now facing liquidation as a result of a court action brought by neighbours over violation of the Settlement Act which forbids the transfer of property obtained under the terms of the act to another party. Pearlmutter admitted in court to having made arrangements with private persons in violation of the law. The latter have hired Beduins to work the land for them.

A group of archaeologists has also been working the area with Pearlmutter's consent, which apparently has not caused any problems. Pearlmutter has been offered two alternatives: to move with his family to Ashkelon or Ashdod, or to stay on the land but turn over the property and implements to the Jewish Agency in payment of his longstanding debts. He told the HAARETZ reporter Ronit Matalon that he doesn't intend to vacate the settlement.

In her article Matalon recounts the history and ups and down of the Pearlmutters, his arrival in 1966 with two wives, the "adoption" of the group by General Gavish who turned over to them an old army camp, the stream of people who came and went over the years, his turning to Ultra-Orthodox Judaism, the support he had for a while from former Chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren who arranged for the conversion to Judaism of a considerable number of Gentile members, the wholesale abandonment of the settlement by his first wife Judith, and most of his children by both women.

Perlmutter has had strained relations with his neighbours, not (they claim) because of his beliefs in Yeshua (Jesus), but because of his strange behaviour and involvement with allegedly dubious persons who have not stopped at violence to advance their interests. Nevertheless, he claims that he does not bear arms but trusts in God and Yeshua.

DEPORTATION: "Don't deport me from Israel. I love the land and the people living here. I want to study Hebrew and to worship God according to my faith. Why don't you permit me the opportunity to live among you?" This is what Burt Hobstadt, a 21-year-old Dutchman living in a young people's Messianic commune which celebrates Jewish festivals in Abu Tor in Jerusalem is asking. Burt was a good friend of the English tourist Paul Appleby who was murdered by terrorists near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The two were living in the same Jerusalem commune. ...

Burt quotes freely from the Bible in order to prove that he and his companions have a spiritual role to play in the life of this country. "Is it only because we celebrate the Jewish festivals that I am suspect?" he asks. "Why is it written in the Book of Isaiah: 'AND I' SHALL COME TO PASS IN THE LATTER DAYS THAT THE MOUNTAIN OF THE LORD'S HOUSE SHALL BE ESTABLISHED IN THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAINS ... AND ALL NATIONS SHALL FLOW UNTO IT.'" He quotes Zechariah: "AND MANY NATIONS SHALL BE JOINED TO THE LORD IN THAT DAY AND SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. ..."

Burt believes that Paul Appleby's death is one of the signs of the end times and of prophecy fulfilment. "Why can't you accept me here? I am willing to listen and to learn everything, even if you want me to convert to Judaism, but I appeal to the civil right of every person to keep his own faith. I am a candid person answering questions from the depth of my heart, so why do you doubt my good intentions?" he protests.

Burt was not afraid to return to Israel, and even visited the site where his good friend Appleby was shot to death. ... He quotes from the book of Amos: "IN THAT DAY I WILL RAISE UP THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID THAT IS FALLEN ... AND I WILL RAISE UP THE RUINS AND I WILL BUILD IT AS IN THE DAYS OF OLD." He adds: "Paul Appleby and my friends and I came out of love; permit us to live among you," says Burt Hobstadt. (MAARIV 16 FEB 87)

THE VANUNU AFFAIR: THE FAMILY RESPONDS (See SELECTIONS No. 145, 146, 148) An extensive interview was published by the Jerusalem weekly KAWL HA'IR (13 MAR 87) with Meir and Asher Vanunu, brothers of Mordecai Vanunu who is accused of revealing classified information concerning Israeli nuclear capability. The brothers, speaking for the family, lashed out at what they described as "false and misleading" reports about their brother and the attitude of the family to him. Meir, an attorney, remarked to the interviewer Hayim Baram: "The family was traditional at its source. Jewish tradition was the hub around which our lives revolved. At present I am a convinced atheist, and therefore I regard my brother (Mordecai's) conversion to Christianity in Australia as his own private matter. It's not easy. As an atheist I must stand alone, just like Mordecai, facing difficult existential and philosophical questions and finding my own answers."

The brothers also denied that Mordecai or any of the family had ever been followers of the extreme right-wing Rabbi Kahana, as suggested in the press, or that following the media coverage of the affair he had been disowned by the family. The parents are "hurting and disappointed that he had abandoned Jewish tradition, but have not forgotten for one moment that he is their son," they stated. They also noted that ultra-Orthodox members of the family are also supporting them in helping their brother in his distress. They denied that he had

committed an act of treason but had acted out of idealistic motives. "We are united in our love for him," they insisted.

CHRISTIAN FAMILY RAISING JEWISH CHILDREN: In Poriya near Tiberias no one was willing to say where the Cibene family lives, because they fear attacks on the family. One of three Christian families living in the settlement, the 27-year-old couple have two children, in addition to which they are raising four Jewish children turned over to their care for various reasons. Recently the YAD L'AHIM anti-mission movement have spread rumours that the couple are holding Jewish children to educate them according to the values of the New Testament. "YAD L'AHIM is pressing us hard," says Charles Cibene, "although I have no intention of keeping the children permanently. If there are Jewish families ready to absorb them, I'll be happy to turn them over, but not to an institution; they have a right to family life."

The Cibenes arrived in Israel five years ago to work at an industrial plant in Tiberias belonging to Mrs. Cibene's father. "When I began working in Tiberias," Charles relates, "I heard from friends about a child abandoned by his parents in the hospital because of severe defects. My wife and I decided to take the child as foster parents, and not for adoption. We didn't investigate whether the child was Jewish, Christian or Muslim. I am aware of the fact that the child should live among his co-religionists; but first of all he is in need of warmth and love, and this is what we provide in place of the natural parents. We have raised Muslim and Christian children and now we are raising Jewish children. We are mad about these kids and treat them as though they were our natural children."

Social workers from around Israel who have heard about the family send them neglected children with defects. "This is very hard work taking care of the children 24 hours a day," says Charles, "but I'm against abortions and against leaving children in hospitals and institutions, and the aim of my wife and me is to care for disadvantaged children." (Several incidents of successful care of these children are given by the reporter, for which they receive 268 New Shekels monthly per child; but for the two brothers they presently care for at the request of the father because of his wife's inability to care for them, they receive no welfare contribution, because of YAD L'AHIM pressures on the Welfare Department, it is rumoured.)

"The money isn't our concern, and we'll continue raising the children as long as we can manage financially," says Charles. "The YAD L'AHIM allegations about us are untrue. On Sabbaths and holidays we send the brothers home to their family, and they also receive a Jewish education. Of course we are Christians and pray at home and read from the New Testament, but the children don't understand this. We also return the children to their natural parents. If they remain with us another five years, we'll know which religious education they have received."

The father of the two brothers, a resident of Tiberias, has sent a sharp letter to the editor of a local Galilean newspaper which had written an article about the couple. "I am the father of the two boys," he wrote, "and they are not unfortunates but happy children, healthy in body and mind, and receiving the best care that children their age could have in the home of this family. ... I am very satisfied with their dedicated care which is above and beyond the meagre compensation they receive. On holidays and weekends the children are with me and attend the synagogue, and from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily they are in a Jewish hostel where they receive kosher food. The Cibene family has come to Israel out of love for the Land and set up an industrial plant in Tiberias. They have been harassed by hotheads acting out of religious and racist incitement without any basis." (HADASHOT 18 JAN 87 Faiz Abbas)

"THE JERUSALEM CRAZE" SYNDROME: This week a 17-year-old French seminarian was released from Kfar Shaul hospital. He had been admitted after wandering about the streets of the Old City ceaselessly without eating or drinking for several days until he collapsed. Two weeks ago an American school teacher was hospitalized in Kfar Shaul after she had come for a tour of the holy places. After a visit to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the woman, a Protestant by religion, locked herself into her hotel room and began to go wild, screaming and shrieking hysterically. In both these instances the diagnosis of the physicians was unequivocal - it was "Jerusalem craze," a familiar syndrome known to psychiatry, which strikes otherwise sane people whose encounter with the city, usually from religious motives, causes them to lose their mental or emotional equilibrium.

Dr. Carlos Bar-El, the district psychiatrist, has confirmed that this is a recognized medical phenomenon. "There are tourists who are driven mad by this city, from ten to fifteen incidents per year. Usually they are Protestant tourists from Germany, the U.S.A., and Scandinavia. They read and live the Bible in an intensive manner during their daily lives, and the encounter between the biblical vision and reality - especially the mystical air of Jerusalem - causes them a nervous breakdown," he stated. This syndrome has been discussed at a number of international psychiatric conferences. To date there is no clear medical explanation for it and the phenomenon is not known anywhere else in the world. (KAWL, HA'IR 6 MAR 87; Yoram Yarkoni)

"THE MISSION": IN ISRAEL

NEW ISRAELI FUND SUPPORTING MISSION: A young Jew last week entered a book shop in the Clal Centre in Jerusalem and found a book there which preaches to Jews that they should convert to Christianity. He asked the shop owner to remove the book but he refused. The young man said he would appeal to YAD L'AHIM, and the owner replied that he would appeal to the Civil Rights organization. The young man then bought the book and tore it to shreds in front of the astonished shop owner. ...

A year ago a group of apostates from Rehovot called the "Grace & Truth Congregation" appealed to the Civil Rights organization to defend it against "attacks from the religious." The society went to their defence and pressured the Rehovot municipality to allow the apostates to operate, declaring: "The Society for Civil Rights supports freedom of worship for all religious sects and asks that the sect of the Messianic Jews be permitted a place for worship in Rehovot."

Many have asked what is the source of the society's funding. It now appears that a Leftist organization in the U.S.A., the New Israeli Fund, grants the society \$100,000 annually! The Fund leaders explain their support for the Society on the basis of their aim to promote tolerance and understanding in Israel. They avoid noting that their money goes to provide legal defence for the families of terrorists and for the support of apostates. (THE ULTRA-ORTHODOX CAMP, JLM, 27.1.87)

MISSIONARY ADVERT: "HAARETZ," which styles itself as a newspaper for thinking people, published last Friday an advertisement with clearly missionary content. It was an article headed "INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH OF AN ETERNAL PEOPLE" and took up one-third of a page. At the close the interested reader was invited to request literature free of charge dealing with the destiny of the Jewish people. It was signed by Yehudi Klaus Moshe Puelz who resides in Ramat Hasharon.

In the permissive atmosphere of these days it is no wonder that this newspaper would publish for a fee an article sharply attacking the penitence movement (conversion to Ultra-Orthodox Judaism), inciting against the Ultra-Orthodox public, and between the lines kowtowing to that Man (Jesus) and the Christianity he created. It would be interesting to learn what are the financial sources of the advertiser here,

and to which sect he belongs. This is a subject of investigation by those engaged in the war against the Mission. (HAMODIYA 20 FEB 87)

BETH SHALOM: The Haifa urban building committee recently rejected the request of the owners of the tourist hostel Beth Shalom on Mt. Carmel to expand the hotel, this in the wake of a news item published in EREV SHABAT about three years ago concerning the missionary activity of Beth Shalom. Rabbi Moshe Blitenthal of the municipality produced from his archives the story of Beth Shalom in Jerusalem's Gilo, the construction of which was prevented in the wake of the early discovery by activists of YAD L'AHIM (of its missionary nature), and demanded that no aid be given to the soul hunters. The committee agreed with him and decided to "permit" an increase in construction of 11 square meters only. (A. Kornfeld, EREV SHABAT 27 FEB 87)

RAMAT HASHARON: The office of the National Religious movement yesterday heard a detailed and shocking report from the lips of Ramat Hasharon council head Moshe Verbin. It concerned the extensive and sophisticated activities of the Mission and of the Emin sect in the settlement and the entire region. Verbin confessed his failure for three years to bring the matter to the attention of the public, to restrict sectarian activists and to eradicate the phenomenon. He described the modern psychological techniques they used for persuading people while buying up flats in the area. He charged the government establishment - especially the Interior Ministry when headed by Rabbi Peretz - with an attitude veering between indifference and cynicism. He warned against weakening resolve in attending to this painful problem, and asked the help of the National Religious movement in combating the sects on various levels.

In summarizing the discussion the office of the movement commended the council head for his display of public courage. It expressed shock at the existence of missionary activity in other parts of Israel as well, which is ruining and corrupting the foundations of Judaism and society in Israel. It called for immediate action to stop this malignancy in every possible way, and appealed to the Ministry of Religious Affairs to employ all the State's legal implements to eradicate this plague completely. At the same time it appealed to all those elements faithful to the people of Israel and the Torah of Israel to join forces in an uncompromising struggle against the sects, which engage in outright idolatry. A restricted committee will be set up under the direction of the General Secretary of the movement to monitor closely the matter and to spur those elements in the State dealing with the subject. (HATSOFEH 27 FEB 87) (See also SELECTIONS No. 146, bottom p. 4, RAMAT HASHARON, SEX AND MISSION)

HUMAN RIGHTS PRIZE: Attorneys Jonathan Kittab and Raja Shehada, heads of the "Law for Man" organization headquartered in Ramallah, this week received a human rights award from Rutco Church in Houston, which monitors human rights violations in the territories. They each received \$5,000 in prize money and a letter of commendation expressing "profound appreciation for those who seek justice under such difficult conditions." (KAWL HA'IR 19.12.86)

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