

**"CONVERTS"**: Dozens of people are standing in the chapel, singing and waving their hands, hiding behind closed windows and thick curtains. They welcome publicity but they fear attacks by hostile elements; for example, the ultra-orthodox YAD L'AHIM organization. They are proud that every day the number of Jews "seeking the truth" is growing, and they arrive at the Study Centre to find it. They say that their community already numbers 3,000 believers in 20 congregations from Nahariya to Eilat. The spreading phenomenon brings one of the "guides" to a sense of exaltation, of Messianic days. "God is working among the Jewish people," he declares.

In a modest South Tel-Aviv location at the end of the Sabbath over 70 new believers, mostly young men and women - some dressed informally, some elegantly - gather to spend over three hours together. Four days before the Hebrew New Year the chapel was filled from end to end. After the blessing of the "the Lord Yeshua the Messiah," the blonde leader opened with a series of announcements in American-accented Hebrew. Three young believers stood on the platform with guitars faced by a young believing woman with a trumpet, accompanying the assemblage while they sang from the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament.

After each song, they let go with personal prayers, availing themselves of their freedom of speech, each one by turn, the others remaining silent. "Your blood covers our sins ... O God, in the name of Yeshua the Messiah, prevent the slaughter on the roads and guide the Israeli Government to the right decisions ...". Spontaneously they lift their hands. Prayers are voiced while the worshippers respond, "Yes, Abba," and "Amen." They relate to the struggle between the Orthodox and the secularists: "We pray for the ultra-orthodox; help us to love them, as difficult as it is. They are the ones who crucified You, and now they attack the entire people, using the Bible to divide the people. Do something for the ultra-orthodox community in the name of Yeshua the Messiah." Someone quotes from the New Testament: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good." After the prayer time there is another medley of songs, followed by a sermon from a young man on the subject of "Hurts and Murmurings." We have to acknowledge our hurts, and not to keep them inside of us; otherwise it will come out in the wrong way, he preaches.

The process of conversion to Christianity is a long one, and can last as long as a year, so that the convert will be recognized as genuine and not turn out to be a pretender or informer. They claim to remain Jewish, but Messianic, even after conversion, baptism and partaking of the sacrifice. The 70 members of the congregation come from both an Oriental and Western Jewish background, and most of those who come there are educated.

Elana came to faith despite her feeling at first that Jews don't believe in Yeshua. Zvika Sedan, a former kibbutz member, had explored various teachings including those from India, which began during the Yom Kippur War. He traveled around the world until he met an American in 1980 who pointed him to the Bible. He believes that the State of Israel is a miracle of God, even though God used secularist agents to establish the State; but he believes that, according to Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones, the Spirit must enter the Body of Israel through the Messianic remnant, which they represent.

He describes the conflict in values with the surrounding world: misunderstandings, false information, immorality and tax cheating, which sometimes makes him an object of ridicule in the eyes of others,

because he will not compromise. He believes in the trinity, and does not conceal his beliefs from others, although he follows the counsel of Yeshua, "not to cast pearls before swine."

They do not belong to a Christian establishment but do have ties with a church which permits them to use its property. "We have to develop our own tradition, and seek a way and an identity of our own," he states. Sedan stresses that, while he is different, he remains a Jew and an Israeli: "I haven't changed my religion ... The rabbinic establishment is against us, but fortunately for us they are beneath contempt."

Mordecai Vanunu is probably the most famous Israeli who has gone on a similar path. "I believe he was foolish, and perhaps even immoral; actually, the nuclear policy of Israel is immoral, but God has ordained government, which should be critical of itself, and I pray that the government should make the right decisions," Sedan says.

There are courageous ones among them like Yaakov Lamdani (should be DAMKANE ... TRANSL.), who make public proclamation of their faith. He invites Jews, Arabs and tourists to his large renovated house in Jaffa for Sabbath meals, song and reading from the Scriptures. "Actually, the Messiah behaved as Jews behaved, for he himself was a Jew," Damkane explains.

Meir was also at the table. He came to faith about seven years ago from a religious background in Bnei Brak. "My parents banished me, but I continued in my search for the truth, which I found in the Messiah," he declares. Beside him sits a solid athletic young man wearing a jersey, on the front of which is drawn a seven-branched menorah and the name YESHUA, and on the reverse the words: "MESSIAH, THE HOPE OF ISRAEL." (EXCERPTS FROM FEATURE ARTICLE IN THE TEL-AVIV WEEKLY "HA'IR" 23.9.87)

**JERUSALEM MARCH:** Several dozen Jews for Jesus handed out missionary pamphlets as they marched in the International Christian Embassy's annual "Feast of Tabernacles" parade here. The missionary contingent — many wearing shirts proclaiming "We are Messianic Jews" — consisted mostly of Jews for Jesus who live in Israel, including Baruch Maoz, one of the leading apostates currently active.

A near brawl erupted when the missionaries handed their pamphlet to a group of religious Jewish children waiting for the parade to pass. A group of South African Christian fundamentalists physically intervened and compelled the furious Jews for Jesus to curb their missionizing. "We, the delegation from South Africa, have nothing to do with missionary activity," the leader of the South African group, Irene Meilhon, told the JERUSALEM TIMES. The benign nature of the South African Christians was confirmed by Rabbi Aharon Kornfeld, YAD L'AHIM spokesman. (EXCERPTS FROM FEATURE ARTICLE BY-LINED Menachem Rosen and Reuven Shamit with photo of "missionaries wearing Messianic Jews T-shirts at Tabernacles March," appearing in JERUSALEM TIMES/JEWISH PRESS 23.10.87. The article was headlined "MISSIONARIES JOIN CHRISTIAN MARCH.")

**AUSTRALIAN VICAR IN ISRAEL TO SEE CONVERT:** The Rev. John McKnight arrived in Israel on the 4th November to visit Mordecai Vanunu, "the lost sheep of St. John's Church." It has a ministry to down-and-outers, unfortunates and lonely seamen, among whom was Mordecai Vanunu, who came in one night on his journey to Christianity, and afterwards came the disclosure of Israel's atom secrets. Accompanying McKnight was Rev. Stephen Grey of the church, their aim to "try to encourage Mordecai."

They were met at the airport by Gideon Spiro and Yael Lotan (members of the Committee for an Open Trial of Vanunu) and Vanunu's brother Asher. McKnight tried to avoid being photographed in order to avoid publicity to their visit. He stated that "the whole matter of his conversion to Christianity is likely to harm Vanunu in Israel." He did mention briefly the support which has built up for Vanunu in Europe. The priests also noted that a resolution is being formulated in the Australian parliament for signature by members of all political parties calling for the release of Vanunu. The nuclear issue is a major issue in Oceania, and there is great interest in the Vanunu affair.

Through Vanunu's attorney Avigdor Feldman, McKnight submitted a request to the Israeli authorities for visitation privileges at the prison where Vanunu is being kept. At present only members of the Vanunu family have visitation rights. (HAARETZ/AL HAMISHMAR/YEDIOT AKHIRONOT/HADASHOT - 5 NOV. 87)

Rev. John McKnight last night left Israel following the refusal by the Israeli authorities of his request to visit Vanunu. "I am very disappointed," he told HADASHOT, "since all the members of the congregation contributed money towards my visit to Brother Vanunu. I regret that the Israeli authorities did not permit me to encourage him." Meanwhile, Vanunu has been instructed to eat more, following his 21-day hunger strike, which caused him a loss of six kilograms weight. (HADASHOT 8 Nov. 87) See also Selection No. 155, bot. P. 2, Vanunu.

**"MIRACULOUS CONVERSION"**: The JERUSALEM POST (17.8.87) carried a report about Lorraine and Aaron Cohen, who face execution in Malaysia if convicted of trafficking in heroin. An Assembly of God evangelist, Patricia Bulman, claims that the Cohens (mother and son) had a "miraculous conversion." Religious groups have quietly provided a valuable service by visiting prison inmates, but recently have become more involved in public trials, which has caused concern among lawyers.

**IDF CONVERSION REQUEST**: Hayim Yisraeli, chief of the Office of the Defence Minister, has informed M.K. Ron Cohen that the naval officer who had disqualified a candidate for officer's training on the grounds of his being Christian (Gentile) had exceeded his authority. In the wake of the incident the regulations are being restated to avoid misunderstanding.

When Gentiles are interviewed for officer training in the Israel Defence Force, the security clearance includes the question of whether they intend to convert to Judaism. "The question is not designed to motivate conversion, nor is it to be seen as a proposal or persuasion to convert to Judaism," Yisraeli stated in his letter to M.K. Cohen. (AL HAMISHMAR 21.10.87; See also SELECTIONS 155, page 4, "CONVERSION REQUEST CRITICIZED")

**MISSING PERSON TO MESSIANIC SECT**: Gal Asher (24) of the Moshav Bnei Dror, missing for several days, was found healthy and whole in the Afula area. Asher, who is studying at the Jezreel Valley College, had been reported missing in the Lake of Galilee area. His family, who arrived from Tiberias, have announced that he is linked to the Messianic sect. (HADASHOT 8 Nov. 87)

**ANTI-MISSION PROPOSALS**: M.K. Meir Kahana: "Very soon I will again submit legislation, which was earlier disqualified by Speaker Shlomo Hilel, against the Mission; also legislation against intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews. (EREV SHABAT 23.10.87)

**YAD L'AHIM** has expressed urgent displeasure with recent proposals to compel missionaries to register as such with the Religious Affairs Ministry and to display the word MISSION in their official title. They

pointed out that the proposals actually grant legitimacy to the Gospel promoters, who will be able to get a "Missionary Certificate" from the government. (EREV SHABAT 23.9.87)

**MISSIONARIES VISIT DISABLED SOLDIERS:** Disabled veterans are allegedly being visited regularly by Jews for Jesus with food and promises, Aharon Lapid of JERUSALEM TIMES/JEWISH PRESS (16.10.87) reports. One of the disabled, Joel Miller, an ex-Canadian, once worked for YAD L'AHIM and infiltrated cults and the Christian Embassy.

**"DORMISSION":** Ultra-orthodox members of the Jerusalem City Council are orchestrating a delaying action to the approval of the Peace Centre for interreligious understanding planned by the Dormition Abbey. "It smells of mission," Rabbi Avraham Lazerson of Agudat Yisrael remarked. The Dormition assistant to the General Manager of the Abbey denied the charge, while the Planning Committee of Jerusalem expressed the city's approval of the project as a "positive contribution to the life of Jerusalem's citizenry." (JERUSALEM SUPPLEMENT: YEDIOT AKHRONOT 23.10.87)

**NEW TESTAMENTS:** Students in the educational institutions of the Kibbutz Artzi movement are studying from Bibles which include the New Testament. This was brought to the attention of the Ministry of Religious Affairs by a member of Kibbutz Mesilot. The Bibles are supplied by missionaries. Minister Zebulun Hammer instructed his office to supply Bibles without the New Testament to the kibbutz, and also appealed to the Education Ministry to investigate the matter of Bibles being supplied by missionaries. (HATSOFEH 29.10.87)

**ECUMENICAL DAY OF PRAYER:** The heads of eight local churches met in Jerusalem on May 1st for a day of prayer and discussion. Among the participants were Anglican and Lutheran bishops and members of the ancient churches. (CHRISTIAN LIFE IN ISRAEL NO. 25 AUTUMN 87)

**NAIM ATEEK:** In an interview in the same periodical, given by Rev. Dr. Naim Ateek, general executive secretary of the Jerusalem diocese of the Evangelical Episcopal Church, Canon Ateek spoke of the diverse roots of the indigenous churches in the Holy Land going back to the first centuries of our era, their Arabization following the Islamic conquest of the region in the 7th century, the introduction of Protestant communities in the 19th century with the arrival of Western missionaries, the recent indigenization of the Anglican church, and the relations between Western churches and local Christians.

The interviewer noted disagreement at the 1986 annual conference of the UCCI between indigenous churches and Western evangelical churches in the region over witness: should there be active evangelism or witness through example?

"Mission is a central tenet of the Christian faith," Canon Ateek replied, but qualified the way it should be practiced. It does not necessarily involve converting people "through our own efforts." He also decried "Western fundamentalist Christians who take the Bible literally ... and tend to interpret biblical passages in a political way." He thinks that most indigenous Arabic-speaking Christians "accept Israel as a state like any other, but not within the framework of Biblical prophetic tradition." Most indigenous Christians are not concerned about the Jewish origins of their faith; "they don't even think of Jesus Christ as a Jew," nor are they interested in theological dialogue or debate. "There is an acceptance of the other person's right to his own faith," he concluded.

#### SECTS

**"KAWL HATSAFON"** (2 Oct 87), a Galilean weekly, in a detailed three-page feature article about exotic settlements in the Galilee, de-

scribed two such groups based on Transcendental Meditation (Kibbutz Yahad and Moshav Hararit), both prospering economically, socially and psychologically. The members and leaders interviewed vigorously denied being sectarians, and pointed to the variety of respectable and well-established personalities involved. The reporter, Esther-Hayn Barzilai, was impressed by the caliber of those she interviewed and their success in establishing cooperative settlements.

She cited authorities who had reportedly discredited the work of the parliamentary committee headed by M.K. Taasa-Glaser on sects and cults in Israel. Professor Kreidler, a world-renowned psychology researcher, had termed the report on T.M. as "a shameful fluke, without basis in serious research, motivated by religious interests ... and amateurish."

The Emin settlement, a more recent development, in Maale-Zviya, was said to be more suspect, but was flourishing, although the Jewish Agency settlement department was watching it closely to ascertain that it does not behave like a cult.

Kibbutz Hardof, motivated by Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophical teachings, began with the "discovery" of his writings by members of Kibbutz Givat Hayim in the 1960's. Hardof is a part of the kibbutz movement, but has close ties with the Swiss headquarters of the Steiner movement.

YAD L'AHIM spokesman Aharon Kornfeld has attacked the decision to apportion land to these groups, and charges that this has only "increased the appetites" of the sects. It is alleged that Israel has the highest percentage proportionate to its population of sectarians in the world. Former Jewish Agency head Arye Dulzin claims that half the members in the mystical sects worldwide are Jewish. Psychologists and sociologists claim that Israelis in particular are vulnerable because of the crisis created by the Yom Kippur War, especially among youth, who are seeking answers to existential questions and have personal problems deriving from life in Israel.

**COUNTER ATTACK:** KAWL HA'IR (6 Nov. 87), the Jerusalem weekly, carried a lengthy feature article reporting the response of the Society for T.M. in Israel to the Taasa-Glaser parliamentary report, which linked T.M. with the mystical sects. In a 50-page counter-report issued by the society under the heading "THE TRUTH ABOUT T.M. AND THE (PARLIAMENTARY) REPORT," 355 scientific studies of meditation are cited, alongside their refutation of the charges of the parliamentary committee, as well as quotations by learned professors who dispute the learned professors cited in the government report.

The society also quotes a remark made by Mrs. Glaser to one of its leaders during a committee hearing: "Why be involved in this? Go to a yeshiva and study Torah," she said. The society claims that the Glaser report wronged some 40,000 Israelis, including cabinet ministers, Members of the Knesset, military officers, academics, doctors, rabbis, lawyers and all strata of society, who are affiliated to it.

**JAPANESE BIBLE:** A new translation of the Bible into Japanese is going on sale in Japan. It is the result of a combined effort of Catholic and Protestant churches in Japan, in which some 70 Bible scholars during a period of 13 years worked on the project from the original Hebrew and Greek texts of Scripture. (HADASHOT 21.10.87)

**JESUS AND ZAMENHOFF:** Joseph Anastas is an Arab carpenter and advocate of Esperanto, the international language invented by Dr. Eliezer Ludwig Zamenhoff. In an interview he stated: "Jesus spoke about turning the other cheek and giving the poor your clothes. Zamenhoff also helped the poor very much. You will note that the one who

produced Christianity and the one who produced Esperanto were both Jews. For me, Zamenhoff was a second Jesus. The Jews have always produced men of peace; it's a pity that now they are producing men of war." (KAWL HA'IR 3 Jul. 87)

**COMMUNISM AND CHRISTIANITY:** "There remains something utopian in Communist thinking, a vision of the last days, which is based on Christian ideals of justice and equality." (Quoted in KAWL HA'IR 23.10.87 in a feature article about the Yugoslav critic of the Communist regime, Milovan Djilas, during a visit to Jerusalem.)

**DIASPORA MISSION**

**U.S.A.** In Georgetown on Pennsylvania Avenue, JEWS FOR JESUS members have been blanketing the streets with their message. No one is sure why the zealous missionaries have suddenly reappeared en masse, but one likely possibility is the opportunity to meet and greet the thousands of new and returning college students. (JEWISH WEEK, WASHINGTON D.C. 3 Sept. 87 in the column "CAPITOL LINE")

The National JEWS FOR JEWS Organization has issued an urgent alert to all Jewish community leaders to beware of the trickery and deception used by the National Campus Life group to entice young Jews to join their Christian organization. Rabbi Rubin R. Dobin, National Chairman, explained that Campus Life is sponsored by Youth For Christ, with about 1500 chapters throughout the U.S. Large sums are raised for its activities, including Jewish contributions by Jews unaware of its Christian nature. In South Florida the organization has agreed to disclose its sponsorship by YOUTH FOR CHRIST and will instruct its staff not to hide its Christian character. The local media have also been informed, and are refusing to accept ads unless the Y.F.C. affiliation is noted. (JEWISH PRESS 6 Nov. 87)

**U.K.** The growing threat of missionaries is to be tackled by the Jewish Seminar Movement based in Stamford Hill in North London. "It is not our aim to convert young Jews to strict Orthodoxy," a spokesman stated. "Young people have a need to belong, to be part of a movement. The missionaries know this, and so do we," he added. (JEWISH CHRONICLE LONDON 16.10.87)

**\*\*\*END TRANSCRIPT\*\*\***

**9 NOV 1987/mb**

**FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS WRITE TO:  
UCCI/SELECTIONS  
POB 116, JERUSALEM 91000  
ISRAEL**

**SUBSCRIPTION RATE:  
\$25 PER YEAR (OUTSIDE ISRAEL)  
\$18 PER YEAR (INSIDE ISRAEL)**

**NOTE: NOT TO BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT UCCI PERMISSION.**