

CHURCH ARSON: Jerusalem police are investigating the fire at St. Paul's Anglican Church in West Jerusalem, which broke out early on the morning of 27.11.87. Before it was extinguished, the century-old church door and a quantity of religious books were destroyed. An Ultra-Orthodox neighbour of the church was detained as a suspect and later released on bail.

Anglican Bishop Samir Kafity, in a press release from his office in East Jerusalem, termed the arson "an act of aggression against spiritual values, equality among religions and freedom of worship." He also expressed concern over the failure of police to apprehend the "criminals that burnt St. Saviour's church in Acre" (See SELECTIONS No. 151, page 1; 152, page 4). The Bishop called for "deterrent measures ... to put a stop to such vandalism."

Knesset Member Meir Wilner of the New Communist Party (Rakah) has tabled an urgent motion for the Knesset agenda, calling for a full debate on the subject and demanding police action to apprehend the culprits and to insure that attacks on religious institutions be stopped. Meanwhile, police are considering increasing mobile patrols following the arrest of the Ultra-Orthodox suspect, whom they have described as "mentally disturbed." The Jerusalem municipality has also announced that it will cover the costs of repair of the church door and replace religious books destroyed by the fire. (VARIOUS PAPERS: 29.11.87 to 4.12.87)

"APOSTATES" IN CHRISTIAN MARCH: Fifty "apostates" marched through Jerusalem's streets during the Feast of Tabernacles under the auspices of the Christian Embassy. The ICEJ repeatedly denies that it engages in missionary activity, but the fifty "Jews for Jesus" marchers distributed obvious missionary material to bystanders, and had the full support of the "imported" Christians. (ULTRA-ORTHODOX CAMP 28.10.87)

As a contingent of Jewish Messianics and a number of Gentiles marched past the Chief Rabbinate building in Jerusalem, the chairman of the "Vaad Hamussar" ("Morals Committee") shouted repeatedly at them, "JEWISH NAZIS!" Having noticed a German marching with them, he shouted in German, "Deutsche Nazi" at the shocked German Christian who would destroy Jewish souls as his countrymen did during World War II. Write your outrage and moral indignation to Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek for allowing Jewish Messianics to march in the Succos parade. (JERUSALEM TIMES/JEWISH PRESS 13.11.87: See also SELECTIONS No. 157, page 2, "Jerusalem March")

NETANYA MESSIANIC JEWS: A nursing aide in a government hostel for the handicapped in Netanya has been dismissed by the Ministry of Welfare because she is a "Messianic Jewess," it has been charged by her co-workers and patients, who have undertaken to fight for her re-employment. Jacqueline Becker, age 23, married and the mother of a child, was employed for about nine months. When she was first interviewed for the job, following completion of a one-year course in the field, she did not conceal her beliefs as a Messianic Jewish follower of Jesus, but stated that her intention was to support herself by her work.

Three months ago the anti-mission organization YAD L'AHIM demanded that she be dismissed because she was a member of the Messianic congregation Asaf in Netanya and that she engaged in missionary propaganda at the hostel, which she denied when questioned by the manager of the hostel. Jacqueline subsequently told the patients of

her shock and grief over the charges and of the intention to dismiss her. They in turn appealed to Knesset member Ron Cohen, who approached the Minister of Welfare, Moshe Katzav, the latter promising to deal with the matter. At the same time, the director Nadav Kagan prepared a report in which he characterized Jacqueline as a dedicated worker who had not, to his knowledge, interjected her Messianic ideas into her work, but a month ago an order was received to dismiss her and two other aides because of budgetary cuts.

The supervisors and patients are now accusing the Dept. of Welfare of bowing to the pressures of the anti-mission society. They point to a Help-Wanted ad which appeared this week for nurses aides at the hostel. M.K. Ron Cohen and the chairman of the Organization of the Handicapped have denounced the dismissals, but Dr. Judah Schiff of the Welfare Department has denied charges of religious discrimination, insisting that the dismissals were based on budgetary restraints. (MAARIV 17.11.87) The Orthodox press has charged that Jacqueline and another woman, Miriam Philips, discharged from the hostel, were both members of the Asaf congregation and engaged in missionary activity on the job. One young woman at the hostel was allegedly led to join the Asaf congregation.

PASSPORT PROBLEMS: The Interior Ministry has refused to issue passports to a Christian couple, Gina and Gordon Pabley, who have been living in Arad for 17 years, on the grounds that they are residing illegally in Israel. An Identity Card which was issued to them 11 years ago was only for a one-year period as temporary residents, and did not entitle them to Israeli citizenship. Their 18-year-old daughter, who wishes to do her army stint, has never been listed in the ministry's registry, and cannot be mobilized or find suitable employment without an Identity Card.

The family learned of their unusual situation three months ago when Mrs. Pabley applied for an Israeli passport to visit family in England. When they presented the ID card issued them in 1976, following the intervention of Shulamit Aloni of the Citizens' Rights Movement, they were informed that it had been issued temporarily. Mrs. Aloni, however, insists that the ID card is proof of Israeli citizenship, and that the family had forfeited their British nationality at the time. "The fact that we are Christians should not prevent us from being Israeli citizens," declares Gordon Pabley. "Are not Jews permitted to be British nationals?" asks Gina Pabley.

A spokesman for the ministry, Tova Allinson, claims that there are many persons living in Israel illegally. "This is a problem for all Western countries permitting and encouraging free entrance to tourists," she commented. Meanwhile, the Director-General of the Interior Ministry, Arye Deri, is studying the matter of the couple, and said that it will be placed before a special committee in the ministry. (MAARIV 19.11.87; HAARETZ 20.11.87)

"JEWISH CHRISTIANS" CLASH WITH RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENT: Under this heading, the Los Angeles TIMES (10.10.87) published a lengthy feature article in its Religion section by staff writer Dan Fisher in Jerusalem about the Messianic Jewish or Jewish/Hebrew Christian movement in Israel, "a small and embattled movement pushing at the religious limits of Israeli democracy." The writer interviewed a dozen Jewish believers in the central area of Israel and visited several congregations and/or their leaders, as well as officials and citizens not connected with the movement, the majority of the latter being unsympathetic. The article is an objective attempt to provide an overall view of the movement and the reactions to it within Israel.

"THE MISSION"

HITCHHIKERS: Missionaries in the north are now practicing a new method for persuading young people, especially soldiers, to draw near to Christianity. Several soldiers serving in northern bases have reported that they were picked up in luxury vehicles, led into conversation by the drivers about Christianity and common aspects it shares with Judaism. The talk included preaching about the need to draw near to Christianity in order to recognize, as it were, the beauty of Judaism. Before leaving the vehicle, each soldier would receive a booklet entitled "The Messiah and Redemption." This method has been used in the Jerusalem region, and it appears that the missionaries are now trying their luck in the north. (A photograph of a group of soldiers waiting about has a caption: "The Mission is Lurking." (KAWL HA'EMEK UPPER NAZARETH 13.11.87)

"THE VANISHED YACHT": The Ultra-Orthodox weekly FRIDAY ("YOM SHISHI") carried the story of a yacht allegedly operated by missionaries under the leadership of an "eccentric" German-born American citizen by the name of Dr. Arthur Hempel. He had received financial backing from a wealthy British Jew, David Lewis, who has invested heavily in developing Eilat. After a series of legal and financial complications, the yacht disappeared, reportedly leaving heavy debts behind. (19.11.87)

FRIEND OR MISSIONARY? In response to an article in the JERUSALEM TIMES/JEWISH PRESS headed "Soviet Jews in Vienna — Easy Prey for Missionaries" (on 2 Jul 87), Eva Huber of Vienna, who was mentioned in the article as an undercover missionary, replied in a letter published in that paper (9 Oct 87) that she was astonished that she was not interviewed before the article was published, that she was a Bible-believing Christian from Finland married to an Austrian Christian, that she loved the Jewish people, was ashamed of what had been done to Jews in the name of Christianity, that her ministry was to help Jewish people in practical ways (clothing, dishes, children's toys, etc.), and denied that she had cooperated with one Esther Dorflinger (whom she never heard of prior to the article), nor knows anything about the "Meshumadim Movement" mentioned.

In his reply, the editor charged that Mrs. Huber works among Russian Jews under the sponsorship of the Christian Embassy, which has been described as "a promoter of missionary activity," and "in her letter Huber does not disavow" the charge that she is a Christian missionary. The editor, however, regrets that Esther Dorflinger was "erroneously listed as one of Sister Huber's associates."

MISSIONARY "COMICS": Jewish and Arab residents of the Old City of Jerusalem last week found a small pamphlet under their doors with an Israeli flag on the cover and the inscription "Love the Jewish People." Inside the pamphlet were tales of history and Scripture in the style of comics. The first story was of ancient Egypt, the second of Rome, and onward to Nazi Germany, Nigeria, Kenya, Chad, Ethiopia, Upper Volta, Dahomei, Senegal — all of whom have either collapsed or are suffering famine because of their hatred for the Jews (ancient Egypt, Rome and Nazi Germany) or for severing diplomatic relations with Israel (the Africans).

The Arabs with whom I spoke regarded the pamphlet as a proof of the expansionism of the Jews in the Old City, that if you don't love the Jews, your fate will be like that of ancient Egypt, Rome, Dahomei and Ethiopia. A further look at the pamphlet, however, will disclose its real aim: pure Christian missionary propaganda.

There is a story beginning with World War III which, based upon biblical passages, describes the death of two-thirds of the Jewish people during a seven-year war which concludes at Meggiddo, where the

people of Israel will be miraculously saved. By whom? Not by Superman, but by the Messiah who breaks through the clouds with nail prints on his hands. An Israeli soldier asks for the identity of the Messiah, who is of course Jesus the Nazarene, the Lord of your life. The pamphlet was printed in Chino, California, by the Shalom Society with headquarters in Portland, Oregon. (KOL YERUSHALAYIM, YEDIOT AKHRONOT SUPPLEMENT 20 NOV 87)

MISSIONARY CONVERT TO JUDAISM: The Ultra-Orthodox weekly EREV SHABAT (13 NOV 87) published a feature article about the Quaker Warder Croason, a U.S. diplomat and mission representative who settled in Jerusalem in 1844, converted to Judaism shortly afterwards, and died in Jerusalem in 1861.

CORRECTION, PLEASE! AL HAMISHMAR (17 JUN 87) published a clarification of an article it carried in April 1986 alleging that the Christian-owned Galtronics plant in Tiberias compelled its Jewish employees to pray to Jesus (See SELECTIONS No. 139, top page 1: "Campaign against Galtronics), as follows: "CLARIFICATION: On 14.4.86 there was published in our newspaper a news item under the heading 'GALTRONICS IN TIBERIAS.' The article contained statements which have been categorically denied by Galtronics. We wish to clarify hereby that we accept the said denial, and that we had no intention of doing harm in any way to Galtronics; and if such an impression was created following the said publication, we regret it."

"FULFILLED JUDAISM": In an interview given to the Catholic weekly "IL SABBATO" (Sabbath), Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the monitor of theological orthodoxy in the Catholic Church, stated that "only a Jew who has converted to Christianity can be a true Jew and understand the full meaning of the Old Testament." The 60-year-old German cardinal, known as a conservative who reflects the views of Pope John Paul II, believes that Christianity is the sole religion that can bring men to the truth. "Jesus is the truth, and faith in him is part of an historic process which all men must share." He quoted Edith Stein, the Jewish-Catholic nun murdered in Auschwitz by the Nazis: "Now that I am a Christian, I have returned to true Judaism." In commenting on Jewish-Catholic dialogue, the cardinal remarked that "the pope has offered respect but also has a theological line (which) always implies our union with the faith of Abraham, but also the reality of Jesus Christ."

The response by Jewish participants in interfaith dialogue to the cardinal's statement was belated but generally negative. Dr. Wigoder of the Israel Interfaith Committee called it "a setback in the process of dialogue." Rabbi David Rosen of B'nai Brith termed it "unfortunately not very surprising," but said that it would be "short-sighted" to break off contact with Catholics and "pusillanimous" not to react. Professor Zvi Verblovsky commented that "the same way that the Jews, including the chief rabbis, find Christianity to be a form of idolatry, the Pope and the cardinal are entitled to see Judaism as preliminary to Christianity." (YEDIOT AKHRONOT 26 OCT 87; JLM POST 20 NOV 87)

Reacting to the controversy, free-lance Catholic journalist and broadcaster David Brown, in "An Open Letter to my Elder Brothers" (JERUSALEM POST 27 NOV 87), sought to clear up "misunderstandings" between Christians and Jews over the cardinal's statement and about general Christian theology. He blamed some of the misunderstanding on the use of the Greek word "Christos" as an equivalent for the Hebrew term "Messiah," and other historical factors which obscured or denied the Jewish sources of Christian faith, especially "the terrible betrayal of Jesus that is antisemitism." He noted: "Christianity depends utterly on the faith of Abraham ... the Christian Bible begins with Genesis and continues throughout the Hebrew Bible and what we

have come to call the New Testament, to the book of revelations to John, a former Jewish fisherman." Brown concludes with an expression of regret for "the blurring of our uncertain moves towards mutual understanding."

In a short feature article by Professor Yirmiyahu Yoav, headed "Hebrew at the Vatican," he writes of the Hebrew phrases and symbols he saw in abundance during a visit to the Vatican in Rome. "On the surface, this would seem to be an encouraging memento, of Jews and Christians having so much in common," he comments. "Actually, however, it is what we have in common which divides us, for Jews and Christians are competing over the same history, battling over the same mythological heroes, which is a much fiercer competition than that which Christianity has with other religions. In Christian eyes, they are the true Israelites. The Jews of history broke (historical and theological) continuity when they refused to accept Yeshua as Messiah." Yoav concludes that, while he favours Jewish-Christian dialogue, Christians must recognize the authority of Jews over their own history. Only thus will they acknowledge their right to return to history and re-establish their state. (YEDIOT AKHRONOT 3 DEC 87)

"HOUSE OF NOAH": The four-room flat on 18 Prophets Street, Jerusalem, always served as a springboard for naive peace ideals, reconciliation and international fraternity. Once it was rented by Rina Geftman, who promoted reconciliation between Jews and Christians. Here were held the first meetings which led to the establishment of Neve Shalom (the Jewish-Arab settlement near Latrun). Now the flat serves as the "House of Noah," a combination of commune, soup kitchen and Indian sanctuary, whose function is to promote interreligious reconciliation, to unite diverse people, and to make gestures of justice in the spirit of the teachings of Mahatama Gandhi.

The founder of "Beit Noah" is Yvette Naal, age 50, a former travel agent, who is a member of a French-Christian nonreligious order called "the Ark" (from whence the name Beit Noah derives), organized by a French disciple of Gandhi, which has 200 registered members worldwide. (KAWL HA'IR 6 NOV 87)

SOVIET POLICY AND THE CHURCH: In an interview which appeared in YEDIOT AKHRONOT (3 DEC 87), Israeli Sovietologist Mihail Agursky claims that the Soviet regime has now abandoned the classical Marxist view of religion as "the opium of the people," and is seeking to establish the church as a pillar of the regime. An estimated 40 million Soviet citizens are part of the church, and this summer the millennium of Christianity in Russia will be celebrated. The regime also views the church as a buffer against the Moslem population explosion as well as a therapeutic antidote to the alcoholism and crime which have increased due to the anti-religious Marxist teaching. Senior Soviet clergy have testified to the warmth with which Gorbachev receives them at Kremlin functions, and he has commented favourably on the devout Russian Orthodox 19th century novelist Dostoyevsky.

"GRATITUDE": Israel helped spring the Rev. Benjamin Weir from his barbaric captivity in Lebanon ... Rev. Weir, safely back home, opposed a Presbyterian Church proposal for better relations with the Jewish people and appreciation of their link to Israel. Turn the other cheek — and get the same old slap in the face. (Seth A. Halpern, Scarsdale, N.Y. in a letter to the JLM POST 15 AUG 87)

CRISIS: The problems of U.S. Jewry are enormous: An intermarriage rate approaching 40%, increasing divorce, a crisis in Orthodox-Reform relations which some see as heralding the greatest split in the Jewish world since the birth of Christianity. (JLM POST 28 APR 87)

FEAST OF TABERNACLES: Interviews with Christian participants in the Christian celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles were featured in a JERUSALEM POST article, which included a black South African woman pastor, who believes that Jews have had worse hardships in their history than the blacks; a pastor of a Church of God congregation in Miami, Florida, who believes that Christian evangelization among Jews "causes fear in the heart of Jews" and movements like JEWS FOR JESUS hinder his work (although he believes that Jews need Jesus to be saved); an American black Jewess who sees JEWS FOR JESUS positively but acknowledges that "the message of love for Israel and the Jews has not made it to the black churches." (16 OCT 87)

JUDEO-CHRISTIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS: A Hebrew University-Duke University archaeological team has been probing the site of the vital capital of the Galilee in antiquity, Sepphoris (Zippori), a mixed city of Jews, pagans and Christians who lived peacefully alongside each other for centuries. Christian life also flourished in the city, and included a community of Judeo-Christians, the earliest form of Jews for Jesus. (JLM POST 4 SEP 87)

CHRISTMAS TOUR FOR ISRAELIS: The Society for Nature Preservation has announced that a guided tour of the scene of the nativity of Jesus will begin at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, which will tour the churches in the area for two hours followed by attendance at a Franciscan ceremony in the Grotto. The Israeli leader, Yitzhak Maisel, a retired educator, will provide historical background to the nativity story and to the questions of Jesus' Messiahship and descent from the House of David. (KAWL HA'IR 4 DEC 87)

NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATIONS: A reader of HAARETZ (16 NOV 87) protests the interference of the rabbinate in the matter of Jewish hotels celebrating New Year's Eve (which they regard as a Christian holiday).

SOUTH AFRICA: The Vinter family came to Israel from South Africa at the beginning of the 1950's out of religious motivation. Unlike Jewish families from South Africa, the Afrikaner-Calvinist family came here in order to experience the biblical atmosphere, intending to stay for a few years and then return to their homeland. The parents and their four sons stayed in Israel for over 20 years, first in Silat and then in Poriya near Tiberias in Galilee. After the mother's death, the family returned to South Africa, where the sons, who grew up in Israel, have set up a farm where they still speak Hebrew, even with their South African-born children. Yohanan Vinter, who married an Israeli girl and converted to Judaism, regards himself as an Israeli Jew of Afrikaner origin. (Overseas JLM POST 5 DEC 87)

END TRANSCRIPT

10 DEC 1987/mb

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EXTRA: On 11 DEC 87 a second fire was started at St. Paul's Anglican Church in West Jerusalem, causing additional damage to the doors and interior walls and rafters. Two suspects have been arrested. (Further details in next issue of SELECTIONS.)