

**FIRE IN JERUSALEM CHURCH:** Police investigators have released two Ultra-Orthodox Jewish suspects in the torching of St. Paul's Anglican church in Jerusalem on 11th December 1987. (See SELECTIONS No. 158, p. 1, p. 6 EXTRA) It was the second arson attack on the church in two weeks and, according to Rev. Lester Moxham, a Pentecostal minister who leads services in the basement of the church, the fifth case of arson in five years. In the past Rev. Moxham has been under attack from anti-mission activists because of his alleged missionary activities.

The suspects were released for lack of evidence, and one of them, 30-year-old Avraham Ben Eliezer Karpovitch, was arrested after an arson attack on the church in November. The recent fire damaged the oakwood choir gallery and a closet-sized vestry. The municipality has pledged to compensate the church for the damage and, along with Religious Affairs Minister Hammer and the Anti-Defamation League of Bnai Brith, issued strong statements of condemnation of the arson.

During a Knesset debate in which the police were asked to give an explanation for their failure to apprehend those responsible for the fires, Police Minister Bar-Lev denied charges by left-wing parliamentarians that the police were not taking the matter seriously. The Left viewed the incidents as additional proof of the spread of "Houmeni-style fundamentalism" among Orthodox Jewish extremists. The arson attacks were widely covered in all the Israeli media. A letter by UCCI Chairman Charles Kopp correcting errors in the account of the November arson was published in full in KAWL HA'IR, the Jerusalem weekly (11 DEC 87).

**EVANGELISM SEMINAR NEAR HAIFA "EXPOSED":** The anti-mission society YAD L'AHIM reported to the press that it had succeeded in "planting" at least one of its activists at a five-day seminar on Jewish evangelism scheduled for 8th-13th December. Sponsored by the Haifa Lutheran church Eliyahu under the title "Edut Idit," it is to be held at the Anglican hostel, Stella Carmel, near Haifa. The seminar will include practical evangelism on Haifa streets, which reportedly will be harassed by anti-mission agents. A photograph of the invitation to the seminar was published by the Ultra-Orthodox weekly YOM HASHISHI ("FRIDAY") on 4th December 1987.

**CHRISTIAN MEDALLIONS TO JEWISH YOUTH:** Some 20 Jewish school children from Migdal Ha'emek who took part in the Tiberias marathon returned home with religious medallions bearing the figure of Jesus and the words of the "Hail Mary." Teachers responsible for the children could not give any explanation for this, but the writers of a report in the Labour daily DAVAR noted "that the possibility was not ruled out that Christian missionaries active in the Galilee" were behind the incident.

In a letter published by DAVAR (20.12.87) on the subject, M. Benhayim of Jerusalem questioned that missionaries, usually evangelical, would distribute Catholic medals related to the Madonna. "It would appear that there are those who hasten to find a missionary explanation for every unusual event, just like those who are ever ready to find a 'Leftist Mafia' behind political events they dislike."

**ISRAEL RADIO IN THE SERVICE OF THE MISSIONARIES:** M.K. Rabbi Druckman, in an urgent motion before the Knesset, expressed shock at the service performed for the Christian mission by means of army broadcasts "glorifying" Christian belief and its religion. The IDF station even invited the "apostate Brother Daniel" of the Carmelite monks to bring the Christian Gospel to IDF soldiers. It was especially painful that

Jewish festivals are not as extensively covered by the broadcasts as are the Christian festivals. It should be discussed in the Knesset, he concluded. (HATSOFEH 5 JAN 88)

**"THE WAY BACK":** The Ultra-Orthodox weekly EREV SHABAT (4 Dec. 87) carried the story of Mordecai Buznah, a 27-year-old invalid who was won back from Christianity to Judaism through the material and psychological endeavours of an unnamed rabbinical psychologist some three years ago.

**DIASPORA SUPPORT:** Millions of dollars are provided the Ultra-Orthodox sector of Israel by Diaspora Jews for housing projects, health facilities, welfare funds and anti-mission activists like YAD L'AHIM. Many of these Diaspora Jews are non-Orthodox and do not realize that their money is going to Ultra-Orthodox institutions, which is sometimes funneled through government grants by means of coalition deals involving Ultra-Orthodox parties. (From a report in JERUSALEM POST International Edition 5 DEC 87 by Charles Hoffman)

**"A HAND TO THE MISSION":** In a sarcastic wordplay on the name YAD L'AHIM, ("A HAND TO THE BRETHERN") the anti-mission Ultra-Orthodox society, Shahar Ilan, KAWL HA'IR correspondent, reviews the recently-published telephone directory of Ultra-Orthodox institutions by the aforesaid body. "But this guide is first of all a guide to the (Ultra-Orthodox) missionary ... to get as many secular children into Ultra-Orthodox institutions as possible, which is one of the chief aims of YAD L'AHIM, and not only the widely-publicized war against the Christian mission." (11 DEC 87)

**"WAITING FOR MESSIAH":** In a full-page feature article by Yonatan Shem-Or of "KOL HAIFA" (1 JAN 88), the Messianic Jewish movement in Haifa and worldwide was reviewed. Beginning with a description of the Christmas celebrations at Elias Lutheran Church in Haifa (mainly involving Scandinavian guests), the writer quoted at length from an interview with M. Benhayim, Israel Secretary of the International Hebrew Christian Alliance, the Hebrew Carmelite monk Daniel Rufeisen; and Comparative Religion Professor Zvi Verblowsky of the Hebrew University. Excerpts follow:

**BENHAYIM:**

Q: You are not Jews who have converted to Christianity?

A: No, we are against assimilation. There are various views about Jewishness. We believe there is a specific Jewish destiny, which has a universal aspect of being a light to the nations.

Q: How do you get married?

A: If there are no halachic (Jewish religious) barriers, we get married by rabbis, but afterwards have a Messianic reception.

Q: Do people hide their beliefs?

A: I haven't hidden it, but at times one must be discreet.

Q: What do you see in the future?

A: I believe we will become stronger and all Israel will be saved, because the Jewish people will see there is no other way (after Orthodoxy and secular Zionism) have not satisfied the requirements of Jewish existence. Finally there will be a remnant that will understand this and lead the Jewish people. (A description of Benhayim's testimony, and activities is also provided.)

**DANIEL RUFEISEN:**

Q: What is the essence of Messianic Judaism?

A: It's a matter of semantics. I don't agree with the term. They are really Christians like me. You can call me a Hebrew Christian. They want to avoid accusations that they have joined an antisemitic religion, since most Jews view Christians as antisemites ... but the rise of the State of Israel and the revival of the Hebrew language (has caused radical changes), which I connect to divine

providence. I met with the Pope and asked him if he doesn't see this as a miracle, that three years after the Holocaust a Jewish state arose, and he agreed with me there is a divine justice in this.

Q: You once tried to obtain recognition as a Jew by court action. (This is a reference to the petition of Rufeisen in 1962 to the High Court to be granted status as a Jew by nationality and Catholic by religion under the Law of Return, which was denied.)

A: I have learned a little since then; now I prefer not to argue about the matter.

**VERBLOWSKY:**

Q: The Messianic Jews claim they are returning to true Judaism.

A: That is their claim, but it is wrong. You have to be a complete idiot to think that it is possible to turn history back 2,000 years.

Q: In the Haifa Scandinavian church I visited there was no cross but there was a seven-branched menorah.

A: The menorah is an ancient Jewish symbol. Nowhere in Scandinavia have I ever seen a church with a menorah. A church with a menorah wants to attract Jews; it is a missionary church. (End Excerpts)

**JEWISH MOTHER SUPERIOR:** Mother Miriam of the Roman Catholic community of "The Little Sisters of Israel" ended a five-day hunger strike directed at the Archbishop of Lyon in France. She protested what she claimed was "an unjust antisemitic trial" against her by church authorities following accusations that she was "abusing" nuns in her charge.

Born Tunde Szentes in Hungary in 1949 to Jewish parents, she was raised as a Catholic by her mother who had converted to Catholicism during the war. The mother concealed her Jewish origin even from her daughter, who eventually became a zealous Roman Catholic nun and founder of a religious community to honour the Virgin Mary. A pilgrimage to Israel during 1982 aroused in her strong feelings for the land and its Jewish holy sites, which she later described to her mother who then revealed the full story of her Jewishness. This caused Mother Miriam to change the name of her community to "The Little Sisters of Israel" and to observe the Jewish Sabbath and dietary laws. She asserted that she was trying to "effect reconciliation between Jews and Christians and not between Judaism and Christianity."

The church court cleared her of the charges of abuse, and her demand to have access to the records of the court hearing were reportedly met. The archbishop commented that "Jews have to be good Jews, and Christians, good Christians," a statement that seemed to be echoed by the chief rabbi of Lyon (who visited the Jewish mother Superior): "She has to choose between being a good Jew or a good Christian." (JERUSALEM POST 5 JAN 88; AL HAMISHMAR 4 JAN)

**"BSHUV":** A Messianic Jewish periodical edited by Menahem Benhayim containing a profile of an anti-messianic personality, congregational life in Israel and a testimony: From Hard Drugs to Messianism, and more. (REVIEWED IN JERUSALEM WEEKLY KAWL HA'IR 1 JAN 88)

**"MESSIANIC JEWS":** "If the way of Ha'etzni (militant Jewish nationalist) succeeds, Israel will become a blood-soaked arena where two million Messianic Jews are fighting 800 million Muslims." (Quoted from a debate at the Tel-Aviv University between Prof. Zvi Razi of the History faculty and Attorney Elyakim Ha'etzni. The term "Messianic Jews" used here has no relation to belief in Jesus, but is applied to militant Jewish nationalists, usually orthodox in religion — TRANSLATOR) (HADASHOT 1 JAN 88).

**MUBARAK AWAD:** "The Israelis are refusing me (residence rights) because I am a Christian. If I were a Jew, I would not be refused," said Awad. "I am willing to change my religion to stay here. And if I were to tell that to a church in the U.S. in front of 3,000 people, it's amazing the reaction I would get." (JERUSALEM POST 5 DEC 87)

**CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S CELEBRATIONS:** The annual debate over Christmas and New Year's celebrations by Jewish Israelis revealed a slight softening of attitudes on the part of the Orthodox establishment. No ban was issued by the Jerusalem rabbinate forbidding New Year's Eve parties in hotels under its supervision (for kosher laws), but no mention was to be made of the "religious" aspect of the day. Israel radio and TV gave considerable coverage to the celebrations in Bethlehem and elsewhere. The fact that the holidays this year fell on Friday probably influenced the wide coverage on Friday evening, the beginning of the Jewish Sabbath, when devout Jews would not be listening or watching.

The English-language Christian information service IDEA from West Germany noted that no Jews live in Bethlehem and the majority of the town's inhabitants are Muslims, with the balance Roman Catholics, Orthodox, and 1,000 Protestants and Anglicans. There are three separate dates for Christmas observed - Western (25th Dec.), Orthodox (6th Jan.) and Armenian (19th Jan.). According to Israeli sources, Muslims account for 13.5% of the population in Israel, followed by 2.3% Christians divided among 73,000 Catholics, 43,000 Orthodox, 1,600 Lutherans, 1,200 Arabic-speaking Anglicans. (IDEA NO. 10 NOV 87, p. 3)

**ISRAEL BIBLE SOCIETY:** In 1986 the Society, based in Jerusalem, distributed 11,737 complete Bibles, 5,838 New Testaments and 18,945 Bible extracts. (IDEA 10 NOV 87 p. 17)

**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 SEPT 87)

Fr. Claudio Baratto, director of the Christian Information Centre in the Old City of Jerusalem, lives in the village of Ein Karem, the traditional birthplace of John the Baptist. He believes that archaeological evidence will show that it was a centre for the early Jewish followers of Jesus, and excavations at his monastery have already given hint of this. Mosaic floors discovered in the 1940's have convinced him that Ein Karem may be one of the centres of the early Jewish-Christian community, that fragile body of believers, pressured by other Jews and by the Gentile church, which eventually died out. The family of John the Baptist and his father Zachary could well have provided the nucleus for a Christian-Jewish congregation. There is no mention of Ein Karem in Byzantine sources, although it was known as a Christian centre, and he attributes this to the fact that the Byzantines simply ignored the Jewish-Christians. (JLM POST 4 DEC 87)

**"BIBLE IN HAND":** A group of 40 U.S. Christian pilgrims, including the American astronaut Lt. Col. Bill Pyles, a Lebanese-American family, and a four-generation family ranging from a 91-year old great-grandmother to a 15-year-old great-grandchild, spent an intensive two-weeks in Israel within the framework of Ulpan Akiva in Netanya. The program entitled "BIBLE IN HAND" is designed to introduce Bible-believing Christians to biblical sites, contemporary Israeli history and its diverse communities, and to provide an introduction to modern Israeli culture. (DAVAR 9 NOV 87)

**ZIMBABWE FRIENDS OF ISRAEL:** In a letter to the JLM POST (14 DEC 87), Leslie Moxham, Minister of St. Paul's Fellowship in Jerusalem, wrote of the "brutal murder of the white members of the Olive Tree and New Adams Farms in Zimbabwe. ... All the members of the two communities (they were not missionaries) loved Israel, prayed for the peace of Jerusalem, held a regular Shabbat meal. Their communities were based on Israeli kibbutz methods and principles ... geared to teaching the villagers successful farming methods and to love Israel. Israel has lost 16 very good friends of Israel."

**CUSTOMS FLAP:** The Israeli Customs Authority recently demanded and received \$20,000 duty through the International Christian Embassy for four tons of clothes donated to Israel by Christian Action for Israel in Holland. The Dutch group paid the duty, but they were "embittered", according to Zvi Givati, the ICEJ liaison to Israeli organizations. The Customs Authority explained that clothes arriving in "commercial quantities," even as donations, are subject to tax in order to protect the local textile industry. The clothing was finally donated to Malbi, a voluntary welfare organization. (IN JLM 8 JAN 88)

**ISRAEL'S VATICAN "AMBASSADOR":** A long feature article for Christmas Day and interview of Fr. Marcel Dubois, French-born Dominican, Hebrew University Philosophy professor, and naturalized Israeli citizen (on Christmas Day 1984), was carried in HADASHOT, by Elezar Sturm. The article discussed the Jewish origins of Christian faith ("Jews and Christians are inclined to forget that Jesus was a Jew, laboured as a Jew among His people, and died for being a Jew."). The reporter speculates on what would have happened had Christianity remained within the bosom of Judaism, as modern Reform Judaism has, to which he compares it.

Professor Dubois describes his attachment to Israel and the Jewish people ("It is only here in Israel among the Jewish people that I feel an authentic identity as a Christian."). He describes his Catholic background, his monastic calling, his naturalization, his work at the Hebrew University where he headed the philosophy department for several years, his handling of charges that he is a missionary (which he denies), his relations to the Catholic hierarchy (including the Vatican) representing a strong pro-Israel view.

**FRENCH AFRICAN MISSIONARY SETTLES IN JERUSALEM:** The story of a French Catholic missionary with radical ideas about mission was featured in HADASHOT (8 JAN 88). Fr. Pierre Vanloujean, after 35 years on the mission field, has retired to Jerusalem, to help out by simple friendship in order to compensate in some measure for the wrongs done by the church against the Jewish people.

**MORMONS:** A significant gain was won in the ministerial committee on the Mormons headed by Religious Affairs Minister Hammer. Procedures were fixed limiting the purchase of land by foreign institutions of a religious or sectarian nature. Hammer stated that the greater part of the damage done in the Mormon University affair on Mt. Scopus was by junior officials who lacked discretion. In the future every such group will be studied by the Interior, Religious Affairs, and Foreign ministers, who will render a personal opinion on the request, which will then be reviewed by the Israel Lands Authority, which will then present its recommendations to the Agriculture Minister. This will be followed by a second review by all the ministers, with the right of each minister to request a full cabinet discussion. (HATSOFEH 10 DEC 87)

Eli Shai of KAWL HA'IR (25 DEC 87) JERUSALEM reviews the TV feature on the Mormon university and concludes, tongue in cheek, that the "real national danger" is in the Mormon pursuit of the names of the deceased because of their strange beliefs in the need to "baptize" the dead

into their cult. Several local weeklies also reported Orthodox irritation over increased contacts between the Hebrew University and the adjacent new Mormon University on Mt. Scopus. (31 DEC 87 to 8 JAN 88)

**SECTS ON KIBBUTZ:** A three-page feature article with photographs of Hare Krishna sectarians in Israel appeared in YEDIOT AKHRONOT (4 Nov 87). A number of kibbutz members have been attracted to this and other sects. An Israeli Hare Krishna group numbering 15 young men and women is seeking to set up a commune. The present centre is on Gordon Street in Tel-Aviv where they maintain a Hindu lifestyle according to Hare Krishna tenets.

**DIASPORA NEWS:**

**ENGLAND:** The London Jewish Quarterly (Issue D. 1987) published an article by C. C. Aronsfeld, "journalist and amateur historian," editor of the monthly "Association for Jewish Refugees." Headed "THE CHRISTIAN MISSION TO THE JEWS," it argues that "the changes in the (Catholic) Church during the past 40 years are greater than during the past 400 years, and the process is continuing inexorably." While admitting that "some Christian sects continue missionary work," it is no cause for alarm nor for denying them their civil rights. "The principle of witness — Jewish or Christian — need not be offensive to religious sensitivities, nor pose a barrier to Christian-Jewish relations."

In any event, Christian missionary work among Jews has been "a remarkable failure" in the past two centuries. He concludes: "Whatever challenge may be presented to Jews by conversionists in this age of the twilight of Christianity, it will be most effectively met by the enlightened self-assurance born in the dawn of a new chapter of Jewish history."

**USA:** TIME Magazine published (28 DEC 87) a full-page ad of JEWS FOR JESUS headed: "WHY CAN'T CHRISTMAS BE A JEWISH HOLIDAY?" and sub-headed: "Isn't Christmas the birthday of the greatest Jew who ever lived?" The book of testimonies, "JESUS FOR JEWS," was offered at a special rate. Julius Berman, chairman of the Jewish Community Task Force on Missionaries and Cults denounced the ad, which also appeared in NEWSWEEK, NEW YORK TIMES and NEWSDAY. "We feel it is important for the Jewish community to stand as a unified front and show our disapproval of the message of JEWS FOR JESUS," he said, urging a letter-writing campaign to the editors of publications carrying the ads. (JEWISH PRESS 31 DEC 87)

Charles Brenner from N.Y.C. reported for the TIMES of London (22 DEC 87) on the furore in the New York Orthodox Jewish community over a Yuletide book for Jewish children relating the life of Jesus. The book described him as a "good and powerful man, but not the Son of God." Entitled "MAN OF GALILEE," by Daniel Bloom, it was written from a humanistic Jewish viewpoint, but has nevertheless been attacked as "missionary."

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