

"THE MISSION"

READY FOR THE ELECTIONS: Tens of thousands of copies of an innocent-looking tract called "Time to Choose", and appealing to voters to choose "that Man" (Jesus), have been prepared at the missionary correspondence school Emmaus for study of the "Holy Scriptures" located in Haifa. They are to be distributed by members of the apostate Messianic congregations throughout Israel during election week. The anti-mission workers of YAD L'AHIM, who have exposed this fact, have appealed to all those who receive the tract and encounter the distributors to obtain their names and addresses and pass them on to YAD L'AHIM (Various Papers between 20-23 OCT 88)

ANTI-MISSION OFFICE VANDALIZED: Swastikas were discovered on the building of the missionary sect on Ben-Hillel Street in downtown Jerusalem as well as damage to the building door. Police are investigating, HAARETZ and HATSOFEH reported on 9 DEC 88.

The new English-language Israeli journal "THE NATION" published on the same date another version of the report involving one Samuel Golding, head of the Jerusalem Institute of Biblical Polemics. Ultra-Orthodox Jews are suspected, but Golding expressed surprise that "they should mix me up with missionaries," adding: "This is not the first harassment I've had during the last few months, but I always thought it was missionaries; they're my only enemies." Golding (who once advertised himself as an ordained Ultra-Orthodox rabbi and doctor and ex-missionary until his pretenses were exposed - EDITOR) suspects that the Ultra-Orthodox have been harassing him because his ideas were "misinterpreted" by a syndicated Haifa journalist, Carl Alpert, who wrote that Golding was not Orthodox and is suspected of being a secret missionary as well as a "closet Christian." He continues to assert that he is a "Holocaust survivor" raised by Christian foster parents. Police told him the type of black paint used by the vandals is the same type used by Ultra-Orthodox zealots against missionaries who were the targets of similar vandalism the same day he was.

"FILE NO 4296/86 WILL YET MAKE THE HEADLINES": Under this heading, the Ultra-Orthodox weekly EREV SHABBAT (2 DEC 88) reviewed the charges made against Messianic congregational leaders in Netanya, that they had enticed Jews by means of material inducements to convert to Christianity in violation of the penal code Section 174a. Following investigation of the charges by the police and by the Attorney-General, the charges were dismissed as lacking evidence or criminal character.

An Orthodox Jewish attorney has continued to pressure the authorities and called for re-opening the case. The newspaper suggested that he might appeal to the High Court to reverse the decision of the authorities. Meanwhile, the office of the Attorney General has denied the charge that it is their policy to ignore enforcement of the anti-mission bribery law. "The file was closed for lack of evidence ... and there are no guidelines not to activate Paragraph 174a," a spokeswoman replied to questions of the journalist.

JEWISH MISSIONARIES: A. Farkash of the Ultra-Orthodox daily MODIYA (15 AUG 88) surveyed the history of Jewish conversions to Christianity and the more recent development of Messianic Judaism and the antidote to it, "Jews for Judaism," led by Larry Levy. While he argues that Jewish conversions to Christian faith in the past were always motivated by fear of persecution or desire for social advancement, the recent movements derive from a lack of Jewish roots and a spiritual hunger. The new group of "Jews for Judaism" has arisen to resist the machina-

tions of the missionaries and apostates who falsely teach that they represent fulfilled Judaism.

APPEAL TO RELIGIOUS KNESSET MEMBERS: Urgent telegrams have been sent to Orthodox Jewish Knesset members by the chairman of YAD L'AHIM asking them not to forget during coalition negotiations to press for passage of a new mission law, an adoption law and a law of immigrant absorption. The chairman noted that the propaganda of the various sects is intensifying and going unchecked. In his opinion the religious parties should take the Absorption portfolio in the new government so that they can have control over all the new immigrants coming to Israel from distressed countries and from Russia. It has been learned that only Religious Affairs Minister Zevulun Hammer has responded to the wire expressing his readiness to work toward putting these proposals on the agenda. (EREV SHABBAT 2 DEC 88)

"RECEPTION FOR MISSIONARIES?" The activists of YAD L'AHIM are furious at Prime Minister Shamir for holding a cordial reception recently for the preacher George Otis, founder of the missionary radio station "VOICE OF HOPE" which broadcasts from South Lebanon and from Jerusalem. In a photograph distributed by the Government Press Office, Otis is seen presenting the P.M. with a sculpture of Moses by Jacques Heller, and saying: "As Aaron and Hur upheld the hands of Moses in his war against Amalek, so do I and my friends seek to uphold Israel." In the protest that the anti-mission activists dispatched they quote other words that Otis has written that are remarkably parallel to the "ideology" of Amalek. "We are now investigating the suspicions that missionary elements have poured money into the election funds of the Likud, and disclosures are expected to follow," said one activist in the anti-mission section. (SHEARIM, ULTRA-ORTHODOX WEEKLY 6 SEP 88)

PETAH TIKVA CAMPAIGN: Dozens of families in distress have recently been rescued before they fell into the claws of the Mission, and have now become Ultra-Orthodox penitents. Rabbi Menahem Schwartz, director of the Petah Tikva district office of YAD L'AHIM, related that permission to publicize this was granted on the eve of the Hebrew New Year. He refused to give the names of the families involved or to furnish additional details, but said that they had made their kitchens kosher and their children were already studying at Orthodox Jewish institutions. He also noted that such campaigns are being conducted in Petah Tikva, "the mother of the settlements", in a discreet manner and without publicity. The community of penitents in the town is growing and bi-weekly meetings of young people and adults are going on. (HATSOFEH 14 SEP 88)

RABBINIC THREAT IN HAIFA: The Haifa rabbinate is threatening to revoke the kosher license of the Dan Panorama hotel on the Carmel if the management doesn't cancel the appearance of "the American physical culture preacher of Christianity," Nancy Larson, a regular performer on Lebanese Christian TV. The popular performer combines Christian preaching with her scheduled performance in Haifa. The anti-mission YAD L'AHIM alerted the Haifa rabbinate "to prevent this dreadful danger in our city of the preaching performer who seeks to win souls for that Man (Jesus)." The hotel management has responded that they will be present during the performance; and if there is missionary activity, it will be stopped immediately. (YEDIOT AKHRONOT 13 NOV 88)

"THIS TOO IS THE MISSION": The Ultra-Orthodox weekly EREV SHABBAT (19 SEP 88) carried a feature article by Rabbi Shlomo Barkai in which he sounded the alarm against a form of "missionary" activity which goes on unrestricted, "which is no less grave than the danger of the Christian mission." The writer refers to "the secular anti-religious media: the radio, TV, the three popular afternoon newspapers and several of the morning papers."

Following an analysis of the limited restraining effect of the anti-bribery law on Christian missionary activity (because it lacks teeth to prevent deceptive missionary propaganda), Rabbi Barkai compares the "bribe" or "enticement" effect of the media, who "entice" the multitudes by "providing detailed and up-to-date news in many and varied fields (not least of all in the field of sports which, as is well known, interests most of the population, which fact cannot be ignored). Presented in an attractive and provocative manner, it clearly and openly constitutes enticement by material benefits (forbidden by the mission law) ... in order to brainwash the multitudes towards accepting their leftist views and to scorn and preach hatred for religion ..."

The rabbi then compares the present situation to that in pre-war Europe when the intellectuals in Ashkenazi Jewry "poisoned" Jewish youth by means of their literature, while the Israeli media are doing the same with Oriental Jewish youth. He then calls upon the faithful to begin an information campaign against the media, while lamenting the fact that many Orthodox Jews, including the Ultra-Orthodox, buy evening papers, thus supporting the war against religion, giving themselves all kinds of excuses for doing so. "Now is the opportune time to clean house," the writer concludes.

MESSIANIC JEWS

NETIVYA CONGREGATION: Your article, "Koreans celebrate autumn evening" (20 SEP 88 IN JERUSALEM) stated that the Koreans "get together at Sunday afternoon worship at the Netivyah Congregation on Rehov Narkiss." This statement was erroneous. Netivyah is a Messianic Jewish congregation and has nothing to do with the Korean community or worship. We do not know for sure, but it is more likely that, if they meet on Rehov Narkis, it would be in the Baptist Church. Joseph Shulam, NETIVYAH (IN JERUSALEM 14 OCT 88)

JEWISH HALACHA: Contrary to the view expressed in Rachel Vardi's letter "Christians in Jewish guise" (IN JERUSALEM 21 OCT 88), halacha (Jewish religious law) says that even a Jew who becomes a Christian is still Jewish, but he/she is not allowed to ... be part of a minyan (religious quorum) or be a witness in a Jewish court. ... In 1962 the High Court of Justice ruled that Brother Daniel Rufeisen was not Jewish for purposes of the Law of Return (although Jewish by religious law), a ruling which applies to Hebrew Christians and JEWS FOR JESUS, generally regarded as members of Protestant churches.

Messianic Jews, however, have a kibbutz, Ir Ovot; also an organization in the U.S., the Union of Messianic Jewish congregations, which represents many Messianic synagogues which keep the Tora and Jewish calendar, and are Jewish religiously, socially and ethnically. ... JEWS FOR JESUS, Hebrew Christians and Bro. Rufeisen are members of Christian churches and have left the faith (Judaism). Dan Levine. (18 NOV 88)

JEWS FOR JESUS: Under this heading the JERUSALEM POST published a letter by Al and Yvonne Pearson, Bournemouth, England, concerning "two families (representative of many) who are currently being denied citizenship in Israel even though their Jewishness has been firmly established, because of their belief in Jesus as their Messiah." The families are Gary and Shirley Beresford and Ricky and Richard Kendall and their four children. They conclude: "As true Gentile Believers with a genuine love of Israel and the Jewish people, we cannot stand by and see this happen without comment." (13 DEC 88)

THE WATCHMAKER TURNED PHOTOGRAPHER: The weekend supplement of YEDIOT AKHRONOT "JERUSALEM" (7 OCT 88) published a story of a Jerusalem

irrevocable," Romans 11:29). "The Church recognizes the value of the religious testimony of the (Jewish people) chosen by God," he said. (JLM POST 10 OCT 88)

A highly critical article of the Pope on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of his accession to the papacy was published in the left-wing daily AL HAMISMAR (21 OCT 88). Zvi Goren charged the Pope with having disappointed progressive Catholics, Protestants and Jews by his conservative stance and "populist" and "naive" approach to public issues, especially those involving Jews and Israel. He quoted an Israeli diplomat, Moshe Allon, who had been in touch with the Pope, and charged that the Vatican has not yet digested the fact of Israeli sovereignty in the Holy Land. "They hate us and fear us," Alon said, "and are playing a double game, giving no more than lip service to their relations with the Jews or the people of Israel."

INTIFADA AND INTERFAITH: In a two-page feature article, Haim Shapiro of the JLM POST (9 SEP 88) reported on the colloquium of the International Conference of Christians and Jews in Montreal in which several Israelis, including a Moslem educator, Mohammed Hourani, who is involved in drawing up a curriculum for Moslems in Israeli schools, took part. The article opened with the statement that "the state of relations between Jews and Christians is going through a new crisis as a result of the intifada, particularly the way it is reported in the West," according to several participants of the colloquium. Also affected was the Israel Interfaith Association, which has been in serious financial difficulties because of the drop in foreign support during the past year.

"THE LAST TEMPTATION" (CONTINUED): Since the last edition of SELECTIONS, another dozen clippings have come in in response to the decision of the Israeli censors to ban the screening of the film in Israel on grounds of offence to the religious feelings of the Christian community in Israel. The clippings also noted the appeal of the distributors to Israel's High Court of Justice on 30 NOV 88 to overrule the censor's decision. Reports of praise for Israel's ban were also noted. The High Court has instructed the censorship board to respond to the petition by giving its arguments for the decision within 21 days. (VARIOUS PAPERS: See also SELECTIONS 167, p. 2-4; 168, p. 2-5)

NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES: HATSOFEH reported that students at the Galili High School in Kfar Saba were studying the New Testament, which has stirred up protests by local rabbis. The school principal Rami Amitai, in response, noted that other schools also taught the subject, and students taking tourism courses were studying the New Testament from an historical perspective only and to learn about Christian holy sites. (11 NOV 88) The Labour daily DAVAR published a feature article about modern views of Jesus. "The personality of Jesus of Nazareth still enthralls Christian intellectuals and multitudes outside the Church," reads the subheading. (4 NOV 88)

CONVERTS: Some 10,000 Christians living in Israel, among them mixed marriages with a Christian mother, have converted to Judaism during the past 12 years. This was stated by the Carmelite monk Daniel Rufeisen who was a guest speaker of the Haifa Press Association. During the same period only four Jewish women converted to Christianity of their own free will. Asked whether this indicated that Judaism had become attractive, he replies: "I haven't checked this out. I can only say that those 10,000 certainly made a free choice." (YEDIOT AKHRONOT 23 OCT 88)

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