

READER'S NOTE: SELECTIONS is a monthly abstract of Israeli newspaper and Jewish Diaspora news and comments relating to Evangelical Christian interests. The material abstracted is not necessarily unbiased, nor does SELECTIONS endorse the accuracy or views of the material.

"THE MISSION"

JERUSALEM ANGLICAN SCHOOL: The parents of a Jewish student and a former Jewish teacher at Jerusalem's Anglican School have charged that "during the past three years there has been a marked increase in missionary work at the school." Rose Weinberg, an orthodox Jewish woman who taught at the school for 17 years stated that "one of the reasons I left was the evangelism of the school (which) became more intensive." In recent years, she charged, it was "really raw Jimmy Swaggert stuff," including personal testimonies by people about "encounters" they had with Jesus.

A Jewish mother, who requested to be unnamed, felt "betrayed" when she discovered her son was attending Christian prayer meetings on and off the school premises. "We had got the impression that the school had a pluralistic approach," she stated. In retrospect, she said that sending her son, a new immigrant from the U.S., to the school was a mistake.

Acting Headmaster Chris Mottershead denies that the school conducts overt missionary activities, but it has the right to teach its pupils whatever religious principles it sees fit. "We're a Christian school," he added, "and we have assemblies and religious studies lessons; all students are expected to attend, and they are told this during their initial interviews." He noted that few Jewish children are enrolled in the school. Naomi Teasdale, the Mayor's adviser on Christian affairs, commented that the school, as a private institution, was free to teach its religious beliefs. (IN JERUSALEM JERUSALEM POST SUPPLEMENT 26 AUG 89)

The ultra-orthodox daily HAMODIYA (28 AUG 89) reported that anti-mission activists had expressed surprised that the Absorption Ministry permitted the children of new immigrants to attend a Christian school instead of providing alternative solutions. Some rabbis also expressed surprise that Jewish teachers would agree to join the staff of such a clearly Christian religious school.

In a letter of response to the IN JERUSALEM article, Canon Michael Bulman, writing for the Anglican School Board members, confirmed that the Christian nature of the school is initially made known to all students and teachers. "We wish also to note that the Christian prayer meetings and Bible study sessions mentioned in the article were not official school events, but held by students after school hours," the letter concluded. (IN JERUSALEM 29 SEP 89)

MALL EVANGELISM: The summer tourist season is drawing to a close, and the tourist industry can be quite satisfied with the results, but not only they. Yaakov Damkani, chief of the Messianic Jews in Jaffa, married to a Christian woman, was standing last week on the Nahlat Benjamin mall in Tel Aviv handing out missionary literature to passersby. (SHEARIM 30 AUG 89)

MAIL EVANGELISM: Residents of Kiryat Harim Levin have complained to the staff of HAMODIYA about dangerous missionary material that has begun to be delivered to the letterboxes of this ultra-orthodox settlement. The envelopes have no return address, but they contain the missionary book, Two Men from Eden, about which many warnings have

been issued. The public is asked to destroy the material immediately upon arrival. (5 SEP 89)

Hayim Farkash, correspondent of the Orthodox daily HATSOFEH (1 SEP 89) reports that religious postal workers in Givatayim are angry that they are compelled to distribute more than 20,000 books containing over 100 pages of missionary material to local residents. Their request to be relieved from delivering the books has been rejected by the local postmaster: "It must be handled like any other postal matter," he said. A strong letter of support for the reluctant postal workers was written by Simha Langsam of Petah Tikva, and published in HATSOFEH (11 SEP). Commenting on the letter, Avi Raz of MAARIV (18 SEP) writes: "Dear Mr. Langsam, if the pious postal workers would not stick their noses into mail which was not addressed to them, they would be spared the anguish of discovering 'missionary' books. What do you think?"

U.S. BAPTISTS

SEEKING VISA FOR ALEX AWAD: U.S. Baptists have been marshalling congressional support to press Israel to grant a visa to Rev. Alex Awad, brother of exiled activist Mubarak Awad (who was expelled from Israel 15 months ago despite U.S. intervention on his behalf). Like Mubarak, Alex Awad has U.S. citizenship. A third brother, Bishara, heads the Bethlehem Bible College. Alex has been nominated to lead the East Jerusalem Baptist Church, but has received no response to an application to return to Jerusalem after leaving, following the expiration of his tourist visa. A Religious Affairs ministry source told the POST that his request is still under consideration. Missouri Senator John Danforth and Congressman Thomas Coleman have stated they will study the matter. Meanwhile, the Palestinian Baptist churches affiliated with the U.S. Southern Baptist Convention have told Israeli authorities that they intend to set up an independent organization. (Haim Shapiro, JERUSALEM POST 10 SEP 89)

BAPTIST VILLAGE "ABSORPTION CENTRE": In the Baptist Village near Petah Tikva, plans are being completed for absorbing ... Soviet Jewish immigrants. The centre for preventing assimilation, "Shvut," active in Petah Tikva, has exposed the expected arrival of new immigrant Christians. It claims that the Soviet regime, in order to be rid of missionaries who engage in anti-communist propaganda, intends to slip them in with the expected waves of Jewish immigrants. Dr. Ehud Lial, spokesman for the Israeli Foreign Office, has confirmed the expected arrival of "missionary reinforcements" from the USSR, and this matter is being handled through diplomatic channels, but refused to detail the steps being taken to prevent immigration of "the mixed multitude ..." (SHEARIM 16 AUG 89)

HEBREW CHRISTIANS AND MESSIANIC JEWS

"GROWING GROUP": There are in Israel today between one and two thousand "Hebrew Christians" who worship in Hebrew congregations. This is according to an article published in MISHKAN, a journal published in Jerusalem on the theme of Jewish evangelism. James Sibley, a representative of the international board of the Southern Baptist Convention, in Israel since 1983, writes that, because there has never been a census of Israeli Jewish Christians and the lines of distinction are often blurred, it is difficult to make a more precise estimate. The number of "secret believers" is probably very small and probably shrinking.

Jewish Christians in Israel are "average, well-adjusted Israelis, not those on the fringe of society," the article claims. There are some 30 congregations and house groups in Israel from the Galilee to the Negev, mostly meeting on Saturday because of "the six-day Israeli work schedule." In recent years they have become more open, distributing

tracts on the streets. A recent campaign in Tel Aviv involved 42 participants. (JERUSALEM POST, Haim Shapiro, 8 SEP)

WORLD MESSIANIC JEWISH CENTRE PLANNED FOR JERUSALEM: "The journey that we took last summer to Jerusalem will help prepare the groundwork for the Messiah's return while the immediate plan is to move the headquarters of the Messianic Jewish movement from the U.S. to Israel. This will come about thanks to continued prayer and financial aid." These words are included in an in-house bulletin of the centre of the Messianic Jews in Maryland, U.S. In an interesting section the editor writes about the cooperation between the group of Messianic Jews recently visiting Israel and the YAD L'AHIM activists, which is described as an "orthodox Jewish missionary organization." Prayer was solicited for "the sincere people of Yad L'Ahim who are trying to protect Israel and Judaism." According to the YAD L'AHIM spokesman, this is part of the brain-washing tactics of the Messianic Jews to blur the ongoing activity of the anti-mission activists.

Rabbi Shalom Beer Lipschitz, chairman of the anti-mission group, has announced that he plans to travel to the U.S. to enlist the orthodox Jewish community in the battle to stem the spread of the Messianic Jewish sect even before they begin their practical plans to move their headquarters to Jerusalem. (YOM SHISHI SEP 1989)

It is known that Manny Brotman, a leader of the Messianic sect, intends to settle in Israel following a planned Messianic conference during Passover 1990. Brotman is of Jewish origin, baptized into Christianity in 1954 by the Christian Missionary Church. YAD L'AHIM also has a list of "Messianics" living in Ariel and Maale Adumim who formerly lived in Ramat Hasharon where there are hundreds of them. (YETAID NEEMAN 18 SEP 89; also HAMODIYA 19 SEP 89)

DISCRIMINATION: A man working on a classified I.D.F. project, who has been awarded a prize as "outstanding worker," is now facing dismissal from his company because of membership in the sect of Messianic Judaism. The worker has appealed to the Association for Civil Rights in Israel for assistance in preventing his dismissal. Attorney Avi Lotan counseled him, and as of this date he has not been dismissed. (Report 1988-9 of ASSOCIATION FOR CIVIL RIGHTS IN ISRAEL, TEL-AVIV BRANCH, Page 45, "RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION," para. 2)

SECT LEADER WINS CUSTODY OF CHILD: A legal battle of seven years between a Jewish-Christian sect leader and his former wife for custody of their son has ended with the father's victory, despite the fact that the High Court decided three years ago that the child's welfare required that he be in his mother's custody. Psychologists involved in the case reported to the High Court that its instructions to prepare the child gradually for maternal custody were frustrated by the father who obstructed all efforts of the mother to meet with the child. She told the court that she was obliged to agree to his remaining in the father's custody. The representative of the Attorney-General also agreed that, under the circumstances, the child should not be removed from his father's custody. The president of the Supreme Court Meir Shamgar and Justices Gavriel Bach and Shoshana Netanyahu thereupon ruled that the child should remain with his father.

The father is a leader of a small mixed Jewish-Christian sect which immigrated to Israel in 1966 from the U.S.A. and settled in a commune which they founded in an outlying area. His first wife left him in 1982, taking with her four children, except one child age 7 at the time. Although the rabbinic court ordered the child's removal to his mother's custody, the father frustrated all attempts to carry out the order. Following an appeal to the High Court by the father through Attorney Joseph Ben-Menashe, the case was turned over to the District Court in Jerusalem, which decided that, for the good of the child, who

was psychologically completely dependent upon the father, he should be placed in an institution. The parents again appealed to the High Court, which, based on expert opinions, ruled that compelling the child to leave his father was psychologically more risky than the effects of his remaining with his father. The Court regrettably concluded that the child must be permitted to build his life in his father's custody. (HAARETZ 3 SEP 89)

ATTEMPTED FLIGHT OF MOTHER AND CHILD IN MESSIANIC SECT FOILED: "My wife has vanished with my 4-year-old daughter," R. briefly told the anti-mission department of YAD L'AHIM. He feared that a Christian organization was helping her. The activists soon located the woman in an East Jerusalem flat rented by a Christian mission organization linked to the Messianic sect. They learned that she was planning to fly out of Israel on a TWA plane. The activists alerted the father, and they dashed off to the airport in time to remove her and the child, which was soon followed by a custody battle in the Tel Aviv Rabbinic Court. Documents possessed by YAD L'AHIM have indicated that the attorney assisting the mother is a member of the Messianic sect, as well as the others helping her. This fact was brought to the attention of the rabbinic judges, to their astonishment. (ULTRA-ORTHODOX PAPERS 14-16 SEP 89)

TELEVISION EVANGELISTS

JIM BAKKER: The trial of the electronic preacher, Jim Bakker, will begin shortly on a charge sheet of 24 articles, including misuse of TV, and defrauding believers of millions of dollars. The trial will last at least six weeks with testimony to be given by dozens of witnesses. Bakker faces a maximum sentence of 120 years and a fine of over five million dollars, if convicted. The missionary empire he headed, known as P.T.L., once boasted profits of 129 million dollars, but was completely shattered in March 1988 when his sexual relations with a church secretary, Jessica Hahn, was leaked to the press. In the wake of the affair, the extravagances of the Bakkers between 1984 and 1987 were revealed. Church funds had been spent on cars, mink coats, huge homes and air-conditioned dog kennels. Meanwhile, following a psychiatrist's claim that Bakker was hallucinating and incompetent to stand trial, Judge Robert Potter ordered him locked up in a federal hospital. (HADASHOT 17 AUG 89; YEDIOT AHRONOT 3 SEPT; JERUSALEM POST 14 SEP 89)

ROBERT TILTON IN THE HOLY LAND: Robert Tilton believes that God is everywhere, but more so in the Holy Land. This helps him better to understand the New Testament, and the landscape of the birthplace of Jesus, Peter, Paul and Mary. An electronic preacher and Pentecostal minister (from an extreme Christian fundamentalist movement), Tilton is a technological freak who is simply crazy for satellites, faxes, cameras; it's his hobby and his profession, and millions of Americans pay him to do what he really loves to do ... Bob Tilton met Jesus ("who looked so very Jewish," he says tearfully), and he spoke with God, but no one sent him for psychiatric evaluation. "My marriage was in ruins, I was on drugs, there was no meaning to my life, and then in one split second I saw God," and everything became disgustingly all right. But he lied twice: Once he said to his TV audience in my presence: "There are many reporters, photographers and local TV people here, but I was the only media there!" Another time he reported: "I'm surrounded by soldiers, generals and captains because of the conflict with Syria, and all the soldiers around me bear Jesus in their hearts." What a liar! (JERUSALEM, YEDIOT AKHRONOT, JERUSALEM SUPPLEMENT, Yael Admoni, 22 SEP 89; also MAARIV 25 SEP 89)

MIDDLE EAST TV: Pat Robertson, the electronic preacher who once ran for the Republican candidacy in the U.S. presidential election, plans to expand the Middle East TV station he owns by setting up new transmitters near Atarot north of Jerusalem, which will then be able

to cover all of Israel, Judea and Samaria, and parts of Jordan. The estimated cost of the investment is between five and seven million dollars without reckoning the cost of the land, which belongs to the Israel Land Authority. One unanswered question is why Robertson has decided to invest money before he has broadcasting rights. (YEDIOT AKHRONOT 15 SEP 89)

JEWIS AND CHRISTIANS

CHICAGO CHURCH FUNDING JEWISH SCOUTS: The "Sabra" scouting tribe in Chicago has been receiving financial help from a local church. The group has absorbed many children of Israeli emigres as well as children of Israeli officials serving there. Israeli Likud M.K. Reuben Riblin has investigated their plight. "The scouts are not supported by any official agency," he reports. "The Zionist organization refuses any contact with them because they are children of emigres, as does the Jewish community." Emigre organizations also refuse to provide aid because of the scout troop's Zionist activity which they fear may cause alienation between them and the children. A number of the scouts have already immigrated to Israel and joined elite units of the IDF, Rivlin reports. To continue their activities they need \$50,000, which he has requested from the Ministry of Absorption and the Finance Minister. "This is a worthwhile investment, since they are the children of Israelis with a high potential for immigrating to Israel and an attachment to the country," he says. (HAARETZ/MAARIV 22 SEP 89)

EXCERPTS FROM NEW TESTAMENT IN JEWISH AGENCY MANUAL: The book, Sites and Sources, recently put out by the Jewish Agency committee for Jewish education, has been designed for Jewish youth groups from abroad and their guides. While mostly of a positive Jewish character, the book contains one chapter on Bethlehem relating to Christianity and quotations from the New Testament without comment. Among the quotations are the verses about Jesus' birth, teachings, expositions, miracles, the Last Supper, his arrest, etc., etc. All of this is quoted from one book of the New Testament, without comment. The book is described as an experimental edition for internal use only.

In response to inquiries, the assistant spokesperson of the Jewish Agency, Sarit Tigri, noted that it is being considered for general publication, and the chapter dealing with Christianity will be reviewed as to whether it should be included in the final edition. Eliezer Shefer, Chief of the Youth Department of the Zionist Organization, commented that "it is inconceivable that the final edition will include a chapter on Christianity entirely based on the New Testament. I will do everything to prevent this chapter from being republished." Yitzhak Rogov, Director General of the Youth and Pioneer Division of the Jewish Agency also expressed doubt that it would be included in the final edition. (YOM SHISHI 29 SEP 89)

THE POPE AND THE COVENANTS: Pope John Paul II has repeated for the third time in three weeks that the covenant between the Jewish people and God has been annulled, and He has made a "new and eternal covenant" with the Christians by means of Jesus the Nazarene. Thousands heard the Pope in his weekly address in St. Peter's Square declare that "through the Old Covenant, God chose Israel to be exclusively His, His chosen people ... but Israel was also asked to be a holy people, to demonstrate its consecration to God by means of a sanctified way of life." By virtue of the New Covenant, "Christians are privileged to be His children of the chosen race, a holy people, through the gift of the Holy Spirit." (AL HAMISHMAR 17 AUG 89)

VATICAN SUPPORTS EVACUATION OF AUSCHWITZ CONVENT: The Vatican expressed support for the steps taken to conclude the controversy over the Carmelite convent in Auschwitz, and proposed to finance an alternative prayer centre for the nuns. At the same time, 47 prominent Polish intellectuals offered to assist in the establishment of the new

centre, and added that the convent must be removed because it is deepening the rift between Jews and Poles. The official Polish News Agency reported that Zigmunt Nissenbaum, a Polish-born Jewish millionaire, has agreed to assist the project, and announced this during talks with Polish Cardinal Glemp. With the Vatican declaration, contacts between Jewish organizations (suspended over the controversy) will shortly be renewed. A Jewish source indicated that the Vatican declaration was the result of pressure on the part of the Polish Prime Minister and Solidarity leader Lech Walensa. (HADASHOT 20 SEP 89)

"IS ALL THE WORLD AGAINST US?": When Tel Aviv District Court Justice Hadassah Ben-Ito was strolling on a London street, she was amazed to see in the front window of a book shop a copy of The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, a 19th century forgery alleging a Jewish plot to rule the world. She began to inquire what Jewish jurists around the world were doing to uproot books of this type from world culture. "Hardly anything was being done, I learned," she commented. She made a thorough investigation of the subject and found in the dusty archives of the Wiener Library at the Tel Aviv university all the proofs to refute the thesis of the book, including a 1934 trial in Switzerland which provided all the necessary legal evidence.

The Jewish community of Berne had taken the publisher of the complete "Protocols" to court on the basis of a law against pornography. It had successfully traced the development of the fraud from a satirical novel by the French writer and jurist Maurice Julie. The work was a veiled critique of the regime of Napoleon III and had nothing to do with Jews. It was towards the end of the century that an agent of the Russian Czar in Paris adapted the book to Russian antisemitic policy. Nevertheless, the Protocols continues to be circulated, and has been translated into dozens of languages and has influenced anti-Jewish thinking worldwide.

Meanwhile, a new book published in Israel seeks to prove that anti-semitism is deeply entrenched in Christian civilization beginning with the fourth century. The work by Prof. Zvi Bachrach of the History Department of the Bar Ilan University cites Church fathers like Chrysostom and Augustine, as well as ordinary clergy who, he alleged, shaped public opinion against the Jewish people. (HAARETZ, Roman Priester, 29 SEP 89)

FUNDAMENTALISTS: In a new collection about Fundamentalist movements published by the Davis Institute in Jerusalem, Dr. Jacob Ariel has written a fascinating article about American Fundamentalists. It shows how the thinking of the Orthodox Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook is almost identical to that of Christian preachers insofar as it relates to the Land of Israel. American Fundamentalists believe that we are in the final stage of redemption, in which the Jewish State is a crucial element and a fulfilment of biblical prophecy. Like their Jewish counterparts, they are waiting for the Messiah with a stop-watch in hand. There are only minor differences between them. Ariel's article should be read and shivered over. (NERI HOROWITZ, JERUSALEM, YEDIOT AKHRONOT 15 SEP 89)

THE TEMPLE MOUNT: In a lengthy article, Nadav Shragai of HAARETZ (29 SEP 89) details the background, activities and expressions of various groups and individuals interested in a restoration of Jewish sovereignty on the Temple Mount. He also notes the ties of Fundamentalist Christian groups to similar Jewish groups.