

NOTE TO READERS: The material in NEWS CLIPS is abstracted from mainly Israeli media sources relating to news and comments of interest to Evangelicals. Some of these sources are extremely hostile to mission work, to Messianic Jews and to the New Testament. The editor requests that readers take this into consideration when reading NEWS CLIPS, nor does he vouch for the accuracy of the reports abstracted below.

"THE MISSION"

EXODUS BY SEA (continued): Some two dozen articles appeared in the orthodox and general Israeli press during January, concerning the project by Christian Evangelicals - accompanied by several Messianic Jews - to bring Jewish immigrants to Israel by sea from the former USSR. (See NEWS CLIPS No. 17, page 11)

Continued charges by the ultra-orthodox - that the project was a missionary ploy - were featured in the press, as well as denials by the British and U.S. sponsors "Ebenezer Emergency Fund" and "Exodus II" in cooperation with an Israeli business group. Absorption Minister Rabbi Yitzhak Peretz supported the project against the opposition of Jewish Agency chief Simha Dinitz, who felt that sea voyages were no longer desirable, with the opening of unrestricted air routes. All the same, Rabbi Peretz sent along ultra-orthodox emissaries to "monitor" the sponsors and prevent missionizing by the Christian staff. In addition, various officials for handling immigration procedures were on board, as well as an assortment of media personnel ranging from secular to ultra-orthodox journals.

Subsequent documents alleging missionary intent by the Christian sponsors led to withdrawal of support from Rabbi Peretz and others, but the contract to bring immigrants in three voyages was fulfilled, under heavy surveillance by orthodox "volunteers" who sought to prevent all contact between Christian & Messianic Jewish staff and the immigrants. Following are selected excerpts from media coverage:

HAMAHANEH HAHAREDI ("The Ultra-Orthodox Camp") led the campaign of "exposure" with two feature articles (1.1.92) reproducing documents allegedly proving that the Ebenezer sponsors were mainly interested in converting Jews to Christianity on the basis of their eschatological scheme requiring Jews to return to Israel so that the Messiah could come. In a follow-up article (8.1.92) headed MISSION SHARKS IN THE BLACK SEA, Yigal Shmueli links the Exodus project to the Lausanne movement and the 1980 booklet "Christian Witness to the Jewish People", as well as to the Christian Embassy, Christian Friends of Israel and Jewish "apostates".

A reporter from the afternoon daily MA'ARIV (9.1.92) filed a cynical report of the "surrealistic" atmosphere on board on one of the trips, where "the Peretz boys defended the immigrants against the Jews for Jesus". The JERUSALEM REPORT (9.1.92) published a feature article focusing on Steve Lightle, author of EXODUS II, a visionary whose book and the vision behind it provided the momentum for the project. The Ebenezer Emergency Fund, an outgrowth of his book, has raised some \$75,000 to finance three trips between Odessa and Haifa, in fulfillment of their beliefs in prophecy. "Passengers verified that the Fund's 17 volunteers on board avoided missionizing," the writer reported.

An article by Yitzhak Hildesheimer in the weekly YOM HASHISHI (10.1.92) outlined the background and Jewish ties of the Exodus project from a moderate ultra-orthodox perspective. It was noted that the agreement to permit the project included a clause which forbade any direct or indirect missionary activity. There were, however, suspicions that this clause was not always honored by the Christians on board, the writer claimed. The same day, the local Haifa journal KOL-BO published a news article alleging that "missionary activists were on board the immigrant ship", and that a "manifesto" was distributed to the immigrants, declaring that the "return of the Jews to Israel was a sign of the return of Yeshua Son of David".

Arye Bender, reporting for MA'ARIV (15.1.92), links the Ebenezer group to Messianic Jews and a Jerusalem conference which Eliyahu Ben-Hayim, an Israeli representative of Ebenezer, helped organize. The latter denied that the conference was missionary, emphasizing that it was an annual event involving Christians believers and Messianic Jews who pray for Israel.

The afternoon daily HADASHOT carried a feature article (17.1.92) by Avi Shmul, their correspondent on the last of three voyages Odessa-Haifa of the immigrant ship - which brought a total of 1,400 new immigrants to Israel. The writer described the latent tension between the Christian group which financed the voyage and the orthodox "monitors" who seemed to have veto power over the Christians. Only one Messianic Jew was willing to be interviewed by the reporter - Michael Morzenbeim (sic.) from Migdal Ha'emek, age 45, a Russian Jew in Israel 15 years. It was the parable of the prodigal son which had won him to the Messianic faith on 27.8.63. When the ship landed in Haifa and new-immigrant certificates by the ultra-orthodox at a ceremony, no word of thanks was offered to the Christian volunteers. Meanwhile, the voyages have been suspended for the winter.

Additional first-hand accounts appeared in the ultra-orthodox YATAID NE'EMAN, which claimed (17.1.92) that the ultra-orthodox "monitors" had prevented missionary activity. In a subsequent article (23.1.92), it was reported that eight young immigrants were persuaded to join an ultra-orthodox seminary. B. Rabinowitz, the newspaper representative on the voyage, described the journey in a two-part "diary", beginning 24.1.92. He relates how the Christians and "apostate Jews" were outmanoeuvred in their attempt to be in contact with the immigrants and their children. One of them, the Messianic Lisa Shmulevitz, burst into tears when it was made clear that none of the Christian groups would care for the children, only Israeli Jews who had been assigned. leader of the Messianic Jews, attorney Shmuel Levin of Rishon Lezion, tried to persuade the orthodox leader to relent, but to no avail. Unfortunately, when the ship arrived in Odessa port, the Ukrainian officials detained it - and when they finally were able to on-load the waiting immigrants for the voyage to Israel, the Sabbath was in force. The Christians, however, were prepared and ended up welcoming and assisting the immigrants onto the vessel, while the orthodox could only say "Shalom Aleichem", being unable to provide any assistance in violation of the Sabbath.

In the following article (31.1.92), Rabinowitz details his encounters with Messianic Jewish "apostates" Michael Marantzenboim, Dina Miller and attorney Levin - as well as the "battle" to prevent contact between

them and the other Christians and the immigrants; also the serving of "unkosher" chickens taken on in a Greek port when the fish supplies ran out. Rabinowitz boasts how he and Hayim Burstein, the Peretz emissary, wheedled information about the Messianic Jews from Marantzenboim. They also thwarted an attempt to involve the immigrants in a ceremony commemorating the Struma sinking, which claimed several hundred Jewish lives during World War II as a result of British refusal to permit Jewish refugees to enter Mandatory Palestine; they objected to the ceremony as Christian in nature. The attempt by Rev. Wayne and Ann Hilsden to hold a concert for the immigrants was also thwarted. (End summary.)

Several general papers carried stories from a non-religious perspective: The Haifa KOL-BO (17.1.92), in a short article, characterized the voyage as one of "suspicion and hostility between the Religious Affairs Ministry inspectors and members of the Christian organization" (sponsors). The reporter, Avi Shmul, who was on the ship, stated that he had seen no missionary activity. The religious inspectors were especially upset about the seven Jewish "apostates" on board, and claimed that one, Michael from Migdal Ha'emek, tried to convert immigrants to Christianity. Immigrants questioned about this refuted the claim.

MA'ARIV (19.1.92) published a first-hand one-page account by reporter Billy Moskona-Lehman in a professional, light-hearted spirit, contrasting the different groups on board: Israeli secularists, modern-orthodox Bnei Akiva types, ultra-orthodox "monitors", Christian Evangelicals, Messianic Jews, Greek seamen and Russian immigrants. The latter were the only ones who were unaware about all the intrigues and maneuvers that were going on about them.

Alisa Odenheimer, representing the JERUSALEM POST (International Edit. 8 Feb. 92), told the story of "Exodus 2" on the "Mediterranean Sky" voyage from Odessa to Israel in 1-1/2 pages, headed OPERATION SOULSAVERS. "The love boat it wasn't," she begins her chronicle. She noted the 30-member team of Christians & Messianic Jews facing the ultra-orthodox representatives of Rabbi Peretz as well as a delegation of "knitted skullcaps" (modern-orthodox) volunteers to combat missionary activity. Also aboard was a representative of the Evangelical journal PROPHECY TODAY.

Operation Exodus is a joint effort of the British Ebenezer Emergency Fund and the U.S. Exodus II Evangelical groups. Steve Lightle, who heads Operation Exodus with Swiss Christian Gustav Scheller, emphasized that convincing Jews to accept Jesus is God's responsibility and not on their agenda. Haim Burstein, leader of the ultra-orthodox group "Shvut Ami", was skeptical. "They are trying to wage a war to get more and more people under their influence," he insisted. In a press conference, Gustav Scheller expressed "deep hurt". He remarked: "It's easy to accuse us of being missionaries; but when I ask for specific details, I never get any hard answers." In a related report headed A DREAM COME TRUE, the stories were told of Yehuda Zabari of Kibbutz Afikim who was miraculously healed of leg paralysis; Steve Lightle who had visions of Exodus II in 1973; and the work of six Messianic Jews and Christian volunteers. "As a group, the (30) believers seem to be the gentlest, most selfless people in the world," the writer commented, "with an awe-inspiring devotion to good works." The journalists were

intrigued about the Messianic Jews, but they never received a complete answer about what led them to Christian faith.

The local weekly KOL HAIFA ("Voice of Haifa") published a feature article entitled MESSIANIC DAYS (24.1.92) by Tal Yaar, about claims and counter-claims by the anti-mission activists of YAD L'AHIM and the Ebenezer Christian group. Bezalel Shpiglitz, the northern representative of YAD L'AHIM, states: "In the past they came at us with pogroms and knives, now they come in the name of love; that's the only difference." He adds: "The Ebenezer people are pleasant and smiling, but their aim is to bring absolutely helpless immigrants to apostasy." Gustav Scheller, the Ebenezer representative, calls the accusation baseless. "All we want to do is to bring your people home," he says. Meanwhile, the Israeli counsel of the group, attorney Shmuel Levin, sharply attacked the ultra-orthodox delegation on the ship. "The only missionary work on board the ship was done by the ultra-orthodox, who simply stifled the new immigrants so they could hardly breathe," he remarked. Upon learning that Ebenezer was bringing a group of businessmen to Israel in June for investigating investment possibilities for promoting immigrant employment, the ultra-orthodox intensified their attacks on the group.

Meanwhile, without connection to Ebenezer, it was learned that Christian missionary activity among new immigrants in the Haifa area has increased. Tracts have been distributed in letter boxes by Messianic Jews from congregation Keren Yeshua. People were invited to listen to daily short-wave broadcasts by Messianic Jews "who believe that Yeshua of Nazareth is the promised Messiah". Yaacov Damkani, the congregation leader, compares their activity to Orthodox Jewish attempts to influence the new immigrants. "I will be active in every area I want to, wherever there is openness by people. The immigrants lived in a society without religion and they're hungry and want to fill the (spiritual) vacuum," he says.

VARIOUS REPORTS ON MISSIONARY ACTIVITY

JERUSALEM: Tzippi Lidder, writing in INDEX JERUSALEM (2 Jan.92), calls for a legislative ban on all missionary activity in view of the mission campaign among Russian immigrants. A.L. of Jerusalem, writing in YATAID NE'EMAN (9 Jan. 92), alerts the public in the Rehavia neighborhood to tract distribution by the Messianic Jews.

HAIFA: A similar article to the one appearing in KOL-BO HAIFA on 24.1.92 relating to Yaacov Damkani, was published in the Haifa subu n weekly KAWL HAKRAYOT (24.2.92).

TEL-AVIV: The ultra-orthodox YATAID NE'EMAN (22.1.92) exposes a "scandal" in the heart of the Tel-Aviv commercial district: mission activity among minors and I.D.F. officers, with baptisms performed by the "Lutheran Beit Emmanuel Church at a secret location uncovered only recently by YAD L'AHIM activists". Mission work among mainly Jewish minors is led by Nel DeWaard of the church. Haim Kanal & David Decker also lead at Beit Immanuel. (Also HAMODIA 22.1.92 & SHE'ARIM 27.1.92)

RISHON LEZION: The weekly BAMAKOM (3 Jan. 92) published a follow-up interview with Baruch Maoz (see NEWSCLIPS No.17, page 7) about the impact of a previous interview (27.12.91); not much reaction was noted.

GALILEE EXPERIENCE: HAMAHANEH HAHAREDI ("The Ultra-Orthodox Camp") published an "exposure" of "the missionary character of the Galilee Experience" (18.3.92), "the largest missionary center in Israel" - on the basis of an article published in ISRAEL VISTAS, a "missionary organ" published by the Rawlings couple, "leading missionaries in Israel, who were among the founders of the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem, the roof organization for all the missionary churches in Israel".

I.D.F.: The ultra-orthodox weekly YOM HASHISHI "exposed" (10 Jan. 92) "an unprecedented Christian attack on Israel Defence Force units". The source of the "Christian attack" was no less than two publications within a ten-day period about Christianity and Christmas, distributed among Israeli military personnel by the Chief Education Officer HQ and the Central Command Education Officer just prior to the Christmas season. Not only do they relate to Christian holidays, but they give information about Christian beliefs, the various groups of Christians, about "that man" (Jesus) and about the crucifixion. "For what purpose is this Christian preaching distributed among thousands of Israeli military?" the writer asks.

JEWISH HEROES: The Histadrut daily DAVAR (27.1.92) reported on a Christian tract which employs the words of famous Jewish heroes and martyrs to Jewish survival, such as Joseph Trumpeldor (who fell in defence of northern Galilee in 1920) and Hanna Senesh (murdered by the Nazis while working to save Hungarian Jews). As Jews who sacrificed their lives for others, they are compared to one "who died to atone for all our sins, the Messiah of Israel", and yet is still rejected by his people. Readers of the tract are invited to learn more by attending Bible studies.

FALSE MESSIAHS & MISSIONARIES: The Histadrut's DAVAR (3.3.92) cites from the organ of the ultra-orthodox anti-hassidic Rabbi Schach YATAID NE'EMAN, which published an emotional appeal to "the sober ultra-orthodox camp" to join forces against the Messianism of Habad hassidim, "because the time has come to rise as one man against the Lubavitch rabbi's propaganda". Writer Hayim Yosef, an anti-mission activist, claims that the distress and disappointment that the Habad movement will cause is liable to lead to conversions to Messianic Christian sects and to the Messianic Jews - as occurred several centuries ago following the downfall of the false Messiah Shabtai Zvi. Yosef relates that when he observed the Messianic Jews adopting the Habad slogan "Messiah Now!", he alerted the Habad leadership to the danger of advancing "the Mission" cause in Israel, but received an unconvincing response from the Habad hassidim.

"LEFT-RIGHT": The left-wing daily AL HAMISHMAR (3 Jan. 92) published a sarcastic article by Ze'ev Tsahor, "praising" ultra-orthodox Absorption Minister Rabbi Peretz for his "liberalism" in cooperating with fundamentalist "right-wing" missionary promoters of emigration from Russia to Israel who believe the Jews must return to Israel before their conversion to Christianity at the return of Jesus. Begin also was an admirer of Rev. Jerry Falwell, whose "anti-Semitic" Moral Majority movement supported Israel. Falwell became involved in a financial scandal, but Begin never reacted to this.

U.M.J.C. MISSION: The Messianic missionaries from America who are organized with the UMJC (Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations) are rejoicing at the "sympathy" they have won for the Messianic concept among many Israeli government officials, by means of funds distributed to new immigrants in Israel. This was reported by YAD L'AHIM, based on an internal UMJC document the anti-missionaries have obtained.

About two months ago the U.S. missionaries held a meeting at the Jerusalem Holyland Hotel to further a plan for purchasing land in Israel, setting up missionary enterprises on the order of Galtronics in Tiberias, and a center in Jerusalem for a school and a literature depot. Another project is called "Let My People In", which is designed to bring in a massive immigration of Jews & Gentiles who are into the Messianic concept. Meanwhile, anti-mission activists are monitoring the U.S. groups closely and seeking ways to prevent the missionary plans from succeeding. (YATAID NE'EMAN and HAMODIA, 12 Mar. 92)

MISSIONARY YESHIVA: The UMJC missionaries have recently developed a project for establishing a "yeshiva" for training Messianic leaders in Israel, and they have already received contributions amounting to \$400,000 for such a seminary, according to information received by the anti-mission YAD L'AHIM. At the same time, they are organizing large clothes shipments for new immigrants, to be distributed through the 35 Messianic missionary congregations in Israel. In 1992, within two months alone, they have channeled some \$80,000-worth of financial aid to Israel. They claim that a "Likud" representative in Israel has asked the UMJC leader Burt Yellin to meet with him. (YATAID NE'EMAN 26.3.92; also EREV SHABBAT 27.3.92)

QUESTIONABLE CONVERT: The ultra-orthodox YATAID NE'EMAN (3 Jan. 92) published a full-page "exposure" by N. Ze'evi of the conversion to Judaism of a daughter of an alleged missionary who heads a pro-Israel organization in Switzerland called FELS DAVID ("Rock of David"), which is really missionary. The daughter allegedly deceived the Israeli rabbinate about her intentions. She concealed her intention to marry an Israeli Jew, and that she had no intention of practising Judaism. Although Swiss orthodox Jews tried to prevent the conversion and the wedding, and sent supporting documents and statements to the Israeli rabbinate, they were rebuffed, and the woman was formally converted and rabbinically married.

MISSION TO NEW IMMIGRANTS: The orthodox N.R.P. daily HATZOFEH (15.1.92, 4 & 22.3.92) and the ultra-orthodox HAMODIA (22-29.1; 6-7-10.2; 10.3) carried a series of articles exposing missionary activities among new immigrants from Russia and Ethiopia, and responses by religious Jews to the activity. Responding to Parliamentary Queries, Religious Affairs Minister Prof. Avner Shaki admitted in the Knesset that the problem was very great, but the Ministry was unable to cope properly because of limited staff and legal constraints. Nevertheless, he had appointed an employee to devote half of his time to the work of dealing with the mission problem.

Reports on missionary work among Jews still in Russia were carried; some even enter synagogues with their apostate literature. Absorption Minister Rabbi Peretz also conceded the gravity of the mission problem, and appealed to the Jewish Agency in Russia to counteract mission propaganda. HAMODIA (7 Feb. 92) reported a tour by Deputy Minister of

Labour & Social Welfare Rabbi Menahem Porush of a religious institute which specializes in "rescuing" young Russian Jews "from the claws of the mission", as well as other Russian Jews without any background in Judaism. At present the institute has 56 boarding students, of whom 20 were circumcised in Israel. In a speech in the Knesset, Rabbi Moshe Zeev Feldman called for a parliamentary plenum to discuss "the campaign of apostasy against Russian Jewry" now in full swing. (10 Feb. 92)

SEPARATE BURIAL: A leading missionary, B.M., very active among immigrants, "has been working to set up separate cemeteries for the Messianics", and has even been in touch with Knesset Members of various factions for this purpose. (HATZOFEH 22.3.92)

NETANYA: The local HADASHOT NETANYA (14.2.92) reported of the shock to Netanya Chief Rabbi David Chelouche on learning that new immigrants were being Christianized and baptised. "Have the immigrants come to Israel to follow Christianity?" he asks. "Their eyes must be opened. If they insist on being dragged into Christianity, the question may be raised whether they are entitled to absorption rights in Israel."

AIR FORCE MISSION: Several papers carried an identical account about Avi Mizrahi, who serves in the Air Force reserves while being an active missionary who also allegedly advises U.S. missionaries how to settle in Israel. He is a leader in the HAMAAYAN congregation in Kfar Sava. (HAMODIA & YATAID NE'EMAN 10.3.92; THIS WEEK IN PETAH TIKVAH 13.3)

CANTERBURY REBUFFS MISSION TO JEWS: The London TIMES (11 March) and the ultra-orthodox HAMODIA (13 March) both reported that the Archbishop of Canterbury has refused to become a patron of a mission society - Church Ministry Among the Jews (CMJ) - because of his desire "to do all in my power to encourage trust and fellowship between the different faith communities in our land". His statement was hailed by Jews and interfaith Christians but sharply denounced by Evangelicals, one of whom called it "a shameful betrayal of CMJ, particularly in its difficult work in Israel". An ultra-orthodox figure in London noted that while the Government of Israel is afraid to outlaw missionary activity, the Archbishop of Canterbury has done so with a courage worthy of commendation.

J.F.J.: The New York Court of Appeals has rejected the appeal of the missionary organization of "Jews For That Man" (Jews for Jesus) in its complaint against the N.Y. Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) on the basis of alleged discrimination in violation of Federal law. The complaint was based on the pressures by the JCRC on restaurant owners and on ministers to prevent an "interfaith Passover Seder" and church meetings in New York seven years ago - and was heard in several courts. (HAMODIA 13.3.92; also JERUSALEM POST 27.2.92 and INT'L 7 Mar. 92)

INTERIOR MINISTRY VS. MESSIANIC JEWS: KOL HAIFA ("The Voice of Haifa") published a feature article (24.1.92) on the Messianic Jews, especially from the former USSR, with photographs of Andrei Miller, a Russian Messianic Jew in Israel three years; of Pastor Helge Hoyland of Haifa's "Beit Eliyahu" Messianic congregation; and of a tract entitled "Your Messiah is Yeshua; He is Alive!". Pastor Hoyland has been subjected to some telephone harassment, to which "we've become accustomed", as well as graffiti sprayed on the church wall. He admits that there are over 150 Russian Messianic believers who have set up a congregation in

Haifa, but only two families of Russian immigrants are members of Beit Eliyahu. The other Russian Messianics have "spiritual fellowship" with Beit Eliyahu - which helps out when they have financial troubles.

Andrei Miller and Pinhas Yitzhaki have been in Israel three years, and most of the Russian congregation are relatively long-time immigrants. They are satisfied with life in Israel, but are somewhat secretive about their faith because of discrimination against Messianic Jews. Andrei was recently discharged from a job, which he believes followed the discovery that he was a Messianic Jew. "We know this is a Jewish state, and therefore don't say directly that we are Messianic Jews, but neighbors and friends know," he states.

David Efrati, Director of the Population Registry of the Interior Ministry in Jerusalem, admits that groups like the Messianic Jews create a profound breach in the Law of Return. The amended Law in the 1970s excludes Jews who are members of another religion, and the High Court has ruled that Messianic Jews are in the category of "another religion". Nevertheless, in the recent wave of immigrants from the former USSR, there was no comprehensive search made to exclude Messianic Jews from immigrating to Israel. "Some time later we did receive information that among the immigrants were a large branch of Messianic Jews who settled in Tiberias and in the north," says Efrati.

Israeli consulates around the world have been notified of this, to prevent the Messianic Jews from immigrating under the Law of Return, he notes. Concerning those already in Israel, Efrati says that the Ministry's legal staff are investigating whether families like the Millers may have made false statements in their applications for entry to Israel, and therefore their immigrant visas would be invalid. "There is no doubt that we have a problem today. The Law of Return was enacted when there were no Messianic Jews or other sects representing themselves as Jews, and we are advising our people abroad to close the breach," he concludes.

BARRY VS. BARRY: "I told my children: If you want to kill me, believe in Jesus and go to church," says Mark Barry, the son of a Jewish mother and a Californian clergyman, who is reckoned Jewish by halacha (religious law). Barry was raised as a Christian and married Diana in a church wedding in 1982, but some time later he decided to declare himself Jewish, and his wife went through a Conservative conversion to Judaism, and they were "re-married" in a synagogue. When they learned that Conservative conversions were not recognized as valid by the orthodox establishment, she went through an orthodox conversion and they were "re-married" - the third time.

In 1990 they immigrated to Israel, but Mark lived and worked part of the time in New York as a male nurse. The marriage began to founder, and eventually he learned that his wife had returned to Christianity and taken their children back to her parents and were being reared in the Christian faith. They agreed to divorce, and he continued to see the children twice a month. During one of these visits he took the children back to Israel and called his wife and asked her to return to Israel to complete the legal proceedings. Diana has returned to Israel and has obtained custody of the children, pending the outcome of the divorce and custody proceedings in the District Court. (YEDIOT AHRONOT 30.3.92)

CHRIST CHURCH & KEHILAT HAMASHIAH: The weekend supplement of HA'ARETZ (31.1.92) carried a three-page feature article by Yehuda Koren headed THEY BELIEVE IN JESUS, FAST ON YOM KIPPUR. The article was accompanied by photographs of a recently restored 1879 English panoramic painting of Jerusalem viewed from the Mt. of Olives; also a photo of Kelvin Crombie, church historian, beside a cross which had been used to indicate to hostile Arabs during Israel's War of Independence that the Anglican Christ Church was NOT a Jewish synagogue - despite the Hebrew inscriptions and themes of the church. The founder, Michael Solomon Alexander, was the first Protestant bishop in the Holy Land, an ex-rabbi who was the first Jewish bishop in the Land of Israel since the 2nd century.

The momentum behind the article was twofold: the unveiling of the panoramic painting by Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek, and the celebration in connection with the 150th anniversary of Bishop Alexander's arrival in Jerusalem in 1842. Koren interviewed Crombie, an Australian Christian who came to a faith in Jesus while visiting Christ Church during a two-year stint as a volunteer at Kibbutz Maayan Baruch in 1981. Crombie told of the conversion of Rabbi Alexander while serving the Jewish community of Norwich in England, which caused a tremendous uproar in the Anglo-Jewish community of the early 19th century.

Reuven & Benjamin Berger, leaders of the revived Hebrew congregation and formerly orthodox Jews, described the similarities of their plight as Messianic Jews to that of Alexander, as well as the differences with respect to the different religious climate in the Jewish community. In those days there was no intermediate stage between orthodoxy and conversion. "He could not become a secular Jew (when doubts about rabbinic Judaism assailed him), but I could when I left the yeshiva at 18 and began to study architecture at the university," Benjamin Berger recalls.

Oded, a member of the congregation, described the shock the family experienced when he came to faith 19 years ago. "We should have sat 'shiva' (the Jewish seven-day mourning rite following the death of a close family member) for you," they told him. Oded expressed reservations about some of the methods which had been used by Alexander to win Jews to Christ: setting up schools, teaching trades, offering free medical aid to needy Jews, and engaging in active evangelism. "We sometimes engage in tract distribution in the streets and strike up conversations about our faith, but we don't try to entice anyone," he comments. Neighbours and co-workers, as well as soldiers in his Reserves unit, know of his faith in Yeshua, and he doesn't feel like an outcast.

Yair Goldstein came from a thoroughly secular home, but even as a child he often spoke of God. He was especially moved by the film "Ben-Hur", based on the novel of the same name, which related in part to Jesus. His conception of Jesus gradually changed over the years, and finally a friend brought him to the Christ Church Hebrew Congregation (Kehilat HaMashiah), where he accepted Yeshua and was subsequently baptized.

Koren weaves into the interviews details of Bishop Alexander's work and that of the church, his protest against the blood libel leveled against Jews by certain Christians (the alleged use of Christian blood for the

Passover), his belief in the restoration of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel, his evangelistic work and the growth of the ministry of Christ Church. The Hebrew worship service now conducted is described, and the life-style of contemporary Jewish believers, and their emphasis on a Jewish approach to faith. "Unlike Alexander, I haven't changed my religion," says Benjamin Berger; "I'm not a Christian clergyman, nor do I belong to a church body." They observe Jewish Holy Days - Yom Kippur, Passover, Sukkot, Purim and Hanuka - but none of the Christian festivals. They are troubled about the likelihood of being excluded from burial in a Jewish cemetery. "I feel that my place is in a Jewish cemetery, because they are my brethren," remarks Benjamin, and adds: "Now that they're about to open a secular cemetery, perhaps there will be a place for us."

Concerning the development of the Protestant bishopric in the Holy Land, Kelvin Crombie notes: "It's a sad quirk of history that the Protestant Church which began by supporting the restoration of the Jews to their land, eventually became so pro-Arab that it appointed a man to a top position who favours the destruction of Israel." Christ Church itself is now totally independent of the Anglican bishopric in Jerusalem.

The ultra-orthodox journal HAMAHANEH HAHAREDI (5 Feb. 92) blasted Mayor Kollek for "granting recognition to a congregation of apostates". The background to the "scandal" was the rediscovery by a "Jewish apostate" of a 115-year-old painting of Jerusalem. The article was abstracted from the a/m HA'ARETZ coverage, always referring to Messianic Jews as "apostates". The unnamed writer also noted that his question, addressed to the office of the municipal spokesman, about the reason for the Mayor's recognition of Jewish apostates went unanswered. The assistant spokeswoman would only confirm the Mayor's presence at the ceremony, and the fact that the ceremony took place in the dining hall of Christ Church should not be misconstrued that the Mayor would not visit a church. The Mayor is wont to visit churches, she said.

STORM IN RABBINATE OVER MESSIANIC JEWS: A storm has burst over the Chief Rabbinate following a proposal to permit orthodox Jewish weddings for members of the sect of Messianic Jews. Rabbi Yitzhak Ralbag, chairman of the Jerusalem Religious Council, has submitted his proposal to the members of the Council and to the Chief Rabbis. The Messianic Jews have sinned out of "stupidity", and affiliation with the sect can be viewed as membership in a "social club", he ruled. The rabbi claimed that his view has support among leading rabbis, such as Rabbi Eliashiv and Jerusalem Chief Rabbi Y. Kolitz - when the bride and groom are both Jewish. But Israeli Chief Rabbi A. Shapira denounced the Ralbag opinion. Writing in response, he stated: "Whoever is a member of another religion is an idolator and an apostate like all apostates, if he is of Jewish extraction. The sect of Jews for Jesus entices and incites to idolatry, and they are Christians like all Christians." A Chief Rabbinate spokesman remarked: "Ralbag's opinion was solely his, and not likely to be adopted." (YEDIOT AHRONOT 12.2.92; JERUSALEM POST 13.2.92; and others)

MESSIANIC JEWISH WOMAN DIES SUDDENLY IN GALILEE: Two local Galilee weeklies (20.3.92) reported the death of Amy Fletscher of Yavne'el, age 27, mother of one child, and member of the Messianic Jewish sect. She had been teaching children at a weekly meeting of the group in the

youth hostel at Poriya Illit, when she sat down and lost consciousness. An emergency ambulance crew was called, but efforts to revive her failed. A subsequent autopsy found no irregular cause of death, and it was attributed to heart failure. Danny Yahav, director of the Galtronics plant in Upper Tiberias, remarked: "Amy was a source of peace and love for everyone who knew her."

STREET NAMES: In 1942 the City of Tel-Aviv adopted a regulation prohibiting the naming of streets after Jewish converts to another religion. In March 1992, by a vote of 10 for and 9 against, the City Council - supported by Tel-Aviv Mayor Lahat - cancelled the regulation, as proposed by Councilman Y. Artzi. Orthodox members of the Council denounced the result, but were assured that Jewish apostates who had defamed their people would not be candidates for street names. (HATZOFEH 10 Mar. 92)

In response to the vote, the ultra-orthodox YATAID NE'EMAN (12 Mar.) denounced the move but directed its fire against secular and orthodox Jewish Zionists who viewed "that man" (Jesus) favourably, or who saw nothing wrong in conversion. "Theodor Herzl once proposed a mass conversion of Jews to Christianity," the writer declared. "Before the (Zionist) National Religious Party fights against street names for converts, it would be better for them to press (Minister of Education & Culture) Hammer to withhold funds from seminars promulgating Christianity among Jews." This referred to Ministry-sponsored seminars on Christian history as seen through the figure of "that man".

MESSIANICS OF ANOTHER KIND

TEMPLE MOUNT THREAT: The activities of Jewish extremists on the Temple Mount are liable to disrupt the peace process seriously, especially as pressures on Israel will mount for concessions. Dr. Ehud Sprinzak, of Jerusalem's Hebrew University, expressed this opinion at a seminar conducted at Haifa University called "Political Myths of the Temple Mount". In his view, extremist Messianic groups on the order of the Jewish underground, which at the beginning of the 1980s plotted the blowing up of the Dome of the Rock, are now seeking legitimacy by means of extremist rabbis to attack the Temple Mount. Tremendous Messianic tension has been stirring, which is liable to engender actions that will get out of the control of the rabbis, he warned. While he does not foresee an immediate danger, any serious advance in the peace process could increase the potential.

Dr. Yaacov Ariel, a specialist in researching Christian fundamentalism, stated that there is widespread activity among these Christian groups to assist - financially and politically - in promoting the building by Jews of the Third Temple, as a means of advancing the Second Advent of Jesus.

Knesset Member Moshe Shahal (Labour) warned against the linkup of a Messianic stream like the settlers (in the Administered Territories) with the ruling Likud party. (DAVAR 9 Jan. 92)

PALACE OF THE MESSIAH: The Lubavitch Rebbe has given the green light for building a magnificent house for the Messiah in Kfar Habad. The timing is apparently linked to the recent petition of a number of rabbis to the "rebbe" to reveal himself as Messiah. The sponsor of the Messianic palace, Zosha Rivkin, has for years been seeking to persuade

the rebbe to build a home for Messiah, but it was only two weeks ago that the rebbe agreed to the project. Meanwhile, a news blackout has been imposed by the residents of Kfar Habad on the subject of the Messianic palace. (HADASHOT 7 Feb. 92)

THE MESSIAH IS COMING: In a three-page feature article with a photomontage of the Lubavitch Rabbi on a white donkey, the Jerusalem weekly KAWL HA'IR (14.2.92) reported interviews with Habad leaders, other orthodox authorities and historians. Several excerpts follow:

Ya'ir Sheleg (Journalist) - Habad reasoning: Inasmuch as the Messiah is flesh & blood and is dwelling among us, and since there is no one like the Lubavitch Rebbe fit for the role, it follows that he is the Messiah and it doesn't matter if he denies it. The Habad hassidim want Messiah now, immediately, and they are organizing a petition calling on him to reveal himself.

Rabbi Brod: The sages describe the period before the coming of Messiah as one in which the religious, social and moral structures are broken. The son rises against the father, the daughter against the mother, which describes our era.

Prof. Yirmiyahu Branover (Habad follower): As a scientist, I can state that there are no rational solutions to political and global problems, such as in our region, or for acid rain, the greenhouse effect, holes in the ozone. Only the Messiah can solve these problems.

Rabbi Brod: In the days of Messiah the whole world will be united in its faith in the Creator. Communism, which was a great obstacle to faith, has collapsed, and many are returning to religion.

Sheleg: They are returning to Christianity.

Rabbi Brod: It's a religious faith. Every rabbi will tell you that a Gentile Christian is preferable to a Gentile atheist. In any case, there have been changes in Christianity, and it's no longer the idolatrous faith it once was. Maimonides wrote that the time would come when Christianity and Islam would fill the role of preparing the way for the Messiah.

Rabbi Schach (major opponent of Habad): Persons close to Rabbi Schach relate that he refers to the Habad movement as "a religion which is closest to Judaism"; that is, it is another religion. He has referred to the Lubavitch rabbi as "a false Messiah" and called his followers "a sect of lepers", "untouchables" - and the anti-hassidic group has charged that the Habad followers have claimed their rabbi is "the physical embodiment of God" (like the Christian belief about Jesus) and with other incarnational descriptions.

RUSSIAN IMMIGRANTS IN CHURCHES: The number of Christians among Russian immigrants in Haifa has doubled, even trebled, since January 1991 - the Haifa weekly KOL-BO (10 Jan. 92) reported. At that time the paper reported that some 60 Russian immigrants were worshipping in the church on Y.L. Peretz Street; now the number has reached about 200, and most of them are listed in their ID cards as Jewish. Prayers are conducted between noon and 3 p.m. on Shabbat, and on Wednesdays between 19:00 and 21:00 hours. They read from the New Testament in Russian and Hebrew,

and the preacher, Bernard Miller, preaches usually about Yeshua the Messiah son of David; afterwards they sing hymns. Miller's daughter (who serves in the Israel Defence Forces) accompanies the singing on an electric organ. On Wednesday last, an American tourist, who represented himself as a Jew who 14 years ago had had a revelation which led him into Christianity, spoke at the congregation. (Reported by Yossi Bar-Moha)

Michal Dvir of Ramat Gan complains about Russian immigrants, especially converts to Christianity, who are grumbling about having to keep their faith secret in Israel. Were they such fools as not to have investigated the matter before coming to Israel? They didn't consider how it would affect their innocent children. (HADASHOT 13.3.92)

The problem of the many Gentiles slipping in among the immigrant waves from Russia is well known. Recently, one of the papers uncovered an additional aspect of this immigration: Jewish converts who cling to their "faith" even after arriving in Israel. During the past 30 years thousands of Jews converted to Christianity in the USSR, and upon arriving in Israel they worship regularly in the Russian church on the Mount of Olives and in Ein Karem, but keep their identity absolutely secret. Para. 4 in the Law of Return states that a convert to another religion is not entitled to Israeli citizenship (under that law). In any case, this is a strange law which, on the other hand, grants Israeli citizenship to Gentiles with Jewish kin to the third generation. The article goes on to describe the phenomenon which led many Russian Jewish intellectuals to convert, including major Russian poets and Nobel-prize winners. (YATAID NE'EMAN 20.3.92)

10,000 ROUMANIAN JEWISH CONVERTS: The afternoon daily MA'ARIV (13 Jan. 92) reported that Uri Eliav, chairman of the Union of Roumanian Immigrants in Israel, has asked the Israeli authorities to assist in the immigration of Roumania's Jewish-Christians. Eliav claims there are 25,000 mainstream Jews now living in Roumania, with another 10,000 assimilated Jewish-Christians who wish to return to Judaism and immigrate to Israel. Most are intermarried with Christian spouses, and are alienated from the Jewish community. In Roumania there is also a large sect of Sabbatarians, Christian 7th-day Sabbath observers who had moved from Judaism to Christianity one or two generations ago. Eliav has written to M.K. Michael Kleiner and Uri Gordon, top officials who are involved in immigration and absorption, and asked for an urgent discussion for arranging the immigration of these assimilated Jews to Israel.

The ultra-orthodox HAMODIA (17.1.92) published a response by Israel's Chief Rabbinate to the Roumanian immigrant group's report. The report has allegedly embarrassed the Jewish Agency and Israeli diplomats. Meanwhile, it has been proposed that the Chief Rabbinate send a delegation of rabbis to Roumania to study at close hand the extent and significance of the problem. Many in the rabbinical council feel that the sincerity of the candidates for immigration and return to Judaism must be examined, and the act of reconversion to Judaism should in any case be completed in Roumania, because of the possible negative influence of anti-religious elements in Israel to persuade them not to undergo formal conversion once in Israel, as occurred with the Ethiopian Jews.

ETHIOPIAN JEWISH-CHRISTIANS: Yehuda Etzion, head of a non-profit organization called MIKNAF DAROM L'ZION ("From the Southern Wing to Zion"), which works to bring Ethiopian Jewish immigrants to Israel, has gone to Addis Ababa secretly in order to investigate the possibilities of bringing out the estimated 2,500 Jewish-Christians left over since Operation Solomon. Etzion, once a leader in the "Jewish Underground", has been working out of Gush Emunim offices in Jerusalem. He and several others have been working with Israeli relatives of the Jewish-Christians to bring them to Israel, and is assisted by Avraham Akala, an Ethiopian Jew who is leading the campaign for the Jewish-Christians.

Jewish Agency officials are unhappy about Etzion's departure for Addis, as they fear it will lead to unnecessary friction with the Ethiopian authorities, who oppose the campaign - but an Ethiopian Jewish activist, Yafet Almu, defended the campaign, saying that the Jewish Agency and the Israel Government are impeding the efforts to bring Ethiopian Jewish-Christians to Israel. "They are on the edge of despair, living in Addis under the most difficult conditions, and cut off from their families who have gone to Israel," he said. (MA'ARIV 15.1.92)

In a letter to the JERUSALEM POST (27.1.92), Yehuda Weintraub, Director of the Foreign Press Relations of the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem, responded to a POST editorial headed DISTRESS OF BETA ISRAEL (20.12.91), charging that it contained many factual errors. He noted that "the Law of Return prohibits Jews who converted out of the faith" (such as the so-called Fares Mura) from immigrating. They cannot be equated with 'assimilated Jews' (as you do), since they are baptized and worship on Sunday in church. True, they do not marry Christians, but that is because Christians do not marry them!" He also claimed that the special committee appointed to examine the situation in Ethiopia had not left for Ethiopia, "because the Ethiopian government does not permit them to come".

The National Religious Party (NRP) organ HATZOFEH (4 Mar. 92) published a brief news article about Jews remaining in Ethiopia, including the Fares Mura, quoting Rabbi Menahem Waldman who is involved in the spiritual absorption of Ethiopian Jewry in Israel. "The problem of the Jewish-Christians is a painful one, but they will finally come to Israel," he said.

The Hebrew monthly magazine MONITIN (March 92) published a five-page feature article about Ethiopian Jews, their immigration and their absorption problems. One of the sources, Koby Friedman, of the Joint Distribution Committee, which was involved in the Ethiopian Jewish exodus, was asked about the Jewish-Christians. He estimated their number among the ones who came to Israel as "no more than 15%" of the 22,000 who arrived, adding: "From East Europe there are many more non-Jews among the immigrants." Asked about the allegations of forced conversions, he replied: "There are no forced converts in Ethiopia. During the past 500 years there have been no persecutions of Jews there. There was missionary activity which was successful. These Jewish-Christians (Fares Mura) converted several decades ago during a great famine in Ethiopia, for a piece of bread."

CROSSES ON HEBREW BIBLES?: In a Netanya synagogue and elsewhere in town, copies of the Hebrew Pentateuch were discovered recently with the

sign of the cross at the end of the book of Exodus, it was reported in the Netanya weekly HASHAVUA B'NETANYA (27.3.92). Those with such Bibles should remove the cross with tippex. An anti-mission activist, Rabbi Lachover, noted that a Jewish apostate in Jerusalem, a printer, had once inserted crosses in Hebrew Bibles out of a sense of mission. When this was discovered, he was no longer used for printing Hebrew sacred literature.

CHRISTIANS & JEWS

CHRISTMAS TREES: Several Haifa residents protested to the Haifa weekly KOL HAIFA (3 Jan. 92) on the placing of a Christmas tree in the lobby of the Panorama Center on Mt. Carmel, as an "offense to Jewish values and the State of Israel". Haifa Council member Issa Nikola responded: "This is a universal festival, and whoever objects (to the Xmas tree custom) reflects a racist mentality. A large percentage of Haifa's population is Christian and observes this beautiful custom." The P.R. spokeswoman for Panorama, Ruth Kotick, commented that the tree was displayed at the request of U.S. Ambassador Wm. Brown, as a gesture to Sixth Fleet seamen stationed in Haifa, to give them a feeling of festivity. In any case, she noted that about 20% of Haifa's population are Christians, and they enjoy the holiday atmosphere at Panorama.

JERUSALEM'S OLDEST PROTESTANT CHURCH: Marking the 150th anniversary celebration of Christ Church, Jerusalem's oldest Protestant church, the JERUSALEM POST (21.1.92) published a feature article by Stan Goodenough, noting its roots in the English Christian restorationist movement, which promoted the belief in the return of the Jews to the land of their fathers, while at the same time promoting Christian faith. Jewish opposition to missionizing and the institutions founded by the English mission (hospital, vocational and other schools, Hebrew college, bookshop, etc.) ironically spurred the growth of Jewish societies for health, welfare and education, "so that Jews would not have to resort to the services of the mission". Nevertheless, Christ Church and the missionary society behind it have remained "singlemindedly dedicated to ministering to the Jews and to encouraging their return to their land". The writer also cites the new book "For the Love of Zion" by Kelvin Crombie, the historian of the Church and the restorationist movement.

CANTERBURY IN JERUSALEM: At a press conference on the last day of his Mideast tour, George Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury, called on Israeli and Palestinian political leaders to foster economic and political conditions to forestall the emigration of many Arab Christians to the West. "My fear is that in 15 years, Jerusalem and Bethlehem will become a Christian theme park (to show) where Christians worshiped long ago. I want Christians to see living Christianity." He also appealed for Israelis and Arabs "to understand how the other really feels". He said that most Western Christians are at heart pro-Israel from their knowledge of the Bible and the Holocaust. (JERUSALEM POST 9 Jan. 92)

In response to the Archbishop's visit to commemorate the anniversary of the Anglican church in Jerusalem, Manfred R. Lehman of Miami Beach, Florida, protested in a letter to the JERUSALEM POST (24.1.92) on the basis of "serious misgivings" among Jews who consider the historic background involving a "renegade Jew, Shlomo Michael Alexander, and a large number of missionaries, many renegade Jews", who sought to stimulate "mass conversions among the Jews in Palestine". The

Archbishop's present "Decade of Evangelism" has "already caused dismay among Britain's Jews".

THE BONES OF ST. STEPHEN: Christine Sakakibara, a Christian living in Israel for 16 years, regards herself as "a true friend and supporter of Israel". Nevertheless, she protests the ignorance and insensitivity of an editorial writer and of a news article relating to the discovery of what may be the grave site and bones of the first Christian martyr, St. Stephen, on the site of a new road which church leaders are asking the authorities to reroute - and to re-inter the bones. (JERUSALEM POST 28.1.92)

The ultra-orthodox HAMODIA (17.1.92) carried a short article dealing with Mayor Kollek's sharp attack on nine church leaders, who threatened to appeal to the U.N. for protection of holy sites - in view of the discovery of ancient holy sites and remains of burial sites. Kollek claimed that \$2m. of Jerusalem Foundation funds had been invested in preserving Christian sites. The writer noted that ultra-orthodox guardians of Jewish holy sites and ancient cemeteries were astonished at the funds spent for Christian sites, while the municipality takes a hard line on the matter of preservation of ancient Jewish sites.

In response to the article, P. Leon, spokesman for the Jerusalem Foundation, wrote in a letter to the editor that the money spent on Christian sites was money designated by Christian donors who specified the use of their donation, and the Foundation had to use it accordingly. He also noted that the newspaper failed to mention that the Jerusalem Foundation has received donations from Jews and Gentiles earmarked for improvement of synagogues and other Jewish religious institutions which have benefited the ultra-orthodox community also.

PRO-ISRAEL CHRISTIANS

"A VISIT FROM GOOD FRIENDS": Under this heading, the JERUSALEM POST (15.1.92) published a lead article welcoming the executive committee of the National Christian Leadership Conference for Israel (NCLCI), representing 35 Protestant, Catholic and Evangelical denominations. The visit, co-ordinated by the Inter-Religious Coordinating Council in Israel, headed by American Jewish Committee director Dr. Ron Kronish, involved a meeting with the Prime Minister, who remarked: "You are among the best friends we have in the world." They also met with local Moslem and Christian clergy, as well as with well-known Israeli figures Natan Sharansky, Benjamin Begin and Ariel Mayor Ron Nahman.

HOLOCAUST ANNIVERSARY: On the 50th anniversary of the Wannsee Conference, at which the Nazi rulers of Germany decided on the annihilation of all Jews in occupied Europe during World War II, a group of German and U.S. Christians gathered at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial Museum, and were addressed by Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek. (IN JERUSALEM 24.1.92)

JEWS & CHRISTIANS NETWORKING: A project designed to promote business contacts between Israeli manufacturers and businessmen in the Negev in order to develop possible export outlets in the U.S. and elsewhere, has attracted members of the International Christian Chamber of Commerce (ICCC) alongside Jewish organizations seeking to advance Israel's economy. In a feature article of a tour by the diverse group published

in the weekend JERUSALEM POST (24.1.92), Carl Schrag cast a critical eye on the situation and noted wryly: "The only people who seem totally gung-ho" about the project are the Christians. "They believe the Lord is on their side, and on ours!" The ICCO plans a conference of 500 Christian businessmen in Jerusalem in June, devoted wholly to networking with their Israeli counterparts.

CHRISTIAN BROADCASTERS: The organization of Christian radio & T.V. broadcasters (N.R.B.) in the U.S. is planning to hold their annual conference in Jerusalem in 1996, if the leadership decides the conditions are suitable. The influential organization comprises 1,500 member radio stations & networks as well as 350 T.V. stations & networks. El-Al has agreed to fly free of charge the directors of the organization due to visit Israel on an exploratory visit, while the Tourism Ministry will foot the bill for hospitality. Ministry spokesman Joseph Shuval explained that the importance of the conference lay in its constituency of journalists with an orientation and interest in the Holy Land. The organization normally holds its conferences in Washington, D.C. and is usually addressed by the U.S. President. It is considered influential among Christian believers. (HA'ARETZ 14.2.92)

The ultra-orthodox daily HAMODIA (21.2.92), in reporting the story, noted that anti-mission activists had expressed surprise at the generosity of El-Al and the Tourism Ministry in extending free flights and hospitality to the organizers of the conference, inasmuch as the organization represents missionary preachers, and no thought has been taken as to the possible influence of the conference on Jews in the Jewish State.

In a feature article on Lebanese T.V. broadcasting, the JERUSALEM REPORT (12 Mar. 92) noted that "Lebanon's T.V. explosion is just a decade old". The pioneer was METV, which aimed at evangelizing the Middle East and "covering the second coming of the Messiah". It is watched by many residents of northern Israel, but has had little political impact in Lebanon.

CHRISTIAN PRAYER BREAKFAST: Over 600 U.S. Christian activists arrived in Israel to attend a prayer breakfast in support of Israel, the first time that the annual International Christian Prayer Breakfast has been held in Jerusalem, with most participants from the U.S. South. Organized in 1981 by the Religious Roundtable, it represents Christians whose biblical beliefs dictate that Israel is a major asset to the U.S., "not a client, but a very reliable friend", according to the Roundtable proclamation. (JERUSALEM POST 20.3.92)

Follow-up reports in the JERUSALEM POST told of a three-day Bible-reading marathon on the Mount of Olives begun by Ed McAteer, who heads the National Religious Roundtable, with 900 participants reading for periods of 15-30 minutes each through the entire Old & New Testaments. There were Christian, Jewish and Arab readers, one of whom was Meno Kalisher, an Israeli son of Jewish parents who is a pastor of the Jerusalem Assembly meeting in Tantur. The marathon, an annual event, was begun in 1990 when U.S. President Bush and the U.S. Congress declared 1990 the International Year of Bible Reading. (23.3.92)

A rally at the Western Wall in Jerusalem by evangelical participants at the Christian Prayer Breakfast drew a small crowd for a highly

politicized event, in which U.S. Christians were urged to vote only for candidates who support the loan guarantees and oppose the return of the administered territories. Several participants indicated that they did not share the conference leaders' political stance. Premier Shamir was warmly received at the prayer breakfast, and thanked them for their strong support. (24.3.92)

In a tribute to Christian Zionists, the POST noted the long history of Christian Bible believers in the restoration of Jews to the Promised Land. "In the U.S., as in Britain, Christian Zionism played a significant role in encouraging and supporting Jewish political Zionism," the writer comments. "Such enthusiasm and devotion are a welcome contrast to the feverish lobbying in Washington against loan guarantees by such Jewish organizations as American Friends of Peace Now... Israel must match Christian faith in its future with unshakeable confidence of its own," the writer concludes. (24.3.92)

In a report (27.3.92) on the prayer breakfast, Greer Fay Cashman of the JERUSALEM POST local weekly supplement IN JERUSALEM described the enthusiasm of the 800 Christian evangelicals from the U.S., Europe, the Far East and Africa who confirmed Christian evangelical belief that support of Israel is a biblical mandate. Keynote speaker Missouri Governor John Ashcroft stated that he was "inspired by the commitment and courage of contemporary Israel", while Israeli Premier Shamir in his response stated that "we are touched by your strong feelings for our people and our land, and the steps you have taken to give active expression to your prayers". The journalist noted that "Christian ministries support many projects in Israel (including funds) for Holocaust survivors, dental and medical care for new immigrants and the aged, transporting immigrants to Israel, family reunions, etc."

The same day, IN JERUSALEM published another article by Cashman, about ICCC promotion of jobs for new immigrants. The ICCC is planning a meeting in Jerusalem, 11-18 June, for the purpose of bringing its 47-country Christian membership to Israel - in cooperation with the Israel Export Institute, The Israel Manufacturers Association, the Treasury and Ministry of Commerce & Industry, and Israeli companies - to promote joint production ventures, importing of Israeli products, and establishing branches in Israel. Swedish industrialist J. Gunnar Olson, President of the ICCC, expects from 500 to 1,000 "to participate in the job creation process".

Eliyahu Tal of Tel-Aviv, writing to the JERUSALEM POST (30.3.92), hailed the International Christian Prayer Breakfast in Israel as evidence that not "all the world is against us... Deeds and not only words mark the activities of the Christian Zionists".

JEWISH & CHRISTIAN MILLENARIANS: Under the heading MESSIAH & FRIENDS, Moshe Kohn, writing in the weekend edition of the JERUSALEM POST (31.3.92), explains the difference between Jewish messianism and its derivative in Christian millenarian/chiliastic concepts, the latter based on the Book of Revelation, chapter 20. Some millenarians "unreservedly support the Zionist venture" while others have proselytized Jews, "believing that Jesus will return only after the Jews have been converted". He also acknowledges "the groups known as Jews for Jesus, Messianic Jews or Hebrew Christians", who may be "chiliastic"

(believing in the Millenium), but decries Jerusalem Mayor Kollek's attacks on "chiliasm" among Jews (not necessarily Jews for Jesus), confusing the issues, and publishing his comments in the foreign media. In a postscript to the article, Kohn criticizes some governmental authorities who harass local Christian friends of Jews, who are here only to foster Jewish-Christian cooperation in areas of common interest.

BIBLE QUIZ & CROSSES: When Education Ministry personnel viewed portions of a drama produced for Educational TV for a 1992 Bible Quiz, they were surprised to discover among the scenes depicting the expulsion of the Spanish Jews a portrayal of the king and queen and the Grand Inquisitor wearing crucifixes. (The Bible Quiz is being linked this year to remembrance of the 500th year since the Expulsion.) They have demanded that these be edited, so that the crosses are not seen on the screen. The producers said they would do whatever is possible to remove the offensive portions. (HA'ARETZ 31.3.92)

NES AMIM: 27 Israeli Arabs have begun a course designed to help them start new businesses, sponsored by the Center for Jewish-Arab Economic Development, which is funded by the New Israeli Fund, Canadian philanthropist Chas. Bronfman and the Ford Foundation. The course is being held at Moshav Nes Amim. (JERUSALEM REPORT 12 Mar. 92)

RUSSIAN CHRISTIANS GIVEN TEMPORARY ISRAEL RESIDENCY: A Middle East Council of Churches news report (Jan. 92), carried by the Christian Information Service, noted that 150 Russian Christians who arrived in Israel "by mistake" two years ago, will be given temporary residence status - according to the Hebrew press. The framework under which they emigrated from the then USSR was arranged primarily for Soviet Jews, but included some Christians from Baptist and Pentecostal denominations who were suffering persecution. They were to have gone on to the U.S. according to an Israeli-U.S. understanding, but the U.S. refused to maintain the agreement and the Christians were stranded in Israel. Dr. David Efrati, head of population administration at the Israeli Interior Ministry, stated that the arrival of additional non-Jewish Russian immigrants within the framework of the U.S.-Israel agreement has been stopped - and it has been decided to grant the 150 temporary residence status with work permits until a solution is found. The immigrants have made it clear they do not wish to remain in Israel.

CHINESE JEWS: The vast majority of ordinary Chinese are completely ignorant about both Israel and the Jews, says Peter Enav, a China expert. "If anything, they think of Judaism as a sect of Christianity; that's if they know what Christians are," he says. This was noted in an article in the JERUSALEM REPORT on the last traces of Chinese Jews. (9 Jan. 92)

CONFRONTATION: DOMINICAN VS. LEIBOVITZ: The afternoon Hebrew daily YEDIOT AHRONOT (21.2.92) published a full-page report on a "confrontation" between the French-Israeli Dominican Professor Marcel Dubois (also former head of the Hebrew University Philosophy Dept.) and Prof. Yeshayahu Leibovitz, the maverick orthodox writer & philosopher, being filmed before an audience for screening on Educational TV. The two are long-time friendly adversaries with sharply opposing views on faith. Leibovitz believes that every Messiah, including Jesus, is a false Messiah, and the Jewish Messiah is one who is ever coming but

never arrives. Any Jew who leaves Judaism is an "apostate transgressor", but remains a Jew. Dubois retorts that "I have friends in this audience who are converted Jews, whom I accept as completed Jews". For Leibovitz, "the Holocaust is a horror without significance or sense, and one can draw no moral lesson from it", nor has it any redemptive value. For Dubois, the Holocaust is the crucifixion of the Jewish people - Israel's Golgotha - and through it one can gain insight into "the mystery of the Cross," and of Christ's suffering, without diminishing the significance of the suffering of the Jewish people.

SECTS

ANTHROPOSOPHY: A storm has been stirred up in the kibbutz movement over the attack on a pioneer Socialist stalwart and once leading Israeli political figure, Yitzhak Aharon, by his son Yariv. In articles and in an as yet unpublished novel, Yariv has decried the spiritual barrenness and emotional deprivation he suffered in his youth because of his parents' break with their Jewish past in the drive to create a new type of Jew. This allegedly led his younger brother Yeshayahu into drugs, anthroposophy, later for a brief period into Messianic Judaism, and eventually to leadership in the Israeli anthroposophic movement which has founded kibbutz Hardof. The sect was founded in the early 20th century by the Austrian Rudolph Steiner, which is said to have "christological" elements and also belief in reincarnation.

The Jerusalem weekly KAWL HA'IR (17.1.92) carried stories about members of the Ben-Aharon family, and detailed from Yariv's perspective his younger brother's involvement with Messianic Jews in Israel: "Yeshayahu was saved from the abyss of hard drugs - a truly rare deliverance - by the light of Yeshua the Messiah. For awhile he lived in a commune of Messianic Jews in East Jerusalem. I visited there, and they would sit with the New Testament, all of them on the border of existence. He saved himself through the process of the new birth in the spirit of Yeshua, but it was a continuation of the suicidal process (with hard drugs) in the real sense of spiritual apostacy."

The following week the ultra-orthodox YATAID NE'EMAN (24.1.92) published excerpts from the writings of Yariv Ben-Aharon, with emphasis on the parental break with traditional Judaism and its alleged tragic impact on the family.

EMMA BERGER SECT: The ultra-orthodox weekly YOM HASHISHI (10 Jan 92) published an expose on the Zicron Yaakov sect founded by Emma Berger and its monopoly on a device it manufactures for purifying the air in shelters designed to cope with attacks by chemical and biological agents in wartime.

"SONS OF NOAH": The weekly supplement IN JERUSALEM (7 FEB 92) published a feature article about J. David Davis, a former Southern Baptist minister, now the spiritual leader of Emmanuel Congregation in Athens, Tennessee, the first registered Sons of Noah congregation in the world and part of a movement which Davis estimates numbers 5-10,000 worldwide. Neither Christian nor Jewish, the sect believes that God made a covenant with the Gentiles through Noah after the flood based on seven laws (prohibitions against idolatry, blasphemy, murder, sexual sins, robbery and the eating of flesh from living animals, plus the

positive commandment to establish courts of justice). The "Sons of Noah" are pro-Jewish, pro-Israel, and actively oppose Christian missionary work aimed at Jews. They reject the trinity and the deity of Christ, but have no plans to convert to Judaism, although they consult with rabbis about the development of suitable prayers and rituals for Gentiles and to work out the universal meaning of the Jewish holidays.

SUNDRIES

MUSICAL BARRIERS OF FEAR: In the framework of Liturgica, the annual week of liturgical music during the Gregorian New Year season, the Jerusalem Symphony orchestra produced the premiere performance of the *CHILDHOOD OF CHRIST*, the oratorio by Berlioz. "Based on - you will not believe it - the New Testament," critic Yitzhak Schor observes ironically, it describes the flight of the Virgin Mary and her husband Joseph from Herod, king of the Jews, and their rescue at the hands of the Ishmaelite-Egyptian. As to why this was the premiere performance of a wonderful work of music, it appears that the fear of being suspected by the orthodox of having a hidden missionary agenda was the reason, and to some extent it still is a factor in Israel. There was a deletion of several sentences from the original text as well as a failure to translate portions of the libretto into Hebrew.

The critic recalled the disturbances sparked by ultra-orthodox protesters against the performance in 1983 of Handel's "MESSIAH" at the Binyanei Ha'uma (National Convention Hall) in Jerusalem. Since then, "THE MESSIAH" and Bach's St. Matthews and St. Johns Passions have been performed only in "Christian" contexts (YMCA auditorium, the Dormition Abbey). Some comfort may be found in the fact that the Liturgica week continues and the "vegetarian" Mozart Mass in C Minor, which speaks of Yeshua as the Lamb of God, is also performed, so that "the barrier of fear" is at least partially broken. (AL HAMISHMAR 8 Jan 92; YERUSHALAYIM 10 Jan 92).

The ultra-orthodox HAMODIYA (10 Jan 92), in reacting to the Schor article, takes pride in the fact that Orthodox objections had until the Berlioz work prevented "missionary music" from being heard in non-Christian settings.

JOHNNY CASH IN ISRAEL: A sympathetic pen portrait of country music star Johnny Cash during a trip sponsored by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism was published in the JERUSALEM POST (7 Feb 92). Cash refuses to be stereotyped as a Christian performer. "My faith in God is stronger than it used to be, but I'm not really into organized religion, getting up on a soapbox and telling you to send me your money," he said. He also disassociates himself from Christian organizations in Israel and the messianic Christian movement in general. "There's too many huge edifices to Jesus Christ that I see here, and I don't think that's what he was preaching about," he says.

NEW TESTAMENT COURSE PROTESTED: Rabbi Hayim Miller, Jerusalem municipal councillor, has protested the teaching of the "New Testament" in the framework of the "People's University", which is under the patronage and support of the municipality. He also protested advertisements about the New Testament studies and their linkup to

ancient Judaism, and demanded the immediate cancelation of all support for the institution. (HAMODIYA 14.2.92)

"BEST BOOK ABOUT JEWISH FISHERMEN" : Mendel Nun is a 74-year-old self-taught archaeologist specializing in the Kineret (Sea of Galilee). Nun has worked for 20 years as a fisherman, discovered Biblical harbors and written books about ancient Jewish fishery. His favorite source is the New Testament, which he calls "the best book ever written about Jewish fishermen." (JERUSALEM REPORT 12 Mar 92)

Summarized : 29.5.92
Reproduced & Distributed
by F.E.L.M. in Jerusalem.
Filenames : UCCLIP18.592
 UCC2.592

Editor : Menahem Benhayim

