

# THE CASPARI CENTER MEDIA REVIEW

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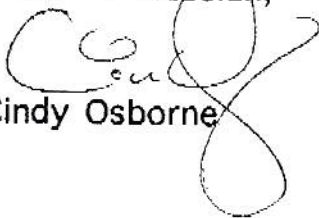
Attn: Kai Kjaer-Hansen

Jerusalem, June 27 1996

Shalom!

Well, I'm doing something new again... You'll find a complete reprint of a column by Ze'ev Chafets from the Jerusalem Report. It's a very well written, though rather painful piece, which expresses the feelings of many secular (and believing) Israelis towards the religious establishment. Now more than ever, with the uncertainty of how the Netanyahu government will handle issues of faith and religion, we need prayer for tolerance and understanding between the different sectors of Israeli society, and for wisdom for our leaders as more and more Messianic Jews come to live in the Land.

Yours in Messiah,

  
Cindy Osborne

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## Out of Order

ZE'EV CHAFETS

# 'I Did the Family a Favor'

**O**N JUNE 17, AS THE NATION WATCHED THE televised swearing-in of the 14th Knesset in Jerusalem, another, less public ceremony was taking place in the dusty southern town of Sderot — the funeral of Dor Bohadanah.

Dor was killed when a car collided with a truck, flew up on the sidewalk and crushed him. His mother and brother were injured as well. Dor was killed in his stroller. He was 2½ years old.

Dor's mother, Corinne, an Israeli who came from Romania as a small girl, and Dor's father, Gil Bohadanah, greeted the large crowd of mourners in the little cemetery. The mayor, David Bouskila, delivered the eulogy. Then the friends and neighbors of the Bohadanah family followed the members of the local burial society as they carried Dor's tiny corpse to a waiting grave.

And then, suddenly, the chief rabbi of Sderot, David Bar Hen, blocked their way. He said that since Dor's mother, Corinne, is not a Jew according to halakhah, her baby couldn't be buried among Jews.

And so they put little Dor outside the gate, all alone, in a place reserved for those unfit to lay in rest next to the townspeople of Sderot.

Dor Bohadanah lies alone, but he is not alone. Last spring, the body of 14-year-old Russian immigrant Gyorgy Yafilsky had to be refrigerated while the guardians of Jewish purity searched for ground sufficiently unhallowed to accommodate him.

At the time, the Rabin government promised to provide non-denominational cemeteries for those citizens the rabbis won't bury.

But there is no such cemetery in Sderot and given the post-election arrogance of the Orthodox political parties, it's doubtful there will be one anytime soon.

"I did the family a favor," Chief Rabbi Bar Hen said later.

"Instead of sending the body to a Christian cemetery in Beer-sheba, I let it be buried in Sderot." After all, explained Rabbi Bar Hen, "according to halakhah, the baby is a Christian."

Dor Bohadanah's family considered him a Jew. He was born in Israel and ritually circumcised. He was not known to have expressed Christian beliefs in his 2½ years on earth. But in

Israel, a person's religious identity has nothing to do with his

beliefs or his wishes or the wishes of his family. It is a matter for the state to decide. And in this case the state was Rabbi David Bar Hen.

Rabbi Bar Hen is a government bureaucrat licensed by the state and paid with tax money. His decision to ban the body of Dor Bohadanah was final because he had the power under the

law to make it stick.

"They appointed me chief rabbi here to protect the Jews," he told the press after the funeral. "They" is the government of Israel. Dor Bohadanah's lonely little gravesite is a monument to the sort of safety the government provides.

Nor is the danger over. "To my sorrow," said Rabbi Bar Hen, "there are many more non-Jews in Sderot." Try to imagine a

government official of, say, France or England refusing to bury a Jewish child in the only cemetery in town and then saying, "To my sorrow there are many Jews here."

The day after the funeral, Israel's leading daily Yediot Aharonot ran a banner front-page headline: "The Netanyahu Era Begins," along with a picture of the beaming new prime minister. On page 12 there was another picture — of Dor Bohadanah. As he begins his era, Netanyahu ought to take a good, long look at that picture.

Benjamin Netanyahu has declared that he wants to be "prime minister of all the people." That fine sentiment will now be tested. Netanyahu is already the prime minister of the Rabbi Bar Hens.

It remains to be seen if he intends to become the prime minister of the Dor Bohadanahs as well. □



**DOR BOHADANAH AND HIS GRAVESITE:**  
A place reserved for those unfit to lay next to the townspeople of Sderot



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## IN ISRAEL...

### **YAD L'ACHIM DEMANDS CHANGES IN ADOPTION AND CONVERSION LAWS**

Yom Ha'Shishi, June 7 1996

In a letter to Prime Minister Netanyahu and the heads of the religious parties in the government, Rabbi Lipshitz, the chairman of Yad L'Achim, has demanded that a number of distortions in the adoption laws be corrected.

His stand is based on the fact that children are taken from their families and put up for adoption on the recommendation of state social workers, with the families often having no legal recourse. His proposal includes making funds available so families can seek out additional opinions from experts in the field, as well as the formation of a public committee to review each case before it goes to court. Another problem, according to Yad L'Achim, is that the cases are currently decided by a single judge. They propose that a panel of one religious and two civil judges decide each case, thus eliminating the tragedy of children from religious homes being adopted by secular families.

As for the laws on conversion, Yad L'Achim cites the recent growth of missionary activity, especially among the immigrant population, as proof of the need for harsher legislation. Because of the government's known desire to avoid conflict with foreign groups and the international community, their new proposal is to simply outlaw any and all inter-religious influence. This would mean that residents of Israel would be prohibited from any activity designed to convince or influence others to change their religious affiliation, whether from Judaism or Islam to Christianity, from Christianity or Judaism to Islam, or, presumably, from Christianity or Islam to Judaism. In Rabbi Lipshitz's opinion, this law is logical and fair, and will be acceptable to Israel's foreign friends.

Editor's note: Fortunately, I don't think this particular law would stand a chance in a court of law... It infringes on both free speech and freedom of religion, and besides it would make it illegal for Jewish anti-missionaries to try to bring "converted" Jews back to Judaism!

### **SHAS DEMANDS A POLICE INVESTIGATION OF THE ANGLICAN SCHOOL**

Itton Yerushalayim, June 14 1996, by H. Abu-Toama

In a followup to the stories about the sale of the Anglican School, this article tells of the Shas (Sephardic Orthodox political party) initiative to have the financial affairs of the school scrutinized by the police. The action is based on supposed claims by parents that the school deceptively raised money in order to beautify the school before its sale, and that it gave money to missionary activities aimed at converting Jews. According to the article, the management of the school refused to allow parents access to information about the school's bank accounts and financial dealings.

The article also states that a group of parents is looking into the possibility of opening another international school in Jerusalem, possibly with help from abroad.

**NON-JEWISH IMMIGRANT BURIED IN A FIELD IN AFULA**

Ha'Aretz, June 14 1996, by A. Shmul

Last week a gentile immigrant from the CIS was buried alongside 3 other non-Jews in a makeshift plot in the middle of a wheat field. The officials of the orthodox Jewish burial society have given no budget to care for the graves or the area, leaving them surrounded by garbage and weeds. The head of the local religious council reacted to the matter by saying that the family should be thankful that they were even given a plot in their hometown, instead of being sent to the Christian cemetery in Nazareth. The former government tried to make alternative burial sites and services available through private companies, but to date there is still only one such option.

**TIBERIAS SYNAGOGUE STOLEN BY GREEK ORTHODOX**

Kol Ha'Shavua, June 1996, by G. Sofer

This venomous 2 page article accuses the Greek Orthodox church - "the messengers of Satan on the earth" in the words of the author - of stealing a historic synagogue on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, and turning it into a place to capture Jewish souls and practice idolatry. The story began during the reign of the Ottoman empire, when the local Vazir sold the abandoned building to the church in order to save his failing economy. They in turn renovated and restored the structure, and when the Jews of Tiberias sued for the return of their illegally sold property, the church demanded that the latter first repay them the equivalent of 4 million dollars to cover the costs of those repairs. The money was never raised, and appeals to all the subsequent governments of the land have not availed. Today the building serves as a youth hostel as well as a monastery and church, a fact which further infuriates Orthodox Jews wary of the "Mission."

**PHOTO CAPTION: THE LARGEST CHOIR IN THE WORLD**

Yediot Aharonot, June 9 1996

A choir of 1000 people, all volunteers, was organized by "Christians for Israel" in Holland. It is performing in Israel as part of the Jerusalem 3000 festivities, and their repertoire includes Psalms, Hebrew songs and classical music.

**PHOTO CAPTION: WELCOME TO ISRAEL**

Ma'ariv and Yediot Aharonot, June 18 1996

Both photos show children who were among the passengers on a boat carrying new immigrants from the CIS. The boat was chartered by a Swedish Christian group whose members were on hand in Haifa to welcome the immigrants to their new home.



## ...AND ABROAD

### **BAPTISTS BEGIN THE STRUGGLE TO CONVERT AMERICAN JEWS**

Yediot Aharonot, June 16 1996, by Z. Yehezkeili

The Jerusalem Post, June 17 1996, by L. Goodstein

The Southern Baptist Convention recently adopted a resolution calling on its members to "direct (their) energies and resources toward the proclamation of the Gospel to the Jews." The president of the denomination's mission board is quoted as saying that they deny the position that Jews do not need Christ, but instead believe that they, like all other people, need a personal relationship with him. American Jewish leaders and some Christian clergy denounced the resolution as a major setback to interfaith relations, even going so far as to call it an anti-Semitic attack.

### **MISSIONARY FESTIVAL IN UKRAINE HALTED**

Yated Ne'eman (English Edition), June 7 1996

As reported in the last CC Media Review, Jewish activists in Kharkov worked to stop a three day music festival organized by Messianic Jews. The organizers were not Jews for Jesus, as stated in that article, but Hear O Israel ministries, and unfortunately the festival was indeed cancelled through the efforts of Jewish officials and the Jews for Judaism anti-missionary group.

This article describes in detail the working methods of Hear O Israel, including what they call deception of uneducated Jews by presenting them with "evangelical Christianity adorned with Jewish symbols."

### **NEWSPAPERS USED IN THIS EDITION:**

Yom Ha'Shishi: Jerusalem religious weekly. Hostile to believers.

Itton Yerushalayim: Jerusalem weekly.

Ha'Aretz: National daily, published in Tel-Aviv, mostly objective towards believers.

Kol Ha'Shavua: Bnei Brak religious weekly.

Yedi'ot Aharonot: National daily published in Tel-Aviv. Attitude to believers depends on the reporter.

Ma'ariv: National daily, published in Tel-Aviv. Politically tends to the right, mostly objective towards believers (depends on the reporter).

The Jerusalem Post: National English language daily, published in Jerusalem. Tends to the religious right, but careful and relatively fair towards believers (has a large Christian readership). Friendly towards right-wing political Christianity.

Yated Ne'eman: English language religious/political weekly, published in Jerusalem. Very hostile to believers.

The Jerusalem Report: English language bi-monthly published in Jerusalem, world-wide distribution. Politically centrist or left of center. Sensitive and objective towards believers.