

THE CASPARI CENTER MEDIA REVIEW

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To: DIM - Kai Kjaer - Hansen
6 pages

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May 31, 1996

Dear Friends,

Well, the elections have passed in relative peace, and we thank God for his protection over us. Now it remains to pray for our leaders and that God's will be done in our corner of the world. It is hard to gauge the people's reaction to the election, as it seems that the dust has not yet settled - though among believers, as in society at large, feelings are mixed. I thank God that his kingdom is established forever (Psalm 89:3-4) and that we have citizenship there, as well as in these earthly kingdoms.

Yours in Yeshua,



Cindy Osborne

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JESUS' COMEBACK

Itton Tel Aviv, May 5 1996, by Yehuda Nuriel

This is an interesting look at the recent media attention focused on Jesus, and the utter silence of the Israeli press in the face of it. Jesus was, after all, the most famous and influential Jew in all recorded history - so why the news blackout?

The first part of the article records the recent "discovery" by a BBC crew of sarcophagi bearing the names Yeshua, Yoseph, and Miriam, which are stored in a Jerusalem archive. The episode made big headlines in the UK and spawned heated discussions on the Internet, but in Israel - nothing. The reporter spoke to the archaeologist in charge of the archive, who reacted, in his words, with annoying academic dryness, saying that this is nothing more than a coincidence, as these were very common names and there were numerous other sarcophagi found at the same site.

The writer then takes an honest look at Israeli/Jewish ignorance of Christianity, both through his own eyes and those of the archaeologist, Professor Amos Kloner. They agree that Israelis are, indeed, ignorant and perhaps afraid of getting too close to anything having to do with "that man." Israeli schools teach nothing about the most important phenomenon ever to happen in our land, or the resultant history and literature.

The writer finds this particularly strange in light of the recent pseudo-pluralism in Israeli society, in which everything is acceptable - everything, that is, but Christianity, which still arouses varied degrees of paranoia. A source in the religious establishment is quoted as saying that Israelis suffer from "Mission Phobia," which causes a general lack of knowledge and interest in anything having to do with Jesus.

The article concludes with a brief review of the recent media exposure received by Jesus, including cover articles in *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *US News and World Report*, and of various theories about his historical authenticity - though unfortunately none of them are based on scriptural truth.

And the sarcophagus? It was empty by the time the BBC found it, but according to the Reuter news agency the bones were reburied according to Jewish law - and the writer comments, "In the final evaluation, we're all Jews."

NEWS FROM THE US

CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATION SUPPORTS HABAD WORK WITH CHERNOBYL VICTIMS
Davar Rishon, May 1; Kol Ha'Ir, Yom Ha'Shishi, May 3 1996

According to an article in the American publication *Messianic Times*, a Christian organization helped to fund the expenses of bringing Jewish children from Chernobyl to Israel. Following the article, the head of the "Blossoming Rose" organization, which made the donations, clarified that they had given approximately \$20,000 during visits to Israel and not hundreds of thousands as the article stated. The group itself believes that it is the duty of Christians to

help Jews return to the biblical Promised Land, though they are against evangelism among both Jews and gentiles.

In response to reporters' questions, the Habad spokesman asserted that his organization had received a Halachic ruling from US rabbis permitting them to receive money from the Christian group, as they were convinced it was indeed pro-Israel and non-missionary. The episode showed rifts in the orthodox Jewish community, with Yed L'Achim questioning the veracity of the Christian group's non-missionary stance and Habad opposition groups crying out against the leadership's cooperation with "missionaries."

MESSIANIC JEWS PLAN TO PLANT "MESSIANIC FOREST"

The Jerusalem Post, May 5 1996, by Marilyn Henry

The Forward (a Jewish newspaper) reports that the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America and the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations are planning to plant 10,000 trees through the Jewish National Fund. A special agreement, in which the groups promise not to use the words 'Messiah' or 'messianic' in promotional literature for the forest, was worked out to placate the Jewish community, which is angered by the groups' efforts to convert Jews.

REFORM JEWS DEBATE THE EXPULSION OF "MESSIANIC" MEMBERS

HaModia, May 1 1996

A Reform congregation in the New York suburb of Utica recently turned down the request of members to strip a "Messianic Jew" of his membership in the temple. In response, the vice-president of the Reform movement stated that he does not consider such a person to be Jewish, going against the public support the Utica rabbi has received for his stand.

The article goes on to criticize the work of "Jews for Jesus," accusing them of pretending to be Jewish in order to entrap and convert unsuspecting Jews, this despite the criticism and condemnation of large Christian organizations. According to their sources, the "cult" has succeeded in recruiting 300,000 Jewish members in 125 congregations throughout the US, a ten-fold growth in the last decade.

AND TOMORROW? MAYBE WE'LL BE BUDDHISTS

Ha'Aretz supplement, May 10 1996, by Steven Daubner

This three page autobiographical article, written by a New York Times reporter, looks at the ease with which many Americans change their religious affiliation. He himself was raised as a Catholic by his parents, who were converted Jews. As he returned to practice Judaism, he began seeking the reasons for his parents' conversion, and concluded that much of our choice of religion is based on a search for identity. In the US this is intensified by the secular upbringing most people have and the "marketplace" of religious options, all vying for our attention and allegiance. Unfortunately the article does not touch on the topic of Messianic Judaism at all, nor on the existence of God or absolute truth.

CHRISTIANS IN ISRAEL

A JEWISH SOUL IN A CHRISTIAN BODY

Yediot Aharonot, May 7 1996, by Idit Na'aman

Wolfram Reiner, head of the Consular Dept. of the German embassy in Tel-Aviv, was killed in a road accident on his way to Jerusalem early this month. This article speaks of the man, his family, and their love for Israel.

His private library was full of volumes about Judaism, he always kept a kippa in his pocket, and his wife lit Sabbath candles every Friday evening that they were at home. Reiner had many Jewish friends, among them Reform rabbis, and even a bookseller in the Orthodox Mea Shearim quarter of Jerusalem. He found many treasures in Judaism, and leaves behind a legacy of love for this people and this country.

CHRISTIAN FRIENDS OF ISRAEL CONFERENCE ATTRACTS PROTESTS

Yated Ne'eman, May 16 & 19; Ha'Modia, May 16 & 20 1996

The orthodox community of Jerusalem mobilized hundreds of people to picket the CFI Shavu'ot conference, which took place this month after the management of the Ramada hotel refused to cancel the event. The protest deterred Jerusalem mayor Ehud Olmert from taking part, despite his earlier refusal to give in to religious coercion. The articles warn that the conference is a dangerous missionary event organized by CFI and the King of Kings congregation, which also operates a Messianic seminary devoted to teaching students how to convert Jews.

MINISTRY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS TO GIVE JAFFA CHURCH 1 MILLION SHEKELS

Yated Ne'eman, May 22 1996

The church which was damaged nearly a year ago by a soldier's gunshots will receive one million Shekels in compensation from the government. As expected, the decision met with the wrath of the orthodox, who complained that their Yeshivas have not received the funds they deserve.

RESTRAINING ORDER AGAINST A CHRISTIAN WOMAN

Yediot Ha'Galil, May 10 1996, by M. Ben Yakir

An American Christian, married to an Israeli, has been barred from leaving the country because her husband claims she plans to flee with their child. The woman, who tried to convert but could not due to her husband's refusal to adopt orthodox Jewish practices, appealed to the court to cancel the restraining order against her.

THE FALASHMURA

JEWS OR CHRISTIANS?

Ha'Aretz, May 12 & 14; Kan Darom May 17 1996

The Israeli government has decided to send a special consul to Addis Ababa, to expedite the reunification of families waiting to join their loved ones in Israel. Unfortunately, and against the recommendation of the State Comptroller, they will be settled in a crime infested area in which there are no social services available to help ease their absorption.

The Kan Darom article brings to light the story of one family, half of whose members have been arbitrarily classified as Christians. The head of the family, Yitzhak Zaudo, was a prisoner of Zion in Ethiopia, and sent his wife and four sons ahead of him to Israel. The wife was forced by the Rabbinate to undergo conversion, despite her practice of Judaism and the testimony of witnesses who swore that she was a "kosher" Jew. When she finally passed the test, she was informed that her three eldest sons were still not considered Jewish and would have to convert individually. At this point they refuse to do so, maintaining that they are real, observant Jews and should not be subjected to this humiliation. Zaudo is overcome with anger that after risking his life for Israel, his family have become second-class citizens.

IMMIGRANTS DEMAND THE REMOVAL OF PICTURES SHOWING ETHIOPIAN WOMEN WEARING A CROSS

Kol Ha'Emek V'Ha'Galil, May 3 1996, by Y. Peretz

Ethiopian immigrants threatened to boycott all events sponsored by the Afula municipality unless pictures of women wearing crosses were removed from an exhibit about Ethiopian Jewry. When the immigrants arrived at the exhibit they began removing the offending pictures themselves, saying that they would create a bad impression of all Ethiopians. After consultations the head of the community center agreed to this action in order to spare the immigrants' feelings.

THE CULTS

MORMONS DISTRIBUTE DEAD SEA SCROLLS SOFTWARE

Ha'Kol Bi, May 10 1996

The Mormons have a new strategy for "getting into peoples' homes," through new software containing most of the Dead Sea Scrolls as well as a Mormon commentary explaining them. They will also open support centers for those wishing to study the scrolls, and are hoping to have such support available on the Internet as well.

WAITING FOR THE MESSIAH IN ASHDOD

Ha'Aretz, May 9 1996, by Daniel Aviv

This article chronicles the recent increase in the activity of the Jehovah's Witnesses in Ashdod, especially among immigrants who are less prejudiced and more open to their ideas and teaching. The local members of the cult received instructions from their headquarters in

the US to intensify their missionary efforts, and in response they have written new booklets aimed at convincing Israelis. Some include material about the part Jehovah's Witnesses played in saving Jews during the Holocaust, while others focus on quotes from the Talmud and Bible which prove that Jesus is the Messiah. The cult members say that they are not missionaries and are only trying to save souls, but of course they are being vigorously opposed by orthodox anti-missionary groups.

TOURISM

PILGRIMS' PROGRESS

The Jerusalem Report, May 16 1996, by M. Lipschitz Sugarman

With the approach of the bimillennium, Israel's Tourism Ministry is preparing for a massive influx of Christian tourists. According to Eli Gonen, director general of the ministry, it would not be an exaggeration to expect 2.5 million pilgrims in the year 2000, though the Vatican's projected 15 million visitors to the Holy Land are definitely beyond Israel's coping ability.

Gonen commented that the average Christian pilgrim spent more money in Israel than other tourists, and that they were less likely to cancel their visits due to security problems.

In addition to Jerusalem, Nazareth is receiving an increased budget to upgrade its tourist facilities. Another popular site for pilgrims, Bethlehem, is now controlled by the Palestinian Authority. Bethlehem's long time mayor, Elias Freij, complains that Israeli security makes it hard for tourists to get to the town, and says, "If tourists can't come to Bethlehem, they won't go to Jerusalem either."

Israel's tourism industry, however, is optimistic that the peace process will bring continued growth, and is, in the words of Eli Gonen, "willing to bet on the future."

NEWSPAPERS USED IN THIS EDITION:

Itton Tel-Aviv: Tel-Aviv weekly.

Ha'Modja: Jerusalem religious daily.

The Jerusalem Post: National English language daily, published in Jerusalem.

Davar Rishon: National daily, published in Tel-Aviv, tends to be politically left-wing.

Kol Ha'Ir: Jerusalem weekly.

Yom Ha'Shishi: Jerusalem religious weekly.

Ha'Aretz: National daily, published in Tel-Aviv.

Yedi'ot Aharonot: National daily published in Tel-Aviv.

Yated Ne'eman: National religious/political daily published in Bnei Brak.

Yedi'ot Ha'Galil: Northern weekly, published in Upper Nazareth.

Kol Ha'Emek V'Ha'Galil: Northern weekly, published in Upper Nazareth.

Ha'Kol B'i: Jerusalem religious weekly.