

Media Update
prepared for
North American Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism
by Susan Perlman
April 13-14, 1988

2

A look at media on our movement since our last meeting:

Each of you has been given a folder of clippings and I'd like to comment briefly on most of them with some reflections on how we are being perceived by the general public, the Jewish community and fellow believers.

The first series of clippings I'd like to look at are in response to Jewish evangelistic activity on university campuses. (1) You'll notice a letter to the editor of the Daily Bruin of UCLA by Avi Snyder. He is responding to an editorial entitled "Words and their power to deceive" by Talia Shulman. It begins: "Last week, strolling through Bruin Walk... (3) Next turn to clipping #3 "Chizuk urges war on the meshumad cult." Next look at #4, #9 and #10 on what's happening on the Princeton campus.

It appears that the typical university student is getting more involved in issues other than that of their earning potential. By writing a letter to the editor or a column on the subject, students are allowing themselves to be vulnerable. It's been said that this college age generation is apathetic and unmotivated; this kind of boldness by students seems to show a trend in another direction; a trend that could mean more spiritual receptivity on the part of students.

Another area of media in past months has been within Catholic publications or through statements by noted Catholic theologians which are being quoted by Jewish publications. Clipping #33 from the Bergen Jewish News in New Jersey is a good case in point. In making his case against Jews believing in Jesus, the columnist quotes Jewish theologian Eugene Borowitz who is regularly published by the Catholic publishing house, Paulist Press and Father John T. Pawlikowski, professor of Social Ethics at Catholic Theological Union.

A very popular Catholic writer whose column is syndicated through National Catholic News Service, Msgr. George G. Higgins has taken on Jewish Christians, Messianic Jews and Jews for Jesus as being coercive, deceptive, denigrated the integrity of Judaism, etc. What he didn't count on was a constituency who were more aware of what Jews for Jesus was all about than he was. Instead of getting people to join the bandwagon to stamp out this "extremist fundamentalist backed" movement, he got an onslaught of mail setting him straight. See clippings #6, 7 and 8.

There was also a number of clippings coming out of the statements from the PCUSA General Assembly and the United Church of Christ that Jews have a continuing covenant which should be respected, hence no evangelization singling out Jews should be done. (#19) These statements have been amplified to the press, most notably by the American Jewish Committee who has a very good media

apparatus to do so. It's interesting to note that Alan Mittleman of the AJC helped draft the United Church of Christ document.

I wanted to profile a few clippings which might on the surface seem like slams on our movement but in actuality could have a positive affect on many readers. The West Palm Beach Post Times profile of a messianic congregation. (#11) The Jewish Exponent of Philadelphia profiles a girl who supposedly professed the faith but is not baal teshuvah (newly observant), etc. (#23) There is one thing that this reporter did which was deadly to her credibility. She wrote an account which does not ring true to the intelligent reader. She underestimates her readership.

Also I want to demonstrate once more how media begets media. This past Christmas' evangelistic ad campaign brought on well over 100 articles and letters to the editor nation-wide, some of which are included in your packet. I've also included a good example of using a media advertisement as a springboard for one's own advertisement. Clippings #13 and 14 are put out by the Plainview Jewish Center and The Olive Tree Congregation in Plainview respectively.

On the lighter side, I thought that the degree of paranoia in the Jewish community was most aptly illustrated in three of the clippings I selected. First, #2 on the El Al endorsement of Messianic Judaism. Second on our "infiltration" into temples #26 and finally, poor Dan Bloom's attempt to portray his version of Jesus to Jewish children. (#5)

And finally, our future is in the determination of our next generation. Clipping #15 tells about a new magazine on the scene, "Kids for Y'shua". As Justin, says, "the sky's the limit."