

## Christian Identity Church Is Threat To Our Society (JTA)

Jewish communal leaders are keeping watch for further developments in the proposed formation in the Kansas City area of a church affiliated with the Christian Identity movement, a melange of right-wing, white supremacist, anti-Semitic groups and individuals active nationally under the guise of a "church."

The Christian Identity Movement is also known as "Identity," "Kingdom Identity," and "Kingdom Message." The movement contends "that the people of Northern Europe — white Anglo-Saxons — are the Lost Tribes of Israel; the Jews are the children of Satan, and that black people and people of color are pre-Adamic — a lower form of species than white people."

One of the movement's "theological constructions" is that Armageddon — the final battle between good and evil foretold in Revelation — "will be a military battle in America's heartland between themselves and the forces of Satan." The movement uses this belief and related notions, to promote and justify paramilitary training and the stockpiling of weapons.

Christian Identity also maintains that the problems besetting the American people are the result of 'race mixing' and inter-religious cooperation between Christians and Jews, which they call sins...They also attack Christian Right Fundamentalists for their support of the State of Israel, and mainstream Christian clergy for being 'agents of Satan.'

"Identity" is composed of hundreds of small groupings dotted across the map, not confined to any single region of the country. It includes self-defined ministries that consist of little more than tape booklet sales, as well as ministers who have regular programs on AM radio stations all over the U.S., and still other leaders who have small, stable congregations in metropolitan areas like Los Angeles and Spokane.

It has emerged as the primary religious and spiritual phenomenon of the far right and must not be dismissed as a marginal phenomenon. The U.S. has been undergoing a resurgence of bigotry under the guise of Christianity; this

resurgence is a deep, ugly stain in our society which people of good will must obliterate.

Leaders of major Protestant and Roman Catholic religious organizations joined a Jewish human relations agency in denouncing the "Christian Identity" movement as "a threat to a pluralistic and democratic America, a perversion of authentic religious values, and a source of bigotry, racism and anti-Semitism." The "church" conducted its first meeting two months ago in Grandview, MO. The event was publicized in fliers mailed to a broad cross-section of area residents ranging from members of the John Birch Society to Jews, according to Carol Smith, farm crisis worker with the Jewish Community Relations Bureau of Greater Kansas City. The JCRB has been monitoring extremist groups through its farm crisis project.

The flier, announcing the program, made no mention of the Christian Identity movement, but invited individuals to attend a "Christian Church Formational Meeting."

Speakers on the program included pastors Pete Peters, Jarah Crawford and Ted Wieland, all of whom were identified by Smith as Christian Identity ministers. "They are absolutely as anti-Semitic as you could possibly believe," said Smith.

In one excerpt from the pamphlet, for example, Crawford responds to an article by Daniel Lehmann, who wrote in the *Chicago Sun-Times* last year that extremist right-wing groups were taking advantage of the farmers' plight.

**'Jews Are A Menace To Mankind'**

"By the Power of Almighty God and Spirit of our Savior Jesus Christ, Christian America declares war on you and your kind throughout the earth," the pamphlet reads. "We call upon all nations to join us in this Holy cause. You Jews are a menace to mankind; the earth can no longer accept you."

Peters, a native of LaPorte, Colo., served as minister to David Lane, a convicted member of The Order, a Christian Identity group whose mem-

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## There Are Places In America Where It Isn't Easy To Be A Jew

By Saul Nathanson

I read with great interest the article which appeared in last month's issue of *The CJN* on the restoration of the synagogue in Mississippi. I recently made a week-long trip to Mississippi and while there visited the synagogue mentioned.

What is most interesting is that the synagogue is not in Jackson, the state capital and a city of 200,000, but rather in Port Gibson, perhaps a hundred miles away, that has a population of 2,400.

I was working with a woman, a local historian, who told me about the old synagogue in Port Gibson as well as the currently active synagogue, Bnai Israel, in the city where we were, Natchez, Miss. She directed me to the local cemetery, a portion of which bears the sign "Jewish Hill."

In this part of the cemetery, not far from the Confederate Veteran's Cemetery, is "Jewish Hill," beautifully situated, over-looking the Mississippi River, with tomb-

### "Jewish TV Magazine" Comes To Charlotte

The "Jewish Television Magazine" is now available for our viewing on Cable 3 in Charlotte every Monday at 2 p.m. and every Thursday at 9 p.m.

The monthly programs which make up the "Jewish Television Magazine" series, now in its second year, are made available to Jewish Federations affiliated with the Council of Jewish Federations, which then obtain air time on their local television stations.

The host of "Jewish Television Magazine" is film and television actor Stephen Macht, currently best known to viewers for his featured role on "Cagney and Lacey."

This month's edition is on Passover, from the Exodus to a Seder conducted in a modern kibbutz in the desert. In deference to the spring season, focus is made on Jewish singles in Miami, Baltimore, Washington D.C. Senator Rudy Boschwitz, "Cupid of Capitol Hill" is featured. Musical selections are played by Selah, formerly known as the Diaspora Yeshiva Band.

stones inscribed in Hebrew and Yiddish of people, including many infants who died in Natchez. Some of the deaths were recorded in the 1840s.

### "You can almost hear the chant of the congregation..."

The synagogue in Port Gibson is a small red brick building with beautiful stained glass windows and a marble arc, as described in the article. The onion-shaped dome is described on a state historical marker as being unique in the state.

When you go inside, you can almost hear the chants of the congregation and the sounds of the children. (The children were usually outside while the parents attended services). I had the feeling that the English colonists must have had when they came back to discover the "Lost Colony."

Here in this very pew were people, like me, who came together to maintain and reinforce their Jewish identity. I thought of the feeling I and many of my fellow northerners felt about leaving cities with large Jewish populations and

"pioneering" to this "outpost" called Charlotte. In little Port Gibson, which is probably as big as it ever was, the Jewish community in 1890 organized itself and built a truly outstanding edifice for the congregation. Where are those Jews now? Where do they come to pray and meet? Do they have seders and Purim parties? Do they say "Yizkor"?

The woman also showed me an article dealing with the local Jewish community in Natchez. There is a beautiful synagogue there, on Commerce St. At one time there were 141 Jewish families in Natchez and the Hebrew School had 75 students. Some Jews even served as Mayor and aldermen. Somehow the Jewish community was tied to the cotton trade and when a boll weevil epidemic struck in 1908, it marked the beginning of the demise of the Jewish community.

There is still an active congregation that has services on Friday evenings. There is no rabbi, so members of the congregation take turns leading services. Every once in a while a rabbinical student will visit from Cleveland or Cincinnati.

Here, too, I felt that here were Jews where it wasn't easy to be a Jew. I felt very fortunate and comforted to be living in as a large Jewish community as Charlotte.

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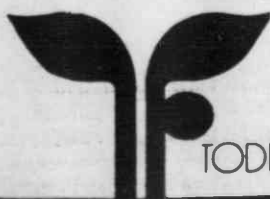
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