

En skandale til?

Den 21. februar skal ægteparret Shirley og Gary Beresford være ude af Israel. De er messianske jøder, dvs. jøder, der tror på Jesus som Messias. De lever på jødisk vis. De har været i Israel i seks år. De kom til landet på turist-visa. Men de har ikke trods ihærdige forsøg opnået statsborgerskab, selv om de er jøder. Tværtimod har Højesteret besluttet, at de ikke kan komme i betragtning under den såkaldte lov om tilbagevenden. Fordi de tror, at Jesus er Messias. Alle andre jøder kan opnå statsborgerskab.

I *Jerusalem Report* (25. februar) fortælles deres historie. I Israelsmissionens Avis har vi fortalt om ægteparret tidligere. Det bemærkelsesværdige er, at *Jerusalem Report* siger, at det er næsten latterligt at betragte dem som en trussel mod staten Israel. Det, de kan håbe, er, at de får lov til at forblive i Israel uden status, som illegale bebo-



Shirley and Gary Beresford's historie fortalt i magasinet »Jerusalem Report« 25. februar 1993.

ere, som lever under en vedvarende trussel om at blive sendt bort. De lever i deres hjemland, selv om de endnu ikke er hjemme.

Hvordan det går familien Beresford, og om de tvinges til at forlade Israel, fortæller vi sene-

re om i Israelsmissionens Avis. *Jerusalem Report* stiller spørgsmålet, om den israelske regering vil vove endnu en deportations-sag i lighed med sagen omkring de 400 palæstinensere, der er blevet deporteret til Libanon. *kk-h*

In 1985, Shirley Beresford, a Jew¹ in Harare, Zimbabwe, discovered. For years she had survived tranquilizers, often on the verge of suicide, in and out of mental hospitals. After receiving Jesus, she flushed tranquilizers down the toilet and took one again.

Shirley's husband, Gary, a marketing manager, had been tutored as a boy anti-Semites and wanted nothing to do with Jesus. Still, Gary wasn't alone when Shirley told him of her new faith. Shirley had always been a seeker, moving from one "new age" sect to the next; though less fussy, thought Gary, the sooner she'd be on to something else.

But instead, Shirley slowly convinced Gary that Jesus was the Messiah. The Beresfords began going to church, but felt a sense of unease. They were Jews, after all, not Christians. They simply happened to have found Jesus.

"Messianic Jews"—as those who accept Jesus as the Messiah call themselves—like to claim their faith has made them better, more "complete" Jews. Often that claim is a disingenuous attempt to disguise what is in effect conversion to Christianity. But in the Beresfords' case, at least, their new faith did indeed lead to greater Jewish commitment. They decided to move to Israel and become halachically observant, to emulate the religious life of their native Jews.

In 1986, they applied for immigrant visas to Israel through the South African Zionist Federation. But one of Shirley's sons from a previous marriage, who had gotten involved with Chabad Hasidism, lobbied the federation that his mother and her husband believed in Jesus. The Beresfords were told their applications would be approved in Jerusalem.

They came to Israel anyway, as tourists. And stayed. For the last six years, they've