



## Now here's truth in advertising!

Hoax or hyperbole? Actually, the ad shown here is indeed slated to appear in *CMAJ's* classified ad section for the next 6 months. The physician placing it says it provides an honest depiction of what physicians can expect in Fraser Lake, BC.

"I'm not going to try to con people into taking it," said Dr. Albert Kelly. He and his partner, Dr. Alan Gow, work 80 to 130 hours a week. Kelly, 52, has been at it for 22 years, Gow, 18. "We're both bagged," said Kelly. Yet they would gladly stay if the provincial government would give them an on-call stipend so they

could subcontract weekend work and get some help that would allow them to pursue some CME. "This government has told us they will not give us what we want," said Kelly. "They'd rather close the place first." Closure would mean that 4500 area residents would have to drive 60 km to see a doctor.

Kelly said the College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia requires that he try to replace himself by advertising, but he doesn't expect to get any responses. "Who would do this job?" he asks. — *Barbara Sibbald*

**FAMILY PRACTICE BC —**  
Two D & T [diagnostic and treatment] centre-based general practices in small mining/logging town, 160 km west of Prince George. Nearest hospital 60 km, no privileges, no CME, 1 in 2 (first) call, 5 months of snow and temperatures to -50° C. In the event of temporary insanity, call 250 699-6225.

## Jerusalem's history overwhelms some visitors

Every year some 200 foreign tourists arrive at Jerusalem's Kfar Shaul Psychiatric Hospital requiring emergency intervention, and Dr. Yair Bar-El sees them all. About 80% of these patients already have some form of psychiatric disorder, but some 3 dozen will be ordinary tourists whose mental health has been affected adversely by their first encounter with Jerusalem.

Most of the patients are well-educated and well-off North Americans or Western Europeans in their 20s and 30s. They are equally divided between men and women, and most are Protestants. Without warning, and usually 3 to 5 days after their arrival in Jerusalem, they become overwhelmed by the emotional intensity of the city and experience sudden disorientation. Some lose touch with reality and believe they personify a biblical character.

This "Jerusalem syndrome" parallels the development of mass tourism,

and the problem may peak in 2000, when Israel is expecting 5 million pilgrims to mark the new millennium. Bar-El, who has been studying the phenomenon since 1987, says "these are people who grew up in households where the Bible was read daily. They internalized the biblical stories during their childhood, and it stayed with them. They may think of themselves as secular, but have a strong religious upbringing."

The venue of the psychiatric breakdown varies according to tourists' religious background. Christians usually experience it in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre or along the Via Dolorosa, places associated with the trial and crucifixion of Jesus; Jews are usually struck at the Western Wall, the last remnant of the Temple complex, or on the Mount of Olives, from which they believe the dead will be reborn when the Messiah reveals himself.

Treatment involves returning dis-

oriented patients quickly to their families. "We don't try to convince them of anything," said Bar-El. "We just want to return them to themselves, and get them back home." —

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**Emergency** (from previous page)

Almost 200 health care professionals spoke during the meeting, which focused on developing international guidelines for emergency medicine, ethical and social responsibilities, advances in technology and research funding. Many developing countries are now forming emergency medicine associations, a development Ho describes as encouraging.

Issues discussed during the 5-day meeting included "mad cow" disease and lessons learned from the Oklahoma bombing disaster. The meeting highlight was probably the videotaped message from Canadian astronaut Dr. Dave Williams, the first emergency physician slated to head into space. His Space Shuttle flight is expected this spring.

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