

JEWES for JUDAISM

Keeping Jews Jewish

Life line

DANNY'S QUEST

Like many Jews, I grew up in a large metropolitan city, had a Bar Mitzvah, and celebrated Hanukkah, Passover, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Nevertheless, I felt little connection to Judaism. While I had a deep desire to search for truth and the meaning of life, by the time I went to college, Judaism was almost nonexistent in my life.



Then I discovered that my best friend had become a Born-Again Christian. Initially, I wasn't interested when he tried to talk to me about Christianity. Yet, I found the Christian lifestyle more appealing than my own and slowly started asking him questions about his experience.

I attended my friend's Baptist church and was warmly welcomed and particularly taken by everyone's friendliness and kindness. It was amazing to meet people who were actually living by the ethics they taught. In comparison, Judaism didn't help me understand life or feel connected to God.

I felt conflicted and thought long and hard about which path to follow. The Judaism I knew was about going to temple on Friday nights and celebrating holidays with no deeper spiritual meaning behind anything I was doing. Born-Again Christianity appeared to have the answers.

After six months of intense involvement in Christianity, my sister asked me to meet with a man who was an expert in Judaism and Christianity. Even though a part of me wanted to learn more about Judaism, I was extremely hesitant to meet with anyone who might confuse me and try to convince me that my belief was wrong. I resisted and instead became more deeply involved in Christianity.

Several Christian friends from college knew I was Jewish and encouraged me to attend "Hebrew-Christian" churches that specifically appealed to Jews. I was surprised to see Jewish practices in these Christian churches. They were exactly like a synagogue with Hebrew prayers and a Torah. The only difference was that the "rabbi" called it "Messianic Judaism" and referred to Jesus as Y'shua.

I joined the "Hebrew-Christian" movement and considered myself a

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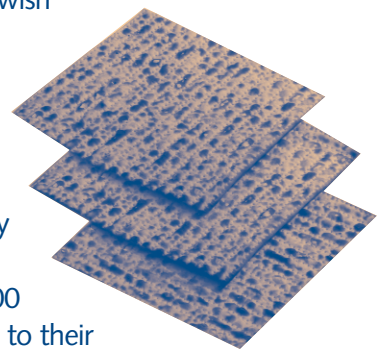
THE FIFTH QUESTION?

by Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz

Increased proselytizing efforts by missionary groups like *Jews for Jesus* recently caught the attention of *B'nai Brith* and *Moment* magazines. Both featured stories documenting the dangerous and insidious multi-million dollar crusade threatening the Jewish community.

Quoted extensively throughout the articles, *JEWES FOR JUDAISM* stands out as the Jewish community's premier counter-missionary resource. Our mission is to keep Jews Jewish. We work closely with Jewish Federations, Bureaus of Jewish Education and synagogues of all denominations. We are also a "Partner Agency" with Hillel, the Jewish campus organization, and share our expertise to help strengthen students' Jewish identity.

The success of missionaries, who have already converted over 275,000 Jews, is due to their intentional distortion of Jewish theology and their use of



(Continued on page 7)

EDITORIAL

Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz

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THE HARD TRUTH ABOUT "SOFT-SELL" EVANGELISM

By Rabbi Michael Skobac

When it comes to salesmanship – which is essentially what evangelism is all about – the “soft-sell” is still a sales pitch. It seeks to disarm us by short-circuiting our natural defensive instincts, and deliberately takes advantage of our popularly held stereotypes about how missionaries work and what they look like. We assume that if someone isn’t carrying a large Bible and preaching endlessly about Jesus and the need to be saved, then that person really isn’t interested in converting us. Taking a page out of today’s sophisticated advertising and sales techniques, today’s low-impact missionaries avoid direct hyping of their product and prefer to simply create warm ‘n fuzzy impressions and positive branding.

Occasionally, these “soft-sell” missionaries experience “loose-tongue syndrome” and clearly articulate their strategy. Joe Dean, founder of an American Christian-Zionist organization, explained that, “By standing with the Jewish people in love and support, we can provoke them to jealousy, as the apostle Paul said, so as to win them to Christ. Not by cramming the gospel down their throats, but by showing that our faith produces faithful works. I have told the Jewish agencies that we are not an evangelical group as such, and this is true. We are not actively trying to win Jews to Christ – but by taking this stand, the Jewish people don’t run away from us, and we are able to witness to them indirectly.”

**“soft-sell”
 missionaries
 experience
 loose-tongue
 syndrome**

Frank Eiklor, head of Shalom International, works tirelessly fighting Anti-Semitism and drumming up support for Israel. He bristles at any suggestion that he has a hidden agenda. But, fundraising letters to his supporters tell another story: “I want to see Christians wake up and stand for the Jewish people. Only then will Jews be impressed and one day want Jesus as their Messiah!”

Chosen People Ministries is one of the largest Christian missionary organizations in the world that specifically targets the Jewish community. In a recent letter sent to their supporters, they explained how their staff was using an “undercover” approach to make meaningful contact with Jewish people. One missionary “found ways to touch Jewish hearts with the Gospel by taking Hebrew classes and befriending her classmates and teachers.” Another missionary spent a year in Israel where “she worked in an Israeli hospital and had some extraordinary opportunities to share with her co-workers.”

“Israel’s Hope” is another missionary organization reaching out to Jews. One newsletter outlined how they were pursuing a more “indirect” approach to sharing their faith with the Jewish community, citing several examples of this type of evangelism including participation in inter-faith humanitarian meetings as well as Christian-Jewish discussion groups focusing on anti-Semitism and the Holocaust. Their obvious agenda is to actively seek ways to subtly inject the gospel message into inter-faith meetings and discussion groups with a large Jewish attendance.

Creative Giving

Thinking about trading in your old car? Consider donating it to JEWES FOR JUDAISM. We will pick up your car, handle the paperwork and get you a tax-deductible write-off as permitted by law.

Remembering JEWES FOR JUDAISM in your will or donating property are other ways you may consider to support JEWES FOR JUDAISM’s programs and services. For more information on how you may participate, please call us (310) 556-3344.



For years, the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem (ICEJ) has been respected by the worldwide Jewish community as a steadfast friend and supporter of Israel. Every year, they organize a "Feast of Tabernacles" program that attracts thousands of Christian pilgrims to Jerusalem. While the Embassy has always portrayed itself as an organization with no connection to Jewish evangelism, JEWS FOR JUDAISM has documented the Embassy's ongoing involvement in efforts to convert Jews.

We recently acquired tapes of meetings from a Feast of Tabernacles program. One of the sessions was entitled, "Fulfilling the Great Commission." In the Christian Bible, the "Great Commission" was the mandate given to the church to spread its religion throughout the world. At the end of the program, a participant identified herself as a missionary to the Jewish people in Israel who focused her outreach on members of the Israel Defense Force. She referred to the passage in Isaiah Chapter 40 which says, *Comfort, comfort My people, says your God. "This is the way that we are going to win the Jews to Christ,"* she said. "It's through comfort. Not through telling them what the Bible says and does not say. They are only interested in love." Following her remarks, the entire room burst out in applause. Her approach to evangelism is not Biblical preaching, but through an indirect emotional connection that is less likely to raise suspicions.

The 2004 Feast of Tabernacles celebration attracted over 4,000 pilgrims from 70 nations. Pat Robertson, the famed American televangelist recognized as a great supporter of Israel, was a featured speaker. It was precisely because of his strong, outspoken pro-Israel reputation that his remarks sent shockwaves throughout Jewish communities around the world.

"Jews need to begin to cry out for their Messiah," Robertson preached. "I've met wonderful Jews in Siberia, Brazil, the United States, here in Jerusalem who are all saying 'Yes, Jesus you are our messiah.'" What makes Robertson's statement even more troublesome is that he was merely articulating a sentiment the Christians in attendance heartily endorsed, but are reluctant to actively and publicly proclaim for fear of exposing their true agenda.

Not all Christians who seek to work and dialogue with the Jewish community have a hidden evangelical agenda. But, there are many who do. We must be vigilant and avoid any interaction with individuals or organizations that conduct their missionary activities under the cover of interfaith cooperation. While we can be thankful for the

genuine efforts that some of these groups make on behalf of Israel, it is nevertheless shortsighted to run joint programs with individuals or organizations that put Jewish people at spiritual risk. JEWS FOR JUDAISM regularly and carefully monitors numerous missionary and evangelical organizations and individuals. If you have any questions concerning a particular group, event or individual, please consult with us.

Rabbi Skobac is Education Director of the Toronto Branch of JEWS FOR JUDAISM.



Rabbi Michael Skobac

WORDS OF PRAISE

☒ **Hillel congratulates our partners at JEWS FOR JUDAISM** for your extraordinary work combating missionary activity and promoting a positive approach to Jewish identity. Hillel has always relied upon JEWS FOR JUDAISM in our work on campus and never more than today when the campaign to target Jewish students is stronger than ever. From your literature to lectures, advertising campaigns to counseling, JEWS FOR JUDAISM has provided our community with an invaluable service.

Avraham Infeld, President, Hillel

☒ **Thank you so much for speaking to the students at Temple Solel.** It is crucial that Jewish teens learn about the danger of groups who try to convert them to other religions. They often do not know what to say or do when they are approached by these groups. Your presentation helped them identify and handle these situations when they arise. Thanks again for a wonderful lecture and for your dedication to working with Jewish teens!

Ellen Fox, Temple Solel School Director Encinitas, CA

☒ **A big yasher koach for your excellent presentations** over Shabbos as our scholar in residence. You had the audience in the palm of your hand, and all of your presentations were top notch. May *Hashem Baruch Hu* grant you continued strength and bracha in all of your important work for *Klal Yisrael*.

Rabbi Daniel Korobkin, Kehillat Yavneh Los Angeles

MA NISHTANAH

Following the devastation of the Holocaust, the Jewish community set about reclaiming hundreds of Jewish children who were among the thousands taken in by the Vatican during World War II. The task was often difficult, as many children concealed their Jewish roots out of fear, while others simply did not remember their backgrounds.

Several rabbis were given the opportunity to identify the children and reunite them with surviving family members. How would they get these frightened children to identify themselves, they wondered?

The method they devised was simple, yet powerful. Standing before the group, one rabbi shouted, "Shema Yisroel Adonai Elohanu!" A number of children immediately responded "Adonai Echad" and were gathered by the rabbis and eventually reunited with family members.

Nonetheless, rabbis began their departure with heavy hearts, knowing that there were Jewish children in the orphanage they were leaving behind.

Suddenly, a little boy tugged on a rabbi's coat and cried out "Ma Nishtana!" He had recalled the beginning of the four Passover questions and it saved him from being lost forever from his people.

JEWS FOR JUDAISM needs your support now so that we can provide Jews with answers and opportunities to learn about their heritage and stay Jewish.



JEWS FOR JUDAISM IN THE SPIN



The producers and crew of VH1's new show "Spin Cycle", recently interviewed JEWS FOR JUDAISM founder and executive director, Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz, for comment about Kabbalah in the wake of its appeal to Hollywood and celebrities. The segment was taped with Spin Cycle's Nick Swardson (r) at the JEWS FOR JUDAISM offices. Co-producers Fox TV and VH1 hope the program will attract hip, young viewers to the "60 Minutes" style news magazine.

HUNDREDS TRAIN TO CONVERT JEWS

In Washington, DC, JEWS FOR JUDAISM responded to the Behold Your God crusade with a counter-campaign that included a series of town hall meetings and discussions dealing with the evangelical invasion. In a revealing demonstration of how the missionary threat is growing, Jews for Jesus partnered with a 10,000-member Mega Church ministered by a converted Jew named Lon Solomon. Through this alliance, more than 600 Christians attended a day-long training seminar that taught them how to successfully "witness" to Jewish people.

MISSIONARIES TARGET FRENCH JEWS

In response to the Jews for Jesus Behold Your God Campaign that hit Paris in 2004, JEWS FOR JUDAISM printed and distributed 5,000 copies of a French translation of "The Jewish Response to Missionaries." This year, Jews for Jesus' efforts will move to Lyons and Marseilles, and in September the campaign will travel to the French-speaking city of Montreal. JEWS FOR JUDAISM's Canadian branch will participate in counter-missionary operations there and distribute another 5,000 books. With more than 210,000 copies in print, the handbook is available in seven languages and can be found online for free. Download it at www.jewsforjudaism.org.

DID YOU KNOW? JEWS FOR JUDAISM INTERNATIONAL

- **Provided more than 9,000 client services** in response to calls for counseling and information regarding missionary, cult, intermarriage and Jewish issues.
- **Educated 14,000 individuals** through our educational lectures, seminars and classes that were presented to all denominations of Judaism.
- **Reached more than 76,000 individuals** through outreach programs, national Jewish leadership and development conferences, summits and festivals.
- **Facilitated more than 344,000 sessions** through our three websites.
- **Supplied expert information on cults and missionaries** to the media including *People*, *Elle*, *The Guardian*, the *BBC*, *VH1*, *Moment Magazine*, and *B'nai Brith*.
- **Distributed over 210,000 pieces of educational literature**, tapes and materials to counteract missionary campaigns and educate the community.



JEWS FOR JUDAISM's new program director, Rabbi Zalman Kravitz, gathers with community members after the program.

JEWES FOR JUDAISM's global response to Behold Your God (BYG), continued with an effort in San Diego that prepared the Jewish community for the *Jews for Jesus* campaign scheduled to strike alongside the High Holidays.

Working with the United Jewish Federation of San Diego County and the Agency for Jewish Education, Rabbi Kravitz was the keynote speaker at an educators' workshop; presided over a town hall meeting, and worked with the Board of Rabbis to provide inter-agency training to Jewish communal professionals. Community Relations Director Tina Friedman, and Planning and Allocations Associate Director Nadine Finkel, expressed their gratitude:

"Early in 2004, our Jewish community learned that Jews for Jesus' "Behold your God" campaign would visit San Diego in the fall of 2004, right around the High Holy Days. We were delighted that, when we turned to you for advice and guidance, not only did you visit our community for a planning meeting but you also helped us reach out to the Jewish community and provide our constituents with the tools necessary to mitigate the impact of the evangelical campaign. With your assistance, we put together a series of events. JEWS FOR JUDAISM's materials were informative and useful. The impact JEWS FOR JUDAISM had on our community will be remembered for a long time."

In addition, Rabbi Kravitz interviewed with newspapers and television stations to bring awareness about collaborations between Jews for Jesus and local messianic churches that continue proselytizing efforts beyond the scope of BYG. As part of that component, JEWS FOR JUDAISM also distributed 14,000 pieces of educational materials throughout the county.



A standing-room only crowd gathers at San Diego's Jewish Community Center ready to mobilize against the Jews for Jesus crusade.

CHAPLAIN CROSSES THE LINE FOR THE CROSS

by Steve Yuhas

Military chaplains have a proud history in the U.S. military, and most of them uphold the mission of the Chaplain Corps in the various services to America's troops, and ensure their right to free exercise of religion.

Unfortunately, the role that Army Chaplain Capt. Andy Taylor played while deployed with the 6th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery in Iraq strayed from that duty.

There are people who serve in the military of all faiths, and it is up to the chaplain of a unit to make sure that everyone is able to worship the way they desire. But when the audience becomes a captive one (because peace turns to war or life becomes death), the job of the chaplain becomes more complicated but must still remain neutral.

Regrettably, Taylor cast aside his neutrality and turned a group of 400 mourning men of many faiths into his own Southern Baptist congregation. He continues to boast about his crowning achievement of baptizing a Jew in Iraq.

After an ambush took the life of a medic in the battalion, Taylor, a Southern Baptist minister, went beyond the duties of chaplain and made himself the arbiter of salvation for a captive audience who had just withstood the rigors of war and the tragedy of loss. While members of the unit sought comfort from Taylor, he was busy telling men who had lost a comrade and who were questioning their own mortality that "there is only one way to be saved" and that is through Jesus Christ.

The Baptist Press' Dana Williamson reported in the Jan. 13 edition that "the only difference in being a chaplain, rather than pastor of a church, is that Taylor's congregation is nearly 1,000 soldiers and their families."

Regrettably, both Williamson and Taylor have a contemptible understanding of a military chaplain.

As soon as Taylor crossed the line from spiritual supporter to Baptist proselytizer, he violated his duty to allow the men of his unit to exercise their religion.

It is painful to lose a friend or a fellow soldier. I've experienced such a loss, but the chaplain who presided over the service did not tell the Jews that the only way to have a spiritual connection to God was to reject our faith and to embrace his. But that is what Taylor did when the Jewish soldier went to him for guidance.

In boasting about the conversion of the Jewish soldier,

he told Williamson that he used "Old Testament Scriptures to show him how he needed a relationship with Jesus."

Religious conversion should be conducted when a man is of a clear mind and without the pressure of battle. To do it at the barrel of a gun, when a man lost a fellow soldier, violates every tenet of fairness and could very well be regretted by this same soldier for a lifetime. At the very least, Taylor should have assured the soldier the ability to speak to a rabbi before his impulsive conversion.

It is estimated that 1,500 to 2,000 Jewish servicemen are deployed in the Persian Gulf region today. Of the 24 Jewish chaplains in the Army, only five were sent to fulfill the needs of what could arguably be the neediest of the Army's servicemen.



Jews are a minority population in any military unit and those most neglected by their commanders. Important holidays, such as Passover and Yom Kippur, are remembered by memos issued by generals in units where Christian holidays and 96-hour passes are coveted.

It is the responsibility of the chaplain to assure that Jewish servicemen have the ability to exercise their faith, particularly in the Middle East, where Jewish servicemen

are scattered across a vast area of land and where some Jewish people never see a rabbi.

Sadly, Taylor abused the captive audience he had and the trust that so many place in the chaplain of a unit to explain away the tragedy, and to answer the unanswerable question about how any God could allow the horrors that befall any unit in battle.

Taylor makes no apologies for his conduct. In fact, he brags about it as if there were a scorecard for conversions in chaplain locker rooms. He has a right to worship any way he chooses, but when he is acting as a chaplain to an entire battalion of men at their moment of loss, his right is secondary to his duty to ensure that hasty decisions and coerced conversions are not done in the name of a God that a Jewish member of the military might reject in peacetime.

I reject the notion of the removal of chaplains from the military, but I am positively opposed to a chaplain recruiting from a captive audience, only to have his conversions become fodder for The Baptist Press' recruiting efforts.

Steve Yuhas is a columnist and radio talk show host on KOGO-AM 600 in San Diego. He may be reached at steve@steveyuhas.com or www.steveyuhas.com

deception and cult-like psychological manipulation. The Passover holiday presents a unique challenge since missionaries host fake Seders that distort our traditions in order to lure Jews to evangelical Christianity. The three Matzahs, red wine and Afikomen are perverted to represent the Trinity, the Messiah's blood of atonement and the Messiah's resurrection and return. The simple act of making holes in the Matzah dough to prevent leavening, is distorted to represent the piercing of Jesus' hands and feet.

Furthermore, missionaries take advantage of Jewish ignorance and pose a confusing fifth question, "Did you know that Passover points to Jesus being the Messiah?" They continue the manipulation by intentionally mistranslating Bible passages, discouraging critical thinking, and introducing unsuspecting Jews to pastors and churches that masquerade as rabbis and synagogues. These blatant and offensive tactics are condemned by

Jews and non-Jews alike.

Jews for Judaism ensures that Jews have a place to turn to when confronted by dubious questions posed by missionaries. Our counseling and educational programs expose the distortions to our traditions, affirm the beauty of Judaism and emphasize the importance of developing a personal connection to God.

I hope you will find this issue of *Lifeline* informative. In it we highlight some of our most recent successes, and address issues that continue to confront the Jewish community.

Together we will meet the challenge of *Keeping Jews Jewish*. I thank you for your support and encouragement, and wish you and your family a very joyous Passover.



Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz

Danny's Quest (continued from first page)

"Completed Jew." I continued to question but didn't always get straight answers. Often the movement's philosophy seemed different, and even heretical, in relation to the Christianity I had first been exposed to.

So I decided that if I really wanted the truth, I needed to do my own research and find out what Jews really believe. Christians attempted to dissuade me, and even warned me not to speak with Rabbi Kravitz because he would lie and confuse me. Despite this, I wanted to ask a knowledgeable rabbi why Jews don't believe that Jesus is the Messiah.

Fortunately, my sister kept asking me to meet with a rabbi. Although I knew I was Jewish, I did not know if it mattered at that point in my life. On the other hand, I figured my eternal life was on the line. I was asking so many pastors and Christian theologians questions, it only seemed fair to talk to a

rabbi and consider both sides.

I finally connected with Rabbi Kravitz and Jews for Judaism. We met for lunch and spent five hours talking! He was able to answer my questions in depth and clear up a lot of my confusion. I saw how, in an attempt to prove Christianity, biblical and rabbinic passages had been mistranslated and taken out of context.

I was also amazed to discover that there is so much meaning to the actions that Jews do. I learned the rational explanations for our traditions, and saw the beauty in living as a Jew. I realized that the "Old Testament" is not obsolete, but on the contrary, contains truth, values

and the path to a deeper connection to God and the Torah.

I wanted to learn more and more. When Rabbi Kravitz invited me to his house for Shabbat, his

family was warm and welcoming; I felt at home right away. At the meal there was singing, eating and meaningful talk that centered on God and Judaism. Afterward, Rabbi Kravitz and I studied for about six hours straight. That was my idea of what a meal should be.

As a result, I began spending time around a community of people who were deeply connected to God and led happy, fulfilled lives. It was nothing like my experience with Christianity, and I became convinced that what I had previously believed was false.

Over the next few months I continued to meet with Rabbi Kravitz and work through all the issues I struggled with. The rabbi was always available for me when I called to ask any question that came up in my mind.

I now understand that as a Jew, there is so much more meaning to be found in seeking God through Torah and living a Jewish life. The potential for integrating spirituality into my life feels infinite.

I decided that if I really wanted the truth, I needed to...find out what Jews really believe.

WHAT'S UP WITH KABBALAH?

Unraveling Myth, Mysteries and Misconceptions

Kabbalah attracted the fascination of pop culture. Over the past year *People Magazine*, *Elle Magazine*, *The Guardian*, the BBC and VH1 have all turned to JEWS FOR JUDAISM for its opinion. Why are people seeking advice to modern-day matters in an ancient Jewish wisdom? Controversy over this issue has left many disillusioned and confused.

Join JEWS FOR JUDAISM's Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz as we explore Kosher Kabbalah and unravel the myths, mysteries and misconceptions surrounding this topic.

Free Admission
Wednesday, June 1, 2005
7:30 p.m.

Sinai Temple
10400 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90035

For more information and
to reserve parking call 310-556-3344.

Co-sponsored by JEWS FOR JUDAISM and Sinai Temple

EVANGELICALS AND ISRAEL

**TROJAN HORSE OR
KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR?**

Thursday, May 5
7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Class code:
#05SN4P05
Fee: \$18

University of Judaism
15600 Mulholland Dr.

Pre-registration
required, call
at 310-440-1246



There are few things that evoke more passion than the convergence of politics and religion. In an era of unprecedented anti-Semitism and anti-Israel hostility the evangelical Christian Right appears to have emerged as a potent ally. Some are concerned about their political stance while others believe they have a hidden proselytizing agenda. An eye-opening examination of this critical issue by Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz will help you decide if we are dealing with a Trojan Horse or Israel's Knight in Shining Armor.

Co-sponsored by JEWS FOR JUDAISM
and the University of Judaism



WIN A TRIP TO ISRAEL

In a show of support for Israel, JEWS FOR JUDAISM is offering you a chance to win a trip to Israel. There are no ticket stubs to fill out, and no books to buy. For every \$18 you donate to the JEWS FOR JUDAISM Passover Campaign, you will receive an automatic entry to our Israel Trip Drawing. You could win a trip to Israel, or qualify for a fabulous second or third prize! Enter by mail or go to www.jewsforjudaism.org. The drawing will be held on May 25, 2005. All submissions must be received by our office prior to the day of the drawing. Good luck!

We really do love Israel. Visit JEWS FOR JUDAISM's booth at the Israel Day Festival on May 15, 2005 at Woodley Park.