



Jews for Judaism

Saving Jewish Lives

We at Jews for Judaism had a rude awakening several years ago. Our organization was originally founded in 1989 in response to a very serious threat to the Jewish community. Hundreds of evangelical Christian groups began directing tremendous energy and resources toward targetting Jews worldwide for conversion. Many of these groups, like Jews for Jesus, sought to create the impression that embracing the Christian faith was not a betrayal of one's Jewishness. Unfortunately, their efforts have been very successful and many thousands of Jews have joined them.

Jews for Judaism responded with comprehensive educational programs and materials to alert the Jewish community to the tactics of these groups and to clarify exactly why Judaism rejects the claims of these missionaries. Aside from working to inoculate Jewish people against their efforts, our counselling services helped Jews who were seduced to return to their families and their rightful faith.

But then we came to the realization that Jews for Jesus is not the problem – they are merely a symptom of a much larger problem. The *real* problem is the disconnect between a growing number of Jewish people and Judaism. This rupture is the real culprit and can manifest in numerous ways.

Lacking any real anchor in Judaism, some Jews might be drawn to Christianity. But others might just as easily be lured by Eastern spiritual paths. Numerous studies estimate that about 25% of North American Buddhists come from a Jewish background. And way out of proportion to our numbers, Jews are overrepresented in the numerous cults and New Age religions that dot the spiritual landscape of North America.

Without a doubt, the greatest concern is with the massive numbers of young people who are giving up on religion altogether. The PEW Research Institute study of American Jewry in 2013 revealed that 32% of millennials did not identify with Judaism at all and that 68% are not raising their children as Jewish. This serious erosion of Jewish identity and general movement toward total assimilation should be a serious wake-up call for us.

Hand-wringing is not an appropriate response to the steady stream of people taking leave of Judaism. We must strive to stem the tide and ultimately help those who have strayed to return to their true spiritual foundation. Our sages have

pointed out that the Torah's obligation to return lost property to its owner applies, by extension, to helping return lost souls to their true heritage.

The prophet Hosea, speaking 2,700 years ago, warned, "My people are perishing due to a lack of knowledge." Jews for Judaism's guiding principle is that knowledge is power; the most vital thing we Jews can do to reverse the devastation taking place today is to help Jewish people appreciate the profound wisdom and spiritual depth of Judaism. There are compelling reasons for Jews to embrace their heritage – and powerful tools available to transmit this knowledge.

Recognizing that people today live on their smart phones, tablets and computers, Jews for Judaism is harnessing the powerful potential of social media to reach young Jews wherever they are. We have produced hundreds of compelling and inspiring YouTube videos that are being viewed by over a

million people a year and are changing Jewish lives. As one viewer wrote, "I am so grateful to have discovered the wonderful Jews for Judaism YouTube lectures by Rabbi Skobac. I am a Jew who converted to Christianity in college, but now, thanks to your online outreach, I have returned to Judaism."

Jews for Judaism has a robust Speakers' Bureau and we present our engaging and exciting lectures to audiences across the GTA and Canada. Your synagogue, organization, school or home group will certainly benefit from the wide variety of topics we discuss. As a participant informed us,

"I can't tell you how much you have helped me in very powerful ways in rediscovering my Judaism. Your lectures are so completely brilliant. You have succeeded in helping me get back to my roots of being a Jew. Thank you."

To find out more about the Jews for Judaism Speakers' Bureau and other services, such as our free counselling, that may be helpful to you, please visit our website www.jewsforjudaism.ca.

Please consider supporting our vital work to keep Jews Jewish with a generous donation. Jews for Judaism needs your help to continue serving the worldwide Jewish community... and saving Jewish lives. ■

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3110 Bathurst Street, PO Box 54042
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6A 3B7
T: 416-789-0020 • TF: 866-307-4362
WEBSITE: www.jewsforjudaism.ca
EMAIL: info@jewsforjudaism.ca
DONATE: canadahelps.org/dn/24741

