

לשנה טובה תכתבו ותחתמו

May you be inscribed in
the Book of Life for a good year



A New Jews For Judaism Seminar Refuting Anti-Israel Pro-Palestinian Rhetoric

by Rabbi Michael Skobac

Ever since Hamas' barbaric terrorist massacre in Israel last October 7, the Jewish people have been involved in two major wars. One involves Israel's effort to neutralize Hamas in Gaza and, at the same time, to defend against attacks by Iran and her proxy armies based in Lebanon and Yemen.

The other war has been the eruption of worldwide Jew-hatred. It has involved the marginalization and vilification of Israel at the UN, massive protests at university campuses and in the streets of major cities, and acts of vandalism and violence directed against Jewish people and institutions.

Jews have been shocked by the broader community's lack of outrage over Hamas's atrocities, as well as the astonishing degree to which people have uncritically bought into the propaganda of the terrorists.

There is a long laundry list of untruths that have been spread on social media and repeated ad nauseum by pundits, politicians, and protesters. Some of these canards include the accusations that: * Israel is a colonialist occupier living on stolen Arab land, * Zionism is racist, * Israel is an apartheid society, * Israel is committing genocide against Palestinians, * The State of Israel is illegal and has no right to exist, * Israel ethnically cleansed Palestinian Arabs from their land in 1948, * Israeli settlements are the main obstacle to peace, * Supporting "resistance" against Zionism is not anti-Semitic.

Over time, many of these slanders have become normalized and are widely accepted as conventional wisdom. The effect this has had on our Jewish community has been both demoralizing and frightening. Many who are not well-informed about the deceptive nature of these accusations begin to doubt themselves and the legitimacy of the Zionist cause. Some Jewish university students have become leading voices in this war against Israel.

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In response to these dangerous developments, we at Jews for Judaism have decided that we need to play a role in helping besieged Jewish people understand the truth about these issues. We have developed a special series that presents the other side of the story to equip people with the essential knowledge to refute the lies being told about Israel.

In 1892, Asher Ginsberg, better known by his pen name Ahad Ha'am, wrote an essay explaining that the vicious "blood libels" against Jews had a valuable upside. The "blood libel" refers to the accusation, dating back to the Middle Ages, that Jews murder Christians — especially Christian children — and use their blood for ritual purposes, such as an ingredient in the baking of matzah for Passover.

Ginsberg argues that since every Jew knows that this canard is patently false, it proves to Jewish people who might otherwise internalize the widespread beliefs of our antagonists, that it is entirely possible for the whole world to be wrong and for the Jews to be right. This is also the goal of our new seminar, which will be launched this fall. ■

COVER PHOTO: LtCol (reserve) Itamar Eitam, IDF, blows the Shofar ahead of leading his men into combat in Gaza. October 2023 - www.israelhayom.com.



REFUTING LIES ABOUT ISREAL AND ZIONISM

- **Occupiers** • **Colonizers** • **Ethnic Cleansing**
- **Stolen Lands** • **Zionism = Racism** • **Apartheid**
- **Illegal State** • **Genocide** • **Not Indigineous**

with Rabbi Michael Skobac

Since Hamas' barbaric Oct.7 attack, and Israel's subsequent invasion of Gaza, the Jewish state has faced an international onslaught aimed at painting it as the real villain in this conflict. An unprecedented wave of anti-Semitism was unleashed worldwide, along with efforts to demonize Israel.

Many Diaspora Jews cannot effectively respond to the canards leveled at Israel. This new 4-part seminar provides the essential knowledge to separate fact from fiction, dismantle the lies and proudly stand up for the truth.

- Nov 21 – **ISRAEL'S RIGHTFUL PLACE:** Refuting the Claim that Israel was Created Illegitimately
- Nov 28 – **ISRAEL'S DEFENSE REALITIES:** The Truth about Israel's Security Measures
- Dec 05 – **THE QUEST FOR PEACE:** Who Really Stands in the Way?
- Dec 12 – **ANTI-ISRAEL PROPAGANDA:** Dismantling the Lies in Media and Politics

Four Thurs, Nov 21- Dec 12, 2024 • 8 PM ET • NO CHARGE
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MISSIONIZING THE MISSIONARIES

Jews for Judaism

by Rabbi Michael Skobac

There's an old saying that "you don't get a second chance to make a first impression." I believe that this idea has negatively impacted the way many Jewish people view the missionary phenomenon.

Many of us recall first becoming aware of groups like Jews for Jesus in the early 1970s. Our early association was that they wore provocative T-shirts ("Jesus Made Me Kosher") and distributed humorous "broadsides" to passersby they encountered on street corners.

Unfortunately, that image stuck, and as missionaries migrated from street corners to cyberspace, many people assumed that there isn't a real movement behind their sophisticated online presence.

The disturbing reality is that since those early days, many thousands of Jewish people have embraced Jesus. Wanting to retain their Jewish identity rather than melting into the vast landscape of evangelical Christian churches, they chose to identify as "Messianic Jews" and established their own "synagogues."

The movement saw huge growth, from a handful of "Messianic synagogues" in the early 1970s to over 500 today, just in North America. They also spread worldwide, especially in Israel, with over 300 Messianic fellowships there now.

These "synagogues" have weekly Shabbat and holiday services led by a "Messianic rabbi." They eschew traditional Christian symbols such as crosses in favour of Jewish imagery — menorahs, stars of David, flags of Israel. At the front of their sanctuaries there's an ark with Torah scrolls inside.

Their congregations mark all the traditional Jewish holidays. However, they give everything a Christological interpretation. For example, they have a Seder meal on Passover but explain that the three matzot represent their belief in the Trinity.

These congregations affiliate with several umbrella organizations. One of the larger of these is the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations (UMJC). Since the 1980s they've held an annual international conference, usually in the United States and sometimes in Israel.

As part of our proactive outreach to Jews who stray from their heritage, Jews for Judaism has gone to these conferences since 1986. This past July, I travelled to Orlando, Florida, with Rabbi Eli Cohen, and checked into the hotel where the UMJC was holding its annual conference. We don't go to protest. Rather, we

park ourselves on couches in the lobby and make ourselves available to anyone willing to speak with us.

Over the five days of the conference, several dozen people stopped by to engage with us. Some were people we'd met previously at other conferences. We had amazing productive conversations, some until 4:00 a.m., and planted some vital seeds that will one day hopefully take root.

There are past conferences where we saw some attendees immediately resolve to leave the Messianic movement and embrace genuine Judaism. More often, the process is longer. I recently heard from someone we met at a conference and worked with afterwards for years. Today he is living a committed Jewish life in Israel with his wife and children. ■

Some attendees immediately resolve to leave the Messianic movement and embrace genuine Judaism.

The
NEXT LEVEL
of the Jews for Judaism
**COUNTER
MISSIONARY
SURVIVAL SEMINAR**
with Rabbi Michael Skobac

A 6-part series well suited for attendees of our First Level Counter-Missionary Seminar. Using recorded video lectures, Rabbi Skobac boosts your Jewish pride and helps you acquire the knowledge & tools to respond boldly to any missionary who challenges your Jewish beliefs.

Then, after each lecture, Rabbi Skobac will answer each participant's questions during a live Question & Answer session.

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Effectively Reason with a Jew for Jesus
- The Eternal Torah vs. New Testament
- Understanding Christian Anti-Judaism
- Satan • Micah 5 • Daniel 9 • The Trinity
- Zechariah 12 • Isaiah 9:6 • And more! Six

Six Tues., Nov. 5 – Dec. 10 • 8:00 PM ET
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KEEPING JEWS JEWISH



Years ago, a full-page ad appeared in several Anglo-Jewish newspapers: If you are Jewish, chances are that your grandchildren won't be!

Many readers back then may have thought the provocative ad was bordering on the hysterical, but as the years have passed, it doesn't seem to be out of touch with reality. Indeed, the noted Harvard University professor Alan Dershowitz published an alarming book in 1998 entitled *The Vanishing American Jew*.

Dershowitz argued that American Jewry was in danger of extinction by the mid-twenty-first century because of skyrocketing rates of intermarriage and assimilation, combined with low birth rates. His sober assessment holds true for Jewish communities in Canada, Europe, and elsewhere in the Diaspora.

It's important to understand the underlying causes of this demographic time bomb. The Jewish population never mushroomed as has that of other peoples. Over 3,300 years ago, G-d noted in the Torah, "Not because you are more numerous than all the peoples did the Lord desire you and choose you, for you are the fewest of all the peoples" (Deuteronomy 7:7). To undertake the necessary effort and sacrifices to overcome the natural tendency to assimilate, Jews would require a profound appreciation for the value of Judaism.

The Bible highlights one of the greatest dangers to Jewish survival, "My people perish due to a lack of knowledge ..." (Hosea 4:6). When Jews are ignorant of the beauty, wisdom, and spiritual depth of Judaism, they are unlikely to make the investments needed to promote Jewish continuity.

There are two kinds of knowledge deficit. One is intellectual, involving a lack of understanding of the vital ideas of Judaism. The other is experiential, where people have very shallow or no real meaningful Jewish spiritual experiences. To be healthy Jewishly, both understanding and experience are needed. We, unfortunately, see many people today who, despite having



a solid Jewish academic background, stray because they never experienced Judaism in a meaningful, compelling way.

Tragically, North American Jewry is on very shaky ground in both metrics. When it comes to basic Jewish knowledge, the general level of most Jews is abysmal. Years ago, I distributed on university campuses in the United States and Canada a tongue-in-cheek "Jewish I.Q. Test" that compared Jewish knowledge with general knowledge. The results were terrifying.

While virtually all the students were able to identify at least one of the books in the Christian Bible, almost none were able to name any volumes of the Talmud. Every single student knew what the doctrine of the Trinity is, but only a handful knew what the term Taryag referred to. One hundred percent of the students were able to name at least one song recorded by the Rolling Stones, but fewer than 2% could name any books in the Hebrew Bible written by King Solomon. I suspect that today's cohort of students wouldn't fare much better.

When it comes to the metric of having spiritually meaningful Jewish experiences, most Jews growing up today are seriously

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Today's Threats to Jewish Survival

by Rabbi Michael Skobac

malnourished. For them, Judaism has become so unsatisfying that the 2021 PEW report on Jewish identity revealed that 32% of American Jews don't identify with Judaism as a religion.

While identification with Israel was always a given, even for Jews who were not connected strongly to Judaism, this has also seriously weakened among young Jews. Their attitudes towards Israel are largely affected by social media, and Israel is routinely pilloried and maligned there. A large percentage of young Jews attend college or university, where the atmosphere created by both professors and fellow students is toxic towards Israel. A growing number of Jewish students now identify with the Palestinian cause rather than automatically siding with Israel. And many of the leaders of anti-Israel student protests on campus are Jewish.

Other ideologies continue to take a toll on young Jews. Critical post-modernist theories and the prevailing skepticism have fueled what is known as the New Atheism. Many Jewish students end up jettisoning any faith they may have had upon arriving on campus, and their Jewish identities become hollowed out.

With an increasingly weak commitment to Judaism and the Jewish people, young Jews cease prioritizing in-marriage. It takes a tremendous amount of commitment and discipline for a young Jew to refuse to date over 90% of the people they meet because they are not Jewish. It's not hard to understand how the intermarriage rate of young Jews in North America is upwards of 70%. The prospect of their raising the next generation with any kind of real commitment to Judaism is remote.

When young Jews enter adulthood with very shallow Jewish educational and spiritual experiences, their primary identification tends to be with the secular North American culture of consumer-driven materialism, entertainment, and recreation. In his 35 years of doing psychoanalysis, Dr. Carl Gustav Jung noted that virtually all of his patients suffered from a lack of spiritual fulfillment in life that left a "hole in the soul."

This is the major weakness that leaves many Jews vulnerable to predatory missionary and cult groups, as well as the varied exotic religions that dot the spiritual landscape.

For example, with mindfulness and meditation gaining general popularity in the world, many Jews have been drawn to the spiritual movements of the Far East, such as Buddhism and Hinduism. Some studies have reported that about 25% of North American Buddhists come from a Jewish background!

The ambient religion in North America is Christianity, and evangelical Protestants are extremely dedicated to sharing their faith. They currently fund over 1,000 organizations seeking to convert Jews. Sadly, they have been very successful and many thousands of Jews have joined their ranks.

The mission of Jews for Judaism's worldwide outreach programming is to prevent this erosion by inspiring Jewish people to understand the wisdom, beauty, and spiritual richness of their heritage so that they will remain Jews committed to Judaism. ■

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Jews For Jesus Have Learned Their Lesson - Have We?



Aaron Abramson, new CEO of Jews for Jesus, served in the IDF.

by Rabbi Michael Skobac

On August 31, the *Jerusalem Post* published an interview with the new head of Jews for Jesus entitled, “Jews for Jesus CEO to ‘Post’: I see us as brothers and sisters, not enemies.” In response, I submitted the following piece as a letter to the editor:

Sarah Ben-Nun’s interview of Aaron Abramson, the new CEO of the Jews for Jesus missionary organization, was a very disappointing read. By failing to challenge any of his talking points, she presented readers with a fluff piece that effectively served as a promotional pitch for this notorious group.

Abramson sought to portray himself and the organization he heads as unassuming, reasonable, and not interested in pushing their beliefs. He kept falling back on the posture of “you have a point of view, we have a point of view, let’s discuss.”

As Jews for Jesus explain on their website, this is a new tone for them. From their earliest days, they didn’t shy away from being brash, abrasive, and confrontational. But they came to realize that in our “I’m OK, you’re OK” age, their hard-sell evangelism was not working for them. So, as with any good sales venture, they pivoted to a nice-guy persona working the soft sell.

At the end of the day, however, they are still all about selling. As Jews for Jesus explain in the “Mission and Values” section of their website, they believe that the only way to have a relationship with God is through faith in Jesus. They claim to have a passion for the “lost” and “relentlessly pursue God’s plan for the salvation of the Jewish people.”

Jews for Jesus is the world’s largest missionary organization that specifically targets Jewish people for conversion. They are entirely funded by Evangelical Christians who are driven by a desire to see all Jewish people come to faith in Jesus.

Aside from his easy-going vibe — meant to disarm his audience, get us to feel comfortable with him, and conceal his real agenda — Abramson is not transparent about his real beliefs. Operating straight out of the early Jews for Jesus playbook of not focusing on who they really believe Jesus is, Abramson repeatedly speaks about Jesus being the Messiah. He, of course, realizes that to proclaim that Jesus is G-d would

turn a delicate conversation into a treacherous one.

When asked how he is different from Christians, the Jews for Jesus CEO offers up an evasive word salad meant to avoid having to say that the doctrinal statement of his organization is identical to that of virtually any evangelical church.

Abramson acknowledges that there is a valid concern that Jewish people who embrace Jesus will abandon their Jewish identities and communities. He tries to reassure the readers of the interview that they never tell people that they can’t belong to a local synagogue. What he doesn’t say is that when they have managed to convert a Jewish person, they strongly encourage that person to join a local Christian church or Jew for Jesus congregation.

In the past, Jews for Jesus came at our community with battering rams. Let’s not be so quick to allow their mellower Trojan-horse approach to gain easy access to our communities. ■

The doctrinal statement of Jews for Jesus is identical to that of virtually any evangelical church.

FALL MINI-LECTURES

with Rabbi Michael Skobac

Thurs., Nov. 7, 8 PM ET

- **Jurassic Judaism:**
A Torah Perspective on Dinosaurs
- **Judaism and The Right To Choose:**
Abortion in Torah Law
- **Me, Myself and I:**
Narcissism Through the Lens of Judaism

Thurs., Nov. 14, 8 PM ET

- **Constantine:**
How an Emperor Transformed Christianity
- **Invisible Wounds:**
How Judaism Views Embarrassing Others
- **Kaddish Stories:**
*That Will Truly Inspire You – With Special
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THE PILLAR OF JEWS FOR JUDAISM'S LIFE-SAVING WORK:

by Rabbi Michael Skobac

Since the inception of Jews for Judaism, we have always had a two-pronged approach to dealing with threats to Jewish survival, threats such as Christian missionaries, deceptive cults, aggressive anti-Israel activists, Eastern religions, intermarriage, Jewish apathy, and other challenges.

Our primary focus is on preventive education. We seek to arm Jews with the essential knowledge they need to resist the efforts of evangelical Christians, cult recruiters, and others who seek to entice them. We do this through our numerous lectures and classes, now all globally accessible at our YouTube channel, as well as the many booklets and articles available for free download from our website.

The second phase of our work is counselling for people affected by missionary efforts, assimilation, and other issues.

To give you some idea of what this entails, I had three counselling appointments today.

The first was with someone from the United States who knows a Jew who has been dating a Muslim woman for three years. He is seriously considering converting to Islam and marrying her. The caller wanted some guidance on how to deal with this and encourage his friend to speak with me.

The second situation was a Toronto rabbi who had in his office someone from the Former Soviet Union who wanted to know why he shouldn't, out of curiosity, read the New Testament.



We discussed a number of reasons, and I recommended he watch my videos discussing the Christian scriptures. He expressed an interest in staying in touch to discuss this and similar issues.

Finally, I spent time with someone who is struggling in the face of the unprecedented Jew-hatred sweeping the world. We explored coping mechanisms and ways to frame the situation.

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Our counselling work evolved dramatically after we launched our very successful YouTube channel. Whenever someone is sent one or more of our videos to watch, IT has the advantage of NOT speaking TO them in a direct, individual way. They don't feel confronted or forced to respond. The pressure is off of them, and they can digest the ideas we're trying to share with them

without a lot of resistance.

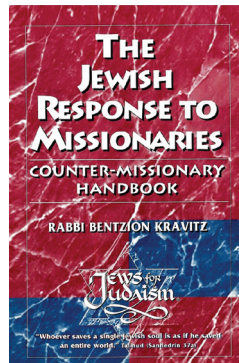
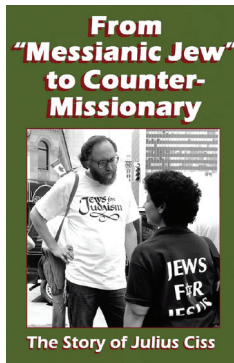
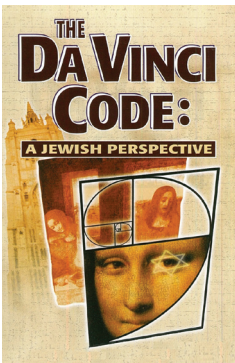
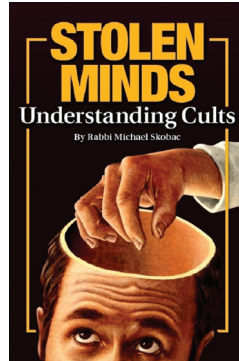
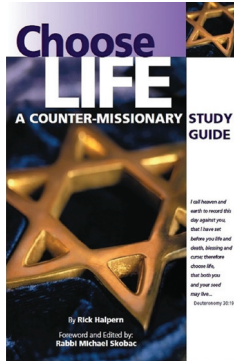
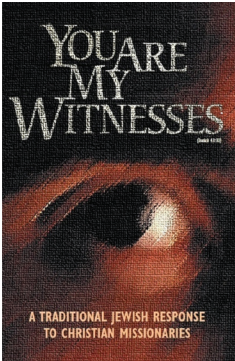
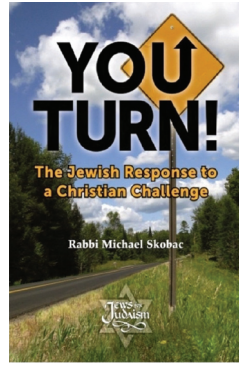
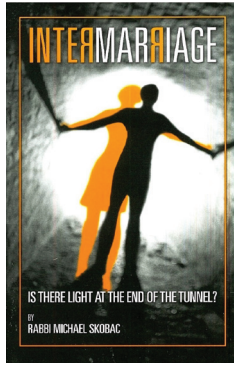
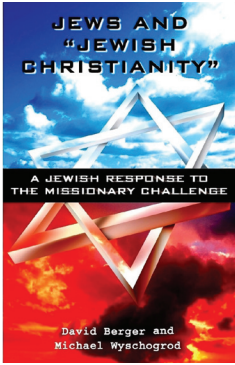
Here are two emails we've received from people who benefited from our videos:

"I listened to your 15-part counter-missionary series with a student of mine who was getting seduced by a Christian club on campus. Thank G-d, he will now be going to a yeshiva in Israel after the semester ends!" – Rabbi Samuel D.

"Thank you for very inspirational lectures at the Jews for Judaism website. They helped me a lot to find my peace in Torah and my Jewishness again." – Janice K.

It's encouraging for us to regularly receive numerous expressions of thanks like these, thanks that would not have been possible without our donors. ■

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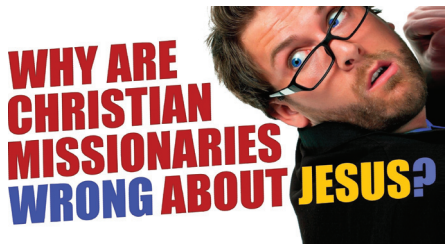
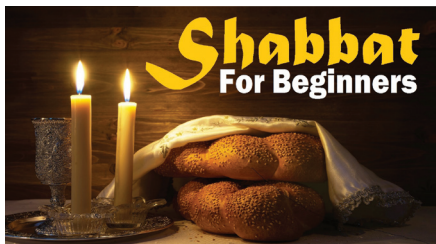
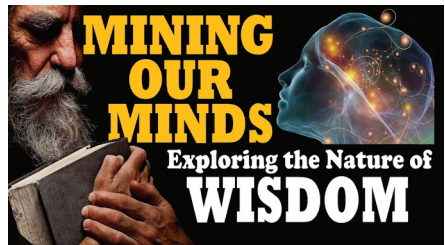
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KEEPING JEWS JEWISH

Please Support Jews for Judaism

Jews for Judaism is a global leader in Jewish outreach. We are at the forefront of addressing the most difficult and sensitive issues threatening Jewish survival.

Our goals are to strengthen Jewish pride and identity and to win back those Jews who have been negatively influenced or coerced by missionaries, cults, eastern religions, the growing rate of Jewish apathy and ignorance, assimilation, intermarriage, anti-Israel BDS propaganda, antisemitism and other challenges to Jewish continuity that are devastating the Jewish community worldwide.

We achieve our goals through local programming and via worldwide Internet Jewish outreach. Last year, over two million people accessed our social media platforms. Thousands of Jews are helped by our YouTube video lectures, specialized intervention, one-on-one counselling, education programs, downloadable literature and audio materials, and Shabbat and Jewish Holiday home hospitality.



Above are 4 of 480 videos that received over 14 million views on our Jews for Judaism Youtube Channel.

Help Save Jewish Lives

Jews for Judaism unites the Jewish community in a common cause. We have earned endorsements from a wide spectrum of Jewish agencies, rabbis and educators. We connect countless Jewish people to the spiritual depth, beauty and wisdom of Judaism. Please support Jews for Judaism. You can help keep Jews Jewish and save Jewish lives by giving now at www.jewsforjudaism.ca/donate/. Thank you. ■

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