

# Jews for Judaism

# Lifeline

KEEPING JEWS JEWISH

1:5776

2795 Bathurst St., PO Box 41032, Toronto, ON Canada M6B 4J6 • 416-789-0020

## MISSIONARY MENACE GROWS

Each year, over 1,000 Christian missionary groups spend \$300 million targeting Jews for conversion worldwide. Over 150 operate in Canada. To entice Jews to convert to Christianity, these missionaries call themselves Jews for Jesus, Hebrew Christians, or Messianic Jews; call their clergy "rabbis" and their churches "messianic synagogues"; and refer to Jesus Christ as "Yeshua HaMashiach," the New Testament as the "Brit HaChadasha," and their Christian faith as "Messianic Judaism."

They often celebrate Jewish holidays with a Christian interpretation. They hold Shabbat services, wearing Jewish skullcaps and prayer shawls to create the impression that Jews can be Christian and still maintain their Jewish identity. Using Torah Scrolls, Shabbat candle lighting, Hamotzi, and Kiddush, they make unaffiliated Jews feel comfortable and welcome in their churches.

Every summer, Toronto experiences an avalanche of activity from these missionaries. The proselytizing activity in Toronto this past summer is the tip of the iceberg of a growing problem in Jewish communities worldwide.

### UJA WALK WITH ISRAEL

The UJA Walk with Israel in downtown Toronto saw a record 18,000 participants this year. Unfortunately, Jewish participants were targeted by missionaries affiliated with several missionary organizations, including Jews for Jesus, the Christian Jew Foundation, and the New Covenant Forum. Their missionaries marched with the parade and stationed themselves at various locations, employing their T-shirts and placards such as "Yeshua Loves Israel" to promote their beliefs and prompt interaction with the Jewish marchers.

Jews for Judaism organized a team of a dozen staff and volunteers to shadow missionaries marching with the crowd. At rest stops some of our group stood with sandwich board signs to alert everyone to our organization and website as a



Julius Ciss, Jews for Judaism's Executive Director, confronts Jews for Jesus at Anti-Nuclear Iran Rally in Toronto

community resource responding to the missionary threat.

As in the past, members of these missionary groups interacted in a very friendly manner with Walk participants in hopes of engaging them in conversation and acquiring their contact information. The continuous presence of the Jews for Judaism Counter-Missionary Task Force made it clear to everyone that these "friendly" individuals were missionaries on the prowl.

### JEWS FOR JESUS SUMMER EVANGELISM CAMPAIGN

The annual Al Quds Rally for solidarity with Palestine and slamming Israel took place on July 11, 2015, in front of the U.S. Consulate on University Avenue in Toronto and drew a very large crowd. Members of the Jewish community organized a counter-demonstration across the street to show support and solidarity with Israel. Jews for Judaism Executive Director Julius Ciss was on hand and witnessed the incredible hatred of Jews spewing

from the pro-Palestinian protesters. One of their vicious chants was, "From the river, to the sea, Palestine will be Juden-free...one day, you will see, Toronto will be Juden-free."

Ciss was surprised when Laura Barron of Jews for Jesus approached him to say "Shabbat shalom!" With her was Karol Joseph, the former director of Jews for Jesus Toronto, now working in the United States. He asked Joseph how long she was going to be in town. Caught off guard, she blurted out that she was going to be in Toronto for two weeks. It was then that Ciss noticed that Barron and Joseph were accompanied by ten people wearing Jews for Jesus T-shirts, turned inside-out.

At that point, Ciss immediately realized that this was a team of Jews for Jesus missionaries that had come to Toronto to conduct their annual Summer Evangelistic Crusade. He quickly mobilized Jews for Judaism's Counter-Missionary Task Force to counter these missionaries on the street.

This year, Jews for Jesus took a new approach to their crusade and changed their

# FACEBOOK TAGS AUSCHWITZ PHOTO AS “INSENSITIVE,” LATER APOLOGIZES

by Julius Ciss, Executive Director

Soon after I posted the photo to the right on Jews for Judaism's Facebook page last March, Facebook notified me that it had tagged the photo as “insensitive.” So I re-posted the image with the following message:

“It seems that someone complained to Facebook about this previously posted photo of my daughter at Auschwitz Concentration Camp. When I posted it, I stated:

‘My daughter, Miriam Ciss, was in Auschwitz Concentration Camp today. My mother, Helena, a”h, and my Aunt Dolly survived Auschwitz-Birkenau. This is just one of the amazing photos my daughter took. Shabbat Shalom and Happy Passover.’

“What I didn't say was that aside from my parents and aunt, the Nazis murdered both my father's and mother's entire families.

“Well, today I received the following notice from Facebook: ‘Your photo wasn't removed because it doesn't violate our community standards, but it has been marked as insensitive because it could offend or upset people.

‘What do you think?’”

This above posting went viral and in seven days — from April 9 to 15, 2015 — it reached 1,886,456 people; was liked by 69,751 individuals; was commented on 26,211 times and was shared by 19,816 persons.

I guess enough friends complained because Facebook issued the following apology just in time for Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day):

“It has come to our attention that a piece of your content was mistakenly flagged by one of our reps. This was a mistake and we've reversed the action taken. We apologize for our error.” – Eleanor, Community Operations, Facebook.

I thank Facebook for acknowledging this mistake.

As I searched for an applicable quote to conclude this posting in honour of Yom HaShoah, I realized that a very appropriate quote would be the following excerpt from the diary of my daughter, Miriam, about her recent trip to the death camps of Poland:

“Today was kind of a gap day... The fill-in day... And yet, it was one of the saddest days of my trip to Poland...

“Today, we visited a mass grave. Yes, on this program, we've been to many and I never cried at any of them. Not as much as I cried here. You see, this mass grave is

different... This mass grave holds 700 children. Yes, you heard me... Children.

“Alone, frightened, and clinging to whatever family they had with them, if they even had any left to cling to... Nazis shot them... The children... And for what? Because they couldn't produce... They were useless to the Reich and so, they were shot... Murdered...

“These sweet children... gone. No longer can we hear their sweet laughter or small feet dancing. No longer can we see the smiles on their faces or the innocent look in their beautiful eyes... Children who didn't have the chance to live, to become and live their dreams. Stolen from us by the worst animal of all...

“I sat motionless at that mass grave. What else was I able to do? I was barely able to hold my head up... It hurt me more than anything. I don't think there was one person on our program that didn't shed a tear when we stood there listening to our rabbi talk about his family and how these children must have felt in their last moments...

“Then he did something I will remember forever.

“He said to us, ‘These children never got a chance to see the holy land, let alone be buried there. We should give them that chance...’ He then proceeded to pick up a box full of dirt. ‘This,’ he said, ‘is from my backyard. This is soil from Israel. If they can't be buried in Israel, then we will bring Israel to them. Their light will forever live inside us. Whoever wants can come take a handful of soil and sprinkle it over the grave.’

“We all stood around him, frozen. We literally were frozen in place, and suddenly I



Miriam Ciss proudly displays flag of Israel at Auschwitz Concentration Camp

saw a hand reach out and take a handful of dirt and when the hand touched the soft soil, I realized that the hand was mine.

“I looked at the Rabbi and just for a moment, our eyes met. I guess it was a kind of comfort for me... I walked over to the grave and soon others did the same. I looked over that blue-painted fence and in my mind, as I held that soil for just a moment longer, the Shabbat blessing that a father and mother give their child came to my mind. Over and over it ran through my head as I watched the wind scatter the soil across the grave.

“Tears just fell freely and all I was able to do was sit there as tears just kept falling. I was frozen at the fact that they were all gone... For no reason other than hatred... These beautiful children are the light in the darkness and their light will forever live on through me and through every breath I take. These children play at the foot of G-d's Kiseh Hakavod (Throne of Glory) now.

“Take care of them for me, please... They are with You now.”

– Miriam Ciss, March 27, 2015, Poland ■

**Your photo has been marked as insensitive because it could offend or upset people.**

Continued from page 1

tactics. Instead of simply distributing evangelistic tracts, they handed out cups of iced tea to passersby on busy downtown street corners. During morning rush hour, they stationed missionaries at major intersections in Jewish neighbourhoods along Steeles Avenue at Dufferin, Bathurst, and Bayview, holding up large banners that proclaimed "Jews United for Jesus." Or they'd show up at shopping malls with large "Jews for Jesus" shopping bags, hoping to attract people to converse with them.

Concerned individuals alerted the Jews for Judaism office to the presence of the missionaries, and our staff and volunteers were dispatched to counter them on the street with placards and sandwich boards. Jews for Judaism literature was offered to those who had received iced tea from the missionaries. One of the Jews for Jesus crusaders became agitated by our Task Force constantly appearing when they were trying to evangelize. She challenged Julius Ciss, asking, "Why are you here?" Ciss said, "To inform people that they can't be sure what's in your iced tea." The missionary screamed, "Are you trying to accuse us of



Jews for Judaism volunteer shadows Jews for Jesus missionaries on the Annual UJA Walk With Israel in Toronto

poisoning the public?" Ciss smiled and responded, "Possibly not their bodies, but certainly their souls."

### ROCK OF ISRAEL AT THE CNE MARKETPLACE

For the past number of years, the Canadian National Exhibition has rented space to Rock of Israel, a Hebrew-Christian missionary group that has been coming to Toronto from Ohio for this event. They staff a booth called "Products of Israel," which has some items from Israel available, but most of the fare is missionary literature and materials aimed at converting Jews.

Jews for Judaism received many complaints from people disturbed by the presence of this misleading booth. In the past, Jews for Judaism submitted challenges to the administration of the CNE about this group, but unfortunately they were not sympathetic or responsive to our concerns. Because the CNE is private property, Jews for Judaism's Counter-Missionary Task Force cannot be stationed in front of or near this booth to warn people about its true nature and agenda.

### ISRAEL RESTORATION MINISTRIES

Over the past months, hundreds, perhaps thousands of Jewish dwellings in Toronto found packages delivered to their doors containing a 100-page book and DVD from Israel Restoration Ministries. During the High Holiday season, many people received small glossy tracts from this organization urging Jewish people to embrace Jesus.

Based in California, this organization was founded by Tom Cantor, a Jewish businessman who became a multi-millionaire through his biotech companies. Struggling with cancer, Cantor converted to Christianity and has dedicated all of his energies to converting his fellow Jews.

Cantor sent teams of young women to deliver these packages door-to-door in Jewish neighbourhoods in Toronto. He has previous-

ly conducted similar campaigns in American cities with large Jewish populations like Los Angeles, Baltimore, and New York.

### SHEMA, O ISRAEL

A new missionary organization dedicated solely to reaching out to the Jewish community is Shema, O Israel, based in Bowmanville, Ontario. This group also launched a major tract distribution blitz in Jewish areas of Toronto, timed to begin around the High Holidays. The literature attempts to prove, based upon the Jewish scriptures, that Jesus is the promised Messiah and promotes the organization's website.

As with all missionary propaganda, there are numerous false assertions and gross distortions of the Bible. Jews for Judaism sent numerous emails to Shema, O Israel pointing out these errors. Not surprisingly, we have never received any return communication.

### CITY OF DAVID RUSSIAN OUTREACH

The latest missionary intrusion into our community was a joint effort by the City of David Messianic Congregation in Thornhill and Sid Roth's Messianic Vision. They produced a Russian translation of Roth's evan-



Jews for Judaism gives a pamphlet to passerby who received a glass of iced tea from Jews for Jesus missionary

gelistic book about Jews who had converted to Christianity that has been widely distributed in Toronto and throughout North America in recent years. This new Russian version has been packaged as a Chanukah gift and is being distributed door-to-door in many of the apartment buildings north of Finch Avenue that house large numbers of Russian-speaking families.

JEWS FOR JUDAISM works to counter the efforts of these and other Christian missionary groups that target Jews by offering free educational programs, materials, and counselling services that connect Jews to the spiritual depth, beauty, wisdom, and truth of Judaism. ■



**L**IFELINE is a free publication of JEWS FOR JUDAISM (Canada). JEWS FOR JUDAISM counters the efforts of Christian missionary groups that target Jews and the impact of cults, eastern religions, assimilation and other challenges to Jewish continuity. We strengthen Jewish pride and identity and win back Jews who have been influenced by missionaries and cults. We offer free educational programs, materials, Internet outreach and counselling that connect Jews to the spiritual depth, beauty, wisdom and truth of Judaism. JEWS FOR JUDAISM unites the entire Jewish community in a common cause and is endorsed by a wide spectrum of Jewish agencies, rabbis and educators.

#### JEWS FOR JUDAISM

2795 Bathurst St., Box 41032 Toronto ON M6B 4J6  
T 416-789-0020 • F 416-789-0030 • TF 866-307-4362

www.jewsforjudaism.ca • © 2015 Jews for Judaism

**Executive Director:** Julius Ciss  
julius@jewsforjudaism.ca

**Education Director:** Rabbi Michael Skobac  
rabbiskobac@jewsforjudaism.ca

**Board of Directors:** Michael J. Halbert • Frank Mayer  
Charles Glina • Robert Walker • Bernie Moskoff

**JEWS FOR JUDAISM Branches:**  
Toronto • Los Angeles • Sydney



# THE WILL TO FORGIVE

**“Forgiveness doesn’t have to depend on the other person.”**

by Gail Lichtman, Jerusalem Post

**E**lul is the month when we ask friends and family for forgiveness in preparation for Yom Kippur. Elul holds out the possibility of wiping the slate clean so that we can begin our relationships afresh with the New Year. Yet, this spiritual opportunity is often needlessly limited to superficial forgiveness.

“People go through the motions without having it really heal them or their relationships. Forgiveness is a Divine gift for healing — to heal the rift between ourselves and G-d, and between ourselves and friends. We need to make amends with others before we can ask G-d to forgive us for our misdeeds against our fellow man,” teaches Chaya Sara Brand, an integrative psychotherapist who, for the past twenty-two years, has conducted Elul workshops on forgiveness.

Under the title “G-d Forgives — Can You?,” Brand, a Canadian-born social worker with a degree from Yeshiva University and thirty-six years of clinical experience, helps people release years of destructive anger and pain through the process of forgiveness.

“There is no statute of limitations on hurts and grudges,” she states. “We have to learn how to let go, how to

choosing to let go of the hurt and the anger for your own peace of mind, for your own health. In doing so you are now entering the realm of G-d. The other person is still accountable and ideally should make amends. However, if they don’t, you are free to choose what type of relationship you want, and you can leave it to G-d to judge the other person. You are free to move on, to heal regardless of the other person’s choices.”

But how does one forgive the seemingly unforgivable? There are several steps that Brand recommends. “First, you need to acknowledge your pain and anger. Anger gives you energy. Use it well. It is like water. You can either drown in it or use it to quench your thirst. This energy can give you the power to take control of your life. If you place yourself in the role of the victim, you give others power over you — the power to hurt you, even from the grave. By forgiving, we take back the power to control our lives.”

Brand compares this with a person holding a microphone. All of a sudden someone plugs the mike into an overcharged socket and the electric charge surges through, shocking the person. “We have two choices: we can either hang on to the mike, waiting for someone to disconnect the power and complaining ‘look what s/he is doing to me,’ or we can empower ourselves to let go. Forgiveness is letting go of our pain, anger, and fears.

“We really have to want to forgive so we can be at one with G-d,” she notes. “Ironically, and sadly, it is not the stranger who has hurt us the most, but those closest to us. We can choose to see the other person not through our base ego but through a higher eye. Look deeply into the other person and see that perhaps his behaviour came from a place of feeling weak or needy or insecure or scared or hurt or vulnerable; in short, feelings that we can also identify in ourselves. Compassion for ourselves and for others is a divine quality. We ask for it from G-d, we ask it from others. We can also offer it as a divine gift to others.”

Brand recommends separating the person from the event. “The event may be unforgivable, but we can forgive the person for being human, for having lapsed. When we recognize that we too are imperfect and we also have lapsed and erred at times, it is easier to be understanding.”

Brand often tells those trying to forgive to visualize the other person as a child with



Chaya Sara Brand, LMSW Psychotherapist,  
Life Coach & Educator

fears and hurts. She says to place yourself in the other person’s shoes and ask yourself how you would have reacted given the same background and circumstances.

“Express your hurt, resentment, anger, and desire for an apology, even if only in an unmailed letter.” She does urge those trying to forgive to contact the other person if at all possible. Very often that person is also anxious for reconciliation, only he or she does not know where to begin.

Brand doesn’t insist that those forgiving have to resume any type of relationship with the other party. “You can forgive someone without liking them. You only have to decide to let go of the hatred. Reconciliation is entirely up to the parties involved.”

Brand notes that in English, Yom Kippur is called the Day of At-one-ment. “If we are truly repentant, we will walk out of the synagogue on Yom Kippur feeling at one with G-d, having been forgiven. It’s difficult to experience this oneness if we are consumed with anger and pain. You want to find peace of mind and feel cleansed by letting go. We need to use the power of Elul for healing the rift between us and others. Hashem has given us this mechanism for healing in order to help us attain the oneness we seek with Him.” ■



Advertisement for recent Forgiveness Workshop

forgive, for our own sake.

Holding grudges can make us sick, literally.”

Borrowing from Alexander Pope — “to err is human; to forgive, divine” — Brand notes that “forgiveness is totally irrational. If someone has done something that needs your forgiveness, then logically they have done something terrible and don’t deserve to be forgiven. But forgiveness transcends the human ego. It is divine and G-dly. This requires us to get in touch with G-d-like qualities within ourselves, and that’s hard work.” It’s a growth opportunity.

According to Brand, forgiveness doesn’t have to depend on the other person saying sorry or changing. “It means that you are

#### THE FORGIVENESS WORKSHOP:

*A Spiritual and Experiential Healing Journey with Chaya Sarah Brand was presented by Jews for Judaism at Shaarei Tefillah Congregation over two evenings on September 1 & 3, 2015. We ran this program because Christian missionaries use the question “How will you be forgiven?” as a tool to lure Jews into Christianity. Ms. Brand was instrumental in helping Julius Ciss leave a five-year involvement in Jews for Jesus and return to Judaism and eventually establish Jews for Judaism in 1989.*

Ms. Brand’s contact info: 718-972-0087  
chayasarabrand@gmail.com  
www.chayasarabrand.com

# 21st ANNUAL CAVALCADE OF STARS



Jews for Judaism is very grateful to the Cultural and Entertainment Committee of Shaarei Shomayim Congregation for hosting the Twenty-First Annual Cavalcade of Stars: Evening of Jewish Music in support of Jews for Judaism's vital counter-missionary work.

At this year's event on Sunday, March 22, three very special local women received awards for their important contributions to Jewish life in Toronto. The "Woman of Accomplishment" awards were presented by Michael Goldrich to Cynthia Gasner, Rabbi Elliott Diamond to Dr. Ellen Warner, and Rabbi Michael Skobac to Zelda Young.

Cynthia Gasner, a freelance journalist for *The Canadian Jewish News* for 45 years, has been very involved with Jewish community institutions like the Kashruth Council of Canada, Jewish Camp Council of Toronto and Baycrest Jewish Home for the Aged.

Dr. Ellen Warner, a renowned oncologist at Sunnybrook Odette Cancer Centre since 1993 and professor of medicine at U of T, pioneered the first genetic testing program in Toronto for breast cancer patients and their families.

Zelda Young hosts the engaging daily Jewish radio program, *The Zelda Show*, on CHIN AM and FM and is a recipient of B'nai Brith's prestigious League of Human Rights Media Award and the Canadian Ethnic Journalistic Award.

Jews for Judaism truly appreciates the generosity of the many talented volunteers and entertainers who contributed their time and musical talents to help make this year's annual concert at Shaarei Shomayim such a great success and an evening to remember.

The hundreds in attendance had the distinct pleasure of hearing the very talented and enthusiastic students of the Netivot

HaTorah Choir. Their combination of traditional Jewish melodies and contemporary music was a delight for all.

Back by popular demand was the entertaining Arbah B'Shir who blended melodic Jewish tunes with striking a cappella harmonies in barbershop quartet style. Arbah B'Shir's vocalists are David Bernstein, Larry Grupp, Brook Jacobs and David Wiener.

With his very amusing jokes, Shaarei Shomayim's very own Rabbi Chaim Strauchler provided a touch of Jewish humour, making the audience laugh out loud.

The evening's Cavalcade of Stars also included the Benami Band with Rabbi Chanan Gans and Graham Tugetman, as well as a duet by Rabbi Noah Cheses and Cantor Zvi Katzman, who received much applause for their outstanding performances.

While there were a few unexpected scheduling surprises, the evening's MC, Sandra Genesove, wasn't fazed as she brought to life that old entertainment adage, "The Show Must Go On."

Jews for Judaism extends its deepest gratitude to Jerry and Sandra Genesove for their non-stop efforts and boundless energy in planning and coordinating this marvelous event. Since 1995, they have ensured that this annual Evening of Jewish Music helps Jews for Judaism fight the ever-growing missionary threat facing our Jewish community.

With the support of Shaarei Shomayim Congregation, this concert represented 21 years of the Genesoves' consistent dedication to Jews for Judaism and their reinforcement of the sage words of the Talmud, "Whoever saves a single Jewish soul is as if he saved an entire world" (Sanhedrin 37a). May Jerry and Sandra's efforts continue

(L-R) **1** Arbah B'Shir Barbershop Quartet: Larry Grupp, Brook Jacobs, David Bernstein and David Wiener. **2** The Netivot HaTorah Children's Choir. **3** Dr. Ellen Warner, Cynthia Gasner, Jerry Genesove, Zelda Young and Sandra Genesove. **4** Rabbi Noah Cheses and Cantor Zvi Katzman. **5** Rabbi Chaim Strauchler. **6** Benami Band: Rabbi Chanan Gans and Graham Tugetman.

to be blessed and remain a vital source of inspiration for our community.

Jews for Judaism, along with Jerry and Sandra Genesove, gratefully thank the hundreds of Shaarei Shomayim members and their friends who generously contributed to making this twenty-first annual concert a huge success. Yasher Koach! ■

# JEWIS FOR JUDAISM: THE CHINESE CONNECTION

by Aaron Wood

I am originally from China and currently live in Tzfat, Israel. Before coming to Israel, I spent seven years in Toronto. Mr. Julius Ciss and Rabbi Michael Skobac are two of my most cherished friends. One of the reasons for our friendship is that we share a passion for the need to counter missionaries in order to keep Jews Jewish.

I was born into a secular family in China. In my early years, I had virtually no knowledge of western religions, and certainly not Judaism. I went to a public school, receiving a secular education, and then to university, where I studied mechanical engineering.

Everything in my life proceeded normally until I met a Christian missionary during my last few months of undergraduate study in 1995. He was an English teacher who had come to China from Colorado Springs, U.S.A. Soon after our meeting, he began speaking to me about the Bible and tried to convert me to Christianity. He gave me a copy of the Bible and sent me to a Christian church to attend services. At the church I was taught Christian doctrine.

There was one thing that particularly bothered me. Why did they insist that I had to believe that a dead man is the creator of the whole universe in order to go to heaven? In order to understand Christianity, I read several versions of the Christian Bible in both English and Chinese. I read books written by Christian theologians, including Joseph Ratzinger. (I predicted that he would be selected as pope after John Paul II's death). I went to different churches, both Protestant and Catholic, and interviewed pastors, priests, scholars and laymen. I had many questions that they could



Aaron Wood

not answer. In order to find the answers, I learned Biblical Hebrew by myself. I also studied Jewish thinkers such as Maimonides, Buber and Rosenzweig. By the year 2000, I was quite sure that Christianity stood on very shaky foundations.

Realizing that numerous people were being lead to falsehood, I started to write about the Bible and Christianity publicly on the Internet. Before long, I received abuse and even death threats from some fundamentalist Christians. They called me "dirty Jew" and "Satan." Without these experiences, I would not have become so aware of antisemitism. It seemed to me that they hated Jews so much that they considered Jews to be the source of all evil.

I said to myself: let me look at these so-called dirty Jews and who they really are. Since then, I have devoted more and more of my time to learning about the Jews and Judaism. During this time I was heavily involved in debating Christian missionaries and antisemites and I found the website of Jews for Judaism. I felt that the information on Jews for Judaism's website was so wonderful, so knowledgeable, so reliable and clear. I finally had the answers for questions that had gone unanswered for years. I said to myself: amazing — the Jews have the truth!

I particularly like the approach of Jews for Judaism to educating Jews about the richness, depth, truth and beauty of Judaism. I finally found the real diamond — Judaism! I soon decided that I wanted to join these people of truth.

Becoming Jewish wasn't possible in mainland China. I had to leave China to pursue the truth and arrived in Toronto in 2005. Finally I could enjoy full freedom of

religion. To my dismay, I realized that many Jews were distanced from their roots. So many Jewish people seemed tangled with contemporary ideologies, trends, movements and other religions. To me, these were just plain stones compared to the real gem of Judaism. In Canada, I appreciated the value of Jews for Judaism more than when I was in China. I became friends with Mr. Ciss and Rabbi Skobac, and they were extremely helpful to me in my growth and Jewish education.

In the twenty-first century, China is emerging as a superpower. Understanding its growing importance, I translated the famous Jews for Judaism handbook *The Jewish Response to Missionaries* into Chinese in 2012. Part of the reason was that when I was in China, I witnessed so much of the bias in the Christian world, castigating Jews for not believing in Jesus.

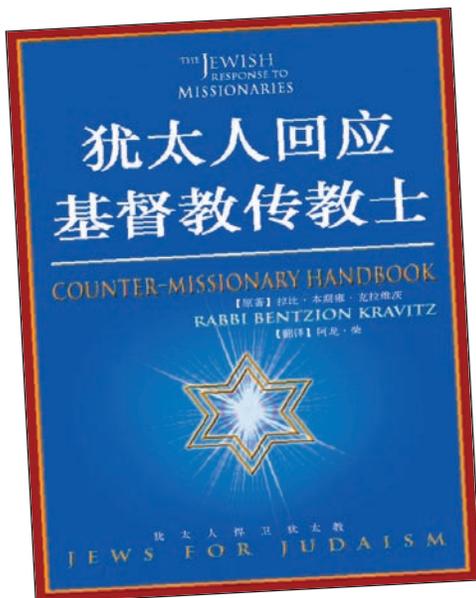
In early 2015, I travelled to China to visit the descendants of the Jews of Kaifeng, China. Some of them wanted to reconnect to their Jewish roots. They asked me to teach them basic Hebrew and Judaism. There I met Mr.



Aaron Wood in China with four of his students who are descendants of Jews in Kaifeng

David Lee, who was like a leader to them, organizing gatherings and lectures. We maintained contact after I left Kaifeng. Recently Mr. Lee told me about the Christian missionary invasion in his community. Mr. Lee told me that my translation of Jews for Judaism's handbook is the most effective counter-missionary resource he has seen. He asked me to produce more translations and to visit the Chinese Jewish community again for lectures and inspiration.

I have travelled a long journey from China to Canada to Israel. I converted to Judaism along the way. There must be a reason for my journey. Perhaps the time has come for me to use my special background and skills to help the Chinese people understand Jews positively and to fight antisemitism in this new battlefield, where 20% of the world lives. ■



Chinese translation by Aaron Wood of *The Jewish Response to Missionaries*

# MICHAEL J. HALBERT HONoured WITH UJA SHEM TOV AWARD

**UJA** Federation of Greater Toronto recently honoured Michael Jordan Halbert, President of Jews for Judaism, along with some of its most dedicated leaders at its Tenth Annual Awards Night on June 10, 2015. With 200 in attendance, the event took place at the Lipa Green Centre and featured 16 awards, of which many boast a long history.

On November 29, Jews for Judaism celebrated its 26-year anniversary and it also celebrated Michael Halbert's 26 years of dedicated service to this vital counter-missionary organization. Michael, who has been crucial to the success of Jews for Judaism, has been on the Board of Directors since 1989, serving as President since 2007.

Under his leadership, in 1996 Jews for Judaism established its full-time, high-profile Crisis Intervention Centre in the Greater Toronto Area. In 2012, Jews for Judaism established its Global Internet Outreach and, through the power of social media and the Internet, expanded its ability to educate vulnerable Jews throughout the world. Under Mr. Halbert's watch, Jews for



Julius Ciss (M), Executive Director of Jews for Judaism, accepts the Shem Tov award on behalf of Michael J. Halbert (inset) from Bruce Leboff (L), Vice-Chair, and Morris Perlis (R), Chair of the UJA Board of Directors.

Judaism has achieved international recognition for its worldwide counter-missionary activities and achievements.

Over our 26-year history, Michael has given Jews for Judaism's staff the freedom to respond with creativity, passion, and spontaneity to the Christian missionary challenge confronting the Jewish community

worldwide. Toronto's Jews for Judaism office is now a world leader in producing educational materials and videos that are being used internationally.

Mr. Halbert has also contributed his expertise to many other Jewish organizations, including Bnei Akiva Schools, Aish HaTorah, The Village Shul, Agudath Israel Anshei Kielce South, and the Hebrew Centre of Belle Ewart.

Michael is continuing in the Halbert family tradition of UJA Federation leaders, currently sitting on the Campaign 2016 Executive Committee. He is also the Event Chairman for the 2016 Aish HaTorah Gala Dinner.

A graduate of both the University of Pennsylvania and Harvard Business School, his business interests include over

20 years in private equity and many other ventures. Mr. Halbert is married to Bat-Sheva and is the proud father of six children.

To our esteemed President, Michael J. Halbert, thank you for 26 years of helping Jews for Judaism keep Jews Jewish and save Jewish lives. ■

## Your Gift is a Legacy for Tomorrow

A bequest to JEWS FOR JUDAISM will ensure that our vital counter-missionary work will continue now and into the future.

Gifts made through your will should be worded in one of the following ways:

- I give, devise and bequeath \$\_\_\_\_\_ to Jews for Judaism, 2795 Bathurst St., P.O. Box 41032, Toronto, ON M6B 4J6.
- I give, devise and bequeath \_\_\_\_% of my estate (or the residue of my estate) to Jews for Judaism, 2795 Bathurst St., P.O. Box 41032, Toronto, ON M6B 4J6.

JEWS FOR JUDAISM  
2795 Bathurst St., P.O. Box 41032,  
Toronto, ON Canada M6B 4J6  
416-789-0020 • canada@jewsforjudaism.ca

# JUDAISM 101

An entry level seminar exploring  
the essential ideas and  
practices of Judaism

with Rabbi Michael Skobac

Topics include: • Judaism on One Foot  
• Basics of Jewish Belief & Philosophy  
• Ethics of Interpersonal Relationships  
• Life Cycle: From Cradle to Grave  
• The Jewish Home: Decor and Diet  
• Special Days: Shabbat & Holidays

Six Consecutive Tuesday Evenings  
March 8 to April 12, 2016 • 8:00 PM  
BAYCREST TERRACE SYNAGOGUE  
55 Ameer Avenue • Admission: FREE  
Registration required: 416-789-0020  
or E: toronto@jewsforjudaism.ca



[jewsforjudaism.ca](http://jewsforjudaism.ca)  
KEEPING JEWS JEWISH

# COUNTERING NEW MISSIONARY THREAT TO ISRAELIS

by Julius Ciss, Executive Director

According to numerous missionary organizations, the Internet has become their most fertile arena for winning Jews to the Christian faith. In order to counter their efforts, Jews for Judaism is highly engaged in educating and inoculating Jews worldwide through our website, Facebook and Twitter presence and through our YouTube channel.

Despite our Internet outreach over the past years, I was totally unprepared for an email I received a month ago from Miriam, an Israeli woman, alerting me to the recent aggressive and accelerating efforts of missionaries targeting Israelis through YouTube:

"I have known of your activities since I was a kid growing up in Toronto, where it was clear that there was a threat of Christian missionaries targeting the Jewish community in Canada. I would never think that the same threat could exist in Israel, but it does... very much so.

"I don't know if you are aware, but there are powerful Christian missionary organizations, with what appears to be significant funding, that aggressively promote Jesus to Israeli Jews across the Internet. At first, I was just seeing banner ads, but now they are promoting very aggressive campaigns on YouTube, with many videos featuring regular Israelis, speaking in Hebrew, explaining how they find meaning in their life since they found Jesus. It's one thing that I keep seeing the ads, but my kids are seeing them all the time, too, which means many Israelis are also being exposed to it."

Miriam then shared some links to missionary YouTube channels in Israel with me and continued:

"I don't know what kind of an impact this is having, but they're making a concerted effort to attract Israelis. Could you help with this from over there in Canada?"

After reading Miriam's email, I quickly began doing research and exploring more of the digital missionary campaign to Jews in Israel. One for Israel, the most prolific online Israeli missionary group targeting Israelis, boasted the following in one of their YouTube fundraising videos:

"Israel is the leading country in the world for hourly time spent online. Over 90% of all Israeli households are connected to high-speed Internet and over 97% of Israelis between the ages of 13 and 34 own a Facebook account. With modern-day technology, the Internet has become the

main tool to reach the masses, especially in Israel... One For Israel is reaching our own nation of Israel with the message of salvation in Yeshua [Jesus] the messiah, using culturally relevant media tools and websites, all in the Hebrew language. We are also training a new generation of Israeli believers with the skills necessary

to penetrate and influence Israel with the Gospel through secular media."

I immediately began to alter our online search optimization parameters to maximize the exposure of our videos in Israel. While doing so, I discovered that someone named Zohar Sutton had taken the initiative to help counter missionary evangelism in Israel by translating our Jews for Judaism videos into Hebrew. In an email to me, Zohar described what motivated him to work against Israeli missionaries on the Internet.

"I'm an Israeli living in Los Angeles. A year ago I came across many videos on YouTube from missionaries like Jews for Jesus. I watched their videos and studied tactics they use to lure Jews around



Zohar Sutton, Translator

the world to Christianity. While doing my research I also came across counter-missionary videos made by Jews for Judaism's Rabbi Michael Skobac.

"Not very educated in Judaism, I had always trusted my parents' default for why Jews didn't believe in Jesus — because "we don't believe in him" — without going into reasons why. Rabbi Skobac's lectures opened my eyes. I learned so much that I felt prepared to take on any missionary who wanted to lure me into their religion.

"What shocked me was that Israelis were also being duped by the missionaries online. How could Jews educated in Israeli schools and brought up in the Jewish State get trapped by such groups? When I saw YouTube videos that showed Israeli missionaries using the Western Wall with Hassidic Jews praying there as a backdrop to their proselytizing messages, I knew I had to do something.

"I decided to translate Rabbi Skobac's counter-missionary videos into Hebrew as a response to the missionaries who are now seeking to brainwash our brethren in Israel."

As a result of these efforts, the number of people viewing our videos in Israel has doubled. We hope and pray that through Jews for Judaism's increased outreach efforts to Israel, we will be able to save many Jews from the threat of missionaries in Israel and to recruit some who will be willing to become counter-missionary activists in the Holy Land. ■



After search optimization, Jews for Judaism's YouTube channel and videos appear right under Jews for Jesus Hebrew YouTube channel

## The Myth of The Resurrection

### A Critical Analysis

with Rabbi Michael Skobac

Christian missionaries promote the alleged resurrection of Jesus as the most compelling argument for their faith. We present a Jewish evaluation of this claim and probe the evidence provided for it.

Thursday, Dec. 24, 2015 • 8:00 PM  
SHAAREI TEFILLAH CONGREGATION  
3600 Bathurst St • Admission: FREE  
Registration required: 416-789-0020  
or Email: toronto@jewsforjudaism.ca

UJA Federation OF GREATER TORONTO

jewsforjudaism.ca  
KEEPING JEWS JEWISH

Shaarei Tefillah  
Community Inspired Judaism