

**Jews for  
Judaism**

**Lifeline**  
**KEEPING JEWS JEWISH**

2:5774

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# MESSIANIC JEWS GET BOOST FROM GEORGE BUSH

**L**ast month, former US President George W. Bush irked the Jewish community when he was the featured keynote speaker at the Messianic Jewish Bible Institute's (MJBI) annual fundraising banquet with tickets ranging from \$100 to \$100,000 each.

MJBI is a missionary organization dedicated to, "bringing Jewish people into a personal relationship of faith with Yeshua the Messiah." The Institute produces educational materials and runs programs designed to train Christians to "provoke the Jewish people to jealousy..." Many of their programs specifically target vulnerable Jews, such as immigrants from the Former Soviet Union and Ethiopian Jews.

It is possible that Mr. Bush accepted the invitation without realizing how offensive his participation would be for the Jewish community. Nevertheless, Messianic Jews and groups like Jews for Jesus viewed his presence as a barometer of how far they've come from their former image of being a controversial and cultic sect. Missionary leader Mitch Glaser gushed that Bush's appearance at this major MJBI event demonstrated that now, "We're a vital community..."

What most infuriates the Jewish community about groups like MJBI and their nefarious ilk is their audacious claim and rally cry that, "When a Jew converts to Christianity, he or she is doing nothing antithetical to Judaism. A Jew can still be a good Jew and believe in Jesus!"

One of their most widely held assertions to substantiate this false claim is that Jesus himself was a Jew as well as all of his original followers. To see through this theological sleight-of-hand is a simple task. Just because an individual



Former President George W. Bush was the keynote speaker at a major Jew for Jesus fundraising dinner.

is a Jew does not automatically mean that everything they do and believe is consistent with the teachings of Judaism. Today, there are many Jewish people who have embraced Hinduism and Buddhism. Furthermore, the people who built the Golden Calf centuries ago were also Jews. Clearly, these practices have no affinity to Judaism, even though the people who engaged in them happened to be Jews.

One of the leaders of the MJBI is Jonathan Bernis who refers to himself as "rabbi." When journalists covering the Bush speech called his organization to ascertain where he received his ordination, they quickly encountered a phone hang up. In an organizational video, Bernis refers to the "spiritual blindness" of the Jewish people. This

pseudo rabbi has obviously forgotten that when pointing his finger at the Jews, three fingers automatically point back at him!

A side effect of the media firestorm ignited in the wake of this event was that Messianic leaders were now forced to defend themselves against many criticisms their movement has drawn over the years.

For example, in a press release issued by Jews for Jesus, this missionary group noted that it was often characterized as "cultish and outside the mainstream of religious normalcy." In response, Jews for Jesus and other messianic leaders admitted that, in reality, their theology is no different from any other evangelical Christian group. However, to lubricate the conversion process, these missionary groups have

George W. Bush continued from page 1

consistently portrayed themselves as a thoroughly Jewish movement! Their admission that there is really no difference between themselves and traditional evangelical Protestant Christianity exposes the duplicity of the Messianics.

As well, even some Jewish pundits missed the mark. Tevi Troy, one of Bush's former Jewish assistants, linked the Jewish community's disdain of proselytizing to, "a time when forced conversions were a

# REMEMBERING MIKE JOFFE

When missionaries knocked at Mike Joffe's door, they always got a lot more than they bargained for... and they never returned. He would make it very clear that he was a proud Jew, committed to Judaism and did not need conversion to Christianity.



Mike Joffe

During his 18 years as a JEWS FOR JUDAISM supporter and volunteer, Mike took the Counter-Missionary Survival Course several times and was extremely well-versed in unfounded missionary claims. In fact, he ran circles around these surprised missionaries. As he accurately quoted from the Bible, he left them dizzy, gasping for breath and very anxious to run away from this powerful Lion of Judah.

On many occasions, Mike volunteered for JEWS FOR JUDAISM to counter Jews for Jesus missionaries on the street, on the Annual UJA Walk with Israel, and to help with our annual fundraising Phonathon. He was warm, friendly and very personable. Although short in stature, he was a giant in superb character traits. Kind, gentle, always eager to help keep Jews Jewish, he delighted in conversations with people who wanted to learn more about the work of JEWS FOR JUDAISM.

Mike was born on June 6, 1926 in Szarkowszczyzna, Poland, one of six children. When the Germans invaded

Poland, he and a sister fled to Russia and hid there for the duration of the war. Mike and his sister survived, as did a brother who was in the Russian army. The rest of his family — parents, sisters and brother—perished in Auschwitz. After the war, he ended up in Switzerland and attended the ORT school

for five years where he studied to be an electrician. In 1954, Mike came to Canada, worked as an electrical contractor and in 1959, married his wife Linda Zyskind and had four sons and seven grandchildren.

Remembered for the great compassion he displayed toward his fellow man, he always judged everyone favorably. He so dearly loved his family and instilled in them the need to be honest, deal fairly and passionately embrace Judaism.

In 1996, Mike retired and spent his days learning, an activity he greatly loved. With more time available, he chronicled the story of his life, which he turned into a book, cherished by his family.

On Tuesday August 27, 2013, Mike's gentle soul left us, but his memory and good name will always live on. May the beloved memory of Mike Joffe, Mordechai Yosef ben Yakov v'Chana, be a source of blessing and inspiration for future generations. Mike, we miss you. From everyone at JEWS FOR JUDAISM, thank you for helping to keep Jews Jewish. ■



Invitation to the Messianic Jewish Bible Institute fundraising banquet.



Messianic Jewish Bible Institute (MJB I) website homepage.

serious issue, when the church was imbued with the power of the state." However, this historical situation is a red herring and not the real concern of the Jewish community. Even if the church's efforts to convert us came with a smile and welcoming hand – rather than a threatening sword and fist – we would still not be receptive to their proselytizing efforts. Why not?

Conversion destroys Jewish souls! When a Jew embraces Christianity with its belief in the Trinity and Jesus of Nazareth as the incarnation of G-d, he is involving himself with idolatry.

The Torah defines idolatry as devotion to any deity that was not revealed to our ancestors at Mt. Sinai. The Jews who stood at Sinai 3,300 years ago did not transmit to their children that G-d revealed Himself to them as a Trinity or in human form. Therefore, a Jew who worships Jesus is committing an act of spiritual adultery. ■

**THE JEWS FOR JUDAISM**

**COUNTER-MISSIONARY SURVIVAL SEMINAR**

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Jan 15 – Feb 19 at 8 PM  
Holy Blossom Temple  
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**Pick up the spiritual survival skills that will empower you to respond confidently to any missionary who challenges your Judaism!**

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# NEW BOOKLET EXPLORES CULT PHENOMENON

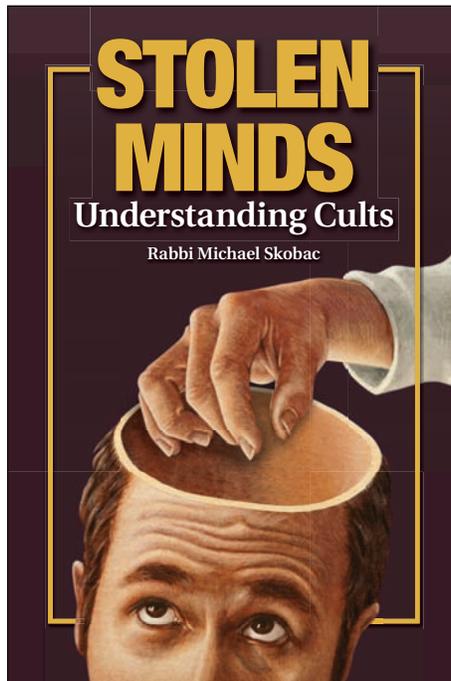
In early 2014, JEWS FOR JUDAISM will release *STOLEN MINDS: Understanding Cults*, a new publication written by Rabbi Michael Skobac, Education Director, Jews for Judaism, designed to bring clarity to a very misunderstood and serious issue, namely cults operating today throughout North America. With this booklet, JEWS FOR JUDAISM wants to assist individuals who have been negatively impacted by cults, as well as prevent other vulnerable Jews from falling prey to their harmful influence.

“Most importantly, countless people simply do not know what cults are,” explains Rabbi Skobac. “People often use ‘cult’ as a pejorative term to describe any group that appears bizarre or that they just don’t like. Actually, cults have little to do with unusual beliefs or behaviours.”

In this publication, Rabbi Skobac explains that cults are groups that exert undue control over the lives of their members through psychological and emotional manipulation. Furthermore, not all cults are religiously based. Many are self-help groups or organize themselves around political or commercial agendas. This booklet will help vulnerable people guard themselves against cult recruiters by exposing their deceptive modus operandi.

Another widely held misconception is that cults are a phenomenon of previous generations, and today, they’ve all but disappeared. It was way back, during the tumultuous late 1960s, when modern day cults surfaced and received tremendous media attention. At that time, we heard lurid stories of young people whisked away to be brain-washed and live in communal squalor. Then, horrific incidents, such as the Charles Manson murders and the mass suicide of hundreds of Peoples Temple members in Jonestown captured the imaginations of the curious public. But today, these kinds of events have disappeared – or have they?

Truth to tell, cult scandals have never ceased. But because they are not as new and surprising as they were 40 years ago, and because sensational news floods our daily lives, we don’t seem to notice as much. More importantly, the



nature of most cultic groups has morphed over the past generation. They have become more sophisticated, more attentive to their public image and less likely to attract critical attention.

“Aside from knowing what cults are and how they operate,” concludes Rabbi Skobac, “it is vital for affected families to know what to do – and what not to do – when a loved one has been recruited by a cult. This publication will empower concerned friends and family to deal more effectively with these frightening crisis situations.”

*STOLEN MINDS: Understanding Cults* is dedicated in memory of Joseph Faywlowicz who, for many years, was an enthusiastic supporter of JEWS FOR JUDAISM’s work in countering missionaries and cults, as well as rescuing Jews from these harmful organizations. His recruitment into a destructive cult caused him to endure enormous suffering and experience a long and difficult recovery. Joseph left a generous legacy to JEWS FOR JUDAISM, part of which is being used to publish and distribute this important work to inoculate Jews around the world against the threat of dangerous cults. ■



JEWS FOR JUDAISM LIFELINE is a free publication of JEWS FOR JUDAISM (Canada). JEWS FOR JUDAISM is the only international educational, outreach and counselling organization exclusively dedicated to counteracting the efforts of evangelical Christian missionary and cult groups that specifically target Jews for conversion.

JEWS FOR JUDAISM’s two primary goals are to strengthen Jewish pride and identity and to win back those Jews who have been influenced by Christian missionaries, cults and other religions.

JEWS FOR JUDAISM works to achieve these goals and promote Jewish continuity through the following highly acclaimed programs and activities:

- 24-Hour Hotline
- Campus Programs
- Ad Campaigns
- Russian Outreach
- Books & Literature
- Outreach
- Library & Archives
- Community Liaison
- Internet Website
- Referrals
- Monitoring
- Facebook & Twitter
- Lectures & Classes
- Audio & Videotapes
- Exit Counselling
- Speakers’ Bureau
- TV & Radio Programs
- Crisis Counselling
- Activism
- Volunteerism
- Shabbat Hospitality
- Counter Leafletting
- Information Requests
- YouTube Channel

To date, over 350,000 Jews worldwide have participated in JEWS FOR JUDAISM’S successful educational programs and counselling services.

One of JEWS FOR JUDAISM’S most outstanding accomplishments has been the uniting of the entire Jewish community in a common cause. JEWS FOR JUDAISM has earned endorsements from a wide spectrum of Jewish agencies, rabbis and educators.

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# THE PEW WAKE-UP CALL

Since its release in October 2013, the PEW Research Center's report on the American Jewish population has received non-stop attention and analysis by community leaders and pundits. The revelations of the study were alarming and clearly provoked tremendous concern throughout worldwide Jewry.

While there were some positive aspects to the report, the upshot was that increasing numbers of Jews no longer identify with the religion of Judaism. One in five Jews claim to identify with no religion and among Millennials (those born after 1980), the number climbed to 32%. Of these, 68% are not raising their children to be Jewish in any way whatsoever – religiously or culturally. Furthermore, while the overall intermarriage rate has risen to 58%, among non-Orthodox Jews it swells to over 70%. These sobering statistics illustrate why, a number years ago, the headline of a Jewish newspaper warned, “If you're Jewish, chances are your grandchildren won't be!”

Clearly, fewer and fewer Jews are connecting to their ancestral religion, and therefore they view themselves to be either secular or just a cultural or ethnic Jew. In probing to understand this dramatic slide toward assimilation, PEW asked respondents what they saw as the essential aspects of what being Jewish meant to them. While only 14% said that observing Jewish law was important, 49% reported that being intellectually curious was vital, and 42% felt that having a good sense of humour was a critical element of Jewish identity. The blatant irony in these responses is that non-Jews, as well, do not observe Jewish law, and a significant percentage of them are also intellectually curious and have a keen sense of humour!

A particularly troubling indication of our decline is reflected in the attitudes of American Jews to something that not long ago was a non-negotiable no-brainer. Even among those Jews who never attended a synagogue and had a tenuous

connection to Judaic religious practices, there was always one key issue they all agreed upon, namely that belief in Jesus as the Messiah was completely incompatible with being Jewish. The PEW study revealed that 34% of those polled reported that they saw no problem whatsoever in being a Jew for Jesus. By the way, this tidbit did not go unnoticed by Jews for Jesus. Immediately, the messianic organization joyously trumpeted the news on its website's homepage.

One thing is obvious about these frightening trends in North American Jewry.

There is a direct cause and effect relationship between today's abysmal Jewish illiteracy and ignorance of Judaic teachings and the serious hemorrhaging of Jews over the past two generations. The vast majority of our young people have never seriously studied even the basic texts of Judaism. We used to be called the “People of The Book.” Today, our Bible, Talmud and the works of

brilliant thinkers, such as Maimonides and Moshe Chaim Luzzatto remain closed books. It is impossible to develop a deep appreciation for Judaism when you know almost nothing about it!

Many people were shocked to discover that while only 19% of American Jews belong to a synagogue, 34% display Christmas trees in their homes. Unfortunately, this situation reflects what happens when young Jewish people are never exposed to Judaism in a meaningful and compelling way. Over 2,500 years ago, the prophet Hoseah lamented, “My people perish due to a lack of knowledge.” Our kids certainly know Lady Gaga but have never heard of Nechama Leibowitz, one of the foremost Bible scholars of the past century. Almost all Jews can identify the mother of Jesus – but do they recognize the mother of Moses? Canadian Jewish youth certainly know about a hat trick, but know nothing about a Siyum HaShas. As the American astronauts exclaimed, “Houston, we have a problem!”

While there has certainly been much hand wringing over the past months,

some analysts have understood that there might also be a silver lining. Often, people in crisis avoid seeking help until they've hit rock bottom. If the PEW report can provoke us to honestly assess our spiritual health and then seek ways to improve, the report will ultimately be a vital catalyst for Jewish renewal. We'll be able to set our eyes on not just surviving as Jews but thriving as Jews!

This year, the annual UJA General Assembly was held in Jerusalem shortly after the release of the PEW report and, of course, this conference devoted tremendous attention to the report's findings and dire implications. Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks, former Chief Rabbi of the UK and one of the presenters, emphasized that the most critical question we must address to assure the continuity of our people is, “Why be Jewish?” Rabbi Sacks boldly stated that young people must see within Judaism something that is compelling and profoundly relevant, something that makes Judaism worthwhile to invest in. Jewish education is not just the assimilation of facts and information. The focus of our educational enterprise must be to help young adults personally identify with the reasons for maintaining ourselves as a distinct people in the world.

JEWS FOR JUDAISM has always regarded this critical observation by Rabbi Sacks to be the basic goal of our organization. Our very name, JEWS FOR JUDAISM, reflects this purpose and underlines that the most significant thing we can do is help Jewish people of all ages embrace Judaism and be *for* Judaism. Our educational programs seek to inspire Jews with an appreciation of the incomparable beauty, wisdom, depth and spirituality of our faith.

The Bible teaches that G-d chose the Jewish people to be a light unto the nations, and to fulfill our mission, we must become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. The prophet Isaiah wrote that one day, the world will come to our light – but for this prophecy to take place, our people must first experience a profound spiritual revival.

In the past two generations, we have witnessed an unprecedented movement of Jewish adults around the world re-embrace their spiritual heritage. Hopefully, the PEW report will be our wake-up call, the vital spark to further ignite and perpetuate this essential revolution. As Theodore Herzl famously stated, “If you truly will it, it is not a dream!” ■



# TORONTO JEWRY IN THE MISSIONARY CROSSHAIRS

Last September, Christian missionaries in Toronto launched an aggressive new campaign specifically timed to coincide with the beginning of the High Holidays. The first salvo of this crusade for Jewish souls began with the placement of numerous advertisements in TTC (Toronto Transit Commission) buses and subway cars travelling through densely Jewish neighbourhoods.

Deceptively called “In Search of Shalom”, this crusade is a project of AMF Ministries and Life in Messiah Ministries, and an offshoot of Need Him Ministries, a generic evangelistic project. “In Search of Shalom” aims to immediately connect targeted individuals with trained missionaries through online devices, such as instant messaging and mobile phone texting. For savvy missionaries, this slick interactive approach is far more effective than the old methodology of standing on a street corner trying to convince passersby to read their literature.

AMF and Life in Messiah Ministries wanted to replicate this highly successful model, but with a strategic twist. “In Search of Shalom” is specifically directed at the international Jewish community, with Toronto as their initial test-market. So far, these ministries have mobilized five different local missionary organizations that already target Jews, and they are actively recruiting and training volunteers available to interact 24/7 with all Jewish people who respond to their advertising.

The second wave of this missionary campaign occurred about a month after the High Holidays. Postcards, delivered to Jewish homes and apartments throughout the GTA, asked the open-ended question, “What is True Peace?” and encouraged readers to visit their website for the answer. Unsuspecting visitors were then confronted with many universal questions designed to pique their interest, such as “Who is God?”, “Who is the Messiah?”, “Death, Is It the End?” and “Isn’t There More to Life Than This?”

When people respond to these advertisements by phone, instant messaging or text, they are immediately connected to a missionary specifically trained to make the case for Christianity to a Jewish audience. Without a doubt, these highly skilled individuals insist that faith in Jesus is entirely consistent with the teachings of Jewish



Missionaries launched an aggressive campaign with numerous advertisements on TTC buses and a door-to-door postcard mailing throughout Jewish neighbourhoods in Toronto.

scriptures. What's more, they cheerfully refer these naïve Jewish responders to local Messianic “synagogues” and organizations for follow-up information and activities.

Over the past decade, missionaries have openly declared that the Internet is their most fertile arena for reaching Jews. Clearly, younger people spend a tremendous amount of time online and on their smart phones, and the “In Search of Shalom” campaign was specifically designed to target them. In fact, their ads and postcards even feature QR codes so readers can simply scan them and instantly visit their insidious missionary website.

The TTC was advised that placing these deceptive missionary ads in their vehicles would be extremely offensive to the Jewish community. In response, the TTC stated that as long as these ads do not incite hatred or violence, they would not be rejected even though the Jewish community may view them as provocative and irritating. And so it was – missionary messages appeared in buses and subway cars throughout our High Holidays.

JEWS FOR JUDAISM is carefully monitoring this “In Search of Shalom” missionary campaign and will report on new developments in future editions of *Lifeline*. ■

## 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.

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# FORMER "MESSIANIC RABBI" SPEAKS OUT

Ira Michaelson was raised as a modern Orthodox Jew in Brooklyn, New York and attended Bnai Israel Synagogue. As a child, he remembers being chased home from Hebrew school by angry kids throwing rocks at him and screaming, "You killed Christ and you're going to hell for it!"

As the old saying goes, "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em," and, as a young man Ira was drawn away from Judaism and succumbed to the deceptive message of the "Messianic Jewish" movement. For 20 years he sojourned in Hebrew-Christianity and ultimately became a "Messianic Rabbi" of



Ira Michaelson

his own "Messianic Synagogue." Fortunately, Ira realized he made an enormous mistake embracing Christianity. He renounced belief in Jesus, returned to Judaism and is again being told he's going to hell.

Prior to Rabbi Michael Skobac's lecture on Dec. 25, *The Virgin Birth Myth: Disproving a Classic Missionary Proof*, JEWS FOR

JUDAISM is featuring Ira Michaelson's fascinating lecture *To Hell and Back: Surviving 20 Years as a Jew for Jesus* on the evening of Dec. 24. (See ad below for details.)

Ira's two-decade experience in various Christian groups gives him a unique insider's perspective on the deceptive tactics used by these missionary organizations that have converted over 350,000 Jews to Christianity. His lecture will show how a vulnerable Jew can be easily enticed into Christianity and will provide us with an understanding of why Judaism rejects Jesus as the Messiah.

Today, Ira works tirelessly to help keep Jews Jewish and inoculate the Jewish community against this missionary threat to Jewish survival. His passion for Torah and Tikun Olam (repairing the world) encouraged him to launch the website [www.torahthreads.com](http://www.torahthreads.com), as well as serve as the Outreach Coordinator for JEWS FOR JUDAISM — East USA, [www.j4east.org](http://www.j4east.org). He also co-hosts "Beyond the Matrix," an online radio show. ■

## Two Explosive Jews for Judaism Events



### TO HELL AND BACK

*Surviving 20 Years as a Jew for Jesus*

with Ira Michaelson

*Outreach Coordinator, Jews for Judaism – East USA*

Ira was the "Messianic Rabbi" of a Hebrew-Christian church and was very active in the "Messianic Jewish" movement. But after 20 years, truth won out and Ira ultimately renounced belief in Jesus, returned to Judaism and is now working to rescue Jews from the Christianity... and once again, he's being told he's going to hell!

**Tuesday, December 24 • 8:00 PM**



### THE VIRGIN BIRTH MYTH

*Disproving a Classic Missionary Proof*

with Rabbi Michael Skobac

*Education Director, Jews for Judaism – Canada*

Christian missionaries insist that the Bible contains numerous prophecies, which identify Jesus as the Jewish Messiah. In this special three-hour seminar, Rabbi Michael Skobac will critically examine the missionaries' popular claim that the prophet Isaiah predicted the Messiah would be born of a virgin.

**Wednesday, December 25 • 1:00 PM**

Shaarei Tefillah Congregation  
3600 Bathurst Street • **Admission: FREE**  
For info: **416-789-0020** or [toronto@jewsforjudaism.ca](mailto:toronto@jewsforjudaism.ca)

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