# LETTERS TO RABBI MICHAEL SKOBAC

• Showing my Jewish mom your YouTube videos was the catalyst for bringing her out of the Christian-influenced New Age movements she had been involved with for about forty years, starting from when I was a baby. She did not say a word when she saw your videos; there was no need to — you put clearly into words what she realized she already knew. She is in her late 70s. She threw out all the Christian items that were in her house. She now goes to shul once in a while, lights Shabbat candles, and has finally agreed to have a Jewish burial. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

• I have to write to you with sincere and deep gratitude for the fountain of wisdom and learning that pours forth from you right into my heart. The way you explain things, with genuine kindness and humility... inviting my yearning soul ever closer to Hashem... When you speak I am inspired by your wise words of love and righteous living.

• When Leora got me to listen to Rabbi Michael Skobac, I said I would only listen to him until I disagreed with him. That was six years ago now and I'm still listening, growing, and loving the teaching of the Torah. Thank you.

• We left Christianity about two years ago after coming across your countermissionary seminar on YouTube. We had been spending dozens of hours watching a Hebrew-Christian preacher on YouTube when one of your Jews for Judaism videos popped up. You've changed the lives of our entire family for generations to come! Thank you for the work that you do! • I now consider Rabbi Skobac as one of my favorite living teachers.

• As always, riveting. Always stimulating. Always challenging. Always educational. And always appreciated.

• My heart and soul goes out to the members of Jews for Judaism. You have been an inspiration through my Jewish experience. I and my family love what you're doing and stand for. Thank you for all your dedication and lectures.

• I have no idea where G-d is leading me next... I have learned to simply trust in each step. But for now, I am deeply grateful for your lectures and your words and I simply needed to express my gratitude.



## WHO OWNS JERUSALEM? The Case Under International Law

A critical and historical analysis examining the legal, indigenous and moral claim that the State of Israel and the Jewish people have sovereignty over Jerusalem under international law.

### Lecture by Dr. Jacques Gauthier

Author of *Sovereignty over the Old City of Jerusalem*, Ph. D. Thesis, University of Geneva

Tuesday, June 26 – 8 PM

**OF ISRAEL: Jerusalem** An in-depth exploration of both the Biblical and Rabbinic perspectives on the relevance of the City of Jerusalem and its relationship to Jews, Judaism and Israel.

## Lecture by Rabbi Eliezer Breitowitz

Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshiva Darche Torah, Toronto

Tuesday, July 3 – 8 PM

Shaarei Tefillah Congregation, 3600 Bathurst St., Toronto Admission FREE • Registration Required For info: 416-789-0020 or toronto@jewsforjudaism.ca

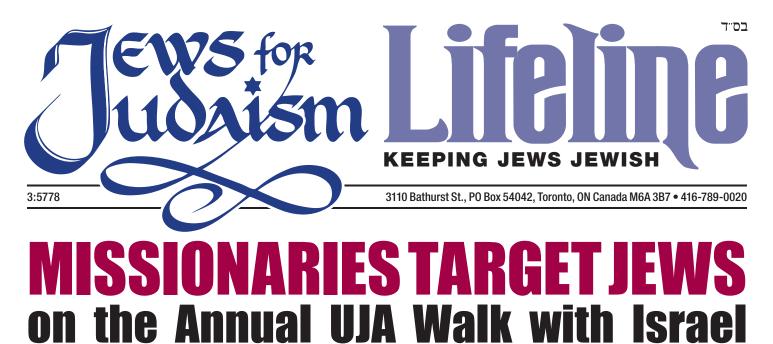


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LIFE 8 LINE



ith the tensions at the Gaza border looming large in the background, this year's Walk with Israel parade in downtown Toronto was bound to see some confrontations. Over 20,000 people joined the procession to show their support for and solidarity with the people of Israel. As expected, supporters of Hamas lined the parade route at two locations to spew their antipathy for the State of Israel.

For decades, Christian missionaries have capitalized on this large gathering of Jewish people and have marched along with banners and T-shirts emblazoned with their conversionary messages. In response, Jews for Judaism has mobilized a cadre of volunteers each year to monitor these missionaries and provide information for parade-goers confused or disturbed by their presence.

This year, instead of walking with the marchers, missionaries wearing Shalom T-shirts, brazenly set up a table on one of the streets of the parade route. One of the missionaries carried a banner proclaiming that "Yeshua (Jesus) Loves Israel," and their table

was stocked with New Testaments, Christian propaganda and small models of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

Our staff and volunteers were notified of this display and quickly converged upon the scene. One of the missionaries insisted that they were not there to proselvtize anyone, only to show their support for Israel. Rabbi Michael Skobac pointed out that the

literature on their table indicated otherwise and that the way to demonstrate solidarity with Israel was by marching with the parade, not by standing apart from it.

A handful of missionaries brazenly set up a table on one of the streets of the parade route.

that someone who had once embraced Jesus was now involved with Jews for Judaism. Jews for Judaism's Executive Director Julius Ciss, also a former Jew for Jesus, engaged in a very productive dialogue

One of our volunteers, Yochanan Delgadillo, had been involved earlier in his life with the Messianic Jewish missionary movement. His presence with our group shocked and unnerved a number of the people staffing the table. They couldn't believe

with one of the missionaries. The discus-

sions and interactions our staff and volunteers had with the missionaries were quite constructive. As a result, they expressed a willingness to meet in the future to study some of the critical issues at the interface of Christianity and Judaism. We hope that these meetings will lead them to reconsider their spiritual choices and return to their rightful heritage.

## **A Supporter's Perspective**

I have been involved with Jews for Judaism for a number of years, actively supporting the incredible work they do in saving Jewish souls. But after 20plus years of a proud association, I was

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LIFE 1 LINE



Rabbi Michael Skobac seeks to enlighten missionaries as Les Aaron looks on

#### **Continued from page 1**

treated to something on the Walk with Israel that made me even prouder.

Every year, volunteers and staff from Jews for Judaism have a strong presence at the Walk with Israel parade. They are like the police force for the Jewish soul. They serve and protect, in this case against any missionaries who show up with the sole purpose of preying on unsuspecting Jews. The missionaries' premise is to bring Jewish people into Christianity by telling them they can believe in Jesus and still be Jewish.

This year, for the first time, I witnessed an encounter that confirmed why I am a long-time supporter. Rabbi Michael Skobac was engaged in discussion with a missionary who was claiming that the Messiah had died for our sins. Rabbi Skobac's methodical and articulate presentation was simply brilliant. With his calm, rational demeanour, he was able to secure the woman's attention. His step-by-step approach in providing the true interpretation of Jewish text (in this case Tanach) made an impact on this woman. He would ask her if she could agree on a particular point. When she said yes, he moved on to the next point, and then the next point, subtly building his case.

I'm so proud to be a supporter of Jews for Judaism. Their work is tireless and truly making a difference in preserving Jewish continuity. – Les Aaron



1) Jews for Judaism staff and volunteers meet before parade, 2) Les Aaron, Rabbi Skobac & volunteer Yochanan challenge missionaries on the Walk, 3) Julius Ciss reasoning with a missionary.





## SUMMER GUEST LECTURE SERIES Testimonies of Return, Hope and Inspiration

Thurs., July 5

**Robert Walker** How A Christian Missionary Brought Me Back to Judaism

> **Daniel Ventresca** From Cath-aholic to Jew-aholic

Thurs., July 12 **Rabbi Dovid Sapirman** <u>A Common</u> Sense Response to Missionaries

Thurs., July 19

**Len Goldberg** Speak of the Devil: He's Not Who You Think He I s

Yochanan Delgadillo Coming to Judaism: Through its Back Door

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LIFE 2 LINE

# **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**



uring the summer months, Christian missionary groups like Jews for Jesus take to the streets and target pedestrians with their proselytizing literature. They also distract drivers at rush hour by waving at them and holding large street-corner banners promoting Jews for Jesus. In response, Jews for Judaism needs volunteers for its counter-missionary campaign to counter this threat.

We need volunteers for our Counter-Missionary Rapid Response Unit to be available on short notice, on a stand-by basis, to help in this effort. Volunteers will act as "Counter-Leafletters" distributing our counter-missionary literature in a non-confrontational manner on the street beside the missionaries or stand next to the missionaries on street corners at rush hour with our own banners. Jews for Judaism is also seeking dedicated individuals to act as "Spotters" who will notify us if, when and where missionaries appear.

When the Jews for Jesus "Summer Street Campaign" begins, it usually lasts for 2-3 weeks in July and August, with most activity at morning rush hour (7:30–9:00 a.m.), lunch hour (11:30–1:30 p.m.) and evening rush hour (4:00–6:00 p.m.). If you would like to volunteer for our program or help support our vital work, please contact us. We will be organizing a volunteer orientation meeting in the near future.

# **RABBI ELI COHEN: NEW DIRECTOR OF OUTREACH**

o meet the rapidly growing demands for its educational programs and counselling services, Jews for Judaism has engaged Rabbi Eli Cohen to bolster its professional staff beginning this coming August.

Rabbi Cohen has run Jews for Judaism in Sydney, Australia, for the past 11 years. Originally from London, England, he comes to Toronto with immense talent and passion for the mission and vision of Jews for Judaism.

Julius Ciss, Executive Director of Jews for Judaism, states, "We are very excited to

have Rabbi Cohen on our team. Our community is facing growing threats from aggressive evangelical and Messianic missionaries, especially online. In addition, young Jews are increasingly vulnerable to the forces of assimilation and assaults on their Jewish identity by anti-Israel incitement. Rabbi Cohen comes to us with the powerful combination of

both a young, fresh dynamism and a wealth of experience."

In addition to teaching and counselling responsibilities, Rabbi Cohen will be

reaching out to and developing relationships with young adults and young families throughout the GTA. He will also work to enhance Jews for Judaism's digital and virtual educational resources and social media footprint.

"I am thrilled to be moving to Toronto. I was first inspired, as a young teenager, to reach out to

Rabbi Cohen comes to

us with the powerful

combination of both

a young, fresh

dynamism and a

wealth of experience.

Jews who have fallen under the influence of Chris-

tian missionaries by this city's late Rabbi Immanuel Schochet. The opportunity to work with Julius Ciss and Rabbi Michael Skobac is both exhilarating and an honour. I hope to inspire young Jews to

reach out to others who are spiritually searching, looking for answers and silently crying out for the community to love them and embrace them."



Rabbi Eli Cohen

Rabbi Cohen has worked closely with Rabbi Skobac, Jews for Judaism's Director of Education and Counselling, for many years. Skobac travelled to Australia for several weeks back in 2007 to train Rabbi Cohen. For the past eight years, the two have reached out to Messianic lews at their major international conference and have had a enormous impact on many of the attendees.

"Rabbi Cohen possesses unique tal-

ents and a profound commitment to the vital work that we do. I am looking forward with tremendous enthusiasm to the opportunity of working together with him here in Toronto," said Rabbi Skobac. "Over the past 30 years, Jews for Judaism has touched and affected countless lives. It is exciting to think about how greatly our ability to serve the Jewish community will be magnified with Rabbi Cohen on board."

# 24<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CAVALCADE

n Sunday, March 21, 2018, the Entertainment and Cultural Committee of Shaarei Shomayim Congregation hosted the 24th Annual Cavalcade of Stars: Evening of Jewish Music in support of Jews for Judaism.

At the event, two special people were awarded for their vital contribution to Jewish life in Toronto. These two individuals have inspired many Jews through their passion, dedication and devotion to Jewish continuity, and their support of our vibrant Jewish community and Eretz Yisrael.

The "Woman of Accomplishment" award was presented by Elliot Dale to Katy Korman for her exceptional impact on the Jewish community. Katy was a past "Volunteer of the Year" for both Shaarei Shomayim Congregation and Mt. Sinai Hospital. She is a pillar of support for many Israeli causes like Technion, Soldiers of Israel and Boys Town and epitomizes the goodness and strength of a Jewish woman.

The following is an excerpt from Katy Korman's moving words as she accepted the "Woman of Accomplishment" Award:

"Being Jewish means belonging to our community and striving to better ourselves through education and tzedaka. Hitler took so many. I just didn't want to become another one by assimilating or looking to another cult for answers. So many Jews lack a social or religious connection to Judaism and are prey to Jews for Jesus missionaries."

"That's why Jews for Judaism is so important for all of us. They reach out to these people one by one. This organization makes a difference. Their work is important today and for future generations. The Talmud says, "Whoever saves a Jewish soul is as if he saved a world" [Sanhedrin 37a]. We cannot reach everyone, but Jews for Judaism is making a difference by reviving Jewish life and heritage today... and for generations to come."

The "Man of Accomplishment" award was presented by Rick Goldberg to Ian Tweyman, who was unable to attend. Ian has been an outstanding Shaarei Shomayim volunteer for countless years and had a great impact as the Brotherhood President as well. A dedicated community supporter, Ian is on the Board of Bathurst Lawn Cemetery, very active in Zareinu and has been a beloved Big Brother to numerous boys.

Attendees were entertained by an impressive line-up of performers. The talented Rabbi Jesse Shore combined traditional Jewish melodies with folk and contemporary music. Arbah B'Shir's vocalists — David Bernstein, Larry Grupp, Brook Jacobs









and David Wiener — blended melodic Jewish tunes with striking a cappella harmonies in barbershop-quartet style. Shaarei Shomayim's Rabbi Chaim Strauchler's funny jokes elicited a great response from the audience. Roberta Finkelstein, the evening's MC, kept the show moving and exciting. The evening was rounded out by an amazing performance from the Benami Band with Rabbi Chanan Gans and Graham Tugetman. The grand finale was a mass shofar blowing with Rabbi Elliott Diamond, Professor Bernard Katz, Cantor Sidney Ezer, Joseph Solovitch, Nathan Ochs and Rabbi Gedalia Zweig.

Special thanks to the many volunteers and entertainers who contributed their time and musical talents to help make this annual concert so successful.

Jews for Judaism is very grateful to Jerry and Sandra Genesove for their untiring efforts and boundless energy in planning and coordinating this marvelous annual event. Since 1995, the Evening of Jewish Music has helped Jews for Judaism fight the ever-growing missionary threat facing our Jewish community. The Genesoves' 24 years of consistent dedication to Jews







for Judaism exemplifies their passion to save Jewish lives and keep Jews Jewish. May Jerry and Sandra's efforts for Jewish survival and continuity continue 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 24th annual concert a huge success. Yasher Koach!

(L-R) 1) Rabbi Chaim Strauchler, 2) Cavalcade of Stars logo, 3) Arbah B'Shir Barbershop Quartet: Larry Grupp, David Wiener, Brook Jacobs & David Bernstein, 4) Rick Goldberg accepts "Man of Accomplishment" Award on behalf of Ian Tweyman, 5) Katy Korman accepts "Woman of Accomplishment" Award from Elliot Dale, 6) Rabbi Jesse Shore, 7) Alan J. Burger, Co-Chair, 8) Roberta Finkelstein, M.C., 9) Shofar Blowers: Rabbi Elliott Diamond, Professor Bernard Katz, Cantor Sidney Ezer, Joseph Solovitch, Nathan Ochs and Rabbi Gedalia Zweig, 10) Sandra & Jerry Genesove, Co-Chairs, 11) Ben Ami Band: Graham Tugetman & Rabbi Chanan Gans.

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# **OF STARS**













Rabbi Michael Skobac lectures with Dr. Mitchell Sutton signing at Yeshivas Nefesh Dovid

Jews for Judaism's

YouTube channel

has a dedicated

section for deaf

Jews with over

18,000 views.

Predatory missionaries are always seeking vulnerable targets for their outreach. Deaf Jews are one of the most underserved groups in our community. Very few resources exist to enhance their Jewish lives. The resultant

lack of serious Jewish education often leaves them ill-prepared to respond to the enticements of specialized evangelical ministries seeking to reach the deaf.

Yeshivas Nefesh Dovid in Toronto is a notable exception dedicated to filling this vacuum. Launched around 16 years ago by Rabbi Chaim Tzvi

Kakon, himself deaf from birth, Nefesh Dovid is the only yeshiva in the world for young men with hearing loss.

Five years ago, Jews for Judaism began an exciting new initiative, in conjunction with Nefesh Dovid, to produce educational videos for deaf Jews. With the invaluable assistance of Dr. Mitchell Sutton expertly signing for Rabbi Michael Skobac, Jews for Judaism has produced nine videos to date, with more slated for the future.

The programs are filmed live for students of Nefesh Dovid and edited to show Rabbi Skobac and Dr. Sutton on a split screen. Jews for Judaism's YouTube chan-

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nel has a dedicated section for deaf Jews that presently has over 18,000 views.

The first six programs produced were a modified version of our flagship Counter-Missionary Survival Seminar. These sessions deal with the Christian obsession to

> convert Jews, understanding why Judaism doesn't see Jesus fulfilling the Biblical Messianic criteria, why Jews don't require the death of Jesus to atone for our sins and refuting alleged Christological proof-texts in the Hebrew Scriptures. In addition, our channel features a signed lecture by Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz of our Los Angeles branch ad-

dressing the missionary challenge.

In addition to these counter-missionary videos, we are producing programs dealing with general topics in Judaism to help enrich the spiritual lives of Jews with hearing loss. To date, these lectures have focused on how to cultivate lives of inner peace, dealing with anger and impatience and fostering peaceful relationships with others.

As there are very few resources available on the Internet for deaf Jews, Jews for Judaism looks forward to continuing our association with Rabbi Kakon and Nefesh Dovid to enhance the lives of Jews worldwide.

LIFE 5 LINE

# ROBERT WALKER HONOURED WITH UJA SHEM TOV AWARD

night, UJA ast Federation of Greater Toronto honoured Robert Walker. а member of the Board of Directors of Jews for Judaism, along with other dedicated leaders and volunteers, at its 13th Annual Volunteer Awards Night on June 6, 2018. With 300 people in attendance, the event took place at Toronto's Shomayim Shaarei Congregation and featured 17 awards,

many of which boast a long history in our community.

As a University of Ottawa student, Rob Walker was drawn to the vital countermissionary work of Jews for Judaism because of the missionary effort to convert Jews on campus. For the last 10 years, he's volunteered for Jews for Judaism as a consultant, counter-missionary activist and fundraiser, and has been on its Board of Directors since 2014. Rob's desire to keep Jews Jewish led to his involvement in community outreach at Toronto's Village Shul in 2011 where he also served on its



Bruce Leboff & Warren Kimel present Robert with Shem Tov Award

Board of Directors, as well as with Aish Toronto, both as a supporter and volunteer.

During his tenure, Rob has upheld Jews for Judaism's commitment to counter the efforts of Christian missionary groups that target Jews, the impact of cults and eastern religions, the growing rate of assimilation and intermarriage, BDS and anti-Israel propaganda, and other challenges to Jewish continuity that are devastating the Jewish community.

Rob's passion for Israel advocacy led him to leave his career in communications consulting and digital marketing to become the National Director of Hasbara Fellowships Canada, helping it to become a leading pro-Israel campus activism organization that conducts Israel advocacy programs across Canada. In 2015, Rob helped Jews for Judaism launch its own Israel advocacy initiative, "The Jewish Connection to Israel." It includes an annual lecture series, dedicated website presence and many advocacy videos on its popular YouTube channel, which receives 3,000 views daily.

When UJA asked Rob why he volunteers for Jews for Judaism, he said, "Jews for Judaism's programs and Internet outreach pay huge dividends, educating the next Jewish generation. Its YouTube and social media are at the forefront of counter-missionary and Jewish education worldwide. I'm honoured to be part of a successful mission to keep Jews Jewish."

With the help of his incredible wife, Shauna, a talented educator who is also involved in Jewish outreach, Rob often hosts guests at his home for inspirational Shabbat and holiday meals. Rob and Shauna are the proud parents of Devorah, Rivky and Avigayil.

To our esteemed friend, volunteer and board member, Rob Walker, we are grateful for your dedication, passion and commitment to Jews for Judaism's vital counter-missionary and outreach work. You have been crucial to our success. Thank you for 10 years of helping Jews for Judaism keep Jews Jewish and saving Jewish lives.

## Attend over 250 Jews for Judaism lectures & programs without ever leaving your home

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Just type in "Jews for Judaism" in the P YouTube search field and click on this icon:



#### **ECTURE** with Rabbi Michael Skobac **SPARKS OF JUDAISM** COUNTER-MISSIONARY Wed. June 27, 8:00 – 9:30 PM Wed. July 25, 8:00 – 9:30 PM • The Star of David • God of Vengeance vs God of Love A Popular Stereotype Refuted **Origins of an Ancient Symbol** • Missionary Midrash? Critiquing • The Kippah Uncovering the a Defense of Mangled Sources Meaning of Jewish Headgear Maimonides' Warning The Dangers • Moms Are It of Quoting Out of Context **Understanding Matrilineal Descent** • Tatoos in Judaism • Could God Have Human Form? A Response to a Christian Claim What Does the Torah Teach? **Examining a Messianic Flip Flop** The Name of God To Follow the Rabbis or Not? Why Don't Jews Pronounce It? • Paul's Credentials Evaluating His Is Judaism Racist? Understanding **Claim for Divine Revelation** the Chosen People Concept

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# **MAIMONIDES' WARNING**

n 1172, Rabbi Moses ben Maimon (Rambam) composed his famous Epistle to Yemen. The Jewish community there was undergoing harsh persecution and pressure to convert to Islam. The letter covered a range of issues, including attempts to prove Islamic beliefs using passages from the Hebrew Scriptures.

Maimonides urged his readers to

"remember that it is not right to take a passage out of its context and to draw inferences from it. It imperais tive to take into consideration the preceding and following statements in order to

proof-texting was seen recently in a video by missionary Tzahi Shapira who refers to himself as a rabbi. He is seen breathlessly hovering over a volume of Talmud and claiming that he has absolute proof that at least some of its rabbinic authors believed that Jesus was the Messiah.

The passage in question is from Tractate Bava Kamma 80a. This is the Sefaria rendering of

A pathetic example of this kind of

the text:

"Rav and Shmuel and Rav Asi once happened to be present at a house where a celebration was being held marking the passage of a week of a newborn son (a circumci-

fathom the writer's meaning and purpose before making any deductions."

He went on to give several examples of the kind of disastrous conclusions that can be arrived at when the context is ignored. Here's one: If you read just the end of Deuteronomy 11:16, "... and you shall turn and serve other gods,'

you might think that the Torah requires that we worship idols. This preposterous conclusion is only possible when ignoring the first part of the verse, which reads: "Be very careful lest your heart be misled ..."

The faulty nature of an agenda-driven approach to understanding the Torah is illustrated in a famous parable by

the Dubner Maggid, who lived in the 18th century.

A man was walking in the forest and came upon a dozen trees with targets on them. Each target had an arrow that hit exactly in the middle of its bull's-eye. He saw the archer in the distance getting ready to shoot another arrow. He quickly ran over him and said. "I've never seen such incredible accuracy and skill. How were you able to shoot those arrows so perfectly?"

"It's not that difficult," the archer replied. "First, I shoot the arrow and then I draw a target around it!"

sion). And some say it was a house where a celebration was being held marking the redemption of a (firstborn) son. Rav would not enter before Shmuel ...'

The Talmud goes on to discuss the etiquette of which sage should enter the room first.

Shapira zeroed in on the Hebrew

Maimonides urged his readers to remember that it is not right to take a passage out of its context and draw inferences from it

**Danger: Circular Reasoning!** 

phrase describing the procedure where an Israelite father redeems his firstborn son from a priest. This is usually referred to as pidyon haben. The Talmud here uses a similar phrase, yeshua haben. Shapira rips this phrase out of the context of the passage, twists its meaning and claims it is describing a son named Yeshua (which is some-

times assumed to be the Hebrew name of Jesus).

The passage has absolutely nothing to do with the name of any child and is certainly not telling us anything about a special child named Yeshua it is speaking about a celebration for the ceremony of the redemption of someone's firstborn son.

When Rabbi Eli Cohen exposed Shapira's chicanery in a Facebook post, the missionary promptly took his video down. Lesson learned: a text without a context is a pretext!



# Your Gift is a Legacy for Tomorrow

### A bequest to JEWS FOR JUDAISM will ensure that our vital countermissionary 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, 3110 Bathurst St., P.O. Box 54042, Toronto, ON M6A 3B7.

• I give, devise and bequeath \_\_\_% of my estate (or the residue of my estate) to Jews for Judaism, 3110 Bathurst St., P.O. Box 54042, Toronto, ON M6A 3B7.

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LIFELINE 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.

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