

Jews for Judaism

Lifeline

KEEPING JEWS JEWISH

1:5780

3110 Bathurst St., PO Box 54042, Toronto, ON Canada M6A 3B7 • 416-789-0020

A hearty *mazel tov* to everyone — our dedicated staff, tireless volunteers and invaluable supporters! Thirty years ago, lacking sufficient funds and adequate facilities, Jews for Judaism was established in Canada.

Our mission in 1989 was bold and simple ... to counter the global onslaught of Christian missionaries, armed with their multi-million dollar budgets and their zealous determination to convert Jews to Christianity.

We had two goals: to provide preventive counter-missionary educational programs to the Jewish community, and to rescue Jews already ensnared by missionary groups.

IN THE BEGINNING...

Jews for Judaism began at a well-worn desk in the corner of my basement, where I assembled our counter-missionary pamphlets and photocopied them at the local print shop. My kitchen, with its rickety table, became our counselling room for “Hebrew Christians.” Today, 30 years later, with the help of the Internet, social media and YouTube, we evolved into a worldwide counter-missionary powerhouse. Much of our success is due to Rabbi Michael Skobac, our Education Director & Senior Counsellor. He is one of the world’s foremost experts in counter-missionary and Jewish continuity issues.

We continually wish our services would no longer be necessary. But unfortunately, as the missionary threat to every Jewish community in the world escalates year after year, we know our services are more necessary than ever and our day-to-day battle is far from over.

THE MISSIONARY THREAT TO JEWS

Today, Jews for Judaism is countering about 100 different missionary groups operating in major communities in Canada. Over 40 such groups operate in Southern Ontario, targeting all Jews, young and old, religious and secular, Canadian-born

Celebrating 30 Years of



Saving Jewish Lives

By Julius Ciss

We continually wish our services would no longer be necessary.

and immigrant. By deceptively presenting Christianity as Jewish, these missionaries, some calling themselves “Messianic Jews,” trap many unsuspecting Jews. Their ministers refer to themselves as “rabbis” and preside over “Shabbat” services where congregants wear *kippot*

and prayer shawls, parade around with Torah scrolls and enjoy a sumptuous “Kiddush.” By contorting our sacred religious symbols, they confuse, manipulate and lure our fellow Jews to Christianity.

Similarly, the missionaries manipulate and mistranslate our Jewish Biblical texts to “prove” that Jesus is the Jewish messiah. By threatening that all non-believers will suffer eternal damnation, it is inevitable that some Jews would rather accept Jesus as their saviour than burn in hell forever.

Worldwide, more than 1,000 such missionary groups spend over \$350 million to evangelize Jews. In the last 50 years, they’ve been devastatingly successful,

converting as many as 500,000 Jews, according to some estimates. In the United States, there are over 750 “Messianic synagogues,” with 300 Hebrew-Christian organizations operating in Israel and over 175 in the former Soviet Union.

During Jews for Judaism’s first two decades, the missionary threat to Jews could be confronted locally; today, missionaries have changed the battlefield and moved to where Jews are easily targeted: the Internet. As a result, we have also expanded our outreach to the global digital realm.

WHY WE ARE SUCCESSFUL

Unfortunately, few people in the Jewish world can effectively respond to these missionaries. That’s why and where Jews for Judaism shines! Our knowledgeable staff recognizes the deceptive presentations by missionaries, detects their subtle manipulation and understands the plight of unsuspecting Jews, duped by these eager recruiters.

Many of Jews for Judaism’s rabbis and staff have worked in the counter-missionary field for about 40 years and have

first-hand experience in rescuing Jews. In fact, I was a “Jew for Jesus” missionary for five years until, thankfully, I was helped back to Judaism by caring Jews in the community. Now, with Rabbi Skobac, we work diligently to save countless others. Our “exit counselling” addresses the emotional, psychological and spiritual issues involved in winning Jews back from Christianity. Because we take great care in reintegrating these men and women into the Jewish community, we are often involved with follow-up for many years after a successful “rescue.”

Jews for Judaism’s initial and

primary goal has always been to win back to Judaism those Jews who have been influenced by Christian missionaries. However, we have had to expand our mandate to countering five other threats to Jewish survival that devastate the global Jewish community:

1. Destructive cults cause many Jews to abandon family, friends and careers.

2. Eastern religions: Buddhism and Hinduism are now the spiritual choices for many Jews. In North America, 25% of non-Asian Buddhists are Jews.

3. Apathy and ignorance leave many Jews unaware, unaffiliated and assimilating.

4. Intermarriage is exploding, with a 75% rate in some North American cities.

5. Anti-Israel and Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) agitation on campus inhibits Jewish students from standing up for Israel and Judaism.

JEWES FOR JUDAISM’S ACHIEVEMENTS

1. Strong counter-missionary presence: We post on JewsForJudaism.ca, social media and YouTube, with videos of our popular counter-missionary lectures; discussions about Jewish spirituality, continuity, philosophy and practice; cults; eastern religions; intermarriage; and pro-Israel content to combat anti-Israel and BDS propaganda. Since the inception of our online presence, Jews for Judaism is currently reaching 1.5 million people annually.

2. Educational programs have been developed, including the *Counter-Missionary Survival Seminar*, and pre-

ventive programs on missionaries, cults and other Jewish continuity topics. These have been presented to more than 130,000 people at synagogues, Jewish schools and organizations. We have trained rabbis, community leaders and laypeople in counter-missionary techniques to combat the missionary threat in their own communities in the United States, Canada, South Africa, Australia, the former Soviet Union and Israel. We display our information at Jewish conferences and festivals, and have a “No Cost to the Public” policy for all of our educational programs,

literature and audio materials.

3. Counselling: We have provided about 60,000 one-on-one counselling and study sessions and referrals (also free of charge) for individuals and families affected by missionaries, cults and Jewish continuity issues.

4. Monitor missionary activity: We receive mailings and emails from many major “Hebrew Christian” missionary organizations in North America informs us in advance about when and where missionaries are active, and we’re there as a counter-presence.

5. Counter-missionary activism: We countered Jews for Jesus during its 3-week “Behold Your God” missionary campaigns in Toronto and Montreal, by providing over 75 public lectures in synagogues, Jewish schools and various organizations. Our “Counter-Missionary Task Force Response Unit” was on-site within minutes, offering our counter-materials to the public wherever missionaries were stationed. We exposed the “Trojan Horse” tactic used by many Christian groups to draw Jews to Christianity by their support for Israel and activism on behalf of Jewish people.

6. Intermarriage: Through programs to increase awareness of the causes of and cures for the intermarriage crisis, we help intermarried couples discover meaning and spirituality within Judaism, making it a positive alternative to the “Hebrew Christianity” presented to them

by the missionaries. See the ad for “Interfaith Dating & Intermarriage” on page 5.

7. The Internet: We connect with 1.5 million people annually through our popular website, jewsforjudaism.ca, Facebook, Twitter and our YouTube channel. Our popular programs have been video-recorded and broadcast through YouTube, where over 325 of our dynamic video lectures have received more than 5 million views, over the last seven years. That’s an average of 2,000 people watching our programs daily!

8. Outreach to specific communities: We provided counselling to “Messianic Jews” attending “Hebrew Christian” conferences in North America; launched a Russian Task Force to respond to the immense evangelical threat directed toward Jews in Toronto from the former Soviet Union, and translated Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz’s book, *The Jewish Response to Missionaries: Counter-Missionary Handbook*, into Russian and distributed it for free to 25,000 of Toronto’s Russian Jews; and presented numerous lectures with ASL sign language to the Jewish Deaf community. We currently have 10 split-screen videos for the Jewish deaf on our YouTube channel.

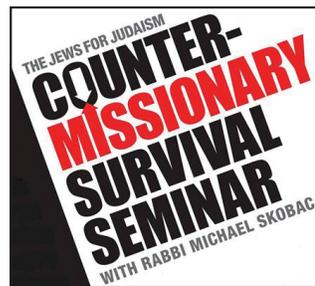
9. Literature and audio/video materials are offered to the public in the form of our newsletter, *Lifeline*, and numerous books and pamphlets are available for free download at jewsforjudaism.ca. We published and distributed over 300,000 copies of *The Jewish Response to Missionaries: Counter-Missionary Handbook*, in 10 languages — also a free download on our website. We possess the world’s largest, most comprehensive archived on missionary and cult groups and make it available to educators, clergy, community professionals and law enforcement agencies.

10. Advertising campaigns were created to promote our programs, public awareness and free educational materials.

11. Media presence: We appeared on dozens of radio and television programs on local, national and international networks including ABC, CBC, CTS, CHIN, CFRB, and ARUTZ-7. We have published hundreds of editorials in leading newspapers and magazines across North America, including *Time*, *The National Post*, *Toronto Star*, *Canadian*



Rabbi Michael Skobac, Education & Counselling Director and Julius Ciss, Executive Director



Our popular flagship program



Jews for Judaism's outreach to Jewish Deaf

Jewish News, Jewish Tribune, and Globe and Mail.

12. Community liaison: Through collaboration with B'nai Brith, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, Canadian Jewish Congress and CIJA (Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs), we earned the respect and endorsement of organizations, congregations and rabbis across the entire Jewish spectrum, including Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist.

13. Jewish seekers were engaged through programs to help them appreciate the depth, meaning, spirituality and beauty of Judaism.

14. Shabbat and holiday hospitality: We offered hosting to hundreds of Jews at Jewish homes for Shabbat and holiday meals. This experience of Yiddishkeit helps them to strengthen their connection to Judaism.

15. High Holiday Learning Non-Services were conducted for free with over 1,500 participants to enable them to experience the spirituality of the holidays and their rituals, and to feel more connected to G-d.

16. Information resource: We fielded thousands of requests for information about missionary and cult groups and other Jewish continuity issues from schools, synagogues, community leaders, media outlets, outreach organizations and laypeople.

17. Israel Advocacy: Today, Jews worldwide are being threatened, frightened and coerced into abandoning their claim to Israel, and in some cases Judaism, when



Rabbi Michael Skobac lectures at the 10th Annual Spring Lecture Series at Shaarei Tefillah

confronted by anti-Semitic, anti-Israel BDS activists, especially on campus and the Internet. To inspire Jews to be confident and knowledgeable in defense of Israel, in 2016 Jews for Judaism inaugurated its "Jewish Connection to Israel" lecture series.

OVER THE NEXT 30 YEARS

Jews for Judaism plans to expand our endeavours in the following areas:

Enhance Worldwide Outreach

We will serve the worldwide Jewish community's constant need for preventive counter-missionary programs with enhanced Internet outreach, and by monitoring ever-increasing worldwide missionary activity, hiring a young outreach professional to connect with millennial Jews, and exploring ways to increase our exposure in the mass media reaching marginal and at-risk Jews.

Israel

We must counter the growing missionary presence in Israel. All major missionary groups have established offices and outreach centres in Israel. Therefore, we must enhance our Israel advocacy outreach with an emphasis on combating anti-Israel and BDS propaganda, work with agencies like CIJA (the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs) and engage in outreach and counselling to the many Jews involved in anti-Israel BDS propaganda movements.

Education

We will increase our programming to Jewish day schools and to Jewish communities in Toronto, across Canada and in neighbouring American cities. We plan to prepare an easy-to-follow counter-missionary curriculum for Jewish educators, intensify our outreach and counselling through an enhanced website, create training programs for rabbis, educators and Jewish community professionals, and expand our educational and audio material, translating them into Hebrew, Russian, French and Spanish.

Counselling

We will organize support groups for families affected by loved ones involved with missionaries, Jewish continuity

issues such as inter-dating and intermarriage, or Eastern religions and destructive cults.

Outreach

We plan to develop counter-missionary affiliates in other cities targeted by the missionaries and expand the activities of our Russian Task Force with materials and programs for new immigrants.

Catalyst for Spiritual Renaissance in the Community

Continue to engage Jews in their spirituality by conducting sessions on enhancing synagogue effectiveness, and identifying and overcoming the weaknesses that leave Jews vulnerable to missionaries, assimilation and apathy.

Outreach to Hebrew Christians

Increase our contact with thousands of "Jews for Jesus" attending "Messianic Jewish" conferences and ad cam-



Julius Ciss engages a Jew for Jesus missionary

paigns to offer downloads of free counter-missionary educational materials at our website.

AND IN CONCLUSION

We think our accomplishments are astounding. We're proud of them. We've published this special 30th Anniversary issue of *Lifeline* because we want you to be proud of our achievements, too. We want you know where your vital financial support has gone over the past 30 years, and where it must go in the future.

Most of all, we want you to know how much we appreciate your participation and your partnering with us over the years. We couldn't have done it without you!

The Talmud in Sanhedrin 37A states, "Whoever saves a single Jewish soul is as if he has saved an entire world."

At Jews for Judaism, we've helped save thousands of souls... because of your support!

Thank you and *Mazel Tov!* ■

Finding Judaism in an Interfaith Relationship

by Jack Botwinik

I was raised with a lox-and-bagels Judaism, replete with misconceptions and negative stereotypes about the religious life. The few laws that we kept, such as not eating pork, we did because of habit or tradition.

Like many of my peers, I had an affinity for Jewish culture, and that's where it ended. And like many young Jews, I became interested in philosophy and spirituality. In college I studied Marxism, Platonism, socialism, humanism, feminism. I wanted to know if any of them was the key to fixing the world. I delved into the teachings of Christianity and Buddhism, and I travelled to the Arctic to taste native spirituality.

In the process, I became disillusioned with one "ism" after another. And Judaism is an "ism" that was never even on my radar.

Until I met Belinda.

Going out with a Chinese girl, an atheist whose grandmother had practised and taught her Buddhist rituals, was exotic and exciting: I was expanding my horizons. But soon the guilt and the doubts started pouring in. Were any of the Buddhist practices idol worship? Did it matter whether our future children ate pork and shrimp? Or was my discomfort with these issues the result of years of conditioning and guilt induced by my parents, synagogue and community? Whatever the case, I couldn't just snap my fingers and make my upbringing disappear.

And not only that:

As I was confronted with an ancient, rich and fascinating Chinese tradition that I knew nothing about, I was challenged to identify what was unique and special about my Jewishness. I needed to understand: What is so important about my heritage that I must sacrifice my happiness — refrain from marrying the person I love — for its sake?

When you're forced to explain and justify your Jewish beliefs, values or practices to a foreign audience,



Belinda Cheung (Bina Ester) and Jack Botwinik (Yankl) with their family.

something interesting happens: the conversations become very stimulating. My Chinese girlfriend would ask me questions about Judaism and I'd run and dig up answers — and not just any answers. They had to be the most satisfying answers possible, so that she'd find Judaism appealing. In the process of sharing my heritage with her, I discovered more and more of its treasures. In the space of four years, from not having a *mezuzah* at my front door, I became a *kippah*-clad, *Shabbat* observant, *tefillin*-donning Jew. Go figure.

Meanwhile, Belinda herself became increasingly drawn to Jewish values and beliefs — while also investigating other religions — and came to see the divine nature of Torah. Since Gentiles are not required to be Jewish to merit a portion in the afterlife, her decision to embrace Judaism came only after months of introspection, further learning, and immersion in Jewish life. Once she converted, I didn't wait

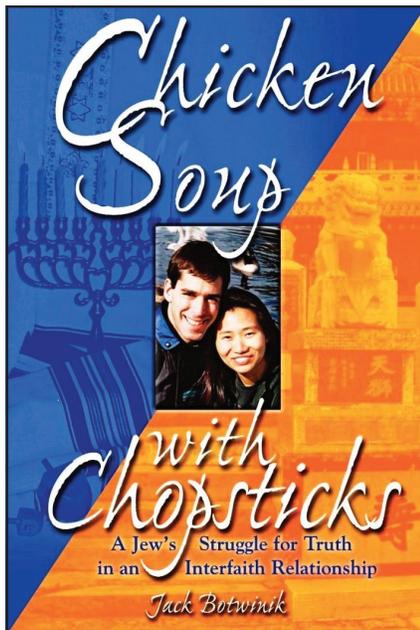
long before proposing to her at a kosher Chinese restaurant!

But it doesn't always work that way. Inter-dating more often than not leads to intermarriage, non-Jewish children and further disaffection from our heritage. In my case, thank God the opposite happened. What accounts for the difference?

Most non-religious Jews who date only other Jews do so because of family and community expectations. Or because of the Holocaust. Or because of anti-Semitism. But these reasons are rather tenuous, tainted with guilt. Many cultures exert pressure to marry one's own kind, but why give in to it — especially in a multicultural society?

Falling in love can override all these considerations. And here, I think, is the key. It all boils down to the bifurcation of Judaism into those who abide by it as a religion (and by religion I mean an all-encompassing sacred and meaningful way of life, something one believes is actually real and true) and those who identify with it only as a culture.

In a Pew study on the state of Judaism in America that asked respondents to identify what is essential to their Jewish identity, 14% replied "eating traditional Jewish foods," and 42% replied "having a good sense of humour." If that's what Judaism is to them, there is not much to be lost in marrying a Gentile. In the same vein, Belinda and I realized that culturally we could take the best of



both worlds. We can celebrate Rosh Hashanah and we can celebrate Chinese New Year. We can eat matzah ball soup one day and won-ton another. We can exchange Jackie Mason jokes and dabble in the wisdom of Confucius. We'd both be enriched.

But if Judaism is more than just a tradition, if it is built on the revelation at Sinai when God gave the Jewish people His Torah, the Divine instruction manual for living, then the ramifications are vastly different. It's not something I can blithely ignore. They're commandments; not suggestions. And included in the Torah is the prohibition against intermarriage.

When you identify as a cultural Jew, seeking diversity in your relationship may be appealing. When you identify as a religious Jew, the boundaries are more clearly defined.

So if we want to curb intermarriage, we need to get young Jews to identify with Judaism as a religion that is relevant and meaningful, rather than simply as a culture.

I believe inter-dating is a symptom of a problem — namely, Jewish ignorance. My inter-dating journey forced me to dive into learning anew, unlearn what I believed Jewish religion was, and relearn it with depth and authenticity that fundamentally changed my identity as a Jew.

I believe a big part of Jewish education today must consist of *unlearning* what we assume Judaism is all about. Is Judaism about refraining from eating pork because of habit or tradition, or is it about observing the kosher laws because that's one of God's ways of ensuring we remain a holy nation? Is Judaism about cultivating a sense of humor, or is it about cultivating a relationship with the Creator?

In short, we need to distinguish between authentic Torah Judaism and its myriad cultural echoes. Only then can we appreciate what it truly means to be Jewish.

During our exploration and spiritual journey, Belinda, now Bina Ester, and I were referred to Jews for Judaism's Rabbi Michael Skobac. A marathon meeting with the rabbi helped me realize just how little I knew about true Judaism as opposed to what I'd grown up with. It kindled our interest in digging deeper into authentic Jewish sources to learn more. Bina Ester and I thank Jews for Judaism and Rabbi Skobac for the important part they played in connecting us to the meaning and beauty of Judaism. They changed our lives. ■

[Jack (Yankl) Botwinik] is the author of *Chicken Soup with Chopsticks: A Jew's Struggle for Truth in an Interfaith Relationship* available on Amazon.

What is so important about my heritage that I must refrain from marrying the person I love?

INTERFAITH DATING & INTERMARRIAGE

An Inspiring Search for Truth and Meaning

With Belinda Cheung and Jack Botwinik, author of "Chicken Soup and Chopsticks: A Jew's Struggle for Truth in an Interfaith Relationship"

Tues., Feb. 11 • 8 PM – SHAAREI SHOMAYIM CONGREGATION 470 Glencairn Ave., Toronto
To Register or for Information: 416-789-0020 or carol@jewsforjudaism.ca



jewsforjudaism.ca
KEEPING JEWS JEWISH

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, 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.

JEWS FOR JUDAISM

3110 Bathurst St., P.O. Box 54042,
Toronto, ON Canada M6A 3B7
416-789-0020
canada@jewsforjudaism.ca



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.

JEWS FOR JUDAISM

3110 Bathurst St., Box 54042 Toronto ON M6A 3B7
T 416-789-0020 • F 416-789-0030 • TF 866-307-4362
www.jewsforjudaism.ca • © 2019 Jews for Judaism

Executive Director: Julius Ciss
julius@jewsforjudaism.ca

Education Director: Rabbi Michael Skobac
rabbiskobac@jewsforjudaism.ca

Administrative Director: Carol Spodek
carol@jewsforjudaism.ca

Board of Directors:
Frank Mayer • Alex Katz • David Zolty

JEWS FOR JUDAISM Branches:
Toronto • Los Angeles



jewsforjudaism.ca

LIFE 5 LINE

What Would Have Been Lost to the Jewish People If ...?

By Rabbi Ahron Hoch

When I came to Toronto in 1982 to work for Aish HaTorah, the international Jewish outreach organization, I was as one of five young rabbis working out of a small office on Bathurst Street. One of the first students to attend my Torah class was Julius Ciss, who had been a Jew for Jesus missionary for five years, and I really wasn't sure that he no longer believed in the Christian faith.

Quite honestly, I had limited experience dealing with any Jew who believed in Jesus, let alone one who had actively been involved in converting Jews to Christianity. Now ... my mazel ... I had one in my class ... and I wasn't sure how to deal with him.

Some people may have advised me that a Jew for Jesus was a hopeless case. "There was nothing I could ever do or say to help him. He's lost. Forget about him. Instead, focus your time and energy on the unaffiliated Jews" ... but I wasn't so sure.

It would have been easier to tell Julius that his prior missionary involvement made it too awkward for us to teach him about Judaism. I could have cited the many newspaper articles about the missionary danger in Toronto that included his name. I could have told him that we felt that he was a serious threat to our community and not welcome in our classes ... but I didn't.

Instead, I arranged a meeting with Rabbi Immanuel Schochet z"l, a renowned Jewish



scholar and authority on missionaries who target Jews. Rabbi Schochet assured me that he also had met with Julius and saw a fellow Jew ... who sincerely felt he had made a huge mistake, wanted to get his life right and return to Judaism. *If Rabbi Schochet took Julius at his word, so would I.*

It's been 37 years since I met Julius. Today, I have no regrets for the many hours I spent with him in my classes and at my Shabbat table, for taking his many calls, and importantly, for putting my trust in him.

As a result of this encouragement and support, Julius became a stalwart anti-missionary activist. He spoke out publicly, counselled others, printed and distributed important educational literature, and advertised in the *Canadian Jewish News...* all at his own expense.

Until 1989, when he established the counter-missionary organization Jews for Judaism only as a part-time endeavour ... he never dreamed it would grow into the vital organization it's become today. But, a few years later, Julius was faced with a serious dilemma.

You see, Julius enjoyed a successful career as one of Canada's leading editorial and advertising illustrators and a popular professor at the Ontario College of Art & Design. But now, he was burning the candle at both ends because of his dedicated work for Jews for Judaism.

He had to make a critical decision — either continue his rewarding, lucrative illustration and teaching career and abandon his anti-missionary work, or quit his association with the art world and devote himself full-time to Jews for Judaism's important life-saving work.

But, when Julius specifically asked for my opinion on quitting his unusual and rewarding profession, I had no doubts at all. I encouraged him to pursue the crucial work of Jews for Judaism.

With Rabbi Michael Skobac as its Director of Education for most of its 30 years, Jews for Judaism has been at the forefront of countering the numerous missionary organizations and cults that aggressively target our Jews across Canada and around the world.

Throughout all these years, as a Rabbi at Aish HaTorah and as the Rabbi of The Village Shul ... I have enthusiastically supported, endorsed and utilized Jews for Judaism to help keep Jews Jewish. Today, I am asking you to do the same.

Tens of thousands of Jews have benefited from Jews for Judaism's preventive educational programs and one-on-one counselling services. For three decades, their lectures and seminars have been an essential resource for Aish HaTorah and The Village Shul and a welcome asset to many other Jewish organizations, synagogues and schools across the country.

In addition, Jews for Judaism's YouTube video channel has received 5 million views worldwide over the past seven years.

Please, donate generously to Jews for Judaism today. This indispensable organization must have ... and well deserves ... our ongoing support. For the past 30 years, they have reached out to help all Jews, of all backgrounds and all ages ... and they might have already impacted the life of someone you know.

I shudder to think what would have been lost to the Jewish people if, way back in 1982, Rabbi Schochet and I had listened to the pessimists and shunned this former Jew for Jesus missionary.

We can now understand why the Talmud teaches, "Whoever saves a single Jewish soul is as if he saved an entire world." Just think of how many souls and worlds you can help save with your generous contribution to Jews for Judaism today! *Please help.*

As Chanukah is upon us, we celebrate the miraculous victory of a few Jews against the overwhelming Greek suppression of Judaism. Today our battle for the Jewish soul is with Christianity, cults, Eastern religions, Jewish ignorance and apathy.

Please, let Julius and Rabbi Skobac know that you greatly appreciate and generously support their unique lifesaving work with Jews for Judaism. *Thank you.*

Wishing you a Happy Chanukah. ■
Rabbi Ahron Hoch, The Village Shul, Toronto.

DEEPENING JEWISH EXPERIENCE

with Rabbi Michael Skobac

If you want to deepen your understanding of Judaism, are seeking more from your Jewish experience, or are just curious – this is for you! In six stimulating sessions, we will explore Jewish wisdom and inspirational teachings, discovering their profound relevance to our lives.

Six Consecutive Wednesdays starting
January 15 at 7:30 PM

THE VILLAGE SHUL 1072 Eglinton Ave. West
For info or to register: 416-789-0020 or
carol@jewsforjudaism.ca



jewsforjudaism.ca

LIFE 6 LINE

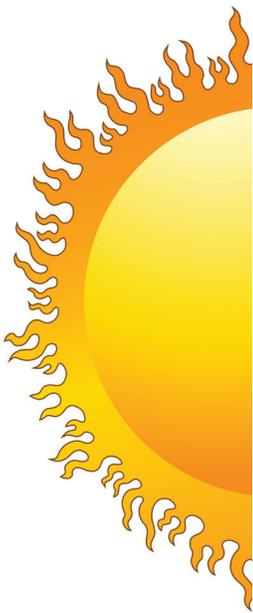
BIRTHDAY OF THE SUN

By Rabbi Yisroel C. Blumenthal

Director of JudaismResources.com

The fact that the most prominent holiday in the Christian yearly cycle is pagan in origin is relatively well known. Some Christian leaders argue for an abandonment of this pagan celebration, while most observe this holiday and use the time as an opportunity to call attention to the message of Christianity.

Many churchmen justify the adoption of a pagan holiday with the argument that this was simply a historical circumstance. The expanding Church found that so many people were already celebrating this time, so instead of attempting to repress this celebration, the Church converted it from paganism to Christianity. The "conversion" of the holiday was achieved by artificially associating the Christian message with the observance of the holiday.



This merger turned the commemoration of the birthday of the sun into a celebration that commemorates the birthday of the "son."

Are these two celebrations really so different? If we look into the heart of the pagan celebration and worship we will see that no conversion was achieved. The Christian celebration is essentially just as idolatrous as the pagan celebration. The only change that was achieved was that the attention given to one idol is now turned to another.

The pagans chose their deities in the following manner. People would be inspired and overawed by various entities in the natural world — be it the power and radiance of the sun, the mighty sound of thunder, the majestic beauty of a river or the magical appeal of the dark forces of the night. Instead of recognizing that these are but creations

of the same Creator who granted us all the gift of existence, the pagan would bend in submission towards the mysterious awe and majesty projected by these entities.

The heart of Christianity, in all of its manifestations, is the submission towards the aura projected by a certain human being. No one saw this person create the world and no one saw this person standing as a second person in a triune godhead. These were theories developed by hearts that were already bent in submission to the aura associated with the personality of Jesus.

The worshippers of the sun and the worshippers of the "son" are both engaged in the same type of worship. They are both allowing themselves to be overwhelmed by the attributes inherent in a fellow citizen of this universe.

The witness of the Jew is that everything in this universe — and all of the majesty, beauty, mystery, charisma and holiness that these entities may possess — are all but gifts from the One Creator who stands above and beyond all of nature while at the same time sustaining and nurturing every detail of existence. It is to Him, and to Him alone, that our worship is due. Not only our own worship, but even those entities that overwhelm humans with their majesty, beauty, holiness and mystery — they, too, owe all worship to the One Creator.

The day will yet come when everyone and everything rejoices in the worship of the Creator (Psalm 98:7). May it happen soon and in our days. ■

**Enjoy over 325
Jews for Judaism
lectures & programs
without ever
leaving your home**

Join over 3,000 people who are visiting Jews for Judaism's YouTube Channel each day.

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



THE ENCOUNTER

JEW FOR JUDAISM **JEW FOR JESUS**

A Simulated Debate
with Rabbi Michael Skobac and Daniel Ventresca

Tuesday, December 24th — 8:00 PM

SHAAREI TEFILLAH CONGREGATION 3600 BATHURST ST., Toronto

Admission: FREE • Registration required: 416-789-0020 or carol@jewsforjudaism.ca



jewsforjudaism.ca

LIFE 7 LINE

THE GIFT OF LIFE INSURANCE

By Mark Halpern

CEO, WEALTHinsurance.com

Chanukah is a special holiday. Occurring in the darkest and coldest time of the year, the Chanukah candles shine their light in the darkness much like Jews for Judaism shines a light for the Jewish people. You can increase the light this year by considering a planned giving legacy gift for Jews for Judaism.

I have been a friend and supporter of Jews for Judaism for a quarter-century. Their creative “out-of-the-box” Jewish outreach has really impressed me with its effective way of “Saving Jewish Lives” and “Keeping Jews Jewish.”

“Planned giving,” often described as leaving a legacy, is about leaving a gift for Jews for Judaism in your will through a bequest, making Jews for Judaism the beneficiary of highly taxed registered investments (e.g., RRSP, RRIF) or donating a life insurance policy. By making a planned gift to Jews for Judaism, you can help to support their mission, fulfill your charitable goals and create a legacy at Jews for Judaism for your family.

A gift of life insurance can have far greater influence than you may think. For a relatively small investment today, you will have a considerable impact for Jews for Judaism in the future. There are several ways to make a gift through life insurance.

1. Purchase a new policy: You can purchase a new policy and name Jews for Judaism as the owner and beneficiary. You will receive a tax receipt for premiums paid each year. Jews for Judaism will receive the proceeds of the life insurance policy upon your death and use the funds to support their important programs. Many policies will provide an annual dividend payment to Jews for Judaism while you are alive, so the life insurance policy can help them each year and not just at death.

2. Designate Jews for Judaism as the beneficiary of your policy: You can name Jews for Judaism as a beneficiary of a new or existing insurance policy. Upon your death, Jews for Judaism will receive the proceeds of the life insurance, and your estate will receive a charitable tax receipt equal to the policy's death benefit. The substantial tax savings would reduce or eliminate other estate taxes owed to the CRA.

3. Donate an existing policy: Often individuals own life insurance that they purchased for financial security when they were younger. Circumstances have changed so that the life insurance policy is no longer needed. If you're in this category,



you can donate the ownership of your life insurance policy to Jews for Judaism today. In this case, you receive a tax receipt for the fair market value

of your policy at the time of your gift (likely between 20% and 60% of the death benefit amount of the policy). If the premiums are still being paid on the policy, you will receive tax receipts for all future premiums.

Benefits to consider:

* You can fulfill your charitable goals and support the life-saving work of Jews for Judaism you so value for generations to come.

* A gift of life insurance will allow you to make a larger gift than you could make from your current disposable income.

* Jews for Judaism issues you official tax receipts for premiums paid on the policies it owns.

* Your gift will not be reduced due to taxes, fees, costs of probate or administration.

* There is no minimum gift level for gifts of life insurance.

Considerations for Singles, Widows and Divorcees:

The tax department is biased against singles, widows and divorcees.

If you have a spouse and you pass away, then all of your assets roll over tax-free to a surviving spouse. Taxes would be due only upon the death of both spouses.

However, if you are single, widowed or divorced, then upon your death your estate will pay taxes on your assets of between 27% and 54%, depending on the type of asset.

This includes registered assets (e.g., RRSP and RRIF), which are taxed at 54% for any amounts over \$220,000. That means a \$1-million RRIF would have a tax of \$540,000, with only \$460,000 going to your named beneficiaries.

So what can you do?

1. Consider naming Jews for Judaism as the beneficiary for all or part of the registered funds in your will. Now the entire amount would go to a charity you care about and none would go to the tax department.

2. If you don't want to change your will, get a multiple beneficiary form from your investment company and indicate a percentage or dollar amount that you would like to leave for Jews for Judaism.

For every \$2 you leave to Jews for Judaism, you will save \$1 in tax.

For more information, please speak to your professional advisor or contact Mark Halpern at mark@wealthinsurance.com.

Mark Halpern is a Certified Financial Planner (CFP), Trust and Estate Practitioner (TEP) and Master Financial Advisor-Philanthropy (MFA-P). In addition to serving on several charitable advisory boards, Mark is President of Aish HaTorah Toronto and has been a friend and supporter of Jews for Judaism since 1995. ■

• Angels & Demons
• The End Times
• Talmud Matters

Three Amazing Lectures with
Rabbi Eliezer Breitowitz

Wednesday, December 25th — 12:30 PM – 4:00 PM
SHAAREI TEFILLAH CONGREGATION 3600 BATHURST ST., Toronto
Admission: FREE • Registration required: 416-789-0020 or carol@jewsforjudaism.ca

UJA Federation OF GREATER TORONTO | Shaarei Tefillah Community Inspired Judaism | jewsfjrjudaism.ca KEEPING JEWS JEWISH

f y t

jewsforjudaism.ca

LIFE 8 LINE