

**Jews for
Judaism**

Lifeline
KEEPING JEWS JEWISH

Fall 2007

www.jewsforjudaism.org

Jewish Survival...We've Got a Strategic Plan!



University students and Jews for Judaism's Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz (rt) in a heated dialogue about peer-to-peer proselytizing on college and high school campuses and future plans to launch a cutting-edge response.

Today, the Jewish community is the target of a multi-million dollar proselytizing crusade unlike anything we've ever seen before. In fact, over the past 20 years, missionaries have converted more Jews to Christianity than in the past centuries! This success, generated by the "Messianic Judaism" movement pioneered by Jews for Jesus, has encouraged more than 900 evangelical missionary groups throughout North America to enter the ring and raise the stakes. Together, they're spending more

than \$250 million a year to ensnare Jewish souls.

Jews for Judaism is the only full-time educational, outreach and counseling organization dedicated to countering the multi-million dollar efforts of deceptive missionary and cult groups that target the Jewish community for conversion.

To achieve its objectives, every organization must have an effective, long term strategic plan. The missionaries certainly have one and now, so do we! With the help of expert consultant Amy

Morgenstern and a grant from the Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles,

Our Mission: To strengthen and preserve Jewish identity through education and counseling that counteracts deceptive proselytizing targeting Jews for conversion.

Jews for Judaism has just completed its visionary plan for 2007-2010.

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The Mitzvah of Giving

Our sages teach, "Whoever saves a single Jewish life saves an entire world." Please, support Jews for Judaism by contributing financially because your support enables us to save Jewish lives.

We also accept in-kind donations including property and stocks, and you can help us in perpetuity by remembering us in your Will or Living Trust.

By supporting Jews for Judaism, you not only get a wonderful mitzvah but also, at the same time, you benefit from a tax-deductible contribution. We can also send a tribute card on your behalf. ■

Rising to New Heights to Convert Jews



Hebrew-Christian missionaries hired an airplane to pull a huge banner with a proselytizing message in Hebrew over the annual Israeli Festival in Woodley Park, CA.

By Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz
Executive Director Jews for Judaism, Los Angeles

On Sunday, April 29, 2007, "Hebrew Christian" missionaries rose to new heights in their devious efforts to attract potential Jewish converts in the Greater Los Angeles area.

As we do every year, the Los Angeles Jews for Judaism branch hosts an information booth at the annual Israeli Festival held at Woodley Park in the San Fernando Valley. Working with our volunteers, we distribute literature, field questions and promote Jews for Judaism's many programs. This year, our booth attracted an extremely large number of the 25,000 people who attended the Festival, and here's why.

While we manned our booth inside the park, dozens of Jews for Jesus and Messianic Jewish missionaries, some even from Israel, surrounded the park handing out deceptive tracts in both English and

Hebrew. Fortunately for us, a court order forbade them from distributing materials inside the Festival area.

So, to grab the attention of the thousands of potential Jewish converts on the Festival grounds, the missionaries hired an airplane to pull a huge banner with Hebrew letters that translated to read:

Hear, O Israel, the Word of God. Yeshua (Jesus) is our Messiah. Moses and the prophets speak of him. The phone number displayed on the banner was for a voice message in Hebrew promoting Jesus and a website.

Ironically, this banner created a phenomenal interest in our Jews for Judaism booth and the upcoming programs that our Los Angeles branch was launching. As a result, Jews for Judaism staff are now in touch with several people who expressed an interest in refuting missionary claims and in learning more about Judaism. ■



MISSIONARY BANNER BACKFIRES!

Jews flock to Jews for Judaism's booth at the Israeli Festival for information and discussion.

Students Threatened New Offensive Created

Jews for Judaism's process in developing its Strategic Plan gave us an excellent opportunity to evaluate the latest trends in proselytizing. We learned that Jews for Jesus and Messianic groups continue to aggressively promote evangelical Christianity in the guise of traditional Judaism and they've been successful! This Messianic/Jews for Jesus movement has grown to over 300,000 Jewish members with more than 15,000 in Israel. Recently, they have devised campaigns that target large Jewish populations, distribute literature on street corners, mail CD's in Yiddish to Orthodox households and send music groups to infiltrate Israeli army bases. Jews for Judaism maintains an active role in responding to these deceptive campaigns.

Our research also revealed that Jews for Judaism must now confront new proselytizing trends that are rapidly evolving. The evangelical community, numbering 75 million in the United States, has shifted and expanded their efforts to include peer-to-peer proselytizing. Christian students are being expertly trained to approach their Jewish friends on high school and college campuses. One particularly disturbing website, CampusRevolution.org, trains Christian high school students in the art of "going fishing" for susceptible classmates.

Unlike the "in your face" missionaries on street corners, this behind-the-scenes, peer-to-peer approach is subtle and covert. Since "out of sight is out of mind," this less visible tactic creates a false sense of security and a mistaken impression that the missionaries have disappeared.

In fact, according to a recent survey, 68% of Jewish high school students and 80% of college students have been approached, at least once, by someone trying to share another religion with them. Many students admit they are vulnerable to such manipulative and confusing tactics, and they fear that their friends less committed to Judaism are definitely at risk.

And there's more! New web-based technologies, such as YouTube, MySpace, Facebook and the iPod have created a virtual on-line community, so aggressive and



Jews for Judaism held its first Collaborative Agencies Meeting to begin implementation of its Community Mobilization Against Proselytizing Program funded by the LA Jewish Community Foundation. Participating in the meeting are (l to r): Bill Cohen, LA Hebrew High; Shoshana Hirsh, JSU (Jewish Student Union); Eitan Ginsburg, LA Hillel Council; Rabbis Bentzion and Zalman Kravitz, Jews for Judaism and Joel Chernick, JCA Shalom Institute.

pervasive, that missionaries suddenly appear in our homes and student dormitories. Moreover, evangelicals are now using the classic Jews for Jesus tactic of telling Jewish students that they can be Jewish and Christian at the same time.

"Since out of sight is out of mind, this less visible tactic creates a false sense of security and a mistaken impression that the missionaries have disappeared."

A direct result of the research for our Strategic Plan was the creation of a dynamic, cutting-edge program designed to empower students, parents and professionals against these high tech trends in proselytizing as well as peer pressure. Our **Community Mobilization Against Proselytizing** program will be launched with the help of a \$175,000 two-year grant from the Los Angeles Jewish Community Foundation.

Working with a team of collaborating agencies comprised of Hillel, JSU, LA

Hebrew High and JCA Shalom Institute, Jews for Judaism's program has been designed to incorporate a wide range of inter-linked activities. These include student liaisons trained to serve as peer-to-peer representatives on their campuses; annual Student Leadership Training Retreat and Concert; development of a student-oriented website, Student Prep Kit and interactive DVD to empower students with answers and materials to deal with proselytizing; and specialized training for Jewish professionals. Our collaborating agencies and a student committee will participate with us in the development, design and use of the latest technologies to put our **Community Mobilization Against Proselytizing** into action.

This multi-faceted program will mobilize and empower multiple community agencies to respond effectively and collaboratively to help our youth resist the often powerful lure of missionaries, cults and peer pressure.

For more information about the **Community Mobilization Against Proselytizing** program, sponsorship opportunities or how you can get involved, contact Rabbi Zalman Kravitz at 310-556-3344 or zalman@jewsforjudaism.org. ■

Awards Luncheon Links Generations to Judaism

Jews for Judaism's recent awards event held on December 10, 2006 honored two outstanding women: Sara Cannon and Babette Weber. Sara received Jews for Judaism's *Community Service Award* because of her love for Judaism and support of our organization. In 2000, when Sara won our Trip to Jerusalem drawing, she gave her 81 year old mother the trip she had always prayed for. Together, they set off on the adventure of a lifetime, linking two generations with a common love of Judaism.

Babette, our *Abavas Chesed Award* recipient, has a passion for Judaism. When Babette was notified that she was the winner of our most recent Israel Trip drawing, she flew into action. Rather than take the two tickets to Israel for herself, she sent her two grandsons, Brian and Michael Becker, on a heritage tour with Jews for Judaism's Rabbis Bentzion and Zalman Kravitz (see photos).

Sara's and Babette's love for Judaism and family epitomizes our theme of *Linking Generations – Keeping Jews Jewish*.

The event's keynote speaker was former



Sara Cannon, accompanied by her husband Bob, receives the Community Leadership Award from Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz.

evangelical minister Gavriel Sanders who amazed the crowd with the story of his transformation from a missionary who converted Jews to a convert to Judaism himself. Sanders thanked Jews for Judaism's

founder, Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz, for his important work and the role he played in helping him and countless others appreciate the beauty and spirituality of Judaism. ■



Proud grandmother Babette Weber receives the Ahavas Chesed Award from Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz.



Rabbi Zalman Kravitz (lt), Brian and Michael Becker, and Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz arrive in Israel for their one-week Jewish Heritage mission.

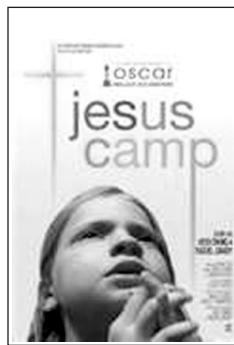
HELP!

My Son's Friends Want to Convert Him

“Jesus Camp,” this year’s Academy Award-nominated documentary, underscores an alarming trend. Christian youth, eager and well-trained, are determined to proselytize their friends. This bold, new effort is affecting Jewish students, and parents are turning to Jews for Judaism for help. Here are three recent, real life scenarios:

- When a mother noticed that her son was crying himself to sleep for several weeks, she knew something was terribly wrong. Finally, he confided that a girl in his class was taunting him, saying he was going to “burn in hell” because he was a Jew who hadn’t accepted Jesus. Her son was 8 years old! The following Sunday, the family met with Rabbi Kravitz who explained to the son some of the reasons Jews don’t accept Jesus and the need for classmates to respect each another’s religious differences. Strengthened by our meeting, her son found the courage to tell his classmate that he was proud to be a Jew and that her remarks were hurtful.
- A 16 year old public high school student was placed in the uncomfortable

position of having to read the King James New Testament as literature. Concerned that some evangelical Christian students might take advantage of this situation and try to proselytize their son, the family turned to Jews for Judaism for guidance and support. We provided him with an understanding of the differences between Judaism and Christianity as well as the tools to recognize and withstand any proselytizing efforts.



- An 18 year Jewish college student was attracted to Christianity by a Christian boyfriend. Although she was reluctant to meet with a Jews for Judaism rabbi,

the counseling we provided her parents encouraged their patience, open communication and unconditional love.

Eventually, we arranged a meeting with their daughter that broke the ice and addressed her negative stereotypes about Judaism and rabbis. After several meetings and Shabbos meals at the homes of Jews for Judaism’s rabbis, she re-examined Christianity, her attitude toward Judaism, and returned to her roots.

The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation funded a recently completed evaluation report on Jews for Judaism’s counseling services. Consultant Dr. J. B. Whitney described us as an organization that offers, “a unique combination of counseling methods tailored to a very specific threat to the Jewish community.” Dr. Whitney’s evaluation ranked Jews for Judaism with a 67% success rate which compares favorably to the results of two treatment outcome studies of counseling cases.

Jews for Judaism is dedicated to keeping Jews Jewish, and our counseling services provide an answer. ■

(Continued from page 1)

Jewish Survival... We've Got a Strategic Plan!

Our Strategic Plan took two years of intensive research to develop, and included input from dozens of Jewish communal leaders, an online survey with 424 respondents and more than 1,800 student surveys. The conclusion? Jews for Judaism’s most essential resources are our counseling services, education programs and website.

Additionally, we identified an urgent need for Jews for Judaism to confront the new trends and technologies currently used to proselytize vulnerable high school and college students.

David Rifkind, Jews for Judaism Board Chair, states, “The implementation of



Jews for Judaism board members and staff meet to launch new Strategic Plan (clockwise from top of table): Amy Morgenstern, Strategic Plan Consultant; Julie Bram; Sara Cannon; Janet Wertman, Development Consultant; Peri Devaney, Administrator; Bruce M. Friedman, Esq.; David Rifkind, Board Chair; Bennett Simon; Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz, Executive Director. Also in attendance were Darrin Hirt, M.D. and Rabbi Zalman Kravitz, Education Director.

our Strategic Plan marks a watershed moment for Jews for Judaism as we move forward and innovatively respond to new

challenges to our community.” An overview of our plan will soon be posted on the Jews for Judaism website. Stay tuned. ■

People are talking about Jews for Judaism



Dr. Joseph Hakimi (third from rt) and high school students from Orange County's Tarbut V'Torah Community School meet with Jews for Judaism's Executive Director, Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz to share their concerns about Christian missionary efforts to convert them.

On behalf of the teens who attended the North American Federation for Temple Youth, Southwest Region Spring Kallah, I am writing to thank you for coming to speak to our group in Phoenix.

Our teens are clearly affected by missionary groups as was evidenced by the raise of hands of people who have been approached by missionaries, and by some of the personal stories they shared. The fact that they listened intently for the entire time you spoke and participated in such thoughtful discussion after you left demonstrated to me that they were truly moved by your talk.

Thank you for helping to give our teens the tools they need to face religious groups who aim to convert Jews to their religion. It was a pleasure to meet you.

Lynne Butner
Regional Advisor, NIFTY-SW

I want to let you know that I appreciate your website. I found it through a search engine while trying to find some balance to my Southern Baptist colleague at work. I have been discussing religious issues with her and she talked to me about Messianic Jews and Jews for Jesus. After reading your online publications, I see where my colleague was saying many of the "scripted" responses to my questions.

Vicki W.

I just finished reading the "DaVinci Code: A Jewish Perspective" analysis [produced and distributed by Jews for Judaism]. What a great booklet! Please keep up the good work!

Carol H.

Thank you so much for speaking to our high school students today. They responded so beautifully to your words, and were deeply affected by your teaching.

I have been a Religious School Principal of our Reform Temple for eighteen years. I would like to share with you some of the feedback I received from the students that amazed me about today's presentation.

1. Despite our students thinking they were not at risk, by the end of the program, the majority acknowledged how easily they could be confused, made vulnerable and put at risk by zealous Christian friends.
2. Christian groups are prevalent in public high schools.
3. When you described your future program that included training Jews for Judaism student liaisons to be a presence on high school campuses, 50% of our students told me that they would be interested in participating in that program.

It is clear to me that our students desperately need Jews for Judaism. I also observed that our students' Jewish identity was strengthened by your presentation.

Thank you again for your incredible presentation

Ellen Fox
Temple Solel School Director

The Power of Persuasion – Everyone's a Target

The rise of global terrorism is a major concern for parents as well as police agencies. How does this threat impact our lives and the lives of our children? To help cope with the stressful issues raised by this new reality, Jews for Judaism has developed a dynamic and highly relevant presentation. **The Power of Persuasion** skillfully explores the connection between cults, telemarketers and terrorists.

Over the past 30 years, cults have been responsible for dramatic personality shifts in countless individuals. Some of these personality changes have resulted in an almost robotic behavior, such as the mass marriage of 3,000 strangers who were matched up at a 1998 ceremony in Madison Square Garden by Unification Church leader Rev. Sun Myung Moon. A more extreme and frightening example was the 1978 mass suicide of 913 men, women and children, all members of the Jonestown cult.

“Cult groups manipulate their members with a systematic application of psychological and social influence techniques also called ‘thought-reform.’”

Most recently, cult groups have resorted to violence. In 1985, the Guru Rajneesh cult launched the first large-scale biological attack in U.S. history, poisoning 751 people



with home grown Salmonella germs. In 1995 the Japanese doomsday cult, Aum Shinri Kyo, killed 19 people and injured more than 5,500 in Sarin nerve gas attacks in the Tokyo subway system.

According to cult expert Dr. Margaret Singer, “Cult groups manipulate their members with a systematic application of psychological and social influence techniques also called ‘thought-reform.’” This manipulation is often used, albeit on a less sinister level, by telemarketers and advertising agencies that control our buying habits by employing marketing techniques

developed by social psychologists. Some of these techniques include embedded messages, placement advertising and subliminal messages.

Terrorist groups, such as Hamas and Al Qaeda, also recognized that they could recruit followers by adapting the power of persuasion used by marketing agencies and the thought control techniques used by cults.

The intentional misuse of these powerful psychological tools has led to a proliferation of groups who take advantage of individuals to further their evil agendas. ■

Contest Winners Take a Bow!

At the conclusion of this school year, Jews for Judaism announced the winners and finalists of its Fourth Annual Jewish Students' Creative Writing Contest. The names and winning entries are posted for viewing on Jews for Judaism's website, www.jewsforjudaism.org.

This year's contest theme was, *My Prayer for Israel*, and over 600 students representing 78 schools in five states participated. Entries from Jewish day schools, religious schools of all denominations as well as public schools expressed a tremendous outpouring of feelings for Israel.

Winners, finalists, parents, grandparents, families and friends gathered for a ceremony at the Los Angeles Jewish Community Library on May 20 where they received recognition for their high-scoring entries. Jews for Judaism's Executive Director, Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz congratulated all the participants and, assisted by Education Director, Rabbi Zalman Kravitz presented certificates and prizes to the winners and finalists.

Jews for Judaism extends a big thank you to all the schools, congregations and youth groups that helped encourage such a large participation in this year's



Finalists and winners of Jews for Judaism's Creative Writing Contest received awards at a ceremony held at the Jewish Community Library at the Federation Building. Front Row (rt to lt): Sammy Azair, *Harkham Hillel Hebrew Academy*; Shawn Marom, *A.E. Wright Middle School*; Lauren Lechtner, *San Diego Jewish Academy*; Samuel J. Vilenski, *San Diego Jewish Academy*; Shai Kohavi, *Kadima Hebrew Academy*; and Noa Brandes, *Maimonides Torah Academy*. Top row (rt to lt): Jews for Judaism's Education Director, Rabbi Zalman Kravitz and Executive Director, Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz; Jessica Behmanesh, *Harkham Hillel Hebrew Academy*; Nicole Danesh, *Valley Beth Shalom* and Rivkah Schefres, *YULA Girls High School*.

contest. Special appreciation goes to contest sponsors Gitel and David Rubin, and Selwyn Gerber who truly appreciate the goal of the Contest, namely making Judaism relevant, fun and rewarding

for all students.

At the beginning of this new school year, we will launch our next contest with the theme, *An Awesome Act of Kindness*. Students are anxiously waiting! ■

Programs that Enlighten and Inspire

An essential component of Jews for Judaism's mission is presenting inspiring educational programs. Over the past year, our four international centers educated more than 30,000 students and adults.

In addition to our powerful **Missionary Impossible: The Jewish Response to Missionaries** lecture, we also speak on a variety of other dynamic topics. Our most popular lectures include:

The Power of Persuasion - *What Do Cults, Telemarketers and Terrorists Have in Common?*

Is Religion Killing Judaism? - *The Search for Happiness and Spirituality*

A Rabbi Cross-Examines Christianity - *Discovering the Real Messiah!*

Evangelicals and Israel - *Trojan Horse or Knight in Shining Armor?*

Kabbalah and The Red String - *Cult or Consciousness?*

The Passion of Judaism - *Connecting to the Spiritual Heart of Judaism*

Jews for Judaism Survival Seminar - *How to Respond to Anyone Who Challenges Your Faith*

Jews for Judaism offers these programs and more in coordination with organizations of all denominations. Some of our recent partners include:

American Jewish University • Anshe Emes • Bais Bezalel • Bais Chana High School • BBYO Regional • Beth Havarim, Agoura Hills • Brandeis Camp Alonim • Chabad Centers in Irvine, CA; Charlotte, NC; Colorado State University, Ft. Collins, CO and East Hampton, NY • Congregation Tiferet Jacob • Hillel Get Into College • Hillel UCLA • JCA Shalom • JSU (at 18 public high schools) • Kol Tikvah • LA Hebrew High • NIFTY • Sinai Akiba Academy • Tarbut v'Torah, Irvine • Temple Ahavat Shalom • Temple Solel, San Diego • University Synagogue • Yavneh Hebrew Academy • Yeshiva Ohr ElChonon • Young Israel of Century City • YULA Girls High School.