

# *Jews* *for* *Jesus* BACKGROUND

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Contact Person: Susan Perlman

**1. *Who or what is Jews for Jesus?***

Jews for Jesus is an evangelistic agency or society. The purpose for which it was founded in 1973 is to proclaim the gospel message to all people. Jews for Jesus is not a separate religion. The 104 staff members are aligned with individual churches and denominations of an evangelical persuasion.

The headquarters is located at 60 Haight Street in San Francisco, California. However, there are branch offices in New York, Boston, Chicago, Toronto and Los Angeles as well as in San Francisco. These branch offices coordinate the evangelistic work carried on throughout North America along with 73 volunteer chapters located in thirty states.

**2. *Isn't Jews for Jesus a contradiction in terms? Aren't Judaism and Christianity mutually exclusive categories?***

Christianity is a Jewish religion. The whole concept of a Messiah is rooted in Judaism. The New Testament Scriptures are incomplete in themselves, but have their thought origins and spiritual foundations in the Hebrew Scriptures.

No one seriously doubts the Jewishness of Jesus nor the Jewishness of his earliest followers. However, because of historical antagonisms and persecutions, some Jews and some Christians find it more palatable to regard these religions as mutually exclusive.

We consider ourselves to be Jews, not only because we were born Jews, but because we continue in the Jewish ideals -- believing that we follow the Jewish Messiah who happens to be the savior of the world as well.

## Jews for Jesus Backgrounder (cont.)

### 3. *Who is the founder of Jews for Jesus?*

The generally acknowledged founder is Moishe Rosen. Rosen was born to Jewish parents in Kansas City in 1932 and raised in Denver, Colorado. In 1953, he and his Jewish wife were converted to Christianity. He received his undergraduate theological training at Northeastern Bible College in Essex Fells, New Jersey. In 1957 he was ordained as a Baptist minister, and in 1986 he was awarded a Doctor of Divinity degree from Western Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary in Portland, Oregon.

Rosen began his career as an evangelist with the American Board of Missions to the Jews. Through involvement with the Jesus Revolution of the late sixties, he developed a distinct method of evangelistic proclamation. **Jews for Jesus** was chartered in the state of California in September of 1973, and eleven Jewish believers in Jesus, along with Rosen, became the founders. The majority of the eleven are still involved with the ongoing work of Jews for Jesus.

### 4. *What are "broad­sides" and are they the only way in which Jews for Jesus communicates its message?*

Broad­sides are six-paneled pamphlets using contemporary themes, graphics and good-natured humor to express religious truths. The agency distributes between two and three million broad­sides annually at such places as college campuses, downtown districts and airports.

Besides this, Jews for Jesus publishes booklets, books and periodicals using in-house printing facilities. One periodical, **Issues**, is sent to 40,000 Jewish people bi-monthly.

The organization also communicates through full-page ads in the print media. The first one appeared in 1976 in the New York Times. This outreach has expanded to include other metropolitan dailies and national magazines.

## **Jews for Jesus Backgrounder (cont.)**

Jews for Jesus also employs music and drama to get out the gospel message. The Liberated Wailing Wall music group of Jews for Jesus has produced nine albums. The dramatic emphasis of the organization includes a one-man play, Watchman for the Morning, and the use of parabolic preaching.

Jews for Jesus is committed to using any ethical form of communication which conveys the message of the Messiah in a creative manner.

### **5. *Why is handing out literature in public places so important to you?***

It is one of the very few ways that people of one religious persuasion have the opportunity to invite inquiry from others, without intruding. It is also one of the few remaining ways that someone who holds to a minority opinion can make their opinion known without great expense. We hand out our literature to make a statement and to invite inquiry.

### **6. *Just exactly what is that statement?***

Our statement is that Jesus, or as we prefer to call him, Y'shua, is the Messiah promised to the Jewish people and the Savior of the world; that he accomplished our salvation by dying for our sins and rising again on the third day; and that anyone who believes that will be saved.

# Protected Pests

The U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments last week in a case that pits the Los Angeles Airport against an organization called Jews for Jesus, which wants to hand out literature to travelers as they go to and from their flights.

This ought to be an open-and-shut case on behalf of Jews for Jesus or anyone exercising his free-speech rights in a public place. The airport is the functional equivalent of a street corner, and the same rules should apply to both. As long as public access isn't blocked, there should be no question that speech is a constitutionally protected activity. People distributing literature at airports can be pests, but they have a right to be there and to do it. Being a nuisance is an insufficient ground for being barred.

In California the state Constitution has been held to allow leafleting by political groups in a privately owned shopping center, which the courts

said constitutes a public thoroughfare and is therefore a public forum. A publicly owned and operated airport can hardly claim to be anything else.

Nor can the airport persuasively claim that leafleting interferes with the functioning of the facility. No one's path is blocked, no one is prevented from getting to an airplane, no one is kept from carrying out the business that brought him to the airport in the first place.

If the Supreme Court gives any weight at all to the free-speech side of this case, it must decide on behalf of Jews for Jesus. Only by completely ignoring the First Amendment interest could it hold for the airport. Under the circumstances, it's hard to see how this case got this far. Leafleting at airports or on street corners can be an annoyance, but that is sometimes the price for freedom of speech. And a small price it is.

March 13, 1987

Letter to Editor  
Los Angeles Times  
Times Mirror Square  
Los Angeles, CA 90053

Dear Editor:

We appreciated your position in the editorial of Friday, March 13, entitled "Protected Pests" in which you felt that the airport should be kept open to us to hand out our gospel pamphlets.

However, we did not appreciate being called "pests." We don't know if the prophets of old were ever called pests, but somehow it seems to trivialize the meaning of the gospel we preach.

Would you consider using the term nuisance instead?

Sincerely yours,

Susan Perlman  
Jews for Jesus  
60 Haight Street  
San Francisco, CA 94102

SP:jen

# THE JEWISH NEWS

THIS ISSUE 50\*

SERVING DETROIT'S JEWISH COMMUNITY

NOVEMBER 14, 1986 / 12 CHESHVAN 5747

## 'Christian Jews' Air Their Beliefs

*Channel 7's 'Kelly & Co.' on Tuesday hosted 'Jesus Jews' and some of their detractors*

**DAVID HOLZEL**  
Staff Writer

A televised encounter Tuesday between Jews who believe Jesus is the Messiah of the Jewish people and their detractors was only "a tiny scratch in a 2,000 year controversy," host John Kelly told his audience on Channel 7's *Kelly & Company* program.

The half-hour segment featured Loren Jacobs of the Jesus group "Shema Yisrael" and Haskell Stone, another Jesus believer, with opposing views provided by Rev. James R. Lyons, a Congregational minister and director of the Ecumenical Institute for Jewish-Christian Studies,

and Rabbi Alon Tolwin.

The debate, which grew heated at times, was punctuated by audience applause and the inevitable commercial interruptions which broke the discussion's continuity.

Stone told Kelly that his interest in Jesus "began as a game." But, in his reading of "Hebrew scriptures" he began to see "Jesus as someone sent for our people." Through prayer and reading the "New Testament," Stone "became convinced that (Jesus) was the Messiah."

Jacobs related how he was initially "struck at how Jewish Jesus was." He said that becoming a

*Continued on Page 22*

## Religious Persuasion

"Kelly & Co." did a mitzvah this week in presenting "Christian Jews" on its Tuesday morning program. Granted, the proselytizers were seeking a wider audience for their ideas, Channel 7 was seeking higher ratings, and Jewish spokesmen and other opponents could do no more than try to be as plib in the few minutes allowed either side.

Who won or lost this electronic debate is immaterial. Of importance to the Jewish community is the warning that this was one small skirmish in the much larger war for the hearts and minds of our children. We can no longer dismiss reports about cults, proselytizers and conversions as happening somewhere else, to someone else's family. And if we are concerned about our own, our battle plan lies within the daily choices we make within our Judaism.

4 Friday, November 14, 1986

THE DETROIT JEWISH NEWS

*Continued from Page 1*

Christian made him "more Jewish. Jesus made me kosher. My friends see that I have not become a gentile."

Stone said that, more than a question of theology, the major problem that Jews have in accepting Jews with Christian beliefs is that they are seen "as becoming a part of a people that persecuted Jews, much of it in the name of Christianity. They see us as joining the enemy side." That history of persecution makes Jesus "a non-option," he added in response to Kelly's question, "Why do the majority of Jews not accept Jesus?"

On the contrary, argued Rabbi Tolwin, Jews believe "the Almighty wants a relationship with the human race without any go-betweens (Jesus)." This remark drew a smattering of applause from the audience. He said that if Jews who believed in Jesus wanted to call themselves a new religion, that would be acceptable from a Jewish perspective.

He charged that groups like "Shema Yisrael" and "Jews For Jesus" seem to straddle the lanes between religions because, in reality, they are evangelical Christian groups "that use the trappings of Judaism to make themselves acceptable to Jews."

In response to a question from Kelly, Rabbi Tolwin said he has read "quite a bit of the New Testament," but that his "sense of priorities" leads him to concentrate on the Torah.

But the Torah is incomplete, Stone said to Rabbi Tolwin. It implies that there is something yet to come.

That "something" is the Oral Tradition, the rabbi answered, referring to the Talmud, "which encompasses all the principals and goals of Judaism."

"Sometimes Oral Law contradicts the Bible," Jacobs declared.

"Give me an example," Rabbi Tolwin shot back.

Stone said there was no need to give examples, but Jacobs insisted on answering, "The Bible says Jesus is the Messiah. Oral Law says he isn't. My vote is with the Bible," he said, prompting applause from the audience.

Rev. Lyons argued that the function of a messiah, an "anointed one," is to bring people "to the knowledge of God."

"I think Jesus is a messiah," he told Jacobs and Stone, "anointed by God to do a specific task ... because gentiles need to know God. Jews already do."

The idea of Jesus' non-universality was questioned by members of the audience. "Why would you want to deprive the Israelites of the precious gift of the Holy Spirit?" one man asked Rev. Lyons, referring to one of the Christian Trinity.

"Why are we fighting over the language?" Rev. Lyons responded. "The world needs the God of Israel."

An Orthodox Jew in the audience noted that while Jesus had been rejected by the Jews as the Messiah, Bar Kochba, who lived 100 years later, was accepted as God's anointed by a majority of the Jews.

"Truth is not decided by majority vote," Stone snapped to warm applause.

Associate Producer Brad Hurtado said that the subject of "Christian Jews" had never been dealt with in the four years he had worked for *Kelly & Company*. From Judaism to Christianity, "is a real dramatic change," he said. "It says something about Jews in general."

But Rev. Lyons saw the phenomenon as "a Christian problem. Jews ought not be defending Judaism against a group like this," he told *The Jewish News* before his television appearance. "Jews become the victims of these kinds of movements and ideas, but it's a Christian problem."

Rabbi Tolwin said it was "important" to have Rev. Lyons on the program. Jacobs and Stone "wanted to bump him from the show because it undermines them if a Christian clergyman says there's no room for them."

# High Court to Rule on LAX Ban on Religious Leaflets

## Constitutionality Challenged by Jews for Jesus

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Supreme Court today agreed to decide whether Los Angeles International Airport may prohibit religious groups from distributing literature inside its buildings.

The court, beginning its 1986-87 term with William H. Rehnquist as the new chief justice and Antonin Scalia as the newest justice, said it will review a ruling that struck down such a ban imposed at the Los Angeles airport.

Owned by Los Angeles, the airport is the world's third busiest. In 1983, the city's Board of Airport Commissioners enacted a resolution saying the airport's buildings "shall be limited to airport-related uses."

The resolution said "sidewalk areas immediately outside the terminal facilities may be used for activities protected by the First Amendment."

### Freedom of Speech, Expression

The Constitution's First Amendment guarantees freedom of speech and expression.

A group known as Jews for Jesus challenged the constitutionality of the Los Angeles airport resolution in 1984 after Howard Snyder, one of its ministers, was ordered to stop distributing leaflets.

Lawyers for the group said Snyder was following Jews for Jesus policy in refraining from either soliciting or accepting any money while handing out the literature. They said he was not harassing, touching or otherwise annoying any other person.

The group's lawsuit charged that the ban violated free-speech rights because the airport, even inside its terminal buildings, is a traditional public forum—similar to a city park or sidewalk.

### Upheld by 9th Circuit

A federal trial judge ruled that the resolution was unconstitutional, and the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld that ruling last March 25.

# Top court to hear new airport-solicitation case

Baltimore Sun

WASHINGTON—The Supreme Court, reopening an issue that had appeared settled, yesterday agreed to decide whether airport terminals may be closed to people and groups seeking to raise money or promote causes.

For years, lower courts have ruled that it would be unconstitutional for cities or counties running airports to ban solicitation in their terminals. The Supreme Court had let that trend of decisions continue, refusing to rule on the issue.

But in a brief order issued on the opening day of their new term, the justices said they will consider a plea by the Los Angeles Board of Airport Commissioners for the right to keep everybody out of terminals except those who have something directly to do with air travel.

The board asked the Supreme Court to rule that an airport terminal is not a "public forum" and, thus, the First Amendment's guarantee of free speech does not apply to the concourses and other passenger areas of a terminal.

The court did not explain why it had become interested anew in the controversy. It simply noted that it would hear a challenge to a ruling last March by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that said airport public areas are public forums.

The Los Angeles case arose when the airport board's ban on "First Amendment activity" in the terminal was challenged by a group known as Jews for Jesus. It went to court to challenge the ban after a security officer sought to stop the group's representative from passing out free religious literature.

A final decision by the Supreme Court is not expected until next year in the case of *Board of Airport Commissioners vs. Jews for Jesus*.

The court began its new term by issuing 49 pages of orders on newly filed cases. The orders indicated the new associate justice, Antonin Scalia, had not taken part in any of the action, apparently because he had not had time to prepare.

Presumably because of his failure to participate, the court did not act immediately on a variety of major new controversies, including local school boards' authority to stop busing students to achieve racial desegregation and switch them to neighborhood schools.

The court did agree, however, to review a wide variety of other issues.

# Justices to Decide on Airport Leaflet Ban

By DAVID G. SAVAGE,

WASHINGTON—The Supreme Court, on the first day of its fall term, agreed Monday to decide whether city officials can bar religious groups and others from distributing leaflets within Los Angeles International Airport.

The case poses the question of whether busy public airports are legally similar to streets and parks—and therefore open to everyone—or whether the corridors of the terminal can be restricted “exclusively to those activities that benefit the traveling public.”

Since 1983, the Los Angeles Board of Airport Commissioners has tried, without success, to enforce such a restrictive policy.

Lower federal courts, acting on a suit by the group Jews for Jesus, struck down the policy as a viola-

tion of the First Amendment's guarantee of freedom of speech.

The U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals noted in a ruling last year that Alan H. Snyder, a minister who was arrested at the airport for distributing leaflets, was “not inhibiting the free flow of pedestrian traffic.” The airport authority could limit solicitors to certain places within airport facilities, the appeals court concluded, but it could not bar them entirely.

Airport authorities throughout the nation have lost a series of court fights when trying to keep solicitors out of terminals, but the high court has never ruled on the issue.

Los Angeles International, the world's third-busiest airport, served 34 million passengers in 1984, according to the city's appeal.

In Los Angeles, Assistant City Atty. James R. Kapel contended that it is “entirely reasonable” for the airport board to try to limit activities there “to airport-related purposes” rather than permitting the facility to become “a Hyde Park,” a reference to the London park where speakers go to be heard, or at least to speak.

The general counsel for Jews for Jesus, Jay Alan Sekulow, said he is confident that the Supreme Court will rule against Los Angeles.

“Airports are public forums, not much different from public streets. You can't have an absolute ban on freedom of speech there,” Sekulow said. The case (Board of Airport Commissioners vs. Jews for Jesus, 86-104) will be argued sometime during the spring, and a decision will be handed down by next July.

IDAHO STATESMAN, October 9, 1986

## Keep soapbox at airports

That soapbox upon which Americans traditionally have climbed to expound their beliefs was once set down in the town square or on a busy street corner. Increasingly it's found in a shopping center or airport. Either way, the idea is the same.

Now that inherent right is threatened by those who would exclude free speech from that most public of places, airports. The U.S. Supreme Court has decided to hear the issue, growing out of a Los Angeles airport case. The precedent it may set is staggering.

Los Angeles City Deputy Attorney James Kapel argues that the airport should be used for “airport purposes only.”

“The traveling public is best served,” Mr. Kapel said, “when terminal facilities only have services travelers really need.”

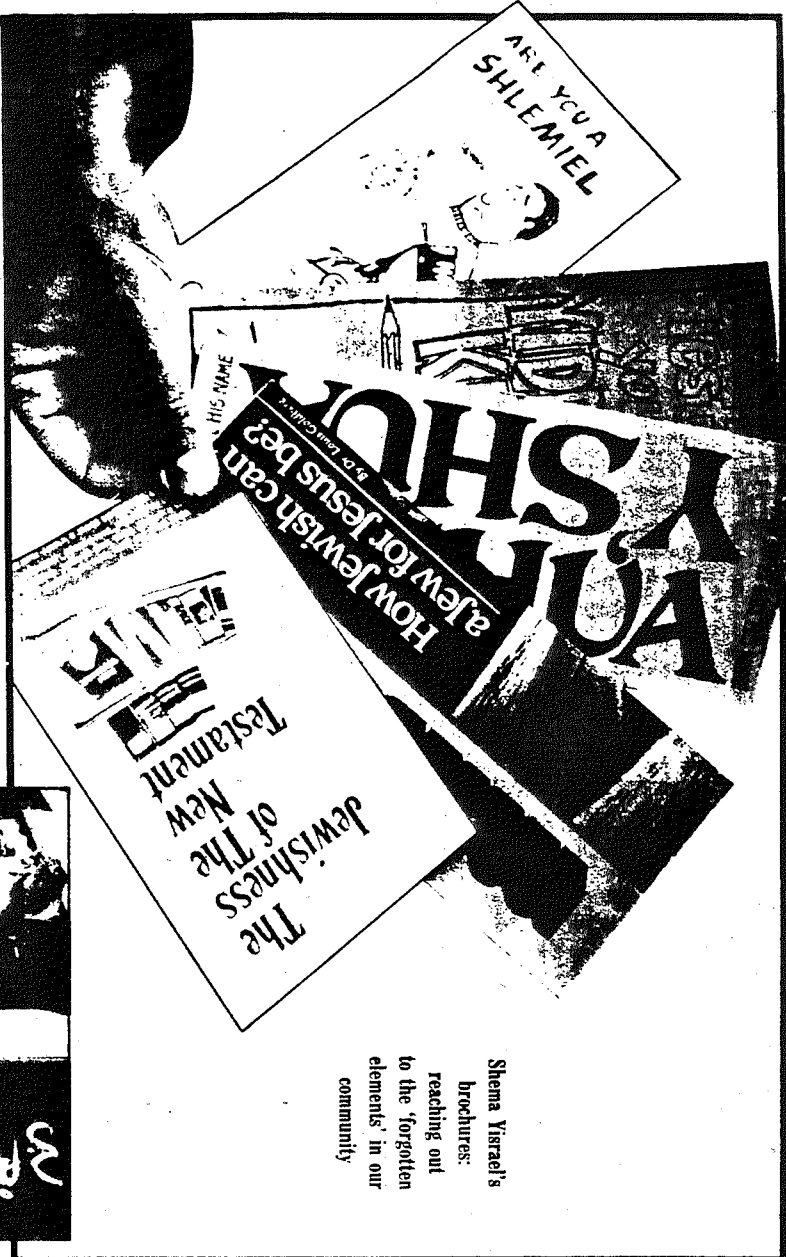
Perhaps Mr. Kapel doesn't think frequent flyers need Hare Krishnas pushing flowers on them, or LaRoucheites pushing politics. Maybe busy businessmen would rather not be bothered by proselytizing Jews for Jesus or meandering Moonies.

Too bad.

Democracy isn't always convenient. As long as no one is being harassed or intimidated, what real harm is there in allowing the expression of ideas? The harm is in banning these folks from public places.

Our grandparents gathered in town squares and on streetcorners to hear the issues of the day debated. We spend our public time in shopping centers, airports and the like. If these places are sterilized of the true believers, we lose an important element of human give and take from our lives. The impersonal communication of television, radio and the mails becomes even more paramount.

As annoying as they can be, these foot soldiers of democracy serve an important function. To push them out in the cold would chill the freedom of expression that makes this country special.



# Who's A Jew?

*'Christian Jews' are trying to blur the distinctions between the religions*

**DAVID HOLZEL**  
Staff Writer

In Paris in the year 1240, a public disputation took place between an apostate named Nicholas Donin and a Jewish scholar named Yechiel ben Yosef. The disputation centered on the Talmud and when it was over, a Talmud was publicly burned.

No Talmuds were burned after the *Kelly & Company* show on Nov. 11, although the program vaguely resembled a medieval disputation, as a probe into the beliefs of "Christian Jews" became a referendum on Judaism.

"It was a bad show because it seemed to have no focus, it seemed to get away from everybody," said



Larry Jacobs, head of the "Gospel of Jesus" in Birmingham. The slogan on his shirt originated with Moshe Rosen, head of Jews for Jesus.

Rev. James R. Lyons, director of the Ecumenical Institute for Jewish-Christian Studies, who participated in the televised encounter. "It didn't do justice to the question."

That question, whether or not "Christian Jews" are a legitimate Jewish or Christian sect, was twisted until participant Rabbi Alon Tolwin found himself defending Judaism.

"Rabbi Tolwin had to do some defense, but any rabbi would have," said Allan Gale, assistant director of the Jewish Community Council.

Gale had a stronger objection to the program:

"These two individuals

(Christian-Jewish program participants Haskell Stone and Loren Jacobs) are organizers, proselytizers. Very little was said about what they do within the community and how the Jewish community feels about it."

The discussion, instead, centered on the validity of beliefs, a hopeless area in which to become entangled, "They're allowed to believe," Gale emphasized. "A Christian would have thought that (Stone and Jacobs) were under attack for their beliefs."

While acknowledging the right to proselytize, Gale criticized Stone and Jacobs' deceptive tactics and their claim that, although they are Jewish, normative Judaism is inauthentic.

The truth is not "just that it was a private decision" to believe in Jesus, Rev. Lyons charged. "This is an organized group, whose purpose is to convert Jews. That never came out."

The group is called "Shema Yisrael," headed by Jacobs and to which Stone is, apparently, loosely affiliated.

According to *Kelly & Company* Associate Producer Brad Hurtado, there was no conspiracy to deceive the public as to Stone and Jacobs' identities or motives. In fact, said Hurtado, their motives should have been clear to all.

"It's obvious that as a Christian person, they're sharing what they know ... (that they are saying) 'We're here to convert you,' even to the rabbi sitting next to him."





## JEWS FOR JESUS BEFORE THE SUPREME COURT

A First Amendment case involving Jews for Jesus will be heard before the U.S. Supreme Court in late February. A resolution banning literature distribution at the L.A. International Airport was earlier struck down by two lower court decisions, after the group contested the legality of the regulation.

"Our concern is why the Supreme Court wants to hear this case at all," says Jews for Jesus attorney Jay Sekulow, whose organization had expected the high court to dismiss the case.

Every other circuit in the country has ruled that airports are open forums, and

thus proper places for literature distribution. A decision against the group could effect the legality of evangelism in other public places, such as shopping malls.

Jews for Jesus distributes five million gospel tracts at airports yearly. But the costs of defending their right to evangelize is already eating into funds used for the task of evangelism, said the group's director, Moishe Rosen, in a recent newsletter.

Those interested in helping support the group during this crisis should send donations to: Jews for Jesus, 60 Haight Street, San Francisco, CA, 94102-5895. ●

## FOR STARTERS

by Jerry B. Jenkins

Vice President for Publishing, MBI

### Bunny Week, Indeed

**Y**ou've got to hand it to "Jews for Jesus." It takes guts to be one, and they are overt in the nicest ways possible.

The ministry's very name offends many Jews, and yet, what is better than being honest? No trickery. No deception. You can't even say that about certain home buying services or some evangelistic ministries.

Sure they stand on street corners and hand out literature, but no one is obstructed, no one is horse-collared, no one is shouted at or preached at or even touched. They boldly wear T-shirts announcing that they are Jews for Jesus. If that offends you, you can walk by.

Staff members of "Jews for Jesus" are Jews for Jesus, and they make that clear. They're currently being attacked and lumped with cultic and other groups who are obnoxious in public places and spoil it for the good guys.

Anyone who has traveled has been victimized by the others. You're innocently working your way through a major airport when someone accosts you by pinning something on you or handing you a book, and you find yourself awkwardly engaged in a conversation.

Recently a young woman sat next to me as I waited for a plane. "Have you heard the news?" she asked. I shook my head, returning her smile, hoping she would be a Christian who might be encouraged to discover another one.

"It's national bunny week," she said, quickly clipping three furry little bunnies to my sleeve. You can imagine how a (very) grown man feels sitting in an airport with bunnies hanging from his arm.

I played she wasn't with Playboy. She wasn't. She said she worked with emotionally disturbed young people (forgive me, but I confess I wondered how recently she had graduated from the program). I could contribute to the program by buying one bunny for \$5 or two for \$9.

Then, I suppose, I would qualify for the program.

I declined. She asked if I wanted to just donate a dollar. I didn't. I have no quarrel with her work, but her approach was all



wrong. Believe me, it's hard to say no when you'd give just about anything to get those bunnies off your arm.

Her smile disappeared and she quickly removed

her bunnies. I was relieved. I felt a little cheap and a little guilty, which is all part of the deal, I guess. Until I heard the reaction she got from a young mother across the way.

"Are you kidding? I don't even know you or what you want and you pin bunnies on me? Forget it!"

I saw the girl half an hour later sans bunnies, with a fistful of fives. Just because it works doesn't mean it's right.

"Jews for Jesus" doesn't believe in embarrassing people. You'll never find yourself an unwilling captive audience. If you want to talk or listen, you'll know in advance who they are and what they're up to.

They believe in Jesus and take seriously the Great Commission. They believe that Los Angeles International Airport, among other public places, is an appropriate venue for exercising their First Amendment rights, as long as they don't harass, embarrass, detain, or solicit.

Pray for them as the U.S. Supreme Court deliberates on the issue.

Later this year, MOODY MONTHLY plans to print an article about single parents: how the church is meeting their needs. We'd like to hear from you if you are a single parent, or from a friend in your church who is a single parent (please pass along this request). Tell us what's been helpful and what has hurt. Cite examples. Do you have advice that would help Christians be more sensitive to your needs? Be specific.

You need not include your name. Keep your thoughts brief. Perhaps from this we can provide some help to others as they minister to this growing group of people within the body of Christ. Address your letter to Letters, MOODY MONTHLY, 820 N. LaSalle Drive, Chicago, Ill. 60610. ■

## Supreme Court Case Poses Threat to Religious Liberty

Jews for Jesus fighting for right to freely preach the gospel

WASHINGTON, D.C.—If Airport Commissioners in Los Angeles have their way, religious groups may be prohibited from distributing literature in the Central Terminal at Los Angeles International Airport.

In a resolution adopted July 13, 1983 by the Los Angeles Board of Airport Commissioners, "First Amendment activities" were banned from parts of the facility open to the general public.

Leading the challenge against the Los Angeles policy has been Jews for Jesus, an evangelical organization well-known for

distributing religious tracts in visible public places.

On July 6, 1984, Rev. Avi Snyder, Los Angeles director for Jews for Jesus, was ordered by an airport security officer to cease distributing literature in a public portion of the Los Angeles International Airport terminal. Snyder was not obstructing traffic or harassing travelers at his location on a pedestrian walkway.

Jews For Jesus filed suit against the Board of Airport Commissioners in Federal District Court claiming the airport prohibited Snyder from exer-

cising his constitutional right of free speech. Though the District Court (as well as the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals) agreed with the Jews for Jesus complaint, the Los Angeles Board appealed the case to the U.S. Supreme Court where oral arguments were heard in February.

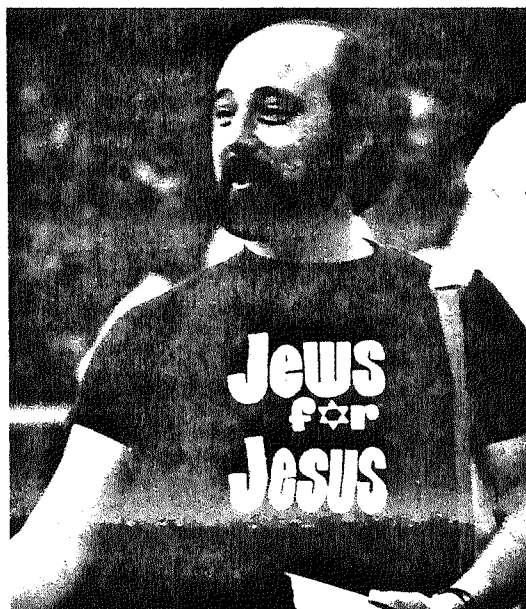
This case has profound implications for religious organizations. The Rutherford Institute calls the Los Angeles resolution, "a crystal clear violation of the constitutional rights to free speech and freedom of assembly."

An amicus curiae brief filed by the Christian Legal Society (CLS) and the National Association of Evangelicals, charges that a "per se ban on all 'First Amendment activity,' without limitation or principled standards of application, is wantonly overbroad."

Though the airport authorities claim their policy was a necessary step to relieve airport overcrowding, the threat to religious liberty is disturbing.

Says the NAE/CLS brief: "Free exercise (of religion) rights as well as those of free speech and press, are implicated by the Board's policy, as many religious groups (such as Jews for Jesus) believe it an affirmative responsibility of their faith to communicate their message to others."

Evangelicals fear that a decision in favor of the Los Angeles Airport Board could severely limit the freedom of Christians to share their faith in public places. At press time, the Supreme Court decision was still unknown. ●



Rev. Avi Snyder, Los Angeles director for Jews for Jesus

## Messianic Jews meld Christian and Jewish beliefs

By Greg Garrison  
News religion writer

They celebrated Rosh Hashanan, the Jewish new year, with Israeli folk dancing and the blowing of the shofar, or ram's horn. Sunday, they will observe Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement.

But they will also celebrate the birth of Jesus on Christmas and his resurrection on Easter.

Beth-El Chai, a congregation of Messianic Jews in Birmingham, melds beliefs of fundamental Christianity with the ancient cultural traditions of Judaism.

Their pastor, Sammy Rubin, 39, is a Birmingham native, but he had left his hometown at age 15 thinking he would never return.

He said growing up in Birmingham left him with many bad memories of the anti-Semitism he was subjected to while attending Crestview Elementary School and Mountain Brook Junior High School. "I was many times beat up because I was Jewish," he said. "I was persecuted in the name of Jesus."

Rubin was bar-mitzvahed at Temple Beth-El, but after that he had "gone away from my Jewishness," he said.

Now he leads an observance of Jewish Holy Days that has a premise far different from that of the longstanding synagogues here. He is Jewish, yet he believes that Jesus was Yeshua, the Messiah, who became a sacrifice to atone for the sins of his people.

Rubin uses the term "born-again" in describing himself and other Messianic Jews, although he avoids the use of Christian jargon in the services.

"It's all very Jewish, even our terminology," said Rubin. "We are Jews and we want to give a place where Jews can come, relax and hear the gospel with no pressure."

There are about 3,000 Messianic Jews in 54 Messianic congregations nationwide, about 2,000 Messianic Jews who attend Christian churches, and about 20,000 Jews who identify themselves as Hebrew Christians (Jews who tend to worship Christ and no longer keep the Jewish traditions), said Helga Nichols, secretary for the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations in Rockville, Md.

The Messianic Jews observe Christian holidays without any of the secular trappings. "We do not have a Christmas tree, we do not hunt Easter eggs," said Rubin's wife, Donna, who grew up Southern Baptist.

On Christmas at the Rubins' home, "We like to make a Star of David cake and sing happy birthday to Yeshua," Mrs. Rubin said.

Beth-El Chai attendance ranges from 40 to 50, Rubin said, many of the worshipers Jews who had been attending area churches until they heard about the Messianic congregation.

The fellowship also is open to non-Jews, who often, like Mrs. Rubin, are married to Messianic Jews.

Beth-El Chai began meeting every other Friday on Aug. 9, 1983, and on Sept. 5 this year began meeting every Friday evening. They meet in the home of Victor Marden, a Messianic Jew who lives at 3571 Cahaba Beach Road. The basement was renovated to resemble a synagogue.

"There was no place (in Birmingham) where a Jew could be a Jew and still worship Jesus until Beth-El Chai," Rubin said.

Rubin was "born again" in California in 1975 and worked as music minister at an interdenominational Christian church in Redstone, Colo., he said. At his sister's wedding in 1982, he met Robert Solomon, pastor of the Messianic congregation in Atlanta, and moved there in order to attend the services.

He was later contacted by Marden and his wife Dottie, who operate World Wide Jewish Missions from their Shelby County home. They convinced him to come back home and lead a Messianic congregation here.

Rubin, an electrical contractor, said he is studying by correspondence from the Messianic ministerial school in Rockville, and when he needs advice on leading Jewish services, he calls Eliezer Urbach in Denver.

Urbach, 64, is a Polish Jew who fled his home 30 miles west of Auschwitz in 1939 at the urging of his elderly parents.



He spent several years in Siberian exile and in a Russian prison camp. His parents were dead by 1945 when he returned to his home near the site of the World War II Nazi concentration camp in southwest Poland.

Urbach was "born again" more than 30 years ago and is now the pastor of a Messianic congregation in Denver.

He said many Jews have told him his parents would be upset to see his conversion. But he disagrees. "They would be very happy because I'm a servant of God now," he said.

After experiencing persecution at the hands of non-Jews, Urbach said he and other Messianic Jews now find they are rejected by other Jews.

"We are on the outside of the Jewish community the moment we name Jesus," he said.

"They do recognize me as a fellow Jew, but when I mention Jesus the Messiah, many are very angry," Urbach said. "It still hurts, but I can't help it."

He said he believes that everyone should have a born-again experience to be saved, Jews and Gentiles alike.

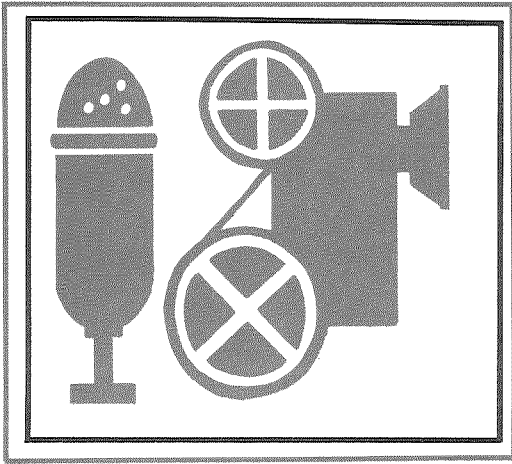
"Jesus was a Jew, and many of us have forgotten that," said Urbach.

"He is the atonement, for everyone, but especially for the Jews."

With Urbach's assistance, Rubin said he has gradually regained the cultural heritage he left behind as a child. Now that he believes Jesus is the Messiah, "I feel more Jewish than I ever have," Rubin said.

*Celebrating  
Rosh Hashanan,  
women of Beth-El  
Chai, above,  
clap to music  
before performing  
an Israeli  
folk dance.  
Hank Layman,  
right, blows the  
shofar,  
symbolizing  
Abraham's  
faithfulness  
and the summons  
to penitence.*





# JEWS F<sup>☆</sup>R JESUS

## BRIEFING BULLETIN

Sue Perlman, Information Officer

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### ORAL ARGUMENTS TO BE HEARD ON AIRPORT BAN ON FREE SPEECH

The Supreme Court will hear arguments in the case involving Los Angeles International Airport's ban on "first amendment activities" on Tuesday, March 3 at 10 a.m. Immediately following, on the Court House steps, Moishe Rosen, executive director of Jews for Jesus and Jay Sekulow, General Counsel for the organization, will be available for comment. A more extensive press conference is scheduled for 1:15 pm at the J.W. Marriott Hotel under the auspices of the National Association of Evangelicals.

"The National Association of Evangelicals has long defended the religious liberty guarantees of the First Amendment," said Robert P. Dugan, Jr., director of the NAE Office of Public Affairs in Washington, DC. "In this case," observed Dugan, "government action threatens the free speech rights of Jews for Jesus, an evangelical organization which shares the same biblical beliefs as the NAE. Thus we have joined in an Amicus Curiae brief urging the Supreme Court to uphold the unobtrusive efforts of Jews for Jesus to spread the gospel in public airports."

Jews for Jesus, an evangelistic mission agency which distributes religious literature in public places including airports, challenged the airport ban in July of 1984. The decision was in their favor in both the U.S. District Court (March 25, 1985) and in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals (March 25, 1986) on the grounds that the airport's ruling was unconstitutional.