

# **Annual Media Report**

**by Susan Perlman**

## **Presented to the North American Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism March 12, 2000**

The following report covers the time period of March, 1999 through February of 2000. The categories I have selected are:

1. Millennial News
2. Rabbi Carol Harris-Shapiro and her book on Messianic Judaism
3. Countering Missionaries
  - a. Targeting
  - b. Joan Rivers
4. Demographics
5. Potpourri
6. International stories
7. Those Southern Baptists

### **1. Millennial News**

It seems appropriate to begin with the fact that this is our first media update of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and so what of the millennium and Jewish missions issues. Well, do start with, Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg quoted in the Detroit Jewish News, says,

**Detroit Jewish News, Detroit, MI, December 10, 1999**

**Not Our Millennium – Is the year 2000 a Jewish issue? Depends on whom you ask**

“Jews should butt out of the turn of the millennium,” Said Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, a historian and visiting professor in humanities at New York University. “It’s not our calendar. We are not at the turn of our millennium.”

There are others in the Jewish community who say that the millennium has profound implications for missions strategy by Christians.<sup>1</sup> The Philadelphia Inquirer reports:

**Philadelphia Inquirer, Philadelphia, PA, January 20, 2000**  
**A hostile reception inside Israel**

At the turn of 2000, when many Christians around the world are looking to the Holy Land for inspiration, a small group of ultra-Orthodox Jews has published a virulent booklet calling on Jews to stop “enemy” Christians from bringing “great Crusade” to Jerusalem. “This booklet is being published in anticipation of the Christian missionaries grand plan to triumph over the Jewish people in the year 2000.”

The Jewish Monthly’s December cover story entitled, Missionaries, Messianics and the Millennium has the subhead, “With the Temple Mount at ground zero, anything could happen.” Among those quoted in the article is Mark Powers of Jews for Judaism, who says:

**Jewish Monthly, Washington, DC, December 1999**

Missionaries, Messianics, and the Millennium

“the coming millennium has sparked an all out preoselytising campaign by both evangelical Christians and Messianic Jews. Jews for Judaism is tracking 900 organizations that have targeted Jews for conversion. Powers says the stepped up activity is methodical and well-planned.

**The Jewish Journal , Los Angeles, CA ,August 6, 1999**

**L.A. 5759—A Day with Jews for Jesus**

**Some 1,200 believers gather at a conference in Woodland Hills, and the Jewish Journal is there**

I feel as if I have entered a parallel universe, where Stars of David symbolize Christianity and people quote Torah to prove the New Testament. Some instances are acutely painful – when I see the display of 100-year-old silver spice boxes and worn velvet Torah covers. Some – the guy dressed as a Chasid, the class on the amidah – are sickeningly incongruous. Their practice is Judaism – the rituals, the prayers – are suffused with a knowledge of Yeshua, the Hebrew name for Jesus. When they read the Shema, for instance, the threefold reference to God – “Hear O Israel, the Lord is God, the Lord is One” – is for them a reference to the Christian Trinity. A group of junior high kids, sitting in a session about Shabbat, talk about kiddush, hamotzi, haftarahs, and the “Brit Chadasha,” the New Testament. They commiserate over missing a league baseball game because it is on Saturday morning, and about being ostracized from the Jewish community.

As the millennium approaches, Jews for Jesus, the missionizing arm of the Messianic movement, has already undertaken an international campaign on a larger scale than ever before. That campaign is about to hit Los Angeles full force with billboards, radio and print ads, according to Susan Perlman, the movement’s spokesperson. “I think that L.A. has got a strategic Jewish

community that should hear and be exposed to what Messianic Jews have to offer,” Perlman says.

## **2. Rabbi Carol Harris-Shapiro**

There has been a great deal of flurry over Reconstructionist rabbi Carol Harris-Shapiro’s book on the Messianic movement, much of which has come from within the Jewish community leadership itself. Though hardly a puff piece on Messianic Judaism, Shapiro, comes across as sympathetic in places- not a politically popular stance to take. For example, the Boston Globe began its review of the book by saying:

**The Boston Globe, Boston, MA, July 17, 1999**

### **In new book, rabbi steps into controversy on Messianic Jews**

Rabbi Carol Harris-Shapiro knew she was treading on dangerous territory when she decided to write her book. And the controversy surrounding its recent release underscores the explosive nature of her topic. Harris-Shapiro’s book, “Messianic Judaism: A Rabbi’s Journey through Religious Change in America,” chronicles the evolution of a movement that has been roundly rejected by mainstream Jews.

The Jewish Forward out of New York, quoted a a strong blend of rabbis who voiced criticism:

**Forward, New York, NY, June 4, 1999**

### **Book’s Sympathy for Messianists Unites Movements in Opposition**

The mainstream Jewish community regards the “messianic Jewish” movement as a group of apostates, funded by large Christian denominations, who deceptively use Jewish rituals to entice Jews into joining their churches – a threat. Now comes a rabbi who takes a more benign view: The movement, she says, is really nothing more than a group of Jews by birth who are erecting a hybrid Jewish-Christian identity that exposes the contradictions and “incoherence” of liberal Judaism in America – just another change. The president of the Reform movements’ Union of America Hebrew Congregations, Rabbi Eric Yoffie, called Rabbi Harris-Shapiro’s argument “absurd.” “For all our pluralism and diversity, people are able to draw lines. The executive vice president of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, Rabbi Jerome Epstein, said, “Are there inconsistencies and incoherences [in Modern Judaism]? Absolutely. But there are still boundaries marking those who fit within the spectrum and those outside...”

I’ve included an interesting interview she did with the editors of the Christian magazine, World, and they asked her some very pointed questions. Here’s an example:

**World, Nov-Dec 1999**

**An Interview with Carol Harris-Shapiro**

World: How do you evaluate the Messianic Jews' own argument that if Jews who follow Buddhist practices or don't believe in God or belong to Unitarian Universalist congregations, sometimes in addition to belonging to a synagogue, qualify as Jewish, why shouldn't Jews who believe in salvation in Yeshua?

CHS: It's an interesting argument. Logically it's very strong. I deal with it in my book by saying, "Look, if it's a question of idolatry, some Buddhist Jews bow before statues of the Buddha and chant, 'Oh Buddha, save me.' Now, they can say it's part of meditation practice, but they're doing things that, according to the halakhah, or talmudic law, are problematic – perhaps as problematic as accepting Yeshua as God." Of course you can draw boundaries wherever you want. The Jewish community can say, "Anyone under four foot, nine should not be a Jew. It doesn't have to be written in halakhah. It doesn't even have to be logical. But if you want to be logical and consistent and to explain, for example, why a Messianic Jew can't belong to a synagogue while you're secular Jewish friend or even a gentile, a practicing Christian gentile married to a Jew, can belong to some synagogue, then you've got a real problem."

### **3. Countering Missionaries**

In the category of countering missionaries and missionary activity, the attack on the Jews for Jesus center in Paris made the international news. Reuters picked up the story and it found its way into a good number of Jewish newspapers. It simply read:

**Reuter's, Paris, France, November 25, 1999**

**"Jews for Jesus" say attacked for the third time**

The Paris office of Jews for Jesus has been attacked by Jewish extremists. Seven young men entered the office last night and beat up Joshua Turnil, one of our personnel, who was there along. They threatened to kill him. The attackers identified themselves as members of the hitherto unknown "New Jewish Order", which he said police told him was a fringe group of Betar – an international right-wing Jewish youth movement.

One wonders if fair minded Jews might have recoiled at that story. Not a proud moment in Jewish tolerance. Another sad commentary is found in the story of Hebrew Christian elder, Malvern Jacobs, who was refused a Jewish burial. One article reads,

**National Post & Opinion, New York, NY, July 7, 1999**

**Why Christian minister refused a Jewish burial**

One of the largest crowds of mourners, some 400, accompanying the body of Malvern Jacobs, 71, a Christian minister, were barred from Pardes Shalom Cemetery where his burial was denied by the Toronto rabbinical associations. He had converted 40 years ago. He was interred in a Christian cemetery. He son, Les Jacobs, said, "This should not happen to anyone. This violation of the freedom of rights. My father was born a Jew, he lived as a Jew, and he will die as a Jew." The Canadian Jewish Congress' Keith Landy responded, "Someone who has made it his life's work to proselytize Jews to Christianity has forfeited the right to be buried in a Jewish cemetery."

Another piece that I felt was worth seeing as an example of counter missionary practice was written for the United Synagogue Youth's publication by a summer volunteer who got involved in countering Jews for Jesus missionaries on the streets of New York during their 1999 summer witnessing campaign:

**United Synagogue Review, published by United Synagogue Youth**

**My life as a counter-missionary**

There I was in the pedestrian tunnel beneath Grand Central Terminal. My "mirror" in the fluorescent Jews for Jesus T-shirt winked at me and smiled. I knew something was about to happen. In a matter of seconds, I was surrounded by eight fluorescent shirts, who began singing an off-key version of "Oseh Shalom Bimromav." To their apparent surprise, I not only joined them, but began to harmonize. In less than a minute, their song had changed to "Y'shua (Jesus) Melekh Yisrael." I stepped away, gave them a mock salute, and shot them a look that said, "See you next year." My month as a counter-missionary had concluded. Were we successful? It may never be clear what impact our pamphleting had on the population at large – not only on Jews coveted by the missionaries, but on gentiles upon whom Jews for Jesus rely for donations and support. My one regret was that there was not a greater show of support from the Jewish community toward our effort. I plan to be there next year when the Jews for Jesus start another round of "Y'shua Melekh Yisrael". This time, I hope we can outnumber them.

Other articles included in this section involve the 3 Ethiopian women slated for deportation from Israel because of their messianic involvement.

**Ha'aretz Daily, Tel Aviv, Israel, February 3, 2000**

**Dream of Zion turns to nightmare**

The fate of three young women from Ethiopia was sealed last week by a short, dryly worded, High Court decision. Their lives as Israeli women might have continued unimpeded, were it not for a video tape of a messianic Jewish event which reached the Interior Ministry about a year ago, from unknown sources. The decision to deport the three women was reached when Eliyahu Suissa was in charge of the Interior Ministry.

Under his replacement, Natan Sharansky, the ministry has refused to revoke the deportation decision. "We came to Israel when we were teenagers," They wrote to Sharansky. We love Jewish tradition, and the commandments of the Jewish religion, but we view ourselves as messianic Jews. That is our private belief; and we never tried to persuade others, or deal with missionary work. We have been Israeli women for nine years. We want to remain in the society, and believe that our citizenship has been revoked unjustly.

One of the shifts I've seen this past year in counter missionary articles has been the proliferation of the use of the term "targeting." Targeting in and of itself is not a perjorative word, yet it has been cast in the same light as deceptive tactics and misuse of religious symbols. Look at some examples:

#### **a. Targeting**

**The Jewish Advocate, July 30-August 5, 1999**  
**Christian missionaries target Jews in New York, Chicago**

**Cleveland Jewish News**

**Targeting Jews—Too many Jews are being entrapped by messianic missionaries**

"Each year we are losing nearly 10,000 Jews due to the aggressive efforts of right-wing fundamental and evangelical Christian groups or cults called Hebrew-Christians, Messianic Jews or Completed Jews," says Rabbi Charles Simon, executive director of the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs and a leading expert on Hebrew-Christian missionaries. "They are converting as many Jews as they can get their hand son to their ministries." Backed by a war chest of over \$150 million a year, more than the combined religious education budget of all the Jewish synagogues in North America, these Hebrew-Christian missionaries, called "soul hunters" by Elie Wiesel, work their way into the hearts and minds of vulnerable Jews.

According to the Countering Hebrew-Christianity manual written by the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs, the following segments of Jewish society are most at risk: Teens and young adults -- enticed to the movement through free concerts and open dances. Jewish seniors -- who are visited in the hospital and invited to programs by Hebrew Christians missionaries. Children with disabilities -- are targeted. Many Hebrew Christians are adopting these children. Russian Jews in Israel and in North America -- reached through ESL courses, financial-aid programs and friendship groups.

**The Jewish Week, New York, NY December 10, 1999**  
**Evangelicals Lose a Friend**

The Southern Baptist Convention just keeps getting slammed for its aggressive conversion policies targeting Jews, Hindus and others.

Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein goes so far as to compare what he calls “witnessing” which is kosher and “targeting” which is not:

**CT Online 11/29/99**

**A rabbi's perspective on evangelism targeting Jews, and his alternatives-  
Yechiel Eckstein**

Rather than focusing on where we disagree, though, I prefer to highlight what we have in common. And rather than getting bogged down in hopeless either/or conflicts over evangelism targeting Jews, I'd like to suggest a third alternative: Instead of targeting Jews for conversion (which I call proselytizing), why not simply include them in any overall outreach (which I call witnessing)?

What's the distinction? If a Christian goes down the street knocking on doors and sharing the message of Christ or passing out literature, and if Mr. Cohen or Mrs. Steinberg happens to answer the door, that's fine; that's witnessing. But if a Christian goes down that same street specifically looking for names like Cohen or Steinberg, that's targeted evangelism, and I think it's wrong. What's more, many Christian leaders agree. Billy Graham and Jerry Falwell, for example, have clearly and uncompromisingly repudiated targeted proselytizing while not budging one inch from their belief in Jesus as the exclusive path to salvation for all.

For an excellent response to Eckstein's piece, you can go online and read the article they published by Moishe Rosen.

**b. Joan Rivers**

Some of the most advantageous to our movement countering of missionary activity was Joan Rivers overreaction to the evangelistic radio spots Jews for Jesus ran last summer in New York and subsequently in Los Angeles and Chicago. The ad simply went like this (play radio ad). Time was book on several secular talk stations, one of which carries Joan's show and according to the New York Post,

**New York Post, New York, NY, July 14, 1999**

**Joan pops top at Jews for Jesus**

Joan Rivers went ballistic on the air Monday night after a commercial for Jews for Jesus aired on her WOR radio show. “Do not prostyletize on my show you \_\_\_\_\_!” Rivers ranted after coming back from a commercial break where the ad was played. “I am going to say right now that I am against this. I find this disgusting to pot on my show!,” she said. “I am a Jew, I was born a Jew and I plan to die a Jew,” River said. “How dare you. How dare you advertise on my show! And every time you advertise on my show I will come out and say I find this disgusting, I find this offensive and I find this ridiculous!” To say the least, it is rare for a radio personality to denounce an advertiser on air – the ferocity of Rivers' attack made the incident all the more remarkable.

This story was carried everywhere including the Jerusalem Report and it generated a number of radio interview on the issues including the Bob Grant Show, Alan \_\_\_ and others in New York. The commercial was played again and again, as a media issue. I want you to hear a little of one of those interviews:

**Forward, New York, NY, July 16, 1999**

**Storm of Anti-Jewish Ads in the Times, on Airwaves Stirs a Wave of Revulsion – ‘Hebrew Christian’ Witnessing called ‘Blatantly Anti-Semitic’ WOR Listeners look to Joan Rivers to Voice Disgust**

A blizzard of radio spots, print advertisements and pamphlets by the “Hebrew-Christian” missionary group Jews for Jesus has local Jewish leaders calling this year’s annual campaign the most aggressive, offensive and anti-Semitic ever. Jews for Jesus, and to a lesser extent other like-minded missionary groups such as Chosen People Ministries, have conducted what they term summer “witnessing” campaigns in New York City for years.

**The Jewish Week, New York, NY, July 23, 1999**

**Airing Out Jews for Jesus**

Can we talk? Not if you’re Jews for Jesus. Comedian and radio host Joan Rivers is refusing to allow the Hebrew Christian missionary group’s spots to air during her WOR talk show. And when a Jews for Jesus official called to discuss the matter with her on air, Rivers hung up on her. WOR (710 AM) is one of several local stations airing a controversial spot featuring Yiddish-accented men arguing whether Jesus is the messiah, as “Hava Nagila” plays in the background. “Joan told WOR that she did not want them run in conjunction with her broadcast,” said Rivers spokesman Richard Grant. “She feels Jews for Jesus is a cult and...commercial time is to promote laxatives or dental adhesives, not for cult advertising.”

**Crosswalk.com – Religion Today, October 27, 1999**

**Jewish Leaders bristle at evangelism**

New York radio talk show hostess Joan Rivers vented an angry on-air tirade when and evangelistic ad ran during her show recently. The ad featured two men with heavy Yiddish accents arguing over whether Jesus is the Messiah, while the Jewish song Hava Nagilah played in the background. “We’re sorry that Joan Rivers doesn’t have as much of a sense of humor as we thought she did,” Susan Perlman, a spokeswoman for Jews for Jesus, the ministry that sponsored the ad, said.

Joan Rivers did us all a service in blasting the ad. It gave it a longer run than we could have otherwise expected. On the other hand, the issue countering missionary activity on the air waves is one we will all have to deal with in the years ahead.

Along with the radio ad opposition there were several articles on the Future Hope campaign, that spun off to include other messianic doings in an area. For example the



For example the Palm Beach Post ran a likeness of the Jews for Jesus print ad and then went on to talk about local ministry in Florida headed up by Ira Brawer:

**Palm Beach Post, Palm Beach, FL, November 5, 1999**

**Have you seen this full-page ad? It ran in glossy magazines and big city newspapers. If you're Jewish, you might have been outraged. Then again, you might have been intrigued. Worst of all, some say, you might have been indifferent.**

It's Sunday morning at Temple Aytz Chayim in suburban Boca Raton and a Torah, cloaked in blue velvet embroidered with a yellow Lion of Judah, is resting on the rabbi's shoulder as he parades through his congregation. Men in yarmulkes and women in long skirts lean forward to press their prayer books into the sacred scrolls and then reverently kiss the pages. It's quintessential Judaica. Enough tradition to make any bubie's heart sing. And then the rabbi opens his mouth. "In the name of Yeshua the messiah," Rabbi Ira Brawer intones. "Take us into the land of Israel. Let every synagogue be a Messianic synagogue. Let every Jewish person's heart be touched."

The next category I want to address is demographics. There are a number of interesting facts that I've gleaned from a variety of Jewish sources. The Forward in New York points to a survey of children of interfaith couples which concludes that,

#### **4. Demographics**

**Forward, New York, NY, April 23, 1999**

##### **Children of Interfaith Couples Reclaim Jewish Identity**

Demographers who predict that intermarriage will reduce the Jewish population in America should rethink their forecasts, if a recent conference for the children of interfaith families is any indication of the Jewish identity of "half-Jewish" children. Of the 20 participants, from Haverford, Bryn Mawr, Smith, Columbia and the University of Pennsylvania, not all had made their way to a yeshiva. Everyone, though, had at least some connection to the Jewish community, however tenuous. Some said that growing up in an interfaith household had actually strengthened their Jewish identity.

An article in the National Post & Opinion reported on a Gallup poll which found,

**Nat'l Jewish Post & Opinion, Indianapolis, IN, October 20, 1999**

##### **Only 30 percent of Jews say religion important**

The Gallup Poll which has found that only 30 percent of Jews responding say their religion is important while twice that percentage of non-Jews hold that view hasn't found much elation in Jewish circles. Jewish demographers say the contrast seems more dramatic than it really is because Jews tend to define religion differently than

Christians. Gary Tobin noted, “Jews tend to say I’m not very religious, which means I’m not very observant. It doesn’t mean they don’t care about being Jewish. If you ask the question in another way: how important is it that your children or grandchildren are Jewish, they would rank very high. We’ve got apples and oranges here.

Another survey on life after death beliefs conducted by UC Berkeley had the following results:

**The Birmingham News      Birmingham, AL      October 22, 1999**  
**More Believe in life after death**

A new study by the Survey Research Center at the University of California at Berkley. Jewish belief in life after death has tripled in this century, from 19 percent among those born in the first decade to 74 percent among those born in the 1960’s. While the promise of an afterlife is present in traditional Judaism and is central to Christianity, Greeley noted that many Catholics and Jews emigrating to the United States early in this century had limited education, including religious education, and were hostile or indifferent to organized religion.

**The Jewish Week, New York, NY, April 23, 1999**  
**Yoffie Renews Call for Outreach**

We have not accomplished all that we should have,” Rabbi Yoffie, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC), told about 75 Reform officials at Stephen Wise Free Synagogue last Sunday. But he also made it clear the Reform movement had no intention of backing away from its outreach strategy, including the controversial acceptance of patrilineal descent as an accepted mode of Jewish transmission—which rocked world Jewry in 1979 and whose reverberations continue to fuel the pluralism war. Rabbi Yoffie challenged communal organizations, saying there has not been enough outreach outside the synagogue. “In most major Jewish communities, a call is made each year to every Jewish family, even if it is not affiliated with any Jewish institution, to solicit a contribution to UJA/Federation,” he noted. “But tell me: shouldn’t a call also be made, every year, to discuss with the family Jewish education for their children? Shouldn’t a call be made, every year, to extend an invitation for Shabbat dinner?”

One of the most provocative Jewish identity questions coming out of Jewish demographics these days revolve around the National Jewish Population Study 2000. Listen to this scenario from a Jewish Telegraphic Agency release:

**JTA, New York, NY, February 4, 2000**  
**National Jewish study plans to wrestle with Who is a Jew**

William Cohen’s father was Jewish, but his mother was not. The young Cohen attended Hebrew school for years, but shortly before his Bar Mitzvah, the rabbi informed him he would have to undergo a conversion since he was not Jewish

according to Halachah, or Jewish law. Offended, Cohen walked out of the synagogue, never to return. Now an adult – and the U.S. secretary of defense – Cohen is married to a Christian woman. Should William Cohen be counted as Jewish? Should he be counted among the intermarried? Identity questions raised by people far less prominent than Cohen are challenging the planners of National Jewish Population Study 2000, which was originally scheduled to get under way last month but has been postponed until May.

**Forward, New York, NY, May 14, 1999**

**Professor Calls for a Campaign to convert Gentiles**

A San Francisco-based academic backed by some wealthy family foundations is proposing that the Jewish community seek to convert million of gentiles to Judaism as a way of reversing it's population decline. Mr. Tobin's conversion initiative represents one of the more radical proposals for reversing the Jewish population trends linked to assimilation, intermarriage and low birth rates. As such, it is engendering a lively debate and challenging some of the most dearly held principles of the Jewish community.

Or this scenario from the Chicago Jewish News:

**Chicago Jewish News, Chicago, IL, December 3, 1999**

**Who is a Jew?**

A 24 year-old woman moves back to her parents home while between jobs. Raised as a Jew, she now practices Buddhism or maybe "messianic Judaism." The telephone rings, "Were you or anyone else in the house raised Jewish?" she is asked. "I'm Jewish," she says, which clues the questioner to launch into a string of other questions.

And then there are those articles that don't quite fit one category or another which I have listed under potpourri: The Jewish Bulletin in San Francisco published a piece on Christmas/Hanukkah greeting cards as a sign of the interfaith realities:

**Potpourri**

**Jewish Bulletin, San Francisco, CA , December 17, 1999**

**Yule-Chanukah cards: Are the messages mixed?**

For example, one of Mixed Blessings most popular cards shows two cats sitting outside two windows; one wears a Christmas hat and the other a yarmulke. Inside one window is a menorah, inside the other is a Christmas tree. Other companies have offerings that aren't so warm and fuzzy such as Santa Claus lifting up his fur-trimmed cap to reveal a yarmulke as he says, "Shalom". Another card shows a Santa responding, "Oy vey, you take the sleigh," after finding out Chanukah lasts eight days. The blending of holidays isn't just a greeting-card phenomenon, either. Until a stock

of two dozen sold out recently, Christmas-tree ornaments emblazoned with Stars of David were available at Santa's Workshop at Pier 39 in San Francisco. Experts are attributing the blurring of religious lines to an increasingly pluralistic Jewish community. "The marketplace is in a sense the pulse of the culture...and we're beginning to see the cultural consequences" of so many interfaith families, said sociologist Egon Mayer, director of the Jewish Outreach Institute in New York.

In this same line, the Detroit Jewish News points out that,

**Detroit Jewish News, Detroit, MI, December 3, 1999**  
**Celebrating Diversity**

Breakfast with Santa had been a decades old tradition at the Detroit Institute of Arts under the sponsorship of the Founders Junior Council, but attendance had been dwindling. I felt the idea of Breakfast with Santa was outdated and changed the celebration to Breakfast with Santa, the Dancing Dreidel and Kwanzaa Candle," Singer explains. "We must make room for ethnic diversity and cross-cultural interests."

Also, did you know how large our messianic movement is?

**The Tampa Tribune, Tampa, FL, December 5, 1999**  
**Episcopal church adds some Jewish traditions**

In its denomination's spirit of welcome, the Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit has begun – in response to the needs of people at the church who have this dual faith – to occasionally incorporate a few Judaic traditions into its services and programs. "Both Christian and traditional Jews are going to have to come to terms with Messianic Judaism with the growing number of people who regard themselves as both Christian and Jewish, both religiously and culturally," said the Rev. Arthur R. Lee III, the rector of the Church of the Holy Spirit. "It is my understand that Messianic Judaism extends to about 18% of the Jewish population and is growing rapidly."

Rabbi Sherwin Wine is speaking at the next General Assembly for Reform Judaism and Robert Lappin, one of the large donors from that branch of Judaism was quoted in the Jewish Advocate as saying

**Jewish Advocate, Newton, MA, November 14, 1999**  
**Renowned Israeli author Amos Oz comes to Newton**

Rabbi Sherwin Wine, founder of Humanistic Judaism, a non-theistic form of Judaism, is scheduled to lead the class at the GA. Robert Lappin, who has given \$5 million to the federation over the last ten years, and described the group as a form of "Godless Judaism." He added, "they just as well might have a session on Jews for Jesus or Messianic Jews."

**Record Eagle, Traverse City, MI, December 27, 1999**

Other Opinions: Churchill, JFK, Freleng

Elvis? Hitler? Who would you pick as the most influential person of the 20<sup>th</sup> century? Rabbi Daniel Kayes-Thomson of the Sh'ma Yisrael Synagogue, a Messianic Jewish congregation in Traverse City, said he would pick Y'shua—better known as Jesus Christ. "More Jewish people have come to recognize him as being Messiah in the last 20 years than in the past 200 years all put together," he said. "We recognize this as being a fulfillment of what the prophets spoke about."

An article in the Washington DC press quotes an Israeli professor who says that courses on Jesus benefit pupils' identity.

**Washington Times, Washington, DC, January 7, 2000**

Israeli professors say courses on Jesus benefit pupils' identity

The time has come for Israeli student to learn about Jesus as a historical figure, say a growing number of Israeli academics. The proposal to expand on Jesus in the school curriculum is likely to encounter opposition from ultra-Orthodox Jewish circles should it gather steam because of extreme sensitivity about anything even remotely suggestive of missionary activity. The Education Ministry's chief supervisor for the teaching of history, Michael Yaron, said the limited number of hours available for history teaching made it impossible to expand Jesus' place in the curriculum.

The weekly news digest of JTA ran a story in late December about how Reform movement leaders got the Walt Disney Hotel in Florida to change the décor of the hotel lobby at their Christmas season convention.

**JTA Weekly News Digest, New York, NY, December 24, 1999**

**Reform Jews pursue quest to find new religious balance**

When Rabbi Eric Yoffie and other Reform Movement leaders walked through the doors of Walt Disney World's Dolphin Hotel about a week before Christmas last year, they were greeted by a garishly lit, outsized Christmas tree and the sounds of caroling. When some 4,500 Reform Jews gathered in the same hotel last week, they found the caroling silenced and the Christmas lights turned off. Deeply rooted in general American culture, while at the same time yearning for a more Jewishly authentic spiritual experience, Reform Jews today are on a quest, searching to develop their own brand of Judaism for the next century.

More importantly, the Reform movement is having a major shift in the kind of issues their leadership is exploring:

The most popular workshops were those that focused on issues such as "God and Theology," Reform Worship in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," "Can we pray what we don't believe?" and "Torah and Observance in the 'Principles of Reform Judaism'".

Evidence of the new direction was visible everywhere. The overall response to Yoffie's worship initiatives, and to the shift in focus within the movement, was positive – as long as the new ideas are not required. The changes "don't bother me, as long as there is a choice," Dr. Arthur Lieber, a radiologist who attends Temple Adath Israel in Lexington, KY., said as he finished up a lunch-time cheeseburger and french fries in a hotel restaurant.

And finally for this category, Rebecca Rubin, daughter of Barry and Steffi Rubin made the news when she was denied a place in the Israel 2000, free 10 day trip to Israel for Jewish college students. Her acceptance was rescinded when it was discovered that she was a Messianic Jew. Rebecca was quoted in the Baltimore Jewish Times as saying:

**Baltimore Jewish Times, Baltimore, MD , February 4, 2000**  
**Turn the Tables**

This week's story on Rebecca Rubin, a Messianic Jew who attends the University of Maryland Baltimore County, illustrates the need for the Jewish community to better formulate and articulate its approach to dealing with Hebrew-Christians. Ms. Rubin – whose father serves as spiritual leader for a local Messianic congregation – was originally accepted for Israel 2000, the free 10-day trip/program for Jewish college students co-sponsored by the Hillel and Birthright Israel organizations. Her acceptance was later rescinded when Hillel was tipped off that Ms. Rubin is a Messianic Jew.

**Baltimore Jewish Times, Baltimore, MD, February 4, 2000**  
**Outside the Gates**

When filling out an application last fall for Israel 2000, the free 10-day trip/program for Jewish college students, Rebecca Rubin checked the box designated "other" for Jewish denominations. "I'm open if people ask me what congregation I go to, but I don't say, 'Hey, I'm a Messianic Jew,' because I don't want them to think I have an ulterior motive," said Ms. Rubin.

Moving on to the international scene, a significant article coming out of Australia quotes the Archbishop of Sydney, Harry Goodhew as saying:

**International**

**Australian Jewish News, Australia, April 2, 1999**  
**Anglican Archbishop defends Church's right to missionize**

The Anglican Archbishop of Sydney has defended the right of the Church to missionise. "Christianity has been a missionary faith from its very beginnings," the Most Revered Harry Goodhew said. "In an open society Christians, alongside all other

faith communities, should be able to persuade others of the truth of their understanding and convictions.”

LCJE area coordinator, Lawrence Hirsch was featured in the Australian Christian about a messianic mikveh service he conducted for four Jewish believers in Jesus.

**The Australian Christian, Melbourne, Australia, November 10, 1999**  
**Messianic Mikveh Service**

During the Jewish High Holiday Season, Beit HaMashiach held a “messianic mikveh service” (baptism service) where four, mostly new believers, testified of their faith in Jesus through immersion. Lawrence Hirsch, Director of Celebrate Messiah and leader of Beit HaMashiach, began the service with an explanation of Christian baptism.

And a most curious item about a 36 year old mechanic and motorcycle rider named Katz who is part of the messianic community in the Dominican Republic.

**The Boston Globe, Boston, MA, December 30, 1999**  
**In Dominican Republic, Jewish descendents revise tradition**

As relatives coaxed their musical instruments into a lively merengue, Katz blew into a traditional ram’s horn, then asked his small congregation to repeat after him: “Glorious Jesus. He is our God,” he chanted. Almost 60 years after he Dominican Republic became the first nation to welcome European Jews during the Holocaust, the second and third generations of this once thriving, now dwindling Jewish community are assimilating. Katz sees no contradiction between the mingling of his Catholic and Jewish traditions. “We are just as Jewish as anyone else who believe in the Torah,” said Katz, 36 a gray-haired mechanic and motorcycle racer, who wears the traditional skull cap and shawl during the services his family holds each week. “We just believe Christ is our savior.”

Going over to Israel, there were two items I thought very significant in this time period. One was the back page of the Jerusalem Report which had Rabbi David Rosen and Messianic Rabbi David Chernoff square off. The question was:

**The Jerusalem Report, Jerusalem, Israel, January 31, 2000**

**The Back Page – Letters to the editor**

**Should Messianic Judaism be considered a legitimate stream of the faith?**

*The Messianic Judaism movement boasts 350 congregations worldwide, tens of thousands of followers, and a growing number of believers, especially among ex-Soviet Jews in Israel. Given the demand to institute religious pluralism in Israel, should Jews who believe that Jesus is the messiah be accepted into the fold?*

Dear Sir,

Jesus, (Yeshua in Hebrew) was a Jew born and raised in the Land of Israel who ministered only to Jews. All of his early followers were Jews, as were the writers of the New Testament. The point at issue in the first century C.E. was not whether belief in Yeshua precluded remaining Jewish but whether gentiles could also enter this messianic faith. Messianic Jews feel that it is Biblically justified to believe in Yeshua. The Bible contains many prophecies that we believe were clearly fulfilled in the person of Yeshua. Ancient Jewish prophets spoke of one who would come from Bethlehem and whose origins are eternal (Micah 5:1). They spoke of a messiah who would suffer and die for the sins of his people. (Isaiah 53:6). Another startling prophecy stated that the messiah must come before the destruction of the (Second) Temple (Daniel 9:24-27). While it is desirable that we be accepted by our people, we Messianic Jews do not need outside validation. We respect all other forms of Judaism, but we believe that we have found the long-promised messiah of Israel and that our faith is Biblical Judaism.

~Messianic Rabbi David Chernoff

Dear Sir,

Your claim that Jews for Jesus should be considered as simply another Jewish alternative strikes me as disingenuous. If someone were to say, "I am a Jew, even a religiously observant Jew, who believes that Mr. X is the messiah," my response to that would be that the messianic expectations of the in-gathering of the exiles, the peaceful existence of the Jewish nation in its land, the spiritual renewal of the Jewish people and an era of universal peace are still far from fulfillment. But I would not for a minute claim that this person's belief in any way places him outside the pale of the Jewish community. After all, a large body of observant Jews believe that their rebbe is the messiah, and no one seriously suggests that they be excommunicated as a result. "Jews for Jesus" claim something very different, however. They insist that holding Christian beliefs in the Incarnation and the Trinity is compatible with being Jewish. Such a claim makes a mockery of Christianity and Judaism alike. Instead of marketing the intentionally duplicitous slogan of "Jews for Jesus," those who believe in Jesus of Nazareth is divine and that belief in him is essential for personal salvation should come clean and present themselves as Christians. While I am committed to Jewish-Christian understanding, I am certainly opposed to Jews who have become Christians claiming that they are simply part of the Jewish religious spectrum, for this is nothing short of deceit.

~Rabbi David Rosen

And finally, a television debate between Jewish believers in Israel and secular and religious Israelis. I'd just like to play about two minutes of this interview to give you the flavor. [play video]

Finally, the big news story of the past twelve months has got to be all that kicked off with the Southern Baptists and their prayer guide for Jews. A number of events happened in close proximity to the release of the Southern Baptist guide for its



members to pray for Jewish people: A very high profile of summer media in July, August and September by Jews for Jesus, the Chosen People Millennium Conference in New York in late September and the release of the prayer guide by Southern Baptists. CT Magazine reported,

### **Those Southern Baptists**

**Christianity Today, Wheaton, IL, November 15, 1999**

#### **Southern Baptists defend new outreach effort.**

Southern Baptists, whose 1996 Resolution on Jewish Evangelism provoked anger and charges of anti-Semitism, are once again at the center of a controversy over whether Jews may come to God only through Christ.

Despite pockets of public opposition to Jewish evangelism efforts, the SBC's actions garnered strong support among many evangelicals during "To the Jew First in the New Millennium: A Conference on Jewish Evangelism..."

"There needs to be a renewed commitment by the general church to Jewish missions," says Mitch Glaser, president of the Charlotte, North Carolina-based Chosen People Ministries, which sponsored the conference.

This was also covered in the New York Times and then in most Jewish newspapers.

**The Jewish Week , New York, NY, November 12, 1999**

#### **Seminary Heads Unite Against Missionizing**

All sign on to letter criticizing Southern Baptist Convention's "deceptive" conversion tactics. In an unprecedented public display of unity, the leaders of America's four major Jewish seminaries signed a letter of protest to the head of the Southern Baptist Convention decrying its new support of "deceptive" tactics to convert Jews. The three-page letter to the Rev. Paige Patterson, president of the SBC, the largest Protestant denomination in the nation, states that the Jewish community is "deeply Offended" that leaders of the 16 million-member Christian movement "has formerly embraced a strategy that attempts to deceive Jews into believing that one can be both a Jew and a Christian.

**The Cincinnati Enquirer, Cincinnati, OH, November 10, 1999**

#### **Letter Sent**

Jewish leaders, including Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman of Cincinnati's Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, sent a letter to the leader of the Southern Baptist Convention Monday condemning the denomination's support for deceptive attempts to convert Jews.

**National Jewish Post & Opinion, December 1, 1999**

Baptists won't single out Jews, they claim

That the Southern Baptist drive here of thousands of missionaries seeking converts wouldn't single out Jews, Hindus or Muslims was the response of its' spokesman, Herb Hollinger, to an interdenominational coalition who have requested that the campaign be abandoned.

I've included a large selection of articles on this subject, but I'd like to point out a few of the atypical articles on this issue. Moment Magazine said the following:

**Moment Magazine, Boston, MA, December 1999**

**Taking on the Southern Baptists—It's time to turn the tables and convert them**

So now we live in an age when the Southern Baptists and others openly strive to convert Jews. The Jewish communal response has been lame, focusing on how offensive this challenge is in an age of enlightenment. A more courageous stand would be to accept the challenge, fight for the moral dignity of Judaism, and challenge the Southern Baptists to a series of highly publicized moral debates – let people decide for themselves which system has more value. But Jewish leadership is often plagued with self-doubt, which leads to a lack of energy and creativity.

**AOL News, September 29, 1999**

**Jewish Leader Says Relations Bad (AP)**

The prayer call was "An arrogant way of denigrating the Jewish religion and the sacredness of our High Holy Days," Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League said. Rabbi A. James Rudin said Jews have no quarrel with a Southern Baptists evangelist like the Rev. Billy Graham, who preaches conversion to everybody and does not target Jews as a group.

Another was written by Jeff Jacoby in an editorial for the Boston Globe:

**Boston Globe, Boston, MA, September 13, 1999**

**Who's afraid of Baptists? Jeff Jacoby**

If any Baptists are praying for me this week, I should like to express my heartfelt thanks. There is not a harsh or bigoted word anywhere in the booklet. It contains reflections on Jewish customs during the Days of Awe, and suggests specific points on which Baptists can focus while praying. As a Jew I cannot share the Baptists' belief in Jesus. But I can certainly acknowledge that by their lights they are offering the Jewish people something incalculably precious: eternal salvation. My religion does not require me to go out and proselytize (indeed it discourages it). But I have no trouble respecting the dedication of a Southern Baptist whose religion does require it of him. To listen to some prominent Jews, however, you'd think the Baptists were calling for a program.

**Baptist Messenger , Oklahoma, September 16, 1999**  
**Prayer guide for Jews stirs attention**

**New York Times, New York, NY, September 25, 1999**  
**Baptists' Evangelism Concerns Jews**

**Washington Post, Washington, DC, September 9, 1999**  
**Baptists Prayer Book Provokes Jewish Anger**

Disappointing but not surprising was Billy Graham's response to this issue:

**The Jewish Week, New York, NY, January 7, 2000**  
**Billy Graham Blasts Brethren**

Rev. Billy Graham has questioned leaders of his won Southern Baptist denomination for targeting Jews and others for conversion. The comments from the 80-year-old world-renowned evangelist is considered significant as the leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention – the nation's largest Christian group with 15.8 million members – has recently increased efforts to proselytize Jews, Hindus and others. "I consider Graham's comments very important because he is giving a reprimand and corrective to the religious extremists who have taken control of the Southern Baptist Convention," said Rabbi James Rudin, director of interreligious affairs for the American Jewish Committee.

**The Jewish Week, New York, NY, January 21, 2000**

**It's getting uglier between Jews and leaders of the Southern Baptists**

The mounting acrimony spilled onto Larry King's CNN show last week when the head of the Baptist's theological seminary rejected pleas by two prominent rabbis to stop targeting Jews for conversion by using what they termed deceptive tactics. Charges of intolerance, deception, and anti-Semitism peppered the hour long debate that pitted Rabbis Marvin Heir and Shmuley Boteach against seminary head Rev. Albert Mohler and Jews for Jesus executive director David Brickner.

**The Jewish Press, Brooklyn, NY, March 19, 1999**  
**Southern Baptists push to convert Jews**

But the climax for this entire issue was the opportunity for Al Mohler of the Southern Baptists and David Brickner of Jews for Jesus to appear on Larry King Live, January 12<sup>th</sup> with Rabbis Hieir and Boteach. Let's just close with a sampling of this exchange:

[show tape]

