

Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism Media Update
by Susan Perlman
April 20–22, 2015

This year's summary will include the following categories: Israel News, Jesus and the Holocaust, Jewish Opposition to the Gospel, Anti-Missionaries, Jewish Demographics, Jews and Evangelicals, Christian Zionism, Anti-Zionism, Christ at the Checkpoint, Legal, Books of Jewish/Christian Interest, Anti-Semitism, Jewish Thought Pieces, Jewish Holidays, and, of course, the catchall of Potpourri.

These are just highlights and are not meant to be a comprehensive look at this past year of messianic news. However I have included them in pdf form for those who wish to download them from the LCJE.net website.

As I point out to you each year, don't assume I've seen all the media out there on our movement. I always welcome getting your input to add to the mix for these reports.

Israel News

An article in the *Mideast Monitor* written during Operation Protective Edge focused on Christians on both sides of the conflict who are praying for peace. The article detailed how believers in Israel and Gaza are trusting in God in the midst of tragedy and loss.

Writing for *Israel Today*, David Lazarus reported on Captain Joshua Lazarus, a Messianic Jewish officer in charge of training guards for the checkpoints in Israel. Lazarus said, "Since Israel built the security wall, these checkpoints are now the main targets for potential terrorists trying to get through unnoticed amongst the hundreds of people passing through every day. We have to check each and every one. A lot of them are angry and try to push through without being checked. It's a tough job."

Ken Walker wrote an article in *Charisma* entitled, "12 Ministries Making a Difference in Israel." Walker wrote that when Wayne Hilsden moved to Israel in 1983 to establish a congregation, he never dreamed he would stay for three decades and that King of Kings Community Jerusalem would grow into a multi-faceted ministry that has helped establish six other churches, a Bible college, and other outreaches. There were only 15 Messianic congregations when Hilsden arrived; now Hilsden estimates there are 150, with more than 15,000 Jews who follow Yeshua. Among the ministries (more than twelve) that Walker highlighted are Ezra International, which works to help Jews make *aliyah*; the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ); Operation Lifeshield, which provides portable shelters to Jews and Palestinians during rocket attacks.

TBN just released a video profiling the work of Jews for Jesus in Israel. I'd like to share a minute or two from this video now.

Jesus and the Holocaust

Christianity Today published a feature on the Messianic Jewish movement in Ukraine. The author, Lincoln Brunner, observed that just as Jews for Jesus preached the gospel in connection with the Holocaust in its *That Jew Died for You* video, so too are Ukraine's Messianic Jews talking about the Holocaust in their evangelistic efforts. Brunner pointed out that Kiev Jewish Messianic Congregation, reportedly the world's largest Messianic congregation with 1,600 attenders, is less than ten miles from Babi Yar, the site of one of the Holocaust's largest massacres. Brunner noted that the LCJE's 10th European conference was held in Kiev last April. He also reported that many Messianic Jews from Ukraine are sharing the gospel in countries to which they have emigrated, especially in Israel.

The Christian Post reported on Jews for Jesus' release of the video, *That Jew Died for You*, just ahead of Passover, Easter and Holocaust Remembrance Day. The short video which went viral with over 1.3 million views, depicts Jesus in line outside the gates of Auschwitz, where he is selected to be sent to the gas chamber. Susan Perlman, associate executive director of JFJ, said that the missionary organization wanted people who view the video to "come away with the understanding that all that happened in the Holocaust happened in spite of what Jesus taught." The article noted that the homepage for the video also includes video testimonies of Holocaust survivors who came to faith in Yeshua. The article also quoted Jay Michaelson of *The Jewish Daily Forward*, who wrote that he believes Jews will find the film so offensive that it "could be used to keep Jews Jewish."

In his blog, "Rabbi Rami's Guide to Judaism," the rabbi responded to a reader's question: "What do you think of the new Jews for Jesus video about Jesus in Auschwitz?" In his response, the rabbi stated that he doesn't believe in a personal God. But if he did, he said, "I want one who will crush the Nazis rather than meekly march into the gas chambers." He added, "If I'm going to believe in a Son of God, give me Thor rather than Jesus."

OneNewsNow.com wrote an article on the video, *That Jew Died for You*. Jews for Jesus Executive Director David Brickner stated that the film is designed to undercut the "tremendous lie out there that Jesus and his teachings are responsible for the suffering of Jews during the Holocaust." Although understanding the controversial nature of the video, Brickner asked people to reserve judgment until they have viewed the film.

Writing in *The Jewish Daily Forward*, Jay Michaelson called *That Jew Died for You* "the most tasteless YouTube video ever." Michaelson pointed out that JFJ "exists to convert Jews." He went on to state that "Any Jew with personal, familial, or even historical memories of the Holocaust will immediately find it to be an outrage." He also called the passage from Isaiah 53 that scrolls at the end of the video "a selective mistranslation."

The Jerusalem Post reported that the *That Jew Died for You* video had gone viral. The article stated, "If messianic Jews were seeking to court controversy, they certainly found the most provocative way of doing that."

The Christian Post published a letter from Conservative Rabbi Bernhard H. Rosenberg, who is the son of Holocaust survivors, about *That Jew Died for You*. The rabbi said, “I recognized it as a movie of compassion.” Rosenberg, who has written several books about the Holocaust, made it clear that he does not endorse Jews for Jesus or their beliefs. But he stated, “I think their intent was not to harm our Jewish people but to depict Jesus as the observant Jew he was.” He added, “The bottom line is that Jesus’ message was not to hate the Jews, but love all humanity.”

Jewish Opposition to the Gospel

Britain’s *Jewish News* reported on opposition from the Jewish community to the opening of Jews for Jesus’ new shop in Hendon, a London suburb with a large Jewish population. Rabbi Yitschak Schochet said this “menace” is as dangerous as anti-Semitism and said that JFJ “should be chased out of town.” JFJ UK Director Julia Pascoe said, “We are good neighbors and we trust those who pass by our shop will come to know that.”

The JC.com also reported on JFJ’s new Hendon shop. The article reported on the responses (all negative) of local rabbis and Jewish leaders, including Rabbi Steven Katz, who stated, “I can’t imagine that any of our congregants will be seduced by their proselytizing and impression somehow that they are part of Judaism.” JFJ UK Director Julia Pascoe stated, “Our signage clearly states who we are and what we believe, which provides an ethical framework for engaging further.”

Anti-Missionaries

The Jewish Press reprinted an article by *JewishIsrael*, whose website states, “Jewish Israel takes a critical look at Israel’s alliances with Fundamentalist Christian groups, and provides a platform for ongoing monitoring and pro-active responses to evangelical missionary campaigns targeting Jews for conversion.” The article commended writers such as Diane Bederman, Danny Fuchs and Rachel Tabachnik, and concluded with this: “The issue of increasing fundamental Christian influence in Israel should be of worry to every Jew concerned with the continuity of Judaism. This is an issue which should unify the Diaspora and Israeli communities rather than cause divisions along political and religious lines. *JewishIsrael* encourages thinking Jewish writers and activists to honestly explore this very challenging problem via a Jewish perspective, which requires putting partisan politics aside and prioritizing the survival of Israel as a unique Jewish nation.”

David Lazarus wrote for *Israel Today* about Amita Schiff, the grandson of Meif Schiff, a famous rabbi from the Chabad movement. Lazarus reported that Amita came to know Jesus over ten years ago when he “met a Hebrew-speaking Israeli Jews for Jesus member on a Tel Aviv beach.” However, Amita began questioning his faith in Yeshua. When he went home to be with his dying grandfather, the family convinced him to talk with a “trained anti-Messianic rabbi.” Amita says that rabbi “saved me from my error.” Now Amita is working with anti-missionary groups to infiltrate the Messianic community and collect information. The article stated that he has been approached by Yad L’Achim, the most well-known anti-Messianic group in Israel.

Yeshiva World News wrote an article warning that “local missionaries, tragically led by Jews, are operating a \$5 million, 14,000 sq. ft. building in the heart of Jewish Brooklyn to convert Jews.” The building (although not named in the article) is Chosen People’s Brooklyn Messianic Center. The article stated that “a shocking study recently showed that 34% of American Jews think that ‘a person can be Jewish if they believe that ‘J’ was the messiah.’” Brooklyn Jewish Experience (BJX) a local *kiruv* organization, whose mission is to bring Jews back to Judaism, is expanding to include an outreach center to stop the missionaries. It will be located just blocks from the Brooklyn Messianic Center.”

Danny Fuchs wrote an in-depth article for *The Jewish Press* entitled “The New Jews for Jesus.” He said the “new Jews for Jesus” are actually religious Jews, not Messianic Jews. He clarified that he is speaking “of those religious Jews whose clarity has become so blurred and distorted due to their involvement and exposure to evangelicals. I speak of rabbis who have described Jesus as a rabbi, and as a ‘kosher’ concept that Jews can embrace without sacrificing their most basic Jewish beliefs.” Fuchs focused on Jeremy Gimpel, a well-known radio personality and ordained Orthodox rabbi. Fuchs says that Gimpel “has done as much as anyone on the scene to grab the evangelical hand and pull him in for an interfaith bear hug.” Fuchs is opposed to interfaith dialogue, which he blames on modern-Orthodox leaders who “n.” Fuchs refuted some of Gimpel’s public statements, then wrote, “The truths of Judaism are inherently in opposition to Christianity and there can be no harmonizing of the two faiths.” He added “Torah is not merely law. It is a way of life required by Hashem, and it remains the only way for man to perfect himself.” Since Gimpel referenced a historical Jesus, Fuchs took this on as well. He wrote: “There is no definitive evidence that a specific historical Jesus existed that has any commonality with the many contradictory and mythical accounts in the gospel.” Fuchs stated, “Various efforts are underway to apprise major Jewish leaders and organizations of the full extent of this spiritual menace, which is not monolithic, but an elaborate network of missionary organizations.”

The Way: Christianity without Walls excerpted a piece from *Israel Today* about the efforts of anti-missionary organization Yad L’Achim to bring new legislation targeting Messianic Jewish and Christian activity in Israel. The article noted that Israel does not have an anti-missionary law, but prohibits outreach to minors and offering financial benefits for conversion. The article also pointed out that “most ultra-Orthodox sects completely ignore these prohibitions in their own missionary activity.”

Jewish Demographics

Bernard Edinger wrote an in-depth article in *The Jerusalem Post* about immigration of French Jews to Israel. He noted that in 2014 France was the single largest source of aliya, doubling to an expected 6,500 (about one percent of France’s Jews) from 3,288 in 2013. Edinger interviewed Roger Cukierman, president of the Representative Council of French Jewish Institutions (CRIF). Cuckierman said French Jews are increasingly afraid for their safety in light of increasing anti-Semitic violence. Jewish leaders say that about 95 percent of anti-Jewish violence is committed by French Muslim Arabs, usually aged 15 to 28. Cukierman said, “We don’t criticize aliya but we don’t encourage it. It would be unfair to France if we did. It’s all a personal decision. We will remain as a minority in this country, but we are very worried by the growth of other, much larger, minorities, which are hostile to us.” Edinger also spoke with Ariel Kandel, head of

strategy for France at the Jerusalem headquarters of the Jewish Agency, which oversees immigration to Israel. Kandel said, “There are 10 times more Jews in the US than in France, yet aliya from France is proportionately 20 times higher.” Kandel said there would be much more immigration to Israel by French Jews “if we were not competing with the French social welfare system, which is one of the most generous in the world and which Israel cannot and does not want to match.” However, Kandel said that many Jews under 30 are making aliya because they see Israel as having better economic opportunities than France, which has widespread youth unemployment. The article closed with this excerpt from an op-ed piece in *Le Monde* by Jewish intellectual, author and sculptor Mark Halter: “You want to leave this country. You want to surrender in the face of those who hate us and want us to leave? Are you going to hand over this house which is ours to the jihadists and to the National Front? I once asked Nathan Levinson, chief rabbi of Frankfurt, who was himself of German origin, and who had returned after World War II to his native land in American army uniform, why he remained in Germany. He replied, ‘To deprive Hitler of what would be his ultimate and main victory: a Germany without Jews.’”

JWeekly reported on the Pew survey result that Europe has lost more than half its Jewish population since 1960, down from 3.2 million to 1.4 million. The survey said reasons for the postwar decline include immigration to Israel, intermarriage and cultural assimilation. The worldwide Jewish population of 14 million is still smaller than the more than 16 million before the Holocaust.

Along these lines, Jeffrey Goldberg penned a 30 page feature article for *The Atlantic* entitled, “Is it Time for the Jew to Leave Europe?” He wrote: “For half a century, memories of the Holocaust limited anti-Semitism on the Continent. That period has ended—the recent fatal attacks in Paris and Copenhagen are merely the latest examples of rising violence against Jews. Renewed vitriol among right-wing fascists and new threats from radicalized Islamists have created a crisis, confronting Jews with an agonizing choice.” After citing example after example of the decline of Jews throughout Europe and the former Soviet Union, Goldberg concludes: “I am predisposed to believe that there is no great future for the Jews in Europe, because evidence to support this belief is accumulating so quickly. But I am also predisposed to think this because I am an American Jew—which is to say, a person who exists because his ancestors made a run for it when they could.”

Jews and Evangelicals

Blogger Hannah Ettinger, who grew up in an evangelical Christian home, now doubts much of what she was taught, including the inerrancy of the Bible, that the Jewish people are God’s chosen, and that Christians should support Israel. The Israeli military operation in Gaza, in particular, has caused her to feel that the conservative Christianity on which she was raised gave her a “myopic, distanced, and deliberately ignorant understanding of politics in the Middle East.”

In an article in *Commentary*, Michael Schulson, a young Jewish freelance writer, noted that in the Pew study, 69 percent of evangelicals felt “emotional warmth” toward Jewish people, while only 34 percent of Jews felt that warmth toward evangelicals. The author theorized that the reason for this unrequited love is that Christians love Jews too much. He says that philo-Semitism has much in common with anti-Semitism, namely that both “view Jewishness as an

abstract monolith, and both endow Jews with particular historical roles—roles, it seems, that are rarely of the Jews’ own choosing.”

Elana Kook wrote in *The New York Jewish Week* about a scheduled event in Fort Worth, Texas, “A Tale of Two Ducks,” featuring Phil and Alan Robertson of television’s *Duck Dynasty* reality show. Kook wrote that the Robertsons “are creating a stir with their latest mission: converting Jews to Jesus.” The Robertsons are teaming up the Messianic Jewish Bible Institute (MJBI) for the event. (You’ll recall their last speaker before the Robertsons was former President Bush.)

A cynical article in the *Inquisiter* also spotlighted “A Tale of Two Ducks.” The article noted that that MJBI “works to bring Jews into a personal relationship with Jesus.” The author was especially sarcastic about the \$10,000 price tag for those who want the special “Commander” package for the event.

Sarah Posner of *Religion Dispatches* reported that Israel’s Chief Rabbis issued a statement condemning a prayer vigil sponsored by the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) at the end of Sukkot at the southern wall of the Temple Mount. The Chief Rabbinate called on Jews to boycott the event, stating that the event was dedicated to the resurrection of Jesus and the Christian conception of the messiah, thereby making it problematic for Jewish participants. Posner noted that the ICJE promotional materials did not explicitly invite Jews to the event.

Sharon Goldman wrote a feature article for *Tablet* recounting, in a very positive light, Johnny and June Carter’s Cash passionate engagement with Israel. Goldman noted the Cashes’ Christian upbringing and familiarity with hymns about the Promised Land, generally used as a metaphor for heaven. She stated that the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 changed the metaphor to a geographical reality. Goldman wrote, “Eleven years after their deaths, Johnny and June Carter Cash stand as exemplars of the complexity and depth of the American connection to both the idea and reality of the promised land.”

CBN News reported on the Stand Firm with Israel summit held in Loveland, Colorado. The gathering was organized by Wayne Hilsden of Jerusalem’s King of Kings Congregation and Pastor Jonathan Wiggins of Resurrection Fellowship in Loveland. Hilsden said that standing with Israel does not necessarily mean agreeing with every decision of its government, but it does mean acknowledging the eternal covenant that God made with the Jewish people.

Michael F. Haverluck, in *OneNewsNow.com*, also wrote about the Stand FIRM (Fellowship of Israel-Related Ministries) summit. He reported that more than 1,700 Messianic Jews and evangelical Christians attended. Haverluck summarized some of the statements by conference speakers Dr. Michael L. Brown, Rabbi Jonathan Bernis, Resurrection Fellowship senior pastor Jonathan Wiggins, Wayne Hilsden, and closing speaker Jack Hayford. When asked what he considered the greatest takeaway from the conference, Brown said, “I believe the attendees were deeply impacted in a number of ways, including: getting a deeper love for Israel; understanding the importance of Israel’s salvation and; seeing how the Church often failed in its witness to the Jewish People—driving them away from Jesus rather than winning them to Him. [They should also come away] understanding the importance of standing with the nation of Israel (but while

working for the best interests of the Palestinians too) and seeing the power of a united ministry for Israel.”

Prior to the *Stand Firm* summit, Steve Rees wrote in *Examiner.com* about the event, focusing on the conference’s efforts to reach Christian Millennials. Rees cited the Pew survey, which showed that 19 to 34-year-old young adults are less pro-Israel than previous church-going Christians. Wayne Hilsden said, “FIRM will be on the forefront of educating and equipping a new generation of believers with deep biblical truth to ignite and sustain a love for Israel and the God of Israel.” Jack Hayford stated, “If you value my opinion from a pastoral point of view, I want you to do what I’m doing, whether it’s your sons or your grandsons—for me it will be my grandsons—I’m going to fund them at the Israel Summit.” Calev Meyers, founder of the Jerusalem Institute for Justice, will be speaking at the summit along with his fifteen-year-old daughter, Noam, who shares her father’s love for Israel. Meyers said, “I believe that we can reverse this trend of declining evangelical support among an emerging generation.”

In *Charisma*, Jürgen Bühler, executive director for International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, noted that “many younger Christians in Western churches are hesitant to give Israel the same unconditional support their parents did.” Much less familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures than previous generations, they instead ask whether Jesus would affirm Israel’s right to live in the land or side with the Palestinians as an oppressed minority. Bühler looked at how Jesus dealt with the Samaritans, who he feels have many similarities with the Palestinians. He noted that the Samaritans had lived in the land for over 700 years before Jesus came, and saw themselves as the rightful heirs of the land. Bühler wrote of Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well, which led to revival in the village. But he also noted that Jesus “affirms to the Samaritan woman the ancient Abrahamic calling of Israel, that through them ‘all the families of the earth shall be blessed’ (Genesis 12:3).” Bühler wrote, “Christ, in His time of earthly ministry, set a remarkable example for us on how to reach out to the Palestinians—and the Christians especially—without compromising the divine calling of His own people.”

Perhaps the most significant piece written this past year on Jews and Evangelicals an support for Israel was done by Religion News Service. Sarah Pulliam Bailey asked whether support for Israel is waning among evangelicals. She noted that David Brog, executive director of Christians United for Israel, wrote that “the days of taking evangelical support for Israel for granted are over.” Bailey observed that several mainline churches and international church bodies have divested money or boycotted products made in Israel. She reported that David Neff, former editor of *Christianity Today*, “said his Jewish friends have expressed some nervousness over recent gathering and activities, including Christ at the Checkpoint.” However, Bailey said that the Pew Research Center surveys suggest that long-term support for Israel among evangelicals has remained relatively stable in the past five years. David Brickner, executive director of Jews for Jesus, told Bailey, “I long to see the church have a balanced perspective on the Middle East, where you don’t have to throw out the concern for Palestinians to support Israel.”

Christian Zionism

Writing for the Religion News Service, Jeffrey Salkin dispelled some worries that Jews have concerning Christian Zionism. He said that not all Christian Zionists believe that all Jews have

be back in the Land before Jesus can return. He admitted that Christian Zionists are far more conservative than Jews on most issues, but argued that Jews and Christian Zionists can still work together. Salkin said that contrary to what most Jews think, Christian Zionists do not want to convert Jews to Christianity, because they believe that God has an eternal covenant with the Jewish people. He agreed that Christian Zionists tend to have right-wing views on Israel, which he said presents some problems, such as their insistence that Israel never “give up an inch of land—even for peace.” But he commended some prominent people he denoted as Christian Zionists, such as Arthur Balfour and Johnny Cash. Salkin conflated evangelicals with Christian Zionists at times in this article.

On *Religiousdispatches.org*, Sarah Posner wrote about a report on Christian Zionism from Molad, an Israeli progressive think tank. Liat Schlesinger, who researched the report, said that although Christian Zionists are usually referred to in the Israeli press as “Christians who love Israel,” that description obscures their theology. Posner stated that in America, “this love for Israel is unabashedly presented as biblical prophecy come to life, culminating in the return of Christ and the conversion or elimination of Jews.” Schlesinger said the Molad report is “showing that they [Christian Zionists] are trying to influence Israeli society and import their agenda.”

I covered the media concerning Lausanne and Christian Zionism yesterday, however summaries will appear in this report as well. However, I will not repeat them now.

Israel Today published an article entitled, “Leading Evangelism Movement Slams Christian Zionism.” The article quoted Steve Haas, vice president of World Vision US, writing in the January 2015 edition of *Lausanne Global Analysis*. Haas stated, “For over 60 years, many evangelicals have clung to a very narrow theological narrative that weds Christian theology with a political ideology known as Zionism.” *Israel Today* wrote, “At its gathering in Cape Town, South Africa, in 2010, Lausanne produced what came to be known as the Cape Town Commitment, which, among other things, urged Christians to repent for their role in ‘Palestinian suffering’ as a byproduct of support for Israel.” [Note: The Commitment never states “as a byproduct of support for Israel.”]

Israel Today published a letter my Michael Oh, director of the Lausanne Movement, in response to the above article. Oh’s letter stated, “The views and opinions expressed in *Lausanne Global Analysis* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the personal viewpoints of Lausanne Movement leaders or networks. . . . We have now added a disclaimer to the *Lausanne Global Analysis* so as to avoid future misrepresentation of the Lausanne Movement by outside sources.” Oh expressed particular concern over *Israel Today’s* portrayal of the Cape Town Commitment. Oh responded, “Palestinian suffering is cited as one example in a list of many other contexts of ethnic conflict. In no way does the Cape Town Commitment call Christians to repent for supporting Israel nor does it link Palestinian suffering as a result of Christian support for Israel.”

Note: The only parts of Michael Oh’s letter that *Israel Today* did not publish were the heading and the first and last paragraphs, which are, respectively, as follows:

Lausanne Movement Calls for the Whole Gospel for both Jews and Palestinians

“I’m concerned by your recent article ‘Leading Evangelism Movement Slams Christian Zionism’ on 26 January 2015 and would like to correct any misrepresentation of the Lausanne Movement that your readers will have received. I am writing to request your publication of this letter in full as a corrective to your article.”

“In the name of fairness and in demonstration of your commitment to high journalistic standards, I ask that you would make the necessary corrections to your article as well as publish this letter in full for your readers as soon as possible.”

An author by the name of Dror wrote in *The Rosh Pina Project* about the remarks made by Steve Haas in the *Lausanne Global Analysis* article. Dror wrote: “Lausanne is so focused on criticizing the Jewish state that it has little-to-nothing to say to criticise of any of the world’s 57 Muslim states.” Dor quoted a Lausanne article about Boko Haram, which stated, in part: “Lastly, de-secularization’ groups like Boko Haram may be calling the evangelical communion to a long overdue conversation about the effects of the secularization of society and culture on religious commitment.” Dor concluded: “Lausanne needs to rebalance its agenda, and steer away from admiring terrorists who murder Christians, because they are an ‘anti-secular force.’ Currently, Lausanne is too busy channeling its energy into delegitimizing the Jewish state.”

Amanda Borschel-Dan wrote an in-depth piece in *The Times of Israel* about Christian Zionist funding of immigration to Israel. She relied in part on Professor Yaakov Ariel’s book, *An Unusual Relationship: Evangelical Christians and Jews*. Ariel wrote: “The War of 1967 enhanced the evangelical faith that the Jews were indeed preparing the ground for the events of the end times.” Ariel also noted the effect of the Cold War: “Much of the resurgence of evangelical interest in Israel took place during the cold war era, and evangelicals combined their opposition to the Soviet Union and communism with their support of Israel.” Borschel-Dan reported on a number of ministries that help Jews in the Diaspora to emigrate to Israel, including Return Ministries, headed by Dean Bye; Christians United for Israel (CUFI), founded by John Hagee; the Jerusalem-based International Christian Embassy; Bridges for Peace, headed by Rebecca J. Brimmer; and the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews (IFCJ), founded by Orthodox Rabbi Yechiel Ekstein. Borschel-Dan stated that IFCJ “by far donates the most funds to aliya and other emergency relief efforts aiding needy Jews all over the world.” Eckstein is on the Board of the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), which also works to facilitate aliyah. Borschel-Dan reported that Eckstein has reduced IFCJ’s annual donation to JAFI from \$11 million to \$4 million because he claims that JAFI is unwilling to publicize the Christian nature of IFCJ’s donations. As a result, Eckstein is creating his own aliyah program. However, the article stated that JAFI was about to partner with Christians by forming the Christian Friends of the Jewish Agency. The new agency “will not include groups like Jews for Jesus, who are explicitly looking to convert Jews to Christianity.” Borschel-Dan also dealt with Jewish mistrust of Christian Zionism, stating that “the overriding concern among many Jews and Jewish institutions is undoubtedly that Christian Zionists, while putting on a good show, are really just interested in converting the Jews.”

Ruth Gledhill wrote an article in *Christian Today* about the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) accusing Rabbi Yechiel Ekstein’s International Fellowship for Christians and Jews (IFJC) of

sabotage by creating competitive arrangements for aliyah. The two groups parted company in 2014 when they failed to agree on a list of conditions presented to IJFC by JAFI. Eckstein had wanted JAFI to acknowledge his 1.4 million Christian donors for their contributions. IJFC started its own aliyah program offering large cash incentives to Jews leaving Ukraine for Israel on one of its flights.

Andrew F. Bush who teaches at Eastern University, wrote an article in the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* critical of Christian Zionism, which he defines as “a movement of premillennial, dispensational, fundamentalist/evangelical Christians who adhere to and promote the beliefs and goals of political and religious Zionism.” He acknowledged that not all dispensationalists support the activism of Christian Zionism. He stated that Christian Zionism “has indeed made meaningful contributions to mission to the Jewish community in Israel.” But he criticized the movement for its failure to recognize Palestinians as a distinct people group. He also noted, “Ironically, despite Christian Zionism’s claims that there is no unique people group known as Palestinians, broad disparaging remarks are commonly made concerning the Palestinian people.” He maintained that “Christian Zionism has failed to listen sympathetically to the views of the people actually living in these societies.” He added, “Western Christian Zionists might make more positive contributions if they would consider the nuanced positions of some Messianic Jewish leaders in Israel who have attempted to respond theologically to the fact of the Palestinian presence in the land.” He wrote, “Christian Zionism’s advocacy of force to achieve what is viewed as God’s purposes is found in its support of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF).” He also stated, “. . . the minimizing of ethical issues reflects the approach of Zionism, which has refused to consider the immorality of occupying a land that was home to another people.” He said, “In refusing to view the Palestinians as a coherent people group, with their distinct values, concerns, and human rights, Christian Zionism . . . in effect dehumanizes the Palestinians.”

Bill Berkowitz wrote an article for *Scoop* about the relationship between Messianic Jews and Christian Zionists. He stated there may be as many as 1.2 million Messianic Jews in the U.S. He mentioned the speaking engagements of President George W. Bush and Phil and Alan Robertson at events sponsored by the Messianic Jewish Bible Institute. Berkowitz wrote of the growing number of Messianic Jews in Israel, as well as the anger and violence they have encountered from religious Jews. After discussing Messianic congregations and other Messianic Jewish groups in Israel, the author concluded: “While leaders of Messianic Jews appear to be bullish on their future possibilities in Israel, the rise of Messianic Jews in both the U.S. and Israel raises questions about their alliance with Christian Zionists and the ultimate intentions of those with End Times on their minds.”

Rachel Tabachnik wrote an article for *The Daily Beast* in which she contended that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s U.S. Christian Zionist partners have changed. She wrote that these new partners are from apostolic and prophetic movements such as the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR). She stated, “Several CUFI (Christians United for Israel) directors, past and present, are part of the NAR leadership, and NAR spokespeople have gained prominence in Christian Zionist circles.” She wrote, “This is a triumphalist theology, one in which the adherents believe they will exercise ‘dominion’ over all of American society, be victorious over their opponents on earth, and convert all the Jews.” She stated that the NAR is in the center of today’s Republican Party and “has steadily taken over the world of Christian Zionism.” Tabachnik cited

Don Finto and Robert Stearns as key players in the NAR. She wrote: “Ironically, the term ‘anti-Semitism’ has been frequently used to describe those who object to Israeli politics, while Christian Zionists, who hold views denigrating Jews’ spiritual lives and which would have been considered anti-Semitic years ago, are described as ‘philo-Semitic’ defenders of Israel.”

Anti-Zionism

JTA reported that some Presbyterians involved in Jewish-Christian dialogue were dismayed over the publication of the study guide, “Zionism Unsettled,” by Israel/Palestine Mission Network of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The guide posits that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is fueled by “pathology inherent in Zionism.” The article quotes various Presbyterian leaders who reject the message of the study guide who are pressing the leadership of the church to renounce the guide.

The Christian Post reported that the Presbyterian Church (USA) decided to stop the online sale of its study guide, “Zionism Unsettled.” PC (USA) declared that the booklet does not represent the views of the denomination. Jewish groups and pro-Israel Christians said the booklet portrayed Jews and Israel unfairly.

In an article in *Commentary* published just prior to the PCUSA vote on divestment, Jonathan Marks noted that by 2013, PCUSA membership had declined about 30 percent since 2000. He wrote, “When an organization allows itself to be influenced by radicals who are out of touch with the membership, the members begin to depart or tune out. As the numbers of thoughtful and attentive members dwindles, the organization becomes more susceptible to the influence of radicals. More members depart and tune out, the radicals become a significant part of the base leaders think they need to listen to, and the organization is in danger of being taken over. Such is the case with the . . . barely relevant Presbyterian Church (USA).” Marks wrote, “. . . if the Assembly votes to embrace the anti-Israel lunatic fringe, even more rank and file Presbyterians may notice that they have leaders, and that these leaders are, increasingly, radicals and fools. Even devoted churchgoers can’t be blamed for leaving a church when it starts to smell this bad.”

The Christian Post reported on the Presbyterian Church (USA) vote to divest its stock holding from three multinational corporations that it says supply Israel with equipment used in the occupation of Palestinian territory. Among groups that denounced the decision by the PC (USA) are the ADL, the American Jewish Committee, the Jewish Council of Public Affairs, and a group of Messianic Jewish leaders who signed an official statement. Signatories for the statement included John Fischer, president of the International Messianic Jewish Alliance; Russell Resnik, executive director of the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations; Paul Liberman, president of the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America; and Frank Lowinger, chairman of the International Association of Messianic Congregations and Synagogues.

Charisma printed the above-mentioned statement by the Messianic Jewish leaders. Here are two excerpts:

- “Amid continuing efforts to pressure and marginalize the state of Israel through boycotts and economic sanctions, the Presbyterian Church (USA) General Assembly will consider proposals to pressure Israel through financial divestment. Amid reports of growing

worldwide anti-Semitism, the church's Israel/Palestine Mission Network offers 'Zionism Unsettled,' a study guide that explicitly delegitimizes Israel as a Jewish state. In the face of such actions, the international Messianic Jewish community expresses its unwavering support for the Jewish homeland in Israel."

- "The IMJA, along with the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations, the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America, and the International Association of Messianic Congregations and Synagogues, affirms the historic connection between the Jewish people and the land of Israel, as well as God's promise to give the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob the land of Israel as an eternal inheritance."

In an opinion piece in *The Christian Post*, Mitch Glaser, president of Chosen People Ministries, wrote about the Presbyterian Church (USA) vote to divest from Israel. After listing some of the possible sincere motives behind the vote, Glaser noted that "a vote for divestment endorses the Palestinian Authority (PA), which does not support the existence of Israel." He added that the PCUSA statement ignored the linkage between the PA and Hamas. Glaser stated that PCUSA leaders "have led the denomination into embracing a particular political narrative." Noting that the PCUSA has also decided to allow its ministers to perform same-sex marriages, Glaser wrote, "As a Messianic Jew I am very concerned with the decisions of the PCUSA. I am concerned with the temptation to reject biblical fidelity. I am very disturbed with the lack of commitment to the literal promises in the Old Testament to the Jewish people."

David Roach of *The Baptist Press* reported that "a diverse array of evangelicals, including Southern Baptists, have denounced the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s decision to divest." Roach interviewed Mitch Glaser; Jim Sibley, former director of the Pasche Institute for Jewish Studies at Criswell College in Dallas; and Nathan Finn, associate professor of historical theology and Baptist studies at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. Glaser said, "We've spent years and years trying to tell the Jewish people that Christians were the best friends of Israel and of the Jewish people . . . What [the PCUSA] felt was compassionate and sensitive to the Palestinian population actually sets us back decades in Jewish evangelism." Jim Sibley told Roach that in Romans 11, the Apostle Paul "warns with a threefold warning against having an arrogant attitude toward the Jewish people, the majority of whom are in unbelief." Sibley said that the PCUSA's divestment decision "is the outgrowth of a total disregard of what Paul is teaching and warning against in Romans 11." Finn stated, "It is perfectly acceptable for foreign policy experts to raise questions about some of Israel's policies in the region. It seems far less appropriate for a Christian denomination to issue a blanket criticism of Israel and side with the Palestinians."

A group of Presbyterians calling themselves Presbyterians for a Just and Peaceful Future in the Middle East placed a full-page ad in *The New York Times* entitled "Presbyterians: We Can Do Better Than Divestment." The ad stated, "We are among the many Presbyterians all over the country who have worked against this action, believing that divestment would strengthen the extreme positions on both sides of this conflict without alleviating the suffering of Palestinians." The ad urged Presbyterians to reclaim the church's role as a "repairer of the breach" among Christians, Jews, and Muslims; reaffirm the church's commitment to a two-state solution; and to strengthen joint Israeli-Palestinian ventures.

Two Presbyterian ministers from the San Francisco Bay Area wrote a piece in *JWeekly.com* decrying the Presbyterian Church (USA) decision to support divestment from Israel. The ministers noted that PC-USA leaders turned down an invitation from Rabbi Rick Jacobs, president of the Union for Reform Judaism, to be his guest in Jerusalem for a sit-down meeting with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to discuss the issues. He asked them to “choose partnership and engagement” rather than “separation and divestment.” They chose the latter. The writers stated, “We recognize that it is impolitic to use the label of anti-Semitism, but there are not many other ways to explain the willful rejection of the only democracy in the Middle East.”

Peter Wehner wrote in *Commentary* that the Presbyterian Church (USA) divestment decision is “part of a long-term effort to de-legitimize and morally stigmatize Israel.” He mentioned that in the 2000s he and his wife left a church they had attended for years when they discovered that a clear anti-Israel bias existed among some influential people within the church. He wrote, “It is hardly an accident that one of those who praised the PCUSA for its actions was none other than David Duke.” Duke wrote on his website: “Israel is based not only on ethnic supremacism, but on massive terrorism and ethnic cleansing . . . Their racist power over the media and government is why Israel can get away with it. But people can stand up. Bravo to the Presbyterian Church for standing up to Jewish racism and supremacism!”

The Committee for Accurate Middle East Reporting (CAMERA) wrote an article contending that InterVarsity Press (U.S.) and Inter-Varsity Press (U.K.) have “published four books that to varying degrees promote anti-Judaism (contempt for the Jewish faith) and/or a distorted view of the Arab-Israeli conflict that portrays Israel in an unduly harsh light.” Two of the books are by Stephen Sizer, who, CAMERA stated, “has engaged in a persistent and systematic campaign to demonize Israel and its supporters in the United States.” The other two books are by Garth Hewitt and Dale Hanson Bourke. CAMERA concluded the article with this: “What exactly do folks at IVP in the United States and England think they are doing? Why are they promoting a hobbling dialect of anti-Judaism and misinformation to young, college-age Evangelicals on both sides of the Atlantic?”

Standing with Israel reprinted a *Charisma* article by Ron Cantor about Dr. Stephen Sizer. Cantor wrote that in 2011, a video was recorded in which Sizer said, “There are certainly churches in Israel/Palestine that side with the occupation [of the West Bank, Gaza and Golan Heights], that side with Zionism. One of my burdens is to challenge them theologically and show that they’ve repudiated Jesus, they’ve repudiated the Bible, and they are an abomination.” When the video became public, Sizer apologized, but, Cantor writes, “Sizer seems miffed and stunned that people are offended. Without expressing what he actually meant when he said we are an abomination, he withdrew the comment. And to be honest, when I watched the video, I wasn’t sure whether he was referring to Palestinian Christians who love Israel or Messianic congregations or both—but his apology is directed to Messianic Jews, so it is safe to assume we were his target.” Cantor says that Sizer has now, in effect, **retracted the apology**. In a recent debate with Dr. Michael Brown, Brown read Sizer’s quote from the video and asked Sizer to respond. Sizer replied, “I am comfortable with that comment.”

London’s Premier Christian Radio website reported that the Church of England is investigating the actions of the Reverend Stephen Sizer, who posted a link to an article on his Facebook site

which suggested Israel was behind the 9/11 terror attacks. A spokesman for the church called the post “a matter of deep sorrow and shame.” The article noted that this is not the first time Sizer has been involved in controversy over his views on Israel.

BBC News also reported on the Church of England’s investigation of Sizer. They noted that Sizer has a history of disputes with Jewish community leaders concerning his blog postings on Israel and Zionism. They added that although Sizer had removed the Facebook post about 9/11, he reportedly was continuing to defend it.

The Diocese of Guildford, The Church of England, published a statement by its bishop, The Right Reverend Andrew Watson, on Stephen Sizer. The bishop had met with Sizer concerning allegedly offensive material on his Facebook account and comments he made to the *Jewish News* and the *Daily Telegraph* afterwards. Here are some excerpts from the Bishop’s statement:

“Having now met Stephen, in my brand new role as Bishop of Guildford, I do not believe that his motives are anti-Semitic; but I have concluded that, at the very least, he has demonstrated appallingly poor judgment in the material he has chosen to disseminate, particularly via social media, some of which is clearly anti-Semitic. By associating with or promoting subject matter, which is either ambiguous in its motivation, or (worse still) openly racist, he has crossed a serious line. I regard these actions as indefensible.”

“I have welcomed Stephen’s apology, his recognition of the deep hurt caused by his actions, his acknowledgement of the gross insensitivity of their timing just prior to Holocaust Memorial Day, and his retraction of the ridiculous suggestion that Israel may have been complicit in the events of 9/11.”

“It is therefore my decision that Stephen’s work in this area is no longer compatible with his ministry as a parish priest. In order for Stephen to remain in parish ministry, I have therefore asked for—and received from him—a solemn undertaking, in writing, that he is to refrain entirely from writing or speaking on any theme that relates, either directly or indirectly, to the current situation in the Middle East or to its historical backdrop.”

“Should Stephen be deemed by the Diocese to have broken this agreement, in letter or in spirit, he has pledged to offer me his immediate resignation, which I will duly accept. He has also agreed to desist from the use of social media entirely for the next six months, after which he and I will review that prohibition.”

“Most importantly of all, I am hugely sorry for the hurt which has been caused to members of the Jewish Community, and I hope and pray that the storms of the past two weeks will ultimately serve to deepen and strengthen our relationship, one with another.”

Betsy Childs wrote a piece for *First Things* about Dr. Stephen Sizer entitled “The Master of Apologies.” She wrote, “It might be instructive to examine a few of [Sizer’s] apologies to see what we can learn from them.” Childs catalogued a litany of offensive statements and social media posts and his subsequent apologies, culminating in the link to the article on his Facebook site suggesting that Israel was behind the 9/11 terror attacks. Childs noted that Sizer’s apology for that repost came only after The Church of England condemned it. Childs concluded,

“While Stephen Sizer has shown himself ready to apologize, he has been unwilling to alter his behavior. It is past time for his church to stop allowing him to plead carelessness as his excuse. His continual posting of anti-Semitic content, as well as his disingenuous apologies, brings dishonor to the name of Jesus and the body of Christ.”

In *The Jerusalem Post*, Caroline Glick wrote a column with the subtitle, “To be clear, J Street is to Zionism what Jews for Jesus are to Judaism.” Glick decried the apathy of Jewish students on American campuses toward Israeli Independence Day. She suggested that distance from Israel and ignorance of the history of the Land contribute to the indifference. But she also said that many are intimidated: “Hate groups like Students for Justice in Palestine and Jewish Voices for Peace harangue Jewish students for uttering even the mildest defenses of Israel. When students are willing to stand up to these hate groups, they are beset by J Street U members telling them that there is nothing anti-Israel about being anti-Israel, and that being anti-Israel really means being pro-Israel.” She added, “Since J Street arrived at the scene, the fact that Israel has always sought peace with its neighbors is increasingly denied and replaced with lies about Israeli culpability for the pathologies of the Palestinians and the wider Islamic world. J Street is an anti-Israel, pro-Iranian and pro-Palestinian lobby run by American Jews.”

Elhanan Miller in *The Times of Israel* reported that young evangelicals are growing more critical of Israel. Miller interviewed Robert Nicholson, a 32-year-old self-described “Zionist evangelical,” who recently spoke on a panel organized by the B’nai Brith World Center in Jerusalem entitled, “The Effort to Divest Evangelical Christians from Israel: a New Campaign.” Nicholson said, “Sticking up for the underdog is Christian. The Palestinians are viewed as the weaker side, so it’s almost automatic for them to buy into this narrative.” He added, “The Christian Zionist narrative tends to be anti-peace, anti-Palestinian. It makes us look bad. Palestinians are suffering and we need to acknowledge that. We don’t do our homework. We must strengthen our beliefs and find a strategy. Otherwise we don’t stand a chance.”

Christ at the Checkpoint

Morgan Lee of *The Christian Post* reported on the third Christ at the Checkpoint conference, held bi-annually since 2010 and sponsored by the Bethlehem Bible College (BBC). Lee noted that one of the ten points of the conference manifesto states that “racial ethnicity alone does not guarantee the benefits of the Abrahamic Covenant.” Lee wrote, “Although the BBC denies that its conference has an anti-Israel slant, stating in the conference manifesto that any solution to the conflict ‘must respect the equity and rights of Israel and Palestinian communities,’ some remain unconvinced.” Mark Tooley, president of the Institute on Religion & Democracy, said that the event represented “a wider movement, mostly confined to Evangelical elites, to neutralize a key pro-Israel constituency in America, with hopes of moving the U.S. geo-strategically towards neutrality between Israel and its enemies.” But some conference speakers said their support for Israel has not diminished. Oral Roberts University President William M. Wilson said that although he does “not agree with every tenant that Christ at the Checkpoint embraces,” he “personally supports the Jewish people and their historic right to exist as a state with Jerusalem as their capital.” World Evangelical Alliance General Secretary Geoff Tunnicliffe, said “This is not about abandoning Israel. It’s about having a fuller conversation. We’ve got to get past this whole full or against mentality. At WEA we’re for peace, for people being treated with justice and dignity. We’re not trying to be against people.”

Israpundit.org published “A Summary of Christ at the Checkpoint” by Dexter Van Zile of The Committee for Accurate Middle East Reporting (CAMERA). After Van Zile reported on several speakers who decried the violence Christians have suffered at the hands of Islamists or Muslim governments, he wrote, “But instead of holding Muslims directly accountable for the violence they perpetrated, speakers directed their ire at Israel, its Christian supporters and at Christians in both the West and the Middle East who have allegedly failed to be loving enough to Muslims who oppress and murder Christians. The conference gave its audience a heavy dose of magical thinking in which authentic expressions of Christian love toward Islamists could bring about peace and justice.” Van Zile contended that Palestinian Christians showed “obsequiousness to the Palestinian Authority” at Christ at the Checkpoint. He theorized that they have become *dhimmis*, people who must acknowledge Muslims as their social superiors and show proper deference to Islam as part of a “treaty of protection,” known as a *dhimma*. Van Zile reported that Oded Shoshani, a Jewish-born Israeli who serves as a pastor at King of Kings in Jerusalem, a Messianic congregation, addressed the issue of the Israeli-built security barrier in Bethlehem. Shoshani said that the barrier was not built “for the sake of oppressing Palestinian people,” but “for the defense of the people of Israel.”

Timothy C. Morgan wrote in *Christianity Today* about evangelical leaders at the third Christ at the Checkpoint (CATC) conference who are defending the gathering against those who criticize it as anti-Israel. Morgan’s article focused on a statement prior to the opening of the conference by Yigal Palmor, chief press aide for Israel’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). Palmor wrote, “Using religion for the purpose of incitement in the service of political interests stains the person who does it with a stain of indelible infamy.” CATC leaders were upset with the statement and met with MFA leaders, who, according to CATC, said Palmor spoke only in a personal capacity. But *Israel Today* countered, “The text Mr. Palmer sent us was explicitly labeled as an ‘official response.’” Gary M. Burge, professor of New Testament at Wheaton College, said, “The statement by the MFA concerning the checkpoint conference is tragic on so many levels: it is ill-informed . . . and the statement itself is an incitement.” The NGO Monitor’s “BDS in the Pews” program issued a report associating CATC with the Boycott-Divestment-Sanction movement (BDS). The report states, “CATC seeks to advance the Palestinian nationalist agenda within evangelical Christian churches, while simultaneously reviving theological anti-Semitic themes such as replacement theology.” Dale Hanson Bourke, author of *The Israeli-Palestine Conflict*, said, “Many [of those attending CATC] are very supportive of Israel and my understanding is that the conference is a place for discussion and debate, not propaganda or manipulation.”

Focusing on Christ at the Checkpoint, Jonathan Mark wrote in *The New York Jewish Week* about a trend among young American evangelicals toward more sympathy toward the Palestinians and less toward Israel. Mark cited an article in the December 2011 edition of *Relevant* magazine that said there would be no Three Wise Men if you “place an eight-meter high wall between the Magi and Baby Jesus.” Mark wrote, “. . . younger Evangelicals are reportedly less “text-oriented than their elders, so Israel—whose Evangelical support is driven by biblical text, with past and future promises—is at a disadvantage when juxtaposed with the Palestinian claims for social justice in the here and now.” David Brog, executive director of Christians United for Israel, said that the “anti-Israel” message “is resonating [with the younger generation.]” Lee Smith of *The Weekly Standard* wrote in *Tablet*, “If the ‘Christ at the Checkpoint’ camp wins out, the pro-Israel Jewish

community that once looked warily upon evangelical support may come to regard that movement with nostalgia.”

Legal

Haaretz reported that the Jerusalem Magistrate’s Court ordered the Messianic Jewish owners of an Israeli reception hall to pay damages to a lesbian couple after refusing to host their wedding. The owners claimed that their business has a religious character and that they should be allowed to practice freedom of religion by refusing to host a same-sex wedding. The owners said that if they were required to hold such events, they would be forced to close the reception hall. The judge declared that a reception hall is not a religious institution and must grant equal services to the public.

The Orlando (Florida) *Sun Sentinel* reported that after eleven years of court battles, Edith Rapp, 79, dropped her lawsuit against Jews for Jesus. Rapp had alleged that her stepson, Bruce Rapp, had falsely depicted her as reciting the “sinner’s prayer” and becoming a follower of Jesus in a report in the Jews for Jesus Newsletter in July 2002. The *Sentinel* reported that “Jews for Jesus’ lawyers from the Orlando firm Liberty Counsel contended Rapp couldn’t prove any damages from the publication, which the organization stood behind as being truthful.”

Morning Star News reported on the Israeli Ministry of Interior’s deportation from Israel of Jews for Jesus missionary Barry Barnett. Barnett was arrested on November 20, 2014, near Beer Sheva in southern Israel by immigration officers while participating in JFJ’s “Behold Your God” evangelistic outreach. Barnett was held in jail for four days until an immigration judge could hear his case. He was charged with “illegal missionary work,” released on bond and ordered to leave the country by December 3. The article noted that Jews for Jesus was working to get the deportation order rescinded. It detailed Barnett’s unpleasant stay in prison as well as his personal background and testimony. Barnett said he met a pastor and five other Christians in prison, which was a great encouragement. He was also able to share his faith with several people there. The article also reported on the Israel’s Ministry of Interior history of revoking citizenship and denying services to Messianic Jews and its complicity with the anti-missionary group, Yad L’Achim. Dan Sered, the Israel Director of Jews for Jesus, said that JFJ is working to overturn Barnett’s expulsion order. I expect the final outcome of the Israeli Supreme Court case that is deciding this issue will bring a new round of media to the fore.

Books of Jewish/Christian Interest

In the Religion News Service, Lauren Markoe wrote about a book by Alan Wolfe entitled *At Home in Exile: Why Diaspora is Good for the Jews*. Wolfe is the director of the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life at Boston College. Wolfe contends that Jews in the Diaspora can more easily apply Jewish values to make the world a better place (universalism) than in Israel, where he uses the term “Jewish particularism” to describe what he sees as a defensive, inward posture. Markoe wrote, “The Holocaust and the creation of Israel in 1948 turned the tide toward the particularist vision, but it’s time to turn the tide again, Wolfe argued, and this will benefit Jews and non-Jews alike, both inside and outside Israel.” Markoe also talked with Yehud Kurtzer, president of the Shalom Harman Institute of North American, who praised the

book but, in Markoe's words, "said it was simplistic to suggest that Zionism is particular and parochial and the Diaspora is universal and moral, and he argued that for all Jews, looking deeply into Judaism and its moral teachings is the key to embracing others."

Anti-Semitism

JTA reported that there were 912 anti-Semitic incidents in the United States in 2014, an increase of 21 percent over 2013, according to the Anti-Defamation League's annual report. During the war last summer between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, anti-Semitic incidents in the U.S. more than doubled compared to the same period in 2013.

USA Today reported that Jews are thriving in central Europe despite rising anti-Semitism. The authors wrote, "One major reason is that a young and more confident generation is shaping a new Jewish identity." They cited a Jewrovision song-and-dance contest in Cologne, Germany, that drew more than 1,000 Jewish young people ages 11 to 19. They quoted Diego Ornique, Europe director of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee: "The younger generation is embracing their culture and identity through informal initiatives and grass-roots movements."

The Jewish Post & Opinion reprinted remarks delivered by Professor Tammi Rossman-Benjamin of University of California Santa Cruz at a conference at Indiana University entitled "Deciphering the New Antisemitism." She stated that the anti-Israel Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) campaign was established in response to a call by Palestinian organizations to facilitate the elimination of Israel. She focused on the American Studies Association's recent adoption of a resolution boycotting Israeli universities and scholars. Rossman-Benjamin noted that several prominent academic associations have criticized the resolution on the following grounds: 1) corruption of the academic mission of the university; 2) creation of a hostile environment for Jewish students; and 3) giving academic legitimacy to global campaigns to harm Israel. She advocated for public, legal and legislative pressure against faculty and universities that endorse BDS.

In *Commentary*, Melanie Phillips wrote a piece entitled "'Jesus Was a Palestinian': The Return of Christian Anti-Semitism." She stated that "a particular demonology" called replacement theology started with the early Christian father Origen. Phillips noted that after the Holocaust, replacement theology went underground, but has now reappeared with "a fresh geopolitical impetus furnished by 'Palestinian liberation theology.'" In this theology, she stated "Jesus becomes a Palestinian persecuted by the Jews while Jesus's descendants—who knew he had any?—become today's Palestinians, crucified in the very land that was promised to them. Their liberation would, of course, require the dissolution of the Jewish state." She cited some purveyors of replacement theology, including British theologian Colin Chapman and Stephen Sizer, the vicar of Christ Church. She stated that one of the reasons progressive Christian churches have adopted an anti-Israel narrative is "the eclipse of faith." She wrote, "Increasingly unwilling or unable to preach the literal truth of scripture, they have turned themselves into campaigners for the poor and oppressed." Phillips stated that some evangelicals are adopting an anti-Israel narrative. She wrote, "An early harbinger of this change was a meeting in London in 1986 hosted by John Stott. The Lausanne Congress of World Evangelization set up a group called Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding to oppose the view that Israel was the

fulfillment of biblical prophecy. Such people subscribe to a movement that the Christian analyst Pau R. Wilkinson has termed ‘Christian Palestinianism.’” She also said that the subtext of the Christ at the Checkpoint conference was “a fusion of theologically based Christian Jew-hatred, Palestinian victimology, and a wholesale rewriting of history.”

A report issued jointly by Trinity College (Hartford, Connecticut) and the Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law (Washington, D.C.) showed that more than half of 1,157 self-identified Jewish students at 55 campuses nationwide who took part in an online survey reported having been subjected to or having witnessed anti-Semitism on their campuses. The very slight variation in the rates across the regions of the United States strongly suggested that anti-Semitism on campus is a nationwide problem. The researchers who led the survey team noted that “while anti-Semitism is often linked to anti-Zionism, this survey was undertaken in the spring of 2014, before the summer 2014 conflict in Gaza that led to a worldwide flare-up in anti-Semitism.”

Jewish Thought Pieces

Abba Tudela wrote a piece in the *Jewish Tribune* revealing that John Joseph O’Connor, the late Roman Catholic Cardinal Archbishop of New York, had a Jewish mother who converted to Catholicism at age nineteen. O’Connor’s grandfather was the rabbi of Congregation Bnai Israel in Bridgeport, Connecticut, in the 1890s. Tudela mentioned another notable Jewish Catholic, the late Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger of France. He pointed out that in addition to Messianic Jews, there are “formerly Jewish Catholics,” “formerly Jewish Buddhists,” and many Jews who joined the Russian Orthodox Church during the years of Soviet rule. Although he refers to all of these as *meshumadim* (apostates), and though *meshumad* is almost always used in a pejorative sense, Tudela asked whether they are traitors and whether the Jewish community should ostracize them or talk to them. He noted that the increasing number of intermarried families in the Jewish community makes this discussion even more imperative.

Writing in the *Huffington Post*, Jewish blogger Diane Weber Bederman stated her objection to proselytizing (with a quick mention of Jews for Jesus) because “telling another or even suggesting that their way of believing is wrong is to attack their identity.” She stated that she is equally opposed to atheists who show contempt for people who believe in God. Bederman gave statistics to counteract the oft-repeated claim that religion is the greatest cause of war and death. She noted in particular a documentary, *Martyred in the USSR*, which tells of the millions killed under atheistic Communism because they believed in God.

In *Moment* magazine, Sarah Posner wrote about Abraham Foxman’s retirement in 2015 from his position as national director of the Anti-Defamation League. Posner said that Foxman has “failed to keep up with fundamental changes in American Jewish attitudes, particularly with increasingly diverse views on what it means to be ‘pro-Israel.’” She stated that Foxman was dismissive of the Pew survey’s findings that showed a declining attachment among American Jews to Israel and greater opposition among younger Jews to Israel’s occupation of the West Bank. Posner wrote, “In picking Foxman’s successor, the ADL has the opportunity to reshape how Jewish organizations respond to changes in American Jewish attitudes toward Israel.”

In *The Jewish Daily Forward*, Leonard Fein (who died in August 2014 at the age of 80) wrote that the decision by the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations to reject JStreet's application for membership was "perverse" and "pathetic." Fein blamed some of the opposition to JStreet on Alan Dershowitz, "who insists that JStreet is analogous to Jews for Jesus, that it is entirely deceptive in its outreach, that it cannot honestly claim to be pro-Israel." He concluded: "JStreet's bid for membership was supported by the Reform movement, the Conservative moment, the Reconstructionist movement and the anti-Defamation League. So where's the real mainstream?"

Writing in *The Jerusalem Post*, Isi Leibler wrote about the failure of J Street to gain admission into the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations. Leibler said that J Street was embittered by that failure and launched a campaign seeking to portray itself as a martyr that was, in Leibler's words, "blackballed by a fanatically rightwing Jewish establishment which is blindly supportive of Israel." Leibler said these are false allegations. He said the argument for J Street's inclusion "presupposes that an organization primarily created with the express purpose of serving as a vehicle to express support for Israel (Presidents Conference) should take under its umbrella organizations committed to opposing its *raison d'etre*." He added, "If J Street's self-description as 'pro-Israel' is to be accepted, we must truly be living in wonderland."

In the *Jewish Journal*, Dennis Prager wrote that "American Jews have become the most active ethnic or religious group in American attempting to remove God and religion from the public square." He gave four reasons: 1) antipathy to Christianity; 2) They feel "excluded" when Christianity is expressed in public; 3) antipathy to religion generally: "Most Jews are little more positively disposed to Orthodox Judaism than they are to traditional Christianity"; and (4) a fervent belief in secularism. Prager said that reason #1 is foolish, as American Christianity, in contrast to European Christianity, has treated Jews well. In response to reason #2, he stated that Jews would be less secure in a de-Christianized America, as Judeo-Christian values would be gone. Prager said that reasons #3 and #4 "represent Jewish tragedies."

Mark Oppenheimer wrote an opinion piece for *Moment* magazine about the increasing number of Jews marrying non-Jews. According to the Pew survey, 58 percent of Jews married since 2005 have a non-Jewish spouse. Oppenheimer looked at the trends in endogamous marriage (marriage between two people of the same religion) and asked, "How much is this a problem of Jewish continuity, and how much is it a problem of religious continuity in America?" He cited a 2007 survey showing that among mainline Protestants, only 55 percent are married to someone from their own "denominational family." Oppenheimer suggested that the two communities talk with each other about their common quandary. He contended that "because there is still a strong cultural component to Judaism, the Jew is probably more compelled by the idea of endogamy." Oppenheimer sees intermarriage as a negative for the Jewish community.

Rabbi Noam E. Marans wrote a piece in *The New York Jewish Week* entitled "Pope Francis, Chagall and Asher Lev." He recounted the paintings of the crucifixion by Chaim Potok's fictional character, Asher Lev, and the reaction against his paintings by his Orthodox Jewish parents. Marans said that Asher Lev's struggles resurfaced for Marans when he visited New York's Jewish Museum to see an exhibit, "Chagall: Love, War and Exile," which featured some

of Chagall's Jewish Jesuses. Marans pointed out that one of those paintings, "White Crucifixion," is the Chagall work that Pope Francis admires most. Marans theorized that in that painting, "Chagall may have been simultaneously communicating that the Jew was once again being martyred, and that it was the Church's persecution of Jews in the name of Christ that had enabled the Nazi crimes." Marans wrote that although we don't know why that work is the Pope's favorite, "Pope Francis, a friend of the Jewish people who has reflected on the horrors of the Holocaust and Christian complicity, would not knowingly be callous toward Jewish sensitivities."

David Lyle Jeffrey wrote in *First Things* about the Jewish and Christian symbolism in Marc Chagall's work. He focused on the speculation and controversy over Pope Francis's admiration for the *White Crucifixion*. Jeffrey wrote that some Catholics believe the Pope has betrayed an "ecumenical syncretism," while some Jewish commentators think he does not understand the uniquely Jewish and, in their opinion, anti-Christian character of the painting. Jeffrey wrote, "I do want to propose that [the Pope's] declared affection for Chagall's juxtaposition of the Jewish people as the suffering servant and Jesus as the crucified redeemer suggests a deep identification with the suffering of the Jews, which he perhaps includes in his contemplation of the cross. Jeffrey pointed out that Chagall painted the *White Crucifixion* after he learned about Kristallnacht. He also wrote poems expressing his grief and fear at the time. In the last stanza of "Mayne Trern" (My Tears), he wrote (translated):

I carry my cross every day,
I am led by the hand and driven on,
Night darkens around me.
Have you abandoned me, my God? Why?

Jeffrey noted that the last line reflects Psalm 22:1, while the first line reflects Luke 9:23. He wrote, "Here, as in his paintings, the two treatments are drawn together in a personal expression of spiritual distress." Jeffrey also pointed out that in Chagall's *Sacrifice of Isaac*, which includes a background crucifixion scene, the ram is not entangled in a thicket, but in the roots of a tree, evoking the cross.

Comedian Jackie Mason wrote a piece for *The Jerusalem Post* entitled "Thank God for the Republican Gentiles," stating that "without them, nobody in America would think Israel should defend itself from Hamas." He wrote, "It is amazing that while Hamas rains rockets on the State of Israel, the guilt-ridden liberal Jews of America can't find any reason to condemn it."

Herb Silverman wrote "Who Is a Jew? What Is a Christian?" for faithstreet.com. He noted the disagreements with the Jewish community about who is a Jew. Silverman, born to a Jewish mother, is an atheist. He cited the Pew Survey result that 62 percent of American Jews say being Jewish is mainly a matter of ancestry and culture, while only 15 percent say it's a matter of religion. He added, "I am hard-pressed to name a pious Jew, dead or alive, who is a household name worldwide—except for Jesus." After trying to define what a Christian is, he turned to Messianic Jews. He pointed out that "ultra-Orthodox Jews have more religious beliefs in common with Messianic Jews than with atheist Jews like me." He added, "So Jews are generally fine with Jews who don't believe in God, but are concerned and embarrassed by Jews who believe that God has a son."

Jewish Holidays

Writing for the *Religious News Service*, Rabbi A. James Rudin, noted that the Last Supper “was like an early version of what later became the Passover seder meal.” He then described his experience in anonymously attending Christian and Protestant Good Friday services in New York over the years. He was particularly curious how preachers would handle the references to the Jewish people in the Gospel of John. In some churches, he found the preachers blamed the Jews and said they merited eternal punishment. In other “positive sermons,” the preachers focused on the meaning of Jesus’ death for our own age. After Passover and Easter, Rudin asked to meet with the preachers. Many asked him why they didn’t tell them he was coming. He asked if that would have changed their preaching. Many said, “I would have changed my message so I didn’t offend you.” Rudin responded, “Imagine the Jews, the kinsfolk of Jesus, are physically present at all your services, not just on Good Friday.”

The Atlantic published a mostly sympathetic feature article by Emma Green entitled, “Hanukkah with the Jews for Jesus.” Green attended a Jews for Jesus Hanukkah party at the Washington, D.C. branch. Her article presented an accurate history of Jews for Jesus, including quotes from Executive Director David Brickner. She told part of the testimony of Stephen Katz, North American director. She wrote of the hostility that is directed at Jews for Jesus by other Jews who see its message as a threat, but added that “Jews for Jesus still seems to have a good sense of humor about its work.” As evidence, the article included reproductions of a few of the ministry’s Hanukkah/Christmas postcards, one depicting a reindeer with menorah antlers. Green also detailed JFJ’s ministry in Israel. Green found the 30-40 Jewish believers she met at the party to be very open about their lives and welcoming toward her. She wrote of them, “Occasionally, when people heard I’m Jewish, they would ‘casually’ suggest that I try reading the New Testament. Maybe in another context, this would have felt threatening. But it didn’t. That is part of who they are, just as being Jewish in my own, complicated way is part of who I am.”

Mark Woods wrote an article for *Christian Today* entitled, “Should Christians Celebrate Passover?” He noted that the Passover has increasingly been incorporated into Christian worship, especially during Holy Week. But he pointed out that some Jews feel this is inappropriate, that Christians are taking something that doesn’t belong to them and making it their own and treating Judaism as some sort of “spiritual fossil.” Rabbi Natan Levy, who represents the Board of Deputies of British Jews (BOD) said, “There’s a difference between learning about a separate tradition and appropriating it, saying it’s ours—that’s wrong.” Rabbi Levy added: “If you are engaging with the Haggadah, it’s a learning process. If not, it’s a rewriting.” The Book of Worship of the United Methodist Church says, “Celebrating the modern meal without a Jewish family as host is an affront to Jewish tradition and sometimes creates misunderstanding about the meaning of the Lord’s Supper.” The Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Council of Churches and Jews expressed similar misgivings about a “Christian” seder. Woods interviewed a Jewish Christian, Terence Russoff, who conducts seder services for Christians. “I talk about how what we’re doing is a forerunner, looking ahead to what Christ did,” he explained. Russoff, some of whose own family are Orthodox Jews, added, “They’d only jibe if they thought we were mocking it. If we’re doing it to help people understand, they wouldn’t mind.”

Potpourri

Aaron Abramson of Jews for Jesus wrote a blog on *FaithStreet.com* entitled “Stuff Christians Say that Makes Jewish People Cringe.” Among the offensive statements Abramson cited are “So, you’re a Jew?”; “Jews love money”; and “I always wanted to be Jewish!” He concluded, “Working to dissolve harmful attitudes and stereotypes can change our relationships with those around us. Why alienate people? Why cause offense? The gospel itself does enough of that. Let’s not create more.”

Tablet published a feature article about the Hebrew Roots movement, whose followers it described as “Torah-observant gentiles.” The writer, Meachem Kaiser, noted that “the movement’s central belief is that the Torah is still binding.” He added, “Hebrew Roots, then, is arguably the first non-Jewish movement to approach Torah the way contemporary Jews do.” Kaiser pointed out, “Whether believers of Christ must follow Mosaic law is an argument that’s been going on since the Apostles.” The article focused on Revive 2013, a Hebrew Roots conference held in Dallas. Kaiser interviewed several leaders of the movement attending the conference.

Lilly Fowler wrote a feature article for the Religion News Service about Lutherans in Jewish Evangelism (LIJE), part of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. Fowler focused on Messianic Congregation Chai v’ Shalom in St. Louis, led by the Rev. Kevin Parviz, a Jewish believer. Parviz said the long-term goal of LIJE is to establish a Messianic congregation in every U.S. city with a significant Jewish population. The article also highlighted The Apple of His Eye Mission Society, led by Steve Cohen and also in St. Louis, which was established as a complementary ministry to LIJE.

Texas Jewish Post columnist Harriet P. Gross wrote of her annoyance at receiving a letter during Passover season containing a copy of *ISSUES: A Messianic Jewish Perspective* (a Jews for Jesus evangelistic publication), along with a cover letter stating that someone had (anonymously) signed her up to receive the free publication. Gross was particularly perturbed that the sender was anonymous. She wrote, “I am not going to attempt answering someone(s) unknown.” [Note: Matt Sieger, editor of *ISSUES*, upon reading Gross’s column, wrote to her and invited her to contact him. He has not heard back.]

The Huffington Post published a brief article about David Berkowitz, the notorious serial killer known as the “Son of Sam.” The article noted that Berkowitz was raised Jewish, but it incorrectly asserted that “he joined Jews for Jesus” in prison. Berkowitz was recently denied parole, but he has never attended his parole hearings. According to his lawyer, Berkowitz said he does not attend the parole hearings because “Jesus has already freed my heart, soul and mind and has forgiven me.”

New Voices, a U.S. national magazine written and published by and for Jewish college students, published a piece about B’rith Sholom, a Hillel International affiliated group on the campus of South Dakota State University. About half of the club, which currently has nine members, has generally been composed of Messianic Jews. Two traditional Jewish students started the club in

2012 and accepted Messianic Jews into the group. A Hillel spokesperson told *New Voices* that the organization has no policy on Messianic Jewish participation at its branches. One of the Messianic Jewish members, Andy Engelmann, estimates that of the approximately 150 Jews in South Dakota, 50 are Messianic!

A story from JTA noted that South Dakota, which has only 345 Jews, does not have a Chabad chapter. The article mentioned the Hillel group at South Dakota State University, which “draws a mix of Jews and Messianics.” The article stated, “Messianic Jews identify as Jewish and engage in Jewish ritual, but because they accept Jesus as the Messiah, they are not considered Jewish by mainstream denominations.”

On a website called ScaryMommy.com, Meredith Hale, who is Jewish and married to a Catholic, wrote about answering questions about God from their five-year old daughter. She said that neither she or her husband are “practicing” their religion, and, with Christmas approaching, she is apprehensive about explaining Jesus to her daughter. She wrote, “This will be the first time that we have to explain to her that Mommy and Daddy don’t agree, that we have two different beliefs with not much middle ground.” Hale added, “As my daughter is in a ‘Mommy phase,’ she’ll probably side with me on this one. Old Testament one, New Testament zero. Of course, when she enters her rebellious teenage years, she’ll get back at Mommy by joining Jews for Jesus, or, even more shocking, declaring she doesn’t really like gefilte fish.”

Via an interview in *WORLD* magazine, Marvin Olasky shared the testimony of Jewish believer Lon Solomon, senior pastor at McLean Bible Church in Northern Virginia. Lon spoke openly of his sinful behavior in high school and at the University of North Carolina, calling himself a “classic sociopath” who used and dealt drugs and experimented with Eastern religions. He considered suicide when nothing brought him peace. Lon then met Bob Eckhart, who preached via a megaphone on campus, handed out tracts, and gave Lon a Bible. When Lon came to Matthew 11:28, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,” he gave his life to Jesus.

Deborah Ross penned a humorous piece for *The Times* (UK) entitled “Reasons Why It’s Good to Be Jewish.” She wrote that although it may be a bad time for Jews in light of the rising levels of anti-Semitism, it is still good to be a Jew. Her reasons include: “You can stand out in the *Yellow Pages* by advertising your services as 24/6.”; “You will not be required to type ‘o’ as often as other religions.”; “You can piss your parents off in a single stroke by saying you are thinking of joining Jews for Jesus.”

Writing in *The Jewish Daily Forward*, Josh Nathan-Kazis made the case that Jews dominate podcasting. He rattled off a list of the top podcasts in iTunes, which, he said, “reads like a passenger manifest on the Exodus.” He noted, however, that the podcasts themselves are generally not Jewish, or only narrowly touch on Jewish topics. “It’s a golden age of Jewish podcasters, then,” he wrote, “but no golden age of Jewish podcasts.” He concluded: “So what does it mean that Jews dominate podcasting? As they say on that Wisconsin Public Radio show and podcast ‘Whad’Ya Know?’, hosted by Michael Feldman (also Jewish!): ‘Not much!’”

Samuel Smadja wrote an article for *Charisma* in honor of his father, Victor Smadja, who passed away after a long battle with cancer on December 25, 2014. Samuel briefly shared his father's testimony and his decision to move with his wife, Suzy, from Tunisia to Israel in 1956 to share Yeshua with the Jewish people. Samuel wrote about Victor's work in leading young-adult conferences, overseeing children and youth summer camps, and establishing Dolphin Publishing, the first Messianic publishing company in Israel. Victor also helped establish Messianic Assembly, the first Messianic congregation in Israel, and served as one of its spiritual leaders. Samuel wrote, "Many Israeli Messianics—several hundred—owe Victor a tremendous debt for laying the cornerstones of the Messianic body in Israel, as well as for leading them to faith."

Attorney John Mauck wrote a tribute to Jhan Moskowitz in the Mauck & Baker LLC Religious Freedom Newsletter. Jhan (1948-2012) was one of the founding member of Jews for Jesus and helped lead a Bible study for attorneys with Mauck in downtown Chicago. Mauck described Jhan as a "former-Jewish-hippie-turned-Jesus-follower" whose "radical conversion to Christianity in the early '70s was the part of the revolution of Jewish youth who became believers and founded Jews for Jesus." Jhan and his wife, Melissa, served as missionaries at the Jews for Jesus Chicago branch. Mauck met Jhan and asked him to lead a small Bible study. That Bible study of attorneys grew steadily. When Jhan and Melissa moved to New York City in the mid 80s, other Jews for Jesus staff in Chicago, including current Executive Director David Brickner, took up the Bible study where Jhan had left off. Four years later, Jhan returned to Chicago and resumed his role as the primary teacher of the Bible study. Jhan taught through the book of Acts three times, with three different approaches. Those teachings became the foundation for Mauck's book, *Paul on Trial: the Book of Acts as a Defense of Christianity*. The Bible study continues today.

Jeffrey Goldberg penned a lengthy feature article for *The Atlantic* entitled, "Is it Time for the Jew to Leave Europe?" He wrote: "For half a century, memories of the Holocaust limited anti-Semitism on the Continent. That period has ended—the recent fatal attacks in Pars and Copenhagen are merely the latest examples of rising violence against Jews. Renewed vitriol among right-wing fascists and new threats from radicalized Islamists have created a crisis, confronting Jews with an agonizing choice."

Huffington Post – interview with Susan Perlman, a rabbi, an imam and a Catholic priest over Christmas week answering the question: What does Jesus mean to you?