

## 2021 LCJE Media Report

This year's summary of our movement in the news will be a lot more extensive inasmuch as we haven't met together as a North American network of LCJE in three years. Also, because our international meeting was in Toronto, we suspended a regional meeting that year as well.

But I don't want to overdo what is presented here today. You will have access to the largest selection of clippings. Me and my team have created a file of the clippings with links to, and precise descriptions of each article. They will also be up on the LCJE website shortly.

So here we go with highlights in the following categories:

- Anti-Semitism
- God TV
- Anti-Missionaries
- Jewish Believer Stories
- Messianic Jews and Politics
- Books of Interest
- Jews and Evangelicals
- What Academics Are Saying About Us
- Innovation in Jewish Missions
- Thought Pieces by Jewish Writers
- Potpourri

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 your input to add to the mix for these reports.

### **Anti-Semitism**

If ever there was a time when anti-Semitism has played a role in recent history, it's been in recent months. A survey on Anti-Semitism was released in October of 2020 by the American Jewish Committee. The AJC was established as a defense organization back in 1906 in response to the massacres of Jews in Kishinev in 1903 and 1905. Its founding mandate was "...to prevent the infraction of the civil and religious rights of Jews, in any part of the world" and "...to render all lawful assistance" to those Jews whose rights were threatened."

Here we are one hundred and sixteen years later with similar concerns. This survey focused on American Jews. Nine out of ten surveyed believe anti-Semitism is a problem here. One in three American Jews (37%) say they were the target of anti-Semitism in the past five years. Another interesting statistic relates to the link between hostility

toward Israel and anti-Semitism. Over 85% of Jewish respondents believe that a statement like, "Israel has no right to exist" is anti-Semitic and 75% of the general public agree. My mind then begs the question, what alternative explanation would the 15 & 25 percent respectively think that statement means when Israel is the home to the largest population of Jews?

But let me move on to some other articles in this category.

Michael Brown makes an eloquent case for a Messianic Jewish position on this subject in *Voices in the Christian Post* in January of 2020: Brown says "An attack against a secular Jew or a traditional Jew is also an attack against us." He points out that the attack on Lev HaShem Messianic Synagogue in Cary, NC, in August of 2019 was an attack against Jews, albeit Messianic Jews. Two months earlier, Beth Abraham, another messianic congregation had its building in Denver vandalized with a swastika. I believe these incidents gave Jewish leaders pause who say we are no longer Jewish. Yet clearly, we are targeted as Jews by anti-Semites.

Not to leave Canada out of the mix, B'nai Brith of Canada reported a rise in incidents by 27%. Incidents in Ontario were up 62.8% and 12.3% in Quebec. According to their director, the Corona virus is "only making Jew hatred worse." Rumors spread that Israel developed the COVID-19 virus to boost the pharmaceutical industry and that Orthodox Jews are deliberately spreading the virus.

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance put out their definition of anti-Semitism which has been formally adopted by the governments of the UK, Germany, Italy, Hungary, the US, the European Parliament, and others. It's rather long and prescriptive, but if you haven't seen it, it is included in the media packet.

A few other articles in the packet that I won't comment on extensively now due to time constraints, include the Boteach/Brown debate on whether the New Testament is anti-Semitic. Spoiler alert: It isn't.

Then there was the Church of England historic anti-Semitism report in November of 2019, which got mixed reviews from the rabbis in the UK because it failed to address Jewish evangelism. Thank you, bishops. And the Christianity Today article a year later which reported on German evangelicals and their stand against anti-Semitism while at the same time pointing out that Nazi theology might not be a thing of the past.

I'll conclude this section by pointing to an op ed piece in an obscure Kentucky newspaper, the Lexington Herald Reader. It touched me, because it was written by a pastor who was also a religion writer. He makes the case against Christian anti-Semitism by giving the basis for Jesus' Jewishness and then ends with, "Without Jews we don't have our Bible as we know and love it. Without Jews there would be no

Jesus. Without Jews there would be no Christianity. To hate Jews is to hate your own spiritual forbears. And your Savior. It's beyond absurd..."

## **God TV**

What do you do as an evangelical broadcaster who secures a seven-year TV license in Israel with HOT, Israel's main cable provider? 700,000 Israeli households subscribe to HOT. Do you tell the world that your aim is convince Jews to accept Jesus as their Messiah? I think if they could have done a do over, and perhaps consulted with the LCJE, their initial approach might have been softer. Nevertheless, the flurry from May to July of 2020 and the strategy of those who oppose the gospel in Israel played out and Israel's God TV channel called Shelanu is no longer permitted to broadcast in Israel. The reason given was that their original application was misleading. But it was the concerted efforts of the government and anti-missionary groups that waged the shutdown campaign, not the subscribers to the cable channel.

Some notable quotes from the believers in Israel include:

Ron Cantor, CEO of Tikkun International, "They claim that the channel that I'm quite sure they've never seen, is proselytizing. But that is not correct. On Shelanu TV in addition to teachings, interviews and worship music, Israelis who believe in Yeshua, share their stories."

Asher Intrater of Revive Israel Ministries, "Shelanu is not an import coming from outside. It is speaking to us from the inside, sharing to our people, heart to heart."

Dan Sered of Jews for Jesus, "It's my hope that the opposition Shelanu is getting will be met with reason as it goes to the courts." Regardless of the channel's fate, Sered hopes any legal ruling won't have implications for Hebrew-language gospel content online. The Internet has brought a lot of Israelis to view and be challenged by the message of Yeshua.

Jamie Cowen, Messianic Jewish Israeli lawyer, "The reality is that Jews believe all kinds of different things and are subject to all kinds of programming that pushed various views. This is a huge open door—as long as the government doesn't shut it down."

Sadly, they did. Shelanu hasn't gone away totally. It can still be accessed online and Hebrew language content is still going out. But this one was a win for the anti-missionaries. No doubt about it.

## **Anti-Missionaries**

Speaking of anti-missionaries, I've included over 20 clippings that reflect on activities of groups like Yad L'achim, Jews for Judaism and Beyneynu as well as local activists who consider it a worthy avocatio to make life challenging for those involved in witness to Jewish people.

Back in May of 2019, Rivkah and David Costello were accused by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency of infiltrating West Rogers Park in Chicago posing as "frum Yids." David is quoted as saying, "We actually keep the Torah and the mitzvahs. We actually have an Orthodox life in our house and every day of our life, and they are saying that it's simply to deceive and to bring people to Jesus."

In November of 2020, Glen and Pauline Plummer from Detroit with the Church of God in Christ were outed by Beyneynu and Tovia Singer who warned, "He is going to baptize the people here in Israel."

Eitan Bar, only days after a well-viewed debate online with Rabbi Chaim Shitrit on the Oral Law, was slapped with a quarter of a million-dollar lawsuit by parties who want One for Israel to take down all evangelistic videos promoting Jesus in Hebrew.

Fast forward to later in April, when Jewish press around the globe reported on Michael Elk. The Jerusalem Post put it this way "In an extraordinary tale of what appears to be furtive and clandestine religious infiltration, a "rabbi," "scribe," and "mohel" posing as an ultra-Orthodox Jew in the French Hill neighborhood of Jerusalem has recently been exposed as an apparent covert missionary and member of the Messianic movement."

While we are not here to pass judgment, and the characterization of these people has come from sources who would like nothing more than to discredit us, we as a movement have standards of ethics, and we've even brought papers here at LCJE explaining our position. Michael Brown wrote a piece for the Christian Post on May 4<sup>th</sup> of this year where he articulated some of those positions with quotes from One for Israel, Chosen People Ministries, Jews for Jesus and Israel College of the Bible. Particularly as we minister among the Orthodox, how we can be both contextual as well as clear on who we are, would make for a good paper at our next get together.

Globally, the opposition continues. The Jewish Agency cut its ties with Chaim Malespin's Return Ministries (a Canadian ministry) after pressure was brought to bear from Beyneynu who accused them of proselytizing new olim.

Several Messianic congregations and schools in Israel are under regular harassment from official and unofficial anti-missionaries. I've included several clippings on this.

Yad L'achim sends a team every Rosh Hashanah to the Ukraine to oppose Messianic Jews in Uman, the home of the founder of Breslav Judaism, Rabbi Nachman.

Shalom Initiative in the UK calls out missionary activity as well. Their director, Stephen Jaffe, says that there are 15 or so registered charities in the UK that "exist exclusively to convert Jews to Christianity and they have raised more than 35 million pounds in the past five years." Mentioned are Messianic Testimony, Jews for Jesus, CMJ, and Eurovision which focus on converting Holocaust survivors. He also commends Christian Friends of Israel, Int'l Christian Embassy, Project Ebenezer, and Christians United for Israel who do not engage in proselytism.

Breaking news just last week, the Bram Center in downtown Jerusalem and its founder, Boaz Michael, First Fruits of Zion (FFOZ), are being charged with having a missionary agenda. Yad L'achim admits that Boaz says who he is on their Facebook page, but wants the Jewish public to beware of him and others. They cite Tim Buckles, who Beyneynu calls part of a sleeper cell of Christian missionaries who infiltrate Orthodox communities in Jerusalem as part of the FFOZ team. It's as cloak and dagger as you can get with dossiers being sent to the Ministry of the Interior. This story is still breaking.

To give you a little of the flavor of the anti-missionary rhetoric, I'm going to play a short clip of a Beyneynu: <https://youtube.com/watch?v=wxuhFZpAXJg>  
(Do this from the beginning to 2:40 ending with (...the dangers these missionaries pose)

What is our response?

"What does the Jewish community want from Jewish followers of Jesus?" Michael Brown's four-page opinion piece in the June 4 [Christian Post](#) is a fantastic response to the anti-missionaries' unreasonable criticism of our movement. His point: criticize our theology or our view on rabbinic traditions, but don't call us deceptive. He points out the double standard: "When we reject Jewish tradition, we are told we are committing spiritual suicide, cutting ourselves off from our history and people. When we honor Jewish tradition, we are told we are imposters of the worst kind." This piece on anti-missionary hypocrisy and double standards is worth your read.

Pray for brothers like Boaz. Be faithful witnesses, be filled with God's grace, and recognize that there are seekers out there that want the good news that Yeshua has to offer.

## **Jewish Believer Stories**

This brings me to an upbeat section of stories of people and circumstances from which we want to take encouragement.

Charisma did a great feature article on Eddie Santoro, senior pastor of Jerusalem's Ahavat Yeshua congregation who died of brain cancer in June of 2019. Beloved by the whole movement in Israel, you'll enjoy reading about his legacy. While Eddie was Italian, he married Jackie, a Jew, and made the Jewish people his own.

Then there is the testimony of Jay Sekulow, who came to know the Lord when he was a law student. Because of his involvement in the Trump administration, and his co-leading of the impeachment trial defense, Mark Pinsky of the Jewish Forward of New York interviewed Jay. As you read this January 2020 interview, you'll see how much of his uncensored testimony is there for Jewish readers to read. Pinsky says Sekulow describes himself a "a nice Jewish boy" and "a reasonable fanatic." He then goes on to say of Jay, "He is a Messianic Jew, brought to the belief that Jesus is the son of God through an organization called Jews for Jesus." His story was highly profiled in the Jewish press. Religion News Service also did an interview that was carried by dozens of major papers.

Christianity Today profiled Anatoli Uschomirski in August 2020, an atheist Jew from Kiev who came to faith after reading Stan Telchin's Betrayed sent to him by a Messianic congregation in Kiev. He and his wife left Kiev for Germany in 1992 and landed in Stuttgart where he started a Messianic home group that grew into a congregation and he now heads an organization in Germany with four Messianic congregations under his supervision. It's exciting to me to see Christianity Today readers exposed to stories like his.

For those who aren't Bob Dylan aficionados, this legendary songwriter, iconic musician, born Robert Alan Zimmerman turned 80 on May 24th. A thoughtful article in BeliefNet.com called, "The Incredible Faith of Bob Dylan" includes quotes from Dylan on his faith. While some have speculated he is no longer professing faith, Dylan reported that he still believes in Jesus.

A few more "feel good" stories. Israel Pochtar and Beit Hallel in Ashdod won a restraining order against Yad L'Achim after nine years of harassment.

The first-ever political party (Gush Hatankhi/Bible Bloc) was established in 2019 with the potential for Christian and Messianic Jewish candidates to be a part of the Knesset.

And the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission dismissed a discrimination in hiring charge brought by a non-believer who sought a social media position with Jews for Jesus. Defended by the Liberty Counsel, Matt Staver, Liberty's chairman, said,

“religious organizations have the right to make a good faith determination of who qualifies as their ministers.”

Finally, a few articles on New York Times writer, David Brooks, who published a memoir of his spiritual journey, “The Second Mountain: The Quest for the Moral Life.” He describes himself as “a wandering Jew and a confused Christian.” He is married to a Christian woman who comes from an evangelical background, yet he sees himself as living in “dramatic contradiction.” His belief in the resurrection of Jesus “comes and goes.” But his story gives some great insight into contemporary Jews who are looking for spiritual meaning.

The next category is:

### **Messianic Jews and Politics**

One of the most interesting articles to come out on this topic was written by Jonathan Tobin who is the editor in chief of Jewish News Syndicate and writes for National Review, Haaretz and the New York Post. The August 2019 article in Haaretz, was titled “Meet Donald Trump’s least disloyal Jews”.

In the article Tobin points to the genesis of this connection going back to 2015 when Trump met with 40 evangelical pastors and televangelists and a video was released with Messianic rabbi Kirt Schneider giving the priestly blessing in Hebrew over him.

In 2016, the Alliance for Israel Advocacy was founded by Paul Liberman as an arm of the MJAA with the goal of promoting a single Jewish state in Israel. Articles on AIA made their way into several Jewish publications. According to an Israel Today article, Joel Chernoff said that “promises were made to walk a bill into Congress for a “soon-to-be-released Peace Plan.”

The article goes on to point out that the closest Messianic Jew to Trump is Jay Sekulow. And they link the article to Jay’s testimony. Tobin also points out that after the Pittsburgh, Tree of Life Synagogue massacre, in 2018, Pence invited a rabbi on stage at a Michigan rally to pray for the victims. The rabbi turned out to be Loren Jacobs who invoked the name of Jesus as Messiah in his prayer which set off a number of articles from the Jewish press that were less than flattering.

Yet it concludes with this quote from Tobin, “Breaking the Messianic taboo was not only a political necessity but entirely sensible. Messianics may continue to make most Jews uncomfortable. But in a world where anti-Semitism and BDS are on the rise, Israel can’t pick its friends.”

Messianic Jew Jonathan Cahn's book *The Harbinger* catapulted him to the best seller lists and his subsequent books on prophesy replaying today took him further into the stratosphere. He was regularly linked with Trump supporters and he characterized Trump "like his ancient predecessors" a "flawed vessel used by God". An article taking this theme further by Sam Kestenbaum of the New York Times is called, "Preaching the Gospel according to Trump."

More recently, the January 2021 demonstrations at the Capitol building in Washington DC put our movement in limelight. Shofar blowing on the Jericho march was prominent. Then among those arrested with the January 6<sup>th</sup> event was a former admin employee in Jews for Jesus's web department and an MJAA Messianic Rabbi from Tampa Bay. There was extensive coverage of the messianic rabbi.

In a completely different direction on Messianic Jews and politics, in October of 2020, the Knesset voted to deny missionaries in Israel any tax benefits. Headed up by Finance chairman Moshe Gafni who is also head of the Ultra-Orthodox party, United Torah Judaism, Gafni said, "These non-profits conduct missionary activities aimed at getting Jews to convert out of the religion and we are against approving tax breaks for them."

### **Books of Interest**

*Rabbinic Judaism Debunked: The Myth of the Oral Law* by Eitan Bar and Golan Brosh is circulating in Israel and the country's largest online book retailer, E-vrit (the equivalent of Amazon books here) has refused to remove it despite protests from ultra-Orthodox sources. E-vrit is owned by the newspaper Yediot Ahronot.

You have to hear the rationale that E-vrit gave the Orthodox for not removing the book: "Our audience is characterized by being a mostly digital book readers and residents of the secular Tel Aviv area. The ultra-Orthodox and members of religious Zionism, the audience that might be offended by the contents of the book, don't use our service and therefore do not affect us financially. But secular people for whom the aforementioned values of freedom are important, do. Removing the book from our site could therefore have a negative impact on our image and harm us financially." The Orthodox didn't buy it.

*The Messiah Controversy: Who are the Jews Waiting For?* This Hebrew-language book is by Professor Israel Knohl of the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem. Knohl has a reputation for finding unconventional explanations for faith issues and has no compunctions about angering his colleagues along the way. He believes that Jesus' trial was an intra-Jewish conflict, with the Sadducees not believing in a suffering or resurrected Messiah whereas he maintains the Pharisees held a quasi-divine status for the Messiah. He goes on to say that if the Pharisees had tried Jesus he would have

been acquitted. There's much more to the argument you'll have to read in the 8-page article.

*The Green Velvet Missionary: God stories from a Jewish believer* by Steven Barry Kaplan hit Amazon's best seller list in June of 2020, climbing to number one in the Christian ministry, Messianic Judaism and Jewish Life categories. Personally, I haven't read it, but I am impressed it got such recognition. Kaplan is licensed as a Southern Baptist interfaith evangelism specialist on Judaism.

And finally, a book by Giles Fraser titled, *Chosen: Lost and Found Between Christianity and Judaism*. Fraser is an Anglican priest in south London. He was raised with little understanding of his Jewish roots. He tells his personal story along with the story of how Christianity and Judaism went in different directions. Married to an Israeli Jew, he is bringing up his son to speak Hebrew. He is uncomfortable around Messianic Jews because he sees himself as a Jewish Christian who existed before the split with the synagogue at the end of the first century.

### **Jews and Evangelicals**

We Know Not What They Speak: Evangelical Wordplay, Parts 1 & 2 started in the Jewish Press in March of 2020 and finished in July of that year. Written by Donny Fuchs, this two-part article is intended to give Jewish readers the writer's spin on what an evangelical is. For example, in part one he points out the "Evangelicals evangelize" and that there is no such creature as a non-evangelizing evangelical. (I wish it were so). He then points out that "Despite denials by partnering with evangelical leaders and organizations, a number of today's Jewish scholars, community leaders and activists are collaborating with missionaries." The second part of the article deals with what evangelicals provide to the Jewish community and the theological meanings and agenda behind evangelical terminology. While Fuchs clearly has an agenda of his own, it is helpful to see how he ascribes motives to evangelicals that are not there.

A tribute in memory of Yechiel Eckstein who died February 6, 2019, appeared in the New York Jewish Week later that month discussing Eckstein's relationship with the evangelical world. He struck out on his own in 1981. He appeared on Christian television and telethons and his persona was such that evangelicals took to this rabbi like no other. He brought his organization to the place where evangelicals responded to the amount of \$140 million annually — the only problem was that the recipients of their gifts didn't know it was coming from evangelical Christians who believe Jesus is not only their Messiah, but the Messiah of the Jewish people.

A Haaretz feature on March 8<sup>th</sup> of this year entitled, How Christian evangelical money and biblical prophecy are driving immigration to Israel. "Aliyah funding is increasingly being 'outsourced' as Jewish money is drying up. So, when a Boeing 787 landed in

Israel this past February each Ethiopian immigrant on board was financed (\$1,300 each) by the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem." Other costs like relocation were also paid by Christian groups.

Groups like the Aliyah Korea Movement helps place Jews from other places to Israel. This Korean-based evangelical group raised \$350,000, more than enough to bring 300 French Jews over and 120 immigrants from Kazakhstan. The article goes on to give a more extensive look at how new immigrants are funded by Christian groups since traditional sources are on the decrease. Abraham Foxman, director of the ADL, is unhappy with the state of affairs: "If we have to outsource Zionism to the Christians, then we've failed in what we're about."

In this section is also a well written blog, "Why Evangelical Christians are Obsessed with Israel." Then there is the breaking article on June 4 in the [Jerusalem Post](#).

[Jerusalem Post](#) article dated June 6, 2021: "Bennett under attack by Evangelical leader for helping oust Netanyahu." Mike Evans, the founder of Friends of Zion Heritage Center in Jerusalem, says he wrote a letter to Bennett and Lapid which has been widely circulated on social media and pro-Israel websites. In it he lashed out at Bennett for not sticking with Netanyahu and helping him form a coalition. "Don't ever call yourself a defender of Zion. You're not." Evans wrote. "You betrayed the very principles that a generation gave their blood for and died for."

Evans is then quoted as saying that he will fight Bennett every step of the way. "You have lost the support of Evangelicals 100 percent... We gave you four years of miracles under Donald Trump and this is how you show your appreciation, sh\*\*\*ing on our face. How dare you."

### **What Academics Are Saying About Us**

Hillary Kaell is associate professor of anthropology and religious studies at McGill University. In an October 2020 article in the Jewish Forward, she deals with the topic of Jewish affinity by various segments of the Christian population. She concludes "Ultimately, evangelism is a Jewish question more than a Jewish affinity one. The trend is growing fastest in Africa and Latin America with rising charismatic populations and few Jewish residents at all. For Jewish affinity believers, the real issue is how a mix of Jewish things and biblical ideas enable them to live out their born-again faith in more visceral ways, with political, theological and social consequences. What this means for Jewish people remains a question.

"Lo, a virgin shall conceive" ... or not, depending on the translation  
In their new book, *The Bible with and without Jesus: How Jews and Christians Read the Same Story Differently*, biblical scholars Amy-Jill Levine (Vanderbilt University) and Marc

Zvi Brettler (Duke University) say that in the original Hebrew, Isaiah's prophecy reads, "Look at the pregnant young woman" and not a virgin. The authors make it clear that both interpretations of Isaiah 7 are valid, but they are just that, interpretations. They go on to say that Christians traditionally read the second creation story of Adam and Eve in the garden as being about sin and alienation from God and it would take Jesus to put things right again. Jews, according to Brettler, tend to read the Adam and Eve story only within the context of the rest of Genesis. It's not that Jews lack a concept of sin, but there's no capital-F "Fall" of humanity. Levine concludes the article by saying that the intent of their book is to get Jews and Christians to say, "I don't agree with you theologically, but I can see the logic of your interpretation."

This teacher believes education, conversations, and respect is the key. Historian, Dr. Rabbi Albert I. Slomovits, is featured in the Atlanta Jewish News on his book, "A New Look at Rabbi Jesus: Jews and Christians Finally Reconnected." Slomovitz hopes to have model Seders, and will continue making animated videos that he hopes will be used in Sunday school classes. He also plans on taking his J-Star Project beyond the Atlanta area.

In an April 2019 article for ABC's Religion and Ethics, Amy-Jill Levine gave her thoughts on how to avoid anti-Judaism at Easter specifically in the Passion narratives. Her strategies are either Excision (cut out the offending passages), ReTranslation (in other words bowdlerize the passages), to Romanticize (change the Jews to humanity), to Allegorize (say the text didn't mean what it says), to Historicize (Jews writing to other Jews, so it can't be anti-Jewish) or her choice Admit the Problem (explain the harm the texts have caused, read the texts silently or in a whisper.) Basically, we choose how we read. Nowhere in her article does she acknowledge that a "thus saith the Lord" approach is an option.

### **Innovation in Jewish Missions**

In May of 2019, a few articles came out on the Upside Down Café at UCLA. One appeared in the campus newspaper, the Daily Bruin. After describing what a perfect cup of coffee they produce and how the setting to enjoy it in was also superior, the writer called Upside Down one her favorite specialty shops. In a second article, the reviewers commended the high standards of the coffee and the artwork, the music and the friendly baristas. Lucy Eshleman, a Jews for Jesus missionary who works at the café, was quoted as saying, "We wanted to build a family, not just a coffee shop."

CBN.com reported on a Messianic worship concert – Music for the Mischpocha: A Celebration of Unity in the Messiah, organized by Chosen People Ministries. Artists included Marty Goetz, Paul Wilbur, Joshua Aaron, and Miqedem.

### **Thought Pieces by Jewish Writers**

I just want to suggest a few articles for your reading pleasure here:

In the May 24<sup>th</sup> edition of The Atlantic, Matti Friedman wrote a very challenging piece for American Jews on how in looking at Israel, many westerners are looking for a mirror of themselves. I am inclined to read the whole article to you because it's that good. Instead, I'll just give you the last three lines: "The truth is that Israel is a small country in the Middle East that has nothing to do with the demons stalking America. We have our own demons. Conflating them won't make either country's problems easier to understand or solve."

Another article on this theme appeared in the May 19, 2021, New York Times. "Gaza Conflict Stokes Identity crisis for young American Jews. Says one of those interviewed, "My moral compass tells me to help the Palestinians, but I cannot shake the ingrained paranoia every time I hear someone make anti-Israel statements."

Rabbi Emma Gottlieb wrote in JewishBoston about having both a Jewish and Christian identity and how that is possible. She concludes it is not theologically possible but culturally and educationally there is overlap. The spiritual gymnastics she attempts in this article are worth looking at.

Rabbi Allen Maller writing for the Times of Israel. attempts to answer the question, What are Jews; a Nation, a Religion, a Culture or a Race? Good luck rabbi.

And Rabbi Ben Greenfield of Greenpoint Shul in Brooklyn answers the question Offended by Christian seders? With this retort: Don't have one.

### **Potpourri**

I will conclude this report with my Potpourri section, designed to put a smile on your face.

A May article from last year on Kirt Schneider is entitled, "The millionaire trying to sell Messianic Judaism to the world." Perhaps Schneider is one of the most well-known Messianic Jews with a Facebook following of over 1.5 million people. The article includes a few impetuous acts he's performed. While in Kiev, he asked two of his bodyguards to take out their weapons while he was blowing his shofar for a photo op. On another occasion, when he visited Zambia, they found his shofar in his luggage and mistook it for illegal animal hunting and arrested him. Eventually it was straightened out, but I don't think that's the last we will hear from this colorful character

The New Yorker article of March 16, 2021, is titled, ZAnon: A High Ranking Anon Sets the Record Straight.

The article lists 14 Deep-State Secrets including Bigfoot is real. But the one that I think would interest our group the most, Deep State Secret 2: The Jewish space lasers were actually Jewish space lasers for Jesus. ...“Years ago, some space lasers paged through a Jews for Jesus pamphlet outside the Messianic organization’s headquarters in Westwood, Los Angeles. Today these space lasers consider themselves a hundred percent Jewish and a hundred percent Christian. So, let’s not be anti-Semitic.”

And finally, a breaking Israel news story: “Rare sightings of “messianic” orcas, sharks and dolphins flocking to Israel’s shores. According to *Tikunei Zohar*, an esoteric book attributed to Rabbi Shim from the first century CE, an increase in fish coming to Israel’s shores signify a specific stage of the Messianic process in which the Messiah from the House of Joseph and the Messiah from the House of David, join. Sharks are making *Aliyah* and according to Rabbi Shim’s followers this is a visible fulfillment of prophecy. The article concludes with the hope for the ultimate fish, Leviathan. For us, of course, we look forward to Messiah’s second coming and the celebration of the marriage supper of the Lamb.