

MinistryWatch *Direct*

Educating & Empowering Donors to Support Christian Ministries

July 2006



MinistryWatch.com

Charitable Advice, but is it Wanted?

By Rodney Pitzer

All too often donors are confused and frustrated in making charitable decisions. Even some of the smartest and high profile donors of our society don't always know the best way to allocate charitable support and are at odds at giving. Just recently news headlines read, **"Church leaders quit Bush-Clinton Katrina aid panel: Interfaith advisory committee members say advice was ignored"**. The departing members of the interfaith advisory committee were quoted as saying the fund's Washington staff disregarded their advice, cutting checks for Gulf Coast churches without properly investigating the institutions.

What about a common, modest Christian donor? Do they know where their donation dollars are going with confidence? Are they sure the organization(s) they might give to are legitimate? Do they know if they can get information from the charities that ask them money? Are the charities asking for money in line with their values, or in opposition to them? How well is the legitimate charity doing in its mission? Is there another organization doing a better job than the one always soliciting in the mail?

Beside many straightforward questions donors may ask legitimate ministries, there are acts of fraud and abuse. Fraud and abuse does not fit nice and neat in just one category, but runs a wide range of activities. These acts exploit good hearts of generosity and either directly or indirectly steal money a second time with a lack of intended public good not going to those in need.

MinistryWatch.com would like donors to support Christian Ministries. Unfortunately, in order to support a Christian ministry, there needs to be an awareness of fraud and abuse in order for their donor dollar to be used as intended. Even the most basic issue or question such as – is the organization Christian, needs to be considered.

It is disheartening that some charities are able to take advantage of our freedoms by misleading the public and funneling money to unintended purposes. How is a donor to know the difference between a fraudulent organization posing as a legitimate charity and those that truly have a passion for ministry?


Many are indications of the need of a more robust charity marketplace where donors and charities can meet with confidence that will lead to increased giving. Unfortunately, the vast majority of feedback is that donors do not feel confident when giving. This should not be the case. Donors should feel confidence and not need to feel skeptical.

There is a very basic and rudimentary framework for donors in giving; however, much work needs to be done to improve the lot of donors and to raise the standards in the charitable marketplace. As matters currently stand, donors to public charities must sit in the back of the bus compared to the protections afforded investors in public corporations. This is not only wrong but also foolish as it deprives charities significant financial and relational benefits that a more balanced and vibrant relationship with donors would bring.

As for charitable fraud, the key to reducing charitable fraud lies in detection and prevention. MinistryWatch.com understands that charitable fraud is everyone's problem, and is committed to lessening the impact of fraud within the charitable marketplace and the world. It is also committed to creating practical donor tools and resources to help donors make wise giving decisions and continue to act as a donor advocate to prevent and minimize charitable waste and abuse.

Improving donor representation and empowering donors could restore a right relationship between ministries and donors thereby igniting a renewed interest in giving. It would also cause current giving to be targeted more effectively and strategically.

Much work needs to be done to improve the lot of donors and to raise the standards in the Christian Ministry Marketplace so that the Lord's work will not be short-changed.

The Rev. William Gray, former leader with the Bush-Clinton Katrina aid panel summed up his feelings by saying: **"I've learned in life that if people say they want your advice and then they change it, ignore it, or undermine it, then they really don't want it."** Some may not desire charitable advice, but for the most part, donors are seeking more information. MinistryWatch.com is attempting to fill that void. 

Transparency Contrasted	
Transparent	Non-Transparent
Open	Closed
Knowledge	Ignorance
Understanding	Emotionally lead
Light	Darkness
Visible	Concealed
Verified actions	Empty talkers
No fears	Reason to hide
Democracy	Totalitarian
Free	Enslaved
Compelled to act responsibly	Able to take advantage
Seeker Friendly	One that hides
Relationship	Divorce
Free Press	Controlled spin
Humbled	Proud
Information Analyzed	Threats of Liable and Slander
Common Language	Translation Problem
Good Example	Bad Example
Joyous Giver	Skeptic

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Jews for Jesus

By Andy Preslar & Rodney Pitzer



Direct Evangelism

Jews for Jesus is a Messianic Jewish ministry, which exists in order to "make the Messiahship of Jesus an unavoidable issue to Jewish people worldwide."

(Continued on page 2)

Jews for Jesus

Transparency Grade

A

Jews for Jesus exhibits a great deal of openness and transparency.

5 Star Financial Efficiency Ratings

☆☆

Jews for Jesus seems about as resourceful as other ministries in directing its financial resources towards its programs.

(Continued from page 1)

The following is a sample communication from Jews for Jesus:

Jesus

- "He was a good rabbi. He taught everyone to be nice to one another."
- "He was a good Jew, but Paul made him into a god for the Gentiles."
- "He got in trouble with the authorities and became a political martyr."

One thing is certain; after two thousand years, Jesus of Nazareth is still as controversial in the Jewish community as he was in the first century. Still, most hold to the traditional bottom line that whatever he was, he wasn't the expected Messiah.

Jews for Jesus begs to differ. We believe that Jesus was, and still is, who he claimed to be—the Messiah of Israel and of all nations. In this section, we present you with arguments for his Messiahship and respond to objections that you may have heard or raised. In this way, we join with those first-century Jews and Gentiles who found Jesus-in Hebrew, Y'shua-to be "the way, the truth, and the life."

Jews for Jesus carries out its mission by means of deploying missionaries in major urban centers around the world to initiate contacts and explore witnessing opportunities with Jewish people in the area. Jews for Jesus also conducts major evangelistic campaigns in cities with large Jewish populations. In addition, Jews for Jesus makes available a variety of resources (including three websites) designed to introduce Jews to Messiah and to help believers (Jewish and Gentile) to effectively share the Gospel with Jewish persons.

One of the core values of Jews for Jesus is its commitment to engage in "direct evangelism." According to Jews for Jesus president David Brickner, "direct evangelism occurs when there is a clear presentation of the facts of the gospel to the unsaved and an urgent appeal to receive salvation through faith in Christ." Brickner maintains that doing direct evangelism requires one to be available (willing to witness), mobile (going to where the lost are), and vulnerable (overcoming the fear of rejection). Direct evangelism distinguishes Jews for Jesus from ministries to Jewish persons that do good work but do not engage in direct evangelism, misunderstand the nature of evangelism, or operate in manner that actually undermines the gospel. Jews for Jesus sees direct evangelism as a necessary supplement to what is commonly called "lifestyle evangelism," in which one is a "witness" for Jesus by simply living a godly life.

A missionary with Jews for Jesus faces a variety of challenges. In addition to organized opposition, Jews for Jesus missionaries are sometimes threatened and berated by those to whom they witness. Ministry of this kind is hard work. Patience is required not only to withstand abuse, but also to wait for spiritual seeds sown to take root and grow. The Jewish people are historically very resistant to the Gospel (and they have indeed at times suffered at the hands of some who name the name of Christ). Another obstacle that Jews for Jesus missionaries must overcome is most Jewish persons' deeply

held belief that to accept Jesus is to disavow their Jewish heritage.


It is partly because Messianic Jews are living proof that one can still be Jewish and believe in Jesus that Jews for Jesus only allows Jewish believers to work for the ministry as frontline missionaries. Another reason behind this criterion is, as Brickner puts it, "truth in advertising." A ministry called Jews for Jesus ought to really send, well, Jews for Jesus into the mission field. More basically, Christian ministries have long recognized the value of sending out workers who can relate to those to whom they minister both culturally and ethnically. Jews for Jesus does employ non-Jewish persons in administrative and other missionary support roles.

Evaluation

Jews for Jesus's direct approach to Jewish evangelism has its critics (see below). However, the notions that Jewish people ought not be evangelized and that the Gospel can be communicated primarily by means of one's "lifestyle" (without actively seeking to be a direct, verbal witness to the Gospel message) both fall short of the New Testament's teaching and apostolic examples (cf., Luke 24:44-47; Acts 4:12; Rom. 1:16, Rom. 10:14-17). Jews for Jesus it seems to be right on target (compared to the teaching of Scripture) in its insistence that the Jewish people need the Gospel as much as anyone else, and that the best way to get the Gospel to them is to go where they live and proclaim the message that Jesus is the Messiah. By so doing, Jews for Jesus is acting in direct accordance with its mission to "make the Messiahship of Jesus an unavoidable issue to Jewish people worldwide."

Of course, direct evangelism must be tempered with love and sensitivity to unique needs and perspectives of individual people. This does not mean that the truth of the Gospel is relative, but it does need to be contextualized. Some former Jews for Jesus missionaries have expressed their concern that Jews for Jesus takes a "cookie-cutter" approach to evangelism, in which evangelistic technique takes precedence over personal interaction. Jews for Jesus's mission statement and program descriptions do imply a direct and well-tailored approach to evangelism, but this approach need not be developed in a negative manner. Given the truth of the claim the Jesus is the Messiah and the Savior of the world, Jews for Jesus's goal of confronting as many Jewish people as possible with a creative and culturally sensitive presentation of the Gospel may be, in itself, indicative of great love and compassion. If Jews for Jesus missionaries are approaching their work in this spirit, the evangelistic techniques, which they are taught, may serve to enhance their ministry, rather than reducing evangelism to mere rote communication.

Summary

Jews for Jesus is one of the most highly visible Messianic Jewish ministries in the world. The work of Jews for Jesus is largely carried out by evangelistic missionaries interacting with people and distributing literature on the streets of major cities that have large Jewish populations. In addition, Jews for Jesus regularly conducts short-term evangelistic campaigns, and deploys full-time missionaries in strategic locations around the world for the work of direct evangelism. Thus, since its inception in 1973, Jews for Jesus has continually maintained and continued to expand its evangelistic outreach to the Jewish people. 

Organizational Details

Home Office	60 Haight St. San Francisco, CA 94102-5895
Phone	(415) 864-2600
Website	www.jewsforjesus.org

Federal Law	EIN: 94-2222464 Tax-Exempt Tax Deductible
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Worldview Considerations

- JFJ subscribes to a sound, evangelical statement of faith.
- JFJ maintains that there is still an important sense in which Israel and the Church are distinct groups; both of which still have roles to play in the future (according to the biblical plan of God).
- JFJ believes that life-style evangelism alone is insufficient as a witness to the Gospel. Direct evangelism (proclaiming the Gospel message) is also necessary.
- JFJ insists that even religious Jews must be evangelized, because following the Torah cannot bring anyone to salvation—only by believing in Jesus is anyone saved.
- JFJ believes that "Jewish" and "Christian" are not mutually exclusive categories, and that one can be a Christian and still celebrate his or her Jewish culture. In connection with this, it should be noted that JFJ is critical of the so-called "Jewish Roots" movement, which claims that the Christian growth must involve keeping the Torah's laws, festivals, and Sabbath observances. JFJ notes that "Jewish Roots" advocates invariably must be inconsistent with the Torah in how they apply its commandments, and that Christian growth (i.e., sanctification) occurs in accordance with the teachings of the New Covenant (the New Testament) rather than the Old. JFJ celebrates the Old Covenant festivals and other observances as a matter of freedom and culture, not as a Christian obligation.

Contact Us

MinistryWatch Direct aims to spur donors to examine ministries and make discerning giving decisions.

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