

Question: What does President George W. Bush have to do with Jews for Jesus?

Answer: Absolutely nothing, if liberal media elites and Jewish community leaders have anything to say about it!

Maybe you heard, former US President

Texas. When journalist Sarah Posner from Mother Jones magazine “uncovered” this story, liberal television pundits Rachel Maddow and Bill Maher, to name a few, raised a cry about Bush giving credibility to “Jews for Jesus.” Seems as if any Jews who follow Yeshua (Jesus) are likely to be branded “Jews for Jesus.”

It was no surprise when denunciations began streaming in. Abraham Foxman of the Anti-Defamation League was “disappointed” that Bush was

speaking to the group, while Stephen Wolpe, considered the most influential rabbi in the US, pronounced himself “disgusted.” Dennis Prager, a conservative Jewish voice much admired by many evangelicals, also weighed in, remarking that while he didn’t see Jews for Jesus as much of a problem, he still despises us. For what? That most censured of all activities, “PROSELYTIZING!” For several news cycles on television, radio, in newspapers

DISSAPPROBATION

George Bush accepted an invitation from the Messianic Jewish Bible Institute (MJBI, not Jews for Jesus) to speak at their annual fundraiser in Dallas,



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and especially on the Internet, the disapprobation continued.

What is going on here? It is a strategy, and a time-honored one in free societies such as ours. Disapprobation, or the voicing of intense disapproval, is one of the most powerful tools used in attempts to squelch unpopular messages. The idea is to shame the messengers into



DISSAPPROBATION



silence by attributing motives or attitudes rather than dealing with the message itself. But even more, public disapprobation is intended to drive a wedge between those who won't be silenced and anyone who might choose to associate with them.

Perhaps some hoped that the former president would back out of his commitment to address the fundraiser. To his credit, George W. Bush did not back down despite intense pressure, even from some within his own circles. Still, a message was broadcast loud and clear. Any public figure had better think twice before having anything to do with Jews who tell other Jews about Jesus. There is a price to be paid in the currency of public opinion. But can we agree, there is an even greater price to be paid by those who bow to that public opinion?

I like what Jonathan Bernis, chairman of the board of the MJB, said in response to the event: "The idea seems to be that it is somehow 'intolerant' for Jewish believers in Jesus to share their convictions with other Jews. The real intolerance is coming from those who apparently think that no Jewish person should ever be exposed to the claims of the most famous Jew who ever lived."

What heartens me is knowing that so many in the body of Christ today understand what is at stake and, rather than buying into that intolerance, they are willing to stand with those who are constantly facing disapprobation. We praise the Lord for Christians who demonstrate great love and support for Jews who proclaim Jesus, despite the price they might pay by association.

Of course, some are not so supportive. During our most recent 'Behold Your God!' campaign in Israel, one of our missionaries was arrested for openly declaring that Jesus is the Messiah. Sadly, a local Christian leader responded by condemning Jews for Jesus via

the Internet. Another instance occurred when a congregation that had teamed up with us on that same campaign was graffitied with terrible slurs against Jesus. Sadly, one of their members circulated an email condemning Jews for Jesus and essentially saying, "See, I knew we shouldn't have had anything to do with their campaign."

I don't know if that person failed to recognize the slurs scrawled on the church building were not against Jews for Jesus, but against Jesus Himself. And that is exactly the point! In the end, it is with the Lord Himself that people's real disapprobation lies. He forewarned us: "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also" (John 15:18-20).

Our love for Jesus compels us to share His truth with others, and that truth is offensive to those who don't believe. You don't have to be in Israel or live in a Muslim society or under a communist regime like North Korea to pay a price for being a lover of Christ. No amount of kindness or generosity on a personal level or even by way of mercy ministries* will shield us from the disapprobation of those who disapprove of Y'shua's message.

If we just believed in Him but never made it a point to tell others, we might escape most of the

disapprobation. But since Jews for Jesus exists to make the messiahship of Jesus an unavoidable issue to our Jewish people worldwide, I guess that pretty much settles it. We don't especially enjoy annoying the Dennis Pragers of the world who wish we would just take our message and go live in some dark closet somewhere. But we echo one of the greatest Jews for Jesus ever, the apostle Paul, when we say, "woe to us if don't preach the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:16). But conversely, it really is a joy to invite people to know Jesus.

I want to give a shout out to all those brothers and sisters in Christ who love us and have become family for those of us who have been turned aside from our own flesh and blood because we identify with Y'shua. It is such a blessing to know that so many brothers and sisters really do stand with us and support us in these efforts. Your encouragement helps give us the courage to stand. In turn, may we be an encouragement to you and so many others as well. Let's all be willing to risk the world's disapprobation in order to make Messiah known as widely as possible. In the end, He is worth it, don't you think?

**I think that mercy ministries are an important outworking of Christian love, yet they do not replace a clear gospel presentation.*

Want to read more like this from David? Check out "The Loving Thing" at: <http://www.jewsforjesus.org/publications/newsletter/february-2005/lovingthing>

BITS from the BRANC

MORE TEAMWORK IN EVANGELISM

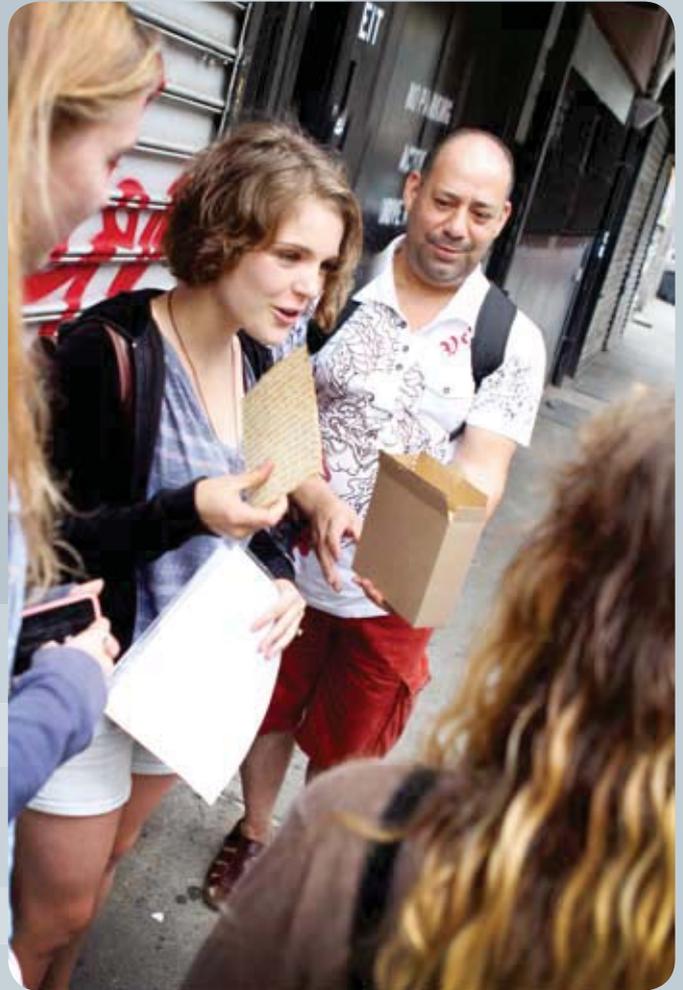
Rob Wertheim came to Sydney to work with us on an evangelistic campaign and brought his viola. He played it everywhere! He reports from San Francisco: "My co-worker, Eric, works in our church relations department. He met a Jewish man at a party in Sacramento (about 160 kilometres from San Francisco) and began to share the gospel with him. Larry* had



many questions, so Eric mentioned our ministry. Larry said he'd be open to hearing from us.

"I called Larry and we set up a phone appointment. The appointment went well but since then it has been difficult to connect, between Larry's work schedule and health issues. Please pray that we will be able to meet again soon and that he will open his heart to Yeshua."

One of us plays viola, another violin, or bassoon, and percussion, and we all make up a team of witness to proclaim Yeshua to the world. Please keep playing your part in God's orchestra, too.



EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY!

Arielle Randle and Elli Marks of our Chicago branch were in New York City leading Halutzim, a short-term missions project for year 11 and 12 students. Here you see Arielle holding a piece of matzah. She explains, "Our Halutzim group was walking around in the Lower East Side, taking in the Jewish culture after a big lunch at Katz's Deli. We wanted to pop into the matzah factory (Streit's) but they were closed. However, we saw one of the employees locking up and I asked if he would take a few moments to tell us really quickly what it was like to work in a matzah factory. Not only did he stay and chat with us, he went back into Streit's and brought us out a whole box of freshly baked matzah! We ate our matzah right there on the sidewalk, and several Jewish people walking by even stopped to chat and ask what we were up to! This photo catches me sharing with the kids and a few bystanders about the significance of matzah for believers in Yeshua."

HES

WHAT CAN BRIGHTEN A DENTIST'S SMILE?



Bob Mendelsohn reports from Sydney: “I asked a mate who is an orthodontist if he could recommend a Jewish dentist near me and he referred me to Phil. Since then Phil has been my dentist, for almost four years. Born in the former Czech Republic, Phil grew up in Sydney. He was a yeshiva student whose father was a chochem (genius), but Phil became fairly irreligious after he and his first wife broke up a couple of decades ago.

“During our first session Phil told me of his religion and of his unbelief. All because on the medical chart Phil saw that I was with ‘Jews for Jesus.’ That was intriguing to him. He’d read the New Testament in his teens, but gave it no second thought. “We carried on a conversation about Jesus at each dental appointment, and even on the golf course, where he and I played a couple of years ago with his wife. Last year he and I sat in my office and discussed at length many issues regarding faith in Messiah. It was clear that God was working on him, but he was reluctant. He pointed out that it’s costly to come

to such a conclusion, and he was right. Jesus said we should count the cost. . . . that’s what Phil was doing, to be sure. We continued discussing Jesus on the phone and in person.

“He got a Complete Jewish Bible and he put it at his bedside to read regularly. He found the teachings of Jesus brilliant. I also gave him a copy of our discipleship booklet so that he could read what I called ‘the fine print.’ I wanted him to know what would be ahead if he were to embrace Jesus as his Messiah. Baptism, congregational involvement, telling others about his profession . . . all of these are included in the booklet.

“Phil’s friend Ian was also guiding him toward Yeshua. Ian first saw Phil professionally some years ago and they have kept up a friendly relationship. Ian also is a keen golfer and a lover of the Jewish people and Israel.

“Finally, Phil rang me one Friday morning. ‘I did it!’ he said, and he told me how he had prayed with Ian to receive Jesus the

night before. It was awesome. He talked about peace and joy and how Yeshua changed everything, but nothing had changed. In other words, he was still Jewish. But now he had a peace that passes understanding.

“Phil told me what really got him thinking about Jesus, and how this might be ‘for him.’ His thinking began to change when he was in hospital for an operation in 2011 and I went to visit and pray for him. I prayed in Hebrew the traditional prayer from the Jewish prayer book and Phil says of that day, ‘You were the only person to pray for me in hospital. You prayed in the name of Yeshua. It got me started on this path.’

“Phil has already begun telling others about his faith, including his wife, who was concerned about whether they would have to give up Jewish holiday traditions. He assured her that believing in Jesus will not make their household any less Jewish. Please pray for Phil to continue to grow in his faith.”

SMALL MEETING, BUT BIG IMPACT

Larissa Savelieva reports from Odessa: “People talk about being in the right place at the right time. Sometimes we do not see until after the fact that God has placed us just that way.

“When I arrived at a church to speak on behalf of Jews for Jesus, I was surprised that only eight people were attending, including the pastor. I confess I was a little disappointed. I prayed to be able to do my best for that church.

“It was clear the people all knew one another, and I assumed they were all believers. So I was surprised when I asked one man, Anatoliy, how long he had been a member of the church and he replied, ‘I am not a church member.’ I said, ‘Oh, so you have just repented recently,’ and he replied, ‘No, I did not repent.’ (That is, I’m not yet a believer in this religion)

By now everyone else was listening to our conversation. I began to ask him questions as I normally would when witnessing, and based on his answers finally asked if there was anything to prevent him from repenting and professing Christ just then.

“Anatoliy replied, ‘There is no obstacle.’ At this point, the pastor’s wife got on her knees and the others followed her example. All were silent as Anatoliy repeated a sinner’s prayer. After he prayed, there was great rejoicing. It turned out that he was an old school friend of the pastor! Situations that may seem like a disappointment can soon become God’s appointment! Please pray for Anatoliy to grow strong in the Lord.”

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IT'S MOVING TIME:

Where is the cloud moving?

Many people don't like to shift homes, unless they don't like where they currently live. Most find a good place and stay there for a long time, and so we have done in Bondi Junction since 2004 when we found a little shop front on the beach end of the centre of the Jewish community. We opened and wondered-- would God bless us? Would we be able to pay the bills? Would any good come from this?

Now 9 years later we still enjoy being able to share the Gospel with Jewish people who drop in regularly, help many unbelievers know about God by literature, free Bibles, and by conversations. We have conducted weekly Bible classes (now most are available online) and special events. It has been a hub of activity. Yes, we paid our bills (Thanks to so many of you!) and we are going to miss it. What's happening?

Some developers are set to demolish our building and many others nearby to erect a 19-story apartment tower. We have until 1 April to get out. As of this writing (Australia Day) we don't know where we are going.

We like the area; we love the visibility of a shop front; we like being on a main bus route; we are paying our bills. Will all this continue?

When the Jewish people wandered in the wilderness under Moses for those 40 years, they probably had a similar response. Wasn't this area good enough for a long time? Could that wadi provide shelter and water enough for our tribe from now on? Where is the cloud moving anyway?

We will keep you updated. We will ask for help. We will ask God to lead us and hope you join us in that prayer. After all we are working together to make Yeshua known, in Sydney's East and wherever you live. If you have a ute and some strong friends who want to move things with us, please let us know. We don't know when or where, but we know that our move is in God's hands. Where he leads, we will follow. Where is the cloud moving?



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