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ear ,

Have you noticed, the gay community in this country has done a masterful public relations job. Within a few decades, the homosexual lifestyle has been redefined from a deviation to a legitimate, acceptable alternative. The gay community has worked on several fronts to

opposite will occur. The world system will invade the church.

What does this have to do with Jewish evangelism?

People's perceptions are subject to change. Some in leadership in the Jewish community have learned very well from the above examples what public relations can do. A smart public relations job can take something that was once unacceptable and make it appear acceptable . . . but it works the opposite way around, too, so that something which ought to be acceptable, like Jewish people preaching the gospel to other Jews, can be made to appear unacceptable. The fact that historically there has been violence against Jewish people in the name of the gospel has been

THE WAR ON JEWISH EVANGELISM

accomplish this, from the legislative route to making their cause known in the media to appealing to the popular culture. The fact that some hate-filled and violent people have treated homosexuals shamefully has been used against anyone who dares to say that homosexuality is a sin, no matter how gently.

Similarly, the face of abortion has changed radically, largely due to public relations and strategy. Those who oppose abortion are said to oppose a woman's right to choose. And again, the fact that some hate-filled and violent people have bombed abortion clinics has been used against anyone who dares to say that abortion is a sin.

The radical shifts in how these things are perceived color all levels of our society. Some Christians wonder why more and more churches are accepting behavior that the Bible rejects. If the church is not salt and light, if the church is not invading the world system with the gospel, then the

used against those who dare to say that Jewish people need the gospel.

There are those who have worked both overtly and subtly to demonize Jewish believers in Jesus and to make the work of Jewish evangelism seem unacceptable, not only in the world at large, but also in the church.

The ministry of preaching the gospel to Jewish people is being called into question and we stand in danger of losing some serious ground if God's people don't sit up and take notice. Let me give you some examples.

Jewish leaders, in consultation with the U.S. Catholic Bishops, helped forge a major document saying that,

targeting Jews for conversion to Christianity is no longer theologically acceptable in the Catholic Church. ("Reflections on Covenant and Mission," August 12, 2002)



ome within the mainline Protestant community are also abandoning Jewish evangelism. The Christian Scholars Group on Christian-Jewish Relations, whose members include Lutherans, Methodists and Episcopalians wrote,

In view of our conviction that Jews are in an eternal covenant with God, we renounce missionary efforts directed at converting Jews. (“A Sacred Obligation Rethinking Christian Faith in Relation to Judaism and the Jewish People,” September 1, 2002)

Those who want to stop Jewish evangelism view these and other examples among Catholics and

motivating some of our Jewish people to fear us and keep us at arm’s length. But we don’t expect to have much of a reputation in the Jewish community. Historically, anyone who wanted to consider Jesus has had to go against the flow. For the most part, such accusations don’t carry weight with many in our evangelical family. Why? Brothers and sisters in Christ know us too well. And if they have doubts, we can point to our membership in evangelical churches and associations, to having our staff educated in evangelical institutions and ordained in mainline denominations, to our books being carried by Christian publishers and so on. However, a more insidious strategy is chipping away at the church.

These false accusations have been effective in motivating some of our Jewish people to fear us and keep us at arms length.

mainline Protestants as successes. They are now employing various tactics to step up their efforts in evangelical Christian circles as well.

Demonizing Jews who believe in Jesus

It starts with criticizing our motives, methodology and mores. We are charged with, “failing the test of ethical evangelism,” “using misleading rhetoric and mass marketing,” “speaking out of both sides of their [our] mouths,” conducting a “shameless crusade to promote the absurd idea that converting to Christianity is the most Jewish thing one can do,” “seeking out and exploiting Jews who are the least knowledgeable of Judaism,” “engaging in subterfuge and dishonesty” and “exhibiting cult like tendencies.” (All the phrases in quote marks are actual excerpts from newspapers.)

These false accusations have been effective in

Theologizing that Jews don’t need Jesus to be saved

We now find ourselves under attack in the theological realm. Groups like the American Jewish Committee’s Interreligious Affairs Department and B’nai B’rith’s Anti-Defamation League have full-time professionals lobbying Christian denominational groups to back off on Jewish evangelism for theological reasons. Their fingerprints are all over the official statements on the subject.

They argue that God made one covenant for Jews and another for Gentiles and that it’s just not necessary for Jews to accept Christ. This is sometimes called two-covenant theology. Others who consider themselves in the evangelical camp are now saying that Jews can be saved by Jesus without actually knowing or believing in Him, or a variation of that idea.

Another front on the battle for Jewish evangelism

regards well-meaning evangelicals who just seem to lack discernment regarding which people and what organizations to endorse.

Christian endorsements that hurt Jewish evangelism

Some well-known pastors and Christian leaders have either endorsed those who oppose Jewish evangelism or have carefully avoided endorsing anyone who does engage in effective gospel outreach to Jewish people. Some are flattered by the affirmation rabbis bestow on them. Others fear that standing with those who believe in Jewish evangelism might jeopardize their friendship with these rabbis. Many simply don't think through the implications or realize that those they are

example, Billy Graham has refused to put in print that appealing specifically to Jewish people with the gospel message is a legitimate Christian endeavor. His statement, "In my evangelistic efforts, I have never felt called to single out the Jews as Jews . . ." is interpreted by some as disapproval of Jewish evangelism.

In fact, that comment, made almost thirty years ago, is still quoted by Jewish community leaders as proof that Graham does not approve of evangelistic ministry directed to Jewish people.

Overtures to evangelicals urging them to denounce us

The Cleveland Jewish Community Federation sent hundreds of letters to churches asking pastors to

I feel like support for our cause is slipping and that many Christians are being quietly influenced by a smart public relations job that opposes Jewish evangelism.

endorsing oppose Jewish evangelism. In any case, the cause of Christ among the Jewish people is hurt.

You can find examples of good Christians endorsing people who oppose our efforts on the web site of Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein. As director of the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, Eckstein has diverted tens of millions of dollars in mission giving to his non-missionary efforts. Yet Lloyd Ogilvie, Gary Bauer, Jack Hayford, Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson and Pat Boone as well as the late Bill Bright are all listed on his site with quotes that sing the rabbi's praises. The quotes may not reflect their knowledge of Eckstein's anti-evangelism stance, or even portray their sentiments today, but they are there just the same. Many lay Christians depend on such leaders to help determine if a cause is "kosher." No wonder evangelicals are duped into supporting Rabbi Eckstein.

Then there are those leaders who simply keep a safe distance from those involved in Jewish evangelism. For

openly discourage your fellowship from associating themselves with "Jews for Jesus," and deny the group access to your facility.

The director of the Canadian Jewish Congress employed the same strategy. He wrote to about 800 pastors of evangelical churches in the greater Toronto area saying,

Rejection of the mission of Jews for Jesus is a way for you to say, "we support the right of each Jewish man, woman and child to live their life as Jews, without being targeted by those who would diminish their faith."

It would be nice to be able to say that all of the pastors who got these letters came to our defense. Some did, praise God, but most remained silent.

Some Christian leaders are standing with the Jewish leadership to publicly denounce us

Two recent examples from outside the U.S. are indicative of what is happening right here. B'nai B'rith Canada called on Dr. Charles McVety, president of Canada Bible College, to co-author an opinion piece in the *Toronto Star* in which he condemned “the ongoing attempt by some Christian groups to lure Jews away from the faith of their ancestors.” When the head of our Toronto branch spoke with him, McVety said that he knew of nothing we have done that was inappropriate—yet on Canadian television and in print he has characterized our evangelistic efforts as deceitful and unethical.

In the United Kingdom, it seems that the Chief

our cause is slipping and that many Christians are being quietly influenced by a smart public relations job that opposes Jewish evangelism.

Fewer evangelical churches are opening their doors to our ministry and it is affecting support for our missionaries and projects all over. As I write, our support from church missions giving and offerings is down \$371,130 from what it was last year at this time. That is a sizeable amount for us and the shortfall is not being made up any place else. That is why I need you to come alongside now as we fight this battle.

This attack against our evangelical position requires us to alert and mobilize the evangelical troops into action. I am hoping that God will use friends like you to help turn things around for us. You have

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Rabbi of Britain and the Jewish Board of Deputies complained to the Archbishop of Canterbury (the head of the Church of England) about our Behold Your God London street evangelism campaign this past summer. In response, the archbishop wrote to the head of our London work that should he be asked about our efforts, he would say “. . . that the campaign by Jews for Jesus represented an approach to Christian witness which neither he nor the wider Church of England could endorse.”

The battle is not over

The above are long-term strategies that have begun to erode the average Christian's understanding of the need for Jewish evangelism. As Irish philosopher Edmund Burke said, “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” Friends, the silence is deafening. I feel like support for

been a friend of Jews for Jesus because you know us, because you know what we do, because you know by God's grace we are able to be effective in preaching the gospel to Jews and Gentiles around the world. I need you to share your confidence in us with your Christian friends.

I want to ask you to start with the pastor of your home church. Perhaps it has been a while since you have had a presentation from Jews for Jesus in your church. Maybe we have never been to your church before. Would you help introduce us to your church, open the door for us to minister to the congregation? We have several programs that will be a blessing to your church friends and family, but we need the opportunity to be heard. I think we can win the friendship of pastors and Christians who love Jesus and love my Jewish people if they can just meet us and hear our heart. You can use the enclosed response slip to

introduce us to your church or other Christian friends.

Thankfully, our support from individuals is not down from last year, but neither has it gone up at all. This is the first year since I have been executive director that our support has not increased from one year to the next. That, combined with the fact that our church missions giving and offerings are way down, has made for a lot of belt-tightening around here. We have put a freeze on hiring any new staff. We have halted all purchases of replacement equipment and we have postponed any salary increases until we see where we stand at the end of the year.

It is my duty to ask for your help at this time to meet some of the shortfall we have experienced this year. I hope that I will be able to give the salary

prayerfully be able to increase their support in the coming year. I have been told by David Stone, our chief administrator, that if those who have been giving could increase their support by just 10% that would do it. For example, if each friend who has been giving \$10 a month could give one extra dollar each month and so on, that would enable us to give those salary increases, add those new missionaries and continue to stand tall in the battle we are facing. While some will not be able to do that, others may be able and willing to do more than that. Whatever you feel you can afford would be greatly appreciated at this time. You might even want to use the enclosed electronic fund transfer form to send your support automatically.

I believe this battle could actually turn into “a victory parade” if it mobilizes friends like you to help us.

increases that our staff has earned, but I can't do it unless we see an increase in our level of support by about \$87,336 per month. We also have half a dozen new missionaries waiting to begin their training in January. Each is working hard to raise support, but if we add them all to our training class, overall our expenses will increase by approximately \$30,000 each month. Then there is the equipment that needs updating or replacing—vehicles that have traveled more miles than I care to think, computers which should have been upgraded but have just limped along. I think you get the picture.

I know that some are already giving all they can to support us, and if that is you, I want to say a great big “TODAH!” Thank you for your love and faithfulness to the Lord Jesus. Please don't feel any pressure to give more than what the Lord has already told you to give.

Yet I imagine there are some who might

As we enter this season of Thanksgiving I am grateful to God for His many blessings to us in Jews for Jesus. I also want to thank you for caring, for taking the time to read this letter, and for standing by us in this time of need. As a way of saying thank you, in response to a donation of \$30 or more I would like to send you a copy of our brand new Liberated Wailing Wall album, “Behold Your God.” This recording of Jewish gospel music will stir your soul and lift your eyes to see that the fields are indeed white unto harvest. I hope you will enjoy listening to it as much as I do. (Please check the appropriate box on the response slip.)

I don't want you to think for one minute that our detractors are winning. I may feel overwhelmed at times, but I am excited about all that God has been doing and hopeful for great things in the future. I believe this battle could actually turn into “a victory parade” if it mobilizes friends like you to help us. I

believe God can turn the tide of this opposition. We may be getting a bit bruised right now, but like Paul, I can say, “we are hard-pressed on every side but not crushed . . .” I know it is God’s intention to bless us in the work of Jewish evangelism and to prosper the work of our hands. The task of reaching my Jewish people with the good news is ultimately His work, so we cannot fail. Thank you for your love and friendship.

Your Jewish brother in Jesus,



David Brickner

P.S. Please do pray for our ongoing outreaches next month. Along with our annual Christmas season evangelism, we have December Behold Your God campaigns in West Palm Beach, Florida and Sydney, Australia. And please give generously if you sense God’s leading. In this financially difficult year we could use your help.

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*We are hard-pressed on every side,
yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not
in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down,
but not destroyed—always carrying about in the body the
dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also
may be manifested in our body.”*

2 Corinthians 4:8-10