

JCPA Resolution

Jewish Council for Public Affairs

RESOLUTION ON MISLEADING AND AGGRESSIVE PROSELYTIZATION

Adopted by JCPA Board, June 10, 2002 in Chicago, IL

The increased aggressiveness of certain missionary Christian groups around the country is a matter of growing concern for the Jewish community. Utilizing misleading practices, some of these groups misrepresent themselves as Jews in an effort to enhance their proselytizing efforts.

Jewish organizations and community centers have been frequent foci of these groups, as have college campuses. Particularly disturbing have been efforts to convert vulnerable populations, including recent immigrants, youth, and the elderly in nursing homes.

The leadership of each major stream of Judaism - Conservative, Orthodox, Reconstructionist, and Reform - have publicly and unequivocally rejected the "Hebrew-Christian" movement's claim to be a form of Judaism, and have objected to their disguised effort to proselytize and convert Jews.

The JCPA:

- Condemns the use of Jewish symbols and practices as deceptive and inappropriate in the marketing of Christian religious groups as legitimate forms of Judaism.

The community relations field should:

- Continue to monitor the activities of missionary Christian groups, including "Hebrew-Christians."
- Educate Jewish and non-Jewish leaders about the practices of missionary Christian groups, including "Hebrew-Christians" and condemn activities which target Jews for proselytization.
- Educate the public to increase awareness of missionary Christian activities, particularly among vulnerable groups such as new immigrants, and the elderly.
- Urge telephone directories to enforce their own rules prohibiting false or fraudulent representations in their publications and to discontinue listing "Hebrew-Christian" congregations under 'synagogue' listings, and instead place them under less misleading designations.
- Develop mechanisms to support, and to provide expertise to Jewish organizations and institutions including synagogues, community centers, cemetery associations, camps, schools, campus, immigrant and senior citizen groups to evaluate and, where appropriate, amend membership or admission criteria to enable the exclusion of those groups or individuals whose purported membership is for the purpose of promoting conversion of Jews to Christianity or for other ulterior motives antithetical to the mission of that Jewish organization or institution.