

We're still Jews!

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In his excellent "Israel's qualitative edge" (Editor's Notes, May 13), Yaakov Katz mentioned that there are four streams of Judaism (Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist). But I want to assure him that there are at least five, and that one of them is Messianic Judaism. There are more than 100,000 adherents in the US alone.

Certain people have concluded that when a Jewish person believes in Yeshua as the messiah, he or she is no longer Jewish. This is absolutely wrong. If you ask any Messianic Jew if he or she is Jewish, that person will say: "Of course I am. I was born Jewish and I will die Jewish. I believe in a Jewish man who fulfilled the prophecies of the Jewish messiah from the Jewish scriptures. The idea that this makes me a non-Jew is absurd!"

Let's say that, worst case, we are wrong and Yeshua is not the Jewish messiah. So take the case of Rabbi Akiva. He proclaimed that Bar-Kochba was the Jewish messiah. Today, we know otherwise. Not only was Akiva mistaken, but his mistake brought enormous catastrophe upon the Jewish people. But do people say he was not a Jew? So how is it that a Jewish person who believes in Yeshua as the Jewish messiah, even if he or she is wrong, is no longer a Jew?

One of the more prominent streams of Judaism today is the Chabad movement. Many of its adherents believe that their late rebbe is the Jewish messiah. I believe this is wrong, but I have no doubt that these people are still Jewish.

Mr. Katz invited us, his readers, to share our thoughts, and I am glad he did this. It shows that we live in a country where freedom of belief and freedom of the press still exist.

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