

# Theological books

## Evangelical mission in Sydney’s east

The man who runs the Australian branch of Jews For Jesus wants people who come into his bookshop to “think for themselves”.

At age 19, Bob Mendelsohn say he experienced a crisis of faith.

Forced to break a commandment – shutting off a light on the Sabbath – Mendelsohn, says he became disillusioned with himself, and ultimately, with his religion.

“Being Jewish had been a calling,” he says. “For me, it was a crisis of identity. I was a boat set adrift. Something was missing.”

Mendelsohn’s says his “salvation” came when he met a pair of Christians who admitted they didn’t have all the answers.

“They won me over with their humility,” he says. “I wasn’t sold straight away, but I started thinking.”

Those thoughts led him to the *New Testament*, through which he says he discovered the “person of Jesus”.

“Here was this model of perfection,” Mendelsohn says. “I felt that Jesus was what I’d been looking for. He was born in Israel, died in Jerusalem. He’s described as a nice Jewish boy and then some. He couldn’t be more Jewish.”



Bob Mendelsohn behind the counter at the Jews For Jesus bookshop in Bondi Junction.

Today, Mendelsohn runs the Australian branch of Jews For Jesus, an international evangelical group which believes Jesus is ‘the Messiah’.

“I think of myself as a missionary,” Mendelsohn says. “We’re on a mission.” An American, Mendelsohn moved to Sydney in 1998 and opened the Jews For

Jesus shop in Bondi Junction in 2004.

“We realised that the best way for people to learn about Jesus was through a bookshop,” he says. The Oxford Street shop also sells CDs, DVDs, coffee and a range of Judaica. “But the Bible is free,” he quips.

Although there are many areas of agreement between the two faiths, Judaism does not accept Jesus as ‘the Messiah’ as described in the *Old Testament*.

For many, the coming of ‘the Messiah’ or the messianic age still lies in the future.

Mendelsohn says quite a few people who visit the shop are surprised to find that Jews For Jesus are open to a lively discussion.

“I’m still Jewish, I still observe Judaism,” he says. “We get a lot of Jews coming in because they’re curious about our message; they don’t know how we can accept Jesus, but they want to know.”

Some have ended up changing their beliefs, he says: “A lot of people come in and challenge us, and that often leads to a healthy discussion.”

“We want to help people get information to make a reasonable decision.”

The Jews For Jesus website includes the stories of those who have ‘accepted Jesus’.

“Our success comes from helping people process ideas,” Mendelsohn says. “The decision is ultimately theirs, we’re just the beginning.”

“All we’re trying to do is impart the message: think for yourselves.”

**Q. What does a bagel, a bacon sandwich and matzah have to do with one another?**

**A. Nothing.**

But with Passover around the corner, it's good to know the difference between leavened and unleavened, kosher and non-kosher.

IT'S EVEN MORE IMPORTANT to know the difference between knowing about things Jewish, kosher and knowing the Jewish Messiah.

Please send us the coupon to JFJ, PO Box 925, Sydney, 2001 to get your Good News for Passover, the book *Testimonies of Jews Who Believe in Jesus*. (Lawyer, cop, Holocaust survivor, businessmen, and many more). One free to each who asks.

No one should be left out. No matter what you eat during Passover.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Suburb \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ I'm Jewish  
☐ I'm not Jewish  
☐ I'm not sure

<http://bit.ly/Pass2017>



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GOOD



the  
BAD

and the  
UNLEAVENED

