

To: NBC News Editors
Date: 03 November, 2018
Re: Rabbi Loren Jacobs Articles

As my heart hurts deeply for the families of Tree of Life Synagogue, and I offer my heartfelt condolences, I find some solace in reading your 30 October article by Corky Siemaszko, and the 31 October opinion by Rabbi Harry Pell. I can understand why the broader Jewish community would assail a Messianic Rabbi for invoking the name of Jesus, during a prayer in their honor. I can also see how being stripped of rabbinic ordination, by ones own denomination, adds fuel to the fire that Messianic Rabbis are faux, and need quotations around their titles. Yet in this time of deep emotion and heavy criticism, I see an opportunity that many might be afraid to approach, but somebody must, so humbly I will.

Nestled in the article was an important point; none of the members in the Michigan Board of Rabbis would have accepted an invite to pray. Coupled with the opinion that a Jewish believer in Jesus is Theologically impossible, one must ask themselves if the offense is laced with a prejudice? A few decades ago, the consensus was that black men were not really people, or human, so the phrase "black gentleman" would be akin to "unicorn", and anyone saying they saw one (or was one) would be chastised. Same with the notion that an Osteopathic or Naturopathic Physician is a medical doctor. In each instance, a person was judged by something other than the content of their character. That, is prejudice.

I understand Jewish identity to be complex, with theological, practical, and cultural dimensions. A person who is born Jewish, yet becomes Atheist, does not have their Jewish identity revoked, because it exists in his or her blood. Yet other beliefs somehow change a Jew's genetics or lineage? Why are we so afraid of acknowledging the Messianic Jewish anomaly, and its rapid growth? Maybe because we would have to then admit we have been cultivating a bias, for quite some time. My prayer, which God forbid, is coming from a Black, Messianic Rabbi... we set aside assumptions and stereotypes just long enough to have impartial dialogue with the thing that we thought can not, does not, and should not, exist.

Rabbi Jonathan Dade