

Rabbi Florianne Chinsky is the only women rabbi in Brussels and her status is constantly being challenged. R. Chinsky continues:

*European and Belgian society is less conscious than North American society in matters relating to feminism. In this matter the support of the FJMC would seriously aid our cause. The presence of a Men's Jewish organization supporting our struggle for equality would be reassuring and could be decisive. Your support would be reflected in an International Journal for Women's Rights (<http://femmeetc.wordpress.com/>)*

*European and Belgian society is less conscious and sensitive to questions of gender. Chir Hadach is a beacon to women throughout the country.*

*The hierarchizing and centralization of European Judaism gives Jewry the feeling that their Consistoire-appointed rabbis are the only legitimate rabbis. Those who seek support for marriages, divorce and conversions are subjected to inhumane politics and behaviors regarding conversion and children of interfaith marriages. They leave their encounters with Consistoire-appointed rabbis profoundly disgusted.*

*This entire project has yet to receive any financial support from the Consistoire, which has the responsibility of providing financial aid to Jewish institutions in Belgium. It is sad that the most dynamic community representing Belgian Jewry and the only one dedicated to outreach and interfaith work has yet to receive appropriate recognition. We are not yet officially present at the inter-communal Yom HaShoah commemoration in Brussels. The presence of the FJMC Yom HaShoah candles could aid us in our efforts.*

*A list of our current needs have been indicated below. I hope, with your support, we can succeed.*

R. Dr. Floriane Chinsky

### How You, Clubs and Regions Can Help

Funds are requested from individuals, clubs and Region for any of the following projects:

**Mitzvah Day:** A day devoted to social action specifically addressing the needs of the poor..... \$400

**Soukat Chalom:** A one-day interfaith seminar in a Sukkah that addresses the commonality of all religions. .... \$700

**International Women's Day:** A day devoted to the raising of women's consciousness and assisting women to learn how to more effectively advocate for themselves. .... \$700

**Yom HaShoah:** The congregation seeks to connect the memory of the Shoah to an increasingly secular Jewish population. The congregation is seeking the gift of 5 cases of candles.

**Taf Tov:** The congregation is seeking the funding to sponsor seven especially dedicated Friday evenings services for a young families. Family services are unknown in Belgium. .... \$700

**Youth Group:** The Congregation seeks to engage a youth director and link teenagers to similar Masorti Congregations in France. Funding is needed to underwrite their transportation costs. .... \$2,000

**Children's siddur:** A Children's siddur is unknown in France & Belgium. Funding is needed for writing & printing. .... \$4,000

**Family Shabbat study Companion:** The congregation seeks to create a text which can be used Friday evening at the dinner table to foster Shabbat dinners and to enhance family activities.. \$4,000

Interested parties should speak with Rabbi Simon



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Leadership Innovation Community

**FJMC  
&  
Masorti Olami**

**Expanding our  
International Presence  
and  
Serving our  
International  
Communities**

**2011-2013**

In the past two years FJMC has:

- Successfully found and arranged for delivery of three sifrei *Torah* to developing Masorti Congregations in Europe
- Distributed approximately one hundred sets of tefillin and fifty *mezuzot* to congregations in Europe, Central and South America. *Mezuzot* were distributed in Quito, Lima, Panama City, Panama, and Berlin, Germany
- In addition Yom HaShoah candles were used in several countries
- Expanded participation in the last two years in the World Wide Wrap to five continents

These precious gifts have resulted in a growing connection of these communities to the North American Conservative/Masorti Movement. Our trips to Peru, Argentina and Panama helped to seed this effort while it created new friendships and resulted in some instances in the formation of Men's Clubs.

Currently FJMC has confirmed reservations from individuals from three countries to our 2013 International convention. Friday evening at the Convention will feature the sharing of a new model of servicing a club or a congregation, which was developed by the Brotherhood of Temple Israel in Sharon, Massachusetts. This will be followed by an address by Dr. Joanna Kubar, President of Masorti Europe. Finally, Rabbi Floriane Chinsky will address the group. This past year, Congregation Beth El Ner Tamid, in Mequon, Wisconsin donated a Torah to the *Chir Hadach* developing community in Brussels, Belgium. The FJMC Executive committee recommended that we direct our international efforts primarily to helping this community grow for the next two years. FJMC is actively encouraging, individuals, clubs and Regions to consider lending their support.

We'd like to tell you of two of the communities we're involved in.

**Stan Greenspan and Richard Gray**

### **Budapest, Hungary and Temple Israel of Sharon, MA Brotherhood Collaboration, Mark Popovsky, Ron Czik**

As a result of the 2011 FJMC Convention the Brotherhood of Temple Israel (TI) of Sharon, Massachusetts has twinned with Dor Hadash of Budapest, Hungary in order to help both communities learn, grow and enrich one another.

Dor Hadash is a small (30-40) egalitarian Masorti community, consisting primarily of young professionals or those pursuing graduate studies. They meet in a community center to celebrate Shabbat and the holidays. This community is in the early stages of its Jewish development. Masorti Europe provides rabbinical oversight and needed religious objects. In the past FJMC has provided *mezuzot* and a Torah, but most of the work has been done by the group.

Temple Israel's Brotherhood connects via monthly Skype calls. The Hungarian Jewish community is under pressure due to the resurgence of both anti-Semitism and racial bigotry that has gained political momentum and has been exacerbated by a poor economy. The TI Brotherhood sends the message that the Hungarian community is not alone.

In February the two communities celebrated - the Worldwide Wrap. Connected via Skype on the big screen, Rabbi Barry Starr delivered a d'var on the meaning of the tefillin. This was followed by the communities *davening* together. A powerful moment occurred when two former Hungarian Holocaust survivors who reside in Sharon spoke about their joy at being able to share this experience.

Plans have been laid to have members of Temple Israel's Brotherhood teach *davening* and Torah *laining* via the internet. This is intended to be an ongoing activity and other teaching/learning opportunities are contemplated. Temple Israel invited two of Dor Hadash's leaders to join the Brotherhood at the FJMC convention and visit Sharon post-convention to meet the Temple Israel community and have a joint educational program. This will take place on July 29. In the future, it is anticipated that members of the Temple Israel Brotherhood will visit Dor Hadash in Budapest.

### **FJMC & Chir Hadach - to the light the Masorti / Conservative movement in Brussels**

*Chir Hadash* is a young community that was created three years ago by Rabbi Dr. Floriane Chinsky and a handful of volunteers, in the heart of Europe, in Brussels, Belgium. It is the first *Masorti / Conservative* community in Belgium and responds to an urgent need— to offer the entire Jewish population, destroyed by the *Shoah* and rapidly assimilating, a reconciliatory path to Judaism.

As Rabbi Chinsky indicated: “*Our community is presently composed of fifty subscribing members, along with two hundred declared sympathizers— this represents a hope for Belgian Jewry.*”

The *Masorti Olami European Region* believes that *Chir Hadach* has the greatest potential for growth but there are several obstacles that need to be first overcome. R. Chinsky continues:

*The first is the attitude fostered by Belgian democracy that is strongly opposed to organized religion, primarily represented by the Catholic church - whom they understand to be the enemy of free thinking. This has taught intelligent Jews they should not be practicing Jews. Chir Hadach' challenges this destructive Belgian tendency towards anti-religiosity through its mitzvah days, interfaith dialogues and a modern approach to teaching Judaism.*

*Belgian Jews (with the exception of the Sephardim who arrived during the 1960s) are the descendants of hidden children who lacked any family experience of Jewish holiday and history. The memory of the Shoah is the bedrock of their identity. In this context, anything that remotely touches upon belief and spirituality is utterly devalued. This devastated Jewish identity includes the stereotyping of ultra-religious orthodoxy as the Jewish norm and the pronounced perception that Judaism is anti-feminist.*