

# ISRAEL

## & Christians Today

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Understanding Israel and world events from a Biblical perspective

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Digital menorah calling for the release of hostages, Bat Yam Israel 11 December 2023. | Photo: Shutterstock

## Light Will Prevail Over Darkness

This year the Jewish people will celebrate *Hanukkah*—the ‘Festival of Light’, as we celebrate Christmas. During *Hanukkah*, the Jewish people recall the Maccabean defeat (a small army of pious Jews) of the tyranny of the Greek empire and the rededication of the Temple in the 2nd century BC. Since 7 October 2023, the world is experiencing another battle between light and darkness.

The violence of 7 October was intended by its perpetrators (Iran, Qatar and their proxies Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad and others) to unleash not only a kinetic war but also a dark, ideological war to destroy the Jewish nation again.

As early as 8 October, there were massive calls throughout the West, by a strange but now familiar alliance of Islamism and secular Marxism, for the liberation of Palestine ‘from the river to the sea’. That, of course, is a call for a global *jihad*—the genocide of

Jews. Like the Maccabees, the response of the Jewish people was to seek to survive, so that Israel can be the light to the nations that it is called to be.

In doing so, Israeli leaders faced an incredibly difficult dilemma: how to destroy Hamas and release the Israeli hostages, while also keeping innocent civilian casualties to a minimum? Eliminating Hamas terrorists has meant, tragically, that thousands of Gazan civilians have been killed, and the infrastructure has been largely annihilated. For the next decades, lawyers will debate whether or not Israel’s response was ‘proportionate’ or ‘excessive’.

In human terms, it is impossible to see any way to break this tragic cycle of violence and destruction, in which neither Israelis nor Palestinians, Jews nor Muslims, are winners.

Thankfully, we can be confident that redemption is not only possible, it has been promised. The Lord will

change the hearts and minds of all in the land. One day, there will be peace from Egypt to Assyria, and the people of Israel will live together in harmony.

Only the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob can solve this conflict, that has become truly a global battle between light and darkness, for the hearts and minds of all people.

Luke records that Zacharias, filled with the Holy Spirit, prophesied saying that Jesus came to save the people of Israel from their enemies, so that “*being delivered [we] might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life.*” (Luke 1:74-75).

As we celebrate Christmas, let us pray for the return of our Lord and Saviour, who will judge the nations, take the throne of His father David, and reign in the midst of His people Jacob. Let us pray that His Son who is the Light of the world will intervene and redeem our broken and dark humanity, in a miraculous way.

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Israel & Christians Today is the premier publication of Christians for Israel

## Colophon

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Our mission is to bring Biblical understanding in the Church and among the nations concerning God's purposes for Israel and to promote comfort of Israel through prayer and action.

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# Hunting Jews in Amsterdam

## ■ Andrew Tucker

International Editor | Christians for Israel

**The world is in shock after the violence that erupted following the Maccabi Tel Aviv-Ajax football match in Amsterdam on 7 November.**

At least ten Israelis were injured by local Arab and Muslim gangs who attacked Maccabi Tel Aviv soccer fans in many parts of the city following the football match. Hundreds of Israelis huddled in their hotels for hours, fearing they could be attacked. Many said that Dutch security forces were nowhere to be found, as the Israeli tourists were ambushed by gangs of masked assailants who shouted pro-Palestinian and anti-Israel slogans while they hunted, beat and harassed them.

Pro-Palestinian activists claimed the Israeli fans were the first to engage in harassment and violence, although those claims have not been verified. Dutch broadcaster NOS reported that a Palestinian flag was ripped off a building in the centre of the city. City officials said that ten Israelis had been arrested ahead of the soccer match that preceded the antisemitic attacks. Dutch Prime Minister Schoof condemned the actions of the Maccabi Tel Aviv fans, but stressed that “there is a big difference between destroying things and hunting Jews,” Schoof said.

It has become clear that this was a premeditated act of terror targeting the Jewish community.

Reminiscent of some of the darkest episodes in European history, it has deeply alarmed Jewish communities in Europe and abroad.

It has also exposed security gaps. Evidence is emerging that the attacks were coordinated by extremist networks linked to former UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees) employee Ayman Nejme. Analysis from the Network Contagion Research Institute (NCRI) indicates that Nejme, an Amsterdam resident, orchestrated these attacks through social media, mobilising groups that openly



A Palestinian flag hangs on a building in Amsterdam. | Photo: Chaim Goldberg/Flash90

endorse anti-Jewish violence. These attackers employed firecrackers, stun grenades, threats, and physical aggression, and forced individuals to renounce their identities, in what has become the most extensive antisemitic assault in the Netherlands since the Holocaust.

The attack underscores a troubling reality: radical groups across Europe are increasingly using public gatherings as venues for antisemitic violence, leveraging social media and transnational networks to amplify their impact.

Europe stands at a crossroads. We cannot dismiss this resurgence of antisemitism, nor can we afford to repeat the mistakes of history by neglecting the safety of Jewish communities. In 1938, Kristallnacht—orchestrated by the Nazi regime—devastated Jewish lives and businesses across Germany. Today, European leaders must act with urgency and determination to prevent a repeat of such tragedies.

Why were the Dutch intelligence, security and police institutions unable to prevent the attacks? The Dutch government has recognised the severity of this incident and pledged to investigate failures within its police and National Coordinator for Terrorism Prevention and Security.

But that is not enough. The Dutch government, European Union authorities,

and international bodies must take immediate action to ensure that those involved are held accountable, leaving no one unpunished or at large. They must examine connections with organisations like UNRWA and scrutinise former employees of international agencies suspected of engaging in antisemitic and violent activities. And they must strengthen protections for Jewish communities.

It is also time for our governments to confront antisemitic narratives that underlie these attacks. For too long, governments have failed to prevent misinformation and slogans that incite violence under false pretences, which serve as rallying points for extremism. The right to freedom of speech does not justify the dangerous calls for intifada and for the liberation of Palestine “from the river to the sea”—all such slogans denying the right of the Jewish people to self-determination and the legitimacy of the Jewish State of Israel, feed the latent antisemitism and inevitably lead to physical attacks on Jewish people.

Our leaders must act decisively to protect all citizens, in this case, the Jewish communities and the Israeli tourists.

As Christians, we must stand in solidarity with Jewish communities and reaffirm our commitment to promoting security, justice, and tolerance.

## Prayer Points

### Israel

- “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: ‘May those who love you be secure. May there be peace within your walls and security within your citadels.’” (*Psalms 122:6-7*).
- The year 2024 has been a difficult year for Israel. It has been a year of loss, sadness and hatred. Pray for comfort for the Israeli population and healing of the victims. Let us also give thanks for the miracles that have happened. Pray for unity amongst the Israeli people and for unity in the *Knesset*, the Israeli Parliament.

### Israel and the Nations

- Pray for the present world leaders. Pray that they will open up in the coming year to God's Word and His plan with Israel.
- In the past year the hatred against Israel was visible worldwide. Pray that the spirit of hatred and lies against Israel will no longer persist.

### Christians for Israel

- Pray that Christians will gain more insight into the spiritual battle that is taking place around Israel. Pray that Christians will see that there is a kingdom of darkness, that tries to exterminate God's people and that prayer is an important weapon against this.
- More than 31,000 Jews made *aliyah* in one year from more than 100 countries. Among them are also Ukrainian Jews who, thanks to the work of Koen and Ira Carlier, will build a new life in Israel. We may thank God that He is bringing His children home. Let's pray for the work of Koen and Ira Carlier and their team in Ukraine.
- Pray that the love for Israel may flourish worldwide in the churches. Pray that we as Christians may stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the Jewish people.

For daily Prayer Points, go to: [www.c4israel.org.nz](http://www.c4israel.org.nz)

# Will Trump's 'America First' Foreign Policy Help or Hurt Israel?

■ Jonathan S. Tobin  
Jewish News Syndicate (JNS)

The return of Donald Trump to the White House may send shivers down the spines of many, if not most, American Jews. Israelis, however, in large part seem relieved by the outcome of the 2024 presidential election. Both reactions are unsurprising.

To the majority of American Jews who are both politically liberal and loyal Democrats, Trump embodies contempt for the rule of credentialed elites—among whom most Jews number themselves—and the woke ideology they have imposed on the nation. Trump is the 'bad orange man' around whom working-class voters of all races have rallied. Movement towards Trump was in evidence in some, but not all, sectors of American Jewry. But it's clear that partisan loyalties overwhelmed concerns about the way left-wing Democrats have embraced antisemitism and hatred for Israel in the year since 7 October 2023.

**Whether successful or not, 'America First' is likely to be a better American foreign policy for Jerusalem than the efforts of Biden...**

Most Israelis see Trump solely through the prism of his undoubted record as the most pro-Israel president since the re-founding of the Jewish state. The positive memories of Trump moving the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, holding the Palestinian Authority accountable for its support for terrorism, and its pushing for the 2020 Abraham Accords peace agreements with Muslim and Arab states have only grown when compared to the equivocal attitude of President Joe Biden and his foreign-policy team during their four years in office.

**A More Pro-Israel President**  
Biden and his administration spent the last year since 7 October speaking out of both sides of their mouths about Israel's struggles. On the one hand, they sometimes expressed strong support for Israel's right to self-defence as well as the eradication of Hamas, and never completely cut off the supplies of arms it needed to continue the war, even if they were slow-walked. Criticism and unhelpful advice served to delay and hamper Israel's efforts to defeat its enemies, while giving hope to the Iranian-backed terrorists that the ceasefire for which Washington yearned



Meeting between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and US president Donald Trump at the White House in 2018. | Photo: Haim Zach/GPO

would allow them to survive and defeat Israel.

Things will be different under Trump, who has repeatedly expressed his

support for a green light to the Israelis to do everything in their power to quickly win the war. Both Israelis and their American friends are right to assume that, at worst, the ties between Washington and Jerusalem will almost certainly be warmer than they were during the past four years.

But even those Trump critics who acknowledge, as they must, that Trump's record on Israel is largely exemplary, are quick to assert that despite that, Israel will inevitably suffer from a revival of a Trumpian 'America First' foreign policy.

The choice of 'America First' for the title of Trump's foreign-policy vision has always been unfortunate since it conjures up the pre-World War II movement led by Charles Lindbergh, that was both dedicated to appeasing Nazi Germany and antisemitic. Trump's 'America First' is neither dedicated to appeasing a foreign foe or spreading Jew-hatred. It is, instead, more of a realist policy than anything else. That's because it involves, as we saw in Trump's first term, a desire to defeat the Islamist terrorists of ISIS, in addition to an aggressive policy of sanctions and anti-terror special operations against Iran.

Trump's version of 'America First' has other tangible benefits for Israel. Unlike both Obama and Biden, Trump is not interested in bolstering multilateral organisations like the United Nations that are cesspools of antisemitism and irredeemably hostile to the Jewish state. The president-elect has little use for that world body or any of its constituent agencies that do so much to demonise and harm Israel.

And though Biden bragged about how European leaders were thrilled with the return of the Democrats to power in January 2021, Trump is right to regard their good opinion as having no value. The less connected the United States is to international opinion, and especially that of the governments of Western Europe, the better it is for an Israel that Western Europe has already largely written off.

Though many anti-Trumpers falsely accuse Trump of antisemitism, the opposite is true since he did more to combat Jew-hatred on campuses than his predecessors, who saw the antisemitic mobs as demonstrating idealism that must be heard, if not fully accepted.

While events and changing circumstances can't be accounted for when determining the future, Trump's pro-Israel record and opposition to woke ideology represent a harbinger of smoother sailing for the alliance between the two countries in the next four years. Whether successful or not, 'America First' is likely to be a better American foreign policy for Jerusalem than the efforts of Biden and Harris.

*Jonathan S. Tobin is editor-in-chief of JNS (Jewish News Syndicate). Republished with permission.*

## Short News

### High Turnover



Israeli commercial high-tech companies achieved a turnover of 7.2 billion shekels in the first nine months of 2024. This shows a recovery compared to 2023, when in the entire year a turnover of 6.9 billion shekels was attained, after 2022 resulted in a turnover of 15 billion shekels. This data shows the resilience of the Israeli high-tech industry. Yokneam High-Tech Park. | Photo: Michael Giladi/Flash90

### Money Tap Open

Saudi Arabia has promised to transfer millions of US dollars to the Palestinian Authority (PA). The PA is in dire straits financially. With this, the money tap that was closed almost a decade ago is opened again. The government wants to transfer an amount of money each month to the 'brothers in Palestine' to alleviate 'the humanitarian crisis.' It is not known how much will be transferred.

### Economic Crisis

The war has inflicted much damage to the Israeli economy, according to the director of the Israel Tax Authority. The economic crisis can be compared with the combined impact of two previous crises, namely the *Yom Kippur* War and the Second Intifada. The director expects that the security expenditure will continue to rise also after this war, amounting to approximately eight to ten billion euros annually.

### ICC Issues Arrest Warrants Against Israeli Leaders

On Thursday 21 November, the Pre-Trial Chamber of the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants against Israel's political leaders Benjamin Netanyahu (Prime Minister) and Yoav Gallant (former Minister of Defence). This decision infringes the rule of law. The Court has no jurisdiction over Israeli leaders. The legal and factual grounds for the decision are very weak. Israel was given little opportunity to rebut the charges. For more information: <https://www.thinc-israel.org/articles/does-the-icc-decision-to-issue-arrest-warrants-against-israeli-leaders-comply-with-the-rule-of-law/>

# Israel's Multi-Front War Beyond 400 Days

## ■ Yochanan Visser

Correspondent in Israel

The war that began in Israel on 7 October 2023, is now more than 400 days old and there is no end in sight. It therefore seems good to look at the overall situation on the battlefield, which consists of seven fronts. These fronts are Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Iran, and Yemen, as well as Judea and Samaria, the heartland of Israel.

The most reported fronts are those in Gaza and Lebanon, more on that later.

### The Fronts with Syria, Iran, Iraq, & Yemen

The least active front is in Syria, from where sporadic attacks are carried out by various militias on the Golan Heights in Israel.

The Israeli Air Force is more active in Syria, regularly carrying out attacks on Iran-related targets. One of those attacks eventually led to the first direct confrontation between Israel and Iran when IAF warplanes bombed a building next to the Iranian embassy in Damascus on 1 April 2024. The attack killed seven advisers to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), three of whom were senior commanders of the IRGC's Quds Force. One of the three was Mohammad Reza, the Quds Force commander for Syria and Lebanon, and the liquidation of Reza sparked a confrontation between Iran and Israel that now threatens to escalate into a regional war.

## Experts now say that the IDF should take on the distribution of humanitarian aid because it is key to the administration of Gaza

Iran has already carried out two major attacks on Israel during the night of 14-15 April and on 1 October, when it fired over 180 ballistic missiles at Israel. Israel responded to the latter attack with extensive airstrikes on military targets deep inside Iran and around the capital Tehran on 26 October. A new Iranian retaliatory strike is now expected. Still, it remains unclear whether it will actually be carried out after the US significantly increased pressure on Iran by deploying B-52 bombers and several new warplane squadrons to the Middle East while also moving more ground troops to Syria.

From the fronts with Yemen and Iraq, Israel is regularly attacked with ballistic missiles and kamikaze drones. The attacks by the Islamic Resistance in Iraq (IRI) have been increasing in number recently but have not posed a direct threat to Israel so far. That could change if Iran and the IRI carry out their promised joint attack on Israel.

Ansar Allah in Yemen, also known as the Houthis militia, is more of a threat to shipping traffic to Israel but the militia also continues coordinated ballistic missile attacks with the IRI on central Israel and the Red Sea resort of Eilat. As a result of these attacks, the port of Eilat has now become virtually inaccessible.

The so-called heartland front in Judea and Samaria is increasingly posing a threat to stability in Israel. The IDF has launched an ongoing operation called 'Summer Camps' to suppress the terror and the rise of Hamas in the area. However, it has become clear that Iran considers this front very important and is trying in every possible way to supply weapons and cash to the Palestinian terror groups in the area. In fact, Iran has already turned the



Tulkarm, in the West Bank (Samaria), August 2024. | Photo: Flash90

cities of Jenin and Tulkarm in Samaria into forward bases of the IRGC and therefore most IDF activity is taking place there and in Nablus, the biblical city of Shechem, where various terror groups are operating.

### Gaza

In Gaza Hamas has taken heavy blows but has not yet been robbed of its ability to partially control the enclave from the 'metro', the underground tunnel complex. The liquidation of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar was a heavy blow to Hamas but the terrorist organisation has proven in the past that it can take such setbacks and continue its *Jihad*.

Due to internal divisions in the Israeli political echelon, the IDF has been limited in its ability to fully implement its war objectives, which include total control over Gaza and the removal of Hamas as the governing power.

The IDF has now been forced to carry out operations in previously conquered areas such as the city of Jabalya due to this policy after it became clear that Hamas was filling the vacuum left by the IDF after it withdrew from the cities in Gaza.

Experts now say that the IDF should take on the distribution of humanitarian aid because it is key to the administration of Gaza and therefore Israel is now trying to solve this problem by hiring foreign companies that specialise in delivering humanitarian aid in war zones.

### Northern Front

On the northern front, rocket and drone attacks by Hezbollah are still the order of the day. Although the number of attacks has decreased somewhat, they have been replaced by increasing attacks with long-range rockets into the centre of Israel.

The Israeli army, with the help of Mossad, has dealt heavy blows to the leadership of Hezbollah that saw almost all leaders and top commanders being liquidated by the IAF.

The Iranian-sponsored terrorist organisation appears to have been infiltrated by Mossad agents who provided precise information that allowed, for example, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah to be liquidated in his bunker two floors underneath a building in the Dahiya neighbourhood of Beirut.

However, the liquidation of Hezbollah's entire top command has had little effect on the battlefield in

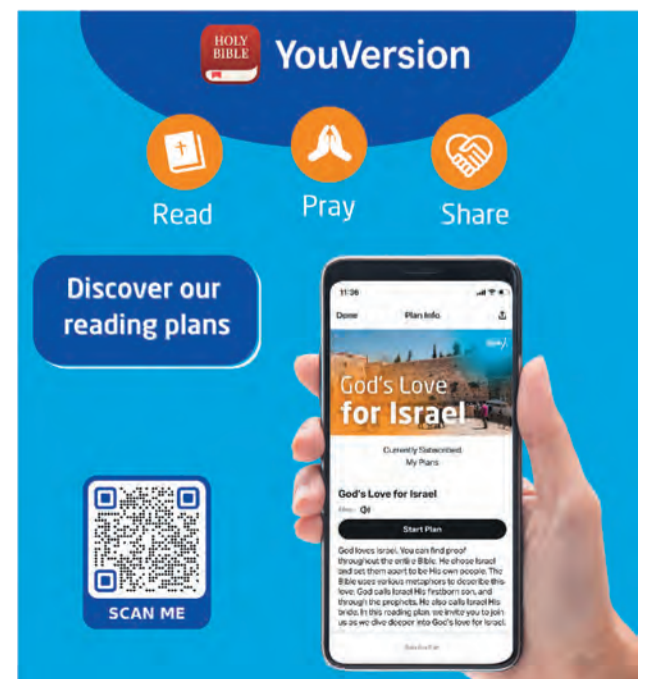
southern Lebanon where Hezbollah is now using guerrilla tactics and operating in small groups that maintain contact with each other via non-electronic means.

The IDF has also adjusted its operational methods and is in the process of creating a buffer zone of at least five kilometres in southern Lebanon. Almost all villages in this area have been destroyed and are no longer populated.

Furthermore, Hezbollah strongholds in the city of Baalbek and the Beqaa Valley are now under constant attack, as well as Dahiya in Beirut which housed Hezbollah's headquarters before the war.

The IDF is also attempting to make it completely impossible for Iran to supply new weapons by bombing border crossings and the Hezbollah depot at Hariri Airport. In this way, Hezbollah's rocket arsenal should be depleted thereby putting an end to the shelling at Israel from Lebanon.

The ground operation in Lebanon aims to push Hezbollah away above the Litani River some forty kilometres from the Israeli border and is expected to take a long time because the IDF is using limited forces to realise this goal.



# Hamas Must be Defeated, not Legitimised

## ■ Khaled Abu Toameh

Jewish News Syndicate (JNS)

More than a year after the 7 October 2023, Hamas-led attack on Israel, the Palestinian Authority (PA) continues to view the Iran-backed Islamist movement as a legitimate partner.

In early November, representatives of the PA's ruling Fatah faction (headed by PA President Mahmoud Abbas) and Hamas held talks in the Egyptian capital of Cairo to discuss establishing a joint administration to rule the Gaza Strip. An Egyptian source confirmed that the Fatah-Hamas discussions aim to create a committee to manage the Gaza Strip, in addition to pursuing efforts to reach a ceasefire there.

Tayseer Nasrallah, a senior Fatah official who participated in the talks with Hamas, expressed 'optimism' that they would lead to the formation of a committee for the reconstruction of Gaza in the aftermath of the war which erupted after the 7 October attack. During the attack, that resulted in the murder of 1,200 Israelis and the injury of thousands, many Israelis were beheaded, raped, tortured and burned alive. In addition, more than 240 others were kidnapped to the Gaza Strip, where 101—alive and dead—remain in captivity.

## The United States and the rest of the world should encourage Israel to continue its efforts to eradicate Hamas.

Hamas, for its part, said: "We held a meeting with our brothers in the Fatah faction, and the atmosphere of the meeting was positive and frank."

In October, Fatah and Hamas representatives held similar talks in Cairo to discuss ways of ending the rivalry between the two parties and establishing a Palestinian unity government. Senior Hamas official Taher a-Nunu said that the purpose of the talks was to "achieve Palestinian national unity and strengthen security and political coordination between the two sides."

By negotiating with Hamas about the future of the Gaza Strip, Abbas is legitimising the Iran-backed terror group. It sends a message to the Palestinians and the rest of the world that he sees no problem in dealing with murderers and terrorists who committed the most horrific crimes against Jews since the Holocaust. As we



Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestinian Authority. | Photo: Flash90

have seen most recently in the Chinese Communist Party, Iran and Afghanistan, negotiating with terrorists and their equivalents simply does not work.

Abbas should, instead, be condemning Hamas, distancing himself from the terror group and holding Hamas fully responsible for the destruction of the Gaza Strip because of the war Hamas started.

Moreover, Abbas should be urging Hamas to relinquish control over the

Gaza Strip instead of begging it to agree to the formation of a joint Fatah-Hamas committee to manage the coastal enclave.

Since Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip, thousands of Palestinians have been killed in wars they initiated with Israel. With the help of hundreds of millions of dollars from Europe, Qatar and Iran, Hamas transformed the Gaza Strip into one of the largest bases of Islamist terrorism in the Middle East. This investment saw the building of a vast network of tunnels and the manufacturing and smuggling of weapons, including rockets and missiles. The assumption that Hamas would voluntarily give up control of the Gaza Strip because of any unity agreement with Abbas, is laughable.

Abbas's efforts to reach a deal with Hamas will only embolden the terror group and incentivise it to pursue its jihad against Israel. These efforts send a

message to Hamas that, despite the crimes it committed against Israelis on 7 October and the *nakba* (catastrophe) it brought on the Palestinians of the Gaza Strip, it can still play a key role in Gaza after the war. Since 2007, Hamas has demonstrated that it does not care about the well-being of the Palestinians, caring only about remaining in power and continuing the fight against Israel.

The Biden administration chose to turn a blind eye to Abbas's efforts to legitimise Hamas. A terror group committed to the elimination of Israel must not be permitted to play any role in a Palestinian government—not in the West Bank and certainly not in the Gaza Strip - preventing them from rearming, regrouping, and preparing another 7 October-style attack.

Since the beginning of the war, Israel has destroyed most of Hamas's military capabilities and many of its top leaders, including Yahya Sinwar, the mastermind of 7 October. The United States and the rest of the world should encourage Israel to continue its efforts to eradicate Hamas. They should also urge Abbas and the PA leadership to immediately sever all contact with the terror group.

There is no alternative to a total victory over Hamas and Iran's other terror proxies as well, ultimately of the toxic Islamist regime in Iran.

If Iran's regime remains in place, torturing both its own people and others—as far away as Argentina—there regrettably will be no peace, not only for Israelis but for Palestinians and the free world.

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## Short News

### Beekeeping Recovery

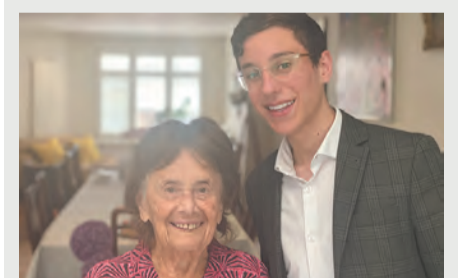


Beekeepers have made a large and successful effort to recover beekeeping before the Jewish New Year. The Israeli beekeeping was heavily affected by the attack of Hamas. Israelis consume about forty per cent of their annual honey consumption in the month of *Tishri* (September/October), which starts with the Jewish New Year. In addition, beekeeping is extremely important for the strongly agricultural region of Tkuma, near the Gaza Strip, because farmers depend on beehives for the pollination of the crops. | Photo: Flash90

### Statement by Amnesty International

"The conflict didn't start a year ago, but with the declaration of the Jewish State," the statement of Amnesty International UK read in a video just before the commemoration of 7 October. In the video, Amnesty International UK accused Israel of implementing apartheid and called on Israel to end 76 years of displacement and destruction. The video ended with an appeal to the British government to forbid arms sales to Israel.

### Holocaust Education



The one-hundred-year-old Holocaust survivor Lily Ebert has passed away. Lily was frequently seen on TikTok and Instagram, together with her great-grandson, answering questions and educating followers about the Holocaust. On the two platforms, she had more than two million followers and their videos received billions of views. Lily received various awards for her education about the Holocaust. During the Holocaust, Lily lost her mother, younger sister and brother. | Photo: Wikimedia Commons

# In the Face of Tragedy

On 7 October 2023, on the day of *Simchat Torah*, Israel endured an unimaginable tragedy that forever changed countless lives and in fact the nation of Israel. The nation will be scared for generations. These pages are dedicated to sharing the stories of that day—of the survivors, those who lost their lives, and of the resilient individuals determined to rebuild.

## “We Must Continue”

Moti Barak is head of agriculture at *kibbutz* Be’eri, which was heavily affected on 7 October. “7 October feels like it was years ago and at the same time as if it were yesterday. Every day I lead people through our *kibbutz*. Over there on the left was the house of Gal, who grew peanuts and potatoes. His parents, Meni and Ayelet, were killed. On the right lived Yarden. She lost her brother when he tried to protect the *kibbutz*. And Ori, who lived nearby, was in charge of growing wheat and maintained the tractors. His parents were killed. And that is just this one street; the list of loss goes on.”

### No Choice

As Moti guides the tours, he sees people crying. “I hear myself speaking, explain, but the words sound unreal.” His own family was fortunate enough to survive, but the community as a whole suffered immensely, with about 100 out of 1,200 residents losing their lives. “It is a terrible loss,” he says, “but we must continue. We have no other choice.”

### Help

“The support is enormous. Many of our farm workers have been injured, killed or evacuated. Without external help, the food would have rotted and the



agricultural produce would have been lost. Volunteers come from all parts of Israeli society—doctors, professors and teachers—everyone comes to help. And there is also help from abroad, from everywhere. Some stay a week, others a month. And more continue to come.”

### Bloom

“I pick myself up. What other choice do I have? We will rebuild Be’eri. We will make the fields bloom again and we will return.”

| Text and Photo: JNF

## Free, Yet Hated

On 7 October, Hamas militants invaded the home of the Goldstein-Almog family in *kibbutz* Kfar Aza. Seventeen-year-old Agam is taken hostage along with her mother and two brothers and taken to Gaza. Her father and sister were killed.

After 51 harrowing days, their nightmare ends when Agam and her family were released through a prisoner exchange deal with Hamas.

Throughout her time in captivity, Agam often dreamed of her release. Yet the reality proved far from her hopeful visions. “I had imagined the world would welcome us back, but what I found was a world divided and full of anger. The hatred I thought I’d left behind in Gaza was waiting for me online.” Her social media and the comment sections on news stories mentioning her name were inundated with hateful messages.

### Support for Hamas

“I have seen how the movement in the West for a Gaza ceasefire sometimes spirals into open support for Hamas, with people pursuing Jews in public places,” Agam explains. “My captors surely still hate me, but when American students chant for ‘*intifada*’ or praise Hamas fighters with slogans like, ‘Al-Qassam, you make us proud,’ it’s clear many others do too.”

### Slave

During her detention, Agam was held in a terror tunnel. “My guards despised me because I was Jewish; they forced me to recite Islamic prayers and made me wear a *hijab*. I was not permitted to mourn my father and sister and was often ordered to keep my eyes on the ground. They told me I’d spend the rest of my life as a chained slave in Gaza.”

### Shattered Illusions

Upon her release, Agam endured several frightening moments. At one point, a large crowd surrounded the Red Cross vehicle she was in, shouting, “Die, die, die!” Agam emphasises the urgent need for all remaining hostages to be released, but adds, “I have no illusions about the world they will return to.”

| Source: *The Jerusalem Post*



Released hostage Agam Goldstein-Almog speaks during a rally calling for the release of Israelis held by Hamas. | Photo: Avshalom Sassoni/Flash90

## ADI Negev Escapes Massacre

On 7 October 2023, ADI Negev, a rehabilitation village, located just 20 kilometres from the Gaza Strip, was miraculously spared. Hamas launched its attack on southern Israel early that morning, known as *Black Shabbat*, at around 6.30 am. Shortly after, ADI’s night shift staff was set to be relieved by the incoming



Edna Malkomo (right) with one of the residents.

morning shift. At 6.55 am, two vans carrying about 50 staff members arrived at the roundabout leading to ADI Negev. They arrived just in time: moments later, heavily armed Hamas militants in pickup trucks drove past the same roundabout but did not turn toward the village of ADI, where the approximately 170 residents with severe disabilities and 70 patients in the rehabilitation centre were being moved to safe rooms amid blaring sirens.

### Staff Murdered

Tragically, the terrorists were able to

carry out a horrific massacre in the nearby town of Ofakim, resulting in the deaths of 50 people, including two ADI employees and family members of staff members. Edna Malkomo, who had just completed her night shift, entered Ofakim just ten minutes after the terrorists arrived. Her car was immediately riddled with bullets, and she was killed instantly. Another ADI employee, Jakob Mortov, was also killed by Hamas terrorists as he attempted to reach a public shelter for safety.

### Precautionary Measures

In the wake of these tragic losses, ADI Negev continues to stand as a beacon of hope and resilience for its residents and staff.

New security measures have been implemented to strengthen the safety of the care village against future threats. The grounds are now fully secured, with a substantial increase in monitoring systems and sensors. Special security doors have been added in several wards, while fences and walls have been heightened and reinforced. Additionally, an official security team has been established to provide maximum protection for the community.

| Text: Yochanan Zomer. | Photos: ADI



Jakob Mortov.

## “We Will Rebuild and Prosper”

Moran Freibach, head of agriculture at *kibbutz* Nachal Oz, shares: “I was born in Nachal Oz and live here with my wife and five children. From an early age, I was taught to always think five years ahead. On 7 October, we spent 11 long hours in the shelter, frightened and largely unaware of what was unfolding outside. When we finally were able to exit again, we saw something awful! Everything had been destroyed—our houses, but also our agricultural fields along with our irrigation systems.

A farmer without land is essentially bankrupt. Everyone in this area is a farmer, producing food for all of Israel. In this hot climate, water is essential. My water reservoir is right on the border and the terrorists had broken the pipes and filters, took the computers and destroyed the reservoir.

Their message seemed clear: if they lose their land, they will never come back. But they were wrong. We are strong, and we will not be driven away. As early as 8 October, we had already begun assessing the damage and planning for the future, however difficult that was with all the personal losses we endured.

Under the protection of army tanks, we re-seeded our fields, right up to the border with Gaza. This is our victory. We want to grow, rebuild, become more advanced and emerge stronger. We want to show the world that this is a war between light and darkness, between life and death.

We will return and prosper—within the next five years.”

| Text and photo: JNF



## “We are Going Home”

On 7 October, Moshe (72) and Diana (75) took shelter in their safe room in *kibbutz* Nir Yitzhak after hearing the air alarm. At 11:30 am, Hamas terrorists invaded their homes to cause death and destruction. Holding the door handle with all their strength, Moshe and Diana tried desperately to keep the attackers from entering. Their efforts were in vain, as a barrage of bullets was fired at the door, injuring the terrified couple.

While Moshe and Diana awaited their fate, the terrorists took their time. They opened the fridge, grabbed food and drinks and settled on the sofa, waiting for further instructions from their leaders. Eventually, orders came: “Take them as hostages to Gaza”. Forced to walk, the couple passed the fence of their beloved *kibbutz*, heading towards Gaza. Severely wounded, Moshe pleaded for medical help in Hebrew. There was no response, after which Moshe told them in English, “We are going home”. Seizing the moment, he and his wife turned and ran back home, expecting to be shot at that moment.

Miraculously, no shots were fired, and once back in the *kibbutz*, they knocked on the door of their neighbour, who, fearing terrorists, did not open immediately. Once Moshe and Diana were inside, the neighbour called his son, a doctor, who gave instructions over the phone on how to stop Moshe’s bleeding. Eventually, the couple ended up at Hadassah Medical Centre in Jerusalem where they were treated.

| Screenshot X



## Ron Shemer (23)

Ron Shemer was a lover of nature and animals, with a passion for ocean sunsets. He grew up in Lod, Israel, as the eldest son of his family. After completing his military service, he dedicated himself to environmental preservation and was planning to begin his biotechnology studies at university in October 2024.

When terrorists from Gaza invaded the Nova music festival grounds on 7 October—where Ron had gone with a group of friends—he managed to escape. He called his mother to reassure her he was safe and on his way home. When he found a car to flee the festival grounds, Ron noticed that two of his closest friends, Dan and Omar, were missing. He left the car to go back and search for them. On the way, he helped a girl who was paralysed by a panic attack.

After locating his friends, they took shelter at an intersection when an alarm sounded. Suddenly, a group of terrorists arrived and threw grenades into the shelter. Ron protected his friends with his body, but the grenades wounded them all. Omar survived. Dan, critically wounded, succumbed to his injuries hours later. Ron, despite his injuries, went out to confront the terrorists but did not return. He went missing and was believed to have been taken hostage by Hamas, until a week later the army found his body, just fifty metres from the shelter. Ron was one of the 364 people who were killed at the Nova Festival.

| Photo: Flash90



## Testimonies from 7 October Survivors

Hundreds of Israelis survived and witnessed the deadliest antisemitic attack since the Holocaust. The Shoah Foundation at the University of Southern California took the initiative to record the testimonies of survivors and witnesses. These accounts serve as living history and can help us how to respond to prejudice, hate and violence, and to combat age-old antisemitism. The testimonies are in Hebrew or English. View the testimonies via:

<https://sfi.usc.edu/october7testimonies>

# Walking in God's Miracles

## ■ Rev Oscar Lohuis

On 16 November 2024, Rev Willem JJ Glashouwer turned 80 years old. He is still very active as a pastor and speaker and hopes to continue with this, as long as he can. "Moses began when he was eighty!", he tells passionately. I visited him and his wife Marianne in Amersfoort, the Netherlands.

### *You weren't a believer at all, as a young man. Why?*

"In my childhood and teenage years I turned away from faith. I was pretty rebellious and threw God overboard. I started to believe in evolution. Darwin, Marx and Freud became my heroes. I have no recollection at all of my childhood faith. I was pretty much out of tune within our family and went through life as a kind of 'angry young man.'"

### *How did you finally come to faith?*

"My father [who was a pastor too: ed.] was virtually blind and therefore had to be driven to all of his speaking engagements. Once I had my driver's license, I had to drive him as well. On one occasion, a (Dutch) missionary from Jordan, an associate of my father, was visiting. When my father was due to speak somewhere, I would usually go to a pub for a game of billiards, but this time, my father asked me to stay with him at his meeting. Afterwards, my father asked my opinion about the meeting, while all three of us were back in the car. Inwardly I was furious and told him that the Bible isn't true and historically unreliable. I also said that I thought the missionary (who was in the car as well) "had overwhelmed the old folks with his shouting", and that it was all about money. The atmosphere in the car did not get any better.

**"I know that you are real and I will serve You the rest of my life." "That never disappeared and I never doubted Him again."**

After taking my father home, I had to take the missionary to the city of Baarn, the Netherlands. He invited me to come in and continue our conversation. It was like that all week. Finally, he said to me: "Why don't you put this to the test by making a decision in favour of God and Jesus?" After that final conversation I parked the car at the roadside and said to God: "If You are real, I will give You everything." Nothing happened. I was angry and said to myself: "I'll never do that again!" But during the night I woke up and I found myself praising God. There was an overwhelming presence and deep inward praise. The second night I had the exact same experience, but this time the praising was even stronger. The third night it was so strong that my heart almost burst. I felt that I couldn't take any more of the joy and glory. I said to the Lord: "I know that you are real and I will serve You the rest of my life." "That never disappeared and I never doubted Him again."

### *How did Marianne and you get to know each other?*

"We knew each other from secondary school acting in a play called: *The Miser* by Molière. I played Cleante, the happy-go-lucky son of the miser who squandered everything. Marianne played his loved one: Mariane!" Marianne adds: "When we married, Willem was still a theology student, I was an executive secretary. So, we lived on my small income on a boat on a canal in the Dutch city of Groningen."

### *The two of you also worked at the Dutch Evangelical Broadcasting Company (EO).*

Willem: "After my studies, I felt unable to become a

pastor. My father was one of the founders of the Evangelical Broadcasting Company (EO). There was virtually no one who wanted to stick their necks out to help that would-be broadcasting company. We really had the desire to spread the Gospel, but we also loved modern media. That's when I started to produce and direct programmes and develop multimedia. Marianne became a TV presenter. We worked with the EO for twenty years and witnessed the broadcast company expand greatly. Around 1977, I founded the Evangelical College, together with Prof Dr Willem Ouweneel and two other pioneers. We offered young people a gap year to give them some sort of injection, to enable them to survive at University as a Christian. We also witnessed that work grow large and it still exists."

### *Ultimately you became a pastor*

"I hadn't finished my theology studies in Groningen in my younger years and I felt guilty about it. My father parted company from the small Reformed Congregation of the Dutch town of Tull en 't Waal. They then appealed to me to assist in the congregation's pastoral work. I could then also finish my theological studies at the Theological Faculty of Utrecht. We decided to accept the appeal. A week later my father passed away. Therefore I never could hear from him what he thought of my becoming a pastor. It was a very small congregation that could give us almost no income. But if God calls, you simply have to obey."

### *In that period you became seriously ill*

"During a TV recording in Jericho (Israel), I became unwell and collapsed. They put me against the car and when I regained consciousness, we carried on. Back in the Netherlands, I had a medical examination. It turned

out that a large tumour, the size of a grapefruit, which caused tremendous pressure on my brain fluid. Within a week I found myself on the operating table. Halfway through the operation, the surgeon wanted to stop because he couldn't take it anymore. He could look from above right through my nostrils. The team urged him to finish the operation anyway. Later the doctor told us that it was a miracle the operation was a success, "because I know what I did to your brains." There were a lot of Christians praying for me. Through a TV documentary I made about a Jewish boy who survived the horrors of the war in Poland, there had been contact with ultraorthodox Jews in Israel. When they heard about my illness, they organised a *Minyan* (ten Jewish men) at the Western Wall, for which they travelled especially from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. God has answered the prayers of Christians and Jews. And, so He called me to serve the Church and Israel. Now I am eighty years of age and still healthy. Marianne and I still serve Israel and the Jewish people: the miracle of God in our days. Israel, the great sign of hope in this world."

### *How did you get involved with the work of Christians for Israel?*

"When I was recovering from the major operation, Karel van Oordt, the founder of Christians for Israel, came to see me. He said: "We are looking for a new chairman. We prayed for it and we want to ask you." We didn't know much about Israel and were astonished. But Karel said: "Many Christians like dead Jews, the Jews in the Bible, such as Moses, David, Peter and Paul. And they like Jews who are yet to be born, the



Rev Willem Glashouwer. | Photo: Willem Jan de Bruin Photography

future generation of Jews who will be called to bless the entire world again from the prophetically restored Israel. But who will stand in the gap for the Jews today? Who is going to fight replacement theology? We didn't dare to say no. And so my speaking engagements about Israel in all kinds of Churches and gatherings started."

### *How did your thoughts about Israel change?*

"In particular due to acquiring a Biblical understanding about the everlasting covenants of God with Israel. By starting to see that the Lord God Himself has established all covenants with Israel of which the Bible speaks, I began to understand. I then wrote the book *Israel on Its Way to its Rest* which later became *Why Israel?* Translations into dozens of languages started the international work. Today new translations are still being added."

### *What have you witnessed due to the work of Christians for Israel?*

"Karel van Oordt had a vision to convert the Church, to give Christians a Biblical view on Israel. He was especially keen on making the Church understand the message, to make atonement for its guilt and remove stumbling blocks. Then we also started the (Dutch) newspaper *Israel Aktueel* to refute the lies about Israel in the media. The message has taken root quite well. Theological reflection has been initiated. Thousands of ministers and pastors also read the magazine *Israel and the Church*. A ministry must speak prophetically, God is working and He is leading the world towards His future."

### *How do you reflect on the past while focusing on the future?*

"I am not looking back, my focus is firmly set on the future. My schedule is packed until the end of next year, with major conferences lined up in many different countries. We hope to continue building. Moses started at age 80 and as long as it is day we will keep going. The Lord truly provides strength. Just this morning I read in *1 Chronicles 29:12*: "In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all." We experience that daily. God equips us for what He calls us to do. None of this is our work, but it is His work through us. In that, we witness God's miracles. So many times, I've found myself simply standing and watching in awe. To Him be all praise and honour."





# Anzacs, Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran—Linked?

## ■ Kelvin Crombie

Australian Historian | Documentor & Founder of Heritage Resources

### Semach & Hezbollah Rockets Over the Galilee

On 25 September 1918, the Australian Light Horse captured the Sea of Galilee following a victory at the Turkish railway station at Semach on the southern shore. An anniversary event was scheduled for 25 September 2024 organised by the Kinneret College and Australian Embassy, but due to Hezbollah rocket attacks, the official ceremony was cancelled. Undeterred, Ziv Ophir of the Kinneret College, and local guide Joe Sofer, decided to proceed with an unofficial event—if I was still willing to come up from Jerusalem and give an historical presentation.

My family agreed to continue with our plans to go to the service and also to visit Israeli friends from *Kibbutz* Mayan Baruch who had been evacuated to a hotel on the Sea of Galilee. Leaving Jerusalem early in the morning daughter Abigail suddenly witnessed four rockets in the sky above us. Daughter Orit stopped the car and we got out to observe the missiles being taken out by Israel's Iron Dome. This was a Hezbollah welcome to the Galilee!

Several hours later we sat together with about ten other stalwarts in front of the statue of the Aboriginal Light Horseman and together remembered the brief but intense battle in September 1918—in which Aboriginal horsemen participated.

I first took my wife Lexie, daughters Orit, Nirel and Talia and other Light Horse enthusiasts to this site in the 1990s when it was a dilapidated site and used for dumping rubbish by the local municipality. Interest in the location grew when I took a group there led by Barry Rodgers from the Emu Gully Adventure Education camp in 2005. When we put the programme together for the 2007 Light Horse re-enactment tour, Semach was firmly on the schedule.

Just after completing my historical presentation during that 2007 tour a dump truck backed in right in front of us and dumped its load of rubbish. The group, composed of some seventy Light Horse enthusiasts, was abhorred—how

could this happen at a site where nineteen Australian soldiers had been killed in battle? Barry then declared that we were going to do something tangible here.

In 2008 I arranged a meeting between some Australian Light Horse Association (ALHA) directors who were in Israel, with members of the local Municipality of Semach and a local historian. The ALHA directors agreed to pursue the vision of a Museum, which was then taken up by the *Kinneret* (Sea of Galilee) College, the ALHA and other entities.

Then in 2010 Barry and I met with Ken Wyatt MP in Parliament House in Canberra. Ken and I had connections to Corrigin in Western Australia and by marriage through my Aboriginal heritage. We proposed that a statue of an Aboriginal Light Horseman be based at Semach, to which Ken readily gave his support. The vision was then pursued.

In 2013 I met up with an Aboriginal man named Raymond Finn, a former member of the Light Horse Association and asked if he could locate at least six young Aboriginal horsemen to ride in the 2017 100th Beersheba re-enactment event. Raymond took up the challenge and located some young riders at Hermansburg Mission near Alice Springs. Thereafter Barry took on the task of instructing these young men in the various protocols connected to being a Light Horse rider.

In October 2017 there were a number of Aboriginal riders at Beersheba, and some also rode in a guard of honour at Semach—at the opening of the Museum in the former Turkish railway station. The following year the statue of the Aboriginal Light Horseman was officially unveiled. So being able to attend and speak at the 2024 anniversary event, despite Hezbollah rocket attacks, also had some personal significance.<sup>1</sup>

### Iranian Missiles Over Jerusalem

A week later while based at Christ Church Ministry Centre inside the Old City of Jerusalem my phone suddenly gave out a warning signal. Thus alerted we went out onto our balcony and noticed dozens of lights moving over us from the east. These were missiles from



The Australian Light Horse Regiment monument in Beersheba. | Photo: Shutterstock

Iran, courtesy of the Shi'ite Muslim regime, which has a stated goal of liquidating Israel. Then the official air raid siren sounded—but by this time the Israeli defence system had begun knocking out these missiles. We lingered to observe the spectacle—until ordered by our daughter Abigail, who had some authority at Christ Church, to get to the bomb shelter.

This episode reminded us a little of the 1991 Gulf War when Iraq sent missiles, but on that occasion, we sheltered in our sealed rooms.

Christ Church, incidentally, was the first Anglican-Protestant-'Messianic' entity to be established in the land of Israel, by a British-based society named CMJ, which had a vision for the complete restoration of Israel. It stands immediately opposite the entrance to David's Citadel, part of which was left standing by the Romans in 70 AD to reveal Roman might—and Jewish defeat and exile. Then on 11 December 1917, General Allenby stood on the steps of the Citadel for the ceremony ending Ottoman Turkish control over Jerusalem. On that occasion some 65 New Zealand and Australian soldiers were in the guard of honour—and they brushed up against the buildings of Christ Church Ministry Centre.

### Hamas Atrocities Where ANZACs had Fought and Died

A week later, on 7 October, my wife

Lexie and I went down to visit Pastor Howard Bass in Beersheba. Howard then invited us to join him on a visit to the Nova Festival massacre site. This we had not planned to do. A few hours later we joined hundreds of Israelis at the site of this Hamas atrocity. It was a very solemn occasion, punctuated by the cries of anguish by a young Israeli lady and the visit of the Defence Minister Yoav Gallant.

This area was very familiar. From 1988 onwards I had led dozens of *In the Steps of Allenby and the Anzacs'* tours to this area—tours which began in Jerusalem and ended in Beersheba. This was the very region where Australian and New Zealand horsemen had fought in 1917 and is also the site of the Anzac Memorial at *Kibbutz* Beeri.

The battles fought here in 1917 revolved around Gaza. But British and ANZAC troops also headed out from this region towards Beersheba in October 1917, resulting in Beersheba's capture on 31 October. This was also the very day that the British War Committee in London passed a resolution promising the establishment of a Jewish National Home in the land of Israel (then Turkish-occupied Palestine).

Part two will be published in the February 2025 issue.

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<sup>1</sup>For further information concerning this Anzac related Museum, contact Ziv Ophir at Kinneret College:

ziv@kinneret.ac.il



## New Zealander's Response—Part 2

### ■ Tony Kan

President | NZ Friends of Israel

In Part 1, we described the six horsemen influencing the Western thinking:

**1. Critical Race Theory:** All the woes of the world are due to Caucasian white people.

**2. Settler Colonialism:** All the woes to indigenous people are due to colonialism.

**3. Neo-marxism:** Society is divided into oppressors and oppressed.

**4. Linguistic Theft:** The meaning of words can be changed to suit, no matter what the word originally meant or by whoever first coined it.

**5. The Big Lie:** The idea of creating a lie so audacious that everyone would believe because no one would be so brazen to say it in public if it were not true. Repeated enough times, the facts are rejected in disbelief.

**6. Cancel Culture:** Anything that you deem unacceptable must be shut down, boycotted, and alienated. The result is civil discussion and debate becomes impossible because it creates a climate of fear. People stop speaking up for fear of losing their livelihoods, their friends, and their reputations.

We also explained how the UN is highly regarded and why its performance falls far short of Western expectations. Having set the scene, our focus now shifts to New Zealand.

### New Zealanders are Naïve About War

New Zealanders are deeply naïve about war. Almost all of us have not had firsthand experience of it and thus the horror and tragedy of it appals us. We simply want it to stop. Isn't war good for nothing? Why can't people just settle their differences over a cup of tea?

Many are in the pro-Palestinian camp because of this reasoning. If Israel would stop, the killing would stop. If they didn't have arms, they couldn't kill anyone.

Hence the naïve but intense pressure on our New Zealand Superannuation Fund and universities to divest any investments in arms manufacturers.

It's naïve because it doesn't recognise that there are tyrants who are prepared to extend their tyranny beyond their borders if they perceive weakness.

Israel's supporters want the killing to stop too. But only after the hostages have been returned, Hamas' ability to repeat 7 October is destroyed and prevented from being rebuilt.

Most are oblivious to the fact that Hamas intentionally incited the war with their 7 October attack to breathe new oxygen into their cause, after the Abrahamic Accords and Russo-Ukraine

War had diverted much of the West's attention and aid.

Hamas started the war and then hid in their tunnels while their women and children paid the price.

### A Wave of Antisemitism

Collectively the horsemen have created a wave of antisemitism. Calls to kill Jews, to eradicate Jews, cartoons reminiscent of Nazi Germany, accusations of genocide, and antisemitic vitriol is endemic across social media, fuelled by unbalanced MSM reporting.

Jewish families across New Zealand are having to counsel their tearful children as they are verbally attacked and berated for being Jewish and therefore guilty by association for 'killing babies' in Gaza.

The Holocaust Centre of New Zealand is doing noble work with limited resources to assist the Jewish community in the face of this storm.

New Zealanders have seen antisemitic graffiti, rocks thrown through a synagogue's windows, Jews being confronted in their workplaces, educational institutions, and Israeli flags ripped down from shop fronts.

### The Palestinian Solidarity Network

John Minto, who previously led the protest against the 1981 Springbok tour has been particularly successful in organising protests in many towns and cities under a new platform the Palestinian Solidarity Network.

Back in 1981 Minto led the charge to pressure New Zealand to boycott Israel. Today's Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement leans right into Minto's philosophy. PSN therefore promotes BDS wherever it can.

A few weeks ago, Minto organised a meeting with the UN Special Rapporteur Albanese to pressure the Sovereign Fund to join the BDS movement. Fortunately, the Fund officials politely declined saying that their ethical investment framework was sufficient and need not be altered.

### The Jewish Community Response: Threatened but Resilient

Threats evoke a flight or fight response. The magnitude of trauma that 7 October has caused should not be underestimated.

We received a phone call from an elderly woman from Wanganui who ran a stall at the Riverside Market. A pro-Palestinian demonstration has been set up there every weekend. She listened to the anger and intimidating rhetoric and began to shake like a leaf.

She couldn't hold her tea anymore and put it down before she dropped it. As she trembled she wondered if she had



Solidarity march in Christchurch.

what they call inter-generational PTSD as she remembered her relatives killed in the Holocaust.

Now she and her elderly friends discuss how they hide their Jewishness. They don't tell anyone they are observing *Shabbat*. They have put away their *menorahs* and taken down their *mezuzahs*. This is not right. As a New Zealander, I am ashamed.

Other Jews, much younger than these ladies have sought comfort and strength in each other's company.

Others have decided to openly show their support for the hostages and the IDF who are risking their lives to bring the hostages back and prevent Hamas from doing it again.

They have been organising marches and vigils, organising billboard campaigns, praying and supporting friends and relatives in Israel.

7 October has drawn the Israeli émigré community and the rest of the Jewish community closer together, collaborating on a scale seldom seen before.

### The Non-Jewish Pro-Israel Supporters

Not everyone is taken in by the Big Lie. A vast majority of New Zealanders can see that there are two sides to the story and only one side is being seen and heard.

A tiny minority of this group is prepared to stand with the Jewish community and support them in any way they can.

Their motivations are mixed. All want to see justice done. Others are also motivated by their sense of kinship with Jews because they follow the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

7 October has meant their efforts to help the Jewish community have been welcomed. These collaborations have led to trust being built as all join in, risking themselves to show solidarity for the hostages and the IDF.

and vigil for the hostages every week. Rain or shine. In summer it can be very hot. In winter it can be very cold and

wet. Yet there are ones who have been to every march, risking their safety, taking the occasional abuse ("Baby Killers!", "Shame on You!"), and answering questions from interested bystanders.

Yet also there are those seated in streetside restaurants, smiling and giving them a thumbs up, or a "good on you", "keep it up" or "don't back down" as they march by.

There are marches going on in New Zealand, such as Nelson, Wellington, Palmerston North, Hawkes Bay, Hamilton, Auckland and Whangarei.

There are prayer groups online, in homes and churches, praying for Israel, for peace, for the hostages, for the brave IDF who are sacrificing their lives to bring them back, to protect their loved ones, and to prevent 7 October from happening again.

Christians for Israel's Solidarity Missions to Israel in the weeks following 7 October and Nigel Woodley's Flaxmere Christian Fellowship's advertisements and demonstrations have impressed and been recognised by the Jewish Community.

The efforts of Dr Sheree Trotter in helping to establish the Indigenous Coalition for Israel are also to be commended as a response against the white settler colonialist libel.

For members of NZ Friends of Israel, the events of 7 October and the subsequent war have divided families, and many family members have agreed to disagree or just not talk about it at all.

We openly discuss how to deal with this situation. While feelings run high, and beliefs are strongly held, winning an argument is not the goal. Instead, we coach people to ask questions, assess how much people know, and then drop an idea that throws doubt on their position. The goal is to throw a stone in their shoe so that the ensuing doubt grows into sufficient uneasiness that they will investigate more deeply.

Many members have reported good results.

# Time to Reform the United Nations

## ■ Robert Nicholson

If you haven't experienced the epic congestion of New York during United Nations week, count yourself lucky. If you have, you know the inverse correlation between the bedlam of the General Assembly's annual meeting and the march of peace among men. Zoom into any traffic jam across the tristate area and you'll find men and women cursing Franklin D. Roosevelt in every tongue.

Understood in biblical terms, the UN's East River complex might be seen as a House of Noah where the patriarch's long-scattered descendants meet to rediscover their fraternal bonds. But if you witnessed the UN's record over the past year, you know that mankind's premier peacemaking body is much closer to a Tower of Babel—and with the world in disarray, you might wonder if it should be disbanded all the same.

Anyone who doubts such a sweeping suggestion needn't look any further than the UN's record on Israel since 7 October 2023.

In just twelve months, we saw shocking revelations about Hamas's penetration of the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in the Gaza Strip; we learned of a Hamas takeover of the UNRWA branch in Lebanon; we watched the Security Council make minimal interventions on behalf of Israeli hostages while making outsized demands to protect Palestinians (and failing to act against Iranian aggression from Yemen, Syria, and elsewhere); we read the International Court of Justice's unconscionable advisory opinion with its demand that Israel withdraw immediately from Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem, including the Old City; we heard the Human Rights Council condemn Israel's highly discriminate 'pager-attack' on Hezbollah terrorists; and we listened to Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian address the General Assembly and say—unironically and with a straight face—that Iran hopes to "play an effective and constructive role in the evolving global order."

More glaring than all this, however, is the UN's total failure to prevent the war now raging between Israel and Iran's proxies in Lebanon. After the last Hezbollah-instigated war in 2006, the Security Council issued Resolution 1701 calling for the total disarmament of the Iranian militia; yet neither the Security Council, its UNIFIL mission to Lebanon, nor the Lebanese government have been willing to enforce the resolution, giving the Islamic Republic of Iran two decades to rebuild its terrorist army on Israel's northern border.

Israelis have endured daily attacks from Hezbollah for a year while fending off Hamas in the south, with nary a peep from the Security Council. Now that the IDF is striking back, however, UN Secretary-General Antonio Gutierrez is suddenly crying that "Hell is breaking loose in Lebanon" and urging "leaders to resume a meaningful dialogue." (His one-sided screeds just got him banned from Israel.) Over at the Middle East Forum, Michael Rubin retorts, "If the UN and Lebanon will not dismantle Hezbollah's network of arms, then Israel will have no choice but to do the job."

With its fixation on the Jewish state, perhaps the UN should be forgiven for its failure to stop conflicts in Ukraine, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Haiti; but those conflicts, and others, stand to widen over the coming year. The question is why we continue to tolerate this feckless institution.

These days, the UN is focused on a Very Big Thing called the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a 'supremely ambitious and transformational vision' for humanity adopted by member states in 2015. This Agenda lays out 17 goals, each with its own secondary goals, that include everything from eradicating hunger and poverty to promoting gender equality and clean energy. In short, it's a blueprint for better global governance.

Described on the UN website as a "once-in-a-generation opportunity to reimagine the multilateral system and steer humanity on a new course," the Summit produced the 'Pact of the Future', adopted by acclamation on 22 September, which obligates member states to redouble their commitment to the 2030 Agenda.

In 2023, UN economists estimated that reaching the Agenda's development targets would require between \$5.4 and \$6.4 trillion per year until 2030. This redistribution of wealth, combined with other obligations, exacts a heavy toll in the name of a 'brighter future for humanity.'

You don't have to be weird to see the UN's more muscular mandate as the emerging tyranny it is.

At least that's the view of Argentina's new president Javier Milei, who came to this year's UN General Assembly to deliver the jeremiad we've been waiting for.

Self-described 'libertarian-liberal economist' Javier Milei may have been the least likely person to become president of Argentina. His tastes and personality are rather eccentric and his politics conservative by Latin American standards. (Curiously, Milei, a Catholic, feels a strong pull towards Judaism and



Signing of the United Nations charter, 1 January 1942. | Photo: Wikimedia Commons

the State of Israel which he doesn't mind sharing.)

Elected to rescue Argentina from a century of failed economic policies, Milei channels the same disruptive anti-wokeism of Donald Trump, Viktor Orbán, and El Salvador's Nayib Bukele—but the task before him is daunting.

Taking the rostrum, he made sure to give credit where credit was due, lauding the UN for helping to repair the world after 1945 by turning swords into ploughshares, etc. But he spent the rest of his 14 minutes tearing into the international body for straying from its founding purpose and leading humanity down the wrong path.

The problem, Milei explained, is corruption—not in the technical sense but the biblical one. Like most "bureaucratic structures that we men create," the UN slowly mutated from an organisation "intended essentially as a shield to protect the Kingdom of Man...into a multi-tentacled leviathan, which seeks to decide not only what each nation-state should do, but also how all the citizens of the world should live." The 2030 Agenda is the latest phase of this mutation, a "supranational government programme, socialist in nature, which seeks to solve the problems of modernity with solutions that violate the sovereignty of nation-states and violate people's right to life, liberty and property."

Milei knows socialism all too well and wants no part of it. "Collectivism and moral posturing of the woke agenda have collided with reality and no longer have credible solutions to offer to the world's real problems," he said. History teaches that "the only way to guarantee prosperity is by limiting the power of

the monarch, guaranteeing equality before the law and defending the right to life, liberty and property of individuals." That's the kind of prosperity Argentinians elected him to restore.

Milei ended his speech by announcing Argentina's dissent from the 2030 Agenda and his own plans to undo it. "From this day on, know that the Argentine Republic will abandon the position of historical neutrality that characterised us and will be at the forefront of the struggle in defence of freedom," he said. He then called "all the nations of the free world to join us, not only in dissenting from this pact but also in the creation of a new agenda for this noble institution: the agenda of freedom."

Calls for reforming the UN are legion. While most foreign policy wonks believe the UN remains an indispensable platform for international dialogue, many have conceded its dysfunction and offered various ideas for fixing it. The problem isn't a lack of ideas but a lack of will.

One thing is for sure: Left unopposed, the dragon will grow. And while Milei is no St. George, his cause is just and his goals are achievable. The UN's mandate must be narrowed—a lot. Its funding must be slashed—a lot (especially for fruitless peacekeeping missions like UNIFIL). Redundant tentacles must be lopped off, and what's left must be consolidated around a more realistic—and less invasive—agenda.

It's a big job, but it can be done.

*Based in New York, Robert Nicholson is a lawyer and social entrepreneur. He is a member of the Advisory Board of thinc. This is an abbreviated version of an article published in 'Providence' on 10 October 2024.*

*The Hague Initiative for International Cooperation (thinc.) is a global network of lawyers promoting the fair use of international law to advance global peace and security. Christians for Israel is a partner of thinc.*



## Largest Gathering in Dunedin

### ■ Mercy Ponniah

Dunedin & Invercargill Friends of Israel

On 13 October, Dunedin's Queens Gardens came alive as nearly 100 people gathered to stand in solidarity with Israel, marking the largest pro-Israel event the city has seen. With the New Zealand and Israeli flags held high, and displaying pictures of the hostages, the crowd included Jews, Christians, Israelis, and members of the Māori community, united in their call for peace, justice and the safe return of the hostages currently held in the conflict.

Speakers from each of these groups addressed the crowd, offering messages of unity, resilience and support. In a powerful display of solidarity, the gathering prayed together for the hostages and soldiers, showing support across both spiritual and national lines. The atmosphere was one of both strength and hope as attendees joined in singing both



national anthems, underscoring the deep bond between these two nations. What stood out most this time was the significant increase in turnout. A year ago, the same gathering had brought together around 20-30 supporters. This time, the numbers had tripled, demonstrating a remarkable rise in local support for Israel during these

challenging times.

This heartfelt gathering reflects the people's strong and growing connection with Israel, as people from diverse backgrounds united in shared prayer and commitment to peace and justice. This is in sharp contrast to the pro-Palestine voice centred around the university.

## Palmerston North Prays on 7 October

It had always been in the hearts of leaders Roger and Georgina Ell to gather Israel supporters in Manawatu to a shared meal, so the 7 October anniversary proved the perfect opportunity. Flags were placed around the room creating a special ambience. A large crowd gathered with representatives from many different groups. Connections were made and others rekindled. There was a great desire to be together to remember what had happened a year ago and the plight of the hostages, IDF and the nation as a whole. The group prayed for an hour and a half in a oneness of spirit. Regular stands for Israel continue on specified Saturdays in the Square with one held on *Yom Kippur* in which a Fijian called Josiah came along. The Ells hope more ethnic churches including Pacific Islanders will join them based on their shared love for Israel and plan to do a combined meeting again.

## Hamilton Shows Strength in Solidarity



For Dennis McLeod, New Zealand's longstanding representative of Christian Friends of Israel (CFI), any 7 October Hamilton memorial event had to be held outside and visible, to show strength in solidarity. The site chosen was Garden Place, in the heart of Hamilton's CBD. Despite poor spring weather, 170 people turned up on Sunday 6 October to remember the atrocities committed. The event was a collaboration between the Christian and Jewish communities marking a new level of cooperation in the city. Destiny Church provided security.

As MC, Dennis introduced the range of speakers including an Israeli reading a testimony from that fateful day. Yifat Goddard, an Israeli, spoke about what it now is like to be an Israeli living in New

Zealand with a foot in each nation. She spoke about the Christian's biblical position regarding Israel as a group grafted onto the olive tree roots with the root supporting the Christian, who cannot survive without it. Jewish Opera singer David Griffiths sang the *Hatikvah*, Destiny Church performed a meaningful *waiata*. Worship was an integral part of the event.

Supporters were reminded that New Zealand is facing unprecedented antisemitism and that in not speaking up or taking action, supporters are being complicit. The time for silence is over. Each person has a role to play in their families, networks, neighbourhoods and communities. Look around you, what can you do? Contact your local council re graffiti.

## Wellington Stands Solemnly

The organising committee for the main Wellington event for 7 October remembrance decided to keep the event small and intimate, held in the Wellington synagogue. They invited all MPs, but as it was a Monday night on a recess week, few were around to attend. Parliamentary dignitaries included Deputy PM Nicola Willis, Chris Bishop, a Hutt MP who has spoken about the evils of antisemitism and ACT MP Simon Court, a staunch Israel supporter. Other dignitaries included the Argentine, German, Hungarian and Irish ambassadors and Deputy Chief of Mission in the American Embassy. Wellington City Councillors Nicola Young and Tony Randle also attended along with Paul Retimanu from the Pacific Island Business Development Trust and Victoria University's Dame Winnie Laban, who spoke. Canon Katie Lawrence from Wellington's Anglican Cathedral was the sole Christian leader present as other Christian ministers were sadly unable to attend due to conference commitments.

Rob Berg, a British Jew who has lived in Israel, opened the service. Yifat Goddard spoke in heartfelt tones about what being an Israeli felt like in the aftermath of 7 October. It set the scene so poignantly. Ambassador Yaccoby gave a heart-hitting message on the extent of the brutality and the foe that Iran represents to the whole Middle East. Two memorable video clips included a tribute to Amit Mann, a female paramedic and Israelis singing an anthem on the theme 'We have no country, but Israel' and the comfort that hearing Hebrew spoken around the world brings. The Rabbi sang the *Mourner's Kaddish* which filled the room with its lament. Wellington Israeli community leader, Eitan Dan, recounted a traditional prayer from his childhood for the fallen called *El Male Rachamin* that had added meaning in the current context. Many tears were shed, not least by those who had lived in the Gaza envelope or who had personal connections to the conflict.

In drawing up the guest list, Joanna Moss insisted that priority be given to the Israeli and Jewish communities with Christian supporters filling any gaps. Thus many Christians went on a wait list and were thrilled to be included as space opened up. This was particularly true for the Israeli dance group; who have stood in solidarity with the community by continuing to dance. For many Christians, it was their first time inside the synagogue itself where those attending faced each other and they could see the *bimah*, the intricate tapestry entrance to the ark where the *torah* scrolls are kept and the eternal frame. But, more special to be a part of such an important service.



## Auckland Commemorates

### ■ Bryce Turner

Executive Director | Christians for Israel New Zealand

Preparations for the commemoration of 7 October were steeped in painful hope. Pain, in the remembering of the murder of so many innocent Israelis, and hope in the desperate desire to see the hostages released, the war over, and no further deaths amongst the young men and women currently defending Israel.

As the day loomed closer, the pain gave way to a sense of duty, of respect, and of pause. There were many events held across New Zealand to commemorate 7 October, culminating in two held simultaneously—one in Wellington, and one at the Auckland Hebrew Centre, which was also live-streamed. The events were developed together by the same group, featured much common material, and followed the same runsheet. This was particularly fitting in not only reflecting a sense of unity amongst the

various Jewish communities in New Zealand, but it also spoke to the strength of the Jewish people all around the world who were also commemorating the tragic attacks. Jewish tradition calls for remembering, it is a huge source of strength and a significant factor in Jewish survival in the diaspora. As images and videos were solemnly played, every person remembered the horrendous attacks. Guests spoke of the impact that the events of 7 October have had on the lives of Jewish people in New Zealand and around the world. Various perspectives were shared, from young people to respected senior community members, from colloquial to diplomatic. Then, a survivor—an Israeli lady who was living directly in the firing line next to Gaza—addressed the assembled crowd. And we listened, and our hearts broke all over again. In New Zealand, we are privileged to

be able to support our small Jewish community. As the world seems hell-bent on identifying differences and division, representatives of the New Zealand Christian community were invited to be a part of this commemoration. To stand with our hurting Jewish brothers and sisters in a time of such vulnerability is a great privilege, an honour, especially given the pages of history in which Christians were the source of similar pain. With hurting hearts, the crowd moved to another great Jewish tradition: Hope. In spite of the present pain, *Am Yisrael Chai!*

While the Auckland and Wellington events were in process, a more public event unfolded at Auckland's waterfront convened by Brian Tamaki, Destiny Church, and other Christian supporters of Israel. Unable to allow a peaceful commemoration of the 7 October tragedy, anti-Israel protestors briefly hurled verbal assault at the group.

## Kapiti News

Following an Israeli initiative, a Kapiti group for Israel and the hostages was formed marching weekly and Christians joined in. Then 100 people crammed into a Paraparaumu hall to hear Shani Teshuva from *Kibbutz Zikim* speak about the events of 7 October, such was the interest. During the Q&A Shani was asked how the ordeal had affected her faith in God, as no doubt this was on the minds of many. Thankfully, she hasn't lost her faith. When questioned about the immediate aftermath and exploding worldwide antisemitism, Shani could not understand why the world had turned on Israel. Sadly she's lost many friends globally. Recounting the relationships and lengthy connections between the Gazans and the residents of the *kibbutzim*, the question was posed whether they had continued. She replied it had all gone silent. The sense of betrayal was palpable.

## Invercargill Brings Supporters Together



### ■ Mike Peters & Mercy Ponniah

Dunedin & Invercargill Friends of Israel

Invercargill's Tweed Reserve Ground in the city centre became the site of an unprecedented show of support for Israel on 7 October. For the organisers it was important to mark the day at the ends of the earth literally. About 60 people gathered for the city's largest organised pro-Israel event. This milestone gathering was the result of weeks of dedicated outreach, with organisers visiting numerous churches and community centres to invite people from all backgrounds to join in solidarity. Seed sowing is vital.

The event brought together an impressive mix of people from across Invercargill—many attending their first gathering of this kind. Cars passing by honked in support, amplifying the voices of those present and filling the air with a sense of connection and shared purpose. The event united individuals from various backgrounds in a common goal: to stand in solidarity with Israel.

The response exceeded expectations, with participants expressing how meaningful it was to find community around a shared hope. For many, this was more than just a gathering; it was a statement of unity from the Invercargill community, showing that even a small city can send a powerful message of support and solidarity across the globe. It is hoped that this is just the beginning of more Israel-focused events in the city.

## Christchurch Drives it Home

### ■ Rebecca Marchand

Secretary | NZFOI

On the anniversary of 7 October, NZFOI hosted a memorial gathering, the culmination of weekly solidarity marches. We had the privilege of facilitating the evening alongside representatives of the local Jewish and Israeli communities. We paid tribute to both those who lost their lives in the massacre and soldiers who have fallen in defence of their people.

The evening began with a video highlighting the plight of the hostages still suffering at the hands of Hamas. It brought the rawness and brutality of the events of 7 October vividly back to mind and reminded us just how high the stakes in this current conflict are. Abigail Watts performed a musical item on violin 'Household of Hope', and Vicki Trustrum sang the song 'Zion'—a poignant reminder that the land of Israel has always been, and will always be home for the Jewish people.

Following candle lighting by representatives of the three communities, the focus switched to a panel discussion featuring Ben Kepes, spokesperson for the NZJC, Boaz Dimant representing the New Zealand Israeli community, and Rebecca Marchand, from NZFOI.

Discussing their experiences over the past year, some of the questions were:

- When and where were you when you first heard of the attacks in Israel?
- What surprised you most about the reaction globally to the aftermath?
- How has it affected you personally?
- How do you see things playing out in the future for Israel?
- To what extent do you think antisemitism has risen in NZ?

This led to a wider discussion. The questions posed are ones we should all be asking ourselves. Participants' comments suggest that the public mood is not as the media portrays it. Many have sympathy for Israel's plight and are fed up with the violence and ugliness of the pro-Palestine groups around the country.

Boaz Dimant then said the *Mourner's Kaddish* and Tony Kan closed with a few words of support and solidarity for Israel. He challenged and encouraged everyone to use their voice to highlight the terrible situation that the hostages and their families are still in, and raise awareness wherever we can bring our influence to bear. Everyone has something to offer in this regard. It was a meaningful, sombre, but also a positive evening with around 65 people attending. The event concluded with refreshments.



# Indigenous Leaders Rally in Jerusalem

■ **Gianluca Pacchiani**  
Arab Affairs Reporter | Times of Israel

A group of about 60 Indigenous representatives from around the globe gathered at Jerusalem's Western Wall on 28 October, joining hands to show their support for Israel and the Jewish people.

The unique delegation marched from Jaffa Gate to the Western Wall through the alleys of the Old City, many of its members decked out in colorful traditional attire from a wide variety of Indigenous cultures, with beaded headbands, feathered headdresses, embroidered shawls, and woven textiles creating a lively and striking contrast to Jerusalem's gray limestone walls.

Among the crowd, alongside symbols of Indigenous cultures, many waved Israeli flags to express their support for the country in a time of war. But the delegation was uniquely positioned to also convey another message: *Jews are indigenous to the land of Israel.*

The march was organised by the Indigenous Embassy Jerusalem (IEJ), a nonprofit established in February with the goal of providing representation in Israel's capital for indigenous people from around the world, independently from their countries of origin.

"We really wanted to show our support for the Jews as indigenous people of this land," said Sheree Trotter, co-director of IEJ together with former member of the New Zealand House of Representatives Hon Alfred Ngaro. Trotter, a Māori scholar and activist, is also a founder of the Holocaust and Antisemitism Foundation in New Zealand.

"There is a false narrative that has taken hold of the Western world, including the country where I live, that paints the Jews as the foreign colonisers who have dispossessed the indigenous Palestinians. We want to change that narrative," she told *The Times of Israel*.

Those seeking to delegitimise the State of Israel often make the argument that Israel is a settler-colonial entity that should be dismantled and replaced with a Palestinian state *"from the river to the sea."*

The Palestinian narrative is rooted in highlighting the Arab historical connection to the land, and Palestinian leaders and scholars assert that their ties precede the mass immigration of Jews that moved to the land with the Zionist movement in the 19th and 20th century—often omitting the thousands of years of deep connection between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel.

As the cohort reached the Western Wall, its members caught the eye of worshipers, intrigued by their exotic

outfits. Many cheered on the visitors and approached them to take photos with them, including a group of IDF soldiers, excited at the unusual encounter. A *haredi* man unexpectedly turned into a choir director and led the delegation in traditional Jewish songs such as *"Hava Nagila"* and *"Jerusalem of Gold."*

For many in the delegation, the journey to Jerusalem represented more than just a physical pilgrimage. It was a meaningful public expression of their kinship with the Jewish people and their Zionism, which would be frowned upon in some of their countries of origin, even within their own tribal communities.

Asked whether participants in the march may be presented with a one-sided view of the conflict, Trotter said, "This delegation has a commitment: The majority of them are Christian, and that gives them that commitment to this place."

The religious affiliation of the participants emerged immediately in conversations. Many said they believed that God promised the Holy Land to the Patriarchs of the Jewish people, as written in the Bible.

Harvey Yesno, a Grand Chief of the *Ojibwe* tribe from Thunder Bay, northwestern Ontario, Canada, said it had been a dream to set up a permanent representation for indigenous people in Jerusalem, and that one of its main purposes was to counter the misinformation about Israel not being indigenous.

"We have the same thing in our lands," he said, speaking of the attempt to delegitimise his people's rights on their ancestral territory.

"We've had treaties with Britain and other colonial powers. Our work now is to correct the narrative that is out there. We believe that Israel is indigenous to this land," he said. "History proves it. Archeology proves it."

Nicholas Gurub Nawab, a chieftain from the *Khoisan* people in southern Africa, acknowledged that sentiment in his community of origin is often hostile to Israel.

"We are busy winning over our tribe so that they can see that we must align with our elder brothers, the Jewish people," he said. "We, as the first indigenous people who have been colonised and have known oppression, identify with our Jewish brothers and what they are suffering in their own land."

Semesi Naciqa, a tribal leader from Fiji, is married to an *Inuit* woman and lives in Nunavut, in the Canadian Arctic. Standing on the Western Wall plaza, he



Grand Chief Harvey Yesno at the Western Wall. | Photo: Perry Trotter

said that he joined the delegation to make a statement.

"We don't agree with what the media and the news are saying that it's an occupied territory. We believe that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, our God also, has given this eternal land for Israel as a covenant to Abraham and his descendants," Naciqa said. "The Israeli people have a right to be in this land, and they are indigenous, just like us."

## Fighting Anti-Zionism with the Tools of Academia

In setting up the Indigenous Embassy in Jerusalem, Trotter had a specific strategy in mind. As a scholar with a PhD in the history of Zionism in New Zealand, she realised that much of the anti-Zionism and antisemitism in the public discourse originates from academia, and consequently must be fought with academic instruments.

The Embassy has set out to promulgate research to disprove claims that Israel is a settler colonialist enterprise and reassert the Jewish people's ties to their ancestral homeland.

"We want to build a body of material that speaks back to those false narratives," Trotter told *The Times of Israel*.

The day after its march to the Western Wall, the IEJ held an academic symposium at the Bible Lands Museum in Jerusalem, in which a dozen scholars presented their research.

The confab saw a keynote speech by Natan Sharansky, an icon of the struggle for Soviet Jewry. Among the speakers was antisemitism researcher Izabella Tabarovsky, a Senior Fellow at the Z3 Institute for Jewish Priorities in California, who gave a presentation on the late-Soviet propaganda to deny the Jewish connection to the Land of Israel, and prevent Jews from emigrating from

the Soviet Union.

Wayne Horowitz, an archeology professor at the Hebrew University, delivered a fascinating overview of his research on ethno-astronomy and the affinities in the cosmological traditions of ancient Israel and the *Gwich'in* Tribe in Arctic Canada.

Canadian First Nations activist Karen Restoule spoke of how the cause of Indigenous peoples has been co-opted for nefarious purposes. At a rally outside the Canadian parliament in Ottawa in December, Restoule denounced the use by anti-Israel protesters in Canada of terms such as 'settler' and 'decolonise' to justify terror and violence against Israeli civilians.

IEJ co-director Trotter also took the stage, and discussed the 'hijacking of indigeneity' in favour of the Palestinian narrative in the Māori discourse on the conflict in her native New Zealand.

In the early weeks of the war, videos went viral of Māori performing the traditional *Haka* dance at pro-Israel demonstrations. Trotter said that while those public displays of support represent the sentiment of many Māoris, they do not reflect the political leadership of the community, or of New Zealand politicians in general.

"New Zealand has become very anti-Israel. It's part of the progressivist, woke trend. That whole package has taken hold of our country and some of our politicians, and so it's very difficult. We don't get a balance, and I'm really sorry. It's all one-sided," she said.

"Part of our work is really to educate, to advocate, and to build a community of Indigenous people who understand the history. We're doing an academic conference, and advocacy on social media, to change the culture," she said.

*Republished with permission.*



## From Tel Aviv

By Yosef Livne, Former Israeli Ambassador to New Zealand



### A Year of Trials and Tears—What's Ahead?

Israel has now returned to standard time, Autumn is here and soon, or so we hope,

winter, with its welcome rains, will be back. Yet, while the seasons change as they always do, Israel is still immersed in the longest and most complex war since its foundation. The news of the successful October raid by the Israeli Air Force in Iran is a testament to the reality in which we live for over a year.

For the past 12 months, Israel has been engaged in a continuous struggle against two evil terrorist organisations— Hamas and Hezbollah. Since 7 October, the IDF has been engaged in arduous combats against these two terrorist organisations which have openly declared that their goal is the destruction of my country.

Behind them, lurking in the background stands one country—Iran. Ever since the fundamentalist Islamists have taken over Iran, they never hid their goal—the destruction of Israel. The Iranian regime has fostered and encouraged the terrorist organisations to confront Israel. As of 7 October 2023, those two organisations along with other terrorist elements in Yemen and Iraq have launched their attack against us. The Iranian regime never tried to mask their involvement in the war by continuously supplying Hezbollah with weapons and economic aid. Iran went even further and twice—in April and in October—they launched missile attacks against Israel. In the face of such brutal aggression, Israel did what any nation would do under similar conditions and reacted. In the early hours of Saturday, 26 October 2024, Israeli Air Force, guided by excellent intelligence launched a series of precise attacks against Iranian targets. The operation hit Iranian air defense sites as well as missiles production sites, sending the Iranian regime a very clear message—stop your aggression or else.

And yet, this nation holds its head high, and its resolve has not diminished. Despite the initial setbacks we suffered on October 7th, Hamas has been severely punished and its leadership has been decimated. The goal is to ensure that Gaza does not become a haven for terror once more. Up north, the IDF struck the top echelon of Hezbollah and is engaged in actions intended to free Northern Israel from terrorist threats from Lebanon.

As we salute our Air Force for its achievement, we cannot ignore the deep mourning which has marked the past year. We mourn the people who were slaughtered on 7 October, and we mourn the hundreds of soldiers who sacrificed their lives in the struggle against the forces of evil. We are united by our demand for the release of our hostages.

# Different World Views

When you have a dispute, you listen to both sides and meet somewhere in the middle, that's dispute resolution and only fair, or so the saying goes. Lying behind the dispute is the premise that both sides have a legitimate claim. A mediator might be called in to facilitate the process helping the parties to come to an agreement. Sometimes it's not mediation that's required, it's arbitration. Arbitration occurs when an independent person called an arbitrator looks at the claims of each party and makes a decision like a judge, not the parties themselves. Some disputes are best solved with mediation and others most definitely require arbitration. So when it comes to the situation in Gaza or Judea and Samaria, which option is best?

This dispute resolution concept is based on Western thinking deriving from biblical values and Greek thinking. The Bible is full of notions of truth and justice. But what these concepts mean to one group does not necessarily mean the same thing to other people groups who do not share a biblical foundation. Many of our international institutions are based on western values because such concepts and institutions were already established in the key nation states when the international order was established in the post-WWII era. Think UN, International Court of Justice etc. Now we are looking at the UN with 193 member states and others with observer status e.g. Palestine. Most of these nations are Muslim nations or part of the Non-Aligned movement that do not share Western values.

### Importance of Foundations

But what if your foundational book is the *Koran* for example and your culture is different? Obviously the framework and notions are different, even if the same words are used. This poses a major problem when nations have disputes. It makes translation very difficult if the true sense is to be conveyed. What 'facts' sit underneath and how they play out is key. In the past people's mindsets were able to be controlled by education, frame of reference and access to resources, especially in the case of closed or semi-closed nations and illiterate or semi-literate people. Nowadays, technology is breaking things open; that is until it too, becomes corrupted. We saw this principle demonstrated in the UNRWA textbooks that rewrote history and glorified the hatred and killing of Jews, rather than teaching respect of differences and peaceful coexistence. But it goes much deeper. Truth will not always change minds when mindsets are ingrained. It is not enough to say that *Islam* was created in 7th century well after Christianity and the Old Testament.

	MUSLIM NATIONS	ISRAEL	WESTERN NATIONS
BASIS VALUES	Koran Truth	Caught in the middle  <i>Their actions are viewed through vastly different lenses.</i>	Bible & Greek Mindset
	Strength		Knowledge
	Respect		Order—Rule of Law
	Superiority		Equality
	God Decides		Compromise—Peace and Justice

A simple illustration might be the story of Mary and Joseph. For some Muslims, Joseph, Mary (or *Miriam*) were Moslems and so was Jesus (*Isa*) all living in Palestine. Some even believe that the state of Israel does not exist. Note that the Iranian regime always refers to it as the Zionist entity, not by state. Naming it does rather suggest it exists!

Biblical values mean that Jews and Christians value and protect life. After all, humans are made in the image of God. Islam is essentially a death cult which glorifies death, and life is not valued. That is why many mothers are happy for their children to die as martyrs and their children are brought up to value sacrifice and death as honour.

### Significance of Land

What about the notion of land. In Islamic thinking, once a land has been occupied by Moslems it belongs to *Islam*. Those countries under Muslim-control should remain Muslim forever. This is why the establishment of the state of Israel created a political and religious earthquake—it was not just about political sovereignty, it was the loss of

status and land. The banned expression '*From the river to the sea*', is about land too. It expresses the notion that we Muslims once held the land and we want it ALL back as it's our land and the Jews must go. When the Jews lived in Muslim lands they lived as second class citizens and paid a *dhimmi* servitude tax.

### Honour, Strength & Power

You may have heard the expression, '*Might is Right*'. What is the role of strength and power on the one hand and compromise and restraint in disputes? Obviously, strength gives power as it creates fear. You can 'solve' disputes through fear via threats. But what if a nation values strength as its top priority, then compromise is a symbol of weakness, thus not a way to solve disputes. That is part of Israel's dilemma.

Prior to the Enlightenment, knowledge played a key role in Muslim societies and was exported. As the European nations rose in significance globally, especially in knowledge and wealth, it brought great shame on the Islamic world. They lagged behind. This shame remains today.

## Two Kiwis Make Israel's Top 50 Christian Allies 2024

In honour of *Sukkot* (Feast of Tabernacles), the Israel Allies Foundation is pleased to publish its 5th annual list of Israel's Top 50 Christian Allies, which, this year, includes two New Zealanders.

The Christian leaders included in this exclusive list express their love and support for the State of Israel through meaningful action, rooted in their deeply held faith. Since 7 October, each of the Christian Allies listed has been particularly vocal in their advocacy, positioning themselves as some of the most prominent defenders of Israel globally.

The diverse group, which includes pastors, former politicians, and organisational leaders, represents the leading voices championing Israel in 2024. Take a look at our two Kiwi women making a significant impact.

### Dr Sheree Trotter

Dr Sheree Trotter is the founder and executive director of Crossover: Israel, a non-profit organisation dedicated to strengthening the relationship between Christian communities and Israel. She also founded the Indigenous Embassy in Jerusalem, which advocates for the Jewish people's indigenous rights to the land of Israel.

### Rev Hayley Ace

Rev Hayley Ace is the founder of Christian Action Against Antisemitism and leads Lea Valley Church in North London. As a member of New Zealand's Māori minority, she emphasises the Christian duty to love Israel and the Jewish people, teaching the history of Christian antisemitism and advocating for support of Israel from all indigenous communities.



# A Legacy of Diplomacy

## Honouring His Excellency Ran Yaakoby—Israeli Ambassador to NZ 2020-24

### ■ Ps Nigel Woodley

For the Protection of Zion I Speak Up | New Zealand

Ran Yaakoby touched down in New Zealand during the Covid pandemic and spent his first days here in mandatory quarantine in December 2020. I called the embassy mobile for the ambassador to say goodbye to his predecessor Dr Yitzak Gerberg but instead, I found myself welcoming the new ambassador to New Zealand. During the four years that have followed Ambassador Yaakoby has been very active in promoting Israel's cause to our nation. He has communicated well with the New Zealand Jewish community and opened new opportunities with the Christian and Māori communities while being kept busy with the diplomatic and business fronts. Ran Yaakoby fits the New Zealand glove well and has represented the State of Israel admirably and

courageously as seen since 7 October 2023.

At a special gathering at my home Church in Flaxmere recently, before the biggest crowd we have seen for a long time, Ambassador Yaakoby was presented with two pens—one for himself and one for his wife. On one was inscribed 'From New Zealanders who bless Israel' and on the other 'From New Zealanders who stand with Israel'. I told him despite what the NZ Ministry of Foreign Affairs does he should keep his pen close to his heart— words that proved poignant as at the UN just hours later NZ voted in favour of another anti-Israel resolution.

We pray that Ambassador Yaakoby's successor fits the New Zealand glove as well as he did. On behalf of New Zealanders who stand with Israel, we wish the Yaakoby family God's best.



Ran Yaakoby and Nigel Woodley, Israeli Embassy, 2021

## Embassy Short News

### Panuve is Israel's First Honorary Consul to Tonga



(Left to right): Prime Minister of Tonga Honourable Hu'akavameiliku Siaosi Sovaleni, Semisi Panuve and His Excellency Ran Yaakoby.

Deputy PM, Hon. Samiu Vaipulu, announced the appointment of Semisi Panuve as the Kingdom's first Israel Honorary Consul during a reception marking Israel's 76th Independence Day. Panuve's appointment was endorsed by Israel's non-resident ambassador to Tonga, His Excellency Ran Yaakoby.

Vaipulu said that Panuve's appointment is a significant step towards enhancing cooperation between Tonga and Israel, demonstrating diplomatic progress and shared values between their nations. The appointment highlights the Kingdom's commitment to strengthening international ties.

### From Samoa to Israel

Polino Falevaai, an Agricultural Research Scientist from the Scientific Research Organisation of Samoa, has travelled to Israel to start an 11-month agricultural internship. The Arava International Center for Agriculture Training is in a desert area in southern Israel. Water management and drip irrigation are key to ensuring vegetables, such as tomatoes and eggplants, thrive. Polino will learn professional, theoretical, and practical know-how and skills in advanced agricultural studies both in the classroom and on the farm.

As the first-ever participant from Samoa, we hope many more from Samoa and the South Pacific will follow in her footsteps after her time in Israel.

## 7 October Survivor Visits NZ

On 7 October 2023, Shani Teshuva began her day in her home in *Kibbutz Zikim*, located in southern Israel. To take advantage of the cooler early morning temperatures, she typically enjoyed a bike ride to the nearby beach between 6:00 and 6:30am. However, on that morning, with the weather more pleasant than the previous week, she decided to linger at home a little longer. In her words, she "gave myself an extra ten minutes, and those extra ten minutes are the reason that I am here alive."

At 6:29 am, rockets began to fire. Shani, along with her husband and their two children, aged 14 and 12, hurried into their safe room. Tragically, an estimated 19 civilian beachgoers were killed at Zikim Beach that day during an invasion by Hamas terrorists. The family remained in the safe room until 10pm, and later the *kibbutz* evacuated. The close-knit community was unfortunately split into two groups as the emergency accommodation available was offered in different locations. Day-to-day life would be limited to the confines of a hotel room for several months.

In December, just two months after the attack, Shani travelled to the USA with her family to share her firsthand experience and that of her community. The following March, she embarked on a speaking tour in the UK. For the first anniversary of 7 October, the Jewish Agency for Israel organised a visit to New Zealand so that she could share her story here.

During her visit, Shani spoke at the 7 October Anniversary event in Auckland. The next day she flew to Wellington for a reception in Parliament hosted by MP Simon Court, followed by a speaking event at the Wellington Jewish Community Centre. Her seemingly boundless energy was evident as she started her third day in New Zealand with an early morning radio interview on *The Platform* with Sean Plunkett, followed by a trip up the Kāpiti Coast to speak at the Coast Community Church and attend a reception with the wider Christadelphian community of the Wellington region.

Despite her busy schedule, Shani devoted ample time at each event to recount her personal story, answer questions, and connect with attendees. Shani's personal



Reception at NZ Parliament. (From left to right): Yael Holan, Deputy Chief of Mission, Orit Elkayam Cohen, Jewish Agency for Israel, HE Ambassador Ran Yaakoby, Shani Teshuva, MP Simon Court, Yifat Goddard and Karin Horen from the Israeli community in Auckland.

warmth shone through as she introduced herself as, first and foremost, a mother of two.

One year after the attack, *Kibbutz Zikim* and many other communities still face significant challenges. While 80% of *Kibbutz Zikim* residents have returned, many others are hesitant or unwilling to do so. Across Israel around 70,000 evacuees remain unable to return to their homes.

Shani highlighted the struggles faced by many young residents of her *kibbutz* who have returned. She credits her family's mental well-being to the tradition of daily family meals, which they maintained throughout their ordeal, emphasising the importance of gathering for meals "with a tablecloth, even for 20 minutes."

After her time in New Zealand, Shani continued her speaking tour with engagements in Melbourne, Australia, before embarking on the long journey back to her family in Israel.

At home, her bicycle still awaits her morning ride to the beach. When she feels ready to cycle again, she believes it will signify that she has begun to overcome the trauma, but for now, that moment has yet to come.





## Calendar Themes

Throughout this year, we will be elaborating on the themes of the C4I 2024 Israel Calendar: Symbols of Israel and significant festivals.

### 30 November: Sigd

*Sigd* is an ancient Ethiopian Jewish festival falling 50 days after *Yom Kippur* on 29th of *Cheshvan*. As with *Yom Kippur*, it involves a fast followed by repentance then a time of feasting and dancing. It commemorates the *Beta Israel's* (Ethiopian Jewry) desire to return to Jerusalem and to see the third temple built. Since 1977, more than 90,000 *Beta Israel* have made *Aliyah*.

### 30 November: Yom L-Tzyion

The story of the exodus of Jews from North Africa and Middle Eastern lands is fundamentally different from European Jewry; who are remembered in *Yom Ha'Shoah*. From the day after UN Resolution 181 (Partition plan) was passed on 29 November 1947, many Jews were thrown out of their home countries in protest. Hence the date, 30 November on the Gregorian calendar for this commemoration.



### December: Hanukkah

In Hebrew the word *menorah* simply means lamp. Traditionally, the *menorah* is depicted as the seven-candle candlestick that was used in the ancient temple. Today it's the official symbol of the government of Israel and appears on state documents. The *hanukkah* is like the traditional *menorah*, but with an extra branch making it a nine-candle holder. Both candlesticks have a centre candle called the '*shamesh*' or servant candle that is used to light the other candles starting from the outside in and going from side to side adding a new one each day. For Christians, this *shamesh* is the biblical servant—Jesus Christ.

### 25-31 December: Hanukkah

*Hannukah* lasts eight days beginning on Christmas Day. It is known as the *Festival of Light*. Jews place their *hanukkahs* in their windows to provide a symbol of light to the outside world. It is a welcome sign on a cold winter's night.

### 1-2 January: Hanukkah

### 27 January: Holocaust Memorial Day

This day is the official UN day to remember the Holocaust globally, as opposed to *Yom Ha'Shoah* for Jews and in Israel. Mark your calendars.

# The Hope of Israel

## ■ Christopher J Archer

Co-chair | New Zealand Israel Friendship Association Inc.

One of the icons of Zionism is the national anthem of Israel *HaTikvah*, the Hope. Like most national icons it has undergone many transformations since it first appeared in 1878. According to Google, *HaTikvah* was originally written by the 22-year-old Jewish poet Naftali Herz Imber who was born in Galicia, now part of the Ukraine. In 1882 Imber emigrated to Palestine where, in 1878, he shared his poem with the early pioneers of Rishon LeZion. The poem, which expresses the deep Jewish yearning for a homeland, reflected the poet's own wanderings, and stirred the hearts of the settlers. According to tradition an 18-year-old boy, Shmuel Cohen, sang Imber's words using a Romanian folk tune which he knew. Imber's poem tied to Cohen's music was a powerful combination and it spread rapidly through the Jewish communities.

**"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope." Romans 15:13**

Early Zionist conferences failed to identify a suitable anthem for the nascent movement and, against the background of a British offer to settle Jews in Uganda, which was rejected by the Sixth Zionist Congress at Basel in 1903, *HaTikvah* was sung by those who saw the destiny of a Jewish homeland "with an eye looking east to Zion." Despite the popularity of the song, it was not

until the 18th Zionist Congress in 1933 that *HaTikvah* was formally adopted as the anthem of the Zionist movement. When the state of Israel was established in 1948, *HaTikvah* became the unofficial national anthem, but it was not until 2004 that an edited version of the anthem was approved by Israel's *Knesset*.

The words stir the heart even of non-Jews, and there are stories of people facing imminent death in Nazi gas chambers who died singing this extraordinary song of hope. Hope, of course, is more than the lyrics of a song. It is a spiritual thing, and its power encourages us to believe in eventualities that are yet to be realised. The hope expressed in the words of *HaTikvah* was largely realised during June 1967 when Israeli paratroopers under the leadership of General Motta Gur, liberated the Old City of Jerusalem and the *shofar* was sounded from the Temple for the first time in 2000 years. This presents us with a new challenge.

If the hope of Israel is only to be understood in an historical context—something that has already happened, where does that leave the Jewish people today? What is their hope for the future?

During these very dark days of Israel's struggle against the demonic forces which are endeavouring to annihilate the nation, hope is a precious and rare

commodity. Occasionally, we receive reports from Israel that many people have lost hope for their future in the Land. As members of organisations which seek to encourage our Israeli friends, we are very conscious of the inadequacy of our ability to foster and sustain their hope. In fact, it is an impossibility. None of us can 'hope' on behalf of somebody else. The English language betrays the weakness of our aspirations when it uses the word 'hope' in a sentence like, "I hope it will not rain tomorrow." Whether it rains tomorrow, or does not rain, is probably inconsequential. Where is Israel supposed to find hope?

In the *Book of Psalms*, the word 'hope' occurs around 20-22 times and it is usually associated with trust in God, and divine deliverance. To quote just one text, "Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for with him is unfailing love and with him is full redemption." *Psalm 130:7*. The Hope of Israel can never rest solely in the strength of its army, or the heroism of its soldiers, or the brilliance of its generals and political leaders. These things can be blessings, but only when they are founded on a deeper surety: the faithfulness of God.

In the *New Testament Book of Acts*, we read of an occasion where the apostle Paul speaks of the "Hope of Israel," but not as an abstract concept. During his trial before the Sanhedrin, recorded in *Acts 23:6*, Paul says, "I am on trial because of the Hope of the resurrection of the dead." Paul links the hope of Israel to the resurrection, a core belief of Pharisaic Judaism and central to the Christian faith in *Yeshua* (see also *Ezekiel 37:12*).

## C4I Projects Say Thank You

Projects supported by Christians for Israel have shared heartfelt gratitude for your invaluable donations. In each issue, we'll highlight their messages of appreciation, reminding us of the meaningful difference we're making together.

### ■ Shmuel Junger

Executive Director | Christian Friends of Israeli Communities

Dear friends, 2023 was a year that will be remembered as one in which everything changed for the people of Israel. The cataclysmic attack on 7 October struck such a devastating blow on the people of Israel that it will take years for the citizenry to fully digest and recover from. Time literally froze for us, and almost eight months later, we have yet to move on. Still traumatised and in tormenting anguish having lost

thousands of our own people, we continue to fight Hamas and attempt to free dozens of our brothers and sisters.

In this darkest hour for the people of Israel, we have truly been comforted by our dear friends from Christians for Israel (C4I). Many of the

communities here in Judea and Samaria, the Biblical Heartland, are surrounded by hostile villages. Moreover, most of the men in a number of the communities have been called up for reserve duty in the IDF, leaving their families behind and their local security teams depleted. However, thanks to all of you, we at C4I have been able to help the communities to properly protect their residents, and to support needed humanitarian and social needs.

From all corners of the globe, exactly

when we needed your help the most, you all have been here for us in spirit and in person, sharing your love and empathy and standing in solidarity with us as we witness the darkest revival of antisemitism in recent years. Knowing that you and many others from Australia, Austria, Germany, New Zealand, Switzerland, and The Netherlands stand with the people of Israel and the Biblical Heartland has meant the whole world to every one of us.

We continue to pray that we and you see better times in Israel. As the psalmist writes in *Psalms 102:29*, "May the children of Your servants dwell securely and their offspring endure in Your presence."

May God shower only blessings on all of you!



# Modern Israel is Still Biblical Israel—Part 1

## ■ Ps Nigel Woodley

For the Protection of Zion I Speak Up |  
New Zealand

This article is the first of a seven-part series based on the e-book *Modern Israel is Still Biblical Israel* by Ps Nigel Woodley.

### Introduction

The people of Israel have been a distinct people group for millennia. Known as the 'People of the Book'; the 'People of Israel' or more commonly as the 'Jewish People', their legacy goes back to the time of the patriarchs of the Bible—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Most of us know about the Jewish people for one reason or another: possibly because they now have their own political state—the State of Israel, which is often at the forefront of international news. Perhaps it is because we remember the most incomprehensible atrocity against a people group in history—the Holocaust, which was Hitler's attempt to wipe the Jewish people off the face of the earth.

But most likely for Christians, it is because we have an affinity with the Jewish people through our knowledge of the Bible. The Rev Rob Yule, a retired Presbyterian minister, succinctly sums up who the people of Israel are: "The people of Israel are the national entity known in captivity in Egypt as 'Hebrews' (Genesis 43:32), in Canaan as 'Israelites' (Exodus 1:9; 3:9-10) or the 'Tribes of Israel' (Genesis 49:28), and after the exile as 'Jews' (Nehemiah 4:1-2)" (Yule 237).

**You do not need to be a rocket scientist to understand that much of the prophecies concerning Israel have been fulfilled, are still being fulfilled, and will completely be fulfilled in the future.**

The Holy Bible has made the Jewish people famous. Some would argue that in some instances it has made them infamous because of the judgments predicted in Bible prophecy, which seem to have reached their conclusion. How do we fit an ancient people—the Jews, into an ancient book—the Bible, and then try to fit both into the modern age? I want to show through the correlation of Scripture that ancient Israel is alive and well in the Modern Age.

Despite some Christians denying that the Jewish people, as descendants of ancient Israel, have any relevance as a distinct covenant people anymore, my purpose is to show that they do, and furthermore, to show that modern Israel is still Biblical Israel. This will be my aim over the next seven editions of *Israel and Christians Today*.

### The Bible Record of Israel's Past

We know from scriptures such as 2 Timothy 3:16 that all scripture is inspired by God. 'All Scripture' refers to both the Old and New Testaments. Jesus summed up the inspired Scriptures of the Old Testament in Luke 24:44, "He said to them, These are the words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you. Everything must be fulfilled, that is written about me in the law of Moses, in the prophets and in the psalms."

Jesus in this statement is confirming the validity of the authentic inspiration behind the three major sections of the Hebrew Bible, which contains the same content as the English Old Testament, but in a different arrangement of the individual books. The 'Law of Moses' refers to the first five books (*the Pentateuch*); 'The Prophets' and 'The Psalms' refer to the other two main sections covering all the remaining books of the Old Testament. In these 'inspired' scriptures we are given a clear history of the nation of Israel from its inception with the great patriarch Abraham right through to its return to the Promised Land after the Babylonian exile.

The New Testament also validates its own authenticity. The gospel accounts of the life of Jesus Christ testify that "these words you hear are not my own, they belong to the Father who sent me" (John 14:24). The book of Acts is an historical account of the early Church. Paul's letters (which comprise half the New Testament) are tabled along with 'the other scriptures'; and the 'pillar'

apostles (Peter, John, and James the half-brother of Jesus) wrote under the command and inspiration of the Holy Spirit as three men who knew Christ on a very personal level.

Even though the New Testament records less of the history of the nation of Israel in relation to the Old Testament, nevertheless the New Testament gives us enough of their history to give us a general idea of the life of the Jewish people living both within and without the Holy Land during the first century. The entire English Bible which includes both Testaments can be summed up in some regards as a history of the Jewish people. Dr Derek Prince summarised it by stating, "Geographically, the Bible is set in the land of Israel; historically, its theme is the people of Israel" (Prince, *The Key to the Middle East* 16).



| Photo: Ps Nigel Woodley

### The Bible Record of Israel's Future

Whilst the history of Israel up until the first century is recorded in Scripture there is another part of Israel's story that is told in another way. We are presented with a part of Israel's story in a futuristic sense—in the form of Bible prophecy. This is also an important aspect of the unfolding saga of a covenant people who have been chosen by God. Much of the prophetic words in Scripture concerning Israel have already been fulfilled, some are presently being fulfilled, with some still yet to be fulfilled.

Prince claims in his book *The Destiny of Israel and The Church*: "At least 80 per cent of all these prophecies have been accurately fulfilled. It is therefore altogether reasonable to expect that the remaining 20 per cent will be fulfilled with equal accuracy" (Prince, *The Destiny of Israel and the Church* 8). Prince also states: "The Bible is essentially a record of Israel written by Israelites, partly in the form of history and partly in the form of prophecy...taken together, the historical and prophetic portions of the Bible constitute a complete history of the people of Israel" (Prince, *The Key to the Middle East* 17, 20).

So, when we take the Bible as a whole—both Old and New Testaments and combine the historical accounts of the nation of Israel with the prophetic words spoken regarding the same nation—then we end up with the full story; an entire record of the history of Israel in this age (and beyond). The historical record is clear. The prophetic record can be blurred if not read properly. However, the Bible was written for common people to read and understand: "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple" (Psalm 19:7). You do not need to be a rocket

scientist to understand that much of the prophecies concerning Israel have been fulfilled, are still being fulfilled, and will completely be fulfilled in the future.

The only way to grasp the Word of God given to us by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is to first believe it, and then understanding will follow. Intellectuals stumble over this basic but profound point because they first demand an understanding before faith. God demands a commitment of faith on the basis that his word is right, and once that commitment is made, he allows us to have the understanding we so much desire—an understanding of the knowledge of God (which is revealed to babes but kept hidden from the "the wise and prudent" - Matthew 11:25). We read in the Psalms: "All who do his commandments have good understanding" (Psalm 111:10), and the primary command that we must "do" is "repent and believe" (Mark 1:15). So often in Christ the understanding follows the doing—in this case the 'doing' is believing.

So, the purpose of this and the following teachings will be to show that the Bible story of the nation and people of Israel continues to this very day as part of the preordained, predestined, and preplanned counsel of Almighty God. Biblical Israel still lives!

To purchase Ps Nigel Woodley's e-book "Modern Israel is still Biblical Israel", go to his website: [www.fortheprotectionofzion.com](http://www.fortheprotectionofzion.com)

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## Feast of Tabernacles Celebration

### Jan Wade

Woodend Christian Camp in Christchurch was the venue chosen by Celebrate Messiah NZ to hold the *Feast of Tabernacles*, and what a feast it was!

Around 130 people from all over New Zealand gathered in an atmosphere of joyful expectation. Family groups, children, teenagers and others from a wide range of ages. It was a feast of *relaxing, relating, rejoicing and refreshing* ourselves in the Lord. These four 'R's were the theme.

Naturally you need to celebrate *Sukkot* with a *Sukkah*. We had one inside, and two outside, for folks to sit, relax and contemplate the things we were learning.

We arrived on *Sukkot* eve, the start of the *Sabbath*. How precious it was to be led by Des and Evelyn Rubie in the *Sabbath Kiddush*, with candle lighting, grape juice and *challah* bread. This reminded us of the preciousness of the Jewish roots of our faith, and gratitude for the blessing of being able to celebrate this feast.

Over the next two days we enjoyed

wonderful times of worship led by a great team of musicians, followed by gifted teaching from Nigel Christensen, Michael Thomas and Zohar Gonen. Each led us through the events of *Sukkot* from *Exodus* to *Sukkot* and the Temple, then to living in *Sukkot* in the present, and finally Zohar, who captivated us with his prophetic teaching '*Living in the Sukkot of the Future*'.

Michael emphasised the relational aspect of the Lord's Feasts. They are a *Moed*—an appointed time when our God Himself, wants to meet with us.

'*Introduction to Learning the Hebrew Language*' led by Tehila Gonen made the task of learning Hebrew both easy and fun. Her encouragement and enthusiasm over the group's achievements caused us all to fall in love with the Hebrew language.

Thank you to the Celebrate Messiah team.

(Top left): Des and Evelyn Rubie during the Sabbath Kiddush.

(Top right): The young ones enjoying toasting marshmallows at the fire pit.

(Bottom): A lot of energetic fun was to had learning Jewish dancing.



## Four Great Covenants of the Bible—Part 2

### Anna Pickett

Continuing from part one in our October issue, part two features the last two covenants.

#### The New Covenant, the Covenant of Priesthood

This covenant is one of redemption from the sin and death that reigns in people. In Jesus Christ, God the Father provided a way for our curse to be reversed. Jesus Christ was not only the son of God, but also the promised seed of Abraham, the Son of Man, in whom all nations would be blessed.

Because of His great love for people Christ willingly emptied Himself and became in every way like us.

An enormous price was paid for our redemption, when the Son of God took our place, in order that we may take on His place. He was tempted in every way like us and yet was without sin. "*God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: (By) sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for (the purpose of dealing with) sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to*

*the flesh but according to the Spirit"*  
*Romans 8: 3-4.*

By overcoming sin in the flesh and paying the penalty for sin, which is death, both the nature of sin and the penalty of sin have been atoned for. By living a sinless life and by offering up himself in death, Christ became the perfect sacrifice for mankind and the perfect High Priest. In Christ we enter into a new life, not just being made of the dust of the ground but being born of the Holy Spirit, with a new heart and a new mind. The love of God is poured out in our hearts by the Spirit, and the righteous requirements of the law are fulfilled in those who walk according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh. In Christ, believers are restored to their original purpose, namely, God being our God, and we being His people. As His people we are to be like God the Father and Jesus Christ and to radiate their likeness into this world.

Because the nation of Israel as a whole did not accept their Saviour, God put a veil over the eyes of those who rejected Him. God then opened the door, using the believing descendants of Abraham, to bring the gospel of salvation in Christ

to the Gentiles. In this way, in Abraham's seed, all nations of the earth will be blessed. The believing Gentiles were (and still are) grafted in Christ among the believing branches of Israel and the two flocks are one body in Christ. At this moment these are the first fruit of believers.

Now let us see how this glorious salvation in Christ is made available to the rest of mankind during the Davidic reign of Jesus Christ.

#### The Davidic Covenant, the Covenant of Kingship

Next to the priestly covenant of redemption comes the covenant of kingship on the throne of David. This Davidic covenant of kingship finds its fulfilment in the seed of Israel's King David. We understand that this promised seed is Christ, the High Priest and Saviour of Israel and the world. As Son of Man, He has secured the throne of David for rulership on earth. As descendant of David, who is a descendant of Judah, Jacob, Isaac and Abraham, Christ is the promised seed of Abraham. Being the promised seed of Abraham, through His rulership as King of Kings on the throne of David, all

nations of the earth will be blessed.

At Christ's first coming, redemption and newness of life were secured for mankind. Through salvation in Christ, we see the first fruit of believers. When Christ takes up His place on the everlasting throne of David, the fullness of the redemption of mankind and restoration to newness of life will come to all nations. The Gospel will spread around the world, removing the veil over the eyes of all people. Mankind will repent and turn from their ways, and the Holy Spirit will be poured out on all nations. The Law of God will go forth from Jerusalem. Spears will be made into pruning hooks, wars will be no more, hostages will be freed, prisons will be opened, the broken-hearted will be healed, the eyes of the blind will see, and the lame will leap like a deer.

All who are in Jesus Christ will walk in the purpose of their creation. They will be sons and daughters in the family of God and as kings and priests, in love, righteousness, and grace, be like Jesus Christ their Brother and God their Father for ever and ever. Amen.



# Was Jesus Born During Sukkot?

## ■ Yaakov Ben Yehoshua

Spiritual Leader | Beth Melekh International

There isn't any conclusive way to determine the day or season of Messiah's birth. We simply don't have access to Biblical, historical, or archaeological information that gives us an accurate date for the birth of *Yeshua* (Jesus). Those who presume to know are reliant on conjecture born from theological niceties and presumptions.

Am I saying *Messiah* was born on 25 December? Certainly not. Does it matter which day He was born? Given the lack of Biblical evidence citing exact dates and times for His birth, I would hazard a guess that God doesn't want us to know the date or season of His Son's birth. He probably has a very good reason for this.

With regard to the '*Sukkot birth*' claim, the census recorded in *Luke 2:1-4* is thought to be the first of two, taken between 1 C.E. and 7 C.E. (It's probably the latter of the two that's referred to in *Acts 5:37*). However, it's more likely that Luke is referring to an earlier census, the record of which has been lost to history.

It's important to remember that for the people of Israel, a census was considered an affront to God. The taking of a census denoted a lack of trust in God's provision (See *Exodus 30:12*; *2 Samuel 24*). Therefore, the census taken at the time of *Yeshua's* birth was something Jews were forced to participate in under an oppressive Roman occupation.

Given that a majority of governors over the provinces of Judea and Samaria (Occupied Israel) were keen to avoid further uprisings and the causes for them, it's unlikely that a census would have been called during an *Aliyot* (a.k.a. *Regalim*, going up) festival of Israel (*Pesach*, *Shavuot*, *Sukkot*). In addition, a Jew whose ancestors were from a town other than Jerusalem could not be both in his ancestral hometown and in Jerusalem (a requirement of the *Aliyot* festivals) during the *Shabbat* festival at the same time. Something the census in question required.

Bethlehem is approximately eight kilometres from Jerusalem (seven times further than the permitted *Shabbat* walking distance) and approximately 136 kilometres from *Natzret* (Nazareth) in the *Galil* (Galilee).

While Bethlehem was close to Jerusalem, the majority of Israel's outer communities were more than two days journey from Jerusalem, where the Temple stood. This is just one of many reasons why a *Sukkot* birth for *Messiah* is extremely unlikely. In fact, all of the *Regalim* (*Aliyot*) festivals fall into this category. Therefore, it's more likely that

*Yeshua* was born in the winter months and not during a 'going-up' festival.

Some misuse the following verse, claiming it proves a *Sukkot* birth:

"Now in the sixth month the messenger Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth." *Luke 1:26*

There has been much needless conjecture relating to this text. Many who are desperate to claim a *Sukkot* birth for *Messiah* need to perform linguistic, contextual, chronological and cultural gymnastics—to name a few—in order to manipulate this date to fit their argument, something every good Bible student knows, is usually an indication that we're headed in the wrong direction.

It's most likely that this 'sixth month' refers to the time as counted from the conception of John the Baptist (*Yochanan*) [*Luke 1:36*]. The problem with confirming the date this way is that we don't know which of the two times of year *Aviyah's* (Zechariah's [John the Baptist's father] clan) division was serving in the Temple, is intended by the narrative.

We're not told at what point during the year the 24 divisions began to serve but we can make an educated guess that they began in the seventh month, *Tishrei*, following the inauguration of Solomon's temple. If this continued to be the practice and providing the beginning of their service was not initiated at the spiritual new year of *Pesach* or at the giving of the *Torah* during *Shavuot* (which are also possibilities [even if this were the case the math still wouldn't conclude a *Sukkot* birth]), then we would calculate that each of the 24 divisions would serve one week twice a year. If they performed their duties in order of selection, *Aviyah's* (Zechariah's clan) division would have performed its duties eighth in order of priestly clans, in the last week of *Nisan* and the last week of *Cheshvan*, with some anomalies caused by the lunar calendar meaning that this would have varied slightly. If we count from *Nisan*, the sixth month would be *Tishrei*. If this is the month of *Messiah's* conception then He was born in the month of *Sivan*. If we count from *Cheshvan* we arrive at *Iyar*, which makes *Messiah's* birth in the eleventh month of the Hebrew calendar, *Shevat*. Neither date is even remotely close to *Sukkot*.

However, the sixth month could also refer to the sixth month of the Hebrew calendar, *Elul*, which is the month prior to *Tishrei*, once again this leaves us with *Iyar* as a possible birth date for *Messiah* (not *Sukkot*).

Additionally because Luke is either a Greek proselyte or a Jew from the Greek Diaspora, he could also be referring to the sixth month of the Roman calendar.



| Photo: Yaakov Ben Yehoshua

Regardless, any conclusion arrived at is pure conjecture. We have no definitive way of knowing when *Yeshua* was born.

Some, by misusing Hebrew say, "But He was born to *sukkah* (dwell) with us", and *John 1:14* says that "He became flesh and *sukkot* (dwelt) in our midst."

But the text of *John 1:14* does not say that *Messiah* *sukkot* with us, but that He *shakan* (from *Mishkan*) with us. He came in the flesh, as a Tabernacle in our midst to *shakan* (dwell). Meaning, that He is a human being who is like the Tent of Meeting (*Mishkan*) which once dwelt in the midst of Israel. Thus, *Imanu* with us *El God* (fully God and fully man).

We note that the children of Israel dwelt in *sukkot* (shelters) surrounding the *Mishkan* (a single tent). *Shakan* is the Hebrew equivalent to the Greek (*eskenosen*), used in *John 1:14*. Both are verbs and NOT nouns. *Sukkot* is a plural noun that is unrelated to the Hebrew *shakan*. So no, He was not born to *sukkah* with us, rather He was born into time and space to *shakan* dwell among us, our *sukkot* surrounding Him just as the *sukkot* of Israel surrounded the *Mishkan* (Tent of Meeting).

While it's true that *Messiah* dwells with us, it's not proof of the date or season of His birth. *Messiah* is also the Lamb of God, but that doesn't mean He was born at *Pesach* (*Passover*). He is the substitutionary sacrifice for our sins, but that doesn't mean He was born during *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement).

Conjecture of the kind associated with the *Sukkot* birth claim is at best naive and at worst a doctrine of men (false). Those who fixate on conjecture at the cost of divisions and contentions within the body are not aligned with the mind of *Messiah* but are in fact pushing their own flesh-born agendas in a prideful

attempt to elevate themselves and place fellow believers under bondage.

Conjecture does not elevate our faith, to the contrary, it diminishes it. We are not called to be teachers of conjecture but teachers of the Truth in *Messiah Yeshua*. As a result of pseudo-learned conjecture and ignorant militancy, many in the Hebrew roots and Messianic denominations owe a debt of repentance to the wider body of believers.

Ref: Ex. 23:14-16, 34:22; Lev. 23:34-43; Num. 29:12-40; Deut. 16:13-15; 1 Kings 8:2, 65; 12:32; 2 Chron. 8:12-13; Ezra 3:4; Neh. 8:13-18; Zech. 14:16; Matt. 17:1-8; Luke 9:28-36; John 7:2-3

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## Settling the Land—Part 4

### ■ Simon Smelt

Retired Economist

Colonial intrigues around the formation of the Jewish state eclipse any spy story.

From the 1920s, King Abdullah of Transjordan advocated a Greater Syrian state to include Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine under his rule. Britain took this up in the 1940s, secretly advocating the creation of such a state (including Palestine) under its stewardship. The intent was to secure Britain's status in the region in return for putting a halt to Jewish ambitions in Palestine. France and the United States opposed such British hegemony. In 1946, the Arab League was formed under Egyptian control, aiming to free 'the Arab nation' from colonial control. Its Arab Higher Committee also wanted to fold Palestine into a Greater Syria (minus British influence or Transjordanian rule.)

In the 1947 UN vote on a Jewish state, Britain abstained—fearing the state would be anti-British and pro-communist—whilst Russia and its allies voted for the new state. After the resolution was passed, Britain did the bare minimum to maintain law and order there. They abandoned Palestine in May 1948 amidst widespread skirmishing, without any handover or ceremony whatsoever—unlike its other colonial departures. Much of the government had already ceased to function, e.g. international air and postal services. These were only re-established some weeks after independence through (Russian-controlled) Czechoslovakia, who also supplied arms to Israel. The British Foreign Office sought to stop British citizens from joining Jewish forces but allowed them to join Transjordan's Arab Legion. Britain had used Cyprus to intern Jews trying to reach the Land and only released the last 25,000 prisoners after Israeli independence.

Official papers show that, in the face of US support for a Jewish state, British policy by 1947 was to accept a 'small' Israeli state. This aimed to maximise the position of former colonies Transjordan and Egypt, notably by retaining a land corridor between the two through the Negev. However, an influential Arabist group in Britain sought further to maximise British interests by encouraging neighbouring Arab leaders directly to attack Israel. Continuing an earlier tussle with France, they hoped to pull Syria and Lebanon into the British orbit and away from their former French colonial masters. Thus, Britain had two different Middle Eastern policies of varying degrees of hostility to Israel. Meantime, French agents monitored the Arabists' efforts and reported them to the Zionist leader, Ben Gurion to stoke

distrust. At the same time, French agents worked with al-Husseini, the Mufti of Jerusalem, who had sided with Hitler in WW2, to undermine both British colonial interests and the Jewish state.

With so much double-dealing, both Arabs and Jews felt betrayed by the colonial powers in the 1948-49 war. Britain tried to monitor the movement of Israeli forces in the Negev; when the Israelis shot down five British Spitfires, the British had neither the will nor the forces available to respond. However, Britain resolutely opposed any permanent peace agreement between Arab states and Israel in order to maintain Arab solidarity against Israel. In this, at least, they were successful.

Britain retained her hostility to Israel into the 1950s. Extraordinarily, a 1955 plan envisaged an RAF attack on Israeli airfields combined with a land attack by Arab armies. The intent was to force a rump Israel back into the British Empire and gain favour in the Arab world. However, when the Egyptian leader Nasser nationalised the Anglo-French-owned Suez Canal in 1956, Britain promptly changed sides.

One result of forming a Jewish state was the persecution and expulsion of many Jews from Arab countries. In 1947, the Egyptian delegate to the UN declared "the lives of 1,000,000 Jews in Moslem countries would be jeopardised by the establishment of a Jewish state." About 850,000 fled Islam, and some 500,000 to Israel. The Jewish population in Arab countries is now less than 1% of its 1948 level. By contrast, the Arab population of Israel and Gaza has increased manifold, even allowing for refugees and resettlement. This makes clear where any genocide lies. Today, among Israel's Jewish population, the largest group (45%) is of Middle Eastern origin. Israel is both ancient and recent among the nations. To summarise, our survey of the Land since the 1st century AD has shown:

- Jews have been continuously present in the Land, clinging on through numerous conquerors, oppressions, betrayals, expulsions, massacres and depressions. This old *Yeshuv* (settlement) was reinforced by a stream of immigrants returning to their ancestral homeland—a difficult and dangerous journey for much of the period.
- From the 15thC to the late 19thC, the Land is consistently reported as largely empty, desolate and depopulated. Population decline was marked by the 10thC and agriculture in the Hula Valley collapsed in the 2ndC, only being resuscitated by Jews in the 20thC.
- A snapshot from the late 17thC shows Jews to be a substantial part of



Emergency seamount from Nahariya in 1948, which was under siege by land at the time.

the local population and engaged in both farming and commerce.

- Increasing numbers of visitors and diplomats from the mid 19thC found the land mostly empty and the Jews harshly oppressed.
- From the 1860s, Ottoman land and other reforms saw substantial concentration of land ownership into the hands of an effendi class, who lived off the rents rather than investing.
- From the 1880s, oppression and pogroms in East Europe drove significant Jewish immigration and began the new *Yeshuv* in the Land.
- Land was purchased for the immigrants at some risk through the ramshackle Ottoman legal system. Funds came from charitable collections throughout the Jewish diaspora and from wealthy families.
- The effect of Jewish immigration, land purchase and associated investment was dynamic on the Palestine economy so that its growth rates greatly exceeded surrounding countries. This led to extensive Arab migration into Palestine from its neighbours. Much of the new Arab settlement clustered around Jewish settlements and towns.
- Displacement of Arab communities by Jewish ones was more than counterbalanced by opportunities from increased economic activity and modernisation. However, the rising proportion of Jews in the Land led to increased tensions and violence. This was exploited by some of the same *effendi* families who had sold land to the Jews.
- British policy under the Palestine Mandate wavered but increasingly was driven by concerns to placate Arab leaders and safeguard wider British imperial interests.

- Jewish presence in Palestine does not fit the colonialist paradigm: the new *Yeshuv* represented no colonial power; they did not expropriate land from locals\*; they worked the land themselves and reinvested any surplus; they sought to express their own culture in the land of its birth; they fought the British colonial power as they had the Romans.
- Arab resistance to the Jews was in terms of developing a strong Arab nation. Palestinian Arabs were seen as part of the wider Arab Muslim *ummah* (community). The idea of a distinct Palestinian nation and culture is a recent concoction, only gaining wide usage post-1967.
- Jewish flight to the new state of Israel was from both European and Arab countries.

Much of the current narrative concerning Israel and the Palestinians is the reverse of the truth. Jews are the Land's earliest known inhabitants. Jewish archaeological ruins lie underneath ancient Arab settlements! They have retained their attachment to the Land through two millennia of foreign rule and work it out to this day. To preserve the Palestinian cause, history must be denied. Hamas says that only Muslims are indigenous to the land that is now Israel, so Jews can never belong there.

A false story has been promulgated which denies the history of the Jewish people, their claims to the Land, and the Lord's promises to them, whilst upholding a distorted history of a concocted people group to justify violence and anti-semitism. All except the puppet masters suffer as a result.

\*After the 1948-49 war, abandoned property was expropriated by the state.

A slightly extended version of this four part series with footnotes will be published shortly on [www.indigenoucoalition.org](http://www.indigenoucoalition.org).



## Jews in Muslim Lands—East—Part 5

### ■ Joanna Moss

In the last article (North) we focused on the impact of the Ottoman Empire on Middle Eastern Jewry, the ancient cities of Aleppo and Damascus and modern Lebanon. In this article, we look East to the lands of Iran, Iraq and Azerbaijan and their significant Jewish presence. Many readers may have heard the term 'Mizrahi' and wondered what it means. Literally, it means Eastern or Oriental and so Jews coming from these three nations are often termed *Mizrahi* Jews. But it can also include North African Jews and those from Yemen. Today the largest Jewish community in the Middle East exists in Iran of about 9,000, but they must disavow both Israel and Zionism.

### Persian Jewry Golden Age

Jews have an ancient history in Iran dating back to the 6th century BC and to King Cyrus, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah and Daniel. It is a history dotted with pogroms, antisemitism and forced conversions interspersed with periods of calm. Islam altered the landscape dramatically from 642 AD, especially the strict Shia branch of Islam. From then onwards Jews faced a number of restrictions such as being unable to touch food that Muslims would eat, enter bathhouses or drink from public water fountains. They were given *Dhimmi* status and forced to pay a *Dhimmi* tax for protection. But the Jews represented only one of the minorities living in the land. Others were equally reluctant to embrace Arab culture, language and religion and so accommodations were made. *Farsi*, not Arabic, remains the dominant language in Iran today and Persians represent only 61% of the population.

### Today the largest Jewish community in the Middle East exists in Iran of about 9,000, but they must disavow both Israel and Zionism.

Historically, Jews played an important role in Persian society occupying professional, political and business positions. This paved the way for them to play a key role in Iranian modernisation when the *Shah* took over. Jews were recognised formally as a community in the late 19th century. The 1910 riot rattled the community with pogroms and forced conversions. The *Shah* took over in a military coup and changed the country's name to Iran in 1925. He began a modernisation programme based on oil wealth in an effort to create a Western-style nation in the Middle East including female emancipation.

After Israel became established in the 20th century, many religious Jews left to move to Israel and the usual shake-up occurred post-UN Res 181 as states aligned along religious lines. Some Persian Jews were concerned about the secular nature of Zionism and the informal Israeli culture that was in sharp contrast to their own. However, following the 1960s White Revolution, many Israelis moved to Iran to take advantage of the business opportunities and enjoy the lifestyle that modern Iran offered and Israel didn't. It was the Golden Age of Persian Jewry with a community of 100,000 Jews (60,000 in Tehran). Others resided in smaller cities such as Shiraz and Isfahan.

All that changed in February 1979 when the *Shah* departed and the cultural revolution began, lasting eight months. Women were forced to wear the *hijab* and lost their freedom. Food lines appeared and higher education was closed for three years. Following the Revolution, one of the wealthiest and prominent Jews was arrested and executed. It sent shock waves through the community. A ban on leaving was instituted especially leaving for Israel, yet many left illegally. During the Iran-Iraq war (1980-88) Iran formed an alliance with Israel trading weapons for oil. There are 200,000 Persian Jews in Israel, many highly skilled, and large, wealthy, strong communities in Los Angeles and New York. Israel has made many attempts to rescue the remaining Jews from Iran.

### Iraq—Middle Eastern Mecca

Iraqi Jewry has been described as the oldest and most historically significant of Jewish communities. It began as a result of the Babylonian captivity spawning the significant Babylonian

Talmud and became a centre of Jewish studies. Between 3rd-7th centuries Iraq had the largest diaspora community in the world of around one million Jews. During the Ottoman era, Iraqi Jewry played a significant role in trade, especially the trade routes serving the Middle East and Asia, with Jews relocating to Asia and establishing trading posts. In the 18th century, Jews from Aleppo and Damascus moved to Baghdad with the decline of the overland routes. In the 19th century, Baghdad was a leading Jewish centre in the Middle East with traders plowing their money into rabbinical scholarship and the community. During this period



Jewish waterpipe seller reading the Torah in his shop, in the Shiraz bazaar. An estimate of 8,500 Jews are still living in Iran. | Photo: Shutterstock

a large *Kurdish* community joined. The Iraqi community had a distinct identity in terms of culture, traditions, dress and rituals and spoke Judeo-Arabic. It was but one of a number of minority communities.

In 1930 Baghdad was 25% Jewish, double the Jewish percentage in NYC of around 12%, but similar to the Warsaw, Poland figure (30%) highlighting the significance of the community at that time. Both communities have now vanished. They were religious, but not Zionist. Jews played a major role in Iraqi independence in 1932 and Jews held key offices in the new government such as the Minister of Finance and in the judiciary. However, from the 1930s onwards the situation began to change, and an influx of Nazi propaganda began to emerge. Unofficial quotas meant restricted access to schools, university and public service positions. Many lost jobs.

A pogrom in 1940 resulted in the death of 200 Jews with significant damage to Jewish property. The writing was on the wall. In 1947, there were 150,000 Jews. The UN vote and the founding of the state of Israel made the situation unbearable. So, in 1950 the government denationalised the Jews effectively forcing them out. Jews gathered in Baghdad waiting to leave. Between 1951-52 two major, urgent operations rescued the Jews—*Operation Ezra* and *Operation Nehemiah*. Altogether 120,000-130,000 Jews left for Israel amounting to 75% of the community. Today nothing remains.

### Azerbaijani Jewry 20th Century Renaissance

Azerbaijan is a small, Muslim country on the Caspian Sea to the north of Iran. Known for its impressive architecture, oil reserves and being an ally of Israel, it once boasted a significant Jewish

community. The community is made up of three types of Jews: *Mountain Jews*, *Georgian Jews* and surprisingly, *Ashkenazi Jews*, although it was formerly a Soviet republic. Today *Mountain Jews* make up the most significant part of the community with their own distinctive language. *Ashkenazim* arrived in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and during WW2. Then they became the majority and many were in the professional classes, especially lawyers and physicians. *Georgian Jews* relocated to the capital Baku in the early 20th century. Today numbers vary from around 5,000 upwards as significant numbers of Jews have married out making counting problematic.

Although there was ancient Jewish settlement, the modern settlement stems from the 1820s onwards. At the end of the 19th century, Zionism was firmly ingrained in the community and it became a focal point in the Russian Empire for Zionism. Once the Soviet Empire took hold, all Hebrew was banned as were Zionist activities. The first *Aliyah* took place in the 1920s and then another followed in the 1970s when the *refusenik* ban was lifted. By then the community numbered around 49,000 and peaked. Once the Soviet states disintegrated, *Ashkenazim* fled fearing the worst. So in the 1990s the population fell to below 10,000 and has been declining ever since. There are seven synagogues in the country each reflecting a distinctive community. Russian remains the *lingua franca* of the community, although there is an effort to teach Hebrew. The government wants the Jewish community to be a part of the state and Jews have been elected to parliament, reflecting their acceptance by the community.



## From the Capital

### Non-Binary New Green MP

Benjamin Doyle is the latest Green MP to be sworn in. He replaces Darleen Tana and comes in at a time when the Green Party is still reeling from one disaster after another. Hailing from Hamilton, Benjamin is the first non-binary MP. Despite having a biblical name; Benjamin, meaning son of my right hand, this Benjamin was sworn in with a *keffiyeh* draped over his arm signifying his solidarity with the Palestinian cause. He plans to represent both Māori and homosexual constituents and supporters based on his background. Prior to entering Parliament, Doyle was employed by the Burnett Foundation formerly NZ Aids foundation and has an extensive career as a high school teacher.

### Embassy Seeks New Home

The Israeli Embassy has been housed in a building in central Wellington owned by Robert Jones Investments Limited for most of its tenure in the present era. Few people knew where it was. However, Sir Bob Jones announced in October that he will not be renewing their lease when it expires in May 2025. This comes as a blow to the Embassy as the move will be both costly and inconvenient as considerable investment has been made bringing the space up to the individual specifications required for an embassy.

The site has been targeted by pro-Palestinian supporters and others who have demonstrated outside and thrown red paint and other unmentionables over the foyer proving a nuisance to Embassy staff and tenants alike. The Israeli Embassy is not the only embassy to face protests. Other embassies in Wellington are fortress-like structures reflecting bad

experiences abroad. Please pray for the new site and for the staff involved in making it happen.

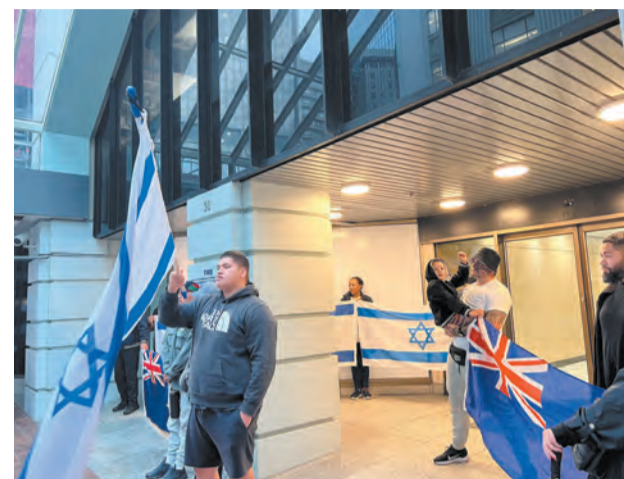
### Green Party Woes

When Wellington City Council (WCC) passed the Ramallah friend city remit on Eides 2023, local Israel supporters warned the wider supporter network that this was just the beginning of an assault on local councils for Palestine support motions. How right they were. Little heed is being given to facts and the jurisdiction principle that divides the activities of central and local government with even the Dunedin Council making suggestions about issuing visas for Gazans! Nelson stood firm on the division. Sadly, Christchurch has followed Wellington's suit.

Based on the Gen 12.3 principle, Wellington would experience a curse and so it has. Even the media has noted it. It's not just about a particular area like the Golden Mile. Take a walk from the entertainment district of Courtney Place starting at the landmark Embassy Theatre; which just turned 100, towards Cuba Street and you witness many cafes, bars and restaurants boarded up. Once you enter Manners Street, it's a sea of empty shops and Willis Street has many gaps too.

In a bid to stem the crisis, the Mayor worked with central government and local businesses to limit the time spent working from home with a call to return to the office. The pedestrian count has increased, but key businesses like Bordeaux Bakery and Pandoro Bakery and café chains have closed challenging the upmarket café culture Wellington is so famous for.

Meantime the pipes continue leaking and the cycle



Israeli supporters blocked protestors from entering and doing damage outside the Israeli Embassy in Wellington. | Photo: Dr Ate Moala

lane revolt continues with residents up in arms all over the suburbs as vast amounts of money continue to be poured into cycle lanes. Business leaders are taking the WCC to court over their impact. Ironically, few cyclists seem to be using them. Car parks are disappearing all over the city including outside the Botanic Gardens, home to the famous duck pond, a childhood favourite of many a Wellingtonian.

Council friction and a mayor giving train-wreck interviews caused the Local Government Minister to threaten to bring in a commissioner to oversee WCC governance and then did it. All is not well.

Meantime Green Party woes continue in central government as Darleen Tana was finally evicted from Parliament as the Greens used the waka-jumping legislation following a party-wide vote. Former Green MP Golriz Ghahraman lost her appeal to have her shoplifting convictions quashed.

## Lessons from Muslim Lands Jews

### ■ Joanna Moss

The story of the Jews from Muslim lands is a story of ancient communities who were suddenly shaken awake, often under turbulent political conditions and wrenched, many with only the shirt on their backs. It was a giant schism. The Jews have gone and little remains to mark their presence despite centuries of history. Each nation's story is different. Some were large communities, whilst others were small ones. Size didn't protect them.

Their story is vastly different from their cousins in Europe because the soil was different in Europe. There Jews aimed for equality, taking their place alongside the best and even being like them. Jews had moved across Europe often being expelled or seeking new and better opportunities. Whereas in the Middle East and North Africa, Jews ostensibly remained in situ and saw themselves as a proud minority with an ancient stake in the land, often being just one of many minorities who interacted with the majority and other groups, but never strived to be like them. Assimilation was not a feature of their story.

These Jews were often literate in a world that was not and the arrival of Sephardim brought European ways. They had a place to stand and performed a service that the majority was either unable or unwilling to do. They

were useful to their home countries and saw themselves as proud and loyal Jews from their respective countries. Denationalisation was a heavy blow. Many were wealthy and/or established, part of a self-contained community that included education, religious and communal facilities. Some didn't see the writing on the wall. They left behind vast tracts of land, homes and businesses and had to start again from scratch. The loss was colossal. There was no compensation.

Despite modern claims, colonisation was something they experienced, not something they committed. Modern colonisation brought Jews many opportunities not afforded to the majority because they were well placed to take advantage of the changes brought to them, primarily through education, public service and business. French Jewish schooling played a pivotal role in preparation. Colonisation also brought Jews a way out when the crunch came. This was particularly true for the *Magrebi* Jews of North Africa. Higher education and international business connections were other ways out. Nazism and the ills of Europe touched them in pockets, but the rebirth of the state of Israel was the genesis of the major upheaval across the Middle East. There was no going back hence 30 November remembrance day.

The lucky ones got out with their wealth and dignity preserved. Many of these Jews relocated to Western

nations such as the United States, France, UK and Canada. The unfortunate were at the mercy of the Jewish Agency to come and rescue them. Thankfully they did. Those in the middle were trapped attempting to leave with the help of smugglers when the gates shut. Some died along the way. Others were imprisoned.

When foreigners cry to Israelis go back home, these Jews know there is no place to go back to. The door shut long ago. Israel was the country Jews went to when there was no other country they could go to—the country of last resort as journalist and social commentator Haviv Rettig Gur opines. Some were Zionist, whilst others were not. Marrying in was part of the tradition as a minority community, assimilation was not.

Despite relocating to Israel or a third country, they have sought to retain their customs and religious traditions judging them of value and significance. But they haven't passed on their home country language to their children, preferring them to take on the language of the new country.

As time passed memories and links with their home countries dwindled and their inability to return, even for a visit meant a severing of ties. Their communal longevity, usefulness and loyalty meant nothing.



# Reclaiming Zionism

## ■ Kate Norman

Bridges for Peace

Israel and the Jewish people were thrust into the international spotlight in the aftermath of the 7 October massacre. For the first few days, as the world watched Israel weep over her 1,200 victims and the 251 hostages swept away to Gaza, the Jewish state had global sympathy. But when Israel fought back, launching a ground operation in Gaza to eradicate the threat of Hamas and return the hostages, the tides turned against her.

Antisemitism rose to a fever pitch, with pro-Palestinian, pro-Hamas, anti-Israel rallies and riots in major cities and university campuses across the Western world. Violence and aggression against Jewish people spiked, while Jewish shops and synagogues were vandalised. However, neither the perpetrators of these reprehensible acts nor those who rally against Israel accept the label of antisemitism. No, instead they identify as anti-Zionist. 'Zionist', in fact, has become a dirty word spat out of the mouths of those who hate Israel and/or the Jewish people. But like with so many perfectly innocent terms and phrases, the word Zionism was hijacked and its original meaning distorted into something that seems distasteful. The time has come to reclaim Zionism and restore it to its original, biblical meaning.

### But What is Zionism?

Zionism is essentially the belief that the Jewish people, as with any other people group, have the right to their own sovereign Jewish state in the biblical Land of Israel. Swedes have the right to live in Sweden. Brazilians have the right to live in Brazil. Don't Jewish people have the right to live in Judea?

Perhaps the best way to understand what Zionism is, is to summarise what it is not. Zionism is not a colonialist movement. It is merely the Jewish people seeking to return to the land God promised to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob millennia ago. Zionism is also not a racist movement. Jewish people have returned from exile in the four corners of the Earth. The Jewish state is a beautifully diverse nation, including thriving populations of non-Jews like Arab Muslims, Christians, Catholics, Druze and so forth. Support for a Jewish state does not mean supporting a Jewish people-only state. Zionism is also not a

conspiracy by the Jewish people to take over the world. Frankly, if that were the case, they would be doing a terrible job, given the rampant antisemitism in the mainstream and social media.

### History of Zionism

Zionism is inherently embedded within Jewish religion, culture and prayers —ever since the Jewish people were first exiled from their homeland and taken into Babylonian captivity in 597 BC. *Psalm 137:1, 5* tells of their lament in a foreign land: "By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion...If I forget you, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill".

Since that exile and the second major exile of Jewish people under the Roman Empire 2,000 years ago, the Jewish people have held a connection with and a longing for their ancient homeland. Religious Jews who recite the *Amidah* prayer three times a day say the following words morning, afternoon and evening: "Raise a banner to gather our exiles, and bring us together from the four corners of the earth into our land. Blessed are you Lord, who gathers the dispersed of His people Israel." Every year, Jewish people in the *Diaspora* (the Jewish community outside Israel) end their *Passover* dinner with the words: "Next year in Jerusalem."

Modern Zionism came about in the late 19th century amid yet another rise in antisemitism, ostracism and persecution of the Jewish people, particularly in Europe. Enter Austrian playwright and journalist Theodor Herzl, known as the 'father' of modern Zionism. Herzl looked around him at the global persecution of his fellow Jews and began a push for the Jewish return to their ancient homeland, where they could live out their Jewish identity in peace and freedom.

Herzl was a political Zionist who sought to draft influential people of the time into joining his efforts to establish a Jewish state in Israel. He published his famous pamphlet entitled 'The Jewish State' in 1886, with the subtitle 'Proposal of a modern solution for the Jewish Question.' His efforts continued for years, culminating in the First Zionist Congress of 1897 in Basel, attended by some 200 Jewish influencers from all over the world, but particularly Europe. In its aftermath, Herzl wrote in his diary: "If I had to sum up the Basel Congress in one word—which I shall not do openly—it would be this: At Basel, I founded the Jewish



Orthodox Jew praying at the Western Wall. | Photo: Pxhere

state. If I were to say this today, I would be greeted by universal laughter. In five years, perhaps, and certainly in 50, everyone will see it."

Herzl was right. Fifty years later, the modern state of Israel was reborn.

### Zionism in the Bible

The word 'Zion' in the Bible refers to Jerusalem, later expanding to mean all of Israel. It is the Land that God promised to Abraham—and God also promised to "bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you" (*Genesis 12:1-3*). God later repeats this promise to Isaac in *Genesis 26:3*: "Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father" and to Jacob in *Genesis 28:13*: "...the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants."

God's purposes and plans for Israel and her people are woven throughout the Scriptures, all the way through to the New Testament. In fact, Jesus was Himself a Jew, born in Judea under Roman rule.

Do you believe that the Jewish people have a right to live in the ancestral homeland that was promised to them by the God of Israel, the God of their forefathers? Do you believe they, like any other people, have the right to exist and live in self-determination? Congratulations, whether you are Christian, Jewish, atheist or any other religion, you are a Zionist.

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## For I Myself am Also an Israelite



Religious Jews perform the ritual of circumcision in the Tomb of patriarch. | Photo: Gershon Elinson/Flash90

■ **Johannes Gerloff**  
Theologian, Journalist, Lecturer & Author

This is part of a series of articles based on the book *Rejoice, You Nations, with His People*, by Johannes Gerloff

This is not the only place where Paul emphasized his roots among the Jewish people. In Caesarea, he explained to King Agrippa II and to the Roman governor Porcius Festus how he “according to the strictest party of our religion” led his life “as a Pharisee” (Acts 26:4-5). He was proud of having been “circumcised on the eighth day”, of being a descendant “of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin”, of being seen as “a Hebrew of the Hebrews”.

You can’t be more Jewish than that! Paul was part of Israel. No one could deny that. He was a Jew not because he had converted or tirelessly studied. He could prove his physical descent. Still, Sha’ul of Tarsus confessed *Yeshua* as his *Messiah*. Despite his physical heritage, he had taken hold of the salvation offered to him by the heavenly Father through mercy alone.

Klaus Wengst wrote: “It is very clear at this point that Paul did not understand his confession of Jesus as *Messiah*—what we would call conversion to Christianity today—as anything that affected his being Jewish! He remains a Jew—an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the people of the twelve tribes”. And: “He and all the other Israelite believers in *Messiah* cannot be considered to be ‘extracted’ from Israel. They remain integrated, are representatives of Israel and are thus a solid testimony to the fact that “all Israel” has not been rejected.”

The fact that Paul traced his ancestry

through the tribe of Benjamin back to Abraham underlines God’s faithfulness in a special way. The Apostle Paul argues: If I, “an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin” have not been discarded, then how much more must it hold true for all of Israel that:

“Never has the [one, true] God rejected His [chosen] people” (Romans 11:2a).

That which holds true for one Israelite, holds true for the whole people of God. A few verses later the Apostle repeats the same statement using different words. He employs an old illustration: “If the firstfruit is holy, then the [whole lump of] dough [is holy]” (Romans 11:16).

God had promised Abraham: “I have given the land in which you live as a migrant to you and your descendants” (Genesis 17:8; 13:15-16). Here in Romans 11:16, Paul reminds us of a commandment linked to receiving the promised land: “When you arrive in the land to which I will bring you, and you will eat of the bread of the land, then you shall offer an offering to the Lord: Of the first of your dough you shall offer a cake as an offering. As you do the offering from the threshing floor, so you shall present it. Of the first of your dough you shall give to the Lord an offering throughout your generations” (Numbers 15:18-21). Therefore, when Paul identifies himself with all Israel, he is not just applying an old rabbinical rule. He is using a principle rooted in the Holy Scriptures.

In Jewish custom, this Biblical principle remains alive to this day. In the *Sabbath* celebration, every Jewish household needs two ‘cakes’ or loaves of bread, made of fine wheat flour if possible. When the dough is kneaded, the baker takes a piece out of the dough and

recites the blessing: “Blessed are you, Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has sanctified us with the commandments and has commanded us to separate the *chalah*”. The removed piece sanctifies the whole lump of dough.

From a Biblical standpoint, it is clear that: If God still has a future for this Rabbi Sha’ul of Tarsus, this Israelite “of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin”, “the first fruit of bread”, how much more does he have a future for the whole ‘lump’—the whole of the Jewish people, all Israel whom he foreknew (Romans 11:2a).

God ‘foreknew’ his people. This means that the Creator had planned something that will only be revealed “in the end of times” (compare 1 Peter 1:20). The ‘knowing’ hints at the deep connection first alluded to in Scripture in Genesis 4:1: “And Adam knew Eve his wife”. Of all the peoples of the earth, the Creator chose this particular nation. He ‘foreknew’ it in order to irrevocably join the fulfillment of salvation to the history of Israel.

Frédéric Godet explains: “In every other case, salvation is a question of the individual. In the case of Israel, however, the question of salvation relates to the nation as a whole. God foreknew this nation as believers and ‘saved ones’, and sooner or later they will not fail to become both”.

“The guarantee for not ‘casting-away’ lies in the ‘foreknowledge’ of God: After all, God cannot give up his original choosing. From the term ‘foreknowledge’, we also clearly deduce the concept of election.

### Reflection

By Rev Henk Poot | Christians for Israel Netherlands



### He Will Reign Over the House of Jacob Forever

“Greetings, you who are highly favoured!” Luke 1:28

The encounter between the angel Gabriel and Mary, as described in Luke 1:27-33, has been a beloved theme in art. Just think of the well-known ‘Ave Maria’ (Hail Mary). What many do not realise, however, is that Gabriel’s greeting echoes a prophecy from Zephaniah: “Sing, Daughter Zion; shout aloud, Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, Daughter Jerusalem!” The prophecy continues: “The Lord, the King of Israel, is with you; never again will you fear any harm.” (Zephaniah 3:14-15). Notably, the Greek word for ‘rejoice’ (*chaire*), used in this prophecy, evolved over time to ‘greetings.’

With these words from Zephaniah, you will clearly realise, that Mary is not just an ordinary young woman from the people of Israel. She is the symbol of Israel. It is Israel that will receive the Son of God and bring forth the *Messiah* for the rest of the world. This is true of Mary, and it is also true of Jesus. He has everything to do with Israel. He will bring salvation and peace to the world. He will even take away the sins of the world. But He will do so as the King of Israel. Israel has received that grace from God.

Another detail from this passage that should be highlighted, are the words of Gabriel about Jesus. “The Lord will give Him the throne of His father David.” At the time, Herod—a descendant of Esau—was on the throne. Yet Gabriel proclaimed that Jesus, a descendant of Jacob, of Israel, would reign. And He will be King over Jacob for all eternity. I suspect that not many people will think about the fact that salvation is from the Jews during Christmas. But it is true, and it is not incidental.

Let us pray for the soon coming of Jesus to Jerusalem, where He will reign from the city of David over the entire world.

“The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; His kingdom will never end.” Luke 1:32b-33

## Short News

More than 57,000ha  
of Land Burnt

Attacks by Hezbollah have burned over 57,000 hectares of land, the Keren Kayemeth Lelsrael—Jewish National Fund announced middle of November. Iran-backed Hezbollah has since fired around 10,000 rockets, missiles and drones at the Jewish state. According to the KKL-JNF Forestry Department, it will take about five to seven years for nature to repair the damage. According to the data, the Upper Galilee and Golan Heights regions in Israel have suffered the most damage with almost 43,500 hectares, followed by the Lower Galilee (about 6,175 ha), Western Galilee (2,223 ha) and Hula Valley (178 ha).

| Photo: Flash90

## Passed Away

Yeshayahu Gavish, who as a general conquered the Sinai Peninsula in the Six-Day War, passed away in Israel at the age of 99. He was the last surviving high commander of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. About the paratroopers who conquered Jerusalem in those days, he said: "They are stealing the show." Gavish joined the Jewish underground organisation *Palmach*, established during the Second World War when he was eighteen years old. After the Declaration of the State of Israel, Gavish stayed in the army.

Sheba Medical  
Hospital Back to Life

Sheba, the biggest medical Centre in Israel, was expanded after the 7 October massacre in southern Israel, causing the war with Gaza to follow. The expansion was necessary to meet the enormous demand for trauma treatment and rehabilitation for civilians and soldiers. Israeli Defence Force (IDF) statistics show that from 7 October 2023 to mid-August 2024, a total of 4,310 soldiers suffered injuries of varying severity. To date, Sheba has rehabilitated more than 600 civilians and soldiers injured in the ongoing Gaza conflict in its newly established rehabilitation department. All under the motto 'Returning to Life'. Due to the high demand, medical facilities like Sheba have invested a lot of time and resources in facilitating the rehabilitation of soldiers, civilians and returned hostages—hopefully, more of the latter will be home soon.

Believing Without Israel  
*Israel is and Remains Israel—Part 14*

## ■ Rev Cornelis Kant

Executive Director | Christians for Israel International

The following article is the last instalment of a series, written by Rev Cornelis Kant, in which he explains how the role of Israel came to be viewed, during the development of the Christian faith and the history of Christian theology, as being insignificant.

God is, and always will be, faithful and trustworthy. He never lets go of what His hand began. He makes covenants with Israel that are everlasting. Even when the people of Israel are unfaithful and follow other gods, and God, in His anger, threatens destruction, He ultimately does not and, out of love for His people, remains faithful to them. Many passages testify to this. Several times God sends His people into exile outside Israel but, He always promises to bring His people back again. He will eventually bring His entire people back to the land of their fathers. The land promise is a fixed and permanent part of God's eternal covenants and promises for His people.

## Risk of Thin Support

The advent of Jesus and the consequent inclusion of the gentile nations in God's plan of salvation does not diminish Israel's position. The allegation that the Jews killed Jesus, along with replacement theology, have together fuelled much aversion and hatred towards the Jewish people over the centuries. Those ideas have caused much harm and are among the principal origins of antisemitism. A theology without Israel is not just an 'opinion' or an innocent understanding of the Bible. It is a sin against God and



God will bring His people back to the land of their fathers. | Photo Dafna Tal/Israeli Ministry of Tourism

harbours great risks and dangers for Jews and for Israel as a land and people in this world. On several occasions in the past, it has led to violence and slaughter of Jews. If this enlargement or fulfilment theology persists, we can rightly worry about Israel's position. For if Israel no longer has Biblical legitimacy, the basis for supporting Israel becomes very thin, especially at this time when Israel's very existence is threatened from all sides.

## Blessing and Riches for Us

God promised Abram that through Abram all generations of the world would be blessed. Paul speaks about riches: "I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous. Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be!" (Romans 11: 11, 12). The fall of Israel, its inability (yet) to believe that Jesus is the

Messiah, brings great riches to us as Gentiles. It has brought us the Gospel of Jesus, with all its spiritual riches. God brings us the Gospel of His Son through and via Israel.

But that is not all. Paul even says that Israel's future adoption will bring us all the more riches. When soon the Kingdom comes and the Word of the Lord will once again go forth from Zion, the whole world will share in riches we can hardly imagine now. Jesus will reign on the throne of His father David and rule over the whole world from Jerusalem. People will no longer learn war. Weapons will be turned into agricultural instruments. A glorious future awaits us through Jesus Christ, who is, and will be, the King of Israel. It is therefore of utmost importance that Christians and congregations worldwide, regardless of their denomination or identity, stand firmly behind Israel. Let the biblical testimony about Israel resound.

The Lord's Prayer  
By Kees de VreugdHallowed be Thy  
Name

In this series, we explore how the Lord's Prayer is embedded in contemporary Jewish faith.

The invocation of God as Father is followed by the sanctification of God's Name. The Greek literally says: *Your Name must be hallowed*. Together with the confession of God's kingship, the sanctification of God's Name is what the Bible is all about. Because a Jew is prepared to give his life for the sanctification of God's Name, the term has become synonymous in Judaism with martyrdom.

The Name of God is so holy that it is not pronounced. At the same time, the Name is the very presence of God. He

is always there. To sanctify the Name is to acknowledge that in deep awe. One of the oldest prayers in Jewish liturgy is the *Kaddish* prayer. *Kaddish* means sanctification. This prayer begins with the words, "Let His great Name be glorified and sanctified." In the synagogue, it is said in turns. The response of the congregation is: *May His Name be great forever and ever*. Isaiah 29:23: "But when his children see the work of My hands in their midst, They will sanctify My name; Indeed, they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and will stand in awe of the God of Israel." When will that be? When the Lord will bring redemption on Israel. But then it goes even deeper. It is God Himself who sanctifies His Name. He speaks constantly in

Ezekiel: "Not because of you, but because of My holy Name which you have profaned before the nations." Not even primarily Israel's sin, but the fact that Israel is in exile is a desecration of God's Name. As a result, the nations are blaspheming God's Name. But God is going to do something about that (Ezekiel 36:23): "I will sanctify My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord," declares the Lord God, "when I show Myself holy among you in their sight."

He sanctifies His Name by bringing Israel back into the land. God's Name is sanctified because the restored people of Israel live again in the land of Israel.

## 7 October Scorecard

### ■ Kameel Majdali

Director | Teach All Nations Inc.

It was a dreadful day which we will never forget. The rape, murder, and massacres of 7 October 2023 were the biggest pogrom since the Nazi holocaust eight decades ago. Over 1,200 were killed and, as with the Amalekites at David's encampment at Ziklag (1 Samuel 30), spoils and hostages were taken.

The aftermath was as well-known as the actual event: Israel went to war. Unlike other brief conflicts, this one needed to be protracted. The objective: to close down the Hamas government in Gaza and neutralise them militarily. Yet the results were anything but guaranteed.

A few short years earlier, Israel dealt with a friendly US administration that moved the embassy to Jerusalem, gave Israel the Abraham Accords resulting in peace treaties with four Arab nations, designated the Houthis of Yemen as a terrorist organisation, withdrew from the Iran Nuclear deal and slapped sanctions on the Islamic Republic. Since 7 October, the Jewish state has dealt with a reluctant, if not difficult, administration that lectured them about being 'proportional' in its response to Hamas holding back delivery of armaments and financial aid in an unprecedented move.

Well-organised and funded pro-Hamas protests were held weekly in major Western cities, and Governments and police seemed not to know what to do about them. Antisemitism, the world's oldest and most irrational hatred, was fully displayed at record levels. Jews do not feel safe anywhere. Israeli fans are now being attacked at European soccer matches.

Israel was told that Hamas could not be defeated, embedded in Gaza, bolstered by hundreds of miles of underground tunnels and weapons with supplies to withstand a long siege. Hamas enjoyed enthusiastic patronage of Iran, Turkey, and Qatar. They also had good public relations, convincing the world that they were the true victims, and Israel was wrong to retaliate. They managed to paint Israel as 'genocidal' zealots who committed war crimes.

Israel is not fighting on one front but several: Hezbollah in Lebanon, IRGC and Hezbollah in Syria, and the Houthis in Yemen who have been hindering international shipping in the Red Sea and sending drones into Israel itself—1,800 kilometres away.

Iran has been bankrolling all these groups with the goal of destroying Israel through its proxies—particularly Hamas and Hezbollah—who wage a war of attrition against the Jewish state. Yet, for



Student protests in Western cities. | Photo: Flash90

the first time ever, Iran has directly attacked Israel with 500 rockets, drones and missiles. However, this large attack has caused minimal damage.

Of Iran's proxies, Hezbollah is of particular concern. They have been well funded by Iran through drug sales and money laundering and armed with 150,000 rockets and missiles aimed at Israel. They, too, had underground tunnels and boasted of a fighting force of 100,000 battle-hardened soldiers from the Syrian civil war. They have to date fired 9,000 rockets into northern Israel, thus dislocating 60,000 Israelis who are being housed elsewhere. Left unchecked, this regional war could morph into World War III.

**Yet, where many saw doom and gloom, Netanyahu saw an open door. Unlike others, he did not flinch, panic, or retreat.**

On top of all this dire portrait stands Israel's embattled and often maligned prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu. Like his nation, he faced great obstacles including opposition from some fellow Israelis and western allies. In the first half of 2023, Israel was rocked with unprecedented mass protests against his Judicial Reform programme. Not just individuals but companies and major organisations were involved. A very disturbing part of the protests was that a number of military reservists who refused to report for their annual duty. Not only was this a first, but it was also a crime. This portrait of a divided, polarised Israel sent the wrong message to Israel's enemies and no doubt set the stage for the well-planned Hamas attack on 7 October.

For many, the protests were a chance to topple the Netanyahu government. Also,

at the age of seventy-five and having been prime minister for sixteen years, many felt that it was time for Netanyahu's tenure to come to an end. Many blamed him—known for being 'Mr. Security'—for the serious security lapse that enabled the barbarism of 7 October to take place. As with Donald Trump after 6 January, Netanyahu was on political life support.

Yet, where many saw doom and gloom, Netanyahu saw an open door. Unlike others, he did not flinch, panic, or retreat. To him, 7 October gave Israel the opportunity—however short-lived—to wage an all-out war against Hamas and other enemy forces and finally finish and win a war rather than fight

and then be cut short by a ceasefire that merely buys time for Israel's enemies to rearm.

What is the scorecard after one year of fighting? Israel has assassinated the senior leadership of Hamas, destroyed tunnels, crippled its military wing, and rendered it a rump to its pre-war levels. Hezbollah has lost its senior leadership, been zapped with booby-trapped pagers and walkie-talkies, and lost half of its cache of missiles. Israel's counterattack against Iran destroyed half of Iran's missiles, antiaircraft batteries and launching sites. Its supreme leader has gone into hiding since Israel assassinated a Hamas chief in Teheran. A politically dead Netanyahu is ahead in the polls.

The war is not over but with tough, courageous and visionary leadership, it is amazing what you can accomplish with the right attitude... and plenty of prayer.

### Biblical Roots By David Nekrutman

#### The Greatest Commandment

In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus was asked, "What commandment is the most important of all?" He replied, "The foremost commandment is, 'Hear, O Yisrael, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength...'" "Shema Yisrael, A'do'nai Elo'hei'nu, A'do'nai E'chad" (Deuteronomy 6:4)

It is important to note that Mark's Gospel was written primarily for non-Jewish believers in Jesus, living in Rome, to strengthen and guide through the era of Nero's persecutions. He does not assume his audience is familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures, and he explains Jewish customs and geography.

Deuteronomy 6:4 is one of the key scriptures of faith. The verse is known within Judaism as the *Shema*.

By Jesus' time, the *Shema* verse—along with Deuteronomy 6:5-9—was part of Jewish daily liturgy. The *Shema* was recited twice a day to fulfill the Deuteronomy 6:7 directive—"when you lie down and when you get up."

The first Hebrew word of Deuteronomy 6:4 is *Shema*, usually translated as 'listen' or 'hear'. However, this Hebrew term does not have a one-word translation. It is an idea.

In biblical Hebrew, there is no word for 'obey'. *Shema* is the closest word for 'obey', but with a twist. God does not want robotic faith. When God declares *Shema* to Israel, He is asking them to freely choose His will as their own. Perhaps, a better one-word translation for *Shema* is 'internalise'.

In understanding the *Shema*, Mark's Gospel presents the verse as a monotheistic credo—[Scribe to Jesus], "Correct, Rabbi! You have truly stated that 'He is one, and beside Him there is no other'" (v. 32). Israel's God is the only one and no other god exists alongside Him.

This is quite fascinating since it is possible to understand *Shema* as a declaration of Israel's loyalty to God (2 Chronicles 13:10) or an eschatological vision that YHWH will be accepted by all people as the one true God (Zechariah 14:9). Rather, Mark is presenting the *Shema* via a Deuteronomic prism (4:35, 32:12) for the Roman believers of Jesus to continue to believe in monotheism of Israel's God.

Mark presents the greatest commandment, "to love God," within the context of *Shema*.

Primarily a polytheistic civilisation, the Roman Empire recognised and worshiped multiple gods. They believed that these deities served a role in founding the Roman civilisation and shaped the events of people's lives daily. The *Shema* is a protest to that narrative. To truly express love for the God of Israel, a believer must recognise that He is the only God, and serve Him only.

# Hanukkah

## ■ Kees de Vreugd

Theologian | Christians for Israel International & Editor  
| Israel & the Church

On Wednesday evening 25 December the first *Hanukkah* light will be kindled in the streets in Jerusalem, in Jewish homes, and even in many cities worldwide. *Hanukkah* lasts eight days. The first night one light is lit, the second night two, and so on, until in the last night eight candles are burning. The ritual is simple. At the lighting of the candle a blessing is said commemorating the miracle of *Hanukkah*. Usually, the hymn *Ma'oz Tzur Yeshu'ati* ('Solid Rock of my Salvation') is sung. And it has become a custom to eat *sufganiyot*, a sort of doughnut baked in oil, referring to the miracle of the oil.

This year, *Hannukah* coincides with Christmas. In Israel, *Hanukkah* falls in the winter. Thus it is mentioned in *John 10:22* as the Feast of Dedication, 'and it was winter'. *Hannukah* is sometimes referred to as the Feast of Lights. Both *Hanukkah* and Christmas celebrate the victory of Light over darkness.

### Historical Background

*Hannukah* celebrates the (re)dedication of the temple. The history is described in the books of the Maccabees. It happened in 167 BC. The Greek king Antioch IV Epiphanes, who ruled over Israel, placed an 'abomination of desolation' (*1 Maccabees 1:54, Daniel 9:27*) in the temple in Jerusalem: a statue for the Greek deity Zeus, and he had pigs sacrificed on the altar. In an unparalleled attempt to assimilate the Jewish people into Greek-Hellenistic culture, *Sabbath*, circumcision and study of the *Torah* were forbidden.

The elite in Jerusalem, among which many priests, had already adopted Greek culture, but the people in the land resisted. A clan of priest-farmers in the city of Modi'in, the *Maccabees*, started a revolt against the Greeks. Under the leadership of Judas Maccabeus, the Jewish people succeeded in taking over Jerusalem and expelling the Greeks from the city. The temple was purified from idolatry, and on the same date as it was desecrated, the 25th of *Kislev*, the altar was rededicated. Eight days took the celebration of the



Menorah on the fifth eve of *Hanukkah* at the Western Wall, Judaism's holiest site in Jerusalem's Old City. | Photo: Kobi Gideon/Flashgo

rededication, just like the eight days of the feast of tabernacles, and like the original dedication of the first temple. The temple was ornamented with crowns and bosses of gold, and was abundantly lighted. From then on, the feast of the dedication should be celebrated yearly. Jesus, too, celebrated the Feast of the Dedication in the temple (*John 10:22*)!

### Oil

The *Talmud* relates the story that, when they entered the temple and wanted to light the *Menorah* (the seven-branched candelabra), there was no oil that was ritually fit for the *Menorah*. Finally, however, they found a small jar of ritually pure oil, just enough for one day. However, a miracle occurred: the *Menorah* burnt for eight days on that small amount, long enough to produce new pure oil.

### Dedication

The word *Hanukkah* means dedication. *Hanukkah* is not just about lighting candles. It is about dedicating,

and re-dedicating oneself to a life in accordance with God's Word. In Jewish thought every human being is supposed to make of himself a temple, a sanctuary by learning the values of God's Word. In this way, he spreads light into the world. That is how Israel understands her own being in the world.

The word *Hanukkah* is also related to the Hebrew word for education (*Hinnukh*). In these dark times, in which Israel is in an ongoing war for her existence, rumours are widely spread and lies are easily believed. Many people are hardly aware of the historical backgrounds, let alone the Biblical foundations, yet have an immediate and absolute opinion. The violence we have seen against Jews in Amsterdam and other cities in the world is rooted in hatred and ignorance. This year more than ever, *Hanukkah* is a call to spread light, not the least by educating people about the real history and the true meaning of Israel. It is at least one important weapon in the fight against the powers of darkness.

## Sharing Israel's Story with Pastors in Chile

### ■ Rev Cornelis Kant

Executive Director | Christians for Israel International

Building relationships in Latin America can be challenging without fluency in Spanish. This changed when Yerko Clavero, a Chilean native, joined Christians for Israel. His involvement allowed us to connect with a network of pastors in Chile. We quickly realized there was significant interest among these pastors in Biblical and historical information about Israel. As a result, we were invited to speak in various churches in Chile.

Nine regional meetings with pastors were organized, thanks to arrangements made by Pastor Luis from Concepción. Additionally, we had the opportunity to preach at two Sunday church services and serve as guest speakers at a missionary event. Yerko accompanied us as a translator, making these interactions possible. In total, we met over 300 pastors, each of whom received a Spanish-translated

copy of the book *Why Israel?*

These meetings were extraordinary. Some pastors expressed, "Had I known this, I would have organised a full-day conference at my church." The pastors represented various denominations, including traditional churches, Baptist and Pentecostal congregations. The smaller gatherings allowed for meaningful discussions and deeper engagement, which were particularly enriching.

Amid the current conflict in and around Israel, many pastors had pressing questions. Their understanding was often limited to what mainstream media portrays. Offering a Biblical perspective on current events proved enlightening for many. Given the vast distance and high costs, most of these pastors have never had the chance to visit Israel. They voiced a strong desire for more Spanish-language resources in Israel. During our trip, we also met the

director of the National Library, who was so impressed with the book *Why Israel?* that he committed to adding ten copies to libraries nationwide.

Each meeting was a blessing, and we are filled with hope and prayers that these initial connections in Chile will grow and flourish in the future.



Pastor's meeting in the city of Hualpe. Rev Cornelis Kant (5th from left) and Yerko Clavero (6th from left). | Photo: Christians for Israel

## The Attempt to Colonise Jewish History

### ■ Yonina Pritzker

Jewish News Syndicate (JNS)

For centuries, the Jewish connection to the Land of Israel was universally acknowledged, but not today.

The history of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel did not begin in 1948, as those who want to erase Jewish history and the Jewish connection to Israel would have us believe. In fact, Jews have been living in their ancestral homeland continuously since antiquity.

Throughout that long history, there have been adversaries who attempted to drive the Jewish people out of their land, such as when the Babylonians destroyed the First Temple in 586 BCE. Those exiled as a result sang, *“By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat; we also wept when we remembered Zion”* (Psalm 137).

The Romans also attempted to drive out the Jewish people when they destroyed the Second Temple in 70 CE. Images of the ancient Roman looters can still be seen in Rome today, carved on the Arch of Titus.

Many more conquerors have tried to incorporate the Land of Israel into their own territories, including Persian, Greek, Byzantine, Umayyad, Abbasid, Crusader, Ayyubid, Mamluk and Ottoman conquerors. Yet Israel has always been the sovereign country of the Jewish people alone.

This ancient bond between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel has been universally acknowledged for thousands of years, including in recent centuries.

In 1830, the governor of Damascus, writing of the Jewish connection to the Matriarch Rachel’s Tomb in Bethlehem, instructed the Mufti of Jerusalem that “they [the Jews] are accustomed to visit it from ancient days; and no one is permitted to prevent them or oppose them [from doing] this.”

Similarly, in 1919, Emir Faisal ibn Hussein, later King Faisal of Iraq, wrote a letter to Prof Felix Frankfurter, later an associate justice of the US Supreme Court, stating: “I want to take this opportunity of my first contact with American Zionists to tell you what I have often been able to say to Dr [Chaim] Weizmann... We feel that the Arabs and Jews are cousins in having suffered similar oppressions at the hands of powers stronger than themselves.”

Faisal stated that the Arabs “look with the deepest sympathy on the Zionist movement” and would “do our best... to help them through: We will wish the Jews a most hearty welcome home.” He also acknowledged that “The Jewish movement is national and not imperialist. Our movement is national and not imperialist. ... I look forward, and my people with me look forward, to a future in which we will help you and you will help us.”

The Supreme Muslim Council also acknowledged the Jewish connection to the Land in a 1925 guide to the Temple Mount, which stated, “Its identity with the site of Solomon’s Temple is beyond dispute.”

This connection was also recognised by the world powers at the close of World War I. It was unanimously affirmed by the League of Nations and codified in international law that the Jews have an indigenous claim to all the land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River, including Gaza, as well as the Golan Heights and the land that comprises the country of Jordan.

Nonetheless, we have seen countless attempts to strip the Jewish people of their land and to denigrate and even criminalise their presence in it. For example,



Francesco Hayez’s 1867 oil on canvas painting ‘The Destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem’ at Venice’s Gallerie dell’Accademia. Both the first and second iterations of the Beit Hamikdash were razed on Tisha B’Av, hundreds of years apart. | Photo: Francesco Hayez, Wikimedia Commons.

almost immediately after the Jewish right to the land was recognised, the international representatives entrusted with facilitating the resettlement of Jews in the Land of Israel gave away 77% of it to create Jordan.

The remaining 23% is precisely the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea about which people chant in the streets today, fabricating this land’s ‘occupation’ by Israel.

Previously, this tactic to erase Jewish history and replace the Jewish people by calling Israel a colonial, occupying enterprise would have shown the claimants to be either ignorant or deceitful. It would not have earned them a teaching position at our celebrated institutions of higher learning, where they have been able to mislead and indoctrinate a generation of students who have not been taught actual history or critical thinking.

Similarly disingenuous was United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres when he claimed that the massacre of Israelis and others in the pogrom of 7 October had context because of Israel’s ‘occupation’.

His statement was in direct contradiction of the UN charter, since the UN inherited the obligations of the League of Nations, including the reestablishment of the State of Israel on precisely that ‘occupied’ land.

We also see the word ‘occupation’ deceptively applied to Israel in various newspapers and on other media platforms. We see it used by international leaders and elected officials who, at best, unthinkingly parrot these tired mantras about Israel and, at worst, are actively aiding in the effort to wrest the Jewish homeland away from the Jewish people by verbally rewriting history and denigrating the Jewish state.

Had Israel’s neighbours offered it any kind of reciprocity, any acknowledgement of the rights of the Jewish nation to a sovereign state in its ancestral homeland, they would have planted the seeds of peace. Unfortunately, in the face of the current attempt to drive the Jewish people out of the Land of Israel, the Jews are once again forced to defend their history, heritage and home while the yearning and praying for peace continue.

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### The Bible Speaks

#### Luke 1: 68-75

“Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because He has come to His people and redeemed them. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David (as He said through His holy prophets of long ago), salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us—to show mercy to our ancestors and to remember His holy covenant, the oath He swore to our father Abraham: to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve Him without fear in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.

Filled with the Holy Spirit, the priest Zacharias sings this hymn. God places these words in his heart and on his lips to make clear: the *Messiah* has come because God is faithful to His promises. The time will come when Israel will be delivered from all Jew-haters and the Jewish people will serve the Lord in peace. | Photo: Unsplash

# 7 October: The NGO War Against Israel

On 7 October 2023, Hamas orchestrated the deadliest attack against the Jewish people since the Holocaust. Terrorists from Gaza committed wholesale acts of murder, sexual assault, kidnapping, torture, destruction, and other atrocities—and they were joined by Hezbollah, the Houthis, and other Iranian proxies in launching a multifront war against Israel.

In parallel to the devastating physical attacks, a powerful network of international NGOs—in partnership with UN agencies and officials—launched a political war against the Jewish state.

## NGOs and 7 October: Atrocity Denial, Contextualisation, Celebration

So called human rights and humanitarian NGOs, contextualised, justified and even celebrated the massacre at times labelling the attacks ‘resistance’. Several senior NGO officials denied the Hamas orchestrated atrocities, including the systematic sexual violence against Israelis.

Instead of supporting and promoting the human rights of Israelis and Jews, NGOs contributed to normalisation of violence, romanticisation of Hamas and other terror groups, and dehumanisation.



Since 7 October, NGO Monitor has mapped the NGO network behind these campaigns, highlighting the role of secretive governmental, private and humanitarian aid funding in enabling antisemitism and violence against Jews and Israelis.

### Israel-Gaza War: The NGO Front

#### Dehumanisation

- Libels: genocide, starvation, war crimes
- Atrocity inversion
- Rape denial
- Erasing Israeli victims and hostages

#### Lawfare

- International Criminal Court
- International Court of Justice
- Lawsuits
- Arms embargoes

#### Global Antisemitism

- Campus intimidation and hate
- Anti-Israel demonstrations
- Widespread anti-Jewish violence

### Miftah

“The silence of ‘Western’ feminists has also been appalling given their earlier outrage about **unsubstantial Israeli allegations** which were used to justify and commit the ongoing genocide in Gaza.”

21 February 2024

### PMRS

“Today is a **glorious day of historic proportion.**”

PMRS (Palestinian Medical Relief Society)  
President  
Mustafa Barghouti  
7 October 2023

### Amnesty

“The root causes of these repeated cycles of violence must be addressed... ending Israel’s 16-year-long illegal blockade on Gaza, and all other aspects of Israel’s **system of apartheid.**”

Amnesty Statement  
7 October 2023

### B’Tselem

“B’Tselem Executive Director Yuli Novak described the events of 7 October as **‘acts of resistance or an uprising against Israeli apartheid regime.’**”

Haaretz  
24 March 2024

### HRW

“The reports and unverified videos of Israeli families taken hostage in their homes, kidnapped into Gaza, are terrifying. There’s no honour in unlawful attacks... **No matter how just your resistance to apartheid and oppression is.**”

HRW Programme Director Sari Bashi  
7 October 2023

### PNGO

“We in PNGO (Palestinian NGO Network) salute this **honourable image** that our people are sketching.”

8 October 2023

| Photo: Background Flash90

Facts Speak

## Attacks on Israel by Hezbollah 8 October 2023–12 November 2024 (Day 403)

**15,900+**  
rockets, missiles and mortar bombs fired towards Israel

**3.4km+**  
m<sup>2</sup> area burnt

**76+**  
murdered

**46,711+**  
Israelis displaced from their homes

**1,100+**  
houses and infrastructure damaged

Source: StandWithUs

## The Lifeline that is C4I

### Danielle Mor

Director | Christian Friends of the Jewish Agency

For over ten years now I have been personally blessed by Christians for Israel. To many this statement might seem strange. What possible personal connection could there be between me as an Israeli, Jewish mother, and a group of devout, faith-filled Christians?

But as a person serving at The Jewish Agency for Israel, I have witnessed and felt firsthand, the deep love for Israel and its brave defenders, the selfless caring for Holocaust survivors in Ukraine, the creativity and joy brought into helping, whether with children suffering from PTSD, new *olim* or in planting tulips.

These have all been a blessing to me and to the many thousands of Israelis whose lives have been transformed thanks to this support. But since 7 October, this blessing has become so much more. It has become a lifeline. A beacon of light in what felt like utter darkness and despair. A proof that not all hope is lost. A warm embrace, that does not let go and wordlessly signals: *You Are Not Alone!*

I first began to realise this when the messages and



Danielle Mor, donating blood, in light of the need for blood for the wounded 7 October 2023. | Photos: Danielle Mor



Danielle playing with new *olim* children, currently in rehabilitation after a five-month evacuation at the Ibim Aliyah village.

phone calls on 7 October started coming in, while I was with my family in our shelter room, asking me: “How am I?” “Is my family safe?” Next, when shaking and crying outside the hospital room of a critically injured young man, I received a firm long embrace from a Christians for Israel member. And of course, in the days, weeks and months that have passed, I have felt and witnessed how the incredible generosity with millions of dollars coming in support of urgent needs, the unfailing faith and the abundant love and fight for justice, have and are a lifeline to myself, to the Jewish people and to all of Israel. I know this path you walk in is not easy. That you too are suffering attacks. And so, if I may, I’d like to end by thanking Christians for Israel for being our lifeline and share with you a Hebrew Jewish prayer, one that is recited all over the world for our defenders:

*“May the Almighty cause the enemies who rise up against us to be struck down before them. May the Holy One, Blessed is He, preserve and rescue our defenders from every trouble and distress and from every plague and illness, and may He send blessing and success in their every endeavour.”*

You can contribute to the Emergency Fund Israel here.  
**Will you help? Any amount helps.**

## Support Huge Encouragement

Since launching the emergency fund on 7 October last year, supporters of Christians for Israel have demonstrated great commitment. In recent months, substantial donations have poured in to help address Israel’s pressing needs. Christians for Israel are deeply grateful for the donations from so many around the globe. Frank van Oordt, Director of Christians for Israel Netherlands, recently shared about the impact of this support after visiting Israel.

“We noticed that Christians for Israel supporters worldwide understood this was a meaningful way to stand with Israel in these difficult months. People in Israel genuinely feel this support. It moves them to know that Christians are praying, offering help, and standing steadfastly alongside them, especially during times like these.”

In the initial phase of the war, emergency funds were largely directed toward enhancing security measures. “Think, for example, about shelters. We also helped northern Israel to buy surveillance cameras, because people there feared attacks.” Israel still has 250,000 evacuees, mostly from the north, which has been bombarded by Hezbollah for over a year now.

The donations have already funded numerous

projects in Israel, yet the need remains high. Frank shared: “Our support is far more than a mere drop in the ocean; it deeply encourages Israel. Each contribution is a tangible expression of the prayers offered, and that is how it is received.”

Looking ahead, Frank assumes that the emergency fund will remain essential for quite some time. “Even after the war ends, funds will be needed for reconstruction. Because of the war’s pressure on the economy and the ongoing return of Jews, vulnerable groups will still need extra support. It is important that we continue to help and demonstrate our love as Christians.”

Frank van Oordt at the Centre of the hostages. | Photo: Christians for Israel



## Our Projects Overview

Part of our mission is to comfort Israel and the Jewish people through prayer and action. If you would like to support one of our projects you can complete the coupon on page 16 or make an online donation. Thank you very much for your support!

### Aliyah

Aliyah is the Hebrew word for the return of the Jewish people to Israel. We support Aliyah mainly from Ukraine (and the former Soviet Union), but also from India and France. Furthermore, we help new immigrants (in Hebrew: *olim*) to integrate into Israeli society.



### Hineni Soup Kitchen

We help the poor of Israel, by providing them with food. We do this in partnership with the Hineni Center in Jerusalem, headed by Benjamin Philip. Your gift for the soup kitchen goes directly to the purchase of food.



### Holocaust Survivors

We support impoverished Holocaust survivors in Israel and Ukraine through various projects which provide assistance to survivors of the Holocaust. Those survivors are elderly and will not be among us for long, and there is a growing demand for practical assistance.



### Christian Friends of Israeli Communities (CFOIC)

You can support the Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria, the heart of Biblical Israel. The main purpose is to encourage the people in the Biblical Heartland and to show them that there are Christians throughout the world who support them and share the belief that the areas of Judea and Samaria are part of Israel’s inheritance.



### Food Parcel Campaign Ukraine

We distribute food parcels amongst Jewish people in Ukraine. These parcels are handed out to Holocaust survivors, needy families, and the sick. Those food parcels are a sign of friendship that demonstrates your support for our Jewish brothers and sisters and that they are not alone.



### Arab Christians

Life for Christians in Bethlehem is often not easy. Christians for Israel supports the First Baptist Church of Rev Naim Khoury in Bethlehem and Jerusalem. The members of this church spread the gospel among Arabs and share their love and heart for Israel and the Jewish people.



For country-specific or further information on our projects, go to our website, [www.c4israel.org.nz](http://www.c4israel.org.nz)

