

# ISRAEL

## & Christians Today

NEW ZEALAND  
and  
SOUTH PACIFIC

August 2020

Av - Elul 5780

CHRISTIANS FOR  
**ISRAEL**  
NEW ZEALAND

Understanding Israel and world events from a Biblical perspective

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| Photo: Flash90

## With All My Heart

**Two young Israeli women stand proudly on a hilltop in Samaria.**

This land is perhaps the most controversial real estate in the world. It has been stamped 'Occupied Palestinian Territory' by the international community.

And yet, many Jews believe with all their heart in the promises of God regarding these mountains.

We can read those promises in the book of the Prophet Ezekiel: "As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and all the settlements in the land. I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel."

Jews who seek to walk and live in obedience to these promises are condemned as 'settlers', and their communities have been declared 'illegal'. They are accused of taking land from the Palestinians. The media and many politicians believe with all their hearts in this, and work to perpetuate the narrative. Governments form their foreign policies accordingly.

**Or do we believe that God is doing a miracle, by fulfilling before our very eyes His own promises so many centuries ago.**

But the reality is different. There is enough room for Jews and Palestinians on the mountains of Israel. And – with exceptions, of course – Jewish settlers are not seeking confrontation, but simply want to live in peace in the land and build beautiful, fruitful communities, bringing blessing to the land and all its residents.

"And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul" (*Deut. 10:12*).

Which story do we believe? Do we blindly follow the images and messages of the secular media? Or do we believe that God is doing a miracle, by fulfilling before our very eyes His own promises so many centuries ago:

"I will surely gather them from all the lands where I banish them in my furious anger and great wrath; I will bring them back to this place and let them live in safety. They will be my people, and I will be their God. I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me and that all will then go well for them and their children after them. I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me so that they will never turn away from me. I will rejoice in doing them good and will assuredly plant them in this land with all my heart and soul." (*Jeremiah 32:37-41*).

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## Colophon

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**Mission**

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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# A Jewish Homeland in Palestine

## ■ Andrew Tucker

International Editor | Christians for Israel

The controversy about 'annexation' takes us to the heart of Zionism. What is Zionism? Do the Jewish people need sovereignty in the land in order to fulfil their calling as a nation? If so, which land? And what about the non-Jews in the land?

These are the subject of the debate that has erupted around a recent essay by Jewish writer Peter Beinart calling for a bi-national State of Israel-Palestine.

Beinart – a North American Jew – argues that the two-state vision (ie. the separation of Israel from the Palestinians) is dead. The current 'brutal and undemocratic' regime, in which Israel controls the West Bank but Palestinians have fewer rights, is unacceptable. The only alternative, he argues, is a bi-national state between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River, in which every person has an equal vote, and the Jewish and Palestinian peoples have equal status. "It is time for liberal Zionists to abandon the goal of Jewish-Palestinian separation and embrace the goal of Jewish-Palestinian equality."

Beinart's essay has provoked vigorous debate in the Jewish world. Daniel Gordis, – a leading Jewish Zionist educator based in Jerusalem – accuses Beinart of dishonesty. Gordis says he shares Beinart's concern for the 'plight of the Palestinians' and admits that the status quo is 'not tenable in the long run'. But he believes Beinart deliberately ignores the fact that the reason Israel has become so successful, is because it has become a safe haven free of threats of annihilation. And he accuses Beinart of downplaying the hatred of the Jewish people within Palestinian and Arab society and argues that unless the Jewish people have a sovereign state of their own, they will again be threatened with persecution.

Of course, none of this is new. Ever since the beginning of the Zionist movement in

the 19th century, the Jewish people have been debating about what it means to be 'Jewish' – how important is it for Jews to be in the land, what does a 'Jewish homeland' mean?

Gordis offers a powerful plea for Jewish sovereignty. "What Beinart does know is that the revitalisation of Jewish life that is Israel's hallmark would end with his proposal. We might well not be annihilated. But Jews would quickly become a minority here, just as they were in Europe. They would be surrounded by hostile masses, just as they were in Europe, and that would certainly (and rapidly) destroy the Jewish confidence that has been at the core of the Judaism's revitalisation in Israel. ... As heretical as this will sound to the Jewish universalist progressives who are Beinart's minions, I care about both the Palestinians and the future of Judaism's richness — but if forced to choose (which would not be the case if the Palestinian position was different), I'm going with the People I am blessed to be a part of."

**"Israel was created not to be perfect, but to restore the Jewish people to its ancestral homeland, and thus to allow the Jewish people and its culture to thrive and flourish."**

Gordis continues: "The unfettered quest for self-immolation, the intellectual thinness of cancel culture, the rage that pulls down statues of Christopher Columbus and advocates abandoning capitalism for socialism without any regard for how Marx's and Lenin's theories unfolded in the Soviet Union, in China, in Cuba or elsewhere – all that is a distinctly American response. Israelis, for all their many faults, show little sign of the cultural fatigue, intellectual sloppiness or willed oblivion-to-consequences that are now emblematic of America's youth. What Beinart has done is to essentially take America's desire for self-destruction and ask Israelis to adopt it. No thanks.

...Israel was created not to be perfect, but to restore the Jewish people to its ancestral homeland, and thus to allow the Jewish people and its culture to thrive and flourish as it can nowhere else on earth. Looked at that way, Israel is not only miraculous, but it is also an extraordinary success. We Israelis can see our terrible mistakes and still take pride in what we've accomplished; many of us are horrified by what is still not right here, but we have no interest in Beinart's suggestion that we, therefore, commit national suicide."

How should we view all of this, as Gentile Christians? There is much to say, but here are a couple of thoughts:

First of all, we should acknowledge that this is very much an intra-Jewish dialogue. The Jewish people themselves need to work out between themselves what their identity and calling are. It is God who is bringing them home, in fulfilment of His covenants with them.

They need to decide how they respond to God's calling.

Second, the Jewish people don't need Gentiles telling them what to do. If asked for advice, we can (and, I would suggest, should) encourage them to look to the Lord alone for wisdom and strength.

Third, it is no surprise the nations of the world condemn Israel.

Fourth, the Jewish people have always been called to look after the "stranger" in the land. (*Lev. 19:33-34*). The Palestinians have rights that must be respected. The Jewish people will be blessed as they 'love them as themselves'. That seems impossible when the leaders of those people seek to annihilate the Jewish State. But the Biblical principle would seem to apply.

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## Prayer Points

By Pieter Bénard

### Israel

- Pray for wisdom for the Israeli government with regard to the application of Israeli law to parts of Judea and Samaria. We see that many see the possession of biblical territory as controversial, while the Bible clearly speaks of the return of the Jewish people to these parts of the land. Pray that governments take this as a starting point and that countries will not be influenced by the many political threats from the EU, UN and Middle Eastern countries.
- Pray for Israel's protection from attacks by Iran. At present, Iran operates mainly indirectly through Hezbollah in Lebanon. Pray for wisdom for the Israeli army.

### Israel & the Nations

- "He rules forever by his power, his eyes watch the nations— let not the rebellious rise up against him." (*Psalms 66:7*). Give thanks that God reigns over the earth. And pray that the nations of the earth will acknowledge this.
- Recently the World Council of Churches in Geneva (WCC) sent a letter to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of all countries that are part of the European Union. In

this letter, they appeal for a firm and principled stance by the European Union against any annexation by the State of Israel. Pray that Christians will take a stand against this and that the letter will have no effect.

- Pray for the protection of the Jewish people as the number of anti-Semitic incidents continues to rise in many countries.

### Christians for Israel

- David Ben Gurion once famously said: "Our future depends not on what the Gentiles say but on what the Jews do". It is our task as Christians to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, peace for the land, and peace for all in the land.
- "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." (*Luke 21:33*). Thank God for His Word, which is trustworthy, and pray that Christians will fill their minds with His word and be assured that God's faithfulness to Israel never ends.
- Give thanks that Christians for Israel inspires and calls on many people to support Israel and the Jewish people. Strong anti-Zionism can also be present among Christians. Pray that this will be broken.

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

## Short News

### Hitler's Birthplace



The house where Nazi leader Adolf Hitler was born, in Braunau, Austria, became more and more a pilgrimage site for people with neo-Nazi sympathies. After a long legal battle with the owner of the house, it was now decided to use the building as a police station. | Photo: Wikimedia Commons

### Never Again Education Act

US President Trump recently signed the 'Never Again' Education Act into law. This law expands Holocaust education in the US. It frees up budgets to improve awareness and understanding of the Holocaust and its lessons. Among other things, there will be a central database with teaching resources about the Holocaust for educators to teach both middle- and high school students. New York Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney who co-authored the bill: "Teaching our children about the dangers of anti-Semitism and hate is a proactive way to stop anti-Semitism before it even starts."

### Time to go to Israel



Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein, a well-known rabbi from New York called on American Jews to make Aliyah to Israel. "All of us, we all need to get out of here. It's not for us anymore everybody. It's just not for us. We don't belong here." Rabbi Wallerstein also referred to other rabbis in the USA who called upon people to leave for Israel. | Photo: unsplash

### Experimental Drilling

The plan had been there for some time, but it certainly is controversial: the extension of the new railway connection between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem to the Old City. The track now ends in Jerusalem at an underground station at the entrance of the city. A tunnel of more than three kilometers should allow passengers to get off at the Dung Gate, close to the Western Wall. In mid-May the experimental drilling started near the Dung Gate.



Photo: Unsplash

# Israel Bans God TV

## ■ Israel & Christians Today Staff

Israel's media watchdog has withdrawn the Israeli broadcast license from US-based evangelical network God TV, accusing it of seeking to target Jews with Christian content.

The International Christian network's God TV launched its *Shelanu* (Hebrew for 'ours') channel at the end of April on Israeli cable provider Hot, describing it as catering to Christians.

This provoked an immediate outcry in Israel, with then-communications minister David Amsalem accusing it of being a 'missionary channel' seeking to convert Jews to Christianity.

The Cable and Satellite Broadcasting Council launched an investigation to determine if God TV had misrepresented its content when it applied for a license.

Late June, Council chairman Asher Bitton ordered Hot to cease *Shelanu* broadcasts.

"The channel is aimed at Jews with Christian content, in contrast to the original broadcast request, which stated it was designated for Christians," Bitton said in a council statement. The Council has ruled that a Christian channel for Jews won't be automatically disqualified in the future, but that it will have to seek Council approval, which *Shelanu* had not done.

In one promotional clip for *Shelanu*, God TV director Ward Simpson tells viewers, "we're going to preach the Jewish Jesus to the nation of Israel... they're going to hear

the gospel presented to them in their native tongue."

Even in the Christian evangelical world, there was opposition to God TV's enterprise. Laurie Cardoza-Moore, founder of Proclaiming Justice to the Nations, even wrote to the Israeli government encouraging them to withdraw God TV's license.

"At a time when global antisemitism is engulfing the world, God TV should be using its platform to teach Christians about their biblical responsibility to stand with our Jewish brethren and the State of Israel. Instead, they have chosen to stand on the wrong side of history, empowering the anti-Semites," said Laurie Cardoza-Moore.

Cardoza-Moore continued: "Unfortunately, because of biblical illiteracy, we are seeing a rise of antisemitism again in Christianity. Christians have adopted false doctrines and traditions known as 'Replacement Theology' and 'Supersessionism' that has mobilised the Amaleks of history. These false doctrines are what fuel the desire to force unbiblical principles on our Jewish brethren. God TV should be encouraging Christians to repent of the history of Christian arrogance and ignorance that has incited some of the worst antisemitic incidents in history, including the pogroms, the Inquisition, and more recently, the Holocaust. Instead, they should ask their Jewish brethren to teach them the Torah as was stated by the prophets."

Putting things into a historical perspective Cardoza-Moore said: "Unfortunately, Christian history is replete with examples of Christians forcing their doctrinal views on Jews; either through torture, or, with a disingenuous smile. As a descendant of Sephardic Jewish ancestry, I have studied the implications of where this type of ideology can lead. My ancestors were forced to convert to Catholicism during the period of the Spanish Inquisition. King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella blamed corruption in the Catholic Church on the Jews. In order to survive that dark period in history, they were forced to convert. For 500 years since then Jews hid their identity from generation to generation, only disclosing their hidden truth upon the matriarch's or the patriarch's passing. They were known as Conversos. Conversos were blamed for plagues, accused of poisoning wells and kidnapping Christian boys for their blood. Many of the Conversos were tortured or burned at the stake to test the authenticity of their conversion."

Cardoza-Moore concluded: "In recent decades, millions of Christians have felt the call to stand with the State of Israel and the Jewish people with no hidden agenda. Our only mandate to the Jewish people is to love and support them because they are God's chosen people. Any attempts to convert Jews or downgrade their religion will only sow undue hatred at a time when we should unite in the face of darkness."

*Continued from page 2*

Finally, isn't it remarkable that this debate centres on the status of mountains of Judea and Samaria? From a Biblical perspective, these are at the heart of Jewish history and identity – and their future. The prophet *Ezekiel* said:

"But you, mountains of Israel, will produce branches and fruit for my people Israel, for they will soon come home.

I am concerned for you and will look on you with favour; you will be ploughed and sown, and I will cause many people to live on you—yes, all of Israel. The towns will be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt. I will increase the number of people and animals living on you, and they will be fruitful and become numerous. I will settle people on you as in the past and will make you prosper more than before.

Then you will know that I am the Lord. I will cause people, my people Israel, to live on you. They will possess you, and you will be their inheritance; you will never again deprive them of their children." (*Ezekiel 36:8-12*)

Have we come to a point in history when God is saying to the Jewish people: do you dare to take responsibility for the land (and people) that I am giving you?

# Muslim Sheikh Honoured for Combating Anti-Semitism

## ■ Aviel Schneider

Chief Editor | Israel Today

**The head of the Muslim World League has 'Jesus' in his name and defends the Jews. Go figure.**

Sheikh Mohammed Al-Issa is Secretary-General of the Muslim World League (MWL) based in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. He was recently recognised for his contribution to combating anti-Semitism as the first recipient of the annual Combat Anti-Semitism Award.

Sheikh Al-Issa has been recognised before for uniting people of all faiths in publicly condemning Holocaust denial and inspiring the next generation to fight hatred and promote peace. At the beginning of the year, Sheikh Al-Issa and other high-ranking Islamic dignitaries from all over the world visited the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau, where many Jews perished in the Holocaust.

The award was presented to the former Minister of Justice of Saudi Arabia in an online event due to the corona crisis.

No mention has been made of Sheikh Mohammed Al-Issa in the Palestinian media. On the contrary, Palestinian publications, including school textbooks, still engage in Holocaust denial and incitement against the Jewish people.

In his online speech, Sheikh Al-Issa sharply condemned the Holocaust deniers in the Muslim world for spreading lies. "Jews and Muslims have lived together for centuries, but unfortunately our paths have diverged in the past few decades," emphasised Al-Issa, who bears the Arabic name for Jesus, meaning Sheikh Mohammed Al-Jesus. "We absolutely need to build new bridges for dialogue between the two communities. Since becoming the Secretary-General of the Muslim World League, I have



Sheikh Mohammed Al-Issa. | Photo: Creative Commons

been committed to fighting hatred and violence. When I was in Auschwitz-Birkenau, I stood next to my Jewish siblings and told them that the Holocaust was the greatest horror in history and promised that this should never happen again."

The sheikh stressed that as long as there are those who distort history and deny the Holocaust, "we will stand against those liars, no matter where they are. Denial of history serves the extremists who only promote hatred and racism. As Muslims, we have a duty to study history and to stand by the international community as part of our faith."

The Muslim cleric also took aim at those exploiting the coronavirus crisis to further spread hate:

"The coronavirus is a common enemy that makes no distinction between Muslims and Jews. Extremists are

taking advantage of the global pandemic to promote the ideology of hate and separation. We have to join forces to fight the virus if we want to keep hope alive against this threat."

Indeed, both in the Middle East and in the West, the Jews have been blamed for the coronavirus crisis.

There is no logic or reason behind such claims. Hate leads to blind madness. Voices like these from Sheikh Mohammed Al-Issa are therefore crucial, especially amid a sea of hateful voices like those in Tehran, from Hezbollah in Lebanon or from Hamas in the Gaza Strip, all of whom speak and dream primarily of Israel's destruction. Incidentally, when you speak to Palestinians about the Holocaust and the extermination of Jews, about half of them still insist that this is a Zionist lie.

## What Does ECI do?

### ■ Dr Emilie Noteboom

Director of Outreach, European Coalition for Israel

The European Coalition for Israel (ECI) is a pan-European group of Christians who are a voice of support for the Jewish people and the Jewish State at the UN, the EU and national governments. At the highest diplomatic levels, it is mostly Israeli or American organisations, often with a distinctly Jewish identity, that stand with Israel. Since ECI is European and not Jewish, our approach is different from those groups, sometimes resulting in doors opening in unprecedented ways. Our message is that we as Europeans have made multiple mistakes when it comes to treatment of the Jewish people. From that sober place we invite decision-makers to learn from our mistakes and choose differently. As non-Jews, we can also build bridges and plead the Jewish cause as an 'objective third party'. It means we are positioned to celebrate the Jewish people and their contribution to Western civilisation and culture. Without the Jews, Europe would not be Europe and the West would not have developed its Judeo-Christian civilisation.

A practical way we have celebrated Jewish culture in the past years has been by organising a Passover Seder at the UN headquarters in New York. The story of liberation out of slavery is one that speaks to all people and is particularly meaningful to African leaders. ECI hosts the event and invites UN dignitaries to be our guests. Israeli diplomats are given the place of honour and lead those gathered through the story of Moses bringing the people out of Egypt. Such events have a unique impact by allowing diplomats, representing nations that are not



Dr Emilie Noteboom, European Coalition for Israel's Director of Outreach (right) with Katharina von Schnurbein, European Commission Coordinator on combating Antisemitism at European Parliament

always friends of Israel, to see a different side of Israel and learn about Jewish culture and history. It highlights the humanity of a people too often portrayed only through the distorting lens of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

This year we could not celebrate a Passover Seder at the UN because headquarters had closed due to the pandemic. Inspired by a little-known Jewish tradition that gives those who were not able to celebrate Passover at its Biblically appointed time another chance to do so, we hosted a virtual Second Passover (*Pesach Shenit*) for UN officials in May. With 'Hope through Music and Literature' as the theme, world-renowned violinist Renaud Capuçon performed selected pieces of music.

Katharina von Schnurbein, the European Commission's Coordinator in the combat against anti-semitism, read texts by celebrated Israeli writers. Tomas Sandell, ECI's founder, and Gregory Lafitte, ECI's Director of UN Affairs, shared their thoughts on hope in times of deep distress and the Jewish contribution to culture, in particular to the French language.

Tomas and Gregory have since started hosting a weekly webinar in which they discuss current events with dignitaries. ECI warmly invites you to join them! To receive invites to the webinars, sign up for ECI's monthly newsletter at [www.ec4i.org](http://www.ec4i.org).

## Short News

### Nine Israeli-Founded Unicorns Now Based in New York



Nine Israeli unicorns, which refers to privately held start-up companies valued at over \$1 billion, are now based in New York, highlighting the growing influence of Israeli companies in the US. Some of the companies listed include prominent names in the tech world, focusing heavily on software and consumer payment services, such as Riskified, Sisense, VAST Data, and Via join Compass, Lemonade, Payoneer, Taboola and The We Company. The number of Israeli-founded unicorns based in New York has nearly doubled over the past year.

| Photo: Unsplash

### Washable Face Mask

The Israeli company SonoviaTech developed a reusable anti-viral mask that will be able to neutralise about 99% of coronavirus. The washable masks are coated in zinc oxide nanoparticles that destroy bacteria, fungi and viruses. Masks have been donated by Sonovia to hospitals in Israel and Germany. In May the SonoMasks entered the market in the USA.

### Iran Urges Action Against Israel After Natanz Blast



On 3 July, ImageSat International (ISI) revealed images of the Khojir facility, which blew up on 26 June. That was the first of four explosions. The ISI assessment says that gas tanks were damaged under a shed and that the gas was destined for a missile facility nearby. Another incident occurred at a medical center days later in Tehran and then on 2 July a further explosion damaged the Natanz nuclear facility. According to experts, the Natanz explosion has set back Iran's nuclear programme by more than a year. Iran called for action against Israel, blaming the blast on the Jewish state. On 4 July yet another massive fire damaged a power plant in Khuzestan. Quietly, Iran is letting it be known, including through commentary as its major media outlets, that suggest it might respond to the attacks. | Photo: Times of Israel

# Biblical Borders of Israel

## Johannes Gerloff

Theologian, Journalist, Lecturer & Author

This article is the second instalment of the two-part series. The first article was published in the June issue.

### The Heartland is West of the Jordan

*Joshua 22:9-34* reports an interesting event that is relevant in this context. The Israelite tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh had settled in the East Bank between 'Arnon and Hermon'. They had built an altar near the Jordan 'on the border of the territory of Israel' (*verse 11*). In the context of the dispute that resulted, the East Bank is strictly distinguished 'from the land that belongs to the Lord, in which the Lord's tabernacle dwells' (*verse 19*).

If we go back to the south west of the country, the border with Egypt is marked at 'the river of Egypt', which is the river Nile, 'the Red Sea', the 'Shihor of Egypt' or 'the creek of Egypt'. This 'brook of Egypt' is often identified with the Wadi El-Arish, which is located approximately in the middle of northern Sinai Peninsula.

In the time of the Maccabees, the extent of what is today's modern State of Israel is described fairly precisely when *1 Maccabees 11:59* speaks 'from the Tyrian ladder', today's Rosh HaNiqla, 'to the border of Egypt'.

### The Subjective Reference

Despite this vast amount of border information, it is quite difficult to establish from Scripture a clearly-defined territory for the Promised Land for the chosen people. When we consider the subjective aspect that repeatedly emerges in the environment of biblical statements about the borders of the land, it becomes clear that the Promised Land does not have definitive boundaries.

We find the first border definition of the Promised Land in *Genesis 13:14-15*. There God tells to Abram: "Lift up your eyes. From the place where you are standing, look to the north, towards the Negev, to the east and in the direction of the sea. All the land that you see, I will give to you and your descendants."

### A Panoramic View

"What you see, I will give to you!" – It remains unclear exactly where Abram stood when God made this promise, at what time of day, in what season of the year it happened, and what the weather was like. The biblical text leaves the reader in the dark about how good the eyes of the then 75-year-old were. These would have been decisive factors in setting the borders.

With Moses, the biblical tradition is clearer. At the age of 120 years, Moses is not allowed to enter the Promised Land. As with Abraham, the drawing of boundaries is done subjectively from the perspective of the observer. However, it is clear that this is done from Mount Nebo, from one of the peaks of the mountain ridge east of the Jordan River. And it is reported of Moses that "his eyes were not weakened" (*Deuteronomy 34:7*).



A chart of cities in Israel on the top of mount Nebo. Mount Nebo is where the Moses was given a view of the promised land that God was giving to the Jews. | Photo: Flash90

The text also clearly states what Moses sees: From 'Gilead to Dan' – that is, the whole mountain range east of the Jordan, including today's Golan Heights up to Mt Hermon. 'All of Naphtali' – the eastern edge of the Galilean mountains. 'The whole land of Ephraim and Manasseh and the land of Judah to the sea on the west' – the central Israeli mountain range with the Shefelah and the coastal plain reaching to the Mediterranean in the background. And then turning left towards the south: 'The Negev', the wilderness of Judah, the Dead Sea and right in front of Moses' feet 'Jericho, the city of palm trees' (*Genesis 34:1-3*).

### To Accept As An Inheritance

The personal perspective of Moses, the one who received the promise, based on his relationship with God and his relationship with the land, is decisive for defining boundaries in the Promised Land. This way of thinking also becomes clear when Scripture stresses dozens of times that God gives the land to the people with a mandate, namely, 'to accept it as an inheritance.' The Hebrew word *yarash* is translated as 'to inherit', 'to bequeath', 'to take as possession', 'to conquer', 'to expel', 'to settle', depending on the context.

Connected with the land promise is thus the quite subjective task of entering, inspecting and actively taking possession of the land as an inheritance. This is why the commandment to live in the land of Israel is so important for rabbinical tradition, or, conversely, the ban on leaving the land of Israel.

### Stepping on the Land

God had not told Abram much about the land God had promised to him. Only: It is 'the land that I will show you' (*Genesis 12:1*). Decisive for further progress was that 'Abram went' (*verse 4*), that he arrived in the land of Canaan together with his extended family (*verse 5*) and passed through the land (*verse 6*).

After Abram had sought peace with Lot by giving him the best part of the Promised Land (*Genesis 13:1-12*), God repeated His purposes with regard to Abram and his descendants (*verses 14-16*). Then God gave

Abram the command (*verse 17*), "Get up! Move through the land in length and breadth, for I will give it to you."

Several generations and centuries later, Moses described the land that God intended to give to his people by announcing (*Genesis 11:24*), "Every place the sole of your foot will step on will be yours." Immediately after Moses' death, the Lord repeated this instruction to Joshua, the successor of Moses (*Joshua 1:2-4*): "Get up! Cross over this Jordan, you and all these people, into the land I am about to give to them, to the children of Israel. Every place the sole of your foot will step on, I have given to you as I spoke to Moses."

In biblical thinking, stepping on the ground determines how big the Promised Land will be. Only that land which the one who received the promise will practically enter and accept as an inheritance by stepping on it, will be the land that God gives him. In reverse, it is true: "If you do not tread the ground, it does not belong to you."

Thus, King Ahab took possession of Naboth's vineyard by entering it (*1 Kings 21:18-19*). And 'Ploni-Almoni' ceded his right to the inheritance of Elimelech to the redeemer Boaz by giving him a shoe (*Ruth 4:7-8*), the very 'tool' that enabled him to step on the land. This way of thinking runs through the language of the entire Holy Scriptures.

God has never given his people a land with borders set once for all, a plot of property that would be clearly defined in any land register – and that an 'Israelite' residing in New York, Tokyo, Berlin or even Tel Aviv would be able to make work for him from a distance or even exploit it as real estate speculator.

From a biblical point of view, the size of the land and its boundaries depend on the individual's inspection of the land, and acceptance of it as an inheritance, by stepping on it with the sole of one's foot. Obedience to the original commission of the Creator to 'cultivate and preserve the land' (*Genesis 2:15*) and a life in accordance with his will emerge as decisive elements considering the borders of the Promised Land.

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# United Response to Covid-19 Attack on Jewish Communities

## ■ Yossi Aloni

Israel Today

**Israel takes the lead in helping Jewish communities around the world recover from Corona crisis.**

For the first time, a global Corona roundtable was convened by the Diaspora and Jewish Agency with around 30 global and regional Jewish organisations to discuss the challenges of the Jewish people and the rehabilitation of Jewish communities.

Jewish Agency chairman Yitzhak Herzog and Diaspora Affairs Minister Omer Yankelevich led the roundtable, which set out to assess the impact of the Coronavirus on Jewish communities around the world and prepare a practical plan for their rehabilitation on the 'day after.' The organisations discussed the current state of affairs in the communities. They discussed the consequences of the current crisis for each community, as well as the challenges faced, the opportunities and the possible responses.

The Global Roundtable held on Zoom from around the world opened with comments by Yankelevich and Herzog, who presented the key issues that organisations will discuss over the next few months until the rehabilitation of the affected Jewish communities.

### The key issues included:

- steps for the rehabilitation of communities,
- coping with routine and crisis,
- raising resources for the period of rehabilitation,
- strengthening leadership,
- cohesion and mutual commitment,
- future community needs,
- preparing for other challenges, such as increasing anti-Semitism worldwide.

Afterward, the leaders of the organisations presented their views on challenges.

Jewish Agency Chairman Isaac Herzog said:

"Today we are making history. This is the first time in the history of the State of Israel that the bodies of the Israeli government and the Jewish Agency are setting up a formal forum to assist Jewish communities around the world, apart from an emergency situation facing one



Jewish Agency chairman Yitzhak Herzog attending a rally at Tel Aviv's Rabin Square, Israel | Photo: Flash90

specific community. This is a paradigm shift of 'All Israel becoming guarantors for each other.' The Roundtable will identify, map and broadly analyse and assess the steps needed to strengthen Jewish communities and community institutions throughout the Jewish world, in addressing the implications of the Corona crisis over a period of rehabilitation that is expected to be long."

Diaspora Minister Omer Yankelevich said:

"I marvel at the conduct of Jewish communities during these troubled times and how they strive to share ideas, learn from mistakes and grow together. Their unified spirit is inspiring, as they establish a system to provide stable and permanent aid to those in need. Together with worldwide Jewry, we will set up an active, strong forum to find practical solutions for all communities. Our office wants to work with all communities everywhere, so that they will have a connection to Israel and Israel to them.

This will make them proud that Israel is a real part of their lives and their identities, just as we in Israel are proud to realise that Jewish life abroad is a real and active part of our own identity."

**"I marvel at the conduct of Jewish communities during these troubled times and how they strive to share ideas, learn from mistakes and grow together."**

The roundtable is expected to convene in its broad forum once every two weeks over the next few months.

Subcommittees will be set up to discuss in depth the challenges leading up to a global recovery from the Corona crisis. The forum will be run and coordinated operatively by the Director General of the Diaspora Ministry, Dvir Kahana, and the Director General of the Jewish Agency, Amira Aharonovitch. Shirley Heller, Senior Advisor to the Jewish Agency Chairman, will manage the forum's office. The office will function together with the Jewish Agency office, headed by Jewish Agency Secretary General Josh Schwartz.

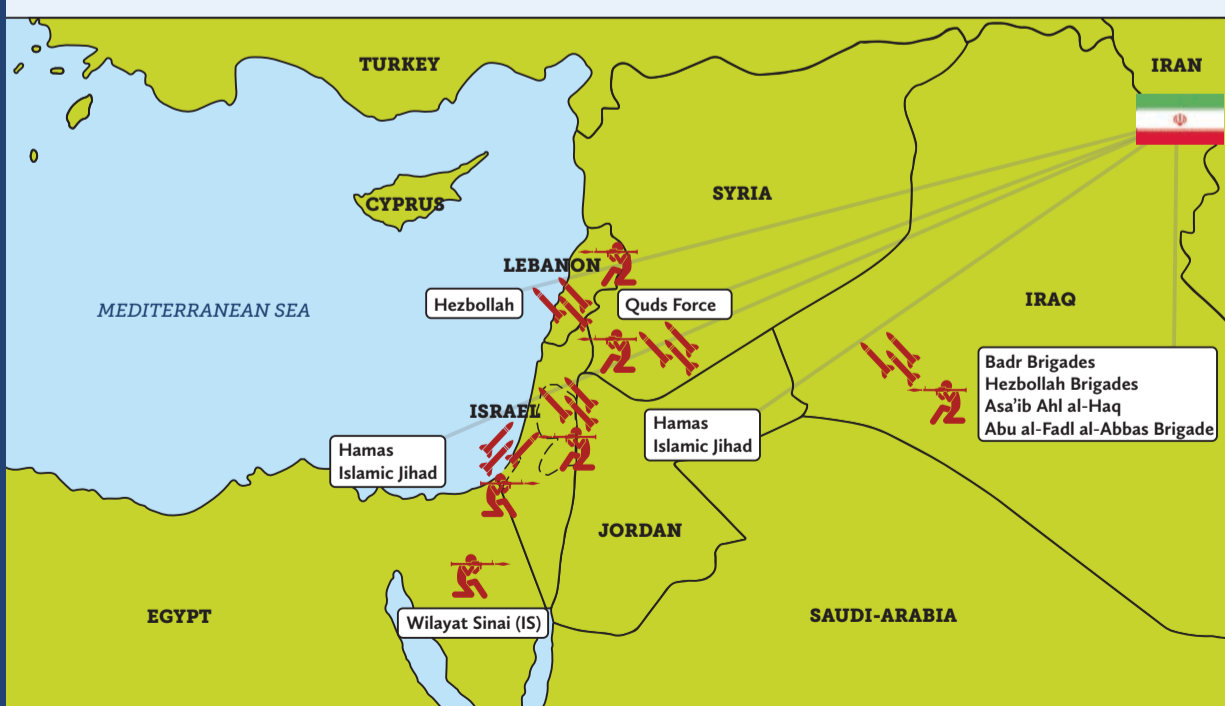
Among the organisations and bodies that participated in the roundtable: a distinguished representation of the Israeli government from the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister's Office; the Jewish Federation of North America, the Keren Hayesod, World Zionist Organisation, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), the Conference of Presidents, JDC, JNF, Orthodox Union, Conservative Movement, Reform Movement, World Jewish Congress, European Jewish Congress, European Conference of Rabbis and more.

In April, the Jewish Agency together with Keren Hayesod and the Jewish Federation of North America, launched a special loan fund, with \$10 million, to help the Jewish communities affected by the Coronavirus. Since the foundation was established, dozens of communities in over 70 countries around the world have asked for assistance. Since the outbreak of the Corona epidemic, there have been numerous reports of the great damage the Coronavirus has caused to Jewish communities around the world, including a high number of fatalities.

According to data compiled by the Diaspora Ministry and the Jewish Agency, fatalities among Jewish communities around the world number in the thousands. Many of these communities have been paralysed or are on the brink of collapse.

## Facts Speak

### Iran's Long Arm



The main Iranian threat to Israel is Iran's use of so-called 'proxy militias'. These are militant movements that unconditionally support the ideas of an Islamic revolution, as preached by Islamic religious leaders. There are also groups which support Iran with money and therefore support it indirectly. This map gives an incomplete overview, but, clearly shows that Iran is in the process of encircling Israel with a network of armed forces.

# Bringing Israel Back to the Church

Marie-Louise Weissenböck is Chairperson of Christians for Israel Austria. She is also Regional Director Europe, and a member of the Board of Christians for Israel International. She grew up in South Africa and came to Vienna to study piano. She has lived there ever since.

## Why and how did you start working with Christians for Israel?

"When I came to Austria in 1980, I noticed that there was not much communication between Jews and non-Jews/Christians in Vienna. As a young person I could not understand this, as already 35 years had passed since WWII, and for a young student that is a long time! The Jewish Museum in Vienna had not reopened yet and there was no official Holocaust remembrance. I prayed to God that if he wanted to use me in some form to help further dialogue and understanding between Jews and Christians, I would make myself available. When I heard the teachings of Willem Glashouwer in Vienna in 2005 and 2007, my biblical understanding of the role of Israel (the land and the people) was confirmed and of course deepened/broadened immensely. In 2007 I was invited to participate in a Christians for Israel "Train the Trainers" weekend in the Netherlands and from there my involvement grew. The Austrian branch of C4I was founded in January 2008."

## What inspires you most about C4I?

"What inspires me most is the ministry's deep and sincere love of Israel and the Jewish people. I grew up with Jewish friends as a kid and it was heartwarming to meet a whole family of Christians who resonated this love and respect that I already felt from a young age. It is based on love for the God of Israel and for Jesus the Jew - which is related to the love of the Jewish people - His first love. Through getting to know the Jewish character of Jesus better, we gain a deeper understanding of what it means as gentiles to be engrafted into the Jewish Olive tree.

Meeting and talking with Karel van Oordt - the founder of Christians for Israel - was a blessing in my life. His deep love for God, for the Jewish people, and for the Word of God, together with his humble character, touched me deeply. He is unforgettable!"

## You have pioneered the establishment of Christians for Israel in Austria - which is not exactly the most pro-Jewish country in the world. What have been some of the highlights of this important work (difficulties, challenges and successes)?

"Austria today has a very Israel-friendly government. Our chancellor, Sebastian Kurz has a very good relationship



Marie-Louise delivering her thank-you speech after receiving a WIZO Gold Award in Vienna, October 2019

with Netanyahu and Israel. He has been there often in the past years. Netanyahu was the one warning our chancellor against coronavirus and Austria took similar actions concerning the lockdown as those in Israel.

Austria is also at the forefront in Europe in the fight against anti-Semitism. Two very important international conferences against anti-Semitism have been held in Vienna in the past years.

A highlight, or rather a blessing, is our really good relationship with the Jewish community, the Israeli Embassy and the Holocaust survivors living in the Jewish Retirement home (Maimonides Centre) in Vienna. We cooperate with the Jewish Museums in different cities, and we have developed a relationship of trust and respect. This is invaluable.

I get invitations to speak about Israel from Catholic, Charismatic and Protestant Christians, which is a great blessing. Our Israel tours are inter-denominational - apart from getting to know Israel and learning more about our roots in Judaism, we also learn from each other, resulting in deeper understanding between different Christian denominations.

A big challenge for us is that our support group is getting older. The generation above 60 is definitely more supportive than the generation below 60. This seems to be a challenge in many countries."

**You are also the Regional Director for Europe.**

## What does that involve?

I am responsible for overseeing the work of C4I in Europe. Our German, Belgian and Dutch branches are large and independent, though they work closely with each other, and have been very supportive of our teams in other countries. I work closely with our "younger" branches - helping them get established, training and inspiring them, and developing strategies for reaching the churches in their countries. Our team in Italy is doing a great job, in an exceedingly difficult and complex country. The work in the Ukraine led by Koen and Ira Carlier is simply wonderful. A highlight has been to establish branches in Denmark and Switzerland in the past three years, and to work with our wonderful representatives in Greece and Albania. The message about God's purposes for Israel in connection to His purposes for the Church in redemptive history is continuing to be spread throughout Europe. I am so thankful!"

## Looking forward, what opportunities and challenges do you see for the ministry in the coming years?

"I think the biggest challenge is the rise of anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism throughout the globe - from the right and the left. Radical Islam is also a challenge. Another big challenge is connecting with the young generation. At the same time, we have a tremendous opportunity to reach a new generation through social media."

## C4I Writes to WCC and WEA

### ■ Rev Cornelis Kant

Executive Director | Christians for Israel International



In June the World Council of Churches in Geneva (WCC) sent a letter to the EU Ministers of Foreign Affairs, appealing for a firm and principled stance by the European Union against any 'annexation' by the State of Israel. The WCC urged condemnation of Israel and economic sanctions.

The WCC has built a long-standing reputation for one-sided condemnations of Israel. We wrote a letter to the WCC urging them to refrain from putting pressure on the EU Ministers. We said that we recognise that there are very different views on this issue both within Israel and within the churches. However, the one-sided criticism of Israel is unacceptable.

"For more than ten years, the Palestinian Authority has refused to sit down with Israel in order to reach an agreement to come to a peaceful solution. For years the Palestinian Authority has been investing in hate education through schoolbooks. For years the Palestinian Authority pays terrorists who attack Jews. Thousands of rockets have been fired from Gaza after Israel handed it over to the Palestinians in 2005. As you all know, Israel is the only safe place for Christians in the Middle East where they can freely confess their faith. In many Middle East countries Christians have been massacred or have fled because of the many religiously motivated wars. The appalling consequence is that there is almost no more room for Christians. However, when Israel takes a step, the World Council of Churches gets moving and calls for the suspension of the EU trade relationship with Israel. We find this shocking, shameful and unworthy of the Christian Church. We are afraid that there is a theology

underlying this, in which the enduring place of the Biblical nation of Israel in salvation history is ignored and denied."

Soon afterwards, the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) issued a statement expressing "concerns" about Israeli "annexation plans". We wrote to the WEA to let them know we appreciate WEA's desire to contribute to the current discussions. However, in our view, their statement does not accurately reflect the history of this conflict, the realities on the ground, or the legal status of these territories. It thus runs the risk of impeding, rather than promoting, a peaceful resolution of this dispute.

Christians for Israel does not defend the Israeli government's proposal to apply Israeli law or sovereignty to parts of the 'West Bank'. But we do defend its right to do so if it sees fit.

*Continued on page 9*

# Update from Christians for Israel Fiji

## ■ Raphael Jordan

National Leader | Christians for Israel Fiji

Greetings from the 'ends of the earth'. If your feet are in Jerusalem, the most distant piece of land from Israel is Fiji. Each month, a group of Bible-believing supporters for Israel gather to pray for Israel, using the material in the Christians for Israel International prayer calendar. During the March-May Coronavirus lockdown, we met fortnightly from our own homes.

Christians for Israel Fiji began the year 2020 with a blast. On 8 January, we were blessed to meet our Prime Minister, Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama. In our discussions, we gave a brief outline of 'Who we were?' 'What do we do?' and 'Why we do the things we do?' We presented him with a written plea, signed by a good number of Bible-believing Christians, urging our government to support Israel at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and to openly declare Jerusalem as the eternal and undivided capital of the Jewish State.

Our visit culminated with a further presentation of a very special gift – a Magen David carved out of Fijian hardwood 'Vesi' and engraved on its base were two Bible verses: *Genesis 12:3* (front) and *Isaiah 40:1* (back).



Christians for Israel Fiji shows overwhelming support to President of the State of Israel, H.E. Reuven Ruviv Rivlin and Israeli delegation on their visit to Fiji in February 2020

In February, we were invited to make presentations in Suva, Nadi and Lautoka, to educate the Church and the leaders of our country, of God's separate biblical plans for Israel through the Holy Bible.



Non-Resident Israel Ambassador to Fiji, Tibor Shalev Schlosser (standing 7th from left) and Israeli Pacific Islands Advisor, Sara Sofer (standing 7th from right) at Pullman Nadi Bay Resort & Spa Fiji on 20 February 2020.

Before President Rivlin's arrival, we had liaised with churches of different Christian denominations regarding his visit to Nadi and Lautoka City (Western urban centers), bearing in mind that this was **a first for the west and also for Fiji** to show support for Israel. The support Christians for Israel Fiji received was overwhelming, especially from surrounding villages of Narewa, Namotomoto, Saunaka and Sabeto.

Upon President Rivlin's arrival at Nadi International Airport and as his motorcade drove onto the tarmac, his entourage was greeted with a sea of Israeli flags held by supporters of Israel, who stood, for some, on the roadside as early as 3am, waving their flags and cheering. This reception continued along the designated route from the airport to Pullman Nadi Bay Resort & Spa Fiji, where our visitors were accommodated.

The Christians for Israel Fiji team was also blessed to be invited to meet Israel's Non-Resident Ambassador to Fiji, Tibor Shalev Schlosser and Pacific Islands Advisor (PIA), Sara Sofer at the Resort after the state dinner.

Sara Sofer later told us that the words buzzing amongst our Jewish visitors, from President Rivlin, to the last member of their team was – "unbelievable" and an "awesome surprise". Most of them were first-time visitors to Fiji and didn't know what to expect. President Rivlin, in his official remarks, reminded Fiji and Pacific Island leaders to support Israel at the United Nations (UN), because of the UN's grossly biased attacks on the Jewish State. He expressed Israel's appreciation for the Pacific Island states support at the UN and expressed that it was not enough to **abstain** from voting on anti-Israel resolutions but should be opposed by Israel's friends.

This was the first-ever gathering by Christian-Fijian-Israeli supporters to show support and love to such a high-level delegate from the Holy Land at his arrival and also on his departure for Australia the following day.

We are emerging from this global pandemic with full blessings from the Lord himself. Wherever you are... stay blessed and may God continue to part our global pandemic, as he parted the Red Sea.

# Possibilities Despite Coronavirus

## ■ Rev Cornelis Kant

Executive Director | Christians for Israel International

In many countries around the world, governments have imposed restrictions to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus. In some countries, the measures are extremely strict. This also has consequences for the activities of Christians for Israel in many countries.

Conferences, lectures, and other activities were cancelled in almost all countries. Also, planning new activities later this year is hardly possible because there are still many uncertainties. Fortunately, the digital era offers a solution. With a great deal of ingenuity, our teams in various countries are organising online meetings and lectures.

**Italy:** Our team in Italy, for instance, arranged a digital meeting about the work of C4I in Ukraine. Koen Carlier, our Aliyah fieldworker Ukraine, and wife Ira participated

in this meeting, as well as Aliyah fieldworker Nataliya. They spoke about the distribution of food parcels and *Meals on Wheels* to Holocaust survivors and members of the Jewish community living in poverty. The participants in the meeting experienced this as wonderful and inspiring. "I am so happy meeting you all in this session and meeting Koen and Ira, thank you, thank you...", Edda Foggarolo, team leader in Italy, told the participants. In a fairly simple way, many people can be reached.

**Malaysia:** Our speakers worldwide can also be easily deployed 'live'. Our team in Malaysia organised an online Bible study meeting on Israel at the beginning of June. As many as 157 people logged in and attended the meeting. These people all came from different churches from all over Malaysia and several participants will host a 'Why Israel' Bible study group in the time to come. At the end of the session, there was an opportunity for questions. One of the pastors wrote an email after the zoom session saying: "Thank you very much, and we want to invite you to visit us in Malaysia and teach us about Israel."

**Vietnam:** In Vietnam, they have been familiar with online Bible studies about Israel, even long before Coronavirus broke out. Just as many countries are familiar with the *Alpha* course, our team in Vietnam is running courses about Israel, where they study the Bible with each other over ten evenings via Skype and other online means of communication.

**Netherlands:** In the Netherlands, the team organises daily live streams via YouTube and the Dutch website of Christians for Israel. A variety of C4I speakers and other well-known pastors teach about Israel every evening, except on Sunday. About 400 people watch the live stream and over 2000 or more people watch it afterwards. "Every evening I watch your live streams and I am so encouraged and inspired by it. I am learning every day", a woman told us when she visited the C4I centre in Nijkerk in June.

Some of these live streams are now also recorded in English, German or French and made available to our teams abroad, who can distribute them via their own (social media) network. In times of Coronavirus, we are incredibly grateful that we have these modern means of communication at our disposal so that the work can continue, albeit in a different way.



Chiara Canciani (Italy) talking to Aliyah fieldworker Natalia in Ukraine.



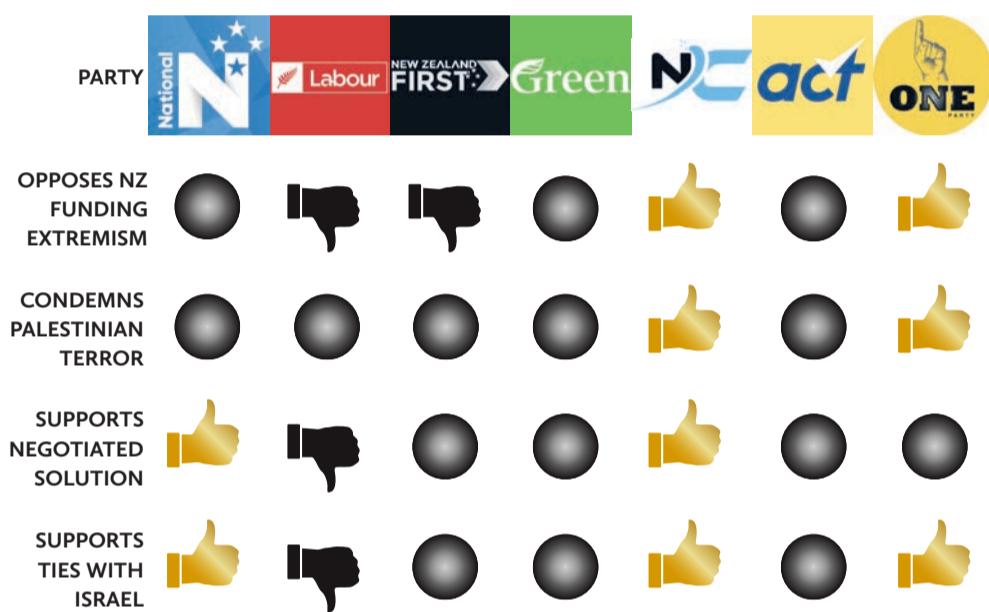
The live stream recording at the C4I Centre in Nijkerk.





# 2020 Voters' Guide for Israel Supporters

In conjunction with the Israel Institute of New Zealand, we've put together a brief guide for the upcoming election, rating each party on four categories relating to policy toward Israel. Here's how they stack up (graphic, with explanations below). For more information about anything in this guide, go to <https://bit.ly/2020VotersGuide>.



KEY: 👍 Party supports this policy. 👎 Party doesn't support this policy. ● Party hasn't made a comment on this policy.

## THE ISSUES

**Oppose Funding Extremism** New Zealand gives at least \$1m to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which has been found to employ staff who have praised Hitler, denied the Holocaust, glorified terror, and incited violence on social media. UNRWA also runs schools that use textbooks which the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination said "fuels hatred and may incite violence". We looked to see if any party had voiced opposition to Kiwi tax dollars funding this extremism.

**Condemn Terror** There have been periods of intense attacks on Israel, including hundreds of missile attacks, flaming kites, and violent riots from Gaza; and stabbing, shooting, and explosive attacks by Arab Palestinians from Judea and Samaria (the West Bank). There has also been clear incitement to terror from Arab Palestinian leaders, including the 'pay to slay' policy of the Palestinian Authority (the PA financially rewards Palestinians and/or their families for the murder of Israeli civilians). We looked to see if any political party has condemned these terror acts or incitement.

**Support Negotiated Solution** It is widely acknowledged that a just and peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict is likely to only come from direct negotiations. We looked to see what position each political party took in this regard.

**Support Ties With Israel** The modern state of Israel has, in the past 72 years, made the desert bloom and become an international leader in agri-tech, medicine, cyber-security, green-tech, food-tech, and other fields. The innovation agreement (and associated 'landing pad' in Tel Aviv) between Australia and Israel is estimated to contribute to bilateral trade worth approximately \$2b annually. We looked to see if New Zealand political parties had expressed a desire for closer ties with Israel.

## PARTY POSITIONS

**National Party** National has not made any comment on New Zealand funding extremism; nor has National has mentioned Palestinian terror or the incitement to terror from Palestinian leaders. However, the party has apologised for their role in UNSC2334, showing a willingness to encourage a negotiated solution rather than pressuring only one side to make concessions. And National MPs have indicated they would like to have a NZ embassy in Israel (rather than the ambassador being based in Turkey), clearly showing a desire for closer relations.

**Labour Party** The Israel Institute of New Zealand has contacted Prime Minister Ardern about New Zealand funding extremism and she has failed to respond. Labour has not mentioned Palestinian terror or the incitement to terror from Palestinian leaders. One of their MPs has, however, expressed support for the discriminatory BDS campaign. BDS singles out Israel for opprobrium and is incompatible with a negotiated solution. When confronted by the Israel Institute of New Zealand, Labour leaders condoned the MP's support. Even if the stated policy of Labour is to support a negotiated solution, their actions speak louder. This also speaks to Labour's desire for closer relations with Israel.

**New Zealand First** The Israel Institute of New Zealand has contacted Foreign Minister Peters about New Zealand funding extremism and he has failed to respond. NZ First has not mentioned Palestinian terror or the incitement to terror from Palestinian leaders. Nor have they made any comment about a possible solution to the conflict or NZ-Israel relations.

**Green** The Green party has not made any comments on any of the issues canvassed in this guide. However, there is a history, beyond the last election, of antagonism toward Israel. For example, in 2016 Marama Davidson joined the 'Freedom Flotilla' publicity stunt to 'end the blockade' of Gaza - essentially in aid of Hamas. More recently, Golriz Ghahraman falsely suggested Israel was committing 'genocide' and 'apartheid' and falsely said Jesus' mother was a Palestinian.

**New Conservative** The New Conservative Party has a clear policy position on Israel. They have committed to NZ withdrawing funding of UNRWA, partly based on its promotion of extremism; New Conservatives have clearly stated their opposition to terror against Israel, expressed support for a negotiated solution, and clearly stated their desire for a New Zealand embassy in Jerusalem.

**Act** Act has not made any comments on any of the issues canvassed in this guide. However, Act responded to the Israel Institute of New Zealand to say while they do not comment on international affairs, they are supportive of Israel. Act leader, David Seymour has hosted the Israeli ambassador on a number of occasions and made a point of meeting him following his return after NZ co-sponsored UNSC 2334.

**One Party** One Party has clearly said they will stop the use of Kiwi tax-payer money "funding UNRWA, which is implicated in fostering antisemitism and encouraging radicalism, until there is evidence of reform." One Party has also clearly condemned terror against Israel and have pledged to designate Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and Hezbollah as terrorist entities. While they have not stated a view on a solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, One Party strongly supports closer ties, including a New Zealand embassy in Jerusalem and stronger trade ties.

## OUTSTANDING MPs

### Alfred Ngaro (National)



Alfred Ngaro restarted the New Zealand-Israel Parliamentary Friendship Group and has repeatedly committed his support for Israel.

### Simon O'Connor (National)



Simon O'Connor is a strong supporter of Israel and has advocated the NZ embassy move to Israel from Turkey. He has also recorded an interview with the Israel Institute of New Zealand, available at <https://bit.ly/3hqEfpC>

### Todd McClay (National)



Todd McClay is a strong supporter of Israel and has advocated the NZ embassy move to Israel from Turkey.

## DISAPPOINTING MPs

### Dr Duncan Webb (Labour)



is a supporter of BDS, hosted Mike Treen for lunch on his return from the 'Freedom Flotilla', and has said that "a strong Zionist lobby" controls US politics.

### Golriz Ghahraman (Green)



falsely suggested Israel was committing 'genocide' and 'apartheid' and falsely said Jesus' mother was a Palestinian.



# Embassy Helps Stranded Travellers

■ **Joanna Moss**

NZ Friends of Israel | Wellington

The consular section of an embassy is relatively hidden to locals when visas are not required for travel, but if you're an Israeli living in New Zealand, the Embassy is a godsend. Not only can you get your passport renewed, but a myriad of other services are available through the Embassy. However when a crisis hits, the services of the consular section swing into action, Covid-19 was no exception.

Their first job is to work out how many tourists are in the country. At lockdown, about 300 Israeli tourists were still in New Zealand. Advice from the Israeli government was clear, travellers should leave New Zealand and return to Israel. This had to be communicated. But given the speed of the shutdown, leaving was easier said than done. The consul team was there to inform their citizens and help where possible to get as many as they could back to Israel pronto. It is what they train for and, in a crisis, it is essential for the process to be carried out thoroughly, accurately and speedily. Enter Israeli military efficiency...The internet was helpful, but it is not the whole story. Phones started ringing and ringing and emails flowed galore.

Flights were being cancelled regularly, leaving travellers stuck. NZ seemed a safe option to hunker down as the virus raged globally, also flying and transiting posed additional risks. Israel, after all, is not next door, compared to Australia. It's at least two back-to-back 12-hour flights, passing through Asia or America, areas that had become hotspots with few flights into Israel via Asia. Furthermore, many tourists were planning extended trips here and elsewhere and were reluctant to curtail their plans, fearing they would never return to NZ. They needed expert advice and this is where a friendly, knowledgeable voice in their own language helps.

Once the border closed, there were no movements in or out. Most people left work, but not Embassy staff. Behind the scenes, much work was going on working with other embassies and the NZ government regarding repatriation to get people home. Some people really wanted to get



EL AL jet plane at the Ben Gurion International Airport in Lod near Tel Aviv, Israel. | Photo: Shutterstock

home. This was a major exercise given the fact that no Israeli airlines flew to either Australia or NZ and transit was a problem. In the initial phase, the Embassy helped over 100 tourists to leave mainly on the first El Al repatriation direct flight out of Perth.

## Once the border closed there were no movements in or out.

The Embassy then looked to other governments. Initially, the British government had made it clear, that NZ was a low priority, given the huge numbers of Brits in far-flung virus hotspots. However, the German government took a different approach, perhaps buoyed on by the sheer numbers of German tourists here. Over Easter, German planes started arriving and the German government kindly offered other embassies seats on these flights.

For Israelis, the sticking point was which countries would allow them to transit. Solving these issues was a huge part of the work undertaken by Israeli embassies globally, coordinating flights and exemptions which only they could arrange.

Overall 50 Israelis left on German repatriation flights, nine on British ones, and finally 40 on an Air NZ flight arranged to link up with a dedicated El Al flight out of Hong Kong. Thankfully another 20 were able to get on connecting commercial flights. All Israelis who wanted to leave NZ have been able to do so thanks to the Embassy's help, a Herculean effort. There will be no more repatriation flights. Embassy staff can now retire from travel agency duties, especially the consul Roy Rosenberg and get back to normal, reflecting on a job well done. Thank you Ambassador Gerberg, Patricia Deen, all other Embassy staff and of course the consul Roy Rosenberg.

# Life in Lockdown

■ **Ahalelah Nickalls**

In our June issue of *Israel & Christians Today*, we featured an article from Ruut Ben Yosef, a tour guide, living in Israel, about living through the lockdown during Covid-19. We then decided to feature an article from a younger person's perspective. Ruut suggested Ahalelah, a young lady from her church.

I have been in quarantine for a few days because of being in close contact with a Coronavirus patient. I barely notice how things have changed since I've been locked away from my daily routine. Here in Israel we are currently in the 'second wave' of the Coronavirus. The number of new cases has been over 1,000 these past few days. We do not know how things will progress; perhaps we will have second lockdown. Gatherings of over 50 people are forbidden and there are many new rules and regulations we must follow if we want to meet our loved ones. Wearing a mask is a must and going outside without one results in a guaranteed fine.

Adjusting to this new reality is strange. What will life be like when this is all ends? What will be our new normal? I'm learning a lot about myself from this unexpected time alone.

I've realised how my daily schedule is a distraction from a lot of the uncomfortable thoughts and feelings I have been avoiding. Without the usual distractions I realise how truly lonely I am, how dependent I am on my friends, my church, and support of my leaders.

I am so thankful that they have been so supportive in every way they can, especially when we have our zoom meeting every week as a church. Yet I always feel that something is still missing. I try to be intimate with God in this time, but without my spiritual support from church, I realise it is more challenging. I realise how much the congregation is strengthening me and keeping me in line with God and his word. I fully understand the reason people used to tell me how important it is to be part of a community. I will never take it for granted again. I miss meeting new people. I miss tourists! The streets of Jerusalem that are usually filled with people and languages from all over the world are now empty of them. I hope that when the pandemic is over Jerusalem will go back to being the culturally diverse and lively city I've missed so dearly.



Ahalelah during lockdown in Israel



## Do You Know A Young Adult Who Loves Israel?

We have a limited number of *Isreality* magazines to give away for FREE. If you know a young adult who would enjoy receiving a magazine, please complete the coupon below.

*Isreality* is an international community of young Christians exploring questions such as, "Who are the Jewish people?", "What is the significance of the Biblelands?", "What does this mean for our personal walk with Jesus?"

### YES! Please send FREE magazine to:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_



## Finding Meaning in the Feasts

### Joanna Moss

NZ Friends of Israel | Wellington

It's easy to forget that the Bible was written for all of human history into eternity. We tend to focus on the present and take it for granted that we can read the Bible whenever we like, forgetting that for much of history most people were illiterate. But God knew that reality and he had a special plan. After all, faith comes by hearing remember, not reading, and there is value in the visual and repetition. The biblical plan included special elements like covenants and feasts which serve as reminders of key things. Can you name all eight covenants? Can you explain them? The feasts represent a special way of communicating truth. They are visual and to be celebrated annually. I often think God knew what he was doing by choosing the Jews because he knew they would be faithful in keeping the feasts. Personally, I'm not so sure Christians would have done so.

**What's SO key to understand about the feasts is to ask ourselves what are they communicating to us about God, us and His plan for mankind.** We don't just celebrate the feasts and get all hung up on the ceremony. That's missing the wood for the trees. There are real gems in these feasts and the more we get acquainted with them, the more we see the genius in them.

So let's begin by looking briefly at the feasts. They form a 3-1-3 formation and amazingly, that totals seven, so you know it's complete. Each feast has unique elements and the way they relate to each other is important too as we shall see. They have meaning for Jews and meaning for Christians too emphasizing for me the symbiotic relationship between our two faiths. We need each other and combined we have a more complete picture. The first three feasts are Passover, Unleavened Bread and First Fruits. As we have read these three feasts point to the Exodus departure from Egypt, manna from heaven and first fruits of the harvest. Note three distinct areas are involved which represent the movement out of Egypt and slavery and into the Promised land. The cross is hidden in the way the blood is applied to the doorposts. Christians understand that Christ is our Passover Lamb and the first fruits of the resurrection. The dates the events are commemorated matter, as they depict the exact days when Jesus fulfilled the feasts. This is true for Pentecost too, coming 50 days after First Fruits.



Jewish men blow shofar on the Jewish High Holidays of Trumpets and Yom Kippur. | Photo: Shutterstock

Now as we look to The Fall Feasts: Trumpets, Day of Atonement and Tabernacles let's ask the same questions: what is God wanting to communicate to us through them? First, note that there is a big gap between Pentecost and Trumpets – the summer. The season when the light is the strongest suggesting the Church Age because Jesus is the light of the world. As we turn towards autumn and the final harvest, the light dims like the age, pointing to its prophetic significance.

### The feasts represent a special way of communicating truth.

Trumpets is a mysterious feast. It is only a two-sentence affair in the Bible suggesting we could easily miss it if we're not paying attention. What is God hiding? Interestingly, Jews acknowledge its importance. The Israelites were commanded not to work and to blow trumpets. So it is all about sound and trumpets. Why trumpets? What do trumpets herald? What were the

mysteries in the Bible and when were they revealed and why? Then think prophetically. Clue: Think Rapture.

Next comes the Ten Days of Awe designed for repentance and the solemnity of the Day of Atonement. In God's thoughtfulness and provision, we are invited to spend one day a year and focus exclusively on our sins over the past year as a minimum. How very insightful of God. It reminds us of judgement and that God decides our destiny. Note that this is where Jews and Christians divide. If we delve into the way sin was dealt with that day in Temple times, we get a fuller picture of the Messiah as well as what the feast points to prophetically. Look at which people it relates to specifically, does a scripture or an event come to mind?

Finally turn to Tabernacles, the feast of booths. It is joyous, lengthy and it reminds us that we are merely sojourners on the earth like the Israelites in their tents. Therefore we should not get hung up on earthly things. Worshipping God his way is important. Look up. One day the scroll will be rolled up.

## Stunning Floral Display in Dead Sea

### Times of Israel

The Dead Sea has reportedly bloomed a colourful floral landscape for the first time prompting many to say it is fulfilling a prophecy from the Book of Ezekiel. The Dead Sea is full of salt and the land is one of the harshest on earth, yet it burst into beautiful fields of flowers! This is what God can do in our lives. He can bring rain on our dry ground and cause our desert places to blossom.

For those who have visited the lowest point on the face of the earth, Ezekiel's end-of-days prophecy of the Dead Sea coming to life seems impossible, yet recently, scientists

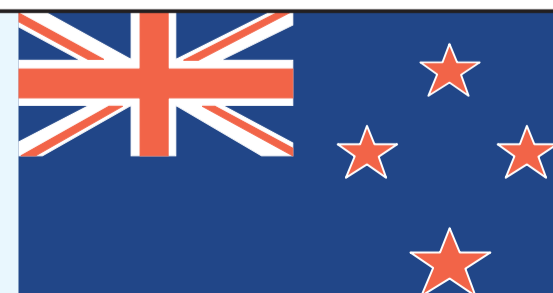
have been shocked to discover that sinkholes appearing around the sea are quickly filling up with fish and other forms of life previously unseen in the inhospitable region.

And now, another rare life form has been witnessed across the northern shoreline of the Dead Sea – colourful floral landscapes. Thanks to Israel's record rains, the breathtaking flower trails have sprouted from the cliffs to the shoreline of the Northern Dead Sea area. The 7km stretch from Kibbutz Kalya to Ovnat is alive with newly formed fields of annual species whose seeds can lay dormant in the desert for years until there is enough water for them to sprout.



**ISRAEL  
FOCUS GROUP**

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# Speaking with Holocaust Centre of NZ

*In this article, Christians for Israel New Zealand conducted an interview with Chris Harris, Chief Executive Officer of Holocaust Centre of New Zealand (HCNZ).*

**HCNZ inspires and empowers action against antisemitism, discrimination and apathy by remembering, educating and bearing witness to the Holocaust.**

**New Zealand is a long way from where the tragedy of the Shoah took place. Why is it important for NZ to have a facility like the Holocaust Centre of NZ (NCNZ)?**

While NZ is a long way from where the Shoah took place, the world got smaller as a result of World War Two, the events leading up to it and the liberation of Europe afterwards. NZ had representation at the Evian Conference on Refugees and whilst expressing empathy with the victim's plight, took the same line as most countries and did not take in as many refugees as we perhaps could at the time.

Many Jews did manage to come to New Zealand after the war - they wanted to come to a place that was as far away as possible, to start a new life. They contributed greatly to NZ's diverse tapestry in areas such as business and the arts.

HCNZ was established by survivors and their descendants. It's important to have this centre in NZ so kiwis get a better understanding of what happened and how we can all stand up against racist and discriminatory ideologies.

HCNZ is NZ's national organisation for Holocaust remembrance and education, and our mission is to inspire and empower action against antisemitism, discrimination and apathy by remembering, educating and bearing witness to the Holocaust.

So to have an organisation like this and to realise that survivors that came here made such important contributions to NZ society is very important.

**The Shoah directly impacted the lives of many Jewish people who subsequently came to live in New Zealand. As so many survivors have now passed away, what impact do you think the holocaust has had (and continues to have) on the current generations?**

The Holocaust, and hearing testimony from survivors, have a strong impact on current generations and will continue to have an impact on future generations. Although we have lost many survivors and will continue to do so we, the current and future generations are the messengers of the messengers, and must continue to pledge 'never again'.

The Holocaust is unique in history. It cannot be compared to other acts of genocide, as they also should not be compared to each other. Future generations need to learn that if Germany a nation that democratically elected a leader and was the most cultured in all of Europe at the time, could be responsible for such genocide, then it can happen anywhere and anytime, so long as people stand by.

**When did the HCNZ open? Who founded it? Who funded it? How did it 'happen'?**

The Holocaust Centre of New Zealand was established in 2007 to remember and honour those killed in the Holocaust - in particular, the families of survivors in New Zealand. Founded by a small group of Holocaust survivors, children of survivors and refugees, the purpose was inspired by Hanka and George Pressburg, the pioneers of Holocaust education in New Zealand. That inspiration was made a reality by a dedicated committee, coordinated by Steven Sedley MNZM, a Wellington-based Holocaust Survivor from the Budapest Ghetto. Hanka and George originally created a small display of Holocaust artefacts and talked to groups of students and visitors about Hanka's personal experiences surviving Theresienstadt, Auschwitz and forced labour in Hamburg. The centre was officially opened by the Governor-General of New Zealand (Hon. Sir Anand

Satyanand) on 15 April 2007. In his speech, the Governor-General noted: "The centre will enhance the New Zealand understanding of the Holocaust." Indeed, the focus of the centre has always been the Holocaust and its connection to New Zealand, especially the survivors who have contributed richly to New Zealand's cultural and business landscape. What started from small beginnings is now an occasion that attracts eminent politicians, diplomats, church and civic dignitaries and large numbers of the general public, with support from the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO, local councils, Jewish organisations and congregations, and the New Zealand Human Rights Commission. Over the years, the Holocaust Centre has become an integral feature of the nation's capital and wider New Zealand museum, tourist and cultural landscape. Its activities and public profile are ever-increasing. In the next phase of the centre's growth, investment in digital and social media education and engagement will be a focus. What started as a project of a small number of volunteers, Holocaust survivors and their children, more than a decade ago, has evolved into a successful, vibrant organisation.

**HCNZ is involved in other projects outside of just the centre itself, what do these contribute to NZ?**

- To enable New Zealand educators to gain a deeper understanding of the Holocaust and to enhance their skills in teaching the subject, the centre established a programme in 2013, in conjunction with Yad Vashem, the renowned Holocaust museum and research centre based in Jerusalem. Every two years, the centre sends approximately 25 New Zealand teachers to Yad Vashem, to attend an intensive course in Holocaust studies.

- #JUSTONEWEEK *Just One Week* is a new secondary school course developed by the Holocaust Centre of New Zealand that tells the history of the Holocaust through the lives of three survivors who eventually made their way to New Zealand after the end of World War 2. The goal of *Just One Week* is to educate students about the impacts discrimination and antisemitism had on Jewish lives by learning the real-life experiences of Jewish survivors who went on to make New Zealand their home.

- The Children's Holocaust Memorial, a memorial and education exhibition tours New Zealand where it gives a unique perspective to the enormity of the scale of the murder of 1.5 million children through buttons. It has a further educational unit which talks about being an upstander rather than a bystander.

- Anne Frank Exhibition: This tours New Zealand telling the story of Anne and the events of World War Two. Guides allow students to take their own classmates through the exhibition and also engage them in discussions about discrimination and prejudice.

- Online lessons and webinars that teachers/educators and members of the public can sign up and participate in.

**Commemoration is also an important role for the Centre;**

- United Nations International Holocaust Remembrance Day events are held on 27 January in Wellington, Christchurch, and Auckland.

- Concerts are held annually in remembrance of Kristallnacht, 9-10 November 1938, otherwise known as the Night of Broken Glass, and also as the November Pogrom.

- Yom HaShoah is remembered every year in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch.

**New Zealand has a long history/relationship with its Jewish citizens and continues to be a country of extremely diverse immigrant cultures. How does the message of the HCNZ apply to others coming to NZ to live?**

It applies to others coming to New Zealand that we are a place that values diversity, inclusion and that together we can all make New Zealand a place that builds on the richness of the cultures and together we can become better global citizens.

**How has Covid-19 impacted the Holocaust Centre of NZ?**

Majorly. Due to the lack of school groups and members of the public visiting, this has had a huge impact on revenue, as we are not government funded and we are slowly trying to return to some normality.

**If people are visiting Wellington, can they come and see the centre?**

Yes, we are located at 80 Webb Street, Te Aro, Wellington. We are open Sunday to Friday 10am-1pm, we can see you outside of that time by appointment, and also have extended hours on the last Sunday of each month open 10am-4pm.

**What are they likely to see/experience?**

View the histories of Holocaust survivors that made New Zealand their home, hear, watch and read testimonies, view primary sources and to have the possible chance to speak with Holocaust survivor or descendant.

**How can people support the work of the HCNZ?**

People can support the centre by becoming members at an annual rate of \$50 per person per year, and by making donations - all funding goes towards the education programmes and operational costs of running the centre.



## Holocaust Memorials at Yad Vashem

*In this new regular column, we look at Holocaust memorials at Yad Vashem. Each issue, we will feature a different memorial and tell the story and message behind each one. We thank Mikaela Hood from Villa Maria College in researching and writing each article.*

### Memorial to the Deportees



The Memorial to the Deportees clings to the hillside of Mt Remembrance, where the iron railway tracks verge on the brink of an abyss. The cattle car dangles on the edge of the twisted tracks, symbolising the journey of the Jews towards annihilation and oblivion. Millions of Holocaust victims experienced traumatic transportation in cattle cars. Once herded from locations across Europe, Jews were cramped into these and deported to the extermination camps. Today these historic cattle cars are usually found as artefacts housed in Holocaust museums. However, in this memorial, the cattle car donated by Polish authorities is unsheltered, exposed to the beating sun and left out to bear the harsh winters, isolated and abandoned, just as the victims it transported were. This powerful image of the cattle car at the end-of-the-line also conveys messages of eternal hope and renewal of life after the Holocaust as it looks out over the hills of Jerusalem.

To support and for further information:

[www.holocaustcentre.org.nz](http://www.holocaustcentre.org.nz)

Chris Harris 027 292 8163  
ceo@holocaustcentre.org.nz

School or adult group visits, contact Lizzy:

leadeduc@holocaustcentre.org.nz

General enquiries, contact Sarah:

operations@holocaustcentre.org.nz



## Jewish Services Receives Queens Award

### ■ Dr Brian Hooper

The Menorah Group

Among the recent Queens Birthday Awards was a David Zwartz whom I know personally. This is what he was awarded for and I quote:

**“ZWARTZ, Mr David John.** For services to the Jewish and interfaith communities.

Mr David Zwartz was President of the New Zealand Jewish Council from 1998 to 2005 and is Chair of the Wellington Jewish Council.

Mr Zwartz has been a spokesperson and advocate for the Jewish community at many levels since the 1980s. As national President, he was a key leader in the response to the desecration of Jewish cemeteries in Wellington in 2004 and 2007 and has been active in the fight against antisemitism. He liaised with the Holocaust Centre of New Zealand to institute the annual United Nations International Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremonies around the country and continues to facilitate this event in Wellington. He has volunteered with the Holocaust Centre since its establishment in 2007, contributing to Holocaust education directly as a writer and presenter, and assisting with the 2019 publication of Anne Frank’s Diary translated into Te Reo Maori. He has been editor and on the editorial board of the former ‘New Zealand Jewish Chronicle’, and a presenter of Jewish programmes on community radio since 1982. He was one of the groups of Wellington faith leaders who founded the Wellington Interfaith Council in the late 1980s and

established the National Interfaith Forums in 2003. Mr Zwartz continues to work as a Jewish representative in the interfaith movement.”

### Brian Hooper’s Comments on David Zwartz

I have known David Zwartz since May 2011. My contact with David came about in a very strange way. A nasty letter to the editor had appeared in the *Dominion Post* newspaper. It was anti-Israel and anti the Jewish people. I drafted a letter in reply and sent it off. I eagerly looked for a letter in the next day’s *Dominion Post*.

**I felt that he was just the person to speak to a group of people who were supportive of Israel and its people.**

Next day there was a letter in the *Dominion Post* from a man called David Zwartz. It was utterly superb. It addressed all the issues involved in the first letter. I hurriedly looked up the phone directory, found a David Zwartz and phoned him. I thanked him for his *Dominion Post* letter and asked him who he was. He said he was a Jew, had been Chairman of the all-New Zealand Jewish Council, and had acted as Israel’s ambassador during a temporary vacancy. I responded by inviting him to meet a group of Christians that I would rustle up. “You are not trying to convert me are you?” David responded. That wasn’t in my mind. I felt that he was just the person to speak to a group of people who were supportive of Israel

and its people. He accepted the invitation.

On the appointed day, in May nine years ago, David and his (late) wife Helen were guests. The only ‘rules’ I suggested were that David speak, say, for half-to three quarters of an hour allowing time for questions. I sensed that David and Helen were impressed by the support and love we had for ‘God’s Chosen People’, expressed particularly during question time.

My impression of David is that of a humble man. I give an example. He was invited to speak at an Anglican men’s group. It was stacked with retired Anglican priests. I had been invited by a parishioner to attend. I was glad that David was the invited speaker. He had a prepared script. After the meeting, he said to me, “How did I go?” He was asking me to give an opinion on how he went. I endorsed what he had said. But I was left thinking: What a superb measure of humility this man has that he would ask me to give an opinion on his message to the Anglicans.



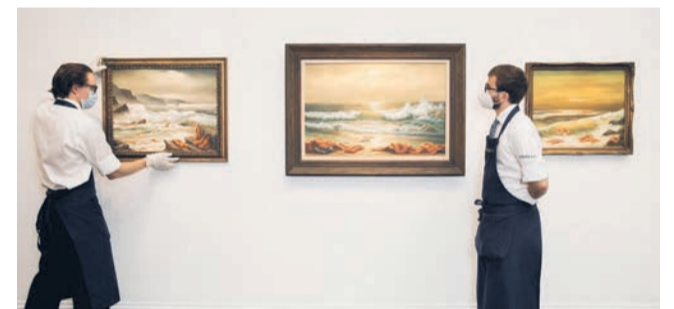
David Zwartz

## Banksy Paintings Auctioned for Bethlehem Hospital

A trio of Banksy paintings sold for more than \$4.3 million at an auction in London on 28 July. Proceeds from the sale will go towards building a new acute stroke unit and children’s rehabilitation equipment for Bethlehem Arab Society for Rehabilitation hospital in Bethlehem.

The work, entitled *Mediterranean Sea View 2017* went under the hammer at Sotheby’s after it was personally donated by the elusive British artist. The work originally hung at the Walled Off Hotel in Bethlehem, a hotel established by the artist located metres away from the West Bank barrier.

While at first glance the work seems to depict a classic landscape, the trio of paintings actually contain a powerful, politically charged message. Closer inspection reveals stormy cliffs and crashing seas littered with bright orange life jackets and buoys, washed ashore with no survivors in sight. They are perceived as a reaction to Europe’s migrant crisis, in which hundreds of thousands of people fleeing war and conflict have tried to reach the continent on dangerous journeys across the Mediterranean and Aegean seas over the past decade.



Banksy’s trio of paintings. | Photo: Getty Images

### Book Review

By Matthew Thorn

## Zionism: the Concise History

by Alex Ryvchin

To the newbie, it may come as some surprise to learn that Israel’s formation was initially championed by Eastern Communists and the Western Hard Left. The first state to offer legal recognition to the State of Israel was the USSR; the British Labour Party in 1944 so extremely supported Jewish aspirations that Ben-Gurion was compelled to temper them, imploring consideration of local Arabs; and the US Communist Party called Israel “an organic part of the world struggle for peace and democracy”. Amazing! How different Ilhan Omar of the US Democratic Party, Corban in Britain, or sentimental Soviet sympathisers on university campuses sound today.

Thrilling, precise and digestible, Alex Ryvchin’s *Zionism: The Concise History* connects the dots from far-flung cities and historical events of the Diaspora to succeed in sharing a coherent narrative of Jewish ambitions for establishing a national homeland in Palestine. It’s easy-to-read and a good tool for the Christian who will soon visit Israel or who has recently returned and is seeking to ‘put it all together’.

Ryvchin does well to begin by defining Zionism, which he summarises as ‘a precise political concept derived from a belief in or support for the right of the Jewish

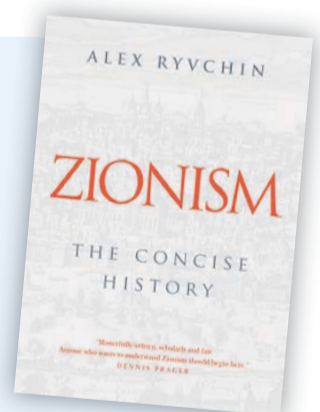
people to exercise national self-determination in some part of their ancient homeland.’ His summary of ancient Israel’s history is brief: Greeks and Romans lording over a people inexorably connected with their Promised Land. The temple destroyed. The people dispersed. Ryvchin picks up the modern origins of Zionism by zooming-in on and giving voice to the Jews of Europe—who after so earnestly assimilating were rocked by the late 19th Century Pogroms—in his note on Leon Pinsker. Pinsker, a Russian trained lawyer and practising physician became disillusioned with Liberalism’s promise of integration and tolerance, beginning to write of the Jews’ lack of ‘geographic cohesion’, meaning that, ‘since the Jews are nowhere at home, nowhere regarded as a native, they remain aliens everywhere...’

The diplomatic quests of Herzl and Weizmann quicken the pace as strong wills who embodied their people’s spirit and acted truly in times of opportunity. Sensitive, Ryvchin is wary to avoid dubious overestimations of Jewish influence on international affairs and tackles the improbability of Israel’s self-assertion from several fascinating and varied angles. In this vein, he demonstrates a fairly good grasp of Christian Zionism when describing pockets of support

within the elite as from ‘those British statesmen of the old school... (who) understood as a reality the concept of return. It appealed to their tradition and their faith...’ Similarly, Ryvchin shows how the idea of the ancient people of the book again taking their place among the world’s nations fit snugly into President Woodrow Wilson’s contemporary American meta-political visions in such a way as to facilitate the birth of the modern Jewish state. Ryvchin does not describe such developments as the hand of God, but does quote Ben-Gurion, who said that “in order to be a realist, one must believe in miracles.”

Shying not away from the internal twists and turns since 1948, Ryvchin introduces the complexity of spiritual, religious, ethnic, ideological and political ideals together becoming material reality. Once you’ve read it, you’ll agree, any Zionist would be most grateful to receive this valuable introduction or refresher: it is a must-have in preparation for the campus, kitchen table or boardroom!

Connor Court Publishing Pty Ltd (September 30, 2019)  
ISBN 978-1925826586





# No Peace Until Jewish Presence Accepted

## ■ Dr Sheree Trotter

Israel Institute of New Zealand

In 2018 I visited Ramallah with two colleagues. In an unanticipated conversation on a street very near Yasser Arafat's tomb, a friendly and engaging Palestinian lawyer explained to us that their leaders were like gangs, they were corrupt and 'monopolise the money'. He complained that they do not care about human rights but are only interested in blaming Israel. In this Palestinian's view, Israel was not the problem – but rather the corrupt and self-serving Palestinian leadership.

It is not uncommon to view the Israel-Palestinian conflict as a power battle, with Israel as the dominant power and the Palestinians as the victims. However, this type of analysis ignores realities on the ground and twists historical facts to suit a political agenda.

A more useful exercise, which might bring real change for Palestinians, would be to consider the power relations within Palestinian society. Why have there been no elections in the Palestinian Territories since 2006? Why does Gaza's Hamas devote untold resources to terrorism rather than building a state? Where do the millions of dollars of international aid go?

In a recent article (June 26) Donna Miles-Mojab claimed that the "clear vision behind the creation of Israel has always been to displace and replace the existing society". This is simply untrue. There was no universally held view as to what a reconstituted Jewish homeland might look like. Most expected to live in peace with the Arab inhabitants of the land. Zionist humanitarian organisations pioneered health initiatives to foster the wellbeing of the inhabitants of Palestine. Indeed New Zealand's women Zionists in the 1920s established Plunket-styled infant welfare centres in Palestine for both Jews and Arabs.

Jewish immigration was not always viewed negatively. The historian Colin Shindler noted:

"In the inter-war years, the industrialisation of Palestine and increased Jewish immigration under the British Mandate produced prosperity for both peoples. The Arab population in Palestine grew twice as swiftly as those of Syria and Lebanon. Tens of thousands of Arabs entered Palestine from surrounding countries, increasing the Arab population by over 8%."

Miles-Mojab seemed surprised by the deep impact of the Holocaust on Israeli consciousness. The systematic murder of six million of one's people, with the complicity of whole societies across Europe, while other nations closed their borders to Jews seeking refuge, should, and does, contribute to Israel's awareness of security needs. Especially when the same Arab nations that have continued to threaten Israel were allied with the Nazis. Irrespective, with regard to Israel's concern for security, there are pressing and very real present considerations.

When Ariel Sharon ordered the evacuation of 8000 Jewish residents in Gaza in 2005, the enclave was turned into a terrorist base by Hamas.

In March 2019, a review found that Palestinians had, in the 365 days prior, launched 1233 rockets from Gaza, hurled 94 explosive devices and 600 Molotov cocktails over the security fence. Arab Palestinian terrorists targeted Israeli civilians and committed 152 acts of arson against Israeli forces, as well as launching incendiary kites that set fire to thousands of acres of farmland. The terrorist attacks from Gaza continue to this day. In addition, Israel faces ongoing threats and acts of violence



Israeli PM Netanyahu, at a Cabinet meeting on 21 June, has announced plans to annex parts of the West Bank.

from Iran, Iranian proxies like Hezbollah and various terrorist groups in the West Bank.

Miles-Mojab's claim of a 'one-state reality imposed on Palestinians' ignores the fact that in Israel, Jews and Arabs enjoy equal rights. In contrast, Jews are forbidden to enter the Palestinian Territories or buy land controlled by the Palestinian Authority or Hamas. Furthermore, the Palestinians have been offered a state on several occasions (1947, 2000, 2001, 2008) but refuse to compromise their maximalist demands.

Given these realities, the push for "complete equality in personal, religious, civil, political and national rights for both Israelis and Palestinians", sounds very much like the One-State Solution advocated by many anti-Israel advocates. This, combined with the Palestinian insistence on a 'right of return', would mean an end to the world's only Jewish state, at best, or genocide, at worst.

Until there's a shift in mindset among Palestinian leaders, one that accepts Jewish presence in the region, there will be no peace.

*Dr Sheree Trotter recently completed a PhD on Zionism in New Zealand at the University of Auckland.*

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# The Fervent Fellowship with God

## An Overview of the Tabernacle - Part 4

### ■ Alison Marshall

Tour Guide | Timna Park | Israel

Every morning and evening, the High Priest would enter through the second veil which was the entrance to the Holy Place. Each time he had to bring fresh hot coals from the sacrificial altar along with a special mix of incense for the golden altar, and he had to refill the crushed, pure oil in the seven lamps of the Menorah and trim the wicks so it would keep burning. *Ex.30:6-8; Lev.24:1-4.*

The priests, on behalf of the children of Israel, had to daily offer a lamb morning and evening, with a meal-offering and a drink offering. *Exodus 29:38-42.*

When the priests cleaned out the hot coals and added more wood to keep the fire burning and perform the mandatory morning and evening sacrifices, some of these coals would have been taken to the incense altar.

On Shabbat there were extra duties; two more lambs to be sacrificed, and fresh unleavened bread to be brought to the table and the old bread eaten by the priests.

*“Then on the Sabbath day two male lambs one-year-old without blemish, and two-tenths [of an ephah] of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, and its drink offering. This is the burnt offering of every Sabbath, in addition to the continual burnt offering and its drink offering.” Numbers 28:9-10.*

*“Then you shall take fine flour and bake twelve cakes (bread of the Presence, showbread) with it; two-tenths of an ephah shall be in each cake (loaf). You shall set the bread of the Presence (showbread) in two rows, six in a row, on the pure gold table before the Lord. You shall put pure frankincense [in two censers, one] beside each row, so that it may be with the bread as a memorial portion, an offering by fire to the Lord. Every Sabbath day Aaron shall arrange the showbread before the Lord continually; it is an everlasting covenant for the Israelites. The bread of the Presence shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a sacred place, for it is for Aaron a most holy portion of the offerings by fire to the Lord, his portion forever.” Lev.24:5-9.*

The table with the Bread of Presence continually before the Lord represents our covenant meal with the Lord. Yeshua is the Bread of Life.

Jesus replied to them, *“I am the Bread of Life. The one who comes to Me will never be hungry, and the one who believes in Me [as Saviour] will never be thirsty [for that one will be sustained spiritually]. John 6:35. “I am the Living Bread that came down out of heaven. If anyone eats of this Bread [believes in Me, accepts Me as Saviour], he will live forever. And the Bread that I will give for the life of the world is My flesh (body).” John 6:51. See also John 6:33 and 48.*

The Menorah, or Lampstand, represents Yeshua as being the light of the world, and also represents the Holy Spirit.

Once more Jesus addressed the crowd. He said, *“I am the Light of the world. He who follows Me will not walk in the*



Model of inside the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, past the second veil - the entrance to the Holy Place

*darkness but will have the Light of life.” John 8:12. “I have come as Light into the world so that everyone who believes and trusts in Me [as Saviour—all those who anchor their hope in Me and rely on the truth of My message] will not continue to live in darkness.” John 12:46.*

The representation of the Holy Spirit is in the seven branches of the menorah and the oil.

*“Then a Shoot (the Messiah) will spring from the stock of Jesse [David’s father],*

*And a Branch from his roots will bear fruit.*

*And the Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him—*

*The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,*

*The Spirit of counsel and strength,*

*The Spirit of knowledge and the [reverential and obedient] fear of the Lord—” Is.11:1-2.*

*“These are the words of Him who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars:” Rev.3:1.*

*“But my horn [my emblem of strength and power] You have exalted like that of a wild ox; I am anointed with fresh oil [for Your service].” Ps.92:10.*

*“How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with great power; and He went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil because God was with Him.” Acts 10:38.*

Now, in Yeshua, we have the Holy Spirit residing in us to remind and teach us. *“But the Helper (Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor—Counselor, Strengthener, Standby), the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name [in My place,*

*to represent Me and act on My behalf], He will teach you all things. And He will help you remember everything that I have told you.” John 14:26.*

The Altar of incense represents Yeshua interceding for us. *“But, on the other hand, Jesus holds His priesthood permanently and without change, because He lives on forever. Therefore, He is able also to save forever (completely, perfectly, for eternity) those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to intercede and intervene on their behalf [with God].” Heb.7:24-25.*

It also represents our prayer, praise, and worship. In many of the Psalms, this is the theme.

*“Through Him, therefore, let us at all times offer up to God a sacrifice of praise, which is the fruit of lips that thankfully acknowledge and confess and glorify His name.” Heb.13:15.*

We have fellowship with God through our Lord Yeshua HaMashiach. *“Even so, consider yourselves to be dead to sin [and your relationship to it broken], but alive to God [in unbroken fellowship with Him] in Christ Jesus.” Rom.6:11. “But if we [really] walk in the Light [that is, live each and every day in conformity with the precepts of God], as He Himself is in the Light, we have [true, unbroken] fellowship with one another [He with us, and we with Him], and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin [by erasing the stain of sin, keeping us cleansed from sin in all its forms and manifestations].” 1 John 1:7.*

*Alison Marshall is a New Zealand born believer in Jesus and has been a Tour Guide for the Tabernacle in the Wilderness since 1999 at Timna Park in Israel. www.berean-to-berean.com*

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### Why is it So Difficult for Jews to Believe in Jesus?

By Rev Cornelis Kant

The number of Jews who believe in Jesus as their Messiah (also known as Messianic Jews) is growing, but remains small. The overwhelming majority of Jews worldwide do not see Jesus as the expected Messiah. This raises questions among Christians, and sometimes insensitivity and misunderstanding as well. This begs the question, why does it seem so difficult for them to accept Jesus? And why is Jesus such a sensitive topic in conversations with Jews? Why does the conversation about Jesus often cause irritation on the Jewish side? There are multiple possible answers to all of these questions. This booklet is a humble attempt to give a few answers.



### San Remo 100 - Pathway for Peace

While Covid-19 appears to have radically changed our world as we know it, this is still very minor in comparison with the world following World War One. Following the end of the Ottoman Empire a huge section of the Middle East hung in limbo. Hundreds of years of Empire and the scars of war left a vacuum of order and structure. Discussions, meetings and then conferences were held as the battle-weary but victorious Allies attempted to work out a plan for the area. A group representing Allies of WW1- in particular Britain, France, Italy and Japan, met in San Remo, Italy, to determine the future of three key areas. *Pathway for Peace* is a commemorative magazine being produced to mark the centenary of San Remo. This glossy publication features a collection of articles and reflections by a range of writers – historical, legal and religious.



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August 2020

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## Black Lives Matter's Anti-Semitic Agenda

■ **Andrew Tucker**

International Editor | Christians for Israel International

The rapid global rise of the radical *Black Lives Matter* ('BLM') movement has caught the world off-guard. But actually, it comes as no surprise at all. It is the fruit of a potent mix of radical Islam and progressive secular values that has taken root in Western society over the past decades. It is also radically anti-Semitic. Tragically, many Jews and Christians are being deceived.

BLM was formed in 2014 as a merger of activists from the anti-Semitic Nation of Islam, the anti-Semitic Black Panthers and Dream Catchers. In 2016, BLM published a platform that has since been removed from its website. The platform accused Israel of committing 'genocide' and referred to the Jewish state as an 'apartheid' state. The platform accused Israel and its supporters of pushing the US into wars in the Middle East. The platform also officially joined BLM with the anti-Semitic BDS campaign to boycott, divest and sanction Israel. BDS campaign leader Omar Barghouti has acknowledged that the goal of the BDS campaign is to destroy Israel.

According to Jewish writer Caroline Glick, "[f]or American Jews, the violent riots constitute a challenge on several levels. First, there is the challenge of squaring their political identity with their Jewish identity. As the 2014 Pew survey of American Jews showed, around half of American Jews identify as progressives. As progressives, many American Jews share the views of their non-Jewish progressive counterparts regarding the need to prioritise the interests of minority communities over their own interests. ...But the Jews' progressive desire to work on behalf of those demonstrating for African Americans places their political identity on a collision course with their Jewish identity. Black Lives Matter, the radical group leading the demonstrations, is an anti-Semitic organisation."

"BLM's platform's publication [in 2016 - ed.] was greeted with wall-to-wall condemnations by Jewish organisations from across the political spectrum. But today, Jewish progressive are hard-pressed to turn their backs on the group, despite its anti-Semitism. As white progressives, they believe they must fight America's 'structural racism' even at the cost of empowering social forces that reject their civil rights as Jews. As Jews, they feel that their rights should be protected. One progressive Jew tried to square the circle writing in the Los Angeles Jewish Journal, 'Today Jews need to support *Black Lives Matter*; tomorrow we can talk about Israel.'"

Glick continues: "As white progressives radicalised over the past decade, radical Jewish progressives built a formidable Jewish organisational framework whose mission is to advance the progressive revolution. They have worked to recast Judaism itself as the apotheosis of progressive revolutionary ideals under the banner of 'tikkun olam' ['repairing the world]."



Israelis hold signs during a protest against the death of George Floyd outside the US consulate in Tel Aviv on 2 June 2020. | Photo: Flash90

Glick notes that BLM has wholeheartedly adopted the Palestinian narrative: "Between BLM's establishment in 2014 and the publication of its platform in 2016, anti-Israel activists went to great lengths to create an utterly false conceptual linkage between the Palestinians and African Americans. Today, anti-Israel activists in the US have stepped up their efforts to capitalise on the riots. Anti-Israel activists in Bethlehem painted a picture of George Floyd wearing a kaffiyeh and draped in a Palestinian flag on the separation barrier. Photos of the picture are being heavily promoted on social media."

### Today, anti-Israel activists in the US have stepped up their efforts to capitalise on the riots.

Leading Evangelical Christian leader Laurie Cardoza-Moore has spoken out publicly against BLM's anti-Semitic manifesto after synagogues and churches were attacked and defaced in America.

"All true American patriots wept bitter tears at the brutal and needless death of George Floyd. Jews, Christians and people of conscience understand the inherent problems within our society that need to be addressed and healed. Racism of any kind does not belong in America and must be relegated to the annals of history. On the same token, it would be hypocritical of Christian leaders to support the *Black Lives Matter* movement while ignoring their past calls to boycott the one and only Jewish State, outrageous claims that Israel has perpetrated genocide and their total denial of the Jewish people's right to self-determination. We are reminded in *Deuteronomy 16:20*; Justice, justice, thou must pursue. These positions are

anti-Semitic to their core and cannot go unmentioned," said Cardoza-Moore.

She added, "Synagogues and Churches were vandalised and defaced with anti-Semitic, anti-Israel and anti-Christian slogans during *Black Lives Matter* riots across the country. Destroying holy books or defacing houses of worship will not move forward the cause of Black America. These are hate crimes that must be called out by the leaders of the movement if they want to retain any gravitas as anti-racists. *Black Lives Matter* cannot lead the charge against racism while advocating the destruction of the only Jewish State and staying silent when churches and synagogues come under attack during their protests."

Cardoza-Moore concluded, "Historically Jews and Christians of all backgrounds stood toe-to-toe in the American civil rights struggle. The late Reverend Martin Luther King was a Christian minister who stood alongside Rabbis in his peaceful marches for justice. Allowing the legacy of Reverend King and this movement to be hijacked by anti-Semitic, anti-Christian and anti-American forces is a great injustice in itself that needs to be rectified for the sake of our shared Judeo-Christian values and the future of these United States. There is a vacuum of spiritual leadership in this movement and it's time for Jewish and Christian leaders to unite publicly to call upon the leadership of the *Black Lives Matter* movement to fully renounce all hate from their platform and condemn hate crimes perpetrated in their name immediately so that the process of healing and restoration can begin."

The quotation of Laurie Cardoza-Moore in this article is based on a report in [www.israelnationalnews.com](http://www.israelnationalnews.com) on 12 June 2020. To read Caroline Glick's analyses of BLM, visit her website: [www.carolineglick.com](http://www.carolineglick.com).

### C4I Writes to WCC and WEA

Continued from page 7

And we think Israel and the Palestinians are best placed to determine how they should act in the context of their negotiations under the framework of the Oslo agreements.

We believe that a genuine and lasting agreement will only be possible if there is adequate recognition of the difficult position in which Israel and the Jewish people find themselves, and of the history and legal status of the territories involved. We also have to remember that the Jewish people have always constituted an important community in Palestine, that they have suffered from

anti-Semitism, persecution and expulsion throughout the Middle East and that Jews have been confronted with Arab violence in the Promised Land even long before the

### ... the one-sided criticism of Israel is unacceptable

state of Israel existed. And the aspiration to destroy the Jewish State is still as alive as it has always been in the Middle East. Arabs have rejected every peace proposal that has been presented over many decades.

We reminded the WEA that, for the reasons above, and the fact that the areas to be 'annexed' are located in the

biblical heartland of Israel, land which the Lord promised to bring back His own people in preparation of the coming of the Kingdom of the Messiah, we believe that Churches and Christians should not prejudge the issues and should be cautious before admonishing Israel.

We believe it is important that the Jewish people are not confronted with a Christian church that is condemning them, but with a church that shows solidarity and love with them. In view of the past, it is appropriate for the Church to take a modest and humble attitude towards Israel, even if opinions on certain issues differ. May the Lord protect Israel and give the Christian Churches worldwide wisdom by His Holy Spirit.

## Jewish Festivals

### Tu B'Av

Minor Jewish holiday of love  
5 August 2020

Tu B'Av (the fifteenth of the month Av) is a minor Jewish holiday. In modern-day Israel, it is celebrated as a holiday of love (*Haq HaAhava*), similar to Valentine's Day. It has been said to be a 'great day for weddings'. *Tu B'Av begins at sundown on 4 August 2020.*

### Leil Selichot

Prayers for Forgiveness

12 September 2020

Selichot or slichot are Jewish penitential poems and prayers, especially those said in the period leading up to the High Holidays, and on Fast Days. In the Ashkenazic tradition, it begins on the Saturday night before Rosh Hashanah. If, however, the first day of Rosh Hashanah falls on Monday or Tuesday, Selichot are said beginning the Saturday night prior to ensure that Selichot are recited at least four times. *Leil Selichot begins after nightfall on 12 September 2020.*

### Rosh Hashanah

The Jewish New Year

19-20 September 2020

Rosh Hashanah, ('*head of the year*'), is the Jewish New Year. It is the first of the High Holidays or Yamim Noraim ('*Days of Awe*'), celebrated ten days before Yom Kippur. Rosh Hashanah is observed on the first two days of Tishrei, the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar. It is described in the Torah as Yom Teru'ah, a day of sounding (the Shofar). *Rosh Hashanah begins at sundown on 18 September 2020.*



### Yom Kippur

Day of Atonement

28 September 2020

Yom Kippur, also known as Day of Atonement, is the holiest day of the year for the Jews. Its central themes are atonement and repentance. Jews traditionally observe this holy day with a 25-hour period of fasting and intensive prayer, often spending most of the day in synagogue services. Yom Kippur completes the annual period known in Judaism as the High Holy Days (or sometimes 'the Days of Awe'). *Yom Kippur begins at sundown on 27 September 2020.*



A boy blows a shofar near the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem. | Photo: Flash90

# Jewish New Year

## ■ Kees de Vreugd

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

Rosh Hashanah (literally meaning 'the head of the year') is celebrated on the first two days of the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar (in 2020, this is on 19 and 20 September). The first month is the month in which Pesach falls. This is the beginning of the feast calendar, while Rosh Hashanah could be compared with the beginning of the 'civil year'.

In the Bible, this day is referred to only as a 'day for blowing trumpets' (*Leviticus 23:24; Numbers 29:1*). Therefore, the central instruction for this day is 'to hear the shofar'. Sabbath years and jubilees were counted from this day. Jewish tradition connects Rosh Hashanah to the beginning of creation. It is the anniversary of the world and humanity. Adam was created on Rosh Hashanah.

Rosh Hashanah is the first day of a period of ten so-called Days of Awe, culminating

with Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. Biblically, this period is not linked to the remembrance of liberation (like Pesach or Purim) or commemoration of catastrophe (like the destruction of the Temple on the 9th of Av). Its concentration is not on events in Israel's history, but on the personal, on mortality and the meaning of life, and the Lord as Creator and Judge of mankind. The day of the trumpets is the Day of the Lord, the Day of Judgment. When God completed the work of creation, He saw that it was 'very good' (*Genesis 1:31*), thus giving creation value, purpose and meaning. Every year again, the question posed by this season is: does humanity, does the world answer to God's plan? The central theme of the Days of Awe, therefore, is trial. The individual stands before the One who knows all. On Rosh Hashanah, it is decided who shall live and who shall die. It is repeatedly said in the prayers: "Write us in the Book of Life." True soul-searching, true repentance, during those ten days will

influence the decision.

The prayers of this season hail God as King and as Father. The shofar blown on Rosh Hashana, first of all, proclaims that the Lord is King and Ruler. But it is, according to the great medieval scholar, Maimonides (12th century Spain/Egypt), also a wake-up call: "Wake up from your deep sleep, you who are fast asleep. Search your deeds and repent." Third, the shofar recalls the revelation at Sinai and calls on God's mercy.

Finally, on Yom Kippur, the Eternal Judge moves from His seat of righteousness to His seat of mercy. The final blast on the shofar, concluding the Yom Kippur service, proclaims life and mercy. The people of Israel come out of Yom Kippur reborn. As another great medieval scholar, Nachmanides (13th century Spain/Israel) said: "Rosh Hashana is a day of judgment with mercy; Yom Kippur is a day of mercy with judgment."

## Book Review

By Kees de Vreugd

## To the Jews First The Case for Jewish Evangelism in Scripture and History by Darrell L. Bock & Mitch Glaser (eds.)

This book has been on my shelf for years, probably because I tended to avoid the challenge. It makes the case for evangelism among the Jews in the 21st century, based on the apostle Paul's saying in *Romans 1:16*, referred to in the title: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." This is presented in every chapter of the book as an ongoing commitment for every Jewish and gentile believing Christian. The book fails to properly address the Jewish response to evangelisation, though.

Both the content of the book and the boldness of its tone – sometimes bordering on arrogance, raise a lot of questions. In saying this, I realise I am responding from a context of European continental history and theology, with a centuries-long heritage of 'teaching of

contempt' of the Jews, culminating in the Holocaust as a reality that is still impossible to grasp, if it will ever be – a reality that has shaken church and theology – and should continue to do so. True, the book has a chapter devoted to the Holocaust, but it uses the Holocaust to underscore the necessity of Jewish evangelism in a way which I cannot understand, and which I only can accept because it is written by a Jesus-believing Jew (*Barry R. Leventhal*).

I agree with the recurring thesis that if the gospel means good news to the gentiles, then it should also mean good news to the Jews. However, do we understand what that good news is? The writers seem to narrow this good news to individual salvation for eternity. But what about Jesus' commitment to the Torah, to bringing all Israel back to the Torah? What about the restoration of Israel and the throne of David?

True, most contributors note that traditional theology had lost sight of the future of Israel. But what about the present reality of Israel? Is that only as an object of evangelism?

In my view, Christians should positively affirm Israel's faithfulness to the Torah as a witness to God. In this, Jews and Christians could stand side by side. Secondly, Christians should affirm Jesus' loyalty to the Torah. So often, it has been falsely taught that Christ made the Torah obsolete, thus turning Him into an enemy of Israel, instead of her Saviour. This theological homework should make gentile Christians humble in telling Jews what they ought to believe.

Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids 2008  
ISBN 978-0-8254-3658-1



# A Heavenly Country?



Sunset in Gerizim, Israel. | Photo: Flash90

## ■ Kees de Vreugd

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

**“But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.”**  
*Hebrews 11:16*

At first sight, you could conclude from the letter to the Hebrews, that we should not take the land promise too literally. The letter speaks of a better, a heavenly country, and calls on its readers/hearers “to go outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we do not have a lasting city” (*Hebrews 13:13-14*). Earlier in this passage, the writer seems to confirm that their earthly city is temporary, or does it? “By faith he [Abraham] lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise” (*11:9*).

The reference to the land of promise, as found in *Genesis 17:8 and 24:3*, is unmistakable. But the question remains open: “Has the promise been fulfilled?” Abraham did live in the promised land, but as an alien, in tents. The promise was not yet completely fulfilled. That was still to happen.

In *Hebrews 11:9-10*, two realities are contrasted. We have to read those verses carefully. The ‘city which has foundations’ is opposed to the ‘tents’, and not to the land in which Abraham is sojourning. Abraham expected God to establish that city in the land of promise. Then, it would no longer be a ‘foreign land’, but finally, he and his offspring would inherit it, according to the promise. Nowhere, does the letter to the Hebrews claim that the promise to — or covenant with, Abraham, is annulled. When the letter to the Hebrews speaks of the Law as a shadow (*Hebrews 10:1*), or of a covenant that is ready to disappear (*8:13*), it is clearly about the covenant of Sinai,

and even more precisely, about the sacrificial service, and not about the covenant with Abraham.

Moreover, we have to keep the historic context of the letter in mind. Jerusalem was occupied by the Romans. The temple was destroyed or was threatened with destruction. The faithful found themselves in the land in the same way as Abraham: as strangers and sojourners in a land, that was promised to them, but still occupied by other nations and other gods. Or, they are in exile, outside the promised land of Israel and the beloved city of Jerusalem. Therefore, the writer calls on them to look forward to the realisation of the divine city and the temple, the model of which is in heaven (compare *Exodus 25:9, Hebrews 8:5*). All this will become reality on earth, when finally, Jerusalem and Israel, and the whole world, will answer to their original destination. This is the expectation the writer of the letter to the Hebrews encourages his hearers to cherish.

# Do Gentiles Have to Become Jews to be Saved? Part 3

## ■ Mandy Worby

Christians for Israel Australia

Yes, the Jews learned the hard way the consequences of not obeying God’s laws. Yes, during the first church era, many Gentiles were coming to faith but there was division among the Jewish leadership over whether these Gentiles needed to obey the law of Moses in order to be saved. This resulted in the council in Jerusalem being convened in *Acts 15*.

Paul and Barnabas and the other Apostles travelled to Jerusalem for this counsel to deal with theological dilemma. Peter and Paul addressed the council, telling how God was saving Gentiles without restriction and freely giving to them the same gift of His Spirit that they themselves had received, without requiring them to become Jews first.

*Acts 15:9*, ‘...and He (that is God) made no distinction between us (the Jews) and them (the Gentiles), cleansing their hearts by faith.’ [Words in brackets added]

The Apostles explained that if the burden of the Jews - circumcision and keeping the Law - was too hard for the Jews to carry, how could they possibly expect the Gentiles to carry it! Not only that, but God was demonstrating His acceptance of them by pouring out His Spirit on them.

The end result of the council was that Gentiles were not required to convert to Judaism, they were not required to be circumcised or eat Kosher. There were however four requirements expected of Gentiles believers and James detailed them in a letter for them. These are the essentials:

1. Don’t eat food that has been sacrificed to idols
2. Don’t eat blood
3. Don’t eat the meat of animals that have been strangled
4. Avoid fornication or sexual immorality

I might add that these four things cover a whole lot of things that are actually unpacked in other New Testament books. As far as being saved, we Gentiles don’t need to become Jewish.



The star of David with blossoms on a fruit tree in spring. | Photo: Unsplash

# The Cost of Israeli Sovereignty



Aerial view of East Jerusalem. | Photo: Flash90

## ■ Yoram Ettinger

Former Ambassador | Head of *Second Thought: A US-Israel Initiative*

The suggestion that the application of the Israeli law to the Jordan Valley and parts of Judea and Samaria would severely undermine Israeli interests, jeopardise Israel's peace treaties with Jordan and Egypt and Israel's overall ties with Arab countries, is divorced from the Israeli track record and the Middle East reality.

### Israel's Track Record

The resurgence of the Jewish State from the ashes of WW2 to global prominence, technologically, scientifically, medically, agriculturally, economically, diplomatically and militarily – despite systematic adverse global pressure and Arab wars and terrorism – has demonstrated that there are no free lunches for independent nations, especially in the Middle East.

For example, in 1948, Prime Minister Ben Gurion, Israel's Founding Father, did not wait for a green light from the White House, in order to declare independence. He was aware that a declaration of independence would trigger a costly Arab military invasion. The CIA estimated that it could amount to 'a second Holocaust.' However, Ben Gurion concluded that achieving a supreme goal was preconditioned upon the willingness to pay a supreme cost. Indeed, the war against the Arab invasion consumed 1% (6,000) of the Jewish population (600,000). Fending off the Arab invasion, Israel expanded its borders by 30%, and would not retreat to the suicidal 1947 lines, despite brutal global (including US) pressure. The pressure on Israel dissipated, but Israel's buttressed borders were preserved.

In June 1967, Prime Minister Eshkol preempted a planned Egypt-Syria-Jordan joint offensive, in defiance of a strong red light from the White House and despite prominent Israelis who preferred the venue of negotiation and mediation, and who predicted a resounding Israeli defeat on the battlefield. Eshkol was aware that Israel's existence, in the violently intolerant and unpredictable Middle East, required a firm posture of deterrence, which could entail heavy cost. In the aftermath of the war, Eshkol reunited Jerusalem and renewed Jewish population beyond the 1949/1967 indefensible Green Line, despite a very heavy US and global pressure. While the pressure on Israel has subsided, the Jewish presence in Judea, Samaria and eastern Jerusalem has surged to 700,000.

In June 1981, Prime Minister Begin ordered the destruction of Iraq's nuclear reactor, notwithstanding the menacing red light from the White House and the opposition by the Mossad, the IDF Intelligence and additional Israeli defence authorities. The naysayers were certain that an Israeli attack had a very slim chance

of success. They feared that this would trigger a global Islamic assault on Israel; it would produce a European boycott of Israel, would create an irreparable rift with the USA and would doom Israel, economically and diplomatically. Begin decided that sparing Israel a traumatic nuclear assault justified even a traumatic cost. While the pessimistic assessments crashed on the rocks of reality, the Iraqi nuclear threat was terminated.

**Just like all Arab regimes ... the pro-US regime in Amman is highly vulnerable, domestically and regionally.**

In December 1981, Begin applied Israeli law to the Golan Heights, disregarding the brutal US opposition, which included the suspension of a US-Israel strategic accord and the supply of advanced military systems. While the heavy US sanctions were replaced by an unprecedented US-Israel strategic cooperation, the Golan Heights have become an integral part of the Jewish State.

The aforementioned Israeli Prime Ministers defied international pressure and therefore were burdened with a short-term loss of global popularity. However, they earned long-term respect for their willingness to defy the odds at a severe cost. Thus, they bolstered Israel's posture of deterrence, which has played a key role in enhancing Israel's national security and Israel's regional/global standing, including its unprecedented military and commercial cooperation with all pro-US Arab countries.

### Middle East Reality (Israel-Arab Relations)

Conventional wisdom is that an Israeli application of its law to the Jordan Valley and parts of Judea and Samaria would threaten the Israel-Jordan and Israel-Egypt peace treaties and could abort the burgeoning relations between Israel and all Arab Gulf States. Such a school of thought underestimates key Arab national security priorities, which have always transcended the Palestinian issue. It ignores the significant role played by Israel's posture of deterrence in the national security strategy of Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, Oman and Kuwait.

For example, the 1994 Israel-Jordan peace treaty reflects Jordanian national security priorities, rather than a Jordanian reconciliation with the existence of an 'infidel' Jewish State in the 'abode of Islam.'

Just like all Arab regimes – and especially since the eruption of the still raging Arab Tsunami in 2010 – the pro-US regime in Amman is highly vulnerable, domestically and regionally.

Irrespective of its pro-Palestinian rhetoric, Jordan's

actions – since 1949 when it occupied Judea and Samaria while prohibiting Palestinian political activity – have represented the overall Arab view of the Palestinians as a role model of intra-Arab subversion and terrorism.

Jordan's Hashemite regime considers the proposed Palestinian state a clear and present lethal threat. At the same time, it considers Israel's posture of deterrence as its most effective line of defence against lethal threats, domestically (subversion by Palestinians, Muslim Brotherhood, ISIS and hostile southern Bedouin) and externally (Iran's Ayatollahs, Iraq and Syria).

King Abdullah II is aware of the key role played by Israel's posture of deterrence in forcing a retreat of the 1970 Syrian invasion of Jordan when the US was unable to extend military help.

Jordan considers Israel a unique source of intelligence and counter-terrorism assistance. Israel supplies water to the 1.5 million refugees from Syria, provides Jordan with commercial access to the port of Haifa and price-discounted offshore natural gas. Moreover, Israel is the most effective lobby for Jordan in Washington, DC. In addition, Israel has accorded Jordan a prominent inter-Islamic plum: the custodian of Jerusalem's Moslem and Christian holy sites.

### Is King Abdullah II expected to cut off his nose to spite his face?

Saudi Arabia and the other Arab Gulf States, as well as Egypt, regard Israel as a most reliable and effective ally in the face of mutual threats, such as Iran's Ayatollahs, the Muslim Brotherhood, ISIS, Turkey's Erdogan and potential tectonic spillovers from Iraq and Syria.

This Saudi-Israel congruence of national security interests eclipses the role played by the Palestinian issue in Riyadh's order of national priorities. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia appreciates the Israeli technological and potential scientific contribution to its effort to diversify their oil-dependent economy.

In fact, Riyadh considers the proposed Palestinian state a potential rogue regime, siding with its arch enemies. Hence, the effective Saudi opposition (contrary to its rhetoric) to the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Thus, the national security concerns of the pro-US Arab countries are advanced by a reinforced Israeli posture of deterrence. On the other hand, a hesitant, appeasing and retreating Israel, which sacrifices its independence of national security action on the altar of overseas green lights, whets the appetite of terrorists and rogue regimes, which threatens the national security of Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and all other pro-US Arab countries.

*Originally published in Breaking Israel News*

## Brothers in Arms



Above: Ruined Crusaders Montfort Castle ( 'Mountain Fortress' ) in the Upper Galilee mountains National park, in the north of Israel. Below: Small waterfall on Kziv stream. | Photos: Shutterstock

### Kay Wilson

Israeli Tour Guide | Author | Cartoonist

Due to the slaughter of Jews and Muslims perpetrated by the Crusaders in, and on their way to, 'liberate the Holy Land', the Crusaders are largely despised in Israel and throughout the Middle East. Their stay in Israel, was less than 200 years, and, according to most historians, their cultural impact - compared to others who conquered the region - was 'minimal'.

One of the most impressive yet puzzling Crusader castles is the Monfort in Upper Galilee. It is located in a nature reserve and a national park and is a popular place for Israeli hikers. The castle sits high on a ridge densely covered with trees. Below is the Brook of Kziv, a 20-kilometre seasonal river where water flows only during parts of the year. Although popular for school trips and a refreshing Sabbath activity, the place is puzzling. The Crusaders had sworn an oath to establish hospitals and protect pilgrims en route to Jerusalem. But this 13th-century castle neither overlooked hospitals, settlements or any road. And it defended absolutely nothing.

History shows that due to moral decay, every great empire has imploded from within. The internal weakening of empires made it easy for other powers to rise in their place. The Crusaders are no different. Before their kingdom fell to Egyptian converts to Islam, it first fell apart due to the different Crusader Orders bickering among themselves.

This squabbling could be the only clue as to the location of the fortress. One theory proposes that it was initially built to move the Crusader archives and treasury from the coast to this more isolated location but as a result of the later tension between the Crusaders, the Teutonic Order barricaded themselves in after learning that their 'Brothers in Arms', the Templars and the Hospitallers, wanted it for

themselves. The Teutonics incidentally, were German knights who joined the Crusader army under Emperor Friedrich Barbarossa - the name Hitler chose for his invasion of the Soviet Union in World War II.

Digging for eight consecutive years at the Monfort, Israeli archaeologists and students from London recently unearthed a magnificent ceremonial hall. It had Gothic architecture, a plastered floor, stained glass and walls over two meters thick. The hall would have been used for guests and dining. Possibly it could have also served as a chapter house where the Crusaders assembled and discussed the ins and outs of life in the castle.

In addition, the team discovered fine glassware, jewellery and Nine Man Morris, a strategy board game that people played way back in the Roman Empire, as well as luxurious apartments with glided wood and decorative walls. Other finds show that the Crusaders enjoyed types of food that Israelis would squirm at. Bones from domestic European pigs were found and the remains of turtles.

The ongoing conflict with other Crusaders made the

Teutonics show-case Montfort, an isolated island in expanding Muslim territory. Its name, which means 'strong fort' was ironically easy prey. The Egyptian Mamluk siege took a mere 15 days. Despite his brutal reputation, Baibars the leader spared the Germans. One theory is, he valued the humiliation of escorting them back to the coast and flaunting his victory over finishing them off with his sword which would be out of sight and out of mind. Baibars returned to destroy the castle on the 4th of July - no relation to American Independence Day - and it was never inhabited again. As an aside, the siege debris discovered at Montfort is the first solid evidence of the Mamluk attack that had previously only been known from medieval sources.

The archaeological finds are one more step in helping archaeologists understand the Crusaders, and what they actually did all day. But until more is unearthed, what we know for now is that those who lived there (supposedly in the spirit of a humble monastic lifestyle), appeared to do so in boredom, self-gratuity and blatant luxury which ultimately caught them off guard.



### Biblical Names

By Kees de Vreugd

## Sarah

Sarah means Princess. In the Bible, she is the wife of Abraham. First, she was called Sarai (*Genesis 12:5*). Together with Abraham, the Lord God gave her a new name. The change of the name implies a new calling, you could say. Abram was the father, or prince, of his own tribe only. But like Abraham, he is the father of a multitude of nations. Likewise, the name Sarai suggests a certain limitation — the suffix *ai* means 'my'. She is the princess only of her own people. However, the limitation is annulled by

the change into Sarah. Then she becomes princess over all nations.

The Jewish tradition which is the source of the above exposition still gives other interpretations of this name change. I would like to share a few with you. It is said, for example, that no *Yod* will be deleted from the Torah. The *Yod* (the letter *i* or *y*) is the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet. The Lord Jesus, too, teaches that not the smallest letter (*iota*) or stroke shall pass from the Law (*Matthew 5:18*). But the *yod* disappears from Sarai's name. How can this be?

Does it somewhere return? For that, we have read on in the Torah. When Moses calls Hosea Joshua (*Numbers 13:16*), the 'disappeared' *yod* is again added. There it returns.

It is also said that a change of name suggests a change of what is within someone's range. Abram could not conceive children, Abraham can. Sarai could not have children, Sarah can.

Was Sarah really the sister of Abraham? You could ask yourself what Abraham meant when he told Abimelech that she was the daughter of his father, but not of his mother

(*Genesis 20:12*). Sarah's mother is nowhere mentioned. That leaves room to the supposition that Sarah was the daughter of Abraham's brother Haran. Then she could be the same person as Iscah (*Genesis 11:29*). Haran died while his father was still alive. Terah was, as it were, at the same time grandfather and father for his granddaughters. Moreover, it was not uncommon to call your granddaughter your daughter. Likewise, the sister can sometimes mean cousin.

## Short News

## Mysterious Dead Sea Scrolls



The Dead Scrolls contain the oldest copies of biblical texts and consists of some 25,000 fragments of leather and papyrus. An international team of researchers successfully decoded ancient DNA extracted from the fragments made of animal skins. The DNA sequences revealed that the parchments were mostly made from sheep and cows, whereas before it was thought they all had been written on goat skin. Some of the scrolls were brought from other areas, and were not originally from the area around the caves where the scrolls were found. | Photo: Flash90

## Digital Saxophone

Israeli start-up Emeo Team has launched the Emeo, the first-ever digital practice saxophone, which allows saxophone players to practice and play anywhere, as long as the device is hooked up to their computers or smartphones. The Emeo connects to the devices using USB, MIDI, and Bluetooth and offers a cutting edge solution to the problem of the inherently loud volume of the saxophone, limiting sax players greatly in the manner in which they may practice and play.

## Israel Aerospace Industries to Cooperate with UAE



The UAE and Israel have no official diplomatic ties, with Jordan and Egypt being the only two Arab countries to have signed peace treaties with Israel. Arab states in the Gulf, including the UAE, have increasingly built informal ties with Israel in recent years amid shared concerns over Iran. Last month, a flight undertaken by Etihad Airways - the UAE's flag carrier - laden with COVID-19 related medical supplies for the Palestinian Authority made a rare landing in Tel Aviv. While the UAE has been critical of Israel's plan to apply sovereignty over Judea and Samaria, its Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Anwar Mohammed Gargash, said two weeks ago, "I think we can have a political disagreement with Israel and try to bridge other differences."

## Introducing Mount Carmel



Panoramic view of Mt. Carmel in Israel. | Photo: Shutterstock

### ■ Kameel Majdali

Director | Teach All Nations Inc.



It has a special role to play in the geography of Israel and served as the stage of one of the most electrifying events in Scripture.

While it has high name recognition, it is little known nor understood. In this edition of **Walk Through the Land**, we will leave the coastal plain and ascend one of the most famous peaks of the Bible: **Mount Carmel**.

The term 'Mount Carmel' is used only four times in Scripture, and 'Carmel' is 26 times. While most references mean the mount, there is also a 'Carmel' southeast of Hebron in Judah. This is where Nabal and Abigail lived (*1 Samuel 25:5*).

Mount Carmel is the location of Israel's third largest city and major port, Haifa. Its greatest acclaim was the famous contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal held on or near its summit in *1 Kings 18*.

Though we refer to it as a 'mount,' in reality Carmel is a mountain range that goes for 39 km in length, 6.4 to 8 km in width, and 450 meters in height. Unlike the majestic cedars in the high mountains of Lebanon, Carmel has predominantly scrubby woodlands. The range runs in a northwest-southeast direction, starting from the northwest corner of Samaria and continuing in that direction until it juts into the Mediterranean Sea.

Look on any map of the holy land and you will see how Mount Carmel redefines the otherwise straight coastal plain. To the south are the plains of Sharon and Philistia. To the north is the Plain of Acre. To the west is the Mediterranean and the east is the Valley of Armageddon.

As we learned in an earlier article, the ancient Egyptians called Mount Carmel and the 'headland' at Haifa, the 'antelope's nose.' Apart from its striking appearance, this 'nose' had a very practical function: it stopped the Sahara Desert sand, brought via the Nile River, and delivered by the counter-clockwise Mediterranean current,

from going any further north. Thus, the ports in the south were sand choked yet to the north they were functional. So, Israel relied on agriculture while Phoenicia became a great maritime nation.

Eventually, there was a trade-off between the two nations: Israel provided the food and Phoenicia with the shipping. This was noted in the days of Hiram king of Tyre (*2 Samuel 5:11; 1 Kings 5:1*), and even in the time of Herod Agrippa I (*Acts 12:20*). In every way, Mount Carmel serve as a natural boundary or 'fence' between Phoenicia and Israel, meaning the Plain of Acre was in Phoenician hands most of the Biblical period.

Being a high mount, Carmel was considered a sacred place. We know it had an altar to the Lord, which was broken down (*1 Kings 18:30*) and probably provided a high place(s) for Baal worship.

**When finally, a cotton-ball cloud appeared, like the first-fruits of the crops, Elijah knew that the dark rain clouds would follow and warned Ahab as such.**

Apart from being a sacred site, it was also symbolic of beauty. Solomon wrote of his beloved that, "Thine head upon thee is like Carmel" *Song 7:5*. *Isaiah 35:2* speaks glowingly of the 'the excellency of Carmel and Sharon.' When *Nahum 1:4* speaks the languishing or withering of Carmel, it is a sign of overflowing judgement.

On a Biblical tour, the main attraction is a visit to **Muhraka** ('the Scorching') on the southeast peak. It is the traditional site of the contest between Elijah and Jezebel's Baal prophets. It has a stone statue of the Elijah, raising his sword to slay Baal's prophets. Nearby is the Carmelite monastery and a nature reserve. There is a great view of the Valley of Armageddon, also known as Esraelon, and down below is the brook Kishon, where Baal's prophets were slain after losing the contest. Also, at the foot of the mountain range is the site of Tell Megiddo, where Armageddon (Mountain of Megiddo) gets its name.

#### Contest on Carmel

Elijah's ministry corresponded to a time of horrific apostasy in the Northern Kingdom, which included the ten tribes of Israel. They were already in trouble with the Lord because of King Jeroboam's sin,

namely the sanctuaries to the golden calves in Bethel and Dan. To add to this scandal, King Ahab married a Phoenician princess named Jezebel. She was a zealous follower and missionary for Baal. Through her efforts, Baal worship quickly becomes the de facto religion of Israel.

Baal was the false god of the Phoenicians, Carthage, and Canaan. He was associated with agriculture and fertility. For an agrarian nation, his favour was highly sought. To appease Baal, his cult included sex worship, religious prostitution, and human sacrifice, particularly of children.

Such worship was an abomination to the God of Israel, and He raised Elijah of Tishbite from Gilead to deal with it. First, the prophet prayed for a drought to judge Israel, which lasted three and a half years. Then he ordered the contest on Mount Carmel with Ahab present, along with 450

prophets of Baal and 400 of Asherah. Whichever God answered by fire would prevail. Not coincidentally, Elijah asked Israel how long it would sit on the fence, figuratively and literally Mount Carmel. Baal failed the test; his prophets were slain and Israel confessed that the Lord is God.

#### Faith Lessons from Elijah

**Confession:** Once Baal was defeated; the drought could be broken. Elijah confessed "I hear the sound of the abundance of rain," though the sky was deep blue and there were no clouds (*2 Corinthians 5:7*).

**Prevailing Prayer:** He prayed fervently to break the drought (*James 5:17*).

**First-fruits (Exodus 34:22):** When finally, a cotton-ball cloud appeared, like the first-fruits of the crops, Elijah knew that the dark rain clouds would follow and warned Ahab as such. The clouds came, the rain descended, and the drought broke.

Walk through the Land for many more faith lessons.

Rev Kameel Majdali, PhD (Melb) is Director of Teach All Nations ([tan.org.au](http://tan.org.au)). His MA degree is 'Historical Geography of the Holy Land' from the Institute of Holy Land Studies.

## Give Arab Children in Israel a Wonderful Summer



Archive image of a Vacation Bible School at First Baptist Church in Bethlehem.

Summer holidays are in full swing in Israel, and many parents face a challenge: how do you ensure that the children enjoy themselves during this time of year? Especially now that many children were forced to sit at home for many weeks because of the coronavirus.

Going on holiday is financially impossible for many families in Israel. This also goes for Arab-Israeli families. Parents do not always succeed in keeping their children entertained for long periods, causing children to hang out on the street - which sometimes has negative consequences.

Fortunately, these parents are offered a helping hand by

Rev. Naim Khoury and his church in Bethlehem. Will you help them so that they can reach Arab children in Israel with God's love this summer?

As Christians for Israel, we have been friends with Rev. Naim Khoury and his wife Elvira many years. They have it on their hearts not only to reach their Arab fellow citizens with the Gospel but also to teach them to love Israel and the Jewish people. Based on God's promises for Israel. We can warmly recommend their request for help.

Here is a letter from Rev Naim Khoury, pastor of First Baptist Church in Bethlehem:

Dear friends,  
As you may know, my wife Elvira and I have been organising summer activities for children in Bethlehem and surroundings for many years. Our goal is to introduce these children to the Gospel, as well as their parents. Besides that we find it important to teach Arab children love for Israel, God's covenant people! This summer we had to plan a different kind of Vacation Bible School because of the corona restrictions. We decided to split the programme into three parts:

- For primary school children, we spread the programme over three weeks, so we can receive many children but not all at the same time. It will be an enormous blessing for the children that they can finally undertake activities again after sitting at home for a long time. We will introduce them to the Bible, both Old and New Testament, in an accessible way!
- For high school students, we organise two days of worship, discipleship training, games, Bible study and good food. We believe that this will inspire the young generation and make them realise that it is not an option to be hopeless. We want to refresh the young generation with this programme.
- We are planning a Revival weekend for members of our congregation, with music and testimonials. After the three-month quarantine and the hardships that people have been going through it is good to meet each other and remind each other that we are not alone.

We hope that you will support these important activities!  
Shalom from Bethlehem, Rev. Naim Khoury & Elvira



If you would like to support Arab Christians, please complete the coupon on page 16.

### Overview of our projects

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)

# A Way in the Wilderness

## Koen Carlier

Aliyah Fieldworker | Christians for Israel Ukraine

These are turbulent and uncertain times, and this doesn't make our practical Aliyah work any easier. The Coronavirus is still spreading rapidly with an average of 1,000 new infections per day. Ukraine is constantly looking at Europe to see what decisions they make and seem to be copying what they do. Different measures are being taken but in practice, people cannot see the 'forest for the trees!' There is confusion everywhere.

Israel is also in a daily fight with an invisible and many visible enemies, however despite this, daily life is normal!

### Integration

The return to Israel continues although there are more obstacles and challenges for the future *olim* (immigrants). People have to wait longer than usual for their immigration request to be approved, only two of the Israeli consulates are open instead of five. Once someone gets the green light, the Jewish Agency decides on which evacuation flight they can go to Israel and upon arrival, the *olim* have to stay in quarantine for two weeks. After that, the integration programme (Aliyah programme) starts and once this is completed, the biggest challenge will be to find a job during this difficult economic time.

Most *olim* who leave at this moment follow an Aliyah programme, like 19-year-old Igor, whose mother is a chef at the Jewish school. Or like Dima, who is 34-years old. At the age of 20, he suddenly lost his hearing, but graduated from university and worked in IT in Kiev.

However, when the quarantine began, he moved back in with his parents and finally decided to make Aliyah. By mid-July, we were able to assist Igor and Dima, with transportation to the airport together with 30 other *olim*. Six of them stayed in our shelter for the night, because they lived ten hours from the airport in Kiev.

### 'Fear Not'

In the photos, you may see smiling people but in reality, everyone is scared because of the Coronavirus and there are many questions and uncertainties. However, in this case, it is important to read *Isaiah 43 verse 5* where it says do not fear because I bring you from the North and the rest of the world.

Another special moment I want to share with you is the time we brought emergency food parcels to 50 young families and had a meeting with them. During that meeting, we had a Zoom session with the deputy mayor of Carmiel in Israel, who answered questions of the participants. Her viewpoint was that despite the challenges and obstacles of Coronavirus, it cannot be an excuse to delay the return from the diaspora. Carmiel is constantly building new apartments to welcome newcomers and the deputy mayor expressed her hope that many *olim* will settle there!

### Return During the Coronavirus Panedemic

In the Bible, we read that the prophets speak about the return of the Jewish people time and again. In our generation, in a way, we can see the sea split and the Jewish people are allowed to return safely. As it is written in *Isaiah 43:19* a way is being made in the wilderness.

In July about 500 *olim* made Aliyah from Ukraine and Russia. Your prayers and contributions to help the *olim* prepare for their Aliyah really make a difference!

**It costs NZ \$300 to help a Jewish person from Ukraine to Israel. Any amount is welcome; please fill out the coupon below to participate in this fulfilment of Biblical prophecy.**

**"Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west." *Isaiah 43:5***



Photos: Jewish Agency for Israel / Svetlana Soroka

## YES! I Want to Support Christians for Israel

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My donation for ministry costs, print & post \$.....

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- Christian Friends of Israeli Communities (CFOIC) \$.....
- Food Parcel Campaign Ukraine - \$10 per meal \$.....
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