

# ISRAEL

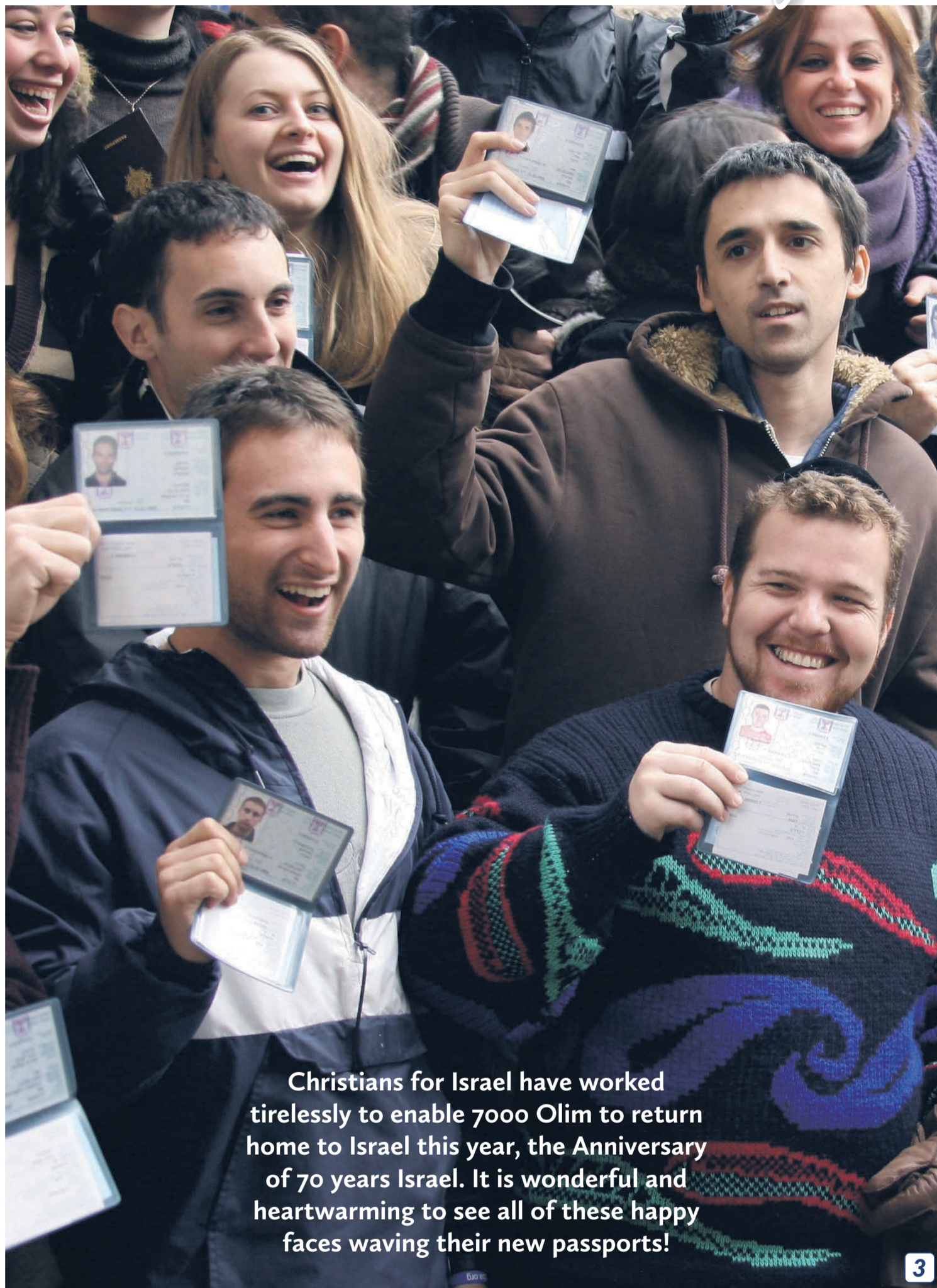
## & Christians Today

INTERNATIONAL

October 2018

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CHRISTIANS FOR  
**ISRAEL**  
INTERNATIONAL

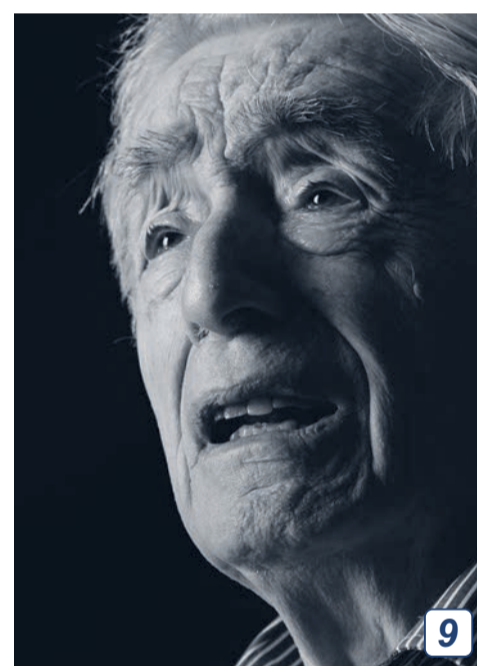


Christians for Israel have worked tirelessly to enable 7000 Olim to return home to Israel this year, the Anniversary of 70 years Israel. It is wonderful and heartwarming to see all of these happy faces waving their new passports!

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

## Prayer Points



By Pieter Bénard  
Christians for  
Israel Prayer  
Coordinator

## ISRAEL

- Intercede for the inhabitants of the south of Israel because of the serious threat from Gaza: missiles, mortars, thousands of protestors who try to cross the border to kidnap or to kill Jews. Israeli villages are only a few kilometres from the border. Pray for the children, many of whom know no other reality and sometimes have to spend days on end in bomb shelters.
- Pray for the cooperation between Israel and Islamic countries, particularly in the following areas: technological developments, inventions, and in the fight against terrorism. This increases the chance of diplomatic relationships.
- There are dozens of promises about the restoration and salvation of Israel in *Jeremiah 30 and 31*. Give thanks for the promises of the return to the land, and a new covenant that the Lord will make with them.

## INTERCESSION

- Praying for Israel is not always easy because of the grave situation in the Middle East. We can be encouraged by *Philippians 4:4a, 6a,7*: “Rejoice in the Lord always... Do not be anxious about anything... and the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”
- The number of Christians in the Gaza Strip has dropped from 4,500 to just under one thousand since 2012. Pray for our brothers and sisters, who, just like in other areas where Islam dominates, are treated as third-rate civilians. Pray that Christians from other countries can visit them to encourage them.
- Pray for the Jewish people. A newspaper can publish a hateful article. An illustration can make fun of them. Their history can suddenly be rewritten. It goes on and on.

## CHRISTIANS FOR ISRAEL

- Pray for the Christians for Israel teachers who will speak about Israel again this coming season at events and conferences, covering countless topics.
- Please pray for the staff and the volunteers of Christians for Israel around the world. “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.” (*Colossians 3:23,24*).
- Pray that we as staff and volunteers do not grow weary of always going against the flow. Negative news about Israel and Judaism keeps on coming. It is a privilege to stand behind Israel; what is done to the Jews also affects us Christians.

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

## Is Israel an ‘Apartheid’ State?

By Andrew Tucker, International Editor, Christians for Israel International

**The Bible states that the Lord will bring the Jewish people back to the land and re-establish them as a nation in the ‘last days’ (Micah 4:1-7). We are surely seeing the fulfilment of that promise over the last 150 years.**

The Jewish people are commanded to reclaim and resettle the wastelands, making them fruitful. But they no doubt also have a Biblical obligation to look after the other inhabitants of the land. The purpose of the return to the land is to give them a ‘new heart’ and put a ‘new Spirit’ in them – so that they will follow His decrees and keep His laws (*Ezekiel 36*). This surely includes compassion for the ‘strangers’ in the land (see, e.g. *Deut. 14:28-29*).

Reconciling these demands – possession of the land, and compassion to others – puts the Jewish people in a difficult position. Especially when having to defend themselves against those who are trying to annihilate them.

The controversial Nation-State Law recently passed by the Israeli Knesset has brought to the surface deep-lying differences of views within Israeli society itself about the spirit of Zionism and the nature of the Jewish State of Israel. At the same time, it has ignited hostile reactions from both Jews and non-Jews who object to the idea of an exclusively ‘Jewish’ State. The law – a ‘Basic Law’ which has semi-constitutional status – goes a little beyond what is already contained in the Israeli Declaration of Independence and other Basic Laws. It lays down an exclusive relationship between the Jewish people, the State and the land of Israel: ‘The land of Israel is the historical homeland of the Jewish people, in which the State of Israel was established’; ‘the State of Israel is the national home of the Jewish people, in which it fulfils its natural, cultural, religious and historical right to self-determination’; and ‘the right to exercise national self-determination in the State of Israel is unique to the Jewish people’.

In a similar vein, it declares that ‘the state views the development of Jewish settlement as a national value and will act to encourage and promote its establishment and consolidation.’ It also makes Hebrew the single official language, relegating Arabic to a ‘special status.’

The law has been attacked by many as (yet another) attempt by the Jews to assert their supremacy over non-Jews in the land. Some say the law is further evidence that Israel is an ‘apartheid’ state. The head of the Israeli Arab Joint List group of parties in the Knesset, Ayman Odeh, denounced the law as ‘the death of our democracy’. According to Time Magazine, ‘be it making room for differences within Judaism or making room for minorities, Israel is looking a little less democratic by the day.’

Unfortunately, it seems the government under-estimated the backlash the law would create within Israel. Perhaps most painful was the complaint of discrimination by the 130,000-strong



Photo Credit: flickr

Druze community in Israel – who support the self-determination of the Jewish people, serve in the IDF and have contributed a lot to the establishment and growth of the State of Israel.

The preparation of the law was chaotic and its enactment a public relations nightmare. It is a great pity the government did not get the support of the Druze and other minorities prior to the law’s enactment. And, from a diplomatic perspective, it may have been wise to have included – as many had suggested – at least a symbolic re-affirmation of Israel’s commitment to democratic principles and equal rights of all citizens.

But while the law may have its shortcomings, Israel is definitely not an ‘apartheid’ state. Israel ranks consistently as one of the most open and democratic countries in the world in Freedom House rankings. The law does nothing to limit the civil rights of non-Jews. For Arabs to accuse Israel of apartheid is the height of hypocrisy.

The nationalist language of the law and of some Israeli leaders may seem provocative. But we should appreciate the context. The PLO, Hamas and many Arab nations refuse to accept the right of the Jewish people to exist as a nation. Some intend to annihilate it. And a majority of nations in the world want to force Israel into borders that are arguably indefensible in such a hostile environment (the ‘1967 lines’). It is hardly surprising that the Jews feel the need to assert themselves.

The right of peoples (including the Jewish people) to self-determination in a specific geographical territory, is an accepted principle of international law and a core value of the United Nations Charter. Without that principle, most states would not exist. And, with the exception of Islamic/Arab countries, the international community has always accepted the right of Israel to be a Jewish state (for example, the UN Partition Plan of November 1947 proposed the creation of a ‘Jewish’ and an ‘Arab’ State).

Every well-developed democracy struggles to manage the tension between promotion of the values that underlie the state, and the human rights of all individuals and minority groups to equal treatment. Israel is no exception. The truth is, most non-Jews in Israel – Arabs, Christians, Druze, Bedouins, and others – much prefer to live in a democratic Jewish State of Israel (with all its imperfections) than an Islamic state in which minorities

are definitely treated as second- or even third-class citizens.

Criticism of the Israeli government is fine, and the Nation-State Law is not immune from that. But we should also affirm the right of the Jewish people to exist as a nation in Israel, and appreciate the amazing contributions the Jewish people have made while fulfilling their difficult task of settling the land, and looking after the strangers in their midst.

Let us pray the Jewish people will look only to the Lord for guidance and that He will give them a ‘new heart’ and a ‘new Spirit’ – as He has promised. Then His Name will be glorified in the midst of the nations.

Christians for Israel  
Mission Statement

**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.

## Jewish Festivals

**Shmini Atzeret** - Eighth Day of Assembly  
1 October 2018

**Simchat Torah** - Day of Celebrating the Torah  
2 October 2018

**Yom HaAliyah** - Recognises Aliyah, immigration to the Jewish State of Israel  
16 October 2018

**Sigd** - Ethiopian Jewish holiday occurring 50 days after Yom Kippur  
7 November 2018

**ISRAEL** & Christians Today

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# Yom HaAliyah - Immigration Day

By Kees de Vreugd, Theologian, Christians for Israel International, and Editor of Israel and the Church

**Immigration to Israel (Aliyah) is a core value of the modern State of Israel. The state was founded partly as a result of several immigration waves and has by definition seen itself as a safe haven for every Jew in the world, welcoming new immigrants since its very beginnings.**

In 2016, the Israeli Parliament, the Knesset, adopted a law establishing the annual commemoration of Yom HaAliyah (Immigration Day) on the 7th of Cheshvan (this year falling on 16 October), 'to recognise the importance of Aliyah to the land of Israel as basis for the existence of the State of Israel, for its development and reinforcement as a multicultural society'. As one of the lawmakers stated, this law also confirms who the real heirs are to the land of Israel. Immigration Day is especially marked in the school system, Government institutions, and the army. The idea was initiated by a group of young immigrants, who see it as a recognition of their contribution to the land.

Initially, the 10th of Nisan was chosen as the date of Yom HaAliyah. This was the day of the first 'mass immigration', the day

that the Jewish people entered the land of Israel after the exodus from Egypt and the forty years' stay in the desert (Joshua 4:19). Interestingly, the verb used in this Scripture has the same root as the word Aliyah. Literally, Aliyah means 'to go up'. In Biblical language, you go up to the land of Israel, and to leave the land is to go down. However, since 10 Nisan is in a school vacation, just four days before Passover, the commemoration of the 10 Nisan event, and every subsequent Aliyah, is held in the fall/autumn, on 7 Cheshvan. Nevertheless, Immigration Day is a national, rather than a religious feast day.

Of course, this date is also not randomly chosen. First of all, it is in the week in which the Torah portion 'Lech-Lecha' (Genesis 12-17) is read in synagogue. The very name of this portion suggests the idea of 'Aliyah'. The name is derived from the opening verse (Gen. 12:1), where God calls Abram, telling him: "Leave your country...", literally: "Go forth (Hebrew: lech-lecha) ... to the land I will show you". Abram then is promised to become a great nation and receives God's blessing. And Abram went, as we read in verse 4, and came in the land of Canaan, which he crossed through from Shechem to the



Photo Credit: Flickr

Negev (the land of the south). He even went further to Egypt but returned to the promised land to stay there.

The 7th of Cheshvan is important also for another reason as the day on which the Jews in Israel begin to pray for rain. While Sukkot (the Feast of Tabernacles) is regarded as the beginning of the rain

season in the land of Israel, it has been an ancient practice to insert the prayer for rain in the daily prayers only two weeks after Sukkot, in order to give those who came as pilgrims to Jerusalem from the far regions of the land the opportunity to return home safely and unhindered, as rain would make the roads impassable in the old days.

## Who is the Servant of the Lord?

By Rev Cornelis Kant, Executive Director Christians for Israel International



Photo Credit: Lightstock

**In several chapters, the prophet Isaiah speaks about the 'Servant of the Lord'. Who is he? I already hear you saying the answer: this Servant is the coming Messiah, the Prince of Peace for Israel and the whole world.**

As Isaiah says: "Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit in him, and he will bring justice to the nations. (...) I will keep you and will make you a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind" (Isaiah 42:1, 6). In chapter 49 Isaiah says: "It is too small a thing for you to be my

servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth". How impressive! We often do not read this text thoroughly, and we do not observe an important detail. Isaiah emphasises here that the coming servant is not only a light for the Gentiles, but He will also be instructed to bring back the people of Israel to their land.

Look at the word 'also'. We mostly apply the work of the Messiah solely to our salvation. But He has more to do. Specifically in relation to His own Jewish brothers and sisters. It is amazing to see that not only the coming Messiah is called the Servant of the Lord: "But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham, my friend, I took you from the ends of the earth, from its farthest corners I called you. I said, 'You are my servant'" (Isaiah 41:8).

So also Israel, the Jewish people, is called by the Lord, His servant. There is a special connection between Israel and the Messiah. The Lord spoke about both of

them: "Out of Egypt I called my son". Isn't that very special?

When we look upon the suffering of the Messiah Jesus, and when we look upon the ages of suffering of the Jewish people, there is an inevitable similarity between both: Messiah Jesus as the first-born or first-fruit of His own people. I am even more amazed when I read Acts 13:47 where Paul and Barnabas support their commitment to bring the gospel to the Gentiles by quoting Isaiah 49: "For this is what the Lord has commanded us: 'I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth'".

When Isaiah spoke about the light for the nations, he referred to the coming Messiah. But Paul as a Jewish expert in the Scriptures also applies this light for the nations to the Jewish people. Both Paul and Barnabas were Jewish believers who went out from Israel into the world to spread the gospel. How deeply connected are the Jewish people and their Messiah, both being called the 'Servant of the Lord'.



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2018 marks the 70th anniversary of the State of Israel. After ages of diaspora, the Jewish state was reborn in 1948. A true miracle. In the 70 years of its existence, Israel had to fight eight wars to defend itself. It not only survived but thrived. It's among the most educated and innovative countries in the world and has one of the highest life expectancies in the world. Jews from all over the world are returning home, a fulfilment of Biblical prophecies.

This limited commemorative edition magazine celebrates the 70th Anniversary of the State of Israel. It is beautifully illustrated, with in-depth articles, inspiring interviews, photos, facts, time-lines and much more. A 'must have' for everyone who loves to know more about Israel.

# People of the Book, People of the Land

By Sheree Trotter, co-founder of Shadows of Shoah, New Zealand

The recent *Aotearoa-Israel Powhiri* (Māori welcome ceremony) held at the Hoani Waititi Marae (Māori meeting house) in Auckland, New Zealand, was a reminder of the historically warm relationship between Māori (indigenous people of New Zealand) and Jew.

In the early 19th century, Jewish traders arrived and quickly developed friendships with the indigenous people. On an individual level this continued throughout the 20th century, resulting in shared initiatives such as language revitalisation and experiments in communal living. However the recent *powhiri* for the ambassador is one of few corporate events bringing together Māori and Israel.

Very early in New Zealand's history, the similarities between Māori and Jewish customs and practices were noted. Well known missionary, Samuel Marsden, drew up a list of comparisons between the two peoples. While early theories that Māori were one of the 'lost tribes of Israel' were debunked, there is no doubting that many similarities exist between Māori and Jews as indigenous peoples.

Foremost amongst the characteristics of indigenous people (according to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) is the connection to ancestral land. Land and *whakapapa* (genealogy) are two key elements in the Māori worldview, as with Jewish thought.

While the Jews are called the 'people of the book', Māori are known as the '*tangata whenua*', the 'people of the land'. This appellation manifests in the way Māori

identify themselves in formal settings. The mountain, the river or sea, the tribe, are all cited as a means of identifying who one is and where one belongs. This is the *turangawaewae*, literally, the place for the feet to stand. This is where one has rights and place of residence through kinship and *whakapapa*. It conveys the idea of belonging.

When life's journey is over, the Māori custom is to return to the place of their ancestors for burial. The integration of Māori thought is revealed in *Te Reo Māori* (Māori language). *Iwi* is the word for tribe as well as bones, just as *whenua* is the word both for land and placenta. (It is a custom to bury a baby's placenta in a place of significance).

In like manner, the Bible speaks of Abraham being gathered to his people and he was buried with his wife Sarah in Macpelah (Hebron). The Bible records Jacob also being buried in Macpelah with his ancestors, and when Joseph died in Egypt, he requested that his bones be returned to the land of his forefathers. This was accomplished in the time of Joshua.

It is not difficult to see the parallels in Māori and Jewish thinking. Jews hold a deep connection to the land promised to their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. When they were exiled to Babylon, the remembrance of Zion brought weeping. Jews have lived in the diaspora for much of their history, and yet, for millennia the longing for a return to Zion has been sustained and expressed in their daily prayers and yearly festivals.



Aotearoa-Israel Powhiri (welcome ceremony) at Hoani Waititi Marae, Auckland, New Zealand

In the Māori worldview, the continual presence, called *ahi kaa*, or keeping the fires burning) on a piece of territory gives that tribe *mana whenua*, or authority over the land. In a similar fashion, Jews have always had a presence in the land of Israel, even though the majority were exiled. From a Māori indigenous perspective, this gives a right or ownership to the land. No matter where a Māori person lives, 'going home' means returning to their *turangawaewae*. The desire of the Jews to return to Zion, to their place of belonging and to be in the land of their ancestors is, likewise, the natural longing of indigenous peoples.

While Māori practices have a long tradition, modern times have seen adaptation and change. Most *marae* are connected to a particular place and people, however Hoani Waititi Marae was the first

intertribal urban *marae* designed to meet the needs of urban Māori living away from their tribal area. Every *marae* will host visitors from other areas, but it was fitting that the *tangata whenua* (Māori people from a particular location) of Hoani Waititi were joined by Māori from around Aotearoa, New Zealand (*Nga hau e wha*, the four winds), to welcome Israel's ambassador and the Jewish community for the Aotearoa Israel *Powhiri*. It is hoped that this historic event will set a precedent of continued friendship between Māori and Israel, and will perhaps lead the way for New Zealand to restore its former friendly relationship with Israel.

**Sheree Trotter is an indigenous (Te Arawa) New Zealander. She and her husband Perry founded Shadows of Shoah, a unique Holocaust exhibition.**

## C4I Philippines Hosts Special Conference

By Rev Conrado D. Lumahan, Director Christians for Israel Philippines



Rev Willem JJ Glashouwer teaching at the special conference in the Philippines

On 5-6 September 2018, Christians for Israel Philippines hosted a Special Conference on '*Israel, End-times and the Second Coming*' at the Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, Baguio City, Philippines. Rev. Willem J.J. Glashouwer, president of Christians for Israel International, and Rev. Conrado Lumahan, director, Christians for Israel Philippines were the speakers.

There were 226 bishops, Bible College presidents and instructors, district superintendents and district presbytery

members, pastors and church leaders who attended this conference from 15 provinces all over the Philippines.

Here is some of the God-glorifying and heart-warming feedback we received from participants:

*"The conference has enlightened us more on the dealings of God to the nation of Israel and has inspired us more to pray and stand in solidarity with the people of Israel."*

Rev Dr Edilberto Cruz, president of Clark Bible College.

*"I'm amazed how God works in the thoughts of the speakers to delve the deepest insights about Israel. I really appreciate the learnings I got about Israel."* Rev Dr Eva Garcia, president, Luzon Bible College.

*"The Israel Conference... opened my spiritual understanding of God's purpose and plan through Israel in these end times. I was particularly impacted by how pivotal Jerusalem is to the history of Christianity... My faith and vision have been sharpened and focused by my attendance at this Conference."* Rev Rey Bernardes, pastor of a Philippine congregation in California.

*"The down-to-heart Spirit-filled revelation of Isaiah 43 of Rev Willem J.J. Glashouwer and the exegesis on Romans 9:4-5 of Rev. Lumahan have both pierced my heart that day. While still contemplating these truths on how God gave such unique place of Israel in His heart, Dr Lumahan came over and advised me to lead a prayer, a prayer of repentance-for our hardness of heart toward the Jewish People, and I repented! It was a life-changing truth and experience that gave me a new strength to face the challenges of the end times and becoming more committed to the greater harvest of souls as the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ draws nearer and nearer. God bless Israel, God bless*

*the Philippines!"* Rev. Elmer Miguel, district superintendent of the Assemblies of God.

*"Glory be to God for the opportunity to lead the prayer of repentance of the sin of replacement theology.... I thank God for the forgiveness and from now on I declare blessings for the Jews."* Rev Dionesio Patricio.

*"God's presence was greatly manifested as we pray and declare the Prayer of Agreement for the peace of Jerusalem... with a repentant prayer for not realising the sin of anti-Semitism. God's presence was felt as we unite ourselves regardless of denominations. We look forward to partner with C4I for such as time as this."* Bishop Paul Baguitay.

After presenting US\$2000 to Rev Willem to bring Jews from Ukraine and India to Israel, Pastor Conrado then awarded Aliyah Certificates to four of the eight churches and individuals who had donated. After the interdenominational conference, some other ministers and churches pledged to start collecting funds for Aliyah. They want to be a part of the fulfilment of God's word when the Sovereign Lord says: *"See, I will beckon to the Gentiles, I will lift up my banner to the peoples; they will bring your sons in their arms and carry your daughters on their shoulders"* (Isaiah 49:22 NIV).

# View the Bible through a Lens

By Rev Henk Poot, Christians for Israel Netherlands

**Itamar - In this edition of Israel & Christians Today we start our journey through the heartland of Israel, namely Judea and Samaria.**

It is said that the promised land has circles of holiness. The first circle is formed by the borders: the coastal plain from Tel Aviv and Jaffa, to Netanya and Haifa. In the north the Golan and in the south the Negev. Looking at the Bible, not much happened in this first circle: In Jaffa the prophet Jonah once boarded the wrong ship, and Peter rented a room from a tanner. I believe that is all. But on the inside of this circle, we find the heart of Israel. All the familiar places from the Bible that tie the Jewish people to the land are in that area. The heart of the heartland is, of course, Zion, Jerusalem.

When we speak about the heart of Israel, we speak about the so-called disputed territories. Some people refer to it as the West Bank or even the occupied territories. In 1948 the Jordanian army conquered the area and established a military administration. During the Six Day War Israel seized the area and offered it back to Jordan in return for peace. Peace was not achieved. After the war of 1973, which started on Yom Kippur (*the Day of Atonement*), Israelis started to inhabit the area, cultivate it and 'deliver' it – as religious Jews would say.

## >> Our Journey Begins

Starting in the north, in the mountains of Samaria, somewhere on the border of Ephraim and Manasseh we enter the town of Itamar. We drive through and take a path that winds its way up to a beautiful



viewpoint. On a clear day, you can see the snowy peaks of the Hermon in the north, the Jordan Valley in the east, the Mediterranean Sea in the west and the Negev in the south.

**In the days of Abram, there was a terebinth tree there that the people had given the name 'teacher.'**

I think of the words of God to Abram: *"Look around from where you are, to the north and south, the east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. I will make your offspring*

*like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you"* (Genesis 13:14-17). Abram was here too. In fact, it was here that he entered into the Promised Land for the first time in his life. And not only he, many centuries later the people of Israel entered here under the leadership of Joshua and the sons of Aaron. One of those sons was called Itamar. He must be buried around here. I heard that his grave is still visited. It is quiet. The only sound you hear is that of the wind. I look down and see the vast Tirzah Valley stretching wide and long from east to west, from the River Jordan to the foot of Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. Indeed, there is room enough here for an entire people. My eye falls on a hilltop in the distance, Elon Moreh. In the days of Abram, there was a terebinth tree which the people there had given the name 'teacher.' Perhaps some sort of Oracle. If the wind whispered through the trees, people could hear the voices of their gods over there. Abram erected his first altar to the Lord over there. In my mind I can see him searching for stones, lifting them and building, preparing a sacrifice

with only one thought in mind: *"The Lord is my God and no one else. He is my teacher. I wait for His voice. This is how I will enter this land."*



View of the Tirzah Valley. The peaks of Ebal (right) and Gerizim (left) and in the middle place that the Bible calls Shechem, nowadays called Nablus. Photo Credit: Wikimedia Commons



View on Itamar. | Photo Credit: Flashgo



View from Mt Gerizim over the Tirzah Valley. On the mountain on the right is Elon Moreh. This is where the Lord promised to Abram that his offspring would possess the land. | Photo Credit: Wikimedia Commons



A slope of Mount Ebal. | Photo Credit: Wikimedia Commons

## Short News

### New Railway Finally Partially Open



Photo Credit: Flash go

Israel's new railway between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem partially opened last month. Trains now operate between Jerusalem and Ben Gurion Airport but it will be a few more months before the track opens between the airport and Tel Aviv. The project initially started in 2001 but has had many delays over the years. Once the project is finished, travellers will be able to travel from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv in half an hour.

### Eilat Coral Growing

Contrary to what you often read and hear, the coral in Eilat is growing. A report monitoring the coral in 2017 said that the average coral cover in Eilat increased by an average of 0.5% per year. The report also showed that although the average cover of coral fluctuates, overall a significant rise is visible. The coral cover is now between 24.1 and 25.3 per cent, whereas, between 2004 and 2006, it was between 19 and 20 per cent.

### Jewish New Year Acknowledged in New York

The UN Secretary-General wished the Jewish world 'Shanah Tovah'- 'A Happy New Year'- at an official Tashlich Ceremony in September, just days before the Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah. He acknowledged that the event *"provided an opportunity to reflect on the gains and setbacks of the past year and to consider how we can better serve the world's people in the year ahead"*.

He then, along with other senior officials, took part in a Jewish Tashlich ceremony which included tossing bread into the East River, casting away sins of the past year in order to start the new year on a clean slate.

This was an initiative of the European Coalition for Israel, of which Christians for Israel is a founding partner.

### Sweden Another Lost Cause for Jews

World Jewish Congress CEO has called the Swedish court of appeals' decision not to deport a Palestinian migrant who was convicted of hurling firebombs at the synagogue in Gothenburg *"an offensive moral outrage that sets a dangerous precedent for rewarding terrorist violence, anti-Semitism, and criminal behaviour."*

Asylum had already been denied to this offender but the court of appeals is concerned that his human rights might be violated by retaliation from Israel, using this as justification for him to remain in Sweden, where he is a direct threat to the Swedish Jews.

# Beyond the Ideal of the Kibbutz

By Ruben Ridderhof, Christians for Israel Netherlands

**When you take a look at the history of Israel, you can't escape the kibbutz and the role this type of community has played in the rebuilding of the modern State of Israel. Idealistic pioneers were willing to share everything with each other. But does the idealism of the kibbutz still have a future after seventy years?**

A beautiful road, winding through green wooded hills, brings us to Kibbutz Ein Hashofet. We are welcomed by Amarzia Dayan, who is excited to tell us about the kibbutz. A 'child of the dream' is what he calls himself, a child of the first generation of pioneers who built the kibbutz. With a little pride, he tells his story. 'You must understand that everything in the kibbutz was born out of necessity', he says.

## >> Necessity

This necessity was of course already part of the conditions in which the Jewish people felt the need to build a safe homeland away from the threats of anti-Semitism. Driven by this idealism, young Jews often travelled in groups to Eretz Israel where they wanted to establish the land. In the archive of the kibbutz, Amarzia shows us pictures of a procession of cars in a desolate landscape. 'That's how they arrived here. Full of dreams, but hopelessly naive. So what's their first necessity? Safety. That's why the kibbutz didn't start on a barren hilltop, but in a nearby abandoned fort from which the first activities were carried out.'

## >> Water and Bread

'The first building in the kibbutz was a water tower. But there was no water here. That's why the pioneers had a geologist come to examine the surroundings and point out where they could dig a well. With this well, a maximum of 33 people could live on the kibbutz permanently in the early days. For bread, the pioneers had a mother from a

nearby village come out. She would get the men to collect dry bush branches, where they built an oven out of clay, burnt the branches for heat, and baked the most delicious bread. But after a few days, she had to go back. One of the men returned with her and learned how to bake the bread. He did this at the kibbutz till the day he died.'

## >> Trees

Gradually, the kibbutz expanded. The pioneers planted numerous trees in and around the kibbutz. The wooded area that led us to the kibbutz is a miraculous testimony to the change that the land underwent since the first pioneers arrived here. But farming in this kibbutz wasn't successful 'The soil here is not good for anything', says Amarzia, 'our income came mainly from industry'.

## >> Change

The kibbutz movement seems to have lost its fire. Most kibbutzim are privatized, and only a few still practice the socialist ideal of sharing everything. Ein Hashofet is one of those kibbutzim, and it is secular. In the north of the Jordan Valley is the religious kibbutz Sde Eliyahu, which also operates traditionally as a collective. This is where the successful company BioBee is located, where bees are kept among other things. Sara Goldsmith is a tourist guide and started living on this kibbutz 29 years ago motivated by idealism. 'The privatization of kibbutzim was in a sense also due to necessity', she says. 'It wasn't like the residents were thinking: we don't want to be socialist anymore. The ideal was still there, but due to financial need the kibbutzim had to be privatized.'

## >> Trust

'My husband and I intentionally chose a collective kibbutz', says Sara. 'But I often say: to be a good socialist these days; you

have to be a good capitalist.

On the kibbutz, you have to contribute according to your means, and you receive according to your needs. But not everyone has the same means. So some people receive in proportion to their contribution more than others. You must be able to live with that. Kibbutz life, therefore, requires a certain degree of mutual trust. If you have a steady source of income with which you can meet everyone's needs, it is easier to maintain that trust. That's why a company like BioBee is vital to our kibbutz.'

## >> Socialism and Judaism

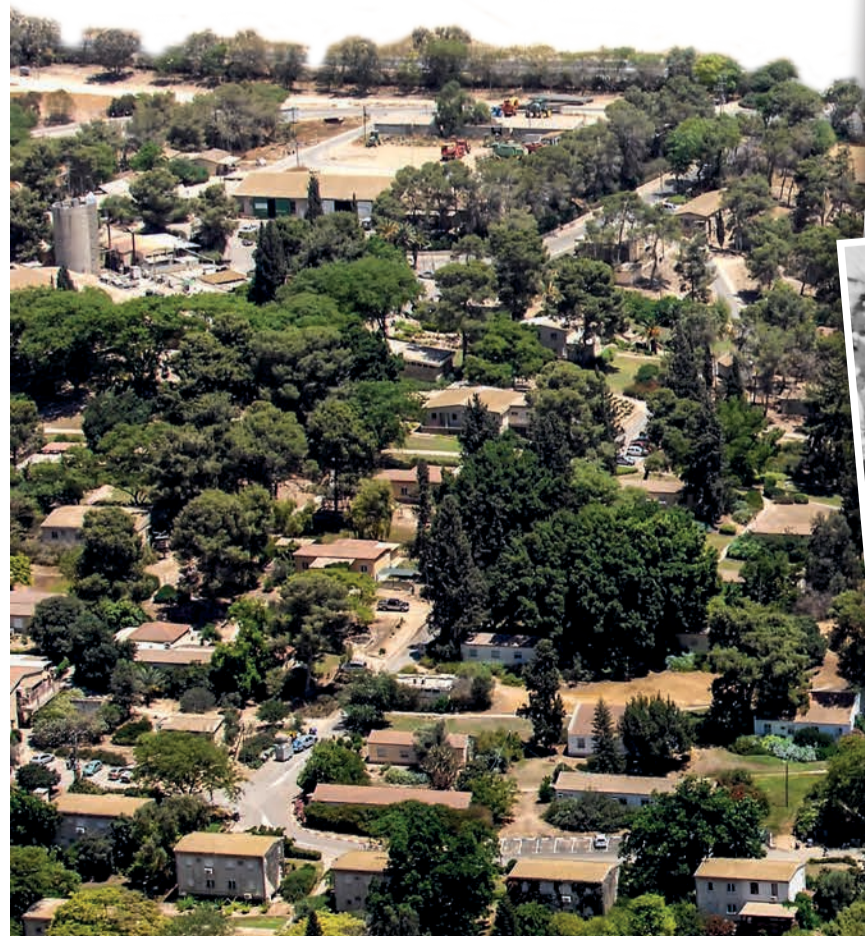
The kibbutz movement was founded by secular Jews. But Sde Eliyahu is a religious kibbutz. Sara shares: 'When religious Jews wanted to start a kibbutz, there was a lot of criticism. 'How can you start a kibbutz as a religious Jew? Do you want to be a farmer? What will happen on the Shabbat and during the feasts? Will you just leave your work?' But that's exactly what we have done. When you read the Bible, it talks a lot about agriculture! And you know what, it works! When the pioneers came to Israel, they wanted to shape the 'new Jew'. But with that, they removed a lot of beauty from the 'old Judaism'. But Judaism is actually very socialistic. The Bible teaches us to take care of each other, and the poor, as a community. You will not find that anywhere else in early history. In my opinion, religious Judaism and the kibbutz go together very well.'

## >> Idealism and the Future

Whether the idealism of the kibbutz can stand the test of time, we'll have to see. Amarzia Dayan from Ein Hashofet has a hard time believing it will. 'The world has changed, Israel has changed, and our government has changed. People no longer ask: what does my country need, but what do I need. I doubt whether this country needs new kibbutzim. Does it need the values of the kibbutz? No doubt about it. Kibbutzim are now being established in the city; communities who want to contribute to what is needed in Israeli society. If they keep their ideals, they can be of great significance to our country.'

When I ask Sara Goldsmith whether believing the Bible is the foundation for carrying on the ideals of the kibbutz, she laughs: 'Not necessarily, because many religious kibbutzim have also been privatized.' She then adds: 'But thanks to Judaism, the feeling of community has remained. I don't think that the necessity to build up Israel is gone. Israel is only seventy years old! That's very young! During that time we have fought many wars. There is still the necessity to build up our country, to restore, to heal from traumas. And I think that the ideals of the kibbutz are very important for this.'

**Excerpt from Israel 70 Years Anniversary Magazine. See coupon on back page to purchase a copy.**



# 4<sup>th</sup> Thesis: Covenants with Israel

By Kees de Vreugd, Theologian, Christians for Israel International, and Editor of Israel and the Church

*In this article, we continue our discussion of the ‘Twelve Theses of Faith on Israel’ published by Christians for Israel.*

**Thesis 4:** We believe that all the Covenants since Abraham have been made with Israel.

**Elaboration:** We believe that the Covenants made with the patriarchs remain valid for Israel. These Covenants include the land, the nation, the blessing and the Davidic kingship, as well as the Covenants regarding the priesthood of Levi, the city of Jerusalem and the Covenant of peace. We believe that the New Covenant, too, was made with the House of Israel and the House of Judah, and that the Church has been engrafted into this Covenant through faith in Jesus Christ. Of this new Covenant the signs are the broken body and spilt blood of our Lord. We believe and confess that Jesus will come as the Messiah of Israel to turn away godlessness from Jacob and to redeem the guilt of the nations. With great anticipation we expect His coming in glory and the bodily resurrection of the righteous dead. Maranatha!

**Clarification:** The respective Covenants are elaborated on in different theses. Here, an exposition of the New Covenant, that has also been made first and foremost with Israel, seems fit. Yeshua came as Messiah in the first place as the One who would redeem the sins of His people, the people of Israel. And one day that will happen, openly and publicly, when the whole house of Israel will enter into their own New Covenant (*Romans 11:25-27; Jeremiah 31:31-34, Isaiah 53, Zechariah 12:10-14, etc.*). But the redemption and removal of the sins immediately has a worldwide perspective, including and regarding all of the nations, *John 1:29: “The next day (John) saw Jesus coming to him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”* After His coming in humility to take away the sins of the world and being met with rejection, one day He will come in glory to gather all nations before Him (*Matthew 25:31-33, Isaiah 2:2-4, Isaiah 63:1-6; Revelation 19:11.*). Anyone who does not add to the words of the prophecy, or takes away from the words of the prophecy will shout, together with the Apostle John: Come, Lord Jesus! (*Revelation 22:18-20*)



## Twelve Theses of Faith on Israel

1. We believe that Israel was created and chosen by God to bless the nations.
2. We believe that the Church and the nations should bless Israel.
3. We believe that the Church has not replaced Israel. By faith in Jesus Christ we also have become ‘children of Abraham’, the father of all who believe.
4. **We believe that all the Covenants since Abraham have been made with Israel.**
5. We believe that the Lord will be faithful to all the Covenants He made with Israel, as well as to all the promises He gave to the Church.
6. We believe that there is the mystery of the hardening in part of Israel for our sake, but that there is also the blindness of the Church for Israel, and a veil over the nations with regard to Israel.
7. We believe that the Church should repent for all deeds of anti-Semitism committed in her name, and should show her true repentance in acts of love and solidarity with Israel and the Jewish people.
8. We believe that the restoration of the Jewish people to the Promised Land of Israel is the beginning of ultimate redemption. We believe that the nations carry a responsibility to help the Jews return.
9. We believe that the City of Jerusalem is the place where the Lord again will make His Holy Name dwell.
10. We believe that one day, Messiah will come to establish His worldwide Kingdom, Then the bodily resurrection of the righteous dead will take place and they will reign with Christ in His Kingdom on earth. We therefore pray for the peace of Jerusalem.
11. We believe that the Son of man will sit in judgment over the nations when the Kingdom comes and will ask them how they have treated Israel and the Jewish people.
12. We believe that ultimately and finally the renewal of all things will take place. Creation will be delivered from its bondage to decay and be brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. And God will be all and in all.

## >> Reflection by Chan Siew Fong

Regional Trainer, Christians for Israel Asia

**We believe that all the covenants since Abraham have been made with Israel.**

Before the Lord opened my eyes to the truth that all the covenants since Abraham have been made between God and Israel, I used to think that the ‘New Covenant’ (*1 Corinthians 11; 23-26*) was the exception, I believed the ‘New Covenant’ was made with the Church rather than Israel. Later, I discovered passages in *Jeremiah (31: 31-34)* and *Ezekiel (36: 24-28)* on the ‘New Covenant’ to be made with the House of Israel and the House of Judah. I also found out that when the Lord Jesus made the ‘New Covenant’ with his disciples, they were of Hebrew descent; there was no Gentile present. When He made the covenant with them during the ‘*Lord’s Supper*’, the ‘Christian church (of Gentile believers)’ had not even been born yet. That had to wait till *Acts 2*.

Why did I erroneously believe that the ‘New Covenant’ was not made with Israel? I realise the root cause of my flawed thinking was my own biblical illiteracy and the focus of popular church teaching.

### Biblical illiteracy

I came to faith believing an incomplete gospel that limited salvation to an insurance policy against hellfire; I had naively thought it was all about accepting the free gift of salvation and improving myself now and ‘*playing the harp in heaven*’ for eternity.

It took me some time, poring over Scriptures, to piece together God’s grand plan to save mankind culminating in Christ’s return to rule mankind for 1000 years from Jerusalem, His eternal capital, and following that, a new heaven and a new earth. I learnt from many Old Testament prophecies that God has not finished with Israel yet and neither should I omit Israel from our mind, my heart and my prayers.

### The Focus of Popular Church Teaching

Following the tradition of ‘*Pietism*’, popular preaching topics include, prayer, giving, devotion and outreach. Israel is conspicuously absent. Curiously, even after 1948 when Israel returned to the world stage, many churches still retain the teaching that the ‘New Covenant’ is a covenant made between God and the Church, and so there is no need to teach about Israel. The very fact that the Jewish people have been exiled for almost two millennia from their homeland, had returned to re-establish their nation, is clear evidence that God is keeping His covenant with Israel! We should include Israel in the curriculum of churches and seminaries.

An old proverb says: “*None as blind as those who will not see.*” Let us not be counted with the blind.

## Short News

### North American Jews Make Israel Home



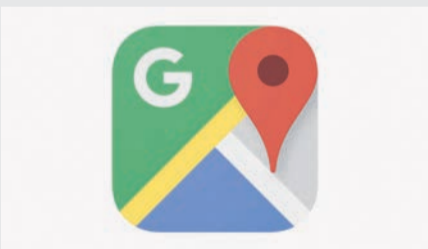
239 North American olim, arrived in Israel recently including 57 future Lone Soldiers, dozens of Jewish communal leaders and 27 medical professionals, as well as a diverse group of individuals from 24 US states and three Canadian provinces. On board the flight were 30 families, 90 children, and three sets of twins.

A special welcome ceremony for the new Olim was held at Ben Gurion Airport upon the flight’s arrival and included more than one thousand guests, friends, family members and Israeli dignitaries, including Aliyah and Integration Minister Sofa Landver, an immigrant from Russia, and Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister’s Office Dr. Michael Oren, an immigrant from the US.

### Israel Leads in Sustainable Development

Investment in research and development is recognised as a means of promoting the UN’s sustainable development goals, as it has a positive impact on the lives of people worldwide. Israel ranks second in the world with its commitment to invest in research and development. It invests 4.2% of its GDP (gross domestic product). It is even leading in the number of researchers per 1 million inhabitants.

### Why Doesn’t Google Maps use Hebrew?



Google Maps is perhaps the most impressive cartographic endeavor in world history, with nearly the entire globe detailed down to the street level. It uses local languages to display foreign places — except for Israel!

Users looking for a map of Eilat, for example, will find it only in English, even though its neighbouring foreign cities - Taba, Egypt and Aqaba, Jordan - are displayed in both English and Arabic. Nowhere in Israel are Hebrew place names displayed. Even obscure languages like Ethiopia, get the dual language treatment. But not Israel.

This is surprising, considering Google has large research and development offices in Haifa and Tel Aviv and has made significant investments in Israeli startups - such as its \$1.3 billion purchase of Israeli map tech company Waze.

# Refugees Forever?

By Dr Colin Rubenstein AM, Executive Director, Australia/Israel and Jewish Affairs Council (AIJAC)

**The Trump Administration’s recent decisions to stop funding the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) and close the Palestine Liberation Organisation’s mission in Washington may appear, prima facie, hostile to Palestinians.**

In reality, however, if responded to in the correct spirit, these moves could potentially be the catalyst for positive, empowering steps that encourage the Palestinian leadership to shed unhealthy rejectionism and unsustainable financial dependencies and redirect their energies towards bettering the lives of their people.

For instance, consider UNRWA and the situation of the 5.3 million Palestinian ‘refugees’ it looks after.

While UNRWA provides a variety of humanitarian services such as education and healthcare to these refugees – overwhelmingly descendants of since-deceased refugees of the Arabs’ 1948 war against partition – this aid comes with the baggage of the agency’s politicisation and exploitation of the refugee issue.

And the most important consequence of that baggage is that, after 69 years, generations of Palestinian families are still condemned to live as refugees, apparently forever, together with all their descendants.

UNRWA, unlike the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) which handles all of the world’s other refugee crises, has no mandate to resettle a single refugee and perpetuates the conflict by using its own unique definition of refugee that includes those descendants and even millions of Palestinians who have full Jordanian citizenship.

Remarkably, UNRWA has continued to maintain refugee camps in Palestinian-ruled areas and provide services to families who have moved out of such camps and into the Palestinian Authority (PA).

What began as an initiative to improve the quality of life for refugees has become an organisation which principally exists to safeguard the Palestinian claim of a so-called ‘right of return’ to pre-state Israel and educate new generations of Palestinians to cling to this false hope.

Given that every descendant of a refugee is also a refugee under UNRWA’s definition, and no one can ever cease being a Palestinian refugee except by dying, the number of Palestinian refugees is slated to continue growing indefinitely as it has for the past 69 years – and so are the demands on donors to fund aid for these refugees. At some point, this was always going to become unsustainable.

Indeed, UNRWA’s unsustainable, perpetually growing demand for donors was cited by the US State Department as a primary reason for opting out of continuing to fund UNRWA.

Moreover, by discouraging Palestinians from living normal lives in the name of



Photo Credit: iStockPhoto

preserving the legally baseless and historically unprecedented ‘right of return’ to Israel – a ‘right’ virtually impossible to imagine ever being implemented – UNRWA is a trap for the refugees it serves.

Thus, in a recent op-ed, Israeli peace activist and former Labor cabinet minister Yossi Beilin called the US decision to stop funding UNRWA ‘just’, because as long as UNRWA exists, Palestinians can never be ‘emancipated’ from their ‘refugee-dom’.

**... this aid comes with the baggage of the agency’s politicisation and exploitation of the refugee issue.**

Yet internal politics at the UN have always shielded UNRWA from reform.

*“For the Palestinian leadership (and) the leaders of the Arab world,” Beilin wrote, “there is nothing more unifying than paying lip service to the right of return, a right they know full well will never be realised.”*

UNRWA can’t even clearly claim to represent the will of the Palestinian public on the ‘right of return’ issue. In January, the latest annual poll by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research found that 62% of those surveyed would support a two-state peace agreement that resolved the refugee issue through compensation.

Meanwhile, the US decision to close the PLO’s mission in Washington also fits into a larger policy of reworking the untenable Middle East status quo.

The closure order was anything but hasty, coming many months after the PLO announced it would cut ties with the White House and had preemptively rejected the anticipated Trump peace plan, dubbed the ‘deal of the century’, sight unseen.

US legislation is actually clear that the closure is a required consequence of Palestinian behaviour. Under a 1987 law, the PLO is only allowed to operate in the US if the President signs a waiver certifying that its operation there ‘is important to the national security interests’ of the US. Subsequent laws in 2011 and 2015 dictate the President cannot issue such a waiver unless one of two

things is true – he can certify that the Palestinians are not promoting, supporting, or endorsing action against Israel at the International Criminal Court (ICC) or the Palestinians have entered into ‘direct and meaningful negotiation with Israel.’

It is simply a fact that neither of these provisos are true today. The PA is trying to take Israel to the ICC and has not engaged in even the pretence of direct negotiations with Israel since 2014. So

both as a legal and political issue, under such circumstances, the US could not countenance Palestinian officials undermining the White House and feverishly lobbying foreign ambassadors against American policies in the shadow of the Capitol, in defiance of US law.

The Trump Administration’s moves are clearly intended to pressure the Palestinian leadership and transform a frozen and unpropitious status quo. While that may feel threatening to many Palestinians, it also provides an opportunity to improve future Palestinian prospects.

State-building, integration and resettlement of the ‘refugees’, and much-increased self-reliance are all possibilities which are open in principle to the Palestinians if the damaging current logjam, constructed from 70 years of unhelpful myths and counterproductive institutions like UNRWA, is overcome.

Sadly, historically, the Palestinian leadership have had a poor record for seizing such opportunities when they are presented to them.

With PA President Abbas’ tenure in power clearly coming to an end, a new leadership could theoretically seize this opportunity for constructive, transformative change away from an unproductive status quo.

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## Short News

### Per Capita Patents: Israel 5th Worldwide



Over the past 18 years, Israel has always been at the forefront regarding the number of international patents per capita, filed under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT).

The peak came in 2000 when Israel ranked third behind Finland and Sweden among the world’s registered patents. Today Israel ranks fifth behind Japan, Sweden, Switzerland and South Korea. Finland has fallen to sixth place.

### Heartfelt Thanks from South Israel

Christians for Israel received a letter from the mayor of Sha’ar Hanegev Regional Council to thank all our supporters for their contribution towards the purchase of new firefighting apparatus. As we reported in the previous edition, Southern Israel has been plagued by fires caused by balloons and kites coming from Gaza. In his letter, the mayor wrote: *“Thank you all, from the bottom of our hearts, for being there for us! May these challenging days pass peacefully.”*

### SodaStream to Expand in Israel



SodaStream’s new investment of over US \$25 million, will include expanding its main production plant in Rahat, which currently employs 1,100 people. When the expansion plan is completed, SodaStream will hire 160 new employees. It has been reported that SodaStream’s activities in the Negev *“have changed the employment situation in the South, especially in Rahat, by providing hundreds of jobs to Bedouin women, thereby strengthening the population throughout the region”.*

### Medical School in Samaria

In August, the University of Ariel opened a medical school. The university has been under attack by the BDS-movement for a while, because of its location in Samaria, within the ‘disputed’ area. Nevertheless, the university is flourishing. The new medical school is a real necessity: Israel has a shortage of physicians.

# Rami Sherman's Role at Entebbe

By Bryce Turner, Director Christians for Israel New Zealand

A police officer clears the way for rescued Air France hostages returning from Entebbe Airport. Photo: Moshe Milner 1976. Courtesy of flickr.



Major (Ret) Rami Sherman, commander of one of the special operations teams who carried out the Entebbe Hostage Rescue in 1976, recently toured New Zealand and Australia. Christians for Israel New Zealand director, Bryce Turner, was able to spend some time with Rami.

***I notice that you did not choose to really share your story and your experience until relatively recently, what made you decide to start sharing it?***

"When we returned home, our first duty was to keep moving forward with other operations for the security of the state. There was no time for speaking out to the public. After four years I decided to start a new life, out of the security forces. I found myself in NZ, busy doing other things; I became a yoga teacher and the story just faded.

During the following years, the story just didn't interest me very much. I became a physiotherapist, which is what I occupied myself with for more than 25 years.

Then in 2016, 40 years after the operation, I guess I became old enough to write my story as one who took part. Then one day I got a telephone call from a Chabad Rabbi in Copenhagen asking me if I would share my story, and since then my life has changed."

***Your story - of your involvement in the Entebbe rescue - is fascinating, especially for us living on the other side of the world, but the message you bring is much deeper. If you were able to convey one message to the world, what would it be?***

"There are a few, but the most significant is seen in the actions of Captain Michel Bachos

and the 12 crew members of the Air France flight. In his decision to stay with the Jewish hostages, at the time when he could have flown out to Paris with the non-Jewish hostages, Captain Bachos showed me the conflict of being a human – constantly choosing what is first in life; values like solidarity, humanity; responsibility for others or the interests of the individual for himself. Everyone must confront this conflict in his own life."

***You speak of 'rediscovering' your Jewish heritage through the experience of Entebbe, what does this mean to you?***

"It was a slow process. Firstly, for more than 25 years after leaving the military, I was deeply into Buddhism, slowly journeying until one day He (God) showed me his face. From that day my life was different.

Then, by being able to share my story with Jewish groups, I realised that all my negativity had disappeared. I was no longer just reacting automatically to 'being a Jew', it became real, personal. I am still learning more about what this means, even at the age of 65, but I now have a much deeper understanding of why we are in that piece of land."

***I am told that you are a classic 'kibbutznik'. How has your experience of the Kibbutz influenced your life?***

"Having been born in a kibbutz, and lived virtually all my life in the kibbutz, I'll share two important things out of many.

The first word which surrounds us from the first moment we are born is 'sharing'. It is not an easy life, sharing almost everything,

but it really prepared me for the army.

The second important concept was that 'we are the kibbutzim on the top', and we should be there to help establish the country. It is a difficult concept to understand, but even harder to live out. Our motivation was to be there in any way to support the country."

***As criticism of Israel by the world's media continues, what do you feel? What message would you have for the media?***

"I mostly worry about how deeply today's media, in very covert and deceptive ways, brainwashes people. I really worry about the new man who believes that he is a free man but doesn't understand how shallow and manipulated he is."

***How do you think countries around the world could do better in their relationship with Israel?***

"I believe there are steps that Israel should take first. My country, Israel, should focus first on working more and more at being a lighthouse for any human being. It is not an easy path, but I believe it is the only way; it is the mission of the Jews. More than that, it is the mission of all people living together in the land. We must continually strive to create an example of how different people could live together, celebrating the human spirit in our daily lives."

***What do you feel Israel as a nation could do better, to improve its relations with other countries around the world?***

"As any coach says to his players when the team is down in the league, 'Let's go back to basics.'"

## 'River of Tears' Going to Europe

By Perry Trotter, Creator of Shadows of Shoah

Christians for Israel New Zealand spoke to artist Perry Trotter, creator of a unique Holocaust exhibition that has been invited to Europe.

***One could not be further from the Holocaust than in New Zealand. How did you become so involved in this issue?***

I have long had an interest in antisemitism, largely driven by my study of Scripture and realisation of Israel's centrality to past, present and future history.

Direct engagement with the Holocaust was triggered by a 2008 visit to a kibbutz. My wife Sheree and I learned that there were a number of survivors living there and we asked if we could return for interviews and photography. I had no particular plan for the material, but upon returning to New Zealand, I began to develop a format by which to present excerpts of those powerful stories.

***What is unique about your work?***

The Holocaust may be the most documented event in human history. What has struck me, however, is that the sheer magnitude of destruction can so

easily overwhelm. The personal experience of the individual son or daughter, brother or sister, is too readily subsumed in the statistic.

Detailed academic documentation is profoundly important. But it is the human face, the pathos of this tragedy, that we seek to communicate.

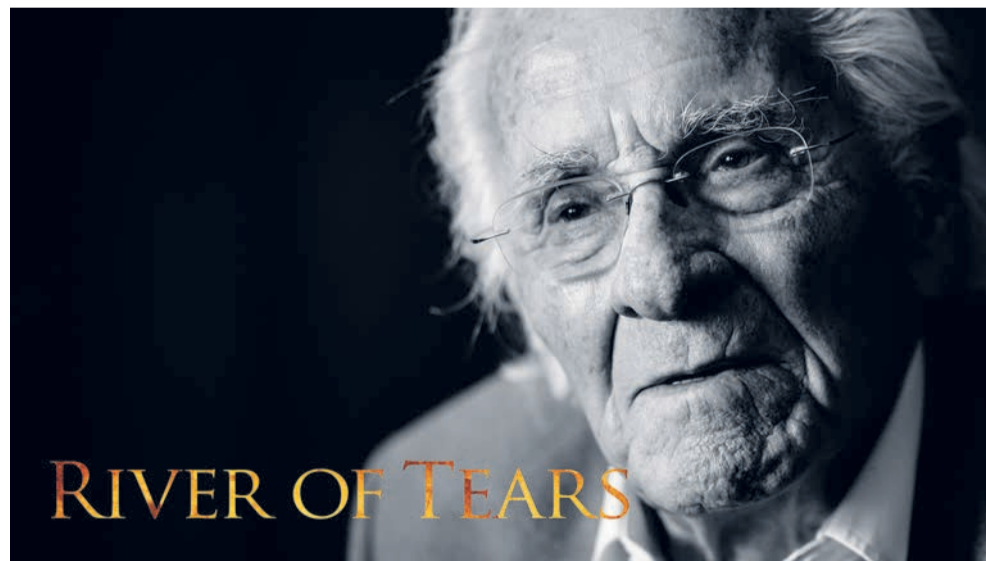
From an interview, we distil just 15-23 lines of text. These are choreographed with black and white portraits and original music. I attempt to communicate this most evil of events with beauty and sensitivity - while of course maintaining historical accuracy.

Ours is a media-saturated generation and is very aesthetically driven. Our work does seem to reach this generation in a way that other media may not.

***Tell us about your exhibitions.***

Our first exhibition was launched by New Zealand Prime Minister John Key in 2013 at a UN International Holocaust Remembrance Day event, followed by a tour to institutions throughout New Zealand.

The new exhibition is entitled *River of Tears* - inspired by Jeremiah's words:



"Oh wall of the daughter of Zion, let your tears flow like a river." It is an ambitious work and uses a number of sensory elements - water, haze, movement of 'bricks', the sound of the railway. It takes immersive engagement to a new level. (View the video at [www.riveroftears.net](http://www.riveroftears.net).)

We established a charitable trust for the work in 2012. It is a non-sectarian body, with a number of Jewish leaders serving on our board.

***We understand you will take your work to Europe?***

We are delighted to have received an invitation to take *River of Tears* to Croatia. The invitation has come from Festival of Tolerance - JFF Zagreb, the president of which is Branko Lustig, Academy Award-winning producer of Schindler's List. The exhibition travels to Croatia January 2019. We hope to tour Europe, where, sadly, this work is so needed."

# Dreadfully Direct Psalm 2, Part 4a

© Johannes Gerloff, Theologian, Journalist, Lecturer and Author

*This is the fourth instalment of a longer article written by German theologian and journalist Johannes Gerloff on Psalm 2. The full text of the article, including extensive footnotes, can be found at [www.c4israel.org/teaching-articles/](http://www.c4israel.org/teaching-articles/)*

The God revealed to us by the Bible is not just sitting in heaven, smiling about the events on planet Earth. He interferes. The prophetic psalmist of *Psalm 2* foresees a time when God speaks up, audibly, understandably, unequivocally, unmistakably.

**“Then He shall speak to them in His wrath. In His fury, He will terrify them” (Psalm 2:5).** God does not state objectively, from a distance, neutrally or even scientifically what might happen. He gets emotional, terrifyingly emotional.

Amos Hakham<sup>i</sup> hears in the language of this verse ‘a warrior of flesh and blood. First, he mocks his enemy, who is weaker than himself. Then he proceeds with fury against him to fight and destroy him.’<sup>iii</sup> The great Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (‘Rashi’)<sup>iii</sup> refers to the ‘rage of fury’ in the ‘Song of the Sea’ (Exodus 15:8), and Hakham adds, ‘that one actually hears the snorting of the nose in this language. When a person is angry, he actually ejects breath through his nose.’<sup>iv</sup> This is audible in the Hebrew word for nose, ‘af’ (אף), which is used here.

The Bible testifies of the word of God: He speaks, and it happens. ‘He calls, and everything stands there’ (Isaiah 48:13).

It quotes the living God several times with the words: ‘I say it, and I will also do it.’<sup>v</sup> Even the Hebrew word stem used in *Psalms 2:5* to denote God’s speaking does not distinguish between ‘word’ and ‘thing.’ What is being ‘said’ is one and the same as the ‘thing’ it designates. The object enters into being by speaking. The Hebrew word ‘davar’ (דבר) has the meaning ‘word’ as well as ‘thing’ or ‘object’.

When God speaks, He does not just utter His thoughts. Instead, His word cuts powerfully into the waves of the sea of nations (compare *Psalms 2:1-2*). When the living Creator God breaks His silence, He can no longer be ignored by His creatures. Then, an energy is being released that makes any human-imaginable nuclear explosion seem insignificant in comparison. God shapes the events in this world through His word.

Samson Raphael Hirsch<sup>vi</sup> recognises in the Hebrew word ‘to frighten’ (bahal/בהל) a relationship with the word ‘ba’al’ (בעל) which is usually translated as ‘lord,’ ‘husband,’ ‘proprietor,’ or ‘owner.’<sup>vii</sup> Originally it refers to the one who has overwhelmed, subjugated and taken possession of another. Hirsch opines, this frightening is about ‘the overwhelming of the inner being, (it is about) consternation.’<sup>viii</sup>

Rashi observes that God’s speech is not directed in favour of the nations, but against them. Then he asks: “What is the speech of God actually all about?” Radak<sup>ix</sup> answers, some interpreters see a

Photo credit: Shutterstock



connection between the Hebrew word stem ‘davar’ (דבר) used here for God’s speaking and ‘the serious plague’ (קִדְרָה קָדַר), which Moses threatens in Egypt in *Exodus 9:3*. There, the Hebrew word ‘dever’ (דֶּבֶר) appears for ‘plague,’ which is totally identical to ‘davar’ (דבר) without vocalisation. The rabbinic teachers further observe that in *2 Chronicles 22:10*, it is said of the wicked Israelite queen Atalya ‘she said’ (וַתֹּדַבֵּר) which in reality meant ‘she killed everyone who belonged to the royal family.’ Ibn Ezra<sup>x</sup> summarises concisely, “This is the language of death!”

Footnotes:

<sup>i</sup> (1921-2012) became known in Israel as champion of the first Israeli and worldwide Bible quiz in August 1958, which revealed Amos’ genius and established his legendary career as interpreter of Scripture.

<sup>ii</sup> Amos Hakham, *Book of Psalms*, books 3-5, *Psalms 73-150* (Jerusalem, Hotzaat Mosad haRav Kook, 6th edition,

1990/1, תש”ח; Hebrew), 7.

<sup>iii</sup> Rabbi Shlomo Ben Yitzchak (France, 1040-1105) or ‘Rabbi Shlomo Itzhaki,’ is one of the extraordinary interpreters of Jewish writings and the very first who explained the Bible and the Talmud comprehensively.

<sup>iv</sup> See note ii.

<sup>v</sup> Ezekiel 17:24; 22:14; 36:36; 37:14.

<sup>vi</sup> Germany, Hamburg 1808- Frankfurt 1888. He is seen as one of the founding fathers of the neo-orthodox movement.

<sup>vii</sup> Jaacov Lavy, *Langenscheidts Handwörterbuch Hebräisch-Deutsch* (Berlin, München, Wien, Zürich: Langenscheidt, 7. Auflage 1985), 79.

<sup>viii</sup> Samson Raphael Hirsch, *Psalmen* (Basel: Verlag Morascha, 2. Neubearbeitete Auflage 2005), 9.

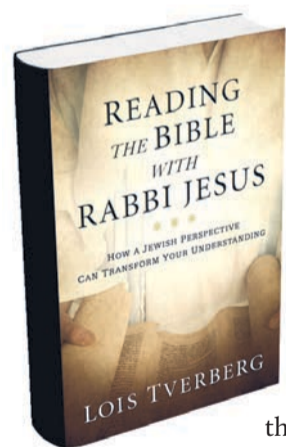
<sup>ix</sup> Rabbi David Ben Yosef Kimchi (France, 1160-1235), the so-called ‘Radak’, was the first among the great exegetes and grammarians of the Hebrew language.

<sup>x</sup> Rabbi Avraham Ben Me’ir Ibn Ezra (Spain, 1089-1164) is one of the outstanding poets, linguists, interpreters of Scripture and philosophers of the Middle Ages.

**Johannes Gerloff (1963) is a German theologian, journalist and Bible teacher who has lived in Jerusalem for over 20 years.**

## Reading the Bible with Rabbi Jesus

By Kees de Vreugd, Theologian, Christians for Israel International, and Editor of Israel and the Church



Jesus’s parables fit perfectly into a non-Western, Jewish culture that expressed itself through tangible metaphors. He was engaging in sophisticated theological teaching, but we miss it if we are looking for the abstract deductive arguments of the Greeks. Jesus often based his reasoning on experience rather than if-then logic.

In her books, Lois Tverberg is exploring the Jewish world of Jesus. The third volume, *Reading the Bible with Rabbi Jesus*, was published at the beginning of 2018. I spoke with her at the presentation of the Dutch translation in Nijkerk, Netherlands.

Tverberg is a scientist of origin. Coming from a sound Norwegian Lutheran background, she started doing Bible studies to get a deeper understanding of the Word of God. Not satisfied with the liberal atmosphere at theological seminars, she found new perspectives in the discovery of the Jewish context of the first century. All of a sudden, Jesus’ sayings and doing made sense. Most significantly, the study of Jesus in His

Jewish context gives proof of the historicity of the Bible.

The Jewish context means in the first place the Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament. But it is the Hebrew Bible as lived and studied by the Jewish people. Early rabbinic writings, therefore, provide a lot of background material for understanding the New Testament.

Tverberg writes for an audience of Christian adults, non-scholarly, non-academic, to share insights from Jesus’ Jewish culture that equip Christians to read the Bible from a Hebraic perspective. “I am writing as a lay person, but try to be choosy in selecting the sources.”

In her first book, *Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus*, she explored the general Jewish context of Jesus and the New Testament. In her second book, *Walking in the Dust (of Rabbi Jesus)*, she is focusing on sayings of Jesus in a rabbinic context. Nevertheless, she says, her approach is as a gentile, to learn and to teach gentiles. In reading both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, she is learning from Jewish scholars. But there is no agenda towards the Jews.

**This book review: *Reading The Bible With Rabbi Jesus - How a Jewish Perspective Can Transform Your Understanding* is written by Lois Tverberg. To purchase this book, go to [www.ourrabbijesus.com](http://www.ourrabbijesus.com).**



## Israel Study Tour for women

8 -16 March 2019

Theme: *Women in the Bible and Powerful Women in Israel Today*

We will study various better and lesser known women of the Bible, who have made an impact in the time they lived, and will also meet Jewish and Arab women in Israel who make a special contribution to society today. Women in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Galilee, Tel Aviv and Rehovoth will give us an insight into their lives and activities.

Bible study, times of worship and prayer will make this an unforgettable tour! For further information, a detailed itinerary, or to make a booking, go to [www.c4israel.org/tour-women](http://www.c4israel.org/tour-women)

# Letters of the Aleph-bet: Tsade צי

By Kees de Vreugd, Theologian, Christians for Israel International, and Editor of Israel and the Church

The eighteenth letter of the aleph-bet is *tsade*. In the modern pronunciation, it represents a sharp ts-sound. A well-known Hebrew word with *tsade* is *tsaddik* (righteous one). This letter is sometimes also called *tsaddik*, first attested in Yiddish. In the past, the *tsade* was often transliterated with z, hence, for example, the spelling Zion for the Hebrew *Tsion*.

The *tsade* has two shapes. At the end of a word, it is written with a downward tail, just like the *kaph* and the *peh*, whereas on other positions it has a flat bottom.

In classic script, the *tsade* is provided with a small crown. In Talmudic tradition, the two forms symbolise that the *tsaddik* (righteous one), who is characterised by his humility and therefore is bent, in the end, will be put upright.

The numerical value of *tsade* is ninety. Sarah was ninety years old when Isaac was born. In the Mishna tractate *“Teachings of the Fathers”* (Pirkei Avot 5:21) different age groups are characterised. A ninety-year-old is bent, it says. The body

becomes weak. But when it is good, someone of that age has also come to bow down for God and become entirely dependent on Him. As a result, he lives very close to God. This is first and foremost expressed in the power of his prayer.

*“The righteous stand firm forever”* (Proverbs 10:25). The Hebrew word *olam* that is the translation for ‘forever’, also means world. You could also read Hebrew as: *“The righteous are the foundation of the world.”* The world is founded on, exists for the

sake of the (36) righteous, who are hidden in every generation, according to Jewish tradition.

*“The righteous will live by his faith”* (Habakkuk 2:4). Man is created in the image (Hebrew: *tselem*: *tsade-lamed-mem*) of God. The righteous one reflects the image of God. *Emunah* (faith) has the numerical value of 102. The numerical value of *tsaddik* is the double: 204. This represents two levels of believing: in God as the Source of creation, and in God who reveals Himself in His Torah.

## ‘I’m Not Alone’ Campaign Growing

By Ariella Bernstein, Jerusalem Foundation

**More than a year ago, the Jerusalem Foundation embarked on the ‘I’m Not Alone’ campaign to support Jerusalem’s Holocaust survivors.**

There are five branches of Café Europa day centres that allow participants to meet and bond with others who suffered the same tragedies during World War II. One may have expected a decrease in the demand for Café Europa over the years, yet the number of participants continues to grow, particularly among English speakers. The programme takes place at Beit Yehudit Community Center in the German Colony neighbourhood in Jerusalem where they served 165 Holocaust survivors in 2017, up from 100 in 2016.

### >> There is a reason for this 65% increase

As Holocaust survivors get older, they face additional challenges and losses, such as losing a spouse or decreased physical and mental capacities. Their needs are often greater, but the available support systems are more limited.

These new challenges add yet another layer of complexity to their unresolved grief from other traumatic experiences. Café Europa provides critical services to deal with these complex hardships.

The Café Europa English Speakers Club provides a place to feel safe and understood. The group experience reduces the feeling of isolation and allows survivors to connect through retelling positive and negative experiences. Survivors can speak of what they gained, lost and then rebuilt, sometimes many times over.

Music, lectures, cultural outings, lessons on survivors’ benefits and technology, coupled with Café Europa’s supportive environment, offer comfort and the freedom to process past experiences and their influence on their lives today.

On a regular basis, between 20 - 35 English speakers attend the Beit Yehudit Café Europa every week and the impact on their lives is evident through some of their recent comments:

*“Marilyn Lyons (singer) reminded me of my youth. After the camps, I wanted to dance, as those were the songs we danced and sang to.”* Gerta Salon, an orphaned survivor.



A speaker at one of the weekly Beit Yehudit Café Europa gatherings

*“The session you had on our benefits helped us financially. We got our hearing test for free!”* Jane and Eric Tietz, German Jews who escaped Nazi-occupied Europe to Switzerland in 1941.

*“The talk about technology was wonderful! I Facetimed my guide in Poland and my*

*grandson in America at the same time!”* Renna Quint, an orphaned survivor of Bergen Belsen.

**You can donate to Café Europa (Holocaust Survivors - “I’m not Alone”) by using the coupon on the back page.**

## The Summer Vacation Bible School

By Elvira & Pastor Naim Khoury, First Baptist Church Bethlehem

To our friends of Christians for Israel, we want to thank you for your generous donation towards the 2018 summer programme at the Vacation Bible School.

A lot of children attended this unique programme. They thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Each morning when they arrived, they were very eager to see what had been prepared for them for that day.

The children were taught stories from the Bible; they memorised verses, coloured pictures, learned Christian songs, made crafts, played games and enjoyed the refreshments they got each day.

But the best part was when children invited the Lord into their hearts during the Bible class stories and were happy to ask questions. They were very excited,

raising their hands up happily wanting their questions to be answered, and quoting verses they had learned.

They learned how to pray, and continued to do so at home.

One family joyfully told us: *“Our children learned to pray before eating their meals and before going to bed to sleep. We were surprised to see them doing this at home, as we had never seen them do that before.”*

Another family commented: *“They returned home happy, singing and telling us what they learned that day”.*

It is victorious for us to see His Word being spread all around as we do His will! Glory to God for allowing us the chance to do so for His glory!

**Christians for Israel supports Arab Christians through the First Baptist Church of Rev Naim Khoury.**

**You can donate to the First Baptist Church Bethlehem by using the coupon on the back page.**



Photo Credit: flickr

# A Small Exodus from Ukraine

By Koen Carlier, Christians for Israel Ukraine

The summer months leading up to the Jewish New Year (9-10 September) have been busier than usual. Why? There are a number of factors why more and more Jews are leaving Ukraine. Firstly, the ongoing conflict of war in the East since March 2014 and the uncertain future. Two major Aliyah Fairs took place in Kiev in the spring and in Kharkov, which were visited by thousands of Jewish families.

Numerous integration programmes, companies and organisations gave an expert explanation of what newcomers could expect. VIP visitor at the fair was Israeli Minister of Aliyah and integration, Sofa Landver (who made Aliyah from the former Soviet Union in 1979), who addressed the audience at the end.

Another factor contributing to the choices that potential *olim* make is the 20 Aliyah seminars, organised this year by Christians for Israel and JAFI (Jewish Agency for Israel) in small and large cities. And one must not underestimate the tens of thousands of *olim* who have already made Aliyah in recent years who inform their family and friends about their new homeland. Add to this rising nationalism and increasing anti-Semitism, and not surprisingly, the decision to leave for Israel becomes easier and is made quicker.

## >> Free Assistance

In Ukraine, we mainly provide free practical help. The Jewish families are grateful for that. We always explain what motivates us to do this work. It is the Lord Himself who calls the nations to bring His People home (*Isaiah 49:22*).

## >> Among them will be the blind and lame

Elderly and socially disadvantaged people are also welcome in Israel. But they have to be patient, because a special place must be found for them, as well as guidance, for example, Juliya!

Ceded at birth by her Jewish mother, Juliya ended up in an orphanage. Many years later we received a phone call with the question: "Could you help Juliya?" That is what we are doing now. Every time we help an elderly or younger person in a wheelchair or a blind man on his way to Israel, the prophet Jeremiah reminds us what we see in Ukraine in our times (see *Jeremiah 31:7-9*).

In short, it remains a challenge for us to be able to meet all the requests for help. Also in Israel, it is a challenge to give an average of 2500 *olim* who are 'coming home' every month from the four corners of the earth, a new place to stay. Each trip with *olim* to an airport is very emotional as those who leave realise there is no turning back. We then have an excellent opportunity to share and comfort the Jewish families on their way home, telling them that many Christians in the nations are praying for them and support their return!

Each person, young or old, is allowed to take up to 70kg with them to start a new life in Israel, hence why there are so many bags!

**BRING  
THE JEWS  
HOME**



## YES! I Want to Support Christians for Israel



### CHRISTIANS FOR ISRAEL MINISTRY

- ☐ My donation for ministry costs, print & post

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☐ CFOIC - Christian Friends of Israeli Communities  
☐ Emergency Food Parcels Ukraine - \$12 per parcel  
☐ First Baptist Church Bethlehem and Holy Land Ministry

### ALIYAH - BRING THE JEWS HOME

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☐ One busload (25 people) (Ukraine) - US \$5250  
☐ First Home in the Homeland  
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☐ Why Israel? Book by Willem Glashouwer

To order these and other resources, go to [www.c4israel.org/webshop](http://www.c4israel.org/webshop)

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