





## Prayer Points



By Pieter Bénard  
Christians for  
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Coordinator

### ISRAEL

- The observance of Passover through to 7 April is a time of sadness (Exodus 2:23), but also a time of joy (Exodus 6:5-7). The attitude of many nations today is the same as that of Egypt then. Pray for Israel and the nations and that God will fulfill His purpose.
- Pray for the powers of spiritual misdirection in Israel to be broken. Many Israelis are trying to find peace and comfort in the New Age movement, astrology, fortune telling, and various forms of meditation. Pray that they may lay this aside, turn towards God, and find Him.
- Give thanks that when Israel returns to their land the Lord God is there with them! Even when we do not understand all that is happening in and around Israel we can trust in Him. *Jeremiah 31:13 says, "I will turn their mourning into joy; I will comfort them."*

### INTERCESSION

- Being a watcher, staying alert and interceding is not always easy. What we need is discipline, patience, and faith. Continue to intercede. The Lord is your strength!
- "Christians pay the highest price for the Arab spring", claims Nabeel Yousef of TWR Middle East. "Where dictators have been driven out, Muslim extremists seize power and Christians are oppressed." Pray for the Christian communities in the Middle East.
- Watchfulness is a prerequisite to prayer. Being a watcher or lookout involves alertness. Let us respond with intercession and thanksgiving to the events that we see taking place in Israel.

### CHRISTIANS FOR ISRAEL

- Pray that our solidarity with Israel may add to our longing expectancy of the return of our Saviour Jesus.
- Will you please pray for the volunteers and employees of Christians for Israel worldwide? People from Christians for Israel affiliates around the world are focused on Jerusalem, the city of the great King, clearly bringing forward Jesus, the Jewish people, and the restored nation of Israel.
- Pray for Koen and Ira Carlier, our field workers in Ukraine. Together with their team, they do essential work for the Aliyah movement. It is extraordinary that all over the world, from Oceania to Uganda, from USA to the Netherlands, people are praying for the return of Israel (Zephaniah 3:20).

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

# 70 Years: Time to Reflect

By Andrew Tucker, International Editor & Executive Director, Christians for Israel International



***"Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the sovereign Lord when I show myself holy through you before their eyes". (Ezekiel 36:23)***

The 70th birthday of the State of Israel is cause for celebration. But it is also cause to stop and reflect on what God is doing in our generation and to consider how we should respond.

Through the prophet Isaiah – writing in the 7th century BCE when the Kingdom

knees will bow to His Son Jesus Christ – the Son of God who has become the glorified Son of Man. The restoration of Israel is all about the holiness and glory of the Lord.

The passage quoted above from the prophet Ezekiel tells us that the Lord's holiness will be established 'through' Israel. Has God's holiness been established through Israel? No, not yet. The modern nation of Israel is weak and imperfect. Nevertheless, there is no doubt the physical restoration of Israel is part of this process of establishing God's holiness. Because it is so clearly a miraculous work, a work that no man could plan or achieve.

The establishment of the King of kings as ruler of the nations in the midst of Jacob (Israel) on the throne of His father David – this was the great promise to Mary when the Angel Gabriel announced the birth of the Saviour (see Luke 1).

## What is it that we see? We see a nation being restored; we see God at work. Israel is a work in progress

of Judah was in the Babylonian captivity – God gives a majestic vision of His future glory. The prophet sees the eternal purposes of God. He looks, as it were, beyond the Babylonian captivity, beyond the partial return under Ezra, Nehemiah and Zerubbabel, beyond the rebuilding of the Temple and beyond the time of the servant Messiah (Isaiah 53), to that age when Messiah will reign, and Israel will be restored to its rightful position as head of the nations.

God tells us through the prophets that restored Israel will be a banner to the nations in the last days. It will be God's warning - his proclamation, his signpost showing us that God is preparing all things for his ultimate goal: the coming of Messiah and the establishment of His kingdom on earth.

Throughout the Old Testament, and confirmed by the Lord Jesus Himself, the Lord tells us that the Jews will be dispersed among the nations, but He promises He will turn with compassion again to the Jewish people. He does not say He will do this because of Israel, or because of the church or the nations. No, He is doing it despite the imperfection and failures of Israel, and despite the imperfections and failures of the Church. He does it because He promised to do so:

*"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there, but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it". (Isaiah 55:10-11)*

In other words, God is restoring Israel in our generation because He said He would do so. Period. And God tells us even more. He tells us why He said He wants to do it: so that His Name will be glorified when all

The restored kingdom of Israel is God's vehicle for testing the Church and the nations. Like all of God's truths, it is so divisive, because it mystifies all those who seek to build their own kingdom and rely on their own reason or understanding. It is the great stone that is 'cut out by no human hand' that crushes the fourth (Roman) empire in the vision of Daniel 2. It is the 'heavy stone' that hurts the nations that try to lift it in the end days (Zechariah 12). And it is the stumbling block that causes the fallen church (Babylon) to seek an alliance with the Anti-Christ, in Revelation 17.

It is strange that we Christians are so blind to this. We should know better. We have been given the mind of Christ, through whom we may understand the thoughts of God. (1 Corinthians 2:11-13). We have been called and equipped to 'make the manifold wisdom of God known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places' (Eph 3:10). We have been given 'eye salve' (Revelation 3) to see the world through God's eyes.

What is it that we see? We see a nation being restored; we see God at work. Israel is a work in progress. But it is HIS work - not ours - and we have no right to interfere in what He is doing.

How should the Church respond? I believe the Bible commands us to:

1. be watchmen, seeing and understanding the times in which we live;
2. pray to the Lord to fulfil what He has promised;
3. comfort the Jewish people in their hour of need;
4. support the restoration of Israel in practical ways (this includes helping non-Jews in the land, and promoting Jewish/Arab reconciliation - see the article about First Baptist Church Bethlehem on page 11); and

5. proclaim God's purposes to the nations and all rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

The future is glorious, but the road thereto is difficult. The church, the nations and Israel are about to go through a great time of trial. The Spirit of lawlessness is gaining power in the world. For those with eyes to see, we can hardly doubt that we are entering into the greatest conflict in world history, the time of 'Jacob's trouble' of which all Scripture speaks, between the Prince of darkness and the God of Israel.

We wish the State of Israel every blessing on its 70th birthday. More importantly, we wish the Jewish people, and all the inhabitants of Israel, the peace and shalom of the Lord, and the glorious future that God has promised.

*"For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake, I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a shining torch. The nations shall see your righteousness, and all kings your glory, and you shall be called by a new name, that the mouth of the Lord will give" (Isaiah 62:1-2).*

## 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

**Pesach - Passover, the feast of unleavened bread**

31 March - 7 April 2018

**Pesach Sheni - Second Passover, one month after Passover**

29 April 2018

**Yom HaShoah - Holocaust Memorial Day**

12 April 2018

**Yom HaZikaron - Israeli Memorial Day**

18 April 2018

**Yom HaAtzma'ut - Israeli Independence Day**

19 April 2018

**Yom Yerushalayim - Jerusalem Day**

13 May 2018

**ISRAEL**  
& Christians Today

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# Israel 70 Years: A Covenant of Love

By Rev. Willem J. J. Glashouwer, President Christians for Israel International



Deuteronomy 7: 6-9  
"For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord, your God, has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be His people, His treasured possession.

The Lord did not set His affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath He swore to your forefathers that He brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; He is the faithful God, keeping His Covenant of love to a thousand generations."

Psalms 105: 8-11 "He remembers His Covenant forever, the word which He commanded, for a thousand generations. The Covenant which He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac. And confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel as an everlasting Covenant, saying, 'To you, I will give the land of Canaan as the allotment of your inheritance.'"

Israel does not exist by the grace of the United Nations. Nor by the grace of the United States of America. Nor by the grace of Europe, Russia or China. Nor by the grace of Christianity. Or by the grace of Islam. Israel exists by the grace of God on the basis of an everlasting Covenant to which He pledged a solemn oath and swore by His own Name – an oath that He will never break. God cannot lie, as Balaam declares in Numbers 23:19 "God is not a man, that He should lie, not a son of man being, that He should change his mind. Does He speak and then not act? Does He promise and not fulfil?"

## >> National and Spiritual Restoration

First Israel will be restored nationally, and then spiritually. Ezekiel says, "For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land (Ezekiel 36:24). For decades now we have seen this happen. They are returning from the four corners of the earth where they were scattered all over the world: This is Israel's national restoration.

But then also spiritual restoration will take place. The Lord says that when they are finally back in the land: "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your impurities and all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you, will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit in you and move you to follow My decrees and be careful to keep My laws. You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be My people, and I will be your God." (Ezekiel 36:25-28)

For many years we see the faithfulness of God in action. We are the generation that sees prophecies being fulfilled. We see God's Covenants being fulfilled as we speak. We are living in prophetic days. We are on the way to the Coming of Messiah and of His Kingdom of Peace and Righteousness, covering the earth from Jerusalem. The true and final Theocracy.

## >> Beginning of Redemption

The modern State of Israel is in existence for 70 years now. It is the beginning of redemption. This 'beginning of redemption' as the rabbis call it, the forming of a Jewish State of Israel and the return of the Jewish people to Israel and Jerusalem, has begun,

and it is an irreversible process. We have passed points of no return.

The prophet Amos 9:15 says, "...I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from their land I have given them, says the Lord your God..." Israel is there to stay. It will not be exiled again. Only two times the Lord raises His hand to bring Israel back to the land. The first time was after the Babylonian Captivity between 600-500 BC, the second time is now, after the 'Roman' Captivity of almost 2000 years.

Isaiah 11:10-12: "...In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to Him, and His place of rest will be glorious. In that day the Lord will reach out His hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of His people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and the islands of the sea. He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; He will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth..."

Nowhere do we read in the Bible that the Lord will raise His hand a third time. Israel is here to stay. They will not be uprooted again. The redemption process has started. National restoration first, followed by spiritual restoration. Messiah is coming.

Ezekiel 39:28 promises in God's Name: "Then they (Israel) will know that I am the Lord their God, for though I sent them into exile among the nations (already fulfilled), I will gather them to their own land, not leaving any behind..." So ultimately all Jews will return back to the Promised Land, back to Zion.

## >> Democracy or Theocracy?

When Israel declared Statehood in 1948, they chose to be a democratic state,

taking the democracies of the Western world as an example. To live in the Promised Land as a people and a nation, one needs a form of government. Over the centuries we have seen all kinds of government in the world. Oligarchy, plutocracy, dictatorship, monarchy, constitutional monarchy, aristocracy and nobility, etc. So Israel has chosen to be a democracy. Which probably is - relatively speaking - the best - or the least worst - type of government. But we should not forget that Hitler democratically came to power. So democracy is not a safeguard against the development of all kinds of evil. Only if the laws in a democracy are inspired by the Judeo-Christian ethics, are inspired by the laws of God that we find in the Bible - such as the Ten Commandments, the golden rule for humanity - only then there will be true freedom and happiness and well-being and prosperity for all.

So democracy is not theocracy, which is the best type of government. Israel has not yet come to its best rule of statehood possible. That will only come one-day when Messiah will come again to planet earth. When His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, to fulfil what the angels Gabriel promised to His mother Mary in Luke 1: 31-33 "You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Highest. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David (in Jerusalem), and He will reign over Jacob's descendants (the twelve tribes of Israel) forever, and of His kingdom, there shall be no end."

## >> True Theocracy is Coming!

May we live to see that glorious day! Then He will be the Peace to the ends of the earth!

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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.

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# Israel - Independent at Last

By Marijke Terlouw, Christians for Israel Netherlands. Excerpt from the new Israel 70 Year celebration magazine

The desire and longing for a Jewish state is centuries old, long before the state of Israel was established. Jews all over the world dream of, pray continuously, and long intensely for Zion. Some make their own dream come true and return to Jerusalem. A long and exhausting journey precedes this.

It was only in the nineteenth century that there appeared to be a glimmer of hope on the horizon that might bring the return to Israel closer. Enlightened Europe with all its great developments turned out not to offer Jews what they hoped for. Jews were integrating into society a little better, but you could not really call it emancipation. At the same time, ideas such as socialism, nation-states, and racism were emerging, and there was a renewed interest in the Hebrew language which was a dead language up till that time. The recurring pogroms in Eastern Europe and Russia reinforced among Jews the idea to make the longing for Zion practical. Zionism began to grow. More and more thought was given to a place for Jews to live that they could call their own. Theodor Herzl convened his congress in Basel, Switzerland, and published his book *Der Judenstaat*.

Meanwhile, a return to Zion had begun, involving more than just a few. The flow of people to the Promised Land grew steadily. Yet it was far from obvious that there should be a state of Israel, and that it should be established in the region where Israel also used to live.

At the start of the twentieth century, the ideas of Zionism began to take more shape. Israel was the place where the Jews wanted to establish their homeland, an area that at the time was still part of the Ottoman Empire, and later mandatory Palestine. The first kibbutzim were started. Increasingly large groups of Jews wanted to build their home in Israel. The desire grew to not only live in Israel but also be able to call it their own state. The

British composed the Balfour Declaration in which they promised the Jews a home in Palestine. The state of 'Israel' appeared to be just around the corner. With the rise of Nazism, that dream seemed to disappear from view. But the Holocaust made the world realise it could no longer ignore the desire of the Jews to have their own state. On 29 November 1947, the United Nations approved the Partition Plan for Palestine, welcomed by the Jewish populations with great joy.

The countdown to the day of declaring their own state had begun (see below).

## >> 37 Signatories

The signatories of the Declaration of Independence were a colourful group. But they were all leaders of the Jewish community in the land. All, with the exception of one, were born in the diaspora. They represented Zionists, Revisionists and Communists, Sephardi and Yemenis. They all signed the declaration, they all had their own motives.

*"I knew that war was what would truly decide the matter. And obviously, if there was a state, it would be easier to win. The wisdom of Israel then was for me the wisdom of war, and the Torah of Israel was the doctrine of war. But I was certain that we would win, because I knew what weapons we had! Even at the time of the ceremony, that was all I was thinking about."* Ben-Gurion

## >> The Birth of Israel in Anecdotes

The final decision to have the ceremony was made only one day in advance: the former mayor's residence in Tel Aviv would be the place where the Declaration of Independence ceremony would be held, it was the Tel Aviv Museum at the time. And that was a problem; it was a museum with all kinds of paintings on the wall.

On 13 May, Otte Wallish came home around noon after working all night.



David Ben-Gurion

He was a graphic designer and advertising agent. There it was: a note asking him to come to the Jewish Agency right away. So that's what he did. There he was told he had 24 hours to prepare the Great Hall of the Tel Aviv Museum for the Declaration of Independence ceremony. There was no time to waste. Within a few hours the museum hall was a workshop. It was a race against time. The paintings were hidden behind wooden panels, a stage was set up, windows were covered, a carpet was borrowed at a store, chairs from various bars, and a statue of a female torso was strategically hidden. The flags were quickly taken to be washed, and the frame for Herzl's picture - that also was borrowed - needed repair. But 24 hours later the hall was transformed and ready for a historical moment.

## >> The Driver

Everything was rushed. The ink was barely dry when Zeev Sherf (*secretary of the People's Council*) and Dorit Rosen (*Sherf's assistant*) hurried the final draft of the Declaration of Independence to the ceremony on Rothschild Boulevard. To not lose any time, Sherf had to flag down a car to take them to the ceremony. They

quickly got in the back, saying: *"You have a great honour, I've got the Declaration of Independence of the state of Israel in hand."*

## >> Three Sections of Parchment

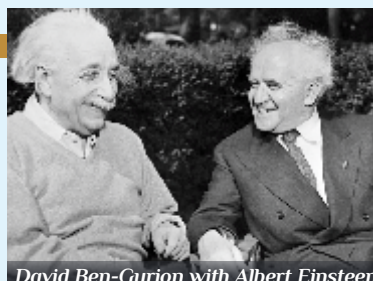
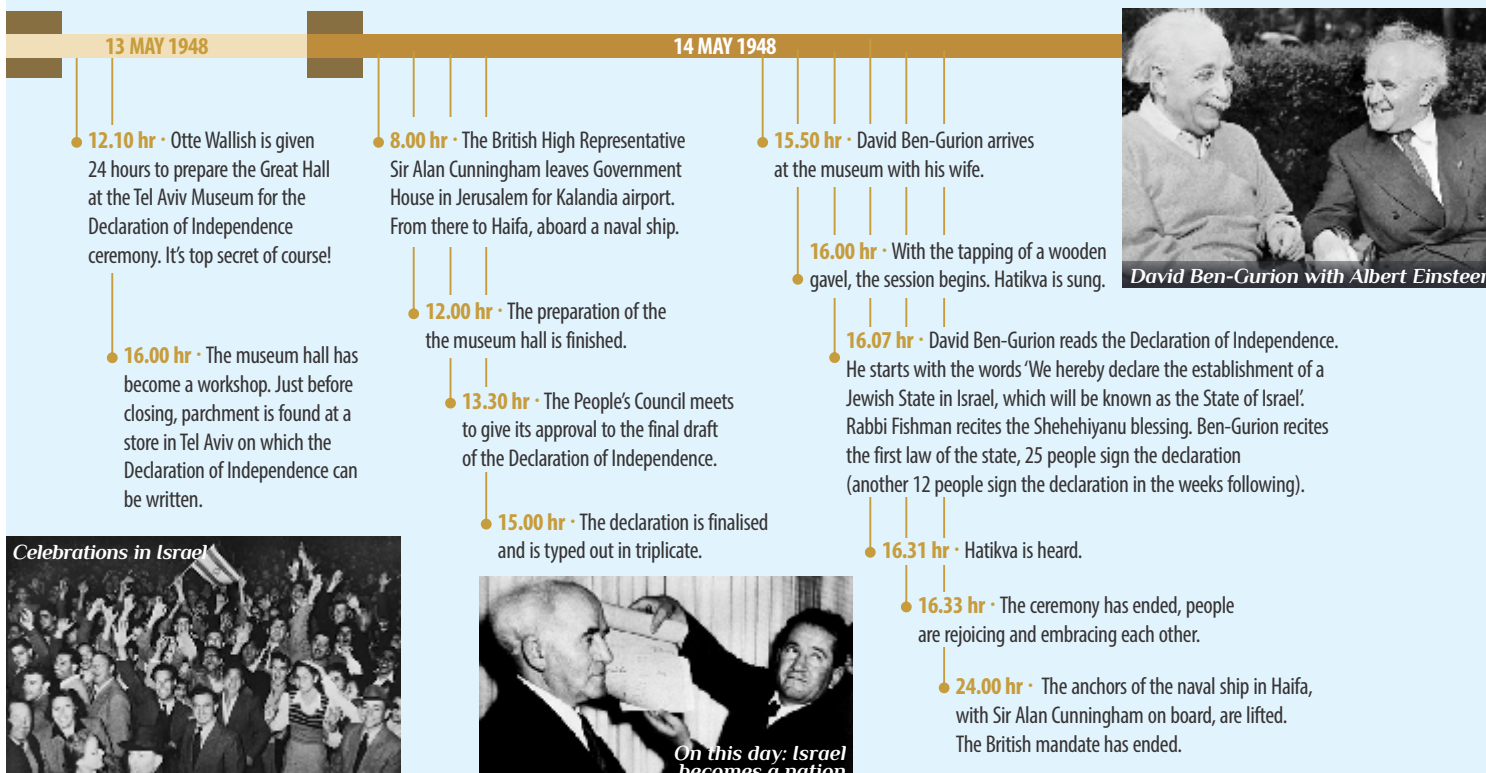
You don't write the Declaration of Independence of Israel on a notepad of course, not even on expensive stationery. It must be able to stand the test of time. That's why you use parchment. But you can't just buy that at any stationery store. Not even at that time. Fortunately, Wallish (*he got this task in addition to preparing the ceremony hall*) was able to find parchment at a store right before it closed, the day before the ceremony. The parchment wasn't very large, so he certainly needed three sheets. And the quality? The store clerk didn't know, and the shop owner had already gone home. Wallish bought the parchment, and he wanted to know the quality of the parchment once he was home, so he immersed it in water and held it in flames. The parchment was approved.

There wasn't time to inscribe the parchment with the Declaration of Independence before the official meeting. The signatories signed the blank parchment attached to a typed copy of the Declaration. While each person signed, the parchment was held in a nicely strategic manner.

## >> Finishing Touches

In the weeks that followed, the sections of parchment were sewn together. A writer needed to be found as well. The Chief Rabbinate recommended a religious writer, but that did not work out. Wallish eventually did it himself. But not before the font and spelling were thought out. It was written in the Sephardic style - because it is pleasant and easy to read - with a beautifully large letter at the beginning of each paragraph. Next, there had to be a seal, one that didn't exist yet. Two religious writers designed a seal in the shape of the Star of David. A beautifully made wooden canister completed it. Now there was a legitimate Declaration of Independence signed with the 37 names of the signatories.

## Counting Down the Hours



David Ben-Gurion with Albert Einstein



# “Israel on Trial” – 70 Years of Delegitimisation of Israel in the UN

By Andrew Tucker, Director and Matthijs de Blois, Senior Fellow, The Hague Initiative for International Cooperation (*‘thinc’*)

US President Trump’s announcement in December 2017 to recognise Israel’s designation of Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Israel, and to move the US embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, provoked an explosion of international outrage, especially (but not only) in the Muslim world. The reaction is remarkable. Trump simply effectuated a decision taken by the US Congress in 1995 and did not in any way change either the situation on the ground in Jerusalem or the status of the city under Israeli or international law. He even left open the question whether the US Embassy would be located in West or East Jerusalem. Yet the sole fact that he recognised Jerusalem as capital of Israel was apparently enough to turn the diplomatic world upside down. The UN General Assembly responded with resolutions effectively condemning Trump and forbidding states to move their embassies to Jerusalem.

Israel has been consistently criticised in the United Nations ever since its creation on 14 May 1948, and especially since Israel assumed control of East Jerusalem and the West Bank in 1967. Every month, UN General Assembly adopts resolutions on the Israel/Palestine conflict, and everyday media around the world report use international law to criticise Israeli ‘occupation’ and ‘settlements’ as ‘dangerously imperiling the viability of the two-State solution’ and an ‘obstacle to global peace’.

Even though Israel is formally a UN member since 1949, Israel has never really been accepted as a full member of the international community of nations:

- Israel is the only member of the United Nations that until recently has not been eligible for representation in the Security Council.
- Jerusalem is the only city in the world over which the UN claims to have a special jurisdiction, and Israel is the only country that is denied the right to declare a particular city as its capital.
- More resolutions in the UN General Assembly and Security Council are devoted to criticising Israel than any other state.
- More institutions and projects have been established within the United Nations devoted to the Palestinian cause

- than to any other people claiming the right to self-determination.
- ‘Palestine’ is the only nation to which the UN member states demand its statehood and contribute annually hundreds of millions of dollars.
  - The Israel/Palestine conflict is the only conflict in the world in relation to which the United Nations seeks to impose a particular solution – notwithstanding the objections of one of the parties to the conflict.
  - Thirty percent of the resolutions concerning specific states adopted by the UN Human Rights Commission in the forty years of its existence were against Israel. Israel is the only country that warrants a dedicated place on the agenda of its replacement on the UN Human Rights Council.
  - The Palestinian refugees are the only refugees in the world whose so-called



UN Ambassador Haley with PM Netanyahu

influence on the way many states formulate their foreign policy in relation to Israel/Palestine. The ‘two-State solution’ sounds just and equitable, but in fact, it represents an assault on Israel’s sovereignty as a nation

## The ‘two-State solution’ ... represents an assault on Israel’s sovereignty as a nation state

‘right of return’ is constantly tabled in international fora, and Israel is the only nation in the world that is alleged to be under an obligation to re-accept the descendants of refugees that fled from its territories in a time of conflict. Since the Arab states (*Egypt, Jordan, Syria*) failed to destroy Israel in the 1973 Yom Kippur War, they and the other Arab and Islamic nations have used the United Nations institutions to ‘delegitimise’ Israel and push the ‘two-State solution’. And blocks of other nations – especially European, African and South American – have supported them. The Arab-Europe alliance, as reflected in the Euro-Arab Dialogue, has institutionalised European support for the Arabs’ political and military objectives of destroying the Jewish State. This reached its zenith in December 2016, when the UN Security Council (*USA abstaining – the last diplomatic initiative of outgoing President Obama and Secretary of State Kerry*) adopted Resolution 2334 in which it effectively laid down the terms upon which Israel is obliged to accept the ‘two-State solution’. The Resolution has a major

state. It is also a fundamental breach of the promises made by the international community to the Jewish people after WWI – less than 100 years ago – through the League of Nations that Jerusalem and all the territories that are now normally referred to as ‘occupied territories’ would be reserved for the establishment of a Jewish homeland – with guaranteed protection of the civil and religious rights of all inhabitants of Palestine (*Jews and non-Jews*). Israel’s critics use strong legal language (*‘legitimate aspirations’, ‘rights to statehood and sovereignty’, ‘condemns’ etc.*) and attribute great importance to United Nations resolutions. But UN resolutions do not constitute binding international law, and many of these statements made in those resolutions are quite simply false or misleading. An increasing number of academics argue that:

1. Israel has the right to exist as a sovereign State enjoying peace and security as all other States;
2. Israel is under no obligation to withdraw from the ‘occupied territories’ or

- remove Israeli settlements;
3. The creation of a State of Palestine is not required under international law;
  4. Even if it were, the United Nations and its member states have no jurisdiction to determine the borders between that state and the State of Israel;
  5. In any event, the borders mandated in Resolution 2334 (*the ‘4 June 1967 lines’*) infringe Israel’s rights under international law; and
  6. Third states are under no obligation to enforce the ‘two-State solution’ or facilitate the creation of the State of Palestine; on the contrary, to do so in terms of Resolution 2334 constitutes a fundamental infringement of Israel’s rights.
- The discriminatory interpretation and application of international law to Israel/Palestine is not only unfair to Israel; it is producing perverse results. Worse, this ‘instrumental’ use of international law to achieve political or military goals is threatening to undermine the credibility of the international legal system itself. There is hope. Sixty-five nations did not vote for the December 2017 resolution condemning the recognition by President Trump of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and his announcement to move the US Embassy to Jerusalem. There is a growing understanding within the UN that the international legal system is being misused. The challenge now is to transform that understanding into concrete political action that gives full recognition to the Jewish people and the Jewish State of Israel.

“If I forget you, Jerusalem,  
may my right hand forget its skill.  
May my tongue cling to the roof of  
my mouth if I do not remember you,  
if I do consider Jerusalem  
my highest joy.”  
PSALM 137:5,6

**LONGING**  
The wall reflects the ancient longing of the Jewish people for Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the temple. The prayers voiced at the wall by Jewish pilgrims were so sincere and emotional that the bystanders starting calling the Western Wall the Wailing Wall.

**NOTES**  
Paper notes containing written prayers are placed into the cracks of the wall. The earliest recorded occurrence of this phenomenon dates back to the middle of the eighteenth century (1743). The idea behind the notes stems from the Jewish belief that God’s presence has never left the Temple Mount.

**WAILING**  
**DEFINITION:** to lament or mourn bitterly  
**SYNONYMS:** crying, sobbing, weeping, lamenting, mourning, sorrowing  
**WAILING WALL:** also called the Western Wall. Literally in Hebrew: HaKotel HaMa’aravi



# Bring My Sons From Afar

By Rev. Henk Poot, Christians for Israel Netherlands

**The prophets of Israel said that God would restore the fortunes of His people (Zephaniah 3:20). That promise is being fulfilled, and that in our own generation: the exile of the Jewish people is coming to an end.**

Why were they exiled to begin with? It is not my place to answer that question. What I do know is that that exile has lasted two thousand years and during those same two thousand years we have come to know the God of Israel. Maybe there is a link between the two. Israel has lived among us, and all that time God has lived among us; because God goes with His people.

## >> Dry Bones

We read that the restoration of Israel's fortunes will be preceded by a time of bitterness and horror. *Ezekiel* speaks of a valley of dry bones (*chapter 37*). Some say this is the result of the ultimate revenge of ancient heathendom. Others say that it

has everything to do with the arrogance of Christendom that wanted God for itself and would not tolerate sharing a place with Israel. A third group says that it is a satanic attempt to humiliate God's name right before the coming of the Kingdom. Perhaps they are all right. But what stands out is that within the same chapter of *Ezekiel* we read about the gathering of all the tribes of Israel and the coming of the Messiah. The dry bones rise from the graves and go to Jerusalem, to their King.

## >> The Anointed of the Lord

The gathering of the children of Israel is primarily the task of the Anointed of the Lord. The masterful prophecy about the coming of the Messiah in *Isaiah 49* says that He will be told to bring Jacob to God. Jesus realised this too. I think that this is new to many people because they skimmed over it while reading or applied it to themselves, but the Gospel speaks of the return of whole Israel.

In *John 10* Jesus elaborates on the great chapter of the gathering, *Ezekiel 34*. There we read how God Himself will end the exile. God is the shepherd who will care for His scattered sheep. Jesus says that He is the Good Shepherd and that He will even lay down his life to bring home the flock of Israel (*John 11:52*). His death would be necessary to break the imprisonment of Israel and the power of the devil.

In His sermon about these things, Jesus foretells that at His coming the angels will complete the gathering in (*of Israel*) (*Matthew 24:31 as the fulfilment of Isaiah 11:12*). These words are sometimes used as proof for the rapture of the Christians, but this is really about the rapture and homecoming of Israel.

## >> A Role for the Nations

Although it is clear that the Messiah Himself will end the exile, *Isaiah 49* says that the nations will also play a role: "Behold I will lift up My hand to the nations

... and they shall bring your sons in their bosom, and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders" (verse 22). It is a misunderstanding to think that the nations hasten the coming of the Messiah in this way. That is not even necessary; it is exactly because His coming is so near that the exile will come to an end. But in His love, Jesus does not allow us to simply be observers. He calls us up as auxiliary forces, God even tells us, "Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth" (*Isaiah 43:6*).

## >> Jerusalem

The return of Israel is closely connected with the return of God to Jerusalem. The image of the future is this: God lives in Zion, His Anointed One reigns on the throne of David, around Him are the children of Israel, created by God Himself to praise Him, and around them the nations worshipping God. May He use us now in preparation.

*Aliyah in images and numbers*

# Back to Israel from Ukraine



Koen and Igor, a faithful driver, with luggage that needs to get to Israel



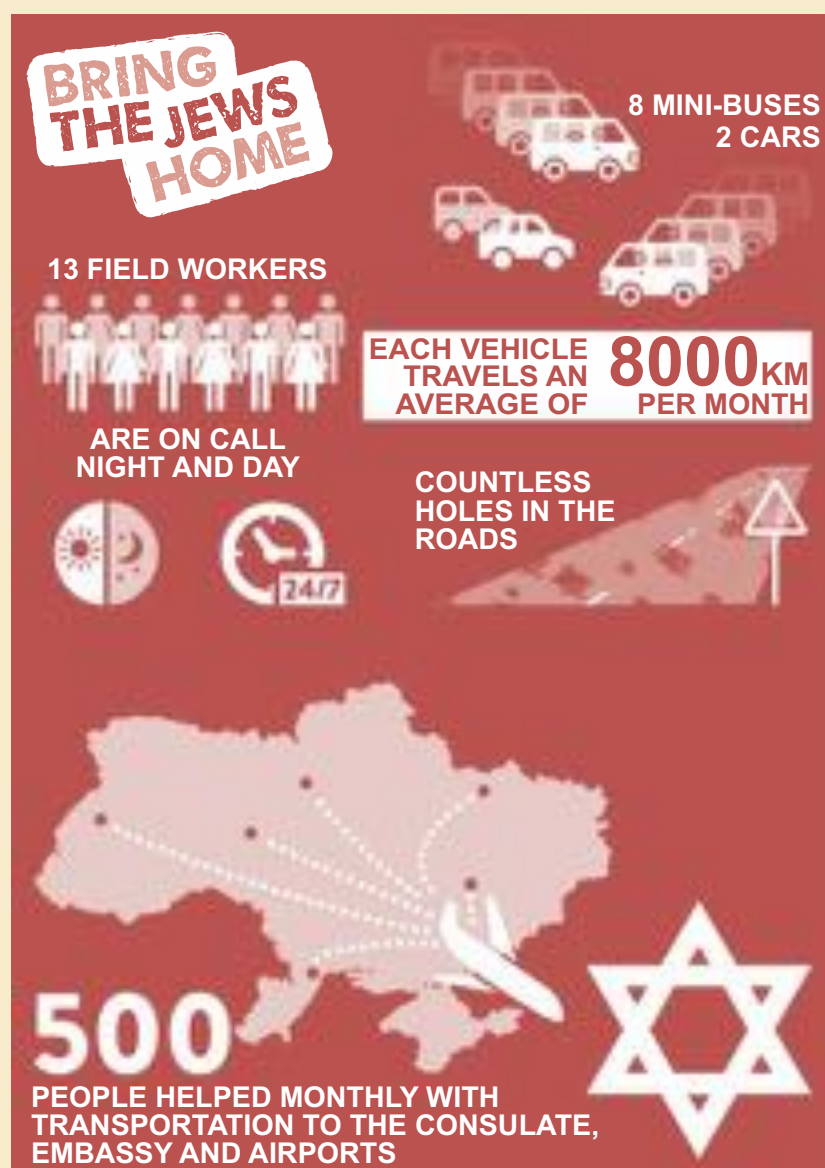
Saying goodbye to family staying behind is not easy at all. This girl just said goodbye to her Grandmother



Holocaust survivor Boris Isaakovich, 83 years old, who made Aliyah in February 2017, shares his story

*For over twenty years Christians for Israel has assisted Jews from the former Soviet Union, particularly from Ukraine, to return to Israel.*

*Our field worker Koen Carlier works with a dedicated team who do this work with much dedication and love.*



Elderly Holocaust survivor Boris Isaakovich leaving his house in Ukraine to make Aliyah



A group of Ukrainian Jews taken to the Airport in Kiev, ready to leave for Israel



# Israel 70 Years: Challenges & Dangers

© Johannes Gerloff, Theologian, Journalist, Lecturer and Author



From the time David Ben-Gurion proclaimed the state of the Jewish people in May 1948, the State of Israel has been challenged, sometimes seriously threatened, and always disputed. What are the threats Israel is facing at its 70th birthday in 2018?

The so called ‘BDS movement’ that promotes ‘boycott, divestment and sanctions’ (BDS) against Israel is certainly not part of them. BDS first and foremost harms the Palestinians, as can be seen on the ground. It serves Israel by moving employment from the Palestinian territories to Israel, forcing Palestinians to sell their land and proving that Israel’s critics are indeed driven by anti-Semitic motives questioning the very right of a Jewish state to exist in the Middle East. BDS’ economic impact is negligible and its efforts to delegitimise the Jewish state are being mocked by reality. Israel in 2018 enjoys diplomatic relations, economic and research exchanges as well as military cooperation with more states than ever before in history.

Neither are demographic developments the existential threat as hosts of doomsday experts have chanted for decades. “*The demographic time bomb is a dud,*” summarise demographers who observe birth rates and recognise that even if Israel would annex the West Bank at the present, Israeli Arabs and West Bank Palestinians would not even make up one third of the population of a ‘greater Israel’. Nobody knows how Palestinians would really think or vote if they had the real freedom and security that comes with Israeli citizenship. The fact that Arabs are represented in virtually all segments of Israeli society, in all of the army and in all political parties, should not be overlooked.

Furthermore, failing Arab states, failing Mid-Eastern societies and a failing religion called Islam have an impact on Muslims that may hardly be overestimated.

Israelis who are being asked what they perceive as current dangers to their society, name social issues among the first challenges. Israel has developed from a socialist third world country in the 1950’s into one of the world’s leading economic and scientific power hubs. Today there is virtually no computer or smart phone that does not contain Israeli thoughts, inventions, programmes or parts. Israel is the number one producer of innovations worldwide. The New Israeli Shekel is one of the hardest currencies on the market.

But this has come at a price. The polarisation among different population segments becomes more and more obvious. There is not just a tension between right and left, Sephardic and Ashkenazi, Jewish and Arab, but also between the financially privileged and

Militarily, the greatest danger to Israel emerges from the north. However, it is not the so-called Islamic State or other Islamist terror groups that are key threats, but the hegemonic ambitions of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Syria’s bloody war has been decided in favour of the pro-Assad coalition, strengthening especially Iran and its supporters. The Islamic Republic and its proxies has established an infrastructure in Syria and Lebanon, where Hezbollah showed a massive buildup over the last decade. Likewise Shiite militias in Iraq and the Houthi’s in Yemen, launching missiles into the heart of Saudi Arabia, contribute to Teheran’s growing power in the Middle East. This scenario poses threats on a new scale.

Amos Yadlin, Executive Director of the Institute for National Security Studies, says that the chances of a large military confrontation in the northern front possibly involving the Syrian army in

and the Muslim Brotherhood movement demand permanent attention. The so-called Islamic State lost all its territory, except some enclaves in the Golan Heights, the Sinai Peninsula and North Africa. Its ideology, however, is still attractive to large Muslim populations and terror cells as well as individuals inspired by the group are active.

In the area of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, the major challenge for many Israelis is to face reality. The majority of Israel’s population claims to be for a two-state-solution, because they want to get rid of the Palestinians, because they hate to be occupiers and because they are afraid of being forced into an apartheid state. However, virtually nobody is ready to offer to the Palestinians what they ever would be able to accept as an independent state. Even the most left-wing Israelis are ready to allow at the best a de facto autonomy which the Palestinians would be allowed to label their state. And nobody knows how to tackle Arab and Islamic anti-Jewish sentiments which are deeply rooted in Islamic sources and must be seen as one of the original causes of the hatred against the Jewish state.

However, even when it comes to modern forms of anti-Semitism, Israel is not just the victim. Being critical of oneself is a character trait and tradition that can be traced back to the prophets of biblical times. Questioning everything and everybody might be the source of Israel’s innovative power. But the hyper self-criticism of Israelis and especially Jewish Israelis against themselves, their society and their leadership might reveal one of Israel’s outstanding strengths as one of its major weaknesses, certainly as a real challenge. As a matter of fact, tragically, some of the worst lies about the Jewish people and their state originate from Jewish Israelis.

**...tragically, some of the worst lies about the Jewish people and their state originate from Jewish Israelis**

those who are struggling daily for their very survival. High living costs and low income is a problem to not just the uneducated lower class, but also to young academics. One salary is hardly ever high enough to feed a family. A young physician, for example, earns in Israel per month less than he would make in Australia in a weekend. The fruit of this tense social-economic situation is that many young academics leave the country. One of the major challenges Israel faces in the 21st century is to become an attractive environment not just for IT geniuses or electrical engineers, but also for doctors, nurses, physical therapists or teachers, to name just a few.

2018 are greater than at any time in the past decade. In March, a drill of Israel’s military simulated a multi-front war, not just against Iran-sponsored Hamas in the Gaza strip and Hezbollah in Lebanon, but also considering possibly Russia’s intervention in Syria. Israel possesses significant leverage against Iran and Russia, because it is capable of effectively undermining their achievement in preserving the Assad regime and progressing stability in Syria.

Looking at the Sunni and Arab world, a nuclear race between Iran and Sunni regional powers like Saudi Arabia, Egypt or Turkey dooms at the horizon. Also the Islamist camp including Turkey, Qatar,

Dome of the Rock in beautiful panorama of Jerusalem from Mount of Olives.





# South Pacific Tour for C4I President

By Bryce Turner, Christians for Israel New Zealand

March 2018 saw Rev Willem Glashouwer embark on the very first tour of the South Pacific. Rev Glashouwer travelled all the way from Holland to Auckland, New Zealand, where we brought him to the offices of Christians for Israel New Zealand. With only half a day to rest, Rev Willem and Pastor Bryce Turner (*Christians for Israel NZ*) flew to Nadi, Fiji, and then took one last short (*30min*) flight on to Suva. With four heavy bags of books, their own luggage crammed right to the weight limit, and with extra brochures and study guides even stuffed in their jacket pockets, Willem and Bryce finally arrived at Suva airport to an amazing welcome from the Christians for Israel Fiji team. Christians for Israel Fiji representative Lepani and his wife Salote, along with Christians for Israel Fiji president Raphael Jordan and his wife Anna and their children, and even media manager Tomo came out late at night to deliver a huge welcome, leading to what then became an outstanding visit. The Christians for Israel Fiji team, who started

only four years ago, had coordinated various church speaking engagements, even an interview with Fiji's biggest newspaper, culminating in a series of three huge evening seminars – the final night attended by over 900 people. Willem delivered clear and powerful teaching, to which the audiences gave an overwhelmingly positive response. The Fijian pastors were deeply moved by the teaching, committing to support the ongoing work of Christians for Israel Fiji. Returning from Fiji to Auckland for just one night, Willem, Bryce and Christians for Israel NZ board chairman Graham Simpson then travelled to the Cook Islands. After being welcomed at the airport by Christians for Israel Cook Islands chairman Bob Williams and the amazing *'Pastor George'*, who is taking on a representative role in the islands, the visitors quickly settled into a busy schedule of new experiences. Speaking in churches, as well as television interviews and even an open-air meeting at the markets – a world first for Willem –

culminated in the official launching of Christians for Israel Cook Islands. It was wonderful to meet Pastor Edward of the Solomon Islands who flew over to spend some time with the team. Pastor Edward is working with Ian Worby (*Christians for Israel Australia*) to establish Christians for Israel in the Solomon Islands.

A change in plans meant that Willem was able to hold some speaking engagements in New Zealand, including a very successful series of seminars in Auckland.

The tour was originally planned to include the official launch of Christians for Israel Tonga, but following the devastation wreaked on the island group by cyclone Gita, this quickly became impossible. Please pray for our Christians for Israel representative in Tonga, Mr Barry Taukolo, and the over 70% of the Tongan population reported to have been affected by the cyclone. We look forward to planning another event with them later in the year. The beautiful, friendly people of the Pacific Islands have a deep love for



Rev Willem Glashouwer speaking at the open-air meeting in the Cook Islands

God and a real affinity with the Jewish people. We thank the teams from Christians for Israel Fiji and Christians for Israel Cook Islands for all their work in organising the programmes, and we celebrate the growing of Christians for Israel in the Pacific.

# "I Felt Like I Was Playing for Them"

By Anemone Rüger, Christians for Israel Project Coordinator - Holocaust Survivors in Israel and Ukraine

Take the love, prayers and hard work of six Dutch, four Germans, one British and one Belgian; enrich with God's eternal promises to His people, let sit for a few days; then pour out over God's very own in Ukraine.

No two working trips to Ukraine are ever the same. These trips were initiated by Koen Carlier, Christians for Israel's Aliyah fieldworker in Ukraine, years ago so sponsors could see the massive impact that our help has on Jewish communities there. The most recent group finished the trip on Thursday 24 March 2018.

*"I could see the slain before me as I was playing my recorder over the ravine of Babi Yar; I felt like I was playing for them,"* said Hans from the Netherlands, as the group slowly walked away from the place where 33,771 Jewish mothers, children and elderly were murdered outside Kiev on 29 and 30 September 1941, after Nazi Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union. Crying quietly, German-born Dagmar

placed a white rose at the menorah-shaped memorial marking the site.

More tears were cried as the group heard the stories of Rita who survived the Pechora death camp, losing both her mother and father there as a 5-year-old within the first week. She promised God that she would dedicate her life to telling her story if she survived the ordeal; or of Olga, then two years old, who was pulled out of the pit of dead bodies by two little boys who survived the shooting in Talnoye, and who carried the children to safety by a Ukrainian woman who had come to the forest to pick mushrooms.

But what they found most overwhelming – in between packing and delivering 1,500 food parcels - was the warmth, the hospitality and the incredible kindness displayed by those very survivors as they sat around the table with us. It came naturally, as survivor Alexander said, *"I harbour no bitterness against the Germans in my heart."* These were the moments when



German-born Dagmar places a white rose at the Babi Yar memorial in Kiev

the group ran out of words, instead hugged the survivors, and prayed for healing, one precious Jewish heart at a time.

*"The prophets longed to see what you see,"* said Rabbi Yeshua some 2,000 years ago to his friends. What a privilege to be the *"feet of those who bring good news"* to the broken, to remind them that the God of Avraham, Yitzhak and Ya'akov has not

forgotten them.

While the participants return to their home countries, Koen and the team get back to work – a group of Jewish people are waiting in a remote town with their bags packed to end 2,000 years of Diaspora and return to their historic homeland, to fulfill the annual Passover blessing: *"Next year in Jerusalem!"*

# C4I Denmark's Official Launch

By Per & Kirsten Nielsen, Christians for Israel Denmark



Rev Willem Glashouwer and Per Nielson

In the presence of the Ambassador of Israel to Denmark, Benjamin Dagan, his wife Irit and Rev Willem Glashouwer, Per and Kirsten Nielsen officially launched Christians for Israel Denmark.

The ambassador and his wife said it was an honour for them to be invited and to be a part of the launch. The event took place in a church, with armed police offices protecting the building, a sight never before seen. We tried to keep the

event low key, but with armed guards, three police cars on the pathway and secret-service all around the building, it was clear that something special was taking place inside.

The second issue of the Danish newspaper was available for the 75 attendees, who represented friends of the Jewish people and Israel who were invited together with representatives of the Jewish community in Denmark.

Unfortunately, Marie-Louise Weissenböck, Regional Director for Christians for Israel Europe, could not be present because of a strike at the airport in Vienna, Austria.

It was a great and blessed evening, with a lot of delicious (*kosher*) Israeli dishes. The Israeli artist, who performed live at the event, was very touched and said she never knew that so many people loved Israel.



# Ethiopian Jews: Pre-Seder

By Joanne Nihom, Journalist for Christians for Israel International

**A long, imposing procession of men and women. Stately they come walking into the hall. Eighty in total, young and old.**

Some seem almost antique, with beautifully painted faces. Many wear traditional Ethiopian clothing. The women have their heads covered. Some of them are pregnant; others carry babies in cloth. Here and there a baby cries, but otherwise, it is quiet. The scene looks like a painting straight from Ethiopia. Upon entering the hall, filled with long festively decorated tables for the pre-Seder, guests are escorted to their places in sign language and some basic Hebrew. They look around uncomfortably. But when the rabbi begins to talk about Passover, everyone listens intensively.

## >> Family Reunion

The group was brought to Israel from Ethiopia five months ago by the Jewish Agency and the State of Israel and is part of the family reunification project. They stay in Haruv, the absorption-centre for Ethiopian Jews in Beersheba. There they will prepare for their new life in Israeli society. Danielle Mor, Vice President, Israel and Global Philanthropy of The Jewish Agency for Israel: *“Here we teach them the language and customs of the country and about Judaism and Jewish holidays. Every year, about a week before Pesach, we organise a pre-Seder for the newcomers, in centres all over the country. This year this has been made possible by the Jewish Agency and Christians for Israel, among others.”*

The pre-Seder starts. The rabbi explains about the Seder-dish and the various rituals. Someone standing next to him translates everything he says into Amharic, the Ethiopian language. Under the direction of the rabbi, the translator reads from the bilingual Haggadah, the prayer book for the Seder.

## >> Same Melodies

As I listen, along with all the other attendees I pour the first glass of wine, my thoughts go back to many years ago. During a study trip to Israel, I visited an absorption-centre for Ethiopian Jews. They had just arrived in Israel and came straight from Ethiopia. They still had to learn about their new life, and many things were totally new to them. Such as the use of a toilet. They thought, I was told, that it was a bowl to make pickles in!



Photo courtesy of the Jewish Agency

It was just before Passover, and several women practised the prayers and songs with each other that they always sang in Ethiopia on Seder evening. I could not believe my ears. They were the same

*elder told us that it was almost there. That meant that the women started with the big cleaning to make the houses chametz-free (bread free). Together we made matzah (flat, dry cracker-like bread) and on the day of the*

## One of the wonders of Judaism: traditions and customs are the same all over the world

melodies that we sing at home. It moved me. One of the miracles of Judaism: wherever in the world Jews live, many traditions and customs are the same all over the world, making our bond strong. Back to the pre-Seder in Beersheba, the rabbi tells about Pesach, a celebration full of symbolism. The story of oppression and spiritual freedom, and about renewed hope that Jews throughout the world celebrate. *“An age-old tradition, the epitome of a centuries-long dream of returning to Israel.”*

## >> Cleaning

I am curious to know how Pesach used to be celebrated in Ethiopia. But the newcomers do not know enough Hebrew or English to answer my questions. Years ago, I interviewed Asher (*Mekunnt*) Rahamin. He came to Israel in 1983, at the age of fifteen. We still have contact now and then, so I call him with my questions. *“Life in our village, with about 30 families, had a clearly Jewish character. All Jewish holidays were celebrated openly. For us, Judaism was like the rising of the sun: a fixed part of our lives. A few weeks before Passover, our village*

*Seder, a lamb was slaughtered in the afternoon. During the Seder, the whole village came together in the house of the village elder and read from the Torah, about the Exodus from Egypt. In Ethiopia, at that time there were no prayer books and no Haggadahs. During the Seder, we ate matzah and lamb and sang the prayers and songs together. And the elders of our village told about the Passover celebrations in their youth.”*

The pre-Seder is almost finished. Together the traditional Lesjanaha HaBa’ah Bejerushalaim (*‘Next year we are in Jerusalem’*) is sung while everyone claps their hands. For this group their ultimate wish has come true: they are finally home.

## >> Ethiopian Jews

More than 135,000 Ethiopian Jews live in Israel. Their lives in Ethiopia were never very bad. With the existing anti-Semitism, they could live. However, a deep desire to emigrate to Israel - and especially to Jerusalem - was passed on from generation to generation. They considered their stay in Ethiopia as temporary. In 1862, there was a group who tried to emigrate to Israel, but they failed. *‘Operation Moses’* in 1984 brought eight thousand Ethiopian Jews secretly through Sudan to Europe and from there to Israel. In 1991 another fifteen hundred went to the promised land with the *‘Operation Salomon’* and over the years, other groups have followed. In 2013, Israel officially stopped immigration from Ethiopia. But in the context of family reunification, the former Israeli minister Silvan Shalom of the Ministry of Interior decided that the last group of Ethiopian Jews should also be brought to Israel. It would involve eight thousand men, women and children. In 2017, 1308 Ethiopian Jews were brought to Israel. It isn’t known what will happen in 2018.



Photo courtesy of the Jewish Agency

## Short News

### Natan Sharansky Wins 2018 Israel Prize



Education Minister Naftali Bennett announced recently that the 2018 Israel Prize for immigration absorption and ingathering of the diaspora will be awarded to head of the Jewish Agency Natan Sheransky.

“Natan symbolises the fulfillment of the Zionist dream,” wrote the minister, “from the darkness of the Soviet prison he was held in as a prisoner of Zion to the light of freedom as head of the Jewish Agency.”

Sharansky was imprisoned by the USSR in 1978 for his struggle for Jewish life in the Soviet Union and the right of Jewish immigration to Israel. He was released in 1986. His wife, Avital, emigrated to Israel prior to his arrest and fought during his time in prison for his release. Minister Bennett noted that Avital is a symbol *“for Jewish sacrifice and heroism.”*

### A Modern Day Exodus: 204 Bnei Menashe Make Aliyah



Eighteen-month-old Revital Haokip was among the 204 members of the ‘lost’ northeastern Indian tribe of Bnei Menashe who the organisation Shavei Israel in cooperation with Christians for Israel assisted in bringing to Israel on Aliyah recently.

The 204 new immigrants come from the northeastern Indian state of Manipur, on the border with Burma, and which is home to the largest concentration of Bnei Menashe in India. The new immigrants plan on settling in the Galilee, where many Bnei Menashe immigrants have made homes. They initially will reside in Shavei Israel’s absorption center in Kfar Hasidim, where they will formally convert to Judaism.

### US Senators Protest Poland’s Holocaust Bill

Fifty-nine US senators have co-signed a bipartisan letter urging Poland to amend draft legislation on a restitution bill that they say discriminates against survivors living in America. The letter sent to Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki concerns a measure from October that would require claimants to be citizens living in Poland and excludes all heirs except *‘first-line heirs’*, meaning spouses, children or grandchildren. The letter comes amid a crisis in Israel’s relations with Poland over the recent enactment of a law that criminalizes blaming Poland for Nazi crimes.



# Twelve Theses on Israel

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

## >> Introduction

There are twelve tribes of Israel. Twelve apostles were sent into the world to proclaim the coming kingdom. The faith of the church is confessed in the twelve theses of the Apostolic Creed. It is still one of the fundamental creeds for millions of Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant Christians worldwide. Five hundred years ago, Martin Luther was privileged to rediscover the gospel of free grace. On 31 October 1517, he nailed his 95 theses on the door of the city Church of Wittenberg, launching the reformation of the Catholic Church. We are privileged to live in a time, in which we see how the people of Israel are restored to the land of the promise. That makes us grateful. But it also causes a feeling of urgency. God’s plan of salvation for His creation has entered a new, decisive stage. How do we relate to it? And how do we relate to Israel? How does the church relate to Israel? We give thanks for the good we have received in the tradition of the church. But we also have to recognise that the church has hardly had any vision for Israel or the Jewish people, even has spoken with contempt of the Jews and Israel. This fills us with shame. Many, therefore, feel the need and the urgency to speak more broadly about God’s salvation plan with His creation

from within the Scriptures. A small group of people from different denominations and backgrounds, working within the framework of Christians for Israel, has come together to think it over deeply. In a sense, they did not represent anybody. It was their desire, however, to speak as members of the Body of Christ, in connection with the church worldwide and through the ages. This has resulted in twelve theses on the place of Israel in God’s salvation plan, in which God’s election of Israel to bless the nations is expounded. These theses do not replace any creed whatsoever but are meant as an impulse to think further about the essential Biblical message concerning Israel and the kingdom. This statement is a cry of the heart on behalf of all those who have discovered that the people and the nation of Israel hold a fundamental and decisive position in God’s plan of salvation with this world. We have attempted not to put something forward that could be considered as being totally new and original, rather just a statement in plain and common language that will lead us all back to our biblical roots. Sadly, when it becomes apparent that the followers of Jesus have cut their biblical roots, there is no hope for divine blessing. The statement is not one of pride, rather one of humility: a cry of the heart. For it is both good and very necessary that the members of the

ekklesia, the body of Christ consisting for the greater part of an overwhelming majority of believers coming from the nations, know what their position in God’s plan is, *Romans 11:17 ff.* In this spirit, Christians for Israel now offers these theses to churches and Christians worldwide, in prayer and humility. In this, and the next few issues, we will elaborate and clarify each of the twelve theses for better understanding.

## >> Thesis #1

We believe that Israel was created and chosen by God to bless the nations. **Elaboration:** As members of the body of Jesus Christ we believe and confess that God has chosen Abraham, Isaac and Jacob because He wanted to bless all the nations of the world in and through them. In this way salvation has come through Israel to us. **Clarification:** Israel has been created (*compare Isaiah 43:1: Genesis 15:4 and 17:19*) by God for the glorification of His Name. For that purpose God elected Abraham and his descendants to become the instrument in His hands to bless and redeem the world, not in the sense of a *numerus clausus* (*a restricted number*) but as a synecdoche (*a part representing the whole*). It was not God’s intention to be selective in His choice, but He chose this way to carry out His universal plans and purposes (*Genesis 12:3 ff*). Everything in salvation history revolves around the

election of Israel, but ultimately it is about the realization of God’s plans concerning the Universe and His Creation. By the term ‘*Israel*’ in the Twelve Theses, we refer to both the people and nation of Israel, consisting of the twelve tribes of Israel coming from the twelve sons of Jacob. The term ‘*Jewish People*’ has the same meaning. The term ‘*Israel*’ can also be used as the name for the land of Israel that God promised to Abraham. We can even use it as referring to the State of Israel that was established in 1948. We are convinced that the promises about the land of Israel that God gave to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their descendants are still valid today (*Genesis 13:15; 15:18, Psalm 105:7-11 etc.*). The land of Israel is the Promised Land, the land that God promised to give to them. One cannot make a breach between the promises given to Israel in the Bible and the establishment of the modern State of Israel. On the other hand, the establishment of the State of Israel is not yet the ultimate fulfilment of the promises given to Israel in the Bible. That ultimate fulfilment will only come when the Kingdom of God on earth has been realized by the coming of the Messiah of Israel. However, we may say that the establishment of the State of Israel is a part of the ultimate redemption of Israel and a moment in the fulfilment of the promises that God gave to Abraham.

# Perspectives on Thesis 1

By Kees de Vreugd, Theologian, Christians for Israel International

Israel is a ‘*creation*’ of God. By this word, we are reminded of the language of *Isaiah 43:1*, which speaks of the Lord as “*he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel.*” Does that also pertain to the nations of the earth? In a derived sense, it does. Man was ‘*formed*’ out of the dust of the earth. And the mass of nations become nations, each with their own character, even in their orientation towards Israel. The clarifications which accompany the twelve theses explain that Israel was chosen as a ‘*synecdoche*’, a part that represents the whole. Does this mean that the election of Israel only has to do with her own salvation, which then represents the salvation of the world? Or could this also imply that Israel has an active role in the redemption of the world, in that it is also suffering for the redemption of the nations, and creation as a whole? However it may be, the question, too, arises: is Israel created and chosen only to bless the nations? Recently, somebody drew my attention to the fact that God, first of all, wants to share His love, His life, even His suffering, with Israel. First of all, He is seeking an intimate relationship with His people: “*I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people*” (*Leviticus 26:12*). To Abraham, God says: “*I am God Almighty; walk before Me and be blameless*” (*Genesis 17:1*). Finally, God says: “*I will dwell among them*” (*Exodus 25:8*). God dwelling among Israel is a recurrent theme throughout the Bible. Of course, this intimate intercourse between God and Israel is a direct testimony to the nations, to the effect that His indwelling also reaches out to the nations. But Israel is His beloved one, a love that is expressed in the images of bride and son.

By Paul Jung, Australia, Christians for Israel Coordinator Korea,

We can readily confirm that God has created and chosen Israel to bless nations when we look into Genesis. Firstly, chapter 12 describes that God called Abram to go to Canaan from Haran and made an eternal covenant. God promised to Abram that “*you will be a blessing* (*Gen 12:2*). *... and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you* (*Gen 12:3*).” “*I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between you and me and your descendants after you..* (*Gen 17:7*).” These covenants were affirmed in chapter 22, “*through offspring all nations on earth will be blessed..* (*Gen 22:18*).” The Lord subsequently, appeared and said to Isaac assuring the same promise, “*I will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham* (*Gen 26:3*).” In chapter 35, God called Jacob back to Bethel where God appeared when Jacob was fleeing from his brother Esau and said, “*Your name is Jacob, but you will no longer be called Jacob; your name will be Israel.*” So he named him Israel (*Gen 35:10*). Later, when the descendants of Jacob escaped from Egypt, the Lord appeared and identified them as the chosen nation declaring that “*although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites*” (*Exodus 19:5-6*). Scholars describe Israel as a showcase for God’s redemptive history. The passage reaffirms that God has created Israel to be a gospel to all nations. Based on these promises made by the God of Abraham, Issac and Jacob, apostle Paul stressed in *Galatians 3:8-9*, “*The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: All nations will be blessed through you. So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.*”

## Twelve Theses of Faith on Israel

- We believe that Israel was created and chosen by God to bless the nations.
- We believe that the Church and the nations should bless Israel.
- 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.
- We believe that all the Covenants since Abraham have been made with Israel.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- We believe that the City of Jerusalem is the place where the Lord again will make His Holy Name dwell.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.



# Letters of the Aleph-bet: Samech ס

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

The samech is the fifteenth letter of the Aleph-bet. It is the letter s. As to the original Semitic sign, several different possibilities are mentioned, amongst which a pictograph of a fish, or of a thorn. In Hebrew, there is still another letter s, the sin, and *‘sin’* means thorn. It could be that originally, the samech was called sin, and only later samech. The early Semitic sign developed into two directions: the Hebrew samech, and the Greek ksi, out of which our X originated.

Samech means *‘support’*. In the Jewish daily prayers, God is called Somech

nefilim: *“You uphold all those who fall” (Psalm 145:14).*

The samech is followed by the letter ayin. From this, the Talmud learns: smooch ani’im – support those who are poor (*the word ani’im starting with ayin*).

The form of the samech is a somewhat flattened circle. The circular form symbolises support. A comparison is made with the rings that hold the lulav together. The lulav is the bundle of branches of a palm tree, a myrtle, and a willow, that, together with the Etrog is used in the celebration of Sukkot (*the*

*feast of Tabernacles, Leviticus 23:40*). In Jewish mystical tradition, the closed circle also symbolises the unlimited power of the Ein Sof, God’s unlimited Light.

You could also think of the bond of marriage, in which man and woman are fully devoted to each other, and each other’s committed support. A circle has no beginning and no end. It is the same with the dedication to each other.

On Mount Sinai, God took Israel as His wife. The Talmud regards the giving of the Torah as a betrothal ceremony, whereby God gives Israel the wedding

ring. Israel commits to obey God’s commandments. *“Thereupon, God committed Himself to provide the Jewish people with their maintenance.”*

The numerical value of samech is sixty. It is remarkable that the priestly blessing (*Numbers 6*) contains fifteen words and sixty letters. When in the Jewish prayer service the cohen (*priest*) blesses the congregation, he has to raise both hands. According to the Mishna (*Jewish oral tradition*), the hand counts thirty bones, so two hands total sixty.

## First Baptist Church Bethlehem

For several years, Christians for Israel has been supporting the ministry of Rev. Naim Khoury, his wife Elvira and their family. First Baptist Church Bethlehem Ministry and Holy Land Ministry have several churches and ministries in Bethlehem, East Jerusalem and Jericho. As Arab Christians, the Khoury’s believe that God’s covenants of God with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are everlasting as scripture states, and teach their people to love Israel and the Jewish people. As a consequence Rev. Khoury’s brother was murdered on the Mount of Olives, their church in Bethlehem has been bombed 14 times, and are often attacked and placed under pressure by Palestinian Muslim leaders. We encourage readers to support and pray for these important ministries financially.

### >> A Prayer Testimony

By Elvira Khoury

August 2017 - I was getting ready to go to Jerusalem with my husband, Pastor Naim for our usual hospital visits, when suddenly I noticed a Muslim family waiting at the church entrance.

It turns out they had travelled a long way, from an area near Hebron and were asking to *‘meet the lady who they had heard would pray for God’s healing and peace to restore health to families’*. Their daughter Sima, who was 21 years old, was in a terrible state. I explained to them that Jesus alone gives peace and healing through His salvation, and He uses me as a servant and a follower of Jesus Christ. After they consented to be prayed for inside the church, we saw the Lord move significantly in their lives.

First, I started praying over Sima who was tormented day and night, experiencing very negative thoughts from Satan. I requested for her to take off her Muslim head veil so that I could pray over her head. Sima’s mother relented and told Sima she could remove her veil for prayer by a Christian woman.

My heart aches for these families I pray over. They are in great pain, and it seems that their religion is empty, making them desperate for new hope. We know that the hope for them is to believe in Jesus Christ and accept His love.

After much time spent sharing and praying explaining the power of Jesus, Sima prayed a prayer of deliverance and salvation. Sima’s aunt who was with the family, suddenly wanted to pray too. She mentioned she was guilty of practising occasional black magic to get answers for her life. She started trembling and was scared, but I told her to relax and trust the person in white who came to rescue her (*the image from her vision*). His name is Jesus. After much prayer and explanation of Jesus, her face became radiant, and joy unspeakable was on her face. I told her that the hand of God was reaching from heaven to accept her as His daughter.

They looked stunned with the knowledge of a true Saviour, and the scales of Islam’s deception fell from their eyes. I told them to turn to the Bible and Jesus. For, this is where they can find the answer!

At 4:45 pm they left the church rejoicing in the Lord! But, before saying goodbye, the mother, pointing with her hand, asked me a question, *“How much payment do you want?”* *“Nothing, come with me,”* I said as I pointed to the cross. *“Pay it to Him, for*



He is the one who did it. Thank Him, for everything you saw today came from heaven above where He is.” She thanked me and said, *“We will pray the prayers and read the Bible!”*

Later that night, I thanked God for using me in a small way to minister to the hurting living here in the Holy Land. This is one of the real stories of the power of prayer that has changed peoples lives. I also thanked God for sending us partners from around the world. Those who cover us in prayer and stand by us. Thank you for making this church’s light a shining beacon to be a blessing to many who live in darkness!

## A Year After Aleh Opened Its Doors

*In 2017, we celebrated Jerusalem’s 50 Year Anniversary by financially assisting to build a new Supportive Wing at ALEH Jerusalem. To commemorate one year after the new wing opened its doors, we received the following update:*

The educational and activity floor houses two rehabilitation kindergarten classes, offering quality day programmes and education to current ALEH residents and community children with multiple disabilities.

Two teachers and four assistant teachers staff the classrooms, working with the thirteen children, who, before the opening of ALEH’s new wing, had no educational framework suitable to their unique needs.

Activities take place in the two specially equipped classrooms, the lobby and the two adjoining patios. Daily schedules are planned for each child according to

individual needs. These include both private and group sessions in conjunction with ALEH’s multi-disciplinary therapeutic staff. The patios provide outdoor fun with therapeutic goals. Meal times are also of therapeutic nature, under the guidance of an occupational therapist and nutritionist.

The residential floor boasts fully equipped, homelike bedrooms and a central nurse’s station. All the required confirmations and building permits have been received to open the residential floor, and we look forward to accepting twelve children and youth who need long-term nursing and supportive care during the next few months. Unfortunately, bureaucratic procedures within the Ministry of Welfare, who refers the children to ALEH, is now holding up this process. In the meantime, we have had to

turn to local insurances directly to help expedite the acceptance of children who are waiting for this quality solution. We are so grateful to you for your partnership

in offering individuals with multiple and complex disabilities a supportive, rehabilitative framework in which they can realise their potential!



### >> A Call For Volunteers

Do you like working with children? Do you like making a difference? Then volunteering at ALEH is perfect for you! ALEH has a multitude of volunteer opportunities to meet each individual’s skill set, preferences, and availability. Go to: [www.aleh.org/volunteering/](http://www.aleh.org/volunteering/)



# A Peculiar Night

By Koen Carlier, Christians for Israel Aliyah Fieldworker



Last month, we had 11 olim (*immigrants to Israel*) to pick up from four different towns and drive them to the airport for their Israel bound flight at 3.30am. We left home at 6.30pm, and I thought to myself that this trip will be easy. It wasn't a long drive, there wasn't a lot of traffic and winter was almost over. But one must never underestimate a drive!

We had just left our hometown of Vinnitsa, when dense fog set in, and some heavy old overloaded trucks blocked our free passage. The police stopped me in a town called Nemirov, asking, "Why does your van make so much noise?" I answered by saying, "Why are there so many holes in the road? This is abnormal!" After that comment, I was allowed to drive on!

Our first pickup was a family in Marjanka, before driving on to Gnivan. Just before entering the town, our right front wheel hit a big hole which I missed because of the fog. Then the engine stopped. A warning light on the dashboard came on saying: fuel cut off, check engine. What to do? Call my wife Ira and ask her to come to our rescue with our 19-year-old Volkswagen or perhaps call one of the other drivers, Igor, he might know what to do. So I decide to call Igor first.



After some explanation, he told me that I had to find a small black button under the hood and press it. Somewhere in between all the wires, I found that button, but no success. I kept trying, and finally, it worked! We finally picked up our last family, just after midnight.

When we finally arrived at the airport in Vinnitsa, Rita from the Jewish Agency met us and moved us through very quickly. As we are well known to the airport staff, Rita had managed to arrange to have one of the check-in counters open for olim tonight. The people we bring to the airport each carry three bags of 23kg, so their check-in process takes more time.

Before the olim board their plane, we always give them encouragement. That evening I said: "This is an important moment in your lives. You are not immigrating, you are repatriating to Israel because your ancestors wandered for many centuries and eventually settled in Ukraine. How special it is that you leave in the year in which Israel celebrates its 70th Anniversary, the same age as the oldest lady in our group tonight, Elianor." The olim thanked us and then we said goodbye as they left Ukraine indefinitely.

# Thank You From Ukraine!

*At the beginning of February we sent an urgent appeal to make it possible to distribute 6,000 extra food parcels in Ukraine.*

We are extremely grateful that so many of you responded to this appeal as friends of the Jewish people. We were able to get to work in full force with all of the dedicated coworkers in the Ukraine.

You gave so generously that we will even be able to hand out extra food parcels and food.

At the same time we see the anti-Semitism that is so deeply rooted in Ukrainian society growing again. This is very alarming.



Besides the food parcel, our extra visit is like a beam of light for lonely Holocaust survivors



This old lady was already waiting for us



## YES! I Want to Support Christians for Israel



### CHRISTIANS FOR ISRAEL MINISTRY

- ☐ My donation for ministry costs, print & post

### SOCIAL WELFARE PROJECTS

- ☐ Hineni - Soup Kitchen
- ☐ Holocaust Survivors - "I'm not Alone" Café Europa
- ☐ 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

- ☐ One person (*Ukraine*) - US \$170
- ☐ One family (5 people) (*Ukraine*) - US \$850
- ☐ One busload (25 people) (*Ukraine*) - US \$5250
- ☐ First Home in the Homeland
- ☐ Bnei Menashe (*India*) - One person - US \$1100

TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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### BOOKS | TEACHING RESOURCES

- ☐ **PRE-ORDER: Israel Magazine - 70th Anniversary**
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To order these and other resources, go to [www.c4israel.org/webshop](http://www.c4israel.org/webshop)



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