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CHRISTIANS FOR
ISRAEL
INTERNATIONAL

Understanding Israel and world events from a Biblical perspective

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Isaac Herzog, then Chairman of the Jewish Agency, welcomes members of the Falashmura community as they arrive at the Ben Gurion airport, outside Tel Aviv. | Photo: Flash90

Pray for the Unity of Israel

In the space of only a few weeks, Israel has both a new government (including a new Prime Minister) and a new President.

Early July, Isaac 'Bougie' Herzog became Israel's 11th President. He took over the reins from Reuven ('Ruvi') Rivlin, who has been President since 2014. Rivlin was greatly loved and admired as an educator and for being a President of the Jewish people worldwide.

An attorney by profession at one of the country's top firms (which was founded by his father), Herzog has held a wide variety of public positions, including leader of the Labor Party and Chairman of the Jewish Agency (2018-2021). He has a family history that is as close as one comes to Israeli royalty. He is the grandson of Israel's first Ashkenazi chief rabbi, Isaac Herzog, after whom he is named, and the son of former IDF major general, Ambassador to the UN and later President Chaim Herzog.

Christians for Israel has worked closely with Herzog and his staff during his chairmanship at the Jewish Agency. We have come to know him as a man of great talent and

integrity who was a father figure for many new immigrants and inspired his staff to establish Israel as a safe haven for Jewish immigrants from around the world.

The President is appointed for a seven-year term. While it is largely a ceremonial function, the President plays an important role. In his inauguration speech, Herzog pledged to serve as a 'president for all' and work to tone down the country's divisive rhetoric. He warned that Israel's 'common ethos and shared values are more fragile than ever.' "Baseless hatred, polarisation and division are exacting a very heavy price... the heaviest price is the erosion of our national resilience," said Herzog. "My mission, the goal of my presidency, is to do everything to rebuild hope."

During his speech, Herzog also stressed the country's obligation toward its minorities, urging the government to battle crime in Arab communities. He also vowed to staunchly defend Israel's military record to the international community.

In his final speech as President, Rivlin urged engagement with Israel's regional partners on security, economic and

political matters and finding solutions related to water, food and climate change. He argued that Jewish-Arab coexistence in Israel could pave the way for greater engagement in the region. "I believe that if we are able to live here together, Jews and Arabs, we will find the way to live together between the Jordan River and the sea and across the whole region."

Rivlin urged the next generation of Israelis to "continue to innovate. If something isn't working - change it. Don't take things for granted because of the simple fact that the State of Israel isn't to be taken for granted. It is a miracle, and miracles must be jealously guarded."

The book of *Proverbs in the Tanakh* says: "For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding. He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity" (*Proverbs 2: 6-7*)

We wish the incoming President and government God's blessing and pray that the day will come soon when peace, truth, justice and mercy shall go forth from Zion into the whole earth.

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Return of the Bnei Menashe



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

Colophon

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Mission

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

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Campaign Against the Jewish State is Intensifying

■ Andrew Tucker

International Editor | Christians for Israel

In their teachings as recorded in the New Testament, Jesus and His Apostles spoke of the many things that would need to happen before Christ could return to reign as King. In doing so, they quoted and expounded on matters that were already referred to – sometimes obliquely – by the prophets of Israel in the Old Testament (the Hebrew Bible).

This includes the rise of an anti-Christian spirit in the world, apostasy in the church, physical and spiritual restoration of the nation of Israel, and the conflicts that would take place in the last days involving restored Israel and the nations.

About one hundred and fifty years ago, the Lord started to bring His children home from their dispersion amongst the nations. Russian Jews escaping the pogroms made their way to Palestine. The time of redemption had begun. Jews gradually joined them from other nations. Over seventy years ago, on 14 May 1948, the Jewish people declared the State of Israel. A nation was born in a day.

Since 1920, the nations have been doing everything in their power to prevent the restoration of the Jewish nation in the land. They have never fully accepted the State of Israel as a member of the community of nations. Even Israel's 'friends' in the UN have waxed and waned in their support. By and large, the church – the 'body of Christ' that is called to boldly declare God's purposes – has been either silent or (worse) actively complicit in opposing the return of the Jews to the land.

Today, the war against Israel's sovereignty in international institutions is intensifying. Allegations that Israel is infringing international law are being used to prohibit Jews from living in the Old City of Jerusalem and the West Bank (i.e. Judea and Samaria), where the



Flag of Israel among other flags at the United Nations building in Manhattan, USA. | Photo: Shutterstock

Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) claims full sovereignty.

The attack on Israel's sovereignty is part of a well-orchestrated and funded campaign in several UN-related institutions, where Arab and Islamic nations are able to mobilise other states to support their demands.

The use of the language, the moral force and the institutions of 'law' is part of Satan's strategy of first deceiving the church and the nations and then mobilising them to oppose God's plans and purposes.

The main arguments used to attack Israel have never really changed over the years. Essentially, they are that the Jewish State is a 'colonial' enterprise that oppresses an innocent indigenous population. It has 'stolen' and is 'occupying' their land. There is a growing chorus that Israel is an 'apartheid' state that is guilty of 'crimes against humanity'.

In recent weeks – since the most recent conflict with Hamas in May – we have seen a massive rise in anti-Semitism around the world, including not only hate-filled words

but also violent attacks on Jews.

I believe this latest intensification of hatred is in part provoked by the hostile rhetoric emanating from the world's most eminent institutions. In addition to the political institutions (United Nations, EU, etc.), there are four legal 'battlefields' upon which this opposition to the restoration of Israel is being played out.

First, the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague decided last February that it has jurisdiction to prosecute Israeli leaders for war crimes and crimes against humanity 'in the territory of Palestine'. The new British/Pakistani Prosecutor Karim Khan QC will now possibly investigate Israeli leaders for allowing 'settlements' to be built, for demolishing Palestinian houses and evicting Palestinian terrorists – all of which the Prosecutor considers to be 'war crimes'. The Court may even consider prosecuting Israeli leaders for the crimes of 'apartheid' and 'persecution' – which are crimes against humanity. *Continued on page 12*

Prayer Points

By C4I Prayer Team

Israel

- 'Hatred stirs up conflict, but love covers over all wrongs.' (*Proverbs 10:12*). Currently there are many internal tensions in Israel. There are political divisions and because of the recent war with Gaza, there is also a lot of distrust between Jews and Arabs. Pray for unity and pray that hatred will be broken and love will increase.
- Give thanks that a new government was formed. Pray for blessing and wisdom for this government and that they will look to God for help.
- Pray for a blessed summer for Israel. Pray for protection against wildfires and fires caused by fire balloons from Gaza. Pray that Israel will be able to welcome tourists again, in order that many people can resume their work in this sector. Pray also for a blessing on the summer camps that the Arab Christian pastor couple Naim and Elvira Khoury from Bethlehem are organising for young people in their area.

Israel & the Nations

- The ceasefire between Israel and Hamas does not mean that the danger from Gaza has completely disappeared. Tensions remain. Pray for protection for Israel at all its

borders, including those in the north. In Lebanon, tens of thousands of rockets are permanently aimed at Israel.

- Israeli military analysts see an increased risk of a direct conflict between Israel and Iran. For now, Iran is carrying out attacks mainly indirectly through Hezbollah and Hamas, but analysts expect that at some point Iran will also proceed to directly attack Israel. Pray for protection of Israel against attacks from Iran in all possible way.
- During and after the war with Gaza, there was an enormous increase in anti-Semitism around the world. During many pro-Palestinian demonstrations, anti-Semitic taunts were heard and signs with Nazi imagery were displayed. Pray that this anti-Semitism will be addressed and that more people will stand up and express their support and love for the Jewish people.

Christians for Israel

- Pray that churches, preachers, Bible study and youth groups will have open eyes and hearts to see God's unending faithfulness to Israel and to recognise the promises being fulfilled in our time as God brings His people home and the land of Israel flourishes.

For daily Prayer Points, go to our website www.c4israel.org

A Central Asia Model for Israel and the Middle East

■ Ariel Ben Solomon

As the Abraham Accords set in and the ties between moderate Arab states and Israel strengthen, more formalised relationships that tackle crucial regional issues—the Iranian threat, anti-terrorism efforts, and economic development, including desalination and clean-water use—may emerge in the Middle East.

An important model for such cooperative development can be found further East—in Central Asia, where the United States and five regional countries (the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan) make up the C5+1 together with the United States, which provides an indispensable platform for dialogue with one of the superpowers.

Yoel Guzansky, a senior research fellow at Israel's Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) who previously served on Israel's National Security Council, said that establishing a formal block of Middle Eastern countries similar to the Central Asian C5+1 is an interesting idea. Solidifying a new 'peace bloc' of Middle Eastern countries 'would be positive for Israel,' although the challenges of the Arab mistrust of Israel and intra-Arab coordination and execution remain.

Israel and some Arab states may be getting closer, with the possibility of regular regional meetings held in Arab capitals and Jerusalem. Economic development, trade, security and other issues may be discussed regularly, perhaps along with American leadership.

That kind of cohesion is at work with the C5+1. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and the foreign ministers of the five Central Asian countries met in April to discuss cooperation on various issues, including health, trade and security threats. A key policy discussed was the planned US troop withdrawal from Afghanistan by 11 September and an effort to have the Central Asian Countries play a great role in maintaining regional stability.

The Central Asian states have disagreements that occasionally boil over into limited military conflict. For example, a border clash occurred in April between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, killing more than 40 people. However, the presidents of the two countries prevented an escalation. They spoke, agreeing to a ceasefire and a meeting. After another flare-up of violence on 4 June, talks between top security officials on both sides led to a nine-point agreement to end the violence.

Despite resentments between some Central Asian countries, there remains an underlying willingness to overcome obstacles and improve conditions on the ground, something that should happen more in the Middle East. The budding relationship between Israel and some Arab countries is driven significantly by the threat from radical Islamic groups and the Iranian regime.



Former President Donald J. Trump, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bahrain Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani, Former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Minister of Foreign Affairs for the United Arab Emirates Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan sign the Abraham Accords Tuesday, 15 Sept 2020, on the South Lawn of the White House. | Photo: Official White House Photo by Joyce N. Boghosian

A Realistic Cooperation Bloc

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the development of genuine political sovereignty posed the most challenging task for the peoples of Central Asia and their elites as they strived to build stable states, says Marat Uteubaev, professor at the Moscow-based Russian Academy of Natural Sciences.

The demise of the Soviet Union mirrors the collapse of the Ottoman Empire following World War I and the development of separate independent states in the Mideast.

Kazakhstan has had more success than other Central Asian countries in this transition to independence from the former Soviet Union. "It is mainly due to the country's first president, Nursultan Nazarbayev, who ruled the country from 1990 until 2019," says Uteubaev. For almost 30 years, Nazarbayev transformed the former Soviet region into a rapidly developing nation that became a leading facilitator for regional diplomatic cooperation.

Nazarbayev proposed CICA (Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia) in 1992 to promote prosperity, peace and security in Asia; it was launched in 1999. It is a forum where both Iran and Israel are active members. Kazakhstan also hosted the early stages of Iran nuclear talks and Syrian peace talks known as the Astana Process in the capital Nur-Sultan (formerly Astana).

The Kazakh leader faced the revival of Russian great power status since 2000 and China's rise a decade later. As a result, he formulated his country's foreign policy as a 'multi-vector,' making it flexible and adaptable. This is necessary to navigate land-locked Kazakhstan's diplomacy among various international powers: Europe, the United States, China and Russia.

Kazakhstan's Central Asian peer Uzbekistan is now attempting a similar balancing act that seeks regional

integration and investment promotion. Uzbekistan followed Kazakhstan's lead in market reforms since President Shavkat Mirziyoyev took over from the authoritarian Islam Karimov in 2016.

The United Arab Emirates, Israel and other moderate Arab states will further develop a multi-vector approach, balancing relations between the traditional ally United States, assertive Russia, economic partner Europe and rising China.

Similar to Central Asian post-imperial cooperation, the success of Israel and the UAE may pave the way for the Abraham Accords members to become the engine that will bring the Middle East into a more prosperous era.

Note that the GDP of Kazakhstan was around \$182 billion and Uzbekistan \$58 billion in 2019. Compare this to Israel's GDP of \$395 billion and the UAE of \$421 billion in 2019. This solid economic foundation could be a driving force behind growing Middle Eastern economic integration.

"The C5+1 and Central Asian Economic Union may also become a good model for Israel and friendly Arab countries" and their evolution "into a realistic cooperation bloc," says Uteubaev.

Nuclear Security Guarantees

Of course, Iran's nuclear programme looms over the Middle East.

One of Nazarbayev's first steps to integrate his country into the international community was to close the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site in 1991, denuclearise and transfer all Soviet-era weapons to the Russian Federation by 1995. In addition, the United States facilitated the securing of leftover nuclear material from 1995 to 2001 as part of the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) programme. The decisive step 30 years ago has paid off.

The Nunn-Lugar programme was created to secure and dismantle weapons of mass destruction and infrastructure in the former Soviet states. Senators San

Short News

European Publishing Giant Supports Israel



Berlin-based digital publishing house Axel Springer put an Israeli flag up in front of its headquarters for several days after anti-Semitic displays at pro-Palestinian demonstrations across Germany, including marches to synagogues, shouting slogans against Jews, attacks on Jewish institutions and the burning of Israeli flags. Several staff complained about it but were told that they could leave if they did not support the company's pro-Israel stance. CEO Mathias Döpfner told his 16,000 employees during a conference call: "I think, and I'm being very frank with you, a person who has an issue with an Israeli flag being raised for one week here, after anti-Semitic demonstrations, should look for a new job." | Photo: Twitter, Hananya Naftali

Praise for Hamas



The textbooks in Qatar are not exactly an example of peace and tolerance. A report from Impact-se, a research institute that analyses textbooks and curricula based on UNESCO-standards for peace and tolerance, shows that Hamas is praised. Terror organisation Hamas is described in the textbooks as a legitimate 'Islamic resistance movement'. Firing thousands of missiles at the civil population is described as 'courageous' and 'remarkable'.

Nunn and Richard Lugar were behind the initiative that resulted in the passage of the Soviet Threat Reduction Act in 1991. The CTR programme was run out of the Department of Defense and aimed to deal with Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan after the collapse of the Soviet Union. "Thanks to Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan is one of the first countries in the world to abandon nuclear weapons voluntarily," says Uteubaev. The bold act provided nuclear security guarantees to Kazakhstan from the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, France and China, and opened the doors for massive foreign investment.

A similar event could occur if the Iranian regime falls, and the new government would decide to denuclearise with cooperation from the United States and other great powers. Kazakhstan offers a tempting example.

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The PLO is on the Verge of Collapse

■ Andrew Tucker

International Editor | Christians for Israel

On 24 June 2021, I spoke with Dr Kobi Michael (Senior Research Fellow, Institute for National Security Studies, Israel) about the conflict between Hamas and Fatah – the two main groups within Palestinian society.

What Does the Conflict Between Hamas and Fatah Mean?

“Since 2007, Hamas is in control of the Gaza Strip. Hamas is not a member of the PLO. Hamas threw out the Palestinian Authority (PA) and is in conflict with Fatah – the largest political party in the PLO.

But this is not an internal Palestinian conflict. It is part of a bitter and bloody regional struggle since the Arab Spring. Four axes are striving for influence and hegemony in the Middle East:

- The Iranian axis – includes Syria and Iranian proxies such as Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, Houti's in Yemen, Palestinian Islamic Jihad in the Palestinian territories, and, in a way, Hamas;
- Salafia Jihadia – which is the most extreme and violent version of Islam, such as ISIS;
- Political Islam (the Muslim Brotherhood) – supported by Turkey and Qatar. Hamas is the Palestinian branch of the Brotherhood, and Gaza Strip is the only place in the Middle East where the Brotherhood is the ruling power of territory;
- Pragmatic Sunni Arab states – led by Saudi Arabia and Egypt, and includes Gulf states (excl. Qatar) and Jordan. The Palestinian Authority (PA) is part of this camp.

Hamas is influenced and supported by Iran, Turkey and Qatar. The Palestinian Islamic Jihad, which operates from the Gaza Strip, is a full Iranian proxy. So in the small area of the Gaza Strip (365 km²), we find Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), Fatah and Iran, Turkey, the UN and other players – all with competing agenda's and interests. Israel has to be able to tackle the threats emanating from each of these fronts simultaneously. In all of this, the Palestinians are pawns on a chessboard.”

Is There any Chance that Fatah and Hamas will Reconcile and Form a Unity Government?

“The chance that Hamas and Fatah will reconcile is equal to the probability that President Sisi in Egypt will accept the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Zero. They are playing a zero-sum game.

Even though the PLO is Israel's preferred partner, the PA has become more important than the PLO. Mahmoud Abbas is the Chairman of the PLO and the PA, and he is also the leader of Fatah, the most important political movement within the PLO. But the PA has no say in the Gaza Strip, where Hamas is in control. But Israel cannot work with Hamas because it is a terrorist organisation, and to legitimise Hamas would undermine the PA and Fatah.

This means Israel has to use two internally contradictory strategies – one in Gaza Strip, one in the West Bank. All of this is further complicated by the fact that Abbas, the PLO, the PA and Fatah are rapidly losing legitimacy and credibility amongst the Palestinian constituency.”

How is Palestinian Society Organised? What Does it Look Like on the Ground?

“Palestinian society is deeply divided. You have those living in refugee camps; those who live in the villages; and those who live in the big cities. Even between the cities, there are big differences.



Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas seen during a tour in the West Bank city of Ramallah in 2020. | Photo: Flash90

Most Palestinians living in Hebron are Bedouins, whose natural affinity is with the Bedouin tribes in Jordan; their immediate loyalty is to their own tribes and clans, and only then to the PA in Ramallah. The Hebron Palestinians are very different from those in the northern cities like Jenin.

Ramallah is the seat of the Palestinian Authority. Most Palestinian Christians live in Ramallah and Bethlehem. Ramallah is identified with the Palestinian elite, like Arafat and Abbas and their families, who came from abroad after the Oslo Agreements. Most Palestinians deeply mistrust the elite.

Then there are the Palestinians in East Jerusalem who have a unique status because they are Israeli residents and have Israeli IDs, meaning they have all the rights of Israeli citizenship (excepting the right to hold an Israeli passport and the right to vote for the Israeli parliament (Knesset)). They can travel freely and hold properties within Israel and the Palestinian territories.

Ramallah is identified with the Palestinian elite, like Arafat and Abbas and their families, who came from abroad after the Oslo Agreements. Most Palestinians deeply mistrust the elite.

The Jerusalemite Palestinians have their own leadership and are not easily affiliated with the PA. This tension was one of the triggers for the recent conflict with Hamas.”

Can Negotiations Really Lead to a Peaceful Solution Between Israel and the PLO?

“The parties governing the PLO are losing legitimacy. Abu Mazen (the familiar name of PA/PLO leader Mahmoud Abbas) has only 8% of support, while Hamas has 74% support in the Palestinian territories (including the West Bank). Remember that the people in the Gaza Strip are more moderate than those in the West Bank. Even if an agreement is reached with the PLO, who will support it? It is not realistic.

The fact is that the current PLO leadership is unable to make the concessions required to reach an agreement. The gap between Israel and the PLO on the key issues are unbridgeable. The fundamental problem is not territories, borders, Jerusalem, water or similar issues. It is the historical refusal of the Palestinians to accept the right of the Jewish people for self-determination. They regard the creation of the Jewish State as an original sin. Even Abu Mazen refuses to recognise the existence of the Jewish people as a nation. If he reaches an agreement, it will be with the State of Israel, which he does not accept as being a Jewish State. The other side of this coin is the right of return; they demand that Israel accept this Palestinian right and their right to implement that right.”

Can the US or Other States Assist?

“The EU, US and others should be more modest and sober. They need to recognise the difference between the parties, and also, the Palestinians hold to a ‘sacred principle’ that ‘nothing is agreed until everything is agreed’. So (putting aside Hamas – which is a separate issue and needs to be tackled separately), our only option is to work with the PA.

We need to keep a final status agreement on the horizon, but in the meantime, we can reach and implement interim agreements on issues such as infrastructure, environment, economy, transportation. This will build trust and create a new atmosphere, which in turn will facilitate negotiation of the more difficult issues. All of this will take time.

There is a very dramatic change in the Middle East following the consequences of the Arab upheaval. This is the new normalisation process between Israel and Arab

countries in the region - a strategic alliance between Israel and Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and the Gulf states and even the PA, reflecting the strategic threats facing all of them: Iran, which is undermining stability in the region, the Jihadic Salafia, the Muslim Brotherhood and Turkey. This may become a new regional framework, allowing thinking at a regional level but also European countries like Cyprus, Greece and Italy. We must think not just of the Middle East but of the Eastern Mediterranean basin. Such cooperation will provide more security, self-confidence and opportunities.”

What Will Happen Next?

“The PA is likely to collapse soon. Abu Mazen cannot continue much longer, and there are no agreed procedures for the succession. All we have are various factions, each with its own armed militia. So if and when Abu Mazen leaves or dies, this will lead to armed conflict, resulting in the collapse of the PA. Then, Israel will have no option but to re-install its military administration. There could be a possibility for some kind of coalition between the various Palestinian families and clans. But Israel should not try to engineer this in advance.”



The Changing Identity of Israel's Arabs

■ Marilyn Stern

Amit Barak, co-founder of the Jerusalemite Initiative, spoke to participants in a Middle East Forum webinar about historic change occurring among the roughly 175,000 Arabic-speaking Israeli Christians and their growing identification with and integration into Israeli society as a whole.

For many years, Arabic-speaking Christians in Israel were commonly known as Christian Arabs, reflecting the fact that they shared much the same solidarity with the outside Arab world as Israel's 1.3 million Muslim Arab citizens. Living primarily in Arab Muslim towns and villages, they were considered part of the undifferentiated Arab sector. Like Muslim Arabs, they are exempt from obligatory military service.

This perspective about the place of Arabic-speaking Christians in Israeli society began to shift around 2012, as they witnessed the growing persecution of Christians throughout the Middle East, most notably those in Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Libya, and the Palestinian Authority self-rule areas.

Arabic-speaking Christians in Israel "are not Arabs."

In response, Father Gabriel Naddaf of Nazareth, a Greek Orthodox priest who had established the Christian Empowerment Council, has called upon the Christian community to embrace Israel as its home and 'safe haven.' Moreover, he publicly urged Christian youth to 'defend our home' by serving in the Israel Defense



Father Gabriel Naddaf (left) with former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. | Photo: Flash90/GPO

Forces (IDF) and the Israeli National Service (*Sherut Leumi*). While Israeli law obliges only Jews, Druze, and Circassians to serve in the IDF, Arabic-speaking Christians (and Muslims) may volunteer.

Father Naddaf's call for Christians to fully integrate into Israeli society and become partners in 'building the state' broke a long-standing taboo. While Arabic-speaking Christians serve as judges in Israel's Supreme Court, hospital directors, and other high-profile positions, Barak explained that their participation until now has been as individuals, not as representatives of a community acting on behalf of Israel.

Evidence of Father Naddaf's success can be seen in the increasing number of Arabic-speaking Christians volunteering to serve in the IDF, from 30-35 before 2012 to around 100 by 2014. Arabic-speaking

Christian volunteers in the National Service (which serves as an alternative to obligatory military service for ultra-orthodox Jews and conscientious objectors) rose from around a dozen to 500.

Father Naddaf's wake-up call to his fellow Christians has been challenged by Muslim and leftist organisations in Israel. Arabic-speaking Christians who embrace his call have suffered boycotts against their businesses and even difficulties seeking marital partners. The threat of violence against Arabic-speaking Christians in the IDF has led them to receive special permission to remove their uniforms when travelling to and from their homes.

Father Naddaf has emphasised the need for education about the origins of Arabic-speaking Christians to bolster their integration in Israel. Arabic-speaking Christians date back to the 7th and 8th centuries when Arab Muslims conquered the area and transformed the culture. Among the imposed changes, Aramaic, the spoken language shared by Jews, Greeks, and Christians, was replaced by Arabic. Christians speak Arabic as their 'mother language' because of the cultural environment where they live, but "they are not Arabs," said Barak. They are being awakened to their true origins as "descendants of the first Jews who followed Jesus ... [and] ... descendants of Aramean tribes, north-of-Israel Assyrian tribes, and other tribes."

At Father Naddaf's urging, in 2016, Israel's Interior Ministry enacted a major change by recognising Aramean as a nationality in Israel. Although the registry process involves a lengthy bureaucratic one, the ministry's recognition enables Arabic-speaking Christians to formally change their identity 'from Arab to Aramean.'

Barak said the next step in the 'ongoing process' of Christian integration is to gain the support of Israel's Ministry of Education. Providing crucial knowledge in the education system about the origins of Arabic-speaking Christians will help bring about 'a real change' by nurturing their identities as Israeli civilians who are fully vested in safeguarding their homeland.

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www.meforum.org

Short News

Young Musicians for Holocaust Survivors and the Elderly



In June, the Jerusalem Music Centre and the Jerusalem Foundation organised a special concert with ensembles of the David Goldman Programme for Outstanding Young Musicians of the Jerusalem Music Centre. Over 100 Holocaust survivors attended this concert, and the Jerusalem Foundation organized five minibuses for transportation. It was an unforgettable and moving event after so many months of Covid restrictions. The Café Europa network offers social interaction and supports opportunities for the city's Holocaust survivors. Hundreds of Jerusalem's Holocaust survivors visit the six Cafés Europa held weekly in Hebrew, Russian, English, and Yiddish. In addition, 'Café Europa on Wheels' visits those that cannot leave their homes. Photo: Yael Ilan

Student from the United Arab Emirates

Recently the IDC-campus in Herzliya welcomed the first student from the United Arab Emirates. A unique event for Israel and a result of the Abraham Accords. Uriel Reichman, president and founder of IDC Herzliya said: "We are proud to be the first academic institution in Israel to welcome a student from the United Arab Emirates." The nineteen-year-old student studies Public Administration and lives in one of the dormitories on campus.

Honduras Opens Embassy in Jerusalem



Honduras officially moved its embassy in Israel to Jerusalem on 24 June 2021 in the presence of Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and visiting Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández. Honduras is the fourth country to open its embassy in Jerusalem. President Hernández arrived in Israel with 20 pastors who brought thousands of signatures of Christians who love Israel. Hernández pointed out that after he took office in 2014, Honduras became 'one of the two countries in Latin America, and one of the five in the world, that most often abstains from the resolutions that Israel opposes.' He expressed the hope to continue to build a solid relationship between Israel and Honduras.

Webinar

Rosh HaShana: Accepting God's Kingship - Celebration of the birth of humanity

Speaker:
David Nekrutman from Israel

David Nekrutman serves as the Executive Director for the Center for Jewish-Christian Understanding and Cooperation.

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 2, 2021

12:00 PM • CEST
6:00 PM • SGT
8:00 PM • AEST
10:00 PM • NZST

MORE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION:
C4ISRAEL.ORG/WEBINAR

Prime Ministers Israel: 1948-present



NB: Prime Ministers highlighted in blue are described below.

David Ben-Gurion

David Ben-Gurion was Israel's first Prime Minister and Defence Minister. On 14 May 1948 he proclaimed the establishment of the State of Israel. Ben-Gurion was born in Plonsk, Poland, on 16 October 1886 and immigrated to Israel in 1906. During the First World War he was deported by the Ottomans and left the Middle East for the United States, where he met and married Paula Monbesz. He returned to Israel in 1919. In 1935 he became head of the Jewish Agency, a post he held until 1948. He established a robust Israeli Defence Force (IDF) and served his first term as Prime Minister from 1948 – 1953. He resigned from the government for two years but returned to power in 1955, following the elections. He would serve as Prime Minister again until 1963. David Ben-Gurion died in 1973.

Moshe Sharett

Sharett played an important role in mobilising international support for the UN Partition Plan in 1947. From 1948-1956, he served as Israel's first Minister of Foreign Affairs and in 1952, he signed a reparations agreement with West Germany. In 1960, Sharett was elected as Chairman of the World Zionist Organisation and the Jewish Agency.

Levi Eshkol

During his term as Prime Minister, Eshkol worked to improve Israel's foreign relations, establishing diplomatic relations with West Germany in 1965, as well as cultural ties with the Soviet Union, which also allowed some Soviet Jews to immigrate to Israel. The major event during Eshkol's governance was the Six-Day War.

Golda Meir

Golda Meir was already 70 years old when she became Prime Minister of Israel in 1969 and the first woman to hold this title. Twenty one years earlier, on 14 May 1948 in Tel Aviv, she was one of the signatories of the Declaration of Independence. From 1956-1966 she served as Foreign Minister of Israel. Many leaders in the international field referred to her as 'the Iron Lady'. She never seemed to seek power. Instead, it appeared she only responded to the call to take it and, by so doing, became a political symbol of special importance.

Yitzhak Rabin

Rabin was the first native-born (Jerusalem) Israeli Prime Minister. He was Chief of staff of the IDF during the Six-Day War (1967) and ordered the bold 'Entebbe Operation' in 1976, in which Israeli and other hostages were rescued after their plane was hijacked. He was Minister of Defence from 1984-1990. His second term as Prime Minister was marked by two historical events: the Oslo Agreements with the PLO and the Treaty of Peace with Jordan. In 1994 he won the Nobel Peace Prize, together with Shimon Peres and Yasser Arafat. While attending a peace rally in November 1995, Rabin was assassinated by a Jewish extremist, leaving behind a shocked and grieving nation.

Menachem Begin

Begin signed a Peace Treaty with Egypt in 1979, after two years of negotiations. Both Anwar Sadat (Egypt) and Begin were awarded the 1978 Nobel Peace Prize. In the wake of the Camp David Accords, Israel withdrew from Sinai.

Yitzhak Shamir

From 1980-1983 Shamir served as Minister of Foreign Affairs, where he guided negotiations with Egypt to normalise relations after the peace treaty. In May 1991, he ordered 'Operation Solomon', the airlift rescue of thousands of Ethiopian Jews. He served two terms as Prime Minister. His second term was marked by the Gulf War, the Madrid Peace Conference and the Fall of the Iron Curtain, resulting in a wave of immigration from the Soviet Union.

Shimon Peres

Peres served Israel not only as Prime Minister (two terms) but also as President (2007-2014) and Foreign Minister (three terms). During the War of Independence, Peres was assigned several posts including military intelligence, arms procurement and naval services. In his second term as Foreign Minister (1992-1995) he achieved his two greatest diplomatic successes, the Oslo Agreements with the PLO and the Treaty of Peace with Jordan. Peres shared the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize with Rabin and Arafat. At the age of 84 (2007), he was elected President of Israel, receiving the ultimate recognition for his lifelong service.

Ehud Barak

Ehud Barak served in the IDF for 36 years, leading several highly acclaimed operations. He was appointed Chief of General Staff in 1991, and promoted to Lieutenant-General. He is the joint-highest decorated officer in Israel's history. During his term as Prime Minister, Israel withdrew from Southern Lebanon in May 2000.

Ariel Sharon

Sharon joined the Haganah at the age of 14 and was a commander in the Israeli Army from its creation in 1948. He served the IDF for more than 25 years and was appointed Defence Minister in 1981, serving in this post during the Lebanon War. In 2004-2005 he orchestrated Israel's unilateral disengagement from the Gaza Strip. In 2006 Sharon suffered a massive stroke, leaving him unconscious. He passed away in January 2014, after spending eight years in a coma.

Ehud Olmert

From 1993-2003, Olmert served as Mayor of Jerusalem. During his term in office, he spearheaded the development of road infrastructure and the light rail system in Jerusalem. He was widely credited with improving the Jerusalem school system. He served as Prime Minister from 2006-2009.

Benjamin Netanyahu

Netanyahu was born in Tel Aviv, grew up in Jerusalem but spent most of his teen years in the USA. In 1967, he returned to Israel to serve in the IDF. He took part in a number of military operations, including the 1972 rescue of a hijacked Sabena passenger jet at Ben Gurion Airport. He was appointed Israel's ambassador to the UN in 1984 and initiated several conferences on how to fight international terrorism. Netanyahu served two terms as Prime Minister and three terms as Foreign Minister.

Naftali Bennett

Bennett, a father of four and a modern Orthodox Jew, is Israel's first prime minister who regularly wears a *kippa*, the skullcap worn by Jews. He is a former commando and self-made tech millionaire who bills himself as further to the right than Benjamin Netanyahu. He served as Minister of Diaspora Affairs, Minister of Education, and Minister of Defense.



David Ben Gurion in his library at his home in Sdeh Boker.



Golda Meir with children of Kibbutz Shfayim.



Shimon Peres.



Jimmy Carter with Menachem Begin.

Who's Who in the New Knesset?

On 13 June 2021, the 36th government of Israel was sworn in. The new government is a diverse coalition comprised of eight parties and will be led by Prime Minister Naftali Bennett for the next two years, after which Yair Lapid will take over. The new 28-member cabinet features record diversity. It includes nine women (the most in Israel's history) and three observant Jewish men. It has an Arab Muslim and a Druze Arab member, while another Arab Muslim will be a deputy minister. Five are immigrants – born in Ethiopia, Morocco, and the former Soviet Union.

The governing coalition includes three right-wing parties, two centrist parties, two left-wing parties, and one Arab Muslim party.

Here is some background on some of the key players in this uniquely Israeli new government:

Prime Minister: Naftali Bennett (Yamina)



Naftali Bennett was born in Haifa to American parents, and throughout his childhood, he moved back and forth between Israel and the United States. He served as a company commander in the elite Sayeret Matkal and Maglan commando units and studied law at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

He then co-founded Cyota, a hi-tech anti-fraud software company, and served as its CEO while living in New York. This company sold for \$145 million to RSA Security in 2005, and Bennett went on to become the CEO of Soluto, another hi-tech startup. He moved back to Israel and began his career in politics, serving as chief of staff under Benjamin Netanyahu in 2006 when the latter was sitting in opposition.

He has now joined Lapid and other right-wing, centrist, and left-wing parties in a narrow, one-seat majority coalition. Under the agreement, Bennett will be the Prime Minister for the next two years, overseeing Israel's most diverse coalition, composed of eight different parties.

Alternate Prime Minister/Foreign Affairs: Yair Lapid (Yesh Atid)



Yair Lapid, the chairman of the Yesh Atid ('there is a future') party, is the alternate Prime Minister who will take over as PM from Bennett in August 2023 under the coalition agreements creating the new government. Until then, Lapid will serve as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and an 'Alternate Prime Minister' will have the right to veto any government decision.

His political career dates back to 2012 when he founded the Yesh Atid party, with a secularist and centrist 'clean government' platform. It quickly went on to be the second biggest party in Israel's Knesset in its first election in 2013, winning 19 seats. From 2013 to 2014, Yesh Atid joined a coalition government led by the Likud, with Lapid serving as Finance Minister under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Netanyahu fired Lapid for alleged disloyalty in December 2014, precipitating new elections in March 2015. Yesh Atid declined to 11 seats and went into opposition.

Lapid was born in Israel in 1963 and is married with three children. He comes from a family history within journalism and politics. Before beginning his political career, Yair Lapid was one of Israel's best-known television presenters and journalists and the author of several books in various genres. He also took part in social organisations across various causes, including special needs, education, and disadvantaged youth.

Deputy Prime Minister/Defence: Benny Gantz (Blue & White)



Benjamin, or Benny, Gantz was born in Israel in 1959 and had a long career serving in the IDF. His IDF tenure of 38 years includes being the commander of numerous units. He also served as a military attaché to the United States and as the 20th IDF Chief of the General Staff from 2011–2015. This period included command of Operation Pillar of Defense (November 2012), Operation Brother's Keeper (June 2014), and Operation Protective Edge (July 2014).

After leaving the IDF, Gantz took part in social and educational initiatives, serving as the chairman of two organisations and helping found the Pnima (Inward) movement, which seeks to address the rifts and polarisation in Israeli society.

Gantz entered politics in December 2018 when he founded the Israel Resilience Party (Hosen L'Yisrael), which later joined forces with additional parties to form the Blue and White (Kahol Lavan) parliamentary group. He led Blue and White throughout the elections for the 21st, 22nd, and 23rd Knessets, leading the party to an effective draw with Likud in each of those elections.

Justice Minister/Deputy Prime Minister: Gideon Sa'ar (New Hope)



Gideon Sa'ar is leader of the New Hope party, which he formed in 2020. He was born in Tel Aviv in 1966 and received both a BA (in Political Science) and an LLB from Tel Aviv University. He worked as an aide to the Attorney-General as well as the State Attorney and then became the Secretary of the Cabinet in the first Netanyahu Government in 1999, and again under Ariel Sharon from 2001-02.

In 2003, he became a member of the Knesset as part of the Likud Party. He was appointed Minister of Education in March 2009. He became increasingly mentioned as a possible successor to Netanyahu, and in March 2013, he became Minister of the Interior. After a reported falling out with Netanyahu, he left politics to return to private life in November 2014. In April 2017, Sa'ar announced his return to politics and an intention to run in Likud primaries. In Dec. 2019, he lost a Likud leadership primary to Netanyahu. In Dec. 2020, he announced the formation of the New Hope party, which gained six seats in the March 2021 election.

Minister of Finance: Avigdor Lieberman (Yisrael Beiteinu)



Avigdor Lieberman was born in 1958 in the Soviet Union. He made Aliyah at age 20, served in the IDF, and earned a BA in International Relations and Political Science from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Lieberman was the Director-General of the Likud Movement from 1993-1996 and Director-General of the Prime Minister's Office from 1996-1997. After founding and becoming the head of the Yisrael Beiteinu Party in 1999, Lieberman was elected to the Knesset.

In 2001, he was appointed Minister of National Infrastructure, then served as Minister of Transportation from 2003-2004 and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Strategic Affairs from 2006-2008. In 2009, he was once again appointed Deputy Prime Minister until 2012 as well as Minister of Foreign Affairs until 2012 and again from 2013-2015. He also served as Minister of Defence from 2016-2018.

Yisrael Beiteinu was originally founded to represent the interests of immigrants from the former Soviet Union to Israel, but in recent years has focused more of its efforts on opposing religious coercion.

Minister of Education: Yifat Shasha-Biton (New Hope)



Yifat Shasha-Biton was born in Israel in 1973 and comes to this position with an extensive background in education; she received a BA, MA, and PhD in Education from the University of Haifa, and has held leadership roles at Ohalo College and Tel-Hai Academic College, and several positions for the city of Kiryat Shmona.

Shasha-Biton was first elected to the Knesset in 2015 with the Kulanu Party. In 2019, Shasha-Biton was appointed Minister of Construction and Housing, and she was re-elected to the Knesset with the Likud Party. As Minister of Education, she has announced intentions to change schooling to five days a week from its current six in Israel.

Minister of Interior: Ayelet Shaked (Yamina)



Ayelet Shaked was born in Tel Aviv in 1976. After serving in the IDF, she earned a BSc in electrical engineering and computer science from Tel Aviv University and worked in a variety of roles at Texas Instruments.

She began her public career in 2006 as the director of Benjamin Netanyahu's office, and in 2013, she was elected to the Knesset with the Habayit Hayehudi (Jewish Home) party. Since then, she has held a seat in the Knesset, representing the Hayamin Hehadash (New Right) and Yamina parties. From 2015-2019, Shaked was the Minister of Justice and has made judicial reform a key priority of her political career.



Naftali Bennett lighting a candle at Hanukka.



John Kerry meeting with Yair Lapid.



Yifat Shasha-Biton.



Ayelet Shaked.

Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast



Participants at the 5th Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast in front of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs



1. JPB booklet; 2: Chiara Canciani and Danila Pisani (C4I Italy) with Albert Veksler (JPB founder); 3: C4I Italy with Rabbi Yehudah Glick (former MK); 4: C4I Italy with Rabbi Tuly Weisz (Israel 365 founder).

Chiara Canciani Christians for Israel Italy

After a long period of worldwide lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic, a war against the terrorist organisation Hamas and a just-installed new Bennet-Lapid Government coalition, the Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast (JPB) was held in Jerusalem on 9-10 June 2021.

First organised in 2017 on the occasion of the celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the unification of Jerusalem, the capital of the State of Israel, this year the Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast was in its fifth edition. Due to the corona restrictions that were still in effect, the Conference was partially held in person (around 70

people attended in person, of which approximately 25 came from abroad) and partially online (around 1.5 million people followed the event from over 100 different countries in the five continents).

Miraculously, I was able to meet the Israeli Government's conditions, travel to Israel, and be part of the Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast representing Christians for Israel. That was an immense privilege for me.

For the first time in my life, I saw a Jerusalem without crowds of tourists, with many shops still with shutters down and the local population amazed to see people arriving from abroad. In my opinion, in this climate, it has been very significant that the doors of the Knesset were

opened for the first time after the lockdown just for a delegation of Christian leaders who love and support Israel.

Indeed the main concern expressed by all the speakers (MKs, Christian leaders and politicians) is the new wave of anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism that not only Israel is facing from terrorist organisations, supported by countries whose aim is to destroy the State of Israel, but that also Jews around the world (especially across Europe and the 'western democratic nations') in recent months.

As never before, as Christians, we are called to be like Ruth in the Bible: "Your people will be my people and your God my God" (*Ruth 1:16*)

C4I Italy's 10-Year Anniversary



Participants at the 10th Anniversary of Christians for Israel Italy



1. Part of the C4I Italy team; 2: Rev Willem Glashouwer teaching with Chiara Canciani translating; 3-4: Participants

Chiara Canciani Christians for Israel Italy

"Till now the Lord has helped us". Using the same words as the prophet Samuel, the Christians for Israel Italy team, thank the Lord for His faithfulness during the past 10 years. At our opening Marie-Louise Weissenböck said in her opening message: "we were full of plans and dreams". We have realised many of those plans and dreams with God's help and grace.

Over the past 10 years we have seen the C4I-Italy team growing, especially with young people and students.

On 3 July 2021, we celebrated the 10th anniversary of C4I Italy in Verona. After a long period of lockdown, it was

the first event in person. The celebration started with music and songs including the national anthems of both Israel and Italy, to remind us that Italy should walk and stand with Israel. Then we had three sessions of teaching from Rev Willem JJ Glashouwer explaining in a profound and Bible-based way, "Why Israel?", "Why Jerusalem?" and "Why end times?". Violin's music (by Maestro Gianni Cardillo) accompanied us during the celebrations which ended, like every birthday party, by cutting the cake and with a LeChaim toast.

Christians for Israel Italy was founded ten years ago, by Edda Fogarollo, Chiara Canciani, Teresa Mollo with Rev Willem JJ Glashouwer as Honorary President. We worked in an uncultivated Italian land during these years, where

there was no teaching, no knowledge of Israel, and nobody knew about the Christians for Israel movement. We have sown, irrigated the soil, travelled the length and breadth of Italy, touching almost all regions, teaching in schools, churches, and education institutes to bring the Bible's message and to fight anti-Semitism in all forms.

We believe that there is an excellent harvest after this time of sowing, and we believe that the Italian desert will flourish as we will continue what the prophet Isaiah said: "Comfort, comfort my people" (*Isaiah 40:1*)

With our hearts full of gratitude and thankfulness, we thank God for what He has done, and we thank our precious Christians for Israel family who supported us.

'Gharqad', the Tree of the Jews

■ Johannes Gerloff

Theologian, Journalist, Lecturer & Author

Terrorism experts and conflict theorists distinguish between capabilities and motivation in a military force or terrorist group. To carry out a terrorist attack, you need both the ability to do damage, the technical know-how to make a bomb, and at the same time the motivation to use a knife, an axe, a car or an explosive device as a terrorist weapon. If either of these, the ability or the motivation, is missing, a terrorist attack cannot occur.

"We can deal with the capabilities of our adversaries," an Israeli academic who specialised in the study of terrorism once told me, "but we can't get at their motivation. Quite often, we reinforce the motivation to perpetrate terror against us by our actions to limit terrorist capabilities."

What number of missiles destroyed how many houses; how many bombs crippled which people; which strategies were successful, and by which tactics who was outwitted never really interested me. I would like to understand what motivates people to become terrorists – even if this first and foremost destroys or cripples themselves and their loved ones. At the same time, the goals they set for themselves in view of their opponents recede into the ever more unattainable distance.

Almost Embarrassing

"In the end times, even nature will support us," a Palestinian told me many years ago: "We will destroy all the Jews!" – The whole thing seemed so childish to me that I never really wanted to write about it.

But then, on 9 January 2012, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem spoke out. What he had to say was broadcast on official Palestinian Authority television. Sheikh Muhammad Ahmad Hussein had been installed in July 2006 by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas as the spiritual leader of all Muslims in Israel and the Palestinian Authority. What he had to say on the 47th anniversary of Fatah's founding can still be heard by anyone on the Internet.

With the Authority of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem

It should be kept in mind that Mahmoud Abbas, commonly referred to as 'Abu Mazen,' is considered 'ready for talks,' expressly in contrast to the 'hardliner' Netanyahu. And Fatah is the backbone of the Palestinian Authority, which explicitly presents itself to Westerners as secular, in contrast to the 'Islamist' Hamas.

Grand Mufti Muhammad Hussein proclaimed: "Palestine in its entirety is a revolution, since [Caliph] Umar came [to conquer Jerusalem, 637 CE], and continuing today and until the End of Days." The Grand Mufti underlined the reliability of the *hadith* before quoting it:

"The Hour [of Resurrection] will not come until you fight the Jews. The Jew will hide behind stones or trees. The stones or trees will call: 'Oh Muslim, servant of Allah,



[Photo: Johannes Gerloff (gerloff.co.il)]

there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him.' Except for the *Gharqad* tree [which will keep silent]."

This *hadith* is also quoted in the *Hamas Charter of 18 August 1988*, in Article 7 under the heading *The Universality of the Islamic Resistance Movement*.

Do Settlers Plant *Gharqad* Trees?

"Therefore," the highest spiritual representative of the Palestinian Authority declared in all seriousness at the Fatah anniversary in January 2012, "it is no wonder that you see *Gharqad* [trees] surrounding the [Israeli] settlements and colonies."

Over the years, in countless encounters, I have found that most Arab Muslims know immediately what the *Gharqad* is about when you ask them. Even on the faces of obviously illiterate Bedouins, a smug smile spontaneously appears in response, obviously not due to my difficulty in pronouncing the first letter 'gh' – a guttural 'r'.

The Internet offers an ever-growing selection of articles on the *Gharqad*, not infrequently repeating the claim that Jews plant these trees in the occupied territories because they know that Islam is right and that violent confrontation between Jews and Muslims is inevitable.

Is the Massacre Unavoidable?

Pious Muslims are firmly convinced that "the final massacre is inevitable and has to happen at all costs". Liberal, friendly, diplomatic, or dialogue-minded Muslims go to great lengths to explain these statements as forgeries in parts of the *hadiths*, which then led to misunderstandings. Others believe that one should not derive legally binding instructions from this narrative.

They are meant to be a description, not a prescription.

Personally, I was told by Muslim friends that such statements were directed only against those non-Muslims who stubbornly opposed the one true God or adhered to a false messiah, the Antichrist. The Qur'an is said to take great pains distinguishing between righteous and sinful Jews.

What is a *Gharqad*?

It gets funny when an interested YouTuber sets out to ask Jews and Israelis if they know and maybe even plant the *Gharqad*. But even in Israeli nurseries, no one seems to know the 'tree of the Jew.'

My own years of inquiries did not really yield a satisfactory answer even from experts in botany, the flora of the Holy Land, and the plants mentioned in ancient holy books. The majority today seems to have settled on a thorny, salty scrub called in Hebrew (*yamluah*), bearing the Latin name *Nitraria retusa*.

However, it is crucial to the question about the motivation and trigger of the never-ending conflict between radical Muslims and the Jewish state of Israel that such narratives obviously continue to spread and stubbornly resist all rationalisation efforts.

It is decisive to have them in mind if we wish to understand why Hamas' chief Yahya Sinwar only days after Israel's destructive military campaign in spring 2021, is able to publically state: "Israel can expect more violence", talk about "10,000 martyrs" and still be able to move around freely among the population of Gaza that so much suffered from this seemingly unending and increasingly vicious war.

Tefillin

In this series, 'Signs of Faith', objects that express Jewish faith are explained and discussed.

"You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead." *Deuteronomy 6:8*

They form a distinctive attribute for the prayers: the *tefillin*, the phylacteries. You have probably seen them sometimes. They consist of two small leather boxes. One is bound with a leather belt on the forehead, the other on the upper arm. In Hebrew, the boxes are called *batim* (plural of *bayit*, house). They contain tiny parchment scrolls on which the four Torah passages are written which command wearing the *tefillin* (*Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21; Exodus 13:1-10 and 13:11-16*). In the 'house' on the arm, the four texts are written on the same piece of parchment. The 'house' on the forehead is divided into four compartments,

each containing a parchment with four passages. This practise goes back to second temple times, as *tefillin* found in Qumran show.

The Bible does not explain how the 'sign on your hand' or the 'reminder on your forehead' (*Exodus 13:9*) should look. That was handed down in the tradition of the Scribes.

The *tefillin shel rosh* is put in the centre of the forehead, right above the hairline. This is derived from a comparison with *Deuteronomy 14:1*, which apparently indicates a spot where hair grows. The knot of the leather strap lies in the neck; the two ends fall over the shoulder and the breast.

The *tefillin shel yad* is put on the upper arm, near the heart (*Deuteronomy 11:18*). The strap is wrapped seven times around the lower arm, between elbow and

wrist. Then it is wrapped around the hand, forming the letter *shin*. Finally, it is wound three times around the middle finger, then *Hosea 2:18-19* is read, in those verses God pronounces three times that He takes Israel as His bride. The windings and the knots together form the letters of *Shaddai*: the Almighty.

The *tefillin* are worn during the morning prayers on weekdays, but not on Shabbat, the High Holidays and the three Pilgrimage Festivals.

These festive times are in themselves a 'sign' between God and the people of Israel (*Exodus 31:17*).



Jewish Festivals

Rosh Hashana LeBehemot

New Year for Tithing Animals
8-9 August 2021

The day shepherds determined which of their mature animals were to be tithed. The day coincides with *Rosh Chodesh Elul*, the New Moon for the month of *Elul*, exactly one month before *Rosh Hashanah*.

Leil Selichot

Prayers for Forgiveness in Preparation for the High Holidays
28 August 2021

Selichot are Jewish penitential poems and prayers, especially those said in the period leading up to the High Holidays, and on Fast Days.

Rosh Hashanah

The Jewish New Year
6-8 September 2021

It is the first of the High Holidays or *Yamim Noraim* ('Days of Awe'), celebrated ten days before *Yom Kippur*. *Rosh Hashanah* is observed on the first two days of *Tishrei*, the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar. It is described in the *Torah* as *Yom Teru'ah*, a day of sounding [the *Shofar*].

Yom Kippur

Day of Atonement
15-16 September 2021

Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the year for the Jews. Its central themes are atonement and repentance. Jews traditionally observe this holy day with a 25-hour period of fasting and intensive prayer, often spending most of the day in synagogue services. *Yom Kippur* completes the annual period of the High Holidays.

Sukkot

Feast of Tabernacles
20-22 September 2021

Sukkot is a Biblical holiday celebrated on the 15th day of the month of *Tishrei*. It is one of the three biblically mandated festivals *Shalosh regalim* on which Jews were commanded to make a pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem.

Shmini Atzevet

Eight Day of Assembly
27-28 September 2021

Shmini Atzevet is a Jewish holiday, celebrated on the 22nd day of the Hebrew month of *Tishrei* (first month of calendar). In the Diaspora, an additional day is celebrated, the second day being separately referred to as *Simchat Torah*.

Simchat Torah

Day of Celebrating the Torah
28-29 September 2021

Simchat Torah is a celebration marking the conclusion of the annual cycle of public Torah readings, and the beginning of a new cycle.

Renewal of the Covenant

■ Kees de Vreugd

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

"When He calls this covenant 'new,' He has made the first one obsolete and whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear." (*Hebrews 8:13*)

So there it is. The old covenant is ready to disappear. It has been replaced by a new covenant. This is proof of God's love and God's faithfulness to His people Israel.

What is *Hebrews chapter 8* all about? The main point is that we have a unique high priest, one who is different from the high priest serving in the earthly temple.

Chapter 8 begins: "We have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" (*verse 1*). In other words, He shares in the glory and majesty of God. But the letter to the Hebrews also tells us that He is serving in the heavenly sanctuary, of which the earthly sanctuary with its priests is a reflection. In what respect does the ministry of this High priest differ from that of the earthly priests? *Hebrews* tells us: this High priest does not need first to do atonement for his own sins. He is of a different order. And therefore, a different covenant is appropriate.

By the way, we should not associate the term 'old covenant' with the books of the Old Testament as opposed to those of the New Testament or New Covenant. At the time the letter to the Hebrews was written, the apostolic letters may have been in circulation. But the New Testament as a whole was still to be compiled. The Bible of the first believers in Christ was the Old Testament, in most cases (like in *Hebrews*) in its Greek version, namely the *Septuagint*.

Moreover, we must keep in mind that the letter to the Hebrews was written to Jews who believed in Jesus as the Messiah. The 'church' as a separate body, apart from and next to Israel, did not exist yet. This would

still take centuries. The movement of people who believed in Jesus as the Messiah was still mainly to be found within Judaism of those days. So we should take the word covenant as it is meant: God's covenant with Israel. Everything discussed is to be taken as an inner-Jewish debate.

Now, this old covenant was inadequate. Or better, the people who had to administer it, the priests, fell short of being a perfect sacrifice to atone for the sins of the people. Because of their own sins, they had to sacrifice for themselves first. Moreover, Israel time and again fell into sin, so much so that they broke the covenant. That was the weakness of the old covenant. The writer to the Hebrews cites words spoken by the prophet Jeremiah (*Jeremiah 31:31-34*). Israel, says God through the prophet, has broken My covenant. Has God then now, from His side, broken the covenant? No! He has renewed the broken covenant! "Behold, days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah."

The *Hebrew of Jeremiah 31* means a renewal of the covenant rather than an entirely new and different covenant. The same is true for the *Greek of Hebrews 8 (and the Septuagint)*. The covenant is renewed, but the partners of the covenant remain the same. That is to say, God is again making a covenant with Israel, but in doing so, He is renewing Israel too: "I will put My laws into their minds, and I will write them on their hearts" (*Hebrews 8:10, Jeremiah 31:33*). From the depth of



Ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament. | Photo: Shutterstock

their hearts, Israel will be motivated by the Holy Spirit to live according to the rules of the covenant, God's commandments. In other words, the conditions of the covenant are renewed – the old one was 'worn out' and 'growing old' (*verse 13*). But the content remains the same. Moreover, the fulfilment of the purpose of the covenant is now firmly established. God can and will abide with Israel because He has sanctified them through the self-sacrifice of the Messiah. Finally, we must note that the writer is referring to the Sinai covenant (and more precisely, the Levitical covenant, concerning the temple office). He does not mean the covenant with Abraham here, in which God promised a land, a nation and a blessing. The promise to Abraham is mentioned in *chapter 6 (verses 23)* of the letter. That promise and that covenant continue to be valid. But living in the promised land is dependent on Israel obeying God's commandments. When the Lord writes His laws in their hearts, they will live in accordance with them. So the renewed covenant affirms the land promise and makes living in the land really possible. We conclude that the new covenant was made with Israel. Next time, we will go further into the text of *Hebrews 8*.

Book Review

By Pieter Hoogendoorn

The War of Return:

How Western Indulgence of the Palestinian Dream Has Obstructed the Path to Peace

by Adi Schwartz and Dr Einat Wilf

The authors are both liberal Israelis supportive of a two-state solution as inter alia foreseen by the Oslo Accords in the early '90s. Twenty-five years after these Accords were signed, they wonder why there still is no peace between Israel and the Palestinians and why the two states are not there.

To find an answer to this question, they go back to 1948, when 700,000 Palestinians were forced out of their homes by the first Arab-Israeli War. More than 70 years later, millions of their descendants are still registered as refugees, with many living in refugee camps. This group has "officially" remained unsettled, demanding to settle in the state of Israel. They believe in a personal 'right of return' to their homes in the State of Israel.

Once starting the book, you can't stop reading. It becomes clear that the

Palestinian demand for the implementation of their claimed right to return to their homes in the State of Israel (not to Gaza or the West Bank, the territory of the would-be state of Palestine according to the 1947 UN Partition Plan which the Arabs, including the Palestinians, discarded), would herald the end of the Jewish state of Israel because of the massive influx of several millions of (Muslim) Palestinian Arabs. For the Palestinians, there can only be peace based on unconditional acceptance of their 'right of return' - which eventually will lead to a 1-state solution, i.e. an Arabic/Muslim state of Palestine (with at best a Jewish minority) "from the River to the Sea". Exit Israel.

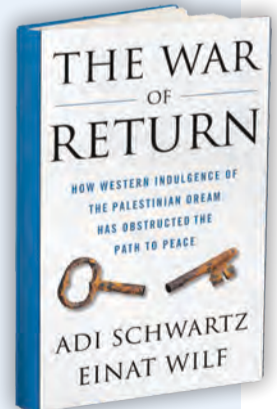
In clear and simple language, the authors reveal the origins of the idea of a 'right of return' and explain how UNRWA – the very agency charged

with finding a solution for the refugees – gave in to Palestinian, Arab and international political pressure to create a permanent refugee problem.

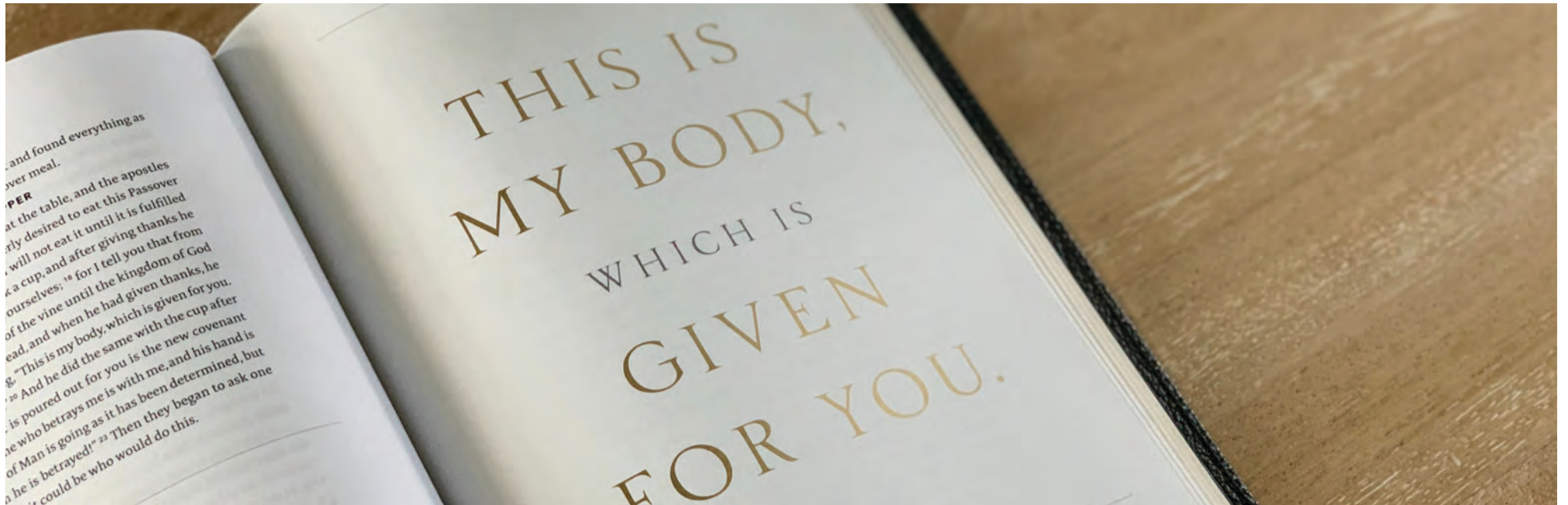
The authors argue that the Palestinian demand for a 'right of return' has no legal or moral basis and is one of the largest obstacles to successful diplomacy and lasting peace in the region. They make a passionate plea to the US, the UN, and the EU to recognise this fact for the good of Israelis and Palestinians alike.

Highly recommended.

Publisher: St Martin's Publishing Group. ISBN 978-1-250-25276-0



The Lord's Supper and Israel



| Photo: Unsplash

■ Rev Cornelis Kant

Executive Director | Christians for Israel International

We all frequently celebrate the Lord's Supper, or Eucharist, in our Churches. The focus is on our reconciliation with God through the blood of Jesus Christ. When Jesus passes the cup of wine to His disciples, He says: 'This cup, which is poured out for you, is the new covenant in My blood' (Luke 22:20). Mentioning the 'new covenant', Jesus refers to *Jeremiah 31:31*, where the Lord promises He 'will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah'. This new covenant is effectuated in Jesus' suffering and death on the cross and His resurrection. The wine in the cup on the evening before His death refers to this new covenant. Jesus is drinking this cup of wine together with His twelve Jewish disciples. Jeremiah and Jesus, when speaking about this new covenant, both emphasise that this new covenant will bring forgiveness of all their sins.

We as Christians may enjoy the blessings of this new covenant with Israel because, through Christ, we are 'grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree' (*Romans 11:17*). During the time before we knew Jesus Christ as our Saviour, we were 'separate from Christ, excluded from the people of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus, you who previously were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ' (*Ephesians 2:12-13*). When we celebrate the Lord's Supper in our Church services, it is important to be aware of our profound connection and relationship with Israel and the Jewish people.

The bread we eat at the Lord's Supper refers to Jesus Christ's body that He gave for us: 'This is My body, which is being given for you; do this in remembrance of Me' (*Luke 22:19*). Jesus gave His life, His body and blood, to deliver us from our sins and give us eternal life with Him in

His Kingdom. When the people of Israel were delivered from slavery in Egypt, they set out for the promised land. On their journey through the desert, they were fed with manna. When Jesus speaks about that manna, He also explains that the manna referred to His body and Himself: 'Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven and gives life to the world (...) Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; the one who comes to Me will not be hungry" (*John 6:32-34*). It is wonderful to see how the manna in the desert and our bread at the Lord's Supper both refer in a special way to Christ's body.

The bread and the wine at the Lord's Supper also refer to the feast that we may partake in together with our Lord in His future Kingdom. Passing the cup of wine, Jesus said: 'for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until

the kingdom of God comes' (*Luke 22:18*). Drinking the wine and eating the bread, we remember what Jesus did for us, and we also look forward to what the Lord will prepare for us. This refers to the wonderful promise in *Isaiah 25:6* 'Now the Lord of armies will prepare a lavish banquet for all peoples on this mountain; a banquet of aged wine, choice pieces with marrow, and refined, aged wine'. The Kingdom and the feast that Isaiah and Jesus refer to will take place 'at this mountain'. And that is Mount Zion in Jerusalem in Israel. Israel will play a huge role in the Kingdom to come, as Isaiah prophesied: 'For the law will go out from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem' (*Isaiah 2:3*).

Even at a specifically Christian celebration such as the Lord's Supper, it is good to be aware of our profound connection and relationship with Israel and the Jewish people. And to express this in our prayers and sermons.



Translating the New Testament

■ Kees de Vreugd

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

Brad H. Young, *The Newer Testament. An English translation that affirms the New Testament's authentic Hebrew heritage*. Tulsa, Oklahoma 2021

The Bible was originally written in Hebrew and Aramaic (the Old Testament or Hebrew Bible) and Greek (the New Testament). That is to say; there are theories about a Hebrew original of the Gospel of Matthew, based on a reference in Eusebius' *Church History* (4th century). It is true that the language of the *Gospel of Matthew* as we have it has a Semitic colour. It is also true that Luke purposely applies a Hebraic style, imitating the language of the Hebrew Bible. Moreover, all apostles and evangelists were Jews (including Luke, I believe). They have their roots in the Hebrew Bible and second temple Judaism. They apply Jewish methods of expounding Scripture. The scene of the stories of the Gospel is the landscape of Israel. The teaching of Jesus breathes the connection with the people and their living in the land of Israel.

Methods and Principles

How should the Bible be translated? There are different methods and principles of translating the Bible, depending on the aims of a specific translation. Should it be an easily readable translation, then the receiving language is the governing principle. In those cases, however, often specific characteristics of the original language or subtle intertextual connections are lost. Should these be preserved, the translation becomes less accessible but would serve specific interests in studying the text.

Hebrew Heritage

In his newly published '*Newer Testament*', Brad H. Young, the eminent Bible scholar, presents a translation that is meant to affirm the authentic Hebrew heritage of the New Testament. What does that mean, and how does he pursue this goal? The title is already an eye-catching example. The use of the comparative 'newer' reflects that the New Testament does not substitute the Old Testament but rather affirms it. Personally, I would prefer to translate the Greek *kainè* with 'renewed'. In other cases, Young does not literally translate but circumscribes the Greek to give an impression of how the original readers

might have understood the words or highlight a certain Jewish practice. For example, the verb *baptizomai* is not translated as 'baptise' but as 'to immerse oneself', as that was common Jewish practice. One would immerse oneself ritually under the supervision of a religious official.

Hebrew Names

Most remarkable in all Hebraizing translations is the use of the original Hebrew names instead of the Greek forms. Jesus is rendered as *Yeshua*, Peter as *Kefa* and Paul as *Shaul*. Sometimes I find that a little pedantic. Does it really evoke the Hebrew heritage, or does it rather alienate the reader? The apostles have adapted the name *Yeshua* to the Greek language in which they preached.

On the other hand, over time, this has alienated Jesus (as well as the New Testament) from His Jewish origins. Again, on the other hand, the time has long been overdue to rediscover the Jewish origins. Can we find a language that affirms both the Hebrew heritage and the grace of hearing the Gospel 'in our own language to which we were born'?

ISBN: 978-1-7362270-0-8

Biblical Archaeologist Dies at 64

■ Marie-Louise Weissenböck

Christians for Israel Austria

Mazar was best known for her discovery of 'King David's palace' in the City of David and biblically tied artefacts and constructions. The large structure she excavated in 2005 in the City of David that is ascribed as King David's palace is one of her more controversial finds. Its location in the City of David National Park, she wrote in a 2006 *Biblical Archaeological Review* article, was based on the work of another female archaeologist, Kathleen Kenyon, who dug in the area in the 1960s.

She led excavations in several sites, including most notably in two locations in the City of David ridge: above the Gihon spring and in the 'Ophel' on the lower slope of the Temple Mount or Al-Aqsa compound. Her finds include some of the earliest known artefacts in the ancient city, which, according to Mazar, date as far back as the 12th and 11th centuries BCE and thus provide scientifically excavated evidence of the biblical united monarchy.

Eilat Mazar was a field archaeologist, a scholar and a lecturer at the Hebrew University's Institute of Archaeology in Jerusalem, where she completed all her degrees. As a child, she often accompanied her grandfather, Professor Benjamin Mazar, in his excavations of ancient Jerusalem, particularly in the City of David and in the Robinson's Arch area near the Western Wall, the findings she saw to publication.

After earning her BA, she worked on Dr Yigal Shiloh's excavation expedition from 1981-1985, which uncovered the Royal Quarter of ancient Jerusalem in the City of David.

"One of the many things I learned from my grandfather was how to relate to the biblical text: Pore over it again and again, for it contains within it descriptions of genuine historical reality. It is not a simple matter to differentiate the layers of textual sources that have been piled one atop the other over generations; we do not always have the tools to do it. But it is clear that



Israeli archaeologist Eilat Mazar shows an ancient medallion dated to the late Byzantine period (early seventh century CE) with a shofar (ram's horn) and a Torah scroll icon at the Hebrew University in 2013. | Photo Flash90

concealed within the biblical text are grains of detailed historical truth." This was her general philosophy about the historicity of the biblical text as a blueprint for academic archaeological excavation.

This idea of using the Bible as a source for historical truth has become increasingly controversial among Israeli academia. Mazar championed the need for archaeological supervision on the Temple Mount and Israeli sovereignty for the many tons of earth illegally excavated there. She also strongly expressed the need to preserve the archaeology in Robinson's Arch archaeological park, which had been in danger during government talks over the construction of a pluralistic prayer platform.

Another somewhat controversial step in Mazar's career was her willingness to partner with Christian allies and financial supporters in continuing her work. Already her

grandfather had had the support of and ties with the Christian community.

According to Tel Aviv University Prof. Finkelstein, Mazar was "one of the most prominent and influential Israeli archaeologists, well-known and respected both at home and on the world stage. She contributed greatly to our understanding of the archaeology and history of Ancient Israel, especially regarding Jerusalem in biblical times. The results of these projects enabled reconstructing the city's layout, its material culture and its impact on Judah and beyond."

Tourists visiting the Israel Museum can view one of Mazar's stunning finds, a rare trove of Byzantine-era gold and silver artefacts, the most impressive of which is a 10-centimetre solid gold medallion emblazoned with a menorah and other Jewish iconography.

Campaign Against the Jewish State is Intensifying

Continued from page 2

Second, the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva has instituted an open-ended international investigation into Israel's treatment of Palestinians. It says Israeli forces may have committed war crimes in the recent conflict with Hamas. The 24-9 vote, with 14 abstentions, took place in a meeting called by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which strongly supports the Palestinians. One of the OIC's goals is to 'liberate' Jerusalem from non-Islamic control. The UNHRC's permanent 'Commission of Inquiry' will

monitor and report on rights violations in Israel, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. It would be the first such Commission with an 'ongoing' mandate. The UNHRC has become a weapon in the hands of Israel's enemies.

Third, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) based in New York decided on 20th May that it will establish a 'Conciliation Commission' to examine the Palestinians' claims that Israel's regime in the 'occupied territories' is discriminatory and breaches international law.

Fourth, at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), based in The Hague, the PLO has launched proceedings alleging that Israel has no sovereignty at all in Jerusalem.

The PLO even argues that the so-called 'West Jerusalem' does not belong to Israel. Their claims are inconsistent and incoherent, and it is unlikely the Court will entertain the case. But the mere fact that the PLO has been able to be such a prestigious institution - established to decide disputes between states - is cause for alarm.

These legal/institutional developments are part of a wider picture of increasing hostility to the existence of the Jewish State of Israel. I sense that we have entered a new, more intense phase of the final struggle.

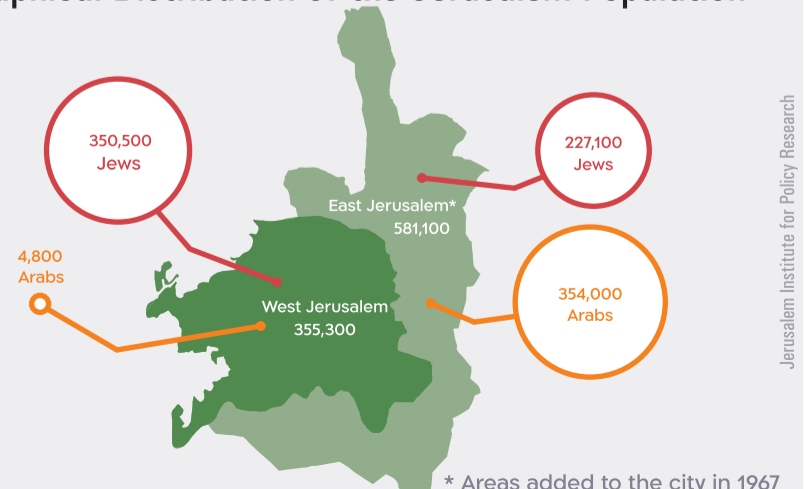
It is our task as Christians to stay awake, to discern the signs of the times, to raise our voice, and to intercede on behalf of the Jewish people - as never before.

Facts Speak

Population of Jerusalem and Israeli Major Cities, 2019



Geographical Distribution of the Jerusalem Population



Twenty Years Since 9/11



9/11 memorial shot at night. | Photo: Shutterstock

■ **Bryce Turner**
Christians for Israel New Zealand

11 September 2021 marks twenty years since the tragedy of what has come to be known simply as 9/11. It is hard to comprehend that the event that so radically changed the world took place before many of the current generation of university students were even born. This attack on America and the ideals of western democracy changed the world forever.

A month after the attack a US-led military force entered Afghanistan, beginning a 20-year 'war on terror'. The first target? The location and capture of Osama bin Laden – the crazed despot heading up al Qaeda, the organisation responsible for the 9/11 attacks. There is an infinite range of opinions as to the effectiveness of this 'war on terror', but if nothing else it has brought awareness directly to the minds of countries who would never have thought such an attack on US soil was even possible.

Bin Laden had announced his war on the US in 1996, supposedly in retaliation for America's support of Israel, its involvement in the Persian Gulf War, and its continued military presence in the Middle East. The 9/11 attacks struck a blow to the heart of populations far wider

than the USA however. For billions, life changed forever. Emergency travel security restrictions became standard practice, an atmosphere of suspicion enveloped peaceful neighbourhoods, families who had lived next door to each other for decades suddenly looked through shaded windows for signs of terrorist activity. Whilst a gross oversimplification, it has often been suggested that 9/11 was really the price America paid for its support of Israel. If nothing else, this should serve as a warning to the world, undisputable proof of the insane level of anti-Israel hatred still being promulgated in many countries, and apparently escalating; bin Laden being just one of a long line of murdering haters of Israel and the Jews.

The 9/11 attack has become one of the most significant events in history, one of the most studied, and one of the most contentious. At the time commentators were predicting a massive escalation of terrorism worldwide, a return to 'cold war' conditions, even the pending end of humanity itself.

20 years on, however, America has suffered many more tragedies. The current Covid19 pandemic has claimed some 150 times more lives in the US alone than the 9/11 attacks. Those who lost their lives in New York, at the Pentagon, or at

the heroic demise of United Airlines flight 93 in a field in western Pennsylvania have become martyrs, however, their names carefully inscribed in the memorial at 'Ground Zero' forever. The predicted escalation into mass terrorism hasn't eventuated, the world is (mostly) still alive and functioning. The violent, murderous Islamic jihadists are at least somewhat being managed, and many would argue that the next major Islamic threat to the western world is being waged through 'wokeism' – the manipulation of public opinion through the dogma of political correctness. Arguably those who would see the destruction of Israel and the genocide of the Jews as a part of their war on the infidels, haven't given up their all-consuming goal.

As we mark the passing of 20 years and pause to respect those who perished, it is essential that we take a moment to examine what we have learned. Just as important as the question "where were you at 9/11?", is the next thought "where are we as a society 20 years later?"; closely followed by "where are we going to be in another 20 years?"

Watching the vile filth of anti-Semitism expanding throughout the western world, one wonders if we have learned anything at all.



UA Flight 175 hits World Trade Centre south tower 9/11.



Arlington National Cemetery - 9/11 Memorial to Pentagon Victims - NW side

Short News

Hebrew University in Top 20



The Hebrew University in Jerusalem is in the top 20 of the worldwide top 200 best universities this year as well. Last year the university was on place 198; this year on the 177th place. The top 200 is drawn up by the British company QS, that specializes in the analysis of universities. | Photo: Flashgo.

COVID-19 Vaccine Boost

The Israeli company Migvax has developed a boost for people who already received a COVID-19 vaccination. The laboratory tests are highly promising. The 'boost' is administered orally and not intravenously. The formula stays effective for a long period of time before a new 'boost' is needed. If the tests prove positive in the coming months, the drug could be on the market in a year's time.

Old Egg



In Javne, a village just below Tel Aviv, a one-thousand-year-old chicken egg was found. The egg came to light during archaeological excavations. The find is unique. From time-to-time egg shells are found but not a whole egg. And if they do find an egg, it is quite often an ostrich-egg, an egg with a thick shell. Unfortunately, the egg broke when the curator wanted to uncover it fully. | Photo: Flashgo

Pilot Project in Hadera: Delivery by Drones

The National Drone Initiative, which began its flights over urban areas in January 2021, entered a second phase in its pilot programme, which includes flights over residential areas in and around Hadera.

This new phase is part of a series of eight demonstrations that are expected to take place during the coming two years, in which tens of thousands of sorties will take place in the skies above Hadera. The goal is to help fine-tune drone technology and ultimately help cut road congestion by creating a network of air corridors for unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) deliveries of medicine, medical examinations and equipment and ecommerce. (timesofisrael).

Journalism Students Taught One Sided

■ **Carly Douglas**

The Australian Jewish News

Students at one of Australia's top journalism schools are being taught not to be objective on the Israeli-Palestinian issue. Two Jewish students at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) said they were left frustrated and upset after attending a Zoom panel event entitled *'Palestine and the media'*, presented by the UTS Centre for Social Justice & Inclusion and Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences in June 2021.

Head of Journalism Professor Saba Bebawi began the panel noting that "what recording reality is, is not objective journalism, it is about offering a portrayal of what's happening on the ground".

Palestinian writer Samah Sabawi questioned, "What is being objective when you're dealing with an occupier and occupied, when you're dealing with an oppressor and the oppressed?" while Jewish Israel critic Antony Loewenstein said, "Objectivity suggests there's two equal sides."

Bebawi also alleged Israel's bombing of a Gaza building that housed Hamas military technology alongside the offices of Al Jazeera and Associated Press "was in an attempt to silence them".

Students were also encouraged to look at a skewed petition the AJN reported on last month that calls on editors to "deliberately make space for Palestinian perspectives", avoid "both-siderism" and respect the rights of journalists "to publicly and openly express personal solidarity with the Palestinian cause without penalty in their professional lives".

Student Pnina Hagege told the AJN, "Having a panel who are all pro-Palestine does not give a correct depiction of what is actually going on. We are given a lot of resources from the Arab-Palestinian perspective but we are given

only Jewish perspectives that are anti-Israel ... They're using the minority to represent our entire community and that's a really scary thing."

Hagege said she and another Jewish student Rachel Palmer, along with other Jewish students, submitted questions to an active chat box but were ignored.

Palmer said, "During my time at UTS, Jewish voices supporting Israel have never been heard. This has contributed to a sense of exclusion, marginalisation, discrimination and physical insecurity I feel as a Jewish student at UTS."

Bebawi did not respond to multiple requests for comment, however executive director of Social Justice at UTS, Verity Firth, who moderated the panel, said, "It is not always possible or even desirable to include representatives with every opposing view."

She added that a recent talk on cybercrime at the university was given by an Israeli speaker.

Executive Council of Australian Jewry co-CEO Alex Rychin said UTS was drawing "a false equivalence between the mere holding of an event with an Israeli speaker and an event which sought to actively persuade journalism students to abandon basic journalist ethics and become activists for the Palestinian cause".

"Much has been said and written about declining faith in journalist standards and the spread of dubious alternative news sources as a result. This event is a perfect illustration of why that's happening," he said.

Meanwhile at Macquarie University, a student told the AJN during the first lecture in her Indigenous studies class this year, her lecturer presented a map that replaced Israel with 'Palestine'.

Then recently, another Indigenous studies lecturer began a lecture with, "We want to express our solidarity with

the Palestinian intifada currently unfolding, which seeks the abolition of the settler state and insists on the liberation of Indigenous land."

At Melbourne University, a Jewish student said a lecture compared "what has happened in Australia to other settler colonial movements, being Israel and Palestine".

A co-director of the 'Indigenous Settler Relations Collaboration' (ISRC) unit at Melbourne University also shared multiple Twitter posts encouraging students to attend pro-Palestine rallies and events, with hashtags like Decolonising Palestinian Territory.

The ISRC unit also released a statement saying it "stands in solidarity with Palestinians resisting settler colonial violence".

"We recognise the ongoing authority of Palestinian people over their lands and the legitimacy of their revolt against this dispossession," it continued.

Asked whether this was justification for Hamas violence, a university spokesperson said the statement "is not intended to be teaching and learning material".

Australasian Union of Jewish Students (AUJS) president Gabrielle Agosin said AUJS had been contacted by many students in both Sydney and Melbourne "deeply distressed by the heavily biased and one-sided accounts of the events in Israel on campus".

"Given that universities are supposed to be spaces that endorse freedom of thought and expression, the lack of balance is very troubling," she added, "particularly when this veers into antisemitic tropes and outright racism. The AUJS team is here to assist students if they have any difficulties on campus."

Rychin said, "We will be liaising with our state constituent bodies in Victoria and New South Wales and universities to address these incidents as a matter of urgency."

Learn about the Land Jesus Called Home



■ **Marnix van Ede**

Keshet Journeys

Experience and learn about the land that Jesus called home through a 360 virtual technology.

People can gain tremendous knowledge as a tour guide from the comfort of their own home along with international experts and scholars in Christianity, Hebrew roots and more.

Keshet Journeys, a tour operator based in Israel, has released a new virtual course with content and biblical reflections with the latest 3D and 360 virtual technologies. The programme, *'Tour Leaders Course'*, consists of a variety of content and virtual tours of the biblical and modern sites in Israel, explained, preached and reflected like never before by well-known

international Pastors and influencers, such as Nathaniel Buzzolic, Pastors Todd and Julie Mullins, Mark Varughese, and Glyn Barrett.

"This is a great opportunity for leaders and people to develop and learn more about the Holy Land in a deeper way. We see the impact of our tours on people's lives and how much it strengthens them in their walk of faith. The Holy Land is, in our perspective, the best educational tool to teach the Bible. The online course combines teachings of top-level Israeli educators and experts, virtual tours to Biblical sites with our best tour guides, and input from pastors from around the world who love to tour the Land." says Moshe Gabay, host and moderator of the tour leaders' course by Keshet Journeys.

Before the pandemic, Israel broke records for the number of incoming tourists, expecting to double its visits within the next few years. The lack of Christian or Messianic tour guides was becoming complicated, as having a Christian group, one of the requests was to have a believer (Christian or Messianic) tour guide. Someone on the same spiritual level or at least understanding. This created the opportunity to develop this programme, giving the right tools to lead a group through Israel, being equipped with the knowledge of a tour guide, and the capability to provide a spiritual message in the context of the Bible.

The interactive content of the programme consists of over 20 live broadcast webinars on a weekly basis and on-demand teaching videos. Upon completion of this course, the user will be able to lead tours for Keshet Journeys or any other tour operator or travel agent. The course combines different fields of expertise, thus offering a far

broader approach than traditional seminary training. The local educators in the curriculum are considered to be worldwide leading experts in their respective fields. Seasoned and skilled in the Land of the Bible, they are able to share unparalleled information and perspectives. In addition, leading pastors provide spiritual input and insights, bridging the past, the present, and the future.

'Coming to Israel changed my life, I learned so much about this small area with endless history. My faith grew and helped me to get a deeper understanding in the Word of God. However, it is not easy to accumulate so much information in just a few days of trip in Israel, people need weeks to get to know and familiarize themselves with it. This course immerses you into a deeper understanding of the Bible in a 360 experience, which means you will be basically on the site where the events you are reading happened. Now is the time to bring the message to others, today is the day to engage more people for Him' says the Christian influencer and teaches on the virtual programme of Caesarea Philippi, Nathaniel Buzzolic @natebuzz.

The course is a unique opportunity to gain tremendous knowledge of the homeland of Jesus from the comfort of your own home. Pastors, leaders, and anyone who would like to lead tours to Israel or wants to learn about the Land of the Bible are invited to take part in this mission. The course is available on www.israeltourleader.com.

While the first limited amount of vaccinated tourists traveling in groups arrived a few weeks ago, further easing regulations will hopefully follow. We hope to welcome you in the Land that Jesus called home soon.

Return of Bnei Menashe: A Modern Miracle



Shavei Israel

Israel's Ben-Gurion Airport was witness to an emotional scene on 31 May when a specially-chartered El Al flight from the Indian capital of New Delhi touched down on the tarmac.

Emerging from the plane were 160 new immigrants from the Bnei Menashe community of northeastern India, descendants of one of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel who are now returning to Zion after more than 2700 years in exile. The group is the first batch of nearly 550 Bnei Menashe that the Shavei Israel organisation, headed by Rabbi Michael Freund, plans to bring on Aliyah in 2021 in cooperation with the Ministry of Absorption and the Jewish Agency.

As they set foot on the Holy Land for the first time, many instinctively fell to their knees and kissed the ground, thanking the Creator for His kindness in bringing them to Israel.

Among the arrivals were Ari Singson, his wife and his one-year-old son, all of whom were reunited with Ari's siblings and family who made Aliyah in 2018. They had not seen each other in three years.

Ari was deeply moved to return to the land of his ancestors, the Land of Israel, saying that it is "no less than a miracle for our family!"

This special Aliyah operation was made possible by an historic partnership between Jews and Christians. In recent years, Christians for Israel have supported Shavei Israel's efforts, an organisation that has brought more than 4,000 Bnei Menashe on Aliyah to the Jewish state.

"We are grateful to Christians for Israel for their ongoing prayers, encouragement and support for the Bnei Menashe Aliyah," said Rabbi Freund, adding that, "I am profoundly grateful to Christians for Israel for the love they show for the Jewish people, the apple of God's eye (*Zechariah 2:8*)."

The return of the Bnei Menashe after so many generations in exile is the fulfilment of Biblical prophecy, as it signifies the beginning of the reunification of the tribes of Judah and Israel. As the prophet, Hosea foretold, "And the sons of Judah and the sons of Israel shall be gathered in together".

In the coming months, hundreds more Bnei Menashe will make the long journey back to the land which their ancestors dreamed of for generations.

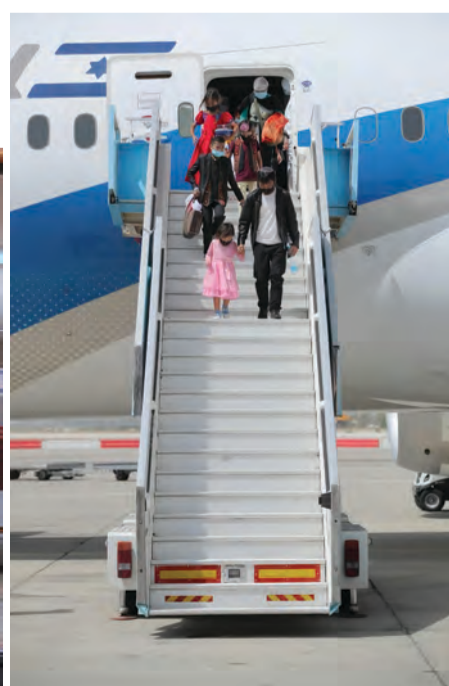
The cost per immigrant is US \$1000, which covers airfare and transportation from India to Israel and some of the initial absorption



costs. For every US \$1000 raised, another member of the lost tribe of Bnei Menashe will be able to return.

By supporting the Bnei Menashe Aliyah, you can be part of fulfilling the Divine Will by bringing the Lord's children back from Exile.

Please give generously so that this modern-day miracle can continue to unfold. Please complete the coupon on the back page. Any amount is welcome.



Overview of our projects

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

Aliyah

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



Hineni Soup Kitchen

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



Holocaust Survivors

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



Christian Friends of Israeli Communities (CFOIC)

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



Food Parcel Campaign Ukraine

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



Arab Christians

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



For country-specific or further information on our projects, go to our website, www.c4israel.org

Bringing Comfort to Jewish Elderly

■ Koen Carlier

Christians for Israel Ukraine

Occasionally we are asked whether we will continue with the *Meals on Wheels* campaign during the summer months. The answer to this question is: "yes". It is still very much needed to deliver meals to the Jewish elderly.

Currently, we provide about 5,000 meals per month from 19 locations in Ukraine. People either pick up their meals, or we deliver them to their homes. In some places, people receive their meals two or three times a week. On Fridays, we include *challah* bread, especially for *Shabbat*.

Each location decides for itself what is realistic for them. In most areas, soup kitchens are still closed due to all the corona regulations, and we also notice that home delivery of meals is very important for the Jewish elderly. They are often lonely, have almost no family or friends, and some are bedridden. For these people, it is a valuable moment when someone comes by a few times a week to provide a meal and to be able to have a conversation. These moments are cherished.

Food Parcel Deliveries Continue

Besides *Meals on Wheels*, we continue to pack and deliver

food parcels with our local volunteers. Each month we pack 2,000 food parcels at four locations (Vinnitsa, Kiev, Mariupol and Donetsk). Russian separatists have occupied the Donetsk region (in Eastern Ukraine) for seven years now, but also here; food parcels are regularly packed and distributed to Jewish seniors. With each food parcel, we always include a word of comfort and a Psalm.

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Our work is always done in close cooperation with the local Jewish community. Rabbi Mendel Cohen from Mariupol (East Ukraine) shared the following about the situation in his community: "The people that need our help are people of age, they struggle with heat in the summertime, suffer from blood pressure issues and need constant medical support. These people are lonely, and we try to support them in the toughest moments of life and provide them with essentials: food, attention, care and support. Our community is deeply thankful to Christians for Israel for their support. You truly make the most difficult years of our elderly easier and better.

Jewish elderly are very grateful and see it as a great blessing that they are provided with meals. Here are few photos we want to share with you:

Rimma (*first photo from the left*) will turn 94 years old in August. She has been bedridden for six years due to a broken hip and various complications. She is very weak but remains optimistic despite her situation. Fortunately, her retired daughter takes care of her. The meals we deliver to her are a huge blessing. Both ladies are very grateful for the help they receive!

Mikhail (*second photo from the left*) is 60 years old, but due to health problems, he cannot work. Not being able to work means no income. He has no family and no one to take care of him. For Mikhail, the meals we deliver are a comfort and a blessing. Mikhail understands that he is not alone in his difficult situation.

On behalf of the Jewish elderly in Ukraine, we would like to thank you for your donation towards the *Meals on Wheels* campaign and our food parcel campaign.

Meals on Wheels cost US \$5, € 5, and a Food Parcel costs US \$11, € 10,. Please complete the coupon below. Any amount is welcome.



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SOCIAL WELFARE PROJECTS

Food Parcel Campaign Ukraine - € 10 | US \$11 ea

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First Baptist Church Bethlehem

Hineni - Soup Kitchen

Holocaust Survivors - "I'm not Alone"

Christian Friends of Israeli Communities (CFOIC)

ALIYAH - BRING THE JEWS HOME

One person - € 135 | US \$165

One family (5 people) - € 675 | US \$825

One busload (25 people) - € 4500 | US \$5000

First Home in the Homeland

Bnei Menashe (India) (1 person) - € 900 | US \$1000

TOTAL DONATION

DONATION

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Israel on Trial (Book) by Andrew Tucker

70 Questions About Israel (Book) by Chan Siew Fong

Israel 70 Years (One-off Collector's Magazine)

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Israel: Covenants & Kingdom (Book) by Willem JJ Glashouwer

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