



INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN EMBASSY JERUSALEM

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem was established in 1980 in recognition of the biblical significance of all of Jerusalem and its unique connection to the Jewish people. Today the ICEJ represents millions of Christians, churches, and denominations to the nation and people of Israel. We recognize in the restoration of Israel the faithfulness of God to keep His ancient covenant with the Jewish people. Our main objectives

- To stand with Israel in support and friendship
- To equip and teach the worldwide church regarding God's purposes with Israel and the nations of the Middle East
- To be an active voice of reconciliation between Jews, Christians, and Arabs, and to support the churches and congregations in the Holy Land

From its head offices in Jerusalem, the ICEJ reaches out into more than 170 countries worldwide, with branch offices in over 90 nations.

Our vision is

- To reach every segment of Israel's society with a Christian testimony of comfort and love
- To reach and actively represent to Israel the support of denominations, churches, and believers from every nation on Earth

The Christian Embassy is a non-denominational faith-based ministry supported by the voluntary contributions of our partners and friends across the globe. We invite you to join with us as we minister to Israel and the Jewish people worldwide by donating to the ongoing work and witness of the ICEJ.



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INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN EMBASSY JERUSALEM - USA

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FROM THE DESK OF THE SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT



Dear Friends,

The war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza reignited in late March when a two-month ceasefire ended after Hamas repeatedly refused to release additional hostages. In response, Israel launched a surprise wave of airstrikes targeting Hamas commanders in Gaza to pressure the group into agreeing to a truce extension. Not surprisingly, a strong wave of pro-Palestinian propaganda emerged as the media once again presented a distorted anti-Israel narrative.

Still, we trust in God's word through Isaiah, which says, "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness" (5:20). God is fully aware of how the true context of current events is often concealed or distorted to favor one side while demonizing the other. An article in this month's magazine explores the media's bias against Israel and discusses our role as Christians in response to this issue. I encourage you to read it.

Also in this month's magazine, you'll read how Israelis are looking forward with hope to the future by taking steps to heal and rebuild their lives with support from the ICEJ. And you be encouraged by a surprising wave of Ethiopian Aliyah that is occurring, even amid the current war in Israel.

This year's Feast of Tabernacles will take place from October 6–10 in Jerusalem, centered on the theme "Ten from Every Nation" from Zechariah 8:23. This passage speaks of a righteous remnant from every nation making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the last days to seek God and spiritually connect with the Jewish people. We believe that the Lord can use our Feast to fulfill this vision. Thanks to recent donations, we have lowered this year's Feast price so more believers can join us on this journey of solidarity and victory with Israel. Read more about it inside the magazine—and make plans now to participate!

Finally, we want to thank you for your faithful support and prayers as our ministry has faced the challenges of Juergen's medical leave for treatment abroad over recent months. We thank God for the spirit of unity and grace that has sustained our staff and global family in his absence, and we are very grateful for his return to again head our leadership team from Jerusalem.

In His mighty and wonderful name,

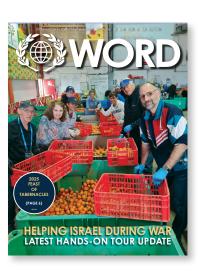
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COVER PHOTO: March 2025 Hands-On Serving Tour participants helping Israeli farmers harvest clementines

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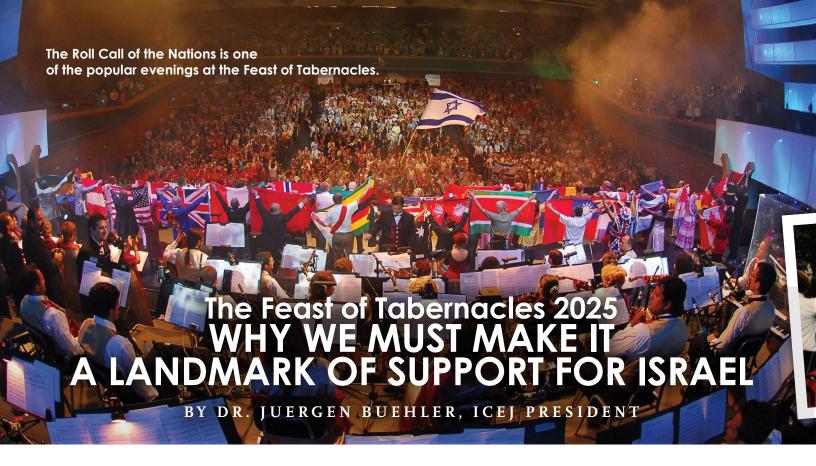












s the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem plans for our Feast of Tabernacles 2025 gathering this coming October, we believe it needs to be a landmark Feast due to this being one of the most critical years in Israel's modern history. Thus, we are reducing the Feast entry price to an all-time low to draw as many Christians as we can for a solidarity and victory tour to a nation recovering from war and needing our friendship and presence here more than ever.

The Footsteps of Messiah

I will never forget when Merv and Merla Watson told me about the very first Christian celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles held in Jerusalem. Back in the late 1970s, the Canadian couple heard God speak to them through Zechariah 14:6, where the prophet foresees a time when all the nations

Merv and Merla Watson at the first Christian celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles

on earth will come to Jerusalem to worship the Lord during the biblical feast of *Sukkot* (Tabernacles).

While the Watsons understood this passage speaks of a future time, they strongly felt God was leading them to start this prophetic pilgrimage now. So in 1979 they invited friends to join them in going up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. To their surprise, several hundred Christian pilgrims followed their call and joined them in Jerusalem.

Preparing for that first Feast of Tabernacles, they wondered how Christians could celebrate a feast that was never part of the Christian calendar. Upon arriving in Jerusalem, they met with a leading rabbi in Jerusalem to inquire how gentiles should celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. After receiving the rabbi's advice, the Watsons left his office, but then he quickly called them back. Referring to the prophecy of Zechariah 14, he said: "If the gentiles are starting to come now to celebrate Sukkot, then I can hear the footsteps of the coming Messiah!"

Comfort My People

The presence of gentiles in Jerusalem celebrating Sukkot became a powerful prophetic statement to Israel and a great source of comfort for them, but it

manifested particularly the following year at the first public Christian celebration of Sukkot in 1980.

That summer, the 13 nations that still maintained their embassies in Jerusalem gave in to the threat of an oil embargo by the Arab League by abandoning Jerusalem and moving their embassies to Tel Aviv. The mood in Jerusalem sank as Israelis saw that the world community buckled under the Arab oil pressure rather than follow moral principles by remaining in Israel's capital city. An Israeli friend who lived here in those days said there was an atmosphere of gloom in Israel as the people realized that just 35 years after the Holocaust, Jews still could not count on international support or sympathy.

Yet it was during that first public Feast gathering for Christians in late September 1980 when the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem was established to show the people of Israel that they are not alone. Despite the decisions of their respective governments, Christians from around the world stood with the young State of Israel and with its eternal and undivided capital of Jerusalem. It was undoubtedly a God-given *Kairos* moment. When Israel needed love and support, Christians from some 32 nations reacted with love, support, and prayer.

From that moment on, more and more Israeli leaders became aware of the new wave of evangelical Christian support for their nation. Jerusalem's beloved mayor, Teddy Kollek, attended the official opening of the Christian Embassy in 1980, and the following year, the respected



prime minister of Israel, Menachem Begin, addressed the Feast gathering, which had grown to 3,000 Christian pilgrims from around the world. Since then, Israel's presidents, prime ministers, cabinet ministers, Knesset members, and institutional leaders have paid tribute to this growing movement of Christian supporters of Israel. It has grown to such a level that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly applauded evangelical Christians as Israel's best friends.

A New Kairos Moment

Here in Jerusalem, we sense that today, we are in another such *kairos* moment, similar to 1980. Global antisemitism is on the rise to a level unprecedented since the rebirth of Israel as a nation in 1948. It is a global plague that has been bringing tens and even hundreds of thousands of anti-Israel and antisemitic protesters into the streets of our cities worldwide. In these mass rallies, they openly call for the destruction of Israel "from the river to the sea" and the death of Jews, mostly with no government intervention.

At the same time, Israel is still mourning the 1,200 Israelis murdered in the October 7 massacre and praying for the release of the remaining hostages in Gaza, while also dealing with the hundreds of Israeli soldiers and policemen killed or injured ever since the pogrom that dark day. Meanwhile, roughly a third of the nation

has experienced post-traumatic stress due to the horrific, inhumane slaughter of masses of innocent Israelis during the Hamas terror invasion from Gaza.

We are in a time when we cannot be silent bystanders—rather, we are called to demonstrate our love and concern for Israel in real, practical ways, reminding them once again that they are not alone!

A Strategic Board Decision

In early February, the international Board of Trustees of the Christian Embassy met and made a strategic decision. We prayed that the Feast of Tabernacles in 2025 would become the largest Christian solidarity mission to Israel this year, showing to this nation and people, just as happened 45 years ago, that they are not alone. Envisioning thousands of Christians marching through the streets of Jerusalem once more, we felt it will be a timely, powerful sign to God's people that He cares for them.

To underline the significance of this moment, the ICEJ Board decided to throw its full support behind this year's Feast by investing in it as never before. We have lowered the Feast entry fee in a truly unprecedented way. Any Christian who wants to be part of this timely call for solidarity with Israel can join all the Feast events in Jerusalem for a symbolic price of \$120. This will cover your participation in the four full days of celebrations in Jerusalem, including the Roll Call of the Nations, Israeli Guest Night, the communion service in the Garden Tomb, Youth Night, the special prayer and healing sessions, and, of course, the ever-popular Jerusalem March through the streets of the capital.

This is the lowest Feast price we have ever offered since 1980, and we pray that God will bless and confirm this investment with a loud statement to Israel that we are indeed friends in their time of need. Our prayer is that this year's Jerusalem March, in particular, will be a powerful exclamation mark of Christian support and comfort for Israel.

Join the "Ten from Every Nation!"

Please prayerfully consider joining us at this year's Feast alongside fellow pilgrims from all over the world as we gather to worship the King of kings in Zion and



take to the streets of Jerusalem to powerfully show our love and support. May this be a time to change your holiday plans and choose Jerusalem instead.

The theme for this year's Feast is a prophetic challenge to all of us: "Ten from Every Nation." This passage from Zechariah 8:23 is not calling for a limit of ten people from every nation but rather a summons for a minimum of at least ten pilgrims from every nation. That is, make sure there is a righteous remnant of at least ten believers coming to represent your nation at this year's Feast. The preceding verses of Zechariah 8:20–22 speak of cities and strong nations coming to Jerusalem. It also says that "the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, 'Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the Lord and to seek the Lord of hosts; I myself am going."

If you sense God is speaking to you as you read these words, call up friends—even your pastor, ministry, or prayer group—and say, "Let us go at once . . . I myself am going."

I look forward to seeing you in Jerusalem to worship Jesus and stand together with His beloved people of Israel. Indeed, now is the time to arise and favor Zion! (Psalm 102:13).





THE MEDIA'S BIAS AGAINST ISRAEL RATCHETS UP AGAIN

BY MARELINKE VAN DER RIET, ICEJ PUBLICATIONS ASSISTANT

The war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza reignited in late March, and with it has come a potent wave of pro-Palestinian propaganda, as the media bias machine against Israel quickly swung back into gear following a two-month ceasefire. Thus, a distorted anti-Israel narrative is taking shape once again, shockingly ensnaring countless news consumers worldwide.

The truce-and-hostage-release deal lasted from January 19 until March 18 and thankfully saw the return of 33 Israeli hostages freed alive and the bodies of 4 deceased Israelis. But the ceasefire collapsed after Hamas repeatedly refused to release more hostages. This prompted Israel to launch a surprise wave of airstrikes on Hamas commanders in Gaza to pressure the terrorist faction to agree to a truce extension.

Global headlines immediately accused Israel of breaching the ceasefire and killing 400 Palestinians—dutifully reporting as fact once more the dubious figures dispensed by the Gaza Ministry of Health, which is run by Hamas.

By instantly blaming Israel, the media ignored that the truce itself stipulates that phase one of the deal would automatically be extended as long as phase two negotiations were in progress. Israel also has maintained

that the second phase requires the demilitarization of Gaza, while Hamas has been parading its weapons in public again and adamantly refuses to disarm.

This all shows that the conflict is not just a battle between armed forces—it is a battle for truth. It is a battle against the pervasive media bias that continually misrepresents Israel's actions, painting the Jewish State in a negative light even as the rocket sirens blare once more across the country. And when Israel is inevitably proven right, the damage has already been done.

So, let's get the story straight.

The Hypocrisy and Contradictions in the Palestinian Narrative

The hypocrisy and incoherence of the Palestinian narrative are overwhelming, yet it continues to garner sympathy and support from the international community. Palestinians and their supporters call for a "boycott of all Israeli things," even targeting non-Israeli companies like Starbucks simply because their founders are Jewish. Yet, these same boycotters are quick to demand that Israel provide aid and services to Gaza.

They call for a "global intifada," meaning a violent uprising against Jews and their friends everywhere. Yet these same voices demand a "ceasefire now." They insist on an end to the Israeli occupation while rejecting peace offers that could have granted the Palestinians their own state long ago. These glaring contradictions are rarely addressed by pro-Palestinian activists and their compliant allies in the media.

Meanwhile, these boycotters downplay or deny the enormity of the Holocaust, with some calling it "a Jewish Zionist invention" even while others say, "Hitler was right! He should have finished the job!" The media ignores this double-speak, or worse, excuses and rationalizes it as a pardonable practice in the Palestinian struggle for self-determination.

Sins of Omission: The Selective Reporting of Events

One of the oldest tricks in this chronic media bias is the use of omission. The idea is simple: leaving out critical pieces of the story skews the narrative. For example, on numerous occasions in 2024, news outlets around the world reported that "Israel fired rockets into Lebanon," but many failed to mention that these rockets were retaliation for previous Hezbollah rocket fire from Lebanon into Israel. By excluding the context of ongoing missile and drone attacks deliberately targeting Israeli civilians, the story becomes one of unprovoked aggression rather than self-defense.

Clever Wording: Manipulating the Narrative

In addition to omission, wording is another powerful tool used by the media to influence public opinion. On June 8, 2024, headlines across major outlets celebrated the "release" of four Israeli hostages held by Hamas. One of these hostages was Noa Argamani. At first glance, this may seem like a positive development. However, a closer look reveals the manipulative phrasing. The hostages were not "released" by Hamas; they were rescued by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) after enduring unimaginable trauma at the hands of their captors. It was Israel's military intervention, not Hamas goodwill, that freed them.

This is just one example of how subtle or clever word choices in media coverage can mislead the public. Such distortions of truth lie at the heart of the Palestinian narrative, and the media amplifies them. But rest assured, those responsible will ultimately face consequences. Proverbs 19:5 is clear: "A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who speaks lies will not escape" (NKJV).

Perhaps the most glaring example of media bias is the double standard applied to Israel. A shocking interview aired on BBC in late 2024, where a reporter questioned Jonathan Conricus, a former IDF spokesperson, about why the IDF did not warn Gaza civilians before a covert military operation to rescue hostages in central Gaza. Conricus answered truthfully: "If we had warned, no hostages would have survived." However, the reporter's question suggests a dangerous and unrealistic expectation. Why would Israel be expected to give advance notice when doing so would endanger the lives of their own citizens and soldiers?

This question highlights the profound double standards often applied to Israel, where its actions are scrutinized in ways that would never be directed at other nations. No military in the world would be asked such a question, yet Israel's actions are always held to a different, higher standard.

Pressure and Accountability: Media Manipulation in Casualty Reporting

This disparity becomes even more evident when we examine how the media

manipulates casualty reporting to further this bias. For instance, when reporting on casualties, why does the media often highlight Palestinian deaths without providing essential context? After an Israeli operation in Gaza, headlines typically blare: "100 Palestinians Killed in Israeli Operation, Mostly Women and Children" or "50" or "500"—always some nice round figure they decide to use that day. A general rule of thumb would be to take those numbers, divide by 10, and assume 50 percent are Hamas combatants.

Further, the implication is obvious that Israel is always to blame for these deaths. However, the media rarely points out that many of these casualties were directly linked to Hamas' use of human shields and the fact that Hamas militants do not distinguish between civilians and combatants. Moreover, the Hamas-run "Health Ministry" in Gaza frequently inflates the casualty numbers, which are then routinely parroted by the media and the United Nations—a malpractice proven time and again. Reliable sources are key. On the Palestinian side, the media often fails to hold Hamas accountable for the civilian deaths caused by their actions. If Hamas refuses to release hostages or uses civilians as shields, the responsibility is conveniently shifted onto Israel. Despite Israel's right to defend its citizens, it endures relentless scrutiny while Hamas' cruelty and refusal to negotiate are largely ignored

Israel faces immense pressure to end the conflict and scale back military responses, yet no such pressure is ever applied to Hamas to release the hostages or end its violence. The truth is, the responsibility for these casualties rests solely with Hamas, who has chosen to use human shields and continues to reject peace proposals and hostage releases.

The Erosion of Objectivity, Neutrality, and Impartiality

Journalistic integrity is supposed to be rooted in objectivity, yet many media outlets today are seen as more ideologically driven than fact driven. The decline of objective journalism has led to increasingly polarized media, where even reputable outlets may sacrifice impartiality for a specific narrative, particularly in complex conflicts such as the Israel-Palestine dispute.

Multiple reports have accused the BBC of bias in its coverage of the Israel-Hamas conflict. A recent study led by lawyer Trevor Asserson identified 1,553 instances where the BBC allegedly breached its own editorial guidelines, including issues of impartiality and accuracy.

Organizations like the United Nations, which are supposed to act as impartial observers, often take sides in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The media frequently quotes their reports and statements, which can carry significant weight in shaping public perception. International bodies, again, like the United Nations, sometimes contribute to biased narratives by failing to hold all parties accountable equally, and their reports are often selectively used or misrepresented by the media.

The Role of Social Media in Amplifying Bias

In the digital age, social media has become a powerful amplifier of media bias, often spreading misinformation, rumors, and biased narratives much faster than traditional outlets. These platforms contribute to the spread of anti-Israel sentiment by allowing misinformation to flourish and gain traction without proper fact-checking. Generation Z, in particular, is using TikTok as their primary information hub, leading them down a cesspool of anti-Israel sentiment. On the other hand. since October 7, Jewish influencers have risen to advocate for Israel and present the Israeli perspective. This is something we want to see more of.

A Call for Truth

As Christians and advocates of truth, we cannot afford to remain silent during such a critical time in history and in the face of such media manipulation. The media's relentless bias against Israel distorts the truth, perpetuating injustice and misinformation that can, and already has, incited violence and division. It is crucial for those who stand with Israel to speak up and set the record straight when the media distorts the facts.

Ultimately, the real story of Israel is being authored by God and shaped by His eternal truth, and no amount of media bias can ever erase it.



COLORADO PASTORS GATHERING

christians still lack a deeper understanding of our spiritual heritage, the identity we're grafted into, and the roots that sustain our faith. I had such a refreshing and inspiring time as Dr. Tyson Lambertson, Barry Denison, and John Vedder shared about the importance of Israel—and why they need our support now, more than ever. I wasn't alive during the Holocaust to oppose the antisemitism of that day, but I am here today, and unfortunately, the culture feels eerily similar to what preceded the murder of 6 million Jews. As a Christian in this era, I will stand firm and support Israel."

—Rev. Shane Beeson, Lead Pastor, The Rock Church, Scottsbluff, NE (Rev. Beeson attended the recent ICEJ USA Pastors and Leaders Gathering in Colorado.)

RECENT WATCHMAN OF ZION AWARDEES



CEJ USA recently honored Earl and Kathleen Cox with our Watchman of Zion plaque for their generous donations to the ministry, which greatly assisted our television ministry out of Jerusalem. Early in his career, Earl was an award-winning TV reporter and news anchor before serving in Washington as a government spokesman for several cabinet-level federal agencies under five different presidents. He later turned down a US ambassadorship to answer the Lord's call to full-time advocacy for Israel.

Earl founded Israel Always and launched the *FrontPage Jerusalem* (FPJ) radio program, which has aired on hundreds of radio stations across North America and abroad. For some 10 years, he coproduced FPJ with the Christian Embassy and brought on Ben Kinchlow as cohost. It was his vision and strategic advice that led to the founding of the ICEJ's American Christian Leaders for Israel (ACLI) network.

Earl's wife, Kathleen, has been a dedicated and indispensable partner in these pro-Israel activities as the chief administrator for Israel Always. The Cox's are a delightful couple dedicated to serving the Lord and supporting Israel.



The ICEJ USA also recently presented Christ Is Love Church in Hendersonville, TN, with our Watchman of Zion plaque. Lead Pastor Dr. Aaron Allison, who accepted the award, shared:

"It has been our church's joy and privilege to partner with the ICEJ for many years as our extension of love to the Jewish people. Our church recognizes the biblical mandate to love and support the Jewish people in their biblical land. As a mid-size church, we have limited staff, travel budget, and time to adequately engage in the crucial issues surrounding the nation of Israel. The ICEJ is our representative to investigate, engage, and serve the Jewish people in Israel. ICEJ gives us a voice and impact during historic times that takes us from theory to present-day activism.

"Theologically, the ICEJ is an anchor for clarity and alignment. The intense emphasis on Jewish issues brings to focus various theological principles that may otherwise be neglected. Beyond the critical big-picture issues dealt with in Congress and the Knesset, the ICEJ provides practical solutions to the everyday needs of the Jews. Our church aligns with the ICEJ because both policy issues and pragmatic love are needed to love the Jewish people fully."



PASSOVER SEDER Calvary Chapel Fort Lauderdale

ore than 300 people attended an ICEJ Passover seder celebration at Calvary Chapel in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, in April. During the event, participants learned about the significance of Passover and the Jewish people's exodus from Egypt, highlighting how these events point to the reality of what Jesus accomplished for humanity through His death on the cross.

The seder was led by award-winning Israeli worship leader Joshua Aaron, who also provided music for the evening. It was a meaningful, faith-building experience as attendees connected with the Hebraic roots of their faith, deepened their understanding of Passover, and celebrated Jesus as the Passover Lamb together.



Let the ICEJ help you host a Passover seder at your church or in your home next year! Start planning now—learn more at: www.icejusa.org/seder

GET TO KNOW YOUR ICEJ USA TEAM



JOHN VEDDER

ICEJ USA Church Relations Coordinator

ohn was born and raised in Auburn, AL, and grew up attending First United Methodist Church of Opelika. He obtained a bachelor's degree from Auburn University in Human Development and Family Studies.

As a college student, John was involved in youth ministries, and as a junior, started the first college ministry at his church, where he was later hired as the college director, serving there for one year. He also served as the worship leader for the contemporary service for a year. John was introduced to the ICEJ at First Methodist and began getting involved as his love for Israel and the Jewish people grew. In July 2018 John and his family moved from Alabama to Williamsburg, VA, where he helped plant Foundations Church Williamsburg. There, he wore many hats—including serving as one of the pastors and a worship leader—and began the youth ministry at the church.

Through the years, John has led many trips to countries throughout the world, including Ecuador, Honduras, Malaysia, and the Philippines. In Malaysia he spoke to believers and non-believers in the capital city of Kuala Lumpur. He also traveled around the mountains outside the city, speaking to and leading worship to house churches. In the Philippines, John worked with KIM (Kids International Ministries), where he helped build a school and worked with impoverished children and families.

John currently works as the ICEJ USA church relations coordinator, often traveling to Israel to lead church and pastors' tours. He has taken over 500 people through the Land. He also travels and speaks in churches across the United States. John has a conviction that the Bible is the inerrant and inspired Word of God and believes in the local church as one of God's vehicles for spreading the gospel around the world. He is currently finishing his his master's from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Natalie, have three children.



fter more than 16 months of war, the Israeli communities along the Gaza border are slowly starting to return to their homes and plan for the future. The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) is working to support these devastated communities through numerous far-reaching initiatives aimed at helping them recover from the trauma of October 7 and rebuild their lives.

The residents of these villages in the Western Negev realize that they will be dealing with the trauma and destruction inflicted by Hamas for years to come, and they are reaching out for help. The ICEJ is responding by supporting several rebuilding and recovery projects. Some of these initiatives are complete rebuilds from the ground up, while others involve major renovations and repurposing of existing buildings that suffered extensive damage on October 7.

Many families in this region endured traumatic events in their own homes, and the haunting memories will be difficult to overcome. Therefore, the communities we are assisting understand that they must not only rebuild their homes but also restore and enhance their entire communities to make returning home appealing.

The government is providing budgets to help rebuild destroyed private homes over the next few years, but each community will need to find funding to restore some of their public buildings, which are the real centers of their communal life together. These are the places that can improve the quality of life for residents and what will draw them back despite the bad memories of the Hamas invasion.

One such community is Kfar Aza, which was brutally invaded by over 300 armed Hamas terrorists on October

7. Out of 950 residents, 62 were murdered that day while 18 more were cruelly kidnapped into Gaza. The battle for Kfar Aza lasted several days, during which many families were trapped in their bomb shelters, desperately hoping for rescue. Approximately half of the homes in the community were severely damaged or destroyed due to fire and explosions.

Within 48 hours, most of the survivors were evacuated to a hotel in Shefayim, a fellow kibbutz along the central coast. Many were recently moved into temporary housing in Ruhama, some 15 miles from Kfar Aza, where they will stay until their new homes are finished.

Given the physical destruction and mental strains of this whole ordeal, the residents of Kfar Aza and other hard-hit nearby villages need easy access to trauma care for their families so they can have the peace of mind it takes to return. They also will be drawn back if community services and activities are readily at hand for all the members of their families.

Thus, the ICEJ is investing in a series of major rebuilding and renovation projects uniquely tailored to enhance public life in these communities and thereby provide the incentives needed to draw residents back home. Here are descriptions of six such building initiatives and the common good they will bring to the Gaza border region.

Child Trauma Treatment Center in Kfar Aza

There are serious concerns among the Gaza border communities about the short and long-term impact of the October 7 massacres on their children. The plans to revitalize communal life at Kfar Aza include a special center for the treatment of trauma symptoms among the children, using the latest cutting-edge therapeutic techniques and

equipment. With the ICEJ's help, an existing kindergarten will be thoroughly renovated and repurposed to provide mental health care for children suffering from physical and emotional trauma.

The project is designed to provide a safe environment for youngsters of various ages to learn how to cope with and overcome the stress and insecurity they still feel from the terrorist onslaught. The center's staff also will instruct and



empower parents to deal with the lingering anxieties of their children and even themselves.

Music Therapy Center in Kfar Aza

This project will involve the total renovation of an existing public building in Kfar Aza to serve as a special center for various forms of music therapy for residents of all ages. The complex will allow for individual musical creativity and expression, which is recognized as an effective therapeutic tool for the relief and healing of extreme stress and trauma. The center will include rehearsal rooms, a recording studio, workshop space, and an open area for performances and community events. Thanks to the ICEJ's assistance, the center also will offer various musical instruments and quality sound systems. In addition, the musical performances coming out of this therapy center will help restore the sense of community on the kibbutz.

Youth Activity Center in Kibbutz Be'eri

A few miles down the road, Kibbutz Be'eri also suffered greatly on October 7. Known for its pioneering spirit, the community was devastated by the Hamas infiltration. Some 132 members were either killed or kidnapped into Gaza, including 51 elderly residents. Over 120 houses were destroyed, while the village's kindergarten and after-school facilities were callously burned and vandalized. In response to the kibbutz's request for help, the ICEJ has committed to rebuilding a destroyed youth activity center from the ground up.

Hamas gunmen had turned the building into a command post amid the battle for the kibbutz, so it needed to be

bombed and leveled. The plot has now been cleared, and construction will soon begin to help restore this key part of the educational support system in Be'eri. The center will provide group activities for youngsters who finish their school day in the early afternoon and need supervision until their parents come home from work later in the evening. They will receive meals, help with homework, and enrichment activities. The center will also host summer and holiday camps for children. Such youth activity centers



are common in Israel—in many households, both parents work full-time—so these centers are critical to a stable social life across the country. They will be needed even more as Kibbutz Be'eri rebuilds and invites their families to return, ensuring both parents can go back to work.

Elderly Care and Activity Center in Kibbutz Be'eri

In the aftermath of the Hamas atrocities on October 7, the elderly residents of Kibbutz Be'eri have faced many hardships and will need special attention and care as they make their way back to their homes. Many have had difficulty adjusting to temporary stays in hotels that have lasted much longer than expected. The community also has a proportionally high number of retirees, which is only expected to grow as the village's overall population ages in the years ahead. Thus, the Christian Embassy is helping to turn a damaged



retirement home in the middle of the kibbutz into an elderly rehabilitation and activity center. The Ne'ot Be'eri facility will provide communal space for senior citizens to receive vital physical therapy and mental health care as well as enjoy cultural events and learning activities. The center will offer cognitive and physical recovery treatments and nursing services, along with uplifting group activities to encourage social interaction among the elderly kibbutz members of Be'eri.

Animal Therapy Corner in Kibbutz Urim

Not far away, the ICEJ has already been helping Kibbutz Urim recover and assist others in the area by investing in its animal therapy farm. We have recently donated three therapy horses to its ranch and sponsored horse-riding sessions for scores of Israeli children from the region in urgent need of trauma care. The Christian Embassy is now looking to restore and expand the animal corner, which was first started decades ago by a now 97-year-old resident of Urim. Thanks to Christian support, the dilapidated petting zoo will undergo a major renovation and be enlarged to provide trauma care to the children of the region, who already suffered from two decades of incessant Hamas rocket attacks even before the terror invasion of October 7. The revamped animal corner will feature plenty of cute and cuddly animals, with comfortable new living spaces



for them, plus two clinics and areas for therapy sessions. Along with the therapy horse ranch next door, this promises to be a highly popular and beneficial place for the children of the Western Negev to rebuild their sense of security and trust in the world around them.

Greenhouse Classroom in Sde Nitzan

Further south, the ICEJ is partnering with a brand-new agricultural school in Sde Nitzan by funding the construction of a large greenhouse classroom for their enterprising young students. The school was initially launched not long after October 7, when the founders witnessed high school students from across Israel coming as volunteers to the Western Negev to help harvest the crops amid the nearby fighting in Gaza. This birthed the vision to encourage other

students to come and learn the latest farming techniques, research new agro-tech methods, and hopefully fall in love with the region and decide to settle here and help develop the land. Currently, 27 high school-aged students are receiving a basic education at the school alongside their specialized agricultural studies. The Christian Embassy has agreed to finance a large new greenhouse to serve as the main classroom for the students to learn greenhouse farming and conduct experiments on increasing the quality and yield of the fruits and vegetables they grow.

Time to Rebuild

Just as Nehemiah led the people of Israel in rebuilding the broken-down walls of Jerusalem, it is time for Christians to help rebuild the battered Israeli communities along the Gaza border. Indeed, the prophet Isaiah foresaw a time when God-fearing gentiles would be involved in such efforts, saying "The sons of foreigners shall build up your walls" (Isaiah 60:10).



This is a truly unique time for the Christian Embassy, as we have never had so many major building projects underway at one time. Some funding for these initiatives has already come in from generous Christians around the world, but we will need your help to complete these projects and hopefully move on to the next ones. The needs are great, but we have an exceptional opportunity to bless and comfort the people of Israel because of it.

While the road to healing will be long and strewn with challenges, these communities so appreciate that Christians are coming alongside them in their hour of need. Join us in helping them start to return and rebuild with a hopeful eye to the future. You can be part of this restoration and recovery process by supporting these vital building projects. .

Donate today to our Israel in Crisis fund at: www.icejusa.org/crisis



HELPING ISRAEL DURING WAR LATEST HANDS-ON TOUR UPDATE

BY NATIVIA SAMUELSON, ICEJ AID ADMINISTRATOR

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) recently hosted another group of Christian volunteers for a Hands-on Serving Tour to Israel during wartime, with participants from around the world engaging together in practical aid projects to show their love and care for the embattled Jewish State.

Today, as antisemitism rises and Israel remains in a tense conflict with Hamas and other adversaries, many Christians feel an urgent call to come and serve in the Land. Jules Verne captured the sentiment in *Around the World in 80 Days* when he wrote, "The world is large, and I want to have a good look at it before it gets dark." Much like the urgency of Phileas Fogg's journey in *Around the World*, many Christians sense that the window to visit Israel freely may not always remain open. Political shifts, security concerns, and global attitudes toward Israel are ever-changing. But for those who do come, especially now, the experience is transformative.

On day one, the volunteers awoke at dawn, shook off the jet lag, and traveled with much excitement to the first stop on our mission—a new agricultural high school in Sde Nitzan near the Gaza border. The ICEJ is building a greenhouse classroom for the Israeli students here, and our Christian visitors were eager to get to work helping however they could.

Asaf, the driving force behind the school, welcomed the group and shared how he has adapted since the massacres of October 7, a day that deeply affected him and his community. He explained that the agricultural school has become his way of healing. His goal is to bring life and hope back to the South by connecting young Israelis to the land, offering them both practical skills and a sense of responsibility.

That day, we rolled up our sleeves and joined the teenagers in preparing mango trees for harvest. As we worked alongside them, Asaf's words echoed in our minds: "The best response to what happened is to work and find your mission. From crisis to mission."

As the tour continued, the phrase "from crisis to mission" also served as our guiding force. We saw this motto unfold in so many meaningful ways, like our visit to an elderly daycare center in the Eshkol region, also bordering Gaza. The stories we heard of resilience and survival on October 7 were incredibly powerful and inspiring. Though they lived through the torrents of terror, they shared their memories of that day and displayed their artwork illustrating their experiences. It was a privilege to meet and embrace them, sense their pain, and admire their determination to keep going.

This included meeting Bella, a Holocaust Survivor who



y wife, Esther, has been to Israel over 20 times, including over October 7, 2023, and I recently went for my third time. We spent six weeks on two different but special solidarity tours. We both desired a tour where we could actually work with Israeli people and significantly contribute in a tangible way to the land and encourage the people. When we learned about the ICEJ Hands-On Serving Tour in March 2025, it seemed to be exactly what we wanted—but it turned out to be so much more! First, it was a small group of only nine tourists, plus our tour guide, Jannie, ICEJ's assistant to the VP for AID and Aliyah. Jannie was amazing, from her insightful morning devotions to giving us individual attention and perceptively encouraging us as a group.

"Since our group was so small, we quickly bonded and learned so much from each other as we were from France, Singapore, Germany, and the United States. What an amazing opportunity for fellowship! We sang and prayed together but also explored Jerusalem at night after supper. We started most days by 7:00 a.m. and spent the mornings doing many physical activities, from pruning mango trees to sorting clementines to repacking care boxes to harvesting oranges to picking and packing hot peppers and cherry tomatoes. We also prepared fresh sandwiches for IDF soldiers. We even interacted with a group of Arab college students. Several times, we were paired with teenage students who were very interested in who we were and why we were there, which, by merely answering their questions, allowed us to express our Christian faith in a relaxed way. In summary, this was the opportunity of a lifetime, and most of us said we were planning to return in November for the next Hands-On Serving Tour."

—Tim and Esther from the United States

lost her grandson Yotam—a hostage who escaped his captors but was tragically killed. "Our message is for you to tell our story wherever you go, especially to the younger generation in your country," she shared. "Thank you so much for coming."

We also spent time at the Leket logistics center, where we helped sort over 7,000 pounds of clementines. This citrus fruit, which would have otherwise been wasted, was rescued by volunteers like us and distributed to families in need.

"Without your help, these clementines would have been thrown away. Thanks to you, we can deliver then to other organizations," said Michelle, our Leket host.

On another day, we sorted food, clothing, and Purim donations for families impacted by the crisis. Our host stated with gratitude: "You do not realize how many families you have helped today. These clothes, food items, and Purim gifts will go to those who cannot afford them."

At Kibbutz Be'eri, we also picked another 35,000 pounds of oranges together with staff from Bank Leumi.

We were able to see the tangible fruit of our labor everywhere we went, and with each act of service, our connection to Israel deepened. Each member began to understand more profoundly the significance of being here at this time—how every small effort contributed to a greater purpose.

One highlight of the tour was our meeting with Juergen Buehler, president of the Christian Embassy. His dedication to the organization's mission was evident, and his words resonated deeply with our group.

"Your presence leaves behind a footprint in Israel. Bring a good report back to your home countries of what you experienced in Israel, just as the two spies Joshua and Caleb did."

Reflecting on the encounter, Stephanie, a participant from France, responded, "It's time we give back to the Jewish people what we have taken and share with our countries about Israel."

Traveling to the northern border area, we met with some incredible young Arab students, full of life and laughter, who are part of a high-tech program sponsored by ICEJ. Maram, the CEO of the program, shared with us the organization's mission:

"We connect Arab students to the job market through mentorship, job searches, and company visits. After the events of October 7, the program's focus expanded to provide additional support to rebuild trust between Arab and Jewish students during these difficult times," he said. We also heard firsthand from the students about the program's impact on their lives.



"It helped me prepare for interviews and write a strong CV," noted Ali, a mechanical engineer. "I'm working at ICL and am still in touch with my mentors."

"It gave me the tools to enter the job market," said Ibrahim, a recent graduate. "I'm now co-owner of a start-up in Tel Aviv." He added, "We want peace and humanity, to meet with people and talk to them, and together, to search for true peace," he added.

As the trip concluded, the group reflected on the powerful moments they had experienced. Marla, from the United States, shared how much she appreciated the various projects and meaningful connections made along the way.

Stephan, from Germany, recalled the warm conversations with locals in Be'eri, while Shawn, a returning volunteer from the United States, summed it up with one word: "Rewarding!" He especially emphasized the joy of being a light to the people of Israel. Finally, Grace

March 2025 Hands-On Serving Tour participants with ICEJ President Juergen Büehler and his wife, Vesna (middle)



from Singapore encouraged everyone to seek the truth beyond the biased media and continue praying for Israel.

Everyone agreed that the most impactful part of the trip was the people they met who left a lasting mark on their hearts. Many group members were even invited to stay longer in some locations as they connected so well with the people.

For those who want to come to the Land and stand with and volunteer alongside Israelis when others turn away, the time is now!

Join the next Hands-On Serving Tour November 4–13, 2025 Learn more at: www.icejusa.org/servingtournov2025







n a remarkable turn of events, a new chapter in the story of Ethiopian Aliyah is unfolding even amid the current war in Israel. While much attention has been focused on the Falash Mura (Ethiopian Jews whose ancestors converted to Christianity), a group from the Beta Israel community within Ethiopian Jewry has been discovered still living in Ethiopia's northern regions. These ancient Jewish communities kept their identity and traditions despite centuries of isolation and were thought to have fully immigrated to Israel during the major operations of the 1980s and 1990s. But this newly discovered remnant is now starting to return to Israel in a surprising new wave of Aliyah.

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) sponsored 26 of these Ethiopian Jewish immigrants who arrived in February, while another 40 more will be coming soon on flights funded by the ICEJ. The ICEJ Taiwan Branch has been particularly generous in sponsoring these Aliyah flights, which are carrying home Ethiopian Jews evacuated out of areas caught in tribal conflicts. They all have waited many years to make Aliyah and were welcomed at an Aliyah center in Be'er Sheva, close to where their families already in Israel live.

This unexpected wave of Aliyah represents the fulfillment of ancient prophecies and dreams for a community that has endured immense hardship. Unlike the Falash Mura, whose Aliyah is currently on hold due to the ongoing war in Israel, the Beta Israel community qualifies for immediate immigration under the Law of Return, which grants automatic citizenship to fully recognized Jews worldwide moving to Israel.

The Beta Israel Community: Ancient Roots, Modern Return

The Beta Israel trace their lineage to what many historians believe was a Jewish kingdom that once flourished in northern Ethiopia, particularly in the Tigray region. Historical accounts, including the Ethiopian religious text Kebra Nagast, suggest that the Jewish presence in Ethiopia may date back to connections between the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon. More concrete evidence points to Jewish communities that established themselves around Lake Tana, possibly connected to ancient Jewish settlements on Elephantine Island in Egypt, dating back from the sixth to fourth centuries BC.



For centuries, the Beta Israel maintained their Jewish identity and their own unique traditions in isolation from the broader Jewish world. The dramatic airlifts of Operation Moses in 1984–1985 and Operation Solomon in 1991 brought the majority of Ethiopian Jews to Israel. But as we now know, there are more who have yet to make the journey.

Recent outbreaks of violence in Ethiopia's northern regions have accelerated this new wave of immigration. The fighting that engulfed Gondar in August 2023 placed many Jewish families in immediate danger, with blocked streets and shortages of food, water, and electricity. The situation in Tigray has also been incredibly volatile, with armed conflict between national forces and regional militias creating dangerous conditions for all civilians, including the remaining Jews.

The Role of the ICEJ in Facilitating Aliyah

The Christian Embassy is playing a vital role in facilitating this new wave of Ethiopian Aliyah. When approached by the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), the ICEJ acted quickly, providing funds for their flights, the long bus rides from Gondar to Addis Ababa, and their adjustment to life once in Israel. The children will also receive support for afterschool educational programs, while the focus for adults is on professional training, completing secondary schooling, and pre-academic courses to prepare them for further educational opportunities in Israel.

This continues the ICEJ's long-standing commitment to Ethiopian Aliyah. Since the historic resumption of Ethiopian immigration in 2015, the ICEJ has sponsored flights for 3,286 out of 7,948 Ethiopian Jewish immigrants who have made their way to Israel.

The Falash Mura: A Humanitarian Effort on Hold

The Falash Mura are a subgroup within the Beta Israel community whose Jewish identity has been a subject of debate, since some converted to Christianity under duress during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But they have sought to return to Judaism and immigrate to Israel, and several thousand have been brought to Israel since 2015, often on humanitarian grounds to reunite families. However, with Israel's continuing multifront war, the Aliyah of the Falash Mura has been suspended, leaving many

families separated and in limbo.

Challenges and Triumphs in Integration

The integration of both the Beta Israel community and the Falash Mura into Israeli society has been a complex and often difficult process. Upon arriving in Israel, many face significant cultural, social, and economic challenges. The transition from rural Ethiopia to a modern, industrialized society is a profound adjustment, and many have struggled with issues such as language barriers, discrimination, and poverty.

Despite these challenges, the Ethiopian Jewish community in Israel has shown remarkable resilience and determination. Second- and third-generation Ethiopian Israelis are increasingly visible in academia, business, and the arts, creating a more diverse and inclusive Israeli society. Ethiopian immigrants have made substantial contributions to Israeli society across numerous fields, including in military service.

A Historic Return

The modern-day return of Ethiopian Jewry to Israel is an amazing success story that pays tribute to their resilience, faith, and determination. As we witness this historic ingathering, the ICEJ remains committed to facilitating the Aliyah of the remaining Beta Israel community and, when the time is right, the last of the Falash Mura. We invite you to partner with us in fulfilling this prophetic mandate. Your support will help ensure that the Ethiopian Jewish return is completed, fulfilling the dreams of a people who have waited so long to come home.





YOUR ISRAEL ANSWER

Who Really Killed Jesus? Unpacking the "Christ Killer" Lie

By Dr. Susan Michael, ICEJ USA President

or centuries, the most dangerous day of the year for the Jewish people was Good Friday as Christians around the world commemorated Jesus' crucifixion. It was all too common that Good Friday sermons incited persecution of Jewish communities. For this reason, Jews commonly stayed in their homes and out of the streets to avoid encountering enraged congregants leaving church services looking for "Christ killers" to attack.

It wasn't until after the Holocaust that the Catholic Church changed its Good Friday liturgy to remove derogatory words regarding Jews and clarified its theology as one of respect for the Jewish faith and people. Some mainline Protestant denominations also made major efforts to renounce antisemitism and establish interfaith relations with the Jewish community.

The problem, however, persists today. As antisemitism is surging around the world, the trope "Christ killer" is commonly found on social media and in some Christian and conservative discourse.

The Evangelical movement is the fastest-growing segment of Christianity today, and while there are many Evangelicals who love and support Israel and the Jewish people, Christians must be aware of and on guard against this false accusation of Jews as "Christ killers."

What Does the New Testament Say?

The New Testament account of Jesus' crucifixion indicates that some Jewish religious leaders conspired to arrest Jesus and called for His death (Matthew 26; Mark 14; Luke 22; John 18). There are many

theories on why the Jewish leaders did this: They were afraid of a potential uprising against their oppressive Roman rulers; they were upset when Jesus cleared the money changers from the temple courts; or they were fearful over Jesus' prediction of the destruction of the temple. It is also widely accepted by Jewish historians that the religious aristocracy of the Second Temple period was corrupt, so there was also undoubtedly an element of self-preservation in their call for Jesus' crucifixion.

The late Professor David Flusser of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (considered the leading Orthodox Jewish expert on the Second Temple era and Early Christianity before his death) may have come the closest to documenting what happened. In his book, *Jesus* (Magnus Press, 1998), Flusser suggests that certain members of the Sadducee sect conspired with the Romans to arrest and kill Jesus to preserve their control of temple worship, which they had wrested from their more popular rivals, the Pharisees.

In any event, it was the Romans who actually carried out the crucifixion, yet they are never blamed for being "Christ killers." This may be because according to the New Testament accounts, the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate felt Jesus didn't deserve death and proclaimed he was "washing his hands" of the matter. According to the gospel of Mathew, the Jewish observers replied, "His blood be on us and our children."

This is the root of the greatly embellished accusation that all Jews from all periods are responsible for spilling Jesus' blood.

The New Testament does not specify who those Jewish observers were, but we know that those allowed into the Roman courtyard were Jews associated with the corrupt religious aristocracy bringing Jesus before Pilate. We must remind ourselves that thousands of Jews had lined the streets outside the city gates only days prior when Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, waving palm branches and proclaiming Him as King. That was the whole reason some Jewish leaders saw Jesus as a threat—throngs of Jews were following Him.

Would the blame accepted by a group inside the Roman courtyard be placed on all of those outside the courtyard who followed or sympathized with Jesus? Likewise, would their guilt be passed down generations to people who were not alive when Jesus died? Of course not. The responsibility begins and ends with the specific group of individuals calling for His execution.

As Christians, we must also recognize our share of guilt in this story. Theologically speaking, we all put Jesus on the cross. First Timothy 1:15 says Jesus was born to die for our sins, and 1 Peter 3:18 adds that Jesus suffered for our sins to bring us to God. Jesus' death was a sacrificial act meant to reconcile fallen mankind with God. Moreover, Jesus had the ability to avoid death but willingly laid down His life when He prayed in the garden of Gethsemane "not my will be done but yours."

What happened in the Roman courtyard that fateful day was how God orchestrated His plan of redemption. We should stand in gratitude and awe of that, not in anger at those He used to bring His plan to fruition.

To demonize all generations of the Jewish faith for that is blatantly antisemitic.

Recognizing Antisemitism

Prompted by a swell in antisemitic incidents, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) drafted a definition of "antisemitism" in 2016 to help countries, institutions, and organizations recognize, respond, and better monitor and track antisemitic incidents. Along with the definition, IHRA provided examples of antisemitism, and one was "claims of Jews killing Jesus."

When the US House of Representatives voted on a bill to adopt the IHRA definition, a couple of far-right members accused the bill of outlawing the New Testament Scriptures. The IHRA example of antisemitism does not refer to the historical narrative of Jesus' trial and crucifixion found in the New Testament. It refers to the centuries-long use of tropes such as "Christ killer" to blame Jews alive today for what happened 2,000 years ago.

For the last 45 years, the International

Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) has educated Christian congregations about this misapplication of Scripture and encouraged instead adherence to the words of the apostle Paul in Romans 9–11. Paul called for Christians to honor the Jewish people because their faith is the very root supporting the Christian faith. The ICEJ's reach into 183 countries makes it the largest Christian organization in the world seeking to establish a new relationship with the Jewish people and the Jewish State of Israel—one based on honor and respect.

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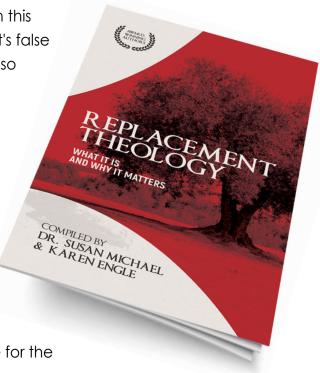
Has the church replaced Israel in God's plan?

Some people believe God's covenant with the Jewish people ended in AD 30, and all the blessings given to Israel through His promises to Abraham have transferred to the gentile church. They believe God will save individual Jews who accept Jesus, but He has no present or future place for national, ethnic Israel in His plan of redemption.

It's a term known as Replacement Theology, and in this concise, easy-to-read booklet, you'll explore why it's false and even dangerous for followers of Jesus. You'll also learn:

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- Whether there is any theological basis for this belief
- If the New Testament supports this idea
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- And more

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