



WORD

FROM JERUSALEM

WHY ISRAEL STILL MATTERS

A Wake-Up Call for
Christian Leaders

THE BNEI MENASHE JEWS
FROM INDIA
RETURN TO ZION



FEAST OF TABERNACLES
HIGHLIGHTS



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 are:

- 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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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRESIDENT'S LETTER	03
--------------------	----

FEAST OF TABERNACLES	04
----------------------	----

TEACHING	06
----------	----

Why Israel Still Matters: A Wake-Up Call for Christian Leaders	
---	--

ICEJ USA REPORT	11
-----------------	----

Judeo-Christian Zionist Congress to Counter Dual Threats Facing Israel, the West	
--	--

ICEJ USA Tours	
----------------	--

Antisemitism Decree	
---------------------	--

ICEJ AID	15
----------	----

ICEJ Helps 81-Year-Old October 7 Survivor Recover, Rebuild	
---	--

ALIYAH & ABSORPTION	16
---------------------	----

The Bnei Menashe Jews from India Return to Zion	
--	--

ISRAEL ANSWERS	18
----------------	----

Why Is Israel So Controversial?	
---------------------------------	--



FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT



Dear Friends,

The new year has begun with a cautious hope that we may be entering a season of greater stability and renewed prospects for peace in the region. That hope is tempered, of course, by the reality that Israel often faces unexpected challenges. Still, our prayers remain fixed on the vision of a lasting and secure peace.

In recent months, we have witnessed a significant shift in the aftermath of the October 7 terror invasion. Amid the global rise in antisemitism, Israeli leaders are recognizing more clearly than ever that Evangelical Christians around the world are one of their most dependable sources of support. We are grateful for this deepening friendship, even as we recognize the ongoing need to pray for all those entrusted with leadership.

The apostle Paul urged the early church to make such prayers a priority. In his first letter to Timothy, he writes: "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority" (2:1-2). Paul understood that praying for our leaders is not optional—it is foundational.

We encourage you to pray throughout the coming year for God-fearing men and women who will seek the Lord earnestly as they lead and work for the peace and prosperity of their people. And please continue praying for Israel's leaders, who face steep challenges both internally and externally.

I hope you enjoy the new look of the *Word From Jerusalem* and that you are encouraged by what you read this month. My prayer for you is that He may guide, strengthen, and uphold you in the year ahead.

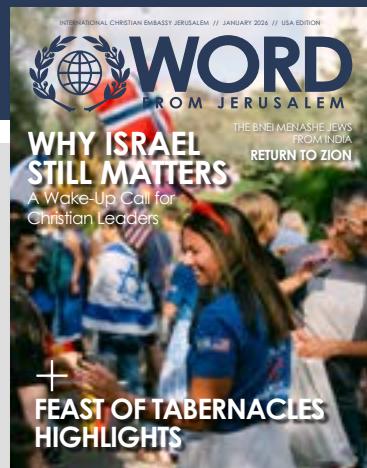
Yours in Messiah,

Dr. Juergen Buehler
ICEJ President

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COVER PHOTO: Jerusalem March
at the 2025 Feast of Tabernacles

FOR MAGAZINE ARCHIVES
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FEAST OF TABERNACLES HIGHLIGHTS

► OPENING NIGHT IN THE DESERT

The 2025 Feast of Tabernacles opened at the Kfar HaNokdim oasis in the Negev on October 9, 2025. Evangelist Manasa Kolivuso of Fiji delivered a stirring message on living a life of worship toward Jesus. As the new interim chairman of ICEJ Fiji, Pastor Manasa urged pilgrims to remember the true purpose of coming to Jerusalem for Tabernacles, found in the theme passage of Zechariah 8:20–23.

“We have ascended to Jerusalem for the ICEJ Feast of Tabernacles 2025 to seek the Lord,” Pastor Manasa declared. “Time spent seeking God is never wasted—it is always invested. Everything else can wait. Food can wait. Rest can wait. Worship cannot wait. We are called to the Feast of Sukkot to have an encounter with God.” He continued, “The world may reject Israel today, but one day, they will come running back. And from every nation, people will join hands and cling to the robe of a Jew . . . We must cling to the robe of the One Jew. If we miss that One Jew—Jesus—we miss it all.”



► PRESIDENT ISAAC HERZOG ON ISRAELI GUEST NIGHT

Israel’s President Isaac Herzog made a riveting appearance on Israeli Guest Night, delivering a warm welcome address to the Feast pilgrims and thanking Christians worldwide for standing with the Jewish nation and people during these past two turbulent years. “It is no coincidence, friends, that you have gathered here at a decisive moment in the history of this region. You, lovers of Zion, have arrived here at a crossroads in which the choice for blessing or curse, for life and liberty or death and destruction, is laid out before us,” said Herzog. “Of course, your love for Israel is not new. For decades, your Embassy in Jerusalem, the ICEJ, has been a global voice of Christian friendship, solidarity, and action for Israel. When others left Jerusalem, you came and said, like Abraham, ‘Hineini, we are here. We stand with the State of Israel, with the people of Israel, and with the Holy City.’”

“I want to thank the ICEJ, its president, Dr. Juergen Buehler, and his excellent team—and Christian Zionist communities around the world. I thank each of you who have made this pilgrimage of body, heart, and spirit to Israel. And those joining us now (online) from around the world.”

► FIJI'S DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER ATTENDS FEAST

The Deputy Prime Minister of Fiji, Viliame Gavoka, came to Jerusalem as a Feast pilgrim just weeks after his nation opened its new Embassy in Jerusalem, the seventh nation to do so. Gavoka was the key figure who insisted on the Embassy opening as a condition for joining the new government last year. “Fijians know that God is with Israel,” he told those present at the Feast gathering. “For decades, Christians in Fiji have longed to see our government stand in Jerusalem—the eternal capital of Israel . . . Fiji is small but growing in Spirit. We stand unashamedly with Israel and unshakably upon the Word of God. We are a people guided by faith, a people of prayer, and a nation that stands with God’s Word.”



► MALCOLM HEDDING RECEIVES NEHEMIAH AWARD

During the Feast, ICEJ President Dr. Juergen Buehler presented this year's Nehemiah Award to his predecessor, former ICEJ Executive Director Rev. Malcolm Hedding, in recognition of his lifetime of achievements in building Christian support for Israel. Hedding first served as chaplain for the Christian Embassy beginning in the 1980s and later came back from South Africa to head the ministry from 2000 to 2011. He remained on the International Board of Trustees and was an international speaker for the ICEJ until 2024.



► OVER 2,000 CHRISTIANS JOIN THE JERUSALEM MARCH

The Christian Embassy's Jerusalem March filled Sacher Park with more than 2,000 pro-Israel Christians from 75 nations, joining thousands of Israelis celebrating Sukkot in the largest solidarity mission since the war began. Just hours after news broke of Israel and Hamas accepting the first phase of President Trump's 20-point plan, the March culminated in a powerful prayer vigil overlooking the Knesset, where believers interceded for the hostages as Israeli leaders weighed the agreement. Within 4 days, all 20 surviving hostages were released—a moment of national joy Israelis will never forget.



BE PART OF ICEJ USA'S 2026 FEAST—SIGN THE INTEREST LIST TODAY AND GET UPDATES AS DETAILS UNFOLD! www.icejusa.org/feast-tour







WHY ISRAEL STILL MATTERS

A Wake-Up Call for Christian Leaders

By Mark Dreistadt, Founder & CEO
of Infinity Concepts, LLC

This article is reprinted with permission from Captivate Magazine, a publication of Infinity Concepts.

It was just another Sunday morning. The worship team closed their final chorus, the announcements scrolled across the screen, and the pastor opened his Bible to deliver a thoughtful, heartfelt message.

Yet something—though not obviously absent—was missing. Not just from this worship service but from countless services like it around the country. What was it?

Israel. Not a prayer for Jerusalem. Not a reference to the Jewish people. Not a word about the land that frames so much of the biblical story.

This silence is not simply anecdotal. According to a recent study conducted by Infinity Concepts and Grey Matter Research, Evangelical churches across the United States now speak less about Israel and the Jewish people than in the past. As a result, we have a generation of believers that is less informed, less engaged, and increasingly uncertain about Israel's place in God's redemptive plan.

The study surveyed over 1,000 Evangelical Protestants and uncovered an emerging fault line between older and younger believers. While 49 percent of Evangelicals overall still believe the Jewish people are God's chosen people, only 29 percent under age 35 share that conviction. Twenty-six percent of younger evangelicals even subscribe to "Replacement Theology" (the belief that Christians have replaced Jews as God's chosen), and a growing number say they simply do not know what to believe.



These numbers should concern us, not just theologically but also culturally.

When younger evangelicals disconnect from the biblical narrative of Israel, it reflects a broader erosion of scriptural authority and historical context within Christian thought. This is not merely an issue of doctrinal precision; it signals a cultural drift that could reshape the way future generations understand covenant, prophecy, and the unfolding plan of redemption.

For decades, Evangelical support for Israel has been a visible expression of biblical conviction. That support was not built on political alliances or news headlines. It was built on Scripture. From Genesis to Revelation, the story of Israel is not a sidenote; it is a thread woven through the whole narrative of redemption. And when that thread is lost, so, too, is a key piece of our understanding of God's covenantal faithfulness.

The data also confirms something many of us have sensed: what leaders say—or do not say—from the pulpit and in public communication has a direct influence on what people believe.

Seventy-one percent of Evangelicals who frequently hear their church leaders describe the Jewish people as God's chosen will agree with that belief. Among those who never hear it, that number drops to just 12 percent. Similarly, when Christian leaders regularly pray for the peace of Jerusalem, believers are far more likely to see that act as vital to their faith.

This is a sobering reminder: silence is not neutral. It shapes theology as surely as a sermon does.

SPIRITUAL SUPPORT FOR THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

The study also revealed hopeful clarity about evangelical priorities. While political support for Israel is seen as important by roughly 60 percent of respondents, even more prioritize spiritual dimensions: 85 percent say praying for the peace of Jerusalem is important to their faith; 74 percent spiritually support the Jewish people; and 73 percent feel a responsibility to oppose antisemitism.

In our survey, the top three concerns among Evangelicals are deeply biblical: What Scripture teaches about Israel (65 percent), Israel's role in prophecy (55 percent), and the Jewish roots of Christianity (44 percent).

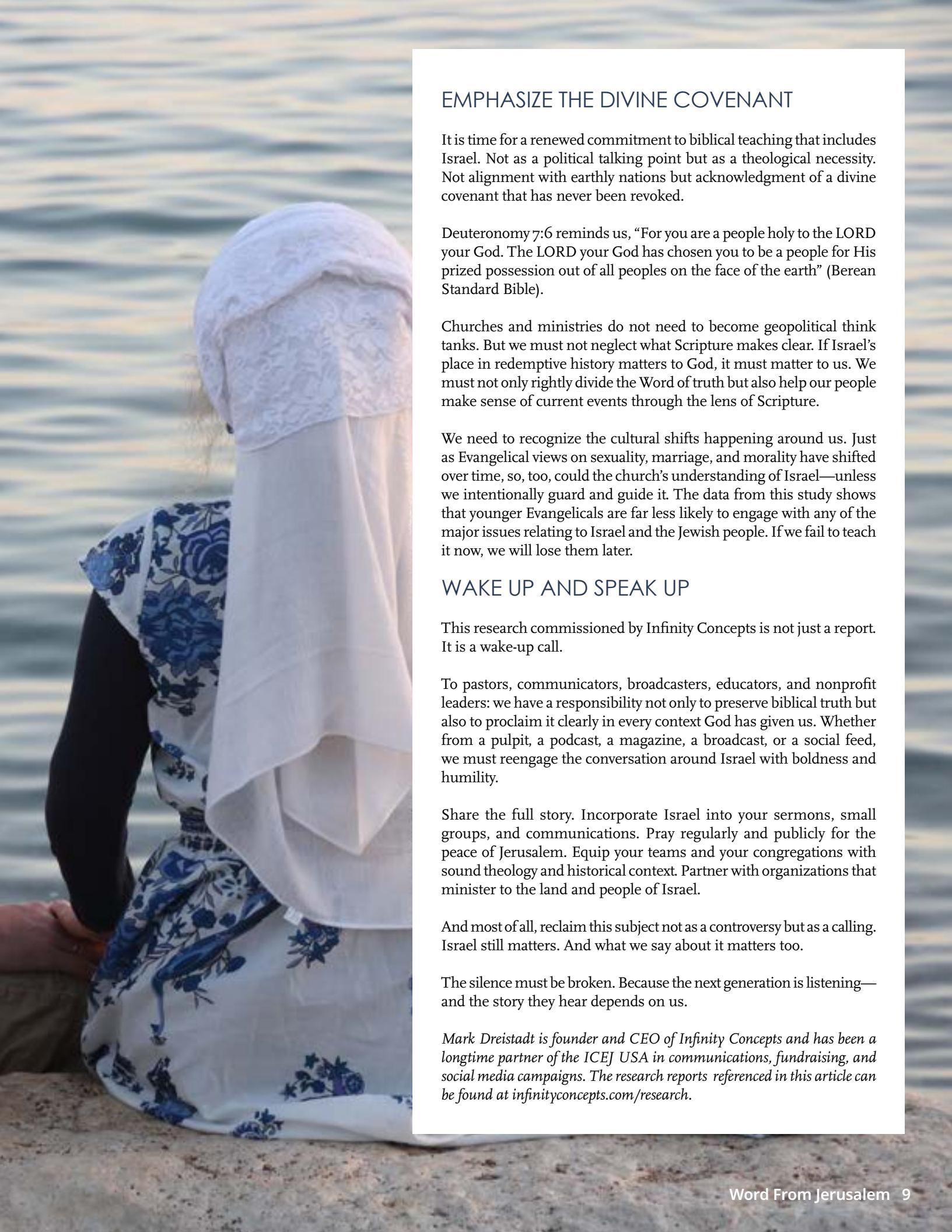
By contrast, political concerns rank lower: US-Israel relations (41 percent), antisemitism (32 percent), media portrayals of Israel (31 percent), and how Israelis view American Christians (30 percent). The contrast is stark. For Evangelicals, the question of Israel is not about politics—it's about God's promises, prophetic fulfillment, and theological continuity.

This is good news. Evangelical support for Israel has not faded; it simply seeks deeper roots. The moment demands that Christian leaders rise to meet that hunger with clear, consistent teaching. As Paul wrote in Romans 11:1, "Has God rejected His people? By no means!" (NIV).

If our churches do not echo that assurance, we risk that the next generation might answer the question differently.



▲ Eilat Seafront • Photography by Pixabay



EMPHASIZE THE DIVINE COVENANT

It is time for a renewed commitment to biblical teaching that includes Israel. Not as a political talking point but as a theological necessity. Not alignment with earthly nations but acknowledgment of a divine covenant that has never been revoked.

Deuteronomy 7:6 reminds us, “For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His prized possession out of all peoples on the face of the earth” (Berean Standard Bible).

Churches and ministries do not need to become geopolitical think tanks. But we must not neglect what Scripture makes clear. If Israel’s place in redemptive history matters to God, it must matter to us. We must not only rightly divide the Word of truth but also help our people make sense of current events through the lens of Scripture.

We need to recognize the cultural shifts happening around us. Just as Evangelical views on sexuality, marriage, and morality have shifted over time, so, too, could the church’s understanding of Israel—unless we intentionally guard and guide it. The data from this study shows that younger Evangelicals are far less likely to engage with any of the major issues relating to Israel and the Jewish people. If we fail to teach it now, we will lose them later.

WAKE UP AND SPEAK UP

This research commissioned by Infinity Concepts is not just a report. It is a wake-up call.

To pastors, communicators, broadcasters, educators, and nonprofit leaders: we have a responsibility not only to preserve biblical truth but also to proclaim it clearly in every context God has given us. Whether from a pulpit, a podcast, a magazine, a broadcast, or a social feed, we must reengage the conversation around Israel with boldness and humility.

Share the full story. Incorporate Israel into your sermons, small groups, and communications. Pray regularly and publicly for the peace of Jerusalem. Equip your teams and your congregations with sound theology and historical context. Partner with organizations that minister to the land and people of Israel.

And most of all, reclaim this subject not as a controversy but as a calling. Israel still matters. And what we say about it matters too.

The silence must be broken. Because the next generation is listening—and the story they hear depends on us.

Mark Dreistadt is founder and CEO of Infinity Concepts and has been a longtime partner of the ICEJ USA in communications, fundraising, and social media campaigns. The research reports referenced in this article can be found at infinityconcepts.com/research.

Leave a LEGACY for Israel's Future

Include the ICEJ in your will
or estate plans and become
a member of the Shomer
(Keeper of) Israel Society

"Behold, He who keeps Israel [shomer] shall
neither slumber nor sleep." (Psalm 121:4)

With proper foresight and planning, it is possible for you to leave a legacy of blessing Israel. The ICEJ has worked tirelessly on behalf of the people of Israel for more than 40 years, and with your help, will be doing so for many more to come. Your planned gift of cash, stocks and bonds, mutual funds, life insurance, excess in retirement funds, property, or a gift annuity are excellent ways to help the ICEJ carry on your love for Israel.

Visit www.icejusa.org/shomer



The Lord has placed before us a great calling to bless His chosen people in Israel and around the world—and we simply cannot do it without your help. The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem-USA, Inc. is classified by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Corporate and personal contributions to the ICEJ's USA Branch, to the extent allowed by law, are fully tax-deductible.

CALL US AT
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ICEJ USA ASSISTS IN LAUNCH OF THE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN ZIONIST CONGRESS TO COUNTER DUAL THREATS FACING ISRAEL, THE WEST

The USA Branch of the International Christian Embassy hosted over 20 members of the American Christian leaders for Israel (ACLI) network in November, along with a visiting delegation of Israeli mayors, strategic thinkers from the Jerusalem Center for Foreign Affairs, and the co-chairs of the newly formed Judeo-Christian Zionist Congress (JCZC). ICEJ USA gathered these Christian and Israeli leaders to launch a coordinated effort—strengthening America, safeguarding Israel, countering Islamic extremism, and defending the values they hold dear.



ACLI MEMBERS—including ICEJ USA President Dr. Susan Michael (middle left), ACLI Coordinator Shelley Neese (far right), and ICEJ USA Executive Vice President Linda Smith (far right, second row back)—meet with the JCZC at the Family Research Council.



ACLI meets at the Family Research Council.



MAYOR HAIM BIBAS presents ICEJ USA President Dr. Susan Michael with an award while JCZC Cofounder Calev Myers looks on.



ICEJ USA President Dr. Susan Michael with Pastor Herman Martir (center), President of Asian Action Network, and ACLI member and JCZC Co-founder Sagiv Asulin at the recent meeting in Washington, DC, to unite Christian, Israeli, and Diaspora Jewish leaders

ICEJ USA AT THE FEAST 2025

Two Perspectives on the Feast of Tabernacles



Shelley Neese and Allison Griffin, coleaders of the Young Adults tour



MIAMI YOUNG ADULTS
GO TO ISRAEL

ICEJ USA was honored to include a special delegation to this year's Feast of Tabernacles: 19 young adults from Miami—a city famed for its cultural blend. The group was a microcosm of Zechariah's vision: second-generation Americans with roots in Mexico, the Philippines, Lebanon, China, Haiti, Poland, and Venezuela. Within this single, vibrant cohort we witnessed a living expression of this year's Feast theme from Zechariah 8:23, "Ten from Every Nation."

For most, it was their first visit to Israel. We journeyed to the Galilee, where the landscape still evokes the world of Jesus and brought the New Testament to life for our group. From there we traveled through the Judean Desert to Qumran, Masada, and the Dead Sea. We closed our trip with several days in Jerusalem, sharing times of prayer and worship at sites associated with our Savior's last week

But visiting Israel's south felt particularly urgent for this group, as the trauma there is still raw. Some participants arrived in Israel knowing little about October 7, but after seeing the aftermath and hearing firsthand accounts, they left determined to share what they learned. Walking through the Nova festival grounds, the car graveyard, and Kibbutz Be'eri was profoundly sobering, revealing the human cost behind the headlines and the courage and resilience of survivors and volunteers.

Now back in Miami, our participants carry stories that will shape their lives and community, having walked out prophecy, stood where Jesus stood, and forged lasting ties with the Jewish people.

—ACLI Coordinator Shelley Neese



THE ASCEND PRAYER GROUP ON ASSIGNMENT IN ISRAEL

There are moments in history when heaven and earth seem to converge—when ancient prophecy unfolds before our eyes. Such was the essence of the ICEJ USA 2025 Ascend tour to Israel, born from the call for those who had prayed faithfully for Israel through two years of war to come to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles 2025. Despite global uncertainty and a short preparation window, 19 women from across America said “yes,” becoming a tribe woven together by faith, prayer, and the sense that God was calling them to Israel for this appointed time.

Our pilgrimage began on October 7 as news of a proposed 20-point peace plan filled the air. Israelis welcomed us, declaring, “God is with Israel and so is America!” On October 9, we joined 1,500 people from 71 nations in the Jerusalem March, sharing American flags with families who shouted, “God bless America!” Days later, atop Megiddo, we learned seven hostages had returned—and Psalm 126 came alive: “We were like those who dreamed . . . the Lord has done great things for us.” After two years of intercession, we rejoiced as Israel’s children returned, and Jeremiah 31 echoed: “Your children shall return to their own borders.” That same day, the US President arrived in Israel—a historic moment for our journey.

From north to south, we traversed the Land in prayer, worship, and encounters with the living Word. The 2025 ICEJ Feast of Tabernacles became a marker for our group—not just for what we witnessed but for what we became.

—ICEJ Prayer Coordinator Monica Stenberg



Kimberly Esslinger and Monica Stenberg, co-leaders of the Ascend prayer group



ICEJ USA LAUNCHES NATIONAL DECLARATION AGAINST ANTISEMITISM

By ICEJ USA Director of Communications Shannon Bennett

In mid-December, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem USA (ICEJ USA) announced the launch of the Christian Declaration Against Antisemitism, a unified statement denouncing antisemitism as a violation of human dignity and calling on Christians to stand publicly with the Jewish people at a time of rising threats and violence.

The declaration brings together Christians from diverse streams and denominations who affirm that hatred of Jews is incompatible with biblical faith and with the principles of justice, freedom, and human dignity that underpin American society. ICEJ USA President Dr. Susan Michael said:

Antisemitism is a moral evil that dehumanizes the Jewish people and undermines the very foundations of a free and just society. ... As Christians, we are compelled by our faith to denounce antisemitism unequivocally and to stand with the Jewish people in word and deed.

The announcement was made amid a sharp increase in antisemitic incidents worldwide, including violent attacks targeting Jewish communities in the United States, Europe, and Australia. The most recent incident—a mass shooting on December 14, 2025, at a Hanukkah gathering in Sydney, Australia—quickly renewed international concern over the safety of Jewish communities and the spread of antisemitic hatred.

In the United States, concern has intensified following an attack on an Orthodox synagogue in New York. Critics said the response from New York lawmaker Zohran Mamdani further inflamed tensions after he publicly asserted that the Jewish organization hosting an event at the synagogue, Nefesh B'Nefesh, was “violating international law” because of its mission to assist Jews in immigrating to Israel—

remarks that seemed to rationalize the attack rather than unequivocally condemn antisemitic violence.

The declaration states that antisemitism is dangerous not only to Jews, but to all people who value democracy, truth, and freedom. It affirms that all people are created in the image of God and that antisemitism represents a grave violation of that God-given dignity.

Signatories acknowledge historical expressions of antisemitism within Christianity and call for repentance, education, and moral clarity in the present. They affirm that the Jewish people remain God's chosen people and that the covenants God made with them remain intact. The declaration commits Christian leaders and congregations to peaceful action in defense of Jewish Americans and Jewish institutions, including synagogues, schools, community centers, and places of worship. It also calls on Christians to oppose, through clear moral witness, anyone who promotes violence, intimidation, or dehumanization of Jews.

The initiative was launched during Hanukkah, a Jewish festival commemorating the defense of religious freedom against persecution. The timing underscored the declaration's message that religious hatred must be confronted and that freedom of worship must be protected. “The silence of good people has too often allowed antisemitism to grow unchecked,” Michael said. “This declaration is a clear statement that hatred of the Jewish people will find no home among the followers of Jesus.”

The full text of the Christian Declaration Against Antisemitism and information on how to sign are available at www.icejusa.org/christian-declaration-against-antisemitism.



ICEJ HELPS 81-YEAR-OLD OCTOBER 7 SURVIVOR RECOVER, REBUILD

By Nativia Buehler, ICEJ AID Administrator

Jaqueline Glicksman, 81, returned to the ruins of her *kibbutz* home in Ein HaShlosha months after Hamas terrorists stormed her community on October 7, 2023. Her house was reduced to ashes and countless memories lost—but she remains determined to return. The ICEJ stepped in to help Jaqueline with a golf-cart-style caddy to support mobility and independence.

On that day, Ein HaShlosha, near the Gaza border, faced an unprecedented assault. About 75 terrorists infiltrated the kibbutz fields before being spotted by a helicopter, which neutralized part of the threat. Still, 4 residents were killed and 16 homes burned. Houses were left riddled with bullet holes, damaged by rockets, and looted, leaving the community in shock.

As families transitioned from hotels to temporary housing, the ICEJ continued to support those displaced. In 2025, the AID team delivered 130 gift packages to evacuated families from Ein HaShlosha—part of more than 1,500 packages sent to impacted kibbutzim such as Nir Oz, Re'im, Be'eri, Kfar Aza, and Nachal Oz. “The aim is to let every community feel the presence and support of Christians around the world,” said Nicole Yoder,

Vice President of AID and Aliyah. “We want them to know they are not facing this alone.”

Jaqueline’s experience on October 7 was harrowing. Alone at home, she first entered her safe room when the sirens sounded, but when she stepped out to make coffee, she heard shouts of “Allahu Akbar” and gunfire. “They weren’t giving out sweets,” she said sarcastically. Moments later, an armed terrorist entered her home, took her phone and tablet, looked her in the eye, and motioned for silence. When he left, she realized the danger and, gathering her strength, climbed through a window and leapt out in her slippers and pajamas.

She ran almost a mile across the kibbutz, passing burned homes, bodies, and a destroyed security vehicle with the chief lying beside it. She knocked on several doors until neighbors Marcelo and Collie Cohen sheltered her.

Months later, standing before the remains of her home, she said, “It hurts that they burned down my house, my life. Nothing is left.” She added, “I never know if it will happen again, and it is frightening.” Yet her resolve is unshaken: “This is my home. I

have no other.” Her son Yossi shared, “The spirit of God covered my mum and protected her. I have no other explanation for how she is alive today.” He added, “She’s been through hell, and I pray that the rest of her life she lives in fullness and in healing.”

Jaqueline’s story reflects both the impact of October 7 and the ongoing need for recovery. Through the generosity of Christians worldwide, the ICEJ is helping survivors rebuild, heal from trauma, and regain independence. Today, Jaqueline not only survives to tell her story but uses an ICEJ caddy to move freely through her restored community.

Help Israelis like Jaqueline recover and rebuild. Scan the QR code or give today at: give.icejusa.org/donate/israel-in-crisis-fund



ICEJ's Assistant to the VP for AID & Aliyah, Jannie Tolhoek, with Jaqueline Glicksman



THE BNEI MENASHE JEWS FROM INDIA RETURN TO ZION

By Howard Flower, ICEJ Aliyah Director

On November 23, 2025, the Israeli government made a decision that will forever change the lives of more than 5,000 people living in the remote hills of northeastern India. In a historic vote, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's cabinet approved a five-year plan to complete the Aliyah of the Bnei Menashe community—the Jews from India, descendants of the ancient Israelite tribe of Manasseh who have kept their Jewish identity alive for 2,700 years of exile.

For the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ), which

has sponsored Aliyah flights for more than one third of all Bnei Menashe immigrants since 2012, this announcement represents the fulfillment of decades of prayer, advocacy, and practical support. It is also a powerful reminder that God's promises to "bring your descendants from the east" (Isaiah 43:5) continue to unfold in our generation.

A COMMUNITY'S LONG JOURNEY

The story of the Jews from India reads like a biblical epic. Their

oral traditions trace their ancestors back to the Assyrian exile of 722 BCE, when the northern tribes of Israel were scattered across the ancient Near East. Over centuries, they migrated eastward along the Silk Road, eventually settling in what is now the Indian states of Manipur and Mizoram.

Despite isolation and wanderings, they preserved remarkable Jewish traditions: a day of rest similar to Shabbat, abstention from pork, ritual sacrifice, and an annual festival involving the abstention from leavened bread. Most

poignantly, they kept alive the “Sikpui Hla,” an ancient song describing a crossing of the sea, pursuing enemies, and a pillar of fire—details strikingly parallel to the Exodus narrative.

In 2005, Israel’s Chief Rabbinate officially recognized the Bnei Menashe as descendants of Israel. Since then, more than 4,500 have made Aliyah, with another 5,800 waiting in India. Until now.

PARTNERSHIP THROUGH CRISIS

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the ICEJ sponsored flights for 212 out of 274 Bnei Menashe brought to Israel—often under challenging circumstances. When immigrants were stranded in New Delhi after testing positive, ICEJ donors provided housing, food, and medical care for families who had already sold their homes and businesses. This demonstrated the Christian community’s commitment to stand with the Jewish people in their return.

THE HISTORIC GOVERNMENT DECISION

The November 2025 cabinet decision marks a turning point. Approximately 1,200 Bnei Menashe will immigrate by the

end of 2026, with the remaining 4,600 arriving by 2030. The entire operation will be managed by the government of Israel and the Jewish Agency for Israel, with an initial budget of 90 million shekels.

Already in early December, about 800 Bnei Menashe Jewish people passed initial rabbinical interviews held in Mizoram, India, representing more than 1,200 people as children were not required to attend. Flights are expected to begin in February.

“[This is] an important and Zionist decision that will also lead to the strengthening of the north and the Galilee,” declared Prime Minister Netanyahu. The new immigrants will settle primarily in Nof HaGalil and other northern cities.

WHY IT MATTERS

The Bnei Menashe have proven themselves worthy citizens of Israel. Many serve in the IDF with distinction; several have received the President’s Medal of Excellence for military service. They bring strong family values, a solid work ethic, and deep loyalty to the Jewish State.

Since 2023, the Bnei Menashe remaining in Manipur have

been caught in severe ethnic violence between the Meitei and Kuki populations. Approximately 1,000 community members were displaced, with homes and synagogues destroyed. Many now live in refugee camps, facing what community leaders call “a blank future.” The government’s decision transforms their despair into hope.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Since its founding in 1980, the ICEJ has assisted more than 193,000 Jews from more than 35 countries in making Aliyah. The estimated cost for preparation, flights, and initial absorption is \$2,180 per person—creating a unique opportunity for Christians worldwide to participate in this prophetic ingathering. Donations in any amount will be very welcome and helpful.

As this five-year project begins, we invite you to stand with us in bringing these last “descendants from the east” home to Israel. Your support will help sponsor flights, provide absorption assistance, and help families reunite after years of separation.

The Bnei Menashe have waited long enough. The time to bring them home is now.



Scan the QR code
or give today at:
[give.icejusa.org/donate/
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WHY IS ISRAEL SO CONTROVERSIAL?

By Dr. Susan Michael, ICEJ USA President

There are two competing views of Israel. The first is that the Jewish State is a miracle and cause for celebration. The second is that Israel is a calamity and should be exposed and opposed. How can there be two opposite opinions—and what makes Israel so controversial?

Let's look at several underlying causes.

MEDIA REPRESENTATION AND MISINFORMATION

As a young student in Israel during the 1980s, I was struck by the stark contrast between what I experienced firsthand while living there and how the media portrayed the country. The disconnect was undeniable—even then, Israel was the target of misleading and distorted reporting, with “fake news” shaping narratives long before President Donald Trump popularized the term.

That pattern exploded after the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack, when misreporting and misinformation related to Israel surged at unprecedented levels. Staged photographs of children clamoring for food, old images from Syria and Iraq showing emaciated children and devastated neighborhoods identified as “Gaza,” and false narratives that denied or distorted key events circulated across social media. Mainstream media repeated claims against Israel of genocide as fact.

As a result, almost instantly, international perception of Israel and the Jewish people turned negative—even though Hamas attacked innocent Israelis, not the other way around. This was reflected

in a spring 2025 Pew Research survey, which found that US adults’ unfavorable opinions of Israel rose from 42 percent in March 2022 to 53 percent by April 2025.

LIES FROM ARAB LEADERS

I also learned while in Israel not to believe what Arab leaders say to the Western world in English, but what they say to their own people—especially in Arabic—because it differs significantly. One of the most well-known examples of this is Yasser Arafat, head of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), who, in 1993, met with the prime minister of Israel at the White House, shook hands, and started what the West thought were steps toward peace with Israel.

However, soon after, while he spoke in a mosque in Johannesburg, South Africa, a leaked recording of Arafat’s remarks to the Muslim faithful revealed his true intent:

The jihad [Islamic holy war] will continue, and Jerusalem is not [only] for the Palestinian people, it is for all the Muslim nation. You are responsible for Palestine and for Jerusalem before me. . . . This agreement, I am not considering it more than the agreement which had been signed between our prophet Mohammed and Quraysh.

The agreement he referred to is well known within Islam. Mohammed had been unable to conquer Mecca, so he

made a 10-year agreement with the ruling Quraysh tribe that allowed him to enter Mecca to pray. After just two years, he had built up his military forces enough to abrogate the agreement, slaughter the tribe of Quraysh, and conquer Mecca. Arafat never intended to live in peace with Israel and instead used the peace process for personal gain. Western leaders refused to believe he meant this and awarded him a Nobel Peace Prize. He later turned down all offers for peace and started the bloody Second Intifada.

Today, that pattern continues. Hamas agreed to the Trump ceasefire, which consisted of two phases. The first phase required the return of all hostages and a retreat of Israel to an agreed-upon area of Gaza. The second phase included the disarmament of Hamas. But once most of the hostages had been returned, Hamas announced that they never agreed to phase two. This reveals a deep disconnect between the language Palestinian leaders use when speaking to Western audiences about peace and how they address their own population. It also demonstrates the use of a ceasefire as a temporary measure to regain strength and carry on the armed struggle.

COMPETING HISTORICAL CLAIMS

The Land of Israel was bequeathed to the Jewish people by God through a covenant (Genesis 12) and has thus been central to their identity since biblical times. Jewish history in the region includes the ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judah, centuries of worship

centered in Jerusalem, and a continuous Jewish presence in the land, even during extended periods of exile and foreign rule. Modern Israel is, therefore, seen as both the fulfillment of a divine promise and the restoration of a people to the land where their story began.

Palestinians, however, emphasize their own longstanding connection to the land, with families who lived there for generations under Ottoman and British control. They ignore the Jewish people's historical ties to the land going back some 4,000 years and claim Arabs are the indigenous population displaced during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War—an event they call the Nakba ("catastrophe"), when hundreds of thousands of Arabs fled or were expelled.

Because both peoples root their claims in history, identity, and in the Jewish case, divine covenant, any compromise feels like a threat to their legitimacy and survival. This clash of deeply held beliefs fuels ongoing controversy. It makes resolution extraordinarily difficult, even though recent history proves that if the Palestinians were to decide to live in peace with Israel, they would be greatly blessed, like the Arabs who did not flee in 1948 and are now full Israeli citizens enjoying more freedoms and opportunities than in any Arab country. That is a reality they do not want to admit.

RESURGENCE OF ANTISEMITISM

These distorted narratives not only shape opinions about Israel but are also feeding a growing resurgence of antisemitism around the world since October 7, 2023. According to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), antisemitic incidents in the United States surged in the months immediately following the 2023 Hamas attack on Israel. In one report, the ADL documented 3,283 antisemitic incidents between October 7, 2023, and January 7, 2024—a 360 percent increase over the same period the previous year.

By 2024, the ADL had documented 9,354 antisemitic incidents—the highest annual total since it began tracking incidents in 1979. Of those 2024 cases in the United States, 58 percent were linked to opposition to Israel, whether rhetoric, protests, or anti-Zionist conduct. More recently, a 2025 global survey by the ADL revealed 46 percent of adults surveyed across 103 countries/territories hold antisemitic attitudes. Sadly, research shows most people who hold such antisemitic views have never even met a Jewish person.

Antisemitism has been likened to a virus that never seems to die out but mutates and emerges with a different face for new generations. The most common form of antisemitism today is a political one that is against the Jewish collective, the Jewish State of Israel. The demonization of Israel, however, is emboldening other forms of antisemitism, and the result is an avalanche of lies, false accusations, and Jew hatred.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

But the true root of the issue is that Israel is fighting a spiritual war—something not easily understood. Three verses in the Bible offer a clear biblical explanation for it. The first is Genesis 3:15, where the Lord says there will be enmity between the serpent and the woman until her seed crushes the head of the serpent. In the end, the Messiah will defeat evil, but first, spiritual forces will direct this enmity and hatred toward the woman.

The second is Psalm 83:1-4, which says God's enemies are conspiring to destroy His people, Israel, so that even their name will never be uttered again. This spiritual enmity against God and His people is reflected in military confrontations and government actions.

A third reference to this spiritual war is in Revelation 12, where John describes Israel as a pregnant woman crowned by the sun, the moon, and 12 stars, which

represent the 12 tribes of Israel. An evil dragon sits at her feet, waiting to devour the male child, and when he fails, it comes after the woman. The age-old animosity of the serpent in Genesis is now depicted as an enraged dragon.

NOT JUST AGAINST ISRAEL ...

Revelation 12 goes on to say that when the dragon is unable to destroy the woman—the people of Israel—he goes after her "other offspring, those with the testimony of Jesus" (v. 17). The church was born out of the Jewish faith and people. We, too, suffer in this spiritual fight. The evil pursuit is against the woman (Israel), her male child (the Messiah), and the woman's other offspring (the church of Jesus Christ).

This helps explain the shocking hatred for Christianity in our days, particularly Bible-based, Evangelical Christianity. We, too, are progressively being openly maligned, hated, and falsely accused.

We are in this together with our Jewish brethren and must stand in solidarity with one another. Whereas the Jewish community may be small, Evangelical Christianity claims over 800 million worldwide. Many Christians pray for the peace of Jerusalem and seek to bless the Jewish people. However, more need to be educated and mobilized to speak out in opposition to such hatred and bring an end to the controversy of Israel.

Lies and conspiracy theories have marred the Jewish people's reputation since the beginning. It's a global problem today with no easy solution. The Jewish people cannot turn this situation around on their own and need Christians to vigorously counter this animosity prayerfully, vocally, and publicly.

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