

ReflectionNZ

Christians for Israel New Zealand

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Meet

Our NZ Team

Introducing: Robert Siakimotu



Robert (Niuean) is married to Laisa (Fijian), and have three children, Deane, Ritchie and Joanna. Their eldest daughter Jaimie, passed away in 1988 from leukaemia at 7 years old.

Robert has worked in Christian ministries for 40 years; 38 of these years with OAC Ministries NZ/International. His roles include teaching seminars, training, preaching, running children's outreaches, speaking at camps and conferences, and ministering in Fiji, Tonga, Samoa, Niue, Cook Islands and Vanuatu. He also works very closely with Mission Africa, Eurasia and Caribbean Projects, and teaches in the School of Evangelism in Africa, Caribbean and South East Asia/Pacific.

Former Christians for Israel NZ director, Graeme Lee invited Robert to develop the Christians for Israel movement in the South Pacific. He works part time with the Christians for Israel NZ board and is helping affiliates in Samoa, Fiji, Tonga, Cook Islands and Niue, to establish Christians for Israel in their countries.

By Bryce Turner, NZ National Executive Director

Pacific Islands Growing in 2018

As I write this editorial, final preparations are underway for a fantastic conference hosted by Christians for Israel Fiji. Guest speaker, Christians for Israel International President Willem Glashouwer, flies into Auckland Friday 2 March, then we fly onto Fiji. After the Fiji conference, we'll travel to the Cook Islands for the official launch of Christians for Israel Cook Islands. Following on from work Robert Siakimotu has been doing in the islands, and after our South Pacific Training Forum last year, we are excited to see Christians for Israel growing in the Pacific. It is especially encouraging to see the deep love our Pacific brothers and sisters have for Israel.

Israel has already resumed its position as the number one topic of the world's media. It was astonishing how quickly the headlines manipulated an invasion of Israeli airspace by a drone, into a spontaneous, unprovoked attack by Israel. Although we have come to expect this by now, it still amazes me how far people will go to twist the facts to suit their own story.

While 'dronagate' was taking place, I was privileged to be in The Netherlands attending a conference with Christians for Israel. Aside from being a long way to travel, and of course being freezing cold, it was a time of great encouragement, joining the wider Christians for Israel community from around the world. Although the schedule was gruelling, we were able to visit the home of Corrie Ten Boom. It was here that my little trip became complicated.

I have long struggled with the tragedy of the holocaust. I understand the horrific details of what took place, the historical accounts, even the theology, but what I struggle with the most is to understand how this all started in a supposedly 'Christian' country – only a few hundred years after Luther's Reformation. As I sat in the Ten Boom house, I found myself torn, even broken. My eyes seemed to be leaking as I looked at the photos and exhibits, and pictured Nazi tanks and soldiers standing outside. These images, and then the realisation that only a few km from our hotel was the site of a huge concentration camp, really cut deep. I remain totally confused as to how human beings can be so cruel, so totally evil, as to commit such unspeakable horrors. Then, just when things were looking really bleak, I looked at that tiny, secret room; that cramped compartment, only accessible through a small hatch in the bottom of a wardrobe, in which hundreds of terrified Jews and members of the Dutch underground hid and were saved. To see the place where the Ten Boom family risked so much, standing up against the evils of the Nazi anti-semitism, is totally inspiring. Their bravery – which ultimately cost most of Corrie's family their lives – is a blatant challenge to all of us, to do the right thing. I left with more questions, but in particular, wondering how I might have acted in the same situation. Would I have the courage to stand up for what is right, even if it cost my life? Am I even prepared to stand up to my friends and colleagues when they are 'misinformed' about Israel?

What's Happening in the Office?

By Cathy Eksteen, Office Manager

Why Israel? Books Have Arrived

A warm welcome from the office for our first **ReflectionNZ** newsletter of the year. Time has certainly flown as Christmas came and went, and Easter is just around the corner, as well as the end of our financial year. We now have bulk stock of our Why Israel? book series, so please keep sending in your orders. We also have some stock left of the limited-edition **Jerusalem Magazine**, which we're selling at \$12.50 each (half price). We look forward to a busy and blessed year ahead.

Jewish Kitchen

Hamantaschen



A hamantash is a filled-pocket cookie or pastry recognisable for its triangular shape, associated with the Jewish holiday of Purim and Haman, the villain in the Purim story. The shape is achieved by folding in the sides of a circular piece of dough, with a filling placed in the center. Hamantaschen are made with many different fillings, including poppy seed (oldest and most traditional variety), prunes, nut, date, apricot, raspberry, raisins, apple, fruit preserves, cherry, fig, chocolate, dulce de leche, halva, or even caramel or cheese. Their formation varies from hard pastry to soft doughy casings. The following recipe is for easy hamantaschen using vanilla, orange juice and fruit preserves.

Ingredients:

3 egg
1 cup granulated sugar
3/4 cup vegetable oil
2 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
1/2 cup orange juice
5 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1 tbsp baking powder
1 cup fruit preserves, any flavor

Directions

Preheat oven to 175°C). Grease cookie sheets. In a large bowl, beat the eggs and sugar until lightly and fluffy. Stir in the oil, vanilla and orange juice. Combine the flour and baking powder, stir into the batter to form a stiff dough. If dough is not stiff enough to roll out, stir in more flour. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough out to 1/2 cm in thickness. Cut into circles using a cookie cutter or the rim of a drinking glass. Place cookies 5 cm apart onto the prepared cookie sheets. Spoon about 2 teaspoons of preserves into the center of each one. Pinch the edges to form three corners.

Bake for 12 to 15 minutes in the preheated oven, or until lightly browned. Allow cookies to cool for 1 minute on the cookie sheet before removing to wire racks to cool completely.

Current Affairs

NZ Headlines Mislead on Iranian Provocation

Courtesy of Israel Institute of New Zealand



On Saturday 10 February, New Zealand time, an Iranian drone (modelled on an American stealth UAV) entered Israeli airspace. An Israeli Air Force attack helicopter was dispatched to shoot down the infiltrating aircraft that came from Syrian territory. Israel then launched counter-attacks on Iranian targets in Syria, during which an IAF aircraft was hit. The pilots managed to get back into Israeli territory and eject from the aircraft but were injured. A larger counter-offensive was launched by Israel, in which additional Iranian and Syrian military sites were targeted.

This sequence of events clearly indicates that breach of Israeli airspace by an Iranian drone, which may have been carrying weapons, was the aggravating event. However, several New Zealand mainstream media outlets published headlines that distorted the true sequence of events, unfairly casting Israel as the aggressor.

Radio NZ's headline focussed entirely on the Israeli response and sensationalised it: *'Israeli air strikes against Syria 'biggest since 1982'*. The article mentioned the Iranian drone in paragraph three of the article.

The NZ Herald published three stories from Associated Press with headlines highlighting Israel's response *'Large scale Israeli raids hit Iranian targets in Syria'*, *'Israeli PM: Air strikes dealt 'severe blows' to Iran, Syria'*, and *'Israel strikes Syria, downs Iranian drone, as F-16 crashes'*. The latter story didn't even mention that the Iranian drone entered Israeli airspace.

The Otago Daily Times also didn't mention that the drone flew into Israel but was more neutral in their headline: *'Israeli-Iranian tensions rise after planes shot down.'*

Newshub also printed a headline that only mentioned Israel's response *'Israel attacks 12 bases in Syria'* and an accompanying video failed to draw in Israel's border.

Stuff.co.nz focussed on Israel's response but did mention the F-16 that was hit, although without any other context *'Israel carries out 'large-scale attack' in Syria after jet shot down'*.

Often, people only read the headlines of articles and a majority of people will share stories on social media without reading beyond the headline, compounding the message conveyed by the title. Thus, it is incumbent on media to accurately report events in the headline. Unfortunately, in the case of the Iranian drone infiltration, New Zealand media did not, and neither did some international media.

This seems to be part of an ongoing media fixation of continually portraying Israel as the aggressor, when the facts clearly show otherwise. As a tiny democratic state, not much bigger than Northland of New Zealand, in the midst of a turbulent region of the world, it is a matter of survival for Israel to protect her citizens. In addition, Iran has clearly stated hostile intentions towards the state of Israel.

We hope that New Zealand media will lead the way in more accurate and careful reporting about Israel.

Youth Perspective

By Maurice (Moses) Gilligan

My Life-changing Journey as a Christian in Israel



Kia Ora, my name is Maurice, or better known, as Moses.

In March 2017, I had the privilege of embarking on a life-changing journey to Israel and Jordan, hosted by Christians for Israel NZ and

Rhema Media. Before this tour took place, I had only been a Christian for a very short time; therefore I desired to know more about our faith and deep history in Israel; which led me to explore the Holy Land.

'Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things have passed away; behold, all things become new.' 2 Corinthians 5:17

The tour with Christians for Israel was well organised with a packed schedule covering a multitude of biblical sights, exciting history lessons, boat rides on the Galilee and plenty of great local kai. I travelled with so many beautiful people and made some great friendships. This drew me closer to God, while giving me a deeper understanding of the Bible, the culture and the people. One thing I knew little about though, was the

Syrian's waiting to cross over to Jordan



'Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and truth.' 1 John 3:16

Recently this has led me to venture back to Jordan where I resided for a month among the refugee communities building relationships, assisted in establishing a local community centre while understanding the needs and resources,



Syrian family seeking a new home

number of refugees and need for love amongst the lost and the broken; countries and people who have lost everything through violence and war. It was heart breaking, I was simply oblivious to this crisis before knowing God and seeing it first-hand. After returning to New Zealand, I began to deeply study the Bible. It was then, that I birthed a deep love for our Jewish brothers and sisters and a desire to see refugees given love and hope.

helping to house families and bring a message of hope and encouragement. I have since returned home and have settled back into the routine of kiwi living, but my heart is with the refugees in the Middle East.

I feel from these previous experiences that my place in this world, is in ministry, helping in the Middle East with refugees, community centres and churches; I am praying and seeking to head back to Israel and Jordan, and continue to lay the foundations for reconciliation and peace, working with both the struggling youth and families. This will take a big step of faith and obviously a lot of prayer and support. I am also certainly open to discipleship and training!

If you are interested in knowing more or you also feel called in these areas, I'd love to hear from you! You can contact me via email at Moses.Gilligan@gmail.com.

Thank you to Bryce and the team at Christians for Israel for the opportunity to share my experiences and vision for the Middle East. Grace and peace to you all.

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29 April 2018

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Jewish Festivals

Courtesy of Christians United for Israel UK

Seven Things You Should Know About Purim

At sunset on Wednesday 28 February, Jews all around the world began the festival of Purim until sunset on Thursday 1 March. But what is Purim and what should Christians know about this important Jewish festival?

1. Purim is based on Esther in the Bible

Purim is defined in the book of Esther, where we read the extraordinary miracle story of God's protection of the Jewish people from the genocide sought by hateful Haman.

Haman was a top official in the ancient Persian empire under King Xerxes I – also called Ahasuerus in the Hebrew language – who ruled Persia and much of the Middle East from 486-465 BC.

2. Purim literally means 'lots'

Purim means 'lots' in ancient Persian. The holiday was therefore named since Haman had thrown lots to determine when he would carry out his diabolical scheme.

3. Purim is a day of celebration

Purim is one of the most fun-filled holidays in the Jewish calendar. It is customary to hold carnival-like celebrations on Purim with children (*and adults, if they desire*) to dress up in costumes. On the day itself a festive meal is shared. Gifts are given to friends and the poor. The origin of these customs is the

biblical passage instructing Jews to observe the days as days of feasting and joy and giving presents of food to one another and gifts to the poor. *Esther 9:22, "As the days on which the Jews had rest from their enemies, as the month which was turned from sorrow to joy for them, and from mourning to a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and joy, of sending presents to one another and gifts to the poor."*

4. Jewish people fast the day before Purim

The day before Purim is a fast day, commemorating Esther's decree that the Jews fast before she appealed to King Xerxes to spare them. The Book of Esther is read on the eve of Purim and then again the following day. Before reading the passage, three blessings are read aloud. In keeping with the lighthearted atmosphere of the day, listeners boo, hiss, stamp feet, and rattle noisemakers whenever the name of Haman, is mentioned in the service.

5. Food is an important part of celebration

A traditional Purim food is hamantaschen, three-cornered pastries bursting with poppy seeds or another sweet filling. It is also tradition to send gifts of two kinds of food to at least one person.

6. Purim reminds us of God's deliverance of the Jewish people

Haman hated the Jews simply for being Jewish. But the account of Esther reminds Jews and Christians that God has His hand upon the Jewish people. Esther's bravery and willingness to stand up for her people reminds us that we must not be silent in the presence of evil, but must confront and eliminate it. Furthermore we are reminded that while oppressors come and go, God's promise and covenant with his people, Israel, is everlasting. The Jews of the Persian Empire, after all, were saved, reminding us that God never deserts His people.

7. Purim provides an important lesson

The ancient problem of anti-Semitism exists in our world today. The Jewish people are hated by some groups simply for being Jews. Furthermore, the Jewish nation is surrounded by enemies that seek its destruction. However, God watches over Israel. And whether Christian or Jewish, we can follow Esther's example by not remaining silent when confronted by evil and standing for Israel *'for such a time as this'*.



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