



News From New Zealand

By Bryce Turner, New Zealand National Executive Director



Right now is a very significant time to be joining the work of Christians for Israel.

On almost a daily basis we hear news from around the world that focuses on Israel, groups all over the planet have ever-stronger opinions about the state of Israel, and world leaders seem even more preoccupied with trying to dictate to Israel how it should live.

Last month we celebrated 50 years of a reunified Jerusalem as Israel's capital. In October we will join our Australian cousins in honouring the bravery of our Anzacs in liberating Beersheba one hundred years ago, and we are also looking ahead to events next year celebrating the 70th anniversary of Israel's independence.

Having just returned from a wonderful study tour of Israel with a group of over 50 people, it was evident there is no shortage of enthusiasm. What has struck me deeply however in my first few weeks in this role is just how much is happening. The recent Bless Israel events throughout New Zealand highlighted how many people are aware of the significance of Israel, and share not just a passion for God's people but also for the work God is doing. To travel to the Holy Land one cannot help but see God at work. Similarly, though, one cannot help but see the inevitable opposition increasing too.

It is exciting, inspiring, but at the same time terrifying to realise that these things are coming to pass just as God promised they would. He has not abandoned His people, and as Jews continue to return to Israel from all over the world, we must be even more active in our support. As Christians, we celebrate that our salvation comes from these very same roots. These events on the furthest side of the world must surely motivate us back here in New Zealand, to keep on with the great commission Jesus gave us before time runs out.

Travelling to Israel provided many opportunities to develop key relationships further, as well as visiting some of the projects that our wonderful New Zealand supporters contribute to. We were able to visit several projects and toured the Knesset graciously hosted by Keren

Hayesod and the Knesset Christian Allies Caucus. At lunch, we were joined by Rabbi Yahuda Glick, a current member of the Knesset who is an outspoken activist for allowing access to the Temple Mount to people of all religions. Rabbi Glick is famous for having miraculously survived a point-blank assassination attempt in 2014. As we look to continuing to build relationships with Israel, the warmth and generosity of these people even under the most trying of circumstances was nothing short of inspiring.

It was a great privilege also to spend time with Sondra Oster-Baras of Christian Friends of Israeli Communities (CFOIC). Christians for Israel has been a long-time supporter of CFOIC, and it was a very special time to be able to spend with Sondra, visiting some of the incredible work she and her team are doing amongst the communities of Judaea and Samaria. Sondra graciously gave us the benefit of her extensive knowledge of the area, personally guiding us. Seeing the work that is going on, the contagious smiles of special-needs children now lovingly cared for in a purpose-built centre, through to the appreciative nods of community volunteers who now have essential emergency-response equipment – including bullet-proof vests - gave me great pride to know that New Zealanders have played a part in making this happen.

Here on the home front, we will continue to inform and inspire the people of New Zealand and comfort the Jewish people and the Nation of Israel. We are working to develop our resources, systems and materials further, and strengthen our relationships with Christians and churches across New Zealand. In this edition, we feature an update on the great work our Christians for Israel colleagues are doing throughout the Pacific Islands.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Christians for Israel New Zealand, I look forward to getting to know more of you as we continue to grow.

Bryce Turner has joined Christians for Israel New Zealand as National Executive Director. Married to the lovely Eleanor and father to three boys (aged 12, 14 and 16), he comes from a background in both Pastoral work and also Electrical Engineering. Bryce, Eleanor and the boys recently returned from a very successful study tour of Israel. Read one of his many highlights of their trip, next.



Left to right: Shmulik Fried, Director of the Friends of Israel Division at Keren Hayesod United Israel Appeal; Eleanor, Joshua, Samuel, Reuben and Bryce Turner, Christians for Israel New Zealand Executive Director; Rabbi Yahuda Glick, sitting member of the Knesset; Graham and Sandy Simpson (Christians for Israel New Zealand Board Chairman; Josh Reinstein, Director of Knesset Christian Allies Caucus.

Baptism in Holy Land

Edited from blog by Bryce Turner, Tour Leader in Israel

16 March 2017 - Yardenit, the baptismal site on the Jordan River.

Today was a spectacular day. We drove and then hiked up Mt Arbel, the site of several ancient Jewish settlements, and also many bloody battles and execution sites. The sheer cliffs on one side being an efficient method of slaughter. From the top of the mountain, we can see the whole of Galilee, from Golan right down past Tiberius, to where the Jordan river meanders down to the dead sea. It is thought that Jesus would most likely have visited this view after his resurrection when he told the disciples to meet him up in the Galilee.

Our next stop was Kursi, the site where Jesus dealt with the man with demons, sending them instead into some nearby pigs (who promptly jumped off a cliff). It is amazing to see the actual locations of so many of the stories we all read in the Bible.

Our afternoon was spent at Yardenit, on the Jordan River. The same river Jesus was baptised in by John the Baptist.

My wife Elle and I had talked for some time now about being baptised (again) in the Jordan River. We asked if there were others on our tour who would like to

embrace the experience. By the time we had shared this opportunity with the group (53 people), over 20 decided to get baptised. Most were celebrating the opportunity to enjoy the special location by being baptised again. There were a number, however, who chose to be baptised for the first time, including my sons, Joshua and Reuben.

So, in one of the truly great privileges I have enjoyed in my life, I spent quite some time in the waters of the Jordan River, the same river where Jesus himself was baptised, baptising people from our group. It is always a great honour to be asked to assist with the ceremony of baptism. For my friend Robert Siakimotu and myself the special location made the experience even more memorable. To then baptise two of my own sons, well, that was the highlight of the tour.

Once again the weather has been perfect, the rain falling within a minute or two of us getting out of the water. Even though the Jordan was cold, everyone was warm after such a special day. The thing is, there's so much here that is special that it shouldn't come as a surprise. It is, after all, the Promised Land.



What's happening in the Pacific Islands

By Robert Siakimotu,
Christians for Israel
Development Officer - Pacific

*Hello, Bula vinaka, Mālō e lelei,
Halo, Kia orana, Fakaalofa atu, Talofa.*

I am very much aware that a large number of Pacific Island people would like to visit Israel, with many of them having visited Israel in the past 10-15 years. I am sure that in the future, a lot more Pacific Island people will visit Israel. I know of at least two groups in the Cook Islands and one in Fiji who are planning a visit to Israel later this year or sometime in 2018.

I had the privilege to travel to Israel this year, compliments of Christians for Israel, for which I am grateful. The main focus of my visit was to attend the Christians for Israel International Forum in Jerusalem. I then joined up the tour group from NZ hosted by Radio Rhema and Christians for Israel New Zealand. I thoroughly enjoyed being part of both occasions, returning home with very special memories about Israel, especially the City of Jerusalem, and its people.

>> Enriching Experience

The tour was hosted by a very inspirational guide called Abigail. It was a privilege to be asked by her to share spiritual thoughts in some of the places we visited, especially in places where Jesus was. Another bonus for me was visiting some of the places that I talk about when I teach the Walk Through The Bible seminars of the Old and New Testament. I can now add a brief comment when I teach by saying, "I was there", or by showing a photo of a

historic Biblical landmark. It was a real honour to have visited Israel. I will go again, God-willing and only if I have the resources and means.

>> Fiji

Lepani & Salote Makubuna – Affiliates

They continue to meet with a group of Christians mainly in the Suva area for their monthly prayer meeting. They specifically pray for Israel and its people. They are also planning promotional and prayer events in the coming months in other parts of Fiji.

>> Tonga

Barry & Moana Taukolo – Reps

They continue to promote prayer for Israel through the Christian TV that they run in Tonga. They are also working closely with Christians for Israel Pacific Coordinator to establish and register Christians for Israel with the local government.

>> Cook Islands

John Tangi – Rep

In the next few weeks, John will pass on his role as Cook Islands representative to a fellow countryman. John will continue working with him to help him to establish Christians for Israel in the Cook Islands. The new person is a very well respected leader with the Cook Islands people and the churches.

>> Niue Island

Poi Okesene – Rep

Poi continues to promote Christians for Israel using the Israel & Christians



The team at Christians for Israel Vanuatu

Today newspapers that are sent bi-monthly from New Zealand. Further contact with Brother Poi is needed so we can fully establish Christians for Israel in Niue. Other church leaders within Niue are also being sent newspapers.

>> Vanuatu

Martin & Lilian Sokomanu – Reps

They continue to distribute the Israel & Christians Today newspapers that are sent from New Zealand throughout church in Vanuatu. Ian Worby, Regional Director for Christians for Israel Oceania, will visit Vanuatu shortly to help further establish Christians for Israel in Vanuatu.

After writing this article, I received an update from Martin Sokomanu, that I have added here:

"Good morning Robert, attached is a photo (above) of our small Christians for Israel Vanuatu team, where most of us are members of our Evangelist church. After receiving the Israel & Christians

Today newspapers, we said a special prayer for the tabloid to go out to as many people as possible, encouraging them to read news about Christians for Israel, Israel and its people, and news from around the world. We are hoping to take a bundle of newspapers to Calvary's Campsite next week. We will give them to the participants who are preparing for the 2018 Evangelism Mass with Pastor Philip, who has just returned after a throat operation in South Korea."

>> Samoa

Unfortunately, due to non-connecting phone numbers and emails, I have not been able to make contact with our rep in Samoa. I will continue to pursue this more purposely in the coming weeks.

Other Pacific Island countries were identified in the Christians for Israel International Forum in Jerusalem.

Certain people will be approached shortly with a view of establishing Christians for Israel in their country.

NZ Bless Israel

By Jane Troughton



On 8 April people stood in 33 locations around New Zealand, in Blessing to Israel.

It was a simple call – for Christians to gather in love and unity to release the sound of blessing from our end of the earth to Israel. The prayer was answered from the heart and spirit by people of many cultures, churches and places, from one end of the country to the other.

It was an incredible feeling to declare Blessing to Israel knowing that we were

standing in unity from one end of the country to the other. At 7am shofars sounded at sunrise in 67 towns and cities – people climbed mountains, stood on beaches, joined in town centres to pray and declare. At 7pm people gathered in churches, community halls and some in lounges to link by a live stream to the national event that being held in Auckland. Where there is unity, God commands a blessing. Where we humble ourselves to pray and turn from our wicked ways, God will heal our land. Many people felt a tangible sense of shift.

In *Genesis 3:12*, God said to Abraham, 'I will bless those who bless you...' God watches how nations act towards Israel. We sincerely want to see God's chosen people blessed, knowing it is significant for our country also to bless Israel. Whatever has happened in history, however our Governments' act, we know that as the body of Christ we must take responsibility in the Spirit for how our nation aligns itself towards Israel.



Shofars at sunrise in Palmerston North

With Iwi leaders, the Princess of Tonga, members of parliament and other dignitaries present, we humbled ourselves, acknowledging and repenting of judgement and anti-semitism. We paid tribute to the sacrifice of the ANZACs; we prayed for the peace of Jerusalem; for our

Governments and Israel, and we joined together to Praise God. We sang our national anthem and meant every word, 'God of Nations at Thy feet, in the bonds of love we meet, hear our voices we entreat...' And, we meant it as in one voice we declared, 'Bless you, Bless you, Israel.'

Shavuot & Matthew's Gospel

By Dr Brian Hooper

Shavuot: 30 May - 1 June 2017

What is Shavuot? What is its relationship with Matthew's Gospel? Christians know Shavuot by its more familiar name of Pentecost.

For it was on a day of Pentecost that God's Spirit was poured out on Jews and believing Gentiles alike. Why was Matthew's Gospel placed first in the New Testament? Why not Mark, the shortest Gospel? Why not John with its opening verse so similar to *Genesis 1:1* – the first book in the Tenakh? To understand the connection between Shavuot and Matthew, we need first to understand Shavuot.

Shavuot is a Jewish holiday that occurs on the sixth day of the Hebrew month of Sivan (within our time frame of 14th May and 15th June). Shavuot has a double significance. It marks the all-important wheat harvest in the land of Israel (*Exodus 34:22*), and it commemorates the anniversary of the day God gave the Torah (the first five books of the Bible) to the entire nation of Israel assembled at Mount Sinai. This latter point of significance is the link with Matthew.

Shavuot, also called the 'Feast of Weeks' marks the seven weeks, or 49 days, between Passover and Shavuot. It began with the harvesting of the barley during Passover and ended with the harvesting of the wheat at Shavuot. Shavuot was the concluding festival of the grain harvest. It was a season of gladness and celebration. Its connection with the Torah is that 49 days after the Exodus from Egypt, God revealed His revelation to Moses in the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments are the centre-piece of the Torah, which at that time, was God's revelation to His Hebrew people.

Traditionally, Moses is the author of the first five books of the Bible. No doubt he used pre-existing documents to form what has come to be known as "The Five Books of Moses."

Exodus 12:51 tells us that Israel was driven out of Egypt on Passover Night, the Hebrew date of Nissan 14. *Exodus 19:1* says that they ended their trip on the first day of the third month Sivan 1. Thus 49 days from departing Egypt to reaching Mt Sinai. On the 50th day, the very next day after reaching the sacred mountain, on the Day of Pentecost, Moses climbed the mountain to receive the Ten Commandments.

By way of a summary, on the 'seven times seven' days, or 'Feast of Weeks', Shavuot



gives us two reasons to celebrate: The blessing from God of barley and wheat harvest, and the giving of His Torah for the edification of His Hebrew people.

>> Gospel by Matthew

From the Church Fathers (who chose which books and letters would become Scripture) to recent times, the Book of Matthew is considered to be the first Gospel written. Just because Mark is short, this is no reason to think that Mark was written first. However, Matthew has a very special reason why he was chosen by early church leaders to be the first Book in the New Testament. We need to recognise that God had a hand in the selection and order of placement for the books in the Bible. We have to acknowledge that God's Holy Spirit also had a hand in Bible formation. Matthew is the bridge between the first set of Scriptures (Tenakh) and the second set (B'rit Chadashah – New Covenant). Furthermore, Matthew is a 'Mini-Torah'.

>> A Brief Overview

- **Genesis 1:1 - 7:28:** New beginnings, genealogy.
- **Exodus 8:1 - 11:1:** A fresh start - Jesus' ministry.
- **Leviticus 11:2 - 13:52:** Teachings and instructions.
- **Numbers 13:53 - 18:35:** Conduct of those in 'family'.
- **Deuteronomy 19:1 - 28:20:** Farewell Moses; farewell Jesus.

>> In Greater Detail

In the prologue (*1:1-2:23*), Matthew reveals that Jesus is the Messiah, by linking him with promises made to Abraham and David. The genealogy of Jesus mirrors the Genesis listing of the various generations. The birth of Jesus links him with the miraculous creation of the human race by

God in Genesis. The flight of Mary, Joseph and Jesus to Egypt reminds us that Jacob sought sanctuary in Egypt. Exodus tells us that God's people escaped following many miracles, and many miracles attended the Hebrew people's journey to the promised land. Many miracles attended the ministry of Jesus (*8:1-11:1*). The third division (*11:2-13:52*), paralleling Leviticus with all its various laws and teachings, finds a strong echo with many teachings by Jesus including seven parables on the kingdom of heaven. The major discourse in the fourth division (*13:53-18:35*) concerns the conduct of believers. Numbers is all about organisation, regulations and laws. The fifth division (*19:1-28:20*) may be summed up in preparation for 'living in the land of promise'. Deuteronomy so appropriately foreshadows Matthew's last section.

>> Matthew: A Mini-Torah

The purpose of Matthew is evident in the structure of his book, which groups the teachings and deeds into five divisions. The five divisions reveal Matthew's purpose of showing Yeshua as the fulfilment of the Law. Each of the five divisions concludes with an ending such as, "And when Jesus had ended these sayings..." (*7:28*) "Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished..." (*11:1*) "Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished..." (*13:53*) "Now it came to pass when Jesus had finished these sayings," (*19:1*) "Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings...." (*26:1*). The remainder of Matthew (*26:1-28:20*) details events and teachings pertaining to the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, and the Lord's commission. Matthew's arrangement is not chronological but is designed to show that in Yeshua Judaism finds the fulfilment of its hopes. Matthew provides that all-important link not only with the Torah, but with the Tenakh also – the sacred Hebrew Scriptures.

Short News

Ambassador Gerberg Visits Samoa



Ambassador Gerberg recently spent time in Samoa meeting Samoan government officials and reiterating Israel's commitment to the small Pacific Island nation. He is pictured here with the Samoan Minister of Health the Hon. Tuitama Dr Leao Talalelei Tuitama who visited Israel earlier this year.

Minister Gerry Brownlee Moves Quickly to Restore Relations with Israel



New Foreign Affairs Minister Gerry Brownlee has revealed he has moved swiftly to try to restore diplomatic relations with Israel. Soon after receiving his ministerial warrant recently, he wrote to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu holding out an olive branch.

Israel withdrew its ambassador from New Zealand in December and belated travel rights of New Zealand's ambassador to Israel, based in Turkey, after New Zealand co-sponsored a Security Council Resolution condemning its continued settlements in the West Bank.

"I've sent a letter to Mr Netanyahu firstly congratulating them on their national day and also expressing a desire for the Israeli-New Zealand relationship to get back on track. We need to do that by recognising that we have synergies in innovation and agriculture."

He would like relations to be restored by October when commemorations for the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Beersheba in Israel are due to take place.

Christians for Israel NZ Launches FREE Newsletter

Christians for Israel New Zealand have developed a newsletter that will be emailed (or posted) on a bi-monthly basis. The newsletter will feature specific news from our team in New Zealand, including upcoming events and points of interest.

If you would like to receive our **FREE** newsletter, please email Cathy Eksteen on info@c4israel.org.nz or sign up on our website. Please include your name, address, phone and whether you would like to receive the newsletter by email or by post.

Our first newsletter is due out July 2017.



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Jews & Gentiles - A Light to Each Other

By John Dunning, Managing Trustee, Inspirational Media

In *Romans 11:13-14*, we read that Paul wants Jews to become jealous. He says this is so that 'some' of them might find God. In the book of *Acts 17:5*, we read that Jews who were not persuaded by Paul, became jealous, especially after some believed.

Paul says that Gentile Christians owe a great debt to the Jews because in the past the Jews were a light for us. The Scriptures and the Saviour are Jewish.

Jesus called Himself 'the light of the world', and He also called His Jewish disciples 'lights', (*Matthew 5:14*). The first disciples were Jewish who led and developed the early church, just as most of the original believers were. That changed quickly to include the Gentiles. The diligence of the Jewish Apostles intervened to make sure Gentiles were not forced to become Jews (*Acts 15*). It wasn't just Peter's boldness or even Paul's

famous missionary journeys that resulted in Gentile conversions. Thomas founded the church in South India, and that church still exists as the 'Mar Thoma' or Marthoma church and Christians now form 13% of the local population.

All the Apostles, except John, and many disciples, were martyred to enable them to pass on to us the truth about Jesus Christ without compromise. Gentiles

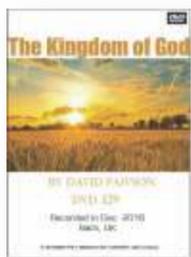
have been blind to the debt we owe the Jews. Many faithfully passed on their knowledge of the Truth at the cost of their own lives.

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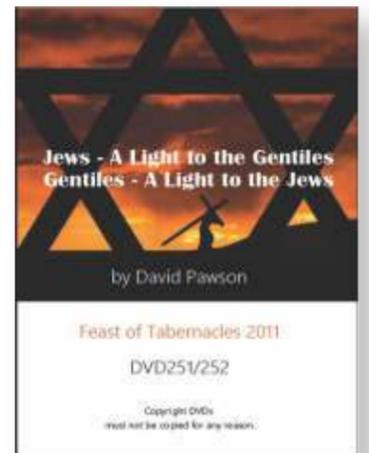
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By Rev. Willem J J Glashouwer



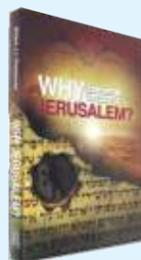
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Projects | For Zion's Sake

For Zion's Sake Ministries, a non-profit humanitarian aid organisation, is supported by Christians for Israel New Zealand. It reaches out to new immigrants (olim) and other Israelis to meet their urgent needs. For Zion's Sake provides humanitarian assistance such as furniture, clothing, food coupons and medicine from their distribution center in Jerusalem. Founding Director, Bradley Antolovich says, "These truly are amazing times to be alive and to witness so many prophetic events unfolding before our very eyes. Imagine, in our generation,

Israel existing as a nation again and with Jerusalem as it's eternal capital! Not since the time of King David has this been so. Surely, the King is coming soon! Your generous giving, prayers, and support make it possible for us to continue to reach out with Yeshua's love to the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel and those suffering around the world!



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