



ReflectionNZ

Christians for Israel New Zealand



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News From the NZ Desk

■ Bryce Turner

New Zealand Executive Director

Kia ora koutou, thank you all for joining us in this edition of ReflectionNZ, the newsletter of Christians for Israel NZ.

It is wonderful to be able to share with you as our country – the whole world – deals with the implications of Covid-19. Whilst on lockdown, people all across New Zealand and beyond have been spending time with immediate family in a way that hasn't really been seen for generations. For some this has undoubtedly been a difficult time and there are going to be some challenges ahead, but for many at least the enforced family time has been a blessing.

Modern communication has made the lockdown tolerable by allowing us to be in instant contact with our loved ones. Similarly, connecting with friends in Israel has never been easier. While Israel too has been hit hard by the virus and the effects of the lockdown, the beautiful Sea of Galilee is at its highest level in two decades. High rainfall over the Israeli winter has seen the country break out in wildflowers in a rare display of lush beauty.

For our Israeli brothers and sisters nervously watching the political scene in Israel, the last-minute power-sharing arrangement signed between Netanyahu and Gantz has at least saved the country from a fourth election. Now that some semblance of a stable government has been established, Israel too can look forward to rebuilding in the aftermath of Covid-19 lockdowns. Following President Trump's peace plan, the Israeli government has signalled its intention to formally (finally) 'annex' parts of Judaea and Samaria. Hearing the cries of indignation echo from all the predictable places around the world, national leaders seem to have forgotten that only weeks ago

we commemorated the centenary of the San Remo agreement – at which the world promised the Jewish people a national home in the mandate of 'Palestine'. Now that this commitment is to be finally realised, isn't it interesting how many are now pushing quite a different – and quite fictional – narrative, condemning any such move by Israel? We pray for courage but also wisdom for Israel's leaders as they handle this situation. Most importantly we pray for calm -for the peace of Jerusalem. It will be fascinating to watch these developments and see how political voices around the world feel the need to force their opinion on Israel yet again.

1 John 3:17-18 (NIV) says "If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? ...let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth." This is one of those passages that smacks me right between the eyes, really challenging me. During the lockdown I was moved to see people taking care of each other in a way that we don't often see these days. Even in isolation there was still the opportunity to contact friends, family and neighbours alike, and simply check on each other. I saw glimpses of great kindness as people who were – are – being blessed by those others who could still do so. I was encouraged to see how so many faithful supporters from all over New Zealand felt to continue giving to our brothers and sisters in Israel and Ukraine.

I know Koen and his team at Christians for Israel Ukraine have been working extremely hard throughout the pandemic, sourcing, packing and delivering even more food parcels to the elderly. During the lockdown there was even a small group of Jews able to make Aliyah. In Tel Aviv our friends at the Israeli Alzheimer's Medical Centre had to

battle with the virus, as the amazing staff team there took care of some of the most vulnerable members of society. Gifts are slowly coming in as we work towards our project target – to bless the Alzheimer's Medical Centre with an ultrasound bladder scanner; A gift from New Zealand. Please contact us if you feel that you would like to contribute to this special project.

In this very unusual period in world history I would like to thank you, our supporters, for your faithful commitment to Israel and to the work of Christians for Israel New Zealand. We thank you for sticking with us as we watch the fulfilment of prophecy in Israel.

From the Office

■ Cathy Eksteen

Subscriptions | Office Manager

Where to even begin... What crazy times we are in. I trust you are all keeping safe and well, and pleased to be in Alert Level 1. If I have to be truly honest I quite enjoyed our cosy little family bubble - not by any means minimising what is going on out there, and fully aware that every human being on planet earth is facing the COVID-19 struggle and effects thereof, whether directly or indirectly. I enjoyed the family time, reflection and joy of the little things all too often taken for granted, not to mention, I got so much done!

I've finalised the annual receipt acknowledgements, and will be sending them out soon. In the meantime, feel free to keep in touch with us, check out our website and please sign up for our information digitally where you can. Take care of yourselves, and God bless you all and give you his peace.

In Ukraine, C4I Steps in to Feed Needy Jews Confined by the Coronavirus



■ Sue Surkes

Courtesy of The Times of Israel |
Abridged by Managing Editor

While poverty-stricken Ukraine scrambles to get a hold on the coronavirus, Christians for Israel has stepped in to supply more than 300,000 meals to elderly Jews confined by the pandemic to their homes.

With its usual activities suspended, Christians for Israel, is using all of its vans, staff and volunteers to deliver food wherever Jews need it, particularly as many soup kitchens have closed because of the virus.

As of 1 May, Ukraine reported 10,406 confirmed coronavirus cases, with 261 deaths, and 1,238 recovered.

On 25 March, the Ukrainian government extended a national emergency for 30 days and deepened lockdown measures. Police set up roadblocks into cities and towns.

The numbers of Jews still living in Ukraine is estimated from 120,000 to 400,000 people. Many are elderly and include approximately 40% of Holocaust survivors. During WWII, between 1.5 to 1.6 million out of 2.7 million Jews living in shtetl villages and market towns across the country perished. That is one in every four of all Holocaust victims in Europe.

Christians for Israel works closely with the Hesed community welfare centres set up by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, with the Chabad movement, and with the leaders of small Jewish communities throughout the country. It is currently either taking meals on wheels or sending money to Jewish institutions to cook and distribute the food themselves in 20 major cities and the areas around.

In Vinnitsa, in west-central Ukraine, Christians for Israel stepped in with meals

on wheels after a Hesed soup kitchen had to close because of the pandemic.

“Requests keep on coming as the news of our service is spreading,” says Koen Carlier, C4I Ukraine. “Food prices have risen up to 40%, and these elderly people have no income and very small pensions.” His wife, Ira, said that they started with 20 people in Vinnitsa. This has grown to 60, and “the calls keep coming in.”

Ira’s brother is a senior doctor at a Vinnitsa hospital. “The country is just not prepared for an outbreak of coronavirus, Italy-style,” Ira said. “He thinks that about 80% of the population will get this virus, including us. Our system of medical care is poor enough without it. The hospitals are only in the big cities, and while there are still trams in the cities, there’s no transport between the cities and the villages. They’re telling villagers who get sick to stay at home and phone, but many villages have no cell phone connection.” In Ukraine, more than 30% of the population is rural. Ira continued, “Where there are hospitals, there’s not enough ventilators, medicines and protective clothing, and the people here have no medical insurance. You have to pay for medical care.”

Lack of trust in official information is a further complicating factor. Traumatized by events such as the Chernobyl nuclear reactor meltdown in 1986, when the then Soviet-appointed rulers kept the population in the dark, people wonder whether the coronavirus figures are correct.

“We don’t know the true numbers,” Ira said. “At the end of March, they announced the first case of coronavirus in our city. But we only recently got tests. People have been dying of pneumonia, but we’ve had

no way of knowing what was causing it.”

Rabbi Pinchas Vishedksi, an Israeli-born Chabad emissary in Ukraine since 1993, served as a rabbi in Ukraine’s Donetsk until August 2014, when he and his congregation fled the Russian takeover. Those who didn’t fly to Israel settled in Kyiv.

Still in touch with roughly 3,000 Jews still in Donetsk city, he said that the pro-Russian authorities keep vital coronavirus-related information away from citizens.

“The tragedy is being hidden,” he said. “It appears that the republics don’t know how to deal with it. It seems to be the only place on earth other than Belorussia, which is also ruled by a dictator, where few precautions are being taken.

“I understand that they closed the schools in Donetsk recently, but life, work and entertainment in the city continues.”

“We need to explain to the Jews there that it’s dangerous to be on the streets. They don’t understand. We might as well be talking Chinese. Koen Carlier told us we must close the soup kitchen there and it was hard to explain to people why they should stop coming. But we closed it and are now cooking meals that are being taken daily to people’s homes.”

Vishedksi, whose Kyiv congregation numbers hundreds from all over the country, said no communal Passover Seders would be held in Donetsk, or in Kyiv. Instead, kits would be distributed.

“The first thing that happened here was that the food stores raised their prices, as did the pharmacies, for sanitizing products,” he said. “There’s no price supervision. People who have been put on unpaid leave have nothing to fall back on. It’s a catastrophe.”

Jewish Kitchen

Rugelach Cookies



The term 'rugelach' is a Yiddish word that literally means 'little twists'. You can find rugelach in almost any Jewish bakery or you can make your own...

Ingredients:

225g cream cheese (room temperature)
 250g butter, softened
 ¼ cup sugar, plus 9T
 ¼ tsp salt
 1 tsp vanilla extract
 2 cups flour
 ¼ cup light brown sugar
 1 ½ tsp cinnamon
 ¾ cup raisins
 1 cup walnuts, roughly chopped
 ½ cup of your favorite jam
 1 egg beaten with 1T of milk (*egg wash*)

Directions:

Preheat oven to 180°C. Cream butter and cream cheese with electric beater. Add ¼ cup sugar, salt and vanilla. Beat well. Gradually add flour with mixer on low, until just mixed. Transfer dough to floured surface and shape into a ball, cut into quarters, plastic wrap and refrigerate for an hour. *Assemble the filling:* Combine 9T white sugar, the brown sugar, ½ tsp cinnamon, raisins and walnuts. Remove dough from fridge, roll each ball on a floured surface into a large circle. Spread with jam, making sure to coat the outside edges (*this will end up being the inside of the cookie*). Sprinkle filling onto the jam, press lightly so filling adheres. Cut each circle into 12 equal wedges. Roll up each wedge, starting from the outer edge. Place on a lightly greased baking sheet with the point tucked under. Chill for 30 minutes. Brush each cookie lightly with egg wash. Combine 3T white sugar and 1 tsp cinnamon, sprinkle on the cookies. Bake 15-20 minutes, until golden brown. Transfer to a greased wire rack (*the bottoms will be sticky*) until cool. Makes 4 dozen.

NZ's Zionist Prime Minister

■ Sheree Trotter

Courtesy of Times of Israel

In 1948 NZ Prime Minister Peter Fraser was criticised for his 'Zionist exuberance' by one of his most senior officials, at a time when the NZ government was vigorously debating recognition of the state of Israel.

Peter Fraser's biographers described him as a man of principle who was an old fashioned human rightist, 'tied on a tight leash to the under dog'.

Fraser was a great friend of the Jewish people and advocated for them on numerous occasions.

In 1943 he spoke emphatically against the 'Nazi Fascist tyranny' calling it 'one of the blackest chapters in the history of the human race'. He was appalled at Nazi treatment of the Jews, which he referred to as the 'savagery of the civilised barbarians of today.'

The horror of the Holocaust, combined with the refugee crises of European Jews undergirded his passionate support for the establishment of a Jewish state...

Read the full article at <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/new-zealands-exuberant-zionist-prime-minister>



Youth Perspective: COVID-19

■ Moses Gilligan

To all reading this article, blessings to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Through this privilege to write here I would like to extend a message of encouragement, peace and hope. The recent virus pandemic has impacted the world in so many ways, going as far as bringing us all to a stand still, with countries in lockdown, borders closed, schools shut and the majority of businesses coming to a halt.

The world sits silent. Waiting for a solution. God is the only solution.

For many across the world there is panic, fear, unrest and confusion. Sadly, this is a taste of things to come as prophesied in the Bible (*Luke 21:11*). For me as a 28-year-old male working full time, this has been a time of intermission from the world, a drawing away, a time to refocus while being still and knowing that God is in control. Over the past few weeks, I have been prompted by the Spirit to return to my foundation and allow God to bring up things in areas of my life that have not been fully yielded to him. Asking the Holy Spirit to reveal areas within our lives is not always a comfortable place to be in, but, through this process, we learn to identify, to repent and overcome many things through His grace and mercy. Building Godly character will draw us deeper into the knowledge of who we are and our identity as children of God.

I feel God is using this time to strengthen the body of Christ, although it may seem we have been separated and unable to attend our local church, be encouraged there is still great work being done. The weight of the world can draw us away from His plans and purposes, leading us to live a life that sometimes becomes very routine and self directed. With this time wisely spent in isolation, I feel the Lord is able to move in the deepest parts of our hearts, leading us to surrender all and trust in Him. In doing so, He is aligning our focus, showing us His will and purposes, refining our discernment, inspiring us by the power of the Holy Spirit to strengthen our gifts, sharpening us with His word, preparing us for things to come by intercessory prayer and fasting, moving us to lift up our unsaved loved ones, who in this time, will more than likely be bound by fear and uncertainty. The world suggests we trust in man more than God, and medicine more than miracles, this is very evident in our culture today. Let us be a people who stand firm on the word of God.

I pray that we come out of this with renewed hearts and minds, full of compassion and love for the lost, the broken and those affected by the virus. That we would carry a joy and confidence in our Lord, a firm foundation showing the world our living hope and unwavering faith. *Isaiah 30:15*

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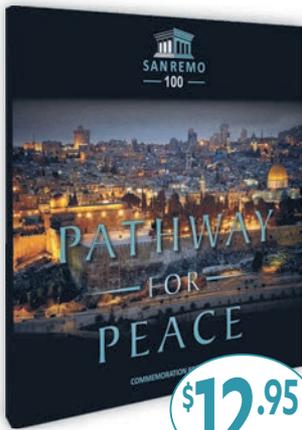
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While Covid-19 appears to have radically changed our world as we know it, this is still very minor in comparison with the world following WW1. Following the end of the Ottoman Empire a huge section of the Middle East hung in limbo. Hundreds of years of Empire and the scars of war left a vacuum of order and structure. Discussions, meetings and then conferences were held as the battle-weary but victorious Allies attempted to work out a plan for the area.

A group representing Allies of WW1 (Britain, France, Italy, Japan) – met in San Remo, Italy, to determine the future of three key areas. The 'San Remo Conference' set about allocating the League of Nations Mandates for 'Palestine', 'Syria' and 'Mesopotamia', passing the 'San Remo Resolution' on 25 April 1920.

In 2020, the centenary of the San Remo Resolution, we are all aware of the unrest in parts of the Middle East. The area that was the subject of San Remo has been an almost constant source of unrest. Why is this? Did the Allies get it wrong? Did anyone even follow the plan?

Throughout 2020, we aim to bring you several publications focussing on the significance of San Remo. 'Pathway for Peace' is a commemorative magazine being produced to mark the centenary of San Remo. This publication features a collection of articles and reflections by a range of writers – historical, legal and religious.

This limited-edition commemorative 44-page booklet celebrates San Remo's centenary. A 'must-have' for everyone who has a heart for Israel. Get your copy today, and maybe gift one to a friend.

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