

Israel threatens to shut down new TV channel for preaching 'gospel of Jesus'

ALISON WEIR MAY 11, 2020 ANTI-CHRISTIAN, DONALD NEFF, GRACE HALSELL, ISRAEL, ISRAEL-PALESTINE, RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM, TALMUD



Promotional image for the new Shelanu TV channel (overlay by If Americans Knew).

Israel has a long history of actions against its Christian minority. Israeli forces have desecrated churches, rabbis have endorsed killing non-Jewish civilians (including children), New Testaments have been burned. While there are many Israelis who have opposed these actions and respect Christians, the fact is that discrimination against Christians is endemic in the Israeli system. Like Muslims, Christians have been persecuted by Israel ever since it was established in 1948...

By Alison Weir

On Wednesday morning one of the headlines on the Fox News homepage was: "Israel threatens to shut down new TV channel for preaching 'gospel of Jesus.'" This was the latest in a long line of anti-Christian actions by Israel.

After awhile the [article](#) was bumped from the Fox headlines for more recent news, and the story largely vanished from view. It didn't appear in the [World news](#) list of articles, although older

news stories were featured there. While the report is still on the Fox site, it is unlikely that many people will see it.

No other mainstream U.S. news organization even mentioned this Israeli action, despite the fact that all report on Israel frequently – and despite the fact that Israel receives a great deal of money from many Christians.

While some other countries also ban Christian evangelizing, Israel is the only one that receives [tens of millions of dollars](#) from evangelical Christians, many of them [not financially well off](#) (although, as we'll see below, this support is starting to change).

As a result of such media omission, few Americans know about the current situation. And even fewer know that such an action by Israel is far from unusual.

Since the U.S. gives Israel over [\\$10 million per day](#) – and this amount [may double](#) this year despite massive U.S. unemployment and the coronavirus devastation to the U.S. economy – it seems important for Americans to learn about the country that our tax money is funding.

In its article Fox [reported](#):

[Israel](#) is reportedly threatening to remove GOD TV channel just one week after its launch, claiming it is proselytizing.

The [Christian](#) network that broadcasts in at least 200 countries, responded in a statement saying, “if we were doing something sneaky, we would not have announced it to the world.”

GOD TV began airing the 24/7 Hebrew-language “Shelanu TV” channel last week on Israel’s HOT cable network as part of a seven-year license from the Israeli Communications Ministry, [The Times of Israel](#) reports.

“Today we made history! For the first time ever, a Messianic television channel is broadcasting the Gospel across Israel in the Hebrew language,” GOD-TV said in a [statement](#) April 29. “Shelanu translates to ‘Ours’ in Hebrew. We want every person in Israel to know, not a foreign

Messiah, but a Jewish one! His name is Yeshua and He has not forgotten His people," it continued.

But on Tuesday, Israeli Communications Minister David Ansalem said in a statement he was not aware that a license was granted to GOD TV, adding he "will not allow any missionary channel to operate in Israel, at no time and under no circumstances."

The decision to allow the channel's contract was an "oversight," said Ansalem, who requested a "thorough investigation of the issue" by the Cable and Satellite Broadcasting Council. "If indeed this channel does missionary work, it be removed immediately," the statement said.

Israel's history of targeting Christian minority

While this is rarely reported, there have been a multitude of actions by the Israeli government, rabbis and others targeting its Christian inhabitants, and discrimination against Christians is endemic in the Israeli system. These actions parallel those against [other minorities](#) whose land has been confiscated by Israel, and lives and institutions damaged or destroyed.

While there is some reporting in the West about Israeli attacks on Muslims and mosques, similar attacks against Christians are largely unknown, particularly in parts of the world where a nonfactual narrative often dominates that attempts to pit Christians against Muslims. For that reason, this article focuses on the history of actions targeting Christians. (For our numerous reports relating to other groups, see our multitude of articles on our [blog](#) and main [website](#).)

The fact is that Israeli forces have desecrated churches, Israeli officials have condoned burning New Testaments, Israeli rabbis have endorsed the killing of non-Jewish civilians, including children, and the Israeli government has steadily confiscated land from Christians for Jewish-only habitation.

Such actions were present from the very beginning of Israel 's establishment in 1948 and continue through today.

Modern day Israel was the **result** of an ideological movement called political Zionism that sought to establish a Jewish-only state on a land called Palestine. This was inhabited by a population that was approximately 80 percent Muslim, 15 percent Christian, and a little under 5 percent Jewish. Before the onset of Zionism, Muslims, Christians, and Jews had been inhabiting Palestine without conflict for centuries.

In 1948, the Zionist movement succeeded in establishing Israel through a war of **ethnic cleansing** in which hundreds of thousands of Muslims and Christians were expelled from their land. Their homes, business, and farmlands were then confiscated by the new state. (By the way, many Jewish theologians and thinkers had **opposed** Zionism as a heretical, destructive **movement**, and even today many **fundamentalist Jews** don't recognize Israel.)

Attacking and desecrating churches

Former *Time* magazine Senior Editor and Jerusalem Bureau Chief Donald Neff wrote five books about Israel. He describes events that US media have largely ignored for decades.

Neff **reports** that in the years leading up to Israel's founding there had been "desecration of Christian property and churches—arson, window breaking, burning of the New Testament."

Neff writes: "A small but fanatical group of Jews wanted no Christians, whom they considered fallen Jews, in Israel. This virulent strain of prejudice had been present since before the Jewish state was founded.

"For instance, after the capture by Jewish forces of Jaffa on May 13, 1948, two days before Israel's birth, there was desecration of Christian churches. Father Deleque, a Catholic priest, reported: Jewish soldiers broke down the doors of my church and robbed many precious and sacred objects. Then they threw the statues of Christ down into a nearby garden."

The Christian father said that Jewish leaders had reassured Christians that religious buildings would be respected, "but their deeds do not correspond to their words."

Neff reports:

“On May 31, 1948, a group of Christian leaders comprising the Christian Union of Palestine publicly complained that Jewish forces had used 10 Christian churches and humanitarian institutions in Jerusalem as military bases and otherwise desecrated them. They added that a total of 14 churches had suffered shell damage, which killed three priests and made casualties of more than 100 women and children.

“The group’s statement said Arab forces had abided by their promise to respect Christian institutions, but that the Jews had forcefully occupied Christian structures and been indiscriminate in shelling churches. It said, among other charges, that ‘many children were killed or wounded’ by Jewish shells on the Convent of Orthodox Copts on May 19, 23 and 24; that eight refugees were killed and about 120 wounded at the Orthodox Armenian Convent at some unstated date; and that Father Pierre Somi, secretary to the Bishop, had been killed and two wounded at the Orthodox Syrian Church of St. Mark on May 16.”

Neff described many such incidents.

Churches were again desecrated during the 1967 war when Israel captured East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, completing the occupation of all of Palestine. On July 21, 1967, the Reverend James L. Kelso, a former moderator of the United Presbyterian Church and long-time resident in Palestine, complained of extensive damage to churches adding: “So significant was this third Jewish war against the Arabs that one of the finest missionaries of the Near East called it ‘perhaps the most serious setback that Christendom has had since the fall of Constantinople in 1453.’”

Kelso continued: “How did Israel respect church property in the fighting...? They shot up the Episcopal Cathedral [in Jerusalem], just as they had done in 1948. They smashed down the Episcopal school for boys...The Israelis

wrecked and looted the YMCA...They wrecked the big Lutheran hospital...
The Lutheran center for cripples also suffered..."

Over the years, individuals and groups desecrated churches numerous times, not only in times of war:

As recently as 1995, an Israeli soldier, Daniel Koren, 22, entered St. Anthony Catholic Church in Jaffa and went on a shooting rampage, firing more than 100 bullets in the altar and the cross above it but causing no injuries. Koren said his Judaic convictions forced him to destroy all physical images of God, and admitted that he had staged a prior attack in Jerusalem's Gethsemane Church.

Perhaps the worst outbreak of organized desecration of Christian institutions came on Sept. 10, 1963, when hundreds of ultra-orthodox Jews simultaneously attacked Christian missions in Jaffa, Haifa and Jerusalem. (One has to say "perhaps" because reporting on this sensitive subject in the U.S. media has been so poor over the decades.) At any rate, the attacks were a concerted effort to intimidate Christians in Israel by a religious vigilante group called Hever Peelei Hamahane Hatorati, the Society of Activists of the Torah Camp. In an attack on the Church of Scotland school in Jaffa, Christian children were beaten and considerable damage was caused to the school by at least 200 rampaging Jews.

Other attacks occurred at two nearby church schools, the Greek Catholic missionary school of St. Joseph and a Christian Brothers school. In Jerusalem, attacks occurred at the St. Joseph convent and the Finnish Lutheran mission school. In Haifa, the American-European Beth El Messianic Mission Children's Hostel and School was attacked.

All denominations were targeted, including Baptists:

On Oct. 8, 1982, the Baptist Church in Jerusalem was burned down. Kerosene had been sprinkled on the church's wooden chapel, constructed in 1933. Although no one was ever charged in the arson, the Baptist Center's bookstore had been vandalized a dozen times in previous years, and Jews were suspected. When the Baptists sought to rebuild the church, Jews demonstrated against the project and the Jewish district planning commission refused to grant a building permit. In 1985, the Israeli Supreme Court advised the Baptists to leave the all-Jewish area.

(Neff describes many more such incidents – see his [full article](#).)

Destroying New Testaments

In 1977, Neff reports, Israel passed a [law](#) making it illegal for missionaries to proselytize Jews. The law made missionaries liable to five years' imprisonment for attempting to persuade people to change their religion, and three years' imprisonment for any Jew who converted.

Simply giving someone a Bible was illegal under the law.

"The next year," Neff states, "Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef, considered a political moderate, issued a religious ruling that copies of the New Testament should be torn out of any edition of a Bible owned by a Jew."

Such actions have continued.

In 2008, for example, the Associated Press carried a [news report](#) about Israelis burning New Testaments. It reported:

Orthodox Jews set fire to hundreds of copies of the New Testament in the latest act of violence against Christian missionaries in the Holy Land.

Or Yehuda Deputy Mayor Uzi Aharon said missionaries recently entered a neighborhood in the predominantly religious town of 34,000 in central Israel, distributing hundreds of New Testaments and missionary material.

After receiving complaints, Aharon said, he got into a loudspeaker car last Thursday and drove through the neighborhood, urging people to turn over the material to Jewish religious students who went door to door to collect it.

The books were dumped into a pile and set afire in a lot near a synagogue, he said.

Inexplicably, the article was only distributed abroad. AP did not disseminate the report to U.S. news media. Israeli media [reportedly](#) published photos of the New Testament burning, and the deputy mayor explained that they were “purging the evil among us.”

In [2012](#) a member of the Israeli parliament tore up a New Testament and threw it in the trash, calling it an “abominable book.”

Among secular Israelis, it is not rare for Israeli TV programs to make fun of [Jesus](#) and [Americans](#). Such stories go on and on.

'It is permitted to kill non-Jews, rape women, burn down churches'

[Recently in Israel](#) radical Israeli rabbis called for the enslavement of non-Jews, and a major rabbi justified the rape of non-Jewish women. While many Israelis condemn such statements, there are also many who agree, some in positions of power.

Israel's top police chaplain defended a book by two Israeli rabbis that claimed Jewish law permits Jews to kill non-Jewish babies. Israel's *Ha'aretz* newspaper [reported](#) on the book's content:

The prohibition 'Thou Shalt Not Murder' applies only "to a Jew who kills a Jew," write Rabbis Yitzhak Shapira and Yosef Elitzur of the West Bank settlement of Yitzhar. Non-Jews are "uncompassionate by nature" and attacks on them "curb their evil inclination," while babies and children of Israel's enemies may be killed since "it is clear that they will grow to harm us."

According to *Ha'aretz*, despite numerous objections to the book, it was enjoying brisk sales in Israeli book stores.

The leader of a Jewish supremacist group in Israel [endorsed](#) the burning down of the Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. He said that the 12th century Jewish sage Maimonides called Christianity "idolatry," and that this justified burning down Christian churches.

(While this extremist's interpretation has been heavily criticized by many, it appears that his history may not be incorrect. [Israeli author](#) Israel Shahak [reports](#): "The Editio Princeps of the complete Code of Talmudic Law, Maimonides' Mishneh Torah [was] replete not only with the most offensive precepts against all Gentiles but also with explicit attacks on Christianity and on Jesus." Similarly, a scholarly book published by Princeton University Press, [Jesus in the Talmud](#), also reports that the Jewish Talmud portrays Jesus as a charlatan, idolater, and worse.)

In their book [Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel](#), Professors Israel Shahak and Norton Mezvinsky [write](#): "The fact is that certain Jews, some of whom wield political influence, consider Jews to be superior to non-Jews and view the world as having been created only or primarily for Jews."

They explain: "For religious Jews, the blood of non-Jews has no intrinsic value." Such religious Israelis believe that "a non-Jewish soul comes from three satanic spheres." Similarly, "The entire creation [of a non- Jew] exists only for the sake of the Jews."

Shahak and Mezvinsky report that this "extreme chauvinism" is directed towards all non-Jews:

The 1973 Yom Kippur War, for instance, was... not directed against Egyptians, Syrians and/or all Arabs but against all non-Jews. The war was thus directed against the great majority of citizens of the United States, even though the United States aided Israel in that war. This hatred of non-Jews is not new but, as already discussed, is derived from a continuous Jewish cabbalistic tradition.

'We have the New York Times in our hands'

Extremely little of this information is reported to Americans, whose politicians from both parties regularly vote to give Israel **\$3.8 billion** of Americans' tax money (over \$7,000 per minute). This legislation is also **almost never reported** by U.S. media.

From its **earliest years**, Israel has confiscated Christian land, and this practice has continued **year after year after year after year after year after year after year**. Again, U.S. media do not consider this newsworthy.

On top of this, Christians in Israel, like Muslims, live under a **system** in which they are **second-class citizens**. There are at least fifty laws that discriminate against them, their schools are significantly under funded, and their access to land is severely limited.

A top U.S. journalist, Grace Halsell, spent a year in Israel in 1977 and wrote a **powerful book** about what she learned, including about Israeli torture of Palestinians.

Like **Donald Neff** and **others**, Halsell had reached the top levels of of American journalism, but was quickly pushed aside when she started **exposing** unpleasant facts about Israel.

In 1998 she wrote a detailed, explosive article entitled "**What Christians Don't Know About Israel.**" In the article she discussed the pervasive censorship on Israel-Palestine "by *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*—and most of our nation's print media."

Her article includes this passage:

As an Israeli journalist, Arie Shavit, explains..., "We believe with absolute certitude that right now, with the White House in our hands, the Senate in our hands and The New York Times in our hands, the lives of others do not count the same way as our own."

Formerly indoctrinated Christians are waking up

Halsell wrote: "Israelis today, explains the anti-Zionist Jew Israel Shahak, 'are not basing their religion on the ethics of justice. They do not accept the Old Testament as it is written. Rather, religious Jews turn to the Talmud. For them, the Talmudic Jewish laws become 'the Bible.' And the Talmud teaches that a Jew can kill a non-Jew with impunity."

"In the teachings of Christ, there was a break from such Talmudic teachings. He sought to heal the wounded, to comfort the downtrodden..."

Halsell reported:

"While Israel and its dedicated U.S. Jewish supporters know they have the president and most of Congress in their hands, they worry about grassroots America—the well-meaning Christians who care for justice. Thus far, most Christians were unaware of what it was they didn't know about Israel."

She continued: "

They were indoctrinated by U.S. supporters of Israel in their own country and when they traveled to the Land of Christ most all did so under Israeli

sponsorship. That being the case, it was unlikely a Christian ever met a Palestinian or learned what caused the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

“This is gradually changing, however. And this change disturbs the Israelis.”

The change Halsell describes has begun to escalate in recent years. Today more and more Christians are learning the facts about Israel-Palestine and are increasingly supporting Palestinian human rights.

Both [mainline](#) and [evangelical](#) Christians are [visiting](#) the region in person, meeting Palestinians, studying the Bible intensely, producing [diverse documentaries](#) and [magazine articles](#).

Some are discussing what they say are deep errors in the interpretation of the Bible they grew up with, and a growing number are exposing flaws with the [Scofield Bible](#), an influential annotated Bible that has played a major role in the growth of “Christian Zionism.”

This could have a major impact. While evangelical support for Israel has [not driven U.S. policies](#) of unconditional support for Israel, it has helped to enable them.

It looks like this may change.

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