

# Museum: A Tribute to the Friends of Zion

Each faced a moment of decision—an opportunity with eternal impact.

Many said, “Yes,” but their choice often came at a great cost. They took action when others cowered in fear. Some gave up their careers, and others died poor and forgotten.

Many risked their very lives. Some were just doing their duty. For others, it was a conviction of the heart.

Some are famous—Corrie ten Boom, Oskar Schindler, Winston Churchill, Queen Victoria, Woodrow Wilson and Harry S. Truman. Others—Arthur James Balfour, Orde Wingate, John Patterson, George Bush and John Henri Dunant—are less well known but equally significant.

They are the heroes of Zionism—the hidden heroes of Christianity who helped protect the Jews from persecution and establish the state of Israel. Their stories are told at the new, state-of-the-art Friends of Zion Museum in Jerusalem.

The museum, the first in Israel to celebrate Christian heroes and their history, was dedicated Sept. 8 with the museum’s international chairman, former Israeli President Shimon Peres; its Israeli chairman, General Yossi Peled; and more than 25 Israeli diplomats present.

It was a day designed to honor the Christian men and women who provided aid and assistance to the Jews during their quest to return to their homeland and gain independence.

The Friends of Zion Museum in Jerusalem portrays the story of Christian love and support for the Jewish people. It showcases the contributions made by Christian Zionists to the rebirth of

the Jewish state in 1948 and their support since then.

The museum has a special relevance in our day. The five-story building has been transformed into the highest-tech interactive museum per square foot in Israel and possibly the world. The museum is located on some of Jerusalem's prime real estate at 20 Rivlin Street, 600 meters from the Temple Mount, across from the future home of what will be the largest Jewish museum in the nation, the Simon Wiesenthal Tolerance Museum.

I have enjoyed a lifelong love affair with Israel and led more tours than I can count. Each time I visited Israel, I found myself wishing to take my groups somewhere that celebrated Christian Zionism. Today, dozens of places exist where one can learn of the evil that people falsely professing to be Christians visited upon the Jewish people.

The Crusades, pogroms, the Inquisition and the Holocaust are and should be well-documented. I also wanted to visit someplace where Christian heroes were celebrated.

Certainly, trees are planted at Yad Vashim in honor of the righteous among the nations. My groups always wanted to see the trees for ten Boom and Schindler. Even so, I always felt that a place dedicated to the positive history of Christian Zionism would be a great addition to tours of Israel. With the opening of the Friends of Zion Museum, there is such a place. Christians who love the Jewish people unconditionally can be inspired, and Jewish people who have never known about Christian heroes such as ten Boom can find friends they did not know they had.

### **Unearthing the Heroes of Christian Zionism**

In 1988, Mike Evans and his ministry partners purchased the home of ten Boom in Haarlem, Holland, and transformed the house and clock shop into a wonderful museum. Her story is virtually unknown among the Jewish people and, for that matter, the vast majority of young people in this generation.

This is despite the story of Anne Frank being known by Jews and Christians worldwide.

Evans wanted to bring the story of the ten Boom family to Jerusalem, but in researching that possibility, he encountered hundreds of individuals who not only assisted the Jewish people during the Holocaust, but also helped to establish the state of Israel.

In 2012, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said of the Christian Zionists' role in Israel's history: "I don't believe that the Jewish state and modern Zionism would have been possible without Christian Zionism. I think that the many Christian supporters of the rebirth of the Jewish state and the ingathering of the Jewish people in the 19th century made possible the rise of modern Jewish Zionism."

The Friends of Zion Museum has documented the oft-hidden history Netanyahu referred to. For example, spotlighted in the museum is the story of John Henri Dunant, a Swiss-born banker and humanitarian. Theodor Herzl first labeled him a "Christian Zionist." Dunant, the founder of the International Red Cross, also inspired the 1964 Geneva Convention and he was the recipient of the first Nobel Peace Prize.

Also spotlighted is Horatio Spafford, whose four daughters were drowned at sea. After viewing the site of their watery grave, he penned the hymn "It Is Well With My Soul." Spafford and his wife went to Jerusalem and built the largest orphanage in the city. The orphanage is now called The American Colony.

George Bush also holds a place of honor in the museum. This George Bush was never president of the United States. He was, however, an ancestor to both Bush presidents. He was a college professor, born in Vermont in 1796. He was a Presbyterian pastor who taught Hebrew and Oriental Literature at New York University. Bush was an ardent believer in the return of the Jews to their rightful land, then called Palestine. In 1844,

Bush wrote *The Valley of Vision*—based on the dry bones mentioned in Ezekiel 37. The book was a clarion call to Christian Zionism and sold more than 1 million copies.

The museum also showcases Orde Charles Wingate. He was a Bible-believing British army officer who created a special military unit in Palestine in the 1930s that later became the Israeli Defense Forces.

Colonel John Patterson, after whom the prime minister's brother, Jonathan, was named, is a significant figure at the museum too. Patterson, a Christian, commanded the Zion Mule Brigade, which became the first Jewish fighting force in 2,000 years.

### **Combating the Rise of Anti-Semitism**

As a former Christian university president, I am deeply concerned about the warped historical view being taught on many campuses. Too many young people have bought into an anti-Israel worldview politically. Others have fallen into the trap of "replacement theology." I have been disappointed to see some of my evangelical colleagues and leaders embrace this theology.

The Friends of Zion Museum seeks to address this serious issue. The museum's educational experience combats anti-Semitism and inspires Christians to learn of their biblical history and heroes and their biblical relation to Israel and the Jewish people. The museum is an exciting high-tech vehicle to combat anti-Semitism. This museum is especially needed as the world turns its back on Israel and supports the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement.

As part of the international program of the museum, Peres presented President George W. Bush in March with the first Friends of Zion award in acknowledgement of his friendship with the Jewish people. President Peres traveled to the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum in Dallas to present

the award.

In April on Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, the Friends of Zion Museum hosted a global event that was aired on 13 satellite networks with about 6,000 churches in more than 50 countries participating live. This broadcast was a show of solidarity with Israel that honored Christian heroes who stood by the Jewish people during World War II. Eli Wiesel, President Peres and Prime Minister Netanyahu appeared on that special.

In the last few months, many of the most prominent evangelical leaders worldwide have toured the Friends of Zion Museum and have lent their support. These include Dr. Jack Hayford, chancellor of The King's University, who said, "This brief and impacting moment has left me tearful, speechless and with a sense of accountability."

"You can't miss it," says Gordon Robertson, chief executive officer of the Christian Broadcasting Network. "If you're on a trip to Israel, this should be your first stop. It will inform you. It will inspire you. It will enlighten you. Don't miss it."

Mark Williams, general overseer of the Church of God, says, "Floor by floor, it was just amazing. I just hope you and your family will take advantage of the opportunity to visit the Friends of Zion Museum in Jerusalem."

### **Excellent Visual Effects Captivate Audiences**

Dr. George Wood, general superintendent of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, said, "It was spectacular! The kind of visual display and advanced technology is unlike anything I have seen in the whole wide world."

If one cared nothing at all for the subject matter, the technology itself is well worth seeing. More than 150 Israeli multidisciplinary experts created the experience in 30 months.

The museum contains the largest onyx video-mapping floor in Israel and perhaps the world, and is equipped with more than 30 video projectors, 45 LCD screens and about 50 speakers.

The museum houses the largest employment of digital equipment per square meter ever in a single museum. The music, which is originally scored, is broadcast on a surround-sound system. A unique, complex animation method called "rotoscoping" brings live action footage into a painted setting that transforms each story during the museum experience.

The tour begins with a unique surround-sound aerial excursion over the land of Israel synchronized with sculptured topography of the biblical land and the 12 tribes of Israel. All aerial shots were originally filmed for this segment with 4K cameras—the largest digital-filming format available.

Visitors then board a high-capacity experimental "time-machine" elevator. As the elevator rises, the surrounding glass surface comes to life with a spectacular sound-and-light show. It is the largest exterior glass elevator in Israel with a unique LED video network beneath its glass interior that combines sound effects and narration for a superb sub-system.

The Founder's Theater holds another first—the longest indoor seamless surround projection system in a museum in Israel (24 meters). Its transparent LED multimedia onyx floor adds a surprising dimension to the storytelling. New to me were the handcrafted wooden figures digitally mapped with animated videos on each polygon of the sculpture's design. The Visionaries Gallery features another first—a hand-drawn mural crafted by a team of artists, then digitalized and animated. The mural wall is comprised of 36 LCD screens with infrared sensor technology triggered by touch. When this still mural comes to life, 11 separate animations are activated on the largest interactive mural in Israel.

The Lights in the Darkness Theater uses digital rotoscoping. I

found it a moving experience to say the least. This theater is the first of its kind.

Visitors are able to see the visual content projected onto their own hands. That content features pictures of some of the Jewish people rescued by Christians.

The grand finale is a 3-D stereoscope with a custom silver screen. Wearing distinct polarized 3-D glasses, visitors see their own faces embedded in the show as a live feed.

### **How the Museum Will Impact Israel**

More than 7,000 individuals from all over the world have already toured the Friends of Zion Museum. Perhaps the most moved of the visitors are the Israelis themselves. One elderly lady said, "Goose bumps, goose bumps. We are not alone."

The museum has purchased a second building. Erected in 1874, the building is one of the first homes built outside the walls of Jerusalem. Here the guests are given the opportunity to leave their impressions using highly advanced technology, comparable to that employed in the 9/11 memorial in New York City.

In the second museum building, guests enter one of three stations that record visitors' impressions. In the state-of-the-art recording facility, the guest is guided through an experience to share his impressions, complete with snapshot photos. The facility is equipped with the most advanced lighting, audio and technological programming to produce the guest's first, intimate and authentic impressions on different topics.

Guests' impressions are also presented in a gallery of framed portraits that cover the walls of the Reception Center. The Impression Gallery will also be available online. Personally, I found one of the most intriguing facilities in the museum Reception Center to be a multimedia broadcasting facility

which allows pastors to speak to their congregations live from Jerusalem.

Museum tours are available in 16 languages and online. One can take a virtual tour of the museum by going to [fozmuseum.com](http://fozmuseum.com). The online tour tells the stories showcased in the museum and allows those who cannot travel to Jerusalem to benefit from the same experience free of charge. This tour has been translated into 13 languages.

The Friends of Zion Museum experience is a remarkable combination of cutting-edge technology, historical narrative and emotional inspiration. Tours, visiting academic groups and individuals will find the Friends of Zion Museum an exciting addition to their visit to Jerusalem.

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**Dr. Mark Rutland** is a New York Times best-selling author of 15 books and many articles. His column appears in each edition of Ministry Today magazine. Rutland's weekly television program is broadcast on TBN Salsa, and he is heard on a daily basis in multiple radio markets. As the executive director of The National Institute of Christian Leadership, he teaches hundreds of church and business leaders from around the world. In the past, he has served as the president of two universities and as a megachurch pastor. He is currently the president of Global Servants, an international agency that, among other works, operates homes for tribal girls on two continents.

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Take a sneak peek of what visitors will see in the Friends of Zion Heritage Center at [friendsofzion.charismamag.com](http://friendsofzion.charismamag.com).

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# 13 Reasons Christians Don't Walk in Miracles

Jesus assured us that signs would follow us if we believe. So why do so many believers come up short when they try to cast out devils? Why do they lay hands on the sick and the sick stay sick? Why do they long for miracle-working power but continue to struggle day in and day out with powerlessness?

It could be because they don't have the faith for it, but it could also be that they [haven't paid the personal price to walk in God's power](#). Yes, we have authority over devils and sickness. Yes, we carry the kingdom of God with us wherever we go. Yes, miracles, signs and wonders happen according to God's will—not our own.

But I submit to you that there could be many things standing between you and the manifestation of His miracle-working power. That was the case in Voice of Healing evangelist A.A. Allen's life. Before Allen's miracle ministry took off, he was struggling with these questions: "Lord, why can't I heal the sick? Why can't I work miracles in Your name? Why do the signs not follow my ministry as they did that of Peter, John and Paul?" Good questions. They are questions every Christian should be asking.

## **Doing Away With Besetting Sins**

"I have found in my travels as an evangelist, as well as in experiences gained in pastorates, that most people have a pet sin (that) they have pampered and petted, and developed, for years. Paul terms it, 'The sin which doth so easily beset us.' (Heb. 12:1.) ... your "besetting sin." He also says it must be laid aside if we are to gain the prize at the end of the race:

'Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.'

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Some of you may stop reading right here. It always gets quiet when I teach or preach about sin. But here's the thing: We like to look at someone else's sin and say that's the reason they don't get healed. Yet Jesus healed sinners over and over again. We need to be less focused on the sins of those who need a miracle and more focused on our own pet sins that prevent us from walking in God's power to set the captives free.

"He (needs to have) shown you what in your life needs cleansing before you can experience the power of God. Your pet sin is the sin that you do not want the preacher to preach about," Allen says. "It is the sin for which you are always ready to make an excuse. It is the sin which, although you would not admit that it is sin, you prefer to do it when you think no one is going to find out.

"It is the sin which leads you captive most easily. It is the sin which you are always ready to defend. It is the sin which causes the clouds of doubt and remorse to cross your spiritual sky, whenever you really feel the need to contact God," Allen continued. "It is the sin (that) you are most unwilling to give up. It is the sin (that) you think is so small that God should scarcely be able to see it, yet so large that you are sure you could never live without it."

### **Practical Examples of Besetting Sins**

Besetting sins sometimes look rather innocent. Some people like to say they are discerning, for example, but they are just critical. Some like to say they are gathering intercessors, but really they are just gossiping. Some like to

say they have the gift of exhortation, but really they are flattering people with manipulation to get their way. Some like to say they exaggerate a bit, but really they are flat-out liars. The list goes on and on. Some pet sins are more serious than others, but they are all serious to God. And sometimes it's not sin; there's just no grace for you to do it.

Allen sounds like when he said, "Thousands of those who profess to be believers in the Lord Jesus Christ today would have more power in their lives if the time they spend in listening to the ball games and 'soap operas,' and 'perpetual emotion dramas' were spent listening to the voice of God, alone in the closet of prayer. These are some of the 'little foxes that spoil the vines,' destroying the tender grapes and robbing God's people of fruitfulness."

Here is the list that God gave Allen:

1. He must realize he couldn't do greater quality miracles than Jesus.
2. He could walk as Jesus walked.
3. He must be blameless like God Himself.
4. He must measure himself to Jesus alone.
5. He must deny his fleshly desires with fasting.
6. After self-denial, he must follow Jesus seven days a week.
7. Without God, he could do nothing.
8. He must do away with sin in his body.
9. He must not continue in shallow, pointless discussions.
10. He must give his body wholly to God forever.
11. He must believe all God's promises.

Numbers 12 and 13 were pet sins that he did not share with anyone, even his wife.

“Christ is sufficiently interested in pointing out the way, that if you desire to find the way of perfectness, He will place his finger on your pet sins, and show you what is keeping you from the goal,” Allen says. “When you come inquiring how you can be perfect, He will not send you away without an answer.”

The question is: Will you dare to ask? Are you willing to pay the price? Are you willing to deal with your pet sins? How bad do you want to see miracles?

**Jennifer LeClaire** is senior editor of Charisma. She is also director of [Awakening House of Prayer](#) in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, co-founder of [awakeningtv.com](#), on the leadership team of the [New Breed Revival Network](#) and author of several books, including [The Next Great Move of God: An Appeal to Heaven for Spiritual Awakening](#); [Mornings With the Holy Spirit, Listening Daily to the Still, Small Voice of God](#); [The Making of a Prophet](#) and [Satan's Deadly Trio: Defeating the Deceptions of Jezebel, Religion and Witchcraft](#). You can visit her website [here](#). You can also join Jennifer on [Facebook](#) or [follow her on Twitter](#). Jennifer's Periscope handle is [@propheticbooks](#).

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## **End-Time Expert: Why There's Not a Pre-Tribulation Rapture**

Following the biblical pattern of the Shemitah combined with the signs of the end times, it makes sense that some would speculate that the tribulation is close.

But will Christians have to endure the prophesied events, or will Christ rapture us away to His kingdom?

The second is more likely, author and speaker John Shorey tells the *Jim Bakker Show*.

“The church people want God to do everything the way they think it should be done,” Bakker says. But God is not bound by human thought.

For Shorey, that means taking a closer look at when the rapture will happen in regards to the Great Tribulation.

Take a look.

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## **This Mountain Can and Will Be Moved**

There is a tremendous shaking, sifting and shifting happening right now across the body of Christ. The heat of the season and the pressure that has come with it is bringing a lot of “dross” to the surface in many hearts.

Last night as I was falling asleep I heard the Lord say that issues of the heart are being brought to the surface in many lives and are overwhelming and looking like mountains. The “issues of the heart” that have come to the surface for many have become so intimidating and so big that many have become “stuck” in the revelation of the wounding, lies, strongholds and struggles that have come to the surface.

I felt the Lord saying these “issues of the heart” have not been brought to the surface to intimidate you, to overwhelm

you, or to discourage you, but actually to POSITION YOU for HEALING.

The Lord has REVEALED these things because He wants you HEALED. As you get before Him and share these “issues of the heart” with Him, radical healing and wholeness is going to take place. Perfect love is going to be PERFECTED in you. Shame, fear, struggles, anxieties, worries, crippling strongholds and lies are going to be melted away by His perfect love.

Don't look at this “heart issue” that has come to the surface as a mountain that cannot be moved. It's about to be melted away. Don't become a victim of this mountain, don't allow yourself to fall into discouragement or condemnation but KNOW that you are moving into greater realms of wholeness and healing.

The Lord is extending you, He is strengthening you, He is awakening you MORE to the TRUTH of WHO YOU ARE.

You may feel like these “issues of the heart” are causing a “breaking” and they are, but it is a glorious breaking. A glorious breaking to release you into greater dependence upon Him, greater trust, greater revelation of His love and who you are. You are actually being promoted into new levels of dependence and revelation of His DELIGHT in you and radical LOVE for you.

He is undoing you with His love and goodness, bringing you into greater freedom.

In this glorious undoing, not only are things that have entangled you melting away, but He will flow through you more powerfully than ever before.

The breaking process can be painful and uncomfortable but He is carrying you, surrounding you with His love and comfort to BRING YOU TO LIFE. His arms are wrapped around you. You are

safe in Him and there is no reason to fear. He is loving you to life!

You are actually moving to a place of greater strength in Him than you have ever been as you embrace this process. Anything hindering you is being broken off. It's time to let go. To free fall into His arms, and see that is the SAFEST place for you to be. To let go of striving, to let go of performance and step into the overwhelming beautiful revelation of His love.

Embrace to process, fall into His arms and you are moving forward in greater WHOLENESS into a WHOLE NEW WORLD!

**Lana Vawser** has a heart to encourage the body of Christ and individuals in their walks with Jesus, to have deeper intimacy with Him and to learn to hear His voice. She operates in the prophetic and loves to share the heart of God with others. Lana has written her first book, titled *Desperately Deep—Developing Deep Devotion and Dialogue with Jesus*, and loves to see others grow in all that God has for them.

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## **The Bible and 7 Other Books Banned to Celebrate Blasphemy Rights Day**

Not only is Wednesday (Sept. 30) [International Blasphemy Rights Day](#), it's also midway through [Banned Books Week](#).

For millennia, governments and societies have used legal and commercial means to censor ideas and expressions that challenge established beliefs.

Here's a list of books that have been banned around the world

for upsetting the status quo.

## 1. The Bible

Yes, the Bible is full of [violence](#), but that's not why it's been banned in many countries. Across Central Asia, publishing, importing and distributing religious literature is restricted to prevent "extremism." In Malaysia, [Malay-language Bibles are prohibited](#) outside the confines of churches to protect "national security." In [North Korea, possessing a Bible is illegal](#) because, well, pretty much everything is banned there. Governments often monitor and restrict communities of believers they fear might challenge their rule. They do so by cutting off access to holy scripture and outlawing proselytization, all while pretending to champion freedom of religion or belief in their constitutions. Don't believe the propaganda. Do keep an eye on [Bible balloons](#) dropping the Word of God into hostile territories.

## 2. *The Da Vinci Code*

[Lebanon banned the Dan Brown thriller in 2004](#), not for its lack of literary merit but because Catholic leaders took issue with its fictional assertion that (spoiler alert!) Jesus married Mary Magdalene and fathered her child. "Those things are difficult for us to accept, even if it's supposed to be fiction," Father Abdou Abu Kasm, then-president of Lebanon's Catholic Information Centre, told the BBC after the book was pulled from shelves. "Christianity is not about forgiveness to the point of insulting Jesus Christ." MARCH, a Lebanese civil rights group, lists "The Da Vinci Code," "Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl" and "Sophie's Choice" among [dozens of books that have been banned in Lebanon](#).

### 3. Harry Potter

In 2002, the United Arab Emirates' Ministry of Education and Youth went full Voldemort, [banning the wizard from corrupting young minds](#) on the grounds that J.K. Rowling's tale ran "contrary to Islamic values." In the same decision, [25 additional books](#) were banned from use in private schools, including George Orwell's "Animal Farm," which features haram talking pigs in a cautionary tale against authoritarianism.

### 4. The Quran

The Muslim holy book is banned and restricted in many of the same places and for many of the same reasons that limit the Bible's reach. In 2013, the Russian city of [Novorossiysk banned a specific translation of the Quran](#) for allegedly promoting extremism and inciting violence, a move that placed the text on a nationwide blacklist. Offended Muslims should take some solace in Russia's commitment to equal opportunity discrimination. Also banned are the works of Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard; Turkish theologian Said Nursi; several Catholic, Jehovah's Witness and Falun Gong publications; and a diverse range of other "extremist" religious texts.

### 5. *Fifty Shades of Grey*

Ultimate nanny state Malaysia isn't into role play or BDSM. The country's Home Ministry [banned the Fifty Shades trilogy and first film](#) earlier this year on the grounds that they were "likely to be prejudicial to morality," whatever that means. Malaysia also banned Canadian author Irshad Manji's "Allah, Liberty and Love" in 2012 for being contrary to Islamic principles, [raiding a bookstore and confiscating copies before the ban was even set](#).

## **6. *The King Never Smiles***

Where men are considered gods, governments and societies don't take kindly to their "blasphemous" portrayals. This unauthorized biography of Thailand's King Bhumibol Adulyadej was [banned before it could be published](#) there in 2006. Thailand's [increasingly strict "lèse majesté" laws](#) shield the deified monarch from criticism and his government from accountability. A 2011 biography of Mahatma Gandhi was banned in Gujarat state for [suggesting that he may have had a homosexual relationship](#), and a 1984 biography of Pakistan founder Muhammad Ali Jinnah was banned for claiming [he ate pork and drank alcohol](#), both forbidden in Islam. That ban was later overturned.

## **7. "The Satanic Verses"**

Most novelists don't make it to four books. Most fourth novels don't ignite global outrage and inspire assassination attempts. Salman Rushdie accomplished both with "The Satanic Verses," his 1988 novel partly inspired by the Prophet Muhammad. The "blasphemous" book was banned in India, burned in the U.K. and led Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini to issue a fatwa calling for Rushdie's death. Threats of violence surrounding the controversy still plague Rushdie. In 2012 he pulled out of a speaking gig at the Jaipur literature festival amid renewed calls for his assassination.

## **8. *Into the River***

Ted Dawe's 2012 novel won critical acclaim and several young-adult fiction awards in New Zealand, back when it was still available in bookstores. The country's Film and Literature Board of Review placed an [interim ban on "Into the River"](#) earlier this month after the conservative Christian group Family First [called for a permanent age restriction](#) to

be placed on the novel, citing its sexually explicit content. Selling or supplying the book remains illegal until the age classification issue is resolved, a stalemate that's contributed to a [spike in global interest](#)—censorship backfiring at its best.

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## **Russia Claims Airstrikes Against ISIS in Syria**

Russia launched air strikes in Syria on Wednesday in the Kremlin's biggest Middle East intervention in decades, but Moscow's assertion that it had hit Islamic State was immediately disputed by the United States and rebels on the ground.

The air strikes plunged the 4-year-old civil war in Syria into a volatile new phase as President Vladimir Putin moved forcefully to assert Russian influence in the unstable region.

Moscow and Washington offered conflicting accounts of which targets had been struck, underlining growing tensions between the two former Cold War foes over Russia's decision to intervene. Washington is concerned that Moscow is more interested in propping up Syrian President Bashar al-Assad than in beating Islamic State.

The Russian defense ministry said the strikes targeted military equipment, communication facilities, arms depots, ammunition and fuel belonging to Islamic State.

U.S. officials said targets in the Homs area appeared to have been struck, but not areas held by Islamic State.

Russia warned the United States ahead of the strikes to keep its aircraft out of Syrian airspace, but the United States pressed forward with its campaign of air strikes against Islamic State forces and said it had targeted Islamic State near the Syrian city of Aleppo.

A U.S. official said Moscow gave Washington just an hour's notice of its strikes, which the Kremlin said were designed to help Assad, its closest regional ally, push back Islamist militants.

Notice of the attack came from a Russian official in Baghdad who asked the U.S. air force to avoid Syrian airspace during the mission, U.S. State Department spokesman John Kirby said.

In Moscow, Putin said Russian air strikes in Syria would be limited in scope and that he hoped Assad was ready for political reform and a compromise for the sake of his country and people.

"I know that President Assad understands that and is ready for such a process. We hope that he will be active and flexible and ready to compromise in the name of his country and his people," he told reporters.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said Washington would have "grave concerns" if Russia hit Syrian targets where Islamic State fighters were not present. Speaking at the U.N. Security Council, Kerry also said the militant group, which is also known as ISIL and ISIS, "cannot be defeated as long as Bashar al-Assad remains president of Syria."

Striking Homs and opposition groups but not IS showed the Kremlin's primary aim was to prop up Assad, a French diplomatic source said.

Areas of the province of Homs struck by the Russians are controlled by an array of rebel groups including several operating under the banner of the "Free Syrian Army",

activists, locals and rebels said. None of the sources named Islamic State as one of the groups operating in the areas hit on Wednesday. Assad views all the forces opposing him in the civil war as terrorist groups.

The Homs area is crucial to Assad's control of western Syria. Insurgent control of that area would bisect the Assad-held west, separating Damascus from the coastal cities of Latakia and Tartous, where Russia operates a naval facility.

Iyad Shamse, leader of an FSA Syrian rebel group, the Asala and Tanmieh Front, told Reuters: "There is no Islamic State in this area. The Russians are applying great pressure on the revolution. This will strengthen terrorism, everyone will head toward extremism. Any support for Assad in this way is strengthening terrorism."

He put the death toll from the Russian air strikes at 50 civilians, including children.

According to a pro-Syrian government military source, there were "five strikes against five areas in Syria's Homs." He said other areas may have been bombed too.

## PROXY WAR

Moscow's intervention means the conflict in Syria has been transformed in a few months from a proxy war, in which outside powers were arming and training mostly Syrians to fight each other, to an international conflict in which the world's main military powers except China are directly involved in fighting.

That raises the risks of military accidents between outside powers and raises pressure for a diplomatic solution, without making it any easier.

Russia joined the United States and its Arab allies, Turkey, France, Iran and Israel in direct intervention, with Britain

expected to join soon, if it gets parliamentary approval.

Russian jets went into action after the upper house of the Russian parliament gave Putin unanimous backing for strikes following a request for military assistance from Assad.

In a barely concealed jibe at Washington, a spokesman for Putin said later the vote meant Moscow would be practically the only country in Syria to be conducting operations "on a legitimate basis" and at the request of "the legitimate president of Syria".

The last time the Russian parliament granted Putin the right to use military force abroad, a technical requirement under Russian law, Moscow seized Crimea from Ukraine last year.

Putin said Russia's military involvement in the Middle East would involve only its air force and would be temporary. One of the reasons for getting involved was the need to stop Russian citizens who had joined the ranks of Islamic State from later returning home to cause trouble, he said.

A U.S.-led coalition has already been bombing Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. But Putin derided U.S. efforts on Monday in a speech at the United Nations, suggesting a broader and more coordinated coalition was needed to defeat the militants.

"The military aim of our operations will be exclusively to provide air support to Syrian government forces in their struggle against ISIS (Islamic State)," Sergei Ivanov, the Kremlin's Chief-of-Staff, said before reports that the strikes had begun.

Russia has been steadily dispatching more and more military aircraft to a base in Latakia, regarded as an Assad stronghold, after the Syrian government suffered a series of battlefield reverses.

Moscow has already sent military experts to a recently

established command center in Baghdad which is coordinating air strikes and ground troops in Syria, a Russian official told Reuters.

Russia's involvement in Syria will be a further challenge for Moscow, which is already intervening in Ukraine at a time when its own economy is suffering from low oil prices and Western sanctions. {eoa}

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## **Can Donald Trump Seal the Deal With Evangelicals?**

Donald Trump has proven the political world wrong. Not only has his iconic name and "GOP frontrunner" appeared in the same sentence, they've stayed together.

And his support is attracting evangelicals too, or as he likes to say, "I'm leading with the evangelicals big league!"

It's true. Poll after poll shows Trump ahead among "self-identified" evangelicals.

Fox News has him at 29 percent, followed by retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson at 21 percent and Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, at 12 percent. A CNN poll has him even higher.

"I think one of the reasons I'm doing so well is that I am a Christian, I'm a Protestant, I'm a Presbyterian, and I'm a total believer," Trump told CBN News from his golf course in Southern California.

"I believe in the Bible," he continued. "I believe in God and

I think I will help them so much with this country.”

## **A Few Rough Edges**

However, with proven evangelical-type candidates already out there like Carson, Cruz and former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, Trump has some work to do.

- He placed fifth at the recent Values Voter Summit – not bad considering he’s not exactly your standard evangelical candidate.
- He’s been married three times.
- He used to be pro-choice, though now he’s pro-life.
- His healthy ego rubs some the wrong way, and his cutting comments about fellow candidates ruffle feathers, too.

Trump told CBN News he’s working on his tone.

“You need a person of tremendous strength, but I think I can tone it down a little bit and I’ll try,” he said.

## **Understanding Trump’s Appeal**

Even so, there is no doubt that evangelicals are responding to his fighting spirit and ability to cut through the political hot air.

“You know exactly where he stands whether you agree with him or not,” Christian voter Lonnie Poindexter said. “That’s what I love about Donald Trump.”

Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, understands why some evangelicals like him a lot.

“Donald Trump tells it like he sees it and I think people, at least on this first impression of Donald Trump, is that he’s not going to be controlled by the political class and that’s what they’re looking for,” Perkins said.

Trump hopes evangelicals will understand his approach.

"I've dealt with very tough hombres and very tough people and I've come out on top," the business mogul told CBN News. "I can understand the evangelicals to a certain extent saying, 'Well, maybe he's not as nice as we want him to be,' but they also want to see the country be great."

### **Trump: 'God Is the Ultimate'**

Evangelicals are also curious about his faith journey.

When asked about who God is to him, Trump told CBN News, "Well, I say God is the ultimate."

Trump then pointed to his Southern California golf course and exclaimed, "I mean God created this. Here's the Pacific Ocean right behind us, so nobody, no thing, no there's nothing like God."

On the campaign trail, he calls the Bible his number one book, something he reiterated to us during our interview.

"The Bible is special," he said. "The Bible the more you see it, the more you read it, the more incredible it is."

What about prayer?

"I am a praying guy," Trump said. He then pulled out a picture of him as a teenager with his confirmation class of 1959 at First Presbyterian Church in Jamaica, Queens.

"Pretty good right? I am a praying person," he said.

What does Trump pray about?

"I think more than anything for the family and health," he told CBN News.

As for God's mercy, his critics went after him when he told an evangelical audience this summer that he wasn't sure he ever asked God for forgiveness. Nevertheless, he left to a standing

ovation.

When CBN News asked Trump whether he believes it is important to ask God for forgiveness, Trump replied, "Well, I do."

"I think it's great. I consider Communion to be a very important thing. When I go to church and I take Communion I consider that asking for forgiveness in my own way," he said.

Trump talks fondly about his Sunday school days, though he admits these days he goes to church when he can.

### **Religious Freedom, Gay Marriage**

While evangelicals may never see him as "Pastor Trump," they do want to see more substance, especially on issues like the rights of Christian business owners who may not want to bake a cake for a gay wedding.

"I'm very concerned about it and there's going to be a lot of law issued about it," Trump said.

Speaking of the law, Trump says he disagrees with the Supreme Court ruling on same-sex marriage.

"We have some very terrible Supreme Court justices, and frankly, they should have at least had that (same-sex marriage case) as a state's right issue," he told CBN News.

Trump does, however, consider gay marriage the law of the land and that puts him at odds with some of his evangelical rivals.

### **Jury's Still Out**

Eventually conservative Christian voters will render their verdict on Trump and all the other candidates.

"I'm praying about it honestly," conservative Christian voter Benjamin Dane said. "I'm asking the Lord what he wants me to do, and I think that's what all Christians need to do."

Meanwhile, Trump will continue preaching his message and pray that evangelicals buy in. He's banking on evangelicals who are sick and tired of the status quo and are ready to win again, something a few pastors told him during a recent conversation.

"They said, 'You know, he may not be perfect, but he's absolutely the best leader and he's absolutely the best guy to take this country out of the morass. So he is a religious guy; he does believe. He may not be perfect, but in terms of running the country he's perfect,'" Trump recalled.

"I will do a great job and they said 'Therefore, we support him,'" he continued. "And these were ministers and respected people and pastors and I think there's a lot of truth to what they said."

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## **ISIS Has Definite Plans to Behead the Pope as 'Armageddon' Approaches**

I sat down recently with Robert Spencer, author of [The Complete Infidel's Guide to ISIS](#), to discuss the terror group's plan for Rome.

While the idea of ISIS conquering Rome may sound ridiculous, Quranic Muslims—not just in ISIS—believe the fall of Rome must take place before the final battle against the infidel armies at Dabiq, Syria and the return of the Mahdi, the Muslim "messiah."

Oh, and ISIS also plans to behead the Pope. The interview is

below.

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# Hollywood Horror Movie Begins Filming With Bizarre Blessing

Production began for *The Conjuring 2* this week, a sequel to the 2013 box-office smash which raked in \$318 million worldwide.

The horror movies that are scripted by two Christian brothers, Chad and Carey Hayes, are about real life paranormal investigators Ed and Lorraine Warren.

New Line Cinema tweeted a photo Monday of what looks to be cast members gathered around a priest, with a description that read, “#TheConjuring filming began bright and early this morning with a priest blessing the set!”

While the movies cover the dark subject matter of demonic possession and oppression, *The Conjuring* included positive and overt Christian content in opposition to the darkness.

James Wan directed the seventh installment of the Fast and Furious franchisee *Furious 7* in between the two *Conjuring* movies and is already lined up to direct *Aquaman*, the superhero movie connected to Zack Snyder's *Man of Steel* and *Batman V Superman: Dawn of Justice*. {eoa}

*This article originally appeared on [movieguide.org](http://movieguide.org).*

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# How One Woman Broke Her Addiction to Social Media

“Mom, I think you like your computer more than you like your family.” Ellie stood in front of me—and my computer—fists on her hips and waiting for eye contact.

“Oh sweetheart, that is not true! Of course I like you better!” I responded defensively.

“No mom. You spend more time playing with your computer than you spend with us.”

I reached for the top of my laptop and slowly began to lower it in an attempt to close the computer. However, I was in the middle of reading a blog post, or an email, or some status update on Facebook, or checking stats on my blog, or something, or anything, or absolutely nothing. Still, it took all the willpower in me to close that screen instead of finishing whatever it was I was doing at a time.

Someday, I will be begging for Ellie’s time and it will be too late if I don’t change this. I have to be present if I want to be a part of my girls’ lives. They are more important. I don’t ever want to regret this. Not ever.

“You know what Ellie; I think that I should not be on the computer from the time you come home from school until the time you go to bed.” I finally said.

“Really?” Ellie’s sweet and excited voice was accompanied by a big smile.

“I will try my best.”

## **It is not easy**

[I didn't anticipate for it to be this hard](#). Like a drug addict going through withdrawal I find myself constantly standing by my computer. "I can check my email really quick; it will only take a couple of minutes." I know it only takes "a couple of minutes" for me to be lost behind the screen. A couple of minutes soon become another afternoon spent with my online friends rather than the family I love and actually get to do real life with.

That is the hardest part. I have exchanged real relationships for those that take place through a computer monitor. I chose to do "virtual" life rather than real life. It makes no sense, absolutely no sense at all. Especially when my family is the one I sacrifice. Ironically, it is my family that I love the most and they are the ones that really matter in my life.

## **The seriousness of it all**

I have an addiction, and it is damaging my real relationships just as much as if I were an alcoholic or a drug addict. I have become an absent mother and wife, all for the sake of social media.

Recently, a friend of mine posted on her Facebook page (Yeah, ironic, isn't it?) a link that tells you the average time you spend online each day. She was brave to have her number displayed on her Facebook wall. Do I want to know? I was already struggling to keep my afternoons free of my computer; did I really want to know the seriousness of my little addiction? So I clicked on the link and the number broke me. The result of "9.8 hours a day" was not only embarrassing, but also shameful, because I could no longer deny that I sold my life to social media and I didn't even realize it. **So I am taking my life back!**

Those results are what led me to write this post, because I

told you I would be real. But also, because now I have more people to keep me accountable. Because I know that this is a real problem easily dismissed because “everyone else is doing it” but the pull of this media-saturated-culture is so strong that it is destroying our relationships. I cannot sit back behind the screen and do nothing about it. I have to take ownership of my time, of my life, and the gifts that God has given to me.

I do not know if you struggle with this or not, but if you do, we can stand together. We can take ownership of our life and get it back. We can become present to the people we love and care for. It will be hard, it will be really hard. The temptation is only a click away. But it will be worth it, so incredibly, absolutely, and completely worth it. Time to stop living behind a screen, and start living life to the full.

*Adapted from **Ellen Stumbo's** blog at [www.ellenstumbo.com](http://www.ellenstumbo.com). Ellen is a pastor's wife and she writes about finding beauty in brokenness with gritty honesty and openness. She is passionate about sharing the real – sometimes beautiful and sometimes ugly – aspects of faith, parenting, special needs, and adoption. She has been published in Focus on the Family, LifeWay, MomSense, Not Alone, and Mamapedia among others.*