

50 Million Christians Enlisted to Participate in Prayer Day for Israel

Organizers plan to hold a Day of Prayer for Jerusalem each October until the second coming of Christ

Christians from around the world are joining a massive army of intercessors to pray for Israel on Oct. 3, as part of an annual Day of Prayer inaugurated by Eagles' Wings (EW) ministry based in Clarence, N.Y.

"This is a biblically mandated requirement for all who believe," said Robert Stearns, EW executive director, at the Jerusalem Prayer Banquet held in New York City on May 20. "We have gathered here at a crucial moment in history."

About 500 Christian and Jewish leaders attended the interdenominational gathering co-chaired by Stearns and Jack W. Hayford, president of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel and founding pastor of The Church on the Way in Van Nuys, Calif. Many signed a public resolution affirming their commitment to the Day of Prayer. Hayford said the signing was a significant action for the church to the biblical call to pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

Hayford sees Israel's role in the end times as a turning point for the church because of the prophetic season. "I don't mean how you read the prophetic handbook," he said. "I mean recognizing that this is a moment that God is at work in our world. It's manifest first in the recovery of Israel, the challenge to that recovery by hostile forces that are more than political forces. They clearly are spiritual forces that

are antichrist-nourished, antichrist in spirit.”

Stearns unveiled EW’s ambitious plan labeled The Jerusalem Project, which calls for an International Day of Prayer on the first Sunday of October every year until the Messiah returns. EW () is seeking to enlist the support of 20,000 U.S. churches and 50 million believers in 70 countries to back the effort.

More than \$100,000 was raised at the banquet to fund a \$1 million budget that includes literature, videos, a Web site (), offices on six continents, and scholarships for a three-week Israel Experience college-student ambassador program.

A group of 10 handpicked students returned from the first ambassador trip in June. They met with educational, political, business and religious leaders. Members of the Knesset, Israel’s parliament, mentored each student for a day.

Brewing for several years, The Jerusalem Project has been warmly received by Yona Metzger, the chief rabbi of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu and other members of the Knesset, as well as Arab leaders in Jerusalem.

Among almost 500 international Christian leaders endorsing the idea are broadcaster Pat Robertson, Korean pastor David Yonggi Cho, prayer leader Mike Bickle, Elim Bible Institute President Paul Johansson, Charisma publisher Stephen Strang and Ted Haggard, president of the National Association of Evangelicals.

“There is going to be a massive end-times swell of prayer across the globe for Israel,” said Lou Engle, co-founder of The Call prayer events. “It’s the heartbeat and sweetheart of

heaven. I have a dream to mobilize a young generation for Israel."

In addition to Alon Pinkus, consul general of Israel in New York, members of the Knesset participated in the banquet. "I think to have friends here in the United States of America, people of the Bible, with the point of view that brings them together with us in this celebration is a unique thing," said Binyamin Elon, chairman of Israel's Moledet Party.

Yuri Shtern, chairman of the National Union Faction, told Charisma about the Christian Allies Caucus (CAC) formed in January. "The CAC is a group of 10 members of the Knesset from six different parties who committed themselves to developing our relationship with the Christian world," he said. "People appreciate what the evangelical Christians are doing for Israel politically, in American politics especially."

Shtern reported that the World Council of Churches has denounced the CAC. "They told us it's a new provocation of the extreme Israeli right with fanatical evangelists, which I think is a compliment," he said. "It means we are on the right path."

Messianic believers also back the project. "There is no question Israel has risen to the center stage of Gentile and world attention," said Felix Halpern, rabbi of Beth Chofesh, an Assemblies of God congregation in Wykoff, N.J. "God is supernaturally imparting a love for the Jewish people through a restorative work of Hebraic roots. Out of this Jewish people are being provoked for the first time in a long time."

Stearns expects 4,000-5,000 Christians from many nations to

participate in the final ceremony in Jerusalem on Sunday, Oct. 3, when the prayer resolution signatures will be presented to representatives of the Knesset.

Peter K. Johnson in New York City