

Christian Tourists Focus of Holy Land Marketing Campaign

Recently appointed Israel Minister of Tourism, Stas Misezhnikov, plans to shift the direction of marketing efforts in Israel by promoting the country's holy sites. In light of Pope Benedict XVI's recent visit to Israel, Misezhnikov will target unique Catholic and Evangelical markets around the world.

"What Israel needs to do is focus on what it has that others don't have, or in other words: the Holy Land," said Misezhnikov. "Israel is holy to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and the focus of the tourism ministry today is to promote Israel as such."

He said there are hundreds of millions of Evangelical Christians around the world who only need be encouraged to visit Israel. In north and South America, the Israel Ministry of Tourism is using its Visit Israel, You'll Never Be the Same advertising campaign to reach Evangelical and Catholic markets, speaking to the spiritual transformation that takes place when one visits Israel.

"The Holy Land—and at its center, Jerusalem—is the best tourist attraction we have; no competition," said Misezhnikov.

Misezhnikov was born in Moscow, in the former Soviet Union, in 1969 and immigrated to Israel in 1982. In 2006, he was elected to the Knesset, where he served as a member of the Knesset finance, economic affairs, and foreign workers committees, and was also acting chairman of the finance committee. In March 2009, he was appointed Minister of Tourism. He is married with three children.