

Israel's Christian Population Experienced Growth in 2013

Israel's Christian population continued to grow in 2013, increasing by 3,000 people over the last year.

According to recent figures released by Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, there are roughly 161,000 Christians living in Israel, equaling about 2 percent of the population and an up from 158,000 in 2012.

Nearly 80 percent of these Christians are Arab, while the majority of the remaining 20 percent are largely from the former Soviet Union.

The cities with the largest Christian populations are Nazareth with 22,400 Christians, Haifa with 14,600 and Jerusalem with 11,900.

However, Israeli Christian women also had fewer children than Jews or Muslims, with only 2.2 children per Christian woman compared to 3.5 for Muslim women and 3.0 for Jewish women.

Israel has one of the few Christian communities left in the Middle East that is still growing. According to the Pew Research Center, just 0.6 percent of the world's 2.2 billion Christians now live in the Middle East and North Africa. Christians make up only 4 percent of the region's total inhabitants, drastically down from 20 percent a century ago, making Middle East Christians the smallest regional Christian minority in the world.

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