

Love in Action: How a Rocket Attack Strengthened Two Christians' Commitment to Israel

"Who is my neighbor?" This timeless question, posed by Jesus in a conversation with a Jewish expert in the law, resonates through the ages. Today, in the suburb of Herzliya, just north of Tel Aviv, we find a compelling modern answer to this ancient query.

At Beit Juliana, a retirement community in Herzliya, Jacob and Anna Engberts, a Dutch Evangelical couple, embody what it means to be a true friend to the Jewish people. Their story exemplifies a remarkable phenomenon: Christians who not only profess love for Israel but actively demonstrate it through service and presence, especially in challenging times.

The Engberts' journey to Israel was rooted in deep spiritual conviction.

In an exclusive interview with ALL ISRAEL NEWS, Jacob shared, "For me, it started when I grew up that my mother quoted from the book of the prophet Zachariah that the Jewish people are the apple of the eye of God. And also in the Book of Romans—that God has not rejected His people Israel, but still has a plan with them." This foundational belief, nurtured in their evangelical church, grew deeper over time.

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Their commitment to Israel blossomed alongside their love for each other. Jacob recounted: "In 1974 I married my wife Anna. Together we loved the Lord Jesus and wanted to give our lives

by serving Him.”

For almost 35 years, they served as pastors of two Pentecostal churches in Holland, all while raising a large family. “It’s not that we don’t have to do anything at home in Holland, God gave us ten children—nine of them are married, so also nine children-in-law and 20 grandchildren,” Jacob noted, highlighting the magnitude of their decision to serve in Israel.

The couple’s heart for Israel led them to volunteer at Beit Juliana, named after a Dutch queen.

“Many of the inhabitants are from Dutch Jewish background, but the number of other origin is increasing. They also come from Belgium, Germany, Poland, France, Switzerland, but also from Arab-speaking countries like Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Morocco,” Jacob explained.

This year, the couple’s commitment was tested dramatically on Oct. 11—the eve of Yom Kippur—when a surprising Hezbollah drone attack hit Beit Juliana. Jacob vividly recounts that night.

“People in the house were fasting and praying that evening. We went to bed very early because we had to work very early the next morning. While already in bed, suddenly we heard a boom, we jumped out of bed, then the alarm came. We were staying on the second floor. We ran to the stairs and as we just went down already the second and very loud boom came. We knew that the building was hit.”

The attack’s impact was severe. “The rocket flew through the outside wall of an apartment on the third floor of the second wing of the building and made a big hole. A lot of the lights in the house didn’t work,” Jacob described.

Yet, amid the chaos, they witnessed what they call miracles.

"The rocket didn't explode!! There was a fire, and because of that, the fire alarm went on, and also all the sprinklers at that wing. The second miracle is that the lady who lived there could leave her apartment in time. The third miracle is that nobody was hurt."

In the aftermath, Anna said she found herself comforting evacuated residents.

"People were confused and very sad by it," she recalled. The next day, despite the attack, Yom Kippur services in the home synagogue proceeded as planned—a testament to the residents' resilience.

The Engberts' resolve only strengthened. "We will not go away now, so that the people here know we are really standing with them, also in these difficult days of war," Jacob affirmed.

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They've gained a deeper understanding of Israel's challenges, noting: "We follow the news about Israel already for many years, but the news about Israel in Holland is mostly biased."

Their ministry service at Beit Juliana has deepened their connection to Israel's people and history.

"Of course, many of the Jewish people have suffered during their lives," they've observed. "In Auschwitz, Bergen Belsen, Theresienstadt, but also here in Israel in the past wars and intifadas ... So several of the people were not afraid, because they went through such things before."

Jacob and Anna's presence, especially after the attack, demonstrates a love beyond words. As Jacob beautifully expressed: "It is not from ourselves. We experience the Holy Spirit Who fills our lives with the Great Love of God, The

Great Love of Yeshua the Messiah for His Jewish People and, of course, also for all the people in the Holy Land!! For the Love of the Messiah compels us!!”

In the lives of this couple, we see a living answer to the question, “Who is my neighbor?”

The Engberts’ unwavering presence, comfort to the elderly in times of fear, and the decision to stand with Israel in its hour of need exemplify what it means to be a true “*rea*” (friend, in biblical Hebrew) to the Jewish people.

This remarkable couple demonstrates that genuine friendship transcends good times, standing firm in adversity with love, support and steadfast presence.

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