

Pentecostal Denomination Declares Support for Israel

✖ One hundred and twenty-eight leaders from the Pentecostal Church of God Sunday pledged support for Israel and an undivided Jerusalem when they presented Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat with a signed a declaration.

General Bishop Charles Scott said the group's visit represents more than symbolism. "Understanding the theology of the situation is paramount," Scott said. "We intend this to be a juggernaut," he added.

Bishop Charles Scott (left) and Mayor Nir Barkat

He said the ripple effect of the group's visit to the Holy Land would reach a quarter million of the church's constituents. The goal, Scott said, is education about Israel through literature and media, and ultimately, tourism to Israel.

The 91-year-old denomination was founded in Chicago in 1919. Its membership consists of 620,000 people in 60 nations. Of the 37 districts in the United States, more than half were represented on the trip, and most participants were first-time visitors to Israel.

The group met the mayor at Jerusalem's city council chambers and presented him with a written declaration.

"We wanted this to be a demonstration that we really supported Israel, not just in declaration but in covenant," said Wayman Ming Jr., general secretary of the Pentecostal Church of God. Robert Stearns, director of Eagles' Wings ministry, which hosted the trip as part of its Watchmen on the Walls program, told Barkat the large delegation was evidence that "a new kind of Christian was coming forth on this earth." He said, "We will not remain silent in support of Israel."

Barkat said group members were “shareholders in the city.” He urged the leaders to go back to their members and encourage more trips to Israel. Tourism also blesses Jerusalem by creating new jobs for Israel’s poorest city, he noted.

Barkat was elected mayor of Israel’s capital city in 2008, and one of his goals is to bring 10 million tourists a year to Jerusalem. Representatives from Eagles’ Wings and the Pentecostal Church of God committed to making the mayor’s goal a reality.

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