

# BRIDGES OF HOPE AND RECONCILIATION INITIATIVE IN ISRAEL



## Introduction:

# A Tragic Moment in History and A Call for Christian Action

The tragic events of October 7, 2023 plunged Israel into deep turmoil, shaking the nation to its core, and intensifying long-standing divisions between Jewish and Arab communities. This sudden escalation of violence also created a humanitarian crisis, leaving thousands displaced, mourning the loss of loved ones and friends, and in desperate need of hope. Amidst this devastation, Mission Eurasia saw an opportunity to respond not just with humanitarian aid but also with a tangible expression of Christ's love in order to promote peace, reconciliation, and unity among Christians/believers on both sides of the ethnic divide.

**Bridges of Hope\*** was launched as a strategic ministry effort to mobilize Jewish and Arab Christians to work together in the name of Jesus to help and provide for families in need. Through this initiative, over the past five months, more than 25,000 people have been impacted by the delivery of food, encouragement, and the message of the gospel. More than 58 Jewish and Arab Christian congregations across Israel came together in this partnership—a historic demonstration of Christian unity—to work side by side and build bridges across the lines of division to serve those suffering the consequences of the escalation. The *Bridges of Hope* food boxes, which you so generously helped to provide, became a powerful and tangible tool to help break down barriers of hatred and build bridges between families, congregations, and communities, opening new doors for sharing the gospel and the message of peace.

### Vision and Mission: Building Bridges of Hope and Reconciliation

The missiological goal of the *Bridges of Hope* and Reconciliation initiative was to model the power of Christian unity in a divided land through first meeting urgent physical needs while pointing people to Jesus, the true Messiah, and igniting a movement of reconciliation by bringing Jewish and Arab believers together in service. This initiative was not simply about distributing food. Rather, it was about demonstrating the gospel through action, breaking through barriers of division, and uniting the church to shine as a light in the midst of conflict.

Following the October 7 attack, the need for immediate physical relief was intense. Families on both sides of the conflict faced shortages of food, water, shelter, medical care, and trauma counseling. The economic strain on displaced families was severe, and in many cases, basic resources were scarce. Using the networks it had developed in Israel over many years, Mission Eurasia partnered with congregations across Israel to identify families most in need. Through a coordinated effort, we provided over 5,000 food packages to families and individuals who were struggling in the aftermath of the attack. Each food package contained a week's worth of essential food items which were neatly and prayerfully prepared and distributed by believers who sought to bring more than just physical aid—they sought to bring the love of Christ and encouragement to those in despair.

*\*The name of this initiative was changed from Bridges of Peace and Reconciliation to Bridges of Hope and Reconciliation after the strong recommendation of Jewish and Arab Christian leaders working with us on the ground in Israel.*





## Reflections of a Leader



*The strategic goals of this project were twofold. First, it aimed to provide tangible help and a message of hope through the gospel to those who had suffered or were still experiencing hardships and deprivation due to the terror attack in October 2023 and the subsequent military actions. Many families on both sides, particularly elderly couples and families with children, found themselves in urgent need of material assistance and basic necessities. In this difficult time, our partners and teams from the Living Israel congregation, which is spread across Israel, took on the mission of supporting them—ensuring they received essential aid along with words of encouragement.*

*At the same time, the second strategic objective was to promote peace and reconciliation by bringing together Jewish and Arab Christian communities in Israel—including Messianic Jewish, Ethiopian Messianic, Arab Christian, Russian-speaking Jewish, and Hebrew-speaking believers—into a shared mission focused on reconciliation. This project was unique in that, on such a large scale, it united both Jewish and Arab communities to work together toward a common purpose: serving those in need while demonstrating and promoting a message of peace and unity throughout Israel. To our knowledge, no initiative of this scale has previously brought these diverse groups together in such a way.*

*The response from community leaders was remarkable. There was a clear openness to this initiative and a strong desire to fully participate in reaching the project's goals. Each community had its own well-established network and ways of engaging with non-believers across ethnic lines, but this project allowed them to expand beyond their usual circles. It opened new doors for ministry, creating opportunities to demonstrate care and share God's love with those in desperate need across the dividing line.*

*Each time we visited the homes of those affected—whether Jewish or Arab families—our brothers from the Living Israel congregation, with kippahs on their heads, were warmly received. We were met with openness and genuine gratitude. People welcomed us eagerly, willing to share their experiences. It often felt like we could have spent hours in each home simply listening to these families who had endured so much but who had not been able to widely share their stories before. Their homes and hearts are now open for continued visits, creating opportunities for different Christian communities to return and build deeper connections.*

*Some Arab and Jewish congregations have already begun follow-up efforts, organizing events and outreach programs for the families who received assistance through this project. The impact goes beyond immediate relief—it has paved the way for ongoing ministry, fostering relationships that will continue to grow and bear fruit in the future.*

**Pastor Pavel Tokarchuk, International Assistant Director for School Without Walls, Mission Eurasia**

## Story of Meir and Carmel



In a world where division has become the norm, there are families who themselves become bridges of reconciliation. One such family is **Meir and Carmel**, a couple from Rishon LeZion who have walked a long road of faithfulness, trials, and service together.

Meir was born in Morocco, where he spent his childhood before immigrating to Israel with his family as a teenager. Carmel comes from an Arab-Syrian background, but after marrying Meir, she accepted Judaism and became part of the Jewish people. They met while serving in the Israel Defense Forces, and for the past 30 years, they have walked this journey side by side.

*"We have always served alongside people of different backgrounds—Jews, Arabs, Druze. We believe that what truly matters is not ethnicity or religion, but the heart of a person."*

When the tragic events of October 7 unfolded, Meir and Carmel were deeply shaken. They had witnessed war, terror, and loss before, but they say:

*"What has happened now is far worse than anything we have ever seen."*

Carmel remembers the days of the Intifada, when fear and destruction gripped Israel, when terror attacks tore through communities, leaving devastation in their wake. Back then, she was serving in the army, witnessing division, suffering, and pain. Even now, after so many years, the wounds of those times have never truly healed.

Yet despite all they have endured, their hearts remain open to goodness. When they learned about the **Bridges of Hope** project, about how believers from around the world were standing with Israel and working to bring reconciliation, they were deeply moved.

*"Thank you for bringing people together, for building bridges instead of walls. What you are doing truly matters."*

As we handed them food packages, they blessed us in return. With warmth and gratitude, they invited us into their home, shared their hospitality, and expressed their heartfelt thanks to all those who made this initiative possible.

The Bridges of Hope project is not just about bringing aid—it is about bringing people together, softening hearts, and showing the love of Christ in action. When two worlds can coexist in one family, when love triumphs over fear, we are reminded that God is still working miracles among us.

**Thank you for your support of Bridges of Hope. Your generosity is not just feeding the hungry—it is spreading faith, peace, and hope.**





## Gospel Partnerships: Reaching More in the Name of Jesus

The **Bridges of Hope** and Reconciliation Initiative was made possible through the strong collaboration of a network of Jewish (both Hebrew-speaking and Russian-speaking) Messianic congregations and Arab Christian congregations. More than 58 churches and groups actively participated in the *Bridges of Hope* effort, with leaders and members dedicating their time and energy to prepare, pack, and distribute humanitarian aid. Among them were Jewish Messianic congregations such as Living Israel, which has 28 congregations across Israel. Living Israel and played a key role in organizing volunteers and reaching displaced and needy Jewish and Arab families.

The Russian-speaking Messianic congregation in Rishon LeZion, south of Tel Aviv, provided significant logistical support, while the Messianic congregation in the city of Ashdod, close to the Gaza border, served families who had been directly affected by the October 7 attacks. Ethiopian Jewish Messianic congregations also took active part, demonstrating the unity of Christ's church across all cultural lines.



Arab Christian congregations showed tremendous enthusiasm as they actively participated in the project, working alongside their Jewish brothers and sisters to bring aid to displaced families. The Arab Baptist Church of Nazareth, which is led by Brother Saleem Shalash and consists of 10 house congregations around Nazareth and across northern Israel, played a key role in distributing food packages to affected communities.

The Arab Association of Churches of the Assemblies of God, led by Bishop Edward Tannous, mobilized 12 of their congregations from Haifa to the Lebanese border to participate in this effort. The town of Shlomi, located near the Lebanese border, where many displaced families from the conflict zone had sought refuge, also became a center of distribution, ensuring that aid reached the most needy and vulnerable.



## Story of Daria



***"My name is Daria, and I want to share how God has profoundly changed my life and my family through the Bridges of Hope Ministry in Nazareth. When I received a food package during a challenging time, it felt like a lifeline. I was overwhelmed with gratitude, and in that moment, I felt God's love surrounding me.***

*"This experience didn't just touch my heart—it transformed my entire family. My husband, who had been struggling with his faith, found renewed hope and strength after witnessing the kindness extended to us. Seeing how we were supported ignited a spark in him, and our family began to come together in ways we never imagined.*

*"My two daughters absolutely love visiting the humanitarian aid center. They love spending time with Uncle Saleem (as they call him), the pastor, and often draw pictures for him and his wife as a way to express their love and appreciation. These moments are filled with joy and laughter, and it touches my heart to see their excitement when they create art to share.*

*"The Bridges of Hope Ministry and the Home of Jesus the King Church in Nazareth are not just about providing aid; they are about building bridges of reconciliation between Arabs and Jews. Through this work, we are learning to love one another and see each other as family. I am so grateful for this ministry and the profound impact it has had on our lives.*

***"Thank you, Bridges of Hope, and the Home of Jesus the King Church, for being a beacon of hope and love in our community!"***





## Reflections of a Leader



*Shlomi, a small town on Israel's northern border, became a front line for suffering in the wake of the October 7 attacks. Relentless shelling by Hezbollah forced over 90 percent of the residents, both Jewish and Arab, to flee, leaving behind homes that became part of a closed military zone. For months, families lived in uncertainty, uprooted from their lives with little hope of returning.*

*In the midst of this crisis, our volunteers stepped in—not just as humanitarian workers, but as ambassadors of the true Messiah who rescues the afflicted. During the evacuation, we provided displaced families with food and support in temporary shelters in Haifa, ensuring that in their darkest moments, they were not alone. But our mission did not end there. When the government allowed residents to return in late February 2024, we followed them to their homes.*

*Working hand in hand with Shlomi's local authorities—including Mayor Gabi Naaman, Vice Mayor Michael Slobodov, and Mirav Ronen, Head of Social Services—we helped provide essential aid to families trying to rebuild their lives. Many returned to houses with empty kitchens and no resources to restart their lives. As Mirav Ronen expressed, "It is a blessing that you chose to help us!"*

*But beyond tangible assistance, the greatest gift we brought was something deeper—the assurance that they were not alone. As the mayor himself acknowledged, beyond food and supplies, what his people needed most was confidence and trust that someone cared. "In this case," he said, "it is you, the Christians, who are bringing this help and restoring our belief in humanity."*

*This is the power of the gospel that not only meets physical needs but restores hope, dignity, and faith. Through the Bridges of Hope project, we are not just providing aid; we are bearing witness to the love of Christ in action, standing with those in need, and proclaiming His peace in our region that is desperate for trust and peace.*

*Thanks to our partnership with Mission Eurasia and local leaders, we were able to respond swiftly, ensuring that families who returned to their homes had food and other essentials to begin anew. More than that, we stood as a testimony of God's faithfulness, demonstrating that even in the aftermath of destruction, His love is unwavering, His people are present, and His light shines in the darkest places.*

**Pastor Benjamin Sadovsky, Living Israel Congregation**

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## A Gospel-Centered Approach:

# Delivering Help and the Message of Hope and Reconciliation

Each *Bridges of Hope* package was neatly printed and designed with a Scripture verse and a dove with an olive branch, a widely recognized symbol of peace that is well-received in both Jewish and Arab communities. These well-designed food boxes were thoughtfully packed by Mission Eurasia's young School Without Walls (SWW) volunteers food boxes to help meet the physical needs of the recipients. These boxes also included an offer to receive a copy of Scripture in Hebrew or Arabic. Despite legal restrictions (policies against proselytism that were reinforced by the government) that prevented our teams from directly placing copies of New Testaments and other Scriptures inside the packages, many families voluntarily requested copies of God's Word in their own language, demonstrating an openness to the message of Christ as Messiah.



Through this powerful ministry initiative, more than 25,000 people were impacted across Israel. Families who had lost loved ones, hope, and trust as a result of the violence on October 7, 2023 were being served by Christians whom they never expected would deliver aid to them.

Jewish families received care and aid from Arab Christians, and Arab families saw Jewish Messianic believers extending compassion in their time of need. This love-in-action approach helped to break through generations of mistrust and division, opening doors for the gospel and transforming hearts and minds.





## Reflections of a Leader



*In a land where history runs deep and divisions have long defined relationships, the Bridges of Hope project is proving that the power of the gospel transcends barriers and brings true reconciliation.*

*One striking encounter highlighted this transformation. Carol Hyde, an evangelist in Israel, shared how, for years, she and her family were terrified of Christians. Stories of churches burning synagogues in Jesus' name left a lasting wound on the Jewish people, creating deep mistrust. Yet, over time, as they heard about evangelical Christians, their perception shifted. To them, "evangelical" signified something different—not just Christians with good intentions, but those truly following Christ. They began to recognize evangelicals as "good people," distinct from those who inflicted wounds in Christ's name in the past.*

*This powerful distinction was at the heart of Bridges of Hope. As we moved through cities, delivering food to families affected by war and displacement, we weren't just seen as humanitarians—we were recognized as followers of the Way. In the midst of pain and division, we carried the light of Christ, just as Jesus called us to in Matthew 5:14-16: "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. . . Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house."*

*Through this initiative, Arab, Messianic Jewish, Ethiopian Jewish, and Russian-speaking congregations came together—not just to provide relief, but to forge relationships rooted in the love of Christ. The aid we delivered met urgent physical needs, but the unity it fostered spoke of something even greater—the presence of God's Kingdom breaking through.*

*The doors opening through Bridges of Hope are not just about humanitarian aid; they are about healing history, restoring trust, and revealing Jesus in a land desperate for peace. This is the gospel at work—proclaimed not just in words, but in love, action, and the undimmed light of Christ.*

**Brad Willey, Mission Eurasia Canada Ministry Development Director**

## Story of Doaa



*"I am Doaa, and I want to share how **Bridges of Hope** became a lifeline in one of the most difficult seasons of my life. When I received a food package, it was more than just a box filled with essential food items—it was a reminder that God had not forgotten me. I was struggling, feeling lost and overwhelmed, but that simple act of kindness touched my soul in a way I never expected. It was as if God Himself had reached out through the hands of those who packed and delivered it. When I received a food package during a difficult for our family time, it felt like a blessing straight from God. . . I was struggling and felt lost, but that simple act of kindness touched my heart deeply. It reminded me that I am not alone, and that God sees my struggles.*

*"With each visit to the Home of Jesus the King Church in Nazareth, I've felt an overwhelming sense of love and community. The warmth and support I've found there have drawn me closer to God. I've learned about His love and grace, and it has transformed my life. Thank you, Bridges of Hope Ministry, for being the hands and feet of Jesus in my life.*

***"I am forever grateful for the hope and love you have brought into my world."***

## Unexpected Blessings: Gospel Impact Beyond Expectations

The impact of **Bridges of Hope** went beyond what we had imagined. Government officials who initially hesitated to allow aid distribution by Christians publicly acknowledged the transformative power of this initiative. Gabriel Na'aman, the mayor of Shlomi, a northern town near the Lebanese border, is an active Jewish believer. He was initially skeptical when approached by our team. However, when he witnessed the arrival of volunteers and the gratitude of families receiving aid, he publicly stated, "I've seen war and division. I've seen hatred and destruction. But today, for the first time, I see something different—an act of love that disarms hatred and brings peace." The mayor of New Nazareth, Ronen Plot, who follows Judaism, had never before witnessed Jewish and Arab people, or Christian congregations, working together. He personally took part in one of the food distribution efforts, escorting a team as they delivered aid to families in need. With a kippah on his head, he stood among Arab and Jewish Christian leaders and next to Ali Salam, the mayor of the city of Old Nazareth, who is a Muslim. He reinforced his speech with hand gestures, visibly displaying the fact that he was deeply moved by what he had seen. He acknowledged that he had never imagined that such collaboration would be possible, and he expressed his deep appreciation for the *Bridges of Hope* initiative. He concluded that there must be a greater power behind this effort—God who moves people to build bridges of hope when it seems impossible.

### Challenges and God's Provision

This ministry initiative was not without its challenges. Security risks in Israel during this project were a constant concern, as terrorist attacks continued to occur in various communities of Israel and there was a concern about the safety of locations for food distribution. Mission Eurasia's staff and teams of volunteers had to navigate some tense environments carefully, and hostility toward Christians in some communities presented difficulties. However, God's protection was evident throughout the project. The economic realities of Israel also posed challenges. Food prices rose and were far higher than anticipated and initially estimated, making it more difficult to provide sufficient groceries for each package within the expected budget. Yet God miraculously provided, unexpectedly opening doors for strategic partnerships with local businesses that gave significant discounts because of the nature of the project, allowing us to stretch resources further than we thought possible.



*Reflections of a Leader*



*Mission Eurasia has long invested in church growth and leadership development within the Russian-speaking Jewish/Messianic community, equipping the Next Generation of leaders for outreach ministries. Through the Bridges of Hope and Reconciliation project, these leaders are now actively sharing Christ’s message of peace and reconciliation, fostering connections between Jewish and Arab communities and congregations. It was especially encouraging to see that, after years of Mission Eurasia’s work in Israel training young Christian leaders, the first volunteers leading this Bridges of Hope effort were graduates of our School Without Walls (SWW) program in Israel.*

*This initiative is both tangible and missionally strategic—thousands of food packages have been packed and delivered by Christian leaders from both sides of the ethnic divide. Jewish and Arab Christians, mobilized by our young leaders trained through SWW, reached out to their counterparts in Arab Christian communities, delivering food, encouragement, and the message of peace to families in desperate need.*

**Pastor Alexander Belev, Executive Director for Mission Eurasia Field Ministries**



## Looking into the Future:

# Expanding the Mission of Outreach and Reconciliation

**Bridges of Hope** has proven to be more than just a missional outreach project—it is the beginning of a movement with the potential to transform lives and unite the Body of Christ in Israel. The overwhelming response from congregations, volunteers, and recipients made it clear that this initiative must continue so that the seeds planted will grow into a lasting and fruitful harvest.

Through this uniquely powerful and strategic ministry, we have reached Arabs, Jews, Christians, and others, building **Bridges of Hope**, one relationship at a time. This work must continue. One of our next steps is expanding School Without Walls training into new congregations and locations. For nearly a decade, we have trained young leaders in Russian-speaking congregations, but many pastors have expressed a growing concern—shallow Christianity remains a significant challenge in Israel. Now, we must focus even more on equipping leaders to preach the gospel of peace and reconciliation through tangible actions like *Bridges of Hope*.

We are committed to raising up the Next Generation with a deeper, gospel-centered faith that can stand firm in a world of conflict, division, and hardship. Through *Bridges of Hope*, we are not just providing aid—we are carrying Christ’s love into the most broken places, offering a path to true reconciliation.

In the months ahead, after evaluating the impact of this initiative, Mission Eurasia is committed to strengthening long-term outreach efforts that foster Jewish-Arab Christian collaboration, expanding training for follow-up discipleship for families engaged with local congregations, and developing sustainable models for ongoing reconciliation and relief efforts.

## Conclusion:

### A Heartfelt Thank You

On behalf of the thousands of Jewish and Arab families impacted through this ministry, the volunteers who served tirelessly, and the Jewish and Arab congregations in Israel, we THANK YOU!

Your generosity and strategic investment in this unique gospel partnership have not only provided physical provision but have also ignited a movement and planted seeds of peace and reconciliation that we firmly believe will bear eternal fruit.

The unity of Jewish and Arab believers demonstrated through this initiative is a testimony that the gospel can build bridges and heal even the deepest divisions.

**To see *Bridges of Hope* in action, please watch the videos shot on the ground in Israel at these links:**

<https://youtu.be/yicLSApO7G0?si=HWonpwP-RRRP23Yc>

<https://youtu.be/B4YrdiWDmCg?si=U2f9jdK0DdxIUsea>

With profound gratitude and faith in Him,  
Sergey Rakhuba and the Mission Eurasia Team

For more information,  
please contact:

**Sergey Rakhuba**  
President  
Mission Eurasia

[sergey@missioneurasia.org](mailto:sergey@missioneurasia.org)  
(615) 435-3720

