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Survey of World Jewish Demographics

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Disclaimer: *This paper is not written by trained demographers. Our intent is to provide the LCJE family with a broad overview of ever-shifting Jewish populations as gleaned from the best sources we could identify. We understand this document may be read by a wider audience, so we have defined some terms with which they may be unfamiliar.*

Demographic data has a short “shelf life.” Even as we prepared this paper new information was made available. This document represents “a snapshot in time” (late July 2015) of our global Jewish friends and family, highlighting notable patterns and shifts in population. Our desire is to sharpen our focus on gospel proclamation “to the Jew first”—wherever in our world Israel’s descendants may be found.

INTRODUCTION

The study of demographics (the statistical analysis of populations) is multi-faceted and many layered. When viewed through a secular lens, the Jewish experience may not appear altogether unique. In truth, few ethnic timelines are stamped with the diverse experiences of the Jewish people, in depth or scope over millennia.

True, Abraham’s offspring have been subjected to the same climate conditions as their neighbors (e.g., the famine in Canaan that caused Jacob’s family to move to Egypt also impacted “every nation” in the region; see Genesis 41:57). Geo-political realities affect Jews and Gentiles alike, as seen in the rise and fall of empires which ruled the eastern Mediterranean throughout history. And all people groups experience natural disasters and disease.

From a biblical perspective, however, the Jewish people are unique. In Genesis 12:1-3 God promises a yet-unseen and unnamed land to Abraham. God “set the boundaries of the peoples,” but only Canaan’s borders are divinely delineated and given by blood oath (Genesis 15).

Further, included in God’s call of Abraham was the promise of “a great nation” through which all the families of the earth would be blessed. Abraham’s offspring will be as plentiful as the dust of the earth (Genesis 13:6), as innumerable as stars and sand (Genesis 22:17). Out of a heart of love God chose Israel from among the nations to be His own singular treasured possession (Deuteronomy 7:6ff).

Whatever God especially loves, Satan especially hates. The enmity of the Evil One for God’s people is well documented in Scripture and evident throughout history. For millennia, Satan has attacked God’s chosen nation, often using wicked individuals (e.g., Pharaoh, Haman, and Hitler) to seek their destruction.

Despite such enduring evil “*Am Israel chai*”—“The people of Israel lives.” What singular proof this is that our God is sovereign and faithful to His promises! May this paper glorify God as His faithfulness to Abraham’s offspring is seen in preserving His people, as reflected (at least in part) in the statistics herein.

CHALLENGES IN JEWISH DEMOGRAPHICS

The counting of Jewish populations is an ancient practice. Scripture records a series of census efforts, beginning in the Torah (e.g., Genesis 46:8-27, Exodus 12:37, and Numbers 1-4). Even so, challenges in measuring the size of Jewish communities persist.¹

Anyone who has performed a detailed investigation of demography understands the difficulty in ascertaining “real numbers” when sources provide differing data. Reasons for variance are understandable, and probably more so with tracking Jewish populations than most. The descendants of Jacob are widely scattered; many are highly mobile. Estimates provided by Jewish organizations measuring their communities vary in accuracy. And national governments gather statistical data using their own national criteria. [The Yiddish term *mishmash* (“jumbled confusion”) seems applicable when surveying the results of such diversity.]

Given this reality, we acknowledge our summary of data on world Jewry will be marked with some degree of ambiguity.² “Measuring Jewish populations, especially in places like Europe and the United States where Jews are a small minority, is fraught with difficulty. This is due to the complexity both of measuring small populations and of Jewish identity, which can be defined by ethnicity or religion.”³

Three prominent challenges are inherent in gathering Jewish demographic data, illustrating the difficulties we face in approaching this task.

1. “Who is a Jew?”

For a people group to be enumerated, a clearly understood definition of who belongs to that group is imperative. The often-asked, “Who is a Jew?” presents the first challenge in our study. This question is complicated on several levels, most notably ethnicity. For example, is Jewish descent patrilineal, as evidenced in the genealogies of Scripture; or matrilineal? (Orthodox Judaism traces Jewish lineage through the mothers.)

Further, when religious affiliation is factored in, those not ethnically Jewish but who attach to Judaism may be considered “Jews.” Even here confusion abounds, since Orthodox Judaism typically does not recognize the validity of non-Orthodox conversions.

¹ One interesting aspect is the enduring idea in some Jewish circles that “the evil eye controls that which is counted,” an idea propounded by Rashi in commenting on the half-shekel census commanded by God in Exodus 30. See Rabbi Professor David Golinkin’s December 2008 article, “Does Jewish Law Permit Taking a Census?” <http://www.schechter.edu/responsa.aspx?ID=39>.

² Sergio DellaPergola, “World Jewish Population, 2014,” in Arnold Dashefsky and Ira M. Sheskin (editors), *The American Jewish Year Book*, 2014, Volume 114 (2014) (Dordrecht: Springer) pp. 301-393.

[NOTE: Herein, DellaPergola/AJY references may be shown as published electronically at <http://www.jewishdatabank.org/Studies/downloadFile.cfm?FileID=3257>; for ease of referral, footnote pagination is shown corresponds to the downloadable PDF, not that of the original publication (in this footnote, the electronic reference is to pg. 15).]

³ Michael Lipka, “The continuing decline of Europe’s Jewish population,” Pew Research Center Fact Tank, February 9, 2015, www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/02/09/europes-jewish-population.

And while rabbis across the spectrum—Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstruction—may not agree on many substantive matters, they are united in rejecting from *klal Yisrael* (the whole of Israel) Yeshua-believing Jews, as our Messianic community often painfully experiences.

The definition of “who is a Jew” is a matter of continuing concern in Israel, the world’s only Jewish state. The Law of Return declares, “Every Jew has the right to come to this country as an *oleh* [immigrant citizen].”⁴

A further amendment extends the right of citizenship to “a child and a grandchild of a Jew, the spouse of a Jew, the spouse of a child of a Jew and the spouse of a grandchild of a Jew, *except for a person who has been a Jew and has voluntarily changed his religion*” [italics ours].⁵

Paragraph 4B of the same Amendment further clarifies: “For the purposes of this Law, ‘Jew’ means a person who was born of a Jewish mother or *has become converted to Judaism and who is not a member of another religion*” [italics ours].^{6 7}

Some secular Israelis, Jewish by birth but not identifying with Judaism as a religion, have sought to have their official status changed from יהודי (“Yehudi” or “Jew”) to ישראלי (“Yisraeli” or “Israeli”). In October 2013 Israel’s Supreme Court denied this request.⁸

We also note the “who is a Jew” question is not answered uniformly in the Diaspora. For example, a Chicago Anti-Defamation League report on a visit to Germany states:

A fact that has surprised many of us during the trip is the general German Jewish Community’s choice to only recognize as Jews those people with Jewish mothers. We were told that this is because the Jewish Community is predominantly Orthodox and so the decision is driven by Halacha (Rabbinical Jewish law). What is ironic here is the fact that the Nazis defined “Jewish”—through the Nuremberg Laws—as having at least one Jewish grandparent.⁹

⁴ Israel’s “Law of Return,” passed on July 5, 1950. See www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/mfa-archive/1950-1959/pages/law%20of%20return%205710-1950.aspx.

⁵ Second amendment to Israel’s Law of Return, passed March 10, 1970.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ This wording intends to exclude Yeshua-believing Jews from citizenship. While the Israeli Supreme Court has carefully sought to avoid weakening Israel’s status as a Jewish state, it has made some accommodation for Messianic Jews to become citizens—providing they aren’t “really” considered Jewish. The following quote is found in Tim Morgan’s April 21, 2008 *Christianity Today* article, “Messianic Jews Win Citizenship Victory in Israel,” (www.christianitytoday.com/gleanings/2008/april/messianic-jews-win-citizenship-victory-in-israel.html.)

In their notification dated 13.04.08 the Respondents declared, that the fact that a person is a “Messianic Jew” has no bearing on an application according to Sec. 7 of the Law of Citizenship, as well as an application according to Sec. 4(A)(a) of the Law of Return (as long as the person applying according [to] the abovementioned section of the Law of Return *is not considered to be Jewish* [italics ours], as described in section 4B of the Law of Return).

⁸ Tia Goldenberg, “Supreme Court rejects ‘Israeli’ nationality status,” *The Times of Israel*, October 4, 2013, www.timesofisrael.com/supreme-court-rejects-israeli-nationality-status.

⁹ “Germany Close Up: Who is a Jew?,” Chicago ADL letter, chicago.adl.org/who-is-a-jew, March 25, 2010.

Further, “who is a Jew?” is not just a “Jewish” question. In these writers’ experiences, Gentiles frequently seek explanation regarding Jewish identification. Definitions that include ethnicity (“Jewish mother, regardless of adherence to Judaism”) or religious affiliation (“non-Jewish mother, but identified with Judaism, preferably Orthodox”) often seem to confuse more than clarify.

2. People are transient

Some Jewish migrations, from biblical times to the present, were the result of people desiring a better life. Elimelech and Naomi moved their family from Canaan to Moab in search of food (Ruth 1). Sometimes the people of Israel were affected by regional political realities (e.g., exile to Babylon); the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Islamic Revolution in Iran serve as more modern examples.

All too many large migrations of Jews stem from the evil and hatred endured at the hands of non-Jews. Major population changes in past centuries were the result of exiles, pogroms, edicts of expulsion and genocide. Jewish people have been forced to flee not only their promised homeland but also many countries of the Diaspora.

Sadly, we still have examples of this today. As anti-Semitism continues to show its ugly face on French (and other European) soil, record numbers of French-Jewish citizens are moving to Israel. Even proceeding the horrific January 9 massacre at Hyper Cacher, a kosher market in eastern Paris, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appealed to the European Jewish population to make *aliyah* (immigrate to the Land). Israel’s Immigrant Absorption Ministry estimates the number of immigrants from France in 2015 will reach 9,000 by year end; by comparison, 7,200 immigrated in 2014.¹⁰

Especially in today's world, it seems few people remain in the same place for extended periods of time. When a demographic survey is taken, double counting (being included both at home and a temporary residence), or missing the count (being away when a survey is conducted), is possible. A family with a home in Israel may also own a residence in Europe. Family members potentially could be included in total population counts in both countries, or not at all, depending on survey guidelines and timing. Others who actually relocate from one city to another may be counted in both. Among the college-aged population, a student counted in California because of a Hillel or synagogue affiliation may also be numbered in the Chicago household where her parents live.

3. Data collection methodologies vary

Collecting accurate demographic data is tedious and comes at a steep cost. Several methods exist for gathering desired information, each with pros and cons and none of them perfect. Surveys require the cooperation of those taking them and can produce inaccurate data or low response rates. Numbers may be based upon membership in a

¹⁰ Itamar Eichner, “French Immigration to Israel Surges in Summer of 2015, *ynetnews.com*, June 17, 2015, www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4669430,00.html.

synagogue, Jewish Community Center or similar organization. As noted, when survey data is gathered from multiple community sources great care must be taken to prevent double counting. And sometimes a demographic number is simply a community leader's "best guess," so many times "approximate" numbers are registered. For these reasons Jewish demography is both science and art.

Population figures also may be skewed for the benefit of those taking or sponsoring the data collection. The *American Jewish Yearbook 2014* notes:

Some major Jewish organizations in Israel and the US—such as the Jewish Agency for Israel, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, and the major Jewish Federations in the US—sponsor data collection and tend to influence the rules of research, rendering them increasingly more complex and flexible. Organizations are motivated by their mission toward their respective constituencies rather than by pure scientific criteria. In turn, the understandable interest of organizations to function and secure budgetary resources tends to influence them to cover Jewish populations increasingly similar to the enlarged and Law of Return definitions rather than to the core definition....¹¹

Other factors in measuring populations

Two important factors are considered in all demographic measurements: 1) birth and death rates, and 2) emigration and immigration. A third factor influences Jewish demographics: "passages"—people joining or leaving a subgroup by choice. Within the scope of our concern, the latter includes Gentile conversions to Judaism, or Jewish people formally aligning with Christianity and/or Islam.^{12 13}

SOURCES

Sources providing world Jewish population figures are plentiful. Data collected by specific Jewish communities is readily available through a simple Google search. However, when surveys are compared, the numbers vary (sometimes widely). Further, dates of publication do not necessarily indicate how "fresh" the data itself may be.

So where do we look for "real numbers?" Even among the sources considered most reliable discrepancies exist. As an example, for total numbers of world Jewry we find:

¹¹ DellaPergola, <http://www.jewishdatabank.org/Studies/downloadFile.cfm?FileID=3257>, 21.

¹² "Conversion of Jews to Islam, at least up to the present time, has been relatively rare, but not unheard of." Historic examples include Abdullah ibn Salman (a rabbi who met Mohammad and converted) and, most famously, Shabtai Tzvi, the "messiah" who in 1666 chose Islam over death.]

¹³ For a more contemporary account, see the Vered Weiss article, "Former Rabbis, Second Wives And Charismatic Kabbalists," *Jewish Business News*, February 27, 2015 for the story of Rabbi Joseph Cohen, aka Yousef al-Khattab. <http://jewishbusinessnews.com/2015/02/27/former-rabbis-second-wives-and-charismatic-kabbalists-jews-who-convert-to-islam>. [A rather "tongue-in-cheek" perspective of "converting out" is found in Jeremy Greenberg's "The Observations of a Jew Who Converted to Islam," *The Huffington Post*, January 18, 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jeremy-greenberg/jew-converted-to-islam_b_1097776.html.]

- *Britannica Book of the Year* (2014): 13,862,000¹⁴
- *Jewish Virtual Library* (accessed July 2015): 13,900,000¹⁵
- *American Jewish Yearbook* (2014): 14,212,800¹⁶
- *World Christian Database* (accessed July 2015): 14,633,714¹⁷

American Jewish Yearbook 2014 (AJY), whose data is also published on line as *Jewish Data Bank*, has been chosen as the baseline of this paper for several reasons: 1) its data is collated by noted demographer Sergio DellaPergola, a Hebrew University professor and recognized expert in this field; 2) the data focuses on Jewry regionally as well as globally; 3) it includes studies by professional demographers undertaken for specific communities or nations (such as the 2013 Pew Research Center's *A Portrait of Jewish Americans*); 4) it presents clear and reliable data collection methods (noting sources and degrees of accuracy), with informative charts to represent findings; and 5) it is published annually, so includes updated data as it is available.

JEWISH IDENTITY

As mentioned previously, to have an accurate count, it is important to know whom we are counting.¹⁸ Below is a chart representing four categories used by Professor DellaPergola's team to collate data. [Be aware this information is representative of the Diaspora only. Israel applies its own (stricter) legal definition of "who is a Jew" which includes "matrilineal Jewish origin, or conversion to Judaism, and not holding another religion."¹⁹]

The "core" Jewish population definition

In Diaspora countries, the "core" Jewish population consists of those who "identified themselves as Jews; or who are identified as Jews by a respondent in the same household, and do not have another monotheistic religion."²⁰

Thus, inclusion in this particular group is not dependent upon an individual's strict (or even loose) observance of or commitment to Judaism, affinity for or knowledge of things Jewish (e.g., *Yiddishkeit*), community involvement, etc. Indeed, this core group does

¹⁴ Karen Jacobs Sparks and Melinda Shepherd, *Britannica Book of the Year 2014*, 324.

¹⁵ "Vital Statistics: Jewish Population of the World," *Jewish Virtual Library*, 2014, www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/jewpop.html.

¹⁶ DellaPergola, <http://www.jewishdatabank.org/Studies/downloadFile.cfm?FileID=3257>, 18.

¹⁷ Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo, eds., *World Christian Database*, www.worldchristiandatabase.org/wcd/esweb.asp?WCI=Results&Query=509&PageSize=25&Page=10. [NOTE: this resource requires password access.]

¹⁸ For instance, the 2013 Pew Survey counted anyone who answered "yes" to: " (a) that their religion is Jewish, or (b) that aside from religion they consider themselves to be Jewish or partially Jewish, or (c) that they were raised Jewish or had at least one Jewish parent, even if they do not consider themselves Jewish today." [See "Sidebar: Who is a Jew?", Pew Research Center *A Portrait of Jewish Americans*, October 1, 2013, <http://www.pewforum.org/2013/10/01/sidebar-who-is-a-jew>.

¹⁹ DellaPergola, <http://www.jewishdatabank.org/Studies/downloadFile.cfm?FileID=3257>, 19.

²⁰ Ibid.

embrace *those who observe Judaism*, but also includes *those who self-identify as Jews by ethnicity or other cultural criteria*. All converts to Judaism and those who claim to be Jewish aside from conversion are also in. And those who are descended from Jewish parents, but do not self-identify as “Jewish” still may be included in the core.

“With such a broad definition of ‘core Jews,’ surely the ‘Messianic’ branch of the family is included?” one may ask. Not by the *American Jewish Yearbook* demographers—or other “official” sources as yet (*World Christian Database* excepted). Explicitly excluded from the AJY’s core group are *those with Jewish parents who have embraced another monotheistic religion*. *Those of Jewish origin who attach themselves with a non-Jewish religious group without formally converting out* are also excluded.²¹

[NOTE: While undergoing a Messianic *mikveh*/Christian baptism is seen as a significant marker in religious identification, even more informal alignment with Yeshua/Messianic faith is sufficient for exclusion in the core group of Jews by Jewish demographers.]

“Enlarged” Jewish Population definition

DellaPergola’s “enlarged Jewish population” includes “the sum of: (a) the core Jewish population; (b) persons reporting they are *partly Jewish*; (c) all others of Jewish parentage who—by *core* Jewish population criteria—are *not* currently Jewish (non-Jews with Jewish background); and (d) all respective non-Jewish household members (spouses, children, etc.).”²²

“Non-Jews with Jewish Background” definition

A further subset of the “enlarged” Jewish population includes “Non-Jews with Jewish Background.” These are “(a) persons who have adopted another religion, or otherwise opted out, although they may claim to be *also* Jewish by ethnicity or in some other way...; and (b) other persons with Jewish parentage (PJBs) who disclaim being Jewish. It logically follows that most PJBs who are not part of the US core Jewish population, as well as many Canadians declaring Jewish as one of *multiple ethnicities* naturally should be included under the enlarged definition.”^{23 24}

²¹ Ibid. [“In a much debated study—the 2000-01 US National Jewish Population Survey-NJPS 2000-01 (Kotler Berkowitz et al. 2003)—the solution chosen was to allow for Jews with multiple religious identities to be included in the core Jewish population definition under condition that the other identity was not a monotheistic religion.”]

²² Ibid, 20.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Here we most clearly see the logical inconsistencies and the lengths to which demographers will go to exclude Messianic Jews. Those of Jewish parentage who explicitly do not self-identify as Jews may be included in the core; yet Yeshua-believing Jews, regardless how many generations of Jewish lineage can be traced or how fervently a Jewish identity is insisted upon, can only fit within the “Non-Jews with Jewish Background” definition.

Law of Return definition

Since its enactment in 1950, the “Law of Return” has guided Israel’s Ministry of Interior in handling applications of new immigrants. For those who meet the criteria, full citizenship and civil rights are immediately granted. Further, a “basket” of varying tax, housing and educational benefits are also available to new *olim*.

As noted above, the Law of Return has been amended twice. As it stands today, a Jew is one who: was born to a Jewish mother OR converted to Judaism (Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, or Reconstructionist), AND who has not joined another [presumably monotheistic] religion.²⁵

“By ruling of Israel’s Supreme Court, conversion from Judaism, as in the case of some ethnic Jews who currently identify with another religion, entails loss of eligibility for Law of Return purposes.”²⁶ This has been tested in court. Given the long-standing practice (instituted by Israel’s first Prime Minister, David ben Gurion) of granting citizenship to descendants of Jews to the third generation, Messianic believers of patrilineal Jewish descent have been given Israeli citizenship (though without being officially recognized as Jews). “The Law of Return applies to a large population—the so called *aliyah* eligible—whose scope is significantly wider than the core and enlarged Jewish populations.”²⁷

“Jewish Ancestry Ever” definition

One of the more colorful aspects of Jewish demography is the case of “lost Jewish communities.” Since the “Operation Solomon” airlift in 1991, the most visible have been the Beta Israel (defined as “Ethiopian non-Jews of Jewish ancestry,” and referred to in Amharic as Falashmura²⁸ or Falashas). They are also the largest in number of “converted” immigrants to Israel—comprising more than half the number of non-Jews in the Land who have formally adopted Judaism. But the Ethiopian immigrant tide is almost ending. In 2007 Israel’s chief rabbi issued 5,538 conversion certificates to Beta Israel individuals. In 2012 the number declined to 2,269; similar numbers were expected in 2013.^{29 30}

²⁵ To our knowledge, no one has been exempted from Israeli citizenship as a Jew for practicing an Eastern religion.

²⁶ DellaPergola, <http://www.jewishdatabank.org/Studies/downloadFile.cfm?FileID=3257>, 14.

²⁷ Ibid.

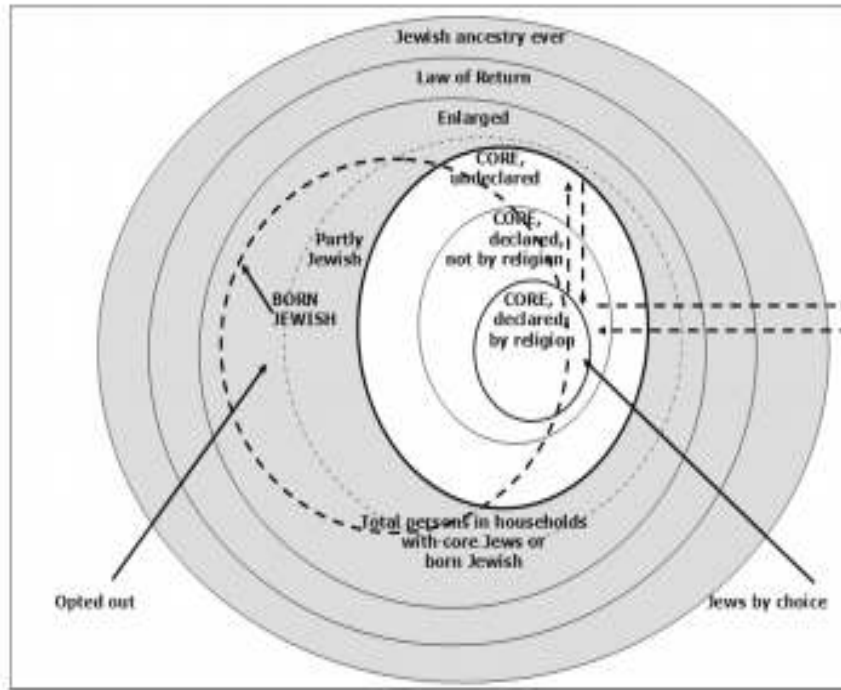
²⁸ Mitchell Bard, “Ethiopian Jewry: The Falash Mura,” *Jewish Virtual Library*, www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/falashmura.html.

²⁹ Yair Ettinger, “The Falashmura path to Judaism,” *Haaretz*, April 12, 2013, <http://www.haaretz.com/jewish-world/ethiopian-exodus-the-last-chapter/.premium-1.541903>.

³⁰ The insistence upon the conversion of members of Beta Israel to Judaism (including “ritual circumcision” by Orthodox rabbis in Israel) to qualify individuals as eligible for the Law of Return proved a source of contention on the part of a proud—and already circumcised—male population.

Lesser known “lost communities” include the Bene Israel and Cochin Jews³¹ of India, and the “Kaifeng Jews”³² from China who have a tradition of connectedness with Jewish roots. The history of Marranos/Conversos/Anusim/Crypto Jews who settled in the New World, particularly in Latin America,³³ has given rise to renewed interest on the part of many to trace their Jewish roots or identify as Jews.³⁴ And a recent *Jerusalem Post* article reports that in the world’s most populous Muslim country, Indonesia, individuals of Dutch-Jewish heritage are embracing a lost connection with Judaism.³⁵

Figure 1: Configuring contemporary Jewish populations (not shown proportional to actual).³⁶



³¹ “Who Are The Jews of India, And What Are Their Origins?” www.shamash.org/lists/sci-faq/HTML/faq/13-09.html.

³² Michael Pollock, "Detailed History of Kaifeng Jews." The Sino-Judaic Institute. 2009, www.sino-judaic.org/index.php?page=kaifeng_jews_history.

³³“Monterrey, and the state of Nuevo Leon, was settled by 695 Jewish families escaping the Inquisition in Mexico City.” “Sephardim–Conversos–Marranos: Historical Overview,” JewishGen, www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/sefard5.htm.

³⁴Juan Forero, “‘Lost Jews’ of Columbia Say They’ve Found Their Roots,” NPR Chicago Radio (December 20, 2012), www.npr.org/2012/12/20/167714541/lost-jews-of-columbia-say-theyve-found-their-roots.

³⁵ Anna Clare Spelman, “The reborn Jews of Indonesia,” *The Jerusalem Post*, July 8, 2015, www.jpost.com/Jerusalem-Report/The-reborn-Jews-of-Indonesia-408326.

³⁶DellaPergola, <http://www.jewishdatabank.org/Studies/downloadFile.cfm?FileID=3257>, 18.

CURRENT REALITIES

1. The Jewish population is increasing in overall numbers, but diminishing proportionally in the world.

The *AJY 2014* relates, “The size of world Jewry at the beginning of 2014 was assessed at 14,212,800. World Jewry constituted 1.96 per 1,000 of the world’s total population of 7.243 billion by mid-year 2014 (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division 2013).”³⁷

In 2014, for every 510 people in the world, one was Jewish. Between January 1, 2013 and January 1, 2014 the Jewish population increased by .66%, in comparison to the world population growth rate of 1.13%. The world Jewish population increase was due entirely to the sizeable increase of the population in Israel (1.73%), which overcame the decrease in the Diaspora (-0.13%).³⁸

Further:

The number of Jews increased between 2013 and 2014 in Israel (and, consequently, in Asia as a whole), in Oceania, and minimally in North America thanks to continuing immigration to Canada. Jewish population size decreased to variable extents in Central and South America, Western Europe, the Balkans, the Former Soviet Union (FSU) (both in Europe and Asia), the rest of Asia, and in Africa. These regional changes reflect the trends apparent in the Jewish population in the major countries in each region.³⁹

Between the years of 1945 and 2014, the world’s population increased from 2.315 billion to 7.243 billion, while the Jewish population growth rate decreased from 4.75 per 1,000 (1945) to 1.96 per 1,000 in 2014.⁴⁰

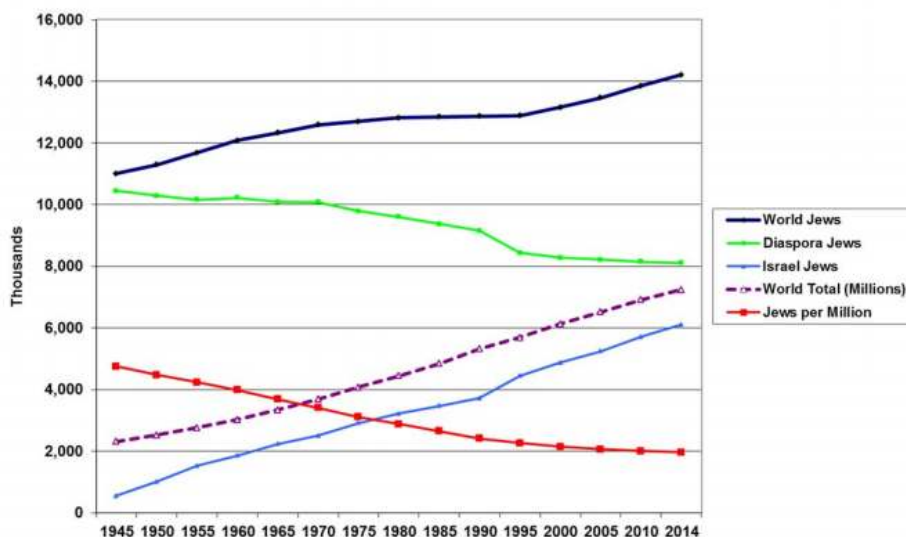
³⁷ Ibid, 25.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid, 32.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 25.

Figure 2: World total population and Jewish population, core definition, 1945-2014⁴¹



2. The vast majority of the global Jewish population resides in the U.S. and Israel.

Figure 3 (below) displays the current picture of the world’s core Jewish populations. In 2014, 83% of the total Jewish population resided in either the U.S. or Israel.

Israel’s Jewish population is largest at 6.1 million (42.9% of world Jewry), “not including about 348,000 people not counted as Jews in the Population Register and those representing families admitted entrance within the Law of Return.”⁴²

[NOTE: See **Appendix 1** for a breakdown of the subgroups of Israel’s Jewish population.]

The Jewish population in the United States is listed at 5,700,000 (based on revised figures provided by the 2013 Pew Research Center study). This represents 40.1% of world Jewry.⁴³

An additional 15% of global Jewry is found in 16 countries with Jewish populations of 19,000 or more. The remaining 2% (with Jewish populations below 18,000) comprise another 77 countries.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Ibid, 12.

⁴² Ibid, 11.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

Figure 3: Largest core Jewish populations, 2014⁴⁵

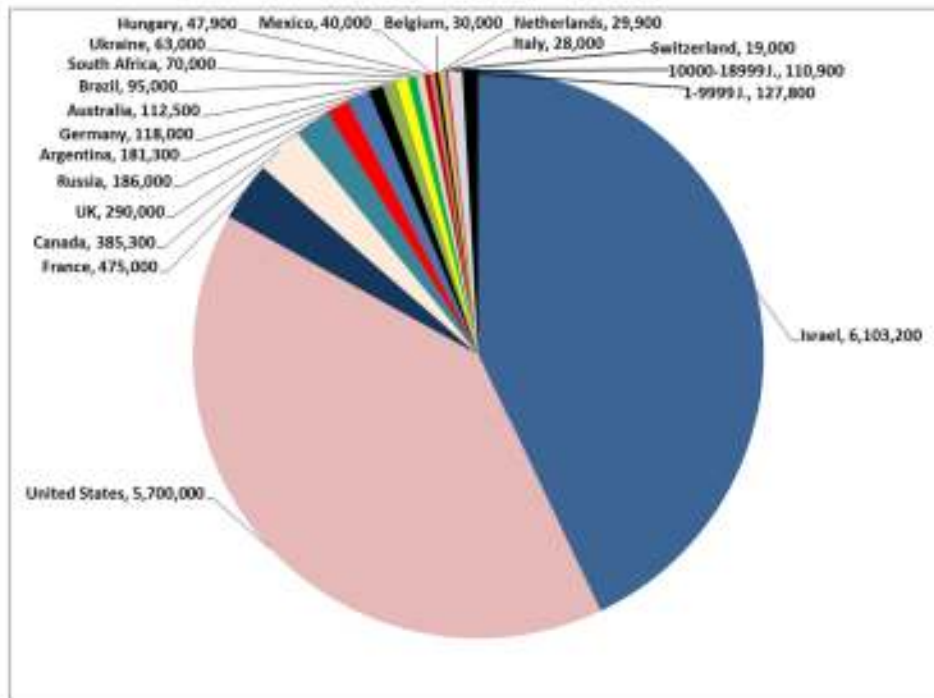


Figure 4: Countries with largest Jewish populations 2014⁴⁶

Rank	Country	Jewish population	Percent of total Jewish population			
			In the world		In the diaspora	
			%	Cumulative %	%	Cumulative %
1	Israel ^a	6,103,200	42.9	42.9	b	b
2	US	5,700,000	40.1	83.0	70.3	70.3
3	France	475,000	3.3	86.4	5.9	76.1
4	Canada	385,300	2.7	89.1	4.8	80.9
5	United Kingdom	290,000	2.0	91.1	3.6	84.5
6	Russian Federation	186,000	1.3	92.4	2.3	86.8
7	Argentina	181,300	1.3	93.7	2.2	89.0
8	Germany	118,000	0.8	94.6	1.5	90.5
9	Australia	112,500	0.8	95.3	1.4	91.8
10	Brazil	95,000	0.7	96.0	1.2	93.0
11	South Africa	70,000	0.5	96.5	0.9	93.9
12	Ukraine	63,000	0.4	96.9	0.8	94.7
13	Hungary	47,900	0.3	97.3	0.6	95.2
14	Mexico	40,000	0.3	97.6	0.5	95.7
15	Belgium	30,000	0.2	97.8	0.4	96.1
16	Netherlands	29,900	0.2	98.0	0.4	96.5
17	Italy	28,000	0.2	98.2	0.3	96.8
18	Switzerland	19,000	0.1	98.3	0.2	97.1

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ DellaPergola, <http://www.jewishdatabank.org/Studies/downloadFile.cfm?FileID=3257>, 34.

Three notable cities in the United States have experienced significant increases in Jewish populations: Portland, Oregon; Seattle, Washington; and St. Louis, Missouri. Between 1995 and 2014, St. Louis experienced a 14% increase.⁴⁷

In **2014**, there are an estimated 32,900 households in the St. Louis study area (the City of St. Louis, St. Louis County and St. Charles County) with at least one adult who considers himself/herself to be Jewish or partly Jewish. These **32,900 Jewish households** include **61,100 Jewish persons**—50,200 Jewish or partly Jewish adults and 10,900 Jewish or partly Jewish children. In addition, a total of 21,600 non-Jewish adults and 6,600 non-Jewish children live in St. Louis Jewish households. **Thus, the total number of people living in St. Louis Jewish households is 89,300.**⁴⁸

Portland, Oregon—a technology/start-up hub—saw its Jewish population nearly doubled (from their apparently much-understated) earlier estimate of 25,000.⁴⁹ Even greater, according to *Tablet*, Seattle has experienced a 70% increase in its Jewish population since 2001 (up from an estimated 37,180 people in 2001 to 63,400 people in 2015). The article also reports this group, with a median age of 39, is highly educated; 55% of survey respondents hold an advanced degree. Notably, over half this population (56%) is intermarried.⁵⁰ [This gives rise to question who in those households is being counted as Jewish.]

3. Globally, Jewish people are concentrated in metropolitan areas.

Unsurprisingly, Jewish populations are concentrated in major urban areas. Given the reality that 83% of world Jewry resides in Israel and the United States, we might expect the top five cities to be in these two countries. Perhaps it will surprise some to learn that slightly more than half (52.9%) of the global Jewish population at present resides in these five major metro areas: Tel Aviv, New York, Jerusalem, Haifa, and Los Angeles.

According to *AJY 2014*, “Of the 17 largest metropolitan areas of Jewish residence, nine were located in the US, four in Israel, and one each in France, the UK, Canada, and Argentina. Nearly all the major areas of settlement of contemporary Jewish populations share distinct features, such as being a national or regional capital, enjoying a higher standard of living, with a highly developed infrastructure for higher education, and widespread transnational connections.”⁵¹

⁴⁷ Stephen M. Cohen, et al. “2014 St. Louis Jewish Community Study” in *Berman Jewish Databank*, www.jewishdatabank.org/Studies/details.cfm?StudyID=769.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Stephanie Butnick, “Seattle’s Jewish Community Grew 70 percent in last 15 years,” *Tablet*, Feb. 5, 2015, www.tabletmag.com/scroll/188781/seattles-jewish-community-grew-70-percent-in-15-years. [NOTE: this demonstrates the difference when the full number of household residents are included with the count.]

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ DellaPergola, <http://www.jewishdatabank.org/Studies/downloadFile.cfm?FileID=3257>, 37.

[NOTE: See **Appendix 2** for the 17 global cities (Greater Metropolitan Areas) with largest Jewish populations. **Appendix 3** lists the 20 US cities with largest Jewish populations, adjusted for partial-year residents.]

4. Major shifts are taking place in the largest demographics, especially Europe.

Early last century the world's largest Jewish population lived in Eastern Europe; post-*Shoah* (Holocaust), only a shadow of once-vibrant communities remains. As late as 1939 the former USSR had 3.4 million Jewish citizens; today the Jewish population of those former republics is estimated at less than one tenth: 310,000. In the same time frame, non-Soviet Empire states (Poland, Romania, *et al.*) saw a population decrease from 4.7 million to "probably fewer than 100,000 Jews in all those countries combined."⁵²

Demographic shifts continue, with the Jewish homeland the greatest draw. "During 2014, Israel welcomed 27,993 new immigrants with most immigrants arriving in Israel from the Ukraine (6,996), France (6,377), Russia (5,040), and the United States (3,208)."⁵³

The unrest on Ukraine's border with Russia, combined with endemic anti-Jewish sentiments and a relaxing of Israeli red tape for refugees,⁵⁴ has fueled an increasing exodus of Ukrainian Jewry. "During the first quarter of 2015, 1,971 people arrived in Israel from Ukraine, a 215%(!) rise in comparison to the 625 who arrived in the same period last year. In Russia the absolute number (1,515) was roughly similar to Ukraine, but the percentage increase over 2014 (50%) while large was a bit less extreme."⁵⁵

The number of immigrants to Israel coming from France is also dramatically increasing. In the first three quarters of last year close to 6,000 French Jews made *aliyah*⁵⁶—for reasons noted earlier: violent attacks, pervasive anti-Semitism, and an uncertain future. A June 2015 *YnetNews.com* article records an increase of 25% in French *olim* in the first eight months of 2015 compared to the similar period in 2014.⁵⁷

⁵² Michael Lipka, "The continuing decline of Europe's Jewish population," Pew Research Center (February 9, 2015), <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/02/09/europes-jewish-population>.

⁵³ "Vital Statistics: Latest Populations Statistics for Israel (Updated April 2015)," https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Society_&_Culture/newpop.html.

⁵⁴ Sam Sokol, "Ukraine's Jews praise easing of Israeli immigration policy," *The Jerusalem Post* (December 12, 2014).

⁵⁵ Mark Adomanis, "Jewish Emigration From Ukraine And Russia Is Surging," *Forbes* (May 4, 2015), <http://www.forbes.com/sites/markadomanis/2015/05/04/jewish-emigration-from-ukraine-and-russia-is-surging>.

⁵⁶ Sam Sokol, "24,800 new immigrants arrive in Israel in 5774," *The Jerusalem Post* (September 22, 2014). <http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/24800-new-immigrants-arrive-in-Israel-in-5774-376063>. [NOTE: stats based on Hebrew calendar year.]

⁵⁷ Itamar Eichner, "French Immigration to Israel Surges in Summer of 2015," *Ynetnews.com*, June 17, 2015, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4669430,00.html>.

5. Population composition is influenced by internal and external elements.

As noted previously, multiple factors influence demographic shifts. Israel provides a primary case in point, particularly in the relative proportion of “biological” growth in comparison to migration and conversion.

In 2013, out of a total growth of 103,600 core Jews in Israel, 91,600 reflected the balance of births and deaths, and 12,000 derived from net conversions to Judaism and from the estimated Israel-Diaspora net migration balance (immigration minus emigration) (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics; Fisher 2013). This estimate includes tourists who changed their status to immigrants, returning Israelis, and Israeli citizens born abroad who entered Israel for the first time. Therefore, internal demographic change produced over 80% of the recorded Jewish population growth in Israel as well as most of the Diaspora’s estimated decrease.⁵⁸

Israel’s Jewish population growth reveals a persisting natural increase—in part due to a relatively young population: in 2012, 27% of Israelis were below the age of 15; only 12% were 65 years and older. And,

In 2013, 127,101 Jewish births—the highest ever—and 35,509 Jewish deaths produced a net natural increase of 91,592 Jewish persons—again, the highest ever. Israel’s current Jewish fertility rate slightly rose to 3.0 children per woman, higher than in any other developed country and twice or more the effective Jewish fertility rate in most Diaspora Jewish communities. This reflected not only the large family size of the Jewish population’s more religious component, but more significantly a diffused desire for children among the moderately traditional and secular, especially remarkable among the upwardly mobile (DellaPergola 2009 c, d).⁵⁹

This combination of a high fertility rate and the young age composition in Israel does not exist in any other Jewish population, including the United States. Aside from a few instances of growth from internal migration (Canada, the U.S. in recent history, Australia, and until recently, Germany), the tendency has been for the Diaspora population to decrease at various rates.⁶⁰ This is caused by low Jewish birth rates (1.9 children per adult among American Jews),⁶¹ an increasing number of the elderly, and an uncertain balance between conversions to and secessions from Judaism.⁶²

An additional factor must be considered when examining the shifting composition of world Jewry: *yordim* (emigrants from Israel). The reality is that Jewish citizens (some native-born *sabras*, but more than half were immigrants) choose to leave the Jewish state for various reasons. The numbers are not insignificant.

⁵⁸ DellaPergola, <http://www.jewishdatabank.org/Studies/downloadFile.cfm?FileID=3257>, 25-27.

⁵⁹ Arnold Dashefsky and Ira Sheskin, eds. *The American Jewish Yearbook 2014*. Vol. 114. Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2014, 365.

⁶⁰ DellaPergola, <http://www.jewishdatabank.org/Studies/downloadFile.cfm?FileID=3257>, 14.

⁶¹ Dashefsky and Sheskin, 4.

⁶² DellaPergola, <http://www.jewishdatabank.org/Studies/downloadFile.cfm?FileID=3257>, 14.

It is estimated that between 549,000 and 582,000 Israelis are currently living abroad, with over a quarter of them residing in the US. Nearly 25,000 Israelis live in Canada, 14,000 in Germany, 13,500 in the UK, 10,100 in Australia and 8,700 in France.... Other Israeli expat centers include Holland, Spain, Switzerland, Brazil, Chile and Ecuador.⁶³

Life is not easy in the Land of Promise. The high cost of living and shortage of affordable housing are a challenge. The threat of radical Islam on the move in surrounding countries, and the continuing fears of terrorist rockets and tunnels from Gaza and Lebanon, are an over-arching reality. Many Israelis love to travel, to get away from it all – especially after completing military service.

There has been concern that an increasing number of Israelis would be leaving for more than “extended vacations.” (Though no official definition exists of what makes one a *yored*, the Institute for Kibbutz Research uses the yardstick of an Israeli citizen living outside of Israel for more than three years, excepting students and those sent abroad to represent the State of Israel.⁶⁴) Despite the recent flurry of the “Milky Revolution”⁶⁵ generated on Facebook from Berlin, the concern that a flood (“between 3,000 to 20,000 over the past five years”)⁶⁶ of young *yordim* will find a permanent home in Germany seems overblown.⁶⁷

In fact, 2012’s emigration figures were the lowest since 1948. Though 2,400 more Israelis left than returned in 2012, this is an improvement over the nearly 10,000 annual loss between 1986 and 2008.⁶⁸ [NOTE: this “net loss” does not include new immigrants to Israel, who more than make up the difference.]

6. Orthodox in the U.S.: smallest, but growing fastest.

Although the Orthodox community is the smallest of the three most prominent Jewish denominations in the U.S., it is the fastest growing. On average, the Orthodox community in the U.S. is much younger and, as elsewhere in the world, has larger families than the remainder of the Jewish population. The 2013 Pew Survey reported

⁶³“Israeli emigration rates at all-time low,” *The Times of Israel* (October 14, 2014), <http://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-emigration-rates-at-all-time-low>.

⁶⁴ Naama Sabar, *Kibbutzniks in the Diaspora*, SUNY Press, February 1 2012.

⁶⁵ James Kirchick, "Israelis in Berlin," *Tablet* (January 20, 2015), <http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/188191/israelis-in-berlin>.

⁶⁶ Anthony Faiola and Ruth Eglash, "Waves of young Israelis find a home in the former Nazi capital," *Washington Post* (October 21, 2014), https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/waves-of-young-israelis-find-a-home-in-the-former-nazi-capital/2014/10/21/7ecd02bf-70fa-4b9f-b226-c4be22049a2f_story.html.

⁶⁷ Ruth King, "James Kirchick: the insidious and mistaken media meme around the irresistible story of Israelis choosing life in Germany," RUTHFULLY YOURS blog post (January 31st, 2015), <http://www.ruthfullyyours.com/2015/01/31/james-kirchickthe-insidious-and-mistaken-media-meme-around-the-irresistible-story-of-israelis-choosing-life-in-germany>.

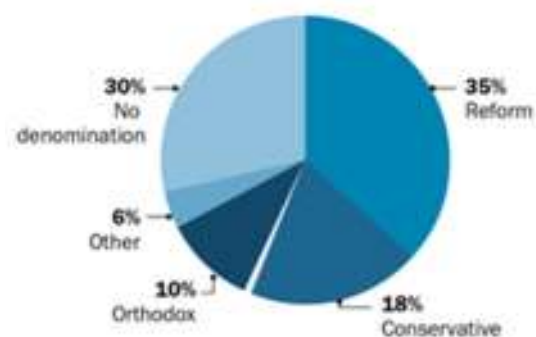
⁶⁸ “Israeli emigration rates at all-time low,” *The Times of Israel* (October 14, 2014), <http://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-emigration-rates-at-all-time-low>.

Orthodox adults between the ages of 40-59 had 4.1 children in their families, compared to 1.9 children for the wider Jewish community.⁶⁹

Previously a low retention rate tended to balance the Orthodox population growth. However, the drift away from Orthodoxy is showing a decline and is noticeably lower among those ages 18-to-29-years-old (17%).⁷⁰ Further,

Reform Judaism continues to be the largest Jewish denominational movement in the United States. One-third (35%) of all U.S. Jews identify with the Reform movement, while 18% identify with Conservative Judaism, 10% with Orthodox Judaism and 6% with a variety of smaller groups, such as the Reconstructionist and Jewish Renewal movements. About three in ten American Jews (including 19% of Jews by religion and two-thirds of Jews of no religion) say they do not identify with any particular Jewish denomination. [2013]⁷¹

Figure 5: Jewish Denominational Identity in the U.S.⁷²



Source: Pew Research Center 2013 Survey of U.S. Jews, Feb. 20-June 13, 2013. Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Based on the net Jewish population (both Jews by religion and Jews of no religion).

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7. U.S. Jewry is trending toward less-observant overall.

The 2013 Pew Survey of U.S. Jewry reported 22% of those surveyed say they have “no religion”: 6% are atheist, 4% agnostic, leaving 12% whose religion is “nothing in particular.” [This accords with the wider American trend away from religion since the 1990s; Pew shows “nones” at 20% overall, and about a third for the under 30 folks among the general U.S. population.]⁷³

The same survey found that approximately one-quarter of people who were raised Orthodox have since become Conservative or Reform Jews, while 30% of those raised

⁶⁹ “A Portrait of Jewish Americans.” <http://www.pewforum.org/2013/10/01/jewish-american-beliefs-attitudes-culture-survey>.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

Conservative have become Reform Jews, and 28% of those raised Reform have left the ranks of Jews by religion entirely. Much less switching is reported in the opposite direction. For example, just 7% of Jews raised in the Reform movement have become Conservative or Orthodox, and just 4% of those raised in Conservative Judaism have become Orthodox.”⁷⁴

“Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist” terminology is often used in the United States. But the global community, and especially in Israel, is more familiar with a *Haredi*/Ultra-Orthodox, Modern Orthodox/Traditional and perhaps some less traditional varieties of Judaism (e.g., Karaism). This proves a challenge to those wishing to measure relative group size worldwide.⁷⁵

Figure 6: Denominational Identification, by Age⁷⁶

	Among Jews ages...			
	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
	%	%	%	%
Reform	29	29	43	38
Conservative	11	16	20	24
Orthodox	11	14	8	6
Modern Orthodox	1	3	3	4
Ultra-Orthodox [*]	9	10	3	2
Other	1	1	1	*
Other denomination	8	6	4	5
No denomination	41	33	24	25
Don't know	*	*	1	3
	100	100	100	100

Source: Pew Research Center 2013 Survey of U.S. Jews, Feb. 20-June 13, 2013. Q.H1/Q.H2. Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

* Ultra-Orthodox includes those identifying as Hasidic or Yeshivish as well as those volunteering they are Haimish or Ultra-Orthodox.

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Despite higher birthrates, at present the *Haredi* community comprises only about 6% of American Jewry. Reflecting the challenge we face in interfacing with the ultra-Orthodox community, 97% of *Haredim* surveyed said “all or most” of their closest friends are Jewish. That number drops to 65% among the Modern Orthodox, and 32% of the wider Jewish community.

Almost all (95%) of the ultra-Orthodox population surveyed consider their communities “excellent or good places to live.”⁷⁷ But those with connections among the *Haredim* know that (as with all insular societies) there is a percentage of disillusioned, disaffected, and depressed. The “XO” (“ex-Orthodox”)—who also self-refer as “OTD” for

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ “The Global Religious Landscape: Jews. Pew Research Center, December 18, 2012. <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-jew>.

⁷⁶ Michael Lipka, “Controversy over new Israeli law highlights growing ultra-Orthodox population,” Pew Research Center Fact Tank, March 13, 2014, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/03/13/controversy-over-new-israeli-law-highlights-growing-ultra-orthodox-population>.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

“off the *derech*” (“path” in Hebrew)—have set up support groups (Footsteps⁷⁸ is one) similar to the “ex-Amish” or “ex-Fundamentalists” in America.

Some of these stories end tragically, as in the July 2015 suicide of Faigy Mayer. Raised in the Belz Hasidic community, she reportedly was embittered at her insulated upbringing. But she also suffered from depression (diagnosed bipolar), so there will be ongoing debate about cause and effect.^{79 80} Regardless of the contributing factors, Faigy Mayer represents a valued human life, now in eternity. She, and so many others, illustrate the continuing need of the human heart to experience the love of God in a personal way.

8. In Israel, conversions to Judaism add to “Jewish” growth.

AJY 2014 includes findings from Israel Conversion Courts on converts from 1999-2012. This includes “passages” to Judaism certified through both the civilian and Israel Defense Forces (IDF) conversion systems. Between those years, 71,984 people converted to Judaism through the Israeli rabbinical system. [As noted, Ethiopian immigrants account for the highest percentage.]

Young adults immigrating from the FSU and Israelis born to non-Jewish immigrant mothers were most likely to convert through the IDF system (some 500-800 annually). Save for the Ethiopians, few converts previously qualified for Israeli citizenship under the Law of Return.⁸¹

9. The percentage of ultra-Orthodox among the Israeli populace is increasing.

Most of the converts (referred to above) are undergoing Orthodox conversions. The attempts in the previous Knesset to loosen the Orthodox grip on conversions were reversed in July of this year; the Chief Rabbinate retains jurisdiction. (And the authority to oversee the rabbinic courts is now under the Shas-led Religious Services Ministry, not the Justice Ministry.)⁸²

It is the ultra-Orthodox who are projected to see the greatest growth in the coming years. The 2013 study, “MJB Data Snapshot: The Socio-economic and Employment Situation of Israeli Haredim,”⁸³ provides some interesting data:

⁷⁸ See www.footstepsorg.org; focuses on safety, family/community, education for XOs and their families.

⁷⁹ Sam Sokol, “Ex-hassidic woman who jumped off roof blasts Orthodox in last letter,” *Jerusalem Post* (July 23, 2015), <http://www.jpost.com/Diaspora/Ex-hassidic-woman-who-jumped-off-roof-blasts-Orthodox-in-last-letter-410008>.

⁸⁰ Allison Kaplan Sommer, “Is the Orthodox world really to blame for mental illness among ex-Hasids?,” *Haaretz.com* (July 23, 2015), <http://www.haaretz.com/blogs/routine-emergencies/.premium-1.667367>.

⁸¹ Dashefsky and Sheskin, eds., 333.

⁸² Haviv Rettig Gur, “Are Israelis facing a tightening of religious restrictions?” *The Times of Israel*, July 10, 2015, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/are-israelis-facing-a-tightening-of-religious-restrictions>.

⁸³ Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute, “MJB Data Snapshot: The Socio-economic and Employment Situation of Israeli Haredim,” May 2013, <http://brookdale.jdc.org.il/Uploads/dbsAttachedFiles/MJB-Data-Snapshot-Economic-and-Educational-Opps-Haredim--May-13.pdf>.

- From 2010 to 2030 the ultra-Orthodox are projected to increase from 11% to 18% of the Israeli population.
- Comparative employment rates in 2011 showed:
 - Haredi men = 46% (78% for all men)
 - Haredi women = 61% (66% for all women)
- In 2011, 54% of Haredi families were poor. Comparative monthly earnings:
 - Haredi men = 6,600 NIS (11,500 NIS for all men)
 - Haredi women = 5,200 NIS (7,300 NIS for all women)

IMPLICATIONS OF THIS DATA FOR US?

1. How much should population data influence our strategic plans?
 - a. Given the reality that more than half the world's Jewish population is concentrated in five metropolitan areas, to what extent should gospel proclamation be centered in those cities?
 - b. Do smaller Jewish communities (and perhaps more remote, as in far-east Russia) tend to be less gospel resistant?
 - c. How much more open to the gospel are transient people (e.g., new immigrants, backpacking Israeli youth)?
 - d. How many places in the world have a Chabad house but no gospel proclamation?
2. In Israel, what should we be doing more (or differently), given the realities that:
 - a. global population shifts likely will continue to increase the percentage of world Jewry living in the Land?
 - b. the percentage of observant Jews (Orthodox and *Haredim*) continues to rise?
3. How will our evangelistic zeal, commitment, methods, etc., be affected by shifting attitudes in:
 - a. The global Jewish community, including
 - i. increasing active opposition to the gospel (in terms of "anti-missionary" preparation and training, as well as methodologies, especially where Jewish populations are concentrated)?
 - ii. growing acceptance of Messianic Jews (on the part of some)?
 - b. The Evangelical Church (perhaps especially in the U.S. where "anti-Christian Zionism" may cloak a waning concern for the salvation of Jewish people)?
 - c. The wider (Gentile) world, with anti-Israel and anti-Semitic sentiments and actions?
4. What are the implications for the gospel of:
 - a. the increasing secularization among the Jewish populations in the Diaspora?
 - b. the growing divide between *Haredim* and *hilonim* (seculars) in Israel?
5. What more we can do together to tackle the larger and more difficult challenges in Jewish evangelism? (E.g., what about "halfway" houses for ex-*Haredim*?)

MESSIANIC DEMOGRAPHICS

In all the Jewish sources cited, we found only passing reference to “Messianic Jews.” No demographic numbers were provided.

World Christian Database does a great work in cataloguing all kinds of religious organizations and movements, from the macro to the micro (including cults and schisms of all sorts). Their search engine turned up 17 (recognizable to us) “Messianic denominations” in 11 countries, representing 126,840 individuals (see **Appendix 4**).

But this merely provides the statistics of members/attendees at congregations identified as Messianic. It does not tell us how many congregants are Jewish (and by what definition). Of course, the other side of that coin would be knowing the numbers of Yeshua-believing Jews who are members of churches not “Jewishly contextualized.”

It would be helpful to know those statistics in order to answer important questions. Is the number of Jewish believers in Messiah keeping pace with the wider Jewish population growth? Are we gaining ground?

God knows, of course. And even without that data we may ask, “Has there been a more exciting time to be engaged in gospel proclamation to the Jewish people?” The resources available to us, the ease of transportation, the multiple avenues for communication, the increasing cooperation of ministries—all are positive markers.

CONCLUSION

We serve a God who knows us intimately, from our thoughts to the number of hairs on our heads. Not a single life goes unnoticed amidst the chaos of humanity—even when traveling the remotest locations of this earth (Psalm 139). Whether Jewish people are found walking the streets of India, climbing the mountains of Patagonia, celebrating Shabbat in Brooklyn, or setting up shop in Jerusalem, the Lord knows and the Lord cares for each individual. And He is the One building His *kehilah/ecclesia/church*.

Ultimately evangelism is not about number crunching or human methods and resources; it is about the Gospel powerfully impacting people at their points of greatest need. Demographic studies, as we have seen, deal with issues of core identity. In our day there is much discussion—and confusion—about identity; gender/sexual, racial, religious, and national, and all very personal. But in the end, what truly matters is whether an individual has found the “in Messiah” identity by which salvation (Romans 8:1-2) and inclusion in the New Covenant purpose (Ephesians 2:4-16) are gained.

Until Messiah returns let us be encouraged to live out the words of the prophet of old: “How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace and brings good news of happiness, who announces salvation, and says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’” (Isaiah 52:7).

Appendix 1: Breakdown of Israel's Jewish subgroups⁸⁴

<u>People Name</u>	<u>Autoglossonym</u>	<u>Pop 2015</u>	<u>Jewish Pop</u>	<u>Jew%</u>
<u>Amharic Jew</u>	Amarinya	2,376	2,352	99.00%
<u>Arabic Jew</u>	syro-palestinian	443,494	434,624	98.00%
<u>Arbili Jew</u>	Arbil	3,168	3,168	100.00%
<u>Berber Jew</u>	judeo-tamazight	3,960	3,960	100.00%
<u>Black Israelite/Hebrew</u>	Talkin Black	4,752	4,752	100.00%
<u>British Jew</u>	British English	39,598	37,618	95.00%
<u>Caucasian Mountain Jew</u>	judeo-tat	15,839	15,839	100.00%
<u>Central Asian Jew</u>	Bukharik	86,323	82,007	95.00%
<u>Cochin Jew</u>	malayalam	15,047	15,032	99.90%
<u>Dutch Jew</u>	algemeen-nederlands	3,168	3,104	98.00%
<u>Falasha (Black Jew)</u>	Kwara	110,873	107,547	97.00%
<u>French Jew</u>	français general	95,034	76,027	80.00%
<u>Georgian Jew</u>	judeo-georgian	78,403	74,483	95.00%
<u>German Jew</u>	hochdeutsch formal	102,954	92,658	90.00%
<u>Hungarian Jew</u>	Magyar	110,873	110,785	99.92%
<u>Iraqi Jew</u>	Yahudi	197,988	197,949	99.98%
<u>Israeli Jewish (Sabra)</u>	ivrit-modernit	1,198,145	1,144,468	95.52%
<u>Jewish (Russian)</u>	russskiy-jazik	1,105,566	895,509	81.00%
<u>Jewish Tat</u>	judeo-tat	95,034	95,015	99.98%
<u>Judeo-Greek</u>	Yevaniki	79	79	100.00%
<u>Karaite Jew (Karaim)</u>	Karaim	31,678	30,094	95.00%
<u>Kurdistani Jew (Kurdim)</u>	nash-didán	47,517	47,517	100.00%
<u>Kurdit Jew</u>	Zakho	11,879	11,879	100.00%
<u>Libyan Jew</u>	Yudi	53,061	53,056	99.99%
<u>Marathi Jew</u>	WIDER MARATHI	14,255	14,241	99.90%
<u>Moroccan Jew</u>	judeo-moroccan	417,359	413,186	99.00%
<u>other minor peoples</u>	Mixed	39,598	17,423	44.00%
<u>Persian Azerbaijani Jew</u>	Dobe	5,544	5,544	100.00%
<u>Persian Jew</u>	Dzhidi	102,954	102,923	99.97%
<u>Polish Jew</u>	Polski	454,027	449,486	99.00%
<u>Portuguese Jew</u>	Português	2,376	2,305	97.00%
<u>Romanian Jew</u>	limba-româneasca gen.	463,292	416,963	90.00%
<u>Samaritan (Shomronim)</u>	ivrit-modernit	792	792	100.00%
<u>Spanish Jew</u>	djudezmo-israel	224,123	212,917	95.00%
<u>Tigrai Jew</u>	Tigray	25,105	24,854	99.00%
<u>Tunisian Jew</u>	judeo-tunisian	13,463	13,194	98.00%
<u>Turkish Jew</u>	türk-çe	55,437	55,431	99.99%
<u>USA Jew</u>	American	3,168	2,914	92.00%
<u>Yemeni Jew</u>	HEBRAIC ARABIC	87,115	87,097	99.98%
<u>Yiddish Jewish</u>	yiddish east	395,976	384,097	97.00%
		6,161,393	5,742,889	

⁸⁴ World Christian Database search results.

Appendix 2:

Figure 7: 17 Greater Metropolitan Areas with largest core Jewish populations.⁸⁵

Rank	Metropolitan area	Country	Jewish pop.	%	Cumulative %
1	Tel Aviv ^b	Israel	3,173,000	22.3	22.3
2	New York ^c	US	2,100,000	14.8	37.1
3	Jerusalem ^d	Israel	872,000	6.1	43.2
4	Haifa ^e	Israel	690,000	4.9	48.1
5	Los Angeles ^f	US	689,000	4.8	52.9
6	South Florida ^g	US	489,000	3.4	56.4
7	Be'er Sheva ^h	Israel	414,000	2.9	59.3
8	San Francisco ⁱ	US	346,000	2.4	61.7
9	Washington/Baltimore ^j	US	333,000	2.3	64.1
10	Chicago ^k	US	295,000	2.1	66.1
11	Boston ^l	US	291,000	2.0	68.2
12	Paris ^m	France	282,000	2.0	70.2
13	Philadelphia ⁿ	US	280,000	2.0	72.1
14	London ^o	United Kingdom	195,000	1.4	73.5
15	Toronto ^p	Canada	186,000	1.3	74.8
16	Buenos Aires ^q	Argentina	160,000	1.1	76.0
17	Atlanta ^r	US	119,000	0.8	76.8

a Most metropolitan areas include extended inhabited territory and several municipal authorities around the central city.

Definitions vary by country. Some of the US metropolitan areas are defined differently than in the Sheskin and Dashefsky chapter in this volume. Some of the US estimates may include non-core Jews.

b Includes Tel Aviv District, Central District, and Ashdod Subdistrict. Principal cities: Tel Aviv, Ramat Gan, Bene Beraq, Petach Tikwa, Bat Yam, Holon, Rishon LeZiyon, Rehovot, Netanya, and Ashdod, all with Jewish populations over 100,000.

c Our adjustment of original data based on core Jewish population definition. About 100,000 individuals pertaining to the enlarged Jewish population were subtracted from the original population estimates by Cohen et al. (2012). New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-CT-PA Metropolitan Statistical Area. Principal cities: New York, NY; White Plains, NY; Newark, NJ; Edison, NJ; Union, NJ; Wayne, NJ; and New Brunswick, NJ.

d Includes Jerusalem District and parts of Judea and Samaria District.

e Includes Haifa District and parts of Northern District.

f Includes Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana area, San Bernardino and Ventura areas.

g Includes Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties. Not including 69,275 part-year residents.

h Includes Be'er Sheva Subdistrict and other parts of Southern District.

i Our adjustment of original data based on core Jewish population definition. About 40,000 individuals pertaining to the enlarged Jewish population were subtracted from the original population estimates by Phillips (2005). Includes the San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont area, Napa, San Benito, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, and Sonoma.

j Includes the District of Columbia, northern Virginia, Montgomery County, Prince George's County, and the Baltimore-Towson area.

k Includes Chicago-Joliet-Naperville area (IL-IN-WI), Kankakee area (IL), La Porte area (IN).

l Includes Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, Bristol, Worcester area (MA), Hillsborough, Merrimack, Belknap area (NH), and Rhode Island.

m Departments 75, 77, 78, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95.

n Includes Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington area (PA-NJ-DE-MD), Berks area (PA), and Cumberland area (NJ).

o Greater London and contiguous postcode areas.

p Census Metropolitan Area.

q Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area A.M.B.A.

r Metropolitan Statistical A

⁸⁵ Ibid, 38.

Appendix 3:

The *American Jewish Yearbook 2014* includes a population chart which excludes part-year residents (75,875 people) included in MSAs [Metropolitan Statistical Areas] 8, 12, and 18 as shown below. The exclusion of this group changes the MSA rankings of several U.S. cities.⁸⁶

Figure 8: Jewish population in the top 20 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) in the U.S.⁸⁷

MSA rank	MSA name	Population		Percentage Jewish (%)
		Total ^a	Jewish	
1	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	19,949,502	2,067,500	10.4
2	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	13,131,431	617,480	4.7
3	Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI	9,537,289	294,280	3.1
4	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	6,810,913	75,005	1.1
5	Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX	6,313,158	45,640	0.7
6	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	6,034,678	283,350	4.7
7	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	5,949,859	217,390	3.7
8	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL	5,828,191	555,125	9.5
9	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA	5,552,942	119,800	2.2
10	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH	4,684,299	249,060	5.3
11	San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, CA	4,516,276	295,850	6.6
12.	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	4,380,878	22,625	0.5
13	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	4,398,762	82,900	1.9
14	Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI	4,294,983	67,000	1.6
15	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	3,610,105	39,700	1.1
16	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	3,459,146	44,500	1.3
17	San Diego-Carlsbad, CA	3,211,252	100,000	3.1
18	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	2,870,569	58,350	2.0
19	St. Louis, MO-IL	2,801,056	54,200	1.9
20	Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD	2,770,738	115,400	4.2
Total population in top 20 MSAs		120,106,027	5,329,280	4.4
Total US population		316,128,839	6,768,980	2.1
Percentage of population in top 20 MSAs		38.0 %	78.7 %	

Notes: (1) See www.census.gov/population/metro/files/lists/2009/List1.txt for a list of the counties included in each MSA; (2) Total Jewish population of 5,329,280 excludes 75,875 part-year residents who are included in MSAs 8, 12, and 18; (3) The total number of American Jews is probably about 6.6–6.7 million due to some double-counting between states (Sheskin and Dashefsky 2006).

^aSource: www.census.gov, July 1, 2013 estimates.

⁸⁶ Dashefsky and Sheskin, eds., 222.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

Appendix 4: “Messianic” Denominations⁸⁸

<u>Denomination Name</u>	<u>Christian megabloc</u>	<u>Country of denomination</u>	<u>Aff 2010</u>
<u>Congregaciones Messianicas</u>	Independents	<u>Argentina</u>	2,000
<u>Messianic Jewish Congregations</u>	Independents	<u>Australia</u>	620
<u>Igreja Messiánica Mundial do Brasil</u>	Independents	<u>Brazil</u>	2,500
<u>Communautés Judéo-Chrétiennes</u>	Independents	<u>France</u>	990
<u>Congregations Messianiques</u>	Independents	<u>France</u>	2,000
<u>Messianic Assembly in Israel</u>	Independents	<u>Israel</u>	180
<u>Messianic Congregations & Synagogues</u>	Independents	<u>Israel</u>	10,000
<u>Messianic Jewish Assemblies</u>	Independents	<u>Moldova</u>	550
<u>Isolated Messianic Jews</u>	Independents	<u>Russia</u>	5,000
<u>Messianic Congregations & Synagogues</u>	Independents	<u>Russia</u>	17,000
<u>Messianic Jewish Congregations</u>	Independents	<u>South Africa</u>	2,300
<u>Messianic Congregations & Synagogues</u>	Independents	<u>Ukraine</u>	5,500
<u>Int Assoc of Messianic Congs & Synagogues</u>	Independents	<u>United Kingdom</u>	3,900
<u>Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations</u>	Independents	<u>United Kingdom</u>	20,300
<u>Fellowship of Messianic Congregations</u>	Independents	<u>United States</u>	10,600
<u>Int Assoc of Messianic Congs & Synagogues</u>	Independents	<u>United States</u>	22,200
<u>Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations</u>	Independents	<u>United States</u>	21,200

⁸⁸ World Christian Databank search results.

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