



**Summary of a
Public Survey of Attitudes among the
Adult Jewish Population in Israel
regarding Christianity, Christians and the
Christian Presence in Israel**

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A. Introduction

The purpose of the survey, which was co-sponsored by the Jerusalem Center for Jewish-Christian Relations (JCJCR) and the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies (JIIS), was to examine attitudes in the various sectors of Israeli Jewish society towards Christianity, the Christian world and the Christian presence in Israel. At the heart of the survey was the question of the degree to which the views of Jews in Israel regarding Christianity and Christians are influenced by the residual impact of the relations of Jews and Christians in the past. An additional question was whether the Jewish population makes a distinction between the Arab Christian population in Israel (numbering approximately 120,000) and the non-Arab Christian population in Israel (numbering about 30,000), among them immigrants from the former Soviet Union, foreign Christian clergy serving in Israel, and representatives of Christian bodies from abroad.¹

The telephone survey, which was conducted at the beginning of March 2008 by the Smith Institute under the directorship of Rafi Smith and Olga Paniel, was carried out among 500 men and women, which constitutes a representative sample of the adult (aged 18 and above) Jewish population of Israel.² The survey involved 25 questions, in addition to questions regarding gender, age, country of origin, education, income and level of religious observance. The breakdown of the interviewees in the sample according to level of religious observance was: 23% ultra-orthodox or orthodox, 24% “traditional,” and 53% secular.³ The breakdown in the level of religious observance for Jews of Oriental origin and Jews from the FSU differed significantly from the breakdown for the entire sample. Among Oriental Jews, 33% defined themselves as orthodox (12% ultra-orthodox and 21% orthodox), 34% as traditional, and only 33% as secular, while among Jews from the FSU 75% defined themselves as secular, 24% as traditional, and only 1% as orthodox.

B. Main findings

With regard to level of religious observance, the survey brought to light great differences in attitude toward Christianity and the Christian presence in Israel among the different sectors of Jewish society.

1. **Relative tolerance – at least on the declarative level – was revealed among those interviewees who described themselves as secular** (53% of those interviewed, of whom 37% are of Ashkenazi background, 28% native-born Israeli, 18% immigrants from the Former Soviet Union [FSU], and 17% Oriental Jews). Thus, for example, 92% of the secular indicated that in the framework of excursions in Israel or abroad, they have visited churches, 91% maintained that they are not bothered when meeting a Christian in the street who is wearing a cross, 85% agreed with the assertion that the State of Israel is obliged to guarantee freedom of religion and conscience for its

¹ The statistics are for 2006 as presented in the 2007 Statistical Yearbook of the Central Bureau of Statistics.

² The margin of error is 4.5%.

³ This breakdown, based on the self-definitions of the interviewees, is similar to data published recently by the Israel Democracy Institute in its demographic indices for 2008, which divide the Israel public into 19% ultra-orthodox or orthodox, 30% traditional, and 51% secular. See Raphael Ventura and Michael Philipov, Israeli Secularism in the surveys of the Guttman Institute 1990-2008 on the website of the Israel Democracy Institute: http://www.idi.org.il/GuttmanCenter/SurveyArticle/Pages/The_Guttman_Center_Surveys_Articles_4.aspx

Christian citizens, 82% disagreed with the claim that “all or most Christians are missionaries to Jews,” 80% believed that it is permitted for a Jew to enter a church, 71% maintained that immigrants from the FSU who define themselves as Christians should be allowed to practice Christianity in Israel, and 70% considered it acceptable for Jewish organizations to receive financial assistance from foreign Christian bodies. With regard to the attitude of the Catholic Church to Judaism and Jews, 69% of the secular felt that there has been a change for the better, which suggests that they have some awareness of the process of change that has taken place in the Catholic Church’s relationship to Jews in the past 50 years; 48% described the relationship of the Catholic Church to Judaism and Jews as positive, while 34% described it as negative and 18% had no opinion. With regard to the relationship of the Protestant world to Israel, 60% indicated that there has also been a change for the better (although a relatively large portion – 24% – had no opinion, which is likely due to lack of knowledge regarding the issue). Among the secular 68% maintained that it is necessary to teach about Christianity in Israeli schools, 66% disagreed with the claim that “Christianity is an idolatrous religion,” 66% said that the attitude of the non-Arab Christian clergy to Israel is positive, as compared with 51% who said that the attitude of Arab Christians to the State of Israel is positive. 66% of the secular indicated that they have Christian friends or acquaintances in Israel or abroad and 54% believed that Christianity is closer to Judaism (as compared with 22% who believed that Islam is closer to Judaism), which likely suggests that from a cultural standpoint the secular identify more with the Christian world.

2. **On the other hand, it appears that even those who define themselves as secular become less tolerant when asked about more sensitive subjects that reflect the persistent residual impact of the relations of Jews and Christians in the past.** Thus, for example, only 56% of the secular Israeli Jews felt that soldiers who define themselves as Christians (mainly immigrants from the FSU) should be allowed to take their oath of allegiance on a New Testament rather than on the Hebrew Bible and only 52% felt that it is necessary to teach about the New Testament in schools in Israel (as compared with 68% who felt that it is necessary to teach about Christianity). Only 48% felt that Israeli policy toward the Churches and Christian institutions in Israel should be to guarantee freedom of religion and to assist them in the same way that other religious institutions are assisted and only 29% believed that the State of Israel must allow Christian bodies to purchase property in Jerusalem to build new churches and fully 64% argued that Israel does not have to permit Christian bodies to purchase land in Jerusalem. 24% of the secular maintained that the Government should encourage the emigration of local Arab Christians to other countries.
3. **Much more negative attitudes were revealed amongst those who defined themselves as ultra-orthodox (10% of the sample) and orthodox (13% of the sample) – together 23% of the entire sample.** 95% of the ultra-orthodox and orthodox argued that Israel does not have to allow Christian bodies to purchase land in Jerusalem to build new churches, 90% maintained that it is not necessary to teach about the New Testament in Israeli schools, and 73% felt that it is not necessary to teach about Christianity at all. 85% indicated that they do not have Christian friends or acquaintances in Israel or abroad, 83% argued that it is forbidden for Jews to enter a church, 79% believed that Jewish organizations should not accept financial assistance from Christian bodies, 78% agreed with the claim that “Christianity is an

idolatrous religion,” 68% maintained that immigrants from the FSU who define themselves as Christians should not be allowed to practice their Christianity in Israel, 67% did not agree with the claim that “Jerusalem is a central city for the Christian world,” 65% maintained that the attitude of the Catholic Church to Judaism and Jews is negative, 62% maintained that the attitude of Arab Christian citizens toward the State of Israel is negative, 62% argued that soldiers who define themselves as Christians should not be allowed to take their oath of allegiance on the New Testament, 60% indicated that they are bothered when they meet a Christian in the street who is wearing a cross, 51% said that Israel should encourage Arab Christians to emigrate from the country, 48% maintained that the activities of the Churches in Israel should be restricted, 45% did not agree with the claim that Israel has to guarantee freedom of religion and conscience for its Christian citizens, 43% agreed with the claim that all or most Christians are missionaries to Jews. Only 17% of the orthodox believe that Christianity is closer to Judaism than Islam, while 49% believe that Islam is closer and 25% that neither Christianity nor Islam is close to Judaism.

4. **A middle position between the orthodox and secular characterized those who defined themselves as “traditional” (24% of the entire sample and composed of 40% Oriental Jews, 25% Ashkenazi Jews, 23% native-born Israelis and 12% immigrants from the FSU). On certain subjects the traditional are closer to the secular and on others closer to the orthodox.** Thus, for example, 75% of those who defined themselves as traditional indicated that they are not bothered when meeting a Christian in the street who is wearing a cross (as compared with 91% of the secular and 39% of the orthodox), 69% agreed with the claim that the State of Israel must guarantee freedom of religion and conscience for its Christian citizens (as compared with 85% of secular and 46% of orthodox), 54% felt it is alright for Jewish organizations to accept financial assistance from Christian bodies (as compared with 70% of the secular and 20% of the orthodox), 51% believe that it is not necessary to teach about Christianity in schools in Israel (as compared with 73% of the orthodox and 30% of the secular), and 61% argued that it is not necessary to teach about the New Testament in schools in Israel (as compared with 90% of the orthodox and 47% of the secular). 47% of the traditional maintained that soldiers who define themselves as Christians should be allowed to take their oath of allegiance on the New Testament rather than the Hebrew Bible (as compared with 56% of the secular and 23% of the orthodox), 52% maintained that immigrants from the FSU who define themselves as Christians should be allowed to practice their Christianity in Israel (as compared with 71% of the secular and 24% of the orthodox), 50% felt that it is permitted for a Jew to enter a church (as compared with 80% of the secular and 13% of the orthodox), 47% believed that “Christianity is an idolatrous religion” (as compared with 78% of the orthodox and 24% of the secular), 34% do not enter churches (as compared with 82% of the orthodox and 8% of the secular), and 57% did not agree with the claim that Jerusalem is a central city for the Christian world (as compared with 67% of the orthodox and 31% of the secular).

With regard to views on the attitude of Arab Christian citizens to the State of Israel, the traditional are closer to secular: 49% of the traditional view their attitude as positive (as compared with 51% of secular and 27% of the orthodox). On the other hand, with regard to the question of the loyalty of Arab Christian citizens to the State, the traditional had greater doubts: only 37% were of the opinion that Arab Christian

citizens are loyal to the State (as compared with 50% of the secular and 19% of the orthodox).

With regard to views on the attitude of non-Arab Christian clergy to the State of Israel, 55% of the traditional described this attitude as positive (as compared with 66% of the secular and 25% of the orthodox), 66% maintained that the State of Israel should allow non-Arab Christian clergy to live anywhere in Israel, including Jerusalem (as compared with 82% of the secular and 31% of the orthodox). On the other hand, 85% of the traditional maintained that Israel does not have to allow Christian bodies to purchase property in Jerusalem to build new churches (as compared with 95% of the orthodox and 64% of the secular).

With regard to the question of missionary activities, 81% of the traditional did not agree with the claim that all or most Christians are missionaries to Jews (as compared with 82% of secular and 45% of orthodox).

5. **With regard to influence of country of origin, the group least tolerant toward Christianity and Christians is Oriental Jews, despite the fact that in their countries of origin they did not live in the midst of a Christian majority and knew the Christian world only from a distance.⁴ The native-born Israelis and those of Ashkenazi background showed greater tolerance than the Oriental Jews. Paradoxically, the Ashkenazi Jews who lived in the midst of a Christian majority in their countries of origin manifested the greatest degree of tolerance. Those hailing from the FSU showed mixed attitudes: in certain areas they reveal a great deal of tolerance, while in other areas – especially those in which the borders between Jews and Christians are blurred – they manifest less tolerant attitudes.**

Thus, for example, 50% of Oriental Jews maintained that it is forbidden for a Jew to enter a church (as compared with 36% of Israeli-born Jews, 35% of Ashkenazi Jews, and 25% of immigrants from the FSU), 37% in practice do enter churches (as compared with 35% of native-born Israelis, 29% of Ashkenazi Jews, and 13% of immigrants from the FSU), 54% agreed with the claim that “Christianity is an idolatrous religion” (as compared with 43% of native-born Israelis, 36% of Ashkenazi Jews and 29% of immigrants from the FSU), 63% believe that it is not necessary to teach about Christianity in Israeli schools (as compared with 52% of immigrants from the FSU, 41% of native-born Israelis, and 33% of Ashkenazi Jews), 77% felt that it is not necessary to teach about the New Testament in Israeli schools (as compared with 69% of immigrants from the FSU, 55% of native-born Israelis, and 50% of Ashkenazi Jews), 61% do not agree with the claim that Jerusalem is a central city for the Christian world (as compared with 42% of immigrants from the FSU, 44% of Ashkenazi Jews and 36% of native-born Israelis), 28% agree with the claim that all or most Christians are missionaries to Jews (as compared with 25% of native-born Israelis, 16% of Ashkenazi Jews and 10% of immigrants from the former Soviet Union), 54% believe that the attitude of Arab Christian citizens of Israel toward the State is negative (as compared with 49% of native-born Israelis, 46% of immigrants from the FSU and 38% of Ashkenazi Jews), 36% maintained that the attitude of non-

⁴ This is likely related to the fact that a relatively higher percentage of Oriental Jews described themselves as orthodox or traditional as noted in the introduction to this summary.

Arab Christian clergy living in Israel toward the State of Israel is negative (as compared with 27% of native-born Israelis, 25% of Ashkenazi Jews and 24% of immigrants from the FSU), 35% were of the opinion that the State of Israel does not have to allow non-Arab Christian clergy to live in Israel (as compared with 24% of native-born Israeli, 20% of immigrants from the FSU and 15% of Ashkenazi Jews), 86% maintained that the State of Israel does not have to allow Christian bodies to purchase property in Jerusalem to build new churches (as compared with 77% of native-born Israelis, 73% of Ashkenazi Jews and 64% of immigrants from the FSU), 50% believed that the Government of Israel should encourage Arab Christians to emigrate to other countries (as compared with 30% of native-born Israelis, 20% of Ashkenazi Jews and 17% of immigrants from the FSU), 58% of Oriental Jews argued that soldiers who define themselves as Christians (mainly from the FSU) should not be allowed to take their oath of allegiance on the New Testament (as compared with 45% of native-born Israelis, 39% of Ashkenazi Jews and 32% of immigrants from the FSU), 55% expressed the view that immigrants from the FSU who define themselves as Christians should not be permitted to practice their Christianity in Israel (as compared with 45% of native-born Israelis, 30% of Ashkenazi Jews and 21% of immigrants from the FSU), 34% maintained that the activities of the Churches in Israel should be restricted (as compared with 22% of native-born Israelis, 14% of Ashkenazi Jews and 10% of immigrants from the FSU), and 32% did not agree with the view that Israel has to guarantee freedom of religion and conscience for its Christian citizens (as compared with 28% of native-born Israelis, 16% of Ashkenazi Jews and 13% of immigrants from the FSU).

- The findings revealed that the younger interviewees (18-29 years old) were generally less tolerant than those in the older age brackets (30-49 years old and those over 50 years old).** Thus, for example, 51% of those in the youngest age bracket (18-29 years old) expressed the view that it is forbidden for a Jew to enter a church (as compared with 42% of those in the 30-49 age bracket and 25% of those over 50), 51% indicated that in practice they do not enter a church (as compared with 32% of those in the 30-49 age bracket and 15% of those over 50), 52% agree with the claim that “Christianity is an idolatrous religion” (as compared with 47% of those in the 30-49 age bracket and 29% of those over 50), 58% expressed the view that it is not necessary to teach about Christianity in the schools in Israel (as compared with 44% of those in the 30-49 age bracket and 35% of those over 50), 60% believed that Arab Christian citizens of Israel are not loyal to the State (as compared with 48% of those in both the 30-49 and over 50 age brackets), 34% expressed the view that Christian clergy should not be permitted to live anywhere in Israel (as compared with 25% of those in the 30-49 age bracket and 14% of those over 50), 45% said that they are bothered when meeting a Christian in the street who is wearing a cross (as compared with 18% of those in the 30-49 age bracket and 12% of those over 50), 52% maintained that immigrants from the FSU who define themselves as Christians should not be permitted to practice their Christianity in Israel (as compared with 43% of those in the 30-49 age bracket and 25% of those over 50), and 31% expressed the view that the activities of the Churches in Israel should be restricted as much as possible (as compared with 20% of those in the 30-49 age bracket and 13% of those over 50).

Possible explanations for the relatively lower level of tolerance toward Christianity and Christians among those in the youngest age bracket might be: the higher level of

enter a church (as compared with 45% of those with lower than average income), 19% refrain in practice from entering a church (as compared with 48% of those with low income), 34% agreed with the claim that Christianity is an idolatrous religion (as compared with 54% of those with low income), 58% said that it is necessary to teach about Christianity in Israeli schools (as compared with 36% of those with low income), 50% said that it is necessary to teach about the New Testament in Israeli schools (as compared with 17% of those with low income), 64% agreed that Jerusalem is a central city for the Christian world (as compared with 37% of those with low income), 82% disagreed with the claim that all or most Christians are missionaries to Jews (as compared with 67% of those with low income), 46% believed that Arab Christian citizens are loyal to the State (as compared with 25% of those with low income), 66% believed that the attitude of the non-Arab Christian clergy to the State of Israel is positive (as compared with 41% of those with low income), 15% were of the opinion that Israel does not have to allow non-Arab Christian clergy to live anywhere in Israel (as compared with 42% of those with low income), 84% said that they are not bothered when meeting a Christian in the street who is wearing a cross (as compared with 60% of those with low income), 63% maintained that the State has to allow immigrants from the FSU who define themselves as Christians to practice their Christianity in Israel (as compared with 34% of those with low income), 54% said that soldiers who define themselves as Christians should be allowed to take their oath of allegiance on the New Testament (as compared with 38% of those with low income), and 81% agreed that the State of Israel has to guarantee freedom of religion and conscience for its Christian citizens (as compared with 64% of those with lower income).

10. **The rather stereotypical picture that emerges from 5, 8 and 9 above is that the greatest level of tolerance regarding Christianity, Christians and the Christian presence in Israel is to be found among Ashkenazi Jews with higher education and higher income.**
11. **Residents of the Jerusalem area (dialing prefix 02) were shown to be less tolerant regarding Christianity, Christians and the Christian presence in Israel, which can likely be explained by the fact that the percentage of ultra-orthodox and orthodox in the Jewish population of Jerusalem is much higher than the national average.** Thus, for example, among Jewish residents of the Jerusalem area 55% maintained that it is forbidden for a Jew to enter a church (as compared with 37% of the entire national sample), 50% indicated that they refrain in practice from entering a church (as compared with 29% of the entire sample), 48% believed that Christianity is an idolatrous religion (as compared with 41% of the national sample), 62% were of the opinion that it is not necessary to teach Christianity in Israeli schools (as compared with 44% of the national sample), 76% felt that it is not necessary to teach about the New Testament in Israeli schools (as compared with 59% of the national sample), 35% agreed with the claim that all or most Christians are missionaries to Jews (as compared with 21% of the national sample), 62% believed that Arab Christian citizens are not loyal to the State (as compared with 51% of the national sample), 33% believed that the attitude of Arab Christian citizens to the State is negative (as compared with 27% of the national sample), 30% maintained that non-Arab Christian clergy should not be permitted to live anywhere in Israel (as compared with 23% of the national sample), 63% maintained that soldiers who define themselves as Christians should not be allowed to take their oath of allegiance on the

New Testament (as compared with 45% of the national sample), and only 11% agreed that Christian bodies should be allowed to purchase property in Jerusalem to build new churches (as compared with 18% of the national sample). On the other hand, more Jews in the Jerusalem area (54%) than in the national sample (50%) agreed that Jerusalem is a central city for the Christian world, perhaps because they personally more directly encounter this reality in the life of the city.

C. Findings of the entire sample

The findings of the survey present a complex picture, including at times apparent contradictions, as concerns the attitudes in the Israeli Jewish public to Christianity, the Christian world and the Christian presence in Israel.

With regard to practice: 59% of the interviewees believed that it is permitted for a Jew to enter a church, while 37% believed that it is forbidden; 71% indicated that in the course of an excursion in Israel or abroad, they have in practice visited a church and only 29% said that they avoid entering a church, suggesting that 8% of those who believed that it is forbidden for a Jew to enter a church have in practice visited a church.

A little more than half of Israeli Jews (52%) indicated that they have no Christian friends or acquaintances in Israel or abroad, while 48% said that they do, suggesting that a significant portion of the Israeli Jewish public have no direct knowledge of the Christian world, whether in Israel or abroad. A significant majority (74%) did not agree with the claim that all or most Christians are missionaries to Jews (while 21% agreed with this claim and 5% expressed no opinion). A similar significant majority (76%) indicated that they are not bothered when meeting a Christian in the street who is wearing a cross.

With regard to beliefs and opinions: 50% did not agree with the claim the “Christianity is an idolatrous religion,” while 41% agreed with this claim and 9% expressed no opinion. With regard to the complex question (which has no simple objective answer): “Which religion is closer to Judaism – Christianity or Islam?” – 42% answered that Christianity is closer and 32% answered that Islam is closer, while 13% maintained that neither of the two faiths is close to Judaism and 7% felt that both are more or less equally close to Judaism. Thus more Israeli Jews see Christianity as closer to Judaism (apparently from a cultural-ethical standpoint) in comparison with Islam. It is interesting to note that 49% of the ultra-orthodox and orthodox maintained that Islam is closer to Judaism, which reflects the classical halachic Jewish outlook.

In reply to the question of whether it is necessary to teach about Christianity in Israeli schools:⁶ 54% were of the opinion that it is necessary to teach about Christianity (as compared with 44% who answered that it is not necessary), but only 37% felt that it is necessary to teach about the New Testament (as compared with 59% who answered that it is not necessary). It is likely that the much higher percentage of those who do not see any need to teach the New Testament in Israeli schools reflects an Israeli-Jewish sensitivity regarding the New Testament, which is seen by many as a central tool of mission to Jews.

⁶ With regard to this issue, see Orit Ramon: “In Praise of Stupidity: The Teaching of Christianity in Israeli Secondary Schools,” *Machanaim*, (Kislev, 5794), pp. 139-145.

With regard to the issue of Jerusalem, there is an evident lack of tolerance among a significant portion of the Israeli Jewish public for a Christian presence in the city and a lack of awareness of the importance of the city for the Christian world. Only 50% of the interviewees agreed with the claim that “Jerusalem is a central city for the Christian world,” while 46% did not agree with this statement. 75% of the interviewees were of the opinion that the State of Israel does not need to allow Christian bodies to purchase properties in Jerusalem to build new churches, which suggests that the vast majority of the Israeli Jewish public do not want to share Jerusalem with the Christian world.

With regard to the question of the attitude of various parts of the Christian world to Judaism, Jews and Israel, the findings indicate a considerable confusion and a lack of knowledge in significant segments of the Jewish public. 40% of the interviewees believed that the attitude of the Catholic Church to Judaism and Jews is negative and a similar portion (39%) believed that the attitude is positive. More than a fifth (21%) had no opinion. On the other hand, 58% of the interviewees were of the opinion that there has been a change for the better in the attitude of the Catholic Church to Judaism and Jews in the course of the last 50 years, as compared with 20% who were of the opinion that there has been no change, 3% who believed that there has been a change for the worse and 19% who had not opinion).

With regard to the attitude of the Protestant world to Israel, 53% were of the opinion that there has been a change for the better among certain Protestant groups, as compared with 14% who maintained that there has been no change, 4% that believed that there has been a change for the worse and 29% who had no opinion. It appears, therefore, that the awareness in the Israeli Jewish public of the changes that have taken place in the Catholic Church is greater than the awareness of the changes in the Protestant world (which of course is much more diverse). Nonetheless, it is important to emphasize that nearly a third of the interviewees are without an opinion or lack knowledge regarding the matter.

With regard to the attitudes of Arab Christians toward the State 45% of the interviewees described it as positive and 45% described it as negative, while 10% had no opinion. Regarding the more direct question “To what extent are Arab Christians loyal to the State?” 39% were of the opinion that Arab Christians are “very loyal” or “largely loyal” to the State, while 51% maintained that they are “not loyal” or “not very loyal.”

In another general survey regarding the attitudes of the Israeli Jewish public, which was conducted by the Center for Research and Information of the Knesset in 2002, 63.3% of those interviewed maintained that the Arabs in Israel will be more loyal to the Palestinian state, while 14.3% maintained that their loyalty will be to the State of Israel, 11.5% believed that they will be loyal to both states in equal measure, and 10.9% answered that they don't know. In a survey that was conducted in 2007 by Prof. Sami Samocha to evaluate Jewish-Arab relations, 18% of the Jewish interviewees rejected the right of Arabs as a separate minority and one third supported denying the right of Arabs to vote in elections to the Knesset. In a similar survey that was conducted in 2006, 75.4% of the Jews identified with the view that an Arab citizen that identifies himself as an “Palestinian Arab in Israel” cannot be loyal to the State and its laws and 72.6% expect that most of the Arab citizens of Israel will be more loyal to a Palestinian state than to the State of Israel.

With regard to the phenomenon of the emigration of Arab Christians to other countries, 56% of the interviewees in the survey under review believed that the Government

of Israel need not take any action in the matter, 31% maintained that the government should encourage the phenomenon and only 9% indicated that the government should take action to reduce the phenomenon. By comparison, on the basis of findings of Prof. Sami Samoocha, the number of Jews who supported encouraging Arabs to emigrate to other countries was 50% in 1980, but dropped to 37% in 1995 and remained 37% in 2007.

In general, the findings of the survey reveal a great degree of indifference and even antagonism in the Israeli Jewish public toward Arab Christians (as part of the general antagonism toward the Arab minority).

With regard to the attitude of non-Arab Christian clergy toward the State, 54% of the interviewees described their attitude as positive and 27% viewed it as negative (18% had no opinion), 66% maintained that the State has to allow non-Arab Christian clergy to live anywhere in Israel (including Jerusalem) and 23% felt that the State does not have to allow Christian clergy to live anywhere in Israel. From this one can conclude that two-thirds of the Israeli-Jewish population is of the opinion that non-Arab Christian clergy are more loyal to the State than Arab Christians and that the State should allow them to live anywhere in Israel (including Jerusalem).

With regard to the main purpose of the activities of the Churches in Israel, 35% of the interviewees believed that the care of the holy places of Christianity is the main purpose, 22% believed that it is the care of the Christian communities in Israel, 21% believed that it is to spread Christianity in Israel, and 11% believed that all of these goals are purposed equally by the Churches. It is interesting to note that among orthodox interviewees, 52% (as compared with 8% among secular interviewees) believed that spreading Christianity is the main goal of the activities of the Churches in Israel, perhaps because of the heightened suspicion of missionary activities in this population. With regard to the question "In your opinion is it acceptable for Jewish organizations to accept financial assistance from Christian bodies (such as evangelical organizations), 55% of the orthodox interviewees replied that it is acceptable to them and 41% said that it is not acceptable.

With regard to the question of the desired attitude of the State toward the Christian presence in Israel and the activities of the Churches in Israel, the findings showed considerable ambivalence and inconsistency among Israeli Jews. 71% of the interviewees agreed in principle that "the State of Israel must guarantee freedom of religion and conscience for its Christian citizens (as compared with 22% who did agree that the State has such an obligation). But only 32% supported a policy "that will guarantee freedom of religion and provide assistance to the Churches as other religious organizations are assisted," while 39% felt that the State must allow the Churches to operate in Israel but should not assist them in any way, and 20% believed that "the activities of the Churches in Israel should be restricted as much as possible."

With regard to the religious rights of immigrants from the FSU, 55% of the interviewees believed that they must be allowed to practice their Christianity in Israel (as compared with 39% who maintained that they should not be allowed). On the other hand, 45% believe that soldiers who define themselves as Christians (mainly immigrants from the FSU) should not be allowed to take their oath of allegiance on the New Testament rather than on the Hebrew Bible (as compared with 44% who were of the opinion that this should be allowed).

It thus appears that there is a considerable gap between a willingness of a large majority of Israeli Jews to declare that the State should guarantee freedom of religion and conscience for its Christian citizens and reluctance to put this freedom into practice when it comes to sensitive matters such as building new churches in Jerusalem or allowing Christian soldiers to take their oath of allegiance on the New Testament.