

Gert van Klinken

Nes Ammim

Protestants in the young
State of Israel, 1952-1967



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Today, Europe is a favoured destination for refugees from all over the world. We might have forgotten an earlier exodus during the aftermath of the Second World War in the opposite direction. Jewish survivors of the Holocaust aimed for Palestine, and after 1948, the State of Israel.

Protestants from the Netherlands, Switzerland, America and Germany intended to join the Jewish people in their new homeland by building the village Nes Ammim. The Netherlands had been occupied during the war; Switzerland had remained neutral. Germany carried the taints of guilt and defeat, the United States the laurels of the victor. What made them work together? And why did the Americans and the Swiss withdraw in 1967, the year of the Six-Day War? The many questions surrounding this village do not end here. Nes Ammim was founded near Akko in 1962. Just fourteen years earlier, a majority of the local population had been Druze or Arab. Most of the Arabs ended up as refugees, and their land was repurposed for the kibbutzim. How did Protestants relate to these events?

It is not the intention of the author to impose present-day views onto the Christian founders of Nes Ammim. The challenge of understanding their mindset within the context of their time is exactly what makes them so fascinating.

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