

Yechiel Eckstein, rabbi who befriended evangelicals, dies at age 67

Through the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews that Eckstein founded, evangelicals have contributed more than \$1 billion to Jewish causes.

by [Yonat Shimron](#) in the [March 13, 2019](#) issue



Yechiel Eckstein of the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews. [Some rights reserved](#) by FellowshipCam.

Yechiel Eckstein, a rabbi who developed deeper ties between evangelical Christians and Jews, died of heart failure February 6 in Jerusalem. He was 67.

Since he founded the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews in 1983, evangelicals have contributed more than \$1 billion—with an average of \$76 per donor—toward causes such as social programs for Jewish people in the diaspora and Israel and helping Jews immigrate.

Pat Robertson said in a statement, “Words cannot express the sorrow I feel at the untimely passing of my dear friend.”

Eckstein was not so beloved by Israel's rabbinical establishment. Older generations of Orthodox rabbis viewed with suspicion his desire to befriend Christians.

He worked for several years for the Anti-Defamation League until it became clear to him that the ADL was uncomfortable with his evangelical outreach, according to a 2005 *New York Times* profile.

His daughter, Yael Eckstein, who is now president of IFCJ, eulogized him as a "rebel with a cause." —Religion News Service