

State of Israel

Media Release

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Christmas 2020 - Christians in Israel

- On the eve of Christmas 2020, approximately 180,000 Christians¹ live in Israel; they comprise about 2% of the State of Israel's population.
- The Christian population grew by 1.6% in 2019.
- 77.1% of the Christians in Israel are Arab Christians. They constitute 7.1% of the total Arab population of Israel.
- Most of the Arab Christians reside in the Northern District (70.4%) and in the Haifa District (13.4%).
- 41.0% of the non-Arab Christians reside in the Tel Aviv and Central Districts, as compared to 33.8% in the Northern and Haifa Districts.
- The localities with the largest Arab Christian populations are Nazareth (21,700), Haifa (16,300), Jerusalem (12,900), and Shefar'am (10,400), as of the end of 2019.
- 785 Christian couples **married** in Israel in 2018. The average age at the first marriage of Christian grooms was 29.9, and that of Christian brides was 26.3.
- In 2019, 2,409 infants were born to Christian women, about 74% of whom (1,785 infants) were born to Arab Christian women.
- The average number of children up to age 17 in Christian families with children up to this age is 1.87. Of these Christian families, the average number of children up to age 17 in Arab Christian families is 1.97 smaller than the numbers in Jewish families (2.41) and in Moslem families (2.69).

For explanations and clarifications, please contact the Statistical Information Center at 02-659-2666

¹ This preliminary estimate for December 2020 does not include Christians who do not appear in the Population Register (foreigners).

- In the 2019/20 school year, 26,858 Christian students 1.5% of the total number of students – attended primary and secondary schools.
- The highest percentage of students entitled to a matriculation certificate that met university entrance requirements (and who were potential candidates for continuing their schooling in institutions of higher education) was among Christian Arabs, at 71.2%. This figure was similar to the percentage of students in Hebrew education² (71.4%), and higher than among Druze (64.5%) and Moslems (45.1%).
- In the 2017/18 school year, 217 Christian students attended pre-academic preparatory learning institutions.
- 51.6% of the Arab Christians continued their studies toward a first degree within eight years of graduating high school, compared to only 33.7% of the total number of high-school graduates in the Arab school system.
- The **proportion of women among the Christian students** was higher than women's proportion among the total number of students in all degrees and particularly in the advanced degrees: 64.3% and 53.7%, respectively, of those studying for a third degree, and 70.7% and 62.9%, respectively, of those studying for a second degree.
- Of the total number of students studying toward a first degree, Christians were most highly represented in the following fields: management information systems (11.2%), musicology (11.0%), and food engineering and biotechnology (10.4%).³
- Compared to Moslem Arab students, the percentage of Christian Arab students studying education and teacher training was lower, and the percentage of those studying medicine, engineering and architecture, and law was higher.
- The percentage of participation in the labour force in 2019 among Christians aged 15 and over was 66.8% (70.1% of men and 64.0% of women). This figure was 56.1% among Christian Arabs (63.2% of men and 48.8% of women).
- Approximately 18,000 Christians a rate of 103 per 1,000 persons were registered at the Ministry of Labor, Welfare, and Social Services in 2019. This percentage was lower than that of Moslems who were registered (approximately 188 per 1,000 persons) and Jews who were registered (109 per 1,000 persons).

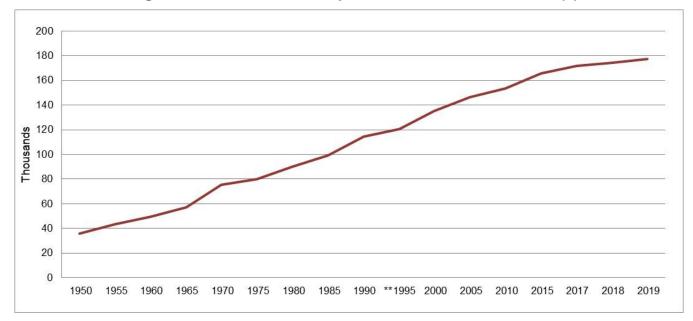
² Excluding students who attend schools under ultra-Orthodox supervision.

³ Fields in which at least 100 students were studying for a first degree. Students studying two fields were counted in each of their fields of study.

Selected Data on the Christian Population (end of 2019)

At the end of 2019, there were approximately 177,000 Christians living in Israel, comprising 1.9% of the total population in Israel: 77.1% of the Christian population in Israel (136,600) were Arab Christians, comprising 7.1% of the total Arab population in Israel.

Of the Christian population in Israel, 22.9% (40,600) were non-Arab Christians. Most of them (including their children who were born in Israel) immigrated to the country with their Jewish family members under the Law of Return during the 1990s.





 * Until 1994, the Christian population also included persons who were not classified by religion in the Population Register. From 1990 to 1994, the population of persons who were thus unclassified was relatively large, and included the immigrants from the former Soviet Union.
** The figure is based on the census for that year.

The growth rate of the **overall Christian population** was 1.6% in 2019. By way of comparison, the growth rate of the Jewish population was identical (1.6%), and that of the Moslem population was 2.3%. During the course of 2019, the Christian population grew by 2,708 persons, of whom 1,056 were added as a result of natural increase. Another 1,425 Christians were added to the Israeli population in the international migration balance, compared to 962 in the previous year.

The Arab Christian population grew by 1.0% in 2019, primarily as a result of natural increase. By contrast, **the non-Arab Christian population** grew by 3.6%.

Distribution of the Christian Population	Natural Increase, Absolute Numbers	International Migration Balance, Absolute Numbers	Percentage of Annual Increase
Total Christians	1,056	1,425	1.6
Arab Christians	1,085	54	1.0
Non-Arab Christians	-29 (1)	1,371	3.6

Table A - The Sources of Growth in the Christian Population, 2019

(1) Among the non-Arab Christian population, the number of deaths surpassed that of births, causing a negative balance of natural increase.

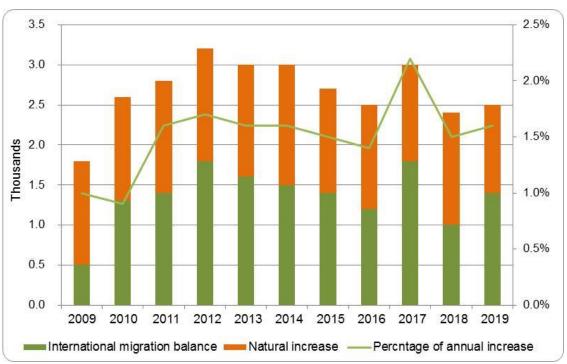
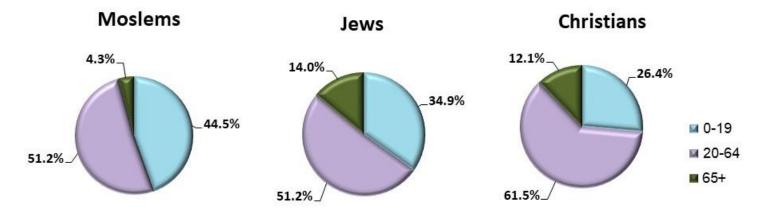


Diagram 2 - Sources of Increase of the Christian Population Over the Past Decade

The age composition of the total Christian population is different from that of the Jewish and Moslem populations. The percentage of young people aged 0–19 was 26.4%, lower than that of the Jewish population (34.9%), and still lower than that of the Moslem population (44.5%).

Persons aged 65 and over made up 12.1% of the total Christian population, compared to 14.0% of the Jewish population and 4.3% of the Moslem population.

Diagram 3 - Age Structure of Christians, Jews, and Moslems, End of 2019



Geographic Distribution

Most of the Arab Christians lived in the north: 70.4% lived in the Northern District, 13.4% in the Haifa District, and 9.5% lived in the Jerusalem District. As of the end of 2019, the localities with the largest Arab Christian population were Nazareth (21,700), Haifa (16,300), Jerusalem (12,900), and Shefar'am (10,400).

The geographic distribution of non-Arab Christians was different than that of Arab Christians: 41.0% lived in the Tel Aviv and Central Districts, and 33.8% lived in the Northern and Haifa Districts.

The largest communities of non-Arab Christians were concentrated in the three large cities: Tel Aviv (4,000), Haifa (3,900), and Jerusalem (3,300).

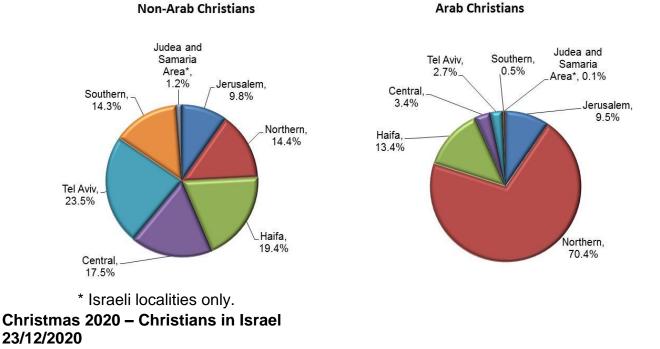


Diagram 4 - Population Distribution of Christians by District, End of 2019

Marriage and Fertility

In 2018, 785 Christian couples married in Israel; 90% of the grooms and 88% of the brides were Arab Christians.

The average age of Christian grooms marrying for the first time in 2018 was 29.9, about a year older than Druze grooms, about two and a half years older than Jewish grooms, and about three and a half years older than Moslem grooms.

The average age of Christian brides marrying for the first time was also higher than that of the other groups: 26.3, about half a year older than Jewish brides, about a year older than Druze brides, and about three and a half years older than Moslem brides.

In 2019, 2,409 infants were born to Christian women; approximately 74% of them (1,785 infants) were born to Arab Christian women.

Out of 624 infants born to non-Arab Christian women, approximately 47% were born to women born in the USSR (former), approximately 19% to women born in Ethiopia, approximately 8% to women born in Israel, approximately 4% to women born in the Philippines, and approximately 3% to women born in Romania and in Germany.⁴

In 2019, the number of children a Christian woman was expected to give birth to during the course of her lifetime (the total fertility rate) decreased to 1.80 children per woman from 2.06 in 2018. The number of children per Christian Arab woman was lower still, at 1.76 children per woman. By way of comparison, a Moslem woman was expected to give birth to 3.16 children during her lifetime, a Jewish woman 3.09, and a Druze woman 2.02.

 ⁴ Including infants born in Israel to Christian women who are not Israeli residents but whose spouses are Israeli residents.
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Households and Families⁵

In 2019, approximately 64,000 households – 2.4% of all households in Israel – were headed by a Christian. Of these households, approximately 39,000 were Arab Christian.

The average size of a household headed by a Christian was 3.03 persons – slightly lower than the size of households headed by a Jew (3.05), and still lower than the size of households headed by a Moslem (4.62).

In approximately 60% of the households headed by a Christian, the head of the household was an Arab Christian. The average size of these households was 3.39 persons.

Of Christian households, approximately 77% (approximately 49,000) were "family" households (which include at least one family). This was similar to the percentage of Jewish family households, as compared with 92% among the Moslems.

Non-family households, which include one person only or a group of persons who are not a family, comprised approximately 23% of the Christian households. This was similar to the percentage among Jewish households, and higher than the percentage among Moslem households, which was only about 8%.

Approximately 7% of the households headed by a Christian consisted of 6 or more persons, slightly less than among households headed by a Jew (about 9%), compared to approximately 31% of the households headed by a Moslem.

⁵ A household is defined as one person or a group of persons living together in one dwelling on a permanent basis most of the week, who have a joint expense budget for food. They may be related or unrelated persons or a combination of persons both related and unrelated. A family household is a household that contains at least one family. A family household can include: one family, one family with "other persons", or two families or more.

A **family** (a nuclear family) is defined as two or more persons who share the same household and are related to one another as a married or unmarried couple (including same-sex couples), or as parent and child (including an adopted child). The major types of families are a couple only, a couple with children (in various age groups, defined by the age of the youngest child), or a lone parent (a lone-parent family) with children. Other types of families that have been defined are: a grandparent with grandchildren, without the children's parents; and siblings who live together, without spouses and without children.

The data on households and families are based on the Labour Force Survey 2019. The data do not include persons living in institutions, kibbutzim, or student dormitories, or persons living outside localities (Bedouin in the South).

There were approximately 51,000 Christian families in Israel. The distribution of Christian families by type of family differed from that among Jewish families, and differed even more from that among Moslem families.

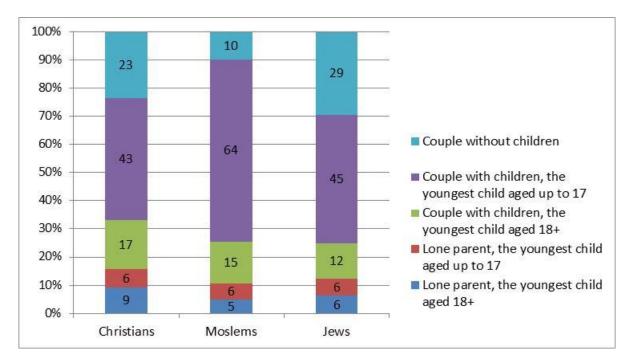


Diagram 5 - Families by Type of Family: Jews, Moslems, and Christians, 2019

The average number of children up to age 17 in Christian families with children up to that age was 1.87. Of these Christian families, the average number in Arab Christian families was 1.97. These figures are lower compared to Jewish families (2.41) and compared to Moslem families (2.69).

Education

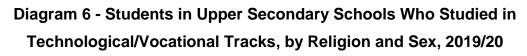
Students in the Education System (School Year 2019/20)

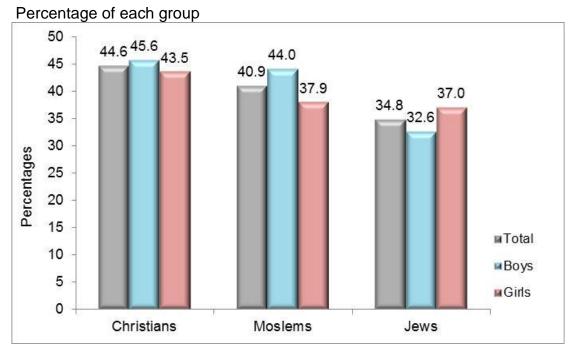
In the 2019/20 school year, there were 26,858 Christian students in primary and secondary school, comprising 1.5% of all primary and secondary school students. This percentage was the same as in the school year 2018/19 (1.5%).

The vast majority (86.4%) of these students were Arab. Christian students comprised approximately 5% of the students in Arab education.

That same year, there were 1,772 Christian students in first grade (Arab education) – approximately 4.8% of all first-graders in Arab education.

Among Christian upper secondary education students (Arab education), 44.6% studied in a technological/vocational track.⁶ This figure was slightly higher than the percentage among Moslems (40.9%), and considerably higher than the percentage among Jewish upper secondary students (Hebrew education), which was 34.8%.





Matriculation Exams (2018/19)

In the 2018/19 school year, Christians comprised 6.4% of all 12th-grade students in Arab education. That same year, 79.3% of Christian 12th-grade students were eligible for a matriculation certificate – a percentage similar to the previous year (78.8%). The percentage of Christian students eligible for a matriculation certificate in 2018/19 was lower than the percentage in Hebrew education (83.5%) and lower than the percentage of Druze (83.1%), but higher than the percentage of Moslems (60.9%).

A high percentage of Christian Arabs students (71.2%) received a matriculation certificate that meets university entrance requirements (and who were thus potential candidates for continuing to

⁶ Beginning in the 2016/17 school year, the method of calculating technological/vocational education (formerly the technological track) was changed, and updated to reflect the current definitions of the Ministry of Education.

higher education). The percentage was similar among students in Hebrew education (71.4%),⁷ and higher than the percentage of Druze (64.5%) and Moslems (45.1%) who were awarded the certificate.

Going on to Study for a First Degree Among Christian Upper Secondary School Graduates in 2010/11 Within Eight Years of Graduating Upper Secondary School (Tracking Until 2018/19)

Arab Christians

Of the Arab Christians, 51.6% went on to study for a first degree within eight years of graduation from upper secondary school, compared to only 33.7% of all upper secondary school graduates in Arab education.

The percentage of Arab Christians who attended universities, of the total number of Arab Christians who went on to study for a first degree, was much higher than the percentage of students in Arab education who went on to study for a first degree at the universities (50.1% and 35.4%, respectively). The percentage of Arab Christians who went on to study for a first degree at the academic colleges was slightly higher than the percentage of all students in Arab education (32.3% and 28.3%, respectively). The percentage of Arab Christians who went on to study for a first degree at first degree at the Open University was much lower than the percentage of all the students in Arab education (8.9% and 18.3%, respectively).

A small percentage of Arab Christian students chose to continue their studies at the academic colleges of education – 8.7% compared to 18% of the total number of students in Arab education.

Non-Arab Christians

Only 36.6% of the non-Arab Christians went on to study for a first degree within eight years of graduating high school, compared to 47.2% of all high-school graduates in Hebrew education.

The percentage of non-Arab Christians who attended universities, out of the total number of non-Arab Christians who went on to study for a first degree, was slightly lower than the parallel percentage of the total number of students in Hebrew education (32.8% and 35.8%, respectively). The percentage of non-Arab Christians who went on to study for a first degree in the academic colleges was also slightly lower than the percentage of all students in Hebrew education (38.8% and 40.3%, respectively). The percentage of non-Arab Christians who went on to study for a first

⁷ Not including students in schools under ultra-Orthodox supervision.

degree at the Open University was substantially higher than the percentage of all the students in Hebrew education (25.4% and 11.7%, respectively).

A particularly low percentage of the non-Arab Christian students chose to continue their studies in the academic colleges of education -3.0%, compared with 12.1% of the total number of students in Hebrew education.

Table B - Persons Who Go on to Study for a First Degree Among All Upper Secondary School Graduates and Among Christian Upper Secondary School Graduates (Arab and Non-Arab Christians) Within Eight Years after Completing School (2010/11), by Type of Institution

-	Hebrew Education, Total	Arab Education, Total	Arab Christians	Non-Arab Christians
Total Number of Upper Secondary School Graduates (absolute numbers)	76,569	20,321	1,804	183
Percentages	47.2	33.7	51.6	36.6
Of them: Continued to academic studies (absolute numbers)	36,105	6,850	930	67
Continued to academic studies, by type of institution (percentages)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Universities	35.8	35.4	50.1	32.8
The Open University	11.7	18.3	8.9	25.4
Academic colleges	40.3	28.3	32.3	38.8
Academic colleges of education	12.1	18.0	8.7	3.0

Students in Pre-Academic Preparatory Learning Institutions

In the 2017/18 academic year, 217 Christian students attended pre-academic preparatory learning institutions. These included:

- 195 Arab Christians and 22 non-Arab Christians
- 50.7% women and 49.3% men

- 186 students studying in specialization tracks, of whom 65.1% studied in a humanities and social sciences track, 25% in an exact sciences track, and 9.7% in a natural and life sciences track
- 18 students studying in a matriculation exam track (completion or improvement)
- 13 students studying in pre-specialization tracks.

Students in 2019/20

In 2019/20, there were 6,400 Christian students,⁸ who comprised 2.3% of the total students at all the institutions of higher education in $|srae|^9 - slightly$ more than their share of the population (about 2%).

Among Christian students, 94.9% (6,100 students) were Arabs and 5.1% (330 students) were non-Arab Christians.

Among the Christian students, 72.8% were studying for a first degree, of whom 23.3% were in their first year (and 49.5% were in the other years); 21.0% were studying for a second degree, and 3.6% were studying for a third degree.

Christian students comprised 2.4% of the total number of students studying for a first degree, 2.2% of the total students studying for a second degree, and 2.0% of the total students studying for a third degree.

Of the Christian students, 52.1% studied at universities, 36.6% studied at academic colleges (23.5% at budgeted colleges and 13.1% at non-budgeted colleges) and 11.3% studied at academic colleges of education.

Christian students comprised 2.6% of all university students, and 2.2% of the students at the academic colleges (2.4% at budgeted colleges, and 1.9% at non-budgeted colleges), and 1.8% of all students at academic colleges of education.

⁸ Excluding international students, who are not Israeli citizens.

⁹ Excluding the Open University. At the other institutions, includes studies following a degree. Christmas 2020 – Christians in Israel 23/12/2020

Field of Study/Population Group	Total	Total Christians	Thereof: Arab Christians	Arab Moslems
Total (absolute numbers)	197,546	4,694	4,454	29,364
Percentages	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
General humanities	3.0	2.1	2.0	2.2
Languages, literature and regional studies	1.4	1.9	1.9	2.3
Education and teacher training	17.3	11.4	11.6	27.2
Arts, crafts, and applied art	3.9	4.7	4.5	2.3
Social sciences	17.0	14.8	14.8	14.7
Business and management sciences	10.7	9.3	9.1	12.2
Law	6.3	8.3	8.5	5.3
Medicine	1.0	1.6	1.6	0.5
Paramedical studies	6.8	9.9	9.9	10.6
Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer sciences	9.2	9.9	10.0	6.5
Physical sciences	1.4	0.7	0.7	1.0
Biological sciences and agriculture	3.1	3.6	3.6	3.2
Engineering and architecture	18.9	21.6	22.0	12.0

Table C - Distribution of Christian Arab Students Studying for Their First Degree, byField of Study and Population Group (2019/20)

Compared with Moslem Arab students, the percentage of Arab Christian students who studied education and teacher training was lower – one out of 8 versus one out of 3. In addition, the percentage of Christian Arab students who studied medicine, engineering and architecture, and law (of the total number of Christian Arab students) was higher than among Moslem Arab students.

Of all students who were studying for a first degree, representation among the Christian students was highest in the following subjects of study: management information systems (11.2%), musicology (11.0%), and food engineering and biotechnology (10.4%).¹⁰

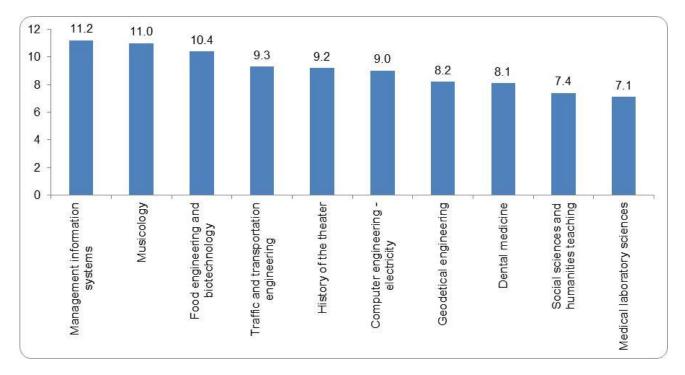


Diagram 7 - Subjects of Study That Had a Higher Percentage of Christian Students (Percentage of Christians Out of the Total Number of Students in Each Subject), 2019/20

The share of women among the Christian students was higher than it was among the total number of students, for all degrees and particularly among those studying for advanced degrees.

Table D - Percentage of Women Among the Christian Students and Among the TotalNumber of Students, By Degree (2019/20)

Degree	Among Christian students	Among all students	
Total (including diplomas)	62.4	59.7	
First degree	59.2	58.5	
Second degree	70.7	62.9	
Third degree	64.3	53.7	

¹⁰ Excluding the academic colleges of education and the Open University. Fields studied by 100 or more students. Students studying two fields were counted in each of their fields of study.

Employment

The **percentage of participation in the labour force** among **Christians** aged 15 and over in 2019 was 66.8% (70.1% among men and 64.0% among women). Among **Arab Christians**, this figure was 56.1% (63.2% among men and 48.8% among women). By comparison, the percentage of participation in the labour force among **Jews** aged 15 and over in 2019 was 67.8% (69.1% among Jewish men, and 66.1% among Jewish women).

The **employment rate** (percentage of employed persons out of all persons aged 15 and over) among Christians aged 15 and over was 64.8% (68.2% among men, and 62.0% among women). The employment rate among **Arab Christians** was 54.4% (61.8% among men and 46.6% among women). By comparison, the employment rate among **Jews** aged 15 and over was 65.0% (66.4% among Jewish men and 63.6% among Jewish women).

The **percentage of unemployed persons among Christians** aged 15 and over was 2.9% (2.7% among men and 3.1% among women). This figure among **Arab Christians** was 3.0% (2.1% among men and 4.3% among women). By comparison, the percentage of unemployed persons among **Jews** aged 15 and over was 3.8% (3.8% among men and women alike).

In 51,000 **Christian households** (79.8% of all Christian households), there was **at least one employed person** (in 21,000 households there was only one employed person, and in 30,000 households there were two or more employed persons). In 29,500 **Arab Christian households** (76.6% of all Arab Christian households) there was at least one employed person (in 11,100 households there was only one employed person, and in 18,400 households there were two or more employed persons). By comparison, in 1,729,200 **Jewish households** (79.4% of all Jewish households), there was at least one employed person (in 672,900 households there was only one employed person, and in 1,056,300 households there were two or more employed persons).

The **housing density** of Christian households was 0.95 persons per room (1.00 persons per room in **Arab Christian** households). By comparison, the housing density of **Jewish** households was 0.79 persons per room.

Social Services, 2019

Persons Registered at the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Social Services¹¹ and Persons Defined as Needing Intervention

In 2019, about 18,000 Christians – about 103 per 1,000 persons – were registered¹² at the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Social Services. The rate of persons registered among the Christians was lower than among Moslems (about 188 per 1,000 persons) and Jews (109 per 1,000 persons).

Of the Christians who were registered, about 57% were women and about 43% were men. About half of those registered (about 49%) were married, about 30% had never been married, and the rest were widowed (about 15%) or divorced (about 6%).

About 81% of the Christians who were registered (about 14,600) were defined as needing intervention.¹³ This rate is about 83 per 1,000 persons. Like the rate of registered persons, the rate of persons defined as needing intervention among the Christian population was lower than among Moslems (129 per 1,000 persons) and Jews (about 84 per 1,000 persons).

The most prevalent type of intervention among Christians who were defined as needing intervention was dysfunctional parents and/or children/adolescents¹⁴ (about 31%). The second most prevalent type of intervention needed was geriatric (about 21%), followed by medical reasons and disability (about 20%). The least prevalent type of intervention needed was addiction and delinquency (about 2.3%).

¹¹ The data cited in this section were processed by the Central Bureau of Statistics on the basis of a file of basic data of the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Social Services. The file includes statistics about families that are registered in the departments of social services.

¹² A file is opened for every family or person who applies or is referred to social departments, and at least one family member must be defined as needing intervention.

¹³ Need for intervention: The reason why the individual applied, or was referred to, the social-services departments. The social worker who is working with the family indicates, for each person noted in the treatment file, his or her main area of neediness and that of his or her family, of a set list of 58 categories of need for intervention (including "normal" need for intervention). The social worker may also indicate a secondary category of neediness for the individual or for his or her family.

¹⁴ This need for intervention includes problems with the parent-child relationship, dysfunctional mother or father, children's educational or behavioral problems, adolescent girls in distress, abandoned children, etc.

Recipients of Social Services in Community and Out-of-Home Frameworks of the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Social Services¹⁵

In 2019, about 3,700 Christians – a rate of about 21 per 1,000 persons – were placed in social service frameworks. This rate is lower than the rate among Moslems (about 34 per 1,000 persons) and Jews (about 29 per 1,000 persons).

Most of the Christians who were placed in social service frameworks (about 85%, about 18 per 1,000 persons) were placed in community frameworks only.¹⁶ In contrast, about 12% (about 2.5 per 1,000 persons) were placed in out-of-home frameworks only,¹⁷ and about 3% (about 0.7 per 1,000 persons) were placed in both community frameworks and out-of-home frameworks. This breakdown is different from the breakdowns of Jews and Moslems who were placed in social service settings (see Diagram 8).

¹⁵ The data presented in this section were processed at the CBS on the basis of files of frameworks and names of the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Social Services. The files include data on persons placed in out-of-home social service frameworks and in community frameworks.

¹⁶ Placed in the community framework refers to a person who continues to live with his natural family and receives community services and support in accordance with the "Looking Towards the Community" policy of the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Social Services. Examples of community frameworks are: day care centers, after-school child care programs, day care in a home settings, parent and child centers, and centers for the prevention of violence.

¹⁷ Placed in an out-of-home framework refers to a person who is unable to live with his family due to his own exposure or exposure of his family to situations of distress and risk. Examples of outof-home frameworks are: foster families, shelters, boarding schools, emergency centers, and nursing homes.

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Diagram 8 - Persons Placed in Social Service Frameworks, by Religion and Type of Framework, 2019

