Extremist Sects Within the Black Hebrew Israelite Movement

Key Points

- Black Hebrew Israelites are not the same as Black Jews or Jews of color.
- Not all Black Hebrew Israelite organizations are antisemitic or extremists.
- The Black Hebrew Israelite movement is divided into organizations or sects that operate semi-independently across the United States.
- Black Hebrew Israelites believe that they are the true Israelites and that the Twelve Tribes of Israel are people of color.
- Popular activities include street teachings and public speaking events.
- Extremist sects heavily rely on social media to spread information and coordinate activity.

Background

The Black Hebrew Israelite (BHI) movement is a fringe religious movement that rejects widely accepted definitions of Judaism and asserts that people of color are the true children of Israel.

Followers, who are also referred to as “Black Hebrews” or “Hebrew Israelites,” believe that Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans are the descendants of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. It should be noted that not all BHI adherents include Native American populations in the Twelve Tribes, but they all agree that white people or conventionally accepted Jews are not members of the tribes. This is a
departure from the mainstream understanding of the Twelve Tribes as a reference to Jacob's twelve sons, who each represent a different genealogical thread of the Jewish population. Similarly, adherents of the white supremacist Christian Identity Movement also claim to be members of the "lost tribes" of Israel.

Black Hebrew Israelites are not Jews and Black Jews are not the same as Black Hebrew Israelites. Black Jews and Jews of color are genuine members of the Jewish faith. Black Hebrew Israelites identify specifically with the biblical Israelites and consider Judaism, Christianity and Islam to be false religions. Many BHI teachers claim that Jews and other white people forced Black individuals into other religions. Extreme factions believe white Jews are perpetuating identity theft.

Black Hebrew Israelites believe they are members of the Twelve Tribes based on biblical interpretation that teaches that their population will be spread across the globe, which they tie to the trans-Atlantic slave trade. BHI presents slavery, racism, incarceration and other social ills as divine punishments for disobedience that can only be cured through BHI ideology.
Many BHI teachings use verses from the Book of Deuteronomy, the fifth book of the Torah, and the King James Bible to tell the history of Israelites from the Old Testament and to give a biblical explanation for the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Teachings assert that the Israelites were warned of repercussions for breaking the Commandments but did not abide, resulting in enslavement as punishment and another race inhabiting Israel in their place. Preachers use Deuteronomy 28:15-68
to encourage individuals to embrace their true title as God's chosen children or continue to suffer in society as their ancestors have.

BHI adherents reject all images of a white Jesus and claim that these images are further attempts to steal the Israelis' identity. Adherents have identified a Bible passage they believe shows Jesus was a Black man. Revelation 1:15 of the King James Bible:

Revelation 1:15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

The description of Jesus' feet as dark and burned is frequently cited as proof that depictions of Jesus as white are misrepresentations. Some preachers assert that accepting the true Biblical image of Christ as he is described and not the “New Jesus” taught by Christianity is a step towards claiming one’s true identity as an Israelite. In extremist sects, it is believed that Jesus, the Messiah, will only save Israel, or the Israelites.

White people and white Jews are commonly referred to as “Edomites” or descendants of “Esau” and biblical enemies of Jacob (Israel). They are described as hairy and ugly, and some teachings of BHI believe that Edomites will become slaves in heaven.

BHI celebrations of Passover and its understanding of symbols like the Star of David or menorahs are based on BHI biblical interpretation and not mainstream Judaism. Christian holidays are considered pagan or Devil celebrations, as are Thanksgiving and other non-denominational holidays. BHI adherents use ancient and manipulated variations of Hebrew, rather than accepted versions. “Y” is heavily used, and other vowels are eliminated. Individual groups favor different variations, but all refer to God and Jesus as Yahawashi, Yahawah, YHWH, or Yahweh and reject spellings or pronunciations of mainstream Judaism.
Extremist Ideology

BHI teachings become explicitly hateful when coupled with racial superiority and accusations against white individuals and specific hatred towards the Jewish community. Extremist Black Hebrew Israelites assert that white people are agents of Satan, Jews are liars and false worshipers of God, and Blacks are racially superior and the only true “chosen people.” Some extremist leaders preach that only true descendants of the Twelve Tribes (Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Indians based on their beliefs) will be allowed into heaven, and that God will permit them to rule over all other races. Leaders and street teachers also push homophobic, transphobic and sexist beliefs, including referring to the LGBTQ community as demonic and not loved by God.

Extremist sects represent a vocal subsection of the larger BHI movement. Just as not all BHI adherents are extremist, not all extremist sects preach the same level of hatred. The most active extremist sects have hardened their messages after decades of operation.

The antisemitic beliefs that some express include claims that Jews have no right to Israel as a homeland, contentions that Israel will not be fruitful until returned to the Israelites, accusations that Jews purposely enslaved Black individuals to steal their identity and assertions that Jews are imposters or Satanic.

Judaism is frequently referred to as the “synagogue of Satan.” Stolen identity is a central piece of the ideology and the basis of animosity towards Jews. Among the commonly cited passages used to justify this hatred:

Revelation 3:9 "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."

Important and Recurring BHI Phrases:
Camp = a street teaching event OR the organization itself.

Edom/Edomites/Esau = Esau is the twin of Jacob and, according to BHI teachings, the ancestor of Caucasians. Esau is described as red and ugly and Jacob's (Israel's) descendants are described as dark skinned. (Note this is not the traditional reading of the Jacob/Esau situation). References are used as insults to show clear racial differences, as Jacob's children, Blacks, are believed to be the chosen race while Esau's descendants are cursed by God.

Jew-ish = negative term for mainstream Jews and used to depict them as imposters.

School = the physical location that hosts activities.

“So-Called” = used to draw doubt to identity labels. Jews are referred to as “so called Jews” and members of the BHI ideology as “so called Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Indians” to highlight aspects of stolen and forced identity.

Street Teaching or Street Units = organized activities during which members read Scripture in public, advertise their organization, and antagonize pedestrians.

Synagogue of Satan = antisemitic term used by groups to express their dislike of Jews and refer to their ostensible nefarious actions.

THM = The most high, God.

**History of American Black Hebrew Israelite Groups**

Black Hebrew Israelite ideology is rooted in fringe interpretations of the enslavement and mistreatment of Black individuals throughout history, including the belief that God punished disobedient Israelites by spreading their nation and their descendants across the world (via the slave trade). While BHI holds white people responsible for the slave trade, some teachings place importance on the
actions of Israelites that lead to their punishment and how acceptance of the ideology will put them back into God's good graces.

American slaves found commonality with the biblical enslavement of the Israelites and considered themselves descendants of the tortured peoples. Over time elements of Black nationalism and Black identity were incorporated into the ideology and later became defining elements in the 1960s during the civil rights era.

Gabriel Prosser, who was enslaved in Virginia, is credited with preaching the earliest iterations of BHI ideology. Prosser, who studied the Bible, is best known for sparking a slave rebellion in 1800.

The earliest organized BHI congregation was started by F.S. Cherry, founder of the Church of the Living God, the Pillar Ground of Truth of All Nations. Founded in the 1880s, the organization grew in size and influence after moving from Tennessee to Pennsylvania in the early 1900s. Cherry integrated racism into his teachings, preaching that all biblical prophets and individuals were Black, and that God hates white individuals because they are frauds.

At the same time, The Church of God and Saints of Christ served as a non-racist alternative to Cherry's teaching. Founded in 1896 by William Saunders Crowdy in Lawrence, Kansas, this BHI sect mixed aspects of Christianity with Israelite slave narratives. Crowdy, an escaped slave, said he received Godly visions that proved the Lost Tribes of Israel were Black. His congregation continues and maintains its non-extremist messaging.

The 20th century saw the growth of antisemitic and extremist teachings that combined with other extremist teachings, including those of the Nation of Islam and Moorish Sovereign Citizens. Noteworthy BHI factions in the 20th century include the Commandment Keepers, Ben Ammi Ben Israel's Dimona, Israel congregation and the Israeli School.
Wentworth Arthur Matthew, founder of The Commandments Keepers Church, also called the Commandment Keepers Church of the Living God Pillar & Ground of Truth and the Faith of Jesus Christ, preached combined ideas of Black nationalism and Judaism. The congregation started in 1919 as a church in Harlem, New York, before becoming a synagogue. Matthew preached that Jews are Black and that white Jews are born from intermarriage between Black Jews and children of Esau, the brother and biblical enemy of Israel.

Like his slave-era predecessors, Matthew viewed the enslavement and suffering of Black bodies as divine punishment. Matthew and Commandment Keepers sought acceptance from Jewish entities, including the New York Board of Rabbis, but while his efforts were unsuccessful and Matthew himself reported feeling outcast by white Jews, he refrained from antisemitic or racist teachings. Matthew supported accepting Jewish refugees and advocated for kindness between his followers and white Jews.

In the 1960's, Ben Carter aka Ben Ammi Ben Israel established a congregation in Chicago, Illinois, under the name African Hebrew Israelites. Ben Israel believed that the Hebrews of the Bible were Black and had claim over Israel as their homeland. Following an unsuccessful resettlement in Liberia, Ben Israel and over 40 families moved to Dimona, Israel and claimed their rights under the Law of Return. Years of negotiations with the Israeli government over settlement lead to their eventual citizenship in 1990. The group now numbers around 5,000 and is well-integrated into Israeli society.

The Israeli School (not connected to the African Hebrew Israelites), founded in the 1960s in Harlem, has produced active splinter factions that propagate some of BHI's most extreme, racist, militant and antisemitic ideologies. Abba Bivens, a former Commandment Keepers congregant, created the Israeli School in an explicit effort to reinstate more extreme teachings. Branded as One West or 1West because of its address in Harlem, the group became a dominant racist and extremist BHI voice.
Operating in the late 1990s under the name the Israeli School of Universal and Practical Knowledge, the group amplified its extremist and racist rhetoric. Apocalyptic, militant teachings and racial superiority pushed the ideology away from its origin and towards the hate we see today.

These teachings proved to be a source of conflict for congregants. In the early 2000s, the group splintered further into multiple extremist factions. Most notably, the original school was renamed the Israelite Church of God and Jesus Christ (ICGJC).

**Structure**

The Black Hebrew religious ideology varies from group to group within the movement. The movement itself includes extremist and antisemitic factions as well as non-hateful factions. It must be stressed that not all individuals who subscribe to Black Hebrew Israelite ideology hold racist, antisemitic beliefs or advocate violence.

The extremist faction of the BHI movement includes distinct groups operating nationally and internationally. Many of the currently active extremist factions originate from the One West (1West) Camp, which encouraged numerous young men to create their own camps dedicated to strengthening the hateful and militant threads of the ideology.

Many extremist sects adhere to a strict hierarchal structure with clearly defined roles and responsibilities and division of the sexes. Roles and classifications can include: Bishop, Deacon, Chief Priests, Apostles, Captain, Officer, Soldier and Brother. Bishops and other high-ranking members are considered divine and trusted sources of truth. Women in the group may organize their own activities and are called Sisters. In many camps, women are not allowed to wear pants or fraternize with male members. Marriage between group members is encouraged and celebrated.
Some factions require members to pay dues or fees. This can include a monthly payment of 10% - 20% of household income, as well as fees for holidays or ceremonies, family fees, clothing and equipment fees and various other payments to the organization. Clothing brands, music production groups, books, and other moneymaking ventures offer additional revenue streams.

Dress codes vary by group, but members may wear long robes, religious garb, or shirts with a faction logo.

While these groups operate independently, the organizational structure and aims are consistent, which allows for partnerships and shared traffic to their online materials. Smaller factions may co-host street teachings or conferences with other factions in efforts to appear larger.

**Active Extremist Factions**
The following organizations embrace and promote extremist, racist, antisemitic, homophobic and sexist elements of BHI ideology. This list is not exhaustive.

**Israel United in Christ, Inc. (IUIC)**

Israel United in Christ (IUIC) was founded in 2003 in New York as a splinter organization of the Israeli School of Universal Practical Knowledge. Founder Nathaniel Ray (aka Bishop Nathanyel Ben Israel), onetime member of the One West camp, has built the organization into an international entity since its creation. Israel United in Christ has 71 United States locations and is increasing their international presence through 20 foreign locations.

*In their own words:* “An Organized Nation uniting our people destroyed from colonialism and slavery.” “Negroes, Hispanics and Native Americans, You ARE the...
Children of ISRAEL. We made God angry, and he put us into slavery. It's time to come back to God

Examples of Antisemitism: In a recorded sermon on January 21, 2020, Bishop Nathanyel and other leadership refer to Jews as: “the devil that the Bible even speaks of,” “the so-called Jews,” “the house of demons,” and specifically call Chasidic Jews “evil despots.”

During the same sermon, another leader disparages Jews by stating: “They lie in their media, they lie in their synagogues, they lie all over the place, everything they do is about lying.”

Notable Activities:

Chicago, Illinois August 31, 2019: IUIC members held the “IUIC Men’s Conference 2019” in Chicago and organized a march attended by 1,000 individuals.

Memphis, Tennessee, August 4, 2018: IUIC members organized the 800-person “Violence Must Stop” march through Memphis to protest incarceration and to denounce violence in black communities. Leaders Bishop Nathanyel Ben Israel and Bishop Gabar were interviewed during the event.

Israelite School of Universal Practical Knowledge (ISUPK)
An important distinction: The Israeli School of Universal Practical Knowledge is the name of the original One West camp in Harlem, New York. The Israelite School of Universal Practical Knowledge is a splinter group that amended the original name to the Israelite School in 2006, while the Israelite Church of God in Jesus Christ (ICGJC) is the original group’s modern entity. ISUPK believes that they are the only true BHI group because of their One West roots.

The current iteration of ISUPK operates as a non-profit in Upper Darby, Pennsylvania and is led by ex-One Wester General Yahanna, aka John Lightborne. There is a special focus on bringing their ideology to Black communities to end poverty, drug addiction, crime, and other social ills.

Examples of Antisemitism: ISUPK sells clothing under the brand UPKFRESH. Their products include a t-shirt depicting a slave ship and the Middle Passage of the slave trade with the words “True Holocaust.”
The Israelite Church of God in Jesus Christ (ICGJC)

Maintaining the legacy and activities of the founding Israeli School, the Israelite Church of God in Jesus Christ continues to operate in Harlem, until recently under the leadership of the late Jermaine Grant, aka Chief High Priest. Grant was also referred to as the “Holy Spirit” and “The Comforter” as he asserted that he carried the Holy Spirit within his earthly body. Grant passed away on April 1, 2020 after a short illness. While the official cause of death is unknown, the Israelite Church of God in Jesus Christ released a statement that Grant died from COVID-19.

Examples of Antisemitism:

David Anderson and Francine Graham, the perpetrators of the December 10, 2019 attack on a kosher market in Jersey City, New Jersey, had links to ICGJC. Anderson and Graham deliberately targeted the Jewish market and Anderson posted antisemitic content to social media prior to the attack.

Literature available on their website includes teachings such as:

“Can Caucasians be Jews according to the Bible? NO!”
“Are the so-called Negros in America Africans? No! They are the real Hebrew Israelites (Jews).”

“The Jew-ish people are imposters (The suffix “ish” = 1. Pertaining to; 2. as or like. Example: as a Jew or like a Jew but NOT a “Jew”).”

Notable Activities:

In January 2020, Grant and another member were convicted of using ICGJC funds to illegally finance their own activities. The two stole more than $5.3 million from the organization and its members. Grant was individually charged with defrauding the United States through his own tax crimes. He was sentenced to 18 months in federal prison. He died in April 2020 while waiting to begin serving his sentence.

Sicarii Hebrew Israelites aka The Sicarii aka Exodus 17:15
Sicarii's name is a nod to the extremist Jewish Zealots who rallied against Roman occupation. Just as their namesakes advocated violence, Sicarii preaches one of the more extreme and violent ideologies. Originally a California-based group, the organization has established camps in 10 US cities.

In their own words: “We are a spiritual community organization that is dedicated to the uplifting of disenfranchised, so-called Blacks, Hispanics, Latinos & Native Americans. Through the spirit and power of the Most High God in the name of his only begotten Son (YAHAWAH BAHASHAM YAHAWASHI). Teaching the truth of the Bible and reintroducing the lost sheep of the house of Israel to their true identity.”
Examples of Antisemitism: During street teachings, Sicarii members have claimed that Jews “stole” their identity through the slave trade, Jews living in Israel are imposters, white people are the devil, and furthered antisemitic conspiracy theories of a Jewish plan to rule the world.

House of Israel (HOI)

Leader Kani Zabach, who studied at the One West Camp in Harlem, NY, founded HOI. The group has multiple chapters across the United States and has attended events with other BHI groups including street teachings and networking conventions.

In their own words: “Community organization that actively participates in uniting and building up the nation destroyed by Colonialism, Imperialism, and Slavery.” “Call back to the fold the Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans; who are the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Through Edification, News, and Practical Knowledge sharing.”

Examples of Antisemitism:

In a video following the December 2019 shooting in Jersey City, Zabach accused Edomites of staging the shooting in an attempt to discredit the Black Hebrew Israelite movement. He further claims that the shooting was a message from God, that “Edomite detective” Joseph Seals was killed because of violence against the Black community, and that Israelites should not feel sympathy towards the “three so-called Jews” that were slaughtered, again claiming that the attack could be fake.

During a December 22, 2019 street teaching, Zabach stated: “Blacks are the real Jews, you’re damn right we are. And we are coming to take back our identity and our nationality.”
Notable Activities:

House of Israel members are most known for an incident in which they antagonized visiting high school students, in Washington to attend an anti-abortion march, at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC in January 2019. The incident drew national attention because a student was accused of taunting a Native American Elder. (The parents of the Kentucky student in question subsequently sued several media outlets for defamation; some, including against the Washington Post and CNN, ended in settlements.) It was later revealed that members of HOI were taunting the students and Native Americans with racial slurs and chants.

True Nation Israelite Congregation aka True Nation
The California-based faction has spread nationally since the early 2010s and has embarked on trips abroad to establish international connections.

In their own words: “Truenation.org gives lessons regarding the knowledge of God and his glorious son Yahawashi (Jesus Christ) to the fact that the TRUE children of Israel will be edified.”

Examples of Antisemitism:

Literature available on their website includes comments such as those below:

“This sect [Edomites] of Jew impostors have stolen our history, written records and have perverted the laws of the scriptures.”
“However, Christ knows the BLASPHEMY (lies) of them which say they are Jews and are not. This is important to understand because this clearly shows that everyone and anyone cannot be a Jew/Israelite, and God takes offense to those that claim to be Jews and are not authentic descendants of Abraham Isaac and Jacob.”

Israelites Saints of Christ aka ISOC

In their own words: “Our mission is to wake up the so called Blacks and Hispanic Natives to their true Biblical nationality and cause them to truly follow God in Christ.” “We are a Bible Based organization that teaches Repentance to the Twelve Tribes of the nation of Israel. Our goal is to spread this marvelous Truth throughout the Earth. The So Called Negroes and Hispanic Natives are the True Biblical Israelites.”

Examples of Antisemitism: A page hosted on their website titled “Not the Real Jew” reads: “Revelation 2:9. I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan” and includes the following text and images, including a Chasidic child stamped with the word “Imposters.”

Activities of Extremist Sects of the Black Hebrew Israelite Movement
Street Teachings

Anyone who spends time in an American city may encounter public sermons and other activities by Black Hebrew Israelite groups. Dating back to the days of One West in Harlem, “street teachings” have become a daily performance for BHI groups. Designated “street units” or members organize on public streets with posters and speakers in the hopes of spreading their teaching and gaining attention. Groups’ antisemitic and racist beliefs are put on display during these performances, transforming urban street corners to theaters of hate.

While reading Bible passages or texts that support their ideology, street teachers will engage with or antagonize pedestrians, sometimes targeting individuals they see as enemies (white people or Jews). While units intentionally target and rebuff pedestrians, the activities do not commonly lead to physical altercations.

These activities are livestreamed over social media or posted on a later date to their many accounts. Titles for uploaded videos will commonly include the topic of the teaching and insults or derogatory terms to describe pedestrians or the population attacked through the teaching.
Social Media Activity

Employing social media for communication, teaching, and recruitment is central to current BHI practices. Real life activities such as street teachings, marches, and conferences find digital homes on BHI social media. Popular social media platforms are frequented by BHI groups to spread their ideology, connect likeminded individuals and coordinate local and national sects. This activity is not unlike the online presence of other extremist ideologies that use online spaces to amplify real-life activities.

Group Level

Organizational level social media activities vary across groups. Many large groups operate a main page, dozens of local school pages, and additional pages for special activities within the faction. For example, IUIC's chapter in Orlando, Florida has a location Facebook page, a location YouTube channel, a location Vimeo account and a location In the Classroom YouTube channel. Because of this, one organization can own dozens of accounts and target or cater to different people across the world.
Group and personal profiles will advertise content from other platforms (i.e., sharing a YouTube link to Twitter), increasing online traffic to a variety of platforms. Individuals or followers will also maintain their own pages and share posts from their location-specific or main group pages.

The most frequently used platforms include:

**Facebook** – Used to share flyers, post photos (from events, mission trips abroad, etc.), and advertise events and content

**YouTube** – Used to share sermons, street teachings and other visual/audio content

**Instagram** – Used by the group to advertise events or celebrate members, holidays, etc.

**Twitter** – Used to promote group activities and content from other platforms

In addition to the platforms listed above, other services like Tumblr, Pinterest, and Soundcloud are popular but not as consistently used across groups. Less mainstream platforms such as Telegram are also used to coordinate in-group activities away from public channels. Israel United in Christ uses Telegram to create school chats, chats for events, and other communication that is protected on the encrypted platform.
Individual Use

BHI-affiliated individuals commonly take a Hebrew name upon exposure to or membership in an organization and change social media profiles to reflect this. Individuals associated with Israel United in Christ frequently use the surname “Ben Israel” or “Israel” and members associated with the Sicarii faction use “Yasharalah” or “Yahawada.” Individuals may also list “Jerusalem, Israel” as their hometown or say that their job, education, or current employment is associated with a group.

These new monikers are added to preexisting social media profiles, replacing the individual’s given name. In some cases, profiles are stripped of their content pre-BHI acceptance, but other profiles show first signs of exposure and the transition from conventional posts to BHI leaning beliefs and messages. These naming and labeling tactics effectively distance the individual from their previous associations, putting forward an image that is solely BHI.

While extremist faction pages limit or use coded language to spread their ideology, personal profiles can feature more hateful messages and dissatisfaction targeted at out groups. Attacks on white individuals, Jews, Muslims, the LGBTQ+ community, and others show how organizational teachings can manifest into individualized hate. Individualized hate can also be seen in user comments on
Livestreams, videos, and pictures posted by the main organization are peppered with comments that range from prayers for leaders to threats against perceived enemies.

Social media allows groups and individual members opportunities to amplify their messages. Much of extremist BHI activity occurs in digital spaces, easily spread across the world through shares and likes. The transnational spread of antisemitism, racism, and extremist hate has allowed current extremist Black Hebrew Israelite preachers to plant seeds of hate globally, advancing the movement well beyond what their predecessors achieved through activities in local physical spaces.

**Criminal Activity**

While aspects of the ideology call for retribution against white people, Jews, and other populations, violent activity perpetrated by BHI adherents is not prevalent. However, isolated cases exist and offer insight into how teachings can motivate real-life activity.

**Violent Criminal Activity**

*Jersey City, New Jersey Kosher Marker Shooting:* On December 10, 2019, David Anderson and Francine Graham shot and killed a police detective before opening fire on the JC Kosher Supermarket, killing three individuals in the store. The incident began when JCPD Detective Joseph Seals approached Anderson and Graham at Bayview Cemetery and one or both suspects shot and killed him.

At or around 12:30 pm Anderson and Graham exited their U-Haul van in front of JC Kosher Supermarket on Martin Luther King Drive and fired shots into the storefront. The establishment was targeted, as video shows the U-Haul and its occupants bypassed other buildings and pedestrians and only fired at the market. Anderson and Graham barricaded themselves inside the building and engaged in
gunfire with responding law enforcement. When officers entered the facility, they found five individuals dead on arrival and identified Anderson and Graham.

Following the shooting, the building superintendent of the Israelite Church of God and Jesus Christ (ICJGC) Harlem location identified Anderson and Graham as church attendants from four years prior. Social media belonging to Anderson was linked to Black Hebrew Israelite and antisemitic beliefs expressed on social media. Anderson’s accounts included messages calling Jews imposters and Satan worshipers and claims of Black supremacy, as well as anti-white and anti-law enforcement content. Anderson was not a member of an established group and expressed his distrust of such organized camps on his profiles.

**Israel United in Christ’s Brushes with the Law:** Israel United in Christ has been associated with two violent acts and has attempted to distance themselves from the perpetrators. The group publically rejects any claims that it is a hate organization or advocates violence, but its teachings prove otherwise.

The East London, UK branch was thrust into the news in 2018 when a female member, 20 year-old Joy Morgan, disappeared. Morgan, a student and active IUIC member from 2015 until her death, went missing in December 2018 following a church activity.

Morgan had met a Nigerian immigrant, Ajibola Shogbamimu, aka Shohfah-El Israel, through the church. On December 26, 2018, Shohfah-El Israel dropped Morgan off at her student housing, disobeying congregation rules about interactions between women and men who were not their husbands. Morgan was never seen alive again. In August 2019, Shohfah-El Israel was convicted of her murder and sentenced to 17 years in prison. The BBC released a documentary on the case that same month which featured Morgan’s family. Family members appear, speaking about Morgan’s distancing from her loved ones and total acceptance of IUIC’s teachings. Morgan’s body was not found until October 5, 2019, ten months after she had gone missing.
Following Morgan’s disappearance, IUIC added an automated pop-up to their site expressing their condolences while distancing the organization from the incident. It reads:

“Our deepest sympathies go out to the family of Joy Morgan. We are deeply saddened by the confirmation News on Joy’s passing. Please accept our heartfelt condolences; words cannot express the sadness we are all feeling right now. We all will sadly miss Sister Joy, but the joy that she brought to our lives and the memories will live on.”

Gerald Duane Lewis, aka Gaddiell Ben Israel, shot and robbed Crystal Raquel Cash, a transwoman, in Evansville, Indiana in 2016. Cash told law enforcement that Lewis used homophobic slurs during the shooting. After the shooting, IUIC released a statement confirming that Lewis was a member but had been removed from the organization for not following guidelines. He pleaded guilty to one count of attempted murder in December 2018.

**Miami, Florida, October 2019**: Larry Greene, aka Elijah Israel, was charged with aggravated assault with a deadly weapon after allegedly assaulting two people at a synagogue. Green was quoted as telling his victims they were “fake Jews” and should “go back to Israel.” Green is a self-identified BHI follower and not associated with an established sect.

**Nation of Yahweh Miami Murders**: The Nation of Yahweh is perhaps most famously known for a string of murders in the 1980s. Nation of Yahweh members were guided by teachings of both Nation of Islam and BHI ideology that developed into violent Black supremacy.

Leader and founder Yahweh ben Yahweh, aka Hulon Mitchell Jr., and 15 followers were indicted on charges of murder in the 1990s and ben Yahweh was convicted in 1992. Between 1981 and 1990, the group was responsible for at least 14 murders of white individuals, ex-members, and others. Members were accused of committing the racially motivated murders to further the mission of the Nation of
Yahweh or at the request of ben Yahweh. At trial, members of the organization testified that ben Yahweh preached racial hatred and violence, beliefs that current members claim to have abandoned.

Nation of Yahweh member **Maurice Woodside**, aka Michael Symonette or “Michael the Black Man,” was involved in the murder trials and is currently active in Miami, Florida as a pro-Trump activist, specifically “Blacks for Trump.”

**Other Criminal Activity**

The Israelite Church of God and Jesus Christ (ICGJC) has been involved in multiple non-violent legal matters over the years. In 2013, leader Grant sued toy designer **Vicale Corp.** over claims the toy figurine made to resemble him was “not black enough” and had distorted features. Most recently, an FBI raid in November 2016 produced evidence that leader Grant and treasurer Lincoln Warrington were stealing money from the organization and its members. Between 2007 and 2016, Grant and Warrington used a third-party company to take over $5.3 million from the Israelite Church of God in Jesus Christ organization. In 2018, the pair was arrested and indicted on charges of conspiracy to defraud the United States. Grant was additionally charged with five counts of personal tax evasion. While originally maintaining his innocence, Grant pleaded guilty to the conspiracy charge in 2019 and in January 2020 was sentenced to serve 18 months in federal prison and three years’ supervised release. He died in April 2020 before completing his sentence.