SIGNS OF SPRING
DISPLAYING GOD’S FAITHFULNESS TO HIS PEOPLE

In this issue: ‘The Covenant,’ Passover and ICEJ staffers signal God’s hand in Israel
The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ)

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem was founded in 1980 as an act of comfort and solidarity with Israel and the Jewish people in their claim to Jerusalem.

Today, the Christian Embassy stands at the forefront of a growing mainstream movement of Christians worldwide who share a love and concern for Israel and an understanding of the biblical significance of the modern ingathering of Jews to the land of their forefathers.

From our headquarters in Jerusalem and through our branches and representatives in over 80 nations, we seek to challenge the Church to take up its scriptural responsibilities towards the Jewish people, to remind Israel of the wonderful promises made to her in the Bible, and to be a source of practical assistance to all the people of the Land of Israel.

The ICEJ is a non-denominational faith ministry, supported by the voluntary contributions of our members and friends worldwide. We invite you to join with us as we minister to Israel and the Jewish people worldwide.

If you wish to make a donation to the general work of the ICEJ or to a specific project described in this magazine, please use the attached response envelope, use the address below or visit our Web site at www.icej.org/get-involved to send your gift. All donations are tax deductible according to the law of your country.

“And I said, ‘I see an almond branch.’ Then the LORD said to me, ‘You have seen well, for I am watching over my word to perform it.’” Jeremiah 1:11-12
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Jesus did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves, but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. - Hebrews 9:12
Dear Friends,

Passover celebrates a great deliverance. It is all about total despair and God’s total ability. It reminds us that “dead ends” which have no hope and appear to be the end of the road, are in reality the beginning of a new and glorious highway. In the end our limitations bring us to a place where, unless God intervenes, we are without hope.

This is Israel’s story as she languished under the oppressive regime of Pharaoh. In response to their cry and certainly not because of their faith, for they questioned and doubted Moses, God came down and delivered them. He took them through water, led them by fire and cloud and fed them on what scripture calls angel food. The Passover is a chronicle about a glorious God who, because of His great love, released His people from the burning furnace of Egypt. Thus the way home to the Promised Land was punctuated with miracles and education, giving the Israelites an understanding of the God they had agreed to follow. The story is a thrilling one and its lessons are inexhaustible and ever fresh.

Passover then teaches us that our God is a God of miracles. You can find Him in all of your life to care for you, provide for you, discipline you but always love you! In the end you will understand Him better and be prepared to give Him your all.

Moreover, His redeeming work, always by the spilling of blood, is because of His grace and mercy and not because of anything we have done. Such grace is hard to understand but it nevertheless remains real and wonderful.

Moreover, the same God that delivered Israel 3300 years ago has not changed. His ways may be far from our ways and the nature of His deliverance may well be surprising, but in the end He will do it.

Our work is called “faithfulness.” Faithfulness to His word and faithfulness in the place of prayer. Nothing in Israel is happening outside of God’s sovereign will. Our place is to occupy our watchman’s tower and not give up or get discouraged. The God of Passover specializes in the impossible. Let us remember this and rejoice in it.

Yours in Jesus,

Malcolm Hedding
Building the set of “The Covenant”

Fourth season of “The Covenant”
biggest one yet

With additional scenes, a new set, fresh costumes and governmental endorsement in several cities, “The Covenant” is entering its fourth season in Israel.

This year, the Biblical musical that has become an ICEJ trademark will be performed in front of a minimum of 17,000 Israelis throughout the entire country, according to Doron Schneider, ICEJ Israeli public relations officer.

“Last time we had to push ourselves in,” he said. “We had to persuade them that this was something good, something positive. Now, even the schools are fighting over the spots available to bring their own students to.”

The cause of “The Covenant” was taken up by an Israeli woman whose daughter was an atheist before she saw the musical.

“Once she saw it, she began to believe in God,” Schneider said.

This woman, Aviva Ben Rafael, chairwoman of the Israeli Youth Award, figured that if it could help her daughter, the message of “The Covenant” could encourage an entire nation to strengthen their belief in God.

Ben Rafael's organization helps youth at risk in Israel. Her access to the upper echelons of municipality offices opened the doors wide for “The Covenant” this year.

As of press time, 20 performances were scheduled and more still unconfirmed. Schneider estimates that if more shows are confirmed, 20,000 Israelis will have seen the show.
The audiences will be mainly schoolchildren, youth, soldiers and the elderly in Tel Aviv, Herzilya, Netanya and Eilat. Some of the shows will be for the general public but most will be for schools.

Two performances are set for the biggest cultural centre in Tel Aviv, an auditorium with 2,700 seats.

“Once you have been there, you’ve arrived on the Israeli arts scene,” Schneider said.

This tour will showcase a new scene as well: the story of Esther. Chuck King, ICEJ Music Director said the scene addition is timely since the tour coincides with the Biblical feast of Purim.

“The scene is in the context of the Jewish people being in trouble, the need for deliverance and a saviour; that someone needs to rise up and speak for a nation,” King said.

A new song written by King has been added to the Holocaust scene. The song is based on the writings of Habakkuk about rejoicing despite troubles.

The stage will also include a new set that will be more versatile. King said the elements will be changeable so that each scene will look different.

Going the extra mile

**ICEJ staffers have ministry at work and home**

**By Nicole Schiavi**

The ICEJ’s mandate from Isaiah 40, is to comfort the people of Israel. For many individual staff members, this mandate extends into their personal lives and some have even fostered Israeli children. Here are some of their stories.

**Wim and Petra van der Zande**

The Lord gently coaxed Wim and Petra into a zealous love for Israel, prompting them to make a trip there from their native Holland in 1988. They prayed that the Lord would open a door for them to return and serve Jesus here. He did the following year and they came on staff at the ICEJ.

When they first came to work here, the van der Zandes poured their
lives into the ministry. Wim became head of the Mailing Department and Petra worked as the Social Assistance Program secretary.

After just two years in the land, the Lord stirred their hearts to foster Israeli children – a virtual impossibility since they had no residency in the nation and barely spoke the language.

And not only did they want to foster children, they specifically requested handicapped children.

“The Bible shows us God’s heart for the weak, the underprivileged and downtrodden,” Petra said. “Those are the people closest to God’s heart. We really felt this was the way the Lord wanted us to go.”

A social worker called them the same day they received their application. Nine months later, the van der Zandes’ first foster child, confined to a wheelchair with “brittle bones” (Osteogenesis Imperfecta), was on his way to their home. He was 4-years-old then, a Jewish Israeli child abandoned at birth by his parents.

One year later the van der Zandes offered to foster another child, this time a Bedouin girl with Arthrogryposis, undiagnosed neurological problems and a litany of debilitating symptoms.

Two years later, they took in the girl’s cousin who had the same neurological problems and different symptoms, including deafness. Wim and Petra had to learn sign language in Hebrew.

In 1997 the family looked complete as they received their fourth foster child, a 3-year-old Muslim boy who is one of four people in the world with “Klein-Waardenburg” syndrome. He is deaf, albino, has scoliosis, osteoporosis, underdeveloped arms and legs, no shoulders and unique facial features.

At 10-years-old he still eats from a bottle, but he has learned to walk, ride a tricycle and enjoys splashing for hours in a pool or bathtub. And despite his physical inability to communicate, he has bonded with Wim and Petra and finds ways to express himself. He always smiles, has developed some “naughty” behavior, Petra said and strong curiosity.

It is a far cry from the way he was when the van der Zandes first saw him. Petra said he was kept in a dark room and his eyes were blank.

“They’re all living miracles,” Petra said. Each of the children has seen gradual improvement in their conditions since being taken into a loving nurturing home. In fact, the Bedouin girls have outlived any others with their same diagnosis, most of whom don’t live past 2-years-old. The girls are now 16 and 17.

Petra, trained as a nurse in Holland, stays home fulltime while Wim volunteers at the ICEJ. But neither of
them is phazed by the overwhelming responsibility they have taken on.

“They’re in God’s hands and we’re grateful for the good years He was able to give them,” Petra said.

“A whole new world has opened for us. We have been enriched,” Wim added. “We have grown into this – God has opened our eyes and our hearts. This is God’s heart and when it came our way, we said, ‘Yes!’”

Sherwood and Jennifer Burton

For Sherwood and Jennifer Burton, the decision to foster Israeli children was unplanned.

The phone rang one day in January 1996. It was an Israeli social worker who was given the Burton’s number by Sherwood’s ICEJ co-worker Wim van der Zande. The social worker asked if the Burtons would foster a 5-year-old boy.

Sherwood, ICEJ’s photographer, and Jennifer prayed and visited the boy. Immediately they were hooked. Thus began for them a path they hadn’t planned to walk on.

“We felt the Lord say, ‘I want you to take care of the kids who fall through the cracks,’” Jennifer said.

The Burtons learned sign language in Hebrew when they took on this first child who was deaf. Also, unlike the van der Zandes, they were allowed to share their faith, especially since the children were mostly of Orthodox Christian upbringing.

Soon after that a social worker asked if they would also take on a Muslim girl. She stayed with them for just a few months until her grandfather, upset that she lived with Christians, demanded she leave their home.

Later a 6-year-old girl came to live with them. An immigrant with her parents from Uzbekistan, she was suffering from the aftermath of drinking a cocktail of poison her father had left on the table when he was planning to commit suicide. He fell asleep, but his daughter found the cup instead and drank it, thinking it was water.

When she came to live with Sherwood and Jennifer, she spent her time in and out of the hospital. After 18 months of joy and heart-breaking hardships, she was released from their care.

“God really does give the grace for the time,” Jennifer said. “He gives you the grace to want them and the grace to let them go.”

By 2002, the Burtons had an empty house again. All the children had either been reclaimed by their parents or were placed into government care.

Just a year later, social services approached them again. This time a Romanian boy, 9-years-old with severe psychological limitations, was looking for home stability. He visits on weekends and lives under doctor’s care during the week.

While the children that the Burtons have cared for have had some physical handicaps, they all had even worse a litany of psychological issues. But this has led the Burtons closer to the vision God has birthed in them: To bring healing to the psychological issues of young children in a community setting.

“We still want to be involved with caring for small children, in psychological more than physical needs,” Jennifer said. “God has shown us His heart, the way he’s helped us with these kids and the way each of them has responded to the Lord is amazing.” ☝️
In a significant speaking tour, ICEJ Executive Director Malcolm Hedding traveled through Central America meeting the ICEJ’s national representatives and furthering its contacts. A regional conference in Honduras brought ICEJ representatives from Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador and, of course, Honduras together.

The churches where Malcolm spoke from Honduras to El Salvador, numbered from 6,000 to 46,000 congregants.

All representatives from ICEJ’s Central American branches decided to create their own “Word From Jerusalem” in Spanish and to meet annually, so as to foster regional fellowship and collaboration.

Malcolm met with the president of El Salvador at the president’s request. Malcolm congratulated him and his country on having one of the few embassies that remained in Jerusalem and emphasised the fact that the Israeli people greatly appreciated this.

Malcolm said the calibre of the people he met in Central America was impacting and in the future their “weight” would be felt within the ICEJ family.

“They are radical in evangelism,” he said. “They see 100 people saved a week. In the developing world they have a radical commitment to Jesus that is truly inspiring, and challenges the comfortable Christian scene of the western world.”

Malcolm also said that Islamic militancy is growing in El Salvador.

Before heading to Central America, Malcolm was in North America, speaking in churches in Tennessee and Florida. The meetings were well attended and blessed.
Changing the tide in Mexico

In a mostly Catholic country and with national polls showing that 90 percent of the population is anti-Semitic, Felipe Garcia has his work cut out for him as the national director of the fledgling ICEJ Mexico Branch.

“Spiritually there is much opposition,” Garcia said. “But one mandate we have: To change the opinion of the Christians and non-Christians about Israel.”

Garcia became ICEJ Mexico’s national director in January 2004. His plan in confronting anti-Semitism in his nation is to first try to impart to believers a heart for Israel. Then he hopes to change the opinions of Mexicans.

“Because of that, I am holding large meetings around the whole country,” he told the Word From Jerusalem. “I believe there is only a short time to do this.”

Last year at Passover, Garcia organized Zionist meetings in the biggest theatre in Chiapas to celebrate Passover with both Christian and Jewish groups together. Garcia said the city is a strategic place and many Muslims are moving there. In addition, one of the largest militant Islamic groups has been established there and sadly, as a consequence, many Christians have been murdered.

“It is very important to hold Zionist meetings in such a difficult place,” he said. “These kind of meetings bring unity to the body of Christ and join Israel and the church.”

Christians are responsible to make known how the church is related to Israel, Garcia said. He is taking this window of opportunity to spread the word to as many Mexicans who will listen, holding conferences and meetings and working fulltime in this endeavour.

Garcia delegated his church responsibilities in each of his churches and ministries to others, thus giving him more free time “to travel through Mexico speaking our love and vision about God’s people.”

He has a strong heart for Aliyah and wants to raise money to fly a plane full of Jews immigrating to Israel.

“We’re not just praying, but acting for Israel. To love Israel is to act and to give because many Christians think they love, but they don’t give,” he said.

Garcia and his wife Maria have two daughters, Claudia and Ana.

Mexico Fact File

Country name: Estados Unidos Mexicanos (United Mexican States)
Population: 105 million
Religions: Roman Catholic 89%, Protestant 6%, other 5%
Government type: Federal republic
Capital: Mexico (Distrito Federal)
Languages: Spanish, various Mayan, Nahuatl, and other regional indigenous languages
(Source: CIA Factbook)
Young adults worldwide will be coming to Israel on our Summer Outreach Project, as part of an active expression of Love and Comfort to the Jewish People living in the Land of Israel.

This project is an initiative that gives practical meaning to fulfilling the Biblical mandate of Isaiah 40 to “comfort” the Jewish people. We welcome all groups and individuals to take up this opportunity, not only to see the land where Jesus walked, but also to take an active role in blessing the People!

“I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

Genesis 12 vs. 3

July 22 - August 2, 2005

Get involved, interact and discuss pertinent issues about Israel and how it relates to you. For more information, and the full itinerary, contact the Grafted team at: grafted@icej.org

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Sun Oct. 16  Sultan’s Pool - Opening Celebration - 7pm
Mon Oct. 17  Registration, Touring - no events
Tue Oct. 18  Opening Night at ICCJ
Wed Oct. 19  Morning Seminars and Evening Celebration
Thu Oct. 20  Morning Seminars and Evening Celebration
Fri Oct. 21  Morning Seminars and Evening Alternative
Sat Oct. 22  Evening Celebration
Sun Oct. 23  Morning Seminars and Evening Celebration

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REGISTRATION FEES

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At the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem we have witnessed that more and more churches worldwide recognize the place of Israel in God’s plan and are searching for ways of how they as a local congregation can support Israel. By this they are discovering an ancient biblical calling, rooted deeply in church history.

**A LONG TRADITION**

Christian support for Israel and the Jews is not a phenomenon that spread only since the birth of the State of Israel in 1948. Early revival movements like the Valdensian and Huguenots or the Pilgrim fathers (the Puritans) felt a deep connection with the Hebrew people. The founders of German Pietism like Spener, Francke or Count Zinzendorf (founder of the Moravian brethrens) shared a deep love for the Jewish people. This love found a particular strong expression from various prominent church leaders in England. The famous theologian Charles Huddon Spurgeon declared in 1855 during a message delivered in Southwark cathedral: “I imagine that you cannot read the Bible without seeing clearly that there is to be an actual restoration of the children of Israel.”

In the same spirit, the English founder of the Methodist Church John Wesley writes in his notes on Romans: “So many prophecies refer to this grand event [of the restoration of Israel], that it is surprising any Christian can doubt of it. And these are greatly confirmed by the wonderful preservation of the Jews as a distinct people to this day. When it is accomplished, it will be so strong a demonstration, both of the Old and New Testament revelation, as will doubtless convince many thousand Deists, in countries nominally Christian.”

Thus it is of no surprise that in the early Zionist movement many believing Christians played an important role in the rebuilding of the Jewish State. William Hechler, Lord Balfour and Orde Wingate are a just a few examples of Zionists who, out of their understanding of scriptures, were deeply involved in the activities that led to the founding of the Israeli state.

**THE EARLY CHURCH**

But the roots of their love for Zion reach back further. Support for Jerusalem was already a fixed feature of New Testament church activity. Many times the Bible reports on how the first congregations in Syria, Asia Minor or Greece sent regular help to Jerusalem. For example the church in Antioch started a live aid project in response to a global famine, which was prophesied by the elders of Antioch. The thrust of this help, however, was directed to the Church in Jerusalem.

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul describes how the leadership of the Jerusalem Church accepted the ministry that Paul had among the Gentiles. However they connected it with the condition “only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.” Most Bible commentators agree that by that the Jerusalem apostles meant help for the needy in Jerusalem. In the churches that Paul attended to, he was therefore always keen to mobilize support for the “saints in Jerusalem”.

For that reason he exhorted the church in Corinth not only to collect the “Jerusalem offering” when he visited the church, he rather suggested: “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.”

He even encouraged the churches to have the gifts delivered to Jerusalem through a personal emissary of each church. This conduct was prevalent in the various churches in the region of Achaia, Galatia and Macedonia. It was to such an extent on Paul’s heart that he dedicated two whole chapters of his second letter to Corinth to the issue. He himself seemed to have the habit of travelling regularly to Jerusalem in order to bring alms to the needy.

**HELP FROM ABROAD**

During this year’s Feast of Tabernacles we were given an impressive demonstration of how Christians follow this tradition even today. Pastor Terra Nova who pastors a church with more than 10,000 members in the Amazon region of Brazil, as in the years before, brought an excited and dynamic delegation of 400 Brazilians to the feast.

Weeks before their departure he prepared his group for their trip to Jerusalem: “Do not come empty handed to Jerusalem!” In Israel he then took up an offering from his group. It was a deeply moving moment when, on the following day, he laid a bag more than US$35,000 at the feet of the ICEJ leadership.

A pastor from the United States did something similar. In the weeks before his departure to the feast he contacted various pastors and asked them to take up an offering from their congregations for the work and ministry of the ICEJ.

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**Israel and the local church (Part 1)**

*By Jürgen Bühler*
Passover (Pesach in Hebrew) this year will be celebrated in Israel during the last seven days of April. As with every year, the vast majority of Israeli Jews, regardless of their religious commitment, will participate in the Pesach Seder on the evening of the first day.

Several days in advance, Orthodox Jews will carefully cleanse their homes of all traces of leaven, according to the commandments given through Moses, and will once again tell their children the miraculous story of the children of Israel’s deliverance from slavery in Egypt nearly 3500 years ago and subsequent birth as a nation, to serve God as a people of His own choosing.

Passover week in Israel is a holiday time of rest and celebration. Schools are closed, work is cut back and family and friends get together. But it is also a time imbued with deep meaning for the Jewish people. It is impossible to estimate the importance of Passover observance in the preserving of the Jewish people throughout history.

In the Bible, the commandment to keep the Feast of Passover throughout their generations was actually the first one Moses gave to the people of Israel collectively, even before the exodus occurred (Ex 12:14). The initial meal of roasted lamb, bitter herbs and unleavened bread was to take place every year on the same night, according to the Hebrew calendar, that the firstborn sons of Egypt were struck down and the children of Israel allowed to depart. Fathers were commanded to tell the story of the exodus to their children.

The command to tell the story became the basis of the Haggadah (literally, “the telling”), a book developed by Jewish Sages after the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. that organizes the Seder (meaning “order”) meal into 14 specific steps. The goal of the Seder is participation by everyone present, who are required to relive the exodus personally and spiritually, as if they themselves were delivered from slavery and chosen for a divine purpose. Each item on the Passover plate symbolizes a particular aspect of the redemptive experience. Matza (unleavened bread) must be eaten throughout the week along with other meals containing absolutely no leaven.

While reminding of past redemption from slavery, the purpose of the Seder is even more to instil a confidence in the promised future Messianic redemption. It ends with the phrase “Next year in Jerusalem,” meaning according to the Sages, the final rebuilt Jerusalem, created by the coming of the Messiah.

There are 50 references to the Feast of Passover in the Old Testament, far more than any other Feast. Remarkably, it continues to hold a central place in Jewish culture and identity. In the New Testament, it is mentioned 27 times and is fulfilled in Jesus himself, who is called the Passover lamb of God, sacrificed for deliverance from sin.
Co-operation, prayer can do a lot

By Maarit Kattilakoski

HELNSIKI - Tension mounted on the Russian-Finnish border as customs officials detained a family of four from the bus of 10 Russian Jews planning to immigrate to Israel.

The officials told them that they were not able to cross the border because the parents’ passports did not have the pictures of their 6- and 7-year-old sons.

It had already taken the family five years to obtain their papers proving they are Jews and to receive visas to Israel. Would they now be sent back after these five years?

Erkki Helistekangas, ICEJ Finland’s exodus contact in Lapland, has experienced many situations at the border and assessed that this one was serious. He asked us – the Christians accompanying the bus - to start praying. We lifted our prayers to Jesus, asking Him to melt the hearts of the custom officials.

A short while later, relief spread throughout the bus as the family boarded again with their papers stamped.

A faithful group of ICEJ workers from Finland, Ireland and Russia banded together in helping the “exodus” from Russia, across Finland and onto Israel. God has called us for this work in Finland and in other countries.
There is also a faithful group of people in Ireland which has supported the exodus work financially and with their prayers.

ICEJ Ireland Representative Brian Silvester joined the Finnish team on this expedition, along with six Irish friends.

We travelled by night train from Helsinki to Rovaniemi where Erkki and Liisa Helistekangas and Kirsti Uusitalo waited for us. We met them and continued towards the border where we crossed, quickly encountering the bumpy roads of Russia.

The following day we met the head of the Jewish Agency, bringing the last part of donation of oatmeal that was sent to the Jewish community by some Finns. We later gathered for a Shabbat meal organized by the local Jewish community, including the 10 who were making Aliyah the next day.

After dinner, we helped carry the luggage for the families to the bus. At 4 a.m. our journey began. The immigrants said goodbye to their families and after some tears, the bus departed. The tears turned to silence, and then tension as the family was detained at border control.

But the sad emotions were replaced with joy and freedom on the immigrants’ faces when we arrived in Finland. We rejoiced seeing the children’s and adults’ faces when they saw reindeer and the Finnish scenery for the first time.

We believe that God allowed those hard moments for the young family at the border so that He could show His love and care in all situations. But this reminds us that this work needs to be continually covered in prayer because there can be many kinds of problems along the way.

Thank you for praying for all the workers in the exodus work. This is just one example of the work we do together and we thank you all for your support.
Nobel Prize winners thank Christians and ICEJ for their support

BY NICOLE SCHIAVI

EL AVIV — Israeli scientist Avram Hershko received one of science’s top honours, winning the 2004 Nobel Prize for Chemistry, but it was only recently that he discovered that Christians were also a support base of his research.

“I learned it only now,” he said at a dinner in January celebrating his award, marvelling at the ICEJ’s contribution. “Not only do Christians support Israel, but cancer research here as well.”

Leah Susskind, the Israel Cancer Research Fund (ICRF) Chairperson, added, “It pleases us very much that together we can support the brilliant Israeli scientists for the benefit of all mankind.”

Hershko, 67, Aaron Ciechanover, 57, and Irwin Rose, 78, an American, shared the prize for their research carried out in the 1980s on how the human body breaks down faulty proteins to defend itself from diseases like cancer.

According to ICEJ Financial Director Timothy King, the ICEJ began supporting the Israel Cancer Research Fund when they helped sponsor Ride for Life, a three-continent motorcycle trek to raise money for cancer research in 2003. Following that, a Norwegian donor regularly took up the cause. King and Nicole Yoder of ICEJ’s Social Assistance Program made subsequent visits to meet research professors at their work in Hadassah Hospital.

“We were very impressed with the type of research they were doing,” King said. “Although we are not a big financial donor, we prayerfully and supportively stand with ICRF and the important job they do.”

ICEJ was invited to attend the celebration of the Nobel Prize recipients.

“As the only Christian donors at the ceremony, we proudly represented Christians in support of Israel’s Nobel winners for this important scientific breakthrough,” King said.

Hershko and Ciechanover said they take pride in being the first Israelis to win Nobel prizes for science.

“To see the joy and pride in Israel and the great reaction in Sweden, it is very exciting,” Hershko said.

Meanwhile Hershko, a scientist to the core, is anxious for the limelight to dim so he can return to work.

“I can’t work as I used to. I like to work ... I want to return to my research,” he said.

Future support for Israel Cancer Research can be sent to the ICEJ Social Assistance Program designated for that purpose.
Youth group spends a day restoring gardens of an Israeli hospital

JERUSALEM - A group of American young adults literally worked to uncover history, spending a day of their trip abroad to help an Israeli hospital in the process of restoring its historical Biblical gardens.

The young people, with a Christian organization called YouthFront, spent a day at the ICEJ in January to learn of the work done here. The next day, with the direction of ICEJ’s Social Assistance Program, they went to Hansen Hospital to clean up the gardens there.

The hospital was ecstatic about the young people’s help and thanked the ICEJ for organizing the project.

“We feel honoured to have had the good fortune of working with you,” said Rivka Regev, of Hansen Hospital. “You should know that your extremely hard work is greatly appreciated as an enormous cleaning up job.”

YouthFront is a Christian Organization from Kansas City, Missouri that works with teenagers and college students. This trip was designed for leadership development and for a chance to serve in Israel.

The historic garden at Hansen has fallen into disrepair over the years. Efforts now to restore the garden were augmented by the YouthFront volunteers who helped clean up debris, rehabilitate the buildings, excavate hidden stone walkways and transport rich soil to planting areas.

SAP, which works closely with Hansen Hospital, confirmed the work site for the group. Hansen Hospital was found-
As you can see in these photographs above and below, YouthFront volunteers cleaned up debris, rehabilitated the buildings, excavated hidden stone walkways and renewed planting areas in the historically significant gardens of Hansen Hospital. The hospital was once a place of refuge for patients with a rare skin disease.

The ICEJ’s Social Assistance Program supports people of all backgrounds and religious affiliations throughout the land of Israel, including Jews, Arabs, Druze and Bedouin in a bid to show the love of Jesus to all in need. Please see the enclosed donation form if you would like to support our work financially.

The hospital was originally called “Jesus Help” hospital (its original German name, Jesus Hilf, is still engraved on its facade). The German Christian nuns, the Diaconese sisters of the order of the Moravian brethren who founded the place, wished to treat lepers out of devotion to the outcast, the suffering and the poor of spirit.

The nuns cared instead for victims of a skin disease named after Norwegian doctor Gerhard Hansen, who in 1879 discovered the bacteria that causes the disease.

Following independence in 1948, the institution went from the ownership of the Christian order to the Israeli government and the number of patients hospitalized there diminished.

The biblically inspired garden encompasses two acres of stone terraces, water cisterns and a variety of flora and fauna, including trees over 130-years-old.
In the Bible, the wasteland near the spring where David sought refuge from Saul is called “the wilderness of Ein-Gedi” and the enclosed camps at the top of the mountains, the “strongholds of Ein-Gedi.” It is our desire to seek this same refreshing, as we retreat to the Lord’s oasis in the desert. Join us as we discover new facets of His rest and revelation.

July 26-August 2, 2005
IN THE DESERT OF EIN GEDI
A SPIRITUAL GETAWAY IN ISRAEL

special guest
DENNIS JERNIGAN

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A TIME OF REFRESHING IN MINISTRY FOR THOSE IN WORSHIP LEADERSHIP

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Gauging that both their publics are wearied by more than four years of conflict, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian Authority chairman Mahmoud Abbas pledged in parallel statements at the Sharm e-Sheikh summit on 8 February to bring an end to hostilities so that negotiations for a peaceful settlement can resume. Neither leader used the term “ceasefire,” nor was any truce agreement actually signed, but if the mutual declarations of a cessation of violence hold, the Sinai gathering will mark the formal end of the second, more bloody Palestinian intifada.

Seismic Shifts: Several factors have contributed to this moment and given rise to cautious hopes that, unlike past ceasefire decrees that were quickly derailed by radical Palestinian terror militias, this one may gain traction. First, majorities on both sides indeed appear fatigued by the fighting and thus no outside pressure was needed to bring the parties together at the Egyptian resort. The Palestinians in particular are realising their terror campaign boomeranged into disaster for them and are anxious for the release of thousands of security prisoners held in Israeli jails. In retrospect, certain IDF sources were remarkably prescient when predicting at the outbreak of the intifada in September 2000 that it would last 4 to 6 years, until the Palestinians were desperate to get their jailed fathers, brothers and sons back.

Furthermore, Sharon’s determination to carry out his Gaza disengagement plan in the face of stiff domestic opposition has helped transform his image among key Arab rulers, with summit initiator and host Hosni Mubarak of Egypt recently describing the once reviled Israeli premier as the Palestinians’ “best chance for peace.”

Finally, and most critical, the death of long-time Palestinian ruler Yasser Arafat in November has allowed a more...
pragmatic Palestinian leadership to emerge, headed by Abbas. Although his stands on the thorny final-status issues of borders, Jerusalem and refugees remain hard-line, Abbas appears interested for now in smoothing the way for disengagement and pocketing the international community’s offer of Palestinian statehood in the West Bank and Gaza before moving on to any next phase of the struggle against Israel. It remains to be seen, however, whether achieving these short-term goals gives Abbas enough incentive at this time to seriously confront defiant Palestinian militias that have blown up past efforts to end the armed uprising.

Hamas wasted little time in testing the Sharm truce, lobbing some 50 mortars and rockets onto Jewish communities in Gush Katif a mere 36 hours after the summit closed. Abbas rushed to Gaza to speed up talks with the rejectionist front and claims to have won their assent to maintaining the “calm,” but many Israelis remain sceptical, given his refusal so far to forcefully disarm the terror militias.

The PLO has engaged in a ‘national dialogue’ with Hamas for more than a decade now and it has always bogged down over a disagreement regarding what stage the Palestinians have reached in their struggle to eliminate the Jewish state. Much of the Fatah-dominated PA still clings to the PLO’s 1974 phased plan that envisions gaining back territory via negotiations and then using it as a springboard for continuing the battle against a more vulnerable Israel. Hamas ideology grants little room for such strategic pauses in the armed struggle, but whenever degraded by IDF actions the radical Islamic militia has accepted short breathers from time to time in order to regroup and rearm.

Fireworks Not Over: Another such moment seems to have arrived, but the pan-Palestinian offer of calm also carries steep conditions and huge risks for Israel. For starters, the Palestinians are demanding that Israel release all 8,000 prisoners, cease all military operations, remove checkpoints, withdraw to pre-intifada lines, grant amnesty to wanted fugitives and stop building the security fence.

In addition, Abbas hopes a simple hiatus in attacks will satisfy the United States and European Union that the PA has met its initial requirements under the ‘roadmap’ to Palestinian statehood, thus bypassing the PA’s express obligations to disarm militants and dismantle the Palestinian terror infrastructure from the outset.

In any case, Abbas hopes a simple hiatus in attacks will satisfy the United States and European Union that the PA has met its initial requirements under the ‘roadmap’ to Palestinian statehood, thus bypassing the PA’s express obligations to disarm militants and dismantle the Palestinian terror infrastructure from the outset.

Hamas also is calculating that a tactical lull will put the ball into Israel’s court and create international pressure on Sharon to show flexibility and restraint even if it launches periodic bursts of terror attacks. Meanwhile, Palestinian militias are already busy rebuilding stockpiles of mortars and rockets with ranges that inevitably will be capable of reaching Ashkelon.

Finally, Israel is being cornered into accepting the full integration of Hamas into Palestinian politics and decision-making. With the PA widely viewed as corrupt, Hamas trounced rival Fatah in recent municipal elections in Gaza by winning 70 percent of local council seats, and could make even more significant gains in PA legislative elections this summer.

One leading Israeli security analyst has just warned that Hamas is seeking the same status as Hizb’Allah in Lebanon, where the radical Shi’ite terror militia enjoys legitimacy as a faction represented in parliament, yet maintains a lethal militia armed with 12,000 rockets and forges its own decisions on when and how to attack Israel with little interference by the central government in Beirut.

So far, Abbas is talking tough about enforcing the PA’s role as sole authority in Palestinian areas, but a showdown with Hamas is unavoidable if he is to keep his commitment to Sharon that Israel’s evacuation from Gaza will not be under fire.

Meantime, Sharon is facing his own showdown with disengagement opponents at home, as the controversial pull-out plan comes up for decisive votes in the Knesset in coming weeks. Proponents are offering larger compensation packages to uprooted families in hopes of avoiding Jew-on-Jew bloodshed, while pro-settler activists are banking on key Likud figures to support a national referendum as a last line of defence before resorting to mass civil disobedience. So even if the Sharm ceasefire holds, there are still plenty of fireworks ahead. 🎆
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