In the Spirit of Elijah  
Repairing the historic breach between Israel and the Church  
By Jürgen Bühler

The Jewish people have long had a tradition that the coming of the Messiah would be preceded by the re-appearing of Elijah, one of Israel’s most extraordinary prophets. This tradition is evident on the night of the Passover seder meal, when the doors to Jewish homes are left open and an empty place reserved at the table for Elijah. It is also mentioned many times in the Talmud and is inspired by the words of the prophet Malachi who proclaimed:

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and I strike the earth with a curse.” Malachi 4:5-6

Jesus also affirmed this Jewish expectancy in Matthew 17:10-13, saying, “Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already.”

This he told his closest disciples on the way down from the Mount of Transfiguration, where they had just encountered Elijah and Moses.

“And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers...” Malachi 4:5-6

Here was a clear reference to John the Baptist, who came “in the spirit of Elijah” to prepare the way of the Lord. Yet Jesus attested to a future appearance of the prophet as well, which will be marked by such incredible success that “he will restore all things.”

Even so, there is also a call to ministry incumbent upon all God’s saints to come in the “spirit of Elijah” and to “prepare the way of the Lord” (Isaiah 40:3) in whatever manner we can.

According to Malachi one aspect of this end-time ministry of Elijah will be to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to their fathers. What does this mean? It surely includes the restoration of broken relationships within families and between generations. However, the Word of God offers us an additional insight which is just as important today.

‘The Fathers’

In the New Testament, the word “fathers” (pater in Greek) is often used in a very particular way. Out of 52 passages which contain the word “fathers,” it is used only 5 times in the context of a natural parent, as in Ephesians 6:4: “…fathers, provoke not your children to wrath.”
Dear Friends,

I just received a phone call from a Jewish colleague telling me that today was the first day of a brand new organization within the Orthodox Jewish community to engage Evangelical Christians as friends. He excitedly declared, “This is a historic moment!”

I am always amazed at the “historic moment” we live in.

If you take a look at the 2,000 years of Christian history and the terrible relations between Jews and Christians, you will join me in amazement at the turn around we have witnessed in our time. Today, the fastest growing segment of Christianity – which is very Bible-based – is largely pro-Israel and loves the Jewish people.

There is still much work to be done, and much still to be learned. And there are still plenty of skeptics and those who will even try to work against this developing relationship. Nevertheless, the train has left the station and you and I have the privilege of being on it!

It is equally amazing to watch as Jerusalem is being positioned to be the “stumbling block” and “cup of trembling” that the Hebrew prophets said she would become.

We are daily living out “historic” moments and the ICEJ is on the cutting edge both in Israel and around the world through our branches in almost 80 countries. We are your source for eye witness accounts of what God is doing in our day. So stay tuned!

In His Most Glorious Service,

Susan Michael
USA Director

Sign up a friend for a FREE copy of our new flagship monthly publication by returning the enclosed card.
A Lasting Legacy

Simple Steps to Maximize Your Support for Israel

Howard Brandt, a long-time volunteer at the annual Feast of Tabernacles celebration in Jerusalem, died at age 84. A behind-the-scenes man who faithfully duplicated Feast seminar tapes in the back room for many years, Howard considered the ICEJ as ‘family’, and bequeathed just over half of his estate to the ongoing work of the Embassy.

“I have no family whatsoever,” Howard once said, “and the ICEJ and Feast volunteers are the people I care about. You do good work for Israel.”

Marjorie Collmer, another American Shomer Society Member who recently passed away, dedicated a large gift to the Embassy’s work from the Marjorie Collmer Revocable Trust. Her gift significantly helped the ICEJ reach out to Israel at a critical moment.

Many of us wish we could give more to the strategic ministry of the ICEJ, but there are things we can do beyond simply writing a check that allow us to give more both now and in the future. With proper planning it is possible to save on taxes, provide for loved ones and also bless Israel in far greater measure than most of us ever imagined! Some of these ways are listed below:

**Stock:** You may own stocks that are worth considerably more than when purchased. Rather than paying the high taxes due on the increased value, donate that stock to the ICEJ. Then the full value is tax deductible to you and goes to benefit the Lord’s work!

**Gift Annuity:** Through a Gift Annuity you can make a gift to the ICEJ today, and enjoy the tax deductions, while receiving a fixed income for the rest of your life.

**Life Insurance:** If you have a life insurance policy that is no longer needed, you can name the ICEJ as the beneficiary. Or you can take out a life insurance policy on yourself just for the purpose of benefiting the Embassy’s work in Israel.

**IRA:** You can name the ICEJ as the beneficiary on your IRA.

**Will:** You can use your will or trust to make a gift to the ICEJ and to save enough on taxes that your family will still receive the level of financial provision that you intended.

As we prepare for and plan the future of this ministry, we ask you to plan with us. Through these simple planned giving instruments you may be able to make a greater and more far reaching impact than you ever thought possible.

Of course, everyone’s situation is different, so be sure to consult a financial adviser about the approach to planned giving that is most appropriate for you. And remember, the decision to give to the ministry of the ICEJ through your estate is one of the best ways to ensure a lasting legacy of blessing for Israel and the Jewish people for many years to come.

To become a member of the ICEJ’s Shomer Society (“Keeper of Israel”) and include our ministry in your planned giving please notify us at: ICEJ USA Branch, PO Box 332974, Murfreesboro, TN 37133.

Alternatively contact us toll free on 1-800-379-3897

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In all the other passages, it is used in reference to the Hebrew Patriarchs and our Jewish forefathers in the faith. Here are some examples: Luke 1:72-73 - “...to perform the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember His holy covenant, the oath which He swore to our father Abraham.” John 6:31 - “Our fathers ate the manna in the desert...” Acts 3:13 - “The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers...” Acts 28:25 - “The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers...” Romans 9:5 – “who are Israelites ...of whom are the fathers...” Romans 11:28 – “beloved for the sake of the fathers...”

Stephen, even in martyrdom, addresses the hostile crowd of fellow Israelites as “brothers and fathers.” (Acts 7:2) In much the same way, we find Paul addressing an angry Jewish crowd as “brothers and fathers.” (Acts 22:1)

Therefore, we see that the various New Testament figures and writers – including Jesus – use the word “fathers” as a term of respect for the Patriarchs and in a broader sense for all the people of Israel down through the generations.

Testament, the body of Gentile believers is also regularly referred to as ‘children’ or ‘little children.’

“We see this understanding early on when John the Baptist says, “For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.” (Matthew 3:9) Most Bible scholars take this as alluding to God’s plan to one day bring the nations into the blessing of the Abrahamic covenant alongside Israel.

The Apostle Paul then writes in Galatians 3:7 “Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.” (See also Romans 9:7.)

In other words, the New Testament makes a clear distinction between the natural seed of Abraham as being the “fathers” and the Gentile believers as being their spiritual “children.”

The Need for Reconciliation

Returning to the prophetic utterance of Malachi, we understand that before the coming of Messiah a work of deep reconciliation would take place which will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and vice versa. It is interesting to note that the Christian...
the Holocaust and the rebirth of Israel in her ancient homeland. Many have refuted the erroneous teachings of deicide and Replacement theology. Vast numbers of Christians are exploring and recapturing the Jewish roots of our faith. Whole denominations are praying for and becoming active supporters of the people of Israel.

On the Jewish side, one can point to the Knesset – Israel’s parliament – which has opened its doors to Christians via the Knesset Christian Allies’ Caucus. The revered Holocaust Memorial and Museum in Israel has even recently inaugurated a special desk for Christian Friends of Yad Vashem.

These developments would have been unheard of only a decade ago. But they show that an increasing number of Jews today realize there have been profound changes in Christian doctrines and attitudes towards the Jewish people. They no longer view us as enemies and perpetrators, but as trustworthy friends and partners.

May we continue to turn our hearts towards one another “in the spirit of Elijah.”

Nowhere is this more needed today than in repairing the historic breach between Israel and the Church, a work of reconciliation that would bring change and repentance on both sides. From the very beginning, the early Church leaders were met with stiff resistance from their Jewish brethren and even persecuted. Later, as the Church became predominantly Gentile, they started to retaliate and the dark and bloody history of Christian anti-Semitism began. The atrocities this produced have spanned the centuries and continue to cry out for deep repentance and the fruit thereof.

The biblical commandment “honor your father and mother” was perverted by the church in the most horrific way by our failure to honor the Hebraic roots of Christianity and the natural family of Jesus.

Yet today, we indeed are witnessing a unique phenomenon in that Jews and Christians are reconciling at many levels and in many ways. The true Church and Israel are beginning to recognize the unique bond between them, and this is all very encouraging.

For instance, there have been tremendous changes in the way Christians view Israel and the Jewish people, particularly since the order of Scripture differs from the Hebrew Bible in that we end with the book of Malachi, not II Chronicles like the Jews. Thus, the last verse of the Old Testament commands a profound work of repentance, “lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”

Dr. Jürgen Bühler serves as the ICEJ’s International Director and travels extensively worldwide giving Christians a balanced biblical perspective on the role of the Church in supporting Israel in these days. He lives in Jerusalem with his wife Vesna and their three sons.
Ever since my first tour to Israel in March 2005, I knew in my heart that I would volunteer in Jerusalem one day. Meanwhile, I worked in investment banking in Birmingham, Alabama, then the Lord called me to seminary at Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Oklahoma. After completing my first year of studying theology, the Lord began speaking to my heart that now was the time to go to Jerusalem.

After battling feelings of inadequacy and fear, and after much prayer, I had an undeniable ‘sense of urgency’ and knew this was a window of opportunity to volunteer for the ICEJ. The problem was that I did not have a clue about what I was going to do or how I was going to afford it, but I had a peace that God would somehow work out all the details if I just showed up! I kept thinking of when Isaiah said ‘Here I am Lord send me!’ I knew that if I just obeyed the call and was flexible God would put me right where I was supposed to be.

Amazingly, the Christian Embassy had a beautiful apartment waiting for me and an opening upon my arrival in the media department where I worked as a staff writer for the daily email news service, Word from Jerusalem magazine, The Jerusalem Post Christian Edition, and FrontPage Jerusalem Radio. I also helped report for the Feast of Tabernacles and found myself experiencing opportunities that journalists dream about.

Recently, I went to Bethlehem to interview local Christians and had the honor of interviewing the pregnant widow and mother of two toddlers whose husband was the martyred Christian bookstore owner in the Gaza Strip. She was back home with her family for a while before returning to Gaza next month. I was so encouraged to see her faith and hear her story of how she is going to fearlessly live her life for the Lord and fulfill her destiny like her brave husband. I also felt that I was able to comfort her with a smile and hug as a representative of the ICEJ.

Another experience that greatly impacted me was interviewing two Sudanese refugee families for whom the ICEJ has provided housing, food, clothing, and work. It moved me to tears listening to how much they suffered in Sudan and how when they fled genocide to Jerusalem, the Embassy was able to step into their lives bringing comfort and healing. It made me question what these families would have done if we were not there to help.

When I first moved to Israel I thought I was going to Israel to help serve and bless others but God blessed me even more!! I have grown in so many areas of my life, overcoming fear, and believe that I have a better glimpse of the heart of the Lord for His people and His land. It also feels like I am living in my very own “Indiana Jones” movie while walking out my divine destiny!

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In January last year, former Democratic vice-presidential nominee, John Edwards, was asked at a private Hollywood fundraiser to name the greatest short-term threat to world peace. He responded, according to journalist Peter Bart of Variety, by suggesting that a decision by Israel to bomb Iran’s nuclear facilities could trigger a world war.

Although the Edwards’ campaign quickly asserted that the former Senator considered Iran to be the source of that threat, not Israel, commentators on the left and right were quick to seize on the so-called gaffe to highlight the impact of the ‘I-Word’ – Israel – on the outcome of the 2008 Presidential election.

A cursory survey of the six current leaders in the race for the White House only confirms the complexity of Israel’s enduring role in mainstream American politics.

Half the candidates listed, John Edwards, John McCain and Mitt Romney steer clear of Israel altogether in their headline policy platform. Neither Edwards nor Romney have published a substantive policy statement in a year. Each of the others, Hillary Clinton, Mike Huckabee and Barack Obama list Israel as a policy issue in its own right. But it is the two Democratic frontrunners that, ironically, have the most to say — an indication of the persistent strength of the Jewish vote in the Democrat Party’s primary process.

With a strong Republican consensus on Israel, it appears to be less influential in the outcome of the GOP race. Still, Huckabee’s Evangelical credentials are clearly drawing pro-Israel Christians his way. McCain, from his speech to the 2007 ‘Christians United for Israel’ conference in Washington, appears to have more weight on the issue, but he, like Romney, has chosen to highlight other aspects of his platform during the primary campaign.

**Primary Colors**

*Where the Next President Stands on Israel*

**Hillary Clinton (D)**
*Hillary has steadfastly fought for Israel’s right to exist peacefully and to defend its people against terrorism. She has condemned Hamas’s rise to power. She has spoken out against the problem of anti-Semitism in Palestinian textbooks and condemned Iran’s conference on the Holocaust. She also successfully helped Magen David Adom join the International Red Cross... HillaryClinton.com*

**John Edwards (D)**
*“For peace, Israel needs a partner. Absent this partnership, Israel not only has the right to defend itself, it has an obligation to defend itself. This means continuing to ensure Israel’s military strength, diplomatically and economically.”
Herzliya, Israel - Jan. 23, 2007*

**Mike Huckabee (R)**
*“The United States must remain true to its long-standing, bipartisan commitment to the Israelis. I will always ensure that Israel has access to the state-of-the-art weapons and technology she needs to defend herself from those who seek her annihilation.”
MikeHuckabee.com*

**Barack Obama (D)**
*Obama will make progress on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict a key diplomatic priority. He will make a sustained push — working with Israelis and Palestinians — to achieve the goal of two states, a Jewish state in Israel and a Palestinian state, living side by side in peace and security.
BarackObama.com*

**John McCain (R)**
*“In view of the increased threats to Israeli security, American support for Israel should intensify — to include providing needed military equipment and technology and ensuring that Israel maintains its qualitative military edge. Israel’s enemies are too numerous, its margin of error too small, and our shared interests and values too great for any other position.”
CUFI Convention, July 17, 2007*

**Mitt Romney (R)**
*“What we should have realized since 9/11 is that what the world regarded as an Israeli-Arab conflict over borders represented something much larger. It was the oldest, most active front of the radical Islamist jihad against the entire world. It was not really about borders. It was about the refusal of many parts of the Muslim world to accept Israel’s right to exist — within any borders.”
Herzliya, Israel - Jan. 23, 2007*
Lifting Bodies and Spirits

By Angelina Lin

One of the ICEJ’s most powerful daily ‘hands-on’ ministries to the Jewish people is carried out by our Nursing Homecare Program, a vital part of ICEJ-AID, the Embassy’s social assistance arm. Experienced nurses, Corrie Van Maanen and Louann King, visit elderly and disabled Russian Jewish immigrants, who often live alone in poverty and dire need.

They provide basic nursing assistance and physical care, while also considering their social, emotional and spiritual well-being. With this help, those with chronic medical problems or disabilities are able to stay at home, rather than be moved to an institution. Even more, the love and dedication that Corrie and Louann bring is a great encouragement to many who might otherwise lapse into despair.

For many, the visits by ICEJ nurses are a highlight of their week. One such elderly lady, Annika, was a respected biologist back in Rostov, but suffered a stroke two years ago and was left neglected, receiving very poor care in Russia.

Her son was already in Israel and managed to bring her here, but his job does not always allow him to be around. Our nursing team has really picked up her spirits. When the mother found out Louann also has musical talents, Annika always insists that she sing songs to the Lord while they are together.

The ICEJ Homecare program extends a Christian hand of comfort to Israelis everyday.

For over 27 years ICEJ AID has touched countless lives across Israel. Let us be your hands and feet in the land to those in greatest need.

Find out more at: www.icejusa.org/aid