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The dynamic created between the two groups of residents is quite unusual, as was evidenced when an ICEJ delegation visited Mavqi’im in late July. Although the moshav is springing back to life, the day we visited the Gaza evacuees were marking the fourth anniversary of the Disengagement according to the Hebrew calendar – an occasion they treated as a day of mourning.

But then a group of 25 families being uprooted from the Gush Katif settlement bloc in Gaza approached Mavqi’im about the possibility of relocating to the moshav. The community discussed the request and decided to welcome them in hopes they might preserve the village and surrounding lands they had worked so hard to plant and nourish.

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The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem

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’s United States Branch is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with offices in Washington, D.C. and in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. We are a non-denominational faith ministry supported by the voluntary contributions of our members and friends.

We invite you to join with us as we minister to Israel and the Jewish people worldwide by using the enclosed response card to make your donation to the ongoing work and witness of the ICEJ.

Please mail all US Donations to:
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The Question of Jerusalem

If the city remains “subject to negotiation” why is only one side permitted to build?

By David Parsons

The Obama administration’s recent demands that east Jerusalem be included in a total freeze on Jewish settlement activity has brought to the fore once again the very issue upon which the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem was founded – the unity of Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was genuinely caught off guard in May when US President Barack Obama began openly insisting on a complete halt to all Jewish building in the disputed territories. The Netanyahu government was trying to work out a deal to allow some continued growth in the settlements when the US State Department then made clear they expected this construction ban to also extend to east Jerusalem.

To be fair, this is not the first American administration to issue twisted directives on Jerusalem. US policy on Jerusalem has long been legally absurd. The astonishing fact is that Washington has never recognized any part of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital. State Department officials often trip over themselves trying to explain this bizarre policy, and always fall back on the empty mantra that “Jerusalem should remain undivided, but is subject to negotiation.”

This position has essentially granted the Arabs a veto over the US power of recognition, which in turn has a huge influence on how other nations worldwide view the city. And the sad truth is that the longer the “Question” of Jerusalem has been left open, the larger that question has become. It has reached the point that Jerusalem has become the capital of everyone else except the Jews.

Thus at the Fatah general assembly in Bethlehem in August, the largest Palestinian faction declared that Jerusalem is “the eternal capital of Palestine, the Arab world and the Islamic and Christian worlds.”

Capital of the Arab world? Capital of Islam?

The Arabs and Muslims had centuries to make Jerusalem their capital, but never did. It was always considered a ‘backwater’ provincial town when in Arab or Muslim hands. Consider that only one Muslim ruler visited Jerusalem during the two decades it was in Jordanian hands from 1948 through 1967.

The city has truly been the capital of only one nation – the Jewish commonwealth – based on an historical, spiritual and cultural attachment that dates back 3,000 years.

The recent machinations of the Obama administration have also managed to expose the moral bankruptcy of US policy on Jerusalem. Now Washington may argue that continued Jewish building in Jerusalem might prejudice the outcome of negotiations. But so does continued Arab building! After all, both sides lay claim to east Jerusalem, and even-handedness therefore requires that either all can build or none can build.

Otherwise, you are validating the bitter anomaly that for a mere 19 years of its long history, east Jerusalem was Judenrein – rendered so by the force of Arab arms.

This stands in sharp contrast to the rest of the city’s long and glorious past. Whenever the Bible speaks of Jerusalem, from the time the Lord chose the city through the heart of King David (II Chronicles 6), it is speaking of what we know today as east Jerusalem. None of these many verses of Scripture refer to western Jerusalem, because that portion of the modern city only arose within the past 100 years. And this same scared Book promises that the Lord “will again choose Jerusalem” (Zechariah 2:12).

May that day come speedily!

David Parsons serves as ICEJ Media Director, produces the Embassy’s weekly radio show, Front Page Jerusalem and is a contributing editor of The Jerusalem Post Christian Edition.

few years ago at an anniversary commemorating the liberation of Auschwitz, former Israeli President Moshe Katsav stated: “The Holocaust is not only a tragedy of the Jewish people; it is a failure of humanity as a whole.”

Seeking to help rectify this tragedy of the past, forty young adult Christians from nine different nations flew to Israel in late June for the fifth annual Grafted ‘Summer Hands On Tour.’ The purpose? To stand with the Jewish people today and be a voice of love and support through practical “hands on” projects.

“We decided that our focus this year would be on the Holocaust, because we know that the survivors are not going to be with us forever”, explained Liesl Maas, director of the ICEJ’s Young Adult Ministry, Grafted. “Much wrong has been done in the name of Christianity, and as the younger generation we wanted to demonstrate our solidarity and love for the Jewish people.”

Through the tour projects, Grafted participants had the opportunity to touch Holocaust survivors who are still suffering in the present, decades after Nazism was defeated, as well as to stand up and defend others in Israel with great needs in their lives.

Beginning in the beautiful hills surrounding Haifa, the group ascended to the grounds of a shelter which welcomes women and children from all spectrums of Israeli society – Jews, Arabs, Druse, and recently African refugees fleeing domestic or religious persecution in their own countries. The Grafted team cleaned, gardened, organised games for the children, and helped restore two playgrounds so the children at the shelter will have a safer place to play.

After a full days’ work in the middle of a summer heat wave, it was time for a swim in the Sea of Galilee. The group checked into a cosy kibbutz on the shores of the Kinneret and headed directly for a swim in the famous sea. This was followed by two days of exploring the Galilee region. We walked where Jesus walked, spent time together meditating on the Word of God, and rejoiced with members of the group who decided to be baptised for the first time.

Feeling revitalised, the tour continued on to Carmiel, where Grafted provided a local soup kitchen with a face lift. The center was abuzz with cleaning, painting, organising clothes, and serving food to the hungry.

The group then headed over to a disabled adults home, where the team performed Israeli songs complete with choreographed dances. Barely seconds into the first song, the crowd were up on their feet, joining the summer tour participants for an afternoon of dancing filled with laughter and joy.

Once in Jerusalem, the tour paid a visit to AMCHA, an Israeli organisation that supports Holocaust survivors. Together with around ten survivors, the afternoon started off with some much needed tea and cake, and time to get to know one another. This was followed by the group performing more Israeli songs and dances while introducing ourselves and our home towns.

“This trip has solidified my faith in a deep way... I understand more about why Israel is so important to the heart of God.”
An Encounter of a Lifetime

‘Hands On Tour’ focuses on Holocaust survivors

By Jordanna McMillan

“This trip has solidified my faith in a deep way...I understand more about why Israel is so important to the heart of God”

The Grafted tour then handed out roses and chocolates as gifts, and told the survivors that as young adult Christians from around the world, God had given us a special love for the Jewish people. Tears flowed from both sides and all of the survivors stood up one-by-one to thank Grafted for coming and showing that we care.

The following day the group settled into the quiet garden of a home just outside of Jerusalem. The tranquil setting is the site of Ner Ya’akov, a home for Holocaust survivors in need. The Grafted team listened to testimonies of several survivors that had suffered in Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen and other Nazi concentration camps.

“Through the Holocaust survivors, I have been touched by God’s love and strength. Even though they have gone through so much, they had this charisma of love and compassion, and life experience,” remarked Johan Middelhoven from the Netherlands.

Through these personal encounters with survivors, along with an in-depth visit to Israel’s National Holocaust Memorial, Yad Vashem, the Grafted team began to understand more about the realities of the Shoah and the importance of knowing history, so that such atrocities are not repeated. At Yad Vashem, Grafted adopted two trees of the Righteous Among the Nations. Their stories testified to the importance of courageously standing up for what is right no matter the cost.

“This trip has solidified my faith in a deep way and has opened my eyes to the spiritual and natural conflicts within Israel that are not shared in-depth on the news. I understand more about why Israel is so important to the heart of God,” commented Rachelle from Canada.

The Grafted Summer Tour group came to bless, comfort and love those who have suffered past horrors and those who continue to suffer today. However, as we wholeheartedly served, the gratitude, acceptance and respect of those with whom we met left every person with the feeling that somehow in the end, we were the ones who were blessed.

The participants returned to their home countries as ambassadors for Israel and determined to make sure that the “failure of humanity in the past” is not repeated in the future.

Jordanna McMillan and her husband Shannon have recently returned to the US after serving in Jerusalem with both the Grafted team and the wider ministry of the ICEJ for over five years. We wish them God’s richest blessings as they continue to follow His call on their lives.
Economic Crisis Prompts Rise in Aliyah

Timely preparations position the ICEJ to bring hundreds home to Israel this Fall

Howard Flower & David Parsons

Aliyah from the former Soviet Union is expected to increase in coming months due to several factors, including a worsening economy in Russia and new incentive packages being offered by Israel for immigrants from these regions. Officials with the Jewish Agency and the Immigration and Absorption Ministry are referring to the current economic crisis they face as an “emergency.”

Thanks to timely preparations and our faithful donors, the ICEJ is positioned to help hundreds of Russian-speaking Jews to come home to Israel this autumn.

A one-time generous gift enabled us to pre-purchase, at discount rates, nearly 350 seats on more than a dozen direct flights from Moscow and St. Petersburg in August and September. That foresight has proven a wise move, due to the growing demand for these seats. The Jewish families we place on these flights are being allowed to take extra luggage with them as well. Some have already arrived to new lives in Israel, adding to the more than 100,000 Jews we have assisted to make aliyah over the past 20 years.

Once here, we are seeking to help these olim (newcomers) with their needs to get absorbed into the country. Many families are arriving just in time for their children to start the new school year, and financial assistance for their educational needs is greatly needed and deeply appreciated.

Meantime, in a new move for the ICEJ, we are assisting our first three Jews from Sweden to make aliyah this year, and that number is expected to climb as the small Jewish community these faces increased agitation from local radical Muslims.

In addition, the ICEJ continues to provide incentive grants for Russian Jewish families who moved to the West and now want to come home to Israel. This initiative is bringing Jews on aliyah from Germany, Canada and the United States, among other countries.

Howard Flower serves as ICEJ Aliyah Director and lives with his family in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Support the historic return of the Jewish people to Israel: www.icejusa.org/aliyah
ICEJ Norway Rallies for Schalit

4,000 Christians call on their Government and the Red Cross to step up efforts to free the kidnapped soldier from Hamas

The Norwegian branch of the ICEJ held a mass rally this summer calling on the Government of Norway and the International Red Cross to redouble their efforts to secure the release of captive IDF soldier Gilad Schalit from Hamas and his other abductors.

In an appeal delivered to the Red Cross and Norwegian government, the ICEJ noted that Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg and Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre have opened contacts with Hamas, placing a special responsibility on them to seek Schalit's release.

The appeal letter also noted that Norway currently chairs the forum of donor nations to the Palestinians and thus should also use its leverage in that capacity to free Schalit, now held hostage for over 1100 days.

Israeli ambassador to Norway Michael Eligal was the guest of honor at the ICEJ event which was attended by over 4,000 Christians from up and down the country. “This was the largest pro-Israel rally ever held in Norway, and we’re hopeful it will spur our government leaders to renew their efforts to free Gilad Schalit.

They are in a unique position to do so and have a special duty to pursue this humanitarian mission”, said Leif Wellerop, Chairman of ICEJ Norway.

ICEJ co-hosts welcome breakfast for Israel’s new Ambassador in D.C.

Dr. Michael Oren, a New York Times bestselling historian, took up his post this summer as Israel’s new Ambassador to the United States to a warm welcome from Israel’s Christian friends in Washington, D.C.

On July 23, the ICEJ helped host a Congressional welcome breakfast for the Ambassador co-sponsored by Rep. Eliot Engel (D-NY) and Mike Pence (R-IN) at the new Capitol Hill Visitors Center.

In his address, Dr. Oren reviewed the history of Christian support for Israel throughout American history and his gratitude for that enduring friendship.

Best-known for writing a definitive history of 1967 Mid East conflict, Six Days of War, Dr. Oren has, for several years, been a regular contributor to the ICEJ’s weekly radio broadcast, Front Page Jerusalem.

The ICEJ also hosted a private farewell dinner this summer in honor of Martin Peled-Flax, a senior minister at the Embassy of Israel, who recently concluded his diplomatic service here in the US.
“It is hard to get past the pain of the Disengagement. The wound actually gets bigger every day due to the way the government is still mistreating us”, explained Rami Ya’acov, a farmer evicted from Pe’at Sadeh.

Rami said that although the government provided compensation for the loss of his home and his farming business in Gaza, it was not enough to rebuild both here in Moshav Mavqi’im. So like the 1800 other families uprooted four years ago, he has had to make a very difficult choice – either build a permanent home and hope to find employment to pay the mounting bills, or start a new business that hopefully will provide a steady stream of income to later construct the family home.

Fellow Gush farmer Reuven Ya’acov (no relation) told us he opted to build a house, but has no business and no income to pay his spiralling debts. Rami chose instead to re-launch his greenhouse business first, but it has not met with the same success he knew in Gush Katif.

“The first year, the greenhouse flooded, the second year, frost took the crop. And this year, I hope to have produce to sell in November and December”, Rami said. Tragically, he has piles of debt and there’s no compensation money left to start a home to replace the one he lost. So his family is stuck in the small caravan they have lived in for the past four years.

Yet in the midst of recounting his sad predicament, in walked Shoshi Krauss, a Holocaust survivor with an unusually bright outlook on life. Widowed several years ago, she has “adopted” Rami and instantly was able to cheer him up.

“He’s my son... and my dance partner”, said the perky Shoshi. “She can dance for two hours without stopping”, Rami responded, a smile tugging at the corners of his mouth.

Shoshi loves Israeli dance, and said she’s the first one to arrive at a celebration and the last to leave. So she and Rami are eagerly looking forward to when they can dance together in the community center when it re-opens this autumn.

Mavqi’im is undergoing a unique transformation, where aging Holocaust survivors and Gaza evacuee families still disoriented from Disengagement are finding common ground in their past sufferings and their hopes for the future of this small moshav. It is one of the more positive stories finally coming out of the withdrawal from Gaza, and the Christian Embassy is thrilled to be a part of it.

“Mavqi’im is beginning a whole new phase”, said moshav manager Naftali Yonah. “Re-opening the community center became a real need, and thanks to the Christian Embassy it will be a turning point for us.”

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