EXODUS FROM UKRAINE

And those the Lord has rescued will return.
Isaiah 35:10
This special issue you hold in your hand is focusing on the critical situation in the Ukraine. The Ukraine today faces great challenges and is on the verge of being separated into two countries. Most evangelical churches in the East of the country, which is in the hands of Pro-Russian separatists, can meet only in the underground. Evangelicals are considered as pro-western allies and face severe oppression. The only accepted church is the Russian Orthodox Church and all other Christians are persecuted. They meet either in the forest or hold small house meetings where singing is not possible. A close friend who has been working in Ukraine for more than 40 years told me that the situation is worse now than in soviet times.

At the same time the situation for the Jews in that area is becoming more and more difficult. Not only is anti-Semitism at a very high level but also the war is taking an unprecedented toll so that many have decided to flee. Some try to flee to their families in western Ukraine but others see that the State of Israel is the only future for them. The ICEJ is working closely with Israeli institutions and with local Christian workers and organizations in the Ukraine to ensure that as many Jews as possibly are able to come to Israel. Just over the past weeks we went on two fact-finding missions to Ukraine in order to see how we can work more effectively in this crisis stricken region. There are many areas in which help is needed. The most difficult part has been to evacuate Jews from East Ukraine to either Russia or to West Ukraine as the area is still under regular fire. Only a few drivers are willing to take the risk to drive vehicles through the boarder areas. Then in the new location temporary housing needs to be established until they can board on a flight to Israel. The final hurdle is the absorption process in Israel. Which means Hebrew needs to be learned, a work place and schools have to be found and life has to adjust to the culture of the new home land.

The ICEJ is involved in every step and we are committed to increase our involvement in the coming months. Please prayerfully read this issue as it is indeed a window of opportunity which is open today. It is a prophetic action in which we have the privilege to participate. The prophets Isaiah spoke of it:

“He will set up a banner for the nations, And will assemble the outcasts of Israel, And gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth.” (Isaiah 11:12)

This banner can be seen today over the Ukraine and it speaks to all of us to rise up and to stand with God’s purposes in our time.

Please stand with us this summer to help in this great work of the Jewish return to their homeland.

Yours in Christ,

Dr. Jürgen Bühler
ICEJ Executive Director
Fear and Hope

The conflict in the east of Ukraine has become by far the heaviest trial in the history of the country, which gained independence in 1991. The magnitude of the current struggle was very evident to us, visitors. Although Ukraine has prospered tremendously since the fall of communism, now the economy finds itself in free fall, the currency has lost half of its worth in one year alone, and the inflation rate stands at almost 60 percent.

Hopelessness and anxiety about the future are very present, but the Jews of Ukraine make every effort to remain hopeful – by looking to Israel. For many of them leaving everything behind and starting a new life in the Jewish Homeland may be the only prospect for a safe future.

Today there are more than 200 000 Jews living in Ukraine, officially, and the number could actually be doubled if it included the unconfirmed cases. In Eastern Europe many still hide their Jewish identity, today however the troubles in the country are changing that. In consequence, the number of Jews immigrating to Israel in 2014 has almost tripled from 2013, with 5840 registered cases. It is estimated that 10 000 Jews will make Aliyah from the Ukraine in 2015 alone.

Demitry and Marina

Among the thousands of immigrants that have arrived in Israel this year are Demitry and Marina Britan. The Britan family comes from Dnepropetrovsk, the third biggest city in Ukraine. Located in the south-east of the country, it is only about 200 kilometres away from the current conflict zone, nevertheless many people still seek shelter in ‘Dnepro’ city, as the locals call it.

Demitry’s wife of three years, Marina, comes from Donetsk, a city currently in the middle of a warzone. Marina fled her hometown with her mother, while some of their family members stayed behind, now fearing for their lives.
A mother tells how she lost her daughter in Eastern Ukraine while her little son (left) is crying constantly.

Now they live in a very basic apartment on the outskirts of Dnepro. They are incredibly hospitable and welcome us warmly, the poverty we see is shocking. Demitry is a medical doctor, however he is not working in his profession. The healthcare system in Ukraine is very unstable and doctors are awfully underpaid. Many professionals prefer to load shelves in supermarkets, where they get better compensation for their work.

**Better life** As a medical doctor, Demitry will have many more work opportunities in Israel. There are special programs to help doctors from abroad adapt to their professional field in Israel, and Demitry has already been accepted into one. His face glowed as he spoke of it, and he is once again filled with hope.

Their travel documents have already been prepared, and now Demitry and Marina are busy studying Hebrew. This will be the most important factor in their process of adapting in their new homeland, they are told. Demitry’s family is already connected with the Jewish Agency for Israel, which ICEJ is partnering with. They help them with the paper work, offer Hebrew lessons and give a lot of emotional support, so needed in this journey.

**In Mayak** The uncertainties and fears are very real for the Ukrainian Jews, especially in places like a centre for refugees from eastern Ukraine in a city called Mayak, east of Dnepro. People traumatised by the ongoing war can find shelter in Mayak, but it doesn’t mean their lives get any easier. Some of the refugees have already been at the centre for months, struggling with bureaucracy to obtain travel documents. Max, the director of the centre, admits that the biggest problem at the shelter is their financial standing at the moment. Accommodation is costly, and the challenges only grow with the passing of time.

All of the residents in Mayak are Ukrainian Jews, and all of them want to immigrate to Israel. They all admit, it is not easy to leave the home country, but Israel is their only hope. Many of the almost 100 refugees are highly educated, some of them even professors, and yet very few of them can afford the immigration process. They all need financial assistance and thanks to the support of ICEJ they finally feel their dream can come true.

**Prophecies being fulfilled** Shmulik Fried, Israeli escort for our tour, was touched by seeing us, Christians, coming to Ukraine in order to help the Jewish population in the country. We came from five different nations, to which Shmulik said: “Now I understand the words of Prophet Isaiah: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: ‘See, I will beckon to the nations, I will lift up my banner to the peoples; they will bring your sons in their arms and carry your daughters on their hips.’’ (Isa 49:22) This prophecy is being fulfilled before my very own eyes!”

Together we can continue living out this prophecy!
Your donations to ICEJ Aliyah will be used specifically to bring the Ukrainian Jews to their Promised Land. We want to walk with them as they prepare and get ready. Be a part of this prophetic purpose, and join in with ICEJ to be involved in this work according to God’s Word!

Make your on-line donation at: www.icej.org/aliyah
Exodus from Ukraine

ICEJ SUPPORTS ALIYAH OF THREATENED JEW

BY BIRTE SCHOLZ

In April of 2014 the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem began supporting the Aliyah (immigration to Israel) of Ukrainian Jews threatened by the civil war, which began in February of 2014 when hostilities broke out between Ukrainian forces, and rebels backed by Russia in the eastern part of the Ukraine. Despite a peace agreement signed in February 2015 in Minsk,Belorussia the fighting continues today.

Worsening situation In July the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) reported growing numbers of killed and wounded civilians in the Ukrainian conflict area. The OSCE warned that the situation is worsening and hardening since the end of April. Many of the 300,000 Ukrainian Jews are not only affected by the humanitarian crisis in the country involving the destruction of homes and infrastructure through shelling, and also scarce food supplies and unpaid wages but suffer from an increase in anti-Semitic incidents. Jews have even been slandered publicly and even blamed for the current crisis.

Thousands of Jews flee Thousands of Jews have fled the cities of Lugansk, Donetsk, and Mariupol, once home to vibrant Jewish communities. Because of the war, the economic instability, and anti-Semitism in Ukraine large numbers of the country’s Jews have decided to move to Israel where they can live in safety. A total of 5,917 immigrants came from Ukraine in 2014, an increase of 196% over the previous year. So far this year 2,990 Ukrainian Jews have moved to Israel. It might be 10,000 by the end of the year.

ICEJ support By July, 2015 the Christian Embassy has been able to support the Aliyah and integration of 835 Jews from Ukraine including 200 who came this year. We support the Aliyah preparation of Jewish families as well as their urgent absorption needs when they arrive in Israel. For months many families were forced to hide in basements often without electricity, water, or telephone and with only scarce food supplies. Eventually they were able to take few belongings and flee from the violence in Eastern Ukraine. They arrived safely in Israel and are now learning Hebrew – the most important requirement to find a good job.

In hard times like this the Christian Embassy will continue its relentless efforts to stand by the Jewish people living in Ukraine and to assist in bringing them home to safety in Israel, the land God promised to their forefathers. $750 per person covers their preflight expenses and immediate and urgent absorption needs.

Please consider supporting our urgent efforts to assist Ukrainian Jews who are threatened by war, economic misery and anti-Semitism to come home to Israel!

Make your on-line donation at: www.icej.org/ukraine
As high-level diplomatic talks between the P5+1 nations and Iran continued to drag on in to the beginning of July, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem weighed into the issue of the serious threat posed by the Iranian nuclear program by delivering the results of a recent global petition drive against the deal to the governments of Britain, France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as to the European Union and United Nations. Over recent months, more than 80,000 Christians from dozens of countries worldwide have signed on to an urgent plea by the ICEJ that the Western powers engaged in the current negotiations should hold firm in demanding the complete dismantling of the Iranian nuclear facilities until any sanctions relief is given to Tehran.

The results of the ICEJ’s global petition, which was signed by over 30,000 Christians from several dozen Western democracies, were delivered at the beginning of July to UK Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius and German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, as well as to EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

At the End of June, the ICEJ-USA branch handed over the final results of its recent USA petition, which was signed by over 50,000 American Christians and also endorses the right of Congressional review of any Iran deal.

The petition notes that Iran’s renegade nuclear program poses an intolerable threat to the Middle East and the entire world. It also stresses that Iran is the world’s foremost sponsor of global terrorism, repeatedly threatens to annihilate Israel, and is engaged in military aggressions that are undermining the stability and independence of countries throughout the region.

The petitioners demanded that any international agreement concerning Iran’s nuclear program must:

1) Require that Iran completely dismantle its nuclear program.

2) Leave sanctions in place until Iran also relinquishes its destructive goals of spreading terrorism, destroying Israel, and achieving regional hegemony.

The petition states: “While we appreciate the ongoing diplomatic efforts to resolve the Iranian nuclear crisis, we fear the agreement now under consideration will not prevent Iran from producing nuclear weapons. It contains too many concessions given the enormity of this threat and the untrustworthy nature of the Iranian regime. We feel we must speak up before it is too late, for the safety of ourselves and our children.”

On the 14th of July the P5+1 nations and Iran announced the settlement of the negotiations about Teheran’s nuclear program. The US-Congress has 60 days now to review the agreement. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declined the deal as “stunning historic mistake” and Arab Gulf states reacted cautiously.
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A 16 month Hebraic Roots Calendar starting September 2015 through December 2016. It contains "All dates in both Jewish/Lunar and Gregorian/Solar calendar systems, in English and Hebrew; All major Biblical/Jewish ('The Lord's appointed times') and Israeli holidays marked and explained in a special reference chart in the back of the calendar; References shown for all weekly scripture portions (Torah and Haftarah), plus suggested New Testament readings; ‘The Astounding Prophetic Significance of Aliyah’ two-page spread including, the sixty-four ‘Aliyah’ scriptures; Highlighting special events on the Jewish calendar; Sabbath (Shabbat) beginning and ending times; Beautiful photos of Israel with Scriptures (KJV and Hebrew); Each page suitable for framing; Each calendar day has a large writing area and in addition, each calendar month has one or more writing spaces for reminders and notes; AND produced and printed in Israel!!

15 USD + shipping/handling

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by Howard M. Sachar
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by Marvin R. Wilson
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The Jerusalem compass was developed in Jerusalem and is patented in the US. Instead of pointing north, it points only in the direction of Jerusalem from any point on the globe. Fashioned from pure solid brass, the lid is deeply embossed in the center with a Jewish Star of David and the words "Jerusalem" in Hebrew and English. The outer edges are encircled with a delicate floral design of Pomegranates found on many ancient carvings in Jerusalem around the first temple period.

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ICEJ SHOMER PENDANT
Shomer is the Hebrew word for watchman. An artistically designed replica of the Zion Mule Corps’ insignia in the front of the pendant with ICEJ engraved on the back with an engraving of the scripture Isaiah 62:5a, "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night:” in Hebrew. Gold plated.

30 USD + shipping/handling

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