‘ISRAEL REFORMATION’ IN THE CHURCH
BY DR. JÜRGEN BÜHLER

ICEJ NEWS
SWORD OF ISLAM

ENVISION 2015 REPORT
Dear friends,

These past weeks have shown that Jewish life in Europe has changed dramatically. After the attacks in Paris, now Jews in Copenhagen have been targeted in yet another terrorist shooting, with a volunteer security guard at a Jewish synagogue in the Danish capital shot dead at point blank range.

As a result, more and more Jews are losing their sense of safety in Europe. The number of Jewish people inquiring about aliyah to Israel is constantly increasing. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made clear that the only true and safe home for the Jewish people is Israel.

At the same time, the stand-off in eastern Ukraine remains very tense. Jews and evangelical Christians are a main target of the pro-Russian militias. A friend who often visited Ukraine even during Soviet times told me the situation is much worse now than it was then.

Natan Sharansky, head of the Jewish Agency, just shared with me that Donetskar, scene of the heaviest fighting, was his home region.

“It is sad to see what is done to the area. But sadder still is to see my fellow Jews struggling to come to Israel”, he told me.

As we were talking, he revealed that three buses with new Jewish immigrants were at that moment held up in east Ukraine, waiting for a green light to leave for the airport and flights to Israel. He sees a new pull for Jews all across Europe to come to their ancient homeland.

While aliyah was dramatically up in 2014, Sharansky expects to see an even stronger increase this year. I assured him that the Christian Embassy is doing everything we can to assist in this urgent effort.

It is an exciting time when we can be part of the fulfilment of biblical promises. The prophet Isaiah declares: “Thus says the Lord God: ‘Behold, I will lift My hand in an oath to the nations, and set up My standard for the peoples; They shall bring your sons in their arms, and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders.’” (Isaiah 49:22)

We are committed more than ever to assist in this expected wave of aliyah from Western Europe and Ukraine. It is a unique window of opportunity to demonstrate to Israel that Christians sincerely care about the fate of the Jewish people. Please join with the ICEJ to help bring more of these precious “sons and daughters” back to Israel.

May the Lord bless you richly out of Zion!

Dr. Jürgen Bühler
ICEJ Executive Director

COVER PHOTO:
Image depicting the desk of Martin Luther

FOR MAGAZINE ARCHIVES
visit www.icej.org/media/word-jerusalem
Next month we will feature exciting reports from our branches and ministry travels around the world in recent months. Also, we’ll have more biblical insights into the theme of Reformation.

Learn more about our upcoming events at: www.icej.org
In centuries past, the Church underwent dramatic seasons of reformation which altered its very nature. One such era of historic change was even christened the “Reformation”–initiated by Martin Luther.

It is hard to underestimate Luther’s impact on the Church. It was not just his theological reforms that dramatically changed medieval Christianity; far more influential was the fact that he placed the Bible back into the hands of believers in their own native language.

Thanks to Luther’s translation of the Bible into the common language of Germans, ordinary Christians could once again read and learn about God for themselves. Previously, it was considered a sacrilege for uneducated lay people to read the Holy Book. But the widespread availability of the Bible would transform everything.

Soon after, other nations translated the Bible into their own languages. King James I authorised an official translation into English a little over 400 years ago. A French translation would soon follow. Over the ensuing centuries, more biblical truths were rediscovered by the Church through subsequent waves of reform.

Today, I see another wave of reformation coming to the Church, and it has to do with...
Israel. The early Church’s understanding of God’s enduring purposes for Israel and of our connection to the Jewish people must be brought back to mainstream Christianity today.

The ‘world missions’ reformation
A powerful example of how original apostolic doctrines were rediscovered and consequently reformed the Church is that of world missions among unsaved nations. The reformed Protestant churches of Europe did not show much zeal for outreach towards pagan nations, but rather focused on reforming the churches of Europe. When leaders of Pietism such as Philip Jacob Spener and Count Nicolaus von Zinzendorf sent out the first missionaries, many Lutheran clergy opposed them.

In his book Transforming Mission, author David J. Bosch tells us these opponents of foreign missions claimed “that the office of Apostle had vanished; that God’s grace no longer worked as powerfully as it did in the beginning; that those who were still pagans were under a curse; that God, if He wished to convert them, would do so without human effort”.

But this attitude would change. By the end of the 18th century, missionaries like William Carey would leave for India, Hudson Taylor would establish the “China Inland Mission”, and David Livingstone would take Christianity to the unmapped heart of Africa. By the mid-19th century, world missions had become part of the orthodoxy of the Church. Now, there is hardly a church which does not have a mission’s budget or support at least one missionary somewhere in the world.

The Israel reformation
Today, a new season of reformation is at hand and it has to do with the Church’s relationship to Israel. I believe in coming decades, there hardly will be a church which does not have a connection to Israel, and a budget to ‘bless Israel’ will be equally natural for a church as their mission’s budget.

With a few exceptions, most churches in the past had little understanding of Israel or the Jewish people. If they did have an interest in the Jews, it often met with opposition similar to those who tried to hinder the outreach to pagan nations.

Many theologians taught that God had abandoned the Jews, who were now an accursed people. They insisted that the Church had replaced Israel and there was no national destiny left for the Jews. For centuries, this was the prevailing view in most of the established churches of Europe. Any contrary outlook was brutally silenced. In 1589, one of the first clergymen to write openly about the promised restoration of Israel, Francis Kett, was burned at the stake for his beliefs.

A paradigm shift for Israel and the Church
Yet in our day, a major shift is taking place concerning Israel. God has dramatically changed His own approach towards Israel, as best described by the prophet Zechariah: “For thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Just as I determined to punish you when your fathers provoked Me to wrath’, says the Lord of hosts.”

This means the teaching of Replacement theology (often masked these days as Fulfilment theology) is being proven wrong by realities on the ground. The reborn state of Israel is a prophetic fait accompli which demonstrates that God is a covenant-keeping God. And this means the Church has to deal with a totally new reality today. For 1900 years, no one asked: “How do we deal with the restoration of the Jews back to their ancient homeland?” But today this question has to be asked.

Yet tackling this quandary is a task with no parallel in Church history. No other generation had to deal with it. This means the coming years will surely be some of the most exciting times in Church history, as we are in a season of unprecedented restoration for the Jewish people.

Back to our roots
The good news is that we do not have to invent a new theology. True, for most of Church history there was no state of Israel and the Jews were scattered around the world. But in the decades when most of the New Testament was being written, a Jewish political entity still existed in the Land of Israel. Though it was under Roman occupation, most Jews at that time lived in their ancient homeland and they enjoyed a measure of religious autonomy. Therefore, if we look at how the Apostles taught Gentile churches around the world about their relationship to the Jewish people, we will find that the Scriptures are quite clear in teaching how the Church should relate to Israel today.

1) Remember your pagan past
The Apostle Paul first reminded Gentile believers in Ephesus and Rome about their previously hopeless pagan status. Today, after 2000 years of Christianity expanding to even the remotest islands on earth, it sounds strange to view ourselves as pagans. But Paul had to remind the church in Rome that as non-Jews, they were like the branch of a wild olive tree. Such wild olive trees produce inedible fruit and thus are little more than a useless shrub.

To the church in Ephesus, Paul appealed: “Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh... that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of...”
promise, having no hope and without God in the world.” (Ephesians 2:11–12)

Paul also reminds both churches that only after they put their faith in a Jewish Messiah, could they be reconciled to God and become part of His people. Only the book of the Jews, the Bible, gave us hope of knowing a loving God.

This means every Gentile church needs to be humble and mindful regarding their own past.

2) Acknowledge the Hebraic roots of your faith
Paul declares to the church in Rome: “Do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.” (Romans 11:18)

That means Gentile Christians should not reject or ridicule the Jewish origins of their faith, but nourish them as one would nourish the roots of a tree.

Adam Clark states it so beautifully that through the Jewish people “all the blessing and excellencies which you enjoy have been communicated to you”.

Or to quote the Presbyterian theologian Marvin Vincent, in his Word studies in the New Testament: “The life-force and the blessing are received by the Gentile through the Jew, and not by the Jew through the Gentile. The spiritual plan moves from the Abrahamic covenant downward, and from the Israelitish nation outward.” Or, as Jesus himself declares, “Salvation is of the Jews!” (John 4:22)

This means every New Testament church needs to recognise the role of Israel as a source of “blessing for all the families of the earth” and to respect the Jewish roots of our faith.

3) Appreciate the irrevocable calling over Israel
The New Testament epistles strongly underline the eternal calling of Israel. Even though the Jewish people might not recognise Jesus as their Messiah and might even be ‘enemies of the Gospel’, Paul still calls them “beloved for the sake of the fathers” (Romans 11:28).

That means if God still loves Israel as is, the Church should love her the same. Paul squarely contradicts every Replacement theologian today: “Will [the Jews] unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar.” (Romans 3:3-4)

So even if they are unfaithful, God still is faithful to His covenants, as He cannot deny Himself. Anything else would be a lie.

This means every New Testament church needs to uphold and proclaim the enduring call over Israel.

4) Recognise your spiritual debt to Israel
Paul made clear to Gentile believers that the Jewish people already provided everything necessary for our relationship with God. The Bible is a Jewish book, we serve a Jewish Messiah and it was Jewish apostles who spread the Gospel to the Gentile world. Paul thus declares that Gentile believers are debtors to Israel.

“For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem.

This means every New Testament church needs to be very intentional in how we return the blessings received through the Jewish people.

5) Expect the restoration of Israel
In the New Testament, the Apostles affirm the enduring calling over Israel and strongly establish the hope of Israel’s restoration. This is demonstrated in the last question they posed to Jesus before his ascension: “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6)

Paul also conveys this hope to the church in Rome: “For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?” (Romans 11:15)

In other words, he maintains that the greatest calling and blessings still lays ahead for Israel.

This means every church should embrace a theology of hope regarding Israel and support her full restoration.

Connect with Israel!
Just as the vision for world missions was renewed within the Church, there needs to be a reformation which reconnects the Church with its Jewish roots. In times to come, a healthy church can no longer afford to ignore Israel. This needs to be taught from every pulpit and become an integral part of the activity, prayers and giving of every church. We see this happening around the world. It is a time of reformation! Join with pastors and believers from around the world in this exciting and historic journey! 🎉
The same dream has come to me three times recently, each time very vivid and arresting. I see a man who writes fervently for days, which turns into weeks and months and in the end years. The nights come and go, and still he keeps writing. The man is concentrated and silent, but you can feel the intensity and gravity of his written words hanging in the air. Urgency clouds the room. His ink is writing history and he knows that the world needs this message to see the light. After years of meticulous translation, his masterpiece is ready. He closes his book with a great sense of pride. This message is about to transform entire nations and he knows it.

The man, tired yet gratified, arises from his old rugged, ink-stained desk, takes his thick masterpiece with him, and closes the door. Yet the air is suddenly filled with a heavy dread of a work unfinished? Something must have been forgotten? The man is gone and he won’t come back. Looking closely, there a small, solitary Star David lies left behind.

It has been 500 years now since Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-Five Theses to the door of the now famed All Saints Church in Wittenberg, Germany in 1517. Although the actual event has never been proven as historic fact, his tract challenging Catholic beliefs did exist and - along with his monumental translation of the Bible into the vernacular - it has dramatically changed the world.

Early in his career, one of Luther’s sharpest criticisms of the Roman papacy was over its mistreatment of Jews. But later he was sorely disappointed by their failure to embrace his revelation concerning the Gospel, which bred in him a deep hostility towards the Jewish people.

Luther’s anti-Semitism would blind him to one of the great truths which remained buried by the Reformation: That God still has reserved a central place for the Jews in His redemptive plan for the world. Israel’s restoration simply lay forgotten on Luther’s desk. This left a crack in the Reformation’s foundation which has hindered many Christians from seeing the full scope of God’s redemptive purpose.

Let us not be blind to the truth forgotten on Luther’s desk. God still keeps His covenant with Israel today, and through it we see the evidence of a faithful God. Our generation has seen this faithfulness in the return of the Jewish people back to their ancestral home and the re-birth of Israel as a nation. Luther did not live long enough to see these prophecies unfold, but we have! Let’s not forget Israel and the Jewish people on the desk of our daily lives.

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LUTHER’S DESK
BY JANI SALOKANGAS

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7 | WORD FROM JERUSALEM
The ICEJ hosted its second annual Envision Pastors and Leaders Conference in Jerusalem in January and it was a great inspiration again to the over 100 participants from 13 different nations – including a group of 36 spiritual leaders from China!

The excellent feedback we received from the Conference stemmed from two things: 1) the wonderful and powerful presence of the Holy Spirit and 2) the wide range of themes we were able to offer.

The Conference featured several speakers from the local Body of believers - both Arab and Messianic leaders. This included inspiring teachings each day by Peter Tsukahira from Mount Carmel in Haifa, as he taught on God’s dealings with Israel and the region, lifting us up to see from a “bird’s eye view” His great plans for Israel and the surrounding Arab nations.

Experts also were invited to give their analysis of current events in Israel and the region. And the group paid visits to the Chief Rabbi (Ashkenazi) of Israel David Lau, to the Knesset with our host Ronen Plot, Director General of the Knesset, to Yad Vashem, and to the brand
new Friends of Zion Heritage Center founded by Mike Evans.

Envision participants also were introduced to Jon Medved, founder and CEO of "Our Crowd", Israel's largest venture capital investment fund in hi-tech companies. He gave a captivating presentation on the remarkable innovations being developed in Israel to improve our lives.

For the grand finale', we took part in a gala dinner at the impressive new Waldorf Astoria hotel in Jerusalem. Hosted by Josh Reinstein of the Knesset Christian Allies' Caucus, the annual 'Night to Honour our Christian Allies' was co-sponsored by the World Jewish Congress.

The KCAC and WJC joined to present their yearly Lifetime Achievement Award to Leif Wellerop, long-time director of ICEJ-Norway and for ten years the Chairman of our Board of Trustees. Leif was honoured for his steadfast support of Israel in Norway and across Europe over the past three decades, as well as his efforts to fund numerous humanitarian projects in Israel.

Minister of Tourism Dr. Uzi Landau was also on hand to present the annual Christian Tourism award, which was given posthumously to Dr. Myles Monroe from the Bahamas.

We are already looking forward to Envision 2016 from January 25-28 next year, when we will again connect pastors and ministry leaders from the nations with different segments of modern-day Israeli society. It is a time to refresh our spirits and hearts with the life of God, and to enlarge our understanding of Israel and the Middle East! Isn't this what all of us need? So make plans now to send your pastor to Envision 2016.

One of the ministry leaders attending Envision 2015 was Qunshan Xu, a church elder from China who helps oversee a large prayer ministry with over one million followers - the "Highway to Yerushalayim" movement. Although he has only a second-grade education, Xu taught himself to paint and today he is mighty in the Kingdom of God.

He came to faith in Jesus in 1981 while his body was wracked by nine diseases and paralyzed. When he asked to be baptized, Xu rose up from the freezing waters totally healed! Since then, Xu has devoted himself to ministering in poor rural villages across China. For the past sixteen years, he has eaten only one meal per day as he travels around to speak and pray for the sick in village churches all over China.

Xu has been detained 14 times by Chinese authorities, yet every single time his prison guards have come to faith and released him. He has led many government officials to the Lord and pastored them for long periods. He once started 100 churches in Mongolia in one 45-day period.

Today, Xu keeps his house open to receive those sick with cancer and incurable diseases. He lets them stay in his home to hear Bible studies and receive prayer until they are healed. Xu finds that many are just in need of repentance.

This was first time for Xu to visit Israel, and he said it was like a dream come true. He was very moved and is thankful for every place he visited and everyone he met during Envision 2015.
The year 2015 is a significant time for Europe and the world, and especially for Germany and Israel, as it has been 70 years since the end of World War II and the exposure of the Holocaust.

On January 27th, the ICEJ took part in events in several locations marking International Holocaust Remembrance Day, which fell this year on the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp.

In Stuttgart, the ICEJ’s German branch hosted a commemoration on January 27 which was attended by over 1,000 people. The speakers and guests included Israeli diplomats, German government officials, and Jewish and Christian community leaders. This included Amb. Dan Shacham, Israeli consul general in Munich; Rabbi Netanel Wurmser, chief rabbi of Baden-Württemberg; and Rev. Hartmut Stebe, president of the German Evangelical Alliance.

In Haifa, the ICEJ participated in an event on the same day honouring Holocaust survivors, with more than 1,000 guests present. Among them were more than 500 Holocaust survivors, including over 100 survivors of Auschwitz. ICEJ Media Director David Parsons addressed the crowd, along with Israel’s outgoing Finance Minister Yair Lapid, and four other Knesset members, as well as Shoshanna Kolmer, a 95-year old Auschwitz survivor who lives at the ICEJ’s Home for Holocaust Survivors in Haifa.

Finally in Jerusalem, the ICEJ held a special wreath laying ceremony in the Hall of Remembrance at Yad Vashem to mark the liberation of Auschwitz, with over 100 Christian pastors and ministry leaders from 15 nations on hand.
Ceremonies will continue this spring across Europe to mark the last days of World War II, culminating on May 8, 2015 with the 70th Victory-in-Europe Day observances to recall the surrender of Germany. For many Germans today, this is an occasion to celebrate as it also marked the liberation of our nation from the clutches of Hitler and the Nazi regime’s reign of terror and its genocidal campaign against the Jewish people.

So the ICEJ-Germany branch has a series of concerts and other special events scheduled over coming months to remember these momentous days for our nation. This year, we are especially challenging the churches of Germany to look back and take responsibility for this dark chapter in our national history, but also to look forward with hope. In the Bible 70 years has great significance, as it speaks of the completion of a whole generation. Our prayers are that God would bring forth a new season of friendship between Israel and Germany, and that a season of spiritual restoration will come to Germany.
Every year as Passover approaches, the Christian Embassy turns its attention to the needs of Jewish families in Israel who cannot make ends meet. Whether it is poor families, new immigrants, single-parent homes or the elderly, the ICEJ wants to be there to help them celebrate this important biblical Feast with joy and dignity.

Pessach is a special family time for all Jews, whether religious or not, when they sit down at the table together to partake of the Passover Seder meal (meaning “in a certain order”). The Bible gives specific instructions for keeping this feast, while other holiday customs have been added over the centuries.

But not all Israelis have the means to celebrate it properly. In fact, over 20% of Israeli families live below the poverty line, including 36% of all children. So thousands of families will be relying on donated foods again this Passover.

In response, the ICEJ is already preparing to pack and distribute traditional Passover baskets, which will contain the customary matza bread and wine or grape juice as well as other essential food items, plus a special holiday gift.

We again will focus on cities with many low-income families, such as Netanya, Ashdod, Beit Shean, and especially Jerusalem. Israel’s capital remains home to many large ultra-Orthodox families struggling to stay afloat financially. And in cooperation with local social workers, we will be reaching out to Jewish families in these poorer neighbourhoods this Passover.

The generosity of Israel’s Christian friends around the world is always appreciated by communities that desperately need our help.

Last year at Passover, a single mother from Ashdod named Leah told us: “It’s very touching not only to receive these amazing gifts, but even to hear that there are Christians in other countries who think about us, and who want to help us. It’s so special!”

So for $100, you can make sure that one needy Israeli family has all the provisions they need to enjoy Passover properly. The ICEJ has a goal of assisting at least 500 Jewish families this holiday season.

Please give generously to ICEJ Aid today! Make your donation on-line at www.icej.org/passover
Of the three great "feasts" that God gave to Israel in the Wilderness, only Passover came with an actual meal. In Exodus 12, the Lord’s instructions are quite precise concerning this banquet.

On the eve of Pessach each household was told to prepare a lamb roasted with fire, to be eaten with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. There was to be one lamb per household, but if the family were too small the lamb could be shared with a neighbouring family. And none of it could be left over.

In other words, God wanted there to be just the right amount for every household - with no lack and no excess!

Today the Passover meal remains a very important occasion for Jewish families, but with certain variations. Most families do not eat lamb out of respect for the fallen Temple where the paschal lambs were once slaughtered. And the Passover seder meal is no longer eaten "in haste", but enjoyed for many long hours and accompanied by songs, blessings, and the retelling of the Exodus miracle.

Yet, this is still a holiday when there should be plenty for every household. But thousands of Jewish families in Israel suffer from serious lack at Passover. This is especially true for many large, poor families with many children. And we want to help make sure that as many families as possible can celebrate the Passover meal this year with dignity and gratefulness to God.

With Passover just around the corner, the ICEJ would like to assist at least 500 Jewish families with Passover provisions this holiday season. For $100, you can make sure that one needy Israeli family has the grape juice, matza bread and other food items they need to enjoy Pessach properly. ☺️

So please give generously to ICEJ AID today! Make your donation on-line at: www.icej.org/passover
Recently, the Christian Embassy committed to helping fund extensive renovations to a food distribution center in Rishon LeZion which helps feed several thousand poor Israeli families every month. This unique ‘bargain shop’ is set up in a parking garage at a busy mall every Thursday and offers food and household items at token prices, which allows low-income families to feel like they are buying the goods rather than just taking hand-outs.

Besides food, the distribution center also offers clothes, toys, and special food baskets for families with infants. Here, they can find here everything they need, including second-hand strollers and basic kitchen appliances.

But the weekly market is in desperate need of renovation, so it can continue offering this valuable service to the poor. Designs have been drawn up to completely revamp the aid center to make it more attractive and welcoming to the needy families it serves.

In February, a group of German Christians touring Israel visited Rishon LeZion on a Thursday in order to volunteer their time during the weekly distribution at the bargain shop. They gave out food baskets and helped needy Israelis pack up their groceries. They also had the chance to meet Nissim Tziyoni, head of the local charity Pitchon Lev which oversees the shop.

“We usually serve about five thousand families in Israel every month, but during the holiday season the numbers almost double”, Nissim explained. “People like to come here not just for the food baskets, but also to socialise. This is their ‘shopping mall’, where they meet with friends. We desperately need to renovate this place, so it can create a pleasant atmosphere in every way.”

Nissim also was proud of the support he receives from Christians.

“Our friends at ICEJ believed in our work from the very start”, he told the group. “Eight years ago, before we received any other support, the Christian Embassy stood with us and made it possible for us to even begin! It was special then and it is still special today, because you are faithful. We are strong in our work, because our Christian friends make us feel secure. Your belief in us is making a difference!”

The bargain shop is giving hope to many, but the parking lot where it is located can look dark and gloomy. The renovations will turn it into a much friendlier environment, where they can do their shopping, talk to a social worker, and even get a free haircut.

It is possible for Christians like you to impact thousands of lives in Israel for years to come. We need a total of US$ 65,000 to complete this renovation project. So please give your best gift today to ICEJ AID.

GIVE ON-LINE TODAY AT: http://int.icej.org/aid/icej-aid
SUPPORT FOLLOWING THE SUMMER CRISIS IN THE SOUTH

The rocket war in southern Israel last summer not only disrupted the daily lives of over two million Israelis, but it also put a heavy strain on many businesses that is still felt to this day. The ICEJ provided financial and personal support to female entrepreneurs living at or below the poverty line, helping them achieve economic independence. Unlike other larger businesses that can absorb the hit, these are small enterprises which needed help to recover once calm returned. Help us assist more such businesses by donating to ICEJ AID!

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR MEDIA STUDENTS

The Christian Film School in Jerusalem is a blessing to many Israelis, as it trains locals to be professionals in the fields of film and journalism. The ICEJ supports the school’s vision to train up students to be ‘salt and light’ in the media and entertainment industry. So we are currently sponsoring two scholarships for students that otherwise could not continue their education. Your gifts can keep alive their career dreams of impacting Israel through media.

PEACE CENTER FOR THE BLIND

The ICEJ has been supporting the Peace Center for the Blind in eastern Jerusalem since its founding over 30 years ago by Lydia Mansour (pictured). This unique center for blind Arab women offers its students not only academic and vocational training, but also guides them in self-care, hygiene, health practices, home economics, mobility and other practical life skills. The students live with their faculty and staff in a shared boarding house, and the ICEJ is helping meet their basic financial needs, like paying bills and buying their hand-made products. Donate today to become a part of this life-changing project!

A STAND FOR LIFE

The ICEJ is partners with an Israeli organisation which assists women in crisis pregnancies to bring their child to birth and supports the mother and baby thereafter. Anat (pictured) makes sure that the strollers, baby carriers and clothes we supply go to the right places. Take a stand for life in Israel by donating to this effort!

DONATE TODAY!

To support any of these social projects and many more, give to ICEJ AID at: http://int.icej.org/aid/icej-aid

Make your donation today!
JOIN THE ISAIAH 62 GLOBAL PRAYER CAMPAIGN!

Since January of 2011, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem has set aside every Wednesday for special times of prayer on behalf of Israel, the Middle East and our global ministry. The first Wednesday of every month is also a time for fasting. This Isaiah 62 Prayer Campaign has now been joined by intercessors around the world who faithfully bring our needs before the Lord. Today, there are thousands of Christians in more than 80 nations participating in the Isaiah 62 Prayer Campaign, as shown on this map.

To become a part of this global prayer effort, we ask that you, your church or prayer group make a commitment to pray with us every Wednesday. Please join us by signing the Isaiah 62 pledge on-line and you will receive a monthly prayer letter to help guide you in your prayers.

Sign up at: http://int.icej.org/Isaiah62_Pledge

You can also sign up on-line for our global prayer chain held on the first Wednesday of the month, when our prayer partners offer up continual prayers during a 24-hour period all around the earth.

To reserve your hour in this global prayer chain, sign up at:

https://isaiah62prayer.youcanbook.me/

(Graphic map by Lana Bahdanava)
ISAIAH 62 PRAYER CAMPAIGN
The recent terror attacks in Paris and Copenhagen are part of an unprecedented wave of Islamic terrorism worldwide. Europe has suffered terror attacks before, such as the Madrid train bombing and London underground blast a decade ago. But the current surge of Muslim militancy comes with a breadth and depth of depravity that has shocked the world. *The Economist* has even started keeping a daily chart to track the alarming spike in Islamist violence worldwide.

The Islamic State and Boko Haram terror militias, in particular, are pursuing a jihadist agenda today that causes even some al-Qaeda enthusiasts to recoil. They adhere to a very strict, cruel application of shari’a law, and are barbaric on the battlefield. Their victims include not only rival Shi’ites, Christians, and Western infidels, but Sunni Muslims as well, including rulers of Arab regimes.

This led several Arab leaders to call for the "reform" of Islam, including the Crown Prince of Bahrain and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi. Speaking to Islamic scholars at Al-Azhar University in January, al-Sisi asked: "Is it possible that 1.6 billion people should want to kill the rest of the world's inhabitants – that is seven billion – so that they themselves may live? Impossible! ...We are in need of a religious revolution. You, imams, are responsible before Allah. The entire world is waiting for your next move."

US President Barack Obama weighed in with a note of caution, again defending Islam as a "religion of peace" and citing historic examples when Christians also lapsed into inhumane behaviour.

Now it is true that many Muslims today practice a peaceful version of Islam, and that some Christians did depart from the path of peace preached by Jesus.

But the radicals in ISIS have a valid claim that they follow the brand of Islam originally established by Muhammad, something the Crusaders cannot claim about Christ. The prophet of Islam set a less-than-peaceful precedent as the commander of a militia which grew into a great army. And early Islam owed its rapid spread to the sword more than scared teachings.

Jesus, on the other hand, eschewed the sword and relied on the power of moral persuasion. And early Christianity grew quickly because of the boldness and courage of the Apostles, who became martyrs for the faith instead of martyring others.

Today, the sword of Islam is being lifted again over entire nations and regions. It has been hanging over Israel since the first Palestinian intifada and the founding of Hamas in 1989. It now threatens the entire Middle East and is looming over Europe and beyond.

To confront this menace, it first needs to be identified properly. We are not fighting a "war on terror", but a struggle against an extremist religious ideology which uses terror as a tactic.

The nature of this threat also must be understood. Radical Islam relies on spreading fear to bring others into an unwilling submission to its aims.

So besides good intelligence and military resolve, world leaders should be encouraging internal voices of reform within Islam who promote a more peaceful brand of the religion. The West also should stand with the younger generations who want to break free from Islam’s stifling constraints. Muslim women also must be freed from Islam’s historic suppression of females.

Meanwhile, Christians should support our brethren now under severe Muslim persecution in the Middle East and North Africa. And we should support the current revival in these areas, as many Muslims are being repulsed by radical Islam and are looking for answers elsewhere.

Above all, no one should give in to the fear that radical Islam is trying to impose on us all. "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." (2 Timothy 1:7)
As the scourge of jihadist violence has spread around the globe, the ICEJ family in various parts of the world are experiencing its painful sting. This is especially so right now in central Africa, where our Christian brethren are being brutally attacked by Muslim extremists.

While the recent terror attacks in Paris were making headlines, Rev. Mosy Madugba, our ICEJ national director for Nigeria, contacted us with an urgent plea for prayer and assistance following the ruthless massacre of an entire village of 2,000 people in northern Nigeria. The area is being terrorised by the radical Islamist militia Boko Haram, which is especially targeting Christians, and Mosy sought help for his friends and fellow believers under horrific assault.

Days later, the ICEJ’s national director in nearby Niger, Rev. Moctar Soumana, informed us that 55 churches had just been burned by Muslim mobs rioting against the French magazine Charlie Hebdo over its Muhammad cartoons. This included his own church and house in Niamey. A mob of 1,000 protestors had surrounded their home and ordered his family to leave before setting it ablaze. Everything they owned went up in flames.

In the West, we were proudly defending our free press. But in Africa, humble Christians were paying the price, even though they were in no way responsible for events in faraway Paris.

The descriptions we are receiving of the criminal and inhumane acts against Christians in Africa are appalling! When Muslim terrorists enter a Christian village, they kill the men, and take the women as sex slaves. The children often have hands and legs severed, or are taken away and sold.

Boko Haram has been known to even commit these terrible atrocities against other Muslims as well - all in the name of Islam and the Koran.

Still, we have met with senior government officials in Muslim-majority countries across central Africa and know they are totally against these acts of terror and want nothing to do with radical Islam. These African Muslim leaders insist the violence and weaponry is being imported by foreign Arabs and by Iran. They also are eager to restore ties with Israel and benefit from all the medical, hi-tech and agricultural advances it has to offer.

So this is a serious plea for your prayers on behalf of our African Christian brothers and sisters! Also, raise your voices in your nations to speak out publicly against what is happening to Christians at the hands of Muslim terrorists. The time to act is now!

Finally, if you would like to donate to the ICEJ’s relief efforts on behalf of persecuted Christians, please give today to our “Operation Hope” fund, which helps Christians in the Middle East and Africa who are suffering from Muslim persecution.

DONATE ON-LINE TODAY AT: www.icej.org/operation-hope
ICEJ MOVES INTO MALI

BY REV. JUHA KETOLA, ICEJ INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR

In January, I travelled to Mali together with our West Africa representative, Rev. Abdou Maiga from Senegal, to officially inaugurate our latest national branch of ICEJ-Mali in the capital city of Bamako.

The Lord truly went before us to pave the way for meetings with the spiritual leadership of the small Christian community (only 2-to-3 percent of the population), as well as the political leadership of this struggling Muslim country.

It was a great privilege to share our vision with several senior church leaders. This included the chairman of all the Evangelical and Protestant churches in Mali, Rev. Emmanuel Dembele, and the chairman of the local Pentecostal churches, Pastor Matthew. The whole Body of Christ welcomed the ICEJ into their land.

I also met with Prime Minister Moussa Mara and the Minister of Religious Affairs, Thierno Amadou Omar Hass Diallo, as well as the Prosecutor to the High Court of Justice, Daniel Tessougue (a wonderful follower of Jesus).

The spiritual fathers of Mali, including Rev. Nouh Yattara from Timbuktu and national Evangelist Rev. Yiranou Traore, joined with us in blessing the new Board of ICEJ-Mali and in separating for service Rev. Dembele as the new Chairman and Pastor Andre Thera as the new National Director. Each accepted their calling to connect Mali more closely with Israel.

I also met with Prime Minister Moussa Mara and the Minister of Religious Affairs, Thierno Amadou Omar Hass Diallo, as well as the Prosecutor to the High Court of Justice, Daniel Tessougue (a wonderful follower of Jesus).

It has been truly amazing to see the Lord opening doors for our ministry in recent years across central Africa. We have reached out to a number of Muslim-majority countries on Israel’s behalf, impacting both the Christian leaders and top government officials in these nations.

Please continue praying for us to complete our vision of having ICEJ branches in at least ten Muslim-majority nations by 2017. We are very encouraged since we are now halfway there.

MINISTRY TRIP TO UK, IRELAND

In January, ICEJ Executive Director Dr. Jürgen Bühler conducted a fruitful speaking tour in the United Kingdom and Ireland. He first served as the featured speaker for the annual national conference of ICEJ-Ireland, held in a lovely retreat center outside Dublin. The fellowship was warm and his preaching on Israel was very impacting. Jürgen then moved on to England, where he spoke at the Kingdom Faith fellowship in Horsham, pastored by Clive Urquhart, and also shared our ministry and vision at a special gathering in Birmingham for 15 British pastors from the Elim church network. The Elim churches are a key pillar of the Evangelical community in the UK and Ireland, and they have been very receptive to the ICEJ’s message concerning Israel’s restoration.
On behalf of the Empowered21 Global Council we would like to extend an invitation to Spirit-empowered believers from every nation on earth to join us in Jerusalem for a celebration of the Holy Spirit during the week of Pentecost. The Jerusalem 2015 Empowered21 Global Congress will meet May 20-25, 2015. This congress will be a time when our movement—the fastest growing movement in the history of Christianity—confers on the future before us and unites together in praying for a 21st century, fresh outpouring of God’s presence. This will be a once in a lifetime moment for all of us!

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT EMPOWERED21.COM

Join us in Jerusalem for a life-changing pastors and leaders conference! Renew your vision by hearing what God is doing in Israel and among the nations! Gain unique prophetic insights from Dr. Jürgen Bühler and other ICEJ senior leaders, as well as from local Jewish and Arab ministers in the Land of Israel!

TO REGISTER OR LEARN MORE, VISIT: HTTP://ENVISION.ICEJ.ORG
TIMES of RESTORATION

This booklet contains a series of teachings on the biblical concept of “Restoration”, which was the theme for the Feast of Tabernacles celebration in Jerusalem. Discover how we are truly living in times of restoration. Never before has God been so active as in the past century in restoring what needs to be restored. Both Israel and the Church have experienced extended periods of divine restoration. He is surely not at the end of this process, as the Word of God tells us the best is yet to come! These are truly exciting days to be alive.

Israel and the Church
An exciting series of three seminars delivered at the 2014 Feast of Tabernacles. International pastors and church leaders discuss how they have presented teachings regarding God’s covenants with Israel and the church’s role in blessing the Jewish people to their congregations and how these teachings have positively impacted their ministries.

Speakers: Peter Tsuzakahira, Rev. Mosy Madugba, Jobst Bittner
Audio CD 19 USD + shipping/handling
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Israel on the Path to Revival
A series of three seminars delivered at the 2014 Feast of Tabernacles by leading Pastors who report on the amazing things happening in the body of believers in Israel today and give perspective for the hope of both Jews and Arabs as the Holy Spirit continues to work to fulfill God’s plan for the region.

Speakers: Avi Mizrahi, Naim & Steven Khoury, Daniel Yahav
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Biblical Theology and Israel
A series of three seminars delivered at the 2014 Feast of Tabernacles by leading theologians which discuss the issues of replacement and fulfillment theology and provide a solid scriptural foundation for Christian support of Israel.

Speakers: Dan Juster, Rev. Malcolm Hedding, Dr. David Elms
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Current Affairs in the Middle East
A series of three seminars delivered at the Feast of Tabernacles by top Middle East experts and media correspondents on the status of current affairs in the region and how these developments impact the world today.

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Restoration in the Nations
A series delivered at the 2014 Feast of Tabernacles focusing on God’s restoration work around the world and how the Gospel of Jesus continues to transform communities and nations.

Speakers: Ingolf Ellssel, Khoo Oon Theam
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The theme “Restoration” was purposely chosen for this year’s Feast of Tabernacles as we believe that there is great hope for both Israel and the church. There is still great hope of restoration for individuals, families, cities and nations. As God is restoring Israel, He is calling upon the Church to have an active part in it. (Dr. Jürgen Bühler is an ordained minister and trained physicist and has served as the Executive Director for the ICEJ since 2011.)

12 USD + shipping/handling

Experience the worship, dancing, and teaching during this year’s Ein Gedi celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. You will hear powerful preaching from Paul Eneche.

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