THE LAND OF Promise
The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem was established in 1980 in recognition of the biblical significance of Jerusalem and its unique connection to the Jewish people. Today the ICEJ represents millions of Christians, churches and denominations to the nation and people of Israel. We recognise in the restoration of Israel the faithfulness of God to keep His ancient covenant with the Jewish people. Our main objectives are:

* To stand with Israel in support and friendship;
* To equip and teach the worldwide Church regarding God’s purposes with Israel and the nations of the Middle East;
* To be an active voice of reconciliation between Jews, Christians and Arabs and to support the churches and congregations in the Holy Land.

From its head offices in Jerusalem, the ICEJ reaches out to more than 170 countries, with branch offices in over 90 nations.

Our vision is:

* To reach every segment of Israeli society with a Christian testimony of comfort and love, and
* To reach and actively represent to Israel the support of denominations, churches and believers from every nation on earth.

The Christian Embassy is a non-denominational faith-based ministry supported by the voluntary contributions of our members and friends across the globe. We invite you to join with us as we minister to Israel and the Jewish people worldwide by donating to the ongoing work and witness of the ICEJ.

I greet you all from Jerusalem with warmest thoughts and prayers for the new year. The general theme for our ministry and the Feast of Tabernacles in the year 2022 is “The Land of Promise”. Over the course of this year, we will take you through the many fascinating aspects of the beautiful Land of Israel: its geography, nature, inventions, cities, and most importantly its people. It is a land of miracles and of promises fulfilled. Yet it also is a land with even more promises still waiting to be fulfilled.

It also is a land that has been contested from the very beginning of time. And it is this challenge which also speaks to all of us: to conquer our very own Promised Land, the destiny the Lord has for each one of us.

As I write to you, tensions in Israel have increased of late, with several stabbing attacks against Jews and much internal crime and violence within the Arab sector. Also, the looming Iranian nuclear threat remains a major challenge for the Jewish state. Military exercises are currently being planned as Israel prepares for the worst. Yet in the midst of it all, the Bible assures us that, “He who watches over Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps” (Psalm 121:4). So, Israel continues to need our prayers to her ever-faithful God.

In the meantime, our ministry carries on with great impact. Right now, the ICEJ is stepping up our support for an historic wave of three thousand Ethiopian Jewish immigrants expected to start arriving in Israel by early this year. Asked by the Israeli government for help, we pledged our full support. Yet for most new immigrants, many new challenges are awaiting them in Israel, especially for those coming from Ethiopia. Leaving a rural, developing country, they arrive overnight in one of the most advanced hi-tech nations on earth. Though they dreamed of reaching here, many of them face very imposing giants they might not have expected in the Land of Promise.

Our Aliyah and Absorption programs are geared to help struggling Israeli immigrants find their place and direction. We will not only help these Ethiopian newcomers reach the Promised Land, we also will remain at their side in the years to come as they adjust to a new life in Israel.

Our other AID programs also help other Israelis face their giants. Through our “Giving a Future and Hope” campaign, we provide needed scholarships for young arrivals and native Israelis to complete special high school degrees or to even receive specialised education in more advanced professions. This is exactly what the prophet Jeremiah declared when he saw his people returning back to their homeland, saying: “There is hope for your future declares the Lord. Your children shall come back to their own country!” (Jeremiah 31:17). This is precisely the vision of our AID department, to give a hope and a future to new arrivals and those already in the land who need our help. With your support, we want to give them a vision for becoming part of the modern miracle of Israel.

I pray that the Lord blesses you as you read through this magazine. Please prayerfully consider to join us as we stand with Israel and help give them the blessed future and hope promised by the Lord!

God bless you richly in this new year!

Dr. Jürgen Bühler
President
International Christian Embassy Jerusalem

COVER PHOTO: Date palms orchard in the Israeli desert

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visit www.icej.org/media/word-jerusalem
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THE LAND of PROMISE

A CALL TO STEP OUT OF THE BOAT AND WALK ON WATER

BY DR. JÜRGEN BÜHLER • ICEJ PRESIDENT
As you read this, the world is about to enter its third year of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the onset of this health crisis in early 2020, we all hoped for a quick end. But today, I am reminded of an insight from Pastor Peter Tsukahara during the Feast of Tabernacles 2021 in his church on Mount Carmel: “Maybe this virus will be with us for another year or two, like the three-and-a-half year drought in Elijah’s time.” No matter how long it lasts, we definitely are living in turbulent times. But in Elijah’s day, the drought ended with God sending fire and then rains from heaven.

A NEW WAY

A Bible passage that has directed and inspired us from the very beginning of the pandemic was from the book of Joshua 3:4, which simply says, “…you have not passed this way before!” We have since found out that God spoke through that same passage to others around the world. Our friend Steve Carpenter was inspired by Joshua 3:4 to write a new song “Keep your eyes on the ark”. The well-known author and recent Feast speaker, RT Kendall, released a book last year entitled: “We have never been this way before!” This passage also came up repeatedly at the Global Prayer Gatherings over the past two years. And at a global leadership summit of Empowered21 in Dubai, various Christian leaders referred to this passage as offering guidance for our times. God seems to be speaking not just to us, but there seems to be one voice around the world that this pandemic represents a new and unprecedented season, and we are being invited – yes, even compelled – to go forward in new ways. It is a new season which requires new wineries.

I well remember how we opened the Feast of Tabernacles in 2021, the very first virtual Feast under the cloud of corona. We started the Feast down in the valley of the Jordan River near Jericho, overlooking the east bank of the Jordan. Already in the months before, I had felt that God was taking us in the ICEJ over the River Jordan into a new season, but with little understanding what to expect on the other side.

CROSSING THE JORDAN

The context of Joshua 3:4 is exactly that: Not far from where we were, God had led the people of Israel after 40 years of desert wanderings into the Land of Promise. It was a shift that could not have been more dramatic. Not only did the waters of the Jordan river stop flowing in that moment, but even more so the whole way Israel had operated for decades suddenly changed. For the first time, a whole generation was circumcised in one day. Possibly even more challenging, the daily miraculous supply of manna stopped the instant Israel entered the Promised Land. A new economy and new strategies were needed. Israel needed to learn the principle of seed and harvest. And Israel needed to transition from a defensive mode into an attack mode in order to conquer the land.

After 400 years of waiting and 40 years of wandering, Israel finally entered into its destiny, to possess the Land of Promise. It was a land that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob could only settle in as strangers and pilgrims. But now, as foretold to Abraham (Genesis 15:13-16), after 400 years Israel was to take possession of the land, as the sins of the nations in the land had reached an intolerable threshold for God.

A GOOD LAND

The land they entered was a “good land” (Deuteronomy 8:7ff), a land of brooks, fountains and springs, a land of wheat and barley, vine, fig trees and pomegranates, of olives and honey. The rocks would contain iron and copper, the necessary hi-tech materials of ancient times. The land they came into was also not an empty land, but they would inherit “good cities they did not build, houses full of good things they did not fill, cisterns they did not dig, vineyards and olive trees they did not plant” (Deuteronomy 6:10-11).

“HEAR, O ISRAEL: YOU ARE TO CROSS OVER THE JORDAN...”

The land was so good that for many generations the “Land of Canaan” became figurative speech for a heavenly place and crossing the Jordan symbolised moving past death into eternity. Yet while the Land of Canaan was indeed a blessed and very good land, it was not heaven. It was a land of obstacles and opposition. Repeatedly, Moses warned Israel: “Hear, O Israel: You are to cross over the Jordan today, and go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourself, cities great and fortified up to heaven, a people great and tall, the descendants of the Anakim, whom you know, and of whom you heard it said, ‘Who can stand before the descendants of Anak?’” (Deuteronomy 9:1–2; see also Deuteronomy 7:1ff, 11:23).

A LAND OF GIANTS

Moses declared that there was a great land, flowing of milk and honey, waiting for Israel on the other side, but it would be humanly impossible to enter it. The challenges were many-fold: Israel was totally outnumbered by its enemies, the cities had impenetrable defence systems, their armies had better weapons, and worst of all they had these unnatural super-heroes on their side, the sons of Anak, the legendary giants. They were the remnants of the Nephilim mentioned in Genesis 6:4, demonoid creatures that caused everyone to fear and tremble (Numbers 13:33). “Who can stand before the sons of Anak?”, was a common refrain in the Land of Canaan.

And it was exactly this reality of human impossibility which already decades earlier had caused Israel to shrink back from the call to conquer the Land of Promise. Looking at the challenge, they felt like grasshoppers. And as for the land, they said it would eat them up for breakfast (Numbers 13:32). Israel refused to follow Moses into the Land but rather listened to the seemingly ‘realistic’ report of ten of the
twelve spies – at the cost of a whole generation perishing in the desert (See Numbers 13:25–14:12; Deuteronomy 1:19-40). Sadly, an entire generation failed to reach the intended destiny for their lives.

Today in hindsight, we too easily brush this generation aside for their unbelief and complacency. But their assessment would have been shared by every risk manager and consultant in our world today. What God asked from Israel was to expose themselves by walking right into a humanly impossible situation. God was asking them to leave the boat and walk on water. What they forgot or ignored, however, was that God was on their side – the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth. The God for whom nothing is impossible. God so often promised them that if they stepped out in faith, He would fight for them Himself even against the greatest giants.

A CALL TO STEP OUT OF THE BOAT
Yet this challenge exists for every generation. Entering the Promised Land means entering God’s full potential for our individual lives and as a community of believers. It means embracing the calling and the works that God has prepared for us from before the foundation of this world (see Deuteronomy 12:8-10, Ephesians 2:10).

In this current challenging season, God is not just inviting us to merely embrace new technologies that we did not use before. He also invites us to discover a new depth and level in our walk with the Lord that we did not have before. It is an invitation of God to embrace His full purposes and to tackle those giants and strongholds we may have arranged ourselves in the past. It is time to cross over the Jordan to the new things God has for us. It is a call to step out of the boat and walk on water.

The Land of Promise meant for Israel – both then and today – that very land which God so often promised in His word to the Jewish people as an eternal possession. It is an inheritance that God affirmed through a covenant (Genesis 15), an oath (Genesis 22), and many other promises throughout the Bible.

For us as followers of Jesus, this means to enter into the fullness of His promises to His children. Even before Joshua’s time, Israel had experienced miracles, victories and divine provision even in the desert. But only when they conquered the land did they enter into the fullness of their destiny. Possessing the good land thus means for us to enter into the fullness of what God has for you and for me.

Here are just some ideas of what the “good land” entails for us.
THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST

here was a tribe in Israel that did not receive any portion or territory of the Land of Israel, but God said: “I will be their portion.” It was the priestly tribe of Levi (Deuteronomy 10:8ff). God Himself was their inheritance and reality. Even for King David, who came from the tribe of Judah and thus could claim a special piece of land on earth – the very city of Bethlehem – his personal relationship and knowledge of God became a far more significant inheritance in his life (Psalm 16:5-6). For David, to be on this “territory” of God’s presence meant immeasurable joy. Just one day in His presence outshone a thousand days elsewhere, including his own beautiful royal palace in Jerusalem.

The very person of Jesus is not just the center of our hope, but in Him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28). Crossing the Jordan thus means becoming God-chasers, seeking and loving Him with all our hearts. This implies to develop habits that become a natural part of our being: fixed daily times in prayer, worship and the Word of God, and in fellowship with the saints, who are His body on earth. Much can be said about this Christ essence and purpose of our lives.

NATIONS AS AN INHERITANCE

Before his death, Moses commissioned Joshua to lead the people of Israel into entering their inheritance – the Land of Canaan. Jesus widened this calling. Before his departure from earth, he commanded his disciples that starting from Jerusalem they were to “make disciples of every nation” (Matthew 28:19) and not to stop until the ends of the earth are reached (Acts 1:8). Like John Wesley so famously announced, “the whole world is our parish.”

Every follower of Christ is not just invited to enjoy his own salvation, but we need to be enlisted into the global deliverance plan that God has for the world. God challenges us in Psalm 2 to “ask of Me and I will give you nations as an inheritance.” This was the call of men like John Knox, who pleaded with God, saying: “Lord, give me Scotland or I die!” Or more recently, the ministry of Reinhard Bonnke, who was driven by a vision of the African continent covered with the redeeming blood of Jesus. You might not be a John Knox or John Wesley, but start praying for people around you as your inheritance.

It was an elderly lady who prayed during the 1930s that God would save her neighbour Rosa Bühlner, my grandmother. God not only answered her prayers, but He invaded our entire family with the Gospel. Declare today that your own entire family is your inheritance from the Lord, just like Joshua did when he proclaimed in faith: “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!” Step over the Jordan and start praying for those around you, and be ready to share the Good News of Jesus!

There also are powerful demonic principalities that oppose God’s purposes with Israel. Antisemitism is just one face of it. This evil dragon even tries to deceive the elect, if possible, and the centuries-old doctrine of Replacement theology in its various shades is just another manifestation of that ancient battle described in Revelation 12. God calls us to renew our stand in this battle. And remember it is not a battle against flesh and blood, but one that is mainly won on our knees!

THE CALL TO BATTLE

In Joshua’s time, giants dominated the Land of Promise. That was only a shadow of the reality around us today. The world is oppressed and ruled by spiritual, demonic giants. We might not be aware of them, but these demonic forces often define the atmosphere in families, cities and even nations. Paul said: “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:11-12).

The arrival of Jesus meant that God established a heavenly and indestructible bridgehead to this world to rescue a lost humanity from the evil one. His mission on earth was to destroy the works of the enemy, and to deliver men out of the kingdom of darkness and move them into the Kingdom of God (Colossians 1:13).

In calling us to cross over the Jordan, God is calling us to put on our spiritual armour and be ready to address the spiritual strongholds in our world. Without doubt, our biblical family values and biblical gender identity are under attack like never before. Unfortunately, some in the Body of Christ are keen to align themselves with the new worldly realities. Like in the time of Deborah, the battle has come to the gates of our society and it is time for the Lord’s people to arise and push back against the waves of lawlessness which are flooding over our nations.

Finally, in the midst of this COVID season, do not allow yourself to be bogged down by the dark realities around us. Do not allow the giants to intimidate you and cause you even to withdraw, as Israel did at Kadesh Barnea. Look up to the Lord who sits on the throne and declare this season to be your time of breakthrough into the good land God has for you. Joshua and Caleb declared that these giants had become their bread (Numbers 14:7-9), as if they just trusted God and stepped out of the boat.

Times of crisis are the best catalysts for change. Do not just desire to return back to the old normal, but consider it as an opportunity for your own new season of victory. The greatest breakthroughs in the Bible were birthed out of difficult and often hopeless situations. This can be the time of your breakthrough and of your personal miracle! Decide today not to be intimidated anymore by the giants you might face, but ask the Lord to take you over the Jordan to start possessing the gates of the enemy – who are destined to be your bread! Ask God to allow you to possess a new territory and to pursue new callings that He has for you. And most importantly, become someone who chases God by knowing Christ better than ever before.

As we do this together, 2022 can become a year of breakthrough and miracles for all of us. It can become a year where God sends His fire and His rains of revival from heaven!

• Ephesians 6:11-12 •

I. Stories from the Hebrew (1903), Heermans, Josephine Woodbury, 1859. The Library of Congress (wikimedia)
When God promised the Land of Canaan to Abraham, what kind of land did he encounter when he first arrived here? Who were its inhabitants? How did they sustain themselves on the land? And why did the Lord choose the Land of Israel for His people?

The Patriarch Abraham came from Ur of the Chaldeans, one of the earliest city-states located in the fertile plain between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. For centuries, these two great rivers have brought life-giving water and rich soil deposits from well to the north to turn an otherwise arid region into a veritable garden.

The Land of Israel, in contrast, features its own truly unique ecosystem situated at the crossroads of three continents and linking the great civilizations of antiquity. Like other travellers from the East, Abraham avoided a straight trek through the desert and came into the land from the north using a familiar landmark – Mount Hermon.

The three summits of Hermon each stand at over 9,200 feet (2,800 meters) and are snow-capped almost half the year. This majestic mountain not only guided those seeking to reach Africa or Europe by way of the Via Maris (Way of the Sea). Since ancient times, the Hermon also has served as a key marker for millions of migratory birds which annually fly south from Russia through the Jordan Rift Valley and down the Nile River to their wintering grounds in East Africa.

As he passed Mount Hermon and the adjoining Golan Heights, Abraham would have encountered the cool, rushing waters of the Dan, Banias and Hasbani streams which come together to form the Upper Jordan River. Coursing through the marshy Hula Valley, this northern leg of the Jordan empties into the shimmering Sea of Galilee – called the “Kinneret” in Hebrew for its harp-like shape. At this point, the land begins to drop well below sea-level, as the Lower Jordan flows out the south end of the Sea and meanders its way to what the Bible refers to as the “Salt Sea” some 90 miles southward. Here, the briny shoreline is over 1,400 feet (430 meters) below sea level – the lowest point on earth.

Further south, the land slowly rises through dry, barren terrain to the northern end of the Gulf of Elat on the Red Sea. To the west of the Jordan Valley and Dead Sea, the steep, rocky cliffs quickly ascend to the Judea/Samaria mountain range, running north-south for roughly 100 miles. Even further west, the land slopes down to the sandy yet arable coastal plain and eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea.

Abraham started down the lower Jordan Valley but turned right halfway down into the Tirzah valley, described simply as “beautiful” in Song of Solomon 6:4. Gradually climbing into the Shomron hills, the narrow valley curves around Elon Moreh, a high, round summit overlooking biblical Shechem (Nablus today). Pitching his tent on the lofty peak, Abraham could spy out the land in all directions (Genesis 12:6).
This path also gave him immediate access to the “King’s Highway” – an ancient road running along the spine of the Judea/Samaria mountain ridge that could easily take one down past Shiloh and Bethel, the Jebusite city we now call Jerusalem, and all the way down to Hebron. Abraham was temporarily diverted by a famine to Egypt, but soon returned to Bethel and followed the highway to Hebron, where he again set up camp, this time by the Oak of Mamre (Genesis 13:18).

Around this period, he resolved the squabbling between his herdsmen and those of his nephew Lot by offering to divide the land with him. Lot famously chose the lush plain of the Jordan, near today’s Jericho, and wound up vexed living among the corrupted people of Sodom. Later, Abraham took his flocks to Gerar, near Gaza (Genesis 20:1), and finally to Beersheba (Genesis 22:19).

What we can notice about the travels of Abraham around the land promised to him by God was that he tended to set up camp and build altars to Jehovah on the high places, where he could spy out the whole Land of Canaan. He also stuck close to the water sources, understandable in such a dry climate.

The Land he had entered was already claimed by another people, the Canaanites – descendants of the cursed son of Ham. On the other hand, Abraham was a Semitic offspring of Shem, traditionally known as an upright servant of God. This contrast still holds great spiritual lessons for the people of God, as we seek to possess what the Lord has promised us even if an ungodly people also claim it. And as a general rule of thumb, any biblical peoples ending in “-ite” (Amorites, Jebusites, Girgashites, Hittites) indicates they were probably Canaanite shepherds living mainly in the hill country of the Land. Meantime, the coastal plain was inhabited by the Philistines, who came from Japeth and were largely farmers and seafarers like the Phoenicians to the north. Over the centuries, the Israelites would face many battles with both the Canaanites and the Philistines as to who truly was master of the Land of Promise.

Later in Scripture, the Land of Israel is repeatedly described as a land “flowing with milk and honey” (e.g., Exodus 3:8, 13:5; Leviticus 20:24; Numbers 14:8).

The Lord speaks glowingly of the Land in Deuteronomy 11:11-12, saying: “but the land which you cross over to possess is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water from the rain of heaven, a land for which the Lord your God cares; the eyes of the Lord your God are always on it, from the beginning of the year to the very end of the year.”

Indeed, the Lord listed out the seven species of fruits and crops native to the land which would always be there to nourish and sustain them – grapes, olives, dates, figs, pomegranates, wheat and barley.

They also could rely on the extremely fertile Jezreel Valley – the largest natural bread basket for a thousand miles in any direction. Yet the Promised Land also lay on the edge of the desert and was susceptible to drought and famine, which God used time and again to test and correct His people.

As we further explore the “Land of Promise” theme leading up to this year’s Feast of Tabernacles, there is so much more to say about this rich topic and many lessons to take from it for our own walk with the Lord. But we can start with gratitude that Abraham was obedient to the call of God to arise from his own country and bravely go to a land he had not yet seen. It was a journey that came with many difficulties and challenges, yet it brought him great blessing and wealth and eventually made him the father of faith and heir of the entire world (Romans 4:13). And Abraham came to a truly unique, beautiful and bountiful land that also proved to be a testing ground of faith for the many generations after him. Even to this day, the people of Israel are confronted with the pivotal question of how much do they treasure this special Land promised to them as an “everlasting possession” (Genesis 17:8).
As we look back at the past year, there were many unique challenges to our ministry in 2021 both here in Israel and worldwide due to the continuing impact of the global pandemic. But with your support and prayers, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem was able to accomplish so much more than we could have anticipated.

**January**
Over 700 pastors and ministry leaders from around the globe took part in the ICEJ’s Envision conference in January, marking our highest-ever participation rate at this annual gathering. Envision was held as primarily an on-line event, streaming out a timely, enriching series of Bible teachings, current affairs briefings, visits with Israeli officials, and panel discussions with local Jewish and Arab pastors.

**February**
Despite corona travel bans, the ICEJ started out the year by bringing hundreds of Ethiopian Jews to Israel, including one young Ethiopian boy who received life-saving heart surgery once in Israel. Between December 2020 and March 2021, the ICEJ sponsored flights for over 500 of the 2,000 Ethiopian Jewish immigrants who arrived in the “Operation Rock of Israel” airlift.

**March**
With scores of Israelis struggling financially due to corona, the ICEJ carried out its largest-ever Passover holiday distribution to poor and disadvantaged Jewish families across Israel, while also delivering Easter gift baskets to Arab Christians throughout the Land.

**April**
As Israel marked ‘Yom HaShoah’, its annual Holocaust Remembrance Day, several leading Israeli media reported on the ICEJ’s special Home for Holocaust Survivors in Haifa. The news outlets highlighted our team of Christian nurses and volunteers working at the Home, while one of the main Israeli TV channels aired a two-hour telethon to raise funds for the Home.

**May**
When Hamas in Gaza launched yet another rocket war on Israel, the Christian Embassy sprang into action by ordering 15 new portable bomb shelters, delivering protective vests and fire-fighting suits to first-responders in the front-line border towns, and staging pro-Israel rallies worldwide. And despite the conflict, the ICEJ welcomed Aliyah flights with some 250 Jewish immigrants from a dozen countries just days after the fighting ended.

**June**
The Christian Embassy welcomed the move of the Embassy of Honduras to Jerusalem and delivered our prestigious Cyrus Award to visiting President Juan Orlando Hernández for his principled decision to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.
These are examples of our many projects, events and ministry highlights over the past year. With your support, we are bringing Jews home, helping settle them in the Land, caring for Holocaust survivors, protecting vulnerable Israeli communities, and impacting churches and nations around the world.

**JULY**
The ICEJ joined with charitable partners to open Israel’s first National Call Center to serve the urgent needs of Holocaust survivors nationwide. The center is located near our Home for Holocaust Survivors in Haifa, and plans are underway to open another call center in Jerusalem.

**AUGUST**
This year the ICEJ marked twenty-five years since the launch of our Homecare program, which provides in-home visits and nursing care for elderly and disabled Russian Jewish immigrants. In the lead-up to the Jewish New Year (Rosh Hashana), ICEJ Homecare delivered holiday baskets to dozens of our elderly and handicapped patients across Israel.

**SEPTEMBER**
The ICEJ hosted its annual Feast of Tabernacles celebration as an online event, offering a Sukkot journey to key biblical sites across Israel. Many of our Feast participants worldwide built their own sukkahs (booths) to mark the holiday.

**OCTOBER**
The ICEJ continued to assist Jews making Aliyah to Israel at a record pace this year, including support for a group of 275 Bnei Menashe immigrants from India who arrived this month, along with more than 100 high school graduates from Russia and other former Soviet republics. Other recent arrivals on ICEJ-sponsored Aliyah flights included 32 immigrants from France in June, plus 87 from South Africa and 30 from North America in July.

**NOVEMBER**
ICEJ delivered some of the 36 new portable bomb shelters donated by Christians worldwide since the Gaza conflict in May, with a focus on protecting vulnerable Israeli communities along both the Gaza and Lebanese borders.

**DECEMBER**
The Christian Embassy worked with Israeli authorities to prepare for an urgent airlift of 3,000 Ethiopian Jews. In 2021, the ICEJ provided assistance for Aliyah and integration to more than 4,000 new Jewish immigrants to Israel from over 20 countries worldwide, including sponsored flights for more than 1,500 new arrivals.
The broad range of political parties which make up the new Israeli government also represent a wide variety of views on the Land of Israel and what areas must be either retained or ceded to ensure peace with the Palestinian Arabs. Many coalition members on the Right see continued settlement building as not only a security imperative but also a religious duty, while those on the Left insist it seriously undermines chances of reaching a two-state solution. So far, the ruling coalition has concentrated on the need to pass a state budget, but their differences over the land-for-peace question are beginning to fray at the government’s cohesion.

The new Knesset is decidedly tilted to the Right, with a strong majority of 70-plus MKs belonging to parties which place great value on holding onto as much of Eretz Israel as possible for security and religious reasons. But the current coalition is fairly balanced from Right-to-Left due to its more immediate goal of keeping former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu out of power. Thus, those in the Bennett-Lapid government are having to live with their differences for now on land/peace issues. But it makes for an almost daily drama of internal and public quarrelling over settlement expansion.

At present, there are multiple flash points over Israeli settlement activity which are drawing the attention and ire of the international community. These include such hot spots within Jerusalem as Sheikh Jarrah, Givat Hamatos, Atarot airport, and the E-1 Corridor just east of the Mount of Olives. Meantime out in the territories, a key source of coalition tension has been the Evyatar settlement outpost, set up in response to a terror attack which killed an Israeli teen near the Tapuach junction in Samaria just weeks before the government was formed.

In June, when the coalition was still young and more harmonious, a compromise solution was brokered whereby the 50 Jewish families who had moved to the site would vacate until the legality of the new community could be decided. But as the months have passed, some families have returned to Evyatar and coalition members on the Left have begun showing up to protest. They even have lobbied European leaders to condemn and sanction their own government, a move which understandably has outraged coalition partners on the Right.

With the 2021 state budget now passed, the sharp divisions within the government – especially over the fate of the Land of Israel – have come increasingly to the fore. This has forced key figures in the Center to forge a middle course intended to placate world powers while keeping the government intact.

In his role overseeing the IDF’s civilian administration in the West Bank, Defense Minister Benny Gantz has allowed new settlement housing starts to continue at almost the same pace as recent years. In addition, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett has set a goal of at least doubling the number of Israelis on the Golan and in the Jordan Valley, both of which hold unique strategic importance for Israel. But in a corresponding gesture to their left-wing colleagues, Bennett and Gantz also are permitting more homes to be built for Palestinians in Area C, as well as increasing the number of permits allowing them to work in Israel.

Nonetheless, the Left is not hiding its displeasure with its own government’s current policies. The Meretz and Ra’am parties reject all Israeli construction in Judea and Samaria, even calling it “criminal”, while the Labour party opposes any building outside the main settlement blocs.

There is a new state budget deadline coming up in February, and the possibility of a Netanyahu comeback is ever lurking in the background, meaning the coalition still has incentives to stay together for now. But given the Israeli government’s vastly divergent views on the land-for-peace formula, we should not expect any significant movement either for or against land concessions to the Palestinians anytime soon. What we can expect, however, is more coalition fireworks over whether the Jewish people should freeze the settlement enterprise and carve up their ancient homeland.
During the eight days of Hanukkah each year, candle lights can be seen flickering in the windows of homes all across Israel, while the streets and squares feature larger Hannukah menorahs with their distinctive nine candlesticks. The festival of Hannukah is a time to remember and celebrate the miracle of a small vial of oil burning for eight days in the Second Temple when it was rededicated in the times of the Maccabees.

During Hanukkah in December, our ICEJ Homecare team continued their weekly visits to elderly and disabled Russian Jewish immigrants who often feel sidelined by society. Most of them survived the horrors of the Second World War, which still casts a dark shadow over their lives to this day.

“We may not be aware of it, but every Holocaust survivor is a miracle. Many of them are the sole survivors of a family, of a generation, and sometimes even of an entire community”, explains Corrie van Maanen, ICEJ Homecare head nurse.

Zachar is all alone in Israel. He is a blind 95-year-old Holocaust survivor who so looks forward to his Homecare visits, and Corrie knows that a cup of tea will always be waiting for her when she visits!

As they sit together, he carefully begins his Hannukah story, searching the memories stored in his heart.

“I was five years old. My grandparents were religious”, recalled Zachar. “My grandfather had a purse and when it was Hanukkah, he took out a ‘kapeika’ (coin) for us. Together with my sister, she was two years older, we were allowed to go to the grocery store to buy special small cookies with that money.”

He gestures with his fingers to show how small the cookies were.

“I was standing close to my sister, and she had to buy them. When we got home, our little brother was waiting for us to share in the goodies. The years before I was born, there had been violent pogroms, and mother and father had to hide.”

Zachar pauses once more, as if he sees it all again.

“Our beautiful Hanukkah candlestick was gone, everything was stolen. My father had made a hanukkiah from a potato, with a little oil and a fuse.”

Pondering a moment, Zachar continued.

“On Christmas Eve to children from underprivileged Israeli families in Nazareth and Haifa. You can join us in showing love to more needy Israeli families by donating to our “Giving a Future and Hope” campaign. Give today at: on.icej.org/givinghope
ICEJ HELPING TO MEND ISRAELI FAMILIES

By Laurina Driesse

Today, Michal* is a cheerful young Israeli girl who is enjoying her childhood and easily makes friends. However, her journey to reach this happy state has been tough. At only four years old, little Michal was diagnosed with cancer. Her mother Tova* bore the strain of frequent hospital visits while her father found solace in drinking. The problems in her parent’s marriage eventually led to divorce.

Tova was left seriously shaken by the divorce and viewed Michal’s cancer diagnosis as the root cause of her husband’s drinking and their failed marriage. As Michal got better, Tova began to blame her for the father leaving and consistently fed her this tale. Michal felt so guilty and tried to do everything to please her mother. She tried to behave like an adult, took on cleaning the house, and caring for her little brother. But nothing seemed to win back her mother’s affection. There were no hugs from Tova, who saved them for other children.

Over time, Tova and Michal started therapy sessions. But when it came time for group interaction between parent and child, Tova avoided being alone with her own daughter. After several years, an Israeli social worker finally helped Tova deal with the trauma of her divorce. As she healed, she understood it was not Michal’s fault. The same worker also helped Michal restore her childhood, regain self-confidence, and receive the love of her mother again.

For Genet*, it felt like her world was crumbling. She struggled with her parental role and giving basic instructions to her children, leaving them to do as they pleased. A social worker convinced Genet to attend weekly therapy sessions with other mothers, but she never opened up much about her home problems.

After two years, she finally informed her social worker about her abusive and violent husband. Genet was extremely fearful and ashamed, and had even asked her children to keep what was happening at home a secret. But she finally found the courage to break the silence and, together with her social worker, she filed a complaint with the police. For an Ethiopian Jewish woman, this was extremely difficult and a huge risk to her and her children.

Through our “Giving a Future and Hope” campaign, the ICEJ is committed to restoring and strengthening broken Israeli families. This initiative seeks to mend shattered families, lift up youngsters who have grown up in difficult circumstances, and find direction for the unemployed and unskilled in need of a fresh start. We want to extend a helping hand on behalf of Christians worldwide who care about Israelis in need.

The excellent staff engage in every aspect of the families’ lives, from daily routines to dialoguing with schools. Other services are offered as well, such as finding benefits for families, marriage counselling, ending domestic violence, and even house calls. And thanks to Christian donors from Finland, the ICEJ recently provided a shade cover from the hot sun for a playground outside one therapeutic center.

You can help us to continue this important work of mending and strengthening Israeli families. Please consider a gift towards our ‘Giving a Future and Hope’ campaign.

* names are changed to protect privacy.
In late November, the Israeli cabinet approved plans to bring home 3,000 more Ethiopian Jews in an emergency airlift out of war-torn Ethiopia. At the request of the Jewish Agency for Israel, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem immediately committed to assisting with this urgent and historic Aliyah operation.

The decision to evacuate the 3,000 Jewish immigrants came amid reports of an escalation in the civil war in Ethiopia, with the president recently declaring a nationwide state of emergency and even going personally to the front lines to lead the battle against the rebel Tigray militia. The tribal conflict has already claimed thousands of civilian lives and forced more than 2.5 million people to flee their homes. Meantime, there are concerns over food shortages due to the worsening drought and famine conditions, and many nations have warned their citizens to leave Ethiopia. This has led to growing calls from within the local Ethiopian Jewish community in Israel for an “Operation Solomon II.”

The most vocal advocate for such an airlift has been Pnina Tamano-Shata, the current Minister of Aliyah and Integration who arrived in Israel from Ethiopia herself at age three in an emergency airlift in the 1980s. There were reports she was even ready to quit the Bennett-Lapid government if her evacuation pleas were turned down.

Under the agreement reached by Tamano-Shata and Interior Minister Ayelet Shaked, the government will be bringing 3,000 Ethiopian Jews still living in transit camps in Addis Ababa and Gondar, provided they arrived in the camps more than ten years ago and also have first-degree relatives already living in Israel.

The new cabinet decision will help implement an earlier government resolution from 2015 to bring home to Israel the last 9,000 eligible ‘Falash Mura’ – Ethiopian Jews whose ancestors were coerced to convert to Christianity several generations back. Over 4,000 of these have already been brought to Israel – more than half of them on Aliyah flights sponsored by the ICEJ. The current airlift aims to bring another 3,000 “in the coming weeks,” leaving 2,000 or so to bring at a later stage.

The Jewish remnant still in Ethiopia have been living in run-down transit camps for up to two decades now awaiting their turn to finally be reunited with their families who already reached Israel. We now have an opportunity as Christians to help lift them out of poverty and the growing dangers of the raging conflict, as well as to bring loved ones back together after many painful years of separation.

The Christian Embassy has pledged to be an active partner in this emergency airlift by offering to sponsor several hundred Ethiopian Jews on the first flights coming out of Addis Ababa. With your help, we can bring home even more, so they can reach safety in Israel and finally re-join their families in the Promised Land.

Please give your best gift today to help with this urgent and historic Aliyah operation.

DONATE AT: on.icej.org/aliyah
Due to the civil war and worsening famine conditions in Ethiopia, it has become difficult for the Ethiopian Jewish community in Israel to obtain a daily staple of their diet – teff flour for baking their traditional flat bread. The special grain is only grown in the Horn of Africa, but exports from Ethiopia to the community in Israel have recently stopped. Yet the ICEJ recently had the chance through a key contact to purchase a ton of teff flour and distribute it among 200 Ethiopian immigrant families at a gathering arranged by Israeli social workers in Netanya. The flour is so popular among the Ethiopian community here in Israel that the event turned into a very festive gathering, with a musical performance, a clown for the children, and a large communal meal featuring everyone’s favourite – teff bread!

Over recent months, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem has been busy delivering thirty-six new portable bomb shelters to Israeli border communities which are especially vulnerable to rocket and mortar fire from Gaza and Lebanon. The funds for these three dozen shelters have all been raised from Christians worldwide in the short time since the Hamas rocket war last May. With these new shelters, the ICEJ has now donated a total of 161 portable bomb shelters to Israeli communities under rocket threat since 2007, with the majority (130) placed in towns along the Gaza border and the remaining shelters deployed in the North.

Over the past decade or so, the ICEJ has placed dozens of mobile bomb shelters in communities in the Gaza envelope, stretching from Kerem Shalom in the south all the way up to Ashkelon. This area has been repeatedly battered by Hamas rocket barrages from neighbouring Gaza. Most of our bomb shelters have been donated to schools, day-care centers, medical clinics, youth centers, community halls, university campuses, factories and other public places which serve a social purpose and can only operate during times of crisis if they have adequate bomb shelters.

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ICEJ AID
Meanwhile, there has been growing concern over the lack of public shelters in the North. A State Comptroller report issued last year warned that 2.6 million residents of northern Israel do not have access to functional bomb shelters. Thus, the Christian Embassy is increasing its efforts to assist towns in the northern Galilee and Haifa regions.

The need for more shelters is most acute in the towns right along the northern border with Lebanon, which are prone to shorter range rockets that cannot be stopped by the Iron Dome system. This hilly, forested area contains a diverse mosaic of Jewish, Arab and Druze towns which are desperately looking for funding to provide better protection for their communities. Other areas of concern are the farming villages in the Zevulun regional council just east of Haifa, which are close to strategic facilities – such as oil storage tanks and chemical plants – which Hizbullah is expected to target in any future conflict.

Just in recent weeks, the ICEJ has delivered bomb shelters to several Jewish and Arab communities in the Zevulun region, and to an Israel Tennis Center facility in Akko which teaches tennis and other sports to Jewish and Arab youths from disadvantaged families. We also have been continuing to fulfil our commitments for additional shelters in farming villages along the Gaza border, including: Kibbutz Nahal Oz (guard tower); Kibbutz Or HaNer (security gate); Kibbutz Beror Chayil (soccer field); Kibbutz Nir Am (museum and café); and Moshav Mivtahim (tomato packing plant).

Since the last rocket war with Hamas in Gaza back in May, the ICEJ has received donations for new bomb shelters from Christians in Brazil, Canada, China, Czech Republic, Fiji, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, South Africa, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, and many other countries.

“These mobile bomb shelters truly save lives and give Israeli families the peace of mind they need to continue their daily lives under the constant threat of rocket attacks,” said ICEJ President Dr Jürgen Bühler. “We now want to focus more on the need for additional bomb shelters to protect civilians in the North. In selecting where to place these shelters, we also are looking to meet other social needs in these community and to promote Jewish-Arab coexistence.”

To donate towards more life-saving bomb shelters, please give to our “Israel in Crisis” fund. Go to: on.icej.org/crisis
For a long time now, Shalom Stamberg and his wife Zelda were eagerly waiting to come live in a new building at our special Home for Holocaust survivors in Haifa. However, their arrival was delayed until a permit could be obtained for the building’s elevator.

Shalom had survived the Warshaw ghetto and five Nazi concentration camps. He and Zelda visited our Home almost daily, and we treated them like they were residents already.

Sadly, Shalom was never able to take up residence at our Home, as he passed away in August. However, one month later his wife Zelda was able to move into the Haifa Home.

Zelda was born in Poland in 1931, the second of five children. Her father was a builder during the summer and butcher during the winter.

When the Germans turned her hometown of Sarny into a ghetto during World War II, the family’s neighbour helped them flee by train to Russia. There, her father was forced to join the Red Army and died in the war, while her mother kept fleeing with five small children. They ended up in Siberia and survived in very difficult circumstances.

After the war, they fled to Kiev and from there back to Sarny. Half the town was levelled and very few from the ghetto survived. They found a half-destroyed house where they lived for a few months under the protection of a friendly policeman.

Yet life became too dangerous for them as Jews, and they found themselves fleeing again, this time to Lodz. There, they heard about the possibility of going to British-ruled Palestine. Zelda and her brother Zalman joined a group of Jewish orphans from across Poland, and together they set off for the Land of Israel. The year was 1947 and their ship, the Moledet, was stopped by the British and sent to Cyprus, where they again were put into a detention camp. In December that year, they were released and made it to Haifa port, only to be interred once more in the detention camp at Atlit. A few months later, they were finally freed and brought to a kibbutz in the independent nation of Israel.

Among the orphans at Atlit, Zelda met her first husband – a survivor from Hungary. They married and had two children. Unfortunately, her husband died unexpectedly at age 51.

Several years later, she met Shalom, a widower himself, and they shared 37 good years together!

Today, Zelda loves living at the Haifa Home. “I don’t want to be alone and it’s hard for me to cook”, explained Zelda. “Here I have friends, we have activities, and I am very grateful that I could come and live here.”

And we are thrilled to have her as a resident.
After establishing a national call center for Holocaust survivors in Haifa earlier last year, the ICEJ is now helping set up a similar emergency call center in Jerusalem. During a short pre-opening ceremony in November, the well-known rabbi Yigal Shriki from Netivot put a mezuzah on the door post of the new call center in Jerusalem. With his blessing, this newest call center was off on its mission to reach out and help the many needy Holocaust survivors in the Jerusalem area, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Social Welfare and other organisations that work with survivors.

A few days before International Holocaust Remembrance Day on 27 January, the center is supposed to be fully operational and will formally open in a gala ceremony with Israeli dignitaries, Holocaust survivors, community leaders, and representatives from organisations that will work together at the call center.

The second new volunteer is Kathlin, who already knew at age 14 what she wanted to do after high school – go to Israel for a year of volunteer work. Four years later, Kathlin started her year of volunteer service at the Haifa Home in October.

Growing up in a Christian family, Israel was always part of Kathlin’s identity as a believer. She read books about the Holocaust and made a presentation about it in tenth grade.

“Somehow, Israel is a second home for me”, assured Kathlin. “I love to explore the Land. I am so happy I am here.”

“I love the elderly and can learn a lot from them”, she added. “I love to see them laugh and dance. It gives me a joy that fills my heart. During the weekend, I miss them already and look forward to seeing them again at the beginning of the week.”

Now our volunteer team of five is complete and it is a great joy to get to know one another. With the giftings and talents of each one, we are focused on improving the Haifa Home and caring for the residents in these last years of their lives.

1. The ICEJ’s volunteer team is now complete and enjoying their new office space.
2. ICEJ volunteer Steffi with resident Sofie.
3. Haifa home volunteer Kathlin with survivor Naomi.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW VOLUNTEERS KATHLIN AND STEFFI

The ICEJ staff at the Haifa Home recently welcomed two more Christian volunteers to round out our team. The first is Steffi, an 18 year-old from Germany who just finished high school with a focus on health care.

Steffi has a deep interest in the Holocaust and Second World War. She arrived in October and is very happy in her new role.

“I always wanted to come to Israel to see the land of the Bible, and when my sister met Kerstin (a former ICEJ volunteer) and heard exciting stories about the Haifa Home, I knew what I wanted”, said Steffi.

“The survivors are so friendly and even though I don’t always understand them, they keep talking to us”, Steffi explained with a smile. “I really like it here and am glad I came!”

“Sometimes, Israel is a second home for me”, assured Kathlin. “I love to explore the Land. I am so happy I am here.”

“I love the elderly and can learn a lot from them”, she added. “I love to see them laugh and dance. It gives me a joy that fills my heart. During the weekend, I miss them already and look forward to seeing them again at the beginning of the week.”

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REFRESHING SPACES

With the team complete, we started to refurbish the Home’s different communal areas with new furniture, fresh colours of paint on the walls, and making these common spaces more welcoming for the residents. The activity rooms received a makeover, as did the physiotherapy room. We will continue this process with other areas.

Please continue to support the ICEJ’s Haifa Home for Holocaust Survivors.
To make a donation, go to: on.icej.org/survivors
Here are updates on some of the latest developments in our global network of national offices as we press past the challenges of corona and broaden our support and activities for Israel worldwide.

**FRESH MOMENTUM IN WEST AFRICA**

In November, the ICEJ global family received an important addition, as a new office was officially opened in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, in the presence of ICEJ President Dr Jürgen Bühler and Dr Mojmir Kallus, Vice President for International Affairs. The Ivory Coast is a very influential country in French-speaking West Africa, and this new office will strengthen our presence across the region.

The festive opening culminated a series of events organised by local Christian supporters of our ministry. At the request of Dr Apollinaire Gboagnon, President of the Evangelical Federation of the Ivory Coast, Dr Bühler spent an entire week preaching on the “Signs of the Times” at his congregation, the Cocody Assemblies of God. Dr Apollinaire is a widely respected church leader throughout the region, and we are honoured to have him as Chairman of ICEJ-Ivory Coast.

At week’s end, a leaders’ conference hosted by David Kuhlen Silue, national director of our Ivorian branch, was attended by some 50 pastors from all major denominations. ICEJ delegations from Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali and Togo came as well. The conference ended with the official opening of the ICEJ office before dozens of government and church leaders, including the governor of Abidjan.

David Silue also was formally appointed as regional coordinator for French-speaking West Africa. He will travel to surrounding countries to speak with local church leaders to secure broader support for ICEJ and develop new contacts where we are not yet represented.

Please join us in prayer for Africa, a continent with rich natural resources and a promising future. In recent decades, the Gospel has reached tens of millions and churches are growing, but many countries are still torn by tribal strife and plagued by corruption. Pray for the transformative power of the Gospel to deeply change the culture. Pray for godly leaders who will guide their nations to their prophetic destiny in God. And pray that the ICEJ may become a bridge to connect these nations to Israel and teach them to bless the offspring of Abraham.

**ICEJ RETURNS TO EAST AFRICA**

After a nearly two-year break in ministry trips to East Africa due to corona, the Jerusalem headquarters sent Vice President of Operations Barry Denison to Tanzania in November to visit churches across the country in another very busy speaking tour arranged by the ICEJ-Tanzania team. In only ten days, he traversed the country by car and spoke in 30 churches and other venues. The packed schedule took him from the Indian Ocean to Mt Kilimanjaro to Lake Victoria, and included multiple stops in Dar es Salaam, Arusha, Morogoro, Singida, Shinyanga, Mara, Mwanza and Geita. He also addressed the ICEJ-Tanzania annual general meeting in Dodoma and the team at the national office in Mwanza.

The Church in Tanzania is unique, as the different Protestant, Pentecostal and Roman Catholic streams all cooperate, and Barry spoke in all these types of churches. They also have a profound love for Israel and give sacrificially to help Jews return to their biblical homeland of Israel. In addition, the churches show great enthusiasm in having someone from Jerusalem visit and teach. Please pray for God’s blessings upon the believers in Tanzania, as they grow in their understanding and support of Israel.

**ICEJ’S GLOBAL NETWORK FORGING AHEAD**

*BY MOJMIR KALLUS, VICE PRESIDENT FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS*
Once an obscure method of spreading information, “Podcasting” has become an increasingly popular medium for distributing audio content. Indeed, in an age of constant sound bites and often superficial news and entertainment, many have felt the need to dig deeper to understand important and complex topics. This is where the ICEJ global network is seeking to provide quality content to better inform Christians about Israel. Several ICEJ national offices have started regular podcasts. For instance, check out:

- ‘Out of Zion’ Podcast on Charisma, with Susan Michael from ICEJ-USA [https://icejusa.org/out-of-zion-podcast/]
- ‘ICEJ Netherlands Podcast’ with Jacob Keegstra, in Dutch [https://nl.icej.org/icej-nederland-podcast]
- ‘Forstå Israel’ Podcast, with Maria Torgussen Helgerud and Martin Gellein of ICEJ-Norway, in Norwegian [https://www.ikaj.no/fip/]

ICEJ-Slovakia, headed by Peter Švec, was invited to participate in the review process which led to the historic decision by Slovak Prime Minister Eduard Heger and his government on 9 September 2021 to formally and unanimously apologise for the so-called ‘Jewish Code’ adopted by the country exactly 80 years earlier. The disgraceful measure, enacted during World War II, effectively legalised the deportation of more than 72,000 Jews living in the Slovak state. It is considered the most extensive antisemitic legal code of its kind in that day. Thus, September 9 has now become a national day of remembrance for victims of the Holocaust and racial violence in Slovakia. “We at ICEJ-Slovakia were pleased that we could offer comment on this decision as a Christian organisation focused on building bridges between Christians and Jews on biblical principles”, said Peter Švec.
ICEJ’S EXPANDING PRAYER EFFORTS BEARING MUCH FRUIT

BY JOSHUA GOODING, ICEJ PRAYER COORDINATOR

What started out as a ripple has grown into a wave. On the Day of Pentecost over two years ago, the ICEJ leadership sensed the Lord directing us to host a 12-hour prayer chain with prayer partners around the world joining on a Zoom platform to intercede for Israel and the nations. There were two prayer points: 1) pray for revival in your nation, and 2) pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit over Israel.

At first, the idea of praying for 12 hours seemed like a tall task and we were not sure if enough people would join to fill the time. Yet to our surprise, the Lord stirred people from some forty nations worldwide to take 15-to-30 minute timeslots, and they actually wanted more time to pray for Israel and their nations.

From this positive response, the ICEJ’s Rosh Chodesh prayer chain was birthed. “Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it...” (Psalm 127:1). We saw the reality of this Scripture as the Lord has added to the prayer chain every month. What started with twelve hours and 40 nations has now grown to a full week of 168 hours of prayer, with over 80 nations participating.

Since the beginning of this global prayer chain, our prayer points have remained largely the same: 1) prayer for revival in your nation, and 2) prayer for revival in Israel. It is with great excitement that I share we are beginning to hear testimonies of these prayers bearing fruit. In Kenya and Finland, for instance, ministry leaders are seeing the stirrings of revival. People are encountering the Holy Spirit more intensely in services, new believers are coming to faith, and prayer meetings are lasting all night. We have even heard reports of this happening in Israel!

Our God hears and answers our prayers! This principle is laid out clearly in Luke 11:9-13. And we do see that persistence in prayer is key to answered prayer.

In parallel with this, the ICEJ also has seen amazing growth and much fruit in our weekly Global Prayer Gathering, which was launched just two months before the Rosh Chodesh initiative. In those very first online prayer meetings at the start of the corona lockdowns in March 2020, over 1,000 participants joined us for prayer and encouragement during that difficult time. Since then, we have consistently seen some 400-600 faithful intercessors pray with us every Wednesday at 4:00 PM (Israel time). And we have even seen prayers answered before the meetings end.

As I look back upon the faithfulness of God over the past two years and the growth in our prayer efforts, it actually brings tears to my eyes. The Lord is raising up watchmen from around the world to take their stand in prayer for Israel. Nations are turning toward the Lord, and He is using the ICEJ as a bridge to connect the nations to Israel.

If you would like to lead a prayer watch during an upcoming Rosh Chodesh prayer chain, please connect with me, Joshua Gooding, the ICEJ prayer coordinator, at: joshua.gooding@icej.org.

For more information regarding our weekly and monthly prayer initiatives:

Isaiah 62 Global Prayer Gathering: icej.org/global-prayer
Rosh Chodesh prayer chain: icej.org/prayer
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