NEW THINGS

THE NEXT SEASON FOR ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH

US EMBASSY BEGINS HISTORIC MOVE TO JERUSALEM
FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Dear friends,

We are living in exciting times. Just a few days ago, we witnessed US President Donald Trump declare that he now recognises Jerusalem as Israel’s capital and that he intends to move the American embassy here.

Trump explained that he was merely complying with the Jerusalem Embassy Act, which Congress passed with overwhelming support from both parties already in 1995. The very first draft of that bill was co-written by David Parsons, who served in Washington at the time as a registered Christian lobbyist for strong US-Israel relations and today serves as Senior Spokesman for the ICEJ.

This shift in US foreign policy will have significant implications for the future. Other nations, such as the Czech Republic, Philippines and Uganda, have already announced they intend to follow suit. The withdrawal of the last 13 national embassies from Jerusalem in 1980 was one of the main catalysts for the establishment of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles that year. Since then the ICEJ, and in particular our USA branch, have worked towards the move of the American Embassy to Jerusalem, knowing other nations were waiting for Washington to take the lead in returning to the holy city. Therefore, we rejoice in this historic development.

At the same time, we are in the midst of another joyful milestone for our ministry. By the end of December, several more ICEJ-sponsored aliya flights of Ethiopian Jews will have landed at Ben Gurion Airport, bringing the total number of Ethiopian immigrants we have brought home over the past year to 1,200. In fact, the ICEJ assisted more than 3,000 Jews in making Aliyah in 2017, not only from Ethiopia but also from Russia (1,100), Belarus (800), Ukraine (70) and India (50), among other nations. We are so grateful that all this was made possible because of the generosity and compassion of Christians from around the world.

This new year will be yet another exciting season for the Christian Embassy. We expect to expand our Haifa Home for Holocaust Survivors and take this special project to another level. By the grace of God, we will be able to share more very exciting news on this and other Spirit-inspired initiatives in the months to come.

Please keep us in your prayers. The ICEJ is at the forefront of a spiritual battle that has to do with God’s purposes for Israel and the Church. A number of our leaders have been affected by life-threatening attacks. God enabled us to overcome them by the prayers of the saints around the world. We know that your prayers are like a wall of fire around our work.

Thank you for standing with us and may this year be a year of blessings and breakthrough for you!

In Christ our Saviour!

Dr Jürgen Bühler
ICEJ President

COVER PHOTO:
Celebration at Damascus Gate in Jerusalem

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I WILL DO A NEW THING

ISAIAH 43:19

BY DR JÜRGEN BÜHLER
As we enter the new year, we are in the midst of a twelve-month period that is rather unique in Israel’s modern history.

During this year-long span, we are celebrating a remarkable series of anniversaries. It all began in May 2017 with the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Jerusalem’s reunification, and it ends in May 2018 with the celebration of Israel’s 70th year of independence. Never in my lifetime can I recall a period with so many remembrances of key historic events related to Israel’s rebirth. They also are significant markers for the Church and the nations. This includes:

Now each of these numbers bears a certain biblical significance.

**Fifty years – the Jubilee**
The biblical Jubilee encompasses a 50-year cycle. According to Leviticus 25, every 50th year was to be a year of Jubilee. If an Israelite landing on hard times had to sell his land or even his own self into servitude, then the 50th year represented a year of good news and renewed favour. All his original inheritance would be returned to him and he would regain his freedom. It is indeed a season of God’s favour (Isaiah 60:1ff; Luke 4:18ff), when God restores unique blessings to His people.

In modern times, Jerusalem has gone through a whole sequence of these Jubilee cycles over the past 50, 100 and 150 years, indicating that there is a divine pattern of restoration and release operating over the city of God.

**Seventy and 120 years – a lifespan of completion**
Seventy years represents a significant timespan in the Bible. Moses gives 70 years as the lower limit of a human lifetime (Psalm 91:10). It was the period for which Israel was exiled to Babylon. Thus they spent an entire lifespan in captivity. Then after 70 years, God remembered His promise of restoration and the Jewish people began returning to their homeland under Ezra and Nehemiah.

The prophet Daniel saw that 70 weeks were determined for Israel and Jerusalem to complete their divine purposes (Daniel 9:24ff).

The period of 120 years represents the upper limit for a human lifespan. In the times of Noah (Genesis 6:3), God gave humanity 120 years to live. Moses also died exactly at this age, and no biblical figure has ever reached this age since.

Thus, both 70 years (for the State of Israel) and 120 years (for the Zionist movement) represent a season of completion and accomplishment.
The Jewish year
The Jewish calendar long predates our Gregorian calendar and counts the years since Adam's creation. According to Jewish tradition, these amazing jubilees have occurred in the Jewish year 5777 which then turned into 5778 at the last Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year) last September. Seven is always a number of completeness. God created the world in 7 days. Jesus said that we are to forgive 7 times 70, representing complete and total forgiveness. The number 777 is one of ultimate completion. The first day of the week is also the eighth day. Jesus rose on the first day of the week from the dead and ushered in a new season. The passing from 5777 to 5778 thus indicates a new season has started.

A new Jubilee season
In general, it is wise to be careful not to over-emphasise the symbolism of numbers. The concentration of anniversaries with highly symbolic numbers, however, does bear a message for Israel and the nations.

The period of 50 years speaks of restoration and return of that which belonged to its original owner. We see this Jubilee cycle in operation over Jerusalem, as key events related to the city have lined up in exactly 50-year intervals, each ushering in a new season for its rightful owners. The discovery of the ancient City of David by Sir Charles Warren brought excitement to the Russian Jewish community and led to the very first wave of Aliyah from Russia in the years following. Allenby’s liberation of Jerusalem together with the Balfour Declaration 100 years ago brought a new season to Jerusalem’s inhabitants and laid the foundation for the state of Israel. And of course, the reunification of Jerusalem in 1967 meant the biblical Old City was back in Jewish hands for the first time in almost 2000 years.

It is therefore no surprise that again, at this year’s Jubilee, another landmark of restoration has occurred for Jerusalem. The decision by the United States to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel finally affirms what the Knesset decreed back in July 1980 in the Jerusalem Law – that Jerusalem is the eternal and undivided capital of the state of Israel. This recognition was unduly withheld by the international community until now, leaving Israel as the only nation in the world not given the right to choose its own capital. As the prophet Zechariah foretold, Jerusalem became like “a cup of drunkenness” for the nations of the world.

But this latest move by the US Administration represents a new level of international recognition for Jerusalem. It is a ‘game changer’ in the way nations will deal with Israel in the future. Other nations are expected to follow suit, yet at the same time it also will result in new levels of hostility by others. In any case, this move will significantly strengthen the historical connection of the Jewish people to their national capital. It also underlines that the biblical principle of the Jubilee is still in operation today.

A new season coming for Israel
As we mark the 70th anniversary of Israel’s national rebirth this year, we can also look forward to a new season of prophetic fulfilment for the nation of Israel. The general idea of 70 and 120 year cycles is that a season has been completed and now something new can be expected. The prophet Isaiah repeatedly declares a new season coming to Israel: “Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” (Isaiah 43:19 [see also Isaiah 42:9; 48:6]).

Over the past 120 years, God has already opened an exciting new chapter for the Jewish people. The headline for this chapter was “Restoration”. A poor, agricultural pioneer state has become the start-up nation that is today a world leader in medical and scientific research and can compete in innovation and efficiency with Silicon Valley or any other hi-tech region of the world. Israel also experienced a number of seemingly hopeless wars and emerged as the unexpected winner. Today it is uncontested in its neighbourhood militarily and has recently become even a strategic partner for Sunni Arab nations against the growing threat of Iran and its proxy terror militias.

Now as we enter this new season, we can expect an even deeper level of restoration. It will continue to strengthen the national and physical restoration of the Jewish State. Yet at the same time, especially after the US recognition of Jerusalem, we can expect a ‘new thing’ that goes beyond the natural and political realm. We do know that one of the greatest outstanding promises God gave to the Jewish people is that of a spiritual restoration for Israel. Almost every Hebrew prophet who foresaw a spiritual return to God on a national scale.

“For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land ... I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; ... I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, ...” (Ezekiel 36:24–27; [see also Isaiah 44:3; Zechariah 12:14; Jeremiah 31:31ff]).

According to the Apostle Paul, this also means the release of an unprecedented blessing to the entire world. “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; [see also v. 12]).
Israel’s revival will release a new level of blessing and resurrection life among the nations. We already saw, in the past 120 years, since the Zionist dream took shape, the greatest Christian revival this world has ever seen. In particular, over the recent decades since Jerusalem’s reunification we have seen dramatic growth in the evangelical churches of the Global South. Today, Church growth experts assess the evangelical movement has well over 600 million believers. What a spiritual revival in Israel will mean for the world is beyond imagination.

Battles and judgement ahead of us

New seasons for the believer, new levels of glory and spiritual depth, are often preceded and accompanied by seasons of battle and even suffering.

The birth of the Zionist movement was triggered by a severe wave of anti-Semitism in Europe, including pogroms in Russia and the Dreyfus Affair in France. The state of Israel was established out of a fierce battle in 1948, and Jerusalem was reunited during the Six-Day War. Both of these wars appeared to be hopeless battles for Israel, as most military experts did not give the small Jewish nation much chance of survival either time.

Yet any new level of divine restoration always results in loss for God’s enemies. Satan will do anything to contest and stop this new season. That there is now opposition to the latest developments on Jerusalem should not surprise us. Both for Israel and the Church, it means we must not just prepare to receive the great ‘new things’ from heaven, but also brace for a new wave of opposition and struggle.

Paul states: “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” (Romans 8:18) There will be seasons of victory, but they might come at a price. Jacob’s encounter with God was a fierce battle, and he came out victorious yet also limping.

The season we are entering will see further breakthroughs for Israel and deeper levels of authority and God’s glory in the Church. But it will be accompanied by global shakings and battles that are unprecedented.

Therefore as we enter this new year, we should steady ourselves for new challenges ahead but at the same time expect great new things from the Lord. God encourages us to dream His dreams. While the world might shake, God is at the same time building a kingdom that cannot be shaken. The restoration of Israel will gather greater momentum, leading to the promised outpouring of His Spirit. And we can also expect an overcoming Church entering into a new season of holiness, authority and blessing.

Let me suggest that you consider the following:

- Get behind what God is doing in the Church and in Israel. Ask the Lord what His purpose is for your life and find your place in God’s kingdom. This will be the most fulfilling life you could ever live.

- Make sure that your foundations are solid and unshakable. Be part of a church that builds your life and faith, and challenges you to believe for greater things and to walk in holiness before the Lord.

- Spend daily time with Lord, praying and reading His word.

- Carry the armour of God and use it! Our battles will increase and they are “not against flesh and blood but against spiritual principalities...” Be equipped for the days ahead!

As we are entering into new and exciting seasons let us together carry out great exploits for our King! 🙏
For it is the day of the Lord’s vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion. (Isaiah 34:8 - KJV)

The recent decision by US President Donald Trump finally to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and move the American embassy here was a very courageous and long overdue act. This issue goes to the core of the historical national identity of the Jewish people. It also goes to the heart of the calling of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, which was founded as an act of Christian solidarity with the deep Jewish attachment to Jerusalem.

Vindication vs vengeance
The response among Israelis to this US decision was more relief than elation. When the United Nations is constantly denying the Jewish connection to Jerusalem, it was nice to hear someone affirm their special bond with this place. Time and again, they have been strangely accused of “Judaizing” Jerusalem. Some even consider it a “war crime” for a Jewish family in eastern Jerusalem to add a balcony to their home. So it was comforting to hear a major world leader warmly and calmly validate their ancient connection to this city.

The Palestinian reaction to Trump’s announcement was largely one of disappointment, as most seem resigned to the fact that it was going to happen eventually. Still, Palestinian and Arab/Muslim leaders voiced their anger and threatened to derail the Embassy move through violent protests and perhaps worse. Apparently, some feel they must prove their reverence for Jerusalem through bloodshed.

Spurious claims and historical fallacies
The heart of the problem is that the genuine Jewish claim to Jerusalem is being challenged by rival claims of questionable origins, including a nationalist one asserted by the Palestinians that the city is the capital of their state and a religious one advanced by Muslims that the al-Haram al-Sharif (Temple Mount) is the third holiest site in Islam and thus exclusively theirs. Both claims have been repeated enough over time as to be believed by billions of people worldwide.

Yet according to leading scholars, Muslim veneration of Jerusalem has political origins dating to several decades after Muhammad died, when the Umayyad dynasty ruling in Damascus lost control of Mecca and decided to elevate Jerusalem as a place of Muslim pilgrimage. To do so, they linked the prophet’s mythical ‘night journey’ to the newly-built al-Aqsa mosque, located on the Temple Mount.
Yet many Muslims down through history have rejected this as a later hadith (tradition) of Islam, since they know al-Aqsa did not even exist yet and that Muhammad turned his back on Jerusalem when he changed the direction of prayer (qibla) towards Mecca. Moreover, the Koran does not contain even one single mention of Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, credible accounts from the early 1920s trace the Palestinian nationalist claim to Jerusalem back to certain British Mandate officials who opposed Zionism and sought to frustrate the implementation of the Balfour Declaration. These British anti-Semites promoted local Arab leader Haj Amin al-Husseini to the lofty title of Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and turned the Dome of the Rock into a symbol of the new Palestinian nationalist movement. The mufti eventually wound up in Berlin supporting Hitler’s genocidal campaign against the Jews, even while the Muslim waqf in charge of the Dome of the Rock published tour guides which acknowledged “beyond dispute” that it was built on the site of Solomon’s Temple.

Universal reverence for Jerusalem
Now one cannot ignore that Jerusalem today holds great historical and religious significance for billions of people of faith all around the world. Yet this universal reverence for Jerusalem originates with the Jewish people and their close spiritual ties to this city. Without that foundational divine connection between the Jews and Jerusalem, no one else would have ever really cared about this remote city nestled away in the Judean hills.

The case for the Jewish capital
The Bible itself makes hundreds of references to Jerusalem. Historians have scoured through ancient Greek and Roman writings and they all refer to Jerusalem as a “Jewish city” and the “capital of the Jews”. During their many centuries of exile, the Jews always longed to return to Jerusalem and restore its past glories. For seven decades now, Jerusalem has served as Israel’s capital, even when it was precariously surrounded by enemies and even though the nations refused to recognise it as such. This steadfast devotion to Jerusalem has again demonstrated its centrality to the Jews.

DURING THEIR MANY CENTURIES OF EXILE, THE JEWS ALWAYS LONGED TO RETURN TO JERUSALEM AND RESTORE ITS PAST

Spiritual conflict to shake the nations
Still, it should come as no surprise that there is now a serious global dispute over the rightful Jewish place in Jerusalem. The Bible is clear that a great “controversy” over Zion would arise one day among all nations (Isaiah 34:8; also Zechariah 12:2-3). Yet God would settle it by placing “My king on My holy hill of Zion” (Psalm 2:6). This refers to that blessed time when the Messiah comes to take up the throne of his father David, which clearly will be located on Mt Zion in Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:1-4, 9:7, 16:5, 24:23; Jeremiah 31:6; Joel 3:17; Micah 4:1-7; Zechariah 8:3; Luke 1:32; Revelation 14:1).

The Bible also foresees that the Messiah’s arrival would be preceded by a rival claimant to the throne, a false Messiah or Antichrist (Matthew 24:5; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; 1 John 2:18, 4:3; Revelation, chapters 11 to 20). These Scriptures suggest it also involves a false claim to the actual site of that throne in Jerusalem. How this may be linked to the current competing claims to Jerusalem and the Temple Mount is not quite certain. But we can already see how such a controversy over Zion has the power to shake all nations.

Until then, each and every nation must choose whether to align themselves on the right side of Scripture concerning Jerusalem. This really comes down to whether they fear God and honour His word more than they fear and honour men.

Jerusalem released into its redemptive destiny
From the start of 2017, the Lord has been showing us that there is a Jubilee cycle in operation over Jerusalem in modern times, whereby every fifty years something dramatic happens to release the city further into its prophetic destiny. So for months now we have been declaring that there would be yet another Jubilee release for Jerusalem this very year, and it appears to now be upon us. President Trump has made a geo-political decision, but it also signals a shift in the spiritual realm. We do not know yet what all the consequences of this move will be and how long they may play out. But we are convinced that Jerusalem is now being released even further into its redemptive destiny, and that we will see a tremendous impact in the global Church as well.

DURING THEIR MANY CENTURIES OF EXILE, THE JEWS ALWAYS LONGED TO RETURN TO JERUSALEM AND RESTORE ITS PAST

Restored Hurva Synagogue in the Old City’s Jewish Quarter.
The ICEJ is well-known for our support for Israel and the Jewish people. So much so, that we sometimes are described as being anti-Arab. This is unfortunate and incorrect because the ICEJ continues to reach out to all the people of Israel and the Middle East with the love of Jesus. For instance, in 2017 we had several significant outreaches, which for security reasons, we could not speak about until now.

The IDF has now gone public with “Operation Good Neighbor”, the name given to the ongoing assistance Israel provides to the devastated communities in Syria near the border. We were approached with a request to assist a secret IDF-outreach to Syrian villagers near the border of Israel. The IDF specifically asked the ICEJ for baby formula to help feed the infants across the border in these villages.

Another outreach involved my wife, Deb Denison, who is an Intensive Care Nurse and Trauma specialist. Together with a close friend, Dr Sally Parsons, a Trauma Specialist, Deb traveled into Syria with a team of Christian medical workers. Thanks to a designated donation from ICEJ Taiwan, we participated directly in this outreach by helping purchase the vast amount of medical supplies needed to keep this team supplied and able to minister through medical care.

For seven weeks, the team showed the love of Jesus in a Syrian village, treating over 1,000 individuals. There were over 120 wounded from the war and 11 babies that were successfully delivered with six of them requiring extremely difficult caesarian surgeries. Had it not been for the C-section deliveries, many of the births would have resulted in death for either the mother, baby, or both.

The ICEJ has given the remaining funds of the designated donation to help purchase medical supplies for the new team going into Syria to equip them to serve for more than four months in rough conditions of snow and isolation. Recently, a nearby town suffered an attack of 50 barrel bombs, including chemical weapons. “Casualties had muscles clamping, barely breathing, spasms and smelled like chlorine,” reported the medical team.

Deb and I counted the cost before she went in, and we said yes to the voice of our Lord knowing the risks involved. When I saw my wife escorted through the border fence by IDF soldiers coming out of Syria, tears of joy and relief flowed forth.

It seems like a mirage, but it’s real: Jews helping Christians show love to Muslims in a nation that has been in a state of war with Israel since 1948. A short while ago, this was unimaginable.

Since the beginning of the chaotic conflict in Syria, over 500,000 Syrians have died, and many more have fled as refugees. During this time, Israel has taken in over 5,000 sick and injured Syrians, including women, children, and men with major illnesses and war-caused injuries. 🌍

To offer your support go to: icej.org/Israel-good-neighbor
SAVING LIVES IN SYRIA

The ICEJ is a hub and staging point for an impressive range of activities. One morning this fall, Deb Denison, the wife of ICEJ’s VP of Operations Barry Denison, returned to the Embassy to share about seven intense weeks in a Syrian war zone. With tears in her eyes, she recounted the horrific situations her medical team endured to shine the light of Jesus in a place that had no understanding of Christianity.

With two doctors, two nurses, two medics, and one photographer, God used a simple group of people to bring the love and healing of Jesus into a small village under attack. Debbie stated, “We were just a rag-tag team of non-military and medical people with a passion for the Lord and a desire to make an impact. God doesn’t need an army, he just needs people who are willing to say, “Yes Lord, use me!”

Debbie explained how she and her husband counted the cost, “I had to say, ‘Yes Lord. I love you enough to lay down my life to show your love to a people who do not know you!’”

Debbie also expressed her deep gratitude for all of the prayers people had prayed for her and her team while they were in Syria: “It was only by the prayers of those who stood behind us that we could navigate some really difficult waters.” Please continue to pray fervently for the many other servants of God that are willing to go into places of war and death to bring the peace and life of Jesus Christ!

War Looming on Israel’s Northern Border

After almost seven years, Syria’s fractious civil war seems to be winding down. Despite Israel’s adversaries having expended much blood and treasure, the end of this war may provide them with a very advantageous position to launch a lethal assault on the Jewish State.

The Assad regime has been preserved thanks to Russia’s military, economic and diplomatic support, along with the enormous numbers of Shi’ite fighters from around the region that were mobilised, trained, armed and transported to Syria by Iran. The most dangerous of these Shi’ite militias is the Lebanese terrorist group Hezbollah, which fought an inadvertent 34-day war with Israel in 2006 and has been threatening to renew hostilities ever since.

Intelligence officials warn that because of the estimated 120,000 rockets Hezbollah has aimed at Israel, along with the battlefield experience it has gained by fighting in Syria, it is much more dangerous than it was in 2006. If Israel does not aggressively react to meet these threats in a future war, its home front will be subject to severe disruption and devastation.

Moreover, Iran has used the war in Syria as a cover to move various military assets, Shi’ite militias, weapons manufacturing, and logistical equipment into Syria and Lebanon. These moves are part of its strategic ambition to establish a land corridor from Iran to the Mediterranean Sea, which will enable Iran to menace Israel directly. One ominous development has been the construction of an Iranian military base close to the Golan Heights. The IDF recently struck this base, but dealing with such threats now carries greater risks due to the proximity of Russian forces. One silver lining, however, is that much of the Sunni Arab world feels equally threatened by Iran’s growing strategic reach, providing new opportunities for Israeli diplomacy.
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THE TEMPLE, ITS MINISTRY AND SERVICES AT THE TIME OF JESUS
BY DR EDERSHIME

Jerusalem’s temple represented not only the glory of Israel’s past but the splendor of its future, when the Messiah would come and reign over God’s people. Eminent scholar of Judaism and the New Testament, Alfred Edersheim, recaptures the essence of the temple’s significance, both in the life of Israel and in the life and theology of the early Christians. Readers who want to experience the grandeur of Herod’s temple - the temple that Jesus “cleansed” - or the anguish of a temple trodden down by Roman soldiers will appreciate Edersheim’s knowledge of and passion for the temple of Scripture. Readers will also welcome this newly typeset, highly readable edition with illustrations and marginal references from Scripture, Philo, Josephus, and the Mishnah.

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This special-edition notebook is elegantly impressed with the skyline of Jerusalem and ICEJ’s logo in gold; it comes in black or white and contains 140 gold-lined pages in high-quality Italian paper, 16 x 16 cm.

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ROCKET ATTACK INITIATES NEW BOMB SHELTERS

Jonathan Dekel-Chen, the director of Bikurim Youth Village for the Performing Arts in Eshkol, Israel, recently wrote a letter expressing his gratefulness for ICEJ-sponsored bomb shelters.

“I returned home earlier this week and was thrilled to see the two new shelters in place in the courtyard adjacent to Bikurim’s dining room. As you may have heard – and may want to relay to your partners – these two shelters were profoundly important, especially a couple of weeks ago. The air raid sirens went off in the middle of the day throughout the Eshkol region due to a launch of a couple of rockets from Gaza. In that moment, our students were all in/near the dining room and ran immediately to the two new shelters. The Bikurim staff told me that the kids reacted really well to the sirens. Thank you for providing the new shelters, because our students were able to quickly feel safe despite the unnerving circumstances.”

Shabbat shalom,
Jonathan
ISRAELI PARLIAMENTARIANS HONOUR CHRISTIAN VOLUNTEERS

BY KAYLA ELLINGSWORTH

A special event honouring Christian Zionists volunteering in Israel was held at the Knesset in Jerusalem on 6 November 2017. Hosting the event, MK Sharren Haskel addressed the Christian volunteers with these words, “Today, it is important that we appreciate and value those who come and volunteer and support our nation.”

Christian Zionist volunteers, about 200 in number, had the honour of attending this gathering inside the Knesset. Jewish leaders and Knesset Members expressed their deep gratitude to Christians in Israel and those all around the world who have given their time, care, love, and finances to stand with Israel and the Jewish people.

Rabbi Yonadav Zar stated, “The Knesset in Israel is like Israel’s national house, but no house is complete without guests. So, thanks to each of you who are here today as our guests. Thank you for coming today because without you we cannot be complete.” Sondra Baras, Director of Christian Friends of Israeli Communities, said to the Christian Zionist volunteers, “You understand that the land belongs to Israel, and we couldn’t be here in the land without knowing that we have Christian friends standing with us and cheering us on.” Rabbi Yehuda Glick also shared the importance of Jews and Christians working together to bring the God of Israel, who is a God of love, to the world.

The main message of the event was to encourage more Christians to volunteer and stand with the Jewish people here in their land with the God of Israel! The day closed with Christians and Jews connecting over refreshments in the lobby. This truly was a remarkable event where Jesus was glorified in the Knesset building of Israel! 😊

SOMETIMES GOD IS DOING SUCH INCREDIBLE MIRACLES, BUT WE ARE OFF DREAMING AND ARE NOT SEEING WHAT HE IS DOING RIGHT IN FRONT OF US.

- RABBI YEHUDA GLICK

FRESH COAT OF PAINT BREATHES NEW LIFE INTO FAMILY HOME

BY NICOLE YODER, ICEJ AID DIRECTOR

Beginning life in a new land is challenging, and successful integration can be a process of several years. This is where ICEJ Aid steps in by providing mentors, encouragement and practical help essential for new arrivals. This week it involved taking our paint brushes and several staff to repaint the apartment of a young single Ethiopian immigrant mother of two. Working hard in elderly care leaves her with minimal resources, making it difficult to invest in home repairs. A few days later, we left with the make-over completed, the apartment sparkling clean, and a huge smile on the face of our new friend. The family’s mentor, Birtukan, conveyed in words what the mother’s smile had already spoken to our hearts, “The family was very excited and happy with the assistance they received. It was like getting into a new house for them! Thank you for your generous giving to families in need. You are doing a holy work. We hope you will continue to assist families. Heartfelt thanks!” In fact, the next families are already waiting in line. 😊

ICEJ AID

15 | WORD FROM JERUSALEM
Daily life in a Ukrainian village is difficult because there is absolutely no purpose, no work, and everyone is trying to move to the city. Vasily Abramovich also left his village and moved to a nearby city called Zaporozhye, yet this was not to be his final move.

Recently, Vasily’s sister, who made Aliyah to Israel 17 years ago, called and invited him to move to Israel. This was his last chance to make a final decision on repatriation, so he decided to change everything and start a new chapter of his life in Israel. “I have great hope for my future. Israel is the country of technology, with the highest level of medicine, and equal opportunity for everyone who wants to work.”

At the airport in Ukraine, we hugged and blessed Vasily with the hope that we will meet him again in Israel, and that his life will change for the better! Vasily shook our hands and said, “Thank you and the ICEJ for your help and support. This gives me a chance to start a new life in the Promised Land!”
A HIDDEN HERO
BY KAYLA ELLINGSWORTH

In 1941, when German forces were poised to conquer Kiev in Ukraine, six-year-old Sergei was standing at the door of his house with his young mom. A group of Soviet soldiers came to evacuate them, barking the order, “Take papers for you and the boy, nothing else. You have to leave in 10 minutes, otherwise you will be killed.” Sergei and his mother were loaded into a cattle car along with several other Jewish families and began an unbearable month-long 1800-kilometre journey to Siberia. As Sergei shared his story with our Homecare worker, Corrie Van Maanen, she could feel the weight of his story as he seemed to relive these memories right before her eyes.

From a painful past, Sergei pressed into a hopeful future as he married his beloved wife Alana. After making Aliyah to Israel 25 years ago, Alana suffered a serious brain haemorrhage leaving her bed-ridden. Sergei became a hidden hero as he became full-time caretaker of his wife, and continued as such for the next 20 years with the help of ICEJ’s Homecare team.

The couple moved to a family member’s house, and yet ICEJ Homecare kept in touch through several visits each year. Last November, Alana passed away. Because our Corrie Van Maanen is considered like family, she was invited to the funeral and even to the family’s home afterward. Sergei was heartbroken without his wife, yet was grateful to live in Israel among his Jewish brethren. Even at the age of 82, he is currently learning Hebrew at an Ulpan for the first time.

God is doing mighty works through ICEJ Homecare as these Jewish people open not only their doors but also their hearts. There remain many hidden heroes like Sergei and Alana. 🙏
A NEW CHAPTER BEGINS IN AUSTRALIA

BY DAN STEEGE, NATIONAL DIRECTOR AUSTRALIA

It is with great excitement that we announce the incorporation of the ICEJ’s new branch in Australia. This development has been years in the making and represents a huge commitment to implement a diversity of projects from an area of the world where religious freedom is entrenched and the Jewish diaspora is vast.

A strong and experienced National Board & Executive Committee, who are all experts in their field, will support our office across Australia. I look forward to working with them and sharing our common vision with you. We will seek to speak God’s truth about Israel in simplicity – especially to the next generation – and to transform the hearts of believers by bringing education, revelation and a subsequent call to action. Christians must unite in these times of political uncertainty. As you hold this issue in your hand, the President of the United States has followed through with his promise to relocate the US embassy to Israel’s capital, Jerusalem. Things are accelerating before our eyes and what a great privilege to be part of God’s people, able to further God’s vision and work in the Holy land.

The Harvest is great but the workers are few, please answer the call with us.

The ICEJ is very pleased to have a dynamic and visionary national director to head up the reincorporated Australian branch.

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In recent years, the number of ICEJ branches worldwide has been increasing at a constant rate. Currently, we have offices or representatives in 90 countries and contacts in 176 nations around the world. This blessing, however, also brings a great challenge: How can we work together in unity as a global team, learning from one another, and fulfilling our calling in each country to comfort the Jewish people and connect the churches to Israel?

To meet this challenge and strengthen the development of our international work, we envision bringing our branches together in regional meetings to provide the opportunity to get to know one another, spend time in prayer together, and share practical insights.

Belgrade Regional Conference
The Serbian capital, Belgrade, witnessed the first regional conference of this kind in October. Sixteen European nations were represented from the continent’s East and West. The participants included national directors and members of staff from our strong and experienced branches like Germany, the UK and Finland, and also from our new branches like Albania and Bulgaria. The ICEJ team of speakers was led by President Jürgen Bühler and VP - International Affairs Mojmir Kallus, as well as our National Director for the US Susan Michael, and Director of Christian Friends of Yad Vashem, Susanna Kokkonen.

The three-day programme kicked off with a reception for local, political, and church leaders. The impressive line-up of speakers included the Deputy Speaker of the Serbian parliament and the Chief Rabbi of Serbia. The organisers from the local Serbian branch, led by the National Director, Rodoljub Oreščanin, proved they are already well-connected in their country.

Fellowship and Team Spirit
Jürgen Bühler presented the DNA of our organisation, which was a highly appreciated understanding of our identity. Other sessions addressed questions on how to grow a branch and the basics of fundraising, while providing tips for interesting projects. Many fresh ideas came from round-table discussions, but the most important element was the fellowship. A strong sense of unity and team spirit developed, which implanted a fresh dose of encouragement and inspiration to all.

The first regional conference confirmed the expectation and will be followed in the coming months by similar events in other parts of the world that will be adapted to local needs and cultures.
SHINING ISRAEL’S LIGHT IN AFRICA

BY ICEJ STAFF

Give yourself a moment and "Ouagadougou" will roll right off your tongue. This is the name of Burkina Faso’s capital, where the local ICEJ branch held its first “Light on Israel” conference. Attending were people from many denominations and partner organisations, with the ICEJ’s Arise Director, Jani Salokangas, as the main speaker. Jani focused on the importance of understanding God’s covenant relationship with Israel, “If we are confused about God’s covenant for Israel, we will be confused about the Bible.”

ICEJ’s West African Director Abdou Maiga emphasised the importance of these conferences because they help mobilise people from different churches to learn about God’s heart for Israel. “People here are generally for Israel, but a lot of this support is based on emotions and not knowledge of the word of God,” stated Abdou. The Q & A session at the end of the conference sparked great questions and discussions, which revealed the genuine interest and hunger of the people to understand this area of the Bible.

The ICEJ continues its strategic work in West Africa to empower the Church to understand God’s purposes for Israel. Keep praying for our work and the Church in this predominantly Muslim region. God has opened this amazing door for our work, and we believe that it will bear much fruit through faith, prayer, and hard work.

NURTURING THE ICEJ’S VISION FOR ISRAEL IN BRAZIL

BY ICEJ STAFF

Our VP of Operations had a whirlwind tour in Brazil reaching out to churches and the Brazilian populace via nationwide television. Barry’s knowledge of and love for Brazil stems from an eight-year stint serving in the land of the Amazon, which makes him expertly positioned to communicate the ICEJ’s sound and visionary views for Israel and the Church.

David Parsons and Brian Silvester of the ICEJ both spoke at the recent Balfour 100 ceremony in the ornate Stormont parliamentary building in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Barry Denison sitting down for his nationwide television interview.
ICEJ President, Dr Jürgen Bühler gives Christian keynote address at the Balfour Centenary Celebration.

"My Lord, ladies and gentlemen, what a privilege and what a joy to be here today with you to celebrate 100 years of the Balfour Declaration. Looking at this evening’s programme, I believe we all can come to the conclusion that God’s powerful hand is resting upon your nation. There is a special calling on Great Britain.

"Many people say there is a Cyrus calling on your nation. Cyrus, the Persian King, who was foretold centuries before he was actually born, by the great Jewish prophet Isaiah, who says, 'Behold, Cyrus, My shepherd, My servant.' He will say to Jerusalem, ‘Be rebuilt.’ He will speak to My temple and say, ‘Be rebuilt and your foundations shall be laid.’

"The Balfour Declaration, indeed, was a declaration to the world to rebuild Zion and to rebuild Jerusalem. Out of the Balfour Declaration, the desert has become a green place. Out of the Balfour Declaration, Jewish people from the ends of the earth have returned back to their homeland and have rebuilt the ancient cities.

"Today, I was at the British museum and I looked at what is called the “Cyrus Cylinder.” You could read exactly what he was doing, calling forth the rebuilding of the Temple. Calling forth the restructuring of the nation and allowing the Jewish people to return to their homeland. Your nation did this in our modern days, and you should be proud of yourselves.

"This little cylinder also stated that the Cyrus declaration was maybe the first declaration of human rights. And I believe this is also true for your nation. Because the establishment of the state of Israel was also paralleled by the establishment of many other nations in that region.

"There are many people that say the Balfour Declaration is a colonial declaration, but the truth is exactly the opposite. It’s a declaration calling for freedom for the nations. And I know that my Bible tells me that he who blesses Israel shall be blessed. And looking at you here tonight, it makes me believe that God has a great future for your nation. The best days are still ahead of you. May God bless your nation. May God bless the nation of Israel. May God bless you all."
JEWS AND CHRISTIANS CELEBRATE BALFOUR DECLARATION TOGETHER

By David Elms, National Director UK

On 7 Nov. 2017 at the Royal Albert Hall in London, thousands of Christians and Jews met to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration. Using the words spoken by Arthur Balfour, the British foreign secretary in the War Cabinet at the time, they named the event “Partners in this Great Enterprise.”

Balfour 100 Committee
The partners both then and now were primarily Christians and Jews. However, the Balfour celebration in the Albert Hall (London’s most prestigious venue) took place because Christian Zionist leaders put aside differences to work together to produce this magnificent pageant of praise and history. Later known as the Balfour 100 committee, this group brought Jewish and Christian leaders together in the British society, including royalty and the present Lord Balfour. However, the key organisation behind the scenes was the ICEJ UK. The president of the ICEJ, Jürgen Bühler, was a keynote speaker along with the Israeli ambassador to the UK, Mark Regev.

A Nation of Destiny
Jürgen spoke about the UK being raised up as a Cyrus nation in the purposes and plans of God for his ancient people. Interestingly, the souvenir booklet carried the same theme. Nations, as well as individuals, are raised up to fulfil a destiny. During World War I when the Turkish Ottoman Empire fell and Jerusalem was freed, it was an amazing privilege, in spite of the appalling carnage amongst the nations, that the birth certificate for Israel was issued by the United Kingdom!

Foundations
Jerusalem was liberated following the world-changing battle of Beersheba that was won by the Australian and New Zealand forces known as the Anzacs. At the same time the Anzacs were defeating the Turks, the British War Cabinet in London voted overwhelmingly for the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. In 1920, the Balfour Declaration was internationally ratified at San Remo, Italy. All of this was foundational for the creation of the state of Israel in 1948.

A Night to Remember
The evening programme consisted of a wonderful cross-section of both Jewish and Christian artists honouring the historical narrative of the Balfour events. It included speeches given by such luminaries as Spurgeon, Bishop Ryle, Balfour and Theodor Herzl. The uplifting choir was from Holland, and the Adoramus Orchestra was from London. Other participants included the Redeemed Church of God Choir, the Israeli Dance Institute and ICEJ’s very own Serguei Popov.

Souvenir Booklet
We have issued a souvenir booklet written by both Jews and Christians with a comprehensive history of Christian Zionism and knowledge about the emergence and legitimacy of Israel as a nation. There is also an excellent DVD of all the evening events. Both are available at a special discount for ICEJ supporters.

Please contact the UK office for more information: uk.icej.org/content/contact-icej-uk
Through the storms of life, God teaches us to keep our eyes on Him as we continue to dance with Him in this journey of faith. The Soler Family endured two hurricane storms that wreaked havoc on their city in Puerto Rico, and caused severe damages to the Christian dance studio they own and operate. The second hurricane hit their city only days before they were planning to fly to Israel for the Feast of Tabernacles, to serve as leaders for the Feast’s Dance Company.

For 11 hours straight, the Soler family prayed to our God who saves as the hurricane raged on with winds blowing around their house at 185 miles per hour! The kids were sleeping, but the parents were up praying over each side of the house declaring God’s protection as water was pouring into their home.

In the midst of the storm, Mr Soler received a message on his phone from someone from the Feast dance team asking, “How are you?” This deeply touched Mr Soler as he knew God was reaching out to him saying, “How are you my son?” With great tenderness, Mr Soler shared, “Even when we are right in the middle of the storm, God always wants to know, ‘How is my son?’ and ‘How is my daughter?’”

Throughout the seemingly impossible journey to get to Israel, the Lord performed miracle after miracle to help the Soler Family safely arrive in Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles 2017! “Sometimes God will take you out of the storm and put you in another area to reveal something to you and encourage you, so that when you get back home you can share what God gave to you. You can rebuild, restore, and help others lift their hands to start the restoration process,” expressed Mr Soler.

Please continue to pray for the Soler Family and the island of Puerto Rico, as our God turns this land of devastation into one of restoration! We also want to encourage you that no matter what storm you find yourself in right now, remember that God is with you showing you how to dance upon the waters of the storm with your eyes fixed on Him!

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Nina Åström is a follower of Jesus who uses her gifts as a pianist, singer and songwriter to bring the love and light of Jesus to people in prisons. She has ministered in about 400 prisons around the world, as far north as Murmansk in the Arctic Circle and as far east as Vladivostok. She recently had the opportunity to share in six prisons here in Israel. The ICEJ Jerusalem staff was blessed to have her share her music and testimony at one of our morning devotionals.

Nina shares God’s love wherever she goes, whether it is in the nicest concert hall or within prison walls, because she recognises that all people desperately need the love of our Saviour, Jesus Christ!
Every autumn, the ICEJ is blessed by gifted, dedicated, and servant-hearted individuals, who come to serve during the Feast. Your help is crucial to the successful and smooth operation of this major event and testimony in Jerusalem. We believe that the Lord specifically calls people to come to Jerusalem to offer their time, energy, and service. So come, be blessed and encouraged in your walk with our Messiah in the city where it all began.

The application process will open in January 2018. Go to feast.icej.org/feast-team

FOR MORE INFORMATION, EMAIL: FEAST@ICEJ.ORG