A NEW SURGE IN ALIYAH
THE INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN EMBASSY JERUSALEM

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.

Our mission is to equip and minister to Israel and the Jewish people worldwide by donating to the ongoing work and witness of the ICEJ.

God appears in many places in His Word as a God who is doing a new thing (Isaiah 42:9; 43:19). God is encouraging us to embrace the new thing He is doing, even while holding fast to the ancient and saving faith of our fathers. It is in this paradox that we are living even today. Coronavirus is forcing us all to think outside of the box and to embrace the many new ways God is leading us into. And as we do this, we will experience His never-changing goodness and holiness – even here in Jerusalem.

We saw this take place at this year’s Envision conference. Threatened by cancellation due to COVID-19, it became our biggest pastors and leaders conference ever. Close to 700 participants from 55 nations joined us as we came live from Jerusalem and other locations across Israel, with more seminars and other content than ever before. The messages from Envision were powerful and all had the same common denominator: God is in control, and especially in these drastically changing times.

That God is indeed in control I witnessed with my own eyes just a few days ago. He allowed us to reach another milestone in the Aliyah work of the ICEJ. Due to Covid all air traffic over Israel had come to a halt, yet the Israeli government allowed for a short moment a special airplane to land. The Boeing Dreamliner had come from Ethiopia with 302 new immigrants on board. Standing on the tarmac at Ben Gurion Airport to greet them, it was such a privilege to watch these new immigrants from Ethiopia step down and kiss the ground of the Promised Land. Even I felt like those who “dreamed when the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion”, as His sons and daughters – old and young, the weak and the strong – came on eagle’s wings to their ancient homeland. It was a specially chartered flight, and what also touched me was that each one of these Jewish immigrants could be funded by ICEJ through the generous gifts of Christians from around the world who were determined – even in times of crisis – to stand with Israel! People like you! Thank you so very much!

Also, I am blessed to share with you that our Home for Holocaust survivors in Haifa is continuing to expand. A new building is just on the verge of completion to further increase the number of people we care for at the assisted-living home.

Please keep both of these projects in your prayers, as well as our upcoming Passover distribution to needy Israeli families.

Finally, I want to thank you for standing with us in these critical times and for helping us so that we can bless Israel today more than ever. I pray that you also will experience a new and fresh touch from God in these difficult days.

May the Lord bless you richly out of Zion!

Dr Jürgen Bühler
President
International Christian Embassy Jerusalem

Support our ministry online at www.icej.org
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‘THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL LIVE BY FAITH’

LESSONS FROM HABAKKUK FOR OUR STORMY TIMES

BY DR JÜRGEN BÜHLER • ICEJ PRESIDENT
The days we live in are truly challenging times. The year 2021 has started out with more worrisome news: new mutations of COVID-19, talk of businesses collapsing, and disturbing scenes from the Capitol building of the United States. The global pandemic has impacted not only our economies, but also the way we worship and fellowship as believers. Around the world, a post-modern ‘cancel culture’ threatens to erase everything which defined our traditional Judeo-Christian values.

Indeed, it seems that everything which can be shaken is being shaken. Many ask: Where is God in all this? Why are our prayers not answered?

For me, the book of Habakkuk holds more relevance today than ever before. The prophet Habakkuk lived in a time when he did not understand the world anymore – and more importantly he did not understand God anymore. As you read this, I encourage you to prayerfully read the entire book of Habakkuk and have your Bible ready as you read along. Allow me to take you through the three chapters of a prophetic book that I believe many of us can identify with today.

The book of Habakkuk differs from other prophetic books in the Hebrew Bible. The prophet did not receive a message directed to Israel, but it is more the very personal dialogue of a troubled man of God with His Creator.

HABAKKUK’S CRISIS

From the very beginning, Habakkuk voices his complaint to God: “How long must I call for help but You do not listen!” (Habakkuk 1:2-4) The prophet comes straight to the point: Lord, my prayers are not answered! In addition, he feels God is just looking on as injustice spreads, and strife and conflicts abound. He sees the people of God and the law being paralyzed (v. 4) and losing their impact in the land. Instead of righteousness, he sees injustice and violence taking over.

GOD’S FIRST RESPONSE

God’s response (vs.1:5-11) was definitely not what the man of God expected: God instructed him to observe what is going to happen, not only in Israel but among the nations. “I will raise the Babylonians … that ruthless and impetuous people” (1:6). They will come to destroy and to take captives wherever they go. In other words, God told him: “You think it is bad now? Just wait, it is going to get even worse and … I am in the midst of it.”

In fact, God told Habakkuk: “I am doing something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told.” (Habakkuk 1:5)

THE MAN OF GOD

Let us take a step back and consider exactly who Habakkuk was. He was not your average Sunday church-goer who once a week bothered to go to the church to fulfill his religious duties. He was not a complainer upset that his prayers did not get instantly answered. We are dealing here with one of the great men of God from ancient times. Habakkuk was one of the few persons whose writings ended up in the Bible. His declaration that “the righteous shall live by faith” (2:4) is one of the most quoted Old Testament verses in the New Testament. A compatriot of Jeremiah, he was a man of prayer and heard the voice of God like few did in his generation.

It was this unique man of God who saw his prayers going unanswered. His “how long shall I cry” (v. 1) was the despair of possibly many years of prayer for revival in Israel, and yet he saw nothing happening. And honestly, that might be the situation of many dear men and women of God in our times, who have hoped and prayed for another revival for decades. Truth be told, it has been a long time since we have seen revivals like Azusa Street, the Welsh revival, and the Wesleyan or Pietist revivals, in many Western countries. “How long” might be the cry of many believers today.

And God’s response to the prophet is even more puzzling: “You would not believe it if I told you!” I remember hearing one of the new prophetic voices recently being asked: “Where were the prophets that foretold of the current global pandemic?” The lady was sincere in answering: “I most likely would not have believed it if God told me about a coming global pandemic.” I was refreshed by her honesty.

Many people question the role of the prophets today, particularly after the recent US election many prophetic when voices foresaw Trump winning a second term. Like Habakkuk, they most likely would not have believed such a dramatic turn would happen to their beloved nation. It is easy to judge them in hindsight. But knowing many of them personally, I know that they – like Habakkuk – hoped most of all for revival in the USA. They hoped, like me and many of us in Israel, that another term of Donald Trump would continue to strengthen Israel and would strengthen Christian values not only in America but in other nations as well.
HABAKKUK’S THIRD RESPONSE
Yet after God’s reply, Habakkuk was even more perturbed. The pagan Babylonians would be allowed to judge the people of God? This was highly upsetting for him. “Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?” the prophet asked (1:13).

But then Habakkuk made a decision that became a game-changer, both for the prophet and for the outlook and tone of his entire message.

THE WATCH TOWER
In that moment, Habakkuk recognised that he desperately needed to hear from God. He understood that old paradigms and concepts would no longer work. The focus now shifted from asking God to hearing from Him.

God still speaks today, but maybe we need to reorient our hearts to hear the new thing He is doing in the world today. We all need to remember that the Bible is full of passages that difficult times will come to the world. Lawlessness will increase, He will judge the world through earthquakes, wars and even pestilences, and yes eventually there will be even a globally orchestrated war on the saints. I do not know what lies ahead, but could it be that we are entering into a new season when things will become even more difficult for the Western church? Yet, as we draw close “to Him and seek His face, God promises that He will draw near to us and will answer our plea!

Instead of praying what he always prayed, Habakkuk went on his watch tower to receive the divine insight for his time. We need to realise that many of the changes of 2020 will be irreversible. What worked in years past might not work today or even tomorrow. This is a time when each one of us is called to go up to our personal watch tower to pray and seek the Lord as never before. We need to hear the new thing God is doing.

THE LIGHT HOUSE
As Habakkuk listened, God spoke to him! God’s new revelation changed the perspective of the prophet. God did not change His purposes, but He allowed the prophet to see the world how God saw it. The Lord told him to write down plainly what He was about to share with him so that others could read it (2:2). That means God gave him not just an answer for his own questions, but what he heard would help others down through time as well.

Habakkuk’s watch tower of prayer turned into a lighthouse of guidance for others. God used him in turbulent times to be like the sons of Issachar (1 Chronicles 12:32). This unique tribe understood the times and the seasons they lived in and also knew what they ought to do. The result was the people were at their command. God looks for these lighthouse people today – people who can give hope and direction in these stormy times.

THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL LIVE BY FAITH
At the same time God affirmed to Habakkuk His immovable purposes. “For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay… but the righteous shall live by his faith.” (Habakkuk 2:3-4)

Shakings would surely come, God said, yet the righteous shall live by faith! The most needed quality we need to strive for in these troubling times is faith. Do not allow the confusion and challenges of our time to rob your faith. In spite of all the chaos around us, God is seated on His throne. This was the vision of Isaiah when one of the greatest kings of Israel died a tragic death. He saw the Lord seated on His throne and the train of His robe filling the Temple (Isaiah 6:1). Or to put it in the words of the prophet Daniel:
When confronted with death and all the wisemen and magicians of Babylon were at the end of their wisdom, Daniel was full of faith and declared... “but there is a God in heaven!” (Daniel 2:28) It means that in the midst of confusion, economic hardship, and all our unanswered questions, it is our faith in Jesus Christ that will carry us through. The righteous shall live by faith!

**GOD IS STILL AT WORK!**

Finally, God affirmed to Habakkuk what he could not believe anymore. In the midst of judgement and chaos, God’s salvation purposes with mankind continue full speed. Like a powerful ray of light penetrating the darkness, God announces: “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” (Habakkuk 2:14) This is not just a theological or prophetic statement of the future, but an invitation of God to take an active part in His salvation purposes. Coronavirus or a new US administration will not and cannot stop God’s purposes!

**HABAKKUK’S NEW-FOUND FAITH**

The prophet Habakkuk’s first reaction was to embrace God’s will. “I heard your report” (3:2). He still did not like it and was filled with fear and trembling (3:2+16), yet he could see that God was at work. He saw pestilence and pandemics “at God’s heels” (3:5), and high places were shaken as the Lord came to visit the earth. But Habakkuk understood that He came not to destroy His people but was coming on a chariot of salvation (3:8) and that God “went out for the salvation of His people, His anointed” (3:13).

This should make us consider that the greatest revivals of recent decades have not taken place in the Western democratic, free-market countries, but in developing nations still fighting poverty in Latin America and Africa, and in places like China and Iran and even more recently in the turbulent Arab world.

In one of our weekly Global Prayer Gatherings recently, we heard an amazing testimony from our branch director in the Philippines, Pastor Stephen Mirpuri. Through November and December last year, we prayed for his region after it was horribly struck by a typhoon. Entire villages were completely submerged in water. Many people lost everything. Yet he just reported how revival broke out in this hard-hit region and only in his churches over 3,000 people accepted Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.

God indeed works in mysterious ways. But He does work! Therefore, Habakkuk received divine faith in the midst of his challenging times. His hunger for revival in Israel was not quenched but even strengthened. “O Lord, I have heard the report of You, and Your work, O Lord, do I fear. In the midst of the years revive it; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy.” (Habakkuk 3:2)

Maybe the greatest time for the Church in the West is still ahead of us. His work is not dependent on any earthly government. In the midst of the pandemic and great political upheaval, let us make Habakkuk’s prayer our prayer: Lord, revive Your work and in wrath remember mercy!

Habakkuk’s attitude was now different from his seemingly legitimate complaints at the beginning of the book. He was able to make one of the most profound statements of faith in the Bible: “Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.” (Habakkuk 3:17ff)

Finally, Habakkuk made one more profound statement, and this is how his book ends: “God, the Lord, is my strength; He makes my feet like the deer’s; He makes me tread on my high places. To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments.” (Habakkuk 3:19, ESV)

The chaos and shakings became the territory of triumph for Habakkuk. God strengthened him with His strength and gave him “feet like deer” treading on “high places.”

There is no doubt we live today in complex and difficult times. Reading this verse, I was reminded of a documentary on mountain goats. They are able to navigate the highest and seemingly impossible terrain of the Rocky Mountains with uttermost ease. God promises this supernatural gift to us. The capability to navigate the new realities of the COVID-19 period, or the coming economic hardships, or a new government not to our liking. He will give us not only His strategies, but also His divine empowerment.

Remember! As we man our watchtower, He might turn it into a lighthouse for others. And most importantly, keep trusting in the Lord because “the righteous shall live by faith!” 🕉️

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1. ‘Habakkuk and the Angel’ by Gian Lorenzo Bernini, c. 1656-61, Santa Maria del Popolo Capella Chigi, Rome. Wikimedia Commons/Peter19916F
RETURN OF THE TWO-STATE SOLUTION
BY DAVID R. PARSONS, VP AND SENIOR SPOKESMAN

With the new Biden administration now in place in Washington, many are wondering how this might impact the Middle East, especially with regards to the Iranian nuclear threat, the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, and the warming relations between Israel and the Sunni Arab world.

FAMILIAR FACES
During the recent US presidential campaign, candidate Joe Biden distanced himself from incumbent President Donald Trump on nearly every issue related to the Mideast region – except for the Abraham Accords. There were just too many positives coming out of the Trump team’s successful efforts to help Israel reach peace deals with four Arab countries (United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco).

But Biden offered a different take on nearly every other policy concern, and his incoming Administration is now expected to shift course in two main areas – brokering an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement and how to defuse the Iranian nuclear threat. In both cases, Biden will likely revert to the approaches taken by the previous Obama presidency, especially given that he served as vice president then and so many other senior Obama appointees are now being tapped for key positions in Biden’s foreign policy team.

For instance, former secretary of state John Kerry is now the new ‘climate czar’, overseeing Biden’s top priority abroad – the crusade against global warming. Samantha Power, who served as Obama’s ambassador to the UN, will now be director of the US AID program. Both Kerry and Power used their clout to elevate these new postings to cabinet-level status.

Meantime, Wendy Sherman, the main US negotiator of the Iranian nuclear pact in 2015, is now number two at the State Department. And Rob Malley, an Obama-era advisor known for his close contacts Iran and Hamas, will now be Biden’s special envoy on the Iranian issue.

Regarding Iran, Bidens’ aides have said they would prefer to renegotiate the 2015 JCPOA agreement to extend its timeframe and include curbs on Iran’s ballistic missile threat. But they first want Tehran to stop their enrichment activities, which the clerical regime is refusing to do until the US lifts its crippling sanctions on Iran. That ‘standoff’ seems likely to end in a simultaneous halt to sanctions and centrifuges.

Biden’s team also has pledged to first consult with its regional allies on Iran, but they also seem to be in a hurry, warning that Tehran could be only “weeks away” from reaching breakout capabilities to develop a nuclear weapon. Israeli officials disagree, however, assessing the ayatollahs still need at least six months to reach the breakout stage. This is an odd reversal of the days when Jerusalem was the one warning Iran was much closer to the ‘bomb’ than the Obama White House estimates.

In any event, it is doubtful Biden’s team will put much effort into consulting with Israeli leader Benjamin Netanyahu on this existential issue for his nation, and the upcoming Israeli elections could be used as a convenient excuse for essentially evading him on the Iran question.

FAMILIAR FLAWS
For many Israelis, the presence of so many Obama-era officials in Biden’s leadership team is also a bad sign on the settlements issue. After all, it is widely believed that John Kerry and Samantha Power were behind the passage of UN Security Council resolution 2334, the blatantly anti-Israel decree adopted in December 2016, just weeks before Barack Obama left office.

That resolution declared that “Israeli settlements, including East Jerusalem, have no legal validity and constitute a flagrant violation under international law.” It added that they also are “a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution”, which can only be “salvaged” by an Israeli settlement freeze.

So for those who stand firmly with Israel’s claims to Judea/Samaria and all of Jerusalem, the days of being able to relax on the settlements issue during the Trump presidency are over. Now it is unlikely that Biden will immediately start pressuring Israel for serious concessions to the Palestinians, but some of their allies in Europe and elsewhere are already doing so.

For instance, when Biden was declared the president-elect in early November, European Union officials instantly ratcheted up their denunciations of the Givat Hamatos building project in southern Jerusalem. Germany and France also have started pushing to relaunch talks over the two-state solution, while UN Secretary General António Guterres recently called for the same, with his official statement citing the exact wording from UNSC resolution 2334 about Israel’s “flagrant violations under international law”.

This was all put on the back burner under Trump, who rarely mentioned the “two-states” option and saw no reason to condemn Israeli settlement activities – his State Department even maintained they were legitimate under international law. But this is all now back in play, so get used to hearing once more the incessant drum beat against the Jewish settlements and Israel’s “occupation” of Palestinian lands.

This shift is basically a return to the foreign policy establishment’s biased consensus – held in Washington and Brussels too – that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict lies at the root of all the troubles in the Middle East and they can only be solved after Israel makes the moves necessary to reach a peace deal with the Palestinians. President Trump proved this ‘linkage’ theory was totally flawed, of course, by brokering peace accords between Israel and four Arab states. But that is not going to stop the Western elites from reviving the same old logic in order to put the onus back on Israel again to make one-sided concessions for peace.

Former secretary of state John Kerry is the new ‘climate czar’
CHRISTIAN EMBASSY TO OPPOSE ICC WAR ‘CRIMES PROBE’ AGAINST ISRAEL

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem has committed to opposing the International Criminal Court’s recent biased decision to unlawfully expand its jurisdiction so a ‘war crimes’ probe could be launched against Israel, a highly selective move which has opened up the Court to justifiable accusations of antisemitism.

The Christian Embassy noted the obvious absurdity of this ruling: Israel is not a member of the ICC and has serious, proactive judicial mechanisms in place to try any such crimes, while the Palestinians do not qualify as a sovereign state under the Rome Statute governing the Court. Therefore, the Court has no legal standing or authority to investigate and charge Israel with war crimes in the so-called ‘occupied territories’.

“It seems the Court has caved to an over-zealous special prosecutor by distorting international law to empower her quest to indict Israelis on invalid and unsustainable charges”, said ICEJ President Dr. Jürgen Bühler. “The ICC is giving daily passes to brutal regimes like Iran and Syria which are committing horrific atrocities against their own people, and instead wants to prosecute Jews for building balconies on their homes in eastern Jerusalem as if they were Nazi war criminals.”

Over coming months, the ICEJ will be working through our vast global network of national branches and activists, as well as with other organisations, to urge ICC member states to reject and rescind this outrageous decision.

ISRAEL HEADED FOR NEW ELECTIONS, AGAIN!

BY DAVID R. PARSONS

Israel is holding its fourth elections in two years, and once again voters are focused on whether to continue under the security and stability brought by long-time Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu or finally move on to a new national leader. There are several factors which could tip the scales one way or another – including Israel’s ambitious coronavirus vaccination effort, Netanyahu’s pending trial, and the new Biden administration’s approach to the Israeli-Palestinian dispute and especially to the Iranian nuclear threat.

The election is slated for March 23, and numerous parties are jockeying to finally unseat Netanyahu. He is still widely seen as “Mr Security”, has performed well on economic affairs, and has led Israel’s largely successful response to the corona threat. Lastly, he has quickly built what may be his most lasting legacy, the Abraham Accords – the historic series of peace deals with several Sunni Arab states that are reshaping the region.

But Netanyahu also is seen by many as focused only on his own political survival, and his trial on three corruption scandals could begin before the balloting on March 23rd. His main rivals in this election are not from the Left, but from his own Right flank. Both Naftali Bennett of Yamina and Gideon Sa’ar of the “New Hope” faction were close associates of ‘Bibi’ within Likud but have since parted ways and now present the biggest threat to toppling the five-time premier. They do not disagree so much with his policies but are banking on Israelis wearying of his personality.

The new Biden administration could seek to impact the election by unnerving Israeli voters about Netanyahu being a liability to closer American-Israeli relations. Yet they could easily drive just enough Israelis into Bibi’s arms to return him to power should Biden’s team come out too strongly against the settlements or too easy on Iran. After all, there is something to be said for security and stability in these very turbulent times.
In late January, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem hosted its annual Envision Conference for pastors and ministry leaders, which drew nearly 700 participants from more than 50 nations to the four-day online event – making it our largest Envision gathering ever.

With the corona threat still with us, this year’s conference sought to inspire greater leadership within the Body of Christ during this ongoing global crisis.

“The COVID-19 pandemic, the disputed American elections, a looming global recession, the erosion of Judeo-Christian values – all of these unsettling developments are causing people to lose the fixed points in their lives”, ICEJ President Dr. Jürgen Bühler told the gathering. “As church and community leaders, we are called to be lighthouses in these stormy times.”

This year’s line-up of Envision speakers included Rev. Ingolf Ellßel (Germany), Dr Billy Wilson (USA), Kay Arthur (USA), Rev. Mats Ola Ishoel (Russia), Evangelist Angus Buchan (South Africa), MP Kenneth Meshoe (South Africa), Rev. Peter Tsukahira (Israel), author Joel Rosenberg (Israel), and ministry/business consultants Phil Cooke and Stephen Mansfield (USA).

Envision 2021 featured daily live broadcasts from the TBN studios in Jerusalem and other key locations around Israel, more than 30 seminar messages from proven church leaders, plus Q&A sessions and prayer times which allowed our guest speakers and pastors from around the globe to interact and fellowship together.

Envision Highlights

1. A visit to Ariel to meet with Jewish settler leaders as well as a Palestinian sheikh who accepts Israel’s rightful place back in the Land.

2. A visit to the Jewish Agency for Israel to hear from their chairman, Isaac Herzog, about Christians partnering in the great Ingathering of Israel.

3. A special wreath-laying ceremony at Yad Vashem to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

4. A visit to the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya for a very informative, wide-ranging discussion with the IDC’s top faculty on Israeli hi-tech, the Abraham Accords and other topics.

5. ORU president Dr Billy Wilson gave an inspiring message on how to walk in godly leadership in these difficult times.

6. Angus Buchan spoke powerfully on how hidden sin can hinder Christian leaders in their ministry.

The conference ended with four Israeli pastors holding a fascinating discussion about their respective views on the ‘End Times’, with a remarkable degree of agreement on keeping our eyes on Jesus and turning to the Word of God to rightly discern our times.
One of the main topics addressed at this year’s Envision conference was the Abraham Accords – Israel’s recent normalisation agreements with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. Since those accords were concluded last summer, Israel also has signed peace deals with Morocco and Sudan, while Kosovo just became the fifth Muslim-majority nation to recognise Israel in the past six months.

There are numerous signs that this positive momentum between Israel and the Arab world will continue. For instance, more than 50,000 Israelis flocked to the UAE to visit and shop over recent months, despite the corona travel restrictions. Prominent Israelis also are increasingly being interviewed by Arab media outlets, and some are even getting their commentaries published in official Saudi newspapers.

In another telling sign, dozens of Arabs from the surrounding nations took part in an online event on January 27th to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day, where they heard a survivor of Auschwitz give her harrowing testimony of being a victim of Josef Mengele’s diabolic medical experiments. The Arab listeners were moved to tears and vowed to bring Holocaust education to schools and societies throughout the Middle East. During the ICEJ’s recent Envision conference, we heard from Amb. Dan Shaham, who quietly served as Israel’s top envoy in the United Arab Emirates during the lead-up to the Abraham Accords. He described the recent move towards peace between the sons of Abraham as truly “prophetic”.

“After getting to know the Arabs over my two years in Abu Dhabi, I realised there are a lot of commonalities between us,” said Amb. Shaham. “Israelis are warm, open and friendly, and so are they. They want to develop their country and to create a new narrative for the Arab world, which is something we also understood as our role... So it was a meeting of minds between two peoples who were both ready for these changes.”

“There was also a value for the Arabs of just doing the right thing”, he added. “One of my friends told me: ‘We have relations with many Christian countries, why shouldn’t we have relations with the Jewish country.’”

American-Israeli author Joel Rosenberg also shared about his recent ground-breaking visits with Arab rulers who are now befriending Israel.

“Suddenly, we’ve seen these tectonic changes and the big question is: Why?” said Rosenberg.

“The Arab leaders I have met are saying the world has changed. They have seen Israel become a military power in this region, but also an economic miracle. And they see Israel as an ally against the growing threat of Iran... They also are telling me they still support the Palestinian cause, but they have become frustrated with the Palestinian leadership for constantly rejecting peace with Israel.”

Meantime, during a visit to the West Bank we also heard from Palestinian sheikh Nasr Abu Khalil Al-Tamimi, who said he not only accepts the Jewish people’s rightful place back in the Land of Israel, but also believes there is room on the Temple Mount for the Jews to rebuild their temple.
REMINDERING THE HOLOCAUST WITH SURVIVORS AT THE HAIFA HOME

By Yudit Setz

On 27 January, the world marked International Holocaust Remembrance Day – held each year on the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp in 1945. One of the best ways to honour the six million victims of the Nazi genocide against the Jewish people is to care for those who survived, which is what the ICEJ does at our Home of Holocaust survivors in Haifa.

The ICEJ has a team of dedicated Christian volunteers serving the elderly residents living in our Haifa Home for Holocaust survivors. This time of the coronavirus pandemic has been especially difficult for our aging residents. As Israel has experienced three long lockdown periods, the isolation and lack of freedom to meet with family, friends and each other has been the most difficult aspect over the past year. This has impacted many both mentally and physically. But renewed hope rolled in as 2021 began!

NEW HOPE

Israelis are slowly coming out of another lockdown, and there are glimmers of hope for protecting those in high-risk groups like the elderly, thanks to a fast-paced vaccination drive now underway. For residents in the Haifa Home, the idea of life returning to normal is certainly a comforting thought. Most of our residents have received both of their vaccination shots. And during February, we are hoping to open the community dining hall again, so the survivors can eat together, socialize, and feel alive again!

CELEBRATING THE MANY YEARS

Meanwhile, birthdays do not go unobserved! Yaakov, originally from Poland, has been living at the Home since 2012 and just celebrated his 97th birthday! Although his birthday party was in the ‘corona lockdown’ style, there was good reason to celebrate. In the past three years, Yaakov has had a live-in caregiver, who takes great care of him. He still walks every day and is grateful for the life he has at our assisted-living facility. He once said: “It was a good idea to make Aliyah and come to Israel in 1948, but it was the best decision to move to the Haifa Home. It’s like a family here!”

SNIPPET OF A CONVERSATION

That feeling of being among ‘family’ is shared by many other residents. One ICEJ volunteer, Kerstin, cleans their apartments, accompanies residents on their visits to the doctor and dentist, and helps wherever she is needed. She recently recalled a conversation with Judith on their recent trip to the doctor. Judith is a 92-year-old survivor from Auschwitz and here is a snippet of their conversation:

Kerstin: “Judith, you are looking so beautiful again today. I especially like your scarf.”

Judith: “Really, do you know how old that scarf already is? For sure 20 or 30 years!”

Kerstin: “Wow, Judith, then is that scarf even older than I am?”

Judith: “It was given as a present from my friend. We were the same age, but she passed away already. All my friends have died. I am the only one remaining, but I am not alone. I have you and you are always there whenever I need you.”

MANIA’S POEM

So many of these tender interactions are experienced daily at the Haifa Home. Mania is an 87 year-old survivor from Bessarabia who became an artist and writer. Although this time of corona has been extremely difficult for her, she tries to keep herself busy by being creative. “We need to create and keep our minds occupied and not sit passively behind a TV, which only depresses us”, she tells the others. An avid painter, she has now taught herself to paint on the computer. Every day, she draws a new picture and writes a poem with it. She was excited to share her latest poem:

(Translated from Hebrew)
WE REMEMBER
On the 27th of January, it was 76 years ago since Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi death camp, was liberated by the Russian Red Army. Like every year on International Holocaust Remembrance Day, we conducted a ceremony at the memorial flame of the Home. Usually, hundreds of people are filling the street and many dignitaries come to address the people. However, due to the strict lockdown rules this year, it was a very small ceremony. With only a few survivors, photographers and media, the ceremony was opened as Shalom S. (96) and Judith H. (92), both survivors of Auschwitz, lit the memorial flame. After the prayers sang by a rabbi, ICEJ staff member Yudit Setz told the gathering:

"Unfortunately, we cannot say that 76 years after the liberation of Auschwitz Birkenau, antisemitism has disappeared. Therefore, these ceremonies to remember are important, but the eloquent words being spoken are useless if they do not go together with action... Together with Yad Ezer l’Haver we are working shoulder to shoulder to care for Holocaust survivors in the last stages of their life. Jews and Christians together. This Home itself is a symbol of hope 76 years later."

Indeed, it is a great privilege for the Christian Embassy to care for these precious people, for as long as they are still with us. Your support goes a long way in helping us do so. Please consider making a difference in the life of a Holocaust survivor today, while there is still time.

BY THE NUMBERS:
- 179,600 living Holocaust survivors in Israel.
- 5,300 were infected with coronavirus and 900 have died.
- 17,000 Holocaust survivors in all died in 2020 (10%).
- 83% are between 75 and 89 years old.
- 17% are older than 90 years.
- 850 are more than 100 years old.

[Source: Israel Central Bureau of Statistics - December 2020]

TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE HAIFA HOME, PLEASE DONATE AT: ON.ICEJ.ORG/HAIFA

DONATE TODAY AT: ON.ICEJ.ORG/HAIFA

VOLUNTEER OPENINGS AT HAIFA HOME

The ICEJ Haifa Home now has two positions open for Christian volunteers. This may be your once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to serve Holocaust survivors! We are looking for a Physiotherapist and a Nurse with a focus on Geriatrics to join our team in June 2021. Only those with qualifications and experience in these fields should apply.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS:
Language skills in English and either German, Russian or Hebrew all very helpful.
Compassion and patience for the elderly.
Flexibility to work with team and in foreign culture.
One to two year commitment.

THE ICEJ OFFERS:
- Accommodation in an ICEJ rented apartment in Haifa
- Three meals per day
- An Israeli volunteer visa
- The privilege of serving Holocaust survivors.

If you fit these criteria, please send your CV and a motivational letter to: yudit.setz@icej.org

EXPANSION AT HAIFA HOME NEARLY COMPLETE

WE ARE PLEASED TO UPDATE YOU THAT THE LATEST EXPANSION OF THE ICEJ’s HAIFA HOME FOR HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS IS NEARING COMPLETION.

BY YUDIT SETZ

"We are pleased to update you that the latest expansion of the ICEJ’s Haifa Home for Holocaust Survivors is nearing completion. Despite the third coronavirus lockdown in Israel over recent months, work on this new phase has steadily moved forward, and we are now in the final stages of adding the last finishing touches to the building. Six housing units have been renovated. Each is equipped with a kitchenette, toilet, shower, and an extra room should the resident require 24/7 caregiver assistance. As we wait for a final permit from the municipality to install an elevator, we are starting the process of selecting possible new residents who will benefit greatly from this wonderful new facility."

TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE HAIFA HOME, PLEASE DONATE AT: ON.ICEJ.ORG/HAIFA

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[Source: Israel Central Bureau of Statistics - December 2020]
The journey from slavery to freedom is commemorated each year during Passover, or Pessach. This is the most important festival on the Jewish calendar. Usually, families and friends gather on the eve of the holiday to enjoy a special Seder meal together, while recounting the story of how Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt.

Each year the ICEJ receives many requests to help disadvantaged Jewish families celebrate this important festival. This year, as the harsh economic effects of the coronavirus pandemic linger, the need is greater than ever. The pandemic has pushed thousands of Israeli families into hardship and poverty. According to the latest National Insurance Institute report, because of the corona crisis, the standard of living in Israel saw its largest drop in 20 years! Suddenly, thousands of working-class families have seen jobs disappear or salaries cut, while young and single-parent families are also struggling to stay afloat. According to the latest grim figures, three in 10 Israelis live in poverty and 20% of the population is unemployed. As a result, social workers have seen a 50% increase in requests for assistance.

Preparations are already underway for this year’s Passover celebration, which begins on the evening of 27 March. Working together with the social workers in cities and towns across Israel, the ICEJ will be delivering gift baskets that include groceries, food vouchers, and kitchen items so that families have all they need to enjoy the Passover Seder meal.

Each year, the families who receive these Pessach gifts are so grateful for the support they receive. Jannie Tolhoek, our Passover distribution coordinator, received the following feedback when delivering holiday gift baskets last year:

“Your gift is something so big to me... Last week I went to the supermarket and there were great discounts, but I had to walk out again because I could not afford it. Your assistance will help me to buy things for the Passover holiday and I am deeply grateful for all those who gave.”

This also came from a social worker in Ashdod: “Thank you so much for this wonderful help! It means a lot to all the families and will give them a huge smile on their face and help them to celebrate Pessach with joy and dignity.”

In addition to the gift packages, the ICEJ plans to fund several community Seder meals, should government health rules allow for large gatherings.

We invite you to share in this celebratory festival by providing a gift basket ($150) for an needy Jewish family. Please consider helping those in need to preserve this beautiful tradition and remember their deliverance from Egypt.

DONATE AT ICEJ.ORG/PASSOVER
HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS
BY LAURINA DRIESSE

During the corona crisis, people around the world have been told to “stay at home”. But, for many Israeli families living on the edge of poverty, being stuck in a house in desperate need of repairs can be extremely challenging.

Nicole Yoder, ICEJ’s Vice President of Aid and Aliyah, saw this need firsthand after visiting the homes of several Israeli families living in dire conditions. Working together with our Israeli partners, we have responded by sponsoring home repairs for families all across Israel.

“When we visited some of the homes with the professional team carrying out the work, it was heart-breaking to see the extent of the repairs needed in some homes”, said Nicole. “Yet we were inspired to see how the repair team, with great compassion, arrived at homes who needed them most and quickly ensured that all was put right again.”

Through this home repair project, dignity as well as hot water was restored to a Holocaust survivor who had a broken water heater and thus had no hot water for a shower. His caregiver was washing him using wet wipes until help arrived.

A similar call came from a single Ethiopian mother of four children who is a victim of domestic abuse. Her hot water heater also was broken, but thankfully she received a new replacement.

Meanwhile, a poverty-stricken woman in Ashkelon was washing up outside with a garden hose for six weeks, as she had no running water in her home. She had a severe leak in her bathroom and a plumber charged her over $500 for a repair that did not work, and then disappeared. So she was without water as well as the money to fix it right. But through this initiative, water was finally restored to her home.

We also were able to help a distraught family who were victims of a fire that engulfed their home, killing the mother, and leaving the husband with their 13-year-old daughter. The repair team restored and painted the damaged walls, fixed the front door lock, and repaired the faulty electric wires.

While the extent of repairs may differ from house to house, the average cost of repairs per home is approximately $1,500. Thus far, the ICEJ supported renovations in 28 homes during 2020 and is continuing to extend this support into 2021. Please consider being a part of creating a better living space for desperate Israelis stuck at home.

A CALL OF HOPE
BY LAURINA DRIESSE

It can be so deflating when one unexpectedly loses their job. Unfortunately, this has happened to tens of thousands of Israelis due to the coronavirus pandemic.

In fact, one million Israelis are looking for work at present. Over 600,000 were placed on unpaid leave and only now are realising they will not be able to go back to their previous jobs. While the government is paying partial unemployment benefits, these are set to end by June this year. Not knowing where to turn next, many are seeking out job counsellors.

Thankfully, some measure of hope is just a phone call away! Working together with an Israeli partner, the ICEJ has pitched in to help with the unemployment crisis by sponsoring a helpline call-center. The center provides free counselling and support to callers from all sectors of Israeli society.

Each person who courageously calls the helpline receives personalized support as well as practical tools and guidance from trained volunteers. For example, callers receive assistance to write a resume, prepare for job interviews, define vocational goals, and set tangible employment goals. They also receive information on their rights and how to cope with loss of income, and are referred to additional resources and services.

Especially hard hit are young people, women and immigrants. Lital, a mentor for new immigrants, says: “We know that the crisis will get much worse before it gets better. It is especially complicated for immigrants who lack cultural understanding and generally have no supportive family network.”

Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, the call center received 100 calls per month, a figure which jumped close to 1000 callers per month due to the crisis. Many need and receive longer-term help. One caller remarked: “My coach was very professional and courteous. She gave me confidence; she gave me hope on difficult days and helped me remain focused while looking for a job. I appreciate all the knowledge, the positive attitude, the dedicated and professional service, the care and the way I was treated.”

Through your generous donations, the ICEJ can continue to assist urgent needs arising from the corona crisis, such as this call center.
With your help, the Christian Embassy will continue to play a central role in the prophetic Ingathering of the Jewish people to their ancient homeland in the months and years ahead. A new surge of Aliyah is on the way, so please give generously to support the ICEJ’s Aliyah efforts in 2021.

DONATE TODAY AT: on.icej.org/aliyah

JEWISH COMMUNITIES WORLDWIDE

The world’s Jewish population in 2020 is estimated at 14.7 million, which reflects steady growth over recent decades but still falls short of the 16+ million Jews alive before the Holocaust.

Here are figures for the largest Jewish communities by country:

PREPARING FOR A SURGE IN ALIYAH

BY ANASTASIYA GOODING

Over the past forty years, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem has been privileged to bring home to Israel more than 160,000 Jewish immigrants from around the world, usually in partnership with the Jewish Agency for Israel. This includes the 3,141 Jews we assisted with Aliyah last year, despite all the coronavirus lockdowns and travel bans. So, what can we expect in the months and years ahead?

Like other Israeli officials, JAFI chairman Isaac Herzog is very upbeat about the prospects for Jewish return to Israel in the near future. At the ICEJ’s recent Envision conference, he forecast that up to 250,000 Jewish immigrants will arrive in Israel within the next 3-to-5 years.

This surge in Aliyah is being triggered by several factors, including the corona threat, the way Israel has responded effectively to it, the spike in corona-related antisemitism, and the way many have discovered they can work remotely from home and even from a distant land. As a result, Herzog said most of the expected 250,000 new arrivals will be young adults with so-called ‘free professions’.

Herzog explained that last year there was a dramatic rise in the number of Jewish families who inquired with JAFI about immigration to Israel. The result was a 91% increase in new immigrant applications from Western countries, including a 400% jump from North America. Calls about Aliyah are up by 50% from English-speaking countries and by 70% from French-speaking countries.

“So which countries will all these expected Jewish immigrants come from? The world’s Jewish population currently is estimated at 14.7 million. Israel is now home to over 45% of these Jews, while 90% of the remaining Jewish communities outside of Israel reside in Western countries – including the Americas, Europe, and the Commonwealth nations (Britain, Canada, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, etc.).

JAFI has specific partners assisting with Aliyah in various regions of the world, and in recent years they have looked to the Christian Embassy for help with Jewish families returning from the former Soviet republics, eastern and western Europe, Ethiopia, and Latin America. The ICEJ also has been helping to bring the Bnei Menashe tribe from India and the Kaifeng Jews from China. All of these Aliyah routes remain open for us in the year ahead.

So far in 2021, we have sponsored flights for 430 Ethiopian Jews who arrived in Israel as part of “Operation Rock of Israel.” (See related story) And there are many more waiting to finally make it to the Promised Land.

“Undoubtedly, we are fulfilling biblical prophecy and the Christian world has a major role to play in bringing about the fulfilment of these prophecies”, Herzog told hundreds of pastors attending Envision online. “We are grateful to Christians who support the idea of bringing Jewish people back to their ancient homeland. And I again want to thank the International Christian Embassy for the outstanding work you are doing to help with this.”

With your help, the Christian Embassy will continue to play a central role in the prophetic Ingathering of the Jewish people to their ancient homeland in the months and years ahead. A new surge of Aliyah is on the way, so please give generously to support the ICEJ’s Aliyah efforts in 2021.

DONATE TODAY AT: on.icej.org/aliyah
Although Ben-Gurion Airport was shut down for the first time ever, a specially chartered flight sponsored by the ICEJ was allowed to bring 302 Ethiopian Jewish immigrants home to Israel in February as part of the ‘Operation Rock of Israel’ emergency airlift. This was the ICEJ’s largest fully chartered Aliyah flight in over two decades, and it came under exceptional circumstances.

Israel’s main airport had been completely closed to prevent the entry of a new variant of the coronavirus which might undermine the government’s mass vaccination efforts. However, a special exceptions committee gave permission for the Ethiopian immigrants to come from Addis Ababa. All the Ethiopian newcomers were required to first pass corona tests and then quarantine for two weeks in Israel.

The ICEJ-chartered flight is part of an Israeli emergency airlift which aims to bring 2,000 Ethiopian Jews from a country battered by drought, locust swarms, economic hardship, coronavirus, and tribal warfare. The Christian Embassy has now sponsored flights for over 540 of these newest Ethiopian arrivals.

“This is a difficult time for everyone, but we are so grateful that these Ethiopian immigrants were granted special permission to make the journey home to Israel”, said ICEJ President Dr Jürgen Bühler. “They have endured very tough conditions in Gondar and now their dreams have come true of finally reuniting with their families in the Promised Land. And we also have many Christians worldwide to thank for making this special flight possible.”

Sources: American Jewish Year Book 2019, Jewish Agency for Israel, Jewish Virtual Library, Shavei Israel, Wikipedia
The ICEJ is expanding its reach among Christians in Argentina, thanks to our long-time supporter Nidia Demarchi. Recently, Nidia organised a watch party for dozens of pastors and ministry leaders to take part in our annual Envision conference in January. It was held at her home church Cita con la Vida (“Appointment with Life”), pastored by Apostle Carlos Belart.

Earlier in October, Nidia also organised a Feast watch party at the fellowship. She first attended the Feast of Tabernacles in 2000, and has been a faithful Feast volunteer every year since 2005, so she knows the impact our Sukkot celebration can have. As a Feast Ambassador last year, she gathered 65 pastors and laymen for the Feast 2020 watch party at her church. Afterwards, Apostle Belart told her the fellowship was totally supportive of Israel and ICEJ, and he would work to bring many from Argentina to Feast 2021 – whether in person or online.

Meantime, Nidia also arranged a Feast 2020 watch party for Pastor Diego Freytes, who has a congregation in the province of Córdoba. He learned much from the teachings on Israel and was especially thrilled to lead a prayer time from Argentina during the Feast prayer marathon. The testimonies of answered prayers from other participants also inspired Pastor Freytes to pray for an end to a prolonged drought which was sparking major wildfires throughout the region. Sure enough, they received a miracle of heavy rains, with even the Governor of Córdoba tweeting the next day: “God sent us rain and extinguished the flames!”

For the past six years, ICEJ-Guatemala has held a ceremony on January 27th to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day and honour the memory of the six million Jews who perished in the Nazi genocide. This year, the ceremony was broadcast on national Christian television through Channel 27, El Canal de la Esperanza (The Channel of Hope), which was founded by our National Director in Guatemala, Dr. Luis Fernando Solares.

In previous years, there were 24 hours of Holocaust-related programming – including documentaries, interviews, films, prayer times and many other elements – intended to make the Guatemalan public aware of this terrible episode in Jewish history.

This year, with everyone in lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ICEJ-Guatemala broadcast a special 3-hour program through Channel 27. Following the suggestion of Israeli Ambassador Mattanya Cohen, the Guatemalan branch invited the top leaders of the local Jewish community to be interviewed, including Rebeca Permuth de Sabbagh (president), Ilan Lopez (director), and Rabbi David Russek.

Another highlight of the day was a special candle-lighting ceremony led by officials from the Israeli Embassy in Guatemala and featuring leaders of Jewish and Christian pro-Israel ministries lighting six candles in memory of the six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust. For this streamed and on-line ceremony, a replica was made of the menorah that can be seen at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

The Holocaust Day programming was broadcast not only via television and cable companies throughout the nation, but also was live streamed on many social media networks, thereby reaching tens of thousands of viewers.

The ICEJ extends a warm welcome to our new branch office in the Caribbean island nation of Trinidad and Tobago, headed by newly-appointed national director Laura Walker. For many years, Laura has impacted the nation through her ministry Tzion Gate Life Centre, which includes prayer, counselling, teaching, children and sports outreaches. She has organised Bible Marathon Readings, launched a school food program, and regularly donated food, clothing, personal care packages, and holiday gift baskets to needy families, elderly homes, and orphanages. Laura is now eager to establish strategic relationships between her local Christian community and the ICEJ, as well as to develop a network of ICEJ representatives in the West Indies region. So welcome to the Christian Embassy’s global family!
ICEJ-GERMANY HOSTS 4,000 FOR ONLINE HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE

BY ESTER HEINZMANN

On 27 January, some 4,000 Christians and Jews from across Germany, Austria and Switzerland marked International Holocaust Remembrance Day with an online memorial service at the New Palace Stuttgart commemorating the six million Jewish victims of the Shoah.

“My childhood ended when I was 13 years old”, said Holocaust survivor and guest-of-honour Ruth Michel-Rosenstock (92) in describing the German invasion of the village in today’s Ukraine where she and her family had fled in 1941. After months of suffering and persecution, the 205 Jews of the village were brutally murdered – including Michel-Rosenstock’s father. “No one survived the final raid but me”, she told a very moved audience. She added that telling their story is her “duty to God and to all who were murdered”.

“Remembrance has no expiry date”, Gottfried Bühler, National Director of ICEJ-Germany, told the gathering. Even 76 years after the Shoah, the memory of the “greatest catastrophe of mankind” must be kept alive, he insisted.

In an accompanying ceremony outside the synagogue of Stuttgart, Joliene Stephan, whose late husband Christian Stephan was founding director of the ICEJ’s German branch, laid a wreath accompanied by her grandson Florian Brämer. Only 11 years old, Florian touched everyone’s hearts when he asked the Jewish people “for forgiveness for what our German people have done to you and your families”.

Michael Kashi, board member of the local Jewish community, related how his personal encounters with Jew-hatred and Holocaust denial had shaped his determination to never stop speaking on behalf of the victims. “They must not be forgotten”, Kashi urged.

ICEJ-GEORGIA MARKS HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

BY SERGUEI POPOV, ICEJ SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE

On January 27, ICEJ-Georgia co-sponsored an event at the “Israel House” in Tbilisi to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day. The gathering was organised with several Georgian universities and was dedicated to disseminating information about the Holocaust to the younger generation. Giorgi Jijieshvili, the ICEJ representative in Georgia, told the audience that true Christianity categorically rejects antisemitism and should always stand with Israel on biblical grounds.

ICEJ JOINS LARGEST-EVER RUSSIAN PRAYER EVENT FOR ISRAEL

BY ANASTASIYA GOODING

On January 27, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, in cooperation with the Jewish-Christian Dialogue in Russia, took part in the second All-Russian Prayer Marathon dedicated to honouring International Holocaust Remembrance Day and supporting the modern-day restoration of Israel. The prayer event for Israel and the Jewish people was the largest-ever Evangelical gathering of its kind, bringing together about 500 Russian-speaking Evangelical communities of different denominations and spanning eleven time zones, from the Commander Islands to Kaliningrad, as well as believers in the Baltic states and Ukraine. ICEJ President Dr. Jürgen Bühler gave welcoming remarks from Jerusalem to the online gathering of more than five thousand Christians. Participants of the prayer marathon also had the opportunity to join the special wreath-laying ceremony at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem live streamed as part of the ICEJ’s annual Envision Conference for pastors and ministry leaders.

Boris Vasyukov, coordinator of the working group for Jewish-Christian Dialogue in Russia, expressed his appreciation for the ICEJ’s cooperation in the event, saying: “We want to express our sincere gratitude for the assistance the ICEJ provides in the establishment and development of the ministry of Jewish and Christian reconciliation in Russia. We follow the ICEJ ministry in Israel and around the world with great respect and admiration. It is an example for us... It is a great honour for us to cooperate with the ICEJ. We want to raise our cooperation to new, higher levels.”
There is much reason to celebrate! Twenty-five years ago, the ICEJ’s Homecare program for Russian Jewish immigrants was launched when nurse Corrie Van Maanen joined the staff. Homecare is still going strong as many elderly and disabled Israelis receive weekly visits, nursing care and a dose of encouragement from Corrie and her team. Your faithful support throughout the years have made this possible.

For the past 18 years, Homecare has built a precious relationship with a Jewish family whose daughter is dependent on full-time care. The parents suffered during World War II and have cared for their disabled daughter since coming to Israel, but both are now 80 years old. Corrie has respectfully come alongside this family over the years to help care for the daughter in practical, loving ways. The mother says the weekly nursing visits are so uplifting. At the end of one recent visit, she sighed: “Oy, if I didn’t have you!

Another lady has known Corrie for 25 years, ever since she made Aliyah from Ukraine with her husband and two sick and fragile parents in the 1990s. Homecare visited the parents until they passed and then came to care for her husband when he fell ill. She is now a widow and living alone, and the Homecare team recently helped pack and move her to a new apartment. She told Corrie: “I have no words to thank you... when my need is biggest, you have always been there for me.”

Homecare also has developed a warm bond with an elderly, blind gentleman in his 90s. On a visit not long ago, he told Corrie: “I look forward to your coming every week because you are willing to listen when I tell you my stories.” After hearing a recent TV broadcast on the Holocaust, he also related that “no television can ever tell or show what I saw as an eyewitness in the darkness of the war.” He often talks about suffering severely during the Shoah, more than seventy-five years later. Every week Homecare buys him groceries, as his pension is small. He is so thankful for the help and to have made it to Israel, saying “it gave me life”.

These are a few examples of the work Homecare does to bring hope and joy to those under their care. For many, Homecare’s visits are the highlight of their week, especially during this time of isolation due to coronavirus. We are here to comfort and serve them with thankfulness. Thank you for the past twenty-five years. 😊

Please continue to support ICEJ Homecare. Find out how at: icej.org/homecare
When the coronavirus pandemic forced everyone to move online last year, the ICEJ was quick to start a whole series of Zoom prayer meetings. After a successful 12-hour prayer marathon during Pentecost in June, we felt we could expand the prayer chain up to 24 hours or more and start regular prayer meetings with participation of churches and prayer groups from all around the world. With the Lord’s leading, we chose the beginning of each month according to the Hebrew calendar, or Rosh Chodesh, as the date for these recurring prayer vigils.

We find that in the Bible, Rosh Chodesh is often mentioned together with the main feasts of Passover, Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles. They are called mo’adim, which can be translated as “appointed times”. That is, God makes an appointment with His people, and says He will listen and will accept our prayers. It is a time for drawing near to God.

We know, of course, that God listens at all times and we can and should pray without ceasing. Yet we also can learn from the Biblical concept of appointed times and use the lesson to enhance our spiritual life.

One aspect of the New Moon is the blowing of the trumpet. The Bible says that “it shall be a memorial (zikaron) for you.” In the Hebrew Bible, the word “zikaron” usually means to remember some dark moments from the past, to draw attention to wrong-doing or sin, in order to learn the lesson from history. Examples are Exodus 17:14, Numbers 16:39-40, Numbers 31:54.

Praying at the beginning of each month thus gives us an opportunity to remember and learn from our mistakes. Moreover, the phrase “memorial before the Lord” can also mean that we ask God to remember us, in the sense that Habakkuk prays, “in wrath remember mercy” (Habakkuk 3:2). We remind God of His word, which gives us hope, because He neither slumbers nor sleeps. He will act on His word.

This is the meaning of the commandment in Exodus 39:7 concerning the High Priest’s breastplate. The priest brings the sons of Israel before the Lord as memorial stones; he literally carries them on his shoulders, with all their sins, wrongdoings and imperfections, and cries out, “Lord, remember mercy”. It is an expression of trust in God’s mercy, in His forgiving character.

It is with this attitude that we seek the Lord every month, and the growing number of prayer groups involved shows that this practice has found resonance among believers in many countries. It is important, though, to keep the right attitude. We are not introducing a new tradition or adopting a Jewish ritual. We have in mind the words of Paul who writes in Colossians 2:16-17: So, let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

Paul points to the fact that the Lord wants our hearts, not outward rituals. The substance is important, and that substance is Christ. Every month, let us use the opportunity to repent, cry for mercy, and also celebrate the faithfulness of God and the salvation in His Son.

Interestingly, we find that the Rosh Chodesh celebration will have a place also in the world to come. Isaiah declares: And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says the Lord. (Isaiah 66:23)

The ICEJ has pioneered the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles as a prophetic sign, understanding that the passage from Zechariah 14, which speaks about the nations coming up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, will only be fulfilled in the Messianic age. It seems that the time has come to turn attention to Isaiah’s words about Rosh Chodesh and teach the Church about its prophetic significance.

The topics will include:

- Studying Torah Together
- Biblical & Prophetic Teachings
- Current Affairs
- ICEJ AID & Aliyah Projects
- Feast Webinars

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1. 2021 Calendar
2. ICEJ’s 40th Anniversary Journal
3. Foundational Teaching 5-book series by Malcolm Hedding
4. Times of Restoration
5. Jerusalem - A Praise in the Earth
6. Whose Land?

SET FROM JERUSALEM*
1. Jerusalem – A Praise in the Earth
2. A Jerusalem flag measuring 90cm x 150cm
3. A 16 x 16cm hardcover notebook
4. The New Jerusalem – Premium Anointing oil Pomegranate

*See full item descriptions at icejstore.com
MESSIANIC PASSOVER HAGGADAH

The Passover Haggadah is a collection of prayers, blessings, commentaries on the Torah and songs related to the Exodus of the Jewish people from Egypt. For many Jewish families on the first night of the Passover celebration, they gather around the dinner table for a Seder meal and to read the Passover Haggadah.

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JERUSALEM COMPASS

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

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ENTER HIS GATES, TO YOUR JEWISH ROOTS BY SUSAN MARCUS

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7.50 USD

ICEJ CALENDAR 2021

New ICEJ Calendar “Life in Israel” includes: Jewish and Christian holidays. Isaiah 62 prayer dates every month; Torah portion and Haftarah; 14 beautiful pictures of everyday life in Israel; Special events of ICEJ Jerusalem. Each calendar day has a writing area.

19 USD   5 USD

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- Malachi 4:5-6 -

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*Physical gathering is subject to Israeli Health Regulations.