HELPING ISRAEL THROUGH CORONA CRISIS
Dear friends,

Over recent weeks, the Coronavirus greatly impacted our ministry. When Israel first issued strict health rules, we held an emergency meeting on what it could mean for the Christian Embassy. Yet the weeks which followed showed God is in control – not a virus. We quickly found ourselves busier than ever comforting the Jewish people.

Since most volunteers left Israel, we received many new requests for help from across the nation. Our staff decided to stay and we ended up packing thousands of Passover boxes, delivering groceries for the elderly and, at the Haifa Home, our Christian staff and volunteers were the only ones allowed to care for the 70 Holocaust survivors living there.

Meantime, we brought over 550 Russian and Ethiopian Jews to Israel and helped cover the extra costs of their two-week quarantine upon arrival, all in cooperation with the Jewish Agency.

This was all noticed by the Israeli media, as 20 some local TV and newspaper reports told how Christians stayed in Israel to help amid the Corona crisis!

New communications technology helped our work greatly. With Yad Vashem, we held a unique online ceremony on Yom Hashoah to remember the six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust. This time when the memorial siren rang out in Israel, not only Israelis but thousands of Christians worldwide also stood in silence to show their respect.

In addition, we found ourselves praying more than ever. Tuesday became a global prayer meeting for ICEJ staff and family around the world. We were all encouraged to hear reports and pray for one another. Wednesday became an online Global Prayer Gathering with key ministry leaders joining us to pray with tens of thousands of believers worldwide.

Thursdays shifted to a different type of prayer gathering initiated by our Jewish friend Dimitry Radischevsky. “Jürgen, now is the time in the midst of this crisis for Jews and Christians to pray together,” he said. We decided to use the Book of Psalms as our prayer manual. Every Thursday, we prayerfully read through the Psalms in Hebrew, Arabic, English, Chinese, Spanish, French, German and many more languages. One Jewish Psalm reader declared: “This feels like heaven.”

Although we were supposed to stay behind closed doors at home, the Corona crisis turned into a wide open door for our ministry that not even a deadly virus could shut.

I was especially touched that China rose to the occasion to generously support us. We even received gifts from Wuhan, the very city where the virus originated. “We want to help Israel overcome the virus through our prayers and practical gifts,” one believer from China said.

I want to thank everyone who faithfully stood with us in this time of crisis. Please continue to support us in the months to come. The doors of ministry are wide open, and we need your help to go through them.

Meanwhile, we also pray that the Lord will keep you safe and healthy in this time of trouble.

Yours in Christ,

Dr Jürgen Bühler
ICEJ President

PS: Please keep planning to join us for the Feast of Tabernacles in October. As of now, we are moving ahead with our Feast plans and look forward to seeing you during Sukkot.

Check for regular updates at: feast.icej.org

COVER PHOTO: An Orthodox rabbi in Israel reading Torah during the Coronavirus crisis (AP photo)

FOR MAGAZINE ARCHIVES visit www.icej.org/media/word-jerusalem
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Driving up to Jerusalem, we have seen many changes over the past ten years. Heavy earth-moving equipment has levelled the steep ascents and straightened the curves of Highway One connecting Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Hilltops have been radically shaved off and valleys bridged or filled to ease the daily traffic congestion making its way up to Israel’s capital.

The current highway construction around Jerusalem is a state-initiated project. But Isaiah speaks about a heavenly-initiated highway project. He hears a voice like a trumpet blast inviting everyone, everywhere, to take part in this prophetic mission. This voice was already heard 2000 years ago through John the Baptist. And I believe this voice is being heard again today.

Back then, it was indeed a controversial call. John the Baptist, in many ways, was a strange character. He did not meet the mainstream expectations of his time. His meeting places were not the polished marble halls of the Temple, but the rough and hostile terrain of the desert. His speaking style was not trained by the great orators of his time, but he used rough language and did not mince words. He openly criticised the religious rulers of his day as a “brood of vipers” and challenged the king to repent of his personal lifestyle of immorality.
His message struck at the very heart of the religious establishment and the notion that belonging to God’s chosen people, the Jews, was a free ticket to heaven (Luke 3:7-9). Rather, God was looking for a people of broken spirit, ready to repent, and not by mere words only. If necessary, God could raise a people for Himself out of stones, John declared. Repentance for John was not just reading a confession in church (or the temple), but required a radical change of lifestyle. “Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance.” (Matthew 3:8)

John was the way-maker for Messiah. He carried out his ministry “in the spirit and power of Elijah… to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” (Luke 1:17) Or as Jesus himself would later say: “Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You.” (Matthew 11:10)

ELIJAH MUST COME
The prophet Malachi links this ministry of the way-maker to Israel’s great prophet, Elijah. Even until today, the Jewish people have a tradition of keeping a seat open at the Passover seder table for Elijah in anticipation of his coming. At one point, the door also is opened just in case Elijah has come.

When Jesus and his disciples were on the way back from the Mount of Transfiguration. They had just encountered Elijah and Moses talking to Jesus, and the disciples asked him: “Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” Jesus answered and said to them, “Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.’ Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.” (Matthew 17:10-13)

Jesus answered in an almost cryptic manner. “Elijah is coming” and “Elijah has already come.” He indicates that there is a twofold ministry of Elijah. One took place through the person of John the Baptist. This ministry was very powerful but at the same time it ended with John the Baptist being beheaded. “They… did with him whatever they wished.”

Yet Jesus also states that there will be a future ministry of Elijah, “Elijah is coming!” According to the Lord, this Elijah ministry will be different in the outcome. This future Elijah ministry “will restore all things.”

The re-emergence and ongoing restoration of the modern state of Israel, the unprecedented growth of the Church around the world, and the global shakings (like the current Corona crisis) all indicate that we are living in times of great spiritual significance. Jesus is coming soon! Yet if that is true, we all need to revisit the ministry of John the Baptist. I personally believe that this current crisis is a call from heaven to all of us to “Prepare the way of the Lord!”

This time it is not the voice of one individual person, church or ministry, but a call from the Spirit of God which is heard across the world by those who hunger and thirst for more of His glory and for the coming of their Saviour. Today, we hear that the Bible is sold out in
many bookstores around the world. In spite of the quarantine, Zoom prayer meetings are mushrooming near and far. This current crisis undoubtedly is challenging and transforming the Church – and Israel. It will help prepare the way of the Lord.

A HIGHWAY OF HOLINESS
God is building a highway in our times. Whoever I talk to around the world, they feel that God is doing something new and fresh in our days. New wine skins! And this new highway being built is not named after denominations or ministries. It is not the highway of a man, but the ‘Highway of the Lord’.

In Isaiah 35:8, the prophet describes it as a “highway of holiness”. This move of God requires us to adopt a new lifestyle of holiness and repentance. Both words – holiness and repentance – have become dangerously rare in many Christian circles today, but they were at the heart of the messages of both Elijah and John the Baptist.

John’s call for repentance was not a call to heathen nations or the Roman Empire, but it was a call to his own people, the people of God. He was calling Israel to get right with their God and today the Lord is calling us, the Church, to get right with God.

Of the seven churches in the Book of Revelation (chapters 2 to 3), God was fully pleased with only two of them. The majority (five out of seven!) urgently needed to repent.

Let us rediscover this holy virtue!

A VOICE IN THE DESERT
This call to build this highway of the Lord will not necessarily grab the attention and approval of the world. Like the times of John the Baptist, it will be a voice calling in the desert. It might not be heard by our friends and family. It might not happen on the platforms of social media and large gatherings. But it will be an intimate move of God between you and Him. One blessing that this current Corona crisis is bringing to us is it has reduced us to our personal prayer life.

In many hearts, there are mountains of pride, human philosophies and religiosity that keep God from moving. Paul writes to the church in Corinth that he is using his spiritual weapons against every high place that rises against the knowledge of God (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). These are not physical mountains, but they can be as daunting as the great peaks of the Rockies or Himalayas.

We have to straighten the crooked, distorted paths of our hearts in order to allow the glory of the Lord to arrive in full measure! The Hebrew word for crooked is ‘yakav’. The same word is used by the prophet Jeremiah: “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9)

The late Derek Prince always liked to point out that the adjective ‘deceitful’ is not in the passive but the active voice. This means it is not so much that our hearts can be easily deceived, but that our heart is an active agent wanting to deceive us. That is why the prophet, a few verses later, cries out to God: “Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; Save me, and I shall be saved.” (Jeremiah 17:14)

TO PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD IS A MATTER OF OUR HEARTS.

To prepare the way of the Lord is a matter of our hearts. Jeremiah – and with him other prophets – understood that our hearts are incurably sick and need a heavenly heart transplant through the Holy Spirit. Ezekiel prophesies about it (Ezekiel 16:44ff). Jeremiah said it will be a new covenant of God dealing with our hearts (Jeremiah 31:31ff). And Jesus said this promised change of heart through the Holy Spirit will be so radical, one will feel like they are being born again. (John 3:6)

Precisely herein lies the secret of why the ministry of John the Baptist was so different to what God will be doing in our days. In his day, countless people were affected by him and got baptized, but it did not produce a lasting change in the heart of the nation. Likewise, Elijah’s challenge to the nation on Mt. Carmel only produced a short-lived change. As the prophet Hosea truly recognised: “O Ephraim, what shall I do to you? O Judah, what shall I do to you? For your faithfulness is like a morning cloud, and like the early dew it goes away.” (Hosea 6:4)
That is why this final cry in the desert will be and needs to be a powerful, heart transforming move of the Holy Spirit, otherwise it cannot succeed! The big difference between the time of John the Baptist and today is that during his time the Holy Spirit was not poured out yet. But it is precisely because of Pentecost and the great expectation of a latter day outpouring of God’s Spirit that allows us to expect an exciting move of God in our days. My friend Angus Buchan said in one of our recent Global Prayer Gatherings that he expects the greatest revival in history to be unleashed after this Corona crisis is over.

We are indeed living through a time that is unprecedented in history – with four billion people impacted by various levels of quarantine caused by the Coronavirus. Therefore, let us not waste this time but rather let us redeem this time for God’s purposes. It is again a time when God is speaking from heaven. It is a time when God declares “once more I will shake the heavens and the earth.” It is through this shaking that God causes “the removal of things that are shaken – that is, things that have been made – in order that the things which cannot be shaken may remain”. (Hebrews 12:27)

All things built on man’s glory and on human efforts will have to fail, so the things built on God’s unshakable Kingdom will remain. If we all join in preparing this divine highway, we will see the glory of the Lord arriving with power. It will be a greater glory than the former house and all the earth shall see it!

“Prepare the Way” was given to us as the theme of this year’s Feast of Tabernacles. When we chose it, we could not have known how relevant this theme would be for 2020! It is indeed the year of a voice crying “Prepare the way of the Lord.”

Please pray for this year’s Feast of Tabernacles. May it be a time of an unprecedented outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Please prayerfully make plans to join us in Jerusalem, and check our website for updates and news on our Feast plans.

In the next issue: “Prepare the Way,” part 2, on how the Elijah ministry impacts the relationship between Israel and the Church. 😊

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1. ‘Saint John the Baptist in the Wilderness’ by José Leonardo, c. 1635, Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Wikipedia public domain
2. Highway 1 and Jerusalem Route 9 under construction. Wikipedia public domain
A
s the Coronavirus threat spread around the world in late February, it quickly became clear that the strict measures which governments were taking to stop the pandemic would be impacting the ICEJ’s work in Israel just as the Passover season approached, when we are normally quite busy with numerous holiday assistance projects. Despite having to work from home, our staff in Israel rose to the challenge of meeting the needs of thousands of Israeli families even as the Corona crisis brought the nation’s economy to a standstill. Thanks to the faithful and generous support of Christians worldwide, the ICEJ was able to help even more Jewish families than usual over the Passover season.

VIRAL CRISIS PEAKS AT PASSOVER
This was indeed a most difficult Passover in Israel, as life and work were totally disrupted by the Corona health crisis. The elderly were told not to leave their homes for their own safety. Incoming flights were banned and tourism flatlined. All non-essential businesses were closed. Unemployment in Israel suddenly jumped to over 25 percent. As Passover neared, the social needs across the country only multiplied. In Ashdod alone, over half the families applied to city social workers for Passover assistance.

With dozens of urgent requests for help flooding into our offices from across Israel, our staff rose to the occasion, Christians from around the world responded to the need, and we were able to help thousands of Holocaust survivors, other elderly citizens, new immigrants, needy families and many others all around Israel desperately in need of assistance this Passover season.

It turned into a special moment when Christians showed their care and concern for our Israeli friends right when they needed us the most! No doubt, “all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose”. (Romans 8:28)

"When the Coronavirus began spreading in Israel, it made our work much more difficult, but it did not stop the mandate of the Christian Embassy to comfort the people of Israel. Rather, it provided a unique and timely opportunity to even expand our ministry to meet critical needs and help many more families as Passover approached", said ICEJ VP Aid & Aliyah Nicole Yoder.
Here is a sampling of what we were able to accomplish together to make the Passover season brighter for thousands of individuals and families under added distress due to the Corona crisis. As you can see, we provided timely aid to more people at Passover than ever before, including Holocaust survivors, other elderly Israelis, new immigrants and children, while also helping emergency relief teams and community workers in need of special medical equipment to stay on the job.

CARE FOR ELDERLY AND HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS
The ICEJ team at our Haifa Home for Holocaust Survivors were designated the primary caregivers for the 70 residents confined to their apartments due to the Corona crisis. This included delivering meals, giving them medical checkups, doing handiwork around their homes, and paying daily visits to break their sense of isolation. The Christian volunteers under the direction of veteran ICEJ staffers Yudit and Will Setz also helped pack and deliver meals to hundreds of other Holocaust survivors and senior citizens all around Haifa. [See the accompanying story on the Haifa Home on p. 12 for a more in-depth report.]

In Jerusalem, some 12 members of the ICEJ staff were permitted to leave their homes to assist the elderly and other vulnerable peoples required to stay in their apartments. Many volunteered with Hineni, a Christian-supported Jerusalem soup kitchen, where they helped pack and deliver some two thousand hot meals to elderly residents of the city over several weeks, as well as 650 Passover food and gift packages.

Despite the stay-at-home orders, the ICEJ also funded and helped with the distribution of Passover gift boxes, including food and hygienic products, as well as daily meals to over four hundred elderly and needy Soviet Jewish immigrants, including many Holocaust survivors, who live in the Jerusalem suburbs of Pisgat Ze’ev and Maale Adumim.

Meantime, we normally sponsor community Passover seders for hundreds of newly-arrived Jewish immigrants, but since large gatherings were not allowed, the ICEJ provided holiday...
assistance to more individual immigrant families this year. This included 269 Ethiopian newcomers who were celebrating their first Passover in the Land of Israel. We also assisted these families with extra absorption assistance while they were in a mandated two-week quarantine upon entering the country.

Finally, the ICEJ furnished games, art supplies and help with online learning for 95 at-risk youths in a special children’s home during the Passover season.

EMERGENCY WORKERS
For families living in southern Israel under the constant threat of rockets from Gaza, life became even harder due to the threat of COVID-19. The ICEJ provided local medical and emergency teams there with sterile gloves, filtration masks, protective suits, disinfectants and other medical gear to allow them to continue making home visits to treat and care for children traumatized by years of rocket fire. They also arranged food and medicine to those in isolation or unable to shop, while also working with Magen David Adom to administer blood tests for Coronavirus.

Elsewhere, we worked with the Jewish Agency to assist 50 other newly-arrived families from other countries who made the trip to Israel despite the Corona threat and went straight into quarantine. This extra absorption aid included vouchers to buy food and other basics as they start a new life in Israel under difficult circumstances.

In addition, ICEJ funds made it possible for the Jewish Agency to run holiday day camps for children of new immigrant families in quarantine. This project included providing games, crafts and toys for the kids to play at home or in small supervised groups.

Meantime, first responders in the Gaza border area repurposed the special ATV firefighting equipment recently donated by the ICEJ to clean and sanitize public areas from the virus, including playgrounds, schools and parks.

OTHER DISTRESSED COMMUNITIES
As unemployment rose due to the Corona lockdowns, the ICEJ reached out to other communities in need all across Israel.

The ICEJ responded to urgent requests for help on behalf of dozens of Bnei Menashe, Chinese and Hispanic Jewish families who arrived in Israel within the past year or so and were struggling due to job layoffs and other economic fallout from the Corona crisis. We were able to provide them with grants and food vouchers to assist the newly unemployed and those in dire need before the Passover holiday.

The ICEJ also helped sponsor a brand new emergency Hotline for families with disabled and autistic children, which proved very timely and effective, especially as anxiety among children and domestic violence began rising across Israel, as elsewhere. With guidance and training from professionals, phone counselors began taking 50 to 100 calls per day, in both Hebrew and Arabic, to deal with cases of fear and emotional trauma among special-needs children associated with the Coronavirus.

Many in Israel’s Arab and Bedouin communities were late in learning about the dangers posed by COVID-19, and when public schools were suddenly closed and many breadwinners in these communities were suspended from their jobs, many families were greatly impacted. In

ICEJ Russia brought 1,000 masks and 2,000 pairs of medical gloves to volunteers taking care of 1,800 home bound people who are all in quarantine.
response, the ICEJ provided 100 Arab and Bedouin families with hygiene supplies and culturally sensitive explanatory materials on how to protect your person and home against the virus, how to practice social distancing, and other helpful information.

Lastly, Israel’s Christian Arab community also has been impacted by the Corona threat, including many workers who have lost their jobs. In the mixed Christian/Muslim town of Eilaboun, in the Galilee, the ICEJ donated computers to 36 families so that their children could access distance learning. Other families with small children also received games and toys for the little ones to relieve stress in the home during the long school closures.

THE NEEDS CONTINUE
We are most grateful that Christians around the globe responded so quickly and generously over recent weeks, enabling the ICEJ to meet more needs than ever over the Passover season. But the Corona health crisis is not over yet, and the needs created by this pandemic will continue to mount – both in Israel and in many other nations. We are just thankful that so many Christians are so dedicated to helping Israel, even though they have urgent needs in their own families, communities and nations. May the Lord richly bless you as you continue to comfort Israel in her time of need.

Please give to our ‘Israel in Crisis’ fund to help us carry out more urgent aid projects in the days ahead!

DONATE TODAY AT ICEJ.ORG/CRISIS
HAIFA HOME
TEAM KEEPING
HOLOCAUST
SURVIVORS SAFE
BY YUDIT SETZ, ICEJ AID DEPUTY DIRECTOR

"FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS ..."
– Esther 4:14 –

W
e had just read this verse from the Book of Esther during Purim in early March when the Coronavirus first broke out in Israel. The words kept resonating in our spirits, as we sensed that God indeed had called us “for such a time as this...”

Before it even became an official health rule, we already decided to restrict ourselves to our homes and workplace, and not to visit any public areas, including shops and malls. Soon after, the elderly residents of the Haifa Home were all required to stay inside their apartments. They could not even come to the community dining hall for meals together. But because of our timely decision to self-quarantine, we were the only ones in a position to take on the daily care of the 70 Holocaust survivors residing at the Haifa Home during the Corona crisis.

“We” are the ICEJ’s team of seven Christian staff and volunteers at our Home for Holocaust Survivors in Haifa. Besides my husband Will and myself, the team includes a nurse, a physiotherapist and three young German girls who have volunteered a year of service at the Haifa Home. The German volunteers were even being summoned home by their government due to the viral threat, but they insisted on staying to serve those living at the Haifa Home.

“Going back to Germany was never an option,” said Marleen. “I came here to help the Holocaust survivors, especially during these difficult times.”

Every day, our team began putting on medical masks and gloves and visiting each resident in their apartments. We sit with them, bring food, provide nursing care and physio exercise, do handiwork around their apartments, and solve their needs. It has been a time of building deeper trust and love with each one of them. The companionship is more precious to them than we may realize. It has been a real privilege to serve them in this way!

Several times each week, we have checked their temperatures and blood pressure. We are grateful to report that every one of these dear Holocaust survivors have been kept safe from the virus and are in relatively good health for their age.

“The past few weeks have been really special and satisfying,” said Deborah, our volunteer physiotherapist. “I felt fortunate to be here at this unusual time and help them as much as I can.”

A DIFFERENT PASSOVER CELEBRATION

A traditional song at the Passover seder asks: “Why is this night different from other nights?” Besides the eating of unleavened bread noted in the song, this year also was different because all of Israel celebrated the Pessach seder in isolation at home, without any extended family. Passover is usually a large family event, so this was not easy, especially for the elderly.

In most years, some of our residents join their children and grandchildren, while the rest gather in the Home’s dining room for a community seder. This year, however, they all had to stay in their apartments. To make it special for them, we went room by room and brought everyone gifts and a festive meal, and sang some of their favorite Passover songs.
ISOLATION BRINGS BACK MEMORIES
For some Holocaust survivors, especially those slowly developing dementia or Alzheimer’s, the time spent alone in their rooms is bringing back bad memories of the war years. Whenever we visit 98-year-old Miriam, she immediately takes you back to her horrific youth in ghettos and Nazi camps, ending with Auschwitz. Even when we try to change the subject, she has trouble leaving that dark time behind. But a Finnish Christian couple thought to send a therapeutic doll, which our volunteer Kerstin has used with Miriam to help her have some fun and laughter with this “baby”.

REPAIRS BIG AND SMALL
Every day, we knock on the doors of the residents and enter for a chat, some exercise and a cup of coffee, plus tending to whatever they need for that day. One Shabbat, we found 94-year-old Shlomo laying on his bed with a winter hat on his head. He was freezing, as his heater had stopped working. So Will immediately got a ladder and fixed his heating system. After some chocolates and a talk, we left Shlomo warm and happy again.

On another occasion, one of our volunteers found that Shlomo could not get his blood pressure meter going. It needed new batteries and was fixed in minutes. “God sent you today to help me”, Shlomo said gratefully.

CLEANING AND LAUNDRY
Besides other duties, our German volunteers Kerstin and Marleen spend time cleaning apartments and keeping residents happy. Even simple tasks like folding laundry have become fun when the residents help out. And the commitment of the Christian volunteers has left a deep impression on many of the Holocaust survivors.

“Before the Corona, we used to play cards every night, we had dances and gymnastics, and now we have to sit alone in our houses”, said Naomi, an 86 year-old survivor from Romania. “These girls come in with a mask and gloves, sit a few feet away, and we have good talks. They tell me, ‘I love you like my grandmother.’”

HOME DELIVERIES AROUND HAIFA
Meantime, the ICEJ team also helped our local charitable partner to deliver boxes of food to hundreds of other Holocaust survivors and elderly confined to their homes throughout the Haifa area. The front door deliveries were greatly appreciated. One Holocaust survivor remarked: “I didn’t have bread for two weeks. That hasn’t happened since I was in Auschwitz.”

HELPING WHILE WE STILL CAN!
Time is running out. There are many Holocaust survivors waiting to find a loving home and community like the Haifa Home. With no government funding, our assisted-living Home is completely dependent on donors such as you! The Coronavirus threat has made our work there even more challenging. With the growing needs of the ever-aging residents, we need your help!

Please give generously and show your love for these dear Holocaust survivors.

GIVE TODAY AT: ICEJ.ORG/HAIFA
You can even ‘ADOPT A HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR’ by contacting ICEJAID@ICEJ.ORG

“I didn’t have bread for two weeks. That hasn’t happened since I was in Auschwitz.”
– Holocaust survivor –
Since 1996, ICEJ Homecare has provided nursing assistance, physical care and emotional support to many elderly and disabled Russian immigrants in Israel. But due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the families we visit and help on a weekly basis, most of them elderly, had to remain in their homes and were not allowed to have visitors. This was very difficult, as they eagerly await the visits of Corrie van Maanen of ICEJ Homecare each week. She has built up relationships and trust with them over the years and we became as family for them.

In this time of crisis, Corrie tried from the beginning to adjust with the circumstances, seeing their needs and stepping in to help as she was still able. The feeling of being ‘locked’ in their own homes has taken a toll, especially on the oldest ones. Most of them experienced suffering in the Second World War, and those memories can return in their fullness, which reinforces their sense of aloneness.

As Zacharia, aged 94, described it: “The loneliness of the isolation is worse than the fear of getting infected.”

“In such a situation, we want to stay close to them”, Corrie explained in response. “We don’t want to let them out of our sight, and we want to continue to see to their needs.”

Ahead of the Passover holiday, ICEJ Homecare has a special outreach every year for a group of Russian Jewish survivors of the Holocaust. The Jewish feasts are always a particularly good opportunity to bring comfort and blessing for these dear elderly ones. Homecare prepared a nice holiday packet with matza, tea, chocolate and other goodies, as well as a card with a word of encouragement. When they read the card, many express their thankfulness, saying: “We are not alone.”

In addition, we packed and delivered Passover holiday food and care packages for the people in Corrie’s care. She has continued to visit them and stay in touch by phone to encourage them and look after their emotional needs. She also continues to care for their ongoing basic needs by bringing groceries and medicines to their door as needed.

Corrie has called this the time of her “stairwell ministry”, as she is not able to enter their apartments, but often just sits on the stairs as they talk to her from their open doorways only a few feet away. When Tanya opened the door recently, she was eager to talk to Corrie. In tears, she told her that this time of isolation gave her such a fear of going hungry again, just as she had experienced as a small child growing up in wartime Ukraine. Since this virus emerged, Tanya has not seen her grandchildren. Her days are long and full of feeling lonely. The visits by Homecare have become a lifeline for her in these challenging days.

“When the storm is hitting hard, like this virus, then our visits and relationships with these people become very meaningful”, said Corrie. “It’s such a blessing to be in a time like this, when the staff of the Christian Embassy can reach out to them with hope and with assurance that the God of Israel is faithful to care for His people in these days.”

To be a blessing to these elderly and disabled Israelis during this critical time, support:

ICEJ Homecare at: ICEJ.ORG/HOMECARE
Dear readers,

The recent health and business restrictions imposed worldwide to curb the Coronavirus threat have made it difficult to print and mail by post our bimonthly Word From Jerusalem magazine as usual. In many nations, postal services have been temporarily suspended or greatly reduced, with bulk print mailings given low priority. This could mean long delays before you receive our upcoming publications.

For this reason, we would encourage you to keep up to date on our latest projects and events by following the ICEJ online, either at our Website int.icej.org or at Facebook.com/ICEJOfficial. We also request that, if you have not done so already, please subscribe to our weekly Ministry Updates by email at: int.icej.org/join

The Christian Embassy has been very active over recent months in helping Israel through the Corona crisis. We want to make sure you stay informed on all we are doing, so your support of our work is more timely and effective in impacting Israel.

Blessings from Jerusalem!

Dr Jürgen Bühler
ICEJ President
Despite Travel Bans, ICEJ Still Bringing New Immigrants to Israel

By David R. Parsons

As air travel restrictions were imposed worldwide over recent months due to the Coronavirus, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem still has been able to assist 565 new Jewish immigrants in making Aliyah to Israel.

In early February, various nations began to issue entry bans which greatly impeded international travel. Yet even as flights were being grounded everywhere, the Christian Embassy still has succeeded in bringing a total of 450 Russian Jewish immigrants on flights from various parts of the former Soviet republics. Most immediately went into a two-week self-quarantine due to the COVID-19 threat. A flight from St. Petersburg with 26 Russian Jewish olim on March 22 marked the 30th anniversary of the ICEJ’s sponsorship of Jewish Aliyah from the former Soviet Union.

Two days later, the ICEJ sponsored flights for 72 Ethiopian Jews who arrived from Addis Ababa. They were taken to an absorption center in kibbutz Beit Alfa and entered quarantine for 14 days as well. In addition, the ICEJ
funded Passover gift baskets with food, games, learning materials and other items for these and many other recently arrived Ethiopian Jewish families as part of their integration process during the Passover holidays.

Together with an earlier group of Ethiopian immigrants in February, the ICEJ has now assisted 115 Ethiopian Jews in making Aliyah during the Corona health crisis.

“Despite all the bad news with the Coronavirus, the good news is that Jews are still coming home to Israel”, said ICEJ President Dr. Jürgen Bühler. “It has been amazing to see the strong desire of these Jewish families to make it to Israel, as many even moved up their Aliyah plans despite the requirement of two weeks in self-quarantine. It is our privilege and our calling to help them and all of Israel pull through this difficult time.”

The Christian Embassy also helped dozens of other recent immigrant families through the Passover holidays, providing them with food vouchers and vital assistance as they remained isolated in Jewish Agency centers. They would normally attend ulpan classes and community events, including day camps for the children. But since they could not gather in large groups, we purchased games, crafts and toys for the children, while also funding small group activities for them.

The ICEJ has also responded to urgent requests for help on behalf of a number of Bnei Menashe, Chinese and Hispanic Jewish families who arrived in Israel within the past year or so and were struggling due to job layoffs and other economic fallout from the Corona crisis. We were able to provide them with grants and food vouchers to assist the newly unemployed and those in dire need before the Passover holiday.

With Israel soon hoping to gradually lift travel bans and home lockdowns, the Aliyah is expected to quickly resume over coming months. To begin with, the Christian Embassy is committed to supporting the on-going Ethiopian Aliyah, with another 150 Ethiopian Jews already approved and awaiting their turn to journey home to Israel.

Meantime, there are many more Aliyah applicants from Russia ready to come as the Russian economy is faltering due to the collapse of the ruble, the Corona threat, and the steep drop in world oil prices. Latest reports also indicate a huge wildfire in the forests near Chernobyl is blanketing Kiev in smoke. Summer is usually the high season for Jewish families moving to Israel, so the children can start the new school year in Israel in the fall. But the situation for many Jewish families in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus has become urgent, and they are asking to move up their travel plans to reach Israel as soon as they can.

SO PLEASE STAND WITH US BY SUPPORTING THE ICEJ’S ALIYAH EFFORTS.
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5 BOOKS SERIES  BY MALCOLM HEDDING
Discover God’s Purpose for Israel, the Church and the Nations Today. The belief system of ‘Replacement Theology’ is once again gathering traction in the Church, influencing a new generation of leaders who see Christian Zionism as the touchstone of everything that is wrong with the traditional evangelicalism of the previous generation. Christians across the denominational spectrum need to be equipped with the theological understanding to make an informed, balanced and biblically articulate defense of Israel.

REMEmBER, OBSERVE, REJOICE  BY PETRA VAN DER ZANDE
Available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, German and Chinese
This book gives background information on how the festivals and events were celebrated in biblical times, and how it is done today, in the re-born State of Israel. The guide will help to gain more respect and appreciation for the biblical festivals, the Jewish holidays, and the Word of God.

BELIEVING GOD  BY R.T. KENDALL
Hebrews 11 is a description of people who persisted in faith. With one or two exceptions (as Abel, verse 4) Hebrews does not describe saving faith but persistent faith. Saving faith does not guarantee our inheritance; persisting in faith does. Saving faith guarantees Heaven; persistent faith results in seeing God do in your life what he did in the lives of those described in Hebrews 11.

MIGHTY - כמים רבים
WORSHIP CD
Enjoy these beautiful worship songs in Hebrew, produced by Pekka Simojoki and Vesna Buehler, featuring various worship leaders from Israel (incl. Shilo Ben Hod, Birgitta Veksler, Vesna Buehler) and choir of young believers from Israel.

ENTER HIS GATES, TO YOUR JEWISH ROOTS  BY SUSAN MARCUS
What is a Mezuzah? Is Chanukah the Jewish Christmas? Can I wear the prayer shawl? What every good Gentile should know... As you enter His gates on your journey, it is my hope that this book will encourage and enrich your spiritual walk. “Won’t you follow me, please.” If as a Christian, you have ever wondered about the Jewish roots of your faith, this book will help you explore this in a very concise yet rich presentation of the basics of the Jewish faith, where the Christian faith started. Very high quality book, cover made out of heavy varnished card stock, with great artwork! This will be a family keepsake for years to come!

JUST LOVE
BY R.T. KENDALL
Kendall takes 1st Corinthians chapter 13 and shows how it should permeate every aspect of our life. He explains to us what is meant by love, a word stolen from its true meaning by our society, and how to practice it in our church, home and workplace. The central thesis of the book is that we have to show a unity of spirit in the church in order to be effective in the world, but one that is not based on compromising God's word.

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THE PATTERNS OF EVIDENCE: THE MOSES CONTROVERSY DVD

This thought-provoking and controversial film asks hard questions of some of the world’s leading experts in Egyptology, ancient Hebrew and early languages.

Filmed in Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Europe and the USA with stunning cinematography and life-like Biblical recreations, Patterns of Evidence: The Moses Controversy will captivate audiences of all ages.

ICEJ SHOMER PENDANT, 24K GOLD PLATED

This unique pendant is designed with a replica of the ‘Zion Mule Corps’ symbol on the front and the ICEJ logo encircled by Isaiah 62:6a in Hebrew on the back. This reminds us to be a ‘shomer’ or watchman for Jerusalem.

ISRAELI FLAG

The Israel Flag Dimensions: 90 X 150cm (31.5 X 43.3 inches).

BEGINNINGS T- SHIRTS

Available in two colors: black and white.

Official T-Shirt of the Feast of Tabernacles “Beginnings” 2019

THE NEW JERUSALEM - ANOINTING OIL BRIDAL GARDEN, ROSE OF SHARON • 10ML

This premium anointing oil has been hand crafted in Israel using extra virgin olive oil made from olive trees around Jerusalem. It has been scented and mixed according to ancient Hebrew recipes by using biblical essential oils and fragrances sourced from Middle and Far East. This bottle of anointing oil has been dedicated to God and soaked in prayer and it was officially tested for quality.
When the Coronavirus threat grew into a global pandemic, the ICEJ’s worldwide network of national branches responded by stepping up their efforts to help Israel, while also joining the battle against this health menace in their own nations.

For example, in Russia our St. Petersburg office purchased 1,000 face masks and 2,000 pairs of medical gloves for use by volunteers delivering daily meals to thousands of Holocaust survivors and other elderly Jews confined to their homes by the virus threat.

In the United States, ICEJ-USA national director Susan Michael co-hosted a special Zoom webinar meeting attended by more than 35,000 Christians and Jews from around the world to learn about Israel’s response to the coronavirus and rising concerns within the Jewish community of a new wave of antisemitism, as many are falsely blaming them for the pandemic. The online event was organized by ICEJ-USA and the grassroots group Combat AntiSemitism Movement (CAM), and featured keynote speakers from Israel, inspirational stories of Christian leaders and a musical concert.

In Liberia, ICEJ national director J. Aaron Wright, Sr. and his nationwide network of pro-Israel Christian volunteers were tasked by the Monrovian government to lead the national effort to educate the public about the Coronavirus threat.
Working from Taiwan, ICEJ Chinese language coordinator Haifa Lu was able to encourage Christians in mainland China to support Israel through the ICEJ as never before, and donations even came in from Wuhan where the virus originated.

In Germany, the ICEJ team in Stuttgart was able to mobilize Christians nationwide for weekly Zoom prayer meetings for Israel through the Isaiah 62 Prayer Initiative, expanding its reach to more than 150 churches. ICEJ-Germany also produced a video which aired repeatedly on national Christian television concerning our extra assistance and care for Holocaust survivors in Haifa during the health crisis and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s warm remarks lauding those efforts.

And in Italy, ICEJ national director Tony Rozzini – who lives in the heart of the hardest hit region of Lombardy – had a chance to go on national radio to call for repentance, especially for the country’s mistreatment of Jews during the Fascist period.

Bella, 92, is one of the hundreds of elderly Jews in the St. Petersburg area, many of them Holocaust survivors, who recently received medical masks and gloves from ICEJ-Russia through the EVA Foundation, to help protect them from the Coronavirus pandemic. The viral threat is just peaking in Russia and such protective gear is in short supply nationwide.

These are but a few examples of the special efforts made by many ICEJ branches worldwide over the past few months to meet the unique challenges of this difficult moment, and we in Jerusalem are very grateful for the backing and support of our offices and representatives around the world.
When it became clear in early March that Israel and the entire world would be severely impacted by the Coronavirus, the ICEJ turned to intensified prayer as our most effective response to this global health crisis. With our Jerusalem offices closed and public meetings banned across Israel, we made use of the Zoom webinar tools to launch the online Global Prayer Gathering, which brings tens of thousands of Christians from around the world together each week for a time of united prayer concerning this viral threat. This has included many faithful members of our Isaiah 62 Prayer Campaign and the ICEJ PrayerWave, along with many other friends and supporters of Israel and the ICEJ worldwide.

Every Wednesday over recent weeks, ICEJ President Dr Jürgen Bühler has hosted very powerful and encouraging times of online prayer, led by such friends in ministry as Angus Buchan, Daniel Kolenda, Paul Wilbur, Mats Ola, Suzette Hattingh, Peter Tsukahira and many others. ICEJ national directors and representatives from dozens of nations also joined in leading prayers, often in their native language. The weekly prayer gatherings have strengthened and blessed tens of thousands of believers from nearly 100 countries who have joined us so far.

"Don't focus on the virus. Focus on our Healer. His name is Jesus Christ Our Lord and Savior!" exhorted Angus Buchan, as he shared about his personal experience with contracting the Coronavirus. Both Angus and his wife have the virus, and yet they are more on fire for the Lord than ever!

Since some of the recent prayer times took place during the Passover season, we also added a special online Communion service, officiated by Messianic Jewish and Arab pastors. You are invited to join us every Wednesday from 4:00-5:00 PM (Israel Time) for the Global Prayer Gathering, as we continue to call on God for full deliverance from the Coronavirus, and for the Lord to work out His purposes in the earth through this global crisis. Participate either by Zoom webinar (with language translations) or watch on our Facebook livestream. You can find the Zoom link and Facebook livestream here:

Zoom link: on.icej.org/ICEJGlobalPrayer
Facebook: www.facebook.com/ICEJofficial

"GOD HAS BEEN SPEAKING TO ME ONE WORD – REVIVAL!"
– EVANGELIST ANGUS BUCHAN – FROM SOUTH AFRICA

“WORK WHILE IT IS STILL DAY!”
– EVANGELIST DANIEL KOLENDA – PRESIDENT OF CHRIST FOR ALL NATIONS
The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem recently joined with the Jerusalem Summit to launch an exciting and timely online initiative – “Calling to God Together” – which has brought Christians and Jews together to read through the Book of Psalms as a prayerful appeal for Divine intervention in light of the global Coronavirus crisis.

Led by ICEJ President Dr Jürgen Bühler and Jerusalem Summit founder Dimitry Radeshevsky, rabbis, pastors and other community and ministry leaders from dozens of nations have taken part in the weekly online Zoom meetings, reading through the Psalms in Hebrew, Arabic, English, Chinese, Russian, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Finnish, Norwegian and many other languages. Hundreds of viewers from more than 70 countries around the globe watch online each week.

“Given the global Corona crisis we are all in, it was a very uplifting moment to join in unity with our Jewish friends to appeal to the God of heaven for help through His holy Word,” said Dr Bühler. “The Jewish people gave us the most powerful prayer book in the world, the Book of Psalms, and Christians cherish their beauty, majesty and solace as well.”

So far, the Jewish readers have included MK May Golan, Likud Party; Josh Reinstein, Director of the Knesset Christian Allies Caucus; and other officials, rabbis, scholars and community leaders from throughout Israel, including many living in the biblical heartland of Judea and Samaria.

Christian readers have included MP Peter Ostman of the Finnish Parliament, Arab pastors from Bethlehem, Nazareth, Egypt and Lebanon, as well as pastors and ICEJ representatives from Albania, Bolivia, Canada, Denmark, Fiji, Finland, Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, Liberia, Mexico, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Russia, Serbia, Singapore, Slovenia, Taiwan, the UK, and the USA.

You are invited to join us for the “Calling to God Together” online meetings on Zoom, every Thursday at 4:00 PM (Israel time), until further notice.

To find out more go to: facebook.com/Calling-To-God-Together-109109440735548
Zoom link: zoom.us/j/206206259

“I called upon the Lord in distress: The Lord answered me, and set me in a large place.”
· PSALM 118:5 ·
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