Prime Minister Netanyahu visits Christian Embassy
Delivers Christmas and New Year's Greeting

The Rescue Mission of Ethiopian Jewry

Jerusalem
The Valley of Decision
Dear friends,

This past year was very eventful. As a family, we literally went through the valley of the shadow of death when I faced a health challenge that, according to the doctors, gave me little hope for survival. But thanks be to God, the doctor’s word is not the final word with our Lord. Jesus restored me, for which we are deeply grateful as a family. But we also are grateful for the prayers of countless people around the world who stood with us in this challenging time. God answered our prayers!

In 2016, God allowed us to be at the forefront of the latest wave of renewed Aliyah from Ethiopia. Many of you were standing with us in prayer and financially. Thank you so much! We also had another blessed Feast of Tabernacles this past year. I will never forget the Holocaust survivors dancing and singing in the Pais Arena on Israeli Guest Night. And the year ended with a surprise visit to the ICEJ by Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, to record his annual Christmas greeting to the Christian world from our headquarters.

There is much more for which we are thankful to God, as He has proved to be faithful beyond our expectations! At the same time, the year ended with another major assault on Israel via a very biased and one-sided resolution of the United Nations Security Council. While the election of Donald Trump as US president gives much hope for many Israelis, they also recognise that the pressure against them from Europe is becoming more intense. Israel needs our support in 2017, and our prayers more than ever before.

Thank you for standing with us over the past year, and please continue to do so in this new year! I pray that the Lord will bless you mightily in 2017 and that it will be a year of blessing and new things from the Lord!

Yours in Christ,

Dr. Jürgen Bühler
ICEJ Executive Director
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The prophet Joel saw three great developments before the coming of “the great and terrible day of the Lord.” First, he saw the Spirit of God being poured out on all flesh – a revival that would cover the whole earth (Joel 2:28ff). Secondly, he saw the Jewish people returning to their homeland (Joel 3:1). And thirdly, he saw the nations gathering together against Jerusalem, and specifically in the valley of Jehoshaphat (“God judges” in Hebrew), a northern extension of the Kidron Valley. He had a special name for this valley – the “valley of decision”.

From the very beginning, Jerusalem has been a city of decision. The first time we read about it, we find Abraham returning from a successful campaign against four kings who had taken hostages from the city-states of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham pursued and defeated the kings, liberated the hostages and brought back a rich bounty of his conquest (Genesis 14).

Upon his return, Abraham reached the “valley of the Kings” – thought to be the Kidron Valley just east of Jerusalem’s Old City. There, two kings appeared to him: the King of Sodom, ruler of an unrighteous city, and Melchizedek, King of Salem. Both made an offer to Abraham. The King of Sodom offered him all the spoils of the conquest: “Give me the souls but keep the goods for yourselves.” Melchizedek’s offer was far more modest: bread and vine. Melchizedek blessed him from “God Most High (El Elyon), Possessor of heaven and earth.”

The difference was very stark! The ruler of Sodom offered riches but kept the souls. Melchizedek was Priest of God Most High. With bread and wine, the eternal symbols of sacrificial redemption, he offered Abraham redemption of the soul. Abraham understood this came from the same God who called him out of Ur in Chaldea. This was the Creator God, “possessor of heaven and earth”, who could claim everything he had.

It was not an easy choice. Abraham had every right to keep the riches of Sodom but he returned all the spoil to its king. He then readily accepted Melchizedek’s blessing and offered back a tithe of everything he had, recognising God’s claim over his life.

Years later, God called Abraham back to Jerusalem. “Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one
DEALING WITH JERUSALEM

DEMANDS HUMILITY FROM EVERYONE, POLITICIANS INCLUDED

of the mountains of which I shall tell you.” (Genesis 22:2) This is the most demanding call anyone could ever receive from God. It meant giving up the son of promise for whom Abraham had prayed and hoped for those many years. Isaac also embodied his own calling: to be a blessing to all the families of the earth. And of course, Isaac was his own flesh and blood. We can only imagine what it took for Abraham to make this agonising journey to Jerusalem. Hebrews says Abraham’s deep belief that Isaac would be raised from the dead enabled him to walk this difficult road (Hebrews 11:17-19).

Twice Abraham made a radical decision in Jerusalem. For him, Jerusalem represented the very fact that God indeed was possessor of heaven and earth. It is the place of total surrender to God; the place to make God the highest authority and submit our rights and will to Him.

David would later make Jerusalem the capital of Israel. As with Abraham, Jerusalem became for David the place of ultimate worship and sacrifice to God. There on Mount Zion, David established a place of perpetual worship to God. One of his psalms says it is a place reserved for the humble and pure of heart (Psalm 24:1-4). Here, the Creator of heaven and earth expects our total surrender to Him. Isaiah declares that “His fire is in Zion and whose furnace is Jerusalem” (Isaiah 31:9). Jerusalem is a battleground for the soul; the place for deciding whom we will serve.

Yet in Jerusalem, God made His own decision to give everything for us. Like Abraham, He gave that which most precious to Him – His only begotten Son. Two thousand years after Abraham, in the Kings’ valley on the slopes of the Kidron, Melchizedek appears again – now as the son of David, King of the Jews, and Son of God. There, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus Christ, our High Priest, prayed the greatest prayer of submission: “Not my will but yours be done.” And as did Isaac, Jesus carried a wooden burden up that mountain to offer himself as an eternal sacrifice for you and me. Throughout history, this offer of redemption has confronted every soul. It remains a place of decision for everyone!

Interestingly, the King of Sodom’s offer also seems to be ever-present in this city. The Book of Revelation calls Jerusalem the city that is spiritually “Sodom”. There is an enduring spiritual battle over the city that manifests even in the political arena. Jerusalem is like a magnet to the rulers of this world, where the arrogance of their power is demonstrated by their desire to divide and control the City of God. But “He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure: ‘Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion’.” (Psalm 2:4-6)

The prophet Zechariah foresaw the drunkenness with which the world’s rulers are eager to decide the fate of Jerusalem. Yet the prophet warned: “...it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it.” (Zechariah 12:2-3)

It is a dangerous thing to carelessly lift that heavy stone of Jerusalem. It is a burden that can crush even nations.

Exactly one hundred years ago, British General Edmund Allenby liberated Jerusalem from the Ottomans. When entering the city through Jaffa Gate, he dismounted his horse and asked his soldiers to do the same. “Only the King of Kings should enter the city riding on a horse,” he reportedly said.

Some twenty years earlier, the German Kaiser Willhelm II visited Jerusalem and insisted that Jaffa Gate be widened for him to ride into Jerusalem on a white horse.

Dealing with Jerusalem demands humility from everyone, politicians included. Those who would too easily divide the city remind us of the prostitute who too quickly took up Solomon’s suggestion to divide the child of her friend. Let us rather seek the peace of this great city! When the Psalmist said, “Pray for the peace. May they prosper who love you” (Psalm 122:6); the Hebrew word for peace – shalom – also means “wholeness”. To seek its unity and peace can mean the difference between blessing and curse.

Therefore, make it a place of decision for you personally, and choose afresh Christ’s eternal gift of bread and wine, submitting to Him. But also, let us pray for our nations to relate rightly to the city that Jesus Christ himself calls the city of the great King. It will be for the prospering of our own nations!
Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu received a gift of a silver dreidel from Dr. Jürgen Bühler of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem during a visit just ahead of the Christmas and Hanukkah holidays. (Photo: ICEJ/Emill Salman)

PM Netanyahu Visits Christian Embassy

Delivers Christmas & New Year’s Greeting from ICEJ Headquarters

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu paid a visit to the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem on December 21st to deliver his annual Christmas and New Year’s Greeting to the Christian world.
The office of Prime Minister Netanyahu contacted the ICEJ to record the traditional Christmas greeting on the grounds of our ministry. Before the filming, the Prime Minister personally greeted a small gathering of Christian leaders at the ICEJ headquarters. Within ten days, the video had received more than seven million views on Facebook alone, and also was posted on Fox News and numerous other major news sites. In his greeting, Netanyahu stated:

“To all of our Christian friends around the world, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! I send you these greetings from Jerusalem. I’m standing in the courtyard of this magnificent International Christian Embassy. I’m so proud of our relations with our Christian brothers and sisters. I wonder for many of you if you remember the experience you had when you first visited Israel, when you saw the Church of the Holy Sepulchre or the Via Dolorosa or the Sea of Galilee or Nazareth. I’m sure it moved you deeply. And it moves us deeply to have this bond with you because we all know that this land of Israel is the land of our common heritage. It changed the story of humanity, it changed civilization. What a magnificent heritage it is. Yet, we also know that it is under attack these days, that the forces of intolerance, of barbarism that attack all religions attack Christians with particular vehemence. We stand with you and I’m proud of the fact that in Israel, this is the one place in the Middle East that the Christian community not only survives but thrives and it’s no accident. It’s because of our commitment to religious freedom; it’s because of our embrace of our heritage; it’s because of our embrace of our common future. So please come to Israel. Come and visit me, I’m waiting for you. It will be a great experience for you. Merry Christmas, Happy New Year.”

With Christmas falling on the same day as the Jewish festival of Hanukkah, ICEJ Executive Director Dr. Jürgen Bühler responded by wishing the prime minister a “Happy Hanukkah,” and giving him a silver Hanukkah dreidel as a gift.

“It was a great honour to host the Prime Minister at our Embassy headquarters and to receive his good holiday wishes for Christmas,” said Bühler. “We know his warm, sincere remarks were greatly appreciated by Christians in lands far and wide. It also was a thrill to respond with our own ‘Happy Hanukkah’ wishes for him, his family and all the Jewish people. This indeed was a season when both communities could celebrate the triumph of light over darkness. And this timely display of solidarity shows once more that Israel is a country where religious freedoms are not only safeguarded but even encouraged.”
In the new year of 2017, we will pass several important milestones for Christians who support Israel. For instance, it has been 500 years since the start of the Protestant Reformation in October 1517, when Christians could read the Bible in their common languages once again and rediscovered that God still had plans for the Jewish people back in their ancient homeland. Meanwhile, it has been 100 years since the Balfour Declaration of November 1917 committed Great Britain to establishing a Jewish national home in Palestine. Finally, we will mark fifty years since the city of Jerusalem was reunited under Israeli rule during the Six-Day War of June 1967.

The anniversary of Balfour is especially significant for the state of Israel and her Christian friends. The Balfour Declaration, issued on the 2nd of November 1917, is a key document in modern Israel’s legal chain of title to the land. From this decree by the British cabinet flowed a series of international decisions to restore the Jewish nation, including the San Remo Conference of 1920, the League of Nation’s mandate over Palestine in 1922, the UN Partition Plan of 1947, Israel’s own Declaration of Independence in May 1948, and Israel’s admittance into the United Nations one year later.

The Balfour Declaration was the crowning achievement of the “Restorationist” movement in Great Britain. As early as the 1700s, leading Christian figures in England had advocated for a return of the Jews to the Land of Israel according to the divine promises of Scripture. This movement featured such noted clergymen as Charles and John Wesley, Charles H. Spurgeon and Bishop Ryle of Liverpool, as well as prominent government leaders like William Wilberforce, Lord Palmerston and Lord Shaftesbury. As a result of their preaching and activism, Restorationism had already become the prevailing view even within the Anglican Church by the time the Jewish Zionist movement was launched by Theodor Herzl in 1897.

When it became clear during World War I that Britain and its allies would be able to free the Middle East from
Ottoman rule, the government of David Lloyd George recognized it as an historic moment to assist the Jewish Zionists in regaining their homeland. Six of the nine members of his war cabinet, including Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour, were openly professing Christian Zionists and they seized the opportunity to issue the modern equivalent of the ancient decree by King Cyrus for Jews to return and rebuild their nation. Because of this solemn commitment, which came to be known as the Balfour Declaration, Britain was granted a mandate to help create a Jewish nation in the liberated province of Palestine.

So we have much reason to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration this year. This coming November, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem will be sponsoring events and joining with Jewish and Christian friends to commemorate Balfour, including observances in London and Jerusalem.

Yet not everyone will be hailing the centenary of the Balfour Declaration this year. In fact, Palestinian leaders will be using their internationally-funded PR machinery to assail this “criminal injustice” against their people. They are demanding that Britain apologize for Balfour and are even threatening to bring a lawsuit against the United Kingdom for all the damages caused to the Palestinians ever since. Yet such moves would be untenable and even counterproductive. The reason is that these actions against Israel would actually undermine the claims to statehood of numerous Arab nations in the region.

Britain’s motivations behind the Balfour Declaration have always been a subject of debate. Some say it was meant to win Jewish favour during the war, or to repay Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann for his valuable contributions to the war effort? Others say it was a gesture of remorse for centuries of Christian anti-Semitism, or simply an act of British expansionism.

The truth is that Balfour was a valid and noble expression of Christian sympathy for a just cause. It also was part of a series of decisions made by the victorious powers during and after the war to create trusteeships in the Middle East and elsewhere as a way of nation-building and granting self-determination to the native peoples of liberated lands. So Balfour actually is a pivotal marker for the closing of the age of colonialism, a self-imposed end by the Western nations themselves.

One of the architects of this mandate strategy was Jan Smuts, an avowed Christian Zionist. Until that time, the European powers would have just claimed the vacated Ottoman territories of the Middle East as part of their own empires. But Smuts and others felt it was time to let native peoples rule over their own lands and that the role of Western nations was just to assist them in the way to independence. This new approach was inspired in part by American president Woodrow Wilson and his fourteen points for spreading democracy and securing the peace in the post-war era. But Smuts also described the mandate system as a “sacred trust” meant to free various lands and peoples from foreign rule.

Thus Britain was granted a temporary mandate in Palestine and Iraq, while France was to oversee nation-building in Lebanon and Syria. In fact, every Arab nation in the Middle East today can trace its legal claim to independence back to some of the same documents and decisions which created modern Israel. This was not a case of creating a Jewish state out of nothing. The Jews, like the Arabs, were viewed as indigenous to the region and thus entitled to reconstitute their ancient nation. So to undermine Israel’s legal chain of title by assailing the Balfour Declaration would also call into question the claims to sovereignty of all its surrounding Arab neighbours. That is not something the Palestinians should really be pursuing.

The Balfour Declaration of 2nd November 1917 was a letter signed by Lord Balfour which conveyed to British Jewish community leader Baron Walter Rothschild the cabinet’s decision to support the Zionist cause. It stated:

“His Majesty’s government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.” ☺
The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem has been receiving wide coverage in the Israeli press over the past year, with the major media outlets reporting on the work and impact of the ICEJ every week in 2016.

This has included the main Hebrew daily newspapers *Israel HaYom*, *Yediot Aharonot* and *Ma’ariv*, the news sites *Ynet*, *Walla News*, *NRG*, *Globes*, and *Arutz Sheva*, as well as the popular national radio channels *Reshet Bet* and *Galgalatz*. Taken all together, this means hundreds of thousands of Israelis are reading and hearing stories every month about how Christian love for Israel is touching lives and caring for families throughout the country, while also defending their nation and its just cause worldwide. In response, we are regularly contacted by ordinary Israelis who thank Christians like you for your constant support and friendship.

Last summer, Israeli media reported on the ICEJ’s gathering of national directors in South Africa and the release of the “Cape Town Declaration” denouncing the BDS movement and the ‘Israel = Apartheid’ analogy. The ICEJ also received extensive coverage for sponsoring the renewed Aliyah flights for Ethiopian Jews still waiting to reunite with families in Israel. The reports stressed the Embassy’s long history of cooperation with the Jewish Agency, and the humanitarian nature of the revived Ethiopian Aliyah.

Next came a wave of reporting on the ICEJ’s criticism of UNESCO over its resolution erasing any Jewish or Christian historic links to the Temple Mount and other biblical sites in Israel. As a result, for many Israelis and Jews living abroad, the ICEJ has become one of the most important Christian voices in the current battle to defend our shared bonds to the holy places in the Land of Israel.

The ICEJ’s Feast of Tabernacles celebration in October also was featured in many Israeli news outlets. The participation of over 5,000 Christians from nearly 100 nations in the annual Jerusalem March received special attention from the Hebrew press in light of the recent UNESCO votes, and was presented as proof that Israel has friends all over the world who stand with the ancient Jewish connection to Jerusalem.

In addition, the ICEJ and the Feast were well covered in the Anglo-Jewish and Christian press over recent months, with a number of positive feature stories in *The Jerusalem Post*, *Times of Israel*, *CBN News* and other outlets. This included broad coverage of the ICEJ’s sponsorship of the renewed Ethiopian Aliyah, the ICEJ response to UNESCO, and the Feast events. *The Jerusalem Post* even published a main editorial welcoming the Feast pilgrims and citing them as a sign Israel is not alone in its struggle for acceptance in the world. There also were several reports about Israel’s new inroads in restoring diplomatic ties and trade with Africa, and the ICEJ’s unique role in encouraging this rapprochement.
Our heart for Israel manifests not only through faithful works of service and generous giving, but also through persistent prayers. The Lord invites us to partner with Him in bringing His Kingdom to earth, as we pray for His will to be done. And when we remind God of His great promises for the people and land of Israel delivered through the Hebrew prophets, He assures us that He is watching over His word to perform it (Jeremiah 1:11-12 NASB).

For the past six years now, the ICEJ has been connecting intercessors around the world through the Isaiah 62 Prayer Initiative, to pray that God’s purposes for Israel will come to pass. We are receiving encouraging reports of God’s power touching lives through this great prayer movement in the nations.

Edith, an ICEJ supporter from Nairobi, Kenya, was excited to learn of the Isaiah 62 prayer campaign because she wanted to support Israel but did not know where to begin. “I realised it was something I could easily do,” she recently told us. “Sometimes you have money, sometimes you don’t have money. And prayer? You can do that every day!”

She urged everyone to read chapter 62 of Isaiah and pray in line with its message. “I think it’s very much on the heart of God to pray for His city. The Bible says over and over again that in Jerusalem, God has put His name forever. So we can’t just forget about it and go on with our lives as if that didn’t matter. If God says it is His city, we need to be interested in what is happening to her.”

Meanwhile in Europe, Isaiah 62 prayer meetings have drawn an unexpected group of people. An Israel prayer group in Stuttgart, Germany was joined by dozens of Iranian refugees who recently converted to Christianity. Repenting for the sins of their government and nation, they intercede passionately for Israel. As German and Iranian believers worship in both the Farsi and German languages, their prayers for Israel have created a real sense of unity.

“When it comes to prayer, you can never go wrong with praying for people,” Edith reminds us. “It is God’s will that all men will be saved. And as Isaiah says, do not give Him rest until He makes Jerusalem a praise! Come to the Feast, come volunteer with the ICEJ, meet other Israeli believers and see what God is doing in Israel!”

Join the Isaiah 62 global prayer movement and pray with us on the first Wednesday of every month! Sign up at www.icej.org/isaiah62
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The Rescue Mission of Ethiopian Jewry Continues!

BY ESTERA WIEJA

The first group of 63 ICEJ-sponsored Ethiopian immigrants came to Israel the same day as the Ethiopian Government ordered a ‘State of Emergency’, which restricted diplomatic travel and reduced mobile internet access. We are calling on your help to join the ICEJ in rescuing the last of the Ethiopian Jewry waiting to come to Israel!

On November 9th, the Government of Ethiopia lifted some of the travel restrictions after months of violent protests. This has allowed aliyah workers once again to travel to the Gondar region of Ethiopia to resume preparation for members of the Jewish community who have already been approved for aliyah. The office remained closed at the time, but the workers were helping the people to start on their journey. First they have to take a van or bus to Addis Ababa 600 km away, and there they need a flight to Israel to be arranged.

In November, more ICEJ-sponsored Ethiopian families have arrived in Israel, increasing the number of Ethiopian ‘olim’ to 84 this past year.

Today, despite all the many difficulties posed by the security situation, the Jewish Agency has reopened their offices in Gondar. There are still many challenges to the whole process of aliyah, but the Government of Israel is committed to its decision to bring 1,300 olim by the end of 2017. The ICEJ is also dedicated to sponsor and care for the Ethiopian Jews after they arrive in Israel.

As Christians, we are devoted first and foremost to the Word of God. The prophet Isaiah said foreigners will be bringing Jewish sons and daughters back to their land. As followers
of a Jewish Messiah, we want to be a part of this prophecy’s fulfillment! The Christian Embassy in Jerusalem wants to walk with the Ethiopian Jewry as they come back to Israel and make this land their home. Their absorption in the land of Israel may last up to two years or more.

Currently administrative bottleneck is blocking the progress of Aliyah from Ethiopia. Please pray that God’s angels would open all the right doors and quicken the arrival of these Jews in Israel. 

You can play a major part in this historic and urgent wave of Ethiopian Aliyah! Support the work of the ICEJ today by giving your best gift to ICEJ Aliyah: www.icej.org/ethiopia

U.N. REPORT ON THE SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA

“Drought exacerbated by El Niño, combined with extensive flooding, disease outbreaks and the disruption of basic public services, continue to have a negative impact on the lives and livelihoods of 9.7 million Ethiopians. Urgent funding gaps for the response remain across multiple sectors to the end of 2016, notably for response to Acute Watery Diarrhea (AWD), and for interventions in animal health and food assistance. Major funding requirements are already anticipated for early 2017, as there are concerning indications that the La Niña phenomenon in the Pacific Ocean, and more significantly the current negative Indian Ocean Dipole, may affect water availability, livestock body condition and Meher harvest performance in parts of southern and eastern Ethiopia.”
ICEJ Brings Real Time Relief To Israel

In November Israel was beset by hundreds of wildfires, many of them deliberately set.

The worst fires swept through the city of Haifa, forcing 70,000 residents to evacuate their neighborhoods. Hundreds of apartment buildings were severely damaged, and scores of families have lost their homes and all their possessions.

In the midst of this crisis, the ICEJ opened up our Home for Holocaust Survivors in Haifa to serve as an emergency shelter for displaced families and especially the elderly. We were able to provide temporary housing and hot meals for dozens of elderly Haifa residents in real time, just as they were having to flee their homes.

At the height of the fires, an ICEJ Aid team was at our Haifa Home to give assistance and calm nerves. A doctor and nurse also were on hand to treat those suffering from exhaustion and high blood pressure. In addition, we purchased 180 foldable beds which were used at the Haifa Home and several other shelters across the city to accommodate evacuees.

Once the fires were under control, many residents returned home to disaster as more than 700 houses suffered major damage or were completely destroyed by the flames. The ICEJ is continuing to meet urgent needs, knowing that we too would appreciate someone coming to our aid under such dire circumstances. And we are providing $1,000 emergency grants to 20 families who were left homeless or whose homes were severely damaged.

The response has been tremendous! Many of these Israeli families have never had to accept charitable gifts before, but they are so grateful to learn that Christians are reaching out in their time of need and thus they are welcoming our help with open arms.

Sarah, a resident of Haifa, was at home when the fires started raging in her city. When her son called her to make sure she is okay, she noticed that the window frame was hot, so the son instructed her to immediately get out of the house. “I left at the last minute,” she told the staff of ICEJ Aid. She received new windows to replace the shattered one in her living area, and ICEJ Aid was there to listen, bring encouragement, but also do some repairs, like fix the water heater that was damaged during the fire. “You’ve given me a reason to smile again,” she added with gratitude.

Once again, our presence here in the land has provided timely help and encouragement in the midst of sudden crisis. And it would not be possible without your generosity.

Let Israelis know they are not alone! Donate to ICEJ Aid today! Go to www.icej.org/aid and give your best gift!
A Monument of Christian Love for the People of Israel

BY ESTERA WIEJA

There are close to 200,000 Holocaust survivors still alive in Israel, and nearly one-fourth of them are living below the poverty line. The ICEJ-sponsored Haifa Home for Holocaust Survivors is a special place that provides emotional and physical support inside a warm and welcoming community.

To help the Holocaust survivors in their latter days, the ICEJ initiated a project called “Forest of Life.” A gift of 500 USD contributes to the vast expenses tied to running the Haifa Home and making sure its residents receive essential care. To honor your contribution of 500 USD or more towards the wellbeing of Holocaust survivors, the ICEJ will plant an olive tree in your name in Jerusalem.

You may also plant a tree in the name of loved ones, which is an option that ICEJ staff member from South Africa, Jo Olsen chose. Olsen bought a tree in the Forest of Life to support the Haifa Home, while also leaving a mark of love in the land of Israel on behalf of her son and daughter, and their respective families.

“Firstly, I wanted to somehow support the Holocaust survivors,” said Jo with conviction. “And secondly, as we are not citizens of Israel, I thought this would be a great way to leave a piece of my family in this land.”

Jo’s children and grandchildren were overwhelmed by the gesture and now want to plan a trip to Israel, “to see their tree”. In the near future Jo hopes to pay for yet another tree, this time in memory of her late husband. “It will be both in his and my name,” she added. “So the whole family can leave their mark in Israel.”

With a gift of 500 USD to the Forest of Life, you build a memorial of Christian love in the land of Israel. The trees revive the natural surroundings of the city of Jerusalem, while your contribution is aiding elderly Jewish residents of the Haifa Home.

Go to www.icej.org/ForestOfLife and send your gift today!
Over recent weeks, Christians from around the world have responded to an ICEJ initiative by sending thousands of Bibles to UNESCO to protest its recent passage of a resolution which seemingly erased any Jewish or Christian connection to Jerusalem and the Temple Mount.

In what has become an annual ritual, the United Nations Educational, Science, and Cultural Committee (UNESCO) passed a resolution in October on “Occupied Palestine” which, among other things, charged Israel with endangering and hindering access to religious sites in the Holy Land. For the second year in a row, any references to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem used only the Muslim names for the site, the Al-Aqsa Mosque and Al-Haram al-Sharif, while intentionally omitting the Jewish and Christian names for the same place – Har Habayit and Temple Mount. This was seen by many as a deliberate move by the Arab and Islamic states to erase the historic Jewish and Christian links to the Jewish temples which once stood there, while also raising concerns that other revered biblical sites in the Land of Israel could become “Islamicized” as well.

The UNESCO resolution was adopted right when the ICEJ was hosting thousands of Christians at its annual Feast of Tabernacles celebration in Jerusalem in mid-October. As the Feast was concluding, ICEJ Executive Director Dr. Jürgen Bühler issued a challenge to Christians worldwide to send Bibles to UNESCO representatives in Paris in order to impress upon them the deep historical and spiritual connections which Christians and Jews have to these holy places in Jerusalem and throughout the Land of Israel.

Since then, thousands of Christians have responded to this challenge by posting Bibles to UNESCO, many of them with references to Jerusalem and other holy places highlighted. Sources at UNESCO have confirmed to the ICEJ that various officials at the international body have been inundated with Bibles and protest letters coming from Christians and Jews will help strengthen those within UNESCO who support a more balanced stand that affirms the irrefutable Judeo-Christian heritage in Jerusalem and throughout the Land.
Czech citizens rally in Prague to support Jerusalem as the capital of Israel

By Mojmir Kallus, ICEJ-Czech Republic

In September, about four hundred people assembled at Wenceslas Square in the center of Prague to protest the Czech Ministry of Education’s decision to identify Tel Aviv as the capital of the State of Israel in future Czech geography schoolbooks, instead of Jerusalem. Representatives from ICEJ were very involved in the protest.

The controversial decision, issued by a lesser civil servant at the request of Khalid al-Atrash, Palestinian ambassador in Prague, sparked wide outrage among Czech citizens and politicians alike.

Miroslav Kalousek, Chairman of the TOP 09 conservative party, highlighted the special friendship between Israel and the Czech Republic: “People need good friends who are not afraid to call a spade a spade. That is even more important when issues of great sensitivity to our friends are at stake.” Senator Daniela Filippi recalled that Jerusalem has been the most sacred city to the Jewish nation for three thousand years and called the Palestinian request a blatant interference in Czech internal affairs.

In response to this uproar, Katerina Valachova, Minister of Education, issued a statement effectively retracting her department’s earlier decision. “There will be no changes to schoolbooks and the maps should reflect reality,” she said, adding the Ministry of Education would not engage in politics. She also stated respect for Israel’s choice of Jerusalem as its capital city.

This turnaround may be attributed to several factors, including a letter from the Mayor of Jerusalem, Nir Barkat, to Czech Prime Minister, Bohuslav Sobotka, and pressure from politicians across the political spectrum, including the Social Democratic Party, which holds the education portfolio.

The ICEJ branch quickly mobilized civil protests on social media, and an online petition was initiated which threatened civic disobedience should the Ministry fail to withdraw its decision. The petition gathered almost three thousand signatures within a few days, showing that Israel enjoys wide support in the country.

A few weeks later, in response to UNESCO’s resolution on “Occupied Palestine,” the Czech Parliament passed a special resolution rejecting the “anti-Israel, hateful spirit” of the motion and decried its omission of Jewish and Christian ties to the holy places in Jerusalem. The Czech resolution added that “the wording, [which] contradicts the neutral and peaceful nature of the UN, discredits UNESCO and in the final analysis strengthens anti-Semitic trends on an international scale.”

Equipping Young Adults in Finland to Promote Peace

By Varpu Haavisto
Special Advisor, ICEJ-Finland

This past autumn, ICEJ-Finland launched an anti-BDS educational project which travels to the country’s biggest cities. Called “Equipping Young Adults to Promote Peace, Justice and Solidarity in the Middle East” (YAPS), the project includes public lectures and workshops.

The lectures, titled “Keys to Understanding the Middle East Conflict,” explore how international law is used as a weapon in Arab-Israeli conflict and how human rights are observed in the Middle East. Another theme is the BDS movement, its real background and goals. Two lawyers specializing in international law participated as lecturers and educators.

The need for this kind of activity is ever-growing in Europe. BDS ideology is being promoted by an increasing number of organizations. If we do not teach history, the basic facts of Israel’s legitimacy, and justice in this conflict, we leave the field open to be conquered by these movements with their distorted message. We want to equip the next generation to meet the new spiritual era that is facing the western world, and to rise boldly equipped with the truth.
ICEJ-USA welcomes Jerusalem leadership for LA, Dallas meetings

The ICEJ’s executive director Dr. Jürgen Bühler was welcomed by the ICEJ-USA branch for a series of meetings in November, including a pair of pastors’ luncheons in Los Angeles and Dallas which drew dozens of local pastors and Christian leaders. The L.A. meeting was co-hosted by Dr. Jack Hayford and the Israeli consul general in Los Angeles, Samuel Grundwerg. The one in Dallas was co-hosted by Lewis Hogan of United Cry as well as the Israeli consul general in Houston, Ambassador Eitan Levon. Pastors at both events were very grateful for the opportunity to engage with Dr. Bühler and learn more about the ICEJ’s ministry. While in the US, he also spoke at Skyline Church with Pastor Jim Garlow in San Diego, CA; Christ for the Nations Institute in Dallas, TX; and the annual conference of the International Coalition of Apostolic Leaders held in Dallas. He was accompanied by his wife, Vesna, and joined for the meetings in Texas by the ICEJ’s International Director, Rev. Juha Ketola.

ICEJ Israel Conference draws over a thousand believers in Germany

More than a thousand believers took part in the event organized by ICEJ-Germany and the Bible College of Christ for the Nations in Bad Gandersheim. During the conference about a hundred children also enjoyed a special Israel Day on the premises of the college.

Main speakers included Gottfried Bühler, Director of ICEJ-Germany, Pastor Ingolf Ellßel, Chairman of the International Board of the ICEJ, Pastor Oded Shoshani from Jerusalem, and his wife Sandy Shoshani, who leads a nationwide pro-life ministry in Israel, and several others.

This event also marked the 10th anniversary of the fruitful cooperation between the college and the ICEJ. “The many different projects and events initiated by the ICEJ are a real blessing of the Lord,” said Gerry Klein, director of the college who regularly invites speakers from the ICEJ to teach at his school.

“The Bible College is a strong base for Israel in the north of Germany,” said Gottfried Bühler. “We are very blessed to work with [you].” The Shoshanis were especially moved by the fact that the main building of the Bible College was originally built by Adolf Hitler to house his notorious motorcycle corps. “What an amazing thing that Jesus is preached here today and that there is life after death!” they said.

ICEJ Arise Impacts Young Adults in Fiji

ICEJ Arise, a ministry for young adults, held a powerful and life changing summit in the Fiji Islands. Jani Salokangas, ICEJ Arise director, was the main speaker of the conference and focused on the topic of discipleship. The event was very well attended by young adults from more than 40 churches, representing 10 denominations.

Samisoni Cakau, the Arise leader of ICEJ-Fiji, was very optimistic about the influence which these young people at the conference will have in the future. “It is crucial for the Church in the Pacific region to unite, and in effect to impact the societies with greater power,” he said.

Many young people decided to turn their lives around, and to follow Jesus. What is more, four young adults spontaneously expressed a desire to be baptized, so the conference also included a special baptism ceremony on the shore of the Pacific Ocean.

“After years of faithful labor of the ICEJ in the Fiji Islands we are now starting to see the fruit of this work also among the next generation,” said Jani Salokangas.
ICEJ unites Ivory Coast churches for Israel

Dr. Maiga Abdou, the ICEJ’s special representative for West Africa, paid a visit to the Ivory Coast in December to meet with the main leaders of the Protestant and Evangelical churches and unify them for more effective activities in support of Israel.

Abdou in the capital of Abidjan included Rev. Gboagnon Appolinaire, Apostle Bouabre Janvier, Apostle Kpangui Bernard, and Rev. Zeze Raphael. They discussed ways to increase the ICEJ’s reach in their country and to grow the delegation of pilgrims from the Ivory Coast attending the Feast of Tabernacles each year.

As new leaders take on the ICEJ’s work in the Ivory Coast, they expect to see a wider embrace of the ICEJ’s vision of supporting Israel while also spreading the Gospel in the nations. The hope is that the churches of Ivory Coast will realise how important it is to invest in acts of compassion and support for the Jewish people, and in prayer for Israel. The recent meetings will undoubtedly give the ICEJ a broader platform to mobilize greater spiritual and political support for Israel in the Ivory Coast.

ICEJ-Liberia hosts Envision pastors conference

The new ICEJ national branch in Liberia recently held its own version of the “Envision” pastors’ conference hosted annually by our Embassy headquarters in Jerusalem. The event was considered an absolute breakthrough in connecting the main Evangelical churches of Liberia with Israel.

Organized by ICEJ-Liberia national director Rev. J. Aaron Wright, Sr., the Envision conference took place in December at the Holy Deliverance Church of God in Monrovia, and drew pastors from 50 different churches all across Liberia. Held under the theme “Bless, Comfort, and Support Israel to be Blessed and Prosperous”, the event was a unique opportunity for Liberian church leaders to interact and gain a fuller understanding of the importance of the restoration of Israel in our day. Participants also discussed the relationship between Israel and Liberia today, compared to what it was before the 14-year Liberian civil war.

The conference agenda also included meetings with Liberian government officials, including Vice President Joseph N. Boakai, who pledged his full support for the ICEJ’s vision, mission and mandate for Israel. Another meeting was held with MP Julius F. Berrian, who declared himself the “ICEJ Man” within the Liberian parliament. ICEJ-Liberia is now seeking to approach every Christian member of Parliament to become an ambassador for the ICEJ.

ICEJ Representative Dr. Maiga Abdou (pictured, second from left) met with top denominational leaders of Ivory Coast in the capital city of Abidjan.

ICEJ-Liberia national director (left) with Rev. Williams at the Envision Conference in Liberia.
ICEJ reaches Kazakhstan with message of hope and reconciliation

By Serguei Popov

The Republic of Kazakhstan, a transcontinental country bridging Central Asia and Eastern Europe, is the world’s largest “landlocked country” (with no access to seas or oceans) and is the ninth largest country in the world.

Sharing borders with Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, the country is dominated by Islam, with more than 70% of the population identifying as Muslims. However, it is still a home to several thousand Jews and traditional Christians (predominantly Russian Orthodox) make up only 25% of the population.

The ICEJ decided to reach out to the local evangelical churches in Kazakhstan to bring a better understanding of Scripture and God’s plans for Israel. At the same time, we made contact with the remaining Jewish communities in the country to show our support to the Jewish People.

After very fruitful meetings with ten of the most influential pastors in Kazakhstan, Pastor Pavel Kuptsov was appointed as a representative of the ICEJ in northern Kazakhstan.

“It is a great privilege to be an ICEJ representative in our country and our region,” said Pastor Kuptsov after the meetings. “Our church is one of the biggest in our region. We have approximately over 500 members, including our branch churches in different cities in Kazakhstan. Our church loves and supports Israel, so we are hoping to have a group from Kazakhstan at the Feast 2017.”

We need your prayerful support for the work of the ICEJ in Kazakhstan during this unstable time in Middle Asia. Also, consider partnering with us and support the international work of the ICEJ by visiting: www.icej.org/international

Christians attend Leadership Seminar on the Holocaust at Yad Vashem

Christina Elisabeth Leinum, ICEJ-Denmark National Director

The 10-day Christian Leadership Seminar at Yad Vashem at the end of November 2016, generously supported by the ICEJ and the Museum of the Bible, was attended by 26 Christian leaders from 9 different countries. One of the countries, Spain, was represented at the seminar for the first time since the program was launched.

It was an honor for us as Christians to partake in this high-level program, where different perspectives concerning the horrific events of World War II were presented. Scholars expert in the fields of history, politics, music and literature introduced us to the different parts of Jewish life in the ghettos, as well as in the death camps. A very precious moment for us was meeting Holocaust survivors, Mr. Nachum and Mrs. Genya Manor. They met and fell in love in the Schindler Factory, where their lives were saved. Their long relationship with Oscar Schindler continued even when they moved to Israel, where he visited them frequently until his passing.

I encourage every Christian leader to take this opportunity to learn and grow in our relationship with Israel. By attending the seminar, we can show the Jewish people that as Christians we acknowledge their suffering, and that we take a stand that many of our predecessors didn’t: the stand against any and every expression of anti-Semitism today.
The ICEJ Feast of Tabernacles 2016 was inaugurated once again at Ein Gedi, along the Dead Sea in Israel. The evening’s guest speaker was Dr. Dionny Baez, son of missionaries, who at a very young age began preaching, ministering and holding large Gospel crusades all across Latin America. Dr. Baez currently pastors a growing bilingual (Spanish and English) church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA.

Under the stars on this warm desert night, Dr. Baez lead a very beautiful, powerful and anointed time of ministry, including worship with both old and new songs. Moving in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, Dr. Baez shared words of knowledge and prophetic utterances received from the Lord, some of which were addressed to specific people, including ICEJ-UK Director Dr. David Elms.

Prior to the meeting, we learned that Rev. Elms was hospitalized in Liverpool, England, and had just undergone surgery for an aneurism, an often fatal swelling of a blood vessel. Dr. Baez led the gathering in a corporate prayer for Elms, and then prophesied that, at 10 PM England time that evening, there would be major improvement in Elms’ condition. Afterwards, Elms’ family members reported they received a call from the hospital exactly at the predicted time, informing them of great progress in Elms’ condition.

We are overjoyed to report Rev. Elms was discharged from the hospital in mid-November and today is at home, recovering from his near-death experience. Together with Dr. Jürgen Bühler, the ICEJ Executive Director, we were delighted to hear Elms’ laughter over the phone! The Lord Jesus was faithful to heal and His prophet had heard it right. We serve a wonderful and supernatural God who does wondrous works and miracles in an answer to our prayers!

Dr. Baez also prophesied to a group from Bolivia, who were part of this large, multinational gathering of about 3400 delegates, that soon they would experience a shift in their country on a national level. A few weeks later we learned that a unique prayer meeting took place in Bolivia, commemorating the Reformation from 500 years ago. In this meeting, Evo Morales, President of Bolivia, together with his cabinet and local pastors were lifting their hands up in prayer to God, publicly dedicating the nation of Bolivia to the Lord Jesus!

In this glorious and very gracious presence of the Holy Spirit, Dr. Dionny Baez also prophesied to the ICEJ Senior Spokesperson David Parsons, who was standing in the crowd, about a book concerning the Middle East and the Muslim religion, which in the Spirit he saw David Parsons writing. This word was later confirmed by David Parsons to be true.

Many more prophetic words were shared that evening by Dr. Dionny Baez – naming specific situations and people – which were also confirmed to be true. Towards the end of the service Dr. Dionny Baez encouraged everyone, citing the Letter to the Hebrews from the New Testament, to pursue the manifested presence and glory of the Lord Jesus, emphasizing the importance of praise and worship in order to experience it.

FRUIT OF THE PROPHETIC MINISTRY OF DR. DIONNY BAEZ AT FEAST 2016

BY REV. JUHA KETOLA, ICEJ INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR
The Feast of Tabernacles is always a wonderful foretaste of that future time when all peoples will come up to Jerusalem to celebrate Sukkot. It is a prophetic statement that our Lord is indeed coming soon. And it declares to Israel and the nations that a new day is dawning.

Join the ICEJ and Christians from around the world at the Feast of Tabernacles in October. Be in Jerusalem and celebrate the 50th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem.

- **$425**
  A special rate of $425.00 for full registration is available until April 30, 2017.

- **$1345**
  The ICEJ also offers a land package program to provide hotel accommodations for 7 nights, transportation to Feast events including the Jerusalem March. Land package rates begin at $1345.00 and include the registration fee.

6 - 11 October 2017

feast.icej.org

We look forward in seeing you in Jerusalem

The City of God – in 2017!