TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH
Jerusalem’s Prophetic Connections
Dear friends,

This year Jerusalem settled into its summer season in fits and starts. The overall pace slows down as school children go on summer break and a sunny atmosphere envelops the city. Yet this summer has in no way been uneventful, neither for the city nor for the ICEJ. Jerusalem continues to be a contested city, seen most recently in connection with the Temple Mount. The assassination of two Israeli policemen led to a confrontation that had regional implications and almost spun out of control. The ICEJ remains involved in prayerful and practical support, which is why we extended financial support to buy protective vests for an elite volunteer police unit who help keep the city calm and safe. Fortunately, such incidents remain the exception. However, as you can read in this edition, the Battle for Jerusalem is an ongoing affair.

Thankfully, summer is also a time for rest, and the ICEJ leadership benefitted from the opportunity to reflect and refresh at a family retreat for our leadership in a beautiful alpine location. Joining us, were some local Jewish and Arab congregational leaders. Our desire and vision are to foster deeper fellowship and brotherhood in Christ with local believers.

Recently, the ICEJ leadership, partners and friends participated in a touching ceremony, where I was privileged to address the 70th anniversary commemorating the fateful voyage of the Exodus and had the honour of meeting a Dutch holocaust survivor who had been a passenger on the ship. I also had a good and personal meeting with Jerusalem’s Mayor, Nir Barkat, who looks forward to seeing our Feast Pilgrims fill up the city in October.

I continue to be inspired by the ICEJ’s global character. Writing this month’s teaching, I drew from the scriptural and prophetic connections that became clear to me when I visited the remote Pacific Islands of Fiji. It is truly amazing that we fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ and celebrate Jerusalem to the farthest reaches of the planet.

Now, as I write this greeting, I have the pleasure of visiting Germany with my family and will be ending the summer in Denmark, along the rugged North Sea coast, where I’ll be speaking at the annual ICEJ Denmark conference.

Thank you for being a part of our global family and for keeping God’s prophetic purposes for Jerusalem and Israel in your hearts and prayers. I hope to see many of you here for the Feast of Tabernacles in the City of God.

Yours in Christ,

Dr Jürgen Bühler
ICEJ President

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This past May, I felt a bit out of place. Jerusalem was about to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the city's reunification, but I was on my way to Fiji. I was travelling to islands that, in a very literal sense, constitute the ends of the earth. If you pushed a needle from Jerusalem through the centre of a globe, the needle would emerge on the planet’s other side, somewhere in the Pacific Ocean – 27°55S/143°26W to be precise. The closest point of civilisation are the islands of French Polynesia. Not far from there, in the expanse of endless water was the place I was heading to, Suva, the capital of Fiji.

Prophetic connection
Fiji is the largest of the South Pacific island chains. No one can travel any further from Jerusalem than these Pacific archipelagos. From Israel’s point of view, it’s the end of the world. I bemoaned my ill-timed planning of travel dates and thought the opportunity to be in Jerusalem for its Jubilee was lost – at least for the next 50 years. Yet, as I was sitting on the plane, I began to realise that, besides being in Jerusalem, being at the ends of the earth was at least the second-best place to be for Jerusalem’s Jubilee. And I am not talking about the beautiful beach resorts. What makes these islands so special is their unique prophetic connection to Jerusalem. I had much time to reflect on this – some 28 hours of travel, which was the fastest connection I could find.

I opened my bible to Luke 21 to read Jesus’s end-time discourse:

“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know
that its desolation has come near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter her. For these are days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” (Luke 21:20–24)

Jerusalem surrounded
Jesus foresaw the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman army, and the following destruction through the commander Vespasian and his son Titus. Jesus’s command to escape an encircled Jerusalem, seems almost out of place. If a city is besieged by armies, then it follows that nobody can enter or leave the city. Yet the historian Josephus Flavius reports that this is exactly what happened. In his final assault to crush the Jewish rebellion, the Roman General Vespasian besieged the Jewish capitol, Jerusalem. During that siege, a courier arrived from Rome, requiring Vespasian’s immediate return to Rome. Caesar had died, and Vespasian’s presence was therefore needed there. Vespasian passed the command of the army to his son Titus and told him to wait for further instructions. Following this, there was a period of uncertainty several weeks long. Flavius reports, that after Vespasian’s departure, Titus somewhat loosened the siege and allowed limited travel in and out of Jerusalem.

The narrow escape
During this period, the disciples and early believers remembered Jesus’s words and used the short time window to escape Jerusalem. The church fathers report that many members of the Jerusalem church escaped to a city called Pella, east of the Jordan River. A few weeks after his departure, Vespasian sent a courier back to his son Titus saying, “I have become the new Caesar. Now finish Jerusalem!” The son followed his father’s orders and destroyed Jerusalem and its temple. Josephus reports it as one of the darkest chapters in Jerusalem’s history. An estimated two thirds of Jerusalem’s and Israel’s population overall were massacred by the Romans. According to historical reports, countless crosses were erected along Israel’s main highways.

Jesus described it as a “great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people.” The population would be exiled and scattered around the world, and Jerusalem and its land would be a place of desolation, occupied by Gentiles.
When I visited the Colosseum in Rome some years ago, I had a revelation about another example representing the brutality of that era. “The Colosseum,” our tour guide explained, “was erected by 3,000 slaves whom General Titus deported from Jerusalem.” And until this day, the Titus Arch in Rome reminds us of the far-flung dispersion inflicted upon the Jews almost 2,000 years ago.

Gentile powers
Since then, Jerusalem and Israel have been governed by foreign powers. First was Rome, second came the Byzantine Empire, which then was replaced by Arab Muslim conquerors in the 7th century. The Muslim regime was interrupted by 100 years of crusader rule. The next rulers were the Muslim Mamelukes, and then the Ottoman Empire that lasted until 1917. From 1917 till 1948, the final occupation was under the British Empire. To sum it all up, the city of Jerusalem was under Gentile rule for almost 2,000 years. Jesus said, “Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles.” He also called the period the “times of the Gentiles.” This would not only describe the status of Jerusalem, but would also signify a new focus of God’s work among the Gentiles.

Restoring the kingdom
When Jesus was about to ascend to heaven, he gathered his disciples on the Mount of Olives. The disciples must have felt that this could be their very last chance to put a question to Jesus. We read about this in Acts:

“Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, ‘Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?’ And He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.’” (Acts 1:6-8)

After being with Jesus for three years and hearing his teachings about the kingdom for almost forty days, the disciples’ big question was, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” Their question was not if God still had a plan for Israel’s restoration, rather it was focused on the timing of the restoration. This indicates that Jesus clearly taught them about a time of restoration for Israel, yet the timing was the factor they were unclear about.

In His answer, Jesus never questioned or corrected their expectation. Rather, He readjusted their focus to a new area in which God would now work on the nations. “It is not for you to know times or seasons” ... “you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Jesus knew about the coming desolation of Jerusalem, so refocused their task regarding the imminent “times of the Gentiles.” The ultimate aim was that “...the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Habakkuk 2:14). In Jesus’s words, “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.” (Matthew 24:14)

This means that for Jesus, the restoration of Israel and of Jerusalem was squarely connected with the fulfilment of the great commission of spreading the gospel to the ends of the earth. I was astounded when I learned that in 1867 the first missionary to Fiji, Thomas Baker, was martyred with eight indigenous Melanesians, who were the first disciples on this Island at the end of the earth. Today almost half of the Melanesian population of the Pacific confess to the evangelical faith.

New breakthroughs, new excitement
In the same year of 1867, another event happened exactly on the opposite side of the planet. In Jerusalem, a young British officer, Sir Charles Warren, dug a shaft, which led him to discover, for the first time in almost 2,000 years, a section of the ancient city of David. This triggered a whole new field of research called biblical archaeology. The news of the discovery of the city of David stirred up a new interest in Eretz Israel among the Jewish community in Russia, which paved the way for the very first wave of Aliyah back to Israel only a few years later. Between 1882 and 1903, the first to settle in Palestine were 25,000 Russian Jews.

Making the connection
As I read all these pieces of information, coupled with the biblical passages, I understood there was indeed a prophetic connection between Jerusalem and the ends of the earth. For me, it seems that when the martyrs died in Fiji in 1867, there may have been a ringing sound through heaven declaring, “The gospel of Christ’s Kingdom has been proclaimed as a testimony at the ends of the earth!” The English word
‘testimony’ translates into the Greek word ‘Martyrion.’ This martyrdom seemed to release an immediate decree in heaven to turn the divine focus back to Jerusalem and the Jewish people. The unfolding of a new season and the time of restoration of all things had begun. Since these major developments took place, the Church in the nations has exponentially grown around the world with major outpourings of God’s Spirit. The prophet Joel foresaw these things, and in parallel, the restoration of Israel took an unstoppable course.

As I landed in Fiji, I understood that it was not a coincidence that for Jerusalem’s Jubilee, we held our first ever Oceania conference in Fiji with some 10 Pacific nations represented. The gospel reaching to the ends of the earth is as strong a sign of the times as a united Jerusalem.

The end of Gentile rule
In the period after 1867, General Allenby liberated Jerusalem from Muslim oppression in 1917; the state of Israel was born in 1948; and Jerusalem was reunited in 1967. During that time, churches grew all over the world with great revivals. These revivals were not only happening in Asia, Africa or Latin America, but even in unexpected places like Iran and other Muslim nations.

At this year’s Feast of Tabernacles, a record crowd of Pacific islanders will come to Jerusalem to celebrate Jerusalem’s jubilee. These are exciting times, indeed!

This has consequences for all of us:

1. **These are historic times to be alive!** In these last days of restoration, heaven is calling us to fully dedicate our lives to the purposes of God. Whether we work in the nations or in Israel, our generation has the privilege to write salvation history unlike any other generation. It is a time to stop being lukewarm, and rather rededicate our lives to God’s purposes in the area He has called us to. Make it a point today and say, “Lord these are historic times to be alive, so please use me in these exciting times! Here I am send me!”

2. **The main areas of God’s work remain in the nations and increasingly in Israel.** God is bringing these two areas closer together, therefore, our vision needs to be for both. If your calling is towards Israel, then don’t ignore the nations. These are the most dynamic times for the church, and if you are called to the nations, then you can’t ignore Israel any longer. God’s focus is shifting back to the Jewish people, and so we should do the same.

3. **Think about what you can do practically to be involved in both Israel and the nations.** Maybe you are called to pray, teach, administrate, help with finances or be an ambassador in your work place. Whatever it is, do it wholeheartedly for God.

4. **Pray for Jerusalem, because it is a biblical command.** In this year of Jubilee, pray that God will restore to Jerusalem what belongs to her (Lev 25:8ff), whether it be in the physical or spiritual realm.
“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
May they prosper who love you.”
- Psalm 122:6

Israel’s liberation of eastern Jerusalem in June 1967 was a pivotal moment in the nation’s modern history, forever captured in the iconic image of IDF troops gazing in awe at the Western Wall.

The enduring struggle
When Jerusalem was reunited fifty years ago, the heaviest fighting occurred not inside the Old City but several blocks north, at Ammunition Hill. It was one of the most intense clashes of the Six Day War, with Israeli and Jordanian soldiers engaged in hand-to-hand combat for control of a key arms depot and artillery position guarded by a dense network of trenches and bunkers. Once they gained control of this strategic fortress, the troops of the 55th Paratroopers Brigade circled around to the top of the Mount of Olives, which had such a commanding view of the Old City that its fall was inevitable.

The new CBN docudrama, In Our Hands, tells this story with gripping detail by using archival footage, first-hand testimonies, and captivating re-enactments. The film allows soldiers who fought in the battle for Jerusalem to speak with candour about what they were fighting for. Some felt it was not just a victory over the Jordanians, but also over the Romans who had destroyed Jerusalem and exiled the Jews almost 2,000 years ago. Other IDF troops said the focus of the victory celebrations should not have been around the Western Wall but on the Temple Mount, which was not fully possessed by Israel largely due to fears it would rile the entire Islamic world.

We see the consequences until this day, as the Temple Mount remains a point of heated contention between Israel and the Palestinians, who constantly exploit the site to stir Muslims to hatred and violence against the Jewish state. Jesus prophesied that Jerusalem would be trampled down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles is fulfilled (Luke 21:24). The Six Day War certainly liberated Jerusalem from direct Gentile rule, but as long as the most important part of the city is still trodden under foot by Muslim Gentiles, the city is not entirely free and in Jewish hands.
The spiritual battleground

No doubt, the battle for Jerusalem is not over. It has been the most contested city in world history, and the struggle over its future will continue. The real battle over Jerusalem is not in the physical realm, however. Rather, it is a spiritual battle waged against principalities and powers who do not want the promised Messiah, Jesus, to take up the throne of David in Jerusalem. Ultimately, this battle will draw all nations up against the city, where God will humble them and bring them all under subjection to the righteous reign of His Messiah (Psalm 2, Isaiah 2:1-4, Joel 3, Zechariah 12 & 14, etc.).

The prophet Isaiah assures us that one day Jerusalem’s warfare will be over (Isaiah 40:1-2). Until then, we can expect more birth pangs of the Messianic kingdom centered around God’s prophetic purposes for this city. Jerusalem has a unique destiny as the throne of the Lord and a “House of Prayer” for all peoples (Isaiah 56:7).

Jerusalem also stands out as the only city in the entire world that the Bible explicitly directs us to pray for. The city’s role and calling in God’s redemptive plan is simply too central and important to leave to chance. So we are to pray for her peace, and for her righteousness to go forth as brightness (Psalm 122:6, Isaiah 62:1).

Prophetic destiny

Right now our prayers are needed more than ever, as the spiritual battle over Jerusalem is intensifying. The battle is always there, but those of us here in the city can sense we are at a critical juncture concerning its future. Yet, we also have a great expectancy that a momentous victory is coming in this Jubilee year for a reunited Jerusalem. Thus, we are believing for the city to be released even more into its prophetic destiny in God this very year.

For more than fifty years now, the international community has been intimidated into denying the Jewish people their rightful place in Jerusalem. To this day, no nation has their embassy in Jerusalem, or recognizes Israeli sovereignty over eastern Jerusalem. Although other excuses are often put forward, the main reason for these diplomatic snubs is simply fear of a violent Islamic response.

Heroes of old

There were other times in Israel’s history when the enemy tried to make the Jewish people afraid to fully possess their inheritance in Jerusalem. For instance, when King David and his forces drew near, the Jebusites taunted him from the walls of their fortified city. But he did not cave in to the fears and instead challenged his loyal troops to forge ahead, and they easily conquered the city (2 Samuel 5:6-9).

In a similar fashion, Ezra and Nehemiah encountered much opposition and intimidation from local tribal leaders when they were rebuilding the Temple and the walls of Jerusalem, but they pressed on with their work nonetheless. When Sanballat and Tobias sought to trick Nehemiah into stopping construction on Jerusalem, he realized “they all were trying to make us afraid.” He then prayed: “Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands.” (Nehemiah 6:9)

Today, we need to pray that Israel will not be cowered by Islamic threats into ceasing to possess and build Jerusalem, and that the nations also will not cave in to the fears which Israel’s adversaries are trying to cast over the holy city. We also need to pray for world leaders to become like Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes – each of whom saw through the lies and tricks of the enemy and were used by God to empower the Jews to build again the city of Jerusalem. Finally, we need to pray for the peace, or shalom, of Jerusalem, which in Hebrew also means “wholeness” or “completeness.” That is, we must pray for the continued unity of Jerusalem in Jewish hands.

The ICEJ held a special screening of CBN’s docudrama In Our Hands about the Six Day War, and will repeat the success at this year’s Feast of Tabernacles.
ADVENTURING THROUGH THE HOLY LAND OF ISRAEL FOR 10 DAYS WITH 33 CHRISTIAN YOUNG ADULTS, FROM 8 DIFFERENT NATIONS, WAS THE PERFECT COMBINATION FOR AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE WITH GOD!

These young adults were led by our ICEJ Arise Director, Jani Salokangas, in serving communities, learning about the conflicts and Biblical perspectives on Israel, all while enjoying the land of Israel and its people.

Up north, at the Sea of Galilee, the Arise team picked up one ton of trash in a poor Orthodox Jewish neighbourhood. The mayor made an appearance personally thanking the Arise Team for their diligent and humble service. The next stop was Capernaum, where Jaako from Finland shared, “I had a powerful encounter with God as I sat near the Sea of Galilee in Capernaum.” It was in that moment that Jaako realised that he was in the very place where Jesus walked on water, preached, healed the sick and performed many other miracles.

Riding through the Golan Heights in Tomcars, the group stopped near the Syrian border and talked with a border patrolman, who encouraged them to educate themselves on the situation in the Middle East. They ventured on to the desert, where they spent the night worshipping God under the stars. Back in Jerusalem, they painted several rooms of the Israeli Goldstein Youth Village School for immigrant children in need, using about 100 litres of paint.

God moved powerfully in the hearts of these young adults, as they served, learned and adventured through the land of Israel. One miracle that God performed was that one of the participants had forgotten his passport and was almost sent home, but by God’s grace he was finally allowed into Israel without his passport! Another beautiful miracle was that three participants were baptised during the trip in the land where Jesus was baptised!

The ICEJ Arise Team was privileged and excited to lead this group of young adults around the Land of Israel, and pleased to report that many returned home with incredible breakthroughs, a renewed purpose for their lives, and a heart for God’s people in Israel! Arise is a life-changing trip for many young adults. We look forward to having many more join us for the Arise Summer Tour 2018.

Learn more about Arise at: www.arisegeneration.org
NEW MONUMENT IN HAIFA HONOURS EXODUS ’47

ICEJ President Dr Jürgen Bühler and Dr Susanna Kokkonen, Director of the Christian Desk at Yad Vashem, flank Exodus ’47 passenger Marty Dotan van Collum, a Dutch Jew who survived Bergen-Belsen and eventually made it to Israel in early 1948. The new monument to the ship features a relief of the Land of Israel with a large anchor resting over the northern port of Haifa.

ICEJ JOINS CEREMONIES ON 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF REFUGEE SHIP SAGA

By David Parsons
ICEJ Senior Spokesman

On the 70th anniversary of the fateful voyage of the Exodus ’47 refugee ship, a special remembrance ceremony was held in Haifa port on 18 July to officially dedicate a new monument honouring the passengers and crew of “the ship that launched a nation.” This is the first monument and historic marker in Israel which pays tribute to more than 4,500 Jewish refugees and crew aboard the Exodus ‘47 who tried to run the British blockade and reach the shores of pre-state Israel in July 1947. The vessel was rammed by British warships and towed to Haifa port, where the Jewish refugees were detained and eventually returned to Germany. The plight of these desperate survivors of the Nazi Holocaust gained worldwide attention that summer and helped sway the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine to support the creation of a Jewish state.

Several dozen survivors from the Exodus ’47 voyage were on hand for the unveiling of the monument, and the ICEJ arranged for several to give first-hand accounts of their perilous journey across the Mediterranean from France. Other speakers included Jerusalem Agency head Natan Sharansky, cabinet minister Yoav Galant (whose mother was on the Exodus), and ICEJ President Dr Jürgen Bühler.

The memorial sculpture, designed by artist Sam Philipe, was a gift of the Jewish American Society for Historic Preservation, which organised the 70th anniversary remembrance ceremonies along with the Jewish Agency, the Haifa Port Authority, the City of Jerusalem, and the ICEJ.

"FUN DAYS" IN JERUSALEM

ICEJ headquarters recently hosted educators from an ICEJ Aid sponsored educational program for youth at risk. Annual “fun days” in Jerusalem for the youth include a lunch, visits to cultural and historical sites as well as a visit to the ICEJ, where they have the opportunity to meet Christian friends of Israel for the first time. The excitement and inspiration the youth experienced left quite an impression within the entire programme, which resulted in the remaining educational staff coming to meet our ICEJ staff for themselves. Connecting Christians and Jews represents the heart of our work to break down barriers built over centuries and enables reconciliation and new relationships to develop.
JÜRGEN BÜHLER OPENING NIGHT FEAST 2016 DVD (TEACHING ONLY)

As you watch the opening night of the Feast in 2016 may you be uplifted and inspired to join us in Jerusalem for future celebrations of the Feast of Tabernacles.

USD 10.99

EIN GEDI CELEBRATION FEAST 2016 FULL NIGHT DVD

As you watch, may you be uplifted and inspired to join us in Jerusalem for future celebrations of the Feast of Tabernacles.

USD 15.99

Celebrate 50 Years of a United Jerusalem!

JERUSALEM COMPASS

The Jerusalem Compass instead of pointing north points only in the direction of Jerusalem from any point on the globe. Fashioned from pure solid brass, the lid is deeply embossed in the center with a Jewish Star of David and the words "Jerusalem" in Hebrew and English. The outer edges are encircled with a delicate floral design of Pomegranates.

39 USD

JERUSALEM NOTEBOOK

This notebook comes in two different colors; black, white. The edges are gold colored and the pages (140) are lined - pages of high quality Italian paper, 16 x 16 cm. Cover style - hard cover luxuriously embellished with the skyline of Jerusalem and ICEJ's logo in a gold color.

30 USD (FREE SHIPPING)

VISIT OUR ONLINE STORE AND RECEIVE A 10% DISCOUNT ON ALL PURCHASES!

Go to: ICEJSTORE.COM and use the discount code: WFJ2017ICEJ – The special 10% discount for your purchases at the Embassy Resources is valid until 31/12/17
A HISTORY OF ISRAEL FROM THE RISE OF ZIONISM TO OUR TIME
BY HOWARD M. SACHAR

The theorists of Zionism had anticipated that revived nationhood in the land of Israel finally would lift this unique and burdensome afflatus from the backs of the Jewish people; for, aside from the religionists among them, the Zionists were animated less by a sense of mission than by a search for normalcy.

USD 59 EACH

THE PALESTINIANS, MYTHS AND MARTYRS
BY JOHANNES GERLOFF

Besides excellent historical background and insight into the political developments in the Middle East according to International law established between the World Wars and afterward, you will hear real testimony from people on both sides of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and amazing stories of things that Johannes has experienced himself during his time in the region.

USD 29 EACH

JERUSALEM, A CULINARY ADVENTURE

It all began in the old neighborhoods of Jerusalem, mainly in the old city. Jerusalem cuisine was a cuisine of a closed space, of Ashkenazim Jews, Sephardi Jews and Arabs who learned from one another. They lived in the same courtyard, spoke Yiddish, Ladino and Arabic, adopted their neighbors’ costume and created their own melting pot. In the old city everyone’s food, food of various ethnic groups, was baked in a huge oven, while the neighbors gossiped and made attempts to imitate each other’s flavors and aromas...

Culinary Adventure - a culinary tour, Mahane Yehuda Market, old & new restaurants, stories & anecdotes, well known Chet’s, ethnic cooks, well known eateries, 71 recipes.

USD 18 EACH

JERUSALEM CITY OF THE GREAT KING
BY R. STEVEN NOTLEY

Jerusalem in the first century A.D. was a far cry from its humble beginnings in the days of King David. In Jerusalem: City of the Great King - the author traces the growth of the capital of Judea, following the Jewish return from Babylonian Exile, through the rule of the Hasmonean priest-kings and Herod the Great, and finally into its turbulent days under Roman administration.

USD 32 EACH

ICEJ SHOMER PENDANT

Shomer is the Hebrew word for watchman. The artistically designed replica of the Zion Mule Corps’ insignia includes an engraving on the back with the scripture from Isaiah 62:6 in Hebrew and the initials of the ICEJ. 24K Gold plated.

30 USD + SHIPPING

NEW!

ICEJ SHOMER PENDANT

ICEJ SHOMER PENDANT
Hope inspires because it runs contrary to expectations. We base our expectations on what we can see, while hope deals with what we cannot see and is beyond our control. Mali’s story shows how her life was infused with hope beyond her expectations.

At age five, Mali’s childhood world began to crumble. Her parents’ divorce tore the family apart. Both her parents remarried and started new families, leaving Mali and her 7 siblings abandoned and relegated to foster homes. Mali ended up in a group home, but as soon as she turned 18, she had to leave the group home with no money, no food, no job and no understanding of how to live in this world.

The streets became Mali’s new home with her bed changing each night as she slept on benches, in bomb shelters and in stairways of buildings. Sometimes she would spend the night wandering in fear, afraid that something might happen to her if she slept. Mali was constantly hungry and soon became malnourished, as her food for the day was sometimes only half a sandwich.

After several years of living on the streets, Mali finally decided to call her mom on a payphone. She wanted to tell her that she was on the streets with no food and no safe place to go. Mali asked her mom if she could go to her house, but to Mali’s detriment her mom just hung up on her. Shortly after this, Mali ended up in the hospital because her body was severely weakened from starvation.

While in the hospital, Mali’s nurse gave her the number of a social worker named Iris. Mali connected with Iris and discovered that the group home Iris ran was full. Instead of just abandoning Mali, just like her mom had done, Iris showed love and care for her by taking Mali into her own home. With amazement, Mali explains, “She just took me home with her! A strange little girl she didn’t even know. My new life began in that moment.” Iris taught Mali about daily life, managing a bank account, nutrition, how to cook, and how to work hard. “Iris became like a mother to me. She saved my life,” Mali said with deep gratitude.

Today, Mali works with children, and she loves what she does because she realises the great importance of investing in a child’s life. In the future, Mali would like to start her own organisation to help other kids who are in the same situation she was in.

Mali expressed her gratefulness towards the partners of the ICEJ, “Through receiving an educational scholarship from the ICEJ, and realizing people around the world believe in and support me, I know I will achieve my dream.”

Jeremiah 29:11 – “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.”

Watch Mali’s story at int.icej.org/mali
Join us in being a part of giving a hope and a future to many others just like Mali.
Partner with us today, at icej.org/aid
POVERTY GAP IN ISRAEL

Down and out in the start-up nation – the two-way split in Israel’s economy

BY DAN HERRON

Ever since its inception, Israel has faced and overcome numerous existential challenges. Just think about what the nation has been through in terms of military confrontations and unrest since 2000. It’s amazing that the country is now in its 14th straight year of economic growth, even when counting the years of the financial crisis.

However, at the heart of the start-up nation’s truly remarkable achievements lies a serious paradox. For all its successes, Israel has the second-highest poverty rate among OECD countries (i.e. developed nations) at 18.8%, only surpassed by Mexico’s. Measured on childhood poverty alone, nearly one in three of Israel’s children lives in poverty. So even though the overall economy as such is not in crisis, many of its individual participants are, and Israel’s economy is headed for a two-way split.

This is not an unusual problem for today’s advanced economies, but one that may have serious repercussions for a nation that needs to maintain a high level of military readiness and qualitative superiority, along with strong social cohesion to keep fighting and / or deterring its adversaries. But how to properly address this issue? First of all, we need to understand Israel’s current strengths and weaknesses.

Here’s where Israel is successful
You cannot but marvel when you consider the long-term dynamic and innovative contributions Israel has made to the global economy. Israel’s brainchildren span all business sectors from smart-drip irrigation to Intel chips for computer processors. The country is the number one generator of startups outside of Silicon Valley, boasting its own Silicon Wadi. Further world-beating statistics concern Israel’s number one ranking in medical patents per capita and the fact that the country outspends the world in R&D relative to its economy. In macroeconomic terms, these successes have translated into:

1) Low unemployment
2) High GDP growth
3) A relatively low level of public debt and inflation

Here’s where Israel’s success is lacking
Israel’s economy is growing and dynamic sectors are outperforming, but the country’s current growth pattern is not inclusive. Israel’s main challenges lie within the following domains:

1. Low wage and productivity growth
2. Cost of housing and living is becoming unaffordable
3. Low government expenditure on education and infrastructure

These lagging indicators can be put down to the cost of dealing with Israel’s security challenges, its import-dependent economy and fractious political system, and its peculiar demographic challenges in the Ultra-Orthodox, immigrant, and Arab-Israeli population segments.

It is important to point out that these issues are part of the national debate and that steps are being taken at the government level. Calls for reducing Israel’s poverty rate (18.8% overall and 31% for childhood poverty, with some communities suffering poverty rates over 50%) and accompanying proposals have been put forth in the Knesset. Yet funds still fall short of carrying out many of the good intentions. Israel’s economy overall is not in crisis but many of its citizens are, and they are falling further and further behind with ramifications for the future strength of Israel.

Why timely action is important
Even though these developments are a social issue, the reason to act is not primarily social or ideological but economic and strategic. Excessive inequality implies wasted potential, which by some estimates cost 2-3% in GDP growth. This is poor business and leaves Israel less leeway to bolster its defence systems or its social and educational programmes.

The solutions are out there
Israelis continue to display a high level of societal ethos but this is very much a real crisis, which is why action at both the grassroots and governmental level is necessary to change the negative trends.

The ICEJ wants to be an active partner in these efforts, which is the reason we want to brief our readers on the backdrop for ICEJ Aid’s efforts and projects in Israeli society. Indeed, because of the political gridlock and sensitivities, some people see dedicated non-profit organizations, such as the ICEJ, as the best way forward. Our strength lies in building strong partnerships and nimbly implementing workable programmes and solutions.

The ICEJ wants to actively tackle this problem and help Israel’s down and out get back in the game and up to speed with the successful sectors of the start-up nation.
ALIYAH AFTER ARRIVAL

By Dan Herron

From take-off in Addis Ababa to touchdown on Ben Gurion’s tarmac, the flight time is roughly 5 hours. Truly arriving in the Promised Land, however, is a much longer endeavour. Aliyah is both an event and a process, especially if you are an Ethiopian immigrant to Israel.

A basic metric such as everyday cost of living rockets when moving from Ethiopia to Israel. At the same time, your earning power as a new immigrant from a developing county is likely to plummet due to the challenges of participating in a modern economy, regardless of your will to work. Despite these hurdles, Ethiopian Aliyah to Israel is a special type of investment that offers great returns. Therefore, the ICEJ is privileged to invest in the longer-term trajectory of Ethiopian immigrant integration into the Land of Israel.

One particular journey began in 2014 with a large family arriving from Ethiopia to settle in Israel’s desert capital, Beersheba. One of the family’s teenage daughters was already carrying an offshoot to a family of her own, though the father of the child settled in a different town in Israel.

A few years later, the now 18-year-old mother, having difficulty managing her finances and finding employment, was referred to a mentoring program for new immigrants sponsored by the ICEJ. Communicative challenges in mastering Hebrew, shyness and lack of confidence were exacerbating the situation, causing her to remain on the sidelines, unable to realise her potential. However, her situation could be turned around with guidance, understanding, and someone to help her tackle the challenges before her.

Revital, the mentor who came alongside this lost young girl, reports, “The work with her was very slow and full of challenges.” Yet the young mother also displayed
Each new immigrant faces their own unique challenges on the path to integration into Israeli society. God’s people are returning home and the ICEJ is helping to give them a soft landing by easing the stresses of adjustment.

Having a mentor aided in two crucial elements of the integration process: one of a practical dimension and the other personal. She helped the young mother navigate her rights as a new citizen and unlock government assistance in the form of food security and a social pension programmes, a complicated two-year long process usually not granted to teenagers. The personal aspect focused on drawing out the true personality hidden inside this shy girl who didn’t believe in herself. Having a mentor to encourage and show her that she had skills to develop and competencies to nurture was crucial to her growth. ICEJ Aid provided a helping hand during the messy uprooting that took place when this Ethiopian girl left Africa, and now she is successfully replanted in her ancient homeland.

Illustrative photos

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Each new immigrant faces their own unique challenges on the path to integration into Israeli society. Gradually, she gained a better understanding of her own capabilities and competencies, grew in independence, learned how to organise her financial life, and took practical matters into her own hands.

The process has not been without curveballs, though, and a baby daughter of a different father was born during this period. Today, this young mother is slowly finding her place in that she is now able to work almost full-time at a centre for the mentally ill. She is advancing in her language capabilities and has grown in confidence, so much so that Revital has now moved on to help others.

an admirable attitude and put in her full effort to amend and improve her own situation. Gradually, she gained a better understanding of her own capabilities and competencies, grew in independence, learned how to organise her financial life, and took practical matters into her own hands.
Four thousand rockets over the course of 34 days, driving 500,000 people from their homes – this was the fiery crucible of the 2006 Lebanon War that gave birth to Operation LifeShield. Motivated to meet the need for secure and easily accessible bomb shelters, two Jewish Israeli-American businessmen came up with the idea for providing above-ground bomb shelters. Rabbi Shmuel Bowman joined soon after, and in 2009 became the organisation’s Executive Director.

Beyond physical structures – Building communities
Bowman’s name derives from Bojman, which means builder. The impact of his efforts goes beyond concrete and reinforced steel, however. He is also building relations with and between Jews, Christians and Muslims. The mandate and mission of Operation LifeShield is to protect and save ALL lives in Israel, because every person is created in God’s image, and this is why he is an exceptional partner to the ICEJ.

Visionary approach to reconciliation
This May, Bowman visited ICEJ’s German branch, galvanizing his audience with the following visionary words, “Picture this sight: Shelters built by Jews, donated by Christians, delivered to a Bedouin Muslim village! Messiah is on his way! What makes this seemingly optimistic attitude truly remarkable and profound is Bowman’s own family history. Most of his family on his maternal grandfather’s side perished in the Holocaust. As a grandson of Holocaust survivors, Bowman has made several visits to Germany. Yet his approach to reconciliation is both soothing and sombre, “You cannot sweep history under the rug.” It remains too “dark” and the wounds are still too raw. “[How can Jews who were not in the Holocaust forgive on behalf of others? And how can young Germans continue to carry the guilt and ask forgiveness on behalf of previous generations?]” Despite the lack of a conclusive solution, there is a way forward, and Bowman seeks to overcome the ruined past by building the future, forging new relations between disparate communities, both in Israel and abroad.

The ICEJ partnership
Rabbi Bowman deeply values his ongoing partnership with the ICEJ, which has lasted for over 10 years. He believes that the Christian Embassy does not have a “deeply hidden agenda, other than standing with Israel.” He continues to convey to other Israelis, “‘Comfort, Comfort my people’ is the marching orders for the ICEJ (...) They are an organisation that recognises the fulfilment of prophecy in the land of Israel.”

The ICEJ recognises their partnership with an indispensable and nimble partner, who effectively liaises with Homefront Command to channel projects and resources to where they are needed the most. Operation LifeShield is a dedicated, selfless, and powerful organisation that goes into dangerous situations to deliver bomb shelters to save as many lives as possible. Shmuel and his team do not shy away from entering war zones. During Operation Protective Edge in 2014, while everyone else was running from cities or towns under heavy bombardment, Shmuel and his team drove in with rockets flying over their heads. They are committed to completing their mission of delivering bomb shelters to help save as many lives as possible!

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"ISRAEL IS COMING BACK TO AFRICA"

BY APOSTLE J. AARON WRIGHT, SNR

Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, visits Liberia for the ECOWAS Summit

The 51st Ordinary Summit of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was attended by 15 West African States and the Prime minister of Israel. This event is remarkable for two reasons: it was the first Economic Summit to be held in Liberia and the first to be guested by a non-African leader.

The two-day Summit began on Saturday, 4 June 2017, in Liberia’s Harbel, Margibi County. All ECOWAS delegates were present with the exception of the king of Morocco who cancelled his trip due to tensions between Israel and his country.

Prime Minister Netanyahu was nonetheless welcomed and received by Liberian president and outgoing chairperson, Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) Liberia’s secretary and Margibi county membership. Netanyahu later spoke to ECOWAS delegates at the summit on the theme: ISRAEL IS COMING BACK TO AFRICA.

ICEJ-Liberia headed by Apostle J. Aaron Wright Snr welcomed the prime minister with a host of ICEJ churches from all over the city. Due to the intense security measures, a grand march showing welcoming banners was conducted through the main street of the city, followed by an indoor programme in honour of the prime minister of Israel with more than five hundred in attendance. The programme was mainly focused on the development of the churches in Liberia and its relationship with Israel. Representative Apostle J. Aaron Wright was the keynote speaker focusing on this theme: LIBERIA-ISRAELI RELATIONSHIP PAST AND PRESENT. Overall, the programme was a huge success!
ICEJ focuses Herzliya Conference on Growing Christian Support for Israel

The Christian Embassy was a major contributor at the annual Herzliya Policy Conference in June, delivering a strong message that Christian support for Israel has become a strategic asset for the Jewish state and that Israeli leaders and policymakers need to give due weight and attention to this growing movement in the decades to come.
ICEJ President Dr Jürgen Bühler delivers the opening address at the annual Herzliya Policy Conference.

“I know for many of you it seems strange that the representative of an evangelical Christian organisation is addressing you at the opening session of the Herzliya conference,” Dr Bühler stated. “However, there is a major demographic shift taking place in the world today that is so significant that in the years to come Israel and this conference cannot ignore it any longer. Over recent decades the global Evangelical community has become the fastest growing religion in the world, and is on the way to overtake Catholicism… I want to challenge you to think about the strategic opportunity that the Evangelical world can offer to Israel today and in the future.”

The panel discussion the next day was moderated by ICEJ Senior Spokesman David Parsons, and Adam Abrams of the Jewish News Service reported, “...one session stood out from the rest due to how it opened: with prayer, “Heavenly Father, we thank you for this time of engagement together between Israel and the Jewish people and Christian friends...we just ask that this be productive and effective.”

Panel participants moved on to provide first-hand accounts from all five continents on the expanding influence of pro-Israel Christians worldwide.

North America was represented by Revd Jerry Johnson, president of the National Religious Broadcasters, who explained why he and so many other American Christians support Israel. “The Jewish people have been a blessing for Christianity,” he said. “When you read the Hebrew Scriptures you read about liberty, freedom and the rule of law. Israel stands alone in this region in defence of these values.”

Speaking for Latin America, Revd Luis Fernandez Solares, national director for ICEJ-Guatemala, described the many efforts Hispanic Evangelicals are undertaking on Israel’s behalf, such as holding mass rallies and dedicating streets and public squares to Israel. He noted that recent studies confirm Latin America is increasingly Evangelical, and therefore pro-Israel.

Gottfried Bühler, head of the ICEJ’s German branch, insisted that despite a rise in anti-Semitism and the BDS movement, “there is a growing positive trend in many Christian churches across Europe. Not only are growing numbers of Christians becoming more aware that the roots of their faith are in Judaism... but they are also ready to take action.”

Revd Abdou Maiga, ICEJ’s special coordinator for West Africa, noted the recent warming in Israel-Africa relations. “Israel has frankly more friends than enemies in Africa,” he declared. “We are working under the radar of the international media, and even in some cases Israeli authorities are not even aware of our efforts on their behalf.”

Joseph Chou, ICEJ-Taiwan national director, assessed that there are now approximately 200 million pro-Israel evangelical Christians in Asia. “My conservative estimation is that there are at least 20 million Chinese Christians who are praying for Israel in their morning, weekly and monthly prayer meetings.”

Akiva Tor, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ended the roundtable by affirming that Israel “sees the success of Christian Zionism as an important national interest.”
The ICEJ Publications Team has said goodbye to a highly valued publications director.

Estera Wieja began her career at the ICEJ as a volunteer in 2010. Serving effectively and faithfully, she was quickly given additional responsibilities and proved herself worthy of taking on the responsibility for the ICEJ’s main publication, the Word from Jerusalem. During her time at the ICEJ, Estera has been a true asset to her superiors and an inspiration to her fellow servants in Christ. Her degree in journalism and personal accomplishments as a writer helped her set a high standard for the Publications Department. She’s a dear sister in Christ, who will be greatly missed.

Estera will continue to serve Israel in her home country of Poland and in the United States, as she takes on new challenges as a writer and public speaker. Her new book on Israel is set to be published in Poland by the end of 2017.

The new person at the helm of the ICEJ Publications Department is Dan V. Herron, a native of both Denmark and the United States, who has long had a heart and passion for Israel, even before he came to faith. Prior to moving to Israel three years ago, he taught English and Political Science for the Danish Armed Forces. Dan has graciously and tenaciously received the baton of Publications Director and is running full steam ahead! 😊
The God Who Answers Prayer!

“Certainly God has heard me; He has attended to the voice of my prayer.” (Psalm 66:19)

BY DAVID PARSONS

We are very grateful for all those who have taken part in our Isaiah 62 Prayer Campaign over the past six years. Today, thousands of believers, prayer groups and entire churches from dozens of nations are joining with us every Wednesday to pray for Israel, the region and the ICEJ. It has turned into more than just a prayer initiative and is now a global prayer movement with great power and potential to impact heaven, and thereby the earth.

The ICEJ recently had a clear answer to one of our prayer concerns, which we are eager to share with you. Last year, we urged everyone to pray that the Israeli government would allow the final remnant of Ethiopian Jewry to come home to Israel. The cabinet then made a historic decision to allow the last 9,000 Jews in Gondar and Addis Ababa to make Aliyah. The first two flights of the renewed Ethiopian Aliyah landed last fall, which was sponsored by the ICEJ. Yet, new obstacles arose, both in Israel and in Ethiopia. It seemed like the Ethiopian Aliyah would again be delayed for years. Even still, we pressed on in prayer calling on the Lord God to open wide the door for the last of this ancient Jewish community to return to their people and nation. He has answered our cry!

In late May, the Israeli government decided once again to resume the Ethiopian Aliyah, and three more flights sponsored by the ICEJ have already arrived at Ben-Gurion Airport. During a recent visit to the Knesset, our leadership was approached by two different officials who congratulated the ICEJ for successfully lobbying the government to let the flights begin once more. They insisted it was our pressure which had finally swung the door wide open for the Ethiopian Aliyah. Yet, the only real lobbying we have been doing is calling out to God to make it happen. God has done this, and we praise Him alone for the victory!

So please be encouraged that our prayers are being heard. God has attended to our voice!

Root and Fruit

This year, I was blessed to be sponsored by the ICEJ UK to attend the annual pastors and leaders conference in Jerusalem. We visited the site where the Ark rested in Shiloh, and while I was praying I looked down and saw a root on the ground. Picking up the root, I felt God tell me to take it back home. Before going to Israel, my hope and prayer was that I would be a blessing to Israel and also to bring something of powerful spiritual nature back to the UK. And the Lord answered.

Returning home to my congregation, I shared about the root in a sermon, saying, “I believe God has sent me back with something, and I will pray for anyone that wants prayer to receive what God has for them.” Most of the congregation came forward. Nearly the entire youth group came forward for prayer, prayed for each other, and some even started speaking in tongues for the first time. After praying for everyone, the young people then prayed for me.

When I talk about what the root symbolises, I remind people who are born again that they are now grafted into a different family tree. The roots of their family line are now found in Israel and go back to Jesus, David and Abraham. What a family we belong to and what a heritage! I encourage people to boast about our ‘great uncle’ Paul, and our ‘great-great-great grandfather’ Moses. With that heritage behind us, how can we fail?
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Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: “May they prosper who love you.” Ps 122:6