PROTECTING
THOSE WHO PROTECT
JERUSALEM

SURGE IN
RUSSIAN ALIYAH
Dear Friends,

This year started with the world removing sanctions from a nation that is probably the greatest supporter and financier of terrorism – the country of Iran. Iranian President Rouhani was quick to offer his analysis: “The only ones who do not rejoice about the deal are Israel and radical elements in America” – referring to the more conservative-minded group of US citizens.

That same week, the European Union added another statement regarding the labeling law which said all agreements with Israel would only apply to Israel, not anybody living in what the Bible calls Judea or Samaria. While this is a politically problematic resolution, of far greater concern is the spiritual and moral foundation of these decisions. Iran, a terror state which publicly executed more than 700 people in the first half of 2015 alone, has now been politically and economically rewarded for a questionable compromise on their nuclear program. At the same time Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East, is being punished and pressured to make concessions to a regime that refused to engage in the basic principles of the free world.

The prophet Zechariah challenges the rich and wealthy nations of the world who “are at ease” (Zech. 1:15). Although it appeared the nations wanted to help, the prophet saw it was done “with evil intent.” Today, the rich and free world offers much well-meaning advice to solve the problems of the Middle East. But I wonder what their true intentions are? Even before the sanctions on Iran were finally lifted, the trade ministers of Europe were lining up to meet with their Iranian counterparts, securing future deals with a regime that still imprisons countless Christians for their faith.

The prophet Joel saw this scenario unfolding more than 2500 years ago. “They cast lots for my people and traded boys for prostitutes; they sold girls for wine to drink” (Joel 3:3). In other words, in order to safeguard their prosperity and live at ease they were willing to sacrifice the people of God.

The same prophets, however, also see a time of reckoning coming when God will establish his justice here on earth. In the meantime, God calls us to pursue all things that are “true, noble, just, pure, and praiseworthy” (Phil. 4:8). As a ministry we are committed to continue doing just that in 2016. Please stand with us as we stand with what God is doing here in the land.

I pray that 2016 will become a year of blessing and spiritual breakthrough for you, and I hope that you enjoy reading this new issue of the Word From Jerusalem.

Yours in Christ,

Dr. Jürgen Bühler
ICEJ Executive Director

**COVER PHOTO:**
Old City of Jerusalem at night.

**FOR MAGAZINE ARCHIVES**
visit www.icejusa.org/wfj

---

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

ICEJ

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem was established in 1980 in recognition of the biblical significance of all of Jerusalem and its unique connection to the Jewish people. Today the ICEJ represents millions of Christians, churches, and denominations to the nation and people of Israel. We recognize in the restoration of Israel the faithfulness of God to keep His ancient covenant with the Jewish people. Our main objectives are:

- To stand with Israel in support and friendship;
- To equip and teach the worldwide Church regarding God’s purposes with Israel and the nations of the Middle East;
- To be an active voice of reconciliation between Jews, Christians, and Arabs and to support the churches and congregations in the Holy Land.

From its head offices in Jerusalem, the ICEJ reaches out into more than 140 countries worldwide, with branch offices in over 80 nations.

Our vision is:

- To reach every segment of Israel’s society with a Christian testimony of comfort and love, and
- To reach and actively represent to the support of denominations, churches, and believers from every nation on earth.

The Christian Embassy is a non-denominational faith-based ministry supported by the voluntary contributions of our members and friends across the globe. We invite you to join with us as we minister to Israel and the Jewish people worldwide by donating to the ongoing work and witness of the ICEJ.

---

**CREDITS**

**Executive Director** Dr. Jürgen Bühler
**International Director** Juha Ketola
**Editor/Communications Director** Estera Wieja
**Graphic Design/ Illustrator** Peter Ecerroad, Patricia Ecerroad
**Copy Editor** Juliane Stark
**Administration** David van der Walt, Wim van der Zande
**Photography** ICEJ Staff & Branches, iStock, Wikimedia, Getty Images, Reuters

The New King James Bible is used for all Bible references unless otherwise noted.

**Word From Jerusalem** is published by the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. Word From Jerusalem has no subscription price and is supported through contributions worldwide. The ICEJ-USA Branch is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with offices in Tennessee, Florida, and Washington, DC. All gifts to this ministry are tax-deductible according to United States law.

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN EMBASSY JERUSALEM - USA
P.O. Box 332974, Murfreesboro, TN 37133

Support our ministry online at:  www.icejusa.org
WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT?


BY DR. JÜRGEN BÜHLER
Watchman, what of the night?" is the desperate cry for help that was heard in the times of Isaiah the prophet. Israel had just witnessed the rise of the Assyrian Empire, one of the most ruthless empires in recorded history. Their influence rapidly spread through the entire ancient world and was even at Israel’s doorstep. In this time of trouble, when violence and lawlessness increased, the desperate cry to the watchman became: “What about this increasing darkness in our world? What is happening to us? Watchman, do you have an answer for us?”

As we enter the year 2016, this cry for help and clarity is also heard today. Dark clouds are everywhere. In the United States, the church finds itself in a battle for the very soul of their nation. Europe has been inundated by an unprecedented flood of more than one million mostly Muslim refugees. At the same time, a new level of terrorism descended on France while Germany entered into the New Year with high-level security threats from Islamic terrorism.

The economic success story of the European Union is endangered not only by the Greek national crisis, but also the combined pressures of escalating terrorism and an influx of refugees. If we look at Africa, we see an increased presence of radical Islamist groups like Boko Haram. The Middle East remains in a state of severe instability; not only are Iraq and Syria falling apart before our eyes, but we also see instability in other countries like Jordan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is being released by the West from its economic sanctions, while continuing to utter threats and incite violence against Israel and the USA. At the same time, the European Union is issuing a labeling law against Israel, the only democracy in the region. All Israeli products from so-called “occupied territories” are expected to be labeled and are thus under the scrutiny of the boycott. While the USA continues to withdraw as an ordering world power, Russia, China, and Turkey have quickly filled the resulting power vacuum in the Middle East.

In short, our world is undergoing significant changes, which will dramatically alter world history and future events. The result is insecurity - even within the church. As in the time of Isaiah, “Watchman, what of the night?” is the desperate question many people have in their hearts today.

THE MORNING COMES!
However, what is far more intriguing is the brief answer offered by Isaiah’s watchman: “The morning comes, and also the night.” This surprising response was contrary to natural laws, and to any human experience. Never did the night and the morning arrive at the same time. The watchman seems confused, and not able to make up his mind about which is coming, the night or the day.

Regardless of how illogical this answer may sound, it is the answer given by God to the people throughout history. Oftentimes, as circumstances grew darker and darker, suddenly the morning star announced divine hope and redemption. The pages of the Bible are full of hopeless situations, where it appeared darkness was spreading, unchallenged and ever increasing, but it was precisely at these moments when the greatest triumphs were then achieved.

All seemed hopeless when the Midianites harassed the nation of Israel, when the strongmen Goliath and Haman each threatened the people of Israel, or when the army of Egypt descended upon the Jews, without a means of escape at the shores of the Red Sea. It was exactly at that moment, when all hope was gone and night came like a flood that godly men cried out, “The morning comes!”

THE MORNING STAR
One of the names referring to Jesus in the Bible is the “bright morning star” (Rev 22:16). This tells us that no matter how dark it is around us, if Jesus lives in our hearts, there is always hope for a breakthrough.

The morning star is often seen as a glaring light in the dark sky, announcing the imminent arrival of the dawn. There is something unique about the morning star. Since ancient times the planet Venus, which is the brightest of the night luminaries, was referred to as the morning star. But surprisingly enough, Venus is not only considered to be the “morning star,” but at certain times of the year it is also the “evening star,” announcing the approaching night. Isn’t it amazing how the very same sign in the sky can be both the herald of the approaching night, and the harbinger of the coming morning?

In my experience, there are two types of Christians who, although they both read the very same Bible, have very different perspectives. Many Christians – often western – read the prophecies of the Bible about the future and see a rather devastating message of darkness, gloom, and decay awaiting the church and the world. However, if you visit some home churches of China you would hear a completely different message. A brother from China recently told me: “In China we are so excited, because the prophetic word promises us that the whole earth will be covered by the knowledge of the glory of the Lord like the waters cover the sea!” He clearly was expecting global revival!

Not long ago we visited a large church movement in Nigeria, which is actively training young Christians in prayer and academics.
to become the future leaders of their country. In some Latin American countries, like Guatemala, more than 50% of the population have become born-again believers. These are churches filled with hope for what God can do!

In other words, some believers are evening star Christians, and some are morning star Christians. Reading the same Bible, some see mainly darkness approaching, while others are filled with hope. The truth is that the watchman saw both. He was enough of a realist to see the night coming, but the first response that passed his lips was to announce the coming morning dawn.

THE GOD OF HOPE
We need to remember that one of the three main trademarks of the church is to bring hope (1 Cor. 13:13). Hope does not disappoint (Rom. 5:5), and it provides an anchor for our souls (Heb. 6:19). God is called a God of hope (Rom. 15:13), which means He identifies His own character with hope. Therefore, we should never give up our confession of hope (Heb. 10:23). No matter what the newspapers, political pundits, and even end-times experts might be telling you, never give up your hope!

The answer that the watchman gave some 2,700 years ago in the time of Isaiah is still valid today: “The morning comes and also the night!” Yes, darkness is spreading across the world in many places. The world is shaking and insecurity is increasing on many levels. But, there remains one rock that cannot be shaken and that is the Kingdom of God!

I was greatly encouraged by the extraordinary story of Rees Howells in the book The Intercessor. In the midst of Europe’s darkest hour, when Hitler’s armies were advancing on every level, a group of 100 intercessors gathered at a Bible college in Wales. There they prayed strategically not only for the downfall of Hitler, but they also declared victory over Nazi Germany when they appeared to be invincible. The two main things that inspired and motivated Howells were his understanding that the Gospel of Jesus Christ needed to go out to “every creature,” and that the return of the Jews to their homeland was imminent. Therefore, he concluded that it was impossible for Hitler to succeed in his operation. In one of the darkest chapters of European history, Howells could see the morning star, even though his hope was deferred for several years.
As the Babylonian, Egyptian, and Assyrian threats pressed in against the Kingdom of Israel, the prophet Isaiah brought a message of incredible hope. In a time when huge international players threatened the sovereignty of his homeland, and with moral decay spreading throughout Israel, Isaiah found hope in the promised Messiah. “The government will be upon his shoulders. And his name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end…” (Isaiah 9:6–7). Supreme authority is given in heaven and on earth to Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul understood that every “throne, dominion, principality and authority” (Col 1:16) are under His sovereignty and need to serve His purposes.

**Kingdom Expansion**

But Isaiah saw something that excites me even more, He not only revealed these powerful attributes of our Savior, but also boldly stated that His Kingdom is in an endless mode of expansion and growth: “Of the increase of His government there is no end.” Therefore, it did not surprise me to hear from a friend in Lebanon that in the midst of ISIS causing havoc in the name of Islam, the churches are full of men with long beards and women in hijabs who are seeking Jesus. They also reported that a wonderful move of God is taking place among Muslim refugees.

From another mission’s leader we even heard of underground church growth in Saudi Arabia and in Iran, where a historic revival is taking place. My son, who attends a Bible school in Germany, reported a few weeks ago that in one evening service at their camp nine Syrian refugees gave their lives to Jesus! A pastor from Berlin also shared with us that several churches in his city are packed with refugees coming to Christ.

It is true that at times God will shake a nation, and even our lives, in order to accomplish His purposes. The prophet Haggai foresaw a great and final shaking which will come “once more” over the entire world and even the heavens. But the ultimate outcome will be that in the midst of these troublesome times, God will build His temple: “For thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; and I will shake all nations, [...] and I will fill this temple with glory,’ says the LORD of hosts. [...] ‘The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,’ says the LORD of hosts ...” (Haggai 2:6–9). The apostle Paul also saw the church as triumphant, greeting her bridegroom as a beautiful and spotless bride. True, some will give in to pressure, temptation, and the attractions of this world. But it is the grace of God which can carry us through and make us overcomers!

No darkness can stop the Kingdom of God! On the contrary, often it is darkness that He uses as His vehicle to come to our rescue (Ps. 18:4-12). The prophet Daniel saw that even in a time when unprecedented trouble and darkness comes “…such as never was since there was a nation,” there will be those “who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever” (Daniel 12:1-3).

Therefore, as times grow more difficult, it is not a time to despair but to strengthen our foundations on that which cannot be shaken. The only unshakable entity is – and will be – the Kingdom of God, so it needs to be our top priority. Let us surrender completely to our King and set our priorities right where they need to be, His Kingdom and His righteousness need to be our highest aspiration. Its expansion can be expected even in our times; there is hope for the church in every nation. Since the morning comes to break every darkness, make a resolution today to be a morning star Christian. ☁️
THE ICEJ PRAYER INITIATIVE
Throughout time and history, nations and individuals have influenced God’s hand as he forms their lives and destinies in His created world. Their choices determine their experience while journeying through this life, as well as where they will end up after their last breath has been breathed on earth. The response from the heart towards the Lord our God determines the future – both in time and eternity.

We are now in the year 2016 and in the light of God’s Word we want to evaluate, discuss, and see what lies ahead for us as nations. This will equip us to pray according to the will of God, and He will hear us (1 John 5:14-15).

MOLDING A VESSEL
The word of the Lord came to the prophet Jeremiah to go down to the Potter’s house; once there He would open Jeremiah’s ears and cause him to hear a timely word from God’s throne (Jeremiah 18). So, the prophet entered the house and began watching the potter make vessels out of clay. If a vessel became marred while the potter was working at the wheel, he began again and turned it into another shape; however the potter saw it to be good and fit.

Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: “O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?” God was reminding Jeremiah of His sovereignty: as Creator, He alone has absolute power over human beings who are His creation. He shapes us as He wishes and He is not accountable to us. This overwhelming sovereignty of God to be able to form and shape individuals and nations is our hope here on earth!

“It is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy” (Rom. 9:16). We don’t rely on our own works, but can rest securely at the center of His good will. In other words, even when we are weak and sinful, we simply turn to Him who is sovereign and respond to Him in faith – it is fully within His grasp to take an impossible situation and make life well again.
THE GRACIOUS AND AWESOME GOD
Even the nations, their corporate life and destiny, can change and be renewed. As the Lord continued speaking to Jeremiah in the potter’s house, He revealed His principles and ways of dealing with the nations. The heart’s response toward God plays a major role in what purpose the vessel in the hand of the divine Potter becomes (Jer. 18:7-10). We are told how obedience to God’s truth will produce blessing, and how disobedience to His voice will bring judgment and destruction.

Through the prophet’s word, God was warning the people that without repentance and without turning from their evil ways as a nation, judgment would soon befall them. He also said, however, that with one turn of the hand and the wheel He could alter the shape of the clay, making it anew to completely transform their impending judgment into a wonderful blessing (Jer. 18:7-8).

Unfortunately, the people did not repent and disaster came in 586 BC when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon destroyed the Jerusalem Temple and took the people into exile. When we see any nation with an unrepentant heart and rampant evil, this example should remind us to warn the people, offer them the message of repentance, and point them towards hope. Thanks to the Prophet Jeremiah, we know how to pray for a nation in danger of impending judgment.

ISRAEL, GOD’S PEOPLE
Because of His loyal covenantal love, the God of Israel has promised a glorious salvation for His chosen Jewish people. After regathering them home from the four corners of the earth, He has promised to cleanse them from all filthiness, give them a new heart, and cause them to walk in obedience with Him! (Ezekiel 36:24-28). Israel as a nation shall be restored spiritually, and will be saved within their ancient homeland (Rom. 11:26-27)!

But, for this to actually happen, the modern day Israeli people need to repent from their unbelief and sinful lifestyles. This is inevitable, since God Himself has already promised to pour out His Spirit in order to move them and to give them the gift of repentance (Zech. 12:10, Acts 5:31). Thus we know what to pray on behalf of Israel.

MIDDLE EAST: SYRIA AND IRAN
We also want to pray for other nations in the Middle East, since they are foretold a terrible judgment and even more tragic disasters unless they repent. Syria is among these nations. The catastrophe in Syria has caused extreme and indescribable suffering for her people which continues until today. Even with the USA, Russia, and Iran’s involvement, the death toll in the area shows no decline. Only a change of heart and mind, repentance, and a return back to the ways of the Creator will stop the current insanity and shameful human behavior in its sinful and unrepentant state in Syria. Let’s pray fervently on behalf of the suffering Syrian people, their leadership, the rebel groups, and the world leaders involved!

Iran is emerging from isolation after signing a nuclear agreement with the West. Attention is now focused on business relations, especially in the oil and airline industries; but world leaders are not publicly addressing the need for the Iranian leadership to cease threats to Israel. According to the New York Times from Dec 19, 2015, Iran is also in the grip of a seven-year drought that shows no sign of breaking, and many experts believe this may be the new normal. Even a return of past rainfall levels may not be enough to avert the water crisis. So, without repentance, a very difficult and sad route lies ahead for Iran.

But there is a God in Heaven who has all power on earth. In the midst of all this chaos, grassroots revival among the Iranians is strong! Millions have come to faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, and are also blessing Israel as a result. Intercede with us for Iran, as the revival continues and spreads to other nations in the Middle East! 😃

ISAIAH 62 PRAYER CAMPAIGN
As prayer warriors, we do have a say in the future fate of our nations. The response from the heart of the people to their God determines their path. Let’s pray together for Israel and for her neighbors!

We invite you to join the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem in the global movement of prayer by using our Isaiah 62 monthly prayer points whenever you pray corporately or individually. Pray with us on the first Wednesday of every month as intercession resounds around the globe throughout the day.

Sign up online: www.icejusa.org/Isaiah62

ISAIAH 62 PRAYER CAMPAIGN

ISAIAH 62 PRAYER CAMPAIGN

ISAIAH 62 PRAYER CAMPAIGN
When the Arab Spring began in 2011, no one expected the changes that we are now witnessing in the Middle East. Generally speaking, revolutions are not difficult to start; finding people who are dissatisfied with the current state of affairs, specifically in this region, is not a problem. When the current uprising in Syria started, people were fairly certain that conflict would not end any time soon. However, no one expected that over half of the population of this nation of 17 million would be displaced and more than 200,000 killed.

With the rise of Islamic State in Iraq and Syria ancient Christian communities in and around Mosul in northern Iraq (ancient Nineveh) and those in northeast Syria were forced to flee to southeast Turkey and into Iraqi Kurdistan. When a key battle took place between Syrian Kurds and Islamic State forces in 2014, people displaced from Kobane also joined these refugees. This increased the already large number of refugees in Turkey to almost 2 million since the outbreak of the Syrian Civil war.

In short, the Middle East has not seen this scale of refugee crisis since the First World War, which interestingly enough is part of the reason we are in this situation today. Understanding what happened in WWI is essential to understanding why the Middle East is in upheaval today.

Nevertheless, followers of Jesus who are serving God in the midst of the refugee crisis have an unprecedented opportunity to reach those in greatest need of hope with messages of the Messiah’s grace and truth, unlike any time in the last 100 years. The situation, humanly speaking, is hopeless and the tragedy, overwhelming. But it is precisely during these times of darkness that the light shines brightest (John 1:5).

Many Bible readers are now taking encouragement from a portion of scripture in the book of Isaiah, specifically...
chapter 19, where God speaks of a highway of worship and reconciliation that encompasses people who were formerly enemies but were becoming a “blessing in the midst of the earth” (Is. 19:24). During 2014-2015 teams of young people from Israel and the nations have traveled this “ancient highway” to provide aid to the refugees, encourage long-term Christian workers serving in the region, and support local churches with a message of hope, especially for those living in the shadow of death.

In subsequent ministry trips to the Kobani region in southeastern Turkey, teams bringing aid also led discipleship schools for Kurdish women displaced by the war. This was accomplished by partnering with local Kurdish believers who also serve other refugees. Two new churches have been established in the city of Suruc, made up of mostly young people of Muslim backgrounds. Other teams traveled to Iraqi Kurdistan to bring aid to Yazidi refugees displaced from Sincar Mountain and living in camps in the Dohuk region.

Our ongoing relationship with a focused group serving out of Israel to these nations, called ‘Derech Avraham’ (Abraham’s Journey), has allowed us at the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem to meet with Christian and governmental leaders from these regions to pray for and support them during this time.

---

**HERE ARE SOME PRACTICAL POINTS TO GUIDE YOUR PRAYER GROUP:**

1. **Jesus taught that in the end of days the wheat and weeds would grow together, signaling a time of both tremendous evil and a promised harvest.** As a result, it is important that we pray according to Scripture for “the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” (Matt. 9:38). It is a simple prayer, but one of great importance at this time.

2. **Pray also for protection and boldness for both the local Christian leaders and the international Christian workers, as well as the entire Christian communities in southeast Turkey and northern Iraq.** The needs are overwhelming and reaching out in love to these refugees is a fulltime job. We hear daily testimonies of Muslims coming to faith in Jesus, but it doesn’t end there; they need to be discipled in their faith.

3. **Winter is the most crucial time to pray for the refugees in both southeastern Turkey and northern Iraq.** Many of them live in abandoned buildings, temporary shelters, or even tents, none of which are suitable housing in winter, which can also be very harsh in this region. Pray for the aid to reach these camps in time.

4. **Finally, the sense of hopelessness is pervasive, especially with the Islamic State forces advancing as close to some of these camps as 20-30 kilometers (about 15 miles).** When both Turkey and Russia joined the conflict, the situation became even more complicated. As a result, massive numbers of the refugee population began to flee to Europe. Pray that God would meet them either on the way or in their host countries in the West.
LATE LAST YEAR, the European Commission issued a directive to twenty-eight national governments in Europe instructing them to no longer recognize Israeli goods originating beyond the 1967 borders as ‘Made in Israel.’

While EU bureaucrats downplayed the directive as merely offering technical guidance in response to concerns raised by various governments, a number of prominent Members of the European Parliament, legal experts, and activists joined a delegation of ICEJ National Directors and staff in Brussels to challenge the move, arguing it was the latest step in a growing boycott of Israel.

Opening the ICEJ-sponsored symposium on December 2, Hannu Takkula, a Member of the European Parliament from Finland, warned that the guidelines, “Would not only harm economic relations, but they would also have an unfortunate impact on cooperation in every field.”

Peter Östman, a parliamentarian from Finland, put it more succinctly, “At the same time that the EU is lifting sanctions against Iran,” he argued, “it is building a boycott against Israel.”

Speakers at the one-day gathering in the European Parliament included international legal expert, Prof. Avi Bell; Father Gabriel Naddaf, Greek Orthodox priest and founder of the Israeli Christian Empowerment Council (ICRF); and Binyomin Jacobs, Chief Rabbi of the Netherlands. Other participants included Daniel Constanza, Executive Director of the Pentecostal European Fellowship; Dutch MEP, Bas Belder – a member of the European Parliament’s Foreign Affairs Committee – and the ICEJ’s US Outreach Director, Michael Hines.

“This labeling law will only divide Israelis and Palestinians further,” said ICEJ Executive Director, Dr. Jürgen Bühler in a statement released prior to the Symposium. Ironically, the 15,000 Palestinian workers who depend on Israeli factories in the territories for their livelihood are among those most impacted by the ruling. “It’s a one-sided law that unjustly singles out Israel and violates the rules of the World Trade Organization,” Bühler said. “If the EU really wants to promote peace they should stop penalizing those Israelis and Palestinians who are working together to make a living.”

“As a Christian leader, raised in Nazareth, living among the Arab Muslims, I tell you clearly: this decision affects Muslims, Christians, Druze, and all other minority citizens of Israel, not just the Jews,” echoed Father Naddaf. “This labeling of Israeli products is a further betrayal of Christian values in Europe, and it further weakens the Christian spirit in Europe.”

To learn more about the symposium and to read the full ICEJ response to the labeling law go to:  
www.icejusa.org/beyond-labels
BOYCOTTING GOD

BY MICHAEL HINES

When it comes to boycotts, Europe has a lot to live down. On April 1, 1933, Hitler declared a national boycott of Jewish businesses and professionals, the first in a series of actions which paved the way for stripping all Jews of their citizenship rights. In the wake of the German economy’s collapse, the Jewish merchants were easy scapegoats for Hitler’s mesmerizing brand of militant nationalism.

Through the hindsight of history, we now know that this state-sponsored boycott of Jewish goods was simply a precursor to the Holocaust. But to those caught up in the madness of the 1930s Nazi rise to power, there was a certain logic to demonizing Jewish affluence. In the eyes of the average German, it made no sense that the Jews were able to navigate the turbulence of a worldwide depression with greater ease than their Aryan compatriots. There must surely be something inherently evil, they argued, regarding the miraculous nature of Jewish success.

More than 80 years later, we see striking similarities in Europe. The Jewish people are no longer demonized, but the Jewish state most certainly is. During a period of worldwide economic recession, Israel has continued to thrive, outpacing the rest of the world in the fields of high-tech innovation and growth.

And as surely as night follows day, we are beginning to see the emergence of a concerted effort to boycott Israeli goods.

Israel’s success in building a state, against such impossible odds from the ashes of the Holocaust, surely points to the hand of God fulfilling His promises through the prophets. The Bible speaks of the One who scattered Israel regathering them again to their land (Jeremiah 31:8), carrying them home on the shoulders of the Gentiles (Isaiah 49:22), restoring the waste places, and making them flourish again (Ezekiel 36:35).

But to acknowledge this reality requires the world to recognize the sovereignty of the God of Israel, and His faithfulness to His Word. It is easier, it seems, to demonize the Jewish people and boycott Israeli goods, than to acknowledge this one undeniable fact.

People often wonder why the West is so keen to side with those who seek its destruction, and all at the expense of its greatest and most loyal ally in the Middle East. But to acknowledge Israel’s right to exist demands that we acknowledge the One who guarantees her survival; and man has been boycotting Him since the beginning.

People often wonder why the West is so keen to side with those who seek its destruction, and all at the expense of its greatest and most loyal ally in the Middle East. But to acknowledge Israel’s right to exist demands that we acknowledge the One who guarantees her survival; and man has been boycotting Him since the beginning.

People often wonder why the West is so keen to side with those who seek its destruction, and all at the expense of its greatest and most loyal ally in the Middle East. But to acknowledge Israel’s right to exist demands that we acknowledge the One who guarantees her survival; and man has been boycotting Him since the beginning.

People often wonder why the West is so keen to side with those who seek its destruction, and all at the expense of its greatest and most loyal ally in the Middle East. But to acknowledge Israel’s right to exist demands that we acknowledge the One who guarantees her survival; and man has been boycotting Him since the beginning.

People often wonder why the West is so keen to side with those who seek its destruction, and all at the expense of its greatest and most loyal ally in the Middle East. But to acknowledge Israel’s right to exist demands that we acknowledge the One who guarantees her survival; and man has been boycotting Him since the beginning.

People often wonder why the West is so keen to side with those who seek its destruction, and all at the expense of its greatest and most loyal ally in the Middle East. But to acknowledge Israel’s right to exist demands that we acknowledge the One who guarantees her survival; and man has been boycotting Him since the beginning.

People often wonder why the West is so keen to side with those who seek its destruction, and all at the expense of its greatest and most loyal ally in the Middle East. But to acknowledge Israel’s right to exist demands that we acknowledge the One who guarantees her survival; and man has been boycotting Him since the beginning.

People often wonder why the West is so keen to side with those who seek its destruction, and all at the expense of its greatest and most loyal ally in the Middle East. But to acknowledge Israel’s right to exist demands that we acknowledge the One who guarantees her survival; and man has been boycotting Him since the beginning.

People often wonder why the West is so keen to side with those who seek its destruction, and all at the expense of its greatest and most loyal ally in the Middle East. But to acknowledge Israel’s right to exist demands that we acknowledge the One who guarantees her survival; and man has been boycotting Him since the beginning.

People often wonder why the West is so keen to side with those who seek its destruction, and all at the expense of its greatest and most loyal ally in the Middle East. But to acknowledge Israel’s right to exist demands that we acknowledge the One who guarantees her survival; and man has been boycotting Him since the beginning.

People often wonder why the West is so keen to side with those who seek its destruction, and all at the expense of its greatest and most loyal ally in the Middle East. But to acknowledge Israel’s right to exist demands that we acknowledge the One who guarantees her survival; and man has been boycotting Him since the beginning.

People often wonder why the West is so keen to side with those who seek its destruction, and all at the expense of its greatest and most loyal ally in the Middle East. But to acknowledge Israel’s right to exist demands that we acknowledge the One who guarantees her survival; and man has been boycotting Him since the beginning.

People often wonder why the West is so keen to side with those who seek its destruction, and all at the expense of its greatest and most loyal ally in the Middle East. But to acknowledge Israel’s right to exist demands that we acknowledge the One who guarantees her survival; and man has been boycotting Him since the beginning.

People often wonder why the West is so keen to side with those who seek its destruction, and all at the expense of its greatest and most loyal ally in the Middle East. But to acknowledge Israel’s right to exist demands that we acknowledge the One who guarantees her survival; and man has been boycotting Him since the beginning.

People often wonder why the West is so keen to side with those who seek its destruction, and all at the expense of its greatest and most loyal ally in the Middle East. But to acknowledge Israel’s right to exist demands that we acknowledge the One who guarantees her survival; and man has been boycotting Him since the beginning.
Our Mission Is Compassion

ICEJ AID IS CONNECTING CHRISTIAN CONCERN TO THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

BY NICOLE YODER

AS THE LORD REGATHERS HIS PEOPLE from around the world, the words of the prophet Isaiah point to a special calling for us in our day: “The sons of foreigners shall build up your walls, and their kings shall minister to you...” (Isaiah 60:10). In 2016, the ICEJ looks forward to a continued partnership with Israel in order to build up her walls through social initiatives that strengthen her people.

These initiatives impact every sector of Israeli society, offering life-changing opportunities for a better future through educational programs, vocational training courses, and mentorship towards employment. Through these efforts, we hope to help build a better future for the disadvantaged, youth at risk, new immigrants, and minorities; while also caring for holocaust survivors and providing immediate aid for crisis situations which arise.

BE A BLESSING IN 2016!
Throughout the year, and across the land of Israel, ICEJ AID represents you by channeling Christian compassion to those who need it most. Your generous gifts enable us to communicate to Israel in word and deed that she is not alone. Together let’s bless the Lord who is doing miracles in our day and who has given us the opportunity to participate in His wonderful works!

Donate to our various projects at: www.icejusa.org/aid

Have you considered coming to Israel in 2016 and allowing us to connect you and your Church family with the people of Israel?

As you interact with the people through hands-on service projects, you’ll gain a greater understanding of the complex reality and the miraculous unfolding story of Israel. Compassionate, practical action by Christians in the land brings much-needed encouragement, while also fostering reconciliation, which breaks down barriers that have been built over centuries.

Contact us at: icejusa@icejusa.org

The ICEJ staff are the ambassadors of the global Church to the people of Israel
IN DECEMBER, a volunteer with the Israeli police force was attacked by a knife-wielding terrorist on the streets of Jerusalem. The attack was meant to take the officer’s life, but since he was wearing a protective vest donated by the ICEJ only days before, the terrorist managed to inflict only superficial cuts to his hands.

“The vest protected me,” the police volunteer told paramedics at the scene.

The vest which shielded this Israeli hero was one of over a hundred purchased with donations from ICEJ supporters and given to Jerusalem’s police volunteers. The campaign to provide these protective life-vests to security personnel – who protect children on playgrounds, commuters on public transportation, and tourists at the city’s many attractions – was the result of last month’s request from the Jerusalem Municipality.

Although often absent from the front pages of major media outlets around the world, the attacks against innocent Israelis and tourists in the country continue to occur on an almost daily basis in Jerusalem and other parts of Israel.

When Israel is in need, the ICEJ is among the first to help! We are providing support services to all terror victims, both direct and indirect. One service is a series of workshops which equips parents to help their children cope with the sharp increase in trauma. ICEJ has partnered with a center which reaches out with comprehensive therapeutic and educational development to every terror victim and family in the land.

By partnering with the ICEJ to protect those who protect Jerusalem, you can show the Israeli people that Christians are concerned about their safety.

Donate today at: www.icejusa.org/aid/israel_in_crisis
Aliyah from Russia is rapidly increasing due to a major recession triggered by falling oil prices and sanctions resulting from the Ukrainian civil war. If you can believe it, Russian Aliyah is now increasing faster than Ukrainian Aliyah!

In the past year, Aliyah from Russia rose by nearly 44%, while Aliyah from Ukraine increased by 34%, due to the continuing skirmishes and a bad economy. Both statistics remind us of the dreadful facts: The situation of Jews in both countries is foreboding. Overall, Aliyah from the former Soviet Union nations increased by about 36%.

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, ICEJ supporters have been faithful in helping the former Soviet Jewry return home to Israel, and today our help is continuously needed!

In many places in the Bible the Lord calls out to the Gentiles to help bring His people home. In Isaiah 49:22 we read: “See. I will beckon to the Gentiles, I will lift up my banner to the peoples; they will carry your sons in their arms and carry your daughters on their shoulders.”

Just as it was in the time of exodus from Egypt, the homecoming of the children of Israel is a witness to the world, and a testimony of the faithfulness of the one true God who keeps His promises.

Russian Reality
Today Russian Jews are moving to Israel in greater numbers mainly because of economic hardships. The Russian ruble is
a “petro-currency” which means that as oil loses value on the market, so does the ruble. Since the slide began over a year ago, the Russian ruble has lost more than half of its value, which devalued everyone’s savings accounts by 50% or more.

This also means every square meter of Russian real estate has lost more than half of its real value. Traveling abroad has become twice as expensive and foreign vacations have become out of reach for most Russians.

One of the hardest hit sectors is commercial aviation, where costs are counted in dollars and euros because most of the airplanes are leased, but people’s income remains in rubles. Wages and salaries have not increased in this period, so airline tickets and accommodations have doubled.

This financial situation has also led some airlines to cancel or cut back on unprofitable flight routes. For instance, Israel’s main airline El Al canceled flights to St. Petersburg and Transaero, a major Russian airline, went bankrupt and ceased operations.

All these factors have impacted not only the Jewry in this geographical region, but also the process of bringing them home to Israel. Arranging flights for Russian Jews to their homeland has become a challenge, as signing contracts for their Aliyah flights has become difficult. Another challenge is increasingly tighter baggage allowance policies, which is a critical element of every family’s journey.

**Help through ICEJ**
The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem was quick to respond and generously sponsored luggage for many of the Jewish families needing assistance at this time. Additionally, the ICEJ increased its program “Aliyah through Finland,” which was in operation already in the 1990s, to relieve some of the pressure in traveling from Russia to Israel.

For more than 25 years Finnish Christians have been inviting Russian Jews to come to Finland on their way to Israel. Today all of the expenses of this journey are paid by an organization in Finland led by the ICEJ. The sponsorship covers all travel costs, including the flight, up to three bags, bus transportation to the airport, and three nights in the homes of Finnish Christians.

The ICEJ has a base in St. Petersburg, which was established in the early 1990s for the purposes of Aliyah. This allows us to help not only the Jewish families in the northwestern region of Russia, but also in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Belarus. Each year the ICEJ assists more than one thousand new immigrants from this region, and the numbers continue to increase. ☺️

**We need your help to bring these Jews home safely!** We live in troubled times, so join with us again to help the Jewry of the Former Soviet Union return to Israel! Make a donation at: [www.icejusa.org/aliyah](http://www.icejusa.org/aliyah)
The ICEJ recently participated in the largest pro-Israel Christian conference ever held in Russia, with over 400 pastors representing church networks from across the vast country convening in Moscow to hear biblical teachings on Israel’s restoration.

ALL THE MAJOR EVANGELICAL denominations were present at the conference, representing some three million Russian Evangelical believers. The gathering was convened by a forum of the leading Protestant bishops of Russia as part of their efforts over recent years to engage in dialogue with the local Jewish community and to learn more about our calling to support Israel.

The ICEJ delegation included David Parsons of the Jerusalem staff, who was a keynote speaker; ICEJ-Russia national director Howard Flower and his wife Elena; violinist Serguei Popov, who now serves as a special ICEJ liaison to the Central Asian republics; and Pastor Elena Ereemeva and her husband Victor, who organize a large delegation of Russian pilgrims to attend the Feast of Tabernacles every year in Jerusalem.

The conference opened with a special joint service with the Jewish community in the Moscow Memorial Synagogue at Russia’s WWII memorial. Among the guests were the Orthodox Chief Rabbi of Russia, Adolf Shayeivich, Jewish Agency representative, Bilana Shahkar, and Russian Parliamentarian, Alla Gerber. Many of the Russian pastors touched the hearts of the Jewish audience with their testimonies of how God has opened their eyes concerning Israel in recent years.

TheICEJ WorLdWIdE
GATHERING IN BRAZIL
BY BARRY DENISON

IN NOVEMBER I was privileged to travel to Brazil to represent the ICEJ and speak on behalf of our ministry. In the city of São Luís, Maranhão, on the northeastern coast of Brazil, I addressed participants of the annual conference of “Igreja da Colheita,” (Church of the Harvest) founded by Bishop Renato Chaves. Each of my three speaking engagements had 2-3,000 people in attendance. In São Luís I was also honored to speak and share about God’s heart for Israel with the church “Ministério Apostólico Internacional Shalom” (International Apostolic Ministry Shalom), founded by Apostle Sílvio Antonio.

I then traveled to Brasília, where the churches of Sara Nossa Terra, founded by Bishop Robson Rodovalho, welcomed me and the mission of ICEJ with great expectancy. I spoke six times over five days in Brasilia and Ceilandia, where the largest meeting was attended by approximately 3,000 Brazilians. My trip ended in Araguari, MG, where I ministered to the “Igreja Cristã Apostólica” (Christian Apostolic Church), led by Pastor Fernanda.

The spiritual hunger of these Brazilian churches was astonishing. Their passion in worship and their response to the teachings of the Word of God were both humbling, and impressive. In many of the services the congregation came forward to pray or to receive prayer, as they humbly embraced the Word and asked the Lord for help to live out these truths in their own lives.

IRISH BRANCH RALLIES FOR ISRAEL

IN LATE NOVEMBER, the ICEJ Irish Branch organized a solidarity rally outside the national Parliament building in Belfast to show support for Israel during the current wave of terror attacks. Several Irish lawmakers joined the rally to express their full support for Israel’s right to defend itself and to protest the recent EU labeling guidelines against Israel. More than 100 Christians from across Ireland took part in the pro-Israel demonstration, spearheaded by ICEJ-Ireland National Director, Brian Silvester.

ICEJ’s David Parsons addressed the crowd, stating that the free world needs to stand with Israel in its fight against terror just as it did with France in the wake of the recent Paris terror attacks. He noted that when France closed its borders, no one accused its leaders of imposing “collective punishment” like they often do with Israel.

Local MP David McIlveen stated that on a recent visit to Ramallah he was shocked to hear a Palestinian official say that it was justified to kill Jews in order to gain an advantage at the negotiating table. “This is not the sort of people you can deal with,” McIlveen insisted. He added that it was hypocritical of Westerners to call for a boycott of Israeli products which he saw were readily available on the shelves of stores in Ramallah.

MP Jim Shannon assured the gathering that he takes every opportunity in the House of Commons to uphold Israel’s right to defend its citizens. Shannon stated that as the only democracy in the Middle East, Israel deserves much more support from the UN than it receives.

In late November, the ICEJ Irish Branch organized a solidarity rally outside the national Parliament building in Belfast to show support for Israel during the current wave of terror attacks. Several Irish lawmakers joined the rally to express their full support for Israel’s right to defend itself and to protest the recent EU labeling guidelines against Israel. More than 100 Christians from across Ireland took part in the pro-Israel demonstration, spearheaded by ICEJ-Ireland National Director, Brian Silvester.

ICEJ’s David Parsons addressed the crowd, stating that the free world needs to stand with Israel in its fight against terror just as it did with France in the wake of the recent Paris terror attacks. He noted that when France closed its borders, no one accused its leaders of imposing “collective punishment” like they often do with Israel.

Local MP David McIlveen stated that on a recent visit to Ramallah he was shocked to hear a Palestinian official say that it was justified to kill Jews in order to gain an advantage at the negotiating table. “This is not the sort of people you can deal with,” McIlveen insisted. He added that it was hypocritical of Westerners to call for a boycott of Israeli products which he saw were readily available on the shelves of stores in Ramallah.

MP Jim Shannon assured the gathering that he takes every opportunity in the House of Commons to uphold Israel’s right to defend its citizens. Shannon stated that as the only democracy in the Middle East, Israel deserves much more support from the UN than it receives.
IN ADDITION to being one of the largest countries in the world with one of the oldest civilizations, India is also the country with the largest number of mosques. In spite of a significant Islamic influence, this densely populated nation in Asia has been an important friend to Israel over the years, but not merely on a political level. Young Israelis often travel to India to get away, and in the past years a small minority of Jews in India, known as the Bnei Menashe, have been returning home to Israel.

The ICEJ has been actively involved with the church in India, and in November Pal Pedersen of ICEJ-Norway visited the local Body of Christ to encourage and teach a biblical perspective on Israel and God’s purposes for mankind. Pedersen’s extensive travels and multiple conferences organized by ICEJ leaders in India yielded much fruit!

Pedersen came to India to meet with numerous pastors and Christian leaders who partner with ICEJ and want to see their country thrive for the Kingdom of God. He first arrived in Delhi, and after ministering to local pastors, he traveled to Punjab, where an ICEJ-sponsored conference was organized for Christian supporters of Israel in the region.

In the state of Chandigarh, Pedersen and Rev. Daniel Padma Rao, the Director of ICEJ-India, ministered to about 200 church pastors and leaders. Some of them heard messages on the calling of Israel for the first time in their lives and they made a commitment that their churches would pray regularly for God’s chosen nation. Another ICEJ conference brought together more pastors in Maharashtra, many of whom experienced a miraculous, healing touch from the Lord!

Over the following days Pedersen and Padma Rao traveled to numerous states in India, preaching the Gospel, teaching them about the promises of God and His love for Israel. The city of Chennai in the state of Tamilnadu hosted an astounding conference, with nearly 3000 people in attendance! It seemed miraculous to see Israeli flags waving and hear the shofars in the middle of India at a Christian conference!

Rev. Padma Rao said the extensive trip around his home country with Pal Pedersen was a tremendous blessing to his people, and they are expecting a great increase in Christian support for Israel in India. The believers in the country were encouraged in their walk with their Savior, but now also dream of visiting Israel, the land of God’s people.

“We were able to preach the Gospel and show the importance of standing together with Israel and the Jewish people in these days,” said Rev. Padma Rao. “We also had very good conversations with the leaders [who] asked many questions about the ICEJ, about Israel, and the situation in the Middle East.”
Patrick Penn, who actively represents ICEJ in his city, regularly meets with other spiritual leaders to inspire them to stand with Israel, and has successfully reached out to the local Jewish community to establish a relationship between their community and the church.

It was my honor to share the vision and mission of ICEJ at a “Quarterly Pastors’ Roundtable” with more than 30 local pastors and leaders. The event was hosted by Pastor Rusty Nelson from the multicultural Rock Family Worship Center.

John and Sally Howard, ICEJ USA Representatives in Atlanta, are active members at Mount Paran Church and, having a huge heart for Israel, are working hard to spread the biblical message regarding Israel far and wide. I was warmly welcomed at a special reception concerning Israel and the ministry of ICEJ at their home. The Associate Pastor of their church, Todd Rainwater, received me at their midweek service, their men’s Bible study (where I introduced our work to their congregation), and I was also invited to teach a Bible class.

Additionally, I visited the Lost Mountain Church of God led by Pastor Keith Bates; a community in Powder Springs, GA, with a passion for missions and for Israel. My next destination was West Palm Beach, Florida. Where I was hosted by the Olive Tree Congregation led by Pastors Michael and Fausta Maass, as well as the AOG Lighthouse Christian Center International Church with Pastor Bill Ilinsky. I was blessed to speak the Word and to see so many open hearts receiving God’s message, from my heart to theirs. 

FROM ISRAEL TO THE USA
BY REV. JUHA KETOLA, ICEJ INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR

IT WAS MY PRIVILEGE to visit several beautiful places in the United States this past November, to strengthen the believers in their support for Israel and also God’s purposes for His people. In partnership with our branch, ICEJ-USA, I had the joy of meeting with Christ-followers in Huntsville, AL; Atlanta, GA; and West Palm Beach, FL.

In Huntsville along with Pastors Patrick and Andrea Penn, I ministered at church services, attended summits for leaders, and shared about the work of ICEJ at a special ‘Israel Day.’

Save the Date
ICEJ USA SUMMER CONFERENCE
Murfreesboro, TN
June 16-18

Please plan to join us.
DO NOT FORGET THE FATHER OF CHRISTIAN ZIONISM

BY DR. JÜRGEN BÜHLER
ICEJ EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As Theodor Herzl's close partner in the early Zionist movement, his activism helped lay the groundwork for establishing a Jewish state in their historic homeland.

He used his connections with European royalty to help Herzl secure meetings with key world leaders. Few people were as passionate and intense in working for Zionism and the Jewish people. Yet even fewer people know his name.

We are speaking of the Reverend William Hechler, a devout Christian who befriended Herzl and became the “foreign minister” of the Zionist movement.

Eighty-five years after his death - the date of which will be remembered this coming January – Hechler is not commemorated across the country that he helped to found. No street bears his name, no structure, no institution. One of the key leaders of the early Zionist movement, and one of the fathers of Christian Zionism, the man that serves as an inspiration for the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, is almost forgotten. Now is the time for the State of Israel to recognize its debt to this man who worked so hard for its establishment.

William Hechler was not the first Christian who recognized the religious importance of the Jewish return to their homeland, but he was the first to work actively alongside the newly-formed Zionist movement. Born in 1845 to a devout Anglican family, Hechler took up the cause of Zionism years before Herzl began his activity. As an Evangelical Christian, Hechler saw the return of Jews to their homeland as a biblical imperative.

Faithful to this commandment, he was looking for Jewish leaders who would get behind the return to Zion. When he read Herzl's booklet on “The Jewish State,” Hechler went immediately and knocked on his door to meet this visionary and encourage him to pursue his dream.

In those days, Hechler served as chaplain of the British Embassy in Vienna, and he used his connections with the German royal family to open doors for Herzl across Europe. It started with a meeting with Frederick I, Grand Duke of Baden, to lay out his plan for Jewish resettlement in Eretz Israel. Hechler also accompanied Herzl on a journey to Palestine, and helped him meet the German Kaiser, Wilhelm II. Hechler also served as a special envoy on behalf of the British prime minister in connection with Herzl's efforts.

Hechler took part in the early Zionist Congresses - and even received special words of gratitude from Herzl for his work. Herzl noted that Hechler and his biblical inspiration had a great impact on his efforts, giving him a sense that he was a modern-day Moses leading his people back to the Promised Land.

Hechler remained an ardent Zionist after Herzl's passing, and was in contact with Jewish and Christian leaders until his death. In the years before World War II, he called for Jews to leave Europe and warned of impending catastrophe. Unfortunately, no one heard him. The story of the close partnership between Herzl and Hechler is told in the book "The Prince and the Prophet," by Claude Duvernoy.

The legacy left by Hechler has not disappeared. Zionist Christian organizations, led by the ICEJ as well as millions of Christians around the world, continue to walk in the path of William Hechler, a great friend of the Jewish people. ☺️
21 - 31 JULY 2016

+ Arise
+ SUMMER TOUR

"THIS TOUR BROUGHT MY FAITH AND BIBLE ALIVE. ISRAEL JUST JAW DROPPED ME WITH HER BEAUTY"  - JOHN

"THE TEACHINGS ARE GREAT, THE PLACES ARE STUNNING AND THE PEOPLE SIMPLY AWESOME"  - LAURA

$1250 USD (EXCLUDING FLIGHTS)

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

REGISTER TODAY
WWW.ARISEGENERATION.ORG
TOUR TO ISRAEL DURING THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES
OCTOBER 13 - 24, 2016
FOR MORE INFORMATION: www.icejusa.org/tours • tours@icejusa.org • (866) 393-5890