Dear Friends,

As I have recently returned to the office from an extended absence due to a serious health situation, I am very delighted to write you. Jesus fully restored me and I can continue in the work to which the Lord has called me – praise and thanks be to God!

The last couple of months we, as a family, went through a difficult time that could have cost me my life. However, in all these weeks, we felt the peace and sustenance of the Lord. We knew that friends around the world were praying for us and that gave us great strength and encouragement. On behalf of my wife, children, and myself, thank you to all who stood with us! I know today, more than ever, that the Lord is mighty to save and His peace was with us even in the valley of the shadow of death. Again, thank you for all your past and ongoing prayers!

I also want to thank the staff and the Board of the ICEJ for standing with us in such an amazing way! You are a great family, and we feel even more privileged to work with you! I especially want to thank our International Director, Juha Ketola, who took my place during my absence. He is a great friend and leader who continued the work with excellence.

I am excited about the contents of this issue. The great work of God to return the Jewish people to their homeland is not over, but is now entering a new phase of activity. The numbers of Jews making Aliyah continues to increase for many reasons: growing anti-Semitism, economic challenges, and even wars. It is truly a privilege to participate in this great prophetic work, helping God’s people return to their homeland. Today the ICEJ is involved in many different countries helping Jews to come home.

The most exciting development is currently taking place in Ethiopia: The government of Israel has decided to bring the last 7000 Jews in Ethiopia back to Israel. They trace their presence there to the time of Queen Sheba when, according to Jewish tradition, parts of the tribe of Dan returned with the Queen to her homeland. The Jewish Agency asked the ICEJ to assist in this historic project to bring them back after almost 3000 years. Please prayerfully consider standing with us in this unique and prophetic task.

Yours in Christ,

Dr. Jürgen Bühler
ICEJ Executive Director
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A MODERN DAY MIRACLE

BY DR. JÜRGEN BÜHLER

Although Chinese, Ethiopian, Indian, or European in physical appearance, Israeli Jews are united by their common roots, which trace back to the twelve sons of Jacob.
With increasing numbers returning every year, today we are witnessing one of the greatest miracles of modern history: After more than 2000 years the Jews have returned to Israel. Never before in human history has a people been dispersed for centuries to the four corners of the earth, only to return to that same ancient homeland and re-establish an independent state. But, it is happening now.

Here in Israel, this return of the Jews is referred to as Aliyah, which literally means “to ascend.” For Jews around the world, returning to Zion is considered a spiritual ascension since it is the spiritual center for all Jews where the very presence of God dwells.

In biblical times, the ascension, or traveling to Jerusalem, was described as going “up to the Mountain of the Lord” (Is. 2:2). Psalms 120-134 are entitled The Songs of Ascension, or in Hebrew Shir Hama’ot, and were sung when Jews made pilgrimage (or ascension) to Jerusalem three times each year during the high holidays.

WAVES OF ALIYAH

Today, Aliyah mainly refers to Jewish exiles returning to the Promised Land. The very first wave of modern day Aliyah was Russian Jews fleeing the pogroms of Czarist Russia at the end of the 19th century. Prior to 1948, a total of five waves of Aliyah brought Jews to Israel, the fifth and final wave was Jews from central Europe escaping Nazi persecution.

Only three years after WWII, on May 14, 1948, David Ben Gurion declared the state of Israel to be established, and literally overnight, Jews returning to Zion had a state of their own. As the Psalmist declared: “When the LORD brought back the captivity of Zion, we were like those who dream…. Then they said among the nations, ‘The LORD has done great things for them!’” (Ps. 126:1-2). It was indeed like a dream. The people who just escaped the gas chambers of Nazi Germany now had a homeland.

Once the State of Israel was established, Jews continued to arrive. Between 1949 and 1950 almost the entire Yemenite Jewish community was airlifted out of Aden. This operation of over 380 flights of British and American transport planes was referred to as Knafei Nesharim, or “on eagles’ wings” referring to Isaiah 40:31: “But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”

Operations Ezra and Nehemiah in 1950-1951 airlifted some 125,000 Jews out of Iraq. The largest contingent, however, came from Morocco. By the mid-sixties, a massive influx of a quarter million Moroccan Jews returned to Israel, which today represents a strong cultural constituency within Israel.

Ethiopian Jews, who trace their ancestry back to the tribe of Dan, returned in two clandestine missions in 1984 (Operation Moses) and 1991 (Operation Solomon), and are still returning even today.

After 1989, when the Soviet Union’s iron curtain was torn down, more than a million Jews flooded into Israel from the “land of the North.” Many view this as a direct fulfillment of Isaiah 43:6: “I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’ And to the south, ‘Do not keep them back!’ Bring My sons from afar, And My daughters from the ends of the earth...” the ICEJ continues to assist Aliyah from Russia, Ukraine, and other states.

As a result, modern day Israel is a fascinating mix of cultures. Once exiled to Europe, Africa, North and South America, China, India, and other nations around the world, Jews adopted many of the cultures and ethnic features of their home countries. Although Chinese, Ethiopian, Indian, or European in physical appearance, Israeli Jews are united by their common roots, which trace back to the twelve sons of Jacob. Every Passover they rekindle the hope of celebrating Passover “next year in Jerusalem,” and that one day they would return to Zion. The Israeli government estimates that today more than half of the world’s Jewish population lives in Israel and numbers continue to grow. In the last year alone, more than 30,000 Jews arrived in Israel.

AN OLD TRADITION

The vast majority of evangelical Christians today see this return of the Jews back to their promised land as proof of God’s covenantal faithfulness to Israel. This understanding is almost as old as the Reformation started under Luther and Calvin. Unfortunately, the early reformers believed God was finished with the Jews. “The Jews cut off from themselves all hope of restoration to the mercy of God,” wrote John Calvin in his commentary on Ezekiel.

But, as the Reformation reached England, and the Puritan movement emerged from it, this began to change. Through studying Scripture, some believers realized that God was not finished with the Jews, and His plan was clearly to restore them as a nation back to their homeland.

From the late 16th century onwards, countless books addressed the biblical restoration of the Jews, even inspiring the Pietist revival movements back on the European continent, like the Moravians under Count Zinzendorf. It became such a prominent theme that great preachers like Charles Spurgeon frequently referred to it. In 1855, for example, during a sermon in London's Metropolitan Tabernacle, Spurgeon declared: “I believe in the restoration of the Jews to their own land in the last days. I am a firm believer in the gathering in of the Jews at a future time. Before Jesus Christ shall come upon this earth again, the Jews shall be permitted to go to their beloved Palestine.”
JESUS ON ALIYAH

The return of the Jews back to their homeland is deeply rooted in Scripture, and runs as a central theme through the Word of God. More than 70 passages promise their return to Eretz Israel (Land of Israel). Beginning with the Law of Moses (Deut. 30:1-10), it is referred to by almost every prophetic writer and was even part of Israel’s songbook, the book of Psalms. The hope that God would “return the captives of Israel” became a part of the liturgy of Israel’s worship. In Psalm 147 the Psalmist declares, “For it is good to sing praises to our God: For it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful.” and immediately explains why: “The Lord builds up Jerusalem; He gathers together the outcast of Israel.”

Jesus himself referred to a dispersal of the Jews from Israel: that Jerusalem would become desolate for a season, “until the times of the gentiles are fulfilled” (Lk. 21:24), indicating a future return of the Jews and a rebuilding of Jerusalem. As Jesus stood on the Mount of Olives, he wept over Jerusalem and foresaw its destruction (Mt. 23:37-39; Lk. 19:41-44). At the same time, he also anticipated a restored Jewish city whose inhabitants would someday welcome him with a Jewish Old Testament greeting Baruch haba b’Shem Adonai (blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord). Baruch haba! (Blessed is he who comes) is even used in modern Hebrew to say “welcome.” So Jesus, who foresaw dispersion, clearly expected a Jewish presence at his return who would welcome him in Hebrew.

UNFULFILLED PROPHECIES

The prophets wrote the majority of the references regarding Israel’s return from exile. More than 50 prophetic passages refer to a return of the Jews from exile. Although many prophesies do refer to the Babylonian exile and return during the times of Cyrus, Nehemiah, and Ezra (539-440 BC), most of them saw the return from Babylon as a partial fulfillment of even greater events foretold by Scripture.

For example, the prophet Amos declares: “I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I
have given them,’ says the LORD your God” (Amos 9:15). Isaiah
speaks to a restored Israel: “They shall inherit the land forever…”
(Is. 60:21), and Jeremiah declares “...and I will bring them back
to this land; I will build them and not pull them down, and I will
plant them and not pluck them up” (Jer. 24:6). These prophets
clearly saw a great and final return to their land after which the
Lord would never exile them again. Obviously, this was not the
case after the Babylonian return, since Israel was once again
dispersed by the Romans 500 years later.

In addition to Israel’s ingathering being permanent, almost all
the prophets understood it would be accompanied by a spiritual
revival and even reformation for the entire nation, most clearly
seen in Ezekiel. After declaring the Lord would take Israel from
the nations and gather them “into your own land” (Ezek. 36:24),
he then beautifully described Israel’s spiritual awakening: “I will
sprinkle clean water upon you ... I will give you a heart of flesh
... I will pour my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my
statutes ... you shall be my people and I will be your God...” (vv.
25-31). (See also Is. 43:44; Jer. 31; Joel 3.)

Israel has not yet experienced a national, spiritual revival of
this magnitude. After the return from Babylon, the prophets
Zechariah, Malachi, and Haggai recognized this spiritual renewal
of Israel had not yet taken place, but was still to come. The Apostle
Paul understood that although only a remnant would be saved
(Rom. 11:5) during his lifetime, he foresaw a future national
revival when “all Israel shall be saved ... and the Deliverer shall
come out of Zion” (Rom. 11:26).

The prophets also saw a future messianic kingdom established
with Israel (Jer. 23) living in perfect peace (Is. 32:17; Ezek. 38.8),
and the nations coming to Jerusalem to worship the Lord (Is. 2:1ff,
Zech. 14:16). All this and more still waits for its final fulfillment.

A CALL TO THE CHURCH

As the prophets foresaw this end time restoration of Israel, they
also expected Gentile nations to play a central role. As the prophet
Isaiah declared: “Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Behold, I will lift
My hand in an oath to the nations, and set up My standard for
the peoples; They shall bring your sons in their arms, and your
daughters shall be carried on their shoulders; ...’” (Is. 49:22).
The return of the Jews is a divine banner, a sign of God to all
the nations (see also Is. 11:12) which the church cannot afford to
ignore. God declares to us: “Get involved!”

Today, hundreds of thousands of Jews have returned to Israel
with the help of Christians and churches worldwide. The ICEJ
has been involved in bringing over 120,000 Jews back to Eretz
Israel. It is one of the greatest privileges of the church today to be
actively involved in this fulfillment of biblical prophecy.

One more thing: this is a message that needs to be preached from
our pulpits. Jeremiah declares: “Hear the word of the LORD,
O nations, And declare it in the isles afar off, and say, ‘He who
scattered Israel will gather him, And keep him as a shepherd
does his flock’” (Jer. 31:10). The return of the Jews to Israel is
a truth, which should be discussed often in every church and
denomination today.

GET INVOLVED

The work of God in returning the Jews to Israel is still ongoing,
especially in many countries of the former Soviet Union (e.g.
Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Belarus), France and the Bnei Menashe
from India. The Jewish Agency recently asked for our assistance
with the final wave of Jews from Ethiopia.

One of our greatest privileges at ICEJ is to be actively involved
in this prophetic work and I invite you to join us. All these
projects are exciting opportunities to be part of what God is
doing in Israel. Pastors, prayerfully consider joining us and
have your congregation sponsor one or more Jews in their
return to Israel. As God is faithful to his promises regarding
his people Israel, I know He will be faithful to abundantly
bless you in return. 😊
Sons of Manasseh come home!

I biblical prophecies are being fulfilled today, because Christians from around the world are listening to the voice of God.

In the late 1970s a small people group in Northeast India began to research their heritage and the origins of their ancient traditions, which led to an ancestral connection to Israel! Under Persian rule, their ancestors traveled through the Silk Route of modern day Afghanistan, Tibet, and China, finally settling in India. This group, called the Bnei Menashe (Sons of Manasseh), is believed to be part of one of the lost tribes of Israel.

And now, members of the Bnei Menashe are coming back to their ancestral home in Israel. Your financial contributions provide flights for them to return, just as the Prophet Isaiah foretold: The nations bring Israel’s sons in their arms and carry Israel’s daughters back to their land (Is. 49:22).

The ICEJ is committed to supporting their journey and your financial partnership makes this possible! Support us today to bring Jews home to Israel: www.icejusa.org/bnei-menashe

Far away yet near at heart: THE JEWS OF CHINA

BY ISABELLA HENKENJOHANN

Over 7,000 kilometers away from Jerusalem, the small community in Kaifeng, China, never lost their Jewish identity. Today, Kaifeng’s young people desire to reconnect with their Jewish roots and come home to Israel.

Twenty-seven year old Li Jing is the oldest of five Kaifeng residents who recently made Aliyah. “I have known since I was very little that I am a Jew,” says Li. “My father told us our ancestors came from Israel. When my father first told me I was filled with pride. But then I was a bit puzzled. I mean, what does it mean to be a Jew? I still have a lot to learn.”

Growing up, Li’s parents did their best to retain their Jewish identity. “We kept the Sabbath and celebrated all the holidays –Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Hanukkah, Passover – all according to Jewish Law,” she says. Although isolated from the rest of the Diaspora, they managed to preserve their faith.

The history of the Kaifeng Jews began 1,000 years ago, when the first Jewish community from Persia or India took root in Kaifeng, a busy city off the main trade route. Europeans knew nothing of the existence of these Chinese Jews until 1605, when an Italian priest came across a Jew from Kaifeng who told him about his flourishing community. The collective, which began to erode in the 19th century due to assimilation and intermarriage, currently contains approximately 100 Jewish families totaling about 500 people who, like Li, are rediscovering their Jewish roots.

In 2010, seven men were the first Olim (new immigrants) to arrive in Israel from Kaifeng. Six years later, the happiest moment of Li’s life was the arrival of her letter of permission to make Aliyah. As Li now settles into her new life in Israel, she is confident her journey will positively impact her fellow Kaifeng Jews, many of whom take Hebrew language courses and religious studies in preparation for moving to Israel.

Please consider making a contribution to ICEJ’s Aliyah work which assists the Kaifeng Jews who long to come home. They depend on our support! www.icejusa.org/kaifeng-jews
Thousands of Ethiopian Jews
WAITING TO COME HOME

BY HOWARD FLOWER

The Israeli Parliament granted approval for the remaining Jews in Ethiopia to return to Israel. Former Interior Minister, Gideon Sa’ar remarked that, “Israel is committed to making courageous decisions to do justice with families that were torn apart for many years.” His statement was welcomed by Ethiopian Jewry activists who said it was “a matter of life and death for thousands of Israeli families.”

The Ethiopian Jews, also known as Falash Mura (Falasha is an ancient Ethiopic term meaning stranger or exile), require additional assistance in their Aliyah preparation and absorption in order to ensure a successful integration into Israeli society.

These extra services significantly increase our costs for Ethiopian immigrants to around $7,000 per person.

The ICEJ is raising support for this historic and much-needed project, which will enable the reunification of Jewish families who in some cases, have been separated for years. Israeli officials say the need is urgent given the current drought and political turmoil in the region, as well as the growing medical problems of the Jewish community still living in camps in the mountainous Gondar area and in Addis Ababa. ☝

Make a donation  www.icejusa.org/ethiopia
Join the ICEJ’s Shomer Society
(Keeper of Israel Society)

Consider the ICEJ in your Will or Estate Plans

The ICEJ has worked tirelessly on behalf of the people of Israel for some 35 years. Our Shomer Society has been an integral part of continuing this work. Your gift of cash, stocks and bonds, mutual funds, life insurance, excess in retirement funds, property, or a gift annuity are excellent ways to help the ICEJ carry on your love for Israel. With proper foresight, it is possible for you to bless Israel greatly for many years to come.

Call Us: 800-379-3897

Give a Donation! Make a critical difference!

The Lord has placed before us a great calling to bless His chosen and beloved people and we simply cannot do it without your help. Your donation will make a measurable difference for God’s purposes here in Jerusalem and beyond. The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem – USA, Inc. is classified by the I.R.S. as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Corporate and personal contributions to the ICEJ’s US Branch, to the extent allowed by law, are fully tax-deductible.
Shoshana opened the door with a huge smile and, with a warm Shalom, invited the ICEJ volunteers into her apartment. She is one of the many people who heard a knock on their door this April, and were greeted by representatives of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, carrying gifts and food coupons for the Passover holiday.

ICEJ volunteers visited three cities in three days and met with dozens of families throughout Israel. Like many others, Shoshana received her Passover gift with tears, pouring out her gratitude with a warm hug.

“Everyone is different and everyone reacts differently,” said Pnina, an ICEJ representative whose fluency in English, Hebrew, and Russian was invaluable. Many of the poverty-stricken Israelis are Russian-speaking and they count on our support. Nevertheless, Pnina is happy to visit the families not because of her language skills, but because she enjoys being with the people and recognizes helping the poor as being obedient to God: “[If] it is important to [God], it is important to us.”

Jannie Tolhoek, ICEJ volunteer from Holland, also visited many families in mid-April with gifts from the ICEJ. In one household, she met Adina (name changed) a mother of six children, three of which have special needs, whose husband only works temporary jobs. In the middle of their living room stood a sewing machine, which Adina uses to make small clothing repairs for neighbors, family and others, in order to help with the constantly growing demands of her large family.

Jannie shared what a joy it is to meet people like Adina, who really need our help: “The fact that people who didn’t even know her would care about her and her family put a big smile on her face.” The ICEJ’s annual Passover distribution is made possible by the generous support from Christians around the world. We are grateful for every donation we receive! 😊

You can continue supporting our compassion work among the poor in Israel. Visit our site for more information: www.icejusa.org/aid

Blessed Passover in the Land of Israel

BY ISABELLA HENKENJOHANN, YUDIT SETZ
Prayers for Israel from Dubai, Iraq, and Indonesia

BY DAVID PARSONS

In the midst of bad reports of boycotts and incitement against Israel, there is some good news: Millions of Christians around the globe strongly support and stand with the Jewish State, practically and through the power of prayer!

For the past five years, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem has developed an ongoing, weekly prayer campaign for Israel, joined by thousands of Christians in over 60 countries worldwide. It might surprise Israelis to learn that Christians from places like Dubai, Iraq, Indonesia, and Malaysia, are committed to praying for her: for wisdom for Israel’s leaders, strength for IDF soldiers, and growth for the economy. They also pray against the evil plans of Israel’s enemies, and that they would repent and turn from their hatred of the Jewish people.

This month marks the 62nd straight month in which Christians have been lifting up Israel through prayer and fasting. Called the “Isaiah 62 Campaign,” this global prayer chain is based on the prophet’s call for “watchmen” to raise their voice and give God “no rest until he makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth” (Isaiah 62:7).

The Christian Embassy, founded 36 years ago in Jerusalem, maintains offices in 80 nations worldwide, and believes that this prayer campaign helps evangelical Christians build a sense of attachment to Israel for the long-term.

Dr. Jürgen Bühler, Director of the ICEJ, said: “These Christians are investing their time and their hearts on behalf of Israel. Before long, they care for Israel like they do for their own families. It makes them life-long Zionists. We hope this is encouraging news for Israelis.”

So why are Christians doing this? The Bible tells us there is great power in prayers to the God of Israel. By their prayers, Joshua made the sun stand still for an entire day and Elijah stopped the rain for three whole years.

The Hebrew Scriptures also speak of a time when the Gentile nations would again lift up prayer on behalf of the nation, and people of Israel. For example, the prophet Zechariah says that “many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord” (Zechariah 8:22).

Defending the nation of Israel requires much hard work and sacrifice. It takes training. It costs money, and sometimes, even lives. But like many Israelis, Christians know this nation is sustained by a God who answers prayer, and there is a special blessing for those who “pray for the peace of Jerusalem. May they prosper who love you” (Psalm 122:6).
Prayers for Israel from Dubai, Iraq, and Indonesia

By David Parsons

In the midst of bad reports of boycotts and incitement against Israel, there is some good news: millions of Christians around the globe strongly support and stand with the Jewish State, practically and through the power of prayer!

www.icejusa.org/isaiah62

1. Join as an individual prayer warrior at www.icejusa.org/Isaiah62
2. Begin an Isaiah 62 prayer group in your community
3. Join us in fasting and praying on behalf of Israel every month

I have posted watchmen on your walls, Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the Lord, give yourselves no rest, and give him no rest till he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth.

Isaiah 62: 6-7

Join the Isaiah 62 Initiative of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem as we corporately pray for the peaceful restoration of Jerusalem. Just as the prophet spoke in Isaiah 62, the Lord has placed the mantle upon us, His followers, to pray for Jerusalem to once again become the praise of the earth. Do not let another day pass! Get in tune with the work of the Lord on behalf of Israel!
The first glimpse of the Promised Land that the Israelites had from the east side of the Jordan River must have elicited a range of emotions. After 40 years of wandering in the desert, eating some unknown substance called “what is it?” (mannah), they must have been extremely relieved to be entering the land of milk and honey they had been told about.

In addition, they felt fearful knowing that there were still giants living in the land they were entering. But, the children of Israel could have also been a little disappointed. Their view from the east side of the Jordan may have encompassed the occasional oasis in the Jordan valley, but they were dwarfed by the barren cliffs of the foreboding Judean Wilderness.

The Israelites were entering a land that looked just as stark, dry and barren as the desert they thought they had left behind. It is understandable that the two tribes of Reuben and Gad asked to remain on the east side of the Jordan where their cattle could graze!

**CROSSING OVER**

It is interesting to note that the place where Joshua and the Israelites crossed the Jordan River to enter the Promised Land is also the place where Jesus was baptized and entered His ministry, and from where Elijah ascended into Heaven. It is a special and popular place for pilgrims to be baptized today.

At first glimpse, visitors are usually disappointed in the Jordan River. They are expecting a mighty rushing river, but it is more like a small stream, and the waters are murky. In 2 Kings 5, the leprous Syrian commander, Naaman, was also shocked when the prophet Elisha told him to bathe in the cloudy, unimpressive waters of the lower Jordan. He replied that there were much better and cleaner rivers back in his country!

This part of the Jordan valley and neighboring Judean Wilderness is the part of the land of Israel that I love the most, probably because it is so different from the lush farmland where I grew up. It is stark, majestic, and overwhelming in its contrasts.

**PROVING GOD’S WORD**

The air is so dry there that it preserved ancient sacred scrolls for thousands of years. The famous Dead Sea Scrolls, some dating back as far as 300 BC, were discovered in caves above Qumran where they had been stored in clay jars. It is possible some of these scrolls were from the Temple and had been hidden there from the Romans in 70 AD. When found over 1,900 years later, they matched the modern biblical text and proved that the Bible had not been corrupted or altered in any way.

It is no coincidence that the first Dead Sea Scroll was acquired by a Hebrew University professor within weeks, if not days, of the 1947 UN Partition Plan, which paved
the way for the creation of the State of Israel. God was beginning to both prove the authenticity of the Bible and fulfill prophecy at the same time.

EXTREMEs AND CONTRASTS
From the Qumran caves one can see the Dead Sea, the lowest place on earth, and the rocky cliffs of the Judean Wilderness (also called the Judean Desert) reaching up some 1,500 feet above. The Dead Sea (known as the Salt Sea in the Bible) is evaporating at such a rate that it is ten times saltier than ocean water. This salinity makes it too harsh for fish to live. It is also too dense for visitors to swim—they float on the surface of the water instead. The lowest point on earth is so far away from the sun that bathers do not have to worry much about burning.

A LAND OF TESTING
While these contrasts and extremes make visiting Israel a fascinating experience, it also made the land a harsh place to live in. When Abraham first entered the Land of Canaan it was during such a severe famine that he went to Egypt for refuge. Isaac also encountered a drought but God instructed him to seek refuge among the Philistines near Gaza instead of Egypt. Similarly, Jacob encountered a famine and sent his sons to buy grain from Egypt, then ended up living there under the providential care and provision of his beloved son, Joseph.

Why would God give a land to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that had such a tendency towards drought and famine, not to mention giants? He would use it as His testing ground. It was a land in which nothing came easy, and faith and obedience are required to attain the fullness of what God had promised.

Israel is no different today. God has brought His people back to their ancient homeland where they cleared malaria infested swamps, made the desert bloom, and from where they have used technology and innovation to solve their water shortage. But, they also encountered hostile resistance from the Arabs who refused to live in peace with them, and who have fed successive generations with hatred and animosity so that Israel is faced with a seemingly unsolvable situation.

I once heard someone ask an Orthodox Rabbi why God would have regathered His people back to their homeland only to be faced with decades of war, waves of terrorism, and a situation that has no solution in sight. His answer was this: “It is part of the redemptive process.”

God uses difficult places and situations to test and refine His people. If we will obey His Word and step out in faith we can overcome the obstacles life puts in front of us. This is the kind of faith that pleases God, and without which, we will fail the test. ☺️

This article is the fourth in a series to introduce Israel and various biblical sites of interest to the Christian reader.
ICEJ JOINS RELIGIOUS BROADCASTERS IN NASHVILLE, TN

BY RAYMOND RAMIREZ

In February, senior leaders from the ICEJ Jerusalem headquarters attended the National Religious Broadcasters International Media Convention in Nashville, Tennessee. Working closely with the ICEJ-USA branch, the team hosted an official session on Israel as part of the media convention’s “hot topics” track, which was open to the thousands of registered attendees.

“Israel: Hope in a Region of Crisis,” featured Rev. Juha Ketola, ICEJ International Director; and Kay Arthur, world renowned author, speaker, and longtime NRB member; and was moderated by Susan Michael, ICEJ US Branch Director.

An official statement from NRB President & CEO, Dr. Jerry A. Johnson read: “NRB is proud to present this very special session, and thankful to the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem for bringing together a fine panel of speakers... this session will give Christian broadcasters a better understanding of these issues and of what God is doing in the midst of it all.”

In addition to the special session on Israel, Rev. Juha Ketola addressed NRB members and NRB Board members in separate closed meetings, giving them insights regarding the work of the ICEJ in Jerusalem. Conference attendees were also able to meet and interact with leaders and staff at ICEJ’s booth in the NRB Expo. The week-long convention provided many opportunities to forge new relationships and to bring a greater awareness of ICEJ’s ongoing work in Israel and around the globe.
UPCOMING EVENTS

June 16-18  ICEJ-USA Summer Conference & Special Concert with Paul Wilbur
Embassy Suites
Murfreesboro, TN 37128

June 18 & 19  David Parsons Speaking
Saturday • 6:30 pm
Sunday • 8:15 am & 10:45 am
Riverside Church
11205 Roseland Rd
Sebastian, FL 32958

June 22  David Parsons Speaking
Wednesday • 7:00 pm
Crossroads Christian Fellowship
10205 Hwy 1
Sebastian, FL 32958

June 23  David Parsons Speaking
Thursday • 10:00 am
Mt. Paran Church
2055 Mount Paran Rd. NW
Atlanta, GA  30327

June 26  David Parsons Speaking
Sunday • 9:00 am & 10:15 am
Touch Heaven Ministries
10 Skyline Dr
Canfield, OH 44406

June 26  Rev. John Smal Speaking
Sunday • 10:30 am
River of Life Church
Barefoot Bay Community Center
“A” Building
625 Barefoot Blvd
Vero Beach, FL 32976

UPCOMING TOURS TO ISRAEL

2016

July 21-31 • Arise Young Adults Summer Tour

October 13-24 • Tour to Israel and the Feast of Tabernacles

November 9-18 • Israel Encounter Pastors Tour

2017

January 17-27 • Envision Pastors Tour and Conference

October 1-12 • Tour to Israel and the Feast of Tabernacles
Why do hundreds of millions of Christians around the world stand with Israel? There is no one answer. The truth of the matter is that the bond between Christians and Israel is as multifaceted as it is strong.

**Theologically,** Christian Zionism is the belief that in the Abrahamic Covenant God bequeathed the land of Canaan to the Jewish people as an everlasting possession for the purposes of world redemption. Therefore, the return of the Jewish people to their ancient homeland represents the fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham and as such, demands Christian support.

Christians who know their Bible will also point out that the text commands us to pray for the peace and well-being of Jerusalem in Psalm 122:6, and to serve as watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem in Isaiah 62:6-7. In Romans 9-11, the Apostle Paul is clear that the church should honor the Jewish people for their theological contributions to the foundations of Christianity.

**Historically,** the Bible-based Evangelical Christian movement has preached from the scriptures that the return of the Jewish people to their ancient homeland would bring a great blessing upon the world. Modern Christian supporters of Israel follow in the steps of great Christian leaders such as John and Charles Wesley, Robert Murray MacCheyne, Charles Spurgeon, and many other Puritan preachers.

**Morally,** after centuries of Christian anti-Semitism, many Christians seek to foster a new relationship with the Jewish people built on mutual respect. They condemn the demonization of the Jewish people and delegitimization of the Jewish state as nothing more than modern expressions of anti-Semitism and, instead, see Israel as a champion of the Christian values of freedom, democracy, and human rights.

**Gratefully,** Christians should also support Israel in gratitude for the protection of their Christian brothers and sisters living in the Jewish state. While religious minorities face intense persecution across the Middle East, Israel provides the only safe haven for Christians and is consequently the only country in the region where the Christian community is freely growing and prospering.

**Personally,** for millions of Christians, the Bible has come alive on their life-changing visits to Israel, which instills an enduring love for the Jewish state. ☀️

Want to learn more about Christian support for Israel?

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The Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem
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Thursday, June 16, 7:00pm Conference Opening Session, Special Concert with Paul Wilbur
Friday, June 17, 9:00am – 3:00pm Leadership Meetings (by invitation only)
Friday, June 17, 7:00pm Conference Session
Saturday, June 18, 9am – 10pm Conference Continues