BRINGING THE ETHIOPIAN JEWS HOME

PRAYING EFFECTIVELY FOR THE MIDDLE EAST

ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH
Dear Friends,

This issue of the Word from Jerusalem carries the theme of the 2016 Feast of Tabernacles: “All the Families of the Earth,” which points to God’s promise to Abraham and also to his descendants. This is God’s masterplan to save His church from every tribe and nation, and also reflects the importance of the family within the very heart of God. God wants to save families! The institution of family is experiencing unprecedented attacks: From gender mainstreaming to new suggested forms of family unions. They all stand in direct conflict with the biblical concept of family as God created it: Man and wife, created in God’s image, bringing forth children.

But the good news is that God is a restorer and a redeemer of families! There are many examples in the Bible of how entire households were saved out of seemingly-impossible circumstances. No matter how desperate your family situation might look like today, I want to encourage you to keep the faith and, like Joshua, declare before the Lord: “But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Joshua 24:15).

In this issue, you will also read how God is bringing the extended family of Jesus back home to the Land today. A new wave of Ethiopian Jews is on the way to Eretz Israel. The exciting news is that you can play a role in this modern-day miracle. The ICEJ was asked to help with the very first group of Jews returning home from Ethiopia, and your gift can make a difference in their lives! Find out more in the following pages of this magazine.

I hope you are blessed as you read this issue. Please let us hear from you, and send us your prayer requests. We will pray for you!

Many blessings to you and your family from Jerusalem!

Yours in Christ

Dr. Jürgen Bühler
ICEJ Executive Director
WHAT CAN YOU DO TO SUPPORT ISRAEL?
ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH

By Dr. Jürgen Bühler
“Now the LORD had said to Abram: ‘Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed’” (Genesis 12:1–3).

When God called Abraham, He assigned to him the most daring task: To impact all the families of the earth; every tribe, ethnic group and community on our planet – everybody! This is as inclusive as it gets! Very few people would accept such a huge mission for their lives.

ABRAHAM’S WORLD
According to biblical accounts, Abraham was born around two thousand years after Adam, the first man, was created, and was in the tenth generation after the flood in the time of Noah. By this time, the families of the earth were in a state of crisis. The account of Genesis 10 describes that Noah and his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, together with their wives, were the only survivors of the flood. After coming out of the ark they reestablished their families on earth and with that, repopulated the new world (Genesis 10:32).

According to Scripture, Noah and Shem were both alive when Abraham was born. Noah died when Abraham was 58 years old (Genesis 9:28) and Shem even outlived him (Genesis 11:11). Abraham, as the oldest son of his father, was the main patriarch of the Shemite clan. He may have personally heard the accounts of his great, great, great… great grandfather Shem, maybe even from Noah; stories of mankind’s rebellion against God and the devastating flood less than 300 years before he was born.

PARADISE LOST
Both Noah and Shem were living witnesses of life in the pre-flood world. Before God’s judgment, people lived much longer (almost 1000 years). The very first humans, Adam and Eve, had personal and regular contact with their Creator – a privilege that was lost by the time Abraham was born. It was a perfect world: a crystal clear stream flowed from the paradise garden called Eden, and in the middle of it were two mysterious trees, the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Man and woman were not allowed to eat from these particular trees, but from all the other trees and fruits they could eat as they pleased.

This perfect world changed when an evil force entered the garden. Satan deceived the woman and both she and her husband decided to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. As a consequence of their disobedience their direct contact with God was lost, and Adam and Eve were forever exiled from Eden. A dark shadow came over the earth. It impacted everything and the destructive influence of Satan was deeply felt by the first family of the earth.

Adam and Eve soon became the first dysfunctional family when their oldest son, Cain, murdered his younger brother, Abel. Not much later the ‘sons of God’ (fallen angels) left their heavenly abode and established perverted families with the ‘daughters of man,’ producing a new form of super humans, which the Bible called ‘giants’ of the ancient world (Genesis 6:4). Without a direct relationship with their Creator God, mankind was pulled deeper into destructive lifestyles. God regretted creating mankind and wanted to destroy it (Genesis 6:7). However, God saw Noah, a righteous man who ‘walked with God,’ and he and his family found grace in the eyes of God and were spared.

When God intervened in Abraham’s life – that was the moment everything changed

Nevertheless, Abraham knew that even the descendants of the three surviving clans did not learn from their own history, as they soon built the Tower of Babel. One Jewish tradition even states Abraham personally witnessed how his compatriots wanted to establish their independence from God and searched to gain a new Eden on earth. In their selfish ambition they tried building their own empire, so God scattered the families around the earth. Because of this breach in communication, some of Abraham’s ancestral families lost contact with their related clans. This divine interference formed the languages of the world.

HOPE FOR A HOPELESS WORLD
When Abraham’s story begins, the families of the earth lived without hope for the future. Abraham knew that he belonged to a lineage of sinful and broken families who had lost contact with God and lived in a state of rebellion against Him. The moment when God intervened in Abraham’s life everything changed. God decided to establish a new family clan with Abraham. He chose a land for them to live in and protected them in a special way. ‘If people around you bless you I will bless them too,’ God said. ‘And, if they attack you, they will have me as their enemy.’ Then came the great mission statement: ‘Abraham, in you and your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’
From every perspective this was a radical turning point in human history. The Apostle Paul considered it to be the first proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ: “And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, ‘In you all the nations shall be blessed’” (Galatians 3:8). When God called Abraham he established the eternal calling of the Jewish people. The main beneficiaries of this calling, however, were not the Jews themselves. On the contrary, this calling came at the cost of their enmity and persecution throughout their history. The main focus of the blessing was “all the families of the earth.” Abraham and his descendants became God’s tool to bring back His light into a world that had become progressively darker.

From the beginning, Israel was a conduit of redemption for all mankind and a light to the nations. Instead of another flood that would cover the earth with judgment, God envisioned a flood of redemption to such a degree that the “knowledge of the glory of the Lord” would cover the earth as waters (Isaiah 6).

Former ICEJ Executive Director, Rev. Malcolm Hedding put it beautifully in his book, The Great Covenants of the Bible: “The Abrahamic covenant is the covenant of God’s decision to save the world and as such it is the most fundamental of all covenants.”

This covenant put a process into motion that lasts until today. Through the descendants of Abraham we received the Bible (Romans 3:1) as well as the greatest blessing of all: God’s only Son, the Redeemer, who was slain for the sins of the world. For this reason, Matthew starts his account of the Gospel with “the genealogy of Jesus Christ... the Son of Abraham” (Matthew 1:1). The land promised to Abraham, and Jerusalem in particular, has become the hub where all the blessings of Abraham’s covenant were unleashed. Here our Savior Jesus Christ was crucified, resurrected, and rose to heaven. Here He poured out His Holy Spirit. From Jerusalem He sent out His disciples to bless all the families of the earth. And, to Jerusalem, Christ will one day return.

The final outworking of this Abrahamic calling is to bring fallen mankind back into the presence of God, giving them access to paradise. Like Adam, one day we will live in a garden-city called Jerusalem. As in Eden, a stream will flow out of the city, with the Tree of Life at its very center. The fruit of the trees will heal the nations and the broken families of the earth, and God Himself, will be constantly present (Rev. 22). Interestingly enough, it was exactly this vision of the heavenly Jerusalem which kept Abraham going and served as his constant source of strength: “for [Abraham] waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Hebrews 11:10).

Abraham’s perspective of his calling was incredibly broad. Although keenly aware of how paradise was lost for the families of the earth, he saw a vision of those families being restored, just like John saw some 2000 years later: “After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb’” (Revelation 7:9–10)!

**FORETASTE OF HEAVEN**

This grand call to "all the families of the earth" affects everyone’s destiny. You and your family members are perfect candidates for the blessings of God, regardless of your past! The price to return back to God has been paid by the greatest Son of Abraham, Jesus Christ. Accept it in faith.

“All the families of the earth” is also an eternal reminder that it was the physical descendants of Abraham, the people of Israel, that ushered in this blessing for us. They were persecuted and hated for it like no other nation. Thus Paul calls us debtors to the Jews and instructs us to bless them in return.

The Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem serves as an incredible sign for our present and future redemption, and this year’s theme “All the Families of the Earth” is a timely reminder of Abraham’s blessings to us. The prophet Zechariah saw “the families of the earth coming to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles” (Zech. 14:16-16). I cannot count how many times pilgrims attending the Feast in Jerusalem told me afterward: “It feels like a foretaste of Heaven!” Coming to Jerusalem is like coming home. Jerusalem connects us like no other place on earth, both with our history and, more importantly, with our future.

May you be blessed with the blessing of Abraham and I look forward to welcoming you at the Feast of Tabernacles, when “all the families of the earth” are invited to celebrate their Creator in Jerusalem.
In recent years the focus in the Middle East has been less on Israel and more on Syria, the rise of ISIS, and the spread of that conflict to Iraq. Thankfully, the fear of many Israelis that the conflict might spill over into Israel has not happened. Instead, Israel’s borders have been quiet, and Israel has become a help for many of the victims of the various conflicts by quietly giving humanitarian aid and medical assistance.

Let us thank God that Israel has been protected and has become a source of blessing in the midst of conflict. Pray with us that the situation remains quiet on Israel’s borders, and that Israel can even increase its positive influence to its neighboring states. (Ps. 121)

Israel’s main trouble has been a series of Palestinian attacks (mainly knife stabbings) in the streets of its cities. While these attacks do not represent an existential threat to Israel, they instil fear in the lives of many Israelis and tourists. Over the last months the number of attacks, however, were significantly reduced.

Give thanks to God for the easing of tensions in the streets of Israel, and continue to pray for complete peace in Jerusalem and all of Israel. Declare in faith God’s protection over Israel and its citizens, and pray that it will not affect, in any way, the Feast of Tabernacles. (Ps. 60:18)

The Syrian conflict has brought a new dynamic into the international arena. Europe is being flooded with millions of Syrian refugees, and ISIS recruits are staging terror attacks in European cities. In addition, Europe has been shaken by the recent referendum of Britain to leave the European Union.

Please pray that all these shakings will bring revival for Europe, and that the church in Europe will continue to rise to bless and stand with Israel. (Hag. 1:6-9; Isa. 60)

Over the past few months, various peace initiatives have been re-circulated by the international community. Whether the French initiative from the European Union, or the Arab league initiative, the Israeli government has been sceptical of the various proposals as they are perceived as imposed from the outside with limited understanding of the real facts on the ground. In addition, none of the past initiatives led to more peace, but to more violence and terror against Israel, in spite of the many compromises Israel was willing to make.

Please pray for Israel’s government and, in particular, for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Pray for wisdom and understanding in the various international talks, and that the schemes of the enemy who seeks to destroy and destabilize the State of Israel might be uncovered. Pray that Israel’s leader might achieve true and just stability that will honor God’s purposes for the region and will benefit all its inhabitants. (1Tim 2:1-4; Isa 32:14-19)

Join the Isaiah 62 prayer initiative of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem as we corporately pray for Jerusalem, the nation of Israel, and the Middle East:

- Join as an individual prayer warrior at www.icejusa.org/isaiah62_pledge.
- Begin an Isaiah 62 prayer group in your community.
- Join us in fasting and praying on behalf of Israel every month.
Ethiopia is currently experiencing their worst drought in 50 years. Caused by El Niño the devastation is quickly spreading to populous areas. The drought has brought a food crisis, which is said to be the worst in 30 years. On top of it, Ethiopia has been targeted by Islamist militants in revenge for Ethiopia’s military intervention in neighboring Somalia in 2006.

With these combined hardships, the government of Israel is ready to bring the remaining Jewish population from Ethiopia back to Israel. Many families have been separated for years, and now they fear for their safety.

In the past, the ICEJ sponsored flights and assisted with absorption through numerous projects, including sports and educational programs, vocational training, as well as Passover assistance. Now is the time for us to get involved again!

The ICEJ Aid Director Nicole Yoder explained the difficulty of this journey for Ethiopian Jews. “I always like to emphasize the challenges they will face upon arrival because of the tremendous gaps between Ethiopia and Israel in terms of culture, education, and technology, etc. They face some of
the greatest difficulties in adapting to life here – more so than other new immigrants."

The ICEJ is once again raising the banner for the remaining Jews in Ethiopia. With God’s help and working together we can bring them to the land of their fathers.

Be a part of this modern day miracle! Send your most generous gift today and be a witness of the Ethiopian Jews returning home! 😇

**BE A PART OF THIS MODERN DAY MIRACLE!** Send your most generous gift today and help the Ethiopian Jews come home.

Make a donation at: www.icejusa.org/ethiopia
ICEJ’s international leaders gathered in Cape Town, South Africa, for the annual ICEJ Leadership Conference in May. More than 70 delegates from 30 countries joined together to strategize and plan ICEJ activities in the coming year.

The reason delegates traveled all the way to the Cape, however, was that South Africa has become a main hub for theological criticism against Israel. Due to their own apartheid history, many African leaders view Israel today as a modern day apartheid state and thus find no reason to support Israel. Replacement theology is being taught from many pulpits in South Africa and from there has spread across the African continent.

Therefore, ICEJ leaders visited several cities prior to our own strategy meetings in order to bring a new and biblical view of Israel to the churches. African continental Director Mosy Madugba; International Director, Juha Ketola, and his wife, Kati; and ICEJ-SA Directors, Luba and Ncedi Mayekiso spoke in churches in White River, Pretoria, Durban, East London, Soweto and Boksburg. It was the first time the ICEJ could hold meetings in these places which were central in the uprising that caused the fall of the apartheid regime some 20 years ago.

The ICEJ and local leaders hosted an event in Durban which focused on repentance for the infamous 2001 UN Durban Conference on Racism. The UN Resolution from that conference equaled Zionism with racism and opened the door to labeling Israel an Apartheid state. Representatives of the local evangelical community repented on behalf of the city of Durban, the nation of South Africa and of the church.

The week concluded with “My Brother’s Keeper,” an open conference with more than 1,000 attendees. At the conference Israel’s Ambassador, Arthur Lenk, presented a video greeting from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to ICEJ delegates.
ICEJ joins the prestigious Herzliya Conference

The city of Herzliya, located on the Mediterranean coast just north of Tel Aviv, earned international fame for its entrepreneurial culture, and since the year 2000, the city has hosted one of the most impacting policy conferences in Israel. Strategists, politicians, economic, and community leaders come to the annual Herzliya Conference to discuss the current and future affairs of Israel, as well as the Middle East in general. The event is organized by the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) in Herzliya, one of Israel’s most prestigious colleges.

This year the ICEJ was privileged to be a contributor at the conference. As a special guest of the ICEJ, Governor Michael Huckabee presented his views on the current elections in the USA and its impact on Israel. As one of the early candidates for the US presidential election and as a strong evangelical leader, Huckabee was warmly welcomed and his insights were met with great interest. In addition, at another session ICEJ’s Executive Director, Dr. Jürgen Bühler, and International Director, Juha Ketola, shared their expertise on the state of Christians in Israel and the Middle East.

“It is a great privilege and a wonderful opportunity to be an active part of this strategic conference, and to bring a Christian perspective to it,” said Dr. Bühler, who also appreciated the insights he gained from the event.

Our South African leadership viewed the conference as a complete success. “It is an historic moment for us in South Africa to speak the truth about Israel and reject the false accusation of Israel being an apartheid state,” said Luba Mayekiso. “It was a conference that gave truth and hope to the churches in South Africa,” he said.

Please keep our work in South Africa in your prayers and pray in particular for our leaders, Luba and Ncedi Mayekiso.

The Cape Town Declaration may be downloaded from the ICEJ website: www.icejusa.org/CapeTownDeclaration.
ICEJ GOES TO CUBA!

The newest ICEJ branch was just opened in Havana, Cuba, by International Director, Juha Ketola this April. For decades Cuba was hostile to Israel, and there are still no diplomatic relations between the two nations. Nevertheless, this communist country, along with many other Latin American countries, went through an evangelical revolution in the last few decades and it is estimated that over 200,000 residents of Cuba are now members of the Assemblies of God Church.

The vast majority of Evangelicals are supporters of Israel, and the inaugural ceremony of the ICEJ branch in Cuba was accompanied by a sea of Israeli flags. Rev. Moises de Prada, the Vice-Superintendent of Assemblies of God (AOG) in Cuba, was appointed as the official ICEJ Representative. Prada became a senior pastor of a local church in Havana over a year ago when the congregation was around 350 people. Today, the church has 1200 members and keeps growing!

While in Cuba, Ketola also ministered in the city of Santa Carla and met with the staff of AOG head office led by the Superintendent Rev. Eliseo Villar Acosta. Despite Cuba’s communist, totalitarian dictatorship Evangelicals are boldly sharing their faith and standing with Israel. Christian communities in Cuba sing songs in Hebrew, perform Israeli dances, and most importantly, fervently pray for Israel.

HAND IN HAND WITH BELIEVERS IN SPAIN

In the spring, ICEJ International Director, Juha Ketola, was invited to minister at the 37th annual National Conference in Malaga, Spain, organized by Rev. Daniel Del Vecchio, the director of ICEA (Iglesias Cristianas Evangelicas Apostolicas) and Asociacion Real (a drug and alcohol rehabilitation center). Vecchio, a missionary from the USA to Spain for 50 years, under whose ministry Ketola got saved in the late 1970s, supports the mission of the ICEJ and welcomed our International Director with open arms and an open heart.
India runs for Jesus

India is the second most populated country on earth. With more than a thousand languages in use, and 22 considered official, it is challenging to reach every state and territory with the message of the Gospel. Yet Pastor Meka Padma Rao, or ‘Dany’ as many call him, found a way to connect with people of different tribes and different backgrounds in 26 of the 29 Indian states. Currently about 140 people from 24 states work voluntarily with ICEJ-India, and over the past three years some 92,000 joined the ICEJ to regularly pray for Israel.

As the Director of ICEJ-India, Pastor Dany shares with the people of India about our Savior, the Lord Jesus and teaches them about Israel. He speaks seven languages, which for most of us sounds overwhelming, but in India is like a drop in the ocean. Pastor Dany has experienced remarkable favor from God in connecting with people, enabling him to develop a nationwide network of Christian leaders who are planted in a wide spectrum of places of influence: in ministries and universities, throughout various businesses and industries, and even in local hospitals and law enforcement.

With pastors and leaders all over the country, Pastor Dany began teaching a simple message that is transforming churches across India: “At every service, whether at the beginning or at the end, I ask pastors to take a minute to speak about Israel and pray for Israel. Just one minute! And let God do the rest.”

This spring, when Christians around the world were remembering Jesus’ sacrifice and celebrating His resurrection, Pastor Dany and ICEJ representatives from different states organized a rally in the capital city titled “Run for Jesus, Stand for Israel.”

This event attracted hundreds of people and opened the door for the Christians to publicly speak about their faith, as well as demonstrate their allegiance with Israel. For the first time in the city’s history, the streets were filled with Israeli flags and resounded with Hebrew songs. What a time to be alive!

Prague’s annual rally to support Israel organized by the local branch of the ICEJ again gathered hundreds of Israeli supporters, and focused on the subject “Fighting Anti-Semitism through Culture.”

Ninety-year-old Holocaust survivor, Doris Grozdanovicova, shared her experience from the Terezin ghetto where she spent her teenage years. Doris spoke of hope, and the positive tone of her speech was emphasized by the release of hundreds of blue and white balloons - the national colors of Israel.

“The existence of the State of Israel is the ultimate proof that Hitler did not succeed and a guarantee that no one will succeed with another genocidal plan against the Jewish nation,” remarked Majmir Kallus, Director of ICEJ-Czech Republic.

Deputy Chairman of the Senate, the upper chamber of the Czech Parliament, Premysl Sobotka, hosted the event in the beautiful Wallenstein Garden. In his speech, he said: “Unfortunately, we see that the Jews again do not feel safe in Germany, France, or Sweden. To me, this is the political litmus test every European should heed… I want to hope that we can learn from history while it is not too late.”

Other dignitaries included Daniel Herman, government Minister of Culture; Adriana Krnacova, the Mayor of Prague; and the Israeli Ambassador, Gary Koren.
YOUR ISRAEL ANSWER:
WHAT CAN YOU DO TO SUPPORT ISRAEL?

By Susan Michael

For Americans, it can often feel like there is little we can do to support Israel in its struggle for survival. However, while Israel’s soldiers and border police work tirelessly to protect the Jewish state from terrorism and military threats, supporters of the Jewish State around the world are also a critical – and powerful – force for safeguarding its future.

Here are five important ways that you can stand with Israel.

1. GET EDUCATED. Israel’s adversaries have used boycotts and propaganda campaigns to spread lies and demonize the Jewish state in the media, in church communities, and on college campuses. You can be an advocate to correct these lies – one person at a time – but first, you have to have a firm grasp of the facts. Learn more about Israel’s democratic values, its commitment to protecting human rights, and its remarkable advancements in medicine and technology so that you can effectively spread the word to your family, friends, and congregation. IsraelAnswers.com is a good place to start!

2. GET POLITICALLY ACTIVE. Make sure that your elected representatives know that you are a strong supporter of Israel and the U.S.-Israel relationship. Call. Write. Engage on social media. Join delegations to Washington. Write letters to the editor. Make your voice heard!


4. VISIT ISRAEL. Visit Israel on your own or as a member of an ICEJ tour. It will deepen your understanding of the Jewish State – the land of the Bible – while showing powerful support for Israel’s people. If you are unable to go, send someone from your church, perhaps your Pastor or Youth Leader. Let Israel impact their lives and your entire church as a result. For information on the ICEJ’s various tours to Israel visit www.icejusa.org/tours.

5. BLESS ISRAEL. You can bless Israel financially by supporting humanitarian aid projects such as the ICEJ’s Haifa Home for Holocaust Survivors, ICEJ’s food programs to feed the hungry, or ICEJ’s Israel in Crisis funds that places portable bomb shelters in vulnerable communities.

Do you want to discover other ways to support Israel?

Visit us at www.IsraelAnswers.com
The Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem
hosted by the
International Christian Embassy Jerusalem

ICEJ Tour to Israel for the Feast
October 13-24, 2016

I personally invite you to tour Israel with me and attend the Feast of Tabernacles.

Susan Michael
ICEJ US Director

This trip changed our lives FOREVER and its impact will strengthen us for God’s work and purpose. We will never be the same, and we love being part of ICEJ and the work it does.

Bill and Sandra

Contact us now to receive further information.

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www.icejusa.org/feast-tour

For over 35 years, the ICEJ has hosted the annual Christian celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles - a multicultural event that draws thousands of pilgrims to Jerusalem for teaching, worship, and prayer. In addition, ICEJ speakers undertake teaching tours, seminars, and conferences across the globe. Their experience in Israel and knowledge of the Bible will guarantee you a trip of a lifetime.
FEAST OF TABERNACLES

PRESENTED BY INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN EMBASSY JERUSALEM