Dear Friends,

The New Year has been ushered in with an avalanche of bad news.

In France, Islamic terrorism is raising its ugly head, massacring members of the free press, targeting a Jewish supermarket in Paris, and executing a policeman on the streets of the French capital.

In the Middle East, Palestinian terrorism is still spreading fear among the citizens of Israel, the Islamic State militia continues its deadly rampages in Iraq and Syria, and the nation of Yemen has just been rocked by a militant Muslim coup.

At the same time - though less reported in our media - Islamic terrorism is stalking Africa. Recently, ICEJ International Board Member, Rev. Mosy Madugba, called us for prayer and assistance for his nation of Nigeria after the radical Islamist militia Boko Haram eradicated an entire village, brutally massacring an estimated 2,000 people, most of them Christians. In nearby Niger, the home and church of our National Director, Rev. Moctar Soumana, was burned by radical Muslims in violent anti-Charlie Hebdo protests.

So we see can that radical Islamic terrorism is threatening every continent.

At the same time, in December, I met an evangelist from Asia who shared with me about exciting new doors opening to his ministry in the Arab world. He reported about recent meetings with key Arab leaders who are listening to and accepting the Gospel. He reported about unprecedented church meetings in Saudi Arabia where hundreds of Muslims received the Lord.

Another report reached us, again from Saudi Arabia, of thousands of Bibles being distributed to sheiks and imams across the country. A German missions leader also just visited us and reported on thousands of baptisms in Tehran every month. So God is undoubtedly at work in the Muslim world.

In Isaiah 60, the prophet sees such a contradictory picture: “For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; But the Lord will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you” (Isaiah 60:2).

Yet at the same time, the prophet sees the light of God rising over His people like the morning dawn. God is still at work as His kingdom grows even in the midst of great adversity. And He calls us to “arise and shine.”

Daniel declares about the darkest hour of mankind: “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 12:3).

We are a people of hope and are called not to be pulled down by the miseries of our world, but rather to look up as our redemption draws near. In the meantime, we ask God to use us in this time of darkness.

Yours in Christ,

Dr. Jürgen Bühler
ICEJ Executive Director

COVER PHOTO:
A French lady holds a sign saying “I am Jewish” at a recent rally in Paris after Islamic terror attacks rocked the city (AP)

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COMING UP IN THE NEXT
WORD FROM JERUSALEM

Our March issue will feature a report on the Envision 2015 Pastors Conference in Jerusalem, as well as more updates on our Aid Projects. Plus we’ll look deeper into the biblical theme of Reformation.

Learn more about our upcoming events at:
www.icejusa.org/events
alienated themselves from God. Throughout the generations, customs and traditions were established which contradicted the revealed will of God. Those traditions included either apostate Temple service, deteriorating family values, idolatry, or a general moral decay in society. During those periods the spiritual leadership of the nation (the priests and the prophets) often were indifferent to the moral decline of the people of God, or even played a supportive role in it.

But when the reformers reinstated God’s will to the people, it changed not only their understanding, but more importantly their heart and their behavior. The entire nation

“... the time of reformation” (Hebrews 9:10).

Evangelical Christianity today could hardly be imagined without the period in history known as the Reformation. Great reformers of the past, such as Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley, and many others, brought changes and transformations to Christianity which were necessary for the survival of the Church.

The above passage from Hebrews speaks about a future season of Messianic reformation that will be ushered in particularly towards the people of Israel.

After such a season of reformation, old traditions of Temple worship will become obsolete, and a new season of worship will be introduced to God’s people.

The word of God records different seasons of reformation in the history of the people of Israel. Men of God throughout the Bible were used by God to bring vital reforms to God’s people. Asa (2 Chronicles 15), Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 30-31), Josiah (2 Chronicles 34), and Nehemiah are just a few examples of great transformational leaders who renewed the spiritual state of Israel.

Reforms were needed when the Israelites
started to seek God (2 Chronicles 15:12). As a consequence, God started to bless His people again and Israel experienced periods of peace, security, and prosperity.

Sometimes, times of reformation lead to the discovery of old truths and doctrines which were all the while in Scripture, but were never really part of the spiritual tradition of the nation. Hezekiah, for example, “rediscovered” the Feast of Tabernacles during Nehemiah’s time. It is remarkable since it never seemed to have played any role throughout the history of Israel until Nehemiah...

"So the whole assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and sat under the booths: for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun until that day the children of Israel had not done so. And there was very great gladness" (Nehemiah 8:17).

After close to 1,000 years of Jewish history, this feast was eventually celebrated in a reform which has impacted the Jewish people even to this day.

The Church also has gone through various phases of reformation and rediscovering old truths. One of them, for example, was the rediscovery of the call to world missions. Most churches did not have a big vision for the lost, nor often for the uncivilized tribes of the world. This changed when Moravian brethren and later people like Hudson Taylor and William Carey left their home countries to become missionaries in far-off lands. They became reformers as they returned the vision for world missions to the Church. Today, it is hard to imagine a local church without a missions budget and outreach.

The Need for Reformation

During various periods of Israel’s history, the prophets called for reformation. In particular, it was Jeremiah who foresaw the imminent destruction of Israel and repeatedly called the nation to repentance and reform.

“This is what the Lord says: ‘Look! I am preparing a disaster for you and devising a plan against you. So turn from your evil ways, each one of you, and reform your ways and your actions’” (Jeremiah 18:11 - NIV).

Many Christians today seek for a solution by looking to their governments. “If we would have another government things would be better.” I often hear. Yes, the Church is called to pray for our governments and this calling needs to be taken more seriously. But the place where God sees national change originating is less from the government and more from the people of God.

"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).

The key for national restoration and healing lies with the people of God. If the people of God seek His face, change their ways, reform their religious culture back to its apostolic roots, then God promises a season of national healing. Let us join together during 2015 and make it a year in which we pray for and seek reformation for the Church of the living God.

Upcoming issues of this magazine will feature different Christian leaders addressing the need for reformation in various important respects.
Looking back over last year, we are thankful and humbled to see how God has used the ministry of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem in so many ways. We were able once again not only to bless Israel and touch many lives here in the land, but also to connect the global Church to the nation of Israel in new ways. Here are a few of the highlights from 2014.

NEW WEEKLY PROGRAM ON GOD TV:
In January, the ICEJ began broadcasting a special half-hour program called “Word from Jerusalem” twice a week on GOD-TV, enabling us to reach millions of Christians worldwide. In general, we saw a significant increase in the number of people we are reaching around the world through our various internet, TV, radio, print, and social media outlets.

ENVISION PASTORS CONFERENCE:
More than 90 pastors and ministry leaders from around the world also joined us for our very first “Envision” pastors’ conference in Jerusalem last January.

HAIFA HOME EXPANSION:
The ICEJ also further expanded our assisted-living home for Holocaust survivors in Haifa by adding a number of new apartments, completely renovating the main kitchen and dining hall, and building a seven-room recreational center to serve the needs of the residents.

SHELTERS FOR THE SOUTH:
During the 50-day Gaza conflict last summer, the ICEJ leaped into action to deliver 10 portable bomb shelters to vulnerable communities, taking groups of the elderly and children from the South on respite to safer areas of the country, and sponsoring a trip abroad to the Czech Republic for some 40 youths from the hard-hit Ashkelon area.

YOUNG ADULTS SOLIDARITY MISSION:
Even while the rockets were still flying from Gaza, ICEJ Arise hosted a successful and life-changing summer hands-on tour for 40 young Christians from eleven countries.

NEW HOME FOR THE FEAST:
In October, we moved our annual Feast of Tabernacles celebration to the exciting new venue of the Jerusalem Payis Arena and attracted the largest number of Feast pilgrims in seven years.

ISRAEL BUYERS GUIDE:
The ICEJ published a first-of-its-kind Israel Buyer’s Guide to promote Israeli companies and their products in the Christian global market.

GROUND BREAKING STATEMENT:
The ICEJ joined with the World Jewish Congress and Empowered21 Global Movement to issue a historic joint statement to 120 world leaders demanding stronger actions to protect persecuted Christians in the Middle East.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP:
The ICEJ launched a landmark strategic partnership with the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference/Conela to make our Feast of Tabernacles the main event for Hispanic Christians worldwide to attend in order to express their solidarity with Israel.

UKRAINIAN ALIYAH:
The ICEJ assisted nearly 2,300 Jews in making Aliyah to Israel in 2014, including more than 700 escaping the Ukrainian civil war. This also included over 660 members of the Bnei Menashe community from India, bringing to 1,000 the number of Bnei Menashe we brought home to Israel over the past two years.

INTERNATIONAL EXPANSION:
We established new ICEJ branches in the nations of Benin, Burkina Faso, Georgia, Romania, Singapore, and Togo, bringing our current total to 80 national branches worldwide.

ISRAELI PRESS COVERAGE:
The ICEJ received unprecedented coverage in the Israeli media over the past year, especially for our Feast gathering and for our humanitarian relief efforts during the summer Gaza war, which were duly acknowledged in a letter from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

GENERAL GROWTH:
The Lord blessed us last year with a solid growth in our ministry. Through God’s grace we helped more people in Israel and reached more people around the world with the message of Israel than ever before. All this was possible because people like you stood with us in prayer and financial support. Please prayerfully continue to partner with us in 2015!
Feast pilgrims entering the new Jerusalem Payis Arena last October

Bnei Menashe immigrants arriving at Ben-Gurion airport last May

Ukrainian family making Aliyah

David Parsons teaching at the Envision Pastors and Leaders Conference

Jürgen Bühler sharing a message on GodTV

Arise Summer Tour
The dramatic terror attacks in Paris in early January have served as a sobering wake-up call to the world about the dangerous resurgence of anti-Semitism in Europe. But for Jews in France and all across the continent, it was a crushing reminder of the harsh reality they know has existed for years now.

Long before the terror assault on the Charlie Hebdo magazine offices and the deadly hostage stand-off at the Hyper Cacher kosher supermarket in Paris left 17 people dead, one could visit Jewish communities anywhere in Europe and find a people under siege. Jewish synagogues, museums, and community centers all have metal detectors and armed guards posted outside. Jewish schools and seminaries have become like fortresses.

If anything, the terror attacks in Paris have shattered any remaining sense of security for much of European Jewry. The hope that their governments could somehow protect them is vanishing.

But protect them from what?

Even with the public outrage and the mass “unity” rallies in the wake of the Paris attacks, most world leaders are still unwilling to identify the real menace now stalking the Jews of Europe – the scourge of Islamic jihadism.

The rallies spoke out against both anti-Semitism and Islamophobia – as if they were equally terrorizing scores of innocent lives at present.

The rising threat now facing European Jewry is an extremely toxic mix. First, there is still much classical anti-Semitism among native Europeans which induces them to vilify Israel as a main cause of Muslim extremism. Add to that the youth violence among the growing Muslim immigrant communities from North Africa and the Middle East. And now, home-grown jihadists are returning from battle in places like Yemen, Iraq, and Syria as trained militiamen seeking to hunt down easy Jewish prey.

No wonder then that Jews are starting to leave France in record numbers. French Aliyah reached an all-time level in 2014 with nearly 7,000 Jewish people moving to Israel. It marked the first time in Israel’s modern history that the highest number of
Jewish immigrants came from a Western country.

Jewish Agency authorities were already anticipating that number to double in 2015 to around 15,000. And that was before the Paris terror attacks, which are now expected to accelerate French Jewish Aliyah even more.

Last year, some 50,000 French Jews approached the Jewish Agency for information about moving to Israel. The week after the Paris attacks, another 2,000 Jews signed up to begin the Aliyah process.

Thus the Jewish Agency has asked the Christian Embassy to assist with funding for the huge influx of French Jews expected to come home to Israel in 2015.

The general perception is that most French Jews can afford the move to Israel. But the reality is that nearly three-fourths of the 550,000 Jews in France come from families that escaped there from North Africa two generations ago, and many still live in poorer neighborhoods alongside Muslim immigrants that came from the same countries of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia.

So they are the most vulnerable Jews at present, and the least able to afford the expenses of moving to another country. And according to the Jewish Agency, it is Sephardic Jews in France which feel the least secure and are showing the most interest in making Aliyah right now.

Over coming months, the ICEJ will be funding Aliyah seminars, ground transport, flight tickets, absorption costs, and other expenses involved in the immigration process. The Jewish Agency has estimated that the average cost for those who need assistance is $1100 per person. ⚠️

So please give today to this urgent need. Help us bring home more French Jews, before it is too late! Give on-line today at: www.icejusa.org/french-aliyah
A CLOSER LOOK AT THE JEWS OF FRANCE

With an estimated 550,000 members, France currently has Europe's largest Jewish community and ranks third in the world behind Israel and the United States. The perception that most are native, well-off French Jews of Ashkenazi descent is wrong, as much of that community was either wiped out, or fled during the Holocaust.

Rather, three-quarters of France's Jews today are of Sephardic origin from North Africa. Their families moved to the safety of France mostly during the unstable period between Israel's rebirth in 1948 and Algeria's independence in 1962; as persecution and violence uprooted the once-huge Jewish communities in these former French possessions across the Mediterranean.

Many came to France alongside Muslim refugees fleeing conflict and harassment in the same countries of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. These Jewish and Muslim refugees often settled in the same poor neighborhoods of Paris, Marseille, and elsewhere, and much of the recent upsurge of anti-Semitic violence in France has occurred in these struggling “immigrant” towns.

While the Hyper Cacher market attack has left all French Jews uneasy, fear runs deepest among those of North African origin, due to their proximity to large Muslim neighborhoods and their haunting memories of forced exile.

France's History of anti-Semitism
As with other European nations, France has a long history of anti-Semitism, including its fair share of blood libels, book burnings, forced conversions, and expulsions. And even during the Enlightenment, one of its champions – the French philosopher Voltaire – wrote of the Jews: “You have surpassed all nations in impertinent fables, in bad conduct, and in barbarism. You deserve to be punished, for this is your destiny.”

When the French emancipation of the 1800s promised “Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité,” the Jews of France thought they would finally find acceptance. But then the Dreyfus Affair erupted in 1894 with its trumped-up charges against a Jewish military officer. The rigged court martial of Captain Alfred Dreyfus in Paris, was witnessed by Viennese journalist Theodor Herzl, prompting him to write a book calling for Jewish statehood, which later spawned the Zionist movement.

During the Holocaust, a largely indifferent France saw one-fourth of its 300,000 Jews perish in Nazi death camps, while many more fled the country. They were soon replaced over the ensuing decades by Sephardic Jews fleeing conflict and Muslim anti-Semitism in the French colonies of North Africa.

A Modern Scourge
The vestiges of classical European anti-Semitism are still present among native French, which is often reflected in the media’s critical coverage of Israel and the government’s traditional pro-Arab stand in the post-De Gaulle era. But much of the anti-Semitic violence in France today is driven by youth gangs in the country's swelling Muslim immigrant community – the largest in Europe.

In 2001, the Second Palestinian Intifada sparked firestorms of Muslim youth violence against Jews in France that continue to smoulder and reignite during times of conflict in the Middle East. During this summer’s rocket war in Gaza, for instance, synagogues came under siege, kosher shops were burned, and Jews were attacked in the streets.

Other prominent anti-Semitic incidents in recent years include:

- The shooting spree by a Muslim terrorist at a Jewish day school in Toulouse in 2012, which left a teacher and three students dead;
- The shooting attack last May outside the Jewish museum in Brussels that claimed four lives and was carried out by a French Muslim terrorist who had returned from fighting in Syria; and
- The shockingly brutal kidnapping, torture, and slaying of French Jew, Ilan Halimi in 2006 by a gang of Muslim criminals.

The biggest concern now is over the increasing number of radicalized Muslims being recruited by jihadist groups to fight in the Middle East and then returning to France to carry out attacks against “soft” Jewish targets. The jihadist attacks on the Charlie Hebdo magazine offices and the kosher supermarket in Paris, are evidence that the threats to French Jews are only getting worse. ☮️
JEWISH ALIYAH

JEWS STILL DESPERATE TO FLEE UKRAINE CONFLICT

BY HOWARD FLOWER, ICEJ ALIYAH DIRECTOR

Besides the worsening situation for Jews in France, the other country of greatest concern to Israeli authorities at present remains Ukraine. Despite recent reports of a ceasefire, fighting in the eastern part of Ukraine is still very intense, and the human suffering there has only been compounded by the onset of another harsh winter.

During a recent lull in fighting, it became clear to Jewish Agency officials that there are still thousands of Jews who have been hunkering down in basements and other hiding places in eastern Ukraine trying to wait out the conflict before fleeing to safer areas. Most are without food, heat, or power, and travel is dangerous. What keeps many of them going is the hope of making it to Israel someday soon.

When, and if, a ceasefire takes hold in the east, even more Jews will come out of hiding, make their way west and seek to make Aliyah. In the meantime, the civil war has devastated the economy throughout Ukraine. The quality of life is low and many Jewish people have decided it is time to move to Israel. So there are thousands already waiting in refugee camps for their turn to come home to Israel.

The Jewish Agency has asked the Christian Embassy to continue funding Aliyah efforts from Ukraine in 2015. Last year, the ICEJ assisted hundreds of Ukrainian Jews in making the journey home to Israel, sponsoring pre- and post-flight costs, such as Aliyah fairs, temporary housing, transportation, and grants to needy families during the absorption phase in Israel.

The ICEJ has committed to continue funding these critical areas of the Aliyah process for Ukrainian Jews in coming months. The average cost to bring Jews from Ukraine to Israel right now is $750 per person.

Please consider making a generous donation today to help with this urgent need! ☞

Ukrainian Jews!
Give on-line today at: www.icejusa.org/ukraine
ICEJ AID

A ‘SHOP’ THEY CAN AFFORD


BY ESTERA WIEJA

While Israel is prospering in many respects, there are still many living in hardship. A recent study found that 1.8 million men, women, and children in Israel are living below the poverty line and almost half that number are children.

The Christian Embassy is committed to assisting such needy Israeli families. For instance, we have been sponsoring the yearly rental costs for two vans used to distribute food to the poor in the greater Tel Aviv area. The vans collect food items donated by factories, grocery chains, and farms on a daily basis and deliver them to some 4,000 impoverished families. They also deliver clothing, shoes, toys, books, and linens, with a special emphasis on items for infants. The vans carry the ICEJ logo along with the message in English and in Hebrew: “Israel, you are not alone!”

We also help with a unique social aid center set up in a parking garage at a busy mall in Rishon LeZion. Every Thursday, the area is quickly transformed into a “bargain shop” which serves over 2,300 disadvantaged families in the region.

It is the end of Israel’s work week and everyone is out window shopping and buying groceries. But for hundreds of poor families, they cannot afford the regular prices. This is a place where they can come and “shop” for food and clothing for mere pennies. The aid center in Rishon LeZion serves thousands of disadvantaged families who are sent there to shop by Israeli social workers.

The ICEJ has sent Christians to volunteer at the make-shift market from such diverse places as Germany and Hong Kong.

Designs have been drawn up to completely renovate the aid center in the Rishon LeZion mall, to make it more attractive and welcoming to the needy families it serves. The ICEJ has been asked to help fund these renovations over coming months.

The food distribution currently takes place in a dark corner of an underground parking garage. New designs have been drawn up to completely renovate the aid center in the Rishon LeZion mall. It will make it more attractive and welcoming to the needy families it serves. It will also enable us to reach out to the people who need help in a more dignified manner. Please help us with these important renovations, so we can serve the needy in a more gracious way. It will honor God.

GIVE ON-LINE TODAY AT: http://us.icej.org/aid

FACING ANOTHER HARSH WINTER

At the start of January, Israel was hit with a powerful winter storm marked by strong winds and heavy snows in higher areas. The country is not prepared to handle wintry weather, and memories of last year’s major blizzard were still fresh. In that earlier storm a meter of snow fell in Jerusalem, causing extensive damage. One damaged property was an outdoor playground at the “Little Hearts” kindergarten attended by children from Jewish, Arab, and foreign Christian families. This is a special day-care for some 50 young children who are taught tolerance and acceptance by believing Jewish and Arab teachers. Their playground was flattened under the weight of last year’s heavy snowfall. Thanks to gifts from Christians around the world, the ICEJ was able to rebuild and expand the playground.
A special part of the Christian Embassy’s ministry in Israel over recent decades has been our Homecare Program, supervised by Corrie van Maanen. A dedicated nurse from the Netherlands, Corrie faithfully serves the needs of many frail and elderly new immigrants from the former Soviet Union, including many Holocaust survivors. In Jerusalem and elsewhere, she lovingly provides them with in-home care. The work is physically demanding, but it gives valuable assistance to those who can no longer take care of themselves.

Corrie’s weekly calendar is filled with daily in-home visits. In most cases, she may be the only visitor they have all week, and many consider her to be their closest friend. She is a great source of encouragement and light in their loneliness.

They also know and appreciate that there are Christians around the world who care for them, as Corrie often reminds them.

Beyond providing basic physical care and health needs, Corrie is quick to notice other opportunities to bring some joy into their lives.

One of her weekly visits is to Tanya and Jashe, a special Jewish couple who made Aliyah with Tanya’s parents in the late 1990s from Kiev in Ukraine. Tanya took care of her sick, elderly parents until they both passed away a few years after arriving in Israel. Later she helped her son with his children. This all left no time for Tanya to learn Hebrew, which added to her sense of isolation.

Today, Tanya and Jashe are both elderly and in poor health themselves. For years they have lacked mobility and struggled with basic activities, like climbing stairs and carrying groceries. Corrie was already a part of their family as ICEJ Homecare had provided assistance for Tanya’s ailing father when they first made Aliyah. Now it was their turn to need that same assistance.

Over recent years, Jashe’s condition has deteriorated significantly and he was moved to a special hospital for long-term care. Tanya struggles with her own limitations, but still visits her husband as much as she can. The support of Dutch Christians makes Tanya’s faithful visits possible, by sponsoring her fares to and from the hospital.

Besides this help, Corrie’s visits also bring her “sparks of joy” every week, she says, adding that, “It’s the little things that give me strength to push through.”

On her latest visit, Corrie brought Tanya some new dishes, kitchen towels, and food products. Tanya’s strength is slowly fading, including strength in her hands, so she often drops things before she is able to avoid it. She is embarrassed by this, and the fact that her dish shelves have become almost empty. Because of your support, however, the new set of plates and cups that ICEJ Homecare supplied has given Tanya a sense of comfort and dignity when she receives guests.

“This is the heart of our Homecare work,” said Corrie. “We see needs and we help when we are able to.” ☺️
Regional Forecast for 2015

BY DAVID PARSONS, ICEJ MEDIA DIRECTOR

As we enter 2015, there are a number of steep challenges facing Israel and the region. Not all is bad news though, as Israel’s economy remains strong, bolstered by massive natural gas finds offshore, and Aliyah is on the rise. Yet as Israelis prepare for new elections, the conflict with the Palestinians appears endless, the ongoing civil war in Syria has spilled over into Iraq and Lebanon, and Iran continues to flirt with the nuclear threshold. The Middle East is notoriously unpredictable, but here are some current trends that give us some idea regarding what to expect next.

Close Israeli Elections

Israel will hold new elections in March and the campaign promises to be a close race. It is not clear yet what will sway voters this time – a focus on domestic issues like social needs and housing costs could help the Left, while reverting to familiar security concerns over Palestinian terrorism and the Iranian nuclear threat would favor the Right.

In the last election just over two years ago, one major issue was the drafting of yeshiva students into the army, leading to a fairly broad center/right coalition minus any ultra-Orthodox parties. But, once a Haredi draft law was enacted, the glue holding the coalition together dissipated and the government began to fragment over differences on the economy and the peace process.

Faced with open rebellion in his cabinet, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, called for early elections, banking on his calculation that potential rivals like Tzippi Livni, Yair Lapid, and Naftali Bennett did not have enough legislative results yet to present to the voters. He is also confident that most Israelis will continue to see him as the sole candidate with the diplomatic and security credentials needed to navigate Israel through the stormy currents in the region. The next Knesset overall is again expected to be slightly right-of-center.

Palestinian Push for Statehood

The Palestinians also have renewed their unilateral campaign for statehood, which could end up a decisive factor in the Israeli elections.

Recently, Palestinian Authority leader, Mahmoud Abbas, forced the United Nations Security Council to vote on a resolution calling for international
recognition of a Palestinian state and demanding that Israel withdraw to the pre-1967 lines within two years. Strangely, Abbas knew the resolution did not have enough votes to pass, yet he pressed for it anyway and then immediately went to the International Criminal Court to demand admission as a member state.

This diplomatic gambit was surely fueled by recent parliamentary votes in several European nations which signaled their readiness to accept a Palestinian state. But it met with opposition from the Obama administration, while the new conservative US Congress is even threatening to cut off American funding to the Palestinian Authority. In the meantime, Israel is withholding customs taxes it collects for the PA over its bid to join the ICC, which it hopes will open “war crime” trials against IDF soldiers in the Hague.

Abbas is now vowing to return to the UN Security Council for a second vote on imposing a firm deadline for Palestinian statehood and an Israeli withdrawal. Such a move could force a US veto, but expect the Obama White House to quietly offer some trade-offs for a Palestinian retreat from its diplomatic brinksmanship.

This has raised questions about what Abbas is really seeking. He is advanced in age and, other than drawing world sympathy, has achieved little for his people. It also is clear he prefers keeping the conflict with Israel alive over gaining statehood.

Meanwhile, the latest Palestinian attempt to “internationalize” the conflict could backfire on Abbas by driving Israeli voters back into the arms of Netanyahu come March.

**Spread of Syrian Conflict**

Meanwhile, the Syrian civil war has raged for nearly three years now and shows no sign of abating. The death toll likely exceeds 300,000 and the fighting continues to spill over into Iraq and Lebanon. Millions have fled their homes and many are suffering through a harsh winter in refugee tent camps in Jordan, Turkey, and elsewhere.

**The plight of Middle East Christians continues to worsen as radical Islamist forces like the Islamic State terror militia gain footholds throughout the region**

Among the refugees of this conflict are tens of thousands of destitute Christians. The plight of Middle East Christians continues to worsen as radical Islamist forces like the Islamic State terror militia gain footholds throughout the region. There are some positive developments, such as the al-Sisi government in Egypt displaying a friendlier attitude towards the ancient Coptic community. But overall, the Arab world is proving to be quite hostile to indigenous Christians.

The Western air campaign against ISIS has begun to roll back some of its advances in Iraq and Syria from last summer, but ground forces will still be needed to secure these areas and stabilize the region. All the while, the Assad regime continues to brutalize its own citizens in order to maintain its tenuous grip on power in Damascus. So, the Syrian conflict remains a quandary that pits Western “war fatigue” against concerns over the growing threat of home-grown jihadists launching terror attacks on European and American soil.

**Iran Nearing “Critical Mass”**

Finally, Iran continues to deceive the world and buy time to advance its renegade nuclear weapons program. High-level talks were to resume in Geneva in January and the stakes could not be greater for Israel.

For years, there has been an “intelligence gap” between Washington and Jerusalem on how close they each believe Tehran is from being able to produce nuclear warheads, but that gap has closed as Iran’s break-out capabilities have undeniably reached critical mass. Instead, there is now a widening “policy gap” on what course to pursue with Iran – prevention or containment.

Led by the US, the Western powers appear ready to compromise by allowing Tehran to retain its uranium enrichment facilities, perhaps as part of some historic American rapprochement with Iran that finally delivers President Barack Obama a major foreign policy success.

Israel, of course, views this as an existential threat and hopes the West will stick with six earlier UN Security Council resolutions which all demand that Iran completely dismantle its nuclear program. Israeli leaders also still view Iran as a greater threat to regional and world peace than ISIS or al-Qaeda, and thus would oppose any deal that would include cooperating with Tehran to fight the Sunni jihadist groups now rampaging in Iraq and Syria. Going forward, Jerusalem is counting on a friendlier Republican-led Congress to protect its interests on both accounts.
The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem stands with Israel in support and friendship in accordance with our founding Scripture back in 1980: “Comfort, comfort My people,” says your God (Isaiah 40:1).

The vision is to reach every segment of Israeli society with an expression of Christian love that represents churches from every nation of the world.

All Israel!
Every nation! …
That is our vision!

As a global ministry, we also: (1) equip and teach the worldwide Church regarding God’s purposes with Israel and the Middle East, (2) support churches and congregations in the Holy Land, and (3) seek ways to be an active voice of reconciliation between Jews, Christians, and Arabs.

With our reach into more than 150 countries, branch offices in 80 nations, the annual international celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem, an active ICEJ AID program, and many other outreaches in Israel, our ministry is acting as a bridge between the nations and Israel.
Understanding Inspires Prayer

Today, the population of Israel stands at 8.3 million citizens, with 74.9% of them Jews (6.2 million), 20.7% Arabs (1.7 million), and about 4.3% others (Christians, Bedouin, Druze, etc.). It is estimated that there are just over six million Jews in the Diaspora, but also 600 million Evangelicals in the world.

This means there truly is enough spiritual power in the Body of Christ to reach out effectively with the global voice of Christians to the hearts of all the Jewish people, as well as the remaining 25% of non-Jewish Israeli citizens. This spiritual power is the power of prayer! Our vision can be fulfilled!

It is the will of God for all Christians to see Israel and her existence in a truthful and biblical way, and to understand that God is a covenant-keeping God who never replaced Israel with the Church! We are also to understand that God will eventually save His people, redeem them, and do good things for them!

When this is understood and fully embraced in faith, it enables believers, in the fear of the Lord, to stand up and pray for and bless the Jewish people with all of their hearts! Imagine, if all of us, together in love and truth before God, flooded the nation of Israel with our global prayers for her salvation and well-being – and continued firmly until He answered! Can you see the Body of Christ from all the continents, in a holy unity of purpose, interceding on behalf of Israel, loving, and blessing her, being a source of refreshment to her like a dew from the Lord? This is our vision!

As a Dew from the Lord

The great English preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–1892) beautifully describes the combined power of individual believers when united. He takes the Scripture from Micah 5:7 where the Lord talks about Israel being in the midst of many peoples like dew from the Lord and like showers on the grass. Spurgeon clearly states that the meaning is literal, about national Israel. But then he, while acknowledging this, also applies it to us as children of God and writes:

Saints are as the dew; for in a quiet, unobtrusive manner they refresh those around them. Silently but effectually they minister to the life, growth, and joy of those who dwell with them. Little as individuals, they are, when united, all-sufficient for the purpose of love which the Lord fulfils through them. Dewdrops accomplish the refreshing of broad acres. (Quote from Cheque Book of the Bank of Faith).

Global united prayer is a mighty spiritual force releasing life and effectiveness into ministry in the midst of modern-day Israel! Quietly but surely the life of God in Christ touches, refreshes, and changes destinies. This is why we have a mission in the nations to raise global prayer on behalf of God’s chosen people. It has an effect! This is why we are fasting every first Wednesday of the month together with people from at least 79 different nations at the moment through the Isaiah 62 Global Prayer Initiative. (You can sign up at: http://us.icej.org/Isaiah62_Pledge).

So prayer is a must, but it is not enough.

Our Vision and Mission in the Nations

Our vision from the Lord Jesus is taking us to the nations not only to raise worldwide prayer in the churches, but we are also reaching out to teach and share God’s will concerning Israel in as many cultures and languages as we possibly can.

• We are constantly visiting and ministering in local churches all across the world.

• The Lord has also entrusted us with an expanding TV ministry via Daystar and GOD TV, plus a radio ministry, thus enabling us to leap borders into the nations everywhere. We are seeing more Christian stations wanting to carry our programs from Jerusalem.

• Our internet platform takes us to countries where even the mentioning of Jesus as the only way to heaven is life threatening, and to say, “I bless Israel” means you are a national traitor.

• We now have Chinese and Spanish language coordinators in our Jerusalem headquarters opening the way to new harvest fields of millions of people.

Our mission is to build an effective global constituency, and open ways for the “temporal” finances from the nations to come into “God’s land” to be changed here into something “eternal.” Remember that money is only good when exchanged and traded into something else! Our Holy Spirit-inspired aim in the nations is to revive the hearts of believers and churches in order for them to start blessing Israel.
In the nations, our goal is also to connect with politicians and decision-makers to make a difference and a lasting impact on behalf of Israel. We are constantly reaching out to new nations and national leaders. Our vision is to have a presence in every single nation on our planet, thus connecting the non-Jewish countries with Jerusalem and the Jewish people of Israel!

Why Connect the Church with Israel?
Why is all of this so important? Why do we endeavor to connect the Church and the nations with Israel? The answer is clear and leaves no room for speculation: “Salvation is of the Jews!” These are the words of Jesus Himself (John 4:22).

The Apostle Paul echoes His Master’s words and forever leaves an altar call to respond to God’s dealings with Israel for every reader: “They (Gentiles) are their (Jews) debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things” (Romans 15:27).

We are debtors and we need to pay our debt of gratitude back to the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob! The one walking in God’s love wants to show his appreciation both to the source (God) and to the vehicle (Jews).

The Bible also promises that whoever blesses Israel shall be blessed! And the Bible commands us to pray for the peace of Jerusalem! The word is clear! So hear and respond to it in faith!

All of this is even more necessary now because of the evil spirit of Satan flooding into the West in the form of radical Islam. The right response is to walk in love, not to be silent, nor retreat and shrink back, nor to give in, but to speak out about our love for Jesus, the Jewish people, the restored nation of Israel, as well as all the different nations and cultures and language groups!

“And they overcame him (Satan) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony!” (Revelation 12:11).
Join us in Jerusalem for a life-changing pastors and leaders conference!

Renew your vision by hearing what God is doing in Israel and among the nations! Gain unique prophetic insights from Dr. Jürgen Bühler and other ICEJ senior leaders, as well as from local Jewish and Arab ministers in the Land of Israel!

To learn more or to register for the US branch tour to Envision 2016, contact Pastor John Small at John.Small@ICEJUSA.ORG or 888-772-7732 Ext. 738.
WORLD LEADERS RESPOND TO ICEJ APPEAL ON PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS

BY LUCY JENNINGS

During the Feast of Tabernacles celebration last fall, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, joined with the leaders of two major Jewish and Christian global organizations in sending a joint letter to 120 world leaders demanding that they take urgent action to halt the brutal persecution of Christians in the Middle East.

This joint letter challenged the leaders of 95 democratic countries over the worsening situation for Christian minorities across the Middle East. Besides the Western-led air campaign to roll back the advances of the Islamic State terror militia in Iraq and Syria, democratic countries have responded so far by providing relief aid in refugee camps and by opening the door to more Christian refugees from the Middle East. Otherwise, the international community has been ineffective in confronting this on-going tragedy, and the ICEJ felt compelled to sound the alarm.

The joint letter was co-signed by ICEJ Executive Director, Dr. Jürgen Bühler; World Jewish Congress President, Ronald S. Lauder; and by Dr. William M. Wilson, President and Co-chairman of the Empowered21 Global Council. Dr. Bühler noted that the participation of Lauder as head of the main umbrella organization representing world Jewry made this an historic initiative.

Over recent months, the Christian Embassy has been receiving official replies from various heads of state and foreign ministries. All of them express concern regarding the persecution of Christians in the Middle East, but the level of commitment to affect change varies. Many responses offer to continue to raise awareness of Christian persecution in international forums, as well as to sponsor groups which promote religious liberties. Some also note that they have eased the way in recent months for more persecuted Christians to enter their countries as refugees.

Here are a few of those responses:

The Government of South Korea said it was “committed to promoting and encouraging respect for human rights for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or...”
ICEJ PARTNERS WITH HISPANIC CHRISTIANS TO BLESS ISRAEL

BY DAVID PARSONS

Dr. Samuel Rodriguez

Some sources claim an embattled Israel is losing Evangelical friends, but that is certainly not the case in the Latino world, where support for Israel is growing in parallel with the rapidly expanding Hispanic Christian community. And Dr. Samuel Rodriguez, head of an organization representing over 100 million Hispanic Evangelicals, has decided to channel that pro-Israel support through the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem.

A speaker at the ICEJ’s Feast of Tabernacles gathering last October, Dr. Rodriguez approached ICEJ Executive Director, Dr. Jürgen Bühler, afterwards and offered to partner together on Israel’s behalf. As President of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference/Conela, Rodriguez has agreed to encourage Latino believers to support Israel and to make attending the Christian Embassy’s annual Feast celebration the “exclusive” means for them to express their solidarity directly to the Israeli people.

The NHCLC and Conela recently merged to form a powerful leadership umbrella for an estimated 500,000 Hispanic Evangelical churches in North, Central, and South America. As President, Rodriguez is an influential figure in the United States and throughout the Latino world, even speaking at the White House and consulting with members of Congress on moral and social issues.

Rodriguez has used his prominent position to speak out for Israel before, but he wants to do more in light of the rising anti-Semitism among young Latinos and the constant media bias against Israel. And he sees the ICEJ as his key partner in accomplishing this goal.

Rodriguez also sees the Feast of Tabernacles as a rallying point for Hispanic Evangelicals to come to Israel every year, experience the country, and declare their support for Israel in person.

"Our objective is to exponentially increase Hispanic participation at the Feast," he said. "We will encourage all followers of Christ in the Latino world to come to Jerusalem at this divinely appointed time, to see the biblical sites, stand in solidarity with Israel, and take part in this dynamic worship experience with believers from all over the world."

Rodriguez recently told the Jewish News Service that most Hispanic Evangelicals are “absolutely committed to Israel,” but he is concerned about the surge in anti-Semitism in the Latino world, especially among the younger generation. He blames the mainstream media’s often negative portrayal of Israel as one of the main culprits behind this trend.

"My job is to convince young Latino people that supporting Israel actually works for the good of all in the Middle East," he said. "It is important to speak the truth about Israel... the sole democracy in that part of the world and a safeguard for religious pluralism... Israel is not the problem, Israel is the solution."

"My message to Israel and the Jewish people is that there is a Hispanic Christian community emerging that will not abandon Israel or the Jewish people," he said. "We will build a firewall against anti-Semitism, and we will do that with integrity and compassion."

"We are excited about partnering with Dr. Samuel Rodriguez in this new initiative to bring more Hispanic pilgrims to the Feast each year," responded Dr. Bühler of the ICEJ. "Their presence in Jerusalem will have a great impact on the Israeli people, and it will only enhance the incredible fellowship we enjoy with Christians from across the globe at this unique biblical festival." ☺

The Feast of Tabernacles 2015 will run from September 27 to October 2 of this year. Find out more at http://feast.icej.org
Many young people think church is irrelevant. Too many are attracted by the shallow buffet which the world has to offer. Yet many leave because they have come to doubt Christianity. In fact, intellectual scepticism is a major reason cited by those who have left the faith.

We can lay the blame for much of this on ourselves — that is, on us Christians.

While there are outstanding exceptions, most Western churches over-emphasize emotional experience while at the same time ignoring biblical truths, which may go against current societal trends like understanding God’s purposes for Israel.

In other words, we’re doing a great job of decorating the stage, complete with moving lights, coffee bars, and cushy couches in order to keep our youth and young adults within our building walls. But we are doing a dreadful job of teaching them godly truths, sound theology, discipline, and God’s plans for Israel and the Church.

We have too much “candy Gospel”
which tastes and looks good, but too little godly “meat” which truly satisfies and changes our spiritual digestive system.

Reinhard Bonnke puts it well: “The less Holy Spirit we have, the more cake and coffee we need to keep the church going.” A production or building never saved anyone, only the grace, love, and appeal of Christ.

**The Fathers are Needed**
The good news is that we can do something about it! We can start by teaching the Bible in our homes. Dads have a vital role in bringing strength and stability to the home. God wants the home to be the primary place where our children can learn about faith. The temple, synagogue, and the church should all come secondary in responsibility for spiritual training.

In the New Testament, Paul did not write to pastors or teachers in Ephesians 6 when he said: “Bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.” He was talking to you and me - the fathers.

**See the Value**
Young adults can accomplish magnificent things for the Kingdom cause. But do we always recognize this? Sadly, it may be that we don't sometimes. We should not overlook this treasured resource in the Kingdom. We must be on the lookout for them and encourage them along the way. God has called young people into His fields throughout history and we should always echo this.

Jeremiah, the great “weeping prophet,” is one of the more remarkable characters of the Old Testament. He sought so desperately to bring disobedient Judah back into accord with the law of God. It is likely that his preaching career covered some sixty years, or perhaps even more. This indicates that Jeremiah was probably in his late teens when the Lord called him to be his prophet to this wicked nation. God has initiated his plans through the youthful zeal and passion of numerous young men and women in the Bible. God still uses youth of faith in our days!

**Equipping**

Having sensational concerts and events for young adults alone is not enough to protect them at their colleges and universities, nor is it enough to make them bold witnesses for those they meet. If they arrive at these places with nothing more than good sentimental feelings about Christ, they are easy prey for anti-Christian, anti-Semitic, anti-Israel “friends” and professors, and a campus environment intent on discouraging their faith and disparaging its truths.

Within ICEJ ARISE, we want to equip the young generation with solid biblical foundations and truths so they can stand in the storms and in their difficult environments. We want to send young soldiers out into the world with the armour and ammunition they need to fight the good fight. We want them to be able to know what we believe and why we believe in it. This naturally includes God's purposes for Israel.

In the history of God's global plan of redemption, He has often tasked young people with a starring role in His epic master plan. Looking back at the history of Israel, this becomes evident. God has always kept young people at the center of this plan, and ARISE wants to be there too!

Keep praying for and supporting us because we cannot do this alone. We are a big international family who cares for our future.

Visit our webpage: www.arisegeneration.org