Dear Friends,

We just returned from a major gathering in the USA of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference (NHCLC). One of the most impacting encounters was a meeting with a Persian pastor who reaches out to his native country of Iran via print, internet, and the airwaves. I had to realize that a nation which seems so bleak and hopeless according to our media has actually become a beacon of hope. This is not because the radical Islamic regime is changing, but because the spiritual atmosphere within Iran is changing dramatically.

After several decades of hard missions work, the pastor told us that before Ayatollah Khomeini took over Iran in 1979, there were barely 1,000 believers who had been saved. Since the Islamic Revolution the number of believers has increased every decade by a factor of 10! He said that today there are more than four million born-again Christians in Iran. The Iranian government just recently stated that after the Zionist threat (meaning Israel), the main enemy of Islam is the Evangelical church. Even the fiercest persecution has not been able to stop the work of God. It shows us that in spite of all the chaos and violence in the region, God is in control and all things work out to the good for those called to be His people.

This gives us great hope for Israel, for the Church, and for our own lives. While the enemies of Israel might scheme to wipe her off the map, and while the current negotiations regarding Iran’s renegade nuclear program are greatly disappointing, we know that God will have the last word.

In the meantime, we are called to action. We need to pray for the church in Iran, we need to take a stand for Israel, and we need to challenge our governments to be more assertive with a regime that persecutes Christians and plans the annihilation of Israel.

I hope you are blessed as you read this latest issue of the Word from Jerusalem. Please consider signing and circulating our latest petition regarding the dangers posed by the Iranian nuclear threat.

Yours in Christ,

Dr. Jürgen Bühler
ICEJ Executive Director
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The Feast of Tabernacles is a Feast for the nations!

Of course, this festival has a rich biblical context looking back in time to Israel’s 40 years of wanderings in the desert when God supernaturally provided everything they needed. It is the Lord’s Feast and a very joyous one, and He is at the center of it — true! It is also a Feast that celebrates the goodness of the Lord and is a time to bring great gifts to His house — true!

However, the climax and complete fulfillment of this Feast includes the Gentile nations and embraces them as well! Israel and all of humanity has been given a great hope, and that is the return of the Great King and Messiah, in His glory and majesty, back to this planet earth. So the Feast of Tabernacles will have its ultimate fulfillment in the return of Jesus.

The prophet Zechariah proclaims how the time will come when all the nations “shall go up [to Jerusalem] from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles” (Zechariah 14:16). The prophet Isaiah also depicts a glorious age when all nations shall flow to Jerusalem to learn the ways of the Lord and not learn war any more (Isaiah 2:1-4). So God sees both Israel and the nations celebrating in this Feast!

God’s Everlasting Arms

In the Bible, God informs us that His everlasting arms are carrying Israel as a nation. He has promised most beautifully: “The eternal God is your
refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms; He will thrust out the enemy from before you, and will say, ‘Destroy!’” (Deuteronomy 33:27).

When Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, nothing could stop their exodus because the invisible, everlasting arms of God were carrying them. Egypt was the greatest empire of that day, but their mighty armies were no match for God’s redeeming arms hovering over Israel and securing them from underneath. His everlasting arms were carrying them out from bondage and slavery to Pharaoh to the wonderful freedom of the Lord as their redeeming King, and into His purposes for them as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. Even their sicknesses and poverty were left in Egypt (Psalm 105:37).

The Song of Moses
Now after those 40 years in the wilderness, and just prior to his departure from this world, Moses sang a song birthed in Heaven to his people, and reminded them of this very same thing: it was God Himself who had carried them all the way through the desert (Deuteronomy 32:11-12). It had been His redeeming powers and everlasting arms which had been looking after them, guiding them, protecting them, and providing for them. Even their clothes and shoes had not worn out. Throughout their journey in the barren landscapes, they always had enough food to fill their stomachs and enough water to quench their thirst.

God Carries Israel Even to this Today
About 700 years after entering the Promised Land, the prophet Isaiah is still declaring the same word of the Lord: it is the God of Israel who is carrying His people (Isaiah 46:3-4). He will still carry them, deliver them, and show Himself strong on their behalf. Even though He will discipline them and carry them out into exile, He will also carry them back to their homeland one day and show them mercy, kindness, and forgiveness. This He has already done!

God carried His people to Babylon by the hand of King Nebuchadnezzar, and by the hand of Cyrus, the Persian king, He also carried them back. But not only this, He has also carried His chosen people back to their ancient homeland a second time in our day! And even until today, His eternal arms are underneath the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and modern-day Israel lives and is very much alive because of Him!

The Times of the Nations
Today, after spending two thousand years in exile, Israel as a nation is back in her ancient homeland for the second time and is a full and independent state. This means that all the Gentile nations must now relate to Israel on a national level. And the unchanging word of the Lord decrees: “I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you” (Genesis 12:3).

In the Bible, God informs us that His everlasting arms are carrying Israel as a nation.

Israel as a nation was called by God to be the carriers of His Word to all humanity and this makes the relationship between Israel and the nations - and vice versa – quite unique. The way of life and the way of death are now before the nations as a choice. As a ministry, we are thus raising global awareness in the Body of Christ on behalf of Israel in order for the nations to choose life. We are seeking ways to speak to national leaders and to faithfully remind the whole world that there will be another kind of day also approaching called “the day of the Lord in the valley of decision” (Joel 3:14).

The Feast of Tabernacles
Now God is calling the worldwide Body of Christ to join His plans and purposes concerning these things. He invites us to celebrate together with Him the reality that He has carried His people back to the land. He is sending out His servants with His prophetic and timely message to declare to the nations and even in the isles afar off, that He who scattered Israel has gathered him (Jeremiah 31:10).

This being so, the nations now need to show up in Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles, in order to publicly express their faith and belief in the future of Israel and for all the nations.

The Feast in itself has a strong, hope-filled and a joyous message about the bright future for the ones who put their trust fully in the Savior. The Feast declares that Israel will be well. The nations eventually will recognize the Lord’s dealings with her throughout her long journey since the days of Abraham until now, and that it is Him who has restored them both back to their land and to their God (Ezekiel 36:22-38).

The Feast also declares the wonderful and promised times of the restoration of all things and the new season for all mankind – even for nature and the animal world (Acts 3:21; Isaiah 11:1-9; Psalm 98).

By celebrating the Feast in Jerusalem as Gentiles from the nations, we declare to Israel and to the entire world that we have hope in this future, that we know what is coming, and that we are already rejoicing in it together with Israel! We are not filled with fear, but with gladness and hope. We have not lost our sense of direction, nor are we confused, nor are we depressed or hopeless. No, just the opposite! Our eyes have seen the glory of the Lord coming upon this earth and we are joyfully expecting Him and His Kingdom to come!

So come and celebrate the Feast with us. Make every effort to join us along with thousands of Christian pilgrims from almost 100 different nations from September 27 to October 2 in Jerusalem. Trust in the Lord, for He will do it and will give you the desires of your heart! (Psalm 37:3-4).

See you in Jerusalem at the Feast! ☝️
The Druze are often viewed as a very closed-off society, but here at the Christian Embassy we have always found the Israeli Druze community to be one of the most hospitable and open people in the region. During a recent visit by an ICEJ leadership team from Jerusalem, the Druze of the Carmel range proved once again just how friendly and welcoming they can be.

Extremely pleasant and devoted, the Druze are very proud of their Israeli citizenship and their young men proudly claim the highest rate of induction into the IDF of any sector of society. This also means they have lost more than their fair share of husbands and sons in defense of the nation, and one of the first things you encounter in a Druze village is how these fallen soldiers are treated with great dignity and respect.

“The moment we arrived, you could quickly see the way they truly honor their fallen sons,” said ICEJ Executive Director, Dr. Jürgen Bühler, who was joined by ICEJ International Director, Rev. Juha Ketola and ICEJ-AID Director, Nicole Yoder, on a recent condolence visit to the families of a Druze policeman and an IDF soldier killed in separate terrorist attacks in Jerusalem last year.

The Druze policeman died while rushing into the Har Nof synagogue where armed terrorists were busy slaughtering observant Jews at morning prayers last December. Gunned down by one of the terrorists, he left behind a wife and child who are struggling with what their future may hold.

His widow is studying to be a teacher, to support their little daughter. Her chances to remarry are very slim, since the culture is very strict on marital traditions. Their living room is a memorial to her husband, with many pictures, framed uniforms, and emblems of service. Every day, this young widow is reminded of her terrible loss.

The fallen Druze soldier had been redeployed to Jerusalem last autumn amid a rash of terror attacks in the capital city, but was then killed when an Arab driver deliberately drove a car into a crowded station he was guarding along the light rail line. His widow has now been left with two young children under her care and much uncertainty ahead. She also suffers from ALS, a disease her husband was well aware of when they married, and he had solemnly vowed to take care of her. Yet now, she must face her own disabilities and provide for their children without him.
The ICEJ had already donated funds to help both widows and now wanted to pay a visit to see first-hand how they were facing their difficult circumstances. Though their futures look so unsure, our support is making a difference in both families. Both women want to honor their deceased husbands by investing in their children. So the funds will be used as scholarships for their own vocational training as well as for their children’s educations.

Many young Druze have a great desire for learning, but after serving in the army they often marry quickly and have to work to support their new families, rather than pursue higher education. For some, the educational lag starts earlier in life. So the Christian Embassy has been cooperating with a number of public schools in northern Israel for years to bring greater opportunities to Druze youth.

Over recent years, the ICEJ has invested in several Druze schools in the Galilee by purchasing computers, desks, headphones, and books for their classrooms. All Druze schools teach honor, ethics, social assistance, and partnership. The children, who speak Arabic at home, learn Hebrew at an early age and quickly move on to learn English as well.

During the visit in April, the ICEJ leadership delegation also toured some of the schools we have assisted; They had prepared a special show on how the children learn languages and how much they enjoy it. It was accompanied by a musical program and a lavish banquet of traditional foods shared with elders of the Druze community.

The ICEJ’s investment in educational projects for the Druze community strives to raise the number of Druze youths acquiring a marketable diploma and continuing on to higher education, even after the army. ICEJ scholarships are also helping them pursue studies while supporting themselves and their loved ones. With your financial gifts, we also hope to expand their school libraries.

"As an Arab minority, the Druze can serve as role models of how minorities can be more fully integrated into Israeli society, and serve it wholeheartedly," noted Dr. Bühler after the tour. "They are good soil for investing in Israel’s future."

So join us in making a difference in this truly unique and ancient community in Israel.

please give your best gift today to ICEJ AID at: http://www.icejusa.org/relief-work
Out of a total of some 1.5 million Druze that can be found in Lebanon and Syria, there are about 120,000 members of the community living in Israel today. They are one of the Middle East’s most ancient and unique ethno-religious minorities, known for their bravery in battle, tight societal cohesion, and secretive beliefs.

According to their own historic narrative, the Druze trace their origins back to the biblical figure of Jethro, the Midianite elder who became a father-in-law and mentor to Moses. They continued to live in the southern deserts until sometime after the Islamic conquest, when Muslim persecution forced the Druze to flee northward, where they found refuge in mountain-top villages on the Carmel, Hermon, and other high ranges in the Levant.

The Druze are often mistaken for an offshoot of Islam, but they have much older beliefs. They adhere to close-knit communal life but also integrate well into their adopted homelands, including Israel. In fact, the Druze boast the highest rate of induction into the military of any sector of Israeli society, even exceeding the Jewish rate, and they serve in all branches of the IDF.

Israel’s top leaders, President Reuven Rivlin and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, both recently lauded the Druze for their loyalty to the nation and its defense.

Rivlin acknowledged the biblical link between the Jewish and Druze people as dating back to Moses and Jethro, even affirming that these two patriarchs made a “covenant” with one another which creates a unique bond between the two peoples to this day. He added that he would like to see members of the Druze community integrated into all aspects of Israeli endeavors.

Meanwhile, Netanyahu sent a message of “blessing” to the Druze, expressing appreciation for their high levels of service in the IDF and police force, and for their spirit of partnership in building up the nation.
ICEJ AID

ICEJ AID IN ACTION!

BY ESTERA WIEJA

Following are recent examples of the many social aid projects which the ICEJ is funding all across Israel.

To support these and other charitable efforts, give to ICEJ AID at: http://www.icejusa.org/aid

TORCH-LIGHTING AT ILAN SPORTS CENTER

Independence Day is a special occasion in Israel and the ICEJ was privileged to be part of a Yom Hatzmaut ceremony at one of the many important social projects we have supported in the land over the years. ICEJ-AID Director, Nicole Yoder, was invited to light the torch for Independence Day at the Ilan Sports Center for disabled athletes in Ramat Gan. She first delivered some “birthday wishes” for Israel and then lit the torch alongside Avihu, one of the disabled athletes at the sports complex. “I am pleased to carry this torch in honor of Christian support worldwide for the Jewish people and the state of Israel, and in the name of brotherhood between nations,” said Yoder. “I do so with a prayer for peace. L’tiferet Medinat Yisrael!” (Which means “for the glory of the State of Israel,” the traditional saying for torch-lighting ceremonies on official memorial days in Israel).
**RED CARPET IN TEL AVIV**

South Tel Aviv is a troubled urban area bordered by an industrial zone and the city's old abandoned bus station, where you can find small shops and businesses next to brothels and drug hang-outs. In recent years, the Christian Embassy has helped sponsor a special charitable outreach to women on these tough streets who are trapped in prostitution and looking for a way out. The Red Carpet center offers free meals and beauty treatments to these women, giving them a safe haven where they can come for manicures and pedicures, to fix their hair, and to receive a hot meal and clean clothing. Those who are homeless can also have a shower and bed for the night. The aim of the center is to treat these women with respect and care and to help steer them towards rehabilitation. The ICEJ has been sponsoring salaries for the staff serving at the center, and recently we also were able to cover the costs of renovating the kitchen to serve better meals.

**REPAIRS AT LITTLE HEARTS KINDERGARTEN**

The Little Hearts kindergarten in Jerusalem is a special place where East meets West and cultural differences take a back seat. Children of all backgrounds, including from Arab, Jewish and foreign families, play and learn together at this unique Jerusalem day-care center. The ICEJ is a proud sponsor of scholarships for some of the families in need of assistance at Little Hearts. In addition, some parts of the facility were severely damaged during heavy snowstorms over recent winters, and the ICEJ stepped in to pay for major repairs to the school’s ever-popular playground. Most recently, the ICEJ donated funds to replace the outside security door after it rotted off its hinges. This left teachers and parents worried not only about someone possibly breaking in, but also that one of the small children might wander off. Thankfully, the new front door has provided security as well as peace of mind for all. The heavy metal door is equipped with an automatic opener and security cameras to enable the staff inside to identify anyone entering and leaving the compound.

DONATE TODAY! To support these and many other social aid projects all across Israel,
SUPPORING SCHOOLS IN TIBERIAS AND JERUSALEM

The ICEJ is committed to the betterment of educational opportunities for the younger generations in Israel. We often do this in cooperation with various institutions of learning, including the only two Hebrew-speaking schools in the land run by Israeli believers. This year we purchased media equipment for the Peniel School in Tiberias, on the Sea of Galilee, and helped to renovate their playground for small children. Meanwhile at the Makor HaTikvah school in Jerusalem, we funded a number of projects, including an updated website, transportation for school trips, photography, arts and crafts classes, tarps and flags for outdoor activities, building repairs, and other school expenses.

HELPING HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS IN NETANYA

One of ICEJ’s most important projects is our Home for Holocaust Survivors in Haifa, where elderly and poor survivors of the Nazi genocide are offered the constant love and care they so richly deserve. But there are other Holocaust survivors elsewhere in Israel who are also receiving our help. Some are struggling financially, but they prefer living near their relatives in other parts of Israel. In the coastal city of Netanya, the ICEJ has been sponsoring special weekly meals for Holocaust survivors as well as aid baskets for other elderly people in need, mostly Russian immigrants.

please give your best gift today to ICEJ AID at: http://www.icejusa.org/aid
ICEJ RESPONDING TO RISE IN ALIYAH

BY A. HOWARD FLOWER,
ICEJ ALIYAH DIRECTOR

The surge in Jews making Aliyah to Israel over recent years has accelerated even more in 2015, and the situation for the Jewish communities in Ukraine and France remains especially urgent. The ICEJ is working to assist more than 2,000 Jews coming home to Israel this year, but we need your help!

According to the Jewish Agency for Israel, the steady rise in global Aliyah over the past seven years grew even faster last year, despite the fact Israel faced another rocket war with Hamas in Gaza last summer. The increase in Jewish immigration is attributed to a global wave of anti-Semitism and Muslim violence, especially in Europe, as well as the conflict in Ukraine.

UKRAINIAN CAULDRON

A negotiated ceasefire has failed to materialize and the continued hostilities make it harder for Jewish people to prepare for Aliyah. The civil war in Ukraine has also been a huge drain on both the Russian and Ukrainian economies and the impact is being felt throughout the region. As a result, Russian Aliyah has also increased 49% in the first quarter of 2015.

ICEJ contributions to JAFI helped over 650 Jews make Aliyah from Ukraine last year. We are currently funding efforts to bring hundreds more Ukrainian Jews home to Israel, covering both pre and post-flight expenses. The average cost to bring Jews from Ukraine to Israel right now is $750 per person.

To support the on-going Aliyah work of the ICEJ, make an on-line donation today!
To assist Jews coming from Ukraine, go to: http://www.icejusa.org/ukraine

FRENCH TRAGEDY

Meanwhile in France, more than 60% of all violent attacks classified by French police as “racist” last year were attacks targeting Jewish people. Most of these attacks were committed by militant Muslims, and this growing threat prompted more Jews to make Aliyah from France than from any other country last year.

JAFI expects over 10,000 French Jews to move to Israel this year, but more funding is needed to assist those who cannot afford the move. There is a general perception that all French Jews are wealthy enough to be able to afford to move to Israel. But this is not the case for over 30% of the French Jews of North African descent who are low income and live alongside Muslim immigrants in poorer neighborhoods around Paris and other large cities – where the threat to their safety is greatest.

In fact, this very misperception – that French Jews have plenty of money – played a sad part in the tragic story of Ilan Halimi, which is retold in the chilling new film 24 Days.

Halimi was a young Jewish man who made a modest living by selling cell phones from a small kiosk. He was abducted by a Muslim gang and taken to their basement hideout, where he was viciously tortured for over three weeks while his captors demanded a huge ransom of 450,000 Euros. They wrongly assumed his Jewish family was well-off enough to pay that sum. In the end Halimi was found naked and handcuffed, with gas and acid burns on over 80% of his body, and he died on the way to the hospital.

The Jewish Agency for Israel has asked for our urgent help to bring thousands of French Jews home this year. The costs for Aliyah and the absorption process for French Jews is currently $1,100 per person.

To support the on-going Aliyah work of the ICEJ, make an on-line donation today!
To assist Jews coming from France, go to: http://www.icejusa.org/french-aliyah
ICEJ-FINLAND CO-HOSTS ALIYAH SEMINAR

The ICEJ’s Finnish branch, along with the Jewish Agency, recently co-hosted a weekend Aliyah seminar in Helsinki for 28 young Russian Jews from the St. Petersburg area who are preparing to move to Israel. The event was held in Finland due to the collapsing economy in Russia, and thus ICEJ-Finland’s National Director, Kari Neimi, was able to speak to the potential olim about Christians who are helping Israel and the Jewish people. Most of these young people will make Aliyah soon and travel through Finland on their way to Israel. Many more Russian Jews are expected to come to Israel through Finland this year. Please do your part to help!

ICEJ ALIYAH EFFORTS IN CENTRAL ASIA

For several decades, the ICEJ has been conducting Aliyah operations in the republics of Central Asia, where there are still tens of thousands of Jews scattered among various communities throughout this vast mountainous region. Interest in Aliyah among the remaining Jews has risen lately, as Islamic militants have infiltrated the region and fears spread about a resurgent Russia. According to Serguei Popov, our Aliyah coordinator for Central Asia, the ongoing slide of the Russian economy and the aggressive actions of Russia in Ukraine and Crimea have left many Jews in the area on-edge. The number expected to make Aliyah is rising and more funds are needed to meet the challenges ahead.

To support the on-going Aliyah work of the ICEJ, make an on-line donation today!  http://www.icejusa.org/aliyah
In April, ICEJ Executive Director, Dr. Jürgen Bühler; and International Director, Rev. Juha Ketola, conducted a ministry trip to the United States coordinated by the ICEJ-USA branch.

The first stop was a visit with Mike Bickle, head of the International House of Prayer in Kansas City, a center of 24/7 prayer and intercession for more than 15 years now. It was encouraging to learn first-hand of his strong stand with Israel and of his ministry’s faithful commitment to pray for Israel and the Jewish people in a special prayer session held every Tuesday.

The ICEJ leadership team then moved on to Houston to take part in the annual convention of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference (NHCLC/CONELA) — the world’s largest Hispanic Christian organization headed by Dr. Samuel Rodriguez. Representing more than 40,000 Latino churches in the USA and another 500,000 globally, the group made a special effort to focus on support for Israel at this year’s gathering.

One entire morning was devoted solely to Israel, the Middle East, and Jewish issues. The featured speakers included Israeli diplomat, Reuven Azar; Iranian-born pastor, Mani Erfan; and Dr. Bühler on behalf of the ICEJ.

Bühler told the audience that: “You don’t have to be a great theologian to see that God is dramatically changing the way he is dealing with Israel,” noting how the Jewish people were dispersed for 2,000 years but have now re-established their nation back in the Land of Israel.

“If God is passionate about the restoration of Israel, you need to be passionate about the restoration of Israel,” added Bühler. He challenged the pastors in attendance to recall the last time they gave a full sermon about the restoration of Israel and the Jewish people, or the last time they visited Israel. He said he believes a day will come when “the majority of the churches all over the world will have a passion for Israel.”

Dr. Rodriguez also stressed the need for Hispanic Christians to stand with Israel, and the Jewish people. He has committed the NHCLC to making the Feast the primary way for Hispanic believers to express their solidarity with Israel in person.

Israel’s importance to the Hispanic Evangelical community also was evident when likely presidential candidate Gov. Jeb Bush spoke to the convention. In a speech mostly devoted to education and immigration, he received the loudest applause for his remarks on the need to strengthen the US-Israel relationship.

Fellow presidential hopeful Gov. Mike Huckabee, a former Baptist pastor, also addressed the gathering and emphasized the need for Washington to repair its relations with Israel. Several prominent American Jewish leaders were also in attendance, including Malcolm Hoenlein of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. They realize the Hispanic community is now the second largest voting bloc in the US and is playing an increasingly important role in American politics.

Meanwhile, George Michael, the husband of ICEJ-USA National Director Susan Michael, a native Egyptian Christian and Middle East Analyst also spoke on the growing problem of Islamic persecution against Middle East Christians.

Afterwards, Rev. Juha Ketola extended his trip over the weekend to preach at local churches and meet with pastors and ministry leaders in the Houston area.
CHEMSTANS JOIN
MARCH OF THE LIVING
BY LISA SCHMID

As Israel marked Holocaust Remembrance Day in April, the ICEJ's German and Czech branches organized an educational tour to Auschwitz, Prague, Krakow, and Theresienstadt for over 100 Christians from Austria, Czech Republic, Ethiopia, Germany, Ghana, and Latvia. The highlight of the tour was joining thousands of Jews in the annual "March of the Living" at the site of the Auschwitz and Birkenau death camps. "With so many Jewish students taking part in the March of the Living each year, it seems Auschwitz-Birkenau is teeming with Jewish life. What a comforting sight!" remarked ICEJ-Germany Administrator, Stephan Lehnert. The group also toured the Oskar Schindler Museum in Krakow, took part in a march against anti-Semitism in Prague, and visited Theresienstadt with two Jewish survivors of the Nazi concentration camp.

ICEJ-GERMANY MARKS 70 YEARS SINCE HOLOCAUST
BY LISA SCHMID

The ICEJ German Branch hosted a special gathering in Stuttgart on May 9 to mark the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II and the uncovering of the Holocaust. Over 1,200 Christians from all across the nation attended the day-long event at the Gospel Forum, the largest Evangelical fellowship in Germany.

"Our nation owes the past 70 years of peace, freedom, and prosperity to the grace of God," said ICEJ-Germany National Director, Gottfried Bühler in his opening remarks. "And German reunification and the establishment of diplomatic relations between Germany and Israel 50 years ago are nothing short of a miracle!"

"How is it possible that one of the darkest chapters in the history of mankind was written in the land of the Reformation?" asked ICEJ Executive Director, Dr. Jürgen Bühler in his address.

Dr. Bühler then identified three main reasons for Germany's slide into war and genocide: the development of liberal theology in Germany, the established churches' formal rejection in 1909 of the move of the Holy Spirit following the Azusa Street Revival, and Christian end-time fatalism during the rise of the Third Reich.

"Read your Bibles!" he challenged the audience. "Be filled with the Holy Spirit! And develop a culture of hope!"

Judith Rosenzweig, an 85-year old resident of the ICEJ's Home for Holocaust survivors in Haifa, made the trip all the way from Israel to tell her story because of her great fear that people will forget the Holocaust, or even deny that it ever happened once all the witnesses have died.

Judith described how the Nazis occupied her native Czech homeland in 1939, when she was nine, and how the persecution of Jews quickly began and only worsened. Somehow, she survived four Nazi concentration camps; including Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen, and Terezin. She recalled the cold winters, the crowded and unhealthy conditions in the camps, and especially the constant hunger.

"We were glad to sometimes see food for animals," Judith explained. "We tried to eat the cow fodder. Sometimes we found peels left over and we were happy."

"I am very grateful that I am a resident of the Haifa Home," she added. "Ever since my childhood I have never felt so protected and cared for."

Judith concluded by saying her greatest wish is, "that people will be nice to one another and that there will be no more wars."

Other speakers included Knesset Member, Robert Ilatov; German MP, Steffen Bilger; Evangelist Suzette Hattingh; Rev. Jobst Bittner; and Dr. Susanna Kokkonen, Director of Christian Friends of Yad Vashem.

The multi-faceted program not only looked back at the tragic events of the past, but also focused on the challenges of today and tomorrow. There were also times of prayer and intercession for Germany, Israel, and the Arab world.
ICEJ-NORWAY HOLDS PRO-ISRAEL RALLY IN OSLO

In May, the ICEJ branch in Norway co-hosted a pro-Israel rally in downtown Oslo which drew 1,500 Christian supporters of the Jewish state. ICEJ-Norway National Director, Dag Juliussen, reports that the large gathering at the Raadhusplassen square included more than 70 pastors and Christian leaders from across Norway, a welcomed sign of the growing support for Israel among churches there.

Among the speakers was Norway’s Finance Minister, Siv Jensen, who stressed that “the fight against hatred of the Jewish people is not over. We must continue to combat anti-Semitism.”

Israeli Ambassador, Raphael Schutz, was moved by the warmth of the large crowd and assured, “We don’t take our friends for granted. Your presence fills me with happiness.”

MP, Hans Fredrik Groevan, leader of the “Friends of Israel” group in the Norwegian parliament, urged that no country, nor the United Nations, should recognize a Palestinian state without the approval of Israel first. His political faction, the Christian Conservative Party, has recently secured government approval for a special national plan for fighting anti-Semitism in Norway.

ARISE TAKES CANADA

ICEJ-Canada hosted Jani Salokangas, Director of our Arise young adults program, for an extensive speaking tour in April which included meetings in Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, and Montreal. God is moving in the Canadian churches and the ICEJ wants to be supportive in this move, especially in equipping the young generation for greater service. Scores of young adults were touched by God and heard for the first time how Israel fits into God’s redemptive plan for the world. Salokangas challenged the young adults, by saying: “Biblical prophecies are unfolding before our eyes, the question is do you believe in them anymore?” Our work to raise up a young generation that stands for biblical truth and for Israel continues to move forward. In Canada hundreds of young people now know that God’s plan still includes the Jewish people and the nation of Israel.
ICEJ-CZECH BRANCH TAKES TO STREETS TO PROTEST ANTI-SEMITISM

In April more than 500 people marched through the streets of Prague to protest against rising anti-Semitism in Europe at an event organized by the ICEJ branch in the Czech Republic.

The 12th annual “Good Will March” passed through the center of the Czech capital and by the historic Jewish Quarter, declaring support for European Jews as well as the nation of Israel. The colorful march included participants from every generation, including hundreds of German youth. The marchers sang songs, played trumpets, carried signs, and waved the national flags of Israel, Germany, and the Czech Republic.

Some of the Czech and German students carried portraits of their “vanished neighbors” - Jewish citizens from their hometowns who were deported by the Nazis and later perished in the Holocaust.

The day-long event featured a series of speeches delivered in the Rudolfinum plaza and a cultural program in the beautiful Waldstein Gardens of the Czech Senate, and ended in the evening with a musical concert by an Israeli jazz band.

In the Waldstein Gardens, several speakers addressed the crowd; including two Holocaust survivors, Israeli Ambassador Gary Koren, and a Czech government minister.

"We consider it alarming that once again Jews do not feel safe in many European countries today," said Mojmír Kallus, National Director of the ICEJ-Czech branch.

Speaking about the march to a Czech television crew, Senator Sobotka emphasized the need to combat anti-Semitism.

"We are hearing of anti-Semitism, xenophobia and such matters all over the world," Sobotka said. "Unless we combat this, we could end up like we were in the 1930s and 1940s. At this moment we must take up arms against the Islamic State."

ICEJ-FRANCE FOCUSES ON ALIYAH, ANTI-SEMITISM

In April, the French branch of the ICEJ took a decisive step forward in revitalizing its ministry in France under new National Director, Rev. Robert Baxter. Hosting its annual conference in the city of Lyon, ICEJ-France drew more than 250 followers who came to hear motivating messages from Baxter and ICEJ Aliyah Director Howard Flower, along with music by renowned violinist Sergeui Popov. There was also a special appearance by Israeli diplomat, Elad Ratson from the embassy in Paris.

The conference focused on the dramatic rise in Aliyah from France over recent years. The terrorist attacks in Paris in January, coupled with an increase in anti-Semitic incidents across the nation, have led to a sharp increase in the emigration of French Jews, with many moving to Israel. Flower delivered informative and inspiring messages regarding the ICEJ’s efforts to be a voice of consolation to the Jewish people wherever they are and to assist those seeking to go home to Israel.

Meanwhile, Ratson addressed the many unique challenges facing the Jewish community in France, including those who choose to make Aliyah. He also thanked the Christian Embassy for our work in Israel and on behalf of the Jewish community worldwide.

Baxter, appointed as national director last November, laid out a clear strategy for the next five years to make the ICEJ in France a point of reference not only in the Christian community, but in the Jewish one as well. He also made an impassioned commitment to Ratson that the ICEJ would do all within our power to assist those Jews wanting to make Aliyah, as well as to fervently fight anti-Semitism in France, and display solidarity with the Jewish people.

Those attending the conference left with a sense that ICEJ-France had entered a new strategic season. Though the dark clouds of anti-Semitism continue to build across France, a light has arisen that will shine the hope of God’s eternal love for His people.
In May, the ICEJ hosted our annual Jerusalem Day reception at our international headquarters. The event drew over 200 guests, including Israeli officials, local Jewish and Christian leaders, and ICEJ representatives from some 35 national branches who were in town for the yearly meeting of our global leadership. Also in attendance were leaders and guest speakers from the Empowered21 Global Congress gathering which was held in Jerusalem later that week to celebrate the Day of Pentecost. The Jerusalem Day reception was addressed by MK Robert Ilatov, the new chairman of the Knesset Christian Allies Caucus; and other dignitaries.
Mentoring is a biblical idea. Although the word “mentor” itself is never used in Scripture, it is a principle found throughout the Bible. For instance, the Apostle Paul gave this mandate in Ephesians 4:11-12: “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”

Wisdom in Experience
In Exodus we read about Moses’s life, which was filled with incredible changes. After 40 years in the Sinai wilderness looking after sheep and his own family, Moses found himself leading hundreds of thousands of people out of Egypt. That was a rapid change in his life. He needed help.

In much the same way the world around us is rapidly changing. Societal changes that used to take a century now happen in the span of a few years. Many young people are waking up to the realization that things have drastically changed around them. And this process is only accelerating. Just like Moses, today’s younger generation needs help.

Jethro is an Old Testament model of a mentor. He wisely identified what God was doing in Moses’ life and stepped in at the right moment to help Moses develop a plan for leading God’s people.

In the same way, God wants to use experienced leaders to pour life’s wisdom into others and to be building blocks for the young adults of today. Success does not come alone; we always need somebody sent by God at some point in our lives. You can see this in the lives of Joshua, Elisha, Solomon, or the twelve apostles. God desires that we lean on our spiritual family and draw wisdom from those around us. In Proverbs 13:20 we read, “He who walks with the wise grows wise.”

Together all Generations
Boys usually long to have a relationship with their fathers. Without it, the next best thing is to have an adult male figure they can talk to about issues in their life without being judged, laughed at, or criticized. We should be there so they can talk to us in a way that is helpful and healthy.

As one young man once said to me: “Thank you for giving me Jethro feedback! I needed help and I also needed you to tell me that.” Today, this young man is living fully for the Lord and being a Jethro to other young people.

I find that many of today’s young adults are far from the mentality of “I don’t want to hear this,” or “I know it better.” Actually, they are very attracted to learning from older generations and forming bonds with them. According to LifeWay research, 45 percent of un-churched young adults felt it was important to receive advice from people with similar life experiences. The same question for churched young adults was 68 percent! The bottom line is that they want to learn from someone else.

God wants to use the older generations to build the character of younger Christians over time.

Douglas J. Rumford says: “Character is like physical exercise or any form of learning; you cannot ‘cram,’ hoping to do in a day or week what can only be accomplished by months and years of consistent practice.”

At ICEJ Arise, we want to help the younger generation find their Jethro; as our vision says: “All nations and all generations!”
In April the nation of Nepal suffered a powerful earthquake which shook the mighty Himalayan Mountains. The devastating quake collapsed buildings, triggered landslides and snow avalanches, and left more than 8,000 people dead.

In the wake of this tragedy, the nation which responded with the largest medical and emergency relief team was Israel. This included a fully-equipped, state-of-the-art IDF field hospital manned by 260 trained professionals.

In fact, Israel has a proud history of sending relief teams to countries struck by natural disasters, including:

- The IDF search-and rescue units dispatched to Turkey after the Izmit earthquake in August 1999;
- The extensive Israeli humanitarian aid to India following the tsunami of December 2004;
- The large relief delegation sent to Haiti after the massive earthquake of January 2010;
- Israel relief efforts extended to Japan in the wake of the tsunami of March 2011;
- The medical and rescue teams that arrived in the Philippines after typhoon Haiyan in November 2013; and finally
- The Israeli medical experts and resources sent to fight the Ebola virus outbreak in West Africa in summer 2014.


In the days just after the Nepal earthquake, Israel had the largest contingent of
emergency and medical workers operating in the country, according to CNN. This included teams from the IDF Home Front Command, Magen David Adom, United Hatzalah, ZAKA, IsraAid, and other rescue and relief organizations - all volunteering their time and skills to help another nation in distress.

Yet some criticized Israel for going to far-off lands to assist others while oppressing and mistreating the Palestinian Arabs right next door. Kenneth Roth, Director of Human Rights Watch, tweeted: “Easier to address a far-away humanitarian disaster than the nearby one of Israel’s making in Gaza. End the blockade!”

Then there is the unique issue of the surrogate mothers. Due to restrictions in Israeli law, many Israeli couples have children using Indian surrogate mothers, but they give birth in Nepal.

Parallel to our search efforts to locate our own citizens, Israel is also committed to helping Nepal. The state of Israel has this tradition of extending assistance to countries all over the world in situations of great need or disaster. In the past, Israel has assisted various nations like India, Haiti, and Turkey. Israel considers it part of our mission to help others, the whole idea of “tikkun olam” [to mend the world].

ICEJ News: Israelis must be proud of what you have been doing there?

We are very proud of the way the whole team jumped into action in Nepal. This readiness to drop whatever it is people do for a living, and to go on such a volunteer mission, despite the risks to oneself, is part of the Israel spirit. And once the decision was made it was only a matter of hours before planes were already in the air... In less than 12 hours after landing in Kathmandu, the Israeli military field hospital was already operational. This, too, is an example of our professionalism... [and] a demonstration of Israeli capability and efficiency.

ICEJ News: What types of relief has Israel sent to Nepal? Is it like the field hospital that was sent to Haiti, which had the only working Wi-Fi connection on the whole island?

The IDF field clinic is a “state of the art” mobile medical clinic. If a patient is scanned, the data can be sent to experts anywhere in the world and they can even assist in live surgery. Aside from this very advanced clinic, Israel sent 260 trained medical personnel (more than all other nations combined). Israel is very dedicated to its relief program and prefers to help with actual trained people, more than with money. We believe trained people are much more important in those initial days after a disaster. A good example of this was the earthquake in Turkey, and how the IDF canine teams found people trapped in the rubble and were cutting them out weeks later, still alive. This kind of task force was developed by Israel’s Home Front Command initially to help Israelis in conflicts here at home. Having this expertise has helped keep Israelis safe and now... we are happy to share it with the world. We are actually aiming for an international network of relief teams that can be coordinated to assist in any disaster, anywhere in the world, based on the Israeli model.

And let me add here that we have decided to leave the IDF field hospital in Nepal as a gift to the nation and army there.

ICEJ News: Have these efforts had any diplomatic impact so far, say in changing voting patterns against Israel at the United Nations?

The primary motivation for our relief efforts is not political but rather humanitarian. If, as a consequence of these relief efforts, countries change their opinion of Israelis from how we are portrayed by the Arab nations, then that would be wonderful. However, we will continue to help people in need regardless of their political stance.

ICEJ News: How does Israel answer critics who say you are helping other nations in need, while oppressing the Palestinians at home?

Israel is helping everyone, including Palestinians and Syrians, as much as they need. If there are any obstacles, it is not on the Israeli side, it's on the Palestinian side, it's with Hamas, or with other terror organizations that refuse to cooperate with Israel. We want to help the Palestinians to prosper and develop, and in many situations we are helping and we have very good cooperation. But it's under the radar and not publicized, to protect the Palestinians. They also don't want to make it public, on many issues such as health and the environment. We wish Israel could do more, but again terror organizations like Hamas prefer to use the misery of their own people as a sales point for their ideology, instead of working to help their own people.
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