IS ISRAEL FACING A THIRD INTIFADA?

WHAT JESUS UNDERSTOOD ABOUT HANUKKAH

RESTORING THE NOBILITY OF MAN

The Timely Message of Christmas
Dear Friends,

Over recent weeks, we have seen a new wave of rioting and violence erupting here in Israel. Most of the rioters are young Arabs who have been fed a militant nationalist and Islamic agenda from their youth. It is ironic that the nation which has invested much in building hospitals, universities, and other infrastructure for the benefit of the local Arab population is under constant attack from these very same quarters. Palestinian youths today are among the most educated Arabs in the Middle East. Yet instead of gratitude, they allow themselves to be exploited by Islamist and nationalist elements. We are called to pray for their deliverance from these evil influences, which drives them towards violence.

We need to pray in particular for the Arab churches in Israel and the Palestinian areas, that a spirit of courage will come upon them to stand up like Gideon and rid themselves from the influence and intimidation which has shackled the church in the Middle East for almost 1,300 years.

At the same time, we see that our work in Israel is bringing much fruit. We have seen over recent weeks that our efforts are considered a blessing by more and more Israelis. During our recent Feast of Tabernacles celebration in Jerusalem, we hosted a group of Holocaust survivors as our special guests of honor. I was personally touched as they came with tears in their eyes to thank Christians for the moral and practical support we are providing to them. It is a new day! Especially now, when Israel is challenged again by Arab unrest, our support means so much to the people of Israel.

So, I want to thank you for standing with us. Without your help, we cannot fulfill our calling here in Israel. No matter where you live, as a supporter of the Christian Embassy you are here with us in Jerusalem. Our team is your extended hands and feet to bless Israel on your behalf. Please be assured that the Lord will be a generous rewarder for the seeds you have planted into this ministry.

Thank you so much for your support, and may the Lord bless you richly!

Yours in Christ,

Dr. Jürgen Bühler
ICEJ Executive Director

Cover Photo: Orthodox man at scene of Har Nof synagogue attack.

For Magazine Archives visit www.icejusa.org/wfj
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One of the greatest tenets of the Christian faith is what the theologian Erich Sauer called “the nobility of man.” We are all created in the likeness of God. This is what sets humanity apart from the rest of creation.

Men compose symphonies, write novels, invent sophisticated tools, and research the secret complexities of the Universe. We display divine creativity in every part of our lives. Even the most advanced primates are light-years apart from the glory which God placed in mankind.

All women and men are created in the image of God. This very truth forms the basis of Western civilization. It gives value and dignity to every human being and demands that they are treated with respect and equality, no matter our race, religion or gender. This sets the biblical faith and worldview apart from every other religion.

What is even more striking is that the God who created us did so with a very special purpose. Every evening in “the coolness of the day,” He would come to converse with the newly formed couple in the Garden of Eden. God talked to them about their daily lives and enjoyed their fellowship because they were like Him. In His Word, God often calls us His children. No other faith offers such a personal relationship with a God who likes to spend time with His creation.

No other faith offers such a personal relationship with a God Who likes to spend time with His creation.

Sadly, this original purpose of mankind was lost in that same Garden. One of the character traits which God placed within humanity as part of our divine nature was that He gave man free will. We can choose to follow Him or not. We can choose to believe and obey Him or to rebel against Him. The fall in Eden thus became the tragedy of creation, of history, and of mankind.

But God from the very beginning knew perfectly well that this possibility existed. So before anything was created, He already provided a way for men to come back to the Father. That is why the Book of Revelation describes Jesus as “the lamb slain before the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8). This means that even before creation, God already understood that He would need to provide humanity with a means of redemption.

The manner in which this salvation was provided underscores in a marvellous way the nobility of man. David, the King of Israel, already grasped that the sacrifices of rams and bulls would not be sufficient to restore those whom the Lord created in His own image. In order to accomplish this, God Himself would have to come down in the form of His only begotten son. Thus the birth of Christ underlines man’s glorious calling.

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).
It was already announced through the Hebrew prophets that the one who would be born to redeem his people would be called "Immanuel," "the mighty God," and the "One from everlasting."

Therefore, Christmas represents a divine affirmation to those who are created in the 'likeness of God.' It is a kiss from God to restore our nobility. Through Christ's birth, death and resurrection, we are restored back to the family of heaven. This is why Jesus is not ashamed to call us his brethren.

What a wonderful truth! God came to dwell among us. The angels broke out in praise: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" (Luke 2:14). When Christ appeared in the fullness of time, he restored peace between God and mankind and showed His goodwill towards those created in His image.

So let us thank God for this incredible calling to be part of His family. And let us commit ourselves to walk worthy of this noble calling.

"Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (1 Peter 1:18-20).

On behalf of the ICEJ leadership and staff in Jerusalem and all around the world, we extend to you and your loved ones our prayers and best wishes for a very blessed and merry Christmas. May God use us powerfully in the coming year to bless His chosen people Israel! ☺

This was not an easy year for Israel and the Jewish people. After the intense Gaza conflict this summer and rising anti-Semitism worldwide, Israelis are now facing a campaign of hatred and violence directed at Jerusalem.

This comes as both Hanukkah and Christmas are quickly approaching. These festive winter holidays fall just days apart this year, and the Christian Embassy is looking to bring comfort and encouragement to the people of the Holy Land this holiday season.

This Christmas, the ICEJ will be reaching out once again to Arab Christian communities in the renowned biblical towns of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth and Jericho. Each was an important setting where God's love was revealed to the world. Working through local Arab pastors and churches, the ICEJ will sponsor holiday gatherings and distribute Christmas gifts to many deserving Christian families.

As always, we want to bless the youngest ones during this special time. Children in Bethlehem and Jericho will receive Christmas packages that will include clothing and toys. With your help, needy Christian families in Jerusalem and Nazareth will be blessed with food coupons, to help them celebrate together around the Christmas table.

The Christian Embassy will also assist many Israelis in marking Hanukkah. With your support, we can help Jewish children, the elderly, new immigrants, and disadvantaged families celebrate the joy and light of this special holiday.

So, please partner with us to bring comfort and joy to hundreds of Christian and Jewish families that need our love and encouragement. ☺
What Jesus Understood About Hanukkah

BY SUSAN MICHAEL
ICEJ-USA DIRECTOR

A common understanding of the December holiday season is that Christmas is the holiday for Christians and Hanukkah is the holiday for Jews. Few Christians relate to Hanukkah since it is not one of the biblical feasts of Israel. But, the fact that Jesus celebrated Hanukkah should make Christians curious enough to investigate the possible importance of the festival to their faith.

It is no exaggeration to say that had it not been for Hanukkah, there could have very well not been a Christmas. Hanukkah prepared the way for the birth and ministry of Jesus. Therefore, Christians may want to not only wish the Jewish community a Happy Hanukkah, but celebrate it themselves!

God Gives the Victory
The story of Hanukkah begins during the period in-between the Old and New Testaments, when Antiochus IV Epiphanes became the ruler of the Greek empire. While the Hellenization of the area already threatened the survival of the Jewish religion, Antiochus seemed obsessed with ensuring the demise of the Jewish faith and thereby, the future of the Jewish people.

He not only murdered the High Priest, Onias III, but he slaughtered 40,000 inhabitants of Jerusalem. All sacrifices, the service of the Temple, and the observance of the Sabbath and of feast days were prohibited. The Temple was dedicated to Zeus, the Holy Scriptures were destroyed, and the Jews were forced to take part in heathen rites.

In his attempt to destroy every trace of the Jewish religion, the final assault was the slaughter of a pig on the sacrificial altar of the Temple, thereby desecrating it. The Maccabean family, from the priestly line of Aaron, led a revolt against this evil ruler and miraculously experienced victory after victory over the mighty Greek forces, until at last the Temple could be purified and its services restored.

This rededication of the Temple to the God of Israel is celebrated during Hanukkah, originally known as the Festival of Dedication. Hanukkah is a Hebrew word derived from the word “to dedicate.”

The defeat of the Greek forces by this small band of Jewish zealots was nothing short of a miracle. God had once again demonstrated His steadfast love and faithfulness to His people by saving them from the threat of extinction. This in itself is cause enough for celebration!

The story goes on to claim that when the Jews re-entered the city of Jerusalem and the Temple, there was only enough of the special oil to light the Temple menorah and keep it burning for one day. But, the oil miraculously burned for eight days while more was being brought from the Galilee—an eight day trip there and back.

The story of the miracle oil is nowhere found in the inter-Testamental writings, therefore it is largely believed to be a legend, however, the very first Hanukkah was indeed celebrated for eight days, and the festival was called the festival of lights as early as the first century. Perhaps archeology will one day uncover a clue to the story’s authenticity.

A Turning Point in History
The events leading up to the Maccabean revolt were prophesied in vivid detail in the Old Testament book of Daniel. In chapter 8, the Angel Gabriel described to the prophet Daniel the coming abomination of a king who would put a stop to sacrifices and desecrate the sanctuary.

The fact that it was prophesied some 250 years before it occurred indicates how serious the threat was to the Jewish people. The Maccabean revolt was a turning point in history that saved the Jewish people and their religion from the threat of extinction.

This story, and the various archeological finds that support it, provide further proof as to the existence of the Temple in Jerusalem. So, while Israel’s modern-day enemies attempt to rewrite history and distort fact by denying the Temple ever existed in Jerusalem, the celebration of the Hanukkah story takes on new meaning.

Jesus and Hanukkah
In John’s Gospel, chapter 10, Jesus entered the Temple during the Feast of Dedication. He would have surely known the story behind the Feast and that the Temple He stood in would not have been in operation without it.

Christians today would also do well to remember the faithfulness of God to the Jews on that first Hanukkah. Had Antiochus succeeded to annihilate the nation of Israel, there would have been no Jewish woman named Mary to become the mother of Jesus Christ.

There would have also been no Temple for the beginning of the Christmas story. Luke 1 starts the nativity story in the Temple with an angel announcing to the priest Zacharias that his wife would give birth to John the Baptist. It is no coincidence that God chose to begin the Christmas story in the Temple, the heart of Jewish life and faith at the time.

Without Hanukkah, the celebration of Christ’s birth could very well have not been possible. So as you wish friends and family Merry Christmas this year, you might also like to wish them Happy Hanukkah! 😃
The residents of the Christian Embassy’s warm home for needy Holocaust survivors in Haifa are looking forward with great joy and expectancy to celebrating Hanukkah in December. The week-long Jewish festival of lights will end this year on Christmas Eve. Every evening for eight days, residents of the Haifa Home will come together to sing songs and light candles to recall the miraculous way the oil in the Temple Menorah, though only having enough oil for one day, burned 8 days until new oil could be obtained.

“It’s wonderful to be here for this, after all we’ve been through,” said Rivka, one of the 70 Holocaust survivors living at the Haifa Home. Each resident has had to overcome their own times of unbelievable trial and darkness, and they welcome visitors who want to learn more about their lives - whether Israeli schoolchildren, IDF soldiers, or Christian tour groups brought in by the ICEJ. So we look forward to bringing a little Hanukkah joy and laughter to the Haifa Home this holiday season.

THANKS FOR THE NEW ELEVATOR
Ever since the new community center opened recently, residents of the Haifa Home and other nearby Holocaust survivors are enjoying the many recreational activities offered there, such as receptions, lectures, computer lessons, movies, gymnastic classes, and games. But those who have difficulty walking up and down stairs are eagerly awaiting the new elevator currently being installed, so they can join in the coming holiday festivities without any problems. The elevator costs were $30,000, and we thank all those donors who helped over recent weeks to meet this need!

AN EXTENDED FAMILY
Recently, Holocaust survivors at the Haifa Home have hosted Christian visitors from Canada, Germany, Australia, and Hong Kong - all arranged through ICEJ AID. They brought much love and generous financial gifts to help with the on-going development and operation of this unique assisted-living facility. “You have become my family,” resident Shula told one group.

COMPLETING THE NEW KITCHEN
Work continues on the expansion and renovation of the main kitchen and dining hall at the Haifa Home. Recently, a large commercial dish washer and one of two new stoves were installed in the expanded kitchen. And until now, food had to be brought in every day. But trained cooks are now on-site preparing three hot meals each day for the residents.

“This is a great improvement in service for the residents, as the food is tasty and prepared with love,” said Yudit Setz of ICEJ AID. “But, we need help to cover the remaining costs to finish the kitchen project.”
INTRODUCING...
YEHUDA AND MARCEL

Yehuda was 12 years old when war broke out in Hungary in 1940. He had been living peacefully with his parents and three sisters. But then they were forced into a Jewish ghetto in Hungary and later assigned to forced labor in Vienna, Austria, where they lived in a deserted schoolhouse and existed on scraps of food. Later, Yehuda and his family were sent on a forced march of about 250 miles to the notoriously cruel Mauthausen Concentration Camp in Germany. Yehuda and his family miraculously survived, and following the war, they eventually found refuge in the reborn nation of Israel. Yehuda and his wife Marcel are the proud parents of four daughters. But, the couple is in deteriorating health and recently were invited to join the family of residents at the Haifa Home.

RUSSIAN CHRISTIANS BRING WARMTH AND JOY

Recently, a group of Christian ladies from Siberia brought warmth and joy to Holocaust survivors during an emotional visit to the Haifa Home. Dressed in colourful costumes, the group’s harmonious singing delighted their audience. Later, everyone happily joined in traditional Siberian dances. As many residents of the home also speak Russian, there were plenty of lively conversations taking place.

ADOPT A SURVIVOR

Some 70 Holocaust survivors are currently living at the Haifa Home. A select committee approves new residents from a long list of waiting applications, based on greatest need. Please help us to care for these precious Jewish survivors of the Nazi genocide. They suffered so much in their lives and thus appreciate Christian compassion all the more. The ICEJ is especially looking for donors who are willing to give regular support to cover the monthly operating costs of the Haifa Home. The best way is by joining our “Adopt a Holocaust survivor” program. For details, go to: www.icejusa.org/adopt

Please help us by donating your much needed gifts to take care of the precious Haifa Home residents like Shula, Yehuda, and Marcel. And, remember them in your prayers!

Current Needs

Here are some of the most pressing needs at the Haifa Home:

1. The home’s normal operating costs amount to $65,000 per month. One way to help is to join our ‘Adopt a Survivor’ program; Find out more at: http://www.icejusa.org/adopt

2. The salary for a recreation coordinator is $1,800 per month.

3. Funds in the amount of $60,000 are also needed to renovate and furnish a ground-level apartment which will be turned into three new residential suites.

Give online today at www.icejusa.org/haifa-home-current-needs
The recent tensions and troubles in and around Jerusalem escalated this week with the brutal massacre of four Jewish rabbis during their morning prayers in a synagogue in the Har Nof neighborhood of the capital city.

Armed with a pistol, an axe and a meat cleaver, two Arab terrorists from eastern Jerusalem assaulted a minyan of Jewish men at prayer early on Tuesday, November 11th in the Kehilat Bnei Torah synagogue, located in a quiet ultra-Orthodox neighborhood on the western edge of the city. The killing spree claimed the lives of four Torah scholars from local yeshivas, while another 18 people were wounded in the bloody frenzy of violence. An Israeli Druze policeman was also shot dead as he rushed to the scene of the attack.

The Druze officer was part of a beefed-up Israeli security presence in the city in response to a recent series of riots,stonings, stabbings, vehicular assaults, and other terror attacks in Jerusalem, including the near-fatal shooting of Temple Mount activist Yehuda Glick three weeks ago.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has blamed the ongoing wave of violence and terror on incitement issuing forth from not only Hamas but also Mahmoud Abbas and the Palestinian Authority. Under heavy American pressure, Abbas condemned the synagogue.
Yet Abbas is not really interested in a full-blown intifada at present. Given the upheavals of the Arab Spring, he fears that unleashing too much chaos on the Palestinian street could lead to his own downfall – which is a very legitimate concern.

So the Palestinian leader has sought a controlled uprising, focused on enflaming tensions in Jerusalem while maintaining quiet in Ramallah.

It appears the Palestinian public is not so interested in another intifada as well. While they are cheering on those carrying out the recent attacks, there does not seem to be broad popular support for a mass uprising at this time, knowing the price they would have to pay in travel restrictions, economic losses and the like.

Still, the Palestinians are playing with fire. In a region already riven with conflict and upheaval, to stoke the flames of a religious fight over the al-Aqsa mosque is a truly dangerous game.

The levels of Palestinian violence and incitement are no doubt on the rise. During the past month, eleven Israelis have been killed in terrorist attacks, more than all those killed during the past two years.

As a result, many Israeli analysts are now questioning whether these are just ‘lone wolf’ terrorists carrying out copycat attacks or is it part of a broader popular uprising against Israel – that is, a dreaded third Palestinian intifada.

Now, for the families victimized by the recent wave of terror, the ‘third intifada’ debate is a meaningless academic exercise. They are in real grieving over lost loved ones and clinging to hope for injured and maimed relatives to recover.

But, for the nation’s leaders, this is a serious inquiry into whether the Palestinian factions are deliberately seeking to stir up another prolonged, bloody uprising against the Jewish state, and especially in its very heart of Jerusalem.

The first point to note is that there always seems to be a bizarre competition between the various Palestinian factions to see who can stir up the most hostility towards Israel. No one wants to be outdone, and especially when it comes to ‘defending al-Aqsa.’ So when one faction starts agitating over the Temple Mount, everyone has to join the game.

The al-Aqsa blood libel is decades old and is the easiest way to heat up the conflict with Israel. This Palestinian fabrication claims that Israel is planning to undermine or topple the al-Aqsa mosque and rebuild the Third Temple. It has been invoked repeatedly to foment violence and bloodshed, including its notorious use in 1929 by Haj Amin al-Husseini, the Mufti of Jerusalem, which led to dozens of Jewish deaths in Hebron and the forced expulsion of its ancient Jewish community.

Whether he instigated it this time or just joined the fray, Abbas has indeed been peddling the al-Aqsa canard of late. When Israel closed the Temple Mount to all visitors for one day last month, following weeks of well-organized stone-throwing incidents on Jewish worshippers at the Western Wall below, Abbas denounced the Israeli security measure as a “declaration of war” against Islam.

The Palestinian Authority’s official media organs also glorified the recent perpetrators of terror attacks as heroes and martyrs.

When the Obama administration finally urged Abbas to cool the rhetoric, he still called for “days of rage” to protest Israel’s efforts to restore calm, which was then followed by the carnage in the Har Nof synagogue.

The Palestinian Authority’s official media organs also glorified the recent perpetrators of terror attacks as heroes and martyrs.

Meanwhile, Jerusalem is slowly being divided by the security measures which Israel is having to implement to restore calm and a sense of security to its residents. Roadblocks are being set up in Arab neighborhoods and some Arabs are being released from their places of work in west Jerusalem. So the current wave of incitement and violence will ultimately harm the daily lives of Jerusalem’s Arabs the most.
The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem has responded to another urgent request from the Jewish Agency to help endangered Jews from war-torn Ukraine in making aliyah. With our latest efforts, we are on pace this year to provide various levels of assistance to nearly 1,000 Ukrainian Jews as they make the desperate journey home to Israel.

The brutal civil war in eastern Ukraine shows no signs of abating. Russian troops have now crossed the border, prompting Kiev to cut off all government subsidies to rebel-held areas. Entire cities are being reduced to rubble. There are widespread food and power shortages, while the Ukrainian economy is in “freefall,” according to the UN. And, to make matters worse, the region’s harsh winter is now setting in.

The deepening crisis has forced many Jews to flee westward to crowded refugee camps, where they are anxiously waiting to move on to Israel. Recently, the ICEJ helped to sponsor seven weekend seminars hosted by the Jewish Agency and attended by some 900 Ukrainian Jews eager to make aliyah. They were all counselled on life in Israel and many registered to begin the immigration process.

Besides the aliyah fairs inside Ukraine, the ICEJ is being asked by the Jewish Agency to help with other pre- and post-flight costs, such as temporary housing and grants to needy families during the absorption phase in Israel. The average cost for Ukrainian Jews to make aliyah right now is $750 per person.

So please consider making a generous donation today to help with this urgent need!

Latest Wave of Bnei Menashe Arrives
In November, the ICEJ sponsored flights for 250 more members of the Bnei Menashe community from India making aliyah to Israel. ICEJ staff members from Jerusalem were on hand at Ben-Gurion airport to welcome the newcomers.

“It’s amazing to see how God is faithful to keep His promises to bring home the sons of Israel no matter how far they were scattered,” noted ICEJ staff member Ants Seiler from Estonia. “The Christian Embassy is totally changing these people’s lives.”

With these latest arrivals, the ICEJ has now sponsored the aliyah flights of nearly 1,000 Bnei Menashe over the past twenty four months, including a record 680 this year. The Bnei Menashe claim descent from the Israelite tribe of Manasseh and aspire to come home to the Land of Israel after 2700 years of exile.

Please support the ICEJ’s on-going aliyah operations! Make an on-line donation today at: http://www.icejusa.org/ukraine
The nation of Israel was shocked in November by the horrific assault on Jewish men offering up their morning prayers in a synagogue in the Har Nof neighborhood of Jerusalem. The killing spree claimed the lives of four respected Torah teachers, while another 18 people were wounded in the bloody frenzy of violence. An Israeli Druze policeman was also shot dead as he rushed to the scene.

Totally depraved in its nature, this terror attack was the latest in a series of riots, stabbings, vehicular assaults and other terror attacks carried out by Palestinians in and around Jerusalem. The wave of violence and incitement has left 11 Israelis dead over the past month, more than all those killed in terror incidents during the past two years. Many more have been injured and even maimed for life.

This means that there are Israeli families right now in deep grieving over lost loved ones, or clinging to hope for injured relatives to recover. Wives have lost husbands, mothers have lost infants, and dozens of children are now orphaned.

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem is determined to be a source of comfort and healing for the families traumatized by this senseless terror. In this regard, the Christian Embassy is reaching out to assist the ultra-Orthodox families struck by the deadly assault in the Har Nof synagogue. A special trust fund has been established by the community for the 24 children who lost their fathers in that attack, and the ICEJ will be contributing towards their future well-being through this fund.

There are many more children whose fathers remain hospitalized due to severe wounds inflicted during the synagogue attack, and we are exploring ways to help them as well. In addition, through our long-time connections to the Druze community, we will be reaching out to help the families of the two Druze police officers recently killed while defending their fellow Israeli citizens.

So this is your chance to help us bring comfort and healing to those who mourn in Zion. The needs of these families are many and their future is uncertain. Yet the news that Christians are helping them gives a powerful and timely testimony that Christians truly care.

Please consider supporting this important initiative by making a donation to our Israel in Crisis fund. We will also be delivering to the families the hundreds of condolence letters from Christians around the world which we have received. Thank you for sending in your messages of love and support.
ICEJ EXHIBITS

In August, Pastor John Small, ICEJ USA Pastoral Relations manager, hosted an ICEJ information booth at the Voices of the Apostles conference in Orlando, Florida. The booth highlighted the Isaiah 62 Prayer Initiative and drew many people interested in praying for Israel. In September, Albert Thompson, ICEJ USA Media Manager and DC Liaison joined Susan Michael, ICEJ USA Director, at the Values Voter Summit in Washington, DC where many new connections were made for the ICEJ, and the time was very busy and fruitful.

CROSSING THE USA

ICEJ speakers were hosted by churches from Florida to California in October and November.

Rev. Juha Ketola, ICEJ International Director was hosted by Pastor Howard Chadwick, a longtime friend of the ICEJ, at the Living Cornerstone church in Port Orange, FL. He also spoke at First Assembly of God in Deland, FL and at The Healing Place in Shreveport, LA. In addition to these public meetings Rev. Ketola met with over a hundred pastors and denominational leaders and experienced a very warm and open reception.

Dr. Jürgen Bühler, ICEJ Executive Director, was also in the USA for meetings and was hosted by Paul and Mary Dillinger, longtime Feast volunteers at their church, Faith Harbor Church of Escondido, CA. He also spoke at The Jerusalem Call event, hosted by Pastor Ray Bentley and the Israel Allies Foundation at Maranatha Chapel in San Diego, CA.

Susan Michael, ICEJ USA Director, was hosted by the North Alabama Friends of Israel and also the Friends2Israel group in Southeast Alabama, and spoke in several churches including Killen United Methodist Church, Killen, AL; First Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Florence, AL; and the First United Methodist Church, Opelika, AL. Rev. Jim and Anne Bevis interviewed her on their weekly radio program. In northern

USA Diary
For more details on upcoming ICEJ events, or to request a speaker in your area call: (615) 895-9830
Europe in Focus

Over recent months, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem has been active in ministry all over the world. Here are just some of our latest outreaches in Europe.

Germany
ICEJ International Speaker Doron Schneider toured through Germany during the recent Gaza conflict and found the national media much more balanced in its reporting on Israel. His messages in churches focused on God’s broader redemptive plans for Israel and the region.

Germany
In September, ICEJ-Arise International Director Jani Salokangas conducted a ministry trip to Germany. The highlight was preaching the Good News at the Code Red Conference attended by 10,000 young adults. Arise also hosted a special seminar at the massive youth gathering where the message went deeper into God’s plan for individual believers, the world and Israel. Over 300 young people committed themselves to regularly pray for Israel.

Netherlands
ICEJ-Netherlands, under national director Jacob Keegstra, recently hosted a wonderful Israel weekend in Holland. The main speakers included Jacob, who has an Hebraic roots teaching ministry, and ICEJ-UK national director Rev. David Elms from Liverpool. The worship team Hearts United also was featured. Some 250 people came for the times of Bible teachings, prayer for Israel, and rejoicing in the Lord.

Spain
In mid-September, Rev. Juha Ketola travelled to the southern Spanish city of Malaga to meet with local church leaders with open hearts for Israel and to explore a re-launch of the ICEJ-Spain branch. He ministered in the cities of Torremolinos and Antequera in churches established by Daniel Del Vecchio, an American missionary with a long record of planting churches and rehabilitation centers in Spain that have touched not only locals but also many foreign visitors. Juha himself first encountered the Lord under his ministry in 1979. So it was a great joy and honor to spend time again with apostle Daniel Del Vecchio, now 82 years old, and his wife and family. The message concerning Israel was well received in the churches where Juha preached, but there is much more to do for the Lord and for Israel in this historic nation of 47 million people.
DENMARK
ICEJ International Speaker Doron Schneider preached in churches from one end of Denmark to the other this summer. He found audiences hungry for the truth about current events in Israel and the Middle East, and how we can see God fulfilling His plans for the region.

SWITZERLAND
During the Gaza conflict this summer, Doron Schneider also went on a speaking tour in Switzerland. Due to much local media bias against Israel, he was able to share accurate information about Hamas and its attacks against the Jewish state.

ROMANIA
In August, ICEJ International Director Rev. Juha Ketola travelled to Romania for a series of meetings set up by our new branch there under the leadership of Pastor Pavel Antonesei. He has a powerful testimony of faith dating back to the days of Communism, and is well respected by Romanian church leaders. Juha preached in services hosted by Baptist and Pentecostal churches in the cities of Dorohoi, Botosani and Suceava, and also met with local Jewish community leaders. In Romania, national leaders and the society in general seem to be pro-Israel, with the government signing 14 cooperation agreements with Israel this summer on a wide range of projects of mutual benefit.

NORWAY
ICEJ-Arise International Director Jani Salokangas, recently visited Norway to speak in a number of churches and connect with young adults about Israel. ICEJ-Norway is now under the direction of Rev. Dag Øyvind Juliussen, who hosts a regular TV show about Israel seen across the Nordic countries.
If you thought the Middle East was confusing before, it just got a whole lot worse! Alliances are changing daily, borders are being redrawn, and countries thought to be allies of one side are becoming allies of the other!

**ISIS or ISIL**
Just figuring out the real name of the bad guys is confusing! There has been a lot of speculation on whether the correct name to use is ISIS or ISIL, and what the difference is between the two. There is an easy explanation because both are translations of the original Arabic title of which the first three words are clear: Islamic State in Iraq. But, the translation of the last Arabic word Sham is much harder as there is no real English equivalent.

Sham was historically known as “Greater Syria” which is a vague area that encompasses modern Syria as well as Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, and more. So to translate Sham as just “Syria” is very misleading because it implies that ISIS only wants modern day Iraq and Syria. That is why another translation uses the English term “Levant,” which is a vague but larger geographical area and is a better word than “Syria” to describe the territorial ambitions of the group.

Whereas ISIL is the better translation, most people use ISIS including yours truly. However, understanding the difference is helpful.

**Is Islam Strengthening or a House Divided?**
Another point of discussion taking place is whether Islam is getting stronger or is a house divided that is destroying itself.

At heart the situation in the Middle East is a violent Sunni-Shi’ite war that is redrawing borders in order to form a contiguous fundamentalist Sunni state in the Levant. ISIS is gaining territory and support for a number of reasons, including popular unrest against old regimes.

But ISIS is also exposing the true nature of Islam. While the West may debate the nature of Islam, the Muslim world knows that this jihadist Islam is based on the Koran and life of Muhammad and can be seen as the “pure Islam.” ISIS is not doing anything that Muhammad himself did not do including beheadings and taking slaves as spoils of war. Therefore, they will gain the support of many Muslims.

But at the same time, some Muslims...
are beginning to speak out against this movement and advocate for a modernization of the Middle East with a more civilized society. Many are disgusted by this 7th century “pure Islam” and are seeking a better life. We should pray for them, that the Lord reveals Himself to them. May many find the Lord at this chaotic time!

The truth of the matter is that the divided house of Islam has already been weakening and this radical jihadist movement is a last ditch attempt to return to the days of Islamic unity and glory by re-establishing the Caliphate (an Islamic state under one supreme religious and political leader, the Caliph, which is required in Shariah or Islamic law). It may look worst on the surface, but this movement is wreaking havoc on the house of Islam, and may be the violent earthquake needed to bring about much needed change. The question is how long will it take and how many innocent lives will be sacrificed?

This process of change may take a very long time and be extremely violent, but it is very possible that Islam could lose its demonic grip on the minds and hearts of millions of people in the Middle East. We have seen this same phenomenon in Iran, a fundamentalist Islamic state, in which the younger generation now wants to leave their 7th century Islamic society and enter the 21st century. It is no coincidence that the underground church in Iran numbers over one million, and some estimate as high as five million, souls.

A Time For Prayer
While it is difficult to understand the chaotic politics and growing schisms in the Middle East, we always know to pray: for the safety of Israel, for the persecuted church, and for souls to be saved. Never has there been a greater need for prayer than now.

Israel is in an increasingly dangerous situation as jihadist forces are now on most of her borders. The only peaceful border is with Jordan and it remains to be seen whether Jordan will be able to keep its territory and sovereignty under an ISIS assault.

The Christian communities of Iraq and Syria are being driven from their homes and countries with nothing but the clothes on their backs. Those who have survived are in refugee camps facing a very cold and deadly winter. Worse yet is the betrayal they feel as the western Christian world sits silent.

The Islamic world is a house divided and jihadists groups are not only destroying the lives of Christians and other minorities, but brutally killing any Muslim standing in their way. A mighty prayer movement could birth many souls into the Kingdom but it takes Christians who are willing to give of their time and energy in fervent intercession as watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem.

To join the ICEJ’s global Isaiah 62 Prayer Initiative go to www.iceusa.org/Isaiah62_pledge
Join the Isaiah 62 Movement

Help us get all 50 states praying for Israel!

We now have over 110 Isaiah 62 prayer groups in 37 states in the USA. Our goal is to have groups in all 50 states. Get your state on the map as one praying for Israel!

To start an Isaiah 62 prayer group, or register your existing group with us, please contact isaiah62@icejusa.org

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