ICEJ 25TH ANNIVERSARY
SPENDING 25 YEARS AS A WATCHMAN AND COMFORTER OF ISRAEL

Read about the history of ICEJ miracles, worship and personalities that have helped fill the ministry’s mandate, plus coverage of ICEJ’s Knesset award.
The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ)

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem was founded in 1980 as an act of comfort and solidarity with Israel and the Jewish people in their claim to Jerusalem.

Today, the Christian Embassy stands at the forefront of a growing mainstream movement of Christians worldwide who share a love and concern for Israel and an understanding of the biblical significance of the modern ingathering of Jews to the land of their forefathers.

From our headquarters in Jerusalem and through our branches and representatives in over 80 nations, we seek to challenge the Church to take up its scriptural responsibilities towards the Jewish people, to remind Israel of the wonderful promises made to her in the Bible, and to be a source of practical assistance to all the people of the Land of Israel.

The ICEJ is a non-denominational faith ministry, supported by the voluntary contributions of our members and friends worldwide. We invite you to join with us as we minister to Israel and the Jewish people worldwide.

If you wish to make a donation to the general work of the ICEJ or to a specific project described in this magazine, please use the attached response envelope, use the address below or visit our Web site at www.icej.org/get-involved to send your gift. All donations are tax deductible according to the law of your country.
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ICEJ NEWS

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The ICEJ staff in the early 1980s

Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert unveils a plaque at ICEJ’s new building, Rachel I'menu 20, in 1997

ICEJ and other Christian organizations found the European Coalition for Israel in Brussels

Nicole (Schiavi) Jansezian, ICEJ reporter, interviews ICEJ-sponsored swimmer Yitzhak Mamistalov, a gold medalist in the 2004 Paralympics

US Congress’ House of Representatives Majority Leader Tom DeLay visits the ICEJ. Pictured (left to right) are Malcolm Hedding, Michael Utterback, DeLay, and Arthur Ivey

Under the full moon, 5000 Feast of Tabernacles pilgrims enjoy a biblical dinner at Qumran

A pro-Israel rally with Norwegian Christians in front of Oslo government buildings

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin received the first sapling of a 50,000-tree forest from ICEJ staff children David Schutz and Anna King

Yudit Setz, coordinator of the ICEJ Social Assistance Program addresses 130 heads of social work agencies in Israel at a reception in the ICEJ’s headquarters

Prime Minister Menachem Begin greets ICEJ Spokesman Jan Willem van der Hoeven at the first demonstration of the “Mordechai Outcry” for Soviet Jewry in 1981

David Parsons, ICEJ media coordinator, answers tough questions from reporters at a press conference during the Feast of Tabernacles

ICEJ has stood with Israel through two wars where Israel’s national security was threatened, when gas masks, such as the ones pictured, were issued to all ICEJ staffers

Dr. Campbell Millar performing a routine check-up as part of ICEJ’s Social Assistance Program outreachs

International speaker and author Lance Lambert addresses an ICEJ audience during a Feast

Grafted, the ICEJ’s energetic young adults department marches in the annual Jerusalem March in 2004
Dear Friends,

In September 1980, upon the exodus from Jerusalem of 13 foreign embassies in response to Israel’s Knesset declaring Jerusalem the undivided and eternal capital of the Jewish people, the doors of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem opened. In reality a very big door opened, even though at the time it seemed to be such a small door, turning on an even smaller hinge.

Twenty-five years later “that door” has witnessed more than 100,000 Christians passing through it! All of them with one thought and purpose and that is to comfort Israel. This “thought” was inspired by the prophet Isaiah who some 2,500 years before spoke of a generation of non-Jews who would rise up to comfort Zion (Isaiah 40:1-2).

How incredible it is that in part, by the work and ministry of the ICEJ, this prophetic vision has been fulfilled. Certainly only the Holy Spirit could have seen the consequences of opening a door in September 1980.

Now 25 years later, “comforting Zion” has taken on a whole new meaning because the vision and work of the ICEJ has spread to all the continents of the world and in some 60 nations we have fully established and self-supporting branches.

Coupled with this is the fact that in Jerusalem the head office, situated in the scenic German Colony, has a staff of 60 people daily pursuing all sorts of initiatives all designed to comfort Israel. Who could have imagined such a thing and, more important still, who really knows the impact of 25 years of faithful service? Only the God of Israel can answer this question, and He will in eternity one day and then there will be even more cause for rejoicing!

However, to be sure we are not proud of these achievements since we recognize that without the faithfulness of Jesus, nothing would ever have been achieved. We are then thankful that we have been able to share in something that was “God-breathed.”

The journey has not always been easy and along the way mistakes were made and conflicts were endured, but through it all the shining, comforting love of the God of the Bible has shone upon the nation of Israel.

As I have watched year by year the excited faces of Israel’s children greeting our annual Feast pilgrims as they have marched in their national colours and costumes through the streets of Jerusalem, I have thanked God that a door did open 25 years ago. An open door that has done much to improve Jewish/Christian relations and an open door that has allowed thousands and thousands of Christians to say to Israel, “Your God is with you, you are not alone and we love you.”

Thank you for going through this door with us and for being part of the journey. Certainly “A New Day” began in September 1980 and by the grace of God may it continue!

Yours in Jesus,

Malcolm Hedding
From a human perspective, there are many reasons why the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem should have ‘folded’ years ago... or perhaps never even began. The odds against this ministry surviving the multi-ethnic, multi-religious pressures of the Middle East were just too great. However, God’s faithfulness and goodness have kept this ministry alive and thriving for 25 years, and through many miraculous events and circumstances He has used the Christian Embassy to bless and comfort Israel and the Jewish people.

Miracle #1 – The Opening of the ICEJ

In 1980 Israel passed the “Jerusalem Law” declaring the city to be Israel’s eternal, undivided capital. All 13 embassies then located in Jerusalem moved to Tel Aviv in protest.

“If governments won’t stand with my ancient people, now is the time for Christians to open a Christian Embassy!” the Lord directed a group of Christians living in the land. Its mandate was based on Isaiah 40:1 – “Comfort, O comfort My people...”

A Christian Embassy in the Jewish State, how could this possibly work? There was only one way, a miracle of God.

Those early pioneers and visionaries included: Jan Willem and Widad van der Hoeven, Johann Lückhoff, Merv and Merla Watson, Elizabeth van Heemstra, Jay and Meridel Rawlings, Lance Lambert, George Giacumakis, Alexandria Rentz, Meri Jones, Jack and Yoma Munting, Larry and Lucia Samuels, Susan Müller, David Bivin, Ludwig and Barbara Schneider, Elgonda

At the ceremony marking the opening of the ‘Jerusalem Christian Embassy’ Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek (center, with hands in pockets) listens to words of support from ICEJ spo
Brunkhorst, Peter van Woerden, Timothy King, and many others who quickly joined forces. Jan Willem van der Hoeven served as ICEJ Spokesman from 1980–1997; Johann Lückhoff served as Executive Director from 1980–2000; and George Giacumakis as Chairman of the Board from 1980–2003.

**MIRACLE #2 – THE INFANT SURVIVES A HOSTILE TAKEOVER**

During the first few months of existence, we found ourselves facing a very wealthy donor who paid the office rent for an entire year. Soon after, he declared that he had registered the name in all major countries of the world, was now the new director and we could all work for him. Imagine, a ‘hostile takeover’ of a young non-profit with no money.

On our knees again, God said, “Give his money back!” We returned the original donation saying we did not need his money and would continue to develop ‘branches’ all over the world on our own. After 25 years, we now have a full-time Jerusalem staff of 60 people speaking 14 languages, and branch offices and representatives in over 80 countries of the world. The fact that a culturally diverse, multi-national support system can unite to fund a largely volunteer ministry team in Jerusalem is truly a miracle.

**MIRACLE #3 – FEAST OF TABERNACLES 1981**

Although the ICEJ was born out of the first Feast in 1980, it was in 1981 when miracles of immense proportions took place. Although we sensed that the Feast should move to the largest convention center in Jerusalem, by August we had not received one shekel of registration money. Agreements had to be signed, deposits made, and it was my name on the contracts.

Our only market research was prayer, and pray we did. We felt God assure us 3000 people would come, and in sim-
(1) Johann Lückhoff, ICEJ’s first executive director, 1980 – 2000
(2) Feast of Trumpets March around Jerusalem’s Old City at Feast of Tabernacles celebration in the early 1980s

Since 1980, every prime minister with the exception of Ehud Barak came to the Feast of Tabernacles...
(3) Menachem Begin
(4) Yitzhak Shamir
(5) Shimon Peres
(6) Yitzhak Rabin
(7) Binyamin Netanyahu
(8) Ariel Sharon;

...and every Mayor of Jerusalem
(9) Teddy Kollek
(10) Ehud Olmert
(11) Uri Lupolianski
(12) Left to right, Michael Utterback and Malcolm Hedding greeting Prime Minister Ariel Sharon at the 2003 Feast
ple faith and obedience we planned on a full house. One month later, 3000 people came from 80 different nations. All our bills were paid.

But the biggest miracle of that Feast was not finance, but the way Israelis received Christians, many for the first time. Prime Minister Menachem Begin, Mayor Teddy Kollek and President of the Great Synagogue Maurice Jaffe all came. To have Orthodox Jews sit in the same hall with Christians was historic, and this joyful spirit spilled onto the streets during the Jerusalem March.

Twenty-five Feasts later, we can look back and say that all prime ministers (with the exception of Ehud Barak), all mayors of Jerusalem, and well over 100,000 Christian pilgrims have made the Feast the largest annual tourist event in Israel, bringing millions of tourist dollars into Israel’s economy.

MIRACLE #4 – LET GOD’S PEOPLE GO

In the early 1980s, Jews were refused immigration from the former Soviet Union to Israel. ICEJ launched a worldwide campaign of Christian protest in front of Soviet embassies called “Mordechai Outcry,” demanding “Let God’s People Go.” The Iron Curtain eventually fell and Jews in the hundreds of thousands came home to Israel. We don’t claim credit for all of this, but we call it a miracle of God in which we took part.

A young believer in Jerusalem collected shekels on Ben Yehuda street with a coffee can and brought it to the Embassy for new immigrants. This simple act so touched the ICEJ leadership that we formed a department for ‘Soviet Jewry’ that has since channelled millions of dollars to assist in the aliyah and absorption of Jewish immigrants. Through the ICEJ, Christians paid for 52 planes of newcomers, and funded the establishment of the Exodus project to transport Russian Jews to waiting El Al planes in the former Soviet Union.

Today, ICEJ continues to fund aliyah efforts in a variety of ways, be it from Argentina, Russian Jews in North America, or from distant parts of Siberia and Central Asia. The Jerusalem Support Center, run in conjunction with the Church of God – Ministry To Israel, also helps new immigrants get established in Israel.

MIRACLE #5 – “WIDOW’S MITE” AID WORK THROUGH SAP

One out of five people in Israel lives below the poverty line. Solving the problem seems impossible, but the ‘loaves and fishes’ effect of multiplication makes the ICEJ Social Assistance Program very effective. Joint projects with municipalities – like a
ICEJ Finland Director Ulla Järvelähto and ICEJ Financial Director Timothy King unveil a plaque at Ashdod’s Cultural Center for New Immigrants sponsored by Finnish Christians as Mayor Zilker, Jim Schutz, Zvi Givati look on. It has become a model for other centers in Israel.

Social Assistance Program’s Nicole Yoder (left) delivers food for Passover that Israeli social workers distribute to families for the holiday week.

Malcolm Hedding, Jürgen Bühler, Beit Eitan Director Edna Aharon and Zvi Givati inspect the soon-to-be-finished therapeutic swimming pool in Ashkelon sponsored by ICEJ Germany.

Dr. Campbell Millar and Ferne Millar of ICEJ’s Social Assistance Program examine a patient in the ICEJ’s Mobile Medical Clinic.

ICEJ Nurse Corrie van Maanen cares for several new immigrants and elderly people each day.

ICEJ’s Lisa Rüdiger delivers a check to the “Pups for Peace” project, formed to thwart terrorist attacks in public places.
community centre for elderly immigrants in Ashdod, a therapeutic swimming pool for the handicapped in Ashkelon, or a group home for the physically challenged in Jerusalem – have multiplied Christian donations in a big way. Smaller projects at the right place and time are also a hallmark of SAP. The difference between our aid work and many other agencies is that Embassy staff deliver the funds in person so Israeli recipients know that Christians care and give sacrificially.

MIRACLE #6 – THE COVENANT

The Covenant is a 90-minute musical drama depicting Bible stories from the time of Abraham, including the ministry of Jesus, until the modern state of Israel. It has been ‘on tour’ four times throughout Israel, as well as in Europe and America, and will be featured as part of the ‘Israel’ track during the Azusa Street Centennial Celebrations in Los Angeles in 2006. During the 2005 spring tour alone, over 18,000 Israelis saw the show in Hebrew.

The Covenant reminds Israelis of how God keeps His promises. It challenges Christians to view Israel from a biblical perspective. To have such a dynamic tool in our hands at this time is indeed a miracle.

FUTURE MIRACLES

Pray that, in its next 25 years, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem will be strong, but also sensitive and tender; that it will be steadfast in its Christian conviction and love of Jesus, and open to a fresh move of the Holy Spirit; and that the miracles will continue, to the glory of God.

Help the ICEJ to continue helping Israelis during its next 25 years of service. Generous donations are especially needed to reach out in love during the tumultuous Gaza disengagement. May the Lord bless you as you give. Please see response donation form included.
So when a small group of leaders came together to consider hosting such a happening in Jerusalem, to always be considered “the Lord’s Feast,” inspiration for its musical elements had already developed in Merla’s keen artistic mind.

The original pioneers of the Feast envisioned a worship celebration modeled after David’s Tabernacle, where all artistic forms were merged in an extravagant and joyous manner, yet with reverence and awe.

“We didn’t want to move forward without consulting members of the Jewish community,” recalls Merla. “So we went to our friend, Rabbi Peleh, and asked him what he thought about our ideas. He responded, ‘That’s the best news I’ve ever heard - the Talmud teaches us that in the last days Gentiles will begin to celebrate the Feast... It means that Messiah is at the very door!’”

Some 400 believers gathered at Christ Church in the Old City for the first Feast celebration. Just one year later, the numbers more than tripled and the Feast was held at the Anglican International School in west Jerusalem. News of this unique event quickly spread abroad and eventually the Feast moved into Jerusalem’s International Convention Center, the city’s largest auditorium.

The Feast of Tabernacles has spawned a movement that has literally covered the globe, affecting the way the Christian world worships. Today, hundreds of similar events occur around the world, all patterned after the music, dance and pageantry at the heart of those early Jerusalem celebrations.

For example, special biblical garments for the singers and dancers were skillfully designed by Peta Robinson, creating dress styles that are copied today by...
scores of Christian dance companies for their beauty and practicality.

Oversight of Feast worship elements eventually passed to other gifted artists, such as the Bob and Ramona Dicks family and Gerald Rowlands, along with Valerie Henry and Randall Bane, who for many years provided choreographic and artistic direction. As the musical complement grew to a full orchestra, the need for a conductor became evident. Dr. David Johnston of Sydney, Australia took the podium and raised the Feast standard to even greater levels.

“The Feast has had a major impact on my life,” recounts Dr. Johnson, “especially the experience of using my creative abilities to integrate expressions of worship through the arts, and to actually be in the Holy City to make music in praise to God. To think that I was actually a small part of biblical prophecy in going up to Zion to worship our Lord in these last days.”

“God used the Feast to completely transform my life,” says Claren McQueen, for many years the ICEJ Music Coordinator. “When I first stepped on stage to sing and looked into joy-filled faces from all across the globe, all worshipping together with one voice, right then my life changed forever!”

Over the years, the Feast has served as a unique platform for giving greater exposure to the music ministries of such artists as Barry and Batya Segal, Jonathan Settel, Ben and Vera Karlsson, Roy Kendall and the Popov family. The Feast would eventually host other established artists, such as Todd Farley and “Mime-istry,” Steve Fry, Ricky Skaggs, and Integrity Hosanna recording artist Paul Wilbur, to name a few.

It is no small coincidence that while the movement to restore “Davidic” praise and worship was being birthed right here in Jerusalem, the global trends in contemporary praise and worship in the Church also began to take wing in the decade of the 80’s. Songs with Messianic restoration themes were written during that time, exposing churches worldwide to the new winds of worship that were also blowing in Israel.

Spiritual parallels can be traced back even further. In the 1960’s Roberta Hromas was bringing groups to the Pool of Siloam for a water libation ceremony - an integral part of the ancient Feast. Dig a little further and you discover that her father, Charles Parham, was a key leader of the Azusa Street Revival at the turn of the 20th century that birthed the modern Pentecostal-Charismatic movement. Now, at the Azusa Street Centennial Celebration in Los Angeles in April of 2006, the ICEJ will be on hand to infuse that historic gathering with a fresh appreciation of Israel’s prophetic destiny in music, drama and proclamation of the Word.
Every enduring ministry must rise to the challenge of ministering in contemporary and relevant ways. While many traditional elements remain, in many ways the Feast today looks and sounds different than two-and-a-half decades ago.

Still, the original vision for a high standard of worship led by anointed and skilled musicians and singers has held. Today’s Feast worship leaders can only look back with gratitude at the solid foundation laid by those who birthed the Christian Celebration of Succot - to touch whole new generations until His Kingdom comes!

A mandate from heaven

“COMFORT YE, COMFORT YE MY PEOPLE” - BY MALCOLM HEDDING

For 25 years the ICEJ has embarked upon a journey of giving comfort to Israel. This journey has involved deeds of compassion impacting virtually every town, village and city in some way through a benevolence ministry that has helped the poor, healed the sick, housed the lonely, encouraged the children and cared for the elderly.

Our Feast of Tabernacles celebration has impacted more than 100,000 Christians with the Biblical perspective of recognizing the hand of God in Israel’s modern-day restoration and the need to work with what God is doing, and to bless it. As I have written before, we are thankful to God for His faithfulness. We have not done our work perfectly, but we have done it sincerely. “The Day” at the judgment seat of Christ will determine its real value! Of this too we are most mindful and so should we all be!

In what way then do we understand the command to tell Israel that her warfare is ended? It clearly has not. I believe we are to understand this in the following ways:

A PROPHETIC CALL:

The modern-day restoration of the Jewish state has been characterised by war and conflict. However, the God who has brought His people back from the nations has done so with blessing and redemption in mind. It is the encouragement of and expectation of a glorious future that brings perseverance, hope and comfort to Israel.

The Scriptures do foresee a time of unparalleled joy and peace being ushered in for Israel. The remarkable Messianic prophecies of Isaiah in chap-
Chapters 2, 11, and 60 reveal this. “Israel’s warfare” is indeed about to come to an end and when it does, the whole earth will be amazed. Above all, God alone will get the glory for He will unravel a problem that has been far too great for the world to deal with. Not even the Church has been able to sort this one out! Indeed much of the Church today sees no biblical significance in Israel’s restoration. They believe it is merely a political accident orchestrated by the United Nations.

**A COMPASSIONATE RESPONSE:**

The prophet Isaiah says, “Speak comfort to Jerusalem.” Another translation of the same verse says, “Speak tenderly to Jerusalem.” A people in peace, joy, victory and blessing do not need the words of comfort or tenderness. No, it is a people in perpetual trauma and conflict that need comfort and tenderness. Sadly church history has been anything but this! Their words have been harsh, bitter and reviling. Thankfully, we at the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem heard an exhortation from heaven 25 years ago that called upon us to “speak comfort to Jerusalem.”

As Israel moves steadily but surely to her God-given destiny, we are determined to stay the course with her. We will be guided by the words of Isaiah 40 and the principles outlined above that flow from it. We are ever mindful that our journey has not been our story alone. In fact, thousands of Christians from all over the world have made it their journey and story as well. We salute you for joining with us and thank you for standing with us in prayer and support.

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**IT IS A THEOLOGICAL STATEMENT:**

That is, much of Israel’s sufferings have been bound up with her calling. She, by the choice of God, became the vehicle of world redemption. The redemptive blessing of God has come to all the families of the earth through Israel.

This vehicle has been constantly challenged by the powers of darkness. For them the equation has been simple: Destroy Israel and you effectively destroy the purpose of God for the world. Thankfully Isaiah declares that this “day” of warfare is coming to an end. On that “day” the whole world will know that Israel existed for their blessing and not their cursing.
Knesset honours ICEJ

Knesset thanks ICEJ for its service during 25th anniversary celebrations

For the second time in 25 years, the Knesset honoured the ICEJ for its activities and service to Israel. In 1991, the ICEJ received the prestigious “Knesset Award” for its role in strengthening ties between Jews and Christians, bringing understanding between Jews and Arabs in Israel, deepening Jewish and Zionist awareness among Christians worldwide and encouraging immigration to Israel.

In 2005, the ICEJ was feted by the Knesset Christian Allies’ Caucus for its quarter century of service.

Eight Knesset members delivered greetings and congratulations to ICEJ national directors from over 50 countries and another 50 members of the ICEJ staff in Jerusalem, gathered in a stately assembly hall in the parliament building.

“Twenty-five years is nearly half as old as the modern state of Israel,” Knesset Member Arieh Eldad said in his opening remarks. “You have been through a lot with us.”

MK Yuri Shtern, co-chairman of the Knesset caucus, said, “This is a special day for me personally, as I was still a refusnik in Moscow in 1980 when I learned through an underground newspaper of the exodus of national embassies from Jerusalem and the founding of the International Christian Embassy. It was encouraging to know that Christians were on our side in our struggle for freedom.”

“It is just as moving today to feel the solidarity and support from people of goodwill like you,” said Shtern, of the rightist National Union. “We Jews should appreciate your friendship better.”

“It was one of the biggest privileges I have had as a member of the Knesset to found with Yuri the Christian Allies’ Caucus,” said Yair Peretz of the religious Shas party. “Already, we have seen you touch thousands of Israelis with food at Pesach and school supplies for children as they start classes.”

MK Ran Cohen of Yahad recalled his escape from Baghdad and aliya to Israel six decades ago. “We Israelis have had a very difficult life and we need your help day by day to achieve our dream of living in peace here in our own land.”

MKs Gila Gamliel (Likud) and Shaul Yahalom (NRP) quoted Bible verses to the ICEJ delegation, while Cohen led the singing of the national anthem “Hatikvah.”

“We present our record of achievements before you today not because we are proud of what we have done, but rather because we are thankful for God’s faithfulness,” responded ICEJ Executive Director Malcolm Hedding.

“We are especially thankful that we have been able to raise up an international constituency that stands with the right of this nation to live in peace and security in the land promised to you. This worldwide following is represented by the 70 ICEJ national representatives gathered here from all the continents, who are the real backbone and workhorses of our ministry,” continued Hedding.

The Christian Embassy delegation was also hosted by Yad Vashem for a special tour of the museum’s new Holocaust exhibits, before joining in with several hundred Israeli and Christian dignitaries for a silver anniversary banquet commemorating the Embassy’s founding in 1980.
Europe Day

Reception highlights the work of the European Coalition

Solly Kaplinski, director of the English desk at Yad Vashem, recalled his father’s experience during the Holocaust. From Lithuania, Kaplinski’s father lost his entire family and eventually, with his wife, made his way to safety.

They were going to take a boat to British-ruled Palestine, but his wife said, “We’ve been through two wars already. We’re going to South Africa.”

Kaplinski noted how times and perceptions have changed since then.

“Had there been a European Coalition, a Christian Embassy, or a Bridges for Peace or Christian Friends of Israel and Christians For Israel, how different the situation might’ve been 60 to 70 years ago,” Kaplinski said at a “Europe Day” reception at the ICEJ on May 9th.

The reception was sponsored by the European Coalition for Israel – a partnership between the ICEJ and the three other major Christian Zionist organisations – to draw attention to the Coalition’s work as the only Christian pro-Israel lobby at the European Union. About 70 people attended the reception, including Israeli Knesset members, ambassadors, prominent academics and journalists.

The European Coalition for Israel represents the only lobby group active in Brussels to fight anti-Semitism and to help Israel’s difficult position within the EU.

“We are in the EU to influence European policy toward Israel, but not meddle with Israeli policy,” said Rijk van Dam, ECI chairman and for eight years a Member of the European Parliament himself.

Van Dam explained the challenges of lobbying for Israel at the EU. More than 500 European parliamentarians are indifferent toward Israel and the majority in the EU believes that Israel is able to defend herself, he said. But just down the street in Brussels is a Jewish kindergarten surrounded by armed guards and concrete walls.

“It is unbelievable that in the 21st century, in the so-called capital of Europe, a kindergarten for Jewish children has to hide behind a bunker,” he said.

ICEJ International Director Jürgen Bühlner said that Israel and the Jewish people are facing many challenges today in Europe.

“The big question now is, whether we as Christians learned the lessons of the past and whether we are willing to speak out and act on behalf of the Jewish people and their state,” he said.

Malcolm Hedding, ICEJ executive director, said Christian organisations monitored the development of anti-Semitism in Europe in the form of anti-Israel policies, and in February 2004 decided to take a stand in the EU.

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“The European Coalition for Israel is an outcome of the decision to come to the defence of Israel and the Jewish communities of Europe,” he said.

At the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum, Kaplinski said the challenges of combating anti-Semitism are daunting.

“Anti-Semitism is a disease .... It may lie dormant, but it is impossible to cure,” he said. Thus, he said, Jews must value “the European Coalition and our other friends who give us unconditional love and support.”

Knesset Member Shaul Yahalom (NRP), ICEJ Executive Director Malcolm Hedding, ECI Chairman Rijk van Dam and ICEJ International Director Jürgen Bühlner at the European Coalition reception at the ICEJ
ICEJ Czech Republic Director Mojmir Kallus is leading the charge against neo-Nazi gatherings in his nation and the ineffectiveness of the police in stopping them.

“We’ve been trying to monitor anti-Semitism in our country for some time,” Kallus said. “The neo-Nazi scene is one of the most dangerous developments.”

Young, right-wing extremists - a small minority of hundreds of a population of 10 million - have staged gatherings recently, the largest of which included 400 people this spring. The participants have come from Germany, Poland and Slovakia, as well as popular neo-Nazi bands from America and elsewhere.

“In Germany the groups would be immediately banned, but here the police turn a blind eye,” he said.

Kallus said the gatherings are usually in small villages where the groups rent a local pub, call it a closed, private event and charge a fee to get in.

“The question is what the police and state do. After the fall of communism, police were strict with them,” he said. “It seems in recent years they are not as strict anymore.”

Kallus has taken up the issue with the authorities, sending off a letter to the Ministry of Interior. The ICEJ is taking the lead calling for police action and other Christian and Jewish organizations are also speaking out.

“There is a consensus among Christians that this is a great danger,” he said.

A man showed a video of one the meetings to police, but they disregarded it and, “It has ended in nothing.”

“What we demand is that ministers set a clear policy so police do what they have to do,” Kallus said.

The rise of Nazism in the Czech Republic is surprising considering the government and residents are relatively supportive of the Israeli government. Anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish sentiment is lower than in other European countries, Kallus said.

What is a problem is racism against the gypsies, and Kallus draws a clear connection between that and the rise of Nazism. He explained that gypsies get the brunt of the violent aftermath of neo-Nazi gatherings simply because there are more of them than Jews in the nation.

“Most people think the problem is with gypsies and that the Jewish question is less relevant,” Kallus said.

According to a Jewish monitoring group, while no attacks were recorded last year against Jews in the Czech Republic, this year six have been recorded already.

Kallus is expecting a response from the Ministry of Interior later this month.

ICEJ Czech Republic Director Mojmir Kallus

ICEJ International Director

The ICEJ is pleased to announce that Dr. Jürgen Bühler, presently a board member and the director of ICEJ Germany, has accepted the position of International Director.
F E A S T O F T A B E R N A C L E S 2 0 0 5

OPENING CELEBRATION AT SULTAN’S POOL, JERUSALEM
- Tapestry of the Nations - Grand Procession
- City-wide celebration with Israeli Guests

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE JERUSALEM
- Deepen your understanding of your Biblical Heritage
- Morning sessions and seminars
- Evening celebrations with a host of international speakers and worship leaders

GRAFTED YOUNG ADULTS FEAST TOUR
- For information on our special young adults tour (18-30yrs), contact Grafted at: grafted@icej.org

ALSO INCLUDED IN THE FEAST EXPERIENCE
- Erev Shabbat Alternatives: Succah Party, Classical Concert or Evening of Ministry
- Unique excursions (costs apply) touching the heart of Israel’s land and people
- Jerusalem March
- ICEJ 24/7 Prayer and Intercession
- Children and Youth programme

REGISTRATION FEES

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Country/Region</th>
<th>US$</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Europe, USA and Japan</td>
<td>290</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Central America, Singapore, South Africa, Far East and Fiji</td>
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<td>Developing Countries</td>
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Sderot – Alex Gadmilov and his family immigrated from the Caucus region when he was 14 and settled in Sderot, a community a couple of kilometers from Gaza at which Palestinians have aimed several Kas-sam missiles killing many residents.

Having moved at a sensitive age and just four years before his mandatory army service, Gadmilov experienced several hardships fitting into Israeli culture.

“I had to get used to the situation, learn the language and look for new friends,” he said. “I didn’t want to serve in the army at first. But eventually I went into an officer training program and I realized the army helped me a lot to get to many places in my life.”

After the army and college, Gadmilov, now 27, decided he wanted to reach out to young people in his situation and came back to his community where the majority of residents are immigrants from the Caucus.

With Gvanim, a community-service organization, and Gadmilov’s experience and suggestions, the Ben Gurion Club was born and now six days a week, the teen-agers of the town have a place to hang out in a safe environment, surrounded by young adults who serve as role models to encourage them.

ICEJ’s Social Assistance Program saw this club as a multi-faceted approach to help the community: Some of the teens are at risk of dropping out of school, many come from low socio-economic backgrounds and most are immigrants trying to acclimatize.

SAP saw this club as a step to get these teens started on the right path for their future. The club provides role models and also sponsors community events. With SAP’s donation, the club purchased computer equipment, office equipment, chairs, a ping pong table, a DVD player and an addition to the kitchen.

Between 15 to 50 teens come to the club everyday to play games, use the computer or take part in organized activities such as sports, arts and crafts and army preparation courses. The people who work there are volunteers or are sponsored by the municipality. Others who have been through the program now volunteer. When asked why he came to the club, Simeon Kablansky just shrugged, “If I didn’t come here, I’d be on the street.”

“We’re the veterans here – we can show them,” Yvegny Ismailov, 20, said of the teens who pour into the centre every afternoon. He explained how the centre helped him as well, especially in preparing for the army.

“I didn’t want to go but when I learned how important it was, I said I would go,” he said. “Now I know there is nothing standing in my way.”

To help the ICEJ support more programs such as this, get involved by partnering with us financially.
ERUSALEM – When Jerusalem Support Center moved into their new offices downtown about a year ago, a new vein of ministry began: an influx of IDF soldiers with no family in Israel seeking help.

But the support hasn’t been solely financial. Gina Utterback, director of JSC, has become confidante, prayer support and mother to many of these young men.

Jonathan, 19, from America, an elite paratrooper in the IDF sent a phone text message to Gina one evening asking for prayer as he prepared to go on a dangerous mission into Palestinian territories. Gina and her family immediately prayed for his safety and she asked him to respond when he safely came out. He did.

Another soldier, Federico, 24, with his mother still in Chile asked Gina to be his “mother” on mothers’ day at his air force base in the Golan Heights. Gina has hosted some of the soldiers for dinner where the family has taken these lonely young men under its wings.

“These guys don’t have any family and it touches their hearts so much when they find out there are Christians who help them and pray for them everyday,” Gina said. “They are so touched that there are people in the world who don’t view them as the bad guys.”

Gina said that many of these men make Aliyah either because they are immensely Zionistic or because the situation in their own country is economically worse than in Israel. Many come here alone and face a dire financial crisis and loneliness having left behind family in their home country.

Gina adds a personal touch to her work, ordering candy bars or soda from America for soldiers craving a taste of home. While she has managed to get sponsors for some of the soldiers, Gina still has a folder on her desk of dozens of unsorted files – each needing help.

The influx of soldiers has also opened the door for JSC to cooperate with the Jewish Agency which is four floors down. Both JSC and the Jewish Agency refer cases to one another when they are stretched to the limits of their resources.

“And each has his own story: A Belgian immigrant who left because he refused to take off his kippa despite anti-Semitic attacks that landed him in a Brussels hospital; Yuri, 22, who sends his meagre earnings to his mother and sick brother in the Ukraine; Yehuda, 19, whose parents sent him from his home in Milwaukee on a one-way ticket to Israel.

The welfare services have collapsed in this country,” said a Jewish Agency worker in charge of soldier files. “Thank God we have you to help.”

If you’d like to sponsor a soldier, send your inquiry and/or a donation with the enclosed envelope. Several lone soldiers sign up for financial assistance weekly.
NYONE whose heart becomes attached to modern Israel must at some point learn to cope with the many highs and lows of her gripping journey. For Christians no less than Jews, the trials, tensions and triumphs of this nation can make for quite an emotional roller coaster ride.

In his acclaimed new book “Six Days of War,” historian Michael Oren makes an astute observation about Israel in recounting one of her most tense yet triumphant moments – the June 1967 war. Faced with Arab threats of annihilation, Israeli leaders and commanders uttered statements on the eve of battle conveying a sense that the nation was both militarily invincible and mortally vulnerable, all at the same time.

These contradictory impressions have never really waned, as even today Israelis confront decisions that some say could secure her future in the region but others contend will drag her to the brink of extinction.

Truth be told, there always seems to be some sort of crisis one can point to in Israel; the question for Christians is whether we profess a steadfast faith that her God will always bring her through.

DURING one such crisis 25 years ago, a ministry was birthed in Jerusalem with a clear calling to comfort the Jewish people in all their trials and to proclaim with absolute conviction that the present-day restoration of Israel is the miraculous and irreversible handiwork of a sovereign God.

In the summer of 1980, the Israeli government under Menachem Begin was undertaking serious concessions for the sake of the newly concluded peace with Egypt.
they had built up a measure of goodwill among the nations, Israeli leaders decided to make a simple declaration about their beloved Jerusalem. The western half of the city had served as Israel’s seat of government since 1950, but on 30 July 1980, the Knesset passed a new Basic Law declaring “united Jerusalem” – including the Old City and eastern parts annexed in 1967 – to be the eternal capital of Israel.

The decision, however, riled the international community and the Arab states threatened yet another oil embargo, this time against any nation that still maintained an embassy in Jerusalem. One by one, the 13 national embassies then in Jerusalem packed up and left to join the 54 embassies located down in Tel Aviv.

In that moment of testing, not one nation in the entire world was willing to stand with the 3000 year-old Jewish claim and connection to Jerusalem!

Just as Israelis were facing the brunt of this hostility and diplomatic isolation, 1000 Christians from 40 nations were gathering in Jerusalem for the first public Christian celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. A small group of Dutch Christians – some who had witnessed the Holocaust firsthand – stood with tears outside the embassy of Holland as the last diplomats cleared their offices and drove away.

A decision was quickly made that, if the nations would not represent Christians here, we would have to do it ourselves. And thus the doors of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem were officially opened in the presence of Mayor Teddy Kollek on 30 September 1980.

Jerusalem remains a “burdensome stone” for the nations to this day, but that particular diplomatic crisis for Israel provided a unique moment for the love of her Christian friends to shine forth. Indeed, it remains an irony of history that an Arab oil embargo would birth a Christian Embassy in Jerusalem.

Israel has faced many dark and difficult moments ever since, but the ICEJ has been there as a beacon of Christian care and concern every time. When Iraqi Scuds were falling in the 1991 Gulf War, for instance, Israel TV Channel One broadcast a feature report on the decision of our full Embassy staff not to flee the country like the diplomatic corps.

Since the launch of the armed intifada in September 2000, Christian support for Israel has again gone ‘high-profile’ and nothing more so than the sight of thousands of courageous Christian pilgrims attending our annual Feast, testifying to every Israeli that we are not just ‘fair weather friends.’

“Through the streets of Jerusalem, a powerful movement, marching for the Jewish state,” reported CNN at the 2002 Feast. “A force to be reckoned with... at a time when bomb-scarred Israel appears to have few friends on the world stage,” a Canadian newspaper read.

Through it all, we have learned that standing with Israel and comforting this people means being able to stand in those darkest hours and not flinch in our trust that God watches over her. “A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity,” says Proverbs 17:17.

Over the past 25 years, the Christian Embassy has pursued a three-fold calling in line with Paul’s admonition in 1 Corinthians 10:32 that we must relate to the Jews, the Greeks [nations] and the church of God.

- To Israel and the Jewish people, we remain a ministry of comfort – welcoming them home and presenting a different face of our Lord than they have known down through the centuries. Thankfully, we can say significant advances have been made in this regard.
- To the Church, we serve as a ministry of stewardship – handling with care the biblical ‘mystery’ of Israel and instructing believers as to the deep Scriptural truths surrounding her eternal calling and destiny.
- To the nations, we have a ministry of warning – sounding the call that the building up of Zion, like Noah’s building of the ark, is a sign to all humanity that they are about to be judged.

These present huge challenges, yet we have much reason to greatly rejoice in the faithfulness of God thus far. With the help of our friends and supporters worldwide, we can confidently look forward to carrying out this high calling in the years to come!
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<td>Music CD — Feast of Tabernacles 2004 (available now!)</td>
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