IN MEMORY OF
GILAD, EYAL AND NAFTALI
Dear Friends,

The Middle East is changing as never before. The Arab uprisings of recent years have resulted in a dramatic reshuffle in the region. The latest development is the sudden rise of the ISIS (the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) militia. Their trademark is unprecedented brutality and ruthless slaughter of whoever does not share their radical view of Islam. In the beginning of the year very few had heard of them, yet today they control half of Iraq and large parts of Syria.

Over recent weeks, we had several encounters with pastors from Iraq who told first-hand of their experiences. It is even worse than what we hear in the media. Public crucifixions of Christians have become a powerful deterrence to anyone considering whether to become a Christian.

However, the pastors also brought us a good report. In spite of the violence and bloodshed, many people are getting saved and baptized and new congregations are being established.

If the past few years have shown us anything, it is that a bloody face of Islam has been unmasked, which is turning many Muslims away from their faith. The reality of sharia law in the Middle East is the reality of returning to the dark Middle Ages. The vast majority of people in the region are not interested in that, but rather want to enjoy liberty and the freedom to express themselves freely. The reason for this lies at the heart of human nature: everyone is created in the image of God and carries within him or her the desire to be free.

According to the Word of God, true freedom is found only in a relationship with our Creator. Or as Jesus says: “If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed” (John 8:36). This is why nations with large Evangelical populations tend to enjoy more freedoms than many other nations.

The pastors from Iraq also confirmed what we have heard for some time now concerning Iran. In spite of Islamic oppression, people are getting saved there as well, and in unprecedented numbers. Iran today has millions of Evangelical believers. There is hope for the Middle East!

As Christians we are called to pray for the region as never before, that the bloodshed will come to an end quickly. Therefore, please join us in our Isaiah 62 prayer campaign.

May the Lord bless you greatly from Zion!

Yours in Christ,

[Dr. Jürgen Bühler]

ICEJ Executive Director

---

THE INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN EMBASSY JERUSALEM is a global ministry representing churches, denominations and millions of Christians worldwide who share a love and concern for Israel and who seek to repair the historic breach between the Church and the Jewish people. We recognize in the modern-day restoration of Israel the faithfulness of God to keep His ancient covenant promises to the Jewish people. Our main objectives are:

To stand with Israel in practical expressions of support and friendship;
To teach the Church worldwide regarding God’s purposes concerning Israel and to link churches with Israel;
To support local churches in the Holy Land;
To be an active channel of reconciliation between Jews, Arabs and Christians;

From our Jerusalem headquarters, the work of the Christian Embassy reaches into more than 140 countries, including established branch offices in over 70 nations worldwide. The ICEJ is Your Embassy in Jerusalem.

The ICEJ is a non-denominational faith ministry, supported by the voluntary contributions of our members and friends across the globe. We invite you to join with us as we minister to Israel and the Jewish people worldwide by using the enclosed response slip to make your donation to the ongoing work and witness of the ICEJ.
CONTENTS

FINDING HOPE IN THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

BACK TO OUR ROOTS
BY DR. JÜRGEN BÜHLER
ICEJ EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

IN MEMORY OF GILAD, EYAL AND NAFTALI

MAYOR BARKAT GREETS JERUSALEM DAY RECEPTION

NEXT ISSUE
COMING UP IN THE AUGUST WORD FROM JERUSALEM

Next month, we will take a closer look at the work of Yad Vashem and the key role of the ICEJ in building Christian support for that revered institution. Also, we’ll have more biblical insights into our Feast of Tabernacles 2014 theme of “Restoration,” plus more exciting reports from our Embassy branches worldwide.

Learn more about our upcoming events at: www.icejusa.org
LAST MONTH, residents of the Haifa Home for Holocaust Survivors welcomed a group of students visiting from the local University of Haifa. A mix of Jews and non-Jews from Israel and abroad, the students are all enrolled in a Master’s degree program in education. Their courses include studying about the history of the Holocaust, which inspired their visit to the elderly home for Shoah survivors.

The students spoke with the elderly residents about their experiences during and after World War II and then took a group of the Haifa Home residents to the scenic coastline where Mount Carmel meets the sea. They first relaxed together at a coffee shop and continued to get to know one another. Later the residents asked to walk along the beach, where they enjoyed the beauty and breezes of the Mediterranean. Afterward, the students left enriched by their conversations and much more informed about their topic of study.
DAY ON THE FARM

IN EARLY JUNE, all of Israel celebrated the Feast of Shavuot – also known as the Festival of Weeks, or Pentecost. This biblical holiday is celebrated exactly 50 days after Passover and commemorates the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai; Christians also began celebrating the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost many centuries later. Israelis today observe this early harvest festival with many activities across the country centered around agriculture, with a special emphasis on dairy products. Cheesecakes are a particularly popular item around Shavuot.

Residents of the Haifa Home were thrilled to be invited to take part in Shavuot Festivities at a moshav (a small farming community) near Haifa. The rural village was established in 1949 by a group of Holocaust Survivors from what was then Czechoslovakia. The Haifa Home residents were treated to some of the produce grown by the community, and they especially enjoyed the folk dances and other performances by both children and adults from the moshav.

Policing the Gardens

LAST MONTH, residents of the Haifa Home received a special visit from a local Israeli police unit who wanted to volunteer their time at the assisted-living community for the day. They first learned some history about the warm home for elderly Holocaust survivors from one of the staff members. Later, they heard from ICEJ AID representative Yudit Setz, who introduced them to the work of the Christian Embassy over the past three decades.

For much of the day, the police officers worked in the gardens around the Haifa Home. The biggest task was cleaning up an area in between two main buildings where construction has started on a new recreational hall for the residents. The site had become a storage space, but the policemen rearranged the storage and revived the garden area.
IT STARTED OUT as a normal school day for young Eugene Erblich. But, then tanks came rumbling into Bucharest, and with them came fear and darkness.

Eugene was 14 years old at the time, and lived with his Jewish parents and seven year-old sister, Elsa. The year was 1940 and his native Romania was in turmoil as Europe descended into war. A fascist faction had seized power and welcomed the German army to occupy the country. And so the Panzer tanks began rolling in.

The director of Eugene’s school came into his classroom and told the Jewish children that they had to leave. As he headed for the door, Eugene was brutally beaten by two classmates yelling “dirty Jew boy.” He screamed and cried and ran for his life.

Shortly after, Nazi forces dragged his father to a forced labor camp. Day after day, there were deportations of Jews from the Bucharest area to Transnistria. Among them were Eugene and Elsa. They were separated and put in children’s camps.

For Eugene, it was the most painful time of his life - both physically and mentally. He was worked nearly to death. There was little food or water and no medical care. He had no change of clothes or a place to bathe. The guards were cruel to the children, treating them like vermin.

Eugene fled back to Bucharest to find the city in chaos. People ran through the streets screaming as gunshots rang out everywhere.

It was 1945 and Europe was being liberated from the Nazi occupation. Eugene’s father soon returned home from the forced labor camp, but he was very ill and emaciated with no strength left. Within a year, he had died.

Eugene, his mother, and sister struggled to rebuild their lives in Romania. He went back to school and graduated with a university degree. Around age 40, he married and had a son named Doron.

The horrific memories torment Eugene to this day.

When the Russian army finally pushed into Romania several years later, the Nazi soldiers disappeared one day and the children were able to escape from the camp. But the area was still being battered by heavy shelling and clashes between German and Russian forces.

Eventually, his family immigrated to Israel in 1980. Eugene lived in Haifa, studied Hebrew, and found work. But then his beloved wife died of cancer two years later. He never remarried and cared for his son alone, putting all his love and effort into Doron’s education. Eugene can now boast of three beautiful granddaughters.

Today, Eugene is an intelligent, charming man, with a quiet demeanor that hides his traumatic past. He recently took up residence at the ICEJ’s Home for Holocaust survivors in Haifa. There, he loves to engage with fellow survivors at the unique assisted-living facility.

Recently, Eugene started a chess class to teach other residents this classic game. He patiently explains the rules in a mixture of Hebrew, English, and Romanian.

“Toda raba, moreh!” chirped his happy students Mania and Michelle, both also from Romania.

So many of the Haifa Home residents are like Eugene in feeling as if they have found a new family. They understand that those around them also have dark memories of their past, and yet they equally share the daily joys and the sense of security of living at the Haifa Home for Holocaust survivors.

Please give your best gift today by visiting us at: www.icejusa.org/expanding-haifa-home
OVER RECENT YEARS, the dining hall at the ICEJ’s Haifa Home for Holocaust survivors has been serving its residents at more than just meal times. The room also serves as a community center where the elderly survivors meet for Bible studies, interesting lectures, arts and crafts classes, occupational therapy, exercise sessions, and movie and game nights, among other leisure activities.

However, with the increase in residents a more suitable place is required for these other group pursuits. Meals sometimes feel rushed as the dining hall has to be cleaned quickly and switched over for other uses, which also means extra work for the staff.

It is our hope that these other community activities will soon be moved from the dining hall to a larger and more comfortable place. Work on the Haifa Home’s new recreational hall has already begun in an area between two adjoining buildings, but we need your support to finish this important project. The residents are already excited about having a new community hall where they can gather for their special activities.

Please give towards this worthy project and to the many other needs at the Haifa Home for Holocaust survivors! We currently need $180,000 to complete the construction project already underway. 🙏
Genealogical research has become one of the fastest growing hobbies in recent years. Various new software bundles are enabling every lay person to discover their distant ancestors. A total of US $2.4 billion is spent annually to trace ancestral roots. Thousands of DNA tests are carried out each year to uncover the ethnic lineage of people in search of their family’s past.

While it can be exciting to discover our biological roots, I want to suggest it is of far greater importance to discover the spiritual roots of our faith. Since it is our faith which promises us eternal life, it is of the highest priority to be connected to the very roots of our belief system. To be poorly joined to this nourishing source can inhibit our spiritual development and can even be fatal.

The place which defines, more than anything else, our root system is the Word of God – the Bible. It is the book which leads us in the way of life and in which we find the truths which have impacted and transformed millions of people, yes even entire nations, through many generations. One can say it is God’s user manual for His creation.

This manual comes in two parts and it is usually the second part, the New Testament, which is frequently read by Christians more than the Old Testament. A recent poll by the American Bible Society showed that 12% of practicing Protestants believe that the Bible starts with the Gospels. And herein lies the challenge, as many Christians miss or sever themselves from the oldest part of their roots.

A Forgotten History
Paul’s letter to the church in Rome starts with an easily overlooked statement: “Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures...” (Romans 1:1–2).

The Gospel which he was called by God to preach was not a brand new revelation which caught humanity by surprise. On the contrary, it was already announced centuries before through the prophets of the Bible. In a way, Paul stated that if you want to find out about
The Bible Lands Museum in Jerusalem currently has on display a unique exhibit on the history of the Bible.

Entitled “The Book of Books” the exhibition contains rare ancient manuscripts of books contained in the canon of Scripture, as well as some of the earliest complete Bibles still existing. A working replica of the Guttenberg Bible printing press is also among the exhibition pieces. These historic items spanning 2000 years of history belong to the Green Family Collection and are destined for permanent display in a new Museum of the Bible which is now under construction on the Mall in Washington, DC, next to the Smithsonian museums. The Bible Lands Museum has been able to extend the stay of “The Book of Books” exhibition in Jerusalem until after the ICEJ’s Feast of Tabernacles celebration in Jerusalem from October 10-15, 2014 so that our Feast pilgrims can also view this remarkable tribute to the history of the Bible.

So if you are at the Feast or visiting Jerusalem anytime soon, make sure to stop by for a tour of this exhibit at the Bible Lands Museum, or visit their website at www.blmj.org/en
the Good News of Jesus it was already “promised beforehand” in the books of the Old Testament.

Too many Christians disregard the Old Testament. A reason why some prefer reading just the New Testament is often based on a skewed understanding of the character of God. “The God of the Old Testament is a God of judgment and wrath, while the God of the New Testament is one of love and compassion” they will say.

This misconception is not a new one; it is almost as old as the Church itself. In the second century, a man named Marcion arose as one of the earliest and most influential heretics within the Church. As the son of the Bishop Synope, he became a prominent teacher in the church in Rome between 144 and 152 AD. Marcion was strongly influenced by Gnostic teachings and believed that the Creator God of the Old Testament was actually the Demiurge, an evil Gnostic deity. Jesus, according to Marcion, came to liberate the world from the hands of this harsh and loveless Creator God.

His unique canon of Scriptures – one of the first in Church history – thus excluded all the books of the Old Testament. Even some of the New Testament books he excluded as being too “Jewish.” While he was eventually excommunicated from the church, his influence lasted far beyond his death. Marcionite churches still could be found until the 7th century, and many theologians hold that Marcion’s concept of a different character of God revealed in the Old and New Testaments is still prevalent today.

That, so early in Church history, a heretic like Marcion could exert such influence is astounding as we look at the nature of the Early Church. The only “Bible” available for the Church in the first century was the Old Testament. If Jesus or the Apostles wanted to prove and affirm their statements, they often used the phrase “it is written,” and by this they were referring of course solely to the Old Testament, as the New Testament was not yet written. More than 65 times in the New Testament either Jesus or the Apostles use the term “it is written,” in this very manner, to affirm the authority of their message.

The Use of Scriptures in the Early Church

For the early believers in Jesus, the doctrines of the Church had to be approved and confirmed by the writings of the Old Testament. A good example is the church in Berea. In the Book of Acts we read that this church was “noble” or “more fair-minded” than the church in Thessalonica because: “...they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11).

Luke not only commends the church in Berea for accepting Paul’s teaching with great joy, but that they also searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether the teaching of the Apostle was indeed in agreement with their Bible. Of course, they could not search the letters of Paul, the Gospels, or the Book of Revelation to affirm Paul’s doctrine – as they were not yet written. This means that if they could not find the teachings of Paul in the pages of the Old Testament, then they would not have accepted it. Many Christians today would probably call them legalistic or narrow-minded, but not Luke, the author of the Book of Acts. He commended them and described that attitude as being “more fair-minded.”

An interesting episode in the life of Jesus can be found in the Book of Luke. In the days after his death and resurrection, Jesus encountered a group of disciples on the way to Emmaus. Totally disillusioned, they described to him the events which had just taken place in Jerusalem. Their teacher, whom they believed to be the Messiah who would redeem Israel, was just crucified and rumors spread even about his resurrection. Jesus challenges them: “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Luke 24:27).

It is interesting to note that Jesus mentions Moses, the Prophets, and the Scriptures. It is these three components, which make up the acronym Tanach, the Hebrew word for the Old Testament. The first letter T stands for Torah, the middle letter N stands for Nevi’im, which means the Prophets, and the last letter CH1 stands for Kotvim, which represents all the writings of history, the Psalms and the books of wisdom. This means Jesus was preaching to them from the entire Old Testament the “things concerning Himself.”

The same can be said about the Apostle Paul. When in Rome talking to the Jewish leaders of the city, he “persuaded them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening” (Acts 28:23). This means that both Jesus and the Apostles could preach the Gospel from the writings of the Old Testament.

The Old Foreshadows the New

Many Christians today would struggle to preach the Gospel by just using the Old Testament. Yet not only the person of Jesus can be found throughout the Old Testament, but also all the main doctrines found in the New Testament are already established in the Old.

The sinfulness of all humanity and our need for redemption (Psalm 14:1-3; Jeremiah 17:9); the necessity of a sacrificial system to atone for sins (Exodus 30:10); the principle of baptism (Exodus 14, referenced in 1 Corinthians 10:2); the arrival of a Messiah who would be the Son of Man (Daniel 7:13), but also the son of God (2 Samuel 7:14); the promise of his resurrection (Psalm 16:10); the promise of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28); the promise that God would justify the Gentile nations (Isaiah 49:6); and many other New Testament truths can all be found in the Old Testament.

The understanding that God is a loving and compassionate Being who loves to forgive sins is introduced to us in the Old Testament (for example, Micah 7:18-20; Psalm 65:3).

At the same time, no book of the Bible speaks more clearly about God's
judgment on a rebellious humanity than the Book of Revelation. That is why Marcion the heretic removed the Book of Revelation from his canon. And many Christians might not know that it is Jesus who speaks more about hell than any other person in the Bible.

Therefore for us, the “whole counsel of God” can only be found in the Old and the New Testaments together. This means, of course, that we equally need to respect, honor, and study the New Testament. While Jesus might be hidden and needs to be searched for in the Old, he is open and clear in the New. Yet both parts of the Bible complement and explain each other.

The Old Testament sheds light on the New as the New Testament does on the Old. Why Jesus had to die on the cross for your sins is much better understood if we have a grasp of the sacrificial system in the Tabernacle and Temple. At the same time, it is a great blessing to read about the sacrificial laws of the Old Testament knowing that the ultimate sacrifice was offered by Jesus Himself.

Daniel and Ezekiel will enlighten for us the Book of Revelation and vice versa. The Book of Romans will become much clearer with a solid knowledge of the Old Testament, as Paul quotes from it more in this book than in any other epistle.

At the same time, the Book of Romans sheds light on some difficult passages of the Old Testament.

For the early Apostles, the Old Testament was the ultimate authority. When Matthew, Paul, James, Peter, and others wrote the books of the New Testament, they assuredly did not know that it would be considered “the Word of God” by future generations. But, they wrote with a great respect for the Old Testament. More than 300 direct quotations and more than 2000 allusions to the Old Testament can be found in the New Testament.

When Paul wrote to Timothy, a young Jewish believer starting out in ministry, he reminded him not to neglect “the Holy Scriptures which he learned from childhood.” Paul affirmed to him that they “are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness...” (2 Timothy 3:15–16).

It is the Word of God, both the Old and New Testaments, which represents our spiritual root system. There, we learn about the fathers of our faith, both those who looked ahead for the Savior and those who remembered being with him.

Back to Our Roots

In conclusion, let me encourage you to read and study the entire Bible on a daily basis. This is where our true roots are found. Make a practical commitment to read every day from both parts of the Word of God. The Bible is not just a book of doctrines, but it is the power of God to transform our lives (Hebrews 4:12). Paul compares it with an immersion bath, cleaning our hearts and minds (Ephesians 5:26). It is a light that gives us guidance (Psalm 119:105), and it even has the power to heal our bodies (Psalm 107:20).

And remember the roots of our faith do not just go back to the Book of Matthew, but they start at creation as recorded in the Book of Genesis. And our future lies in heaven, as described in Revelation, while all that is in between teaches us the way to get there.

There are many good reading plans which will take you through the whole Bible in one year. To be very practical, why don’t you commit to reading three chapters every day and four every Sunday? Doing so will take you through the entire Bible yearly. Choose the translation that you like most and start today. It will change your life just as it has mine and countless others.

Back to Our Roots
And every day, too!” Edna chimed in.

“All the Bnei Menashe flights are like this, with very moving human stories of people dreaming to come home to Israel and facing hardships along the way,” said Michael Freund, Director of Shavei Israel, who is spearheading the effort to bring them home. “In this group, there is also a woman seeing her brother and sister for the first time in 21 years.”

Another young lady described the mixed feelings of being reunited with family but separated from friends.

“I have my family with me, and my older siblings are already here,” said Rivka. “But I hope my friends that remained in India will be coming to Israel soon as well. I was very much looking forward to starting my new life in Israel. I’m very happy we are finally here!”

The Israeli cabinet allowed the Aliyah of the Bnei Menashe to resume in 2012 and over 680 have now arrived over the past 18 months on flights sponsored by the Christian Embassy. Another 500 are expected by the end of this year.

The Bnei Menashe, or “sons of Manasseh,” claim descent from one of the lost tribes of Israel. Their ancestors were exiled from the Land of Israel by the Assyrian Empire some 27 centuries ago and wandered throughout the Orient until they reached what is now northeast India, between Burma and Bangladesh. Despite their wanderings, they kept such traditions as honoring Shabbat and refusing to eat pork. Most of all, they kept alive their dream of one day returning to the land of their forefathers.

Based on such evidence, the Chief Rabbinate of Israel officially recognized the Bnei Menashe community as descendants of Israel a decade ago.

With the help of Christians worldwide, more than 2,200 Bnei Menashe are now living in Israel. But the 7,000 remaining in India are still waiting for their chance to come. There are more families separated by time and distance, longing to reunite in Israel. But they need our help!

The Bnei Menashe are being drawn back to the Land of Israel yet they have little means to make it here on their own. The cost and great distance involved are beyond their means. For $1,000 (or €750), you can sponsor the flights home for a member of a Bnei Menashe family.

Isaiah 43:6 commands us to: “Bring My sons from afar, and My daughters from the ends of the earth.”

So, Christians everywhere need to become part of this historic, prophetic return of the sons of Israel from the East. Give today to the ICEJ’s Aliyah operations to bring more Bnei Menashe home. ☺️
THE CHALLENGE OF ALIYAH

ICEJ on pace to bring more than 1,000 Jews to Israel this year

FOR SEVERAL REASONS, Aliyah to Israel is on the rise in 2014 and the ICEJ is currently engaged in several exciting initiatives to bring Jews home from around the world. In fact, we are on course to help bring more than 1,000 Jewish immigrants to Israel this year. But we need your help to see this through.

Bnei Menashe
The ICEJ was thrilled to welcome home another wave of 250 Bnei Menashe from India in recent weeks. We expect another two groups totalling 500 more newcomers by the end of the year. Our commitment in covering their flights and other travel costs is around $1000 per person. The challenge is therefore before us to raise $500,000 by December for these upcoming Bnei Menashe flights.

Ukrainian Jews
The Jewish Agency for Israel approached the ICEJ in April with an urgent request for funding to assist with a sudden increase in Jews making Aliyah from Ukraine due to the national crisis there. The number of Jews leaving Ukraine for Israel could quadruple by year’s end. The funds we are raising will be used to cover a range of flight-related costs as well as assist with their absorption needs once in Israel.

French Jews
The ICEJ also would like to help sponsor a flight of French Jews making Aliyah later this summer. Due to rising anti-Semitism, Muslim agitation and economic woes in France, the number of French Jews interested in moving to Israel is growing quickly. With your help, we can bring more French Jews home this summer.

All of these Jewish communities need our assistance. By giving to our Aliyah efforts right now, you can help bring the sons and daughters of Israel home from the north, east, south, and west.

DONATE TO OUR ALIYAH FUND TODAY AT:
www.icejusa.org/aid/aliyah
EARLY IN HIS CAREER, Marcos was selected to play for the Brazilian national under-23 soccer team. Today, he is also the pastor of a church and serves as the national director of ICEJ-Slovenia.

He was accompanied by Rafael Rodrigues, a Brazilian fitness coach and brother of Roger Rodrigues da Silva, who in 2008 won the Brazilian Cup with his team, Sport Club do Recife.

As the camp kick-off neared, Baptist Pastor, Steven Khoury, of the local partner Holy Land Missions, was excited about what ICEJ Arise was bringing to Arab youngsters in his historic hometown.

“What Arise is doing is extremely important! You are building a relationship with these young kids and with the local church,” explained Khoury. “They have been talking about the camp for over two weeks and they did their homework by Googling everything they could about Marcos Tavares.”

“We could have had 3000 people at the camp, but we had to reduce it to only 60 in order to make it more effective and fun for the participants. But who knows, there might be a future Marcos Tavares among these kids,” he added.
There were two training sessions each day, which started with warm-ups and then drills to teach a range of new techniques. These were all led by Marcos, Rafael, and Arise Director, Jani Salokangas, who is also a competitive athlete. Each practice ended with the boys dividing into teams to play one another, and needless to say, the team with Marcos was the most popular.

The youngsters were so thrilled with the camp that their faces looked like Christmas had come early to Bethlehem this year.

During a break, an enthusiastic boy named Haman said that thanks to Marcos, he had learned several important new lessons in the sport. Florentino, 12, said he woke up very early that morning in order to be on time for camp and even set out his play clothes the night before, just to be ready.

Many excited parents also stayed around when they dropped off their children to get a glimpse of their kids playing with a professional soccer player. On the sidelines we met Doha, a father from a nearby Muslim village whose two boys were in the camp. He often attends practice to see his children play, because when he sees the joy in their eyes it makes him happy as well.

“I’m the only bread winner in my family, and with seven children it is sometimes hard making ends meet, buying new shoes, soccer clothes, and even paying for the transportation in order to attend the training. Yet despite the expenses it is all worth it, as I want my children to be happy,” he said assuredly.

The camp ended with a closing ceremony where prizes were handed out to the best players, and Marcos shared his testimony with all the participants.

Marcos spoke about his journey from a childhood filled with severe poverty in Brazil, his love for soccer, marrying his wife Leticia, the start of his international career in Malaysia, and then his encounter with Jesus, which dramatically changed his life. Marcos added that “he was happy to be in Bethlehem and that seeing the children reminded him of his own youth.”

“My family was poor. I didn’t even have a bed to sleep in; I had to sleep on the floor,” he said. “Some days all we ate were biscuits and bread. We could only afford one coke a week, which we drank on Sundays.

“I didn’t have any shoes and played soccer barefoot until my career took off at age 14, which finally started bringing in more money. But over the years, as the fame and money grew, so did the alcohol and women, which led to depression.”

At one point, Marcos even considered abandoning soccer, but thanks to support from his wife he continued.

As he shared his testimony, over 60 young boys and their parents sat captivated by his story, especially the part about one day meeting a man who changed his life forever.

“My training got better! My relationship with my wife got better! I was transferred to Europe and to the best club in Slovenia, where I started to score goals.”

Today, Marcos is the number one scorer in the history of the club, with over 119 goals.

“My life was very bad, but I met someone who changed it. I dreamed about being a soccer player but I had no real power to do it. But this man gave me power and reassured me that I could do it. I could have been dead or in prison, but here I am today because of him. And his name is Jesus Christ! He gave me hope and a better life.

“You are looking at a professional soccer player not because I had a good agent, but because I have Jesus Christ,” he concluded.

Jani Salokangas and Steven Khoury then shared their thoughts on the weekend. Jani spoke about the importance of being a good person both on and off the field. He also shared on the unifying power of soccer, where the color of your skin or background does not matter.

Finally, Pastor Khoury thanked Marcos and ICEJ Arise for bringing such joy to the youngsters of Bethlehem. He said that the soccer camp will go down as the first-of-its-kind for his town, and that photos of the sporting event had already gone viral all over Facebook.

Every participant returned home with a souvenir t-shirt adorned with the logo of the Arise Soccer Camp. The four best players also received a trophy, an official NK Maribor jersey, and a cap signed by Marcos.

The prize for “Most Valuable Player” went to 14-year old Mashdi, who said that the best lesson he learned was the importance of fair play. Like so many of the youngsters, Mashdi also said that he dreams of becoming a professional soccer player just like Marcos.
After more than two weeks of an intensive, desperate search that held the attention of the entire nation of Israel, IDF troops finally located the bodies of the three Jewish teenagers kidnapped by Hamas terrorists in mid-June. Many in Israel and around the world were earnestly praying for their safe return, but it turned out that the young men were murdered by their abductors not long after they were seized while on their way home from school at night.

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem joins in mourning the loss of these three young yeshiva students: Gil-Ad Shaer (16 years old), Eyal Yifrah (19), and Naftali Fraenkel (16).

We are urging all our following to unite with us in prayer for the families of these teens and for the people of Israel as they bear the sorrow of this moment. The July prayer focus of our Isaiah 62 Global Prayer Campaign also will be centered on the days and important decisions ahead as the nation and its leaders deal with the aftermath of this tragedy.

Hamas and other terrorist groups are constantly trying to kidnap Israelis to either murder them or hold them for ransom to free Palestinians convicted of murder and other violent crimes. Thankfully, the majority of such attempts have been thwarted. But the terrorists view the seizure and death of these yeshiva students as a successful operation, which means Israel has to raise its guard higher and find a way to deter it from happening again.

So join us every Wednesday in July in earnest prayer before the Lord God to watch over the people of Israel as they stand on the front lines every day in the battle against Islamic terrorism.

1) Pray for the families and close friends of the three slain Israeli yeshiva students Gilad, Eyal and Naftali, for courage, strength, comfort and abiding faith in God during this time of loss and mourning.

2) Pray for Israel’s leaders as they deliberate on what courses of action to take to defend the nation from terrorism and deter Israel’s enemies from trying to strike again in this same cruel manner.

3) Pray for the Israeli security forces and police authorities as they maintain a constant vigil against such evil and violence.

4) Pray for the capture of those involved in this kidnapping operation, both those who ordered and planned it and those who carried it out.

5) Pray that the Palestinian people will finally choose the path of peace with Israel. Pray that Israel’s enemies would repent from their hatred and violence and would open their hearts to the Lord God.

IN MEMORY OF GILAD, EYAL AND NAFTALI
The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem joined with the Knesset Christian Allies Caucus and the World Jewish Congress in late May to help open pro-Israel caucuses in the parliaments of Latvia and Estonia.

ICEJ Media Director, David Parsons, traveled to the Baltic states with officials from the Knesset and the World Jewish Congress to meet with local parliamentarians and church leaders. The Israeli delegation included Deputy Knesset Speaker, Gila Gamliel; KCAC Director, Josh Reinstein; and WJC-Israel Chairman, Shai Hermesh, also a former Knesset member.

The Israeli delegation first visited Riga, where ICEJ-Latvia National Director, Ilze Saulites, arranged meetings with members of parliament and national church leaders. MP Inga Bite, a pro-Israel Christian, was installed as chairwoman of the new Israel Allies Caucus in the Latvian parliament. Israel’s ambassador, Hagit Ben-Yaakov, then hosted a reception which included senior clerics from the Catholic, Lutheran, Orthodox, and Evangelical churches, as well as Jewish community leaders.

The group then moved on to Tallinn, where ICEJ-Estonia National Director, Peeter Vosu, also had meetings lined up with parliamentarians, Israeli Ambassador, Dan Ashbel, and local Christian and Jewish leaders. The Israeli delegation was able to engage with a cabinet minister and four MPs, including the deputy speaker of the Estonian parliament.

When MP Sim Kissler was appointed chairman of the new Israel Allies Caucus in the Estonian parliament, this brought to 30 the number of countries that now have such pro-Israel caucuses, which work to mobilize support for the Jewish state and people.

“Although Israel is always at a disadvantage in international forums like the United Nations because of pressure from Arab states, our ability to garner support for Israel in individual countries through the establishment of 30 parliamentary caucuses for Israel is unprecedented,” Reinstein remarked.

In both Riga and Tallinn, members of the Israeli delegation also were invited to speak at large pro-Israel rallies in local churches, with hundreds of people attending each event.

Parsons noted that many view the Baltic states as a common bloc, but he found that each nation has its own unique history and culture. For instance, most of the Jewish community in Latvia were killed during the Holocaust, often by local Christians. But in Estonia, most Jews were able to flee to safety and survived the Shoah.

“I was very encouraged by the level of support for Israel and the Jewish people we encountered among the parliamentarians and church leaders in Latvia and Estonia,” said Parsons. “Even the Catholic, Lutheran, and Orthodox bishops were keenly aware of the dangers of resurgent anti-Semitism in Europe and were determined to combat it.”
NEW LEADER FOR ICEJ-NORWAY

BY DAVID PARSONS

ONE OF THE KEY FIGURES in the global leadership of the International Christian Embassy over the past three decades has been ICEJ-Norway National Director, Leif Wellerop, who also served for ten years as Chairman of the International Board of Trustees. Through his tireless efforts, Leif has had a tremendous impact on Norway’s lively national debate over Israel-related issues, as well as on the direction and growth of the Christian Embassy worldwide.

In June, Leif handed over the reins of ICEJ-Norway to his Deputy, Rev. Dag Øyvind Juliussen, who has been working with the Norwegian branch since 1996.

Dag has had an interest in Israel since his teenage years, and began pursuing that calling with prayer and fasting around 20 years ago. He heard the Lord speak clearly that he was to get involved with the work of the ICEJ, beginning with a large rally he organized with the participation of 40 churches from all around his region of Norway.

"I wondered what our church could do to bless Israel, beyond just saying ‘shalom.’ It took a lot of faith to rent the main hall in town and to invite the Israeli ambassador from Oslo," Dag recently recalled. "But when I saw that the place was packed, the Holy Spirit whispered in my heart, ‘This is just the beginning!’ And I’ve been vested in Israel ever since."

He soon became an assistant pastor in his church as well as a part-time staff member of ICEJ-Norway. Since 2006, he has been full-time with the ICEJ, producing around 500 radio programs. And in more recent years some 50 TV programs about Israel and the Christian Embassy. He has preached and taught in churches and Bible schools both in Norway and around the world, while also engaging in public debates and writing articles about Israel and the Middle East for national newspapers.

"Leif has done a great work over these many years building up the Norwegian branch of ICEJ," Dag noted. "Norway is considered to have one of the most anti-Israel press corps in the free world, and yet despite this, today there are tens of thousands of Christians standing with Israel in Norway. There is no doubt that Leif has had a strong impact on awakening these believers to the unique calling of Israel."
"The contributions of Leif Wellerop to the work and ministry of the Christian Embassy over recent decades have been enormous," said Dr. Jürgen Bühler, ICEJ’s Executive Director. "He has helped to provide vision and stability, which has enabled us to grow in areas far beyond the borders of his native Norway. We especially see his imprint reflected in humanitarian projects and in lives all across Israel. And we are grateful that he still has a fire for Zion and will continue working with the ICEJ team in years to come."
There are times in the lives of all believers when they may face doubts and discouragement. No matter what the reason for one’s disappointment, the Bible offers guidance as well as examples of others who have experienced the same. But today, we can find considerable encouragement not just in the biblical stories of the Israelites of old, but in the story of God’s faithfulness to His people throughout history, even up until today.

The Faith of Our Fathers
The Puritans were so encouraged by the story of the ancient Israelites that they took from it direction for themselves. They yearned for freedom from their “bondage” of persecution at the hands of the corrupt state church, just as the ancient Israelites had been freed from slavery in Egypt. So, the Puritans crossed their “Red Sea,” which was the Atlantic Ocean, and arrived on the shores of their “Promised Land,” upon which they founded a nation built on religious freedom.

Later, the African slaves in America also found great comfort in the Bible stories as they saw parallels to their own experiences. They felt their enslavement was much like that of the Hebrews in Egypt, and their exile and captivity like that of the Jews in Babylon. Therefore, the stories of Daniel and Moses gave them great hope of deliverance so they sang songs like “Didn’t my Lord deliver Daniel” and “Go Down Moses.” Their hope of freedom was expressed in the black spiritual “Pharaoh’s Army Got Drowned.”

God’s Faithfulness to Abraham
The 11th chapter of Hebrews highlights various biblical characters who believed God and acted accordingly, and it has brought encouragement to believers for generations. The Apostle Paul urged the discouraged believers of the early church to learn from their fathers who, with faith and patience, inherited the promises (Hebrews 6:11-12). He then specifically pointed to Abraham as an example of one who patiently endured until he obtained the promise.

Paul’s message is clear - God is a faithful God. Just as He fulfilled His promises to Abraham, we can trust Him to fulfill His promises to us. We receive strength and courage from the stories of those who went before us and who patiently endured in faith before they saw the promises fulfilled.

But let’s take a closer look at Abraham. While Abraham did live to see the fulfillment of God’s promise of offspring, other promises had not yet been fulfilled when he died. For one thing, Abraham lived as a foreigner on the land God promised him. It did not become the “possession” of His descendants until some five hundred years after his death.

God had also promised Abraham that through him all the families of the earth would be blessed. That fulfillment only took place some 1,500 years later when the atoning death of Jesus purchased salvation for every person who would receive it.

God is Still Fulfilling Promises
God is still fulfilling His promises to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and that realization should bring great encouragement to all of us. For, just as God promised Abraham that his descendants’ possession of the Promised Land was forever (Genesis 17:8), He later explained that their right to live on the land was based on their relationship with Him (Deuteronomy 29:24-28). It is truly a holy land for a holy people.

If they sinned, their sin would be punished with exile; they would be removed from the land God had given them. But God always promised a return to their land, and the spiritual restoration of His people. Psalm 89 confirms that although He would punish their sin, His loving kindness would never be withheld, nor would His faithfulness ever fail. “My covenant I will not break, Nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips” (vs. 34). Israel’s promised inheritance and restored relationship with God was a sure thing.

Christians should find great comfort in knowing that although God allows His children to suffer the consequences of sin, using that time to teach us and correct our ways, that we can have an expectant hope of return to His presence and His goodness in our lives!

So, in times of discouragement and doubt, remember the return of the Jewish people to the land God promised to Abraham, exactly as foretold by the Hebrew prophets thousands of years ago. We can find hope in this amazing demonstration of the faithfulness of God.

Susan Michael is the US Director of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem.
JOIN US IN JERUSALEM FOR A LIFE-CHANGING PASTORS & LEADERS CONFERENCE!

JANUARY 26 - 29

JERUSALEM
ANNUAL CHRISTIAN SOLIDARITY EVENT
The US Branch of the ICEJ once again served on the Host Committee for the 13th Annual Israel Solidarity Event at the Israeli Embassy in Washington, D.C. on May 1st. In his opening remarks, Israeli Ambassador Ron Dermer addressed the Evangelical leaders in attendance. “To be Israel’s Ambassador to America is to be the Ambassador to the friendliest country on earth to Israel.... And the anchor of support for that friendship in America is you.”

Keynote speaker, Rev. Franklin Graham, then said, “I support Israel not only because I worship a Jew but because of what the Bible says about Israel and the future of Israel.... Mr. Ambassador, we love Israel, and we love you, and we thank God for your country. And I can’t speak for Evangelicals, but I can just say for me, I’m going to support Israel.”

ICEJ USA LEADERSHIP MEETINGS
The US Branch held annual Board and Leadership meetings in Murfreesboro, TN in late May attended by some 75 participants from across the country. The meetings included general ministry updates, project reports, teaching by Rev. Malcolm Hedding and Pastor Allen Jackson, as well as private events for donors followed by a beautiful commitment banquet.

Many expressed excitement over the expansion of the ministry in the US, as well as the caliber of projects and outreaches in Israel. Next year’s meetings will be held in conjunction with an ICEJ conference the weekend of June 12-14, 2015.

EXPANDING IN CALIFORNIA
In addition to numerous speaking engagements and seminars this Spring, US Branch Director, Susan Michael, was excited to present the Discerning the Times seminar at The Rock Church in Anaheim. She has been invited back for an even larger event, and other meetings are being planned in both northern and southern California this year.

PASTOR JACK HAYFORD
Susan Michael also met with Pastor Jack Hayford and expressed the ICEJ’s gratitude for his many years supporting Israel upon the occasion of his 80th birthday and celebration of 60 years of ministry. He expressed his desire to work more closely with the ICEJ in the US.

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

WWW.ICEJUSA.ORG/EVENTS
Join the Isaiah 62 Movement

www.icejusa.org/Isaiah62_pledge

www.icejusa.org/Isaiah-62-prayer-group

We now have over 60 Isaiah 62 prayer groups in 25 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

Isaiah 62 Prayer Groups in the USA

Help us get all 50 states praying for Israel!

ICEJ

www.icejusa.org/Isaiah-62-prayer-group
This year’s features

**OPENING DESERT CELEBRATION**
at the fabulous Ein Gedi oasis along the shores of the Dead Sea!

**COMMUNION WITH BELIEVERS**
from around the world at the inspirational Garden Tomb!

**MORNING SEMINARS & EVENING CELEBRATIONS**
at the brand new Jerusalem Arena!

**THE POPULAR JERUSALEM MARCH**
through the streets of the Israeli capital!

**PRAYER VIGIL BESIDE THE TEMPLE**
Mount in the historic Ophel archaeological park!

**BELIEVERS FROM MANY NATIONS**
gathering together to bless the nation of Israel!

The Feast of Tabernacles is your “appointed time” to be here in Jerusalem for this unique and colorful celebration. So join fellow believers from more than 100 nations as we come together to worship the Lord, to hear powerful preaching of the Word of God, and to bless the people of Israel!

**REGISTER TODAY FOR THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES BY VISITING:**
http://feast.icej.org/register