

The Power of the Cross

A Simple Symbol, Yet a Mighty Demonstration of the Character of God

Dr. Jürgen Bühler
ICEJ Executive Director

“God did not wait for the human race to improve before He decided to offer the incredible redemptive gift of His son. He did so when we were hopelessly lost and in open rebellion against Him.”

No matter how noble the cause, would any among us consider giving up our children for it? No, family comes first! And of course, this is our first realm of responsibility as good parents. But this was not the case with God. He was willing to give His Son, not to redeem a noble company of saints, but Jesus died for wretched sinners like you and me.

This is the exciting news; God did not wait for the human race to improve before He decided to offer the incredible redemptive gift of His Son. He did so while humanity was hopelessly lost and in open rebellion against Him. This love was not deserved and it remains beyond our understanding. This also gives us hope. Paul uses that very truth to assure the status of the believer. If God was willing to offer the incredible gift of the death of His only Son while we were still sinners, Paul urges us to consider how much more will He now give us everything as His children. God will never come to a point that He is finished with you.

A Demonstration of God’s Love

At Calvary we see more than anywhere else the character of God. Paul declares: “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8) If there is one place where God’s love can be seen and understood best, it is at the foot of the Cross. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.”

During the Passover season each year, we are reminded of the most powerful event which ever took place in human history. At exactly the moment when thousands of Passover lambs were being slaughtered in the Temple in Jerusalem, Jesus – the Lamb of God – died on the Cross and carried away the sins of the world. This perfect fulfillment of the Paschal sacrifice on a Roman cross outside the city walls of Jerusalem has become the primary symbol of Christianity.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth that if he had to condense the Christian faith into one single message, it would be the message of the cross of Christ. When visiting the church in Corinth, he was “determined not to know anything... except Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2). For all eternity, the Cross declares an eternal and powerful message to the world.

The Cross is a mighty demonstration of God’s character...
The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem

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’s United States Branch is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with offices in Washington, D.C. and in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. We are a non-denominational faith ministry supported by the voluntary contributions of our members and friends.

We invite you to join with us as we minister to Israel and the Jewish people worldwide by using the enclosed response card to make your donation to the ongoing work and witness of the ICEJ.

Please mail all donations to:
PO Box 440276
Nashville, TN 37244

Or make your tax-deductible gift online:
www.icejusa.org

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June 28th - July 8th, 2012 (Ages 18-35)
A life-changing opportunity for young adults to gain a biblical perspective on the Mid East and participate in ‘hands on’ service projects.
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UPCOMING ICEJ SPEAKING EVENTS

Franklin, TN
Nashville Days of Remembrance
Holocaust Day Symposium
Sunday April 15th: 4pm-7.30pm
Rolling Hills Community Church
The WareHouse, 1810 Columbia Ave.
Malcolm Hedding, Annette Lantos,
Dr. Katrina Swett, Michael Hines et al.

South Jersey
Teresa Simila
Weds. April 18th: 7pm
Praise Tabernacle, EHT, NJ
Fri. April 20th: 9am-12pm
Atlantic Christian School, EHT, NJ
Sunday April 22nd: 7pm
River of Life, Blackwood, NJ

Washington, DC
Susan Michael
Friday April 20th: 9am
‘His Presence, His Fire Conference’
Madison Hotel, 1177 15th St. NW.
Conference Registration Required

Alden, NY
Discerning the Times
Saturday April 28th: 9am
Grace In Community Church
11269 Broadway Street
Susan Michael & Mike Mott

Sebastian, FL
Understanding Israel
Saturday May 5th: 9am
River Church
11205 Roseland Road
Larry Booth & John Small

Murfreesboro, TN
Israel, the Church & the Nations
May 19th-20th
World Outreach Church
1921 New Salem Hwy
Featuring Malcolm Hedding; Eric Metaxas and Allen Jackson

Yorba-Linda, CA
Israel: The Elusive Peace
May 25th-27th
Richfield Community Church
5320 Richfield Road
George Giacumakis, Malcolm Hedding; Susan Michael & Deby Brown

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO INVITE AN ICEJ SPEAKER OR SEMINAR TO YOUR CHURCH CALL: (615) 895-9830

www.icejusa.org/events
He literally is willing to do whatever it takes to finish the good work He started in you (Romans 8:32, Philippians 1:6). So never give up on yourself!

A Demonstration of Righteousness

The Cross also demonstrates God’s righteousness. “Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed…” (Romans 3:25)

The Cross is a powerful display of the righteousness of God. The German theologian Erich Sauer wrote: “All the patience of the past was only possible in foresight of the Cross and all grace of the future is justified in hindsight of the Cross.” It is there at the Cross where every single righteous requirement of God is being met. It is only at the Cross where God’s righteousness can become our very own righteousness. It is this glorious exchange at the Cross which allows us to enter freely into the presence of God, knowing that all our sins past, present or future are being met by the grace of God.

The Exaltation of Jesus

It was the unconditional obedience of Jesus to his heavenly Father which exalted him above all measure. When Jesus is introduced by John in the first chapter of his Gospel, the Apostle sees “the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father” (John 1:18; see also Proverbs 8:35-37). After the Cross, Jesus returned to his Father, yet not to His bosom but “after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God,” with “angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him” (Hebrews 1:12; 1 Peter 3:22). What an exaltation!

Paul described this in the following way: “He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore, God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:8-11)

This does not mean that Jesus through the Cross attained a more divine nature or a higher heavenly status. He already was the all-powerful Creator (John 1:3). Yet the Cross has earned Him that glorious name of Jesus which is worthy of all our praise and adoration forever.

The Transformation of Humanity

The great impact of the Cross on the human race is that it is not just a means to avoid punishment and hell. Jesus did not die to just save the sinner from certain death (even though this would have been reason enough to thank God for all eternity). Rather, the Cross delivers to us something far greater. The death and resurrection of Christ make us part of God’s eternal family! When Jesus died on the Cross, an incredible exchange of identity took place.

It is not only Jesus who died on Calvary, but everyone who places their faith in his hands died with Christ and is resurrected to a new identity (Romans 6:6). Or as Jesus put it, we are “born again” (John 3:3). And once this transformation takes place, our new identity is that of a son or daughter of God. Jesus brings us into such an intimate relationship with the Father that we can call him “Abba” (Romans 8:15). Jesus has become our all-powerful elder brother and he himself “is not ashamed to call [us his] brethren!” (Hebrews 2:11)

We have become co-heirs with Jesus and one day we will rule and reign with him! What a wonderful redemption!

Therefore let us rise up from all our lethargy. The Cross has become our victory for today and the gateway to a triumphant future. Let us live according to that glorious destination and let us give thanks to God for His saving love!

Dr. Jürgen Bühler serves as the Executive Director of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem and has lived in Israel since 1994. He currently resides in Jerusalem with his wife Vesna and their four children.
born there. But after a painful divorce, mother and daughter came back home to be with their extended family.

"In Europe I have nobody, I am alone there. My family lives here," said Nisreen.

Israel has a policy of confiscating the residency permits of Arabs in eastern Jerusalem if they live for more than seven consecutive years abroad, a measure which has put Nisreen and her daughter in a difficult spot. They could not return to Jerusalem, but the Palestinian Authority also said they were not eligible to receive an identity document to live in Bethlehem, as they were from Jerusalem.

With no legal status or identity papers, they could not be employed. Both would be glad to work but are repeatedly turned down for job interviews. Moreover, Nisreen is afraid that she will be deported and sent back to Europe if she is held at a checkpoint.

"I would like to work so much, to help people, pray with them and study the Bible," said Nisreen. "But I feel suffocated here. I can’t work. I can’t go out. It is hard, very hard."

She has a servant’s heart, but her freedom of movement is restricted.
due to these complications and she rarely leaves her house except for church events.

Mother and daughter were grateful to be chosen for the new aid project. “This will help us much. It comes at the right time,” Nisreen said thankfully. “We have everything in the house but we need money for food and to pay bills.”

“In spite of my hardship, I feel the hand of the Lord on me. I don’t know how, but God is providing. I sometimes even have money in my purse and I don’t know where it comes from. I know the Lord is with me and He helps me a lot,” Nisreen assured.

When she speaks about her faith in God, her eyes shine.

“I don’t want people to feel sorry for me. I thank God for everything! Through the church, I have become stronger in my faith. I experience the Lord more and I understand Him more.”

“I can do everything through Him who gives me strength,” she declared, citing a favorite passage from Philippians 4:13.

Maryam will be another recipient of the new aid project. The 61 year-old lady welcomed the ICEJ team with a bright smile and a friendly hug. In spite of difficult circumstances, her joy and faith are evident.

When her mother became sick, Maryam had to quit work to take care of her. Yet since her parents died 13 years ago, Maryam has not been able to find a new job and is living alone in her family’s house. Though she has three brothers also living in Bethlehem, relations have not been easy as they have tried to evict her out of the family house.

“Because I have Jesus at my side, they couldn’t take my house,” explained Maryam. “The Lord touched my heart with the verse John 3:16 and I walk with the Lord.”

In beautiful Arab calligraphy, this verse hangs in a frame in her living room. She has a heart for her neighbors, most from traditional Christian backgrounds, and she likes to share about the Lord with them. However, she revealed one of her deep sorrows.

“They all like me, but they don’t like me to talk about Jesus,” she said.

Maryam has managed a meager income by renting a room in her house. But she added that “the Lord sends me money and sometimes I don’t know how, but he helps me.” When Aisha told her, that she is chosen to participate in the food program, Maryam was thrilled.

“It will help me a lot because I don’t have much income,” she said while turning to ask Aisha: “Can I also buy vegetables and fruit with it?”

When told “yes,” Maryam smiled: “Excellent!” Because of diabetes and high blood pressure, she also needs medication.

“If I have money and the clinic has it in stock, I buy medication. If not, I don’t buy it.”

Maryam rarely leaves the house except when she is picked up for church events. More than once she has fallen, breaking a leg on one occasion and her right hand on another.

Aisha is glad to help with coordinating the project. “For me the focus is to help people,” she said. “We local Christians are concerned about those in need and we hope for peace. Everybody hopes for peace!”

Please help us support needy Christian families like these in Bethlehem and Beit Jallah. A one-time or monthly gift of $100 to ICEJ AID will provide essential aid for families struggling to survive. Please designate your giving as “aid for Arab Christians.” Your gift will let them know that they are not forgotten and your prayers are much appreciated as well.

Birte Scholz is a member of the ICEJ Media Team in Jerusalem. To support the work of ICEJ AID go to: www.icejusa.org/aid

BELIEVERS IN BETHLEHEM:
Arab Christians worshipping in a Church in Bethlehem. The Community has dwindled in recent years and many are in need.

ABOVE LEFT:
Crosses & minarets dominate the ancient Bethlehem skyline (AP Photos)
In 2011, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem helped to bring 2,974 Jews home to Israel, representing about 15% of the total worldwide Aliyah.

This figure includes our support for the Red Carpet program, which helped bring 1,811 Jews home from Europe, Britain, South Africa, Latin America, Australia and the Middle East.

The final Red Carpet flight for 2011 arrived in December, bringing 235 immigrants just in time for Hanukkah celebrations. They went straight from the airport to the Ramada Hotel in Jerusalem for an overnight stay. The next day, the Red Carpet arrivals enjoyed an Aliyah Fair, where representatives of dozens of organizations – local authorities, companies, and service providers – presented information about housing, jobs, schools, banking, insurance, health care, language classes, and absorption programs.

Through this program, the ICEJ will be able to assist many more Jews who will be making Aliyah in 2012, including those who have been affected by the Euro crisis and the resulting wave of anti-Semitism. (It seems Jews are always blamed for money woes!)

In 2011, there were some areas where Aliyah increased sharply. In Holland, for instance, the rate of return to Israel rose 32% due to anti-Semitism by Muslim, leftist and rightist elements. France and Sweden also have experienced recent Aliyah increases due to similar factors.

In southern Europe, the Euro crisis is also pushing Aliyah and causing a frightening rise in anti-Semitism. Spain and Portugal saw a 54% increase over the previous year in Jewish immigration to Israel.

Hungary is also experiencing serious financial problems and a resulting rise in anti-Semitism which has caused Aliyah to increase 25% in 2011.

Aliyah from Middle East countries increased 29% due to the Arab revolutions and a very serious wave of Jew-hatred.
Nearly half of all Jews in Venezuela have left the country and some are making Aliyah through neighboring Colombia, whose own Aliyah has also increased by 86%.

With your prayers and support, we will be able to help Jewish families streaming into Israel from all these troubled areas around the world.

ICEJ’s Aliyah focus in 2012 also includes the remaining Jews in Ethiopia and the Bnei Menashe community in India. In 2011, another 2,666 Ethiopians made Aliyah, up 62% from 2010. Meanwhile, the 7,000 Bnei Menashe are currently awaiting final government approval for their return.

More recently, ICEJ has begun a new campaign to promote Aliyah programs through social media such as Facebook, knowing that young people are the future of Israel.

ICEJ ‘fishermen’ are able to make contact with more than 500 young Jewish people per day through social media. We plan to expand this program to North America this year.

After recently launching his personal Facebook page, Israel’s President Shimon Peres commented that Jews are “People of the Book and also people of the Facebook!”

For the past two years, Israeli officials have been focusing on young Jews in the Diaspora, to teach them how to fight anti-Semitism and to bring them to Israel to visit or for short-term volunteers programs which lead them to eventually settle here.

It is important that Christians from the nations play their role in helping gather the remnant of Israel. Many thanks for your ongoing prayers and support. Together we continue to bring the exiles home!

Support the ICEJ’s ongoing efforts to bring the Jewish people home from the four corners of the world!

www.icejusa.org/aid/aliyah

The Druze of Maghar
ICEJ AID Project Update - By Estera Wieja

Today, there are about 100,000 Druze citizens in Israel, with thousands of them serving in the Israeli army. Though classified as Arabs, the Druze are a uniquely independent community while also making important contributions to the nation as a whole.

ICEJ AID has assisted several Druze schools in the Galilee by purchasing computers, desks, headphones and books for their classrooms. The computers improve discipline and help children with short attention spans to keep up with their peers.

One of those schools is in Maghar, a town with a Druze majority (57%), with the rest Arab Christians and Muslims. Most of the Druze residents serve in the IDF and Israeli police and recently a new neighborhood was built for discharged soldiers.

“In taking care of the soldiers, we need to take care of what is important to them – their parents, families, their children. That’s the only way to raise another generation of loyal citizens,” the local school principal said.

Exchange programs are organized with schools in other cities to teach the children about their Jewish, Christian and Muslim neighbors.

“It means a lot to us that you Christians support us,” the principal added. “I did not choose to be Druze, but I am one... The support we receive from Christians through ICEJ AID teaches our children what it means practically to accept others.”

ICEJ AID also reaches those in need in the Druze town of Hurfeish, located over 2,200 feet high overlooking the border with Lebanon. Here, the ICEJ partners with a school that has a special environmental project where children learn how to preserve water resources that are so important to this region.

Above the front door of the school flutters a beautiful large Israeli flag. The school is a second home to 370 students and 44 teachers, a number of them Christians.

“We are touched that Christians around the world choose to support the education of the Druze,” assured the president of the parent’s council.

Support ICEJ Aid Projects in Israel
www.icejusa.org/aid
2012 Spring Teaching Conference
*May 19-20, Murfreesboro TN

Rev. Malcolm Hedding: Bible teacher, former ICEJ Executive Director
Eric Metaxas: Bestselling biographer of Bonhoeffer & Wilberforce
Pastor Allen Jackson: World Outreach Church, Murfreesboro TN

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*Schedule to be finalized. Check website for details.

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