ALIYAH
HELP JEWS FLEEING VIOLENCE IN FRANCE

THE MIRACLE OF ALIYAH

CHRISTIAN EMBASSY FUNDS MAJOR RENOVATIONS AT GALILEE ORPHANAGE
Letter from the Director

Dear friends,

Just a few days ago we concluded our annual National Directors’ Conference, with some 80 of our ministry leaders participating from Israel and more than 30 other nations worldwide. The theme which God placed upon our hearts for this gathering was “A New Season of Growth!” God challenged us to expect and work for growth and expansion, as good and faithful servants of the Lord (Matthew 25:21). Otherwise, a plant which does not grow and produce fruit is destined for extinction.

God dealt with all of us in a powerful manner and we all left the conference with a new sense of calling and urgency. We are thankful to God that we could see even in the last year the beginnings of a new season of growth and many new opportunities for increasing our reach and impact both here in Israel and abroad. We all feel that God is doing something new and exciting here in the land, in our ministry and around the world. But He also challenged us that in this new season, the Lord wants our entire hearts set on Him.

The growth we expect is not only financial increase or expansion of ministry, but most importantly it needs to be accompanied by spiritual growth. One of the most exciting developments in the past two years has been the increased dedication of all our staff to prayer and fasting. We can clearly see that as we grow our spiritual roots, the entire tree is growing.

I want to invite you personally to partner with us in this new season of growth. Join us in our calling, in our prayers, and in our support for Israel. The work is great but few are those who labour in it. Join hands with us today as we stand together with Israel in this new season!

Your co-labourer in Christ,

Dr. Jürgen Bühler
ICEJ Executive Director
The ICEJ is represented internationally through its branch network in over 70 nations of the world. These branches have contacts with church leaders and movements in their nations.

Throughout the year the Embassy sends speakers around the world to explain important issues regarding Israel and the Middle East. Our foremost objective is to increase Christian awareness and support of Israel by stimulating leaders, churches and organisations to become effective influences in their countries on behalf of the Jewish people. Receptions are also held, bringing together local Jewish communities, Israeli representatives and Christian leaders in order to facilitate reconciliation and understanding.

To find out more about upcoming ICEJ events in your area visit us online at: www.icejusa.org
“When the Lord brought back the captivity of Zion, we were like those who dream.” Psalm 126:1

BY BIRTE SCHOLZ
OR THE BNEI MENASHE FAMILIES who recently arrived in Israel from India, the long waiting game is still not quite over. They have longed for decades for the chance to come home after 2,700 years of exile, yet the aliyah process kept getting delayed. Now they are finally in Israel and eager to start working or studying in school and putting down roots here. But first they must learn Hebrew. And one of the most important words to learn in Israel is savlanut—“patience!”

“We worked very hard to make aliyah for many years, but it kept getting frozen and we had to wait”, said Hanoch Haokip, a 27-year old computer instructor with a wife and two small children. “It is hard to describe what we felt when we finally arrived in Israel. We are quite happy here!”

“We really want to start working”, Hanoch explained. “We have been in limbo for years waiting to come rejoin the Jewish people. We want to earn our own way and start our lives over here. But first we have to concentrate a few more months on learning Hebrew, so we can have a better chance to succeed once we finish.”

At the start of this year, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem sponsored the flights for 274 Bnei Menashe to make the journey home to Israel. These families have now completed courses in Judaism at an absorption center and are moving into apartments provided by the government in the Galilee towns of Akko and Migdal HaEmek. Christian Embassy staff recently visited Hanoch and several other Bnei Menashe families to see how they are adjusting to life in Israel and found them immersed in Hebrew language classes, known as ulpan.

“It is difficult to start a life here without knowing the language. Therefore we are learning Hebrew at the moment”, said Amos Touthanz, who is living in Akko with a cousin and nephew who all arrived in January. “I wish I already spoke the language and was working. I want to learn it fast!”

Amos smiled and held up his text books, proud that he is the first in his family to speak the Hebrew tongue back in the Land of Israel.

“My parents and my two brothers are eager to come, too”, he assured. “They ask me always on the phone: When is the next aliyah flight? When can we come?”

Some of the newly arrived Bnei Menashe families already had relatives here in Israel from an earlier wave of aliyah, and everyone seems

THE FAMILIES WERE ALL VERY GRATEFUL to the Christian Embassy for sponsoring their flights to Israel and excited when they learned the ICEJ is raising funds for more flights later this summer so that their other family members can also make aliyah.
to still have loved ones back in northeast India anxiously waiting to come as well. For each one, making it back to the Jewish homeland after 27 centuries of exile is like a dream come true.

“In India we were always dreaming of coming to Israel”, said Milka Lhouvum, a 21-year old girl who came in January with her parents, two brothers and grandmother. “It is faith which brought us here. It is God’s hand bringing us home to this land.”

“I feel holy and free here compared to India” added Milka. “There, we practiced our Jewish faith but it was hard because it was not the Promised Land. It was hard to defend our kosher lifestyle. Physically we felt comfortable but in spiritual terms we were not free. Nothing was holy in India. In Israel we feel closer to HaShem (“The Name”). And we don’t have to hide our identity.”

For these Bnei Menashe families, their bond with the Jewish people and their sense of safety and belonging in Israel is extremely strong, despite the hostility of surrounding nations. “In our Jewish community in Manipur, we often hid our kippas when we went outside. It was dangerous at times, like during the Lebanon war in 2006”, noted Hanoch. “There were incidents that Bnei Menashe were attacked by local Muslims in Mumbai.”

“We know about the situation here and we have studied it”, he added. “But when the Almighty has set you up for something you don’t think about anything else. We are not worried. This is part of Jewish life!”

All the Bnei Menashe insisted they have been warmly welcomed in Israel, as most Israelis have already learned of their community’s close family bonds, strong work ethic and their sense of patriotism from the initial 1,700 Bnei Menashe who came around eight years ago.

“My father is really welcomed in the local synagogue when he goes to pray three times a day”, said Milka. “They give him a seat and tefillin to pray. His soul feels lighter here.”

“People are very nice here in Akko”, Hanoch reassured. “They want to talk to us and hear our story. Even Arab taxi drivers welcome us. We hope it stays that way.”

“The absorption is going very well, better than the ones before, because we are much more experienced and the Israelis know more about the Bnei Menashe and are more receptive”, assessed Zvi Khante, coordinator of the Bnei Menashe for Shavei Israel, which is overseeing their aliyah.

The families were all very grateful to the Christian Embassy for sponsoring their flights to Israel and excited when they learned the ICEJ is raising funds for more flights later this summer so that their other family members can also make aliyah.

“Thank you for your help and your efforts. Being here is like a dream come true and without you we still might not be here”, said Amos. “I’ve been waiting for this since I was a little boy. So I’m very happy but it is incomplete until the rest of my family arrives.”

There are still 7,000 members of the Bnei Menashe community in India waiting for their turn to finally come home to Israel, and the next flights are expected in August.

There are still 7,000 members of the Bnei Menashe community in India waiting for their turn to finally come home to Israel, and the next flights are expected in August. Please join with us in making this prophetic return happen in our day.

You can sponsor the flight for one Bnei Menashe for US $1200. With your help, their dreams of being reunited with the Jewish people in the Land of Israel will come true! 😊

The Haokip family

HANOCH HAOCHIP CAME TO ISRAEL in January with his wife Miriam and their two little daughters. Back in India, he was working as a computer instructor and English teacher at a private school in the Manipur region. His wife also was trained in computers. After their arrival in Israel, the Haokip family stayed for the first two months in an absorption center in Givat Haviva.

“Every morning I would wake up in the absorption center and think I was still in India. That was quite confusing. It was like living a dream to finally come to Israel”, Hanoch said.
“We worked very hard to make aliyah and our journey was delayed many times. For ten years we prepared to come. But I have wanted to come to Israel since I was ten years old. We persisted in our longing. My wife and children are very happy here. To immigrate to Israel was the best decision I have taken in my life.”

The family is now living in Akko, where Hanoch, though only 27, has become a respected and natural leader of the small Bnei Menashe community as they make their way through four more months of Hebrew language classes.

Hanoch and Miriam are eager to learn Hebrew quickly to hasten their adjustment to the Jewish homeland. Their two daughters, ages eight and four years, are picking it up fast as well in their schools, where they are mingling with Israeli children.

“I would like my children to be strong and to live a Jewish life here in Israel”, Hanoch said.

After finishing the ulpan course and Judaism classes, Hanoch will decide whether to join the army or find a job, even if it is in a new profession. Though still young enough to be drafted into IDF service, he and other Bnei Menashe men will be given a choice of serving in the military if they have wives and children already.

“Most of us want to work or to go straight into the army. Some will also need to finish our studies and afterwards find a good job”, Hanoch said.

In his spare time, Hanoch and his friends like to play soccer as they did in India. “Football is more than a hobby for me, it is a mania”, he smiled.

“All of us want to come to Israel but someone has to be first”, added Hanoch. “We are a part of this latest aliyah wave. Others came before us. My grandmother has lived in Kiryat Arba for nine years now. I am the first brother in my family to come to Israel. Hopefully, the others will follow us soon.”

Haggit Khaute and her daughter Ilanit

The young couple had waited a long time to come to Israel, and struggled with the decision of whether to get married and start a family while still in India. “Since I was a child my parents told me about Israel and I wanted to be there”, recalled Haggit. “We did not know when we would be allowed to make aliyah, so we finally decided to marry. Then our daughter was born and now we are finally in Israel. It was a very long journey.” Back in India, Amichai had worked as a tutor for younger students in the mornings and evenings, and in between he helped his cousin with the family business. After finishing his Hebrew and Judaism studies, he wants to go into the army, a decision Haggit has accepted.

“I am happy with that”, Haggit assured. “But we have to see whether it works out. After that he may find a technical job.” Like other Bnei Menashe families, the Khautes are busy learning Hebrew at the moment. “For me, it is very good to be in Israel. I like everything about it. But our main problem is that we don’t know the language. We are learning a lot even if it is hard for me to study with a child. But there are other families who help me with taking care of the baby”, Haggit said.

Haggit was surprised to see that not everyone in Israel is living a “dati” (observant) lifestyle. But she insists the faith she had in India is growing even stronger here. “I don’t miss India”, she assured. “The only ones I miss are my parents. With your support I hope they will come soon! Thank you for helping us!”

The Khaute family

AMICHAIR AND HAGGIT KHAUTE, both 27 years old, came to Israel in January with their one-year-old daughter Ilanit. They are eager to build up a new life in the land of their dreams.

“It is very exciting to raise a family here in Israel”, Haggit said with shining eyes, her daughter nestled in her lap. “From the minute I arrived, I felt at home.”

PLEASE JOIN WITH US in making this prophetic return happen in our day. You can sponsor the flight for one Bnei Menashe for US $1200. Any other gifts will also be much appreciated. Give today to this special ICEJ Aliyah operation at:

www.icejusa.org/donate/bnei-menashe

DONATE
HERE IS A SERIOUS INCREASE IN ANTI-SEMITISM in Europe, with neo-Nazis quite active in Hungary and Greece. But the most dangerous situation for Jews right now is in France, where the rise of Muslim hostility has become very alarming. As a result, many Jewish families are fleeing France.

The French Jewish community numbers more than 550,000, and consists of those who survived the Holocaust as well as Middle Eastern and North African Jews who came due to uprisings such as in Algeria in the 1960s. Yet Muslims from these same areas also came to France seeking a better life. Today for every Jewish person there are ten Muslims in France.

The situation for French Jews has worsened over the past decade due to fallout from the second Palestinian intifada, as Muslim youths burned cars and fought openly with police using petrol bombs and rocks. The intifada had clearly come to France. This prompted some Jews to buy homes in Israel in preparation for making Aliyah.

In 2005, Israeli leader Ariel Sharon called for French Jews to return to Israel, and the number of French olim (newcomers) doubled. In 2006, Ilan Halimi was brutally tortured and left to die just because he was Jewish. The following year President Nicolas Sarkozy cracked down on the violence, giving the French Jewish community a temporary respite.

Yet violence against Jews escalated again following Israel’s operations in Gaza in January 2009. Cabinet minister Yuli Edelstein called France the “most dangerous country” for Jews.

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem responded by supporting the “Red Carpet” program, which gives special assistance for Jews coming to Israel from regions in crisis. Through this program, the ICEJ helped more than 4,000 new immigrants between 2008 and 2012.

This year, the Jewish Agency is planning coordinated flights for French Jews as a way to build a sense of community among the families who are making aliyah together. During the pre-Aliyah activities, the families...
form bonds of friendship which continue to develop once they arrive in Israel.

The ICEJ has been asked to help sponsor a special French Aliyah flight in July. The cost for each seat will be $600, which includes an additional baggage allowance.

Those who choose to come on a group flight will be able to participate in one of our “Aliyah Fairs”. Immediately upon arrival, the group of new immigrants are greeted at the airport and taken to a hotel in Jerusalem where they spend their first day making arrangements for their new life in Israel.

In Toulouse last year, a Muslim killed a Jewish father and three children outside a Jewish day school. Just recently, an Iranian man stabbed a rabbi and his son after previously beating a Jewish man with an iron rod. These are modern-day pogroms. Jews are fleeing France for their safety.

About 2,000 French Jews will make aliyah to Israel this year. The Jewish Agency believes their new level of care for French immigrants will encourage many more to come home to Israel.

Please join with us to support these French Jewish families in making aliyah. Their situation is worsening and our help is needed! Many thanks for your contribution towards this latest surge in the great Aliyah of our day.

GIVE TO THE ICEJ’S ALIYAH OPERATIONS AT:
www.icejusa.org/aid/aliyah

THE PROMISE OF RETURN

"WHEN THE LORD BROUGHT BACK THE CAPTIVITY OF ZION, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing. Then they said among the nations, 'The Lord has done great things for them.' The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad." - PSALM 126:1-3

"And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." - ISAIAH 35:10

"Thus says the Lord God: 'Behold, I will lift My hand in an oath to the nations, and set up My standard for the peoples; They shall bring your sons in their arms, and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders; Kings shall be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers; They shall bow down to you with their faces to the earth, and lick up the dust of your feet. Then you will know that I am the Lord, for they shall not be ashamed who wait for Me.'" - ISAIAH 49:22-23

"Therefore behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, that it shall no more be said, 'The Lord lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,' but, 'The Lord lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north and from all the lands where He had driven them.' For I will bring them back into their land which I gave to their fathers." - JEREMIAH 16:14-15

"Therefore do not fear, O My servant Jacob," says the Lord, "Nor be dismayed, O Israel; For behold, I will save you from afar, And your seed from the land of their captivity. Jacob shall return, have rest and be quiet, and no one shall make him afraid." - JEREMIAH 30:10

"Thus says the Lord God: 'I will gather you from the peoples, assemble you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel... Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God.' - EZEKIEL 11:17-20

"Those of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man, and their heart shall rejoice as if with wine. Yes, their children shall see it and be glad; Their heart shall rejoice in the Lord. I will whistle for them and gather them, for I will redeem them; And they shall increase as they once increased. I will sow them among the peoples, and they shall remember Me in far countries; They shall live, together with their children, and they shall return. I will also bring them back from the land of Egypt, and gather them from Assyria. I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon, until no more room is found for them." - ZECHARIAH 10:7-10
“THREE TIMES YOU SHALL KEEP A FEAST to Me in the year: You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread [...] and the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labours which you have sown in the field; and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you have gathered in the fruit of your labours from the field.” (Exodus 23:14-16)

We have just passed the biblical Feast of Shavuot, or Pentecost, one of the three times in the year when the people of Israel were required by God to come up to Jerusalem for a holy convocation. They were to appear in Zion to celebrate Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles, the three great pilgrimage feasts of the Bible. Among other things, all three feasts were celebrations of thanksgiving for the different seasons of harvest in Israel’s calendar. In the last issue, we looked at the Feast of the “firstfruits” which took place during Passover. This month, we will look at Pentecost or Shavuot, also known as the Feast of Weeks.

**Pentecost Harvest**

The second harvest feast for Israel was Pentecost, which took place exactly fifty days after that “day after the Shabbat” when the firstfruits were offered to the Lord (Leviticus 23:15f). During Passover, when the very first fruits were presented, the fields were mostly green and still weeks away from being ready for harvest. It was a statement of faith to place all produce of that year under God’s blessing.

Yet as the days of Pentecost arrived, the spring crop of wheat and barley had come to ripen and was now dedicated to God. “And you shall observe the Feast of Weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest...” (Exodus 34:22). It was a first feast of thanksgiving to celebrate the faithfulness of God. But other harvests would still follow, like the olive, wine and figs.

**Tablets of Stone – Hearts of Flesh**

According to Jewish tradition, the people of Israel arrived at Mount Sinai on Pentecost. Exodus 19 records that God came down on the mountain with fire, thick clouds and loud thunders. On that day God gave the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments, on “tablets of stone, written with the finger of God” (Exodus 31:18).
Three Thousand Souls
For the Church, Pentecost also constitutes a first celebration of ingathering, as a first harvest of souls was gathered into the storehouse of God. “[A]nd that day about three thousand souls were added to them”, says Acts 2:41.

It was indeed only a firstfruit of harvest, as millions more would follow in the weeks, years, decades and centuries to come. The first harvest was an exclusively Jewish harvest, as all those initial believers in Jesus were Jews. Over time, God would show those original apostles that the fields of harvest were ripeening in other parts of the world. It would eventually grow into an innumerable company of people from every nation, tribe and tongue.

It is worth noting here that when God came down with fire on Mount Sinai, Israel was challenged with His holiness and judgment. When Moses went back up on Mount Sinai, Israel rebelled against God and built the golden calf. As a consequence, we are told that 3,000 souls perished (Exodus 32:28). Yet on the day of Pentecost, 3,000 souls found eternal life. This is a clear demonstration of the life-giving power of the new covenant. The Covenant of Moses is one of laws written on tablets of stone and of unchanged hearts. The New Covenant is one of hearts transformed by the Spirit of God.

Both Acts 2 and Exodus 34 powerfully remind us why the book of Hebrews underlines again and again that we have the privilege of serving a covenant built on better promises (e.g. Hebrews 8:6). But it also teaches us how desperately we need the Holy Spirit to change our hearts.

Conclusion
Shavuot was a celebration of the beginning of the annual harvest season. It was the starting point of the church and the beginning of countless harvest cycles which would sweep millions around the globe into the kingdom of God. But it is also the beginning of a church which remains in desperate need of the Holy Spirit, otherwise the leaven of human nature will overcome and spoil the harvest.

Pentecost was the beginning of a harvest season which is still going on to this day. The signs of the times suggest that we are in the midst of possibly the last great season of harvest. Israel is being restored and reunited again. Just as Israel faced the consequences of their sin, the land remained desolate for years. But unlike other sacrifices, it was leavened – symbolising the imperfection of the church. It is true that church history is a continuous line of great triumphs but also of sobering failures. The great failures in church history or even in the church today should never cause us to stumble but rather to make us draw closer to God, recognising our need for His Spirit to continuously change our hearts.

According to Jewish Tradition, The People of Israel Arrived at Mount Sinai on Pentecost

Paul refers to that moment in his second letter to the church in Corinth. The New Testament believer, Paul states, is “an epistle of Christ, [...] written not with ink, but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart” (2 Corinthians 3:3). For Paul, the ministry of the New Covenant was taking place on a whole new level compared to the covenant of Mount Sinai (see Jeremiah 31:31ff).

In Acts 2, it says “when the day of Pentecost had fully come”, the Spirit of God fell on the early Church like a rushing mighty wind and with tongues of fire on each of the believers. The disciples entered into a new season of ministry. It was a ministry of Spirit-empowered individuals who were personally transformed by the indwelling presence of God. It was a powerful and dynamic group of people who impacted the entire world with the Gospel.

Next month, we will cover the greatest harvest festival of all, which is Sukkot or Tabernacles. It has great significance for the times in which we live. I also want to encourage you to please consider joining us at this year’s Feast of Tabernacles celebration in Jerusalem, to be filled with the life-changing power of the Holy Spirit and thereby stand equipped for the harvest ahead.
A NEW SEASON OF GROWTH
ICEJ hosts National Directors Conference in Jerusalem

The annual conference of the ICEJ’s global family of National Directors was held this year in Jerusalem in early May, drawing representatives from more than 30 countries.

The presence and glory of the Holy Spirit was felt in a tangible way and His voice heard clearly. One of the delegates commented: “People left energised, challenged, informed and most of all filled with a new anointing from the Holy Spirit to carry the work forward. I know this is true for me.”

A diverse roster of speakers gave excellent teachings under the theme of ‘A New Season of Growth’, which truly built the spirits of the participants. But the good reports on the past year of activities also lifted the national directors and filled them with joy and new strength. The financial growth that has taken place in several of our branches worldwide and the growth of the activities in the nations, together with the reports of the many new doors opening for us within Israel, were very encouraging! God is moving!

One of the highlights of this year’s conference was when our newly appointed national director for Mexico, Dr. Carlos Quiroa, handed the keys of Mexico as a prophetic act to the leadership of ICEJ to enter through the gates into this most populous Spanish speaking country in the world, with over 112 million people. His own apostolic calling has placed Quiroa over one million Mexican Evangelical believers. Among his many areas of oversight, he organises the annual ‘March of Glory’ in Mexico City. This spring, the event drew nearly one million Christians to the capital city to proclaim their faith in Jesus and to pray – and specifically to pray for Israel and for the ministry of the ICEJ.

The special guest speaker at this year’s National Director’s Conference was Rev. Allen Jackson from Murfreesboro, Tennessee, who has served as senior pastor of World Outreach Church since 1988. The Church has more than 10,000 members and has grown steadily every year over the past two decades. His series of messages on cultivating growth in our churches and ministries was both inspiring and challenging to all. While so many of our international representatives were gathered in Jerusalem, the ICEJ decided to host a Yom Yerushalayim reception on our Embassy grounds to allow them to mingle with Israeli officials, local Jewish and Christians leaders, and some of the closest partners of our work here in the Land of Israel. The good food and fellowship made for a delightful evening.

The next day, one long-time Jewish friend of the Embassy gave a glowing report to her following that “something beautiful happened yesterday and I just had to tell you about it. Driving through the gates of the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem... one enters a world of glorious gardens, exquisite architecture and absolute love.” So we have to thank God for the impact the ministry is having in Jerusalem and to the ends of the earth.
ICEJ-MEXICO STANDS WITH ISRAEL AT MASSIVE MARCH

THE ICEJ’S BRANCH IN MEXICO, under the leadership of our new national director there, Dr. Carlos Quiroa, was once again involved this spring in the annual March of Glory, a massive one-day gathering in Mexico City which drew nearly one million evangelical Christians to the streets of the capital city. Dr. Quiroa has been a main organiser of this yearly march from its inception, which is called to allow Mexican believers to publicly proclaim their faith in Jesus. But the marchers have also become increasingly bold in declaring their support for Israel through this massive event. Without being instructed by the organisers, many marchers showed up on their own this year with Israeli flags, which they paraded through the heart of Mexico City.

ICEJ-GERMANY RECENTLY ORGANISED TWO CONFERENCES in the north and south of the country to raise a banner of unity in the Church and teach on Israel’s modern-day restoration. The conference in the South was held in Stuttgart and drew 800 participants, while the one in the North took place in Tostedt and was attended by 500 Christians. The conferences both brought together believers from many different church backgrounds who gathered under the theme “Rising up in Unity”. Besides local German ministers Peter Wenz (Stuttgart) and Ingolf Ellßel (Tostedt), the speakers included Palestinian Christian pastor Dr. Naim Khoury from Bethlehem, Messianic Jewish pastor Daniel Yahav from Tiberias, and a former Muslim-turned-evangelist from Algeria who all shared the platform and prayed together. Their gripping messages gave fresh insight into the heart of God for Israel and the nations, and gave a foretaste of the time when people from every nation, tribe and tongue will praise the Lord together. Gottfried Bühler, National Director of ICEJ Germany, noted that “unity is possible when we all gather under the cross of Christ and worship the King together.”
ICEJ Joins ‘March of the Living’
BY LISA SCHMID

IN EARLY APRIL, the ICEJ’s national branches in Germany, Slovakia and the Czech Republic came together to bring some 180 high school students to the annual “March of the Living” at the Auschwitz concentration camp in southwest Poland. The march is held each year on Yom HaShoah, Israel’s Holocaust Remembrance Day, and drew over 10,000 Jewish students from around the world once more. But the participation of so many non-Jewish students, some even carrying German flags, drew much attention from the organisers and media, as well as from the hundreds of Holocaust survivors who took part.

FROM AUSCHWITZ TO BIRKENAU
The Czech and Slovakia branches of the ICEJ have been arranging for non-Jewish students to attend the march for several years now, but this was the first year that ICEJ-Germany participated. ICEJ Czech National Director Mojmir Kallus first started the initiative several years ago to bring Christian students from his country and other European nations to the March of the Living each spring. “These visits to Auschwitz have been very impacting on these young Christians and it was exciting to bring the first group of German students this year”, said Kallus.

It is rare to see German flags on display at the March of the Living, which follows the path from the gates of the Auschwitz concentration camp to Birkenau to remember the six million Jews who perished during the Nazi genocide. At first, the German flags were met with scepticism and sometimes anger on the part of the Jewish participants.

“A Jewish guy from Mexico asked me how I could be here with a German flag and if I carried it with pride. I felt very uncomfortable in the beginning”, related Alishan, a student from Leonberg Germany. “Then I explained to him that we are here as German students to show that we won’t forget and that we have to take responsibility for our history. It should never happen again. After that the ice between us broke. He was really happy and thanked us for coming. We marched on together for a while until we had to say goodbye.” The students wanted to show solidarity with the Holocaust’s victims, to come to grips with German history, to raise a banner against the resurgence of anti-Semitism, and to learn more about what really happened at such Nazi death camps.

“Auschwitz deeply shocked me, but the March of the Living really encouraged me”, said Johathan Schilling, a German participant. “It was a great sign of hope to see young Jews wrapped in Israeli flags full of life and laughter in a place where their ancestors arrived imprisoned in cattle cars. The people of Israel live!”

NEW PARTICIPATION
“One can still feel the horrible atmosphere of death in this place, even 70 years later”, commented Gottfried Bühler, National Director of ICEJ-Germany. “The March of the Living, on the other hand, is a powerful symbol of hope and life. It shows that Hitler did not succeed with his devilish plans to annihilate the Jewish people. That we as Germans are allowed to march here is once again a moving display of the Jewish soul that always reaches out to others.”
**Israel Embassy Solidarity Event**

**In early May,** ICEJ-USA National Director Susan Michael co-hosted the Embassy of Israel’s 12th Annual Christian Solidarity Event in Washington DC. Former ICEJ Executive Director, Rev. Malcolm Hedding joined Israeli Ambassador to Washington Dr. Michael B. Oren and the Dean of Liberty University Law School, Mat Staver as the featured speakers at the gathering of some 300 pro-Israel Christian leaders from around the United States. This annual event draws Christians from throughout the nation, many of whom are also involved in the National Day of Prayer held the same week.

**March of Remembrance**

**In Early April,** as Israel marked its annual Holocaust Remembrance Day on Yom Hashoah, ICEJ USA National Director Susan Michael was a guest speaker at the first March of Remembrance held in South Florida, an area that is home to the nation’s third largest Jewish community, including many Holocaust survivors. The march was a regional, collaborative effort uniting a number of regional churches, synagogues and community groups in a solemn walk of remembrance on the streets of Boca Raton. About 300 Christians and Jews participated in the interfaith march and heard messages from the Mayor of Boca Raton, Holocaust survivors, as well as several local pastors and rabbis.

**ICEJ-USA Hosts Spring Conference in Florida**

**In April,** the ICEJ-USA branch hosted their annual Spring national conference in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida under the theme “Up to Zion”. ICEJ Executive Director Dr. Jürgen Bühler and Music Director Ray Ramirez came from Jerusalem to join ICEJ-USA national director Susan Michael, Rev. Malcolm Hedding and other speakers for a series of in-depth Bible teachings and leadership briefings. The gathering culminated with an inspiring “Taste of Tabernacles” worship concert featuring acclaimed Messianic songwriter Paul Wilbur. Some 800 people attended the event which was hosted by the Pentecostals of Cooper City church and co-sponsored by New Wine Ministries.

The next day, five area churches hosted ICEJ speakers at their Sunday services, while a Pastors’ Luncheon was hosted by the Good Shepherd United Methodist Church on Monday in West Palm Beach. In addition, a presentation about the ministry of the ICEJ was made to approximately 150 board members and key leaders of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference. Overall, the week’s events were very successful in increasing the ICEJ’s reach in the Southeast and among Hispanic Christians.
The Christian Embassy was recently invited to be special guests of the spiritual leader of the Druze community of the Galilee, Sheikh Muwafaq Tarif, in his home village of Julis. This connection was made for the ICEJ through senior officials at the University of Haifa, where Sheikh Tarif is vice chairman of the Board of Trustees. ICEJ Executive Director Dr. Jürgen Bühler and ICEJ-Norway National Director Leif Wellerop took up the invitation last month and paid a visit to the village, where they were showered with legendary Druze hospitality.

The sheikh set out a generous table of traditional foods and toured his guests around the village, including a visit to the Israeli Druze heritage center. The Druze community of the Galilee and Mount Carmel regions are very loyal citizens to the State of Israel. In fact, Sheikh Tarif’s village of Julis has the highest percentage of army enlistment among males of any municipality in the country at 100%, even though military service is not mandatory for the Druze. The Druze leaders require that their young men serve in the IDF, and also encourage their young women to do national service and study in university.

Druze Visit

**NEW MEMBER OF ICEJ ADVISORY BOARD**

Visit with Reinhard Bonnke

During a recent speaking tour in the United States, ICEJ Executive Director Dr. Jürgen Bühler and Music Director Ray Ramirez were able to meet with well-known evangelist Reinhard Bonnke, who is a good friend and supporter of the Christian Embassy. After spending several decades impacting millions in Africa, Bonnke has shifted much of his ministry focus to the US over the past year in answer to a call to believe for revival in America.

Bonnke welcomed Jürgen and Ray to his new offices in Orlando, Florida, and gladly agreed to become a member of the ICEJ’s International Advisory Board. Jürgen also handed him a special invitation from church leaders in the central African country of Niger to come hold evangelistic rallies there. It is one of the few African nations where Bonnke has yet to minister and he said his team had just been praying for an open door to Niger.
Audrey Ruth Peer grew up in Ontario, Canada, the only child of an interfaith marriage between her Jewish father, Harry Jackson, and her Christian mother, Geraldine. Her father owned a successful clothing store and was a prominent businessman and religious leader in the Jewish community. Audrey’s mother and grandmother would read her Bible stories as a little girl and she came to love Jesus.

Audrey also loved her parents dearly and grew up having a close relationship with them both. She was especially proud of her father for assisting post-war Jewish refugees from Europe who came to settle in Canada. Later, he contributed to tree-planting in Israel and also established a scholarship there. Audrey was her father’s daughter in more than one respect, but never more so than in her love for Israel and the Jewish people.

In the 1940s, Audrey studied piano at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto and deepened her walk with the Lord. Her long-time friend Pat Raymer remembers that “Jackie” – her nickname back then – cared a lot about other people and prayed for them. She had no children of her own, and her husband Doug passed away in 1979 after only 15 years together.

Audrey was a deeply compassionate person, and extraordinarily generous in her giving to those less fortunate. After Doug died, Audrey became more active in volunteer work, often on a personal level. There was, for instance, a blind lady who lived alone and she used to do her grocery shopping.

Audrey always regretted that she and Doug had never visited Israel together. She had a great love for the nation and for the Jewish people.

But more than anything else, it was always her relationship with the Lord that mattered most to her. “Jesus is my life”, she once said.

In 1994, Audrey was introduced to the ICEJ at a weekend conference at CBN’s Founders’ Inn & Conference Centre in Virginia Beach. It was a “Taste of the Feast” gathering, with superb speakers and a dynamic worship and dance team, all from Israel. It was there that she signed up for the Word from Jerusalem magazine and began faithfully donating to the Christian Embassy over the years.

Audrey Ruth “Jackie” Peer passed away in February of 2012, leaving a substantial gift in her Will to the ICEJ. In an arrangement with her estate, these funds have been divided among several worthy social aid projects in Israel, providing vital assistance to Holocaust survivors, orphaned children, music students, and Jewish-Arab coexistence efforts, among other needs.

Such estate gifts are an important resource for the ICEJ, helping us to commit to larger humanitarian projects and long-term strategic planning for the ministry. With proper foresight, it is possible for you to save on estate taxes, provide for loved ones, and also bless Israel greatly!

Please consider the ICEJ in your estate planning. Become a member of the Shomer Society and impact Israel beyond your days. Find out more by calling (615) 895-9830 or going online to: www.icejusa.org/shomer.
In April, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem took part in the dedication of new housing and renovations it has recently helped to fund at Beit Singer, a unique children’s home in the Jezreel Valley in northern Israel.

For more than three decades, one of the priority areas of the ICEJ’s social work has been reaching out to Israeli youths-at-risk in hopes of giving them a better chance to succeed. One of the ICEJ’s long-time charitable partners in this effort has been Beit Singer, a special warm home which cares for 95 abused and orphaned teenagers living at their facility in Kfar Yehezkel, near Afula.

All the children at Beit Singer have suffered some form of neglect, including physical or sexual abuse, and lack family support. But at Kfar Yehezkel, they are surrounded by a friendly environment where they can enjoy childhood and focus on their studies with the help of professional counsellors.

With assistance from the Christian Embassy and other sources, Beit Singer works to develop their character and skills. They are integrated into a school, where their progress is monitored closely. They also get to enjoy fun activities such as horseback riding, karate, theatre, sports, music and much more.

In recent years, a number of the children had to share small rooms in old, dilapidated caravans which had become barely suitable for living. The Christian Embassy responded to Beit Singer’s urgent request for better housing for them, and the new dorm rooms were dedicated at a special ceremony in April. Among the guests of honour were Leif and Gunvor Wellerop of the ICEJ’s branch in Norway, who personally made a generous donation towards this need.

The Christian Embassy also contributed towards major renovations which Beit Singer undertook to its main building complex, which contains dorm rooms, dining facilities and activity halls.

Today, the main dormitory building shines with bright corridors and clean, modern rooms. The renovations give the once run-down facility a beautiful and vibrant look.

Meanwhile, the old caravans were replaced by brand new cottages thanks to the ICEJ.

“We want to help freely”, Leif Wellerop told the dedication gathering. “Thanks to the
Jewish people, we have the Torah, the Prophets. Now we want to bless them, not from obligation, but with great joy."

The grounds of Beit Singer used to serve as British army retreat center and then were adapted to become a home for Holocaust orphans. Today it serves youths that deserve a better life.

“These are God’s children and they need our help”, ICEJ Executive Director Dr. Jürgen Bühler told the gathering. “We want to stand with them and take part in initiatives that are important to God.”

PRAYERFULLY CONSIDER MAKING A DONATION
You can help us reach out to other disadvantaged youths in Israel.
Contact us today and make a donation to ICEJ AID at: www.icejusa.org/aid
IN RECENT YEARS, some 50,000 Africans have crossed into Israel from Sinai, creating a refugee problem that Israeli authorities have struggled to solve. Most are from war-torn Eritrea. Many Israelis consider them “infiltrators” just looking for jobs and want them deported. But to hear the tragic stories of some of these refugees can leave one very sympathetic to their cause.

Eritrea has been ruled by a brutal dictatorship ever since it seceded from Ethiopia two decades ago. The United Nations has denounced the regime for its repression, religious persecution, frequent executions, and forced military conscription program. This has led to a steady exodus of native people from Eritrea.

Still, most Eritreans in Israel never planned to come here. Efraim (name changed), 28, originally hoped to find work in Angola. He was being persecuted for his Christian beliefs and hid out in the capital of Asmara for three years.

“People like me could get imprisoned underground. I didn't want to end up in a ship container”, Efraim recently told Word From Jerusalem.

So Efraim joined the estimated 3,000 Eritreans who flee each month to overcrowded refugee camps in Sudan. There the real tragedy began. Fetching water just outside a UN refugee camp, he was abducted by traffickers circling the camp in big black trucks and waiting for anyone to venture out.

Efraim was taken to northern Sudan and handed over to a convoy bound for Egypt. Men and women mainly from Eritrea and Ethiopia, all thirsty and hungry, were put in trucks and covered with hay. Efraim thought about jumping off at some point, until all the prisoners were chained together.

The human smugglers then sold the abductees to Bedouins in the Sinai Peninsula for a small sum. The entire network of smugglers consists of nomadic North African tribes who funnel their prey to Sinai, where they are held for ransom.

“Compared to the Bedouins that run the camps in Sinai, the transporters get little money”, Efraim recounted. “But all the ransom money usually comes through bank transfers... through banks! Which means somebody must know about this. Many in Egypt must know about this... but no one does anything.”

The UN has described the human trafficking trade centered in Sinai as one of the world’s most unreported humanitarian crises.
Efraim’s abductors initially demanded three thousand dollars from his family. When calling his relatives they would torture Efraim and make him scream, to scare his family. During one phone call they broke Efraim’s wrist.

“If somebody was screaming for mercy, they would torture them even more”, Efraim stated.

As Efraim’s mother and siblings desperately raised money from extended family, the kidnappers hiked the price to thirty thousand dollars and threatened to sell his organs. For two months he was beaten and tortured almost every day. The chains ripped the skin off his legs and Efraim started losing his eyesight, most likely from blood poisoning.

“I did not believe I would come out alive”, Efraim admitted. “They would hang me by my hands. My wrist never healed properly from being broken, and both of my hands were becoming disfigured. With no blood circulation, at one point I lost all feeling in my fingers.”

Almost half the group brought into the Bedouin torture camp with Efraim died soon after arriving or as a result of torture. Women were especially abused. Many actually wished for death.

Egyptian security forces patrol Sinai but only in limited numbers, as Egyptian police are afraid of the better-armed Bedouin militias.

Efraim recalled one Muslim man who tortured prisoners and constructed prison cages, but did his job in tears and prayed every day that it would all end.

“In a sense this man saved my life”, said Efraim. “He pleaded for me, told the owners that my family will get the money so they needed to keep me alive.” Thanks to this Efraim’s feet were unchained. Yet with no real key, they broke the chain with rocks and left his ankles in even worse shape.

“I didn’t believe I would ever walk again”, Efraim shared. “It was truly by God’s miracle that my feet got healed!”

When Efraim’s new ‘owners’ realised his health was shot, they dropped him near the Israeli border. After walking all night with a few other freed but battered prisoners, they were finally noticed by some Israeli soldiers. The IDF patrol showed mercy to the group, and Efraim was taken to a hospital in Beersheva.

The stream of African refugees entering Israel from Sinai peaked at over one thousand per month, but that has now been reduced to a trickle due to the rapid construction of a 260-km border fence. Most of those who came in cannot obtain official refugee status, nor can they work or receive social services.

Recently, Israeli law was changed to now allow automatic detention of asylum seekers crossing the border. A huge detention center has been built in the Negev, where the most recent African migrants are now being housed and fed and treated fairly.

Meantime, a recent study found that an estimated 6,000 Eritreans who arrived in Israel over the past three years had been tortured along the way, like Efraim. But the total number of Eritreans kidnapped and tortured in Sinai is higher, with over four thousand presumed dead.

Once in Israel, Efraim was finally safe from his tormentors and has slowly recovered his strength. He has gained weight and learned to walk again. Israeli doctors have performed seven operations on his hands and feet to save his limbs and maybe even his life. Yet today, Efraim remains in urgent need of more operations to restore full use of his hands. They are completely disfigured and were almost amputated. But Efraim cannot imagine life without his hands.

Efraim asked not to be named or photographed for this article, but he is hoping someone will come to his aid. He has no money, no documents to travel and no way to work, and thus is stuck in a foreign country that wants to deport refugees like him, even though he did not come to Israel by choice. Sadly, he also cannot return to his home country. So Efraim is hoping that God has another miracle waiting for him.
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For more information regarding the ICEJ or The Feast of Tabernacles, please visit our website: www.icej.org

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