ALIYAH GROWING RAPIDLY

COMING HOME ALONE
Dear Friends,

Spring is upon us.

As you watch nature wake from its winter slumber, I hope you are encouraged by the newness and rapid growth of this season. Like nature, Israel and the ICEJ are humming with activity right now.

We recently celebrated Purim, which commemorates the deliverance of the Jewish people from Haman’s wicked plan. While Haman was sentenced to death on the very gallows he had constructed to exterminate the Jewish people, the spirit resident within him is, unfortunately, alive and well today. Daryl Hedging’s article on page 18, “The Rise of an Ancient Hatred,” will showcase the many ways that spirit was, and still is, at work.

But “we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28). We see this clearly evidenced in our cover article, “Coming Home Alone.” Inspired by a World War II era program, when parents who were concerned about the rise of Nazism sent their children to safety in Israel, the modern-day ICEJ sponsored Naale program is assisting Ukrainian parents by giving their children the opportunity for a better life in Israel. These young people—60% of whom will be joined by their parents later—must be prepared to make the journey home to Israel alone.

This month’s magazine also tells of the rapid growth in Aliyah since 2008—a 95% increase! Together we helped almost 2,700 Jews return home in 2018. This year, we are set to assist over 3,500. We wish you could have been with us as our staff helped welcome home 83 Ethiopian Jews this February, the first fruits of the 1,000 that will come later this year.

In closing, I encourage you to join our US Branch at our annual conference, this May in Murfreesboro, TN. It is certain to be a time of in-depth teaching. And in this day, when truth is under constant attack, it is important that we come together as believers for times of spiritual renewal and refreshment. Beginnings is certain to be just that—don’t miss it!

Yours in Christ!

Dr Jürgen Bühler
ICEJ President

COVER PHOTO:
Jewish children at an ICEJ sponsored Naale seminar in Ukraine. They are getting ready to go to Israel alone and the seminars use several types of group cohesion activities to build a support system within their group.

For Magazine Archives visit www.icejusa.org/wfj
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As time marches on, we tend to divide history into distinct periods, each with a beginning and an ending. Today, we live in the Digital Age. But in biblical terms, our present age began in Noah’s lifetime, when God destroyed the ancient world due to its irretrievable rebellion and offered mankind a new, post-Flood beginning. God’s covenant with Noah established the order of the seasons we still enjoy today. But the Bible also warns this current age will one day end amid a massive global upheaval, similar to the deluge, ushering in the promised Messianic Age. Jesus himself said: “But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be” (Matthew 24:37).

How could Jesus make such a prediction? After all, God promised never to destroy the earth again by water. While this is true, there are other means of judgment at His disposal, and we often overlook the fact that God’s covenant with Noah came with a rule for mankind to follow. So, what was this rule?

In many ways, the Flood account parallels the Creation story. For instance, just as Adam could eat from every tree, except for one specific tree (Genesis 2:16–17), Noah was told mankind could now eat of all things, even the animals—but there was an exception. Man was not to eat live flesh with its blood (see Genesis 9:3–6). But this was more than a dietary law; the Lord also specified He will require an account for every life. This passage is the first appearance of this key principle in Scripture, and it also warns against murder. But the rule goes even deeper and is rooted in the concept *Imago Dei*: mankind is a special creation of God made in
His image. So, we must draw a line between ourselves and the animals and should not act like them. Rather, man must maintain a high view of himself as the closest thing in Creation to God, which means every human life has dignity and deserves respect.

Now when God makes a rule, He does not waste His breath. Any violation has consequences! Here, the implication is that God would no longer be bound by His side of the Noahide covenant and could severely judge the earth again—just not by water.

This helps explain why Jesus warned that His second coming would be like the “days of Noah,” which he also paired with the “days of Lot” (Luke 17:26–30). The apostles Peter and Jude also linked the days of Noah and Lot, and both insisted that the fiery judgment that befell Sodom is an “example” of the coming global judgment at the end of the age (2 Peter 2:4–6; Jude 6–7). In fact, Jesus and the apostles all foresaw the present age ending in a great cataclysm like the Flood, only by fire this time, followed by the new beginning of Christ’s peaceful, righteous reign on earth—what we call the “Millennium.”

They could say this with confidence because there are Flood analogies and allusions throughout the Hebrew prophets connected to the end-of-days judgment. The clearest example is Isaiah 24, which foretells of a time when the earth will be laid waste and its surface distorted (v. 1); the inhabitants of the earth will be burned and few men left (v. 6); the windows of heaven above and foundations below will open again . . . as in the Flood (v. 18); and alas, the earth will split apart and be violently shaken (v. 19). All this will be happening because mankind has “broken the everlasting covenant” (v. 5)—a reference to God’s covenant with Noah (see Genesis 9:16). In other words, Isaiah foresaw an ominous day when humanity would be in serious violation of the underlying rule of the Noahide covenant.

In my new book Floodgates, I make the case that humanity has been in breach of this command ever since the mainstream acceptance of Darwinian evolution, which directly refutes the divine origin of mankind. Indeed, Darwinism erases the line between humans and animals and says we came from them, thereby greatly devaluing human life.

From its inception, Darwinism was highly seductive. For starters, it provided an easy means to explain away the old order, when the Church and Crown both claimed to rule by divine right. It also proved very flexible, as radical revolutionaries and political theorists all cited it to support their widely divergent worldviews, from atheistic Communism (with its violent mass purges last century) to laissez faire Capitalism (where only the fittest survive).

Darwinism also gave rise to Scientific Racism, as many white Europeans used the theory to justify their condescending views toward the “lower” races. The worst expression of this phenomenon was Aryanism. Indeed, Hitler’s main treatise, Mein Kampf, reads like a biological paper, justifying on Darwinian grounds the elimination of the inferior Jewish race to prevent degeneration of the supreme Aryan race.

The bad fruit produced by Darwinism is endless, and its ungodly influence has thoroughly permeated the modern world. It has fuelled the death mills of abortion and has led to the growing acceptance of homosexuality and the rise of militant atheism. How can this be? Because mankind has used Darwinism as a scientific pretext to walk away from any moral accountability to God. We have reasoned away His existence and have become the judges of morality in His place. Even among those who still believe in a Creator God, many feel the world is so broken they could have done a better job in making it. But to assume moral superiority to God is dangerous!

No doubt, the stronghold of Darwinism lies at the root of the irreversible moral rebellion against God in the earth today. It also has exalted itself against the truth of Christ as both fully God and fully man. For if we truly understood the concept of Imago Dei, we would realize that when the Lord formed Adam from clay in Genesis 2:7, He was actually making the bodily form that He would one day come to dwell in forever.

What an amazing thought—that God wanted to reside in one of these human bodies! It gives mankind such great worth. And if we are in Christ, we have the matchless hope and promise that we will enter the age to come with immortal bodies like His, freed from our current human limitations. For “we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3:2).
The ICEJ hosted its annual Envision Conference in January with over 150 pastors and ministry leaders from 25 different nations gathering in Jerusalem for a special time of fellowship. The group also visited key sites and learned more about God’s heart for Israel.

The main sessions at Envision featured teachings by ICEJ leadership and select local ministers, who provided a solid biblical perspective on Israel—both the ancient and modern land and its people. Given that the New Testament admits there is something of a “mystery” to Israel, the teaching series aimed to equip pastors and ministry leaders to speak and teach confidently on the subject. For some, it was their first trip to Israel—like Brian from Denmark—so they had much to take in, even just driving around Jerusalem. Yet even for those who have been to Israel many times before, like Bible teacher Sally Howard from Atlanta, Georgia, there is always so much more to learn about Israel and take back to churches and communities.

On the opening night, ICEJ President Dr. Jürgen Bühler gave a powerful message from the story of Baalam and Balak in Exodus and explained that many today are looking for vantage points from which they can scrutinize and denounce Israel for her faults. But as Christians, we need to maintain God’s perspective on this uniquely chosen nation.

The next morning, ICEJ VP & Senior Spokesman David Parsons emphasized the importance of preaching the full counsel of Scripture about Israel from the pulpit. “Your view on Israel says much about your view of God!” Parsons exclaimed.

Connecting with Israel and the Local Body
In addition to offering ministry tools and networking opportunities, Envision also challenged attendees to deepen the personal impact of their time in Israel. Noted Bible teacher Peter Tsukahira spoke on the great importance of these ministers receiving fresh revelation from God. “What you need to be praying while you are here in the land is: ‘God, open the eyes of my heart. Show me what you are doing here in this land.’”

Magne, who leads a congregation in Germany, shared that this was a motivating factor for him. “I have a firm understanding of the importance of Israel,” he said. “I hope to renew and strengthen my connection and relationship with God’s heart for Israel.”

Panel discussions with local Jewish and Arab pastors, as well as Messianic professionals and business owners, provided a rare inside perspective on life in Israel for the believing community here. In one session, Arab and Jewish ministers shared the stage, discussing the unique opportunities and challenges their congregations face in Israel. The unity and cooperation between these shepherds and congregations inspired the audience, as they stand firm for the truth of being one new man in Christ!

Other panels discussed trends in business, Israel’s corporate culture, and ways to get involved. “I think the Lord is calling each of you to a deeper relationship with the community in Israel,” explained Israeli consultant Yoel Shoshani. “Above all, I encourage you to be an ambassador for us to your nation.”
An especially touching session featured three local pastors who shared their personal Aliyah experiences. Pastor Birlie Belay is an Ethiopian Jewish immigrant who has started several Ethiopian Messianic congregations here in Israel. He explained the many struggles Ethiopian Jews have in moving to Israel, including the extreme culture shock and the discrimination he faces for being African and a Messianic Jew. In the middle of these struggles, Birlie also sees God moving powerfully.

“God is doing new things here in Israel,” Birlie said. “We need your prayers for the leaders and pastors to do God’s will here. Your love makes us more jealous for Yeshua . . . God sent you to encourage us, stand with us, and pray for us!”

The conference also included several day outings to places of special interest in Israel. The first excursion took the pastors and leaders to Yad Vashem, the revered Holocaust remembrance center in Jerusalem. Throughout the tour, each story they heard about the Holocaust brought a new level of understanding and impact on the group. A separate field trip took the pastors to the volatile border with Gaza to see up close how the ICEJ has been helping Jewish villages there cope with years of rocket fire and other terror attacks.

War of the Worlds
ICEJ International Spokesman Rev. Malcolm Hedding was also on hand to add to the ministry component, and he stressed the need to recognize and steel ourselves for the intense spiritual battle already raging around us, particularly over Israel’s destiny. The three spheres where we battle most is the conflict over Israel, the conflict over our communities, and the conflict within ourselves, he explained. “God embarked upon this adventure to rescue you, and the war was won on the cross of Calvary. But we have to work out and live out our salvation,” Malcolm declared.

Meanwhile, ICEJ VP of International Affairs Mojmir Kallus discussed some of the difficult New Testament verses concerning the Jewish people, and the need for patience “until” their hardness of heart is over and the restoration of Israel is complete. “God has a glorious future for the people of Israel,” Mojmir stated.

In another session, ICEJ VP for Jerusalem Operations Barry Denison outlined in Scripture the unique prophetic role reserved for the gentiles in assisting with the ingathering of Israel in modern times. Drawing from Isaiah 66:18–20, he likened it to an aromatic “grain offering” being brought to the Lord at the temple.

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During his state visit to Washington, DC to meet with US President Donald Trump in March, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro also met with a group of prominent evangelical Christian leaders, including ICEJ USA National Director Susan Michael. At the CBN-sponsored event, Bolsonaro shared his vision for Brazil and received prayer and commitments of support from the religious leaders in attendance.

Bolsonaro told the evangelical gathering that he has experienced two major miracles. First, he is alive after an assassination attempt during his campaign, and second, he won the election. He now seeks to move Brazil in a new direction, away from its prior leftist leanings. Some of his main goals include protecting the lives of the unborn, reversing socialism’s toll on Brazil, and strengthening his nation’s ties with Israel. He is looking to God for wisdom and direction in the face of great opposition.

Susan Michael introduced the work of the ICEJ to President Bolsonaro and encouraged him in his decision to move the Brazilian embassy to Jerusalem. He explained that his decision to do so was firm, but he was working to do it in the best way and timing possible to minimize any economic repercussions.

When Bolsonaro—a self-identified Roman Catholic—visited Israel, he was rebaptized in the Jordan River. While there, he noted how much the small nation prospered despite its few resources and how Brazil struggles economically despite having great resources. He considers Israel to be a role model for his country.

Dr. Pat Robertson, the founder and chairman of the Christian Broadcasting Network, closed the meeting by praying for the president to be anointed by the Holy Spirit, protected, and strengthened for years to come.

Just a few days later, Honduran President Orlando Hernandez was in Washington, DC for meetings with the US administration and took the opportunity to meet with a small group of Jewish and Christian leaders. The meeting was to applaud his decision to immediately open a diplomatic office in Jerusalem and learn more about Honduras’ overall plan to move its Embassy from Tel-Aviv to Israel’s capital city. Susan Michael was able to describe the history and work of the ICEJ to President Hernandez and explained how we look forward to welcoming the Honduran Embassy to Jerusalem. 🇧🇷
COMING HOME ALONE

The ICEJ recently sponsored two special children’s Aliyah seminars in Ukraine. The Naale Seminars are for young people who are preparing to make Aliyah to Israel without their parents. The seminars prepare them and their parents for the logistical and emotional challenges they will face. The youth will finish high school through the Naale program, and 96% of them will make Aliyah. At least 60% of their parents will make Aliyah later on, but initially the child must be prepared to make the journey home to Israel alone.

Many of the youth will be in the same schools in Israel, and they will need to depend on each other for support without their parents. The seminars use several types of group cohesion activities to build a support system within their group. The picture on the cover of this Word From Jerusalem magazine shows the children in an exercise to increase trust with one another.

The word “Naale” is an acronym in Hebrew for “Youth Coming Before Parents.” The official program started in St. Petersburg, Russia in 1992 in the tumultuous days following the fall of the Soviet Union, when public schools were dysfunctional and Jewish parents requested that Israel receive their kids for better schooling. It was inspired by the Youth Aliyah Movement, which developed during WWll when parents who were concerned about the rise of Nazism sent their children to safety, hopeful they might be able to join them later.

The program has continued and serves distressed communities such as the Jewish community in Ukraine. The situation is quite bad there, and many families want a better life for their children in Israel but do not feel the whole family can make the move at the moment.

So far, more than 17,000 children have made Aliyah to Israel through the Naale program. The majority of them have come from Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine where the future today is uncertain and parents hope for a better life for their children in Israel. Israel’s future is bright, and many opportunities await them there.

Help the ICEJ sponsor five Naale seminars in 2019: www.icejusa.org/support-aliyah
ICEJ ALIYAH EVENTS IN 2018

- **2 Holocaust remembrance concerts to promote Aliyah**
  - concerts were held in cooperation with the Jewish Agency and the Jewish community in St. Petersburg, Russia, on January 16 & 27.
  - To raise money and awareness for the Aliyah surge, the ICEJ brought 80 members of the Eva Music Ensemble to Helsinki and Tampere, Finland, from May 11–14.

- **“Israel 70” Art Exhibition**
  - celebrating Israel’s 70th was an Aliyah outreach to the large Jewish community of St. Petersburg, Russia, from April 1–14.

- **140 children, preschool and ages 6–12, and 40 young adults attended two summer Aliyah camps in Bobruisk and Gomel, Belarus, in June and July.**

- **80 children ages 7–14 attended a Latvian Hebrew language summer camp in Saulkrasti, Latvia, from June 29–July 5.**

- **47 young adults attended a 3-day ICEJ sponsored Aliyah seminar in Imatra, Finland, from August 10–12.**

- **528 people have made Aliyah through Finland with the help of the ICEJ since 2014.**

- **38 ICEJ sponsored Naale participants departed from Belarus for Israel on September 6.**
ICEJ helped almost 2,700 Jews make Aliyah to Israel in 2018 from Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, The Baltic States, Central Asia, India, and Ethiopia. The need is increasing and with your help we will bring even more home in 2019. Please give at www.icejusa.org/support-Aliyah

Worldwide Aliyah in 2018

- FSU-19,305
- Western Europe-3,967
- North America-3,399
- Latin America-1,644
- Rest of Asia & Africa-76
- South Africa-332
- Turkey-203
- Oceania-173
- Middle East-154
- Eastern Europe-146
- Ethiopia-37

23 ICEJ-sponsored SELAH participants departed Belarus for Israel on October 10.

75 young adults attended a 3-day ICEJ Aliyah seminar and conference in Riga, Latvia, from October 26–28.

250 people attended the ICEJ Day of Jewish Knowledge event in Bobruisk, Belarus, on November 11.

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ICEJ sponsored a winter camp in Narochanka, Belarus, from December 24–30.

The ICEJ hosted a 3-day event about the Holocaust called “Festival of Tolerance” for Russian school children and their teachers in St. Petersburg, Russia, from November 14–16.

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A very special flight from Addis Ababa landed at Ben Gurion airport in early February 2019. On this flight were 83 Ethiopian Jews finally cleared to make Aliyah. Some had been waiting their entire lives to return to their ancestral homeland and reunite with family members. This was no ordinary arrival.

While ICEJ staff members waited with the local families for the olim (new immigrants) to arrive, we heard numerous stories of family members waiting to meet a mother, brother, or grandmother they had not seen in 12, 18, or even 38 years! Their longing was palpable.

ICEJ VP Barry Denison greeted the immigrants as they stepped off the plane. As soon as the first olim entered the arrival hall, an entire mob of family members flooded to greet them. Frail old grandmothers in wheelchairs embraced grandchildren they were meeting for the first time. Almost instantly songs and drumming broke out in the room. At last, families were reunited in their true homeland.

ICEJ has pledged to pay for the flights of all 1,000 Ethiopian Jews approved for 2019, and this was the first of many joyful reunions. Together we can bring them back home.

Become a partner today and shape Israel’s tomorrow: www.icejusa.org/ethiopia
“Worldwide, the situation for Jews is unstable now, but Aliyah is strong,” writes ICEJ’s Aliyah Director Howard Flower about the sharp rise in Aliyah last year. This boost illustrates a unique pattern in the different countries from which Jews are immigrating: Jewish communities face numerous challenges—whether financial crises, refugee living situations, threats of war, anti-Semitic acts and hate speech, or other threatening circumstances.

Living in Instability
A significant region for Aliyah activity is the former Soviet Union, including Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. In Russia, the fall of the ruble triggered a major financial crisis, forcing a large majority of people below the poverty line. Others live in consumer risk zones, which often suffer food shortages and lack of other essentials, exposing residents to health risks and malnutrition.

Aliyah Grows Rapidly
Spurred by heavy oppression, Jews are seeking refuge in their homeland of Israel. The hand of God is present in the Aliyah process, as immigrants adapt to the culture, learn the language, receive training, get a job, and build a new life in Israel. God is rescuing His people, not just from exile but also from the harsh living conditions in their current countries.

Christians are helping to make this financially possible. With the support of Christians worldwide, the ICEJ assists more than 10 percent of all Jews making Aliyah to Israel each year. In 2018, we helped 2,539 people and are on track to assist over 3,500 this year.

Barry Denison, VP of Operations, oversees ICEJ’s Aliyah assistance. Digging through the Scriptures recently, he uncovered more truths about Aliyah from the prophet Isaiah, which he shared at ICEJ’s Envision Pastors and Leaders Conference this year.

“O Zion, bearer of good news, lift up your voice mightily, O Jerusalem, bearer of good news” (Isaiah 40:9 NASB). In many translations, this passage is translated as a command to bring good news to Zion. However, the original Hebrew indicates Zion itself is the bearer of good news. Therefore, as it relates to Aliyah, Zion bears good news to those Jews living in desolate circumstances as they return to the homeland the Lord intended for them.

Denison continued with Isaiah 52:9–10, which reads: “Break forth, shout joyfully together, you waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord has bared His holy arm in the sight of all the nations, that all the ends of the earth may see the salvation of our God” (NASB). Aliyah is a comfort to the Jewish people, especially now as they suffer under persecution, poverty, and many other life-threatening circumstances. Aliyah is strong because God is laying bare His strength and drawing His people home.

As believers, God establishes a responsibility for us regarding Aliyah. Again in Isaiah the Lord declares, “The time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come to see My glory . . . and they will declare My glory among the nations. Then they [the nations] shall bring all your brethren from all the nations as a grain offering to the Lord, on horse, in chariots, in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem,” says the Lord” (Isaiah 66:18–20 NASB). As we—the church—help the Jewish people return to their homeland of Israel, God honors it as a grain offering, holy and pleasing before the Lord.

Thus, let us continue to lift up our offering before the Lord, giving glory to Him as Jerusalem continues to be a bearer of good news to her scattered ones. ☩
NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN EASTERN EUROPE

BY MOJMR KALLUS
VP INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

In October, I visited Ukraine—one of the larger countries of the former Soviet Union with a population of 44 million. Evangelical believers make up about 8 percent of the population or about 3.5 million people. There is complete freedom of worship in the country, which provides a great opportunity to develop our work.

I ministered together with Serguei Popov in four churches in Kiev, and our main purpose was to take our Ukrainian branch to another level. Pastor Valeriy Alymov was appointed the new executive director, taking over from Grigorij Komendant, a respected father figure in the Ukrainian church and a great champion of Israel. We had a successful meeting with ten senior leaders of the largest evangelical denominations including the Baptist Union, Pentecostal Union, and Charismatic Union—together representing more than 4500 churches and Messianic congregations. They all support the new ICEJ branch that is being formally established.

The general awareness of Israel in the church there is rather weak, but the Lord is stirring the hearts of pastors who want to understand more about God’s plan for Israel. Now that good foundations have been laid, we have a strong and dedicated team on the ground that is ready to run forward. Please pray for continued favor and open doors in Ukraine.

Next, we went to Riga, Latvia, for an ICEJ regional conference with participants from our branches in Finland, Russia, Denmark, Sweden, UK, Ireland, Estonia, the Czech Republic, Romania, and Latvia. We presented our mission statement, and discussed expectations of the branches. Fruitful discussions emerged between representatives of mature and experienced branches and the newcomers who appreciated the opportunity to learn from their experience. We also had a Shabbat dinner together with the Jewish Agency leaders who shared about Aliyah to potential olim. ICEJ’s VP of Operations Barry Denison also had the opportunity to introduce our ministry to the Jewish Agency in Latvia.

He shared, “We dreamed that our people would be a part of this move of God. Step by step, God supported us and confirmed our dream. Today, we not only have a group of pilgrims, but the love of Israel in the hearts of Bolivians.”

As pastor of the First Evangelical Baptist Church in Bolivia, Oliveira witnessed members of his congregation express their love for Israel, not only in words but also in action. The people of Bolivia come every Shabbat with generous and voluntary donations that God miraculously multiplies each year. Pastor Oliveira explained to his church, “This will be for exclusive use of the ICEJ in Jerusalem, because [the] ICEJ is our arm and extension of the church. They can do what we cannot throughout the year. We have decided to be a part of the Christian Embassy, not only during the Feast, but also in everything ICEJ does throughout the year.”

Other churches have seen what God is doing in Oliveira’s church, so today his church brings donations from several ministries to donate to the ICEJ. As one final comment on their giving, Oliveira said, “When we see the work of the Embassy, we feel very happy. It ensures that our offering of comfort is indeed comforting the people of Israel. The ICEJ can put into practice the generosity of the people of Bolivia. We are glad to know that the money is used in a precious way through the ministry of the ICEJ.”

When Pastor Alberto Magno Sales de Oliveira was baptized in the Holy Spirit, he received a new vision and love for Israel that not only impacted his life but also brought a spiritual renewal to his family and congregation. One of his dreams was to bring large groups of Bolivians to the Feast of Tabernacles, and he has seen God fulfill this dream year after year.

Hearts of Generosity in Bolivia

BY KAYLA MUCHNIK

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ICEJ ON US CHRISTIAN CAMPUSES

By Dan Herron

In November, ICEJ’s David Parsons visited the United States to spread the word at Christian colleges about the work of the Christian Embassy, and discuss his new book Floodgates. At Liberty University, he met with Dr. Ed Hindson, Dean of the Divinity School, and Dr. Randall Price, a popular professor on many Israel-related subjects. Parsons also spoke in the daily chapel service at CBN, as well as the weekly chapel for students at Regent University in Virginia Beach, VA. He challenged the students with a message about the stronghold of atheistic Darwinism in Western societies today and the key prophetic role it plays in the growing rebellion against God in these last days.

SHALOM FROM BURUNDI

By Amanda Gross

“We are honoring Israel first, because Israel is God’s firstborn among the nations,” announced the First Lady of Burundi, Her Excellency, Reverend Denise Bucumi Nkurunziza as she introduced our ICEJ delegation from Israel. We were greeted with an enthusiastic “SHALOM,” because “shalom” is a common greeting in Burundi.

Representing ICEJ headquarters, Jo Olsen, Jannie Tolhoek, and I were incredibly honored to take part in the first International Women Leaders’ Conference in Burundi organized under the theme, “Women of Destiny, Arise, Be Courageous, and Act for the Matter Concerns You.” The conference was attended by 500 Burundian women and 116 delegates from 24 nations, as well as the First Lady of Zambia, Her Excellency, Esther Nyawa Lungu and the First Lady of Central African Republic, Her Excellency, Brigitte Touadera. The First Lady of Burundi is an ordained minister who has a passion to mobilize the women of Burundi to understand their role as leaders, not only in their homes but also in their nation.

As part of the conference, we traveled three hours north to the province of Ngozi to take part in the launch of the First Lady’s “Free to Shine” campaign, which has a mission to eradicate mother-to-child transmission of HIV. We also visited the “Good Samaritan Orphanage,” which is now caring for 40 orphans. We had the opportunity to pray for the orphans and caretakers, as well as bless them with supplies for the orphanage.

Walking away from this conference, I was inspired by the first lady’s life and her amazing endeavors and by the Burundian people’s genuine love for Israel. Many conference attendees even came to our Israel delegation to say they pray for Israel and have a dream to one day visit the Holy Land. God moved powerfully during this conference, and we look forward to seeing what the Lord will continue to do through this historic moment in Burundi’s history!
The United Kingdom and the United States have long been considered safe havens for Jewish communities outside of Israel. Unfortunately, there is much reason to be concerned about the future of that status given the appreciable rise in anti-Semitism recently.

Both nations have now witnessed the previously unthinkable rise of politicians who openly embrace anti-Semitic positions. In the United Kingdom, for instance, former Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks has warned that Jews would feel compelled to leave the country should the Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn come to power.

In the United States, a “Jexodus” movement has begun imploring Jews to abandon the Democratic Party following oft-repeated anti-Semitic rhetoric from Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN). Her Democratic Party colleges have responded with only a half-hearted rebuke.

This has all happened at a time when the number of anti-Semitic attacks has increased—with the F.B.I. disclosing that in 2017, over 50 percent of all religiously motivated hate crimes in the United States were directed at Jews.

Lessons from Persia
Ezekiel 35:5 warns of an “ancient hatred” harbored against the Jewish people that ultimately seeks their destruction. We see this in the story of Esther where Haman sought to wipe out the Jewish people for the supposed crime of being faithful to the laws God had given them.

The Talmud teaches that Haman rejoiced when he saw that the Pur (lots) he threw to determine the date of the Jews’ destruction had fallen on the month of Adar because that is month of Moses’ death. Driven by a desire to supersede the law-giver, Moses, Haman developed his theory of Jews holding a dual-loyalty, thus making them untrustworthy citizens. Sound familiar? It should, because here’s a recent quote from Democratic Rep. Omar:

“I want to talk about the political influence in this country that says it is okay for people to push for allegiance to a foreign country.”

Ilhan Omar
United States Representatives for Minnesota

Omar was referring to Jews, specifically those working for AIPAC, and accused them of seeking to expand their supposed dual-loyalty to the State of Israel. This is nothing less than classic anti-Semitism, repeated in history as illustrated in the Dreyfus Case in France that helped spark Theodore Herzl’s Zionist movement, and the devilish Protocols of Zion that fueled the pogroms of Eastern Europe and Russia, forcing thousands of Jews to flee to Palestine at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Lessons from Egypt
In April, Jews all around the world will remember Passover, celebrating their
deliverance from yet another tyrant, Pharaoh—who enslaved them and attempted to murder all their newborn male children for fear that they were becoming too powerful. Through the centuries, Jews in the diaspora were forced into occupations considered less reputable, in areas such as finance and loans. When they succeeded, they were then accused of using their financial power to wield undue influence upon the nations in which they found themselves.

Once again, Omar has unfortunately provided us with a modern-day repeat of this old canard. She has claimed that Israel has “hypnotized the world” and suggested that AIPAC pays off politicians to buy their support of Israel. She seems to have bought into this dangerous fallacy that the Jews are secretly using money and dark means to control the world behind the scenes.

While Omar’s anti-Semitic comments have been broadly denounced, there has unfortunately been an attempt by some to excuse her comments as well-founded but poorly worded. The notion is that while criticism of Israel is valid, it just needs to be done in a more sensitive manner. This is nothing less than a Trojan Horse designed to provide cover for an extreme position on Israel and implicate every Jew in the West as complicit with Israel’s alleged crimes.

Lessons from Europe
Studies have shown that in Europe especially, anti-Semitic incidents rise exponentially when Israel is forced to respond to another round of Hamas’s violent targeting of her civilian population with rocket barrages. Jews in Europe are held directly responsible for what is perceived as injustice by Israel when they act to significantly weaken Hamas’s ability to attack her citizens. The exporting of this disturbing mindset to the United States is truly disturbing and should be confronted in uncompromising fashion, lest it take root and start to fester.

Some might say that criticism of Israel is valid. Fair enough. But when the intent of that critique is to repeat blatant lies, whether claiming her defense against rocket attacks constitutes a genocide or her security measures to limit terrorist attacks from the West Bank amount to apartheid, we should realize that the goal is not to engage in open debate. Rather, it’s to falsely paint Israel as an evil regime that needs to be dismantled. Any Jewish support in the West for Israel is therefore deemed a dangerous impediment to this hideous goal.

An Evangelical Response
Despite all this bad news, the good news is that Israel and the Jewish people do not find themselves alone. Millions of Bible-believing Christians around the world understand the special place the Jewish people hold in God’s economy, having thoroughly rejected the kind of classic anti-Semitic tropes that even invaded the church through such erroneous constructs as Supersessionism and Replacement Theology.

Indeed, many evangelical Christians read the story of Esther and understand that Mordecai’s reminder that she had been called “for such a time as this” resonates today—and this compels them to take a stand for Israel and the Jewish people in the places God affords them a voice. And if ever there was a time when that voice was needed, it is now. ☺

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God’s plan to redeem mankind and restore all things.

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