CORONAVIRUS: PERSPECTIVE FROM JERUSALEM
Dear Friends,

I do hope and pray you are safe and in good health. The global shaking over the coronavirus is impacting every nation on earth, and I’m sure you have felt it in some way. Just know that we are praying for you and that all of us will emerge from this crisis with our lives and families intact and with our faith and trust in God stronger than ever.

In the midst of a complete shutdown here in Israel, our volunteer team in Haifa has been helping to feed and care for Holocaust Survivors and other elderly people confined to their homes. Their courageous efforts have been covered by all the Israeli TV channels, and Prime Minister Netanyahu even mentioned it in his daily briefing on the current health threat. We also packed food boxes and delivered them to the elderly and disabled patients cared for by our ICEJ nursing team and others in the Jerusalem region in need.

Besides all that, we are continuing to sponsor Aliyah flights for Jewish families who are still arriving in Israel even amid this global crisis. They are now required to also enter a two-week quarantine, and the Jewish Agency is looking for our assistance with this added phase of their immigration as well.

After 40 years of ministry here, we know it is in difficult times like these that our efforts to bless and comfort Israel count the most. But we need your support at this time, when it can truly help those facing this coronavirus threat alone. We thank you for your help.

Yours in Christ,

Dr Jürgen Bühler
ICEJ President

Cover Photo: Yudit Setz, ICEJ Director of ICEJ’s Haifa Home for Holocaust Survivors, and her husband Will Setz.

For Magazine Archives visit www.icejusa.org/wfj
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CORONAVIRUS: PERSPECTIVE FROM JERUSALEM

A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM DR. JÜRGEN BÜHLER, ICEJ PRESIDENT

Written during a mandatory two-week quarantine
In early March, I returned from Germany to Israel and had to self-quarantine for 14 days. During that time I had an opportunity to pray and think about what this global menace could mean for the church and for Israel, as the worldwide impact of the corona threat reaches new heights almost daily.

This tiny virus—smaller than one micrometer—has brought the world economy to its knees with plunging stock markets, international travel at a virtual standstill, and many peoples and nations gripped with fear. One of the main pieces of advice given to people is to frequently wash their hands. This is taken so seriously people are stealing large quantities of disinfectants right out of European hospitals.

1. A Call for Purity

In Western cultures, the regular practice of washing our hands is not as old a tradition as we might think, but was only adopted some 150 years ago. The reason is that there was no knowledge of bacteria and viruses or their role in spreading diseases. It was Hungarian doctor Ignaz Semmelweis (1818–1865) who discovered, while working in a maternity hospital in Budapest, that when doctors would wash their hands in a chlorine solution before treating women the death rate among birthing mothers caused by infections was drastically reduced. He was called the “savior of mothers.”

But the nation with the oldest reported tradition of physical cleanliness is the Jewish people. Because of this, Jews in the Middle Ages were less impacted by the “Black Death” plague. The reason was that Jews—unlike the wider European culture—maintained a biblical practice of washing their hands before meals. This was not understood by their gentile neighbors, and it gave rise to conspiracy theories and violent waves of anti-Semitism that left thousands of European Jews dead.

Yet this tradition of purity goes back to the very beginning of the Jewish people, when Israel received the law of Moses. There, God commanded the priests to immerse themselves totally in water when they were dedicated as priests (Exodus 29:4). Whenever they entered the tabernacle to serve God, they were commanded to wash their hands and their feet in the bronze laver before the tent of meeting (Exodus 30:17–21).

The people of God understood that this was not just a ritual of physical purity, but it reflected a far deeper truth: the need for purity in our hearts. In Psalm 24:3–4, King David asks: “Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully.”

Through the prophet Isaiah, God also warned that He could not stand the services, sacrifices, and singing of His people anymore because “Your hands are covered with blood” (Isaiah 1:15). The passage makes clear that the prophet was not speaking of physical blood but about the sins of His people.

And the prophet Joel commands to “Blow the trumpet in Zion” to call the people of God together to repent and search for Him, because “Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him” (Joel 2:1, 14).

Jesus himself teaches that purity of the heart is more important than personal hygiene and washing of hands, because it is our hearts that defile and deceive us (Matthew 15:16–20).

Of course, this does NOT mean we can ignore any practical advice or health law requirements concerning this virus (such as those in Israel my family is currently observing). But it does mean that we need to show the same and even greater vigor when it comes to purifying our hearts, because this will impact our spiritual life.

2. A Time of Global Shaking

In early February, many key leaders of our ministry worldwide joined us in Jerusalem for strategy sessions regarding the ICEJ’s 40th anniversary. In one of the prayer times, Dag Øyvind Julaussen, an ICEJ board member and our national director in Norway, shared that over recent months the Lord spoke to him strongly from Haggai chapter 2. There the prophet declares:

“For thus says the Lord of hosts, “Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory” says the Lord of hosts. (Haggai 2:6–7; see also vv. 21–23 NASB)

This prophecy is then quoted in Hebrews 12:27–29. Heavenly and earthly principalities and systems will be shaken. Just a few weeks after our gathering in Jerusalem, the world is indeed experiencing a shaking that has led to many unprecedented consequences, such as Israel not allowing any tourists into the country.

These prophetic tremors will be so impactful that Jesus himself warns of “men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken” (Luke 21:26).

The effects of the current shakings are manifold. An unanticipated economic crisis is looming worldwide. According to some news outlets, the economic damage of the coronavirus in canceled flights, undelivered goods, etc., is already in the order of one trillion dollars. This is not just a number but affects real people. For example, El Al Airlines has placed most of its staff on unpaid leave, and large parts of their fleet are grounded. The shares of computer giant Apple fell sharply in January and February as parts of their smartphones were produced in the Wuhan region and are not deliverable anymore. The British weekly Spectator assessed it all means a breakdown of globalization—at least temporarily.
The corona pandemic definitely demonstrates how fragile the global trade system is. It is a possible foretaste of that great day described in Revelation when the global system comes to a sudden end because “Babylon is fallen, fallen” (Revelation 14:8).

At the same time, the prophet Haggai describes this shaking as releasing a new measure of glory in God’s temple. In other words, as the world is in turmoil, His kingdom is growing stronger on the earth. One of the more positive outcomes of the coronavirus outbreak currently hitting Iran is that some 70,000 prisoners—among them many persecuted Christians—were reportedly released from prison.

These same shakings can release a hunger for God, and the church needs to be ready for it. What this passage from Haggai demonstrates is formulated in a different way in Hebrews 12. Here, the shakings to come will shake what can be shaken while also revealing the things that cannot be shaken (Hebrews 12:27ff).

The passage then concludes with an appeal to all of us: “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:28–29).

3. Just a Foreshadow
Reading the Word of God and listening to the news, I cannot help but think that this is only a small foreshadow of what is to come. The Hebrew prophets and the New Testament speak of a time when God will severely judge the world for its unrighteousness and rebellion against God.

If someone would have googled “corona” in early January 2020, the search result would have led either to a Mexican beer or to images of the corona of the sun as seen during a solar eclipse. This occurs when the moon is totally covering the sun, forming a bright corona (“crown”) in the form of a ring of fire surrounding the moon. Only the outermost rim of the sun is seen and not the sun itself. In prayer, the thought came to me that this is exactly what we see today. The pandemic of the coronavirus is not the judgment itself but a harbinger of what will come in far greater measure if the world does not repent. In that sense, the coronavirus is a sign of things to come, when certain plagues will devastate the earth and still humanity will not repent (Revelation 9:18–21). Yet it also is a reminder that this is still a time of grace when “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21). It is a wake-up call to the church to understand the times and season we are living in and to act accordingly.

Therefore, allow me to offer the following advice. These suggestions should in no way replace sound measures that your national health system might require from you. But we should use this as an opportunity to:

A. Draw near to God, review our actions, and wash our hands where necessary. Let us search our hearts and renew our relationship to God, who indeed is “a consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:29; James 4:8). The apostle Peter, speaking of these last days, admonishes us: “[S]ince all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat” (2 Peter 3:11–12).

B. In this time of shaking, let us remember that God does not change. Our lives are in His hands. He is telling us to “fear not, because I am with you.” It is exactly in these dark and challenging times when our light can shine even brighter. People will be watching us. Let us be rays of light and hope in the Risen One.

C. Let us recognize that we are living in times when we should expect more shakings to come. And so let us establish a sure foundation. Jesus reminds us in the Gospel of Luke: “Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near” (Luke 21:28). Indeed, Jesus is coming soon!

D. Jesus encourages his disciples to view prayer as essential to make it through these challenging days: “Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man” (Luke 21:36). Make a commitment today to spend more time in prayer and to seek God like never before.

E. The apostle Peter reminds us that God’s prophetic word is meant to serve as a light in times of darkness: “And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your heart” (2 Peter 1:19). The Word of God will serve as a beacon and a compass for our lives in these shaky times. Make sure to have your daily diet of His living Word.

F. Finally, it is a great opportunity to stand with God’s purposes for Israel. This nation has been placed under severe restrictions due to the coronavirus, with the primary aim to save human lives. In particular, the elderly (including many Holocaust Survivors, one of whom has already passed) will be affected greatly by the quarantine measures and limitations imposed during this health crisis. New Jewish immigrants will still be allowed to make Aliyah to Israel, but they also must self-quarantine for two weeks. Our ICEJ AID team is already assisting local charities with various projects to support those most affected by this challenging situation.

Please help us meet this urgent need.

Give to: www.icejusa.org/crisis
Over recent weeks, international travel—including tourism to Israel—has been severely impacted by the coronavirus threat. Israel was quick to react by instituting a required two-week quarantine for any incoming visitors and the cancellation of large public events, such as the Jerusalem Marathon.

We fully expect these restrictions to be lifted and for life to return to normal again here in Jerusalem by the time our Feast of Tabernacles celebration arrives in early October. And no matter what happens, we do intend to “keep the Feast,” as Zechariah 14:16 commands! But we do ask you to join with us in earnest prayer concerning this year’s Feast and for the coronavirus threat to be fully contained and eliminated as soon as possible.

This is a special Feast of Tabernacles for the ICEJ, as it marks the 40th anniversary of our ministry here in Israel. So we need extra wisdom and foresight to plan this special Feast and also to adjust the schedule to meet the challenges posed by the current situation.

Please pray that we would have the “mind of Christ” as we plan for this year’s Feast (1 Corinthians 2:16).

Pray for the right speakers and worship leaders to come minister at this year’s Sukkot gathering in Jerusalem.

Pray that Israelis would be especially blessed by those Christians who come to express solidarity with Israel at the Feast.

We also urge you to pray that the Lord would move mightily to spare lives and eliminate the suffering and fear caused by the coronavirus.

Pray that God’s will would be accomplished in the earth amid this global crisis.

Pray that medical experts and government authorities would be able to quickly contain and eradicate this menace to public health around the globe.

Finally, pray that Israel would be the nation to come up with the solution to nullify this threat.

CALL TO PRAYER!

Please join us www.icejusa.org/isaiah62_Pledge
PASSOVER
AND THE
CORONAVIRUS
THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB
SUSAN M. MICHAEL, ICEJ USA DIRECTOR
The height of coronavirus infections and quarantines in the United States will more than likely occur right around Passover, or mid-April, this year. The timeless lessons of the famous Israelite exodus from Egypt are rich in significance for us, some 3,400 years later, as we deal with our own plague-like contagion. The story describes mandatory confinement and provides a way of escape from a deadly plague.

**Marked by the Blood of the Lamb**
The story is found in Exodus 12, where the Israelites are instructed to kill a lamb and to wipe its blood onto the lintel and doorposts of their homes. Mandatory confinement is then ordered in verse 22 when the Israelites are told: “None of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning.” Safe in their homes marked by the blood, they would not be harmed by the judgment that would be executed throughout Egypt that night.

> ... kill the Passover lamb. And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning. For the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you. (Exodus 12:21–23)

The blood of the sacrificed lamb was to be sprinkled on the doorposts as a sign or marker, so when the Lord passed over Egypt in judgment, the “destroyer” could not enter that home. Later in Sinai, when the Law was given and the sacrificial system was established, the greater meaning of sacrifice was understood as a covering and forgiveness of sin. The blood of the lamb was a marker that signified payment for sin, and this home belonged to forgiven ones.

The tenth plague was completely impartial and would strike everyone. Only the families marked by the blood that night—those who trusted God for their salvation and obeyed His instructions—would be spared. Whoever hid behind the blood was safe—the price for their sin had been paid, and they were spared this judgment. Death would pass over them.

The apostle Paul later referred to Jesus as the Passover lamb who was sacrificed for us (1 Corinthians 5:7). Through faith in His atoning sacrifice, we are marked by His blood and no longer deserving of judgment—it will pass over us.

**Protection in the Blood**
There is much discussion throughout the Christian world as to whether this coronavirus pandemic is God’s judgment on the earth or simply a highly infectious virus. Some say it is judgment, others that it is a warning of judgment to come. Whichever it may be, let’s learn the lessons afforded us in the Passover story and in faith and obedience place ourselves under the protection that God has provided for His children.

When we come under the blood of Jesus, our Passover lamb, we are marked as those who trust God and obey what His Word instructs us to do, and as such are part of the family of the redeemed. Our family has a loving and generous heavenly Father who bestows on us wonderful blessings and gives us many gifts.

We still live in a fallen and sinful world experiencing bouts of judgment and consequences of rebellion against God. We do not live in a protective bubble and may be affected by the sin, disease, and worldly disasters around us. Nevertheless, the Word is very clear that we are also part of the kingdom of God, and we can boldly approach His throne of grace and receive help in our time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

**Healing in the Blood**
It was while celebrating the Passover that Jesus astounded his followers by holding up the third cup of wine in the seder (ritual) meal—the cup of redemption—to signify the cutting of the New Covenant with His blood. He instructed his disciples to drink of that cup and eat of the unleavened bread in remembrance of Him. Churches all around the world do just that in what is known as communion.

When we partake of communion, we are reflecting upon the body of Jesus that was broken and His blood that was shed as a propitiation for our sins. Through His death on the cross, we are forgiven and adopted into the family—the kingdom of God—with all of its blessings, including forgiveness, protection, and healing.

The apostle Paul made this profound connection in 1 Corinthians 11:27–30 when he told the church at Corinth that they were not respecting the body and blood of Jesus as required in the communion service, and this was why some were “weak and sick” and others had died. The power of the atoning blood of Jesus was to have kept these believers walking in all the benefits found in their Father’s kingdom, including healing. But they had taken
communion without the correct attitude of somber remembrance of the sacrifice made for them, therefore, did not receive the benefits of protection and healing it symbolized.

Healing is part of God’s nature. After the Israelites left Egypt, the very first lesson God taught them was that He was Jehovah Rafah, the “God that heals thee” (Exodus 15:26). Another translation could be the “God who keeps you well.” Later, when the Law was given at Sinai, it promised healing to those who lived in covenant with the God of Israel: “And I will take away from you all sickness” (Deuteronomy 7:15).

Jesus indicated physical healing was part of forgiveness of sins. In Matthew 9, He explained that healing and forgiveness are connected and that healing the paralytic demonstrated his sins had been forgiven:

For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise and walk?’ But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”—then He said to the paralytic, “Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.” And he arose and departed to his house. (Matthew 9:5–7)

Remove the Leaven
The first step in experiencing these great benefits afforded to us through Jesus is repentance. In the Passover story, God told the Israelites not to leaven their bread—the obvious reason being they had to leave quickly. But leaven represents sin and corrupting influences in the Bible. Therefore, the apostle Paul said we too must “purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us” (1 Corinthians 5:7).

Purging of sin is an ongoing process and is part of maturing spiritually, but it is absolutely necessary to walk in the fullness of all that Jesus won for us on the cross, including healing (James 5:16). While we will only enjoy the fullness of the kingdom of God once we pass into eternity and take on immortality, we can apply its principles to our lives now and experience help in our times of need.

The Passover message during this coronavirus pandemic is that through Jesus, our Passover lamb, we have been forgiven and adopted into the family of a loving Father and have full access to all of His provisions. We can come to Him for protection and healing in our time of need. We only need to come to Him in repentance, removing all leaven from our lives and come under the protective blood of Jesus, our Passover Lamb.

When the pandemic is over, may you be able to say along with the Psalmist:

Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies. (Psalm 103:2–4)
SCRIPTURAL PRAYERS OF PROTECTION

The Word of God is our ultimate source for comfort and instruction. Use these powerful Scripture verses as you pray.

Father, Your Word says in 1 John 5:14–15 (GNB), “We have courage in God’s presence, because we are sure that He hears us if we ask Him for anything that is according to His will. He hears us whenever we ask Him; and since we know this is true, we know also that He gives us what we ask from Him.” I am going to pray directly from Your Word, the Bible, so that I know I am praying according to Your will, and therefore, You will hear me and answer my prayers.

And Your Word says in Philippians 4:6 (ESV), “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” So I refuse to be anxious or worried about anything and choose instead to pray about everything and to make all of my requests to You with thanksgiving. I am thanking you in faith that You will keep these promises to me.

Your Word also says in 2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV), “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” So I thank You Lord that I do not, and will not, have a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Your Word says in Isaiah 41:10 (GNB), “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.” So I thank You Lord that You have given me the authority to use the name of Jesus to trample on serpents and scorpions—every kind of evil spirit—and over all the power of the enemy. And because of that, nothing shall by any means hurt me.

And Your Word says in Isaiah 53:5 (NKJV), “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.” Therefore, I thank You that You are my refuge and my strength. You are a very present help in trouble. Even if the whole earth is removed, and even if every mountain is thrown into the ocean, I refuse to fear.

And Your Word says in Isaiah 54:17 (NKJV), “No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which riseth against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from Me,” says the Lord.” So I declare in the name of Jesus that no weapon formed against me shall prosper and that every tongue—every negative word that disagrees with Your promises to me and every word that rises against me to judge me—I condemn and cast down. Such words will not come to pass. This divine protection is part of my inheritance as a servant of the Lord, and my righteousness—my worthiness to have this protection—comes from You, the final authority.

Your Word also says in Luke 10:19 (NKJV), “Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.” So I thank You Lord that You have given me the authority to use the name of Jesus to trample on serpents and scorpions—every kind of evil spirit—and over all the power of the enemy. And because of that, nothing shall by any means hurt me.

And Your Word says in Psalm 91:11 (NKJV), “No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which riseth against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from Me,” says the Lord.” So I declare in the name of Jesus that no weapon formed against me shall prosper and that every tongue—every negative word that disagrees with Your promises to me and every word that rises against me to judge me—I condemn and cast down. Such words will not come to pass. This divine protection is part of my inheritance as a servant of the Lord, and my righteousness—my worthiness to have this protection—comes from You, the final authority.

And now, Lord, I pray Psalm 91. Because I am an heir of the blessing of Abraham through Jesus Christ, I personalize every promise in this chapter. According to Psalm 91 (NKJV modified), I declare: I dwell in the secret place of the Most High and abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him I will trust.” Surely, He shall deliver me from the snare of the fowler and the perilous pestilence. He shall cover me with His feathers and under His wings I shall take refuge. His truth shall be my shield and buckler. I shall not be afraid of the terror by night nor of the arrow that flies by day nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday. A thousand may fall at my side, and ten thousand at my right hand; but it shall not come near me. Only with my eyes shall I look and see the reward of the wicked. Because I have made the Lord, who is my refuge, even the Most High, my dwelling place, no evil shall befall me, nor shall any plague come near my dwelling. For He shall give His angels charge over me to keep me in all my ways. In their hands they shall bear me up lest I dash my foot against a stone. I shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, and the young lion and the serpent I shall trample underfoot. Because I have set my love upon the Lord, He will therefore deliver me. He will set me on high because I have known His name. I shall call upon Him and He will answer me. He will be with me in trouble. He will deliver me and honor me. With long life He will satisfy me and show me His salvation.

Provided by The Rock Church, Anaheim, CA
Israeli families, the elderly, and other vulnerable groups have been advised by the authorities to stay home—some even under mandatory quarantine. New Jewish immigrants will still be allowed to make Aliyah to Israel, but they also must self-quarantine for two weeks.

In response, the ICEJ is working with local Israeli charities to deliver food and other necessities to those confined to their homes, particularly the elderly and Holocaust Survivors. Approximately one quarter of Israel’s estimated 193,000 Holocaust Survivors are impoverished, struggling with illness, or living alone.

They are Israel’s most vulnerable during the current coronavirus shutdown, and the ICEJ is reaching out to help. We are preparing and delivering food parcels to their doors while taking extra precautions such as wearing hazmat suits and avoiding personal contact to ensure their safety.

We realize the coronavirus is posing problems for many nations all over the world. But we want to give you an opportunity to demonstrate your love and concern for Israel during this global emergency by helping us feed and care for these Israelis in need.

This appeal is based on the example set by the gentile believers in Antioch—the first ones to be called “Christians.” In Acts 11, a great famine was impacting the entire known world during the reign of Emperor Claudius. And even though they had urgent needs of their own, the followers of Jesus in Antioch “determined to send a contribution for the relief of the brethren living in Judea” (see Acts 11:26–30).

Please consider a gift to help us provide and care for those confined to their homes in Israel. We are working to make sure these families and elderly people have food and other necessities as they wait out this health scare. Thank you for thinking of Israel, even as your own nation deals with the coronavirus threat.

**ICEJ ASSISTING ELDERLY ISRAELIS DURING CORONAVIRUS CRISIS**

**THE FACTS & FIGURES**

Let’s take a look at the facts to get a better picture of the Holocaust Survivors living in Israel today:

- 193,800 Holocaust Survivors live in Israel today
- The age range for Holocaust Survivors is 74 to over 100 years old, and 15% are over 90 years old
- 1/3 were born between 1939–1945 and are now 74–80 years old
- 66% are women, and 40% are men
- 64% were born in Europe (36% from the former Soviet Union)
- 16% were born in Morocco
- 11% were born in Iraq and witnessed the Farhud in 1941
- 2% were born in Algeria
- 37% immigrated to Israel before 1951
- 24,000 are married couples where both partners are Holocaust Survivors
- 13,600 live in Haifa

*These statistics were taken from the Central Bureau of Statistics on the occasion of the International Holocaust Memorial Day (January 27, 2020) and are based on the number of Holocaust Survivors alive from December 2019.

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED URGENTLY.
GIVE TODAY AT WWW.ICEJUSA.ORG/CRISIS
Every week, a Homecare volunteer climbs the stairs with a small bag of groceries to visit Zachar and supplement his meager cupboard. Since he is 94 and almost blind from a war injury, he carefully handles each item, which is the way he “sees” these days. Then, comes the most important part of the day for him: the cup of tea and a listening ear.

Zachar was born in the Ukraine and, along with many aging Russian immigrants, was part of what used to be called the “Unknown Holocaust.” Only with the fall of the Soviet Union did the stories of horror begin to emerge. Zachar’s story is one such story.

As a teenager, Zachar was placed in a ghetto in Vinnitsa, Ukraine, but somehow managed to escape. This was an area where most of the Jews were massacred and buried in mass graves in surrounding forests from 1941 to 1942. However, he was eventually caught, and by the end of 1943, Zachar found himself in a place of hell. The Pechora Concentration camp was set up in a former sanitarium for tuberculosis patients. The camp was packed with adults and children, and many died of starvation every day. Of the (approximately) 11,000 Jews crowded into the camp, only some 1,200 survived. Amazingly, young Zachar escaped from this place: “I am not thankful for the suffering, but am very thankful to have survived it,” he told Homecare nurse Corrie. He joined the Red Army along with 1.5 million Jewish soldiers to fight against Germany’s invasion. Zachar received many medals for his courage, including one of the highest orders.

After the war, he did not return to Ukraine but instead lived near Moscow for the next 50 years, until finally coming to Israel with his beloved wife. Sadly, his wife died after 60 years of marriage, and his two children and their families still live outside of Israel. He feels lonely, but he does not regret his Aliyah. “I have found freedom in Israel,” Zachar said.

At the end of the visit, he always makes the same request: “Come again soon. I am waiting for you.”

ICEJ Homecare takes the time to care for “the one” in practical and powerful ways with the love of God. Partner with Homecare today to continue to make a difference in the lives of Holocaust Survivors and elderly immigrants in their homes right here in the land of Israel.
The ICEJ’s Haifa Home for Holocaust Survivors is unique in many ways. Its purpose has evolved from merely providing Holocaust Survivors accommodation to becoming a loving family of caring staff, volunteers, and visitors.

The Haifa Home has had an impact and influence beyond its walls, and from the Haifa area has come warm support in the form of volunteer help, free services, and invitations for outings. Other Survivors living in the Haifa area are often invited to the Home for group activities.

ICEJ is conscious both of the privilege of assisting these Survivors and that time is running out. As the years go by, our residents are slowly aging, and many are passing on.

Another one of our long-term residents passed away this January. Leah Levi, who moved to the Home with her husband nine years ago (both Survivors from Romania), succumbed to cancer and has left another empty space in the Home and in our hearts.

We recognize now more than ever that time is running out for us to impact these precious Survivors. Therefore, we invite you to partner with the ICEJ in continuing to provide the best care and love to Holocaust Survivors in Israel today!

Meet Haifa Home Resident, Bluma

Chaya Bluma Kaminski was born in Lodz, Poland, in 1932. She had just started school when the Germans invaded and the persecutions started. With the help of her father’s friends, the family escaped from the Lodz Ghetto. They survived the war by moving around from place to place in Russia. More than 300 family members who remained behind perished. After the war, Bluma and her parents spent some time in Germany and Sweden before arriving in Israel. Bluma worked as a seamstress and a department store manager. She raised two children and has six grandchildren—most of who live abroad.

Last August, Bluma came to live with us at the Haifa Home. She appreciates that she is well taken care of in every way and that she has her own place where she enjoys privacy. Bluma still enjoys working on her sewing machine and blessing people near and far with her crafts!
Remembering the Past, Giving Hope for the Future
Faithful volunteers continually provide love, care, and specific skills that benefit the health and well-being of the residents. They also provide small repairs, making the Survivors’ homes even more accessible and safe to live in. And last, but definitely not least, there are always moments in the daily routine to stop and enjoy a cup of coffee along with lovely conversations that fill the hearts of both the Survivors and the volunteers.

International Holocaust Memorial Day
Holocaust Survivors, their families, soldiers, police, and the Maccabi Haifa soccer team, amongst many others, crowded the small street in front of the Haifa Home for Holocaust Survivors on International Holocaust Memorial Day. Over 500 people, including dignitaries from the Haifa municipality, Rabbis, MKs, and ambassadors of multiple nations, came from all over the country to attend the day’s ceremony. ICEJ’s VP & Senior International Spokesman David Parsons touched the hearts of many with his words: “As I stand here today, I can assure you there are millions of Christians around the world who remember the horrors of the Holocaust. They also remember with deep regret the long, tragic legacy of Christian anti-Semitism. And we say to both: ‘Never again!’”

Living Life to the Fullest
Residents at the Haifa Home had the opportunity to kick off an important soccer match and basketball game aired on television and attended by thousands of fans. The Survivors thrive on this type of attention, honor, and respect, especially after a life of suffering and hard work to build up this nation. Opportunities like these motivate them to get up every morning and give their life purpose. Many of the residents are in their 90s and still going strong, and we believe it is because of the love, support, and honor they have been shown in these latter years of their lives.

Music, Balm for the Soul
The residents at the Haifa Home enjoy listening and moving to music—they even have a weekly dance party. Recently, a Christian organization from Denmark—Gideon’s Army—donated a brand-new Camac Hermine Harp with 34 strings to the Haifa Home. On the day the harp was delivered, a professional harpist with the Philharmonic Orchestra in Haifa named Olga gave a concert. The beautiful, delicate sounds of the strings touched many hearts. Olga promised to come with her students and perform a concert for our residents once a month. We also invite anyone who knows how to play the harp well to come to our Home and give a concert for our residents.

Make a difference today! www.icejusa.org/haifa
Be a part of that future generation spoken of in Psalm 102 that is partnering with the Lord in His work to restore Zion, for the set time has come.

**PARTNER LEVELS**

**Covenant Partner**
Show your love and support for Israel by partnering with the ICEJ. Become a Covenant Partner at a giving level of at least $30 a month. In appreciation, you will receive the following resources:

- A Partnership Certificate
- The Word From Jerusalem magazine
- A year-end gift of appreciation

**Ambassadorial Partner**
Partnership in ministry is a gift God gives to strengthen and undergird His work. Become an Ambassadorial Partner with the ICEJ at a giving level of at least $100 a month. In appreciation, you will receive everything in the Covenant Partnership level plus:

- Exclusive access to ICEJ’s quarterly Mid-East ministry update conference call from Jerusalem
- An invitation to attend our ICEJ USA leadership briefing during our national conference

**Builder of Zion Partner**
Isaiah declared the Lord will call Zion’s walls “salvation” and her gates “praise” (60:18). As we walk together side by side, the ICEJ would be honored if you would become a Builder of Zion Partner at a giving level of $2,500 a year or more. In appreciation, you will receive everything in the Ambassadorial Partnership level plus:

- A discount of $200.00 on a pilgrimage tour to Israel during the Feast of Tabernacles or other qualifying tour
- An additional gift acknowledging you as a Builder of Zion Partner

**Gateway of Zion Partner**
Show compassion for Zion and bless the people of Israel. The ICEJ would be honored if you were to become a Gateway of Zion partner at a giving level of $20,000 a year or more. In appreciation, you will receive everything in the Builder of Zion Partnership level plus:

- The opportunity to meet with ICEJ leadership and/or receive personal briefings on ICEJ projects that are of interest
- Special invites to exclusive events such as pastors’ lunches and VIP meetings that are held in your area or community
- An additional gift acknowledging you are a Gateway of Zion Partner

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ISRAEL: THE JEWISH PEOPLE’S PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE
BY DARYL HEDDING, ICEJ USA DEPUTY DIRECTOR

ICEJ Cosponsors Israel Breakfast at NRB Convention

The National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) annual Christian Media Convention is the largest national and international gathering of Christian communicators. This year, the ICEJ cosponsored an Israel Breakfast on February 26th along with NRBT and the Combat Anti-Semitism Movement.

The early morning event proved to be a popular one among convention attendees, and the ballroom was packed to capacity. The program was interspersed with worship led by Aaron Shust and Joshua Aaron, while Susan Michael, ICEJ USA Director, Gary Bauer, President of American Values, and EJ Kimball, Outreach and Partnership Manager at Combat Anti-Semitism, all addressed current issues affecting Israel and Jewish people around the world.

Mr. Bauer, the keynote speaker for the event, did well to sum up the central theme of the morning when he stated that the Jewish people are not visitors to Israel, but rather that Israel is their past, present, and future.

Israel’s Past
Mr. Bauer was unequivocal in clarifying that anti-Semitism is the only motivation behind those like the Palestinian Authority and the United Nations who regularly question the historical presence of the Jews in the Holy Land. And he pointed out with alarm that we are seeing anti-Semitism take hold on campuses, in congress, and even in the body of Christ, with the same old anti-Semitic canards being mainstreamed again.

Contrasted with this bleak, but necessary, review was another side of the story explained so well by Susan Michael, who encouraged attendees with statistics on how much Christian organizations like the ICEJ have been able to achieve in support of Israel and the Jewish people worldwide. This year is the ICEJ’s 40th anniversary, and some significant milestones were recognized: 140,000 Christians have attended the Feast of Tabernacles celebration in Jerusalem, 150,000 Jews have been given assistance to make Aliyah, 100 Holocaust Survivors have been taken in at the ICEJ’s Haifa Home, and 100 bomb shelters have been placed in Southern Israel. These achievements speak hope to Israel despite the attacks she faces.

Israel’s Present
Mr. Bauer made strong case for Israel and the United States being the two pillars of the greatest civilization in the world, one that has brought freedom and prosperity everywhere it has spread. And the ideas upon which this republic is built are taken primarily from the Bible, a Jewish book—ideas like equality and inalienable rights. But, Mr. Bauer warned, a world without Israel and the United States would be a dark place, so we must fight for this civilization.

In a striking symbol of solidarity and the one new man, Aaron Shust, an American gentile, and Joshua Aaron, an Israeli Jew, performed Aaron’s song “Zion” together on stage in a moving rendition of a song comprised exclusively of promises made to Israel in Scripture. Susan Michael referred to Shust and Aaron’s unique ministry as a new wave of worship coming forth from Zion in our day.

Israel’s Future
EJ Kimball explained the work his organization is doing to bring together individuals and organizations from across the globe in a movement to combat anti-Semitism and eliminate what is undoubtedly the oldest form of bigotry.

Susan Michael followed up by informing the audience of a joint initiative by American Christian Leaders for Israel (ACLI) and Combat Anti-Semitism to address the alarming rise in anti-Semitism here in the United States. Leaders of ministries and organizations at the breakfast were invited to take action and attend a follow-up meeting in the Capitol where they would have a chance to learn more on how to respond and would be given a chance to provide input and resources to meet the challenge of defeating anti-Semitism here in America.

The response was overwhelmingly strong, and there should be no doubt that Israel and the Jewish people will not face an uncertain future alone. She has great friends here in America, and they are ready and willing to take on the fight that lies ahead.
Abundant conspiracy theories and misinformation about the coronavirus pandemic have elevated fear and anxiety levels for many. We have had to sift through benign misinformation and intentional disinformation to understand the potential dangers of this virus and the best practices to avoid it. As a result, the US government Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has become the place to go for information one can trust.

**Government Misinformation**

Other countries, however, do not have such trustworthy and helpful governments. They are at the mercy of corrupt leaders attempting to hide their own mishandling of the crisis and place blame elsewhere through their state-controlled media.

Case in point: a Chinese government spokesman set off a disinformation frenzy in China when he tweeted the self-serving lie that it was the US army that brought the epidemic to Wuhan. Russian media then chimed in accusing both the United States and the United Kingdom of developing the virus to harm Russian ally China.

Iranian Revolutionary Guard generals claimed the virus was an American biological weapon aimed at both China and Iran, while Iranian state media also blamed the “Zionists.”

Throughout the Muslim world, rumors abound that the Jews developed the coronavirus to gain power, kill a large number of people, and make a fortune selling the antidote.

**Conspiracy Theories**

These lies have infiltrated the internet in the United States and are used by conspiracy theorists to advance their anti-Semitic theories. The Anti-Defamation League is tracking and documenting the proliferation of these lies on both fringe internet platforms as well as mainstream platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, and Reddit.

Conspiracies abound about the origin of the virus that blame everyone from the US government to Bill Gates to Israel. Some are using the virus as proof in their case for—or against—vaccination, immigration, or imposition of martial law. Racists are denigrating all things Chinese, while anti-Semites blame Jews for the virus as a means to manipulate the stock market to their financial advantage, bring down President Trump, or profit from a vaccine they developed beforehand.

**Why the Jews?**

Why the Jews? They are suffering from the virus like everyone else and trying to develop a vaccine just as fast as the rest of the world. Their religious leaders called for prayer at the Western Wall for the entire world to be spared this pandemic. Yet, they are blamed for creating it, using it to kill masses of people and then profit off of its treatment.

As wrong as it is, the proliferation of false accusations against the Chinese people is because the virus started in China. But what do the Jews have to do with this virus? Why the lies about Israel and the Jews? Because age-old anti-Semitism will use every opportunity to spew hatred on the Jewish people.

The danger for Jews during pandemics is not just the disease but also the conspiracy theories it spawns. One of the greatest catastrophes to afflict the human race was the fourteenth-century bubonic plague—known as the “Black Death”—that swept through Europe. Historians estimate that up to 50 percent of Europe’s population died in the pandemic, with rates of death as high as 75 percent in Italy, Spain, and France.

The Jewish minority had already been demonized by church and state, so they were an easy scapegoat. They also fared better than the general population, possibly due to their dietary and religious practices or the fact many were confined in walled ghettos. Their lower death rates, however, fueled suspicions they were behind the pandemic, and many Jews who survived the plague were then massacred in pogroms.

We should not dismiss conspiracy theories as mere craziness. Conspiracy theories produce anger, and anger moves quickly from words into actions; verbal insults often result in physical attacks. It is, therefore, our responsibility to speak up against these lies and point people to reliable sources of information.

**Flattening the Curve**

While seeking to flatten the curve of the coronavirus, we must do the same with the pandemic of anti-Semitism. It is a deadly virus that poisons hearts and minds, eventually destroying those it infects along with those they hate.

We must take the necessary steps to identify and isolate it, protect others from becoming infected, and develop educational “vaccines” against it in our churches, schools, and society.
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You can touch and change a life this summer by sending a young adult on a tour of Israel. By doing so, you’ll give them an opportunity to explore the land of the Bible to see where it all happened. They’ll be able to pray, worship, learn, laugh, and experience Jesus in the Holy Land.

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