Dear Friends,

As you open this magazine, we are in a time when many countries are entering a “second wave” of the COVID-19 pandemic. In Israel and elsewhere, infection rates are again on the rise. But by the grace of God our work continues unabated.

Since coronavirus travel bans and lockdowns first began in late February, the ICEJ sponsored flights for over 1,000 new immigrants. Going forward, we are hoping to keep this pace and continue to fly 250 new immigrants to Israel each month, through the end of the year. Please prayerfully consider joining our “Rescue250” challenge (see p. 10), as we seek to fund emergency flights for Jews in dire circumstances due to coronavirus and other factors.

We also recently marked a special occasion of 30 years of Aliyah flights sponsored by the ICEJ. I will never forget Christian Stephan, the former leader of the ICEJ Germany Branch, telling me the story of how in early 1990 he felt called to act, just months after the gates of the former Soviet Union had finally opened to “Let my people go!” Armed with a check of some US$200,000, he flew to Jerusalem and told the ICEJ board: “Now our hour has come! We need to fly the Jews back to Israel!” Little did he know that God had spoken the same thing to Ulla Jarvelisto, our former national director in Finland. Together, they sponsored the ICEJ’s very first charter flight of Jews making Aliyah from Russia, which landed at Ben Gurion Airport on May 28, 1990.

And the story continues, as Jews are still coming on “eagle’s wings” back to the Land of their fathers, just as the prophets foretold. We can rejoice in God’s faithfulness, as the ICEJ has now assisted more than 157,000 Jews to make Aliyah since our founding 40 years ago.

We continue planning the Feast of Tabernacles, and while we are not 100 percent sure how the Feast will take shape, the Feast will happen. This is not a feast of the ICEJ but “the Feast of the Lord!” So please be ready to join us either personally by coming to Jerusalem (if possible) or for the first time as a “virtual Feast pilgrim” and enjoy the many exciting programs we will broadcast live during Sukkot.

Finally, please continue to uphold us in prayer. It is a challenging season, and we are more dependent on your prayers than ever before. May the Lord bless you richly from Zion!

Yours in Christ,

Dr. Jürgen Bühler
ICEJ President

P.S. Please contact the US Branch and plan to join us for the Feast of Tabernacles in October.

From the President’s Desk

Word From Jerusalem

Cover Photo: The Epstein family and their cat, Luba, make Aliyah

Support our ministry online at: www.icejusa.org
CONTENTS

4 PREPARE THE WAY

8 CHRISTIAN EMBASSY MARKS
30 YEARS OF ALIYAH FLIGHTS

12 FEEDING STARVING
JEWISH CHILDREN
IN ETHIOPIA

13 LUBYA’S ALIYAH

14 ICEJ DONATES A
SAFE ROOM FOR
NEGEV TRAUMA CENTER
Driving up to Jerusalem, we have seen many changes over the past 10 years. Heavy earth-moving equipment has leveled the steep ascents and straightened the curves of Highway 1 connecting Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Hilltops have been radically shaved off and valleys have been bridged or filled to ease the daily traffic congestion making its way up to Israel’s capital.

The Bible says that such a massive undertaking will also take place in the spiritual realm. This will not be to smooth the way for the ever-increasing flow of tourists to Jerusalem or to account for growing infrastructure needs in the fast-growing “start-up nation.” It will be a spiritual highway, which makes a path for something far more important. It will be a highway project to prepare the coming of the glory of the Lord.

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; Make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth; The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.’”
(Isaiah 40:3–5)

Driving up to Jerusalem, we have seen many changes over the past 10 years. Heavy earth-moving equipment has leveled the steep ascents and straightened the curves of Highway 1 connecting Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Hilltops have been radically shaved off and valleys have been bridged or filled to ease the daily traffic congestion making its way up to Israel’s capital.

The Bible says that such a massive undertaking will also take place in the spiritual realm. This will not be to smooth the way for the ever-increasing flow of tourists to Jerusalem or to account for growing infrastructure needs in the fast-growing “start-up nation.” It will be a spiritual highway, which makes a path for something far more important. It will be a highway project to prepare the coming of the glory of the Lord.

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; Make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth; The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.’”
(Isaiah 40:3–5)

Driving up to Jerusalem, we have seen many changes over the past 10 years. Heavy earth-moving equipment has leveled the steep ascents and straightened the curves of Highway 1 connecting Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Hilltops have been radically shaved off and valleys have been bridged or filled to ease the daily traffic congestion making its way up to Israel’s capital.

The Bible says that such a massive undertaking will also take place in the spiritual realm. This will not be to smooth the way for the ever-increasing flow of tourists to Jerusalem or to account for growing infrastructure needs in the fast-growing “start-up nation.” It will be a spiritual highway, which makes a path for something far more important. It will be a highway project to prepare the coming of the glory of the Lord.

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; Make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth; The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.’”
(Isaiah 40:3–5)
John the Baptist was a preacher who upset people both in his appearance and message. Yet many loved him and felt this strange firebrand in the desert had the word of the Lord for their generation. They sensed that God had again sent a man like Elijah of old, challenging their lukewarm-ness and wayward lifestyles. From all over Israel, they came to listen to him and to undergo the baptism of John. Jesus himself later gave him the highest compliment a man could expect: “Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist” (Matthew 11:11).

When the people asked who he was, John was surprisingly unpretentious and declared that it was not at all about him but the One who would come after him. “I am ‘the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, “Make straight the way of the Lord,” as the prophet Isaiah said” (John 1:23).

His message struck at the heart of the religious establishment and the notion that belonging to God’s chosen people, the Jews, was a free ticket to heaven (Luke 3:7–9). Rather, God was looking for a people of broken spirit and ready to repent—and not just by mere words only. If necessary, God could raise a people for Himself out of stones, John declared. Repentance for John was not just reading a confession in church (or the temple) but required a radical change of lifestyle. “Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance” (Matthew 3:8).

John was the waymaker for the Messiah. He carried out his ministry “in the spirit and power of Elijah . . . to make ready a people prepared for...
the Lord” (Luke 1:17). Or as Jesus himself would later say, “Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You” (Matthew 11:10).

ELIJAH MUST COME
The prophet Malachi links this ministry of the waymaker to Israel's great prophet, Elijah. Even until today, the Jewish people have a tradition of keeping a seat open at the Passover Seder table for Elijah in anticipation of His coming. At one point, the door is opened just in case Elijah has come.

When Jesus and his disciples made their way back from the Mount of Transfiguration after just encountering Elijah and Moses talking to Jesus, the disciples asked him:

“Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” Jesus answered and said to them, “Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.” Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist. (Matthew 17:10–13)

Jesus answered in an almost cryptic manner. “Elijah is coming” and “Elijah has already come.” He indicates that there is a twofold ministry of Elijah. One took place through the person of John the Baptist. This ministry was powerful, but at the same time, it ended with John the Baptist’s beheading. “They . . . did with him whatever they wished.”

Yet Jesus also states that there will be a future ministry of Elijah: “Elijah is coming!” According to the Lord, this Elijah ministry will be different in the outcome. This future Elijah ministry “will restore all things.”

The reemergence and ongoing restoration of the modern state of Israel, the unprecedented growth of the church around the world, and the global shakings (like the current coronavirus crisis) all indicate that we are living in times of great spiritual significance. Jesus is coming soon! Yet if that is true, we all need to revisit the ministry of John the Baptist. I believe this current crisis is a call from heaven to “Prepare the way of the Lord!”

Despite the quarantine, Zoom prayer meetings are mushrooming near and far. This current crisis undoubtedly is challenging and transforming the church—and Israel. It will help prepare the way of the Lord.

A HIGHWAY OF HOLINESS
God is building a highway in our times. Whoever I talk to around the world feels that God is doing something new and fresh in our days. New wineskins! And this new highway being built is not named after denominations or ministries. It is not the highway of a man but the “highway of the Lord.”

In Isaiah 35:8, the prophet describes it as a “highway of holiness.” This move of God requires us to adopt a new lifestyle of holiness and repentance. Both words—holiness and repentance—have become dangerously rare in many Christian circles today, but they were at the heart of the messages of both Elijah and John the Baptist.

John’s call for repentance was not a call to heathen nations or the Roman Empire, but it was a call to his own people, the people of God. He was calling Israel to get right with their God, and today, the Lord is giving the same call to His church.

Of the seven churches in the book of Revelation (chapters 2–3), God was fully pleased with only two of them. The majority (five out of seven!) urgently needed to repent.

Like Israel at the time of John the Baptist, we need to rid ourselves of the notion that the church has a free ticket to heaven. A powerful move of God in our times requires a powerful change in our lives.

This year started, our staff in Jerusalem felt God was calling us to repentance—not that blatant sin was raging among us, but we felt God was calling us to greater separation from the world and closer communion with Him. Charles Finney, one of America’s greatest revival preachers, writes in his classic Lectures on Revival that every revival is preceded and paralleled by a wave of repentance. Let us rediscover this holy virtue!

A VOICE IN THE DESERT
This call to build this highway of the Lord will not necessarily grab the attention and approval of the world. Like the times of John the Baptist, it will be a voice calling in the desert. Our friends and family might not hear it. It might not happen on social media platforms or in large gatherings. But it will be an intimate move of God between you and Him. One blessing that this current coronavirus crisis is bringing to us is it has reduced us to our homes, our family relationships, and our relationship to God. The Bible promises us that if we draw near to Him, He will also draw near to us.


**Mountains, Valleys, and Crooked Ways**

John the Baptist’s message brought God’s people out of the valley of complacency and compromise. The valleys we experience do the same for us today. A “valley” can be lost passion for our first love, Jesus. Or it can mean neglecting the “means of grace” through which God chooses to build His kingdom—the fellowship of the saints and communion time spent in the word of God or invested in our personal prayer life.

In many hearts, there are mountains of pride, human philosophies, and religiosity that keep God from moving. Paul writes to the church in Corinth that he is using his spiritual weapons against every high place that rises against the knowledge of God (2 Corinthians 10:4–5). These are not physical mountains, but they can be as daunting as the great peaks of the Rockies or Himalayas.

We have to straighten the crooked, distorted paths of our hearts to allow the glory of the Lord to arrive in full measure! The Hebrew word for crooked is *yakav*. The same word is used by the prophet Jeremiah: “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9).

The late Derek Prince always liked to point out that the adjective “deceitful” is not in the passive but the active voice. This means it is not so much that our hearts can be easily deceived but that our heart is an active agent wanting to deceive us. That is why the prophet, a few verses later, cries out to God: “Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; Save me, and I shall be saved” (Jeremiah 17:14).

In order to prepare the way of the Lord, we need to prepare our hearts. Jeremiah—and with him other prophets—understood that our hearts are incurably sick and need a heavenly heart transplant through the Holy Spirit. Ezekiel prophesies about it (Ezekiel 36:24ff). Jeremiah said it will be a new covenant of God dealing with our hearts (Jeremiah 31:31ff). And Jesus said this promised change of heart through the Holy Spirit will be so radical that one will feel like they are being born again (John 3:6).

Precisely herein lays the secret of why John the Baptist’s ministry was so different to what God will be doing in our days. In his day, countless people were affected by him and were baptized, but it did not produce a lasting change in the heart of the nation. Likewise, Elijah’s challenge to the nation on Mt. Carmel only produced a short-lived change. As the difference between the time of John the Baptist and today is that during his time, the Holy Spirit was not poured out yet. But it is precisely because of Pentecost and the great expectation of a latter-day outpouring of God’s Spirit that we can expect an exciting move of God in our days. My friend Angus Buchan said in one of our recent Global Prayer Gatherings that he expects the most significant revival in history to be unleashed after this coronavirus crisis is over.

We are indeed living through a time that is unprecedented in history—with four billion people impacted by various levels of quarantine caused by the coronavirus. Therefore, let us not waste this time, but instead, let us redeem this time for God’s purposes. It is again a time when God is speaking from heaven. It is a time when God declares, “Once more I will shake the heavens and the earth.” It is through this shaking that God causes “the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—so that the things that cannot be shaken may remain” (Hebrews 12:27).

All things built on man’s glory and with human effort will have to fail so the things built on God’s unshakable kingdom will remain. If we all join in preparing this divine highway, we will see the glory of the Lord arriving with power. It will be a greater glory than the former house, and all the earth shall see it!

“Prepare the Way” was given to us as the theme of this year’s Feast of Tabernacles. When we chose it, we could not have known how relevant this theme would be for 2020! It is indeed the year of a voice crying, “Prepare the way of the Lord.”

Please pray for this year’s Feast of Tabernacles. May it be a time of an unprecedented outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Please prayerfully make plans to join us in Jerusalem, and check our website for updates and news on our Feast plans.

Look for “Prepare the Way: Part 2” in the next issue of *Word From Jerusalem* on how the Elijah ministry impacts the relationship between Israel and the church.
The ICEJ welcomed a group of 94 new Jewish immigrants to Israel on May 26 on a special chartered plane, which marked 30 years of Aliyah flights sponsored by the Christian Embassy since the first one touched down in Israel in May 1990.

When the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem was founded in 1980, one of its first initiatives was to start advocating for the release of Soviet Jewry. Christians staged rallies in capitals around the world demanding, “Let my people go!” So when the Iron Curtain fell in October 1989, and the door finally opened wide for Jews to leave the Soviet Union, it was only natural for the ICEJ to start helping bring them home to Israel.

Some of the ICEJ’s earliest leaders, such as Finnish Branch founder Dr. Ulla Järvilehto, were already pioneering Christian efforts to assist Jews trickling out of the Soviet bloc in the 1970s and 1980s through welcome centers in Budapest and Vienna. But once Soviet Communism collapsed, the possibility opened up for bringing masses of Russian-speaking Jews directly by plane to Israel.

Soon after, the ICEJ’s German Branch approached the Jewish Agency with an offer to help pay for a flight of Soviet Jews, and ICEJ Finland quickly agreed to cover the other half of the costs. Thus, on May 28, 1990, a special ICEJ-funded charter flight carrying several hundred Russian Jews landed at Ben Gurion Airport. This was the first Aliyah flight fully sponsored by Christians, and thus it stands as a unique milestone for the ICEJ.

An excited ICEJ delegation was waiting on the tarmac to warmly welcome these exiles home in fulfillment of biblical prophecies that the Jewish people would one day return to the Land of Israel from the “north,” and that gentiles would be there to assist them (see e.g., Isaiah 43:6; Isaiah 49:22–23; Isaiah 60:4–16; Jeremiah 31:8).

Ever since that first Aliyah flight, the Christian Embassy has funded more than 300 direct flights for Jews coming home to Israel. Once you add in all the other Jewish immigrants we have assisted along the way—whether with connecting flights, transport to airports, special grants for needy families, Hebrew language classes, Aliyah seminars, fairs and youth camps, and so much more—the ICEJ has now assisted over 157,000 Jews in making the journey home to Israel.

This includes Jewish immigrants coming from Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Belarus, Brazil, Canada, China, Cuba, Czech Republic, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Moldova, Russia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uzbekistan, and Venezuela, among others.

There are many more Jewish people waiting their turn to make the move to Israel, and the interest in Aliyah is rising—despite the coronavirus, or in many cases, because of it. And the Christian Embassy needs your help in bringing them home.

Please support the Aliyah efforts of the ICEJ. Watch the Video.
Despite all the recent global travel bans due to the coronavirus outbreak, we were still able to bring a remarkable 1,000 Jewish immigrants on Aliyah flights to Israel since our first sponsored flight this year landed in late February.

With planes grounded worldwide, many in Israel were expecting a pause in Jewish immigration due to COVID-19. But surprisingly, the door of Aliyah has remained open, as interest in moving to Israel is on the rise. Many Jewish families even decided to move up plans to reach Israel, which they view as safer and better positioned for economic recovery.

In response, Israeli and Jewish Agency officials arranged “evacuation flights” over recent months that continued to bring new immigrants home to Israel. The Christian Embassy supported these extraordinary efforts during the coronavirus crisis by funding Aliyah flights for 234 Ethiopian Jews and 766 Jews from across the former Soviet Union between February 20 and June 16. This required a total of 85 flights in all, including dozens of connecting flights for Russian-speaking Olim coming from all across the vast regions of the FSU.

The ICEJ covered many of the extra Aliyah costs incurred at this time, including two-week stays in coronavirus-mandated quarantine for the new immigrants once they reached Israel.

“The coronavirus pandemic has brought much suffering and negative headlines all over the world, but one of the positive stories coming out of this crisis is the surprising surge in Aliyah, as many Jewish families are seeking a way to reach Israel as soon as possible," said ICEJ President Dr. Jürgen Bühler. “We are both honored and elated to play a key role in this unique chapter in the modern-day return to Israel, as even a global pandemic could not stop Jewish people from finding their way home to Israel.”

Many of these recent Jewish arrivals came from Russian-speaking countries where the local economies are struggling and the coronavirus threat is still peaking. Even travel within these countries is difficult and, in some areas, not allowed. Yet Jewish families have been making incredible efforts to board the flights for Israel. In several instances, pregnant mothers nearing term were determined to reach Israel in time to give birth in the Jewish homeland.

More Jewish families are eagerly awaiting their chance to come to Israel. In this unique moment in history, God is urgently calling them home, and He is calling on us to help!

Join with Christians from around the world to make their dream of Aliyah a reality. Please consider what you can do to help.

DONATE TODAY
www.icejusa.org/aliyah
Despite the coronavirus travel ban, the ICEJ has been at the center of a remarkable wave of Aliyah. Since February, we have brought 1,000 Jewish immigrants home to Israel. Many are escaping very difficult conditions and are thrilled and relieved that they have made it safely to Israel.

The ICEJ’s partners at the Jewish Agency for Israel are referring to the flights coming now as “evacuation flights” chartered by the Israeli government to bring Israeli citizens back home and to welcome new immigrants. No other travelers are allowed on board because of the current health restrictions both here and abroad.

Yaroslav and Victoria arrived recently from Ukraine and are expecting their first child. Because of the advanced stage of Victoria’s pregnancy, it was challenging to evacuate her out of Ukraine. Yet the Jewish Agency placed them on a “rescue” flight from Kiev to Israel sponsored by the ICEJ in mid-April. Now released from quarantine, they are busy settling into their new home in Ramla in central Israel.

Married for little more than a year, Victoria explained why they decided to come—and why now.

“I really wanted our child’s birth to take place in Israel,” she said. “Now that we have made it safely here, our parents can stop worrying.”

The journey to Israel began early in life for Victoria. “From my childhood, I had the feeling that I did not belong in the place where I was. When I grew up, I discovered my Jewish roots, which confirmed the truth of my experiences.”

In 2017, Victoria traveled to Israel for the first time with her dad to see relatives and went back sensing, “This is the place where I want to be, the place that I belonged.” A new calm settled over her soul.

After that trip, Victoria began attending Hebrew courses as well as Jewish cultural events. She soon met Yaroslav, and not long after, they married. He was fully supportive of her desire to start their new life together in the Jewish homeland, and in fact, the young couple even went to Israel for their honeymoon last year.

“These were two unforgettable weeks that gave us the motivation to do our best to live and build a family in Israel,” Yaroslav shared.

As they settle into their new life in central Israel, what is ahead for this couple?

“We will live, we will work, and try to give a decent life to our future generation,” said Yaroslav.

Victoria plans to study languages, while Yaroslav will make professional use of his artistic skills. Even amid the pandemic, this young family is full of bright plans for their future here in Israel.

“We are so happy to be here,” Victoria said. “And we want to say ‘thank you’ to everyone who helped us! Because it was our dream and such a deep desire in our hearts.”

Yaroslav and Victoria arrive from Ukraine and are expecting their first child.
Each of the 1,000 new Jewish immigrants the ICEJ has brought to Israel over recent months has a unique and meaningful story on their journey “home.” For Serguei and Tatyana Fraerman and their daughters, Olga and Elizabeth, the actual trip took only four days—but their journey to Israel has spanned eleven long years.

On May 12, the Fraerman family was placed on a specially chartered “evacuation flight” from Moscow bound for Ben Gurion Airport, with Tatyana 32 weeks pregnant with twins. It was still the height of the global coronavirus lockdown, and their flight was the last opportunity for her to travel due to medical reasons. Her advanced pregnancy required a lot of extra paperwork and much persuasion with airport authorities, but they made it.

“In my mind, I expected that I would give birth in Israel,” Tatyana recounted. “But due to the situation with the coronavirus, our flight had been delayed over and over. The time came closer and closer when I would be forbidden to fly, and we began to lose heart. How could this be?

“Then suddenly, as if a gift of fate, we received word that our flight to Israel was scheduled. Suddenly there were suitcases, packing of things, making arrangements. Everything happened instantly!”

“My parents died when I was nine years old, and at that time, I did not know about Aliyah,” said Serguei. “I knew my relatives lived in Israel, but I did not know if I could go there. Only at the age of 29 did I learn this was possible and began the process of repatriation. Then I met my spouse, our first daughter was born, then the second, and another stage in our life [began] with its own day-to-day problems.”

Although the application process turned out to be long, they continued to collect all the necessary documents for moving to Israel. Then they learned that Tatyana was not only pregnant but expecting twin boys, and this became the pivotal moment. “We wanted the children to be born in Israel,” Serguei insisted. Yet with the Israel Embassy closed for quarantine and all airlines grounded, it appeared the dream was not to be. But then events began to unfold miraculously.

“First, I want to thank the Israeli consul for accepting our appointment during quarantine. Even though the Embassy staff were not at work, we submitted passports through the guards, and then the consul called me on the phone. He congratulated us on being approved and apologized for not being able to inform us in person,” recalled Serguei. “Then we received a letter that our departure will be on May 12.”

Describing his first moments in Israel, Serguei said: “At Ben Gurion Airport, we were immediately met by ICEJ staff and the Jewish Agency, our children were presented with gifts and sweets, and we were photographed. Everything seemed to happen very quickly. I had not slept for two days before that, packing our luggage.

“To come to Israel was like a call in our blood,” he said. “Here I feel at home. Although we haven’t even traveled or walked around yet, I have many friends and relatives here. This is a good country. This is a safe place for children, and it is paradise on earth.”

“I would like to thank the ICEJ for assisting us to make Aliyah. You help people make their dreams come true. Thank you so much for your support,” said Tatyana.

This is now a happy and hope-filled family ready to embrace their future here in the historic homeland of their Jewish ancestors. Serguei and Tatyana are grateful to everyone who helped them along the way.

The Jewish Agency is calling them “evacuation flights” since they are bringing trapped Israeli citizens back home as well as new immigrants approved for Aliyah. Priority is given to those facing urgent health concerns, rising anti-Semitism, and poor socioeconomic conditions. Many of these Jewish Olim had planned to move to Israel over recent months and have even quit their jobs and canceled their apartment leases. Due to the coronavirus, they are stranded without home or finances.

Help us bring at least 250 Jews on Aliyah “rescue flights” to Israel this coming month

Donate today at: icejusa.org/aliyah

(The estimated average costs per seat for this month is $620, which can include extra baggage allowance, connecting flights, ground transport, and other costs.)

And follow our progress in this urgent Aliyah campaign at: www.icejusa.org/rescue250
ICEJ FEEDING STARVING JEWISH CHILDREN IN ETHIOPIA

In 2019, at the request of Isaac Herzog, the chairman of the Jewish Agency, the ICEJ donated $100,000 to provide emergency nutritional support to Ethiopian Jewish children and nursing mothers who are waiting in a community in Ethiopia to make Aliyah to Israel.

Medical teams working in Gondar reported that at least 22 children were saved from starvation by this program, while many more were saved from hunger and the onset of long-term health problems.

The program’s significant success has led doctors to refer other children. Roughly 350 children—from newborn to five years old—and approximately 100 pregnant mothers receive ICEJ-sponsored meals daily.

“Based on the past 18 months’ experience, ICEJ’s supplemental feeding program has proven to be vital to the health of the children in Gondar and extremely cost-effective,” the Jewish Agency leadership said in a letter to the ICEJ. “We deeply appreciate ICEJ’s past generosity.”

At the same time, the cost and availability of food throughout eastern Africa has risen dramatically due to a massive plague of locusts, which has devastated agricultural output. Therefore, it is more urgent than ever for Ethiopian Aliyah to resume and increase, bringing all those still waiting home to Israel at last!

“Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.” (Matthew 25:40)

WHY ARE SO MANY JEWS SUDDENLY WANTING TO MAKE ALIYAH?

BY DAVID R. PARSONS

Rather than bringing Aliyah to a halt, the coronavirus crisis appears to be producing a surge in interest among Jews worldwide to move to Israel. In fact, Israeli and Jewish Agency officials are estimating that as many as 90,000 Jews will immigrate to Israel over the next 18 months. That would be nearly double the average rate of Jewish return of the past decade.

There are several factors driving the Aliyah wave at present, but the main reason is the sense that Israel has done well so far in handling the coronavirus pandemic.

Even among the world’s Jewish population alone, the difference between Israel and the Diaspora communities is quite stark. Israel is home to some 6.6 million Jews, and yet it has seen just over 300 deaths so far due to the coronavirus, whereas an estimated 10,000 Jews have died from the virus to date in Europe and North America out of a Jewish population of around 7 million.

Thus, Israel is increasingly viewed as having a better health system than many other Western countries with significant Jewish communities.

Israel’s economy also is seen as stronger and more able to recover from the impact of the pandemic. Many Israeli workers placed on temporary layoffs in March and April are back at work, although unemployment does remain abnormally high and incoming tourism is still blocked.

Israel also has shown its unique national resiliency over recent months. This is a people who have become accustomed, unfortunately, to facing a myriad of crises over the decades—especially wars and natural disasters—and they know how to collectively pull together and respond.

Despite almost 18 months of political deadlock and three failed elections, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu took firm command of the nation’s battle against the “unseen enemy” of COVID-19 and even counseled other national leaders on how to deal with the global health menace. Polls instantly gave him a decisive boost for truly taking the lead in confronting the viral threat.

Finally, there are growing concerns among Jews worldwide about the sharp rise in anti-Semitism over recent months, as many are falsely blaming the Jewish people for the coronavirus pandemic as well as for the racial tensions rocking the United States and many other nations right now.

Thus, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of Jews applying to make Aliyah in just about every Jewish community abroad—from Sydney to St. Petersburg to São Paulo.
The Epstein family are from Kharkov, Ukraine. The father, Dima, is an engineer, the mother, Wolya, is a translator, and the daughter, Ksuysha, is 12 years old. They are full of excitement and faith that their recent Aliyah will be successful.

In planning their Aliyah, however, they knew that Lyuba, their five-year-old cat, had to join them. Lyuba means “loved,” and little Ksuysha would not be able to part with her. “He is part of the family,” Dima said, “and we could not imagine our home without him.” Special permission had to be secured by the Jewish Agency and immigration authorities.

The Epstein’s, and especially Ksuysha, were concerned how Lyuba would adjust to their new home—to the new country. But they knew he was tough and a survivor from birth. When he was a tiny kitten on the street, stray dogs killed his mother and nearly killed him. A kindly woman rescued him but couldn’t take care of Lyuba. She advertised to find a good home for the kitten, and the Epstein’s were a perfect match. Since then, Lyuba has been living with them, safe in their care, spending every night in Ksuysha’s bed.

The Epstein’s have family in Israel and intend to live in Holon in the future. They know only a little Hebrew and look forward to going to language school.

Dima says, “I am certain we will overcome all problems of starting our life in Israel. Of course it will be hard at first, but we have a wonderful and proven cure for stress. No matter how bad a mood you will come back home with, a few minutes with Lyuba, petting his silky fur, and everything becomes easier.”
Newly Constructed Safe Room

Director of S’dot Negev Resilience Center with ICEJ Staff
Imagine you are a mother on a leisurely stroll down a walking path with your eight-year-old son. Suddenly, you hear the all-too-familiar sound of a faint voice. Your heart beats faster! It feels like a thousand butterflies are swirling in your stomach. You know what is coming next. The low sound quickly turns into a commanding voice: Tseva adom! Tseva adom! (“Color red!”).

There is not even enough time for the siren. Instinctively, you know a rocket is coming, and you only have a few seconds to find shelter. But your small son starts running after an even younger girl on the path and says: “Mommy, Mommy, she lives far away—I will go and take care of her.” Then he realizes, “But who will take care of me?” and returns to his mother.

Sadly, this is a true story. It is the harsh reality that Israelis in the southern Israeli town of S’dot Negev live with every day.

S’dot Negev is located within three kilometers of the volatile Gaza border. Civilians here are confronted by the threat of underground terror tunnels popping up into their area, the constant challenge of explosive balloons flying overhead, and the ever-present fear of Hamas rocket attacks. At times, their area has been battered by barrages of 300 rockets in one day!

In response, the S’dot Negev Resilience Center was opened to provide a place of refuge and healing for traumatized families in the community and surrounding region, offering short-term counseling and coping strategies. The clinic manager, Esther Marcos, says their approach is “therapy and treatment for after the effect but a lot of preventative work as well.”

The Resilience Center has expanded from four to twelve qualified therapists who work with children, families, and groups. It has seen a recent influx of teenagers and men who are suffering from stress.

The Resilience Center needed to be enlarged, but first required a safe room to shelter people during a rocket attack. The ICEJ learned of this need and leaped into action.

“We felt such an urgency to help when we understood that those suffering psychological stress were left unprotected when looking for help and healing,” recalled ICEJ Vice President for Aid and Aliyah Nicole Yoder.

Thanks to a generous donation from Dr. Garth and Tina Coonce of TCT Christian Television Network, in partnership with ICEJ USA, we built the necessary safe room. It is made of reinforced steel and can withstand a direct rocket hit.

During a special dedication ceremony, an ICEJ team watched as a mezuzah was placed on the door frame along with a dedication plaque expressing our hope that this safe room would “provide protection and comfort to our dear Israeli friends.”

Nicole Yoder immediately noticed how much larger and nicer the whole remodeled facility was compared to her initial visit. “I can hardly recognize the place,” she told her hosts. “It is great to see what else we helped to happen by giving the shelter room. May this room provide peace of mind.”

Concluding the dedication, Esther Marcos assured us: “The children and families are saying thank you!”

Please help us to protect and comfort the people of Israel.
Give at: icejusa.org/aid
While the ICEJ has been helping Israel deal with the coronavirus crisis, another issue the nation continues to face is the threat of Hamas. In May, the Christian Embassy delivered three lifesaving portable bomb shelters to an Israeli community along the Gaza border. An additional eight shelters will be delivered to the area soon.

The three shelters were donated to Kibbutz Kfar Silver, located between northern Gaza and Ashkelon. The Kibbutz operates a special youth village that is home to some 250 children from new immigrant families and from broken homes. The youth village also houses schools for another 700 students from the surrounding region. Kfar Silver was chosen to receive the shelters because it did not have adequate protection for the children on the playground or in the new classrooms recently constructed near the main school buildings.

The ICEJ raised the funds for two of the bomb shelters through a “Giving Tuesday” online donation campaign back in December. Several residents of Kfar Silver made video appeals for the campaign, describing how their students are vulnerable to sudden rocket attacks from nearby Gaza. Villagers have less than 30 seconds to find shelter when the red alert sounds!

The residents of Kfar Silver were elated to hear that their appeals for help had touched the hearts of Christians from all over the world to give to this need. Donations for the shelters came in from Mexico, the Philippines, Finland, Australia, Barbados, Germany, India, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Thailand, United Kingdom, and the United States.

The two shelters were placed beside a playground and new classrooms at the Sadot Silver elementary school. The third shelter, donated by the ICEJ USA, was placed in an area where the staff of the youth village reside.

“We are very glad to have these shelters,” said Leo, head of the Sadot Silver parents’ committee. “When I sent the photos of their delivery out to the parents, my phone was immediately full of ‘thank you’ messages.”

**ICEJ DONATES THREE SHELTERS FOR CHILDREN AT KFAR SILVER**

**BY KAYLA MUCHNIK**

Bomb Shelter Donated by the ICEJ for Kfar Silver
Join the ICEJ’s
SHOMER SOCIETY
Leave a Legacy for Israel’s Future

Consider the ICEJ in your Will or Estate Plans

The ICEJ has worked tirelessly on behalf of the people of Israel for almost 40 years. Our Shomer Society has been an integral part of continuing this work. Your gift of cash, stocks and bonds, mutual funds, life insurance, excess in retirement funds, property, or a gift annuity are excellent ways to help the ICEJ carry on your love for Israel. With proper foresight, it is possible for you to bless Israel greatly for many years to come.

Leave a legacy! Make a critical difference!

Call Us: 800-379-3897

The Lord has placed before us a great calling to bless His chosen and beloved people and we simply cannot do it without your help. Your donation will make a measurable difference for God’s purposes here in Jerusalem and beyond. The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem – USA, Inc. is classified by the I.R.S. as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Corporate and personal contributions to the ICEJ’s US Branch, to the extent allowed by law, are fully tax-deductible.
The Strategic Importance of the Jordan Valley

By Susan Michael, ICEJ USA Director

President Trump’s proposed peace plan for Israel and the Palestinians allows for Israel’s annexation (extension of sovereignty) of the major settlement blocks in the “West Bank” as well as the Jordan Valley. While the overall plan has been touted as the best plan presented thus far, it does allow for an eventual Palestinian State should the Palestinians come to the table. In the meantime, indications are that Israel can go ahead and begin extending sovereignty over those areas she requires in any future agreement.

The Trump administration previously recognized Jerusalem as the eternal capital of Israel as well as Israel’s sovereignty over the Golan Heights, both recognitions that Israel had long-awaited. This peace plan seems to be opening another historic door for Israel to solidify the defensible borders she needs.

Is Annexation the Right Word?
Some analysts argue it is incorrect to use the term “annex” for territory to which Israel already has a legitimate claim. It is even dangerous because the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court defines “annexation by the use of force of the territory of another State of part thereof” as “constituting the grave Crime of Aggression.” To describe Israel’s extension of sovereignty as “annexation” implies the territory belonged to another State and Israel (and the West Bank) to the west—it is bordered by steep cliffs rising as high as 3,900–5,600 feet high.

The majority of the Jordan Valley is already administered by Israel, as it forms part of the West Bank’s “Area C” as outlined in the Oslo peace accords of the 1990s. Eighty-six percent of the land is Israeli farmland due to its year-round agricultural climate, fertile soils, and water supply. It is strategic militarily because it forms the border between Jordan to the east and Israel (and the West Bank) to the west and is regulated by the Israel-Jordan peace treaty of 1994.

Keep security and economic ties with Sunni Arab countries that will prevent legitimate pushback; and a strong Israeli security presence that is capable of deterring Palestinian unrest. This stated, Israel’s local friendships are not guaranteed tomorrow, and American support for such action rests on a shaky reelection bid for President Trump. If Israel desires to obtain defensible borders for the future, now is the time to act swiftly.

Jordan Valley

The “Jordan Valley” is used here to include the lower course of the Jordan River, from the spot where it exits the Sea of Galilee in the north, to the end of its course, where it flows into the Dead Sea in the south. The valley is a long and narrow trough roughly 65 miles long. This valley includes the lowest elevation in the world, and on both sides—to the east and west—it is bordered by steep cliffs rising as high as 3,900–5,600 feet high.

Israel’s security by preventing the development of military threats against Israel—including conventional warfare, terrorism and guerilla warfare—from and via the Palestinian territories. The only way to keep illegal weapons from entering the demilitarized Palestinian zone is for Israel to maintain control of its borders.

Jordan’s Security

Jordan gave lip service to cutting ties with Israel in response to the “annexation” but has no interest in conflict with Israel. It is Israel and the United States, not the Palestinian Authority, that bring peace and stability to Jordan. One senior Jordanian official reporting to Israel Hayom newspaper asserted:

As expected, Jordan will beat its chest loudly in support of the Palestinian people while treasuring its strategic ties with Israel in a quiet manner.

In conclusion, the chance to extend sovereignty to the Jordan Valley and major settlements is a unique opportunity. Everything, at least momentarily, is in place for such a move: the strong support of the White House; developing security and economic ties with Sunni Arab countries that will prevent legitimate pushback; and a strong Israeli security presence that is capable of deterring Palestinian unrest. This stated, Israel’s local friendships are not guaranteed tomorrow, and American support for such action rests on a shaky reelection bid for President Trump. If Israel desires to obtain defensible borders for the future, now is the time to act swiftly.

Israel’s security by preventing the development of military threats against Israel—including conventional warfare, terrorism and guerilla warfare—from and via the Palestinian territories. The only way to keep illegal weapons from entering the demilitarized Palestinian zone is for Israel to maintain control of its borders.

Jordan’s Security

Jordan gave lip service to cutting ties with Israel in response to the “annexation” but has no interest in conflict with Israel. It is Israel and the United States, not the Palestinian Authority, that bring peace and stability to Jordan. One senior Jordanian official reporting to Israel Hayom newspaper asserted:

As expected, Jordan will beat its chest loudly in support of the Palestinian people while treasuring its strategic ties with Israel in a quiet manner.

In conclusion, the chance to extend sovereignty to the Jordan Valley and major settlements

...
ISRAEL IMPACT TOUR
Where the Bible comes alive!

Ages 18–30

November 4-13, 2020

The Israel Impact Tour is our amazing, one-of-a-kind, power-packed 10-day young adult tour to Israel—the land of the Bible. This tour is uniquely designed for outrageous fun and spiritual impact. You’ll ride a camel, snorkel in the Red Sea, hike Masada, sleep in a bedouin tent, float in the Dead Sea, get baptized in the Jordan River, wade through water in Hezekiah’s tunnel, and take a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee. You will also learn so much from the Bible as you worship in Jerusalem, pray at the Wailing Wall, enter the Garden Tomb, seek God about your future on the beach of the Mediterranean, and commit to His will in the Garden of Gethsemane. You’ll come back with a clear understanding of Jerusalem and Israel on three key levels: 1) the biblical/historical, 2) the current geopolitical, and 3) the future/prophetic. You’ll not only make new friends, you will meet Israelis from all walks of life. This tour, that originates with a group flight from the USA, is being led by Peter Ebenroad, ICEJ USA Young Adults Coordinator, John Vedder, ICEJ USA Church Relations Coordinator, and Zach Patterson, The Rock in Anaheim, California.

www.israelimpacttour.com

Get In Touch
(888)772-7732 ext. 742
PREPARE FOR THIS YEAR’S FEAST OF TABERNACLES

**PRAY ABOUT GOING UP TO JERUSALEM**
Contact us for assistance at: (866) 393-5890 or tours@icejusa.org

**REGISTER TO WATCH THE LIVE STREAM**
Sign up for live stream alerts at: www.feastoftabernacles.live

**GATHER A FEAST OFFERING TO SEND TO JERUSALEM**
Give online at: www.icejusa.org/offering

**SEND IN YOUR PRAYER REQUESTS**
Go to www.icejusa.org/prayerrequest and we will pray for you

October 2 - 7, 2020

For more information, please contact us at:
(866) 393-5890 • tours@icejusa.org