Dear Friends,

We have had a very busy season of many wonderful happenings here in Israel and around the world. The celebrations of Jerusalem day, and the 50th Anniversary of a united city, lasted over a month.

A truly historic and very blessed event was the very first prayer breakfast held by the Knesset under the auspices of Reuven Rivlin, the president of Israel. We at the ICEJ felt honored to play our part in the event and its preparations.

In addition, we again welcomed more than 90 leaders from over 40 nations to our annual ICEJ International Leadership Conference. And of course, the past weeks have been marked by the visit of a very favorable US president, Donald Trump. These are just a few of the many exciting events that took place in recent weeks. Jerusalem is indeed an exciting place, and we see in so many ways how this city is becoming more and more a place where the nations come to hear the word of the Lord.

This year marks a special Jubilee for Jerusalem. The 50th Jubilee is a divine declaration that marks the favor of the Lord. It is a year when possessions revert to their original owners—a year of release. Therefore, we can expect God to touch Jerusalem and its inhabitants in a unique way this year.

What this will mean remains yet to be seen. But I know that God will bless Jerusalem in a special way. The greatest blessing would surely be the fulfilment of Zechariah’s great prophecy: “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy ...” (Zechariah 12:10). Let us all pray together that this year indeed will be the year of the Lord’s favor on Jerusalem!

Yours in Christ from Jerusalem,

Dr. Jürgen Bühler
ICEJ President
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JERUSALEM, A PRAISE IN THE EARTH

The Significance of the City of God: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

BY DR. JÜRGEN BÜHLER
Four thousand years ago, God chose the Mesopotamian merchant Abraham and gave him a destiny that would radically change the world (Genesis 12:1–3). With Abraham, God chose a people to whom He promised great things. These promises of blessing for Israel were not given as an end to themselves. It was not about God choosing a favorite people for Himself from all the nations on the earth. It was much more than that. The purpose of God’s calling of Abraham and his descendants after him was to save the whole earth. “... and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Genesis 12:3). Paul saw already a first proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ in this promise: “Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: ‘All nations will be blessed through you’” (Galatians 3:8 NIV).

The Land and the People
The fact that is often ignored is that God chose not only the people—“from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah” (Romans 9:5 NIV)—but also a geographical place. God not only promised Abraham He would make him a great and blessed nation, but He also assured him of a “land I will show you” (Genesis 12:1 NIV). As Abraham’s descendants are supposed to be a blessing to all families of the earth, this special stretch of land is of strategic significance for the salvation of mankind. In a way, it is the bridgehead connecting heaven and earth. In other words, in the land of Canaan, God opened the door for all mankind to gain free access to the kingdom of God.

Epicenter Jerusalem
The epicenter of this special and promised land is the city of Jerusalem. Abraham had two powerful experiences there that would impress an eternal and momentous seal on the city. First, Abraham had an encounter with the mysterious King Melchizedek. Melchizedek was the king of Salem, later called Jerusalem. He approached Abraham with bread and wine acting as both the king of peace and the king of righteousness. Melchizedek was not only a worldly ruler but combined the office of a priest with that of a sovereign king—a distinctly messianic quality. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews also envisioned Melchizedek as a forerunner of the promised savior of the world. After his fellowship with Melchizedek, Abraham would return once more to the mountainous area of Jerusalem where God ordered him to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac, the son of promise. Abraham ascended this mountain in obedience, while fully assured in faith that God was able to raise his son from the dead (Hebrews 11:19).

Almost a thousand years had to pass, until King David ultimately realized the significance of this place. He relocated the capital of his kingdom to Jerusalem, understanding that God was going to establish His temple in this very city. The temple was not supposed to be just a Jewish house of prayer. The Word of God teaches us that even the stranger who did not belong to the people of Israel was able to find the God of Israel there “in order that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you” (1 Kings 8:43 ESV). Therefore, at a later time, Isaiah would call the temple “a house of prayer for all nations” (Isaiah 56:7).

The Promise in Babylon
For many Jews, the world collapsed when, after several conquests of Jerusalem, the Babylonians destroyed the temple in the year 480 BC. How could God allow this to happen? The Jews taken away didn’t understand God anymore or what was happening to them. “By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion” (Psalm 137:1 NIV). It was the prophet Daniel who never gave up hope for Jerusalem and who understood like no one else the eternal purpose of this eternal city. As a high official in the Babylonian Empire, a role that could be compared to that of a prime minister today, Daniel prayed
for the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the return of the Jewish people from Babylon. “While I was speaking, and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the Lord my God for his holy hill” (Daniel 9:21 NIV), Daniel recounted, “the man Gabriel” appeared to him and instructed him.

His words preoccupied many theologians and Bible researchers for centuries. “Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophecy, and to anoint a most holy place” (Daniel 9:24 ESV). There is hardly a more explicit passage in the Bible that describes the unique calling of the Jewish people and the city of Jerusalem as clearly and distinctly as this one. God appointed a certain timeframe for the Jewish people and the city of Jerusalem in which He would fulfill the following tasks: to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophecy, and to anoint a most holy place.

There is no other city on earth with such a calling.

1. Finish transgression: The transgression of God’s commandments is the huge problem of humanity. “They have all turned aside,” the psalmist declared (Psalm 14:3). But there will be an end to this disease of rebellion against God and His commandments.

2. Put an end to sin: The root of human rebellion against God originates in the nature of man. Ungodliness has its source in our hearts. Jesus explained, “For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander” (Matthew 15:19 ESV). No human is immune from it. But this sinful nature of man shall be put off. The Hebrew word also allows the translation “will be sealed.” That is, God will seal this source completely, once and for all.

3. Atone for iniquity: All sins which have been committed already shall be atoned for. Even if the sins are like crimson and cry out to heaven, they shall be as white as snow (Isaiah 1:18).

4. Bring in everlasting righteousness: Isaiah proclaimed, “My righteousness will be forever, and my salvation to all generations” (Isaiah 51:8 ESV). There won’t be just a brief period of righteousness as there was under King David and King Hezekiah, who were then succeeded by ungodly rulers. This reign of righteousness will last forever: “Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this” (Isaiah 9:7 ESV).

5. Seal both vision and prophecy: All the promises of God, however great and mind-boggling they might be, shall come to fulfillment. Not one iota of God’s promises will be dropped.

6. Anoint a most holy place: This can be everything—a future temple in Israel, the eternal sanctuary of the heavenly Jerusalem, the church as a temple, or each individual believer as a temple. John Wesley saw therein primarily the threefold anointing of the Messiah as king, priest, and prophet.

“What a marvelous prophecy!” the theologian H. C. Leupold wrote. “These six statements include all good things which God pledged to the humans.” Daniel linked these tremendous promises tightly to the Jewish people and to the city of Jerusalem. “About your people and your holy city ...” Therefore, it is not surprising that Jesus had to fulfill His mission in Jerusalem from the beginning. No other city was qualified for this. On the mountain of transfiguration, Jesus conferred with Moses and Elijah “who appeared in glory, and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem” (Luke 9:30–31 WEB).

God predestined Jerusalem to be the city for the world’s redemption. Jesus died in Jerusalem “once for all” for the sins of the world. Abraham could see this day to come, as he was binding his son on the altar on mount Moriah (John 8:56). Daniel anticipated that Jesus atoned for the sins of the world outside the city gates on Calvary hill (Golgotha). He conquered death when He rose from the dead and accomplished a complete redemption for humanity.

The Model Church in Jerusalem

At first, it was a cause of concern for the first disciples that Jesus ascended to heaven from the Mount of Olives in eastern Jerusalem. But Jesus promised them that He would not abandon them. A comforter was to come. And He did come precisely on the day of Pentecost, again in Jerusalem. The Spirit of God rested like tongues of fire on each one of the 120 disciples. Ordinary people were filled with the presence of God and started a powerful ministry which brought thousands of people into the kingdom of God. The first church was founded in Jerusalem. It was a powerful community which relied not only on well-elaborated theological teachings but also on the effective dynamic of the proclamation of the gospel. This Jerusalem church did not believe in cultural adaptation to draw people into the congregation, but its people trusted in the changing and miracle-performing power of the Holy Spirit. They did not own cathedrals or big church coffers, but they were able to say: “I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!” (Acts 3:6 ESV). Among all model churches and all revival movements of Christianity, none has had more impact on us than the church in Jerusalem.
Jerusalem or Rome?
Tertullian asked once: “What has Jerusalem to do with Athens?” His answer pointed out that the gospel of Christ has little to do with Greek philosophy. On the contrary, we are well advised through Scripture to look to Jerusalem. The cross and the resurrection, so inherent to Jerusalem, do impact Athens, Berlin, Beijing, New York, and the rest of the world. Even today Jesus comes out of the city gates of Jerusalem to approach every human being with bread and wine. Not by chance the psalmist wrote, “If I forget you, Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill!” (Psalm 137:5). We should never forget: the cradle of our faith stands in Jerusalem, not in Rome.

Conflict Over Jerusalem
It is thus not surprising that this city is embattled like no other. The prophet Zechariah foresaw a global escalation over the city of Jerusalem: “Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about … a burdensome stone for all people … though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it” (Zechariah 12:2–3 KJV). Jerusalem shall be divided, internationalized, or even subordinated to the Vatican. The plans for the future of this city are numerous. God is warning the nations: All who want to lift this burdensome stone “will surely hurt themselves.” Jerusalem is the city of God (Psalm 46, 48) and God is passionately concerned about this city: “I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy” (Zechariah 1:14; 8:2 KJV). When God calls something His own and expresses His zeal so clearly, then we would be wise to “let Jerusalem come up on our heart” (Jeremiah 51:50).

Jerusalem, Our Hope
Not only are our roots in Jerusalem, but the hope of our faith also lies there. The redeemer will come back to Jerusalem “in the same way you saw him go up into heaven” (Acts 1:11 ISV). His feet will neither stand on Azusa Street nor in Brownsville nor in Wittenberg nor Herrnhut but again on the hill east of Jerusalem, on the Mount of Olives. At that very time, Christ will take up His Messianic rule as the Prince of Peace. The promises of Daniel will be accomplished completely. Jerusalem will stand firmly established as the head of the nations. “The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Isaiah 2:3 NIV). As a result, they will “beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore” (Isaiah 2:4 ESV). Jerusalem will be a praise in the earth and no longer a cup of trembling for the nations. But this will not happen automatically. God seeks our cooperation. Isaiah described our task as follows:

“On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have set watchmen; all the day and all the night they shall never be silent. You who put the Lord in remembrance, take no rest, and give him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem and makes it a praise in the earth” (Isaiah 62:6–7 ESV). God is searching for intercessors who are ready to be involved in His great plan of redemption for the world and for Israel. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! Those who love Jerusalem will prosper! (Psalm 122:6).
As Israel marked 50 years since the city of Jerusalem was reunified, the ICEJ hosted a series of events to mark this historic occasion. In May, we hosted dozens of Israeli officials and local Christian and Jewish leaders for our annual Jerusalem Day reception and dinner on the grounds of the ICEJ. Then during the Six-Day War remembrances in early June, Christian Embassy representatives came in from all over the world for the inaugural Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast and our ministry’s annual Global Leadership Conference. The festivities concluded on June 15 with a special screening on the Embassy grounds of the new documentary film on the 1967 Six-Day War entitled *In Our Hands*, produced by CBN. The film features first-hand interviews with members of the IDF’s 55th Paratroopers Brigade who liberated the Old City of Jerusalem 50 years ago, as well as an all-Israeli cast of actors performing reenactments of those dramatic events.

The ICEJ featured prominently at the first annual Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast held in June under the auspices of Israeli President Reuven Rivlin and the Knesset Christian Allies Caucus. At the invitation of MK Robert Ilatov and Albert Veksler, more than 500 Christian leaders from 58 nations attended this inaugural event, including some 60 ICEJ senior leaders and national directors from around the globe. Convened to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem and to encourage Christian prayer for Israel worldwide, the three-day gathering included multiple events. These events included a visit to the Knesset, a reception at the president’s residence (pictured), a worship concert, a founders’ gala dinner, and the launch of the first annual Presidential Prayer Breakfast for Israel at the grand Waldorf Astoria Hotel in Jerusalem. ICEJ President Dr. Jürgen Bühler was a keynote speaker at several of these events, and the ICEJ received frequent recognition from other speakers for its role in pioneering the global movement of Christian support for Israel in our day.
INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE 2017

In early June, the ICEJ hosted more than 100 national directors and other key representatives and staff from 45 countries around the world at our largest-ever International Leadership Conference in Jerusalem. With 25 new branches added in just the last five years, it was especially exciting to welcome around 20 of these international leaders to our Jerusalem headquarters for the first time.

HERZLIIYA CONFERENCE

ICEJ President Gives Address at Herzliya Policy Conference

In June, the ICEJ once again participated in the annual Herzliya Policy Conference, the most prestigious gathering of government, diplomatic, security, academic, and economic leaders in Israel each year. ICEJ President Dr. Jürgen Bühler addressed the opening session by highlighting the critical role the ICEJ and its worldwide branches have played in recent years in supporting Israel diplomatically, as well as the strategic importance of the growing evangelical Christian movement worldwide in providing support for the Jewish state.

The ICEJ also hosted a panel discussion on “Christian Support as a Growing Strategic Asset for Israel,” moderated by our Senior International Spokesman David Parsons. This panel featured pro-Israel Christian leaders from all five continents who discussed the present status of this global constituency and its potential for Israel in coming years. The panelists included: President of the National Religious Broadcasters Dr. Jerry A. Johnson (North America); ICEJ Guatemala National Director Dr. Luis Fernandez Solares (Latin America); ICEJ Germany National Director Gottfried Bühler (Europe); ICEJ Special Coordinator for West Africa Dr. Abdou Maiga (Africa); and ICEJ Taiwan National Director Joseph Chou (Asia). Akiva Tor of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also joined the panel to bring an official Israeli perspective to the discussion.
The ICEJ Invites You
as a Pastor or Ministry Leader to Israel.
This unique Israel tour for pastors also includes a four-day international Envision Pastors’ Conference in Jerusalem. Join pastors and leaders from around the world for this inspiring conference. This itinerary is perfect for pastors who are looking for a tour to Israel that offers something more in-depth.

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We are pleased to welcome Rev. Mojmir Kallus to the ICEJ leadership team in Jerusalem, where he will serve as the new vice president for international affairs.

Mojmir has been the national director of ICEJ Czech Republic since he founded the branch in 1994, and in recent years, has served as a member of the ICEJ’s International Board of Trustees. Mojmir has a background of great dedication to faith in Christ, even during times of Communist oppression, and brings many valuable skills to his new position.

Mojmir was born in 1962 into a nominal Christian family in Czechoslovakia when it was still under Soviet domination. In 1983, while studying mathematics at Charles University in Prague, he accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior in an evangelical church. He completed his math degree in 1985 but was soon called into ministry. He first served as a lay minister in the Czech Brethren Church and later became a full-time assistant pastor. In the years after the fall of the Iron Curtain, the fellowship grew to be the largest congregation in the country, with about 1,000 members.

In the post-Communist period, many well-known evangelists were visiting the country, and Mojmir often served as an interpreter at their rallies. Thus, he had the privilege to assist such respected ministers of the gospel as Billy Graham and Reinhard Bonnke. In 1998, he planted a new church associated with the Vineyard movement, while also holding a secular job as a freelance translator and interpreter. Soon, Mojmir started working as an official translator for the Czech government, accompanying the prime minister and other cabinet ministers on their travels around the world.

Mojmir became aware of the Christian Embassy in 1990 and made his first trip to Israel in 1992 to attend the Feast of Tabernacles. Two years later, he was appointed to head the new Czech Branch, our first in a former Communist country.

Over the years since, Mojmir has become one of the ICEJ’s most resourceful and effective national directors. In one innovative project, he managed to secure Czech and EU government funding for the Czech Branch to teach Holocaust education in public schools. He has championed the fight against anti-Semitism and pushed for bans on neo-Nazi groups in Eastern Europe.

Mojmir has leveraged his professional contacts as an official government translator into successful lobbying efforts for Israel in the Czech parliament and cabinet, including the parliament’s recent decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. He has also taken the lead in launching several new ICEJ branches in Eastern Europe, giving him valuable experience as he moves into opening new branches in other regions of the globe. Meanwhile, Mojmir has continued his pastoral role for many Czech Christians who greatly respect his grasp of biblical Hebrew. For many years, he has led a Friday night Bible study of the weekly Torah portion.

Mojmir will move to Jerusalem this summer to take up his new position and will be accompanied by his wife, Lucie, and their 12-year-old daughter, Matylda.
ICEJ MENTORING PROGRAM
For Immigrant Families In Israel
BY KAYLA ELLINGSWORTH

Shortly after her daughter was born, Sonia, a new immigrant to Israel, became a single mother. Having too little income to support them, she began studying for her second degree but had trouble balancing her responsibilities. She tried seeking help with several public institutions but was turned away. She felt alone, judged, and incapable of gaining control over her life.

Sonia's life finally took a turn for the better when she met a lady at her daughter's kindergarten who told her where to find help. Through a mentoring program sponsored by the ICEJ, Sonia now meets weekly with an advisor and finds it to be a “breath of fresh air.”

“My mentor helped me see the bigger picture, set achievable goals, and find the courage to face my problems,” Sonia explained with relief. “I meet with a financial advisor to help put financial issues into perspective, and most of all, I dream again. Today, I am a proud holder of a degree from one of the top universities in Israel. I am looking at a brighter future, and I will be forever grateful.”

The mentoring program, sponsored by the ICEJ, helps immigrant families with their basic needs and then develops a comprehensive plan to move these families toward independence according to their unique challenges. Assistance focuses on developing or upgrading marketable skills, finding employment, offering financial advice, and helping children adjust to a new school system by providing extra-curricular activities or tutoring.

You can partner with us and help Jewish families arriving in Israel feel right at home! Help people like Sonia and her daughter by sending your gift today: www.icejusa.org/absorption

DONATE ONLINE
A woman was sleeping on a couch in a busy room full of people, with cigarette burns on the skin around her ankles, wearing clothes that desperately needed washing. Although not a common sight in Israel, even in this Land of Promise there are people like her in desperate need of help. Through the ICEJ, you can reach out even to the least of them.

One of the darkest neighborhoods in Tel Aviv is home to many lost souls overcome by despair—drug addicts, prostitutes, and victims of human trafficking. And yet amidst this nightmare stands a beacon of hope. With the ICEJ’s help, a couple of Israelis have created a safe place for these local women to get off the streets for several hours during the day and be encouraged to take steps toward rehabilitation.

This unique center surrounds these women with acts of kindness and love—a new hair style, painted nails, a warm meal, a hot shower, or even a new outfit—luxuries often taken for granted by the average person.

“It is so fun to come here. I never got a manicure before, and here you can also find a new outfit that you might not otherwise be able to get,” said one of the troubled women at the center.

The staff and volunteers at the center engage in conversations with the women while serving food, offering new clothes, doing their hair and nails, and hugging them just like a mother would hug her own daughter.

“These women, living on the streets, have been touched in all the wrong ways,” the volunteer shared. “Many hands have hurt and abused them. When they come to our shelter, we get to embrace them with hands that are gentle, loving, and caring. We have the honor to be God’s hands to these women.”

From the Streets of Tel Aviv to A NEW LIFE OF HOPE AND A FUTURE

Many men who are addicted to alcohol or drugs come from broken and dysfunctional homes. Often their fathers are addicts, and their sons learn the same destructive habits at an early age.

Hamid (not his real name) is such an example. He grew up with an alcoholic father in an Israeli Arab Muslim family in one of the villages in the north of the country. Because of the problems at home, he left school at a young age and started to work in construction with his dad. In his teenage years, he started to drink and use drugs. Eventually, his family threw him out of the house and Hamid ended up on the streets of Tel Aviv where he has lived for the past 10 years.

His miserable life changed dramatically when a former drug addict named Raja found him on one of the back streets of Tel Aviv during a weekly outreach. They developed a relationship as they met every week. Together with food, care, and love, Raja offered Hamid true hope for a better life. He decided to grab hold of this ray of hope and was brought to a rehabilitation center.

Now, nine months later, Hamid is clean for the first time in 25 years. He is learning about his new life with God and is happy in his new home. Raja is teaching him and spends much time with him. They study the Word together and have lots of time to talk and laugh. Communicating in Arabic, his mother tongue, and talking to a person who understands his culture is an enormous help and essential for his journey to a new life—which is full of hope—and his bright future. The ICEJ is supporting Raja’s work in the streets of Tel Aviv.
“Anna” (not her real name) was born in Ukraine, and when she was 15 years old, gave birth to her first child, a girl. Anna lived with her daughter in a shed with only a bed and a mattress. She eventually married and had a home where her second daughter was born, but 14 years later, her husband was in a severe motorcycle accident and died.

Anna was Jewish and had heard about life in Israel, so she decided to immigrate there with her children. She met a man and moved in with him. They often smoked pot together. After they separated, she fell deeper into drugs and prostitution. He married another woman and continued with his life, but she stayed in the notorious neighborhood of the Old Bus Station in South Tel Aviv, homeless and addicted.

From the time she became a mother, Anna never left her children alone, not even for a single day. During this time, however, the exact opposite occurred. She abandoned her children because she could no longer take care of them. Her eldest daughter became responsible for her little siblings and raised them.

Throughout this time, Anna occasionally tried to quit drugs but was not able to until she found the ICEJ-supported Red Carpet Center. They referred her to a rehabilitation center where, after suffering through withdrawals, she is now completely clean from drugs. She has come to love the Lord with all her heart.

By the grace of God, Anna has experienced a beautiful restoration in her relationship with her children. She hopes to return one day to the Old Bus Station district in Tel Aviv and help her friends who are still in the vicious cycle of drugs and prostitution. She desires to share the hope she found and help them escape that hellish life.

Ten women have now completed the restoration program and are clean from drugs. Please pray for them and their reentry into normal life.

Many of the suffering people in this land long for any sign of compassion. The ICEJ is your hands and feet in this land that serves those in need. You can make a difference! Send your support to the ICEJ by following this link: www.icejusa.org/aid
By Birte Scholz

In May, ICEJ Germany organized a speaking tour for Orthodox Jewish Rabbi Shmuel Bowman, visiting five German churches and a theological seminary. “The fact that an Orthodox Rabbi is ready to speak from the pulpit of German churches, 70 years after the Holocaust, is unprecedented and a great honor for us,” said ICEJ Germany National Director Gottfried Bühler. Rabbi Bowman spoke about his work of setting up life-saving bomb shelters in endangered Jewish and Arab communities throughout Israel. “When we set up Jewish-designed and Christian-sponsored bomb shelters in Arab-Muslim communities, then we can rightly say that the Messiah is on the way,” Bowman said.

FIGHTING ANTI-SEMITISM WITH CULTURE

BY LISA SCHMID

At the end of April, 36 German teenagers from four different schools studied the effects of anti-Semitism and took a stand against it on a four-day educational trip organized by the ICEJ branches in Germany and the Czech Republic.

Touring through the concentration camp of Theresienstadt in the Czech Republic, the students met with Judith Rosenzweig of the ICEJ-sponsored Haifa Home for Holocaust Survivors, accompanied by ICEJ staff member Yudit Setz, and Evelina Merova from the Czech Republic. Judith and Evelina both survived the horrors of Theresienstadt and Auschwitz during WWII, and their personal stories deeply impacted the youngsters.

In Prague, the students participated in a “March of Goodwill” against anti-Semitism, alongside hundreds of Christians and Jews. The march ended with a rally in the Wallenstein Garden, where they were joined by Minister of Culture Daniel Herman and Deputy Speaker of the Senate Jaroslav Kubera, as well as Israeli Ambassador Daniel Meron.

RABBI BOWMAN IN GERMANY

St. Vitus Cathedral at the Prague Castle

For the first time in Czech history, leaders from the Christian and Jewish communities celebrated Jerusalem Day together in the famous St. Vitus Cathedral at the Prague Castle, the 600-year-old symbol of Czech statehood. The event was organized by the ICEJ Czech Republic Branch in cooperation with other Christian and Jewish organizations.

Several hundred people, including members of parliament and ambassadors, participated in the celebration of our common spiritual heritage. Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat greeted the assembly in a video message, highlighting the good relations between both countries. Israeli Ambassador Daniel Meron mentioned many connections between Prague and Jerusalem and noted that 50 years ago the reunification of Jerusalem opened the holy city to all. Czech President Milos Zeman also sent his greetings to the event.

Deputy Speaker of the Czech Parliament Jan Bartosek announced the successful passage on that very day of a resolution which calls on the Czech government to promote “respect for Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.” The motion represents an official recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel by the Czech Republic. It also strongly criticized the recent resolution of UNESCO, “which explicitly denies Israeli sovereignty over her own capital city of Jerusalem.”

Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu publicly thanked the Czech Republic at an event at Ammunition Hill in Jerusalem, adding: “The Czechs once gave us Czech rifles; this was the start of the struggle. Now the parliament in Prague called on its government to respect the status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel ... this the correct, worthy, and courageous decision that others should copy.”

St. Vitus Cathedral at the Prague Castle

Holocaust survivors with a group of German teenagers

NEW IMMIGRANTS RECEIVING A WELCOME PACKAGE FROM YUDIT SETZ, ICEJ AID
ICEJ SWITZERLAND HOSTS JERUSALEM DAY EVENT

In May, the ICEJ Swiss Branch held a Jerusalem Day celebration at the historic Palace Hotel in Lucerne, Switzerland, with more than 300 Christians gathering to rejoice in the reunification of Jerusalem in the 1967 Six-Day War. ICEJ Switzerland National Director Hansjörg Bischof welcomed David Parsons from the Jerusalem staff as the keynote speaker, while Israeli Ambassador to Switzerland Jacob Keidar and Swiss MP Hans-Ulrich Bigler also brought greetings. Israeli-Swiss singer Einat Betzalel performed special music.

ICEJ VP/Senior International Spokesman David Parsons

ICEJ USA DELIVERS STRATEGY PAPER TO TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

The USA Branch of the ICEJ has delivered a strategy paper to President Donald Trump and the United States government identifying the main reasons the international community has historically used to justify its refusal to recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capital. The first reason is the idea of internationalizing Jerusalem, as suggested in the 1947 UN Partition Plan, which was only intended as a temporary measure and has long since become outdated. The second reason is the need to be even-handed. This too is a poor excuse as many nations—including the United States—have placed their top envoys to the Palestinians in Jerusalem, while their counterparts in Israel sit in Tel Aviv.

The paper states that by moving the US Embassy to Jerusalem, the Trump administration will right a historic wrong, send a message to the world that America stands by its allies, and signal the Palestinians that the time for compromise has come.

“This year of Jubilee for Jerusalem is the right time for the United States to correct this historic injustice by leading the nations back up to Jerusalem,” stated ICEJ USA Director Susan Michael.

ICEJ NORWAY CONFRONTS FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF TERRORISM

Widely known, yet rarely publicized, is the fact that significant amounts of donations to the Palestinian Authority are siphoned off and used to support terrorists and their families. Furthermore, their terror attacks are celebrated in the Palestinian territories, a fact often brushed over by Western media.

However, a scandal broke out recently when a new women’s center in the West Bank, sponsored in part by the Norwegian government, was named after a female terrorist responsible for killing 37 civilians—including children—near Tel Aviv in 1978. The ICEJ office in Norway was first to react and disclose this information to the public; the office also approached the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and several members of parliament for comment.

Later in the afternoon, the MFA released a historic statement, calling glorification of terrorist attacks “completely unacceptable,” condemning the notion of naming a cultural center after a terrorist, and demanding a return of Norwegian funds contributed to the center. The Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs confirms that the Palestinian Authority uses $300 million annually to reward imprisoned and released terrorists, along with the families of deceased terrorists (jcpa.org).
The ICEJ is breaking new ground in both practical and spiritual terms in one of Europe’s poorest countries. “God Loves You” is the affirming name of a small but vibrant evangelical church in Cërrik, central Albania. Because God also loves Israel, local pastoral couple Kristian and Nina Kotorri invited the newly opened ICEJ branch in Albania’s capital city, Tirana, to organize an Isaiah 62 prayer event.

In doing so, Albania is uniting with believers in 85 countries across the globe to lift the Jewish people in prayer. Taking Isaiah 62:1 to heart, “For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not be quiet,” the Kotorris concurrently began circulating a petition for Albania’s government to recognize Jerusalem as the eternal capital of Israel and move the Republic of Albania’s embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

THE NEW BRANCH
The opening of a new ICEJ branch in Albania is quite remarkable. The country is considered predominantly Muslim and, until the fall of Communism 25 years ago, communist leaders boasted of having erased all religion from Albania and creating the first atheist state. Yet persistent and unified efforts by western missionaries are bearing fruit. This means sound biblical teaching on Israel has led young believers to embrace God’s plan for the Jewish people, creating a stable basis for the ICEJ’s work.

The potential for strong ties with Israel is also related to another, less-known chapter of Albania’s history. During World War II, the government refused to round up its Jews as the Nazi occupiers demanded. Instead, local Albanians risked their lives and hid many Jews in their own homes. The number of Jews living or hiding in Albania increased tenfold during the terrible years of the Holocaust. The story is well-known at Yad Vashem, where 69 Albanians, many of them Muslims, were awarded the honorary title Righteous Among the Nations. The ICEJ hopes to build on this historical heritage and facilitate strong, positive ties between the two countries, bringing blessing to both.

JOIN ALBANIA AND MANY OTHER COUNTRIES IN PRAYING FOR ISRAEL
This month we encourage you to pray with us that Israel would not be hindered or deterred from building up Jerusalem within the plans and purposes of God for this day. Pray the nations would overcome their fears of recognizing Jewish rights and Israeli sovereignty over the city. Pray for the Holy Spirit to override the plans and schemes of man when it comes to this city. Pray for Jerusalem to remain undivided and in Israeli hands. Pray for God to accomplish all He intends for the city of Jerusalem and the people of Israel in this special year of Jubilee.

If you would like to receive our monthly letter with specific topics to lift in prayer, join the Isaiah 62 initiative of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem and pray with us for Jerusalem, the nation of Israel, and the Middle East:

2. Begin an Isaiah 62 prayer group in your community.
3. Join us in fasting and praying on behalf of Israel on the first Wednesday of every month.
How is a small nation like Israel providing significant humanitarian aid around the world?

By Susan Michael

Israel, the size of New Jersey, has achieved acclaim all over the world with its humanitarian aid efforts. With the advent of the modern Jewish state in 1948, Israel set its course to embrace its biblical history of charity, “repairing the world,” known in the Hebrew language as “Tikkun Olam.” Isaiah 1:16–17 sums it up: “Devote yourself to justice, aid the wronged, uphold the rights of the orphan, defend the cause of the widow.” This value permeates Israeli society which transports Tikkun Olam to nations in need.

Several agencies oversee Israel’s world impact including MASHAV, established in 1957 under Prime Minister Golda Meir. As an arm of Israel’s Foreign Ministry, MASHAV runs Israel’s official humanitarian assistance program. MASHAV’s training courses have impacted the lives of millions living in poor nations by enabling 270,000 participants from 132 nations to return to their countries to improve agriculture, medicine, water, and other necessities.

IsraAID, a non-profit, non-governmental organization, focuses on disasters and long-term support. Since its establishment in 2001, it has been on the ground in nearly every major humanitarian crisis in the 21st century. Their civilian and Israel Defense Force personnel, including medics, doctors, search and rescue teams, and post trauma experts, often arrive in the earliest days of a disaster.

Whenever disaster strikes, whether flooding in the United States, medical treatment for Syrian refugees, or earthquakes in Nepal, Israelis are on the ground to help.

For example, when Haiti’s 2010 earthquake hit, IsraAID’s team was the first on the scene, saving thousands of lives. They set up a world-class field hospital recently named in a ceremony by the World Health Organization as “the number one in the world.” At the time, The New York Times reported, “Years of dealing with terrorist attacks, combined with an advanced medical technology sector, have made Israel one of the nimblest countries in disaster relief.” IsraAID has helped in 140 countries.

Israel even reaches out to its enemies in overt and covert ways. Ziv Hospital located in the northern Israeli town of Tzfat has treated more than 2,000 seriously wounded Syrians who make it to the Syria/Israel border.

In another fascinating outreach, Israeli humanitarian aid volunteers undertake dangerous missions from Israel into Syria to deliver medicines, food, and other necessities to hundreds of thousands of desperate Syrians. They secretly go to countries without diplomatic ties to Israel.

One of its leaders describes their work: “We are a group of Israeli citizens who love their homeland and believe in a Jewish tradition and culture that values compassionate, open-minded respect for the sanctity of human life and dignity. We believe we are blessed to be born in a democratic country that enables its citizens to travel to challenging and dangerous places ... Israel feels a moral and ethical duty to become ‘the voice of the voiceless’ ... even among some of our toughest and cruelest enemies.”

YOUR ISRAEL ANSWER:

How is a small nation like Israel providing significant humanitarian aid around the world?

Do you have a question about Israel?

Visit us at www.IsraelAnswers.com and get it answered!
Join the ICEJ’s Shomer Society
(Keeper of Israel Society)

Consider the ICEJ in Your Will or Estate Plans

With proper foresight and planning, it is possible for you to leave a legacy of blessing Israel. The ICEJ has worked tirelessly on behalf of the people of Israel for over 37 years and with your help will be doing so for many more to come. Your planned 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.

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.
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