THE GOD WHO HEALS

SEA OF GALILEE: Full Again
Dear Friends,

The disruptions caused by the coronavirus shutdowns have been painful for many people and in many different ways. We at the ICEJ have seen offices closed and hundreds of events in many countries cancelled. We wondered how the Feast of Tabernacles would be affected. One thing we knew for certain was it would be a different Feast this year.

We are happy to announce that the Feast will go on! And since you are unable to come to Israel for the Feast, we are bringing the Feast to you. We will bring anointed worship into your homes from sites such as the Garden Tomb and the Southern Steps of the Temple Mount. We have an array of speakers giving an unprecedented number of seminars and workshops. You will feel like you are right here with us in Israel!

Please sign up for further information on this year’s Feast at www.feastoftabernacles.live.

Finally, please continue to uphold us in prayer as we also remember you in ours. It is a challenging season, and we are more dependent on your prayers than ever before. But we serve a faithful God, and He will see us through.

I trust the testimonies in this month’s magazine will be a blessing and encouragement for you.

May the Lord bless you richly from Zion!

Yours in Christ,

Dr. Jürgen Bühler
ICEJ President

COVERAGE PHOTO: The Sea of Galilee (Itamar Grinberg)

FOR MAGAZINE ARCHIVES visit: www.icejusa.org/wfj

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**BY DR. JÜRGEN BÜHLER**

**ICEJ PRESIDENT**

“For thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land.’” (Haggai 2:6)

The prophet Haggai foresaw a time of global shaking. He saw not only the earth but also the heavens shaken. A shaking heaven does not mean that the heavenly dwelling place of God will shake. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. His rule and throne is everlasting. Rather, this refers to the heaven and earth, the sea and dry land.” (Haggai 2:6)

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“We are definitely in a time of unprecedented global shaking. The COVID-19 virus is causing global upheaval, resulting in an unseen flood of unusual government decisions worldwide. Like never before, a plague is impacting every part of our planet and affecting every nation on earth all at once. Also, the riots and demonstrations caused by the recent death of an African American man, George Floyd, are spreading like a wildfire around the world. Its greatest, most disconcerting impact is felt in the United States, where it has already enflamed the existing polarization within society and even could sway the upcoming presidential elections. Many of these demonstrations have been taken over by destructive forces that do not seek racial harmony and the peace of a nation but rather their destruction. I personally sense much of the violent fallout is of an evil spiritual origin and thus needs to be addressed in spiritual battle through prayer.

Together the COVID-19 pandemic and the riots are creating a national wound in America and around the world that cries out for healing. And it is exactly here that the Word of God gives us hope:

“[If] My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” (2 Chronicles 7:14)

This verse teaches us that prayer can lead to the healing and restoration of entire nations. Prayer is not just a weapon to fight personal wars regarding finances, health, or family. Prayer can be a strategic missile with national impact, and combined with fasting, it can break any yoke and stronghold. God inspires us to think on these levels.

“Ask of me,” God says, “and I will give you the nations for your inheritance” (Psalm 2:8). When Daniel prayed in Babylon for the dispersed people of Israel, his prayer impacted angelic principalities that ruled in the heavenly realms over the whole universe of Greece and Persia. That means focused and intentional prayer can shift the atmosphere in nations and regions.

One example of this is what happened in Germany during the late 1980s. After World War II, Germany was severely判决 and experienced a national division into two parts. East Germany was controlled and suppressed by the Soviet Union (with the East German region eventually overseen by a KGB officer named Vladimir Putin). The other side was part of the Free Western world led by the United States of America. The faultline of the Cold War, between East and West, ran right through Germany and especially through the city of Berlin. Germans stood on each other and were even trained to fight each other in case of war.

When I was in Germany last summer, it was 50 years after reunification, so I talked to pastors and leaders from east and west and was greatly encouraged by what I heard. Already in the late 1970s, prayer groups emerged in particular in communist East Germany that prayed for the healing of our land. In the year before reunification, various individuals and prayer groups, led by God and unknown to the others, went to the wall and prayed that it might fall. On both sides people held Communion at the Berlin Wall, not knowing others were doing the same.

The demonstrations that led to the fall of the Berlin Wall actually started out of the Monday prayer meetings of Nikola Church in Dresden, a weekly prayer gathering that started already in 1986. And God answered these prayers!

Even still in mid-1989, the reunification of Germany looked impossible. Some of the prophetic voices who foresee a unification, like the British Bible teacher David Pawson and Loren Cunningham of YWAM, were laughed at by pastors in Germany. What separated Germany was not just a national rift but global political blocks that were willing to defend and fight for their piece of Germany. As a child, I well remember the US military maneuvers close to my hometown near Stuttgart.

What really happened on the night of November 9, 1989, no one knows. But everyone agrees it was a miracle when an East German high-ranking official declared the border to be open.

I am writing this today as the nations of the world need healing. There is a wall going through the United States—and I am not talking about the wall that secures the southern border of the United States. It is a wall that separates and polarizes the nation and can endanger not only the fabric of America but the global leadership of the United States as a nation under God.” America needs our prayers more than ever before. In particular, we Christians in the Western world owe this to the United States more than any others as they stood with us for decades.

God also can heal and reunite Korea as he healed and reunited Germany. North Korea was once known as the “Jerusalem of Asia” as a revival greatly touched that nation. What looks today impossible is possible with God.

The key, however, lies not with politicians but with the people of God. Note that 2 Chronicles 7:14 does not say, “If the president” or “if the government” or “if the parliament” but, “If my people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray … I will heal their land.”

The key to the healing of our nations lies in the hands of ordinary people like you and me who will stand at these walls of division and call for them to fall in the name of Jesus!

Please join us in prayer for the United States, for Korea, and for Israel. Maybe your own nation needs a touch of God. God is the healer of nations. “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much,” says James 5:16. Our prayers can break the demonic powers of division, liberalism, and racism because Jesus is the Lord of lords and King of kings. Nothing is impossible for him when his people pray. Let us join hands and do this together!

God bless you from Jerusalem as we change the world together!
When the Israelites escaped Pharaoh’s armies and began their journey through the wilderness, God began to reveal to them who He was—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who had delivered them from slavery. The very first revelation found in Exodus 15:26 is that He was Jehovah-Rapha, the “God who heals.” The next wilderness lesson was that He was also their provider.

As I read the words, they resounded deep in my heart, and I knew the Lord was speaking to me. The next morning when the doctor phoned with alarming test results, I immediately had peace. The Lord had known this was coming, and He had not only warned me, but He promised He would go through it with me, and I would come out unscathed. That is truly what happened. Looking back now, it is as if it never even happened. I came out unscathed just as He promised.

If we really believe God, then troubles should not be crises of faith but opportunities to run into His loving arms and receive from Him all that we need. I ran to Him—the God who heals—and experienced His deliverance.

Saved to Serve

At the beginning of this year, the former Executive Director of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem and ongoing International Board Member Malcolm Hedding attended strategic planning meetings of the ministry in Jerusalem. On the final night, being quite tired from international travel and wall-to-wall meetings, Malcolm went to bed early.

During the night, he was awakened by an excruciating pain that had erupted, without previous symptoms, in his abdomen. At first, he thought it was possibly food poisoning, but when it became more aggressive and painful, he knew that something serious was wrong, and so he called his daughter Charmaine, who lives in Ramat Aviv. She, driving like Jehu did his chariot, rushed over to pick him up and get him to a hospital.

Once in the hospital, he was diagnosed with a serious infection of three organs: the pancreas, liver, and gall bladder. He was rapidly dehydrating, and his gall bladder was diseased beyond recovery. A team of five doctors told him that he had about five hours to live and that he needed urgent life-saving surgery.

Dr. Jürgen Bühler, the ICEJ president, put out a global prayer alert for Malcolm. Malcolm’s wife, Cheryl, flew out to Israel to be with him, and he was rapidly prepared for surgery. After a four-hour surgical procedure, Malcolm was placed in an intensive care ward—and all the while the people of God, all over the world, were praying for him. Intercessors, burdened by the Holy Spirit, prayed for him throughout the day and night.

Malcolm made it through and, while he still had to undergo three more surgical procedures, there was no doubt that Jesus had intervened and saved his life, and this also because of the faithful prayers of the people of God everywhere. Most certainly, Malcolm was saved to continue serving the kingdom of God and the purpose that God has for Israel. Prayer is powerful and is a tool to bring about a miraculous turn of events.

The Miracle Man

The ICEJ UK Director, Rev. David Elms, was preparing to travel to Israel for the 2016 ICEJ Feast of Tabernacles celebration when he experienced an excruciating pain in his kidneys. He collapsed on the floor and was then taken to Liverpool hospital, slipping in and out of consciousness. The specialist told his wife it was an aortic abdominal aneurysm and told her to gather the family to say goodbye as there was little chance of David coming through the operation.

Once the doctors diagnosed that he had about five hours to live, the ICEJ leadership and said he had a word from the Lord that someone closely linked to the ICEJ ministry was ill, and the whole assembly should pray for him. So thousands gathered in prayer. He went on to say that if in a few hours, the man’s kidneys would be healed. Back home a few hours later, the surgeon approached David’s wife and said there was no damage to the kidneys; the doctors were now hopeful he would make a full recovery.

David was soon well and back to his work with the ICEJ. His doctor told him, “We call you the miracle man. Eighty-five percent of people who suffer from these aneurysms die, and of the remaining 15 percent, many are left with various handicaps.” David said, “I am not a miracle man, but I follow and serve a miracle-working God who answers the prayers of His people.”

Jesus, Get Me out of Here

Early one morning in November 2016, ICEJ India Director Pastor Dany woke up at home in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, to pray and to work on his computer. When he switched on his computer, it sparked an explosion of leaking gas. The room erupted in flames, and the building started to collapse.

Pastor Dany cried out to the Lord with one simple prayer “Jesus, help me get out of here!” Protecting his face with his arms, he somehow
stumbled through the raging fire, over rubble, and into the street where many neighbors had gathered after hearing the explosion and helped get him to the hospital.

For three days, Pastor Dany lay in bed in excruciating pain, his arms and legs covered with bandages, his face badly burned by the flames. Thankfully his family was unharmed, but he thought his life was over. He feared he would never be able to move his arms again, continue his ministry, or look after his family. He felt completely crushed.

Then something miraculous and supernatural happened. Pastor Dany had a vision of a man asking, “Why are you crying? Why are you in pain?” With bewilderment, Pastor Dany answered, “I cannot move my arms. I cannot even move my fingers. Isn’t it obvious? My whole life is over.” Then Pastor Dany asked, “Who are you?” The man in the vision replied, “I know who you are. I have met you in Jerusalem. Now start moving your fingers.”

He moved his fingers and then his arms and then, to the amazement of the hospital staff, he got out of bed.

At the advice of an Israeli doctor, Pastor Dany requested his bandages be peeled off to facilitate the healing even though it was excruciatingly painful. The doctors had advised it would take two to three months before he would be ready to leave the hospital. But lo and behold, Pastor Dany walked out of the hospital on the ninth day and preached at his local church the very next day. No one could believe it! Jesus had delivered him!

Jürgen, You Are Here!

In December 2015, ICEJ President Dr. Jürgen Bühler was diagnosed with advanced kidney cancer that was growing out from the kidney into the main vein, winding “like a snake” toward his heart. As advanced as medicine is in Israel, there were no Israeli doctors with the experience to operate on such a rare and severe case. The serious expression on the doctor’s face showed he did not have much hope for Jürgen.

People began praying for Jürgen around the clock and from across Israel and all around the world. The Holy Spirit gave him and his family peace that surpassed their understanding, which was in total contradiction to their circumstances. Upon arrival in Germany for the surgery, they requested one final ultrasound—still believing for a miracle. The results, however, were sobering. “Much of your abdomen is unrecognizable,” said the doctor. “Everything is full of cancer.”

The surgery took much longer than planned due to complications. The specialist said it was one of the most complex operations he had ever done, requiring 25 units of blood just to get Jürgen through it. Doctors did not know if he would survive and put him in an induced coma, which was supposed to last for several days. To everyone’s surprise, he woke up the very next morning—still in extremely serious condition. On the second day, however, a remarkable restoration started to take place. Ten days after the operation, he left the hospital and, just two weeks later, Jürgen and his family were on the airplane back to Israel.

When he went to see his doctor in Jerusalem, the doctor’s mouth dropped open followed by a big smile a few seconds later. “Jürgen, you are here!” he shouted. He had obviously not expected Jürgen to survive long enough to see him again. But God had other plans and had intervened on his behalf.

In all these situations, people of faith handled trouble by going to the Lord in prayer. We thank God for all of the wonderful doctors and the medical advances that were used in each of these stories. But even doctors know their work can only go so far. That is when we turn to the God who heals.

We serve a great God. His mercy is new every morning, and great is His faithfulness to fulfill His Word. If you need prayer, feel free to let us know at the ICEJ USA, and we will stand with you in faith.
There has been much enthusiasm among the nations about this year’s Feast of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem. Despite the coronavirus, we are determined to make this the most exciting Feast ever! Join us for:

• Israel’s largest annual Christian gathering will become the world’s largest-ever Sukkot celebration!
• Messages from local Israeli and international ministers and worship leaders!
• Unprecedented Feast seminar options
• Seven days of worship, teaching, and celebration for only $50

Plus, you’ll have online access to 40 years of Feast highlights!

The Bible instructs us to “keep the Feast” (Zechariah 14:16), and thus we will be holding the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem this year, come what may. So even if you are not able to make the journey up to Jerusalem this year, you can join us online. This is your chance to “appear in Zion” at the Feast of Tabernacles 2020!

Sign up for registration information when available at: www.feastoftabernacles.live

ONLINE GLOBAL FEAST
OCTOBER 2–8, 2020

From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me, declares the Lord. (Isaiah 66:23)

We thus feel we must “blow a trumpet in Zion” and invite all the nations to join us for this monthly prayer marathon. In biblical times, the trumpet call summoned the people to gather for war or for temple rituals. This is a season when prayer is vital, and this trumpet call needs to be heard around the world. Our prayer aims are straightforward. We will pray for revival worldwide, in your country, and in Israel. We will pray that coronavirus will lose its impact and that God will show up and bless this year’s Feast of Tabernacles more than ever!

We will write more about the prophetic significance of the biblical festival of Rosh Chodesh. Meanwhile, we invite you to join us for these unique prayer times on the following dates:

**20–21 AUGUST** Rosh Chodesh 24-hour prayer call took place in June, and God was present from start to finish. For 24 hours, we sought the Lord in earnest prayer from dozens of locations around the globe and in many languages.

**18–19 SEPTEMBER** We thus felt led to launch a special monthly 24-hour watch to make room for this increased desire to pray. The date the Lord placed on our hearts was Rosh Chodesh, a overlooked biblical holiday that marks the beginning of the month on the Hebrew calendar. Our first Rosh Chodesh 24-hour prayer call took place in June, and God was present from start to finish. For 24 hours, we sought the Lord in earnest prayer from dozens of locations around the globe and in many languages.

**WHY ON ROsh CHODESHE?** Rosh Chodesh is a joyful festival given to Israel on Mount Sinai. The blast of two silver trumpets were to signal the new moon, and thus the new month (Numbers 10:10). God also commanded that special sacrifices be offered every new moon (Numbers 18:11–15). These celebrations became an integral part of Israel’s culture, when fasts held feasts and the king celebrated it with a banquet (1 Samuel 20:3–6). It also has a prophetic aspect, as the prophet Isaiah sees the day coming when all flesh will worship Him every Rosh Chodesh.
The 70 elderly residents at the ICEJ’s assisted-living home for Holocaust Survivors in Haifa are slowly, cautiously emerging from the isolation of a nine-week coronavirus lockdown in their rooms. They are relieved to be alive and well, happy to see each other, and grateful for the daily, loving care provided by our Christian team on-site all these many weeks.

Retirement homes in Israel and worldwide were hit hard by the COVID-19 crisis, with some decimated by the virus that has particularly targeted the elderly. But we are elated to report that not one of the Holocaust Survivors under our care at the Haifa Home contracted the coronavirus. And in fact, they have all been remarkably healthy for their age over the past two months of the lockdown, thanks to all the hearty meals, vitamins, medical checks, and daily visits provided by Yudit Setz and her six Christian coworkers at the home.

When the quarantine period began in March, the residents had great difficulties with the sudden isolation. “Our ICEJ team became their only lifeline to the outside world and their main caregivers seven days a week,” explained Yudit Setz, who heads our Haifa Home team. “We visited their homes daily to find out how they were coping, took them out for little walks, did physiotherapy, checked their medical needs, and repaired things in their homes. These may seem like small things, but they often made a huge difference in their day-to-day lives. They looked forward to our knock on their door and the human contact that broke the loneliness and brightened their day.”

Finally, the residents of the Haifa Home meet again. After a long lockdown, the residents were finally able to meet again in the dining room for the holiday of Shavuot. What a joy and what a celebration! When Rivka entered the dining room, she was crying and said: “These are tears of joy! I am so very happy to see everyone again and in good health.”

After a joyous surprise birthday party for the residents. With balloons, decorations, cakes, and music, we have surprised different residents with an unexpected birthday party. These moments of celebration and togetherness bring lots of joy and happiness!

“Your made my day. I feel so special, loved, and appreciated on this special day for me,” repeated Rita several times after we brought her to the activity center for a cup of coffee. There she discovered that the party was to celebrate her 86th birthday.

Mania had written a beautiful poem for the occasion:

Meeting Again

Finally, the residents of the Haifa Home meet again. After they were locked up in their homes due to the awful coronavirus.

Thank God, that the “very unwelcome guest” did not visit us.

With God’s help, it passed us by.

How nice and pleasant it is to meet in the dining room with friends.

Together sharing food and words,

We hope that we will meet each other again in the future from time to time.

And at other events and parties.

We wish everyone health, a good mood, and new perspectives.

We will share experiences in great atmosphere.

And welcome guests will visit us again with joy.

We wish Shimon and the ICEJ team, that provided in all our needs, with a generous heart, good health, and a willing heart to serve, now and in the future.

Mania and her poem

Unfortunately, the joy of meeting each other again in the dining room did not last long. Even after dividing the residents in different shifts, the decision was again made to close the dining room due to the growing number of people in Israel being infected with the virus. It’s difficult for the residents to deal with this second wave of coronavirus and isolation.

CELEBRATING LIFE

Gestures of love and attention do wonders.

In the new activity center, our team has been organizing birthday parties for the residents. With balloons, decorations, cakes, and music, we have surprised different residents with an unexpected birthday party. These moments of celebration and togetherness bring lots of joy and happiness!

We wish Shimon and the ICEJ team,

Mania and her poem

Getting used to a new country and culture at an advanced age is challenging, and learning a new language is close to impossible. Renate, who was born in Germany and lived the past 50 years in the United States, made Aliyah only seven years ago.

THE HAIFA HOME AND ALIYAH: “NEW IMMIGRANTS” ARRIVING

The Haifa Home is a home for Holocaust Survivors who cannot live by themselves anymore, who are lonely, and who do not have the financial ability to go to other assisted living facilities. Over the past several months, it also became a home for two Holocaust Survivors who chose to make Israel their home in the latter years of their life.

Meir, who immigrated from Romania only three years ago, came to live in the Haifa Home a couple of months ago. Renate, who was born in Germany and lived the past 50 years in the United States, made Aliyah only seven years ago.

“Your made my day. I feel so special, loved, and appreciated on this special day for me,” repeated Rita several times after we brought her to the activity center for a cup of coffee. There she discovered that the party was to celebrate her 86th birthday.

Rita enjoys treats on her 86th birthday.

Other residents at Rita’s celebration.

Mania and her poem

The atmosphere was festive, and everyone came in their holiday outfit to celebrate together. The cooks worked hard to prepare a dinner fit for kings and queens. But the greatest blessing was to see one another again in good health after the isolation. As King David so beautifully describes in Psalm 133: “Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”

Mania and her poem

ART WITH COLOR

In the art room, some of our residents create the most colorful art projects of their choice. Claudia, for example, is an art therapist who is helping the residents create art pieces.

Even with her dimming eyesight, Bluma, a Haifa Home resident, works every afternoon in the art room on various projects. She has made a storage box for her medication and a vase for the beautiful tulips she received as a gift from friends.

Meir walks with Haifa staff member, Debora.

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Mania and her poem
A DAY WITH THE DRUZE  
BY LAURINA DRIESE

With an early start to a sunshine-filled day, there was much excitement as the ICEJ staff set out from Jerusalem one morning in early June to visit the Druze community of Hurfeish, just four kilometers from Israel's northern border with Lebanon.

Unfortunately, a severe shortage of adequate bomb shelters along the border means that communities there are ill-prepared for Hezbollah rocket attacks. This is a reality that authorities are working to correct, and the ICEJ, due to the generosity of our German supporters, will soon deliver two portable shelters to the Hurfeish Cultural Center—a focus of Druze youth activity and community life.

However, those living in the northern periphery far from the economic center of the country face other challenges as well. High rates of unemployment or underemployment, as well as a lack of urban development, create barriers to economic growth for both individuals and communities. Investment in education is essential to improve opportunities for women and young people.

To address these needs, the ICEJ is enriching Druze schools in partnership with local leaders by providing such things as computer labs and also upgrading libraries and adding music rooms. Our most recent project includes sponsoring an Aviators’ Program that works in conjunction with the Israeli Air Force and the Ilan Ramon Center. One highlights of the program is interaction with Israeli Air Force pilots who act as role models and meet monthly with the youth to inspire them toward excellence at school and in all they do.

For three days in May, the ICEJ AID team journeyed throughout Israel to deliver food baskets to single parent families. Many were headed by Jewish single mothers who are trapped in unhealthy marriages, unable to leave due to religious laws that grant only men the right to divorce.

With Israel’s unemployment rate skyrocketing due to the coronavirus, many families have been struggling to make ends meet. And unfortunately, not every shattered home was safe during the recent lockdown. Sadly, with domestic violence on the rise, many vulnerable women and children faced abuse. Others were left bereft of any support from husbands and fathers.

For Israeli Jews, religious courts handle marriage and divorce issues according to Jewish law, which gives only the man the right to grant a divorce to a woman. This reality leaves many women, known as “agunot,” susceptible to abuse and chained to unloving or unviable marriages. The women cannot remarry or bear more children, even though the men may go on with their lives and start new families. And too often, the men refuse to provide financial assistance for their children. Surveys indicate that 19 percent of Jewish women in the process of divorce are being denied a “get” (divorce certificate)—almost 3,000 women per year.

Many of these women feel alone and worn down by the ordeal, and any family breakup is sad. Nevertheless, it is inspiring to see the courageous way these “agunot” women have sought help and continue to do their best to protect and provide for their children without the father’s help.

As we traveled from city to city and home to home delivering food baskets, some of the agunot mothers lacked words to express their gratitude and simply beamed a smile. Others embraced us and invited us in for a drink. One mother, Hanit®, shared that her life has been tough. Currently, she and her 14-year-old son, Daniel®, are both in counseling to work through emotional scars of the past. Nevertheless, both Hanit and her son have beautiful smiles and remain positive. Our food basket brought a lot of joy.

Daniel straight away investigated the food basket and then jumped up and down when he discovered his favorite items like spaghetti, black tea, and chocolate. On the spot, they decided spaghetti would be on the menu that very night. As we walked back to the car, Daniel accompanied us and continued to thank us!

Hanit’s faith and appreciation was also evident. As we spoke she shared, “It can only become better! God has a plan and watches over us. My heart is overflowing with thanksgiving for how I am cared for.”

Join us in continuing to provide hope to many other families like Hanit and Daniel!  

MAKE A DIFFERENCE TODAY AT: ICEJUSA.ORG/AID

Watch the video at: www.icejusa.org/singlemothers

*Names were changed to protect the families.
BRINGING HOPE TO CHRISTIANS IN NAZARETH

BY KAYLA MUCHNIK

Nazareth is the city where Jesus grew up, and it once boasted a Christian majority. But now it is predominantly Muslim. Nevertheless, a Christian minority (10 percent) remains, and they are currently facing the many challenges of the coronavirus crisis, like everyone else. Governments mandated quarantines for the elderly and the closure of businesses has caused economic and emotional suffering for many. Our ICEJ AID team visited Nazareth just as Israel began to lift restrictions.

We met elderly Christian residents, many with health challenges, who were greatly in need of encouragement and extra help. On this visit, we assisted 20 Arab Christian families with care, food, and medications. We also were able to deliver to a home via a window that is only 20-feet-tall. In another example, we helped an elderly man who was bit by a cat and unable to get to the hospital. He and his family were so grateful to know that we would come to their home. The next day, he was able to walk with us.

Over recent months, the ICEJ staff have been rotating to serve each day at Himeni and keep it open to feed the hungry and unfortunate, including a number of Holocaust Survivors. Each day, at least three or four Embassy staffers are on-site, cutting vegetables, scooping up plates of food, and packing meals for home delivery. Even during the strictest lockdowns, the ICEJ staff were still considered essential workers by the Israeli government and could come serve and package meals.

Benjamin Philip, the founder and director of Himeni, has been thrilled and relieved by the help of the ICEJ. “Truly, I must say that you have been sent by God. I cannot say it differently,” he recently stated. “At the time when the coronavirus started, we would have had to close down because our own workers and regular volunteers were unable to help due to serious reasons. But the ICEJ came every day, which allowed us to stay open and continue to provide Israelis in need with daily help, even in remote areas.”

Ryan Tsuen, the ICEJ’s graphic designer, has been excited to serve the Lord here in Jerusalem in this different way. “For myself, the opportunity to volunteer with Himeni was an immediate ”Yes!” said Ryan. “I realize the need for a nutritious meal, and Himeni does not disappoint,” he added. “We know we are called to love others as Christ loves us. And when given the opportunity to love through this act of service, what more can you ask?”

Irene Sands, housing manager for the ICEJ staff, is also grateful for this unique opportunity to serve the needy in Jerusalem. “It is always a blessing to serve those less fortunate than ourselves, and it warms my heart to see a smile appear from offering them more soup or pouring their water for them. As Mother Theresa said: ‘It’s the small acts of kindness that echo into eternity.’ To treat them with dignity and to show love is so important.”

Irene also noted: “I have enjoyed working with other ICEJ staff members who I do not usually work with that much, learning more about their lives and discussing their latest activities, all while dishing up food! It can be more physically trying than office work, but great teamwork helps.” She added: “I want to say a word of thanks to the ICEJ’s supporters worldwide for enabling our staff to have this special opportunity at this unique time. I am most grateful.”

Indeed, it is such a blessing for the ICEJ to be the hands and feet of our Christian supporters here in Israel. Thanks to you, we are able to answer the Lord: “Here am I.”

Please consider a generous gift to the ongoing social aid work of the ICEJ during the coronavirus crisis.

Visit: icejusa.org/aid

THE SEA OF GALILEE IS FULL!

BY: SUSAN MICHAEL, ICEJ USA DIRECTOR

I remember back in 2003 hosting some dear friends for dinner at the Lido Decks restaurant on the Sea of Galilee. It was a beautiful warm evening, and we ate outside. For the next 19 years, I watched the Sea of Galilee continually recede and become so low that the restaurant looked like it was perched on 20-foot-tall stilts far above what water was left below. Other boat docks were abandoned on dry ground, and islands appeared where none had been visible before.

After especially rainy winters of late, however, the Sea of Galilee is miraculously at its highest level in two decades and is only inches away from flood stage! Israelis are rejoicing over this good news, as the Sea is their main freshwater source and provides some 25 percent of the country’s water. It has long been seen as a gauge of national health, and therefore, the Water Authority has daily monitored the water level since 1969.

In Israel the sea is known by its Hebrew name, Kinneret, which means “harp” and comes from Numbers 34:11 and Joshua 13:27. The most commonly accepted reason for this name is that the lake is shaped like a harp. All of the Old and New Testament writers call the Kinneret a “sea” except for Luke, who called it “the Lake of Genesaret.” The Greek word Genesaret is anglicized to read Chinnereth, or Kinneret. Most other references in the Gospels use “Sea of Galilee.”

The Sea of Galilee is the lowest freshwater sea on earth and the second-lowest body of water in the world after the Dead Sea. The current level is around 685 feet below sea level, which is only 8 inches from its maximum. If it does reach flood level, Israel’s Water Authority would, for the first time since 1995, need to open the dam, sending water into the Jordan River and replenishing the entire Jordan Valley down to the Dead Sea, which has evaporated to dangerously low levels.

Let’s pray for abundant rain again this winter so healing, fresh waters from the Sea of Galilee can make their way to the Dead Sea and turn around its depletion as well.
Standing for Right
Israel is a democratic state whose legitimate historic right and claim to the Jewish homeland was duly recognized by the international community not so long ago. Thus, “annexation” is not really the proper word for what Israel is considering, as it normally connotes the hostile taking of another’s property. Rather, Israel would simply be asserting sovereignty on lands it currently possesses and over which it already has a valid historic claim. Yet the world blithely treats it as an attempt to steal someone else’s lands.

Admittedly, there is a rival Palestinian claim to these same areas but of such recent origin that it pales in comparison to the longstanding Jewish title over eretz Israel. The people of Israel must decide whether to compromise on their superior land claim for the sake of peace. And as Christians, we respect Israeli democracy and the right of its people to make this decision free of outside interference or threats. Thus, with great empathy and care we will be watching the history when we partake in the debate over the fate of the disputed territories.

Standing for Justice
Christians believe God made a covenant promise to Abraham to deliver the entire Land of Israel as an “everlasting possession” to his descendants. How and when God ultimately fulfills that promise is up to Him. But we do believe the modern-day return of the Jews to the Land of Israel, including the mountains of Judea and Samaria, is part of God keeping His covenant promises to the Jewish people concerning their land inheritance.

Our Bible also says that God scattered them from the Land for corrective and redemptive purposes, while at the same time vowing that He would always regather them to the Land of Israel one day. Thus, we consider it a matter of historic justice that the Jews have returned to their homeland in modern times. And since Christians also serve the same God as the Jewish people, our own faith is strengthened when we see Him being faithful to His promises to Israel concerning the Land.

Standing for Truth
To build their rival nationalist claim to the historic Land of Israel, the Palestinians have found it necessary to deny any Jewish connection to the Land, and particularly, to Jerusalem. In doing so, they have decreed our Bible—both Old and New Testaments—to be full of falsehoods concerning the ancient Jewish presence in this land. This would mean King David did not rule over a large Israelite kingdom from his palace in Jerusalem, as recorded in the Hebrew Bible, and that Jesus did not enter and teach in the courts of the Second Temple as the Gospels all say.

That should capture Christians’ attention, and rightly so! The Palestinians also have routinely damaged and destroyed important biblical sites that bear the archaeological proof that ancient Israel once inhabited the land. So Christians are standing for truth and the preservation of history when we partake in the debate over the fate of the disputed territories.

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Standing for Fairness
Because so many Christians were hostile to the Jewish people down through history, we view it as our moral duty as Christians today to stand with Israel and against those who are hostile to the modern Jewish state and its people. There are simply too many nations and peoples who treat Israel unfairly and even loathe its existence without just reason or cause. So we are determined to stand against the rising tide of anti-Semitism, the rampant anti-Israel media bias, the stone-hearted threats of sanctions and violence, and the outright bullying of Israel in international forums.

We are simply standing for fair treatment of the Jewish nation and people in hopes it will create a more level playing field for Israel. The UN Security Council’s adoption of resolution 2334 in December 2016 is a prime example of the lopsided and prejudicial decisions routinely made against Israel. By declaring that it is a violation of international law, the resolution is one more example of outside interference and threats. Thus, with great empathy and care we will be watching the annexation debate and will stand with Israel as it wrestles with this complex and consequential decision.

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So to answer the question, Christians have plenty of reasons for why we care so deeply about the annexation debate and how the Jewish people hope to maintain their enduring connection to their biblical homeland. 

I have engaged with a number of reporters lately, both on and off the record, concerning the Trump peace plan. And one question keeps coming up: Why should Christians care about whether or not Israel annexes more territory in the West Bank? So for the record, here are some valid, sincere reasons why Christians should—and do care about Israel and its current debate over whether to annex parts of Judea/Samaria in the context of the Trump plan.

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Visit us at: www.IsraelAnswers.com, and get your question about Israel answered!
Despite the coronavirus crisis, this year’s annual Feast of Tabernacles celebration in October will be more exciting than ever! Join us for an inspiring seven-day worship experience from Jerusalem with a global online audience. You will feel like you are right here with us in Jerusalem!

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THE FEAST WILL TAKE YOU TO:

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THE GARDEN TOMB • for an online communion service with believers from around the world
THE SOUTHERN STEPS • the main entryway into the Second Temple in Jerusalem
THE TOWER OF DAVID • overlooking the entrance to Jerusalem through Jaffa Gate.
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