Dear friends,

These past weeks have been packed with special events and happenings.

The first Sunday of June was a historic occasion for the tiny island nation of Fiji as it hosted the inaugural ICEJ Oceania Conference. This was my first visit to Fiji, and I will always cherish the memories. One cannot help but hear the words of the prophet Isaiah: “And all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God” (Isaiah 52:10). Fiji is at the “ends of the earth,” and the gospel is thriving there—as well as support of Israel!

On the 70th anniversary of the fateful voyage of the *Exodus ’47* refugee ship, we attended a special remembrance ceremony that was held in Haifa Port on July 18 to officially dedicate a new monument honoring the passengers and crew of “the ship that launched a nation.” This is the first monument and historic marker in Israel which pays tribute to the more than 4,500 Jewish refugees and crew aboard the *Exodus ’47*.

An ICEJ team, led by our Vice President – Operations Barry Denison, hazarded a visit to the Jewish community in Gondar, Ethiopia. The report they returned with was heartbreaking and strengthened our conviction to do everything in our power to help Ethiopian Jews return home. An administrative bottleneck now seems to have been overcome, and the first immigrants are arriving after a long delay.

We hope you will enjoy reading about these other exciting events in this month’s *Word from Jerusalem* magazine.

Yours in Christ from Jerusalem,

Dr. Jürgen Bührler
ICEJ President
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On Saturday, August 12, I was honored to speak at Yad Vashem’s Graduate Event for those who have completed their Christian Leadership Seminars in Israel. It was encouraging to see the commitment to fight anti-Semitism from Christians of different denominations and continents around the globe.

Yet, it was surreal and frankly disturbing to see later that same day the breaking news on TV screens as I walked through Washington-Reagan airport. Violent scenes were broadcast live from Charlottesville, Virginia, where neo-Nazis were brazenly out on the streets of America displaying all their race-based, anti-Semitic hate for the world to see.

Only days later, ISIS carried out a terrorist attack in Catalonia, Spain, using a van to kill more than a dozen innocent men, women, and children, and injure over 100 more. The Chief Rabbi of Barcelona responded by declaring that the Jewish community in that region is doomed. He cited the authorities’ reluctance to clamp down on radical Islam as the driving force behind growing anti-Semitism in Europe, leaving Jewish communities vulnerable across the continent.

Until now, Americans could draw some comfort from the fact that the growth of anti-Semitism in the United States has been significantly slower than in their European counterparts over the last two decades. Many are not surprised to see how increased immigration to Europe from Muslim nations has resulted in a troubling rise in anti-Semitism and now also jihadist attacks.

But, Americans should be surprised by what they see developing in the United States at present. On display in Charlottesville was more than just two sides battling over the future of Confederate statues. There is something more sinister at work here and, as in Europe, it is unfortunately the Jewish community that stands to suffer.

Two Opposing Ideologies
The neo-Nazis marching with their swastikas and Hitler salutes exhibit
classic anti-Semitism. Based on race and white supremacy, this ideology is easy to recognize and has been fully rejected by the nations of the West. It incongruously casts Jews as sub-human while accusing them of some grand, evil scheme to control the world, especially through Communist ideology.

On the other side from the neo-Nazis in Charlottesville was the opposition group mostly made up of Antifa (which stands for anti-fascist action). Born out of the 1930s when the Nazis and Communists were struggling for power in Germany, the modern Antifa movement has its roots in opposing the brown shirts while also associating with more Marxist/anarchist ideologies. Closely linked to the Black Lives Matter movement today, these groups are also anti-Zionist. This means they reject the desire of Jewish people to return to their homeland, viewing Zionism as race-based colonialism that profits at the expense of the local, indigenous people, in this case the Palestinians.

Anti-Zionism is Anti-Semitic
Detaching the Jewish people from the land God bequeathed to Abraham and his descendants some 4,000 years ago achieves two insidious goals. First, it removes the Jewish people’s historical connection to the land, turning them into invading foreigners that must be repelled, thus legitimizing all means to cleanse “Palestine” of their presence. Second, it denies the Jewish people their identity as a nation with a place to live in this world, relegating them to the status of permanent wanderers at the mercy of all the other nations who choose to host them.

This is at its core anti-Semitism. It is just cloaked in a veneer of modern political correctness. But there should be no tolerance for such discrimination. The last century should have taught us that dangerous ideologies such as Nazism or Communism can have disastrous outcomes, with Jews usually paying the higher price.

Their Alliance with Muslim Anti-Semitism
Just as disturbing should be any ideology that embraces both classic and new anti-Semitism, rejecting the legitimacy of both the Jewish people and the Jewish state. Despite the refusal of the Western media to acknowledge it, the recent spate of vehicle attacks in Europe originated as a tactic of Palestinian terrorists seeking to kill innocent Jewish civilians in Israel. Their goal is to destroy the Jewish state as it exists today. Their strategy follows the Algerian playbook, where a small Islamist insurgency was able to overtake a much larger colonial power, France. And for the last 100 years, they have aligned with any ideology that will serve this end.

When the Nazis rose to power, the Jewish people were already taking steps to reconstitute their state in the land of Canaan. The Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin el-Husseini, opposed the Jews and so made his way to Hitler where he joined his cause with that of solving “the Jewish problem.” He swiftly became a popular voice in support of the Nazi Holocaust against European Jewry, even recruiting an SS company in Bosnia which slaughtered 90 percent of Bosnia’s Jews.

Given safe haven by Egypt after the war, Haj Amin el-Husseini became the mentor of Rahman Abdul Rauf el-Qudwa el-Husseini, the Egyptian-born leader of the PLO better known to the world as Yasser Arafat. Committed to the destruction of Israel, Arafat not only favored the use of attacks against “soft targets,” he literally innovated the tactic of using civilian airline hijacking as a terror weapon.

Nazi ideology has permeated Islamic thought since World War II with Hitler’s Mein Kampf remaining a staunch favorite in Middle-Eastern countries, while Holocaust denial has been given state-sanctioned prominence. The current leader of the Palestinian Authority, President Mahmoud Abbas, claimed in his 1982 dissertation that the number of Jews killed in the Holocaust was hugely exaggerated and Zionist collaboration with the Nazis was the real cause for the genocide. He received his PhD from Lumumba University in Moscow.

It’s no secret that Communist Russia worked closely with the Palestinian Liberation Organization in support of its conflict with the Jewish state, especially after Israel severely humiliated the Soviet Union’s Arab allies in the 1967 Six-Day War. A recent release of Cold War documents even seems to suggest that Abbas was himself a KGB spy.

In their over-arching quest to defeat Israel and the Jewish people, the Islamic world has proven itself willing to work with two opposing evils, Nazis and Communists, because the ideologies of both are committed to at least one common goal: the destruction of God’s chosen people.

Wake Up, American Church
As the Apostle Paul warns us in Ephesians 6:12, this battle is ultimately not against flesh and blood but against spiritual principalities and powers. We should not be surprised then to see the same spirits of deception and destruction manifesting themselves in Virginia as they do in the Middle East. Our challenge is to discern the spiritual meaning of these events and to take heed.

In a continent that has virtually outlawed any Nazi identification, the Jews of Europe still face an uncertain future. The leaders there are unable or unwilling to correctly identify and confront another anti-Semitic threat now hidden in the anti-Zionist rhetoric of Islamic extremists and their leftist collaborators.

The church in Europe failed the Jewish people during World War II, and it is failing them again today. This should be a lesson to the church in America. We still have time to discern what is happening and then take action to ensure we do not fall into the deceptive trap that is being laid.

What happened on the streets of Charlottesville is a wake-up call.

Anti-Semitism and its twin, anti-Zionism, must not be allowed to take root in America. Sadly, support for neo-Nazis and for Antifa is growing as people line up in defense of either side. The church, however, must stand up in defense of the Jewish people and the State of Israel at this time. May the Lord give us all the courage we need for the battle ahead. ☩
Christian leaders from all over the world have attended specially tailored seminars at Yad Vashem’s International School for Holocaust Studies since 2010. These leaders become unofficial ambassadors to Yad Vashem following their educational experience. It is therefore important that connections are carried on and continued education is provided for these committed leaders. The Graduate Meeting, sponsored by the Museum of the Bible, was attended by 120 people including seminar graduates, some spouses, and other Christian leaders. Staff of the Museum of the Bible also participated, including its president, Cary Summers. The ICEJ was represented by ICEJ USA Branch Deputy Director Daryl Hedding who gave a thought-provoking talk on anti-Semitism and the role of the church in combatting it.

The 11th International Christian Leadership Seminar was held at Yad Vashem’s International School for Holocaust Studies in April. The first seminar was held in 2010; this year, the event grew to three seminars—including one for young Christian leaders.

Twenty-eight Christian leaders from around the world attended the seminar thanks to generous funding made available by the Museum of the Bible in Washington DC, the ICEJ German Branch, and the ICEJ USA Branch.

World-class lecturers taught about the Holocaust and its aftermath with an emphasis on anti-Semitism throughout the centuries, as well as modern forms of anti-Semitism. Participants heard heart-wrenching stories from Holocaust survivors and were enlightened about the Jewish response to the Holocaust. They also toured significant Christian and Jewish sites in Jerusalem and in the north.

It was an emotional experience many said they will never forget. Participants expressed their profound gratitude toward the donors.

The next Christian Leadership Seminar will take place at Yad Vashem, November 26 – December 5, 2017. For more information and to apply, please go to www.icejusa.org/yad-vashem-seminars
NEW MONUMENT IN HAIFA HONORS

EXODUS ‘47
ICEJ Joins Ceremonies on 70th Anniversary of Refugee Ship, the SS Exodus ‘47

A special remembrance ceremony was held in Haifa Port on July 18, the 70th anniversary of the fateful voyage of the Exodus ‘47 refugee ship, to officially dedicate a new monument honoring the passengers and crew of “the ship that launched a nation.” This is the first monument and historic marker in Israel that pays tribute to the more than 4,500 Jewish refugees and crew aboard the Exodus ‘47 who tried to run the British blockade and reach the shores of pre-state Israel in July 1947.

British warships rammed the vessel and towed it to Haifa port where the Jewish refugees were detained and eventually returned to Germany. The plight of these desperate survivors of the Nazi Holocaust gained worldwide attention that summer and helped sway the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine to support the creation of a Jewish state.

Several dozen survivors from the Exodus ‘47 voyage were on hand for the unveiling of the monument, and the ICEJ arranged for some of them to give first-hand accounts of their perilous journey across the Mediterranean from France. Other speakers included Jerusalem Agency Head Natan Sharansky, Cabinet Minister Yoav Galant (whose mother was on the Exodus ‘47), and ICEJ President Dr. Jürgen Bühler.

The memorial sculpture, designed by artist Sam Philipe, was a gift from the Jewish American Society for Historic Preservation that organized the 70th-anniversary remembrance ceremonies along with the Jewish Agency, the Haifa Port Authority, the City of Jerusalem, and the ICEJ.

ICEJ President Dr. Jürgen Bühler and Director of the Christian Desk at Yad Vashem Dr. Susanna Kokkonen flank Exodus ‘47 passenger Marty Dotan van Collum, a Dutch Jew who survived Bergen-Beisen and eventually made it to Israel in early 1948. The new monument to the ship features a relief of the Land of Israel with a large anchor resting over the northern port of Haifa.
REMEMBERING THE EXODUS

BY DAVID PARSONS

The year 2017 is filled with anniversaries of key moments in Israel’s modern history. Foremost among them are the 50-year Jubilee celebrations of Jerusalem being reunited under Israeli sovereignty in June 1967, and the centennial ceremonies marking 100 years since the Balfour Declaration in November 1917. But a third important event that happened 70 years ago was remembered on July 18 with the dedication of a special memorial to the Exodus ‘47, otherwise known as “the ship that launched a nation.”

The Exodus was an old, rickety steamer originally built to traverse the shallow, calm waters of the Chesapeake Bay. But in 1947, she was refitted by the Jewish underground to carry thousands of Holocaust survivors on a desperate voyage across the Mediterranean Sea to break the British blockade and reach the shores of Mandatory Palestine. When the British navy attacked the ship just offshore, the tragic fate of her passengers grabbed world headlines and played a central role in the rebirth of Israel the following spring.

When the Exodus left port in France 70 years ago, she was heavily laden with more than 4,500 tattered Jewish refugees who had survived the Nazi genocide and were determined to reach the Land of Israel. But the British had imposed a naval blockade to stop such refugee ships from reaching Palestine, and the passengers knew that, if captured, they would be sent back to Europe. So, the Haganah underground invited a sympathetic American Methodist minister, Rev. John Stanley Grauel, to join the voyage as a reporter who would be free to tell the story of what was about to transpire.

As the overcrowded vessel approached the Israeli coast in the dark of night, a British fleet of six destroyers and a light cruiser closed in. They first sandwiched the Exodus between two destroyers, trying to crush her aging hull. After seven such ramming attempts failed to sink the vessel, British troops armed with machine guns and bully clubs stormed aboard. The defenseless Jews put up what resistance they could. Three were killed and almost 150 were injured.

Despite their gallant efforts, the ship was seized and towed to Haifa port, where all the Jewish passengers were arrested and eventually sent back to Germany.

The British could not apprehend Rev. Grauel since he was a non-Jew and a US citizen. Instead, he was placed under house arrest at a hotel in Haifa. But this happened to be the very hotel where Western journalists were staying to cover the visit that summer of the UN Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), and Grauel began telling the visiting reporters about the brutal ordeal at sea. Then, late at night, he was quietly whisked away by the Haganah and smuggled past roadblocks into Jerusalem to tell the UNSCOP itself what had happened.

The UNSCOP had been holding hearings that summer to
When the *Exodus* left port in France 70 ago, she was heavily laden with over 4,500 tattered Jewish refugees who had survived the Nazi genocide and were determined to reach the Land of Israel.

recommend a solution to the “Palestine problem.” But the eleven-nation commission had been refusing to meet with Jewish war refugees still held in displacement camps in Europe. When Grauel described the British assault on the unarmed refugees aboard the *Exodus* firsthand, it impacted the committee members profoundly.

“The *Exodus* had no arms,” Grauel told the UNSCOP panel. “All they fought with were potatoes, canned goods, and their bare fists.”

The plight of the *Exodus* passengers stretched out several months before a worldwide audience, fueling the committee’s growing sense of its humanitarian mission. Until then, most of its members were leaning against partition and the creation of a Jewish state. But after Grauel pleaded their cause, the committee agreed to visit the camps in Europe to speak directly with Jewish war refugees, who were nearly unanimous in their desire to go to Palestine. Before long, most UNSCOP members concurred that the Jewish people needed a state of their own.

Thus, the testimony of a Christian minister about the British attack on the *Exodus* became the turning point in UNSCOP’s shift toward accepting Jewish statehood. Grauel would later write of that fateful moment on board the ship, saying it felt as if he were witnessing the battle of “Concord and Lexington ... I just knew I was watching the rebirth of a nation.”

Indeed, the well-known journalist Ruth Gruber, who witnessed the commandeered boat docking in Haifa, described the *Exodus ’47* as “the ship that launched a nation.”

The vessel remained tied up in Haifa harbor until a mysterious fire burned her to the waterline in 1952. The ship was towed out to deeper waters and sunk. Today, there are markers to her in Italy, France, Germany, and Baltimore, Maryland, but ironically there has never been a marker or memorial to the *Exodus ’47* in Israel.

That was rectified this July 18 when Israeli officials, Jewish and Christian leaders, and the last *Exodus* survivors gathered at the Haifa Port terminal to dedicate a special sculpture and historic marker in memory of her courageous passengers. The Jewish American Society for Historic Preservation spearheaded the effort, and the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem was there as well to mark the historic occasion. Besides paying respects to the brave Jewish refugees on board the *Exodus*, the ceremonies properly noted the key role of Rev. John Stanley Grauel in her story. Seventy years after her voyage helped birth the nation of Israel, the *Exodus ’47* will finally receive her due.

Rev. John Stanley Grauel is buried in the Alliance Church International Cemetery in Jerusalem, just two blocks from ICEJ headquarters (DP/ICEJ photo).

A model of the Exodus memorial dedicated this summer at the Haifa Port terminal (photo courtesy JASHP)
Belarussian Jews facing many hardships in their country of residence are ready to come home. The ICEJ stands ready to help them every step of the way—in Belarus as well as in Israel.

The ICEJ has been active in Belarus since 2006, providing secure transportation to the airport for more than 4,000 people, as well as hospitality as needed along the way. The first historical record of a Jewish community in Belarus dates to Brest-Litovsk in 1388. In 1791, Catherine the Great forced the Jews of Belarus to live in the Pale of Settlement. But Belarussian Jewry survived and multiplied, growing to 750,000 by the end of the 19th century.

In the run-up to the Russian revolution, Belarussian Jews were particularly hard hit by pogroms, leading many to flee to the West and home to Israel. Further hardship occurred during the Holocaust; Belarus was one of the main locations for the Nazis’ Final Solution. More recently, following Ukraine’s civil war, oil prices dropped sharply, halving the real value of the Belarusian ruble and throwing the economy into crisis. The protests and resulting government crackdowns, along with growing tensions with Russia, contributed to a climate of fear.

Aliyah to Israel from Belarus has spiked in the past year and continues to increase. According to the Jewish Agency, moving to Israel has become an attractive option—especially for young people—but because of low incomes, Jewish families must rely on savings and loans to make ends meet. For many of them, returning to Israel has only been made possible by Christian support.

Moshe and Irina (not their real names) made Aliyah recently from Belarus with the help of ICEJ. Moshe told us, “We are very thankful for the help from ICEJ in bringing us and our baggage to the airport from our city which is very far away. Our country is very troubled now. Our currency lost a lot of its value. There is a lot of unemployment and the government has even imposed a tax on people who are unemployed. People who cannot find work must pay a ‘parasite tax.’ It’s unbelievable. We are very much looking forward to our new lives in Israel.”

You can be a part of the Belarussian Jews’ miraculous journey! Support the ICEJ’s Aliyah efforts and help Jews in the nations come home to Israel. Send your gift here: www.icejusa.org/aliyah
ICEJ-assisted Aliyah for the Bnei Menashe—the secluded Jewish community in northwestern India—passed the 1,000 mark, right in time for a young Bnei Menashe IDF soldier to be honored by Israel’s president for his service. Staff Sergeant Eliezer Menashe was recently invited to President Rivlin’s Jerusalem residence, where he was awarded the President’s Medal for Excellence, along with other outstanding soldiers from the IDF.

Twenty-two-year-old Eliezer made Aliyah in 2010 at age 16. He presently serves in a combat unit of the Golani Infantry Brigade. He follows in his older siblings’ footsteps who also served in the IDF; his older sister was the first female from the Bnei Menashe community to complete military service. Eliezer thus continues to meet the high standards set by his family and the broader Bnei Menashe community.

The ICEJ is proud and pleased to have a stake in the return to Israel of this dedicated and patriotic Israeli population group. Thanks to the support of many Christians from around the world, the ICEJ provided airfare to Israel for these Jews from the remote Indian region. 🌏

To help us continue the important work of Aliyah, bringing Jews from every continent back to Israel, donate now at: www.icejusa.org/aliyah
MORE ETHIOPIAN JEWS ARRIVE HOME IN ISRAEL!

“Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.”
Proverbs 13:12 (NIV)

The ICEJ wants to walk with Ethiopian Jewry every step of the way, which includes their journey back to Israel—as well as the process of making this land their home. Partner with the ICEJ to see the longings of these families finally fulfilled!

After the first waves of Ethiopian Aliyah two decades ago, many Ethiopian Jews left their homes to prepare for the trip to Israel, only to discover that the government of Ethiopia had put a halt to their journey. Now, we get to witness God fulfilling His promise: “In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to bring back the remnant of his people—those who remain in Assyria and northern Egypt; in southern Egypt, ETHIOPIA (Cush), and Elam ...” (Isaiah 11:11–12 NLT, emphasis added).

You can play a major part in this historic and urgent wave of Ethiopian Aliyah!

Support the work of the ICEJ today by giving your best gift to ICEJ Aliyah: www.icejusa.org/aliyah
Mount Carmel is at the tip of a beautiful 24-mile-long wooded mountain range nestled in-between the Mediterranean Sea to the West and the Jezreel Valley to the East. “Carmel” means “vineyard of God” or “garden of God” and the Bible describes it as a beautiful and fruitful region.

Most Bible students, however, associate the area with the famous confrontation between the prophet Elijah and the prophets of the Canaanite fertility god, Ba’al, found in 1 Kings 18. While there are no archeological remains to verify the exact place of this event, the Stella Maris Monastery is said to mark the place of Elijah’s altar that had been known as the “place of burning” for centuries.

From the top of the monastery is a magnificent view overlooking the Jezreel Valley where many major wars have taken place throughout history and where at least one more is predicted: the war of Armageddon. It was on high places, such as Mount Carmel, that pagan altars were built; what a more fitting site for Ba’al worship than the lush “garden of God.”

Elijah chose this place of Ba’al worship for the site of a showdown with the pagan prophets and the king who supported them. First Kings 16:29–33 tells us that King Ahab did more to provoke the Lord to anger than all the kings before him because of his worship of Ba’al, and because of his marriage to the evil Queen Jezebel who had ordered the murder of the prophets of the God of Israel.
THE POWERLESSNESS OF BA’AL

Ba’al was known as the fertility god of both the people and the land, and was often depicted as a bull with a lightning strike in his hand. This god of weather was believed to provide the rain needed for crops. Therefore, when a drought set in after Elijah had declared to King Ahab there would be no rain for three years, Ba’al was proved powerless.

Recognizing the Canaanite god’s lack of power was not enough for Elijah, however. He wanted the people of Israel to return to pure worship of the God of Israel. The confrontation on Mount Carmel was ultimately directed at the people of Israel to bring them back to their God.

After three years of drought, the agrarian economy was devastated, and the people were desperate. Elijah had King Ahab gather everyone on Mount Carmel—the prophets of Ba’al as well as all the people of Israel. Elijah then implored his fellow Israelites to decide to either follow the God of Israel or follow Ba’al.

After the prophets of Ba’al were unable to call fire down from heaven, Elijah taunted them with his sarcastic remark about their god: “Either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened” (1 Kings 18:27).

Elijah then built an altar in the name of the God of Israel, based on twelve stones to signify the twelve tribes of Israel. He drenched the altar with water and waited for the time of the evening sacrifice at which time fire came from heaven and not only consumed the burnt sacrifice, but the wood, the stones, and all the water.

The people saw this and fell on their faces before the Lord and proclaimed, “The Lord, He is God!” Ironically, this phrase, “The Lord, He is God,” is the meaning of Elijah’s name in Hebrew.

CONFRONTING OUR BA’ALS

Elijah’s generation was not the first, nor the last, to mix their worship of God with the worship of false gods. An example of this is found in the New Testament. The Samaritans were the descendants of Israelites who had inter-married with Assyrians; they incorporated the worship of pagan gods along with the worship of the God of Israel. Therefore, mainstream Judaism considered the Samaritans to be unclean and forbade contact with them.

The lesson we take away from our visit to Mount Carmel today is the importance of keeping our lives free from the influences of the godless world around us. Elijah entreated the people to choose between the true God and the false one, because the righteous and holy God of Israel required pure worship and lives dedicated solely to Him.

John echoed Elijah’s call to purity in his warning to the Laodicean church in Revelation 3. He accused the Laodiceans of being neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm (Revelation 3:16)—an impure condition that would result in their loss of relationship with God.

It is critical that we discern and turn from worldly influences infiltrating our lives, making our worship impure and our faith lukewarm, so that our conduct demonstrates, “The Lord, He is God” and we walk in the power of God as did Elijah.
The first Sunday of June was a historic occasion for the tiny island nation of Fiji, as it hosted the inaugural ICEJ Oceania Conference. The conference culminated in a march on May 27, which included ICEJ representatives from the Oceania region as well as from Jerusalem who took to the streets of Suva (Fiji’s capital) in solidarity with the Jewish State to show their love for Israel.

ICEJ President Dr. Jürgen Bühler and ICEJ Arise Director Jani Salokangas came all the way from Jerusalem to awaken our love for Israel. They were here simply to remind us of our responsibility to Israel and the city of Jerusalem as commanded by Scripture. God requires us to pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122) and bless the people of Israel in every way.

Before He was taken up to heaven, Jesus promised: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8 NIV). The words, “the ends of the earth,” prove why Fiji and the islands of Oceania are significant to Israel.

Our friends from Jerusalem relayed how momentous traveling from Jerusalem to Fiji was for them—from the Land of Israel to these Pacific Islands, the furthest landmark on earth. What does God say about the “ends of the earth”? Job 28:24 says, “For he looks to the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens” (ESV). Surely, it was God who ordained our ancestors to voyage the Pacific Ocean. While they were great voyagers and used the stars to guide their way, I agree with Dr. Bühler when he said that it must have been the Spirit of the Lord who directed them to this land, knowing how prophetic it would be in fulfilling His Word.

The ICEJ is represented in the Oceania states of Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea. The ICEJ Oceania Conference saw the launching of the work of the ICEJ in the Cook Islands, Kiribati, Tonga, and Samoa, with the hope that these men and women will take hold of the ICEJ’s vision and set sail in their respective island nations.

Wherever you may be—in the Pacific Islands or another part of the world—if you are like me and stand with Israel and God’s purposes for Israel, connect with your nearest ICEJ branch. Perhaps you are thinking of being in Jerusalem this October for the Feast of Tabernacles—please go! I have no doubt that the glory of God will be manifested in all its power and splendor over the Holy Land and over every heart that stands with Israel.
THE EAST AND THE WEST BLESS JERUSALEM: CHURCHES IN ASIA AND LATIN AMERICA PRAY FOR ISRAEL

BY REV. JUHA KETOLA

TAIWAN MEETING (pictured above) - The ICEJ’s directors in Taiwan, Joseph and Deborah Chou, have been wonderful tools in God’s hands to educate and enlighten Taiwanese churches about His purposes concerning Israel and the Middle East. Together with several local churches and their leaders, they hosted seminars and gatherings which took place in the cities of Taipei, Taitung, and Taoyuan.

The first conference I joined, “Jerusalem Flame Seminar—Isaac, Ishmael, and the Nations,” took place in Taipei. Along with Pastor Daniel Yahav from Tiberias, Israel, and Rev. Afeef Halasah from Amman, Jordan, we joined ICEJ Taiwan and six local churches in worshipping the Lord and ministered to them from the Scriptures. The next ICEJ Taiwan Conference, hosted by the City Spring of Life Full Gospel Church, was held in Taitung—the poorest city in Taiwan.

Our last stop was Taoyuan where we participated in a conference organized by local churches and hosted by Bread of Life Christian Church. The Taiwanese pastors and leaders treat prayer with great honor and respect; thus, the time of intercession truly nourished our hearts and spirit, and it powerfully reinforced the spoken Word.

COLOMBIA MEETING (pictured left) - More than 1500 pastors and leaders from across Colombia attended a conference in Cucuta, Colombia, hosted by Jose Satirio, the senior pastor of Centro Cristiano Church. Delegates came from Argentina, Ecuador, Guatemala, Chile, Brazil, Venezuela, Peru, Mexico, India, and the United States. It was an honor to speak at the conference about God’s plans for Israel and why as Christians we need to be involved in those plans. In the past 42 years, through the ministry of Pastor Satirio, 105,000 people in Colombia were baptized and more than 40 local churches were planted in Cucuta with 300 additional churches throughout Colombia.

In Bogota, the capital city of Colombia, we served at Centro de Alabanza Oasis Church led by Apostle Gustavo Paez. While pastoring his local church, Apostle Paez also reaches thousands through his TV and radio ministry, and oversees more than 100 churches in Colombia and abroad. It was a great honor and a delight to share God’s message with young disciples in the School of Prophets in Colombia.

ICEJ CANADA WALKS WITH ISRAEL

The ICEJ Canada once again joined the annual “Walk with Israel” 5k, organized by the United Jewish Appeal in Toronto. This is the 16th march organized on Victoria Day in which the ICEJ has participated. This year, the event highlighted the 50th anniversary of Jerusalem’s reunification. Many prominent names attended the event, including the Israeli Consul General Galit Baram, members of parliament, and city council members. More than 50 people represented the ICEJ, who carried the biggest flag at the march.
The ICEJ is a global ministry called by God to reach out from Jerusalem to all the nations. Through the years, the Holy Spirit has led us to every continent. This spring, together with my wife, Kati, I traveled to the Philippines to strengthen our work there and meet with many spiritual leaders in the country.

Both the previous ICEJ Philippines National Director, Bishop Dan Balais, and the current National Director, Bishop Joshua Blas, together with ICEJ Representative Sally Madatu, work to reach the people of their nation with the gospel and God’s message concerning Israel. They do so on numerous islands that belong to their country.

In the city of Cebu, several local pastors along with many young people came to our event eager to learn about God’s salvation plan regarding the Jewish people. The meetings were coordinated by Linda Francisco, the first female ICEJ leader in the Philippines. I then ministered at Christ the Life Changer Church, where we were welcomed by Pastor Nicario Castorico, a former baker now leading a church of 1,200. At Citichurch, led by Pastor Lito Diamante and Senior Pastor Jo Alfafara, I had the pleasure of meeting with ministry heads of churches in Cebu City and neighboring municipalities.

In Manila, we ministered at the main church of Apostle Joshua Blas, of Joshua Generation Worldwide Ministries. After suffering a serious stroke and still using a wheelchair, Apostle Blas remains a leader over many churches. He found the strength to welcome us at his church in person and even led the ICEJ board meeting. In Cuneta Astrodome I had the privilege to preach about Israel to around 5,000 people at a national gathering of intercessors. Bishop Balais has been organizing these gatherings for 30 years and has made a point to teach the people to bless, pray, and intercede for Israel. It was also a great delight to visit Friends of Jesus Christ Church in Manila. Over the years, this church and Pastor Lucy Peralta have stood with our ministry and demonstrated their love for Israel in many ways. We also ministered to young adults from Word of Hope, as well as Jesus Loves You Church, led by Bishop Rey Pe Benito, which has been sending volunteers to the Feast of Tabernacles in Israel for years.

In the city of Cagayan de Oro, we joined a gathering of regional pastors and leaders representing 180 churches of the Assembly of God Church, at the invitation of Rev. Elpie Taboclaon, the District Superintendent and Board of Trustees of the Philippine General Council of the Assemblies of God. I taught a seminar for pastors, church workers, and businessmen from Bukidnon, some parts of Lanao del Norte, and Cagayan de Oro City. I was also able to minister in Mindanao, after almost two decades with no official ICEJ delegation from Jerusalem in this Muslim-dominated region.

One unforgettable experience happened in Masbate, where we took part in the dedication of a mountain to the Lord as a place of prayer for Jerusalem and Israel. One of the ICEJ Philippines Board members, Sister Mercy Cabiles, had a vision 12 years ago to prepare a place of prayer on seven different mountains. The Lord told her that “when you build it with no money, it will belong to Me.” Her dream became a reality through prayer and faith. We had the honor to dedicate the first mountain, “Moriah Prayer Mountain.” Six more will follow later this year to cover all the continents of the world in prayer.
“Fraternity” quickly morphed into 50 years of controversy and Arab non-cooperation. The 32-acre Temple Mount remains a tinderbox of contention with the Al-Aksa Mosque Imam, Muhammad Ahmad Hussein, spewing hatred in every sermon.

The Need for Additional Security
In July, the tinderbox literally exploded when three Arab terrorists set off a crisis far more dangerous than the usual Arab rock-throwing and hate speech. The terrorists killed two Israeli Druze policemen with weapons they smuggled into the Al-Aksa Mosque beforehand. Israel's decision afterward to install metal detectors elicited widespread condemnation and more Arab violence which continued to escalate after the murders. Yet, metal detectors and security cameras are common at other holy sites worldwide.

For example, Islam's two holiest sites are in Saudi Arabia, and the annual convocation in Mecca, The Haj, is monitored by 5,000 cameras and 100,000 security personnel. The British company that oversees security there also requires millions at The Haj to wear electronic bracelets.

The Vatican has upped its security with metal detectors and thousands more police. After terrorists attacked a Buddhist holy site in Bihar, India, the Indian government ordered more security, including commandoes. Similarly, after an Islamist attack at the Sikh Golden Temple in Amritsar, police squads began frisking visitors at the shrine with bomb detectors.

When the Israel Defense Forces reunited Israel's capital Jerusalem in the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel's leaders made a generous—and fateful—decision reflecting the Jewish state's unswerving commitment to religious freedom. Under the leadership of renowned Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, Israel allowed the Jordanian Muslim Waqf Foundation to continue administration of Judaism's holiest site—the Temple Mount.

Before Israel's victory, the Waqf had ruled the Mount for 20 years, during which time only Muslims were allowed access. Not Jews. Not Christians. Now that Israel has some influence in the matter, Jews and Christians are allowed on the Temple Mount but cannot pray there. They are permitted entrance through only one gate, and only during prescribed hours, while thousands of Muslims have unfettered access through ten gates.

Dayan's decision was highly controversial since the Temple Mount has been Judaism's holiest site for 3,000 years, and a Muslim presence did not exist until the 8th century. In the arrangement, the Jordanian Waqf Foundation administers the Temple Mount, and the Israeli Police protect and monitor it. Dayan's 1967 quote expressed hope: “We have returned to the holiest of our places, never to be parted from them again. ... We did not come to conquer the sacred sites of others or to restrict their religious rights, but rather to ensure the integrity of the city and to live in it with others in fraternity.”

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The True Issue is Control
Metal detectors on the Temple Mount are controversial not because they are unnecessary but because the true issue here is one of control. Jews have the historical and moral right to control the Temple Mount.

King David purchased the site 3,000 years ago from Araunah, a Jebusite. Araunah wanted to give the land to King David, but 2 Samuel 24:24 records David's reply: “I will surely buy it from you for a price for I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God which cost me nothing.” David paid Araunah 50 shekels of silver and built an altar for peace offerings.

Thus, the ancient deed is recorded in the world's most popular book. History does not record a subsequent sale of the land which later became the site for both Jewish temples.

Unfortunately, Israel's agreement with the Muslim Waqf gives away a degree of control over the area demonstrated by Israel's inability to implement justified security measures. This despite the fact that other Muslim holy sites have the same level of security measures with no outcry for doing so.

It is yet another hypocrisy in a long line of injustices where Israel, the leader in middle eastern religious freedom and security, is singled out for doing the right thing. (5)
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