THE FEAST GOES GLOBAL
Dear Friends,

We are rejoicing over the Lord’s blessing on this year’s Feast of Tabernacles celebration. We were a bit overwhelmed with the task of presenting a global event as robust as the Feast is online. But the Lord helped, and it was the largest Feast ever!

We are also thanking the Lord for all that we were able to accomplish throughout the difficult year of 2020 and the coronavirus shutdowns not only in Israel but around the world. Our ministry has entered a whole new season, and we are excited about what that means for 2021.

Over the coming months, the ICEJ is taking on an urgent challenge—assisting with a wave of 2,000 Ethiopian Jews being brought home to Israel.

Aliyah flights for these Ethiopian Jews are scheduled to start in December and will take several months to complete. The cost per person for bringing them home to Israel is currently higher than normal, but the Israeli government has decided to bring them as soon as possible. And the Jewish Agency is looking to the ICEJ to support this urgent Aliyah effort as much as we can.

The ICEJ has flown over 2,200 Ethiopian Jewish immigrants to Israel in recent years, including 268 olim so far this year—despite the coronavirus travel bans. Now the opportunity is here to bring home another 2,000 Ethiopian Jews who are desperate to reach Israel. It’s time for us to act!

We look forward to partnering with you to bring God’s children home!

Many blessings from Jerusalem!

Dr. Jürgen Bühler
President
International Christian Embassy Jerusalem
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The coronavirus pandemic may have prevented thousands of Christians from attending the ICEJ’s annual Feast of Tabernacles celebration here in Israel in early October, but our innovative online Global Feast spawned hundreds of Sukkot gatherings and watch parties in dozens of countries worldwide, drawing more Christians than ever before into marking this joyous biblical holiday together.

The ICEJ’s virtual Feast featured seven daily live broadcasts to large audiences on GOD TV, Daystar, Vision Norway, and other Christian TV networks worldwide. Over 7,000 Christians from 107 nations also accessed the Feast online, along with hundreds of churches around the globe, who hosted Sukkot celebrations and watch parties linked to our live Feast broadcasts from Jerusalem. These Sukkot gatherings drew crowds ranging from small groups in underground churches in China and Iraq to several thousand in large churches in Bolivia and the Ivory Coast—which means the total audience for this year’s Feast could easily be in the hundreds of thousands.

“When we first started celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles 40 years ago, there were very few Christians worldwide who knew about Sukkot,” said ICEJ President Dr. Jürgen Bühler. “But 40 years later, there are millions of Christians around the globe who have discovered this biblical festival and are building sukkahs and waving the four elements. And many of them tuned in to this year’s Feast from Jerusalem, which allowed us to reach our largest audience ever. So the irony is that during the coronavirus crisis, this biblical holiday [has] caught on with more Christians than ever before.”
"You have made me happy. For many years we have celebrated with thousands, but today is a Feast shared with one and maybe it is more important to me, because you brought me such joy."

TAKING THE FEAST TO ISRAELI GUESTS

BY LAURINA DRIESE

Israel Guest Night is a special evening during the ICEJ’s Feast of Tabernacles each year, when local Israelis join us for a program of music, dancing, and solidarity with Israel.

Besides her many other duties at the Feast, Homecare nurse Corrie van Maanen always makes an extra effort to bring many of the elderly and disabled Russian Jewish immigrants she cares for year round to Israeli Guest Night. They often come in wheelchairs to take part in the joyful celebration with thousands of Christians from the nations. That was not possible this year due to the coronavirus, and instead, Corrie brought the joy of the Feast right into their homes during Sukkot. She lovingly prepared gift baskets filled with pomegranates, grapes, dates, and chocolates and picked up freshly baked pastries along the way.

Visiting Luda, Corrie delivered the gift basket and surprised her with several songs on the flute. Luda was overjoyed! “I want to record it and share it with all my friends,” said Luda, who has attended Israeli Guest Night for many years. She has no family here and often feels alone. Drinking coffee together, Luda shared, “I am missing out on sitting in a sukkah. I hear my Jewish neighbors, but I cannot join them.” Suddenly, she realized, “We have our own sukkah this morning here in my kitchen!” Corrie was touched by how her small gestures turned into an unforgettable moment for Luda.

For Tanja, this year’s Sukkot was particularly difficult as the lockdown prevented her from spending the holiday with her son and grandchildren. But when Corrie arrived at her door bearing the gift basket and pastries, Tanja instantly brightened up. As Corrie played her flute, Tanja said: “You have made me happy. For many years we have celebrated with thousands, but today is a Feast shared with one, and maybe it is more important to me because you brought me such joy.”

Corrie next visited Lena, a widow struggling with severe depression. With the strict lockdown, she had not left her home or spoken to anyone for days. Grateful for the gift basket and pastries, Lena poured them some tea and spoke of her loneliness, especially during the Sukkot holidays. Cautiously, Corrie offered to play her flute. Soon a glimmer of joy returned to Lena as she clapped after each song. One song referred to a fountain of blessing, and Corrie prayed for her soul to be like a fountain of blessing this year. Lena was truly lifted by the surprise visit and “chamber concert” in place of attending the Feast.

Normally, the Feast draws over 5,000 Christians from 100 nations up to Jerusalem, even in years of conflict and terror when regular tourism to Israel is down. The coronavirus forced the ICEJ to take the Feast online this year, but the silver lining is that our largest audience ever tuned in for a truly Global Feast. ☺

This year’s roster of Feast speakers included Anne Graham Lotz, Billy Wilson, and Jentzen Franklin from the USA, Enoque Adeboye (pastor of the largest church in Africa), Younghoon Lee (pastor of the largest church in Asia), René Terra Nova (pastor on one of the largest churches in Latin America), Mats Ola Ishoel (pastor of the largest church in Russia), and popular South African preacher Angus Buchan.
“I believe we are seeing a move of repentance, a move of prayer, and a move of intercession like never before covering the whole world.”

Jürgen Bühler

“We are grateful to Christians around the world that are helping fulfill biblical prophecy.”

Isaac Herzog

“Friends, I want to thank you for all you are doing for Israel during these difficult days.”

Reuvin Rivlin
THE FEAST FROM THE Nations!

Looking to the future, I see a role for the ICEJ to the very day that Jesus returns.

Susan Michael

“It’s time to fall on our knees in repentance of sin, as we prepare ourselves for the coming of the Lord.”

Anne Graham Lotz
THE YEAR IN REVIEW
ICEJ MEETS THE UNIQUE CHALLENGES OF 2020

As we look back over the past 12 months, Israel and the entire world were greatly impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. But the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem rose to the challenge and more than ever before in some of our key areas.

JANUARY - Our Jerusalem staff started the new year with a month of concerted prayer. The ICEJ then hosted some 100 pastors and ministry leaders from Israel and abroad for our annual Envision conference—an enriching time of Bible teachings, current affairs briefings, encounters with Israelis, and special visits to biblical sites and government offices.

FEBRUARY - ICEJ leaders met in Jerusalem to plan for our 40th Anniversary celebrations during this year’s Feast of Tabernacles. But our ICEJ-Norway national director also spoke from the prophet Habakkuk that a great “shaking” was coming, and within days the coronavirus started spreading from China.

MARCH - As the COVID-19 threat forced Israelis to stay at home, the ICEJ became busier than ever feeding the poor and assisting the elderly in lockdowns. We also began flying hundreds of new Jewish immigrants to Israel on emergency Aliyah flights from Russia, Ukraine, and Ethiopia.

APRIL - Despite strict lockdowns over the Passover holidays, the ICEJ helped feed and care for more Israelis than ever before over the Pesach season, including hundreds of Holocaust Survivors and other elderly Israelis confined to their homes.

MAY - ICEJ marked 30 years of Aliyah efforts with a special chartered flight from Russia in late May, adding to the hundreds of Jewish immigrants flown to Israel by our ministry despite the coronavirus travel bans.

JUNE - With each passing week of the worldwide health crisis, the ICEJ intensified its online prayer initiatives, including our weekly Global Prayer Gathering, as well as extended online Rosh Chodesh (New Moon) prayer vigils first launched in June.
JULY • By July, the ICEJ had sponsored over 85 direct and connecting Aliyah flights, bringing more than 1,000 new Jewish immigrants to Israel from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Ethiopia, despite the coronavirus global travel bans.

AUGUST • Following the massive blast in the Beirut port in early August, the ICEJ raised over $35,000 in contributions to help several churches, prayer houses, and other ministries in Lebanon repair damages to their facilities and reach out to their communities with a strong Christian witness.

SEPTEMBER • The ICEJ surpassed over 100,000 signatures from 130 nations in a worldwide petition addressed to the Danish Bible Society, urging them to recall an alarming new Bible translation that omitted or replaced hundreds of references to Israel in both the Old and New Testaments.

OCTOBER • With travel bans restricting foreign tourists from entering Israel, the ICEJ transformed our annual Feast of Tabernacles celebration into an online global event, with more speakers, worship artists, and seminars—and more viewers from more nations—than ever before.

NOVEMBER • In response to a rash of airborne arson attacks launched from Gaza this summer, ICEJ delivered more urgently-needed firefighting equipment to communities in the western Negev, including fireproof outfits, shoes, and masks for 120 emergency responders.

DECEMBER • ICEJ is ending the year by sponsoring flights for hundreds of Ethiopian Jews who are part of a renewed wave of Aliyah for the last remnant of this ancient Israelite community.

These are examples of our many projects, events, and other ministry highlights over the past year, despite the many unique challenges we all have faced. With your support, we are bringing Jews home, helping them settle in the Land, caring for Holocaust Survivors, protecting vulnerable Israeli communities, and impacting churches and nations all around the world. 😊
PARTNER WITH THE ICEJ IN 2021. COMMIT TO MONTHLY FINANCIAL SUPPORT TODAY.
GO TO: WWW.ICEJUSA.ORG/PARTNER

THE YEAR AHEAD

We are so grateful for your faithful support over the past year and for the trust you have placed in the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem’s work and vision. In our 40th year of ministry, we overcame many steep challenges and fulfilled our calling to bless and comfort Israel like never before. This was all made possible thanks to your firm commitment to the Lord, Israel, and our ministry—we know you continued to give even when there were major uncertainties in your own lives.

As we enter a new year, we are hopeful that our efforts together can accomplish even more for the kingdom in 2021. So many Israelis will need our help every day, and you enable us to touch their lives with God’s sustaining love. Join us in bringing more Jewish families home on Aliyah flights, in caring for more Holocaust Survivors, in protecting more embattled Israeli communities with bomb shelters and firefighting equipment—and so much more!

One of the biggest challenges we are facing early in the new year is assisting with the expected wave of 2,000 Ethiopian Jews being brought to Israel at this time. The Aliyah flights are scheduled to start in December and will take several months to complete. The per-person cost to bring them to Israel is currently higher than normal, but the Israeli government has decided to bring them in large numbers as soon as possible. The Jewish Agency is looking to the ICEJ to fund as many of these Ethiopian olam as we can, and we know that most have spent years in rickety transit camps waiting and dreaming of their moment to return to Zion. Please consider what you can do to help us meet this great humanitarian need and fulfill biblical prophecy at the same time!

So thank you once again for your support and prayers and for standing with Israel through the ICEJ. May God bless and reward you for your generosity, faithfulness, and obedience to His Word.

Take a journey to the world of the Bible—where it comes alive and can change your life. We live in an increasingly secular society that questions everything about the Christian faith. Learn how to find the answers you are looking for about the authenticity of the Bible, the amazing story it tells, and what it means for you.

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Be a part of that future generation spoken of in Psalm 102 that is partnering with the Lord in His work to restore Zion, for the set time has come.

PARTNER LEVELS

Covenant Partner
Show your love and support for Israel by partnering with the ICEJ. Become a Covenant Partner at a giving level of at least $30 a month. In appreciation, you will receive the following resources:
- A Partnership Certificate
- The Word From Jerusalem magazine
- A year-end gift of appreciation

Ambassadorial Partner
Partnership in ministry is a gift God gives to strengthen and undergird His work. Become an Ambassadorial Partner with the ICEJ at a giving level of at least $100 a month. In appreciation, you will receive everything in the Covenant Partnership level plus:
- Exclusive access to ICEJ's quarterly Mid-East ministry update conference call from Jerusalem
- An invitation to attend our ICEJ USA leadership briefing during our national conference

Builder of Zion Partner
Isaiah declared the Lord will call Zion's walls "salvation" and her gates "praise" (6018). As we walk together side by side, the ICEJ would be honored if you would become a Builder of Zion Partner at a giving level of $2,500 a year or more. In appreciation, you will receive everything in the Ambassadorial Partnership level plus:
- A discount of $200.00 on a pilgrimage tour to Israel during the Feast of Tabernacles or other qualifying tour
- An additional gift acknowledging you as a Builder of Zion Partner

Gateway of Zion Partner
Show compassion for Zion and bless the people of Israel. The ICEJ would be honored if you were to become a Gateway of Zion partner at a giving level of $20,000 a year or more. In appreciation, you will receive everything in the Builder of Zion Partnership level plus:
- The opportunity to meet with ICEJ leadership and/or receive personal briefings on ICEJ projects that are of interest
- Special invites to exclusive events such as pastors' lunches and VIP meetings that are held in your area or community
- An additional gift acknowledging you as a Gateway of Zion Partner

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Over the coming months, the ICEJ is taking on an urgent challenge—assisting with a wave of 2,000 Ethiopian Jews being brought home to Israel. Aliyah flights for these Ethiopian Jews are scheduled to start in December and will take several months to complete. The per-person cost to bring them home to Israel is currently higher than normal, but the Israeli government has decided to bring them as soon as possible. And the Jewish Agency is looking to the ICEJ to support this urgent Aliyah effort as much as we can.

The Ethiopian Jewish community traces their heritage back to Moses, who married an Ethiopian woman (see Numbers 12:1–10). Some 135,000 now live in Israel, but thousands more were left behind in Ethiopia because their ancestors were pressured to convert to Christianity several generations ago. There are 8,000 of these “Falash Mura” still stuck in rundown transit camps in Addis Ababa and Gondar—many have lived there for up to two decades in impoverished conditions. They have nothing to go back to, and they refuse to give up on their dream of being reunited with their families back in the promised land.

After much debate and many delays, the Israeli government finally decided in 2015 to allow them to come home. But the process has been slow, and now their plight has worsened due to several developments:

1. Malnourishment: Ethiopia is suffering from a prolonged drought, which has impacted the whole nation. Jewish and Christian groups (including the ICEJ) have helped feed and care for these Ethiopian Jews left in transit camps, but many are malnourished and need to be relocated to healthier surroundings.
2. Coronavirus: Much of Africa has been spared by COVID-19 so far, but Ethiopia has seen a high rate of infections and deaths.

3. Locust plague: There are currently massive swarms of locusts devouring the land across Ethiopia and East Africa.

4. Conflict: A civil war has broken out between Ethiopian government forces and a regional rebel militia, with fighting reported only 45 miles from the Gondar transit camps.

Thus, this latest wave of Ethiopian Aliyah has become an urgent humanitarian mission! The ICEJ has flown over 2,200 Ethiopian Jewish immigrants to Israel in recent years, including 268 olim so far in 2020—despite the coronavirus travel bans. Now the opportunity is here to bring home another 2,000 Ethiopian Jews who are desperate to reach Israel. It’s time for us to act!

Please consider a generous donation to help these deserving people rejoin their families in the Jewish homeland. May the Lord bless you richly as you donate toward this urgent and worthy cause! 😇

You may also want to watch our documentary Journey of Dreams—filmed when an ICEJ team recently visited the transit camps in Ethiopia to see firsthand the difficult conditions in which thousands of Ethiopian Jews are now living. It is very moving to see their determination to reach the land of Israel to be reunited with their families and the Jewish people. Watch at: http://www.icejusa.org/documentary
Besides bringing almost 1500 Jews on flights to Israel this year, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem also has been sponsoring 201 Jewish youths from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and the Baltic states in Youth Aliyah programs, which prepare them for moving to Israel. Earlier this month, 89 of these youths arrived at Ben-Gurion on a flight from Russia, while another 80 came from Ukraine. An additional group of 25 came from Belarus this week, and seven more will arrive soon from Latvia. So, despite coronavirus, the great ingathering of the Jewish people continues, and the ICEJ offers you the opportunity to be directly involved.

Over the past 15 years, the ICEJ has supported Jewish teenagers in the former Soviet republics to take part in the Naale and Sela programs managed by the Jewish Agency for Israel. The Naale program gives Jewish teens from the Diaspora the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to live in Israel and study in some of the nation’s best high schools for 3-4 years. About 90 percent of the students who come on the Naale program end up staying in Israel and approximately 60 percent of their parents make Aliyah as well.

Sela is a home-away-from-home program for those who are looking to pursue a prestigious international education, take lessons in Hebrew and other languages, engage with Israeli society and culture, meet new friends, and just experience life in Israel. By the end of the eighth month, all program participants receive an Israeli identity card.

These Youth Aliyah programs have proven to be a huge success over the years in bringing Jewish children to Israel ahead of their parents, as it is often easier for youngsters to learn a new language and adjust to new surroundings and then help their parents acclimate once they arrive. It has been a great blessing for the ICEJ to support these unique and highly effective Aliyah programs over the years.

In 2020, the ICEJ has been very active with the Naale and Sela programs by sponsoring over 200 Jewish youths attending camps and seminars by providing transportation to and from testing centers and camps in Ukraine, Belarus, Latvia, and Russia.
In January, the ICEJ helped fund a Winter Seminar, which drew children and young adults from the religious community in northwest Russia. They learned about Israel and life for Jewish people during Soviet times.

In February, the ICEJ sponsored a Weekend Aliyah seminar in Irkutsk, Siberia, for 60 young adults and assisted a Naale Aliyah Youth Seminar attended by 82 youngsters in Odessa, Ukraine.

In March, we assisted with a Naale Youth Aliyah seminar for 50 students in Riga, Latvia.

The ICEJ also provided transportation for participants in two summer camps held in Saulkrasti, Latvia. Each camp had 51 attendees, who gathered in two shifts of approximately 25 each. There also were 17 adult leaders and teachers. This all required two buses due to Corona health restrictions, which the ICEJ was happy to provide.

Another 34 teens participated in a Youth Camp and Seminar in Latvia in August, sponsored by ICEJ. They discovered rules for financial well-being, learned about daily life in Israel, and participated in theater classes.

In September, we again provided transportation for 44 Naale applicants to go through the testing center phase of Aliyah in a safer environment. Another group of Naale students arrived from Belarus, which is experiencing a surge in coronavirus cases along with widespread political unrest. The ICEJ arranged buses to the airport for them and their parents. We repeated the process for another flight of Sela students and their parents in November, including our sponsorship of vans to collect them from nine cities throughout Belarus for the trip to Israel.

YOU CAN HELP KEEP THE DOOR OF ALIYAH OPEN AMID THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS. GO TO:
WWW.ICEJUSA.ORG/ALIYAH
This has been a most unusual and exciting year for the ICEJ in our Aliyah efforts. Despite the coronavirus travel bans, we have sponsored Aliyah flights to Israel for nearly 1,500 Jews—the most in a single year since the 1990s—and the year is not over yet! This includes 268 Ethiopian Jewish immigrants and the rest from Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus.

Aliyah from the North is continuing every week. And now, the Israeli government has approved plans to bring another 2,000 Ethiopian olim over coming months, and the Jewish Agency has requested our assistance in sponsoring their journey home.

Here is the story of one of the families we recently brought on an Aliyah flight to the Land of Israel.

Dmitry and Alexandra Tyrtyshny and their son, Svyatoslav, came to Israel from Russia on an ICEJ-sponsored flight on August 31. Just a couple of years ago, Alexandra was ready to make Aliyah with her son, but then a delightfully unexpected event happened. She met her future husband, and he was ready to follow her to a new life in Israel. It took over a year to arrange everything for the move to Israel. Despite the coronavirus crisis, they were able to take this important step in their lives with the Christian Embassy’s help of the Christian Embassy, partnering with the Jewish Agency.

“As far back as I can remember, I always wanted to move away from Samara, my home city. I lived with a dream to go somewhere; I even had the idea of going to China to work there as an English teacher,” said Alexandra. “But when I found out about my pregnancy, naturally, the attempt ‘to conquer the world’ had to be postponed,” she explained.

After her son’s birth, Alexandra faced an unpleasant turn of events when she became divorced from her husband. Afterward, she devoted herself to caring for her child, and the dream of moving had to be put on hold. Then she remembered her Jewish roots and realized: “Where else will I be welcomed as if I was coming home? Only in Israel!”

By this time, Svyatoslav was two years old, and he had a year left before enrolling in pre-kindergarten. “I had a whole year ahead of me to find out all the details regarding my opportunities in Israel,” she recalled.

Alexandra had already visited Israel through the Taglit-Birthright program and began to study Hebrew, but there was still much to learn and plan. Then, amid all of her planning, change came again.

“During the year I had planned to make Aliyah, I found Dmitry, a loving husband and a wonderful father for my son!” shared Alexandra. “But it meant our move was postponed for another year.”

Even though Israel is ready to accept Jews with their non-Jewish spouses, the couple must be married one year before getting approved for Aliyah. During that year, Alexandra and her husband studied Hebrew, prepared documents, and thought about things they would take with them to Israel.

“The most difficult thing was probably to convince our parents that we wanted to make our lives better, not worse,” recounted Alexandra. “For them, Israel is another world, full of problems and dangers, into which they were not ready to release for their children.”

There were many obstacles in their way while making Aliyah, including the coronavirus pandemic. “We had already begun to fear. Do we really have to postpone our dream again, for an indefinite period?” Alexandra confided. “But no virus could scare us. The Jewish Agency, the Israeli Embassy, the Ministry of Integration, and all who are involved in our Aliyah—they were all there to help!” she stated. “And now our dreams have come true!”

After making Aliyah on the ICEJ-sponsored flight, Alexandra and her family stayed at a special quarantine hotel in Israel, which gave her time to look back on her recent journey in life.

“As we reflect on the path we have traveled and try to imagine our future here, Israel is a country that made the impossible possible to bring us here,” said Alexandra. “We will have six months to learn the language and, at the same time, create new dreams and make new plans!”

Many more Jewish families dream of coming home to Israel, and they need our help. Ethiopian Aliyah has become especially urgent, as hundreds are expected to start coming on flights in early December. But it will only be possible if Christians like you join with us in bringing them back to the promised land.
Situated in the unlikely location of Nazareth’s industrial zone, you will find an evangelical Arab church dedicated to serving both the Arab and Jewish communities surrounding them.

During this time of the coronavirus crisis, Pastor Saleem Shalash and his church are a shining light for this historic town, which today has Jewish and Arab neighborhoods. With mounting requests for assistance coming in, he recently arranged for church volunteers to help pack Rosh HaShana food baskets for distribution to Israeli families in need.

Without hesitation, Nicole Yoder, vice president of Aid and Aliyah, along with her assistant, Jannie Tolhoek, took a road trip to Nazareth, where they, too, extended a helping hand.

Walking upstairs to the church’s packing area, Jannie was blessed to see a small humanitarian center offering clothes, shoes, and household supplies to those in need. Moving along, they found boxes laid out and many volunteers on hand, so the food packing process sped along joyfully with much laughter filling the room.

Speaking with Pastor Saleem afterwards, Nicole Yoder shared how joyous it was for the ICEJ to partner with his congregation to help these families in need by providing some 100 food baskets. With much appreciation, Pastor Saleem responded that “God told me to feed His people and to do good in a practical way in bad times.”

This is a mission we certainly share at ICEJ, and Pastor Saleem’s Arab Christian congregation is carrying it out with passion there in Nazareth. Many requests for assistance are referred to the church by the Israeli social welfare department, and they reach out to as many as they can.

When asked by the Jewish mayor of nearby Nof HaGalil why they, as Arabs, are reaching out to the Jewish community, Pastor Saleem said: “We want to bless them as we are blessed by the Jewish Scriptures.” This began a wonderful relationship serving both the Arab community in Nazareth as well as Nof HaGalil, a neighboring Jewish town.

Not long after this visit by our AID team to Nazareth, Jannie Tolhoek drove to a church in Bethlehem, along with ICEJ staff member Tricia Neighbors, this time to personally hand out 70 food bags packed at our Jerusalem offices.

After a warm welcome by Pastor Naim and Elvira Khoury, they enjoyed fellowship in the evening church service before giving out the food bags. Tricia was especially moved by the expressions of gratitude for the gift baskets, which were received with many happy smiles, thank yous, and “shukrans.”

During their visit, our team learned about the difficult times faced by the people of Bethlehem. Pastor Naim explained that many locals work in Israel, but with the coronavirus lockdowns, many have not been able to work or have been sent on unpaid leave. Those who rely on Christian tourism to Bethlehem are also suffering. He thanked the ICEJ, emphasizing how necessary the aid was for them. “Our people are suffering with no work, no food, and many are depressed. It is a disaster! Your support came in such a timely way,” he said.

Pastor Naim and Elvira also noted that over recent months the ICEJ is the first organization to reach out to see how they are coping during this difficult time and to support them. He went on to say how the food bags are “an encouragement to each of us, a bag of hope and confirmation that God sees us and watches over us.” Jannie assured him that the ICEJ indeed cares for them and is standing with our Arab Christian brothers and sisters.

Thank you to those who have faithfully given so we can meet the needs of the less fortunate in Israeli society, especially in these difficult days. Your gifts to our “Israel in Crisis” fund at this time are doing a world of good!
On September 15, 2020, the ministers of foreign affairs for the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain joined Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel at the White House for an event that would bring about a profound change to the Middle East. The ceremony, formally known as the Abraham Accord, normalized relations between the two Arab countries and Israel. The occasion was nothing less than historic, as the UAE and Bahrain became the third and fourth Arab countries to have normalized relations with Israel.

These two nations are not the only ones to stand on the frontline of the new paradigm shift. At the press conference immediately before the Abraham Accord, President Trump said he expected five or six other countries to normalize relations with Israel. Within weeks of the peace accord, Kosovo’s Muslim-majority Balkan nation moved to recognize Israel’s statehood and normalize ties. On the same day, Serbia announced plans to recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capital. Sudan announced plans to normalize relations with Israel, a country that had sworn never to make peace with Israel 53 years ago. Malawi, Honduras, Guatemala, and Serbia have all broadcasted intentions to move their embassies to Jerusalem. So the real question is, what events transpired that are leading to a changing worldview of Israel?

**Mutual Regional Threats**

For decades, Israel has waged a tiresome battle to preserve its existence in light of Iran’s global and regional aggression. Hezbollah militants in Lebanon, Iranian drones flying into the country from Syria, and an emboldened Hamas presence in the Gaza strip are a few examples of Iran’s persistent attempt to destroy Israel. But Israel is not the only country with its Iranian woes.

Israel and the Arab world are threatened by an advancing Iranian nuclear program that has forced the region into a cold war. States adjacent to the Persian Gulf, such as Bahrain and the UAE, face threats to their national security and private sector from an aggressive Iranian navy. Saudi Arabia wages war against Iranian backed Houthi rebels in Yemen. This goes without mentioning other shared threats such as ISIS, al-Qaida, and other Islamic extremist groups in the region. In all, Israel and the Arab nations have developed a shared view of regional threats that have pushed the countries to cooperate in the security and intelligence sectors, which developed the foundation for the diplomatic bridge between both worlds.

**An Opportunity for American Embrace**

As a result of the Abraham Accord, the United States announced plans to sell F-35 fighter jets to the UAE, a move that would strengthen the Emirati military in light of Iranian aggression. The move would be somewhat controversial, as some Israelis fear their qualitative military edge (QME) over other Middle Eastern countries would be adversely affected. In the meantime, Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz has continued discussions with US leadership to ensure this doesn’t become a major issue. From a bigger perspective, this potential move has sent a message to other countries around the world: those who embrace peace with Israel will invite possibilities of further military cooperation from the United States.

Alternatively, from a diplomatic perspective, countries that have moved to normalize ties with Israel or simply recognize Jerusalem as her capital have found themselves in the American spotlight. Guatemala, Honduras, Serbia, and Kosovo—countries with seemingly insignificant world influence—have enjoyed being hailed as advocates for peace as they have taken major steps to warm relations with Israel. Sudan, which has been on America’s list of state sponsors of terrorism for 27 years, was finally removed from the list, largely a result of normalizing ties with Israel. Like Israel’s steps to create peace, these smaller countries have been able to act boldly out of an understanding that the United States will be there to support them despite potential opposition from the world.
Coronavirus
Israel is accepted by many as a world leader in the world of medical technology and coronavirus research. That is why the foreign affairs ministers of both the UAE and Bahrain spoke about coronavirus research and partnerships as one of the first priorities of the new alliances. Additionally, the UAE’s tourism and oil exports have slowed down as demand for both has dipped due to the pandemic. Opening these countries’ economies to Israel will expand economic growth despite the coronavirus recession.

Major Diplomatic and Economic Benefits Are the Adornment
At the ceremony for the Abraham Accord, Foreign Affairs Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed of the UAE asserted, “The aim of all of these treaties . . . is to work toward sustainable development.” Within hours, these words came to fruition. Bank Hapoalim, the largest bank in Israel, signed a major cooperation agreement with the National Bank of Dubai to allow more opportunities for business and trade between both countries. A day after the Accord, Emirati logistics company DP World partnered with Israeli Shipyards to open a direct shipping line between the two countries, with DP World CEO bin Sulayem stating the deal will “help our customers to do business in the (Middle Eastern) region more easily and efficiently.” Direct flights, telephone communications, and an eventually post-coronavirus tourism boom are also expected to bring economic growth to Israel and the Persian Gulf region.

To refocus on Europe, Serbia and Kosovo found opportunities to warm up to one another and toward Israel at the White House in early September. Although both states—part of ex-Yugoslavia—have been at odds with one another for decades, the two reached a basic agreement to recognize one another’s sovereignty (the main issue dividing them). They have also committed to economic normalization, which has reopened the dialogue between the two Eastern European countries. Simultaneously, the countries agreed to move their embassies to Jerusalem, not to mention the beginning of normalized ties between Kosovo and Israel in the first place. President Trump stated, “By focusing on job creation and economic growth, the two countries were able to reach a major breakthrough.” Similarly, strengthening ties between the East European countries and Israel will create more investment opportunities, diplomacy, and tourism.

Peace Comes from Strength
Thanks to her ingenuity and a robust alliance with the United States, Israel has maintained a qualitative military edge (QME) that gives its military a winning advantage against threats from Palestinian aggression and throughout the Middle East. Because of Israel’s strength, they are in a position where they may take risks for peace. On the day of the Abraham Accord, Hamas operatives retaliated by firing 15 rockets at southern Israel. Thanks to missile defense technology, such as the Iron Dome, Arrow, and David’s Sling, Israel can continue seeking peace with Arab countries without paralyzing fear or desperation caused by terrorism. The same sense of strength is what gave Israel confidence when they first normalized ties with Egypt in 1979.

A Generational Shift in the Arab World
At the advent of the digital age, much of the developed Arab world has been exposed to Western ideas for peace and prosperity, particularly younger generations. Thanks to various social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, many throughout the Arab world have access to the same information available throughout the West. Furthermore, much of the developed world was enabled to follow President Trump’s recent deal for peace between Israelis and Palestinians and see how the Palestinian Authority responded in a typical fashion of rejectionism and violence. Witnessing these events live and unfiltered has motivated many to move forward with peace despite the Palestinians’ refusal to come to the negotiating table.

Global Fatigue from Palestinian Refusal
Since the first day of Israel’s statehood, the Palestinians have continually refused every peace offering from Israel that could have resulted in a two-state solution between the nations. In fact, the Palestinians have traditionally responded with violence against Israelis when peace deals were offered, with minimal or no negotiating in many cases. As discussed, the growth opportunity for many countries to normalize relations with Israel is great. To continually delay building these ties comes at an expense, especially for the Arab people, and the pain from doing so is exacerbated in times of war and disease. The idea that a two-state solution must be achieved for further peace throughout the Middle East has been proven incorrect by the Abraham Accord. If anything, the recent events have put more pressure on the Palestinians to return to the table, as the Arab voice of sympathy has been hushed by active, innovative forces for peace. This new understanding has partially opened the floodgates of prosperity between Israel and countries throughout the world.

Concluding Thoughts
There is much to accredit for the substantial progress made for peace between Israel and the rest of the world. Positive forces such as the United States’ strength and Israel’s innovative spirit, have enabled Israel to reach a position of strength to take risks for peace. A pro-Israel Trump administration has served a vital role in brokering peace between Israel and the Arab world, as well as leading the way with the Jerusalem Embassy move, inspiring countries from Central America and Eastern Europe to follow suit.

On a darker note, the world has experienced much hardship amid a global pandemic and recession, and an aggressive Iranian terror threat has threatened stability throughout the Middle East. All this and other unmentioned global issues have catalyzed extraordinary progress for Israeli peace, incentivizing countries such as Bahrain and the UAE to accept Israel’s help in the cold war against Iran and bring life back to their respective economies.

In the new digital age, the advantages of forging relationships with Israel outweigh the costs of siding with a Palestinian Authority that continually refuses to negotiate peace. Although recent peace initiatives are far from ending the Israeli-Arab conflict, the shift has certainly begun an era of growing peace between Israel and the world.
“BRING MY PEOPLE HOME!”

Bring hope to Ethiopian Jews during this holiday season!

In October of this year, the Israeli government made the decision to bring home another 2,000 Ethiopian Jews. The ICEJ has committed to play an instrumental role in this urgent humanitarian mission to bring them to their ancestral homeland. The first flight is scheduled in December and the Jews of Ethiopia need your help!

As they are waiting to make Aliyah, the Jewish community in Ethiopia has suffered many hardships. They have been forced to live in rundown transit camps, battling religious persecution, and suffering famines caused by desert locusts and flooding. Many children are malnourished and need medical attention.

During this season of celebration and thanksgiving, you can bring hope and a future to Ethiopians waiting in squalid conditions and praying to make Aliyah.

Please send a special holiday gift today! Give online at www.icejusa.org/holiday