



WORD

FROM JERUSALEM



...
**PREPARING
FOR A SURGE
IN
ALIYAH**
...

**THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT'S
CRIME AGAINST THE JEWS**



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Dear Friends,

As spring returns to Jerusalem, we see signs everywhere that God is doing a new thing (Isaiah 42:9; 43:19)—and God encourages us to embrace it while holding fast to the ancient and saving faith of our fathers. It is in this paradox that we live, even today. Coronavirus challenges us to think outside the box and to embrace the many new ways God is leading us. And as we do this, we will experience His never-changing goodness and holiness—even here in Jerusalem.

I recently witnessed with my own eyes how God is indeed in control as ICEJ's Aliyah work reached another milestone. Due to COVID, all air traffic over Israel had come to a halt, yet the Israeli government made a significant exception in allowing a special airplane to land. The Boeing Dreamliner had come from Ethiopia with 302 new immigrants on board, part of the completion of "Operation Rock of Israel" (p. 10).

I felt so privileged as I stood on the tarmac at Ben Gurion Airport and watched these new immigrants from Ethiopia step down and kiss the ground of the promised land. Even I felt like those who "dreamed when the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion," as His sons and daughters—old and young, weak and strong—came on eagle's wings to their ancient homeland. It was a specially chartered flight, and what also touched me was that each one of these Jewish immigrants was funded by ICEJ through the generous gifts of Christians from around the world who were determined, even in times of crisis, to stand with Israel! People like you! Thank you so very much!

As we consider recent challenges within Israel, whether from their recent election (an unprecedented fourth in two years) or the Israeli government's ambitious vaccination program, the shadow of growing anti-Semitism looms worldwide. In this issue, we cover the ICC's unprecedented decision to revise their jurisdiction to bring ludicrous "war crimes" charges against Israel (p. 4) and also the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's cohesive definition of the term anti-Semitism (p. 18).

ICEJ's emphasis on prayer continues through our weekly Global Prayer Watches each Wednesday, and Rosh Chodesh Prayer Watches that usher in each new Hebrew month (p. 14). Please pray for Israel's leaders in this difficult season and also pray for us as we continue to serve all the people of Israel during these current challenges.

Finally, I thank you for standing with us in these historic times and for helping us bless Israel today more than ever. I pray for a new and fresh touch from the Lord for you this spring.

May the Lord bless you richly out of Zion!

Dr. Jürgen Bühler
President
International Christian Embassy Jerusalem



The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem was established in 1980 in recognition of the biblical significance of all of Jerusalem and its unique connection to the Jewish people. Today the ICEJ represents millions of Christians, churches, and denominations to the nation and people of Israel. We recognize in the restoration of Israel the faithfulness of God to keep His ancient covenant with the Jewish people. Our main objectives are:

- To stand with Israel in support and friendship;
- To equip and teach the worldwide church regarding God's purposes with Israel and the nations of the Middle East;
- To be an active voice of reconciliation between Jews, Christians, and Arabs, and to support the churches and congregations in the Holy Land.

From its head offices in Jerusalem, the ICEJ reaches out into more than 170 countries worldwide, with branch offices in over 90 nations.

Our vision is:

- To reach every segment of Israel's society with a Christian testimony of comfort and love, and
- To reach and actively represent to Israel the support of denominations, churches, and believers from every nation on earth.

The Christian Embassy is a non-denominational faith-based ministry supported by the voluntary contributions of our partners and friends across the globe. We invite you to join with us as we minister to Israel and the Jewish people worldwide by donating to the ongoing work and witness of the ICEJ.



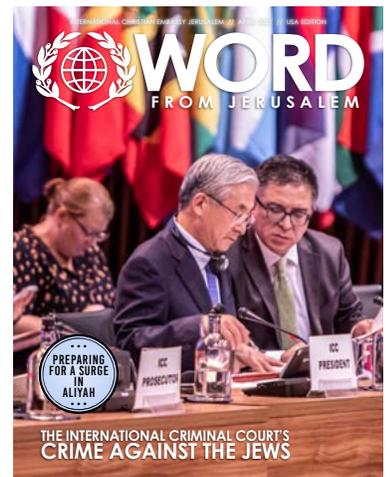
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COVER PHOTO: International Criminal Court hearing in The Hague, Netherlands

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CONTENTS

APRIL 2021 USA EDITION



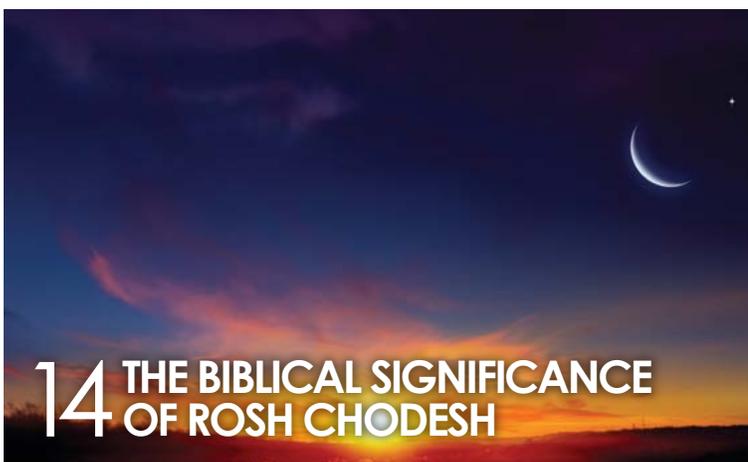
4 THE ICC'S CRIME AGAINST THE JEWS



8 PREPARING FOR A SURGE IN ALIYAH



12 SHIELDING VULNERABLE BORDER TOWNS



14 THE BIBLICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ROSH CHODESH



18 IHRA DEFINITION OF ANTI-SEMITISM

THE ICC'S CRIME AGAINST THE JEWS

BY DR. MOJMIR KALLUS
ICEJ VICE PRESIDENT FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS



The International Criminal Court in The Hague, which unlawfully expanded its jurisdiction in order to launch a war crimes probe against Israel.

It was shocking to hear the recent news that Fatou Bensouda, the outgoing chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, has proceeded to open an official probe against Israel. Her decision to investigate Israel for war crimes allegedly committed in “Palestine,” including establishing of illegal West Bank settlements and violations of the law of war by the personnel of the Israeli Defense Forces during the 2014 Gaza War, is immoral, unjustified, and beyond the court’s authority. Her decision is itself a crime against the Jewish people and saddles the Court with the stigma of having initiated a modern-day blood libel against Israel.

BACKGROUND OF THE ICC

The International Criminal Court in The Hague was established by the international community via the “Rome Statute” two decades ago to investigate and prosecute the most heinous crimes under

international law, including genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression. It was meant as a “court of last resort,” with limited jurisdiction, trying only those atrocities referred to it by ICC member states or whenever those nations were unwilling or unable to try the perpetrators under their own judicial systems. The ICC was founded after the world witnessed horrendous acts of genocide in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s. Special ad hoc tribunals were created to deal with the atrocities committed in those conflicts.

The first instance of an international criminal investigation and trial for what they referred to as the new crime of “genocide” was at the end of World War II when a group of senior Nazi officials were tried at the Nuremberg tribunal. Against this backdrop, it is completely absurd that the ICC has decided to investigate the only Jewish state



for possible war crimes committed “on the territory of Palestine.” The Nazi war crimes against the Jews shocked the world’s conscience, yet now the laws and forums set up to deal with such reprehensible acts are being unjustly turned into a weapon against the Jewish state. Israel’s purported “crimes” actually consist of either acting in self-defense against deliberate Palestinian terrorist attacks targeting Israeli civilians or building Jewish homes and schools in politically disputed territories over which the Jewish people have valid legal and historical claims of their own.

The ICC chief prosecutor’s path to open her investigation was cleared in early February by a pre-trial chamber of the Court, which ruled that the Court has the jurisdiction needed to act on this matter. That narrow decision (two judges to one) is shameful, wrong, and destructive—legally, morally, and practically.

DISSENTING OPINION

As the dissenting judge pointed out, considerable legal acrobatics were required to arrive at this biased decision—namely:

- It pretends that just by its association with the Court, the entity of “Palestine” is a state—even though it does not satisfy the accepted legal criteria for statehood under international law.
- It also pretends that this “Palestine” has jurisdiction over the people of Israel, even though the Oslo Accords signed by both parties expressly exempts Israel’s citizens from their reach.

No wonder that Hungarian judge Peter Kovács, the dissenting member

of the pre-trial chamber, noted that “neither the majority’s approach nor its reasoning is appropriate in answering the question before this chamber,” and “they have no legal basis in the Rome Statute, and even less so, in public international law.”

MAIN FLAWS OF THE DECISION

Treating Palestine as a State

First, it blurs the line between politics and law. The ICC has relied on the UN General Assembly’s political proclamations, ignoring the fact that these non-binding resolutions are of a political, not legal, nature. Clearly the Court is harming its reputation by allowing such politicization. Worse, it ignores established principles of international law when the Court decided that “Palestine” can be considered a state. Palestine does not meet the criteria for statehood laid down in the well-accepted Montevideo Convention, which requires that a state possess a permanent population, a defined territory, a government, and the capacity to conduct international relations. It should be in the interest of all the signatory governments to the Rome Statute to uphold the integrity and reputation of the Court.

Defining the Borders of Palestine

Second, in trying to answer the question to which territory its jurisdiction extends, the Court has defined the borders of Palestine, which is most certainly not its role. Moreover, in doing so, it has accepted the maximalist Palestinian territorial claims, which include all of Gaza, the West Bank, and eastern Jerusalem, without even considering Israel’s position and its well-founded claims to these disputed territories. By doing this, the Court prejudged the outcome of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, which is the only mechanism that can settle the dispute and define the borders. Such an approach by the Court rewards Palestinian intransigence and undermines the prospects for peace. Most governments publicly support a negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, so it should be in their interests to point out that the decision goes against their long-held policy.

Ignoring the Oslo Accords

Third, the Court has disregarded the Oslo Accords, which stipulates that the Palestinian Authority has no jurisdiction over Israelis anywhere in the disputed territories. Therefore, even if it was considered a state party to the ICC, the Palestinian Authority cannot offer jurisdiction over Israeli citizens to the Court because it does not have any itself. By ignoring these valid Oslo commitments, the Court has jeopardized the binding nature of international agreements in general. In particular, the witnesses to the Oslo Accords (the USA, European Union, Norway and Russia) should voice their alarm at such a ruling.

Ignoring Dissenting Members

Fourth, the majority on the three-judge panel chose to completely ignore the opinion of seven States Parties (Australia, Austria, Brazil, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, and Uganda), which insisted that Palestine does not fulfill the criteria for statehood. Their involvement is unprecedented as they did not make their submissions in their own defense but rather weighed in on an issue that does not directly involve them. Some argue they did so because they felt it was a matter of principle. They made their submissions already a year ago, and after the flawed decision of the pre-trial chamber had been announced, they publicly repeated their original objections. These countries certainly are interested in pursuing their cause at the ICC, which they can do by bringing it to the attention of the ICC’s governing Assembly of States Parties.

At the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, we believe it is our duty to raise our voices to defend truth and moral clarity. Though access to the ICC judges is minimal, we plan to approach the States Parties to the ICC (the 123 countries that have ratified the Rome Statute) to make clear our objections to this untenable investigation of Israel.

George Orwell is quoted as saying: “Sometimes the first duty of intelligent men is the restatement of the obvious.” We cannot allow the Court’s obvious overreach to be ignored. 🌐

CHRISTIAN EMBASSY TO OPPOSE ICC ‘WAR CRIMES PROBE’ AGAINST ISRAEL

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem has committed to opposing the International Criminal Court’s recent biased decision to unlawfully expand its jurisdiction so a war crimes probe could be launched against Israel—a highly selective move that has opened up the Court to justifiable accusations of anti-Semitism.

The Christian Embassy noted the obvious absurdity of this ruling: Israel is not a member of the ICC and has serious, proactive judicial mechanisms to try any such crimes, while the Palestinians do not qualify as a sovereign state under the Rome Statute governing the Court. Therefore, the Court has no legal standing or authority to investigate and charge Israel with war crimes in the so-called “occupied territories.”

“It seems the Court has caved to an overzealous special prosecutor by distorting international law to empower her quest to indict Israelis on invalid and unsustainable charges,” said ICEJ President Dr. Jürgen Bühler. “The ICC is giving daily passes to brutal regimes like Iran and Syria, which are committing horrific atrocities against their own people, and instead wants to prosecute Jews for building balconies on their homes in eastern Jerusalem as if they were Nazi war criminals.”

Over the coming months, the ICEJ will be working through our vast global network of national branches and activists, as well as with other organizations, to urge ICC member states to reject and rescind this outrageous decision 🌐

FAITHFULLY SUPPORTING ISRAEL

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.



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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
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JEWISH COMMUNITIES WORLDWIDE

The world's Jewish population in 2020 is estimated at 14.7 million, which reflects steady growth over recent decades but still falls short of the 16+ million Jews alive before the Holocaust.

Here are figures for the largest Jewish communities by country:

PREPARING FOR A SURGE IN ALIYAH

BY ANASTASIYA GOODING

Over the past 40 years, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem has been privileged to bring home to Israel more than 160,000 Jewish immigrants from around the world, usually in partnership with the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI). This includes the 3,141 Jews we assisted with Aliyah last year, despite all the coronavirus lockdowns and travel bans. So what can we expect in the months and years ahead?

Like other Israeli officials, JAFI chairman Isaac Herzog is upbeat about the prospects for Jewish return to Israel soon. At the ICEJ's recent Envision conference, he forecast that up to 250,000 Jewish immigrants will arrive in Israel within the next three to five years.

Several factors are triggering this surge in Aliyah, including the coronavirus threat, how Israel has responded effectively to it, the spike in coronavirus-related anti-Semitism, and the way many have discovered they can work remotely from home and even from a distant land. As a result, Herzog said most of the expected 250,000 new arrivals will be young adults with so-called "free professions."

Herzog explained that last year there was a dramatic rise in the number of Jewish families who inquired with JAFI about immigration to Israel. The result was a 91% increase in new immigrant applications from Western countries, including a 400% jump from North America. Calls about Aliyah are up by 50% from English-speaking countries and

70% from French-speaking countries.

"Undoubtedly, we are fulfilling biblical prophecy, and the Christian world has a major role to play in bringing about the fulfillment of these prophecies," Herzog told hundreds of pastors attending Envision online. "We are grateful to Christians who support the idea of bringing Jewish people back to their ancient homeland. And I again want to thank the International Christian Embassy for the outstanding work you are doing to help with this."

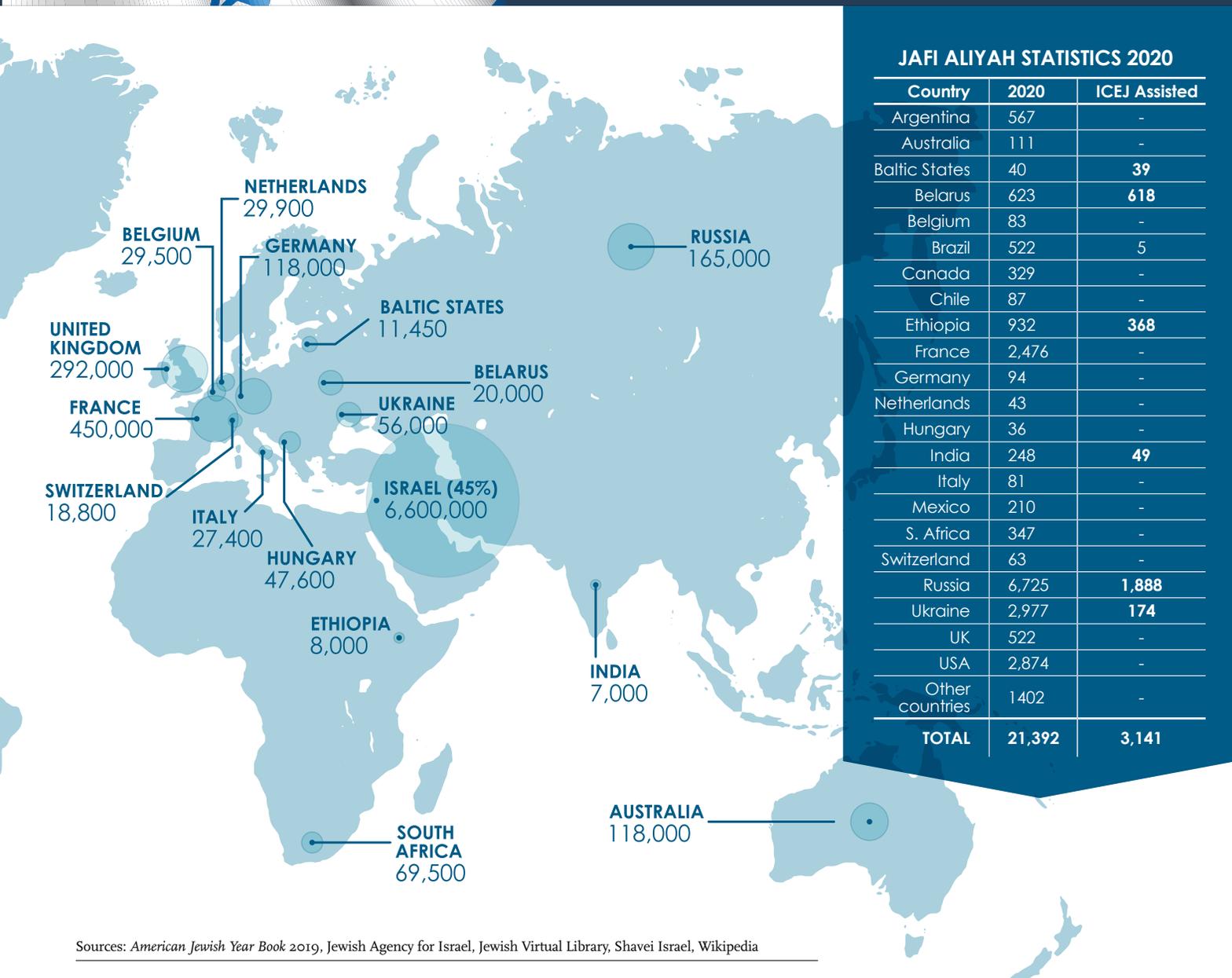
From which countries will all these expected Jewish immigrants come? The world's Jewish population currently is estimated at 14.7 million. Israel is now home to over 45% of these Jews, while 90% of the remaining Jewish communities outside of Israel reside in Western countries, including the Americas, Europe, and the Commonwealth nations (Britain, Canada, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, etc.).

JAFI has specific partners assisting with Aliyah in various regions of the world. In recent years, they have looked to the Christian Embassy for help with Jewish families returning from the former Soviet republics, Eastern and Western Europe, Ethiopia, and Latin America. The ICEJ also has been helping to bring the Bnei Menashe tribe from India and the Kaifeng Jews from China. All of these Aliyah routes remain open for us in the year ahead. 🌍



With your help, the Christian Embassy will continue to play a central role in the prophetic ingathering of the Jewish people to their ancient homeland in the months and years ahead. A new surge of Aliyah is on the way, so please give generously to support the ICEJ's Aliyah efforts in 2021

DONATE TODAY AT:
www.icejusa.org/aliyah



Sources: American Jewish Year Book 2019, Jewish Agency for Israel, Jewish Virtual Library, Shavei Israel, Wikipedia

ICEJ Brings 302 Ethiopian Jews to Israel in February Despite Airport Closure.

Although Ben-Gurion Airport was shut down for the first time ever, a specially chartered flight sponsored by the ICEJ was allowed to bring 302 Ethiopian Jewish immigrants home to Israel in February as part of the Operation Rock of Israel emergency airlift. This was the ICEJ's largest fully chartered Aliyah flight in over two decades, and it came under exceptional circumstances.

Israel's main airport had been completely closed to prevent the entry of a new coronavirus variant that might undermine the government's

mass vaccination efforts. However, a special exceptions committee gave permission for the Ethiopian immigrants to come from Addis Ababa. All the Ethiopian newcomers were required to first pass coronavirus tests and then quarantine for two weeks in Israel.

The ICEJ-chartered flight is part of an Israeli emergency airlift that aims to bring 2,000 Ethiopian Jews from a country battered by drought, locust swarms, economic hardship, coronavirus, and tribal warfare. The Christian Embassy has now sponsored flights for over 502 of these newest Ethiopian arrivals.

"This is a difficult time for everyone, but we are so grateful that these Ethiopian immigrants were granted special permission to make the



journey home to Israel," said ICEJ President Dr. Jürgen Bühler. "They have endured very tough conditions in Gondar, and now their dreams of finally reuniting with their families in the promised land have come true. And we also have many Christians worldwide to thank for making this special flight possible." 🌍



OPERATION ROCK OF ISRAEL'S LAST FLIGHT HAS LANDED!

BY ANASTASIYA GOODING

The last flight of Operation Rock of Israel arrived on March 11. In total, this operation brought more than 2,000 members of the Falash Mura community to Israel; the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem sponsored 502 of these flights for new Ethiopian arrivals.

For many of these Ethiopian Olim (newcomers), their Aliyah journey has taken several decades, with most of that time spent in harsh living conditions in transit camps in Gondar and Addis Ababa awaiting their turn to board a flight to the promised land. Those conditions have only worsened over the past year due to intense famine, a civil war, locust swarms, and the coronavirus pandemic, not to mention the long separation from loved ones and delayed dreams of finally reaching the Land of Israel. Each new flight brings dozens of touching life stories of individuals and families—and we are delighted to share one with you.

Ethiopian Jewish Family Reunited in Israel

Amane Bitao, along with his wife and three children, were among the 302 Ethiopian Jews who arrived on a specially chartered Aliyah flight sponsored by the ICEJ on February 12. His arrival in Israel marked the complete

reunification of his entire family after 11 years of separation. After his 14-day quarantine, the whole family, including his mother, three sisters, and two brothers, will finally celebrate their reunion in the Land of Israel.

Almost two decades have passed since the Bitao family decided to make the journey home to Israel. The first ones who managed to reach Israel were two sisters that made Aliyah with their husbands and children 11 years ago, settling in Petah Tikvah. That left the mother and three siblings still in Ethiopia. Eight years later, the mother was granted permission to immigrate to Israel. But three remaining siblings—sister Tedfaletz and brothers Shigao and Amane—were left with their families in Gondar, clinging to hope of coming one day. The Bitao family was torn apart and longed to be made whole again.

Tedfaletz describes the difficulties of living in the Gondar transit camps. The Jewish families there experience abuse from Ethiopian landlords who charge them exorbitant rents to live in hovels without running water and electricity.

But the Bitao family is truly a testimony of God's faithfulness. Tedfalech and Shigao, together

with their families, finally received approval to make Aliyah in early January. However, their joy was overshadowed by worries that their older brother Amane could not join them and would have to wait for the next flight. A few days after arriving, they learned Ben Gurion Airport had closed, and they feared for their brother—especially since he has post-traumatic stress disorder from his service days in the Ethiopian army.

After weeks of anxious waiting, exciting news came that a specially chartered flight arranged by Israeli and Jewish Agency officials and sponsored by the Christian Embassy would be granted an exception to land at Ben Gurion due to their dire circumstances. Among the 302 Ethiopian Jewish immigrants on board were Amane and his wife and children. It was a moment of great joy for the whole family to finally make it to the Jewish homeland after so many years of separation.

We invite you to partner with us as we continue to bring God's people back to Israel from the four corners of the earth. This is your chance to be a part of history, to fulfill biblical prophecy, and to change the lives of these Jewish families forever. 🌍

Give your best gift today to support the ICEJ's Aliyah efforts!
www.icejusa.org/aliyah



AN ETHIOPIAN JEWISH FAMILY 'EMBRACES' AFTER 20 YEARS

BY ESTER HEINZMANN, ICEJ GERMANY

Operation Rock of Israel brought 2,000 of the approximately 7,500 Jews remaining in Ethiopia who are eligible for Aliyah. Most have been waiting for up to two decades in abject poverty to reunite with their families in Israel. The ongoing



uncertainty about their future and separation from their loved ones have taken a toll. This includes the family of Yaliganesh Addis, who lives with her husband and four children in a transit camp in Gondar.

It has been 20 years since Yaliganesh last saw her mother, Nana. Back then, Nana and her three sons left their village of Gojam, moved to Gondar, and applied for permission to immigrate to Israel. Nana's other four children, including Yaliganesh, remained in Gojam, with some preparing for marriage. After waiting nine years in Gondar, Nana finally received permission to make Aliyah. "We were so happy," her son Kafale remembers.

But then they received bad news: only the mother and three sons were allowed to immigrate to Israel. "They told us: 'You go now, and once you're in Israel, the others will follow,'" Kafale remembers.

Today, he and his family live in Petah Tikvah. In the years that followed, three more siblings made Aliyah, but not so with Yaliganesh.

"I cried so much when they left for Israel, and today, 10 years later, I am still crying," she says. "I couldn't even say goodbye to them."

Her family also suffers from the separation. "My mother is totally devastated," says Kafale. "For 20 years she has been separated from her daughter. She's never seen her four grandchildren."

LEFT BEHIND

As a young man, Kafale tried to help Yaliganesh make it to Israel. Repeatedly, he was told: "Don't worry. Your sister will come eventually." After his military service in the IDF paratroopers, Kafale traveled to Gondar, where he was shaken by the conditions his sister faced in the transit camps.

He found Yaliganesh living in a small mud hut with no electricity or running water—like most Jews in Gondar. Meals are cooked on an open fire. Neighbors share one communal toilet.

Jewish families are charged far too much for rent, especially if they have children. For years, Yaliganesh stored away her few belongings in suitcases—always ready for her journey to Israel.

Jews in Gondar also have a hard time finding work, as employers do not know how long they will be around. So they live from the little money their families in Israel send them. The Jewish Agency tries to ease their suffering and provide medical care. There is also a food program for pregnant women and malnourished children under five, which the ICEJ helps finance.

HOME AT LAST

Last November, Yaliganesh finally received permission to make Aliyah. "I will be so happy to see my family again. It feels like a dream," she smiled.

Her family in Israel was also excited. "At last, the time has come. After 20 years of tears, we can embrace her and let out all this longing," said a relieved Kafale.

What is the first thing Yaliganesh will do when she finally reaches Israel? "I will embrace my family and thank God."

In late December 2020, Yaliganesh and her family finally arrived in Israel. After the mandatory 14 days of quarantine, she finally hugged her mother, Nana, and her siblings! 🌍



SHIELDING NORTHERN ISRAEL'S VULNERABLE BORDER TOWNS

ICEJ donates bomb shelters to a community cultural center near the northern border with Lebanon

BY LAURINA DRIESSE

Within four kilometers of Israel's northern border with Lebanon is the village of Hurfeish, home to a mix of Israeli Druze and Christians. The Druze minority are exceptionally loyal to Israel and consider it a great honor to serve in the Israeli Defense Force (IDF). Many continue in security professions after completing their service with the IDF.

While the Druze and Christian residents of Hurfeish live in peaceful coexistence, the community faces a serious external threat. They live under the constant fear that Hezbollah terrorists operating freely on the Lebanese side of the nearby border will decide to fire rockets into Israel, with Hurfeish right in the line of fire! They would literally have only seconds to find shelter.

Israel's entire northern border region is hilly, forested terrain dotted with picturesque villages like Hurfeish. The area is home to around 250,000 residents—an ethnic mosaic of Jewish, Druze, and Arab Christian towns and farming communities. One thing they all have in common is a lack of adequate bomb shelters for the local inhabitants.

During a recent spike in tensions with Hezbollah across the border, local council heads learned that the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem had placed over 110 portable bomb shelters in Israeli communities along the volatile southern border with Gaza. So they invited an ICEJ delegation to visit the area and consider donating shelters in the north as well.

After assessing the need, the ICEJ chose Hurfeish as the first village to receive shelters. The heartbeat of Hurfeish is its community cultural center, a hive of activity comprised of an outdoor sports complex and an indoor community center that hosts public events, daily activities, and educational courses. Through the generous donations received from our Christian supporters, the ICEJ was recently able to place two bomb shelters at the facility, giving peace of mind to those who use and enjoy it.

Unfortunately, the delivery of the bomb shelters was not without incident. As the truck carrying the two heavy portable bomb shelters made its way

through the hills on the way up to Hurfeish, the driver had to brake and swerve to avoid a motorcyclist who suddenly cut in front of him. The biker was spared any harm, but the truck's heavy load—each shelter weighing 23 metric tons—went flying into a nearby field! Thankfully, no one was injured, but the shelters landed on their sides.

A police investigation ensued while an independent engineer examined the shelters for structural damage. Thankfully, the damage was only cosmetic, confirming the resilience of these shelters to protect lives! The bomb shelters were repainted, loaded onto another truck, and safely delivered to the eagerly awaiting Hurfeish community.

Nicole Yoder, ICEJ Vice President of Aid and Aliyah, was thrilled to finally see the shelters in place next to the cultural center and the adjacent sports field, complete with dedication plaques crediting ICEJ Germany for the donations that made it possible.

Hurfeish also has a village church where local Arab Christians congregate and participate in activities. The ICEJ hopes to embark on a second project in this village, which involves installing additional shelters at other defenseless sites.

The need remains acute—Lebanon is in the midst of an unprecedented economic crisis due to Hezbollah's misuse of public funds. Some analysts believe the Shi'ite terror militia may seek to extricate itself by starting a war with Israel. The IDF has been holding large training exercises to prepare for such a conflict, but the local residents need more time to install shelters.

A recent state controller report warned that 2.6 million residents of northern Israel do not have access to functional bomb shelters. The need is most acute in the towns right along the border, where the IDF's Iron Dome batteries cannot stop shorter-range rockets. These villages are desperately seeking funding to provide better protection for their communities, and the ICEJ is grateful for our friends worldwide who are enabling us to offer them these urgently-needed bomb shelters. 🌍

Please consider a generous donation to help protect the vulnerable communities of northern Israel.
www.icejusa.org/bombshelter



Let Us Help You EXPERIENCE ISRAEL

The US Branch of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) is here to help you experience Israel through an array of tour offerings for churches, young adults, pastors/leaders, and the annual Feast of Tabernacles celebration. As a Christian ministry headquartered in Jerusalem for over 40 years, we have expertise in Israel—both biblical and modern—that will greatly enhance your experience.

We also help pastors and Christian leaders take their members on tour to Israel:

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*"Many peoples will
come and say,*

*'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the temple
of the God of Jacob. He will teach us
His ways, so that we may walk in His paths.'" (Isaiah 2:3)*



For more information on our tours, please go to www.icejusa.org/tours, call (866) 393-5890, or email us at tours@icejusa.org

THE BIBLICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ROSH CHODESH

BY MOJMIR KALLUS, VP FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

When the coronavirus pandemic forced everyone to move online last year, the ICEJ launched a whole series of Zoom prayer meetings. After a successful 12-hour prayer marathon during Pentecost in June, we felt we could expand the prayer chain up to 24 hours or more and start regular prayer meetings with participation of churches and prayer groups from all around the world. With the Lord's leading, we chose the beginning of each month according to the Hebrew calendar, or Rosh Chodesh, as the date for these recurring prayer vigils.

We find that in the Bible, Rosh Chodesh is often mentioned together with the main feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. They are called *moadim*, which can be translated as "appointed times." That is, God makes an appointment with His people and says He will listen and accept our prayers. It is a time for drawing near to God.

We know, of course, that God listens at all times, and we can and should pray without ceasing. Yet we also can learn from the biblical concept of appointed times and use the lesson to enhance our spiritual life.

One aspect of the new moon is the blowing of the trumpet. The Bible says "it shall be a memorial (*zikaron*) for you." In the Hebrew Bible, the word "zikaron" usually means to remember some dark moments from the past—to draw attention to wrongdoing or sin—to learn a lesson from history. Examples are Exodus 17:14, Numbers 16:39-40, Numbers 31:54.

Praying at the beginning of each month provides an opportunity to remember and learn from our mistakes. Moreover, the phrase "memorial before the Lord" can also mean that we ask God to remember us, in the sense that Habakkuk prayed, "in wrath remember mercy" (Habakkuk 3:2). We remind God of His word—which gives us hope, because He neither slumbers nor sleeps—knowing He will act on it.

This is the meaning of the commandment in Exodus 39:7 concerning the High Priest's breastplate. The priest brings the sons of Israel before the Lord as memorial stones; he literally carries them on his shoulders, with all their sins, wrongdoing, and imperfection, and cries out, "Lord, remember mercy." It is an expression of trust in God's mercy, in His forgiving character.

It is with this attitude that we seek the Lord every month, and the growing number of prayer groups involved shows that this practice has found resonance among believers in many countries. It is important, though, to keep the right attitude. We are not introducing a new tradition or adopting a Jewish ritual. We have in mind the words of Paul who writes in Colossians 2:16-17: "So, let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ."

Paul points to the fact that the Lord wants our hearts, not outward rituals. The substance is important, and that substance is Christ. Every month, let us use the opportunity to repent, cry for mercy, and also celebrate the faithfulness of God and the salvation in His Son.

Interestingly, we find that the Rosh Chodesh celebration will also have a place in the world to come. Isaiah declares, "And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the Lord" (Isaiah 66:23).

The ICEJ has pioneered the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles as a prophetic sign, understanding that the passage from Zechariah 14, which speaks about the nations coming up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, will only be fulfilled in the Messianic age. It seems that the time has come to turn attention to Isaiah's words about Rosh Chodesh and teach the church about its prophetic significance. 🌐

■ To join our next prayer call, watch www.icejusa.org/roshchodesh for the next Rosh Chodesh prayer watch schedule. ■

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HOW CAN A LOVING GOD DO THAT?

BY DR. SUSAN MICHAEL

Dr. Susan Michael is ICEJ USA Director and host of the Out of Zion podcast.

It is happening more and more these days, and it just breaks my heart. A pastor of another large church has announced that the Bible is not the Word of God. He is leading his “evangelical” church away from one of the four core tenets of evangelicalism: belief in the authority of the Scriptures.

According to such pastors, the problem is that the Old Testament does not describe the loving God of the New Testament and is filled with war and judgment. My response? Don’t throw away the baby with the bathwater! Don’t discard the Old Testament—learn how to read and teach it.

Jesus grew up memorizing and studying the Old Testament and had ample opportunity to disavow it if it was, in fact, not inspired. Instead, He considered the Old Testament to be the Word of God.

He did not seem to have a problem with how it portrays God nor troublesome passages like God’s use of a flood to destroy a wicked generation of mankind. In fact, Jesus compared His own return with the flood narrative. He also did not disavow God’s judgment that destroyed

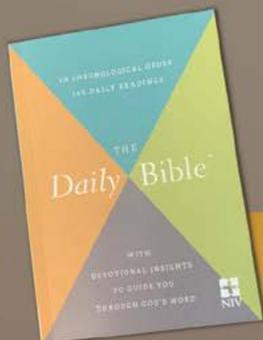
Sodom and Gomorrah but instead pronounced a worse judgment on the city of Capernaum for not believing in the miracles He had carried out there.

Jesus not only revered the Old Testament and considered it to be true but recognized its power and spiritual authority. When Satan tempted Him in the wilderness, Jesus responded with: “It is written,” and then quoted from Deuteronomy. One of those verses was that man shall not live by bread alone but by the Word of God, which in Jesus’ time was what we now call the Old Testament. If we tell our congregants to disregard the Old Testament, we rob them of the very spiritual nourishment Jesus prescribed and the powerful weapons He used Himself.

If you want to understand the God of the Old Testament better, join me on the *Out of Zion* podcast episode: “God’s Love for His People.” I invite you to *Walk Thru the Bible* with me each week by downloading our Bible reading plan (<https://icejusa.org/walkthruBible>), and get started reading right away! Invite your friends and family to join us! I can’t wait to *Walk Thru the Bible* with you!

WATCH AND LISTEN TO THIS EPISODE AND MORE AT WWW.OUTOFZIONSHOW.COM

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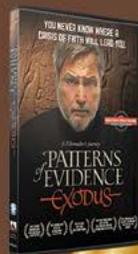
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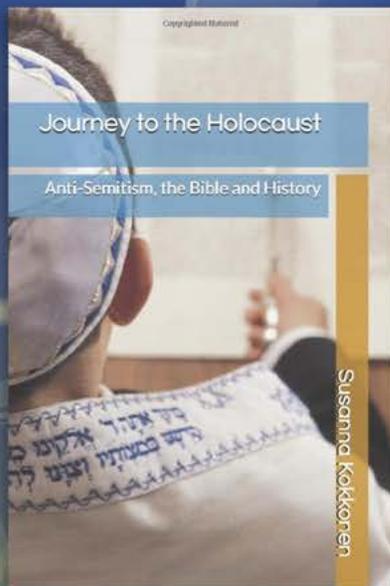
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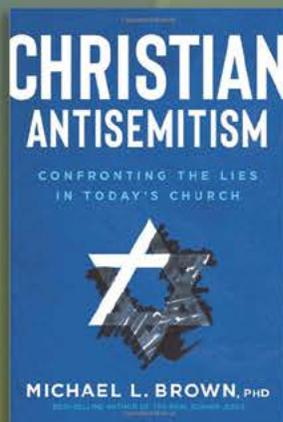
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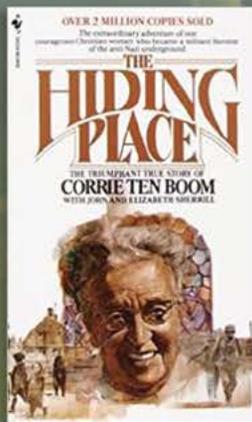
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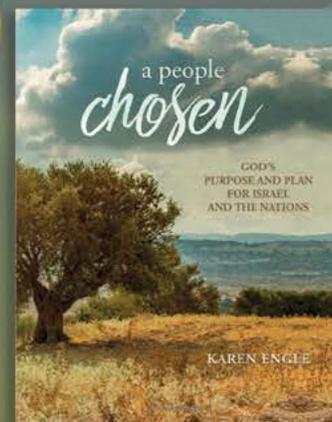
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YOUR ISRAEL ANSWER

What Is the IHRA Definition of Anti-Semitism?

By Dr. Susan Michael, ICEJ USA Director

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), an intergovernmental organization mandated to focus on Holocaust-related issues, determined that, to address the problem of rising anti-Semitism, there must be clarity about what it is. Some 30 governments have now adopted their non-legally binding working definition of anti-Semitism, and efforts are underway to expand that to include international organizations such as the United Nations and their related agencies.

The Working Definition

The definition drawn up by IHRA experts is: “Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

Examples Given

One unique and extremely helpful aspect of the IHRA definition is the list of examples of anti-Semitism it includes. These examples make it clear that anti-Semitism does not just target Jewish individuals but the Jewish State—Israel. Criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as anti-Semitism. But applying double-standards to Israel does, as well as using images and symbols from classic anti-Semitism and the Nazi regime when speaking of Israel.

The Correct Spelling

IHRA has also addressed their spelling of the term “antisemitism,” often written with a hyphen (as in this article: “anti-Semitism”). The unhyphenated spelling is favored by

many scholars and institutions to dispel the idea that there is an entity “Semitism,” which “anti-Semitism” opposes. The conjunction of the prefix “anti” with “Semitism” indicates anti-Semitism as referring to all people who speak Semitic languages or to all those classified as “Semites.”

However, since its inception, this term referred to prejudice against Jews alone. IHRA feels anti-Semitism should be read as a unified term (“antisemitism”) so that the meaning of the word for modern Jew-hatred is clear.*

Why This Definition Is Needed

The IHRA Definition is an important tool for education and guidance on anti-Semitism. As anti-Semitic incidents have increased worldwide, governments and civil society can use the definition to identify modern expressions of anti-Semitism better. Many seek ways to speak out against anti-Semitism, but the first step is to define and identify it and understand its impact.

What It Is Not Intended to Do

The definition should not be viewed as legal code. Some countries already have laws against anti-Semitic acts such as Holocaust denial, discrimination of Jews, or the distribution of anti-Semitic materials that should remain. In other countries, some aspects of the IHRA definition, if put into law, might infringe upon freedom of speech. Each country needs to assess how best to adopt and use the IHRA definition.

Some liberal groups are pushing back against the IHRA definition because they feel it is too restrictive on criticism of Israel that, in their eyes, is warranted. The definition makes clear that “criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded

as antisemitic.” However, the definition has become divisive; some activists have sought to give it the force of law, and others are claiming it infringes upon their right to free speech.

Mainstream Support

Today, governments, campus administrators, law enforcement bodies, and civil society organizations around the world are using the IHRA Definition. It has proved to be an important tool to help educate on anti-Jewish bias, assess claims of anti-Semitism, assist in identifying whether a crime might also be categorized as a hate crime targeting Jews, and aid in determining the impact of certain behaviors.

In a December 2019 executive order, the Trump administration instructed the Executive Branch to consider the IHRA definition, including its 11 examples, when investigating civil rights complaints—including those filed to the Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights regarding alleged discrimination on campus. The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, a coalition of establishment Jewish groups, sent a letter to Biden asking him to adopt the IHRA definition. The ICEJ organized a similar letter signed by 140 Christian leaders under the American Christian Leaders for Israel network.

The US government needs to join the growing list of countries that have adopted the IHRA definition, which would give all agencies the necessary tool to identify anti-Semitism and stop its growth.

** Recognizing both spellings as correct, the Word From Jerusalem continues to hyphenate “anti-Semitism.”* 



ICEJ TO BIDEN: SUPPORT ISRAEL AND COMBAT ANTI-SEMITISM

BY ICEJ STAFF

American Christian Leaders for Israel (ACLI) continues to provide a unified voice of truth to the American public in support of Israel and the Jewish people. A project of the US Branch of the ICEJ, ACLI collectively represents tens of millions of American Christians. Through various initiatives, ACLI leaders seek to ensure that when making key decisions on Israel, the leaders of this nation are informed of the position held by the millions of American Christians represented.

In February, ACLI sent a letter to the full Senate encouraging senators to ask Biden nominees if they are familiar with, and will adhere to, the working definition of anti-Semitism developed by IHRA when performing their duties: “We write today out of concern for our country’s security as we see anti-Semitic incidents escalating at an unprecedented rate. We ask that during hearings for President Biden’s nominees that you question them related to their position on combating anti-Semitism, specifically on adoption and implementation of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition within their agency.” The full letter may be viewed here: <https://aclforisrael.com/letter-to-us-senators/>

Then in March, ACLI sent a letter to President Biden proposing several guiding principles that ACLI sees as significant for

his administration regarding the security of the United States, Israel, and the Jewish people.

The guiding principles include: (1) not reentering the Iran nuclear deal (2) requiring bilateral negotiations to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (3) honoring the Abraham Accords (4) adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism across all Executive Branch agencies, and (5) committing to work to combat anti-Semitism at all governmental levels here and abroad—in particular, opposing the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement (BDS).

Dr. Susan Michael, Director, ICEJ USA & ACLI commented, “ACLI is deeply concerned with the rising incidents of anti-Semitism in the United States and around the world. We want to ensure this administration works to combat this evil and to keep the United States’ relationship with Israel strong.” The full letter may be viewed here: <https://aclforisrael.com/letter-to-president-biden/>

ACLI’s mission: On behalf of the tens of millions of American Christians that we collectively represent, we the members of ACLI seek to provide a unified voice of truth to the American public in support of Israel and the Jewish people. 

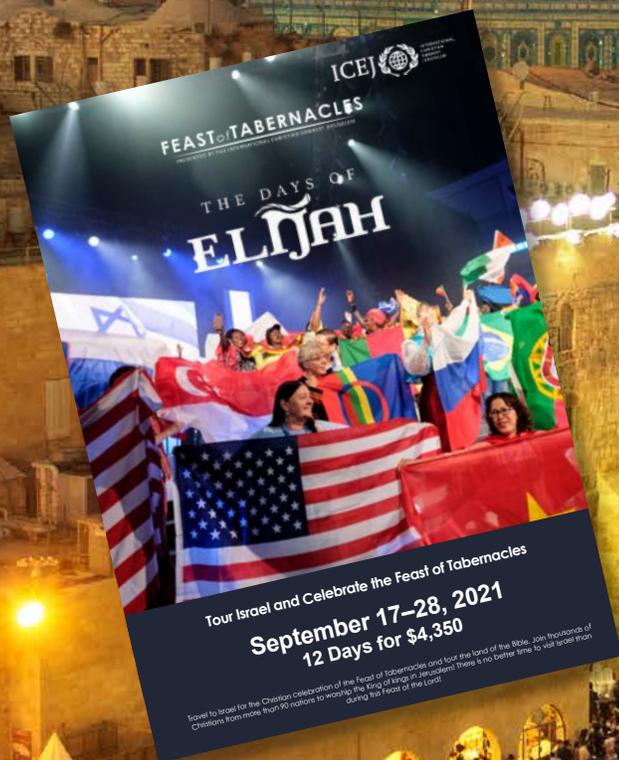
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