

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN EMBASSY JERUSALEM // NOVEMBER 2021 // USA EDITION



WORD

FROM JERUSALEM



COMING HOME
AFTER 2,700 YEARS



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.



CREDITS

ICEJ President Dr. Jürgen Bühler
USA Director Susan Michael

VP International Affairs Dr. Majmir Kallus

VP Finance David van der Walt

VP Operations Barry R. Denison

VP International Spokesman David Parsons

VP AID & Aliyah Nicole Yoder

Managing Editor/Publications Director Laurina Driesse

USA Managing Editor Julaine Stark

Copy Editor Karen Engle

Staff Writer Anastasiya Gooding

Graphic Design/Illustrators Ryan Tsuen, Peter Ecenroad, Nancy Schimp

Photography Shutterstock, ICEJ Staff and Branches, Associated Press, Wikimedia Commons, iStock, Ynet Adobe Stock FLASH90, JAFI, Wikimedia, alixpress.com, sunseeker.it, Getty Images, Laura Ben-David

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INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN EMBASSY JERUSALEM - USA

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Dear Friends

But you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, The descendants of Abraham My friend. You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest regions, and said to you, "You are My servant, I have chosen you and have not cast you away: Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." (Isaiah 41:8–10)

Though it's been thousands of years since Isaiah penned this passage, we continue to witness God's faithful fulfillment of these words to His people, Israel. As I write to you, the new Israeli government sworn in last summer is faring better than many expected and continues to address pressing issues on all sides (see page 4). For many in Israel, it feels like a new season where a new generation of forward-thinking national leaders is assuming the helm.

Please pray for these leaders as they address challenges on all sides—from internal security and the economic impact of COVID-19 to the rising threat of a nuclear Iran (see page 6).

Aliyah continues to be a priority for the ICEJ (see page 10), as well as volunteers bringing comfort to precious Holocaust Survivors (see page 12).

Prayer for the peace of Jerusalem continues throughout the ministry of the ICEJ, with many opportunities to worship and pray with brothers and sisters around the world and receive updates and the latest urgent prayer requests for Israel directly from Jerusalem. We continue to receive testimonies like the one from Jay and Gail Neer on page 13. God's Spirit is moving powerfully in these prayer times.

By the grace of God, our work in Jerusalem keeps expanding as new requests for help come to us from all over Israel. We are thankful to God and all of you who support us in prayer and finances. I hope you enjoy the latest issue of *Word From Jerusalem*, and I pray that as you read it, God will bless and inspire you!

Dr. Jürgen Bühler
President
International Christian Embassy Jerusalem

COVER PHOTO: A Bnei Menashe mother and child arrive in Israel (*photo credit: Laura Ben-David, Director of Marketing & News Media, Shavei Israel*).

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BENNETT-LAPID GOVERNMENT STANDING THE TEST OF TIME

BY DAVID R. PARSONS

ICEJ VICE PRESIDENT & SENIOR SPOKESMAN

Broad yet fragile, Israel's new government has held together since taking office in June and is faring better than many expected. Forged around a rotation agreement between Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and Foreign Minister Yair Lapid, the ruling coalition consists of eight diverse Israeli parties united by their common quest to keep former premier Benjamin Netanyahu from returning to power. With so many competing agendas among its razor-thin 61 Knesset members, many wondered whether the new government could survive, much less accomplish anything. But so far, the Bennett-Lapid alignment looks to be on a stable course for the foreseeable future.

Bennett and Lapid represent a younger generation of Israeli leaders who are generally forward-looking and willing to make compromises to promote the entire nation's welfare. They came in facing numerous

challenges at home and abroad—the most immediate being the prolonged coronavirus pandemic.

As the coalition assumed office, many Israelis felt they were about to beat COVID-19 through an aggressive mass vaccination program. But then the more contagious Delta variant slipped into the country and produced a fourth wave of infections over the summer, which stressed the national health system once more.

With his hi-tech background, Prime Minister Bennett listened to the medical experts but then opted to do everything possible to keep the country and economy open. Rather than strict lockdowns like under Netanyahu, he has relied on Israeli citizens to voluntarily follow the health rules and isolate when exposed. At the same time, the new government has continued its strict approach to foreigners entering the country, which means the tourism industry

will need more time to recover.

Meanwhile, the Knesset will soon vote on the passage of the annual state budget, which previous governments failed to secure over the past three years. And although it appears the budget will pass, there are numerous and often petty disputes among the coalition partners that could easily derail the process, which might trigger the dreaded prospects of yet another election. One serious dispute is over whether Palestinians can marry Israeli Arabs and gain Israeli citizenship. The Arab parties favor such a measure, but many on the right oppose it as a backdoor “right of return.”

The proposed budget includes investments in the Arab sector to reduce the spiraling rates of inter-Arab crime and violence and deal with the root causes of the shocking Arab-Jewish street brawls, which broke out during the Hamas rocket war last May.



Naftali Bennett and Yair Lapid preside over a recent meeting of the new Israeli cabinet.

On the international front, maintaining warm relations with the United States is always a top priority for any Israeli government, and Prime Minister Bennett sought to reaffirm the alliance when he flew to Washington in August for his first meeting with US President Joe Biden. However, the outcome was thrown in doubt when Biden postponed their meeting to deal with his government's tumultuous exit from Afghanistan. Still, Bennett received passing marks back home for his handling of the crisis moment—largely by remaining silent on the chaotic American withdrawal.

Bennett sought to focus Washington's attention on the growing Iranian nuclear threat while rebuffing any push by the Biden administration for renewed peace talks with the Palestinians on a two-state solution, arguing such a move could easily fracture his coalition.

The Israeli government is also facing US pressure to curb Chinese investment in its infrastructure projects and hi-tech sector, giving Beijing too much leverage over Israeli policies and access to sensitive Western technologies.

The Bennett-Lapid coalition intends to rebuild the traditional bipartisan base of support for Israel among Democrats and Republicans in Washington to deal with such issues, which may prove challenging as next year's US midterm elections approach. The new government also wants to be proactive in repairing Israel-Diaspora relations, especially with American Jewish leaders who have felt slighted by Israel's favoring of the ultra-Orthodox over the Conservative and Reform movements. With the haredi parties out of government, Bennett and the national religious camp have a chance to bring some needed balance to certain state-synagogue

issues—such as allowing civil marriages and non-Orthodox conversions—which would appease many Israelis as well as American Jews.

In addition, the battle against the BDS campaign is a key focus of the new government's diplomatic and *hasbara* (public relations) efforts, as seen in the ongoing tussle with Ben & Jerry's ice cream execs over their garbled and discriminatory boycott of Israeli settlements.

Above all, the Bennett-Lapid government is faced with a momentous decision on how to confront Iran as it closes in on the nuclear threshold (see the following article on Iran).

Finally, keep in mind that if the opposition Likud party were to replace Netanyahu as chairman, Bennett would come under immediate pressure to renege on his rotation deal with Lapid and move to form a majority right-wing government with Likud. 🌐

ISRAEL AT A CROSSROADS ON IRAN

BY DAVID R. PARSONS

ICEJ VICE PRESIDENT & SENIOR SPOKESMAN

The Iranian nuclear threat has been building since the early 1990s, and every Israeli prime minister has had to deal with it in their own way. Over the ensuing years, each Israeli leader has expressed allegiance to the “Begin Doctrine”—the policy first set by Prime Minister Menachem Begin that Israel will not allow a hostile state in the region to acquire weapons of mass destruction. But it has recently emerged that due to a flurry of distractions over recent years—most notably the coronavirus pandemic and four stalemated elections—Israel may have fallen behind in its readiness to deal a lethal blow to Iran’s renegade nuclear program if needed. Some in the security and

political elite insist that it may be too late for Israel to handle this threat on its own and must now rely solely on the United States to deliver the Jewish state from this dilemma. Whether that is truly the case or not, the new Bennett-Lapid government is clearly at a crossroads

concerning Iran’s ambitions to destroy Israel by nuclear means.

The first Israeli intelligence reports about Tehran’s pursuit of a nuclear weapons program hit the desk of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1992. The program was still very early in its development then, but it is interesting to note in retrospect that Rabin sought to sell the seven-year Oslo peace process as a race against time for the forces of peace to gain control of the region before Iran did.

Over the years, Israel has been able to slow Iran’s nuclear progress with Western help, but Tehran has been extremely determined to forge ahead. The ayatollahs learned the lessons of Israel’s attack



Iran centrifuge display (Reuters)

on Iraq's atomic reactor at Osirak under Menachem Begin in 1982 and Ehud Olmert's surprise operation against the Syrian reactor at al-Kibar in 2007. So they have taken key components of their nuclear infrastructure deep underground in hopes of protecting them from Israeli strikes and prying Western eyes. They also have built up a substantial deterrence in the form of tens of thousands of rockets in the hands of Iranian proxy militias on Israel's northern and southern borders.

Over the past decade, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu focused on securing international sanctions to impede Iran's progress toward the bomb while also carrying out a series of largely successful covert operations against Iran's nuclear facilities and atomic experts. Part of Israel's success in getting Western powers to finally take serious action against Iran was due to the IDF showing it was indeed ready to carry out a direct long-range assault on Iran's nuclear sites, including a very brazen war exercise involving a mass sortie of 100 strike and refueling aircraft, which flew all the way to Gibraltar and back in plain sight of American and European radar. The result was a tightening of sanctions on Tehran, which forced the Islamic regime to the negotiating table. But those talks ended in 2015 with a weak JCPOA agreement due to the Obama administration's strangely lenient approach to Iran.

US President Donald Trump later abandoned the JCPOA for good reasons, but the Iranians have used that as an excuse to cross several red lines. In recent months, the International Atomic Energy Agency has disclosed that Iran is enriching uranium up to 60 percent purity, which falls just short of weapons-grade levels and also has been forging uranium metal, a key part of a nuclear warhead. Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz also recently warned that Iran is only two months away from developing an atomic bomb if it decides to make one.

On the heels of that warning comes former Prime Minister Ehud Barak's assessment, published in a column in *Yediot Ahronot* over the High Holy Days, that just as Iran is approaching the nuclear threshold, Israeli leaders have been distracted by the coronavirus crisis and two years of stalemated elections, leaving little in the budget to help the IDF keep its plans current for attacking Iran. He may have been referring here to Israel's shortage of jumbo bunker-busters and top-flight refueling planes.

Israel's only option now, argued Barak, is to strengthen its ties with the United States and hope it will take the actions necessary to deliver Israel from this existential threat. He added that the United States does not presently have any military plans to strike Iran and will not likely develop any under the Biden administration.

The result, he concluded, is that Israelis will have to learn to live under the shadow of a nuclear Iran.

Although he criticized the Bennett-Lapid government for helping to put Israel in this dire strait, Barak put most of the blame on Netanyahu. [It is worth recalling here that Barak sat with Bibi in a coalition government not so long ago, where they developed the "gunslinger" strategy, which eventually swayed the Americans and Europeans to ratchet up sanctions on Iran.]

Only time will tell if Barak's dour assessment is right. Some suggest the Israeli military is still well-prepared for a long-range strike on Iran's nuclear assets, especially with its new squadrons of F-35 advanced stealth fighter-bombers. Others contend that the budget shortfalls can quickly be made up, and the IDF still has time to update its equipment and contingency plans for striking Iran.

In any case, there is a point in time not far ahead when Iran will likely cross the nuclear weapons threshold, closing the window for Israel to carry out preemptive strikes in keeping with the Begin Doctrine. Let us all pray that Israel's leaders, intelligence agencies, military branches, and civilian resilience will all be up to the task should that moment come. 🕊️



NEW LIFE IS A HEARTBEAT AWAY

ICEJ supporting pro-life efforts in Israel

BY LAURINA DRIESSE, ICEJ STAFF

The ICEJ's Giving a Future & a Hope campaign seeks to strengthen and support Israeli families reaching toward a better tomorrow—and where better to start than at the beginning of life!

The sad truth is that in Israel today, abortions are common and even legal until birth. So many precious lives are being taken, and far too many women carry feelings of loss, guilt, and brokenness, which often torment them to their core.

Every year in Israel, there are about 170,000 live births but also approximately 40,000 abortions. Last year alone, the state paid for 18,000 abortions, regardless of the circumstances. Since 1948 more babies have been aborted in Israel than Jewish children who died in the Holocaust.

This heartbreaking reality spurs on the ICEJ to support pro-life efforts in Israel—and recently, ICEJ AID assistant Jannie Tolhoek spoke with Sandy Shoshani and Anat Brenner, both long-time advocates and directors of pro-life work in Israel.

Sandy explained why she is so passionate about pro-life work, where roughly one in every five babies is aborted.

“Nothing grieves the Spirit of God more than the shedding of innocent blood,” Sandy said. “Only 50 percent of the abortions are single women,

and 49 percent are married couples. It is mostly women between 20 and 35, a lot of divorcees, [and] a lot of married couples who feel they cannot afford another baby. Many abortions are done because of the mother's health—including her mental health. If she says that she is not sleeping well or is stressed and cannot cope, she can have an abortion.”

Anat relates all too well. She found herself pregnant while serving in the Israeli army and felt that a baby would simply ruin her life.

“I will not have a future,” she thought. “And I didn't have the right person to walk alongside me to tell me that it can be different and that there are many other options. So I had an abortion.

“It really devastated me because at one point in the pregnancy, I felt so good,” Anat added. “I was holding my tummy, and it was such a lovely feeling, but because I didn't want to have the baby and I didn't see myself as a mother, I just shut down these thoughts and ignored that good feeling.

“Right after I had the abortion, I knew that the life I had inside of me would never come back,” she continued. “This is something that I did forever, and I was so broken. I couldn't stop crying, and for many months after that, I suffered from depression. I had to move in the army from the place where I was to another place, because everything reminded

me of the abortion, and I just couldn't handle life so well after that.

"When I became a believer, this was one of the first things the Lord dealt with me about and healed me from my abortion experience. And I had such a strong desire to help other women who suffer from the consequences of abortion—who are broken and never had time to grieve at all over their baby that they lost in the abortion," concluded Anat.

Today Anat gives her all to ensure that pregnant women know that they have someone to support them. She became a pro-life counselor to help others decide not to have an abortion and established a hotline so that women in crisis—not knowing what to do or facing an unwanted pregnancy—can call for help.

"I really believe that when the women have the right person to walk alongside them, when they think that abortion is the only option, God can do something else—and they can begin to see other options. They can feel that there is somebody who has empathy for them [and] can understand them and walk alongside them," Anat explained.

Sandy agrees that these women desperately need emotional and practical support, adding: "We offer hope for the mom and practical help and healing; these three things are so important. As many of the moms say, 'You have given me the possibility to raise my child with dignity, not poverty.'" To date, Sandy has helped more than 3,500 women.

"Nobody should abort because of money," Sandy insists.

"I really want to thank the ICEJ and the donors with all my heart because you have sponsored so many babies over the years, saved lives, protected women from abortions, and made a difference! Praise the Lord! Thank you so much for your love, your care, your support, and your prayers, and God bless you for caring and loving the babies and moms in Israel," said Sandy.

Anat also expressed her heartfelt gratitude:

"I really want to thank the Christian Embassy for standing with us in such a heart-touching way," she said. "I know that God is using you all for us, and we are so thankful for your prayers, for your support, for your love, and for you standing with us in this fight for life. You are tools for God to help raise our hands in this battle to fight for the babies in Israel. Thank you so much."

The counseling and practical help offered to women in crisis pregnancy provide them with necessary baby items such as a crib, stroller, bathtub, or bedsheets—as well as practical financial assistance so that the mother can purchase diapers, formula, or anything else she may need.

The ICEJ is dedicated to strengthening families in Israel and invites you to help us provide these basic needs for many more little ones and their mothers. Please help us to preserve life and offer a future and a hope to many more Israelis by giving your best gift today. 🌍

Giving A Future & A Hope

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."

JEREMIAH 29:11

GIVING A FUTURE AND A HOPE TO THE STRUGGLING SIDE OF THE START-UP NATION

- STRENGTHENING FAMILIES
- EDUCATION & ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT
- CHILDREN & YOUTHS AT RISK
- COEXISTENCE IN ISRAEL

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Talya Kestelman

ICEJ HELPS JEWISH WOMAN 'ON FIRE' TO MOVE TO ISRAEL

BY ANASTASIYA GOODING

Talya's Story

Talya Kestelman made Aliyah from South Africa this summer on an ICEJ-sponsored emergency flight. As a 23-year-old young woman, she came with joy and bright expectations for the start of a brand-new chapter in her life. Talya visited Israel for the first time when she was 15 years old as part of a school program.

"I just absolutely fell in love with this country," she recalled. "I felt so connected to Israel, and my soul was on fire."

Amid the ongoing coronavirus travel bans and economic uncertainty, Jews are still finding their way home to

the promised land, and projections are that Aliyah will even accelerate over the coming months. So far in 2021, over 18,500 Jews have immigrated to Israel. And as always, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem is right there amid this Aliyah wave, helping to bring over 2,200 of these Jewish immigrants home to Israel this year. This includes our sponsorship of Aliyah flights for more than 1,300 Jews coming home from all directions.

COMING HOME AFTER 2,700 YEARS

BY LAURA BEN-DAVID, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & NEWS MEDIA, SHAVEI ISRAEL

After 2,700 years, the Bnei Menashe are coming home! Here are a few of their stories.

REUBEN HAAKIP FAMILY

As the Bnei Menashe Aliyah is approaching, one family who will be on board with the group is the 66-year-old Head of Matiyang Village, Churachandpur, Mr. Reuben Haokip. Apart from his chieftainship role, he was employed by the government as a teacher and retired in 2015 after working for almost two

decades. He will be making Aliyah with

his wife, two sons, a daughter-in-law, and a grandson. His younger brother made Aliyah in 2011, and they have not seen each other since then. He is greatly looking forward to seeing him again.

Mr. Haokip inherited his chieftainship from his late father, who died in 2004. Unfortunately, his father died while waiting to make Aliyah. Now they will carry his memory with them when they leave India. Chieftainship is a role found in remote parts of Manipur left largely ungoverned by the Indian government—so the chief often fills this void.

They are entrusted to exercise tribal law in these remote areas where the presence of state authorities is minimal to practically non-existent. Criminal or non-criminal cases, like marriages and petty theft, are often solved in the chief's village court. The constitution of India recognizes their authority—because of their high status in the Manipur tribal society, they are considered a "mini-king" of sorts.

With that said, why would a man like Reuben Haokip wish to make Aliyah and leave behind the high social status he and his family enjoy?

His answer was a humble one. Haokip lamented with a smile:

Life is good here, but rich and powerful people—and poor people—all have a common Creator. We often find comfort in the words of God. The kindness of God is in all of us. It is unconditional. It's just that some people are too ignorant to see it. There is nothing more comforting than to dwell in His presence. My status may bring me power, but it is meaningless. To me this Aliyah is the unfolding of the prophecy—the words *Hashem* (God) coming to life. I can't resist being a part of it.

He then added, "In Jeremiah 31:15, it says our grandmother, Rachel, is weeping for her children because they are no longer in Zion. And the Lord comforts her and promises her that 'Her children shall return to the border.' Finally, my turn has come to return to the border of Zion. My biggest wish is to be buried in the land of Israel when I die."

Please help us bring these people home to Israel.

She then came back for a second visit to Israel with her family, and there was no doubt about where she belonged. "God was sending me a message that I needed to live in Israel," she said with a smile.

Talya shared her desire to live in Israel with her family and asked permission to move here. Her family said she first needed to finish her university degree, so she faithfully worked at her studies and received her diploma.

"I'm going to Israel. I need to be there," she insisted afterward. "I need to live my life and meet my people. I need to experience life as a true Israeli."

Talya is the first member of her family to blaze the trail back to Israel. She is looking forward to seeing her father in December, who plans

to visit her and see what life in Israel really looks like.

"I really hope that my whole family will move to Israel within a couple of years," Talya confided.

Talya was also thankful to know that Christians around the world are supporting the Jewish return and that the ICEJ helped with her life-changing flight to Israel.

"I'm so grateful to have been given this opportunity to come to Israel," she said. "Knowing that I have a country that will accept me no matter what, just because I'm Jewish, is a real blessing, and this is very special for me."

After coming out of quarantine, Talya's first step in Israel was starting an intensive Hebrew language course at Ulpan Etzion in Jerusalem.

"It is something special to be in this group of people from all over the world. We all have the same vision and calls in our lives. We all left everything behind to come to this special place, to learn a new language, and we have all started our lives over here. It is very special to be a part of this," she explained.

Taking one step at a time, Talya is settling into an apartment and is looking forward to beginning her master's degree in environmental studies.

"There are a lot of opportunities in Israel in terms of green design and green architecture. That is the field I want to go into," she said.

We pray this young Jewish lady from South Africa will achieve her dreams and aspirations in her new homeland—Israel. 🌍

Give to: www.icejusa.org/aliyah



MEIRA SINGSON FAMILY

MEIRA SINGSON FAMILY

"My family is fortunate enough to be a part of this upcoming Aliyah, but my heart weeps for those thousands of Bnei Menashe yearning to make Aliyah and become a part of the unfolding prophecy. I have waited for this Aliyah for as long as I could remember. I hope their wish will soon come true. I am so

grateful to those who have taken the initiative to help the Bnei Menashe and who are making enormous efforts to fulfill the dreams of thousands of them who remain in India.

"My name is Meira Nemneikim Singson. From the moment I heard the news that I, along with my remaining three children, could be making Aliyah this year, I have been filled with joy. My other children (three daughters) made Aliyah earlier this year and their uncle made Aliyah a few years back. The idea of joining them has made me smile nonstop. I cannot control my happiness. I am that excited.

"I run a small variety store in my village. Our life is not always that fortunate. In 2011 my beloved husband left this world to be with his Creator eternally. Since then, my children are my only happiness. Three of them got married and made Aliyah with their husbands. I am very happy for them, but on the other hand, I was extremely sad because I miss them a lot and have not seen them for years. I love Zion and I love my children. I pray to Hashem many times for our unification."

OSHER SINGSIT FAMILY

"My name is Osher Singsit. I am 49 years old, married, and my beautiful wife and I have 4 sons and 2 daughters. I served in the Indian army and retired in the year 2011. My younger brother and sister have already settled in Israel, and we have not seen them in years and miss them terribly.

"My other brother made Aliyah in 2007. I haven't seen him in 14 years! With your help and prayers, my family will be making Aliyah to Eretz Israel this year. My kids are very excited about it. We like India, but it is our dream to make Aliyah to Israel and settle there.

"We are the children of Menashe (Manasseh). We have been lost for many many years, and now we want to be reconnected to our roots. So with all your help and prayer, we will be fulfilling our dreams and the prophecy of the prophet."

In Isaiah 49:22, the Lord says: "Behold, I will lift My hand in an oath to the nations, and set up My standard for the peoples; they shall bring your sons in their arms, and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders." So we are invited by God to play a key prophetic role in the great ingathering of Israel in our day. Please join us by supporting the ICEJ's Aliyah efforts! 🌍



OSHER SINGSIT FAMILY

Give to: www.icejusa.org/bnei-menashe



NEW TEAM OF ICEJ VOLUNTEERS SERVES HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

- BY YUDIT SETZ

In early fall, we were thrilled to welcome Dinna, Birgit, and Christine, who are three of the five new Christian volunteers coming to serve at the ICEJ's Home for Holocaust Survivors in Haifa. We now have two nurses and a physiotherapist serving the precious Holocaust Survivors, and the two remaining volunteers will join us soon. They are replacing our previous volunteer team whose time here ended last summer.

Dinna was born in Kyrgyzstan but raised in Germany, and her language skills in German and Russian are a great tool in her daily work. To hear about the Haifa Home is quite different than seeing it on the ground, and after being here now for several weeks, Dinna is pleasantly surprised as she makes her rounds and gets to know the residents.

"What a nice project!" she exclaimed. "The residents have their own apartment and yet are not alone but have a community of fellow residents and staff that do everything they can to make everyday life easier . . . God is pausing my life in Germany so that I can serve these Holocaust Survivors here in Israel."

Birgit was born in Germany but came to us from Switzerland. She is a well-educated and experienced physiotherapist, having worked in different countries and cultures, and she immediately put her expertise into practice.

"It's a privilege to work with people who survived the Holocaust, especially as a German and in the land of Israel," noted Birgit. "I am impressed and touched by the warm welcome I received from residents and staff alike. I am amazed how fast they embraced me."

Mobility is very important for the elderly, and besides her individual physiotherapy sessions, Birgit is leading three exercise groups.

"It's a blessing for me to bring joy to the lives of these elderly Survivors

who suffered so much and to feel a heart connection," added Birgit. "It is truly worth it, to leave everything behind."

Christine was born in Kazakhstan and raised in Germany. She brings her talents as a nurse and educator to caring for the aging residents, many over 90 years old.

"I love to work with the elderly, to make their life easier. I also desire to show God's love for them through my work," explained Christine. "I was very impressed with how they are very happy we are here. This was very surprising for me."

As we look ahead, we are filled with expectation and excitement! With a new and bigger team, we are planning more ways to improve the quality of life for the residents. We are renovating the two community activity rooms where many events currently take place so that they are more welcoming. We also are planning more fun and enriching activities for the residents.

In addition, the permit to install an elevator in the ICEJ's newest apartment building at the Haifa Home has been approved. This means by early next year, we can place more Survivors in the six new housing units.

Finally, in November we will open a new branch of the national Call Center for Holocaust Survivors in Jerusalem. This facility will expand our efforts to reach out and help more Holocaust Survivors across Israel in their final years.

It is a great privilege to care for these precious Holocaust Survivors, and we are grateful for the support of all the wonderful donors who help make this possible. Your continued support of the Haifa Home community ensures these Survivors will enjoy a good quality of life in their remaining years. 🌍

Please give to: www.icejusa.org/haifa

PRAY FOR THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM

BY JOHN VEDDER, ICEJ-USA
CHURCH RELATIONS COORDINATOR

Why do Christians say to “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem”? What is it about this phrase that seems to echo across the nations and throughout time?

The Hebrew word *shalom* means peace, harmony, wholeness, and completeness and is traditionally used as a greeting or farewell in Israel. So when we pray for the *shalom* of Israel, we are praying for security, safety, harmony, and completeness for the nation of Israel.

Praying for the safety and security of Israel aligns us to Psalm 122:6: “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! May they be secure who love you! Peace be within your walls and security within your towers.” It is a call to intercede on behalf of the nation of Israel for complete restoration of the nation and people—restoration to not only the land of Israel but also to God Himself. Paul writes in Romans 11 about this great restoration of the children of Israel back to the Lord and invites us as gentiles to join with generations past in praying and longing for them to be restored.

Over the past 40 years, the Lord has led the ICEJ to establish initiatives to connect thousands of believers around the world to pray for the *shalom* of Israel. Currently, we have three distinct opportunities to participate.

1. **Start or join an Isaiah 62 prayer group in your area** – Join with nearly 100 other groups using our monthly prayer points that come straight from Jerusalem.
<https://icejusa.org/isaiah-62-prayer/>
2. **Join our weekly Global Prayer Gathering hosted in Jerusalem** – Hear from leaders in Israel and around the world regarding current events and prayer needs.
<https://icejusa.org/event-item-global-prayer-gathering/>
3. **Join our monthly Rosh Chodesh prayer call** – Gather online with believers from around the world to enter the presence of the Lord at the beginning of each new Hebrew month in accordance with Isaiah 66:23: “‘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.”
<https://icejusa.org/event-item-rosh-chodesh/>

Join other Bible-believing Christians from around the globe and lift your voice in praise and thanksgiving to the Lord in intercession for Israel and our own nations. Let us enter the throne room of our heavenly Father and pray together for the peace of Jerusalem. 🌍

WWW.ICEJUSA.ORG/ISAIAH62



Gail and Jay Neer in Israel

A WORD OF GRATITUDE TO ALL AT ICEJ WHO HAVE HAD A HAND IN THE ROSH CHODESH PRAYER

My husband, Jay, and I cannot thank you enough for this Rosh Chodesh prayer gathering. We sign on to our desktop computer when the prayer gathering begins and we leave it on for the entire prayer gathering.

Most times we have it on mid-audio and sometimes on full audio, and then at night, we put it on low audio so that it is on 24/7 just bathing our home and our spirit in prayer. Sometimes I get up in the night and join in, especially if it is just one or two praying. I want them to know that there are others that are joining hearts with them in prayer to the Father.

I often think of the prayer that Jesus prayed in John 17:21, “...that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us that the world may believe that you have sent me.” We are so very grateful to be a part of the body of Christ and to have brothers and sisters in the Lord all over the world. We are honored and consider it a privilege to be able to join in prayer for Israel and the Jewish people, as well as for the body of Christ, for all their prayer needs and petitions and requests.

God's richest blessings upon the ICEJ leadership and organization, and may the Lord continue to guide you and grant you wisdom from on high for all the decisions you must make. May the Lord grant you extraordinary favor with Him and with men and with women. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Most sincerely in Him,

Jay and Gail Neer
Boca Raton, Florida

HOLIDAY GIFTS OF H

HELP JEWISH FAMILIES COME HOME

Countries Impacted: Ethiopia, France, Ukraine, China, and India

In a time of rising antisemitism and economic uncertainty, the opportunity for Jewish families to make Aliyah to Israel is more important than ever.

When you support Aliyah, your gift will ensure Jewish families receive the help they need:

- **Travel costs to Israel:** Assistance for these families is crucial, otherwise they would be left in limbo—without a home or income—and dependent on the charity of others.
- **Basic needs upon arrival:** Once they land in Israel, more assistance is needed to cover their basic needs until their government absorption benefits start and they can begin building a new life in the land.



www.icejusa.org/aliyah

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SUGGESTED GIFT

Average cost per person: **\$565**

Shared cost: **\$50**



ADOPT A HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR

You can make a real difference in the life of a Holocaust Survivor residing in our assisted living home in Haifa. When you adopt a Holocaust Survivor, you join a team of dedicated caregivers who look after the survivors daily and provide for their needs.

www.icejusa.org/donate-adopt-survivor

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SUGGESTED GIFT

Average cost per person: **\$2,250**

Shared cost: **\$50**

SUPPORT A CALL CENTER FOR HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

The coronavirus lockdowns left thousands of elderly Holocaust Survivors struggling with loneliness and triggered the return of painful memories as Jewish youths trapped in Nazi-occupied Europe. Sadly, many of them were suffering in silence with no one to turn to and no one checking in on them to make sure they were alright. In response, the ICEJ has sponsored a national emergency call center, which operates 24 hours a day on weekdays and is manned by staff and community volunteers from across Israeli society.

www.icejusa.org/call-center



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SUGGESTED GIFT \$25

HOPE AND COMFORT

PROVIDE FOOD FOR NEEDY FAMILIES

Provide a family with a basket of basic food items.

There is an increasing need to provide basic food items for families struggling below the poverty line at the holidays and throughout the year. Your gift to ICEJ AID can make a difference in the life of a family.

www.icejusa.org/aid



SUGGESTED GIFT

Average cost: **\$100**

Shared cost: **\$25**



CARE FOR ORPHANS, CHILDREN, AND AT-RISK YOUTH

A significant segment of Israel's youth has no family. Your gifts to ICEJ AID allow us to assist this neglected segment of Israeli society in many ways. We provide:

- Playground equipment
- Mentors
- A comfortable, safe, loving, and supportive environment
- Assistance as they transition into adulthood and prepare for college and careers

www.icejusa.org/aid

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SUGGESTED GIFT

One year of assistance for a child: **\$250**

Shared cost: **\$20**

BUILD A BOMB SHELTER

In order to safely send their children to school, go to the market, or do outdoor activities such as basketball, tennis, or swimming, Israelis need a bomb shelter close by where they can find refuge when the air raid siren sounds. Unfortunately, they only have 10 seconds to run for shelter!

Will you consider gifting a bomb shelter—or share the cost—and bring hope and peace to Israelis under rocket fire.

www.icejusa.org/bomb-shelters

Scan to donate



SUGGESTED GIFT

Cost of one bomb shelter: **\$26,000**

Shared cost: **\$150**



MASADA



THE LORD MY STRONGHOLD

A Look into Israel's Physical and Spiritual Fortresses

BY DR. SUSAN MICHAEL, ICEJ USA DIRECTOR

"The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold." (Psalm 18:2 NIV)

Psalm 18 is said to be a Psalm of David that he wrote when the Lord delivered him from the hand of Saul. We read about just such a day in 1 Samuel 24:22, where it says that after Saul and David made an agreement, "Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold."

During the time of the Israelites, a stronghold was a naturally elevated rock formation or mountain that offered protection and a place of safety. For example, when David was hiding from Saul, he dwelt in the "strongholds" at Ein Gedi, an oasis fed by a waterfall descending from the barren mountains alongside the Dead Sea. There are many caves visible high on the cliffs above Ein Gedi similar to the ones in which David may have hidden.

But 1 Samuel 24:22 says that David went up to "the

stronghold," indicating that there was one stronghold everyone knew about that stood out among all the rest. It is possible that stronghold could have been the 1,300-foot-high rock plateau overlooking Ein Gedi that is known today as Masada (fortress). There is no way to know if it is the stronghold David dwelt in, but there is no better example of what David meant when he described the Lord as his stronghold.

Masada

Masada has a history almost as rugged and deadly as it looks. It was the first site Herod the Great fortified after he gained control of his kingdom. He built a three-tiered palace down the cliffs on the northern edge of Masada that included a swimming pool, Roman bath, and throne room. The entire fortress was self-sufficient with cisterns, aqueducts, agricultural plots, storage rooms, servants' housing, and a synagogue.

But Masada is best known for the dramatic last stand of a small band of Jewish zealots who had fled there from Jerusalem in AD

70 after Roman forces destroyed the temple. Some 900 zealots lived there and resisted Roman rule until AD 73 when a Roman legion laid siege to Masada, building a large siege ramp so a battering ram could reach the wall around the fortress. Once the Roman assault began to penetrate the wall, the Jewish resistance ended in a mass murder-suicide, leaving only seven survivors—two mothers and five children, who hid in a cistern.


When archaeologists first excavated the site in the 1960s, they found many scrolls stored in the synagogue—but the top scroll that had been taken out for the zealots' last teaching was Ezekiel 35–38. In those chapters, the Lord speaks judgment on the surrounding nations for their treatment of His people, but He also promises to regather the Jewish people back to their land in a time of blessing and peace. In chapter 37, that future rebirth of Jewish sovereignty on the land is described as dry bones coming back to life from the dead.

These zealots took their lives in utter hopelessness, choosing

death over a life of slavery to the Roman oppressors, yet knowing that one day, God would fulfill His promises and raise up the nation, even if from dead, dry bones. This is why Masada is such a moving place to visit today.

A Heavenly Stronghold

But the real lesson of Masada is found in the life and words of David. He benefited greatly from the great strongholds of his day and hid in them for his physical protection. However, David did not put his trust in earthly strongholds. He knew that God was his true stronghold, and in Him alone could he trust.

Visiting the magnificent mountain stronghold of Masada reminds us of how strong and mighty our God is—like a high tower we can run to for safety in times of trouble. Even though we cannot trust a physical stronghold as fortified and protective as Masada, we can trust our God in all things. He is our rock, a high tower and shield—the One in whom we *can* take refuge (Psalm 144:1–2). 



A WORLD AT THE CROSSROADS

"This is the way. Walk in it." ISAIAH 30:21

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OUT OF ZION

WITH SUSAN MICHAEL



SETTING THE STAGE FOR ONE AMAZING MOMENT

BY DR. SUSAN MICHAEL

Ever wonder why Jesus was born in the first century AD and not some other time? Or why He was born Jewish, and why to a particular Jewish girl living in the town of Nazareth of Galilee? Jesus did not just appear out of nowhere like a Greek God of mythology, and the location of His birth was not happenstance. God had been carefully setting the stage over thousands of years.

God had promised Abraham that his descendants would have a global mission of blessing all the peoples of the earth. He would use them to carry out His plan of redemption. He then revealed to the prophet Isaiah that a baby would be born of the line of David—and a light would shine upon the Galilee by this royal child who was to reign forever.

But first, God had to purify His people of idolatry. Exile was needed. This dispersion did not mean God's promises to them were over, and in the book of Esther, we read how He intervened on their behalf and saved them from annihilation. He then allowed them to return to Jerusalem and reestablish their national homeland.

God had done all of this and more to set the stage for one amazing


moment in history. When the time was right, He sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth in the Galilee to a particular virgin girl named Mary to announce she would give birth to the Messiah in fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham, as well as to David.

If this baby was to be born in Bethlehem (south of Jerusalem), then why did God choose Mary way up north in Nazareth? Why were descendants of David living up in the Galilee instead of in their home territory around Bethlehem? The Bible does not answer all these questions, but in this fascinating podcast, you'll hear the story about the Galilee, the village of Nazareth, and David's descendants who had moved there.

Discover why God may have chosen Mary and why she was so willing to carry this child as prophesied by the prophet Isaiah some 600 years earlier. God had been busy at work for hundreds—even thousands—of years setting the stage in preparation for the birth of the Messiah.

Join us this month as we begin our walk through the New Testament—beginning with the birth of Jesus—on the *Out of Zion* podcast entitled “One Amazing Moment.” Download your free New Testament Reading Guide (icejusa.org/reading-plan) to get started right away—then join me each week for the Out of Zion podcast.

It just might change how you read the Bible!

Dr. Susan Michael is USA Director of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem and host of the Out of Zion podcast. 

WWW.OUTOFZIONSHOW.COM

Join me on a walk through the New Testament

Read through the New Testament beginning the week of November 15 using the acclaimed *Daily Bible* accompanied by my weekly podcast commentary. On each podcast, I will review what we read that week along with interesting artifacts or background that make your Bible come alive. Invite your friends and family to join us. I can't wait to walk through the New Testament with you!



BEGINS WEEK OF NOVEMBER 15—SIGN UP TODAY FOR YOUR FREE NEW TESTAMENT READING PLAN:

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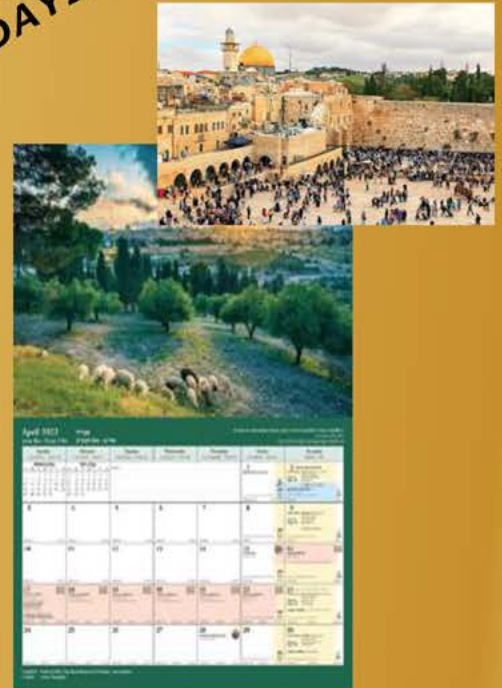
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2021/2022 CALENDAR

This 16-month calendar (September 2021–December 2022) has stunning photos of Israel. It includes American and Israel holidays as well as the Priestly Blessing and the Hear O' Israel (Shema) blessing.

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- **Susan Michael**
ICEJ USA Director



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