



WORD

FROM JERUSALEM

...
WHY
PAUL WROTE
ROMANS

(PAGE 4)

...

Israel

THE UNICORN NATION



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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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Dear friends,

As I write this, tension is thick in Israel as terror attacks are on the rise, including Muslim rioting in Jerusalem—particularly on the Temple Mount. Additionally the Israeli parliament voted to disband itself, forcing another national election, the fifth in three years. Despite these rumblings, we are still seeing God's faithfulness to His people in profound ways.

One way is through the war in Ukraine. As a result of the atrocities happening in that nation, Ukrainian Aliyah to Israel has continued, strongly and steadily, as people flee to the Jewish homeland to safety. Between January and May, some 28,638 Olim, or "newcomers," have already arrived in Israel to start their new lives. Indeed, God is keeping His promises to bring His people back "from the north country" and to "gather them from the remote parts of the earth" (Jeremiah 31:8). Our Haifa Home update (p. 15) features the stories of a few of these Olim.

Also in this issue, Caley Myers—an Israeli attorney and founder of ARISE, which promotes Christian investment in Israel—highlights Israel's contributions to science, culture, and tech. And we share how Israel has recently had the opportunity to support two related initiatives. Interestingly, though Israel's hi-tech sector is flourishing, there's a shortage of qualified employees to fill those jobs—and a noticeable lack of Arabs. The ICEJ has provided computers to disadvantaged Israeli families, but we've also come alongside Arab Israelis wishing to pursue high-tech careers to make that dream a reality. You can read more about why Israel is called the "unicorn nation" in Myer's article (pp. 8–9), learn how the ICEJ is helping to fill these unique social gaps (pp. 10–11), and see how you can be a part of these initiatives.

In our lead article we explore Paul's epistle to the Romans, which includes the most thorough treatment of God's dealings with the Jewish people, how the church should relate to them, and why we still feel the impact of some of the erroneous doctrines of the early church to this day.

I pray you will enjoy this issue of *Word From Jerusalem* and encourage you to consider standing with us as we continue to love and bless the Jewish people and, as Paul exhorts us in Romans, strengthen the relationship between Israel and gentile Christians.

Yours in Christ,

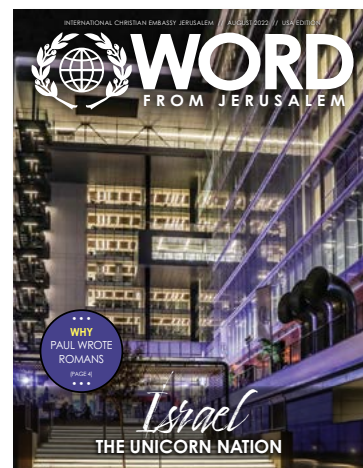
Dr. Jürgen Bühler

President

International Christian Embassy Jerusalem

COVER PHOTO: An 11-story development center in Petah Tikvah, Israel (2019)

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Roman Colosseum (photo by David Köhler on Unsplash)

WHY PAUL WROTE ROMANS

BY DR. JÜRGEN BÜHLER, ICEJ PRESIDENT

At the heart of his epistle to the church in Rome, the apostle Paul devotes three chapters to the relationship between Israel and gentile Christians. Yet his teachings on Israel go well beyond chapters 9, 10, and 11 and can be found throughout the book of Romans.

In chapter 1, verse 16, Paul immediately proclaims that the gospel is “to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” In chapter 2, he addresses the issue of Jewish identity and the benefit of circumcision. Then in chapter 3, Paul twice poses the question of whether there is any advantage left in being Jewish, to which he answers in the affirmative. Next, chapter 4 explains how Abraham—the first Hebrew patriarch—attained righteousness. Later in chapter 14, Paul deals with Jewish dietary laws, and in chapter 15, he explains Israel-church relations according to Old Testament prophecies and Christian responsibility toward Israel. Finally in chapter 16, Paul closes his epistle in amazement at the long-hidden mystery of the gospel, which “has been made known to all the [gentiles],

leading to obedience of faith” (v. 26, NASB).

Israel is therefore a theme that resonates throughout his message to the Roman believers, more so than any of his other letters to the churches of Asia Minor. This raises the question: Why did Paul write more on this subject to the Roman church? The reason can be found in an often-overlooked passage: “Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus” (Romans 16:3).

THE EXPULSION FROM ROME

Priscilla and Aquila had been coworkers with Paul for several years. In the book of Acts, we meet this devout couple for the first time when Paul arrives in the Greek city of Corinth:

After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome). (Acts 18:1–2)

The couple helped Paul establish the church in Corinth and moved on with him to Ephesus, where they remained actively involved in church planting alongside Paul. Like him, they were followers of Jesus of Jewish descent. Acts says they were forced to leave Rome because the emperor, Claudius, had expelled all the Jews from Rome.

The Roman historian Suetonius confirms this event, and the early church historian Orosius gives the date as AD 49. Others even place it as early as AD 41. This expulsion was no isolated case. Only a few decades earlier, Tiberius had expelled all Jews from Rome to the island of Sardinia.

Suetonius explains the expulsion came about because of the “disturbances and riots among the Jews at the instigation of Chrestus.” Most church historians today agree that this refers to Christ. Christians were also frequently referred to as “Chrestianoi.” Apparently, there was an internal dispute among the Jewish residents of Rome over the messianic claims of Jesus, as had happened in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1), Antioch (Acts 15:50),



Archaeological remains of ancient Corinth
(photo by Greg Gallaher on Unsplash)

Archaeological remains of ancient Ephesus
(photo by Timur Can Şentürk on Unsplash)

Iconium (Act 14:1–7), Thessalonica and Berea (Acts 17), and elsewhere. But Claudius had little tolerance for their debate and expelled all the Jews.

This included Priscilla and Aquila, who fled to Corinth, where they met up with Paul. They joined his ministry team for several years, moving with him to Ephesus. But a new emperor arose in Rome named Nero, who allowed the Jews to return in AD 54. Priscilla and Aquila returned around this time, which is why Paul greets them at the end of his letter.

THE FIRST GENTILE CHURCH

Therefore, the expulsion of Jews from Rome is critical in understanding Paul's message to the church there. The church in Rome had existed long before Paul ever arrived there. Like other churches in those early decades of the movement, many congregants and undoubtedly most of the teachers were Jewish. They were the most versed in the Holy Scriptures, which at that time consisted of only the writings of the Old Testament. Thus, when Claudius decided to expel the Jews from Rome, including those who believed in Jesus, this meant the church in Rome was probably the first one entirely made up of gentiles. This likely presented a significant challenge. All the teachers and elders who instructed them every Sabbath were gone!

Yet the Holy Spirit was also with them, and the gentile believers managed to keep the church in Rome intact and growing on their own for a season. This likely brought a new sense of confidence, as they discovered the church could still operate without the Jews.

TENSIONS WITH THE RETURN TO ROME

But then the emperor, Nero, allowed the Jews to return, and no doubt tensions developed. Priscilla and Aquila were among those who came back to their home congregation, where they probably encountered a changed attitude toward themselves and their fellow Jewish believers.

The historic context strongly suggests that Paul wrote to the church in Rome to set things in order and resolve the tensions between the new gentile leadership and the returning Jewish congregants.

For instance, we see Paul firmly admonishing the gentiles not to forget their spiritual roots are in Judaism. This begins in his initial greeting, where he reminds them that Jesus “was born of the seed of David according to the flesh.” But in chapter 2, he also advises the returning Jews to lead more through example than by words. And in chapter 14, he addresses questions regarding Jewish dietary laws that had arisen.

Still, Paul directs the main thrust of the letter toward gentile believers and their need to

respect the Jewish roots of their faith. He stresses that God's oracles, covenants, and redemptive purpose began centuries earlier with the Jewish people. In addition, he makes clear that the Messiah was not a Roman citizen but descended from King David's royal lineage.

The Roman church found itself in a conflict between Jew and gentile from which it may never have recovered. Eventually, we find Priscilla and Aquila back in Ephesus, where Paul greets them again in 2 Timothy 4:19. Several decades later, as one of the greatest heretics of the early church—Marcion—arose from the fellowship in Rome, the church there became the breeding ground for Replacement Theology.

Marcion taught there from AD 137 to 144 and maintained that the God of the Old Testament was one of vengeance and wrath, whereas the God of the New Testament was a different deity, one of love and mercy. He even taught that some of the books of the New Testament were too “Jewish” for him.

The church finally expelled Marcion, but he took many gentile Christians with him. The impact of his erroneous doctrines—based on the rejection of our Jewish roots because Israel largely rejected Jesus—is felt to this day. 🌍



Abraham and Melchizedek (Artist Juan Antonio de Frías y Escalante)

WHAT IS THE “BLESSING” OF GENESIS 12:1–3

and How Do You Get It?

BY DAVID PARSONS, ICEJ VP AND SENIOR SPOKESMAN

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.” So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham. (Galatians 3:8–9)

Genesis 12:1–3 is a foundational passage for Christians who love and support Israel today. Ask most Christians why they stand with Israel, and they will first cite Genesis 12:3 and their desire to be blessed—but then, they will quickly jump over to some favorite verses from the Hebrew prophets about Israel’s restoration in the last days. But today the term “bless” or “blessing” is used so loosely that it has become somewhat watered down, and its much deeper meaning has been lost. We also often reduce this passage to a magic formula or simple mathematic equation that if we bless Israel, we will be blessed. That always seemed a little too self-serving to me.

So I asked myself a few important questions: What is “the blessing of Abraham” in Genesis 12:1–3? And how do I receive it? Is it some sort of magical powder that will make me rich? And do I get it by praying for Israel, defending Israel, giving to Israel, or visiting Israel?

I found that the blessing of Abraham in Genesis 12:1–3 has a much more profound meaning than many Christians realize. It is the origins of the Abrahamic covenant and God’s initial unveiling of His redemptive plan for the whole world. In fact, the apostle Paul in Galatians 3:8–9 refers to these verses as the first preaching of the gospel. So we best spend some time trying to understand its full significance and meaning.

First, note that God says, “Get up and go to a land I will show you.” It took faith and effort for Abraham to even look at the land. But once Abraham arrived, God said He was going to give him the entire land. Thus, Abraham is considered the father of faith in the one true Creator God.

Second, consider that “bless” or “blessing,” or *baruch* in Hebrew, generally means “to speak well of” or “to wish well.” But the Bible itself

clearly defines the word “bless” in its highest meaning:

For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, just as *David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin.”* (Romans 4:3–8, emphasis added)

Here, Paul is quoting from Psalm 32:10–2. So the “blessing” that came upon Abraham in Genesis 12:1–3 was a blood covering over his sins because of his faith and hope in the sacrifice of the Messiah to come. And once that covering was there, God could bless, multiply, and increase him in so many ways until he became quite wealthy.

This is the first preaching of the gospel—that the righteousness that comes by faith covers sins and that through Abraham’s descendants, this covering would be offered to all the families of the earth.

From the start, God did not hide this plan of salvation offered to all humanity. Nor did He make it exclusive to Israel. The promised Redeemer would come from Abraham’s “seed” for all mankind.

This blessing over Abraham helped provide for and protect Abraham and his descendants as they journeyed down through time to carry out their redemptive mission. Balaam ran into it when King Balak asked him to “curse Israel” (see Numbers 23:7–8, 18–24; 24:9). Even though

Balaam wanted the money and honor Balak offered, he could not curse Israel because of this covering and shield over them. It wasn’t until he counseled Balak on how to make Israel stumble through adultery and idolatry that this hedge was breached.

Now, if the “blessing of Abraham” is ultimately a blood covering over his sins, how do you and I get that blessing? By praying for Israel, giving to Israel, defending Israel, or visiting Israel? Once again, the Bible plainly answers how:

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, *that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.* (Galatians 3:13–14, emphasis added)

We can only obtain that highest “blessing” that came upon Abraham at the foot of the cross! This is the gospel—first preached to Abraham but promised to all the families of the earth. Because we have received eternal salvation through Jesus and the Jewish people, we ought to be grateful to them and give back. So I pray for Israel, give to Israel, stand up for Israel, and visit Israel—not to squeeze something more out of the Jewish people but because of what I have already received from them through Christ. This is indeed the message of Paul in Romans 15:27:

It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things.

We will never be able to repay all we received through Israel. But Paul says we should at least try. 🌍

The Land of Promise



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ISRAEL, THE UNICORN NATION

BY CALEV MYERS



The first words of Exodus 20 are: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt” (v. 1). Here God identifies Himself as the God who brought Israel out of the land of Egypt. That phrase is repeated another 130 times in the Old and New Testaments. In fact, any time He wants to say something important to the children of Israel, He begins with that sentence. Why? Well, the miracle of the Exodus from Egypt was such a nature-defying, irrational, illogical event we might want to hear what the God who did that has to say. Right?

But after God repeatedly identifies Himself this way, He then says twice—once in Jeremiah 16:14–15 and once in Jeremiah 23:7–8—that a day is coming when He will no longer be called the God who brought the children of Israel out of Egypt but the God who brought the descendants of Israel out of the land of the north and from all the countries where He had driven them.

The current regathering of the Jewish people back to the Land of Israel is a miracle of biblical proportions. It supersedes the Exodus of Egypt to the extent that God says: “They will no longer call me the one who brought Israel out of one nation but the God who brought Israel back from the whole world.” As our first prime minister David Ben Gurion said “To be a realist in Israel, one must believe in miracles.”

ISRAEL, THE UNICORN NATION

Let’s talk about the technological and business success of Israel and why Israel is today called the “unicorn nation.” (The term “unicorn” refers to a privately held start-up company with a value of over \$1 billion.) We must put it in the context of the amazing miracles that far exceed our economy. Israel is the only country with the same name, living in the same land, speaking the same language, and with the same faith it had 3,000 years ago. There’s no other country

like that on earth. And the fact that none of that existed for 2,000 years should be mind-boggling. ... God not only raised Jesus from the dead but an entire nation!

The miracle of Israel is so irrational, so illogical, that it defies every law of nature and history. It is the greatest miracle we can point to today to show this generation that there is a God in heaven, a God who can choose a nation and say: “This people will be in this land and be blessed.” No matter what the United Nations or the European Union says, no matter what *BBC* or *CNN* or *Al Jazeera* say, *this will happen*. God will bring His people back to Israel from the four corners of the earth.

What has kept my faith firmly grounded in the Bible and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is stepping out of my front door every day here in the Land and seeing this miracle of epic proportions that I have no way of explaining. It is a magnificent story.

ISRAEL’S ECOLOGY

Before looking at the economy, let me say a few words regarding Israel’s ecology. Many people are talking about climate change. Al Gore was not the first one to predict climate change. I would give that credit to the prophet Isaiah. Among other verses, Isaiah 35:7 says springs of water will burst forth in the wilderness, and He will give the glory of the Carmel—which is tropical and beautiful—to the Negev.

Today, the desert of Israel is indeed coming to life. Israel has the highest agricultural output per capita of any country in the world, even though we are in a desert land. Israel is the only country in the world that has more trees today than it had 100 years ago—450 million more.

British scientists who came to Israel in the 1930s estimated there was only enough water resources to provide for two million people maximum. Those same water resources today provide water to 12 million people in Israel and



A vineyard in the Negev desert

Intel opened a new 11-story development center in Petah Tikvah in 2019, pitching it as the “smartest building in the world” due to its 14,000 sensors that control lights, temperature, ventilation, parking, and more.



and preventing terrorist attacks on every continent. And that's more important today than fossil fuels. So I expect the list of nations moving their embassies to Jerusalem to grow in the foreseeable future.

Even the big players in the Arab League are all doing business with Israel today. Businesspeople have gone before the diplomatic community in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, and Morocco to do business with Israel, but it took five to ten years for the diplomatic community to catch up. This is why I believe that the mother of all peace agreements will probably take place sometime in the next five

years because Saudi Arabia is where the UAE was five years ago.

the Gaza Strip, even while we export water to our neighbors. We recycle and reuse 80 percent of our water, more than any country in the world, by huge margins. (Spain is in second place at 40 percent.)

Israel desalinates far more water than any other country in the world; 90 percent of the water coming from our taps is desalinated.

We also brought drip irrigation to the world. A simple *kibbutznik* (member of a *kibbutz*) was walking by a row of pine trees some 40 years ago and noticed that one was twice the height of the others. He looked down and saw a leaking pipe and thought: *If we could make intentionally leaking pipes, we could excel with agriculture in arid climate.* He created a company called Netafim, which produces drip irrigation that has benefitted the world. (Netafim was sold to a Mexican company for US \$5 billion about five years ago.)

SCIENCE AND CULTURE

Meanwhile in science and culture, Israel has the highest ratio of university degrees per capita of any nation in the world, the highest number of engineers and PhDs per capita by a large margin, and the highest rate of entrepreneurship among women. We have more museums and orchestras per capita than

any country in the world, and we publish more books per capita, by a large margin. And this is a fun one! Beersheva has the most chess grandmasters per capita of any city in the world.

ISRAEL'S ECONOMY

Regarding our economy, we have the most start-up companies per capita in the world—more than 2,600 start-up companies and counting. Israel has the highest amount per capita of R&D (research and development) centers in the world, and almost every serious multinational company has its R&D in Israel. Here's a partial list of just 30 out of 250: Alibaba, Amazon, Apple, AT&T, Barclays, Dell, Dropbox, eBay, Facebook, General Electric, General Motors, Google, HP, Huawei, IBM, Intel, John Deere, Johnson & Johnson, Lenovo, Marvel, Microsoft, Monsanto, Nokia, PayPal, PepsiCo, Philips, Samsung, SanDisk, Texas Instruments, and Xerox.

Opposition Leader Bibi Netanyahu says every country today wants diplomatic relations with Israel for three reasons: technology, technology, technology. And every leader of every nation wants two things for their people: economic prosperity and security. Israel is providing both: economic prosperity through innovation with the previously mentioned companies and security by sharing our excellent intelligence

Finally, more Israeli companies have traded on the NASDAQ in New York than in the entire European continent. Germany's Deutsche Bank recently ranked the Israeli shekel as the world's second-strongest currency, falling only behind the Chinese yuan.

Every start-up company wants its exit to be a “unicorn.” The year 2021 was the greatest year for Israeli fundraising for start-ups in our history—72 IPOs (initial public offerings) on the NASDAQ in New York together raised over US \$71 billion. So many start-ups are reaching “unicorn” status of a \$1 billion valuation that there is now a new level. A “decacorn” company is a start-up valued at \$10 billion or more.

There were at least two of these in Israel in 2021. As Israel continues to lead the global innovation scene, I would say that it's far surpassed Silicon Valley by now. 🌐

Calev Myers is an Israeli attorney and founder of ARISE, which promotes Christian investment in Israel. This article is excerpted from his presentation at the ICEJ's International Leadership Conference (ILC) in May 2022.

HELPING ISRAELI ARABS ENTER BOOMING HI-TECH SECTOR

BY LAURINA DRIESSE

Driving along the Ayalon freeway into Tel Aviv, one cannot help but notice the many tall, modern office buildings dominating the skyline. Though quiet and brilliantly lit up at night, they transform into powerful hubs of Israel's now legendary "start-up" industry during the day.

Israel's hi-tech sector is flourishing, with far more start-up businesses per capita than anywhere else in the world. Despite this, there is still a shortage of thousands of qualified employees needed for tech jobs every year, with a noticeable lack of Israeli Arabs, especially at the entry-level. Arabs make up some 21 percent of Israel's population, yet a study in 2018 found that only 3 percent of the country's hi-tech workforce were Arab, and Arab women constituted only 0.1 percent.

On the positive side, interest is growing among Israeli Arabs in pursuing hi-tech careers. However, currently, only 15 percent of students who choose this field of study are Arab, and their drop-out rates are often high. Many come from challenging economic backgrounds away from the Israeli mainstream, leading to social and culture shock during their first year of study. Furthermore, those Israeli Arabs who complete their studies often struggle to find good jobs as many companies hire mainly by referrals, resulting in positions being filled within a tight, non-diverse circle.

During COVID, it became evident that Arab students and job seekers needed career guidance; many feared they would not finish their degrees or be successfully placed in companies. When the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem heard of a computer coding course that provides up-and-coming Arab students with an opportunity to enter Israel's hi-tech industry, we were glad to support this initiative.

This practical course is held in Haifa. It trains and prepares about 60 Arab students each year for a successful career within the local hi-tech industry, offering an alternative or extension to their formal education. Some enter the course with a relevant degree but need more practical training and assistance with job placement. Others participate without any previous schooling or experience in the computer field, but they already show an interest in and a talent for coding.

In the first phase of the bootcamp course, all 60 students learn basic computer science and front-end JavaScript. Then in the second phase, 40 students have the opportunity of furthering their skills in full-stack JavaScript.

The students also participate in biweekly group assignments. To simulate the work environment at a hi-tech company, previous course participants mentor the students, helping them solve technical problems and present their solutions to the class. As a finale to the course, the students implement a project for an Israeli employer, giving them practical job experience along with support and guidance from supervisors.

At the end of the year, all 60 Arab students will graduate with a program diploma; 20 will be experts in front-end JavaScript, and 40 will master full-stack JavaScript and project scoping.

ICEJ Vice President for AID and Aliyah Nicole Yoder recently visited this year's class at their coding bootcamp in Haifa. The Arab students were eager to show what they were learning and share their aspirations with her. Nicole learned that Rihaan has worked in the social sector for most of her career. However, during COVID she recognized the importance of technology and decided to change careers.

"What I like about this program is that I got more than the full-stack coding; I also improved my teamwork skills," shared Rihaan. She also found the program enhanced her self-study and research skills and said she learned how to perform well in interviews and write a better CV. Rihaan added, "The idea that we have mentors is really great! You know that there is someone with you during and after the course. I want to develop myself, learn more skills in the hi-tech field, and eventually be in a senior position," Rihaan told Nicole.

However, moving into hi-tech does not mean Rihaan has left her love of social work behind. In her free time, she volunteers at a home caring for children with disabilities and sees a great need for these children to have the opportunity to learn about technology.

"I want to open a social enterprise so I can support them to one day integrate in the hi-tech field too," Rihaan said with a sparkle in her eye. She expressed her appreciation to the many Christians who supported the computer coding program for Israeli Arabs.

"Thank you to everyone who has given," she said. "You gave us a great opportunity. I didn't think I would have been able to enter the hi-tech field, coming from a different field, but now I believe that everything is possible. Really, thank you for everything."

Join the ICEJ as we help all sectors of Israeli society reach for a brighter future. By supporting learning opportunities like this coding bootcamp, you level the playing field for these young Arab students and help them find a place in Israel's booming hi-tech industry. This strengthens and empowers the entire nation to move forward.

Please give to: www.icejusa.org/aid

CLOSING SOCIAL GAPS THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

BY LAURINA DRIESSE



A volunteer at the Ramot community center repairs a computer.

Advancing in most careers today requires computer skills, especially in Israel, the “Start-up Nation.” However, 25 percent of Israelis are computer illiterate. According to a recent Globes report, half of the poorest Jewish families and nearly 60 percent of all Arab families in Israel do not own a home computer.

So our ICEJ AID team was excited to learn of an opportunity to provide computers to disadvantaged families while also helping Israeli youths at risk and disabled national service volunteers learn computer repair.

When an ICEJ team recently visited the Ramot community center in Jerusalem, the computer repair lab was being moved outdoors. Excited youth continued their repair work while local families came to collect computers. Our team quickly staffed tables to help distribute the refurbished computers to those in need.

Thanks to Christian donors, the ICEJ was able to fund the repair of 100 recycled computers, along with accessories and software needed for them to run smoothly.

The computer repair lab is run by disabled national service volunteers, youths at risk, and others with scholarships to study computer repairs. They attend weekly computer classes and receive a Cisco certification in PC repair to boost their job qualifications and social mobility.

Those who receive the computers span all age groups and cultural backgrounds and are referred to the Ramot center by their social

workers. When they pick up their computers, the repair lab volunteers happily explain how they work.

“During the coronavirus crisis, the lack of computers among Israel’s lowest strata was painfully clear,” explained ICEJ Vice President of AID and Aliyah Nicole Yoder. “This resulted in learning gaps as children unable to attend virtual classes fell behind. Since March 2020 the lab has refurbished 1,250 computers and screens donated by hi-tech companies and the private sector.”

One couple sent a letter of gratitude, saying: “Both of us [parents] were unemployed because of COVID, and at one point, we had five children at home who needed to study online. ... We did not have a computer at home, and you came to our aid and really saved us.”

Through your generous giving, the ICEJ can instill hope in many more Israeli’s lives. 🌍

Please continue to support our aid work at:
www.icejusa.org/aid



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Nicole Yoder and Jannie Tolhoek of ICEJ AID with ICEJ-sponsored Jewish immigrants who are receiving medical training to practice in Israel

ICEJ SPONSORS MEDICAL TRAINING COURSE

BY ANASTASIYA GOODING

Since 1980 the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem has faithfully helped the Jewish people return to Israel and put down roots in their ancestral homeland by supporting various integration initiatives. Often when we meet Olim (new immigrants), we see a burning desire in their hearts not only to establish their personal lives in Israel but also to make a special contribution to the country in which they are now citizens.

In response, the ICEJ actively supports various programs that help new immigrants update their professional credentials or receive training to pursue employment opportunities and fully develop their careers here in Israel.

One such program offers a medical training course for doctors from Russian-speaking countries aimed at helping them pass a recertification exam so they can practice their profession in Israel. This course is a win-win for immigrants and for Israel, where there is a great need for qualified medical professionals. Upon successfully completing their exams, these immigrant doctors will undergo an internship supervised by Israeli doctors before they are fully qualified in Israel. Some 99 percent complete the course and receive assistance to find employment in hospitals around the country.

ILYA AND OLGA'S STORY

Ilya and Olga made Aliyah last year and through the ICEJ's sponsorship, joined the medical course to work toward certification in Israel. Ilya always dreamed of making Aliyah and wanted to serve as a doctor here in Israel. He studied to be a family doctor and plans

to specialize in oncology. His wife Olga is an epidemiologist. However, after moving to Israel, she decided to study a new field of medicine to broaden her horizons.

The program contains many benefits: it provides a place to stay, a stipend for food, and the freedom to study without having to find work immediately. This was helpful to Ilya and Olga because it allowed them to focus on their studies.

"This is a very high-level course, and we have learned a lot of new information that was very useful for our doctor's career," said Ilya. Olga also pointed out how inspiring it was to learn there are treatment options in Israel that did not exist in the hospitals where they previously worked. "Thank you for this opportunity and for your interest in these programs. Thank you so much for your help," Ilya said gratefully.

Now they want to become established here in Israel and be good doctors and citizens. They dream of offering their children a better future and more opportunities.

DIMA'S STORY

Dima moved to Israel from a small town. He studied general medicine, and he and his wife—also a doctor—participated in the medical training course.

"I am very surprised by the gift that this program has been," he stated. "Israel has some of the best medicine in the world. I have not seen anything better and feel that this is an opportunity to advance."

Dima has made many friends among the other doctors in the program. He and his wife took their exams at the end of July and plan to complete their internships and build new lives and careers in a different city in Israel. "I would like to study cardiology and start first in Haifa," Dima offered.

CHANGING BAD HISTORY TOGETHER

Nicole Yoder, the ICEJ's Vice President for AID & Aliyah, recently met with some of the medical trainees we are sponsoring and explained that our financial support for them comes from Christians around the world who want to bless the people of Israel in practical ways.

Emil, a training program coordinator, responded: "Thank you so much for all of your support and help. I am a historian by profession. I know that there have been many tough times between Christians and Jews throughout history.

"What you and other Christian organizations do is an opportunity to change the bad history, to bring hearts together. This is very beautiful," Emil added. "I hope it will continue and that we will be brothers and sisters living in peace. Thank you so much."

In turn, we want to thank you—our supporters—for your generous giving, which is breaking down the barriers built over the centuries and forging new relationships between Christians and Jews. 🌍

Please continue to support the ICEJ at:
www.icejusa.org/immigrant-assistance

PROVIDING A “FIRST HOME IN THE HOMELAND” FOR NEW JEWISH IMMIGRANTS

BY ANASTASIYA GOODING

Today Jewish people from many diverse backgrounds are returning to Israel from around the world, each with personal stories. Some had been planning the move for years. Others were forced to leave everything behind—save a few items in a suitcase—as they fled from war to Israel.

Each Oleh (new immigrant) arrives with a dream to build a brighter future for their families in the Jewish homeland. Of course, this starts with finding a new home—but how? And where?

One option is the “First Home in the Homeland” project, launched by the *kibbutzim* network in 1989. “First Home” has welcomed hundreds of immigrants and provided a soft landing spot while they learn the Hebrew language and decide where to settle permanently.

Newly arrived Jewish families are welcomed to the *kibbutzim*—Israel’s renowned system of collective farms—where they study Hebrew for their first six months. Many stay for a full year if there is space on the *kibbutz*. This program also provides a built-in community, with mentoring and other assistance from local *kibbutzniks* (*kibbutz* members), whom they encounter daily.

Currently, some 48 *kibbutzim* in northern and southern Israel are providing homes for Jewish families who have just made Aliyah.

Last year 210 immigrant families benefited from this open door. This year, Israel has experienced a sudden influx of 130 new families due to the crisis in Ukraine, which has also stirred immigration from several other Russian-speaking countries. Thus, the program has been scrambling to find additional farming communities that can offer apartments. In response, 10 new *kibbutzim* quickly joined the First Home in the Homeland program. Yet much work remained for coordinators urgently seeking to prepare places for the new arrivals.

To start, local *kibbutz* families donated furniture in good condition



A new apartment furnished by ICEJ at Kibbutz Revivim

for the open apartments. However, more furniture and appliances—beds, kitchen tables, study desks, chairs, clothing closets, refrigerators, air conditioners, and many other items—were still needed to furnish those apartments. The Christian Embassy

heard of this urgent need and stepped in to help cover the budget.

Our gift went to ensure full furnishings for 50 apartments in Kibbutz Revivim and Kibbutz Mashabei Sadeh in the south, as well as in *kibbutzim* near Nahariya in the north. In one instance, we helped furnish apartments

in a vacant hostel with small one-room apartments connected by an open door so the new families would have two units each to make their stay more comfortable.

In addition to donating these home furnishings, the ICEJ is also providing the new immigrant families with gift packages of household items, such as blankets, sheets, and towels. Our ICEJ AID team recently delivered welcome baskets to 20 families during a visit to Kibbutz Revivim; the other 30 families will receive their baskets soon.

The ICEJ delegation was warmly welcomed at Revivim, where the immigrants were amazed to hear that the gifts were from caring Christians worldwide. After just a few months in Israel, each family was already able to introduce themselves in Hebrew, and there were smiles and warm cheers all around.



New arrivals from Ukraine and Russia at Revivim

Despite being in the Negev desert, Revivim has been turned into a very green, charming place with modest homes and a peaceful atmosphere for more than 800 residents. The *kibbutz* is a diverse community of Russian, Brazilian, and Sephardi Jewish families, Anglo-Saxon immigrants, young Israelis completing their national service, and now the new Ukrainian and Russian-speaking immigrants.



Jannie Tolhoek of ICEJ AID visits a new immigrant family that now has beds for their children.

Your generous support has enabled us to welcome these 50 new Jewish immigrant families who recently fled to Israel with few possessions and provide them with fully furnished homes. Many more immigrants need

our assistance as they establish themselves in their ancestral homeland. Thank you for helping us ensure that they are warmly welcomed and provided for as they adjust to their new life here in Israel. 🌍

Donate to our Aliyah & Integration efforts today at:
www.icejusa.org/immigrant-assistance

OCT 9-16
2022

The Land of Promise



What is a Feast Watch Party?

A gathering of at least 10 people from your church, small group, or simply friends and family who get together for one night during the Feast of Tabernacles to watch online and experience together all that the Lord has in store during this appointed time. We will leave the outline for the night up to you and what will best work for your group but in addition to watching the 1-2 hour Feast of Tabernacles event, you can add dinner, snacks, live worship, or even your own live teaching on the Feast.



How do you sign up?

To get your special Feast Watch Party access code email John Vedder at john.vedder@icejusa.org or call our office at 615-895-9830.



How do you watch?

Online through the ICEJ's Feast platform. You will want to log in before the party and learn how to find the program you will want to watch at your party.



When do you watch?

Due to the time difference from Israel to the United States, the Feast will be made available on demand each day for your viewing. This means that you and your group can decide what day and what event will best suit your group. Please check online for the schedule, and if you have any questions or would like a recommendation of which event to watch please reach out to us.



What is required to host as a Watch party?

- 10 or more in your group
- Report back to us the total amount in your group after watching
- Take up a special Feast offering that can be mailed to our US administrative office

If you meet the requirements and are approved, the ICEJ will give you a **FREE REGISTRATION** coupon code to use as a way to say thank you for hosting a watch party.



HOST A FEAST WATCH PARTY

Celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles with the ICEJ by gathering a group to watch online

"Then everyone who survives of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem shall go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the Feast of Booths." (Zechariah 14:16)

We would like to extend a special invitation to you and your congregation or small group to attend the Feast of Tabernacles online, October 9-16, 2022, for an incredible experience like no other. With live Israeli worship and inspired speakers from around the world, you can celebrate and experience the Feast as if you were there in Jerusalem.

Contact us today! Email:

John Vedder – USA Church Relations Coordinator
john.vedder@icejusa.org or call (615) 895-9830

HAIFA HOME

NEVER A DULL MOMENT

BY ICEJ STAFF

Another three residents from Ukraine have moved into our Home—Anatoly and Maya from Charkov, and Natali, who arrived in Israel last week from Odesa.

The transition from a life in Ukraine to Israel is certainly not easy, but when we visited Maya in her new home, she kept saying: “Everyone is so loving and caring for us here. We feel grateful and overwhelmed.” Two of our new residents went on a shopping trip with our volunteers to IKEA. They had never been to such a huge store and had the time of their life. Volunteers also took them on a sightseeing tour through Haifa to help them get accustomed to their new surroundings.

A MAKEOVER

An Israeli TV 13 film team surprised Shela—who fled Charkov, Ukraine, and had to leave everything behind—with a day out where they spoiled her as much as they could. In the meantime, a team of workers repainted her apartment

and put new furniture in it. They even had managed to take pictures and other items from her home in Charkov. At the end of the day, when they returned Shela to her apartment, she had the surprise of her life. Delighted and touched to tears, she noticed the pictures of her husband and daughter (both have passed away) and the beautiful new look of her apartment.

The program about Shela was recently broadcasted on Israeli TV.

ENGINEERS WHO KNOW HOW TO COOK

The dining room was abuzz when a group of engineers from the oil refinery in Haifa decided to come and cook with our residents. They had prepared special aprons and did a cooking workshop with confectioner and chef Eyal Weizman. Talking and preparing the food together was so much fun. They prepared

several courses,

including cupcakes, snacks, and the main meal. The residents were grateful that they not only cooked for them but also sat down to talk and get to know them. Zelda, one of our residents, said: “It was wonderful to cook together with these young people, especially because I loved to cook all my life.” The day also impacted the engineers, and I am sure they will be back.

FROM IRAN WITH LOVE

S. was born and grew up in Iran in a Muslim family. He was raised with deep hatred toward the Jewish people and Israel and was one of the people that used to shout, “Death to Israel.” However, he became a believer later in life, left Iran, and fled to the United Kingdom. God completely changed his heart and gave him a heart full of love for Israel and the Jewish people instead of the hate that used to fill his heart.

While in Israel he wanted to speak to the Holocaust Survivors and share with them how much he loves them and appreciates all they have done for the Jewish State. The residents were touched by his story and grateful that he came to share it with them. Because his life and his family's life back in Iran are still in danger, we cannot publish his real name and picture. 🌐

Zelda with the chef

Room makeover

Iranian speaker

New residents from Ukraine

Give to our
Home for Holocaust Survivors at:
www.icejusa.org/haifa



DON'T BE IGNORANT OF THIS MYSTERY

BY DR. SUSAN MICHAEL

Paul's epistle to the Romans is considered the most concise presentation of the gospel in the New Testament. Interestingly, it also includes the most thorough treatment of God's dealings with the Jewish people and how the church should relate to them. Why was that information so foundational that Paul included it, yet it is hardly taught in churches today?

These verses are admittedly complex, but they best describe Paul's view of his own people, God's unending love for them, and the apostle's vision of harmony between Jews and gentiles in Messiah. Paul needed to instruct the church in Rome on this issue because of its unique set of circumstances.

The Jews had been kicked out of Rome by the emperor, Claudius, and after his death, they were allowed back in. Therefore, the early church in Rome started out as Jewish, then included gentiles, became only gentile, and finally was a mix of gentiles and fewer Jews. The problem was that the gentile Roman church had developed a condescending attitude toward the Jews in their absence. Now that they had returned, friction ensued.

I am so thankful Paul wrote Romans 9–11. It clarifies what He understood as a Jewish Christian that needed to be explained to

gentile Christians, that the Jewish people still had a special place in God—their calling is irrevocable, and they are loved on account of the patriarchs. While a remnant had followed Christ, most had not and could even be considered enemies of the gospel—but this did not change the promises of God regarding them.

Instead, their rejection of Jesus' messianic credentials had allowed the gospel to go to the gentile world. Their disobedience had resulted in our receiving grace—so we should show kindness to them. We should be humble and realize we were at one point all enemies to the gospel and as guilty as the other.

This partial hardening of the Jewish people was only until the fulness of the gentiles had come into faith, and then, the apostle proclaimed, all Israel will be saved—just as God had promised through the Hebrew prophets of old. The branches that had been broken off the tree of faith will be grafted in again, and it will be for the world as “life from the dead.”

Paul understood how fundamental this understanding was to unity amongst the Jews and gentiles in the church. He also understood its complexity and called it a mystery. But He pleaded with the gentile church in Rome not to be ignorant of it, and neither should we. 🌍

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

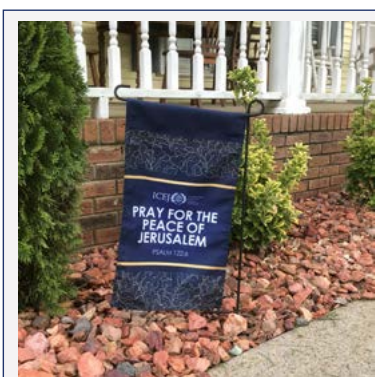
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YOUR ISRAEL ANSWER

Why Christians Support Israel: Moral Reasons

Part 3 of a 5-Part Series

By Dr. Susan Michael, ICEJ USA Director

Christianity—an offshoot of the Jewish faith, founded by the Jewish Messiah and built on His teachings of forgiveness and love—ironically produced centuries of hatred, persecution, and even murder of the Jewish people. All of this happened despite the apostle Paul's instructions for believers to honor the Jewish people as the root of our own faith (Romans 11). Something went horribly wrong, and the church failed the Jewish people. Today, however, we have the opportunity to make amends and build a new relationship based on mutual respect.

THEOLOGICAL SEEDS SOWN

Christianity did not cause the Holocaust. However, Christian anti-Judaism developed into antisemitism, which paved the way for the Holocaust. The lesson for us today is that we should walk in the compassion and forgiveness of our Lord. If the church had walked in the humility and meekness Jesus taught and modeled, the Holocaust might never have happened.

Evidence of tensions between Judaism and Christianity showed up early in the life of the church and resulted in a complete split by the end of the Bar Kokhba revolt in AD 135. The changing composition of churches throughout the Roman Empire also contributed to the division between the two faiths. Gentiles from pagan backgrounds outnumbered those from a Jewish background. Roman brutality also had ramifications. During periods of persecution of Christians, Jews disassociated from them, and during periods of persecution of Jews the Christians would do the same.

Within this complicated situation, some church fathers began to preach against Judaism and warned their followers to stay away from it. Centuries of this type of teaching developed into a church doctrine of contempt for the Jews, which motivated Christians to persecute them. It also paved the way for state laws that degraded the Jews, sometimes forcing them to live in walled ghettos or be expelled from their country altogether.

This article does not allow space to cover this history thoroughly, but suffice it to say, the state and the state church were both guilty of horrible treatment of the Jewish people.

The Protestant Reformation produced more of the same. Martin Luther is best known for the 95 Theses he nailed to the door of the Wittenberg Castle Church, birthing the Protestant Reformation and a return to the Bible as the source of religious authority. Unfortunately, in his later years, Luther turned bitter toward the Jews. In his writings, Luther outlined specific ways to persecute and degrade the Jewish people, ending with a plea for some solution, "that we all may be free of this insufferable devilish burden—the Jews."

HATRED IN FULL BLOOM

It is no coincidence that 400 years later, in Luther's German homeland, Hitler reprinted the reformer's antisemitic writings for distribution. He used them to coerce churches into silence as he carried out his "final solution"—the extermination of the Jewish race.

After Christian leaders had called the Jews "monstrous animals" and "evil seed," it is no wonder Nazi cartoons could depict the Jewish

people as devils with horns and tails. It was not Hitler who thought up the distinctive yellow-star badge to be worn on their clothing. The idea originated with Innocent, the thirteenth-century pope who called for Jews to be identified by distinctive clothing.

Hitler also used medieval Catholic anti-Jewish legislation as a model for his own. The theological seeds planted centuries earlier had come to full bloom, and the church was silent—most Catholics and Protestants did not withstand Hitler's plan.

THE NEED FOR HUMILITY

This tragic history of Jewish-Christian relations should cause every Christian to seek ways to establish a new relationship with the Jewish people based on mutual respect. We need to repent for this tragic story and strive to make amends.

One way is to stand in solidarity with the Jewish people and support Israel. Likewise, we should condemn all modern forms of antisemitism—namely, the demonization of the Jewish State.

SUPPORT JUSTICE

Israel's founding brought justice to the Jewish people. After almost 2,000 years of exile and ongoing persecution, the Jewish people are back in the land and can now control their own destiny. We need to support their right to self-determination, to defend themselves, and to become the "light to the nations" God has called them to be!

That is why we, as Christians, have a moral obligation to support Israel. 🌍

Visit us at: www.IsraelAnswers.com and get your question about Israel answered!



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