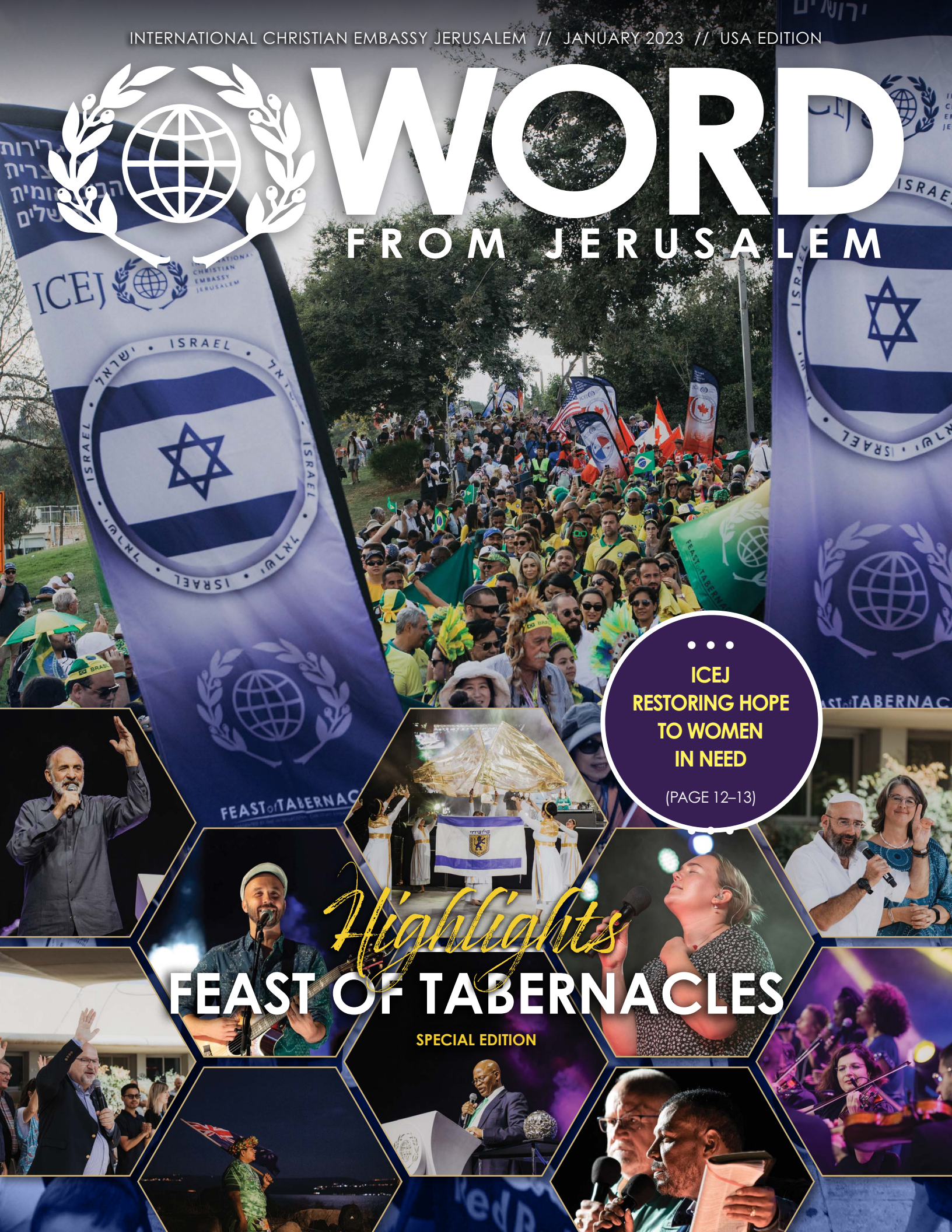




WORD

FROM JERUSALEM



...
**ICEJ
RESTORING HOPE
TO WOMEN
IN NEED**

(PAGE 12-13)

Highlights FEAST OF TABERNACLES

SPECIAL EDITION



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. Mojmir 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 Karen Engle

Staff Writer Anastasiya Gooding

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

Photography Shutterstock, Adobe Stock, ICEJ Staff and Branches, Wikimedia Commons, YouTube.com, Unsplash

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Dear friends,

After three long years, we finally gathered in person in Israel for the Feast of Tabernacles! The Bible calls it the "feast of the Lord"—or in Hebrew, a *mo'ed* (Leviticus 23:2), which means an "appointed time" and refers to when the Lord promised to meet with His people in Jerusalem. And this is exactly what happened.

So many who attended said, "This was the best Feast ever!" Indeed, it felt like this was "the best ever"—not because of the best speakers, artists, or organization but simply because the Lord showed up powerfully. An atmosphere of worship prevailed from day one to the last day. As Zechariah 14:16 foresaw, the nations came to Jerusalem to worship the Lord, and the Lord, in turn, came down and tabernacled with us. But what truly struck me the most was people's palpable hunger and thirst; each night, hundreds answered the altar call to rededicate their lives to God.

For the first time we included a time of worship on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus ministered 2,000 years ago. Another highlight was a whole day of prayer, where pilgrims prayed for Israel and the nations they represented. And after many years, we reintroduced the healing service at the Feast. I was truly blessed by how many people came that night and later shared testimonies of being healed of pains that had bothered them for years. Even our founding ICEJ Director, Johan Lückhoff, who went to every meeting despite his frailty, had his hearing restored. Another new highlight was our closing solidarity rally with the Israeli border communities near Gaza. You can read more about all these activities and other Feast highlights on pages 4–10 of this month's magazine.

Meantime, our ministry continues full speed ahead with blessing and comforting Israel all the year through. You will read about what's happening at the Haifa Home for Holocaust Survivors on pages 16–17 and be encouraged by how our AID projects are blessing many on pages 12–14.

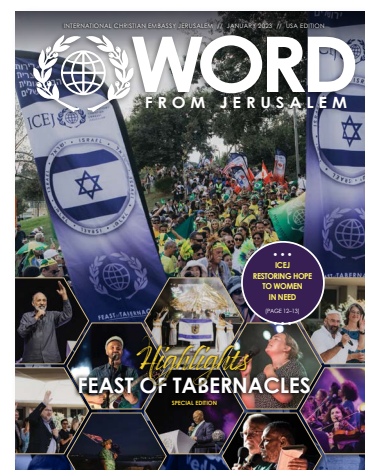
Please prayerfully make plans to join us for next year's Feast, from September 29–October 6, 2023.

Thank you for standing with us!

Dr. Jürgen Bühler
President
International Christian Embassy Jerusalem

COVER PHOTO: Highlights from the Feast of Tabernacles

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FEAST COVERAGE BY LAURINA DRIESSE, CHRIS CHAMBERS, AND DANIELA STAENGLE

The ICEJ concluded its first in-person Feast of Tabernacles celebration in three years, which included an exciting eight-day journey through Israel under the theme “The Land of Promise.” This was our first-ever hybrid Feast, with in-person and online participation, as well as our first time hosting Feast events on the Sea of Galilee.

More than 2,000 Christians from 70 nations came up to Jerusalem for the Feast, marking the return of Christian tourism to Israel post-COVID. Several thousand more from at least 30 nations joined us through our special streaming platform, many at church and home Feast watch parties around the globe.

The Lord’s wonderful presence, which abided with us daily from start to finish, marked this year’s Feast. God’s word consistently flowed throughout the Feast as ministers from around the globe spoke with clarity and anointing into our times. Meanwhile, every worship session was powerful and dynamic, which touched our Feast pilgrims as we ministered to the Lord in praise.

The Feast began at the beautiful Capernaum National Park on the Sea of Galilee, where we spent two nights worshipping the Lord in this incredible setting and hearing inspired messages by Apostle René Terra Nova from

Brazil and Evangelist Manasa Kolivuso from Fiji. We then ascended Jerusalem for five days of Feast gatherings, including the colorful “Roll Call of the Nations” in the Jerusalem Pais Arena, morning seminar teachings, the ever-popular Jerusalem March, a Day of Prayer in the Pavilion, and a moving communion service in the Garden Tomb. We also brought back the tradition of holding a healing service at the Feast. ICEJ Philippines National Director Pastor Stephen Mirpuri gave an inspiring message on faith and healing before many were prayed for and touched by the Lord.



The Feast concluded with a special Solidarity Rally in the western Negev to show support for Israeli communities living under constant rocket threat along the Gaza border area. We also partnered with Keren Kayemeth Le’Israel (KKL/JNF) to offer a ceremony to reflect the ICEJ’s commitment to the security and greening of the western Negev region. Each Feast day featured local Israeli and international speakers and worship leaders. In addition, the vast array of musical artists made for a beautiful multicultural worship experience.

Meanwhile, there was a powerful flow of the

Word of God during the preaching and seminar sessions, including messages from Dr. Jürgen Bühler, Lou Engle, Andrew Brunson, Sergey Shidlovskiy, Steve Mirpuri, Malcolm Hedding, Peter Tsukahira, David Parsons, Stephan Christiansen, Calev Myers, Benjamin Berger, and many others.

At the Galilee opening, Malaysian pilgrim Huan shared: “We want to experience God during this Feast of Tabernacles because He promised to tabernacle with us. We have an appointment here with Him, so we came. It’s the convocation with God—like a rehearsal until He returns and tabernacles with us.”

In Jerusalem, the opening night at the Pais Arena included a colorful display of national flags and costumes representing 86 nations in person and online during the “Roll Call of the Nations.” MK Sharren Haskel, the co-chair of the Knesset Christian Allies Caucus, was on hand to welcome the return of Christian visitors to Israel but also encourage us to stand with the Iranian people currently seeking basic freedoms. In a dramatic act that made headlines across Israel,





Haskel cut off part of her trademark flowing hair to show support for the female protesters in Iran.

On day four of the Feast, Jerusalem's deputy Mayor Fleur Hassan-Nahoum warmly greeted our Feast pilgrims after the difficult years of COVID. "Don't take anything for granted," said Hassan-Nahoum. "Everything can be temporal. Your house is not necessarily your castle. Only God is your protector, and this is what we celebrate on Tabernacles. We are so honored that all of you are our shelter to the sometimes-horrible hatred we get from so many places around the world."

That same evening the ICEJ also presented its prestigious Nehemiah Award to the former Chief Justice of the Republic of South Africa, the honorable Mogoeng Mogoeng. For over a year now, Chief Justice Mogoeng has stood firm in his support for Israel on biblical grounds, despite tremendous pressure and widespread vilification in South Africa and worldwide.

The focus of day five of the Feast was the popular Jerusalem March. Several thousand Feast pilgrims paraded through the capital city's streets with national flags and traditional costumes to express their love for Israel. Jerusalem Mayor Moshe Lion was so pleased to see Christian visitors in his city again that he invited ICEJ President Dr. Jürgen Bühler to lead the Jerusalem March with him. One marcher from England, Mary, spoke to a camera crew as she waved her country's flag: "The Feast is just such an amazing



experience," she said. "I love Israel and the Jewish people." Naomi, an Israeli watching the march, responded: "We always feel so isolated in Israel—this little, tiny, tiny Jewish people. And to feel this hug from people from all over the world is really wonderful. We appreciate every single person who has come."

The next day, we held a special Day of Global Prayer at the Pavilion in Jerusalem, which saw the nations come together to pray for their respective regions and Israel. In addition, an online prayer *sukkah* was open throughout the Feast for pilgrims to join in prayer. Another highlight for Feast pilgrims was the special communion service hosted in the Garden Tomb. Pastor Andrew Brunson from the United States was the main speaker, while Arab Pastor Naim Khoury from Bethlehem and Jewish pastor Avraham Ben Hod from Israel served communion. One couple at the Garden Tomb service shared how they first met in this very place three years ago at the Feast. "Now we are a married couple, and today we celebrate our anniversary back here," shared Lars and Randi, now living in Switzerland. "Meeting each other here has been a new beginning for each of us. We believe that God gave us a joint purpose and heart



for Israel. Each visit to Israel has been an especially intense time. ... Like Yeshua himself wished even as a child to stay in the temple, in God's presence, we feel the same and would stay if

we could."

"It is absolutely awesome," added Aletta and Johannes from South Africa. "When you come to Israel, you always come with an expectation ... [and] you are always really surprised what God gives you in His Spirit! ... I hadn't expected so many Jews would appreciate our support for them at the Jerusalem March. It was a real powerful demonstration of the love people from the nations have for Israel. Breathtaking!"



On the final day of the Feast, 700 Feast pilgrims from 50 nations traveled south to show solidarity with the Gaza border communities. They received a warm welcome from Mayor Ofir Libshtein of the Sha'ar HaNegev Regional Council and firsthand accounts of what life is like for people living in these resilient towns and villages close to the Gaza border. As the solidarity rally ended, 1,000 blue and white balloons were released as "prayers for peace" in the Gaza border region.

We hope you will consider coming up to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles 2023 from September 29 to October 6, 2023 🌍

And please enjoy the beautiful Feast photos and daily highlight videos on our Feast Gallery site at: www.feastgallery.icej.org

THE LAND of Promise

BY DR. JÜRGEN BÜHLER
ICEJ PRESIDENT

This article is excerpted from a message by Dr. Jurgen Buhler on the Land of Promise at this year's Feast of Tabernacles.



YOU ARE SEATED HERE TODAY IN JERUSALEM BECAUSE 4,000 YEARS AGO, GOD MADE A PROMISE TO ABRAHAM THAT ONE DAY ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH WOULD COME TO THE SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.

“The Land of Promise” is our 2022 Feast theme—but how many people know where this exact phrase is written in the Bible? Is it in the Old or New Testament? Israel is called the “land of promise” only one time in the Word of God, in the book of Hebrews: “By faith Abraham lived in the land of promise” (11:9). So the Land of Promise is not just an Old Testament promise but is introduced to us in the New Testament by the writer of Hebrews. He called it the Land of Promise because he understood the promises of God are unshakable and unfailing.

The idea of the Land of Promise goes all the way back to the calling of Israel in Genesis 12. A man named Abraham was living in Ur of the Chaldeans. ... One day, he heard the voice of God saying: “Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Genesis 12:1–3).

You are seated here today in Jerusalem because 4,000 years ago, God made a promise to Abraham that one day all the families of the earth would come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. You might say, “Where is this in

the Bible?” In Galatians 3:8, Paul says, “The Scriptures, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand”—that is, through Abraham the Messiah would come and all the nations would be blessed.

Now Abraham and Sarah were getting old, and they tried to bring about this promised descendant. But one day God told Abraham to look up toward the heavens ... and count the stars. And He said, “That’s how your descendants will be.” Abraham then asked how he could be sure of this, and the Lord made a covenant with him in Genesis 15. He told Abraham to cut some animals in half. There was blood everywhere. And a deep sleep fell upon Abraham. Then the Bible says: “On the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying: ‘To your descendants I have given this land.’”

The message was simple. If any party making this covenant breaks it, their fate [would] be the same as those slain animals. They would pay with their life. A covenant is one of the most precious, holy things that the Bible has to offer.

But there is something peculiar about the covenant of Genesis 15. ... Abraham was sleeping, and God Himself—in the form of a fiery torch—walked through the animal pieces.

What was the message? God said: “No matter what you will do, Abraham, no matter what your people do. No matter if they will follow me or do not follow me. ... I’m going to make a covenant with you today that this is your land of promise. I’m not going to change my mind. ... This is your land; this is your calling; this is your destiny—to be a blessing for the nations.”

There are people today in the church who say that God has changed His mind about the Jewish people. Because they (the Jewish people) have sinned, God is finished with Israel. Let me tell you, if God is finished with Israel, your and my salvation would be on a very shaky foundation. Let’s be honest with ourselves: How many times has the Lord had to rebuke us that we do not pray enough, we are not zealous enough, [or] we are not faithful enough? Many times the Lord has had reason to change His mind about us! ... But the Word of God tells me that even if we are unfaithful, He still is faithful and keeps His promises to us.

That is why the New Testament writers knew this land was promised to Israel. And that is why the Christian Embassy, with a loud voice, is declaring that this land belongs to the Jewish people—not because the United Nations says it, not because of the European Union, but because the King of kings and Lord of lords gave it to them: Israel. 🌍

Feast

REVIEW

TWO GLORIOUS NIGHTS IN THE GALILEE

For the first time in over four decades of the Feast, the ICEJ took our Sukkot celebration to the Sea of Galilee. The beautiful setting of the Capernaum National Park provided the perfect backdrop for our standing-room-only gathering to spend the opening two nights of this year's Feast.

Over the two evenings, we received greetings from local Israeli pastors Daniel Yahav from Tiberias and Saleem Shalash from Nazareth, as well



as a security briefing from IDF Major (Res.) Elliot Chodoff, while Apostle Renê Terra Nova from Brazil and Evangelist Manasa Kolivuso from Fiji delivered the main messages. In addition, an array of anointed worship leaders from Israel and abroad led us in times of praise and worship that echoed across the Sea of Galilee.

"This needs to go all over the world. The Holy Spirit was really present," said Bishop Festus Mulwanda from Zambia after his first taste of the Feast. "The worship band from Norway (Filadelfia Lovsang) carried the presence of the Lord, and I want to get them to Zambia." 🌐

THE NATIONS APPEAR IN ZION

After ascending to Jerusalem, Feast pilgrims gathered in the Pais Arena for the traditional Roll Call of the Nations, where each nation represented at the Feast presents itself before the Lord with their national flag and often in traditional costumes. As representatives from 86 nations paraded across the stage with colorful flags, the event was displayed on screens to recognize each country with pilgrims attending the Feast in-person and online.

Israeli Knesset member Sharren Haskel also delivered an official greeting to Feast pilgrims and thanked them for coming to Jerusalem: "The prophet Zechariah spoke of a future time when all the nations would come to Jerusalem to celebrate the holiday of Sukkot. Look around you now—we are the living proof of the truth of the Word of God," said MK Haskel.

"This gathering is an indication of what's going to happen when we stand before the throne of grace in heaven," exclaimed a pastor from Liberia. "To participate in this Feast, I see myself in the presence of God. And the Land of Israel is amazing. ... We're walking in the Bible!" 🌐

THE JERUSALEM MARCH

Feast pilgrims are always excited to take to the streets of Jerusalem to express their love for Israel in the popular Jerusalem March. The atmosphere was festive as many pilgrims adorned in national costumes interacted with crowds of Israelis watching along the parade route. Jerusalem Mayor Moshe Lion was so thrilled to see Christians visiting his city again after the global pandemic that he invited ICEJ President Jürgen Bühler to lead off the March

with him. "I must tell you that we missed you these two years. We are very happy to host you," the mayor said.

Pastor Manasa Kolivuso from Fiji responded: "It was such a treat for me to meet all the Israelis today along the March route and tell them we support and pray for them. This is my first time to Israel, and we are already talking about chartering a whole flight from Fiji next year." 🌐



COMMUNION IN THE GARDEN TOMB

Another highlight for Feast pilgrims was sharing communion in the Garden Tomb with fellow Christians from around the world. This year, Pastor Andrew Brunson spoke powerfully on how his relationship with the Lord grew during his two years of suffering in a Turkish prison: “I discovered that there is an intimacy that only comes with testing, an intimacy that only comes with hardship and suffering.” 🌍



SOLIDARITY VISIT TO GAZA BORDER REGION

The week-long Feast concluded with a visit to the western Negev to show support for Israeli communities along the Gaza border living under the constant threat of rockets and arson balloons. Over 700 Christians from 50 nations took part in a solidarity rally held in the Sha’ar HaNegev region. Mayor Ofir Libshtein warmly welcomed the Christian visitors and thanked the ICEJ for helping “to make our lives safer ... This is an amazing and wonderful place to live 95 percent of the time. But 5 percent of the time it’s not easy to live here.”

In addition to donating 140 portable bomb shelters and two dozen fire-fighting vehicles to the region over recent years, the ICEJ is now partnering with Keren Kayemeth Le’Israel (KKL/JNF) to plant protective hedges and reforest burned areas in the Gaza periphery.

As the solidarity rally ended, the ICEJ delegates released 1,000 blue and white balloons into the air as “prayers for peace” in the Gaza border region. 🌍



FEAST IN THE MEDIA

This year’s Feast 2022 received ample coverage in the Israeli, foreign, and Christian press. The fact that thousands of Christians were back in Israel for Sukkot after a two-year slump in tourism was certainly news worth reporting.

For example, two Iranian-born singers performing at the Feast were interviewed by several media outlets about their support for Israel and conversion to Christianity:

“Our people, we love Israel,” Peyman Motjtahedi, a worship leader from Texas, assured an Israeli reporter. “The brotherhood between the Jewish and Persian people is beautiful for us.” He added that several Persian Jews shed tears when they saw him carrying the traditional Iranian flag in the Jerusalem March.

Several other articles featured former Chief Justice of South Africa Mogoeng Mogoeng, who received the ICEJ’s annual Nehemiah Award for his courageous, principled stand for Israel. And American pastor Andrew Brunson, who spent two years in a Turkish prison, also spoke to several journalists on Israel-Turkey relations. 🌍



FEAST TEAM MEMBERS KEEP THE FEAST IN MOTION!

The Feast of Tabernacles is a massive undertaking for our full-time staff in Jerusalem. To meet this challenge, many dedicated Christians faithfully come each year to volunteer their time at the Feast. This year, we had 106 Feast team members—35 served for the first time, and another 12 assisted from abroad with the online Feast. Each person sacrificed to serve others at the Feast. They worked tirelessly to ensure all areas of this week-long event ran smoothly: ushering, security, transport and registration, music, stage production, photography, logistics, and more. Every role was vital in ensuring the pilgrims enjoyed their Feast experience. 🌍

A TRIBUTE TO ELGONDA BRUNKHORST

Finally, we want to pay special tribute to Elgonda Brunkhorst, a key organizer of the first Feast in 1980. Elgonda passed away earlier this year, but a few years ago, she shared with our staff the many challenges she faced putting together that first Feast. It was one long, amazing testimony of many answered prayers. She could not speak Hebrew, and this was before cell phones and email. She needed translators, carpenters, dancers, sewers, chairs, and sound equipment but had little money to work with. Nevertheless, the Lord directed her in incredible ways, and we honor Elgonda for helping set the tone of faith and self-sacrifice among those working behind-the-scenes to make the Feast a success every year. 🌍



CHIEF JUSTICE MOGOENG

Every year at the Feast, the Christian Embassy presents its annual Nehemiah Award to a Christian leader who has distinguished himself as a strong, committed supporter of Israel and the Jewish people. This year, the award was given to the recently retired Chief Justice of the Republic of South Africa, the Honorable Mogoeng Mogoeng.

Chief Justice Mogoeng is a devout Christian and highly respected jurist across Africa. Over the past year, he took a bold public stand for Israel based on biblical principles and courageously refused to back down in the face of tremendous pressure and widespread vilification in South Africa and elsewhere. At the height of that stand-off, the ICEJ South Africa Branch spearheaded a public petition in support of Mogoeng, which was signed by over 150,000 fellow citizens.

After receiving the Nehemiah Award, Chief Justice Mogoeng described how he refused to surrender to a dark agenda that would rob South Africa of its national destiny to be a “blessing” to Israel in line with Scripture:

“I wish I had time to express appreciation for all those who supported me at the time when I was confronted by untold vitriol and persecution, but time simply does not permit,” Mogoeng told the Feast gathering. “[I]t is the apparent need for self-preservation, or an attempt to avoid reputational damage, the love for position or power, fame or seemingly good ... that has led many to deny Jesus Christ. But by God’s grace, and with the prayers of the saints, I mustered the courage to say: ‘No, I belong to Jesus.’”

“A rejection of Jacob or Israel and his

OUR TERRIFIC TRANSLATORS

We also recognize the many translators who helped make it possible to offer the Feast messages in so many languages again this year, an extra challenge due to this being a “hybrid Feast” of both in-person and online pilgrims. It was technically impossible to provide translation by one team to both audiences at once; thus, we arranged two sets of teams working simultaneously. The whole language team had 52 members who made the Feast accessible in Spanish, French, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, German, Finnish, Norwegian, Danish, Italian, Czech/Slovak, and Thai. 🌍



descendants is a rejection of God’s promises for them. And it is also an attraction of the curse to you. ... Take a careful look at all those who chose to curse instead of bless Israel and the children of Israel, and you be the judge whether you see blessings or curses instead.” 🌍



With great anticipation, a group of Americans from across the United States boarded a plane to Israel on October 6, 2022, to fly across the ocean together. After almost three years of being unable to travel to Israel, the excitement was tangible to return to an in-person celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles.

After gathering in the airport's arrival hall, the group made its way first to the Dead Sea. Waking up that first morning and looking over the still body of water and surrounding mountains set the tone for touring for the next few days. We then took in the ancient sights of Ein Gedi, where David hid from Saul; Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found; and Masada, famous for where the last Jewish revolt against Rome occurred after Jesus' death. Soon Scripture and biblical history began to come alive for every person on the tour.

After a much-needed relaxing swim in the Dead Sea, the group headed to the Sea of Galilee for the next part of their adventure. Settled at Magdala, a hotel nestled on the Galilee shores, we began walking and experiencing the places where Jesus did most of His ministry. The days around the peaceful waters of the Galilee included morning devotions at the Mount of Beatitudes, exploring ancient Capernaum and meditating on all Jesus did there, and trekking through Tel Dan, which included drinking from natural spring water and learning about Abraham's journey through that area. Water baptisms in the Jordan river were a highlight for many who chose to publicly declare their faith in Jesus near where He Himself was baptized.

One tour participant commented how the sites "helped me spiritually—in that when reading the Bible, I can picture places that are talked about. The stories come alive more because I've seen the places."

The two evenings in the Galilee included the opening night events of the ICEJ Feast of Tabernacles celebration, where the ICEJ American group, along with other groups from around the world, worshiped the Lord on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. A golden moon hung large in the sky as flags and banners rose to meet it. Almost a thousand voices floated across the water as people from every nation sang out in unison and listened to the Word of God preached. People from our group felt the palpable excitement matched by every other group there, which would follow the rest of the Feast of Tabernacles celebration.

Saving the best until last, we made our way up to the glorious city of Jerusalem, where the remainder of the tour and Feast celebration took

place. We prayed for Jerusalem as "watchmen on the walls," explored the City of David, and walked from the Mount of Olives down to the Garden of Gethsemane. We experienced a special time at the Garden Tomb as we viewed the open tomb and took communion together, followed by a powerful time of prayer and worship. Participants also visited Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust Museum, where the ICEJ USA group adopted a tree in memory of a righteous person for a year. It was a challenging and emotional but significant visit.

A highlight of the tour was the Jerusalem March, where we joined thousands of other Christians from the Feast of Tabernacles and marched down the streets of Jerusalem to show the Jewish people their continued love and support for Israel. Israeli families lined the sides of the roads with their hands stretched out to thank the groups for their love and support. The entire group felt the warmth and welcome from every Israeli. James Lissner, a USA tour participant, said: "The joy in being with fellow believers from around the world on the march to Jerusalem will be a memory treasured in my heart."

We also attended the evening celebrations and morning seminars of the ICEJ Feast of Tabernacles, where we had the opportunity to listen to a wealth of internationally renowned speakers and worship leaders, adding to the depth and understanding of the theme for this year, "The Land of Promise."

The USA tour concluded at the ancient city of Caesarea Maritima. From there, participants received a final commission to go out, just like the first apostles, to fulfill the call of God on their lives and continue to bless God's people Israel. One participant deeply impacted by the journey, Karen Bettencourt, commented: "[The tour] just deepened my love for Israel."

There was no better way to end this remarkable tour to Israel for the Feast of Tabernacles! The group took up the prophetic call to come up to Jerusalem to worship the Lord during the Feast and, in so doing, felt the tangible presence of the Lord every step of the way—from the Dead Sea to the Sea of Galilee and finally, up to God's holy city, Jerusalem. Everyone returned home changed, renewed in their callings, and with a deeper understanding of God's Word in their hearts.

There is only one place God carved out for Himself—Zion. Join the ICEJ on our next trip to Israel for the Feast of Tabernacles and see for yourself what God has in store for you there! 🌍

For more information on the Feast Tour in 2023, go to: www.icejusa.org/feast-tour



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ICEJ Restoring Hope to Women in Need

BY LAURINA DRIESSE

A little haven in the south of Israel is providing a safe place for abused, traumatized, and homeless Israeli women, thanks to help from the ICEJ.

Situated in Beersheva, this sanctuary shelters Israeli women from all walks of life, each with a unique story. Israeli social services or anti-violence organizations, detox facilities, friends, or family refer them to the shelter.

The women who come to this shelter do not often qualify for any existing social program; thus, the State cannot provide for them. This includes, for example, victims of abuse who are not suffering psychiatric damage severe enough to be treated in a hospital or special hostel but are not mentally stable enough to cope with everyday life. They also take in women who do not qualify for a battered women's shelter if the abusive husband is imprisoned. Often, these women may not have a roof over their heads or any other means of survival. The situation is further complicated in cases where it involves new immigrants who do not have the support of nearby family and friends. In situations like these, this special shelter steps in.

"Our shelter is there to show God's love in action, provide a peaceful and comfortable atmosphere (not just housing), and surround them with people who truly care for them and are eager to become their supporting family," shares Tatyana, the shelter manager.

Dedicated staff works closely with social services for each woman, meeting

weekly with a counseling committee to help the women solve their social and legal issues. They also prepare them for living independently. Some women stay in the shelter for just a few days. Others remain for up to a year or more, depending on their circumstances.

The generosity of our donors allowed the ICEJ to be instrumental in establishing this shelter, which provides a place of safety and rest and mentors and encourages the women.

"These women arrive broken and unable to find their way on their own," explained Nicole Yoder, ICEJ Vice President for AID and Aliyah. "Due to the mentoring support and practical assistance they receive there, the women leave knowing that they are loved and that there is hope and a good future in store for them. We are honored to help provide them an opportunity to regroup and start afresh."

Anat* was a victim of sexual abuse with severe psychiatric problems. While in the shelter, she received help applying for a disability allowance and other benefits. After staying for a year, she moved to a hostel for people with similar conditions. Her mentor keeps in touch, and we are pleased





to report that she is doing well and in contact with her family.

Here at the Christian Embassy, we deeply desire to see families in Israel strengthened, and thus we are thrilled to see lives being transformed and families reunited due to our support for this shelter. Recently, Jasmine,* a single mother who arrived with her baby, said her farewells after a stay of 18 months. It was not an easy journey, however. After being at the shelter for six months, social services agreed to return her oldest son to her from a foster home. Since leaving the shelter, Jasmine has found employment and moved into a rented apartment. More good news has followed, as social services is preparing to return her other two children to her too.

Among the newest arrivals to the shelter is 67-year-old Sarah,* who fled to Israel to escape a violent husband who threatened to kill her. The shelter became a haven for her by helping her get her legal status and social allowances in place, secure employment, and prepare for an independent life.

Meanwhile, Karen,* a new arrival in her 40s, had turned to alcohol to dull the pain of living with an abusive husband. Unfortunately, what was a tool to numb pain became an addiction. But we are excited to share that she completed the detox process quickly and



miraculously is now clean. Karen enjoys attending the shelter's Shabbat dinners, and the shelter manager, Tatyana, is dedicating much time to teaching and guiding her.

Betty* (24) was born in Israel to Russian-immigrant parents. Her father, to whom she was very attached, abused drugs and alcohol.

When Betty was 12 years old, her parents divorced, leaving her devastated. Although she had a knowledge of God, she struggled with identity issues and found it difficult to relate to friends. In the army, she found friends and a place to shine, where her natural leadership abilities gained her a responsible position in her unit. She dedicated herself fully to her job, which included many night shifts, to the neglect of her health. Soon the lack of sleep, constant stress, poor eating habits, and lack of nutrition took its toll.

When Betty completed her army service and entered civilian life, she began suffering severe headaches with pain that extended to her neck and the rest of her body. After multiple doctor's appointments, she was diagnosed with fibromyalgia. She tried different medicines, but nothing seemed to help her until someone suggested she try medical cannabis. This relieved the pain, but the drug also clouded her thinking and deteriorated her emotional state. She soon fell into the company of friends who smoked cannabis recreationally and negatively influenced her.



After Betty found her way to the shelter, she could finally break free from using cannabis and other psychiatric medications that she had once used to treat the fibromyalgia. Today, Betty has restored her relationship with God and is no longer suffering from depression. With a new lease on life, she is learning to care for herself by eating healthy and exercising regularly. She said, "I want to keep fighting for my life!" This change was possible because of the assistance she received at the shelter.

Your generous support has made a positive impact not only in Betty's life but in the lives of other Israeli women at the shelter. Thank you for restoring hope to women who are suffering and in crisis. 🙏

**Names have been changed to protect identity.*

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PLANT A TREE TO BEAUTIFY ISRAEL & SAVE LIVES

On the last day of this year's Feast, some 700 Christians from 50 nations joined ICEJ leadership on a visit to the western Negev to take part in a special Solidarity Rally with local Israeli communities along the Gaza border and a symbolic tree-planting ceremony with Keren Kayemeth Le'Israel (the Jewish National Fund, or JNF).

We also committed to KKL/JNF to leave a lasting impact on the region by donating trees that will revive forests in the western Negev region burned in recent arson balloon fires while also planting protective hedges to shield Israeli communities close to the border from the line-of-sight of rocket squads operating in Gaza.

In partnership with KKL/JNF, the ICEJ will be replanting scorched areas in a large section of the Be'eri Forest near the Gaza border, which will be renamed the "ICEJ Forest." This lovely forest is popular with Israelis, especially when

the carpets of red anemones bloom in early spring. And KKL/JNF just added new bike paths and free bike stands to make it an even more attractive place for family visits. Thus, the new ICEJ Forest will be a lasting reminder to scores of Israelis of our support and care for their nation.

Please join us in these important efforts to beautify and regreen the western Negev and to protect Israeli communities from the intended harm emanating from nearby Gaza. These tree-planting projects will be using eucalyptus, tamarisk, broadleaf, and other species of trees that grow rapidly, do well in arid conditions, are bushy, provide good shade, and regenerate quickly after fires.

A donation of US \$25.00 includes processing and delivery of your digital tree certificate and will plant one tree. Larger gifts are also welcome and greatly appreciated. 🌳



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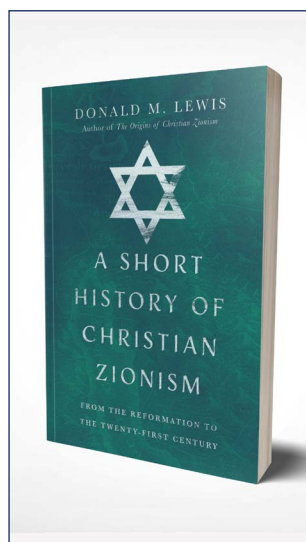


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THE ICEJ'S HAIFA HOME BUZZES WITH JOYFUL ACTIVITY

BY YUDIT SETZ

Joy and happiness flooded the hearts of residents at the ICEJ's Haifa Home for Holocaust Survivors around the celebratory festival of Sukkot when they received international visitors bearing beautiful gifts and treasured conversations.

An Unexpected Visit from Slovakia

Martin and Yulia Herbert from Slovakia visited the Haifa Home just before the Feast of Tabernacles started in Israel. They came with their daughter and brought gifts and messages of love from the only Jewish retirement home dedicated to Holocaust Survivors in Slovakia.

"We heard about you, and we would like to give you some little things from our creative workshop. We hope they make you happy," read a beautifully decorated card from the residents and staff of Ohel David in Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia.

Indeed, their visit brought such joy to our residents. They admired the handiwork of the residents of the Ohel David community, the creatively painted bags, and other hand-crafted items made by residents of the Slovakian home, many of whom are over 90 years old. Our own Fanny S., who can be found daily in our art room, immediately went to her home to give Martin and Yulia some socks she had knitted herself and then showed them all her artwork in her apartment.

Sukkot, the Feast of Joy

A beautifully decorated sukkah was built outside the Haifa Home, and residents delighted to sit in it while enjoying each other's company and fulfilling the commandment of Leviticus 23:42-43 to "dwell" in the sukkah for the week of the Feast.

Visitors from the ICEJ Feast

After so long of not being able to host groups and visitors at the Home, we were privileged to welcome a German group that attended this year's Feast of Tabernacles, as well as different donors who were in Israel and wanted to see the Haifa Home with their own eyes.

After visiting, Ann from the United Kingdom wrote: "I just want to thank you so much that I was able to visit the Home for Holocaust Survivors yesterday. Thank you for giving us so much of your time. It really was very special, and it has impacted me very deeply. May the Lord continue to bless and uphold you richly as you minister to these dear ones so close to His heart."

Tree of Life project

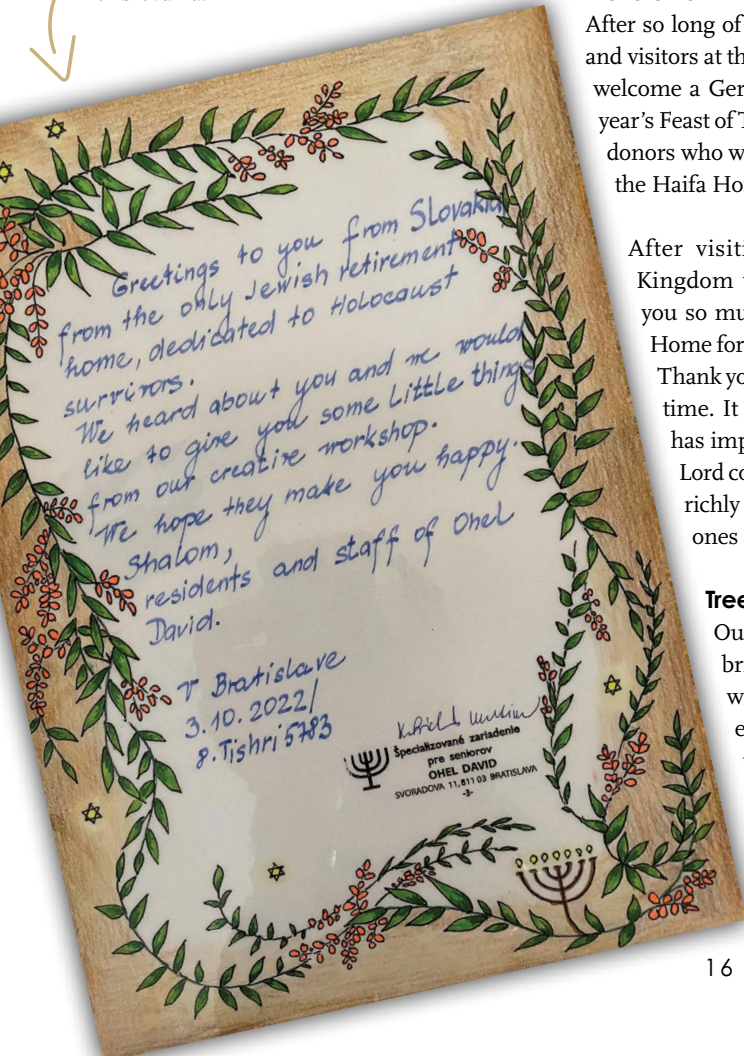
Our ICEJ nurse, Christine, had the brilliant idea of doing a project with the residents that would emphasize thankfulness and the good times our residents have experienced in their lives. "There is joy, which comes from a joyful heart. But how can a broken heart and a

bitter soul feel joy again?" wondered Christine. "One way is to remember the good things in life, and gratefulness can make the heart smile again."

Christine wanted to help residents remember the courage, hope, and strength they had to start life over again after all the suffering they endured. "Through the project, I was able to understand our residents better and build deep relationships. I learned a lot from their stories about courage, love, and strength, and came to see in them as people who were fighting to find the way back to life after much suffering," shared Christine.



Naomi, one resident who participated in the "Tree of Life" project, was touched to tears when she tried to explain what this project had done to her. Proudly, she has started to tell the story of her "Tree of Life" to every visitor who comes and shares all the things that she is so thankful for.



Introducing New Residents

Sixteen new residents from Ukraine have found their way to our Haifa Home. Two of our latest arrivals are Alexander and Irina from Mariupol, in Ukraine.



Alexander was born in Mariupol and had to flee in 1941 with his family when Nazi Germany invaded Ukraine. They ended up in Armenia, and he still

remembers it as a time of fear, hunger, and lack. From the fall of 1941 until 1944, the Nazis killed an estimated 1.5 million Ukrainian Jews, and over 800,000 were displaced to the East.

They eventually returned to Mariupol, where Alexander became an engineer and married Irina, a pediatrician. Together they have a daughter.

Though now elderly, they were still active when Russia invaded Ukraine in February. They lived next to the now famous Azovstal steel plant in Mariupol, and soon their life became a nightmare of bombardments, hunger, and lack of the basic necessities needed for life. Their lives were often spared when bombs fell nearby and destroyed windows and other parts of their home. One day they were told to get their bags ready, and

they would be picked up within 15 minutes to flee Mariupol. Irina still finds it difficult to talk about all the hardships they suffered.

"This was the only dress I was able to bring with me," said Irina, pointing to the outfit she was wearing. They arrived in Israel in June this year, along with their daughter, and in September, they moved into the Haifa Home.

"People have been very kind to us," expressed Alexander with a smile. "We received everything we need. What surprised me the most about Israel is that they are building everywhere, and the country is blooming. I look forward to learning new things and hope we still can have some good years here in Israel."

Reflections of a German Volunteer

Josh, who has been part of our Haifa Home team for eight months, recently shared his experience working at the Haifa Home. "In the Haifa Home, I do whatever is needed," said Josh. "I'm good with technology, so I help the residents with their TVs and computers. I also clean apartments and the common areas. Sometimes I take care of the gardens. I take and edit pictures for publications and write for the ICEJ AID updates. I manage the letters and packages donors from around the world send to the residents.

"But my favorite activity is just sitting down with the residents and talking to them. None of the work I did before I came here compares to what I'm doing right now caring for these precious people who lost family in the most brutal ways and went through so much pain in their life," he continued. "We have people here who had to live in the woods for years when they were children, scavenging for food, and as a result, were malnourished. Some people saw most of their family murdered in cold blood.

"Then there are second-generation Holocaust Survivors working here, putting in all their heart every day. They're well into their 60s and 70s but still going strong, jumping at every request the residents have, and always trying to make it work somehow.

"We [also] have Muslims working closely together with Jews and Christians, proving that coexistence not only works but enables flourishing relationships," added Josh.

Prison service workers also volunteer at the Home—some of whom have committed serious crimes but have chosen to turn their life around. "If you watch some of them, the way they handle the residents is so gentle and kind, you wouldn't believe what they have done in the past," Josh explained.

"On Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day), one of the residents told me that I made that day at least a little bit more bearable for her. To be with [residents] on that day, to hug them and share some of their suffering, was such a privilege, knowing that my great grandfathers contributed to the Nazi regime. It was a sorrowful day, and I teared up many times, but I also felt immense gratitude to experience this. I still feel gratitude every day when I come to work because just from a human perspective, it's the most special place I've ever seen," concluded Josh. 🌍



Josh and resident Renate enjoy a walk outside the Haifa Home



A delegation from Germany visit the Home for Holocaust Survivors

Please donate today at:
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YOUR ISRAEL ANSWER

Jews and Christians Learning to Relate

Part 3 of a 3-Part Series: Advice from Pioneers

By Dr. Susan Michael, ICEJ USA Director

Many Evangelical Christians have an appreciation for the Jewish people and would love to be involved in the developing relationship between the two faiths. But the thought of where to begin might be a little intimidating: How do you learn what to do and what not to do?

While you need to study up a bit to better prepare yourself, the truth is that you don't learn how to have a relationship by reading a book. You learn by engaging with the other person—you learn Jewish-Christian relations by doing it. And unfortunately, you will learn the most from your mistakes.

That said, I do have tips and advice for Christians launching out into this arena. I have been privileged to have been involved in strengthening Jewish-Christian relations for some 40 years now through my work with the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem. Over the years I observed great strides and even amazing partnerships develop, both in Israel and the United States. I have also interacted with many other pioneers and recently interviewed several of them to provide you with the very best guidance.

Here are seven tips for how to approach Jewish-Christian relations.

1. Be Sincere

The first thing to understand is that your relationship with a Jewish person must be a friendship, not a mission. It is not a means to some other end. There cannot be a hidden agenda or strings attached to your friendship, or it is not really a friendship. A true friendship is sincere, honest, and transparent. So if that is your goal, please read on!

2. Have a Learning Attitude

One of the most common mistakes is approaching the Jewish people from the point of arrogance—thinking we know more than they and looking for ways to demonstrate that! However, in reality, we have so much to learn from the Jewish faith, experience, and knowledge of the Scriptures.

Great theological differences exist between us. One is over the identity of Jesus. Another is how we approach the Scriptures—Christians in a much more direct way, Jews through the commentary of many rabbis. However, we have much more in common and can learn many things from each other.

I have heard rabbis comment on how impactful their fellowship with pastors has been in teaching them how to pray more spontaneously and informally in public settings. And I know of pastors who are excited by the insight into Scriptures they have gained from rabbis.

3. Understand How You Are Perceived

Though a lot has changed over the last 25 years, some pockets in the Jewish world still fear and distrust Evangelical Christians. Anti-missionary activists have instilled great alarm in their community about Evangelical Christians and our support of Israel. At the heart of this pushback is the issue of evangelization. And it is important that Christians understand how the Jewish community perceives it.

Most Christians would consider a Jew who believes in Jesus as still Jewish but with the added belief in Jesus as the Jewish Messiah. The Jewish community, however, sees it very differently. For them, you cannot be both; they consider accepting Jesus as Messiah and God as converting from Judaism to Christianity. Therefore, they think evangelization is an attempt to make them no longer Jewish. It is a much bigger issue than losing one person to the faith—it is a threat to the survival of the Jewish people. For every one Jew who converts there may be thousands of descendants lost to the Jewish faith, a serious threat to the future of such a small people group.

There is another source of fear that has less to do with theology and more about politics. Some from the more liberal segment of the American Jewish community have instilled fear of Evangelicals' political strength and conservative domestic agenda. It is unthinkable for them to have a relationship or work together with us in support of Israel. Of course, political coalition-building around one issue happens every day. So as much as we may disagree on abortion or separation of church and state, this does not mean we cannot agree on the support of Israel or even find common ground on the issues with which we disagree. But it is a hurdle that must be overcome.

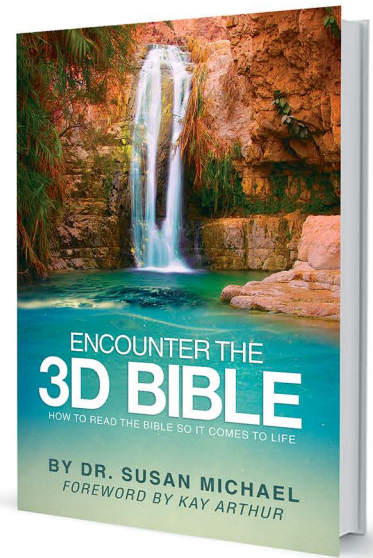
4. Learn from History

Few Evangelical Christians know the history of Christian antisemitism, and when I teach it, they are often astounded—if not downright mortified—by it. It is so important that we learn about this tragic past because the Jewish community knows it, and they view us through its lens. Knowing the history of Christian antisemitism will make us aware of the highly sensitive issues, red flags, or hot topics that must either be avoided or handled with great care.

Learn more from pioneers in Jewish Christian relations at :
www.icejusa.org/israel-answers-series

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For example, when we learn about the Jewish children in history who were kidnapped and forced to be baptized, we can understand the sensitivity to the whole idea of baptism. And when we read the baptismal rite for a Jewish person in which they had to renounce everything Jewish, we better understand why conversion is viewed as a betrayal of their Jewishness. When we learn of the atrocities carried out under the sign of the cross, we will understand why, to this day, many Jews will not enter a church.

5. Read Up on the Topic

The best book to read to prepare yourself for engaging in this relationship is *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith* by Dr. Marvin Wilson. Dr. Wilson has been a pioneer in Evangelical-Jewish relations over the last 50 years, and he wrote this seminal book that is even used as a textbook in college courses.

In addition to the history of Jewish-Christian relations, he explains Hebrew thought and the Jewish heritage of Christianity. He also gives practical advice from his extensive personal experience of how to approach and engage your local Jewish community.

6. Learn from the Pioneers

Dr. Wilson is one pioneer, but there are others who, over the last 25 years and more, have helped forge a whole new relationship between Jews and Christians. The easiest way to learn from them is by listening to my interviews with them on the *Out of Zion* podcast linked below.

7. Approach the Relationship with Humility and Honor

Again, while studying and preparing yourself is crucial, you will learn most by engaging in the relationship. Of course, you'll make mistakes along the way, but that's okay. When that happens, sincerely apologize, and ask your offended friend to help you understand what you did wrong and how you were perceived.

The relationship is new, and it is extremely delicate. The most important thing is that you be sincere and humble. That means listening more than you speak and apologizing when you are misunderstood.

You will be so rewarded for the effort as there is a spiritual nourishment when the branch is rightly related to its root (Romans 11:18). And the root will find its greatest fulfillment when it is united with the branch that can bear its fruit. We need each other. 🌿



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